

# History Without the Humbug

*Countering the Re-Writing of History*

## How Socialism Reshaped Africa

*by Aida Parker*

The purpose of these articles is to counter the deliberate re-writing of history with those stubborn things called facts, and that wonderful thing called truth. “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil” (Isaiah 5:20)

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### FOREWORD

by Shaun Willcock

The following article should be carefully read and digested by every Socialist and Communist in general, and in particular by every black African Socialist and Communist. We have been told Communism is dead. Far from it. The supposed “death of Communism” was a deliberately manufactured deception. It is alive and well, though usually now under different names (such as “social democracy”) and not as overt as it once was, for purposes of deception. Many countries in Africa, including South Africa, as well as around the world, prove conclusively that Communism is very far from dead. It is a powerful, extremely active, global force. The United States itself is increasingly under its sway today.

As you read, always bear in mind that this piece was written in 1990; and many years have elapsed since then. And yet ask yourself this question: *since this was written, how far have the countries listed here progressed, either for good or ill?* Tragically, two things have happened: first, the African countries which cast off the economic policies of Socialism/Communism still wallow, for the most part, in the poverty caused by those insane policies decades ago, and furthermore, often continue to suffer under other aspects of Socialism/Communism; and second, other African countries have continued to doggedly pursue Socialism/Communism, and are in fact worse off now than they were when this was written. Zimbabwe is such a case: there, Marxist maniac, Robert Mugabe, managed to utterly destroy the country once known as the breadbasket of Africa, turning it into basket case, having violently driven its highly skilled white farmers off their farms; so that today, Zimbabwe is far worse off than it was in 1990.

And then there is South Africa. In 1990, when Aida Parker wrote this, South Africa was still under a white government; but not even four short years later, despite all the warnings issued by knowledgeable anti-Communists in SA and elsewhere, in a massively rigged election the African National Congress (ANC) of Nelson Mandela, in alliance with the SA Communist Party (SACP), came to power. And SA was now placed firmly on the road to full-blown Communism. The lessons of the rest of Africa were not learned; the warnings, loud and clear, blaring from one failed, collapsed Socialist/Communist African state after another, were not heeded; and the new ANC/SACP government forged ahead with its monstrous Socialist/Communist plans. There were those, liberals mostly, with their heads in the clouds as always, who thought that SA would somehow be different from the rest of Africa and would follow a different path; that Mandela, the liberals’ Great Hope, would somehow enable SA to buck the trend; that this country would finally prove to the world that a black-ruled African country could actually succeed, following a free-market, Capitalistic course. How wrong they have been proved to be! SA under the

ANC is following precisely the same path to economic collapse and extreme poverty. The warnings were ignored; the lessons of three decades of Socialist stupidity went unlearned.

This, in fact, was precisely why Aida Parker wrote the special Spring 1990 issue of her magazine, *The Aida Parker Newsletter*, from which this article was taken. This is what she said: “We have little time. The SA we have known, and think we still possess, lies gasping. The ANC/SACP alliance rides high. Their programme is in top gear. They are going from strength to strength. They play the media brilliantly. They have amassed an unbelievably well-thought-out, well organised, well-financed and highly professional campaign. Yet, the undisputed fact remains: they have nothing concrete, absolutely nothing of value to offer South Africans. This is where we come in. This is what this special issue of *APN* is all about. In it, we have tried to take the guesswork out of things: to show people, simply and clearly, how socialism has destroyed life, hope and happiness for hundreds of millions of people; how that awful pattern must be repeated here should the hammer-and-sickle ever fly over the Union Buildings in Pretoria. This time, we have really gone for broke. The decision to push ahead with this extra-large issue was taken after many meetings with Black moderates.... They came to see us because they are desperate men. Their greatest need, they told us, was material with which to counter the ANC/SACP propaganda machine.”

Alas for South Africa, all that she and so many other moderates and conservatives (of all race groups) did was not, in the end, enough. The ANC/SACP was victorious. And although the *actual* emblem of the hammer-and-sickle does not fly over the Union Buildings in Pretoria, the *ideology* behind that hammer-and-sickle emblem is now being firmly legislated throughout the country. Communism was indeed victorious, and sits in power in the Union Buildings.

It is too late to prevent the Marxist/Socialist takeover of SA, but it is never too late to work hard to reverse it. Political power now lies in the hands of black South Africans. Only they can bring about this change. It is our prayer that the information contained herein would still be used, all these years later, to open the eyes of many to the horrifying reality of what Marxism/Socialism does to countries. And then, perhaps, if enough thinking black South Africans begin to use their heads instead of their emotions which have thus far united them to the ANC because they mistakenly think this organisation brought them “liberation” and “freedom”, the day may yet come when the awful period of ANC rule over South Africa will be nothing but a sad, horrible memory. That day is in all likelihood still decades in the future; a long, hard road lies ahead; but come that day inevitably must, given enough time, as the wheels come off this once-great land, and the dream of great prosperity for the millions of black South Africans lies shattered by the wayside.

And always let it be kept in mind: the greatest need of all men, in South Africa, Africa and the world, is for the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Africa will remain the Dark Continent as long as Socialism, Communism, Romanism, Islam, and African ancestor worship and witchcraft continue to hold sway. Freedom does not come from embracing this or that “ism”, whether it be Marxism, Socialism, Romanism, Mohammedanism, or any other; true freedom is *spiritual*, it is freedom from bondage to *sin* and *Satan*, and only Jesus Christ, God’s Son, can give it. “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” (Jn. 8:36). *This* is the glorious message Africa needs to hear.

*Shaun Willcock, Bible Based Ministries*

## INTRODUCTION

*“Under a Communist Party government, South Africa will become a land of milk and honey. The cause of communism is the greatest cause in the history of mankind.”* – Nelson Mandela in his *How to Be a Good Communist*.

Many South African Blacks believe that socialism in Africa has been a brilliant success, politically, economically, socially. Socialism is therefore very much respected by them. It is not only promoted by the ANC/SACP/UDF alliance, but by the PAC, COSATU, the National Union of Mineworkers, by Desmond Tutu, Allan Boesak, the SA Council of Churches, the SA Catholic Bishops Conference, by publications such as *New Nation* (today virtually the ANC’s official mouthpiece) and many, many

more.

Huge numbers of SA Blacks are, then, quite content when told that their radical leaders will use socialism to “re-shape” the “New South Africa.” In hard fact, of course, and on the African experience, the very word “socialism” should give South Africans, Black and White, goosepimples.

The socialist sweep through Africa began 33 years ago with the advent to power of Ghana’s Kwame Nkrumah. During the great liberal period that followed African “liberation,” you would (judging by reaction from press, pulpit and politicians of the time) have considered that every African socialist government was run by angels.

Nkrumah, Nyerere, Kaunda, bare-faced hypocrites all, claimed as one man to have taken up the task of standing up for Africa’s dignity, presenting themselves as the exponents of all that was fine, just, honest and noble. Claiming spurious respectability from a foreign, borrowed ideology, they were, they told us, “going to make other socialists elsewhere proud of socialism in Africa.”

If political posturing, sloganeering, propaganda, hype and ballyhoo could make any meaningful contribution to the wellbeing of nations, then there is no doubt that Africa would have been in Utopia years ago. Unfortunately for the Black collectivists and their cheering White liberal clique, ideology and reality met in head-on collision on Africa’s socialist road to Utopia. What, factually, has socialism wrought on this continent?

Almost from the word go, though liberals would choke rather than admit it, the economies of the socialist states began stumbling downwards: controlled as they were by men ignorant of all sound business practices, bereft of management expertise and lacking in all financial caution and common sense: but full of arrogance and political rhetoric, exactly as with the ANC/SACP/PAC/UDF in SA today.

Thanks in no small measure to these ideological incompetents *Africa, always the poorest continent on the globe, today has the distinction of having 22 of the world’s poorest states: by no coincidence, all of them socialist or formerly socialist.*

Despite the most urgent pleas and warnings from Western economists socialism, through its clumsy and destructive intrusions into wealth-creating mechanisms, has virtually destroyed the economies of Black Africa. Precisely as in Eastern Europe or wherever else its skeletal hand has settled, *not one African socialist state has proved a success.* All are bywords for government maladministration, impotence, hopelessness and failure. Collectively and individually, they have brought a thousand, ten thousand, times more misery and hardship to the so-called “masses” than all SA’s so-called “racist, oppressive” legislators lumped together. And let Joe Slovo challenge that.

If anyone doubts the failure of socialism, even a brief look at the shattered economies and starving people of this continent will make this reality abundantly clear. And here, with 30 years of socialist failure behind us, we are no longer working in the field of empiricism. Stringing these national tragedies together provides numbing evidence of how the great, mystic promises held out at independence died in malign mirage.

It accordingly becomes profoundly important that SA Blacks be shown just how socialism has “re-shaped” Africa.

These are trying times for African socialists. Gone is the once-confident offensive against “the capitalist system” and “Western imperialism.” Three decades of African independence have left the continent’s socialist states in great, great trouble, politically, economically, socially.

Although this has seemingly escaped Washington and Westminster, more and more African leaders today accept that *it is not SA which has raped the economies of once-prosperous countries, but African socialists who promised prosperity while feathering their own nests.*

Economic and political sanity is beginning to return to Africa [to a few parts of it at any rate. – Ed.]. Although many of the reforms remain as yet on paper only, we are now in Round Two of what British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan termed The Winds of Change. Major reconstruction is taking place, the length and breadth of Africa.

The continent is beginning to debate both the free market and the multi-party system, both rejected by the overwhelming majority of African states at independence in the Fifties and Sixties. The message

that market-based economies work better is being widely accepted almost everywhere. What is wanted, in the words of Olaru A Otunnu, former Foreign Minister of Uganda, is no longer “people’s democracy” or “guided democracy” but “plain democracy without frills.”

A new generation of African leaders (and many of the old) is aware of the new East European maxim that “the third way (between communism and capitalism) leads only to the Third World.” And they want out of it. Let’s look at Africa, 1990:

## GHANA

This is where the dreams of Africa’s bright future were born – and where they died. Once known as “the Black Star of Africa,” Britain’s former Gold Coast became the Republic of Ghana in 1957. In his time, the socialist leader, Kwame Nkrumah, was as fashionable in the West as Mandela today. When the young Queen Elizabeth became pregnant, he was the first Commonwealth leader to be informed.

*In the post-1945 period Ghana was Africa’s richest black state, producing 10% of the world’s gold, holding some US \$1 billion in foreign reserves and with a per capita income roughly that of Spain. By diligent housekeeping, this level of prosperity could have been consolidated, even expanded. It was not to be. Declaring that it was his intention to “make Africa a strong and unified continent of Socialist commonwealth,” Nkrumah wrote the first chapter in the savage and tragic end to the colonial process.*

### ***Kwame Stalin?***

His political philosophy, much the same as that of the ANC/SACP today, was that African states were not poor and backward because of any intrinsic physical or human reasons, but because the colonisers had deliberately held back Black Advancement. To counter that, he introduced a bastardised Stalinism, arrogating to himself quasi-divine powers, crushing all opposition and wrecking the rule of law.

Capitalism was decried, Western nations insulted, the people promised Eastern-type “liberation,” none of it remotely relevant to the African experience. The economy zig-zagged downwards; the State gained majority participation in 235 enterprises; foreign holdings turned into a \$1 billion deficit. When he was overthrown in 1966, while headed for China (where, he said, he was going to solve the Vietnam War), *Ghana had been reduced to almost present-day Ethiopian standards.*

Ghana’s agony was far from over. In 1982, after a succession of coups and counter-coups, Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings moved ruthlessly to establish what he termed a “People’s Republic.” Over the next two years he demonstrated how a confused leftwing “revolution” could transform a critical situation into unmitigated disaster. Then came the U-turn, with Rawlings now saying that he “hated” Marxists, that his “contempt for them was beyond measure.”

The World Bank moved in, plus big infusions of foreign aid, and the state that pioneered African socialism is now attempting to make itself a showcase of African free market innovation. The future, alas, is uncertain.

## TANZANIA

There was a time when ex-President Julius Nyerere, a man seduced by leftwingers from the London School of Economics and former high priest of one-party, African socialism, stubbornly provided chapter and verse in defence of “one-party democracy.” For decades he argued that developing countries could not afford the luxury of democratic opposition: that his particular form of pseudo-communism was the only system promising paradise for the labouring masses: with predictably awful results.

### ***Nyerere’s Follies***

Now, in the wisdom of old age, he has changed totally. Tanzanians, he now opines, “should not believe that a one-party state is God’s wish.” One party “has the tendency of stumbling. It has the habit of wronging the people.” He should know. His socialist follies spelt disaster for millions of his people. His juvenile ideas of “*scientific socialism*” led Tanzania to economic catastrophe, chronic corruption, a

*ruined agricultural system and entrenchment of privilege* by the political elite.

With the help of the IMF Nyerere's successor, President Ali Hassan Mwinyi, is now attempting to pioneer a far-reaching Economic Recovery Programme, so far with little relief to the exhausted economy. Like so many other East European and African nations, Tanzania is finding how hard it is to recover from Marxian bungling.

## ZAMBIA

Another of socialism's total economic and human failures, a society which has been imploding for years. In 1964, less than three decades ago, conditions for development there were as bright as in SA. *When Kenneth Kaunda took over, Zambia was one of Africa's richest states* and the world's main supplier of copper. In 1973 the weak-minded Kaunda, a man variously given to bursting into song, tears and rage at public gatherings – yet still described by the US State Department as “one of Africa's outstanding statesmen” – decided to adopt old East Bloc systems for his own country.

After outlawing all political opposition, he embarked on a policy of nationalisation of mining companies, banks, land and major business houses. Far from being criticised for this, KK's much-lauded but economically incomprehensible system of “humanist socialism” was presented as a “shining example” to SA. So began the long descent into penury, till *today Zambia is one of Africa's poorest and most indebted nations*. Lusaka's crippling debt of US\$7,2 billion is probably the world's biggest when measured against size of population.

Overall, Zambia is a disaster story, epitomising everything that is wrong with Africa, including gross managerial incompetence, a chronic inability to plan ahead, a total and absolute ignorance of economic and financial reality. In a country of fertile farmland and extensive natural resources, food riots are the order of the day. Exasperated by Kaunda's pitifully inept performance, Western diplomats describe him as “an essentially vain man who appears to prefer being driven around foreign capitals in Mercedes cars to tackling his own country's considerable problems.”

### ***Adamantly Blind***

Kaunda, however, adamantly refuses to admit the hopelessness of his monopoly socialist state. Although, in response to angry public protests, he has agreed to hold a referendum (using an outdated voters' roll) later this year on opening up to multiparty elections, there will be no competition for the presidency. Generally, he says, there is no need for Zambia to change its political system, “as East Europe was merely following Zambia in guaranteeing citizens' rights.” That caused a horse laugh. Rights? In KK's Zambia, what rights?

History has been a long time catching up with him, but his luck is now running out. And so is his reputation. In a Zambian court hearing (March, 1990) of four army officers accused of plotting to overthrow Kaunda in 1988, it was alleged that the President had swindled his country out of US\$4 billion, which he “keeps in foreign banks.” True? Who knows. But a lot of Zambians believe it.

Still as *Business Day* recently commented, there is no pleasure for South Africans in Kaunda's fate. We have too many of our own dead set on following the same path.

## ZIMBABWE

As recently as 22.4.89 the London *Economist* claimed that relations in Zimbabwe were “sunny,” that the economy was “chugging along more successfully than in any other country in Southern Africa except Botswana” (surely not all that difficult?) and that it had a “relatively advanced manufacturing centre.” Where do these people come from?

### ***Rotting Away***

The truth is that Robert Mugabe stares into a bottomless pit, his country rotting from within, eaten away by a killer combination of socialist ineptitude; a dramatic increase in HIV-positive cases, mainly in the economically active element of the population; overwhelming unemployment; all compounded by the insuperable task of living up to the enormous expectations created by Zimbabwe's new Marxist

rulers at independence in 1980.

Mugabe told his Parliament in 1983 that “there is no dogma holier than communism.” Then-President Canaan Banana was even more lyrical. “For me, socialism is the legitimate child of Christianity. Christianity and socialism have everything to do with human destiny.” That’s what our own beloved Tutu thinks, too. Even as he builds yet another African pest hole, Mugabe remains wedded to his old Marxian ideologies. Swimming against the current African tide, he continued to fight doggedly for an official one-party Marxist/Leninist state. Zimbabwe, as the London *Sunday Telegraph* recently pointed out, already shows classic symptoms of such a state. The head of the army, Rex Nhongo, is now the country’s richest man and *the title of richest woman is probably held by the high-minded President’s wife, Sally Mugabe*. Nor can any visiting journalist fail to see that in Zimbabwe a handful of individuals driving in luxury cars have noticeably separated themselves from the masses they profess to serve.

As far as Eastern Europe is concerned, Zimbabwe’s State-owned papers attempt to portray these events as a capitalist-manipulated plot, not people throwing off the yoke of tyranny and dictatorship [it was actually a communist plot, a smokescreen, and not the dawning of any true freedom for these countries. – *Ed.*]. In an effort to break the country of its present economic stranglehold, Zimbabwe’s Minister of Finance is seeking to dismantle strict socialist controls, and so hopefully encourage investment and revitalise growth. Mugabe’s persistent calls for a Marxist/Leninist state were not calculated to speed this process.

Again we quote from the *Telegraph*: “At last December’s ZANU Congress, President Mugabe listened in frosty silence as President Chissano of Mozambique recounted his own conversion to multi-partyism and economic liberalisation. Mr Mugabe ‘settled’ the debate in favour of Marxist/Leninism by denouncing Zimbabweans who had embraced ‘another foreigner, Jesus Christ, who was not born in Zimbabwe and whom Zimbabweans have never seen.’” So the well-meaning Chissano could put that in his pipe and smoke it.

## MOZAMBIQUE

In 1975 the Portuguese, betrayed by communists in their own army, abandoned this giant East African state to invading CIA/Soviet-supported Frelimo forces. Samora Machel, a Mao/Marxist who bragged of creating “Africa’s New Man,” as though humanity was made of Lego, became a cult figure, in SA as elsewhere. He very quickly transformed Mozambique into a habitat of death and despair. The Portuguese, who had held things together against huge odds and Western hostility, left by the tens of thousands: surely predictable to any but a Marxist/Leninist.

The once *prosperous, exporting agricultural sector was collectivised and ruined*. Millions starved. Health services collapsed. Hundreds of thousands were sent to “re-education” centres, where many died. Political opponents ended up in the dreaded “moral decolonisation centres.” In 1977 Frelimo established itself as a Marxist/Leninist “vanguard party,” trying to emulate Cuba and Vietnam in joining the Soviet bloc.

In Machel himself, an atrocious tinpot dictator, the world had a prime example of Third World socialist tyranny, which did not stop Mrs Thatcher from sending him arms and military instructors. *By 1985 the economy had contracted by half, the population had increased by a third*. So much for Machel’s success in striving for “dictatorship of the proletariat.”

### ***Comeback Attempt***

Now, under a new ruler, Joachim Chissano, Mozambique seeks a comeback from the dead. In efforts to forestall complete economic and administrative collapse, Frelimo at its July 1989 Congress quietly dumped Machel’s handiwork. The Marxist/Leninist experiment was officially declared a failure and the country turned its attention to free enterprise. Since then President Chissano has introduced a new constitution, allowing separation between State and the single party, and providing for the right to strike and independence of the judiciary. Frelimo remains the country’s only legal party, although Chissano says he is not in principle against the multi-party system.

## MADAGASCAR

This beautiful, mountainous island, fourth largest in the world, was known as the “Pearl of the French Empire” before independence in 1960. In 1972 the AREMA Party (Advance Guard of the Malagasy Socialist Revolution) overthrew the conservative government headed by Philibert Tsirinana. Didier Ratsiraka took power in 1975, instigating an isolationist and socialist era based on theories enunciated in his own, personally-prepared *Little Red Book*. This stated that “Madagascar’s only route for rapid development is through socialism.”

### ***Expropriation***

Ratsiraka duly nationalised banks, insurance companies, trade and commercial concerns. Land was expropriated, co-operatives established. The islanders soon discovered what a bad bargain had been struck. As a result of reckless spending, poor marketing, corruption and nepotism, *the economy declined catastrophically, coming perilously close to bankruptcy*. Within a decade Madagascar had declined into one of the most meagre economies in Africa.

With peasants being paid inadequately for their rice, the nation’s staple food, production collapsed and there were widespread food shortages. This turned Madagascar from a rice exporter to a rice importer.

On March 11 this year this formerly stalwart Marxist island nation reversed course. To assuage a public whose purchasing power had dropped 60% in the 15 years of his reign, Ratsiraka agreed to institute free market policies. Now the private sector is opening up fast. Madagascar has returned to the French franc zone, and a subsidiary of the French giant, *Banque Nationale de Paris*, has opened in the capital. SA investors are taking a close look at the islands. Officials from SAA, SAFTO and Sun International have visited there for talks on two-way trade. Socialism bites the dust once more.

## UGANDA

Once one of the most promising and prosperous nations in tropical Africa, it has almost from the day of independence from Britain in 1962 been Africa’s house of horrors, ruled by a succession of moral cripples. First president was socialist Milton Obote, a protégé of Julius Nyerere. A hard-drinking tyrant, Obote was overthrown by Idi Amin Dada in 1971. Now an already bankrupted State embarked on years of State-sponsored terrorism. Amin was overthrown by Tanzania and Obote supporters in 1979 – followed by even greater bloodshed. Obote was overthrown, this time by President Yoweri Museveni in 1985. Uganda turned away from command economics and, under IMF guidance, secured some modest return to prosperity. But the healing process is not easy. Uganda is now trying to cope with 1,5 million orphans from the decades of atrocity: and from the huge incidence of AIDS depopulating large areas of the country. To top it all, the murderous Obote threatens to seek power once again.

## ETHIOPIA

Emperor Haile Selassie was overthrown in 1974. The revolution was soon usurped by a faction of Marxist zealots headed by the grotesquely horrid Major Mengistu Haile Mariam, a dangerous and vindictive man and another prolific killer – rightly termed the “African Pol Pot.” A course of Ethiopian socialism was proclaimed, industries and banks nationalised. The first “land reform” of March 1975 laid the basis for an agricultural policy which effectively destroyed agriculture. All rural land was nationalised and redistributed, with a 10 ha limit placed on holdings and transfer of holdings forbidden. This ensured that agriculture could never progress beyond peasant level, by preventing the growth of efficient producers and excluding economies of scale. Another policy was to redistribute holdings yearly, making it pointless for an individual cultivator to make land improvements or apply innovations because the benefits would be lost and accrue to another owner at the end of the year.

### ***Marxist Evangelism***

Already one of the two poorest nations on earth, Ethiopia’s food production per capita between 1970

and 1981 fell by 84%. The extravaganza of Marxist evangelism proceeded. Following the Stalin precept, a terror campaign ensued, conceived to instill subservience into a discontented population. Between 1976 and 1979 more than 100 000 were slaughtered and, to make this slaughter even more obvious, bodies were strewn throughout the streets of Addis Ababa.

After last year's failed coup attempt (26.5.89) Mengistu purged his entire Army leadership, at least 300 senior officers, including 50 generals, being executed or arrested. This, combined with an economy that is in tatters; that a further 7 million people are again on the verge of starvation; that possibly more than one million people are dead through Government-induced famine, civil war, disease, drought and forced mass population relocations – plus the fact that the Soviet arms pipeline is shutting down – has resulted in Mengistu being politically born again.

“Socialism *baka!* (enough)” is the cry across the land. “We want capitalism!” And the Ethiopian Government is falling over itself to say that it will adopt a mixed economy. Deciding that Marxism is not the password to popularity, Mengistu now, rather bizarrely, argues that Ethiopia was never socialist in the Eastern Bloc sense. Socialism was “just used as a tool to shatter the aristocracy, dismantle feudalism and introduce land reform.” As confirmation that he is veering away from Marxist/Leninism, Mengistu has announced a referendum on the widening of political participation to opposition groups. All this leaves many Ethiopians wondering just what all the horrendous sacrifices imposed on them in the name of socialism were all about.

## **BURKINA FASO**

Yet another example of a socialist Utopia developing into a chaotic nightmare. Former leader Thomas Sankara, friend of Beyers Naude and IDASA, was a revolutionary firebrand determined to follow in the steps of Fidel Castro and Colonel Gadhafi. Sankara was overthrown by Captain Blaise Compaore in 1987 “to save the country from total chaos.” Compaore is now offering to share power with other parties and experimenting with private enterprise.

## **CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE**

Suffering severe economic difficulties as a result of the fall in world oil prices, the Congolese Labour Party (CLP) is swinging away from socialist practices imposed in the early '80s. In January, the CLP set up a commission to study methods of democratic political and economic change.

## **EQUATORIAL GUINEA**

Africa's least populated and fifth smallest state. While administered as Spanish Guinea of the Spanish Equatorial Region, it enjoyed the continent's highest per capita income. It was granted autonomy in 1968, when Francisco Macia Nguema of the evocatively and appropriately named Fang tribe snatched power. By 1970 the country was well on the road to systematic terror. Bolstered by Soviet funding and Cuban troops and advisers, the maniacal Marxist monster killed 50 000 of his countrymen – many through extremes of torture – and drove 150 000 into exile. In the words of the last US Ambassador to the country at that time, Nguema's “barbaric behaviour made Idi Amin look like a great statesman.” On 3.8.79 Nguema was overthrown in a coup d'etat. Having abandoned Marxism, the country is now walking the stony path back to democracy.

## **GUINEA-BISSAU**

A former Portuguese possession wedged between Senegal and Guinea. When the country won its independence in 1974 the new government, headed by Luiz Cabral, a man familiar in international communist circles, invited Moscow and its allies to advise on nationalisation, redistribution, central State planning, collectivisation, State-owned manufacturing, and confiscation of the business sector. Such communist extremes led to the exodus of most Portuguese.



### **“African Albania”**

The economy rapidly went into reverse. Formerly self-sufficient in food, rice production fell 50% below pre-independence levels. Dubbed “West Africa’s Albania,” it became one of the world’s 15 poorest countries with an average per capita income of US\$3 a week. By 1985 the situation had deteriorated so badly that President Joao Barnardo Vieira turned to the IMF for an emergency rescue operation. It switched to free market principles, encouraged more private ownership, and lifted price controls and trade restrictions.

## **GUINEA-CONAKRY**

Once the rich child of the French colonial family, it was at the time of independence in 1958 Africa’s leading banana exporter; possessed one-third of the world’s known bauxite reserves; had three major rivers with potential for hydropower projects. It was considered much more likely to succeed than neighbouring Ivory Coast, which was then dependent on a single crop – coffee.

### ***Soviet Tutelage***

At independence President Sekou Toure, a well-known exponent of radical revolutionary politics in Africa (and recipient of the Lenin Peace Prize), rejected France’s offer of close co-operation. Instead he set out to create “Marxism in African clothes” under Soviet tutelage. He wound up confirming the point made by Kenya’s cynical old Jomo Kenyatta: “Don’t be fooled into looking to Communism for food.” Toure was already throwing off Communism before his death in 1984. Conakry is now pursuing the market system.

## **BENIN**

Even this formerly staunch Marxist/Leninist People’s Republic has now declared its constitutionally-prescribed communism a dead duck. Earlier this year, under pressure from France, Military President Mathieu Kerekou was forced to end 18 years of Marxist rule and invite previously banned opposition parties to help run the country. Unable to pay government salaries for months past, Mr Kerekou’s announcement came after a general strike and widespread demonstrations demanding an end to Marxist rule. Soldiers opened fire on crowds who had earlier torn the cover off a still-to-be-inaugurated statue of Lenin and stoned it. Multiparty elections are to be held next year. The country will now “exploit the positive factors of capitalism.”

## **SAO TOME e PRINCIPE**

These are African West Coast islands formerly owned by Portugal. At independence the country swung into East Bloc orbit, resulting in the exodus of about 2000 Whites. Ill-conceived land distribution and other socialist schemes bankrupted the economy. The republic is now being advised by the IMF and switching to multiparty status, though socialist influences are still strong.

## **CAPE VERDE**

An offshore archipelago nation formerly owned by the Portuguese, now switching from socialism to the free market. It will hold multi-party elections in November.

## **SOMALIA**

Another country trying to extricate itself from a Marxist quagmire. President Mohamed Siad Barre embraced Marxism in 1970, largely to win Soviet support, but expelled 6000 Soviet advisers in 1977 when Moscow sided with Ethiopia in the Ogaden conflict. Last October (1989), with his country in disintegration, Barre announced the introduction of multi-party democracy. He had come under strong

pressure to resign from his own Socialist Revolutionary Party, and was under unprecedented attack from his own party newspaper, bitterly critical of his links with the late President Nicolae Ceausescu of Romania; the intelligence service run by his wife and the excessive numbers of high-living Barre relatives occupying official posts. While desperate to democratise itself and win international approval, Somalia's base for doing so is dangerously fragile. A very uncertain future.

### **SUMMING UP:**

What we have presented here is the merest whisper of the stupendous, nearly incomprehensible tragedy that has overwhelmed Africa in the cause of doctrinaire socialism. It is incredible that any nation would wish to duplicate such gargantuan human tragedy. Yet, just as the era of radicalism in Africa recedes [as she and many others thought in 1990 – *Ed.*], so the diehard ideologues of the ANC/SACP seek the same socialist fate for the “New South Africa.” South Africans are fooling themselves if they believe the results would be any different here to what has happened elsewhere in Africa. *It is something for all of us, Black and White, to fear and guard against...*

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Aida Parker was a highly articulate, conservative South African journalist, whose *Aida Parker Newsletter* was read around the world before she passed away in 2002. Her excellent writings should not be forgotten. This article is taken from a special issue of *The Aida Parker Newsletter*, published in spring 1990, Auckland Park, Johannesburg, South Africa. Consent was granted for the use of this material, providing acknowledgment was made of the name of the copyright holder: Aida Parker Newsletter (Pty) Ltd. It has been very slightly edited for publication here.

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