



## OBSERVATIONS OF AN NATION DOING IT HARD UNDER AUSTERITY MEASURES

Abalinx 31 January 2018 Peter Adamis

I wrote my observations of Athens Greece during September to November 2013. At that time Greece was in the middle of the final crisis and Greeks were struggling to get by.

People lost their livelihoods, crime rates rose, there were daily demonstrations in the street, political infighting, the rise of extreme left and right wing groups, increased austerity measures biting to say the least, suicide rates increased, homeless and a myriad of other calamities had fallen upon the people of Greece.

I wrote at the time that despite all of the negative observations, I still had faith in the Greek people to survive and become a stronger nation when they regain their confidence and former glory. I was to go on to say that Greece would lose a whole generation before that happened.

You have to give credit where it is due, the Greeks as a whole are a courageous and resilient lot who may struggle in the early stages but will eventually come out on top. History is always an excellent guide and the Greeks are proof of that.

A mere four years have gone by and the youth have left Greece seeking employment opportunities elsewhere. Those in the Diaspora of earlier years have benefited from the drain of young people and the language amongst those living in the diaspora has been given an injection. Many of them hope to return once they have raised sufficient funds, others have succumbed to the seduction of the Western lifestyle and appear to remain.

As for those living in Greece, they as expected have adjusted to the austerity measures despite the failure of their government to abide by the referendum held a few years back. The next elections are not to be held until 2019 and it is anyone's guess what the end result or outcome will be. However, what is becoming apparent across Europe is the rise of Right Wing Conservative groups and a gradual reformation of political parties like Golden Dawn.

I will not comment any further on the economic or political environment of Greece itself and allow viewers to make their own judgement based on what they know, their visits to Greece itself and what they read on social media, mobile or the printed news media. Whatever the case, the old cliché that a picture is worth a thousand words is also true in this case. I have a rather more positive point of view but it is a personal one and readers can make their own mind up.

The observations below were written in early 2014 and being displayed here for readers to make a comparison with what they know to be true. I don't expect everyone to agree with me, but then again that is what social media is all about.

1. Approximately every third shop in Athens is empty and open for rent
2. Entire buildings are open for sale
3. Many municipalities are in poverty
4. Every 400 metres there is a pharmacy - symptomatic with stress and worry
5. Every 500 metres there is a shop open buying gold and jewellery
6. Every 300 metres there is a beggar to be found – some in a very distressed state
7. Graffiti is all over the Athens and Thessalonica – Very depressing sight
8. There are less cars to be seen on the road and in the side streets
9. The majority of the roadside mini shops (Peripteries) are closed or have empty shelves
10. There are less refugees, displaced persons, Africans, Bangladeshis and Pakistanis to be seen
11. Refugees, displaced persons, Africans, Bangladeshis and Pakistanis in some municipalities
12. Police are paying out of their own pockets to maintain basic services
13. People are blaming the politicians for the current economic problems
14. People are believing wild stories and lies from Greeks from the Diaspora regarding employment
15. Every two kilometres there is a pawn shop with unbelievable merchandise
16. Peoples pensions have been cut to the bare minimum with further cuts in the air
17. Despite generative publicity about Golden Dawn, the people have a silent respect for their actions
18. Golden Dawn has many voters in the country side despite the recent negative publicity
19. Politicians have lost the respect of the people and are seen as tools of the EU and Germany
20. People wish to remain in the EU and retain the Euro as their currency
21. Only two refugees and/or Africans were seen in the Flea market at the Monistraki (Athens)
22. Only at the tourist areas the financial crisis was not evident. Frequented by many young people
23. Despite peoples low morale and depression they are a resilient people who will not give up
24. Statistics were stopped being televised once they reached 7500 dead - Suicides every day go unreported
25. Many of the young who are seen at the bars, coffee houses and taverns are living with parents money
26. Employment is at all-time high, but Albanians and Bulgarians seem to find work for less pay
27. Country towns and villages the people are feeling the crisis but are not starving
28. Tourism for 2013 was better than previous years and people are realising the value of visitors
29. Red tape is rife and extremely difficult to navigate for people
30. Medicines, hospitals, basic services, doctors and nurses are at an all-time low for those who cannot pay
31. Strikes are many, political instability, criminal activity at all time high and people afraid
32. People have funds put away but are very reluctant to spend or invest due to economic uncertainty
33. People are learning to live with less luxuries and live from day to day
34. Beggars are seen going through the trash seeking food and other commodities
35. Police are seen on most corners or driving through streets patrolling on motor bikes
36. Banks and government buildings have tightened security especially around financial institutions
37. Young people considering returning back to villages and towns despite the poor services
38. Some young people who chose to remain in Greece are working at two jobs to survive
39. Apartments are open for rent at low prices but there are no tenants
40. Side street vendors are no longer in existence as in past years
41. The new generation have turned their backs on the paradigms of the past seeking their own path



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