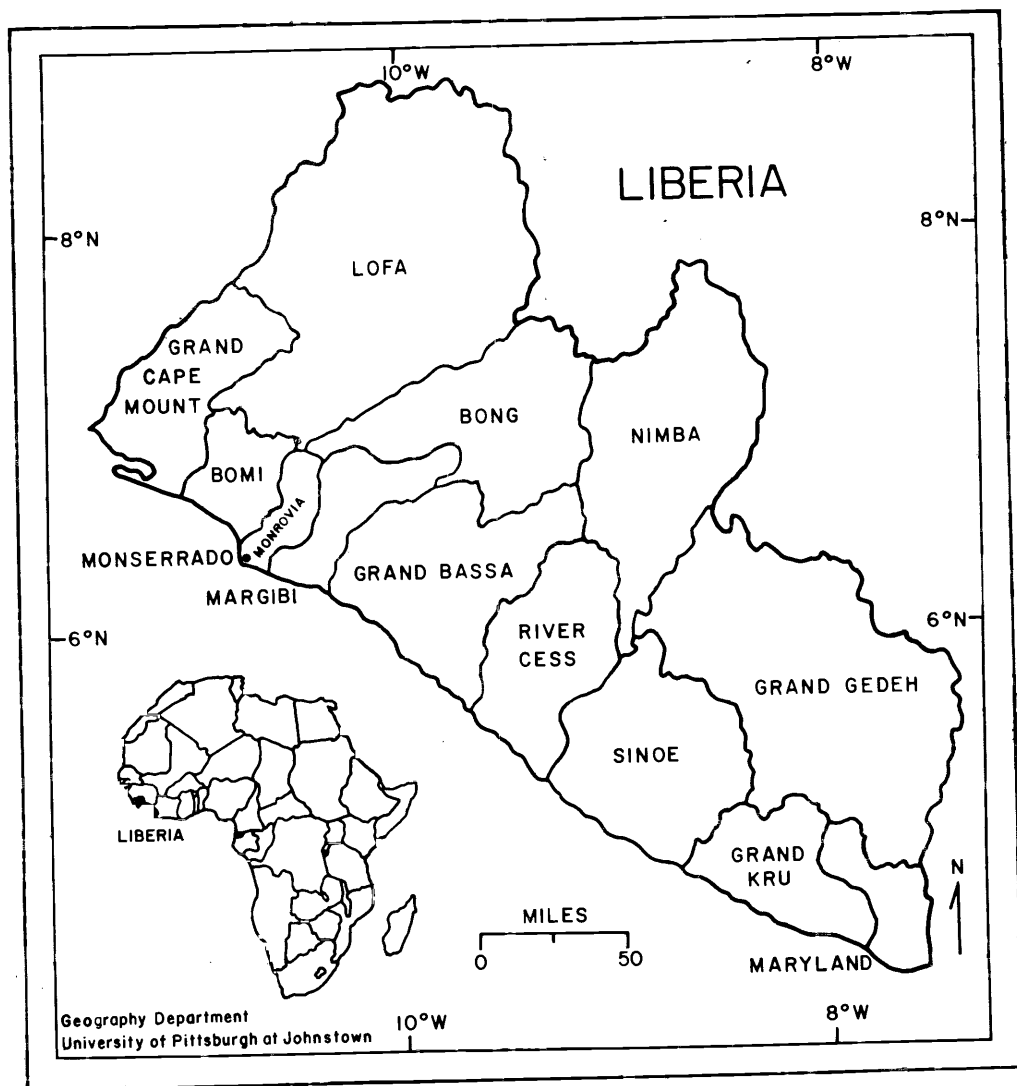


# LIBERIAN STUDIES JOURNAL



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**Landsdell Christie:  
American Pioneer in Liberia  
Liberian Iron Ore Magnate in America\***

Garland R. Farmer

**A Time of Unexampled Prosperity**

Few can have begun 1953 with quite the same blend of emotions as Landsdell K. Christie, stripped of operational authority in Liberian mining Company (LMC), the company he had formed eight years earlier to develop the Bomi Hills iron ore deposit in Liberia; his ownership reduced to less than 18% of the company's stock; and at dagger's point with Republic Steel Corp., which controlled operations, finances and almost 65% of the stock. Yet, in Washington Irving's phrase, every prospect was for "a time of unexampled prosperity": Shipments of Bomi ore were increasing rapidly, ending 1953 45% up from 1952. Average price per ton of ore increased by some 21% in one year. Sales revenues of \$14,160,000 were 73% above 1952's total of \$8,169,000; after-tax profit more than doubled, from \$3.5 million in 1952 to almost \$8 million in 1953. (For all Christie's bitterness at Republic's primacy, such results made it hard to fault its management, at least until LMC reached paunchy, self-satisfied middle age.)

Just before Christmas, 1952, LMC declared a dividend of two categories of preferred stock with a total value of \$9,156,000. Although nothing could be paid on this stock until after repayment of a \$4 million loan from the U.S. Export Import Bank, every evidence was that payment would not be long in coming. After the Eximbank was repaid in 1954—five years ahead of time, one issue of preferred stock was redeemed, returning to LMC shareholders the full amount, \$4,573,000, originally invested. The following year, a similar amount was paid to redeem the second preferred issue. Christie's share of these payments totaled a bit over \$1,625,000. The meticulous care of attorney Vernon R. Y. Lynn and his law firm, Curtis, Mallet-Prevost, Colt & Mosle ("Curtis Mallet") assured that much of this amount was either free of income tax or qualified for the then-still-advantageous capital gains tax rate.

Between 1956 and 1962, LMC distributed to shareholders some \$69,600,000. Although Christie did not retain for himself all of his 17.777% share, preferring to share his good fortune in ways discussed later, dividends on this block were almost \$12,400,000 during that seven year period.

(Of course, Republic Steel also profited handsomely. In fact, it was only by bringing to the U.S. over \$15 million of LMC dividends accumulated in a Liberian subsidiary formed to hold its LMC stock that Republic was able to maintain its dividend to shareholders in 1961. The following year, having exhausted this supply of cash, Republic steel cut its dividend from \$3 to \$2.50 per share.)

Transformed by Bomi's fresh-flowing horn of plenty, Christie's life took two courses which sometimes ran parallel, sometimes intersected and often diverged, but, being almost entirely uncharted, demanded of him singular ingenuity, commitment and perception. One of the courses was that of the enterprising American pioneer in an African nation which he was, almost inadvertently, helping to reshape; the other was that of Liberian iron ore magnate active in an America which knew little about iron ore and less still about Liberia.

### American Pioneer in Liberia

Unlike some who preceded him, Christie was no fleeting specter whose name was known but whose face was not; he was a visible presence. He drank and played cards at the Saturday Afternoon Club; "lifted collections" at churches across the land; sped, terrified, past rocks and shoals in Secretary of State Gabriel Dennis' power boat; walked the dock as head of the Port Management Company; set up—and lost money in—a construction company to help Liberia avoid losing soon-to-expire U.S. road-building funds; sat through long visits from seekers of comfort and cash as well as bearers of tales and good wishes, many of whom joined him in a drink, or at the table ready for surprise guests.

As when he built the road to Bomi, he had to make a path in an tenebrous "high bush" of unformed government policy, cutting through a tangled and resistant bureaucracy, testing untested public reaction, without guide or map or marker. He had to feel his way, step by step; what is remarkable is not that he took wrong steps, but that he took so few of them.

### Spinning "... Down the Ringing Grooves of Change"

As he felt his way into this new role, Christie began to enjoy being an instrument of broader change, particularly change which flowed directly from LMC's activities: Schools (he had a weakness for them, as for education in general); medical care (the only place he ever said he would like to see his name was on LMC's hospital—a small enough honor, ignored by resentful partners); housing with electricity, convenient to running water and toilet facilities; modern transportation and communications.

Of special interest to him were the more demanding and rewarding jobs which LMC opened up. On visits to Bomi, he was always attracted by Liberian faces in places where foreign faces were previously seen: the out-patient clinic, the pharmacy, the chemical labs, the repair shops. He had one major blind spot, however: to him, only rough-and-tumble Americans were fit to operate such heavy equipment as locomotives, electric shovels and the like. Once he stood on the brim of a mining pit and pronounced the dexterity with which a burly, tattooed blond was manipulating a monstrous electric shovel as proof that only Americans born and raised around mechanical equipment could master such operations. No one volunteered to introduce the operator whose poor English, heavy accent and fierce Dutch pride risked arousing some unpredictable and unwelcome reaction, from one of the other man.

Later on, Christie and LMC would be criticized for slowness in building company housing, providing a high school, replacing expatriates with Liberians and so on. In fact, while he was ever heedful of the profits that were so important to him personally, he often favored spending for things which his partners opposed. He sometimes prevailed by arguing that the expenditures would be good public relations or would be forced on the company by Government in any event, but more than a few actions were relegated to the no-man's-land which separated the company's principal personalities. As with the nuns' bathroom at St. Theresa's convent, recounted later here, he often augmented from his own pocket whatever LMC was prepared to do, which, it is only fair to add, was considered rather generous at the time.

The endless agonizing about whether progress is a "good thing" had already afflicted the thinking classes while Christie was still alive but it did not much affect him. He saw no reason to debate whether literacy is better than illiteracy; scientific medicine, better than bush medicine; moving loads by motor vehicles, better than moving them on the heads of bearers; running water, better than water carried in calabash bowls by children scarcely able to hold them steady. It was not that he could not see that a traditional way of life would disappear along with head loads and illiteracy; he simply believed that a better one would supplant it. Having spent nights in insect-ridden huts and contracted an awesome tapeworm from food consumed in the most idyllic surroundings, he welcomed modernization as both desirable and unavoidable, and wanted to be at the forefront of it.

Thus it was that he enjoyed Vai Town, as the community that grew up outside LMC's gates was called ("the second largest town in Liberia," bragged its boosters), on payday Saturday, with its gaudy, disorderly display of prosperous change: Lebanese shops offering Coleman lamps to light the huts of the farmers whose wives sold the produce that brought the cash for the lamps and the occasional can of jack mackerel or corned beef; sewing machines under shade trees, churning out clothing for laborers whose pay

envelopes had so recently transformed them from subsistence farmers into cash customers; pick-up trucks loaded with sheets of zinc roofing, sacks of nails and other materials to build the dwellings which sprang up wherever a newcomer could take over a bit of land. (He enjoyed seeing all this, but from a reasonable distance; needless personal contact was avoided by this fastidious man wherever he was.)

### Shaking the Fundamentals

Beneath these changes lay a profound and far-reaching revolution which Christie and LMC set into motion and which investors who followed them carried still further; it was the beginning of the end of the "old" Liberia. For example, tribal distinctions began to blur, if not to disappear, as people from all over Liberia came seeking jobs at Bomi. A heterogeneous island a where once only Vai and Gola were found. Other elements settled in their midst, wherever land could be bought or leased or simply taken over. When first employed, laborers often insisted on taking meals separately by tribe, but they soon abandoned the practice as too much bother. The same thing happened later at Mano and probably at the other iron ore mines as well. To be sure, what resulted was more a mixing bowl than a melting pot, but there had begun a previously unknown blending of Liberians which continued until the end of the mine.

Of even greater import to a changing nation were the jobs requiring the education fostered by President W. V. S. Tubman, which most often went to the qualified rather than to the protégés of "big shots". Relatives of "Honorable" did find their way onto LMC's payroll but they were relatively few. Many of the "junior staff" or higher level blue collar jobs which required some formal schooling were filled by those who would otherwise have passed their lives on the fringes of the old elite, suspended in a halfway world between settler elite and indigenous stock. In short, a new class was evolving, one which would spread throughout Liberia in the coming two decades, to other iron mines and the rapidly expanding private sector of smaller enterprises. These people would later be prominent among the growing number of Liberians wanting better educations—college educations!—for their children. (A half-blind janitor at National Iron Ore Company's dock office in Monrovia had one son who became a medical doctor and another who headed a government-owned bank.) They were also among those who sowed the seeds of impatience with old ways that eventually sent traditional structures tumbling. Considering the events of the past ten years, it is unlikely that Christie would have welcomed the thought but the tidal wave of change which he helped set in course contributed to the nation's turbulence as surely as did any university campus radical.



The process of change extended well beyond Bomi and LMC. As LMC grew and was followed by others, opportunities opened for Liberians in businesses which served concessions, their employees, or others who prospered further downstream. Trucking companies, battery plant, industrial gas plant, garages, office cleaning services, guard and security services, housing and office rental, printing plants, paint factory, cold storage plant are only the first to come to mind. Less reliant on the large companies but benefiting from the prosperity generated in part by them were such businesses as the brewery, the flour mill and slaughter house, countless restaurants, bars and shops, not to mention the taxis and pickup trucks which flowed incessantly over roads leading to the various concessions.

Because they had the education, the access to funds, and the connections needed to do business with government and concessions, many of those best able to take advantage of these opportunities were the same people who peopled government posts, but even here there was an interesting and unforeseen side effect: After it was possible for them to live, or hope to live, on outside incomes, these people were freer than any who had gone before from dependence on government jobs, and more than one landed in this safety net after falling from Presidential favor, former Treasury Secretary Charles Sherman was an excellent example. (Rubber farming produced a similar liberating benefit, offering perhaps greater freedom as it depended less on the bureaucracy for permits, licenses and the like.)

### Changing the Way the Open Door Opened

The nation at large was soon marked by LMC's presence: a growing economy produced growing government revenues and with greater income came increased government activity, much of it beneficial. As other investors arrived, they found that the terms of participation in Liberian development had been set, or influenced in great degree, by Christie. The principle of Government participation in profits was firmly established. The level of participation was unalterably aimed at 50% by the LMC Collateral Agreement of 1952. The timetable for reaching that level was hastened by the LAMCO and Bong Mining concessions, overtaking LMC's slower schedule, which was itself accelerated in 1965. Although he did not initiate this acceleration, he assured its embedment in Open Door investment policy when, in 1958, he formed National Iron Ore Company with its 50% Government interest. (The later controversy over Government's investment of borrowed money in this company will be covered in a Part III, on the Mano River project.) Finally, with his formula for financing the purchase of an additional 20% of National Iron Ore by individual Liberians, he raised the bar another notch so that the public offering of shares in new ventures became an all-but-routine aspect of subsequent investment in the country (underscore "public"; there had been

"private" placements before 1958, some by Christie, as is discussed elsewhere here).

While it is rare indeed to find in studies of Liberia in the 1950s and '60s anything vaguely resembling a summation of Christie's contributions to the changes which marked those years, almost all offer, indirectly or boldly, the hint or the assertion that . . .

**"Officials at the Ministry Told Me Christie Paid Tubman . . . "**

Few things have been said about Christie with more certainty or less evidence than that he had somehow "bought" President Tubman, a juicy possibility that has proven irresistible to scholars and scandalmongers alike. Even the serious, but not always unbiased, Dr. F.M. van der Kraaij, in his "The Open Door Policy of Liberia", repeats an allegation made by "officials of the Bureau of Natural Resources and Survey", who quoted a PhD dissertation written 12 years after Christie's death as saying that " . . . Christie had paid Tubman not to undertake any action" on a dispute between LMC and the Bureau over the weighing of ore shipments. In the first place, anyone who ever dealt with Tubman would know how unlikely it would have been for him to blink at a failure to pay Liberia something owed to it merely because someone, even a friend like Christie, asked him to. The case would have had to be argued and Tubman would have had to be convinced that, in fact, the amount was not owed. Of course, if the case were being argued by a friend, convincing would be made easier, but anyone who ever did business with either man would know that the arcane subject of the moisture content of ore shipments was among the last things Christie would have tried to discuss with the resolutely untechnical Tubman, or to which Tubman would have paid any attention. Although not directly involved in this LMC matter, I was either part of or aware of all of his dealings with Tubman during the period when the dispute over weighing ore shipments was at its hottest and can say that Christie did not ask Tubman to intervene in it. This is a fine example of how the back alley gossip which amused and scandalized pre-revolutionary Liberia has been transformed into "history" by sufficient repetition.

That said, it is also true that concessionaires, including Christie, often took to the President their pleas for redress of government actions which they considered unfair or illegal—a practice, ingrained in all of Liberian life, which reflected the absence of an effectual judicial system. Nevertheless, prudent petitioners limited appeals for presidential intervention in legal and administrative matters, if only because Tubman truly had no patience with detail. Also, as his time was chronically limited, one was well advised to reserve this "court of final appeal" for the most important matters. When hearing such pleas, Tubman's assessment of the appellant's honesty and fairness could figure as large as the facts of the case, to the point, perhaps, of validating in

some measure van der Kraaij's complaint that "the close friendship between Tubman and Christie hindered an efficient approach of L.M.C. by the Liberian Government". Implicit in that complaint, however, is the tenuous assumption that the bureaucracy castigated as wrong-headed and arbitrary toward Liberians was fair and efficient in its "approach" to foreign investors.

The arena most open to criticism and misinterpretation had to do with cases in which Tubman found the facts were inconclusive so that his own judgment weighed more heavily than legality. Here, he would often give the benefit of any doubt to the foreign investor, at least partially because he wanted to be sure that Liberia was seen by prospective investors as hospitable, fair and reliable, and because he knew that the testimony of those already operating there was more persuasive than investment codes and advertising campaigns. Obviously, the bureaucrats and their foreign advisors, frustrated by this attitude, tended to take decisions contrary to their recommendations as evidence of sinister and corrupt influence.

(The dozens upon dozens of telephone calls, personal visits and inquiring letters which individuals and firms contemplating investment in Liberia directed to Christie and those around him were almost daily proof that Tubman was right about testimonials of "satisfied customers" being the best way to sell his Open Door Policy.)

It should not be thought that appeals to Tubman, even in the name of Christie, were assured of success, nor that one got more than one chance, usually a rather brief one, to plead his case. When NIOC was building the road from Bomi to Mano in 1961, it built the first bridge across the Lofa River and, almost within hours, its construction and transportation equipment was blocked by taxis and pickups carrying rice and galvanized iron sheets, stuck in deep mud, disabled by impossible conditions or involved in collisions with bulldozers and trucks. A gate was erected on the Bomi side of the bridge to forestall such interference with construction, but it was soon destroyed and the local magistrate refused to enforce any restriction on use of the bridge and the road beyond. When all else failed, I appealed to the President for permission to keep the bridge closed for one dry season so that scarce time and equipment would not have to be devoted to incautious trespassers. Tubman was sympathetic but firm: "You can't do that. That road is progress, probably the only progress some of those people will get out of the mine. I won't send soldiers to keep them off of it. You'll just have to try your best." The delays caused by that decision cost NIOC a lot of money.

Moreover, the benefit of a doubt was not an inalienable right; Tubman gave weight to reliability, performance and a capacity to learn from experience. On another occasion, I had to defend the company for a second time against some relatively minor complaint that had been carried to the Presi-

dent. Remembering my explanation from the first time, Tubman chided, "Garland, dog bites man once, dog's fault; dog bites man twice, man's fault." Case lost.

It would be naive to think that even a slow-to-censure ethics committee of the U.S. Congress would today sanction all aspects of Christie's relationship with Tubman, but before going into these more closely, some attempt has to be made to understand what he was trying to do and the rules he considered applicable to him, to Tubman and to Liberia in the 1950s. One thing which affected his actions more than can be recaptured or assessed today is the extent to which, being the first in these waters, he had to make up the rules himself. He sometimes hinted that, given the chance to do so, there were things he might have changed himself. Small wonder, then, that to those who opposed his concession from the start have since been added those who find themselves competent to pass judgment with little understanding of and even less feeling for the Liberia, the Africa or the business into which he plunged so wholeheartedly and with so little preparation 45 years ago.

### **What Manner of Man Was This?**

To portray Christie is challenge enough; to explain him is well-nigh impossible, but the gravity of the assertions about him and Tubman oblige a look at some of the myriad and complex motives which moved this charming, liberal, moody, vindictive, puckish, demanding and headstrong eccentric:

First there was wealth. Not the wealth of the Rockefellers, but wealth writ with a capital "W". Wealth enough to command recognition, impose respect and support luxury. Wealth to spend, to risk, to give away, but not to lock up. Having wagered years and millions of dollars on Bomi, he believed he had earned a generous return and did not pretend otherwise. Not for him the prissy avowal of present-day Midases that money is "only a way to keep score". His reaction would surely be that money makes possible too much of what is otherwise impossible to be treated so patronizingly.

But it was not wealth alone that drove him. He needed and thrived on the excitement of its pursuit. It was always exhilarating, and usually unsettling, to be around him as he recklessly stormed his next target, hell-bent on imposing his will on men, on climate, on geography, on Nature herself. He would surely have been wealthier at the end had he cared more for money and less for excitement.

For all the pride he took in the larger, more general changes in Liberia touched on here, he got even more pleasure from the tangible changes in individual lives produced by his business activities and personal largess. This largess was not sacrificial, although it was often of uncommon generosity. He simply could not resist openhandedness any more than the urge to gamble

and win. Being able to indulge a liberal instinct was another reason for having wealth; it enabled him to give as wholeheartedly, as eccentrically, as frivolously as he wished without requiring sacrifice.

Some examples illustrate the random, formless and unpredictable nature of his liberality:

**\*\*** After a bush taxi pilot who had often flown him and his people to and from the Mano mine lost the use of a hand in a plane accident, Christie paid all expenses to have the hand reconstructed at the world-famous Columbia Presbyterian Hospital in New York, and for his wife to be with him during the protracted ordeal.

**\*\*** When the Liberian Assistant Port Director, whom Christie had been instrumental in installing in that pioneering job, lost sight in one eye, Christie paid everything—transportation, surgery and all—to have a cataract removed, also at Columbia Presbyterian. (However, when the same friend later asked him to help finance a political campaign, Christie declined; foreigners should stay out of Liberian politics.)

**\*\*** Upon hearing that George and Mai Padmore, whom he had come to know and admire when, as Executive Assistant to the President, she was putting order into doing business with the Executive Mansion, were overwhelmed by the cost of educating five sons, he started sending them, one by one, through the best New England preparatory schools and universities and continued to do so many years after these two friends held any position of importance to him or LMC.

**\*\*** Once when we drove through a particularly miserable part of Monrovia where children were sailing wood chips on gutters filled with stagnant water, he said how sad it was that they would never know the joy of childhood things he remembered—especially merry-go-rounds. Back in New York, he had a carousel built, a beautiful one, with carved ponies and a sound system that played calliope music. Presented to the Mayor of Monrovia, it was installed in a vacant area on Camp Johnson Road, where I stopped now and then to watch the unbridled enjoyment of the waifs crowded on it. After Port Director Don Inskip left Liberia, no one else cared enough to maintain it as he had done; bit by bit it was dismantled and disappeared. (The “Merry-Go-Round Market” replaced it on the spot which later became the “Rally Time Market”.)

**\*\*** Unlike many others, he would risk displeasing Tubman to stand by Liberian friends after they incurred the President’s wrath. When Secretary of the Treasury Wm. E. Dennis and Attorney General C. Abayomi Cassell fell into the limbo reserved for those who had lost presidential favor, Christie helped them set up a company to market lumber and crushed rock produced by LMC in excess of its own needs, having a spur rail line built to their

property from LMC's railroad in the Port of Monrovia to facilitate the business which was predictably profitable. (Several years later, when NIOC required the lumber and rock for the Mano River project, the two, understanding and helpful, gave up their contractual claim to the products and closed the company without complaint, if not without regret.) Similarly, when Tubman's feud with former Vice President C.L. Simpson inhibited getting clients for the law firm he established with his son, he asked Christie for some help, even though he knew the latter was tied to (and, it must be said, well served by) lawyer-lobbyist Richard A. Henries. Christie asked me to see what could be done and in the course of arranging to have the Simpson firm look after a spectrum of relatively petty legal matters such as damage claims involving company vehicles, etc., I came to have a very different view of and an unexpected soft spot for the cool, haughty and often difficult man whom I had first known as Liberian Ambassador in Washington. When NIOC could no longer afford dual legal representation, Simpson accepted the fact with the utmost grace and did all he could to be helpful after the business relationship ended. He, like Dennis and Cassell, said he could not do less considering all that Christie had done for him and for Liberia.

**\*\* Christie seemed unaware of how disconcerting his liberality could be. When Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt admired a blue cigarette box in his Faberge collection, he gave it to her there and then. She enjoyed it for some weeks until her secretary asked how much it should be insured for. Upon learning what an expensive thing it was, Mrs. Roosevelt insisted on returning it, saying she couldn't sleep with it around. Toward the end of his life, when his Faberge collection was on display at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, he gave a visiting, long retired, iron ore buyer for the French steel industry a personally-guided, after-hours tour. When one piece attracted particular attention, Christie had the curator open the display case and sign out the piece, which he presented to his rattled visitor.**

**\*\* In the autumn of 1958, he sent me to Liberia for two weeks for the distribution of Liberian Enterprises shares to the Liberian public, a matter of intense personal interest to him. The job did not go as smoothly as hoped, so I had to stay much longer, leaving a newly-relocated wife and two small children to fend for themselves. My return flight arrived at New York after 10 p.m., but Christie was on hand to rush me to a bar to hear every recallable detail: who had actually bought shares? were they the same old faces, or had we reached beyond the usual circles? what did they say? how did they act? was it really going to be all that he had hoped? As I boarded the last flight to Washington, he handed me an envelope addressed by his hand to my wife, saying, "This is for Annie; she's been a good girl." At home, at 2 or 3 a.m., after 30 hours of travel, I tossed the almost-forgotten envelope to my wife before going to brush my teeth. When I returned to the bedroom, all lights were on**

and she was sitting upright in bed, counting \$50 bills, her reward for having been so uncomplaining (how he hated complaints!).

\*\* Then, there was:

### A Bathroom for St. Theresa

For the nuns at St. Theresa's convent school in Monrovia he was a sure, though agnostic, source of help. Controlling an intelligence network to shame the KGB, they often heard of his arrival at Roberts Field before he got to Monrovia. Mother Superior Gomberta, in her seventies, would walk to the house on Mamba Point where he customarily stayed to welcome and invite him to take dreaded tea—or, even more dreaded, sherry—with the nuns. On one such visit, as they toured cramped and shabby facilities, Mother Gomberta made a compelling plea for a study hall and student dining room. As usual, Christie saw more than he was shown and spotted a nun walking to an outhouse perched over the bordering beach. Once back on the second floor porch, he was not interested in the study hall-dining room, "You can always find someone to give to children. I want to do something for the women who are giving their lives to the children. I want you to have an inside toilet and shower." "Oh dear, Mr. Christie," came the response, all laced with an irresistible Irish brogue, "I'm sure the fathers would never hear of it!" "Well, ok, just tell the fathers it's a toilet or nothing."

On his next trip, Mother Gomberta had good news: The fathers said Mr. Christie was a difficult man, but if he would only give a toilet, then a toilet it would have to be. Christie made one condition: he asked that the job be given to Bill Fleming, a former employee who had started his own small construction firm. No problem, as "poor, dear Bill" was a good—well, fairly good—Catholic who often lent a hand around the convent. Months passed and the billings received in New York attained important levels. When finally invited by the sisters for a "thank you" sherry and an inspection of the toilet and shower room on the second floor, Christie saw that something was being kept from him and insisted on seeing the ground floor, where he found a new study hall and dining room!

Not one to let deception go unproved, he got two barely-qualified daughters of the cook at the LMC Guest House accepted at the school (expenses paid by LMC). One soon dropped out but the other finished with honors and went to work at the Institute of Tropical Medicine.

To finish with the St. Theresa story: Mother Gomberta having said in passing that "Poor, dear Bill has gone quite broke on this job", Christie wanted to know how that could be, considering all the checks signed by him and all the loads of materials provided by LMC. "Well, Mr. Christie, Bill just couldn't say 'No' to the sisters when they asked for little extras, like linoleum on the

floor, or little lockers for their books and things like that." Although she protested that Poor Dear Bill should bear the loss because "he has some sins he needs to atone for", Christie asked for and paid without quibble a final billing covering the "little extra things" plus a modest profit, which Fleming used to build a concrete boat in which he and his young bride sailed away to his native Ireland.

### Of Dorms and Labs and Breeding Goats

Many schools sought and got help from Christie. At the behest of Vice President Tolbert, he gave to Ricks Institute and was more than pleased when it named a *girls'* dormitory after him. He also contributed to the College of West Africa, the University of Liberia, Booker Washington Institute, and Cuttington College and to a dozen or more of those volunteer private schools which sprang up like mushrooms around the country, like the C.C. Dennis Primary School at Bomi and the Elizabeth Tubman Memorial Institute on Bushrod Island whose unshakable promoter and principal named a bright and efficient chemistry lab after him.

Much of what was needed to build the basketball court at the YWCA came from him, as did funds for a Lutheran missionary's efforts to breed a strain of goats better suited to conditions in the Central Province. St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Monrovia got a new organ. Annual amounts went to the Tubman Institute at Cape Mount, the Catherine Mills Rehabilitation Center, the Boy Scouts. Add to these a long list of small churches and scholarships to Liberians, some who became useful citizens at home and others who turned out well but never returned to Liberia.

Organizations in the U.S. interested in Liberia and Africa also had his support, among them the African American Institute (of which he was a founder), the Phelps-Stokes Fund and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (on whose board he served). He supported Crossroads Africa, and enjoyed the company of its ebullient founder-president, the Rev. James Robinson, to whose African-American Morningside Church he gave part of a farm he owned at Chatham, in WASPish upstate New York.

Of course, he also supported good works with no African connections. Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt once came to call with a portfolio of her causes and asked what kind of charity appealed to him. Unable to resist a chance to tease and, if lucky, to shock, he replied, "Bad girls". Not in the least taken aback, Mrs. R. said, "Well, let's see. Bad girls. How about a home for unwed mothers?" Beaten at his own game, out came his check book.

Included in a s of his contributions in the late '50s there is an amount in support of the work of a little-known professor at Syracuse



University, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, now the voluble and imaginative Senior Senator from the State of New York.

In this meandering look at Christie's philanthropy there lies an insight into the way he found to share the abundance from his Bomi gamble. Without much knowing what it was, some latter day saints contend that whatever he did was suspicious or, at the very least, not in Liberia's best interest. But before accepting so stern a moral judgment, a closer and better-informed look might usefully be taken at a gamut of elusive considerations, such as intent, timing and consequence, in addition to the other giving described above.

### **He Did Do Something, But What?**

First, what did he actually do? In grossly simplified terms, he gave or, most commonly, sold at a minimum price shares in companies formed to hold part of his stock in LMC. The impetus for the formation of these holding companies—of which there were three, so far as I know—came from American tax law rather than from any design to create channels through which to make dubious payments. When large dividends began to flow from LMC, it was clear to attorney Vernon Lynn that this flow needed to be transformed from regular income, taxable at a top rate of 65%, into capital gains, with a top tax rate of 20%. Employing Curtis Mallet's experience in the occult world of international law and taxes, Lynn set up a company in Panama to which Christie sold a portion of his LMC stock, with installment payments to be made from LMC dividends. U.S. tax authorities set rigid guidelines for this type of transaction, one being that the stock had to be sold to an entity in which neither Christie nor his heirs held a majority interest, so that much of the stock of the three companies which were set up over a period of five or six years was acquired by estates, trusts and individuals whose financial matters were directed by Curtis Mallet, thus simplifying the fixing of the value of the never-openly-traded LMC stock so as to meet Internal Revenue Service requirements. Given the uniform confidence in Curtis Mallet's probity and judgment, it also minimized shareholder nit-picking about how much of the companies' income was distributed and how much invested for a future in which the LMC cornucopia might be exhausted.

Christie offered differing amounts of stock in these companies to friends and associates, including President Tubman and other Liberians, some with official dealings with LMC and others with few or none. In addition, there were perhaps half a dozen U.S. officials, some at the Bureau of Geological Survey and some at the State Department's Division of African Affairs who had moved on to other assignments by the time he offered them stock.

The timing of this stock offering also sheds some light on the critics' accusations that Christie set out to buy influence and favor:

To pass U.S. tax scrutiny, the price of LMC stock sold to the holding companies had to have some relation to the income the stock could be expected to produce, which means that this process could not have been completed until 1955 when LMC was permitted, under the Collateral Agreement of 1952, to start paying dividends. As this was several years after any important decision regarding the concession, the Eximbank loan and the Collateral Agreement could have been influenced by it, the worst construction one could give to the opportunity to buy stock in the first company, at least, is that it was a way to thank people for past help, quite in keeping with Christie's way of doing things. The number of lucky investors was enlarged with the offerings of stock in the second and third companies to people who came into the picture later, among them several who had nothing to do with Liberia (including Mrs. Roosevelt, some of her family and friends, and a public relations man who once led a society orchestra at the Shoreham Hotel in Washington).

Shareholders in these Panamanian companies enjoyed a generous return on their investments, as my own experience shows: After I had been in his employ for three years Christie offered me a modest amount of stock in the last, shortest-lived of the three companies. I invested \$2,250 in 1961. By the time it was liquidated in 1983, the company had paid me about \$41,500, or an average return over a period of 22 years of about 84% per year—a very welcome, but hardly corrupting, addition to the family income. Dividends received by those included from the beginning would naturally have been even more impressive.

While the timing of his offering of stock argues that nothing so crass as a payoff for favors was intended, it is equally clear that Christie meant this magnanimity to benefit LMC by encouraging a generally favorable climate toward it and its activities. On the whole it did just that, but it could not immunize the company from obeying the law, or from observing the terms of its various agreements with the government, or from that most elusive and pervasive of constraints: the obstruction of officials jealous of the manna they suspected was raining on others, or the sniping of anti-foreign bureaucrats and their foreign "advisors" (Liberia had its share of both, if nothing like what was found in Ghana or Nigeria), or the pettifoggery of those who were simply alienated by such things as the insensitivity of some of the expatriates representing the concessions. Where the favorable climate sought by Christie could have, and must have, "... hindered an efficient approach of L.M.C. by the Liberian Government", in Dr. van der Kraaij's words, was in interpreting how the law or the concession applied in specific cases; it is unthinkable that the interpretations of the more cautious bureaucrats were never influenced by the well-known friendship between their President and LMC's. However, Christie was only one of a number of foreign investors whose relationships

with Tubman, if not as close, afforded them the same opportunity to bask in his attention at functions where a maximum impression on officialdom, at all levels, could be assured.

There are other facets of this sharing of LMC income with Liberians which merit comment:

In the first place, the sharing was out of Christie's own pocket, and, consequently, did not affect either the income of other LMC shareholders or the government's profit participation—except to the extent that the favorable operating climate he sought may have bolstered profits.

Secondly, even if he had had no interest in a favorable relationship with Liberians in positions of authority, with whom could anyone have dealt other than with those he selected over 35 years ago? Among Liberians with the experience, education and worldly exposure to put this windfall to productive use, as he hoped at least some would do, there was only a handful without government ties or responsibility, and these were mostly opponents of Tubman and of Christie's concession. Some "conflict of interest" was unavoidable, but, with the passage of time, even conflicts of interest changed. Some of the chosen died; others moved to jobs where they could neither help nor hinder; still others lost presidential favor and the jobs that went with it. A few of the latter used this income to help in their own businesses, which added a new freedom from dependence on political patronage to the local scene.

(Although there were those in Liberia 40 years ago who were much better-off than the masses, most of the settler elite lived on the outer reaches of modest comfort. Only the plushest would have qualified as upper middle class in most American or European places—exception made of the wide availability of poorly-paid servants. It seems likely that a well-to-do New Yorker like Christie would have considered that he had to do with worthy candidates for uplift rather than with African *lati fundistas* grabbing for greater luxury.)

The lucky shareholders certainly grew accustomed to liberal dividends and would have been reluctant to jeopardize them. That must have affected their thinking, without guaranteeing conformance to Christie's purposes, had he been bent on corrupting the process. How, for example, could he shut off dividends to some ingrate who failed to stay "fixed" without disrupting Vernon Lynn's carefully devised tax structure? In short, as a way to pay bribes, this would have been an uncertain and inefficient approach, not Christie's style.

An incident in 1959 illuminated for me, caught in the middle of it, some of the delicacy of the Tubman-Christie relationship in matters affecting the purse:

As will be covered in more detail later, the Liberian committee in charge of distributing the shares allotted to Tubman a substantial bloc of stock in Liberian Enterprises, Ltd. (LEL), through which Liberians were investing in NIOC. Christie financed 80% of the cost, with the Liberian purchasers, including the President, paying the remaining 20% in three installments. Tubman met the first two installments on time. However, when NIOC's bankers required attestation that all capital subscriptions had been paid by NIOC's shareholders, the only significant amount outstanding was the 10% still due to LEL from Tubman. He gave no answer to two or three gentle reminders. When I wrote him about the matters concerning Mano which I hoped to discuss with him on a forthcoming trip to Monrovia, Vernon Lynn, bearing the main burden of loan negotiations, insisted on adding a paragraph restating the importance of Tubman's paying up fully and promptly. Nervous about having my signature on a debt collector's message, I asked Christie to look at it before it was sent. Sharing my misgivings but not wanting to complicate life for the overburdened Lynn, who was only trying to keep Mano moving, he sent private word to Tubman that he would put up the needed \$25,000, and add it to the amount to be repaid out of future dividends. (No gift, no bribe, but more than other Liberians were offered; was that unscrupulous or merely friendly?) Barely was I settled in front of his desk a few days later before Tubman proceeded to excoriate me, for a most uncomfortable time: how dared I imply that he was not going to pay his debt? where did I get the nerve to put such a suggestion on paper? Once spleen was fully vented, we went on to other matters and he sent me off with an invitation to drinks that evening, during which he had his valet and keeper-of-cash, Jimmy Barrolle, fetch an envelope containing his check for the amount due to LEL. We never touched on the subject again and he never knew of Christie's offer of a loan.

(It could be amusing to run errands between Tubman and Lynn, who looked after many things for the President, without compensation, naturally. One of Lynn's jobs was to keep tabs on Tubman's investments in American stocks; I remember only AT&T and General Motors, two of Lynn's favorites. He also operated a savings account into which income from these companies was deposited. When Tubman heard I was planning a trip to Liberia, he usually asked to see the up-dated savings bank passbook, wanting to know how much interest had accrued. Because Tubman always asked, Lynn would explain the transactions even though amounts larger than one or two hundred dollars were seldom involved. Then, he would insist that Tubman be pressed for documents which were rarely signed and returned even after repeated

reminders from Lynn, who was especially exasperated when the neglected papers had to do with stock rights which had a value that disappeared with time. Nagging usually set the President shuffling through a desk drawer and coming up with handfuls of unopened envelopes among which the missing papers were often found.)

### How Sharper than a Serpent's Tooth

One generous impulse backfired on Christie when he tried to spare Tubman the trouble of finding suitable employment for his son, universally known as "Baby Shad", when that lively, ingratiating, personable and unpredictable scapegrace completed what, for lack of a better description, might be called his "education" in America. Christie was immensely fond of young Shad and had devoted many hours and a little money to sheltering him from the consequences of assorted misdemeanors and helping find new schools when old ones despaired. Recognizing the need for informed Liberian help for the hastily-deployed expatriate crew working on the Mano River project, he proposed to hire Baby Shad to handle public, government and labor relations for NIOC. Not only would Mano get well-connected help, but his friend the President would have one less problem on his platter. When the idea was put before the elder Tubman, his first question was, "How much is Chris thinking about paying him?" Told it was \$10,000 or maybe \$12,000—the mists of time obscure details), he ruefully noted that was more than his cabinet officers were paid; wouldn't Chris rethink the salary? And was this really the best way to get the boy to face the reality of earning his way in life. Still, if Chris thought it would help Mano, then he would agree, but preferably for less money.

As usual, Christie had already told Shad what he would be paid, so there was no turning back on that point. Not only did Mano's hard-pressed construction crew find it almost impossible to locate the government-labor relations specialist when he was needed, but it soon was discovered that the time between a request for action and its execution could be extended. When it was urgent to obtain land near the Port of Monrovia for housing, talks with the aging dissident, D. Twe, led to his verbal agreement to lease NIOC a parcel of land on the St. Paul River. A lease agreement was hastily prepared and, after the President was told of the dealings with his old foe, Shad was asked to get Twe's signature. Weeks, then a month or more went by with no news, until a rumor reached New York that Twe was at death's doorstep in the Firestone hospital. Prodded by a barrage of cables, Shad completed the deal only hours before the tough old man passed away. Twe's daughter challenged the validity of a signature obtained under such circumstances and, emboldened by the interest of others in land on the St. Paul River, succeeded in prising more money out of NIOC.

Before long, it became clearer why NIOC's advisor had so little time for advising: he had been busy forming a labor union, the Congress of Industrial Organizations, which had unsurprisingly elected him its president. At his insistence, Christie contributed \$5,000 in support of the fledgling union.

Around this time, Christie, on a visit to Liberia, arranged a trip for President Tubman and a dozen high officials on one of NIOC's sparkling locomotives to the newly-completed bridge across the Lofa River, the largest bridge in the country at the time. During the stop there, a noisy and ill-tempered demonstration occurred in which some laborers displayed a large cooking vessel of rice on the top of which was the carcass of an enormous and disgusting rat. The complaint was that this sort of thing happened so often that it proved the need for an organization which would protect workers from exploitation. NIOC's labor advisor was visibly uninterested in calming this little storm, but the episode was only the first in a brief and flashy career as labor leader. After some months, he realized that these incompatible roles might not advance his political goals, so he decided to retire from advising the struggling NIOC to devote himself more or less full-time to creating more advantageous turmoil at LMC. Christie's help to the union and its president was rewarded with wildcat walkouts, organizing rallies and demands for many benefits, some overdue and others out of an opium eater's fantasy.

In the midst of the disruptions at Bomi, CIO President Tubman went to Europe for some international labor meeting. As Christie was in London to see iron ore buyers, he invited Shad to have breakfast at his suite in the staid and luxurious Claridge's Hotel where we were treated to a virtuoso display of unbridled labor union bombast, at the end of which Christie rose from the table saying, "Well, it looks like the kid has grown up!"

He sponsored the adoption of some of the union's more reasonable demands, notably those dealing with additional worker housing but was pilloried by some at Republic Steel for not using his "connections" to squelch this gadfly. It can be said with some certainty that Christie never tried to get the elder Tubman to rein in his obstreperous junior, though the two did, in one rather wistful exchange, admit that Christie's well-intentioned effort had only caused them additional pain. Despite this shabby behavior, Christie never lost a rueful fondness for young Tubman and was genuinely pleased when the latter was sent by the President to visit him during his final days in a New York hospital.

### Corruption Confounded

His disgust upon hearing from Tubman about a real effort at bribery may not persuade doubters that Christie was incapable of the act himself, but it is offered as evidence of a strong disinclination to take that route: In early 1961,

he was, as usual, met at Roberts Field after an overnight flight from New York by a Presidential military aide-de-camp bearing a "Green Letter" invitation from Tubman to proceed directly to the Executive Mansion. Christie was not impervious to special treatment of this type nor unaware of the endorsement of his importance which it conveyed, if only because of the rough passages it smoothed and the red tape it cut. Customarily, when he reached the Mansion, the President excused anyone in his office long enough to fix a time for them to get together later. On this occasion, however, we were made to sit and wait with the usual crowd of petitioners—a doubly trying ordeal for him, on whom the no-smoking rule weighed heavily. He was curious about the identity and mission of the only other white person in the crowd: a pale, perspiring, roundish and balding man in a splendid Italian silk suit and a silk shirt which cost much more than my washable seersucker suit. The aide-de-camp outside the presidential office knew only his name: Arno Newman. Nothing more. Further indignity came when the newcomer was escorted into Tubman's office ahead of all others. He stayed so long that when we were at last called in, Christie barely got through the greetings before blurting out, "Shad, who was that guy who just left here?" That, said Tubman, was an interesting story which he would tell later in the day.

We were on the magnificent verandah of Port Director Inskip's house on Mamba Point, with its view of the Port of Monrovia and an unending stretch of the Atlantic beyond, when the President arrived for a "sundowner" in an inelegant old armored Cadillac he used when he wished to prowl incognito (which meant, this being the old Monrovia, that all who saw the dilapidated vehicle pass knew not only who was in it but for what purpose). From the breast pocket of his short-sleeved, open-neck sport shirt there extended a bit of paper, looking very much as if it had been placed where it would attract attention. After a sip of their Johnny Walker and Jack Daniels, Christie pressed his question: "Shad, who the hell was that guy in your office this morning?" Oh yes, Tubman wanted to show him something interesting; he pulled out the piece of paper and passed around for admiration a certified check for \$100,000 made payable to the order of W.V.S. Tubman.

After 30 years there can be no pretense of a verbatim report, but this is very close what Tubman then recounted:

You know that after your Export Import Bank's feasibility study (uttered with a sneer he reserved for such studies and their authors, who were assumed to be PhDs, a dire condition in his eyes), decided Liberia didn't need hydroelectric power, I have pushed our ambassadors to find investors who might consider a concession to generate electric power. That Belgian businessman, Mr. Newman, says he is ready to undertake a power project if he gets the exclusive right to generate and

distribute electric power in Liberia, and he presented a big agreement which he proposed that we sign straight away.

I told him that while we welcomed his interest, I was no expert in such matters and would have to consult the young Liberians present, who had gone to Europe and America to study engineering and economics and law. It would be very wrong of me to sign such an important agreement before they had reviewed it. If they said agreement was all right, I would sign it; if they thought improvements might be made, we would have to discuss them with him. So, I hoped he would not mind going with them to review the proposal.

As the group was leaving, Mr. Newman asked if he might remain behind. When there were only the two of us, he said, "Mr. President, I have brought a certified check for \$100,000; to whom should it be made payable?" I said, "Well, just make it out to me, W.V.S. Tubman." After he handed me the check, I said, "Mr. Newman, this is welcome and timely. Tomorrow I am going to start a nationwide drive to raise money for the churches of Liberia. When I announce your generous check as the first contribution, the drive is sure to be a success!"

Christie muttered all evening about the effrontery of anyone who would try such a thing, and was delighted the next day when Tubman closed the door to any second Newman thoughts in a radio broadcast lauding the Belgian and his \$100,000 contribution to the nation's churches.

(The after life of that check and the hydroelectric project is a part-hilarious, part-tragic saga which deserves a fuller telling than fits here. Suffice it to say that Newman was never able to fulfill his part of the deal and, after several extensions, it was annulled. Meanwhile, Tubman had used the ruinously high rate for power and other objectionable provisions to scare the American Embassy—and the investors who stood to pay the highest price for Newman's project—into urging a new look at the project. After the U.S. decided to finance the Mt. Coffee dam, Tubman, with an eccentric sense of fairness and against the advice of his experts, asked Newman to present a claim for reimbursement of expenses; after all, Newman's activities had led to Liberia's getting the electric power which had been refused until he came on the scene, and Tubman admitted that he had used Newman to force a rethinking of the feasibility study. He was ready to repay such as soil surveys and engineering. However, when Newman's attorney presented the bill, the \$100,000 check was there, along with amounts for wrist watches, hotel suites and companionship for officials who visited Brussels, with interest. It did not ease matters that the attorney was Roy M. Cohn, well



known to the Secretary of Treasury and Attorney General as top assistant to American Senator Joseph McCarthy. Despite the efforts of his local counsel, C.C. Dennis, Jr., he paced the Ducor Palace pool for days before seeing them. Memory has it that, after much balking and protest, Secretary of Treasury James Weeks was told to pay Newman about \$1 million, around half of the claim.)

Getting back to Christie and whether, as an official of a competing iron mine said not long ago, he "had Tubman in his hip pocket": To one who conveyed messages and patched rifts between them during the final years of Christie's life, there was never a hint that Christie took Tubman for granted nor that Tubman would have allowed him to do so. Every communication to Tubman was crafted with cautious respect for the misunderstandings which the distances and differences in surroundings between them could engender. Nothing was routine, not even the joking cable salutations and sign-offs that became a game of "can-you-top-this-one" between them. My trips to Liberia were rehearsed in detail: what I was to say in this circumstance or that, pitfalls I should avoid, signs of changes in presidential mood to be watched for, how I should pass on (in hastily-devised codes) anything requiring Christie's knowledge and reaction. In brief, Christie worked constantly and employed all his capacities of observation, analysis, humor and daring to beguile—and, yes, to influence—Tubman, but he did not take influence for granted.

### Shining Gifts That Took All Eyes

He entered with undisguised enthusiasm into what, in later years, became a demeaning competition to offer the President the most striking birthday gift, or inauguration gift, or what-have-you gift. In some years his gifts were more inspired than others. Once, it was an expensive and beautiful but not especially imaginative Steuben glass sculpture. Another time, it was a strikingly decorative 18th century brass Portuguese saluting cannon discovered in a back-alley antique shop in Lisbon when Christie was shopping for something similar for his estate. The cannon stood for several years on the front steps of the Totota farm house, lonely and unappreciated, until, after much detective work, Christie located and sent it a mate. The pair made an even more handsome sight after Christie, having detected signs of degradation during a week-end visit, sent a supply of protective emollients; he missed nothing.

One of his most imaginative entries in the gift-giving competition came in 1960 when he took to the inauguration an electric organ, complete with organist, to replace the leather-lunged antique that had long wheezed discordantly through receptions in the parlors of the old Executive Mansion. After deciding on a top-of-the-line Hammond organ, he was passing through Pennsylvania Station on his nightly commute to Long Island when he heard

Christmas carols being played by a red-haired Irish locomotive driver who annually took time off from railroading to serenade harassed New Yorkers. The incredulous musician-engineer at first treated Christie's invitation to fly to West Africa 10 days later to entertain a fistful of heads-of-state as the product of a pre-train hour in the nearby bar, but, once persuaded, he not only obtained passport, visa, inoculations and the like but boarded the charter flight playing an accordion with which he serenaded Firestones, Christies and other potentates of American investment in Liberia throughout the night-long trip across the Atlantic.

### Getting Something for Something

There is no contesting that there was sometimes a calculating and purposeful side to Christie's largess:

In the days when air service to Liberia was limited to two Pan American flights and one or two Air France flights per week, seats had to be reserved weeks ahead, which was seldom possible for Christie and his people; consequently, he offered small amounts of stock in those Panamanian companies to PanAm station managers at strategic stops —Paris, London, Lisbon and Dakar, not only facilitating last-minute travel but also reducing the time he spent waiting for baggage and getting through airport formalities.

Another minor yet revealing example of calculation was his practice of giving the presidential valet a \$20 bill virtually every time he saw that faithful retainer, even several times during one trip. When questioned about "dashing" someone who had a rather large rubber farm and a number of other visibly profitable holdings, his answer was that, whether needed or not, the money was always welcomed profusely, and that, moreover, "Some night Shad is going to call for his medicine and if something I've done is bothering him, is going to ask Jimmy, 'What do you think of that fellow, Christie', and the answer is going to be, 'Oh, Mr. President, Mr. Christie is a fine man'."

This famous open-handedness made him the natural prey of those expecting a dash, the West African version of baksheesh: Clerks, servitors, inspectors and paper-stampers glowed with surprise when \$10 or \$20 bills appeared in discreetly-offered palms instead of the standard \$1 or munificent \$5. Higher-ranking seekers not being so easily satisfied, they engaged in a bit of genteel extortion. A newspaper gossip columnist who wrote pseudonymously as "Tom Tinkle" extracted \$50 or \$100 on each visit by producing some juicy item about LMC which he had NOT used. One newspaper publisher gleaned both gifts and "loans" in much the same manner, and was lucky to have a fairly regular flow of real and invented scandal in letters from an expatriate locomotive engineer dismissed by LMC for trying to institute many of the work rules which were strangling American railroads.

A balder example of calculation was the transfer of fairly sizable blocks of his own shares in LEL to two LMC officials in positions to help or hinder the Mano project. No 20% payment, as for Liberians, only an assignment of one-half of any dividends to repay their cost. He did the same with others, including several of the Wm H. Muller & Co. people working to sell Mano ore. In the latter case, the purpose was to reward people for doing a good job; in the former, it was to secure help that might otherwise have been withheld. The same offer was made to the LMC geologist who pioneered exploration of the Mano ore deposit, after Christie had succeeded in having that area handed over to the newly-formed NIOC. Abashed by a straight-laced refusal which closed with the statement that any requests for information about the deposit should be sent through his LMC superiors and not directly to him as in the past, Christie tried through me to change the geologist's mind by arguing that all he intended was to recognize the exemplary work done at Mano under very difficult conditions. When this did not work, he remained most uncomfortable with the knowledge that the young man believed his aim was to suborn rather than to reward.

In retrospect, there were two instances in which the Tubman-Christie friendship played a central role in decisions of importance to Liberia, but, even in these, it is not at all clear that the President would have acted differently had the two not been friends. In both, Christie enlisted Tubman's support for actions which got for Liberia things which Republic Steel had not been prepared to give:

In 1956, LMC conducted an aerial magnetometer survey of the area lying within a 40-mile radius of Bomi granted by its concession agreement, uncovering two "anomalies", or areas where the magnetometer detected iron ore sufficiently rich to justify a closer look: one on the Mano River border with Sierra Leone, the other in the Bea Mountain range, about halfway between Bomi and Mano. LMC's geologist mounted a small expedition, walking 50 miles through the Gola Forest, following an elephant trail much of the way, to a site where rudimentary poking and digging led him to report that further, much more expensive, exploration should be done. However, when LMC realized that the acreage of "exploitation lots" remaining under its concession would not cover all of the iron-bearing area, majority shareholder Republic Steel was, not unreasonably, reluctant to approve substantial additional expenditures until it was clear that LMC would be able to develop the deposit.

During the maneuvering over whether and how to increase exploitation acreage, Christie and Treasury Secretary Sherman were busy shaping Christie's new approach to developing Liberia's iron ore, which eventuated in the formation of NIOC and LEL, and rested on three fundamental departures from past practice: First, there was to be an investment of money as well as resources by Government; secondly, Christie would finance, on generous

terms, the purchase of stock by the Liberian public, and, finally, 70% ownership would be held by Government and individual Liberians, much more than the 50-50 profit-sharing formula which had only recently become the standard.

Most Liberians with any cause to choose between them took Christie's side in any conflict with Republic and those on LMC's board of directors were kept in a state of virtual permanent irritation by the stubborn bluntness of Republic's directors. So it was not surprising that, after Christie's idea was outlined to Tubman and received favorably, Sherman informed LMC that Government was not ready to increase the exploitation acreage under the terms of the existing agreement. Still stinging from the 1952 battle over a first concession revision, which produced the "Collateral Agreement", there was little taste in LMC's ruling circle for another round. At the next board meeting, Charles White, outspoken chairman of both Republic and LMC, broke a career record for insensitivity by stating that if LMC could not get the acreage needed to develop Mano, it should take whatever lots remained to it in the center of the deposit "so nobody else can develop it either". Christie did not miss the opening White gave him.

He had Curtis Mallet put together a draft concession agreement, with all the requisite legal underpinnings for NIOC and LEL: articles of incorporation, by-laws, everything down to the minutes books. In recognition of LMC's prior rights to the area, it was to have 15% of NIOC under the proposal which Christie and Sherman put before Tubman for approval without more extended vetting by a growing Government concession bureaucracy. The President was favorable in general but, with his usual care for Liberia's reputation as a reliable place to invest, was uneasy about so off-handed an approach to modifying existing concession rights. It was here that Christie's friendship—not to ignore his position as titular head of the potentially offended company—was determining; pleading urgency and radiating confidence in both the new deposit and the new investment formula, he overcame Tubman's misgivings. In close collaboration with Christie, Sherman spent much of 1957 negotiating LMC's acceptance of a "Statement of Understanding", the precursor of the NIOC concession agreement which was approved by the Legislature in March, 1958. Not unreasonably, Republic felt ill-used and resented both what had been done and the role which it knew Christie's friendship with Tubman had played in it.

The second instance in which Christie used their friendship was similar to the first, this time to get Tubman to add the Bea Mountain area to NIOC's concession. Because the aerial magnetometer survey had indicated that the iron ore occurrence there was less rich than the one at Mano, not much had been done to investigate it until NIOC's railroad construction cut through a tip of it, giving a better look at ore that was lower on quality but perhaps

amenable to economic upgrading. Christie's mind was, as always, light years ahead of current happenings; he saw this as the place NIOC would go after the as-yet-unopened Mano deposit was exhausted. Republic was still pouting about Mano and in no hurry to do anything with the Bea. To avoid prolonged negotiations, and to hide his hand from Republic, Christie proposed that Tubman issue an Executive Order which would add the Bea area, generally described but not specifically named as such, to NIOC's concession. He sent me, armed with a personal note to Tubman, to get the required signature, which was given without enthusiasm. It was not long before Republic and not a few Liberians responsible for mineral resources and concessions were surprised to read that the Executive Order dated May 7, 1959 had been forwarded to the Legislature for its approval. Then came Christie's turn for a surprise; months passed without the expected Legislative rubber stamp. Sent back to inquire after the Executive Order's health, I was assured by the President that everything was going as it should, but soon after that the Legislature adjourned without acting. Christie raised the matter at a meeting with Tubman during the Inauguration celebrations in January, 1960. The President was evasive and spoke uneasily about the principle of taking an area away from a company without negotiation or compensation or even an exchange of communications. Christie said such steps were not necessary in light of LMC's lack of interest in the area, which the Liberian members of LMC's board would confirm. There ensued several eyes-averted expressions of hesitation and reassurance which ended with Tubman looking squarely at his friend and asking, "Chris, are you saying this as Lansdell Christie or as President of Liberia Mining Company?" When the answer was, "As President of Liberia Mining Company", he promised that things would move ahead. Legislative approval came on May 11, 1960, but the tangled and futile aftermath of this brazen grab by Christie on behalf of NIOC would prove Tubman had had good reason to hesitate, although both of them would be gone by then.

### **Friendship, Friendship, Just an (Almost) Perfect Blendship**

Over time, the Tubman-Christie friendship took on a Rabelaisian tinge more often rooted in adolescent pranks than in a business relationship between middle-aged men of vastly disparate backgrounds. An earthy example of this came in September, 1960, when Tubman cabled he was going to Switzerland for medical attention, making reference, as he often did, to the Scriptures, this time to Deuteronomy 23:1. Consulting a Bible kept to hand for interpreting and composing messages exchanged with the President, Christie's personal assistant-confidante read to an uncommonly flustered boss:

"He that is wounded in the stones, or hath his privy member cut off, shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord."

Appalled at the message's portent, Christie was obliged, in those more tranquil times when telephones in New York could not speak to those in Liberia, to remain in doubt until he called Tubman only minutes after the latter arrived at Zurich's splendidly senescent Dolder Grand Hotel: A hydrocele had been diagnosed and surgery was scheduled the next day. A what? A hydro-c-e-l-e. *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* was bland but un reassuring: "... an accumulation of serous fluid in a sacculated cavity (as the scrotum)." A doctor at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital whom Christie had earlier impressed into the service of Liberia could add little; he had never seen a case, but did remember medical textbook pictures of victims sitting on testicles the size of large balloons. However, the surgery was not serious and, if timely, as this seemed to be, almost always successful. Reassured about any threat to Tubman's life, if not about his libido, Christie was beside the President's hospital bed a day or so after the uneventful surgery. As soon as greetings were exchanged, the President asked me (summoned for a scolding about an excess of iron ore competitiveness wrongly attributed to me by a LAMCO officer) to wait outside a few minutes. The two had almost an hour alone before I rejoined the unburdened President and much-relieved friend to whom he had talked freely about his ordeal. Later, Christie recounted most, if not all, of what had transpired: the sleepless nights which followed the diagnosis, the probing of textbooks and doctors for some clearer prospect, the cross-examination of the Swiss surgeon, the discomfort and uncertainty of post-operative pangs, and then—oh, and then!—that morning's evidence of unreduced manliness. With earthbound purgatory averted, the two agreed there was time enough to worry about exclusion from "the congregation of the Lord".

Only once in twenty years was this friendship shaken. In the summer of 1961, a rumor that some undetailed trouble had befallen the President's private life reached Christie. He devoted two or three days to composing a very personal and singularly expressive letter conveying his hope that whatever had gone awry would soon be put right. Only after sending the letter did he learn that he was himself somehow connected to the trouble. A puzzling and disturbing situation turned maddening with the further news that gossip touching on him was being spread in Liberia by the head of Firestone Plantations Company. Convinced that this former friend was working to undermine his position with Tubman, Christie dictated an intemperate cable insisting that he and his tormentor be ordered to Liberia so Tubman could get at the truth in person. He was persuaded to send the message by hand rather than by cable, but due to mix-ups that would have been comic in other circumstances, Tubman received it aboard a French passenger vessel en route

from Abidjan to Monrovia. Outraged at the exposure of a personal problem to the public gaze inherent in shipboard communications, Tubman sent a blistering reply which ended, "... I will neither permit nor tolerate any more of this nonsense."

Disconcerted and unsure of what lay behind all this, Christie sent me to clarify things if possible. After several anxious days, I saw the President, who agitatedly repeated a security agent's report casting a shadow on Christie's loyalty to him. As it concerned events I had witnessed, I was able to tell him what had truly happened, and, so I thought, discredited the report.

It was not entirely clear that the President accepted my explanation at face value; he implied he would expect me to lie to protect him in similar circumstances. Still there it was: So little substance to cast so large a shadow. In any case, nothing more was said about the security agent's fallacious report.

However, Tubman's wrath was fearsome when he described his humiliation upon receiving, aboard a passenger liner, an *en clair* cable concerning his private life. I tried to defuse the subject by describing all that was done to avoid the very thing that had angered him: how, after dictating the cable, Christie had decided to send it as a hand-carried letter; how an LMC employee en route to Liberia was located at the New York airport and Pan Am persuaded to delay his flight until the letter/cable could be delivered to him by helicopter; and how, after arranging to have LMC's General Manager deliver it to the President by hand, Christie had dictated a second cable alerting the President to the dispatch of the first. Everything had been done to assure privacy. I then irritated him by saying that, given that Christie had not known that he was on that ship, someone in Monrovia must have relayed the message. Whereupon, he dismissed me abruptly, with, as an afterthought, an invitation to Totota a few days later.

At "The Farm", I repeated my account of the efforts to avoid embarrassing him and my speculation about who could have relayed the message to the ship, and was once more met with squinty-eyed impassivity and a silence which lasted until almost too late for me to leave for Roberts Field and a plane to meetings with Mano's creditors in Holland. Then, as suddenly as it had risen, the storm subsided. Without elaboration or any expression other than a return of the warmth with which he commonly greeted my comings and goings, Tubman sent me on my way with the word that the matter was forgotten and he looked forward to seeing Christie in Liberia soon.

(It later turned out that Christie's cable informing Tubman about the hand-carried message had been put in a cable envelope into which the original cable had been slipped earlier, so that both messages were dispatched

simultaneously . . . to Monrovia, not to the ship; that truly was done from Monrovia, but I never felt compelled to review the facts with Tubman again.)

Unfortunately, this example of the harm which could come from security agent gossip was forgotten along with the original report; rumor remained an unsettling part of life in the republic for years thereafter. Tattling on rivals and opponents became so ingrained in political life that one government title, Public Relations Officer (or "P.R.O."), became synonymous with snitching.

Before closing an Executive Council at Greenville, Sinoe County in September, 1970, the President asked if anyone had anything more to take up with him. An elderly woman in the back shouted something and was invited to come forward. Using an interpreter, she identified herself as the widow of a Kru chief who had died a few months earlier. Tubman reacted most sympathetically, saying her husband had been so good a friend and supporter that he had sent his aide-de-camp to represent him at the funeral, then he asked what she wanted to discuss with him. She needed a job. The exchange which followed went much like this:

President: Can you take shorthand?

Petitioner: No, Mr. President.

President: Can you type?

Petitioner: No, Mr. President.

President: Well, can you read and write?

Petitioner: No, Mr. President.

President: Then what kind of work could I give you?

Petitioner: I want one of those jobs carrying news to the President.

The clap of nervous laughter that burst through the meeting hall revealed how sensitive a nerve the old woman had touched. The President laughed as heartily as anyone, but P.R.O.s continued to "carry news" and to make life uncertain for many. One of William R. Tolbert's earliest actions upon succeeding Tubman was to abolish the P.R.O. jobs (but not, of course, the carrying of news).

In March, 1962, seven months after that session with the President at Totota, Christie returned to Liberia to visit the still-building Mano River iron mine with the President and Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands. A personal friend of both men, the Prince's relaxed and companionable style did much to ease any remaining strain between them. The three, with a few Liberian officials and Dutch contractors, traveled from Bomi Hills to Mano on a railroad flat car fitted out with a sagging tarpaulin roof and chairs which



bounced about as they moved over too many miles of track with little or no ballast rock, so that uneasy passengers could see the rails writhe as the train approached. The day-long trip ended just in time for the travelers to change into tuxedos and belatedly join a hundred others for a dinner in Monrovia where the two old friends publicly resumed their habitual free and easy way with one another.

Christie's last trip to Liberia was in May, 1965, when he announced the payment of the first dividend by LEL to the Liberian shareholders whose purchase of stock he had financed. Tubman lavished praise on Christie, calling his imagination in finding a way for Liberians to share directly in the nation's mineral wealth " . . . the unselfish act of a man with a generous conscience".

### **The Liberian Iron Ore Magnate in America**

Despite two or three trips to Liberia and at least one extended tour of European consumers of iron ore each year, as well as the considerable time he devoted to Liberians and matters of interest to Liberia in the U.S., his truncated role as President of LMC only occasionally filled the days of a man who could tolerate neither solitude nor inactivity. He quickly set out to shape a second course for all that boundless energy and interest; before either knew what was happening, New York became aware of a new presence, of Lansdell Christie, Liberian Iron Ore Magnate.

### **The Greener Pastures of Politics**

Fascinated by Washington and the levers of power there, not having satisfied the ambition of public service which once led him to West Point, and not at all repelled by the panoply of high Federal office, he set his sights being Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs after control of Washington passed from Democrats to Republicans in 1953, as everyone agreed was sure to happen. In his years of briefing and beseeching cooperation from the Washington foreign affairs establishment, he came to feel he could do as well as and, most likely, a good deal better than most of those with whom he had dealt, if only because of his hands-on experience in Africa. Conscious of, but unabashed by, his lack of any university certification of intellect, and knowing that his pursuit of a State Department post might be advanced by some more formal instruction, he enrolled in political science and international relations classes at Princeton University, to which he was driven by a liveried chauffeur two or three times a week from his home on Long Island. His Princeton instructors were so taken with him that he was asked to serve on the Advisory Council of the School of Public and International Affairs (which honor also brought the privilege of providing financial support for the school's good works).

In the familiar manner of aspirants to appointive office, he contributed to the expected winner of the 1952 election, the Republican Party, sometimes through John Foster Dulles, whose future control of U.S. foreign policy was generally assumed. To no avail, however; he was never offered a State Department job. A consolation offer did come from Sinclair Weeks, Eisenhower's Secretary of Commerce, who proposed the job of Assistant Secretary for International Commerce. When Christie turned down the offer, the White House called to ask why a businessman who had helped elect a business-oriented President would not join the team; he answered that he wouldn't pay the man who offered him the job \$10,000 a year to work for his company. (He sometimes liked to remind Republican friends of how right he had been when, later on, it was almost-universally held that Weeks was the weakest member of the Eisenhower cabinet.) He then abandoned both the idea of a job in Washington and the Republican Party. Never the ideologue, he was, four years later, on the list of the largest individual contributors to Adlai E. Stevenson's second try at the Presidency.

Christie did not leave many footprints on his trail from liberal Republican to middle-of-the-party Democrat, so not much is known now about how he came to be a member of the New York State Democratic Finance Committee, together with Joseph Baird, whose exposure to Christie aroused an interest in Liberia that led to his founding West African Explosives and Chemicals (EXCHEM), a pioneering enterprise which operated in Liberia until the fighting of the 1990 rebellion overran its installations near Harbel. However it came to be, between 1956 and 1964 Christie was prominent in what might be called the "national wing" of the New York Democratic Party which included many prominent persons of the day: Anna Rosenberg, who had held several high-level posts under Presidents Roosevelt and Truman, often the first woman to do so, and with whom Christie enjoyed an especially congenial and, for both of them, illuminating relationship; Thomas Finletter, Truman's Secretary of the Air; Mary Lasker, widow of a legendary public relations pioneer and today a major source of financing for cancer research; Marietta Tree, the handsome scion of the Peabody family of Massachusetts, widow of an English noble whose murder in Bermuda long preoccupied the scandal sheets, and chairman of Adlai Stevenson's finance committee. Through them he came to know and see much of Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, Senator Hubert Humphrey, Senator Stuart Symington, as well as others of prominence in local New York City politics, which led to his being appointed to serve a brief period as head of the Long Island Park Commission after the death of its fabled and controversial founder, Robert M. Moses.

Although ever fascinated by Washington and inner circle national politics, Christie tired of demands for money from so many people whom he did not know or wish to know. He had told me in 1957 that, considering my

acquaintance with Liberia, he wanted me to join a new mining activity in which Liberians would own controlling interest, but when the Mano River project was slower getting started than expected, he decided to send me to Washington as his political "No" man. There followed almost two years spent observing and mingling with Senators, Congressmen, Democratic Party grandees, press people and others of like ilk so he could know things before they became "news" and be able to quote, or refer friends and petitioners to, his "man in Washington".

More consequentially, he encouraged me to use the time and contacts he was paying for to press Liberia's case for Washington's attention. The winds of change blowing across Africa, welcome as a portent of colonialism's end, had been accompanied by a chill of anti-Americanism and excessive movement to and from Moscow. Official Washington was so entranced by Africa's bold, radical and charismatic new men that it had little time for the moderate course and, at the time anyway, the economic success of Tubman's Liberia. Christie told Hubert Humphrey, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's African subcommittee, that I had been thinking about how the U.S. might put more emphasis on Liberia's potential for leading newly-independent Africa in the paths of righteousness, and the Senator asked me to work with his assistant, Allard Lowenstein, on a speech he was preparing to give in the Senate. A liberal of undiluted purity, Lowenstein was not impressed to learn that I had come to praise and not to bury "old fogey" Tubman and his changing nation, so my career as a source of ideas about the new Africa was cut short. It was only after Lowenstein left his staff that the Senator, in pursuit of the Democratic nomination for the Presidency, took the obligatory tour of Africa, stopping in Liberia long enough to be impressed by Tubman and what Liberia was accomplishing in the face of many handicaps. (Following some flamboyantly radical years on the faculty of Stanford University, Lowenstein was elected to Congress by an impenitently liberal New York district, only to have his promising career ended a few years later by a mentally deranged gunman.)

### Trying to Make an American President

In late 1959 the New York Democrats with whom Christie consorted became alarmed when it seemed that young Senator John F. Kennedy might run away with the party's presidential nomination. Most liberal New York Democrats had long feared and loathed his father, Joseph P. Kennedy, and the Senator had not won their respect by his service in the House of Representatives or the Senate. Hoping to find a more suitable candidate, the group held several high-powered lunches (at Christie's expense) in the Hunt Room of Manhattan's thoroughly un-Democratic "21 Club" restaurant at which a number of Democratic hopefuls answered questions from 20 or 30 movers,

shakers and contributors. Senators Hubert Humphrey, Stuart Symington and Lyndon Johnson appeared but none was chosen. Christie would have been happy with any of the three and helped arrange an African tour by Symington, sending me along to assure an appropriate reception by Liberian officialdom. Christie tried to persuade Vernon Lynn, a ble Republican, to attend the lunches in the hope that Lynn would find some Democrat irresistible, but Lyndon Johnson was the only one Lynn was willing even to listen to. The two of us flew from a meeting with the Export-Import Bank in Washington to New York on the day that Johnson appeared, arriving late. We stopped to freshen up in the men's room where the elderly attendant, who knew Lynn as a founding member of the "21 Club" when it was a speak-easy in the 1920s, asked if he should have Lynn's "regular table" made ready. When told that Lynn was going to the Hunt Room, he was so shocked that he dropped the warm towel he was proffering with the involuntary exclamation, "But, Mr. Lynn, what are you doing with *those* people!". Only time and greatly enhanced tips ultimately restored Lynn's diminished standing in the men's room.

Unable to settle on a candidate considered able to beat Kennedy, the New Yorkers went their separate ways. Although he had no thought that Adlai Stevenson had a chance of getting the nomination for a third time, Christie had a soft spot for him and reserved a bungalow at the Beverly Hilton Hotel for Stevenson, his campaign manager and me during the National Democratic Convention in Los Angeles in June, 1960. It was sadly instructive to see Stevenson become so deluded that the convention was going to be deadlocked and switch to him at some late hour that he quit our little arrangement and moved to a hotel where he would be nearer the wheeling and dealing he imagined was about to take place. Christie, who had to be kept informed by telephone every hour or so, was intrigued when Stevenson's room in the bungalow was occupied by Lyndon Johnson's top aide and speech writer, a friend from university days, but was less impressed later when, just after I had told him my housemate was writing Johnson's refusal of the nomination for Vice President, he heard Johnson accepting the honor on television.

Once Kennedy had been selected by the Democratic party, Christie not only contributed to his campaign but gave me the wherewithal to do likewise, which meant that he and I were among a dozen or so invited to have breakfast with the candidate at Kennedy's favorite Carlisle Hotel. The charm which was to transfix the world was in full play and no one left the breakfast as cool to the candidate as some had been on arrival. However, Christie's ardor for politics had cooled. The Mano River project was starting to make heavy demands on his cash and he remained unenthusiastic about Kennedy, if no longer actively opposed; while not among the top contributors that year, he did not desist entirely, and correctly took it as a bow in his direction when the

Kennedy White House asked if I would serve as Ambassador to Cambodia (!) or Zaire, although the bow was not so flattering that he felt moved to offer time off for such service.

### Always Something New in Africa

His interests ranged wider than politics and always included Africa. In 1953 he was co-founder of the African-American Institute (AAI). He was well aware of, and unapologetic for, the later-revealed ties of the AAI with the Central Intelligence Agency, having seen no interference in AAI policy by the agency, which insisted that its only interest was in fostering contact between Africa and the U.S. where interest in the rapidly-changing continent was only slightly less desultory than today. Christie contributed to the organization's scholarship program and often underwrote AAI functions honoring African leaders. He once was asked to entertain Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah at his estate on Long Island and to sell Nkrumah on an educational exchange program which the AAI desired to establish with Ghana. The two candid and forceful men got along nicely until Nkrumah remarked that American professors sent to work in his country would have to have two degrees for each degree required of a British professor, such being the relative quality of the educational systems of the two nations. Christie's national pride, of which he had an inexhaustible supply, was so affronted that he excused himself from further dealings with Nkrumah.

Despite his ignorance of French, and lack of interest in speaking any foreign language, Christie got along famously with Guinea's Sekou Toure at another AAI function. Things went less well with Tanzania's Julius Nyerere, whose redoubtable charm seemed more effective with Scandinavian socialists than with Yankee capitalists.

Christie's office became a standard stop on the itinerary of Africa leadership exchange programs and many a future prime minister came calling. By 1960 there was an abundant supply of such and Christie was of more than passing interest to them because of his unique approach to financing Liberian ownership in the Mano River iron ore mine; rarely did even the most virulent left-winger take his leave without issuing an invitation to come to his homeland and do likewise. Such visitors were met with genuine cordiality before being turned over to me for more details, which is what happened one afternoon when Moise Tschombe and Albert Kalonji, two obscure visitors from the Belgian Congo, showed up on 15 or 20 minutes' notice. Tschombe was affable, inquisitive, intelligent and quick to grasp the significance of what Christie was doing, and he tried to get Kalonji to see the potential of such an approach for the latter's diamond-rich home region of Kasai. In the midst of our talk, a phone call told them that an announcement had just been made in Belgium of early independence for the Congo and instructed them to get on

the next plane to Brussels. (It was difficult to reconcile the delightful Tschombe in my office that afternoon with the monster collaborator of the same name who was hijacked and died in detention in Algeria a few bloody years later. Kalonji's brief comic and corrupt hour on the stage as "Emperor" of the Kasai, with leopard-skin mantle and elephant-tail scepter, was more in character.)

Many efforts were made to embroil Christie in African (and Liberian) politics but he always declined the honor. While he greatly admired Tubman and wanted to support the policies he felt were working to the good of Liberia, he firmly resisted suggestions that he help this or that candidate in Liberian elections, even when they were personal friends. He did not like to see foreigners mix in domestic American matters and saw no reason why he should behave differently regarding domestic politics in Africa. In 1961, Charles Sherman, whose judgement he respected, brought a Ghanaian opposition leader to LMC's 70 Pine Street offices in search of financial help in overthrowing the increasingly anti-American Nkrumah. Visiting from his exile in Holland, Kofi Busia told a depressing story of the brutal treatment meted out to old comrades by Nkrumah, who was also actively working to undermine Tubman's influence in Africa. In spite of sympathy for Busia and dislike of Nkrumah, Christie wanted nothing to do with such meddling. Although Busia argued his point with the gentle, professorial manner for which he was known, it was my job a few days afterwards to tell Sherman and Busia that the answer was a regretful "No". (It was a relief when, during negotiations with him in 1967, Prime Minister Busia did not remember those meetings in New York as clearly as I did.)

In the course of his AAI activities Christie met Garfield Todd, the liberal white Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia whose futile efforts at multi-racial politics were to end in his disappearance from government, but not before he became something of a second echelon hero abroad. Todd was expanding his large, modern farm and he persuaded Christie to participate in the project on terms so generous as to activate attorney Vernon Lynn's overworked ulcers. Preoccupied with Southern Rhodesian politics and losing ground to hard-line white supremacists as the country moved toward a "Unilateral Declaration of Independence", Todd's business suffered and any transfer of funds to Christie was made virtually impossible after the United Nations imposed a boycott on Southern Rhodesia. Although saddened by Todd's failure at least to stay in better touch with him and disappointed when a deal agreed to by Todd's daughter, Judy, was not honored, he always spoke with sympathy of the missionary-politician and the fight he had conducted.

### **Many Things Bright and Beautiful**

American politics and African affairs did not exhaust his days or his spare funds. Somehow, during these same years, Christie found the time to become

knowledgeable about and the money to accumulate a variety of beautiful things:

More than 20 years before the American magazine publisher, Malcolm Forbes, fixed Hollywood-class attention on his collection of the works of Peter Carl Faberge, the nonpareil jeweler to the Imperial Court of Russia, Christie had put together a collection of those works which was ranked by connoisseurs among the world's best, rivaling in quality if not in numbers those of the Queen of England and the Hermitage Museum of Leningrad, still known as St. Petersburg when Faberge, his goldsmiths, artists and artisans worked there. Methodically and cannily, Christie acquired an erudition that impressed the academics and challenged the purveyors who had devoted entire adulthoods to Faberge. With a determination recently devoted to iron ore, he pursued, piece by piece, the items needed for a balanced and comprehensive collection: the bejeweled and enameled Imperial Eggs which the Tsars presented to wives and mothers and favorites at Easter each year; vanity and cigarette boxes; bonbonnières; miniature replicas of sedan chairs and stylish pieces of furniture; figurines made of precious and semi-precious stones; animals carved from a surprising variety of materials.

Rarely were persistence, familiarity with subject, and poker-faced bargaining combined to better effect than when he maneuvered to purchase an item from the two dealers, one in New York and the other in London, who held sway over the trade in Faberge articles, especially those offered for sale by exiled Russian aristocrats in need of funds to maintain some vestige of the life style that had helped bring to power the new Bolshevik elite, which also sold many Faberge works (but not all of them; Nikita Khrushchev wore a pair of Faberge cufflinks).

On Christie's trips to London time was always reserved for a visit to the Regent Street shop of "Messrs Wartski of London and Llandudno", where he was met reverentially by impeccable young men in frock coats and striped trousers who prayed him await the imminent coming of Wartski's head, Emmanuel Snowman, O.B.E., J.P., Alderman of the City of London, who, during the 1920s, had rescued many of the Imperial Eggs from Soviet hands. After proper but friendly greetings, the two would descend a winding steel staircase to two rooms lined with lock boxes from which "The Maestro", as Christie called Snowman, would—with just a hint of showmanship—bring out articles, roughly in order of increasing interest and value. The first might be items purchased at auction on orders from Christie, then, some which might fill voids in Christie's collection, followed by more unusual ones that had come on the market since their last meeting. To the accompaniment of good-natured banter about worth versus price, Christie would put to one side possible choices, the rejects being returned to the strong boxes. Then, winnowing completed, the two would consider more closely the pieces both

knew Christie wanted. Some adjustment in prices might be made, depending on the total value of the purchase, but there was no haggling; each respected the other's knowledge of the material and its worth. Then, before any deal was closed, Christie would say, "O.k., Maestro, let's see it" and, to a showy jangling of keys, Snowman would open another box and produce the splendid "Imperial Russian Easter Egg", of lime-green enamel, trellised in gold, decorated with two large diamonds and perhaps fifty double eagles with smaller rose-diamonds. Inside it was a model of the Coronation coach in yellow gold set with rose-diamonds. This belonged to Alderman Snowman and was not for sale. Christie coveted it, ached for it, had to have it to crown his collection, for he already owned its companion, the Coronation Box. This was the bait which kept him returning to Regent Street, the reason to buy things he might not truly have wished to buy or to pay a bit more than he thought he should for others. He might cajole the Maestro or push a little more insistently than on the previous visit, but he always left with only the promise that if the egg were ever for sale, he would have first refusal. He never got the chance; more than a decade after his death, it was still in Wartski's basement, most likely being shown to an equally covetous Malcolm Forbes.

Most of his more important pieces came with stories of the type that lend intrigue and add value for collectors: The magnificent Chanticleer Egg, with its diamond-set gold rooster crowing at the hour, had been presented to the Dowager Empress Maria Feodorovna by her son, Tsar Nicholas II. Both the vanity box of an uniquely beautiful blue color and the remarkable nephrite and gold miniature watering can had come from the notable collection of an actress for whose favors Tsar Nicholas II and his uncle, the Grand Duke Alexis, competed with gifts from the Faberge workshop. The Gypsy Woman figurine, fashioned from at least six different types of stone, represented a celebrated gypsy singer who took poison and died onstage before the eyes of the Imperial Guardsman who had rejected her.

About a dozen pieces transited Liberia in 1960. Because they were not old enough to qualify as "antiques" and had too much gold and too many diamonds to be considered "art" by the U.S. Customs Service, any entering the United States would have been taxed at the prohibitive rates applicable to more pedestrian jewelry. Most of the items bought at Wartski's were left there while Christie tried to persuade officialdom that he would be adding to America's patrimony by bringing them to the U.S. Finally, unwilling to wait until the tedious process could be concluded, he claimed some of the more important items, put them in a soiled canvas PanAm carry-on bag which went with him on a trip to Monrovia and Mano. He took the bulkier pieces when he departed for New York but left me the flight bag still containing half-a-dozen items, among them a surpassingly delicate gold basket containing lilies of the valley whose flowers were of oriental pearls and leaves of carved



nephrite. Some days later, he had me and the flight bag whisked through the formalities at the New York airport, having persuaded those in need of persuasion with a showing of the articles he had brought back earlier. However, he could not spare me an awkward time on my departure from Liberia when the customs agent, perhaps finding that payday was too far away (as they used to say in pre-revolutionary Liberia), undertook a slow and painstaking search of my baggage, allowing ample time for chat and the transfer of any gratuity that the spirit dictated. When, at last, he tired of the game, he motioned to the PanAm bag and asked, "What you got in there?" "Nothing in there but gold and diamonds, Slocum." "Oh, Mr. Farmer, you like joke too much. Take you bag and go."

At first, the Faberge collection was kept in a sturdy but scarcely-inviolable wall safe at the Christie estate on Long Island. He liked to handle and let guests handle the pieces, opening things that opened, winding up things that functioned. Finally, when concern for the security of his collection and of his family combined with a desire to share this beauty with a larger audience, he agreed, first, to a show at Washington's Corcoran Gallery of Art and, then, to a "permanent" exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, where it was at the time of his death. It says much about this very private man that, despite the great pride he had in the collection, he did not permit his name to be associated with either exhibit, nor with the beautiful catalogue published by the Corcoran Gallery, with its handsome color photographs and learned commentary by Alderman Snowman's son and successor. Malcolm Forbes has written of buying a large part of the collection after Christie's death, and of the Aga Khan's acquisition of the charming little animals carved from semi-precious stones. By transferring ownership to his company, Forbes managed to share in the cost of this purchase and its subsequent upkeep with American taxpayers who can and should enjoy its beauty which is displayed at the magazine's building on New York's Fifth Avenue.

#### **Missing and Wanted: Washington's Gaming Table and Portrait**

Even as he was pursuing Faberge, Christie was putting together a much-admired collection of American antique furniture. Once more, he mastered the arcana and the jargon, and absorbed the stories which give depth and verve to collecting. Early on, he acquired a gaming table which was one of a pair that General George Washington gave to a family in whose home he had lived while fighting the British round about New York. Through it he found, so to speak, another Coronation Egg, the thing he had to have almost above all else: the table's missing mate. This time he had more success; after a lot of detective work and much wheedling of dealers, the mate was located and added to a collection which was sold after his death at an auction described at the time as the most important ever of American antique furniture.

His search for the gaming table may have been what brought him to the attention of the State Department protocol officer responsible for furnishing the rooms in which American Secretaries of State entertain the world's great. This pleasant and persuasive gentleman not only set out to insure that what went into the reception and dining rooms on the top floor of the State Department building was of the best produced by early American craftsmen but that collectors such as Christie helped stretch the Department's meager budget for such luxuries. When attending a function honoring President Tubman there, Mr. and Mrs. Christie were given a personally-guided viewing of the several handsome and expensive pieces acquired through their generosity.

In one final, doctor-prohibited burst of energy and impulse, he left the New York hospital where he was to undergo radiation treatment of a brain tumor to fly to London for an auction of American items among which he believed he had spotted a "missing Rembrandt Peale" portrait of George Washington, although the auction house's catalogue made no such claim. After playing Scrabble with his friend and ore sales agent until quite early in the morning, he attended the auction and bid in the portrait at a goodly price for a bogus Rembrandt Peale, but a bargain for an authentic one. He spirited George Washington away from England on the next plane to New York. As he returned to the hospital, the painting was on its way to the Boston Museum for authentication. The expert there, though almost persuaded, passed in favor of the Brooklyn Museum's more expert expert, whose words verged on the Delphic but whose recommendation that the painting be insured for some five times the price paid spoke volumes of authentication. Desiring both to assure it a home worthy of its importance and to buttress its identity, Christie, with the help of the delighted protocol officer, loaned the painting to the White House to which it was later given outright by his widow—which is how it came to be on the wall of the Oval Office, behind the desk of the beleaguered Richard Nixon as he labored to persuade the world that he was no crook.

There were other delightful if less noteworthy collections: A large array of lead soldiers in brightly colored British military regalia, whose acquisition provided an excuse to pass through London's Mecca of upper-crust tourism, the Burlington Arcade, when going from Wartski's on Regent Street to his "Bespoke Tailor" on Saville Row. Models of historic interest: U.S. Frigate "Constitution", made in 1798; H.M. Brig Sloop "Ferret", made in 1760; a cannon and carriage, made in 1820. A source of a different type of enjoyment was found on his Long Island estate in the acres of evergreen shrubs and trees, with fine examples of Cedars of Lebanon and Atlas cedars, and a "Monkey Puzzle Tree" acquired at much expense in a failed attempt to win a small bet from a daughter.

Indeed the entire estate on Muttontown Road in suburban Syosset was something of a collection, an accumulation of smaller properties, including one where Zog, exiled king of Albania, had built a modest chateau which he never occupied and which Christie had razed to deny its use to a growing vagrant clientele. The Christie estate was entered through a carriage house with its comfortable-looking quarters for some of the people who worked there and a white-pine office which he rarely used except when he stopped there to telephone the butler's pantry in the main house to order a drink for a visitor—and one for himself—before his wife's disinclination to offer alcohol could take effect. Plus a tack room for all the well-oiled gear that horse fanciers seem to require, in the midst of which was an irresistibly cheerful Sicilian wedding cart made for the marriage of a daughter who, as he would tell visitors ruefully but not without some understanding, found its Italianate gaiety inconsonant with the sober North Island environs. There were the stables, a riding corral and pasture for the horses, Arabian pure bred and Western quarter horses. And the ten Dartmoor ponies ("1 Stallion, 1 Mare, 4 mares with foals at foot") brought from England, complete with "500 Pure Salt Licks", after he saw a herd of the shaggy animals during a trip through the legendary moors of southwestern England. Predictably, there was a fleet of imported motor vehicles ranging from a transcendently elegant Rolls-Royce to a Jaguar sports convertible whose gear box he burned up when he accepted the challenge of a teenager in a souped-up jalopy to a drag race early one Saturday morning en route to his weekly session of golf, bridge and sour mash whiskey in the rarified atmosphere of the North Hempstead Country Club.

Aside from what it reveals of a side of this complex man that was little known in Liberia beyond a small circle of friends, this cursory look at his collections has another relevance to this portrait, for they had, imperceptibly, become a repository for much of the wealth from Bomi Hills. By the time the brain tumor at last won out, the Mano River project had drained much of his liquid wealth, due to no-interest loans to Liberians to buy shares, low-interest and subordinated loans to National Iron Ore Company and investments made personally and through Liberia Mining Company. The comfort of his widow was assured in large part by the sale of many—but by no means all—of the rare and beautiful things he had so carefully brought together for what was, sadly, a very brief enjoyment.

### The Still Small Voice of Gratitude

At the floodtide of prosperity, Christie devoted no little effort to renewing contact with and showing over-due gratitude to people whom he remembered for some act of friendship or kindness. He gave long, raucous and boozy dinners for schoolmates at a Brooklyn high school in a private room at the "21

Club" restaurant, itself almost as foreign to some of them as the distant Liberia from whence came their old friend's wealth.

Reminiscing about running away to Alaska as a teenager, he suddenly thought of a railroad policeman in California who had probably saved his life by teaching him the tricks of hitching illegal rides on freight trains. Wanting to show his thanks, he hired a private detective who, months later, reported the man had died some time before. After more detective work located a daughter, he spoke with her at touching length about her father's kindness to him.

His loyalty and open-handedness to old friends was well known, if not always predictable. Upon setting up a company to manage the Mano River project, he sought out and hired as its president a man who had worked for a company with which he had done business in the days of Christie Scow company. This man had discovered that his employers were cheating Christie through short weights on shipments of sand and gravel and risked his job to set things right, earning from Christie a debt of gratitude that was repaid over 25 years later. Nevertheless, when a few months on the job revealed that time had diminished the drive and endurance of the new employee, dismissal followed abruptly and without remorse.

Spice was added to such acts of gratitude when they entailed some joust with authority on behalf of friends:

When, at long last, he and LMC had bank accounts with balances large enough to be interesting, he was visited by an official of Bankers Trust Company who said responsibility for the accounts was being transferred to him. It was not enough that this presumption came from an individual who was personally *non grata* to Christie because of some unforgiven affront dating from a shared youth in Brooklyn Heights; he was proposing to replace a gentle, humorous and effective New Englander, Vernon Lynn's college friend, for whom Christie had formed the warmest of attachments when the three of them worked on LMC finances in the early days. While the visitor listened, Christie called the president of Bankers Trust to say he would prefer things to remain as they had always been. For his pains, he had to sit through a repetition of his visitor's sales talk about better service from the new international division than from the older metropolitan division—in short, father knew best what was good for Christie. Within hours, accounts with balances of over \$1 million were moved to a competing bank. The following day, as soon as a report of this transfer reached his desk, the bank president called to say that, on second thought, it might be more appropriate for the New Englander to stay in charge of Christie's business, which he did until emphysema dictated an early retirement, but not before he worked further wonders in financing the Mano River project.

Christie stirred up an unexpected storm by recommending that Curtis Mallet take as a partner an attorney with whom he had shared an office in the Pentagon and whose subsequent service as the State Department's top legal officer ended with John Foster Dulles' house-cleaning frenzy in 1953. Christie argued that his friend's experience was a natural fit with Curtis Mallet's practice in international law. Though hardly unaware of the prejudices which pervaded life on Wall Street, it does not seem to have occurred to him that his friend's being Jewish would run up against an antediluvian practice which had Jewish law firms looking after Jewish clients and Gentile firms after Gentiles. However, somewhere in the firm's innermost coterie of senescent partners, which included a centenarian who was the sole survivor of the names on the door, the question was raised. Worse still, it fell to Christie's oldest contact at the firm, the venerable Judge Otto Schoenrich, to inform him that, despite the high regard his friend had inspired, the firm did not find the moment propitious to engage in blazing trails. Although the Judge delivered the message in the gentlemanly fashion that marked all his doings, Christie was angry and disappointed with people whom he admired. Soon afterward, he and two or three drinking companions who were directors of the Monrovia Port Management Company went from a meeting in Liberia to Southern Rhodesia to view Victoria Falls. Seated on the verandah of a hotel which overlooked that splendid sight and emboldened by a more than reasonable amount of sour mash whiskey, they sent a "wish you were here" cable to a missing director, addressed by Christie as follows:

Vernon R.Y. Lynn, Esq.  
c/o Curtis, Mallet-Prevost, Colt, Mosle and Finkelstein

Back in New York, he was again invited to lunch by Judge Schoenrich and told that such bad taste was not the best way to deal with a matter which all now agreed had become a troublesome one. Unpersuaded, Christie took the occasion of his next trip to Europe to send another cable, this time addressed to:

Vernon R.Y. Lynn, Esq.  
c/o Curtis, Mallet-Prevost, Colt, Mosle and Yamaguchi

Of course, it is not for outsiders to know whether this ill-mannered hectoring did anything more than prevent the subject from being swept under the dull gray carpets of Curtis Mallet's fusty offices at 63 Wall Street, giving time for support from less backward-looking partners to take form. However it happened exactly, the firm did reverse its position and received as a partner his friend, who did many good things for the firm and for Liberia, which he represented before the World Court. Let the record also show that through the door opened for him came others of different essence from the firm's founders

who also added immeasurably to Curtis Mallet's reputation and to the pleasure of doing business with it.

This tilt with prejudice had more to do with attachment to a friend than to any predilection toward crusading for social justice. In general, Christie did battle for individuals rather than for great causes, and preferred continuing pressure to the all-out, do-or-die assault. However, racial discrimination presented a problem at both levels; it was repugnant in itself, of course, but challenging it also risked the constant threat—almost the certainty—of adding to the already frequent embarrassment of Liberian friends. One example of how he dealt with this dilemma was the way he introduced Liberians into the previously restricted premises of India House, his stodgy, comfortable and picturesque luncheon club on Hanover Square in Manhattan. In the early years, he mostly avoided the issue by entertaining guests of color (and women, including my wife) at the larger, more open, but less convenient Downtown Athletic Club, with its commanding view of New York Harbor and the Statue of Liberty. When he first took Africans to the closer and cozier India House, it was to private rooms on an upper floor, to which women were also restricted. Soon, he asked to be seated in a side room on the main floor, then, ultimately, in the main dining room where, it is only fair to say, the appearance of the Africans caused only the faintest stir among a few of the more sclerotic. Most Liberians seemed to be either unaware or appreciative of the way he went about this although some younger ones who had endured discrimination during student years in the U.S. may have wished more banging on the table.

But, back to Christie's attachment to friends and his long memory of good or evil done to him:

The less generous side of the long Christie memory was equally powerful. The number two man of Christie Scow, who had scrapped alongside Christie for the right to tie scows up at piers in New York Harbor, sinned in some undiscussed but conclusive manner, never to be spoken to afterward. Christie's brother fell under similar ostracism. When his gambling and carousing buddy from World War II days in the Belgian Congo and protégé as Port Director soured under the pressures of the expanding Free Port of Monrovia, becoming erratic, embarrassing and often violent, this loyal follower was replaced and allowed to slip from contact with little more than a backward glance.

In arranging a trip to see French steel industry officials, he asked the Bankers Trust Company vice president to inform the bank's newly-opened office in Paris of his coming. Colonel H., head of the office, dutifully called and was invited to have cocktails in the ornate, gilded Ritz Hotel suite which Christie liked to occupy, if only so he could tell guests that it was where Nazi Field Marshal Hermann Goering had customarily stayed while pillaging

Paris. Colonel H., handsome and gray and ram-rod erect, with a noticeable limp in one leg, duly appeared and, before he realized it, fell into a cat-and-mouse game which clearly was to Christie's liking:

-Hadn't they met before, the Colonel asked.

-Perhaps, since both of them had served in the Pentagon during the war.

-Oh yes, that must have been it.

A bit later, the Colonel thought otherwise:

-They must have met more recently than at the Pentagon.

-The Christies were often at the Casablanca resort in Scottsdale, Arizona in November; maybe it was there.

-Of course, that was a spot the Colonel also frequented; they must have crossed on the golf course.

Still he was not satisfied:

-There was something he couldn't put a finger on. -Well, how about Florida? The Christies customarily went there in February. -That might be it as the Colonel had been there several times.

However, when the Colonel left, he was still searching a recalcitrant memory for some missing connection.

Christie was jubilant. He had shaken the aplomb of the "son-of-a-bitch who got me kicked out of West Point". So that was it: almost 40 years earlier an upperclassman at the U.S. Military Academy had mistreated his roommate so shamelessly that Christie stepped from an inspection line and righteously inflicted a good deal of bodily harm, causing his dismissal from the Academy. Throughout the intervening time, he had followed the bully's career, always watchful for a chance to even the score, and, of course, well-aware of any encounter on the golf course or elsewhere. But, when the chance came, a heavy limp prevented the worst: "The guy is a goddam hero. He lost that leg in the war." Old choler had been diluted by new respect, but it had not died completely away. Upon our return to New York, he had me call the bank vice president and tell him the story. "What the hell does Chris want me to do? Fire the Colonel?" No, just make sure the news is broken in a way that will produce maximum consternation. It is not clear that the news ever was broken. Christie never asked, apparently ready to consider that an old score had been settled, even if not as painfully as he had wanted for four decades.

### "Drink with Me and Drink as I"

If only because it now and then shook a normally restrained, placid and inward disposition, and could lead to a tempestuousness that belied the gentility, courtesy and urbanity so characteristic of him, mention is made several times here of the quantities of alcohol, in the form of Jack Daniels sour mash whiskey, Canadian ale and white peppermint frappes, with which Christie liked to irrigate work and play. That this was a benign practice, on the whole, is seen in the number and diversity of people on three continents—miners, steel magnates, politicians, royalty and courtiers, longshoremen, academics, antiquarians—who found him congenial, interesting and entertaining. It is also pertinent that his friendship with Tubman was cemented by many long and uninhibited sessions of whiskey and poker at the Saturday Afternoon Club, in the days before Tubman began pretending to swallow his Johnny Walker Black Label while merely dipping a lip into it as a way to reduce his own intake of alcohol without discouraging that of his guests.

Alcohol did, of course, have its effects but only rarely did even the most heroic indulgence do more than animate an impassive countenance or allow to the surface something ebullient, rebellious, puckish, mercurial, maybe even uncertain; or adolescent, like the time in an old hotel in provincial Holland when he led some companions suffering from slow social development in moving from floor to floor and door to door the shoes left for polishing by guests who, scowling wilting Dutch scowls, found it easy the next morning to identify the miscreants in the dining room where only they were not in bedroom slippers.

After one well-watered lunch at India House he insisted on returning to 70 Pine Street via a circuitous route past the corner of Broad and Wall Streets so he could feel the biceps of a traffic policeman who had worked there for years and whose uniform could barely enclose arms and shoulders of dimensions little known before anabolic steroids. In the middle of traffic, Christie squeezed an outsized arm saying, "I've wanted to do this for 15 years", then startled its owner with an offer of a job as head of security on his Long Island estate. The policeman visited the estate but, obviously still disbelieving, did not accept the offer.

Drinking did not produce only sunny moods, of course. Jack Daniels contributed to a disconcerting penchant for fist fights, including one that ended his friendship with the Firestone Plantations Company president, and to a rude exhibition at a hospitable Plantation home when he took over the public address system to revile at length the absent boss of most of those present.

Colorful though it could be, the consequences of heavy-duty drinking should not be exaggerated. Still, any story of Liberian iron ore must include



one session, rollicking and up-beat, which was to cost Christie and the Mano River project a great deal of money and pain:

In early 1959, he sent a mining engineer to the isolated and primitive exploration camp at the Mano River iron ore deposit in preparation to offering him a job as General Manager of the nascent National Iron Ore project. Respected for his performance at mines in North and South America and known (though not yet to Christie) for a frightening temper, Floyd Erickson had just, unwillingly, ended a turbulent time as manager of a large iron mine in Minnesota in which Republic Steel was a moving force. After inspecting the little that was then to be seen of Mano, he went to London for meetings with a Christie who was straining to start an adventure in which Erickson expressed boundless, if thinly supported, confidence. In a suite at Claridge's Hotel, the two took each other's measure, and, then, their enthusiasm inflamed by a flow of whiskey maintained by Admiral George Wauchope, a close friend and head of Farrell Lines, they fed each other's abundant supply of optimism, exulted in the prospect of settling old scores with Republic Steel, and produced the flimsiest of back-of-the-envelope estimates of costs and a construction schedule. Wauchope, whose Scottish skepticism had been refined by over 20 years of surprises and disappointments in merchant vessels working African ports, could not silence disbelief when Christie asked Erickson for a date when the first shipment of ore could be made and was told that, if work started right away, it could be done two years from that day. Intolerant of doubt, Christie bet Wauchope \$100 that Mano would make its first shipment of ore by April 11, 1961.

Almost overnight a playfully-made wager was transformed into a project deadline. Lenders were told of—but not actually promised—April 11, 1961. So were ore buyers, equipment suppliers, contractors and, of course, Liberian officials and shareholders. Later exploration showed that the ore would require treatment by facilities not foreseen that night at Claridge's; loans were slower in coming than expected but rains came earlier, fell more heavily, lasted longer than had been seen for years. Almost everything changed, except April 11, 1961, which imperceptibly became an altar on which all manner of sacrifices were made: railroad right-of-ways were narrowed, inclines in access roads and railroad were left half removed, every third or fourth railroad cross tie was omitted, ballast rock was spread thinly or not at all. Months sped by with Christie brooding in New York, awaiting some formal change of date or an apologetic explanation from Erickson who was working 18 or 20 hours a day, raging from work site to work site, firing engineers and mechanics faster than the New York office could replace them. Each was more obstinate than the other and steeled against being the first to blink; Erickson still refused to admit, even when the first skimpy shipment of hastily and poorly prepared ore was made on December 1, that April 11 had

come and gone. The canker was in the rose; its infestation of the whole plant will be followed in a subsequent part of this portrait.

**"Something in the Parting Hour Will Chill the Warmest Heart"**

Less than two months after his return from Liberia in May, 1965, Christie entered Columbia Presbyterian Hospital to seek explanation and correction of signs that all was not normal with him. He had developed a tremor which obliged him to hold a glass with both hands; he suffered sudden and dramatic changes of mood, even for a normally volatile personality. The two fine and devoted doctors who had, at his behest, cared for so many Liberians reported that a brain tumor had been found; exploratory surgery proved it to be small and benign but in a location which made surgical removal impossible. Radiation treatment was begun with the usual burden of side effects which did not, however, prevent his receiving such old friends as Charles Sherman and Shad Tubman, who was sent to see him by a concerned President. He also insisted on regular reports about Mano and on making that fast trip to London to buy a rare portrait of George Washington. The tumor shrank under radioactive bombardment, but his doctor tried as gently as possible to avoid arousing high expectations. When maximum radiation had been performed, he returned to the beautiful surroundings of the home on Muttontown Road, where he died on November 16.

When President Tubman went to Switzerland in August for his annual check-up, Christie was still focusing on the future and wrote with optimism about the test work being done in the Bie Mountains. He reported that he was to undergo exploratory surgery the next day and added:

"My association with you has been an exciting one and we have many warm memories. Mayhap the fates will deign to smile on me and I'll be back in harness once again. One great incentive to carry on is always the keen memory of all the good times we have had together."

Liberia would see the last, unique demonstration of the friendship which that last communication celebrated on November 24, 1965 in the Centennial Pavilion, where Liberia inaugurates and bids farewell to its Presidents, when President Tubman rose to speak, thick voiced and hesitant. After a moment's silence, he tried again. Still unable to talk, he asked Acting Secretary of State T. Ernest Eastman to read his

**"Panegyric to the Memory of the Late**

**Colonel Lansdell K. Christie**

**President, Liberia Mining Company."**

In the pavilion's balconies, a Joseph's coat of school uniforms marked the attendance of students from the many schools Christie had helped: Ricks Institute, Bromley Mission, St. Theresa's Convent, and on and on. The Cabinet, Supreme Court and representatives of the Legislature sat on the dais to the President's left. On his right, was the "Chief Mourner", as the President had designated me, with other friends, associates and employees; when A. Momolu Massaquoi, Director of the Bureau of Natural Resources and Survey, left the official group to join the personal friends, several others did the same.

In the week since Christie's death, Liberian radio had twice daily broadcast tributes by prominent Liberians, but none was so personal or so eloquent as that which the President had dictated but could not deliver:

"... It would seem better for this somber Service for us to sit in silence... However, I wish to point out as indelibly as possible to the people of every class and range of Liberia the unselfish and patently deep and immovable love and interest this great man, Lansdell Christie, entertained for the development of this country, prosperity of its people, particularly its common people, and his unexcelled and unparalleled sacrificial contribution to every phase of national, civic, educational and industrial life of the nation and its people.

"His interest and friendship could not be challenged, it was above and beyond question. He was as much a Liberian as a Liberian could be and this interest he carried and manifested by word and deed from the time that he entered business in this country..."

Nothing like it has been seen in Liberia: flag at half-staff throughout the nation, the President in mourning, Centennial Pavilion filled with the music of the University choir and the Frontier Force band, honoring a man of different nationality and race whom the President, six months earlier, had called the "Iron King of Liberia".

He left the scene much as he had lived it: Confused and uncertain, but filled with optimism that the worst for Mano was over. After costing more than estimated, starting shipments of ore later than scheduled, delivering a product which did not meet specifications and suffering every manner of growing pain, NIOC had recently completed a refinancing in which Christie had subordinated his loans to those of all other lenders and deferred other amounts due him on management fees and the like. Worse still, he had had to ask LMC, meaning Republic Steel, for help in overcoming the production problems which had dogged Mano's every step. His old adversaries were no more sparing of him than he had been of them, missing no opportunity to make the process as humiliating and punishing as possible. One second-

echelon Republic rack-turner, whom Christie dubbed "The Killer", went so far as to demand that his Long Island property be put up as security for NIOC's debt; Christie was actually seeking a way to do so until a furious Vernon Lynn, working through a tough-minded partner from a hospital bed, put a stop to the sordid proposal.

And yet . . . as they so often did with Christie around, things were getting better. With debt rescheduled and a bit of money to fix some of what needed fixing, with shipments and prices of ore increasing and quality improving, with the grudging and surly but productive help from people who mightily and vocally resented having to help a project they had never believed in, things got better. Before he departed, Christie knew that wheels were in motion to pay the LEL dividend which he had promised in May.

On February 4, 1966, distribution of dividend checks to over 1600 Liberian shareholders began. The inventive financing provided by Christie meant that they got a cash return on their investments of 15% p.a. and, in addition, applied another 15% against the amount advanced by him. When Mano's days were over, the shareholders whom he financed were the only investors who had made a profit.

Christie had tried to spread Liberian iron ore wealth beyond traditional bounds, to push the nation's economy a bit further into the 20th century. The numerous dividend checks endorsed with "X—His Mark" gave affecting witness to how well he succeeded, if only for a while.

### Endnotes

\*An opening word: The Goal of this portrait of Christie is to give substance to a figure who, despite the large role he played in Liberia's economy for over 20 years, has remained poorly known. This part includes a number of anecdotes about events which the writer either witnessed or was told of by Christie and other first-hand sources. One result is an immodest but unavoidable use of the first person pronoun. There were others closer to him, for longer periods; may the few left to do so be inspired by this to tell their own versions of the story.

Part II of a series on  
American Entrepreneurs and Liberia

The Editor

## Firestone's Labor Policy, 1924-1939

Arthur J. Knoll

### Harvey S. Firestone, Sr. in Socialist Retrospect

Harvey S. Firestone, Sr. chose Liberia for plantation agriculture because he was convinced that labor there would be both cheap and available. Firestone's manager in Liberia, Donald A. Ross, a former British rubber planter whom Firestone had recruited from Malaya, told of the existence of a plentiful and inexpensive supply of workers along the Du and Farmington rivers in Montserrado County and on the Cavalla river in Maryland County.<sup>1</sup> At one point Ross reported that Liberia had a potential labor pool of some 1.5 million people.<sup>2</sup> Heartened by such reports, Firestone spoke confidently of a "practically inexhaustible" labor supply in Liberia. In 1925 the rubber magnate thought that his company might use as many as 350,000 laborers to work future plantations. Raymond Leslie Buell, the young Harvard researcher who visited Africa in 1925-26 and who subsequently became *persona non grata* with the American State Department for his criticism of official American aid to business ventures, exclaimed critically that Firestone would need to mobilize no less than the whole adult male population of Liberia to implement his operation.<sup>3</sup>

The Firestone Plantations Company needed Liberians for the many tasks associated with opening a new agricultural enterprise. Dahn workers recruited from Nimba County spoke of being firemen and waterboys as land clearing for the Du river plantation proceeded. The company also needed people to burn away bush and forest, to open the Du River to transportation, and to tap mature rubber trees. Once the Firestone Plantations Company commenced operations in 1926 the task of rubber tapping became urgent. Tapping called for exceptional skill and great patience on the part of the rubber tappers. In the process of extracting the milky latex from the trees, tappers had to be careful to make one millimeter incisions in the outer bark. If they cut too deeply, they wounded the tree. If they cut too lightly, the latex would not "bleed" in sufficient quantity. After collecting the morning's proceeds, the tapper poured the latex into large buckets.<sup>4</sup> Such skilled work could only be accomplished after the *Hevea* rubber tree had matured for five to six years. Charles Morrow Wilson, who observed the Firestone operations in 1946, stated that Liberia's most impressive asset was the excellence of its workers.<sup>5</sup>

By the end of 1928 company efforts resulted in the clearing of 15,000 acres for the Du and Cavalla plantations. Harvey S. Firestone, Sr. reckoned that the process of land clearing and planting cost \$100 per acre, a relative bargain when one estimated labor costs for comparable activities in the Far East.<sup>6</sup> Banking on an employed force of 6,000 Liberians in 1927, Ross calculated that Firestone would save \$300,000 in labor costs when Liberian laborers did the same work as their equivalents in the East Indies.<sup>7</sup>

As early as 1924 Firestone employed about 100 workers on the Mount Barclay plantation which the company rented from the Liberian government. Mount Barclay was an experimental enterprise of 1,500 acres twenty miles north of Monrovia in Montserrado County. In 1907 it had belonged to the British entrepreneur and colonial official Sir Harry Johnston whose Liberian Development Company subsequently defaulted on its \$23,700 debt to the Liberian government.<sup>8</sup> To retrieve the situation, Liberia assumed the banker's claims against the company and severed its relation with Johnston. Monrovia then permitted Firestone to rent the old British estate without asking Johnston's successors if they wanted to pursue the founder's endeavor further.<sup>9</sup>

Mount Barclay became Firestone's trial enterprise. It was brought into full rubber production well before the completion of negotiations for the 1926 loan agreement that subsequently permitted Firestone to open its plantations at Du in Montserrado County and Cavalla in Maryland County. James L. Sibley, educational advisor for the Liberian government, commented that Mount Barclay was "paying [Firestone] handsomely."<sup>10</sup> Success at Mount Barclay clearly established the feasibility of rubber growing at Firestone's future larger enterprises at Du and Cavalla.

With Mount Barclay as a base, Firestone proceeded to create the largest continuous rubber plantation in the world. It became America's first big corporate endeavor in tropical Africa. By 1928 company land under cultivation totaled 23,000 acres in Montserrado County and 12,000 acres in Maryland County. In the same year Firestone employed a monthly average of 8,262 unskilled workers and 530 skilled workers at Du. At Cavalla Firestone's operation gave employment to some 2,000 unskilled workers.<sup>11</sup> Although these employment figures represented a far cry from the founder's original estimate of 350,000 workers, their earnings provided a considerable cash influx into the Liberian economy. In 1928 Liberian President Charles D.B. King reported that Firestone paid Liberians \$1,024,050 in wages.<sup>12</sup> Evidently Firestone was the only large and constant source of income for Liberians. When Firestone cut its payroll about in half in 1929, the economy experienced dislocation as government tax revenues from workers' salaries plummeted. President King deplored this contraction citing what he called the resulting "disastrous consequences" for the government's internal development program.<sup>13</sup> Johnson concluded: "There is now no question that the Government

appreciates the importance of the Firestone Plantations Company to the general prosperity of the country . . ."<sup>14</sup>

Although Harvey S. Firestone, Sr. entered Liberia for solid business reasons, the Akron businessman was not devoid of idealism. He spoke of the redemption of Liberia through American business. Utilization of Liberian labor would play a key role in Firestone's plan to transform Liberia. In the early days the founder proudly announced: "So far as I know, we are the only employers of African labor to establish the American working day . . ."<sup>15</sup> Harvey S. Firestone, Jr. perpetuated his father's vision by describing Liberia as that "quaint little democracy, rich in the traditions of America . . ." which would now be modernized by its benefactors.<sup>16</sup> Writing from Liberia in October 1926 and obviously enthused with what he found, the younger Firestone exulted as he saw no reason why "we cannot make real history."<sup>17</sup> His father maintained that the 1926 loan agreement would provide the opportunity for the founder to fulfill his moral obligation to Liberia.<sup>18</sup>

From the vantage of the 1990s, such professions of entrepreneurial mission may seem archaic, forced, or spurious. Indeed Marxist ideology has long considered idealism and morality as cloaks for exploitation. The Liberia Working Group of Bremen, Germany, prolific publishers of many studies on Liberia, describes Liberia as America's colony managed by Firestone for the benefit of the company and for the settler elite. According to a prominent member of this group, Robert Kappel, the author of *Ökonomie, Klassen und Staat in Liberia* (Frankfurt - Main, 1982), Firestone achieved monopolistic control in Liberia which allowed the corporation to restructure classes and to create a national wage-earning proletariat.<sup>19</sup> Kappel's contention derives from V.I. Lenin's model of exploitation developed in *Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism* in which Lenin argued that political domination was the prerequisite for economic exploitation. In the Kappel analogy, Firestone the capitalist became Firestone the imperialist.

Lenin's devotees are often unaware that Karl Marx, the founder of Marxism-Leninism, had the greatest regard for western imperialism in general, and for its British variant in India in particular. For Marx imperialism was a historical necessity; it destroyed stagnant and isolated village societies thereby moving India progressively forward to socialism. The capitalist became the unwitting agent of that great dialectical process of social transformation which would eventually liberate the proletariat from exploitation.<sup>20</sup>

Lenin departed from Marx's assessment of imperialism as modernization by denying that western capitalists participated in a progressive movement of social change. For Lenin capitalist modernizers became western parasites who drew tribute from Asia and Africa to support their "tame masses of retainers. . ."<sup>21</sup> Capitalists, according to Lenin, needed backward areas for the

investment of their surplus capital. To this end, they followed their flag to subjugated areas. Unfortunately for this theory and its general applicability in tropical Africa, capital rarely followed the flag. In the case of Liberia, there was as no such American flag for Firestone to follow. Moreover, there was little American surplus capital because America's banks were still busy subsidizing their own country's industrialization. Lenin maintained, too, that the chief feature of modern capitalism was the existence of monopolistic conditions under which one group controlled all the sources of raw material.<sup>22</sup> Firestone did not fit this role. He shared his critical resource, rubber, with Liberian planters, albeit an elitist few. First informally, and after 1943 formally, the company distributed treelings to Liberian planters. In 1941 the number of Liberian-owned rubber farms was listed at 150; by 1964 the number had increased to 3,200.<sup>23</sup>

The heart of Lenin's argument is the concept of exploitation. The theorist argued that capitalists would never use their surplus capital to raise the standard of living of the masses because exploitation is integral to the maintenance of their system.<sup>24</sup> Lenin assumed that imperialist exploitation consisted of the employment of African and Asian labor at wages lower than those normal in a free bargaining situation. In fact imperialists (and Firestone too) routinely paid wages higher than those obtaining in the indigenous sector. Private rubber producers in Liberia even asked Firestone to keep wages for unskilled workers low in order that independent Liberian farmers could continue to attract laborers. Originally the company sought to raise wages in order to reduce labor turnover and to spur worker efficiency.<sup>25</sup> It dropped the idea after protests by wealthy Liberian rubber farmers.

There are other reasons why Lenin's theory about imperialism, and Kappel's too, are wide off the mark. These need not all be reviewed here. Suffice it to say that Lenin's concept of "economic man" going to Africa or Asia solely to make money expresses the usual socialist naiveté inherent in the concept of man supposedly sacrificing ideology, patriotism, humanitarianism, and power-lust solely for economic gain. Many went to Africa for reasons other than profit; most were propelled by a multiplicity of motives. In fact, one may view imperialism as the highest stage of nationalism in which patriotic mission rivalled economic gain as the prime motivating force. Although economic motivation probably was an overriding factor for Harvey S. Firestone, Sr., he also proclaimed the invigoration of Liberian society through the introduction of American working techniques to be one of his goals. As a sort of early missionary-capitalist, the rubber magnate supplemented his economic endeavors with his professed desire to modernize and to improve Liberia.<sup>26</sup>



### Problems in the Early Recruitment of Labor, 1924-1930

In the early years the Firestone Plantations Company hired laborers in an *ad hoc* way. At Mount Barclay Firestone simply notified the local population as employment became available. This prospect brought 2,000 applicants who waited outside the plantation for the opportunity to work.<sup>27</sup> The company's Board of Directors noted approvingly that Firestone did not recruit either "direct or through the government." Those who cleared land and planted trees were all payroll laborers who came of their own volition according to the company.<sup>28</sup>

Apparently a number of Liberians who swelled Firestone's labor ranks fled; what Raymond Leslie Buell called, the "unpaid servitude" existent on settler farms. They also escaped the road work required by the government of Liberia.<sup>29</sup> Agricultural laborers naturally preferred to work for wages. Chiefs sought to evade providing road workers by saying that their men were away working on the Firestone plantations.<sup>30</sup> The result was a tug of war between country and corporation over available labor for diverse enterprises such as road work, portage, rice-farming, and plantation work. Firestone, Liberian planters, and Spanish landlords on the island of Fernando Po off the coast of modern Nigeria in the Bay of Biafra all competed for plantation workers. In comparison with its competition, Firestone proved to be a relatively attractive employer. In April 1927 Donald A. Ross pronounced the labor supply to be "satisfactory," noting that: "the great majority of them come to us voluntarily searching for work."<sup>31</sup>

Ross also mentioned a situation which would create a problem for his corporation: about 25 per cent of the work force returned to their villages, particularly during January and February, for the annual planting. Firestone's labor statistics thus record a considerable turnover in employed workers.<sup>32</sup> Through migration workers renewed contacts with their community precluding their becoming a "rootless proletariat" assigned to plantations. Nor did Liberian labor adopt the transient labor pattern of South Africa in which the males abandoned their families for years of work in white areas.

Frederick C. Helm of Columbus, Ohio pioneered Firestone's recruitment policy. He was joined by other American recruiters such as H. H. Burgess and Ross Wilson. These men went directly into the interior to speak with paramount and clan chiefs. There they bargained for the desired laborers in diverse parts of Liberia in order that recruitment would not deplete any area too severely. Often a district commissioner accompanied the party.<sup>33</sup> Once assembled the workers walked in groups, sometimes for days, under their headmen to the Firestone plantation at Du. Although Firestone's recruiters may have spread their efforts over Liberia, those people who furnished most

of the company's labor were Liberians of Kpelle, Loma, Dahn, and Mano ethnicities.

At Cavalla in southern Liberia, Harvey S. Firestone, Sr. had his second largest plantation of 7,000 acres. Here the labor supply was originally so favorable that an acre of forest could be cleared for only \$5.53 through contract work. Plantation manager Donald A. Ross prized the experienced Cavalla laborers who had already been abroad to work in Fernando Po, the Gold Coast, and in Nigeria. This exodus, he felt, would now be stemmed by Firestone's need.<sup>34</sup>

The Liberian government soon had reservations about permitting Firestone to recruit as many workers as the company needed for its plantations. Monrovia feared its own tasks such as road building would go unfulfilled if workers were permitted to leave the interior for work nearer the coast.<sup>35</sup> Beginning in 1926 the government sought to control recruitment through the revival of the old 1912 Labor Bureau which would supervise the hiring of workers and the remuneration of clan and paramount chiefs who furnished men for work. The government assured chiefs that they would be compensated for their procurement efforts and that laborers would be able to opt for a period of service on plantations of from one to three months.<sup>36</sup>

The revived Labor Bureau became operative in the spring of 1926. Under the Secretary of the Interior, it agreed to supply the Firestone Plantations Company with an annual total of 10,000 men, 2,000 from each of Liberia's five counties. By June 1926, according to Raymond Leslie Buell, the Bureau had already provided the plantations with 600 laborers. For this service Firestone agreed to pay chiefs one cent a day per laborer furnished, and a like amount to the Liberian government.<sup>37</sup> The government thereby satisfied its own wishes and gave practical effect to that part of the Firestone agreement wherein it stated: "the government . . . agrees that it will encourage, support and assist the efforts of the Lessee to secure and maintain an adequate labour supply."<sup>38</sup>

Although Firestone had initial recourse to government recruiting, the company soon preferred to find its own workers. The testimony of a former British plantation manager with Firestone gives some indication why:

I arrived in Monrovia in the middle of November, 1925 and early in December proceeded 30 miles up the Du River and commenced felling operations. A start was made with the few available voluntary laborers but as recruiting by the Company's officials was not allowed the labour force soon dwindled until work was practically at a stand still. To meet the situation a Government Labour Bureau was formed with the

concurrence of Firestone and gangs of forced labour under armed guards began to arrive on the Plantations. In many cases these men had been herded from their villages hundreds of miles away and as no food was provided on the march by the Government many arrived in an exhausted and emaciated condition. Out of the first batch of 150 men I saw arrive twelve died within a week of arrival.<sup>39</sup>

The former manager also stated that the government retained at least 50 percent of the workers' wages that Firestone paid to the Labor Bureau. As a result laborers began to associate Firestone with official fraud and coercion. They refused to appear for work. By the onset of the Great Depression the labor shortage became serious. According to Firestone's management in October 1930: "it was apparent that there was not sufficient voluntary labor to go round."<sup>40</sup>

To avoid being linked with a compulsory labor system, Firestone decided near the end of 1930 to once again recruit by itself. Charles S. Johnson cited two other difficulties that prompted the company to strike out on its own: the difficulty of securing permits for recruiters and the trouble with district commissioners. Johnson concluded: "Always the business is made disagreeable and difficult . . ."<sup>41</sup> Harvey S. Firestone, Jr. had outlined the company's position to President King as early as 1926: the company wished to employ any laborers that it deemed necessary without first obtaining the government's permission. "Such labor so employed shall be free to bargain for its terms and conditions of employment with the Company . . ."<sup>42</sup> In view of the debacle which confronted the Liberian government in December 1930 when it was charged with trafficking in slave labor on Fernando Po, Firestone was wise to disengage from the Labor Bureau whose recruiting methods William R. Castle, Jr., the American Undersecretary of State, said "have a tendency to result in conditions analogous to those of forced labor and are likely at some time to draw the well-merited censure of civilized opinion." Castle was convinced that Firestone wanted to treat its laborers well, but that the attempt of district commissioners, chiefs, and the military to derive profit from recruiting nullified the founder's intent.<sup>43</sup>

Firestone's independent effort to secure labor was apparently successful. In the period 1926 to 1930 the company maintained an annual rate of employment of about 18,000 men. Harvey S. Firestone, Jr. noted in his diary that on a visit to Liberia in February 1928 a double line of workers, perhaps 8,000 or 9,000 men, formed on both sides of the road to greet the "Great White Chief."<sup>44</sup> From 1930 on the younger Firestone increasingly assumed the direction of company affairs in Liberia, although acting very much in the interest of his father.

### The Forced Labor Scandal, 1929-1934

The American State Department's accusation in June 1929 that the Liberian government tolerated conditions "hardly distinguishable from organized slave trade" involved the African republic in an international investigation which threatened its independence.<sup>45</sup> In his detailed and insightful *Black Scandal*, Ibrahim K. Sundiata has investigated this charge, and its repercussions in Liberia. Sundiata concluded that the American State Department was well aware of labor abuse before 1929, but that State acted only when such reports threatened to have repercussions for American investment there.<sup>46</sup> Sundiata maintained that the desire "to ward off criticism of American officialdom and American business" rather than humanitarian motives impelled the State Department to admonish the Liberian government. Since President Herbert Hoover's administration had been solicitous of Firestone's welfare, charges of labor misuse, if linked to Firestone, could have involved Washington.<sup>47</sup> The U.S. severed diplomatic relations with Liberia in 1930.

If Sundiata correctly assessed the State Department's aim, he reckoned without Harvey S. Firestone, Sr.'s preoccupation with debt repayment. Indeed, the elder Firestone seemed curiously unconcerned about Washington's June charge. There is also no known archival evidence that Firestone asked the State Department to investigate reports of official labor abuse in Liberia. One would have thought that the rubber magnate would have been concerned about the shipment of forced labor to the Spanish island of Fernando Po, the substance of the State Department's charge, because such a practice might diminish his own labor recruitment. Instead Firestone worried most about official mismanagement within the Liberian government which threatened the repayment of his loan and which opened up the prospect of international intervention in Liberia.<sup>48</sup>

In December 1930 Harvey S. Firestone Sr. lamented to the American Secretary of State, Henry L. Stimson, that "the people who governed Liberia were hopeless; that they are sinking lower and lower and that nothing could be done with them except to control them." Stimson appreciated this viewpoint, but concluded that America could not undertake the governance of Liberians.<sup>49</sup> In September 1932 Firestone complained to President Herbert Hoover during the height of the labor abuse crisis that the settler elite had violated all of the terms of its contract with his company because "neither of us has been firm enough with the Liberian Government in insisting on their carrying out their agreement."<sup>50</sup> Five months later, in a state of near outrage, Harvey S. Firestone, Sr. pressed the State Department to send a warship to Liberia to collect on his debt. State refused saying that it could not send a warship to every country that violated its contractual obligations.<sup>51</sup> It is clear that by 1930 the founder had tempered much of his earlier idealism about modernizing Liberia.

The League of Nations' International Commission of Enquiry in Liberia (hereafter as League Enquiry) provided a revealing report on December 15, 1930 about the relations of company and government in Liberia. It also exonerated the Firestone Plantations Company from either impressing labor or consciously employing labor forcibly recruited.<sup>52</sup> The League Enquiry indicated that the company employed fewer people than Harvey S. Firestone, Sr. had originally speculated. For instance, on June 30, 1930 the payroll at Du and Cavalla listed 9,077 and 1,316 workers respectively.<sup>53</sup>

The League Enquiry confirmed what both workers, company, and missionaries reported about labor abuse in Liberia: that laborers could not choose their work freely because chiefs assigned them places to work; that district commissioners and other Liberian officials routinely appropriated workers' wages paid by Firestone; that workers were forced to work in order to pay the hut tax; that there existed a competition for available labor between the Firestone plantations, the government, the chiefs, and the sources of employment outside Liberia like Fernando Po; that district commissioners expected to receive bribes from Firestone before they sent men to the plantations.<sup>54</sup>

Charles S. Johnson's revelation of the government's use of forced labor on the roads - about 6,000 men worked daily in the interior without pay - explained some of Firestone's attractiveness as an employer. Johnson detailed how chiefs, who received commissions from the government, felt compelled to subject their people to the harshest and most brutal labor required not only by the administration but also by the Liberian military, the Frontier Force.<sup>55</sup> Complaints by laborers about working conditions elicited beatings from district commissioners. Johnson concluded that Monrovia's harsh policy drove workers into neighboring colonial territories thereby depriving Liberia of its productive people.<sup>56</sup>

If Harvey S. Firestone, Sr. in America seemed more concerned with debt repayment than with forced labor on Fernando Po, his representative in Liberia, Walter D. Hines, focused on the worker shortage. In March 1929 Hines worried about Liberia's shipment of laborers from Cape Palmas because it interfered with Firestone's need; he said that the Cavalla plantation could use 1,000 more laborers than it had. According to Hines, the company was reduced to recruiting fifteen and sixteen-year olds.<sup>57</sup> Plantation manager Donald A. Ross reported Cape Palmas as "thoroughly drained of laborers" and that the company had to send workers from Du to Cavalla.<sup>58</sup> As a result of this labor shortage, Firestone officials carefully observed how many laborers exited Cape Palmas for Fernando Po and which Liberian officials profited from this shipment abroad.

At the behest of Harvey S. Firestone, Sr., the anthropologist, George Schwab, made a survey about conditions in Liberia. In 1928 Schwab and his

wife spent seven months traveling in the five counties from which Firestone drew the labor for its plantations. Ostensibly reporting on behalf of the Department of Anthropology and the Peabody Museum of Harvard University, Schwab also had an assignment from the elder Firestone: to determine how local opinion assessed his company's activities in 1928. Schwab's observations, which were ably edited and amplified by George Harley, accorded in many instances with those of the League Enquiry, resident missionaries, and Firestone's own labor recruiters. All agreed that the condition of labor was unsatisfactory.

Schwab reported that district commissioners depleted the countryside not only of labor but also of all movable wealth that they could appropriate; scarcity of labor resulted in women, some of whom were pregnant, doing men's work such as portage; Liberians like the Dahn and Mano deserted interior towns to escape the heavy hand of hinterland rule; workers returning from Firestone plantations had to avoid the roads in order to prevent being robbed by both district commissioners and members of the Frontier Force.

Schwab considered Firestone's presence a decided asset for the countryside. He referred to Liberian plantation workers who told him that Firestone aided Liberians by permitting them to earn the money they needed to pay fines. Other workers, according to Schwab, asked how long it would be before Firestone freed the country from oppressive rule. If Firestone did not act, some workers maintained that they would continue to be slaves of the settler. Schwab concluded that Harvey S. Firestone, Sr. should pressure the Liberian government into reforming the hinterland administration.

After four years, the League Enquiry ground to a halt in December 1934. The Liberian government opposed the League plan of assistance which would have placed Liberia's fiscal and legal affairs and the governance of the interior under international supervision. The League also sought the removal of the five district commissioners in the interior as "dishonest and corrupt."<sup>59</sup> Monrovia rejected this international attempt to ensure Liberian solvency as a violation of its sovereignty. The League also investigated Firestone's relation to the host country. League officials remarked upon the burden placed upon Liberia by the repayment terms of the 1926 loan. They questioned the presence of a powerful corporation in a weak state.<sup>60</sup>

Since the League could only recommend its solution, Liberia, as a sovereign state, countered with its own plan of reform. The new Liberian president, Edwin Barclay, proposed some modest internal improvements paid for by customs revenues and hut tax proceeds. He and Firestone also agreed to mend their relations. Barclay signed supplementary loan and planting agreements with Firestone which scaled Liberia's interest payments on the 1926 loan to current revenues and which lowered the interest rate on 1927 bonds from 7

to 5 percent. Such actions and the desire of Franklin D. Roosevelt's new Democratic administration for reconciliation paved the way for Washington's resumption of diplomatic relations in May 1935.<sup>61</sup>

As a result of the League investigation, Liberian profiteers in the transport of labor to Fernando Po lost their lucrative enterprise. Liberia's economy continued in a precarious state while the administration of the interior remained unreformed. Using the argument of Liberian national sovereignty as a shield, President Barclay successfully deflected any effort to ameliorate the condition of his hinterland subjects. Barclay also bested Firestone in that he avoided the rubber magnate's attempt to have an American adviser appointed with sweeping fiscal powers over the Liberian economy. Firestone could not achieve its wishes without State Department intervention which was not forthcoming.

The League Enquiry may have inhibited labor export, but it did little to mitigate exploitation. Firestone's resort to individual recruitment also did not materially improve the condition of Liberian workers. Company recruitment diverted control of labor registration from the Liberian Labor Bureau to district commissioners in the interior who continued to charge a fee of one-half cent per man per day for their services.<sup>62</sup> Thus supervision of recruitment devolved upon the very individuals who exploited the peoples of the interior. Apparently the Labor Bureau's only subsequent task was to approve the quotas of laborers Firestone requested from different districts. In a tripartite arrangement which remunerated paramount and clan chiefs for furnishing workers, Firestone's recruiters ended up working with district commissioners and local authorities in the procurement of labor. This cooperative arrangement persisted well into the 1960s.<sup>63</sup>

#### Firestone's Relation with the Liberian Elite

After the League Enquiry the mutuality of interests between elite and Firestone continued unabated. Through very effective delaying tactics President Barclay and the elite had avoided most international supervision over their affairs. Firestone ignored George Schwab's advice that the company coerce the government into adopting a humane hinterland policy. Nor did the company respond to complaints from other observers like Arthur Hayman and Harold Preece who castigated the government for its hinterland policy. Hayman and Preece termed the district commissioners private agents of the slave ring who subsequently "became the official 'labor agents' of the government . . ."<sup>64</sup> Abuses in the interior continued to be reported through the 1930s. In 1939 Lester A. Walton, U.S. Minister in Monrovia, detailed numerous cases of maladministration which involved forced labor without pay for private Liberian concerns. District commissioners broke paramount chiefs who did not accede to their commands. Walton concluded: "It is my sincere belief that

the most serious and vital problem confronting the Liberian people today is that of native administration."<sup>65</sup>

What Schwab, Hayman and Preece neglected to consider was that the elite and Firestone had common needs. Both were dependent upon the laborers furnished by traditional society for the success of their endeavors: the elite needed free labor to maintain roads and to minimize the cost of hinterland administration; Firestone exploited the same source for its plantation labor. Cooperation between company and government became the most effective way to accomplish all tasks. With their power and influence in economic and political spheres, the elite were well positioned to mediate between company and country. Acting as intermediary, the elite, like its colonial counterparts in neighboring European colonies, basically fulfilled two functions: it dealt with the agents of industrial society; it mediated or "squared" this relationship with the traditional sector. Of course the elite had its own agenda which did not always "square" with that of Firestone, particularly when company and country competed for available labor. Such discord proved to be temporary. As internal colonists, the elite needed the productive efforts of traditional society to sustain them in their essentially non-productive capacities at this juncture. Their exploitation of the hinterland persisted through what J. Gus Liebenow has termed "coercive sanctions" designed to secure maximum compliance with their wishes.<sup>66</sup>

Ronald Robinson, the English historian of empire, described the collaborative relationship that developed in European overseas colonies when indigenous elite and foreign entrepreneur and conqueror "converted external economic power into internal political cooperation."<sup>67</sup> Although Liberia remained, technically-speaking, a free state, Firestone and the elite reproduced the mutually dependent relationship existing among their counterparts in the neighboring colonies. Firestone's presence as economic heavyweight could thus be sustained by influence rather than by duress. The scope of maneuver of either party in this close relationship was constricted. Generally only limited action was taken by either side without an estimate of its possible effect upon the other.<sup>68</sup> The forced labor crisis of 1929 to 1934 which momentarily pitted some elite profiteers against Firestone was essentially an aberration which was not repeated in the later 1930s.

In separate works, Robert Kappel (*Ökonomie, Klassen und Staat in Liberia*) and F.P.M. van der Kraaij in his *The Open Door Policy of Liberia* (Bremen, 1983) have expanded the Robinson and Gallagher thesis by applying it to Liberia. Kappel termed Liberia a servile state led by an elite which provided Firestone with the requisite laborers, taxed the vulnerable, and prevented the creation of unions for worker defense.<sup>69</sup> Van der Kraaij depicted the elite's dependence upon foreign corporations, such as Firestone, as the price settlers were willing to pay for the survival of their privileges. Since direct income from the



concessions sector provided nearly one-third of the domestic revenues, the author concluded that the fortunes of the elite were indissolubly wedded to Firestone.<sup>70</sup>

An initial area of company-country political cooperation was in tax collection. As Liberians became more dependent upon wage labor, the government recognized the fiscal advantage to be derived from a cash-earning population. Indeed, according to Kappel, the decisive reason why Monrovia recruited workers for Firestone was the government's desire to appropriate the tax revenues generated by labor.<sup>71</sup> Monrovia appointed the Firestone Plantations Company to be its agent for the collection of the hut tax from laborers employed on plantations. The company proceeded to its new administrative task with vigor. Managers determined the hut assessment for Liberians even before a sufficient number of dwellings had been completed for workers on the Firestone lease. Monrovia asked Firestone to continue in its capacity as tax assessor and collector on a permanent basis.<sup>72</sup> In this function the Firestone Plantations Company became an auxiliary to government and performed, albeit in a lesser manner, some of the same functions as a European charter company.

### The Development of Labor Policy, 1934-39

Firestone's interest in government provided the opportunity to supervise not only the economic productivity of its labor force but also its living habits. R. C. Porter, manager for the Firestone Plantations Company, told town chiefs that no Firestone laborers, other than clerks and overseers, should reside in their towns. Laborers would live on plantations in houses of adobe block with concrete tile roofs. Spatial segregation would prevent the use of Firestone labor for government service projects.<sup>73</sup> Porter also cautioned that chiefs would be held directly responsible for gambling, liquor traffic, or similar undesirable activity in their towns.<sup>74</sup> This mandate accorded with company practice of "driving all gamblers and loafers out of the country towns in our area . . ."<sup>75</sup> Porter concluded, to his dismay, that undesirables expelled from villages sometimes ended up in company labor groups. He urged overseers to expel them.<sup>76</sup> Porter's obsession with isolating his workers from perceived undesirable influences extended to the company concessionaire, the United States' Trading Company, whose manager he once upbraided for dispensing beer on the Du plantation.<sup>77</sup>

Porter's preoccupation with worker supervision might be viewed as a form of 1930s' company altruism. More probably his interest reflected Firestone's need for competent and diligent laborers. The proceeds from the hut tax, which annually fluctuated from \$92,000 to \$124,000 between 1927 and 1932, were assigned to the debt service.<sup>78</sup> Since Firestone was Liberia's chief creditor, company officials could argue that their supervision of worker

performance aided in the retirement of the official debt, and in the ultimate enhancement of their own prosperity.<sup>79</sup> When the Liberian legislature considered a bill in early 1936 to reduce the hut tax and to compensate for lost revenue by substituting a fee for membership in agricultural societies, F. C. Fisher, attorney for the Finance Corporation of America, Firestone's lending agency, objected. President Barclay intervened to persuade the legislature to withdraw the bill which was then in Barclay's words "definitely abandoned."<sup>80</sup>

Company and country also cooperated in the area of justice administration. President Barclay authorized the establishment on Firestone plantations of special judicial districts within which Liberian justices of the peace operated. Firestone did its part by providing the buildings on plantation land for the justice of the peace and his staff to have offices and a detention center for detainees.<sup>81</sup>

The pattern of recruitment developed by Firestone reached its classic form in the 1930s and persisted to the 1960s. Firestone went directly to the source, the villages for manpower. Here company labor recruiters like Frederick Helm and later H.H. Burgess dealt directly with clan and paramount chiefs. Chiefs obviously did not relish the loss of local laborers who were particularly useful for meeting government requirements and for the fulfillment of their own community services. Helm and Burgess therefore compensated chiefs through a gift in either coin or kind. The company, employing Liberian English, called the gift "dash."<sup>82</sup> If tendered in coin, "dash" amounted to 1 cent per man per day paid to chiefs by the company. Firestone advanced a similar sum to the Liberian Labor Bureau.<sup>83</sup>

After the Second World War this Helm-Burgess system became institutionalized in the "Paramount Chiefs Assistance Plan" with the full backing of the Liberian government. Under this arrangement Firestone paid each paramount chief "15 cents per man per month during the rice-growing season from January through June, and 10 cents per man per month from July through December, or a total of \$1.50 per man per year."<sup>84</sup> Firestone thereby achieved another bargain; the company paid a small price for the participation of chiefs and government in its system. Firestone's recruiters kept records of their transactions which noted the chief's name as well as his district, section, tribe, and the number of workers he sent to Firestone. Recordkeeping provided the means to keep recruiters informed of the ethnic composition of their labor force and to furnish a future tax list for the government. Liberians of Kpelle, Loma, Dahn, Mano, and Bassa ethnicities remained most numerous among Firestone's laborers from the 1930s until the present day.<sup>85</sup>

Unquestionably Firestone's recruitment plan, designed primarily to compensate chiefs for lost labor, opened the door to coercion. Chiefs had the

opportunity to divest themselves of village enemies or undesirables through transport to labor. The presence of government lent official sanction to what would normally have been a commercial transaction. Workers who quit the plantation to return home early probably incurred the chief's displeasure. Chiefs tended to succumb to both official pressure and to Firestone's monetary inducements to supply labor.<sup>86</sup> Firestone's managers expressed concern over this coercive element in recruitment. They feared the plan would bring dissatisfied workers to the plantation who would then denigrate the company upon return to their villages. If compulsion directed recruitment, perhaps no more workers would come. Thus R. C. Porter, the Firestone labor manager: "On the other hand to try to work men that do not care to come to Firestone or that do not care for money is a dangerous thing as these men will not do good work here and so will not receive good pay."<sup>87</sup> Harvey S. Firestone, Jr.'s reaction to this problem is not known. Apparently the younger Firestone was quite content to leave daily management to men like R.C. Porter while he concentrated upon the Firestone Plantation Company's overall fiscal status.

The company encountered labor problems in the 1930s that had not surfaced in the previous decade. Since so many employers drew on the available labor pool, there were often not enough workers to meet the requirements of company and country. Firestone also proved to be a less attractive employer as reports of insensitive treatment of workers by overseers surfaced. Manager Porter had to demand from his overseers "more skill and diplomacy in handling their men . . . ." The company informed laborers that they could "draw rice regularly against their wages, and that they can return home or seek other work whenever they care to do so."<sup>88</sup> It also became clear to Porter that health conditions among the workers needed to be improved. Recounting an earlier four-month period in 1928-29, Porter complained that no medical officer visited the plantation on the Du and Farmington rivers. The result was that dysentery existed and smallpox was close to becoming an epidemic. Porter concluded that the company needed more doctors since "life is as precious here as it is elsewhere . . . ."<sup>89</sup>

Firestone's housing policy was initially unpopular among workers. They complained about dwellings placed in a standardized, military-like pattern. Workers preferred irregularly-sited dwellings which reproduced their villages rather than the tidy grid-like patterns which had originally been introduced by Harvey S. Firestone, Sr. Workers also wanted to live in cylindrical huts with cone thatched roofs and not in the square structures favored by their employer. An important consideration for those who lived on Firestone's plantation was the opportunity to do their own farming adjacent to their dwellings.<sup>90</sup> The company addressed these wants. By 1939 worker huts on the plantations reproduced more closely those in villages.

Firestone's low wage scale burdened the company in its attempt to attract sufficient labor. The Firestone Plantations Company paid workers 14 to 18 cents per day in 1936. According to the company, workers received pay commensurate with their ability and diligence, their regularity in reporting for work, and their length of time on the job.<sup>91</sup> Even a very diligent worker, however, could expect no more than 18 cents per day. Liberian laborers also complained that they had no choice but to buy at the company store, the United States Trading Company. At the month's end, after Firestone deducted food purchases (mostly rice), workers said that sometimes they were left with only a couple of shillings (one shilling equalled about 44 cents).<sup>92</sup> Further, no opportunity existed for workers to purchase from competitors because Firestone had effectively eliminated other rice merchants from the company lease. The erratic nature of employment also exercised workers who were often employed on a short-term basis only. As a result of the depression, Firestone refused to make contracts of long duration with its work force.

In February 1936 President Barclay became so concerned with worker complaints that he asked his Secretary of the Interior to investigate. Barclay summarized the situation as follows:

The information which we have received shows clearly that there is a feeling of resentment on the part of a considerable proportion of the laborers employed on your plantations. I wonder if you can be sure that your payrolls are not padded. It is evident that the laborers think they are and they do not in fact receive all the money which the Company disburses for the payment of wages. I remember one case in which a man said that he came to the plantation bringing with him from his village his own rice, sufficient to carry him through the month. He said he bought no rice at all from the company store during the whole month that he worked, but at the end of the month he found himself charged with rice issues which he had not received and which was [sic] deducted from his wages."<sup>93</sup>

Firestone's Fisher replied rather unconvincingly that the company had not sought to establish a selling monopoly. Rather, according to Fisher, it wanted only to have individual traders licensed and then consigned to certain spots on plantations.<sup>94</sup> To the more general charge that Firestone's labor practice disadvantaged its workers, Fisher did not respond.

Throughout 1936 the Liberian government renewed its concern for higher wages for workers. President Barclay proposed the establishment of a guaranteed wage scale for employed Liberians. According to F.C. Fisher, Barclay "felt that it was his duty to protect Liberian labor from exploitation, particu-

larly as under existing conditions the FPC, which is predominantly the most important employer in the Republic, can practically dictate its own scale of wages."<sup>95</sup> Harvey S. Firestone, Jr. heartily opposed the wage scale, maintaining instead that market forces alone should dictate wages. Firestone noted that his father's company had been spending "vast sums of money" in Liberia over long periods of time without much recompense to itself. When Firestone's initial development period ended (and Harvey S. Firestone, Jr. gave no date here), the company could be more flexible on wages.<sup>96</sup>

President Barclay ultimately bowed to the company viewpoint. He abandoned the project for administrative or legislative wage regulation as long as Firestone promised not to lower wages below the subsistence level. Barclay did make an eventual vague claim to exercise some control in the field of wages; the time may come, the President said, "when such legislation might be necessary to ensure to laborers employed by the Company a wage which would represent something more than a bare subsistence."<sup>97</sup> The President also abandoned his idea that Firestone keep a register of laborers for the perusal of the Department of Interior. Firestone opposed the register as an "objectionable burden" on the grounds that it would add to administrative costs. Barclay also failed to convince Harvey S. Firestone, Jr. that his father's company should offer workers some degree of permanence in the workplace. The President wanted Firestone to make formal written contracts to keep workers at least thirty days. Firestone refused, labelling Barclay's proposal inconsistent with "sound business policy" and with precedent in the United States where workers had no assurance of permanence in the work place.<sup>98</sup>

In early 1936 Firestone became concerned about Liberia's enactment of a duty upon imported rice, the so-called Rice Embargo Act. The company feared that the cultivation of upland or dry rice would denude the land of forests and thus lead to soil impoverishment. To prove his point, Harvey S. Firestone, Jr. showed President Barclay aerial photos which revealed the deleterious effect upland rice cultivation had on soil retention.<sup>99</sup> In addition, the exclusion of cheap imported rice would make it more difficult for Firestone's laborers to feed themselves. The prospect of worker unrest because of higher food prices obviously worried Harvey S. Firestone, Jr. Just as Firestone was ready to argue that the Rice Embargo Act was contrary to the spirit of the 1926 Planting Agreement, President Barclay agreed in February 1936 to suspend its operation. Company and country also explored the possibility of growing more wet rice in lowland areas.<sup>100</sup>

Problems surrounding labor surfaced again in 1937. The result was the third revision of the Planting Agreement of 1926 (1935, 1936, 1937). At a revealing meeting in the Executive Mansion on November 8, 1937, President Barclay and Harvey S. Firestone, Jr. debated the need for additional changes in the 1926 Planting Agreement. The president returned to his perennial wish

to enact laws governing minimum wages and hours for labor and to write these into the original agreement. Firestone countered that not government regulation but universal market rates should determine wages. Firestone's persistence won. The amended Planting Agreement of November 10, 1937 stated that Firestone's wage and hour scale and benefit structure would parallel those in existence in other West African ( that is to say, colonial) states.<sup>101</sup>

According to Harvey S. Firestone, Jr., the implementation of this principle of parallel wage structures was necessary to protect his company from the eventuality that a future hostile Liberian legislature might impose a wage scale higher than those normally resulting from "the operation of economic forces."<sup>102</sup> In effect Firestone obtained a guarantee that the company need never pay workers more than the neighboring colonial powers did. Since the managed economies of colonies paid generally low wages, Harvey S. Firestone, Jr. rested in the comfortable assurance that his company would benefit from savings in the wage sector. President Barclay recognized immediately the advantage accruing to Firestone when he stated that his colonial neighbors "might be administered more with a view to the advantage of employers than the welfare of the people of the country."<sup>103</sup> Firestone insisted that he had to minimize his costs of production vis-a-vis his colonial neighbors for competitive reasons. Programs of social betterment for workers would therefore be subordinated to profit-making.<sup>104</sup>

The November discussions in the Executive Mansion revealed the differing perceptions of labor entertained by government and company. On the one hand President Barclay felt compelled to state the case for fair wages and security at the work place. On the other hand Harvey S. Firestone, Jr. emphasized that social improvements for workers ranked far below company profits and Firestone's assessment of labor as a market commodity. Although quite dissimilar, these views produced no long-lasting discord between company and country as President Barclay surrendered to Firestone's wishes. Obviously the Firestone Plantations Company was an important contributor to elite welfare. Company desires had to be seriously entertained if the elite wanted to continue to receive foreign support to bolster their position of influence. And President Barclay was the leader of the elite. When Firestone's employment rolls declined, so did state revenues.

One might have expected the free government of Liberia to have played its role as guardian of labor in a more vigorous capacity. It chose to acquiesce in most instances to Firestone and thus to become a participant in labor's exploitation. This mutuality of interest between indigenous elite and foreign entrepreneur, originally portrayed by Ronald Robinson and later amplified by Robert Kappel and F.P.M. van der Kraaij, found confirmation in cooperative and mutually profitable ventures in Liberia.

### Firestone as an African Employer

What then of Firestone's labor policy? The elder Firestone's plan to transform Liberia through American capital did not materialize. As a result of the forced labor crisis in Liberia, Harvey S. Firestone, Sr. experienced disillusionment with his enterprise. Neither he nor his son spent enough time in Liberia to effect the kind of change that they might have wanted. Both Firestones viewed their main task to be efficient and profitable company operation rather than progressive reform. The founder's directives were haltingly implemented by company officials preoccupied more with production quotas than with the creation of the American working day in Liberia. Firestone did create the nucleus of a wage-earning population divorced from subsistence agriculture but dependent upon subsistence wages. Numerically small, it in no sense constituted a national proletariat. After the company introduced the regular payroll in Liberia, workers had the opportunity to dispel the myth that monetary incentives did not exist in traditional society.<sup>105</sup>

Since Liberia was not a colony, no imperial government existed either to supervise or to implement what J. Gus Liebenow termed the "colonial bargaining strategy." In this arrangement, a colonial administrator acted as arbiter among competing groups, usually to allocate scarce resources, but also to protect the weak.<sup>106</sup> Imperial rulers, responsive to public humanitarian pressure from home, often adjusted colonial policy to please domestic pressure groups. A similar arrangement in Liberia might have prevented company and country from crassly exploiting labor.

In spite of Harvey S. Firestone, Sr.'s penny-pinching and within the context of pre-Second World War Africa, Firestone was neither a brutal employer nor one that utilized forced labor. Certainly the company should have paid its workers much more. Firestone conveniently argued, however, that it kept wages low because the elite complained that higher agricultural wages would drive them out of business.<sup>107</sup> As D.K. Fieldhouse has pointed out for colonial Africa, low wages generally "reflected the social environment of a subsistence economy" rather than a conscious effort to disadvantage workers.<sup>108</sup> Firestone certainly paid Europeans much more than Liberians for the different work that they performed. But the company could rationalize that it paid its Liberian workers in hard cash and much more than their counterparts received in the traditional sector.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>D. A. Ross and C. A. Myers to Harvey S. Firestone, Sr., April 8, 1927 and D. A. Ross to Harvey S. Firestone, Sr., April 25, 1927, in Overman Files, Firestone Archive in possession of Professor Svend Holsoe, Department of Anthropology, University of Delaware. Hereafter as F.A. (Holsoe). I am indebted to Professor Holsoe for the opportunity to utilize his personal archive, particularly since the Firestone Archive at the Bierce Library, University of Akron, is, as of this writing, still not open to researchers.

<sup>2</sup>Donald Ross to Board of Directors, April 28, 1927, F.A. (Holsoe).

<sup>3</sup>Raymond Leslie Buell, *The Native Problem in Africa* (London: Frank Cass & Co., LTD, 1965 reprint), II, 833. Ibrahim K. Sundiata correctly notes that Buell, "although somewhat sympathetic to Liberia, was, most importantly, highly censorious of Firestone." In Buell's eyes Firestone practiced "callous economic imperialism in Africa." Ibrahim K. Sundiata, *Black Scandal: America and the Liberian Labor Crisis, 1929-1936*. (Philadelphia: ISHI, 1980), p. 43. The American State Department, in turn, rejected Buell's criticism of Firestone's Liberian project. Assistant Secretary of State, William R. Castle, felt that Buell had "a curiously twisted mentality" and that his book, *The Native Problem in Africa*, was little more than a "propaganda document." William R. Castle to Charles E. Macy, American Consul, Port Elizabeth, South Africa, July 19, 1928 and William R. Castle to George Grafton Wilson, July 19, 1928; both letters in Personal and Confidential Box No. 10, Countries Correspondence File, Herber Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch, Iowa. Hereafter as HHPL.

<sup>4</sup>Charles Morrow Wilson, *Liberia* (New York: William Sloane Associates, Inc., 1947), pp. 111-112. Hereafter as Wilson, *Liberia*.

<sup>5</sup>Charles Morrow Wilson, *Liberia: Black Africa in Microcosm* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1971), p. 135.

<sup>6</sup>Harvey S. Firestone, *Men and Rubber. The Story of Business* (New York, Doubleday Page & Co., 1926), p. 268.

<sup>7</sup>D.A. Ross and C.A. Myers to Harvey S. Firestone, Sr., April 8, 1927, F.A. (Holsoe).

<sup>8</sup>According to Charles S. Johnson, the American representative on the League of Nations Committee of Enquiry into Forced Labor Practices in Liberia, company efforts after two years and the expenditure of some \$335,000 produced "fifteen miles of dirt road, a small launch, and two automobiles . . .". Charles S. Johnson, *Bitter Canaan. The Story of the Negro Republic*. With an introductory essay by John Stanfield (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1987), p. 103.



<sup>9</sup>J. Pal Chaudhuri, "British Reaction to the Firestone Investment in Liberia," *Liberian Studies Journal*, 1972-74, Vol. V, No. 1 (Department of Anthropology, University of Delaware, 1975), p. 43.

<sup>10</sup>James L. Sibley, General Letter No. 2, May 26, 1926, F.A. (Holsoe).

<sup>11</sup>Memorandum of President King recorded by Charles S. Johnson, Enc. 1, 449 of Nov. 26-29, 1929, Folder 5, Box 89, Charles S. Johnson Papers, Fisk University Archive, Nashville, Tn. Hereafter as Johnson Papers.

<sup>12</sup>Anthony J. Nimley, *The Liberian Bureaucracy: An Analysis and Evaluation of the Environment, Structure, and Functions* (Washington, D.C., University Press of America, 1977), p. 200.

<sup>13</sup>Memorandum of President King, Nov. 26-29, 1929, Johnson Papers.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup>Quoted in Wilson, *Liberia*, p. 132.

<sup>16</sup>Harvey S. Firestone, Jr., *The Romance and Drama of the Rubber Industry* (Akron: The Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, 1932), p. 111, p. 116.

<sup>17</sup>Harvey S. Firestone, Jr. to Harvey S. Firestone, Sr., October 20, 1926. Enclosure in Monrovia Cable, No. 39, National Archives, Washington, D.C., 882.6176, F51/142. Hereafter as National Archives.

<sup>18</sup>Harvey S. Firestone, Sr. to President Herbert Hoover, September 26, 1932, Box 991, Presidential Foreign Affairs, Countries, Liberia, HHPL.

<sup>19</sup>Robert Kappel, *Ökonomie, Klassen und Staat in Liberia* (Frankfurt am Main : Haug und Herchen, 1982), pp. 213, 232, 243-44, 278, 279.

<sup>20</sup>Lewis H. Gann and Peter Duignan, *Burden of Empire: An Appraisal of Western Colonialism in Africa South of the Sahara* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1967), p. 17.

<sup>21</sup>Vladimir I. Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism: A Popular Outline* (New York: International Publishers, 1939), p. 103.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 82.

<sup>23</sup>Wayne Chatfield Taylor, "The Firestone Operations in Liberia," *United States Business Performance Abroad, Fifth Case Study* (Washington, D.C. : National Planning Association, 1956), p. 94. Also see Table 28, Martin Lowenkopf Files, Archive of the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, Stanford, California, p. 99.

<sup>24</sup>Lenin, *Imperialism*, p. 63.

<sup>25</sup>Draft for Chapter V, "Rubber Concessions," in Folder 10, *An Economic Survey of Liberia: Records*, Northwestern University Archives, Africana Manuscripts, Box 3, 19, p. 178. This preliminary writing furnished material for Robert W. Clower, George Dalton, Mitchell Harwitz, and A.A. Walters in their *Growth without Development: An Economic Survey of Liberia* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1966).

<sup>26</sup>According to General Blanton Winship, a judge advocate of the United States Army, : "Mr. Firestone shared the widespread American interest in the progress of Liberia, and that, entirely aside from his business concerns, he wished to see the country develop along sound economic and social lines." Quoted in James C. Young, *Liberia Rediscovered* (New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co., Inc., 1934), p. 101. Although Harvey S. Firestone, Sr. was propelled by business profit, he felt that his gain did not preclude Liberian betterment. As Firestone sold its rubber products and Liberians made money by working, both sides were to share in the benefits of Liberian transformation.

<sup>27</sup>N. Nelson to Henry Carter (U.S. Department of State), November 15, 1929, U.S. Department of State, *Records relating to the Internal Affairs of Liberia, 1910-1929*. Hereafter as *Records* . . . , 1910-1929.

<sup>28</sup>Board of Directors Meeting, Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, April 27, 1927. F.A. (Holsoe).

<sup>29</sup>Buell, *Native Problem*, II, 835.

<sup>30</sup>Sidney de la Rue to William R. Castle, June 26, 1926, United States Department of State, *Records*, . . . . 828.6176 F51/176, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

<sup>31</sup>Donald A. Ross to Harvey S. Firestone, Sr., April 28, 1927;; excerpts from Board of Directors Meeting, F.A. (Holsoe).

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup>Wilson, *Liberia*, p. 114.

<sup>34</sup>D.A. Ross to Harvey S. Firestone, Sr., April 28, 1927;; excerpts from Board of Directors Meeting. F.A. (Holsoe).

<sup>35</sup>Sidney de la Rue to William R. Castle, Jr., December 10, 1925, 882.6176 F51/136, National Archives.

<sup>36</sup>John L. Morris, Secretary of the Interior, to Daniel Walker, Paramount Chief, Karkator Sect., Dist. No. 2, Naarma, December 4, 1925, 882.6176, F51/140, National Archives.

<sup>37</sup>Buell, *Native Problem* . . . , II, 834.

<sup>38</sup>Article 2, The Firestone Agreement, October 2, 1926 in Buell, *Native Problem* . . . , Appendix, II, 883. The arrangement that Monrovia made with Firestone was not as restrictive as depicted by Buell. Secretary of the Interior Edwin Barclay told Firestone that the company had considerable freedom to recruit the workers it needed. Government presence during recruitment simply assured that Monrovia would be remunerated for its effort and that the chiefs would deliver the men needed. Edwin Barclay to Ross, April 22, 1926, Enc. 1 in Reed Paige Clark to Secretary of State, Washington, D.C., May 18, 1926, No. 373 Dipl., Dept. of State, *Records* . . . , 1910-1929.

<sup>39</sup>Firestone Manager to Rt. Hon. Arthur Henderson, M.P., December 13, 1929. Enclosure in Charles S. Johnson to U.S. Assistant Secretary of State, October 1, 1930, Johnson Papers.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup>The Firestone Plantations Company, Enclosure in Charles S. Johnson to U.S. Assistant Secretary of State, October 1, 1930, Johnson Papers.

<sup>42</sup>Harvey S. Firestone, Jr. to C.T.O. King, December 2, 1926, in R. Earle Anderson, *Liberia : America's African Friend* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1952), p. 136.

<sup>43</sup>William R. Castle, Jr. to William T. Francis, American Minister, Monrovia, June 21, 1928, U.S. Dept. of State, *Records* . . . , 1910-1929, 882.5048/1.

<sup>44</sup>Harvey S. Firestone, Jr., Diary Entry, February 2, 1928, Micro. 613, Roll 27, National Archives.

<sup>45</sup>Quoted in Wolfe Schmokel, "The United States and the Crisis of Liberian Independence," *Boston University Papers on Africa*, Vol. II (Boston: Boston University Press, 1966), pp. 306-307.

<sup>46</sup>*Sundiata*, p. 36, p. 47.

<sup>47</sup>*Sundiata*, p. 47.

<sup>48</sup>Robert Kappel maintains that the U.S. government pressed for a League investigation in order to divert attention from what, he asserts, were Firestone's own forced labor practices. Kappel, *Ökonomie, Klassen und Wirtschaft in Liberia* p. 233.

<sup>49</sup>Henry L. Stimson Diaries, December 10, 1930, Vol. 10, p. 212. HHPL.

<sup>50</sup>Harvey S. Firestone, Sr. to Herbert Hoover, September 26, 1932 in Presidential Foreign Affairs, Countries, Liberia, HHPL.

<sup>51</sup>J. Pierrepont Moffat, Diplomatic Papers, Entry of February 7, 1933, MS AM 1407, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

<sup>52</sup>League of Nations, *International Commission of Enquiry in Liberia*, Dec. 15, 1930. c.658.M.272 1930. VI, p. 83. Hereafter as League Enquiry.

<sup>53</sup>Worker turnover was frequent at Firestone. It is therefore difficult to calculate exactly the annual average number of workers employed by the company. If workers remained at Du and Cavalla from one to three months, quite possibly Firestone employed about 18,000 to 20,000 workers per year at both plantations.

<sup>54</sup>League Enquiry, p. 53, p. 55, pp. 81-83.

<sup>55</sup>Johnson, *Bitter Canaan*. pp. 193-194.

<sup>56</sup>*Ibid*, p. 197.

<sup>57</sup>Johnson summarized the March 22, 1929 Confidential Memo of William T. Francis, American Minister to Liberia in Box 89, Folder 4, p. 75, Johnson Papers, Fisk University.

<sup>58</sup>Firestone Plantations Co. to Donald A. Ross, April 5, 1929, Box 89, Folder 4 in Johnson Papers, Fisk University.

<sup>59</sup>League Enquiry, p. 87.

<sup>60</sup>Sundiata, p. 64.

<sup>61</sup>Sundiata, pp. 78-79.

<sup>62</sup>League Enquiry, p. 79.

<sup>63</sup>Russell U. McLaughlin, *Foreign Investment and Development in Liberia* (Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, New York, 1966), pp. 93-94. Wilson, *Liberia*, p. 134.

<sup>64</sup>Arthur I. Hayman and Harold Preece, *Lighting up Liberia* (New York: Creative Age Press, Inc., 1943), p. 80.

<sup>65</sup>Lester A. Walton to U.S. Secretary of State, No. 310, July 20, 1939, Dept. of State, Record Group No. 59, 882.00/1097, National Archives.

<sup>66</sup>J. Gus Liebenow, *Liberia: The Evolution of Privilege*, (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1969), p. 53. I realize that the role of the Liberian elite is a subject of debate among scholars if not among the elite themselves. Carl Patrick Burrowes in his "The Americo-Liberian Ruling Class and other Myths: A Critique of Political Science in the Liberian Context," Occasional Paper No. 3: Spring 1989, Temple University maintains that the classic descriptions of the elite as a domineering and exploitative group rest upon a number of ideational misconceptions which Burrowes then takes considerable time and effort to attempt to rectify. Liebenow's description of the elite remains intact because it is bolstered by empirical evidence from a variety of

sources such as the League of Nations, western observers in the field, spokespeople from traditional society, missionaries, and even from the elite themselves.

<sup>67</sup>Ronald Robinson, "Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism: Sketch for a theory of Collaboration," in Wm. Roger Louis, ed., *Imperialism: The Robinson and Gallagher Controversy* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1976), p. 136.

<sup>68</sup>F.P.M. van der Kraaij maintained that the elite placed Liberia in a type of political-economic thralldom to foreign investors, like Firestone, a servitude, he said, which continues to the present day. F.P.M. van der Kraaij, *The Open Door Policy of Liberia* (Bremen, Germany: Selbstverlag des Museums, 1983), Band 17/1, xvii.

<sup>69</sup>Kappel p. 278.

<sup>70</sup>Van der Kraaij, I, 450.

<sup>71</sup>Kappel p. 244.

<sup>72</sup>W. D. Hines to Liberian Secretary of the Treasury Dennis, June 18, 1927, F.A. (Holsoe).

<sup>73</sup>R. C. Porter to Senior Overseers and Clerks, February 24, 1930, F.A. (Holsoe).

<sup>74</sup>R. C. Porter to Senior Overseers and Clerks, November 19, 1929, F.A. (Holsoe).

<sup>75</sup>R. C. Porter to Senior Overseers and Clerks, November 21, 1929, F.A. (Holsoe).

<sup>76</sup>Ibid.

<sup>77</sup>R. C. Porter to Peterson, USTC, January 28, 1930, F.A. (Holsoe).

<sup>78</sup>Republic of Liberia, Hut Tax Collection, 1927-1932, F.A. (Holsoe).

<sup>79</sup>F. C. Fisher, Attorney for Finance Corporation of America to Gabriel L. Dennis, Secretary of Treasury, February 3, 1936, F.A. (Holsoe).

<sup>80</sup>Excerpts from Memorandum of Meeting with President Barclay prepared by F. C. Fisher, February 20, 1936, F.A. (Holsoe).

<sup>81</sup>Harvey S. Firestone, Sr. to President Barclay, November 10, 1937, F.A. (Holsoe).

<sup>82</sup>Wilson, *Liberia*, p. 134.

<sup>83</sup>Buell, *Native Problem . . .*, II, 834.

<sup>84</sup>Taylor, "The Firestone Operations in Liberia," p. 67.

<sup>85</sup>Wilson, *Liberia*, pp. 133-134.

<sup>86</sup>Robert W. Clower, George Dalton, Mitchell Harwitz, A. A. Walters, *Growth without Development: An Economic Survey of Liberia* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1966), p. 158.

<sup>87</sup>R. C. Porter to Donald A. Ross, January 16, 1930, F.A. (Holsoe).

<sup>88</sup>R. C. Porter to Senior Overseers and Section Chiefs, April 12, 1930, F.A. (Holsoe).

<sup>89</sup>R. C. Porter to Donald Ross, November 5, 1929, F.A. (Holsoe).

<sup>90</sup>Johnnetta B. Cole, "Traditional and Wage-Earning Labor among Tribal Liberians." Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of Anthropology, Northwestern University, 1967, p. 190.

<sup>91</sup>Excerpts from Memorandum of Meeting with President Barclay prepared by F. C. Fisher, February 20, 1936, F.A. (Holsoe).

<sup>92</sup>Ibid.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid.

<sup>95</sup>Memorandum of a Meeting with President Barclay. Present: Harvey S. Firestone, Jr. and F. C. Fisher. March 3, 1936, F.A. (Holsoe).

<sup>96</sup>Ibid.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid. President Barclay's rather weak support for government wage regulation deserves at least one comment: In 1937 Monrovia was \$282,000 in arrears on payments for the 1926 loan. Minutes of a Meeting between President Barclay, Harvey S. Firestone, Jr., F. C. Fisher, October 30, 1937, F.A. (Holsoe).

<sup>98</sup>Memorandum of a Meeting with President Barclay: Harvey S. Firestone, Jr. and F. C. Fisher, March 3, 1936, F.A. (Holsoe).

<sup>99</sup>Excerpts of Memorandum of Meeting with President Barclay, February 20, 1936. F.A. (Holsoe).

<sup>100</sup>Ibid.

<sup>101</sup>Article II, part h, section 3: Amendment to the Planting Agreement of November 10, 1937.

<sup>102</sup>Minutes of Conference of November 6, 1937; present: Edwin Barclay, Gabriel Dennis, Harvey S. Firestone, Jr., F. C. Fisher, F.A. (Holsoe).

<sup>103</sup>Ibid.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid.

<sup>105</sup>Liebenow, *Liberia, The Evolution of Privilege*, p. 78.

<sup>106</sup>J. Gus Liebenow, *African Politics: Crises and Challenges* (Bloomington, IA.: Indiana University Press, 1986), pp. 244-45.

<sup>107</sup>Low wages certainly contributed to an increase in Firestone's profit margin. In 1935, for instance, Firestone's sales total achieved a net profit of \$5,649,000 after taxes and depreciation. Alfred Lief, *The Firestone Story. A History of the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company* (New York: Whittlesey House of McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1951), p. 209.

<sup>108</sup>D.K. Fieldhouse, *The Colonial Empires. A Comparative Survey from the Eighteenth Century* (New York : Delacorte Press, 1967), p. 390.

## **Liberian Higher Education at Cuttington University College: Are Both Sexes Equal?**

Janice M. Saunders

### **Introduction**

In many countries of the world, especially those struggling to become technologically advanced, the issue of status maintenance—when people tend to stay at the socioeconomic level of their parents—can be a critical one. For instance, Grusky states that in order for a country to develop, social differentiation should be based upon achieved, not ascribed, status (1983, p. 495). When status maintenance is the norm in a social stratification system, that system is largely based upon ascribed statuses.

There are many factors involved in status maintenance. One factor that has not received as much attention as it should is that of gender/sex (Cooney, Clague, and Salvo, 1982; Powers, 1982). Although there is not an abundance of cross-national data on females, a number of studies do document status differences between males and females in some spheres. For example, in the area of tertiary level (college, university) education (Schiefelbein and Farrell, 1984), research on developing countries reveals that the ratio of males to females in universities is very high (Eshiwani, 1985; Payanzo, 1980). Why is this the case?

It begins in childhood. Many studies point out that young girls, especially in rural areas, are relied upon heavily by their mothers and families to help with domestic chores (Hughes and Mwiria, 1989; Carter, 1982). Girls are particularly called upon to care for younger siblings. Young boys are not required to spend as much time on domestic chores as are girls; hence, they have more time for educational pursuits where available (Mitchnik, 1976).

It is expected by families, too, that a girl will get married and leave her home of orientation, taking her assets—particularly labor—to her family of procreation. Males, on the other hand, are often expected to share their future incomes and labor with their families of origin. It is understandable that, in a developing country, scarce resources, such as education, are given first to sons. Families perceive a greater return for their investments in their sons than in their daughters and are willing to go to greater lengths to provide opportunities for their sons. For example, Peil has found in West African countries the pooling of resources by extended kin, even across class boundaries, in order to help a male obtain an education (1982, p. 171).



Even if both males and females are attending school, the males are more often "tracked" in curricula such as science and math, which are considered more appropriate for males than females (Eshiwani, 1985). The fact that at the University of Liberia in 1980, for example, only 15% of the science majors were female reflects the likelihood of education tracking (Carter, 1982:148). Hughes and Mwiria found "bias in learning materials and classroom dynamics" which contributed to sex stereotyping and to discouraging "inappropriate" attitudes and behaviors in both females and males (1989, p. 180). In other words, beginning at home, continuing into school, and consequently into the labor market, females are "educated" to fewer options (Hughes and Mwiria, 1989; Schiefelbein and Farrell, 1984; Kohn, 1981). Women are socialized to be more conservative in their aspirations than are males (Peil, 1982).

Another factor influencing educational attainment for males and females in any given country is level of subsistence. In most developing countries, agriculture is the prevailing mode of livelihood. In the case of Liberia, one of the main reasons females do not have as great an access to education as do males is because their labor, even at fairly young ages, is too crucial in the agricultural system to allow them the luxury of continued education (Carter, 1982).

Two other considerations involved in the education of women in developing countries have been documented. One is the fear on the part of parents that females who go away to preparatory school (which is often necessary to receive a good education) will get into moral trouble. That is, it is feared their daughters may not remain chaste without proper supervision, i.e., without parental or community care (Hughes and Mwiria, 1989; Carter, 1982). On the other hand, if the females attend a local institution, it may very well be educationally inferior, thus limiting women's chances of ever being qualified to participate in a tertiary level of education (Hughes and Mwiria, 1989). Second, Carter states that in Liberia, various restrictions on females frequently prevent them from attaining the same level of English language skills as their male cohorts; therefore, females cannot readily compete in higher education or in the job market (1982, p. 154). Given the problems of women in pursuing an education, it means that those women who do make it to the tertiary level of education in developing countries are more likely than not to have come from families with greater resources (Peil, 1982:159).

The purpose of this study is to examine the social characteristics of students at Cuttington University College in Liberia to see (1) if males and females who matriculate have similar social backgrounds and (2) if status maintenance is prevalent or not within this private, coeducational, four-year, liberal arts, church-affiliated college.

The variables that will be examined include: sex ratio, ethnicity, parents' residence, religion, age, grades at Cuttington University College (CUC), desire to remain in college, source of spending money, family social class, parental occupations, parents' income, parents' education, academic majors, plans for after graduation, and predicted future occupational prestige and social class.

### Description of Sample

The data for this study were collected through a questionnaire administered to students at Cuttington during the first semester of classes in 1989. The researcher had to receive permission from Cuttington professors in order to administer questionnaires in classes.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, the sample is a nonrandom one.

The sample is representative, however, in that its characteristics are comparable to those of the total student population at Cuttington in terms of sex ratio, age, social status, religion, and rural-urban residence. Further, all but one<sup>2</sup> of the 16 major ethnic groups in Liberia are included in the sample, with the largest percentage being Kpelle (14%) and Bassa (12%), the two largest ethnic groups in Liberia (Nelson, 1985:89) (see Table 1).

Table 1. Ethnic Group Membership of CUC Student Sample

Ethnic Group	%	(N)
Bassa	11.6	( 23)
Belle	1.0	( 2)
Gbandi	3.0	( 6)
Gio	3.5	( 7)
Gola	3.0	( 6)
Grebo	7.0	( 14)
Kissi	2.0	( 4)
Krahn	5.0	( 10)
Kru	6.5	( 13)
Kpelle	13.6	( 27)
Loma	7.0	( 14)
Mandingo	2.5	( 5)
Mano	7.0	( 14)
Mende	.5	( 1)
Vai	2.5	( 5)
Americo-Liberian	3.0	( 6)
Other	11.6	( 23)
None	3.5	( 7)
No answer	6.0	( 12)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>(199)</b>

Of the 199 questionnaires, 126 are from males and 72 from females (one person's sex is unidentified), reflecting the general sex ratio of the total student body at CUC (Carter, 1982:147). This is not an unusual sex ratio for university students in developing countries. In fact, in many countries, including those in Africa, the ratio of males to females is far greater than at Cuttington (Eshiwani, 1985; Peil, 1982; Payanzo, 1980).

The ages of the students in this survey range from 13 to 42. Generally the student body is older than "traditional" college students in more technologically advanced societies. Of the 191 students who gave their ages, only 11 are under 18 but 102 are aged 22 or older. Being "older" is common for university students in developing countries (Payanzo, 1980:334).

In the analysis of social class, I must proceed with caution. The students in the sample were asked to choose from a list the social class which best describes their family's status and their own predicted future social status. The list named five classes, ranging from lower to upper class. This measure of social class is very much a Eurocentric one and may not offer a valid representation of the social hierarchy, or social stratification system, within Liberia.<sup>3</sup>

Nonetheless, as students matriculating at CUC, most (perhaps all) perceive hierarchical differences within the student body and learn about hierarchical variance in family background. Also, judging from speech patterns, dress, musical tastes, travel experiences, and lifestyles, many Cuttington students are "westernized" and probably are familiar with the concept "social class" and the nuances therein. Most importantly, if one compares the students' perceptions of their family's social class with their indications of parents' income, occupation, and education (see Tables 2-4), there is consistency between their selection of class rank and those three measures of class status.

Roughly 31 percent of the students in this sample identify the social standing of their families as middle class, with around 29 percent saying they are from upper class backgrounds, and 40 percent from the lower or working class. When asked to project their future social class status, however, 28 percent say they expect to be in the upper class, 55 percent in the middle classes, with 17 percent expecting to be in the lower or working class. It is apparent these students perceive the possibility of class mobility through education. Ninety-two percent of the students in this sample identified themselves as Christians, 4 percent Islam, 3 percent independent, and 1 percent "other". Most say they and their parents, especially their mothers, attend religious services fairly regularly.

Slightly over 23 percent of the students' parents were not born in Liberia, and of that percentage, 12 percent presently live outside of the country. Of the students (90.5%) who answered the question regarding parents' residence, 51

percent of them have parents who are urban dwellers and 33 percent who live in rural areas. Type of residence—rural or urban—was not ascertained for the rest of the parents who live out of the country. In developing countries, urban dwellers often have greater access to a better education than do those who live in rural settings. It is expected then that more urbanites than ruralites would qualify for and be represented in a university.

Forty-eight percent of the students in this sample are freshmen, 22 percent sophomores, 12 percent juniors, and 18 percent seniors. The higher percentage of freshmen and lower percentages of upper classmen is probably a function of a number of factors: difficulty in college courses; difficulty in obtaining money to continue one's education; and high drop-out rates due to a variety of reasons such as marriage and disillusionment with the system—factors not unlike those found in institutions of higher education in countries all over the world. These problems are likely to be exacerbated in developing countries, however.

The average grades of the students in this sample lie in the "B-C" range, with those having "C" averages, 50.8 percent, only slightly larger than the group making "B" averages, 44.6 percent. Roughly 2 percent average "D" or below while almost 3 percent average "A". This is a normal curve distribution.

When asked how they felt about continuing their education at CUC, 40 percent of the students replied they would "try hard to continue" and another 40 percent said they would "do anything to stay." Only one student replied s/he would "like to quit" and one student said s/he "did not care." The rest, 19 percent, said they would be disappointed if they had to leave "before graduation."

Sixty-three percent of this CUC population obtain the money they need from their parents, 23 percent in the form of an allowance and 40 percent receive it as they need it. The rest either earn their own money, receive it as a gift, or obtain it from a combination of sources. Twenty-one percent of the students are on scholarships, most of which are from private industry in Liberia or from church organizations.

### Comparing Males and Females

When comparing differences in parental income, there is a significant difference between males and females (see Table 2). Nearly 27 percent more males than females rate their parents' income as low, while nearly 8 percent more females than males rate their parental incomes as high. (It also should be noted that twice as many females as males do not know what their parents' income is.)

Table 2. Parents' Income

Sex	Low		Medium		High		Don't Know		Total	
	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)
<u>Male</u>	41.7	(48)	33.9	(39)	10.4	(12)	13.9	(16)	63.2	(115)
<u>Female</u>	14.9	(10)	37.3	(25)	17.9	(12)	29.9	(20)	36.8	(67)
<u>Total</u>	31.9	(58)	35.2	(64)	13.2	(24)	19.8	(36)	100.0	(182)

Chi square      Degrees of Freedom      Si      cance

16.92114                      3                      .0007

Adding insight to the above information, there is little difference between male and female students in the percentage of mothers and fathers whose occupations come under the headings of "sales people," "operators," or "managers," but a greater percentage of males than females have fathers and mothers who are subsistence farmers or mothers who are full-time housewives with no income (see Table 3). Conversely, a greater percentage of female than male students have mothers and fathers who have professional or technical occupations.

Table 3. Mothers' and Fathers' Occupations

	Farmers & Housewives	Farmers	Sales & Operators		Managers		Professionals & Technical Workers		Total	
	Mother % (N)	Father % (N)	Mother % (N)	Father % (N)	Mother % (N)	Father % (N)	Mother % (N)	Father % (N)	Mother % (N)	Father % (N)
<u>Male</u>	58.6 (68)	27.3 (33)	18.0 (20)	16.5 (20)	9.9 (11)	24.8 (30)	13.5 (15)	31.4 (38)	64.9 (111)	64.7 (121)
<u>Female</u>	51.7 (31)	15.2 (9)	13.1 (8)	15.2 (9)	13.1 (8)	24.2 (14)	21.7 (13)	45.5 (23)	35.1 (40)	35.3 (46)
<u>Total</u>	56.1 (99)	21.0 (43)	16.4 (28)	16.0 (30)	11.1 (19)	24.6 (44)	16.4 (28)	36.4 (60)	100.0 (171)	100.0 (167)

Chi-Square      D.F.      Significance

Mother's Occupation: 2.84347      3      .4164

Father's Occupation: 5.10264      3      .1644

When examining contingency tables (see Table 4) for parental education, it is clear that both the mothers and fathers of the female students are more highly educated than those of the males. Almost 13 percent more of the fathers and 15 percent more of the mothers of female students have had university level education as compared to the parents of the males. At the other end of the scale, 18 percent more fathers and 17 percent more mothers of the males than of the females have had no formal schooling.

Table 4. Parent's Education

Sex	No Formal Schooling		Primary School		Secondary School		University		Total	
	Mother % (N)	Father % (N)	Mother % (N)	Father % (N)	Mother % (N)	Father % (N)	Mother % (N)	Father % (N)	Mother % (N)	Father % (N)
Male	30.8 (60)	30.3 (36)	6.8 (8)	10.9 (13)	23.7 (28)	19.3 (23)	18.6 (22)	39.5 (47)	63.4 (118)	64.7 (119)
Female	33.8 (23)	12.3 (8)	13.2 (9)	6.2 (4)	19.1 (13)	29.2 (19)	33.8 (23)	32.3 (24)	36.6 (28)	35.3 (26)
Total	44.6 (83)	23.9 (44)	9.1 (17)	9.2 (17)	22.0 (41)	22.8 (42)	24.2 (49)	44.0 (81)	100.0 (186)	100.0 (186)

It follows that sources of spending money differ for the sexes in this survey (see Table 5). Nearly 12 percent more males than females have to earn their own money or are recipients of gifts from sources other than their parents. Approximately 18 percent more females than males get a regular allowance from their parents. By allowance is meant a sum of money given regularly by parents to the student, to be spent by the student as the need arises. The concept of allowance is a western construct but adopted by some Liberians who are familiar with the practice, through living and/or studying abroad, and who can afford to grant such financial concessions to their children. Many times this money is spent not for essentials, such as tuition or room and board at the college, but for recreation, extra food or drink, and so on. It is not unusual, for instance, for Cuttington students who can afford it to spend allowance for weekend visits to the capital, Monrovia; to purchase music tapes for their tape players; to buy soft drinks and food at the small market set up across the road from the college cafeteria; and to make periodic shopping trips, even once in a while to the United States, for clothes.

Table 5. Source of Spending Money

Sex	Allowance From Parents		As Needed From Parents		Earn Myself		Gifts		Combination		Total	
	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)
Male	16.1	(20)	43.5	(54)	12.9	(16)	18.5	(23)	8.9	(11)	63.6	(124)
Female												
Total	22.6	(44)	40.5	(79)	11.3	(22)	15.9	(31)	9.7	(19)	100.0	(195)

Chi-Square 9.58971      Degrees of Freedom 4      Significance .0479

Related to sources of spending money is the difference in ages between male and female students at CUC. The younger the student the more likely the economic dependence on parents. The youngest students at CUC tend to be female and the oldest male (see Table 6).

Table 6. Age

Sex	Below 18		18-21		22-30		31-42		Total	
	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)
Male	2.5	(3)	44.2	(53)	41.7	(50)	11.7	(14)	62.8	(120)
Female										
Total	5.8	(11)	40.8	(78)	45.0	(86)	8.4	(16)	100.0	(191)
<u>Degrees of Freedom</u>										
11.80965		3		.0081						

As to the educational endeavors of the students at Cuttington, a comparison of reported grades reveals little differences between males and females. Roughly 50 percent of both sexes reported "C" averages and 45 percent "B" averages. Approximately 3 percent of the males, but no females, said they receive mostly "D's" or below. Students who earn mostly "A's" are approximately 3 percent male and 1 percent female. In any case, the correlations between grades and gender were not statistically significant for this sample.

As is typical of university students in developing countries, one finds barely 3 percent of the female students in this sample majoring in chemistry, general science, and math (Hughes and Mwiria, 1989; Eshiwani, 1985). Interestingly though, of the biology majors, there are proportionately more females than males (not shown in table). This is probably due to the strong nursing program at CUC. Over one-fourth of the females in this sample are majoring in nursing (this is compared to 3 percent of the males). In total, almost half of the women students major in either biology or nursing. (Phebe Hospital, one of the finest medical facilities in Liberia, is located within a mile of CUC. The nurses there probably provide role models for the college students and Phebe itself the hope of employment.)

Table 7. Academic Major

Sex	Social Science Humanities		Life Science (Nursing & Biology)		Chemistry, Math, & General Science		Business, Economics & Acct.		Total	
	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)
Male	12.1	(14)	24.1	(28)	17.2	(20)	46.6	(54)	62.4	(116)
Female										
Total	8.6	(16)	33.3	(62)	11.8	(22)	46.2	(86)	100.0	(186)
<u>Chi-Square</u>										
19.76860		3		.0002						

Looking at other majors at CUC, one finds more distinguishing features between males and females (see Table 7). Most (approximately 12 percent) of the social science and humanities majors (education, history, political science, public administration, pre-law, English, and theology) are male while few (3 percent) are female. In business, economics, and accounting, however, the percentages of male and female majors are quite similar (47 and 46 percent respectively). Since in a developing country like Liberia, a college graduate is more likely to be employed in the public rather than the private sector, one could deduce that both men and women students at Cuttington are preparing themselves for government jobs; or perhaps business, economics, and accounting majors—male and female alike—have aspirations in the private sector.

After graduation from Cuttington, no fewer than 60 percent of the students expressed the desire to attend graduate school. This applies equally to males and females (55 and 56 percent respectively), with over half of each wishing to continue their education abroad. Twelve percent of the males, but none of the females, responded they would help at home after graduation. This sex difference supports the findings of other research that males in many developing countries are considered "committed" to their families of orientation in ways females are not, especially if the families are making great sacrifices to provide an education for their sons. Approximately 6 percent of the students would like to go abroad to work after graduation and 15 to 17 percent of them plan to stay in Liberia and work. No female (or male) responded that she would be married and keep house full-time after graduation.

Students in this survey were asked to list the occupation that they intend to pursue after graduation. These occupations in turn were rated according to Treiman's Standard International Occupational Prestige Scale (1977). Out of this scale which ranges from -2 (occupation of gatherer) to 90 (Chief of State), the student's selections range in prestige from 44 to 79. Although the percentages of males and females were nearly equal at the most prestigious end of the scale, 21 percent more females than males selected occupations from the lower end (see Table 8). In both the middle ranges of prestige, more males are represented than females. It would seem for some females, at least, occupational aspirations are lower than for their male counterparts. It also may be the case that occupations considered "appropriate" for women are not the ones with greatest prestige.



Table 8. Prestige Rank of Future Occupation

Sex	Lowest Prestige Rank 44-54		55-64		65-74		Highest Prestige Rank, 75-79		Total	
	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)
Male	7.5	(9)	50.0	(60)	19.2	(23)	23.3	(28)	64.2	(120)
Female	28.4	(19)	37.3	(25)	11.9	(8)	22.4	(15)	35.8	(67)
Total	15.0	(28)	45.5	(85)	16.6	(31)	23.0	(43)	100.0	(187)

Chi-Square      Degrees of Freedom      Significance  
 15.38603                      3                      .0015

Contrary to the results of future occupational prestige, when asked to identify their future class status, a greater percentage of males than females predict lower and lower-middle class status for themselves (see Table 9). (Again one must be mindful of the earlier caveat that CUC students may or may not interpret the concept "class" in a way that imputes validity to these findings.) Approximately 40 percent of each sex think they will enjoy upper middle class status, but 18 percent more women than men see themselves occupying upper class status in the future. The contrast between future occupational prestige and future social class of men and women can be explained in part by examining the Pearson correlation coefficients for the associations between future social class and other variables (see Table 10). The largest association for future social class, .448, is with the class of the student's family. Cross-tabulation (see Table 11) reveals in this sample that 9 percent more males than females say their family's social class is low while 11 percent more females than males say their family's social class is high. Other studies document that, typically, in developing countries the female social class background is higher than the male's at the university level (Hughes, 1986; Njenga, 1986, Bowman and Anderson, 1980).

Table 9. Future Social Class Status

Sex	Lower or Working		Lower Middle		Upper Middle		Upper		Total	
	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)
Male	21.0	(25)	19.3	(23)	38.7	(46)	21.0	(25)	63.3	(119)
Female	11.6	(8)	8.7	(6)	40.6	(28)	39.1	(27)	36.7	(69)
Total	17.6	(33)	15.4	(29)	39.4	(74)	27.7	(52)	100.0	(188)

Chi-Square      Degrees of Freedom      Significance  
 10.63259                      3                      .0139

Table 10. Pearson Correlation Coefficients For Future Social Class Status

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1. Future social class status	1.000	.221***	.448***	.284***	-.067
2. Sex		1.000	.119*	.165**	-.127*
3. Social class status of family			1.000	.490***	-.154*
4. Mother's education				1.000	-.130*
5. Scholarship					1.000

Note: Sex and scholarship were treated as dummy variables.

- \*p ≤ .05, one-tailed test.
- \*\*p ≤ .01, one-tailed test.
- \*\*\*p ≤ .001, one-tailed test.

Table 11. Social Class Status of Family

	Low		Medium		High		Total	
Sex	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)
Male	43.4	(53)	32.0	(39)	24.6	(30)	63.5	(122)
Female								
Total	40.1	(77)	31.3	(60)	28.6	(55)	100.0	(192)

-

Degrees of Freedom

2.906492.2338

It may be that women in this survey from the upper class expect to remain in that status, regardless of their future occupational plans, through marriage. Perhaps they plan on g men who will provide them with upper class status. For example, Peil found in her study of five West African countries that females of high class status can and do maintain their statuses through marriage (1982:164).

Table 10 also shows the relatively high association, .490, between family social class and mother's education. In other studies the focus usually has been on father's education as the best predictor of family class. In several other zero-order correlation analyses in the present research (not shown), however, the association between mother's education and family social class consistently is greater than that between father's education and family class. It would seem, with this CUC population at least, that the mother's level of education is a better indicator of family class than is the father's level of education. This finding is contrary to most in stratification research and

illustrates the importance of including both sexes in future social stratification research.

### Summary and Conclusions

On many of the variables in this study, males and females show similarities. In terms of ethnicity, the major Liberian groups are represented in fairly equal proportions. There is also equal distribution between the sexes according to rural versus urban residence of parents, with the majority from urban areas. Just about all the CUC students identify themselves as Christian. Both men and women students in this sample feel strongly about continuing their education at Cuttington and the majority make average level grades. Roughly forty-six percent of both males and females major in business, economics and accounting. After graduation, both sexes express a desire to continue their education abroad.

Notwithstanding the above sexual "equalities," the issue of status maintenance at CUC is yet to be addressed. Is status maintenance the norm at Cuttington? The answer is not a simple yes or no. What emerges from this data is that status maintenance applies more to the female than to the male students. More of the women are from higher social class families and expect to remain in their higher statuses, despite the fact that their occupational aspirations may be lower than those of the male students. Women are socialized in developing countries (as well as in other parts of the world) to be more conservative than men in their occupational aspirations and often depend on marriage for their social status.

As for males, more of them are from families of lower economic statuses, are supporting themselves, and plan to help their parents upon graduation. Although these findings might, for a moment, suggest that the male students suffer more disadvantages than the females, the male population as a whole is actually better off. First and foremost it is of great import that males are in superior number at CUC. In other words, males, regardless of socioeconomic status, have much greater access to education than do females. Through selectivity of various sorts discussed earlier in the paper, only a small percentage of women ever reach the tertiary level in the educational system.

Once at the tertiary level, males and females at Cuttington are distinguishable from one another on the bases of academic majors and future occupations. Choices of males on both reflect many more options perceived and pursued.

In sum, if this population of CUC students reflects the Liberian social stratification system at all, it appears that social mobility is realizable, but more so for men. For women, status maintenance is more characteristic. Probably more restrictive than lack of money for females, though, is the

problem of gender role expectations that limit options. Certainly Liberian society is not exceptional in this feature.

There are a number of questions raised but not answered in this study. One of the most important concerns the relationship between mother's education and family social class. Is the mother's educational level more closely associated with family class than the father's in Liberia or in other cultures? If this is the case in Liberia, does status maintenance tend to be more prevalent among females who have more highly educated mothers? This is a preliminary study and as such offers only initial insights into the issue of status maintenance in the Liberian social stratification system. Much more research is needed. Given present conditions in Liberia, sorting out behavioral patterns related to stratification will be delayed.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Without the cooperation of these professors it would not have been possible to have collected data from a sufficient number of students. If they had been sent questionnaires through campus mail, students would have been extremely leery about filling them out given their lack of knowledge of the researcher, and given the political climate in Liberia.

<sup>2</sup>No students in the sample identified themselves as De (Dey).

<sup>3</sup>In future research, I should like to develop a social status scale based on an extensive number of interviews with Liberians involved in a wide variety of occupations and lifestyles. Such a scale would be grounded in the Liberian experience and could be tested for validity and reliability against other cross-cultural "instruments."

A larger problem with the methodology for this research—again coming out of a Eurocentric model—is the use of a written questionnaire to obtain data. One does not know the extent of "questionnaire literacy" among CUC students. It can be quickly added, however, that questionnaire literacy can be a disadvantage as well as an advantage. The researcher can never be sure whether respondents understand the questions (but I did encourage CUC respondents to ask about any questions they wanted clarified, and they did) and are answering candidly.

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Wilson Jeremiah Moses, *Alexander Crummell: A Study of Civilization and Discontent*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1989, 380pp.

This volume is a remarkable attempt by Professor Moses to highlight the life and works of Alexander Crummell, a major black historical figure who had been largely ignored, neglected or downplayed in Black Studies literature. This thoroughly well-written book also represents an important contribution to Liberian history. It reflects the results of Moses' painstaking research that has produced a documentary which gives revealing insights into race relations in the Episcopal Church, racism among Christians generally, and the basis of current controversies among black intellectuals.

Although his ideas were precursors to the ideals of African nationalism and black pride, very little mention is made of Crummell's works during the resurgence of Black Studies in the United States in the 1960's. Moses attributes this neglect to Crummell's espousal of black self-help and separatism, wherein the liberal, egalitarian, anti-establishment forces of Black Studies in the 1960's did not accommodate Crummell's conservative views. This trend, as Moses correctly noted, pervades the current debate among black intellectuals as they attempt to struggle with the vagaries of social issues of today.

While many blacks believed that one could not speak of self-help and be nationalistic at the same time (as Crummell advocated), Moses shows, through well documented sources, that from the perspectives of Crummell's systems of values and belief, nationalism and black self-help were not mutually exclusive ideals. Through Crummell, Moses exposes "the conflicting emotions" of the educated black man with respect to the white controlled Western world: he is discontented with white civilization, but he depends on it to manifest his own racial being.

Crummell's early experiences with racial prejudice and injustice in his professional life helped to shape his views on the approaches to the solutions to social conflicts. His difficult personality and bad tempers were supposedly his response to constant struggles against racism. However, Moses suggests that one appreciates Crummell synergistically: as a Victorian intellectual, American evangelist, Liberian nationalist, and Afro-American leader. Single identities of Crummell would reveal a negative and controlling personality.

Moses documents Crummell's disappointing and often humiliating feuds with superiors in the Episcopal Church, who delayed his ordination to the priesthood even after seminary studies and a brief stint at Yale University. These

conflicts were based mostly on racial grounds. Crummell exemplified the inferior status of blacks in the Episcopal Church of the United States, and he did not hesitate to make his views known. In prolific political sermons, and writings, Crummell spoke against racism and clamored for independent black institutions and institutional separatism as the basis for black self-respect and self-reliance. During the early 1800's, he was an avowed abolitionist and anti-emigrationist, who was not only opposed to colonization, but regarded the white-backed American Colonization Society (ACS) as a threat to all blacks. Later in England, he would accuse the ACS of an attempt to rid the Western World of free slaves and make slavery secure.

Moses details Crummell's matriculation to England where he planned to achieve a "sweet revenge" over the American whites. In England, he would cultivate the more "superior" European civilization and become the envy of White Americans "who had sought to ostracize him." In England, he earned a degree in the classics and moral subjects, including mathematics, from Cambridge University. He also spoke extensively before civic and church groups on the mistreatment of blacks in America.

At the conclusion of his study, Crummell shocked his colleagues in the anti-colonization movement when he announced his intentions to go to Liberia. Some of his contemporaries in the anti-emigrationist movement, especially Martin Delany, contended that Liberia was "a slaveholder's hoax . . . where missionary operations were scouting parties" supported by President Joseph Jenkins Roberts and his menials who "knowingly are instrumental in entrapping their brethren in trammels of their hell-originated scheme." In correspondences to his benefactor, John Jay, Crummell reasoned that Liberia would provide him self-respect, independence and the warm climate that was conducive to the health of his frail wife and his own health. Moses, however, also opined that Crummell was influenced by J.J. Roberts, the nation's first president during his visit to England in 1851.

Crummell, a dark-skinned black, arrived in Liberia in 1853 where he would spend some twenty years fighting the white dominated church, racial injustice of Americo-Liberian mulattos against the natives and attempting to establish a strong evangelical and educational presence. A few months after his arrival in Liberia, there were serious differences between Crummell and his bishop, John Payne, who indicted the inferiority of blacks and constantly admonished Crummell to personify meekness. Crummell was partial to political civil sermonizing, whereas his bishop wanted him to emphasize missionary preaching. Crummell was later transferred to Cape Palmas where he taught at Mt. Vaughn High School.

Crummell had desires to shape Liberian national policies and be considered as one of the founding fathers of the new black republic. He dreamed of the



establishment of Liberia College. In 1861, in response to his wife's poor health and the need to raise funds for Liberia College, he went to the United States. There, he got support from the white controlled Massachusetts Colonization Society and the Protestant Episcopal Church. He, together with educator Edward Wilmot Blyden, was appointed by President Stephen Benson as commissioners to speak on behalf of Liberia in the United States. Crummell returned to Liberia in 1863 where he, Blyden and J.J. Roberts shared the three professorial posts at Liberia College, inaugurated a year earlier.

At Liberia College, Crummell was disappointed that he had not found the first rate institution he had dreamed of. Then Crummell ran into problems with the college administration over his salary which he thought was too meager to overcome his recurring financial problems. He disdained college President Joseph Jenkins Roberts, a mulatto whom he believed did not respect his efforts and those of the dark skinned Blyden. He complained about his work hours and teaching schedule which he believed were overwhelming. He spoke pejoratively against African languages. He upheld his bias towards Anglophilism and Christian ethnocentrism as a means of civilizing the natives. This was a view different from that held by Blyden, who respected indigenous cultures, languages and Muslim civilizations. The Massachusetts Colonization Society would later give President Roberts a free hand to discipline Crummell. In 1866, Crummell was forced to resign.

He went back to his evangelical work, establishing a church in New Georgia, near Monrovia. He used his energy to directly evangelize the natives and serve as the mouthpiece of the darker colored natives against what he viewed as the anti-native sentiments of Americo-Liberian mulattoes. Moses intimates Crummell's eloquence in speaking for the rights of the natives and supporting their incorporation into the national fabric. His friend, E.J. Roye, who shared Crummell's views on the improvement of the native tribes, was elected President in 1870. A \$500,000 ill-fated loan taken on behalf of the Liberian government from an English bank by Roye eventually led to the President's downfall. Americo-Liberian mulattos, led by J.J. Roberts had opposed the loan arrangement as too costly; Crummell had supported his friend arguing that the benefits of new roads and infrastructure outweighed the cost. When it proved that the loan was managed by dishonest bankers in England, mulattoes used the fiasco to orchestrate a coup in which President Roye was killed.

Frustrated by financial and health problems and unable to become Bishop of Liberia, Crummell increasingly grew despondent. He left Liberia for the U.S. following Roye's death in 1871. Crummell settled in Washington, D.C. On the eve of his retirement from active duty Crummell travelled extensively in America, giving speeches on various topics including Africa, the nature of civilization and progress. He also became the founder of the American Negro

Academy in 1896. His pro-colonialist position on Africa remained to the end.

Wilson Moses has produced an excellent and perceptive account of a thoroughly important African-American nationalist, missionary, educator, philosopher, and an indomitable foe of racism and bigotry. Every facet of this treatise is well documented with interconnected historical chain of events. It has immense scholarly value for \_\_\_\_\_ and instructors of Liberian and U.S. history, black or African studies. The author has eminently reviewed the plight of educated Pan-Africanist black men, including W.E.B. Dubois and supporters of Marcus Garvey who were influenced by \_\_\_\_\_ : they come to Africa to register their discontent with Western civilization and establish black control. What they found was a dependence on the white man and a dominant control by the white man.

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Julius Emeka Okolo and Stephen Wright, eds., *West African Regional Cooperation and Development*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1990. 360pp.

We have in this collection of essays an important, though uneven, contribution to the study of development and cooperation in the subregion of West Africa. The editors promise a dual focus on regional organizations and developmental problems both within and among countries of the region, as well as the implications of progress or a lack thereof for the continent as a whole. The objective is largely achieved.

Consisting of an introduction and two parts (but no conclusion), Part I (Regional Organizations) includes chapters devoted to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), francophone regional organizations and the Mano River Union (MRU). Part II (Cooperation and Development) discusses such developmental issues as gender and development, Islam and development, and the military and development.

In the absence of a conclusion, it appears that the introduction is designed to tie things together under the rubrics of "Development" and "Trends and Problems in West African Development". Defining development in the broadest possible sense so as to encompass the controversy among scholars (including contributing authors to the volume) as to usage and meaning, the editors allow that cooperative ventures in West Africa are shaped not only by economic factors, but by political and social factors as well. They also allow for the debate as to whether West African development is to be perceived in "sub-regional or purely national context".

The "Trends and Problems" are devoted to the development process in the subregion. Two evident themes are firstly, "that there are numerous problems and development debates which are common to the countries throughout West Africa, and that these provide useful focus for comparative study of government reactions and policies," and secondly, "that cooperation and the pooling of resources could be increased at a non-organizational level . . . to improve the chances of successful attainment of the region's development goals." (p. 9). Otherwise put, the future of the integrative process in the subregion is significantly linked to satisfactory bilateral cooperation.

There is much food for thought in the several essays of the volume though there is an occasional problem of a misnomer as when the role of Nigeria in the formation of ECOWAS is called "ECOWAS: Problems and Potential" (Chapter 7), or a re-hashing of information as in the Amadu Sesay piece on the MRU with

little s analysis of the current strains and stresses that seem to promise the demise of the Union in its current form.

Noteworthy in "The Development and Structure of ECOWAS" are two indications. The first is that "the first attempt to promote the idea of a West African economic community was made by President William Tubman of Liberia in . . . 1964." In fact Tubman advanced that idea much earlier in his quest to contain Kwame 's drive for a politically united Africa. The Liberian leader clearly saw functional (and regional) cooperation as means of indefinitely postponing the day of reckoning for any collective political agenda. The second indication in this essay is the reference to the 1978-adopted ECOWAS Protocol on Nonaggression and the 1980-initiated Protocol on Mutual Assistance and Defense. The latter is amplified upon by Claude E. Welch, Jr. in his piece in the volume. While rationalizing that "there is no development without security" (p. 40) these protocols not only point to the politics implicit in any community of sovereign states; they also highlight, as they did during the Liberian civil war, the complications of improvisation in regional peace-keeping or peace-monitoring efforts.

Timothy Shaw's "Regionalism and the African Crisis: Towards a Political Economy of ECOWAS and SADCC" is perhaps the most theoretical of the collection. It focuses the "position and prospects of Africa in an unequal world order" as it contrasts "'orthodox' and 'radical' modes of analysis and modes of production, taking into account the interrelationship between theory and policy." (p. 119)

The book is well structured and, for the most part, articles are well written. In spite of the real effort at setting the stage in the introduction to the study, a conclusion by the editors would have been useful in finally pulling things together and pointing out areas for further exploration and study. One area for further study that now clearly stands out is ECOWAS' experimentation in its involvement with the civil war in the member state of Liberia.

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J. Samuels Reeves, *Revelation of the Religions* (Published by the author in Monrovia, Liberia: Printed by Sabanoh Printing Press, 1990). 109pp.

The author is a Liberian and a clergyperson ordained in the Baptist denomination. He holds theological degrees from The Baptist College and Seminary in Liberia and Virginia Union University in Virginia, U.S.A. Reeves had lectured at Cuttington University College and served Liberian pastorates.

In his book, *Revelation of the Religions*, Reeves attempts to discuss in some detail the three major religions (*Islam, Christianity, and African Traditional Religions*) as practiced in Liberia and on the continent of Africa. The book consists of ten chapters, a conclusion, endnotes on each chapter, and an index. *Revelation of the Religions* primarily consists of two major sections: The first section deals with Islam, Christianity, and African Traditional Religions in Liberia and the second section discusses Islam, Christianity, and African Traditional Religions in Africa in general. The last two chapters deal with views of young Africans on the religions and the young professionals and organized religions, respectively.

Reeves' approach is basically to present this work as a historical narrative. He attempts to give the historical background of each religion and what he perceives to be the practices within each of them. In some instances in his narrative, he makes comparison between the religions, but the work is not a comparative analysis of religious phenomenon nor is it a general comparative religious studies as such. His discussion on Islam in Liberia is very brief, scanty and generic in scope with very little specificity about the Liberian situation. His apology at the beginning of the book says it all: "*Islam in Liberia has not been given proper research attention and only the most general statement based on the knowledge of Islam elsewhere in West Africa may be made.*" (He apparently had not seen the articles by Richard A. Corby, "Manding Traders and Clerics" and those by Svend E. Holsoe "The Manding in Western Liberia, Vai Culture and Islam" nor the many articles and books by Benjamin J.K. Anderson.)

The author seems to be more familiar with the Christian religion than Islam and African Traditional Religions. He is more charitable to the Roman Catholic establishment in Liberia, and talks about the numerous accomplishments the Catholics have made in missions. He recounts some of the achievements of other Christian denominations in Liberia and talks about some of the 'cal

ventures undertaken by these Christians churches in education, health, and other areas. He does not deal adequately with the independent Church movements in Liberia and what they have contributed to the growth and nurturing of the Christian Church.

Rev. Reeves' research methodology which included interviews, the use of secondary resources and his personal experiences as a Liberian Churchman added new dimensions and some perspectives to the study. His use of contemporary, social, political educational, cultural, economic, and other issues such as abortion, to demonstrate his points, add to the significance of this work.

Nevertheless, major theological, ethical, moral, and basic philosophical discussions are done at a \_\_\_\_\_, because this work is intended to be an introduction to the study of the religions of Liberia and Africa and not a major discourse. This indeed is a pioneering task. Reeves must be complimented for his efforts.

However, there are a few areas of concern to be raised. These issues have weakened this very fine book.

(1) **The use of genders and other terms.** The language is sexist and highly male dominated. i.e. "Psychologists usually allude to the fact that one of the basic wants of **man** is the desire . . . ." (p. 9); Islam "tries to make **men** fit to live with each other." (p. 10); "Missionaries also advised the **tribesmen** never to work on Sundays." (p. 15); "Traditional cults of the living dead are accommodated and persist in a Muslim guise so that the departed **forefathers** take on the role of intercessors between **man** and God." (p. 8); ". . . a Moslem must declare his faith and pledge his loyalty." (p. 9); "Christianity is a monotheistic religion that believes in God as the Almighty **father**. He is a just and \_\_\_\_\_ Creator . . . . who works redemptively through the holy spirit for **man's** salvation." (p. 42).

These male sexist statements, the use of the \_\_\_\_\_ e pronoun for God, God as "**He**" a "**father**", the reference to some Liberian people as "**tribesmen**" and people as "**man,**" or "**men**" and many more like these are plentiful in the text. The use of the terms **persons, people, mankind, humanity, or individuals** would have been better choices of words to convey universality and inclusiveness.

The use of the terms **tribesmen** and **tribes** instead of *ethnic people* is also disturbing. To many people, the terms **tribe** and **natives** are loaded with connotations. They mean different things to different people. But our author here lavishly used them throughout the book with no consideration as to their

implications. Scholars and writers dealing with ethnic peoples must be conscious or mindful of the language they use.

(2) **Inaccuracies and lack of clarification.** In several instances in the book, the author presents inaccurate and unsubstantiated information about the tradition, the people and the religious practices he is discussing. Writing about the Poro and the Sande initiation rites, on page 15 he states, "Natives who attended these schools were never considered as permanent citizens of the town. They were also referred (sic) to as sinners, a belief still strongly held in Liberia up to this very hour."

I do not know of any Liberian or non Liberian community in which the Poro and Sande rites are practiced, where people would consider individuals who have been sent to the Poro or Sande grove as non- citizens of the town from which they came. Nor does the author of this book explain what he meant by the term "sinner" to refer to the uninitiated of the Poro and the Sande. The term sinner which is actually a misnomer for the word uninitiated, in no way denotes, connotes, or even imply commonality or similarity in meaning to the Christian or theological definition for the word "sinner" in a Biblical, Quoranic or Christian sense. Non-Liberian readers may misunderstand the term and equate it with the Christian/Muslim meaning of a sinner: "One who had disobeyed God, gone against the will of God, missed the mark and had not treated the neighbor or other human beings according to God's commandments." I am sure this is not the meaning of the term sinner when some Liberians incorrectly employ it to mean the uninitiated of the Poro and the Sande.

Another example of the inaccuracies and lack of clarity by Reeves is on page 16. He writes:

The circumcision practiced in the Bible has also been adopted by Liberians. In the society, every Liberian boy is to be circumcised in order to prepare for marriage and to be considered a man. I am happy, I went through that myself because even the girls discuss you with their friends. It is a disgrace not be (sic) around here. (p. 16)

I am not sure if Reeves means that Liberians adopted the practice of circumcision from the Bible, or for that matter, if Liberians adopted the custom. Circumcision had always been a time honored tradition of most ethnic if not all Liberian people. Christianity, the Bible, or Islam did not introduce circumcision to Liberia. The practice was already in the area before the coming of the Church and Mosque.

I would have the author to have mentioned the matter of female  
 · ion or clitoridectomy at this point, but he does not mention that until  
 on page 25 when he alludes to it in passing without to his readers the  
 significance or religious implications and meaning attached to these practices.

The author makes another unsubstantiated claim when he wrote:

Christianity introduced an improved kind of life known as love  
 for one's fellowman as for himself. This life style brought about  
 the idea of monogamy in the Liberian society. Liberians are  
 now embracing this kind of life style because it is economical  
 and healthy for a family life. (p. 19)

Monogamy had always been practiced among ethnic and non-ethnic popu-  
 lations in Liberia. Christianity did not bring the idea of monogamy to Liberia.  
 A man was free to marry as many women as he was able to support, or were able  
 to support him. The chief's and other prominent people in traditional societies  
 had the luxury of taking on many wives, but for the most part, the majority of  
 traditional indigenous Liberians were monogamous. Christianity did not intro-  
 duce monogamy in Liberia; it was already present before the arrival of ty  
 in the area.

Another example of the unsubstantiated claims of the author:

... Today, Liberians are exposed to a more civilized way of  
 living. ... Traditional Christianity has contributed to the beliefs  
 and unethical acts practiced by the native. Today Liberians  
 have more trust in the Almighty God to do his will as he pleases  
 and not to do and harm. Spiritually, Christianity has made the  
 Liberian people to be reliable and trustworthy. (p. 20)

Again, there is no explanation concerning what the author calls "*more  
 civilized way of living*" and what he considers "*unethical acts by the  
 native.*" He talks about African Civilization as "primitive civilization" (p.73). As  
 one reads the book, one finds a lot of ambiguities, sweeping generalizations,  
 inconsistencies, contradictions, and inaccuracies. On p. 85 he talks about "All  
 the peoples of Africa know of a Supreme being" and that there is a belief in this  
 only one and supreme god, yet, he talks about Africans believing in many gods  
 "beside the high god, a god of thunder who is the god of blacksmiths and war,"  
 etc. The fact is, even though Africans believe in one God, there are lesser spirits  
 that serve as intermediaries, they are not gods, they are spirits. Some people  
 prefer to refer to them as deities. But the concept of one god is prevalent all over  
 Africa.



In discussing the different sects in Islam in Liberia, the author never clearly pointed out the theological, ethical, or doctrinal differences between the sects. He says that in Liberia, there are the Suni, the Ahmadiyya, and the Marabouts, Karamoko, or Mori as they are called, who were members of the (Tidyaniya and Qadiriya) orders, but never mentions the presence of Shia.

Another troubling issue is the illustrations on the cover of the book. The Mosque represents Islam, the Church represents Christianity, and I suppose the hut with the thatch roof is meant to be the representation of African traditional religions. What is troubling about this symbol is that African Traditional Religions have had no buildings of worship representative of those religions. God, from the ATR stand-point needs no building to be worshipped in, because the belief is that God is everywhere and that a house of worship is not . To quote from what Reeves has written on page 69:

Ancestors are approached at particular places such as grave sites, specific hills (forest hills), on specific river banks, specific trees, and at special stones. Like the Church, Mosque, Temple, and other religious places of worship, these places serve as worshipping spots."

If the above statement is true, why should he (Reeves) use a symbol of a hut to represent African Traditional Religions as if the hut has the same purpose as the temple, church, or mosque? Symbols sometimes convey subliminal messages and images, therefore they must be used with extreme caution and in the appropriate context.

On a more positive side, I think Reeves put a lot of work into the production of this book and he must be commended highly for the effort. With all the concerns one may raise about the content of this book, it does have some useful function especially for new readers and lay people and those who are not familiar with the Liberian community and its religious establishments. Theologians and scholars as well as lay people can learn from this little book. My hope is that in the next edition, some of the many concerns, among which I have just listed a few here, will be addressed by the author.

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### Recent Publications and Theses

- Bah, M. Alpha, "Sierra Leone-Liberia Border Relations, 1882-1982", African Studies Association Annual Meetings Papers, 1990, #100.
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- Steiner, Christopher Burghard. "Worlds together, worlds apart: Merchants, markets, and the mediation of knowledge in West African art trade." Ph.D. thesis, Harvard U., 1990. 330pp.
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## NEWS AND NOTES

### Twenty-Fourth Annual Meeting of The Liberian Studies Association

The twenty-fourth annual meeting of the Liberian Studies Association will be held at the University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio, March 19-21, 1992. Contact person at the University is Dr. Sakui W. G. Malakpa of the College of Education.

## ERRATA

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### LIBERIAN STUDIES JOURNAL

"Landsman: The Conversations of Bai T. Moore"

Arnold Odio and Dianne W. Oyler (Editors)

pages 13-25

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**"Two hippos cannot live in one river: Zo Musa, Foningama, and  
the Founding of Musada in the Oral Traditions of the Konyaka"**  
Tim Geysbeek and Jobba K. Kamara pages 27-78

**See Table B and Table C on the following pages.**

Table 1 - THE KAMARA & FONINGAMA BEFORE MUSADU  
Abbreviations: F = Foningama, M = Musadu, T = talisman & ZH = Zo Musa\*

Episodes	Mandingo					Vai	Loma
	VASE KAMARA [13/18]	KEWULEN KAMARA [17a]	SUNAWOLO [9]	YVES PERSON [4]	"MONOGRAPHIE"[3] FISHER #1 [5]	KRONAH [27]	KORVAN [33/41]
(1) Early History	F's ancestors migrated from Sibi to Jénu. F's father married Makula Damah Soba Kronah.	F originally from Sibi.			F born in Sianon.	F, uncle Fakoli Kronah & Filimo Totta (Dole?) in Kankan.	F born in Mali; prince of a king.
(2) F Leaves Jénu	F married a Talawole or Toure - Fen Jalla born. Leaders in Jénu conspired to kill F by digging a hole that F would fall in. F's hat & gold ring fell instead. F left, instructed his wife to give hat to Fen Jalla and follow F later.						
(3) Jéli Helps F	Kuyateh or Konate (F's griot) meet F after F escaped; took F to his home in Mau with his wife. Relationship established between Kamara & Kuyateh.						
(4) Kamara Arrive in Solona	F's father Sunaka, wife, Konsaba, & other children moved to Solona where the Kpelle lived. The Kpelle tried to help the Kamara; or were forced out by the Kamara.	F moved to an open hill.	F lived in Gbè.	The Kamara moved to Solona.	Konsaba founded Gbeesoba with help of diviners.		
(5) Morikana Moved to Mau	Moli man summoned Kalazoo Norikane (and Vanisa Bayoh) to help Sunaka & Konsaba.						
(6) Morikana Blessed the Kamara	Morikana sacrificed girl, gold and red pan to bless the Kamara; blessing diminished by peoples doubt.						
(7) Morikana & Palm Nut	Morikana gave Konsaba a palm nut; nuts scattered after given to F in Musadu.						
(8) Morikana Settles	Morikana and Vanisa Bayoh settled in Faylay Sula & Koroba respectively.						
(9) F Leaves Mau	The Kronah in Musadu learned that F would make the Konyan prosperous. Fenyabu took F from Mau.						
(10) F Rescued in Solona	Kronah took F & Jéli to Konsaba in Solona. Konsaba conspired to make F leave, then tried to kill F. Old woman & Fenyabu helped F & Jéli escape to Musadu. Joking relation established between Kamara (F) & Kuyateh (Jéli).	F fathers Konsaba in Gbè.	F fathers Konsaba in Gbè.		F left after Konsaba tried to kill him. F had become more popular than Konsaba.		
(11) F Arrives in M	F went to M; met Fenyabu's bro Tuwani Gbèè and diviners.	F and friends went to M.	Two groups of people helped F & Kalazoo Sahyon fight when they went to M.	F left Konsaba and used calvary to overcome opposition in M.	F fled to Manino to his uncle Toumani Kronah.	F & companions "evacuated" Kankan; welcomed by ZH in M.	F fled to M after quarrel with his brothers in Mali.

\*Words such as "juju" and "pagan" taken from translations. Post-publication corrections: Talawole = Traore (not Toure); Kuyateh = Kouyate (not Konate).

Table C - ZO MUSA IN MUSADU

Episodes	Handingo	YASE KAMARA [13/18]	YAYA DOLE [10]	KEMULEN KAMARA[17a]	HANMAOT DOLE [8]	SUNMOLO [9]	MUSADU MISC. [19]	V.SUNAMOLO [16]	FISHER #1 [5]	FISHER #2 [6]	BOUYASSOU [2]
(12) M		Zo Musa Koneah or Koneah (Kpelle) moved from Yar-gbôla to Waani to become slave of Kalandô Morikolo Suaray.	ZM Sayon (Kpelle) & Juufa Kôni (Lowa) were slaves.		ZM (Handingo) was a fisherman.		ZM Kone (d) - Sayon (e) - Kone & Zo Jala (e) were slaves of Luani Kone (a,c,d,e).	ZM Kone was captured & arrested.			
(12) M Founded		ZM received permission to build hut at fishing place (Musadu); took fish to master. Many people began to stay with ZM. ZM's master & wife moved to M.	Slaves (and master) moved from rock behind M to M. Luani Kôni named the area "Musadu" 805 years ago.		ZM built a house on Jôn river to fish. People stayed with ZM, refusing to reside in town of bad chief F.	ZM (Kpelle) lived in M.	ZM & other slaves moved from Biyôôla to M to fish (e). They built a fishing booth; soon many people and ZM's master settled in M (a-e).	ZM founded M 2050 years ago.	ZM (Kpelle) & 2 other Kpelle pagan priests; or Zo's ruled M.	ZM (Kpelle) was chief of M (ZM = F?).	F founded M. ZM Kone (Kp), Zogafakoni & Fangebou lived in M.
(13) ZM's Talisman		Morikolo made T for ZM that ate sheep & babies.	ZM's T killed babies.	ZM's chare swallowed babies & dogs etc.	F's T swallowed goats & babies.	ZM's juju ate babies.		ZM's T ate sheep, chickens and human beings.	ZM & other Zo's had a juju.	Kpelle at war with ZM.	
(14) Conflict Between ZM & M		Kalandô "Sayon" killed summoned from Kôni; he along with other diviners made a T that destroyed ZM's T.	Fisayo (Lowa) sent for Morikolo in Firfulah, who in turn sent Jawi Koneah to make a T to destroy ZM's T.	ite mori men in M made a T that destroyed ZM's chare.	The pig medicine people, with ZM's help, made a T that destroyed F's T. Noli & ZM defeat F. ZM fled.	Big moli man made Musila T which destroyed ZM's T.		Sueawolo made a T which destroyed ZM's T.	F, unable to defeat Zo's, called for Kalandô Molefolay Jaro to get rid of the Zo's juju, afterwards.	Talhata Sherif helped ZM defeat Kpelle rivals. Islam spread in M.	ZM & companions expelled from M.
(15) ZM's Curse & Poro Society		ZM cursed M; ZM founded the Poro to protect the Kpelle from the Handingo.	ZM cursed M and founded the Poro society where peoples backs were marked at the big	ZM worshiped rocks behind M called Ngôni.							
(16) Preparing to Leave		Before leaving with companions, ZM took some water, branches & rock from M.			Before leaving M, ZM took some water.						
(17) Journey South		Various incidents took place at Jôn, Kanikikela, Manakolo, Gbôlo & Yelawula before going to Zoeta.	ZM stopped at Jiluo (Jôn) & Kanikikela before reaching Zoeta.	ZM left M and went to Zoeta.	ZM passed Kanikokela & Jiluo (Yelawula) after leaving M.		Creek by M named after ZM's wife Jôn.	After leaving M, incidents took place at Gbô & Bôola before ZM "rested" at Bôola.			ZM & companions moved to Zoeta.
(18) ZM in Zoeta		ZM made Zoeta look like M; made powerful devil from his T.	ZM reached Zoeta.	ZM reached Zoeta.	Zontia made to look like M.						

## DOCUMENT

### **Lawyers Committee for Human Rights Critique of the U.S. Department of State's Review of Human Rights in Liberia for 1990\***

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the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights**

**(The Editor)**

This year's report on Liberia is a detailed presentation of human rights conditions given the severe constraints in reporting due to the ongoing civil war and the State Department should not be criticized for minor oversights. The report, on the whole, accurately captures the complete breakdown of the social fabric by the end of the year which resulted in anarchy and systematic torture, extra-judicial killings and other forms of abuse committed by all the warring factions. In one of the strongest statements ever made in a country report, the State Department asserts that the "overall human rights situation in Liberia in 1990 was appalling." The report confirms that facilities such as hospitals, churches and diplomatic compounds that should have been off-limits under the rules of war were attacked by all sides resulting in the deaths of thousands of civilians. To its further credit, there are careful inclusions of human rights violations existing in the early part of the year which could easily have been forgotten as the situation deteriorated so drastically, such as prison conditions or detention without trial.

For the first time, the State Department is unequivocally critical of President Samuel Doe and the lack of accountability in the government and military. However, a major flaw in the report is its failure to convey adequately the larger context and pattern of a decade of human rights abuses under President Doe which contributed to the start of the civil war and the ongoing atrocities. It is worth noting that the abuses perpetrated by the main rebel group led by Charles Taylor (NPFL) and Prince Johnson's rebel group (NPFL)—"disappearances," killings, targeting of ethnic groups, arbitrary persecution—all followed a pattern created by Doe. Even the manner in which Doe was killed by Prince Johnson's group mirrored Doe's treatment of his own enemies. From 1980-90 officials of the Doe government and military were never held accountable for abuses, and many of those who were in government positions when the worst abuses occurred continued in those jobs for the first part of 1990. Meanwhile, government institutions were steadily undermined by those responsible for



past abuses. Without placing human rights abuses within this context, the atrocities committed by the rebel troops and government troops described in the report cannot be fully understood.

The State Department has consistently misrepresented the Doe government's efforts to intimidate and silence the press in the past and the problem is evident again this year. Attacks on the press, imprisonment of journalists and the banning of newspapers over the past 10 years had already created an atmosphere in which the press was unable to function without extensive self-censorship and fear by 1990. During 1990, the situation was no different and the State Department starts off accurately by stating that "[a]t the beginning of 1990, the Liberian press was under increasingly serious restrictions and intimidation from the government."

While the report states that "[a]s the government's control slackened, the independent media began to cover the civil war with considerable candor and generally gave full coverage to AFL [Armed Forces of Liberia] abuses and losses and to rebel activities," it also should have noted that at no time did government attempts to control the media slacken. Emmanuel Bowier, Minister of Information, harassed journalists consistently until the government fell. While coverage of the war increased as the war progressed, at no time were journalists permitted to report freely and the newspapers possessed much more information than they ever reported (including photographs that were never used). Moreover, journalists who reported during this time continued to face the possibility of "disappearance" or death and any increased coverage should be attributed to the bravery of those in the press rather than to liberalized government policy.

The report states that foreign journalists were "generally treated well by both sides, allowed to enter and leave the country without undue interference." This statement is inaccurate. For example, in July several journalists encountered problems. Elizabeth Blunt of the British Broadcasting Corporation had her letters of accreditation revoked by the Ministry of Information after she reported that AFL soldiers had fired into the Nigerian Embassy. Her life was threatened by the government and she was forced to leave until September when she reentered the country under the auspices of the West African regional keeping forces (ECOMOG). Kenneth Noble of *The New York Times* had to leave Monrovia hurriedly after being threatened by AFL soldiers outside El Mason Hotel, Julian Marshall of the BBC was threatened by AFL soldiers at gunpoint and Associated Press reporter Michael Roddy was clubbed and stripped by AFL soldiers.

The State Department concludes that the hundreds of thousands of Liberians fleeing over the border during the year exercised their constitutional right to "move freely throughout Liberia and to leave or enter the country at any time." This huge population movement was anything but voluntary; people moved under duress, often in response to death threats from the various warring

parties. To imply somehow that the displacement of these hundreds of thousands of people constituted an exercise of their constitutional right is outrageous.

The report accurately notes that there were numerous checkpoints set up by the various forces which hampered movement and were the sites of many killings and robberies. Each faction attempted to force civilians behind their lines and as people moved, they had to pay large bribes to pass through these checkpoints. As the fighting intensified, merely the approach of a large number of people walking towards a checkpoint would trigger gunfire by apprehensive soldiers, rebel or government.

The extent to which these checkpoints became killing areas will never be known, but the State <sup>t</sup> should have noted that the numerous checkpoints were frequently associated with arbitrary harassment and extrajudicial killings. Eyewitnesses reported to the Lawyers Committee that the Ganta checkpoint was littered with bodies and AFL soldiers were using human skulls for drinking cups. Another eyewitness described a checkpoint on Johnson's side in Caldwell as having been made out of skeletons. Taylor's group specifically targeted nationals from the countries that had contributed forces to the ECOMOG forces at their checkpoints. Among those killed by Taylor's forces were eleven Ghanaian professors from the University of Liberia.

The report omits to mention the use and abuse of children in the fighting. There are many reports of armed children, some as young as 10, killing and being killed. Eyewitnesses verify that the NPFL has a children's brigade and many of these children have been responsible for looting, raping and killing civilians.

In the discussion on the use of excessive force, the report accurately describes the excessive and random killing, primarily of civilians, that took place throughout the year, the absence of accountability and lack of effort on all sides to put a stop to these killings.

In a major omission, the report fails to mention that as the fighting continued, Doe then sent Charles Julu to Nimba County to head the AFL soldiers. Julu was responsible in November 1985 for directing a combination of soldiers in the national army and armed Plant Protection Force of the Liberian-American-Swedish Minerals Company in a systematic campaign of reprisals against Gios in Nimba County. At that time, he detained dozens of Gio civilians and was responsible for the extrajudicial killings of a number of Gio soldiers.

Given Julu's history in the area, Doe's decision to send him into Nimba to head the troops in 1990 was a clear signal to Liberians that Doe had no intention of curbing human rights violations by his soldiers, and in fact, his choice of Julu indicated quite the opposite. As the fighting continued, such fears were not unfounded, and in fact there were credible reports that Julu was responsible for

killing over 40 civilians at a checkpoint on Tubman Boulevard near the World Health Organization office. As Doe became more desperate, the thin veneer of restraint was disposed of and increased license was given to AFL troops. Moreover, Doe issued guns and uniforms to Mandingo and Krahn civilians urging them to defend him.

#### Endnotes

\*What follows is a critique of the U.S. Department of States review of human rights in Liberia for 1990. The critique was prepared by the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights as part of a forthcoming Lawyers Committee report which will assess the State Department's description of human rights conditions in 49 countries. The 1990 State Department report on Liberia is reproduced in Volume XVI, No. 1 (1991) of the LSJ.

## DOCUMENT

**Agency for International Development  
Washington, D.C.  
Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance  
(OFDA)  
Situation Report No. 19  
May 6, 1991**

### **West Africa—Displaced Persons**

**Areas Affected:** All of Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Sierra Leone

**No. Dead:** The exact number killed is not yet known, but estimates range between 10,000 to 13,000.

**No. Affected:** 1.2 million displaced persons in Liberia and over 760,000 who have fled to neighboring Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Nigeria and Mali.

### **Summary of Assistance to the West Africa Emergency**

USG	\$127,465,034
US Private Agencies	\$1,985,000
International Community	\$76,908,823
<u>Total</u>	\$206,358,857

### **Background**

On Dec. 24, 1989, a small band of guerrillas seized government installation and villages in Nimba County of northern Liberia. The go t of former President Samuel Doe sent its armed forces to oust them. Attempts by the Government of Liberia (GOL) to eject them from their strongholds were futile. The rebel offensive gained momentum and gradually defeated all but tiny remnants of the government forces. The nation is still contested by three warring groups: the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) led by Charles Taylor, the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL) led by Prince Johnson, and remnants of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL). A second interim Government of National Unity (IGNU) has been formed and it is once again headed by Amos Sawyer. The new interim government has the support of the AFL, INPFL, and other independent Liberian political parties. Charles Taylor refuses to accept this new negotiated interim government.

Thousands of traumatized Liberians have been displaced from their homes; more than 760,000 of them have fled to neighboring countries. An estimated 350,000 Liberian refugees are in Guinea, 320,250 are in Cote d'Ivoire, 125,000 are in Sierra Leone, 8,000 are in Ghana, 1,700 are in Nigeria, and the number of displaced persons inside Liberia is estimated at 1.2 million in need of assistance.

A five-nation West African peacekeeping contingent which includes troops from Sierra Leone, Guinea, Gambia, Nigeria and Ghana is still in Liberia.

### The Situation

Delegates at the all-Liberia party conference which started on March 15, 1991, have reached an agreement, but they fell far short of a solution which could lead to a lasting peace. Dr. Sawyer has been chosen to head this second interim government.

The leader of the NPFL, Charles, Taylor, is still in control of 90% of the country. All attempts to involve him in the new negotiated government have failed. Liberia continues to be divided and remains a country with serious problems.

In Sierra Leone, however, refugee relief operations have been disrupted by an armed NPFL incursion into Sierra Leone. Liberian refugees have been scattered; only 10-15,000 are now accessible with most moving toward Freetown. Some 45,000 people (about 20% of whom are Liberian refugees and 80% of whom are Sierra Leoneans) have fled into Guinea. Several thousands Liberians have moved to the Freetown port seeking passage back to Monrovia. An additional five thousand have already embarked for Monrovia.

Relief operations in Liberia continue unhindered; some refugees have returned to Liberia. Special Emergency Life Food (SELF) has already completed its 7th general relief food distribution. Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and World Food Program (WFP) have opened a new central warehouse for storage of relief goods.

UNICEF Representative, Esther Golluma, noted that the malnutrition rate of children in Monrovia has fallen from 27% to under 5%.

### Transport Activities:

In response to the Liberia-Sierra Leone border-altercation, the government of Sierra Leone suspended all airline and shipping activities between the two countries. The UN-sponsored AirServ International was the only air service exempted from the ban; it continues to provide airlift support for NGOs working in Liberia. As of April 30, the ban was being modified, and some commercial carriers are being granted authorization to enter Sierra Leone.

**Lodging:**

Lodging remains difficult in the Liberian capital. Prior arrangements must be made. The El Mason in downtown Monrovia, which initially opened as a restaurant, has now reopened its hotel; it is currently offering accommodations to business travelers.

**Action Taken by the Interim Government of Liberia (IGOL)**

Interim President Amos Sawyer called on all able-bodied Liberians to work together and rebuild their nation. He offered a 30-day amnesty to all combatants and invited them to participate in a rehabilitation program. Sawyer's new government is also preoccupied with setting up reception centers for Liberians wanting to return to their homeland.

**Action Taken by the Government of Guinea (GOG)**

Relief assistance to Guinea has been plagued by poor roads which have been worsened by the rainy season. Lack of trucks has also been a critical constraint to delivering food to refugees. To counter this problem the GOG repaired bridges to ensure that the supply route to N'Zerekore from Conakry would remain open.

The number of refugees registered in that country is now over 400,000 most of whom are located in the Guinea Forest Region. Relief workers believe that the actual number is closer 325,000. A new UNHCR census is underway in the Forest region. The GOG is using Guinean facilities to establish schools for refugee children.

In order to increase warehousing facilities, the Guinea Forest Resident Minister has authorized the use of two hangars. A plot of land has been allocated for the installation of a logistics center. This ministerial decision will provide 3,000 metric tons of storage capacity, a workshop, and offices of ADRA to operate in the Forest Region.

Reports provided by the USAID Office in Guinea indicate that the GOG spent \$300,000 to assist victims of the Liberia civil strife. Rice was transported by the military and distributed through regional authorities. The GOG also provides full cooperation with donors and relief agencies, including duty free fuel.

The newest refugees fleeing the fighting in Sierra Leone may need to be accommodated in refugee camps, in order to provide adequate assistance. Unlike the early refugees, the arrivals are dispersed in villages throughout the Forest region.

### **Action Taken by the Government of Cote d'Ivoire (GOCI)**

The GOCI has established a registration system to provide adequate demographic data on the arriving refugees. Official estimates indicate that refugees in the Danane, Guiglo and Tabou departments total more than 320,000. As in Guinea, a census is underway and is uncovering some significant over counts. The GOCI is repairing existing water pumps in the refugee areas. With the assistance of international organizations the government is also educating the refugees on health related issues. Recent Congressional and RP/CDC monitoring visits to West Africa, have reported that relief officials in Cote d'Ivoire are dealing effectively with the refugee situation.

A report provided by a CDC Public Health Specialist, David Bassett, who visited Cote d'Ivoire during the period April 8-12 indicates that: "The GOCI has provided considerable manpower, technical services, land, warehouse space and other goods/services to relief agencies and Liberians, and has created flexible conditions for the refugees. Liberians are allowed to move freely back and forth across the Liberia-Cote d'Ivoire border as well as inside the country. Liberians are able to sell in the marketplace, build homes, and organize informal educational programs for their children."

### **Action Taken by the Government of Sierra Leone (GOSL)**

The GOSL has been cooperating with international organizations to provide relief assistance for the thousands of refugees in its country. As noted, fighting in the eastern region has scattered the refugees and led to hostility toward refugees who were previously welcomed as members of extended families.

### **Assistance Provided by the U.S. Government**

#### **Liberia**

On Jan. 16, 1990, as a result of the fighting in Nimba County, U.S. Ambassador James K. Bishop concluded that a disaster existed in Liberia. He allocated on Jan. 18, 1990, \$25,000 through the International Committee of the Red Cross to procure relief items for the civil strife victims. In addition, the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster assistance (OFDA) provided on March 7, \$30,000 to the U.S. Mission in Monrovia. The funds were used for the purchase of communications equipment and two computers; the procured items were to assist the U.N. with its relief efforts. A USAID Representative, Mr. Samuel Scott, has been assigned to Liberia. As of March 7, 1991, he assumed his duties as the USAID Coordination Officer in Liberia.

OFDA provided on April 12, 1990, \$14,285 for the purchase of a vehicle and the financing of communication installation costs. USAID/Monrovia contrib-

uted \$22,000 to Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in support of its relief preparations. CRS received on June 6, additional OFDA funding of \$114,649 toward its increased role in the relief effort.

On June 22, 1990, OFDA provided a grant of \$50,000 to *Medicins Sans Frontieres* (MSF/Belgium) in support of displaced reception centers in Liberia. The grant provided sleeping, cooking and sanitary facilities. A senior OFDA Operations Officer, Joe Gettier, was dispatched to Liberia in July. His role was to assess and coordinate any further OFDA assistance to the area. A Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) was also sent to Liberia, but the deteriorating security situation made it impossible to fulfill all its objectives. The seven-member team upon its return provided health, medical, and sanitary assessments to the Liberia Task Force. The estimated cost of these missions, is \$42,300.

On September 4, 1990, OFDA dispatched a second Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) to Monrovia. The deteriorating security situation which worsened after Doe's death made it difficult for the team to accomplish all of its objectives. The DART Health Officer, Dr. Ellery Gray, visited the refugees at the Greystone site near the U.S. Embassy and reported severe cases of malnutrition and rampant diarrhea and dysentery; 277 of the 500 persons surveyed in the Mamba Point area were found to be severely malnourished. The estimated cost of the second disaster response team is estimated at \$12,000.

On September 21, 1990, OFDA allocated \$999,717 to Catholic Relief Services in support of its humanitarian assistance to Liberians affected by the 16-month-old-civil war. An additional allocation of \$373,000 was also donated to MSF/Belgium to rehabilitate three hospitals in Nimba county and provide medicine and medical supplies to hospitals in Bong, Lofa, Grand Bassa, and Nimba counties, and in Monrovia. A total of \$250,000 was allocated to UNICEF in support of a water and sanitation project in Guinea. OFDA also provided \$128,124 to cover transport costs for the airlift of 70,000 pounds of medical supplies donated by Medical Assistance Programs (MAP) to MSF/Belgium in Liberia.

On October 27, 1990, OFDA sent Operations Officer Joe Gettier to Freetown and Monrovia to assess the worsening relief situation and to ensure that the food distribution effort is carried out expeditiously. He was joined by representatives from CRS, U.S. Committee on Refugees, and Action Internationale Contre La Faim (AICF). The mission's top priorities were to ensure the supply of food and water for Monrovia, to institute supplementary feeding and to augment logistical back-up for international organizations and NGOs working in Liberia. A total of \$5,000 was allocated by OFDA for water restoration.

On December 19, 1990, OFDA reserved a grant of \$339,965 for Action Internationale Contre La Faim (AICF). The grant will assist AICF in its supple-



mental feeding program in Liberia. A grant of \$479,000 has also been approved to cover airlift operation costs between Freetown and Monrovia. The grant has been allocated to Air Serv International. Communications equipment have also been provided by OFDA to improve flight coordination between Monrovia and Freetown. The total cost of the communications equipment is estimated at \$7,000. OFDA's funding of the Air Serv operation will expire on May 8, 1991. An additional 30 days of airlift operations funded by UNDP will start on May 9.

On February 24, 1991, the Department of Defense (DOD) airlifted 70,000 pounds of humanitarian goods to Liberia.

OFDA is allocating an additional \$158,000 to CRS in support of additional relief activities which are being undertaken by the Christian Health Association of Liberia (CHAL).

**Total .....\$3,165,409**

#### **Cote d'Ivoire**

As a result of the many displaced persons arriving in Cote d'Ivoire, Ambassador Kenneth L. Brown on Jan. 17, 1990 determined that a disaster existed in the country. He presented \$25,000 and a vehicle to the representatives of the League of Red Cross Societies (LRCS). The humanitarian grant has provided food, shelter, transportation and medicines to the impacted areas. A DOD plane landed in Cote d'Ivoire on Feb. 26, 1990, carrying 54,000 pounds of emergency medical supplies to help the displaced persons. The estimated cost of this airlift is assessed at \$222,500. A Peugeot truck costing \$8,000 and clothing valued at \$4,000 were donated by the USAID Regional Economic Development Services Office (REDSO).

**Total .....\$259,500**

#### **Guinea**

On Feb. 5, 1990, Ambassador Samuel E. Lupo, determined that the refugee situation constituted a disaster. He exercised his disaster authority to allocate \$25,000 to MSF/Belgium to assist those affected by the Liberia crisis.

**Total ..... 25,000**

#### **Sierra Leone**

The 16-month-old civil war has also affected Sierra Leone. Since May, Sierra Leone has become a sanctuary to many refugees and third country nationals fleeing the callous brutality in Liberia. An estimated 125,000 refugees have arrived in the country. On August 14, 1990, the U.S. Ambassador Johnny Young, declared that the situation warranted assistance and allocated \$25,000 to help with ongoing relief activities. On October 6, 1990, OFDA allocated an additional \$25,000 in support of the continuing relief efforts by the Sierra Leone Red Cross.

OFDA has also provided \$32,983 to CARE for a logistics expert to assist the U.S. Embassy in Sierra Leone.

However, ongoing clashes at the Liberia-Sierra Leone border are having a negative impact on relief activities in Sierra Leone.

**Total.....\$82,983**

### **Regional Assistance**

In FY 1990 the U.S. State Department's Bureau for Refugee Programs (RP) donated \$1.2 million to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), \$1 million to the League of Red Cross (LRCS), and \$3.5 million to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in support of ongoing humanitarian activities. ADRA received a grant of \$245,925 from RP to purchase trucks in support of ongoing relief activities in Guinea.

In FY 1991, an additional \$6 million from the President's Emergency Refugee Migration Assistance (ERMA) has been approved for the Liberia crisis. So far RP has obligated \$1 million to the league, \$1 million to UNHCR, and \$3 million to UNICEF for programs in Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, and Sierra Leone. RP has sent a short-term Refugee Coordinator to Freetown, Sierra Leone, to assist the U.S. Embassy in monitoring refugee activities in the area. A permanent Refugee Coordinator will be placed in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire starting this summer.

Since May 1990, AID/FFP has authorized a total of 167,400 metric tons of rice and 22,305 metric tons of processed foods in support of relief efforts in countries affected by the Liberian crisis. The total value in foods, ocean freight, internal transport, storage, and handling is estimated at \$112,100,000. To date, 121,412 metric tons of Title II food aid have been made available to the region. 4,512 metric tons have now been booked for May, early June arrival.

A total of 19,333 metric tons of commodities have landed in Monrovia. A total of 12,816 metric tons (mostly rice) has been shipped to Buchanan, Liberia. 520 metric tons of rice have been moved overland into harper and Cape Palmas from San Pedro, Cote d'Ivoire, and another 2,081 metric tons of rice are moving cross-border from Danane into eastern Liberia. Food shipments to Guinea's Forest region to date total 24,599 metric tons; Sierra Leone has received through April 15, 1991, a total of 11,395 metric tons for Liberian refugee feeding; Cote d'Ivoire has received 25,056 metric tons.

A total of 121,412 metric tons of food have already been delivered to the region.

**Total USG Assistance .....\$127,465,034**

### **Assistance Provided by U.S. Private Organizations**

The Liberian Agricultural Company (LAC), an American owned rubber plantation in Liberia, has provided assistance to thousands of impacted civilians. It has also provided shelters to many displaced persons. The organization is currently encouraging farmers to start planning and revive the agricultural sector of the country. LAC is coordinating with local and international organizations for additional assistance to the distressed areas of Liberia.

### **Assistance Provided by U.S. Voluntary Agencies**

The African-American Institute in New York has established Liberia Watch, a network of Liberian and U.S. groups concerned about Liberia. The network has already established the following committees to assist with the crisis: A ham radio committee, a transfer of funds committee, an education committee, a publicity committee, and a newsletter committee.

ADRA—is working with UNHCR in Guinea to transport food to refugees in the Guinea Forest region and other affected areas. It is also sending a new representative to Guinea to manage the ADRA logistical portion of the refugee relief activities in the country.

American Red Cross—contributed \$70,000 to the Liberian relief efforts.

CARE—provided short term housing in the form of plastic sheeting and tools to Liberian refugees in Sierra Leone. The cost for the project is estimated at \$80,000. It also completed 1,000 shelters in the Pujehun District of Sierra Leone.

CRS—established a working presence in Monrovia during the last week of October. It has tackled the difficult job of organizing the port of Monrovia. It is conducting food distributions with a local non-governmental organizations S.E.L.F. (Special Emergency Life Food). CRS reports that "in March 600 MT of rice, beans, peas, vegetable oil and fishpowder was distributed to an estimated 500,000 beneficiaries through 35 neighborhood committees in 140 distribution centers."

CRS/Ougadougou and CRS/Lome—donated 120 metric tons of vegetable oil to Caritas and CRS/Cote d'Ivoire.

CRS/Sierra Leone—distributed to 3,000 Liberian refugees in Sierra Leone: 150 metric tons of bulgar, 60 metric tons of corn-soys blend, and 15 metric tons of vegoil.

Christian Health Association of Liberia (CHAL)—donated \$5,000 in support of ongoing relief activities by the Liberian Catholic Secretariat.

Church World Service (CWS)—has opened the former Seventh Day Adventist Cooper Clinic in Sinkor, Monrovia. The clinic will provide medical assistance to those in need. Program costs are estimated to be in the range of \$300,000.

Lutheran World Relief—has given an initial grant of \$25,000 to the Lutheran World Relief Federation in support of their relief activities in the Liberian crisis.

Liberian Committee for Relief—Resettlement and Reconstruction (LICORE)—Executive Director James K. Holder has reported that LICORE is acting as an information center for the Liberian Community. The Washington-based PVO has set up a database which is helping those affected by the one-year-war to locate relatives lost during the conflict. Collected data on Liberian professionals have also been stored to assist international organizations and PVOs in finding qualified Liberians for relief and reconstruction programs in Liberia. LICORE coordinated the arrival of three humanitarian flights carrying 70,000 pounds of relief cargo which arrived in Monrovia on Feb. 24 and 25, 1991. These flights were under the auspices of DOD.

Medical Assistance Programs International (MAP)—has donated 70,000 pounds of medical supplies (valued at \$1.5 million) to MSF/Belgium in support of its medical intervention in Liberia. OFDA has provided financial assistance for the transport of the medical supplies. The MAP medical shipment arrived in Sierra Leone on September 25, 1990.

World Relief—has provided \$10,000 for a local purchase of rice to feed Liberian refugees in Sierra Leone.

**Total U.S. PVO Assistance .....\$1,985,000**

### **Assistance Provided by the International Community**

#### *International and Non-Governmental Organizations*

Action International Contre La Faim (AICF)—is providing supplementary feeding in Liberia.

Cause—a Canadian NGO is setting up relief distribution points in Kenema, Sierra Leone.

EC—on March, 1991, the Commission of the European Communities (EC) announced a grant of emergency aid totalling \$5.4 million; the grant will finance food and medical programs to be implemented by the World Food Program, Medecins Sans Frontieres, Lutheran World Federation, and Concern. On April 29, 1991, the EC announced a grant of \$743,400 for the Liberia civil strife victims. This grant brings the EC contribution to \$41,243,400 since the beginning of 1990.

ICRC—has begun a city-wide cleaning campaign in Monrovia by using a scheme of "food-for-work". A water expert was also dispatched to Monrovia.

LRCS—is mounting relief efforts in partnership with UNHCR in Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone, and so far channeled \$2,762,876 for food and transport. LRCS has been distributing food to more than 100,000 refugees in Sierra Leone.

Medecins Sans Frontieres/Belgium—reports that it is coordinating activities at 90 supplemental feeding centers in NPFL territory serving some 3,000 children. MSF/Belgium is starting to swap edible rice for excess seed rice being held by local farmers. The "Seed for Rice Program" will distribute seeds to farmers at the beginning of the spring planting season. MSF along with UNICEF and Plan International have jointly established an orphanage project which will benefit 5,000 children. The project will monitor, assist and upgrade existing orphanages. WFP will provide food for these orphanages. MSF/B and MSF/Holland are carrying out a vaccination campaign against measles in Nimba and Margibi counties of Liberia.

MSF/France is undertaking another vaccination campaign against measles among refugees in Cote d'Ivoire.

National Muslim Congress of Liberia—donated clothing, oil and rice in support of relief activities.

**Special Emergency Life Food (SELF)—has just completed its 7th food distribution in Monrovia.**

UNHCR is assisting the Liberian refugees in neighboring countries. Pledges in the amount of \$16.1 million were received in response to the UNHCR's 1990 appeal for \$15.9 million. UNHCR has agreed in principle to take on Africare as implementing partner in Guinea. Africare would assist refugees and local residents in planting vegetable gardens. UNHCR has also confirmed that they will provide funds for three 500 metric tons warehouses, one in each of the three main relief departments (Danane, Guiglo, and Tabou) of Cote d'Ivoire.

UNICEF—donated \$200,000 in medical and hygiene assistance to help the displaced persons. UNICEF has also completed a nutritional survey, which found that 27 percent of Monrovia's under-five age group are malnourished. UNICEF is contracting electric consultants to increase electrical generating capacity at the Liberia Electric Company. UNICEF is also helping to improve water and sanitation facilities in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire. UNICEF also continues with its vaccination program in Cote d'Ivoire.

UNDRO—has chartered a relief flight which arrived in Monrovia on Dec. 15, 1990. The flight was used by numerous NGO's not yet represented in Liberia. The purpose of the journey was to assess the situation, and prepare for an

eventual return to the country. UNDRO is also involved in coordinating efforts to improve local communication networks in Liberia.

WHO—is airlifting medical supplies to Liberia.

WFP—has authorized the use of \$1,860,000 from its logistics emergency funds to help victims of the Liberia Crisis. It is also requesting \$1,360,000 in cash contributions for logistics and staffing from international donors. WFP is providing food assistance in the interior of Liberia through Lutheran World-wide Service in Cape Mount County, through MSF/France in Bomi County, and MSF/Belgium in the north eastern part of Liberia. WFP is also providing 81,161 metric tons of food products which will be shared among displaced persons in Liberia and the vulnerable groups of refugees in Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Sierra Leone.

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Governments

The following government donations have been made primarily through UNHCR, LCRS, and ICRC appeals. Some donations have also been made bilaterally to refugee hosting countries and to non-governmental organizations engaged in relief activities. Some contributions have been provided “in-kind”.

Belgium	\$70,000	Norway	\$322,727
Canada	\$4,055,000	Spain	\$31,185
Denmark	\$486,224	Sweden	\$495,050
Finland	\$300,529	Switzerland	\$384,615
France	\$1,049,000	United Kingdom	\$840,633
Germany	\$273,000		
Guinea	\$300,000		
Japan	\$1,444,769		
Ireland	\$42,995		
Italy	\$81,633		
Korea	\$5,692		
Liechtenstein	\$21,495		
Netherlands	\$4,533,000		

**Total Non-USG Assistance .....\$76,908,823**

## DOC

### **Economic Community of West African State Second Meeting of the Committee of Five on the Liberian Crisis Held in Yamoussoukro, 16–17 September, 1991 Final Communiqué**

The ECOWAS Committee of Five on Liberian held its second meeting in Yamoussoukro, COTE D'IVOIRE, from 16 to 17 September, 1991 under the chairmanship of His Excellency Felix HOUPOUET-BOIGNY, President of the Republic of COTE D'IVOIRE. The Committee invited certain Member States of ECOWAS to participate in its deliberations.

2. Present at the Meeting were the following Heads of State and Government or their duly accredited representatives:

- His Excellency Captain Blaise COMPAORE, President of Faso, Head of Government, BURKINA FASO.
- His Excellency Felix HOUPOUET-BOIGNY, President of the Republic of COTE D'IVOIRE.
- His Excellency Alhaji Sir Dawda Kairaba JAWARA, President of the Republic of THE GAMBIA.
- His Excellency General Joao Bernardo VIEIRA, President of the Council of State of the Republic of GUINEA-BISSAU.
- His Excellency Lieutenant-Colonel Amadou Toumani TOURE, Chairman of the People's Redemption Transitional Committee, Head of State of the Republic of MALI.
- His Excellency Abdou DIOUF, President of the Republic of SENEGAL.
- Honorable Kokou Joseph KOFFIGO, Prime Minister of the TOGOLESE Republic.
- Honorable Augustus AIKHOMU, Vice-President, representing the President of the Federal Republic of NIGERIA.
- Honorable Mohamed Ibn AS, Deputy PNDC Secretary for Foreign Affairs, representing the Head of State of the Republic of Ghana.

3. Also present at the invitation of the Committee were:

- His Excellency Dr. Amos SAWYER, President of the Interim Government of LIBERIA.
- Mr. Charles TAYLOR, Head of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL).
- The Representative of the International Negotiations Network (INN).

### **Outcome of Deliberations**

#### **Consultations**

4. The Committee reviewed developments relating to the Liberian crisis since its last meeting in Yamoussoukro on July 29, 1991. The Committee noted that since that meeting, consultations were undertaken between the States of ECOWAS and with some friendly states outside the sub-region on a number of matters aimed at restoring lasting peace and security to Liberia in justice and dignity.

#### **ECOMOG**

5. The Meeting recognized the vital importance that the necessary conditions of peace and security on the ground should be created in order to reinforce the confidence of the parties concerned as well as create the atmosphere conducive to the holding of free, fair, and democratic elections in Liberia. To this end, the Meeting agreed on the need to remodel and reinforce ECOMOG and reiterated earlier appeals to other Member States of ECOWAS willing and able to contribute troops to do so without any further delay. It therefore welcomed with appreciation the announcement by Senegal of its readiness to contribute troops to ECOWAS.

#### **Maintenance of Ceasefire**

6. The Meeting noted with satisfaction that both the Interim Government and the National Patriotic Front of Liberia had adhered to their commitments to continue to observe and consolidate the ceasefire in Liberia.

#### **Encampment and Disarmament**

7. The Meeting welcomed the agreement of the parties to implement, under ECOWAS supervision, the encampment of their troops in designated locations and their disarmament, and the arms and ammunition would be deposited in appropriate armouries also under the supervision of ECOMOG. The Meeting mandated ECOMOG, in liaison with the parties concerned, to work out the practical modalities for the implementation of this agreement.



### **Electoral Process**

8. The two parties agreed to set up a five-member Elections Commission for the organization and supervision of the elections to be held in Liberia. The Commission would meet in Monrovia as soon as possible.

9. The two parties agreed to establish a five-member Ad Hoc Supreme Court to adjudicate disputes arising from the electoral process as provided for by the Liberian Constitution.

10. The parties also agreed to cooperate fully with the International Negotiations Network (INN) of the Carter Centre invited by the Committee to assist with the electoral process.

### **Missions to Guinea and Sierra Leone**

11. Concerned about the deterioration of the security situation in the border areas between Liberia and Sierra Leone on the one hand, and Liberia and Guinea on the other, the Meeting requested Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau and Nigeria under the Chairmanship of Senegal to visit Guinea and Sierra Leone. The objective of the mission, among other things, would be to convey the outcome of this Meeting to the Heads of State of those countries with a view to enlisting their cooperation for the successful implementation of the agreement reached and to facilitating the restoration of normalcy in those border area.

### **Vote of Thanks**

12. The meeting expressed its appreciation and gratitude to His Excellency Felix HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY, President of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire, the Government and people of Cote d'Ivoire for the warm reception and hospitality accorded to all delegations and for the excellent facilities made available to ensure the success of the Meeting.

### **Next Meeting**

13. The Committee decided to meet again in Yamoussoukro on 29 of October 1991.

DONE IN YAMOUSSOUKRO THIS SEVENTEENTH DAY OF SEPTEMBER  
1991

signed  
His Excellency  
Captain Blaise COMPAORE  
President of Faso, Head of  
Government, BURKINA FASO

signed  
His Excellency  
Felix HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY  
President of the Republic  
of COTE D'IVOIRE

signed  
 His Excellency  
 Alhaji Sir Dawda Kairaba JAWARA  
 President of the Republic of  
 THE GAMBIA

signed  
 His Excellency  
 General Joao Bernardo VIEIRA  
 President of the Council of  
 State of the Republic of  
 GUINEA-BISSAU

signed  
 His Excellency  
 Lt.-Col. Amadou Toumani TOURE  
 Chairman of the People's  
 Redemption Transitional  
 Committee, Head of State of  
 the Republic of MALI

signed  
 His Excellency Abdou DIOUF  
 President of the Republic  
 SENEGAL

signed  
 Honorable Kokou Joseph KOFFIGO  
 Prime Minister of the TOGOLESE  
 Republic

signed  
 Honorable Augustus AIKHOMU  
 Vice-President of the  
 Federal Republic of NIGERIA

signed  
 Honorable Mohamed Ibn AS  
 Deputy PNDC for  
 Foreign Affairs, representing  
 the Head of State of the  
 Republic of GHANA

signed  
 His Excellency  
 Dr. Amos SAWYER  
 President of the Interim  
 Government of LIBERIA

signed  
 Mr. Charles TAYLOR  
 Head of the National  
 Patriotic Front of LIBERIA  
 (NPFL)

## DOCUMENT

### **Economic Community of West African States Third Meeting of the Committee of Five on the Liberian Crisis Held in Yamoussoukro, 29–30 October, 1991 Final Communiqué**

The ECOWAS Committee of Five on Liberia held its third meeting in Yamoussoukro, COTE D'IVOIRE, from 29 to 30 October, 1991 under the Chairmanship of His Excellency Felix HOUPOUET-BOIGNY, President of the Republic of COTE D'IVOIRE. At the invitation of the Committee, apart from those who are members of the Committee of Five, the other members of the ECOWAS Standing Mediation Committee participated in its deliberations together with Guinea and Sierra Leone.

2. Present at the Meeting were the following Heads of State and Government or their duly accredited representatives:

- His Excellency Captain Blaise COMPAORE, President of Faso, Head of Government, BURKINA FASO.
- His Excellency Felix HOUPOUET-BOIGNY, President of the Republic of COTE D'IVOIRE.
- His Excellency General Joao Bernardo VIEIRA, President of the Council of State of the Republic of GUINEA-BISSAU.
- His Excellency Lieutenant-Colonel Amadou Toumani TOURE, Chairman of the People's Redemption Transitional Committee, Head of State of the Republic of MALI.
- His Excellency Abdou DIOUF, President of the Republic of SENEGAL.
- Honorable Kokou Joseph KOFFIGO, Prime Minister of the TOGOLESE Republic.
- Honorable Augustus AIKHOMU, Vice-President, representing the President of the Federal Republic of NIGERIA.
- Honorable J.B. DAUDA, Second Vice-President, Attorney-General and Minister of Justice, representing the President of the Republic of SIERRA LEONE.
- Honorable Alhaji Omar Sey, Minister of External Affairs, representing the President of the Republic of the Gambia.
- Honorable Dr. Obed Asamoah, PNDC Secretary for Foreign Affairs, representing the head of State of the Republic of Ghana.

—Honorable Faciné Toure, Attorney-General and Minister of Justice, representing the Head of State of the Republic of Guinea.

3. Also present at the invitation of the Committee were:

—His Excellency Dr. Amos C. SAWYER, President of the Interim Government of LIBERIA.

—Mr. Charles TAYLOR, Head of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL).

—Dr. Salim Ahmed SALIM, Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity.

—Mrs. Dayle E. SPENCER, representative of the International Negotiations Network (INN).

### **Outcome of Deliberations**

#### **Developments since the Committee's Last Meeting:**

4. The Committee reviewed developments relating to the Liberian crisis since its last meeting in Yamoussoukro on 16 and 17 September 1991. The Committee noted with appreciation that since that meeting, the Republic of Senegal, in keeping with its promise to contribute troops to ECOMOG, had started deploying its troops to Liberia to join ECOMOG. It also noted with pleasure the fact that the parties, in consonance with the agreement reached in Yamoussoukro during the last meeting of the Committee of Five, had nominated a five-member Elections Commission for the organization and supervision of the elections to be held in Liberia and a five-member ad-hoc Supreme Court to adjudicate disputes that may arise from the electoral process, as provided for by the Liberian Constitution. The Committee urged the parties concerned to take all necessary action to ensure that the Interim Elections Commission begins its work without any further delay.

#### **ECOMOG**

5. Recalling its earlier appeal to other ECOWAS Member States to contribute contingents to ECOMOG, the Committee welcomed with appreciation the announcement by Guinea-Bissau of its readiness to contribute troops to ECOMOG in order to enhance its capacity to discharge its peace-keeping role in Liberia.

#### **Timetable for Encampment and Disarmament**

6. Recalling the earlier Yamoussoukro Agreement of the parties to implement, under ECOMOG supervision, the encampment of their troops in designated

locations and their ent, and the mandate given to ECOMOG, in liaison with the parties concerned, to work out the practical modalities for the implementation of that accord, the Meeting considered and agreed a Pro of Implementation of these important elements of the cease-fire which is annexed hereto. This Programme envisages the implementation within 60 days of all the modalities for the establishment of the necessary conditions of peace and security on the ground in order to reinforce the confidence of the parties as well as create a proper atmosphere conducive to the holding of free, fair, and democratic elections in Liberia not later than six months from the date of this meeting. The Committee therefore renewed its mandate to ECOMOG to ensure that the Programme is smoothly and speedily implemented, in order to make it possible for democratic elections to be held in Liberia within the stipulated period. To this end, it appealed to all the parties concerned to continue to repose trust and confidence in ECOMOG and to cooperate fully with ECOMOG, the Interim Elections Commission, the International Negotiations Network (INN) and all other international observers who may wish to observe and monitor the electoral process.

#### **Visits to Guinea and Sierra Leone**

7. The meeting received the report of the Delegation of the Foreign Ministers of Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau and Nigeria, headed by Senegal, which was requested to visit Guinea and Sierra Leone after the end of the Committee's last meeting. It welcomed the participation of Guinea and Sierra Leone at the meeting and particularly noted with appreciation, the declaration of these countries to continue to cooperate with the Committee in order to achieve the successful implementation of the ECOWAS peace plan and to facilitate the restoration of normalcy in the border areas of Sierra Leone and Liberia. The Committee agreed on the necessity that all hostile foreign forces be withdrawn immediately from the territory of Sierra Leone and that a buffer zone be created with similar dispatch on the Liberian side of the border, to be monitored by ECOWAS.

#### **Vote of Thanks**

8. The Committee expressed its appreciation and gratitude to His Excellency Felix HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY, President of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire, the Government and people of Cote d'Ivoire for the warm reception and hospitality accorded to all delegations and for the excellent facilities made available to ensure the success of the meeting.

DONE IN YAMOUSSOUKRO THIS 30TH DAY OF OCTOBER 1991

signed

His Excellency  
Captain Blaise COMPAORE  
President of FASO

His Excellency  
Felix HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY  
President of the Republic  
of COTE D'IVOIRE

signed

His Excellency  
General Joao Bernardo VIEIRA  
President of the Council of  
State of the Republic of  
GUINEA-BISSAU

signed

His Excellency Lt.-Col.  
Amadou Toumani TOURE  
C of the People's  
Redemption Transitional  
Committee, Head of State of  
the Republic of MALI

signed

His Excellency Abdou DIOUF  
President of the Republic  
SENEGAL

signed

Honorable  
Kokou Joseph KOFFIGO  
Prime Minister of the  
TOGOLESE Republic

signed

Honorable Augustus AIKHOMU  
Vice-President, representing  
the Head of State of the  
Federal Republic of NIGERIA

signed

Honorable J.B. DAWDA  
Second Vice-President,  
Attorney-General and  
Minister of Justice representing  
the President of the Republic of  
Sierra Leone

signed

Honorable Alhaji Omar SEY  
Minister of External Affairs,  
representing the President  
of the Republic of THE GAMBIA

signed

Honorable Dr. Obed ASAMOAH  
PNDC Secretary for Foreign Affairs,  
representing the Head of State of the  
Republic of GHANA

signed

Honorable Faciné TOURE  
Attorney-General and Minister  
of Justice, representing the Head  
of State of the Republic of GHANA

signed

His Excellency  
Dr. Amos SAWYER  
President of the Interim  
Government of LIBERIA

signed

Mr. Charles TAYLOR  
Head of the National  
Patriotic Front of LIBERIA  
(NPFL)

## **Annex**

### **Program of Implementation**

#### **ECOMOG Mission**

- Cover the whole of Liberia.
- Supervise the encampment and disarmament of all warring factions.

#### **Preliminary Accepted Conditions**

- ECOMOG shall enjoy freedom of movement throughout the territory of Liberia.
- All warring factions will willingly abandon their fighting positions and move into designated camps.
- During the period of encampment and disarmament, eminent persons of the INN will visit Liberia in order to reinforce the confidence of the parties.
- All parties concerned will recognize the absolute neutrality of ECOMOG and demonstrate their trust and confidence in it.
- Some weapons would be inadvertently lost and would therefore need to be located and recovered.
- There would be some obstacles and possible minefields that would need to be neutralized.
- All entry points into Liberia will be monitored by ECOMOG troops.

#### **Tasks**

- Eliminated external threat to allow the encampment and disarmament program to be smoothly and effectively carried out.
- Monitoring of all possible avenues of approach into Liberia by patrols and static guards.
- Search, in conjunction with administrative authorities, to recover hidden or lost weapons.
- Strategic installments will need static guards.
- Security will be provided to all VIP's and where freedom of movement is established such security will not be necessary for local dignitaries.

It is clear that trust and confidence from all the parties to the conflict underpin the operations of ECOMOG which, in the light of the Yamoussoukro meetings, should now take us into the next phase. It is therefore recommended that this next phase commence on 15 November 1991 which shall be known as "D" Day.

It is envisaged that the ECOMOG military program can be completed within 60 days as follows:

#### **D-Day**

—Issue Orders.

#### **D-Day + 7**

- Confirmatory recce completed of all encampment areas and forward patrol bases.
- Border guards in place including buffer zones along Sierra Leone/Liberia border.
- Road blocks and check points removed in collaboration with administrative authorities.
- Reception centers for encampment open.
- ECOMOG patrols commence.
- NPFL encampment + documentation.
- Receiving, crating, and storage of weapons at designated points completed.
- Resettlement program commences.
- Robertsfield International Airport reactivated.
- Consolidation of border areas in collaboration with the Administrative authorities.
- Appropriate light Air Detachments deployed in Liberia (including helicopters).
- Routine patrols continue.
- Permanent presence and monitoring of all airports and seaports.
- International flights into Robertsfield commence.
- No movement of heavy weapons belonging to ECOMOG where not necessary.



**D-Day + 60**

—Assignment completed by 14 January 1992.

The operation itself will be conducted at small unit and sub-unit level but there is an over-riding need to keep border security forces for as long as . Command and control will be exercised at Force Head

## CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

**D. Elwood Dunn** is Editor of this Journal, and Professor of Political Science, The University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee.

**Garland R. Farmer** is a retired U.S. Foreign Service Officer who served at the Liberian desk in the State Department during the Truman Presidency. He is also former President of the Mine Management Associates (managing agent for the National Iron Ore Company).

**Arthur J. Knoll** is Professor of History, The University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee.

**Janice M. Saunders** is Associate Professor of Sociology at Roanoke College, Salem, Virginia.

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**Nya Kwaiwon Taryor**, a United Methodist Clergyman, is former Coordinator of Chaplaincy, now Research Associate at Hamilton College, Clinton, New York.

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