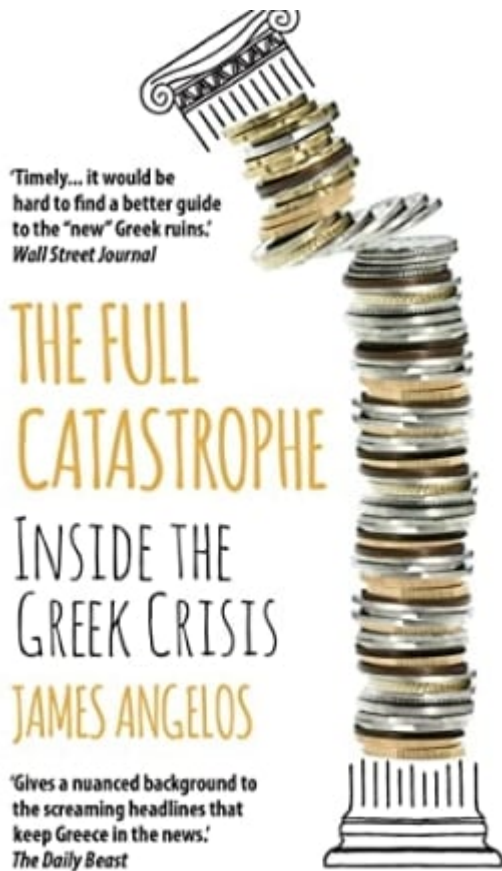


When Socialism Meets Reality. A Review of The Full Catastrophe

By Armando Simón

The Anglo-Greek author, James Angelos, went to Greece during the economic/political crisis of the past decade and interviewed people around the country, plus gave some of his own observations and threw in a little of WW II history.



The reader may remember scenes on TV news of grown Greek men sitting down, crying in front of banks. People began leaving the cities to go to work on the farms for food. The only comfort I got from this was recognizing how, throughout history (or archaeology), cities have emptied when the economic and farm systems for providing goods to the city break down, whether it is Ancient Rome, or the Maya.

In reading the book one becomes exasperated with the Greeks

for ignoring what was in front of their faces. It is difficult to muster sympathy for the disaster they themselves created. Worse, they blamed everyone else (Germany, the Troika, foreigners, the politicians) for their economic catastrophe—everyone except themselves. Greece practiced socialism for decades running a mindblowing deficit which they were able to cover up for a few years by fraudulent bookkeeping, but you can deny reality just so long and then it comes back with a vengeance to bite you in your backside.

Not only were the rich able to avoid taxation, but the politicians engaged in embezzling. The ordinary Greek also engaged in widespread theft of State funds. For example, bribed doctors would certify healthy people as being disabled so they could obtain disability payments from the state (this practice was widespread). Absolutely useless people were put on State payrolls who did absolutely nothing, did not even show up for work. State bureaucracies were incompetent and overstaffed. One television station had no audience, but the workers refused to let it be dissolved and put pressure on the politicians, who, again, did nothing. When one accountant tried to ferret out the corruption, the Deep State sabotaged his every move and he finally quit. One mayor attempting to deal with the corruption was murdered.

What made things much worse is the same evil that is present in many other countries: that it is almost impossible to fire bureaucrats. In the Greek case, believe it or not, that is in its Constitution!

Greece became Europe's Venezuela, except that the reason it did not go belly up is because being tied to the EU, it could continue the Socialist practice of spending other people's money—while insulting them (Germany). There was always a strong Communist influence in Greece since the late 1940s and one can see its influence in the economic collapse. Obviously a leftist, the writer makes absolutely no connection whatsoever, nor is he outraged by the presence of communists

in Greece; instead, as usual, he uses up a lake of ink to denounce the supposedly Nazi-like Golden Dawn movement.

It must be comforting to wear blinders.

And speaking of blinders, the Greeks' vision is fossilized in the past. They are still agitating against the Turks, as if this was 1820. Not only that, they added a villain; they are also fixated on the Nazi occupation of 1940.

Apparently, the Greeks are not very bright and have a victim complex. Not a good combination.