

# European Troika Is Committing Genocide Against the Greeks

by Dean Andromidas

Oct. 14—It is official: The brutal austerity being forced on Greece constitutes genocide. A report appearing in the prestigious medical journal *The Lancet* reveals that Greeks are “losing their lives” because of the cuts in health care that are being dictated by the Troika, the debt collectors of the European Commission, the European Central Bank, and the International Monetary Fund. The price Greece is paying for having to implement the “memorandum” that the government signed in return for the latest so-called “bailout” is the lives of its citizens.

Although there are no statistics on how many lives have been lost due to these policies, there is no doubt that death rates are already in the thousands. This alarming report is not about “underdeveloped” “Third World” countries, but a nation in the heart of Europe. It is an indictment of the governments of the trans-Atlantic nations that are willing to force genocide upon their own populations to save a toxic financial system, which is dragging this planet into a new Dark Age.

Make no mistake: This genocide is intentional, part of the British monarchy’s policy of radical reduction in the world’s human population. The plight of Greece is the future of the entire trans-Atlantic world. It is a wake-up call to especially the people of the United States, that the weapon of a restored Glass-Steagall bill must be wielded to crush this bankrupt financial system once and for all.

## ‘A Greek Tragedy’

Entitled “Health effects of financial crisis: Omens of a Greek Tragedy,” the *Lancet* report was authored by Dr. Alexander Kentikelenis and Dr. David Stuckler from Cambridge University, Prof. Martin McKee from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and several others. Their data are drawn from official Greek government and EU statistics on income and living conditions.

They examine the period between 2007 and the first half of 2011, pointing out that the debt crisis has led to the increase of unemployment from 6.6% in May 2008 to 16.6% this May. Youth unemployment increased from

18.6% to 40.1% over the same period. One can add that unemployment is expected to top 20% by the end of the year. From 2007-10, the debt increased from EU239.4 billion to EU328.6 billion, or to 142.8% of the gross domestic product. One can again add that it is expected to increase to as much as 200% by the end of this year.

Because of the demands by the Troika for budget cuts and “reform” of the health sector, the budgets of public hospitals have been cut by no less than 40%! This is at a time when the loss of employment has forced more and more people into the overburdened public health system. In fact, the authors report that there was a 24% increase in 2010 alone and another 8% increase in the first half of 2011 in the number of admissions to public hospitals, with a corresponding decrease of admissions of 25-30% to private hospitals.

Many people cannot even afford the nominal EU5 payment required to be treated at a public hospital’s outpatient clinic. The hospital situation has gotten immensely worse, given the fact that several pharmaceutical companies, including the Swiss group Roche, have stopped supplying Greek hospitals because of unpaid debts.

There has been a dramatic increase in the number of Greeks seeking care from volunteer street clinics that have sprung in the big cities, primarily for the thousands of illegal refugees. But now, Doctors of the World estimates that the percentage of Greeks seeking attention from street clinics has increased from 3% to 4% before the crisis, to 30% today.

“There are signs that health outcomes have worsened, especially in vulnerable groups,” according to the *Lancet* report. There was a 14% rise in the number of Greeks reporting their health as “bad” or “very bad” between 2007 and 2009. Many of the unemployed cannot afford medication, including diabetes sufferers who cannot afford insulin, which means they are condemned to death.

The study revealed that suicides rose by 17% between 2001 and 2009, while an unofficial 2010 figure quoted in Parliament mentions a 25% rise compared



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*Greek youth and the trade unions are speaking out against the EU austerity measures that are killing people every day. This is a demonstration in Thessaloniki on Sept. 10. Inset is Prime Minister George Papandreou, whose capitulation to the international bankers has made him an unpopular figure.*

WEF/swiss-images.ch/Moritz Hager

with 2009. The health minister reported a 40% rise in the first half of 2011 compared with the same period in 2010.

“The national suicide helpline reported that 25% of callers faced financial difficulties in 2010 and reports in the media indicate that the inability to repay high levels of personal debt might be a key factor in the increase in suicides,” the *Lancet* authors write. “Violence has also risen, and homicide and theft rates nearly doubled between 2007 and 2009.”

HIV infections rose significantly in 2010, with injection drug users (IDUs) accounting for half of the rise. The numbers are on course to rise by 52% this year. Many new infections are also linked to increased prostitution and unsafe sex. Heroin use rose by 20% in 2009, according to estimates from the Greek Documentation and Monitoring Center for Drugs. Budget cuts in 2009 and 2010 have meant the loss of a third of the country’s outreach programs, which forces addicts to seek admission to overburden public hospitals.

“Since January 2011 we have seen a more than 1,000% rise of HIV among intravenous drug users,” says Eleni Kokalou, who works in the Infectious Diseases Department of Evangelismos Hospital, according to the *Guardian* on Oct. 10. “Lack of preventive services at community and primary level and funding cuts for the few existing ones, like the syringes exchange program for IDUs, has contributed greatly to the rise,” she said.

The report concludes: “Overall, the picture of health

in Greece is concerning. In an effort to finance debts, ordinary people are paying the ultimate price: losing access to care and preventive services, facing higher risks of HIV and sexually transmitted diseases, and in the worst cases losing their lives. Greater attention to health and health care access is needed to ensure that the Greek crisis does not undermine the ultimate source of the country’s wealth—its people.”

A separate study, conducted by the consumer protection group KEPKA, reports that there has been an increase from 2.61% in 2006 to 19.91% in 2011, of consumers reporting that they have changed their dietary habits because of the economic crisis. People’s diets are reverting to those of decades ago where red meat or pork is now eaten only once a week, while lamb, a Greek favorite, only once a month, while people are eating out less often.

Greece is already under the threat of a population collapse. The population growth rate is 1.7 to 1.8%. With high unemployment, especially the more than 40% youth unemployment, a young couple cannot even afford an apartment, let alone raise a family. Moreover, many young Greek professionals are leaving the country. Greece is going back almost 50 years, to the time



Gregory Asmolov

Russian analyst Mikhail Dmitriev (inset), addressing a conference on the island of Rhodes, said that there are “huge opportunities” for shipping alliances between Russia and Greece. Shown here is the port of Aegina, another Greek island.

when the nation was impoverished, and the lack of opportunity for a better life led large numbers of young people to emigrate.

### The Troika’s Nazi Bureaucrats

With the stroke of a pen, the Nazi bureaucrats sent millions to their deaths. “We were just following orders,” they told the Nuremberg prosecutors after the war. Setting aside any doubt that the Troika bureaucrats are on a par with those Nazi bureaucrats, the leading Greek daily *Kathimerini* (Oct. 12) interviewed Matthias Mors, the European Commission representative of the Troika. The interview appeared under a picture of the gray-suited, prune-faced Mors alighting from his chauffeured limousine.

In response to a question on whether the Troika “dictated” to the government what it has to do, Mors said that the Troika only defines the budgetary targets. “[What] exactly should be done is a choice of the government. We are not imposing any particular choices on the government.” In other words: We don’t say who should be killed, just how many.

When asked whether he thought Greece’s debt were sustainable, he answered, “In terms of debt sustainability, I would say the situation has not fundamentally changed compared with our analysis in June,” i.e., the debt should be paid despite the fact that Greece’s debt is already heading toward 120% of GDP, and is expected to approach 200% by the end of the year.

Asked whether the laying off of public sector work-

ers, on top of tax increases, budget cuts, and other austerity measures, is politically sustainable, Mors replied: “We are fully aware that this is very tough. But I would say that we are at a critical moment, where Greece has to convince the international community and the other euro area members that it is willing and able to reach the objectives that it has

committed itself to. Therefore, it is crucial that these measures are implemented.... This is very difficult, very painful, but we must make that effort.”

Mors called for the government to make more cuts in the health sector and to consider cutting the minimum wage, which is less than EU4 an hour or EU739 a month, or half of that of the Netherlands, France, and Great Britain.

The Troika has just finished its quarterly review of the Greek government’s implementation of the memorandum, which will be the basis for deciding whether the next EU8 billion tranche of the bailout will be handed out. The Troika even more cuts and tax increases, including 30,000 additional job cuts in the public sector, on top of the 200,000 that have already been eliminated; additional cuts in public-sector pay on top of the 20% across-the-board cut implemented last year; a draconian 250% increase in the property tax; and the increase in the income tax that forces people who make as little as EU5,000 a year—less than the minimum wage—to begin paying income tax.

The tax with the Orwellian name “solidarity tax,” of 1-4% of taxpayers’ income, which was supposed to be for only one year, has now been extended for the next two years. This is in addition to the 23% value added tax on all goods and services.

### The Greeks Will Fight

The announcement of these cuts drew an immediate angry response from the trade unions.

“When they hear this, people will definitely revolt,” said Ilias Iliopoulos, general secretary of the ADEDY civil servants union. “Everyone is at the end of their tether. The Summer’s over and they know they can’t

take any more. From now on things are going to get aggressive. [The international inspectors] can't really expect us to take this lying down. Every day more and more Greeks are being pushed into penury. Our country is being turned into a poor house. And all for [financial] targets that are being continuously missed. We're in a vicious cycle. It can't go on."

The trade union movement has been conducting rolling strikes for weeks, including occupation of government ministries. So unpopular is the 250% property tax, which is being collected through the property owners' electricity bills, that union workers blocked the state utility offices where the bills are printed. They have vowed to refuse to shut off the electricity of any one who cannot afford to pay the tax. Both the private- and public-sector trade union federations have called for a 48-hour general strike on Oct. 19-20, to coincide with the parliamentary vote on the latest austerity measures.

Even the Greek Orthodox Church has come out and attacked the government. On Oct. 7, the Holy Synod called on the government to spread the burden of the crisis evenly. Enough burdens on our brothers on low wages and pensions. Enough of the taxes and cuts to low wages. Enough of the armies of the unemployed. Go after the tax dodgers and make checks on capital." Metropolitan Nikolaos of Mesogea and a number of other church leaders called for the government to introduce relief measures, particularly those in the greatest need. "If they cut the power off even from one person, then we will cut the power to all our churches," the bishops said. "We will perform wedding ceremonies with candles."

## The Strategic Context

The Greek people will resist, just as they resisted the Nazis; but to win they need the help of a United States that will use a Glass-Steagall reform against the financier oligarchy, and that will join a Pacific alliance for development of the physical economy, with China and Russia, which could drag Europe to the only path of economic salvation.

It is important to note that Russia has invited Greece to join in this development perspective. Mikhail Dmitriev, president of the Center for Strategic Research in Moscow, speaking to a conference on "New Horizons for Economic Relations in Investment Policy, Commerce and Tourism," held Oct. 1-2 on the Greek island of Rhodes, offered Greece the opportunity to join this alliance.

In a broad-ranging presentation on how Russia could contribute to the revival of the Greek economy, Dmitriev

pointed to "Russia's expertise in freight and passenger traffic," and suggested that Greece could join in one of Russia's key projects for expanding its Trans-Siberian Railway. "Russian investments in Greek railways could form a synergy with another ambitious project—to extend the Russian 1.520 [meter rail] gauge<sup>1</sup> to Bratislava and Vienna. This new link could generate mass container transit from East Asia to the heart of Europe via the Trans-Siberian Railway. For the Greek railways, this project could open new, enormous freight-traffic opportunities and revitalize the national rail system." But Dmitriev pointed out that there is opposition to the plan, saying, "Our EU counterparts are still not convinced."

Dmitriev also said there are "huge opportunities to build up shipping alliances" between the two countries, given that Greece is the number one shipping operator in the world by deadweight, and number four by number of merchant ships, and that Russia is number five by number of merchant ships. This could also include investments in Greece's ports and improving links with Russia's Black Sea ports.

He also mentioned agriculture, in which Russia "remains an almost untapped export market for Greece," since Greece produces certain agricultural commodities not produced in Russia. Dmitriev said that Greek food is very popular among Russia's "Perestroika Baby Boomers," those born in the late 1980s.

It should be noted, however, that current EU agricultural policies are destroying Greece's agricultural sector.

Commenting on Dmitriev's offer, a Greek source involved in developing stronger economic relations with Russia, said that the Russians and Chinese want to develop rail links from Shanghai to Western Europe. He added that China has already leased part of the Greek port of Piraeus, and is using it as one of its main entry points into Europe, and that Greece could become part of this Eurasian transportation loop. He lamented the fact that the current Greek government has rejected this offer, obviously under orders from the EU and the creditor banks. The source charged that the government is acting like "traitors."

In fact, the latest rumor is that the government wants to literally *give* the railways to the French, to pay off Greece's unpayable debts! "Here the Russians want to invest real credits into Greece, but this government is giving the railway away simply to pay down the debt which is totally unpayable," the source exclaimed.

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1. Most countries use a 1.435-m rail gauge, which has historically complicated railroad connections between Russia and its neighbors.