

BEFORE STUDYING ITS ECONOMY, WE MUST FIRST UNDERSTAND SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

The Marquis de Condorcet (1743-1794) was delighted that within his lifetime both France and the baby United States had achieved "freedom" from despotic kings. Condorcet was a leader in the early days of the French Revolution. When the revolution turned a corner, Condorcet was turned upon by the radicals and sentenced to a rendezvous with the guillotine! Rather than subject his head to such a fate, he poisoned himself. Prior to his disenchantment, Condorcet wrote that everyone should achieve the "freedom" of France and the U.S. Watch his wording! "Will it, little by little, disappear -- this immense distance which separates these [free American and French] people from the servitude of nations submitting to kings, the barbarism of African hordes, and the ignorance of savages?"

Condorcet's choice of words is definitely not politically correct for our age! Servitude to kings has largely vanished from our planet; what about "barbarism of African hordes" and "the ignorance of savages"? Are they still with us? An answer may come from considering Sub-Saharan Africa today.

To provide a fair and balanced account, let's first consider "barbarism" in Africa committed by Caucasians. We know much about the past presence in Africa of the British, French, and Belgians. It should also be noted that in 1884, it was the Germans who colonized Togo, Cameroon, Namibia and Tanzania. When natives resisted, the Kaiser's troops brutally crushed such opposition from the Herero tribe. This German barbarism has not been forgotten. An official 1993 Bundestag publication acknowledges that this early "holocaust" caused considerable damage to Germany's reputation around the world. But the Germans were at it again as 1914 brought on the World War. In the Hollywood film classic "The African Queen," we can witness such German barbarism.

Sad to say, today a similar mood of conflict dominates great portions of Sub-Saharan Africa; but this time the Germans are not involved! As we considered this region from A to Z, or Angola to Zimbabwe,

considerable unrest is observed. To establish that Sub-Saharan Africa is indeed a fruitful area for further research, here is a quick hopping from spot to spot that was accomplished in our paper.

In Angola, UNITA rebels were fighting to overthrow the "corrupt dictatorship" of Eduardo dos Santos. In Burundi, since 1993 the Tutsis have continued to battle the Hutus. In Congo-Kinshasa, the Congo Liberation Front was opposing the central government and in one low point in the process, six International Red Cross workers were killed. At Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, rioting students and police struggled; 38 dead, 250 injured. In Ghana, at a soccer match, 130 persons were trampled to death when the spectators became unruly. In Rwanda, a monastery was accused of turning over to the Hutus some 7,000 Tutsis who had sought refuge in the monastery; those Tutsis were killed. South Africa seems to be leading the continent in the percent of citizens with AIDS. Other Sub-Saharan nations are very close behind. In Sudan, there are drought, famine and a civil war between Christians/Animists from the south and Muslims from the north. Troops from Uganda have been involved in the civil war in Democratic Republic of Congo. Troops from Zimbabwe have been doing the same while also invading white farms in their own nation.

What about the future for Sub-Saharan Africa? A passage from the Gospel of Saint Matthew seems appropriate: "Take no thought for the morrow... Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." The evil in Sub-Saharan Africa today is indeed sufficient! Its effect upon economic issues there makes one wonder if there even is a future. At least, as we have hinted above, Sub-Saharan Africa is an area open to massive further economic research.