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Samuel W. Seton, Liberian Citizen

Jane J. Martin

Samuel W. Seton was a nineteenth century Glebo Liberian whose name appears only rarely in Liberian history books. He was not one of the major figures of Liberia's past but he played an interesting part in her history as both rebel and patriot and in both roles he had an impact on Liberia's development. Seton's story illustrates the attitudes and problems of a man of traditional ethnic background who came to accept the standards of Liberian settler society and the dominant position of Liberian authority while remaining attached to his kin, and loyal to his own people.

A Glebo Warrior and his Christian Apprenticeship

To Kla, as he was called, was born near Cape Palmas in eastern Liberia, probably in the 1830s.[1] His family were Nyemowe as opposed to Kudemowe Glebo. The Nyemowe Glebo lived in the traditional towns at Cape Palmas, Graway and River Cavalla and claimed the lands which surrounded these towns, while Kudemowe peoples were found at Rocktown, Fishtown and Half Cavalla. Kla's great grandfather, Yortarpey, had come from Sasstown farther to the west where there was a large Glebo community.[2] We know little about Kla's childhood. However, by the 1850s, he had been involved in two activities which typified the life of most Glebo young men: he had been to sea, working on merchant ships which travelled along the West African Coast, and he had been a warrior, taking part in at least one of the ritualistic battles which occurred almost yearly between Nyomowe and Kudemowe towns in the 1840s and 1850s.[3]

By the 1850s Kla had also felt the impact of the new forces which affected the life of most Glebo around Cape Palmas. In 1834 a colony of black Americans from the United States had been established at Cape Palmas under the auspicies of the Maryland Colonization Society. In the first treaty which they signed with the Nyomowe Glebo chiefs, the settlers agreed to respect the rights of the Cape Palmas Glebo to their town and their farm lands. The new settlements of emigrants had grown up around the traditional center. The development was not without tension or friction which Kla undoubtedly witnessed, but there had been no outbreak of war in the first twenty years, and the approximately one thousand colonists tended to support the Cape Palmas Glebo in their wars with other Glebo towns.

Missions had also affected the Cape Palmas Glebo. Although the station of the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions had been closed in 1843, the

Protestant Episcopal Church had maintained and strengthened its mission efforts begun in 1836 among the Glebo. Many Glebo at Cape Palmas were converted in a revival of 1855. Churches and schools were crowded with those eager to learn and Bishop John Payne, head of the missions in the area, said of the converts, "Along the road they are to be seen with books in hand, asking of each other, and of colonists who may chance to be passing along, the instructions they seek."[4]

In 1856 Kla was converted to Christianity. He may have been influenced by the revival at Cape Palmas for he had evidently attended the mission school.[5] However other circumstances may have affected his decision as well. During one of the Glebo wars Kla and a friend had visited one of the Glebo Christian catechists to seek God's help through prayer instead of relying on the traditional war medicine.[6] It seems probable that this occurred between February and April 1856, when the Cape Palmas Glebo won important victories against their Rocktown enemies. God's support had not made Kla inviolable: he was wounded in battle and the ball fractured his thigh so that ever afterward he walked with a permanent limp and, at least in his later life, used a cane.[7] While he was recuperating he was visited by C. C. Hoffman, one of the most devoted and respected of the Protestant Episcopal missionaries, and N. S. Harris, a leading Glebo convert, who convinced him that he should devote himself to Christian labors.[8] He was baptised on July 20, 1856, and given the name of Samuel W. Seton probably after an important contributor to the mission cause in the United States. Said Hoffman, "He is another token to us of God's favor, another crown of rejoicing, to think that from grossest heathen darkness he has been brought to the marvelous light of the Gospel."[9]

Kla's life now took on a different shape and new activities absorbed his attention. The area of Cape Palmas itself had a new status. The wars of the mid 1850s between the Nyemowe and Kudemowe Glebo soon involved the settlers. Desperate for help, the leaders of "Maryland in Liberia," which had gained its independence from the Maryland Colonization Society in 1854, appealed to the Liberian Government at Monrovia. When Liberia's assistance brought victory against the hostile Nyemowe Glebo, the tiny state opted to join Liberia as a new county. There is no evidence that this change made a difference in Seton's life. We do know, however, that, as a result of these wars, the Cape Palmas Glebo were forced to leave their old homes and built a new town across the Hoffman River from the settler community and not far from a Christian Glebo settlement. The Christian town, called Hoffman Station, had been founded by Seton's friend N. S. Harris, in 1855, when accusations from his colonial neighbors made life difficult for him in the westernized town. Seton lived at Hoffman Station.

From 1856 until the mid 1870s much of Seton's time was devoted to preparation for service in the church, to preaching and missionary activity. He studied

Latin and Greek as well as church e of his teachers was Alexander Crummell, later to beco of Monrovia and in the Protestant Episcopal Church in Wa lso became involved in translating works into Glebo, prima nd hymns. He instructed the new missionaries in the fundam Beside scholarly activity there were missionary trips. A sho at Webo about 60 miles in the interior with one of the Glebo Seton accompanied the missionary, C. C. Hoffman, on som villages and later he evangelized in these interior towns ver most of his efforts were devoted to the Glebo around Cape Palmas. When Harris died in 1862, Seton took his place and became the native superintendent. He taught night school, preached regularly and visited the nearby Glebo villages. By this time Seton had established a reputation for dependability among the missionaries and they commented on his intelligence as well as his reliability.[10] In December 1865 he was made a deacon and directed to preach and assist at St. James parish, the church at Hoffman Station. In 1868 he was ordained a minister in the Protestant Episcopal Church.

Leadership in the Mission Community

In the years following his ordination Seton took iniative in his work and sought to play a dominant role in the mission's life. He was eager to develop a girls' school at Hoffman Station; he purchased a boat to make commuting between mission stations easier; he condemned interference with the schools under his jurisdiction by one of the missionaries; he questioned mission decisions made about his jurisdiction without consulting him; and he made a number of suggestions for the mission's improvement. After the death of the second missionary Bishop, J. G. Auer, in 1874, Seton suggested that the St diocese (which included Glebo and settler Liberian workers as e given authority to appoint teachers and control students at ol located at Cavalla. The Secretary of the Board in New Yo the existing system which gave those responsibili he missionary in charge of the school – both American dy, the representative of the Protestant Episcopal Church, vis eton, at Eddy's request, enumerated the needs of the missio hurch at the cost of about $10,000, a school house estimated ply mission needs, new texts, a small steamboat, travelling expenses for missionaries and reasonable support for apprentices educated in mission schools so that they could support their families.[11]

Seton's initiatives aroused innumerable complaints from the missionaries in the field who were especially critical of his financial needs and his lack of frugality. After receiving Seton's letter on the needs of the mission, Eddy commented:

> Mr. (Seton) seems to be a useful man in his work, well entitled to the name of a Christian clergyman, but he must be considered, as regards his character and life, from the standpoint of the well ascertained characteristics of his people. Remembering that Hoffman, of blessed memory, took him from his native town a naked "Krew Boy," and that all that he is, and all that he has, has been the gift of the mission, and that, but for his connection with it, he would be a half-starved, utterly destitute savage, we might justly look for some evidences of contentment and gratitude to God and the Church for all earthly blessings as well as for the higher things, all of which he received as the gifts of Christians bestowed for Christ's sake; but, on the contrary, the very fact that all these things have been given him without his having had to earn his own living in youth, is to him simply a confirmation and acknowledgment of his right to such further things as he may ask for of the committee.[12]

Bishop Auer and his successor Bishop Penick both condemned Seton's extravagance: he purchased a melodeon which Auer claimed no one could play properly; he wanted the mission to pay for a trip which he took down the Coast for his health, and he built a large house in the 1870s which seemed beyond his resources.[13] The bishops felt that his accounts were suspect and his bills and claims difficult to unravel.

It may have been true that Seton was living beyond his means. His salary was only $500 a year in 1871 and he had many ways to use the money. Bishop Auer noted that his heathen relatives expected things from him; Seton himself pointed out that, beside his own family of a wife and two children, he was surrounded by numerous poor Christians who looked to him for relief. His preaching trips were also an added expense.[14]

Seton sought to participate in the life of the settler-Liberian community and this increased his financial outlay. Missionaries who declared that one of their aims was to civilize the Glebo felt that Seton had become "too civilized." He ordered such items as flour, butter, yeast, tinned meats, and other expensive items – as well as books – from abroad. "Mr. S. tries to imitate the style of living of a Liberian Minister, but he ought not to do it," declared Bishop Auer in 1871.[15] Bishop Payne had earlier complained: "He has a decided delight in holding forth in English discourses (at a great disadvantage) in St. Marks' Church to though his own people have great need of him."[16] Seton's commitment to the settler-Liberian community is evident in the fact that sometime before 1875 he "signed the Constitution," and so, with other Hoffman Station Glebo Christians, became a Liberian citizen.[17] Yet he must have suffered some inner turmoil. He was not considered a social equal by the settler-Liberians at Cape Palmas where western dressed Glebo had sometimes been referred to openly as "native dogs," and no settler-Liberian ever asked educated Glebo to dinner, "not even Rev.

Seton," according to one observer.[18] At the same time missionaries claimed that Seton lacked influence among his own people.[19]

Leadership in the Glebo Community

Seton may have lacked influence among some of the Glebo Christians at the mission station but he was playing a significant role in the wider Glebo community in the early 1870s. Since his conversion he had been concerned with the continuing divisions between the Glebo sections. In his work with Hoffman in the early 1860s he had taken part in at least one peacemaking mission among the Glebo.[20] In the late 1860s there was even greater need for reconciliation between the Glebo sections. Wars between Kudemowe and Nyomowe towns had become increasingly destructive and the government seemed unable to settle the difficulties. Seton, who remained neutral, saw other Christian Glebo take sides with their relatives and fight in the wars.[21] In 1871 Seton and other Glebo Christians became known as the "Joiners of Relations" when they initiated peace between the two sections.[22] Two years later, in December, 1873, Seton was among those responsible for the founding of a Glebo Confederation or Reunited Kingdom. Guns were buried, traditional rituals followed and the Gloria in Excelsis sung at the ceremonies where men of all the Glebo towns vowed to maintain peace and set up a common council.[23] This confederation may have been stimulated by news of the confederation which had existed among the Fanti of present day Ghana in the years from 1868 to 1871. News of the Fanti Confederation as well as its constitution appeared in The African Times which was read by many Glebo men. Seton may have gained more intimate knowledge of its operation during a trip which he took down the coast in December 1869 and January and February 1870. At that time he visited Accra and Christiansborg as well as Lagos, Calabar, Brass, Bonny, Gabon and Fernando Po.[24] Moreover Seton gained new opportunities to develop links among the Glebo towns of the different sections when he acquired responsibilities for preaching at the Kudemowe towns of Cavalla and Rocktown in early 1873.[25]

The formation of the Confederation in which Seton took a leading part stimulated fear in the settler-Liberian community, many of whose members felt threatened by Glebo unity. Protestant Episcopal Board officials read about the Confederation in the mission newspaper The West African Record and, in December, 1874, wrote to those involved, warning them that the Church recognized no government except the Liberian Government and that they were anxious that nothing should interfer with that government.[26] In February 1875 Seton was one of those who wrote back to the Board, declaring that they had no intention of interferring with the "Americo-Liberian" Government.

> We acted thus then with a pure motive to conform to the declaration of our Lord: "Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the

> children of God." We further beg to forewarn your committee that some of the Americo-Liberians since the establishment of your mission among your people have had and still have a deep rooted but unfounded prejudice against us.[27]

Only a week before this letter was written, the Superintendent of Maryland County, James Tuning, had written to the Board charging that Seton and other mission workers were following a course toward war.[28] Tuning's own recklessness, his lack of respect for Glebo leaders, and his prejudice played an important part in provoking the war which followed, although there are reasons to suspect that traditional Glebo chiefs may have heightened tensions and forced the Christian Glebo to take sides.

War began in September 1875 between the Glebo and the government, after attempts at meditation by J. S. Payne, President-elect of Liberia, failed. Seton remained with the Glebo whose army was estimated at five to six thousand. He denied taking an active part in the war.[29] In September the Rev. Mr. Fair, a newly arrived missionary and a neutral party was admitted to the barricade at Hoffman Station and spoke with Seton. Seton declared that he sympathized with his people and felt it was his duty to watch over their souls.[30] However he said that he still considered himself a Liberian citizen and intended to take up arms only in self-defense. He was acting as an interpreter for the Glebo and expected to continue this work.

Settler-Liberians and missionaries – including Fair himself – felt that Seton was one of the main rebel leaders.[31] The militia aimed their shells at his house and sought to damage St. James' Church as well, according to one observer.[32] There is little aside from the weight of opinion to prove that Seton had initiated and continued to control the Glebo so-called aggression. He had ordered a large quantity of gunpowder and percussion caps from the Mission Office but this had been eighteen months before the war began.[33] On the other hand the Christian Glebo generally did play an important role in the prosecution of the war. Liberian authorities told Thomas Eddy, then at Monrovia, that the flag at Hoffman Station was labelled "In God We Trust" and that the Glebo were heard to chant together the Te Deum and the Gloria in Excelsis when they were victorious in battle.[34] Eddy also declared that a committee of the Christian Glebo had initiated a supreme court to decide issues which could not be settled by townheadmen.[35] Such a court had been suggested at the formation of the Glebo Confederation.

Seton's influence during the war may be assumed from the prominent position he held in the making of the peace. The U.S.S. Alaska arrived in February 1876, and the Glebo agreed to come to terms under the mediating efforts of Captain A. A. Seemes. Before the meetings began Seemes talked with Seton unofficially about the war and during the talks Seton acted as interpreter. The peace that was made pleased Seton as it did other Glebo men for it "opened up the Constitution." In it the

Liberian Government promised to give the Glebo equal rights with other citizens including the same rights to the use of public lands and to trading opportunities.[36] Seton was convinced that Liberian leaders now saw the necessity of incorporating the indigenous peoples into Liberia if they themselves were to survive.[37]

From Minister of the Gospel to Government Servant

After the peace, Seton returned to his church work as minister of the congregation of St. James' Church at Hoffman Station. His relationship with the Episcopal Church was soon to change. In 1878 he was dismissed from his office, and in 1887 he was converted to the faith of the Jehovah's Witnesses and left the Church. His interest in religious ideas remained but gradually political concerns took precedence, as government positions became available to him.

When Bishop Penick arrived in Cape Palmas in late 1877 and reviewed the missions he declared that Hoffman Station was the "most lifeless" station in the jurisdiction, and he spoke of Seton as "a very remarkable man encompassed with suspicions."[38] Penick himself was not an easy man to work for and further trouble arose between Penick and Seton soon afterward. In February 1877 Seton's wife Mary Bowman Seton had died, and, in September, in a ceremony performed by Samuel D. Ferguson, later to be Bishop of Cape Palmas, Seton was married to Laura Potter, age sixteen.[39] One of the missionaries openly protested the marriage in St. James' Church and declared that the woman was guilty of committing adultery. Bishop Penick interviewed Seton, learned that the tale was accurate, and, in an unprecedented action, dismissed Seton from the mission, pending a decision from the Church in America.[40]

Set ept such arbitrary decisions. In a letter addressed to
the eccle ed States he noted that his wife had repented and
joined the rriage, and that the villagers had drawn up a
testimony d not feel that he had violated his ordination vow
which rea r diligence to frame and fashion your own lives, and
the lives o g to the Doctrine of Christ, and to make both
yourselve in you lieth, wholesome examples of the flock of
Christ?" etermine, had he broken any known law or canon of
the Prote f the United States.[41]

The case was referred to three of the Bishops in the United States. They did not feel authorized to hold a trial or to make a decision but they offered the opinion that the Bishop of Cape Palmas had been justified in dismissing Seton. Undoubtedly influenced by the fact that Seton had been accused of adultery on three former occasions and had never been convicted because of questionable testimony by the

witnesses, the Bishops – who had used almost no evidence to substantiate their opinion – concluded:

> We are moreover impressed with the very great importance in carrying on Mission work in Africa of presenting clearly and strongly the pure morality of the religion of Christ, and of employing as laborers in this field those only whose conduct is without just reproach.[42]

Despite the loss of his clerical status, Seton continued to maintain his membership in St. James Church. In 1882 and again in 1885 he sought to be restored to office, without result. Then, in 1887, when decision on his case was pending, Seton wrote to Ferguson severing his relationship with the Protestant Episcopal Church.

> My reason for doing so in the first place, is, I believe that the Protestant churches have departed from the pure word of God as taught by Jesus Christ and His apostles and have adopted human dogmas and traditions of the elders which make void the word of God (Mark VII. 13) on account of which Jesus denounced woe upon the Pharisees and others who were guilty of the same thing in His day. Matt. XXIII 1-33, XV 2, 3, 9, Mark VII, 2, 3, 5. . . . .
>
> My second reason for leaving the Prot. Episcopal Church is, I desire to preach the pure word of God under the sole authority and commission of none but Jesus, whom I recognize as the only Head of His Church, and no other. Having my eyes once annointed with the eye salve (Rev. III, 18) of the pure word of God, I dare not remain any longer to dapple with you in the human teachings, for the word of God, which are the prolific sources of discord and wranglings in the Protestant Churches. You may ask me where are you going my brother? I will answer you, I am not going back to heathenism where I once was, but I have already united myself with the Church of Christ – the Church which Christ himself and His apostles organized and which is characterized by the preaching of the pure word of God and primitive simplicity in all things appertaining to the same Church. . . . I shall ever endeavor to win you all to Christ and into His Church.[43]

Ferguson was convinced that this move was "an attempt on the part of Satan to pull down and destroy all that has been reared up for the cause of Christ in this land."[44] The Bishop declared that Seton had withdrawn from the Church because he had not been restored to his position of authority and because the sect of the Jehovah's Witnesses which he had helped to establish in Cape Palmas did not condemn polygamy.[45] Ferguson issued a warning against the new church and its false prophet, Seton.[46]

Seton's break with the church and his interest in a new sect seems to have been a considered and a religiously motivated act. As the Bishop noted, Seton and others had been reading the literature of the Jehovah's Witnesses which had began to reach Liberia. Seton was influenced by articles. He and a number of other residents of Cape Palmas, including settler-Liberians, had recognized themselves as part of the Church of Christ after reading together the article "Ekklesia" in the September 1884 edition of .[47] The author of that article contrasted the early church of Christ with the present church organizations and declared that present day churches had developed their own creeds and laws.

> These laws emanate from their heads or rulers and law-givers; so it is clearly seen that these present day churches have and recognize as heads, or directing, ruling powers over them the ancient founders of their various creeds while their clergy in conferences, councils, synods, and presbyteries, interpret and enforce the "traditions of the elders" which "make void the Word of God." These take the place of the true head of the church – Jesus, and the true teacher and guide into all truth, the Holy Spirit.[48]

The writer went on to urge men to take as their example the early church, "where we are all bound under Christ, by love and common interest," and to settle arguments through recourse to the scriptures.[49] Seton's decision to leave the Protestant Episcopal Church was undoubtedly influenced not only by these new ideas, but also by a similar action of his "dearest friend," the settler-Liberian Edward Wilmot Blyden who had resigned from the Presbyterian Church in September 1886 to become a "Minister of Truth."[50]

Religious activities continued to concern Seton in the years after he became a Jehovah's ding member of the newly established faith and conducted nd the homes of others. He preached in the traditional h, according to Ferguson, the chiefs regarded the new doct ow long Seton continued these efforts is unknown but refere urch, as the new sect was called, appeared in the Episcopal rts until 1891 and meetings evidently continued up to the turn of pread the doctrine by distributing copies of The to friends in Monrovia.[53] He also showed a gical ideas, and requested literature from John Miller, an independent Presbyterian in New Jersey. Miller wished to help spread the Gospel among the Muslims of central Liberia and he had corresponded with Edward Blyden about a possible mission. Seton wrote to him, eager to cooperate with Blyden in the effort.[54]

Although he maintained his interest in religion, Seton's main work in the quarter of a century following the war of 1875 centered around government service. Sources

on his efforts are scanty and the picture which can be pieced together is very incomplete. As early as August 1876 he was serving as a peacemaker in the interior.[55] He was the Commissioner of Education in Maryland County by 1884, and he appears to have held that position until his death. In 1884, at a time when Liberia was becoming aware of the need to strengthen her boundaries, Seton was appointed to a commission to visit San Pedro to the east of Cape Palmas in order to investigate the possibilities of establishing a settlement in that region.[56]

His most prominent position was that of representative to the National Legislature of Liberia. He ran for office in 1887 and, with 171 votes, was among the three representatives elected from Maryland County. Glebo chiefs with limited rights already sat in the House, but Seton became the first Glebo to be elected to the Assembly. Settler-Liberian as well as Glebo voters supported him.[57] We know little about his efforts in the House of Representatives and their successes or failures. He did introduce a bill for the incorporation of tribal peoples into the state. "If that bill is passed and put into force with earnestness and vigor, Liberia will take an important step in the direction of progress," said Edward Blyden.[58] Seton was reelected for a second term in 1889. Although he gave up his national office in the 1890s, he continued to take an active part in government affairs as Judge of the Monthly and Probate Court of Maryland County as well as Commissioner of Education at Cape Palmas.

Meeting Discrimination in Two Committees

Despite his successes in Liberia, Seton had detractors among some settler-Liberians. They were especially eager to remove him from his position as immigration agent of the American Colonization Society at Cape Palmas. Seton had been appointed to that post in 1886 by C.T.O. King, the representative of the American Colonization Society in Liberia.[59] Immigrants were being encouraged to settle in Maryland County in order to buttress Liberia's eastern boundary against French penetration. Ownership of land had always been a source of tension in Maryland County and King hoped that the appointment of a Glebo like Seton with influence among Glebo peoples would make it easier to acquire land for the settlers.[60] Seton's appointment was solidly supported, the more so because he had accepted settler-Liberian values. Benjamin Anderson, the explorer and public official, for instance, thought that Seton was "sensible to the present interests of his country."

> Our natives have the stupid idea of all Barbarians; that we have come to oust or deprive them. Whereas so far from that, we have come to deliver them from heathenism. And besides it is simply a return of their own people. Mr. Seton now fully understands this grand natural idea.[61]

The most vocal opposition to Seton's appointment came from James Tuning, the former ounty during the 1875 war, who had once been described a he association of Thieves, Robbers, and Adulterers." t "nothing but a true borned Americo-Liberian-or American c llow subjects coming from America – having himself come from eton was labelled a foreigner who sapped Liberia's life blood a l development.[64] Tuning had a number of supporters ı r-Liberian community and among the somewhat rowdy grou e organized a public meeting against Seton as well as writing le A.C.S. and fn . Seton had his supporters, including the Episcopal Bishop, but he was his own best defender. The following passage from a letter to one of his critics is an interesting assertion of his principles and determination.

> . . . I believe that nature has bestowed upon me some humane principles of philanthropy and especially. . . racial instinct so that where ever I find a human being, or a man of my down trodden race, I recognize him and do all in my power to make him as cheerful and comfortable as I can. Hence I am well known in Liberia as well as in other places where I never was before. But while I do so voluntarily sacrifice many things for the interest of humanity I find another principle in my (?) which never allows any person, friend or foe, to trample upon my rights, whether natural, divine or political, with impunity.
>
> In your clownish letter in question you charged me with unjustness, unreasonableness, ungentlemanly manners, dishonesty, and then threatened to stigmatize me throughout Liberia. In answer to this part of your letter, I beg to assure you that I have my reputation so firmly established in Cape Palmas, if not in whole Liberia, that I do not entertain the least dread in my heart for your assailing it with all your might.[65]

Seton did not lose his position as agent and still retained it in 1898.

While Seton suffered discrimination from settler-Liberians who resented his rise from a "savage state," on at least one occasion he was also opposed by Glebo who maintained traditional ways. In 1897 some Glebo attacked the farm of Otto Koch, a German who had leased land from some Liberian citizens at Cape Palmas. The Glebo men had claims on the land but Seton and others, acting as mediators, urged them to submit to "the Power that be." "Upon this the natives considered us as their bitter enemies," wrote Seton to Wilson of the A.C.S.[66] An opportunity soon arose for the traditional Glebo of Cape Palmas to act against their "civilized brethren." In 1897 and again in 1899, members of new political parties, first the Reform Party and later the Union Party, urged the uneducated Glebo to pressure their voting relatives to cast

their ballots against the incumbent Whigs. In 1899, when Union Party members were not elected, the traditional Glebo ransacked the dwellings of the educated Glebo and destroyed houses, furniture and personal belongings. Twenty six families, 150 persons in all, were forced to flee from Hoffman Station to Harper.[67] Seton and his friends and neighbors determined to leave the area and its intrigues and hoped to establish a farming settlement on the Cavalla River with support from the A.C.S.[68] The plan did not materialize and although Seton kept his residence in Hoffman Station he evidently spent most of his later years in Monrovia where his daughter and his son and perhaps other family members resided.[69]

Seton's Last Years

Seton's last years were spent in writing and in public speaking, an activity which had given him pleasure from his earliest days of preaching. He worked in cooperation with settler-Liberians. A number of his articles were published in the , a slim periodical published in 1898, 1899, and 1900, and designed to encourage potential investors in Maryland County. For instance, one of the articles detailed the trip of the Seton Exploring Party up the Cavalla River and identified the resources of the area.[70] Seton's name also appeared in the list of those attending the meetings of the Maryland Academy of Philosophy, a group which was more concerned with the development of favorable economic conditions in the county than with philosophy.[71]

Until the end of his life in February, 1908, Samuel Seton remained deeply attached to Liberia's values. His last wife, Louisa D. Seton was a settler-Liberian – the first known "Americo-Liberian" woman to marry a Glebo. One of his daughters, Louisa, married William M. Davis, an important Liberian official who held such offices as Attorney General and Secretary of State, and another daughter, Euphemia, became the wife of President Edwin Barclay.[72] Throughout the years after 1875 Seton maintained his faith that the unification of Liberia's people would come through the Liberian Government and that the government would recognize her obligations to the indigenous people.[73] He took special pride in the achievements of the Glebo of Maryland County and, in a speech at the celebration of the sixty-sixth anniversary of the founding of "Maryland in Liberia" in 1900 he commented:

> Of all the four counties of the Republic, that of Maryland has been the foremost to recognize the primary importance of incorporating into the body politic the civilized aborigines, as well as the accession of the heathen tribes far and near in the interior. For an illustration of the fact, we see their advancement in the following positions etc. held by them. In the military department we find four holding position as Captain. Three have been Honourable Members of the Legislature, in the House of Representatives. Many have held positions as schoolteachers, and have

> done so with great credit to the race, among whom we find the Rev. M. P. K. Valentine, M.A. as the first colored Principal in the county. Many are excellent classical scholars. Two have been acting as efficient Engineers. Four have received diplomas as graduates in medicine, one is still in America practicing. There is another (not of the four) now in the U.S. graduating in Medicine. You will also find among them, accomplished musicianers.[74]

He concluded his speech by stating his belief that the county would succeed in race identification and amalgamation, and thereby grow stronger.

After Seton's death President Arthur Barclay, in his annual address of December, 1908, acknowledged Seton's influence in Maryland County and his efforts at bringing together settler and indigenous Liberians.[75] Seton's stand against prejudice and his leadership activities were undoubtedly among the pressures which led the government of the county and of the Republic to advance Glebo men and interests. Yet the difficulties which he encountered in his efforts to develop links between peoples and to live a fulfilling personal life demonstrate that it was not easy for a Glebo man to assume the role of Liberian citizen.

FOOTNOTES

Abbreviations:

DFMS:	Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, Church Historical Society, Protestant Episcopal Church, U.S.A. FLB: Foreign Letter Books. Documents from the closed file are quoted with permission.
ACS:	American Colonization Society materials, Library of Congress.
SM:	Spirit of Missions

[1]C. C. Hoffman, Diary, July 20, 1856, SM, XX (1857), 231.

[2]S. W. Seton, "Migration of Glebo Tribes from the East," Cape Palmas Reporter, II, 8 (Mar. 1900), 319. In this paper I use the spelling for Glebo terms found in the Traditional History and Folklore of the Glebo Tribe issued by the Department of Interior, Republic of Liberia in 1957.

[3]Seton to Denison, Nov. 19, 1869 FLB, DFMS; Hoffman, July 29, 1856, SM, XXII (1857), 231.

[4]Payne to Irving, July 14, 1855, DFMS.

[5]Edwin Gahie Hodge, Interview, February 21, 1975, Monrovia.

[6]Seton, SM, XXXI (1866), 267.

[7]Eddy to Duane, September 16, 1875; DFMS; Seton, SM, XXXI (1866), 267.

[8]Seton, SM, XXXI (1866), 267.

[9]Hoffman, July 20, 1856, SM, XXII (1857), 231.

[10]For information in this paragraph see: Report of the Missionary Bishop to Africa, SM, XX (1855), 622; Hoffman, Journal, Sept. 6, 1856, SM, XXII (1857), 285-6; Hoffman to Denison, Mar. 10, 1859, DFMS; Hoffman to Denison, Sept. 11, 1861, DFMS; Hoffman to Denison, Oct. 9, 1861, DFMS; Hoffman to Denison, Dec. 12, 1863, DFMS; Crummell to Tracy, Jan. 20, 1868, FLB, DFMS; Mary B. Merrian, Africa (Boston, 1868), 139; wi (Hymns and Prayers in Grebo), (Lagos: CMS Press, 1924), passim.

[11]Seton to Auer, Sept. 30, 1873, DFMS; Seton to Duane, Mar. 5, 1874; DFMS; Seton to Eddy, Aug. 7, 1874, DFMS; Seton to Duane, May 10, 1875, DFMS.

[12]Thomas Eddy, Report, n.d. (1875?), filed at the conclusion of Eddy's correspondence, DFMS.

[13]Auer to Denison, Oct. 18, 1870, DFMS; Auer to Denison, Feb. 25, 1871, DFMS; Penick to Kimber, May 21, 1878, DFMS; Penick to Kimber, Feb. 26, 1879, DFMS. Some ruins of his house were still standing in 1976.

[14]Auer to Hare, Oct. 10, 1871, DFMS; Seton to Morrell, June 8, 1868, DFMS; Seton to Denison, Nov. 22, 1867, DFMS.

[15]Auer to Hare, Oct. 10, 1871, DFMS.

[16]Payne to Denison, Apr. 4, 1868, FLB, DFMS.

[17]R. S. McGill to Duane, Sept. 18, 1875, DFMS.

[18]J. C. Hazeley, Report, Apr. 12, 1875, misc. files, DFMS; Auer to Hare, Oct. 10, 1871, DFMS.

[19]Payne to Hare, Dec. 27, 1870, DFMS; Auer to Hare, Oct. 16, 1870, DFMS; Auer to Hare, Feb. 25, 1871, DFMS.

[20]Hoffman, Journal, Nov. 3, 1862, SM, XXVIII (1863), 64.

[21]Payne to Denison, May 7, 1868, FLB, DFMS.

[22]Seton to Hare, Nov. 1, 1871, DFMS.

[23]Valentine to Langford, June 1, 1893, DFMS; McGill to Duane, Dec. 25, 1874, DFMS.

[24]Seton to Duane, Mar. 19, 1870, DFMS.

[25]Auer to Hare, July 23, 1873, DFMS; Auer to Hare, Sept. 22, 1873, DFMS.

[26]Duane to Ferguson, Dec. 20, 1874, enclosed with Ferguson to Langford, Nov. 9, 1887, DFMS (the original letter book copy is missing from the records of the society).

[27]Document from S. W. Seton et. al., Feb. 12, 1875, filed with the materials of O. E. Shannon, DFMS.

[28]Tuning to Board, Feb. 6, 1875, DFMS.

[29]Eddy to Duane, Sept. 16, 1875, DFMS.

[30]Fair to Duane, Sept. 23, 1875, DFMS. Seton had attended school with Charles Hodge who was, in 1875, the chief of the Cape Palmas Glebo people and one of the leaders of the war. Edwin Gahie Hodge, Interview, Feb. 21, 1975, Monrovia.

[31]Eddy to Duane, Monrovia, Sept. 16, 1875, DFMS; Fair to Duane, Sept. 23, 1875, DFMS; J. E. Moore, Secretary of State, Monrovia, to Duane, Dec. 20, 1875, DFMS.

[32]J. C. Hazeley, Report, April 12, 1875, misc. files, DFMS.

[33]Seton to Duane, Jan. 9, 1874, DFMS.

[34]Eddy, notes, n.d. received Jan. 29, 1876, DFMS.

[35]Ibid.

[36]Printed Treaty enclosed with Turner to Fish, May 31, 1876, United States Ministers to Liberia, National Archives microfilm, Roll T.-5. Article seven of the treaty. see Samuel David Ferguson, Jr. Letter from King Yado Gyude of the Cape Palmas Grebo and Reply (Cape Palmas, 1910), 16-17.

[37]Seton, Mar. 15, 1876, SM, XLI (1876), 310-12.

[38]Penick to the Board, Nov. 22, 1881, DFMS; Penick to Kimber, May 21, 1878, DFMS.

[39]Mary Bowman Seton was probably Seton's second wife. One of the missionaries in the early 1860s stated that his wife was named Harriet and was a lady

with a temper. H. G. Brittan, . 2nd edition (New York, 1860), 267-8.

[40]Penick to the Board, Jan. 23, 1878, DFMS.

[41]Seton to the ecclesiastical court, Jan. 21, 1878, DFMS closed file.

[42]Smith to Penick, Mar. 14, 1878; DFMS; For accusations of adultery against Seton see: Penick to Board, Jan. 23, 1878, DFMS; Gibson to Kimber, Jan. 4, 1878, DFMS.

[43]Seton to Ferguson, Sept. 1, 1887, copy enclosed with King to Coppinger, Sept. 20, 1887, DFMS, XXIV, 2, ACS.

[44]Ferguson to Gibson, Sept. 20, 1887, enclosed with Ferguson to Langford, Oct. 8, 1887, DFMS. closed file.

[45]Ferguson to Langford, Sept. 8, 1887, Oct. 8, 1887, DFMS. closed file.

[46]"Warning," Sept. 3, 1887, enclosed with Ferguson to Langford, Sept. 8, 1887, DFMS. closed file.

[47]Seton, n.d. in IX, 6 (Feb. 1888), 8.

[48]"The Ekklesia," , III, 4, 5 (Oct. Nov., 1881), 295. The article was reprinted in the issue of September 1884 but this issue, the one which Seton read, was unavailable to the author.

[49]Ibid.

[50]Seton to Blyden, Feb. 19, 1889, XXVI, ACS.

[51]Ferguson to Langford, Oct. 8, 1887, DFMS. closed file. see also Seton to Blyden, Feb. 19, 1889, XXVI, ACS.

[52]E. P. Keda Messenger, Annual Report, June 30, 1891, DFMS; David Shank, written communication, Oct. 2, 1978.

[53]Seton, n.d. IX (Feb., 1888), 8; Seton to King, Sept. 30, 1887, enclosed with King to Coppinger, Oct. 6, 1887, XXIV, 2, ACS.

[54]Seton to John Miller, Feb. 1, 1889, The Miller Papers, Princeton University Library; Edith Holden, (New York, 1966), 612.

[55]Report of Committee (Valentine and Ferguson), Aug. 19, 1876, filed with Ferguson, DFMS.

[56]Seton to Davis, Secretary of State, Feb. 25, 1884, Box 22, folder of reports, Shufeldt Papers, Library of Congress.

[57]King to Coppinger, May 7, 1887, XXIV, 2, ACS.

[58]Blyden to Coppinger, Jan. 6, 1889, XXVI, ACS.

[59]Seton to Blyden, February 19, 1889, XXVI, ACS.

[60]King to Coppinger, Dec. 17, 1886, XXIII, 2, ACS. It is possible (but improbable) that Seton visited the U.S. in late 1887, perhaps in his position as agent of the ACS but the evidence for this has not been confirmed. see David Shank, letters of August 21 and Oct. 2, 1978, referring to The WatchTower, Jan., 1889.

[61]Anderson to King, Feb. 15, 1886, enclosed with King to Coppinger, Dec. 17, 1886, XXIII, 2, ACS.

[62]Thompson to King, Aug. 15, 1887, enclosed with King to Coppinger, Sept. 10, 1887, XXIV, 2, ACS.

[63]Tuning to Agent, July 14, 1887, XXIV, 2, ACS.

[64]Tuning to Board, Aug. 22, 1887, XXIV, 2, ACS.

[65]Seton to Roberts, Feb. 11, 1887, XXIV, 2, ACS. For evidence of Ferguson's support of Seton – surprising in light of Seton's break with the church and Ferguson's "Warning" – see Ferguson to Coppinger, Dec. 6, 1887, XXIV, 2, ACS.

[66]Seton to Wilson, June 26, 1899, XXVII, ACS.

[67]Ibid.

[68]Supplement to Seton to Wilson, June 26, 1899, XXVII, ACS.

[69]Philip Seton, Interview, May 20, 1976, Cape Palmas. Philip Seton is the grand nephew of S. W. Seton.

[70]S. W. Seton, "The Seton's Exploring Party," Cape Palmas Reporter, II, 5 (June, 1899), 181-9.

[71]"Memorial Addressed to the President of Liberia by "the Maryland Academy of Philosophy," Liberia Bulletin, XXIX (Nov. 1906), 51-5; African Agricultural World, IX, 8 (Nov. 1906), 6; Liberia Recorder, Dec. 9, 1905, 4-7.

[72]The Silver Trumpet, III, 1, 16; Tuning to Coppinger, July 11, 1887, XXIV, 2, ACS; Philip Seton, Interview, May 20, 1976, Cape Palmas.

[73]Seton to Wilson, Aug. 27, 1897, XXVII, ACS.

[74] Thursday, February 22nd, 1900, n.p., n.d. (Library of Congress), 27-8.

[75] of the President of Liberia, 1908, 34.

Determinants of Milk Choice in Infant Feeding Among Urban Liberian Mothers[1]

Magdalene S. David

Introduction

Extensive research conducted on infant feeding practices throughout the Third World in recent years has provided ample evidence of the declining incidence and/or duration of breastfeeding with concomitant increases in the use of breastmilk substitutes[2] (Orwell and Murray, 1974; Jelliffe and Jelliffe, 1978; Greiner, 1979; Raphael, 1979; Pelto, 1981; WHO, 1982; Igun, 1982; Franklin et al., 1983; David et al., 1983). This trend is not uniform between countries and, equally important, is not uniform within countries, being mainly an urban phenomenon.

The growing literature on infant feeding practices has been largely health-oriented, focusing on nutritional and health concerns such as the effects of the use of breastmilk substitutes on infant morbidity and mortality rates and the implications of a decline in breastfeeding for fertility rates. By contrast, relatively few studies have systematically investigated the factors that account for declining breastfeeding rates in developing countries. Fewer studies still have attempted to develop conceptual frameworks for explaining these recent changes in infant feeding practices despite the observation made by the World Health Organization (WHO) that 'there is clearly a need for a better understanding of the factors that have influenced breast-feeding so that appropriate interventions can be formulated for each specific situation' (1982).

The major conceptual framework of the determinants of milk choice which can be identified in the infant feeding literature can be designated the 'modernization' model, as it explains declining breastfeeding rates in the developing countries in terms of the ongoing processes of urbanization and modernization which are occurring as a result of contact with Western influences. Among the various aspects of Western cultural influences seen by advocates of this perspective to have the greatest impact are the infusion of Western technology and its subsequent glorification (Jelliffe and Jelliffe, 1978), the promotional activities of the baby milk manufactures (Jelliffe, 1972; Berg, 1973; Greiner, 1975), the trend toward increased female participation in the work force (Nerlove, 1974; Popkins and Solon, 1976; Butz, 1977), the perception of female breasts as a symbol of sexuality (Nag, 1983), prestige emulation (Pelto, 1981), the breakdown of supporting social networks that traditionally promoted breastfeeding (Raphael, 1979), and the lack of support for breastfeeding by the formalized health services due to a Western orientation (Jelliffe and Jelliffe, 1978).

A number of other factors associated with modernization in less developed countries (LDCs) have been shown to influence a mother's choice of infant milk. These include most notably, maternal education attainment which in turn appears to be related to a number of variables such as maternal age, type of marriage, and use of contraceptives. Most studies investigating infant feeding practices in LDCs show a negative correlation between female education and breastfeeding (Dow, 1977; Adegbola and Page, 1979; Igun, 1982; Franklin et al., 1983; Jarosz, 1985; Oni, 1985). This may be due to the relationship between education and Westernization, to the association between education and wage employment, to the adoption of the Western perception of female breasts as a symbol of sexuality (which makes breastfeeding in public difficult), or to an acceptance of the view that breastfeeding is 'traditional' or old-fashioned and therefore to be avoided.

Hypotheses can be offered to explain the observed and/or expected relationships between maternal age, type of marriage, use of contraceptives, and breastfeeding behavior. It can be conjectured that a positive correlation exists between maternal age and breastfeeding, since it is expected that older women, being less exposed to education and to a Western lifestyle in general, will tend to breastfeed more (i.e., in greater proportion and for a longer period) than younger women who would have a greater opportunity to attend school. Dow's (1977) findings based on a Yourba (Nigerian) sample that women in monogamous unions breastfeed for shorter intervals than women in polygynous unions, can be attributed to the effects of education on type of marriage rather than due to the effects of marital type per se on breastfeeding behavior. Contraceptive use may either have a direct effect on breastfeeding behavior or one which is mediated by maternal education. In the former case, it can be hypothesized that women in LDCs who use contraceptives (they usually tend to be educated) are likely to be aware of the negative effects which many contraceptives (especially hormonal methods) have on breastmilk and therefore will stop breastfeeding once they resume use of contraceptives following childbirth. On the other hand, the positive relationship found by some studies (Oni, 1985) between contraceptive use and breastfeeding behavior can be attributed to the well known effects of education on contraceptive use.[3]

Against the background of the above discussion and the statement of the majors tenets of the 'modernization' model for explaining change in breastfeeding behavior, it can be hypothesized that the key measurable determinants of infant milk choice in less developed countries will be maternal educational level, occupation, and duration of urban residence. Other factors likely to be strongly associated with a mother's choice of infant milk include maternal age, contraceptive use and factors associated with the use of the health care system, such as place of delivery and whether or not counselling on infant feeding was given immediately after birth.

This article will test the applicability of the 'modernization' model described above by drawing on data collected during a 1983-84 survey of mothers living in four Liberian cities. It will examine in detail factors associated with breastfeeding patterns and the use of breastmilk substitutes. Because the model under consideration only deals with socio-economic variables, the discussion is restricted to these factors and excludes any mention of issues related to feeding performance which may influence milk choice.[4]

Method

The data examined in this paper were drawn from a cross-sectional retrospective study on the feeding of urban Liberian infants in their first eight months of life. A stratified quota sampling technique was used to select the sample of mother-infant pairs living in four major cities to represent a cross-section of different socio-demographic groups. Selection of mother-infant pairs was based on child's age, maternal education, occupational status and duration of urban residence. The resulting sample can therefore be described as purposive or judgemental. Localities covered were: Monrovia, the capital city; Kakata; Bong Mines, a mining town; and Gbarnga. Details on the methodology of the study are described elsewhere (David, 1986a).

Sample size in the four localities ranged from 288 to 199, with a total of 910 mother-infant pairs. Data were collected by female interviewers[5] in 1983-84 using open-ended questions written in English and spontaneously translated as needed into Liberian English or a Liberian language. The majority (85%) of interviews took place in the respondent's home, while 15% were conducted in clinics. Other data gathered for the study include a survey of 12 health care facilities in the four study localities, interviews with 35 health care professionals and a survey of 25 retail stores selling breastmilk substitutes and feeding paraphernalia. Data from the interviews with mothers were coded by the primary investigator and analysed using a simple statistical computer package. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the characteristics of the sample, and chi square values were used to determine the strength and direction of relationships found in cross-tabulations.

Results

Milk Choice[6]

Of the 910 infants surveyed, 437 or 48% had been breastfed exclusively since birth. Twenty three infants or 2.5% were being exclusively breastfed at the time of the interview but had formerly been fed with breastmilk substitutes. Thus, 51% (910) of the sample were exclusively breastfed at the time of interview. The remaining 49% of infants were being fed with breastmilk substitutes at the time of interview, either in

conjunction with breastmilk (313 or 34.4%) or exclusively (137 or 15.0%) (Table 1). Of all the infants in the study, only 3.5% had been bottlefed since birth that is, had never been breastfed.

The results show a consistent decline in the incidence of exclusive breastfeeding from the neonate category to the eight month category, with 82% of infants below one month being breastfed exclusively compared with 41% of infants between five and eight months (see Figure 1). Over half of the mothers who were practicing mixed feeding (both breastmilk and artificial milk) had started giving their babies artificial milk after the age of one month. A significant number (37%) however had given their baby breastmilk substitutes during his or her first month of life, while 7% of mothers had introduced artificial milk during the week following the child's birth. Among the 106 mothers bottlefeeding exclusively but who had formerly breastfed their baby, 47% had stopped breastfeeding between the first and second month, 27% had stopped when their baby was three months old, and 26% had stopped breastfeeding at less than one month.

Socio-Demographic Variables

The results of the study show that the use of breastmilk substitutes is positively and independently associated with several socio-demographic characteristics of mothers including education, occupation and urbanity (duration of urban residence), as shown in Table 2. The more education a woman had, if she worked in the formalized occupational sector and the longer she had lived in an urban area, the more likely she was to use breastmilk substitutes. It is important to note that all three factors tend to be intrinsically linked. Thus, the more education a woman has, the more likely she has lived in an urban area for a long time, works in the formal employment sector and has a relatively high socio-economic status.

Milk choice was also found to be associated with use of contraceptives, maternal age, place of delivery and postnatal counselling on feeding[7] (see Table 3). Use of contraceptives at the time of interview, being 25 years of age and above, delivery in a health care facility and having received postnatal counselling were positively associated with the use of breastmilk substitutes.

The association between artificial milk use and use of contraceptives, maternal age, place of delivery and postnatal counselling can be explained by the influence which education, occupation and urbanity exert over these variables. In this connection, three hypotheses for explaining these associations can be formulated: 1) education is an antecedent variable to contraceptive use,[8] 2) maternal socio-economic status (as measured particularly by education) acts as an intervening variable in the relationship between milk diet and place of delivery because it influences the dependent variable, milk diet, by mediating the independent variable,

place of delivery, 3) the relationship between milk diet and maternal age is mediated by the intervention of education, where it is assumed that younger women (less than 25) in Liberia have lower levels of education than older women due to the late entry of most Liberian girls in school; hence this may explain why younger women are more represented than older women in the breastfeeding category.

Stated Reasons For Using Artificial Milk

Mothers who currently were feeding their infants breastmilk substitutes were asked the primary reason they introduced breastmilk substitutes (see Table 4). Among mixed feeders, the primary reason given by mothers for using breastmilk substitutes was insufficient milk, while the most common reason given by exclusive bottlefeeders was related to job or school commitments. With regard to an explanation for the answer insufficient milk, it was observed by the author that although most Liberian mothers breastfeed 'on demand', the duration of suckling is often too short to have an effect on the secretion of prolactin which regulates milk production. In effect, the frequent nursing practiced by most mothers appears to be intended to pacify rather than to feed the baby.

It is notable that relatively few mothers gave breastfeeding difficulties as a reason for introducing breastmilk substitutes, which dismisses the idea that a significant proportion of women are physically incapable of breastfeeding. Clearly for most women using artificial milk, breastmilk substitutes are a much needed convenience. This appears to be the case particularly among market women who constitute the majority of working women in urban areas. Although the assumed compatibility of informal sector work and breastfeeding/childcare generally holds true in the Liberian setting, responses given by some marketwomen point to recent developments which make it difficult to combine petty trade with breastfeeding and childcare. In view of the growing competitiveness in marketing, especially in Monrovia, many women are finding it necessary to increase their work efforts, leaving them with less time for breastfeeding and childcare during working hours. The result is that many marketwomen find it more convenient to leave their babies at home with a bottle.

Other Factors Influencing the Use of Breastmilk Substitutes

Besides the direct effects of maternal education, occupation and urbanity on infant milk choice, the results of the study also show that the health care system and the availability of breastmilk substitutes affect women's beliefs, attitudes, motivations and behavior with regard to infant feeding. The author also made several observations while in the field, that were supported by comments made by informants, which show how the socio-cultural environment affects mothers' infant feeding behavior.

Socio-Cultural Factors

It can be postulated that increased bottlefeeding in the Liberian situation is an example of the acquisition of Western material culture, motivated by prestige emulation. Although no details are available on the history of breastmilk substitutes in Liberia, there is evidence that such products were first associated with elite women of settler descent, particularly those employed in the formal sector during the early part of this century. It is further proposed that the use of artificial milk has been incorporated into the socially constructed concept of 'civilized', which forms the basis of the prestige system in Liberia.[9] In this connection, it is interesting that when asked to describe the type of women who feed their babies with artificial milk only, many of the respondents gave answers such as 'civilized' women or 'white women'. It is also clear from anecdotal evidence that the status of a man, particulary one who is educated is elevated by his ability to afford to buy milk for his child.

Other areas in which the Westernization and urbanization of Liberian society appear to have brought about changes in breastfeeding behavior include the apparent break-down of social networks that traditionally support breastfeeding and the perception of female breasts as a symbol of sexuality. Although the breakdown of networks that traditionally support breastfeeding cannot be empirically substantiated, several factors suggest this to be the case. One point is that the majority of mothers interviewed (60%) did not seek advice from anyone on infant feeding matters. A second indication that community-based breastfeeing support is on the decline in urban areas is seen in evidence that a significant proportion of mothers interviewed believed that their breastmilk was insufficient, while others introduced breastmilk substitutes because their babies were crying too much or refused the breast (see Table 4). Both of these stated reasons for introducing artificial milk suggest a general lack of knowledge about the behavior of babies and about the most appropriate and best pattern of delivering breastmilk to babies. This may be due to the lack of opportunities in urban areas for women to learn by observation the essential techniques of breastfeeding or to seek advice on breastfeeding from more experienced mothers.[10] The adoption of the Western perception of female breasts as a symbol of sexuality results in difficulties for women to breastfeed in public. In addition, there is concern that breastfeeding causes breasts to sag, stretch and generally lose shape, which is related to the adopted perception of breasts as a symbol of female sexuality. The majority of women (60%) from a sub-sample of 50 women were of this opinion. This belief, which does not appear to be related to educational level, makes young women, in particular, reluctant to breastfeed.

Key among the socio-cultural factors affecting Liberian women's beliefs, attitudes, motivations and behavior is the strong cultural norm prohibiting sexual intercourse for nursing mothers. Seventy one percent of the 910 women interviewed felt that it is wrong for a nursing mother to have sexual intercourse, and that sex during

lactation would have dire consequences for the baby (diarrhea, weakness, weight loss, etc.). The problems which have developed in urban areas with regard to this belief are the result of the breakdown of institutions and practices which support protracted sexual abstinence among nursing mothers, namely the traditional separation of a woman from her partner after the birth of a child and the presence of a co-wife to take the place of the nursing wife. In urban communities where polygyny is on the decline, close proximity between a nursing woman and her partner makes abstinence a constant trial, with the result that women frequently begin to use artificial milk so as to be able to resume sexual relations, without, in their view, endangering the health of their child.[11]

A number of other 'traditional' Liberian beliefs were observed by the author to discourage breastfeeding and encourage the use of breastmilk substitutes. There is the view held by some Liberian ethnic groups, e.g., the Kpelle, that breastmilk is not a food, which leads to the belief that a baby requires another source of nutrition.[12] Another traditional belief is the advice given by some traditional healers to women who had previously experienced an infant death, that their milk is `bad' and would kill the baby. Thus these women would turn to artificial milk. Religious practices among Muslims may also have some bearing on the breastfeeding behavior of some Liberian women. A number of Muslin women interviewed in Gbarnga during the month of Ramadan (when fasting is mandatory for Muslins) reported that they had stopped breastfeeding because they found it difficult to fast while breastfeeding. Investigation into Islamic norms however revealed that nursing mothers are exempted by the Koran from fasting. Two explanations for this situation are therefore likely. One is that the religious leaders in the communities concerned were misinterpreting the pronouncements of the Koran by compelling nursing mothers to fast. Alternatively, women simply used fasting as an excuse to terminate breastfeeding.

The Health Care System

There is evidence that the use of health care facilities influences a woman's infant feeding decisions. In 1984, it appeared that the health care system in Liberia was not actively or adequately encouraging breastfeeding because 1) the system did not provide mothers with adequate information about the management of breastfeeding; 2) some health workers were not well informed about the management of breastfeeding; 3) some health care facilities did not observe practices which help to initiate breastfeeding and ensure its continued practice.

Although all of the 12 health care centers surveyed professed promotion of breastfeeding, only 20% of the mothers who had attended prenatal clinics reported having had prenatal counselling on infant feeding. Only 10% of the women who delivered in a hospital/clinic reported receiving infant feeding advice while in hospital. It was also observed that some maternal and child health clinics followed the practice

of teaching mothers how to prepare infant formula, while at the same time stressing the importance of breastfeeding. Clearly, this gives a woman a confused message.

Lack of knowledge regarding infant feeding practices among Liberian health professionals, which may contribute to increased bottlefeeding, is evident in the recommendation given by 74% of the 35 health professionals interviewed that infants should be fed on a schedule. This view stands in opposition to the current medical recommendation that feeding `on demand' (i.e., unscheduled and unlimited) is preferable since scheduled feeding diminishes the prolactin reflex, and the secretion of prolactin, hence milk production, is related to the frequency, intensity, and duration of suckling (Delvoye et al., 1977; Jelliffe and Jelliffe, 1978:15; Howie et al., 1982; Glasier et al., 1984; Allen et al., 1986).

Evidence that hospitals follow practices which do not encourage breastfeeding is provided by the information that in most of the maternity units surveyed, newborns were taken to their mothers for feeding anywhere from 4 to 24 hours after birth. Not surprisingly, the majority of health personnel interviewed were in favor of this practice which, however, contrasts sharply with the current medical recommendation of early nursing after birth (20 to 30 minutes), when the rooting and suckling reflexes needed to establish lactation by initiating the let-down reflex, are strongest (Jelliffe and Jelliffe, 1978:14).[13] Another practice observed in some of the surveyed health care facilities, which may discourage breastfeeding, is the initiation of prelacteal feeds (e.g. glucose, water or tea) which may reduce a newborn's hunger and diminish the rooting and suckling reflexes which are essential to initiating the let-down reflex in mothers attempting to breastfeed.

The Availability of Breastmilk Substitutes

The widespread availability of breastmilk substitutes in Liberia may encourage usage in the sense that knowledge of a product and easy access to it, while not necessarily encouraging its use, is a major step in that direction. Breastmilk substitutes and feeding bottles are widely sold throughout Liberia and are available in virtually every neighborhood shop in towns and cities (Goldman, 1979; Jarosz, 1985; David, 1986b). In 1982, an estimated total of 652,606 kilograms of infant foods (including formulas) with a value of $2,160,612 were imported, suggesting a sizable market for such products (David, 1986b). Given the absence of media promotion at the time of the study,[14] it is reasonable to suspect that a major channel through which many Liberians become familiar with substitutes is through their presence on store shelves. This hypothesis is supported by data which shows that 3 out of 10 women from a sub-sample of 37 interviewed in the four study localities, who could name at least one brand of infant formula, reported having learned brand names from seeing cans on store shelves.

Discussion

The data presented give support to the 'modernization' model for explaining the recent decline of breastfeeding in less developed countries. The findings suggest that infant milk choice is significantly influenced by socio-demographic characteristics of urban Liberian mothers, which in turn are largely conditioned by the joint processes of Westernization and urbanization. Moreover, it is clear from the study that breastfeeding practices are changing in direct response to Western influences (such as the perception of female breasts as symbols of sexuality), urbanization and modernization.

Aside from supporting the conceptual model under consideration, the findings of this study give rise to a number of important observations on trends in infant feeding practices. First, the data presented give further support to reports which suggest that the introduction of bottlefeeding should not always be assumed to be associated with the cessation of breastfeeding in less developed countries (cf. Franklin et al., 1983). A second point, which constitutes an important conclusion of this study, is that many Liberian mothers appear to introduce artificial milk to their babies in response to their own perceived needs (e.g., time), despite the fact that most women are aware of the superiority of breastmilk. This observation forms the basis of a criticism of the 'modernization' perspective on change in breastfeeding behavior in that it can be argued that the latter perspective attributes too much explanatory power directly to external influences to the extent that processes of change derived from internal factors, such as belief systems (e.g., the post-partum sex taboo) and the changing needs of women, tend to be ignored. The author thus contends that the 'modernization' perspective is useful mainly in terms of offering a macro-social description of changes in infant feeding practices. But because this approach appears to be unable to capture the dynamics of the process of change in breastfeeding patterns, in which internal as well as external forces are at play, it is incomplete and inadequate as a conceptual framework.

In proposing the need for an alternative conceptual framework of the determinants of milk choice, two main points can be derived from the findings of the present study: 1) it is important to avoid attributing an overdetermining role to Western influences which leads to the portrayal of Third World users of artificial milk as passive figures merely reacting to 'modernization' in the form of a tin of milk, 2) breastfeeding behavior must be recognized as being embedded in a complex system of relations, institutions and beliefs that are themselves undergoing change. In short, it is being suggested that changing trends in infant feeding practices in LDCs should be examined as part of a holistic analysis of change taking place, since once the value systems supporting breastfeeding are altered, the incentive to persevere through breastfeeding problems are reduced, especially given the availability of alternatives (i.e., artificial milk). The implications of this perspective for research is the understanding that knowledge of the socio-cultural context of breastfeeding can help to predict how changes, both planned and unplanned, in the ecological and cognitive contours of society might affect breastfeeding.

Figure 1

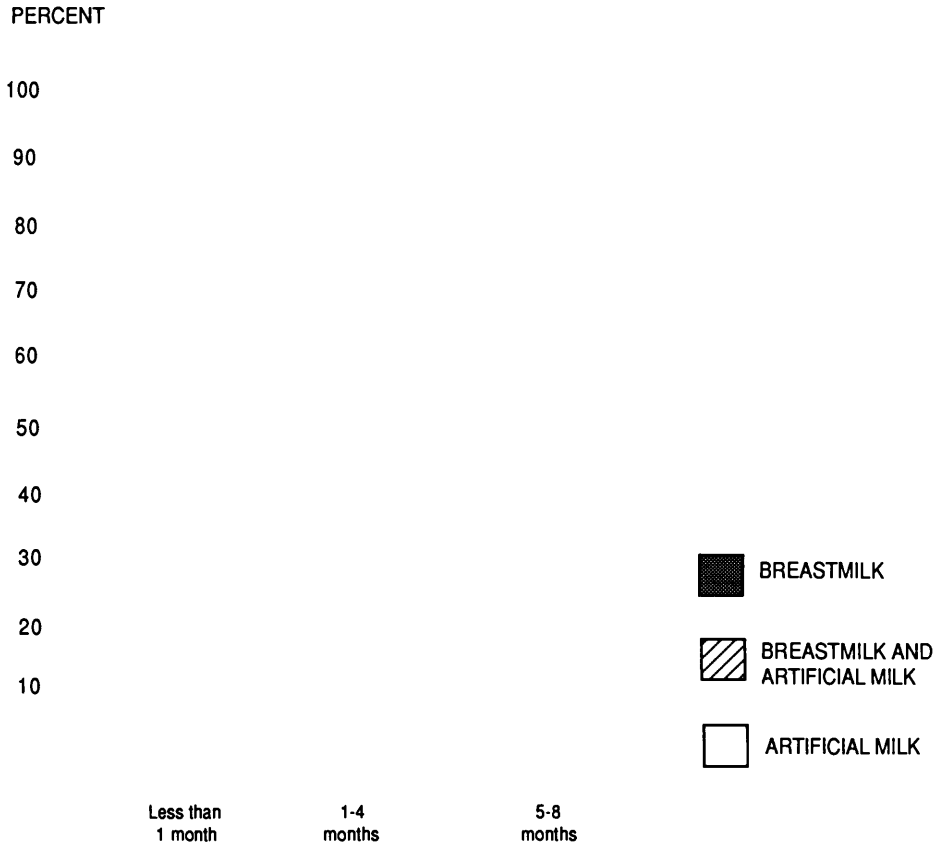

Table 1

Past and Present Milk Diet of
Case Infants by Study Locality

Past and Present Milk Diet

Locality	Breastmilk, Never had BMS*		Breastmilk now, Formerly Some BMS		Breastmilk and BMS		BMS, never had Breastmilk		BMS, formerly Some Breastmilk		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Monrovia	131	45.5	10	3.5	88	30.6	16	5.6	43	14.9	288	100
Kakata	95	47.7	3	1.5	76	38.2	7	3.5	18	9.0	199	100
Bong Mines	126	58.6	9	4.2	53	24.7	2	0.9	25	11.6	215	100
Gbarnga	85	40.9	1	0.5	96	46.2	7	3.4	19	9.1	208	100
TOTAL	437	48.0	23	2.5	313	34.4	32	3.5	105	11.5	910	100

*BMS stands for breastmilk substitutes

Table 2

	Breastmilk Only		Breastmilk and Substitutes		Breastmilk Substitutes Only		Total	
Education[a]	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
None	305	59.8	160	31.4	45	8.8	510	100
Primary	106	48.8	79	36.4	32	14.7	217	100
Secondary	46	28.9	65	40.9	48	30.2	159	100
Post-Secondary	3	12.5	9	37.5	12	50.5	24	100
Total	460	50.5	313	34.4	137	15.1	910	100
[b]								
Not Working	200	58.1	115	33.4	29	8.4	344	100
Working In Informal Sector	211	55.1	124	32.4	48	12.5	383	100
Student	40	30.5	53	40.5	38	29.0	131	100
Working In Formal Sector	9	17.3	21	40.4	22	42.3	52	100
Total	460	50.5	313	34.4	137	15.1	910	100
[c]								
5 yrs. or less	128	62.7	63	30.9	13	6.4	204	100
More than 5 yrs.	332	47.0	250	35.4	124	17.6	706	100
Total	460	50.5	313	34.4	137	15.1	910	100

a) $X^2 = 90.78$ (6 d.f) $P \leq .05$ $r = .30$
b) $X^2 = 83.96$ (6 d.f) $P \leq .05$ $r = .27$
c) $X^2 = 21.84$ (2 d.f) $P \leq .05$ $r = .15$

Table 3

Present Milk Diet by Mother's Contraceptive Practice, Age, Place of Delivery and Post Natal Counselling on Infant Feeding

	Present Milk Diet of Infants							
	Breastmilk Only		Breastmilk and Substitutes		Breastmilk Substitutes Only		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Contraceptive Practice[a]								
Not currently using contraceptives	446	53.7	287	34.5	98	11.8	831	100
Currently using contraceptives	14	17.7	26	32.9	39	49.4	79	100
Total	460	50.5	313	34.4	137	15.1	910	100
Age of Mother[b*]								
15-24	245	53.6	151	33.0	61	13.3	457	100
25-44	153	42.6	135	37.6	71	19.8	359	100
Total	398	48.8	286	35.0	132	16.2	816	100
Place of Delivery[c]								
Home/Elsewhere	182	56.6	100	31.1	40	12.4	322	100
Health Care Facility	278	47.3	213	36.2	97	16.5	588	100
Total	460	50.5	313	34.4	137	15.1	910	100
Post-Natal Counselling[d**]								
Did not receive counselling	252	49.9	171	33.9	82	16.2	505	100
Received counselling	31	34.8	39	43.8	19	21.3	89	100
Total	283	47.6	210	35.4	101	17.0	594	100

a) $X^2 = 86.15$ (2 d.f) $P \leq .05$ $r = .28$
b) $X^2 = 11.31$ (2 d.f) $P \leq .05$ $r = .11$
c) $X^2 = 7.44$ (2 d.f) $P \leq .05$ $r = .087$
d) $X^2 = 6.89$ (2 d.f) $P \leq .05$ $r = .097$

* NOTE: Mothers who knew their age (N = 94) are excluded.

**NOTE: This variable only applies to mothers who delivered in a health facility (N = 594).

Table 4

Stated Reason	Mixed Feeders N	Mixed Feeders %	Artificial Milk Feeders N	Artificial Milk Feeders %	Total (Row)
Mother Returned to School/Work	87	27.8	32	30.2	119
Insufficient Milk	102	32.6	16	15.1	118
Other Reasons	82	26.2	25	23.6	107
Child Was Ill, Cried Frequently, Refused Breast	27	8.6	9	8.5	36
Mother Experienced Difficulties in Breastfeeding[a]	3	1.0	19	17.9	22
To Allow Mother To Go Out	8	2.6	5	4.7	13
Mother Was Ill	4	1.3	-	-	4
TOTAL	313	100	106[b]	100	419

[a] Difficulties commonly experienced by mothers included sore nipples, sore and engorged breasts, abscesses, etc.

b Among exclusive artificial milk feeders, this question was only asked of those mothers who had previously given their babies some breastmilk, hence the total number of respondents was 106; 31 mothers had never breastfed their baby.

FOOTNOTES

[1]This article is based on research undertaken at the University of Liberia with grants from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Geneva Infant Feeding Association (GIFA). I acknowledge, with deep appreciation, the assistance given by the following persons in conducting the fieldwork on which this paper is based: Al Hassan Conteh, Karen Tompkins, Jeannette Kpissay, Jeannette Carter, Mark Tessler, Nancy Pielemeier and Joane Nagel. I am also grateful to Doris Slesinger of the Department of Rural Sociology, University of Wisconsin-Madison for offering comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

[2]As used in the present context, breastmilk substitutes refer to the wide range of commercially produced milk products which include infant formula, evaporated and powdered milk, the latter two not being specifically intended for infant consumption. The term 'breastmilk substitutes' refers simply to the use of commercially produced milk, whether used to supplement or to substitute for breastmilk. No distinction is made in this article between infant formula and non-formula products. The term 'bottlefeeding' is also used to loosely refer to the use of breastmilk substitutes since infant bottles are the most common containers used in feeding artificial milk.

[3]The relationship between education and contraceptive use is explained in terms of more educated women having a greater willingness to be innovative, to deviate from the norms of the society, to have greater knowledge of contraceptive methods and how to acquire them, and a greater exposure to Western society, which results in a greater likelihood to reject a fatalistic attitude toward life and a greater desire for a small family.

[4]Aside from socio-economic characteristics of the mother, milk choice can be influenced be factors related to feeding performance. For example, a mother who breastfeeds her baby following a schedule is likely to experience decreased milk production since the quantity of milk is controlled by the frequency, intensity and duration of nursing. If such a mother decides to supplement her breastmilk with artificial milk, the quantity of her breastmilk will decline, resulting in her need to supplement further. Thus, the quantity of breastmilk production is inter-related with her breastfeeding practices and her choice or necessity to use breastmilk substitutes may actually be determined by inappropriate breastfeeding practices.

[5]High school and college students, all of whom were residents of the locality concerned, were employed as interviewers.

[6]Since the primary focus of the present discussion is on milk choice, information is only given on the type of milk being used in infant feeding to the exclusion of other foods/liquids. Thus, for example, as used in the present context, 'exclusive breastfeeding' means that no other milk besides breastmilk was being used, although

other foods/liquids may have been present in an infant's diet. Details on the overall diet of case infants are available elsewhere (David, 1986a).

[7]Postnatal counselling on feeding refers to whether or not a mother who delivered in a health care facility received counselling on how to feed her baby.

[8]This direct effect is demonstrated when mothers who are aware of the effects which most contraceptives have on breastmilk, terminate breastfeeding once they resume contraceptive practice. These mothers usually tend to be educated.

[9]For a more detailed discussion of the Liberian prestige system, see Mary Moran, 1986, 'Civilized Women: Gender and Prestige Among the Glebo of Cape Palmas, Liberia.' Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Brown University.

[10]This type of assistant, whose function is to 'mother the mother', is know as a 'doula' in the infant feeding literature.

[11]See, for a similar argument in the context of other African countries, Romaniuk, 1967; Morgan, 1971; Schoennmaeckers et al., 1981; Bledsoe, 1987.

[12]Likewise, Bledsoe (1987) reports that the 'Mende [Sierra Leone] do not necessarily see breastmilk as irreplaceable or even as the best nutrition for a baby' and notes that one Mende physician she interviewed found that people often view breastmilk much like water (4).

[13]As noted by Allen et al., (1986), a review of the literature on the time of first feed and lactation outcome shows that the importance of an early first feed is still controversial. They attribute inconsistencies in studies on this issue to lack of standardization in the construction of the variable 'early first feed' (57). Allen et al. however note that if early feed does affect either the initiation of lactation or its duration, there is need to understand whether it does so through a biological/ physiological link or through an effect on the mother's attitude or behavior.

[14]Media advertisements of breastmilk substitutes in Liberia were discontinued in 1983, perhaps in response to the ban enforced by the WHO/UNICEF International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes. There however existed no national legislation prohibiting such advertisements in 1983-84.

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The Dynamics of Liberian Vai Culture and Islam

Svend E. Holsoe

Introduction*

There has been a strong tendency in the past literature on Islam in Africa to approach the topic from the point of view of Islam and its spread, or to put it in another way, the Islamization of Africans. Recently, scholars have begun to question this approach. The concept of the "the great tradition" à la Redfield, may not be a particularly useful one. It certainly gives a unidimensional view of the process of acculturation, as it tends to hold people up to a particular yardstick and asks, are so-and-so Muslims or not?

This paper addresses Islam from the point of view of the Vai people. The concern here is to understand Vai society, particularly their religious beliefs and practices and to see how Vai people accepted and/or rejected different aspects of Islam as presented to them at various times during the last one hundred and seventy-five years or so. For it is clear, to borrow a phrase from Nehemia Levtzion, Islam can not be considered as necessarily a contageous disease.

Early Vai Society

Contrary to the opinion of one scholar who has studied Islam among the Liberian Vai (Fisher 1968), it has not been possible to trace Islamic practices among the Vai during, or immediately after their migration to the coast from their homeland in the savannah country. Certainly none of the traditions of this migration, which took place in about 1500, mention Islam.

In addition to the oral traditions concerning this early migration (cf. Holsoe 1974a), we have a detailed ethnographic account of them, written about 1628 by an unknown Dutchman, who while resident in the Vai country was a keen observer of Vai society (Dapper 1670: 385-418).

From this account, we know that the Vai had a concept of a high God, "kangmba," but the idea was vague and individuals did not address themselves directly to "kangmba." In the early part of the twentieth century an Anthropologist/ Linguist, August Klingenheben, interpreted "kangmba" to mean, "a big place," i.e. heaven (1939: 326). In addition, he found that people only used the term when

expressing surprise or hurt, presumably something like the American "God damn." Otherwise, the term was used in reply to the usual question on meeting someone as to the stae of their health. In this case the answer was "kasa bele kangmba mai," popularly translated as, "there is no rust on God's side," clearly a formulaic phrase not unlike the American, "God be praised, I am well."

When the Vai people were in need of supernatural assistance, instead, they turned toward the autochthonous spirits, placing offerings at various shrines such as beside special trees, on particular stones or along the edge of bodies of water. Otherwise, they addressed their ancestors for guidance and assistance, as the latter were always present watching over and caring for their living descendents. This guidance and assistance could occur in at least two ways, either by individuals directly calling upon particular ancestors, which might be visually manifest by placing offerings upon the graves of an individual, or through the officers of the men's Poro or Beli society. The latter institution acted as an intermediary between the living and the dead and interpreted the wishes and desires between the two groups. The ancestors through the Poro intermediaries held the ultimate sanction, death. Thus an important aspect of Vai religious belief concerned these ancestors and an individual's relationship to them.

In addition to the Poro intermediaries, another group of individuals play a role in the spiritual life of the Vai, the "jakehmor." It was to these individuals that a Vai person would turn to obtain predictions concerning future events, in order to acquire certain ointments or powders which would alleviate particular diseases, or a talisman which would ward off bad spirits, or witches.

As coastal residents, the Vai became intimately involved in trade as middlemen between Europeans passing along the coast and interior peoples. Among the most important itinerant traders from the interior to the coast were the Manding. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, these Manding, particularly the Kamara from the Knoian area of Upper Guinea, began to move out of their highland area and to penetrate into the coastal forest region. They first settled among the Loma where they established a number of chiefdoms, at the same time mixing with the local peoples (Person 1970: 284). From this base they established trade links toward the coast, forming what has been called the "Mandinka corridor" (Hopewell 1958: 84).

The earliest mention of Manding presence on the coast among the Vai at Cape Mount comes from an account dated 1724 (Labat 1730: I, 90). It is not surprising that this first reference to the Manding should be among the Vai people. Linguists have classified the Vai language along with the Manding as part of the Northern sub-

division of the Mande languages (Welmers 1958: 21). Nineteenth century observers also saw the close cultural affinities between the Vai and the Manding (Lynch 1853: 345; Tracy 1868: 44; Smith 1893: 28). In fact, the Manding of the interior viewed the Vai as related, calling them the "western Dyula" (Kouroubari 1901: 163). With an enclave of peoples of similar language and culture living on the coast, the Manding peoples who settled in the Loma area were drawn in the direction of the Vai at Cape Mount to obtain salt and to trade for European goods, rather than to some other point along the coast.

Thus, Manding peoples regularly visited the Vai country for trade prior to their own conversion to Islam. This conversion occurred some time before 1765, the date when Kankan, a Soninke Muslim trading settlement, was destroyed. The Soninke and Manding inhabitants were dispersed, some of whom moved southwestward into the forest bringing Islamic beliefs with them (Trimingham & Fyfe 1960: 38).

Apparently there were a sufficient number of individuals in this movement to effectively carry Islam into these new regions. But it was probably not until the latter part of the eighteenth century that the effects of Islam were felt as far as the central forest region halfway between the coast and the savannah.

Accounts of the founding of the town of Bopolu located in this forest region, which date prior to the beginning of the nineteenth century, state that Muslim clerics accompanied the invading armies (Saiyon 1965 & 1970; Sirleaf 1965). The earliest actual documented references of Islamic practices among the Vai on the coast, who seem to be the only peoples in the area to openly manifest interest in Islam do not occur until 1819 (Cates 1819: 63). There is, however, the assumption by some scholars that the conversion of the Vai by the Manding began about 1800 (Trimingham & Fyfe 1960: 39). Likewise, the American Colonization Society's agent, Jehudi Ashmun, writing in 1827 concurred with the belief that Islam began its spread in the Vai area at the beginning of the nineteenth century (Ashmun 1827: 246). Thus, the presence of Islam among the Vai was a fairly late phenomenon considering that they had lived on the coast approximately three centuries prior to its arrival from their homeland.

The nature of the Islamic beliefs brought through the forest region to the coastal Vai is less clear. It is known that Muslims in the savannah region at this time were followers of the Suni tradition and members of the Qadiriya (Arcin 1911: 80-81; Kaba 1973). Islamists working in this general area, however, have not clarified the precise nature of Islamic practices, except to assert that acceptance of the Qadiriya brotherhood encouraged the recognition of the Muslim cleric as a status separate from that of other occupations (Hopewell 1958: 43-44).

There can be no doubt that these clerics followed the trade routes of their fellow Manding, but it is also certain that the presence of Muslim traders, and even clerics, did not necessarily cause the conversion of their hosts. Again, Islam was not a disease.

In the first extensive account on Islamic practices among the Vai written by Ashmun, we learn that:

> In every village you perceive a lodge, for the reception of itinerant teachers of that religion [Islam], who, from a large portion of their number coming out of the Mandingo country, generally take the name of "Mandingo teachers." ... These strangers are always received with great respect, and often retained by opulent individuals for several years. ... They certainly exercise great zeal and sagacity in the propagation of the doctrines of Mahometanism and have but too extensively succeeded in proseltyzing to that religion, ... They never alarm the prejudices of the pagan Africans by decrying their stupid superstitions; but substitute by the gentlest means but with the utmost assiduity and perseverance, the doctrines, duties and worship of the Koran, in their place... Seldom aiming, directly at the conversion of persons of adult age, they confine their principal efforts to the instruction of the youth and children. These they teach to write the Arabic, in a fair character, and to read and understand the koran and other books, of which they always possess several manuscripts. They are also trained to the daily repetition of the prayers and creeds of their religion, and to the observance and practice of its feasts, festivals, and oblations. The young thus come to be the advocates and instructors of this religion to their parents and elders, who, for the sake of the general improvement of their sons in knowledge and learning, having first been induced to tolerate, come at length, by an easy and natural transition to embrace it. ... Nearly the whole Fy [Vai] nation is in some degree under its influence; and in every large town there are to be found many, of whom are nearly all the Chiefs, that observe with minuteness the various austerities and ceremonies, which it enjoins (Ashmun 1827: 224-246).

These are the observations of an outsider, as to the extent and nature of Islam among the Vai in 1826. How well did he really understand the degree to which Islam had been embraced? His observations would be echoed by others later. Were their conclusions more correct? To what degree can symbol and content be equated? These are the questions which must be addressed.

Extensive Spread of Outward Islamic Practices

If the text is examined carefully, one would see that Ashmun speaks of opulent individuals practising Islam, meaning the important men. If one examines Vai oral traditions it is evident that only a limited number of prominent individuals openly practised some form of Islam. For these people it was advantageous to have a Muslim at their court, or in their town, especially if their political position was illegitimate.

Elsewhere the subject of legitimate and illegitimate political positions has been discussed (Holsoe 1974b), thus only a brief summary will be given here. There was the possibility in the Vai country for individuals outside of the traditional lineages that held political power to gain access to leadership positions. This was feasible because these individuals had access to economic resources through European goods which were being traded along the coast. Such individuals used a mechanism for achievement that already existed in the traditional social structure whereby war chiefs could gain political power for a limited time purely by achievement. These men were able to hold on to it beyond the time of warfare by means of the economic wealth gained through trade. However, their position was obviously illegitimate, because they did not have the backing of the ancestors, nor as a consequence that of the elders of the Poro Society. It behooved them then to find an alternative means to sanctify their political position. One useful way was to turn to Muslim clerics and to invite these men to join them in their towns.

Some Vai were impressed by the Muslims. The latter had an ability to read a written script. They had a belief in a God which was different from the Vai God and which gave them a sense of moral superiority. More importantly, at the time, it seemed their skills at predicting future events were good.

There are many extraordinary cases cited in the oral traditions of Muslim clerics who foretold events correctly. There is, for instance, Zolu Duma, a Vai man who was raised on a rice fanner up in the air and then told by the Muslim cleric that all the area he could see was the territory over which he would rule, which eventually came true.

For the few individuals among the Vai who manifested in an open way a conversion to Islam, they did so because it was useful, particularly those men who illegitimately held political positions. There were also in this society, as in all societies, a certain group of intellectuals who had a curiosity about the world of ideas. This is in part documented by the fact of the Vai invention of a syllabic script (cf. Holsoe 1971). In addition, in one of the early Vai manuscripts, it is possible to find a certain number of incantations which are apparently quotations from the Quran (Koelle 1851). There is also an account of an individual who first became interested in Islam, then finding that he was not terribly satisfied by what he learned, moved on to other areas of intellectual exploration (Koelle 1854: 26-27). For the general population, however, Islam had very little acceptance.

The one aspect that intrigued and interested the Vai in the nineteenth century was the role of the Muslim cleric who could act as a prognosticator. This individual made charms, or talismen, and "cut sand," a form of divination. This type of men caught the attention of the Vai, and it seemed to them that these clerics' abilities were more powerful than any of the "medicines" that their own "jakehmor" could command. Thus, there was at this point in time a congruence in these two types of individuals, and it was the Muslim cleric who tended to supplant the traditional prognosticator.

Evidence of this process can be found in the vocabulary collected about 1850 by the German linguist, Sigismund Koelle. In it are many Islamic words, nearly all of which concern medicines, soothsaying and predictions. These are words that had been taken out of Arabic and transformed to fit Vai phonetic rules (Koelle 1854: 143-277; Fisher 1968: 8).

This was not, however, a time in which Islam made any inroads into those aspects of Vai belief structure which involved the ancestors or the spirits, and their relationship to the living. That world of ancestors and spirits, and their visible intermediaries in the Poro Society, all remained quite intact. So during the nineteenth century, Islam had a limited influence upon the belief structure of the society.

Muslim clerics arrived and if they were thought by Vai individuals to be useful or advantageous, they were allowed to settle either in their own quarter of a town, or to form a separate town. They were treated as any other stranger. They were assigned to a stranger-father, who was legally responsible for them and for their actions. With time those individuals who decided to remain, were permitted to marry Vai women, so that incorporation into Vai society also began to occur at the genetic level.

It would seem that at least during most of the nineteenth century the two religious systems were able to coexist with a minimum of conflict. The Muslims, both incoming Manding as well as Vai, did not try to challenge the Poro society and the belief structure associated with the Vai ancestors and spirits. They kept to themselves. There is a tradition, in fact, of a Muslim family which moved into one part of the Vai country. They were initially welcomed into the main town. However, they soon decided that the Vai people in the town were too "noisy," and they requested and were allowed to move out and form a new town on their own (Getawe 1966). In their new location they were not bothered by the singing and dancing which accompanied the usual Vai masquerade performances.

In the 1880's there was a social upheaval in the Upper Guinea area, sometimes referred to as the Dyula revolution (Person 1968). Samori Toure emerged as the dominant political leader. As a professed Muslim he used Islam as one of the means of unifying peoples of that area. Out of that upheaval an invasion of new Manding peoples came southward into the forest region as far as the Vai country. They arrived among the Vai in about 1892.

The grounds for the invasion lay in the nature of the interaction between Manding Muslims in the whole region, who in trying to trade to the coast were hampered by such local peoples as the Gola. As a consequence, Manding in Bopolu, a trading entrepot to the east of the Vai, hired Manding mercenaries from the interior, but quickly lost control of their "bought" army. The mercenaries pillaged the countryside and in time invaded the Vai area causing considerable destruction.

This invasion of Manding warriors brought along, or was soon followed by, Muslim clerics. A new impetus was added to Islam in the Vai region. In addition, shortly afterwards the French invaded and subdued the upper Guinea area in a rather brutal manner. As a consequence, more Manding peoples moved southward crossing what was still an ill-defined border into Liberia. Many of these peoples eventually settled in the Vai area.

However, the only real influence the immigrants had was to increase the number of Muslims in the region. There was no fundamental change in the nature of Islam and Islamic practices in the Vai country. Soothsayers, or prognosticators, continued, and the whole belief structure in ancestors, spirits and the Poro society still remained essentially intact.

The Twentieth Century

Not until the beginning of the twentieth century, in fact during the First World War period, did major changes begin to take place in the Vai country. These pressures came from the outside and were due to the growing power of the Liberian settlers.

As the central government moved to subdue and control the areas considered within its territorial sphere, it affected the political structure that had existed from the past. Government officials began to manipulate the structure in such a manner that their candidates gained political positions, no matter whether the individuals were from legitimate lineages, or whether the individuals had achieved their positions by economic means. Now Vai men could manipulate their roles and relationships to suit the settlers' interests.

In addition, it meant that the whole legal structure including judicial rights was transferred to the settler central government. Thus, capital punishment could only be administered by the Liberian courts. As a consequence, the most important sanction which had been held by the officials of the Poro society was removed from their control.

For the first time, Vai people begin to question how effective their ancestors were in caring for their living descendants. Clearly, Vai society was shaken. People

were uncertain of what was happening. Old values and beliefs were no longer to be trusted.

Not surprisingly, in the 1920's a small scaled nativistic uprising occurred, in the form of the Leopard Society. It was an attempt to revert to the traditional beliefs, with the reinstitution of control and power by the ancestors and their living intermediaries. Thus, members of the Leopard Society tried to take political control into their own hands in the name of the ancestors and the spirits.

It was a period in which Vai were ambivalent about which structure to follow. As far as religion was concerned, there was the problem of whether to try to continue to believe in the power of the ancestors, and autocthanous spirits, or to turn to the new religious practices of Islam which had existed around them but had been traditionally rejected. Actually, it was during this period that a Muslim cleric went into retreat for seven days to pray; a classic pattern for such clerics. The cleric prayed that the Leopard Society would cease. In time it did, though it was several years later.

Certainly there were other pressures for change which existed during the 1920's. But the crucial factor was the effect which the central government had on the core belief structure of the Vai. Since the belief in ancestors provided the assurance that political decisions were made correctly, any change which the Liberian government caused in the way political decisions were judged – in this case the removal of capital punishment from the hands of Vai Poro leaders – had to necessarily shake the core belief structure. However, this was not the only fundamental change which the central government imposed upon the Vai.

In 1930, the Liberian government abolished internal servitude. The significance of this change lay in the very important status differentiation which existed in the Vai country. A majority of the Vai population was under one form of servitude or another. With the government decree, those individuals were freed. As a consequence, it wrecked absolute havoc upon the social structure. For instance, the economic base was destroyed. All the farm labor had been done by servants. Suddenly they were now free to leave or to cease working for their masters. In fact, large numbers of them did leave the Vai country and moved either to the urban areas of Robertsport and Monrovia or back to their homelands. So, the Vai society was shaken again.

The consequences were several and became apparent by the late 1930's and into the 1940's. There was a shift in the nature of funeral practices from traditional patterns to Islamic forms. Ancestors were no longer as important, thus, individuals no longer continued to "water" the graves, that is to make sacrifices to ancestors at their grave sites.

Poro, which had been basically incompatible with Islam began to hold shorter and shorter sessions. More Muslim teachers began to arrive in the area (see for

instance Goody et al. 1977). There was an increase in the number of Muslim towns; several became ceremonial centers to which individuals gathered for the more important events on the Islamic calendar. In fact, even certain political offices were turned over to members of Muslim families because it was thought they would probably be better able to deal with the central government than the traditional political rulers.

Among the prestigious Vai families there was a certain ambivalence about what their attitudes should be toward Christianity. Because the settlers were Christians, there were Christian missionaries on the coast in the colonial settlements. However, there was uncertainty among the Vai about this because the Liberian Christians were viewed as having been slaves, which of course was largely true. The prestigious Vai families had always been free. Thus, to send their children to be educated by former slaves caused second thoughts. As a consequence it was a period in which a form of hedging occurred among these Vai families. One son was sent to a Christian mission and the next son was sent to study under a Muslim cleric. So they alternated back and forth, spreading their bets as to whom would receive the most useful education.

For the majority of the people who continued to live in the Vai country, Islam filled the gap in beliefs which were lost with the "demise" of the ancestors. The earlier belief in "kangmba" as the supreme diety, was now translated into a belief in Allah. Again there was congruency which helped to make the new belief structure acceptable. The belief in Allah was not totally foreign and different from the traditional concept of a high god held by the Vai.

The Nineteen Seventies

The Vai in the 1970's moved one step further. In every town and village a mosque was erected, and there was essentially regular attendance for at least the morning and evening prayers. If one was a fully converted Muslim, as measured by outside standards, one would attend all five prayers. However, Vai Muslims, the vast majority of the people, prayed only in the morning and evening.

The Vai observed Ramadan, the month of fasting, as well as, Muhammed's birthday, and they saw these as important events in their annual calendar. When financially possible, individuals using air travel made the hadj to Mecca.

There was still a certain amount of variability in the numbers of wives which important men had. Under Muslim law one was supposed only to have four wives, but this was not rigidly enforced, particularly when some marriages were made for pragmatic or political reasons. For instance, if one's elder brother died, one had the right, but also the duty, to inherit and look after the elder brother's wives. There were also political marriages which had to be made, especially if there were factions within

the town. The marriages provided a means of sealing these factions. So, there were exceptions to the prescribed number of wives.

Poro no longer held its former position. It was mainly a brief period in which circumcision occured if the individual had not been previously circumcised. Sometimes there was a short seclusion. It depended on just how far a particular town had moved toward Islamic practices. There were, for instance, Poro sessions that lasted only for two or three days, whereas in the past they would have been in session for four years. Things had changed to such an extent that a petition was sent by three of the five paramount chiefs in the Vai country stating to the central government that they were going to discontinue the Poro society in their areas.

There was a counterpart to the men's society, the so-called Sande society. But that society had never been as strongly tied to the central belief structure. Sande society never was an arbitor with the ancestors. Its main function was an enculturative one, that is, to educate the girls to become proper Vai women. So Sande continued, as it had not come into conflict with the changing belief structure. However, some question was raised by Muslims about the use of masked figures by the Sande society.

Funeral practices had also shifted. Although the nature of traditional funeral practices were not described here, we know that in the past there could be a considerable delay, sometimes several weeks, before the body was actually buried. Sometimes it was even buried, exhumed, and then reburied. By the 1970's, bodies were buried immediately after death. There was no delay. Likewise, bodies were no longer opened and examined to see whether an individual was a witch or not.

In addition, funeral feasts now took place on the third, seventh and fortieth days, all of which were taken from the Muslim calendar. The types of foods which were used for the feasts had shifted so that whereas in the past individuals ate rice with red palm oil – it was thought that the ancestors liked that kind of food – by the 1970's the Vai made instead a rice flour which was mixed with sugar. This was basically a ceremonial meal. It was intended to be symbolic with more importance placed on gathering the family and acknowledging that a particular individual had died.

The forty day feast itself, that is, the final feast, was also shifting in the Vai country. Whereas in the past it was celebrated as a mass festival with singing and dancing, as well as carousing all night, by the 1970's it was becoming a more sedate ceremony in which the men gathered in the center of the town, in an open area, and they all divided up the Quran, each man simultaneously reading his pages from the Quran. Afterwards there was quiet.

The use of amulets and medicines still persisted. This practice had existed from the earliest days. Likewise, Muslim fortune tellers were still to be found and at times attracted customers from considerable distances.

The Future

We conclude with a few remarks concerning the future of Islam in the Vai area as viewed from the vantage point of the mid 1970's. The Poro society as traditionally practiced would probably cease in the whole area. However, due to the special recognition given to the Poro by the central government as symbolic of traditional culture, there was pressure for its retention, at least its social festivals. Nevertheless, there certainly would be in time a greater movement towards Islamic purity in the sense that individuals would try to measure up to the ideal standards set by Muslim law, the Shariá, and by the Quran.

It was clear that that direction would continue to take place. Though it was being challenged seriously by Western education. The central government was, after all English speaking and writing, and there were more and more individuals who were obtaining higher educations – going on to college and graduate school. It was obvious to all that these individuals were receiving positions within the government and in industry.

Although the process had its inception during President Tubman's time, President Tolbert made overt changes within the government's general attitude toward Muslim societies. He healed some of the breaches between divergent Muslim associations in Monrovia, and he accorded Muslims completely equal status with Christians. Thus, Imams offered prayers at state occasions along with Christian ministers. This was something which would not have occurred previously.

Summary

From the description given it should be apparent that any concern as to whether a particular group of people are Muslims or not, really begs the question. First of all, one has to ask, at what time? And secondly, and more importantly, what constitutes a Muslim? It can be argued that the lowest common denominator which makes any sense, if such a question has to be asked, must embody three basic questions, namely: 1) whether an individual believes in Allah, rather than in a multitude of gods, 2) whether there is a belief in Muhammad as Allah's prophet, and 3) a belief in the Quran as a holy work. Any other questions take one into doctrinal matters.

Even then, instances can be named where all three basic questions can not be answered with a complete affirmative. One thinks, for instance, of Clifford Geertz's example from Indonesia where a multitude of accomodations have occurred between

a belief in Allah and a large number of Indic gods of an earlier tradition (Geertz 1968). Possibly, one may have to fall back on the somewhat unsatisfactory definition that a Muslim is one who recites the "shahada," or even more basic definitions that a Muslim is one who says he is one.

Certainly the more important question which has been addressed in this paper concerns process. By what means did Islamic practices become incorporated, or remolded, to fit Vai cultural concepts of what was acceptable? The limited acceptance in the beginning of those practices which were most congruent, is not surprising. It has occurred in many other areas. As Trimingham has noted, "the form in which the animist first encounters Islam is little removed from animism" (1959: 30). In this, he stresses the similar, or as used here, the congruent.

The reverse, however, is equally important. The behavior, dress and beliefs of the Muslim clerics also determined their acceptance. As has been noted, politically upward mobile individuals capitalized upon the respect and fear – the differences – which the Muslim held in the eyes of the Vai, using the Muslim's influence to act as an alternative means of sanctifying their political position.

Even then, only a limited acceptance occurred and not until a much later time did a fundamental shift take place toward Islam by the Vai. This was during a period of "relative deprivation" to borrow David Aberle's phrase (Aberle 1962). Societies have a series of alternatives when faced by a variety of forces outside their control. They can capitalize on the new opportunities. They can acquiese in the forced changes, or they can collapse. The nature of the two forces coming into contact, as well as the internal resilience of each group meeting the other are important factors. In this case, as far as the religious aspect of their society was concerned, most of the Vai turned toward the new opportunity of Islam as an adaptive move.

Ultimately, the main point is, before we can grasp the broad processes whereby Islam spread in Africa, and elsewhere, it is necessary to look at many microcosms. The Vai are one such example.

* This paper was first presented on November 25, 1974, at the Department of Anthropology Faculty Colloquium, University of Delaware, and a revised version was read at the Institute of African Studies, University of Liberia, August 1975. I recognize that Lester Monts (1984) has not long ago published an article detailing his observations of recent changes in Islamic practices which have occurred in the Vai area. I have chosen to let this paper stand as it was originally written and to allow my predictions of the mid-1970's to be measured against Monts's observations of the 1980's.

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"PRIMITIVE" KPELLE STEELMAKING: A HIGH TECHNOLOGY INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM FOR LIBERIA'S FUTURE?

Gordon C. Thomasson

KPELLE STEEL AND TECHNOLOGICAL REVOLUTION

The abrupt physical transition from the savannah grasslands of the interior to the rainforests of Liberia marked the necessary beginning of an Agricultural Revolution as the Kpelle people mastered the upland cultivation of rice (Oryza sativa) in that new ecosystem. It also began a major Kpelle Technological Revolution, as is reflected in their metallurgy.

Ecology and Industry

Just as radically new agronomic knowledge and technology had to be discovered, experimentally developed, tested and adapted, so too manufacturing skills had to be invented and/or modified to fit the new ecological niche in which the Kpelle people found themselves. Tools that were sufficient for farming in the relatively more dry interior were not adequate for clearing the rank vegetation of the jungle floor, let alone the triple tier forest's canopy of tall hardwoods, with their massive trunks and buttress roots. In the same way, if the Kpelle had and maintained an "iron" manufacturing technology during their westward migrations, it would have had to be modified and adapted to the new constraints and opportunities which Liberia afforded. More accurately, like most traditional peoples, the Kpelle manufactured a carburized steel (see Goody, 1971; Shinnie, 1971; Maddin, et al, 1977; van der Merwe and Avery, 1982; Muhly, 1982; and Haaland and Shinnie, 1985), but with a difference.

TRADITIONAL WESTERN PERSPECTIVES ON METALLURGY

Basil Davidson, one of the most sympathetic students of and popular writers on African history and culture, nevertheless perpetuates views of traditional metallurgy that, like colonial views of indigenous agriculture, seriously undervalue the technology of peoples like the Kpelle. In a discussion of the consequences of the slave trade, after pointing out the incredible suffering of those who were enslaved and removed from the continent, he outlined the impact on those who were left behind.

> Where, then, lay the main consequences of the slave trade for African life? These lay in the field of [illegible] and in the field of politics [italics in original].
>
> The slave trade damaged the production of goods, the creating of wealth, in two ways. First of all, it obliged West Africa to export its most valuable raw material, which was human labor. Year after year, for more than three centuries, tens of thousands of African farmers and craftsmen were shipped away to work in American plantations, mines and cities. With their labour they created enormous wealth and profits, but seldom for themselves and never for Africa. All that Africa received in exchange were the manufactured goods of Europe; and this was the second way in which the slave trade damaged Africa.
>
> It is easy to see why. West Africa, like other parts of Africa, possessed its own craftsmen. Often they were highly skilled. They produced goods which were sold from one end of West Africa to the other. But they produced them by [illegible] [emphasis added]. Now they had to face the competition of much cheaper goods made by machinery outside Africa.
>
> Cheap foreign cottons, produced by Europeans or Indians forced to work for very low wages, began to ruin the market for cotton stuffs produced by self-employed and often prosperous African craftsmen. Cheap European metalware, machine-made, competed with the handwork of African metal-smiths. Understandably, African craftsmen suffered from this cheap competition. But they were not able to go over to European factory methods: they had neither the necessary money nor the knowledge, while their way of life kept them faithful to traditional methods.
>
> So the slave trade removed African labour from Africa, and did much to ruin the livelihood of African craftsmen (Davidson, 1967:283-284).

There are several typical assumptions made here. These include the idea that European goods displaced African manufactures by competition. From the capitalist view this took place through the workings of the "free" market. Marxist dialectics sees, on the other hand, that just as peasant agriculture must give way to industrialized agriculture, so too hand labor must be replaced by mechanization and exploited industrial labor. Both systems of thought conclude that " [illegible] " (that are usually called "primitive") are inferior and/or obsolete. As will be discussed below, however, at least in the case of Kpelle metallurgy, its problem was clearly not an inability to meet "cheap competition," nor were its products "primitive" or inferior. Furthermore, it is not necessarily the case that converting to "European factory methods" would produce either a cheaper or a better product in Africa, nor is the assumption justified that the demise of African technology came from peasant resistance to change or a "way of life [that] kept them faithful to traditional methods."

"PRIMITIVE" KPELLE STEELMAKING

RECONCEPTUALIZING METALLURGY

The author's study of Kpelle metallurgy, as in the cases of his examination of their education and agriculture, has revealed that there was more than simply an "appropriate" technology existing before conquest. Instead, it would be justified to speak of an optimum, but in no way static technology, in light of the available resource base that was part of the ecosystem in which Kpelle culture developed and existed, and which it still occupies today. Under careful analysis, it is obvious that this was a highly adapted indigenous knowledge system or complex of indigenous technical knowledge.

Technological Overview

There are significant impediments to any study of the Kpelle "iron" industry, though much can yet be learned. Less is known about their bronze, gold and silver technologies. Historical and ethnographic approaches have their own problems, in part due to predictable and certainly not irrational patterns of secrecy found among guilds of metallurgists around the world. In fact, traditional metallurgical skills such as those of the Kpelle cannot simply be committed to textbooks. The following description of a Tanzanian blacksmith's knowledge is typical (and could easily apply to a traditional smith almost anywhere around the world).

> The blacksmiths' knowledge is entirely based upon accumulated empirical experience, which has been "inherited" from one generation of blacksmiths by the next. This knowledge is part of the blacksmith's senses and cannot be separated from him [nor can it be abstracted into or learned from a textbook -- it can only be learned through the formal education of an apprenticeship]. If you give a blacksmith a piece of scrap, he will first test it. He weighs it a couple of times in each hand, heats it up in the furnace and observes how long it takes to reach a certain colour.
>
> Finally he beats it and looks at the sort of sparks it gives, listens and feels how the iron "responds" and perhaps he will also smell the sparks. Meanwhile he mumbles, as if he is talking to the steel. After testing it, he knows what sort of steel he is working with, furthermore, he even knows for which purpose this steel is best suited. He cannot convert his knowledge into the percentage of carbon content, but he "knows" (Müller, 1980b:14).

In historic times some of the predecessors of the Kpelle in Liberia -- specifically the Krahn -- used pit furnaces with bellows for forced-draught smelting of iron, as well as charcoal from the ubiquitous forest hardwoods. Charcoal is another industry in itself, which the inmigrating Kpelle also developed in their own way.

Archaeological problems in studying the Kpelle in general are substantial. Nonprofessionals' expectations (including also the expectations of archaeologists without significant tropical experience) of the kinds of finds that will come from archaeology in hot, humid tropical areas, are usually based on the discoveries that come out of the near perfect preservation environment that constitutes much of the Ancient Near East and Egypt. These hopes are totally out-of-touch with the reality of what we can hope to find in the rainy humid tropics. The same factors that so radically degrade tropical soils destroy artifacts. Everything from characteristically highly acid and bacterially hyperactive soils to virtually optimum temperatures for artifact destruction (too hot), coupled with rainfall in huge amounts and falling with impacts at times exceeding twenty tons per square inch, work against finding very much at all. Add to this the fact that if we equate the amount and sophistication of technique and data analysis, the ratio of serious work in the Ancient Near East compared to tropical Africa is possibly 10,000:1, and what has been done usually involved techniques of recovery and preservation that had been developed in arid regions, and are often inappropriate to the point of being self-defeating. The disparity in sophistication of technology alone shows that dogmatic statements about the lack of evidence for some ancient civilizations in Africa are ludicrous. Moreover, some assume, for example, that an iron industry requires a large-scale infrastructure, but the material remains for such a technology actually may be quite inconspicuous (Gabel, et al., 1972-1974). For example, up into this century, before penetration by western technology, one traditional smelter built around a plantain stalk near a small village in what is at least now Kpelle territory (remains of the smelter are on the property of the Youth of Life Mission School, 6.5 kilometers east of Palala, Bong County), left behind a slag heap that measures approximately 3 x 13 x 50+ meters, which many nearby residents today do not even know exists.

The Kpelle ironworking tradition is one of several distinct technologies found in West Africa. In Liberia itself these mainly include the old Loma, Kpelle and Krahn traditions, all of which involved some mining and smelting of iron as well as forging and, in the Kpelle case, possibly the casting of implements. One of the more well-known products of the extinct Loma industry is the so-called "Kissi penny," a stylized arrow, bundles of which were part of a traditional bride price (and may have had a divinatory function, as well). These "coins" are mentioned in the literature as early as 1687 A.D. (Schulze, 1973:153). Moreover, virtually all peoples of Liberia were active in working iron which they purchased from those who mined and smelted it. The mining and smelting of iron is still practiced among the neighboring Senofu people of the Korhogo prefecture of the Ivory Coast (Jammes, n.d.), but it is almost dead in Liberia.

"PRIMITIVE" KPELLE STEELMAKING

Kpelle metallurgical technology, in contrast to the literature, as reflected in its material remains, and also in interviews with informants, was both sophisticated, quite distinctive and clearly not derived from neighbors, captives or slaves obtained as the Kpelle settled the area. Besides mining and smelting of iron alloys and brass, Kpelle smiths even may have made cast iron as well as forged tools; they did some types of welding and gunsmithing. Overall, while utilizing what is often denigrated as "primitive," or even appropriate technology, their knowledge was very advanced.

The Kpelle utilized an above-ground furnace that seems to have employed both bellows and convection-draught. The location of a smelter was consecrated or sacralized by the planting of one or more cotton trees (often reaching fifty meters in height), in the same way that traditional townsites were demarcated. The furnaces were built by covering a thick plantain stalk with termite clay (reportedly they were sometimes built on hillsides). Once the clay was more or less dry, the inner layers of the plant could be pulled out from the top (like rings out of a cut onion); after the clay was further dried (slowly, by periodic applications of palm oil), a fire inside the chimney that was thus created completed the drying and the hardening of the clay. Down- or up-slope winds probably had no significant role in the smelting process. On the other hand, the powerful suction created by the rising hot gases through the tall, tapering column could have combined with the bellows to make possible high smelting temperatures. It is noteworthy that plantain is not the most common savannah plant, though it may have been available to Kpelle blacksmiths prior to their arrival in Liberia's rainforests.

More problematic than the use of plantains for furnace building is that, given the relative scarcity of trees in the savannah, the technology for charcoal-intensive smelting of metals, if brought by the Kpelle from the southern Sudan, was maintained during their migrations at quite a considerable labor cost. Moreover, the ability to recognize new and diverse types of iron ore encountered as they moved from one into another of successive mineral environments is most astonishing.

Kpelle furnaces were charged with a mixed-charge of charcoal, possibly corkwood, and ores, and at least one report holds that three days were the minimum time required to complete a run (Schulze, 1973:155). We do not know what sort of fluxes were used, but a silica flux in the form of grasses added to the charge is likely. Apparently continuous smelting was also practiced at times, recharging the furnace from the top and tapping the molten ore from the bottom. Several informants described the molten ore's flow through small trenches into holes (pigs?), suggesting that temperatures were high enough not just to extract blooms for the making of wrought iron, but to do casting. If this is true, it is unique in the ancient world. The percentage of metal extracted is undeterminable, but even if the technology were very inefficient (extracting, say, less than 20% of the metal from the ore), the quantity of slag

observable at some of the obviously more active sites indicates production would clearly have exceeded any possible domestic consumption.

The author also obtained reports from informants of the "mixing" (alloying) of different types of ore (specifically referred to by "rocks of different colors") to produce what informants consistently described as a high strength, rust-resistant "Kpelle iron." Unrelated interviewees in many distant areas reported that unlike kwii metals, "Kpelle iron" did not rust away after acquiring a light surface patina. Close examination of museum pieces that had not benefited from any modern preservation techniques, let alone humidity and temperature control, confirmed these reports, as did less formal observation of the few pieces seen in the field. Further testing the reliability and validity of these claims was an essential task. The consistency of the reports from distinct sources gave some confidence, but the literature stood in direct contradiction. For example, Willi Schulze noted that

> The Kpelle furnaces were charged with one thick layer of charcoal on which roasted lateritic iron ore was heaped (1973:155).

Moreover, no one was willing to part with any old artifacts made of "Kpelle iron." The author was, however, able to collect both slag and laterite gravel (plinthite ore) from one Kpelle smelter site. This made possible empirical testing and verification of informants' verbal reports.

X-ray fluorescence spectrometry revealed that slag samples from the Kpelle smelter contained (besides the predictable iron) silicon, sulphur and aluminum, significant residues of manganese, titanium and chromium, lesser amounts of barium, possibly traces of nickel and copper, and usual readings of calcium and potassium. The significance of the tests is heightened by the fact that x-ray fluorescence spectrometry testing of the laterite gravel from the same furnace site revealed a composition of iron, a larger proportion of titanium and chromium than in the slag, some zirconium, and a trace of nickel, but, relative to the slag, almost no calcium or potassium, and most significantly, a comparative absence of manganese in the laterite gravel (roughly fourteen times more in the slag than in the ore).

The absence of manganese from the laterite gravel and its substantial presence in the slag shows that, contrary to what has been assumed in the past, laterite could not have been the Kpelle's only ore, because in and of itself, it could not account for residues in the slag. Reports in the literature of the Kpelle simply smelting roasted laterite gravel ore, made by scholars who have not observed a smelter in operation, cannot be sustained by the evidence. The informants' reports of ores being mixed, on the other hand, tend to be confirmed. The superiority of "Kpelle iron" is reflected in its

surviving reputation among the older Kpelle and the reported demand for it from traders and neighboring tribes (Schwab, 1947:136-146). One technical source, discussing iron in antiquity, noted

> In some areas, the iron ores also contained some other metals beneficial to the properties of the iron with which they became alloyed during smelting (manganese for instance), and the metals produced from such ores were so superior as to become justly celebrated (United States Steel, 1957:4, emphasis added)

The reputation of "Kpelle iron" is unusual, then, not because of the metal's manganese content, but due to the fact that, at least in this case, it was achieved by the conscious alloying of ores to obtain the desired characteristics. The reputation of Kpelle iron was well-deserved, and explains the, at times, high volumes of production reflected in some slag heaps, and its place in regional trade.

Blacksmithing and Trade

Among the Kpelle, tools were obtained from a blacksmith based upon an exchange of labor. Kuu (cooperative labor) groups and individuals would work on the blacksmith's farm a given amount of time, based upon the time a smith spent producing the goods received. But since, unlike farming, which is seasonal, smithing can be practiced year-round, surpluses were produced that could be exported. Thus, even more than leatherworkers, weavers, or those planting trees and occasionally harvesting kola nuts, smiths were engaged in commerce from a very early period. The blacksmith would have been one of the few people in Kpelle society who could offer sufficient goods in exchange for cattle that were brought into the rainforest areas from the savannah. It should be recognized that while not all blacksmithing groups are nomadic, the roles of smith and merchant are necessarily symbiotic, if not always synonymous, due to the durability and longevity of the goods the smiths produce. A traditional smith who does not engage in trade himself or through middlemen very quickly runs out of customers. The travelling smith and tinker are common to many societies. But the smith who mines and smelts as well as works metals is usually less mobile and more linked to travelling traders than those who only fabricate tools from metal that others produce. For people with an established smelting technology, leaving known ore deposits is a major step, since one cannot be assured of finding adequate sources elsewhere.

While virtually all their neighboring tribes had smithing traditions, apparently only the Loma and Krahn were significant competitors in producing iron in the region, but, perhaps due to the Kpelle's metallurgical skills (alloying, etc.), "Kpelle iron" was in higher demand. The Kpelle smiths and smelters kept their technology secret. They were, from all indications, not highly mobile, but were quite open to trade, especially

through Mandingo (Malinke) who brought salt and other commodities in exchange for workable bars of "iron" (steel -- on other early African "iron" trade see Morgenthau, 1979:109; Wilson, 1979:56-57, 62; Meillassoux, 1965:74-75; Miracle, 1965:289; and Bohannon, 1964:79-97). It is also possible that the Kpelle smelters supplied not just bar-stock, but smithing tools (especially anvil-hammers) to the blacksmiths of neighboring tribes. Given the size of some slag heaps and the frequency of smelters around Kpelle villages it is reasonable to assume that trade carried "Kpelle iron" throughout at least much of West Africa. Today, as will be discussed below, Kpelle smiths no longer mine and smelt their own iron, and are dependent on outside sources of "kwii iron" (old truck leaf springs, etc.), to make the tools they sell and exchange for labor.

PROBLEMS BETWEEN KPELLE AND WESTERN METALLURGY

Despite the obvious strengths of Kpelle steel manufacturing technology, that industry is at best moribund today. The author found only a rapidly diminishing number of old blacksmiths knowing anything about mining and refining iron ore. Tool-making and repair have only a precarious status. Virtually every village still has at least one smith, but they are best described as underemployed, even though traditional-style tools are almost universally preferred over imported implements because of their functional utility. In every village studied, and in every interview conducted by the author with rural Kpelle under about forty years of age who were not blacksmiths, there was total ignorance that their ancestors had ever mined and refined iron. Even among Kpelle university students who had attended school at what is now the Youth of Life Mission School in Palala, where the largest known slag heap in the region is located, none were aware of that smelter's existence.

The older generation does not talk about the old iron industry, and some schoolteachers even ridicule blacksmithing as primitive and backward. Rather than there being anything wrong with the traditional industry, however, the reasons for the decline in smelting and making tools include, among other things, non-economic forces, changing patterns of trade, distortion of "market" pricing, and disruption of traditional reciprocal labor relations. In the Kpelle case, however, it is not a sufficient explanation to argue that

> The growth of this trade [with Europe] began to affect the structure of production in West Africa. Some previously economic activities -- blacksmithing, iron smelting, even the mining of iron -- declined, "ruined by the competition of cheaper and purer iron bars imported from Europe," as well as by
>
> > increasing quantities of cheap European imports of iron basins, matchets, knives, hoes, wire and other metal goods turned out by

> the expanding mass production techniques of the industrial revolution (Wallerstein, 1976: 36, quoting Flint).

"Free trade," mass production, and "competition" with imported goods did not eclipse the Kpelle iron industry, nor was it displaced because it was an inferior technology linked to an obsolete form of social organization. If it is in fact dead, it was killed by colonialism and monopoly capitalism, not because the product it produced was in any way inferior or overpriced in the marketplace.

Non-Economic Obstacles

The suppression of traditional blacksmithing in favor of importers was not unique to Liberia, nor were the motives for destroying indigenous industries uniquely economic. Colleagues have verbally reported to the author cases of traditional smithing being suppressed elsewhere in colonial Africa for non-economic reasons, including preventing the manufacture of weapons (swords and spears, etc.). On the other hand, Müller's reports that

> During the colonial era [in Tanzania], blacksmithing was often actively suppressed in order to promote the use of imported goods, maximize the production of export crops, and prevent the manufacture of guns (Müller, 1980b:13).

have been rather carefully refuted by David Brokensha, who cites from colonial records from the 1930s to the 1950s to show that blacksmithing was recognized and valued by some officials in East Africa (Brokensha 1983:90). Each case must be examined carefully.

Changing Patterns of Trade

As certain imported consumer goods -- pure refined salt, for example -- became available at low prices in the interior, indigenous trading patterns began to evolve, but could have survived. While certain goods such as "Kpelle iron" were still desirable, there were fewer indigenous products that African traders could offer of comparable value to the labor invested by the smiths, especially since the supposedly "free" market prices had to match or be lower than those for non-African imported tools and scrap iron.

National boundaries, customs agents, bribes, and corruption also broke down traditional trading networks that had existed prior to these economically artificial barriers being interposed. Highly desired trade goods were more costly due to the new expenses and risks that resulted from governments redefining indigenous trade as crime (smuggling). As a result, "legal" (coastal controlled) imports came to be

substituted for the goods that moved through the indigenous system. This further enriched the dominant groups, while increasing the impoverishment of the indigenous majority in the long run. This is because the real, long term cost of substituting imports purchased through the sale of non-renewable resources for domestic manufactures is actually much higher than one could calculate from shipping invoices.

The settler controlled Liberian government, throughout this century, actually subsidized the coastal merchants (largely themselves), to the long range destruction of indigenous industry, the economy and currency. From the initial incursion into Kpelle territory up through the first years of the Doe regime, this took place, in part, by putting artificially low ceilings with heavy penalties on the market prices of cutlasses and other implements manufactured by traditional smiths. While this resulted in traditional implements apparently costing less to buy than the imported tools, and therefore supposedly staying competitive with them, the controlled price (which was ostensibly a protection for indigenous industry), was always kept lower than what it actually cost for the smiths to manufacture the goods. This made it impossible for the smiths to survive, and guaranteed a profit, first directly to the settler-Liberian merchants who imported metal tools, and later indirectly to themselves through Lebanese surrogates or other "front-men."

Accelerating through the Tolbert years, and getting even worse under the Doe regime, irrational subsidization and price-distortion also takes place as the government allows merchants to spend costly "foreign exchange" (i.e. U.S. dollars) on the importation of goods that could have been produced locally, to say nothing of the lost economic multiplier effect of domestic production and consumption. For instance, in 1982, depending on market prices and grade of ores or concentrates, from 3.5 up to as many as one-hundred long tons of Liberia's rapidly vanishing reserves of high-grade iron ore had to be exported to generate the foreign exchange necessary to re-import steel in the form of a single Chinese or Brazilian machete (made from their own ore) that weighs approximately a pound. In 1982 such an implement cost U.S.$4.00 in Kpelle country, and was inadequate to the task. In this type of exchange, the bulk of the profit goes to the more than generously licensed multi-national mining concessions, and again to the importers, who as quickly as possible ship their profits to banks outside Liberia. Neo-classical and monetarist "free-market" theories are more than irrelevant when it comes to solving this kind of problem -- they exacerbate it. Only domestic manufactures could reverse the situation.

Another factor leading to the breakdown of the traditional industry was that it was based upon labor exchanges. There is nothing uneconomic or impractical about

this type of reciprocity. From the extension of control by the coastal people over the hinterland, however, distortions in the "market price" of labor again put blacksmiths at a disadvantage. Corvée labor was implemented on "legal" and extra-legal bases from the moment that troops moved inland. Tribal peoples were first impressed as hammock carriers and bearers for the soldiers themselves and to carry their plunder. Then more corvées were established to build roads, create estates and plantations for district commissioners and other central government figures. Also the monetary "hut tax" was imposed on the non-monetary rural economies. With ever greater frequency, the people's labor was forcibly diverted to uncompensated enriching of the dominant powers. Added to this were the quotas of laborers that chiefs were required to send to work on the 1,000,000 acre Firestone plantation (albeit at starvation wages) from 1927 onward into the 1950s, and the kidnapping by Monrovians of men that were sold into slavery and shipped to Spanish plantations on the island of Fernando Po and to Panama, which ended with the League of Nations censure in 1930. Forced labor persisted in the Doe regime, with county superintendents and other military officers forcing entire villages to make enormous private rice farms for them without compensation of any kind.

Increasingly, schools have further depleted the traditional labor market, not just during class time, but throughout the lives of those who attend, both through the systematic denigration of the traditional system and the overvaluing of "white collar" employment. The average school-leaver is accurately perceived in the village as "lazy" -- refusing to work in traditional ways, yet unfit for anything else in the almost non-existent westernized economy. All of these factors have artificially raised the cost (and availability) of labor to the point that the old exchange relationships are rarely viable, and farmers are forced to buy inferior imported goods while their neighbors cannot afford to produce implements that are worth buying, because of price ceilings.

CONCLUSION

Kpelle steelmaking was a viable economic enterprise, capable of producing a high quality product that was far better suited to the needs of local farmers in terms of functionality, strength, and rust resistance than are imports, at a far lower real cost to the nation. With minimal government cooperation, the author believes the industry still could be revived, better serving the nation's farmers, blacksmiths, and the economy as a whole, making Liberia self-sufficient in the production of iron hoes, axes, cutlasses, and etc., providing work for the blackmiths and smelters, their children, and future generations, as may be happening in other parts of Africa (Müller, 1980a). Contrasted with mass-produced machetes, etc., the local smiths' products are far superior in many respects. As has been noted elsewhere:

> As part-time farmers, the blacksmiths [of rural Tanzania] know local soil conditions, crops, and farmers' preferences. Therefore their jembes [heavy,

> more or less heart-shaped hoes] vary a great deal. The sizes and weights are determined by whether they will be used for digging or weeding. A different jembe exists for every crop and soil condition: some are heart-shaped, others are in the form of a dish; the former is for hard soil, the latter for soft. . . . smiths are frequently asked to modify [hoes that are mass produced] (Müller, 1980b:11-13).

The only real constraint would be the careful development and maintenance of "woodlots" for charcoal production to prevent deforestation -- a relatively easy task today. Kpelle steelmaking is indeed a high technology indigenous knowledge system which holds real promise for Liberia's future. It is also an endangered national resource that can become extinct with the death of its last practitioners.

NOTES

[1]This paper was originally delivered at the Liberian Studies Association meeting, Santa Barbara, California, March 12, 1987. It is derived in part from chapter V (Kpelle Steel and Technological Revolution) of my Cornell University Ph.D. dissertation, "Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Sciences, and Technologies: Ethnographic and Ethnohistorical Perspectives on the Educational Foundations for Development in Kpelle Culture" (Ithaca, New York: 1987), which treats traditional agriculture, medicine, metallurgy, and education.

[2]These themes are articulated today by a number of other scholars who somewhat parallel my approach, including Robert Chambers (1985, 1983), and his associates at the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex in publications such as ? (1979), David W. Brokensha, D. Michael Warren and Oswald Werner, in ı (1980), and William Foote Whyte and Damon Boynton in ı - ı n r (1983).

[3]On the significance of such "mumbling," compare my discussion of "Ritual As a Mnemonic Strategy in Traditional Health-Care Training and Delivery" (Thomasson, 1987:274-284).

[4]This technique is common in West Africa. Van der Merwe links it to Phoenician traders on the West Coast of Africa and dates it back as far as Nigeria in 400 B.C. (1982:151).

[5]Willi Schulze gives a good overview of what is known of migration patterns (1973:45-49).

[6]See the chapter on "Mining: the Liberian iron ore industry" in Willi Schulze (1973:153ff.), and a discussion of Kpelle iron by the same author (1970-1971).

[7]I am indebted to Fred W. Nelson, Radiation Safety Officer at Brigham Young University and an expert in doing such analyses in his own archaeological research, for conducting these tests. For technical details of the tests, see Thomasson (1987: 225-226 n. 11, 226 n. 12, and 226-227, n. 13).

[8]This is certain, both because of the ease with which manganese melds with iron, its substantially lower melting point. If a furnace is hot enough to liquify iron the manganese will already have melted. These factors combine to insure that Mg could not have resisted smelting and have become more concentrated in the slag than in the laterite. The trace of sulphur in the slag may have come in with the Mg-bearing ore. In the smelting process some Mg tends to fuse with S and float to the surface where it can be skimmed or otherwise removed and discarded, leaving amuch better product.

[9]Today manganese steels are known as high strength low-alloy steels of relatively lower ductility–perhaps this is a reason Kpelle blacksmiths did not generally water-quench their work. Due to the properties of the alloy it very possibly would have been too hard and brittle if quenched. See also my discussion of the Kpelle "Well-Tempered Cutlass" (Thomasson, 1987:243-248).

[10]As an example, a copy of the controlled commodities "Price List" from the Liberian Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Transportation which I obtained in early 1982, gives retail price ceilings for locally made tools as follows:

No. Item	Size	Wholesale Price	Retail Price
104.Cutlass	Large	$2.50	$3.00
105. "	Medium	2.00	2.50
106. "	Small	0.75	1.00
108. Ax	Large	1.25	1.50
109. "	Medium	1.00	1.25
110. "	Small	0.75	1.00
111. Hoe	Large	1.25	1.50
112. "	Medium	1.00	1.25
113. "	Small	0.75	1.00

(Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Transportation, n.d.)

[11]From the Nimba range, the LAMCO concession exports raw ore that is up to 69% pure iron, and soil fertility in the form of hardwoods from the vanishing rainforest. Latex (and therefore soil fertility) is exported in similarly enormous amounts with equally dismal returns to the nation. Firestone has, of course, refused for years to put a tire manufacturing plant in Liberia, in spite of the considerable market that exists there and throughout West Africa.

[12]While apologetic historical revisionists today are tending to minimize the significance of these events and the very uncomfortable image of settler-Liberian blacks enslaving tribal-Liberian blacks, the ethnohistorical perspective of Kpelle and other native informants recalling those events has been neglected. People interviewed by the author made clear distinctions between enslaving and being enslaved by neighboring tribes on the one hand (where one might marry and live some semblance of a "normal" life, however inferior one's status, or even be ransomed or rescued), and being carried away forever by the coastal peoples on the other. When asked if either condition was like dying, only the latter was so identified.

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Liberia's Second Republic:
Superpower Geopolitics in Africa*

Patrick L. N. Seyon

The Students

James A. Perkins (1975, p. 23) has observed that "when other critical voices are not to be heard...in authoritarian societies students have frequently been the de facto opposition party. In these circumstances student political activity, with the university campus as the base, has not been without influence." The students in Liberia have played a significant role as de facto opposition from the early 1960s, when Tubman ruled Liberia by a single party without opposition, to 1985, when military rule officially came to an end.

Under Tubman, the students from the University of Liberia, the state university, and Cuttington University College, an Episcopal private liberal arts institution, organized themselves into the Liberian National Students Union. By 1962, student opposition to Tubman had reached a high point, and he described the institutions of higher learning as "hot beds of sedition". That year, two student leaders from both institutions were arrested, charged with sedition and detained. Instead of deterring student activism, as the government had intended, the detention of the student leaders spurred further student activism, but drove it "underground". By 1968, student opposition was at a point sufficiently significant for the Tubman regime to threaten to close down the University as a means of curtailing student activism and opposition.

Following the death of Tubman in 1971, William R. Tolbert, Jr., who served as vice president under Tubman for nineteen years, assumed the presidency. He liberalized the tight political machinery Tubman had operated, dissolved Tubman's three security networks and the informant machinery, the Public Relations Officers. He also tried to bring the youth into the government. Much younger people than before were given cabinet appointments, a unit in the labor ministry was established to deal with employment and other matters for youth (now a full ministry), the voting age was lowered to eighteen years to give the youth opportunity to participate meaningfully in the government, and he promised to set aside a number of seats in the legislature for the youth. Tolbert referred to the youth as his "precious jewels". But Tolbert's rhetoric

*Second of two part article. Both parts were written in 1986.
Editor

of eradicating corruption, waging war against ignorance, disease and poverty, leading Liberia to "higher heights" and removing the poor from "mat to mattresses" did not match his deeds or performance, and as the gap between expectation and performance widened, the Tolbert regime lost its credibility and legitimacy with the students, and came into a head-on collision with them in early 1975.

It may not have been all Tolbert's fault or deliberate reneging on his promises. By 1975, the Liberian economy had gone into a tail-spin after its phenomenal growth (critics say without development) in the 1950s and 1960s, exacerbated by the OPEC oil price hikes of 1973-74, and that left Tolbert without the capital to make good some of his promises, particularly providing jobs for the growing number of graduates. The high profile involvement of his family in the government and private sector, his inefficiency and mismanagement of the economy and corruption, coupled with his elaborate plans to host the OAU summit in 1979, rapidly eroded his credibility with the students, and Tolbert lost his legitimacy and image as a political reformer.

By 1979, both MOJA and PAL had joined forces with the students in their opposition to the Tolbert regime. The Monrovia rice riot of 14 April 1979 was the result of the Tolbert regime attempting to break up a demonstration organized by these three groups against the government raising the price of a hundred pound bag of rice from twenty to twenty-two dollars. And this paved the way for Tolbert's overthrow in 1980 by the military.

After the 1980 coup, Doe paid a visit to the campus of the University of Liberia to thank the students and the university for raising the political consciousness of the Liberian masses. Since Doe had promised that he would wipe out corruption and nepotism in Liberia, he was given a symbolic sword by the students to use in his fight to wipe out corruption and other social injustices in the Liberian society. But the honeymoon between the Doe regime and the students came to an abrupt end. The students were the first to demand that the PRC set a date for returning Liberia to civilian rule. And when the members of the PRC started their ostentatious living in a manner similar to the Tolbert regime which they had replaced, the students were the first to attack Doe and the PRC. It was to silence or curtail student criticism that Doe announced in December 1981 that the ban on politics extended to students. University administrators were instructed by Doe to appoint students representative committees to coordinate student activities on the campuses.

In early January 1982, the Liberian National Students Union sent a delegation to make a special appeal to Doe to allow students to elect their campus leaders as in the past. Doe took the appeal as a challenge to his government by the students. The six student leaders who took the appeal to the Executive Mansion were arrested. They were charged with treason, brought down guilty by the Special Military Tribunal, and sentenced to death by firing squad. Some expressed the view that Doe would not

execute the students for making an appeal to him for the exercise of a right he said the Liberian people had been denied and for which he had seized power. The extra-ordinarily harsh measures taken were all designed as a ploy to frighten the students into silence, it seemed. In any event, Doe granted the students executive clemency.

If in fact the government did want to silence criticism by the students by its orchestration of treason charges, trial and death sentence, then it achieved the opposite effect. The students continued their criticism of the government. In September 1982, the students at the University of Liberian went on a bus strike. Doe had promised the university buses at the beginning of the school year to transport students to the university's new campus, seventeen miles outside of Monrovia, but had failed to fulfill his promise. Students commuting between the two campuses experienced transportation difficulty, because of insufficient buses, some of which were very old and frequently broke down, leading to students missing their classes. While students were without transportation, twenty-eight new honda accords, one for each member of the PRC, each of whom already had one or two government cars, had been bought and delivered at the Capitol Building. This angered the students and led them to stage the bus strike. The intention was not to ride the old buses or attend classes until the Doe government had provided the new buses promised. Doe was out of the country when the strike started. He rushed home and told the students that the new buses had already been shipped to Liberia from South Korea, where he had been visiting, and would arrive soon. The students were then urged to return to classes.

A brief "truce" between the Doe regime and the students prevailed until August 1984. The new constitution had been approved by referendum, and contrary to Doe's earlier promise that he would return Liberia to civilian rule in 1985, he not only announced that the return to civilian rule would be delayed until early 1986, but also that he was going to run for the presidency. This announcement was not received well by the students, who were taken by surprise and felt betrayed by Doe. And Doe's popularity with the students early in his rule was most probably predicated on the fact that he had indicated he would return Liberia to civilian rule in 1985, which was not taken to mean he would just change uniform and entrench himself in power. To fuel an already tense situation, rumors spread about a coup plot while Doe was out of the country visiting West Germany. It was also rumored that Doe himself had planned the coup so that he could declare himself president, lock up his political opponents, suspend the new constitution and then rule by martial law.

Doe cut short his visit and returned to Monrovia, Sunday, 19 August 1984. Upon his arrival, Doe ordered the arrest of Amos Sawyer, who chaired the commission that wrote the new constitution, and was serving as dean of the college of liberal arts at the University, as well as another member of the faculty, George Kieh, for "security reasons".

The students staged a boycott of classes on Monday, 20 August 1984, demanding Sawyer's release. Wednesday afternoon, 22 August 1984, Doe ordered soldiers to go to the campus to "disperse" the students, who continued their peaceful boycott of classes and demonstration on the campus. The soldiers opened fire on the unarmed students and then went on a rampage. A minimum of ten students were reported killed, even though the Doe government denied anyone was killed or injured. Hundreds more were wounded from gunshots. The soldiers brutally beat up faculty and students, and raped others. After this, the entire senior faculty and administrative staff were dismissed by Doe and the university was closed. With the raid on the university and its closure, Doe bought himself some time. But he was not prepared to allow the students to regroup. By December 1984, he had the leaders of the Liberian National Students Union arrested and detained. They were not released until September 1985, just before the elections.

In March 1986, the students took to the streets in Monrovia in support of striking public school teachers who had not been paid for four months. The clash with the soldiers left many students wounded and sent 28 soldiers with serious wounds to the hospital. The government was forced to close all schools for a period of nearly three months. These bloody clashes between the Doe regime and students may also introduce another element into Liberian politics that has been absent up to this point--radicalism on the part of a significant portion of the Liberian population: the young intelligentsia.

In a country of over 70 per cent illiteracy, the university students constitute an important component of the intelligentsia and a potent political force. Tubman tried to contain the students, and Tolbert tried co-optation, but they were aware that the political force of the students had become a reality in Liberian politics and could not be eliminated. In various ways, they sought support of the students. Doe has found out the hard way that the student political force has to be reckoned with. His hands have been burned and a few skeletons have been added to his already packed closet. He was forced to close all schools in Liberia March-May 1986. This is just the first year of his six-year term, and there may be more encounters in the future that may not be particularly friendly, unless he can make amends for the past, establish a better working relationship, and change his anti-intellectual attitude.

With 50 per cent of the Liberian population under age twenty, the university students feel that they are the leaders of the majority of the population. It is the politicians who will have to recognize this demographic and political factor in the Second Republic and deal with it. The students are, therefore, an important political force in the Second Republic, and some of their leaders at the university will enter the political arena. What political alliances the students form, how they use their votes and power, as they bargain with other political actors and/or forces could mean the

difference between orderly democratic political development and instability in the Second Republic.

Organized Labor

About 70 per cent of Liberia's estimated 2.2 million population lives in the rural areas, and is involved in subsistence agriculture. The labor force in the formal economy, estimated at 550,000 in 1980, has a substantial portion unemployed since the close of 1982. The majority of the work force is in agriculture, while 55,000 is in the public sector; making the government the largest employer in Liberia. Unemployment in the formal economy is reported to be running at about 50 per cent. For example, Firestone, one of the largest private sector employers, laid off 1,700 workers in 1983, the National Iron Ore Company laid off 1,200 in 1984, and LAMCO, the biggest iron ore mining company in Liberia, laid off 1,500 employees in 1984, because of the world recession. The Liberian government itself has had to lay off substantial numbers of its employees in order to reduce its budget deficit, which has increased to over $70 million in the 1985/86 fiscal year.

Foreigners hold most top and middle-level managerial and technical jobs in the private sector. The majority of the Liberians in the private sector are unskilled, and a substantial portion of those who work with the rubber and mining companies tend to be intermittent; working long enough to save some money and then returning to their farms at the beginning of the farming season.

Organized labor started about the mid 1950s with the establishment of the Labor Congress of Liberia in 1953 and the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) in 1959. By the early 1960s, a number of industrial strikes at Firestone and LAMCO in 1961, particularly the July, 1963 strike at Firestone where 20,000 workers walked off their jobs, led to the enactment of labor legislation in 1963. Although the intent of the legislation was clearly to control labor activism, it did establish the legal framework for collective bargaining between labor and management in Liberia. However, the legislation made it very difficult for unions to strike, because a labor board, appointed by the government, had to rule whether or not a union could strike. The board often took no decision, or delayed decisions in favor of the trade unions for strike, when they had legitimate basis for a strike. This led to further labor unrest in 1966 at Firestone, Goodrich, and LAMCO, and the Liberian government used the military to break the strikes and force workers back to work. It was this type of depression of workers' wages, with government control, that enabled Firestone, in one year (1963), to recover as gross profits nearly half of its total investment of $26 million in Liberia.

The CIO was given support by the government in order to contain the Labor Congress of Liberia, which was being radicalized. These two unions merged in 1980 to form the Liberian Federation of Labor Unions. Through the mechanism of the labor

board and officials of government heading unions, the Liberian government controlled trade union activism. However, by the time of Tubman's death in 1971, the Liberian government, not wishing to be sanctioned by the ILO for suppressing trade union movement, which it in fact got, was forced to allow trade unions to function. By 1980, the unions had been politicized, first by the government, which wanted union support and mass rallies, and then mobilized against the government by the students, MOJA and PAL.

Following the 1980 coup, the PRC promulgated Decree 12 banning strikes, understandably to protect itself, as the Tubman regime before it had done. For a government that had seized power to "redeem the suffering masses of Liberia", Decree 12 was indeed odd. It was not enthusiastically received by the workers, nor did they abide by it. For there were several strikes, and the PRC only managed to contain strikes through intimidation, repression, and in only a few instances by persuasion.

Trade union activism tends to increase in times of economic decline and financial austerity. The Liberian economy is in such a state, and the government is already having trouble with organized labor. Early in 1986, the doctors and nurses stayed away from their jobs to demand their back pay and protest deplorable working conditions. The Doe government threatened to dismiss them if they did not return to work. Since doctors and nurses cannot be replaced so easily, the government's threat amounted to precious nothing. The teachers went on strike in 1985 and again twice in 1986. The teachers' early 1986 strike for back pay, restoration of twenty-five per cent cut in their salary, and payment of transportation allowance in arrears for two years led to student demonstrations that forced the government to close all schools March-May 1986.

This is by no means the last word from organized labor, and may just be the warning for an explosion, unless the government can take the necessary corrective measures to improve the economy and reduce the high rate of unemployment. In the final analysis, it can be said that how the other sociopolitical forces interact with and relate to organized labor may hold the key to a stable political order and economic recovery in the Second Republic.

When Samuel K. Doe seized power in a bloody military coup 1980, he called his coup a "revolution". And to show the Liberian people and the world that he meant business, less than two weeks after seizing power, he carried out a spectacular public execution of 13 former officials of government, confiscated their properties, and followed that with execution of some soldiers to restore order and discipline in his military. No one hears anything about the so-called revolution from Doe or anyone

else these days. And this raises the interesting question of whether Samuel Doe's Liberian "revolution" has fizzled out, or what is happening to it.

There was an incipient revolution gaining momentum when Doe seized power in 1980. The university students, some of the staff and MOJA were in the forefront of the incipient revolution. Ideologically, the revolution was going to undertake a fundamental restructuring of the Liberian society so that the majority of the people would be involved in making the critical decisions that affect their lives and country. While the specifics of the program of such a revolution had yet to be worked out, the general feeling was that once Doe had performed the major task of overthrowing the settler oligarchy, he would step aside and let a vanguard group undertake the restructuring task.

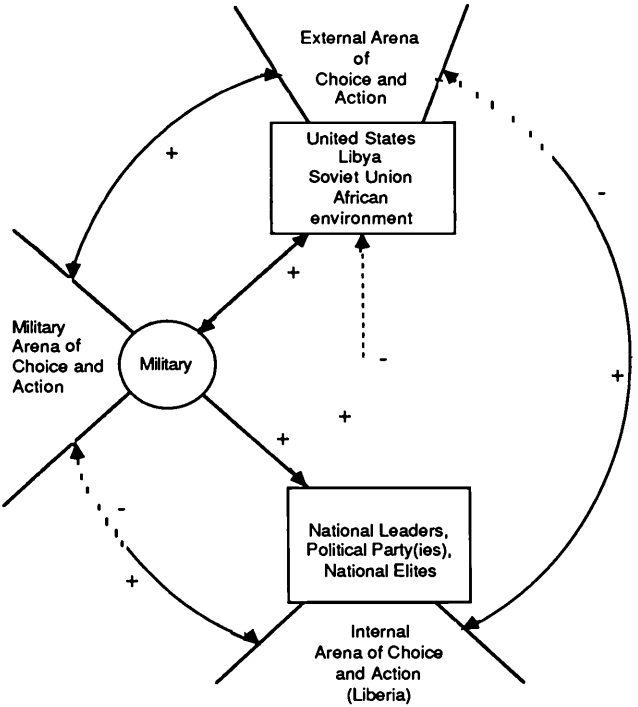
Those in the ruling People's Redemption Council (PRC), including the co-chairman and vice head of state (4 in number), who were sympathetic to the revolution, were charged with plotting to overthrow the government and treason, and executed in August 1981. This was followed by purging from the cabinet the leading MOJA members. The University of Liberia, which served as the base for the students to bring off the revolution, was smashed in 1984. And with that, it seemed that Liberia's incipient revolution was nipped in the bud. However, arbitrary, authoritarian, personal rule and the absence of rule of law, the denial of fundamental freedoms and civil liberties, inequality in the distribution of the wealth of the country, corruption, mismanagement, all of which formed the basis of the incipient revolution, are being practiced by Doe on a scale unknown in Liberia's history. In addition, Doe has introduced tribal politics together with repression and violence in Liberian politics. He may have intervened at a critical point with his coup to avert a revolution, but since seizing power, Doe has plowed enough seeds for a full-scale revolution, and if he keeps on his present course, he may just spark it off sooner than he would wish.

Other Social Institutions

Although not political institutions, there are other social institutions in Liberia that have played an important moderating role in Liberian politics in the past, and may still play such a role in the Second Republic. Included in this category, not necessarily in the order of importance, would be the University of Liberia that has championed and articulated the cause of rule of law, due process, human rights and civil liberties, social justice and democracy. It has also contributed to the creation of a new Liberian intelligentsia, and served as the only forum for dissent in an authoritarian society. The Liberian Council of Churches, which recently played the mediating role of arranging a meeting between the Doe regime and the grand coalition of the opposition parties, has maintained a very strong position on separation of church and state, has spoken out strongly against violation and abuse of human rights, and come under the wrath of the Doe regime. Secret societies such as the Masonic Order, the United Brothers of

Friendship and the Odd Fellows, banned under the military, are being reconstituted, and will seek to influence state policies and politics through their members, as they have done in the past. The indigenous secret society, Poro, under whose auspices Doe called a meeting with his political opponents in early 1986, is already beginning to do just that, with the new president as its titular head just as in the past. The women, who had a wing in the True Whig Party, are beginning to organize themselves and are making an important impact on national issues. The arrest and detention twice of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, member of the Liberia Action Party, for treason, and the arrest and detention without charges of Mary Antoinette Brown Sherman, former president of the University of Liberia, have forged links between the less educated Market Women Association and the educated women. They presented a strongly worded statement to U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Chester Crocker, when he visited Liberia in April 1986, asking that the United States cut off aid to the Doe regime.

To conclude, the foregoing discussion is summarized in the theoretical model on geopolitics below. The model conceives an interdependent geopolitical world in



A Theoretical Model of Geopolitics

terms of systems and subsystems interacting in ongoing processes. Three arenas of choice and action are shown. While the military arena is set out for analytic purpose, in reality, it operates in the external and internal arenas as an important component. Two sets of arrows are used in the model to indicate its dynamics, showing relationship and interaction between and with the external and internal arenas of choice and action.

There is one illustrative arrow, one-directional, between the theaters of choice and action of the military and the internal arenas (represented respectively by the circle and rectangular boxes). The arrow indicates that while the military has a direct influence on and can displace national leaders and political parties through coups, the latter are powerless to disband or dissolve the military. This is what has happened in Latin America and Africa. In the larger context, the military can constrain choice and action in both the external and internal arenas. Thus, military budgets become sacred cows and not subject to cuts, and the military virtually dictates how much of national resources are devoted to development and deployment of weapons systems. In the African setting, where the military had displaced national leaders, political parties and repressed national elites, the internal arena is dominated by the military, which not only controls the national wealth, but also the decision rules and who gets what, when and on what terms.

The two-directional arrows indicate that in an interdependent geopolitical system, the choices made by one group of political actors, which lead to action, bear directly on and constrain the choice and action options available to other political actors; hence the dotted arrows going from the internal arena to the external, and between the external and internal theaters, and from the internal arena to the military. Choices made and actions taken to implement the choices in the theater and/or internal arena may at times necessitate choice or action in the external arena and/or theater. But by and large, the external arena constrains both the military and the choice and action options available to political actors in the internal arena from the perspective of superpower politics. From this viewpoint, political actors in the internal arena and theater are forced to make only choices within the framework of the external arena's choices, or those which do not come in conflict with the external arena.

The plus signs indicate that the actors in the external arena and theater can negate choices and action of actors in the internal arena and theater, while the minus signs indicate that the reverse cannot be done, or that the cost is so high (Guinea, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Grenada) that it serves as an effective deterrent.

This is obviously a simplification of complex systems and processes, but the model makes possible some analysis dealing with relationships and interactions in the geopolitical system and how they impinge upon and constrain the behavior of little states such as Liberia.

When the model is applied to Liberia, it attempts to explain that choices made in the external arena and theater by the United States in its national interest, in part dictated by interaction with the Soviet Union and Libya, have impinged upon and constrained the choice and action options available to Liberia, and in particular the military, which is in power. This is a historical process that goes as far back as the founding of Liberia. In more recent time, among other things, the United States has made Liberia a part of its sphere of influence, invested to exploit Liberia's mineral and other resources, placed its propaganda and intelligence facilities in Liberia, and decided that Liberia should have little or nothing to do with the Soviets and Libyans, except on terms acceptable to the United States. Liberia can only make choices and take implementation actions within the parameter of the United States' choices. Thus, Liberia had no choice but to suspend diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, sever them with Libya, and establish them with Israel. As long as Liberia operates within the parameter of the United States' choices, it is fine. But if it attempts to operate outside the permissible choice parameter provided by the United States, the United States would institute punitive action.

Since the Doe regime has no legitimacy, has little capital to meet the basic needs of its people, is dependent on the United States to feed its people and provide 30 per cent of its budget, and must rule by force and repression, it cannot go against choice options dictated by the actors in the external arena and theater such as the United States. Furthermore, as long as Doe keeps within the parameter of the United States' choices, as he has been doing, including defending the United States at the 1986 non-aligned states meeting in Zimbabwe, for which he received commendation from President Reagan, the United States is likely to continue to support Doe. It must necessarily follow that those seeking to remove Doe from power, are, by that very fact, perceived by the United States as being hostile to its interests in Liberia and its geopolitical requirements.

This brings us to the three questions raised earlier in our discussion: (1) To what extent has military rule been institutionalized by fiat in Liberia in violation of the new constitution, and what are the implications for the political future of the country? (2) Has Liberia become a prisoner of its past, and is Doe on a stage being managed and directed by forces which he neither comprehends nor can control? and (3) How can Liberia recover from its current political and economic crises and develop?

Questions one and two can be disposed of rather quickly, and without difficulty, in the light of the foregoing discussion, while question three requires further thought.

As to question one, when Doe was sworn into office 6 January 1986, as first president in Liberia's Second Republic, there was hardly any doubt on anyone's mind that Liberia was not being returned to constitutional, civilian rule, as had been promised by the military in 1981, and supported by the United States. Doe, who promoted himself from master sergeant to general, had refused, when called upon, to

resign his commission in the military in order to run for the presidency. While Liberia's new constitution does not expressly prohibit Doe, or any military personnel, from ruling Liberian, the Liberian people never thought that returning Liberia to constitutional, civilian rule meant or included Doe staying in power, and they attempted to take steps to ensure that that would not happen. They rejected Doe in the October 1985 presidential elections, and everyone, including the United States, knew that the former master sergeant had not been chosen by the Liberian people to be president in the Second Republic.

Why was Doe sworn into office if the people rejected him? There are two quick answers to this question. The first is that Doe had the support of a tribalized military to retain power, and secondly, the United States was supporting Doe and the tribalized military. As Assistant Secretary Crocker said in his testimony to the U.S. Congress in January 1986 (pp. 9, 16 and 20):

> In the short run, President Doe's government seems to have the power to govern. A key lesson of the November coup attempt is that the military units that counted--the first battalion and the Executive Mansion Guard--(commanded by Doe's tribal Krahn officers and made up of Krahn soldiers) were loyal and effective.

Crocker then went on to state that Doe has two important constituencies that enable him to rule, which no other Liberian politician has:

> That constituency is his symbolic representation--albeit not exclusively his alone--of those "countrymen and countrywomen" who for so long were excluded from Liberia's political life, and his support within the army. On the latter score, we know all too well from other places how short a shelf life military support can have. But the events of November 12 showed it is there today. And we know of no other Liberian leader today who can bring to the table of political accommodation all of those key traits that I have just mentioned. Doe could misplay his cards, but he does hold a pretty good hand (emphasis added).

Based on this analysis, and without concern that being a "countryman" and having the support of the military, without the commitment to rule of law and constitutional democratic rule, for which Doe had seized power, were not adequate to rule, Crocker concluded:

> We intend to go forward with our policy of trying to work with President Doe's government to make the promise of Liberia's Second Republic succeed (emphasis added).

The United States knew that the Liberian people did not elect Doe president, but it threw in its support for him, principally on the grounds that Doe has the support of the army, since he is by no means the most eligible representative of the indigenous people. Thus, it seems clear that a military, by mere violence and repression, has entrenched itself in power in Liberia, with the support of a superpower such as the United States. It lacks legitimacy, managerial and technical competence, and is corrupt. Its only basis for power is violence and repression. And it may only be persuaded to give up power by a greater perceived or actual violence capability than it has. This means Liberia has been shortchanged, and has a long way to go over rocky terrain of political violence and instability in its pursuit of constitutional, civilian rule and democracy.

As to question two, Liberia seems trapped by its history. It has merely flip-flopped; going from settler, minority, one-party rule to indigenous, minority, de facto one-party rule, with United States' support and the military as constants. The settler ruling elite lacked legitimacy and needed United States support and the military to maintain power; so does now the Krahn ruling group. With a more militarized regime, U.S. support has become even more crucial. And all of this is made possible because of the interaction of East-West superpower geopolitics with local politics--U.S. apprehensions about leftist proclivities of the Liberian opposition.

For now, the United States seems to think that Doe is the best bet for its interest in Liberia. The opponents of Doe will have to convince the United States that betting on Doe is a high risk, and that Liberia can be made an American showpiece of constitutional democracy in Africa. To the extent that the United States is persuaded and convinced of the two immediately preceding points, and is willing to work with those who want to institute constitutional democracy in Liberia, only then can the historical mold of minority, one-party rule, with the army as the basis of rule, into which Liberia has been cast for over a century, be broken.

And that leads to question three, which is, how can Liberia recover from its current political and economic crises and develop? This is a very difficult question, and views expressed below are exploratory and preliminary--thinking out loud as it were. But if the nature of the difficulty of recovery can be made clear, then the recovery steps should emerge. This is, therefore, an attempt in that direction.

The nature of the difficulty of Liberia's recovery involves a set of intricately interwoven factors: history, the army, dependency and East-West superpower geopolitics. None of these factors lends itself to quick and easy answers.

Liberia, like all social systems, has a history that serves as the background to current developments, and may even explain such developments. Major departures from history often call for revolutions, and individuals and social systems alike tend not

to leap into revolutions, unless they have no other choice. Liberia is no exception to this general rule.

An incipient revolution that may have turned into a full revolution was aborted by the military intervention of 1980. And rhetoric notwithstanding, little or nothing has changed; Liberia is trapped in its history of minority, one-party rule: the only difference being that it is an indigenous Krahn minority.

It is important to emphasize that Liberia's long history of minority rule has been made possible by two key factors: (1) United States support, and (2) the military. Liberia's current political crisis, in which a minority indigenous group has placed itself in the driver's seat of the state, is also made possible by United States support and the military; a tribalized military that is armed to the teeth with sophisticated weapons, the majority of which has been supplied by the United States. The indigenous Krahn minority relies on the United States support and the military to maintain power, just as the settler minority relied on United States support and the military to maintain power in the past.

One aspect of the nature of the difficulty of Liberia's recovery has to do with finding a way to break Liberia out of this historical mold of minority, one-party cum military rule, and disengaging the military from Liberian politics. In the ideal world, the solution would be for Liberia to demilitarize itself. This is perhaps easier said than done. It must first be recognized that it has to be done. The cost of maintaining one soldier, $2,600 per annum, which is sure to increase in the future, is much too high for Liberia, and in terms of social justice, is a grossly unfair distribution of the national wealth. But the military has a corporate interest and will not submit to demilitarization, particularly given that it is now in power. Even though demilitarization is difficult under current political conditions, it should be pursued as a long-term goal.

The United States' full support and cooperation will be critical here. Instead of training and arming soldiers to kill innocent and unarmed Liberians, it needs to be said that Liberia wants to use this portion of its human capital that is idled for rural transformation and development. United States military aid to Liberia should be in the form of training to convert the military to an army corps of engineers-type to build rural roads, dig wells for safe drinking water for the rural people, build schools and clinics, and undertake other developmental tasks. Instead of sending arms to Liberia to equip a military that is only at war with its unarmed citizens, the United States can send in vocational/technical teachers and instructional materials for the training of the military. This is one way of disengaging the military from Liberian politics and providing it a definite role in Liberia's economic recovery and development. If this exercise is successfully implemented, it will have two positive developmental and cost-saving effects that would be of mutual benefit to the United States and Liberia. First, it should increase Liberia's food production, and secondly, this will reduce American food and

military aid to Liberia, at considerable savings. Liberia can accordingly reduce its dependency on American food aid.

And this leads to dependency. There are two levels of dependency: (1) cultural and psychological, and (2) economic and political.

At the cultural and psychological level, the average Liberian "thinks" him/herself "American". American dress and speech are slavishly imitated, and American pop music is heard in remote villages. Liberians who have televisions or go to movies view American films. Liberians have cultivated a taste for American cultural and consumer goods to the almost total neglect of their own. It is interesting to note that while Afro-Americans were making efforts to reach back and identify with their African roots, their Liberian brothers and sisters were (and still are) abandoning theirs.

English, which is the official language of Liberia, is the American version, and American textbooks are used throughout Liberian schools at all grade levels. The majority of Liberians who have graduate and professional training have been educated in the United States. State structures and social institutions, including republican presidential form of government, judicial system, and even architecture have been adopted from the United States. This level of American cultural penetration into Liberia sometimes shocks American visitors to Monrovia, because Monrovia, in lifestyle and architecture, is like a city in the south of the United States. Culturally and psychologically, the Liberian "thinks" and "behaves" American, and tends to stand out from other Africans on the continent, who are now making efforts at restoration of their African cultural heritage.

At the economic and political level, Liberia's dependency somehow qualifies it to be the fifty-second state of the United States. Liberia uses United States currency as its medium of exchange, and the United States is its major trading partner. United States investments in Liberia are the major source of Liberia's foreign exchange earnings, and Liberia depends on imports from the United States and aid to feed its people. Up to 30 percent of the national budget is contributed by the United States; making Liberia the highest per capita recipient of U.S. aid in sub-Saharan Africa. Even though Liberia was self-sufficient in food production up to the mid 1950s, it now imports $15 million worth of grain, principally rice, from the United States annually to feed its people.

As Liberia was integrated into the United States economy, starting in the 1950s, to produce raw materials for American industries, it came increasingly to produce what its people could not consume, and they in turn developed tastes for and consumed a lot more of what they did not or could not produce, but had to be imported from America. As the terms of trade deteriorated and the United States economy went into recession, following the oil crisis of 1973-74, Liberia became more and more dependent on the United States for its physical survival. The majority of Liberia's

external debts, estimated at $1.4 billion, is owed to American financial institutions. It goes without saying that these linkages put a cap on a country's autonomy and sovereignty.

Dependency poses two major obstacles to Liberia's recovery and development. The first is attitudinal and psychological, and the second is economic. Unless the attitudinal and psychological obstacle can be successfully overcome, there is no way the economic obstacle can be overcome.

It may require a major revolution to re-orientate Liberians such that they are able to face up to the fact that if Liberia is going to recover from its current crises and develop, it will require Liberians to do the job. The general attitude of Liberians is to think of development in terms of aid and assistance from outside. This general attitude will need to change so that the major responsibility for Liberia's recovery and development will be in the hands of Liberians. External assistance will then be a supplement. At the very elementary level, this will mean Liberians should eat what they produce, and if they cannot produce to feed themselves, then they should face starvation. There is plenty of fertile land to produce sufficient food for all Liberians. Changing the attitude and psychology of the Liberians to accept that Liberia's recovery and development are the full responsibility of Liberians is not likely to be achieved overnight. But unless it is achieved, the second obstacle, which is economic, cannot be overcome.

With the change in attitude and psychology, accompanied by new values, the next logical step is to tackle the economic obstacle. This will require restructuring of the national economy to facilitate the implementation of a program of selective withdrawal from the world capitalist system into which Liberia was fully integrated in the 1950s. This may require, for example, that rather than producing rubber, whose price Liberia does not determine or control, Liberia will produce more rice and other local foods to feed its people; thereby decreasing its dependency on food aid and importation of food. It may also mean that Liberia will have to raise tariff on certain luxury consumer goods for the wealthy, while making duty free farm tools, fertilizers and so forth. In such measures, reprisals should be anticipated. There will, therefore, have to be the strong national will, commitment, discipline and courage, undergirded by the new attitude and psychology to restructure Liberia's economy for the benefit of Liberians.

Finally, there is the difficulty of superpower geopolitics in Liberia's economic recovery and development. Superpower geopolitics leaves little or no maneuvering room for small countries such as Liberia. But Liberia must be fully aware of this limitation or constraint externally imposed upon it, as it seeks to implement a recovery program.

Last, but not least, the recovery process will be painful and slow, but if a start is made now, success is sure to follow.

The foregoing brief discussion of the difficulty which history, the military, dependency and superpower geopolitics place in Liberia's way as it seeks to recover from its current crises must be seen as for building a new and better Liberian society. Against the background of the challenges posed, Liberia's recovery can proceed in three stages. The first and second are military and political respectively, which are a prerequisite for stage three, which is economic. Attempting economic recovery without the military and political settlements is tantamount to placing the cart before the horse. Experience of the past six years shows that no significant measure of change can be made in the economy without a satisfactory political settlement that can restore confidence, establish public order, and allow people to undertake certain productive economic activities.

The military poses a very difficult problem, because they have the guns and are in power. In addition, the military has been tribalized. Recognizing that a political settlement, which runs counter to the interests of the military, may not be allowed to stand, several steps suggests themselves. The ultimate goal is eventual demilitarization:

1. The first step is balanced ethnic representation in the military and officer corps, based on proportional representation in the population, without increasing the size of the military.

2. The Krahn strategic representation in the military will have to be reduced to achieve step one above. In addition, a substantial number of Krahn officers and enlisted personnel will have to be retired from the military.

3. Once steps one and two have been achieved, the political settlement should get underway. Step three involves the launching of a training program for the military that is rooted in "learning by doing". Thus, the training program should include the building of rural roads, digging wells for safe drinking for the rural people, etc.

4. The training program and service should be organized in such a way that will allow the soldiers to remain in the military for a specified period, after which they should be integrated into the society; thus leading to eventual demilitarization.

The Political Stage of Recovery

There are three key elements to a satisfactory political settlement in Liberia: (1) the military; (2) ethnicity; and (3) the United States.

The military element has been discussed above. It needs to be borne in mind that the military is critical to achieving a political settlement and political stability in Liberia.

A final political settlement formula will have to provide a certain measure of protection from violent reprisals against members of the Krahn minority group that now holds power. Obtaining the guarantees for such protection may be contingent upon and made far easier by their willingness to give up power and enter into a power sharing arrangement with the others. The sooner such willingness is manifested, the greater the chances of the guarantees for protection.

The United States will have to make a policy shift. The way to protect American interests in Liberia and geopolitically does not lie through Doe and a tribalized military. This may work for now, but in the medium and long terms, it will prove expensive and counterproductive. And if the United States is committed to democracy worldwide, it can make an impressive case by ensuring that democracy works in Liberia. One thing that works in favor of the United States in the process is that the Liberians are willing and eager to reach a satisfactory political settlement with American participation and guarantee.

Options

Three options are available in reaching a satisfactory political settlement in Liberia: (1) new elections; (2) dividing the legislature and cabinet positions on the basis of the 1985 elections "official results" of Doe "winning" 50.9 per cent; and 3) holding a Lancaster House-type conference to arrive at a new political formula for power sharing.

Option one of holding new elections is consistent with the non-binding U.S. Senate and House resolutions of December 1985. Most Liberians favor it for the democratic experience of being able to select their leaders. But this option has already been and will be rejected by the Doe regime. In September 1986, on his return from Zimbabwe, after attending the meeting of nonaligned states, Doe said that the opposition could have anything save new elections. The key reason for this position may be that Doe knows he cannot win in a fair and free election in Liberia, and also is not prepared to give up power. Option one, accordingly, is not obtainable, given current political conditions in Liberia.

Option two is to share the legislative seats and cabinet positions between the Doe regime and the oppositions on the basis of the 1985 elections "official results", which gave Doe a 50.9 per cent victory. This means Doe and his party will take 51 percent of the seats in the legislature and 51 per cent of the cabinet positions. The opposition may reject option two on the grounds that Doe did not win the elections, and accepting option two would be to legitimize Doe and his elections fraud. It does not seem logical also that Doe could only "win" 50.9 per cent of the votes, and his party "won" 80 per cent of the seats in the legislature. If Doe would accept to turn over 49 per cent of the legislative seats and 49 per cent of the cabinet positions to the opposition parties, in a spirit of national reconciliation, and commit himself to work with the opposition in an acceptable democratic atmosphere of freedom of speech, of the press and movement, and strict adherence to the new constitution, the opposition should be prepared to accept. Option two is attractive in that it provides something for everyone, and is not as risky as option one.

Option three comes into play if options one and two are rejected. In option three, everything is on the table for bargaining, including the presidency, and all participants come to the table starting from zero. It is conceivable in this option that the presidency is rotated; Doe ruling the first three years, retroactive to January 1986, and another person serving the remaining three years of the first six-year term, until the next elections. Option three conceives a Lancaster House-type conference to be held in a third party country, or convened directly by Washington. It may be to Washington's advantage to convene the conference directly.

Reconciliation efforts so far have produced no results for two principal reasons. The first is that Washington has left it with Doe and his regime to dictate the terms of reconciliation, holding a loaded gun to the heads of his opponents to submit. The other has been U.S. policy of "constructive engagement" with the Doe regime. If the United States changes from its policy of "constructive engagement" with the Doe regime and brings the parties to a conference table, a workable and satisfactory political settlement on one of the options suggested above could be reached in 1987. Failure on the part of Washington to take the initiative to bring the parties to the conference table and to ensure that a workable political settlement is agreed upon, particularly in a situation where other interested and sympathetic outside parties expect such initiative, and the Liberian look forward to it, will create a very serious credibility gap for Washington and damage its prestige in Africa. More particularly, Washington may be viewed by the youth of Africa as favoring military dictatorships and tyranny over democracy, rule of law, civil liberties and human rights, and this may drive them to embrace ideologies that may not be friendly to Washington's interests in Africa. The cases of Liberia and Zaire would stand as irrefutable evidence.

The three options provided above by no means exhaust the universe of possibilities. They are put forward only as a basis to get a discussion started. Other

options may emerge as a result of the discussion. It is hoped that that will happen. In the final analysis, however, finding an acceptable and workable political settlement in Liberia may depend less on options, and more on the willingness and commitment of the relevant political actors, including the United States, to work together to create a new and better Liberian society, in which one is not judged on the basis of ethnic and military affiliation, but on what contribution one can make to Liberia's progress; where all are equal before the law and stand equally privileged; and that will operate democratically under rule of law, undergirded by justice.

Once discussion gets underway in stage two, stage three can be set into motion.

The Economic Stage of Recovery

Liberia's economy is in shambles, and the country is walking a thin line separating survival and bankruptcy. The factors of production, not ruined in the past six years, only operate at 50 per cent capacity. Unemployment is high; there has been physical as well as trained human capital flight, and the majority of the qualified Liberians trained over the past 25 years have fled the country. Liberia is thus left in a state of near economic and intellectual bankruptcy. All this has been made possible by the existing political conditions in the country. An acceptable and workable political settlement, therefore, becomes a sine qua non for economic recovery. All Liberians are needed to get Liberia's economy moving again. What is presented below represents suggested terms of reference for a national economic reconstruction commission that will undertake the preliminary phase of the economic recovery.

As a preliminary step, after the political settlement has been reached in principle at the conference table, and in preparation for the economic activities for economic recovery, all soldiers should be removed from the countryside, towns and cities into their barracks, and all checkpoints, except those at borders, should be removed. This will allow the people to exercise their constitutional right of freedom of movement, as they engage in or prepare for productive economic activities.

A national economic reconstruction commission of not less than five and not greater than nine, comprising Liberia's best economic, financial and managerial minds, should be appointed. The commission should sit for a period of not less than three and not longer than six months. The task is to prepare a report on how to revive and restructure Liberia's economy. It should be provided facilities and staff, including researchers, that will enable it to perform adequately its task.

If given three months, the commission should spend the first month conducting public hearings throughout Liberia to get input from all the Liberian people. If given six months, the first two months should be devoted to public hearings on what changes

the Liberian people would like to see take place in their economy. These hearings are critical to the economic recovery process, because they will help educate the people on what specific ways they can be involved to contribute to the recovery process. Having thus been involved in the review exercise and alerted to the difficult task that lies ahead for everyone, the task of mobilizing the people for economic recovery will be made easier.

The following principles should guide the commission's review of the entire economy. The overhaul and restructuring of the economy is to enable it to function for the benefit of the Liberian people. The commission should bear in mind that the majority of the Liberian people are not government civil servants, who have turned themselves into masters, nor urban dwellers. The majority are in the rural areas. The overhaul of the economy must, therefore, have a rural bias. And since the principal industry of the rural people is agriculture, the overhauled and restructured economy must have an agricultural bias. The emphasis must be placed on self-sufficiency in food production and better health care for the rural people, which is primary health care, because a well-fed people become a healthy people, and a healthy people become an economically productive people. And that is the only way Liberia, operating under democratic conditions for its people, can recover from its current state of economic decline and stagnation. The restructured Liberian economy should be given some capacity to institute measures of selective withdrawal from the world capitalist economy.

Among other things, the commission, in the discharge of its task will have to pay particular attention to: (1) agriculture and rural transformation; (2) external debts; (3) monetary policy; (4) employment in general and public sector employment in particular; (5) government expenditures; (6) parastatals; (7) foreign investment; (8) mobilizing domestic capital for investment; (9) tax structure; and (10) the government bureaucracy.

The report of the commission should be widely disseminated by the news media and opened to public debate and discussion before it is finalized.

This article has attempted to put into focus, from a theoretical and historical perspective, the external environment of superpower geopolitics, with the United States and Soviet Union as the key actors, into which Liberia's Second Republic has been launched. It is the relationship and interaction of the key actors in the external environment and their relationship and interaction with the military and relevant political actors in small states such as Liberia that lead to political and leadership crises. An understanding of this complex network of relationships and interaction, as well as superpower competition, is a prerequisite to resolving political conflicts in

states such as Liberia, because they set the parameters of what is possible and may be allowed to function. The small states such as Liberia can only make choices and take action within the parameters set by the choices and actions of the superpowers. The military and/or political leaders in the small states who operate in the parameters externally set for them by the choices and actions of superpower patrons, receive full protection and arms from their patrons, even when they violently repress their people. Samuel K. Doe of Liberia is a case in point. Military rule is thus by fiat institutionalized in Liberia, but is backed by the United States and its military.

In the final analysis, a political settlement in Liberia will depend as much on what the United States wants, and its perception of threat from the Soviet Union to its Liberian interests, as it does on what the Liberian people want. This being the case, the paper has suggested that the United States take the initiative to bring the parties in Liberia to a round table conference. Three options for resolving the political and leadership crises are presented: (1) new elections, (2) dividing the legislative seats and cabinet positions, 51-49 between Doe and the opposition parties on the basis of the 1985 elections "official results" that Doe "won" 51 per cent of votes cast; and (3) holding a Lancaster House-type conference to work out a formula for power sharing, with the possibility of rotating the presidency. Option two, which is not as risky as options one and three, and gives something to everyone, might be preferred by some of the politicians. But new options could emerge from the discussion.

The paper has argued that unless military and political settlements are reached, economic recovery is not likely to happen. Based on the assumption of reaching a military and political settlement, this paper has proposed the appointment of a national economic reconstruction commission to prepare a report for reviving and restructuring the economy for a economic recovery.

From all indications, Liberia's Second Republic may have a long way to go over rocky terrain of ethnic violence and political instability in its pursuit of democracy, unless the United States, which has and continues to support Doe and his tribalized military, can change its policy of "constructive engagement" with the Doe regime and bring all the political contenders to a round table conference. Washington's failure to play this important role may create a serious credibility gap and damage its prestige in Africa. More importantly, Washington may be viewed by Africa's youth as favoring military dictatorships over democracy, rule of law, civil liberties and human rights, and this may drive them to embrace ideologies that may not be friendly to Washington's interests in Africa. The cases of Liberia and Zaire will stand as irrefutable evidence.

The United States has a critical challenge and opportunity in the Liberian case, and time is running out.

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THE LIBERIAN NATION IN REVOLT:
A Psychological Analysis of Recent Events

James Thomas-Queh

Most scholars on Liberia have been primarily focusing on historical and political factors in their study of Liberian society. They have not delved into the psychological mechanisms that have activated and stimulated the Liberian people during the past two decades. This article will present a psychological analysis of recent events in Liberia, exploring the psychological factors that contributed to the transformation of the complacent Liberian population into active groups more conscious of their destiny. It will focus on recent upheavals in Liberia including the military coup of 1980.

The article is divided into three parts. The first section treats the transformation of the Liberian population from complacency to self-consciousness; the second portion analyzes how the Liberian people went from sporadic protests to mass revolt. The last part synthesizes the current dilemma of the masses in their continuing struggle for a more equitable and just society.

I. -

(a) Change of Leadership, Hope and Uncertainty

It is common to observe that a change of whatever nature, source, or timing, can produce an effect on the people and their environment. But the change that we are concerned with here is that of a national leadership and its impact on the people. Why does a change of a national leadership have an effect on the population? This is due to the state of anxiety of the people--uncertain as to what might be the repercussions or results of the change. This anxiety or uncertainty becomes even more acute depending on the social environment, personality of the incoming leader, and the kind of political system in place.[1] From this assertion we can ascertain whether a change of leadership could at the same time be a stimulus of hope and uncertainty for a given population.

How does this theoretical assumption fit in the Liberian case?

After almost three decades of absolute rule, president W. V. S. Tubman (1944-1971) died suddenly on July 23, 1971. Like most of the post-World War II leaders of his

era, he benefitted from the massive economic growth and the social and political stability it ensured. But in the process Tubman became a "democratic dictator." He created a cult of the presidency that made him appear larger than life, so that everyone could depend on his political and social generosity to make a living.

Thus, Liberia was evolving around Tubman, the president; Tubman, the man; Tubman, the father; Tubman, the uncle; Tubman, the savior. He had succeeded in creating a strong personalized relationship with the people. Of course, the very negative side of this policy was that his 27-year rule had bred a society laden with parasites and non-innovative individuals who had come to believe that Tubman was immortal, and without him the country would cease to exist.

The unexpected death of Tubman was a great shock to the population at large. The Liberian people were soon overtaken by a mood of uncertainty--serious doubt about the future of their country. It is important to stress here that for the first time in the long history of Liberia there was an unanimous consensus of self-consiousness among the different ethnic groups (indlgenous and settler Liberians) as to the destiny of the country. In other words, it was not the usual settler and indigenous hostility of "who owned the land and who exploited whom or what." The question was what would become of Liberia without Tubman?

Social psychologists have sought to explain how an individual uncertain either by an external or internal social interaction can be susceptible to the influence of others or norms.[2]. We must note that since the primary concern of the Liberian population was the future of their country, their state of uncertainty was an external social interaction. And this social environment or mood of uncertainty would have a reciprocal influence both on the behavior of the incoming president and the susceptibilities of the population.

It was under this social environment that William R. Tolbert, Jr. (1971-1980) ascended to the Presidency. But instead of diminishing the state of uncertainty, he deepened it momentarily. Why?

To survive for nineteen years as vice-president, Tolbert had to live the opposite image of his mentor. He was know to be terribly stingy, unsympathetic, and weak. While these negative attitudes helped to save him from the purge of Tubman, they were to become his acquired personality traits. He had for too long lived under stress from threats, inferiority, and a false role. A major psychological effect was that he developed an inferiority complex--a trait with negative properties such as: envy of others, indecisiveness, easily influenced by others and not sure of oneself.

However, this unfavorable portrait of the vice president raised many doubts in the conservative ruling class. Its core members were opposed to the ascendency of Tolbert to the presidency. This sparked a crisis, and the population was quick to perceive the first split in a heretofore tight hegemonic ruling class. The fear of a power struggle temporarily deepened the state of anxiety and uncertainty of the population.

But Tolbert became president thanks to the Constitution--a democratic document--and the only thing that was in his favor. He realized this fact very quickly once he was well in power as can be attested from his first policy statement to the nation.[3]

> Politically, our system of democracy has so matured as to have effectuated, before our very eyes, a meaningful, though sudden, administrative transition, thus reflecting a further exercise of our franchise...

What an astonishing revelation! Here was a man who had been a virtual servant vice president for almost two decades under a dictator, now proudly informing his people that their "system of democracy had matured"--matured to have avoided a major power struggle.

The uncertain population which ignored all along that Liberia had anything called a "Constitution" capable of effectuating a peaceful transition, woke up to a reality. They became aware like Tolbert that their "system of democracy had matured." Thus during this period of transition, the word "democracy" became prime.

From this assertion, we have formulated two hypotheses as to the cause of this awareness in the aftermath of a state of uncertainty.[4]

a) A conflictual state of mind or uncertainty produces stimuli that can make an individual self-conscious in that in his search for a viable response, he usually looks around for references of comparison--to others or norms.

b) Once the stimuli producing the state of uncertainty are diminished (either positively or negatively) the individual begins to take stock--that is, he becomes conscious of the reality or deforms it. What has diminished his uncertainty would likely become his point of reference.

This assertion could join the postulate of professor Moscovici which states that the intervention of a "mediator" between an individual and his environment is indispensable when the individual is incapable of confronting the reality. This "mediator" could be the norm or an individual or group. In the former (norm) the mutual influence being exercised is in the interest of finding a common solution to an issue. And in the latter--one could influence another and modify his point of view or opinion from the role of an expert or an advisor.[5]

Now, with the anxious population on the one hand, and the disunited conservative ruling class on the other, Tolbert could not avoid the influence of the

Constitution (the norm or mediator) as the point of reference of his leadership. To put it another way, he thought it was less compromising and more conciliatory to place between himself on the one hand, and his own ruling clique that opposed him and the uncertain population on the other, the organic law of the land that brought him to power. Of course, he had no time to reflect why the constitution had never been adhered to in the first place.

Coming as no surprise, Tolbert's speeches, actions, and gestures in the first year of his administration were extremely excessive, democratic and terribly compromising. To quickly overcome his inferiority complex, he attempted to create an image, a style, and a sense of direction of his own. He thought to build a political base of his own which would consist of elements hitherto despised or ignored by the Tubman regime. He preached "merit, not favoritism" to seek alliance and support among youths, the intelligentsia, and an emerging rural bourgeoisie.

To make good on his words, Tolbert had to put into question the very symbols of the settler class domination of Liberia: Matilda Newport Day, National Flag, National Anthem, National Motto, and even the Constitution were all open to scrutiny. On the international front, he normalized diplomatic relations with the Eastern block countries beginning with the Soviet Union in 1972 and suspended relations with Israel.

On the welfare of the people, President Tolbert reaffirmed his determination in his inaugural address:[6]

> We realize that we lead this nation not in restoration of lost individual honor; nor in a wave of vindication and recrimination. Rather, we will endeavor to lead our people hopefully into a future fresh with blossoms of abundant opportunities for all. And only by the measure of response to the stimulation we provide for utilization of these opportunities will posterity assess the quality of our leadership--a leadership wholly dedicated to raising the standard of living of those whom we lead, without discrimination.

True, if one were to read keenly the first phrase of this passage, he will find out that it alludes to Tolbert's terrible nightmares with Tubman's chief security men as well as those elements in the ruling clique who had opposed his ascendency to the presidency. As for the promises for the betterment of the people, they were enormous.

Before these symbolic gestures and speeches were fully implemented, Tolbert had already won the hearts of the people as a progressive leader--a label that he would experience difficulty in ridding himself of. Everywhere in the coutry the spirit of change could be felt; the uncertainty of the population had been succeeded by enthusiasm and high expectations. The "sleeping" Liberian populace had awakened to a brand new day! So popular had Tolbert become that the people nicknamed him

"speedy). But also "speedy" became a name that he would find extremely hard to live up to.

(b) Political Propaganda and Tolbert: the contradictions of the regime.

If president Tolbert were to maintain his popularity at the level it had reached, the "contract of confidence" established between himself and the population had to be met. The momentum of "speed" in social and political reforms had to be maintained. But after the "grace period" of two years, steam began running out of the mass mobilization--the "blossoms of abundant opportunities for all" were slow in coming, and the flag, anthem, motto, and constitution had still not been altered.

Another period of uncertainty fell on the population. But this time the phenomenon was an internal social interaction in that the preoccupation had turned away from an external factor (future of the nation) to individual personal well-being: Job, school, food, and other items that were promised in abundance.

The leadership was faced with a dilemma; it had apparently exhausted its resources and energy to go any faster. Thus to re-motivate the people, the administration multiplied the use of political slogans. This interaction would have adverse consequences: it simply accelerated the contradictions of the leadership and the profound deception of the population. Why?

Let us examine the definition of propaganda: "a systematic attempt on the part of an interested individual or individuals, to control the attitudes of groups of individuals by suggestible means, and, subsequently a control of their actions".[7] As this was the case, what the leadership wanted to achieve was clear: re-mobilize the people and control their attitudes and actions.

Unfortunately though, the propanganda had lacked two of the major principles of propaganda described by Klineberg. The first of these principles is "perception"--the process by which the propagandist brings out the situation-stimulus relating to the source which could at the same time divert attention from the same--in other words, he wants his message to be perceived and he tries to give it a stimulating value that would make it prominent with respect to the general source of the sensorial impressions present in the entourage of the individual at that precise moment.[8]

Judging from this postulate, two conditions are posed if a propaganda were to be effective. First, the attitudes of the people or the environment must already be predisposed to the propaganda. The Liberian population, though in its second state of uncertainty, was not predisposed to swallow the slogans of the same leadership which was the root cause of their disappointment. The people were now watching their president like a scientist looking through a microscope. Second, it is imperative that a propaganda possesses a certain or maximum degree of truth. In political propaganda

this truth must bear on the urgent preoccupation of the people, and the logic as to their fulfilment.

For example, the Tubman regime was marked by a lone slogan: "Unification and Open Door Policy." In introducing the term: "Unification," Tubman knew that the tension between the settler-Liberians and the indigenous-Liberians reached a boiling point. An urgent compromise was needed if the settler class were to maintain its domination of the country. This was a truth.

When Tolbert came to power in 1971, the country had largely been unified, but in the process other more serious social problems were created and left unattended. These were later to be reflected in the slogans of the regime. From his first policy speech came the phrase: "Upward Thrust for High Heights." For the country to have attained this upward thrust of development, President Tolbert then proposed a "Wholesome Functioning Society" which was defined as follows:[9]

> We seek a Wholesome Functioning Society where opportunities are equally opened to all, where all are equally dedicated to benefit thereby, and where all sense the responsibility to maintain same. We desire a Wholesome Functioning Society where merit, not favoritism; productivity, not influence and connnection; selflessness, not selfish individualism, form the criteria for real distinction. Devoted to discipline, order and justice, we strive at achieving a national community where there is enduring loving care for the poor, the helpless and underprivileged, and where there is compelling sympathy for the disadvantaged.
>
> The Wholesome Functioning Society we seek will inspire and redirect the creative abilities of the young and the old into a self-renewing and unselfish role for a greater Liberia.

These ills that Tolbert wanted to alleviate were the same that he himself helped to create or ignored during his 19 years as vice president. But most of all, this passage was the source of the slogans that would mark his administration. Prominent among these slogans were: "Total Involvement," "Mat to Mattress," "Precious Jewels," "Liberian Socialism," "Humanistic Capitalism," and "It is no Joke, There will be no imported rice by 1980."

If Tolbert were to fulfill what was preached in some of these slogans, he needed a combination of two options. First, a massive dose of financial capital and administrative honesty. Unfortunately for him, the world economy was already on the decline by 1970. On the other hand, the transition from "Liberian Socialism" to "Humanistic Capitalism" was so radical, that he acknowledged the rampant corruption of some of his officials in January 1980.[10] It was regrettable that he did not include himself and his family.

The second option was purely psychological. And we are alluding now to the second principle of propaganda--the counter-propaganda--as described by Klineberg. As he put it, "the propagandist uses the counter-propaganda when antagonistic attitudes try to impede the cementing of the integration desired."[11]

This principle of counter-propaganda can be observed in Tubman's political slogan of "Unification and Open Door Policy." He referred to his predecessors' policies as a "Closed Door" policy, adding: "I will never subscribe to such supercilious shortsighted, contracted and phobic policy that paralyzed industry and investment and kept the nation in poverty, suspicion, despair, commotion and turmoil."[12] This outright critic showed Tubman as a decisive man and at the same time turned the attention of the people away from the stringent conditions posed by the foreign investors that were later to exploit the Liberian people and their natural resources. The ensuing economic benefits unified the people by reinforcing the position of the ruling class, breeding a rural bourgeoisie, and creating a proletarian society.

President Tolbert had his opportunity to have formulated effective counter-propanganda slogans, but did not dare. He could have associated the under-development of Liberia and the poverty of its masses to the defect of democracy, socialism, dictatorship, or just to his predecessors. Such negative suggestions would have diverted the attention of the people towards a scapegoat, while at the same time portraying Tolbert as resolved, courageous and sincere.

But Tolbert simply contented himself with pointing out very loudly to the people their nation's ills as if they fell from the sky. He never had the courage to reveal the source of the misery for the people so that they might seek to avoid it or make it their "enemy of reference." He acknowledged the "nation's democracy had matured," but refused any challenge to the True Whig Party. He spoke of "a sort of Liberian socialism in action, not the Marxist type which degrades individuals, but Liberian socialism which uplifted them."[13] But Liberians were getting no better off than Marxists anywhere. He presented his Four-Year Development Plan (1976-1980) under the slogan of "Humanistic Capitalism" only to envisage hosting a lavish O.A.U. conference that would make the country virtually bankrupt. He declared 1979 a year of "Economy and Accountability" only to purchase a $14 million presidential jet[14] while the budgets for education, health, etc., were trimmed to help pay the nation's huge foreign debts. He brought the voting age from twenty-four to eighteen years, but left the famous "property clause" intact as if the youths owned properties. The promise to "ensure security and protection for all citizens, and their freedom from fear and intimidation," saw public executions and public flogging of juvenile delinquents (the very Precious Jewels) without precedent in the legal annals of Liberia.[15] TheWholesome Functioning Society to be built on "merit, not favoritism" ended up with the sons, daughters and relatives of the First Family heading the government ministries and public corporations. Without any doubt these individuals were qualified, but the

population perceived a nepotism at its best. And the most famous of the slogans, "It is no joke, there will be no imported rice by 1980" was envisaged, it seems, to simply increase the price of the country's staple--rice--to further enrich Tolbert himself.

As the slogans multiplied, so did the population await each act of contradiction that would follow. Here was the source of the accelerated general state of deception, and thus deepened the loss of confidence in the leadership.

(c) The Birth of Dissidents and Radical Social Movements

President Tolbert, imposed by the Constitution, having disappointed his people, what could Liberians do?

We have formulated four hypotheses.

1) If the "system of democracy had matured" as declared by Tolbert, the people would have voted him out of office immediately after his first four years.

2) Since the above did not come to pass and all the powers were still concentrated in the president, the people could have chosen to remain passive like they were under Tubman. But unlike Tubman, Tolbert had told the people that their "system of democracy had matured" and he attempted to demonstrate that it had.

3) The foregoing being the case, organize protest demonstrations to express their discontent and press for genuine political and social reforms since a certain degree of political tolerance existed. But this phase would need a leader.

4) When three fails, seach for a mediator--a neutral and independent channel or spokesman to facilitate the dialogue between the people and power.

5) When four fails, the result was anarchy.

As we shall see, the people acted within the latter three hypotheses. But before going any further we will make two brief observations of a socio-psychological importance. First, one great success of Tolbert's inconsistent policies and behavior was the exposure of the infallibility of the president. The old legacy of a "president larger than life" image faded into oblivion. The personalized relationship that existed beetween Tubman and the people no more held. And second, for long Liberians were made to live within an artificial social class structure. One was either a settler descendent (privileged, well-to-do and "civilized") or indigenous (poor, heathen, and uncivilized). While the aspiration of everyone else was to become settler, the tendency only created pseudo-rich and snobishness--people pretended to be what they were not. But the "merit, not favoritism" soon detached the people from the old legacy to become themselves; no one needed to have a settler name, wife, husband,

protector or see the president nor pay allegiance to the True Whig Party before obtaining a job and integration into the "Establishment." The secret fraternities--Mason, UBF, SMT, etc.--all lost their significance. It quickly came to surface in this process that instead of the settler/indigenous dichotomy, Liberia has three social classes: rich (very few families), middle class (technocrats, professors, teachers, etc. who made the system functional but were little recognized), and the poor people (the vast majority of the Liberian people). This newly found self-independence left the people to focus on their political liberties. They discovered that the president depended on the people, and not the people on the president.

If we have gone to length with this explanation, it is because there could be no revolution in a society where there is not an identifiable middle class. This assertion is even more real in developing nations such as Liberia where the middle class cannot absorb the huge burden of the mass of poor people, and thus need to expand.

The middle class is prominent for its intellectual domination especially in developing countries. It should not be a surprise, therefore, as mass society theorists and psycho-pathologists of social movement have observed, that intellectuals are largely responsible for inspiring and promoting mass movements and for providing them with symbols and powerful appeals.[16] All the well-known dissident movements in Liberia have had an intellectual symbol--Dr. Francis Morais, Didwho Twe, Henry B. Fahnbulleh, Sr. and Nete-Sie Brownell, just to name a few.

Under the Tolbert regime, the leadership the people needed to forge ahead in their demands came from the University of Liberia which had already been breeding dissidents. Young professors such as Togba-Nah Tipoteh, Amos Sawyer, Boima Fahnbulleh, and Dew Tuan-Wleh Mayson returned enthusiastically from abroad convinced that a new era had dawned in Liberia. They held Tolbert to his "progressive" speeches and began inculcating into the students the sense of national identity, responsibility and independence or as Liberians say literally: "Open the Eyes of the People" – until they became disappointed like the population at large. From then on they passed to action – first, they mobilized the university students and ousted the president of the university, Advertus A. Hoff, a cousin of President Tolbert. The crisis brought to focus Tolbert's deep-rooted practices of nepotism. And in a second act, these professors who had already become the idols of the youths, formed the Movement for Justice in Africa (MOJA) in 1973. In other words, each social interaction lifted a psychological barrier that facilitated another action.

From this point onward the dissent left the campus walls and went into the streets. In 1974, these dissident professors, and this time with the participation of outstanding institutional church leaders, organized an anti-gambling campaign under the banner of the Citizens of Liberia Against Gambling (COLAG).[17] They won the battle; and the crisis sent the legislators seething with anger for being made the scapegoat by the president. And in the same year the Citizens of Liberia in Defense of

Albert Port (COLIDAP) was organized against Stephen Tolbert.[18] This was the most serious of the crisis that almost plunged the country into a civil war if Stephen Tolbert had not died a few months later in a plane crash.

While these spontaneous movements faded away, with the exception of the MOJA, from state repression and intimidation after they had achieved their objectives, the national leadership simply felt reassured about being on the right path. The slogans continued and the contradictions and deception deepened.

Thus the stimulus for a mediator emerged – the neutral and independent channel or spokesman to facilitate the dialogue between power and population if confrontation was to be avoided. The MOJA as the only surviving movement quickly occupied this role. How the movement was to conduct itself in its newly found position depended, in the first place, on the circumstances that had assured the movement's survival. Among the several hypotheses, we shall refer to three.

a) Because the movement was established on a broader international platform – African liberation struggle – rather than local politics. It was therefore considered harmless by the authorities (power). But "training must start at home."

b) In his desire to present himself on the international scene as a "progressive leader" and wanting an attachment to the intelligentsia, Tolbert became a charter member of the MOJA. And true to the Liberian political sycophancy most members of the government and ruling class became members de facto. Thus, when the movement later turned its attention to the injustices at home, the national leadership could not disassociate itself outright from the movement nor resort to open repression. Therefore the authorities used primarily the process of "naturalization"[19] to mask the relationship of antagonism that had developed to discredit the movement; its leaders were branded as so-called "Ph.D holders" and "irresponsible youngmen" who were engaged in making "unconstructive criticisms." But these charges only increased the influence of the movement.

c) Fortunately for the national leadership, the leaders of the MOJA turned out to be radical liberals – individuals who wanted to introduce genuine changes into the system, but not to destroy it.

These were just a fraction of the factors that were to determine the MOJA's relationship with the authorities and the population. In knowing before hand the intentions of the national leader and the disappointed population, the MOJA modulated its mediation to that of a "wise arbiter" – keeping the two parties at distance without achieving a solution. But, while this social interaction kept the movement surviving, it also succeeded in enlarging the sphere of political tolerance and the political independence of the masses.

But after five years of mediation, the population saw the role of the MOJA as becoming monotonous. The movement, virtually enslaved by its own principles of consistency, liberalism, and nonviolence, had nothing new to offer to the people who it had taught to know their rights and dialogue; and to the authorities which it had been warning all along as to the danger of not meeting the expectations of the people.

This impasse which the authorities and the population had reached, created the environment-stimulus for another mediator – someone or a group with new ideas and innovations. Suddenly, the Progressive Alliance of Liberia (PAL) emerged on the local scene (1978) with populist innovations and charisma – the only remaining ingredients that were needed to activate the masses to anarchy.

II –

The arrival of the PAL on the local scene brought the radical social movements to two. While the MOJA was catering to the intelligentsia, students, and some members of the upper social echelon, the PAL's populist philosophy made echoes among the market women, "yenna-boys," the unemployed, and school drop-outs – that vast majority of the population that really struggles to survive.

The president who had shown all along a tendency of "wanting to be what he could not be" or in other words, a "not too sure of himself" behavior, would be easily susceptible to the influence of these movements.

No sooner was the PAL settled, there developed in this new social order an interaction of two separate relationships of antagonism with the authorities (power) and two influence relationships with the population (see Fig. 1).[20] In other words, a situation had been created whereby the two social movements were transmitting negative impressions of the authorities to the population in their effort to win the influence of the population. The moral support of the institutional churches in this process was extremely important.

In this intense competition for influence, there was to emerge the phenomenon of "indirect inter-relationship influence" between the MOJA and the PAL. This was a situation whereby the social interaction of one movement, the authorities or the population produced the environment-stimulus that caused the second movement to act independently. To put it more explicitely, one movement did not act simply because the other had acted in a similar manner (constituting the process of direct inter-relationship influence); but it acted because the social climate was conducive to such an action.21 In this latter case, the population perceived the action as genuine and not just one movement imitating the other. Thus the state repression based on the false notion that "one movement was serving as cover for the other" was not justified in the eyes of the population, and therefore was never effective.

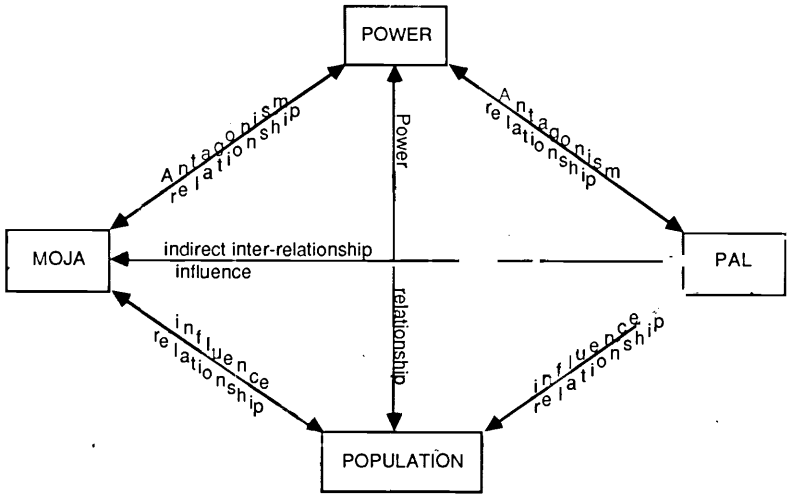

Fig. 1 Social context in which antagonism, power, influence, and indirect inter-relationships were observed to have been diffused between Power/Population/MOJA/PAL.

This development was to relieve the fear of repression and reassure the population. This was why the masses responded to PAL's call for a protest demonstration on April 14, 1979 against a proposed increase in the price of rice. This protest was soon transformed into what has become known as the "1979 Rice Uprising." This event lifted the last of the psychological barriers.

a) It exposed beyond all reasonable doubts the weakness of the national leadership;

b) Put into prominence the power of the masses and the notion that "people must fight for what they want, and do not have to accept what they get," and

c) For the first time the army became a popular entity, overcame its inferiority complex, and realized finally its role as a major power-broker.

The MOJA perceived the stimulus of a popular desire for democracy or else the system was heading for a disaster. The movement therefore put an independent candidate to contest the 1979 Monrovia Mayoral Elections against the True Whig Party. Surprised by the popular enthusiasm and popularity of the independent candidate, the government postponed the elections to the great disappointment of the

people. But by then the events had clearly revealed that the masses wanted an alternative to the True Whig Party – a party that had outlived its usefulness.

This environment-stimulus induced the PAL to form the Progressive People's Party (PPP) in January 1980 – the first opposition party in many decades. But some weeks before the first year anniversary of the 1979 Rice Uprising, the authorities imprisoned the leaders of the PPP and also banned the party against all the rules of democracy and the wishes of the people.

This over-exaggerated repression on the part of the leadership was not necessary if the president had been a decisive man. But he had permitted the concerted social actions of the movements to asphyxiate his regime. In other words, the indirect inter-relationship influence had blocked the power relationship, and the interaction began to undermine the authority of the national leadership.

But the president having frustrated all peaceful efforts intended to give democracy a chance, the determined populace would take their revolt a degree further: the April 12, 1980 coup d'etat or anarchy.

This passage to the coup d'etat or anarchy was made possible by an ultimate social psychological stimulus provided by "rumors." Now, the danger of rumors was felt perhaps for the first time in the United States in 1942, during the Pearl Harbor crisis.[22] This event had all the circumstances and conditions conducive to the propagation of rumors: it had disorganized the regular channels of information – the authorities introduced an unwarranted and unhabitual censorship. And on the other hand, the crisis had also disrupted the lives of several thousand men who abruptly saw their future thrown in the air.

From this observation, Allport and Postman were able to formulate the postulate that "within a group, the propagation of rumors concerning a specific subject is in direct rapport with the and nature of that subject to the life of each of the members of the group."[23]

These authors concluded that the Pearl Harbor crisis was considered as an important and ambiguous affair by almost all the citizens of the United States. Important, because it constituted a potential danger for everyone, and because its immediate consequence – the mobilization – affected everyone. Ambiguous, because no one seemed to know exactly the extent of the attack, its causes nor its possible consequences.

Parallel conditions conducive to rumors were created in the approach of the first year anniversary of the 1979 Rice Uprising. As we saw, the leaders of the PPP were

imprisoned and the party arbitrarily banned by the rubber-stamp Legislature. In the midst of this tension, there was a total news black-out on the fate of the imprisoned PPP leaders, they were not even allowed to receive visitors. To further make a bad situation worse, president Tolbert made a statement less than two weeks before the anniversary:

> I will be tough, mean and rough from now on. I want to show you that this is the time to carry out the law in this country to its fullest and I intend to do it. If in the past I have been lenient, I want the people to forgive me. I am not going to be lenient with them anymore. If you do not understand it now, you will understand it by and by.[24]

This passage proved beyond all doubts that the president dictated the law, and therefore the fate of the political detainees was at his mercy. This fact had caused many to believe that the national leader was about to do something irrational or "excessive" as he had often proven. This was to be the source of the two fatal rumors that quickly emerged.

a) That the authorities had planned to stage a kangaroo court trial of the PPP leaders on the date of the anniversary (since their movement – the PAL – was the organizer of the protest), and then execute them on the same date.

b) That the president was scheduled to depart on a state visit to Zimbabwe on April 16, 1980, and the detainees were to be executed secretly in prison during his absence under a plot to be disguised as an escape attempt to which the soldiers had responded.

These two rumors had a common denominator: the detainees would be executed one way or the other to mark the anniversary. This takes us to explore a first question: Why was the anniversary so prone to these fatal rumors?

First, because of its importance as the day more than a hundred Liberians lost their lives in fighting for their "rice and rights." And second, the first year anniversary was filled with ambiguity as nobody knew what to expect: will the masses take to the streets again or will the leadership do something stupid? In other words, the indiscriminate repression of the authorities had left an uncertain atmosphere.

We could now look at a last question: what did the rumor-mongers stand to gain in putting these fatal rumors into circulation? Rumors are propagated with a double objective: to explain and to ease the emotional tensions felt by the individual.[25] In circulating rumors, one wants to mobilize the attention of others and in the process oneself is reassured.

Thus, the intentions of the rumor-mongers were crystal clear: certainly concerned about the fate of their imprisoned idols, they wanted to get an explanation and reassurance from somebody if not the authorities. The fatality of the rumors quickly mobilized a popular attention, and "secret executions" became the general subject of conversation.

Unfortunately, the authorities made no effort to dissipate these rumors. And everyone knows the famous axiom: silence means consent. Thus, the fear of an eventual execution of their political idols, the same young sergeants and corporals who were probably to serve as secret state executioners turned public executioners in one of Africa's bloodiest coups d'etat.

III –

"Liberia, seven years after Samuel K. Doe came to power, remains in a state of uncertainty, politically and economically. Many citizens have become crestfallen and confused as never before in 140 years of independence."[26]

From the foregoing, it seems clear that the identical psychological phenomenon, uncertainty, that propelled the people to action under the Tolbert administration still persists and even more profoundly so under the current military-turned-civilian regime. Given this fact, it is easy to assume that the protests and revolts will continue unabated but under a different socio-political environment.

This raises two questions: 1) Why the April 12, 1980 coup d'etat did not diminish the uncertainty of the people, and (2) under what new social order are the people continuing their protests and revolts?

1 – Why did the April 12, 1980 coup d'etat not diminish the uncertainty of the people?

Before the army could settle itself in power, three factors would change the course of events: a) the ideological factor, (b) the politico-economic factor, and (c) the power factor.

a) Ideological factor – The coup has been an "abortive or fiasco revolution" because the radical social movements – MOJA and PAL – did not indoctrinate the masses with any real ideology different from that of the political Establishment. Thus the military leadership suffered from tunnel vision. What was not there could not be put there by the logics of persuasion.[27]

This vacuum created a conflict as the People's Redemption Council scrambled between the different political thoughts of its civilian mentors. Finally, three tendencies

emerged – on the right was General Thomas Quiwonkpa; the left was represented by General Thomas Weh-Syen; and the center or moderate was controlled by Samuel K. Doe, the head of the junta. This development deepened the conflict within the junta, and thus created insecurity that reinforced the demand of the people for the army to relinquish power to the civilians.

b) Politico-economical factor – Once in power, the military realized that the economic life-line of Liberia led to the United Statese. And as the axiom goes: he who controls your purse also controls your policies. In other words, an economic dependency is tantamount to a political dependency.

Henceforth, the United States began the manipulation of the regíme by flushing the military with financial aid and other privileges. The objective was clear: transform the army into the new élite class unit to be the guarantor of the vast interest of the United States in Liberia.

This tango of realities soon saw the military evolving from the defender of national interest to the defender of self-interest – the prerequisite for the transformation of any group into an élite unit. The defenders of the status quo easily won the day.

c) Power factor – Having suddenly found itself acquiring everything it wanted, the military leadership realized that power brings abundant privileges and high social status. Henceforth the logic was simple: to preserve these privileges and high social standing, power must be retained at all cost. Here was to begin a series of brutal purges starting with the entire left wing tendency of General Weh-Syen in October 1981. In the next act, the return to civilian rule was put off from 1983 to 1985.

But, the population undeterred simply kept up the pressure. Finally, the military leadership was obliged to apply one of the three forms of military disengagement from power – military-turned-political – described by J. 'Bayo Adekson.[28] But before then Commanding-General Quiwonkpa who had all along connived in the purges or "pretended not to know," was stunned by how Samuel Doe had adopted himself to the pomps of power. But most of all the General found out that the man he so supported and protected, was shrewdly preparing to install himself arbitrarily as the first indigenous president. What happened next was that the two close friends broke ranks; and Doe having the advantage of power succeeded in ousting Quiwonkpa who fled into exile in the United States in 1983.

This exit left the military leader the free hand to achieve his dream. On October 15, 1985, the rigged elections were held to legitimize Doe as president. And on November 12, 1985, General Quiwonkpa led an ill-fated rebellion from exile to achieve what he failed to do as Commanding-General. He was savagely killed in the process only to leave Samuel K. Doe as the supreme ruler of Liberia. Since then the country has been more engulfed in strikes and protests.

These factors examined have engendered the dictatorship which fosters the current ills: brutal repression, instability, mal-administration, institutionalized corruption, economic disaster and mass poverty. Thus persists the uncertainty of the people.

2 – Under what new social order are the people continuing their protests and revolts?

Everyone would agree that if the people's power has not yet toppled the present regime, it is due in part to the institutionalized repression and foreign interference. But also there is another factor one should not ignore – that is, the new class order established de facto since the coup d'etat and the complicated relationshps existing between these class groups (see Fig. 2).[29]

The military ascendency to supremacy created two important sub-classes in the upper social stratum. The first consists of the younger generation of the settler class and their elders who realized the need not to fight to regain power since there was not

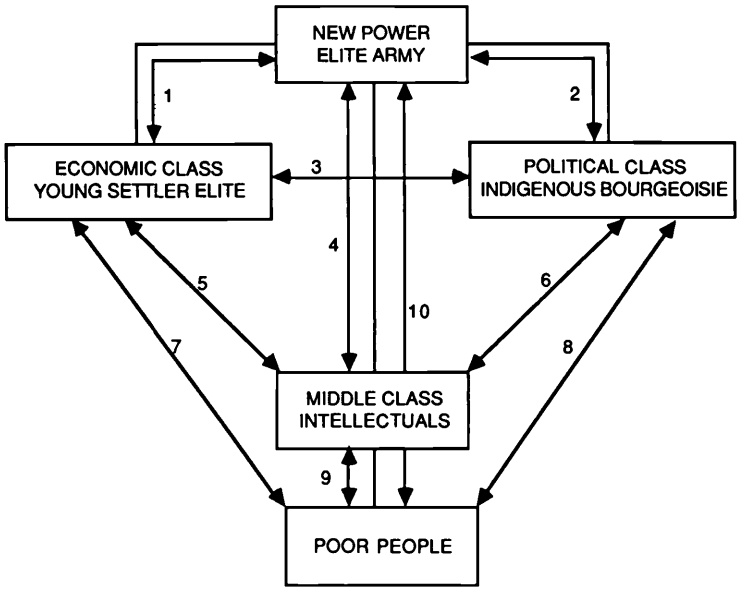

Fig. 2 The new class order in Liberia since the military coup d'état of April 12, 1980, and the relationships observed between different social classes.

Relationships: (1) Between power élite and economic class: economic relationship. (2) Between power élite and political class: political relationship. (3) Economic class and political class: interest relationship. (4) Between middle class and power élite: relationship of antagonism. (5) Between economic class and middle class: influence relationship. (6) Between political class and middle class: influence relationship. (7) Between economic class and poor people: relationship of exploitation. (8) Between political class and poor people: relationship of influence. (9) Between middle class and poor people: relationship of influence, and (10) Between power élite and poor people: power relationship.

an ideological change in the social, economic and political structure of the country. Hence, taking full advantage of the regime's lack of administrative management and eagerness to survive at all cost, these young settlers' offsprings have taken control of the economic vacuum – the wealth and business connections of their elders. To perpetuate their new found economic power base, they rallied around the National Democratic Party of Liberia (NDPL) of the military-turned-civilian leader. This marriage of convenience or interest moved the regime into the indentical foot-prints of the overthrown civilian government.

The second sub-class is that of the indigenous bourgeoisie. The fact that the majority of the soldiers are indigenous and the tribal chiefs are perceived as the genuine representatives of their people, these have established their full political influence which was suppressed in the past. This power base would have an important role to play in the problem of tribalism that has emerged since the military took power. If the settler class was united around a single party for over a century, the future genuine leaders will have to unite the indigenous bourgeoisie to keep Liberia united and stable.

There has not been any change in the lower social stratum composed of the two traditional groups: middle class and poor people. The intellectuals, though the majority are now in exile, are still prominent in the middle class – while the bulk of the population continues to make up the poor people.

In their ardent struggle for freedom, liberty, justice and betterment, the masses must take into account this new class order. If in the past it was everybody against a minority ruling clique, now the people are confronted with three interest groups at the helm of power: army, indigenous bourgeoisie, and young settler élite.

In the latter part of April 1987, a friend of the author's, received the clipping of a letter published in the Daily . The author glanced at the closing paragraph which expressed the current mood of Liberians.

> Finally, let me warn all those who believe that Liberian people are fools. We are watching everything in this country. If you use the national radio facility for one group of people, we know; if you supress newspapers, we know; if you misuse national money, we know; if you misuse power, we know; if you think people who voted in national elections are now illiterate to vote in local elections, we know; if you make laws to harm the people, we know; and if you use the constitution against certain groups of people, we know.
>
> Liberians are not fools.

Nothing lasts forever before the power of the people. The world stands witness to Ferdinand Marcos of the Philippines, Jean-Claude Duvalier of Haiti, Jaafar Nimeiri of Sudan, and the Shah of Iran – who ignored the will of their people only to become persona non grata. Thus, in the absence of a just social, economic and political system, Liberia risks living with a vicious circle of strikes, protests, revolts, and brutal repression until the people win their struggle.

FOOTNOTES

[1]James Thomas-Queh, "Le Peuple en Revolte: Une Etude de Psychologie Sociale sur le Coup d'Etat au Libéria," M.A. Thesis, Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales de Paris, 1985, p. 7.

[2]Serge Moscovici, , (Presses Universitaires de France, 1979), p. 36.

[3] July 23, 1971-July 31, 1972, (W. R. Tolbert), Executive Mansion, p. 153.

[4]Thomas-Queh, "Le Peuple en Révolte:..", p. 17.

[5]Moscovici, 1979, p. 36.

[6] July 13, 1971..., p. 319.

[7]Otto Klineberg, , (Presses Universitaires de Paris, 1967), p. 565.

[8]Ibid., p. 567.

[9]Presidential Papers July 23, 1971..., p. 154.

[10]Nya Kwiawon Taryor, Justice, Justice: A Cry of my People, (Strugglers' Community Press, 1985), p. 217.

[11]Klineberg, 1967, p. 570.

[12]Y. Gershoni, "An Historical Examination of Liberia's Economic Policies, 1900-1944," Liberian Studies Journal Vol. XI, No. 1, 1986, p. 20.

[13]Presidential Papers July 23, 1971..., p. 382.

[14]The Voice of the Revolution, 15 March 1979.

[15]James Thomas-Queh, "La Politique de contrôle Social dans un Pays en Voie de Développement: Analyse des lois, des Institutions Judiciaires et l'Application de la Justice Pénale au Libéria," Ph.D. Thesis, Sorbonne II, 1986, pp. 362-369.

[16]Paul Wilkinson, Social Movement, (The Macmillan Press, 1971), p. 121.

[17]Togba-Nah Tipoteh, Democracy: The Call of the Liberian People, (Tofters Trycheri ab, 1981), p. 93.

[18]Ibid., p. 97.

[19]Gabriel Mugny, The Power of Minorities, (Academic Press, 1982), p. 44.

[20]James Thomas-Queh, "Le Peuple en Révolte..., p. 89.

[21]Ibid., p. 90.

[22]André Lévy, Psychologie Sociale, (Dunod, 1970), p. 170.

[23]Ibid., p. 170.

[24]New Africa, May 1980, p. 26.

[25]André Lévy, Psychologie Sociale..., p. 172.

[26]West Africa, 27 April 1987, p. 796.

[27]C. E. Z. Liberty, "Report from Musardu (Letter to an American Friend): Reflections on the Liberian Crisis," Liberian Studies Journal, Vol. XI, No. 1, 1986, p. 76.

[28]Oyeleye Oyediran, Nigerian Government and Politics under Military Rule, 1966-79, (The Macmillan Press), p. 214.

[29]James Thomas-Queh, "Le Peuple en Révolte...., p. 172.

Katherine Harris, (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1985 pp. vii, 101)

Katherine Harris' treats the evolution of U.S. values in what became Liberia in 1822, and the relations that emerged between the two countries. Other themes cursorily treated in the study include the emigration of black Americans and the transfer of U.S. values such as its political, religious, economic, and social systems to Liberia, and the blending of these values with the African ones, which Harris uncritically asserts led to the formation of a social synthesis "uniquely Liberian."

Although it is demonstrated that the Liberian colony was begun by American colonizationists who had borrowed this idea from previous colonizationists, the study correctly indicates that these colonizationists succeeded in inducing the U.S. government to support their cause. The material and military assistance given by the U.S. government to the Liberian colony during most of the period covered by the study bears testimony to the foregoing argument.

At this juncture, the Liberian colony is presented as a venture of the U.S. It is, for example, described as an "informal" colony of the U.S. The role of the American Colonization Society (ACS) in the inception and the development of Liberia's social institutions is hardly considered.

While the above description could well be applied to the Liberian colony, the failure of the study to treat the effects of the ACS on Liberia seems to create some basic problems especially if one takes into consideration Liberia's institutional formations such as its political, economic, and social developments. Although these were generally American values, such institutional values were overwhelmingly influenced by the ACS in the pursuit of its objectives in Liberia. The political, economic, social, and religious culture of paternalism that characterized nearly every main institutional development of Liberia was, for example, an extension of the values inherent in the ACS. The ACS had borrowed it from its Southern social environment, and was to transfer it to Liberia through its chief administrators in that colony. Indeed, Liberia's aristocratic social arrangements and power centralization could be traced to the old southern background of the ACS, and not to the American society as a whole as the study seems to imply.

Even the relations that developed between the U.S. and Liberia can only be fully understood by taking into consideration the predominant role played by the ACS in the inception of Liberia. For had not the ACS started the Liberian colonization

scheme, there may not have been such relations. Indeed, Liberian/U.S. relations developed as they did in large part because of the role of the ACS in such relations. The "informal colonial" status assigned to Liberia by the U.S. was only ascribed because the ACS had created an enabling atmosphere. Had not the ACS created such a condition, one of the following developments would have probably occurred: direct U.S. colonial venture in West Africa or no U.S. colonialism in that region at all. The latter may have likely happened, since the U.S. did not appear interested in having a colony in Africa.

The book is well researched and importantly contributes to Liberian studies. Above all, it poses many interesting questions that are bound to challenge students of Liberian/American studies.

Amos J. Beyan
Youngstown State University

Gregory U. Rigsby,
Thought (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987, pp. x, 231)

Alexander Crummell has long been recognized as a central figure in 19th century Afro-American history and as such has received fair coverage by historians especially those interested in the small number of black leaders who worked for African regeneration. Yet no one has attempted a full length biography of this leading thinker. Crummell's broad range of interests and intellectual ecleticism are, by any measure, daunting and might help explain why no one has braved a biographical study. Rigsby takes us some distance towards this end, but his interests are not those of traditional biographers. His objectives are more limited: they are to trace the nature and evolution of Crummell's Pan-African thinking. This is, in other words, an intellectual biography of sorts. Although Rigsby cannot avoid exploring other aspects of Crummell's thinking, especially his asceticism, there is little effort to delineate other important features of his philosophy.

What then of Crummell's Pan-Africanism? Unfortunately Rigsby makes no attempt to trace the philosophical contours of Pan-Africanism, a necessity one would think, for an appreciation of Crummell's contributions to an idea that has grown in importance in this century. Rigsby does discuss the influences of the Rev. Peter Williams and Boston Crummell on Crummell, but that only gives the reader a glimpse of important influences in young Crummell's formative years. What were other black thinkers--- David Walker, Henry Highland Garnet, James McCune Smith, and others--- saying? Without this background Rigsby's analysis, which in places is very perceptive, lacks the requisite understanding of exactly what Rigsby thinks are the general contours of Crummell's Pan-Africanism. As the book unfolds the concept develops a rich amorphousness. It includes, among others, Crummell's views on missionary work in Africa, the solidarity of free blacks and slaves articulated by the Negro Convention Movement in the 1830's, there is also something called "Christian Pan-Africanism" (p.73) and all of this coheres, five pages later, into a Pan-African movement. One is puzzled by this array of apparently disparate elements that comprised the thinking of one who Rigsby shows was a rigorous intellectual.

Rigsby may have done himself a disservice by putting so much emphasis on this admittedly important facet of Crummell's thinking. A comprehensive intellectual biography would have shown the broad range and complexity of Crummell's views and facilitated Rigsby's discussion of the centrality of Pan-Africanism to Crummell's thinking. That, in turn, would have required Rigsby to explore more fully critical historical developments in Crummell's life. One example will suffice. Rigsby teases

the reader when he asserts on more than one occasion that Crummell clashed with mullatoes opposed to his race-centered views and actions. Rigsby undoubtedly sees this as an important issue in both Africa and the United States yet it is never explored in any detail. As a result we get a glimpse of what happened at Liberia College, in Crummell's dispute with Edward Wilmot Blyden, and with his vestrymen at St. Luke's in Washington D.C., but no sustained discussion of the impact of these color and class antagonisms on the immediate event or on Crummell's Pan-Africanism.

I have some other quibbles with this book including some sloppy copy editing. Yet Rigsby has made some invaluable contributions to our understanding of 19th century black intellectual history. His discussion of Crummell's views on the "living realities of spiritual existence" and the nature and role of black leadership, a "talented tenth" to use DuBois's phrase, is enlightening. Future studies on 19th century black intellectual and cultural history will benefit enormously from Rigsby's discussion of these issues. Rigsby has also given future biographers of Crummell much to think about.

Richard J. M. Blackett
Indiana University

NEW BOOKS ON LIBERIA

(Current Listing does not preclude future review)

1. SOUJOURNERS IN SEARCH OF FREEDOM: THE SETTLEMENT OF LIBERIA BY BLACK AMERICANS, by James Wesley Smith (University Press of America, 1987: 228 pages) The study "concentrates on those black Americans who settled Liberia early in the nineteenth century. Unlike any previous work on the subject it focuses on the settlers themselves. It examines their motives for emigrating, depicts the role they played in the colonization and development of the colony, and relates the hardships, sufferings, and privations they experienced in the process."

2. LIBERIA: UNDERDEVELOPMENT AND POLITICAL RULE IN A PERHIPHERAL SOCIETY, edited by Robert Kapel, Institute for African Studies, Hamburg, 1986: 292 pages). This is a very interesting collection of articles presented in German, French, and English. The articles include "The Role of the Putu Development Corportation in rural conscientization and mobilization in the 1970's" (S. Kamara), "The role of the Military in the history of Liberia" (M.B. Akpan), "The IMF and Liberia: Adjusting to the crisis" (C. Dzuibek), "Liberia under military rule, 1980-1985" (J.P. Chaudhuri), etc.

3. THE CULTURAL POLITICS OF RELIGIOUS CHANGE: A STUDY OF THE SONOYEA KPELLE IN LIBERIA, by Randolph Stakeman (The Edwin Mellen Press, 1986: 255 pages) The study examines "the effects of christianity on religious behavior, ritual performance and the ideas about the supernatural among the Sonoyea Kpelle".

4. CATHOLIC MISSIONARIES AND LIBERIA: A STUDY OF CHRISTIAN ENTERPRISE IN WEST AFRICA, 1842-1950, by Edmund M. Hogan (Cork University Press, 1981: 268 pages) The book is a study of the organization and growth of the Catholic Church in Liberia to 1950. Marginally it treats the role of the mission in the political and social life of Liberia in general, and of the Kru in particular.

5. A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE ON ASPECTS OF DICTATORSHIP IN LIBERIA, 1980-1986, by Amos Sawyer (Liberia Working Group, No. 5, Breman, West Germany, 1987: 95 pages)

6. PROCESSES OF ARGARIAN CHANGE AND THE FOOD QUESTION IN LIBERIA, by Siapha Kamara (Liberia Working Group, No. 7, Breman, West Germany, 1987: 140 pages) The monograph "attempt to provides some hisorical insights into the underlying causes for present-day problems of food insecurity in Liberia."

7. FROM SLAVES TO PALM KERNELS, A HISTORY OF THE GALINHAS COUNTRY (WEST AFRICA), 1730-1890, by Adam Jones (Franz Stiener Verlag, Wiesbadan, 1983: 220 pages) Primarily an economic history of the chiefdoms of Kpaka, Peri-Massaquoi and Soro-Gbema located between the Mao and Mano Rivers.

8. "Pluralism, Constitutionalism, and Law in Africa: A Liberian View," by Winston B. Tubman, pp. 109-117 in DEMOCRACY AND PLURALISM IN AFRICA, edited by Don Ronen (Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 1986: 220 pages).

9. LIBERIA: A NATIONAL POLITY IN TRANSITION, by D. Elwood Dunn and S. Byron Tarr (Scarecrow Press, Inc., Forthcoming, 1988).

RECENT DISSERTATIONS ON LIBERIA

Barclay, Anthony, "Fiscal Perfomance and Economic Growth: The Bouyancy of the Tax Structure in Liberia", Ph.D., 1986, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 159p.

Beyan, Amos Jones, "The American Colonization Society and the Formation of Political, Economic and Religious Institutions in Liberia, 1822-1900", Ph.D. 1985, West Virginia University, 186p.

Burchfield, Shirley Ann, "Improving Energy Data Collection and Analysis in Developing Countries: A Comparative Study in Uganda, Liberia and Sudan", Ph.D., 1986, University of Texas at Arlington, 365p.

Coleman, Ciyata Dinah, "Exports and Spatial Economic Growth in Liberia: Effects of Rubber and Iron Ore", Ph.D., 1986, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, 110p.

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Kieh, George Klay, "Dependency and the Foreign Policy of a Small Power: An Examination of Liberia's Foreign Policy During The Tolbert Administration, 1971-1980", Ph.D., 1986, Northwestern University, 287p.

Moran, Mary, "Civilized Women: Gender and Prestige Among the Glebo of Cape Palmas, Liberia", Ph.D., 1986, Brown University

Newman, Debra Lynn, "The Emergence of Liberian Women in the Nineteenth Century (Afro-American, African Diaspora, Pan-Africanism, Black Nationalism)," Ph.D., 1984, Howard University, 508p.

Parekh, Pankaj, "Operational Concerns and Primary Health Care: The Need for an Interdisciplinary Approach and Constraints to its Implementation in a Developing Country," Ph.D. 1984, UCLA
("Nimba County, Liberia, provides a profile of a developing area that suffers from the classic symptoms of poor health conditions: poor sanitation,

malnutrition, inadequate shelter, and rapid population growth. The study presents a Primary Health Care (PHC) proposal for this county that emphasizes the web of interdependencies relevant to a PHC program and unveils a set of constraints that must be addressed to promote intersectoral coordination of services, community participation and partnership between community and government.")

Roberts, Ben Augustus, "Patterns of Migration to, within, and from the United States: A case study of Liberian Nationals," Ph.D. 1986, Arizona State University, 168p.

Schmidt, Cynthia Elizabeth, "Multi-Part Vocal Music of the Kpelle of Liberia," Ph.D. 1985, UCLA.

Singler, Victor John, "Variation in Tense-Aspect Modality in Liberian English," Ph.D. 1984, UCLA.

Tarpeh, Dominic Nmah, "Local Participation and Institution Building: The Case of the Lofa County Agricultural Development Project in Liberia," Ph.D. 1984, State University of New York at Albany, 525p.

Thomasson, Gordon C. "Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Sciences, and Technologies: Ethnographic and Ethnohistorical Perspectives on the Educational Foundations for Development in Kpelle Culture." Ph.D. 1987, Cornell University.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

Amos J. Beyan, a Liberian, is Assistant Professor of History at Youngstown State University.

Richard J. M. Blackett is Professor of History, Indiana University and Associate Editor of the n l ı . His most recent publication is BEATING AGAINST THE BARRIERS: BIOGRAPHICAL ESSAYS IN NINETEENTH CENTURY AFRO-AMERICAN HISTORY (Louisiana State University Press, 1986).

Magdalene S. David, a Liberian, is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She is currently on leave from her position as Research Fellow at the Institute of Research, University of Liberia. Her areas of interest include women's studies, rural sociology and the political economy of Liberia.

Svend E. Holsoe is Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Delaware and Director of the Institute for Liberian Studies, Inc.

Jane J. Martin, an historian, and formerly of the African Studies Center of Boston University, is Executive Director of the United States Educational and Cultural Foundation in Liberia.

James Thomas-Queh, a Liberian, is a research student in Criminology and Social Psychology at the University of Paris. He is former Director of Rehabilitation at the Liberian Ministry of Justice.

Patrick L. N. Seyon, a Liberian, is visiting scholar with the Africa Research Program, Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, and former Vice President for Administration, University of Liberia.

Gordon C. Thomasson is an applied anthropologist. He and his wife Elizabeth taught at Cuttington University College from March 1980 through June 1982, during which time the fieldwork upon which the current article is based was conducted. He is presently on the faculty at Brigham Young University.

Bestseller Mentions Liberia

Chapter 15 (pages 310-311) of Bob Woodward's VEIL: THE SECRET WARS OF THE CIA 1981-1987 provides the following information: "...The security-and intelligence-assistance operations were producing. In all [United States CIA Director William J.] Casey had twelve, including aid to: ..... Liberia's leader Samuel K. Doe. The deputy chief of Doe's personal guard, Lieutenant Colonel Moses Flanzamaton, became a CIA agent and eventually attempted to seize power by leading a machine gun ambush on Doe's jeep. Doe was not injured, but Flanzamaton was captured, confessed to his CIA sponsorship of the assassination. It was white knuckles at Langley [CIA Headquarters in Virginia] for days, fearing that the agency would be accused unfairly of an assassination attempt. Liberia had been founded by freed American slaves and had been Africa's first republic. Apparently, Flanzamaton had signed on with the CIA with a view to enhancing his own political ambitions. But he was executed a week after the coup attempt, and the accusations died with him."

Announcement

LIBERIAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION, 20th Anniversary Conference will convene March 17-20, 1988 at The University of Akron. The conference theme, "TWENTY YEARS OF LIBERIAN STUDIES: DEVELOPMENT AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS" will examine from an interdisciplinary perspective, the development of Liberianist scholarship up to the present, as well as make projections for future directions. For further information contact: Neal Homes, Afro-American Studies Program, 120G Spicer Hall, The University of Akron, Akron, Ohio 44325 (phone 216-375-7143).

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