

# THE UNENDING CRISIS

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*Nothing is more permanent than the temporary*  
*Greek proverb*

Greece is in its seventh year of an economic collapse of unprecedented severity in postwar European history. Victim of her own political corruption as well as “united” Europe’s permanent identity crisis, mixed with unresolvable differences between North and South, Greece has ended up in the role of the perpetual lab animal in addition to the unenviable status of a country with her sovereignty smashed by creditor invasive demands for “supervision.”

Both of Greece’s “leaders” and European “partners” refuse to recognize the irrevocable catastrophe already dealt upon the country by the EU-sponsored repeated “bailouts” since 2010.

That Greece cannot recover from her tailspin has been exhaustively analyzed against the increasingly weak “counter-arguments” of supposed “improvement” offered by her bailout handlers pursuing their own public relations and political targets. Her predicament, condemning the bulk of her population to permanent penury and life-destroying degradation, won’t change

any time soon--and the average Greek [realizes](#) this despite the daily oppressive brainwashing to the contrary.

The destruction of Greece is the severest indictment to date of the supposedly noble European “democratic experiment” in its present form.

Greece, because of her own distorted vision of global trends, refused to realize she was the ready-made proverbial “weak link” that could be manipulated as *the test case* in the struggle between opposing views of how Europe’s future would be shaped.

The first phase of the creditors’ assault has been successful: the back-to-back “bailouts” have paved the way for maximum plunder of Greece’s family silver. With “internal devaluation” having collapsed the country’s total net worth to fire sale price levels, future foreign investment--if it comes--will have a party if, that is, the “investors” would gather the courage to deal with Greece’s infamously obstructive state bureaucracy and public sector corruption.

Greece also miscalculated the true dynamics of “united” Europe’s authoritarian attitude in organizing this continental “democratic experiment.”

There’s little democracy in having this gargantuan construct run by a handful of colorless bureaucrats, appointees of Europe’s “central powers” led by Germany. There’s even less democracy in outfitting the “experiment” with a so-called parliament that has no constitutional authority, no power to legislate and enforce its legislating, and no say in how decision-making at the highest level is “managed.” And there’s obvious disdain, displayed by the Brussels *unelected* bureaucrats, toward the “experiment’s” membership comprising separate countries with long, distinct, and strong national identities and traditions many of which increasingly balk at EU diktats.

Greece, and her inept and opportunistic political clans, also fell victim to Europe's fatal abandonment of politics in favor of the "economistic" neo-liberal model and its "globalization" extension.

The financial meltdown of 2008, and the near collapse of the Western financial system, taught Europe little, if anything. Blindly, European governments fell into line behind Berlin's mania for austerity and a mix of disastrous policies, some borrowed from across the Atlantic, specifically designed to increase the wealth of the fabulously rich one percent at the expense of the rest ninety nine percent of the world's population bar none.

The failure of this "economistic" model, seeking to impose on national governments the imperatives of economic profit above all else, hasn't discouraged Europe's masters in the rich North from continuing on the same catastrophic path.

The neo-liberal "solution" to all the vagaries of this world continues to call for deep budget cuts, commodification of labor, and severe contraction of social benefits. The measures demanded by the creditors, seeking to "cure" Greece, are brutal and openly aiming at forcing wages and incomes down to Asian sweatshop levels (which they have already almost achieved).

This "post-modernist rationalization" is compatible with the calamitous impact of the euro currency on weaker European economies. What Wolfgang Streeck calls "The European consolidation state," which has the euro as its main pillar, strives to suppress the traditional politics of popular democracy and replace them with the "rational thinking" of *uber* technocrats belonging to the international predatory financial industry.

Greece, the smallest fish in the tank, mistakenly came to believe that she belonged, by right, to the EU's "hard core"--and this is how she sneaked into the Eurozone through the back

door by cooking the books while the rich and famous looked the other way for “political reasons.”

Once inside though, Greece discovered that this was a game for the big boys only. In the event, she still tried (unsuccessfully) to introduce her own “primitive” forms of corruption to an arena populated by elephants, elephants which manipulated the world not with the methods of the run-of-the-mill small town thieving accountants but by global relentless “financialization” ala Goldman Sachs.

Greece also discovered, to the muted painful surprise of her eager “Europeanists” and various self-important “experts,” that “united” Europe, led by the German juggernaut austeritarians, had little desire, if any, to act as a lender of last resort for Greek debts. Thus, when the criminally amateurish IMF original bailout plan set the stage for her economic and, eventually, her sovereignty dissolution, with Berlin’s two-faced blessings, Greece went into the coma that continues to this day.

Even under these dire circumstances, promising death and destruction, Greece *could have* made progress by biting the bullet and using the opportunity of her (corrupt) house collapsing around her head to break her own fatal impasses: to put the knife to a lethargic public sector of gargantuan size and similar appetite for funds; to the labyrinthine regulation of the so-called “closed professions;” and to the constant hand-outs to voter groups to sustain their “loyalty.” She could have acted to dismantle perhaps the most corrupt local government in Europe; to put an end to constant “reforms” and “adjustments” of an impossible Ottoman tax system; and to launch the herculean labor of cleaning the Augean stables of the public university system and launching in its place the kind of higher education demanded by a modern European country.

But such reforms demand the type of politics, civil society attitudes, and leadership talents that do not exist in the cradle of democracy.

The future looks even bleaker because the creditors, with Germany leading again, refuse to give Greece substantive debt relief.

With the Greek sovereign debt ballooning around 200 pc of GDP, claims (especially by Germany) that Greece “does not need debt relief” is the macabre joke of the century. Various potions, like extending debt maturities, are paper-thin excuses of politicians fearful of losing domestic support if they appear “wasting” tax payers’ money to rescue “incurable frauds” like the Greeks.

This “extend-and-pretend” approach does nothing to relieve Greece or provide convincing evidence that “united” Europe *wants to be truly united* and, thus, converts the Greek crisis into a severe test of the so-called “European identity.”

Today’s Greece is nothing but the didactic illustration of *the EU’s fatal fundamental flaw of trying to be a “union” without honoring the obligations that such a form of organization requires.*

Europe’s long history of strong-willed national actors, with conflicting interests and priorities, cannot be erased by European charters and 300-page long “constitutions,” Schengen agreements, and “community guidelines.” And it cannot be defeated by the unstoppable diarrhea of regulation from Brussels which has dictatorially displaced the *exclusive right* of national parliaments to decide on domestic legislation by introducing the demand for “adjusting national laws to European norms.”

These “European norms” come with an outspoken disdain, often expressed publicly by EU mandarins, about national elections “interfering” with the European project. That European electorates, especially in the South, continue to believe in forms of redistributive democracy comes in direct conflict with the neo-liberal “post-modern consolidation” of brutal budget cutbacks and the gutting of social services favored by the unelected European Commission and the powerful industrial wheelers-and-dealers of Europe’s Northern “central powers.”

Greece has little, if any, hope of escaping the trap of debtor’s prison and permanent pauperization in the bright new world of the global [system of “quantitative easing”](#) printing trillions of paper money to increase an equally paper “growth” in the more advanced economies--where “good jobs” are part-time and pay anemic wages.

At the end of the day, and even in a hypothetical ideal world economic environment, and without the sovereign debt deluge, Greece would have run herself into the ditch because of her own untreated maladies:

1. an explosive demographic problem that will soon turn the country into Europe’s old people’s home;
2. an economy in which the struggling private sector must feed an army of retirees plus the legions of “government workers;”
3. and in an economy where the numbers of those who pay no or very little taxes dwarf the ranks of those who are struggling to feed themselves and their families and, at the same time, meet the demands of a monumentally unjust and skewed tax system.

It is high time that Greece, at long last, realizes she cannot depend on the philanthropy or the interests of others and begins to do what is needed under her own steam. Only then, and then perhaps, she might escape the next, and possibly, final collapse.