



## DEMOCRACY AND AFRICA

—George B.N. Ayittey, Ph.D.

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As we all know, Africa teeters on the brink of economic disintegration, political chaos and social decay. But more fundamentally, Africa is a tragedy in more ways than one. The main reason why things have gone so wrong in Africa, in my view, is that there are so many people, international institutions and aid agencies who want to help Africa --- and sincerely. But the problems is, few understand the very people they seek to help.

Mythology bedevils attempts to help Africa. One of these enduring myths is the nonsensical notion that Africa had no culture, no history and no viable institutions before the arrival of the European colonialists. You and I know that is patently false. But then our leaders perpetuate these myths by their own shameful ignorance of African heritage. Foreigners may be excused for their ignorance of African institutions but that of our own leaders is inexcusable.

After independence, African nationalists justified the imposition of all sorts of heinous and alien systems on their people upon the basis of African tradition. These systems range from life-presidents, military rule, one-party state systems, strong centralized rule, and censorship. It is not possible to deal with all these myths propagated by African leaders within the time allotted me. So I will deal with the "one-party state system" issue.

When Nelson Mandela was released after spending 27 years in an apartheid jail a year ago, most African leaders were overjoyed. "What a glorious day!" exclaimed an ebullient Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia. But these leaders who were celebrating did not bother to look where they were standing --- on the necks of their people! The freedoms they demand for the blacks in South Africa (which they

should have; nobody questions that) are not granted their own people in their own black African countries. How many African leaders allow their people one man, one vote to choose their leaders?

Out of the 52 African countries, only six (Botswana, Egypt, Mauritius, Namibia, Senegal, and The Gambia) allow their people the right to vote. Four may now be added to the list: Benin, Cape Verde Islands, Sao Thome and Principe, and Ivory Coast in 1990. Twenty-six are military dictatorships and the rest are farcical democracies where only one candidate runs for president and always wins 99.9999 percent of the vote to declare himself "president for life."

The one-party state system was borrowed from Eastern Europe. Following the collapse of these systems in Eastern Europe, one would have thought that African leaders would take note and reform their political systems too. But they adamantly refused to do so, claiming that democracy is alien to Africa. Pure nonsense. Others argue that dictatorships are inherently an African cultural phenomenon. African chiefs are despotic, authoritarian (Shaka the Zulu) and ruled for life. Current leaders are merely the modern versions of Africa's traditional rulers. That is a gross distortion because there is an ocean of difference between the "modern and educated" leaders and the traditional ones. The myth of despotic Shaka was propagated by many European writers to provide a justification for colonialism. They wrote that colonialism was good for Africans because it "liberated" them from their despotic chiefs. Now it is "educated" African leaders who are propagating these myths.

The initial reaction of most African leaders to the events in Eastern Europe was an exercise in hysteria and

*To those who consent, no injustice is done*

self-delusion. They acted like ostriches, sticking their heads into the sand and pretended nothing had happened. See no evil, fear no evil. The state-controlled press in Africa naturally did not give the events in

## 'See no evil, fear no evil.'

Eastern Europe much coverage. Angolan and Mozambican journalists who give them much coverage were dismissed. In other countries where they were reported at all, they were relegated to some obscure sections on the back pages of the newspapers.

Asked whether they would allow multi-parties, *perestroika* and *glasnost*, African leaders initially performed some rather strange acrobatics. "Zaire has no need for *perestroika*," declared President Mobutu. "It's one-party system is the most elaborate form of democracy." Consequently, Mobutu is not prepared to tolerate the multi-party system: "African countries which have adopted a multi-party system have not benefited from western solidarity like Eastern Europe. So far I was the only one to orient everything," he added.

Rawlings of Ghana made his first public remarks on events in Eastern Europe during an End of Year Party for diplomats when he told them that he hoped "reforms in the East will be reciprocated by similar changes in the West." What about Ghana? "NO!" said the state-owned *Ghanian Times*. In a two-part editorial, it condemned the change in Romania as the "work of imperialism."

Presidents dos Santos (Angola), Kaunda (Zambia), Mengistu (Ethiopia), Moi (Kenya), Nyerere (Tanzania) and many other African leaders obstinately refused to consider the possibility of multi-parties. Events in Eastern Europe had no relevance whatsoever to Africa, according to them. In Zambia, the

powerful Zambia Congress of Trade Unions called for a multi-party state and scrapping the one-party rule through a referendum. But "the government had accused its critics of political myopia and insensitivity to the dangers of their proposal which may explode simmering 'tribal conflicts'" (*The African Letter*, April 16-3-, 1990; p.9).

A similar view was echoed by Burkina Faso's military dictator, Blaise Compaore:

"In my opinion, multipartyism is not the ultimate solution for resolving Africa's problems. Creating a multi-party system in Africa will only encourage those on the outside to descend upon those who serve their interests. Political freedom must be developed, but not at the expense of the sovereignty which protects a country against capitalist exploitation" (*West Africa*, Mar. 26 - Apr. 1, 1990; p.481).

Who really are the vultures, descending upon the African people, snatching, kidnapping and killing them: the imperialists or military dictators? And what have political freedom and rights of the African people, the peasants, got to do with foreign capitalists?

Also emanating from some African leaders was the silly argument that Africa needs a one-party state in order to forge national unity in a tribally-fractious nation. Mr. E.T. Kamara, party affairs minister in Sierra Leone --- a one-party state --- complained:

"It is disgruntled politicians, students, lecturers and people in government who want to do everything on a tribal banner, who want us to go back to multiparty system. The one party system evolved from a negative multi-

party system. It was evolution and not revolution" (*West Africa*, June 4-10, 1990; p. 934).

But so too will the multi party system evolve from the "negative" one-party system. Unsurprisingly, President Moi of Kenya dismissed a multi-party system as "garbage" while Zambian president Kaunda said its "reintroduction would be a national disaster" (*The Economist*, June 2, 1990; p. 48). Actually, Kaunda meant a *personal* disaster. A March article in Zimbabwe's *Financial Times* charged that President Kaunda of Zambia, the great African father of "humanism", has stashed at least \$4 billion in overseas real estate and bank accounts.

In a government communique issued on December 8, 1989, President Omar Bongo of Gabon reasserted his belief in the one-party state system and declared that the Gabonese Democratic Party (PDG) is "open to all Gabonese, uses its framework to encourage democratic dialogue, and is the only force capable of maintaining national unity and promoting the *development* of the country." Development for whom: the elites or the peasants?

## 'Who really are the vultures, descending on the African people?'

It is true tribalism has been the scourge of African politics. But the one-party state system is *not* the solution! Ever noticed that those African leaders who preach national unity and denounce tribalism are the same ones who surround themselves with members of their own tribes? Doe and the Krahs, Rawlings and the Ewes, Babangida and the Muslims, Bongo and the Bateke, Houphouet-Boigny and the Baoule, Barre and Marehan, Moi and the Kalenjis, Mobutu and the

**"Freedom and reality are very closely bound up together. Only real people can be free. If unreality arises in our thinking (or feeling), our freedom of action is destroyed because we will act upon the external reality in terms of a false belief about it and our actions will have results which we did not expect." -John MacMurray, Freedom In the Modern World (1935)**

Gbandes, Mugabe and the Shona, Mwinyi and the Muslims, etc. etc... Obviously, those who abhor tribalism ought to *detribalize* themselves first. But African leaders show no signs of doing so.

Africans no longer buy the "one-tribe domination" and the "one-party state" nonsense. Over the years, the one-party state machinery increasingly

### "The one-party state has been turned into an employment exchange for loyal party cadres..."

became autocratic and brutally repressive. Even Zambia's Minister of State agreed: "The one-party state has been turned into an employment exchange for loyal party cadres, instead of remaining a dynamic political system for the welfare of the people" (*The African Letter*, Apr. 16-30, 1990; p. 10).

Naturally, those in power and in prominent positions in the ruling party despise any talks of political pluralism or power-sharing. They prefer a continuation of the present one-party state system as they benefit immensely from it. Mr. Musa Gendemeh, Sierra Leone's deputy agriculture minister, said exactly this on the BBC "Focus on Africa" program (Apr. 24, 1990). He declared that:

"He won't give up his present privileged position for the sake of a multiparty system nor would one expect a policeman or soldier to give up his one bag of rice at the end of every month for the same... He warned that anyone talking about another party would be committing treason... that ministers and MPs suspected of having something to do with the multiparty movement are now under surveillance...and that whenever there has been trouble in the country, his people, the Mende, have suffered the most

and he warned them to be careful" (*West Africa*, June 4-10, 1990; p. 934).

It is a shame that a minister would utter such irresponsible gibberish. Multipartyism, *perestroika*, and *glasnost* will only threaten or diminish their power and privileges. The gulf between these leaders and their people could not be more glaring. Hordes of diplomats, foreigners, Africans, intellectuals and even chiefs have counselled them. Still, they stubbornly cling on to power --- at their own peril. Remember

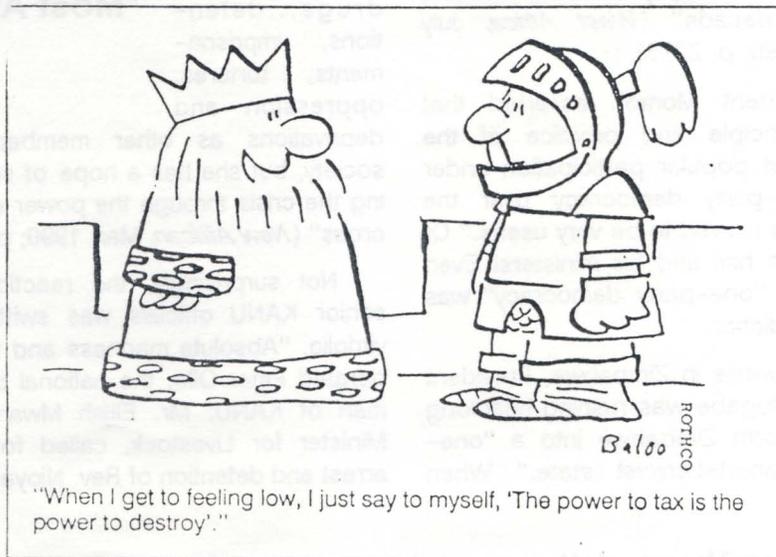
what happened to Doe? Siad Barre of Somalis had to flee in a tank. But the tank ran out of gas!

Recent statements by the secretary-general of the Congolese Trade Union congress also indicated that some never learn. Speaking on a public lecture on *perestroika*, Mr. Jean-Michel Bokamba-Yangouma, who is also a member of the political bureau of the ruling Congolese Labor Party, emphasized that multipartyism had proven dangerous and damaging to the Congolese state in the period leading up to independence, producing violent clashes between different political tendencies.

In neighbouring Cameroon, President Paul Biya reacted strongly to demands for multipartyism calling them "Maneuvers for diversion, intoxication and destabilization." In a nationwide radio and television broadcast on April 9, 1990, President Biya said that Cameroon's main concern was the contry's economic crisis and therefore anything else was merely a diversion.

"He applauded party loyalists who have organized pro-government demonstrations in recent weeks, claiming they had 'rejected unequivocally the imported political models and formulae.' He claimed that his supporters 'had solemnly renewed their conviction' that the ruling RDPC was 'the crucible of national unity, while at the same time the best possible training-ground for Cameroonian democracy...I am counting on your vigilance,' he said, reminding his audience that the elections to be held in weeks ahead were aimed at revitalising the RDPC's internal structures" (*West Africa*, Apr. 23-29, 1990; p. 687).

Of course, President Biya did not realize that the one-party state system was imported from Eastern Europe. African leaders applaud deliriously when they see pro-government demonstrations and rain bullets on anti-government ones, betraying infantile political and intellectual maturity. As discussed below, when 20,000



**"The terms 'liberal' and 'conservative' are two of the emptiest sounds in today's political vocabulary --- words that can be used safely by any speaker who wants to be misunderstood in the greatest number of ways by the greatest number of people." -Ayn Rand, *The Intellectual Bankruptcy of Our Age* (1961)**

Cameroonians held an anti-government rally in Bamenda on May 26, 1990, security forces opened fire on the crowd, killing at least six. President Biya, however, began to show signs of flexibility. In an address to the congress of the ruling Cameroon People's Democratic Movement on June 28, 1990, he announced a series of measures that could lead to a multi-party

ZANU-PF member of Parliament, Byron Hove, raised an objection to the party's drive toward a one-party state, he was ejected from the congress of delegates to prevent him from voicing his dissenting opinions.

In Kenya, Reverend Dr. Timothy Njoya also suggested in a December 1989 sermon that African leaders should reconsider the one-party state system in the light of the recent events in Eastern Europe where, he indicated, the one-party system originated from.

"Such parties have completely failed to be democratic in the Eastern European countries of Romania, Hungary and Poland where they were manufactured and imported by (pioneer African nationalists like) Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere and Modipo Keita into Africa," he said.

He went on to prophesy that Kenya was headed for a major disaster unless corruption, injustice, road accidents, abuse of power and other "evils," which in the last decade had been converted into "habits and culture" were removed. Rev. Njoya added, "The Church may not avoid suffering, road accidents, inflation, shortage of essential drugs...detentions, imprisonments, tortures, oppression and deprivations as other members of society, but she has a hope of surviving the crisis through the power of the cross" (*New African*, Mar. 1990; p.16).

Not surprisingly, the reaction of senior KANU officials was swift and vitriolic. "Absolute madness and folly!" berated Peter Oloo, the national chairman of KANU. Mr. Elijah Mwangale, Minister for Livestock, called for the arrest and detention of Rev. Njoya.

Kenya's Vice-President Professor George Saitoti insisted that the one-party systems in Africa were derived from African traditions. Nonsense. In case African dictators are contemplating making the one-party system "more dynamic", S.B. Tejan-Sie, a Sierra Leonian lawyer base in Free-town, has asserted: "If anything, a system which confines political power to only one political group is alien to our culture and traditions and has failed politically and economically for over a decade and half" (*West Africa*, Apr. 23-29, 1990; p. 663).

It is true that an African chief rules for life but he is appointed with the advice and consent of the Queen Mother and the Council of Elders. He does not appoint himself. There is a fundamental difference. Nobody just gets up and declares himself "chief-for-life" and his village to be "a one-party state" in indigenous Africa.

Most African societies have a Queen Mother whose duty is to select a candidate and present him or her to the Council of Elders for approval. This council is a representative body made up of the heads of the various extended families in the community. the families choose their own heads. Among the Asante of Ghana, the Queen Mother has three chances to produce an acceptable candidate or

**"Most African societies have a Queen Mother..."**

else the Council makes the choice itself. The Igbo of Nigeria has no Queen Mother but any prominent person could seek to become a headman or ward chief.

The chief rules as long as his people allow it. Sanctions can be brought against any chief who flouts the will of his people. He is first admonished privately by his advisers and then publicly. If he persists his

**"In Zimbabwe, Mugabe was rushing headlong into a one-party Marxist-Leninist state."**

system in Cameroon. These measures included the establishment of a human rights commission and the lifting of restrictions on freedom of association imposed in 1967 and which effectively rendered useless the Cameroonian constitutional provision for multi-partyism. But other African leaders remained obstinate.

In his address on the State of the Nation to Parliament in July 1990, President Momoh of Siera Leone declared: "As your president, I have to say it loud and clear --- multi-partyism at this point of our social and economic development will only spell doom for us and take us right back to those old dangerous days of divisiveness, conflict, victimisation and vindictiveness that we have happily left behind for well over a decade" (*West Africa*, July 9-15, 1990; p. 2078).

President Momoh asserted that "the principle and practice of the system of popular participation under the one-party democracy over the years has proved to be very useful." Of course to him and his ministers! Even the term "one-party democracy" was a contradiction.

Meanwhile in Zimbabwe, President Robert Mugabe was rushing headlong to transform Zimbabwe into a "one-party Marxist-Leninist state." When

**" When Thomas Jefferson, at the age of thirty-three, wrote 'all men are created equal,' he and his contemporaries did not take these words literally... Men were equal before God. Each person ... has unalienable rights, rights that no one else is entitled to invade. 'Liberty' is a part of the definition of equality, not in conflict with it." -Milton Friedman, *Free to Choose* (1980)**

people can resort to several remedies. The Igbo people go on a village strike, bringing life to a halt. that usually forces the authorities to mend their ways. In other societies, the people simply abandon their chief and move elsewhere. The history of Africa is full of migrations of people to escape oppression. Nobody loves freedom and independence more than African natives. That explains why there are more than 2,000 different tribes in Africa today. Rather than submit to despotic rule, the natives moved somewhere else to preserve their culture and independence. This course of action is still evidenced today by Africa's growing number of refugees.

In other tribes, an erring chief or king is simply "destooled" (removed).

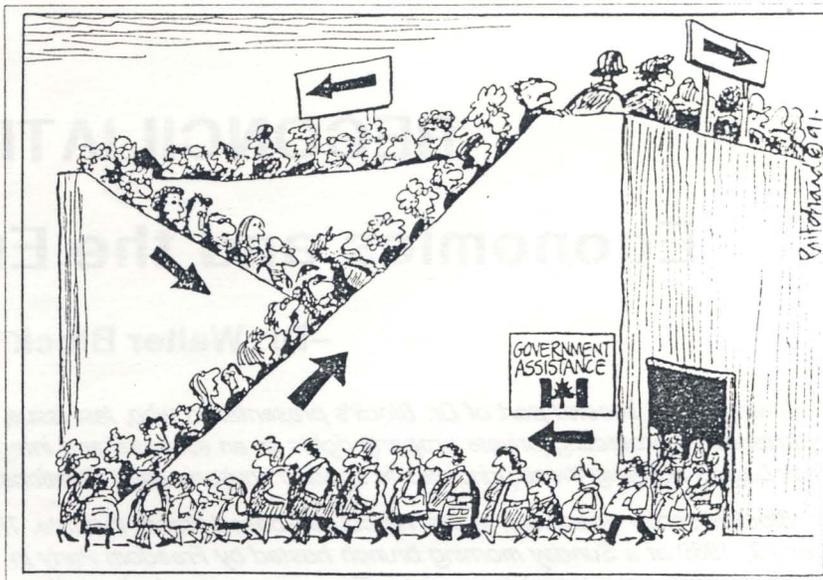
**"In governance, the chief and his councillors sat under a tree and debated issues..."**

According to the Ghanaian historian, Dr. Kwame Arhin, "The people of Asante destooled three kings in 1799, 1874, and 1883. They destooled Osei Kwame in 1799 for absenting himself from Kumasi and failing to perform his religious duties during the Aday festival. They destooled Karikari in 1874 for extravagance. They destooled Mensa Bonsu in 1883 for excessively taxing his people."

With the Asante, divestiture proceedings began when disaffected members of the community filed grievances against the king before the Council. The king was given the opportunity to defend himself. If found at fault, he was asked to pay *mpata*, a pacification fee. If the aggrieved party refused to accept this, the king was "destooled." The Yoruba, however, remove their *ona* differently by a process known as *kirikiri*. If he is incompetent or abuses his power, a mob would

surround his residence, loudly abusing him and pelting his hut with rocks. He would be given three months to leave the village. If he refuses, then a select band of men would seize him and dispose of him. The Gikuyu of Kenya remove their rulers by a process known as *itwika* --- a genuinely indigenous African people's revolution.

In governance, the chief and his councillors sat under a tree and debated issues until they reached unanimity. Any adult could participate in council meetings, called *indaba* among the Zulu of South Africa. One did not have to belong to any particular one-party state to participate. Even in Angola, the African King, Alfonso, allowed the Portuguese merchants to send their own representative to his court in the 19th century. The Asante of Ghana also permitted foreign representation. No one was "locked out" of the political decision-making process: Even slaves could also participate. In Senegal, slaves, *djam*, elected their own representative to the king's court. In most places in traditional Africa, slavery as a social class was of no economic consequence. Slaves could own property and had full political rights. In fact, the Jaja of Bonny of



Niger Delta (Nigeria) rose to become king from a slave origin in the 19th century.

In the political process, if the chief and the councillors were deadlocked on a verdict, a village meeting would be called and the issue placed before the people for a *consensus* to be reached. The Khosa of South Africa call one of these village meetings *pitso*.

When the colonialists came to Africa, they did not find a box with "ballot" written on it. Nor did they find a building with "Congress" or "Parliament" written on it. So they concluded the indigenous African system of government was "undemocratic" and "despotic" because the chief ruled for life. Nonsense. Chancellor Williams, an African American (or American, for short), was highly impressed by the Mossi indigenous system in northern Ghana: "Their political system, highly democratic, was unsurpassed by any state anywhere in the world. That system was developed by Africans." He may have been overly effusive in his praise. But the fact is, Africans had their own indigenous system of government.

They sat under a tree and talked about issues affecting the community. The Europeans put up a building and called it "parliament" which literally means a place to talk. What's the difference? Africans had *participatory*

(concluded on back cover...)

**"The state is the great fictitious entity by which everyone seeks to live at the expense of everyone else." -Frederic Bastiat, 1848**

# RECONCILIATION: Economics and the Environment

—Dr. Walter Block

*(Following is the second part of Dr. Block's presentation who, last issue, discussed the Tragedy of the Commons and the importance of protecting private property rights as an essential and integral part of environmental protection. This issue, Dr. Block begins applying these principles to specific environmental situations.)*

*Dr. Block is senior economist at the Vancouver-based Fraser Institute. The following speech was originally presented on October 29, 1989 at a Sunday morning brunch hosted by Freedom Party in Toronto, Ontario. Dr. Block's speech has been reprinted verbatim from taped transcripts. The presentation in its entirety is now available on video and/or audio tapes through Freedom Party. Inquires welcome.)*

## Part 2 – Common Ownership, Common Problems

### Pollution and Acid Rain

Let's start with pollution and acid rain.

Up until the 1830s and 1840s, any time there was a trespass --- what we would now consider an environmental trespass or "pollution" --- it was taken care of under the *law of nuisance*. They reasoned, quite adequately, quite logically, that if I take my garbage and I dump it on Daniel's lawn and they catch me in the act, it is very clear what will happen. The forces of law and order will grab me and say "that's a violation of Daniel's property rights and you just can't do that. We're going to grant Daniel an injunction so that you don't do it again. We're going to make you pay the damages and we'll put you in jail if you keep going."

*But*, if I were to burn it up first, to pulverize it, and instead of dumping eggshells and orange peels and box tops on his lawn I first burn them, and then I send the soot and ashes on to his lawn, they would see no difference. They were quite sensible. They'd say "Well come on! You can't fool us! You're doing the same thing as in the first place and you're still a nuisance, and we're going to still do what we

would have done to you in the (first case).

But around the 1830s and 1840s, a more "sophisticated" knowledge of the law came into being. The judges still said "Yes, yes, this is a violation of property rights. We admit that," they would say to the plaintiff. "But, there's something more important than your stinking, snivelling, greedy private property rights." And what is that? Well, it was the "public good."

The "public good" has to take precedence over "greed" and "selfishness" and individualism, right? Right(!?! "So, what we're going to do is, we're not going to grant you an injunction to stop the perpetrator. He can send smoke wafting onto your property. He can ruin your laundry. He can set off sparks on your haystack --- and we're not going to stop him. We're going to give him in effect *carte blanche* to do as he will with *your* property, not only with his property, but with your property."

And there were other reasons besides the "public interest." There was this idea that there was the "public

*good*"; in other words, we're going to give a licence to the railroads to (pollute). And since the railroad is running and it sets off sparks, "well that's just too bad. We the legislature have given this railroad our *im primatur* and whatever they do is legitimate".

There was another reason that if the smoke only went from person A to person B, that would have a private remedy. But, if the smoke went from person A to fifty other people, it was now considered a *public* nuisance and you couldn't sue as an individual because "you're just one of many". So the proper place to go was the legislature, not the court, and they have to pass a law. Needless to say, they pass no such laws because, in effect, they were bribed more fully by the perpetrators of this than by the defendants or by the victims.

That's the old story. So what were the results of this? The results of allowing manufacturers to get away with polluting other people's property were: that they now had no incentives *not* to (pollute).

**\* When private citizens attempt to 'redistribute the wealth' of others, we call it theft. When politicians do exactly the same thing, we call it equity! Thus, by some strange alchemy, stealing is transmuted from the base metal of criminal activity to the pure gold of noble purpose.\***

*-Murray Hopper, Socialism and the War On Wealth, 1985*

Suppose that you were public spirited, and you were a free enterprise person and you were dedicated to the philosophy of liberty and freedom, and you said that it's *wrong* to violate other people's property. And what you're going to do is engage in research and development in smoke prevention devices. You're going to install scrubbers in your smokestacks. You're going to burn high-grade coal which doesn't have much pollution although it's more expensive. Instead of the low-grade sulphur coal that just blackens the sky.

Well what would happen to you if you did all these things? You'd go broke! Right? Because you presumably are just as able as your competitors in, say, steel manufacturing, and everyone else is just blindly polluting the air, and you alone are engaging in extra costs so that you don't pollute the air. Well, you'll go broke. That's the market. See? Free enterprise doesn't work! Right?

No.

Free enterprise works --- but only if it's embedded in a legal system that upholds private property rights. Free enterprise doesn't work if we don't have private property rights. It's too much to claim for the market system that it can work adequately, that

people can act responsibly, if the incentives are all perverted. And they were all perverted by the fact that the rights of the victims were not upheld.

Now, some people describe what I've just called an intolerable situation, as one of "externalities." And they call this a "market failure." They really do. They say "this is a market failure because while the company takes into account all its sales, it doesn't take into account all its costs." And there are people who say this that are reputable supposed advocates of free enterprise systems such as based at the University of Chicago.

If you read most economics textbooks and you look under the category called "market failure", you'll see "externalities" listed as a market failure. I'm not kidding you. People who you might think are real free enterprise advocates are saying things like this. That this is a market failure.

But it's no such thing. It's a failure of government, or law to uphold property rights. They see it as a fault of *capitalism* that businessmen can keep all those revenues but allowed to impose some of the cost, such as

smoke particle removal, on other people.

This is absolute nonsense.

Acid rain, by the way, is just a special case of the more general pollution problem. Instead of the pollutants going from A to B and C and D, they just go up into the clouds and into the water. But it's the same thing: then they affect everyone else. So I don't really see that there's any reason to

### "Acid rain is just a special case of the more general pollution problem."

treat acid rain as a special problem. It's just part and parcel of the pollution problem.

Then there are these other Chicago-type economists, these supposed free enterprisers, who say that the solution to the problem is *not* to uphold property rights, but rather, to have the government set up an "optimal level of pollution" and then to sell... (I'm not kidding here, we are not making this up. It sounds like I am, but I'm not) and what we have to do is say, "Well, in Toronto, we can have a hundred tons of pollution (and I don't know whether it's a hundred or a thousand or a million --- whatever they decide; there is no rationale behind any decision. It's all arbitrary. You know, we'll pick "X". "X" is the right amount of pollution. Then what we'll do is we'll sell, we'll auction off the right to pollute."

Well, I want to read a magnificent quote. I wish I had written it. I suppose I could take credit for it but it would be a lie. I really *meant* to write this, and he beat me to it. He stole my ideas, actually. He's a thief; I'll have to sue him.

It's Martin Anderson who's just utterly magnificent and this is in my introduction to this book.



**"The more corrupt the state, the more numerous the laws."**

*-Tacitus, 56-120 A.D.*

Quote: "If you took a bag of garbage and dropped it on your neighbour's lawn, we all know what would happen. Your neighbour would call the police and you would soon find out that the disposal of your garbage is your responsibility and that it must be done in a way that does not violate any one else's property rights. But, if you took that same bag of garbage

**"What we need are tougher, clearer environmental laws *that are enforced.*"**

and burned it in the back yard incinerator letting the sooty ash drift over the neighbourhood, the problem gets more complicated. The violation of property rights is clear. But *protecting* them is more difficult. And when the garbage is invisible to the naked eye, as much air and water pollution is, the problem often seems insurmountable. We have tried many remedies in the past. We have tried to dissuade polluters with fines --- with government programs whereby all must pay to clean up the garbage produced by the few, with a myriad of detailed regulations to control the degree of pollution.

"Now, some even seriously propose that we should have economic incentives so we could charge polluters a fee for polluting. And the more they pollute the more they pay. But this is just like taxing burglars as an economic incentive to deter people from stealing your property and just as unconscionable. The only effective way to eliminate serious pollution is to treat it for exactly what it is --- **garbage**. Just as one does not have the right to drop a bag of garbage on his neighbour's lawn, so does one not have the right to place any garbage in the air or in the water or in the earth if it in any way violates the property rights of others.

"What we need are tougher, clearer environmental laws *that are enforced*. Not with economic incentives but with jail terms. What the strict application of the idea of private property rights will do is to increase the cost of garbage disposal. That increased cost will be reflected in the higher cost of the products and services that resulted from the process that produced the garbage. And that is how it should be. Much of the cost of disposing waste material is already incorporated in the

price of the goods and services produced. All of it should be. Then only those who benefit from the garbage will be made to pay for its disposal."

See, the problem is, that the present remedy that came about in the 1830s and 1840s, is that we *subsidized* our entire industries to engage in pollution intensive methods of production. But they didn't have to engage in those. They only did because that was the way the economic incentive was set up.

Had law and order prevailed from the very beginning, the industry would have been led, "as if by an invisible hand" says Adam Smith, towards those production techniques that do *not* specialize in heavy fallout and pollutants.

So for 150 years we went merrily on polluting ourselves. Then all of a sudden certain people said "Hey, look. Things are getting pretty desperate." One of the cartoons that I saw illustrates this very much. It was a mother and a daughter and they're eating in an outside restaurant. Now usually, you'd expect the mother to say to the little girl, "Hurry up dear,

eat your soup before it gets cold." The caption here is: "Hurry up little girl, eat your soup before it gets dirty."

OK. So we know that the problem is very bad. So what does the government do? It says "Well, you know, it's very bad. We've got to regulate. We've got to say you, you, and you, you can't use this. You have to use that. You have to use all sorts of techniques."

One of the problems originally, by the way, about smokestacks is that they used to have pretty low smokestacks and it would be clear where the smoke was going. So guess what these geniuses came up with? *Big* smokestacks. 150 feet high. So that the problem doesn't exist anymore, right? You can't see it. It's like pushing it under the rug.

Well, I think that the best way is to get back to a regime of private property rights. Now you might conceivably have to make some compromises. Maybe. This is where we need to research. Just how do you go back 150 years? How do you turn back the clock 150 years towards a more just regime? Do you just say that no one can pollute anymore and pretty much the whole society gets wiped out? Do you grandfather it in? These are difficult problems. Or do you compromise with this crazy selling of pollution rights, temporarily?

**HERMAN**



"One day you'll realize that the people capable of running the country are too smart to get into politics."

**"You can't always get what you want, but if you *trysometimes*, you just might find that you get what you need." -Mick Jagger, Keith Richard**

# SOCIALISM 509

—Kenneth H.W. Hilborn

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My own predilection, of course, would be for a rigid systematic principled application of saying no more property invasion. You see, in a fully free society, you wouldn't have a situation where you have *no* pollution. Economists are always enamoured with the idea of optimizing things. Even in a free society, we wouldn't aim for zero crime, because zero crime might take the entire GNP to solve. We want only "optimal" crime, which means that we devote only a certain amount to stopping criminals.

It's the same here. We want "optimal" amounts of pollution. Now in the free society, the way the optimal amount of pollution would be determined is through voluntary contract. Namely, in the 1830s, I set up a steel mill in Cleveland somewhere, and I buy ten square miles of property, and I keep a low smokestack. We decide that pretty much all the pollution will stay there. And then I sell you a house on the grounds that I have the pollution rights to that air. And if you want to buy that house, you buy it at a lower price that reflects the disamenities.

In that case, the pollution is internalized. I'm not violating anyone's rights even though I'm polluting them, because they agreed to be polluted. It's the same with airport noise and noise pollution. If I have an airport, one square mile, and I buy ten square miles and I plunk the airport right in the middle, and then I start selling houses in this area which is noise polluted, and I sell it to you under the full knowledge that your house is going to be noisy, well, you have no right to complain about the noise. It is no longer an invasion.

In technical economic terms, the externality has been internalized. There is no more transgression.

OK. That's enough for **pollution**. The next one I want to talk about is **species extinction**.

(cont'd NEXT ISSUE!)

Marxism as hitherto known having proved disastrous, some socialist ideologues still trying desperately to salvage Karl Marx's reputation have invented a new piece of nonsense called "analytical" Marxism, which they distinguish from the discredited "classical" Marxism.

Analytical Marxists are supposedly committed to human rights. But how can they be, without ceasing to be Marxist in any

meaningful sense? Marx believed in the existence of a class struggle that could end only when the capitalist class was abolished. That notion is scarcely compatible with respect for human rights. Capitalists are human too, and a society cannot be said to be respecting human rights if people are denied the right --- the freedom --- to buy property and enjoy it in safety.

How can capitalism be eliminated without depriving existing capitalists of their productive possessions, and denying potential capitalists the freedom to acquire such possessions in the future? For Marxists to champion the right of capitalists to liberty, and thus to property, would be just as much a repudiation of their own doctrine as it would be for Nazis to uphold the right of Jews to equal status in society.

Another aspect of analytical Marxism (as summarized by a University of Calgary philosopher, Thomas Hurka, in a *Globe and Mail* column, Sept. 4/90) arises from recognition of capitalism's ability to increase its already high productivity. The Marxists argue that instead of increasing output and supplying people with more goods, this

## \*How can Marxists be committed to human rights without ceasing to be Marxist in any meaningful sense?\*

growth in productivity should be used to give workers more leisure. Capitalist enterprises cannot do that, because they have to remain competitive in order to survive. Therefore socialism is needed.

One can easily see the gap in this reasoning. Socialism is supposedly necessary in order to make the best use of capitalist productivity. But if socialism replaces capitalism, why would we expect capitalism's high productivity to survive? Why wouldn't socialism's *low* productivity become the norm?

Surely it makes no sense to introduce a disastrous economic system in order to take advantage of benefits derived from and dependent on the successful economic system one plans to abolish!

The analytical Marxists' scheme

**\*There is the Marxist interpretation of Nazism, according to which Hitler is the inevitable result of capitalism. This evades the facts that Germany after Bismark was the least capitalistic country of Western Europe; that the Weimar Republic from the start was a controlled economy, with the controls growing steadily; and that the word 'Nazism' is an abbreviation for 'National Socialism.'\*** -Leonard Peikoff, *Ominous Parallels* (1982)

also raises the problem of workers whose priorities are "incorrect" in Marxist eyes --- that is, workers with less desire for four-hour days or six-month vacations than for the pay increases and higher material living

reductions in current standards of living; but providing the equivalent of present full-time pay for part-time work would make production costs drastically higher than necessary. Competition exists among nations as well as among capitalist enterprises, and a country adopting this version of Marxism would be unable to hold its own in a competitive

have sold abroad would be too expensive for foreigners, lack of exports would make it impossible in the long run for the Marxist country to pay for these large scale imports. Thus, whatever their original intentions, the prospect of losing their foreign-exchange reserves would eventually force the Marxists into the policy of self-sufficiency and economic isolationism to which I referred. Such a policy leads naturally to stagnation and decline, because it entails a high degree of state-imposed economic planning and protection for industry against the challenge of competition.

**"Under a Marxist government, escape from legislated leisure would have to be illegal..."**

standard that increased output would make possible. The preference for more income rather than more leisure is all the more likely to be widespread because some people enjoy their work and find fulfilment in it; they would be bored with nothing to do but lie on a beach, watch television or engage in other recreational activities. That is true especially (though not exclusively) of those whose work is in some way creative or innovative.

world --- unless, of course, other industrialized trading nations were stupid enough to adopt the same policy, or could be coerced into doing so.

Under capitalism, as productivity increased, workers' real incomes gradually increased too, and hours on the job were gradually reduced. That was a pragmatic response to changing circumstances. To cut time on the job as a matter of policy dictated purely by ideology is likely to prove as much a road to disaster as any other attempt

In our present system, those who prefer leisure to money are free to seek part-time employment. In the analytical Marxists' dream world, however, it seems that everybody would be *restricted* to part-time employment whether he liked it or not. Of course short hours or long vacations could allow people to hold two jobs, but under a Marxist government any such escape from legislated leisure would have to be illegal; to tolerate dual employment would mean tolerating great economic inequality between one-job and two-job workers, with the result that many people would feel under pressure to keep up with their acquaintances by working as much as before.

The analytical Marxists believe that their ideal cannot be realized under capitalism, precisely because competitiveness is indispensable to the survival of capitalist producers. But in a world of extensive and reasonably unimpeded international trade, a socialist system of production would have to be competitive too.

**"Under capitalism, as productivity increased, workers' real incomes increased too..."**

Thus an analytical Marxist regime, like the classical Marxists of the past, would have to do at least one of two things --- seek world domination so as to impose its system on everybody, or seek a high degree of self-sufficiency, insulating itself as much as possible from the market forces of the global economy. Otherwise countries maintaining normal levels of work could flood the Marxist state's domestic market with goods at prices with which the Marxists' high-cost industries could not compete.

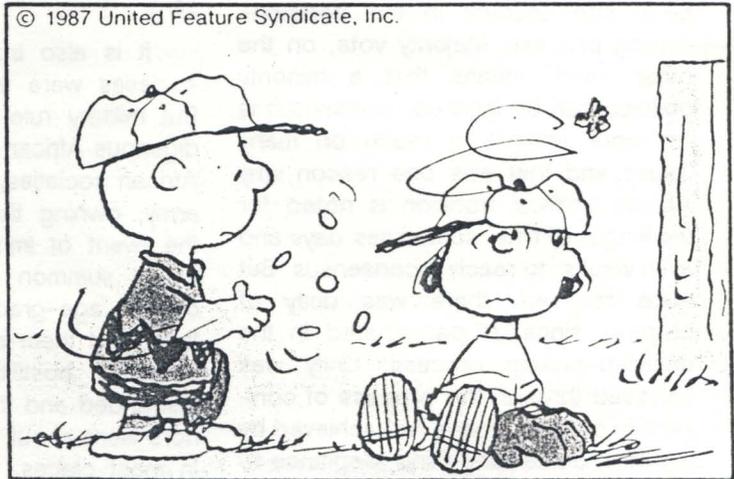
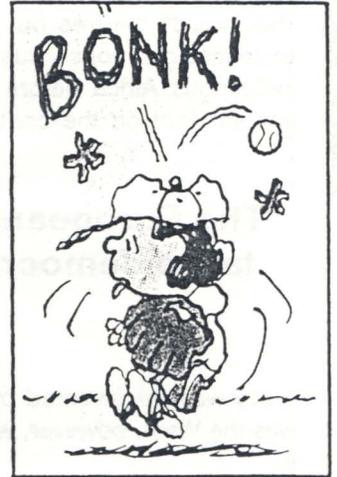
to impose doctrine on reality. Will left-wing intellectuals ever give up and face the truth? Capitalism works; the theoretical alternatives don't and won't. The Right, with its commitment to economic freedom, has been right all along; the socialist Left (under whatever name) was, is and always will be wrong. Intellectuals who have been wasting their time with Marxism --- classical, analytical, or whatever --- should look for something more constructive to do.

The analytical Marxists are apparently not promising significant

Since the goods it might normally

**HAGAR**





"The highest art in the world cannot guild socialism. It is impossible to make beautiful the denial of liberty." -Auberon Herbert, 1899

(... continued from page 5)

democracy which reached a consensus. The Europeans introduced *representative* democracy based on majority vote. Never mind how "primitive" or "backward" the tree but the institution of reaching a consensus was there in indigenous Africa before the colonialists set foot on the continent. Demo-

**"The Europeans introduced representative democracy based on majority vote..."**

cracy was *not* invented by the West. It was the West, however, which polished it.

Consensus means that minority positions are not only heard but also taken into account in the decision-making process. Majority vote, on the other hand, means that a minority position can be ignored. Consensus is far more difficult to reach on many issues and that was one reason why African political tradition is noted for the length of time, sometimes days and even weeks, to reach a consensus. But once reached, there was unity of purpose since *all* participated in the decision-making process. Unity was achieved through this process of consensus building. It was not achieved by the chief demanding blind allegiance to his leadership and the suppression of alternative viewpoints. All historians, experts and African leaders agree on this. But then the same leaders fail to realize that consensus, by its very

nature, is the antithesis of autocracy. One cannot impose one's will in a system that is traditionally structured to reach decisions by *consensus*. Clearly, despotism does not inhere in the African political tradition. As the late Dr. Busia, ex-president of Ghana observed: "Authoritarianism cannot be

justified on the basis of African tradition." The African chief or king is powerless without the

Council of Elders. He cannot pass any law or reach any decision without their consent. The chief cannot remove the councillors because they are chosen by the extended families they represent.

It is also true that many African societies were made up of warriors. But military rule was not part of indigenous African culture. In indigenous African societies, the people were the army, owning their own weapons. In the event of imminent war, the chief would summon all young men of a certain age-grade to assemble and then lead them into battle. After cessation of hostilities, the "army" was disbanded and the "soldiers" or warriors went about their normal activities. In most places, there was no military involvement in the indigenous system of government.

Only a few (less than 10) of the over 2,000 ethnic societies in Africa

had standing armies. Asante, Dahomey, Yoruba and Zulu had such armies. Even then, these armies cultivated their own farms to feed themselves, built and maintained roads, protected their citizens, scarcely acting as a drain on the native economies.

Regularly paid contingents of soldiers were an institution created by the colonialists to defend their commercial interests and to suppress incipient African agitations for freedom. African leaders who lament over the lingering colonial legacies that hamper their development should look no further than the army. Military rule is as alien to African heritage as colonial rule itself.

There is of course a role for the military in any modern society in defending the territorial integrity of a nation and protecting its people against external aggression --- a function which even Africa's supposedly "backward" warriors, equipped with "primitive" weapons, understood. But many of today's "educated and trained" soldiers in Africa do not seem to understand this.

Clearly, the political systems imposed on much of Africa after independence by its leaders were alien to indigenous African political culture. At the very least, African leaders should have built upon their own indigenous political institutions. After all, they are part of black African culture.

They did not.

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**"The blessing that is compulsory is not wholly good, and any system of morals which has to be forced on us is immoral." -Elbert Hubbard, 1001 Epigrams (1911)**