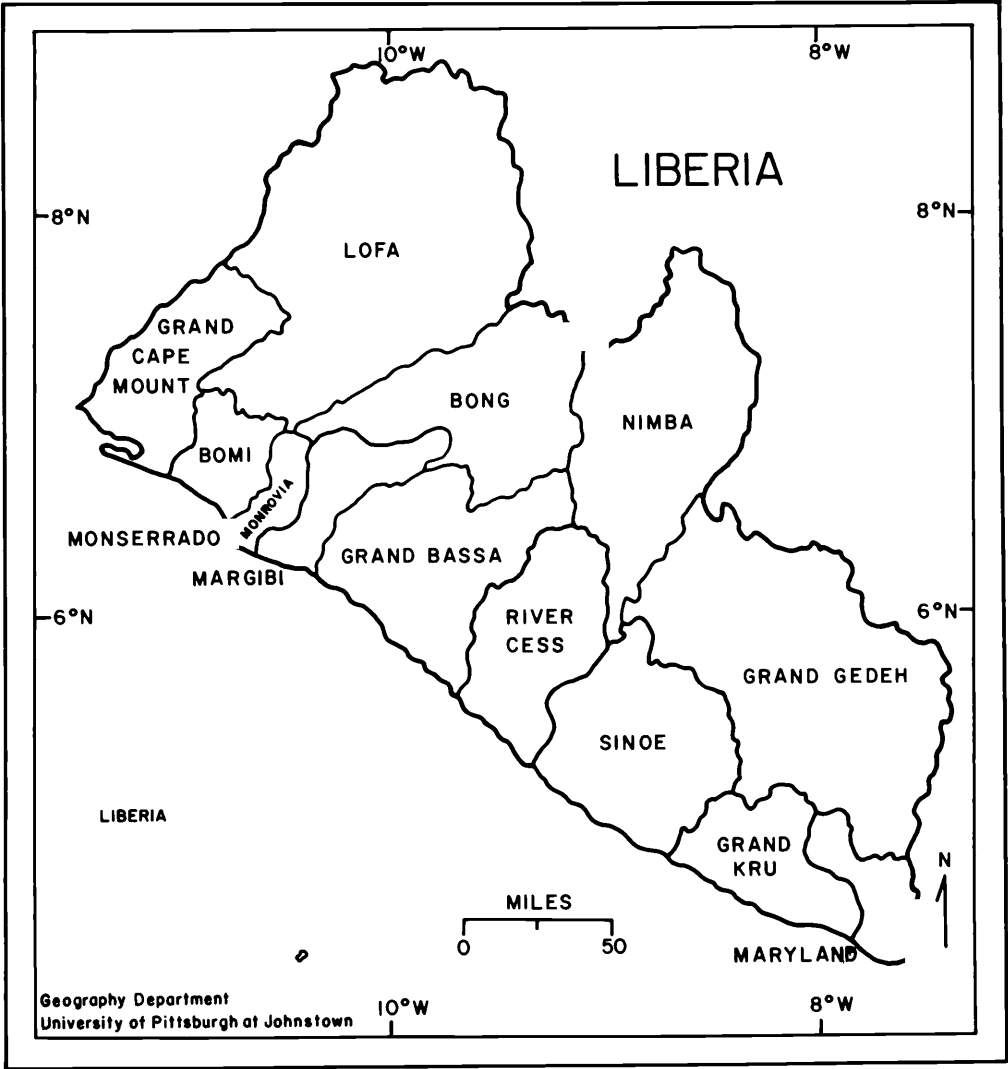


LIBERIAN STUDIES JOURNAL



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## **About Lansdell K. Christie, The Liberian Iron Ore Industry and Some Related People and Events: Getting There\***

Garland R. Farmer

### **By Way of Introduction**

Lansdell K. Christie's Liberian Mining Company was the first fruit of Liberian President W. V. S. Tubman's "Open Door Policy." Company and Policy, entrepreneur and politician were linked from the day in 1945 when Tubman's opponents took to the streets of the capital city to block legislative approval of the concession agreement which would create the Liberian iron ore industry and, like it or not, reshape the nation. Before they met, each man's future had become interwoven with the other's; some felicitous design had it that each would also like and respect the other.

Liberia witnessed something of that respect and friendship upon Christie's death twenty years later, in November, 1965, when the President declared the nation to be in mourning and presided over a memorial service in the Centennial Pavilion, where Liberia inaugurates and bids farewell to its Presidents, honoring a daring and innovative risk-taker who first risked his own money, first had African directors on his company's board, first provided for African government participation in the profits of a mining venture, first set participation as high as 50 per cent, built Liberia's first railroad, first offered and financed the purchase of mining company shares by the Liberian public, and first led another company which, in running of the Freeport of Monrovia, pushed the Open Door further ajar.

A true, larger-than-life pioneer, Christie has been mis-seen, ill-used and all but libeled by most studies of post-World War II Liberia. Neither he nor Tubman nor Liberia in the '50s, '60s, and '70s can be accurately perceived through writers who, even at this remote date, feel compelled to repeat without attribution or substantiation back alley gossip claiming that Christie "paid Tubman" to do this or not to do that. Christie and I were friends for more than 12 years before he asked me to join him in developing the Mano River mine, at which I continued for nine years after his death. Even so, I try in what follows to achieve a degree of objectivity that has been absent from most of what has so far been written about him. I may not succeed in being completely impartial, but I shall try to make this an accurate recital of events as I lived through them myself or as I learned of them from the participants. Perhaps, then, this account will partially balance those which have been created at greater remove in time, place and sentiment from what actually took place during an exciting and creative era in Liberian history.

### **The Long Road from Brooklyn to Bomi Hills**

It was a long and tortuous passage to West Africa from Christie's childhood in turn-of-the-century, well-to-do Brooklyn Heights, overlooking a New York Harbor that was plowed by oaken scows built in his father's shipyard.

Restless and venturesome, he rode freight trains across the country and tried mining in Alaska at age 17—he could quote Robert Service's picaresque poems ever after. In 1923, he entered the U. S. Military Academy at West Point. It was not the likeliest choice for one so averse to authority; ineluctably, a rebellion against the mindless assertion of power brought his expulsion: An upperclassman had demanded to see his roommate's cufflinks, taken them and then penalized the roommate at the next inspection for having no cufflinks. Christie stepped from line and thrashed the oppressor. The Con who had first nominated him got him reinstated in school, but another conflict with the system soon brought final dismissal.

Earlier, at a West Point dance, he had met the daughter of a scow owner customer of his father, and they were married in 1926. His father-in-law hired him, setting a course which would lead, however circuitously, to Liberia. The collar of that stern and exacting man proving no easier to wear than West Point's, Christie started his own Christie Scow Company, using funds raised partly by hypothecating his wife's jewelry. (He often said that when they dined with her parents, she kept one hand in her lap to hide the absence of a ring they had given her.)

The scow and tug business in New York Harbor was a quasi-monopoly of Irish owners, who vigorously resisted this interloper. (Scow owner's association meetings commonly opened, he said later, with the president saying, "Well, gentlemen, let's hear what the Protestant bastard has to say so we can get on with business.") He and his Irish number two man often had to brawl on piers with competitors for room for his vessels. Only ingenuity kept Christie's Scow working: he stationed his feisty and devoted factotum, Charlie Ormsby, who had sailed to Japan in his early teens aboard a four-masted schooner, on a houseboat tied to a buoy in the harbor from which he dispatched scows on orders relayed from offices on the 58th floor of 70 Pine Street, then the highest building in the Wall Street area and later known to many Liberians as headquarters for LMC.

Christie early saw war coming to Europe and the U. S. With characteristic enterprise, he sent Ormsby up the Hudson River to Albany, to buy freight-hauling vessels of whatever kind or condition, beached or afloat. The time was coming, he said, when great amounts of material would have to be moved and there were not going to be enough bottoms for the job. He spent freely to recondition Ormsby's purchases and, when the U. S. war effort began, Christie's Scow was ready to haul rock, gravel, coal, and a profitable gamut of other cargoes.

He joined the Army in August, 1942, being assigned to the transportation corps and the Pentagon. He was later sent to construct air fields in Africa and, in the Belgian Congo, to arrange to transport raw materials required by the war effort, including copper and a heavy ore moved with caution and secrecy: uranium. These activities caused him to stop in Liberia several times, usually at Lake Piso (known then as "Fisherman's Lake"). As with the barges on the Hudson River, an intuition in which he had come to have total confidence told him his future lay in Africa.

### **Sydney de la Rue: An Advocate for Liberia**

Sometime during the war years, he met an "old African hand" in the State Department, Sydney de la Rue, who was to play a key role in focusing Christie's interest in Africa on Liberia. A wily, case-hardened bureaucrat, de la Rue was advisor on African Affairs and a member of the Anglo-American Caribbean Commission. From 1921 to 1928, he had served in Liberia as Auditor, General Receiver, and Financial Advisor, positions established by the "1912 International Loan Agreement." He had a fondness for Liberia and an interest in its prosperity which even those (such as I) who dreaded his long-winded and pompous manner recognized as genuine. His affectionate remembrances entitled *Land of the Pepper Bird*, published in 1930, were for years the only book on Liberia available in the State Department library.

De la Rue told Christie about the "The Holland Syndicate," which, in February, 1933, had been granted sole prospecting rights to minerals in Liberia and an option to exploit 50,000 acres of land of its choice. Its main interest had been in finding a continuation of the diamond mining area at nearby Pendembu in Sierra Leone, and the four mining engineers and three prospectors sent from Holland did find areas which promised diamonds and gold. In addition, the team leader, H. Terpstra discovered a number of iron bearing formations, including Bomi Hills, which he estimated at "several dozens of millions of tons of ore."

### **First Exploration of Bomi Hills**

W. F. C. Englebert van Bevervoorde, a geologist and later professor at Delft University, went to Liberia in 1935 to explore Terpstra's discovery further for Wm. H. Muller & Co., a member of the Holland Syndicate which owned and managed mines in Spain, was the largest European dealer in ores, and active in related fields such as shipbrokering.

In 1946, the donnish and self-effacing Professor van Bevervoorde gave a talk at Delft on the Holland Syndicate's activities which—as translated by G. M. Kramer, a student of van Bevervoorde who was closely associated with Liberian

mining for more than 15 years—provides an essential background to the enterprise upon which Christie was preparing to embark.

Van Bevervoorde decided that the Bomi ore would interest Germany and Poland, but that England would probably confine its imports to Sierra Leonean ore and American producers with their preference for the Bessemer process of steelmaking, would not like the rather high phosphorous content of Bomi ore. He estimated that it would cost some 1,600,000 Pounds Sterling to build a port and railway and provide other facilities and equipment to produce 500,000 tons of ore per year. Then, he added:

However, what I feared most were not these costs, but the attitude of the Liberian Government. They seemed to be of the opinion that iron ore mining was a most lucrative business and that this was a beautiful opportunity to line one's purse.

The proposed agreement provided that the Holland Syndicate would pay a combination of royalty, export tax, land rental, and profit tax (2%!) which would

... (mean) a tax of at least 1 shilling 2 pence per ton of ore, which is exorbitantly high. Spain, for instance, which had much undertaken to stimulate mining, demands only 3% of the value at mine mouth and does not ask for an export duty.

But this was not the worst. Much worse was that during the negotiations with the Government it became clear that it was trying through all kind of machinations to keep the affair on a string, so that it became not possible to obtain the concession. The Holland Syndicate became fed up with this and stopped all its activities in 1938, and when the war broke out, turned its back to Liberia.

I am of the opinion that only an American enterprise will succeed to work with her with success, as only they can reckon with the collaboration of the Liberian authorities.

After the Holland Syndicate withdrew, a second Dutch group, NEEP, explored the Bomi area in 1936 and 1937, but a suspicion—disproven later—that Nazi Germany was behind the group led Liberia to cancel this effort. In 1938, the U. S. Government induced United States Steel to look into Liberian iron ore, but once more the absence of a port or railroad gave rise to an unfavorable opinion. Sydney de la Rue believed that the U. S., having worked against NEEP, owed Liberia help in putting the iron ore project back on track. He would tell many about Terpstra's discovery, but Christie was the first to act on his information.



### Judge Schoenrich Negotiates a Concession

Typically, after deciding to act, Christie's first move was to seek the best available advice on international concessions. De la Rue recommended Otto Schoenrich, a lawyer whose work on mining and oil concessions he had known when financial advisor to the government of Haiti in the 1930's; only his original information about Bomi Hills would mean more to Christie's ultimate success.

Since 1916, "Judge" Schoenrich had been a partner in the law firm of Curtis, Mallet-Prevost, Colt & Mosle, one of the oldest in New York, dating back to 1830, and perhaps the first to specialize in international and foreign law. (It would later represent Liberia and Ethiopia in their World Court case against South Africa.)

Raised in a bi-lingual family in heavily German Baltimore, a schoolmate of the writer H. L. Mencken, Schoenrich was a mild-mannered gentlemen of unshakable decorum and pince-nez glasses who had led a life of incongruent high adventure. His familiarity with the languages of the places in which he conducted business on four continents was prodigious: German, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Polish, and Greek among them. He wrote a two-volume study of the legal battles of Christopher Columbus' family, doing research in the libraries of whatever country his law work took him to. He was secretary to President Theodore Roosevelt's Cuban Peace Committee in 1906 and served as a judge in courts in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Santo Domingo.

(This extraordinary man's memoirs, *Reminiscences of an Itinerant Lawyer*, privately printed in Baltimore in 1967, are a leisurely, engaging and instructive look at times and places now changed forever. They also show the sympathy and high-mindedness with which one rather minor official tried to implement America's policies toward Central America in the 1910s and 1920s. Later censorious generalizations about that era are shaken by many episodes, as when, to the amusement of both men, the judge's young daughter sang songs of rebellion learned from her nurse to her father's guest, the fabled Cuban revolutionary, Farabundo Marti.)

Unlikely as their opposite personalities made it, Christie and Schoenrich were so greatly taken with each other that on March 12, 1945, a few weeks before his 70th birthday, the latter set off for Liberia, flying in the bucket seats of military transport planes, sleeping, bathing, and eating with boys young enough to be his grandsons. The trip took 11 days, including time in Miami and Accra waiting for low priority plane seats to Roberts Field.

As when he had earlier negotiated agreements to build a railway in Persia (Iran) and a dam in Greece, Judge Schoenrich drafted a concession agreement before leaving New York. His first act upon reaching Monrovia was to visit the American Minister to Liberia, Lester A. Walton, who presented him to President

Tubman. Next, he "... engaged the leading lawyer of the country, H. Lafayette Harmon, as the Liberian attorney of the mining enterprise and was pleased by the care with which he examined the draft of the proposed concession to make sure that it contained no provisions which the Liberian Government might deem objectionable." Harmon invited Secretary of Treasury William E. Dennis and Attorney General C. Abayomi Cassell for drinks, during which Schoenrich found his "... position was rendered difficult by the fact that an American promoter had recently deluded the Liberians with visions of a great agricultural expansion, but disappeared without producing results."

Negotiations, held whenever the officials could find time, "... proved strenuous and trying. Mr. Dennis ..., an affable portly man, had been a lawyer, but had gone into business and traveled abroad: while a hard trader, he held a broader viewpoint than the Attorney General, Mr. Cassell (who) ... a good knowledge of the law but was unfamiliar with mining concessions and the requirements of investors, and his keen legal mind found doubts in almost every sentence."

(Schoenrich and Cassell became friends and, notwithstanding that his firm had many clients active in Liberia, as well as the Government itself, the Judge worked hard and successfully to have the International Commission of Jurists protest the disbarment of Cassell in 1961 after he made a speech in Lagos criticizing the Liberian courts and particularly Chief Justice A. Dash Wilson.)

Even when agreement was reached on the concession, signing was delayed because "(an) American promoter, claiming to act in the name of an obscure Boston company, applied for a concession ... offering to advance a million dollars on account of royalties ... President Tubman felt it his duty to investigate the proposition, but promised that if it proved unworthy of consideration the concession would go to Colonel Christie. As was to be expected, the promoter and his offer were soon exposed as absolutely unreliable, but the incident delayed the signing of the concession until after my return to the United States."

During his ten weeks in Liberia, Judge Schoenrich devoted time not occupied with the iron ore concession to drafting a contract for the management of the Freeport of Monrovia—about which, more later, as Christie would also be President of the Monrovia Port Management Company.

At the end of May, two and a half months after the "Itinerant Lawyer" left New York, he started a slow and laborious return to New York, first waiting several days at Roberts Field for plane passage to Fisherman's Lake, about 45 minutes' flight away.

### Opposition to the Concession

The concession agreement was finally signed in New York on August 27, 1945 by Secretary of the Treasury Dennis and Christie. Opposition to ratification by the Legislature was expressed by a protest march on the Executive Mansion. (President Tubman once told me half jokingly that the marchers had mainly been "Up River Boys.") Journalist and perennial gadfly Albert Porte circulated a petition against the agreement, citing among its defects the lack of any provision for rehabilitation of the area once mining activities ceased. Three judges—T. Gybli Collins, N. H. Gibson, and J. A. Gittens—signed the petition and were dismissed the day it was made public. Judge Gittens lived long enough to tell his son-in-law, former Ambassador Nathaniel Gibson, of his feeling of vindication after the closure of LMC left a gaping crater at Bomi Hills.

Perhaps even greater opposition arose from the belief, widely said to have been shared by former President Edwin Barclay, that the concession's 80-year land lease was only a device for circumventing the constitutional limitation on ownership of land in Liberia. Events have shown this concern to have been unwarranted, but they have also shown that there is reason for concern about the condition of land and improvements when these revert to Liberia.

Another basis for opposition was the opinion of Liberia's first university-trained geologist, Arthur Sherman, who, after surveying the area with three American geologists sent by President Roosevelt in 1944, believed that the deposit was an important national resource which should be reserved for development by Liberians.

Despite vocal and active opposition, the agreement, whose terms have been so widely examined that repetition here is unwarranted, was ratified by the Legislature on January 22, 1946. Christie had his Liberian attorney, "Fay" Harmon, incorporate the Liberian Mining Company, to which he transferred the concession. Only then did he go to Liberia to meet President Tubman for the first time, making the trip he would make two or three times a year for almost 20 years.

### Lansdell Christie: More about the Man

The man who had thus roiled Liberian waters even before he was received by its President was not to the common run:

Barely 41 years old, at once self-possessed and reserved, Christie effused an optimism which only the flintiest could resist. Good looks and a casual elegance of dress helped assure that he rarely went unnoticed. (When he attended meetings in the State Department in the early days, secretaries in the Division of African Affairs often urged friends to go to the corridor just to watch him arrive.)

Functioning with a mixture of intuition and deliberation that could disconcert friend and foe alike, he inspired a rare degree of loyalty and affection, and of resentment. Unsentimental about those who fell short of expectations; lavish with those who met—or, preferably, exceeded—them; relentless with any who stood in his way; intense and headstrong, he withheld neither generosity nor ferocity in pursuit of success, whose fruits he liberally shared. As was natural in one who undertook so wild a venture as developing Bomi Hills in 1946, he considered a wager to be an essential spice to any activity: he almost never played a game—bridge, golf, gin rummy, or Scrabble—unless a stake, however small, was involved. When waiting for an elevator outside his 58th floor office, he often bet \$5 on which of six would arrive first.

Although no stranger to prosperity, Christie recognized with his customary realism that he had neither the wealth nor the expertise to succeed alone. Having heard from the U. S. Geological Survey geologists who had surveyed Bomi Hills and from de La Rue about Wm. H. Muller & Co.'s earlier interest in Bomi Hills, he met and got the support of Joseph Frering, head of Muller's U. S. company, who, in June, 1946, took him to meet its top executives in The Hague. By January, 1947, Muller & Co. decided to participate in the venture, beginning an association which lasted, albeit much reduced, until the end of LMC in March, 1977.

The task ahead of the two new partners was imposing. There was no road between Monrovia and Bomi, some 42 miles to the north and across rivers that would need substantial bridges. A railroad would have to be built and equipped. Mining and railroad equipment would require maintenance shops. Electricity had to be generated and water supplied to industrial facilities as well as to a small city of housing, offices, schools, a hospital. Investments of some \$10 million (about \$43 million in 1986 dollars) lay ahead.

In an arduous intercontinental effort to attract more capital, Christie canvassed steel companies in the U. S. and Europe. One large steel company sent a geologist to assess the deposit and got a report described by Judge Schoenrich as "... so devastatingly unfavorable that it might have wrecked the project, the ruins of which would then have easily been taken over." Christie said he was turned down once by every steel company in the U. S. and Western Europe, twice by some.

Information provided by A. Th. van der Lecq, Muller's last Chairman, conveys a vivid picture of the project's unremitting demands on the two shareholders for cash:

—When LMC was incorporated on September 20, 1946, Christie had already invested \$200,000, (about \$910,000 in 1986 dollars);

- On January 2, 1947, he and Muller each contributed \$50,000 (1986=\$229,000);
- Three weeks later, \$100,000 each;
- August 4, 1947, another \$100,000 each;
- March, 1948, \$50,000 each;
- April, \$100,000 each;
- May 5, \$10,000 each, six days later, \$20,000;
- June 7, \$60,000 each.
- Then, the well seems to have run dry for a while; the two partners put in nothing more until early December, when Christie added \$5,000; later that month, he and Muller paid in another \$10,000 each.

At this point, the end of 1948, Christie had invested \$615,000 (1986=about \$2,806,000) and Muller had put up \$410,000 (about \$1,870,000). These were impressive amounts to sink into an uncertain enterprise in a distant and little-known part of the world. And keep in mind that LMC had no debt, only direct investment, although Christie had personally borrowed against his scow company, his home on Long Island and heaven-only-knows what other assets to raise his share. Tubman had risked much in granting and defending the concession; in Christie, he got an investor who met his measure; in staid and genteel Wm. H. Muller & Co., Christie found a worthy partner.

#### **Stettinius Associates: An Unwanted Suitor**

A new player entered the scene in November, 1948, when LMC received the first installment of a badly-needed-but-much-resisted investment of \$248,000 (1986=\$1,131,000) from The Liberia Company, whereupon hangs another tale:

Since late 1946, Christie had been fighting takeover efforts by Stettinius Associates, a group which was negotiating for its newly-formed subsidiary, The Liberia Company, a concession which, when signed in September, 1947, included—in over-simplified terms—the right of first refusal to develop all minerals in Liberia.

The group was formed by former U. S. Secretary of State Edward R. Stettinius, Jr. after he left government in June, 1946, in collaboration with a clutch of high-flying former government officials. Its offices on the top floor of New York's Plaza Hotel offered grand views of Central Park and even grander visions of putting together world-wide investment "packages" to sell to others, with Stettinius Associates taking a minority position in each.

Although Stettinius had inherited wealth (and, later and indirectly, his position as Chairman of the U. S. Steel Board) from his father, an investment banker with J. P Morgan Company, it seems that his resources alone would not support such a grand program, so a narrowing of scope was decided upon. Focus narrowed on Liberia, with help from the omnipresent Sidney de la Rue, who was Stettinius' neighbor in the Virginia horse country near Washington, DC.

The case in favor of Liberia centered on LMC and the opportunity offered by Christie's problems, about which de la Rue was fully informed by attendance at Christie's frequent and candid meetings with the State Department, which had been asked by the Export Import Bank whether U. S. foreign policy interests would be served by a loan which Christie was seeking. (It should be said here that, although favorable, on balance, to Firestone, State nonetheless welcomed any responsible activity which might lessen the rubber company's dominance of the Liberian economy and, thus, defang the oft-repeated jibe of Liberia's colonial neighbors that the country was a "Colony of Firestone.") State's response was slow in coming, partially because of reservations in its economic division about some of the incentives accorded to LMC.

From its corporation in September, 1947, the Liberia Company had aimed at taking over LMC or, at least, many of the rights included in LMC's concession. In December Stettinius, unsuccessfully, petitioned President Truman to cancel LMC's rights to exploit gold and diamonds in the LMC concession area. His strong-arm team used every contact of the former Secretary of State to turn the Liberian Government against Christie, once trying to enlist the influence of the elegantly correct American Under Secretary of State, Joseph C. Grew, who politely excused himself, though he did become a Director of Stettinius Associates after he retired. This maneuvering ended in November, 1948 with The Liberia Company's investment of \$248,000 in LMC, which, in the first 10 years of the mining company's operations, paid it dividends of over \$6,000,000, more than it ever invested in Liberia.

My own recollection of a vain and vacuous Stettinius, coddled by sycophantic retainers, differs from the generous view of him in Dr. F. P. M. van der Kraaij's valuable study, *The Open Door Policy of Liberia*, as the unsung hero of the Liberian economic development. However, in all fairness, one must admit that his company did take a risk at a time when LMC's future was far from assured, and it profited in proportion. That was how the Open Door Policy was supposed to work: it attracted high-risk investment to Liberia and rewarded the risk-takers fully. Others would be attracted by the experience of those who had gone first.

(Christie later said that, soon after forming LMC, he offered de la Rue a position as vice president. The latter preferred to stay on at State until eligible for a full pension, so Christie promised that the post would be waiting whenever

de la Rue wanted it. When he decided that de la Rue was feeding the Liberia Company information on his troubles, Christie asked to be released from this promise in exchange for an annual payment to de la Rue or his widow for the rest of their lives. After de la Rue accepted his offer, Christie felt free, and proceeded, to resist this inconstant friend and The Liberia Company with his usual force and relish. When de la Rue retired from government, he was made vice president of Stettinius Associates.)

### **A Road to Bomi Hills**

Soon after Christie and Muller joined forces, work began on a road from Brewerville, on the north bank of the St. Paul River near the new port, to Bomi Hills. A disused American Army camp was made ready for incoming expatriate personnel, mainly Dutch citizens recruited by Muller from the Dutch East Indies, where the first steps toward Indonesian independence had been taken. On March 7, 1947, a 35-man work force under a Liberian foreman, Robert Sherman, broke ground on the road. Soon, another crew started working from Bomi toward Brewerville. Using only hand tools, the two groups reached the village of Bakenda about 18 months later, having completed some 40 miles of road, much through heavy tropical rain forest.

With the motor road to Bomi completed and The Liberia company's investment now available, in January, 1949 the resourceful and untiring Robert Sherman could start work on a railroad right-of-way, now with a crew of some 700 laborers but still without heavy equipment. As with the motor road, the rail bed from Brewerville to the Kpo River would be built entirely by hand.

### **Lend-Lease and the Freeport of Monrovia**

In the midst of these happenings, an event of major importance to the iron ore project occurred: on July 26, 1948—the 101st anniversary of Liberia's independence—the \$19.3 million Freeport of Monrovia was formally opened. This project was one of two which resulted from President Franklin D. Roosevelt's short visit to Roberts Field while returning to the U. S. from the Casablanca Conference in January, 1943—the other being the U. S. Economic Mission to Liberia, a precursor of President Truman's "Point Four" program, which later became USAID. Roosevelt invited Liberian President Edwin Barclay to the U. S., but, prohibited by Liberia's constitution from another term as President, Barclay awaited the election of his successor before making the visit. The True Whig Party nominated W. V. S. Tubman in February and, after the nation ratified this choice in May, the President and President-elect were in Washington by early June.

The U. S. Navy had long wanted a port in West Africa at which its ships could call without concern for the sometimes unpredictable attitude of the

European colonial powers then governing other West African ports, a concern given substance by German submarine raids in two world wars and the obstruction of the Vichy-appointed colonial authorities in French West Africa during World War II. However, after the North African landings in late 1942, the Navy's interest in the Atlantic south of Morocco faded and, in any event, it wasn't prepared to devote any of its own funds to a port in Liberia. The Roosevelt White House took the quickest and easiest course by making the port a Lend-Lease project, for which it had both the freedom to act and funds already appropriated by Congress.

The agreement providing for the construction of the Freeport of Monrovia, signed December 31, 1943, was a curious example of the ambivalence with which American officialdom had long approached Liberia. There was a genuine desire to help an "old friend." Considerable bureaucratic ingenuity was needed to qualify the project for "Lend-Lease" funding and much good will was shown in pushing to start construction in 1944. However, under Lend-Lease rules, the \$19.3 million involved had to be a loan, not a grant. So as not to saddle a nation whose government budget in 1944 was less than \$1 million with an impossible debt, repayment was, uniquely among Lend-Lease projects, to be made solely from the project's income, not from other Liberian funds. Equally unusual was the proviso that the port be the property of the U. S. Government and be managed by an American company, approved by the U. S., until the debt was paid.

The familiar blend of consideration and paternalism which permeated this agreement was largely the handiwork of another of the personalities who appeared and reappeared on the Liberian scene in the early decades of this century: Col. Harry A. McBride. A career diplomat with rare African experience as American Vice Consul at Boma in the Belgian Congo, he had gone to Liberia in 1918, at age 31, to serve two years as Acting General Receiver of the Customs and Financial Advisor, under terms of the 1912 International Loan Agreement. In 1934, while assistant to Secretary of State Cordell Hull, he was sent on a special mission to investigate the troubled circumstances behind a British recommendation that the U. S. assume a protectorate over Liberia. McBride's report is credited with having led to U. S. recognition of President Edwin Barclay's regime and to resumption of negotiations to resolve the dispute between Liberia and Firestone's Finance Corporation of America which contributed to the nation's parlous international position.

McBride retired from the diplomatic service and assumed the prestigious position of Administrator of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, in 1940, then joined the Army in January, 1942. Almost immediately, he was sent to Monrovia to negotiate the Defense Areas Agreement which would permit the U. S. to build and use such facilities in Liberia as it might find n to its operations in the war. Signed by McBride and Liberian Secretary of State,



Clarence L. Simpson, on March 13, 1942, it was this Executive Agreement which led to the transformation of Roberts Field into a major stop for American military traffic and authorized construction of roads joining Roberts Field to Monrovia and Fisherman's Lake (Lake Piso), where a seaplane base was built and abandoned before a proper road could be completed.

While in Liberia for the Defense Areas Agreement negotiations, McBride was told by President Barclay, an old friend, that the U. S. should consider building a port. Though this was outside the scope of his assignment, McBride passed Barclay's suggestion on to the White House. Thus, it was Roosevelt who raised the subject during his Roberts Field lunch with Barclay less than a year later. It was said that, at the end of his visit to Washington, Barclay refused to sign the communique proposed by the Americans until Roosevelt formally undertook that the U. S. would build the port which he had first proposed.

The importance of that port can be fully appreciated only by those who have descended a rope ladder, swinging wildly and mocked by sailors watching from above, to a surf boat, rising and falling alongside a merchant ship and sat amidst large cartons of breakfast cereal, bales of used clothing and the like for a hair-raising ride over a sand bar almost blocking entry to the Mesurado River and the picturesque and antiquated customs dock on Water Street. I did so in April, 1946 as a passenger on a ship which spent nine days unloading cargo that would later be discharged in less than two days at the wharf in the protected waters of the new port. (Twice daily the ship rolled violently as dynamite charges blasted rock from the receding tip of Mamba Point, to be hauled across the "temporary" Mesurado Bridge and dumped onto the steadily extending breakwaters.)

Important as the port was to Liberia, it was crucial to Christie's mining venture. The modest off-shore loading facility envisaged ten years earlier by Professor van Beevervoorde would not do now. No longer was iron ore shipped in cargoes of under five thousand tons; by the time LMC was ready to ship ore in 1951, buyers were requiring that ships carrying ten or even fifteen thousand tons be accommodated. In the mid-1960's, three mining companies were loading vessels carrying 60,000 tons at their piers in Monrovia. By the 1970's, Bong Mining Company loaded vessels of over 90,000 tons, which were still much smaller than the 300-to-400,000 ton carriers hauling Brazilian and Australian ores to Japan and Europe. The capacity of the Freeport of Monrovia to adapt to such fast-changing demands was a tribute to the engineers who had been twitted for designing a facility so much larger than any need foreseen in 1944.

### **Monrovia Port Management Company**

In 1946, the U. S. Department of State, having assumed post-war Lend-Lease responsibilities, began to seek an American company to manage the port as the agreement required. It found that, apart from the uncertain iron ore

shipments, projected traffic through the new port was so limited that revenues were unlikely to cover operating costs, let alone profit for a management company or any payment on the Lend-Lease debt. The Division of African Affairs set out to convince the American companies doing business in Liberia that they should jointly form a company to operate the port. There was little enthusiasm for the idea. Indeed, Firestone, Liberia's largest exporter, did not intend even to use the new port, being satisfied with its lightering operation at the mouth of the Farmington River. Gradually, though, all realized that there was no other solution, and seven companies—Firestone, LMC, Farrell Lines (which began service to Liberia in 1947), Texaco, Socony Vacuum (later, Mobil), Mississippi Steamship Lines, (Later, Delta Lines), and The Liberia Company—formed the Monrovia Port Management Company, each putting up \$25,000 as a contribution toward operating capital. Firestone joined because its trading subsidiary, USTC, would use the new port's general cargo facilities.

Because efficient operation of the port was initially seen as more important to Christie than to themselves, the others persuaded him to take on the presidency of the new company, a job which immediately proved to be more demanding than he had expected because of a conflict with State over the terms of a management contract. The political and economic offices favored a broad and loose authority aimed at encouraging port use and producing a profit. They were opposed by a brilliant lawyer representing the Office of the Legal Advisor. This nephew of a great U. S. Supreme Court justice, and later member of the Cornell Law School faculty, was an unreconstructed New Dealer who mistrusted business in general and argued for maximum limitation of the management company's activities as the best way to defend Liberia's interests. The arguments between him and the crusty Wall Street lawyer representing the Port Management Company, especially over how a "free port" was to be run, were classic confrontations which one, totally silent, junior officer still considers it was a rare and educational privilege to have witnessed. As a result, even though the port was near enough to completion to receive the U. S. naval vessel which brought President Harry Truman's delegation (including Sydney de la Rue!) to Liberia's Centennial Celebration in July of 1947, the port management contract was not signed until July 26, 1948.

Typically, Christie was not inactive pending completion of legalities. As soon as the port management company had funds, he cabled an army captain who had worked with him in the Congo and was then fighting Communists in the mountains of Greece, urging him to get out of the Army and come to Liberia as Port Director. A physically imposing giant of a man, impatient, tireless, hands-on, profane, loyal and impetuous, Donald Inskip had all the qualities needed to start up a modern, efficient and profitable port operation. (He had already been to Liberia in December, 1943, in charge of a three-Jeep convoy which transported the American dollars which replaced the British pound as the

nation's official currency from "Fish Lake" to Monrovia.) After marrying a Red Cross worker in Greece, Inskip left the Army for Liberia, to become, for 15 years, one of the expatriate personalities about whom feelings, for and against, ran high. Arbitrary and abrasive as "Tiny" Inskip could be personally, there is no denying that, well into the 1960's, the Freeport of Monrovia was the work of his meat hook hands. The port's successful start-up was also another mark left on Liberia by Lansdell Christie, who had had to defend its director from an impulsiveness which at least once caused him to be declared "persona non grata."

Christie liked to tell how, when LMC's funds ran low in 1948, the Bank of Monrovia refused to lend him enough to pay the wages of the laborers building the road to Bomi, so he got Inskip to borrow it, pledging his salary as collateral. Probably this was the \$5,000 he paid to LMC in December. (A little earlier in 1948, on the terrace of Washington's then-post Shoreham Hotel, he saluted my wife-to-be at a large and lavish champagne-and-orchids dinner which he couldn't pay for until two years afterward.)

### Bridging the St. Paul River

A major obstacle to moving ore from Bomi to Monrovia remained: a bridge across the St. Paul River, at the northernmost point of Bushrod Island, a 980-foot structure whose estimated \$1.2 million cost was well beyond LMC's means. In early 1948, doubtlessly encouraged by Christie, the Government of Liberia requested by diplomatic note that the U. S. build the bridge, pointing out that the Executive Agreement of December 31, 1943 provided for "a port, port facilities and *access roads*." It argued that the bridge would be the sole link between the port and the large region of Liberia then called the Western Province. Adding that, without income from iron ore shipments, the port would probably not meet operating expenses, Liberia asked that enough of the \$5 million remaining from the \$19,275,000 in Lend-Lease funds designated for the project be used for the bridge and a connecting road to the port.

Because the story of the bridge illustrates so well the effort, the patience and, sometimes, the guile required to move assistance for a relatively obscure ally through the bureaucracy, the inertia and the competition for funds in Washington, it deserves to be told in more detail than its cost alone would justify:

U. S. Congress action was required to use Land-Lease funds after June 30, 1948 and to enter into any new contract under the Lend-Lease law, which authority had expired two years earlier. The political climate in Washington could not have been less favorable to such steps. President Harry S. Truman was locked in vitriolic dispute with what he called "The Do-Nothing 80th Congress," which was slashing budgets, cutting back on commitments, and fighting such initiatives as the Marshall Plan in Western Europe and the "Truman

Doctrine" in the Balkans. Worse yet, the bridge proposal would go to congress in the State Department budget, which was routinely held hostage by conservative Republican committee chairmen intent on blocking Truman's policies by denying the funds to operate them.

Within the Department, things were not more favorable to inclusion of the bridge in the budget. Power in State resided largely in the Office of European Affairs (EUR) and the top officers of the                   ent who had served there on their ways up the ladder. Engaged in a continuing fight to fund the European recovery program, these patricians did not favor any side skirmishes likely to distract attention from their battles. Similarly, although it held direct sway over Liberian affairs, the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs (NEA), embroiled in two other politically sensitive issues—the anti-communist fight in the Balkans and the founding of the state of Israel—had scarcely more enthusiasm than EUR for mixing these issues with Republican phobias about Lend-Lease. (Lack of enthusiasm turned to irritation, one Saturday night in March, after his former boss, Stettinius, called the NEA Director Loy W. Henderson to demand that he push through Congress action on funds to rehabilitate Roberts Field within two weeks so he could announce the news on a forthcoming trip to Liberia.)

Despite high-level coolness, the Division of African Affairs (AF) favored the bridge and could quote the U. S. Economic Mission to Liberia as reporting that it was the only means to assure meaningful income for the new port. AF was a small unit, with only a chief, assistant chief and five "desks": Ethiopian, Liberian, Economic and, watched closely by the more prestigious EUR, two for British and French Africa. It was considered within the Department as being unable to say "No" to Liberia, although the Liberian Government would have found that an exaggeration. In fact, AF was working to get several Liberian items included in the 1949 budget, among them increased funds for the Economic and Public Health missions and funds to complete rehabilitation of runways and navigation aids and cover minimum operations at Roberts Field, a move to block Pan American Airways' petition to cease service to Liberia because, it said, the airport was unsafe.

Nevertheless, there was great shuffling of feet in AF about whether to defy the express wish of so many important superiors to avoid needless vexation of Congress, and it seemed that intradepartmental soul-searching had stalled the bridge when the Liberian Embassy in Washington requested an appointment with Secretary of State George Marshall for a special representative of President Tubman, President Pro-Tem of the Senate, the Honorable H. Lafayette Harmon, who was to put before the Secretary several matters that the President considered pressing. Secretary Marshall being unable to receive Senator Harmon, an appointment was made with the Assistant Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Norman Armour, a Brahman of such exalted status that few from AF had ever

breathed the same air as he. A background memorandum on the matters to be covered was required from me, the assistant Liberian Desk Officer. I found that, while he had a general notion of what was to be discussed, Liberian Ambassador C. D. B. King was sure only that the St. Paul River bridge had high priority, so the first draft of my memo was aimed at informing Mr. Armour fully, and favorably, on that subject. It became less full and less favorable as it moved up the hierarchy and reached Armour's desk as a weak-kneed recommendation of "further consideration."

Astringently proper, Armour received the affable and voluble Sen. Harmon graciously, but quickly sent him one rank down the pecking order to NEA Director Henderson, doubtless much warmed by Armour's assurance of unflagging American concern for Liberia's well-being. No stranger to dilatory tactics, Sen. Harmon would not let Henderson confine their meeting to platitudes. He pressed, now less affably, for something much more concrete. Henderson, tempered by the fires of Middle Eastern negotiations, would not be cornered and avoided commitment to anything more than a full and friendly examination of possibilities. Examination began one step further down the hierarchy, in AF, where Harmon found more support than authority.

He spent a few days in New York, then sailed for England on the Queen Mary, from which he sent a cable showering thanks on Assistant Secretary Armour for having received him so well and expressing the great gratitude which he felt, and which President Tubman would feel, at Mr. Henderson's agreement to move ahead with the bridge. Stupefaction and consternation surged through Foggy Bottom! How, Armour wanted to know, could Henderson have given such an impression? How, Henderson wanted to know, could AF have allowed any such idea to go uncorrected? Study of the memorandum of the meeting showed Harmon's message to be an outlandish exaggeration of Henderson's position, but he had done his job for Liberia—and his client, Christie: some place in the bureaucracy, far above the Liberian desk, the decision was reached that, however it had happened, there was no choice but to see if the (expletive deleted) bridge could be worked into the budget.

The surest way to justify doing so seemed to be to show that from the first the term "access roads" in the Executive Agreement had been intended to cover some such thing as the St. Paul River bridge. The Liberian Desk Officer, Sam Sims, and I sought help from the agreement's author, Col. Harry McBride, who met us in his grand office at the National gallery of Art (I have not seen one more impressive). Distinguished, handsome with gray hair and bristly mustache, impeccable in demeanor and in dress, Col. McBride could not have been more cordial, more sympathetic, or less helpful. The phrase, "port, port facilities and access roads," had been lifted from some other treaty and had no specific application to the port at Monrovia. He would like to help Liberia, but such was the fact.

AF then asked the Office of the Legal Advisor to give an opinion on the matter. The budget deadline was near before an eight to ten page opinion was received, setting forth myriad arguments as to why the bridge could not be considered an "access road." A little later, in the Department's basement snack bar, I saw the lawyer who had written the opinion and complained that he had shot us out of the water. "Oh, did you *want* to build that bridge? Send back the memo and I'll give you another." Which he did; it was eight or ten tightly-argued pages supporting the bridge. So it was that, buried in State's budget, there were paragraphs both permitting use of the remaining funds and authoring a new contract to construct a road and bridge across the St. Paul.

However, the fight was not over; AF had to defend the bridge before the House Appropriations Committee and its terrorizing Chairman, John Taber, a thundering mastodon from Upstate New York much given to bullying civil servants. On the appointed date, AF's Chief, Assistant Chief, Liberian desk officer and the assistant desk officer spent several hours in the committee room, watching Taber and their peers. After other business called him elsewhere, they were told to return the next day. Unsurprisingly, it turned out that only the lowest ranks, desk officer Sam Sims and I, were available, and it wasn't until the third day that we were called to the witness table where we sat, scarcely noticed, while staff members mumbled importantly into Congressional ears. Someone asked whether it was true that the cost of the port and the proposed bridge were to be repaid and, after confirming the point, the two petitioners were told to go and sin no more.

For weeks it was uncertain whether the committee had approved, disapproved or simply forgotten the bridge, then word reached AF that the First Deficiency Appropriations Act, approved May 10, 1948, contained the sought-after authorization to use up to \$4 million of the unexpended funds. The port construction contract with Raymond Concrete Pile was quickly amended and work began immediately on the one-lane road and railway bridge. First used in November, 1949, it was the only link between Monrovia and Grand Cape Mount County until 1979. As often happened in those cooperative days, it was the joint involvement of the Government of Liberia and a private investor that brought the bridge into being. LMC could not have gotten the bridge built by Lend-Lease without the Liberian Government's initiative, and it is almost certain that the penny-pinching 80th Congress would not have agreed but for the prospect of income for the port from iron ore.

### **Republic Steel Corporation Buys Control**

As 1948 closed, LMC's prospects were much brighter than they had been 12 months earlier: the road to Bomi had been completed, the Freeport of Monrovia had opened, financing for the essential St. Paul River bridge was assured, and fresh funds had come in from The Liberia Company. Finally, it was Christie's

luck that, late in the year, on a flight from London to New York, he was seated next to an official of the Republic Steel Corporation; by the time the plane landed, he had persuaded his seatmate that Republic should take another look at Bomi Hills.

Republic was America's third largest steel producer and something of a hybrid, having been pieced together in 1930 from several ailing or bankrupt companies. In 1949 its President was Charles White, a bluff and autocratic one-time blast furnace manager, the last real "steel man" to direct the company before control fell to lawyers and financiers. Christie would have a stormy relationship with this stereotypical pre-war Midwestern industrialist: hard-driving, single-mindedly dedicated to his company, with little taste for the uses of subtlety.

In February, 1949, both Republic and the Eximbank, having received a favorable report from an engineer it sent to analyze the project, were sufficiently interested to accept Christie's invitation to meet at Bomi Hills with himself and Dr. Thomas P. Thayer of the U.S. Geological Survey, whose enthusiasm for the possibilities of the deposit dated from his participation in the survey conducted in December, 1943.

The case for the project had been strengthened by dramatic changes in the American steel industry. In only two years, from 1946 to 1948, steel production in America grew by over 37%, from 66.6 million tons to 88.3 million tons, driven by war-delayed consumption in the U.S., the reconstruction of Europe and Japan and the loss of steel plants in both those areas to World War II bombings. Moreover, wartime demand for steel had drained the highgrade iron ore fields in Minnesota and Wisconsin, and the techniques for upgrading the poorer remaining ores which would soon remake the industry were not yet in use. Almost overnight, American steelmen, including those at Republic, found themselves looking overseas for iron ore, many for the first time.

Following the meeting at Bomi, things moved faster. The Eximbank indicated pre approval of a loan of \$4 million (which would not be formally granted until August 18, 1949), but it stipulated that no funds would be paid out until a major user of iron ore had invested in LMC.

This condition denied to Christie any leverage that Republic's need for new sources of ore might have given him. Taking full advantage of it, on March 2, 1949, Republic paid \$200,000 for an option to buy controlling interest in LMC. On May 25, it exercised that option, bringing its total investment to \$2,000,000, making LMC's shareholdership in shares of \$100 par value:

Republic Steel	20,000	or	55.98%
Lansdell K. Christie	9,150		25.61%
Wm H. Muller & Co.	4,100		11.47%
The Liberia Company	<u>2,480</u>		6.94%
Total	35,730		

Republic also agreed to loan LMC an additional \$1 million on or after January 1, 1951, but never had to do so. Republic got the right to purchase up to 450,000 tons per year of LMC's open hearth lumpy ore at one-half the average price paid by other consumers. Like many steel producers in 1949, it relied rather heavily on the open hearth furnace. To operate efficiently, this fading process required a goodly proportion of high grade ore (at least 60% iron content) in the form of lumps six inches or larger. Because such ore mostly occurs in the crust or capping, it usually makes up only a small portion of an iron ore deposit. At Bomi Hill, it was not only first to be mined, it also had an uncommonly high iron content of up to 70%. As part of an iron ore sales agreement signed with LMC on June 1, 1949, Republic got the cream of the deposit at a bargain price, a deal which later added to the bad blood that developed between Christie and Republic and led to a bitter disagreement between the Government and LMC.

Sometime soon after Republic and the Eximbank made their commitments, Christie transferred 800 of his shares, with a par value of \$80,000, to three individuals and a company toward whom he felt grateful for help given during the difficult times just past. It is not clear now which were paid for and which were gifts, but in either event the transfer was made after LMC's future was secure and owning the shares could only be rewarding. When trying to understand Christie's acts of generosity, including many to Liberian officials, this transfer of stock should be kept in mind as an example of his disposition to reward past help rather than to buy future favor. Those who benefited from this impulse in 1949 were:

- Byron H. Larrabee, then Vice President and later President of Firestone Plantations Company (250 shares), who had his company help Christie in dozens of ways, and was a favorite drinking and traveling companion for several years before the two had a titanic falling-out which ultimately contributed to a misunderstanding that almost ended Christie's close friendship with President Tubman.
- J. van der Velde (250 shares), the Dutch mining engineer who was Bomi Hills' first mine manager.



- J. Perry (50 shares), an official of Socony Vacuum who had his company's people in West Africa ease Christie through many difficulties, including housing him when he was stranded by uncertain plane connections in Dakar and elsewhere.
- Farrell Lines (250 shares). Although the company was most helpful to a potentially major customer of its new service to Liberia, this transfer is the first evidence of a close business and personal relationship that developed and endured between Christie and Farrell's Executive Vice President (later President) Admiral George Wauchope whose code, as craggily Scottish as his name and profile, seems not to have allowed taking the shares for himself.

### **The Push toward Bomi Speeds Up**

The timely infusion of cash from Republic and, soon after, from the Eximbank came as the U.S. Navy, which had overseen the construction of the Freeport of Monrovia, was selling the project's equipment as surplus property. Christie was able to buy and take immediate delivery of heavy machinery needed to complete the railroad and build the industrial facilities at the mine: bulldozers, cranes, power shovels, dump trucks and the like. (At least one small shovel and some other pieces of this equipment were still in use in 1976.) Now that Robert Sherman and his crews had something more substantial than picks and shovels, railroad construction moved rapidly, as did work on two steel bridges across the Kpo and Maher Rivers, where allowance had to be made for the high and rapid surges such streams experience during rainy seasons that can bring 200 inches of rain, or more.

The new funds also permitted placing orders for the industrial facilities at the mine: power generators from England, crushing and screening equipment from the U.S., as well as railroad wagons from England with wheels and axles from Belgium, all on long delivery.

### **A New Call for Funds from Shareholders**

A final call for capital from LMC's shareholders was made to complete the job of bringing Bomi Hills into production. On January 5, 1951, all shareholders except (inexplicably today) Christie contributed *pro rata* an additional \$1 million, resulting in the following new distribution of ownership:

Republic Steel	28,157	shares or	61.57%
Lansdell Christie	8,127	" "	17.77%
Muller & Co.	5,248	" "	11.48%
Liberia Company	3,174	" "	6.94%
Larrabee, Farrell, van der Velde & Perry	1,024	" "	2.24%

### The Hand-Loaded First Cargo of Ore

As LMC was racing to get into production, world events once more affected its prospects. War erupted on the Korean peninsula on June 25, 1950, with the predictable effect on demand for steel: U.S. steel production rose from 96.5 million tons in 1950 to 111.3 million in 1953. By the time the first trainload of Bomi ore reached the port on April 6, 1951, the price of open hearth lumpy ore had increased from about \$5 a ton to roughly \$15 a ton.

Republic wanted the first cargo of ore. It arranged to ship approximately 10,000 tons on a vessel due to sail in early June, 1951. Unhappily, LMC's shiploading facility was not ready in time. Under strong pressure to avoid the demurrage expense which would result from delaying the ship and also to show the world that Liberian ore had arrived, the full 10,000 tons were carried from stockpile to the ship in buckets and pans on the heads of a chain of laborers working around the clock. The grueling and dirty work was well paid for the times, and those present said that a carnival atmosphere prevailed throughout. The ship left on time, reaching Republic's dock in Baltimore, Maryland on June 23. Carnival atmosphere or not, it was a relief to all when the second cargo was loaded in the conventional fashion. LMC shipped 167,000 tons of ore in its first year.

### LMC's Concession Revised

Increasing shipments (877,000 tons in 1952) and rapidly improving ore prices made it clear that the mine was going to be more profitable than anyone had foreseen when the original concession agreement was signed. Early in 1952, the Liberian Government, through its newly-appointed Ambassador to Washington, Clarence L. Simpson, raised the question of revising the agreement. This move was initiated and largely directed by Charles D. Sherman who had become Financial Advisor in 1951, the first Liberian to hold a position previously filled by Americans. Representing LMC in the ensuing negotiations was yet another rare and altogether admirable man, Vernon R.Y. Lynn, who succeeded Judge Schoenrich when he returned from wartime service with the U.S. Navy which included command of a fleet of landing craft in the invasion of Normandy beaches in June, 1944, and of Pacific Ocean islands and atolls in 1945. Lynn found Sherman wildly unrealistic; Sherman found Lynn, with his habitual derby hat, gray gloves and ever-fresh boutonniere, a hide-bound Wall Street

Tory. It is evidence of the largeness of spirit of both men that, working honestly if not amicably at first, they learned to respect one another, then became close friends. Lynn would be a significant investor in the Cape Mount County oil palm venture which Sherman launched long after he had fallen from grace and power. (Lynn also was a generous but anonymous donor to many good Liberian works, often scholarships in the guise of "loans" whose full amount was often unexpectedly returned to the "borrower" when the final installment note was paid. One such borrower was later dean of the law school at the University of Liberia.)

The concession revision, known as the "Collateral Agreement of 1953", was a major milestone in the Open Door Policy, establishing practices, such as profit participation by Liberia ranging up to 50% and membership on the Board of Directors, of which all subsequent investors would have to take account. The Collateral Agreement has been minutely dissected by numerous thinkers, usually more interested in how it might have been done better than in how extraordinary it was in the context of Africa, or, indeed, of foreign investment in general, in 1953. There is no reason to debate the details here, although they were debatable both at the time and later. Suffice it to say that the revision was of key importance to Liberian economic development, if only because prospective investors always wanted the best terms any previous investor had gotten, regardless of how circumstances had changed; consequently, improving the LMC concession was, in effect, improving all subsequent ones. Credit (or blame, to those of such mind) for this pioneering step goes to Charles Sherman, who spearheaded the push for it, and to Christie, whose willingness to accept change almost cost him the presidency of LMC.

As was perhaps inevitable in view of the amount of money involved, the concession revision negotiations created tensions which Christie knew could not be allowed to grow. He decided to put an end to them before irreparable damage was done to relations with Liberia. In the spring of 1952, he visited the U.S. State Department, which was watching nervously as the mood surrounding LMC began to sour, and I well remember what he said then: "I'm going out to renegotiate our concession. When Firestone leaves, Liberia will have a rubber plantation. When we leave, it will have a hole in the ground. We've got to do more for Liberia than Firestone." What he didn't say was that he was making this move without prior agreement with LMC's Board of Directors or its majority shareholder, Republic Steel.

A lone wolf, never much limited by articles of incorporation or by-laws, Christie probably didn't foresee how violent the reaction to his initiative would be. Republic was seized with righteous outrage, and not least its iron-fisted Chairman, Charlie White, whose people had already found fault with Christie's rather free-flowing management style. White and Republic decided that Christie would have to be dismissed as President. First, however, they had to face up to

a different consequence of the new agreement: the presence of Liberians on the Board of Directors, believed to be the first for any such company in Africa south of the Sahara. The three whom President Tubman had named were Secretary of the Treasury Wm. E. Dennis, Attorney General C. Abayomi Cassell, and Liberian Ambassador to the U.S. Clarence L. Simpson.

The story of the first meeting of the Board attended by these three was often told with great relish and, perhaps some embellishment, by the participants, who savored its high drama. Based on many hearings from all three, the following is offered as the most accurate version at hand:

The evening before the meeting was to be held in New York, Charlie White invited the Liberian Directors to dine at his suite in the Waldorf Astoria Towers. A heated argument raged throughout the evening. Christie's flouting of common corporate practice was examined, along with his various other failings, real and imagined, serious and frivolous. The Liberians insisted that regardless of any other shortcomings, Christie had done the judicious, indeed the only, thing LMC could do in view of the changes in the company's prospects since the original concession was signed. Around two o'clock in the morning, White, exasperated and tired of talk, bellowed, "Well, I'm sorry you feel that way, but we are going to get rid of Christie. We own the stock!" Cassell is said to have answered, "We're sorry you feel that way, Mr. White, but you are not. We own the land!" The group broke up, Christie's future undecided.

#### **Liberian Directors Save Christie from Dismissal**

The next day, at the Board meeting at the Cloud Club on the 63rd floor of the Chrysler building, the deadlock continued through the morning session. In the men's room during a rest break, Dennis and White found themselves side by side at the club's unique urinals above which ran windows with awe-inspiring views of upper Manhattan. There, Dennis proposed and White accepted a compromise which the Board readily adopted: Christie would retain the title of President, along with responsibility for relations with Liberia and the sales of ore; Republic would have full control over all operational and financial matters.

It was a bitter pill for Christie. Republic quickly replaced with its own people the team, mainly Dutch, recruited by Muller, which had worked loyally to bring the mine into production on time and at a record-breaking low cost. More lastingly, he was no longer in charge at Bomi; he became a guest in his own house. For years he awaited the chance to prove that he was as "good an operator" as those who had pushed him from authority.

#### **Muller Sells Its Shares**

Some time during this stressful period, the head of Wm H. Muller & Co., A.F. Lodeizen, a distant and somber figure, went to New York to discuss LMC

with Christie. The meeting left a bitter heritage for reasons which neither man ever wished to dwell on. Not long after the meeting, in June, 1952, Muller sold 1,148 LMC shares to Republic Steel for \$197,456. (At the same time, former General Manager van der Velde sold Republic his 320 shares for a bit more than \$55,000). In October, Muller was offered \$840,000 by stock brokers Model, Roland and Stone (MRS) for its remaining 40,000 shares, which Muller accepted after Republic failed to exercise its right of first refusal. The reason given for this sale—in addition to a profit of over \$510,000—was that the Muller office in New York needed new capital which Holland's post-war currency controls prevented the parent company from providing. Some familiar with Muller's activities believe the restrictions could have been overcome and that Lodeizen's strained relations with Christie were the real reason. Christie inspired no tepid or ephemeral emotions.

Model, Roland and Stone, LMC's new shareholder, was a smallish firm founded by Leo Model, who had twice fled the Nazis, first to Holland in 1936, then, in 1941, to New York where he maintained many Dutch contacts and came to have interests in several mining ventures. In MRS, LMC got an investor with no other interest in Liberia but with knowledge of mining company practices in other parts of the world. Thus, LMC reaction to demands from Liberia, made usually in the name of "good will" or "changing times," for benefits not required by law or by LMC's agreements had to reflect a new dimension, commonly ignored by the company's critics: director responsibility toward shareholders not otherwise concerned with Liberia.

As LMC entered a new and unprecedentedly profitable era, its ownership was distributed as follows:

Republic Steel	64.78%
Christie	17.777%
Model, Roland & Stone	8.746%
Liberia Company	6.94%
Others	1.758%

In the eight years that Christie had striven to persuade steel companies, investors and bankers in Europe and the U.S. about Bomi Hills, he had publicized Tubman's Open Door as no government campaign could have. Now, LMC's striking prospects aroused the lively interest of a wide range of prospective investors: In 1953, an agreement was signed which led to Africa's largest iron ore development in the Nimba Mountains by the Liberian American-Swedish Minerals Company (LAMCO); in 1957, the German steel industry began the explorations that would bring Bong Mining Company into being. In 1952, there were the Munnariz Industrial Works and other investments from Spain, and, from the U.S., an overpowering combination of mechanical genius and evangelist named R.G. Letourneau, always flanked in airplane or board

room by a seat reserved for his “partner”, God. The next year, it was the African Fruit Company from Germany. In 1954, the efforts of two Liberian rubber farmers, George A. Padmore and Harry Morris, whom President Tubman had sent to an international rubber conference in pursuit of new investment and, more to the point, of competition for Firestone, resulted in the B.F. Goodrich rubber plantation agreement, signed under Judge Schoenrich’s wise and mellow guidance. These were the early-comers; after 1955, the pace quickened annually.

Votaries of the “Growth without Development” doctrine of Liberian economic development have been so transfixed by the inadequacies of policy, people and nation that they have either not seen or have been unwilling to acknowledge that Liberia had entered its busiest and most prosperous period. Hidden today under layers of statistics about how imperfect it all was there is a time of great exhilaration, hard to recreate at this remove: Government income more than tripled from under \$9 million in 1952, when LMC made its first royalty payments, to over \$32 million only eight years later. From 1950 to 1965, over 3,500 miles of all-weather roads were pushed into isolated areas and school enrollment grew from 20,000 to over 95,000. Thousands of new jobs were created and countless new small businesses formed. Electric power and running water reached scores of thousands, as did clinics, hospitals, shops—and courts and jails. Looking back, it is easy to see how many were left out. At the time, however, even those who didn’t actually enjoy the changes knew of them and could still believe that everyone would somehow be included, if not this year, then the next—if not them, then their children. Of course, things could have been done better, and should have been. But Liberia has never known better times.

Like Liberia, Christie’s life was transformed by the wealth which flowed out of those years of risk, uncertainty and disappointment. Soon he was active in American politics and African affairs, week-ending with royalty, moving with the powerful—and the simply enjoyable—of three continents, and engaging in a studiously aggressive accumulation of rare things once owned by the Tsars of Russia and the Founding Fathers of America which gave him the dual gratification of pursuing as well as possessing.

But he wasn’t done with Liberian iron ore. Before the end of the ‘50s, he set out to reshape the way Liberian mineral resources were developed by personally financing the distribution of ownership to the Liberian people.

\* Part I in a series on American entrepreneurs and Liberia in the post World War II period.

The Editor

**'Two hippos cannot live in one river': Zo Musa, Foningama,  
and the Founding of Musadu in the  
Oral Traditions of the Konyaka<sup>1</sup>**

Tim Geysbeek  
Jobba K. Kamara

The object of this paper is to introduce readers to a body of oral traditions that has received little attention in historical, anthropological and folklore studies.<sup>2</sup> The traditions, that the Konyaka/Manding<sup>3</sup> from southeast Guinea narrate, explain how the ancient town of Musadu<sup>4</sup> was founded. (Sources that provide direct information about topic appear in numbers enclosed in brackets—see Appendix A). The Konyaka generally agree that Musadu was established by a Kpelle slave named Zo Musa who built a small 'fishing booth' near a creek, and that Musadu grew in size as others moved to the area. Zo Musa emerged as a leader in Musadu, but fled after the Manding forced him out of town. Some sources claim that the Kamara ancestor, Foningama was involved in this incident, and one informant used the proverb 'Two hippos cannot live in one river' to symbolize the conflict that transpired between Zo Musa and Foningama [13]. After Foningama became chief, all of his sons (or grandsons) left and settled in the regions that surround Musadu.

This story is a "cultural document" that transmits a wide range of information about moral values, social relationships, religious prestige and political power (see Feierman 1974:3). Many Kamara regard Foningama as a "culture hero:" boys are told that they can grow up to be like Foningama if they behave correctly, and men can be called Foningama if they earn good reputations (see Johnson 1986:41-45). The name Foningama itself is the same as the famous 13th-century Manding ancestor Fran Kamara who served as an ally of Sundiata (Massing 1985:42).<sup>5</sup> Kjell Zetterström claims that Zo Musa is "widely known" in the regions that encompass N'Zerekore (1976:18), and Zo Musa may be as significant to some Southwestern and Eastern Mande as Foningama is to the Konyaka.<sup>6</sup>

Musadu is set in the Konyan (Map 1).<sup>7</sup> The Konyan is located on a plateau that is surrounded by mountains in a lightly wooded region of the savannah, and it encompasses or is situated near the sources of the St. Paul/Diani, Lofa, Milo and Dion rivers. The region provides a suitable environment for farming and grazing, and was strategic in the past for facilitating migration, trade and communication to the coast and the trans-saharan trade routes of the north (Person 1979:260 and Brooks 1985:107).

Prior to Foningama's migration to the Konyan in the 15th century (Person 1984:312, 317), the Konyan was populated by the Kono and Kpelle; ancestors of the Loma, Gio and Mano; small groups of autochthones (Person 1961:47–51, d'Azevedo 1962b:535 and Zetterstrom 1976:14–16); and the Kromah, Könde (Kone) and Konaté who had immigrated to the region after the Mali empire was established, primarily during the 14th century (Hopewell 1958:30–32, Person 1964:325–327 and 1968b:50, 74). The Donzo (Fofana) and Soumaourou (Sumawolo) reportedly began to settle in the Konyan during the 15th century, along with more Islamicized clans such as the Bility (Berete), Dole, Dukuley, Kaba, Kamara, Kante (Konate), Sano, Sayon, Silla, Sise, Sherif, Swaray and Toure (Person 1968a:106–110 and 1968b:98, 125, 224, see Episode 11 and note 52). The Kamara gained control of the Konyan by the late 15th century and seem to have played a leading role in the early phases of the Mane "invasions" (Person 1964: 326). The Dole, Bility and Kromah eventually supplanted the Kamara as the political elite in the Konyan as the latter migrated towards northwest Liberia (Person 1973:271).

The Zo Musa and Foningama related episodes can respectively be linked with the Manding clans who settled in the Konyan during the 14th and 15th centuries. This chronological ordering is reflected in part by the fact that griots merged the two accounts over time (Robinson 1989). Consequently, one will notice many places throughout the epic where narrators link Zo Musa and Foningama. The positioning of 'two hippos' against each other in Musadu is one such example.

### Liberian Images of Musadu

As the Manding forged commercial and political ties with the "Americo-Liberian" community in Monrovia during the early 19th century, they described Musadu as a "very large and populous town" that had "numerous horses, asses, cattle, gold, silver, and ivory" ("Latest from Liberia" 1858:130 and Gibson 1869:135).<sup>8</sup> Musadu was dubbed the "capital of the Mandingo" ("Latest from Liberia" 1858:129–131 and ANNUAL REPORT 1859:44–45), and the government not surprisingly encouraged or sponsored three expeditions to Musadu. The first was commanded by George Seymour and Samuel Ash in 1858. President Benson kept track of their movements as Manding "itinerants" brought news of their travels to Monrovia, but the explorers only reached Kouankan, a town said to be a three day journey from their destination ("Latest from Liberia" 1858:129 and ANNUAL REPORT 1859:26). In 1868 and 1874 Benjamin K. Anderson led the only expeditions that reached Musadu. Anderson's description of Musadu's great wall, healthy environment, ancient traditions, access to gold and impressive calvary remained vivid in the minds of many Liberians for years to come (Anderson 1870/1971:88–105 and 1912/1971:35–36),<sup>9</sup> but these memories diminished by the end of the century as the govern-



ment began to deal with a series of domestic and foreign problems.<sup>10</sup> The latter included strained relations with the French, who occupied the Konyan in 1899. French politicians partially justified their presence in the Konyan by arguing that Anderson fabricated his whole story about going to Musadu, and the Liberian government relinquished its claims to the Konyan in 1910 (Fisher 1971:vi-vii and Germain 1984:123-124).

Since Anderson's time, so little has been written about Musadu that some scholars still discuss its whereabouts (see Zetterstrom 1976:17 and Duignan & Gann 1984:392).<sup>11</sup> Questions of Musadu's location reflect the sparse historical information that researchers have been able to gather. Anderson, for instance, lamented that the "Mandingo" were "sadly careless" about keeping a record of Musadu's age (1870/1971:104), and Humphrey Fisher one century later was prevented from visiting Musadu after he waited for several months just to enter Guinea (see Fisher 1971:vii). However, despite the relative ill fortune of those who have sought to learn about Musadu's history in the past, we have recently collected some written [3, 7, 30, 41] and oral materials [8-20] that provide new information about Musadu.

### Sources

All of the Manding sources post-date the early 1940s except for two collected in the mid-19th [1] and early 20th century [2]. Apart from the traditions that Martin Ford [8-9],<sup>12</sup> Tim Geysbeek [10-16, 51], Jobba K. Kamara [17, 18] and Jomah B. Kamara [19, 20] recorded during the mid-1980s, all of the information comes from an explorer, a missionary and a local historian—Benjamin K. Anderson [1], Pere Bouyassou [2]<sup>13</sup> and Daouda Camara [7]; two western historians—Yves Person [4] and Humphrey Fisher [5-6]; and one or more French administrators who wrote the "Monographie de la . . . Beyla" during or after 1942 [3].<sup>14</sup> The Vai [22-29],<sup>15</sup> Loma [30-42, 50],<sup>16</sup> Kpelle [43], Mano [44-46], Gio [47], Gola [48] and Kono [49] also mention Musadu and Zo Musa or Foningama in their traditions.

The French administrators [3] and Fisher [5-6] provided the most complete descriptions about Musadu's founding until the most recent histories were collected. Mammadi Dole [8], Sumawolo [9], Yaya Dole [10/19e], Vafin Sumawolo [16], Kèwulèn Kamara [17a] and Vase Kamara's traditions [13/18] are the most descriptive of the later. Vase Kamara in particular provides extraordinarily rich details about some of the people, places and events in the story. While Vase Kamara is not a "griot" or "jèli,"<sup>17</sup> both of his histories that we have gathered can be defined as "epics" because they contain the formulas, episodes, music, length, heroic and legendary traits, and information about culture and social relations that are characteristic of Mande epics (Johnson 1986:30-57).

In addition, the “*Monographie de la . . . Beyla*” [3] and the interviews that di Dole [8], Yaya Dole [10], Vase Kamara [13/18] and the elders in Musadu [19a-e] seem to represent “official” versions of the story. Deviating from these are the “informal” or “separate traditions” that Vafin Sumawolo [16], Kèwulèn Kamara [17a], the non-Manding and most of the Liberian Manding narrated. The latter belong to ethnic groups, lineages, clans or towns not as closely associated with Foningama or Musadu. They sometimes disagree with the more “official” accounts, and thus have the potential to render more information that can be used for historical reasons (see Feierman 1974:9-10).

In spite of the many cases in Africa where the writings of educators, missionaries, travelers, scholars and local historians have been incorporated into oral traditions, little “feedback” from written materials has influenced the Manding sources (see Henige 1982:71-85). This tendency was reinforced in the quarter-century following the early 1960s when only a few westerners were allowed to enter Guinea. Among the Manding elders from whom most of the traditions probably originate, French, Arabic, Manding written in Arabic script and the script (N’Go) was probably not used widely enough to facilitate feedback on a broad basis. Vase Kamara is literate, and this may be one reason why his accounts are more detailed than the others, but most of his information was probably collected from oral rather than written sources. Some Manding have had access to the “*Monographie de la . . . Beyla*” [3] and Dyigiba Kamara’s manuscript (n. d., see Person 1979:276), so some of the information from these works may be included in certain oral histories (see note 20). Certain Manding must have copies of Yves Person’s publications, but the distribution of his material is probably limited, and Person published relatively little about this topic when compared with other sources that appeared prior to the 1980s. One clear example of feedback is the Kamara genealogy [7] that may have been taken from Dyigiba Kamara’s manuscript (n. d.) (Kamara 1989). Mohammad Kromah helped collect a number of the interviews [10-12, 14, 16]—some of his information is identical to theirs, but much of his material is also original [51]. The question of feedback as it relates to these sources needs to be carefully examined in the future.

### Organization of the Sources

The data in the oral traditions is presented in a number of Appendices, Tables and Maps, and a description of the epic in narrative form. We have divided the epic into three major parts, and these are sub-divided into twenty-one episodes (Table A). A number of miscellaneous episodes are given as well. An episode is a separate “narrative unit” or “mini-tale” that marks a “new development in the plot” of a story and often moves from one geographic location to another.<sup>18</sup> The first section tells about Foningama’s life prior to his

**Table A—EPISODES IN THE MUSADU EPIC**

THE KAMARA & FONINGAMA BEFORE MUSADU	ZO MUSA IN MUSADU	FONINGAMA IN MUSADU
1) Early History	12) Musadu Founded	19) 'Foningama's Sacrifice'
2) Foningama Leaves J mu	13) Zo Musa's Talisman	20) Laws, Execution & another Sacrifice
3) Jèli helps Foningama	14) Conflict Between Zo Musa	21) The 'Division' of Foningama's Sons
4) The Kamara Arrive in Solona & Musadu/Foningama	15) Zo Musa's Curse and the Poro Society	
5) Morikana Comes to Gb Region	16) Zo Musa Preparing to Leave	
6) Morikana Blesses the Kamara	17) Journey South	
7) Morikana & the Palm Nut	18) Zo Musa in Zoeta	
8) Morikana & Bayoh Settle		
9) Foningama Leaves Mau		
10) Foningama Rescued in Solona		
11) Foningama Arrives in Musadu		

arrival in Musadu; the second reveals how Zo Musa founded Musadu and then moved south; and the third discusses various incidents that occurred in Musadu after Foningama moved to the Konyan.

The Manding do not cognitively separate the traditions into this many episodes, but because this structure generally fits Vase Kamara's narratives and is a convenient way to categorize most of the information, we have chosen to model the body of this paper along Vase Kamara's work. Most of the sources only include elements or complete accounts of one to a half-dozen episodes, and some randomly insert information that has little significance unless compared with other sources. In formatting the information in this way our intent is not to provide a generic Konyaka version or "minimal core narrative" of how Musadu was founded. Such an approach would minimize the "variation" in the accounts, and represent "a kind of historical lowest common denominator" that is not conducive for studying history (Miller 1980:19-20, see Johnson 1986:63).

### **The Kamara and Foningama before Musadu**

The first section identifies the origin of the Kamara, describes how a marabout named Kalamöö Morikana helped the Kamara become prosperous in Solona, and tells how the leaders in Jému and Solona tried to kill Foningama (see Table B and Appendices C. 1-4).

### **Episode #1 The Kamara Migraion to Mau**

Most of the sources claim that Foningama or the Kamara came from or passed through Sibi,<sup>19</sup> and Vase Kamara states that Foningama was a fifth generation descendant of Kaman Kamara/Kamanjan who helped Sundiata establish the Mali empire [13/18]. The three most detailed Sibi traditions state that the Kamara moved from Sibi to Farinkamaya near Siguiri before they migrated to Solona (Mau) and Musadu. Of these, the French writers [3] and

Daouda Camara [7] state that a Dioman Camara<sup>20</sup> from F                      ya moved to Mau where Foningama was later born [3, 7], and Vase Kamara claims that Foningama's ancestors moved from Sibi to Kouroussa and then on to Jému where Foningama was born [18].

The Loma historian Paul Korvah explained that Foningama, "a son of the King of Mali," was exiled from his homeland in the 15th century after his brother Sogaini successfully defeated him for the throne [33b]. Korvah later added that Foningama moved south because a drought had ruined farming conditions in Mali [41]. A variant tradition claims that Foningama was a son of Mali's King Musa [Zo Musa or Mansa Musa?] who fled to Musadu after he was defeated in battle [42].

### Episode #2 Foningama Emerges and Flees from Jému

Apart from migration histories that mention Foningama,<sup>21</sup> Vase Kamara is the only informant to give detailed information about Foningama's youth. According to Vase, Foningama grew up in Jému.<sup>22</sup> Foningama's father was Sumaka,<sup>23</sup> and his mother was Makula Damah Soba, a daughter of the Kromah who lived near Musadu. Two of Makula's sons in order of birth were Konsaba<sup>24</sup> and Foningama [3, 4, 7, 13/18, 16].

Foningama married a Touré [18] or Talawole [13], and she gave birth to his first son Fén Jalla.<sup>25</sup> The elders in Jému plotted to kill Foningama because they felt that he might lead the people in rebellion against their authority. They invited Foningama to a meeting where they asked him to sit on a chair. The chair was placed on a skin that covered a hole filled with sharp objects. Foningama avoided falling into the hole, but in the process of doing so dropped his bracelet [13], gold ring and a special *Diomande fula* (Diomande/Kamara 'hat') [13/18]. The 'Kamara hat' was a highly coveted item that symbolized power and authority in his family.<sup>26</sup> Before Foningama left Jému, he told his wife to give the hat to Fén Jalla when he became an adult, and then send Fén Jalla to rejoin him [18].

### Episode #3 Jèli Helps Foningama

After Foningama left Jému, he met a jèli named Nakumala Konate [18] or Kuyateh [13]<sup>27, 28</sup> who told Foningama how the elders in Jému had tried to kill him. Foningama accepted the jèli's offer to stay in Mau with the jèli's six children. Upon reaching Mau someone mixed blood from the hands of the jèli's children and Foningama. This formed the basis for an alliance that made the jèli's family (the Kuyateh) and Foningama (the Kamara) become 'one' [18].

#### Episode #4 The Kamara Move to Solona (Gbé/Mau)

The next part of the tradition shifts to a description of Sumaka and Konsaba's experiences in Solona.<sup>29</sup> Two sources state that Foningama's brother Konsaba was born in Gbé [17a] or the place with the 'open hill' [9]; and a third says that Konsaba founded the village of Gbeesoba ('big town Gbe') near a hill with two heads, along with Foningama, his older brother Konsakourou, and Soumata Camara [3] (note 23). According to Vase Kamara, Sumaka left Jému with his wife and children, but was told before the journey began that he would prosper only if he settled near a hill with two heads [13/18].<sup>30</sup> Sumaka and Konsaba settled by a two-headed hill called Gbèsaysayn [18] located near the town of Solona where the Kpelle 'worshipped' mountains [13/18].

Vase Kamara gives two different accounts about the events that took place when the Kamara encountered the Kpelle. In his second version, Konsaba reached the Kpelle at night and made the town crier tell the people that anyone who failed to greet 'the chief' (Konsaba or Sumaka?) would be killed. The Kamara frightened the Kpelle so badly that the Kpelle eventually left [18].<sup>31</sup> Vase did not mention a confrontation in his first version or say that the Kamara forced the Kpelle to leave. Rather, he said that Sumaka and Konsaba sacrificed a cow and gave it to the Kpelle so the latter could help them [13].

#### Episodes #5-8 The Kamara Blessed by Kalamöö Morikana (Sumawolo)<sup>32</sup>

Episodes five through eight tell how a Muslim cleric named Kalamöö Morikana helped Konsaba and Sumaka become prosperous in Solona. After their encounter with the Kpelle in the above episode, Konsaba consulted a local marabout. The marabout admitted that the request was 'too big' for him,<sup>33</sup> so he put a 'talisman' or 'charm' in the mouth of a fish and sent the fish to Kalamöö Morikana in Tumotu (Mali?) asking for help. Upon receiving the message, the *kalamöö* or 'teacher' left on a nine-month journey with Vamisa Bayoh and went to Solona. When they arrived, Konsaba brought Kalamöö Morikana a 'light skinned girl, a red pan and gold,' and the earth 'swallowed' these objects. However, the town's residents, in opposition to Konsaba's plea, complained that the marabout made the sacrifice without fulfilling his promise to make them prosperous. *Kalamöö* Morikana made them reappear to demonstrate his power, but said that their prosperity would be diminished because they did not trust him [13/18].

In return for *Kalamöö* Morikana's work Konsaba gave the *kalamöö* and his companion all of the men, horses, cows, food and other goods that were present in the market. When Konsaba escorted them out of town, *Kalamöö* Morikana gave Konsaba a palm nut. Konsaba grew a number of palm trees and took some of the seeds to Foningama in Musadu. Foningama grew some trees, and birds

took the palm nuts and scattered them into the regions that now include southeast Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone [13/18].<sup>34</sup>

After Kalamöö Morikana and Vamisa Bayoh left Solona, they divided the land that they were given and respectively founded the towns of Feletula/Faylay Sula and Krobalo/Koroba [13/18].

### **Episodes #9-10 The Kromah Rescue Foningama**

The next three episodes shift to Foningama's confrontation with his brother Konsaba in Solona and subsequent journey to Musadu. According to Vase Kamara, Foningama remained in Mau with Nakumala Kuyateh during Kalamöö Morikana's encounter with Sumaka and Konsaba. Meanwhile, the Kromah family in Musadu had learned that Foningama would become the chief of Musadu and that everyone would prosper as a result of his rule [13]. They were also informed that Foningama's life would be threatened [13/18]. The clan head of the Kromah was Fakoli who lived in Dagbanor. Fakoli's daughter Makula Damah Soba was Sumaka's wife and Foningama's mother, and two of his sons were Tumani Kèmè/Tumanningèmè and Fènyabu [13]. The necessity of bringing Foningama to Musadu was increased by the disorder that Zo Musa's talisman was creating in Musadu. During the course of a discussion about Foningama, Tumanningèmè said that 'the one we have here [Zo Musa] is now troubling us. You know, two hippos cannot live in one river' [13]. The Kromah sent Fènyabu to escort Foningama to Musadu. Fènyabu went to Mau, the people for taking care of Foningama, and took Foningama and his jèli to Konsaba [13/18].

Konsaba greeted Foningama politely, but tried to coerce him into leaving by having a \_\_\_\_\_, who was hidden in a hole in the ground, signal during a town meeting that Foningama would become prosperous if he moved to Musadu. Konsaba then attempted to cover his plan by plotting to have a 'devil' kill Foningama and his companions, but an old woman warned them of the plot, and the party of three fled to Musadu [13/18].<sup>35</sup> Konsaba wanted to kill Foningama, not only because he feared his strength, but also because he was jealous of Foningama's popularity and position in the family [3, 13/18, (49)]. Sumaka had decided that Foningama would follow in his 'footsteps,' so had secretly given the \_\_\_\_\_ hat' to Makula, and told her to give the hat to Foningama when he grew older [13].

### **Episode #11 Foningama Arrives in Musadu**

Most sources state that Foningama encountered no resistance when he went to Musadu. Kèwulèn Kamara notes that Foningama went to Musadu with the five marabouts who blessed him [17a] (episode 19 and note 67), and Vase Kamara says that Fènyabu took Foningama and his jèli to Musadu after they fled

from Solona. Upon reaching Musadu, Fènyabu introduced Foningama to Tumaningèmè [13], and Tumaningèmè asked the local Muslim diviners from the Dolleh, Swaray, Dukuley, Konneh, Toure and Sherrif clans to help Foningama [13/18]. The diviners agreed only after they learned that Foningama had a "greater star" than Zo Musa [13]. The "Monographie de la ... Beyla" similarly states that Foningama left Konsaba and went to Tumaningèmè who lived near Wanino(r) [3]. Humphrey Fisher was told that Filali/Fodey al-Hajj Kenneh, Filimamudolay (Filimamu Dolleh) and another chief accompanied Foningama to Musadu, or that these men already lived in Musadu when he arrived [5]. Senesee Kromah claims that Zo Musa welcomed Foningama and those who accompanied him—Fakoli Kromah and Fillimo Totte (Filimo Dolle?) [27], and Mohammad Kromah noted that Fakoli Kromah escorted Foningama from Badoula to Musadu [51].

Two Manding sources contend that Foningama's journey to Musadu involved a struggle: Sumawolo tells how two groups of twelve people each fought for Foningama and his friend Karamöö Sahyon as they approached Musadu [9], and Yves Person claims that Foningama used a cavalry to invade the Konyan [4:912].<sup>36</sup> Two Loma claim that Foningama was a warrior [34, 41], and one of these said that he moved to Musadu with a "great band" of people [41].

### Zo Musa in Musadu

Vase Kamara's history of Musadu moves in location and subject from the events that took place in Gbè to seven episodes that explain how Zo Musa founded Musadu and later fled south (Table C). Briefly summarized, most Konyaka agree that Musa was a Kpelle slave who obtained permission from his Manding owner to build a small house by a river so he could have a place to stay when he went fishing. Many people began to settle near Musa, thus explaining how Musadu was founded. Zo Musa later obtained a charm which swallowed babies and terrorized Musadu's residents, so another charm was made that destroyed Zo Musa's. Afterwards, Zo Musa left the area and moved south.

Most Manding claim that Zo Musa was Kpelle [2, 5, 6, 9, 10, 13/18, 19d, 19e, 35], but one contends that he was Manding [8]. The Kpelle [43], Gola [48] and two of the Mano accounts [44, 46] respectively state that Zo Musa was Kpelle, Gola and Mano. The other Mano tradition questions whether Zo Musa was Mano or Manding [45], and the Kono believe that he was Manding [49]. Some claim that Zo Musa was raised with his grandparents in Sanyola/Saniola in Gbana-Yargbèla, and that he moved to Waani (=Waninor?) [13] or Biyööla [10] after he became a slave. Zo Musa is variously described as a diviner [5, 8, 9, 27, 33, 43, 49], slave [10, 13/18, 16, 19a, 19b, 19e], chief [5, 6, 33/41, 48], fisherman [8, 13/18, 19, ] and/or resident of Musadu [2].

Of those who claim that Zo Musa was a slave,<sup>37</sup> Vafin Sumawolo said that he acquired this status after he was 'arrested and held captive' [16]. Yaya Dole notes that he was enslaved with Zo Jala and a Loma man named Juufa Köni in Biyööi before he moved to Musadu [19e].<sup>38</sup> Four say that his master was Tumaningèmè Kromah [10, 19a, 19c, 19d], and one states that his owner was Kalamöö Moikolo Swaray from Waani [18]. Two informants claimed that Tumaningèmè lived either in Giakolo [13] or near Wanino(r) [3]. In contrast to these references about Zo Musa's slave status, none of the early Manding [2, 3], Liberian Manding [5, 6, 8, 9], Vai [27] or non-Manding traditions say that Zo Musa was a slave.

Seven of eleven sources say that Zo Musa's last name was "Koma" [2, 5, 13] or a variation—"Köma" [16, 19d], "Komah" [18] or "Coma" [43].<sup>39</sup> Jacques Germain said that Zo Musa's brother's last name was "Koro" ("Kolo") [43], and Holas and Zetterstrom gave the same last name for Zo Musa in their Kono [49] and Mano accounts [45]. The French monograph reported that he was a "Kone" [3].

### Episodes #12 Zo Musa Founds Musadu

Many traditionists state that Zo Musa founded Musadu [8, 10/19e, 13/18, 16, 19a, 19d, 19e, 33/41, 44, 46, 48], and a Manding from Lofa County said that Musadu 'could have been a Kpelle settlement named by the founder after his son Musa' [35]. The Vai [27], Kono [49] and six Manding sources [5, 6, 8, 16, 17a, 51] simply state that Zo Musa was a prominent person who lived in Musadu. Bouyassou said that Zo Musa was exiled from Musadu [2], and the French just mentioned that he was an "authocone" or 'host' (note 53) [3]. Mohammad Kromah wrote that Fakoli Kromah founded Musadu [51], and Bouyassou [2] and Person (1970:284) wrote that Foningama founded Musadu.

Bangali Queche's account that follows is typical of the way that the Konyaka describe how Musadu was established [(8), 13/18, 19e]:

*Question:* How was Musadu founded?

*Answer:* According to what the old people told me, the founders are the Kromahs.

*Question:* Where did the Kromahs come from who settled here?

*Answer:* I do not know where they came from, but that is where they came to settle (Bangali pointed to a section of the forest outside Musadu).<sup>40</sup> The man had a slave whose name was Musa. Musa used to leave the jungle and go fishing every day. There came a time when he asked his slave master if he could build a fishing booth by the place where he fished.<sup>41</sup> He would stay for a week or so and then bring back all the fish to his master in the daytime. So his master let him do that.



There was a time when the Fulani<sup>42</sup> would come around and they would sleep at Musa's place—Musa's town.

*Question:* Where did these Fula come from?

*Answer:* The Fula came from Giaso, and they were always on their way to Jökodu for marketing.

This slave master's name was T                    g Gèmè. He was a Kromah but was called T                    g Gèmè. Then his wife said, "Husband, you can see Musa is getting popular and his place is well loved by the people and we own him. Why is he more popular than we are? We have to go where he lives. "

That is how the town got its name—"I am going to sleep in Musa's town"<sup>43</sup> [19a].

Yaya Dole [10] and Vase Kamara [13] made a distinction between the 'founder' of Musadu, Zo Musa, and the 'owner, ' Musa's master. Dole added —

The Kromahs were said to be the owners of the town. If anything has to be done, they are the first to be consulted before us [the Doles]. In Koniya, whenever the first respect is given to the Kromahs, the second is given to us.

Finally, Sokomo Kromah made an interesting comment about the early history of Musadu that deserves further study:

Misadu was in the first place called Nèlèkölönoinö. Even right now it is in this Nèlèkölönoinö where T                    gèmè's grave is located. I don't know where it is, but my father told me that this is where it is, and I believe that the grave is there [19c].

Sokomo Kromah intimates that the physical location of "Musadu" has changed one or more times in the past, and that Musadu has been known by different names. This lends some support to George Brooks's hypothesis that Musadu functioned as a Mande commercial center prior to the time that the Manding migrated to the region (1985:101). Following this argument, "Musadu's" founding pre-dates Zo Musa. The possibility however cannot be discounted that Zo Musa was the first (or one of the first) to build on the cité where Musadu is now located—as many traditionists claim, or that the town's name was changed to Musadu after Zo Musa became important.

### Episodes #13-14 Zo Musa's Talisman and Defeat

The next two episodes tell how Zo Musa's safè or charm<sup>44</sup> Musadu's residents and was destroyed. Many sources [8, 9, 13/18, 17, 51] agree with Yaya Dole's characterization of these episodes, but some important differences exist as well that are elaborated upon below.

Zo Musa's safe used to do a lot of damage in the town.

In the olden days people used to bathe their children and place them in fanners. This safe used to kill them.<sup>45</sup>

Ancestor Flaymö Dole sent someone to Moikölö with the following message, "The man whose town we have come to has a talisman that is doing lots of things here. Please come help us."

Moikölö, for his part, sent his assistant Jawè Kènnèh.<sup>46</sup> When Jawè came, he wrote a talisman [and] tied it to the throat of a toad. The toad was placed on the usual path of this safe. When the safe took this toad, it burst or exploded.<sup>47</sup>

When that happened, Zo Musa decided to leave the town [10].

Yaya Dole [10], Mohammad Kromah [51], and some of Fisher's informants [5] claim that Foningama helped destroy Zo Musa's talisman. Vase Kamara says that Foningama arrived in Musadu while the incident transpired, but does not say that Foningama helped eliminate the talisman [13/18].

Two themes crosscut this episode that must be discussed. The first concerns the ways that Zo Musa is depicted in the accounts. The Konyaka generally insinuate that Zo Musa is the villain of the story, but two Liberian Manding and all of the non-Manding seemingly disagree. Mammadi Oole reported that Foningama was the 'bad' chief, and that it was Foningama's talisman rather than Zo Musa's that 'swallowed' the children [8]. Dole also said that Zo Musa helped defeat Foningama's talisman, but that he finally had to flee because he feared that Foningama would kill him. Judge Tulay, another Manding from Liberia, claimed that Zo Musa asked a cleric to help him defeat "another Kpelle branch" [6].<sup>48</sup> Gola traditions identify Musa as the ancestral head of the Gola who lived in Musadu. The Gola later migrated to northwest Liberia after the "Mandingo" pressured them to leave [48].<sup>49</sup> The Kono say that Zo Musa left because he had a quarrel with his brothers [49], and the Kpelle associate Zo Musa with powerful charms [43]. The Mano focus more on Zo Musa's sons who are described as having migrated south because of sibling rivalry [45], their refusal to follow the Manding religion [46], or because they broke some laws [44].<sup>50</sup>

The second issue relates to the fact that many of the traditions describe the Zo Musa stories in Islamic or non-Islamic terms, at least on the surface. Three of the Liberian Manding accounts are presented in an Islamic framework. The informants in Fisher's first tradition depict Karamo Molefolay Jaro as a "Muslim cleric" who "prayed for Fangamma against the zo's. He prepared a lasmo-? from the Arabic *ism allah*, meaning 'the name of God'—which swallowed up all the juju of the zo's" [5]. In Fisher's other tradition, Zo Musa called a Muslim named Talhata to "pray for him" [6]. Martin Ford's Sumawolo identified the person who destroyed Zo Musa's talisman as a 'big Moli man' who 'wrote the Holy

Koran' on the charm that he 'put on the throat of the frog' [9]. Mohammad Kromah's description of the "molleyman's" talisman [51] is identical to Sumawolo's [9], and VaKèwulèn Kamara claims that the "moreys" were involved [17a].

Speaking from a more non-Islamic perspective, Mammadi Dole stated that the 'big-big people' who destroyed the talisman (Foningama's) were engaged in 'devil work' or 'medicine business' [8]. Other examples might include Vafin Sumawolo who said that 'diviners' made the talisman that destroyed Zo Musa's charm [16], and Yaya Dole who said that Jawè Kenneh, who is featured at the beginning of this section, was summoned because he was reputed to be able to 'perform lots of magic and miracles' [10].

Islamic and non-Islamic descriptions of these events can be interpreted in a number of ways. One is that Muslim and non-Muslim views may reflect "informal" and "official" versions of the story. Another is that some of the accounts can be interpreted either way. The fact, for instance, that Yaya Dole did not specifically identify Jawè's 'miracles' with Islam does not mean that the 'miracles' that he performed were non-Islamic [10]. The *nasi* that Vafin Sumawolo's 'diviners' used to make the above mentioned talisman can be interpreted as "Quran slate water used as medicine" (Fisher 1871:xvi) or a powerful substance that represents the "'power of darkness, a thing to be used to harm someone'" (McNaughton 1988:62). Descriptions of Zo Musa as a 'herbalist' or "local Kpelle magician and diviner" (Massing 1985:41) seem to conflict with Kpelle [43] and Kono [49] claims that marabouts helped Zo Musa make the talisman that 'swallowed' children in Musadu. Clerics however catered to Muslims as well as non-Muslims, and many of the charms that they produced had a neutral value that could be used for positive or negative purposes (Imperato 1977:63-66, 86, Brooks 1985:52-53 and McNaughton 1988:11, 48).

The ambiguous way that some of the traditions can be interpreted is also due in part to the fluid roles that many Muslim clerics assumed when they migrated to southeast Guinea during the apogee of the Mali empire. Clerics who made charms and worked as fortune tellers, healers, arbitrators and advisors became integrated into many non-Manding societies by identifying with roles that "traditional priests" held. They often functioned on the same "spiritual-cultural realm" as these "priests," and were only distinguished from the latter by their use of Islamic regalia such as Arabic writing, prayer beads, and specialized forms of divination and amulet-making. Their education often comprised little more than training in how to make "magic," and rudimentary instruction in Islamic law. Islamic scholars of a later era who practiced a more orthodox form of Islam disapproved of these "magico-religious" activities (Kaba 1976:410-411, Person 1979:260-264, Hunwick 1985:123, Levztzion 1985 and 1987:21-23, and Corby 1988:45-49).

### Episodes #15-18 Zo Musa's Response and Journey South

After the talisman was destroyed, Zo Musa cursed Musadu<sup>51</sup> saying that 'strangers'<sup>52</sup> in Musadu would always receive more honor than 'hosts.'<sup>53</sup>, <sup>54</sup> Following are the only detailed descriptions of Zo Musa's curse:

Koniya, would you make a stranger better than a host? I did every work here including the founding of the town. The Foningama who just came, would you make him better than I in the town? From now on, strangers will remain more mighty than the people living in this town [the hosts]. This new man, you have made him better than me. I am leaving and he will settle in the town [13].

Flaymö Dole, Tumani Kèmè and Foningama, God has honored a stranger more than a host. You people are the strangers and we are the citizens and you have driven us. God has given more power to the stranger than the host [10].

Later, Zo Musa acquired another talisman. From this he made some *masafing* ('masked devils')<sup>55</sup> and founded the Poro society [10, 13/18, 33] to protect himself and his followers from the Manding [18, 33]. Vase Kamara relates that Zo Musa marked his people's backs at the 'hill' or 'little bush' located one to two miles north of Musadu to preserve the distinction between the Kpelle and the Manding so that the latter would not kill the former [18]. Yaya Dole said, in accounting for the origin of the Poro, that Zo Musa and his associates 'used to mark one another's back' in this same area which he termed the 'big rock' [10].<sup>56</sup> This is probably the same 'rock' that Kèwulèn Kamara claims that Zo Musa worshiped. Kèwulèn said that this rock's name was (is?) Ngöni, and that the name Konya derives from Ngöni [17a].<sup>57</sup>

Zo Musa is variously described as having left Musadu with his wife and children [18]; his brothers [43:76]; his Kpelle and Manding friends [13]; and Zogofakoni and Fengebou [2]. He also took part of Nyamoayekaba<sup>58</sup> rock that is located near Musadu's mosque [13/18], some branches from a Baobab tree [13], and water from several creeks – Nèlèkolomakoköni [13/18],<sup>59</sup> Nyangulani [13/18], Jön [8, 10, 13/18], Kabakone [8], Gbèko [10], and Jakö [10, 13/18]/Jiakö [8].

After Zo Musa departed, he stopped at the Jön/Jöön (Dion) river that flows just south of town. This river or 'creek' was reportedly named at this time, and two versions of the same story suggest how this happened.<sup>60</sup> According to one, Zo Musa went to the river one day and 'fled' from Musadu. When he failed to return, the people went to the river and said, "'Oh, jön (the 'slave') never came back [19d]!"' Another person said that the river was named after Zo Musa's Kpelle wife whose name was Jön.<sup>61</sup> While Musa and his friends were waiting for

her by the river so they could leave, they asked, “‘Has Jön not come so we can go’” [18]?

The Manding claim that Zo Musa and his followers eventually settled in Zoeta/Zogotta [8, 10, 13/18, 15, 16, 17a] (and Map 2 and Table C). According to Vase Kamara, they headed west to Mt. Kanikokela, and then moved down to Bon/Gbolo where Zo Musa retrieved a ‘snuff can’ that he lost [13/18, also 16, 43:90]. They then went on to the Jewuula/Yelawula mountains near Boola and settled in Zoeta. Upon their arrival, Zo Musa planted the branch, rock and water that he carried from Musadu in order to make his new town look like Musadu [8, 13/18]. Yaya Dole characterized the significance of Zo Musa’s trip in the following way:

All the places that they settled before reaching Zoeta became ‘customary.’ Whenever someone from Musadu violates or commits crimes in any of those towns, nothing comes of it, only one kola nut is given as a symbol or tradition [10].

After Zo Musa settled in Zoeta, Vase Kamara claims that he ‘made a devil by following the pattern of his sheep horn’ (note 44) that could ‘dance’ better than any of the three hundred ‘devils’ in the area [13].

### Foningama in Musadu

The last part of the epic contains three episodes that tell about Foningama’s sons and his rule in Musadu (see Table D). The number of his sons differs according to ethnic group and source, varying anywhere from seven [33/41, 34, 39] and nine [30] in the Loma accounts,<sup>62</sup> to twelve [4, 20], thirteen [16], fifteen [in 13], sixteen [2, 7] and seventeen [13/18] in the Manding traditions (Table B, C.1-4).<sup>63</sup> During his time in Musadu, informants generally concur that Foningama made a sacrifice and instituted some laws, and that some of his sons were later executed for breaking one of the laws.

### Episode #19 ‘Foningama’s Sacrifice’

Some of the Manding claim that Foningama offered an important sacrifice after he became the chief of Musadu (Table E). Kèwulen Kamara [17a] and Vafin Sumawolo [16] say that Foningama made this sacrifice so that he could have more children. Sumawolo connects Foningama’s sacrifice with the ‘division’ (episode 20) when Foningama’s sons left Musadu [9]. Vase Kamara implies the latter but specifically states that Foningama made the sacrifice to bring ‘law and order’ to the region [13/18]. Most of these informants and Mohammad Kromah [51] say that Foningama sacrificed ‘one hundred items,’<sup>64</sup> and contend that the marabouts who helped Foningama had to settle in Nonsamoridu while they waited for banana seeds that Foningama promised to give them (see Appendix F/Nonsamoridu).

In the first of the four accounts that directly relate to this topic, Kèwulèn Kamara said that Foningama made a sacrifice while he lived in Gbè so he could have more children [17a]. Foningama only had one son (Konsaba)<sup>65</sup> at the time, so he asked a jèli for help. Foningama gave the jèli some meat and a hundred items, but the jèli gave ‘Foningama’s sacrifice’ to a cleric named Valaye Swaray because he could not fulfill Foningama’s request. He was said to

Table D Foningama in Musadu

Episodes	Manding				Vai	
	Vase Karama (13/18)	Yaya Dole (10)	Lei Seyon (19D) Karama (20) M. Karama (12) K. Karama (17a)	V. Sumawolo (16)	M. Kromah (51) Sumawolo (9) D. Carama (7) Yves Person (4) "Monographie" (3) Boysenose (2)	Misc. (22-24, 26)
(19) F's Sacrifice	F told to offer sacrifice so his children would prosper when they moved to other areas.		Valaye Swaray, Dukuly Binya, Mamula, Dole & 4th person in Gbè bless F so F will have children (17a).	F gives sacrifice to Jan Vale from Nyonamcorrida to have children.	F made sacrifice for children before they left M (9). F made sacrifice (51).	
(20) "Laws"	F made some laws to safeguard M's residents and market.	F made some laws.			"Laws of F" (14); market law (3, 51)	"Laws" in M.
Execution or Escape	F had four of his sons killed after they broke one of the laws.	One of his sons who violated the laws was killed.		One of F's sons became a 'victim of the law.'	Five of F's sons & F's griot were executed for committing a crime in M (3).	Son(a) of chief broke law. Son(a) (& chief) fled to the coast.
Sacrifice for M & the Karama	Another son's life was spared after the Donzo made a sacrifice.	Playzo Dofah was the first person to sacrifice a cow for M (same incident?)				
(21) 'Division'	There was a 'partition,' sons & grandsons moved to different regions.		F divided the land among his sons (for grandsons) (12, 17a); time when the Manding, Loma & Kpelle divided (19d).	Everyone came to M for the 'division' of the land.	F's children founded/moved to many places (2, 7, 91).	

have enough power to make dead trees come to life and destroy healthy trees. Valaye Swaray agreed to help, but needed Dukuly Binya’s assistance. Valay Swaray and Dukuly Binya lived on opposite sides of a river that was flooded at the time. Because Valay Swaray could not cross the river, he wrote a letter or talisman to Dukuly Binya and tied it to the wing of a bird. The bird flew to the bank of the river and a crab swallowed the bird. A fish swallowed the crab and a crocodile<sup>66</sup> did the same to the fish. Dukuly Binya killed the crocodile when it reached his side of the shore and agreed to help Valaye Swaray after he read the note. Because the river was flooded, Dukuly Binya sat on a prayer mat with Mamulu Dole and another person and crossed the river.<sup>67</sup> After the men arrived they blessed Foningama [17a].

Vafin Sumawolo similarly claims that Foningama made a sacrifice so that he could have children, but said that Foningama did this after he moved to

Table E Manding Accounts of 'Foningama's Sacrifice'

	<u>Kéwulén Kamara</u> <u>(17a)</u>	<u>Vafin Sumawolo</u> <u>(16)</u>	<u>Sumawolo [9]</u>	<u>Vase Kamara</u> <u>(13/18)</u>	<u>M. Kromah [51]</u>	<u>L. K. Sayon [19b]</u>	<u>Y. Dole [10]</u>
Actors	PG>phio> Vale Swaray > Dukuly Birya (Mamulu Dole)	Sumawolo instruct PG to sacrifice. PG> Jan Vale from Nonsamoridu	PG offers sacrifice	PG told to sacrifice (to Swaray?)	PG makes sacrifice	—	Flaymo Dole
Sacrifice	meat + 100 items	100 items	food + 100 things	PG-horse, cow, sheep, human, food	100 of everything	—	cow
Purpose	more sons	more sons	sons>'division'	PG-'law & order,' children prosper, 'partition'	—	Manding (non - Kromah), Kpelle, Loma	for Musadu
Aftermath	—	13 sons	—	—	—	—	—
Children	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
'Division'	—	'division'	'division'	'partition'	—	'division'	—
Nonsam-oridu	—	Jan Vale waiting for banana seeds at samoridu	—	Swaray waiting for banana seeds in Nonsamoridu	—	—	—
Rèn Jalla	—	Rèn Jalla vs. Pasuejan	—	Rèn Jalla> Sumaridu	—	—	—

Musadu. Foningama gave one hundred items to a Jan Vale from Nonsamoridu,<sup>68</sup> and Foningama later had thirteen sons [16].

Sumawolo and Vase Kamara state that Foningama offered a sacrifice to ensure that his children would be successful after they left Musadu. Sumawolo, linking the sacrifice to the 'division' (see below), noted that after all of Foningama's children were born, Foningama made a 'big sacrifice with food and other things gathered together in groups of one hundred. Then, after he made the sacrifice, his sons started to go away from him' [9].

Vase Kamara associated Foningama's sacrifice with the laws and his children. The sacrifice consisted of 'a human being, a horse, a cow, a sheep and food. He put all of these items together and gave them to the diviners so they could do some work for him' [13].

Possibly related to this sacrifice are other incidents that informants mention. Yaya Dole said that the 'ancestor of the Doles, 'Flaymo Dole,<sup>69</sup> 'was the first man who sacrificed the cow for the town' (Musadu) [10]. Musadu's residents believed that their town's success depended on Foningama, so their prosperity depended in part on Foningama's well-being. We do not have enough information to ascertain whether this Flaymo Dole was one of the clerics who helped Foningama make his sacrifice, or whether he was involved with the sacrifice mentioned in the following episode that the Donzo made for Foningama's children. Lai Kayflay Sayon [19d] did not refer to the sacrifice, but spoke about the 'division' that Sumawolo and Vase Kamara associated with the sacrifice.

### Episode #20 'Laws, ' 'Execution' and another 'Sacrifice' in Musadu

The next episode tells about the establishment of some laws in Musadu and the execution of one or more of Foningama's sons for breaking one of the laws. Yves Person attributes some ancient "laws" to Foningama,<sup>70</sup> and Vafin Sumawolo said that one of Foningama's sons 'became the victim of the law' [16]. Likewise,

Yaya Dole claimed that one of Foningama's sons was killed for violating a law. Mohammad wrote that a person should not "cause [a] riot in the market ground" [51], and the Beyla monograph noted that Foningama killed five sons and one of his griots who committed a crime against the *caravanniers* [3]. Vase Kamara similarly claimed that four of Foningama's sons were killed for breaking a law that prohibited disrupting the market place, added that the Donzo from Nyèla later sacrificed a cow and/or chicken to preclude the execution of his remaining sons [13/18].

### Episodes #21 The 'Division' of Foningama's Sons

Finally, many informants speak about a time when a great 'division' occurred in Musadu.<sup>71</sup> Benjamin Anderson indirectly mentioned this when he noted that Musadu was the place from which "all the other towns sprang up" [1]. The sources describe this as having taken place at various levels. Vafin Sumawolo narrowly set the 'division' in the context of a schism that forced Fasuejan/Va Sudyan) and Fèn Jalla to leave Musadu [16],<sup>72</sup> and Lai Kayflay Sayon used the 'division' in the broadest sense to explain when the Kpelle, Loma and Manding moved to the regions where they now reside [19d].<sup>73</sup> Most of the other sources [9, 13/18, 16, 17a] equate the 'division' to the time when Foningama's sons assembled in Musadu and 'were given which way to go' [17a]. Sumawolo made a direct correlation between the sacrifice that Foningama made and the division: 'after he made the sacrifice then his sons started to go away from him. ... They divided, but everybody came from one' (Foningama) [9]. The Manding told Father Bouyassou that Foningama's children founded Konya and various sub-regions of Konya—Koradougou, Simandougou (Sumandu), Famoela and Maghana (Mahana/Maana) [2]. Others after Bouyassou said that Foningama's sons also migrated to Guirila, Gbana, Gbaladu, Buzye, Konokölö, Koningö, Koigblama/Koigbrisama, Koadu/Quardu, Gboni, Waju and Colomokoru [4, 7, 11, 12, 13/18, 17a, 20] (see Appendix C. 1-4).

### Conclusion

Our primary goal has been to review how the Konyaka variously believe that Musadu was established given the material that is presently available. The Konyaka tell how a Kpelle slave named Zo Musa founded Musadu, and relate how Foningama (the Kamara) made Musadu a great town after Zo Musa fled. The Kamara retained enough importance in the Konyan so that Samori Toure and Sarji Kamara had to solicit their support when they began to vie for power during the mid-19th century (Person 1968b:430-432, 825, 2126-2127). Sarji in fact, claimed that he was Foningama's successor (Person 1968b:288 and [18]), and Vase Kamara said that Sarji 'offered a person, a horse, food and a gift to the Konyakas' that 'was said to have been an extension of the sacrifice [that Foningama] offered in Musadu' [18].



Finally, we hope that the Konyan will be used as a focal point to link Liberia in a more meaningful way to the wider study of West African history. Liberia's unique background has been responsible for some of the isolation that exists between both areas in the literature, but there are many similarities between Liberia and neighboring countries that transcend political boundaries and deserve more emphasis. The proverb cited in the title of this paper explains that Foningama and Zo Musa could not live in Musadu at the same time. In applying this proverb to the present, we hope that today's scholars will make a greater effort to succeed where these two men failed so that the 'two hippos' of Liberian and West African history will be able to 'live in one river.'

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, Atlanta, Georgia (November 1989). The Michigan State University History Department provided the funds that made the presentation of this paper possible. We thank Linda Johnson, Harold Marcus, David Robinson, Jay Spaulding and students of a History Seminar at MSU who met in October of the same year for suggesting ways that the first draft could be improved. Finally, we are grateful for Tim Beals, Beth Hovey, Tami Geysbeek and one of the readers for their editorial assistance, and Martin Ford and Joseph Lauer who made some helpful comments pertaining to the contents of the paper. We of course are totally responsible for the final product. (Jobba K. Kamara was unavailable to help prepare the last draft).

<sup>2</sup>Notable exceptions are Person (1968b) and Massing (1985:35-45).

<sup>3</sup>The Konyaka from the Konyan are distinguished from the Manyaka who live in Bopolu, western Liberia and certain boarder towns in Guinea. The Konyaka and Manyaka are Manding/Mandingo or Northern Mande speakers who are differentiated from the Southwestern Mande (Kpelle, Kono and Loma), Eastern Mande (Mano and Gio/Dan) and Southern West Atlantic (Gola) (Dalby 1971:5-6, 9, Welmers 1974:1 and Cutler with Dwyer 1981:1). The Vai are Northern Mande, but references to the "Manding" in this paper do not include the Vai unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>4</sup>Other popular spellings are Moussadouougou, Masadu and Misadu. Many Konyaka use the latter form in their every-day speech.

<sup>5</sup>Foningama is a contraction of Foni Kama/Kamara/(Ngama). (K > g when proceeded by a nasalized consonant in Konyaka). Foningama is also called "Diomande" ([13] and Person 1984:317). Foningama is variously spelled Falikaman [2], Foni Kaman Camara [3], Feren Kamara [4], Fangamma [5, 6], Farin Kaman Camara [7], Foninkama [8, 9], Funikama [9], Foningama [10, 13/

18], F ngama [16], Feni Kamara [27], Fanggama [29], Fernigaman, Farligaman, Farngamah [30], Fonikgema [32,50], Falingama [32], Fali Kama [33/41], Faligama [34], Fanikama [37] and Foningaman [51]. "Foningama" is used throughout the paper because this is the way that many Konyaka say his name.

<sup>6</sup>Jeff Morton reports that the Manding who live in a Manding town in Lofa County are not familiar with Foningama (1990). Morton's observation suggests that the Konyan Manding may generally be more familiar with Foningama than the Manding from northwest Liberia.

<sup>7</sup>The present-day Konyan includes the area between Gbana, Boola, the Fon-Going mountains, and the Pic de Tibe (near Sondugu). Some Manding say the Sumandu, Gbana and northeast Konokölö are part of the Konyan (see Person 1968b:32). The regional boundaries identified in Map 1 are approximate and are subject to change as further research is conducted. Historical questions concerning when, how and why these regions developed and were given the names that exist today have yet to be studied in detail. A few Manding informants living in Monrovia during the mid-1980s supplied most of this information. Other sources include data and maps in Germain (1984), Person (1961, 1968b and 1973), and the following colonial maps located in MSU's Map Library—Captain Peroz's "Mission Du Ouassoulou: Empire Central De Samory" (n.d.), E. Jacobi's "Soudan Francais" (1898), and d's "Carte Politique du Soudan Française" (1888–1889 and 1890–1891). Most of the town names can be found in the GUINEA gazetter (1965). We thank Laurie Anderso (MSU) for producing the maps.

<sup>8</sup>The British in Sierra Leone made a reference about Musadu's religious importance in 1840 (see Jones 1983:73). This is the first time, to our knowledge, that Musadu ("Massado") appears in the written records. Jehudi Ashmun reported that a "comparatively populous and civilized people" lived in a town about 150 miles away from Monrovia (ANNUAL REPORT 1828:44-45). This may have been Musadu or Musadu's northern neighbor Medina.

<sup>9</sup>These images reflected the favorable though ambiguous impressions that Liberians had of the Manding, and overshadowed the bleak economic and political situation that Anderson encountered when he visited Musadu (Anderson 1870/1971:105, see d'Azevedo 1969:12 and Ford 1990). Many older residents from Musadu cite traditions about 'Englishmen' and 'Americans' that curiously resemble incidents that Anderson wrote about. Anderson for instance noted that "it is the ambition of the Musahdu Mandingoes (especially women) to speak English, " and that some of the "Mandingo" learned how to say "My Dear" (1912/1971:35-36). Over a century later, Yaya Dole said that "'yes" . . . became the English language for the people at the time' because 'the Englishman' (Anderson) always said "'yes, yes'" [10]. The cotton tree located on the outskirts of Musadu is an object of many stories as well. Yaya Dole claimed that

Anderson 'used to sleep' in a tent that he built under the cotton tree (Anderson does not say that he set up a tent in Musadu), and that he pounded a nail into the side of the tree to support the tent. Dole's statement about the nail can be read in the framework of a wider discussion about an object that Anderson supposedly put into or on the side of the tree. Mammadi Dole said that the 'Americans' (presumably Anderson) 'attached' a 'written document' to the 'big tree' [8]. (Anderson signed a "treaty of friendship" with Musadu's chief, Fisher 1971:vi). When Anderson concluded his discussion about the "affection" that the Manding had for the English language, he said that "the stranger that may now enter the gates of Musahu will be assuredly greeted by women *if he is an American*" (1912/1971:36, our italics). Some Manding continue to believe (at least at a popular level) that a special relationship exists between Musadu and America. Stories are told about "Americans" who have visited Musadu, and some believe that the ancestors of many black Americans who now live in the United States originally came from Musadu. The following is Mammadi Dole's response to a question that Martin Ford asked about Benjamin Anderson that captures certain images that the Musadu Manding have about America and Anderson:

Plenty Americans went to Misadu to study, plenty. They have their property in Misadu. Their grandfather know about that. They dug a big hole. They put their property in that hole. They closed the hole and put cement over it . . . The majority of the negro go visit that place when they first visit Africa. They go and see their property. The ones that start to come during this time, their time. They start to ask them about their grandfather. (Anderson?). Then they explain the history. The place where they have their property, they planted a tree, a big tree over that property. They have a written document attached to that property, . . . that tree. No other white man can go in Misadu if they are not an American . . . to go and ask the people about the history of that time. They will not agree to tell you the history, except if you are from America [8].

<sup>10</sup>Public interest in Musadu and other towns in the distant "interior" began to subside by the mid-1880s after having become popular during the 1850s ("Latest from Liberia" 1858:129, Gibson 1869:135 & 1881:14-17, "Liberia's Mission" 1872:23 and Nassau 1873:43-51, see Martin 1969).

<sup>11</sup>As Kjell Zetterstrom speculated, Musadu ("Misalu") is the town identified on French maps as Moussadou, located about six miles northeast of Beyla (8 46N—8 37W, GUINEA: OFFICIAL STANDARD NAMES 1965:115, 116).

<sup>12</sup>We thank Martin Ford for providing copies of these narratives. Ford also informed us of Fisher's Gio tradition (1967:704) and the Mano histories in Zetterstrom (1976:18-19).

<sup>13</sup>Bouyassou, in 1913, was the first to mention Zo Musa and Foningama [2].

<sup>14</sup>1942 is the last date that appears in this document.

<sup>15</sup>The hypothesis will be forwarded elsewhere that Vai traditions that speak of the sons of a chief in Musadu who violated some laws and fled to the coast [22-26, 28] refer to Manding descriptions about Foningama's sons who broke a law and were executed in episode 20 (Geysbeek 1990). Svend Holsoe suggests that the Fahnbulleh-Kiatamba migrations which these Vai traditions describe are related to the 16th century Mane/Folgia-Karou invasions (Holsoe 1967:93 and 1974:11, see Person 1984:317). Andraes Massing (1985:37) suggested that Foningama may be the same as Fanggama who was one of king Siaka's (ca. 1780-1843) ancestors in Sierra Leone [29].

<sup>16</sup>We thank Gerald Currens and Robert Leopold respectively for giving us copies of Korvah (1960), Golovayaa (1972) and "Lorma Folktale" (n. d.); and Gizzi & Korvah (n. d. /1972), "Liberian Bureau of Folkways" (in Pinney n. d.) and Weisswange (n. d.) and (1969).

<sup>17</sup>Very few "griots" actually live in the Konyan (see Person 1972:5). Because most of the important details from the oral sources can only be seen in this work, Vase Kamara's first narrative [13] is being prepared for publication (in Geysbeek forthcoming/b) to help "preserve the flavor" of this body of oral history (see Henige 1990:382).

<sup>18</sup>This definition is taken from Conrad (1981:180), Vansina (1985:71-74) and Johnson (1986:38).

<sup>19</sup>One Manding version states that Foningama migrated from the Malaka region in Mali to Sibi, and then settled in Musadu [11]; and a similar account identifies Foningama as a Malaka from the Sudan who stopped in Sibi before he moved to Musadu [12]. Another states that Foningama's journey began in Sibi and proceeded from Gb to Musadu [9], and one person claims that Foningama came from Tabu [16]. Tabu may refer to Tabon, the home of Fran Kamara in the Sundiata accounts (see Niane 1960b:23, Darbo 1972:2 and Conrad forthcoming). Mohammad Kromah wrote that Foningama moved from Badoula (near Siguiri) to Musadu [51]; and Senessee Kromah [27] and Karin Weisswange [37a] reported that Foningama "evacuated" or "came from" Kankan before he migrated to Musadu.

<sup>20</sup>Can the Dioman ancestor of these traditions be related to the region of the same name that is located between Siguiri and Kankan along the east side of the Milo river (see Niane 1960a:44-47 and Massing 1985:25)? Also, note how Daouda Camara's genealogy [7] resembles the French monograph [3] (Appendix C. 2, 4). Could the French have had access to Dyigiba Kamara's manuscript (n. d.), or does the similarity between both demonstrate how well some aspects of Manding history are so "well preserved?"

<sup>21</sup>These migrations only outline in the very broadest terms the Kamara migration routes. Yves Person questions the historicity of Foningama (1973:281).

<sup>22</sup>Two Manding sources say that Foningama was born in Musadu [3, 11], and two Loma traditions claim that Foningama came from Mecca [32, 34].

<sup>23</sup>The French report similarly mentions a Soumata Camara who was an important person in the Foningama story [3] (Appendix C. 1, 2).

<sup>24</sup>Two Manding informants note that Konsaba was Foningama's son [9, 17], and one interchangeably identifies Konsaba as Foningama's brother and son [3].

<sup>25</sup>Most agree that Fèn Jalla was Foningama's first son [3, 4:270, 13/18] or the only one of Foningama's sons who they mentioned (Appendix B). Two claim that Fèn Jalla was Foningama's most important son [3, 7].

<sup>26</sup>The 'Kamara hat,' [15] also translated 'witchcraft hat' [13], seems similar.

<sup>27</sup>Sundiata's griot Balla Fassèkè was a Kouyate (Niane 1960b:78).

<sup>28</sup>Kèwulèn Kamara [17a] and the French monograph [3] state that Foningama had a jèli, but they do not say his name. The monograph and Yaya Dole mention a jèli named Gnamissa Kromah [3] or Ngana-Musa Kromah [10], but he is not specifically identified as Foningama's.

<sup>29</sup>This may be the same Sianoh that Dioman Camara migrated to [7]. Is there a link between Solona and the region of Solon situated east of Kangaba? See the many maps in Cisse & Kamissoko (1988) for Solon and other regions located north of the Konyan that are mentioned in this paper.

<sup>30</sup>The French document says that diviners forecasted the location of this hill to Konsaba [3].

<sup>31</sup>Vase also claims that the Kpelle were named *Gbelese* (*Gbèlèsès*) after *Gbesaysayn* hill [18]. Sokomo Kromah narrates a slightly different version of the same story [19c]. The Konyaka call the "Kpelle" people *Gbèsè*.

<sup>32</sup>Vase Kamara said that Kalamöö Morikana ("mori" Kane/Kanneh) was a Sumawolo in the Sundiata portion of his history [18].

<sup>33</sup>There are other situations in this epic where a marabout asked to perform a particular act is forced to defer to another marabout who is more powerful (see McNaughton 1988:43).

<sup>34</sup>Vase Kamara's placing of Foningama in this context represents the only time when one of his episodes does not fit the overall plot of the story.

<sup>35</sup>One of the readers commented that "Levi-Strauss would have a field day with this myth."

<sup>36</sup>Person does not indicate whether he based this reference on oral testimony or his own hypothesis (see Brooks 1985:122-123).

<sup>37</sup>The mobility that characterizes Zo Musa's enslavement is similar to the slavery that operated among other Manding peoples during pre-colonial times (see Conrad 1984:39-41 and Roberts 1981:185-186).

<sup>38</sup>Others identify Zo Musa with two men: William Morlu et. al. says that Zo Musa ruled Musadu with two "pagan priests" [6]; Bouyassou states that Zo Musa left Musadu with Zogofakoni (Zogo Fa Koni) and Fengebou [2]; the Kpelle claim that Zo Musa departed with his brother Zo Missa Coma and Miao [43:76]; and the Mano from Guinea believe that "Zo Mai . . . came to earth from the sky" with his two brothers, Mekula and Ma [44].

<sup>39</sup>Geysbeek (forthcoming/b) argues that "Koma" refers not to Zo Musa's last name as such, but rather to the "Komo" or "Koma" society (McNaughton 1979:17), an esoteric association that the Manding transported south as smiths and traders migrated towards the forest region during the 14th century (see Hau 1973:39-43 and Brooks 1985:132-139). (Also, compare the 'horns' and 'devils' that he is associated with to those used in the Komo, see McNaughton 1988:132-140). Furthermore, the Islamicized Manding (eg. Kamara) who moved to the Konyan during 15th century replaced the predominately non-Muslim Manding as the political elite, but Islam probably did not become significant until the Qadiriyya became important in the late 18th century (Person 1968b:98, 125, 138, Fisher 1971:xvi-xxx and Corby 1988:47).

<sup>40</sup>Donzo said that Zo Musa built his house where the mosque in Musadu is presently located [19d].

<sup>41</sup>Mammadi Dole said that Zo Musa constructed his house along the Jön [8].

<sup>42</sup>"Significant numbers of Fula began to migrate to the Konyan from Amana (Kouroussa) during the 17th century (Person 1984:317, see Person 1968a:103, 109 and 1968b:160). Vase Kamara only spoke of 'travelers' and 'traders' [13/18], and Mammadi Dole referred to 'people' [8].

<sup>43</sup>Bangali Queche [19a] and Vase Kamara [18] agree that Musadu was named before Zo Musa's master settled in Musadu. According to Yaya Dole, T . . . gèchè said that Musadu should be named 'Musa's town' or "Musadu" because Musa was the first person to settle in the area. President Benson wrote that "Moosá-doo" meant "'Moses' town'" ("Latest from Liberia" 1858:129).

<sup>44</sup>Translated or identified as 'juju' [5, 8, 9], 'medicine' [8], 'talisman' [13, 51], *safe* [10, 13/18, 16], 'charm' [17a], fetish [51], *bassi* ('medicine') [51], 'horn talisman' and 'sheep horn' [8, 13].

<sup>45</sup>Sources also say that Zo Musa's charm 'swallowed' babies, sheep, dogs, chickens, goats, frogs and toads [8-10, 13/18, 17]. The charm made a sound like a barking dog [13/18] and was produced from the horn of a sheep [10, 13/18] or ram [49]. Korvah said that the horn was filled with charcoal [33a].

<sup>46</sup>Others claim that local practitioners had to solicit outside help as well. Vase Kamara stated that a Flaymo Dolleh was summoned from Kèwa [18], and Mohammad Kromah said that Foningama sent for the Sherif from Mali [51]. In Fisher's first text, Foningama asked for a Karamo Molefolay Jaro who may have come from Kingui in northern Mali. Sumwolo said that a 'big Moli man' went to Musadu to confront Zo Musa [9].

<sup>47</sup>The Kono version stated that someone put a toad on Zo Musa's charm, thereby causing it to lose all of its power [49].

<sup>48</sup>Fisher suggested that Judge Tulay may have confused Zo Musa for Foningama (1971:x). Mammadi Dole may also have done the same [8].

<sup>49</sup>d'Azevedo learned that the Manding tried to tell the Gola that they (the Gola) originated from Mecca (1962a:176). Gola references to Zo Musa probably derive from economic and social contacts that they had with the Manding (see Brooks 1985:107).

<sup>50</sup>Feedback must account for some of these similarities because the Kono, Kpelle, and Mano have similar migration traditions and common ethnolinguistic origins (Person 1968b:436 and Zetterstrom 1976:16).

<sup>51</sup>Yaya Dole said that Zo Musa cursed Musadu by Jön river when he left [10].

<sup>52</sup>Those who migrated to Musadu with Foningama are 'strangers.' Flaymö/Fremö Dole [10/19e] or Foromo Dore [3], Tumaningèmè [10/19e] and/or Gnamissa Kourouma [3], and Foningama [2, 3, 10/19e] are specifically listed in this category.

<sup>53</sup>Zo Musa [2, 3, 10/19e], Zogofakoni (Zogo Fa Koni) [2] and/or Djifa/Juufa Kone [3, 10/19e], Zo Jala [10/19e], Toumani Kourouma [3] and Fengebou [2] are singled out as 'hosts' or the important people who lived in

Musadu before the ‘strangers’ arrived. Tumani is the name of a particular kind of tree, but may also refer to Tumaningèmè.

<sup>54</sup>One informant identified 100 Tumanies, Zoe-Musa Köma and Sumawolo as ‘hosts’ and ‘strangers’ without making any distinctions between each [16].

<sup>55</sup>Translated as ‘country devils’ in Vase Kamara’s first version [13], and ‘devils (masked men)’ in his second [18]. *Masafing* means ‘the thing of the chief’ or ‘the thing belongs to the chief.’

<sup>56</sup>These rocks, though larger in size, look similar to the group of “large dolerite rocks” in Niani that D. T. Niane speculates might have been a place of worship (see Niane 1984:137, plate 6. 6).

<sup>57</sup>*Koniya* or *Konya* is associated both with the cluster of rocks called Ngöni and the Koniya or Konyaba near Musadu [10, 15, 16, 18, 19a, 19c]. (*Ba* means ‘big,’ *Koniaba* means ‘rock water’ or ‘big rock in the water’ [19d]). Is Koniya or Konyaba related to the Kouyero or Kourando mountains located north of Musadu? *Koniya* itself is a Kpelle word that means ‘rock’ or ‘rocky mountain’ (*Koni*) and ‘river’ (*Ya*) [13/18, 15, 17a, 19c]. One elder said that *Koniya* is a corrupt form of the word *Gönniya* [19d], and another said that ‘the mountain was inhabited by the Gbèsè (Kpelle)’ and known as *Koniba* before the Manding arrived [19c].

<sup>58</sup>*Kaba* means ‘rock’ in Konyaka.

<sup>59</sup>Nèlèkolomakoköni means ‘yellow seed washing creek’ and is a particular type of sand. Is there any relationship between Nèlèkolomakoköni creek and Nèlèkölökonoinö?

<sup>60</sup>Jön is the same river that Zo Musa fished before Musadu was founded.

<sup>61</sup>Vafin Sumawolo said that Zo Musa’s wife’s name was Yö-Yö, and that her son’s name was Wo-ye-ye [16].

<sup>62</sup>For Loma genealogies of Foningama, see Geysbeek (forthcoming/a).

<sup>63</sup>A combined total of thirty-three persons are listed as Foningama’s sons: the Manding give twenty-one, and the Loma fifteen (see Appendix B). Both identify Fèn Jalla/Fayala, Seimafile, Cé Birama/Seiliblema and probably Famoïya as one of Foningama’s sons. Vase Kamara explains that some discrepancy exists in the number of how many sons Foninagama had,



depending on whether his sons who were executed are counted, or whether Fèn Jalla, who did not stay in Musadu, is counted [13]. Two sources mention that Foningama had at least one daughter [2, 5], but Magnambouy is the only name given [2]. Massing notes, concerning the number of lineages associated with Foningama, that twelve is: "an ideal number reflecting the structure of the old Manding heartland" (1985:41). Weisswange, in referring to the number of Foningama's sons, writes that "7 and 12 are both sacred numbers, each of them comprises 3 as [the] number of women and 4 as [the] number of men and thus seem to stand for the entity of all peoples and not for a reduction of descendants" (n. d. :B).

<sup>64</sup> Gifts such as this made in quantities of 100 are related to the non-Islamic sphere of Manding culture (Conrad forthcoming, see Niane 1960b:71).

<sup>65</sup> Given the fact that all of the other sources identify Konsaba as Foningama's older brother, Kèwulèn Kamara may have confused Konsaba for Fèn Jalla. Most informants say that Foningama was in Solona when Konsaba tried to kill him (see episode 10).

<sup>66</sup> The Manding believe that birds and crocodiles can be used to carry messages from the spirit world to human beings (McNaughton 1988:126, 137, see Zahan 1974:19). Some Manding associated crocodiles with divination in the past (Imperato 1983:38).

<sup>67</sup> Yaya Dole stated that Flaymö Dole migrated from Bayöla (=Biyöla?) to Musadu. Flaymö moved with his brother Flaymo Sima (Yaya's direct ancestor seven generations removed) from "Manding" to Dialu/Diahu before they reached Bayöla. In speaking of the Dole migration, Yaya said that 'Whenever the river overflowed, they [the Dole] made sure that they did not loose the fish in the flood' [10]. This may be a reference to the story that Kèwulèn Kamara told about Dukuly Binya, Mamulu Dole and the other persons who crossed the river to meet Valaye Swaray. Kèwulèn Kamara stated that Foningama went to Musadu with some friends, and the above mentioned marabouts are probably the friends to whom he was referring [17a].

<sup>68</sup> Vafin also said that his 'ancestor' instructed Foningama to make the sacrifice.

<sup>69</sup> This is the same Flaymo Dole who sent for Jawe Kènnèh to destroy Zo Musa's talisman (episode 14).

<sup>70</sup>Person called them the “famous ‘customs of Feren Kama,’” the “custom of Musadugu,” the “law of the Konyan” and the “customary law” (1968b:184, 430, 884 and 1973:271).

<sup>71</sup>Reminiscent of D. T. Niane’s description of the “Division of the World” that took place at Ka-ba after Sundiata defeated Soumaoro (1960b:73), oral traditionists make the ‘division’ appear as though all of Foningama’s sons left the Konyan during Foningama’s lifetime. Yves Person however has shown that most of the Kamara left the Konyan after the 16th century. The Semanfilesi first moved into Konokölö during the 17th century and established the ‘principal line’ of ‘intrusion’ that later Manding such as the Fenséménesi followed. The Fenséménesi moved into northwest Liberia during the 18th and 19th centuries (Person 1968b:270). The Fandyarasi (Fènjallasi), Fenbremasi and Famoylisi migrated towards Liberia during these later centuries as well, but passed in a more southerly route through Buzye (Person 1973:269-273 and Appendix C. 3).

<sup>72</sup>Vafin does not specify where they went, but other sources say that Fasuejan and Fèn Jalla (and/or their descendants) migrated to Mahana and Sumandu respectively ([2], [7], [13/18], and Person 1971:679 & 1968b:125, see Appendix E).

<sup>73</sup>Geysbeek incorrectly identified Bangali Queche as the source of this information in a previous work (1988:58).

**Appendix A**  
**References Derived from Oral Sources About Musadu**

**Manding Links**

- |     |         |  |
|-----|---------|--|
| [1] | 1868    | Benjamin K. Anderson (1870/1971:104)   |
| [2] | 1913    | Bouyassou 1913 (in Lelong 1949:24-25)  |
| [3] | 1942-58 | "Monographie de la . . . Beyla" (n. d. /1942?)                                       |
| [4] | 1954-58 | Yves Person (notably 1968b)  |
| [5] | 1967    | William Morlu, Brima Nyi & Ismail Malik (in Fisher 1971:ix, xi-xii)                  |
| [6] | 1967    | Judge Tulay (in Fisher 1971:x)   |
| [7] | 1979    | Daouda Camara (1979, minor revisions—1989). Original is 42" x 36"; from Ivory Coast. |

RECENT MANDING TRADITIONS: Organized in order of informant, location of interview, collector(s), translator and date. Portions of the narratives that appear in the paper have been altered slightly from the original translations. This has marginally affected Faliku Sanoe's translations, and had almost no effect on Jobba K. Kamara's. In the future we hope to make transliterations and word-for-word translations for each of these texts. This will provide a better rendering of the original narratives. All persons interviewed below were old men, and most of the recordings were conducted in homes.

*Collection of Martin Ford (Liberia), 1984-1985.*

- |     |  |
|-----|--|
| [8] | Dole, Mammadi. Bahn, Martin Ford, Faliku Sanoe, 28 June 1985. Kola trader; originally from Musadu.           |
| [9] | Sumawolo. Bahn, Martin Ford, Faliku Sanoe, 1984. Poor but humble and respected; lived in Liberia since 1962. |

*Collection of Tim Geysbeek (Guinea), 1984-1986.*

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| [10] | Dole, Yaya. Musadu, Tim Geysbeek & Mohammad/"Chèjan" Kromah, Jobba K. Kamara & M. J., 24 March 1986. Interviewed in Y. D. 's home and <i>Ngöni</i> during mid-afternoon; audience included Chèjan's father Mustafa who knew Y. D. and whose presence was responsible for such a good interview. This is contrasted with Y. D. 's minimal input when interviewed in a group situation [19e]. |
| [11] | Kamara, Amara. Damaro, Tim Geysbeek & Mohammad/"Chèjan" Kromah, Jobba K. Kamara, 18 March 1986. Interviewed with other elders in attendance under his veranda in a hurried situation.   |

- [12] Kamara, Manju. Watafeledou, Tim Geysbeek & Mohammad/"Chèjan" Kromah, M. J., March 1986. Poor translation; and interview was interrupted many times by children.
- [13] Kamara, Vase. From Fombadou, purchased in Lebanese store (Monrovia) in 1985 by Makula Mammadi Kromah, Jobba K. Kamara—assisted by Sidiki Koni, n. d. Army veteran and teacher. The context of interview is unknown.
- [14] Kromah, Manju. Watafeledou, Tim Geysbeek & Mohammad/"Chèjan" Kromah, M. J., 20 March 1986. Poor translation, voice quality and recording. Another older man was present during interview.
- [15] Kromah, Valase. Macenta, Tim k & Makula Mohammed Kromah, Makula Mohammad Kromah, 27 August 1984. Fata Bakari Kromah (*kabila kundi*) was present during interview, along with a few other men and one woman intermittently listened to portions of his testimony.
- [16] Sumawolo, Vafin. Siatulo, Tim Geysbeek & Mohammad/"Chèjan" Kromah, Jobba K. Kamara & M. J., 12 & 23 March 1986. A few men (including M. K.'s father), some women and a number of children listened under V.S.'s veranda.
- [51] Kromah, Mohammad/"Chèjan". Personal letter to Tim Geysbeek, 12 February 1990. Letter answered questions that T. G. had asked in previous correspondence.

*Collected by Jobba K. Kamara (Guinea), 1985-1986.*

- [17][a] Kamara, Kewulen & [b] Jallah Kamara. Kwanga/Kouankan, Jobba K. Kamara, Jobba K. Kamara, 12 December 1985. No information about narrators or context of interview.
- [18] Kamara, Vase. Foubadou, Jobba K. Kamara, Jobba K. Kamara—assisted by Sidiki Koni, 21 December 1985. J. K. K. interviewed V. K. after translating his first account [13]; V. K. was anxious to correct a section of Kèwulèn Kamara's narrative [17a] that had been broadcast over the radio. This 2 hour and 40 minute interview, like his first one [13], covers Sundiata, Foningama and Samori. Jobba began the recording with only his guide and V. K. present. His guide left but others gradually came to listen.

*Collected by Jomah B. Kamara (Guinea), 1985.*

- [19] [a] Queche, Bangali, [b] Lai Kayfala Sayon, [c] Sokomo Kromah, [d] Donzo & [e] Lai Yaya Dole. Musadu, Jomah B. Kamara, Jobba K. Kamara, March 1985. Group interview; no other information about context.
- [20] Kamara (?). Kwanga/Kouankan, Jomah B. Kamara, Jobba K. Kamara, January 1986. No information about context.

Vai Origins

- |      |           |   |
|------|-----------|---|
| [22] | 1869      | Creswick (1867:354-360)   |
| [23] | 1893      | Smith (1893:28)   |
| [24] | 1906      | Bacon (1906)  |
| [25] | 1911/1926 | Massaquoi, Momolu ([a] 1911:460-462, [b] in Klingenheben 1926:124-131)                                  |
| [26] | 1914      | Ellis (1914:27-28)  |
| [27] | 1961      | Kromah (1961, in Massing 1985:37-38).   |
| [28] | 1967      | Holsoe (includes Johnson 1954?:8-9, Klingenheben 1926:124, 126 & Simaièla Fahnbulleh in Holsoe 1967:62) |
| [29] | 1985      | Massing (1985:37, in Jones 1979:325)  |

Loma Origins or Links

- |      |             |  |
|------|-------------|--|
| [30] | 1936        | Free Mulu, Ngallima, Kekwuellah, Sarbo Ballah ("Investigation . . ." 1936)             |
| [31] | n. d.       | Gizzie and Paul D. Korvah (n. d. /1972)  |
| [32] | n. d.       | Liberian Bureau of Folkways (in Pinney n. d. :27-28).                                  |
| [33] | 1960/1971   | Korvah ([a] 1960, [b] 1971)  |
| [34] | 1969        | Fahnbulleh (1969)  |
| [35] | 1969        | Mamadi Kumala (in Weisswange 1969:59)  |
| [36] | 1969        | Zeze K. Roberts (in Weisswange 1969:59)  |
| [37] | n. d. /1969 | Weisswange ([a] n. d. :7-8 & [b] 1969:Part 3)  |
| [38] | n. d.       | Momolu Kamara (Weisswange n. d. :8-9)  |
| [39] | 1972        | Old Man Namah Jallah (in Corker & Massaquoi n. d. / 1972:59-60)                        |
| [40] | 1974        | Akoei Golovayaa, Bitijama 1972, interviewed by Gerald Currens (see Currens 1974:13-15) |
| [41] | 1988        | Korvah (1988)  |
| [42] | n. d.       | "Lorma Folktale" (n. d. )  |
| [50] | n. d.       | S. Atkinson & Paul D. Korvah (in Pinney n. d. :16-26).                                 |

Kpelle Migration

- |      |         |                       |
|------|---------|-----------------------|
| [43] | 1946-47 | Germain (1984:76-105) |
|------|---------|-----------------------|

Mano Origins

- |      |      |   |
|------|------|---|
| [44] | 1947 | "Eight old men of Zuluti" (Schwab 1947:24-25) |
| [45] | 1976 | Zetterstrom (1976:18-19)                      |
| [46] | 1976 | Zetterstrom (1976:18, footnote #1)            |

Gio Origins

[47] 1967

Fischer (1967:704, in Zetterstrom 1976:17)

Gola Origins

[48] 1960s

d'Azevedo (1969:6-12)

Kono Origins

[49] 1952

Holas (1952:19-22)

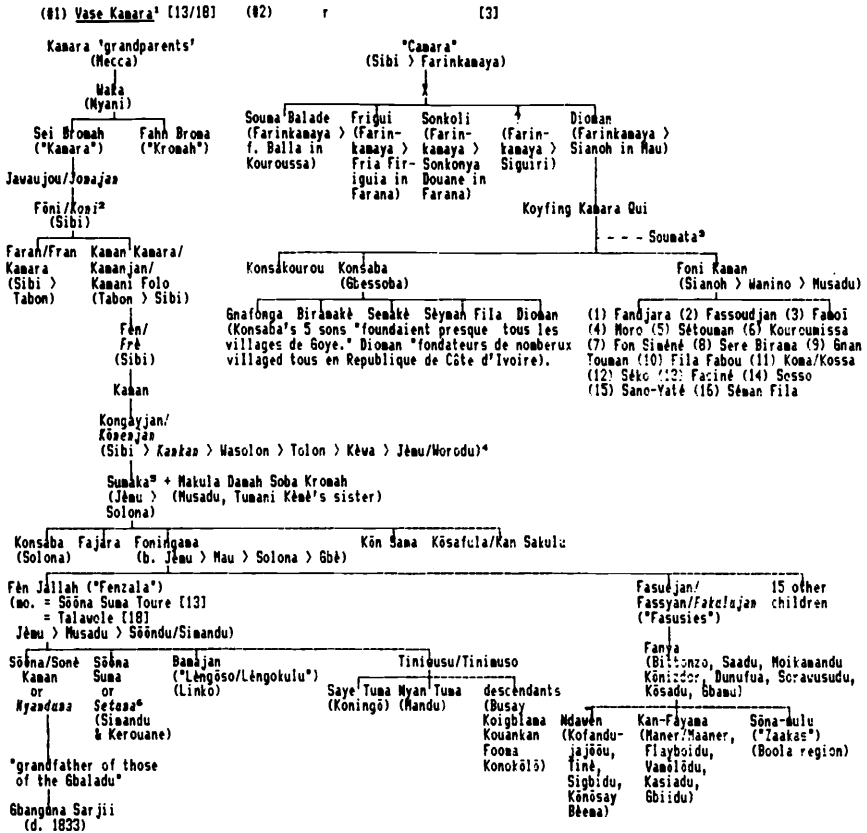
## Appendix B - Comparative Chart Listing the Names of Foningama's Sons

Mandingo Accounts							Loma Accounts								
Beyla [3]	Person [4]*	D.Canara [7]	V.Kanara [13]	V.Kanara [18]	A.Kanara [11]	K.Kanara [17a]	Kanara [20] J.Kanara [17b]	M.Kanara [12] M.Kromah [14]	V.Sunawolo [16]	Sunawolo [9]	Korvah [33/41]	Voinjana [30]	Fahnbulleh [34]	N.Jallah [39]	M.Kanara [38]
1. Fandjara	Fandjara	Fandjara	Fén Jallah	Fén Jallah	Fan-Jallah		Vasayjan	Fén Jalla	Fan Jallah	Fassa/Fasu	Fayala		Fayeah		
2. Fassoudjan	Va Sudyan	Foussou-Djan	Fakulujan	Fasuejan											
3. Fanoi	Fanoyli	Fanoy/Fanoe									Fanoiya*				
4. Moro	Moso-Dyila	Monson Dulla													
5. Sétouman	Setuma*	Setouma*		Setuma*	Sona-Sina										
6. Kouroumissa	Soona Missa*	Kounoun Missa													
7. Fon Siméné	Fen Séané	Fing Sewene													
8. Sere Briana	Fen Brena	Fin Blana													
9. Gnan Touman		Gnandouma*		Nyan Tuna*											
10. Fila Fabu															
11. Kona/Kossa		Vakossa													
12. Seko															
13. Faciné															
14. Sosso															
15. Sano-Yaté															
16. Séman Fila	Sémana Fila	Seanh Fila									Seinafile	Selna Vra			Seinavile
17.	Va Samori Dya	Samoyen													
18.		Cé Birana									Seilibelama				
19.		Donou Fon Moe													
20.		Farina-oy													
21.						* Kinsaba*			Saba						
22.											Fala Wubo	Farvubar	Fala		Falawubor
23.											Sajl				
24.											Gigbala				
25.											Sisima	Sisima			
26.															
27..											Vra Missa				
28.											F Mai-Missa				
29.												Saah			
30.												Tamba			
												M'Yumah			
31.													Harle		
32.													Joma		
33.													Kpakoto		

<sup>1</sup>See Appendix C.3 for Person's ordering of Foningama's sons and sources.<sup>2</sup>Fen Sédéné's son in Person (1968).<sup>3</sup>Gnandou's grandson in Canara (1979).<sup>4</sup>Alternate spelling (or name) is Siina Sina.<sup>5</sup>Fen Sédéné's grandson in Person (1968).<sup>6</sup>Cé Birana's grandson in Person (1968).<sup>7</sup>Fén Jalla's son in Kanara [18].<sup>8</sup>Probably Konsaba, person most often identified as Foningama's oldest brother.<sup>\*</sup>Identified as warabout of Fala Wubo and Seinavile, but most likely Foningama's son Fanoi (Weisswange n.d.:8).

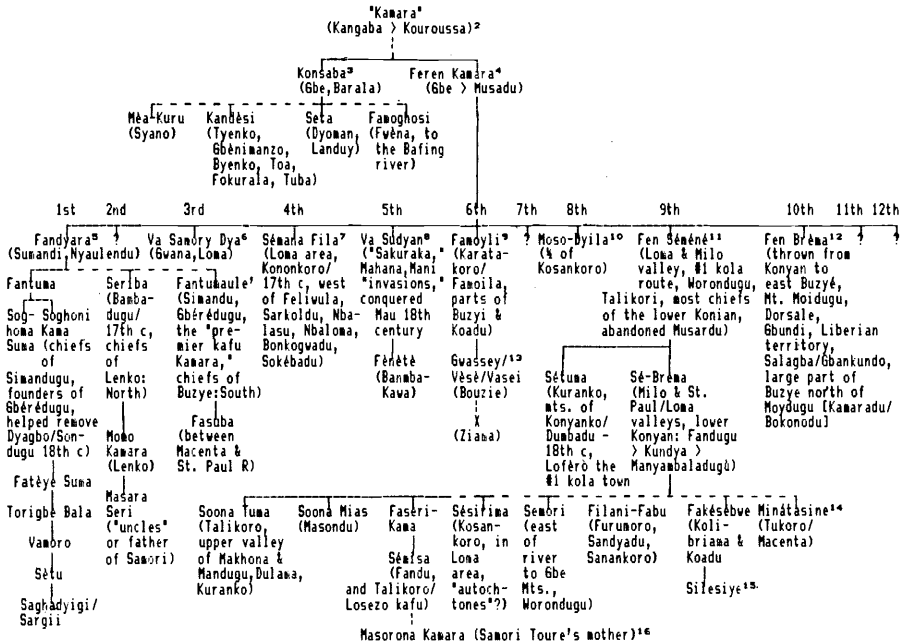
## 2 - Genealogy Charts of Foningama's Ancestors

Abbreviations: b. = born in X place; d. = died in X date; and &gt; = moved from X to Y.

<sup>1</sup>Taken from Vase Kamara's 1985 version [18]. The names and places in italics are from his first text [13].<sup>2</sup>Föni (like Foni in Foningama) represents Kamara *faze* bards noted for reciting Islamic texts. This Föni, who was an ancestor of Faran and Kananjan, may perhaps be placed in the era between the fall of Wagadu/Bhama and the rise of the Mali empire during the time that the *faze* evolved as a distinct group in Manding society (see Conrad, "Blind Man").<sup>3</sup>Associated with Foningama and Konsaba, but, unlike Vase Kamara, not identified as Foningama's father (footnote 5).<sup>4</sup>After leaving Manding, the Kones went to Amana behind Kouroussa and then to Jëmu. From Këva to Jëmu were the Kromahs. The Kromahs were the people that the Kones met after the Kpelles left the area [13]. The Kamara met the Kone and Kromah in these regions as they migrated south (see Niane 1960a:44-48, Person 1961:50, 1964:325 & 1972:5-6).<sup>5</sup>Vase Kamara's Sumaka is equivalent to the "Monographie" Soumata. Sumaka/Soumata may be a corruption of the Manding *faze* ancestor Silamaka (see Conrad, "Blind Man").<sup>6</sup>Fën Jállah's sons Nyanduna and Setuna in Vase's first version [13] corresponds to Tiniwusu's sons Myan Tuna and Saye Tuna in his second [18].



Appendix C.3 - (#3) Partial Reconstruction of Yves Person's Genealogy of Foningama<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup>This chart includes <sup>some</sup> many of the important people and towns that Person mentioned.

<sup>2</sup>Person 1964:326 and 1971:675.

<sup>3</sup>Person 1968b:87, 227, 437, 448, 591.

<sup>4</sup>Person 1964:326 and 1968b:160, 2269.

<sup>5</sup>Person 1968b:270, 263, 429, 445, 567, 579.

<sup>6</sup>Person 1968b:263, 567, 587.

<sup>7</sup>Person 1968b:270, 271, 570, 579, 591.

<sup>8</sup>Person 1971:679 and 1968b:87-88, 160, 192, 227, 448, 570, 591.

<sup>9</sup>Person 1968b:304.

<sup>10</sup>Person 1968b:304.

<sup>11</sup>Person 1968b:270, 55, 242, 256, 263-264, 270-272, 278, 304, 1383, 1968a:108.

<sup>12</sup>Person 1968b:270, 578.

<sup>13</sup>Weisswange n.d.:6, 9.

<sup>14</sup>Person 1968b:578-579, link to Sé-Bréma not clear.

<sup>15</sup>Person 1968b:578.

<sup>16</sup>Person 1972:108.

A endi C.4 (#4) Daouda Camara's "Genealogique de la Dyanastie Camara..." 1979/1989 [7]

"Ceux ci auraient vecu a Sibi (Region de Bamako) Republique du Mali origine de Camara"

Man, Sibi, Fere, Dankoro, Mansa = Camara

Sibi = Moussa Camara

Fere = Kanan Kamara<sup>1</sup>

Dankoro = Moussa Camara

Farenkaman Camara (Sibi > Faren-Kamaya/Siguiri)

Soumable (Bale, Kourou- ssa)	Soli (Fenda Solli- man in Kouroussa)	Firigui (Firia in Faranah, Sierra Leone)	Sonkoli (Dabola)	Malle (founded Mallea in Siguiri)	Fato (founded Fatoya in Siguiri)	Dioman (founded Koy-Fing Koyfing)	Camara (13th century, Faran Camaya > Sianoh/Maou Touba) Camara (Diomande: Sianon)	Kinting (founded Kintingna in Siguiri)
---------------------------------------	--	---	---------------------	--	---	--	---	---

Fing Koy Fing Camara (Sianoh > Diemou/Beyla [?])

Gbogbe (10) <sup>2</sup>	Gbefing (Maou, [15])	Famo Camara (Sianon, [6])	Konsaba Camara (his descendants resident dans le Goye Beyla... (et Barala et le Maou')	Farin Kadan Camara (Sianoh > Moussadougou/Beyla) (*ses descendants sont les Camara qui peuplent la Guinee Forestiere Beyla, Kerouane, Macenta et le Liberia Il etait le Benjamin des fils de Fin G/Koyfing Camara')	Ceta Du Cessa (villages in Côte d'Ivoire & Diomandougou)	Miakane du Miakourou (villages in Côte d'Ivoire, [7])	Sakoura (villages in Mau [12])
-----------------------------	-------------------------	------------------------------	---	---	--	--	---

(1) Fin Blama (Sinedou, Yen- tedou, Simandou, Bouzie, Bakedou (Gboni))	(2) Kounoun Missa (Gbakedou, Biramadou/ Gouna-Beyla, Simiss- adou, Fabadaradou, Diako Guirila/Beyla)	(3) Donou Fon Moe (Saousoudou, Mouana, Beyla, Duakolidou)	(7) Fandjara Camara (Siandougou, Beyla, Foundou Diomandou, Kekouradou, Kour- oudou, Damaro, Gberekan, Forladiansoba/Burila-Beyla, Diagbadou/Macenta)	(8) Sewan Fila (Koadou, Kono- koro/Macenta, Kolibirama Guirila-Beyla, Malinke, Gboni)	(9) Fossou-Djan (Sirikidou, Moir- ssiadou, Massoro/ Guirila-Beyla)	(10) Famoy ou Famoe (Famoula, Dia- boidou, Korata- koro/Simandou, Kassanka/Ziama- Macenta, Diabo- dou/Guirila- Beyla)
(4) Samoyen (Sirankoro, Gouana, Beyla, Moribadou/ Kabadiadou/ Karagoua- Beyla, Kossa, Guerze - six sons)	(5) Monson Quila (Konsankoro, Bougou- la, Kerouane, Kosa- koulou, Moribadou/ Mahana-Beyla)	(6) Fing Sewene (Diomandou/Kon- ianko-Beyla, Sibiri/Koni ianko- Beyla)	Fatdumah Dulin (Siandougou)	(11) Farina-oy Camara (Dousoufoila/Beyla, Diagbamoredou, Kobi- Gulindou, Mialindou, Sakinoulindou/Houana- Beyla, Mangolo/ <sup>3</sup> Boda-Beyla)	(12) Cè Birama Camara (Dounadou, Banankoro, Diaradou, Dandou, Matigne- baladou, Kamaladou, Gbe- dou, Konssakoro, Konianko, Kerouane, Sekanadou, Kerouane, Fadou/Koig- brisama)	

Sone Kaman Camara (Gberadou/Simandou, Torigbeballa-Dougou, Sirmoriddu, Landeidougou, Monodola, Fandou, Koyola, Sikidou, Kamissadou, Kessa-Diaradou, Manakoro, Beressokan)	Sona Siman (Simandougou)	Sone Balla (founded Dionsoba/ Founou Dussou Lancedou- (Simandougou) Damaro)	Sonè Dossou (Sondou > Dousou- doun/Linko-?)	Setouma <sup>4</sup> (Bamadou/Linko) (Coniko)
Fata Souman	Fadjarrakin (founded Djarrakin- dougou/ Damaro)	Faman (founded Gberadou)	Fakassia Soumaoja (founded (Kissidou- dougou/ Simandou)	Fran Camara (Doussoudou, Kigneko, Linko, Nissenedou, Koyola)
Fafoudun Gnakoro				Fass Nigbe/ <sup>4</sup> (founded Linko)
Torhes Ebeballa				8 generations present
Famoro - ?				
Sesetou (Gberadou/Simandou, Torigbeballa-Dougou, Sirmoriddu, Landeidougou, Monodola, Fandou, Koyola, Sikidou, Kamissadou, Kessa-Diaradou, Manakoro, Beressokan)	Gnouma Dussou (co-founder of (Kassia- dougou, Sirakoro)	Diorro (Kassia- dougou, Sirakoro)	Fafounde Gnakoro (Gnakoro, Makora- kabadu, Frala)	Sosso Kamara (founded Damaro, 17th century)
Gbankouno Sadi Camara (executed by Samori, 1883)				Kassoan (founded Fassoudou, near Kankan)
3 generations present				Morou Kankan Tokouno-Kankan
				Diarrakoro Keoulin (the rest of the people listed here from Damaro)
				Sakone Siaman Kagbe Kekoura
				Gnama
				Fata Keoulin (1852-1917, "Capitaine de armee Samorienne, 105 Enfants)
				Kene Brahima (1873-1928) (54 children)
				Diontan Djiguba (1882-1963) (48 children)

<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>Towns or people added to chart in 1989. Author(s) of 1989 alterations unknown.

<sup>2</sup>Numbers in brackets indicate the number of other towns that cannot be included in genealogy.

<sup>4</sup>"Fass Nigbe" scratched out in place of "Fassugbe." Only the most important individuals and towns in genealogy are listed below.

# Appendix D

## Comparative Ancestor Lists of Gbanguna Sarjii and Djiba Camara

Although we did not purposely solicit genealogies, we found, as Person did, that the Manding have "rather well preserved traditions" that extend to the mid-16th century if "absolute" dates are used (Person 1972:5-10). Using thirty years as a medium for establishing the dates of migration movements, Person estimated that the Kamara migrated to the Konyan "in approximately 1550" (1972:10-13). Later, Person coordinated his genealogies with the Mane invasions and wrote that the Kamara must have moved to the Konyan by the late 15th century. In doing so, he modified his long-held practice of accepting "absolute chronologies" that pre-dated the 17th century and argued that his genealogies "only give the minimum length of the period" (1984:317, see 1968b:102).

### 1. Gbanguna Sarjii (chief antagonist of Samori and executed by the latter in 1883)

Date of Births/Absolute Chronology	Number of generations from Foningama Camara [7]	Person [4:445]	Vase Kamara [13]	Vase Kamara [18]	Beyla [3]
1550s-1560s	Farin Kaman	Feren Kaman	Foningama	Foningama	Fori Kaman
1580s-1590s	1) Fandjara	Fandyara	Ferjala	Fen Jallah	Fandjara
1610s-1620s	2) Fatduman	Fantuma	Nyanduma		
1640s-1650s	3) Sone Kaman	Soghoti Kama		Söna Kaman/Nyanduma	Soné Kaman
1670s-1680s	4) Fata Souman	Fatye Suma			
1700s-1710s	5)	Fafoudan Gnakoro			
1730s-1740s	6) Torhes Ebeballa	Troigbe Bala			
1760s-1770s	7) Famoro	Vamoro			
1790s-1800s	8) Sasetu	Setu			
1820s-1830s <sup>1</sup>	9) Gbenkouno Sadi	Saghadysii/Sargii	Gbanguna Sargee	Gbanguna Sarjii	Saadji/Gnana
1850s-1860s	10) Kagbe Sethou				
1880s-1890s	11) Keletigui				
1910s-1920s	12) Dagbe Larasana				

### 2. Djiba Camara/"Damaro Djiba" (1882/1884-1963, Chief of Damaro/Simandu)<sup>2</sup>

1550s	Farin Kaman	Foningama	Foningama	Farengorman	Fori Kaman
1580s	1) Fandjara	Fan-Jallah	Fenerla	Fenerla	? <sup>6</sup>
1610s	2) Fatduman Dulin		Vandumane	Fennumane	
1640s	3) Sona Siman	Sona-Sima	Sownoseman	Sounesemon	Soné Siman
1670s	4) Founou Ousou	Tiri Wusu	Faam Woosuan		
1700s	5) Fakaseia	Fakasia <sup>4</sup>	Fakeseah	Farcaseah	
1730s	6) Soso <sup>3</sup>	Soso	Soso	Soso	
1760s	7) Diarrakoro	Jallah Kôlô		Jalakôlô	
1790s	8) Diarrakoro Keoulin	Jallah Kôlô Kéwulen	Yakakare	Jalakôlôwulani	
1820s	9) Gnana	Old Man Nyama	Kamaryina	Chémôô Nyamani	Gnana
1850s	10) Fata Keoulin	Fata-Kéwulën	Fara Chern	Fata Chéwulën	
		Kémè Brama <sup>5</sup>			
1880s-1882/84	11) Diantan Djiguba	Jonda Jiba		Yemnosou?	Djiba Camara
1910s	12) Farimagbe Mamadi				

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Approximate date of Sargii's birth (Person 1979:265). Sargii was a contemporary of Samori, so we have arbitrarily selected the years surrounding 1830 for his date of birth.

<sup>2</sup>Daouda Camara [7] and the "Monographie de la... Beyla" [3] respectively claim that Djiba was born in 1882 and 1884.

<sup>3</sup>Daouda Camara claims that Sosso Kamara founded Damaro (the present "capital" of Sumandu) in the 17th century [7]. Daouda Camara [7], Amara Kamara [11], Manju Kamara [12] and Manju Kromah [14] also state that Sosso had four brothers. None of the other persons in this genealogy are given this kind of recognition (except for Djiba himself), indicating that Sosso, his father Fakasia (see footnote 4), and those reported to be Sosso's brothers were important and may be associated in some way with Islam and/or small-scale states formation.

<sup>4</sup>Amara Kamara said that the voluntary association responsible for constructing the school and clinic in Damaro is called the "Fakasia tion," named after this Fakasia [11] (see Geysbeek 1988: 48-54 and Massing 1970).

<sup>5</sup>Daouda Camara identifies Kèmè Brama as Djiba/Diontan Camara's brother rather than his father [7]. We accept Daouda Camara's claim on this point, and thus do not include Kèmè Brama as an additional link to Foningama. Daouda Camara says that Kèmè Brama (1873-1928) ruled Sumandu after Fata Keoulin died, and was succeeded by Djiba.

<sup>6</sup>This source does not connect Foni Kaman to Soné Siman.

### Appendix E Important Personal names Used in Oral Sources

(Listed Alphabetically in order of first name)

Dukuly Binya—marabout who blessed Foningama so Foningama could have more children (See Valaye Swaray & Mamulu Dolleh) [17a].

Fakoli Kromah—Tumani Kèmè, Fènyabu and Makula Dama Soba's father [18], accompanied Foningama to Musadu [27], founded Musadu [51].

Fasuejan—Foningama's first son born in Musadu who became an arch rival of Fèn Jalla [13].

Fala Wubo—Foningama's son who migrated to Lofa County, primordial Loma ancestor (many Loma traditions).

Fengebou—left Musadu with Zo Musa (see Zogofakoni) [2].

Fèn Jalla Kamara—Foningama eldest son rejected by his brothers in Musadu (notable Fasuejan) and later founded Söndugu [4, 7, 13/18].

Fènyabu Kromah—rescued Foningama from Konsaba [13/18]

Filali/Fodey al-Hajj Kanneh—friend of Foningama in Musadu [5].

Filimamudolay—another friend of Foningama in Musadu, succeeded Foningama as chief (see Filali Kenneh) [5].

Fillimo Totte (Dolle?)—accompanied Foningama to Musadu [27].

Flaymö Dole—early Dole to migrate to Musadu before Foningama arrived [10].

Foningama—ancestral head of the Kamara in the Konyan (many traditions).

Gnamissa Kromah [3] or Ngana-Musa Kromah [10]—jèli associated with Foningama.

Jan Vale—marabout who helped Foningama have more children (see Sumawolo) [16].

Jawè Kenneh—Moikölö's assistant who helped destroy Zo Musa's talisman [10].

Jomanday or Diomande—Ivorian equivalent of Kamara.

Jön or Yö-Yö—Zo Musa's wife [18].

Juufa Köni—fellow slave of Zo Musa (see Zo Jala) [10].

Kalamöö Flaymo Dole—summoned from Kèwa to help destroy Zo Musa's talisman (see Flaymö Dole) [18].

Kalamöö Moikolo Swaray—Zo Musa's slave master [13/18].

Kalamöö Morikano Sumawolo—helped the Kamara become prosperous in Solona, founded Feletula [13/18].

Kalamöö Sayon—helped Foningama move to Musadu [9].

Karamo Molefolay Jaro—cleric who helped defeat Zo Musa [5].

Konsaba Kamara—Foningama's brother who became prosperous in Solona and tried to kill Foningama [3, 13/18, see 4, 7, 9, 16, 17a].

Magnambouy—Foningama's daughter [2].

Makula Damah Soba Kromah—Tumannigè'mè's sister and Sumaka's wife [13/18].

Mamulu Dolleh—marabout who blessed Foningama so Foningama could have more children (see Dukuly Binya & Valaye Swaray) [17a].

Moikölö—sent Jawè Kenneh to help Flaymö Dole and the other marabouts destroy Zo Musa's talisman [10].

Nakumala Kuyateh/Konate—jèli who took care of Foningama in Mau [13/18].

Soumata Camara—companion of Konsaba and Foningama [3].

Sumaka Kamara—Foningama's father [13/18].

Sumawolo—responsible for destroying Zo Musa's talisman, instructed Jan Vale to bless Foningama [16].

Tumannigè'mè (Kromah)—Zo Musa's master [10, 19a, 19c, d], person who helped Foningama in Musadu [3, 13/18].

Valaye Swaray—marabout who blessed Foningama so he could have more children (see Dukuly Binya Mamulu Dolleh) [17a].

Vamisa Bayoh—accompanied Kalamöö Morikana to Solona, founded Krobalo [13/18].

Zogofakoni—left Musadu with Zo Musa (see Fengebou) [2].

Zo Jala—fellow slave of Zo Musa (see Juufa Köni) [10].

Zo Missa Coma—German identified ZM Coma the Zo Musa of this paper [43].

Zomissakoro—Holas identified ZM Koro as the Zo Musa of this paper [49], and Germain identified ZM Koro as Zo Missa Coma's brother [43].

Zo Musa—Kpelle slave who founded Musadu (many traditions).

## Appendix F The "Five Towns" of the Konyan and Nonsamoridu

### *The "Five Towns" of the Konyan*

Traditionists speak about the "five towns" of the Konyan. Four of these are Musadu, Nyèla, Dyakolidugu/Jacodu or Jökudu) and Beyla. Dukelela and Tulela are interchangeably identified as one of the others. Some claim that Nyonsamoridu (Nyonzomoridu) was founded during Foningama's lifetime, but Nonsamoridu does not seem to be considered one of the "five towns." The order and explanations of how these towns were founded is subject to some disagreement. Lai Kayfala Sayon and Senesee Kromah, for instance, wrote that:

Nyèla was the first town established after Misadu. Some of the people from Misadu left to establish Nyèla. Then came Tulela, then came Jacodu [Dyakolidugu]. Of all the five towns that make up Konya, Beyla is the youngest. All of the towns to the sea coast came from Misadu [19b].

Feni Kamara became the outstanding landlord of those who later followed Many. He gave the Dukules a site to erect Dukulela; the Nyeis built Nyela; the Beles built Belela; and Fakoli Kromah's son Jala Kromah built Jakorodu. These five towns were in the chiefdom of Koniya under Feni Kamara [27].

Senesee Kromah wrote that Nyèla was founded by the Nyei clan, and Yaya Dole [10] and Sokoma Kromah [19c] respectively claim that Vamai (Va Mamadi) and Vabanyè built the first house where Nyèla is now located.

We have no other record about Tulela other than what Lai Sayon said above, and Yves Person's comment that Dole marabouts from Musadu controlled the chief Islamic positions in Tulela (1968b:226).

Yaya Dole [10] and Lai Sayon [19b] agree that Dyakolidugu was founded before Beyla, but Vafin Sumawolo disagrees [16]. Somoko Kromah claimed that the Bility founded the Dyakolidugu (see below), and that Dyakolidugou's first name was Molinaani [19c]. Yaya Dole [10], Vafin Sumawolo [16], and Senesee Kromah [27], said that the Kromah founded Dyakolidugu, and the latter two respectively cited the founder's first name as being Jakolo or Jalakromah.

All of the sources state that the Bility or Berete founded Beyla [10, 16, 91c, 27]. "Beyla" means 'the home or place of the Bility/Bereta' [4:224].<sup>1</sup> Yaya Dole states that some of the Islamized Bility<sup>2</sup> first migrated to Gbana and Jacodu, but that they moved west and founded Beyla because Gbana's residents practiced so much 'devil business' [10].<sup>3</sup> Sokomo Kromah notes that the first Bility in Beyla was Yanu, and that Yanu was followed by his son Mōōfènggōninuma. One of Yanu's three brothers founded Dyakolidugu.

Senesee Kromah wrote that Dukulela was established after Feni Kamara gave the Dukuley some land [27]. Somoka Kromah said that a group of people

were looking for something by a river near an okra farm that Mammadi Bility's wife owned [19c]. Bility allowed them to settle on the farm, and this is where Dukulela was established. Kromah also states that Dukulela was the only 'strange town' of those that came from Musadu, and that Dukulela was the last town to be founded in the Konyan.

*The Founding of Nonsamoridu*

The Donzo and Swaray claim that their ancestors founded Nonsamoridu.<sup>4</sup> The French report states that an unnamed Donzo and a great Donzo hunter named Se'man-gue founded Nonsamoridu [3]. The Swaray story is linked with the banana seeds that Foningama (or someone else) was supposed to give to the marabouts who helped him make his celebrated sacrifice (episode 19). Following his story in the sacrifice episode, Kèwulèn Kamara said that

someone [probably Foningama] told them [the marabouts who assisted Foningama] to wait, for they would soon be given some banana seeds. After waiting and not receiving these seeds, the marabouts decided to go back to Gbè. At that point Foningama said, "You are going and this banana is sweet. Why can't you sit and wait for the seeds so that you can take them back with you?"

Kèwulèn concluded that 'up to now those people [the marabouts] are still waiting for the seed' [17a]. Vafin Sumawolo narrated a similar account. After Foningama gave the sacrifice to Jan Vale, Foningama told Jan that he would give him some banana seeds. Jan is 'still waiting for the banana seeds' [16]. Vase Kamara said that they Swaray had to build a settlement in Nonsamoridu while they waited for the seeds—

The morleys who came for the offerings were given two . . . (The two bananas were put on the stranger food and carried to be hopefully used as a desert). They had not seen or eaten a banana before. After eating these bananas, they came and siad, "Jomanday [Foningama], thank you."

He said, "Don't mention it."

They then asked, "What is the name of this thing that came along with the food today?"

He answered, "Banana."

They said, "Please give us some of the seeds so when we are ready to go to Mau we can plant them."

He said, "Ok, stay here. Anytime it bears seed I will give it to you to carry."

Up to that time the Swarays are waiting for banana seeds . . .

When the Swaray men asked for the banana seed and were told to wait for the seed, he went and made a farm and put a hut there. He said, "I will gather



some small wood (*nyozön*).” In the place he gathered the wood is where the town of Nonzomoridu was established. God has always answered the call of the morleys (the Swarays) of Nonzomoridu [18].

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>The suffix “la” and “du” is respectively added to family and individual names when converted into town names. Thus, Bility/Berete and Musa become Bilityla/Beretela (Beyla) and Musadu (Morton 1989 and Person 1968b:224). Sokomo Kromah adds that “be” in Beyla means “yam” [19c].

<sup>2</sup>The Bility have long been recognized as a Muslim clam. Tumané-Mandyan Berete was a marabout of Sundiata (Person 1968b:177), and the Bility were the marabouts of the Kamara during Foningama’s lifetime (Person 1968b:224).

<sup>3</sup>Vafin Sumawolo also notes that Gbana was inhabited by persons (traders) who performed ‘devil business.’ The founders of Gbana were Fafaran, Mawu-Jallah, Fasona Ballah, Mei Wusu and Tangbo Trawollay, Tangbo Trawolly was also known as Siakölö-Suba and is buried in Tabuyaku [16].

<sup>4</sup>The Swaray are a lineage of the Donzo (Person 1968b:264).

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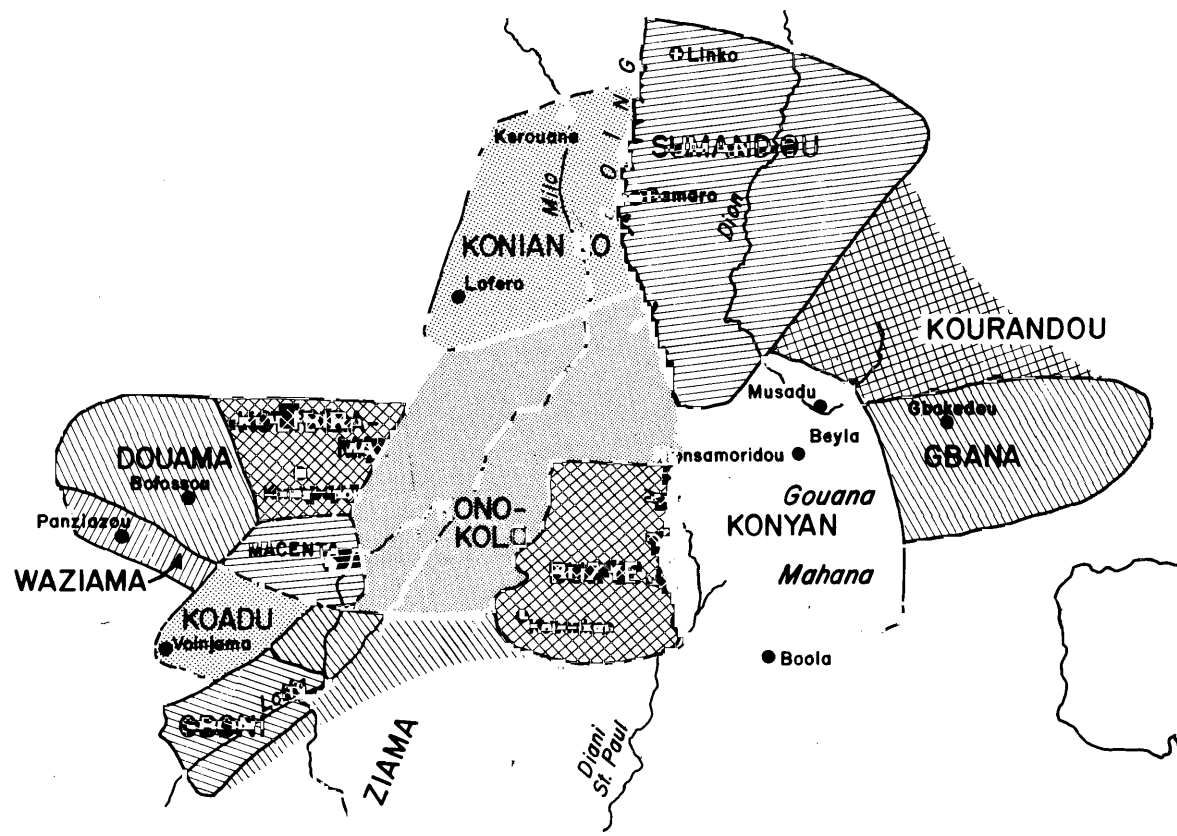
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MAP 1 The Konyan and Neighboring Regions (tentative)



MAP 2 Principal Localities in the Musadu Epic

## **Cuttington University College During the Liberian Civil War: An Administrator's Experience\***

Henrique F. Tokpa

### **Introduction**

These pages contain highlights of my experience as an administrator at Cuttington University College (CUC) during the Liberian Civil War. This account covers the period March through December 14, 1990. During this period I served as acting President of the institution from March to May and August through December 14, 1990. I have excluded experiences which did not have a direct bearing on the survival of the institution.

### **The Approach to Bong County**

It was a clear, cool morning, and the usual morning fog had cleared away. The maintenance men had assembled "up the hill" (the location of the warehouse, maintenance department, and utility plants) to begin their assignments, which was to secure the college property against possible destruction in the civil war which had begun in Nimba County on December 24, 1989. Following a visit to my office at the administration building to look over my daily itinerary, I had gone up to the maintenance and utility grounds at about 9 a.m. to check on the progress of the workers and their various assignments.

Thirty minutes after my arrival on the maintenance and utility grounds, we heard a loud explosion from the northeast. Looking in that direction, we saw a huge cloud of smoke over Gbarnga, the capital of Bong County. Gbarnga is located 8 miles northeast of the College. The loud artillery sound was followed by the sounds of many other guns, some of which I learned later were General Machine Guns (GMG), Russian Powerful Guns (RPG), and Bazookas.

We knew that the long-awaited war had reached Gbarnga and in a few hours Cuttington would be overrun. At that point Dr. Melvin J. Mason, President of CUC, who had returned three days earlier from a two-month business trip to the United States, came up to the maintenance utility grounds to tell us about the sounds of guns which he had heard from the direction of Gbarnga. He also wished to check on the progress of the work of securing the college's property in the event the fighting reached us. That day tested the will power of those of us who decided to remain on the campus with the hope of remaining alive and convincing the rebels of the importance of the institution so

as to avert its destruction. This decision was to pay off, as less structural physical damage was done to Cuttington than was done to the University of Liberia campuses.

The news of the rebel incursion in Nimba County began to reach Cuttington during the last week of 1989. The institution had closed by mid-December for vacation; almost all of the students and some instructors had left the campus. However, the summer school program was to begin in early January so we were awaiting the return of students from Nimba County to confirm the rumors and radio news about the war.

The news of the rebel activities in Nimba County was not so new. In November 1985 another rebel incursion had been launched from that county by the late General Thomas Quiwonkpa. The Quiwonkpa plot was foiled and his rebel forces, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) was crushed and he was killed. Many of the rebel leaders, mainly from Nimba County and of the Gio and Mono tribes, fled the country as the Doe forces went into Nimba County and carried on a massacre, murdering over 3,000 Gio and Mono civilians to "teach the Nimba County citizens lessons" and to prevent further opposition to his rule [*Liberian Diaspora* Oct.-Dec. 1990. P. 18]. The exiled rebels from the Quiwonkpa forces began to plan another invasion and later found a leader, Charles G. Taylor. Mr. Taylor, a former member of the Doe government who had been accused of embezzling public funds, had subsequently fled the country. He had defended himself by alleging that President Doe wanted him because of his association with General Quiwonkpa. The new rebel movement retained the former name of NPFL.

The summer school students from Nimba County confirmed the rebel incursion and spoke of great atrocities committed by Doe's soldiers. At this time we at Cuttington, like many other Liberians, believed that this incursion would soon be crushed as previous ones were, and that "the situation was under control," as President Doe in early January had informed the nation.

The news of the invincibility of the NPFL spread far and wide in Liberia. The Liberian army was no match for them even though the government reported the contrary. By March 1990 the Cuttington administration had become very concerned about the war, which had resulted in the capture of almost all of Nimba County; Cuttington is only about thirty miles from the Nimba County border. The main concern was whether to open the college in April as planned or delay opening until a later date. The administration decided to abide by planned schedules because a delay in opening would anger the government, which wanted the nation to believe that the rebel incursion was containable. A delay in opening would suggest to other schools, including the University of Liberia, which were also to open soon, that the government was unable to

manage the situation. After weighing all considerations, it was decided that the college be opened.

The Cuttington administration, headed by Dr. Melvin J. Mason, was a new one. Dr. Mason had become President of the college in February 1988. In June 1988 I had joined the administration as Dean for Administration and Planning. Mrs. D. Musuleng Cooper, who had joined the staff in 1988 as Administrative Assistant to the President, had been promoted in March 1990 to Acting Dean for Academic Affairs. The former Academic Dean, Dr. William S. Salifu, was transferred to the newly-created position of Coordinator for Graduate Studies. The war situation was to become the first major problem to face the Cuttington administration. The magnitude of this national problem was not understood or felt at that time.

Soon after the institution reopened for the academic year 1990, Dr. Mason had to leave the Country (from the middle of March to May 23) to attend to university business in the U. S. He also had to leave the campus several times in August to escort his ailing wife to the Ivory Coast, to seek assistance for the college, as well as to monitor the situation from abroad. During his absence, I served as Acting President. The events of the ensuing months were very trying.

### Cuttington Braces for War

By April 20, 1990 the war had intensified and reports on the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) indicated that the rebels were heading toward Buchanan (Grand Bassa County), and that all American and British nationals were urged to leave Liberia (SIMNOW No. 53 Winter 1990-91, p. 2). Information that the war was heading to Buchanan gave us some relief because it suggested Bong county, and indeed Cuttington, would be by-passed; the rebels would take Buchanan and move directly to Monrovia, their ultimate target.

Our assumptions about the rebel movement toward Buchanan proved to be incorrect when news reached us the following week that Ganta, Nimba County, had fallen. There were also reports of rebel activities at Baila, Bong County, a border town at the St. John River between Nimba and Bong Counties, about 30 miles from Cuttington.

This news led me to call a brief senior staff meeting to discuss possible plans of action should the war reach the college. I also arranged to meet Venesius Vorkpor, the Superintendent of Bong County, and the county education officers. The subsequent meeting with these local officials proved useless as they could not give me any concrete information or advice about the situation. A few days later, a delegation of three people accompanied me to a meeting in Monrovia with the Minister of Education to discuss the situation. The meeting with the Minister also yielded little, as he could not advise us about whether to close or to remain open. He restated the government position that everything

was being done to bring the situation under control and that there was no need to panic. Because we did not get a clear response from the Education Minister, it was clear that we at Cuttington would have to make the decision to close or not to close.

In early May, most of the students became very uneasy because of the news of the rebel activities around Palala, Bong County, only 20 miles from Cuttington. Attempts to appeal to the student body to remain calm were to little avail. Some students began to leave the campus. We intensified our efforts to persuade the students to remain, especially when we heard that more than 500 well-trained government soldiers with huge supplies of arms and ammunition had been sent to protect Gbarnga and to stop the rebels in their tracks. Soon our efforts began to take effect and many students decided to remain on campus to at least take their mid-term exams which had been postponed earlier, in late April, pending the easing of the tension.

### **The Senior Staff Arrest**

With the increasing news of the invincibility of the rebels, and the realization that the Cuttington administration had to formulate realistic plans to handle the situation, I called a senior staff meeting to work out a plan and to present a statement to the student body during the May 10th regular assembly of faculty, staff and students.

In that meeting it was decided, and the Cuttington Community was subsequently informed, that the situation at hand was a very complicated one and demanded that both students and faculty/staff work together to study and interpret it. The administration decided to invite all commuting students to move on campus.

Most importantly it was decided that the institution was not going to close, but would not prevent anyone from leaving, as the men and women could not be forced to remain on campus under the prevailing circumstances. The students were assured that those who decided to leave would be offered make-up classes when the situation improved and they returned. These announcements gave most students some assurance that the administration was doing all it could.

All of our efforts to restore calm among the students and the community shattered when, immediately after the assembly, about seven heavily-armed Liberian soldiers, headed by one Major Duoh, stormed the campus and took us away from our homes to the Military garrison in Gbarnga for interrogation. At about 1:30 p.m. that day, just as I was having my meal, one of the students ran to my house to inform me that soldiers were coming to arrest me and that they had arrested Mrs. Cooper and three other people. I immediately left the food and awaited my arrest. Three minutes later a maroon Toyota pick-up truck

pulled into my neighbor's yard and three soldiers were sent to my house to get me. I submissively join them and headed for the pick-up truck. At the truck I met Mrs. Cooper, Mr. T. Kromah Gai, the registrar, Dr. Siaam Naami, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Dr. Salifu. The leader of the team, Major Duoh, had remained at a point near the administration building and had ordered that no traffic leave or enter the campus until we were taken away. Because we could not all fit into the pick-up truck, I volunteered to drive my car to Gbarnga. This suggestion was welcomed and two armed men rode with me to Major Duoh.

Upon reaching Major Duoh, I was immediately asked about the whereabouts of Mr. Tonneh Tokpah, Cuttington Comptroller, who is of the Mano tribe, and Mr. Michael Slawon, the Dean for student services, also of the same ethnicity. When I replied that I did not know their immediate whereabouts Mr. Duoh shouted insults at me, accusing the Cuttington faculty and staff of subversive activities and of supporting the rebels by encouraging Gio and Mano faculty and staff to support them. In the same breath he accused us of housing students who supported the rebels. Before I could reply he ordered us all to leave for Gbarnga.

At the Gbarnga barracks the scene was even more frightening. There were more than 300 soldiers posted at various points around the barracks. There were several mortar guns and armored vehicles parked at various strategic locations. The scorching May afternoon sun did not seem to bother the over-dressed, heavily-armed men with at least two loaded bullet belts striped across each man's shoulder. Upon reaching the barracks we were led to a group of about nine men who were seated under a large almond tree on a bench with a small table in front of them. On the table were two pistols and near each of the nine men were M-16 assault rifles with grenade launchers. Standing about three feet away in a semi-circle were about fifteen armed men over-looking the seated men. When we approached it became clear that we had come to a tribunal.

About five feet to our left were three half-naked soldiers, each between 20 and 25 years old, wearing only green fatigue trousers. Their hands were tied behind their backs and they were without shoes. They were seated about two feet apart. I briefly overheard their interrogators asking why they had run away from the war front. Within three minutes of our arrival under the almond tree, the three men were ordered to be taken away.

This brief scene of interrogation sent a wave of shock through my body. From the look of my colleagues, they appeared to be experiencing the same emotion. One of the seated men ordered us to come closer. As we approached he introduced himself as Lt. Col. Doweh, Commander of the Gbarnga battalion. He immediately asked for the acting President of Cuttington. When I presented myself, he ordered that my colleagues be escorted to a house and given seats. I was to remain to answer all questions. I quickly realized that showing fear

would make matters worse. I calmed myself down and prepared to answer. The interrogation lasted for about 3 hours. I was shown a list of about 18 names of students, faculty and staff, and was told to attest to their involvement in subversive activities against the Doe government. I recognized all of the names as Gio and Mano. I was told that the list was submitted by a Cuttington student to the G-2, the military intelligence at the Gbarnga Barracks. I was also told that they had been informed that the purpose for the general assembly that morning was to close the university and to send the students home, thus undermining the efforts of the Liberian army. To these charges I presented a copy of the statement made at the assembly. We had carried a copy of the statement just in case we were asked about it. After he received the statement, the Lieutenant Colonel continued to explain the direct involvement of each individual charged. I was lectured to on the potential consequences of such activities at the institution and was told to advise the student body, as well as faculty and staff, to refrain from all subversive activities. He ordered me to report any subversive activities to Gbarnga. He informed me that the entire institution was under surveillance. In responses I explained that I knew of no such anti-government activity on the college campus. My explanation was interrupted often. I gave a s of the institution's position on the war and asked the Lt. Colonel to inform me of any dangers to the institution. I was strongly advised not to close the institution and was given the assurance that the rebel incursions would soon be crushed. I was released to join my colleagues, who were seated with General Charles Julu, the commander of the forces sent to crush the rebels. When I appeared the General expressed regret for the incident and emphasized that it was not their aim to harass civilians, especially authorities of educational institutions. After a brief conversation, we all got into my car and I drove back to Cuttington to the waiting, worried residents.

The result of our arrest was the de facto closure of the college. That afternoon more than 60% of the students left the campus. Those who remained made plans to leave the next day. They were convinced that their lives, as well as everyone else's at Cuttington, were in jeopardy. They were not going to remain on campus, making them easy prey for the army and/or the rebels.

By 11 a.m. the next morning, those of us who were arrested the previous day headed for Monrovia to update Archbishop George D. Browne, Bishop of the Episcopal Church of Liberia and Chairman of the Cuttington Board of Trustees, who had returned from the United States about a week earlier. We had decided that after briefing the Cuttington community on the ordeal of the previous day, we would travel to Monrovia to inform the Chairman and Members of the Board of the incident and seek their advice.

The news of our arrest had spread quickly in Monrovia. Our meeting with the Archbishop and a few Board members gave us the assurance that the Board would back any decision we made regarding the closure of the institution. To



prevent further antagonism with the Government, Archbishop Browne, who was also at odds with the Doe government, agreed to publish a statement to students and parents informing them that Cuttington was not closed and urged students to return to campus. The Archbishop also strongly advised us to take immediate action to close the school if the situation grew worse over the next week or two. He expressed his concern that parents would never forgive him if harm came to children he had urged to return.

After the Gbarnga incident and the subsequent trip to Monrovia, it became clear that the college could not remain open for too long. We would have to close in a week or so. On Monday, May 14th, in a senior staff meeting at Cuttington, we decided that if the rebels should advance beyond Palala the institution would be closed until the situation improved. Committees were set up to supervise the evacuation of students first, and later faculty and staff, in the event of an emergency closure.

Later that day I received a hand-written note from Mr. Tonneh Tokpah, the comptroller, to proceed to Monrovia to help him because intelligence officers from the Doe government were searching for him to kill him. I left Cuttington on the morning of May 15th to attend to Mr. Tokpah's call for help. While traveling, the rebels ambushed a military convoy near Gbarnga. This caused Mrs. Cooper, who I had left in charge, and the rest of the senior staff to execute the plan of closing the school temporarily and they began to evacuate the students. On May 16th Cuttington was closed and the immediate evacuation of students began.

When the news of Cuttington's closure reached me at 9:30 the morning of May 16th, I was at Archbishop Browne's office. I immediately got into my car and began the journey back to Cuttington. It was the fastest I had driven in my life. I made the two-hour trip in 75 minutes. When I arrived, the second bus load of students was leaving and one of the students shouted to me, "Dr. Tokpa, we'll see you in the Third Republic. You all have done well!!" The evacuation of students went smoothly as planned.

### **The Planned Strategy to Save College Property**

The evacuation of the students took two days, May 16th and 17th, and went according to plans. On May 18th I called a general meeting of faculty and staff. In that meeting all employees were informed that, as the College was not going to be responsible for lives and property destroyed due to the war, Cuttington was prepared to evacuate everyone to Monrovia or another safe location of their choice. In my address to the group I asked for volunteers to remain with me on campus to meet the rebels. Out of the 150 assembled employees, 20 agreed to "sacrifice their lives" and remain with me to protect the campus. Although most of the maintenance and utility workers lived off campus in surrounding

villages, such as Sinyea, Galai and Lewsville, most agreed to continue the work securing the institution's property until the job was done. The rest of the employees were evacuated using the institution's vehicles, or were given gasoline for their private vehicles. By Monday, May 21st, all of those who had chosen to leave the campus for reasons of personal safety had left.

The basic plan was to evacuate women and children first, followed by the men. Those who remained to protect the campus were divided into committees responsible for various aspects of the campus operations. The group which had chosen to remain on campus had also set up a quasi-evacuation plan whereby individuals would inform each other and proceed to a protected hideout when the campus was attacked. We had no idea of when or how the guerrillas would storm the campus. We relied on God. However, after the campus had fallen we would come out of our hideout, meet the rebels, and begin negotiating with them and befriending them. We hoped to convince them of the importance of not destroying the institution. Even though we were aware that our bargaining positions were extremely weak as compared to those of the conquering rebels, we hoped that making kind gestures, such as providing housing for their commanders and gasoline and fuel for their vehicles, would soften their attitude toward us, making it possible to appeal to them for protection. Important factors in our strategy were cooperation and hospitality, and clarity on what the college could offer. We were to tactfully refuse requests which could result in providing access to office buildings, registration and the records office, the library, the Africana Museum, and other academic areas. We were to skillfully maneuver the concerned commanding officers to win their friendship and confidence and by doing so, obtain protection for the institution.

When the evacuation was complete and the task of bolting storage rooms, etc. were well underway, I decided, on May 24th, to drive to Monrovia to meet Dr. Mason. He was scheduled to return that day from the U.S. I had also planned to carry back the May salary of all the maintenance, utility and college farm workers, as well as salaries for the casual laborers and those who volunteered to remain on the campus. We had transferred the finance office to Monrovia, with all records and staff, when the students were being evacuated. The work load in Monrovia was quite heavy, and the staff had no time to carry the salary and make payments. On Friday, May 25th, after meeting with Dr. Mason and briefing him on the situation on the campus, I decided to drive back with more than \$20,000 cash under the back seat of the 1987 Chevrolet Monza. We were lucky that this money was not discovered at any of the 30 or more checkpoints between Monrovia and Cuttington. The driver, twenty-year-old Samuel Juasemai, had advised that we hide the money under the vehicle's back seat. We hoped that the vehicle would not be thoroughly searched for weapons since we were heading toward the frontline. We reached Cuttington by 2 p.m., after a four-hour drive. The next day, on May 26, 1990, the rebel group, led by Prince

Johnson, overran Gbarnga, Cuttington, Phebe, Sgt. Kollie Town and Suakoko. This siege lasted for about a week. On June 2nd, the Taylor group, which had captured Salala and Kakata, 30 and 60 miles south of Cuttington, also on May 26th, had advanced north and reached the Johnson group. The two forces began a two-day battle, part of which was fought on the Cuttington campus. It was not clear to me whether that battle led Johnson to advance to the Bong Mining Company, 70 miles from Gbarnga, by way of the Phebe Hospital where he stopped for a few hours, Sgt. Kollie Town and Balama Town, five miles south of Sinyea where he spent two days and headed for Bong Mines on foot through the jungles and villages.

### The Rebels

When the rebels entered the Cuttington campus they appeared in various sizes and forms. They included children and adults (male and female) from ages 10 through 40. However, most of the fighters were men, ages 13 to 25. An astonishing feature of the rebels was their mode of dress. The Prince Johnson group wore green army fatigues captured from the defeated Liberian army. However, all of the Taylor forces wore odd clothing. Many of the men wore wedding gowns, wigs, dresses, commencement gowns from high schools, and several forms of "voodoo" regalia. All rebels wore cotton strings around one wrist and around the neck and shoulder. They all displayed black tatoos on one arm, slightly below the shoulder. They believed that any person who wore these talismans and tatoos, and strictly adhered to the laws of not eating pumpkin, having sex, touching lime and taking a bath, could not be killed in battle by enemy fire. Because of the importance of this "bullet proof" protection, there was a medicine man in residence at the Cuttington training base to administer these medicines at the end of their military training.

Most of the rebel fighters were elementary and high school students. When asked what their reward would be for fighting, they often replied that one reward was avenging the deaths of their relatives killed by the Doe army. Another reward they claimed was that Charles Taylor had promised them scholarships to complete their schooling. For the commanders and "special forces" they were promised huge sums of money ranging from \$10,000 to \$30,000 (U.S.) per person.

Almost all of the commandos, we were told, were trained in Libya and Burkina Faso. Many of them who had served in the Liberian army before 1985, had previous military training. As military personnel, most of their decisions were made quickly with heavy punishment, including execution, or tying both hands behind the back until both elbows met and jailing the offender for hours or days.

Because of the military orientations of these commandos, their preoccupation with the war, we had to learn to renegotiate agreements on a day-to-day basis. An agreement reached one day could readily be disregarded the next day. For example, a decision made to assign armed men to the college administrative building and the Africana Museum was abandoned the next day and those places were broken into by unknown intruders. When the commanders were approached on the issue, they could not give satisfactory reasons for the change of command. However, I experienced that promises made one-on-one with those leaders I dealt with were more likely to be fulfilled than those made by them when surrounded by their men.

Once the rebel leaders accepted us in their circle of trust and respect, there was a tendency for some of us administrators to be what George Orwell called "double thinkers" (Orwell, 1949). After closely associating with these commanders, trainers and fighters for more than five months, some of my colleagues tended to justify some of the brutal behaviors of these men. In some cases I could not understand whether their positions on some issues regarding actions taken by the rebels were the results of delusions, a consequence of their great understanding of the rebel cause, their lack of understanding, or merely an attempt to win favor in case the Charles Taylor forces succeeded. However, in most cases, Cuttington personnel had the institution at heart as they associated with the men-in-arms. There was only one instance where a foreign (Ghanian) faculty member connived with the rebels to take away college property.

### The ECOWAS Intervention

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) intervention in the Liberian civil war posed a great political challenge for us at Cuttington in our dealings with the Charles Taylor rebel group which was opposed to the intervention. At first we took the position of non-alliance, but it soon became clear that Cuttington had to take a position—one that was favorable to Taylor's.

After hearing Taylor's position on the rebel station, Radio Number Three in Gbarnga (formerly ELRG), that the NPFL did not welcome the intervention and that it would attack the ECOWAS forces, it occurred to us that the lives of our foreign faculty would be in danger. To confirm this intuition we consulted with Dr. Gwenegale, medical director of Phebe Hospital, who also had foreign nationals in his employ. He admitted his fear and concern about the employees and told us that the doctors and other foreign staff were contemplating a communication of resentment of the ECOWAS force.

With this information I called a general meeting and the decision was reached to send letters to ECOWAS and the United Nations (UN) expressing opposition to the peace-keeping forces. On September 6, 1990 these letters were written and sent to Charles Taylor for onward transmission to the addressees

since we had no means of posting them. Mr. Taylor was also served copies with a covering letter expressing our position on the issue. It should be stated that some members of the group honestly resented the landing of foreign troops on Liberian soil, while others felt that since the United States had refused to arbitrate the situation, the peace-keeping ECOMOG forces should be welcome to settle the seemingly unending war.

The fear for the safety of our foreign employees and the position we took did save those employees. In mid-September, reports reached us that the Taylor forces were rounding up nationals from countries with troops in ECOMOG and taking them to several locations. We heard that those in Lofa County were taken to Voinjama, those in Grand Bassa taken to Buchanan and the Liberian Agricultural Company (LAC) and so on. On September 20, 1990, we wrote to Taylor requesting, among other things, protection for our foreign staff. This was also followed by negotiations with C. O. Oliver Council, who would have been the most likely person to do the arrest, and with C. O. Cooper Saye, NPFL Commander for Bong County, who could have also carried out the arrest or given the arrest order. In these negotiations we assured the rebel commanders that these employees had sacrificed their freedom to leave and had remained with us in the institution because of their love for the college and Liberia. We tried to impress upon the rebel leaders that these foreigners were, in effect, missionaries. The commanders asked us to guarantee that these foreigners would not leave campus to travel in the countryside. They also asked us to promise that these individuals would not be involved in reconnaissance for ECOMOG. To protect these colleagues we gave our word to the commanders. None of our foreign employees were ever arrested although there was one incident of a Sierra Leoneian family being molested by a drunken rebel trainer. This trainer later apologized to the family for his actions after being confronted by his superior to whom we had reported the incident.

### Personal Experiences

There are many accounts of personal experiences by the faculty and staff who remained on campus. The first of these experiences was a near-tragic one involving primarily the Mason family. On May 29th I had gone to Phebe hospital to hear the latest news from the front line; most wounded soldiers were brought there and they often brought much news with them. I was en route from Sanoyea, forty miles southwest of Cuttington from where I could not proceed to Monrovia because of road blockage. I had been advised earlier by Dr. Mason to go to Monrovia to my wife, Kiapheh, who was quite ill then, and if possible return a week or so later. At that time, those of us at Cuttington had no idea that the Charles Taylor group had control of the road from Gbatata, Bong County to Kakata, Margibi County. We thought that their control stopped at Suakoko. At Phebe hospital, Dr. Gwenegale warned me not to go on to Cuttington because

one of Prince Johnson's men, who had already killed two people near Gbarnga and Cuttington, and had just left the Phebe hospital grounds with a hospital pickup which he had seized, was looking for me and Dr. Mason. I did not heed the warning right away, but headed for Cuttington by way of Sinyea Town. After Sinyea and near Cuttington I was stopped by one of Dr. Mason's farm workers. He was covered with mud from the Mason's rice swamp where he had been working. He asked me of the whereabouts of Dr. Mason and strongly warned me not to go home. He also asked that, if I saw Dr. Mason, to tell him not to come home, that there was a rebel at the Mason's house who had come to kill Dr. Mason and me. He explained that the rebel was already molesting Mrs. Mason but some Cuttington employees had come there and were trying to convince the rebel to leave. [The story of this ordeal could best be explained by the Masons, but I was told later that the rebel threatened to sexually molest and kill Mrs. Mason]. When Dr. Mason came home to rescue his wife, he was cut in the left palm by a rebel when he tried to push away a dagger pointed at him. The rebel later took Dr. Mason's watch, his gold ring, some money, and drinks, and headed for Kayata, a large town eight miles behind Sinyea which he claimed was his birth place. Kayata is also my home town, and the rebel had planned to meet me there, as he had been told I might have gone there. While the Masons' ordeal was going on, Dr. Gwenegale had sent word to Prince Johnson to report the two previous killings by this rebel and to express concern about the safety of Dr. Mason and me. Johnson later sent some of his men who killed the renegade rebel in Galai Town behind Sinyea, five miles from Kayata.

The second experience tested our strategy of befriending and negotiating with the rebels to save Cuttington. This strategy almost cost the life of Mrs. Cooper and Moses Bennie, a Cuttington driver, on June 2nd when they carried some wounded rebels from the Prince Johnson faction to Gbarnga. The rebels had been wounded when their Toyota bus crashed into a tree on campus. About 20 in number, these rebels had come to the campus to ask for engine oil for their bus taken from the Liberian Army. The bus had belonged to Small Rice Seed Project, an agricultural project in Bong County situated behind the Central Agriculture Research Institute. They were en route to attack the Taylor group. After obtaining the oil from us, the bus' steering locked as they drove past the Cuttington soccer field and the vehicle ran into a tree near the Harris Hall dormitory, wounding many rebels. Three of the unhurt rebels ran up the hill, where we were still inspecting the facilities, and asked for a ride to Phebe Hospital two miles away. Mrs. Cooper, who had driven up earlier, volunteered to carry some, and I offered my assigned pick-up truck and driver, Moses Bennie, to take the rest. On their way to the hospital, the group leader ordered that the wounded men be taken first to Gbarnga, their headquarters, before going to the hospital. On their way back from Gbarnga, Mrs. Cooper and Mr. Bennie were caught in a cross fire between the Johnson and the Taylor forces. Before this incident, we had no knowledge that the rebels had two factions. This

incident tested our strategy. Mrs. Cooper reported that Mr. Johnson was very appreciative to her and to Cuttington for helping his men.

Other personal experiences of mine include my being held at gun point at least five different times and told to turn over all of Cuttington's vehicles, gasoline, and fuel oil to members of the Charles Taylor rebel factions. The seizure of the Cuttington property, as well as some employee's private property (cars, furniture, clothes, etc.) began in June and continued until I left in mid-December, 1990.

### **Cuttington as a Rebel Training Base**

On July 2, 1990, at about 9 p.m. I heard a vehicle drive into my yard. By then I was getting accustomed to rebels coming to my house to order me to give them some of the college property. Dr. Mason and I had decided that I should deal with the rebels and should give them anything they wanted if my life was threatened. Out of the blue Volkswagen Rabbit came four armed rebels and Mr. Major T. Morris, Cuttington supervisor for utility and maintenance. The armed men were led by C. O. Oliver Council, head of training command for the Taylor NPFL group. Council ordered me to immediately make available three staff houses for the rebel training staff and a large dormitory for his 500 rebel trainees. He explained that the trainees had left the Konola Academy in Margibi County because of the inadequacy of space and that the men were already on their way. I had no choice but to comply. During the next day when we at Cuttington realized that there were at least 2,000 trainees and 20 trainers, and that two other dormitories and five other staff houses had also been broken into, I and two other colleagues approached Council and his assistant, C. O. Yates (a former Nimba County District Education Officer of the Ministry of Education) to discuss the discrepancy. In that brief meeting we were told that "everything in Liberia, including the grass, now belonged to Charles Taylor" and that all damage caused by the rebels would be paid for by him. We realized then that Cuttington was going to be destroyed.

From July 2 to October 4, 1990, Cuttington became a training base for 6,000 trainees and over 40 trainers and their dependents. All of the college's dormitories and more than 35 staff houses were occupied by these rebels. From a preliminary assessment undertaken by us, the estimated cost of damages resulting from the rebel occupation, from July 4th to October 4th, was about \$4 million (U. S.). The estimate included the cost of items taken or destroyed from Cuttington's two warehouses which were ransacked—vehicles, dormitories (beds and mattresses), staff houses (refrigerators, stoves, furniture sets, broken doors and windows), offices (office equipment, stationary), etc. This information was included in a report submitted to the Episcopal Church Center in New York. This report was also prepared for submission to Charles G. Taylor. After several attempts by us to meet with Taylor to pay our respects to him and discuss

the Cuttington issue, we met with Eric Scott, Special Assistant to Taylor. Scott asked that we prepare a report for use by the Ministry of Public Works when it came to repair the damages done to the college facilities. Taylor was always reluctant to meet the Cuttington delegation, g with our first written request dated September 20, 1990. However, he did associate with a few Cuttington employees on a personal basis.

Our greatest fear regarding the campus being used as a training base, was not the looting of the facilities or the personal molestations, but the likelihood of the base being attacked by Prince Johnson and by the ECOMOG forces. We learned after the base was established at Cuttington, that the change from Konola was motivated by an attack threat from the Johnson forces. Later, when the ECOMOG and Taylor disagreement heightened, it was felt that the intervention force would attack Gbarnga and Cuttington. In fact, on November 16th, the ECOMOG force did attack Gbarnga, north of Cuttington, and the Small Rice Seed project south of us, from the air. Cuttington was never hit, although an anti-aircraft gun mounted on a Mercedes Benz truck was situated on the campus near the Epiphany Chapel, making the institution an even more likely target.

#### **Cuttington as Home of the NPFL National Assembly**

On November 10, 1990 at about 9 p.m. on a rainy night, I heard a vehicle drive up into my yard. When I looked through my living room window I saw C. O. Oliver Counsil and seven armed rebels approaching my back door. When I went to meet them I was ordered to get into the Toyota pick-up, and we drove off. Shortly after I got into the vehicle, I asked Counsil where we were going and for what purpose. He replied that he could not disclose any information until we reached our destination.

This frightened me greatly. On September 20, 1990, Cuttington had written the rebel leader Charles Taylor about the destruction of Cuttington due to the presence of the training base and to solicit the return of at least one of the college vehicles taken by his men. We believe this letter contributed to the removal of the base by October 4, 1990. Counsil had earlier expressed to me his resentment of our action and had refused to transfer with his men to Camp Naama, about 40 miles North of Gbarnga. He was also aware of another letter from us to Taylor dated October 12, 1990 thanking him for the base removal and requesting protection against further looting on Cuttington. Knowing that Counsil was angry with me, that he had come for me at night with armed men, and that he refused to tell me his mission or our destination, frightened me terribly but I behaved otherwise.

Five minutes later we drove to one of the campus houses near the basketball court. The two-bedroom cottage was guarded by about eight armed men. When I entered I saw Mrs. Cooper seated to the right with two other persons



and Fr. Jelico Bright of Saint Stephen's Episcopal Church in Monrovia. Two other gentlemen were seated to the left of the small living room. Nearer the door to the left sat a slightly bald man, about 45, with an M-16 assault rifle near him. Council followed in and reported "Mr. Vice President, I have brought Dr. Topka." The V. P. thanked Council and offered me a seat near Mrs. Cooper. He introduced himself as Enoch Dogoleah, Vice President of the NPFL government, and explained his mission. He had come to "ask our permission" for the National Assembly to be based at Cuttington. He told us that Fr. Bright was heading the election commission and that all of the commission deliberations, as well as all other activities of the Assembly would take place on campus. He was therefore requesting the use of the vacant faculty and staff houses, classrooms, offices and the cafeteria for at least two weeks. After seeing Fr. Bright, who was the consultant and a co-signer of Cuttington's checks, I felt relaxed and immediately expressed our willingness to do everything to enhance the formation of an interim government. Of course, I also knew that it was not a matter of choice. However, Vice President Dogoleah proved to be a very pleasant and understanding person to work with. He was very courteous to us.

The presence of the assembly members on campus did help Cuttington to some extent. Responsible and mature civilians were now in Cuttington houses, thus minimizing destruction to the homes. The assembly members were also helpful in conveying to Taylor the situation on campus and the refusal of Council to vacate the campus with his remaining 40 or more men and women. These interventions contributed to the eventual departure of Council and his followers from campus in late January, 1991.

#### **Local Government Officials Seminar**

In addition to hosting the NPFL National Assembly, Cuttington hosted the Ministry of Internal Affairs seminar for all local officials in the Taylor-occupied territory. The seminar ran from November 13-20, 1990, and was attended by more than 500 participants from all over that part of the country. The Cuttington administrators were involved in its planning and administration. I made brief welcome remarks and later closing remarks. All references in my remarks regarding our efforts to protect the institution were applauded. I also appealed to the Taylor Government in that forum for further protection of Cuttington, the only higher institution of learning with less destruction. Several reports had indicated near-total destruction of the University of Liberia. About a week after the seminar I received a letter, dated December 6, 1990, from Samuel Saye Dokie, Minister of Internal Affairs, thanking the Cuttington Administration for its cooperation in making the seminar a success.

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\*Though not a research article as such, we have included it because of the significance of the information.

The Editor

Jacques Germain, *Peuples de la Forêt de Guinée* (Paris: Academie des Sciences d'Outre Mer, 1987), 380 pp., including maps, photos, charts. Available from ASOM (15 Rue La Perousse, 75116 Paris), 150 F

Why should a book on the forest peoples of Guinea interest Liberianists? The answer can be found on ethnic maps of the two countries. The border that separates Guinea from Liberia divides peoples without regard to common language, culture or history. At least seven ethnic groups straddle Liberia's boundaries with its neighbors. *Peuples de la Forêt de Guinée* is a study of three, the Kono, Kpelle and Mano. Based on notes the author took while he was "administrateur de brousse" in the Cercle de Nzerekore for sixteen months in 1946-1947, it is very much an old fashioned ethnography. Germain's observations are contemporaneous with those of such authorities as Holas (Kono), Mengrelis (Kpelle) and Harley (Mano), all of whom wrote well rounded descriptions of the local cultures. Germain follows this pattern, dividing his book into three parts. Part One, "Le Pays et Les Hommes" (Chapters 1-5), covers the physical geography and history of the region. Part Two, "Organisation Sociale, Politique et Religieuse" (Chapters 6-10), treats the life cycle, clan organization, settlement patterns, supernatural belief and initiation. Part Three, "Les Artisans et Les Techniques—Les Arts" (Chapters 11-13) speaks of material culture. The author is at his best in dealing with local history and political organization. Despite his relatively short stay in the region, his study is a valuable source of ethnographic fact, particularly regarding political process among the segmentary forest peoples. In part, this strength stems from his having tapped in 1946-47 an enduring memory of pre-colonial conditions. This is evident in a series of genealogical charts illustrating the histories of various descent groups. Germain's discussions of the founding of particular chiefdoms, the formation of villages, and the evolution of intergroup alliances are all insightful. Nevertheless, his work's datedness contributes to an anachronistic quality, obvious, for example, in a section that dwells on permutations of such physical traits among "the forest type" as skin color, shape of eyes, stature, head and nose size (40). This antiquated quality would not be disturbing if the book had been published as an older work, as, say, a compendium of field notes belatedly released. Yet, Germain refers to articles as recent as 1975. His updating is woefully lacking, though, for he neglects many important works of immediate concern to the study. I am not speaking of mere oversights, but rather, of an apparently conscious omission of scholarship that does not suit his agenda. For example, in his treatment of Samori, the Mandingo ruler, Germain depends

almost wholly on colonial military accounts, omitting any mention of Yves Person's exhaustive work on the "s life and times."<sup>1</sup> It is no wonder then that refers to Samori as, "l'Atilla de la Haute Guinée." Similarly, he ignores Suret-Canale's works on colonialism in Guinea, again choosing to rely on military sources.

These are only a few of the glaring omissions suggesting a bias that becomes particularly apparent when Germain speaks of Liberia, which he does with surprising frequency. Indeed, his observations are reminiscent of the botanist, August Chevalier, or the explorer, Captain d'Ollone, neither of whom recognized Liberia's rights in the region. In language that echoes Chevalier, maintains that the Liberians had less claim to the frontier than the French, because they were "restricted to the coast...completely unknown to the forest tribes" at the time of the Franco-Liberian convention of 1892 (123).<sup>2</sup> His statement is inaccurate. Most of the peoples of the frontier region were no less familiar with the Liberians than with the French, neither of whom established a presence in the area until the twentieth century. goes on to point out, with some truth, that once the Liberians intervened in the hinterland, they wrought havoc (138). And yet, he is silent about similar French activities. In referring to the "Kpelle Revolt" of 1911, he accuses the Liberians of having provoked the local peoples, noting that once the revolt was over ("crushed" in the parlance of contemporary colonial reports), the French enjoyed "excellent" relations with the Kpelle and "prestige" in a region where the Liberians could only "pretend" to have rights (140). The French priest, Father M.H. Lelong, wrote of the harsh treatment the Kpelle endured under the colonial regime, but dismisses the criticisms of this "caustic observer" (147).<sup>3</sup>

Germain's bias is also evident regarding colonial administration. He observes that the political units the Liberians recognized as "clans" had no traditional precedent (195). By contrast, he describes the "canton" as the "consecration" of a political unit that "France found on arriving in the region" (228). His implication is, of course, that the French were sensitive to indigenous political organization, while the Liberians were not. The evidence is clearly to the contrary. Paris and Monrovia occasionally admonished their personnel to respect the institutions of the subject peoples. Nevertheless, elders in both regions recall administrative practices reflecting the conviction that local institutions were, to use the words of Secretary of State King, "uncompromisingly antagonistic to the laws of humanity."<sup>4</sup> does not reserve his revisionism for Liberia alone. He accuses the of inspiring "arrogance and audacity" in the Liberians (138), blames traders for the existence of guns in the interior, and accuses y and England of disguising intentions to establish a protectorate over Liberia (138). France, we must assume, had no designs on the Black Republic, yet this was clearly not the perception of Liberians, who feared French machinations more than those of any other power.

These invidious comparisons between France and its rivals mar an otherwise solid study, which, because of its scope, and Germain's energetic fieldwork, adds useful information to a sparse ethnographic corpus. I have no competence to comment on data Germain includes on local cosmology or artisanal practice, but I trust that this information would complement the extant literature, notably Harley's and Holas's works on masking traditions.<sup>5</sup> In sum, Germain's blend of apparently conscientious fieldwork and colonial partiality calls to mind Yves Person's assessment of Louis-Gustave Binger, whose powers of observation were indisputable, but whose judgment was suspect.<sup>6</sup> Binger was a man of his times. Germain's book is a throwback to another age. It is a shame that, although French colonialism in the region is thirty years dead, Germain still contests Guinea's borders with Liberia.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Yves Person, *Samori: Une Revolution Dyula* (Dakar: Bulletin de l'Institut Fondamental d'Afrique Noire, 1968).

<sup>2</sup>cf. A. Chevalier and E. Perrot, *Les Kolatiers et les Noix de Kola* (Paris, Auguste Challamel, 1911), 154, 158.

<sup>3</sup>M.H. Lelong, *Ces Hommes qu'on Appelle Anthropophages* (Paris: Editions Alsatia, 1946).

<sup>4</sup>Records of the U.S. Department of State Relating to Liberia (1910-1929), King to Curtis, 26 May 1916, 882.00/540.

<sup>5</sup>George Way Harley, *Masks as Agents of Social Control in Northeast Liberia* (Cambridge, MA: Peabody Museum, 1950); Bohumil Holas, *Les Masques Kono* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1952).

<sup>6</sup>Person, *Samori* (I), 6.

Martin Ford

Blaine Harden, *Africa: Dispatches From A Fragile Continent* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1990. 333 pp.)

*Persona non grata* is normally a phrase reserved for diplomats and other persons who have fallen out of favor with a host government. Lately, however, it has become the mark of "distinction" for those journalists who have the gumption to write and speak freely and factually about human rights abuses and the excesses of Third World authoritarian governments.

For his book, *Africa: Dispatches From a Fragile Continent*, Blaine Harden was nearly kicked out of Kenya, banned for life from Liberia, is certainly not welcomed in Mobutu's Zaire, and may not feel comfortable in several other African countries while their current "Big Man," or head of state is in office. But Blaine's lot is not a lone one. He joins the rank of J. Gus Libenow (*Liberia: The Evolution of Privilege*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1969), John Gunther (*Inside Africa*, New York: Harper, 1955) and several other foreign correspondents who have dared to tell African leaders what local journalists would not dare write or speak.

The good thing about being banned for life from a country like Liberia is that it is not for the duration of Harden's life, but in this case, the life span of Liberia's late dictator, Samuel Doe.

The book consists of an introduction and seven chapters that describes the socio-economic and political aspects of life in seven African countries: Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria, Sudan, Kenya, Zaire and Zambia. "I wanted to give the problem of Africa a human face," the author says in the beginning. "The news from the continent that seems doomed to overpopulation, famine, and political instability is incomplete and misleading," he adds.

The main ingredient in Harden's book and the portion with specific relevance to Liberia is Chapter Six, which he aptly named "The Good, The Bad and The Greedy." Here, he describes a disease that seems to be immune to the political will of the African people. What he calls "Big Man's Disease" is a malady which plagues the African continent, and could very well be the source of most of its economic, social and political problems. Without paraphrasing, Harden's "Big Man" is thus:

His face is on the money. His photography hangs in every office in his realm . . . He names streets, football stadiums, hospitals and universities after himself . . . He insists on being called 'doctor' or 'conqueror' or 'teacher' or 'the big elephant' or 'the

number one peasant' or 'the wise old man' or 'the national miracle' or 'the most popular leader in the world.' His every pronouncement is reported on the front page. He sleeps with the wives and daughters of powerful men in his government . . . He bans all political parties except the one he controls. He rigs elections. He emansculates the courts. He cows the press. He stifles academia. He goes to church . . . He is . . . the richest man in the country.

To illustrate the various dimensions of "Big Man's Disease," Harden describes three African heads of State. Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, who he describes as "perhaps Africa's most likeable 'Big Man,' but an example of fine sentiments, bad economics and disastrous development." Liberia's Samuel Doe who, "like Bokassa and Amin before him, blended buffoonery and brutality while bankrupting his country and turning his government into an international laughing-stock." And Daniel Arap Moi of Kenya who is neither a buffoon like Doe nor a dreamer like Kaunda. Instead, "he is a stolid, slow-speaking, not-very dynamic Big Man who deftly uses the tools of his trade—payoffs and coercion—to stay in power."

As an African, my pride wants to force me to condemn Harden's book as another "outsider looking in" perspective by a westerner who is insensitive to African values and tradition. As a journalist, I am forced to examine it from the standpoint of objective reality. It is a good book about the bad things some African leaders are doing to their own people. It is not a so good book to the extent that it ignores some of the good things Africans are doing irrespective of tyranny, bankrupt economies, and declining social order.

Harden narrates his stories with the keen eyes of a journalist, and the analytical mind of an author. His ability to remember details of conversations in situations where he clearly could not have had a tape recorder is remarkable.

If the book has any faults, it is that the language is more colorful in certain areas than is necessary to convey the message: the reference to Nigeria's Ibrahim Babangida as "a gap-toothed general with an endearing smile..." or to Kenya's Moi as having "crooked teeth" are references which the book could do without.

Another problem with the book concerns the accuracy of some details relating to Liberia. Contrary to what Harden represented, Doe never made his birthday a national holiday. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf neither has four children (she has two sons) nor was she jailed "for ten years at Does insistence (p. 245)." Doe was an eleventh grade drop-out and not a high school graduate (p. 242). Martin Brown, not Marcus Brown was a disc jockey on state-owned Liberian Radio (p. 240). The U.S. government did not "supervise the voting" (p. 246) in Liberia's rigged general election, despite what a USAID official may have told Mr. Harden.

It has been mentioned that another Kenyan journalist has some problems with the details in the Kenyan section of the book. I cannot speak for the other countries which Blaine covered. The fact remains that as a journalist, Mr. Harden should be held to a higher standard on accuracy when producing the written word for human consumption.

Despite these micro flaws, the macro picture of Blaine Harden's Africa remains intact.

He has earned his *persona non grata* stripes among African leaders. Among the African people, I dare say that he should be seen as an outsider who risked a lot to bring their story to the outside world.

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Robert Kappel and Werner Korte, Eds., *Human Rights Violations in Liberia, 1980-1990: A Documentation*. Bremen, Germany: Informationszentrum Afrika, Liberia Working Group, 1990, introduction, table of contents, 308 pp., paperbound with ring binder. DM 20, \$13.50.

This assemblage of about 200 documents is another production of the prolific Liberia Working Group of Bremen, Germany which has contributed so much to our knowledge of contemporary Liberia. Edited by Robert Kappel and Werner Korte, the collection surveys ten years of human rights violations by the former Doe government. The documentation consists of narrative reports, news analyses, personal recollections, historical extracts, previous publications of the Liberia Working Group, and appeals from organizations like Amnesty International. Almost all of the sources are in English; a few documents are in German. Representing a concerted effort by an international intelligentsia, this collection received contributions from Holland, America, Liberia, Nigeria, and England.

The sources effectively depict the suffering of the Liberian people under the regime of former President Doe and his Krahn supporters. They speak of imprisonment without cause shown, torture, fear, intimidation, and the total erosion of all civil rights. Two sets of documents are particularly graphic: those describing the assault upon the University of Liberia on August 22, 1984 and those compiled in the aftermath of the failed coup of Thomas Quiwonkpa (11/12/85) whose body parts were then publicly paraded in Monrovia. Particularly disturbing is the revelation of U.S. cooperation with and indulgence of President Doe even after his violations became public knowledge. Support of Doe (\$500 million since 1980) was the price the U.S. seemed willing to pay to guarantee the security of its Liberian interests.

The appearance of this volume is particularly timely. It furnishes pertinent background material for an understanding of the current civil war in Liberia with its long casualty list of about 20,000 dead and for the subsequent demise of the Doe regime. Given the repressive atmosphere in Liberia from 1980 to 1990, it is astonishing that this documentation is as extensive as it is. The editors draw heavily upon the bold reporting of Liberian newspapers like *Footprints Today* and the *Daily Observer* as well as upon the London-based *West Africa* periodical. Remaining entries come from a wide variety of sources such as newspapers, periodicals like *Liberia Forum*, J. Gus Liebenow's *Liberia, The Quest for Democracy*, U.S. House of Representatives and Senate documents, and some articles from German Newspapers (not translated).

Clearly this collection is a necessary aid in the reconstruction of contemporary Liberian history. It complements and updates the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights' publication *Liberia: A Promise Betrayed* (1986).

Unfortunately the organization and format of this volume do leave something to be desired. First, the copy is neither particularly clean nor is it standardized. Sentences in articles should not be underlined. Let the reader choose what is important. It would also have been more convenient for the reader if each article had been computer rendered instead of being xeroxed. A uniform font and the appropriate source and date at the head of every entry would have improved the physical quality of the text. Second, standard editorial practice is not to print every possible source relevant to the topic. Judicious selection illustrative of the main articles bearing on the six topics presented in the collection would have sufficed. Naturally, in a topic of this importance, the temptation exists to print everything. For the sake of the reader, this tendency should be moderated.

The lawyers Committee for Human Rights in its *Liberia: A Promise Betrayed* has developed an effective format for source presentation. The Committee presents many pages of introductory commentary which are followed by the primary material. The reader is thus made aware of the background of his documentation. In comparison, the Liberia Working Group's volume in some places appears as undigested source material which, at least for the uninitiated reader, is, in its sheer bulk, overwhelming. Far better would it have been if each of the six parts of this collection had been prefaced with a summary that explained the events recorded by the succeeding documents.

Nevertheless, the Liberia Working Group is to be commended for its presentation to the world of the most current documentation about the gross betrayal of a people and a country by an inept and brutal ruler and his coterie. The documents reveal Doe as a sort of "group type" afflicted with paranoia, self-absorption, and lack of conscience in the pursuit of power—all attributes commonly associated with megalomaniacs like Stalin or Saddam Hussein. Doe's crimes and his subsequent demise give credence to Lord Acton's well-worn but still pertinent dictum: "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

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Santosh C. Saha, *A History of Agriculture in Liberia 1822-1970: Transference of American Values* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1990, pp. 130) and *A History of Agriculture in West Africa: A Guide to Information sources* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1990, pp. 128).

Santosh C. Saha's books are two volumes in the series, "Studies in African Economic and Social Development" published by the Mellen Press. Volume 5 is an analysis of Liberian agricultural history, with a specific attempt to dispute a thesis by historians that agricultural activities were sublimated by Liberia's ruling class of expatriate Americans who had a bias towards trade. Volume 6 is an attempt to fill a void in the paucity of bibliographical sources for research on the history of agriculture in West Africa, including Liberia. In volume 5, *A History of Agriculture in Liberia 1822-1970*, Saha presents a brief but interesting excursion into Liberian history and the relevance of agriculture in these historical developments. Because of their salient role in Liberian history, the expatriated freed slaves, the Americo-Liberians, are prominent in what the author sees as the pattern of agriculture in Liberia between 1822 and 1970 (and beyond): an overall low per capita food production and poor economic performance. Historians and critics, according to Saha, have blamed this agricultural crisis on the Americo-Liberians who, in their quest for "trade," have neglected the agrarian economy. The author rejects this reasoning, and in a wholly descriptive and interpretive analysis, attempts to provide justification for the positive influence the expatriate Liberians (who later became the country's ruling class for more than a century) had on Liberian agriculture. The author then makes a logical, step-by-step argument to validate his case that returning ex-slaves did not neglect agriculture, first analyzing the status of agriculture before 1822 and the founding of Liberia by the American Colonization Society (ACS) and the appointment of Jehudi Ashmun as its first governor. Ashmun, who served as governor from 1822 to 1828, saw agriculture not only as a basis of subsistence for the new colonists ("it would be a shame to depend on half-naked savages to feed you," he told colonists; p. 39), but used it as a means of colonial expansion. Ashmun thus set up an agricultural policy which included efforts to "enlarging the limits of the American Colonization Society's acknowledged jurisdiction" with the formation of new agricultural oriented settlements. Under this policy, more arable land were acquired from natives, initially around the Stockton Creek, Caldwell and New Georgia areas. A model for what would later become the government's agricultural policy implementing arm was also established during this period in Ashmun's Committee for Agriculture. One major benefit of the relationship between the natives and the expatriates was the mutuality in

acquiring agricultural skills. Through what the author termed "transference of American values," the expatriates introduced such concepts as the ownership of private property, fencing farm lands, surveying and record keeping and plantation farming. They also introduced the natives to the use of modern farm equipment to replace their weak tools. They learned farming methods from the natives when they observed that their own methods acquired from former slave masters were not conducive to productive farming in the Liberian climate. Saha makes a contribution to the literature on Liberian studies in presenting one dimension of the ageless theme of the role of the Americo-Liberians in Liberia's socio-economic history. However, there are several shortcomings in the work, which, as suggested by the title, should have been more extensive in the coverage of agricultural events during the period studied. Primarily, the brevity of the study (130 pages, including references and bibliography) leaves the reader's quest for agricultural history mostly unquenched. A historical survey usually is demarcated into periods that are either complimentary or contradictory. There is no systematic demarcation of the historical periods. Rather, the author leads the reader around pockets of historical periods. An analysis being made of the 1838 period would suddenly transgress to the 1980s and then back to the period under analysis. There is no consistent time frame of reference in the work. Empirical data, vital to such a major study, is very scarce in the book. A time series analysis of exports and imports, or trade balances, was marginally present (for example he details a two year period in the case of timber and a forty year period, not including the 1900s, in the case of coffee). The absence of substantive empirical data did not do justice to the validity of some of the author's assertions which came across as mere sweeping statements (for example "by the middle of the 1860s sugar cane plantations began to decline in Liberia" p.64; there is no comparative period nor a magnitude of decline to support this statement).

The author also does not delve into the details of significant periods or institutions that affected agriculture in Liberia. For example the decline of coffee and sugar exports in the 1890s seriously affected the country's foreign indebtedness and the ability of its rulers to control the interior and thus the acceptance of the generous Firestone loan agreement in 1926 to relieve some of this debt. Only cursory mention is made of the impact of the Open Door Policy, Operation Production, the relationships with international organizations including the West African Rice Development Association (WARDA), the World Bank and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) who designed means between the 1960s and 1970s to lower Liberia's food import and import costs and generate export diversification for the country. The author also exerts great energy to defend a thesis with no reference to sources or works that had developed the antithesis that Americo-Liberians were responsible for the demise of agriculture in Liberia. Moreover, it confuses the reader when the author suggests in his opening paragraphs that trade and agriculture were

mutually exclusive, yet in his analysis gives the indication that agriculture was a necessary and sufficient condition for trade, especially in the export oriented cash crops the settlers cultivated. In spite of its brevity and empirical shortcomings, this book makes a profound contribution to the wide body of literature on the historical relationship between the settlers and the development of Liberia, especially in agriculture. Saha's historical expedition dispels a myth that the settlers were not innovative in agricultural activities. In Volume 5, *A History of Agriculture in West Africa: A Guide to Information Sources*, Saha presents a wide range of bibliographical sources on various agricultural topics in West Africa, agri-business, public policy, research methodology, etc. It is designed as an aid to scholarly research and teaching. The book represents the result of a painstaking effort to produce agricultural resources that cover up to 1988 (the earliest inclusion is a work done in 1966). While it compliments other bibliographical works on African studies, its specificity on West African agriculture is a remarkable contribution. The work is presented according to research themes and cross referenced by bibliographic character (e.g. articles, essays, dissertations). As such, it creates difficulties for a busy researcher who needs to locate sources on a particular West African country since the works are not referenced by country. The works on Liberia, while adequate, seems to understate the scarcity of studies on Liberia's agriculture. Some unpublished studies which represent major contributions to agriculture were not included. These include WARDA reports, theses by Liberians who studied agricultural economics under a USAID grant between 1976 and 1979 and dissertation studies including Florence Chenoweth's 1986 doctoral thesis at the University of Wisconsin, "Small Farmers Response to Economic Incentives: A Case Study of small Farmers in Liberia" (Chenoweth had served as Liberia's Agriculture Minister prior to pursuing her studies and details the problems involved in transforming the subsistence sector). Since most of Saha's inclusions on Liberia were derived from published sources (few senior thesis from Cuttington College students were included), this may be an invitation for Liberians to dust off their research works and have them published. There certainly is a continuous need for annotated bibliographies on specific disciplines as they relate to Africa, and Liberia's representation, especially in the aftermath of the Second Republic, is vital.

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Hassan B. Sisay, *Big Powers and Small Nations: A Case Study of United States—Liberian Relations* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1985), 202 pp.

The book is designed to examine the relations between the United States, a big power and Liberia, a small power. In order to achieve this, the author divides the book into eleven chapters. Chapter 1 discusses the socio-cultural, economic and political dynamics within the American society that subsequently propelled the formation of the American Colonization Society (ACS). According to the author, "the most crucial factor, however, appeared to have been the growing fear among white Americans about the increasing number of free blacks in the United States and their potentially disquieting influence on their enslaved brethren" (p.1). Chapter 2 examines the process of state formation in Liberia, g with the repatriation of free black slaves from the United States to Liberia, under the auspices of the American Colonization Society and the Government of the United States. Chapter 3 concentrates on the efforts to maintain Liberia. The author's emphasis is on "the efforts to bolster the sagging [Liberian] economy" (p. 23). He discusses, inter alia, Liberia's efforts to secure loans from various European powers; the vitriolic internal debate over the loans and their attendant impact on the country's sovereignty; and the consequent transformation of Liberia into a pawn of the great powers—particularly, "chess game." Chapter 4 deals with the emergence of Liberia's resource potentials a' la the cultivation of rubber, and the resultant development of interest by both American officialdom and private interests—Firestone. Chapter 5 revolves around the League of Nations' Commission of Inquiry's investigation of the practice of slavery in Liberia. Chapter 6 deciphers the reaction of the various sectors of the international system to findings of the League of Nations' Commission of Inquiry on the practice of slavery in Liberia. Chapter 7 discusses the problems associated with the efforts of the Liberian state to expand its territorial control into the hinterland where the various indigenous groups predominated. Chapter 8 deals with the financial controversy between the Government of Liberia and the Firestone Plantations Company. Chapter 9 examines Liberia's role in World War Two, particularly, the supply of rubber to assist the wartime efforts of the United States and the allies. Chapter 10, the Disintegration of the Republic, is what I term the "loaded section of the book." This is because it attempts to deal with a confluence of issues: 1) the efforts of the Barclay Administration to improve wages and working conditions of Liberian workers; 2) the Tubman Administration's drive to unify "Americo-Liberians" and the [indigenes] (p. 148); 3) Tubman's "open door policy" and the resultant

influx of foreign capital; 4) United States' development assistance program; 5) the Tolbert era, particularly the rise of grassroots opposition to the status quo. Using the dominant analytical lenses in Liberian studies, the author characterized the incipient Americo-Liberian elites or ruling class against the suppressed indigenes who constituted the lower class; and 6) the April 12, 1980 coup that brought Sergeant Doe to power. Chapter 11 is a summary of the various chapters.

The book can be assessed at two levels: its strengths, and weaknesses. In the case of the former, two major areas are noteworthy. First, the book's overall strength is its historical dimension of United States-Liberian relations. For example, the author provides an outstanding chronological exposition on the involvement of the United States in the evolution of the modern Liberian state. Second, the author does a good job in discussing the various constellation of internal forces that have participated in Liberia's state formation and state building.

In terms of weaknesses, there are three major ones. First, the book's emphasis is on the historical dimension of United States-Liberian relations. Consequently, it does not do justice to its title: relations constitute a multifaceted phenomenon with political, economic, socio-cultural, ideological and military-security dimensions. Thus, the book should have examined how these factors individually and collectively shaped United States-Liberian relations. Second, chapter 10 on the "Disintegration of the Republic," should have been divided into three separate chapters on: 1) the Tubman era, 2) the Tolbert epoch, and 3) Military Rule. The primary foci of each of these chapters should have been: a) the nature of the two countries' relations in the aforementioned areas, and b) the interplay between domestic conditions in Liberia, and the country's relations with the United States. In its current formulation, the "loaded chapter 10" tries to deal with several important issues that are pivotal to the two countries' relations in a compact and cursory manner.

Finally, like most books on Liberia, the author attributes the conflict that has traditionally underpinned the country's evolution cum development, to differences between the various indigenous groups on the one hand and the "Americo-Liberians or settlers" on the other hand. Such an analytical framework is flawed for several reasons. First, the settler stock was not a monolith: there were internal ethnocultural cum class-differences between, for example, the light-skinned and the dark-skinned settlers. Importantly, these differences often manifested themselves in the efforts of the two groups to control the state's apparatus. Second, the formal incorporation of Liberia into the global economic system in the 1920s, heralded the formation of a modern class-based society that hitherto stressed the individual's relationship to the major means of production, rather than ethnocultural characteristics. Thus, since then the Liberian ruling class has consisted of an amalgam of the owner of foreign capital, particularly

from the United States, and local Liberian compradors representing all shades of the ethnics . Third, if one even argues *ceteris paribus* that the dominant conflict in the Liberian society has been between the Americo-Liberians and the indigenes, then how does one explain the fierce opposition to the status quo by several members of the settler stock? Although ethnicity is an important variable, nevertheless, it must be located within the broader political economy if it is to have explanatory value.

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## NEWS AND NOTES

### Letter to the Editor

Lagos Nigeria  
February 18, 1991.

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Mr. Editor:

I have just read volume XV, Number 1, 1990 of the *Liberian Studies Journal*, published by the Liberian Studies Association, Inc.

My attention was especially drawn to Dr. Byron Tarr's "*Founding of the Liberia Action Party*". His recollections of the nearly three years of behind-the-scene political activities of Jackson F. Doe, Samuel K. Doe, Peter A. Johnson, Samuel D. Hill, J. Bernard Blamo and Augustus F. Caine, at a time when politics was banned in Liberia, is quite revealing.

Dr. Tarr's revelations provide valuable building blocks for piecing together the political realities of a much debated era in Liberian history, and the role of key collaborating actors, who later found themselves dancing on opposing political platforms, to the beats of distant drums.

While commending Dr. Tarr for his contribution to the lively debate on Liberia during the past decades, I wish to make a few observations regarding some facts in his publication as follows:

- I. On page 17 of the Journal (Volume XV, No. 1, 1990), Dr. Tarr asserts in paragraph 4 that the *Revelation* was a news organ of the Progressive Alliance of Liberia (PAL)

On the contrary, the *Revelation* magazine was neither owned nor published by PAL. It was a mimeographed magazine published by some students of the University of Liberia, under the editorship of Vittorio A. Jesus Weeks, son of a former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Rocheforte L. Weeks.

The *Revelation* had its genesis in the University of Liberia student demonstration in 1973, when protesting students occupied the grounds of the Executive Mansion while President Tolbert was at the Tubman High School in Sinkor. They demanded the immediate removal of the University President, Dr. Advertus A. Hoff, who had suspended a male and a female student for what was officially referred to as "holding hands" on campus.

Reluctance on part of the Liberian Press to publish the students' demands led to the publication of a mimeographed document designed to reveal the students' demands, and thus the *Revelation* magazine was launched.

Following the resolution of that crisis the *Revelation* magazine remained alert to other socio-political issues including activities of *Citizens of Liberia Against Gambling* (COLAG) and *Citizens of Liberia in Defense of Albert Porte* (COLANDAP). The *Revelation* staff helped organize a mass rally to raise funds for the legal defence of Albert Porte in a case brought against him by then Finance Minister, Stephen A. Tolbert.

The *Revelation* collapsed following excessive fines (\$17,000.00) imposed upon its staff members by the Liberian Supreme Court and the jailing of its entire staff for publishing a caricature of the statute of justice with the blind-fold falling off its face, and a cover story supporting Albert Porte in a case of defamation of character, which was being reviewed by the Supreme Court.

The news organ of the Progressive Alliance of Liberia (PAL) was the *Revolution*, a tabloid with photographs, published in the United States of America. Copies were circulated in Liberia by clandestine means, which Dr. Tarr authoritatively exposed in his publication under review.

- II. In the third paragraph, page 18 of the Journal, Dr. Tarr writes, "MOJA first public organizational meeting was held in late 1972 at the Sinkor residence of University of Liberia's economic professor Togba Nah Tipoteh."

While I discontinued membership in the Movement for Justice in Africa (MOJA) in 1974, as a founding member, I wish to comment on events leading to the organization of MOJA, and in the process, address the notion of a "public organizational meeting" prior to the founding of MOJA.

The decade of the seventies was one referred to in the Liberian student movement as an "era of critical consciousness". Firstly, the Tubman generation of University students, muffled by an un-written code of silence, was being succeeded by a more daring brand of Tolbert's "Precious Jewels". [President Tolbert referred to the youths of Liberia as his precious jewels, whom he challenged in 1971 to explore new frontiers, and question old concepts, in the national effort to evolve a "wholesome functioning society" ].

This was a far cry from the warning of Vice President Tolbert, who during the trial of Ambassador Henry B. Fahnbulleh, Sr., accused of plotting to overthrow President Tubman in 1968, told students at the University of Liberia to "leave politics and study your lessons", after they went to court enmasse and cheered for Fahnbulleh.

Winds of change occasioned by the decade of the seventies became more evident, when during the 1973 student demonstration at the Executive Mansion against the head of the University of Liberia, President Tolbert drew applause from the student movement when he urged the University President to "live up to twentieth century realities".

By 1973, students of the University of Liberia had organized a debating society whose officers included Dougba Caranda, Yvette Chesson, Vahplahn Holman and Gabriel Fernandez, among others. I was elected its first chairman.

Experiences of the student movement in Liberia during the Tubman administration were such that general awareness of global issues, and their relevance to African and Liberian realities was negligible in student circles.

When some university students, including Krainga Harris, E. K. Sherman and William Appleton, demonstrated at the French Embassy near Monrovia against the French government's bomb tests in the Sahara desert in the sixties, they were accused by the Liberian government of being "Socialists", arrested and jailed. The rest of the student body went about business as usual.

It was against this background that the decade of the seventies ushered in a new, vocal brand of students, who defiantly debated issues ranging from emergency powers given to President Tolbert, to the anti-apartheid struggle; from decolonization and support for African liberation movements, to Jesse Jackson's request for dual citizenship for African-Americans, during his visit to Liberia in 1972 in support of the National Fund Raising Rally.

An Azanian (South African) political science lecturer, Vusumsi Make, who in concert with Fulbright professor Dr. Jean Martin, Dr. Amos Sawyer, Dr. Togba Nah Tipoteh and Prof. Abraham L. James, sponsors of the University of Liberia Debating Society, sought to expose students of the University of Liberia to the struggles of Blacks in South Africa against apartheid.

In March 1973 Prof. Make borrowed two films from the British Embassy near Monrovia, titled: *"The End of the Dialogue"*, and *"The Last Grave at Dimbazi"*. The University rules on extra-curricular activities restricted campus programs to sponsorship by registered campus organizations. All attempts by him to have the Political Science Student Association and the U. N. Students Association sponsor the films failed, as the aftermath of the Tubman era continued to linger in some quarters.

It was the Debating Society which sponsored the showing of the films on March 21, 1973, to mark the 13th anniversary of the Sharpsville massacre in South Africa. For the first in Liberia, students and lecturers at the University saw the violence and brutality of apartheid. The deafening silence which followed the end of the film show was eloquent.

Dr . Amos Sawyer, a sponsor of the Debating Society, who served as master of ceremonies moved forward and posed a question: "Well, you have seen the situation of our people in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, what do you think we can do about it?"

Those present advanced many suggestions including public demonstrations against apartheid. The prevailing views forming a consensus demanded that we organize a mass awareness campaign to mobilize public opinion and government's support for African liberation movements.

Lastly, it became n to find a name for the new organization, which would be dedicated solely to the African liberation struggle. The Movement for Justice in Africa (MOJA) was agreed upon.

Thus, MOJA, formed by students and faculty of the University of Liberia, was formally launched. The formation of MOJA out of a program sponsored by the University of Liberia Debating Society was a spontaneous action informed by the shocking aftermath of the Sharpsville massacre seen on screen thirteen years after that unfortunate incident. There was no prior "organizational meeting" for the formation of the Movement of Justice in Africa ( MOJA ) .

The 1972 meeting at the residence of Dr . Tipoteh, which Dr . Tarr referred to, and to which I was invited, centered around the concept of forming an organization resembling a corporation, in which individuals would hold shares, and engage in collective activities in support of community development, especially in the rural areas.

Most of those invited to that meeting were Liberians of rural background, returning home from abroad with advance degrees. A copy of Tipoteh's invitation to that meeting (which I still retain) carries the list of those invited, including Dr. Augustus F. Caine, Counsellor Chea Cheapoo, Dr. Vuyu Golokai, and Counsellor Seward Cooper, then a student at the University of Liberia, among others.

Suspicion on part of the government, and subsequent security activities discouraged the growth of this organization, which Dr . Tipoteh later transformed into the communal-type *Susukuu* agricultural project in the Putu Region of Grand Gedeh County, during the latter half of the decade of the seventies .

Dr. Byron Tarr deserves credit for the rare opportunity he provides students of Liberian studies to explore some aspects of the nature of Liberian politics.

Best wishes for the Liberian Studies Association, Inc; and for the *Journal*,  
Maximum success !

Yours truly,

J. Emmanuel Zehkpehge Bowier  
Former Chairman, U. L. Debating Society  
Founding Member, Movement for Justice in Africa (MOJA)

## DOCUMENT

### From the U.S. Department of State 1990 Human Rights Reports.

#### Liberia

At the beginning of 1990, Liberia was a nation which, while theoretically under a constitution and legal system patterned on America's, was in essence ruled by one man: Samuel K. Doe, through his army and political party. In late December 1989, a small group of insurgents from the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), led by Charles Taylor, crossed into Liberia from the Ivory Coast to attack government targets in northeastern Liberia's Nimba county. The Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) responded by carrying out a brutal series of attacks on civilian targets in Nimba, singling out members of the Mano and Gio tribes for retribution because of their perceived support for the rebels.

The Gio and Mano responded by siding with the insurgents and, in turn, targeting Doe's tribe (the Krahn), along with the Mandingo, whose role as small merchants made them unpopular, and many of whom were perceived as supporting the government. The insurgency spread throughout Liberia, but, although NPFL forces reached the suburbs of Monrovia in early June, they were unable to defeat the AFL. By early July all semblance of the old government's authority had vanished, leaving a stalemate in which various military commanders wielded de facto executive and judicial power in their respective areas of control. Eventually the NPFL was driven back by a five-nation West African Peacekeeping force (ECOMOG), which entered Monrovia at the end of August, and a splinter rebel group, the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL), led by former Taylor military commander Prince Johnson. An "Interim Government of National Unity" (IGNU), formed in Banjul in August by Liberian exiles, with Amos Sawyer as President, was then able to enter the ravaged city. The three warring factions (NPFL, INPFL, and AFL) met in Banjul on December 20-21 and agreed to hold additional meetings to work towards a cease-fire and holding another all-Liberia conference in Liberia to form an interim government within 60 days.

Both the rebel and the AFL soldiers killed innocent civilians for reasons ranging from ethnic identity to suspected collaboration with one of the other sides. Most of the soldiers involved in the conflict are poorly trained and barely, if at all, disciplined. Their behavior has been the greatest source of human rights abuses in Liberia in 1990, and they are collectively responsible for the deaths of thousands of civilians.

Liberia began 1990 with a mixed economy based on traditional agriculture and exports of iron ore, rubber, and timber. Virtually all export activity has



ceased, and a great deal of the traditional agriculture has been disrupted by the massive population displacements caused by the war. With the exception of a single rubber plantation operating behind rebel lines, almost all organized economic activity had ceased at year's end.

The overall human rights situation in Liberia in 1990 was appalling. All combatants routinely engaged in indiscriminate killing and abuse of civilians, looting, and ethnically based executions, with one of the worst single episodes occurring in July when AFL soldiers killed approximately 600 persons taking refuge in the courtyard of St. Peter's Church. Leaders of all the armed groups did little or nothing to stop the killings and, in some cases, may have encouraged them or been directly responsible for the abuses. Thousands, if not tens of thousands, of civilians died in the Liberian civil war, many of them from malnutrition and disease brought on by economic collapse, and over 50 percent of the population has been displaced. Not even Doe himself was immune. On September 9, he was captured and tortured to death by Prince Johnson and his INPFL forces.

## **Respect for Human Rights**

### **I. Respect for the integrity of the Person, Including Freedom from:**

#### **A. Political and Other Extrajudicial Killing**

In addition to the thousands of civilians killed extrajudicially by the warring parties (see Section 1.g), there were a number of killings specifically committed for political reasons. In January former political activist Robert Phillips was brutally murdered in his Monrovia home. although the Doe government's Special Antiterrorist Unit was probably responsible, there was no government investigation.

As fighting drew nearer Monrovia, reports proliferated of suspected NPFL sympathizers—including Mano and Gio members of the AFL—being detained and killed. On the other side, there are reliable reports that the NPFL executed several prominent Liberian political figures, including former Liberia Action Party leader Jackson F. Doe. On September 9, President Doe was tortured by Prince Johnson and the INPFL, later dying of his wounds.

#### **B. Disappearance**

Disappearance were common throughout Liberia in 1990, with the AFL, NPFL, and INPFL abducting and killing civilians, sometimes in large numbers, who were perceived as enemies, based primarily on ethnic identity. The full extent of this activity may never be known. NPFL and INPFL leaders threatened

severe consequences to members of their organizations engaging in such activities, but it is unlikely that these warnings had any real effect.

### **C. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment**

The most graphic example of torture in 1990 was the videotaped interrogation and torture of President Doe by rebel leader Prince Johnson and his followers. The AFL is reported to have routinely beaten captives, often severely, and both sides subjected prisoners to mock executions, including the NPFL's mock execution of an American journalist held by them in September. Reports of the torture of captives in the Executive Mansion by Doe's followers were frequent and credible but in most cases difficult to confirm as most of the victims were subsequently executed. As the fighting intensified, AFL soldiers brutally tortured and systematically executed suspected NPFL sympathizers held in the grossly overcrowded Barclay Training Center prison. Both the NPFL and the INPFL severely beat and tortured prisoners in order to extract information. There are also reports that some ECOMOG troops resorted to similar tactics. Before the civil war began, conditions for prisoners in the nation's jails were hazardous to life and limb. Prisoners were denied access to family and medical care. Cells were small, crowded, and filthy, and care of captives was haphazard at best. Several inmates of a county jail in Zwedru, Grand Gedeh county, had to be admitted to a local clinic suffering from malnutrition when the commander of the prison embezzled their rations; one died. Conditions at the maximum security facility at Belle Yella have long been of concern; there have been many credible reports that inmates there have died in the last few years as a result of disease, malnutrition, or torture. Some prisons were reportedly opened by forces of all the factions, but there was little information on the fate of individual prisoners.

### **D. Arbitrary Arrest, Detention, or Exile**

The 1985 Constitution provides specific legal safeguards for the rights of the accused, including warrants for arrests, and the right of detainees to be charged or released within 48 hours. These rights, although sometimes enforced, were frequently violated, either due to procedural incompetence or to willful acts by the authorities, particularly in cases involving national security. Brief detentions were frequently used as a form of petty harassment. Judicial inefficiency and neglect often resulted in prolonged detention without charge. However, by early July the entire legal system had ceased to function, and whatever legal safeguards that had previously existed had vanished.

At the outset of the civil war, Doe's followers rounded up hundreds of male Gio and Mono residents of Monrovia during January and February. No warrants were issued for their arrests, and no judicial officer reviewed the action.

Many were questioned and released, others were held for long periods or killed. During the fighting throughout the war, both sides detained members of opposing ethnic groups at will, with no procedural safeguards. As fighting drew nearer the capital, the frequency of arbitrary arrest and execution of perceived enemies by both the government and the NPFL increased markedly.

### **E. Denial of Fair Public Trial**

In January Liberia possessed a legal system modeled closely on that in the United States, including a judicial structure with a Supreme Court at its apex, protections for civil rights such as the right to be charged or released within 48 hours of arrest, and a requirement for arrest and search warrants. In practice, however, the system afforded little protection for defendants' rights. Corruption was pervasive among court officials, lack of training and supplies hampered the work of those who had the will to work, and the system as a whole was subject to inordinate executive interference. By July, the system had completely collapsed along with the rest of civil authority, and justice was in the hands of military commanders and their units.

In March, in an effort to win public and international support, President Doe made a number of conciliatory gestures towards his critics, including ordering the release of imprisoned Liberia Unification Party leader Gabriel Kpolleh, attorney Ceapar Mabande, and several others. They had been awaiting a retrial ordered by the Supreme Court of their controversial 1988 treason convictions.

There were a number of other political prisoners at the time of the collapse of the Doe government. Many of these are believed to have been released.

### **F. Arbitrary Interference with Privacy, Family, Home, or Correspondence**

The almost complete lack of discipline among AFL and rebel soldiers and the collapse of civil authority made instances of military interference with civilian life common in 1990. Many of these instances centered around theft or extortion, with many AFL and rebel soldiers regarding possession of a weapon as a license to steal or intimidate. In the early months of the fighting, refugees from Nimba reported AFL soldiers going from village to village, demanding cash and goods from the residents and beating or killing those who refused to surrender their possessions. In some cases, entire villages were looted and then burned by marauding troops. Similarly, when NPFL forces took the port city of Buchanan in May, they looted the town's shops. There was extensive looting by the AFL and later the NPFL, INPFL, and even ECOMOG in Monrovia and its suburbs. The INPFL, AFL, and NPFL routinely commandeered vehicles, equipment, gasoline, and food from rubber plantations and other businesses with no

compensation. During the fighting in Monrovia, even diplomatic facilities were subject to forcible entry and looting, primarily by NPFL and AFL forces.

### **G. Use of Excessive Force and Violations of Humanitarian Law in Internal Conflicts**

The vast majority of killings in Liberia over the course of the civil war occurred when other government and insurgent soldiers deliberately killed civilians with no semblance of trial, hearing, or impartial judgment, and with no fear of being held accountable for their acts. Liberians of all ages were killed on the basis of ethnic identity, religion, of having worked for the government, or in many cases for refusal to surrender money or possessions to undisciplined soldiers. The majority of AFL and NPFL soldiers throughout the war had free reign to kill civilian members of opposing ethnic groups. NPFL soldiers also sought out and killed Krahn and Mandingo civilians, albeit much less frequently than the NPFL, especially during their 5 month occupation of Bushrod Island.

The total number of civilians killed will never be known, but is likely to number in the thousands. Atrocities were initially confined almost entirely to Nimba county, where the NPFL launched its insurgency, but as the fighting continued and control of territory changed from government to insurgent forces, different ethnic and religious groups were victimized. From the outset of the conflict, the AFL primarily killed Gio and Mano persons but also targeted Americo-Liberians. In one of the most horrific acts of brutality, AFL soldiers entered the compound of St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Sinkor on July 29, where hundreds of Gio and Mano civilians had gathered for safety. The soldiers shot, stabbed, and hacked to death men, women, and children throughout the compound. Journalists and others who later visited the site estimated the number of dead at over 600. The AFL also killed scores of Gio and Mano who sought refuge at other Monrovia churches and the United Nations compound. Reports that the AFL was killing civilians and dumping their bodies at the end of the runway at Spriggs-Payne airfield were confirmed when ECOMOG forces recaptured the area, and journalists counted over 100 corpses at the edge of the swamp that borders the airfield. Two specialized units within the AFL, the Executive Mansion Guard (EMG) and the Special Anti-Terrorist Unit (SATU), were primarily responsible for such killings, although regular AFL units were also involved.

The NPFL also killed civilians, again based primarily on ethnic considerations. From the January attack on Kamplay in Nimba county, where they executed government officials as well as private citizens, rebel forces routinely singled out members of the Krahn and Mandingo ethnic groups for killing. Numerous incidents occurred in Nimba county in January, during the capture of Buchanan in May, and in Voinjima in July, and in Paynesville, Gardnersville,

and Sindor areas, in and around Monrovia, in August, September, and October when as many as several hundred Krahn and Mandingo, including women and children and a number of Nigerians and Ghanaians, were summarily killed. In late September, after the NPFL entered Grand Gedeh county, there were reports by refugees who fled the area that the NPFL was again hunting down and killing Krahns.

The NPFL ordered residents to evacuate areas under its control and forced them through checkpoints where anyone suspected of being Krahn or Mandingo or a former government employee was identified and killed. At one such checkpoint dubbed "no return," the NPFL was reliably reported to have killed more than 2,000 people. In the Monrovia area ECOMOG buried hundreds of NPFL victims in a mass grave at the end of Duport Road in Paynesville. The NPFL also shot hundreds of civilians, according to credible reports, at Fendall and the Gardnersville Housing Estate. Following Charles Taylor's remarks over NPFL radio on September 14 that one ECOMOG national would be killed for every Liberian killed by ECOMOG forces, NPFL soldiers turned on Nigerians, Ghanaians, Sierra Leoneans, and possibly other West Africans in Paynesville and Fendall. At food distribution points and medical clinics, the NPFL required that registrants identify themselves by tribal affiliation. Krahns and Mandingos were subsequently sorted out and killed.

Although with less frequency than the NPFL, Prince Johnson's INPFL faction is reliably reported to have singled out and killed Krahn and Mandingo, including Krahn legislator Chea Kayee, removed from a refugee encampment by Johnson's men in mid-September and later found dead. INPFL soldiers also identified Krahn and Mandingo civilians on Bushrod Island and killed them, including women and children. Some 200 corpses were reported to have been left near the base of a bridge to Bushrod Island.

In both the AFL and NPFL, few soldiers were ever disciplined for such actions, and almost no attempt was made to stop them. The government did relieve the first commander of the forces in Nimba, General Smith, on January 23 because of poor discipline within the ranks. However, his replacement, General Craig, was also relieved of his post within weeks, and General Smith resumed command. Neither side made more than a token effort to stop killings of civilians throughout the war.

The INPFL did issue a field command that soldiers guilty of looting or killing civilians should be summarily executed, and some were. However, INPFL abuses did not end, and the soldiers themselves were mistreated and received no trial or legal protection. INPFL leader Johnson claimed to have executed some INPFL members found guilty of harassing and killing civilians. Although the level of INPFL abuses decreased somewhat, it was not eliminated. Despite frequent claims that such deaths resulted from civilians being "caught

in the crossfire," none of the killings discussed here were incidental to combat, although there were an unknown number of civilian casualties from ECOMOG air raids against the NPFL-controlled port of Buchanan and near Monrovia in November.

## II. Respect for Civil Liberties, Including:

### A. Freedom of Speech and Press

At the beginning of 1990, the Liberian press was under increasingly serious restrictions and intimidation from the government. The passage of an act creating a "Communications Commission" designed to "monitor and control" the media and the fact that ECLM, a private radio station, remained closed further encouraged the practice of self-censorship among many Liberian journalists. It was exacerbated by the firebombing of the editorial offices of the *The Daily Observer*, Monrovia's largest circulation paper, in March. The paper continued to publish, as did several others, until the proximity of fighting to Monrovia forced them to close. AFL soldiers subsequently burned down *The Daily Observer* offices as the rebels closed in on Monrovia.

As the government's control slackened, the independent media began to cover the civil war with considerable candor and generally gave full coverage to AFL abuses and losses and to rebel activities, although a few newspapers had reported AFL atrocities from the start of the civil war. As the war continued, even the government-owned electronic media began to provide fuller coverage, and several independent newspapers called for Doe's resignation. Although there were not direct reprisals against these newspapers, the government called meetings with the relevant editors, issued threats and warnings, and other wise tried to intimidate the press. In March President Doe declared that *The Sun Times* and *Footprints Today*, two newspapers he had banned in 1988, could begin publishing again. They never did. In June the government lifted the ban imposed on the newsletter of the Liberia Action Party, but it did not resume operations.

Indeed, by the third quarter of the year, no one was publishing anything in Liberia except for the occasional propaganda leaflet. There were no newspapers or television stations, and the only functioning radio stations were broadcasting foreign news and propaganda on behalf of the NPFL. In November, when the security situation had improved in Monrovia, a new newspaper, *Torchlight*, and a radio station, ELBC Monrovia, began operations. A second newspaper, *The New Times*, appeared in December.

Although domestic journalism ceased to function, from the beginning of the conflict foreign reporters arrived in Liberia to cover the war. They were generally treated well by both sides, allowed to enter and leave the country

without undue interference, and even given guided tours of "liberated Liberia" by the NPFL. However, the NPFL did beat an American journalist held by them briefly and subjected him to a mock execution. The NPFL reportedly still has two Nigerian journalists under detention. Reportedly, dissemination of news is tightly controlled within NPFL territory.

### **B. Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association**

Before 1990, the constitutional guarantees of freedom of assembly were honored more often in urban areas than in rural. In Monrovia, several political parties were active, although none organized large gatherings in 1990. In rural areas, although at least one party did undertake some organizing work, partisans were subject to a greater degree of harassment and interference from local authorities. Within the first weeks of the incursion, government troops tried to arrest one rural organizer for the opposition United People's Party (UPP), possibly because of his role in opposition activities in Nimba County.

As the fighting in Nimba dragged on and began to spread to other areas, efforts began in Monrovia to organize peace groups. Several groups, particularly the Interfaith Mediation Committee, held organizational meetings declaring their interest in a peaceful solution to the conflict and ultimately calling for Doe's resignation. Several public marches and rallies were held by such groups, with major human rights, legal, journalists, and teachers' associations participating. While most were peaceful, government forces fired on the last such march in late June, possibly killing several persons, and beat protesters suspected of calling for Doe's resignation. As the fighting grew closer to the capital, peace groups, like all other organized activity drew to a halt. In an unsuccessful bid to appease critics calling for his resignation, Doe lifted the ban on two political parties and lifted restrictions on the student union and business caucus in June. In December ECOMOG banned demonstrations and nonreligious public gatherings when the INPFL planned a march protesting allegations of ECOMOG brutality, but the ban was not rigidly enforced. The Press Union of Liberia resumed meeting in Monrovia during the last quarter of the year.

### **C. Freedom of Religion**

The 1985 Constitution states that freedom of religion is a fundamental right of all Liberian citizens, and in practice there are no restrictions on this right. No religion has preference over others, and there is no established state religion. Christianity, brought by 19th century settlers and spread through the interior by missionaries, has long been the religion of the political and economic elite, and public figures often refer to the "Christian principles" on which Liberia was founded. The majority of the rural population follow traditional religions. Although Mandingos, who are predominantly Muslim, have been targeted by rebel forces, other Liberian Muslims have not received the same treatment.

#### **D. Freedom of Movement Within the Country, Foreign Travel, Emigration, and Repatriation**

The Constitution provides every person the right to move freely throughout Liberia and to leave or enter the country at any time. Hundreds of thousands of Liberians have done so, beginning in early January when reports of AFL massacres began to circulate in Nimba county. The Gio and Mano residents of Nimba fled the fighting by crossing the borders to Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire by the tens of thousands, often by simply walking across ungarded borders. Others walked to Sierra Leone, and, as the NPFL entered Grand Gedeh county, most of the Krahn fled to Côte d'Ivoire.

Within Liberia, the checkpoints which hampered internal movement for years were dramatically increased once the fighting began, and many of the AFL and NPFL checkpoints became scenes of harassment, robbery, and killings. The Ganta checkpoint, on the road from Nimba county to Monrovia, was reported to be the scene of dozens of killings in January, and when the fighting reached Monrovia there were checkpoints every few blocks. The NPFL set up checkpoints in areas it controlled and harassed civilians fleeing the country, particularly on the main road from Monrovia to Sierra Leone. On that route, at the checkpoint at Gbah, harassment and killings were especially common. The INPFL also established checkpoints in areas of Monrovia it controlled, at which government workers, and occasionally Krahn, were identified and sometimes killed. Despite these restrictions, there has been massive internal displacement within Liberia; one U.S. Government estimate put the number at 600,000 Liberians displaced within the country, in addition to the 750,000 refugees outside the borders, by the end of the year. This amounts to around 50 percent of Liberia's prewar population.

#### **III. Respect for Political Rights: The Right of Citizens to Change Their Government**

Despite constitutional and legal guarantees of free and fair elections, the ability of Liberians to exercise their right to change the government was put in serious doubt by the fraudulent 1985 elections that kept the Doe government in office. The Liberian government as it existed in January was in theory modeled on the American system and included a bicameral legislature, an independent judiciary, and a two-term limitation on presidential service. In practice, the President held a preponderant share of the power. Once the fighting began, Doe virtually ignored the other, mostly moribund, branches of government, although the legislature, largely a rubber stamp throughout Doe's tenure, rejected the President's June call for early elections and urged negotiations with the rebels. Some members of the legislature did call for Doe's resignation and voiced their concern about the widespread abuses                      ted by the AFL.



Charles Taylor claims to be President of Liberia and reports he has held "traditional" (head count) elections for seats in a national assembly, but his claim to the executive rests on his military victories.

In August a group of exiled Liberian political, social, and religious leaders meeting in Banjul formed an Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU), headed by political scientist and opposition leader Amos Sawyer. The IGNU arrived in Monrovia in mid-November, after ECOMOG and INPFL forces had pushed NPFL forces away from the capital city. At the Banjul meeting in December, agreement was reached that an all-party conference would be held in Monrovia by mid-February 1991 that would choose a new interim government which would hold office until general elections could be held.

#### **IV. Governmental Attitude Regarding International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Violations of Human Rights**

Despite the overwhelming evidence of military atrocities on all sides of the fighting, both the government and the rebel groups insisted that civilians were not being targeted. Government officials dismissed early reports of killings by the AFL, claiming that those reports concerned civilians caught in the crossfire between government troops and rebels. When it became clear that unarmed civilians were being shot outside of combat, they complained that it was difficult to differentiate between rebels and civilians. Similarly, the NPFL denied for months that there was any systematic killing of Krahn and Mandingo civilians by its troops, attempting to brush off reports by attributing incidents to occasional indiscipline. Prince Johnson, who has personally executed individuals in front of witnesses without any pretense of a trial, also denied reports of atrocities. He murdered one local relief worker on the spot for selling rice even though he had earlier approved the scheme for charging nominal prices for such relief food.

Aside from these almost pro forma denials, neither the government nor the rebels seemed particularly concerned about whether their abuses became known. The AFL, INPFL, and NPFL allowed journalists and human rights activists relatively easy access to areas near the fighting. Some journalists returned with videotapes of opposing troops and civilians being beaten and threatened, and Prince Johnson deliberately made a videotape of the torture of President Doe, which he then released to the media. In December Prince Johnson invited Amnesty International to visit Monrovia and investigate the alleged killing of 400 of his INPFL troops by ECOMOG. The ECOMOG commander welcomed the visit.

## **V. Discrimination Based on Race, Sex, Religion, Language, or Social Status**

During the Doe regime, the perception of domination by, and government favoritism toward, Krahn's grew and gave rise to ethnic tensions that had been either nonexistent or at least dormant. Thus, from the beginning of the insurgency the country fractured along ethnic lines. Until the fighting moved out of Nimba county, it was almost entirely a tribally based affair. The Krahn-dominated AFL was intent on suppressing the Gio and Mano tribes, which in turn saw their chance at revenge on the Krahn and the Mandingo. Even after the war widened in scope to engulf all of Liberia, rebels continued to single out Krahn and Mandingo for retribution, which the AFL focused its depredations in Monrovia primarily but not exclusively on Gio and Mano residents there. Americo-Liberians were also singled out for harsh treatment.

The Constitution provides that only "persons of Negro descent" may be citizens or own land, denying full rights to many nonblack residents who have lived their lives there.

The status of women in Liberian society varies by region, with women holding some skilled jobs in Monrovia, including cabinet-level positions, in the past. Even prior to the war, however, there was some discrimination against women in education and employment. In some rural areas, in particular, traditional attitudes hold sway, e.g., that women are the property of their husband.

In the massive violence against civilians, women have suffered the gamut of abuse, especially rape. Even prior to the war, domestic violence against women was probably extensive but was never seriously addressed by the government or women's groups as an issue. Female circumcision is widely practiced in rural areas and in 1990 was debated openly and extensively in the Monrovia press. There are no statistics on domestic violence against women, but it is considered to be fairly common.

## **VI. Worker Rights**

### **A. The Right of Association**

Like virtually all other organized activity in Liberia, unions had disappeared by July, with industries shut down and their workers scattered. Worker rights, along with other rights, were essentially ignored in the chaos that enveloped Liberia as the year progressed. The following paragraphs reflect the situation prior to the disintegration.

The Constitution states that workers have the right to associate in trade unions. Over 20 trade unions were registered with the Ministry of Labor,

representing roughly 15 percent of the monetary sector work force. Ten national unions were members of the Liberian Federation of Labor Unions (LFLU), an affiliate of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. The Government did not recognize the right of civil servants or employees of public corporations to unionize or strike.

On April 27, the U.S. Trade Representative announced that Liberia's status as a beneficiary of trade preferences under the Generalized System of Preferences program had been suspended as a result of Liberia's failure to take steps to provide internationally recognized worker rights. The suspension remains in effect.

### **B. The Right to Organize and Bargain Collectively**

With the important exception of civil servants and employees of public corporations, workers had the right to organize and bargain collectively. Labor laws had the same force in Liberia's one export processing zone as in the rest of the country.

The 1990 report of the Committee of Experts (COE) of the International Labor Organization (ILO) reiterated that Liberian labor legislation fails to provide workers adequate protection against discrimination and reprisals for union activity, fails to protect workers' organizations against outside interference, and does not give eligible workers in the public sector the opportunity to bargain collectively. The COE noted that these deficiencies violate the provisions of ILO Convention 98 on the right to organize and collective bargaining which Liberia has ratified.

### **C. Prohibition of Forced or Compulsory Labor**

The Constitution prohibits forced labor, and the practice was firmly condemned by the Doe government. Liberia has also ratified both ILO force labor Conventions. However, serious questions have been raised by the ILO and others about the degree of enforcement of that prohibition, especially on rural community development projects.

The COE report cited above urged the Government to bring its law and practice into conformity with ILO Convention 29 on forced labor by adopting legislation providing penal sanctions for illegal use of forced labor and improving the inspection program for enforcing the prohibition of forced labor. The COE repeated its earlier criticism of a law providing prison sentences, with an obligation to work, for certain proscribed criticism of the Government; such sentences are in violation of ILO Convention 105 on the abolition of forced labor.

#### **D. Minimum Age for the Employment of Children**

The government prohibited employment of children under age 16 during school hours. Again, such employment is a moot point, although it should be noted that many rebel soldiers are reported to be very young, with some less than 12 years of age.

#### **E. Acceptable Conditions of Work**

The labor law of Liberia provides for a minimum wage, paid leave, severance benefits, and safety standards. Before the economy collapsed, the minimum wage for agricultural workers was approximately 90 cents per day, with industrial workers receiving three or four times that amount. These wages did not provide a decent standards of living but were generally supplemented by other sources of income. As there was little or no economic activity in Liberia at the end of 1990, these regulations had little meaning.

## DOCUMENT

### **Liberia: A Human Rights Disaster Violations of the Laws of War by All Parties to the Conflict**

**An Africa Watch Report, October, 1990\***

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(The Editor)**

#### **I. Introduction**

In the course of less than a year, Liberia has become a human rights disaster. Over half its population has been displaced from their homes, including over 500,000 who are refugees in West Africa. All parties to the conflict have committed grave abuses of human rights against civilians, violating the humanitarian standards governing non-international armed conflict.

During a visit to the Côte d'Ivoire from September 11-19, Holly Burkhalter, Washington Director of Human Rights Watch, interviewed newly-arrived refugees in several Ivorian villages in the area of Tabou, as well as refugees who fled in July to the Ivorian department of Guiglo.<sup>1</sup> The following report describes abuses by the Liberian Army, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), and the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL) as reported by the eyewitnesses. A May 1990 Africa Watch report entitled "Flight From Terror" described the wave of human rights abuses committed largely by government forces in the first three months of the conflict. This update includes extensive new information on abuses by the NPFL, as well as additional material on abuses by government forces.

A summary of Africa Watch's findings follows:

- \* The Liberian Army has committed gross violations of human rights and violations of the Geneva Conventions, including killings of civilians throughout President Doe's ten year rule, and particularly within the past year. Krahn soldiers' widespread killing of Mano and Gio civilians in early 1990 set the stage for extraordinary reprisals by the NPFL against Krahn civilians in mid-1990.

- \* The NPFL has violated the Geneva Conventions by committing widespread killing and torture of noncombatants, particularly Krahn and Mandingos. As a result roughly two thirds of Liberia's 125,000 Krahn have fled the country and the remainder are at risk of genocide.

- \* Children under the age of 15 are serving with NPFL forces and are engaging in killings and abuse of civilians. The recruitment or enlistment of children violates international humanitarian law.
- \* Undisciplined NPFL fighters are engaging in widespread killing and looting throughout Liberia.
- \* Prince Johnson, the head of the INPFL, is himself implicated in the murder of civilians, and he and his forces are responsible for the murder in custody of President Doe and his entourage, in violation of humanitarian law.
- \* The "peacekeeping force" from the Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS) is including in its ranks soldiers from the Liberian army as well as the INPFL. Liberian army soldiers continue to loot, raid, and harass in Monrovia.
- \* Liberian refugees in Sierra Leone, Guinea, and the Côte d'Ivoire are in need of greater food and medical assistance from the international community.
- \* Africa Watch calls upon the United Nations Secretary General to appoint a special representative on Liberia to help negotiate an end to the conflict and coordinate emergency assistance to civilians within Liberia.
- \* Africa Watch calls upon the Bush Administration to increase relief aid to the refugees, to permit more Liberian refugees to enter the United States, and screen out known human rights abusers from those Liberians permitted to enter the United States. The United States has a special responsibility for Liberia, not only because of long-standing historical ties, but also because support for the Doe government helped lay the groundwork for the human rights abuses being committed today.
- \* Western European governments seem to regard the Liberian crisis as a "U.S. problem." Increased contributions for relief assistance to the refugees and to Liberia itself are needed, and Western European governments should press the issue of Liberia at the United Nations.

## II. Background

The current crisis began when a small group of rebel insurgents attacked the Liberian border town of Butuo, in Nimba County, in late December 1989. The Liberia army conducted an extremely brutal counterinsurgency operation in the

area in early 1990, in which soldiers killed civilians indiscriminately, burned whole villages, looted, and rampaged. The majority of the victims of this period were Manos and Gios, who have been regarded with hostility and suspicion by the government since an abortive coup attempt in 1985, led by a former officer from Nimba county, which is populated by Manos and Gios.

The army's atrocities against civilians in Nimba County was so vast that within four months, some 160,000 Liberians had fled into neighboring Guinea and the Côte d'Ivoire. The greater portion of the first large wave of refugees to flee in the January-May period, however, appeared to be Mano and Gio people escaping abuses by government soldiers.<sup>2</sup> Some, however, were Krahn civilians escaping gross abuses by the NPFL forces, which killed noncombatants from that ethnic group who were encountered in the area.

The atrocities committed by the Liberian army in Nimba County and other areas of Liberia intensified the insurgency, which had begun with only a few hundred rebels. Many of the new recruits were children from Nimba County whose parents had been killed by soldiers in the first months of the conflict. As Charles Taylor's NPFL grew, control of those forces evaporated. By July, the NPFL was committing abuses on a massive scale against the Krahn, mirroring, in intensity if not in numbers, Liberian Army abuses against the Mano and Gio people of Nimba County. The brutality of rebel troops is clearly motivated, though in no way excused, by the desire to avenge the abuses of 1985 and early 1990.

The abuses by NPFL forces and by government soldiers against innocent combatants from rival ethnic groups (described below) are not the inevitable consequence of communal hatred. Liberians of various ethnic groups lived together peaceably for decades, and, indeed, intermarriage between ethnic groups (including Americo-Liberians—the descendants of freed American slaves who settled in Liberia in the 1800s) was common.

It was not until Samuel K. Doe took power in a bloody military coup in 1980, and began a policy of rewarding his own people, that ethnic differences developed into a political problem. By surrounding himself with soldiers and cronies from his own group, the Krahn, promoting and providing economic and educational opportunities for them at the expense of others, and permitting and even encouraging egregious abuses against civilians by Krahn military and police, President Doe's policies sowed the seeds of hatred and set the stage for a civil war that has in the course of nine months reached near-genocidal proportions.<sup>3</sup>

The situation in Liberia today clearly reflects a high degree of violence motivated by ethnic tensions. But even after extraordinary abuses by both sides to the conflict, Liberian noncombatants, living in refugee camps and left to their own devices, have shown that they can live together in peace.

### III. Violations of the Laws of Armed Conflict

Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions (the rules of war governing noninternational armed conflict) requires that rebel forces and government forces alike take steps minimizing harm to civilians.<sup>4</sup>

The presence of foreign forces from the Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS) does not change the relevance of Common Article 3 to the conduct of the rebel and government forces. As a human rights organization, Africa Watch does not take a position on the presence of ECOWAS military forces (known as ECOMOG) but we are concerned about allegations of abuses by these forces. We have received credible reports that ECOMOG has rocketed some civilian areas of Monrovia and its suburbs, and that ECOMOG soldiers have looted and stolen. Africa Watch has not been able to conduct its own investigation to substantiate these reports. However, in light of frequent reports from various sources, Africa Watch is calling upon ECOWAS to confine ECOMOG's role strictly to a peacekeeping function and to take measures to prevent and to punish abuses against civilians, and conduct that violates humanitarian law.

Africa Watch has received reliable and credible reports that the remnants of the Liberian army are fighting alongside ECOMOG against the NPFL. According to a Liberian civilian who recently came to the U.S. from Monrovia, Liberian army soldiers are being used as guides to assist ECOMOG in flushing out NPFL rebels. This witness estimates that approximately 2,000 Liberian troops and about another 1,000 civilians—most of whom are family members of the Krahn soldiers or Mandingos—are housed at Doe's executive mansion. They emerge, heavily armed, from the mansion to raid areas within Monrovia for food.<sup>5</sup>

Africa Watch is concerned about such reports of collaboration between the ECOMOG forces and the brutal and discredited soldiers from the Liberian army, whose participation in gross abuses of human rights is well known. We are also concerned about the participation of INPFL soldiers in ECOMOG operations. The INPFL, like the Liberian army, has consistently violated, and continues to violate human rights. There should be no place for such forces in the ECOMOG "peacekeeping" force.

Article 3 requires that persons taking no active part in hostilities, or combatants who have laid down their arms or are wounded or sick, shall be treated humanely "without any adverse distinction founded on race, color, religion or faith, sex, birth or wealth, or any other similar criteria." Summary executions, cruel treatment, the taking of hostages, and humiliating and degrading treatment are strictly prohibited, and the wounded and sick are to be collected and cared for.



#### IV. Violations of the Laws of Armed Conflict by the Insurgents

The insurgent forces have consistently violated these standards from the outset of the insurgency in late December. Charles Taylor is the commander-in-chief of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) which comprises the bulk of rebel strength. Prince Johnson was a NPFL commander with Charles Taylor until he broke off in February to form the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL). Johnson's forces, thought to number no more than 500 fighters, are based in Monrovia, and control several parts of the city, including Bushrod Island. Troops under both commanders have engaged in violations of the laws of armed conflict, including executions of civilians and captured soldiers, torture, and mutilation.

Gross abuses against civilians by the rebels have accelerated in the course of the conflict. In the period since late June, when rebel forces began to make significant inroads into the Krahn stronghold of Grand Gedeh, and violations reached staggering proportions.

The Mandingo people, a mercantile tribe considered too accommodating to Doe, have also been singled out for persecution and death by rebel troops. Because they tend to be more wealthy than other Liberians, they have been perceived as having profited from their relationship with the authorities. Many of the refugees pouring into Guinea in recent months are Mandingo business people from Nimba County fleeing the NPFL.

##### A. Killings of Civilians

Africa Watch interviewed a large number of mainly Krahn refugees in the Côte d'Ivoire who had fled from Grand Gedeh in late June to escape rebel abuses. The majority had come from neighboring villages in Liberia, a walk of approximately three hours, and are concentrated in the Ivorian department of Toulepleu. According to relief personnel, the level of violence against Krahn noncombatants from June to the present has been so great that the Krahn have poured out of Grand Gedeh at the rate of 1,000 per day. At this time, U.S. officials and relief personnel estimate the number of Krahn refugees in the Toulepleu area to be approximately 75,000 to 80,000.<sup>6</sup> This represents a significant portion of the total Krahn population of Liberia, estimated at 4% of the national population, or approximately 125,000 people.

Liberian refugees in the Ivorian village of Pahoubli had entered Côte d'Ivoire at various times since July. One group crossed the border about a month ago. They fled their village of Gbarzon in Grand Gedeh when rebels attacked them in the middle of the night. Witnesses described how the rebels rocketed houses and shot people in their beds. Sick people or the elderly who couldn't run were killed, and virtually the entire village fled into the forest. When asked how many had lost family members, the group of approximately 50 adults all raised

their hands, stating that they didn't know if their family members were dead, still in Liberia, or somewhere else in the Côte d'Ivoire.

One refugee, Harris B., a junior high school teacher and a former commissioner (superintendent) of his district in Liberia, described how rebels entered Grand Gedeh on June 27. His account follows:

The rebels entered Grand Gedeh on June 27. They killed everybody in the area—Krahn, Mandingo, and Bassa. They didn't try to choose between the groups, but killed everybody because they thought they were all Krahn in Grand Gedeh. I saw them kill a mother and her three-year old twins, and two others. My two brothers are missing, and three other members of my family. I don't know where they are because we fled in all directions when the rebels attacked. So many people died that you don't have enough paper to write down all their names.<sup>7</sup>

According to this witness, there were soldiers in the town, "but not enough to protect us, they were all killed." Under humanitarian law, the presence of soldiers in an area inhabited by civilians does not permit the rebels to attack the village indiscriminately. The armed soldiers themselves are permissible military targets but civilians and civilian structures such as homes and schools may not be targeted as such. The combatants have the duty to avoid or minimize harm to civilians even when attacking soldiers who may be in the vicinity. That is, it is not permissible for them to shoot into a crowd of civilians because they think that a few enemy soldiers are among them.

Refugees interviewed in the Ivorian town of Pékani Houebli in the Toulepleu area had much the same experiences. Rev. Peter D. fled Duegee Town on June 14th when rebels entered the town and shot and killed civilians and rocketed homes. Rev. Peter D. saw a seventeen year old boy shot and killed with no questions asked. Jackson T., aged approximately 60, also fled from Duegee Town at the same time. Two of his sons, Ricky and Arthur, who were unarmed, were killed by the NPFL.<sup>8</sup>

Another of the refugees, Harry P., also fled Duegee Town when the NPFL attacked. His account follows:

I fled Duegee Town when I saw soldiers and rebels fighting. I saw rebels shooting people indiscriminately, including women and children. I can't tell you their names because I was running, I just saw them drop when hit by soldiers, and I couldn't go back to identify them.<sup>9</sup>

Africa Watch is extremely concerned about the failure of NPFL leader Charles Taylor to take any measures to prevent such gross abuses against

noncombatants. In particular, we are concerned about the killings of civilians targeted solely on account of the fact that they are Krahn or Mandingo.

An interview with a Liberian religious minister reveals the seriousness of this lack of command and control. Rev. A., aged 60, lived in Buchanan where his wife and children remain. He was captured by the rebels five separate times in the period of April through July. According to his testimony, he was singled out in part because he had been appointed by the Doe Government (against his will) in April to be a public safety commissioner and receive arms from rebels turning themselves over to the government. He fled Buchanan for Monrovia in April when rebels came looking for him, then walked from Monrovia back to Buchanan several months later (about 60 to 70 miles.) His account follows:

All along the way I saw dead bodies lining the road. I was stopped at many rebel checkpoints—at least 50. At every stop the rebels would ask people to speak Mano or Gio. If they couldn't, they were led away. The rebels took them behind buildings, and I heard shots. Then the rebels would come back, and boast "I killed five," or "I killed 10." This happened once at a checkpoint on July 27. The rebels took away three men just behind a nearby house. I heard three shots, and the rebels returned and said they had killed the three. There were no Liberian army soldiers in the area when these incidents happened; the victims were noncombatants.<sup>10</sup>

Africa Watch has also received reports that there were many army deserters in this area who were also killed by the rebels, along with noncombatants, as described by Rev. A. The killing of captured soldiers, or soldiers who have laid down their arms is a violation of the Geneva Conventions.

Rev. A. witnessed the execution of two men, a Krahn named Frederick Tokpah, and Wilbert Matalay, aged 60, a member of the Bassa ethnic group. Wilbert Matalay was grabbed by rebel soldiers on July 27, who accused him of being a government agent, and shot him, though he had not worked for the Doe Government. He was apparently suspected of government ties because he had worked for the Tubman Government, many years before Doe took power.

The execution of Wilbert Matalay demonstrates another group of civilians who were at risk of rebel reprisals: persons on lists compiled by the rebels who were believed to be affiliated with the government. Persons on rebel lists were killed regardless of their ethnicity. Thus Wilbert Matalay, a Bassa, was executed for his wrongly presumed political allegiance, rather than rebel hostility against the Bassa per se.

Another example of rebel hostility to presumed authorities is Rev. A. himself:

I was stopped at a rebel checkpoint and I thought I would be killed this time for sure. A rebel brought a knife to my throat when I said I was a minister, and said "we are looking for ministers, I will kill you." I told him I was a minister of the gospel, and the rebel laughed and told me I should call myself a pastor in the future.

Rev. A. was urged to leave Liberia by an acquaintance working with the rebel forces, who said that Charles Taylor could not control his troops. He told Rev. A. that they would kill him before they found out who he was. Rev. A. escaped Liberia on August 31 through the intervention of a Catholic priest, who brought him to Abidjan.<sup>11</sup>

### **B. Executions Committed by Prince Johnson**

As Prince Johnson's small force of approximately 500 fighters are based in Monrovia, it is the forces answerable to Charles Taylor (who may number as many as 10,000) who are responsible for most of the rebel abuses outside the capital city. Prince Johnson's forces engage in abuses within Monrovia, however, and the rebel leader himself has murdered innocent civilians in full view of the international press. On August 3, for example, Prince Johnson shot and killed a relief worker accused of profiteering from rice sales, while the victim was handcuffed to a Frenchman working for Catholic Relief Services. The execution was carried out before photographers, and the international press carried photos of a gun-toting and grinning Prince Johnson pointing at the dying victim as he lay on the ground.<sup>12</sup> Another incident was witnessed by a group of Nigerian journalists in mid-September. The journalists reported that Johnson sprayed a car with bullets, killing the driver. A German woman passenger was wounded and taken away by rebels. In another incident, Johnson accused a woman of stealing rice and shot her in the face.<sup>13</sup>

The most dramatic case of rebel atrocities against prisoners is that of Samuel K. Doe himself. Doe was captured by Prince Johnson's forces when he came out of the Executive Mansion with 65 of his bodyguards on September 10, apparently to negotiate his  from Liberia with the ECOMOG forces. According to eyewitnesses, Doe was mutilated horribly before he finally died, and his body was displayed and desecrated by the rebels at the Island Clinic.<sup>14</sup> Such treatment, including desecration of the corpse, is strictly prohibited by humanitarian law.

### **C. Torture, Ill-treatment, and Executions of Detainees**

Budu W., a 21-year old student from Harper City fled Liberia on July 17 to escape recruitment by the rebels. On Tuesday, July 11, Budu witnessed the execution of a Krahn man in the Liberian town of Pleebo:

I saw them kill a Krahn man. He was an older fellow, about 45 years old. The rebels were young kids, about 13 or 14 years old. They stripped him in the middle of town in front of everybody. They cut off his ear. Then they gave him a glass of water to drink. Afterwards they shot him dead.<sup>15</sup>

Representatives of an international humanitarian organization in the Côte d'Ivoire described the case of a young woman who was brought by her mother to their food warehouse in late August. She was a Krahn who had been captured by rebels in Grand Gedeh about a month previously along with an unidentified number of other Krahn civilians. According to testimony that she provided to relief workers, the rebels kept the prisoners with them as they marched. They attempted to determine which of their captives was Krahn by beating them to see if they would cry out in the Krahn language. When they did, they were slain on the spot. If other captives expressed emotion at the sight of the killings, this was taken as evidence that they also were Krahn, and they too were killed. She was beaten every day. At a moment when security was lax, she escaped, and managed to find her mother amongst the refugees of Toulepleu. The relief workers concerned said that she was apparently injured from the beatings, incoherent, and in a state of shock.

#### D. Conscription of Children

A number of witnesses described seeing heavily-armed children with the rebels. According to another witness:

When the Krahns entered Nimba [County] all the kids' parents died. Now the kids want revenge. This is the concept in their minds. They are so little that I could shake them till they drop, but the guns give them courage.<sup>16</sup>

Two nurses from New Zealand working for a French medical organization within Nimba County in Liberia reported that they recently saw a rebel as young as 7 or 8 years old, staggering under the weight of a Kalashnikov automatic rifle which was as tall as he was, and menacing people with it.<sup>17</sup>

A Kenyan nun, Sister Josephine, who was in the Côte d'Ivoire for the Pope's recent visit, stated that her order had operated four schools in Buchanan for elementary and secondary students with over 3,000 students. By June, only 1,000 students were left in school; the remainder had joined the rebels. She reported that children as young as 10 years old—fifth and sixth graders—enthusiastically joined the rebels. Those too small to carry guns carried grenades. According to Sister Josephine, Charles Taylor was not recruiting the children, they had joined enthusiastically of their own volition.<sup>18</sup>

Whether or not the children joined the rebels voluntarily, their presence with the fighting force is a serious violation of humanitarian norms concerning children in warfare. International standards prohibit the conscription or recruitment of children under the age of 15. For example, article 4(3)(c) of Protocol II to the 1949 Geneva Conventions, although not signed by Liberia, states that "Children who have not attained the age of fifteen years shall neither be recruited in the armed forces or groups nor allowed to take part in hostilities."<sup>19</sup>

### **E. The Taking of Hostages**

The taking of hostages is strictly forbidden by Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions, and is binding on rebel and government forces. Yet foreign civilians in Liberia have been attacked by both government forces (see below) and by the NPFL. Charles Taylor has admitted to taking at least 1,000 Nigerians, Ghanaians, and Guineans hostage in Buchanan, where, according to some reports, they are being kept in appalling conditions.<sup>20</sup> However, other reports received by Africa Watch indicate that some of the foreign nationals are being held in "protective custody" under what appear to be adequate conditions, but are not permitted to leave. Hundreds of foreign nationals from governments which have sent troops to participate in the ECOMOG force fled to their embassy compounds in Monrovia, and apparently when Charles Taylor controlled these parts of Monrovia he prevented them from leaving. He was reported as saying that "Nobody will leave Liberia until the conflict is over . . . Remember what the Americans did with the Japanese living in the United States in World War II. They put them in concentration camps."<sup>21</sup>

### **F. Rebel Killings of Fleeing Soldiers**

Relief personnel and the Ivorian authorities are concerned about fleeing army soldiers who have been pursued by rebels into the Côte d'Ivoire. The Ivorian authorities, working through the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), have initiated a policy of disarming rebel soldiers within the Côte d'Ivoire and exchanging their uniforms for civilian clothes. To prevent hostilities from spilling onto Ivorian soil and to keep them from menacing the Mano and Gio refugees, they are then relocated away from the border to the Toulepleu area. The Ivorians have also placed military personnel on the Liberian border to guard against rebel incursions in pursuit of fleeing soldiers.

One such incident took place on September 5 in the Ivorian town of Bliheron when rebels from Charles Taylor's force crossed over to the Côte d'Ivoire, and shot and killed eight soldiers who were attempting to swim across the Cavalla River, which runs between the two countries. The rebel soldiers claimed that they thought they were in Liberia, but turned themselves over to the Ivorian authorities. Refugees interviewed by the delegation in Bliheron witnessed the executions, and were terrified.

Again, it should be noted that soldiers who had deserted or abandoned hostilities are protected under the provisions of Common Article 3 of the Geneva Accords. From our interviews, it seems fairly clear that the soldiers attempting to swim across the Cavalla River were deserting. If they were deserting, rather than fleeing from actual combat, their murder is a violation of this provision of humanitarian law.

### V. Violations by the Liberian Army

The Liberian army has long been associated with grave abuses against civilians. The same rules of non-international armed conflict apply to government forces as to rebels, and the indiscriminate executions and abuses committed by the Liberian Army are strictly forbidden.

The death of Samuel K. Doe on September 10 did not mean the dissolution of his army. The army is now commanded by General David Nimley, who took over following Doe's murder. Nimley has been implicated for years in gross abuses of human rights against Liberian civilians, and is widely thought to have organized a death squad within the armed forces this year. (See below.)

At the time of this writing, at least 1,000 heavily armed government soldiers are in control of certain areas of the country, and the army continues to abuse, loot, and kill with impunity.

#### A. Killings of Civilians

Africa Watch's May 1990 report, *Liberia: Flight from Terror* describes in detail the atrocities committed by the Liberian army in its counterinsurgency campaign in Nimba County. Abuses included indiscriminate killing of men, women, and children. Soldiers torched huts with the sick and the elderly inside. Civilians were killed merely on the suspicion that they were of Mano or Gio ethnicity. In the words of a former soldier from Karnplay, ex-lieutenant Hargana Pouden, "No one is safe from the army, if they are Gio, not even old people."<sup>22</sup>

In the months before Doe's death on September 10, the group of Krahn soldiers surrounding the president in Monrovia engaged in gross abuses in the capital, including regular executions of captured civilians and the large-scale murder of unarmed displaced persons. Government soldiers outside the capital continued their practice of killing non-Krahn and suspected political opponents.

One particularly grisly incident occurred on July 30 when Liberian army soldiers attacked a large group of displaced civilians who had sought refuge at Saint Peter's Lutheran church. The international press reported that more than 600 men, women, and children were murdered by soldiers who sprayed the church with gunfire. Andrew Voros, an American former Peace Corps volun-

teer who lived in Liberia for many years, was in Monrovia at the time and tended those wounded in the attack. In an interview with Africa Watch in Washington, D.C. on August 28, 1990, Voros stated that approximately 185 civilians were killed on the spot when soldiers entered the church and sprayed the men who were sleeping in one room with gunfire, then went to another room where women and children were sleeping and killed them in the same manner. Following the attack, a large group of refugees fled to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) compound and broke down the gates. There were many civilians badly wounded in the attack, according to Voros, who described women and children with hands and feet blown off, and gaping head wounds. A group of Liberian soldiers entered the compound and marched away with about 350 of the civilians. They were taken to the beach near the John F. Kennedy Hospital, where there were reports that the men were separated out and taken away to be killed. Voros speculates that the entire group was actually killed. When this figure is added to the original 185 dead, the total casualties approximate the figure of 600 dead given by French medical groups in Monrovia and reported in the press.<sup>23</sup>

Reporters from the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) visited the Lutheran Church in October, where bodies of the victims of the massacre remain in an advanced state of decay. The reporters visited a two-story building next to the church where "people are lined up in their mattresses on which they were sleeping when the massacre happened, still lying there now . . ." <sup>24</sup>

Gen. Nimley, the commander of the Executive Mansion forces who with the death of Doe claims to be the President, is reportedly one of the officers responsible for death squad activities by the army. The military death squad began executing Mano and Gio soldiers from the Liberian army early in the conflict, and their bodies, as well as those of Liberian civilians regularly appeared on the streets of Monrovia from February on. The army death squad also murdered homeless and mentally disturbed street people. Some sources have also implicated Gen. Nimley in the brutal murder, on January 4, 1990, of Robert Phillips, a former critic of President Doe.

Africa Watch has also received reports that army soldiers killed civilians indiscriminately in towns which were retaken from the rebels. Rev. A. described how in numerous instances when rebels retreated from a village and soldiers returned, anyone who didn't flee was killed. For this reason, the rebels apparently often evacuated civilians from the areas they left. Rev. A., for example, was evacuated by rebels with a large group of civilians from the ELWA religious mission to the Fendall campus of the University of Liberia.

On October 10, 1990, two reporters from the BBC described a "killing field" at Spriggs Payne Airfield, where President Doe's death squads took their victims:



... the area, which is a swamp area, is now littered with corpses, mostly in skeletal form. They had just rotted away and it is just the skulls and bones left. The killing field—I suppose that is what it is—is at the end of the runway ... The swamp at the end of the runway is thick with bones and skulls and under every bush there is a sign of killing, skulls that have been smashed, bodies that have been torn apart by either machetes or gunfire and in all we counted up to over a hundred we can see.<sup>25</sup>

While Africa Watch has not been able to visit Liberia itself, foreign reporters in Monrovia have recently reported indiscriminate shooting and looting in the capital by government soldiers. Agence France Presse reported on September 20, 1990 that a Senegalese jeweller saw four of his countrymen shot and killed by Krahn soldiers.<sup>26</sup>

### **B. Torture, Inhumane Treatment, and Execution of Detainees**

Samuel Doe's forces have long been implicated in torture and inhumane treatment of detainees. Doe himself has been accused of having personally participated in the 1985 murder of Thomas Quiwonkpa. The troops closest to Doe in the Executive Mansion have a reputation for particular brutality.

Andrew Voros, (see above) was himself captured by 17 Liberian soldiers on August 10 and held at the presidential mansion for eight days. He was arrested at the residence of USAID personnel in Monrovia, where he was living, along with Col. Chris Doe (no relation to the president). According to Voros, Col. Chris Doe hid at his home because he had received word from inside the military that he was to be killed because of his attempts to limit abuses by the soldiers.<sup>27</sup>

Voros and Col. Doe were taken to the Executive Mansion, which has a common cell and a number of others in a cellblock which had been designed originally as a latrine for the Executive Mansion. Voros was questioned by General David Nimley and accused of being a CIA agent. Also in the cellblock with Voros and Col. Doe were several dozen Mano and Gio prisoners, some of whom had been held for months. Some appeared to have been jailed solely because of their ethnicity. Others were common criminals, and there was one woman detainee who was apparently an insane person living on the streets. Her constant ravings and screams kept the other prisoners awake. Conditions within the cells were appalling; there were no toilets, simply an empty adjoining room, thick with excrement, which was used by soldiers and prisoners alike as a latrine. Filth from the latrine was tracked back into the cells where prisoners sat or slept on the floor.

The prisoners (except for Voros) were not given food and water, and many of them were literally starving to death. They begged for food scraps at a tiny

opening to the outside at the top of the cell, and passed around crumbs of food between them. When Voros attempted to share the occasional tin of juice given to him by the soldiers, he was prevented from doing so and warned that his own rations would be cut if he shared them.

Periodically, Krahn soldiers would enter the cells and randomly select prisoners to take outside and beat bloody with their heavy cartridge belts. Badly wounded prisoners would be thrown back into the excrement-covered cell. The unlucky ones were taken out and killed by soldiers. On August 4, Col. Chris Doe was one of those killed; he was surrounded by a group of screaming soldiers and cut repeatedly with a machete until he was nearly dead, when they cut his throat.

Occasionally, prisoners would be taken from their cells for "burial duty." Voros saw two very emaciated prisoners, an old man and a younger one, taken away. According to the younger man, the two were taken to a burial ground behind the Executive Mansion and made to dig a mass grave. They buried twelve bodies, most of which were horribly mutilated. When the digging was completed, the older man's throat was cut and he was thrown into the common grave. The younger prisoner was returned to his cell.

On August 18, Voros was taken to Barclay Training Center where Gen. Nimley accused him of firing upon and killing government soldiers.<sup>28</sup> Eventually he was released and evacuated from Liberia by U.S. Embassy officials.

### C. Looting, Pillaging, and Abuse

The death of Samuel Doe hastened the disintegration of the Liberian army, which was already apparent in the large numbers of defections and desertions earlier this year. In recent months, the remnants of Doe's army are running amok in Monrovia and elsewhere. Africa Watch has received extensive reports of looting, stealing, and harassment of civilians by soldiers.

Refugees interviewed in the Ivorian town of Tabou described how Doe's soldiers had taken over towns in Maryland County, including Pleebo and Harper in mid-August. Comfort J., a young Liberian woman who arrived in the Côte d'Ivoire on August 19, reported the following:

I am from Pleebo, in Maryland County. I came here two weeks ago. The Krahn Army [government forces] was taking people's things, harassing and beating people. I know of people they killed. When they arrived, I left.<sup>29</sup>

## VI. The Humanitarian Needs of the Refugees

As a consequence of egregious abuses against Liberia's civilian population by all parties to the conflict, approximately half the population of the country

has been displaced from their homes. A quarter of these are refugees in West Africa. The people of the Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Sierra Leone have responded generously to the plight of the Liberian refugees. The U.S. State Department's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) estimated on October 26, that there were 561,681 Liberian refugees in West Africa, including: 280,000 in Guinea; 206,681 in the Côte d'Ivoire; 70,000 in Sierra Leone; and 5,000 in Ghana.<sup>30</sup> In all cases, the host governments have not needed to set up refugee camps because local residents have permitted the refugees to share their dwellings. Host governments and relief organizations have helped the refugees build additional huts. In Guinea, roofing and plastic has been donated by the UNHCR, and hundreds of huts have been built. Relief personnel maintain that this arrangement is far better for the refugees than a camp situation, but it is clear that more must be done to assist the Liberians and their hosts.

The villagers have shared their food, too, which has been particularly important because relief assistance has not been sufficient to meet refugee needs.<sup>31</sup> The United States is by far the largest donor to the Liberian refugees. Indeed, many of U.S. allies consider Liberia a "U.S. problem," and have not responded as generously as is needed. Africa Watch regards the Liberian disaster as an international problem, and recognizes the need for the international community to respond appropriately. Nonetheless, it is clear that because of the United States' historic relationship with Liberia, and particularly because of past U.S. support for the Doe Government, which helped lay the groundwork for the country's destruction today, the U.S. bears a particular responsibility to aid the victims.

To date, the United States had provided \$41 million for rice through the World Food Program. (This figure includes funds needed for transport.) An additional several million dollars in additional assistance has been donated by the U.S. for the refugees through humanitarian organizations, and \$2 million has been donated by the U.S. to the International Committee of the Red Cross, Catholic Relief Services, and the French medical groups for humanitarian assistance within Liberia.

At the time of our visit, refugees in the Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea were not starving, though they were clearly in need of more food and medical assistance than the humanitarian organizations were able to provide them. In particular, the need for protein, such as dried fish, was acute; refugees interviewed in Pékane Houebli and Pékane Houebli in the Toulepleu area who arrived in late June or July received a relief package that included rice, oil, salt, tomatoes, and onions. Some also received soap and blankets. No further commodities except rice was provided after the initial package was given, and later arrivals only received rice. Because most of the refugees (particularly the later arrivals) arrive from Liberia starving, their original ration is depleted quickly and their Ivorian hosts are forced to share their scarce food supplies with the refugees.<sup>32</sup> Relief person-

nel in the Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea made a strong appeal that they be given additional food by international donors, and permission to distribute it among the host families.

Large numbers of refugees arrived from Maryland County in recent weeks, due to fighting in that area and an acute shortage of food within Liberia. There are currently about 10,000 refugees in Tabou, most of whom have come since August. Refugees interviewed in Tabou City and surrounding villages experienced the same shortage of food as those in Toulepleu. The Ivorian Prefecture of Tabou, Simeon Agoua, said that the League of Red Cross Societies had promised that there would be dried fish and it was announced on the radio that this commodity was available. No fish was supplied after an initial shipment, however, and the Prefecture expressed concern about the miserable condition of the refugees in his area.<sup>33</sup> According to the Red Cross, an international donor had made some fish available last spring, but when this had been distributed, no additional fish was provided. Representatives from the League of Red Cross Societies interviewed by Africa Watch appealed for international donations of fish and other food commodities needed by the refugees.

The newer arrivals in the Tabou villages were mostly urban dwellers from the town of Harper and surrounding towns in Liberia who had few skills for living in the jungle. An Ivorian living in Proollo, directly across the river from Liberia, noted that the Liberian refugees "don't have the habit of fishing," and stated that he was aware of only one refugee who had attempted to fish. Nor did they have guns to hunt with.<sup>34</sup> Relief personnel confirmed that the former city dwellers were unequipped to forage for food or fish or hunt in order to supplement the rice supplied to them by the Red Cross, making them wholly dependent upon their Ivorian hosts for meat and other food. Relief personnel feared that tensions would inevitably develop between the refugees and their hosts, as food supplies were becoming scarce for everybody, refugees and Ivorians alike.

The food situation for refugees in Guinea is much worse than in the Côte d'Ivoire. Refugees are living with the local population in their homes, as in the Côte d'Ivoire, but food distribution is complicated by the fact that there are fewer villages and many more isolated huts in the forest. Moreover, the roads from the Guinean capital of Conakry to the forest area where most of the refugees reside are very poor.<sup>35</sup> Only about half of the relief supplies that are needed have reached the refugees via the route from the capital. Until very recently, no aid was being brought across the Ivorian border at all, in part due to Guinean Government reluctance to deal with the Ivorian authorities. A week before our visit, the first food shipments arrived from the Côte d'Ivoire, though the delegation visited some villages where virtually no food at all had been delivered.<sup>36</sup>

The delegation found cases of malnutrition in refugee children in Guinea, as well as cases of beri beri. Food in Guinea is in particularly short supply from now until harvest in approximately six weeks to two months. Virtually all the rice has been used for seed, and the local people have almost nothing left to share. Refugees and Guineans alike are eating "palm cabbage"—the inner part of the palm tree. The relief delegation reported that refugee concentrations in the area of Yomou had received no relief assistance at all, and the refugees had been there for a full seven months. There are approximately 6,000 Guineans living in the area, and at least 6,000 Liberian refugees.<sup>37</sup> Additional groups of refugees are said to be arriving in Guinea at the rate of 500 per day, fleeing both the fighting and hunger. It is said that there is virtually nothing to eat in Liberia, and many refugees emerge emaciated and ill.

#### **A. Harassment of the Refugees**

The Refugees International delegation which visited Guinea experienced some hostility from Guinean soldiers at a local level, and at one point a member of the delegation was arrested for having attempted to take video film of the refugees in the Guinean town of Thuo. When the Liberian refugees witnessed the soldiers' hostility to the delegation, they came forward to describe their own problems with local military authorities. According to the refugees, the refugees are harassed by the soldiers, who have taken Liberian refugee children "hostage," by confining them within military facilities until their parents pay a ransom of food or money. The refugees stated that this was a regular practice. Guinea's civilian authorities were extremely cooperative with the delegation, and are clearly concerned about the Liberian refugees. Africa Watch is calling upon the Government of Guinea to investigate the reports of harassment by the Guinean army.

#### **B. Medical Care**

The Ivorian Government and the French medical groups have visited most refugee areas and vaccinated the refugee children, as well as Ivorian children, for yellow fever and measles. In Guinea, children had been vaccinated in some of the villages the delegation visited, but not all. The French medical group, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) is providing medical assistance to the refugees at small clinics set up in various villages in the Côte d'Ivoire. MSF-Belgium is providing similar services in Guinea. Despite the invaluable work of these medical groups, however, there are extensive medical needs among the refugees and gaps in the provision of medical care.

Newly arrived refugees in the Tabou area of the Côte d'Ivoire did not report significant medical problems, but those who had been in the Côte d'Ivoire longer, such as those interviewed in the Toulepleu area, were in bad need of

medical care. In Peka Houebli for example, where there are approximately 3,000 refugees and 300 Ivorian locals, refugees interviewed on September 16 reported that 5 adults had died in the previous two weeks of malaria. Also, 4 children had died the previous day of malaria, diarrhea or of a disease which the medical groups speculated might have been elephantiasis, according to the symptoms they described. The refugees interviewed by Africa Watch in Peka Houebli and Pahoubli also complained of stomach problems from eating "bush cabbage" which they found in the jungle to supplement their rice diet, and coughs and respiratory problems due to sleeping on the ground with no blankets. MSF has a number of clinics in the Côte d'Ivoire, but the refugees in Peka Houebli were not aware of those clinics, and did not have access to medical care.

The medical situation in Guinea was worse than that of the Côte d'Ivoire, according to the delegation from Refugees International and Project Mercy who visited a number of villages in the forest area. The group saw cases of beri beri, and children who were clearly malnourished.

In Guinea, as in the Côte d'Ivoire, skin diseases were common, as many of the refugees were sleeping on the ground without blankets or mats. According to the League of Red Cross Societies, a donor had provided a supply of soap and blankets for the refugees last Spring, but supplies have long since been exhausted and the size of the refugee population has increased considerably. Many refugees in Guinea suffered from malaria. Refugees appealed for mosquito netting and malaria pills.

The lack of clean water is another major problem in both Guinea and the Côte d'Ivoire. In Guinea, the delegation found considerable problems with dysentery which was the result of refugees and local people alike over-using creeks, open wells, and streams for all their sanitation needs. In the Ivorian town of Prollo, refugees and local people obtained their drinking water from the Cavalla River. One of the refugees, John T., said that they see dead bodies floating in the river every day, which obviously contaminate the water supply.<sup>38</sup>

The most urgent medical need at the moment, however, is the need for more food. The refugees (and sometimes their Ivorian and Guinean hosts) are much more vulnerable to disease due to inadequate food. Food assistance must be increased significantly if the outbreak of disease is to be avoided.

## VII. Humanitarian Needs Within Liberia

As difficult as the situation of the refugees is, their situation is not nearly as desperate as that of Liberians who remain in the country, particularly in Monrovia. According to the U.S. Department of State, "50 to 60 deaths are reported daily in Monrovia due to severe malnutrition and diseases; most of the victims are children."

More than 80 percent of the population of Monrovia are malnourished.<sup>39</sup> To date, the U.S. and other donors have not delivered large amounts of food to Monrovia because, according to State Department officials, the security situation has not permitted ships to land. Andrew Natsios, director of the State Department's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, has stated that the first ship, holding 500 tons reportedly reached Monrovia on October 25, and a second ship holding 1,100 tons of food was to have arrived on October 26.<sup>40</sup> Natsios reported at a Congressional hearing on October 25 that Catholic Relief Service carried out a nutritional survey last week of 500 Liberians in Monrovia. Of those interviewed, 208 were said to be suffering from the final stages of malnutrition. Natsios stated that relief officials were shocked by such a statistic, which they said rivalled anything they had seen, including the Ethiopian famine of 1984-1985.<sup>41</sup>

The United States and other donors have granted assistance to various nongovernmental organizations within Liberia, including Médecins Sans Frontières and Catholic Relief Services. However, a much larger international effort is clearly needed and will continue to be needed in coming years, given the destruction of Monrovia particularly and the rest of the country.

Africa Watch calls upon all parties to the conflict within Liberia to facilitate the provision of food and medical aid to all civilians in need. In particular, all parties must agree to permit the free transport of food into Monrovia, and protect all relief personnel there, and in the rest of the country.

### VIII. U.S. Policy

There is no country in Africa with whom the United States has had closer relations than Liberia. Settled in the 19th century by freed American slaves, Liberia has looked to the United States for support ever since. Today, Liberians are anguished by what they feel is the United States' virtual abandonment of their country at a time of its greatest crisis.

While rebel and army leaders and their forces are responsible for the destruction of Liberia, the United States has a particular obligation to assist the victims. During the first five years of Samuel K. Doe's reign, the U.S. Government provided half a billion dollars to the regime, making it the largest aid recipient in sub-Saharan Africa. In 1985, the Reagan Administration put its stamp of approval on elections which were recognized by a wide range of international observers, as well as Liberians, as fraudulent. U.S. support for Doe at that critical moment consolidated his hold on power, and demoralized and weakened Liberia's political opposition. In 1986, the U.S. Congress ended most U.S. assistance to Liberia.<sup>42</sup> However the United States maintained military "advisors" in Monrovia who actually went into Nimba County ostensibly to

advise Doe's troops during the bloody attempt to depopulate the area in early 1990.<sup>43</sup>

Because past U.S. support for Doe played a major role in the destruction of the country today, the Bush Administration has an important responsibility to do more to assist the victims of the conflict.

#### **A. Relief Assistance:**

The United States is the largest donor for the Liberian refugees, but much more assistance is needed, and the U.S. and other donors should provide it expeditiously. As of October 11, the Bush Administration had provided \$48,724,703 in assistance to the Liberian refugees, out of a total of approximately \$62 million provided by the international community. European governments have tended to view Liberia as a "U.S. problem," and have not given as much assistance to the refugees as they have in other circumstances. Africa Watch believes that because of the historic special relationship between Liberia and the U.S., the United States' government has a particular responsibility in the current situation. Nonetheless, the humanitarian needs of over half a million Liberian refugees are great, and their situation is worsening. Other donors should join the United States in mounting an enormous effort on behalf of the refugees and Liberians still living in the country.

In addition to dramatically increasing humanitarian assistance to the refugees themselves, the United States and other donors should provide sufficient food commodities to the World Food Program and the League of Red Cross Societies (which are distributing food in Sierra Leone, Guinea, and the Côte d'Ivoire) to enable those organizations to provide supplemental food to local villagers, as well as to the refugees.<sup>44</sup> In mid-October, a special appeal for \$5.4 million was launched by United Nations Disaster Relief Commission (UNDRO) to provide aid to Guinean villagers in need because of the assistance they had provided to the refugees. At the time of this writing, no donor had responded.

#### **B. Liberian Refugees in the U.S.**

There are thought to be approximately 14,000 Liberians visiting the United States who are stranded here as a result of the conflict in Liberia. On July 27, 1990 the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) issued instructions which granted Liberians living in the United States voluntary departure status on a case-by-case basis. In order to apply for the new status, Liberians with valid visas must turn in their documents and place themselves in deportation proceedings prior to receiving the safe haven designation. The new status, however, only allows them to stay in the United States for six months.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, the safe haven program is only available for those Liberians who arrived in the United States before July 27. Finally, the INS has apparently not publicized even this



limited program to its regional offices; lawyers working with Liberian refugees have reported that virtually none of their clients have been granted the change of status, apparently due to the fact that local INS officials were for the most part ignorant of the program.

While we welcome the fact that there has been acknowledgement of the need for safe haven for Liberians in the U.S., the INS's program does not begin to meet the needs of those in the United States. First, Liberians entering the United States after July 27 should be included in any safe haven program. Second, Liberians should be permitted to stay in the United States until conditions within Liberia allow them to return home safely.

Liberian refugees are clearly deserving of "extended voluntary departure," (EVD) a program which the executive branch can simply designate for victims of conflicts or natural disasters. In the past, EVD has been granted to Poles, Ethiopians, Ugandans, and others on the basis of turbulence in their countries. On October 2, the House of Representatives passed legislation granting EVD to Liberians, Kuwaitis, Salvadorans, and Lebanese. The Senate is expected to address the issue in the coming weeks. In the meantime, we urge the Administration to treat Liberians as they have dealt with Chinese students in the United States following the Tiananmen Square massacre, at which time a stay of deportation was announced for all Chinese, and work authorizations were processed expeditiously.

### **C. Travel Documents For Liberian Refugees in West Africa**

Liberia's West African neighbors have accepted half a million Liberians. Some of the refugees have close ties with the United States, including family members who are residents here. U.S. Embassies in West Africa should be instructed to view generously requests for non-immigrant visas for persons who wish to visit the United States, but not stay here permanently. Many Liberian refugees are eager to return home, as they have left family members there, and do not want asylum in the United States. Yet it is difficult for them to stay in the Côte d'Ivoire or Guinea, where they do not speak the language and have no family, friends, or money. The executive branch should designate Liberia as a country of special humanitarian concern, and allow Liberians to apply for visas at any Embassy. Liberians should not have to depend upon the INS representative, who is based in Nairobi.

### **D. Increased Refugee Slots for Liberians**

The regional ceiling for refugee admissions from Africa in fiscal year 1991 is 4,900.<sup>46</sup> In view of the enormous number of Liberian refugees accepted by the country's West African neighbors, the United States should increase the number of refugee admissions and designate them for Liberians. Two years ago, the

number of Soviet Jews admitted to the United States was raised to 25,000. A similar agreement should be reached for Liberians.

### **E. Screening of Human Rights Abusers**

Liberians in the U.S. and U.S. missionaries who have recently returned from Liberia have reported that a number of Liberian soldiers whom they know to have been abusive have entered the United States. Several of Doe's top military leaders, who commanded troops which engaged in egregious abuses are now in the U.S., including General Alfred Smith, who commanded the troops which carried out the counterinsurgency campaign in Nimba County, Charles Julu, commander of the Executive Mansion Guard, and army chief of staff Henry Dubar. Also, several prominent civilian officials from Doe's government who are responsible for human rights abuses have recently entered the U.S. Among them are Doe's Presidential Affairs Minister, G. Alvin Jones,<sup>47</sup> and Justice Minister Jenkins Scott.<sup>48</sup> Africa Watch is urging the administration, that ways should be found to exclude known human rights abusers. We believe that neither the United States nor any other country should accept for permanent residence, or permit short-term visits, by notorious human rights abusers.

### **F. U.S. Pressure on Human Rights**

The conflict in Liberia has reached such proportions that it is difficult to know what the United States could do to aid civilians within Liberia. The vast majority of the population is at risk of disease and famine due to the conflict.<sup>49</sup> Krahn and Mandingos, particularly, are at grave risk at the hands of victorious rebels, and Doe's forces continue to kill other ethnic groups and political suspects indiscriminately.

The Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Herman Cohen, appeared to adopt a largely "wait-and-watch" attitude throughout most of the conflict. At no time did the Administration publicly call upon Doe to step down, despite the deep unpopularity of his regime within Liberia, its international isolation, and in light of the increasing bloodshed within the country. In September, Secretary Cohen visited the region and encouraged negotiations between the parties to end the conflict. Unfortunately the fighting and destruction have continued. It is clearly time for the United States to become more actively engaged in an international effort to save what is left of Liberia.

To date, U.S. policy appears to have been to defer to the Economic Community of West Africa in dealing with the Liberian crisis. It is unrealistic to expect ECOWAS to struggle alone with a disaster of this size. The ECOWAS "peace-keeping" force (ECOMOG) has now assumed a combat role, in alliance with the INPFL and the remnants of the Liberian army. Moreover, ECOMOG has not been able to protect and feed Liberian civilians, or stem the hemorrhage of

refugees. A different approach is clearly needed. The United States and its allies should call upon the United Nations Secretary General to appoint a high-level special representative on Liberia. In the past, the United Nations has appointed special representatives to mediate conflicts in Afghanistan, Namibia, Central America and the Iran-Iraq war. As a recognition of the severity of the situation in Liberia, the U.N. should now adopt the same policy there.

In addition to promoting a peaceful resolution to the conflict, the UN special representative should coordinate a massive feeding effort within Liberia. Only the arrival of huge amounts of food can prevent mass starvation. But despite the gravity of the situation, the U.S. and other governments have been dithering over this problem for months. The excuse for not bringing ships into the port of Monrovia is that insurance is prohibitively expensive. Monrovia is facing a human crisis of enormous proportions; surely the international community can come up with a way to cut through the red tape, and deliver large quantities of food to the starving city.

Finally, Africa Watch recommends that the U.S. and other governments denounce abuses of human rights by all parties to the conflict. Following meetings between the Assistant Secretary and rebel leaders Charles Taylor and Prince Johnson, Ambassador Cohen, stated that both men "would like to see Liberia with a truly democratic system, and they would cooperate in organizing that."<sup>50</sup> There is no evidence to support this premature conclusion. On the contrary, there is overwhelming evidence that the forces commanded by both men have, and continue, to commit gross abuses of internationally recognized human rights and humanitarian law.

Presumably the Assistant Secretary made such an ill-considered remark in the context of encouraging negotiations to end the conflict. However there is no justification for prematurely praising Taylor and Johnson, given the overwhelming evidence of rebel leaders' personal responsibility for gross violations of internationally recognized human rights. The United States should take particular pains to avoid the mistake it committed ten years ago, when it rushed to embrace Samuel K. Doe who came to power after murdering top officials, including the president of the civilian government he overthrew.

The United States should make it clear that there will be no U.S. assistance for a regime which attempts to seize power by slaughtering civilians, and should call upon all parties to cease such abuses immediately.

## **IX. The European Community**

The disintegration of Liberia in such a short period of time, and the widespread abuses of Liberians by all sides to the conflict, is a tragedy of unparalleled magnitude for Liberia. Africa Watch is calling on all parties to the conflict to end abuses against innocent civilians, create conditions that would

allow refugees and displaced people to return home, and to allow all Liberian citizens to live without the fear of violence, and to negotiate a peaceful end to the conflict.

Liberia is considered by many European governments to be an "American problem," and the U.K. and the rest of the E.C. have deferred to the United States and largely "watched and waited" while Liberia has been destroyed. It is long past time for the international community as a whole to become engaged in efforts to help resolve the conflict in Liberia, and to provide greater assistance to victims both within and without Liberia. Africa Watch calls upon the United Kingdom and the European Community to press the United Nations to appoint a special representative on Liberia. Africa Watch also appeals to the U.K. and the European community to increase assistance to Liberians in West Africa, and to aid efforts to provide food and medical assistance within Liberia.

### Notes

\*Africa Watch is part of Human Rights Watch, and was established in May 1988 "to monitor and promote respect for internationally recognized human rights in Africa."

<sup>1</sup>During part of the visit, Ms. Burkhalter accompanied a delegation from Refugees International and Project Mercy, which visited the Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea to assess the humanitarian needs of the refugees. Refugees International is a refugee policy organization based in Washington, D.C.; Project Mercy is a humanitarian organization based in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

<sup>2</sup>For a more complete description of the background to the conflict and abuses by Doe's troops in Nimba County, see Africa Watch's May 1990 report, *Liberia: Flight From Terror, Testimony, Abuses in Nimba County*.

<sup>3</sup>A report issued by the Lawyers committee for Human Rights in 1986 noted, "Liberia is rife with talk of revenge. The possibility of massive reprisals against the Krahn if President Doe is violently removed from power is conceded by all sides. The Krahn themselves are living in fear." *Liberia: A Promise Betrayed*, page 5.

<sup>4</sup>In some non-international armed conflict situations, Protocol II of the (Geneva Accords also applies, which imposes an even stricter standard on parties to the conflict. Protocol II does not bind Liberia, because the government of Liberia did not ratify it.

<sup>5</sup>Interview in Washington D.C., October 17, 1990.

<sup>6</sup>When Africa Watch visited Côte d'Ivoire in late February, there were approximately 63,000 refugees there. By now, the numbers have reached

162,000. The increase is largely from civilians fleeing starvation, or Krahn people fleeing rebel soldiers.

<sup>7</sup>Interview in Pahoubli, September 16, 1990.

<sup>8</sup>Interview in Peka. Houebli, September 16, 1990.

<sup>9</sup>Interview in Peka Houebli, September 16, 1990.

<sup>10</sup>Interview in Abidjan, September 13, 1990.

<sup>11</sup>Interview in Abidjan, September 13, 1990.

<sup>12</sup>"Marines Evacuate 21 More in Liberia," New York Times, August 8, 1990.

<sup>13</sup>"Ghana is Said to Strike Liberian Rebels." New York Times. September 17, 1990.

<sup>14</sup>"Bloody end of a butcher," The Observer [London], September 23, 1990.

<sup>15</sup>Interview in Tabou City, September 11, 1990.

<sup>16</sup>Interview in Tabou City, September 14, 1990.

<sup>17</sup>Interview, September 17, 1990.

<sup>18</sup>Interview in Abidjan, September 12, 1990.

<sup>19</sup>While Liberia has not signed Protocol II, it is clear that customary international law prohibits the introduction of children into hostilities. Moreover, Article 38 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted by the United Nations last year, states that: 1. States Parties undertake to respect and to ensure respect for rules of international humanitarian law applicable to them in armed conflicts which are relevant to the child. 2. States Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure that persons who have not attained the age of 15 years do not take a direct part in hostilities. 3. States Parties shall refrain from recruiting any person who has not attained the age of 15 years into their armed forces. States parties shall endeavour to give priority to those who are oldest.

<sup>20</sup>The exact number of hostages taken by Charles Taylor's forces known. The U.S. State Department did not have an estimate of the number.

<sup>21</sup>"Nigerians Discuss Situation at Monrovia Embassy." AFP, August 23, 1990.

<sup>22</sup>*Liberia: Flight Terror*, May 1990, p. 10.

<sup>23</sup>Interview in Washington, August 28, 1990.

<sup>24</sup>"Reporters Visit Monrovia's Airport Killing Field," BBC, October 10, 1990.

<sup>25</sup>"Reporters Visit Monrovia's Airport Killing Field," BBC World Service, October 10, 1990.

<sup>26</sup>AFP, "Government Soldiers Looting, Shooting in Monrovia." September 20, 1990.

<sup>27</sup>Voros says that Col. Doe had been going about Monrovia attempting to disarm "1990 soldiers"—that is, thieves and criminals who had been hastily recruited into the army to make up for the large numbers of casualties and desertions in the course of the counterinsurgency campaign. The army depicts Col. Doe as a deserter.

<sup>28</sup>Nimley also insisted that a U.S. missionary who had been killed on approximately August 10 had died when he ran a roadblock and shot at a soldier. But the Lebanese neighbors of the victim, who were on the U.S. ship offshore where Voros was taken, actually witnessed the killing of the missionary. They stated that he died when army soldiers fired on his home and he was hit by a ricochet bullet.

<sup>29</sup>Interview in Tabou City, September 14, 1990.

<sup>30</sup>"West Africa—Displaced Persons," Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), Situation Report No. 10, October 26, 1990.

<sup>31</sup>According to relief personnel, there is currently a shortfall of \$10.2 million in response to the lodging request of the League of Red Cross Societies, the UNHCR, and World Food Program.

<sup>32</sup>We heard reports from relief personnel that some of the refugees arrived so hungry from Liberia that they ate their rice raw.

<sup>33</sup>Interview, September 14, 1990, Tabou City.

<sup>34</sup>Interview, September 11, town of Prollo.

<sup>35</sup>The Refugees International delegation which visited Guinea reports that one trip of 60 miles took them five hours.

<sup>36</sup>Officials at the U.S. Embassy in Abidjan estimated that the refugees in Guinea needed approximately 4,500 to 5,000 tons per month. They had received no more than 2,000 tons per month from Conakry. The first shipment of 500 tons from the Ivory Coast was to have been delivered in early September, and relief personnel are hoping to move as much as 1,000 tons per week into the area. Interview, September 12.

<sup>37</sup>There are 4,000 refugees officially registered, though the Government of Guinea States that the actual number may be as high as 11,000.

<sup>38</sup>Interview, September 15, 1990.

<sup>39</sup>Agency for International Development, office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance, Situation Report No. 10, October 26, 1990.

<sup>40</sup>Interview in Washington, D.C., October 25, 1990.

<sup>41</sup>Joint hearing by the House Select Committee on Hunger and the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, October 25, 1990.

<sup>42</sup>Military aid to Liberia "in the pipeline" continued into 1987.

<sup>43</sup>The Bush Administration has justified the presence of the military advisors on the grounds that they were attempting to curb human rights abuses. This was an unrealistic objective, given the breadth of the slaughter. It is inconceivable that two U.S. advisers could have restrained marauding troops who had actually been ordered by Doe to commit abuses against civilians. Some have suggested that the United States advisors went into Nimba in an attempt to investigate reports of Libyan support for Charles Taylor's forces.

<sup>44</sup>According to officials from the international humanitarian agencies, they cannot distribute commodities to Citizens of the Ivory Coast, Guinea, and Sierra Leone unless a major donor such as the United States specifically instructs them to do so.

<sup>45</sup>Arthur Helton of the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights reported that the INS office in New York where Liberian refugees are to go to change their status has the words "Detentions and Deportations" above the door. Naturally, few Liberians care to enter.

<sup>46</sup>For 1991, the ceiling for refugee admissions. from Latin America is 3,100; for Eastern Europe it is 5,000; for the USSR it is 50,000; for East A.Asia (Indochina) it is 52,000; for the Near East/South Asia it is 6,000.

<sup>47</sup>G. Alvin Jones is considered to have been Doe's closest advisor. He is personally responsible for having three men publicly flogged outside the Finance Ministry. The men were accused of theft, though there was no trial or conviction. One of the victims later died.

<sup>48</sup>As Doe's Minister of Justice, Jenkins Scott is responsible for the unjust arrests of numerous prisoners over the years.

<sup>49</sup>The Administration has sent a team to Liberia to attempt to assess humanitarian needs. Unfortunately, until there is some stability in the country, most observers feel that it will be almost impossible to deliver the assistance.

<sup>50</sup>New York Times, September 21, 1990.

## DOCUMENT

### U. S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Herman Cohen's Remarks to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, November 27, 1990

#### Liberia

The civil war in Liberia is now g its twelfth month. Suffering throughout the country has been massive, with some 80 percent of Liberia's 2.2 million people either displaced, experiencing severe food shortages or now refugees in neighboring countries.

The war is stalemated between the three opposing Liberian forces (Charles Taylor's group, Prince Johnson's forces, and remnants of Doe's forces) and the armed forces of the ECOMOG.

Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) has been pushed out of the city of Monrovia by the ECOMOG with assistance from Prince Johnson's Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NIPFL). Remnants of former President Doe's Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) continue to play a negative role within the city and have been linked to continued looting and civilian harassment there. Both the INPFL and AFL have now handed over civil power to the interim government of Liberia, headed by Amos Sawyer. Mr. Sawyer arrived in Monrovia on Wednesday, November 21, and was warmly received by Prince Johnson and, to a lesser extent, by AFL Commander Bowen. To the extent that there is room for optimism, we hope that the interim government's presence in Monrovia, coupled with the proposed ECOWAS talks in with President Traore and Charles Taylor, will begin some movement toward lasting peace. This will, however, be a difficult process as many destabilizing forces have been unleashed throughout Liberia. The United States government stands ready to facilitate the process in realistic ways.

My testimony today is focused on the diplomatic efforts we have undertaken to facilitate a Liberian peace process. My colleague, Andrew Natsios, director of the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, will speak to some of the dimensions of the U.S. relief effort. These efforts have gone forward to the extent that the security situation has allowed. Our humanitarian work and our diplomatic efforts operate in tandem.

Between the beginning of the conflict in r, 1989, and the early summer of 1990, the United States government conducted a vigorous initiative to bring about reconciliation the opposing forces in Liberia. All of the



groups involved sent delegations to the State Department at different times. Our message was always the same: Liberia's problems must be settled by Liberians on the basis of democratic values.

While Samuel Doe was still in power, we urged him to move up the date of the next presidential election so that the insurgents could feel that their grievances could be addressed. You will recall that Samuel Doe had agreed to an election within one year, or mid-1991, and had also agreed not to run for reelection. Unfortunately, these concessions were insufficient for the National Patriotic Front, which demanded Doe's immediate resignation and exile. Throughout the process, the United States government offered to evacuate Samuel Doe and his family from Liberia to another African country whenever he wished to leave, but he failed to take up the offer.

During the first five months of 1990, the administration also made a major effort to evacuate American citizens living in Liberia who were in danger of being caught up in the fighting. The United States military forces stationed offshore played an important role in our successful effort to evacuate every American who wished to leave as well as nationals of 58 other countries.

During the spring of 1990, the Economic Community of West African States, concerned about the danger of thousands of their nationals living in Liberia, the hundreds of thousands of Liberian refugees who had taken refuge in Cote D'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone, and the overall threat to regional stability caused by the conflict, decided to offer its mediation services to the parties to the conflict. The ECOWAS mediation commission proposed that Liberia be governed after a cease-fire by an interim government whose leaders would not be eligible to run for office. The role of the interim government would be to restore peace and social services and prepare for a free and fair democratic election. The United States government issued a public endorsement of the objectives of the ECOWAS mediators.

Under ECOWAS auspices, certain Liberian political parties held a conference in Banjul which elected the leaders of an interim government, headed by Amos Sawyer as the president. That process was flawed by the absence of the National Patriotic Front from the conference. Despite the absence of the NPFL, the interim government offered Charles Taylor the post of Speaker of the National Assembly, and offered the NPFL six seats in the National Assembly, more than any other political organization. They also assured Mr. Taylor he could run for office in a democratic election even though he held the post of speaker in the interim government. Charles Taylor refused to accept the offer.

In the absence of a Liberian political consensus, the war continued, mainly in a prolonged siege of central Monrovia by the NPFL and the breakaway INPFL. Despite many weeks of combat, it was clear that Samuel Doe's dwindling band of troops could not be defeated in central Monrovia. The continued

stalemate guaranteed that the city of Monrovia would slowly starve to death. Worried about their nationals and the growing tragedy, the members of the ECOWAS mediation commission decided to send troops to Monrovia. The military group dispatched to Monrovia was called ECOMOG, which stands for monitoring group of ECOWAS. The military force hoped to be received peacefully, but was vigorously opposed by Charles Taylor's NPFL. A number of ECOWAS governments that did not participate in the decision to send troops to Liberia objected to the action as being contrary to the rules of the organization, which is an economic grouping. In view of the split within ECOWAS on the issue of military intervention, the United States maintained its neutrality while continuing to support the stated goals of ECOWAS — cease-fire, interim government, and democratic elections.

Throughout the period December, 1989, to August, 1990, the United States has been actively engaged in humanitarian relief. Wherever and whenever possible we have assisted those inside Liberia and the Liberian refugees in other countries. Whatever one may feel about the armed intervention of ECOMOG forces, we can state that their ability to open up the Port of Monrovia and their pacification of much of the city allowed us to arrest the starvation of that city.

By September, 1990, it was clear that the ECOWAS effort was not making progress in building a political consensus for Liberian national reconciliation. For that reason, I made a tour of the region, where I discussed the problem with a number of chiefs of state. I found general agreement that Liberians should solve their own problem through negotiations without any preconditions. My trip was followed by a tour undertaken by Liberian task force director Don Petterson, former ambassador to Somalia and Tanzania. He urged all of Liberia's neighbors to foster national reconciliation among Liberians. We both informed the President of Burkina Faso that we disapproved of his sending arms to the NPFL in transit from Libya, and that any continuation of that activity could only result in a deterioration of our bilateral relations. We also informed all of the governments that Charles Taylor must play a leading role in any solution and that no political process can succeed unless Charles Taylor cooperates. My feeling is that since our two visits there has been a greater determination to seek a regional consensus about Liberia. The upcoming regional summit scheduled to be held in Bamako will demonstrate whether that cautious optimism is correct.

Mr. Chairman, creating a regional framework for peace is one of the primary necessities for a successful end to the mediation committee's mandate. To that end, Charles Taylor has been invited by Malian President Moussa Traore to meet with him in Bamako; Mr. Taylor has also indicated his intention to meet

with the ECOWAS mediation committee during the course of his visit to Bamako. Just a few days ago, Mr. Taylor told us he may also agree to stay in Bamako during the ECOWAS summit. In addition to such a meeting, Mr. Taylor's stay in Bamako could provide an opportunity for discussions with interim government President Amos Sawyer.

These developments are hopeful portents of peace, but, for the moment, they represent only intentions. The United States will continue to support the ECOWAS stated goals and does so in that belief that ECOWAS mediation in the peace process supports our goals of regional solutions to regional problems.

During the conversation, Mr. Chairman, Charles Taylor indicated to me great concern with the problems of interim governance and with ECOMOG neutrality. I discussed with him ways that these issues could be dealt with within a negotiating structure. While I am encouraged by Mr. Taylor's stated willingness to show flexibility, this remains declaratory policy unaccompanied, for the moment, by diplomatic action or demonstrable desire to achieve an enforceable, lasting cease-fire.

With respect to the role of ECOMOG, the stated primary purpose of the military force has been to stop the fighting and achieve a cease-fire. I hope that all sides show flexibility and a negotiated solution to the war. Failing that, it is difficult to see how Liberian lives can be saved.

Mr. Chairman, the costs of war are measured in lost lives, refugees and displaced persons. We believe that more than 600,000 Liberians are living outside their country today, many of them in makeshift camps in Guinea, Sierra Leone, Cote D'Ivoire, Ghana and Nigeria. Their fate is part of what drives American policy in the Liberian conflict. For the time being, these people's needs are being met by massive assistance programs but they need more than that. They need peace in Liberia.

## DOCUMENT

### ***"Academic Freedom in Liberia", from Academic Freedom and Human Rights Abuses in Africa***

**An Africa Watch Report, November 1990\***

**This report is reprinted with the permission of Africa Watch  
(The Editor)**

The University of Liberia is the successor to Liberia College which was founded in 1862 by a philanthropic group based in Boston. The University of Liberia was established by a legislative act in 1951 after the College was destroyed by fire.

Throughout the 1980s, the regime of former President Samuel Doe regarded the intellectual and political ferment associated with the University of Liberia as a threat. In 1980, Dr. J. Teah Tarpeh, Vice President of the University for Academic Affairs and Professor H. B. Yaido were detained in Monrovia's Post Stockade military barracks for several hours. They were held on suspicion of "subversive activities," but they were not informed of the basis for that suspicion.

In 1981, Dr. Patrick Seyon, Vice President for Administration was detained along with others for allegedly plotting the overthrow of the government. Seyon was held incommunicado and denied access to legal counsel. He was tried before a military tribunal, and was found innocent and released. Dr. Seyon had been flogged and beaten for the first eight days of his detention. As a result he suffered kidney damage and had to be hospitalized for a week.

In a clampdown on student political activity in June 1981, the government banned Commany Wesseh, a student leader and member of Liberia's Constitutional commission from making any public statements and having contact with the press. Shortly afterwards, letters protesting the ban appeared in newspapers, and Commany Wesseh was arrested. He was placed under house arrest and then detained for two weeks.

In January 1982, General Doe promulgated Decree 2A. Decree 2A prohibits all academic activities which "directly or indirectly impinge, interfere with or cast aspersion upon the activities, programs or policies of the government of the People's Redemption Council." Professors, instructors, teachers and students were singled out for special mention. The Decree also banned "[a]ll activities directed at or incidental to the formation of student organizations or parties or

the holding of elections or engaging in student politics in any form or for whatever purpose whatsoever." <sup>1</sup> Violation of the Decree was made punishable by death.

Decree 2A was issued at a time of increasing tension between students and the government. In response to a public warning from Doe to stay out of politics, the Liberian National Students Union (LINSU), issued a public appeal for permission to conduct student elections. Six student leaders were arrested on January 20. They were: Ezekiel Pajibo, President of the Students Union; Siaffa Blacki, Klon Brownwell, James Kwiah, Alaric Tokpa, and Kpedee Worwor. They were initially charged with violating a prohibition on political activity contained in Decree 2 but since that Decree lacked specific provisions governing student elections, there was no applicable legislation. To fill this gap, the government quickly issued Decree 2A.

The six students were detained at the Post Stockade and tried within a week of their arrest *in camera* by the Supreme Military Tribunal. They were reportedly convicted of treason. Five of the students were sentenced to death, and January 29 was set as the date of execution. However, on January 28, in response to a national outcry and international pressure, President Doe issued an executive pardon which resulted in the immediate and unconditional release of the students. On releasing the six, General Doe issued an ominous warning: "We warn administrators and faculty members on campus, parents and guardians, Sunday school teachers and church leaders to refrain from politics for the next three years. This warning from the PRC is the last."<sup>2</sup>

Decree 2A had a dramatic impact on university life; it eliminated student government which organized all campus activities. there were no more academic symposiums, debates, student publications or honor roll. The student newspaper, *The University Spokesman*, ceased publication in 1980. *The Liberian Law Journal* was last published in June 1981.

Also in 1982, James Cooper, the seventy year old former registrar of the University of Liberia was arrested for allegedly "slandering" the military government. He was sentenced to three years' imprisonment.

In early 1983, a commencement speaker was briefly detained by security forces after giving an address in which he stressed the importance of academic institutions freely pursuing independent lines of inquiry.

In August 1984, Dr. Amos Sawyer, the acting Director of the Institute of Research, a prominent University faculty member and Chair of Liberia's Constitutional Drafting Commission, was arrested with George Kieh, a lecturer in the political science department. Along with fourteen others, they were charged with plotting a coup. Sawyer and Kieh were not charged and the details of the

plot were never made public. They were held in the Post Stockade for two months before they were "pardoned."

On August 22, 1984, 200 soldiers of President Doe's Executive Mansion Guard, acting on his direct orders stormed the campus of the University of Liberia, which is located directly across the street from the Executive Mansion in Monrovia. They were ordered to suppress a student demonstration protesting the arrest of Sawyer and Kieh. According to reliable reports, the soldiers fired indiscriminately on the demonstrating students, beat them with rifle butts, stripped them naked and many female students were raped. The soldiers went on to loot the university campus. After the attack, the army sealed off the campus for five days making it impossible for independent observers to verify what happened. During this five day period, the soldiers looted and vandalized the campus.

Following the attack on the campus, President Doe dismissed the administration of the University, including the President, the Faculty Senate and the University Council, who he held responsible for the student demonstrations. He only re-appointed those individuals he believed to be politically apathetic. Among those dismissed were some of Liberia's most respected scholars: Dr. Mary Antoinette Brown Sherman, who was president of the University; Counselor Philip Banks, who was Dean of the Law School; Dr. Amos Sawyer, the Dean of the Political Science Department; Dr. Patrick Seyon, Vice President for Administration; Dr. J. Teah Tarpeh, Vice President for Academic Affairs; and Dr. J. Pal Chaudhuri, a professor of history.

In December 1984 and January 1985, student leaders were arrested and charged with distributing illegal leaflets. Six members of the Liberian National Students Unions, all in their 20s, were detained. They were Ezekiel Pajibo, Alaric Topka, Lucia Massally, James Fromoyen, Dempster Yellah and Christian Herbert. They were held for a month at the National Security agency, where they were interrogated by Joint Security. Then they were transferred to the Post Stockade. During this period they were kept in isolation, flogged, and threatened with death. They were held for five months at Liberia's notorious Belle Yella prison, an isolated maximum security prison located deep in the forest of a remote part of Liberia. After five months, they were returned to the Post Stockade for another three months. Pajibo spent another six weeks in solitary confinement there. After nine months in detention, they were released without ever having been charged.

In August 1987, the acting Secretary General of the opposition Liberian Action Party was dismissed from his position as associate professor at the University of Liberia after the University administration decreed that his political activities were incompatible with his academic responsibilities. The dismissal came after the Professor had joined other prominent Liberians in

challenging the arguments of a fellow professor, the principal speaker at an official National Day ceremony, who stated that a multi-party government was contrary to African traditions.

In July 1988, the acting President of LINSU and a prominent member of an opposition party were dismissed from their positions as teaching assistants at the University of Liberia. The University administration claimed that the move was unrelated to the political activities of the two, but no other university employees were dismissed.

In August 1988, President Doe issued Executive Decree Number Two which banned all student political organizations including the Liberian National Students Union. The ban on student politics was later incorporated into the University of Liberia's handbook of rules and regulations. According to one Liberian student interviewed by Africa Watch, the ban had a stultifying effect:

All student activities were prohibited on campus. This included lecture series, newspapers, and the university's Intellectual Discourse Program. The Intellectual Discourse Program was a weekly or biweekly event where students invited professors, judges and cabinet ministers to discuss various topical events. The students prepared for these discussions and asked plenty of tough questions. People from the community came to these sessions.<sup>3</sup>

The ban came in the wake of numerous incidents of student unrest throughout the country, including one in which soldiers shot at demonstrators, killing one school employee and wounding two students. Eleven student leaders at the University of Liberia who signed a leaflet protesting the ban were expelled from the university and charged with disorderly conduct for allegedly fomenting student unrest. The University administration later suspended fourteen more students who were described as ringleaders of the student protests against the ban.

In mid-September 1988, the government detained 21 students for questioning, with regard to an unexplained explosion on the university campus. The students were arrested in a church meeting with national church leaders who had volunteered to mediate the students' dispute with the government. Most of the 21 students were released shortly after the arrests, but nine of them were held for two weeks without charge before being released.

Although Executive Order Number Two had technically expired, in October 1989 two students were suspended from the University of Liberia and three students were detained without charge or trial for two weeks, for attempting to revive a student organization.

In October 1989, Momodu Lavala and two other university students were detained illegally and without charge for two weeks. They were suspected of violating a ban on student political activities imposed by President Doe under Executive Order Number Two. Momodu Lavala and another student had been suspended from the university after they re-established a student political party, citing a 1974 Supreme Court ruling that executive orders lapsed after one year if not ratified by the legislature.

### Notes

\*Africa Watch is part of Human Rights Watch, and was established in May 1988 "to monitor and promote respect for internationally recognized human rights in Africa." According to the Africa Watch Committee, the current report "is based on research undertaken in late February 1990, in Cote d'Ivoire. Africa Watch is grateful for the cooperation of the Ivorian authorities responsible for the coordination of the relief efforts. In particular, we would like to thank Medecin sans Frontieres, the French medical relief organization, for their invaluable assistance."

<sup>1</sup> Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, *Liberia: A Promise Betrayed*, p. 157.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 162.

<sup>3</sup> Africa Watch interview in New York with a former Liberian student, September 10, 1990.

### Acknowledgements

All of the staff of Africa Watch contributed to this report: Richard Carver; Richard Dicker, Janet Fleischman; Rakiya Omaar; Karen Sorensen; and Alex de Wall. Richard Dicker had overall responsibility for the report which was edited by Rakiya Omaar. We are grateful to a number of our board members who provided us with invaluable information and contacts, and who encouraged us in undertaking this project. They are: Roberta Cohen, Tom Karis, Gail Gerhardt, James Paul and Claude Welch, Jr. We are especially indebted to the many African academics and students who shared their experiences with us. It is their information and their concerns which have enriched this report. Many of them requested anonymity, and we have respected that wish.



DOCUMENT

**Text of Desperate Letter from Liberian  
President Samuel K. Doe to U. S.  
President George Bush**

June 4, 1991

The Executive Mansion  
Office of the President  
Monrovia Liberia

His Excellency George Bush  
President of the United States  
The White House  
Washington, DC  
United States of America

Dear President Bush:

My country is on the brink of disaster. I am confident that our armed forces have the ability to stop the rebels who have gathered some thirty five miles from the perimeter of our capitol but if the rebels succeed, tens of thousands of innocent citizens will be slaughtered. Our people are frightened and hungry. We do not have food to give them nor the transportation to help them escape. They have nowhere to go even if they were able to leave on their own initiative.

I love my country dearly and am willing to make any sacrifice necessary, even if it means giving my own life, to preserve our nation and avoid the slaughter of our people. I formally offered to resign if free elections could be called to fill my office but was informed by our Congress and my own legal advisors that this was illegal under the constitution. I since have pledged that I will insure that free and honest elections are held in 1991, as provided by our constitution, and that I will not offer myself as a candidate for re-election. This will give our people the opportunity to elect a president of their choice.

Another suggestion which has been advanced for resolving the crisis is that I should immediately relinquish the Presidency in favor of a new interim Government to be established by certain factions. However, it is my concerted view that, were this course of action to be pursued at this time, a political vacuum would be created which might be filled by elements hostile to the immediate creation of a democratic atmosphere.

I believe that democracy to the Liberian people means, above all, the guarantee of a peaceful transfer of political power. When this principle is

established in practice and adhered to, other issues can be resolved creatively and productively within the constitutional framework.

It was against the foregoing background that I have decided to communicate with former United States President Jimmy Carter, who is held in high esteem by the Liberian people, and the United Nations to actively intervene in the restoration of peace in my country as well as to ensure that the necessary mechanisms are implemented for the holding of free and fair elections. To this end, I have also called upon all Liberian politicians, both at home and abroad, to commence preparations for the forthcoming elections. Necessary measures will be taken to enable all Liberians including the rebel group, to participate fully in the electoral process.

Mr. President, it is difficult, I understand, for Americans to understand why so often Africans resort to violent overthrow of their governments. Our actions may not always be justified but conditions often become unbearable and we may have no other mechanism to effect a change. Our own coup in 1980 was not planned. I was one of a group of soldiers who participated in the overthrow but I did not personally order the executions which shocked the American people. These events occurred during a period of great stress when retribution, rather than reason, was the motivator. Like all of you, I, too, wish they had not occurred.

I stepped into the leadership of our country as a young boy still in his twenties because the perpetrators could not agree about who their new leader should be and I happened to carry the highest rank among the group. I had a high school education and knew nothing about government. I have tried to learn to be a good leader. I have earned my college degree in government during my time in office. I initiated our country's first multi-party national elections in 1985 which I realized were criticized by many Western countries but which also had their positive side. Experience should permit us to greatly improve the mechanics of our next election.

My relationship with my country might be likened, in some respect, to that of a man who loves his wife very much but at times is tempted to be unfaithful. If he finds that his wife has a terminal disease, all other temptations disappear and he prays only for her survival. I realize that people have said that I have been driven by power, greed or other unhealthy desires but these have not been my primary motivations. If I have failed in these regards at times, I ask for the forgiveness of my people. Times of crisis should bring out the best in a person. I hope my willingness to do whatever is necessary to ease the pain of our people or save our country will persuade everyone of my sincerity.

I understand that your own former President Richard Nixon recently released an autobiography wherein he details certain of his actions which he now regrets and that this finally has allowed the American people to focus on

the good things in his presidency and push the bad to the back of their minds. Forgiveness is at the core of Christianity and our country is predominantly Christian. I only hope that my people will forgive me for any wrongs I have committed and focus on the good things that I have attempted to accomplish, particularly the sacrifices I now am ready to make.

My plea to you, Mr. President, is that you quickly arrange a ceasefire and send in a peacekeeping force or use your influence to urge the United Nations to do so.

As you know, the rebels are led by a man named Charles Taylor who is a convicted criminal.

He accepted the offer of Libya's Colonel Kadafi to train a small band of mercenaries to attack our country. These mercenaries came in from the Ivory Coast through our Nimba County, knowing that discontent with the government was greatest in that area. As he moved toward the coast, he picked up locals who either were dissidents or afraid to refuse to follow him. A great majority of his forces are totally untrained and are good Liberians.

It is not my desire to slaughter rebels, only to get them to drop their arms and return to their homes. If any rebels, or any of my own soldiers, have committed crimes such as murder and rape, they will be properly tried under our law. No government action will be taken against "rebel" who drops his gun and returns to his home.

If you will honour my request to send a peacekeeping force, I know that the majority of those with the rebel forces will lay down their arms.

I realize that the political implications of such move on your part could be great. Perhaps you could explain to your nation that it was the United States who was responsible for the formation of our Republic, Africa's oldest, when America began returning is expatriated slaves to this area. Our capitol is named after your President Monroe. Our flag is a a replica of yours. Our laws are patterned after your laws. We in Liberia have always considered ourselves "stepchildren" of the United States. We implore you to come help your "stepchildren" who are in danger of losing their lives and their freedom.

If you think it necessary to release this communication to your people so that they can understand our plight, please feel free to do so.

Faithfully,

Signed, Samuel K. Doe

DOCUMENT

**Liberian President  
Samuel K. Doe writes  
to U. S. Senator  
Edward Kennedy**

April 30, 1990

The Executive Mansion  
Office of the President  
Monrovia, Liberia

Honourable Edward Kennedy  
Senator  
United States Congress  
Washington, D.C.  
U.S.A.

Dear Honourable Kennedy:

This letter comes to you and through you to the American people in the light of the Nimba crisis which has persisted for a little over four months.

Liberia, founded in 1822 was virtually a one-party State until 1980. It was in an attempt to broaden the base of political participation and rectify social and economic anomalies of that time that the Military in Liberia initiated the April 12, 1980, Revolution. This act did not only put an end to the century-old hegemony of one sector of the population, it also set the pace for multi-ethnic involvement in the administration of this Republic.

It was in this context that a new Constitution was approved by the Citizenry in 1984, and elections held in 1985, with the participation of four new political parties.

Regrettably, since 1985, various attempts have been made to destabilize this constitutionally elected government, but to no avail. This administration has endeavored over the last four years to preserve a civilian government, which is more broad-based than any government Liberia has had or known throughout its history. All ethnic sectors are today adequately represented in the three branches of Government.

Unfortunately, however, on December 24, 1989, an invasion, led by Charles Taylor, a fugitive from justice both in Liberia and the United States of America, was launched. Our security investigations have shown the involvement of Libya, Burkina Faso, and La Cote D'Ivoire in support of these rebels.

This is, therefore, tantamount to external aggression. These three Nations perpetrated the recruiting, training, transportation, and hosting of these rebels whose sole visible intent is to inflict damage on the citizenry and infrastructure of the Country, and thereby destabilize government.

Since the Nimba incursion, we have exercised patience, restraint, caution and maturity in dealing with the rebels. Extreme care has been taken to safeguard and protect innocent citizens within the affected areas. The army has been specifically instructed to only attack areas occupied by rebels, or in self-defense. This is the reason why this threat to our peace and security has dragged on for a protracted period. We continue to exercise restraint so that we do not unduly inflict loss on the non-combattant population in the area.

Our Government remains committed to a genuine economic adjustment program, and this has been evident in various policy actions and overtures over the past six months. We shall persist in these efforts.

In addition, our Government is committed to protect human rights. Liberia is one of the few countries in Africa today which does not have political prisoners.

Consistent with our commitment to the rule of law, we have never relented in dealing drastically with indiscipline amongst soldiers, and have severely punished all acts of abuse which have been brought to our attention.

In view of the national and international concern to bring a lasting solution to this crisis, our administration will continue to foster and maintain a government of National Unity.

We further remain committed to the holding of free and fair election in 1991 and will be prepared to welcome international observers to the 1991 Presidential elections.

In further crystallizing our interest in the undeterred continuity of the Liberian nation and people, this Special Ten-Man Presidential Delegation comprising of a cross-section of leaders of political parties, the Liberian Council of Churches and officials of Government, has been constituted and empowered to visit the United States of America to exchange views and clarify our positions on the options envisioned in solving the problem. We are confident that this problem will be brought to a speedy and amicable resolution.

Faithfully yours,

Signed, Samuel K. Doe

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