

From the beginning of this year the Greek government stopped publishing the usual monthly statistics of births and deaths. Continuing to do so would give a truer cost of the EU-imposed austerity programme than any massaged economic statistics.

In 2017 the annual total of deaths was 123,700 as against 118,623 in 2016. But in 2013 the total was only 70,830 and before the financial crisis the death rate was usually around 60,000. So twice as many people are dying than used to be the case.

The reason for this massive increase in mortality is the austerity imposed by the EU and the IMF, which dissolved the Greek NHS. Poverty, hunger, lack of heating and increased suicides account for the rest. These figures measure a terrible increase in human suffering, taking place in a modern European country. But that's all right with the BBC and broadcast media because it's happening in the EU which, they believe, is such a wonderful thing and rather fashionable on the left of politics. Whilst the UK remains an EU member, our government is part of the government of the EU, responsible for the deaths in which Europhile MPs and MEPs are also complicit.

Whoever the Greek people elect to government, it is the EU authorities which dictate policy, such as the privatisation of public assets ports, airports, electricity etc. They are also insisting that the government must speed up the auctioning of homes on which people can no longer afford the mortgages. Wages and pensions have been drastically cut and direct and indirect tax rates increased.

To prevent interference with the forced sales, electronic auctions have been introduced. Around 5 million taxpayers lack the funds to pay taxes and the state can now auction properties for debts over 500 euros.

I would not have credited this information, if it had not come from an unimpeachable source. Ambassador Leonidas Chrysanthopoulos (Retired) had a distinguished career in his country's foreign ministry. He is now a member of the secretariat of the Front for a Free Greece. Last year I hosted a conference which he addressed and thought surely things could only get better for the Greek people. But they have not.

Those who presently complain of austerity here need to be reminded that our fate would have been very much more like that of the Greek nation, if people like Tony Blair and Ken Clarke had got their way and locked us into the prison house of the euro currency. It is time to leave the whole tyrannical project behind and perhaps to divert at least a small portion of our bloated foreign aid budget to the worthwhile relief of the unfortunate citizens of Greece.

*If you want to find out more about the effects of austerity on Greece, this video (in Greek but with English subtitles) lasts an hour and a half but provides some deep insights into modern Greek history.*

*Ambassador Chrysanthopoulos spoke at last year's CIB Annual Rally. You can watch his speech here.*