

Destroying Greece to Save it

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The Troika is looting Greece. They're destroying it. They're waging financial war. They partnered with corrupt Greek officials.

They're strip-mining Greece for profit. It's the epicenter of global pillage. Ordinary people have no say. They're victims of force-fed harshness.

The more Athens borrows, the greater its debt burden, the harder it is to get out from under. Greece is dying. It's practically a corpse already. Only its obituary remains to be written.

Official unemployment tops 27%. It's likely higher. Youth unemployment approaches 65%. An entire generation's lost. It's being systematically destroyed. It's dying on the alter of pay bankers first. Whatever they want they get.

Greece's New Democracy/PASOK coalition plans thousands more layoffs by yearend. On July 17, it enacted its seventh austerity package since 2010.

It calls for firing 15,000 state workers. About 25,000 will be gone by yearend. Up to 150,000 will be sacked by yearend 2014.

Members of the Troika demand their pound of flesh. They insist in return for emergency loans. They reflect loan shark economics writ large.

Greek economist Yanis Varoufakis calls "Bankruptocracy in the Greek Sector of Bailoutistan" destructive. It's "progressing in leaps and bounds."

It's doing so with "European taxpayers loan guarantees providing the capital and a bonfire of the Greek people's hopes for the future supplying the energy."

Greece is a black hole of inequity. It's burning. It's a model of self-destruction. It's birthrate's in decline. Stillbirths rose 20% since 2008.

Greece spends much less on education than other OECD countries on average (8.3% compared to 13.1%). It doesn't matter. In mid-July, parliament approved thousands more teacher layoffs. They promise recovery ahead. Things do from bad to worse.

Around 40% of households lack healthcare. A late March [Lancet study](#) said Europe's financial crisis poses major threats to health.

Greece is hardest hit of all. So are Spain, Portugal and Italy. Suicides and infectious disease outbreaks "are becoming more common in these countries, and budget cuts have restricted access to health care."

Public health's in crisis. Policy makers are largely silent. They're dismissive. They're indifferent to human need. John Pilger calls willfully destroying social justice the "Age of Regression." Police state harshness enforces it.

It's vicious. It's the new normal. It reflects nations gone mad. Potemkin societies replace real ones. Black hole harshness reflects them. Greece is prologue for what's deepening.

It's spreading across Europe. It's hammering Americans. It affects Canadians. It's coming to a community near you. Imagine unaffordable basic services. Imagine unavailable healthcare when ill.

On April 20, the [TransAtlantic Consumer Dialogue](#) (TACD) IP Policy Committee addressed Greece's healthcare crisis. It did so by open letter to coalition officials, saying:

"This letter is an attempt by Greek scholars and physicians from diverse academic areas of specialization to raise our concerns regarding the current, dire, state of Health Care services in Greece."

"Our country has fallen into a dismal state, and it is constantly challenged by extrinsic and intrinsic pressures, while the economic and social climate deteriorates further each day."

"The Greek government, in total obedience to the irrational demands of the Troika, focuses on the obligations of the citizens towards the state, and seems to forget or ignore its own obligations towards its citizens."

"The Government has imposed a brutal and self-defeating fiscal austerity; in a confiscatory manner, it tries to collect extra revenue from an already impoverished and afflicted populace, while it neglects its main role, as specified by the Constitution: The Protection of the Rights and the Welfare of the Citizen Body."

Greece's black hole deepens. Coalition partners shrank GDP by 25%. Doing so's a shocking indictment of corrupt mismanagement.

Public health's in disarray. It's "collapsing on all fronts." The health of an entire population is "seriously undermine(d)."

Mortality and morbidity are increasing. Troika subservience demands vital service cuts. Medical staff numbers are reduced.

Essential equipment deteriorates. Everything's in short supply. "Patients now have to pay for consumables, for medical tests, and for surgeries."

"This is all on top of what they already paid through their insurance funds."

"Those who suffer from chronic diseases, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, are forced to pay a 25% deductible for the cost of their medication, while prior to the crisis this deductible stood at 5%."

"Cancer and kidney failure patients suffer not only due to the increased costs of specialized treatments, but also the general rundown of these facilities, loss of key personnel and dramatic shortages in medications."

“Unable to receive treatment at home anymore, they have to travel far away for dear life, and wait in endless queues in the corridors of bureaucratic health-insurance offices and/or hospital clinics.”

Mental health services are greatly diminished. “Psychiatric hospitals in Greece can no longer perform at the level required to provide even basic treatment to patients diagnosed with serious mental illnesses.”

“Standard (surgery) rates” force patients to pay about 20% in advance for materials and services.

Doing so “makes both emergency and elective surgeries virtually unapproachable for a broad segment of the population.”

Millions of unemployed and underemployed Greeks have inadequate resources for expensive treatment. Many can’t afford rent, utilities, enough nourishing food, other basics, and other living expenses easily affordable years earlier.

Greece’s poor, unemployed and retired “have no choice but to forego basic, life-saving drugs and healthcare monitoring.”

They do it to afford minimal sustenance. Thousand of medical and other professionals emigrated. Prior to crisis conditions, Greece’s National Health System (ESY) provided exceptional services.

It now lacks basic resources. It has too few trained professionals. It’s “besieged at every level.” It’s “plundered with your consent.”

It’s dying a slow death. So is Greece. It’s beholden to foreign bankers. It’s “not a government of Greeks for Greeks.”

“The disastrous policies that undermine even the basic health of the Greek population must come to an end.”

Greece represents the worst of neoliberal harshness. Social services across the board are disintegrating. They’re in disarray. They’re disappearing in plain sight.

In 2013, martial law was imposed three times. Coalition gangsters wage war on their own people.

Central Athens demonstrations are banned. Police state harshness targets nonbelievers. Courageous people initiate change, said Pilger.

There’s no other way. They’re responsible for “taking back their own lives against (long) odds.” Civil disobedience is a noble tradition. Pilger says read Percy Shelley. “Ye are many; they are few.”

Victor Hugo said nothing’s stronger than “an idea whose time has come.” Seize it. “(D)o it,” said Pilger. The alternative is deepening dystopian harshness.

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