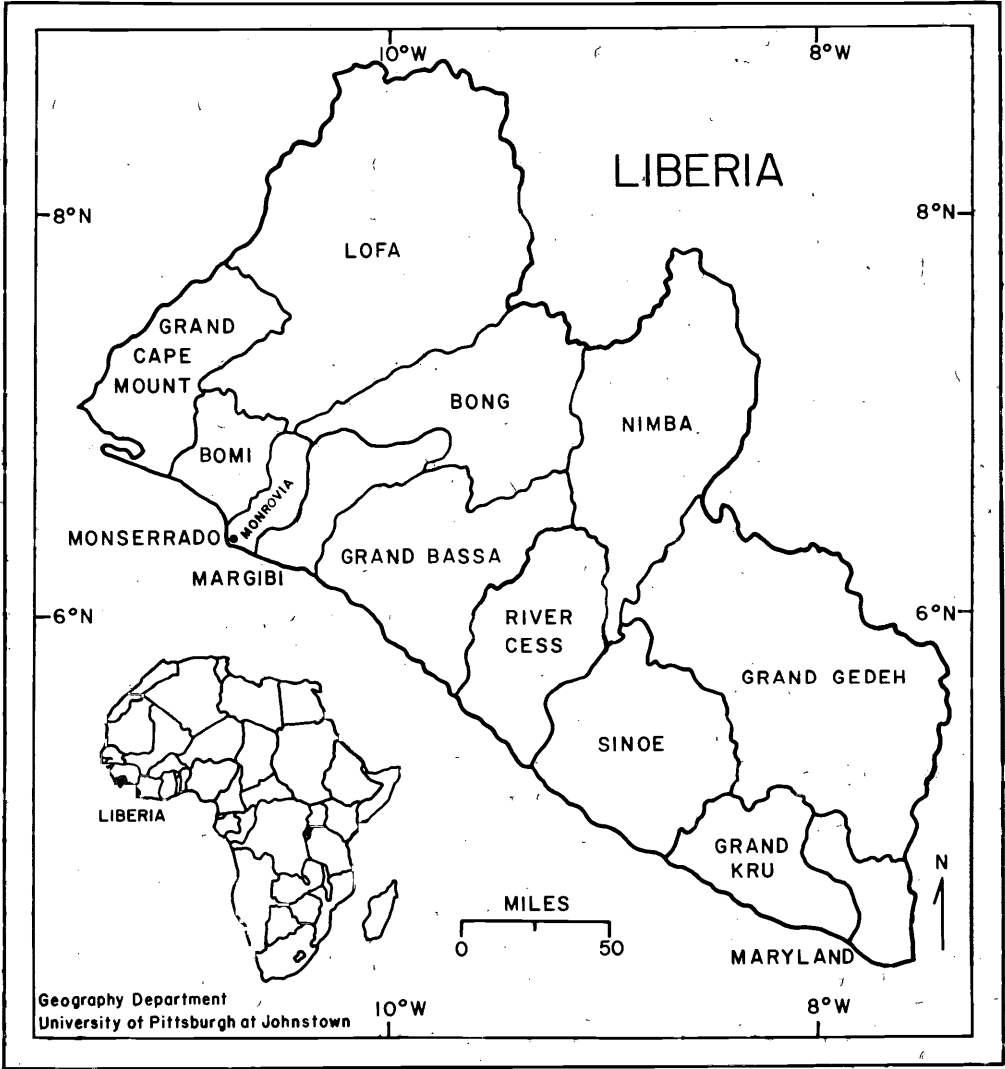


LIBERIAN STUDIES JOURNAL



# LIBERIAN STUDIES JOURNAL

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## **Macroeconomic Policies and Agricultural Performance in Liberia: 1980-90**

J. Chris Toe

### **Introduction**

Sub-Saharan Africa is perhaps the only region in the world to have emerged worse-off at the end of the 1980s than it was at the beginning of the decade. Most of the subcontinent's economies experienced weak agricultural growth, decreased industrial production, poor export performance, rising debt, and retrogressed social services, institutions and ecology (World Bank, 1989; p.2). Ineffective domestic policies, adverse external developments, and reluctance in adopting comprehensive programs of economic adjustment were instrumental in undermining agriculture and other productive sectors.

Liberia was no exception to these difficulties. Severe macroeconomic problems were encountered due to government's incapacity for reversing failed policies of the past, the continued pursuit of expansionary internal economic policies and an acquiescent external strategy. These stances resulted in unsustainable fiscal expenditures, uncontrolled monetary expansion, declining international demand for primary exports and diminished access to overseas sources of finance. These developments reinforced pre-existing structural impediments and poor microeconomic policies in eliciting sluggish growth in agriculture and contraction in industry and services (Figure 1).<sup>1</sup> The resulting confluence of falling per capita GNP and eroding social sector performance relegated the country to a low-income status, ranked 131 among 160 nations on the UNDP's 1992 Human Development index (UNDP, 1992; p.128).

This study evaluates the macroeconomic environment for agriculture in Liberia in the 1980s. It reviews the structure and performance of agriculture within the context of economy-wide events and related government policy responses and discusses the impacts of fiscal, monetary and exchange rate, trade, and external aid policies on agricultural performance. Lessons derived from this evaluation are synthesized and used, in the concluding assessment, as the foundation for a suggested policy framework linking macroeconomic stability and agricultural restructuring.

### **Data**

Over the last 35 years, many developing countries expended vast amounts of resources for the collection, collation, analysis and dissemination of economic and social statistics. In Liberia, the building and maintenance of the kinds of databases that could facilitate the evaluation of national and sectoral economic

performance were not accorded the requisite budgetary priority. The resulting paucity of data and gaps in national and international series did not, however, restrict the achievement of this investigation's objectives.

The three sets of data sources accordingly utilized in this study were: 1) Participant observation which is based on the author's knowledge of the process through which macroeconomic and agricultural policies were formulated and implemented during the period under consideration; 2) The Ministry of Agriculture (Monrovia, Liberia), *Draft Green Revolution Action Plan, Volumes I and II*. 1989 for foreign assistance and government expenditure flows to agriculture; and 3) World Bank, *World Development Report*. 1986-1992; *World Tables*. 1992; *Government Finance Statistics Yearbook*. 1991; United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and World Bank, *African Development Indicators*. 1992; and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, *Production Yearbook*. 1990 for macroeconomic, social and agricultural performance data.

## **Analytical Considerations and Empirical Evidence**

### **Analytical Considerations**

The determinants of national and intercountry differences in agricultural performance have been broadly categorized as luck factors, agricultural policies and macroeconomic policies (Lele, 1989; p.6). Luck factors comprise land, labor, institutional and infrastructural endowments inherited at independence or at the inception of modern governance as well as postliminary exogenous developments at the national and international levels.<sup>2</sup> Agricultural policies are sector-specific measures designed to enhance the growth and development of a nation's farm sector. Macroeconomic policies are planned and concerted actions taken by government to create favorable cross-sector economic conditions.

Evaluating impacts of the latter set of policies on agricultural performance demands the explicit recognition of two overarching issues. The first of these is the degree of influence exercised by domestic authorities in designing macroeconomic policies; this is assumed to be directly related to the extent to which possible outcomes associated with such initiatives can be controlled. This relationship implies a distinction among macroeconomic policies based on the degree of controllability: fiscal and monetary actions could be considered 'fully controllable' while those that fall within the realms of external trade and foreign assistance are construed as being 'mildly controllable'. This differentiation is critical for assessing the efficiency of the economic decision-making process and the effectiveness of policies.

The second consideration, the responsiveness of agricultural performance to changes in the macroeconomic environment, is deemed to be contingent on

how well the sectoral economy is integrated into the rest of the macroeconomy. This assertion underpins the analytical approach adopted in this paper because structural interdependence is pivotal in determining the difference between enabling and disabling economy-wide policies. The transnational evidence that follows confirms the plausibility of these two assumptions, indicating how crucial the controllability of macroeconomic policies and the magnitude of structural interrelationships are to institutionalizing an appropriate economy-wide environment for agricultural growth and development.

### Empirical Evidence

The objective of analyzing the effects of macroeconomic policies on the agricultural sector of Liberia manifests changes that agricultural development paradigms have undergone over the last half century. This phased transformation of ideas and related policies initially associated development with growth in average per capita output in the 1950s and 1960s (Staatz and Eicher, 1990; pp. 3-38). By the 1970s, income distribution, nutrition, employment generation and other equity issues had risen to the fore, achieving parity with growth as the dominant development themes. Rising disenchantment with the failures of integrated rural development and basic needs programs in moderating the intractable problems of the developing world in the last decade and a half redirected the thrust of agricultural development thought to market and macro policy reforms, food security and food policy, sustainable agriculture and other environmentally-driven goals.<sup>3</sup>

Two seminal crossnational studies by Lecaillon et al (1987; pp. 117-129) and Lele (1990; pp. 351-535 and 1989; pp. 8-42) exemplify the novel emphasis on evaluating macro policy impacts on agricultural performance. Lecaillon et al (1987) reviewed evidence from 1960 to the early 1980s for a sample of countries comprising Burkina Faso, Mali, Kenya, Tanzania, Nepal and Sri Lanka over the 1960-early 1980s period. It was found that the ratio of money to gross domestic product (GDP) at current prices rose throughout the period in all countries with the possible exception of Tanzania. Sources of monetary expansion were world inflation, budget deficits and structural transformation. Although the consequences of monetary expansion on agricultural performance were difficult to accurately assess, a positive relationship between money supply, the liquidity ratio and the volume of agricultural output was found in all sample countries except Tanzania where a combination of falling agricultural production and increasing monetary aggregates exerted inflationary pressures.

A significant proportion of the gross public expenditure flow into agriculture which grew absolutely and relative to total government expenditures in all countries was allocated to recurrent outlays in Tanzania, Burkina Faso and Mali. This recurrent expenditure bias resulted in increasing dependence on foreign aid for development investment which in turn imposed greater counterpart

funding costs on already-strained public finances. Generally positive net government transfers indicated that public sectors in these sample countries had contributed to reductions in their agricultural surpluses.

Finally, the growth of export volumes was found by Lecaillon et al to be reasonably good in all countries over the period except in Tanzania and Sri Lanka. But the evidence also revealed that external food assistance which tended to discourage agricultural production in Mali and Burkina Faso and agricultural exports in Nepal was neutral in Sri Lanka. Overall, all of the countries were found to have experienced difficulties in deciding the appropriate mix of agricultural export promotion and import substitution, thus rendering their external strategies ineffective.

The investigation by Lele (1989), with policy implications summarized in Lele (1990), confirmed the general conclusions of Lecaillon et al (1987). It also enhanced the comparison of subregional and interstate differences in agricultural performance by adopting a methodology which considered the historical circumstances of each country. Lele established that between 1960 and 1988, the East African nations of Kenya and Malawi performed better than Tanzania because of superior macroeconomic and agricultural policies. Kenya was ranked higher than Malawi in terms of agricultural output growth, success in reconciling growth with equity and in developing both food and export crops. But Malawi's agricultural performance exceeded Tanzania's where neglect of agriculture was found to be an outcome of the country's singular pursuit of equity. "Good" macro policies allowing Kenya and Malawi to perform better than Tanzania were identified as the avoidance of prolonged currency overvaluation, small and stable budgetary deficits and inflation rates, limited shares of government expenditure in gross domestic product and large shares of government budgets allocated to agriculture and infrastructure.

Following terms of trade adjustments for national differences in initial conditions and resource endowments, the performance of Cameroon was found to have exceeded those of the other West African nations of Nigeria and Senegal. According to Lele, Cameroon's agricultural performance surpassed the others' because of the pursuit of a relatively stable and predictable set of macroeconomic policies, e.g. using taxation to diversify the agricultural economy. Nigerian agriculture was distorted and thus harmed by currency overvaluation which implicitly taxed export crops, unstable economic policies, neglect of technology and erosion of state and local government capacity for providing basic services. Adverse domestic economic policies including costly and failed diversification strategies also impacted negatively on Senegal's agricultural performance.

Lele lastly determined foreign aid as being influential in the agricultural performance of all six countries. These external flows were especially critical in



developing smallholder production capabilities in tea and coffee in Kenya, cotton in Cameroon and maize in Northern Nigeria.

By demonstrating the positive relationship between 'good' macroeconomic policies and agricultural prosperity in countries similar to Liberia and linking agricultural growth to sustainable national economic development, the empirical evidence from Lecaillon et al and Lele provide significant insights into the current research undertaking. Relating Liberia's poor macroeconomic and agricultural performance to the country's dualistic production arrangements and overwhelmingly visionless economic policies is therefore supported by the experiences of other African and Third World states.

### **Interrelated Production Structures and Poor Performance**

In the early stages of development, structural interdependence limits the expansion of productive sectors when national policies broadly favoring agriculture are lacking (Aziz, 1990; p.11 and pp.14-19). The interrelatedness of production structures further magnifies impediments to raising factor productivity by reducing the effectiveness of strictly sectoral approaches to achieving growth. Liberia's failed attempts at developing agriculture over the course of the last fifty years underscores this inextricable linkage between structural change and productivity gains.

### **Dualism and Missing Links**

The structure of Liberian agricultural production is a microcosm of existing macroeconomic patterns. Both the economywide and sector-specific modes of production are markedly dualistic, indicating the non-integration of traditional agriculture into the modern economy. The modern macroeconomic sector consists of government operations and trade, with the latter dominated by foreign-owned concessions; these enclaves control Liberia's primary export commodities which are iron ore, rubber and logs. The traditional sector comprises peasants who produce food for subsistence along with small amounts of cocoa, coffee, and oil palm products for international trade (FAO/World Bank, 1986; pp. 5-6).

The bi-modal structure of production at the national level is replicated in agriculture where foreign plantations, Liberian-owned commercial farms and a few parastatal estates coexist with subsistent smallholder farms. Foreign-owned plantations and concessions utilize large-scale capital-intensive technology in the production of high yielding rubber and oil palm varieties and the commercial exploitation of forest resources (FAO/World Bank, 1986; p. 5) .

Output of Liberian-owned commercial farms is an assortment of locally consumed food products and export crops. Cash crop yields and the degree of farm mechanization are low relative to those of foreign plantations but resource

productivity on these farms exceeds that of parastatal estates. The latter are subsidiaries that are owned and managed by export monopolies, the most notable being the Liberia Produce Marketing Corporation (LPMC). Over the years, as financial mismanagement and institutional deficiencies crippled the effectiveness and sustainability of most government corporations, the contribution of their farming enterprises to Liberia's gross agricultural product became insignificant (FAO/World Bank, 1986, pp. 14-16; Toe, 1987, pp. 39-41; and Smith, 1987, p. 49).

Although the transformation of the peasant agricultural economy has been a long sought goal of Liberia's donor-led development strategy, domestic economic policies disfavoring agriculture debilitated subsistence farming (Ministry of Agriculture, 1980). Intrasectoral disparities between commercial and subsistence farming were widened in production technology, type and volume of crops produced, yields, income levels, management skills, access to domestic and external markets, credit, and rates of utilization of hired labor and strategic chemical inputs.

Smallholders nonetheless demonstrated remarkable resilience amid overly  
ating public sector pricing and marketing systems, lack of research and extension outreach and the absence of a credible and creative agricultural development philosophy. The subsector was largely responsible for maintaining Liberia's food security and positive trade balances in the 1980s (Statistical Table 3).

This analysis unmasked the pervasiveness of structural dualism in the Liberian economy in which the minority modern sector is fundamentally de-linked from the majority traditional sector (FAO/World Bank, 1986; p. 2). The continuing lack of commitment to market transactions by peasants and their low rates of participation in existing imperfect markets were wholly explained by the prevalence of poor and inconsistent national policies. It also was shown that in contrast to the avowed intent of government, national agricultural strategies made required improvements in factor productivity secondary to acreage-induced output expansion. This and other courses of action prevented the integration of agricultural subsectors and stifled efforts aimed at reducing the dualistic organization of national production.

Rationalizing prices, limiting and improving government intervention in markets and broadening the access of smallholders to appropriate technologies, credit, extension and other non-price determinants of agricultural growth are needed for hastening the convergence of these currently disparate sectors. Adopting effective rural income and employment generating policies in conjunction with appropriate strategies for income redistribution could also aid the harmonization of growth with equity in Liberia. Failure to steer macroeconomic

and agricultural policies in this direction has the likelihood of empowering the recurrence of the hapless economic performance that is described in the following section.

### **Dismal Performance and Ineffective Policies**

The period between 1980 and 1990 was characterized by substantial macroeconomic disequilibrium as domestic financial adversities, current account deficits and negative growth gained prominence in an economy pervaded by political instability, endemic structural deficiencies and misguided economic policies. These developments motivated criticisms of the economy's unparalleled dependence on international trade, its attendant lack of ability for absorbing external shocks and the absence of a political will for tackling rapidly deteriorating economic and social conditions.

The military take-over of government in April, 1980 and subsequent expansion of fiscal expenditures worsened the fate of an economy already on the threshold of decline.<sup>4</sup> Despite growing evidence of dwindling investor confidence and spiralling capital flight following the coup d'état, the Government of Liberia (GOL) increased military and public sector employment and salaries (Toe and Rogers, 1987, p. 72; U.S. Department of Commerce, 1989, p. 4; and Europa Publications Ltd., 1993, p. 483). Moreover, the GOL embarked on a policy of financial diversion by means of extra-budgetary and non-budgetary spending (Belleh and Falana, 1991; p. 12). These actions precipitated budget deficits averaging 9 percent of total revenues in 1986-89, up from 4.7 percent in the 1975-79 period (Figure 2). Government obligations including salaries ultimately remained unsettled for extended periods as external debt arrears rose.

A major repercussion of the latter policy miscalculation was the ent of new capital inflows by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and other donors (Dore, 1988-1989; p. B84). Decisions to terminate assistance became necessary after the GOL failed, on several occasions, to follow through on promised implementation of structural adjustment programs on which additional aid had become conditional.

In Liberia's external sector, the average annual growth rates of exports and imports fell, respectively, from 4.5 and 1.5 percent in the 1965-1980 period, to -3.2 and -9.8 percent in 1980-1988 (World Bank, 1990; p. 204). Buoyancy of the private sector, however, boosted exports of oil palm, rubber and logs as weak demand and volume reductions led to declines in the values of iron ore, cocoa and coffee (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1989; p. 5). Although aggregate merchandise imports followed a general downward trend, food imports grew at an average annual rate of 9 percent between 1986 and 1989 (UNDP and World Bank, 1992; p. 99). The consequent erosion of net foreign assets and the accrual

of arrears associated with external debt servicing led to negative current account balances in several years of the 1980s (Figure 3).

GOL responses to these macroeconomic problems consisted of untenable policy measures which resulted in monetary expansion and increased debt overhang (Statistical Appendix, Table 2). The government mandated official parity between the Liberian and US dollars and promulgated a 25 percent surrender of export earnings in exchange for Liberian currency (Toe and Rogers, 1987, p. 51; U.S. Department of Commerce, 1989, p. 5). The money supply ultimately grew from L\$ 115 million in 1980 to L\$ 302 million in 1989 and total external debt rose from US \$686 million to US \$1.743 billion in the same period (Figure 4). Although they provided short term political relief, these expansionary strategies later proved to be counter-productive to the government's economic adjustment objectives.

The US dollar which heretofore had been the dominant medium of exchange was surpassed in circulation by newly minted Liberian \$5 coins; these were subsequently withdrawn from the market and replaced with larger supplies of \$5 notes. Lacking market determined exchange rates, this dual currency system produced shortages of foreign exchange and essential goods and services. The ensuing *de facto* devaluation of the domestic currency propelled the emergence of a parallel foreign exchange market (Abikar and Toe, 1992; p. 17).

Liberia's negative macroeconomic performance and poor policy environment reduced resource flows to agriculture and other productive sectors in the 1980-90 period. They also rendered appropriate structural adjustments and other efficiency improvements impossible to undertake. But agriculture's share of total production nonetheless grew from 27 percent in 1981 to 33 percent in 1987 (Ministry of Agriculture, 1989a, pg. 28). This contribution to GDP rose again to 37 percent in the following year, making agriculture the largest sector in the Liberian economy (World Bank, 1990; p. 182). In the same period, the percentage of economically active population engaged in agricultural activities declined slightly, from 74.1 in 1980 to 69.9 in 1990, due more to a surging lack of economic opportunities in rural Liberia than to structural transformation and exchange monetarization (Statistical Appendix, Table 3).

Agriculture's aggregate positive contribution to economic growth in the 1980s obscured a downward trend in the performance of its subsectors that had begun in the late 1970s. As total agricultural, crop, food and cereal production rose during the decade, the per capita equivalents of these indicators steadily fell (Figure 5). Low yields, ineffective producer prices and a plethora of other policy and institutional deficiencies that had symbolized the agricultural policies of past administrations prevented attainment of GOL's rice self-sufficiency objectives throughout the 1980s.<sup>5</sup> Food aid and commercial rice imports amount-

ing to 25-35 percent of total annual consumption were consequently required, beginning 1984, to augment domestic output of the country's major staple commodity (Toe, 1991, p. 3; U.S. Department of Commerce, 1989, p. 7).

The dilemma of sluggish output expansion accentuates the challenge of Liberian agriculture which is how to feed an escalating population in a marginally-increasing productivity environment. Liberia's population grew at an annual rate of 3.1 percent in the period from 1960 to 1990 and is expected to increase at a rate of 3.3 percent in the last decade of this century (Figure 6); these growth rates exceed past and projected rates for SubSahara Africa and are twice the world average (UNDP, 1992; p.171). If this trend persists and the past remains a harbinger of the future, Liberia's delicate collective food security position could be supplanted by accelerated poverty and social collapse in the medium term.

This guardedly pessimistic outlook is enhanced by the recent performance of Liberian agricultural trade and dismal expectations regarding the future of international trade in farm commodities (UNDP, 1992, p. 61 and UNDP, 1990, pp. 79-80). Between 1980 and 1985, the value of agricultural exports fell at an average annual rate of 2.5 percent and has continued in free-fall since 1986 (UNDP and World Bank, 1992; p. 230). The volume of these products also decreased by 2.5 percent in the 1986-1988 period. Falling export earnings and weak domestic production negatively affected food security, prompting increased dependence on overseas development assistance. The majority of this inflow was food aid which grew at an average annual rate of 37.6 percent in 1980-1985 (UNDP and World Bank, 1992; p. 233). Although this assistance was responsible for ameliorating the threat of political instability at the time, it transmitted wrong signals to the country's leadership by disguising inept domestic policy responses and instilling a false sense of security.

### **Macroeconomic Policies Undermining Agricultural Growth**

Recent negative macroeconomic performance and relatively stagnant agricultural growth reflect the correlation between national policies and sectoral performance. This section provides ample evidence of the pernicious consequences of poorly conceived policies on a sector widely regarded as the bedrock for sustainable economic development in Liberia.

### **Loosening the Grip on Fully Controllable Policies**

The overwhelming majority of policy actions taken by government in the 1980s resulted in missteps that entrenched already perverse public involvement in commodity, input, money and foreign exchange markets. Public intervention

in agriculture also assumed an exploitative posture, demonstrating the government's lack of resolve for confronting the economic excesses and bad policies that had been carried-over from earlier administrations.

### **Fiscal Disincentives**

Between 1984 and 1988, the Ministry of Agriculture accounted for only 2 percent of recurrent expenditures and 35 percent of development spending financed predominantly by P.L.480 rice sales (Ministry of Agriculture, 1989a, p. 69 and 1989b, p. 47). On the aggregate, these flows amounted to 5.7 percent of total government expenditures per year during the period. Central government fiscal support to agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting combined grew from 5 percent of total expenditures to barely 8 percent in 1986 (Figure 7). Insignificant resource infusion plus the preeminence of foreign inputs in the nation's development budget indicates the low priority that was accorded agriculture in the GOL's investment decisions (Statistical Appendix, Table 4). The scale of these transfers pales even more when compared to the sector's contribution to GDP (33-37%) or to employment (70-74%).

The potentially positive impacts of government spending in the 1980s moreover were often offset by unstable changes in public expenditure policies and patterns for agriculture as well as for complementary economic sectors like transportation. Untimely and insufficient internal resource commitments were partly responsible for falling farm productivity and increasing dependence on foreign official investment capital. This latter development exposed the GOL's inability in meeting increasing domestic obligations associated with foreign financing, provided justification for the suspension of external assistance and facilitated the eventual collapse of donor-assisted agricultural development projects (Dore, 1988-1989; p.B84). Poor sectoral policies additionally reinvigorated the inefficient absorption of already inconsequential financial flows.

Another source of fiscal disincentives was the explicit and implicit taxation of agriculture. Direct levies including export taxes, import duties, income taxes on earnings in the monetized agricultural subsector and contributions imposed on rural farmers in lieu of national or local taxes were rampant in the 1980-90 period. Although the incidence of these taxes was lessened by administrative incompetence, remarkably efficient indirect measures were also employed to siphon an emerging agricultural surplus. Officially-sanctioned overvaluation of the Liberian dollar and the negative net effects of fiat prices and subsidies transferred income from agriculture to the non-agricultural sectors of the economy. Increases in non-productivity based public sector minimum wages and salaries correspondingly led to higher on-farm production costs, tightened rural labor markets and encouraged rural to urban migration (Toe, 1991; pp. 14-15). These redistributive fiscal measures and low expenditure flows deprived

the agricultural sector of much needed resources for capital investments and output expansion.

The foregoing review has discussed the two principal avenues through which Liberian fiscal policy impacted agriculture in the 1980s: allocation of development expenditure shares and the redistribution of income through budgetary and nonbudgetary measures. Actions that affected the stability of spending levels and patterns, public investment and the distribution of funds among recurrent and capital uses were as critical to agricultural performance as were the absolute and relative levels of resource transfers. Levies on agricultural income and exports, subsidies and guaranteed prices provided additional unfavorable fiscal stimuli that profoundly affected agricultural development patterns.<sup>6</sup> By implementing fiscal policy with little or no regard for its retarding effects on agricultural performance, the GOL accentuated inherited structural rigidities and accelerated the trend toward decline of the sector.

### **Uncontrolled Monetary Growth and Exchange Rate Fixation**

Liberian monetary policy is wholly reliant on incomplete control of domestic issues in a dual-currency exchange regime. Money supply consists of the U.S. dollar which is legal tender but over whose movement little or no restrictions apply, and the Liberian dollar which is not recognized as the national currency but has dominated domestic money markets since the mid-1980s (Abikar and Toe, 1992, p. 17; and U.S. Department of Commerce, 1989, p. 5). By mandating parity between the US and Liberian dollars in preference to market-determined or other kinds of exchange rate regimes, government authorities overvalued the domestic currency and created excess demand for offshore funds on the official money market. This policy and the absence of objective measures for foreign exchange management at the National Bank of Liberia engendered a para-legal foreign exchange market.

The combination of forced parity and monetary policy irrelevance increased market uncertainties which led to an acute scarcity of capital goods. It also encouraged cheap food imports, discouraged domestic food production, exerted negative influences on agricultural input price stability and reduced the purchasing power of consumers. Growing imbalances in public sector finances provided GOL with a rationale for expanding the supply of Liberian dollars instead of altering its foreign exchange stance and exerting appropriate monetary restraint. But by increasing the liquidity ratio of the economy relative to GDP growth, agricultural terms of trade were adversely affected, the agricultural surplus receded and current account deficits rose (Figure 8).

Growth of monetary aggregates and the consequent overvaluation of the domestic medium of exchange penalized agriculture by reducing the purchasing power of local currency paid to farmers by official marketing agencies and

middlemen.<sup>7</sup> Cash crop producers responded to this impoverishing development by resorting to illicit cross-border trade in cocoa, coffee and GOL subsidized imported rice.<sup>8</sup> Exploitation of this alternative marketing channel caused increasing shortfalls in the exports of these controlled crops over the last quarter of the 1980s, emboldening the International Coffee Organization (ICO) into slashing Liberia's export quota to half of what it was in the mid-1980s.

Another avenue through which Liberian agricultural performance was compromised by spiralling monetary expansion and an eroding domestic currency was the altering of sectoral lending patterns.<sup>9</sup> Faced with rising uncertainties in the official foreign exchange market, development finance institutions and agricultural risk-averse commercial banks sought to deposits of offshore funds from private sources. This was accomplished by concentrating a greater proportion of bank loan portfolios in import trade and in the financing of log and rubber exports especially after 1986. The strategy depressed investments in food production as relatively lower cost imports funded by trade receipts saturated local urban markets, the primary destination of marketable food surpluses in Liberia.

Although it is difficult to predict the consequences of relatively long-term monetary growth on agricultural performance, the uncontrolled expansion of these aggregates as happened in Liberia is apt to broaden the agricultural/non-agricultural price differential rather than to stimulate agricultural production.<sup>10</sup> Lacking sensible monetary and external trade policies, government actions evoked the emergence of a parallel foreign exchange market. But the impacts of monetary expansion on farm productivity and supply elasticity were never ascertained. The relationship between sustained increases in liquidity and exchange rate movements under a fixed regime also was never investigated.<sup>11</sup> These and other policy lapses of the 1980s paved the way for capital goods shortages, purchasing power reductions and the crowding-out of agricultural production, mainly food, in Liberian credit markets.

### **Encouraging Impotence in Mildly Controllable Policies**

The storm of international developments which imperiled the Liberian economy in the 1980s affected other developing economies also. But unlike Liberia, government authorities in several African, Asian and Latin American countries undertook meaningful domestic policy adjustments and implemented innovative institutional arrangements that reduced the vulnerability of these economies to external shocks. The preceding Liberian government, during whose tenure deterioration in balance of payments equilibrium initially surfaced, failed to develop and execute mutually-reinforcing internal policies and sensible outward-looking external strategies in the last half of the 1970s when, among other things, falling prices for the country's primary export commodities



became evident. This failure and the passivity of the 1980s were disastrous for Liberia's external economic relations.

### **Restraints on External Trade**

Iron ore exports were responsible for much of the heralded growth in Liberia's gross domestic product in the 1960s and early 1970s but it was agriculture which ensured the achievement of tenuous external payments balances over most of the 1980s (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1989; pp. 5-7). Agriculture financed not only imports of farm inputs and food, but non-farm consumer and capital goods as well. Amid general economic decline, private sector adaptability accorded agriculture the enviable position of being the only sector to record positive growth during this period.

In spite of this achievement, intrasectoral failures were pronounced in the 1980s as exemplified by the performance of Liberian agricultural exports. The average annual percentage growth of the value of farm exports fell as international commodity prices and, later, the volume of agricultural exports declined. Agriculture's rising share in total production thus reflected falling relative shares for the non-agricultural sectors of the economy in these years. Consequent deterioration of the international terms of trade led to reduced export purchasing power and, for several years, increased import costs especially for capital goods.

In concord with policy positions of the 1970's, official reactions to these increasingly punitive external shocks were weak, ad-hoc and self-defeating. As already discussed, exchange rate fixation and an overvalued Liberian dollar reduced effective farmgate prices and encouraged illegal transnational trade in restricted exportable commodities. Export licensing and similar policies were also continuously used by government to protect the export monopolies of state-owned enterprises like the Liberian Produce Marketing Corporation (LPMC). Competition and investment in agricultural export activities thus tended downward for commodities with a state presence. Corresponding growth in the trade of uncontrolled agricultural products, mainly logs and rubber, served to offset reductions in the exchange of controlled goods (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1989; pp. 6-7).

The market for farm inputs also was not free of inappropriate government regulations (Toe and Rogers, 1987; pp. 75-76). The GOL subjected imported farm inputs to discretionary and quantitative limits which led to higher prices and decreased availability of essential factors of production. Although the importation of agricultural inputs is theoretically duty-free, in reality surcharges, invoice entry fees and other costs were imposed on almost all categories of farm resources imported into Liberia.

The unbridled openness of the Liberian economy posed an added problem for agricultural productivity growth by being a source of disincentives for investment and industrialization. Between 1984 and 1987, duty-free exemptions represented 53 and 57 percent of the value of all imports, respectively (Ministry of Agriculture, 1989a; p. 19). In 1987, exemptions on food imports alone amounted to 32 percent of the value of imported food products. These discretionary reductions in fees which were constantly applied fiscal strategies contributed to severe revenue shortfalls not only in this four-year period but throughout the 1980s. Private sector investment in domestic food production also was hampered by waivers-induced implicit subsidies provided to export activities and the urban consumption of imported food products.

Foreign trade is determinative to the magnitude and stability of public expenditure flows into agriculture. Ensuring positive impacts on agricultural performance requires linking policy responses to world market developments. In the case of Liberia, policy makers wrongly interpreted price taking in international agricultural markets to be an onus ordaining internal lethargy. In so doing, domestic policies that could have been designed to exert considerable influence on export values through efficient production, pricing and exchange rate policies were left to the vagaries of international markets.

### **Diminishing Foreign Assistance**

Overseas development assistance (ODA) was a major but declining source of budgetary support and development financing in the 1980s. It averaged between 8 and 10 percent of GDP and accounted for 60 percent of gross domestic investment (UNDP and World Bank, 1992; p. 298 and p. 302). Another dimension of the country's dependence on aid is the high net ODA per capita which was US \$54 in 1980-1985 and US \$32 in the period following 1986. Comparable figures for Sub-Sahara Africa were US \$20 and \$27, respectively. After averaging annual growth of 38.5 percent in the five years preceding 1980, donor assistance fell to 0.9 percent in the subsequent five-year period. This downward trend continued at an increasing rate after 1986 because of government's debt arrears and counterpart funding problems.<sup>12</sup>

Foreign support led Liberia's quest for agricultural development over the last thirty years by shaping the magnitude and direction of public investment. Donor inputs, however, became particularly crucial in the 1980s when government capacity for financing agricultural projects and programs became impaired by unsound monetary policies and weak fiscal practices. Although a disproportionate share of this assistance was allocated to the expansion of export crop production capabilities, minimal amounts were disbursed to projects and programs for increasing rice production, improving road infrastructure and building the capabilities of agricultural institutions (Ministry of Agriculture, 1989a; pp. 68-69).

Beginning 1976, agriculture's share of total foreign aid averaged 35 percent (Ministry of Agriculture, 1989a; pp. 68-69). While this is equivalent to the sector's contribution to GDP, it is four times the share of agriculture in the national budget. Technical assistance was the major component, accounting for between 40 and 60 percent of total outlays. The World Bank, European Development Bank and the African Development Bank provided 60 percent of multi-lateral funding while 75 percent of bilateral assistance was contributed by the United States, West Germany (now part of the German Republic), Italy and the People's Republic of China.

Donors contributed US \$200 million to the GOL's public investment program (PIP) between 1982 and 1986 (Ministry of Agriculture, 1989a; p. 69). Of this amount, 48 percent was allocated to the expansion of production capacities for specific export commodities, 18 percent for institution building, 4 percent for agricultural development projects and 10 percent each for food, forestry and vocational training projects. In the same period, non-PIP assistance totalling US \$11 million supported research and other productivity-enhancing endeavors.

Despite its predominance, foreign assistance has failed to bolster Liberian agriculture.<sup>13</sup> Limited national absorptive capacity, aid-associated defects and the absence of meaningful linkages between donor conditionalities and domestic policy interventions are key factors that created this dilemma. Specifically, the macroeconomic environment for agriculture was unfavorable, sector-specific policies and institutions were poor and deficient and coordination of aid policies and programs was virtually non-existent at both the national and donor levels. Other causes of aid ineffectiveness included gyrating donor concerns and policies, faddism and defective project design and implementation (World Bank, 1990; pp. 127-137).

The dilemmas and constraints of external aid are evidenced by the constraining effects of food aid on food production. During the 1980s, concessional rice imports was the dominant component of food aid, with revenues from monetization providing the bulk of Liberia's development expenditures. Despite its role in augmenting the rice gap and maintaining a semblance of public investment in the sector, sale of subsidized rice became a vehicle for isolating agriculture from the rest of the economy.<sup>14</sup> It encouraged the GOL to evade painful but necessary adjustments, kept rice prices artificially low, stimulated urban consumption of imported rice, discouraged local rice production and reduced the substitution of rice with other domestic food commodities like cassava. These burdens of aid illustrate the need for improved coordination of foreign assistance and the improvement of Liberia's absorptive capacity.

As national capabilities for net transfers into agriculture and infrastructure are impaired as occurred in Liberia during the 1980s, foreign assistance becomes indicative of the utility of domestic support for agriculture.<sup>15</sup> Aid gains increas-

ing importance by maintaining public investment in the sector. But this growing dominance renders domestic development strategy captive to the swinging pendulum of donor concerns. Evaluating the effectiveness of aid for agricultural development thus necessitates reviewing aid levels and related changes, aid concessionality and share in government expenditure, donor multiplicity and the relationship between project and nonproject lending. Analyses of this nature were clearly lacking in Liberian policy circles where dwindling domestic resources for development compelled a laissez-faire posture toward foreign assistance.

### Concluding Assessment

This study evaluated the macroeconomic environment for Liberian agriculture in the 1980s, finding economy-wide events and policies to have been non-neutral in influencing variations in the sector's performance.      ting policies were determined to have deterred structural transformation, constrained competition and crowded-out private initiatives in agriculture. Insufficient and unstable funding, uncontrolled monetary expansion, prolonged exchange rate fixation and foreign trade restraints reduced potential increases in agricultural productivity by discouraging investment and thus, growth in output and farm incomes. By festering macroeconomic imbalances, poor domestic policies and ineffectual institutional arrangements restricted agriculture's contributions to overall economic progress during the period.

Negative economic outcomes of this magnitude embody experiences that are critical to the forging of future directions. Accordingly, lessons that have been drawn from Liberia's era of poor policies and economic disequilibrium and their syntheses are the following:

- Fiscal imbalances deter new investment and redistribute incomes away from agriculture. Unchecked monetary growth reduces the purchasing power of consumers, farmers and agricultural exports. Negative results of the magnitude experienced in Liberia could have been averted if sound and well-articulated policies had been formulated and implemented.
- Exchange rate fixation constrains efficient resource allocation among export and import competing sectors. Failure to address the resulting currency overvaluation and its tendency for moving domestic terms of trade against agriculture is ironic and self-defeating given the importance of this sector and international trade to developing countries like Liberia.

- Unbridled public intervention aggravates existing distortions, reinforces barriers to entry and discourages private participation in agriculture. Government monopoly of export marketing and public controls on domestic food prices stifle farm productivity and stymie structural transformation.
- High rates of population growth contribute to the steady erosion of national capacities for collective food security. This phenomenon also entrenches poverty. The absence of a national commitment to lower fertility and other aspects of population control enlargens the gap between the poor and the rest of a country's citizenry.
- Lack of political consistency and fortitude renders adoption of sensible economic policies difficult, if not impossible. Despite overwhelming evidence that government's activist stances in fiscal and monetary policies were prolonging the crisis and deepening its pervasive effects, Liberia's political leadership failed to muster the courage needed for economic recovery by continuing to conduct "business as usual".

These lessons and the experiences of other countries indicate that an enabling macroeconomic environment for agriculture is provided only when chronic fiscal and monetary imbalances and exchange rate overvaluation are avoided, consistently positive and stable net government transfers are made available to agriculture, and external aid and trade relations are in consonance with appropriate development objectives. Any development strategy that employs a different set of macroeconomic choices gives rise to a vicious cycle of undesirable events for agriculture.

It is therefore evident that dismantling economy-wide constraints to agricultural development requires resolving Liberia's macroeconomic instability within the framework of a comprehensive program for economic adjustment. Such a program specifically warrants the successful achievement of three major interdependent objectives: restoration of macroeconomic balance, removal of structural impediments in agriculture and other productive sectors and containment of the country's soaring population growth. Parallel policy actions also are needed for building and encouraging progressive and democratic institutions. This latter set of complementary measures is critical to achieving sustainable development and securing the scale and direction of adjustment.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Agroecological, environmental, infrastructural, technological and institutional constraints have posed formidable barriers to Liberian agricultural development since the inception of nationhood. These impediments include the scorching tropical heat and humidity, acidic and iron-toxic soils and the topography of Liberia's land mass (USAID, 1980; pp. 9-10). Limited skills and knowledge of smallholders, lack of appropriate technological packages, a land tenure system that has encouraged slash and burn cultivation and non-existent rural infrastructure have also proven to be detrimental to the quest for agricultural transformation. These sources of stunted growth in agricultural productivity evolved from historical circumstances or the physical environment but were reinforced over the years by a culture of institutional ineptitude in Liberia. Severe and lingering weaknesses in public planning and policy, obsolete arrangements for delivering public goods and services, poor organization and management of development institutions and political and socio-cultural biases against efficiency rendered the pursuit of agricultural development and growth an exercise in futility (Ministry of Agriculture, 1989a). These crippling institutional deficiencies could have been avoided, or at least moderated, by the formulation of an effectual national development philosophy based on which cohesive and effective agricultural policies would have been designed and implemented.

<sup>2</sup> Inception of modern governance is included by the author as the historical equivalent of independence for countries like Liberia where no direct colonial presence has been recorded. The post-World War II period could qualify as such an era in Liberian history.

<sup>3</sup> Parallel periods have been demarcated by Lele (1990; p.535) and found to be responsible for altering donors' agricultural development perceptions and policies. For example, donor concerns changed from export crop expansion in the 1960s to food crop expansion in the mid 1970s. They reverted to exports, as exemplified by structural adjustment programs, in the early 1980s and are now fixated on food security issues.

<sup>4</sup> Liberia's economic miracle of the 1960s was already imperiled and eroded by the time the 1980 coup d'état occurred. The sources of decline were: (1) failure of the Tubman and Tolbert administrations to promote and pursue diversification of the enclave-based economy; (2) deficit spending by government that escalated from \$7.8 million in 1975 to \$170 million in 1980 as a "result of corrupt and unproductive spending on enlarged payrolls and inflated salaries, public corporations and the hosting of the 1979 OAU Conference"; (3) lack of policies for reducing Liberia's reliance on international markets for capital and consumer goods; and (4) the absence of an effective development approach for ameliorating endemic structural and institutional obstacles (USAID, 1984; pp. 1-3).

<sup>5</sup> Government's goal of rice self-sufficiency, on which tremendous resources have been expended, has been derided and branded 'mis-guided' and 'unachievable' in several local and international development circles because of the magnitude of structural and institutional obstacles that must be overcome in order for self-sufficiency to be realized and sustained. The availability of viable alternative policy objectives also makes this goal an unwise choice. It has been suggested that government ought to have focused on achieving food security by raising overall self-sufficiency in the production of major starch commodities like cassava, yams, sweet potatoes as well as rice rather than to pursue rice self-sufficiency (Nathan Associates, 1989; pp. i-v).

<sup>6</sup> Since these levies are used by governments to control external trading activities, their impacts also could be discussed under foreign trade.

<sup>7</sup> The strong relationship between changes in real exchange rates and the volume of agricultural exports has been empirically estimated. World Bank studies have found that a one percent reduction in the real exchange rate induced a 0.6 to 0.8 percent fall in the level of agricultural exports for all developing countries but more than one percent in the case of Sub-Sahara African nations (World Bank, 1986; pg. 71). Positive correlations also were reported between real exchange rate movements and agricultural output. Also see the consumer price index in Statistical Table 2 and U.S. Department of Commerce, 1989, p.6.

<sup>8</sup> This was well-known to USAID Mission and Government of Liberia (GOL) officials. It was also directly observed and investigated by the author as well as discussed in meetings of the Board of Directors of the Liberia Produce Marketing Corporation (LPMC) and the National Rice Committee of the GOL.

<sup>9</sup> The long-term increase in Liberia's money supply did not result from the need to enhance the productive capabilities of a leading sector like agriculture or as a consequence of externally-imposed factors. Rather, monetary expansion occurred as growing imbalances in central government and parastatal finances led to increased borrowing from the domestic banking system by the public sector to the disadvantage of private creditors, particularly those from the agricultural production subsector who were crowded out of the domestic banking system. Between 1980 and 1989, net claims on the public sector by the domestic banking sector grew by \$561 million (Toe, et al, 1985, pp. 124-125; Abikar and Toe, 1992, pp.21-22; and Belleh and Falana, 1991, p.11).

<sup>10</sup> Assume that real GDP and the level of aggregate prices are represented by an aggregate output index (Q) and a composite price index (P), respectively. The monetary equivalent of PQ is the product of the quantity of money (M) times the velocity of circulation of money (V). Symbolically, the relationship becomes  $GDP=PQ=MV$ . Applying this framework to agriculture yields alternative scenarios. A moderate and regular expansion of the liquidity ratio (M/

GDP) is non-inflationary and normal for a developing nation where increased participation in monetary exchange is encouraged. As trade monetarization intensifies, traditional producers build up cash reserves to obtain purchased inputs up to the point where a larger money supply (M) is required to accommodate a given output (Q). At this stage, the effect of M on prices (P), rather than on output (Q), becomes the key concern. When relative stability of the velocity of circulation of money (V) is assumed, prices (P) may rise if the supply of agricultural products is inelastic, production of marketable surpluses may be induced through increases in effective demand, or differences in the agricultural/non-agricultural price ratio may occur (Lecaillon, et al, 1978; pp.24-25).

<sup>11</sup> The efficient operation of a fixed exchange rate regime demands fiscal and monetary discipline; these attributes were clearly lacking in Liberia in the 1980s. Prolonged budget deficits and/or monetary growth increased the supply of Liberian dollar-denominated assets, a total stock in which the money supply is overly significant, at a time when the demand for such assets was plummeting. These public actions, which are the opposite of those that were required for maintaining official parity with the US dollar, caused the price of the Liberian dollar in terms of the US dollar (the exchange rate) to fall. The failure of the National Bank of Liberia to adjust money supply downwards meant that overvaluation would occur and a parallel market for foreign exchange would develop at the unsupported fixed exchange rate. It is the impression of this author that the facilitation of personal, not public, transactions is the motive for maintaining parity then and now.

<sup>12</sup> Other data utilized in this paragraph are obtained from UNDP and World Bank, 1992; pp. 294-306.

<sup>13</sup> Development assistance is successful and effective only when gains realized during the process of aid transmission are sustained in subsequent periods (eg. after the cessation of assistance). The evident lack of sustainability in the 1980s, of whatever gains may have been garnered as a result of Liberia's consumption of foreign aid, reflects donors' programmatic weaknesses as well as host country unwillingness to succeed.

<sup>14</sup> This view may be contrary to the observations of some multilateral and bilateral donors (See World Bank, 1990; World Development Report 1990; p.135, Box 8.7) as well as some economists (See Singer, Hans W. *Food Aid*. in Eicher, Carl K. and John M. Staatz, ed. *Agricultural Development in the Third World*, 2nd edition; The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore 1990; pp.242-248). The findings of this author are, however, supported by evidence from the Sahel and Nepal, among others, where food assistance discouraged agricultural production and agricultural exports, respectively (See Lecaillon et al, 1987; p.26).

<sup>15</sup> Foreign assistance is treated as a separate entity to reflect its leading role in determining the magnitude, direction and pattern of public investment in



Liberian agriculture. This country-specific approach may be regarded as being unconventional (See Lecaillon, et al, 1987; p.26 and pp. 125-129).

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### FIGURES

1. Growth Rates of Production by Sector, 1965-80 and 1980-88
2. Growth of Revenues and Expenditures, 1980-88
3. Value of Exports and External Debt, 1980-90
4. Growth of Money Supply, 1980-89
5. Per Capita Food and Cereal Production Indices, 1980-90
6. Population Growth, 1980-90
7. Share of Agriculture in Total Expenditures, 1980 and 1986
8. Growth of Constant GDP at Market Prices, 1980-87

**Figure 1: GROWTH RATES OF PRODUCTION BY SECTOR, 1965-80 AND 1980-88**

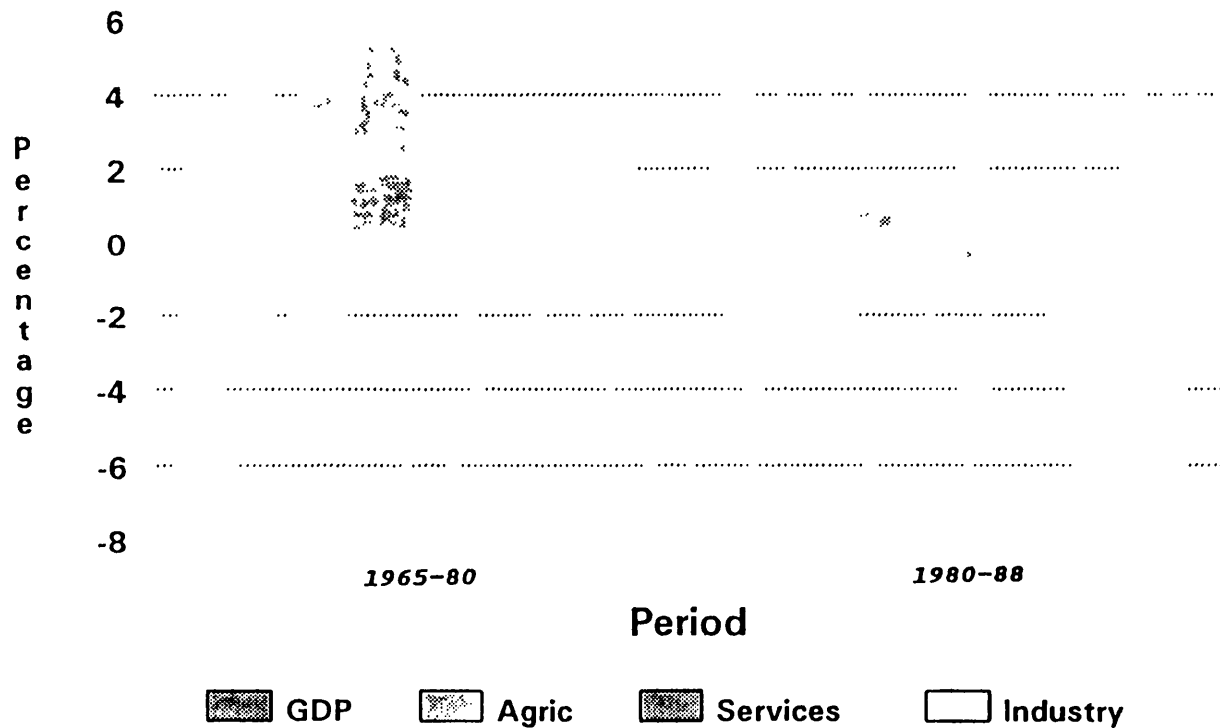
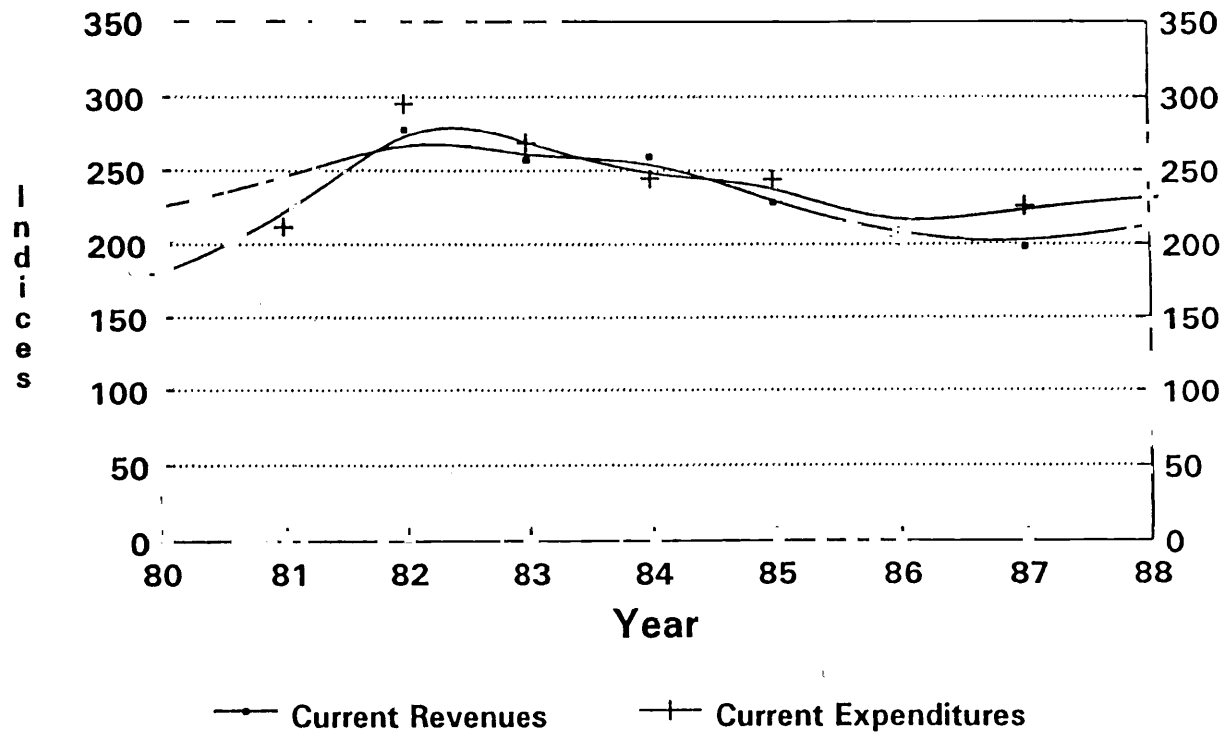
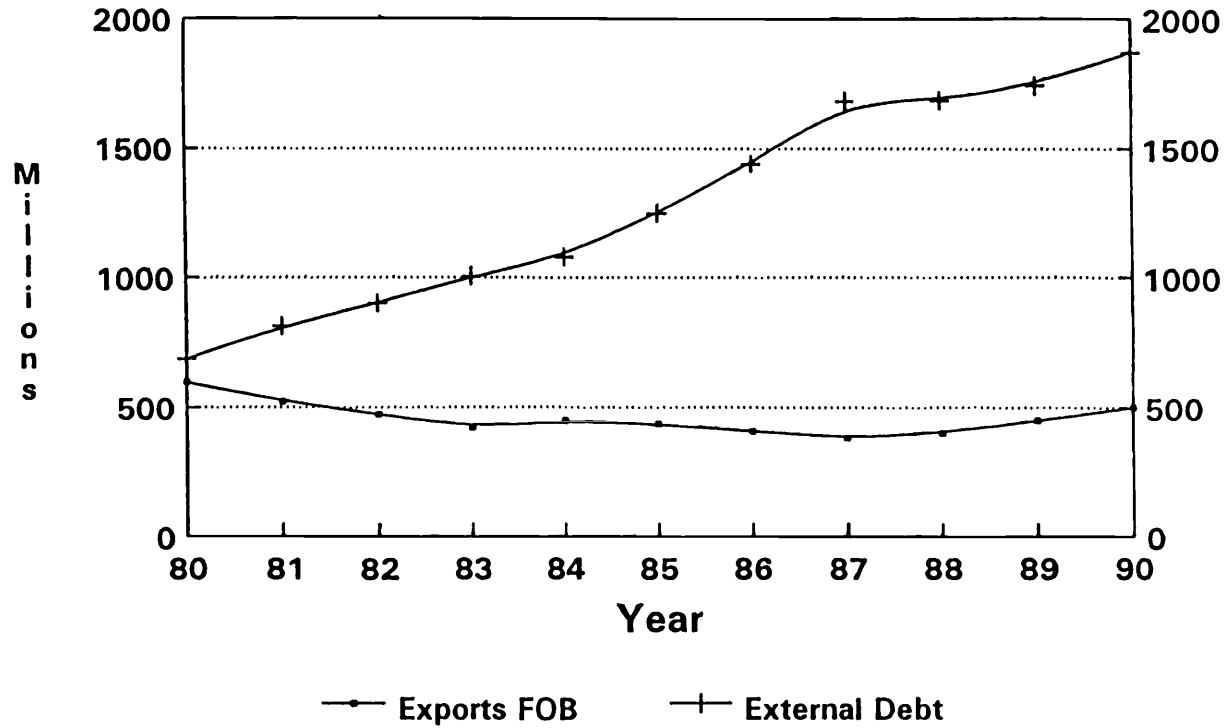


Figure 2: GROWTH OF REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES, 1980-88



Millions of Current L \$

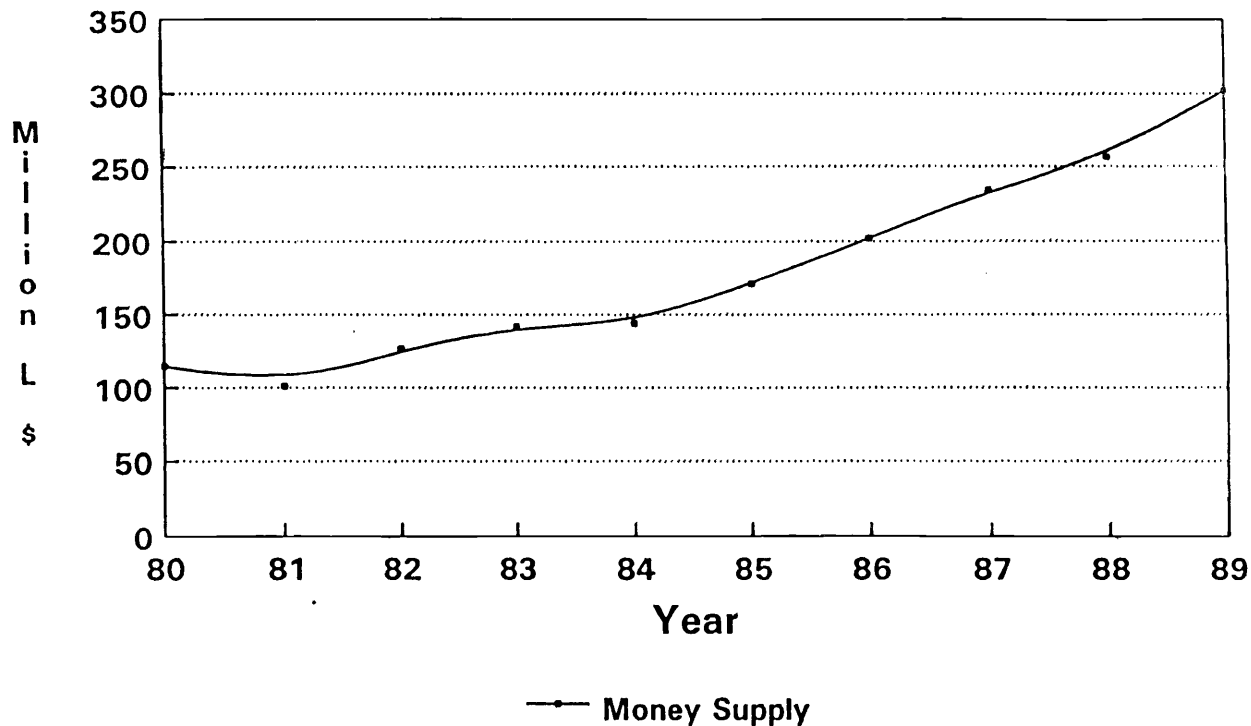
Figure 3: VALUE OF EXPORTS AND EXTERNAL DEBT, 1980-90



Millions of Current U.S. \$

Source: Statistical Appendix, Table 2

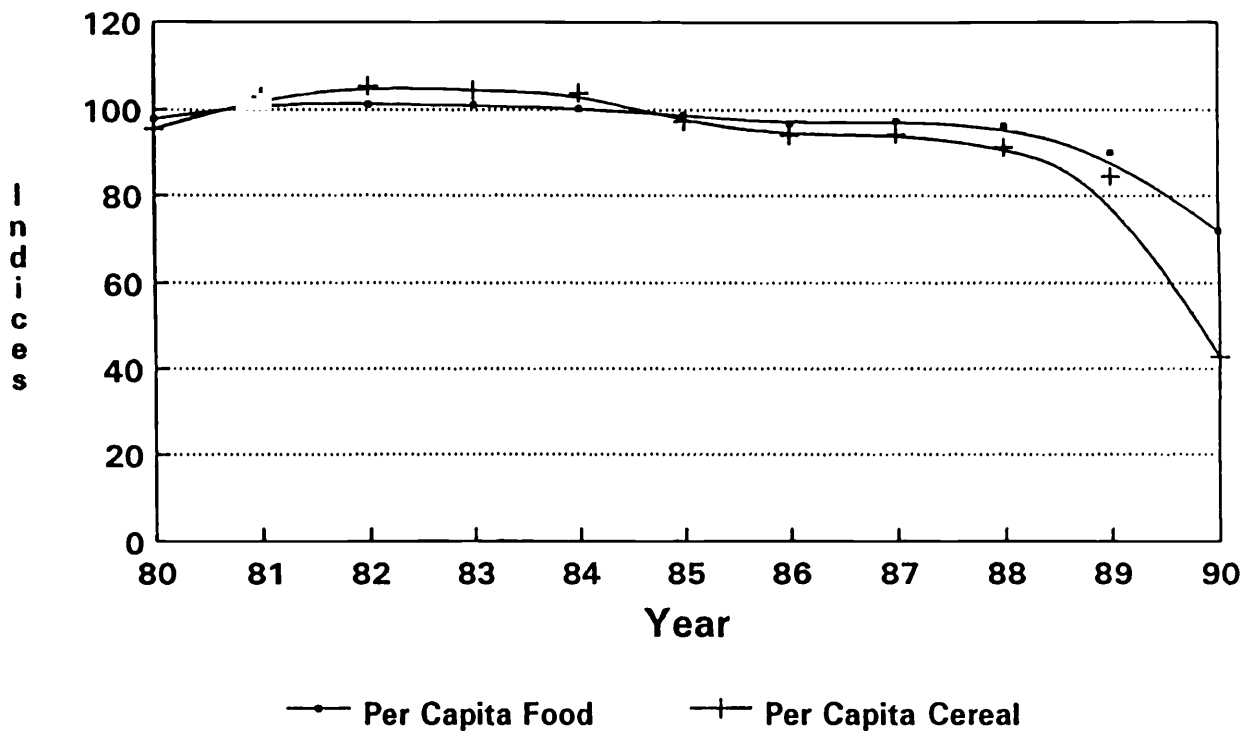
Figure 4: GROWTH OF MONEY SUPPLY, 1980-89



Million of Current Liberian (L) Dollars

Source: Statistical Appendix, Table 2

**Figure 5: PER CAPITA FOOD AND CEREAL PRODUCTION INDICES, 1980-90**



Source: Statistical Appendix Table 6

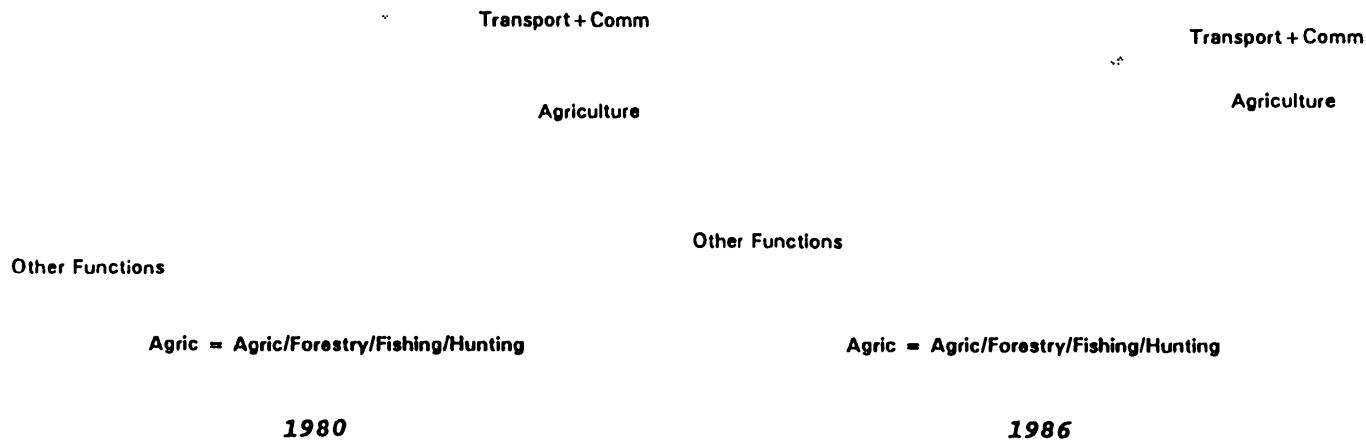


Figure 6: POPULATION GROWTH, 1980-90



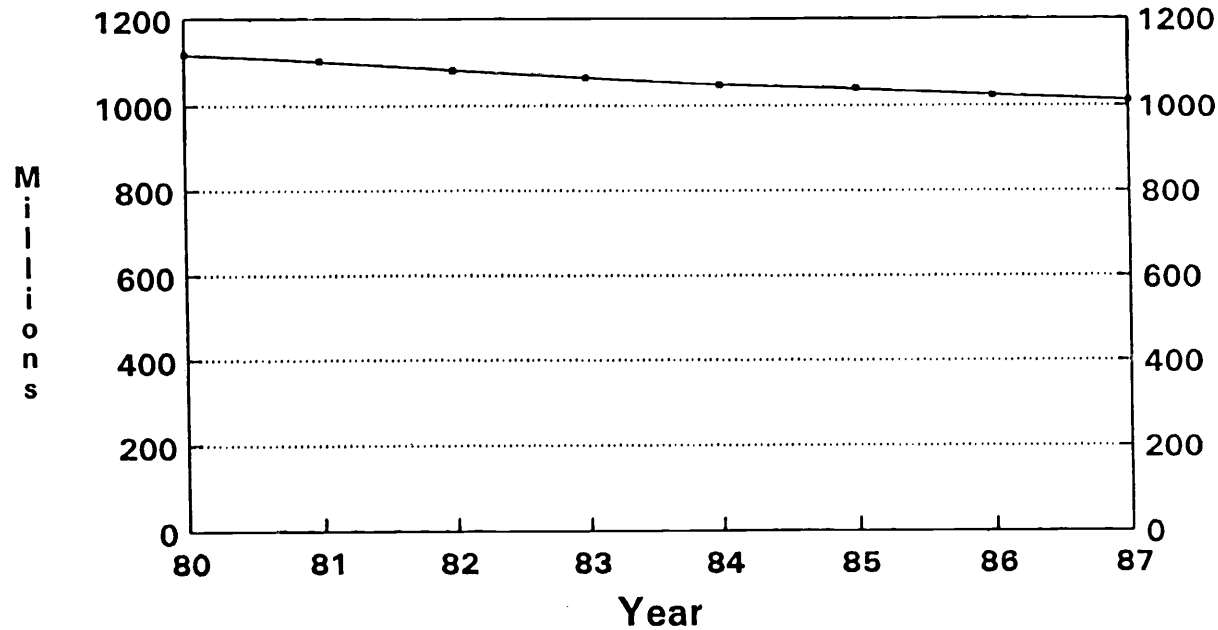
Source: Statistical Appendix, Table 2

**Figure 7: SHARE OF AGRICULTURE IN TOTAL EXPENDITURES, 1980 AND 1986**



**Source: Statistical Appendix, Table 4**

Figure 8: GROWTH OF CONSTANT GDP AT MARKET PRICES, 1980-87



— Constant GDP

(1980 Liberian \$ in Millions)

Source: Statistical Appendix, Table 2

**Statistical Appendix Tables**

1. Social Indicators of Development
2. Basic Macroeconomic Data
3. Performance Indicators for the Agricultural Sector
4. Selected Functions of Central Government Expenditures

SOCIAL INDICATORS OF DEVELOPMENT					
	1980	1985	1988	1989	1990
Females as % of total pop.	49.40	49.30		49.50	
Poverty (a)	91.00	93.00			92.00
Total fertility rate	6.50	6.50		6.30	
Life expectancy at birth (years)	51.00	52.00			54.00
Infant mortality (per thousand)	159.00	146.00			135.00
Kilocalories per capita	*****	2326.00	*****		
% pop. with access to safe water					
Total	12.00	34.00	55.00		
Urban		50.00	100.00		
Rural	16.00	16.00	23.00		
Illiteracy rate					
Total		68.00		61.00	
Male		57.00		50.00	
Female		79.00		71.00	
Primary school gross enrollment ratio					
Total	49.00	40.00			
Males	63.00	51.00			
Females	34.00	28.00			
Labor force participation rate					
Total	39.00	37.00	36.00		35.00
Female	25.00	23.00	22.00		21.00
Male	53.00	51.00	50.00		50.00

Source: African Development Indicators, 1992

Note: (a) number of dependent population per 100 persons of working age.

## TRADE AND ECONOMIC DATA

	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968
<b>POPULATION AND NATIONAL ACCOUNTS</b>									
Population (000)	1876.00	1836.00	2001.00	2085.00	2132.00	2199.00	2268.00	2336.00	2411.00
GDP per capita (current US\$)	560.00	560.00	550.00	500.00	480.00	470.00	450.00	450.00	450.00
GDP at market prices (current US\$)	1116.80	1085.00	1122.00	1087.00	1084.00	1095.00	1095.00	1136.30	1095.00
GDP at market prices (constant 1960 US\$)	1116.80	1103.10	1081.30	1084.30	1047.20	1040.40	1023.00	1012.80	1012.80
Ave. annual growth of GDP (%)	-4.50	-1.20	-2.00	-1.80	-2.10	-0.80	-1.70	-1.00	-1.00
Total consumption (% of GDP) (a)	72.70	81.20	87.80	90.00	85.80	85.70	81.90	81.90	81.90
General government consumption (% of GDP) (a)	18.30	18.30	21.70	18.10	17.10	21.00	17.10	17.10	17.10
Gross domestic investment (% of GDP) (a)	27.30	16.30	14.30	11.80	10.20	6.70	6.70	6.70	6.70
Consumer price index (1967=100)	78.00	83.80	86.80	81.40	82.50	81.80	83.20	83.20	83.20
GDP deflator (US series, index 1987=100) (a)	68.30	87.80	91.80	86.50	82.70	83.80	84.30	100.00	100.00
<b>MONEY AND FINANCE</b>									
Domestic credit (% annual change) (a)	18.70	14.10	18.10	17.30	3.90	14.90	6.30	15.90	24.70
Claims on private sector (% annual change) (a)	-38.20	3.20	-17.60	-4.80	8.40	2.20	-4.10	21.10	-17.10
Claims on government sector (% annual change) (a)	83.20	27.80	34.80	28.10	2.80	22.10	10.00	20.00	31.40
Net foreign assets (million US\$) (a)	-134.00	-180.00	-224.00	-247.00	-253.00	-294.00	-331.00	-412.00	-418.00
Money supply (million of current US\$)	114.54	100.84	128.66	142.12	144.36	170.75	202.15	233.54	256.54
<b>GOVERNMENT FINANCE (millions of current US\$)</b>									
Gov't deficit (-) or surplus	-64.30	-110.30	-116.80	-102.90	-61.00	-87.10	-90.90	-83.90	-72.20
Current revenue	225.10	242.40	278.20	257.20	256.50	228.60	205.40	198.40	212.70
Current expenditure	178.70	211.80	295.40	268.70	244.70	244.10	205.30	226.10	231.90
<b>EXTERNAL SECTOR</b>									
Value of exports, fob (million current US\$)	504.98	523.80	472.67	422.58	448.07	435.80	408.44	382.20	400.00
Value of imports, cif (million current US\$)	534.08	477.23	428.36	411.62	383.21	384.40	337.82	307.80	350.00
Growth of merchandise exports (%)	-1.80	-0.80	-10.50	-8.00	2.80	2.80	-12.80	-12.80	-2.10
Growth of merchandise imports (%)	-13.80	-13.80	-1.80	0.10	-8.80	-19.80	-11.80	18.40	8.80
Index of terms of trade (1967=100)	106.30	90.70	100.10	96.70	96.90	96.70	102.20	100.00	108.30
Real effective exchange rate index (1987=100) (a)	96.3	106	114.3	118.9	124.3	123.90	107.60	100.00	100.00
CA bal. before off. transfers (million current US\$)	9.81	6.99	-86.40	-218.78	-104.73	-54.31	-81.10	-163.00	-54.31
CA bal. after off. transfers (million current US\$)	48.01	75.44	3.45	-102.80	-0.86	37.33	15.30	-117.80	15.30
Total outstanding external debt (million US\$)	685.70	813.40	902.20	1005.20	1075.00	1244.50	1436.10	1685.20	1870.30

Source: World Tables, 1992 except (a) African Development Indicators, 1992

Key to abbreviations:

CA - current account; off. - official

TABLE 3.

## PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Total economically active population ('000) (a)	751.00					846.00			911.00	902.00	934.00
Percentage in agriculture	74.10					72.00			70.80	70.30	68.00
Production indices (1979-81=100) (a)											
Total (index)	100.50	102.98	105.47	108.56	114.40	115.08	117.05	122.48	121.37	120.58	93.00
Per capita agriculture	100.55	98.81	105.05	107.05	113.01	113.25	114.82	120.18	118.28	117.75	87.10
Total crops	100.80	102.69	105.01	105.29	113.35	115.21	116.52	121.35	119.52	117.95	87.10
Per capita crops	100.84	99.55	106.01	95.78	100.41	98.64	94.86	98.51	92.38	88.47	80.00
Total food	104.83	107.78	111.12	111.12	113.78	115.78	117.17	121.57	124.08	118.80	94.00
Per capita food	97.83	101.24	101.00	101.00	100.25	98.82	96.93	97.48	96.38	90.02	72.00
Total cereals	85.48	106.13	112.18	114.70	117.75	114.05	113.87	117.71	117.60	112.23	56.00
Per capita cereals	85.51	102.90	105.36	104.35	103.78	97.38	94.04	94.37	91.38	84.48	42.00
Volume of food output ('000 metric tons)											
Rice	243.00	266.00	284.00	290.00	296.00	288.00	268.00	298.00	298.00	290.00	
Cassava	300.00	300.00	300.00	270.00	218.00	282.00	308.00	372.00	447.00	400.00	
Value of agric. exports (million US\$CPIR)	151.00	124.00	86.00	107.00	126.00	120.00	108.00	107.00	119.00	182.00	66.00
Volume of agric. exports ('000 metric tons)	105.00	102.00	97.00	96.00	114.00	115.00	114.00	110.00	108.00		
Volume of cereal imports ('000 metric tons)	96.00	111.00	117.00	102.00	113.00	103.00	118.00	100.00	102.00	157.00	70.00
Food aid ('000 metric tons)	3.00	26.00	42.00	57.00	47.00	20.00	78.00	2.00	56.00	28.00	28.00
Area under major crops ('000 metric tons)	371.00	371.00	371.00	371.00	371.00	371.00	371.00	371.00	373.00	373.00	
Yields of major crops ('000 hectograms/hectare)											
Rubber	7.80	7.70	6.70	8.10	9.40	9.70	10.10	10.70	10.80	11.80	
Coffee (green)	4.80	3.40	4.70	3.80	5.60	4.50	4.80	8.00	2.50	2.50	
Cocoa	2.30	2.70	1.80	2.30	2.50	1.90	1.90	1.40	1.70	1.80	
Rice	12.30	12.80	13.50	12.30	12.80	12.50	12.80	12.80	12.80	11.80	
Cassava	66.70	66.70	66.70	60.00	50.40	61.80	63.80	80.00	85.70	80.00	
Official producer price/world price (ratio)											
Rubber (nonspic. coagul)	0.77	0.85	0.78	0.49	0.43	0.54	0.56	0.68	0.90	1.01	
Coffee (Robusta)	0.84	0.86	0.83	0.55	0.49	0.44	0.44	0.48	0.84		
Cocoa (fat ave. quality)											
Farmland price/world price (ratio)											
Rubber (nonspic. coagul)	0.44	0.66	0.43	0.34	0.43	0.62	0.48	0.48	0.83	0.81	
Coffee (Robusta)	0.77	0.85	0.78	0.54	0.43	0.54	0.54	0.88	0.80	1.01	
Cocoa (fat ave. quality)	0.84	0.88	0.83	0.55	0.49	0.44	0.44	0.48	0.84		

Sources: (a) FAO Production Yearbook, Vol. 44, 1990  
 (b) World Bank African Development Indicators, 1992  
 Key to abbreviations:  
 CPIR = current prices and exchange rates

Table 4:

SELECTED FUNCTIONS OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE								
(Millions of Liberian dollars)								
	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
Total Expenditure	281.00	323.20	371.00	338.30	298.40		273.90	
Of which:								
Defense	16.20	36.50	50.20	27.30	22.60	27.70	21.00	23.50
Education	33.50	51.60	56.70	52.20	45.80	47.90	38.80	42.80
Health	14.60	24.60	26.60	24.60	18.50	16.10	15.60	18.70
Social Security & Welfare	3.80	8.30	2.00	4.20	2.40	1.90	2.30	2.50
Agric., Forestry, Fishing, Hunt.	14.10	16.20	27.20	19.50	16.80	17.60	21.00	23.60
Transportation & Communication	45.80	56.40	26.90	34.70	24.00	23.30	19.80	16.20

Source: Government Finance Statistics Yearbook 1991



## Human Rights and The Civil War in Liberia

Janet Fleischman

The civil war in Liberia is ending its fifth year, with ever-increasing numbers of displaced persons, refugees, and civilian casualties. The lack of protection for civilians from abuses by all parties to the conflict and the profound distrust among the warring factions remain obstacles to lasting peace. If peace is to take root in Liberia, human rights protections must be incorporated into the peace process.

In 1994, Liberia remained a divided country: the Liberian National Transitional Government (LNTG), a coalition government, was seated on March 7 and governs the capital, Monrovia, backed by the West African peacekeeping force (ECOMOG); Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), still claims to control 60 percent of the country; the United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO), made up primarily of soldiers from former President Samuel Doe's army, the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), controls at least two western counties; and a new faction, the Liberian Peace Council (LPC), made up largely of former AFL soldiers from the Krahn ethnic group, controls significant areas of the southeast. In addition, the Lofa Defense Force (LDF) has been fighting ULIMO in Lofa County.

Although some progress was made in late 1993 and early 1994 toward ending Liberia's bloody civil war, the situation soon disintegrated. Despite hope for meaningful disarmament, political infighting and renewed combat stalled the process, with only some 3,400 combatants demobilized by late June 1994, out of a possible total of 40-60,000. One warring faction, ULIMO, has split into two along ethnic lines: the Krahn group, headed by General Roosevelt Johnson, is battling the Mandingos, led by Alhadji Kromah. The inter-ULIMO fighting in the western counties of Bomi and Cape Mount has reportedly claimed hundreds of civilian lives since it flared up in March. Two other factions, the NPFL and LPC, have been fighting in the southeast, taking a heavy toll on the civilian population. Some 100,000 displaced persons have fled into the area around Buchanan, with more arriving every day.

The peace agreement signed in July 1993, known as the Cotonou accord, was believed to be Liberia's last, best hope. The accord stipulated that concomitant with disarmament, a five-person Council of State elected by all the factions would take power from the interim government until elections were held. A thirty-five-member transitional parliament would include thirteen members from the NPFL and the interim government, and nine from ULIMO. Between August 1993 and May 1994, political wrangling prevented the LNTG from being seated.<sup>1</sup> In February 1994, it was agreed that David Kpomakpor, a lawyer

representing IGNU, would chair the LNTG; with Dexter Tahyor of ULIMO<sup>2</sup> and Issac Mussah of the NPFL as vice chairs. Finally, in mid-May, Dorothy Musuleng Cooper was named Foreign Minister, and the LNTG was complete.

A number of former officials of the Doe regime who were known for their involvement in human rights abuses were also named to the Transitional Government and the Electoral Commission. In addition to the nomination of Isaac Mussah, a notorious NPFL general, the most serious concerns focus on two ULIMO nominees—George Dweh, reputedly linked to killings during the height of the civil war; and Jenkins Scott, former justice minister and closely associated with Doe's repressive policies.

An important element of the Cotonou plan involved the creation of a UN Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) to help supervise and monitor the agreement, in conjunction with ECOMOG. The plan also provided for an expanded ECOMOG force, under the auspices of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), to be composed of African troops from outside the West African region. By early 1994, some 800 Tanzanians were deployed in Kakata, and 900 Ugandans were in Buchanan.

There is also a human rights component to UNOMIL's mandate, which requires UNOMIL to report on violations of the ceasefire and violations of humanitarian law. Although the language was not as strong as might have been hoped—it did not establish a human rights office or provide for the deployment of human rights monitors—at least the UN resolution acknowledged officially that reporting on human rights violations was part of UNOMIL's mandate in Liberia. In reality, however, human rights reporting from the UN has been minimal, at best.

All the warring factions have been responsible for human rights abuses. The following are some of the most notable incidents in recent years.

The AFL, former President Doe's army, was thoroughly discredited by its gross abuses during the 1980s and especially during the war in 1990, when it massacred civilians and devastated Monrovia. The AFL was responsible for the massacre of some 600 civilians who had sought refuge in St. Peter's Lutheran Church in July 1990. In June 1993, approximately 547 civilians, mostly women and children, were massacred at Carter Camp, a displaced persons camp outside Harbel. The victims were shot, beaten or hacked to death, and mutilated. A UN investigation later concluded unequivocally that the massacre was carried out by the AFL.<sup>3</sup>

The NPFL has committed serious abuses against the civilian population, including harassment, looting, torture, rape, and summary executions. During the height of the war in 1990, the NPFL committed egregious human rights abuses against civilians, especially people from the Krahn and Mandingo ethnic

groups, considered to have supported the government of Samuel Doe. In October 1992, during Operation Octopus when the NPFL launched an offensive against Monrovia, NPFL fighters were responsible for widespread looting and killing, including the murder of five American nuns.<sup>4</sup> There were persistent reports that the NPFL was responsible for a May 1993 massacre at Fassama that left approximately one hundred civilians dead, although this incident was never fully verified. The NPFL has also attacked civilians in its war against the Liberian Peace Council in the southeast. It is clear that NPFL fighters continue to act with impunity in their territory, and that the ongoing abuses and intransigent attitude of the NPFL have constituted a serious obstacle to ECOMOG's efforts at peacekeeping.

ULIMO was formed in 1991 by AFL soldiers who fled to Sierra Leone. ULIMO's conduct in the areas it captures has included attacks on civilians, looting, and executions of suspected NPFL sympathizers. ULIMO has also denied freedom of movement in its areas, harassing civilians and relief organizations. On December 23, 1993, ULIMO attacked the United Nations base in Vahun in Lofa County: UN and nongovernmental organizations' vehicles were confiscated, and their warehouses were looted. The UN was forced to evacuate all its staff, in addition to 82 orphans. In March 1994, ULIMO split into two factions, Krahn versus Mandingo. The fighting in the western counties has been fierce, with civilians being targeted by both sides. ULIMO is also believed to be responsible for cross-border attacks on Liberian refugees in Guinea.

The emergence in late 1993 of a new armed faction, the LPC, threatened to disrupt the fragile peace process. The LPC is largely Krahn and includes many former AFL soldiers, some of whom had also fought with ULIMO. In 1994, the LPC stepped up its campaign against civilians. Displaced persons describe LPC abuses as systematic and gratuitous. Thousands of civilians have been displaced by the fighting, with some 100,000 registered in the city of Buchanan alone, according to international relief organizations. Testimony from displaced persons and foreign observers indicates that the LPC is responsible for serious human rights abuses against the civilian population, especially those the LPC considers to have supported the NPFL. Abuses include extrajudicial executions, arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, rape, and looting.

There have been consistent reports that members of the Nigerian contingent of ECOMOG—not the Ugandans or the Ghanaians, who are also stationed in the Buchanan area—are aiding the LPC. Displaced persons and foreign observers believe that the Nigerians are supplying arms and ammunition to the LPC as a way to weaken the NPFL, while profiteering on the side. The implications of this are very serious, even though it is not clear how high up the collaboration goes in the Nigerian contingent.

The hostility between NPFL and the Nigerian contingent of ECOMOG dates back to the initial ECOMOG intervention in August 1990, when Charles Taylor accused Nigeria's President Ibrahim Babangida of attempting to rescue Liberian President Doe, and has continued ever since. The NPFL has singled out the Nigerian contingent of ECOMOG as its main enemy, and has sought to humiliate the Nigerians whenever possible. Meanwhile, ECOMOG has been accused of aiding other Liberian factions in their fight against the NPFL. In October 1992, when the NPFL attacked Monrovia, there were many allegations that ECOMOG armed ULIMO and the AFL. Sources in the US government have confirmed that ECOMOG supplied—or at least facilitated—some arms transfers to the AFL and ULIMO. There were also many reports that ECOMOG provided transportation to ULIMO fighters.

A remarkably similar pattern of cooperation is emerging between elements of the Nigerian contingent of ECOMOG and the LPC. Residents of Buchanan report that LPC fighters have free run of the city, sometimes checking their weapons at an ECOMOG checkpoint at the outskirts of the city and reclaiming them when they leave. Some observers have reported a joint ECOMOG/LPC checkpoint, and displaced persons have seen the Nigerians transporting LPC fighters.

A very disturbing characteristic of the Liberian war has been the use of child soldiers. International law—the Protocols of the Geneva Conventions and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child—forbids the use of children under the age of fifteen as soldiers in armed conflict. The African Charter on the Rights of the Child has a higher threshold, stating that no one under the age of eighteen can serve in armed hostilities. In spite of these protections, thousands of children are being used as soldiers in Liberia.

There are no precise figures on the number of child soldiers in Liberia; even the total number of combatants in all the factions is unknown. Most observers estimate that between 40,000 and 60,000 combatants are involved in the conflict. In any event, UNICEF estimates that approximately 10 percent of the fighters are under the age of fifteen; some estimate that an additional 20 percent are under eighteen.

The main rebel factions—the NPFL and ULIMO—have consistently used children under the age of fifteen. There have been reports that the LPC is also using child soldiers, although the lack of access to their territory makes confirmation difficult. As a result, many thousands of children in Liberia have suffered during the war; many have been killed or wounded, or have witnessed terrible atrocities. Moreover, many children have themselves committed atrocities, killing, maiming or raping civilians, and looting homes. Many were only ten years old when they joined in the fighting. As a United Nations military observer in Liberia explained:

Lots of children are used at checkpoints. Manning a checkpoint gives a kid power and influence, even if he's twelve years old . . . . Sometimes there are fifteen or twenty people at a checkpoint and the commander is only about ten years old. Boys at checkpoints have killed people for no reason at all. Their leaders don't take care of them . . . . It's a children's war.

Some of the children were forcibly recruited by the warring factions, but the majority apparently joined up voluntarily. When asked why they had joined, many explain that they joined to avenge the killing of family or friends, as a way to protect their families, or as a means of survival. All of the children were armed, usually with AK 47s. Thousands of them have fought on the front lines, used essentially as cannon-fodder.

Reintegrating these children into society is an immense problem. In some cases, their families have fled and no relatives can be found. In others, families have refused to take the children back because of what they have done. Most of the children had only a year or two of education before joining the fighting.

The situation of the displaced civilians, estimated at approximately 500,000, and residents in many parts of central and northern Liberia became increasingly desperate by late 1993 and into 1994. Relief assistance to these areas had been effectively cut off after the October 1992 offensive, although some food and medicine continued to flow through the Ivory Coast border. Since the ULIMO attack on the UN compound in December 1993, the situation became markedly worse, with upper Lofa county effectively cut off from any outside assistance. Similarly, no relief is being provided in the territory controlled by either the LPC or the two factions of ULIMO.

Meanwhile, an estimated 711,000 Liberians remained as refugees in the neighboring countries: 415,000 in Guinea; 250,000 in the Ivory Coast; 25,000 in Ghana; 17,000 in Sierra Leone; and 4,000 in Nigeria. (The war also displaced some 400,000 Sierra Leoneans, 170,000 of whom went to Guinea and 100,000 to Liberia.) The issue of repatriation of the refugees remained subject to progress on the political front and the resolution of certain security concerns, and as of July 1994 no significant repatriation had occurred.

## **The International Response**

### **The UN Role**

After finally addressing the Liberian crisis in November 1992 and imposing an arms embargo (Security Council Resolution 788), the secretary-general

dispatched his special representative, Trevor Gordon-Somers, to investigate the situation. Human rights has been notably absent from his statements, and he has missed many opportunities to insert human rights protections into the peace process.

The June 1993 massacre at the Carter Camp in Harbel heightened attention to the Liberian war and set in motion a series of important international developments. On June 9, 1993, the UN Security Council condemned the massacre, requesting that the secretary-general launch an immediate investigation and warning that those responsible would be held accountable for their actions.<sup>5</sup> On August 4, the U.N. Secretary-General, Boutros-Ghali ordered an independent inquiry into the Harbel massacre. A three-member panel, headed by Kenyan attorney general Amos Wako, visited Liberia in August and concluded that the massacre was "planned and executed by units of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL)."

Simultaneous with these initiatives, the peace process gained momentum. In a major breakthrough, on July 25, 1993 a peace agreement was signed in Cotonou, Benin, by the NPFL, ULIMO and IGNU. The accord followed UN-sponsored negotiations in Geneva involving representatives of all the factions. These negotiations were part of a series of peace talks spearheaded by Trevor Gordon-Somers, the Secretary General's Special Representative in Liberia. Representatives of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the OAU also served as sponsors of the Cotonou agreement.

On September 22, 1993 the Security Council adopted Resolution 866 establishing the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) for seven months. In April 1994, the United Nations Security Council extended UNOMIL's mandate for another six months, with the proviso that the situation be reviewed on May 18 and June 30. This provides an important opportunity to re-examine UNOMIL's progress and purpose, and reinforce the need for its mandate to be implemented.

UNOMIL has not been reporting publicly on either the violations of the cease-fire in the southeast or violations of humanitarian law, although apparently reports are being sent to New York. UNOMIL is itself restricted in its movements, and has not been able to conduct investigations into reported violations. However, by avoiding the human rights issues, the UN is failing to discharge its mandate in Liberia.

The UN mission in Liberia constitutes one of the only means of exerting pressure on the warring factions, as well as on the Nigerians, to halt this downward spiral. The UN must implement its mandate: UN observers are authorized to report on violations of the cease-fire and of humanitarian law, and they must protest publicly when they are restricted in their movements.

In addition, the new human rights officer for UNOMIL must engage in active human rights monitoring, so that human rights violations can be documented and their perpetrators identified.

### The United States

After years of supporting the brutal and corrupt regime of former President Doe in the 1980s, making it the largest recipient of U.S. aid in sub-Saharan Africa, the U.S. largely withdrew from Liberia once the war began in 1990. Toward the end of 1993, however, when it became clear that the latest peace plan required substantial U.S. assistance if it was to succeed, Liberia finally became a higher priority.

The main tenets of U.S. policy toward Liberia are to support conflict resolution efforts by ECOWAS and the UN, to withhold recognition of any government in Liberia, and to promote ECOWAS and its peace plan. By the end of 1993, the conflict resolution efforts had gained new momentum: On September 30, the U.S. obligated \$19.83 million (\$13 million in Economic Support Funds and the rest in Foreign Military Financing) to the UN Trust Fund for peacekeeping in Liberia. The money would be used by ECOMOG and the OAU to help finance the deployment of the expanded ECOMOG troops, but not for lethal assistance. On December 20, 1993, the U.S. allocated an additional \$11 million in support for the UN-monitored African peacekeeping operation in Liberia.

The U.S. was the leading donor to the victims of the war: since the beginning of the conflict, including more than \$57 million in fiscal year 1994. An additional \$28.7 million had been provided since April 1991 to assist the ECOWAS-led peace process.

Although the U.S. government acted quickly to condemn the June 1993 massacre in Harbel and to welcome the Cotonou peace agreement, it did not stress adequately the human rights component of the crisis. The U.S. should have made clear to all the warring factions that human rights issues would directly impact U.S. foreign assistance to any future government, and that the U.S. would distance itself from any force that continued to violate human rights and international law.

The U.S. has been aware of the human rights problems associated with the ECOMOG intervention, yet U.S. policy still revolved around full support for ECOMOG. The U.S. must make clear its concern about human rights violations by elements of ECOMOG, and condition U.S. aid on respect for human rights.

On two occasions in 1994, the U.S. sent officials to Liberia—in January, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Prudence Bushnell, and in February, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, George Moose. Both visits involved meetings with representatives of the main warring factions and

were meant to deliver a message that the U.S. had limited patience, and that the factions had to move forward on the peace process. Shortly thereafter, the factions announced their agreement about the seating of the LNTG. Bushnell returned to Liberia in June, and delivered a stronger message to the factions, warning them that if there was no visible progress in the peace process, the U.S. was going to examine its options, and that those factions leaders considered to be obstructing the peace process may no longer be allowed access to the United States. This message was meant to resonate particularly with George Boley who heads the LPC, since he owns a home in Maryland (USA).

The U.S. growing concern with LPC was also reflected on May 9, when acting State Department spokesperson Christine Shelly expressed increasing concern about human rights abuses in Liberia, especially those involving the LPC: "We have received numerous credible reports of gross human rights violations—including murder, rape, mutilation and to ommitted by the LPC against unarmed civilians. The LPC's aggressive military activities have displaced tens of thousands of Liberians and threaten to plunge the country back into full-scale war." The statement also criticized human rights abuses by both factions of ULIMO and the NPFL.

### **The Need for Accountability for Human Rights Abuses**

One of the tragedies of Liberia is that the issue of accountability has been avoided in all the peace negotiations. Those responsible for egregious human rights abuses in Liberia must be held accountable for their crimes. It is the responsibility of governments to seek accountability, regardless of whether the perpetrators are officials of the government, the military, anti-government forces, or others. Any laws that purport to immunize those who have committed gross abuses from exposure of their crimes, from civil suits for damages for those crimes, or from criminal investigation, prosecution and punishment, must be opposed.

There has been discussion of a general amnesty for all combatants. The report of the All Liberia Conference of March-April 1991 resolved that a "conditional amnesty be granted to all Liberians who served as combatants in the civil war of Liberia,"<sup>6</sup> but does not elaborate. Many Liberians also fear that a blanket amnesty would lead to a wave of vengeance killings, with individuals settling scores on their own. Seeking accountability does not contradict these calls for a conditional amnesty. An amnesty for the offense of taking up arms and for general acts of war is wholly different from an amnesty for war crimes or crimes against humanity.

Many Liberians express the fear that any effort to seek accountability for past abuses will destroy the fragile fabric of Liberian society, that too many



people have too much blood on their hands. One expatriate with long experience in Liberia put it this way:

Where do you start? When do you start? At this point, there are so many people involved at various points of time. Maybe you could go after some of the more flagrant ones. There are plenty of names from the AFL—from 1985, from 1990—and then you've got the NPFL, the INPFL and now ULIMO. There are so many people involved that if you start it, everyone's going to be pointing fingers at everyone else.<sup>7</sup>

While recognizing the difficulty that some governments may face in holding members of their own armed forces accountable for human rights abuses, these difficulties do not justify disregard for the principle of accountability. Despite these obstacles, the alternative is far worse. It is important to note that any investigation, prosecution and punishment of those responsible for gross abuses is premised on a reconstituted court system that would conform to internationally recognized principles of due process of law.

Until such time as a court system could handle cases of accountability for past abuses, some form of Truth Commission might be established, on the model of El Salvador, to avoid acts of revenge. In El Salvador, a group of distinguished persons was appointed by the UN's Secretary General to conduct a six-month review of "grave acts of violence . . . whose mark on society demands with great urgency public knowledge of the truth." The 1992 peace accord in El Salvador also established a civilian review commission to purge the military of human rights abusers.<sup>8</sup> Although the circumstances in Liberia differ, important lessons can be learned from the role human rights played in El Salvador's peace process, especially the effort to seek accountability.

There is not much good news coming out of Liberia at this writing (mid 1994). Promises to disarm have been ignored, fierce fighting has resumed, and civilians again find themselves bearing the brunt of the brutality. Yet there are glimmers of hope that Liberia's balance will eventually tip toward peace, instead of sliding back into war; these are provided by the creative and courageous civil society in Liberia, which has continued to organize, inform and serve Liberian communities, especially around Monrovia.

When it comes, peace will present its own trials. A Liberian woman described the challenges that will be faced: "The hardest thing," she said "as a person, as a society, as a nation—is how to reach out to the people who killed and massacred our people." Peace in Liberia will not be easy, with the land looted and ravaged, the people battered and bitter, but the alternative is truly terrifying.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> On August 16, the Liberian factions elected Bismark Kuyon, representing the Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU), as chairman of the interim council, and Dorothy Musuleng Cooper of the NPFL as vice-chairman. On October 20, the NPFL abruptly replaced Musuleng Cooper with Isaac Mussah, a notorious NPFL commander. On November 15, IGNU replaced Kuyon with Philip Banks, who had been serving as Minister of Justice.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Ziah, a Krahn, refused to support his fellow ULIMO candidate, Mohamed Sheriff, as chairman, and this led to the split within ULIMO. Kromah sacked Ziah on March 3, and ordered Krahn fighters in ULIMO to be disarmed. General Roosevelt Johnson, a Krahn, announced on March 6 that he had replaced Kromah as head of ULIMO. Ziah was then replaced by Dexter Tahyor, a compromise candidate.

<sup>3</sup> The report went on to recommend that three soldiers be prosecuted in connection with the massacre. In September 1993, the interim government detained the three soldiers named in the report, but openly questioned the UN's findings. Reports indicate that the soldiers have been released, and no further action has been taken on this case.

<sup>4</sup> In late October 1992, five American nuns, based in Gardnersville, were killed by the NPFL. The nuns were: Sister Barbara Ann Muttra, 69; Sister Joelle Kolmer, 58; Sister Shirley Kolmer, 61; Sister Kathleen McGuire, 54; and Sister Agnes Mueller, 62. Three were killed in the convent house and two were shot on a nearby road. Although the nuns represented a tiny fraction of those killed, their death attracted international attention to the resurging war.

<sup>5</sup> Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali instructed Gordon-Somers to conduct an investigation into the incident. While this quick response by the UN was welcome, it was ultimately undercut by the fact that Gordon-Somers's report to the secretary-general was not published, or his findings revealed. Questions were raised as to why the secretary-general chose to send Gordon-Somers, when his role as a mediator of the conflict precluded him from making any findings that would antagonize any of the warring factions.

<sup>6</sup> "Final Report of the Proceedings of the All Liberia National Conference," March 15-April 20, 1991.

<sup>7</sup> Africa Watch interview in Monrovia, Liberia, March 8, 1993.

<sup>8</sup> Americas Watch, "El Salvador: Peace and Human Rights, Successes and Shortcomings of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador," September 2, 1992.

# Sexual Harassment in Liberia: A Review

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## 1. Introduction

A study of the problem of sexual harassment in the workplace in Liberia is important. However, the issue has not received much attention in the courts and social policy, and, thus, direct assessments of the subject seem to be virtually nonexistent. An extensive literature search produced only one fairly recent paper which has important limitations in law and public policy. Kieh and Railey (1993) examine the relationship between sexual harassment and employment opportunities for women in Liberia. Their main conclusions are: (1) There are no laws on sexual harassment in Liberia; (2) a linkage exists between sexual harassment and employment opportunities for women; and (3) the traditional societies in the rural sector have established systems for dealing with the issue.

As I discuss below, these three conclusions are not substantiated by laws of Liberia, data, and cultural norms and traditions, respectively. In light of the importance of the subject and the implications of their conclusions on law and public policy in Liberia, further examination of the issue — as well as of Kieh and Railey's methodology and conclusions — is needed. To this effect, this paper reviews Kieh and Railey's analysis and conclusions and discusses the laws of Liberia on the subject and other public policy considerations.

The outline of the paper is as follows. Section 2 presents a background on sexual harassment. This is followed in Section 3 by a review of Liberian laws on the subject. Section 4 reviews United States Supreme Court cases on sexual harassment that could have an impact on decisions of Liberian courts. Section 5 examines the relationship between sexual harassment and female employment. A brief discussion on sexual harassment in traditional societies is presented in Section 6. The final section presents the summary and conclusions.

## 2. Background

Sexual harassment in the workplace is an ancient problem, that is getting new attention around the world. The problem existed during biblical times as reported in the Book of Genesis, chapter 39. Although the vast majority of victims of sexual harassment are women (Colden 1994), in that biblical incident, the victim was the male and the harasser was the female: "And it came to pass ... that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me. But he refused.... And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her.... And it came to pass about this time, that Joseph went into the house to do his business; and there was

none of the men of the house there within. And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand and fled...." (Gen.39:7-12). The victim was later discharged from his duties in his master's house and imprisoned.

Although it is an ancient problem, sexual harassment is a fairly new term. In Japan, for example, there was no term for the problem until several years ago, when the Japanese borrowed from English and coined the term *seku-hara* (Webb 1991). During the United States Senate hearings on the nomination of Clarence Thomas as justice of the Supreme Court, many men in Kenya asked "What is sexual harassment?" and said that there was no term for it in the African context (Mbugguss 1992).

Today's awareness of the problem began in the 1970s in the United States as a result of changes in the power relationships between men and women in society at large and, more particularly, on the job. These changes were the results of the enactment of the Civil Rights Act, the participation of women in the labor force, and the women's movement (Bustelo 1992; Webb 1991). The Civil Rights Act's prohibition against employment discrimination was amended to include sex discrimination. Additionally, as more and more women earned college and professional degrees and began participating increasingly in the labor force, they began challenging traditional views of male-female relationships and division of labor between genders in the workplace. Following the successful efforts by the women's movement in the United States to classify sexual harassment as a form of sex discrimination prohibited under Title VII of the Civil Rights of 1964, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) published Guidelines in 1980 defining sexual harassment. The Guidelines define sexual harassment as follows:

#### **§1604.11 Sexual harassment**

Harassment on the basis of sex is a violation of Sec. 703 of Title VII. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. [29 CFR §1604.11(a) (1985)].<sup>1</sup>

Thanks to Anita Hill's testimony during the United States Senate confirmation hearings in 1991 on the nomination of Clarence Thomas as justice of the

Supreme Court, sexual harassment is getting international attention. Since that hearing, the number of reported complaints and incidents of sexual harassment has increased dramatically in many countries, including Australia, Canada, the Dominican Republic, Great Britain, India, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Russia, Sweden, and the United States (Mbuggus 1992; Pope 1994; Roman 1994; Webb 1991). In the United States, for example, the number of complaints filed with the EEOC increased from 3,661 in 1981 to 5557 in 1990; after the hearing in 1991, it increased to 5649 in 1992 and to 7,273 in 1993 (Clark 1991; Heath 1994).

In Liberia, however, the problem has not received much attention in the courts and social policy. It has not been litigated in Liberian courts, and, therefore, there are no case laws on the subject. Hence, for a definition, this paper follows the EEOC Guidelines on sex discrimination, prohibited under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act.

### 3. Laws on Sexual Harassment in Liberia

The conclusion that there are no laws in Liberia to address the issue of sexual harassment (Kieh and Railey 1993) is in sharp contrast to Liberian jurisprudence. Laws of Liberia provide one who is sexually harassed a right of action or means of obtaining redress. According to Article 18 of the Liberian Constitution, "All Liberian citizens shall have equal opportunity for work and employment regardless of sex, creed, religion, ethnic background, place of origin or political affiliation, and shall be entitled to equal work for equal pay." This provision prohibits, *inter alia*, discrimination in employment on the basis of sex. Since sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination, it is prohibited by the Constitution.

Whether Liberian courts will interpret Article 18 of the Constitution to include a prohibition on sexual harassment is a crucial issue. The public will not know how this constitutional provision applies to sexual harassment until the provision has been interpreted by cases to produce case laws. Although there are no case laws on the subject, existing laws and practices of Liberia do address the problem of interpretation.

The approach is to use decisions of the United States Supreme Court as persuasive authority in Liberian courts. Using the Court decisions as precedence, a Liberian judge will be required to decide a case by applying the principle that has already been decided by the Court, provided the facts in the Liberian case are similar to the facts in the American case. That is, since the particular legal point has been well settled in the American Court and since the Liberian case has substantially the same facts as the American case, the Liberian court should decide the case in accordance with the principle that has already been decided by the American Court. If the Liberian court is persuaded, it will apply the principle established in the American case to the Liberian case and

United States Supreme Court decisions on this issue will be very persuasive since the Liberian constitutional provision under review is quite similar to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which, *inter alia*, prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of sex. Title VII makes it "an unlawful employment practice for an employer to fail or refuse to hire or to discharge any individual or otherwise to discriminate against any individual with respect to his compensation, terms, conditions or privileges of employment because of race, color, religion, sex or national origin." (78 Stat. 255, 42 U.S.C. S2000e-2(a)(1)). Similarly, Article 18 of the Liberian Constitution states that "All Liberian citizens shall have equal opportunity for work and employment regardless of sex, creed, religion, ethnic background, place of origin or political affiliation, and shall be entitled to equal work for equal pay." Both laws do not specifically mention sexual conduct, yet the United States Supreme Court has upheld the litigability of sexual harassment under Title VII. With the American Supreme Court interpreting Title VII to prohibit sexual harassment and with this statute being similar to Article 18 of the Liberian Constitution, Liberian courts will certainly be receptive to the United States Supreme Court decisions as persuasive authority in sexual harassment cases.

Except as modified by laws now in force and those which may hereafter be enacted and by the Liberian common law, the following shall be, when applicable, considered Liberian law: (a) the rules adopted for chancery proceedings in England, and (b) the common law and usages of the courts of England and of the United States of America, as set forth in case law and in Blackstone's and Kent's *Commentaries* and in other authoritative treatises and digests.

The reception of foreign laws serves a very useful function in a nation's jurisprudence. In developing nations, laws governing certain aspects of human life may not exist. Laws evolve over time, and as Neubauer (1991) states, "[t]he legal system is determined by the social forces actually brought to bear on it." As social forces change, a vacuum may exist in the legal system whereby existing laws cannot address the impact of these changes. As a result, a society is in a state of flux when there are no laws governing a conduct that it considers unacceptable. To avoid this problem, Liberia enacted the reception statute. Other countries, such as Israel and the United States, have had similar provisions in their laws. Israeli laws are derived from sources such as the British common law and law of equity.<sup>2</sup> In post-revolutionary America, as new states were formed, Berman (1961:13) notes that "it was generally provided in their constitutions that the English common law, as it then existed, should form the basis of judicial proceedings," and Blackstone was frequently cited in American courts during this period (Abadinsky 1988).

Other laws, such as the Civil Service law, the domestic relations law, and the penal law, also have an impact on sexual harassment. In government agencies, the Civil Service law of Liberia governs the employment, promotion, and dismissal of civil servants. In a situation where an employee has met the requirements for promotion, but is denied the promotion because of sexual harassment, the employee can seek redress through the Civil Service Commission. After the employee establishes such a *prima facie* case, the burden then must shift to the employer to articulate some legitimate, nondiscriminatory reason for the employer's decision. A similar procedure is required by the labor law of Liberia governing employment in the private sector.

The domestic relations law prohibits interference into marital relations. Where a married person has been sexually harassed, the harasser can be sued for interference into marital relations, and the court can grant relief as provided by law. The penal law also addresses a wide range of sexual offenses.

It has been argued that most of the elites in the power structure are among the perpetrators of sexual harassment and, therefore, these elites find it difficult to address the issue (Kieh and Railey 1993). But the victims need not wait, because, contrary to Kieh and Railey, there are in fact legal remedies through the courts and administrative agencies. Courts are often called upon to decide important social issues that other branches of government choose not to decide. This is particularly the case with emotion-laden issues that other policy makers try to avoid.

Moreover, because the judiciary is largely insular within the broader political system, politically disadvantaged groups or those who are not in the power structure have often turned to the courts to seek redress. It is no accident, therefore, that individuals who were not within the power structure challenged

their detention after the November 12, 1985 coup attempt.<sup>3</sup> They filed a petition for a writ of habeas corpus in 1986 when they were not formally charged as required by the Liberian Constitution. When the court ordered their release citizens jubilated in the streets of the capital, Monrovia. Similarly, in the United States, many of the highly controversial Supreme Court decisions have involved groups with little or no political standing. For example, Blacks (before the modern civil rights movement), members of small religious groups such as Black Muslims and Jehovah's Witness, and sexual minorities have too few votes to influence elected officials, but with legal arguments, they were able to gain major victories in the courts (Neubauer 1991). Liberians, too, need to exercise their legal rights through the judicial process in order to realize the necessary changes in social policy. The problem of sexual harassment needs to be placed on the judicial agenda.

#### **4. United States Supreme Court Cases on Sexual Harassment**

Since, in certain circumstances, American case laws are considered Liberian law or can be used as persuasive authority, a review of sexual harassment cases decided by the United States Supreme Court is in order.

Although many sexual harassment cases have been decided by United States courts, only a few have been heard by the Supreme Court. In the leading case—*Meritor Savings Bank v Vinson*, 477 U.S. 57 (1986)—Mitchell Vinson was employed as a teller-trainee in Meritor Savings Bank. She progressed through the bank's hierarchy, but after using up approximately two months of sick leave, she was dismissed for excessive use of leave time. In the action brought against her supervisor, she claimed that she had been subject to consistent sexual harassment in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. She was forced to engage in sexual relations with her supervisor 40 to 50 times over several years (sometimes in the bank vault). She also stated that he had fondled her in front of other employees. She testified that she had not reported these and other abuses to his supervisors because she was afraid of him. Her extended use of sick leave was caused by the emotional stress that she had gone through as a result of her sexual abuses.

There were countercharges by the supervisor and the bank. They argued that Vinson dressed provocatively and that she had engaged in sexual fantasies. The bank stated that if her supervisor had sexually harassed her, it was unknown to the bank and was done without its consent or approval.

The key holdings of the Court were:

1. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination illegal under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.



2. Sexual harassment is illegal even if the victim suffered only a hostile work environment and not the loss of economic or tangible benefits.
3. Lack of knowledge of the harassment does not automatically relieve the employer of liability for the supervisor's harassment.
4. The complainant's consent to the behavior does not relieve the employer of liability. The question is not the "voluntariness of the complainant's participation," but whether her conduct indicated the behavior was unwelcome.
5. The complainant's behavior, such as provocative speech and dress, may be considered in determining whether the complainant found particular sexual advances unwelcome.

In *Long Island Typographical Union No. 915 v. Newsday* (1991), *Newsday* dismissed its composing room worker after female coworkers complained that he made "offensive and unauthorized contact" when he walked by them. However, in arbitration, he won rulings against his dismissal based on his union contract. *Newsday* took the case to court.

The Supreme Court upheld *Newsday's* dismissal of the worker, stating that the arbitration completely ignored public policy against sexual harassment in the workplace. This ruling reinforced an employer's legal obligation to eliminate sexual harassment in the workplace.

In the most recent case, *Harris v. Forklift Systems, Inc.* (1993), Teresa Harris worked as a manager for the company from 1985 to 1987. She claimed that throughout this period, the company's president often insulted her because of her gender and often made her the target of unwanted sexual innuendos. The president told her on several occasions, in the presence of other employees, "You're a woman, what do you know" and "We need a man as the rental manager"; at least once, he told her that she was "a dumb ass woman." Moreover, in front of other employees, the president suggested that the two of them "go to the Holiday Inn to negotiate [her] raise."

In August 1987, Harris complained to him about his conduct. He claimed he was only joking and promised to stop. But in September, he began anew. On October 1, Harris quit and then brought action against the company, claiming that the conduct of the company's president toward her constituted an abusive work environment because of her gender in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Citing *Meritor Savings Bank v Vinson*, 477 U.S., at 65 and 67, the Court held that: "When the workplace is permeated with 'discriminatory intimidation, ridicule, and insult,' that is 'sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the victim's employment and create an abusive working environment.' Title VII is violated."

The importance of these cases is that the Court upheld the litigability of sexual harassment as a form of sex discrimination under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, thereby making Title VII the most powerful legal weapon in the United States against sexual harassment in the workplace.<sup>4</sup>

In light of the absence of Liberian case laws on this issue, these United States Supreme Court cases could have a significant impact on sexual harassment cases in Liberia, because Title VII's prohibition of sex discrimination is similar to that of the Liberian Constitution.

## 5. The Impact of Sexual Harassment on Employment

In their attempt to study the relationship between sexual harassment and employment opportunities for women, Kieh and Railey (1993) state that job interviews usually focus on sexually laden issues and women who consent to having a social relationship with their supervisors are employed or promoted. From these descriptions, they conclude that a linkage exists between sexual harassment and employment opportunities for women in Liberia.

This conclusion has basic methodological limitations. First, no data are presented to show the relationship between sexual harassment and employment opportunities.<sup>5</sup> It would have been appropriate to carefully discuss the data analysis process employed, such as questionnaire construction, sample size, statistical tests performed, and robustness of the results.

Second, their methodology and conclusion do not isolate the effects of sexual harassment from the effects of other factors on employment opportunities for women. The issue is not whether there is sexual harassment. The issue is whether changes in employment opportunities for women can be attributed to sexual harassment as argued by Kieh and Railey. This is a testable proposition. Economic theory suggests that changes in employment could be influenced by many factors, such as levels of education, national economic growth, and growth in the labor force. Therefore, isolating the effects of each variable is important, because to conclude otherwise could erroneously attribute the impact of other variables on employment to the impact of sexual harassment. In the absence of any discussion of the methodology employed in arriving at their conclusions, Kieh and Railey's conclusions are somewhat *ad hoc*. A model for investigating the impact of sexual harassment on female employment is developed and tested in note 6.<sup>6</sup>

## 6. Traditional Societies and Sexual Harassment

Kieh and Railey also argue that "the traditional societies in the rural areas have devised systems for dealing with the sexual harassment of women..." (1993:199). Given the definition of sexual harassment, it is doubtful whether the issue exists in traditional societies or whether they have devised means of dealing with it. In traditional societies, there is a well-defined division of labor between males and females. Men do the slashing and burning of the fields and the hunting, while women do the planting and harvesting. Such a society is unlikely to have incidents of sexual harassment as defined — "[U]nwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, [or] (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual...." [29 CFR §1604.11(a) (1985)]. Why would a member of one sex seek employment from a member of another sex in a traditional society when duties are clearly defined? What employment or job promotion would a member of one sex in a traditional society seek that could lead to sexual harassment?

Therefore, while traditional societies have laws governing sexual offenses, these offenses may not include sexual harassment, because, given the social order in these societies, sexual harassment as defined may not be applicable to them. This suggests the need for a definition that is applicable to the traditional context. With the majority (over 70 percent) of the Liberian population living in the traditional sector, democracy requires that the laws of society embody fundamental notions of justice for all.

## 7. Summary and Conclusions<sup>7</sup>

Although sexual harassment is an important subject, it has not received much attention in the courts and social policy of Liberia. In a recent paper, Kieh and Railey discuss sexual harassment and employment opportunities for women in Liberia. Their study has three main objectives: 1) to stimulate discussion on the issue, 2) to show a linkage between sexual harassment and employment opportunities for women, and 3) to show the need for legislation on the issue.

With respect to the first, they have introduced the issue in the literature on Liberia and thus have provided a basis for debating the issue in Liberian public policy. In this regard, Kieh and Railey have made an important contribution.

On the issue of a linkage between sexual harassment and employment, I have shown that this is not substantiated by data. Although they state that such a linkage exists, they failed to discuss the methodology used to arrive at this conclusion.

On the issue of laws on sexual harassment, I have outlined various laws and legal procedures that can be used to seek redress. The Liberian Constitution clearly prohibits this form of \_\_\_\_\_ ation in employment and is, perhaps, the most powerful legal weapon on this issue in Liberia. With the Reception Statute, the rules adopted for chancery proceedings in England and the case laws of England and the United States on the issue are considered Liberian law. The Civil Service Law, the Labor Law, the Domestic Relations Law, and the penal law also have an impact on this problem.

Liberians need to exercise their legal rights and seek redress in the courts of law. Courts differ from other institutions in how they operate. Unlike legislative and executive institutions that seek out problems, and in large measure, control their agenda, courts are passive and reactive. Judges can act only when they are called upon by parties seeking redress. Because they depend on others to bring matters to their attention, courts have a limited ability to control their agenda. Thus, the issue of sexual harassment needs to be brought to the attention of the courts. Courts do not seek cases; cases seek courts.

The existence of laws against sexual harassment can help people feel sufficiently protected and confident in the workplace to resist objectional behavior and report it when their rejection is not honored by the harasser. However, laws will not be enough if those concerned do not unite to convince employers in both the public and private sectors of their legal obligation to eliminate sexual harassment in the workplace. This is a challenge for post-war Liberia.

## NOTES

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1. Other countries have definitions for sexual harassment quite similar to that of the United States. See, for example, the Recommendation of the Commission of the European Community on the measures that should be taken by member nations to protect women and men in the workplace (Bustelo 1992) and the penal code of Kenya (Mbugguss 1992).

2. *Encyclopedia Americana*, s.v. "Israel."

3. See, for example, *In re Dr. Leon Ledlum, D. K. Wonseleah et al. v. Jenkins K. Z. B. Scott et al.*, First Judicial Circuit (February 12, 1986).

4. Sexual harassment in education may constitute sex discrimination under Title IX of the 1972 Education Act Amendments. In *Alexander v. Yale University* (1977), a female undergraduate at Yale University said that her professor offered her an A in his course if she would accept his sexual proposition and that when she refused she got a C. She demanded that the lower grade be removed from her academic record. The district court held that sexual harassment may constitute sex discrimination under Title IX, stating: "It is perfectly reasonable to maintain that academic advancement conditioned upon submission to sexual demands constitutes sex discrimination in education, just as questions of job retention or promotion tied to sexual demands from supervisors have become increasingly recognized as potential violations of Title VII's ban against sex discrimination in employment." (Lacey 1991).

5. Kieh and Railey's (1993) data sources include their direct observation of sexual harassment in Liberia over the last twenty years and interviews with a cross-section of Liberians.

6. Whether sexual harassment has an impact on employment of women is testable. A model for testing this relationship in future research is derived as follows:

Let the female unemployment rate ( $U$ ) in year  $t$  be a function of the growth rates of the following variables: national economic output ( $Y$ ) (measured as gross domestic product lagged one year), the female labor force ( $N$ ) in year  $t$ , and number of sexual harassment complaints ( $H$ ) in year  $t$ . All growth rates are at annual rates in percentage points. The model for estimation is specified as

$$U_t = \alpha Y_{t-1} + \beta N_t + \gamma H_t$$

where  $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ , and  $\gamma$  are the elasticities of unemployment with respect to economic output, labor force, and sexual harassment, respectively.

$\gamma < 0$  implies that sexual harassment has a positive impact on female employment.

Estimation of equation (1) using OLS and sexual harassment and U.S. Bureau of Census macroeconomic data for the United States over the period 1981 to 1992 yields ( $t$  statistics are in parentheses):

$$U_t = 4.609 - 0.484Y_{t-1} + 1.134N_t + 0.001H_t$$

$$(2.590) \quad (1.774) \quad (0.071)$$

$$N = 11, R^2 = .556, SE = 1.011.$$

The parameter estimates for economic growth and female labor force are statistically significant at the 5 percent and 10 percent levels, respectively. The parameter estimate for sexual harassment is not statistically significant.

These results suggest that sexual harassment had no impact on the aggregate female unemployment (or employment) rate in the United States over the period 1981 to 1992, but economic growth and growth in the female labor force had significant impacts. A one percent increase in economic growth yields one-half of one percent decline in the female unemployment rate, . Although the sample size is limited, the results suggest the use of an appropriate methodology in relation to the issue.

7. The Kieh-Railey study has other limitations, but these will be relegated to this note. Several authors are mentioned as those who have published articles and/or books on sexual harassment in the United States. However, the necessary bibliographic references to these works are not provided.

They also argue that the Liberian political structure has been dominated by men, as reflected in the number of women who have held public office over the period 1847 - 1990. Their data used to support their position are reported in Table 1. There are many inaccuracies in the data. I have therefore added to the table a column in which more accurate information is reported.

**Table 1. Number of Women Holding Public Office in Liberia  
(Before 1991)**

Office	Kieh-Railey <sup>a</sup>	Guseh <sup>b</sup>
Acting President/Head of State	Not reported	2
Ambassador	3	5
Cabinet Minister	7	8
County/Territorial Superintendent	1	1
Deputy and Assistant Ministers	15	54
Dir. of Autonomous Agencies & Bureaux	1	2
House of Representatives	8	11
House of Senate	4	3
Judges	5	6
Managing Dir. of Public Corp.	1	6
President of University/College	1	1
Supreme Court Justice	1	1

Note: Some of the numbers in the last column could be more if one considers the different years and positions in which a person served. Names of women who have held public office are available from the author.

## Sources:

<sup>a</sup>Kieh and Railey (1993: 194).

<sup>b</sup>The author and the respondents to a questionnaire (See names preceding note 1.)

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## Phantoms Of The Hinterland: The "Mandingo" Presence In Early Liberian Accounts<sup>1</sup>

### Part I\*

Warren L. d'Azevedo

Throughout the written history of Liberia, in the traditions of the early colonists as well as of the indigenous Africans, and in the profuse commentary of Americans and Europeans, the "Mandingoes" are a unique and persistent element which has profoundly influenced the cultural orientation and course of events in the area. For the Liberian colonists and most Euroamerican commentators the Mandingo represented a great tradition which was at once admirable and threatening. Despite the fact that their presence in the Liberian area antedates some other indigenous peoples, they are most often described as intruders or foreigners who represent neither a distinct "tribe" nor a clearly defined social entity in the roster of regional groups. Their ambiguous identity was shaped by stereotypes that permeate much of the writings of Europeans and Americans, and have been a significant element in national Liberian culture.

It was not uncommon in Liberia to hear the "Mandingo" spoken of as "the Jews of West Africa."<sup>2</sup> In this context they are seen as peculiarly commercial and unassimilable emigres or itinerants intent upon fresh opportunity, but without relinquishing ties with their parent cultures or seeking absorption into the host culture. Yet for centuries the "Mandingo" and their precursors have been known to the native peoples of Liberia as an integral part of the African world in which they and their ancestors have lived. The population movements that brought large numbers of disparate peoples into the coastal sections, also brought the "Mandingo" and, more recently Islam. Local traditions frequently attribute to them a major role in the creation of conditions for mobility, competition, and the development of trading confederacies. Moreover, in the historical traditions of the American colonists as well as of Euroamerican observers, the "Mandingo" once represented a civilization which provided invidious contrast to the multiplicity of small societies of "savages" in the forests along the western coast, and which was in some respects superior to their own. They were seen as the potentially dominant and effective force in the interior, the people with whom the colonists would eventually share the great task of exploiting and elevating Africa. Thus, the Liberian settler society of the nineteenth century adapted and reinforced a central theme of its Euroamerican heritage.

The following discussion addresses the peculiar role which the perception of the "Mandingo element" played in the formative decades of the Liberian nation. During this period various indigenous ethnic groups began to be identified by Europeans and Liberian colonists as unitary "tribes" and their assumed characteristics stereotyped and ranked with reference to an idealized segment of the population believed to represent a superior race emanating from the Sudanic highlands. Through much of the nineteenth century it was the Gola, in particular, who came to epitomize a dark force in the northwestern interior obstructing the advance of "civilization" over "savagery." The attitudes generated in this period about the various native cultures, their politics and distribution, became deeply entrenched themes of the historical perspective of a settler dominated Liberian society as well as in the writings of Western observers. Furthermore, the appeal of the mysterious "Mandingo" and the early Liberian dream of forming advantageous alliances with their legendary empires is one of the compelling themes that inspired the first attempts to penetrate the far interior.

From the inception of the Liberian colony and through the 1870s—a period of more than fifty years—the vast territory inland from the narrow strip of coastal settlement was virtually a terra incognita to Liberians and Europeans alike. What little was known came from contact with native traders or from the occasional intrepid Liberian merchant who dared to venture short distances inland to trade in the villages of a tractable chief. Though Liberian settlers and their government had been able to establish a presence some distance up the St. Paul River and even maintained a resident agent or commissioner in some towns of the Kpelle and Bassa people south of the river, such access was not possible through the entire northern region between the St. Paul and Mano rivers. A mere fifty miles from Monrovia stood Bopolu, the center of a heterogenous confederacy, where Manding and other traders congregated under protection of the powerful chieftain, Sao Bosu, and where Liberians eagerly hoped to institute regular diplomatic commercial traffic with the fabled societies of the "Mandingo" highlands far beyond. But their way was blocked by the numerous intervening chiefdoms of the Gola and other groups who jealously guarded their control of routes to the interior.

Yet the strong entrepreneurial interest among some of the early Liberian settlers is evidenced by the fact that individual colonists managed to engage in direct trade with leaders of chiefdoms in the immediate interior who were otherwise hostile to any foreign travelers from the coast suspected of seeking commercial contact with peoples farther inland. Scattered commentaries by intrepid petty traders of this kind appear in colonial journals and newspapers of the time and were, perhaps, a major source of information about routes, conditions and prospects of intercourse with the near-interior. The bulk of the writings, however, was produced by American colonial agents, government

officials and missionaries among whom were a few black repatriates intent upon securing a homeland in Africa and building a new nation. Foremost among the latter were two Liberians of the mid-nineteenth century whose careers give expression to one of the most compelling themes of Liberian aspiration in those times.

Benjamin J.K. Anderson and Edward Wilmot Blyden exemplified the postcolonial spirit and progressive expansionism of the new Liberian nation in which the issue of relations with the vast surrounding region of indigenous African polities was a paramount and contentious concern. Like most of their contemporaries they shared the view that the "Mandingo" were the key to fulfilling the Liberian dream of advantageous alliances with legendary empires to the east. This dream motivated their pioneering explorations of the interior and shaped their proposed strategies of nation building. Together, they provided a vivid insight into the attitudes and ambitions of the immigrant Liberian settler society in its confrontations and accommodations with Africa and native Africans. Though they had been preceded by a few remarkably courageous and observant travelers such as the American Colonization Society commissioner D.W. Whitehurst, the missionary Thomas J. Bowen, and the Liberian explorers George L. Seymour and Samuel J. Ash, their reports remain the most significant and revealing sources of knowledge about the Liberian hinterland in the nineteenth century.

The Liberian enterprise was but three decades old and the Republic had just been formed when Anderson and Blyden entered the scene: but their unique roles and contributions are best appreciated in the context of the events and social climate that characterized the formative years of the colonial and national experiment. Therefore, the present discussion begins with a review of relevant historical conditions affecting initial Liberian attitudes and policies with regard to the African interior of the small enclave wrested from the indigenous inhabitants.

### "Mandingo"

The word Mandingo appears very early in European accounts of contact with the west coast of Africa.<sup>3</sup> It referred to certain merchants who spoke a "Mandingo" language and told tales of populous commercial centers in the far interior. Their kings carried the title of "Mansa," and were said to have subjugated many of the small unruly "tribes" along the coast. They were presumed to have control of the merchandise which most attracted the Europeans, and frequently were employed as interpreters because of their knowledge of many local languages and their sophistication in commerce. As European contact increased and extended along the coast, people presumed to be Mandingo were found engaging in trade among the various chiefdoms from the Gambia to the Niger Delta. They appeared to constitute an elite who were treated with

deference by the coastal peoples and whose place of origin in the far interior seemed to be a vast region of wealth and empire. The European myth of Prestor John provided a ready vehicle for reinterpretation of the legends concerning great Mandingo empires and the fabled Timbuktu that were to affect European orientation to the coast up to the end of the nineteenth century.

Prior to European conquest and partition of Africa there is discernible in the writings about the western coast a continuous theme of impatience with regard to the inability of Europeans to penetrate the interior and establish direct commerce with the "Mandingo empires." A major obstacle was the numerous petty chiefdoms of intervening peoples occupying coastal territory and vigorously defending their strategic and lucrative position as custodians of trading stations on the sea as well as routes to the interior. Access to the promised abundance of gold, ivory, slaves, and other commodities was believed to be frustrated by the rivalries and machinations of the "primitive and degraded peoples" with whom Europeans were forced to deal as local intermediaries. Knowledge of the interior—particularly of the sources of goods—was withheld from Europeans or was purposefully misleading. The notion began to develop early in the nineteenth century that the "Mandingo" represented a powerful civilization in the process of invading the coast, the proper competitors and potential allies of Europeans.

During later periods, as European commerce became more intensive, attitudes concerning the Mandingo were characterized by ambivalence. On the one hand there was the admiration for their relative wealth, skill in "trafficking," elaborate costume and deportment, their empire building, and military exploits. On the other hand, they were seen as effective competitors in commerce, conquest, and prestige coupled with the fact that they were "civilized heathens" many of whom were bearers of a monotheistic religion which had long been anathema to Christian Europe. Early stirrings of the concepts that were to develop into the "Hamitic hypothesis," which came to dominate European evaluations of African culture history in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, were evident in the tendency to see "Caucasian" features and customs among the Mandingo, and to attribute these to the diffusion of traits from presumably superior peoples in northern and eastern Africa.

C.H. Fyfe points out that Europeans in Sierra Leone tended to define any Muslim trader from the interior as "Mandingo" and that such persons were always favorably contrasted with the local tribal peoples because of their commercial vigor, decorous manners, and worshipful adherence to Islam. Governor Macauley is said to have once remarked that Africans were the more civilized the further away they were from the coast and that Islam seemed to him to share much with Christianity. During the peak of the slave trade the Mandingo were apparently highly valued slaves in New World markets—particularly as domestics—because of their purported good looks, dignity of

bearing, and intelligence.<sup>4</sup> They were frequently the subjects of romantic fiction about "noble Africans" of exotic Kingdoms, or of "Princes" fretting under the ignominy of bondage in foreign lands. The mystique surrounding the Mandingo is still to be found in modern literature.<sup>5</sup>

As indicated, the term has had long tenure and wide currency throughout West Africa. Though very early observers of the coast had begun to distinguish a "Mandingo" language and people from other interior groups of similar culture, it was a common practice to apply the term to any people who had presumably come from "Mandingo country" beyond the coastal forests. At a later period it also became associated with people who professed Islam, used Arabic script, wore Sudanic costume and ornamentation, and who were professional merchants ostensibly connected with the great nations of the interior whose pastoralism, flourishing caravan centers, royal courts, and standing armies were legend.

The linguistic and cultural situation along the coast from Liberia to the Gambia has been the subject of extensive speculation by scholars, often with a minimum of evidence and based upon an uncritical acceptance of diffusionist assumptions about migration and conquest. These assumptions essentially attribute all major advances in cultural complexity along the coast to the expansion of Mande-speaking peoples from the interior highlands to the coast into areas that were already occupied by backward forest tribes speaking dialects of West Atlantic (Mel) and Kwa languages. This simplistic picture of cultural relations on the coast has begun to be challenged by recent historiographic investigation. Though interpretations continue to be affected by previous historical generalizations, the works of Yves Person, P.E.H. Hair, Walter Rodney, and others are among the first systematic surveys and analyses of documented materials for the region.<sup>6</sup> It is clear that the situation on the coast during the early period of European contact was more complex than suggested in the writings of European and American commentators up through the first half of the twentieth century. The idea of successive waves of "Mane" (Mande, Mandinka, "Mandingo") invaders driving the passive "Sape" (Mel, and other) peoples to the coast and incorporating many of them into subjugated confederacies is no longer tenable as the outline of a more dynamic historical situation emerges.

Therefore, references to the Mandingo or any other group in this region are best understood in the context of the specific historical and cultural situations from which they are derived. Not only have the terms used to designate various tribes, languages, and areas undergone continuous revision and varied application, but the entities themselves have been changing. In Liberia, all of the factors discussed above have affected the social relations and cultural orientation of its peoples. For centuries prior to colonization, the indigenous populations were involved in much the same processes as suggested for the region as a whole.<sup>7</sup>

The traditions developed among local Africans about their interrelations with other African groups were also influenced by their relations with Europeans, and later, with the American colonists whose interpretations of events were often based on quite different premises and goals.

### **The Mandingo Myth In Colonial Genesis**

The earliest reports of agents of the American Colonization Society at Sierra Leone and what is now Liberia give scant attention to description of African peoples, their tribal identification, or their customs. This absence is striking in view of three centuries of European experience on the coast, and an accumulation of written accounts about the social and political conditions encountered in exploration and trade. The American agents and colonists had established their initial settlement at Sherbro where, for more than two years, they had close association with British administrators, European and African traders, and the natives of Sherbro.<sup>8</sup> Yet the reports to the American Colonization Society during the period of 1817 to 1822 were almost entirely concerned with problems of locating settlement sites, colonization program policies, and the difficulties of forming and maintaining a viable community of black American colonists. There seemed to be little time or need for reporting local African conditions excepting where they were immediately pertinent to colonial aims.

Despite America's long involvement in the Atlantic slave trade, knowledge of the coast of Africa was slight in the United States. In his instructions of 1817 to Samuel J. Mills and Ebenezer Burgess (two agents appointed to explore the western coast of Africa on behalf of the Colonization Society), Bushrod Washington advised them first to go to London to "procure information from those gentlemen relative to the state of the west coast of Africa, the best means of prosecuting your inquiries when you arrive there, and to obtain letters of introduction from the proper persons to the governor of the Sierra Leone colony, and to any other gentlemen on the coast who may probably aid you in your object." The agents are further advised to report on the climate, soil, healthfulness, and major geographic features of the region. But, in addition:

It would be particularly desirable to ascertain the character of the different nations or tribes on the coast, and more especially of those in the neighborhood of the place you may recommend as a proper situation for the colony...You will direct your attention particularly to the Sherbro country, which country it is expected you will visit. By means of native interpreters, you will endeavor to consult with the native chiefs of the different tribes, and explain to them the design which the Board have in view...You will obtain as particular and accurate an account of the territories, and nations, on the west coast of

Africa, as possible, together with the character of the different nations on the coast and in the interior, and the boundaries of their territories.<sup>9</sup>

Apparently this charge was not a major concern of the early colonial agents, occupied as they were with more pressing problems. By 1821 the American settlement at Sherbro had become an annoyance to British administrators at Sierra Leone. They recommended that the agents seek a site further down the coast at some distance from the section where British interests were concentrated. A number of possible sites were visited briefly, among them was Cape Sierra Leone, Cape Mount, and Grand Bassa. A contract for the purchase of land was even concluded in 1821 with a King Ben of Grand Bassa.<sup>10</sup> A year previously, Commodore Perry had paused at Cape Mesurado to make inquiry for the Colonization Society agents about the possible suitability of the place for settlement. While there, his entire negotiations were apparently through "an intelligent mulatto" by the name of Mill who resided at the Cape. Mill assured Perry that he and "the kings and chiefs" were favorably impressed with the proposal of a settlement.<sup>11</sup> But when Agent Eli Ayres and Lieutenant Stockton went to Cape Mesurado in late 1821—after the abortive attempt to arrange a colonization site at Grand Bassa—they were not impressed by Perry's efforts:

It has been the anxious desire of European Powers to get possession of this place for more than one hundred years. Both the English and French have made repeated trials to obtain it. Lieutenant Perry attempted to open negotiation for it, by writing to Mr. Mills. They have all mistaken the true policy of dealing with these people; and no negotiation, other than for necessities of life, will be obtained from them without using more policy than this. Knowing the methods that had hitherto proved abortive, we determined to try a new system of proceeding; and instead of trusting to others to make that impression upon the king...we determined to go ourselves directly to the king, and plead our own cause.<sup>12</sup>

This brief critical evaluation by Ayres of previous efforts to make effective contact with native groups at Mesurado provides some insights into the character of European relations with the coast. Due to problems in language and lack of knowledge about the political conditions among African groups, Europeans frequently communicated through intermediaries such as resident European traders, renegades, and adventurers, as well as a class of men often referred to as "mulattoes" who had been produced by intermixture. These latter persons had close connections with the local Africans, spoke their languages, and often

p an extensive knowledge of local conditions. They were accommodated both by Africans and Europeans because of their crucial role in facilitating communication.

The difficulties which Ayres and Stockton encountered in trying to utilize a more direct approach are well documented. The consternation which they caused on the first and second visits in 1821 and 1822 is fully described in reports to the Colonization Society, as well as their initial suspicions that their efforts were being frustrated by the resident "mulatto" trader, Mr. Mill.<sup>13</sup> Also it is clear that "direct" negotiations (or, as Ayres had phrased it, "a new system of proceeding") were neither so new nor so effective as he had anticipated. Much of the ensuing difficulty and confusion had to do with the insistence of the agents that they deal directly with "King Peter" (a presiding Dei chief at Mesurado) whom they considered to be an independent local monarch. The King was not only reluctant to meet with them without the services of a local intermediary such as Mill, but stated again and again that he did not have the authority to make a unilateral agreement in that "other Kings" along the coast and in the interior must be consulted. Had the Agents worked more closely with Mill they might have gained a better knowledge of actual conditions in the immediate interior.<sup>14</sup> Cape Mesurado was the focus of interest of the chiefs of a number of small chiefdoms of various tribal groups along the coast and in the interior for whom it constituted one of the major stations of coastal trade in slaves and other commodities. The loose confederacies among these chiefdoms and the intensive competition for commercial advantage were not conducive to the establishment of firm agreements in Euroamerican terms. When Ayres returned in August, 1822, with a small advance group of settlers to carry out the previous years contract, "King Peter" and the other chiefs who had been party to the agreement changed their minds due to pressure from a large number of angry and adamant chiefs in the interior.

The events surrounding the resolution of this situation are recorded in detail in Ayres' reports, and his version of these events has been incorporated into Liberian history of the initial colonial period. But an incident of particular importance occurring at that time was to affect the orientation of the first settlers to this African region for many decades to come. Every account of this period by Liberian or Euroamerican historians emphasizes the role of a "King Boat-swain" or "Bosan" a presumably "Mandingo" ruler who is said to have come to the aid of the settlers in their initial altercation with the coastal chiefs over the procurement of lands for a site.<sup>15</sup> The specific incident referred to is that which Ayres describes a few weeks after the establishment of the small American settlement. It was in a precarious state, having been besieged for weeks by hostile local natives. Ayres immediately called a "palaver" which attracted "seventeen kings, and between thirty and forty half kings." The mood of the assembled chiefs was that the colonists must leave Cape Mesurado. But in the



midst of these negotiations one chief, whom Ayres refers to as "our Boson, king of Condo," interrupted to announce that he and his "warboys" had come to insure justice, that the colonists had a right to the land they had paid for, and that he would defend them against the other chiefs, if necessary.<sup>16</sup> The other chiefs are reported to have quickly reversed their position in obvious deference to his power. On the following day, on April 25, 1822, the colonists hoisted the American flag and took possession of the land.

Throughout the tumultuous decades that followed, the colonists increased their numbers and their territory against almost continual harassment from chiefdoms in the vicinity of the Cape due in part to their interference in the slave trade, and perhaps primarily to the feuding taking place among various groups of the interior. In these hostilities, the man known throughout the interior as Sao Bosu ("King Boatswain" or "Boson") was clearly a major aggressor, and his armies made frequent raids for slaves or conquest into chiefdoms close to the colonial settlement. But, since he did not attack the colony itself and continued to make friendly overtures, he was considered to be a powerful interior patron attempting to bring order among the unruly petty chiefdoms of the coast. The complexity of the situation was only dimly perceived by the colonists, for they misunderstood the forces at work in the interior.<sup>17</sup> Sao Bosu was striving desperately to extend the control of his confederacy over trade routes from the interior to the coast. He had established alliances with the Vai and Gola chiefdoms at Cape Mount where the slave trade flourished, and he exercised considerable influence over some of the Dei and Bassa chiefdoms southeastward along the coast where other trading stations existed. However, his aims were being frustrated in the early nineteenth century by the vigorous expansion of Gola-dominated chiefdoms into formerly Dei, Kpelle and Bassa areas between Bopolu and the coast.

It was essentially the pressure from these new Gola chiefdoms that caused "King Peter" to rescind his earlier contract with the colonists. The Gola chieftains feared colonial interference with the slave trade, and also the economic and political advantage which a Dei alliance with the colonists might give to the Bopolu confederacy under Sao Bosu who was seeking corridors of direct trade to Cape Mesurado and other stations. The major attacks upon the Dei chiefdoms—and upon the colony during the first three decades of the colonial settlement—were instigated by Gola chiefs and their confederates determined to maintain their new strategic position between Bopolu and the coast. The Bopolu confederacy itself was already weakened by internal strife and the uncertain allegiance of its chieftains. By the time of Sao Bosu's death in the late 1830s, the Gola had reasserted an ancient claim to the area around Bopolu and came to dominate a new alliance of chiefdoms throughout the western interior from the St. Paul to the Mano rivers.

The erroneous notion that Sao Bosu was a "Mandingo warlord" and that Bopolu was controlled by great Mandingo towns in the far interior seeking to subjugate the small tribes of the coast, persisted throughout the nineteenth century. There is no doubt that Malinke influence was considerable at Bopolu, and that this town was the western terminus of major interior trade routes. But Bopolu was not a "Mandingo" stronghold so much as it was the center of an exploitive and unstable confederacy of immigrant tribal peoples and their chiefs profiting from the regulation of commerce between the interior and the coast.<sup>18</sup> Manding traders were eager to deal with the coastal stations but were prevented from easy access by intervening tribal chiefs who often imposed exorbitant fees for passage, or insisted upon acting as intermediaries in trade. Thus, Bopolu, where such traders were welcome, became a major market for distribution. Only where special alliances had been formed with coastal chiefdoms, such as at Cape Mount or under sporadic colonial protection along the St. Paul River near Monrovia, were any large number of Mandingo or Liberian traders permitted to venture or congregate.

### **The Lure Of Kondo, And The Vai Exemplars**

The colonists, however, continued to view the Kondo confederacy of Bopolu as the gateway to commerce with the supposed great Mandingo empires and cities of the far interior. Despite the fact that the town was not more than a three or four day trek into the interior, the difficulty of the journey through unfriendly chiefdoms was claimed to be a deterrent to regular direct contact. The first colonial representatives apparently did not reach Bopolu until 1827 in connection with the signing of a treaty between the colony and Sao Bosu. Another expedition was sent in 1829 for the purpose of determining the possibilities of increased trade and the opening of a path between the interior town and Monrovia. Such a path was completed in 1830 and, for a period of time, increasing numbers of Mandingo traders were able to deal directly with the colony. But wars and aggressive Gola attacks soon blocked these attempts.<sup>19</sup> The few colonial visitors to Bopolu stressed the large markets, the abundant commerce from the interior, and tales they had heard of even larger centers further inland. They were also especially impressed by the appearance of the "Mandingoes," many of whom were included in Sao Bosu's retinue.

In 1830, Governor Mechlin became interested in establishing a factory at Bopolu for direct trade with the interior, but this plan was abandoned because he feared that in the event of Sao Bosu's death the colony would lose its investment should his successor be unfriendly to the colony. The road had just been completed, and he wrote to the Colonization Society, as follows:

I find that our Colony is becoming more known in the interior, from the increased number of Mandingoes who resort to us. These people form the connecting link, or medium of

communication between the interior tribes and those inhabiting the sea-coast. They are almost all exclusively devoted to trade, and evince great shrewdness in all their mercantile transactions, and it is almost impossible to get the advantage of them in making a bargain...

They are all Mohommedans, and are very zealous in gaining proselytes, and have succeeded, to a great extent, in propagating their faith among the natives on the windward coast, from Cape Mount to the river Pongas and Nunez. Go where they will their persons are respected, and their influence very great. This arises from their being almost the only people who make amulets or fetiches for the more ignorant, which is of itself a source of considerable profit, as these fetiches are held in greater estimation from the fact of the maker's being able to write Arabic, or as the natives say "make book."<sup>20</sup>

This is one of the few early colonial comments that reflects upon the special characteristics of any segment of the local native population, rather than upon the character of individual "Kings and Princes." The content and tenor of the statement is in keeping with the prevailing orientation of Europeans to the Muslim merchants from the interior highlands, and the generally invidious contrast with coastal peoples. The idealization of the Mandingo, reinforced by the legend of Sao Bosu at Bopolu and the continuing hostilities of local chiefdoms, conditioned all later Liberian relations with the western hinterland.<sup>21</sup>

Perhaps no event of this period more effectively dramatizes the intense yearning of the colonial government and its American supporters to establish relations with the fabled Islamic civilization beyond the forest than the brief sensation produced by a manumitted slave named Abduhl Rahahman. A devout Muslim and a man of notable dignity he claimed to be the son of a Fulbe king and whose regiment was captured in a war when he was twenty six years of age. Taken to the coast he was sold into European slavery and eventually was bought by a tobacco planter in Natchez, Mississippi where he was soon given the name of "Prince" because of his demeanor and claim of royal blood. In 1828 at the age of sixty six his cause was taken up vigorously by a group of white benefactors who brought it to the attention of President Adams and the American Colonization Society. Through the intercession of Secretary of State Henry Clay, President Adams urged that the "Moorish slave" be restored to his own country "for the purpose of making a favorable impression in behalf of the United States." Abduhl's master agreed to free him on the condition that he not receive liberty in the United States but only upon return to Africa.

A petition was conducted among the citizens of Natchez to purchase the freedom of his wife and, while similar efforts were underway to manumit his

many children, Abduhl \_\_\_\_\_ began a triumphant and well publicized journey to Washington decked out by his patrons in "Moorish costume." Touted as the "unfortunate Moor" and a "King of Timbuctoo," he had an audience with President Adams in which he attempted to correct the official misapprehension that he had been a citizen of Morocco rather than of Futa Jallon. He then requested that he be returned home by way of Liberia where he had been assured by the Colonization Society of an enthusiastic welcome and from which his homeland was said to be but three hundred miles distant. It was his intention, he said, to help in opening the trade between Fulbe country and the colony and, also, to divert existing trade southward from Sierra Leone. This plan might have succeeded had he been sent to Sierra Leone as some had suggested, but the Colonization Society and the United States Government were cool about that idea.

On March 18, 1829 Abduhl \_\_\_\_\_ and his wife arrived at Monrovia among a group of new colonists. Acting colonial agent Joseph Mechlin immediately prepared to spend five hundred dollars to outfit the expedition to Futa. But the rainy season intervened, and the warfare aimed at preventing Liberian penetration to Bopolu and beyond intensified. While awaiting an opportune time to attempt the journey to Futa, Abduhl \_\_\_\_\_ contracted fever and died on July 6, 1829 at the age of sixty seven. His children remained in American slavery, and the great project for which he had been groomed collapsed. A strange rumor circulated in the colony that a Fulbe caravan sent by Abduhl's family in Futa Jallon had reached Bopolu with thousands of dollars in gold dust to welcome a return in keeping with his rank. Learning of his death, however, it was said that the caravan turned back, ending a most poignant episode in Liberian history.<sup>22</sup>

Later attempts were made by the colonial government to strengthen ties with Sao Bosu. During the 1830s, some Liberian traders and commissioners ventured into the interior as far as Bopolu where they were welcomed, but they brought back reports of continual interference and hostility on the part of intervening peoples and, in particular, the Gola. Even at Bopolu, they were prevented from going further eastward by the apparent policy of Sao Bosu and other chiefs of Kondo designed to restrict direct colonial traffic with interior markets, and to make Bopolu the center of such commerce. Missionaries also sought to open schools under the willing patronage of Sao Bosu, and were, during these shortlived experiments, impressed by the eagerness of their students, particularly those of the "Mandingo" segment of the Bopolu population who were Muslim and wrote Arabic. The presence of many Vai people at Bopolu, some of whom were Muslim and who struck the visitors as similar and closely associated with the Mandingo, was frequently noted. The existence of a "Vai script" was just becoming known,<sup>23</sup> and further substantiated the view that the Vai and the Mandingo were the superior peoples to be cultivated in the

region. Other peoples were ranked invidiously in accordance with the statuses ascribed by colonial history and the continuing struggle for a precarious security.

The once powerful Dei had been so weakened by the wars between the Gola and the Kondo which raged through their territory, that entire chiefdoms had moved to the coast and placed themselves under the protection of the colony. In this process, they were soon looked upon as pitiable dependents by the colonists. The Gola were feared as the most savage and untrustworthy enemies of the colony and were deemed mainly responsible for the turmoil in the western interior. The Vai, on the other hand, were known as a powerful and respected tribe whose chiefdoms at Cape Mount and Gallinas controlled important slave-trading stations as well as routes through Gola country to Bopolu. The prospect of alliance with the Vai was also attractive to the colonists, but the Vai chiefs and renegade European traders of that area were not eager to encourage potential colonial intrusion into one of the last sections of the coast where there was still a flourishing commerce in slaves.

During the first years of settlement, the colonial administrators placed restrictions on any commerce with Cape Mount in an attempt to discourage the vigorous slave trade in that area. But the illicit activities increased despite British and Liberian efforts at blockading. In 1826 certain chiefs of Cape Mount and Gallinas expressed an interest in renewed legitimate trade with the Colony. Jehudi Ashmun, the Colonial Agent, immediately responded by making an official visit to these sections. His unfinished journal of this voyage, though very brief, is among the few detailed colonial statements about the Vai or any other group in that early period. It also presents a vivid picture of emerging Liberian settler attitudes toward the Vai and the Mandingo as expressed by one of the white American leaders of the colony. Ashmun pointed out that the primary intercourse of the colony with coastal peoples tended to be to the southeast ("leeward") of Cape Mesurado, and that the colonists were much more familiar with that area than with the northwest ("windward"). Of the latter, he wrote:<sup>24</sup>

But while in the state of the windward tribes, there was nothing in these respects, to invite, there was much to repel our familiarity. They are distinguished from their Southern neighbors by an extreme jealousy of the interference of strangers, either in the country trade, in their territorial jurisdiction, or their civil affairs. The different orders of their people, originating in birth, office, and wealth, are more distinctly marked; and the rights of the superior grades are very proudly asserted, and maintained. These self-styled 'gentlemen,' as a necessary incident of their condition, possess the political power of the country, and monopolize its trade. Their superior intelligence united with a thorough education in all the arts of deception

practiced in the African trade, render it extremely difficult for such as deal with them to gain a moderate profit on their barter...

In these brief remarks, Ashmun expresses all of the ambivalence about the Vai that typified Liberian attitudes through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They, like the "Mandingo" appeared to be proud and aggressive people. They had power and vigorously defended their resources. Their society suggested complexity in its hierarchical yet pluralistic arrangement, a factor which subtly appealed to European observers as a contrast to the ostensibly more primitive estate of tribes reported elsewhere. At the same time, Ashmun's sardonic reference to "self-styled 'gentlemen'" indicated irritation about pretensions to greatness. Similar attitudes toward the Vai as "lazy and haughty" pretenders to superiority persist to this day among modern Liberians. The focus of Ashmun's admiration, however, was directed to the influence of Islam and the Mandingo. Among several important traits that distinguished the Vai from their southeastern neighbors was one which he thought to be especially obvious:

The first is that peculiar cast of character, induced by the general and serious profession of the Mahometan faith. In every village you perceive a lodge, for the reception of itinerant teachers of that religion, who, from a large proportion of their numbers coming out of the Mandingo country, generally take the name of 'Mandingo teachers'. These are a tall, slight-made race of men, whose prominent and sometimes fine features, are indicative of those superior intellectual endowments, by which they are distinguished—and, who commonly unite an uncommon urbanity of manners, with profound dissimulation. They...are distinguished, by their sobriety, perseverance, activity, and avarice, from the natives of this part of Africa. These strangers are always received with great respect, and often retained by opulent individuals of the country, as their priests and religious instructors for several years; but never relinquish the intention of returning ultimately to their native country, except when advanced as they often are, to stations of dignity and power, in the different countries, where they may have taken up their residence...They never alarm the prejudices of the Pagan Africans by decrying their stupid superstitions: but substitute by the gentlest means, but with the utmost assiduity and perseverance, the doctrines, duties and worship of the Koran, in their place.

This observation is followed by a devout nineteenth century Christian's elegant critique of a competing faith:

The sublime idea of one Supreme Deity—of the creation—of an universal providence—a general judgement, and consequent accountability of men for all their actions—with the awful prospect of an immortal existence, and eternal retribution—these stupendous truths, so agreeable to the refined nature of man, and which Paganism never taught or conceived, have a natural, and surprising influence to awaken the mind from the torpor of the savage state, and give to the whole character a new stamp of intellectuality and intelligence. And all these doctrines are retained in the religion of the Koran. But this faith has no power to regenerate the principles of the heart, nor to reform materially the life. It even sanctifies revenge, pride, deceit and cruelty, when the exciting object is an unbeliever...It seems adapted in all its parts, to captivate the imaginations and affections of an ignorant and barbarous people. And its progress in this district of Africa, within the last twenty years has been proportionably rapid and extensive.

For what appears to be the first instance in the colonial record, Ashmun recognized that the Vai represent a southern limit of Islamic penetration on the Liberian coast. "Few or none of the Deys," he writes, "and none to the leeward, either profess this faith, or entertain its teachers. It is a singular circumstance, that our Colony occupies the point of separation between Mahometan and Pagan Africa, on the Western Coast." Though this view was not entirely correct, it was and is true that the St. Paul River has been a general limit beyond which the Mandingo and Islam have made little southward progress. Whether Ashmun was aware of the significance of his statement or not, it is an important historical fact that the fortuitous placement of the first Colony at Cape Mesurado was to bifurcate the orientation of the developing nation between the western portion of the interior and the entire southeastern area.

Ashmun closes his unfinished journal by a comparison of the Vai with other coastal Liberian tribes. "More intelligent than their leeward neighbors, they are also more reserved, proud, conceited and selfish." Their houses, furnishings, food, and modes of dress, all "indicate their decided superiority in point of taste and skill over the leeward tribes." He mentions the acuteness of their political views and commercial transactions. Their vices become familiar virtues in contrast to other local groups: "Too proud to ask for presents like their Southern neighbors, they were far too selfish to decline them when offered. Ambition of power and consequence, is a vice which seldom discovers itself among the Bassa and Dey Tribes."

### The Emperor Has No Clothes

A decade or so later in colonial history, when the Dei and the Bassa had been thoroughly subjugated, the attitude toward them became benignly patronizing, and it was the Gola and other aggressive interior peoples who received invidious comment. But the colonists continued to be impressed by the Vai and the Mandingo, seeing them as the advance guard of civilization from the Sudan. Their intensive slaving activity and ruthless power were decried but gingerly accommodated in the interests of potential alliance. They were seen as potential allies only temporarily duped by the machinations of illicit European traders and beset by expanding Gola chiefdoms seeking to usurp their monopoly of coastal commerce. Sporadic negotiations and missionary efforts failed to produce any workable alliance with the Vai at Cape Mount until 1856 when President Roberts established a Liberian settlement there which was named Robertsport in his honor.

Elsewhere in the western interior, however, the colonists pictured vast areas of forest inhabited by hostile "cannibals," with only Sao Bosu and his Mandingo confederates at Bopolu providing a ray of hope. Colonial fortunes were much better southeast of Monrovia where, during the 1830s, new settlements were successfully established on the coast among Bassa, Kru, and Grebo chiefdoms. As a result, these peoples were better known early in Liberian history and were viewed more favorably throughout the nineteenth century than were most of the peoples to the northwest and northeast of Monrovia. By contrast, the southeastern region did not possess major routes of regular trade with the far interior and the population scattered through the forest sections was relatively sparse. Thus, the corridor of possible expansion directly inland along the St. Paul River continued to excite the imagination of the colonists well into the twentieth century.

There is a peculiar irony in the fact that the Vai and the Mandingo, fortified by the legend of the friendly King of Kondo at Bopolu, were so highly regarded by the colonists and their agents. Colonial policy was dedicated to ridding the coast of the slave trade, and this policy accounted for much of the resistance to its expansion. It was recognized that, despite Sao Bosu's early patronage of the colonial settlement at Cape Mesurado, his confederacy was responsible for much of the slave raiding in the western interior, and that a large proportion of the slave commerce was routed through Bopolu to allied Vai and other stations at Cape Mount and Gallinas. In 1830 Agent Anthony Williams noted that Sao Bosu was also extending his wars into Bassa villages southeast of Monrovia: "King Boatswain's grand object, is without doubt, the procuring of slaves, as he is perhaps the greatest slave dealer on the western Coast of Africa. These wars, we view as an injury to the Colony, as they interfere much with our native trade. In their progress, Boatswain's warriors invariably destroy everything that seems like cultivation, even the palm trees do not escape their ignorant fury."<sup>25</sup>



But Sao Bosu was still the "benefactor" whose power the colonists believed to be a sufficient check on other tribes who sought to remove them from the coast. Moreover, in their view Sao Bosu and his Mandingo and Vai allies represented a provincial extension of Muslim civilization which needed only the leavening of contact with a superior western culture and Christianity to transform it into a worthy partner in leadership.

Williams visited Bopolu in 1834 and persuaded Sao Bosu to allow him to open a school. During his few months stay he was deeply impressed by the intelligence of his students and remained relatively unperturbed by the continuous warfare and extensive slaving activity going on about him. It is of special significance that he and his companions did not read to Sao Bosu the full text of the letter of introduction from the Methodist Episcopal Church in Monrovia. This letter contained preachments to the King about the slave trade, the trade in rum, and other matters which Williams and the party thought best not to mention at that time "...lest their fears might take alarm, and the little hold which we had obtained in their confidence be totally destroyed. The work will be more readily accomplished when a free and unreserved intercourse shall take place between these people and those of the Cape, and when the quick jealousies of their natures become neutralized by a knowledge of the benevolence which prompted this mediation and effort of good."<sup>26</sup> This ambivalence of ideal and pragmatic motives was a central feature of early Liberian colonial acculturation and in the development of relations with native groups.

One of the Commissioners in the party which brought Williams to Bopolu was a D.W. Whitehurst who later wrote what may stand as the earliest and most detailed account of conditions in the interior.<sup>27</sup> A major contribution of this narrative is the full description it provides of political relations among the chiefdoms between Monrovia and Bopolu just prior to Sao Bosu's death in 1836-37, and the eruption of full-scale interchiefdom warfare precipitated by the breakup of the Kondo Confederacy. Whitehurst makes it clear that the remaining Dei chiefdoms were desperately attempting to maintain neutrality in the conflict between Kondo and the Gola, but that they were losing ground and their country was being devastated. Permission to proceed to Bopolu was subject to the approval of Gola chiefs, and the party was kept waiting for long periods in Dei villages. Despite the intervention of Zingby, "Mandingo" warchief of Sao Bosu, they were unable to go on, and were finally called back to Monrovia to await the conclusion of the wars. Of particular interest in the account of the initial phase of the journey is Whitehurst's description of the determined efforts made by Zingby on behalf of his leaders at Bopolu to clear the way for the Liberian party to proceed through the intensive Gola obstructions. While the commissioners awaited a more opportune time, they learned that Zingby had died as a result of wounds in a skirmish with the Gola. Some weeks later, Sao Bosu sent word to Monrovia that he would provide another escort to bring the

commission to Bopolu. (This situation was to change after Sao Bosu's death in 1836, as Gola influence in the Kondo confederacy incorporated Bopolu into a cordon of control between the Mano and St. Paul rivers aimed at preventing direct Liberian commerce with the far interior.)

Their second effort finally brought the commission to Bopolu after a most arduous trip. Their meetings with Sao Bosu were disappointing, for he was apparently drunk most of the time. Whitehurst wrote, "Boatswain is upwards of 6 feet, 3 inches high, proportionably stout, and when young was no doubt very powerful. He is now upwards of 60 years, but intemperance has made sad havoc upon his intellect and frame, and with it produced a decrease of morals. One smiles at the morals of a savage, but it has induced him to copy the vices of civilized life with a remarkable fidelity. King Boatswain can swear, and talk bawdy equal to any man, and they are requirements of which he seems duly proud."<sup>28</sup>

Sao Bosu is also reported to have been worried about death, and to be losing control of his chiefs under pressure of Gola attacks. Fettered slaves were numerous, and new prisoners were being brought into the town daily. The party witnessed many atrocities which shocked them, but carefully kept their opinions to themselves so as not to disturb their reception. Sao Bosu was irritated with any indication of colonial attempts to intervene in the war with the Gola, saying that it was not the affair of the colony and that he was merely defending himself against attack. He promised that when he had captured major towns from the Gola on the path to Monrovia, he would let the colonists garrison them. He claimed to be interested only in peace, and free trade to the colony.<sup>29</sup> A striking confirmation of the main lines of trade and political alliance from Bopolu to the coast, as suggested above, is provided by Whitehurst's observation near one of the King's barricaded towns just west of Bopolu: "We crossed a small stream, and continued our walk until we arrived at a spot where the roads forked, one leading to Cape Mount, the other to Cape Mesurado. Pointing toward the latter, and fastened to the earth by stakes of wood, was a spear, planted there by order of Boatswain, as indicative of his hostile intentions toward Bum Bum a town which the Gola had captured."<sup>30</sup>

While in Bopolu the members of the Commission noted (as had all before them) the large and very active markets, and the superior appearance of the "Mandingo element" of the town. But unlike other reports, the journal offers some significant comments about its social organization. Apparently the Mandingo were not in control of the town, as others had suggested, but occupied a section or quarter headed by their own "chief." A certain degree of autonomy seems to have obtained among the various groups of the town, for Sao Bosu is said to have turned to the Mandingo section for aid when the "Boussas" refused to take the lead in a war. In a town whose population had been reported to be as much as eight or ten thousand,<sup>31</sup> an assembly of

Mandingoes on a Muslim feast day was estimated by Whitehurst to be 120 persons.<sup>32</sup> Thus the Mandingo Muslim population seems not to have been large, though it provided influential leadership in warfare, commerce, and diplomacy in the Kondo Confederacy. It appears, also, that each major quarter of the town might have had its own gate in the barricade, for a reference is made to a "Mandingo Gate."<sup>33</sup>

Sao Bosu apparently ruled the confederacy through a loosely structured council of participating chiefs representing a wide variety of groups. His authority was not unlimited, and there is indication that the loyalty of groups depended largely upon short term alliance and the promise of immediate gain. Whitehurst's vivid account of village life, warfare, and chiefdom politics during those turbulent years of the 1830s constitutes one of the few documents of true ethnographic value in this early period. The report also contains a realistic portrayal of Sao Bosu shortly before his death and reveals the actual status of Bopolu among the aggressively competitive chiefdoms struggling for advantage in western Liberia.

When Commissioner A.D. Williams returned with Whitehurst to Monrovia in 1835, he predicted that the Gola would bring about the fall of the Kondo Confederacy.<sup>34</sup> In the next few years the prediction was borne out. After Sao Bosu's death, Gola chiefdoms dominated the whole of the intervening interior from the St. Paul to the Mano rivers, and the Gola faction at Bopolu gained ascendancy. By 1839 a chief known as Getumbe began a series of punitive raids against Dei villages in retaliation for their defensive neutrality in previous wars and their cooperation with the colonists. He had emerged as one of the new leaders of the region around Bopolu and, with the support of Sao Bosu's successors and mercenaries of the confederacy, he planned to consolidate Gola control of the trade routes along the St. Paul River. In this process he also began to attack colonial settlements to which many Dei had retreated, and served notice that the Colony was not to interfere with his plans. The situation became so serious that Governor Buchanan sent out the militia to Getumbe's town, which was captured and burned. In Liberian history this event is described as a great victory and turning-point in Liberian fortunes. Getumbe is said to have fled and become a hunted wanderer. In actuality, he continued to exercise great influence in the affairs of chiefdoms throughout the Bopolu area, and almost thirty years later he was reported to be in good health and a distinguished elder.<sup>35</sup>

Though this confrontation gave the Colony considerable prestige and discouraged major attacks against its settlements, intensive warfare persisted in the western interior. Trade to the far interior was still difficult, and the Liberians were not pleased with the new regime at Bopolu. Nevertheless the government took advantage of the successful campaign against Getumbe to conclude several useful treaties for land and alliance with local chiefs, particularly with Dei chiefs

from whom the colony procured large tracts of land along the St. Paul for new settlements. For the next twenty-five or thirty years the colonial sector was occupied with the problems of developing an independent republic and with the extension of new settlements southeastward along the Kru coast. Sir Harry Johnston states that there was an increased migration of Mandingo into north-western Liberia during the 1840s, and that this was accompanied by intensive Muslim activity.<sup>36</sup> But the government seemed little aware of the conditions in that section of the interior, and appeared to have temporarily given up its interest in Bopolu or Cape Mount. The western interior remained an enigma.

### Bopolu Revisited

The situation at Bopolu was not observed again in any detail until the American missionary Thomas Bowen visited the vicinity briefly in 1850.<sup>37</sup> An interesting feature of his account of this visit is the misinformation he received in Monrovia before venturing into the interior. He seems to have been under the impression that "a civilized native, called King Boatswain" still governed Bopolu, and he had been told that the town was 150 miles in the interior. His efforts to reach Bopolu through "the Gola bush" revealed that the situation had scarcely improved in the past ten years and that many changes had taken place which were apparently unknown to Liberians. Bowen's intention was to visit Bopolu with his friend, Mr. Goodale, for the purpose of establishing a mission there. He also wanted to study the "Puloh or Fellatah language" and he had been told that he would find speakers of this language at Bopolu. As he did not think that he would find natives "superior to those on the coast," he hoped to prepare himself at Bopolu "for the purpose of preaching to the more civilized people of Sudan," to which he might pass on "by a much frequented route from Bo Pora to the Niger."<sup>38</sup>

These heady plans got off to a poor start. Upon reaching the town of Vanisua ("Vanzwaw"), which was an important Dei-Gola trading center a few miles west of Monrovia and over the St. Paul River, his party was detained for seventeen days awaiting permission from the chiefs to proceed inland. During his stay at the town, he noted the large number of Dei, Vai, and Mandingo traders in the well-stocked markets. Much of the goods he was told came from Bopolu, and the market constituted a major place of exchange with the colonists. There appeared to be a deep hostility between the local natives and the Mandingo itinerants: he referred to Bopolu as a "Golah town," and learned (with amazing belatedness) that King Boatswain was dead. The present leader was known as \_\_\_\_\_ who "had removed the seat of government from Bo Pora to Sama, six miles nearer Monrovia." When he finally reached Sama, \_\_\_\_\_ would not let his party go on to Bopolu, and demanded three hundred dollars worth of goods from them for the privilege of entering his country.<sup>39</sup>

Bowen was disgruntled with all that he saw with the exception of the Mandingo and Vai. He determined that "the Golahs are degraded and superstitious, and it seems to me one of the meanest tribes in Africa." The Dei people near Monrovia "though somewhat improved by intercourse with the colonists, they are still savages...are grossly and stupidly superstitious." But the Vai are dealt with in quite different terms:

The Vy [Vai] people about Grand Cape Mount belong to the same extensive ethnical family as the Mandingoes. More than one hundred and fifty years ago, as now, they were considered superior to other tribes on this part of the coast. They are the only people in Africa who have invented an alphabet for their language...some of the Vies as of other superior tribes, have renounced heathenism and embraced the religion of Mohomet, which the more stupid tribes never do. These facts indicate the people to whom we should first offer the Gospel. I believe it is a general, if not a universal rule, that the most intelligent heathens, other things being equal, are the most easily converted from idolatry.

But for the Mandingo of Liberia are reserved the most glowing expressions of praise:

The Mandingoes, whose country lies three or four hundred miles to the north-east of Monrovia, are one of the finest tribes in Africa—tall, erect, muscular and intelligent. Their ethnological affinities extend from, the neighborhood of Ashanti to the Great Desert. Like other tribes in the interior, the Mandingoes are sufficiently mixed with Caucasian blood to give them a semi-European cast of countenance, which is sometimes accompanied with a yellow or mulatto skin. They are not all Mohometans, some whole Mandingo tribes being still chiefly Pagan, but those among them who have embraced the religion of the false prophet, are generally more zealous, and better acquainted with the Koran, than any other negroes west of the Niger...All of them that I have seen are strongly opposed to intoxicating drinks, and I was told that some of them would not taste of food for which rum has been given in exchange...They oppose music and dancing as a heathenish practice, unfit for the worshippers of the true God...All of the Mandingoes with whom I have conversed, believe that missionaries would be permitted to live and preach in their country, but they think that no Mandingo could be induced to renounce Mohometanism. They deny that the Golahs and other rude tribes are capable of being converted at all.<sup>40</sup>

So impressed was he with the Mandingo image he was led to muse later in his account that "should the Gospel be established among these people, who are known to be the most intelligent and energetic tribe south of the Desert, they might become active missionaries, and subdue more by the Word, than they have by the sword."<sup>41</sup> As for the remainder of the population:

Altogether, the people are good-for-nothing, contented savages, who spend most of their time in lounging about, as if to eat and sleep and talk were the chief end of man. Beymba [the Mandingo interpreter] assured me that some of the tribes further in the interior were still more degraded. After my return to Monrovia, some of the colonists affirmed that all the people in the country to which I had been, were cannibals.

The Mandingoes at Sama, and especially an intelligent old man, who had been at London and Liverpool as a sailor, told me several things about the interior of the country. Three days journey from Sama, the Mandingoes have built a considerable town called Godiri, which serves as a resting place for traders as they pass through the barbarous tribes who inhabit the forest...It is still four or five days' journey to the Mandingo country, which lies on the head waters of the St. Paul's and extends eastward to the Yolla Ba (Big River) or Niger.<sup>42</sup>

Though he felt that Lansanna, chief of Sama, had mistreated him, he observes the following in his favor: "a was a native of the interior, and though a residence of fifty three years among the heathen, had rather impaired his devotion to Mahomet, he still condemned idolatry, and required his idolatrous subjects to obey some parts of the 'Mandingo law,' particularly in the settlement of palavers."

But for all his polite recognition of values of a rival faith, Bowen was not allowed to pass into the interior, and he ends his account on a note of weary exasperation:

The various difficulties and adventures which I passed through before I could regain the coast—how the negroes appeared determined to have the remnant of my goods—how I was bullied and threatened by Lansanna, and a personage called the Golah king, who was chief of all the Golahs in Sama—how I had to quarrel and almost fight for seven days, before I could obtain permission to leave the town—how the surly Golahs on the road almost starved me as I returned through their country ...how my carriers tore open packages and robbed me of several dozen knives and my bottle of Cologne water;

and how I finally arrived at Monrovia, hungry, weary, and glad, about nine o'clock at night—all this need not be related.<sup>43</sup>

This depressing experience convinced Bowen that his missionary calling should be carried out among more deserving peoples:

Conquest, colonization, or some other stringent means, must be employed to raise the people of Guinea to humanity, before the Gospel can elevate them to Christianity. No chemist will produce a result contrary to the laws of matter, and no missionary will have success contrary to the laws of the human mind. This is taught in the Saviour's parable...If there had been no people in Africa superior to those of Guinea, I might have been content to pass my days here, engaged in the lowest departments of preparatory labors; but when I knew that the intellectual and social state of the Central Africans, already demanded the Gospel and a higher degree of civilization, it appeared to me unreasonable to neglect them for the sake of premature labors in Guinea. With these feelings, I bade joyful adieu to Monrovia, and sailed for Badagry, whence I expected to penetrate into the interior.<sup>44</sup>

Aside from the fascinating insight concerning the motives and values of a mid-nineteenth century American missionary that this work contains, its historical interest lies in the description of conditions immediately to the interior of Monrovia of which the government of the new republic was largely ignorant. It reveals that the Gola had fully succeeded in their efforts to control politics and commerce. Passage to Bopolu from the coast was still viewed with suspicion by intervening chiefs, and Bopolu itself was no longer seeking direct alliance with the colony, preferring rather to carry on trade through markets in native towns close to Monrovia. Bowen's sojourn in Liberia was very brief, and he obviously was not committed to any personal sacrifice in so unprepossessing an area of Africa. Liberian colonists and resident missionaries often expressed themselves in a similar way about the interior and gained what little information they had from just such sources.

### The Complete Line Of Obstruction

Through the 1850s and 1860s warfare continued unabated in the western interior, particularly in the Cape Mount area where Vai chiefs competed for supremacy in one of the last thriving outlets for the slave trade. Gola chieftains were also pressing on the Vai from the interior, and were consolidating their control of people and territory in the old Kondo country, in former Dei chiefdoms, and over the St. Paul River into Kpelle and Bassa areas. The young Liberian Republic had declared its independence in 1847, but its small settle-

ments along the coast were almost completely insulated from direct relations with the vast northwestern region. It was preoccupied with the development of new settlements at Cape Mount and along the southeastern coast, and with problems created by the remnants of the slave trade as well as by territorial contentions with the French and British.

Despite this temporary absorption in national organization and diplomacy, Liberians still dreamed of opening commerce with the legendary "Mandingo empires." In 1858 President Stephen Benson sent George L. Seymour, a missionary, and Samuel J. Ash on an extended expedition to explore the unknown regions beyond the forest.<sup>45</sup> Benson was determined to open negotiations with the Mandingo "empires" that were believed to be discouraged from further attempts to reach the coast because of the Gola and other hostile tribes. Seymour and his companion Ash actually made a remarkable journey of some six months and claimed to have visited a great walled city which was surrounded by other walled towns with extensive cultivation and manufacture. Their glowing accounts of wealthy towns and hospitable reception kindled the old Liberian hopes. Unfortunately, while returning from the interior Seymour almost lost his life, a fact which reminded the coastal settlers that obstacles to their aims had not been removed.

It was not until ten more years had passed that a similar but more productive exploration was undertaken by Benjamin K. Anderson, a young Liberian who had served as Secretary of the Treasury. Sponsored by funds from American philanthropists, and with the encouragement of President Daniel B. Warner and E.W. Blyden, he set out in 1868 to find the country of the Mandingo. His journal of this adventure, though not widely read in its time, was one of the first detailed accounts of exploration deep into the Liberian hinterland.<sup>46</sup>

The initial plan, as advised by his Mandingo guide, Kaifal, had been to take the direct route to Bopolu from Vanisua ("Vannswah"), a Dei town near Monrovia where he noted that "more than half of the village is now in the hands of Mandingo traders from Boporu." But warnings from his "friends at Monrovia" that he would be unable to pass over that route caused him to go a long roundabout way through a "Bessa's town" on the far western boundary of Gola territory where the ruler was said to be somewhat independent from Bopolu control. He hoped that from there he could circumvent the most hostile of the chiefdoms and find another trade route to Musadu. As he passed through the country he remarked on how the once powerful Dei had become a scattered remnant through wars and absorption into other tribes. Ironically enough, the town of Suen that Governor Buchanan had burned and sacked in his 1839 campaign against the Gola warchief Getumbe, was thriving: "Old Gatumba's town, both in appearance and hospitality, is the only redeeming feature of this part of the country."<sup>47</sup> There is no indication, however, that Anderson met him.



Anderson makes it clear at the beginning of his narrative that the goal of his exploration, as agreed by his supporters in America and Monrovia, was to reach "Musardu, the capital of the Western Mandingoes." It is the "country of the Manding" itself that the expedition determined to see at last. He writes, "The Mandingoes have always excited the liveliest interest on account of their superior physical appearance, their natural intelligence, their activity, and their enterprise. No one has passed unnoticed these tall black men from the eastern interior, in whose countenances spirit and intellect are strongly featured."<sup>48</sup>

But unlike his predecessors who had seen the Bopolu of Sao Bosu as the welcoming gateway to commerce with the fabled Manding markets of the far interior, to Anderson it had now become part of a region unfriendly to Liberian penetration, thus leading to his decision to travel by a circuitous route:

Boporu, though the most direct route, or the route most usually traveled, is also the place where the strongest opposition is offered to any one wishing to pass through. It is the place where the policy of non-intercourse originated. Its power and policy dominate over the surrounding regions... Besides, it is the policy of our intervening tribes to get up scare-crow reports, to prevent intercourse between the interior and Liberia. Nothing is more dreaded, and especially by the Boporu Mandingoes, than the penetration of the interior by the Liberians. There is, therefore, a complete line of obstruction, extending east and west, in the rear of Montserrado [Mesurado] country, which hinders or inconveniences trade... It is along that line that the Boporu Mandingoes and others are determined to be the 'go-betweens' to the inland trade and Liberian enterprise. They it is who are chiefly engaged in making beef scarce, and country cloths small, who trammel and clog the Boozie [Loma] and Barline [Kpelle] trade.<sup>49</sup>

It would appear that Bopolu was no longer the haven of noble African allies against the intervening Gola and other recalcitrant chiefdoms that Liberians had believed it to be during Sao Bosu's lifetime, the gateway to the fabled riches of the Sudan. The "Mandingo" there had become "different" so that it was necessary to look further into the hinterland for contact with the "real" Mandingo. Thus Musadu, the renowned ancient trading center on the route to Beyla and Kankan, had replaced old Bopolu as the locus of Liberian aspiration in the east.

Liberian unfamiliarity with the near interior to the north is vividly exemplified by the sense of strangeness which Anderson seems to experience the moment he crossed the St. Paul River scarcely ten miles from Monrovia. One gets the impression that once he had passed through the Liberian settlement of Virginia and the old Dei trading village of Vanisua he was in largely unknown

territory. Though a few Liberian merchants and emissaries had penetrated the area, little reference is made to any information that might have accumulated previously. His map and account would suggest that knowledge of the geography of the region or of its ethnic distributions and politics was still very sparse. However, he considered the entire intervening section, circumvented by his alternate route to Musadu, to be occupied by chiefdoms that had become increasingly hostile to Liberians traveling inland for purposes of reconnaissance or direct commerce. Though not specifically noted by Anderson until later in his narrative, these groups were led by powerful Gola chiefs who had succeeded in disrupting the aspirations of Sao Bosu and Monrovia for a direct trade and who now were exerting considerable influence over the policies of the Boporu confederacy whose leader was Sao Bosu's son by a Gola mother. The collective strategy of Gola chieftains and their allies from the Lofa to the St. Paul rivers was to prevent any intercourse between the coast and the eastern interior that would weaken their control of a lucrative trade in slaves and other commodities. Though these chiefdoms were generally autonomous units, often waging war on one another and sometimes involved in loose confederacies among themselves or with Vai, Dei, Kpelle and other groups, they constituted a formidable and expanding hegemony in the northwestern interior.<sup>50</sup>

Anderson's chosen route appears to have taken him on a wide arc around the most aggressive southern Gola chiefdoms to the Gola-Vai area interior to Cape Mount where he would have access to the well-traveled ancient road from Gallinas and Cape Mount to Bopolu or other points in the northern interior (though this is not so stated). This had been a major corridor of Manding relations with the Vai, either by way of Sierra Leone, through the Gola Forest, or by way of Bopolu. Unfortunately, despite the assurances of his Mandingo guide, Anderson found himself no better received at the distant town of "King Bessa" on the Cape Mount road than he might have been by going directly northeast from Suen as had others before him. Every effort was made there to impede his progress to the interior, and the king's behavior was a great disappointment. Anderson writes of him:

He is of Mandingo extraction. I regret, however, to say that he is deplorably wanting in that sedateness and religious cast of feeling which usually forms the distinguishing characteristics of that tribe...I was informed that he had purchased a dispensation from the rigid observances of that creed from some of the Mandingo priests, by paying a large amount of money. This license to do evil so affected our journey to Musardu, that it came nearly breaking up the expedition altogether...I had now struck the line of obstruction at this point...Bessa, in carrying out this policy of non-intercourse

with the interior, which is a standing, well-known, and agreed-upon thing throughout the whole country, now commenced a series of annoyances, his people acting in concert with him.<sup>51</sup>

It is interesting that Anderson attributed the attitude of this chief mainly to his admiration of "Prince Manna" (a powerful Vai chief of the Gallinas area who at that time was continuing his defiance of Liberian government efforts to restrict the slave trade and to enforce its customs laws).<sup>52</sup> Though the Liberian settlement of Robertsport had been established and peaceful relations were maintained with the Cape Mount Vai, in the late 1860s a series of wars instigated by Manna occurred throughout the area and a contingent of the Liberian army was sent against him. These wars continued after his death in 1872 and until a peace was negotiated a few years later.<sup>53</sup> Many Vai leaders had by this time become Muslims and large numbers of Manding were living among them.

It appears that "King Bessa" was exploiting his strategic position in commerce between the Gallinas-Cape Mount sections and the traders at Bopolu. His treatment of Anderson reflected his antagonism toward the Liberian government and his determination that any trade with the Liberians should be directly through him rather than with anyone "behind him." It is not clear what his relations were with the Gola chiefdoms to the east and south but he was under some constraint and apprehension concerning his connections with the leaders of the mixed confederacy at Bopolu with whom he seemed to have had a thriving trade in slaves, salt and other goods.

After weeks of exasperating difficulties and delays, Anderson was able by threat and sheer determination to continue on. At this point the itinerary of the trip becomes confusing. Apparently it took him but one uneventful day to reach Bopolu (despite his earlier determination not to go there) where he spent the night conferring about the goods that Bessa had tricked him into leaving behind, and the defection of his guide, Kaifal. The next day he left to return to Vanisua (presumably on the direct route that he had previously refused to take), a trek that took four days. He found Kaifal, and then again proceeded to "Bessa's town" to collect his goods. Still unsuccessful, he returned to Bopolu after a circuitous three-week digression. There followed almost three more weeks of "palaver" with certain of the "Mandingoes" of Bopolu who were finally persuaded to send Kaifal to redeem Anderson's goods from Bessa.<sup>54</sup> When this had been accomplished Anderson's narrative focuses at last on the situation at Bopolu.

At his first audience with "King Momoru" (Momolu Sao), the current ruler of the Bopolu confederacy, Anderson was much impressed by his intelligence and good will.<sup>55</sup> He found that the king exerted considerable influence over the affairs of chiefdoms throughout the region, even as far eastward as Musadu, and presently was attempting to suppress hostilities among the Kpelle, Bandi, and

Loma that were interfering with trade. Moreover, Momolu expressed a strong desire to establish closer ties with the Liberian government and was annoyed by its failure to communicate with him. When Anderson informed him of the behavior of "King Bessa," Momolu immediately "convened the leading Mandingoes of the town and the principal chiefs" berating them for their actions of harassment against Liberian travelers. They were also warned that they would be held accountable for any further obstruction of Anderson's journey and, before the meeting was over, they appeared to be thoroughly chastened by the king's wrath.<sup>56</sup>

In his account of this event, and throughout his observations of Bopolu, Anderson is preoccupied with the "Mandingo" segment of the population. For example, when Momolu is said to have assembled the "leading Mandingoes" and "the principal chiefs" we are not told who these other chiefs were or who they represented. Though Anderson notes in passing a very heterogeneous ethnic population in which Vai, Gola, Manding, Kpelle, Loma, Bandi and other languages were spoken, we learn nothing of what this might indicate about the internal organization of the central town of the confederacy. It is obvious, however, that Momolu was not under "Mandingo" authority but displayed a considerable degree of independence with regard to local policy and external relations. What, then, was his true constituency and who were the leaders of the various groups represented in Bopolu? Did Anderson's bias lead him to identify any person whose attire or deportment suggested Islamic adherence as "Mandingo?"

Some light is shed on these questions by Anderson's passing reference to the "variable elements" of the population of Boporu and its suburbs, amounting in his estimation to as much as ten thousand, including slaves and retainers. In this setting the "Mandingo" are said to "possess strong moral influence" through the office of their Mohammedan "priests...but as the ruder tribes do not addict themselves to the intellectual habits of the Mandingoes, it has been found necessary to adjust that faith to the necessities of the case; and to temper some of the mummeries of fetichism with the teachings of Islam."<sup>57</sup>

It is the "ruder tribes," however, that constituted the indigenous population of the region he already had passed through, of the Bopolu confederacy, and of a major portion of the country he was to traverse on his way to Musadu. Yet he was totally intent upon the "Mandingo" who, despite their machinations against him and the confirmation of their antagonism to Liberian penetration, he continued to idealize as representative of a superior culture that he would find further to the east. It does not seem to have occurred to him that the Bopolu confederacy, though providing a major center for itinerant trade, was not subject to direct control from the Manding highlands but, rather, was determined to regulate and exploit the traffic to and from the coast to its own advantage. This appears to be true of the local resident "Mandingo" as well; for

though Anderson was later to receive a jubilant welcome at Musadu, it was they who had resisted Momolu's willingness to send him on his way. In fact, it is apparent that Momolu's "Mandingo" advisors were in league with chieftains such as "King Bessa" and others along the route to the Vai coast who were jealously protecting their control of the trade. This was also the case for the route eastward to Musadu:

Every effort was made by the Boporu Mandingoes to prevent my going. It was told to Momoru that if any thing befell me, he alone would be held responsible to the government. Even Old Gatumba sent word to Momoru not to allow me, under any circumstances whatever, to pass and 'go behind them;' for he declared that I was going for no other purpose but to ruin their trade. It was the first time, I was informed, that the king had set himself in opposition to the advice and counsel of his chiefs, many of whom were greatly opposed to my passing through their country to go to the interior...To the Boporu Mandingoes I held threatening language, in which I informed them that if I did not succeed in going to their country, I would return and break up all their trade at Vannswah [Vanisua, the old Dei trading center near Monrovia.]

When finally able to depart Bopolu (actually from Momolu's neighboring town, Totokole) Anderson commented, "I had now again to experience the effects of the jealousy of the Mandingoes. They had determined that I should not reach Musardu. They therefore gave secret instructions to the Mandingo guide, Beah, who was to accompany me, to delay and shuffle all along the route, so as to exhaust my means and discourage my perseverance, and thus finally thwart the expedition. It was through this man's tricks that I was compelled to spend six months in going to Musardu, when only one was necessary."<sup>58</sup>

A matter of particular interest here is the mention of Getumbe, the Gola chieftain of Suen on the direct route from Monrovia to Bopolu. Though Anderson claimed to have gone through this town before diverging his route westward to "King Bessa's," remarking on its fine appearance and hospitality, he did not then make any mention of Getumbe himself, or his historical association with the area. Only after he reached Bopolu do we learn that "old Gatumba" had sent a strong message to Momolu advising against allowing the expedition to continue.<sup>59</sup> This was the same old chief who as a youth was on the beach at Mesurado with a contingent of slaves for trade when Stockton and Ayres landed to negotiate for a colonial settlement in 1822.<sup>60</sup> He had been a ward of Sao Bosu and became a major ally of the Kondo confederacy in its early attempts to clear the route from Bopolu to Monrovia from Gola obstruction. However, in the later period, during Sao Bosu's decline and after his death, Gola domination of most of the intervening area had become complete and they

began to reassert claim to the Bopolu region in which they and the Dei previously had held sway. In Gola tradition Getumbe is depicted as an ally of Gola interests in the war with Thomas Buchanan's Liberian forces and, later, as a distinguished elder figure representing the resurgence of Gola ascendancy at Bopolu. At the same time he was known to be a close relative ("uncle") of Momolu on the maternal side. Thus, by helping to install the latter as ruler of the Kondo confederacy, Gola aspirations for control of the entire region north-east of the Liberian settlement were assured. In this process Manding and other traders between the coast and the interior were allowed to move through at their discretion, while the growing threat of Liberian direct contact with the far interior markets would be curtailed.

It is this policy that Getumbe exemplified in his warning to Momolu with regard to Anderson's expedition—the same old man whose town had been burned by the Liberian militia thirty years before, who was said to have fled in disarray, and who now was an honored elder advisor to the king of Bopolu. This also was the policy that Anderson found vigorously demonstrated at "King Bessa's" town on the alternate route he had taken far to the northwest and where his journey was almost terminated. His reasons for making this detour are puzzling. As noted above, he states that his decision was due to the apprehensions of "friends in Monrovia" who considered the direct Bopolu route too dangerous, and the fears of his carriers. The impression is given early in the narrative that he had refused altogether to go to Bopolu where he anticipated the strongest opposition to his venture. His guide, "a learned Mandingo," had urged him to go directly to Bopolu but, upon Anderson's refusal to do so, suggested a detour through "Bessa's town." Had Anderson hoped to find a path to Musadu that would by-pass Bopolu? His distrust of the "Boporu Mandingo" inexplicably overshadowed that of any other potentially hostile groups of the region. Yet, after experiencing the deceptions of "King Bessa" he leaves without his equipment and goes to Bopolu in one day, then makes the circle to Vanisua, to "Bessa's town," and back to Bopolu during which no difficulties are reported!

Now when one considers that Anderson had left Vanisua on March 6, reached a town referred to as "Mannèenah" near Bopolu on March 12, then on March 13 traveled westward *forty* miles to "Bessa's Town" in one day, the itinerary as reported becomes confusing. It would appear that he covered a distance of about eighty miles in seven days, a reasonable pace excepting for the statement that one-half the distance was covered in one day, giving some credence to the views of those who place "Bessa's Town" much closer to Bopolu (See Note 51). Moreover there is his decision to return to Vanisua in search of his errant guide Kaifal *by way of Bopolu*, the very place he had taken such pains to circumvent! He seems to feel no need to explain this decision or the fact that he could travel back and forth a number of times between Bessa's Town, Bopolu and Vanisua without serious incident. Had he gone directly to Bopolu at the

outset—through which he was constrained eventually to pass anyway—his meandering and frustrating detours of six or more weeks would have been reduced to a mere six days from Monrovia.

There can be little doubt that the discrepancies and disorder of those first two or three months of the expedition were an acute embarrassment to a man like Anderson whose methodical temperament and sense of responsibility to a great task drove him to carry out a venture that few of his countrymen were prepared to undertake. Unlike the confident and self-reliant tone of the narrative after he departs Bopolu at last for Musadu, his description of difficulties encountered on his attempted alternate route give the impression that unforeseen delays resulting from the unscrupulous behaviour of others had distracted him from his purpose and taxed the limits of tolerance. Where later in the narrative he presents a more measured account of events and his own role in them, the earlier sections seem written by someone outraged by human foibles and anticipating deceit at every turn. In part this could be attributed to his anxiety and inexperience at the start of his journey. But it is just as likely that it was an effect of the Monrovia attitude about the immediate interior where problematic relations with local native groups had instilled prejudicial stereotypes and mutual distrust.

Some indication of his discomfort about the first phase of his trip appears in the introduction to the narrative where he seems to be making an uncharacteristic effort to absolve himself of responsibility by placing the blame for his misadventures on others. The weeks of delay at Vanisua were the fault of the Kroomen carriers who deserted him. It was the apprehension of his "friends in Monrovia" that led him to refuse to go to Bopolu, and it was the untrustworthy Mandingo guide Kaifal who sent him to Bessa's town instead. And, in one revealing passage, he gives vent to a rare diatribe concerning his peers in Monrovia and the general state of misinformation about the interior that seems to be intended as a rationalization of his initial difficulties:

Before setting out on this expedition, I made every effort to join another civilized person with me; but the undertaking was considered of too dangerous a character. I tried to prevail on some of the young men, who had but little else to do at the time; but was so entirely unsuccessful, that I fear their reputation for enterprise and hardihood must suffer when I relate how they preferred the safe, soft, grassy streets of Monrovia to an expedition into the heart of their country, simply because it was said to be perilous. I thereafter received other discouragements, from a quarter and of such a character that I must forbear to mention them. [If only one could discover what was meant by this cryptic comment!]

Many stories were rife of the unsettled state of the country: that the roads between us and the interior tribes were infested by banditti, and that war was raging between interior tribes themselves; that between all these jarring forces, it was impossible for the expedition to survive forty miles. And this was the opinion of those who were in a condition to be the best informed. But as the expedition was pushed on in the very localities where these difficulties were said to exist, it was found that there were disturbances, but not of a character to entirely prohibit our progress. The practice of exaggerating every petty affair into the proportions of a universal war, is used for a purpose; being often an artifice to produce general consternation, out of which the more knowing may cull every advantage for themselves. [Another cryptic comment, perhaps related to the first above!]<sup>61</sup>

Within the pages of this otherwise informative and convincing account of a major journey of a Liberian into the far interior, the portion dealing with the area closest to Monrovia strains the credulity and patience of the reader. One can conclude only that Anderson was a victim of Monrovia fears and misinformation. It is possible that the difficulties experienced by other travelers in the turbulent period following the death of Sao Bosu, and the chaotic struggle for power within the Kondo confederation, had created a profound dread of the region among the coastal Liberian settlements. Anderson's ambivalence concerning the "Mandingo" certainly suggests that the earlier Liberian optimism about open interaction and commerce had been tempered by a growing realization that their contingents in the western hinterland, at least, had begun to adopt the same policy of containment and obstruction employed by the Gola and other intervening peoples. To his apparent surprise, Anderson found this "line of obstruction" extending all the way north and west to "Bessa's town," at the extremity of Gola country, where he had expected to find access to the far interior "capital" of the true Mandingo. It was an obstruction that blocked the convergence of the two major Manding routes of trade to the coast—the one down through Sierra Leone to Cape Mount, and the other filtering through Bopolu to Cape Mesurado (Monrovia) and Cape Mount. Anderson's effort to by-pass the Gola cordon may have succeeded had he gone a bit further north through Vai and Mende country to link up with the Mano River route, which may have been what Kaifal and Bessa were suggesting to him. Other Liberians were trading with little difficulty throughout the area, but Anderson sought to open direct commerce with the Manding markets of the far interior, something which the expanding Gola hegemony along the coast was designed to prevent. This struggle to control large-scale Manding penetration and direct trade with the coast was a major factor in native resistance to the Liberian polity throughout the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century.



## ENDNOTES

\* This is the first part of a three-part series. The Endnotes will be numbered consecutively throughout the three parts.

## Editor's Note

<sup>1</sup> A portion of this paper was originally prepared for presentation at the Conference on Manding Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies, London, 1972 under the title of "The 'Mandingo' Presence in Nineteenth Century Liberia." The author was unable to attend and the materials have not been published elsewhere prior to the present extended revision. I wish to thank Martin Ford for his careful reading of this manuscript and for his many helpful suggestions, but absolve him from responsibility for any errors of fact or interpretations that might have escaped his scrutiny.

<sup>2</sup> For example, a Liberian scholar has commented that "The Mandingoes...are... principally migrant traders who can earn the nomenclature of black Jews." See in Bai T. Moore, *The Tribes of the Western Province and the Denwoin People* (Monrovia: Bureau of Folkways, Interior Department, 1955), p. 32. Martin Ford calls to my attention a singular comment by A.B. King, "A Special Correspondent," in *The Observer*, 12 November 1879: "There is no one who can drive a bargain so well as a Mandingo woman—I always associate her with my idea of a Jew; for with a real Jew, I am not yet well acquainted." Equally pertinent is Benjamin Anderson's comment in the report of his 1868 expedition in which he refers to the haggling in Mandingo markets as "the usual practice of 'jewing down.'" (*Narrative of a Journey to Musardu, the Capital of the Western Mandingoes*. [New York: S.W. Green, 1870] p. 100).

<sup>3</sup> The word "Mandingo" appears in Portuguese, French and British written sources as early as the first decade of the sixteenth century (P.E.H. Hair "Ethnolinguistic Continuity on the Guinea Coast," *Journal of African History* 8(2) (1967):247-268). In the mid-nineteenth century Koelle's linguistic studies in Sierra Leone led him to observe that the term was a "perverse representation" of that for a complex of peoples properly referred to as "Mandenka." For a discussion of this point and pioneering distributional data, see Sigismund Wilhelm Koelle, *Polyglotta Africana* [1854] (Graz-Austria: Akademische Druck-U. Verlagsanstalt, 1963), pp. 2-4. (English trans. by P.E.H. Hair and David Dalby). The term Manding has come to be employed as a designation for the more general distribution of Mande-speaking groups in the highland savanna regions eastward from the coast. (Cf. David Dalby "Distribution and Nomenclature of the Manding People and their Language," in Carleton T. Hodge, ed., *Papers on the Manding*, [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1971], pp. 1-8).

<sup>4</sup> C.H. Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone* (Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 66-67. Also Sir Harry Johnston noted that Mandingo slaves were especially desired as servants by owners in the New World, though often considered a problem because of their pride and independence (*The Negro in the New World* [London, 1910], pp. 82, 94, 98). For extended discussion of the status of Mandingo slaves see Joseph E. Holloway (*Africanisms in American Culture*. [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991] pp. 4, 12-17).

<sup>5</sup> A particularly dramatic expression of this phenomenon is provided by Esther Warner who has written a number of semi-fictional accounts of her experiences in Liberia. The protagonist of *The Crossing Fee* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1968) is a Mandingo man, Mekula, who is referred to as a "Lord of Darkness" symbolizing for the author a black conscience as well as ominous rival of the white world. The "Mandingo" (and, early on, the "Moor") have figured in a vast corpus of Euroamerican literature and popular lore whose beginnings go back at least as far as the North African and Atlantic slave trades. An underlying theme of the genre has been the melodrama of miscegenation and the ambivalent fascination of interracial sexuality. One of the more bizarre manifestations of its tenacity in contemporary American life may be found in a quotation attributed to Los Angeles Police Sgt. Stacey Koon who was acquitted in the notorious case involving the merciless beating of a lone black man by a squad of policemen. He is alleged to have written in a book manuscript that the man Rodney King provoked the treatment by behaving in a "sexually suggestive fashion" outraging him and his fellow officer Melanie Singer: "As King sexually gyrated, a mixture of fear and offense overcame Melanie. The fear was of a Mandingo sexual encounter" (*Newsweek* magazine, 1 June 1992, p. 17).

<sup>6</sup> The extensive ethnohistorical research of Svend E. Holsoe on the Vai and the Manding diaspora in Liberia has been an important contribution to understanding of early developments in the area. [Among the more recent contributors to the growing corpus of historical studies on indigenous peoples of Liberia are a number of Liberianist scholars whose work has served to shed light on this much neglected aspect of the region: for example, Frederick McEvoy, Martin Ford, Tim Geysbeek, Andreas Massing, Monday Akpan, Richard Corby, George Brooks and others].

<sup>7</sup> The general region alluded to here comprises the territories of what are now Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia and western Ivory Coast as discussed in W.L. d'Azevedo, "Some Historical Problems in the Delineation of a Central West Atlantic Region," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 96(2) (1962):512-538.

<sup>8</sup> While the first contingent of American colonists were still at Sherbro, and well before the Colonization Society decision to search the coast of what is now Liberia for a new settlement site, a missionary from Sierra Leone explored the entire seaboard by foot from Gallinas to Grand Bassa recording the placement of chiefdoms, prominent rulers, trade and political relations. Of particular

importance is his description of the turbulent conditions between Cape Mount and Cape Mesurado, involving a complex demographic situation in the process of rapid change. At Cape Mount he reports that both Vai ("Foy") and Dei ("Daa") languages were spoken equally, an observation that lends support to Vai, Dei and Gola oral historical consensus that the Dei had occupied the coast from Mesurado to Cape Mount prior to their own arrival, and were a western extension of the Bassa people (the language Cates' guide used in communication along the coast). Moreover, "King Peter" (Zolu Duma) is said to have controlled most of the Cape Mount region and is described as "a native of Golah country" to the interior who "has continued partly by force and partly by fraud to secure to himself the government of Cape Mount." As he trekked southward along the beach to Mesurado, Cates found numerous camps of Gola "salt boilers" intruding on the coastal Dei. These observations are clearly indicative of the aggressive Gola advance from the interior that was to confront the Liberian colonists a few years later. Equally significant is the absence of Manding traders and clerics (reported frequently in his journal before leaving Sierra Leone) but also the indication of a surprising number of European and American missionaries and traders residing in isolated villages. There appears to have been an effective and amazingly rapid network of word-of-mouth communication all along the coast and through the interior. ("Journal of a Journey by Reverend J.B. Cates and Others in Feby, March and April, 1819," *Church Missionary Society*, Church Archives 1/E7A-9). Later in the same year Ephraim Bacon, "Assistant Agent of the United States to Africa," made a journey by ship down the coast from Sierra Leone accompanied by the "native missionaries" William Tamba and William Davis who had been interpreters for J.B. Cates and who spoke "all the different languages of the tribes as far as the Bassa country." Commenting on possible sites for the settlement of American colonists, he notes that the "King Peter" at Cape Mount was "one of the most warlike in West Africa" and was determined that neither the American government nor the Colonization Society would be allowed to interfere with his vigorous slave trade. It was learned that this King was in control of the entire coastal region as far as the St. Paul River, and that the "King Peter" of Mesurado (with whom the American colonists had to deal two years later) was "a dependent" of the former and equally hostile to the purposes of the colonial venture. Therefore, Bacon sailed on to "Bassa country" which he pronounced "most eligible" for the location of a settlement. Incidentally, John Mills, the mulatto trader at Mesurado who was to play so central a role in the negotiations for a site in 1821-22, is referred to as "a yellow man." ("Abstracts of a Journal of E. Bacon." *Proceedings of the Church Missionary Society in England, 1819-20*. [Philadelphia: S. Potter & Co., 1831] pp. 10-14). Information of this kind seems not to have been referred to or even employed by the American Colonization Society agents when choosing to bring settlers to Mesurado.

<sup>9</sup> From the Text of Instructions (Washington, 5 November 1817) sent by Bushrod Washington, President of the American Colonization Society, to Samuel J. Mills and Ebenezer Burgess, agents, as reproduced in C.H. Huberich, *The Political and Legislative History of Liberia* 1 (1947):59-61, New York.

<sup>10</sup> See letters from J.B. Winn, U.S. Agent for Captured Africans, to Hon. Smith Thompson, Secretary of the Navy, April, 1821, and from Winn to Thompson, 6 August 1821 as given in Huberich, pp. 163, 176.

<sup>11</sup> Correspondence between Perry and Mill given in Huberich, pp. 215-217.

<sup>12</sup> Letter from E. Ayres to the Secretary of the American Colonization Society, 11 December 1821 given in Huberich, p. 187.

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, Ayres to E.B. Caldwell, 23 August 1822 given in Huberich, p. 204. John Mill was the most recent of a series of "mulatto" and European resident factors at Cape Mesurado where the slave trade and other commerce had flourished for a century or more. A brief but valuable summary of rare sources on pre-colonial traders at Mesurado is provided by Svend E. Holsoe, "A Study of Relations between Settlers and Indigenous Peoples in Western Liberia, 1821-1847," *African Historical Studies* 4(2) (1971):331-362.

<sup>14</sup> They were, in fact, forced to do so on more than one occasion as indicated by the signature of "John C. Mill" witnessing the contract concluded with the chiefs at Cape Mesurado on 15 December 1821, and by Ayres report of 23 August 1822 in which it is stated that the chiefs would carry out no further negotiations without the presence of "Mr. Mill...their scrivener." See in Huberich pp. 195-196, 204.

<sup>15</sup> This was Sao Bosu, leader of an emergent confederacy centered at Bopolu in the early nineteenth century. His name appears in many variant forms in writings on Liberia, and there is an extensive lore associated with his origin and exploits. Cf. S. Jangaba M. Johnson, "The Warrior King Sao Boso: A Biographical Sketch" (pamphlet, n.d.) [Monrovia: Department of Information and Cultural Affairs]; Sir Harry Johnston, *Liberia* Vol. 1 [London: Hutchinson and Co., 1906], pp. 148, 250; Svend E. Holsoe, "The Manding in Western Liberia: An Overview," *Liberian Studies Journal* 7(1) (1976-77):4-7; and, Richard A. Corby, "Manding Traders and Clerics: The Development of Islam in Liberia to the 1870s," *Liberian Studies Journal* 8(1), 1988: 49-50. In his "New Introduction" to the 1971 Cass edition of Benjamin Anderson's narratives (see citation in Note 46, below) Humphrey Fisher presents a useful s of local traditions and material from early documents concerning the history of Bopolu and Sao Bosu's life (pp. xii-xiv).

<sup>16</sup> E. Ayres to E.B. Caldwell, in Huberich, pp. 208-211. It is noteworthy in this context that the myth concerning the "Mandingo" character of Sao Bosu and Bopolu had just begun to emerge at this initial point in Liberian colonial history.

Though the colonial agents reporting on these early negotiations do not yet make such a connection explicitly, it clearly was anticipated by Major Laing whose fortuitous stop at Mesurado on a British colonial schooner in 1822 is credited by Sir Harry Johnston with bringing about a tentative peace between the beleaguered American colonists and the attacking Dei and Gola chiefs (*Liberia*, Vol. 1, p. 140). A few years later Laing recalls: "I learned that the natives had been joined by a tribe who had come from a great distance, and who, from the description given of their dress, habits, and mode of fighting, I immediately recognized to be the Mandingoes." (Alexander Gordon Laing, *Travels in the Timmanee, Kooranko, and Soolima Countries in Western Africa* [London, 1825], p. 125). Thus, like many of his contemporaries, Laing applied the designation "Mandingo" readily to any peoples on the coast who fit the stereotype current among Europeans of the period. The practice was to become general among the colonists and their agents.

<sup>17</sup> For ethnohistorical descriptions of the conditions obtaining among the indigenous groups of this section of the coast in the early nineteenth century, see Svend E. Holsoe, "The Cassava-Leaf People: An Ethnohistorical Study of the Vai People with a Particular Emphasis on the Tewo Chiefdom," Ph.D. Dissertation, Boston University Graduate School, 1967:97-156; and Warren L. d'Azevedo, "A Tribal Reaction to Nationalism," Part I, *Liberian Studies Journal* 1(2) (1969):1-39.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Svend E. Holsoe, "The Condo Confederation in Western Liberia," *Liberian Historical Review* 3(1) (1966):1-18.

<sup>19</sup> A good summary of information concerning these early attempts to establish direct relations with Bopolu is provided in A. Alexander, *A History of the Colonization of the Western Coast of Africa* (Philadelphia, 1849), *passim*.

<sup>20</sup> *African Repository and Colonial Journal* (hereafter, *African Repository*) VI (1830):55-56. In this same letter Mechlin's description of the "road," supposedly just completed by a Mr. F. James, is rather ambiguous. He states that one-third of the distance could be traveled by water (presumably up the St. Paul River) and thence the remainder "directly from Millsburg to Bo Poro." But his estimate of distances is puzzling: "...the route from this place [Monrovia?] to Boatswain's [Bopolu] is reduced to about eighty or ninety miles, in place of the old circuitous one of 150." In that the actual distance by this route is about fifty miles, Mechlin may have exaggerated a bit to impress the Board of the Colonization Society, or was merely reflecting Liberian settler misinformation about the interior. It would be useful to know more about "the old circuitous route," for that might shed light on the roundabout journey taken by Benjamin Anderson in 1868 (see Note 51, below).

<sup>21</sup> The process of creating a culture hero of Sao Bosu was well under way in the mid-1820s as indicated by a description of him by Colonial Agent Jehudi Ashmun in which he is said to have a stature approaching seven feet, as being

finely proportioned and having "a countenance noble, intelligent, and full of animation, he unites great comprehension and activity of mind, and what is more imposing, a savage loftiness, and even a grandeur of sentiment..." (*A History of the American Colony in Liberia from 1821-1823* [Washington City, 1826], pp. 12-13). Ashmun's words were plagiarized by A.H. Foote almost thirty years later (*Africa and the American Flag*, [London, 1854]) and similar eulogies appear in later Liberian and European writings concerning Sao Bosu.

<sup>22</sup> This brief resume of the Rahahman episode is drawn from a remarkable work of biographical scholarship by Terry L. Alford (*Prince Among Slaves*, [New York & London: Harcourt Brace Javanovich, 1977]). Not only does the book offer a rare portrayal of the special relations that existed between some plantation owners and certain of their slaves at the turn of the nineteenth century, but it sheds light on the differential statuses conferred on elements of the slave population determined in part by their place of origin in Africa and the lore associated with them. Of particular relevance to the present discussion is the extent to which \_\_\_\_\_ could emerge as a privileged individual during this period, a figure of public sympathy and benign curiosity avidly championed by the American Colonization Society and its Liberian agents as an instrument of fanciful political and economic objectives in Africa. The tenor of contemporary comment provides some insight into the pragmatic aspects of the matter. For example, the Twelfth Annual Report of the Colonization Society (*African Repository* V (1829):14-17) reads as follows: "Providence has brought before the Society, an individual (now about to embark for Africa) singularly qualified to extend our knowledge and influence, and to facilitate communication with distant, but powerful nations of the interior. This man was born in the city of Tombuctoo [actually Timbo in Fula Jallon], of which place his grandfather Almam or (Alimamy) Ibrahim or (Abrahima) was King...The Managers indulge hopes of great and permanent advantage to the Colony, from the return of this captive Moor. Several African languages he can still speak, and the Arabic is written by him with facility...he is disposed to aid by his influence the Colonial trade with the interior, and would gladly bring the communities with which in early life he was acquainted, into habits of friendly, commercial, and Christian intercourse with the settlements of the Colony." A short note in the Thirteenth Annual Report (*African Repository* VI (1830):5) reads: "The Managers cannot close this melancholy statement...without recording, with painful regret, the death of Abduhl Rahahman, the unfortunate Moorish Prince." Dr. Joseph Mechlin, acting colonial agent in Liberia, lamented the "great loss" and observed that "the Footah country" abounded in gold and, had the Prince lived, Liberia would have become the "most important [settlement], in a commercial point of view, on the whole Western Coast of this continent" (quoted from P.J. Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement 1816-1865* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1961] p. 164). The romance of the legendary interior is exemplified by the reiteration of the euphemisms "Moor" and "Prince" in all references to this

elderly slave only recently manumitted by his master in Mississippi. Moreover, to the Liberian colonists, this ostensibly royal Fulbe was perceived as a link to the admired "Mandingo" beyond the "savage tribes" to their immediate interior. It also may be noted that in Natchez, Mississippi, as well as elsewhere in the Americas, Muslim slaves were usually termed "Mandingoes" and preferred over other Africans for their presumed higher intelligence despite the belief that they were less capable of sustained field labor than "Guiney Negroes" and often exhibited pretensions of royal birth (See Alford, *Prince Among Slaves*, pp. 42-43).

<sup>23</sup> Almost twenty years before S.W. Koelle's pioneering study of the script, it had been reported by two American missionaries at Cape Mount in 1833, and by a colonial commission to Bopolu in 1834 shortly after it had been invented. See Holsoe, "The Cassava-Leaf People," pp. 49-53; and P.E.H. Hair, "Notes on the Discovery of the Vai Script," *Sierra Leone Language Journal* 2 (1963):36-49.

<sup>24</sup> The quotations that follow are taken from the few pages of Ashmun's unfinished journal ("The African Coast to the Windward of Liberia," *African Repository* 2 [1827]:241-248). Of special interest here is not only his laudatory characterization of the "Mandingo" but an earliest instance of recognition of the limits of Islamic penetration into the region north of the St. Paul River and of a significant distinction between the cultures of the "leeward" and "windward tribes." This anticipates by more than a century and a quarter James Hopewell's cogent discussion of "The Manianka Corridor" and "The Pagan Wall" as a significant ethnographic feature well into the twentieth century ("Muslim Penetration into French Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia Before 1850," Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University, 1958:84-93). Moreover, Ashmun, like his contemporaries, already was imbued with the notion of "a comparatively populous and civilized people" living in the far interior whose economies, arts, use of Arabic as a written language, and whose "degree of intelligence and practical refinement exists little compatible with the personal qualities attached, in the current notions of the age, to the people of Guinea." However, the impediments to colonial aspirations in the far interior were great: "Intercourse with these people, a knowledge of whom it has been the policy of the natives on the coast, for the sake of monopolizing the trade, to conceal from the colonists, will, it is expected, be shortly commenced, and cannot fail to improve the commercial interests of the colony, as well as the moral and intellectual character of the Africans" ("Report of the Managers," *Eleventh Annual Report of the American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Colour of the United States* [Washington, 1828], pp. 44-45). Such hopes were never to be fulfilled in the nineteenth century.

<sup>25</sup> *African Repository* VI (1830):210-214.

<sup>26</sup> *African Repository* XI (1835):246; and XII (1836):278-280.

<sup>27</sup> "Mr. Whitehurst's Journal," *African Repository*, XII [1836]: presented serially in Nos. 4:105-111; 5:144-150; 6:177-184; 7:209-216; 8:211-246; 9:273-281; 10:307-315. D.W. Whitehurst, one of four members of the commission sent by Governor Pinney and with the approval of the Colonial Board, presented this journal to the Managers of the American Colonization Society upon his return to the United States. In a note appended to the publication of the first installment the editor of the *Repository* comments: "Its vivid picture of African manners will render the extracts from it which we proceed to publish, interesting to every reader; while to the reflecting mind it suggests new views of the importance of the Colonizing system in communicating the lights of religion and knowledge to a Continent on which the darkness of ages rests." This characteristically pious assessment does scant justice to a remarkable document that appeared over seven issues of the *Repository* and provides an unprecedented wealth of early ethnographic observation in the Liberian interior on the part of an unusually perceptive American emissary. But there is little indication in the accounts of subsequent travelers such as Thomas Bowen, Benjamin Anderson or E.W. Blyden that the detailed information it contains about inter-ethnic conflicts, warfare and alliances among small chieftaincies or the rampaging campaigns of competing warchiefs was known to them when they set out on their own projects. This is one of the more curious aspects of Liberian exploration and relations with the indigenous peoples of the interior.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 273-274. This somewhat pensive description of the ailing leader is in marked contrast to that of Ashmun some ten years earlier (see Note 21 above). The decline and death of Sao Bosu is alluded to frequently in writings of the period as a tragedy for the Colony. This mode of arch yet engaged good humor in Whitehurst's narrative is a refreshing relief from the priggish moralism of many early observers. His commentary on the appearance and manners of native Africans is even-handed and quite often admiring. Moreover, he reveals little of the predilection of his contemporaries to extol the Manding at the expense of other groups. Note, for example, the intimate expression of his partiality in the following brief digression: "Frequent lavings of their persons are general with the Africans of the sea-board; and I have noticed that when from unexpected contingencies their accustomed ablutions have been prevented, a sense of uneasiness and lassitude is the result. I speak not of the *Foulah* or *Mandingo*, for take them as a body, they are wedded to filth, and it is not an uncommon occurrence among gentlemen of those tribes, to wear their robes until they literally rot from their persons. The *Kroomen* [a coastal people represented by the carriers in the party which he refers to throughout as 'assistants'] use the warm bath morning and evening, and invariably have cold water poured over the persons afterwards, or their bath is incomplete. My experience leads me to prefer this mode, both as to its cleansing and bracing qualities; and I can safely say, that after an indulgence of this nature, I always



feel refreshed and invigorated from the habitual lassitude of system, which in this climate all foreigners have to experience." ("Whitehurst's Journal," p. 144).

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 277-278.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 275. Detailed discussions of the Gola challenge to the Kondo confederacy and Liberian trade during these years are provided in Holsoe, "The Condo Confederation," and d'Azevedo, "A Tribal Reaction to Nationalism."

<sup>31</sup> Early population estimates for Bopolu and the confederacy are given in the *African Repository* V (1829):6 and in Alexander, *A History of the Colonization of...*, pp. 260-261. The figures vary considerably and seem excessively large. Whitehurst ("Journal" pp. 275-276) claimed that Sao Bosu had thirty-two barricaded towns and many half-towns under his authority over an area of about twenty-five miles in diameter. In 1868, thirty years after Sao Bosu's death, Benjamin Anderson estimated the population of Bopolu at about three thousand and about ten thousand for the entire Kondo area of which the slave population was said to be treble that of free persons. Yet Holsoe ("The Condo Confederation" p. 28) cites a report of 1840 stating that in the four years since Sao Bosu's death the population of Bopolu had been reduced to four hundred persons! There can be little doubt that, apart from observer distortion, the situation at Bopolu altered drastically over the years in accordance with the fortunes of war and trade.

<sup>32</sup> "Mr. Whitehurst's Journal," pp. 307-308. Such facts about the composition and organization of the town were never clearly addressed by later observers.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 312.

<sup>34</sup> A.D. Williams to J. Seys (16 May 1835), *African Repository* XI (1835):284. By 1838, Williams, now Lieutenant-Governor, was writing to the Board of the Society that "the native wars in our vicinity continue to wage with unabated fury. Jenkins [Fan Fula Yenge], a chief of the Gorahs, made an irruption about four days ago, into a town of the Dey tribe, and captured and murdered about two hundred persons. This is nearly the last town of any consequence that belonged to the Dey tribe. The Gorahs seem determined on the extermination of this unfortunate people, and there is every probability that they will effect their purpose. Should they succeed in extinguishing the Deys, I cannot at present say by whom the country will be inhabited—whether by the Gorahs or Condahs." (Extract of dispatch to the Board in May, 1838, as quoted in Huberich, p. 539).

<sup>35</sup> See Sir Harry Johnston, *Liberia*, pp. 180-182, for standard Liberian version of these events, including the notion of Getumbe as a defeated "wanderer" and Buchanan's desperate need for a "victory." According to S. Jangaba M. Johnson (*Traditional History and Folklore of the Gola Tribe of Liberia* 2 [Monrovia:

Bureau of Folklore, 1961], p. 160) "Ge Tumbe" was the son of a Gola woman from a town on the lower St. Paul River and of a Vai man from Tewo section in Grand Cape Mount. He was given as a ward to Sao Bosu at Bopolu and later became the renown chieftain of the Suehn ("Suwoin") area comprised of a mixed population of Gola, Dei and Mandingo villages. (*Ibid.*, 2:66-67). Though Getumbe was an ally of Sao Bosu early in his career, his later role in conflicts involving Gola, Dei, the Kondo confederacy and the Liberian settlers seems often to have been vacillating and obscure. He maintained an antipathy to colonial intrusion throughout life and, after Sao Bosu's death, emerged as a major elder chieftain at Suehn and Bopolu. During journeys to Bopolu both Benjamin Anderson and E.W. Blyden had dealings with this intrepid old warrior (see below), and he made an astutely diplomatic explanation to Blyden in January, 1869 concerning his participation in earlier wars against the Colony (See "Statement Made by Gehtumbah," *African Repository* XV(2) (1870-71): Letters Received, No. 04853-55). Nevertheless, in Gola tradition he appears as an heroic leader of Gola resistance to settler and Mandingo hegemony.

<sup>36</sup> Johnston, *Liberia*, pp. 191-192. Though it is true that Manding traders and Islamic influence increased in northern and western Liberia in the mid-nineteenth century, the impact was less extensive than Johnston seems to suggest. It was not until after the turn of the twentieth century that Islam made any appreciable advance among most of the indigenous cultures of the coastal region (Cf. Hopewell, "Muslim Penetration," pp. 90-103).

<sup>37</sup> Thomas Jefferson Bowen, *Adventures and Missionary Labors in Several Countries in the Interior of Africa from 1849 to 1856* (Charleston: Southern Baptist Publication Society, 1857). The quotations here are from the second edition printed by (London: Frank Cass and Co., Ltd., 1968).

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 67-68.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 68-78.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 40-43.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 80-81.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 83-84. In 1859 Martin Delany visited Liberia on his way to explore the Niger Valley for potential American black settlement. Though he had been one of the most vocal critics of the Colonization Society venture in Liberia, he was nevertheless cordially received by Blyden and other dignitaries in Monrovia, and he left favorably impressed. Ironically enough, he had read Bowen's book published two years earlier and cites it in his own report of 1861 as a major source of guidance for his expedition to establish a truly independent

homeland for American blacks in Africa. (Cf M.R. Delany and Robert Campbell, *Search for a Place: Black Separatism and Africa*, 1860. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1969, pp. 17, 36, 52-67; see also Dorothy Sterling, *The Making of an Afro-American: Martin Delany 1812-1885*. New York: Doubleday & Co., 1971, pp. 163-164, 186-193.)

<sup>45</sup> The report of this expedition was published in the Monrovia newspaper *Liberia Herald* of 4 January 1860. A very brief summary appears in the "Address of the President," *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society* 4 (28 May 1860):184-185. Seymour and Ash traveled through the eastern Kpelle areas as far as the Loma town of Kwonka ("Quanga") which lies in present-day Guinea. (Cf. Holsoe, "The Manding in Western Liberia," pp. 3-4). This venture was promoted by President Stephen A. Benson, a vigorous advocate of aboriginal interests and exploration of the interior. Under his sponsorship funds were acquired through public subscription and, ten years before Benjamin Anderson set off on the same direction, Benson instructed Seymour "to attempt to reach no further, this time, than the capital of the Mandingo Country, Moosadoo which means, 'Moses Town.'" (Doris Banks Henries, *Presidents of the First African Republic* [London: Macmillan, 1963] pp. 28-30). See also Stephen A. Benson to R.R. Gurley, *African Repository*, May 5, 1858, p. 130.

<sup>46</sup> Benjamin Anderson, *Narrative of a Journey to Musardu, the Capital of the Western Mandingoes* [New York: S.W. Green, Printer, 1870]. This book, together with the account of Anderson's second trip in 1874 ("Narrative of the Expedition Dispatched to Musahdu"), was reprinted with original pagination by Frank Cass and Co., Ltd., (*Travels and Narratives*, No. 69 [London: Cass Library of African Studies, 1971]). The edition carries a useful "New Introduction" by Humphrey Fisher. The narrative of the 1874 expedition was first printed in 1912 at Monrovia by the College of West Africa Press, edited and introduced by Frederick Starr. The spelling Musadu is used by the present writer for the place that has been rendered by Anderson and others of his time variously as Musardu, Musahdu, etc., for the town in The Republic of Guinea known as Musadugu today.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 12.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6. It is interesting to note Anderson's singular use of the designation "country of the Manding" in this introductory passage, a term I do not recall appearing in early Liberian nomenclature.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11. Actually the road to Bopolu was comparatively peaceful at this particular time (Cf. Holsoe, "The Manding in Western Liberia"). As others were making the trip without serious difficulties, Anderson's predicament is difficult to fathom. Compared to the truly perilous conditions encountered by Whitehurst and others on the same route more than three decades before, the problems described by Anderson seem trivial and dysphoric. Later

in the narrative, as he proceeds at last on the remarkable trek to Musadu, this pettiness and confusion of purposes is absent. (See discussion below.)

<sup>50</sup> These interrelations are discussed extensively in the articles by Svend Holsoe cited above, and in his "A Study of Relations." See also d'Azevedo "A Tribal Reaction to Nationalism," Part 1.

<sup>51</sup> Anderson, *Narrative of a Journey*, pp. 16-17. Though the precise location of "Bessa's town" is ambiguous in Anderson's account, the present writer speculates, from the coordinates given by Anderson and other clues, that it was either at the site of the present village of Gbesse near the Lofa River in the Kone section of Grand Cape Mount County or one even farther to the northwest near the Mano River. He does speak of it as being forty miles west of Bopolu "in the western portion of the Golah country" (Anderson *Ibid.*, p. 10, 15), which indeed would place it there though he does not mention crossing large rivers. His claim to have walked that distance in one day is problematic. (Svend Holsoe suggests that the distance given in the report is an error, and that the town in question was actually as close to Bopolu as one day's walk: personal communication, 1993). Yet the statement that Bessa was "of Mandingo extraction" (possibly also Vai or Gola!) and that he was an admirer of "Prince Manna" of Gallinas would seem to place him in the area which had been part of the confederacy led by the Vai-Gola ruler Zolu Duma who had a close relation with Manna a few decades before. Anderson also comments that Bessa's Town was "somewhat independent of Momoru Son, the king of Boporu." Moreover, Bessa attempted to dissuade Anderson from going to Bopolu and "tried his best to induce me to go on my journey *through his country*" (my italics). This would suggest the alternate route to the interior between the Lofa and Mano rivers, circumventing the Kondo Confederacy altogether (Cf. Anderson, *Ibid.* pp. 10, 25). Earlier writers tended to agree generally with this far northwestern placement of "Bessa's town." Johnston, (*Liberia*, p. 252) locates it "quite close to the coast, to the west of the River Mano," and Abayomi Karnga (*History of Liberia* [Liverpool: D.H. Tyte and Co., 1926], p. 43) defines "a zigzag route to the town of Gbesse, the then capital of the Teywor country," that is, to the modern Tewo section (as suggested in the present paper). Both of these early writers seem to have relied directly on Anderson's account and his accompanying map ("Map of a Journey to Musardu, the Capital of the Western Mandingoes, 1868-69"). A map prepared by the "Capitaine du Génie, Reginauld de Lannoy de Bissy," based on Anderson's account, was reproduced as a fold-out for the book by Henri Emmanuel Wauwermans, *Les premisses de l'oeuvre d'émancipation africaine. Liberia, Histoire de la fondation d'un état nègre libre* [Bruxelles: Inst. Nat. Geogr., 1885]. It is in close accord with that of Anderson, particularly in the placement of "Gbesse" just to the northern interior of Cape Mount. In the Cass edition of Anderson's "Narrative," 1971, p. 119, Humphrey Fisher noted that after examining a number of early British, American, and French maps depicting the places visited by Anderson, "I am confident that a traveller today, with Anderson's narratives

in hand, would be able to pick out his predecessor's route quite closely." In 1973 and 1974 a group of Liberian and American scholars attempted to retrace Anderson's first route by visiting the main towns mentioned in his journal and recording extraordinarily valuable interviews with local historians. However, for reasons not altogether clear, they determined that the "Gbesse's town" of the initial stage of Anderson's journey was shown to be too far to the northwest on his map (Dr. Jane Martin, personal communication). They proposed that the town may have been Besao, a principal center of the Senje Clan of the Gola, about one half the distance from Monrovia. This seems most unlikely, and the interviews with local elders provided little evidence for the assumption. (See entry of 26 November 1973 in Jane S. Martin, C.E. Zamba Liberty, S. Jangaba Johnson, Karl Hassleman and others, "Following the Trail of Benjamin Anderson," Unpublished Ms., University of Liberia, 1973-74). Moreover, a "Mandingo" or Muslim king is not indicated in the early history of this town which contained a sacred grove of Gola Poro and was part of the complex of Gola chiefdoms between Bopolu and the coast, forming the staunchest "obstruction" to direct Liberian commerce with the interior under a confederacy led by the warchief Fan Kwekwe. Thus Besao ("the town of *Da Sao*," a title conferred on the local sacred elder of the secret associations) is not likely to be "the town of *Gbesse*," the actual name of a number of towns farther to the north and west of the Lofa River. Had Anderson wished to reach Besao (as "Bessa's town") he could have done so by a short, though possibly more precarious route directly north from Monrovia through Dei and Gola country rather than by the elaborate and circuitous one indicated in his narrative.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone*, pp. 363, 412.

<sup>53</sup> See Holsoe, "The Cassava-Leaf People," pp. 175-186.

<sup>54</sup> Anderson, *Narrative of a Journey*, pp. 22-25. Still more puzzling in this fascinating episode is that Anderson's goods were finally relinquished by Bessa under persuasion of a young Liberian named Sanders Washington from the settlement of Virginia who had come to this recalcitrant ruler's town for the purpose of trading. Apparently others were making the trip successfully though, significantly, not for the purpose of going on to the interior but merely to trade directly with the chief and return. Anderson also remarks that "Bessa himself is a personage well known to one of our best citizens, Mr. Gabriel Moore." The entire affair caused Anderson considerable embarrassment, particularly when Kaifal accused him of refusing to take his advice about going directly to Bopolu at the start. (*Ibid.*, pp. 36-37).

<sup>55</sup> Momolu Sao was a son of Sao Bosu by a Gola woman. After the death of his father in 1836, a series of successors representing various ethnic segments of the confederacy attempted unsuccessfully to maintain its previous unity and influence. A degree of stability returned with the selection of Momolu whose

diplomatic marriages with women of surrounding chiefdoms as well as his kinship ties with important Gola leaders (for example, Fan Kwekwe and Getumbe) through his maternal line enhanced the fortunes of the confederacy.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 47-48.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47. Anderson's misunderstanding of the political situation at Bopolu is evident here. His reiteration of the "Boporu Mandingoes" as the principal instigators of his difficulties is a cogent illustration of the affect of presuppositions that led him to view any of its leaders who professed Islam as "Mandingo," or to fail to recognize that the diplomatic and trading policies of Bopolu itself were directly responsive to the concerns of Gola chiefs intervening to the coast (such as Getumbe) and to many other chiefdoms loosely allied with the confederacy. Each of these polities jealously guarded its prerogatives in trade, and actual Manding dominance was considered as much a threat as that of Liberian intrusion. Among the Gola, this resistance continued well into the twentieth century. (Cf. d'Azevedo "A Tribal reaction" *passim*).

<sup>60</sup> See "Statement of Gehtumbah," and Note 35, above.

<sup>61</sup> Anderson, *Narrative of a Journey*, pp. 10-11. Given the deep social schisms in Liberian society at the time, Anderson's oblique allusions to their impact on his project are most intriguing, but until we can learn more of his social relations we can only guess his meaning.

**A HALF CENTURY of AMERICO-LIBERIAN CHRISTIANITY:  
WITH SPECIAL FOCUS on METHODISM  
1822 - 1872**

Thomas C. Hendrix\*

The approximately seventeen thousand African-Americans who settled along the Grain Coast of West Africa during the nineteenth century were few in number as migrations go. This seems especially so in view of the vast number of Africans who were forcibly carried across the Atlantic, over a period of four to five centuries, to be made slaves in the Western Hemisphere (Curtin 1969; Inikori 1976; Curtin, Anstey, & Inikori 1976). However, those who settled in Liberia constituted an important contingent of the African diaspora who aspired to return to their homeland. The metamorphosis of African-Americans into Americo-Liberians during the nineteenth century involved a number of complex factors — including the preconditioning effects of their African background, the circumstances of their slave experiences in North America, and the establishment of a new society in the West African environment. My purpose here is to examine the religious component which was an inextricable part of this process of migration and settlement. Three factors are to be given consideration — first, the African-Americans' adoption and adaptation of Christianity under the North American slave system; secondly, the establishment and growth of Christianity in the Liberian environment; and finally, the process whereby a pietistic faith gave legitimation to a type of colonialism. The focus here is on the African-American Christians who became the principal agents in the planting of Christianity in Liberia.

I.

At the time when their migration to Liberia began in 1820 African-Americans had for the most part been identified with Christianity for less than a century. Because the slave-exporting areas of Africa had been only superficially influenced by Christianity, slaves imported into the English colonies knew only their traditional religion and held to it as best they could. The twenty Africans who were landed at Jamestown in 1619 were the first recorded in the North American colonies, but they were followed by only insignificant numbers during the next few decades. However, the second half of the seventeenth century saw Black slavery become firmly established in colonial North America along with the entrenchment of the plantation system in the tobacco-, rice-, and sugar-growing areas. The demand for cheap labor that grew in conjunction with

a trans-Atlantic commercial complex and the accessibility of captive Africans led to the increase in the slave population (Degler 1970: 29-30).

The importation of Africans into the thirteen colonies increased at such a rapid rate that by the end of its war for independence the new nation contained over 757,000 African-American slaves and freedmen (Klein 1971: 108). This meant that although an increasing percentage "of them were second, third, fourth, or fifth generation Americans" (Fogel & Engerman 1974: 23-25), large numbers continued during the century to be new imports with little or no Christian orientation. White efforts to promote religious instruction and to win conversions made very little impact on the Black population during the first century and a half of slavery in the thirteen colonies. Officials of the state, of religious institutions, and of more informal groups "promoted the conversion of slaves" throughout the colonial period (Jernegan 1931: 27-29). The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, organized by the Church of England in 1701, largely failed in its efforts to reach into the local plantations and provide religious training for the slaves.

Masters, in their refusal to cooperate with the SPG's program of religious instruction among slaves, were motivated by their fear of what the Christianization process would do to their bondsmen. A certain "egalitarianism implicit in Christianity," they feared, would make slaves too proud. Baptized Blacks would be wanting to share the communion cup with their masters and sit beside them while listening to the sermon. Expectations of equality would soon destroy the master-slave relationship, and that could not be countenanced (Raboteau 1978: 101-103). An even more horrifying fear was the thought that Christianity would make slaves "ungovernable, and even rebellious." To the slave holder this was no unsubstantial phobia. Indeed, in the antebellum South, the threats of Black uprisings became real in the Denmark Vesey conspiracy in Charleston, South Carolina, and the Nat Turner revolt in Southampton County, Virginia.

The overall results of the mission efforts of the colonial period are seen in the fact that in 1775 fewer than 5 percent of the more than half-a-million slaves were even nominally related to Christian churches (Sernett 1975: 32). Beyond the external reasons for these slim figures, there were explanations more closely related to the slaves' own condition. Religious disorientation seems to have characterized at least the first century of the Africans' enslavement in British North America. The period around 1760 was crucial for Black Americans. Prior to this time they had not been able to reestablish their collective life which had been central to all aspects of their African cultural experience. Africans could not reestablish their familial ties on American soil because far more male than female slaves were imported and because they were sold to and settled among small and scattered slaveholders. The constant introduction of new people from Africa kept fresh in many minds the beliefs of a traditional religion. But most



found it almost impossible to carry out the customary practices of their religion, for the collective milieu in which that religion had been practiced had been irreparably destroyed. A series of experiences had "helped quash the practice of group religion among Africans in America before 1760"—the trauma of being torn from home and familiar surroundings, the "devastating 'middle passage' ..., the prospect of early death in America, [and] the humiliation and resulting anomie produced by the introduction to slavery" (Butler 1983: 66).

Although the hardships, which were integral parts of slavery, did not decrease, the middle decades of the eighteenth century brought significant changes in the religious life of American Blacks. The "development of kinship and family systems that was made possible by declining slave mortality, accelerating normalization of the slave sex ratio, and the resulting increase of marriages and children finally made the collective practice of religion meaningful for Africans in America" (Butler 1983: 66). It is significant that almost simultaneously with the reordering by African-Americans of their collective life a new religious movement, evangelical Christianity, was taking root in the British colonies. The evangelical movement with its appeal to all classes of people, including Blacks, was to sweep across the thirteen colonies and create a new spirit. Most characteristic of what was to be called the Great Awakening were the "revivals, waves of religious fervour through which thousands were to be led to an active profession of the Christian faith" (Latourette 1939/1970: 214-6). The revival that broke out in Northampton, Massachusetts, in 1734, under the preaching of Jonathan Edwards was to have vast repercussions on both sides of the Atlantic. Successive waves of revivals led by the Presbyterians, then by the Baptists, and later by the Methodists rolled southward before the Revolutionary War. The evangelical movement lost its momentum during the War for Independence, but it burst forth soon thereafter with greater force than ever as all denominations put into operation simultaneous and extensive programs of revivals (Jackson 1931: 171). The surge of religious enthusiasm continued into the nineteenth century and in the first thirty or forty years of the century literally changed the "religious configuration" of the new nation and particularly of the South (Sernett 1975: 32). Between 1790 and 1830 the Methodist Church grew from 57,000 to 511,000 and the regular Baptist churches from 65,000 to 320,000. While the Methodists had increased almost tenfold and the Baptists five times, the total population of the nation had only trebled. A high percentage of these new church members were Blacks. In Virginia, for example, while the Black population was increasing 69 percent, the increase in Black church membership was 131 percent, a growth that was double that among the population at large. In 1811 over one-third of the South Carolina Methodists were African Americans (Jackson 1931: 203).

Whereas previous efforts to win converts among Blacks had reached only a very few, now for the first time they were responding in large numbers to the

appeals of the evangelical preachers. Wherever the latter went, "blacks were among those lifted up to new heights of religious excitement" (Raboteau 1975: 128). Many revivalists noted with pleasure not only that Blacks were adding to their crowds, but that they too were experiencing the second birth. They were, for the most part, received into the church in the same way as white members, by the conviction of sin, the assurance of salvation, and baptism. Blacks discovered that they, too, were welcomed at most mass meetings. Special sections of camp meeting grounds were sometimes set aside where Black attendants could listen to their own preachers and socialize among themselves, but the two races often joined to participate in integrated sessions.

The Baptists and Methodists were the two denominations in the South that reaped the greatest harvest of Black members, for by the end of the eighteenth century about a fourth of their southern membership was Black. While revivals and camp meetings were often well planned, and perhaps even orchestrated, one could not predict where the evangelical fervor would break out next. The Gaspar River and Cane Ridge camp meetings in Kentucky had been planned for the year 1800, and out of them came a great and unpredictable frontier revival embracing Blacks as well as whites. "The camp meeting proved to be a powerful instrument for accelerating the pace of slave conversions" (Jackson 1931: 174).

The evangelical de-emphasis upon religious instruction appealed to the illiterate and self-educated slave. Since neither the Baptists nor the Methodists required a well-educated clergy, the humble "exhorter visualized and personalized the drama of sin and salvation, of damnation and election" in such a way that the most poorly educated could understand. As John Thompson, an ex-slave, explained: "the Methodist religion was brought among us, and preached in a manner so plain that the way faring man, though a fool, could not err therein" (Raboteau 1978: 133). Neither the knowledge of doctrine nor the ability to recite a creed and follow the liturgy was required, but all that was necessary for conversion was an openness to "the *experience* of conviction, repentance, and regeneration." What the evangelical gospel was saying for the slave was: "we are weak, humble, naked, wretched and blind and must therefore present ourselves to God for salvation" (Raboteau 1978: 133). The slave in his miseries could grasp this gospel, and consequently it often spread of its own accord from plantation to plantation.

The evangelical faith had both an other-worldly aspect and a down-to-earth quality, contradictory as it may seem. Both found strong expression among Black Christians. On the one hand, there was tremendous strength to be derived from the conviction that victory and freedom would ultimately be the lot of the believing slave. It could be called a religion of escape, but it carried many through the harsh experiences of slavery—long hours of hard labor, the discomforts of the slave quarters, the agony of numerous whippings, the humiliation of being treated as sub-human, and worst of all the shock of families torn apart.

It was a faith that meant survival and the defeat of abject submission. On the other hand, the evangelical emphasis upon the availability of salvation for all had crucial implications for this world in the minds of Blacks, both slave and free. To be freed from sin meant not just a moral cleansing but freedom from the effects of the white man's sin. Even the "individualistic emphasis of revivalism, with its intense concentration on inward conversion, fostered an inclusiveness which could border on egalitarianism" (Raboteau 1978: 132). If Blacks could share the experience of conversion with whites, it seemed to follow that they should be able to share on the same basis in the social and civil arenas.

But white America was unwilling to follow this line of reasoning to its logical conclusion. The attitude of white Christians toward their Black brothers and sisters was ambivalent at best. The early history of Methodism in America serves as an example of trends in the slavery debate. The organizing conference, in December, 1784, at Baltimore, of the Methodist Episcopal Church had ordered all members to emancipate their slaves within a year or withdraw from the Church. But as Methodism grew in the South it began to compromise its stand with the emphasis on slave conversion superseding manumission. Disagreement over the slavery issue arose early in the nineteenth century and culminated in the separation of the church, in 1844, into two bodies, the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

While the battle lines were being more clearly drawn between the North and the South and between the advocates of abolition and slavery, Black Christians were beginning to feel the effects of the growing tension in the church. Restrictions were rather minor during the early years of independence, however, and there was a voluntary aspect to the response of Blacks to Christianity. The "slave who was convinced of sin in his own heart might seek baptism and church membership without the intervention necessarily of any white Christian whatsoever. Once converted by whatever agency or method, the blacks were readily received into the white churches" (Jackson 1931: 217-8). However welcome as members slaves might be, they were given little or no voice in the administrative responsibilities of the church. It was not only the slaves who were kept in subordinate positions in the church, but even Christian freemen experienced the effects of racism. Segregated communion services were held, and Blacks, slave and free, were made to sit in special pews or in the balcony.

Restrictions became progressively harsher following the Nat Turner uprising in 1831. With white suspicion of northern intentions and fear of Black uprisings growing, it seemed necessary to silence Black preachers and keep Black meetings under strict control. In 1832, Virginia's General Assembly enacted a law providing that "no Negro ordained, licensed or otherwise" could hold religious meetings of any kind or at any time. The previous year another law that complemented the above had ruled that under no circumstances

should Blacks, slave or free, be taught to read and write. Thus Southern Blacks were forced to practice what has been called "religion without letters" (Jackson 1931: 204).

The expression of Black conversion to Christianity and participation in the evangelical movement could not be contained within such limitations. The determination of African-American Christians to escape the control of white Christians took two major forms. One was the rise and growth of independent Black churches, and the other was the secretive practice of religion by the slaves in what has been called the "invisible institution." The two at times blended in with each other. Considering the handicaps with which Black Christians had to deal as members of integrated churches, it is no wonder they began gathering in small groups and forming their own churches. There, away from the watchful eye of the master class, they could listen to their own preachers, take their own disciplinary actions, and determine their own style of worship.

Despite the differences in church polity between the Baptists and Methodists the same evangelical spirit and desire for freedom from white control prevailed in both. Methodism did not begin its rapid growth as a vital participant in the evangelical crusade until after the War for Independence (Norwood 1974: 82-102). But even before this date Methodist preachers were seeking out African-Americans, both slave and free, and were preaching a gospel to which many readily responded with the hope that it would bring them both inner peace and acceptance as God's children. The result was that during the closing years of the eighteenth century and the opening years of the nineteenth Blacks were revolting against white domination in the Methodist churches of Philadelphia, Baltimore, and New York City and were moving toward the formation of their own independent churches.

Richard Allen was a slave when he was converted in a Methodist revival. Upon obtaining his freedom and moving to Philadelphia he became a member of St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church along with a number of other Black Methodists. When they discovered that they could not worship and otherwise participate on an equal basis with white members, they left St. George's in search of the external freedom to match the inner freedom they felt to be theirs as Christians. Gathering a group of Philadelphia Blacks similarly inclined, Allen formed the Bethel Church and in 1794 began meeting in a blacksmith shop which he had purchased. While maintaining separate worship, the Bethel Church nevertheless remained under the control of the local white clergy of the Methodist Episcopal Church for about two decades. About the same time similar occurrences were taking place in Baltimore where Blacks, led by Daniel Coker, an ordained Methodist deacon, were forming their own Bethel Church because of white abuse. After meeting privately for ten years they purchased their own building in 1797 and by 1812 had over six hundred members. Daniel

Coker had been a fugitive slave whose freedom was purchased by a Quaker friend and had founded the city's first school for Blacks (Coan 1975: 17-23).

Finally, in April, 1816, after the Philadelphia church's victory in a legal battle to own and control its own property, Coker and Allen brought together representatives of several churches to form the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Daniel Coker was the first to be elected bishop only to resign immediately, but the next day Richard Allen was elected to the episcopal office which he held until his death in 1831. Following the Philadelphia meeting forming the first Black denomination in America, the lives of the two men went in different directions. Allen became a leader in the opposition movement against the American Colonization Society which was organized the same year as the A.M.E. Church. Four years later Coker joined the first group of emigrants sent to West Africa under the sponsorship of the Colonization Society and eventually settled in Sierra Leone instead of Liberia.

White efforts to keep expressions of Black religion under strict control in the slave-holding South did not work out as well in reality as intended. The enforcement of legal and ecclesiastical regulations was often haphazard, varying from one locale to the next and changing with the circumstances of the times. Small groups gathered in slave cabins after dark to pray, sing, and listen to one of their group expound on the Gospel. They slipped away at night, eluding the white patrols, to meet in some secretive grove or ravine or thicket commonly dubbed a "hush arbor." They turned large kettles or pots on their sides to contain the noise of loud preaching and praying and hung up wet quilts to muffle the sound of their shouting and singing. If they felt the need to be especially secretive they kneeled in a circle around the speaker, covered the mouths of the animated, and sang and prayed in whispers. After they had taken care of their personal needs on Sunday, and perhaps had attended church with their masters, they met separately from the whites to hear their own preachers or exhorters (Raboteau 1978: 215-7).

Some slaves may have rejected the white man's version of Christianity, or they may have rejected it altogether, but for the multitude of religiously oriented slaves it had some very special meanings. Conversion to Christianity meant much more to the slave than submission, obedience, and personal piety. The master class emphasized the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments in religious instruction of the slaves, but not the slaves themselves. White preachers liked to remind Blacks of the story in the New Testament where the Christian missionary, Paul, returned a runaway slave to his master. But for the slaves the liberation account in the "book of Exodus was preeminently appropriate. Black religionists told and retold the story of the deliverance of the Jews from slavery in Egypt and the possession of the land promised to their fathers" (Simpson 1978: 221). Account after account tells of slaves' retreating to some secret place to pray for freedom away from their masters' disapproving ears.

Slaves were caught between the reality of the present pain and the hope of relief in the future. A common theme among Black Christians was the belief that though separated in this life from family and friends they were sure to meet in heaven. Henry Bibb, the inveterate runaway from his native Kentucky, sent a message home to his mother that "my prayer shall be to God that we may meet in Heaven, where parting shall be no more." For many the only consolation was to be found in the future that was not of this world, and it gave them the strength to endure. Only a few years after Emancipation a Black woman was heard to say, "My soul was set free long before the fetters fell from my body. God gave me *his* freedom, but the little children of this earth would not give me theirs" (Smith 1972: 506). The consolations that came to the slave in his present life can probably be explained when it is understood that the Black religion was not a set of beliefs or a code of ethics but an experience—an experience he interpreted as one of the "Almighty Sovereign God." The "black religious experience" not only gave the slave the assurance that his "life was no longer determined by the slave system," but it "gave the slave the necessary strength, fortitude, and character to fight against the legalized form of slavery" (Cone 1975: 137-5).

Whichever of these two aspects might be uppermost in the religious experience of Black Americans on particular occasions, an underlying communal quality seems to have been present as the evangelical faith took hold among them. From the beginning, the emphasis of white teachers of Black converts was an individualistic one. But as Timothy L. Smith has pointed out:

By contrast, slaves had come to the New World unwillingly, in a condition which bound them not only to their masters but also to Black people whom in Africa they never would have thought of calling brothers. The context of their religious conversion was, therefore, one of human solidarity, not personal freedom. Black Christians rejoiced in the communal acknowledgement of their sins and shouted and danced in the ecstasy of deliverance (Smith 1972: 508).

When they met as groups, whether a handful of people or several hundred, spontaneously or planned, they seemed to derive strength for their daily plantation problems. Often at the secret meetings a preacher was not needed. All spoke what was on their minds, praying and singing all around. Where slaves were allowed religious privileges, evening sometimes turned into an impromptu singing fest in the quarters.

This communal nature of Black religion reflected the influence of African religion. There were other distinctive African qualities which also took root in African-American culture. It is true that in "the southern United States the combination of hostile white power, small plantation and farm units, and the early closing of the slave trade crushed much of the specific African religious

memory" (Genovese 1972: 211). However, certain African traditions, "forms and meanings," were preserved and modified as native Africans settled into the slavery routine and as their descendants made the adjustments their survival required. In the course of two or more centuries the "black slaves...utilized West African concepts in a new and totally different context. In so doing they transformed those West African forms into something which was neither African nor European-American but a syncretic blend of the two that produced a totality which must be looked at in its own terms" (Rawick 1972: 32).

Another African motif which was to have a continuing influence in the development of African-American religion was the emphasis upon the wholeness of life. There were no distinctions between the secular and the sacred, between the here and hereafter, as there are in the Western world. The belief in ancestors and their power over the living often occupied a prominent place in African culture, but it did not survive among Black Americans. However, its effect can be seen upon the use slaves made of the traditional view of heaven as it had been expressed in Western Christianity. Their emphasis was not a simple escapism. But their various views of heaven are to "be seen as one—as a necessary and intrinsic ambiguity that reflects a view of the world in which the spiritual and the material merge" (Genovese 1974: 248-9). Deliverance could take place here, hereafter, or both.

The affirmation of human beings and their lives constituted a further theme of the African worldview. The religion of the African-Americans seems to have inherited this propensity and used it as a transforming agent of the Christian beliefs and practices they adopted. The way Blacks treated the problem of good and evil — on both human and supernatural levels — is an example. Western thinkers have had considerable difficulty reconciling the two, but "the tradition which holds nothing to be entirely good or entirely bad, deeply embedded in African thought, was reflected in the belief of the slaves that the Devil could be a friend in need" (Simpson 1978: 217). This perspective enabled Black people both to see the cruel realities of their world for what they were and yet to affirm the joy of life. Dancing, for example, was considered sinful and so was strictly forbidden under the strict pietism of evangelical Christianity, but "slaves were able to reinterpret and 'sanctify' their African tradition of dance in the 'shout'" (Raboteau 1978: 72).

Thus while the American brand of evangelical Christianity had its origin in Europe, it had a special appeal to the Black members of the population. But African-Americans took it and created a faith that was distinctly their own by blending it with persistent African themes. As a result of the suffering slavery caused them, it became, for them, both an "enabling" and a "coping" religion. This is not to say that religion provided a meaningful experience for all Blacks both free and slave. Many no doubt rejected all efforts to induce them to seek Christian conversion, and a "rich tradition of folk belief and practice, including

conjure, herbalism, ghost lore, witchcraft, and fortune-telling, flourished in the slave quarters" (Raboteau 1978: 275-288). In fact, conjure as a system of belief and practice often existed alongside of Christianity. But it was the evangelical emphasis upon conversion and salvation through Christ that was to predominate as the professed faith of American Blacks including those who were to become Liberian settlers.

## II.

Among motivating forces, the religious factor was integral to emigration to Liberia and was expressed in at least two ways. First, once on African soil the religiously inclined could practice their faith as they pleased beyond the prying eyes and control of suspicious whites. Not only would they no longer have to slip off to a secret worship place, but also they would have complete control over all church activities. The second factor influencing some to seek a new home in Africa was the desire to share their new-found faith with those who had been left behind on what they now considered to be the dark continent. Many were convinced that the light of Christ had shown on then to lead them through the cruel hardships of slavery and racial oppression, and now they would carry that light back to their ancestral homeland. They took with them not only a new set of beliefs and a pattern of emotional experiences, but also the institutional forms in which those beliefs and experiences were embodied. Probably only a small minority of prospective emigrants saw themselves as Christian missionaries to the heathen Africans, but Christianity was undoubtedly the predominant religious orientation of those who settled in Liberia. Most who were religiously inclined went to Liberia as Baptists and Methodists, for these were the denominations whose emphases appealed the most to Black Americans. The planting of Christianity on Liberian soil was thus an integral part of and simultaneously with the colonizing process itself.

The establishing of Christianity in Liberia did not have to wait on the sending of missionaries, for the early colonists were their own missionaries. African-American immigrants provided their own religious leadership for more than a decade following the settlement in 1822 of the colony on Cape Mesurado. They formed their own religious societies, they built their own houses of worship, and they supplied teachers for their schools. It was not until the middle of the thirties that American church bodies began to make a persistent mission commitment to Liberia.

During their first decade in West Africa the Methodist settlers, like the Baptists, were left almost entirely on their own in forming their own churches. The documentation concerning the origin of the Methodist Church in Monrovia is not as clear and direct as with the Baptists. Yet it seems certain that both denominations were the first formal institutions established by the settlers. Within about three years after the first settlers landed on Cape Mesurado, Jehudi



Ashmun was reporting that both the Methodists and Baptists were going about the "business of building a house of worship" (African Repository 1826: 88-9). A year later he was writing that

two commodious and beautiful chapels, each sufficient to contain several hundred worshippers, have been erected, and consecrated to the christians' God. . . . These edifices were erected wholly by the personal services and voluntary contributions of their respective parishioners;—and . . . have devolved upon the congregation no debt, either for materials or labour (American Baptist Magazine 1833: 15).

The earliest Liberian Methodists seemed to have had little if any support, either financial or moral, from any denominational bodies in the United States. The American Colonization Society called upon American churches to provide support, especially by taking up offerings at their Fourth of July celebrations, for its often-stated goal of Christianizing Africa. Various governing bodies of the Methodist Episcopal Church responded with resolutions and by "lifting of offerings" for the ACS, but African-American Methodists on the spot in Liberia got no money and little encouragement during the first decade. The failure of the American church was not due to ignorance, for the 1824 General Conference, the quadrennial meeting of the Methodist Episcopal Church, received a request from Liberia for help, but all it did was pass a resolution (African Repository 1825: 126-7 & 1830: 335-6).

Liberian Methodism's first outstanding leader was a man who never set foot on Liberian soil, Daniel Coker referred to above. In 1820, four years after the formation of the A. M. E. Church, he joined the first group of colonists who sailed for West Africa aboard the *Elizabeth* and who landed on Sherbro Island where they unsuccessfully attempted to establish a settlement. Although he stayed in Sierra Leone when the colonists moved to Cape Mesurado in 1822 after the arrival of a second group, he had held them together during the intervening months as their unofficial pastor and as the acting agent for absent and dying white agents. In Sierra Leone he was appointed superintendent of a settlement of "recaptured Africans," and he founded the independent West African Methodist Church (Payne 1891/1968: 13-18).

It is not clear whether Coker led in the organization of a Methodist church aboard the *Elizabeth*, (Barclay 1949: 328) but there are intimations of it in his *Journal* which he kept from the time of embarkment at New York to settlement on Sherbro Island. That the colonists and the agents took advantage of the opportunity the five weeks crossing gave them to lay plans for the future is indicated by Coker's entry on February 19, the middle of the voyage. He wrote, "We have been two days busily engaged in laying out the plan of a city and organizing our societies" (Coker 1820: 14). Coker could well have been referring

to a loose formation and the separate meeting of the denominational groups on board, for in Methodist parlance the word "societies" was another name for any religious groups whether large or small. A few weeks later he addressed an open letter to "my dear African Brethren in America" appealing for united support of the African mission while at the same time implying that new churches in the African colony would be expected to follow old denominational lines:

If you come as baptist, come to establish an African baptist church, and not to encourage division. If you come as presbyterians, come to support an African presbyterian church, and not to make divisions. . . . If you come as methodists, come to support an African methodist church (Coker 1820: 42).

Once the new colony of Liberia was established and more immigrants were yearly arriving, the Methodist Church must have expanded not only in Monrovia but in the new settlements being established along the coast and on the St. Paul River. Daniel Coker's decision to remain in Sierra Leone seemed to have left a leadership vacuum among the Methodist settlers. Yet, when the first official missionary of the Methodist Episcopal Church was sent to Liberia, he found African-American Methodist clergy already at work leading small flocks of followers in different locations. The Rev. Melville B. Cox was appointed superintendent of the Liberian mission, but he was a sick man when he arrived on the *Jupiter*, March 8, 1833, and he succumbed to the "African fever" the following July 21. He quickly discovered that the grandiose plans he made and the projects he initiated depended upon colonists already on the scene. Cox had not only to recognize their existence and work with them, but he found it prudent also to obtain their permission to serve as their superintendent. One of his first acts was to call "two Conferences, for the transaction of the important business of his mission," and in the Methodist connection there can be no "Conference" without the presence of clergy (Cox 1835: 114). At least eighteen African-Americans, who had served in some connection as Methodist clergy in the United States, had immigrated before Cox arrived. Most of these came in the early thirties. Among these were a few who were to occupy a prominent place in the colony such as Elijah Johnson, who was among the 1820 group of immigrants, Anthony D. Williams, who arrived in 1823, George R. McGill in 1827, and Daniel Ware in 1833.

Johnson and Williams were Methodist ministers before they immigrated, played leading roles in secular colonial affairs, and provided leadership in the establishment and growth of Liberian Methodism before the arrival of white missionaries in 1833-1834 (Meth. Missionary Society 1834: 5-10). Little is known of Elijah Johnson's background except that according to immigration lists New York was his state of origin. It was also thought that he fought in the War of 1812 against the British and that he studied for the Methodist ministry (Star 1913: 64-5). If such was the case, his experience and training prepared him for his role as

the military leader in several wars with indigenous Africans, as a member of the colonial council, as a colonial supervisor in the absence of the ACS agent, and as a Methodist pastor for over a quarter of a century until his death in 1849 (Huberich 1947: 463-7). Although neither church nor colonial records make any mention of Johnson's church activities before 1834, he was undoubtedly an important church leader from the time he landed in 1822. The Missionary Society's records show him to have been a diligent pastor for the last fifteen years of his life, 1834 to 1849 (Meth. Missionary Society 1834-1849). The fact that he and Williams were the only Methodist clergy to be mentioned among the colonists during most of the twenties adds further emphasis to his important religious role.

Anthony D. Williams had a similar career, for he served the colonial government in various capacities as well as the Methodist Church as pastor to the settlers and missionary to nearby Africans. A clergyman from Petersburg, Virginia, he had migrated to Liberia in 1823 (Starr 1913: 75-6). There is little indication of how he spent his first years in Liberia. But he must have nourished the Liberian Methodist Church through its early years, for, as "a preacher in the Methodist connexion," it was said of him that he was "almost the husband and father of the little church in Monrovia" (African Repository 1833: 190). Beginning in 1827, when he assumed the position of Colonial Treasurer, Williams carried increasingly heavy loads in the colonial government as the vice-agent. Between his stints as acting-agent in the absence of the white agent, he traveled to the United States in 1833 to receive ordination and then the next January accepted an assignment for a year as a missionary at Boporo (Meth. Missionary Society 1835: 2, 18). Williams had for most part to abandon his church activities during much of the thirties because of his responsibilities as the major colonial official present in Liberia. Although he returned to the pastoring of Methodist flocks in the forties, he never occupied the important and influential place he had previously held in the church. Yet, it must have been to such as he—as well as Johnson, McGill, and Ware—that the M. E. Missionary Society was referring when it reported in 1834

that several colored brethren are already engaged in the work of preaching the Gospel in the colony—that through their instrumentality, chiefly, societies and circuits have been organized under the discipline of our Church—that through the labors of local brethren who are resident there, the work of God seems to be extending among the people, so that, both in Monrovia, and some of the neighboring settlements, Christianity has already taken strong hold in their affections (Meth. Missionary Society 1834: 7).

Not only was the establishment of Christianity and its institutional expression in America's West African colony to be credited primarily to the colonists

themselves, but also their religious activities loomed large in their struggle for independence and self-reliance. Melville Cox ran into trouble on the issue of the administration of the sacraments by unordained clergy when he insisted that only those "authorized so to do...by the regular Episcopacy of the parent church in America" could perform this function. Although "almost all" of the "preachers and people" agreed to abide by the Church's regulation after considerable coaxing by Cox, a few remained adamant (Cox 1835: lii). Not more than five Methodist clergy deemed the issue important enough to return to America for ordination during the next fifteen years, but most clergy probably administered "holy communion" as they saw fit. It is also to be noted that while settler clergy accepted the principle of itinerancy of the Methodist system, some refused to go to the churches to which they were annually appointed when it was not in their self-interest. Because neither the churches nor the Missionary Society could provide them with adequate financial support, a compromise was often reached by appointing them to churches near their homes where they also followed other occupations that were more profitable. Despite the failure to adhere strictly to Methodist structures, the church grew so that by 1847, its total membership came to about nine hundred (Meth. Missionary Society 1847: 21).

At the same time the Baptists were claiming around four hundred members or about half as many as the Methodists (Weeks & White 1959: 54). One can not verify the accuracy of such claims, but they do indicate that the Methodists and Baptists made up a sizeable portion of the settler population. Immigrants to Liberia tended to maintain the religious connections they had originally made in the United States. Thus the Methodists and Baptists, who with their evangelical zeal had won the most followers among the Black population, continued to predominate among Christians who relocated in Liberia. On the other hand, only a few Americo-Liberian settlers were either Presbyterian or Episcopalian because neither group had won a large following among American Blacks. Nevertheless, though few in number, members of each group, feeling the need to maintain their denominational identity, banded together and formed their own societies in Monrovia.

It is clear that the planting of Christianity in Liberia, particularly during the first dozen years of the colony's existence, was an Americo-Liberian phenomenon. American Blacks brought their own religious style and outlook with them and established it on West African soil. Christianity in Liberia, for much of the nineteenth century, was confined largely to the settler population while winning comparatively few of the native Africans. Although white mission agencies were turning their attention to Liberia and were beginning to send large numbers of missionaries in the middle thirties, the responsibility for the expansion and consolidation of the Christian movement fell largely upon the Americo-Liberians. The relations between these two forces were not always the most cordial, and they sometimes worked at cross purposes. Missionaries

usually assumed control of the missionary effort, but, in reality, it was the settler Christians who determined the direction of nineteenth-century Liberian Christianity.

The interest of American Christians in what they considered to be the redemption of Africa had developed to such an extent that nearly all the church bodies had organized their own missionary societies by the end of the second decade of the nineteenth century. This concern for the African soul was an integral part of the colonization movement and grew along with the colony of Black Americans in West Africa. The American Methodists, among whom the missionary fever was growing, responded to the death and brief career of Melville B. Cox by sending more mission personnel to Liberia. But, five of the eight who came with such high hopes, either died or were forced to return within a year because of bad health (Cason 1962 111-3). Despite the losses of early missionaries through death, sickness, and discouraging results, the years of 1833-1834 marked the beginning of an intensive effort in Liberia on the part of American missionary agencies. Between 1833 and 1847, the year of Liberia's independence, all American church bodies assigned seventy-seven missionaries to Liberia. But of that number at least 60 percent had served in Liberia three years or less, and more time was required to become effective. Furthermore, many were sick so often that they could hardly function at all (Hendrix 1985: 308).

In spite of the brief duration of most missionaries' presence in Liberia, they made a definite impact upon Liberian Christians. Once missionaries began appearing on the scene in the middle thirties the religious leaders among the settlers often found themselves working under the direction of a white American superintendent assigned by the home board. Methodist policy placed the authority over pastors in the hands of the annual conference whose ordained clergy formed its membership and whose presiding officer was the bishop. Although no bishop made a Liberian appearance until 1853, thirteen settler clergy and two recently arrived missionaries, Spaulding and Wright, organized the "Liberian Annual Conference" on January 10, 1834 (Meth. Missionary Society 1834). Wright died in less than two months, and Spaulding left for the United States before the end of April, but they helped to give institutional form to independent churches that had come into existence during the previous twelve years. The Liberian environment required modifications, but Methodist immigrants seemed willing to continue working in the Methodist system which provided considerable financial assistance.

Upon the loss of Spaulding and Wright, the Methodist Missionary Society appointed the Reverend John Seys, of New York, as superintendent of the Liberian Mission (Huberich 1947: 728-9). Seys took the direction of the Mission into his own hands, and for nine years somewhat dictatorially exercised all the authority of a bishop except that of ordination. He was an aggressive church

administrator whose seeming inability to stay out of public affairs often made him the center of colonial controversy. He got into trouble with colonial officials when he demanded that land be granted to a citizen of New York and that imported mission supplies could be sold tax-free. The conflict came to a climax when Seys formed a political party to contest an election against Governor Buchanan. The death of the governor and the return of the missionary superintendent brought a relaxation of tensions. As a replacement for Buchanan the Colonization Society appointed J. J. Roberts, a Methodist layman, who supported the colonial government in the dispute with Seys.

That the dispute was a power struggle between Seys and Buchanan cannot be doubted, but for the Americo-Liberians it was more than that. Resentment of white control seemed to lie just below the surface and carried over to the relationships between settler Christians and the mission boards in the U. S. Although the two groups had achieved a *modus vivendi* between them, ambivalent feelings toward the other on both sides were a constant source of irritation. Missionaries wavered between skepticism toward the settlers' qualifications for advancing the Gospel and surprise at "their Christian fidelity, zeal, and prudence" (Meth. Missionary Society 1844: 16). Christian leaders, particularly the Methodists, must have sensed the lack of trust in the colonists on the part of the Missionary Society, for the latter persisted in assigning white American ministers to superintend the Mission. It wasn't until January 1857 that the Liberian Methodist Conference was allowed to elect its first Black bishop, Francis Burns (Meth. Missionary Society 1859: 10-11).

Another source of resentment among the Methodist clergy in Liberia was the second-class status given their annual conference. Two years after the organization of the Liberian Annual Conference the General Conference of the Methodist Church, holding the regular quadrennial session in 1836, recognized the new African conference but severely restricted its powers and privileges. In the first place, as a mission conference the Liberians were not allowed to send delegates, either to debate or vote, to the General Conference. In the second place, the pension funds of the general church were not to be available to any Liberian clergy, even to those who had met the requirements for ordination. The reason given was that "they derive their support, not in the ordinary way, but from the Missionary Society" (Meth. Missionary Society 1837: 11). The latter was only partially true, for only a few of the clergy received a salary from the Society, and most had to supplement what little they received from their churches with income from outside sources. In any case, the clergy were rather vehement in expressing their resentment.

Growth among the Methodists and Baptists in Liberia before 1860 followed much the same pattern and was due to the same factors: (i) a sizeable and sustained landing of new immigrants, (2) advancement of capable settler leaders on all levels, and (3) a moderate support from the home board. Despite

the reluctance of the Methodist Missionary Society to turn over responsibility to settler leadership, Francis Burns was clearly taking his place as the denomination's leader. Thus when the 1856 General Conference of the M. E. Church finally gave way to allow the Liberian Annual Conference to elect its own bishop, Burns was the natural selection. Burns had the usual problems of any denominational administrator, but his chief difficulty and source of irritation arose out of a misunderstanding between himself and the Missionary Society in New York. One of his major complaints was that the officials in New York did not consult the "authorities of the Mission in this Country" before making appointments of personnel to Liberia (Burns 1861). Burns' feeling of resentment was only one of a long line of Americo-Liberian reactions to what they perceived as a continuing and unjustifiable control from abroad. The Liberian church continued to operate under the same kind of pressure — reprimands for not doing more in the way of converting the natives along with a 75 percent reduction in appropriations.

The remaining question of how Liberian Christians perceived themselves and how they saw themselves meeting their Christian responsibility has no one answer. Christianity did, however, serve as a unifying force among divergent social and economic groups of the settler population. All found something common in their religious faith. Theirs was a personal faith with an emphasis upon the individual's experience of Christ's redeeming love, an experience which often took the form of a traumatic and emotional conversion. Only thus could one resist the temptations of this world and guarantee a happy existence in the next life. Personal immortality was very important. Abram Blackford told of "coming home one night from the Methodist Church" and of hearing "a crying over the street [from] a woman [who] died very sudden . . . . She was not prepared for death" (Wiley 1980: 22). Settler letters to friends and former masters and mistresses back in America are replete with hope of meeting them in the hereafter.

The saved in the church did more than just pray. Prayer meetings were held at least weekly as a means of keeping faithful those who tended to backslide. The better known and more dramatic means of producing an atmosphere which encouraged an experience of the Lord was through the occasional revival. Not all African-Americans who immigrated to Liberia were Christians before they came, so revivals were considered important to the Liberian churches. These protracted meetings, which sometimes lasted several weeks with their impassioned preaching, stirring singing, and the mourners' bench where the searcher for salvation agonized in prayer, were the chief means of bringing new members into the church. The revival brought from America was a common phenomenon among the Americo-Liberians throughout the nineteenth century. One missionary described a revival in Monrovia when "for the space of eight days business stood still." He continued: "The work was principally confined to men who are heads of families, . . . 'Real candid sinners,' . . . ring leaders of Satan's militia in

Monrovia" (*African Repository* 1839: 254). Not only did revivals bring the so-called hardened sinners and the unbelievers into the fold, but they also revitalized those who had become unfaithful to the faith.

If revivals were a means of converting sinners, of winning new members for the churches, and of renewing the commitment of the weak, the weekly observances in the church were seen as equally important to the Christian life of the community. One of the first things visiting observers and newcomers noticed about Liberia was the church-going habits of the settlers. One recently arrived immigrant wrote from Millsburg that "we have meetings three times a week, and on the Sabbath three times a day" (*African Repository* 1838: 179). Strict adherence to what were believed to be these means of grace was more than a matter of individual loyalty, for it was an activity of a community of people. For the settler Christians, regular and faithful attendance was a symbol that set them apart from the heathen Africans who knew no sabbath and whose worship seemed to the Liberians to be of the most base kind. Other than these corporate acts of worship, the expression of a Christian community found few other outlets.

The pattern of Christian activity, belief, and style established itself rather early in the life of the colony and remained somewhat fixed throughout the century. The churches grew and expanded as the colony, and then the Republic, grew with the arrival of African-American immigrants and the establishment of new settlements. The Liberian census of 1843 shows that from a numerical perspective the settler churches were more effective than the parent denominations in the United States. Tom Shick reports that there were 1,015 immigrants affiliated with the three Liberian denominations in 1843 (Shick 1976: 155). Since neither the Baptists, Methodists, nor Presbyterians counted as members children any younger than twelve, close to 50 percent of the 2388 settlers had at least a nominal membership in some church. In contrast only 15.5 percent of the American population were church members in 1850 (Latourette 1941/1970: 177).

### III.

The issue now to be raised is the part played by Christianity, the religion of the Americo-Liberians, in the building of Liberian nationalism. The Christianity they brought with them had been a religion of a people oppressed by slavery and racism. Whether free or slave, Black Americans obtained from Christianity a perspective toward life that enabled them both to endure tyranny and to struggle against their oppression. But out of their migration to and settlement in West Africa, a transformation in the social role of their religion took place. It provided a divine sanction for Liberian nationalism and the rationale for domination over the indigenous population. The change did not occur suddenly, but a pattern was established early in the colonial period and hardened



with time. In order to understand what took place in the religious life of nineteenth-century Americo-Liberians, one needs to look at two factors at work in Liberia's national development, the disposition toward continuity and the forces of change. Both played a part in the evolution of Christianity among the settlers of Liberia.

As has been stressed above, religion was an important aspect of the African-American fragment which established itself on a small section of the West African coast. Black Christians who settled in Liberia continued to live by and promote the evangelical spirit in much the same way they had in America. Ministers preached the same "doctrines of human depravity, divine sovereignty, and unconditional election" that were being preached in revivals across the United States. No one knew better than they that many of the settlers either remained unconverted or were only nominal Christians. Revivals and camp meetings were held as often and were supported as fervently as previously. Preachers on these and other occasions sought to lead the unsaved through the typical pattern of conversion — "first a feeling of sinfulness, then a vision of damnation, and finally an experience of acceptance by God and being reborn and made new" (Raboteau 1978: 268). With new settlers arriving almost yearly for the first half century of Liberia's history and with the tendency of Christians to backslide, the revival fervor remained strong. Stated denominational meetings were not simply times for doing church business or for gathering the faithful, but were also occasions when, hopefully, the presence of the Holy Spirit would revive the disheartened and bring the sinners under conviction. The unsaved within the settler community presented enough of a challenge to evangelical forces in Liberia. The masses of surrounding aborigines, with centuries of so-called heathenism behind them, made a new and almost impossible claim upon the Christian body. It is thus no wonder that Americo-Liberian Christians put most of their resources into bringing their own people into the fold of Christ and retaining their loyalty at a high pitch.

One of the characteristics of the evangelical faith that many settlers brought with them from America was an emphasis on the personal and experiential aspects of religion. Salvation was not something one automatically received as a member of a group but was a divine guarantee of one's sins forgiven and of eternal life breaking into the believer's personal life. It was an experience that could not be given a rational explanation but one to which the individual could only witness. One settler, though deeply disappointed that he did not receive the money he thought his deceased master had intended for him, testified to a more spiritual inheritance: "O Glorious hope of perfect love, it Lifts me up to things above, it bears on eagles wings" (Wiley 1980: 168). First generation immigrants were particularly torn by the fact that they would not see their American relatives and friends again but were comforted by the thought that they would meet in heaven. The settler minister felt it was his responsibility to

foster the kind of atmosphere where the Holy Spirit could give sinners the assurance of personal salvation.

Although the same evangelical Christianity that had been the sustaining faith of Black Americans continued to receive as great an emphasis in Liberia as it had in the United States, the religion of the Americo-Liberian settlers had to adjust to a new environment. The social and political context of their religion changed radically as they established their various settlements along the two hundred miles of West African coast. Whereas they had lived under the restraints of slavery, whether as slaves or freedmen, they found themselves struggling to establish their own way of life among a people with whom they shared mutual misunderstanding, suspicion, and hostility. Whereas freedom had been only a dream for most, and a slim possibility for a few who were able to follow the North Star to Canada, they could now work as they saw fit to provide for themselves and their own well-being beyond the commands and interests of their former masters. Whereas the white man's rights as citizens had been denied them, even in the North, they were now laying the foundation for their own nation in which they would be free to develop their own way of life. With a new environment (geographical, cultural, and political) presenting them with a radically different set of challenges, their religion could be expected to take on an entirely different role. The outward expressions of their Christian faith did not seem to change much, but its functions did. Neither did the language used in their religious observances and statements of faith noticeably change, but different emphases gave new meanings to the old symbols as well as required new ones (Blamo 1971: 21-30).

The migration of Black Americans to Liberia required new ways of thinking about themselves. They had come for numerous reasons and out of different kinds of backgrounds. Those who had been emancipated in order to be colonized in nearly all cases had no choice in the matter, and with only a few exceptions masters did very little to prepare their slaves for colonization (Wiley 1980: 168). The free Blacks who chose to immigrate did so, for most part, under a degree of compulsion — from the desire to escape the dark shadow of racial degradation. In any case, once they were settled in Liberia, or at the time it was determined that they were to be colonized, these returning exiles had to begin identifying themselves in a different way. Just as Christian beliefs had carried them through the dark hours of slavery, so they would help the immigrants to redefine themselves now that they were on the continent of Africa.

However Black Americans might have thought of themselves in relation to Africa and whatever their attitude toward immigration, none could deny their African origins. If any of them wanted to forget those connections, and many would have preferred it that way, white Americans would not let them disregard the fact that they were children of Africa. The settlers' presence in Liberia led them to see themselves as more than just some of Africa's "scattered

children." They had become the vanguard of the returning Black diaspora, and upon them rested the responsibility of leading in the repatriation of the great mass of their race in exile. This was not an unusual theme to be expressed in the inaugural addresses of Liberian presidents. Joseph Jenkins Roberts summed it up in his third inaugural on December 3, 1851, when he stated his belief "that God has destined this republic to be the centre of attraction to her scattered children, who for ages have bent under the galling yoke of oppression in almost every quarter of the globe, and that He will gradually bring them into the enjoyment of perfect freedom in the bosom of Liberia" (Guannu 1980: 13-4). One much less prominent settler expressed the same sentiment in grandiloquent terms:

This is the land of our fore fathers, the land from which the children went, back to the land they are Returning. Liberia is now spreading her rich perfume round and about the big valleys of the World and introducing and calling out to her sons and daughters to rise and come up out of the Valley of ignorance and Hethenism (Wiley 1980: 162).

Such statements, by both ordinary settlers and their leaders, indicate that many Americo-Liberians believed they were serving a higher purpose than simply establishing a new home and bettering themselves in a land far from the United States. They were performing an important task for their race, one that had significance above all for Africa and all her dispersed descendants and then for the whole world. Nineteenth-century citizens of this small nation did not have a complete grasp of the broad expanse of Africa's diaspora created by the centuries of the slave trade, but statements by their political, intellectual, and religious leaders indicate that they were more sensitive to the international scope of racial exploitation than might be suspected. They believed that Liberia was the prospective instrument whereby not only could the scattered children of the race be returned to their ancestral home, but also Africa itself could be redeemed from its centuries of darkness. It was thought that the task of bringing salvation to Africa should not fall into the hands of others, such as white missionaries, but, as Alexander Crummell, Episcopal minister and educator, insisted, should be "reserved . . . to the offspring of this race who themselves have been suffering the sad afflictions of servitude in foreign lands. The children of Africa, scattered abroad in distant lands, are the indigenous agency — the men . . . who are yet to accomplish the large and noble work of uplifting Africa from degradation" (July 1967: 106).

The rhetoric that was used on both official and informal occasions, when the ideology underlying the national goals was discussed, was often embedded with religious symbolism. The theme, divine providence, repeatedly appeared when questions were raised about the forces that led them to West Africa. Some saw the founding and continued existence of Liberia as more than an accident

of history. They saw it as part of God's plan to bring African people into the kingdom of righteousness. Could it be, they wondered, that the enslavement of Blacks in the Western Hemisphere served a larger purpose? At least, it was argued, the Almighty could take the suffering of Africa's scattered children and turn it to divine purposes — that is, their conversion to Christianity, their adoption of Western civilization, and their introduction of both to Africa on their return. This kind of religious interpretation of Liberia's history persisted well into the twentieth century as a factor in its national self-understanding.

The symbolism of divine providence was useful to Americo-Liberian immigrants not only in understanding the broad expanse (world-wide and centuries-long) of their race's history, but also in explaining Liberia's own brief and precarious existence. In his first inaugural address Joseph Jenkins Roberts stated his belief that "the Divine Disposer of human events, after having separated us from the house of bondage . . . led us . . . towards the land of liberty and promise." He went on to point out "how signally Almighty God delivered them [the first settlers], and how he had hitherto prospered and crowned all our efforts with success" (Guannu 1980: 2,7-7). James P. Skipwith was not trying to impress anyone except his former master when he wrote in reference to Presidents Roberts and Benson that the "light that led them this far was light from heaven. I Believe that Liberia will yet stand with the eather Parts of the Civilized world" (Wiley 1980: 94). Such comments, uttered both by the elite and by more common members of the citizenry, were not meaningless shibboleths, but were reflections of the basic beliefs of the settlers.

President Roberts was expressing an ancient Christian precept but was applying it in a different context when he said that he believed that "*the establishment of this Republic was not wholly the work of man; the Almighty himself directed the enterprise*" (Guannu 1980: 13). Roberts as a successful politician and wealthy entrepreneur who engaged in the difficult process of nation-building discovered that the "work of man" often confounded what he believed to be divine providence. Although Roberts and other national leaders spoke often of the "Christian state" (Guannu 1980: 111) being established in Liberia, they faced problems created not only by external forces but also by their own perennial prejudices and inner conflicts. Mulattoes and pure Blacks continued to harbor the hatreds for each other that they had acquired in America. With the mulattoes dominating "the political and economic life of Liberia" and being concentrated in Monrovia, the Blacks fought to have Liberia College located at one of the interior towns along the St. Paul River where most of them settled. Having been unsuccessful in that attempt, black Liberians were further angered by "the almost total exclusion of black settler and African youths" from the college (Akpan 1982: 298). The attempt of the Blacks to dislodge the mulatto elite from their places of privilege came to a head in the crisis of 1870-1871 when Edward J. Roye became the first full-blooded African to be elected president (Shick :977: 301-302).

In spite of the obvious discrepancies in Liberian claims as a land of opportunity for all Africans, especially for those of the diaspora, Americo-Liberians maintained their vision of a great Christian empire in Africa. Edward Blyden, Liberia's leading intellectual of the nineteenth century and one of the earliest pan-Africanists, believed that the settlement of a few thousand American Blacks on the shores of West Africa had a deeper purpose than that intended by the slave holders who emancipated their slaves to be colonized or by the free Blacks who emigrated seeking to escape the restraints and discriminations of a racist society. In one speech he stated his belief that behind the establishment of Liberia was a "design of Providence" which led in "the laying of the foundation of future empire in Africa" (Wilson 1969: 81). Liberians were laying the foundation on which was being built a great "province of freedom," as Alexander Crummell called it, which would benefit all people of African ancestry. Essential to the development of a sense of identity and loyalty was the creation of a myth surrounding the pioneer settlers who were said to view "their venture as an opportunity to exercise their freedom" (Harris 1982: 115). In fact, J. J. Roberts, in his first inaugural address, referred to them as "isolated christian pilgrims, in pursuit of civil and religious liberty" (Guannu 1980: 2).

The quest for freedom seemed to have no meaning, however, for the relationship between the Americo-Liberians and the Africans. Upon closer examination of Liberian history it has become rather obvious that the country's goal was not to establish a system "of equality and partnership between settler and indigenous African" (July 1967: 99). The legal status of the aborigines as subjects made it clear that they were not really expected to become political peers with the settlers. Like the European immigrants to the Western Hemisphere who expected the Native Americans to adjust to white culture, Americo-Liberians "conceived of cooperation between the settler and the native African only on terms that the latter adhere to the western social and cultural standards introduced by the immigrants" (July 1967: 100). Integration may have seemed to have been the settlers' national goal, but what they meant was assimilation. When seen in the best light, what the settlers wanted for the aborigines was that they receive just compensation for ceded land, that western education be made available for their children, and that those living in the immigrant communities absorb the ways of western civilization. Hilary Teague, editor of the *Liberia Herald*, clearly stated the national goal in regard to the Africans:

Our object is to form a regular community to be gradually matured into a nation . . . by elevating the character and enlightening the minds of the natives preparatory into incorporation in the body politic. . . . Hence it follows that the true interest of the colonists and natives are . . . the same; and it should be one among our first objects to convince them of the fact (July 1967: 98).

The key words in Teague's above statement — "elevating," "enlightening," "incorporation," and "convince" — indicate a one-way process based on an affectation of cultural superiority. Having become "essentially American in orientation" Americo-Liberians considered most aspects of their lives superior to those of the native Africans — individual land tenure superior to communalism, monogamy to polygamy, Western legal system to decision through palaver, trousers to loin cloths, houses to huts, and Christianity to superstitious paganism. Somehow or other when these were all added together, they proved to the settlers that their African neighbors "displayed only ignorance, idolatry, licentiousness and godlessness" (July 1967: 100). As a means of justifying their presence and their possession of land in West Africa, they conceived their mission to be the Christianizing and "civilizing" of the Africans among whom they lived. A basic assumption running through most public oratory, and settler thinking in general, was the superiority of Christianity over Africa's traditional religions. African customs, in settler eyes, were thus outer appurtenances to an inner quality which kept the Africans on a lower level.

As so often has been the case with other colonialisms, the attitude of settler superiority was the basis for the creation of a new nationalism. The goal was to merge the two people, the settlers as repatriated Africans and the native Africans, into one people united on the basis of white European culture. In view of the threats to Liberia's security, the issue of national unity was very important to her. During much of the nineteenth century the very existence of one or more of the Americo-Liberian settlements was in jeopardy because of warfare among various African peoples or because of hostilities between the Monrovia government and neighboring indigenous groups. The latter resented the effort to force a foreign culture on them and resisted the newcomers' claims on their land. In addition to the external threats from other colonial powers, there were those created by factionalisms within. Each of the settler enclaves pursued its own interests. Conflicts also arose out of differences between the lighter and darker colored Americo-Liberians, out of denominational loyalties, and out of political affiliations and class distinctions. It was impossible, of course, to eliminate these internal differences, but it was important that they not be allowed to become too divisive as Liberia faced the more dangerous external threats.

National unity was one of the central emphases not only in the rhetoric of political leaders but of the religious. This is exemplified in the career of James S. Payne, twice elected president in 1868 and 1876. He had immigrated from Virginia in 1829 at age ten with his family and in 1842 began his career as a minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church of Liberia. During the next eighteen years he served as pastor of churches in Greenville, Edina, and Monrovia and while still a young man was given a leadership position in the Liberian Methodist Conference. But in 1860 he took a leave of absence, ostensibly for health reasons, and was placed in a special ministerial category, that of super-

numerary, which allowed him to participate in politics while maintaining an official and close relationship to the church. During the later years of his life he acted as treasurer of the Methodist mission for the home board in New York. The fact that Payne carried water on both shoulders, the secular and the religious, points to the place Christianity and the church occupied as unifying forces among the Americo-Liberian settlements. Despite the denominational, regional, and political differences, the brand of Christianity practiced by the settlers was quite homogenous and thus a unifying factor.

Furthermore, the Methodist Episcopal Church was more representative than the other denominations, for it was able to establish and maintain stations, including churches and schools, in all the settlements. The Presbyterians were few in number, the Baptists grew more slowly, and the Episcopalians limited their mission work largely to the Grebo in Maryland County. In comparison to the others, the Methodists recruited a steadier and larger supply of clergy throughout the century, a fact that was crucial to the growth of the church (Meth. Missionary Society 1877: 35). In addition to those ordained who were available for repeated assignment as ministers in charge of churches, a sizeable body of local (or lay) preachers was available for various responsibilities in their churches. Although women were not eligible for ordination or for the pastorate, a few of the better educated among them were assigned to be teachers for the churches' schools. The operational structure of the Methodist Church enabled it to use its ministers so as best to meet the needs of all its churches and thus to overcome the regional differences. Although some ministers spent their years in one region, Methodism's itinerant system kept many of its ministers on the move with assignments in several settlements thus giving them wide attachments throughout the entire country. Probably more important were the annual sessions of the Liberia Conference which brought the ministers from all the churches together to report the work of the previous year and to make plans for the next year. The fact that the places of meeting for the Annual Conferences were shifted yearly from one church to another, kept many citizens informed about what was happening in the other settlements and thus helped to bind them together (Wiley 1980: 254).

The unity sought and the unity achieved were thus obviously limited to the Americo-Liberian community. The failures of the churches' missionary efforts among the indigenous Africans and the failures to bring them into the political process belied the rhetoric of religious and national leaders (Meth. Missionary Society 1867: 17-18; 1877: 35). Among the reasons for these failures was the very nature of the religions competing for the loyalty of the African population of Liberia. It was not, in fact, so much a matter of competition as of the settlers attempting to displace the African's traditional loyalties with their own brand of Christianity. Americo-Liberians may have felt drawn in some ways to their native neighbors, but there was much about their customs and practices that

was repulsive to them—polygamy, sparse clothing, trial by poisonous sassa-wood, witchcraft, etc. They viewed these as the works of Satan whose rule over Africa was being overcome by the establishment of the Kingdom of righteousness in Liberia. At the organizational meeting of the Liberia Baptist Association in October, 1835, it was stated that when the settlers landed “Liberia presented a barren unbroken wasteland . . . , where Satan held high his empire over the souls of men. . . . Now . . . the kingdom of Satan shaken to its very centre, totters on its base, and the darkness and ignorance of ages are retiring before the bright rising of the Sun of Righteousness” (*African Repository* 1836: 33). There was thus no room in Christianity for the traditional beliefs; Satan’s rule had to be overthrown, his influence expurgated, and the African soul cleansed.

There may have been room enough in African culture for many of the Christian’s beliefs and practices, but the exclusive character of evangelicalism prevented the integration of the two religions. The only way Africa could be redeemed was for her people to admit to the evil rule of Satan over their lives—that is, to admit to the sinfulness of the practices they had been following—and to open themselves to the saving grace of faith in Christ. Those who did not accept this plan of salvation were left on the outside of God’s kingdom where they would receive what they deserved even in this world. Indigenous Africans seem not to have been moved by the expounding of a system of beliefs which was foreign to their patterns of thought and action. It was not necessary to accept the conviction of sin, for in their view their religious customs met their needs. From their perspective it was their culture with its religious connotations which was the superior. The underlying themes of the African traditional religions and the Christianity of African-Americans may have been similar (Hendrix 1895: chapters 1 & 6), but the Black experience in America combined with the influence of Western civilization created an almost insurmountable barrier between the two groups of Africans, between those returning from the diaspora and those who never left.

That the Americo-Liberians retained at least a degree of the African emphasis on the wholeness of life was seen in the way the religious, the commercial, and the political intermingled in the same people. That survival and success in the settler community often depended on one’s family connections pointed to the continued importance of the extended family among the settlers (Shick 1976: 100-114; Liebenow 1969: 131-147). Because neither the settlers nor the native Africans understood that they shared these two emphases, on life’s wholeness and the family, they were not able to overcome the barriers that kept them apart.

Meanwhile another development was to create havoc in African/settler relations. The adoption of the Western principle of private ownership and its replacement of communally held property was to be the basis of long-lasting conflict between the two groups. Both concepts of land holding were to be seen in a larger religious context. Westerners viewed the holding of private property



as well-nigh sacred, and to Africans the principle of land held in common was vital to their whole way of life.

There was another factor, probably the most important one, which undermined all efforts at national integration including the Christianizing of Africa. As Jane J. Martin has pointed out,

It was the Americo-Liberians who were building Liberia. It was they who sought to bind together the peoples into one nation. . . . Even when missions and government authorities cooperated in the task, even when the spirit was energetic and the times were peaceful, the task could be frustrated by the fact that Africans valued their own culture above Christianity and civilization of this different people (Martin 1968: 38).

It was their religion which the Americo-Liberians were trying to push as the superior replacement of the old. The Africans were not interested in building a new nation, especially on principles foreign to them, nor in acquiring a new religion that could not be integrated into their own. They rightly understood that for the settlers "it was the standards of the West . . . which were required to ensure the success of Liberia and the prosperity of the people of West Africa" (July 1967: 109). In a more practical sense they also saw the church as an agent of national expansion in its efforts to establish mission stations on the frontier just beyond the Americo-Liberian settlements (Holsoe 1967: 174-178, 186, 211). The introduction of Christianity into that section of West Africa known as Liberia was thus part and parcel of the effort to thrust a whole new way of life upon natives of the area.

Christianity, as the religion of the settlers, also became the means whereby they gave legitimacy to their developing nationalism. That there were doubts in the minds of many of them about how they related to the native Africans seemed evident from the numerous reminders that they must be about the business of converting the heathen natives. To the settlers Africa was not only a continent of long-benighted people who were to be pitied and governed for their own good, but of a people who refused the Gospel when it was offered them. Therefore, if they turned their backs on the light that had been proffered to them, they were to be excluded from the privileges of "civilized" rule. In the native denial of Western ways and values, the settler community found justification for becoming an exclusive little group that ruled, rather shakily, and exploited indigenous peoples to the extent of its strength. The kind of democracy that the African-Americans had known in the United States—"a white community" with "negroes flourish[ing] beneath it" (Hartz 1964: 59)—predisposed them to stress their own freedom even if it was attained at the expense of native inhabitants. While they were going through the process of settling themselves in Liberia, they were sowing the seeds of an oppressive system, the harvest of which was not to come until a century later.

African-American immigrants made of the very religion which had sustained them and their forefathers throughout the American slave experience one that supported them as the dominating group in Liberia. The beliefs and observances of their religion remained the same, but its role was reversed. As the returning exiles from among the African diaspora, they placed a new emphasis on certain old beliefs. God as the supreme ruler over all the affairs of men had long been an essential part of their faith, but this belief took on special significance in the light of their responsibilities as the builders of a new nation. Divine providence had freed them from the shackles of slavery and racism, had set them on the shores of a land abundant with resources, and had given them the mission of creating a Christian empire on the African continent. They looked on themselves as being a chosen people, few as they were, assigned the task of bringing the superior qualities of "civilization" to the African masses. Adherence to a sacred calling such as this led to the feeling of preeminence over their African neighbors. As a people who had once groveled before, or rebelled against, their masters, they became a people who regarded their fellow Africans with condescension.

#### IV.

The Christianity that the African-Americans brought with them into their Americo-Liberian life was part-and-parcel of the liberal fragment which they had extracted from Jacksonian America. They seem to have been influenced by American liberalism which Louis Hartz describes as a "liberal cohesiveness" which was firmly established in "the victories of Jeffersonian and Jacksonian democracy" (Hartz 1964: 73,84). Two facets of the liberal fragment should be noted. The political one, adopted by the African-American immigrants, was the ideology of American republicanism. Just as citizenship in the U.S. was limited to whites so membership in the new Liberian republic was confined to Americo-Liberians. The other aspect of this fragment was the ideal of economic freedom as espoused by Jacksonian liberalism. What was meant by "economic freedom" was "freedom of opportunity." But what was not meant was that "government should guarantee rights to all equally" (Degler 1970: 147-8). With this kind of ideology undergirding their economic ambitions, Liberian settlers eagerly entered into the competition for trade and several acquired sizable fortunes. Thus the "Jacksonian right to vote and to live the bourgeois life" that was denied both native and Black Americans (Hartz 1964: 59) was reflected in the relationship between the Americo-Liberians and the indigenous population.

Parallel to the adoption of the liberal fragment in both the United States and Liberia was the evangelical emphasis on the individual's experience of salvation. In contrast to traditional African thought patterns in which religion was inseparably tied in with the total life of the community, the two became separated. The saved, including those in the process of conversion, developed

a certain unity in the church's ministrations. But in other spheres of life the "principle of free competition and individualism" became dominant. The weight that evangelicalism placed on the personal not only gave religious legitimation to Jacksonian type of liberalism that found expression in Liberia, but more important aided in the undermining of communalism as a potential basis for a developing Liberian society.

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**G. Henry Andrew, *Cry, Liberia, Cry!* New York: Vantage Press, 1993. xxv, 228 pp.**

Andrews' book is the second first-person account of the present civil war, known to this reviewer, written by a Liberian, to appear since that fateful incursion into Nimba County about five years ago by Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL). One suspects that more of this type of writing will appear in the near future, written both by perpetrators of this national carnage and their victims, and, like Andrews' book, will serve to reveal the mindset that has led to this Liberian tragedy.

The book is divided into three major parts, with the author making a complicated attempt to focus these varied parts on the theme of the book: how it became possible for Liberians to bring such disaster upon themselves. Part I includes three chapters of the author's diary which chronicles events leading to the near fall of Monrovia to the NPFL's rebels. This part thus sets the tone for the rest of the book.

Part II, from which the title of the book is taken, presents a poem (15 pages long, of 41 stanzas), modestly referred to as a "short poem" (p. xxii) where the author recounts the "stories of terror and death and destruction related by escaping Liberians" between July and December 1990.

Part III, with two chapters, focuses on the various symptoms of the general malaise of underdevelopment facing not only Liberia but also all of Africa. "It is not possible to speak of Liberia today outside of the African context. Liberia is a part of Africa and in many respects mirrors Africa in microcosm, only worse. And no wonder, because Africa is in a mess." (p. 77) The first chapter looks at Liberia in the context of Africa, and the last chapter, Liberia in the context of its own past and present history.

Overall, the book is compelling reading. Andrew's writing style is crisp, descriptive, humorous but at the same time serious. In the first part where his diary brings to life the sense of futility that gripped Liberians in general, but Monrovia in particular, the writing is reminiscent of Andrews' popular column of the late 1960s and early 1970s, "From Where I Sit," which appeared in *The Liberian Star*. In that column as in this book, he calls a spade a spade. Interestingly, for those of us who followed his career as a veteran journalist and later saw him fade away into political oblivion after his dismissal by President Tolbert as minister of information, it is good to see that the years away from journalism have not eroded Andrews' keen sense of observation as a reporter. For this part of the book is vantage reporting.

Take, for example, his description of the political merry-go-round between President Doe and the NPFL to resolve the conflict in July 1990 and its effect on

the people. "Tension, which had begun to dissipate a little with President Doe's latest concession for including the NPFL in an interim government, returns. The BBC reports that Taylor has rejected the move. We wait, and wait. One needs nerves of steel to survive this. Monrovia's are now as jumpy as grasshoppers." (p. 24) Of the breakdown in law and order, he writes: "This is our seventh day without water and our fifth day without electricity. Drunken soldiers are commandeering taxis and private vehicles all over. When their commandeered vehicles run out of gas, they simply stop another car and take it over." (p. 23) Of the wanton violation of human rights, he notes: "Later, after the soldiers are well beyond my gate, I ask of a neighbor and learn that the young man taken away was accused of making Red Cross flags for use by the NPFL forces to camouflage their activities. Of course the young man was vigorously protesting his innocence, but I don't think anyone will see him again." (p. 24)

While the somewhat epic poem in the second part gives the book its title, it also weakens the book because it seems more like an intruder in an otherwise smooth prose. This reviewer questions the wisdom of including the long poem in the book. Put in the middle of this book, it tends to disrupt rather than add to the significance of the situation being described. The poem makes boring reading, and one cannot wait to get through it in order to get back to the prose in part three. A good editor would have suggested it be left out.

It is a welcome relief to get through part two, because once again, the reader is propelled into the pleasant sea of Andrews' prose, as he now turns his attention to analyzing the symptoms of the "most deadly disease afflicting the very core of our national life." (p. 71) He starts by looking at Liberia's past and present history within the context of Africa. While he does succeed in showing similarities in the mentality of Liberians and other Africans towards national development and the value of human lives, the average reader nevertheless will be overwhelmed by the massive evidence provided, to the point of accusing Andrews of an overkill, even though the reader will also nod approval at most of the assertions made and conclusions reached.

The overwhelming evidence, at once humorous and lighthearted, do turn deadly serious in their accusation of the complacency of every Liberian. For example, many Liberians will not like what they read about the behavior of the combatants (both the government soldiers and NPFL rebels) as their atrocities are reflective of most Liberians, who cannot easily excuse themselves regardless of whether they were in the country or abroad. "There is a universal amazement, bewilderment, and shock at the coldblooded brutality of the combatants, not against each other, but against innocent civilians. Defenseless men, women, and children shot at point-blank range, often in the back after being told to go . . ." (p. 72) This and other passages in the book indict all Liberians, because these combatants are our family members, relatives, loved-ones, and friends. Aware that this washing of our "dirty linen" in a book would rub some Liberians the



wrong way, Andrews does not apologize but insists that this is necessary if we are to have a true, national reconciliation. "We must wash our dirty linen in public. Some people may resist this, but if we could dirty the linen before the eyes of the whole world, we cannot now wash that linen in the closet. . . . On the national scene, there can be no true reconciliation unless the episodes and incidents that now make reconciliation necessary are fully aired and exposed." (pp. 72-73)

He continues throughout to show that regardless of whether Liberians were supporters of Tubman, Tolbert, Doe, or Taylor, or whether they considered themselves "neutral," this tragedy cannot be a national lesson if it is simply said, "Let us forgive the past and start anew." (p. 73) A lot more soul-searching of the national psyche has to take place, including the investigation of past national wrongs, at least those of recent memory such as the rice riots of 1979, the pseudo-revolution of 1980, the raid on the University of Liberia campus in 1984, the two army forays into Nimba County after the failed Quinwonkpa coup in 1985, and the atrocities committed on all sides during this civil war.

And therein lies the value of this book, that it challenges all Liberians to re-evaluate their individual responsibility in what has happened, especially in the areas of morals, values, and development policies. That only in such self-examination at all levels of our national life can sanity and human dignity be restored to Liberia, a nation of once friendly and caring people. That our national problems are not from outside, but are created and perpetuated by an internal mindset that has made most, if not all, of us sycophants, thinking only of "me, my family, friends, and cronies." (pp. 70-71)

This message is aptly summarized in the book's epilogue: "There is no immutable law of nature or of man that decrees that Liberia must forever remain backwards, underdeveloped, largely illiterate, and in ignorance, poverty, and disease. Our destiny lies in our hands, as it has lain for 145 years. The very fact that our country has existed for so long and yet remained backwards should serve as a sufficient catalyst to galvanize us into action." (p. 223)

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Paul Gifford, *Christianity and Politics in Doe's Liberia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993, 349 pages.

Gifford's primary object of study seems to be the discovery of the 'role Christianity played in the socio-political system of Liberia'; the function of (christian) religion in Liberia. (p. 2) He seeks to discover why the religious phenomenon of Christianity in Liberia had not taken the form of a Latin American Christianity, i.e. concerned to make socio-political issues central to one's religiosity (Liberation christianity). His research culminated in Monrovia and its adjacent territories, in 1988-9, when Samuel Doe's regime was at its most decadent.

Gifford's thesis is his answer to this seemingly simple question: Why did the Liberian people tolerate such a despot (Doe) for so long (1980-90)? His answer: because they were unwittingly and systematically imbued with an interminably sychophantic dose of religiosity which went under the name of 'biblical christianity.' (p. 7) Put differently, Gifford works with the Liberationist assumption that, 'the limit of a tyrant is in the endurance of the oppressed.' With sometimes unequal documentation, he propounds a hypothesis to explain how—with a brand of Christianity—this paralysing endurance was produced, which served to entrench Doe's power. But Gifford does not stop there. He shows (successfully, I think), how the blooming of this Christianity in Liberia may be correctly (even if not sufficiently) understood as 'controlled, funded and orchestrated from the USA'; a christianity which contributed to the 'oppression, impoverishment and destruction of an entire country.' (p. 3)

This is a good editorial summary of the-Gifford-thesis,

"In general, Liberian Christianity—far from being a force for justice and human advancement—diverted attention from the cause of Liberia's ills, left change to God's miraculous intervention, encouraged obedience and acceptance of the status quo, and thus served to entrench Doe's power. This Christianity, devised in the USA and promoted largely by American missionaries, thus had the effect of furthering the regional economic and political objectives of the US government, which was committed to supporting Doe."

'In general,' Gifford is right. Anyone interested in the Third Republic ought to have access to a copy. This is a good book. It's style is clear, readable, and jargon-free. His presentation is straightforward, yet full of nuances and interesting anecdotes. His arguments seem thorough, except at points we will note, and his logic flowed well. This book has an appropriate range of documentation, and as such, the point being made is almost always authenticated and solidified. No credible study of religion in Liberia can ignore this work, in which he establishes

well and firmly the Gifford-thesis. He brings to poignancy the need to reevaluate, not just the nature of church and state relations, but our canons of right and wrong theology (whether Christian, African Traditional, or Islamic), of theological education, and specifically, our relished canons of biblical hermeneutics.

He devotes 38 pages to the historical context of religion in Liberia; 41 pages to the Independent churches, 50 pages to the Mainline churches, and 92 pages to the Charismatic-Evangelical churches; and finally, 55 pages to the geopolitical function of Liberian Christianity. These basic facts indicate where Gifford's main interest lies—the political function of the evangelical-charismatic churches (from whence much of his information come).

But there are several points at which one could query Gifford. Easily tempted to say something about everything [for example, that there is a major abbreviated bibliographical reference—p. 306, n39 "CIIR"—not on the list of abbreviated works; or, that 4 Roman Catholic politically critical pastoral letters sent out over eleven years is not "frequent" as Gifford claims (p. 73), but woefully inadequate], I will limit my comments to areas material to his argument.

Gifford does not seriously entertain the contrary possibility that it was precisely this resilient (escapist?) religiosity that sustained people *despite* an atrocious regime. And, as such, it was a liberating, rather than an enslaving faith. It is not that he is unaware of a 'liberating' interpretation of 'Biblical Christianity,' his cynicism does not allow him to give it much (if any) thought. For example, he says—in one breath—that because this christianity is "so uncritical and totally unrelated to social conditions," it "enables Christian phrases and symbols to legitimate all kinds of dubious social realities." (p. 140) Yet he does not see the verticalism of biblical christianity as itself a socio-politically motivated option that deals with the crisis of a prolonged despotism. And, as such, is very related (not 'totally unrelated') to the overwhelming oddity of social and political repression.

My next comment relates not to the coherence of his arguments, but the cogency of his conclusion. My problem is with Gifford's understanding of Liberation theology. A sociological critique is necessary to a Liberation christianity as found in Latin America. But, Liberation theology is not sociology, and cannot stop at theoretical analysis. It is practical (collective) steps which incarnate (makes actual) a socio-politically relevant theology. Now, the boon of his argument was that Liberian Christianity lacked that critical (sociological) awareness which accounted for its manipulation by Doe and his associates. That is, its acquiescent theology functioned positively to encourage grass-root non-involvement. The presence (or absence) of the former leads to the presence (or absence) of the latter.

However, his conclusion is confusing. All through the book we are led to believe that a lack of social analysis in the theologising in Liberian Christianity (suggested from the beginning p. 47, and stated in the end p. 305), means an acute lack of conscientising for grass-root involvement in political affairs. According to his research, the former was present only in the Roman Catholic church, but the latter was nowhere found (p. 299). This moves, for me, from a confusion to a contradiction. Gifford is (unwittingly) telling us in his conclusion, by this Roman Catholic exception, that a critical-prophetic-socio-politically-responsible theology need not lead to the grass-root mobilisation characteristic of Latin American Christianity. But surely this runs against the grind of his whole argument, i.e. that if only Liberian Christianity could get its act together and demystify its religious language in being more politically relevant (p. 315), it would produce an analogous (and enviable!) Latin American religious phenomenon.

This incoherence arises from his failure to take seriously an African Religiosity which he at various point dismisses flippantly (p. 187, 293, 315) as insignificant to account for the lack of the Latin American phenomenon. It is not so much what one says (external pressure) that influences one's reaction, but one's prior disposition (pre-understanding) which makes sense (or nonsense) of what someone says. A supplementary study of this prior, implicit religious grammar of a Christianity suffused with the religiosity of traditional (or popular) religion may prove just as rewarding as this book. But that is beyond this review.

The last comment leads me to caution that when Gifford speaks of the theology of various churches, he is always referring to the theology of pastors and clerical leaders. He, at no time, clarifies his use of 'church' as the people themselves, the leaders, and/or the institution. In fact he uses this ambiguity to his advantage. He says that the 'church leaders' after the 1980 coup spoke out less and less as time went by, with two obvious exceptions, "Rev. Walter Richards and Archbishop Francis" (Rev. Toimu Reeves?). But, in order to maintain that the mainline churches were not political enough, he says, "in these instances it was decidedly not the Baptist and Catholic churches that were involved; it was the leaders as individuals" (p. 92-3). Here he clearly distinguishes the church from their leaders (by what measure he does not say). Yet, he equates Archbishop Browne with 'the churches' voice' (p. 65). Later, he argues with support from Sawyer, that "the churches' refusal to consider their role in these (political) terms . . . constitutes their greatest failure" (parenthesis mine, p. 97). But in Sawyer's quoted work, *Effective Immediately*, the identity of 'church' and 'church leaders' is most pronounced. There, it was the voice of the church leaders (termed 'church') that were seriously destroyed and demeaned, not the church as an institution. Gifford unwittingly adopts this confusion,

thereby withholding from the reader the distinction (or difference, if any) there is between the voice of the 'churches' and the voices of their leaders.

Gifford also ignores an important piece of data. Doe encouraged 'Biblical Christianity', he says, because far from being a threat to Doe, it was a support (p. 142). But—and this is the point—Doe repressed the mainline church (p. 97), castigated its leaders and undermined their political 'interference' (p. 65). Presumably, Doe attempted to sabotage any institution or groups of individuals (students? clerics? nurses? academicians?) challenging or posing a threat to his power. How does Gifford explain the threat the mainline churches posed to Doe, if it was not socio-politically motivated? Why did Doe warn them to leave 'politics' to politicians? Why did the more 'spiritual' churches accuse the mainline churches of 'politicking' (p. 143)? Gifford thinks that both Doe and the 'spiritual' churches confused the churches with their leaders. So that although their leaders were politically minded, the churches weren't. That is a fair enough observation. But if, as Gifford does, one ingenuously goes onto find out what 'the church' says from sermons, personal testimonies, crusades, magazines, interviews with church leaders, workers, and missionaries, (p. 4) surely, one is hard put to distinguish personal views from that of the church. He doesn't seem to realise, that a church is no more nor less political than its leader. To silence its leader is to all intents and purposes to silence 'that church'. The inevitable confusion between the voice of the church/church leaders that Gifford makes has already been noted. What it means here, is that this 'irony' of his remains no less ironical, but hardens into a contradiction. In other words, it remains an unexplained element of his research which should challenge the certainty of his conclusion.

It will be unfair to say that Gifford does not take the complexity of the Liberian religious phenomenon into account. But a few sweeping statements can be found which would seem to betray a simplicity untrue to the facts. Such as, "Africa has no tradition of asceticism." (p. 187) Personally, there is nothing particularly virtuous about asceticism. But this statement is a downright falsehood, only sustained by an unchecked history of African Christianity. Which part of the Christian Church was it that gave Pelagius (a heretical monk who attacked the compromising and worldly (!) theology of Augustine) his greatest following, if not the ascetic and Donatist segment of the African church? Where did Montanism begin and flourish, commanding someone of no less significance than Tertullian? What is the predominant feature of the monophysitic (Coptic) christianity alive today in Ethiopia, since the fourth century B.C.?

Gifford says elsewhere, "During the 1980s, Liberian Christianity experienced a remarkable numerical increase. When asked why, *almost all* church officials replied, 'Because we teach the truth'" (p. 286). By going on to explain the increase in only the evangelical churches, excluding both Mainline and Inde-

pendent churches, implies that 'almost all' refers to the 'Evangelical churches' only. Yet it reads as though other churches are included.

His generalisations seem to progress structurally as well. In reference to the Africanness of Liberian Christianity, he writes,

*"Many non-mainline leaders reacted very forcefully against and denied the possibility of an African or black theology. Most simply never thought in such terms. All, however, would have strongly affirmed that African Traditional religion was nothing but pagan darkness." (italics mine p. 294)*

Indeed, this may be a probable conjecture, but he provides no documentation, well, except one from a pastor of Calvary Baptist church, Monrovia!

The undisputed strength of this book lies in the demonstrated probability of this hypothesis of Americanism to explain both the features and function of 'Biblical Christianity.' The controversy has just begun. And Gifford needs to be commended for so ably enabling just that.

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Paul Gifford, *Christianity and Politics in Doe's Liberia*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). 349 pages.

Of the social forces impacting contemporary Africa, Christian churches have made a conspicuous contribution to both the political successes and failures of the continent. Paul Gifford's richly detailed study of Christian churches in contemporary Liberia sheds valuable light on this mixed political impact of churches, though Professor Gifford clearly views churches in Liberia as having hindered more than aided movement in what could be considered "progressive" political directions. For Gifford, progressive movement lies in the direction of democratic, corruption-free political institutions and politically-empowered and activated citizens. Both sets of objectives are certainly critical in any political context and, according to Gifford, churches in Liberia have done virtually nothing to advance either one.

The causes of this, Gifford argues, are both historical and contemporary. First of all, he says, the Christianity brought to nineteenth century Liberia by black repatriates from the United States was politically problematical from the start. It encouraged a sense of collective Christian remove from politics even as it pursued a colonizing agenda that included turning the territory into an outpost of U.S. political and economic interests as well as internally stratifying the Liberian population in ways favoring coastal settlers over inland tribes.

Gifford makes clear that the political naivete and contradictoriness of Liberian Christianity, so evident in its beginnings, has endured into the present. He points out that churches in contemporary Liberia still presume to possess a distance from politics (as though this were both virtuous and attainable) despite what has been a persistent and often glaring co-optation by American and Liberian ruling-class interests. According to Gifford, mainline churches became little more than "a means of legitimating power" (59), which was readily apparent by the 1980 coup at which time President Tolbert was the "Chairman of the Baptist Convention; Warner, his vice-President, was the presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church; and Reginald Townsend, the National Chairman of the TWP, was the moderator of the Presbyterian Church" (58).

The symbiosis between church and state, however, proceeded beyond overlapping leadership structures, to discourse. Gifford details how mainline churches were prone to heap religious praise on political leaders, such as Tolbert, and how, even more frequently, leaders such as Tolbert and Doe, mounted church platforms to heap religious praise upon themselves. Another source of mainline church co-optation Gifford pays attention to was the church's reliance on the financial support of their more prosperous members, many of whom were part of the Liberian political establishment.

When combined with more direct forms of government coercion, the sum of all of this, says Gifford, was that mainline churches offered only sporadic resistance to corrupt political leaders. Gifford does spend considerable time pointing out exceptions to this, in particular, the outspokenness of Baptist pastor Walter Richards and Catholic Archbishop Michael Francis. Nevertheless, his conclusion is that "the mainline churches were not political at all" (97).

Gifford is even more critical of the newer wave of evangelical churches which, he argues, have been most disposed toward American ideological interests—or, more specifically, the ideological interests of American conservatives. He notes how Liberian evangelicals have appropriated both the otherworldly emphasis of American evangelicalism as well as its tendency to enshrine economic rights while remaining reticent on political and (especially) human rights. Gifford shows that within evangelical churches in Liberia, this economic preoccupation has taken the form of an aggressive commitment to the concept of free-enterprise (meaning, among other things, an anti-communist fervor) coupled with a theological fixation on the notion that it is God's will that Christians attain wealth and prosperity.

Gifford establishes quite plausible and, at times, compelling relationships between the religious postures of Liberian churches (as understood mostly through their public discourse) and the ability of leaders such as Samuel Doe to run roughshod over the rights and interests of the Liberian people. Gifford enumerates, for example, how certain congregations attributed rice shortages to the work of demons, or to "God's plan," rather than to "the corruption of politicians who would take the available rice and sell it on their own account" (118, 120). In these instances, and others like them cited by Gifford, a religious disposition directly contributed to a failure to act upon vital material and political interests.

But while certain religious beliefs no doubt contributed oftentimes to political passivity, a question that could be asked is to what extent the absence of political activism was due to more immediate political factors such as the disproportionate power Doe possessed and his obvious willingness to use it against his opponents. In a situation of such power imbalance, which of the following comes first: a discourse that constricts one's political posture or the political constrictions themselves? At the very least, it could be posited that these factors have operated dialectically. Gifford seems to argue, however, that in Liberia the discourse has been far more responsible for the conditions than the conditions have been for the discourse.

Just as Gifford argues that religious discourse has played a central role in causing the problems, he argues that religious discourse of another sort ("liberation theology") would play a crucial role in solving them. Progressive theological analysis may certainly have a role to play, but it will take far more



than theology to redirect the politics of powerful, brutal governments. Gifford points to the impact of church leaders on the civil rights struggle in the United States as an example of the political force progressive theology sometimes wields. However, in this instance, leaders such as Martin Luther King, Jr. not only made theological claims about justice but, more importantly, made justice claims which drew on a binding set of U.S. constitutional principles. Theological appeals minus a tradition of binding constitutional rights would have produced far fewer results.

This was made clear by the South African anti-apartheid struggle in that it had religious leaders appealing to the nation's Christian religiosity but it did not have constitutional guarantees for its oppressed majority. As a result, religious leaders in South Africa exerted less pressure on their government than King did on his. But again, the point is that while theology is important, immediate political factors conceivably account more for political dispositions and political outcomes. Therefore, the political behavior of the Liberian masses must be primarily critiqued in the light of their existing political obstacles and political opportunities.

Nonetheless, Professor Gifford has provided a sorely needed national study of West African Christianity, one filled with important insights into the social impact of Christianity within the Liberian context and beyond. This well researched and well written book will be required reading for anyone interested in the relationship between religion and politics in Africa.

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Arthur F. Kulah, *Theological Education in Liberia: Problems and Opportunities*. SCP/Third World Literature Publishing House, Lithonia, Ga., 1994, 106 pp.

Arthur F. Kulah, Bishop of the United Methodist Church in Liberia asserts that "the concern of this book is to provide a forum for a meaningful dialogue in which the church can reflect on the kind of theological educational program which is 'authentically African and authentically Christian.'"

In order to do this he compares and contrasts the curricula of the seminaries in Liberia and analyzes the contents of each curriculum in order to discover if the Church is "engaged in a viable and functional theological education for its pastors and theologians." Then using the responses received from lay people, pastors, as well as non-Christians, the author presents "a model of theological education which is faithful to the problems and needs of the Liberian people." Lastly, suggestions and recommendations are made to Church leaders "concerning the direction in which viable theological education should be heading."

For the author, the problem with Liberian theological education is a curriculum which was brought from the West by the missionaries and which continues to be influenced by them. Using the curriculum of the four theological seminaries in Liberia, one sees no emphasis on African Traditional Religion, Liberian Traditional Religion, African Church History, and the History of the Christian Church in Liberia. However, I disagree with the author when he writes that the task of analyzing the curricula and philosophies of the seminaries leaves one "discouraged and frustrated." I sense opportunity instead.

Referring to the Protestant Episcopal Church's theological education, Bishop Kulah writes that it is not operating as an ecumenical seminary; that it is "simply a four-year liberal arts program with a religions department." But the fact is that Cuttington has a Department of Theology and its graduates have excelled in graduate programs. Also, while it is true that the Liberian curricula may be identical to that of the West, it needs to be pointed out that the seminarians are not completely alienated from the traditional spirituality of their people and the position of their church in the Liberian society. The reason the curricula of the Liberian seminaries are patterned after that of the West is because we have not brought forth a better curriculum that emphasizes the religious beliefs and practices of our people. This remains an area of challenge to Liberian Christians.

Such a task is delicate. Are the traditional religious leaders willing to share their "secrets?" The religious leaders representing the different tribes should be assured that this venture is not one of betrayal. Neither is it one in which the faith of our ancestors is being ridiculed and abused. Also, seminarians should be encouraged to share their own spiritual journey in an open and supportive atmosphere.

The author does no justice to the countless lay and ordained ministers who labor for the spread of the Good News when he writes that the "whole style and content of the African Church's preaching and teaching ministries were imitations of the church which introduced Christianity to Africa." Christianity was brought to Africa, but Africans have taken Christianity to a higher level. The reason we have embraced Christianity is because deep down within our hearts we carry a religious conviction that precedes the coming of the Christian Church from the West. The African Christian Church has done an excellent work in celebrating its religious heritage and the gifts of its people, and this must be commended.

The author believes that lest African Christian theology runs the risk of being nothing but African Traditional Religions in written form, "the personal experience of God's revelation in Jesus Christ must be shared with and must receive the approval from the universal Church." The African Christian Church should share its belief in Jesus Christ, but we cannot wait for the "approval" of the universal Church. What if the rest of the universal church does not agree with us? Do we discard our beliefs?

In the process of explaining the symbolic meanings of the different traditional Liberian symbols, the author gives the symbolic meaning of a woman as "servant, passivity." On the contrary, African women have always symbolized strength. Unfortunately the West often describes her as "the beast of burden." Caution should be taken when defining and describing the religious symbols so that it is not misunderstood and/or given the wrong interpretation.

The proposal of an ecumenical seminary as advanced by Kulah, is excellent, but it comes with its share of responsibilities. While it is true that its African, especially Liberian, traditional religious study program will be one of high esteem, Liberian theologians should be able to keep abreast of the latest theological writings of the Christian church and encouraged to publish their writings. Most importantly, this proposed ecumenical seminary should be a resource center for the rest of the world to come and do research.

It is good that the author supports the theological training of ministers' wives because of the importance of their ministry along with that of their husband's. However, domestic science should not be the only non-theological course available to "wives." With the presence of female seminarians and clergy, the academic needs of their spouses should also be considered.

I applaud Kulah's desire that Liberian seminaries have a more inclusive curriculum "to give the students dual competencies"—theological and vocational. In addition to vocational training such as carpentry, masonry, and agriculture, the list should be expanded to include accounting, book-keeping, and word processing. These and other skills will be of great advantage to the pastor and the parish.

Bishop Kulah must be commended for this publication, and for sharing and defending the precious religious and social beliefs and practices of the Liberian people. Liberian Christians have always been in touch with the deep religious spirituality of their ancestors even though they may not know it. This is an important reason why the Christian faith continues to spread significantly in Liberia and elsewhere in Africa.

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Joseph J. Walters; *Guanya Pau: A Story of an African Princess*, with a foreword by Oyekan Owomoyela. Originally published in 1891 by Lauer and Mattill of Cleveland, Ohio. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994). 112 pages.

*Guanya Pau* could have also been titled, *Walters' Apology*, but the man had nothing to apologize for. Not to his contemporaries, and not to any other writer of African fiction since he published his pioneer work near a century ago. The opening paragraph of Walters' introduction:

This little book I give to the public, conscious of its defects and lack of literary finish. The author is an under graduate and cannot hope to be able to make a valuable contribution of Literature. . . ,

is an understatement which calls attention to a man of humility, modesty and talent. And, he was a Liberian.

Many students of African literature are still taught that West African fiction in English started with Amos Tutuola's *Palm Wine Drinkard* (1952), and was made popular by Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, (1958). Joseph E. Casely-Hayford's *Ethiopia Unbound: Studies in Race Emancipation*, (1911) has been cited as the beginning of African fiction in English.

With the discovery of Walters' *Guanya Pau*, Casely-Hayford's anthology would have to be reordered since it predates Casely-Hayford by eleven years.

Credit for unearthing Walters' work goes to John Victor Singler, who, in 1990, published an article in this very journal about his findings. [See, Singler, John Victor. "The Day Will Come: J. J. Walters and *Guanya Pau*," *Liberian Studies Journal* XV. 2 (1990), 125-34]. Walters' work had literally been buried in a pile of old books at the library of Oberlin College in Ohio where Walters earned an A.B. degree in 1893. Singler's literary excavation that unearthed Walters must be considered on a similar scale with the anthropological discovery of the *Zinjanthropus*, as *Guanya Pau* seems to have settled once and for all a crucial missing link in the metamorphosis of African fiction in English.

Both Singler, and Oyekan Owomoyela in his foreword to the current edition, have performed noble tasks by bringing Walters to readers. Singler writes that Walters died of tuberculosis, on November 12, 1894, a disease he had developed while in the United States. He had not celebrated his 40th birthday. He died in Cape Mount, his birth place, where he had returned to be superintendent of his alma mater, St. John's Episcopal Mission.

The novel deals with the central theme of the liberation of the African woman and is clearly ahead of its time. The content of the novel is as relevant to contemporary society as it was over 100 years ago when it was first published.

Guanya Pau, the central figure, our protagonist, is a beautiful princess from the Vai tribe which live in an area that is modern day western Liberia and parts of Sierra Leone.<sup>1</sup> She was the daughter of Manja (king) Kai Popo, and, upon his death, the four-year-old Guanya is betrothed to the wealthy but, "short, ugly and clumsy Kai Kundu, a 'gentleman' of the Pisu with nose and lips twenty-five percent in excess of the average African." This type of detailed imagery permeates the novel and keeps the reader entertained and informed about the people and environment Walters writes about.

Guanya rejects Kai as a suitor, preferring instead her childhood sweetheart, Momo, who shares her passion for monogamy and distaste for polygamy. This bold act of rejection defies all customs and norms of the day. As a Gregree-Bush<sup>2</sup> girl, she was supposed to be grateful that a man was willing to pay \$300.00, about three to six times the traditional amount, as a bride price<sup>3</sup> for her. But, Guanya, by Walters' account was no ordinary girl. His flattering description of her regal aura and commanding beauty is followed by a footnote which states, "It is nothing strange that in Africa . . . we find women with features as fair and delicate as the Caucasian; small hands and feet, oval cheeks, teeth of marvelous whiteness, and many exceedingly beautiful . . . [with] a symmetrical and well-proportioned figure . . ."

### The chase

Guanya escapes with her friend, Jassah, and is pursued by men hired by her wealthy suitor to find her. The chase takes the reader on a trip through Vai country, cuisine and culture. The twenty-one short chapters are a rich description of life on the run in a forest which ecosystem is untouched and animals live in harmony with the environment. The narrative provides an insight into a 19th century traditional African society with social units that are unique and sometimes bizarre in their own ways.

Walters' commitment to Christian principles is obvious through out the novel, but perhaps comes to light best with his satirical description of the Mohammedan missionary who, during prayers, "(smote) himself on the breast, performing multitudinous genuflections, prostrations and superegations."

The conflict is set in the novel when Guanya, a woman, dares to go against the dictates of a male-dominated culture. A culture in which the notorious wife-beater, Kai Jalley, who beats one of his wives to death [p.45] describes women thus:

Now, you know, woman is nowhere among us recognized as man's equal, hence no redress can be determined for her treatment. Further more, is she not in the same class with the mule or cow? You would all answer yes. Well, if I should kill my cow, none of you would raise the least objection.

The Court exonerates him.

Thus, Guanya Pau's escape is not only an affront to Kai Kundu, but a challenge to the very foundation of society.

Walters' ability to articulate Guanya's liberated female perspective is attributed by Singler to Walters' association with Oberlin College which became the first college in the United States to award A.B. degrees to (three) women in 1841. When Walters attended Oberlin fifty years later, one can only assume that the school's commitment to the education of women had a lasting effect on the thirtish Liberian.

Walter vehemently decries the "incestuous pandemonium in which (African women) are incarcerated, and the complex anti-female structure of traditional African societies."

In his prologue to the novel, Walters advocated the education of women, and, [on page 11] he elucidates, through Guanya Pau, that "(women) were never destined in this world to be servants—sold and treated like slaves, but on the contrary, that woman is as good and great as man, and intended to be his equal, and that the realization of this is possible . . . But the day will come."

### Caught

After several close calls and breath-holding nearmisses, the chase of Guanya Pau ends tragically when she jumps into the lake and drowns rather than endure the thought of being taken back to share Kai Kundu's bed. She is followed into the deeps by her friend, Jassah, who proclaims their childhood pact of, "I shall never leave you, Guanya!" Walters, in his "finis" to Guanya Pau, writes, "Then she sank to rise again at the last day, when the seas, and lakes, and rivers shall give up their dead." An epitaph suitable for his own tomb stone.

This book is a must-read for scholars of African literature, and certainly should be required reading for students of Liberian literature. With it, the chronology of African literary fiction can start where it should; at the beginning.

Despite being written over a century ago, the issues this book deals with are clearly contemporary.

Walters offered the book, with "its defects . . . incorrect as with its many errors of grammar and composition. . .," not in an attempt to reap any personal rewards, but, because, as he puts it, it has a "message." And, indeed, it does: That the full strength of African society cannot be fully realized until the continent harnesses and respects the full potential of the other half of its population—women.

It is almost inconsequential to point to flaws in the book because it is such a classic. Walters' use of the narrative style where dialogue would have been more illuminating prevents some of the characters from coming to full life. He implies in certain places that European culture is superior to African and the need for development to come from the outside to Christianize the "heathens." This Euro-centric view of the world which Walters projects, is through no fault of his if we consider the statements within the context of the period in which he was writing. Conventional wisdom in 1891 did not allow an Afro-centric perspective to compete in the market place of ideas. His use of mussulman for Moslem and dowry instead of bride price also reflects the writer's times.

*Guanya Pau* will not get any rave reviews as a great African novel, but its place as a pioneering classic in African literary fiction is no longer a matter of dispute.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Walters refers to them as the Vey, the most intelligent, the Kru excepted, and promising of all the natives of the west coast.

<sup>2</sup> Here is another terminology Walters uses correctly despite the fact that in modern Liberian lingo, the term is often referred to as "Grebo Bush." Walter likens this traditional African secret society to the White Cross Society of America. A more generic name for it today is the Women Sande Society.

<sup>3</sup> Walters uses the term dowry which is acceptable for archaic English. In contemporary terms, however, a dowry is the complete opposite of bride price. It is the gifts that a woman brings into the marriage.

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### Recent Publications and Theses

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**Minutes, First Annual Liberia/Sierra Leone Conference  
April 6-9, 1994, Charleston, South Carolina**

The first annual joint meeting of the Liberia/Sierra Leone Studies Associations was convened at the College of Charleston, Charleston, South Carolina, at 9:07 A.M. on Thursday April 7, 1994, by host Dr. Alpha Bah. Those present included Dr. Arnold Odio, Dr. William Allen, Dr. Elwood Dunn, Ellen Hendrix, Dr. Yekutiel Gershoni, Dr. Alpha Bah, Dr. Cynthia Schmidt, Dr. Mario Bick, Dr. Diana Brown. Dr. Odio read the minutes of the 25th Annual Meeting of the Liberian Studies Association held in April 1993 in Albany, Georgia. Adding an amendment to note that Shirley Cox also attended the All-Liberian conference of the Liberian Embassy in Washington, D.C. together with Alpha Bah and Arnold Odio, Dr. Dunn moved that the minutes be accepted as read. The motion was seconded by Dr. Allen. Dr. Odio further noted that the minutes will be published in the *Liberian Studies Journal*.

Dr. Odio, outgoing President, then conducted the meeting. He began by reading a fax received by Dr. Bah from Dr. Amos Sawyer on March 29 regretting that he would be unable to attend the Liberia/Sierra Leone Conference as he had intended, and explaining that delays in the transfer of power from the Interim Government to the Transitional Government had made it impossible for him to leave Monrovia in time for the meeting. Dr. Allen moved, and Dr. Dunn seconded the motion that Dr. Sawyer's letter be included in the minutes of the current meeting.

Dr. Odio further noted the need to find money for scholarships to enable interested students to attend the Liberian Studies meetings. Dr. Bah reported that one student had contacted both himself and Dr. Hendrix about this, but no funds had been available, and as far as he knew, this student had not been able to come to the meeting. He noted, however, that there are legal problems involved with the dispensing of such funds by organizations which do not have non-profit status.

Dr. Dunn stressed that this was a preliminary meeting due to time constraints imposed by the official opening of the conference by the Provost of the College of Charleston, set for 9:30 A.M., and by the fact that several members of the Executive Committee had not yet arrived. It was agreed that a full meeting would be held on Friday, April 8, from 2:00 to 3:30 P.M. Dr. Allen pointed out that the agenda for that meeting will need to include:

- 1) a discussion of the Articles of the new Constitution;
- 2) a discussion of what state will be the legal venue for the incorporation of the Liberian Studies Association;

- 3) the election of a new Secretary/Treasurer to fill the post vacated by the recent death of Dr. Hendrix;
- 4) the election of new members to the Executive Committee;
- 5) the need to elect a new editor for the *Liberian Studies Journal*, as of next July, when Dr. Elwood Dunn steps down;
- 6) the venue for next year's conference.

Dr. Dunn's move to adjourn the meeting was seconded by Dr. Allen, and Dr. Odio adjourned the meeting at 9:30 A.M.

The meeting was reconvened by Dr. Odio on Friday, April 8, at 2:30 P.M. Those present included: Dr. William Allen, Dr. James Dennis, Dr. Joseph Holloway, Dr. David Hartfield, Dr. Cynthia Schmidt, Dr. Trevor Hall, Dr. Alpha Bah, Dr. Arnold Odio, Dr. Peter Severeid, Mrs. Ellen Hendrix, Dr. Bokai Twe, Dr. Elwood Dunn, Dr. Yekutiel Gershoni, Dr. George Kieh, Dr. Patrick Seyon, Professor Doris Railey, Dr. Mohamed Nyei, Dr. Mario Bick, Dr. Diana Brown (and members not identified).

Dr. Cynthia Schmidt then reported on the book drive, indicating that many members have books ready to send to Liberia, but are having difficulties in finding transportation to get them there. She reported that the Dayton, Ohio Sister-City Committee may be able to help get the books to Morovia. Dr. Odio proposed that members might use the Jeremy Denton amendment (??) which allows for use of the military to ship the books. If members could get the books to a military base, it might be possible to get them to Liberia. Dr. Bah then suggested that members should examine the orientation and content of the textbooks to be sent, to avoid including those which contain distortions and misinformation, particularly in texts in the social sciences and humanities. He recommended focusing on the collection of science texts rather than those in the humanities. Dr. Patrick Seyon, asked to characterize the situation of getting the books to Liberia, said that the University of Liberia needs to stay open in spite of the continuing difficulties in the country. The University was desperately in need of books. He suggested that members get lists from Liberia of specific titles needed. Dr. Odio then asked for a motion to set up a committee to look into methods for shipping the collected books to Liberia. Dr. David Hartfield was appointed chair of this committee, which will also include Dr. Cynthia Schmidt, Dianne Oyler, Dr. James Dennis, Dr. Neil Holmes and Dr. Alpha Bah. Dr. Hartfield can be contacted by phone at (816-785-4097).

Constitutional changes were then reviewed and discussed. Dr. Peter Severeid submitted the proposed revision of the Liberian Studies Association's Articles of Association, and explained that the Association also needs to find a new jurisdiction for incorporation. This should be wherever the process is easiest and cheapest, but it may also need to be a state in which one of the board

members is a resident. Responsibility for overseeing the legal issues of the constitution falls to the Secretary/Treasurer. Following the death of current Secretary/Treasurer Dr. Thomas Hendrix, Dr. Severeid volunteered to work on these with whoever is elected the new Secretary/Treasurer. Dr. Allen also noted that the name of the Association might be changed to the Liberian Studies Association "Incorporated", depending on the legalities of the Association's new home.

The following amendments were offered to the new constitution submitted by Dr. Peter Severeid:

- a) (ARTICLE VI, 5.) The editor of the *Liberian Studies Journal* will be made a member of the Executive Board, and will serve a three year term.
- b) (ARTICLE V, 2. a.) Election of the two board members-at-large, each of whom will serve a two-year term, will be staggered to take place on alternating years, in order to maintain continuity.
- c) The Advisory Board of the *Liberian Studies Journal* will have no specific size, but will reflect the necessities of particular situations.
- d) The Executive Board can appoint any other board member in addition to the Secretary/Treasurer, as necessary, to sign checks and other legal documents.
- e) Professor Doris Railey proposed that the working of the constitution be changed to make the document more gender neutral. Dr. Odio objected to the replacement of "he" with "he/she", and Dr. Severeid then suggested replacing all pronouns with proper nouns. A motion to this effect by Dr. Bick, seconded by Dr. Dunn, was passed unanimously.

It was proposed by Dr. Dunn and seconded by Dr. Allen to adopt the new constitution as amended. Dr. Odio agreed to be the signatory on the new constitution.

New officers were then elected. Dr. Alpha Bah was proposed as the new president by Dr. Odio. Upon a motion by Dr. James Dennis, seconded by Dr. Bick, Dr. Bah was unanimously elected. Dr. Bokai Twe was nominated and elected Vice-President. Dr. Arnold Odio was nominated as the new Secretary/Treasurer by Dr. James Dennis, seconded by Dr. Dunn, and elected unanimously. Dr. Odio noted that Dr. George Kieh will remain Member-at-Large through 1995, and suggested that in view of the complexities of the new constitution, Dr. Peter Severeid should remain as Member-at-Large through 1996.

The location of the Liberian Studies Association archives was then discussed. Dr. Joseph Holloway stressed the need to find a central place where the archives and all information pertaining to the Liberian Studies Association can

be stored, including video materials currently in his own possession, and back issues of the *Liberian Studies Journal*. Dr. Odio noted that the Avery Center at the College of Charleston has offered to house Liberian Studies Association's archives. The University of Indiana, which has already agreed to house the Holsoe library, might also wish to take this archive. Dr. Dunn expressed the hope that all of this material could go to the same place. But Dr. Bick noted that a university's interest in Dr. Holsoe's library might not extend to the archives of the *Journal*. Dr. Dunn charged the members of the Board with the resolution of this issue.

Dr. Holloway also raised the issue of the need for continuity and coordination between the *Journal* editor and the person charged with producing the proposed Newsletter. Dr. Dunn suggested that the Newsletter should not be a separate publication but should be incorporated into a special page reserved for this purpose in the *Journal*, and that the Secretary/Treasurer is the logical person to coordinate the news events of the Association and transmit them to the *Journal*.

Dr. Dunn then opened the question of finding a new editor for the *Liberian Studies Journal*. He agreed to stay on as editor through July 1995, to bring out the first issue of that year. Dr. Severeid proposed that at the 1995 meeting of the Liberian Studies Association, the Board will formally turn the *Journal* over to the new editor. The next issue of the *Journal* will carry an advertisement for a new editor, inviting those interested to submit 500 words indicating their qualifications. Dr. Allen urged the selection of a committee to consider the applications, and it was decided that the Board will evaluate the candidates. Dr. Dunn expressed his feeling that it is not appropriate for the outgoing editor to participate in this selection, and it was agreed that he would excuse himself.

Members wished to express their great sadness at the passing of Secretary/Treasurer Thomas Hendrix, their thanks for his work for the Association, and their condolences to Ellen Hendrix. Dr. Allen moved that Dr. Hendrix be recognized with a post-mortem award stating the members' deep appreciation for his many years of commitment, and that this should be presented to Ellen Hendrix at the 1995 meeting of the Association. The Board will decide the form of the award. The motion was seconded by Dr. Severeid and passed unanimously.

A proposal was made by Dr. Alpha Bah to merge future meetings of the Liberian and Sierra Leone Studies Associations. Dr. Dunn gave his opinion that the matter merited further study, and charged the Board to look into the possibilities and implications of such an action.

The next meeting of the Association in 1995 will be held at Sinclair Community College in Dayton, Ohio, and hosted by Dr. Bokai Twe. The venue for the following year will be decided at next year's meeting.

Dr. Cynthia Schmidt questioned whether the Liberian Studies Association might increase continuity and communication among its membership by holding additional informal meetings during the annual African Studies Association meetings. Dr. Dunn recalled that a past proposal to hold the Liberian Studies Association meetings during the African Studies Meetings had been defeated, and various members then noted that they could not obtain funding for more than one meeting per year, and thus were not able to attend the African Studies Association meetings. However, those who can attend the ASA meetings are urged to meet informally on their own.

Dr. Dunn then moved to adjourn the meeting, and with a second by Dr. Allen, the meeting was adjourned at 4:20 P.M.

65 Lisle Road  
Colchester CO2 7SD  
Essex, England  
July 25, 1994

Dr. D. Elwood Dunn  
Editor, *Liberian Studies Journal*  
Department of Political Science  
The University of the South  
Sewanee, Tennessee 37383  
USA

Dear Dr. Dunn:

It is indeed gratifying to learn that Liberia is now producing professionals of a high calibre. This letter is in response to Professor Boikai S. Twe's article, "A Perspective on Psychological Disorders of Liberia," published in Volume XIX, Number 1 (1994), pages 41-48 of the *Liberian Studies Journal*. I read the article with absorbed interest. Although the article has much to commend it, it raises many issues that are not only peculiar to Africa with its history of coups, inter-ethnic civil wars and famine, but are equally applicable to some developed countries as well.

Like some scholars who have studied academic disciplines containing—isms as a suffix (e.g., Marxism, existentialism, etc.), and whose interpretation of

events or any piece of literature tends to be influenced by those —isms, so too, scholars or students of psychology tend to restrict their interpretation of events by viewing them from a purely psychological perspective. Professor Twe seems to fall in this category. Please let me explain.

Professor Twe asserts that "African social scientists are morally obligated to help diagnose the psychological 'diseases' contributing to disunity and self-destruction among Africans." (p. 41). He goes on to say that the article is a result of his "professional observations as a guidance counsellor with the Urban Youth Council in Monrovia (1971-72), home visits and interviews in Monrovia during December 1979 and July 1986 and a recent trip to Freetown and Monrovia in December 1990 during a lull in the Civil War." (p. 41). Professor Twe does not tell the reader whether he studied Counselling Psychology or whether he is a licensed psychologist. Is he aware that in the United States most state legislatures have introduced much stronger certification laws which forbid practitioners who are not properly qualified from calling themselves psychologists? There are also licensing laws which define certain psychological services and make it illegal for unqualified people to offer these services for payment or on *gratis*. As far as I am concerned, there has been no legislation in Liberia stipulating requirements for the certification of psychologists. Then too, the University of Liberia and Cuttington University College, the two institutions that enjoy a duopoly of higher education in the country, do not award degrees in psychology. Students in the W.V.S. Tubman Teachers College of the University of Liberia study Educational Psychology for pedagogical purposes.

Moreover, psychology straddles the arts, sciences, and social sciences. In his shuttling job as a guidance counsellor with the Urban Youth Council in Monrovia, did he work in conjunction with a psychiatrist? For a licensed psychologist to be a successful guidance counsellor, he must work closely with a psychiatrist, who will help to alleviate some of the psychosomatic illnesses or refer a client or patient with an organic disease to a medical doctor. From the list of contributors to the issue in which Professor Twe's article appears, it would seem that he practices psychology almost exclusively as an academic discipline. Consequently, he should not regard himself as a licensed psychologist or a guidance counsellor.

Furthermore, the author seems to be out of step with the march of time in that his grasp of Liberian history is rather muddled. For example, in agreeing with Naim Akbar and using his psychological paradigm as a conceptual frame of reference to analyze the psychological malaise plaguing Liberia as a nation, Professor Twe notes that "Enslavement and colonialism disconnected many Liberians from their traditional values and relationships." (p. 42). It is true that the repatriated polity of Liberia (a small percentage of the population of the country) was enslaved.

However, unlike other nations of Anglophone and Francophone West Africa, Liberia was not colonized in the orthodox sense of the word. In other words, Liberia's historical, political, social, economic, and educational circumstances were so different that the founding of the nation was indeed unique. Although the initial efforts of the American Colonization Society (ACS) were vital in the founding of Liberia, the ACS did not build any infrastructures and other facilities essential for national growth and development. In this respect, the American Colonization Society is a patent misnomer. It should be called the American Repatriation Organization (ARO). Britain colonized Nigeria, Ghana, and Sierra Leone, among others, and built great universities and other infrastructures that contributed substantially to the growth and development of those countries before they attained autonomy. But Liberians did virtually everything on their own initially during the critical years in the formation of their nationhood. Thus, the usual criticism often levelled against Liberia that, as the oldest independent country in Africa south of the Sahara, the country is essentially underdeveloped is indeed unjustified. Even Liberia's first loan was given by Britain and not by the United States. In other words, in the formative stages of nation-building, the United States government did not contribute to the development and growth of the Liberian nation.

Professor Twe states that "To reconnect their lives to a new sense of certainty and self-worth, many Liberians unconsciously adopted Euro-American values and view of the world, i.e., domination of others through warfare, seizure of natural resources and private accumulation of wealth." (p. 42). Is Professor Twe advocating "philistinism," i.e., a smug conventionalism or hatred of other foreign cultures? The very fact that he uses English, a European language, rather than an African or Liberian language and a Western psychological paradigm as a conceptual frame of reference to delineate Liberia's psychological malaise defeat his own purpose.

Did indigenous Liberians adopt Euro-American values during pre-slavery or pre-settler days? During the era of pre-slavery or pre-settler Liberia, inter-ethnic warfares were frequent among the various ethnic groups in the country. It was through inter-ethnic warfares that one ethnic group was able to achieve socio-political and economic domination over another ethnic group. An ethnic group that established itself as a pre-eminent power, sold members of the vanquished ethnic group to European and American slave-traders. So "domination of others through warfare, seizure of natural resources and private accumulation of wealth" does not exemplify a psychological malaise called "Alien Self-Disorder." Rather, it is a simple case of the desire for power, absolute power exemplified in the assertion, "might is right." And this was the major cause of the Gulf War. Saddam Hussein's desire to prove that Iraq was more powerful than a small city-state like Kuwait sparked off the Gulf War. The acquisition of the oil-wells or oil-fields of Kuwait was incidental to Saddam



Hussein's aims and objectives. In essence, Professor Twe commits the fallacy of "Part and Whole," which consists in attributing to a whole what belongs to its parts, or of attributing to a part what belongs only to the whole. In other words, the fact that Charles Taylor did make use of the natural resources of Liberia to aid his war efforts does not mean that this is characteristic of all Liberians; neither is it characteristic of Liberia as a nation. It is essentially political rather than psychological.

Furthermore, Professor Twe seems to reduce his argument to the absurd when he asserts that:

On the mental level, the alien self-disorder typically shows up as anxiety or panic attacks (the inability to feel safe in cooperative social situations), phobias (extreme fear of African cultural values and achievements which are reflected in indigenous languages, systems of thought, names and customs), obsessive-compulsive mental disorder (extreme reliance on magical charms and rituals), post-traumatic stress systems (reliving repressed traumatic memories), pain and anger associated with identity confusion. (p. 43).

The fact that Charles Taylor was able to mobilize Liberians as rebels who constituted the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) proved that Liberians do indeed feel safe in "cooperative social situations." It is true that in the past some indigenous Liberians were ashamed of their ethnic backgrounds or identities. They were even ashamed (Professor Twe uses the wrong word, "fear") to admit that they could speak their mother tongues. But this tendency was inculcated in them by some members of the settler-stock, who perceived indigenous Liberian languages as being intrinsically inferior to express sophisticated concepts about Western Civilization and Christianity. Thus, these indigenous Liberians who were often wards in the homes of the settlers became victims of negative self-concepts.

However, this is no longer the case. In recent years (i.e. before the coup and the civil war), there was an upsurge in things Liberian, including Liberian languages, indigenous names, and in the culture of the country as a whole. For example, Dr. Togba-Nah Tipoteh, a member of the Kru ethnic group, was originally known as Rudolph Roberts. Professor Kona Khasu was also known as Emmanuel Roberts. Then too, the late President William R. Tolbert, Jr., a member of the settler-stock, spoke the Kpelle language fluently. Another member of the settler-stock, the late Honourable C. Cecil Dennis, Sr., a member of the House of Representative, also spoke the Kpelle language with pride.

In analyzing the psychological "diseases" of Liberia, the author notes that Liberians also suffer from "Antiself Disorder." He asserts that people who suffer from antiself disorder "tend to be very socially conservative, highly religious

and psychologically depressed." (p. 44). Are being "conservative" and "highly religious" psychological diseases? The British are a conservative people, and this trait is instilled in them from childhood through the process of socialization. As a people, Liberians are not "conservative." Rather, they are friendly, hospitable, generous, kind, and ethnicity-conscious. By political temperament, some Liberians are radical while others are liberal, reactionary, and democratic. It is true that Liberians are religious, but they cannot be branded as religious fanatics, a sense which Professor Twe's use of the term, "highly religious," seems to imply. These tendencies, traits, dispositions or temperaments that Liberians possess are also a result of the process of socialization. I am sure that Professor Twe is aware that more people than would care to admit it are at least defined by cultural and social expectations which are spelled out to them in various ways from the beginning of childhood. Then too, it would seem that Professor Twe thinks that Liberians believe in fatalism (i.e., the doctrine that all events are predetermined by fate and, therefore, cannot be changed by human beings) when he asserts that "They believe they can not control outcomes or events in the future." (p. 44). Liberians are not "fatalists."

Moreover, the hostility that has existed through the years between indigenous Liberians and members of the settler-stock on the one hand, and between the various ethnic groups on the other, is a result of sectionalism and ethnicity. "Name-calling" (i.e. Westernized Liberians referring to their relatives and friends as "country men," "country women," "natives," etc.) is a tendency that is prevalent in developed countries such as Britain and the United States. The average Briton will call an Irishman "thick Paddy," a term that is indeed considered offensive to the Irish and, therefore, pejorative and condescending. It is not uncommon to hear a Briton who speaks with the accent often referred to as "Received Pronunciation" (RP) to call a Londoner from the "East End" of London as "Cockney," a word that is also pejorative and condescending.

According to Professor Twe, the third psychological disease that afflicts Liberians is "self-destructive disorder." He notes that individuals who are afflicted with this psychological malaise often indulge in "ethnic and political murders, corruption and excessive abuse of drugs." (p. 45). He goes on to say that "Many individuals suffering from self-destructive disorder seek outlets as criminals, armed personnel or foreign agents." (p. 45). The crimes that Professor Twe enumerates as a result of self-destructive disorder are prevalent in Britain, the United States, the former U.S.S.R. (now the Commonwealth of Independent States), and other developed countries as well. For example, "ethnic and political murders" are the order of the day in mainland Britain and Northern Ireland (the Irish, incidentally, are now regarded as a separate ethnic group in the British Isles). Even school-leavers and other unemployed youths in Britain often indulge in vandalism and do other criminal damages out of frustration, despair, and boredom. Thus, the problems and psychological disorientations that Professor Twe enumerates are a result of unemployment, urbanization and

industrialization in Monrovia and other cities. Before the coup d'état of April 12, 1980 and the outbreak of the inter-ethnic civil war in December 1989, there was an influx of illiterate Liberian families from rural Liberia into Monrovia and other cities in quest of a better standard of living. Because they were illiterate, the bread-winners of these families could not be gainfully employed in the cities. So, unemployment, urbanization and industrialization undermined the morals of young men and women. They also tore apart the ties of the nuclear family as well as the agrarian family. Beggars and other street urchins roamed the streets of Monrovia and other cities. Ironically, as progress arrived in Monrovia and other urban centers, these poor, illiterate Liberian families found themselves more and more squeezed together in squalor. The demands of urban life and industrialization tore asunder the bond of family ties at a time when Liberia was not prosperous enough to have sanitariums, orphanages, and other public institutions. In other words, the paradox of progress did have a toll on the lives of these families and their offspring. Thus, the recommendations that Professor Twe makes could only be implemented if post-civil-war Liberia were prosperous enough to build sanitariums, community centers, and other public institutions to rehabilitate individuals suffering from the psychological disorientations that Professor Twe enumerates.

However, with the massive destruction of infrastructures and other public facilities, prospective government officials and other civic leaders cannot implement Professor Twe's recommendations because the country is now virtually bereft of its physical, spiritual, and financial resources and well-being. My bone of contention is that such public institutions and other facilities could only be established with Western aid and expertise. Thus, we have to make a constructive selectivity of those Euro-American skills and aspects of Western expertise that are essential for our own welfare or well-being and incorporate them into the fabric of our national life for growth and development. But Liberians who are psychologically disoriented cannot be rehabilitated with traditional African authority and order because such an approach is crude, superstitious, and anachronistic. The world is a global society in which nations are interdependent.

Indeed, it is true that "psychological problems and disorders tend to contribute to psychological, neurological or biochemical malfunctions." (p. 46). This prompted me to state initially in this letter that a licensed psychologist and a guidance counsellor should work closely with a psychiatrist and a medical doctor. Some of the health problems created as a result of the civil war can only be remedied by a medical doctor because they are organic rather than functional.

In the final analysis, although Professor Twe's article is full of a great deal of *non sequiturs* for the most part, it has much to commend it because it makes Liberians to become aware that they do have many problems to solve and hardships with which to contend as a result of the civil war. The article also alerts

Liberians to the fact that a code of indifference and inactivity should not prevail in post-civil-war Liberia. Liberians must take the initiative and play an active role in the difficult process of reconstruction and rehabilitation. Liberians should also realize that the civil war is a direct consequence of sectionalism and ethnicity. The experience of the past should be a lesson to the present. If Liberians are to survive as a nation in the Third Republic, they should put aside all prejudices, biases, sectionalism, ethnicity, the desire for ethnic cleansing and other unwholesome attitudes and activities, and build a united Liberia. I believe we can achieve a peaceful co-existence if we learn to drill ourselves into a regime of tolerance.

Very truly yours,

(Sgd) Robert H. Brown

#### **Vicious Circle:**

##### **Hate Returns to Haunt Those Who Cradled It (Rwanda)\***

A Reprint from *The New York Times*, July 17, 1994 Section D, p. 1

Starting in the 1970's, Rwanda was a favorite laboratory for international aid. Largely because it was so small, it was considered a fine place to test how effective various development strategies could be in a land with a cooperative Government and good transportation.

Now it is a laboratory of a different sort—a microcosm from which to learn what can happen when politicians seek to ride sectarian forces of hate.

This is, after all, not a question just for a tiny country in East Africa. Politicians from Belgrade to Armenia to Kashmir and beyond have been playing upon long-simmering ethnic divisions to a remarkable degree in recent years—often, as in Bosnia, with brutal results for their rivals and little but international ostracism for their own people.

That ethnic or tribal rivalries can backfire on those who promote them is a truism long since accepted by scholars of international affairs. "The detour towards ethnicity is totally ruinous," said Professor Fouad Ajami of Johns Hopkins University, an expert on the politics of, among other places, Lebanon. "The tribal consolation is a false consolation. It is a false sense of union, an ethnic binge you indulge and then you realize it doesn't do anything for you. But you cannot reason with these furies. The call of blood is powerful for a moment, then people will wake up in the wreckage of it all."

In the confused new world of the 1990's, the startling turnabout of the last week in Rwanda's civil war presents a case study in just what Mr. Ajami is talking about—a cautionary lesson to politicians who bet on ethnic passion as their path to power.

Two months ago, the world stood aghast at the massacres being perpetrated against a minority tribe, the Tutsis, by extremists from the majority Hutu tribe who held power. But the extremists didn't count on being defeated militarily and now they face a debacle: Tutsi rebels, even though their tribesmen have been decimated by massacres, control almost all of the country while the majority Hutus, gripped by a terror of retribution and revenge, are fleeing.

"The Hutu politicians have created a situation from which there is no escape," said Alison Desforges of Africa Watch, a human rights group. "They have made their opponents into such demons that they have no outs for themselves. There is no way to turn back. The language of extremism is the appeal to fear. There is no longer the possibility of recognizing a human face. There is no means for negotiations. They would have to discredit their own propaganda."

The terrifying bloodshed in Rwanda began in April, drawing on long-running tribal rivalries between the Hutu people and the Tutsis, some of whom had been taking part in a four-year-old rebellion. A suspicious plane crash killed Rwanda's President, Juvenal Habyarimana, and was followed almost immediately by wide-scale massacres. In retrospect, the plane crash seems to have been an excuse, the spark needed to ignite a plan by Hutu extremists in the Government to eliminate all Hutu moderates and Tutsis from future positions of power; the principal tactic was to inspire large-scale killings of Tutsis in the capital, in villages and in the countryside.

The ground for this had been laid well in advance. Since 1990, the ruling party and the Hutu extremist party had been intensifying and promoting animosity against the Tutsis, in addition to bloating the army to 30,000 men and procuring weaponry from France, Egypt and South Africa. Human rights officials say that long before last April, the army was training Hutu extremist militias and directing small massacres of Tutsis. Identity cards still carried an entry for an individual's ethnic group. Even though an agreement was signed in August 1993 to create an interim government with the rebels, the Government of President Habyarimana did nothing to suppress the creation of a vitriolic anti-Tutsi radio station that called for annihilation of the entire Tutsi ethnic group.

### Death by Radio

When the massacres began in earnest, it was this radio station, Radio Mille Collines, that did the most to egg on the slaughter of the Tutsis. According to

Africa Watch, the radio station called Tutsis "enemies" who needed to be exterminated. It also condemned individuals by name. At one point, it proclaimed that "the graves were only half full" and exhorted Hutus to take up their machetes and fill them.

But by spreading such a blanket of anti-Tutsi terror across Rwanda, the radio station got more than it bargained for—a large part of the responsibility for the panicked flight, first of a quarter of a million Hutus to Tanzania and now of more than half a million Hutus to Zaire. The propaganda, it turns out, has made it inconceivable to many Hutus that the rebels, who in fact have shown themselves to be quite disciplined, mean it when they say they want national reconciliation and a coalition government.

So this is the result: In a land that was home to 8 million people, between 200,000 and 500,000 Tutsis have been killed and between 2 million and 3 million people, most of them Hutus, have fled their homes.

But it seems that Rwanda's lessons are not easily learned. Next door, Burundi, similarly populated by Hutus and Tutsis, is beginning once again to be torn apart. In October 1993 more than 50,000 people were killed in clashes there between the Tutsi-dominated army and Hutus. Now, as the Hutus and Tutsis of Burundi watch the chaos in Rwanda, their own hatreds are intensifying again.

And there are chilling similarities with Rwanda. A radio station, called The Radio That Speaks The Truth, based in French-controlled territory in southwest Rwanda, is now broadcasting to Burundi messages of anti-Tutsi hatred. (French soldiers now in Rwanda say they cannot locate the transmitter to shut it down.) Human rights officials say there have been large-scale arms distribution and organization of Hutu militias.

"It's just unimaginable what kind of horrors could happen," said Ms. Desforges. "It would not be genocide but it would come closer to civil war. The level of fear and tension is increasing. Unless human rights prosecutions are done immediately, there is no way to stop it. It is necessary to show that killing is not an acceptable tool of politics."

\*Lessons for Liberia?

*Editor's Note*

## I n R 1

A Reprint from *West African Journal*, Vol. 3, No. 2, July / Aug. 1993 pp. 6-7

While the Liberian tribes are fighting among themselves for power, some muslim fundamentalists in the country have threatened to take up arms against christians for depriving them of their basic constitutional rights.

This threat was the message delivered by the National Muslim Council of Liberia at the 20th anniversary of the Movement for Justice in Africa (MOJA) at the Monrovia City Hall. The Secretary General of the Muslim Council, Sheikh Kafumba Konneh, alleged that the Liberian government was giving christianity a preferential treatment in the country while paying deaf ears to demand for their rights to be respected as guaranteed in the 1986 Constitution.

The Muslims are forced to pay taxes that run state media institutions that do not serve them; forced to observe christian laws and holidays "that are discriminatory and in open violation of the Constitution of Liberia" and that only christian chaplains are recognized by the government, according to Konneh's litany of complaints.

He cited the 1979 rice riots, the 1983 Nimba raid, the 1985 electoral fraud, and the 1989 Taylor invasion as actions perpetuated by the christian community in Liberia. He threatened that "Muslims are prepared to follow similar trends" if their demands are not met, according to *The Eye* newspaper.

The constitutional foundation for Konneh's message of war for civil rights can be found in Chapter III Article 14 of the 1986 Constitution of Liberia. It states that "All persons shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion and no person shall be hindered in the enjoyment thereof except as may be required by law to protect public safety, order, health, or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others. All persons who, in the practice of their religion, conduct themselves peaceably, not obstructing others and conforming to the standards set out herein, shall be entitled to the protection of the law. No religious denomination or sect shall have any exclusive privilege or preference over any other, but all shall be treated alike; and no religious tests shall be required for any civil or military office or for the exercise of any civil right. Consistent with the principle of separation of religion and state, the Republic shall establish no state religion."

"As a result of the existence of these discriminatory laws on the books, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is still writing proclamations, though unconstitutional, to make the observance of religious holidays compulsory. The Ministry of Education continues to maintain in its academic calendar holiday breaks such as Easter and Christmas, that muslims are forced to adhere," Konneh observed. Furthermore, Monrovia City Hall is enforcing a city ordinance that sets Sunday aside as a clean up day and therefore, no commercial activities are to be carried out on that day.

The statement has provoked several reactions from the society. Alhaji Kromah, Chairman of Ulimo, a devout muslim and founder of the Liberia Muslim Liberation Movement, categorized Konneh's demand for rights as "irresponsible." MOJA Chairman, Dr. Togba Nah Tipoteh, who invited Konneh to the program where the statement was made, disagreed with the muslims who want to employ the use of force as a means to achieve equal rights. He said the statement was counter-productive.

The Liberia Council of Churches (LCC) took serious exception to Konneh's pronouncement and doubted whether it was the consensus of the entire muslim population since the muslim council is part of the Inter-Faith Mediation Committee working for peace in Liberia. However, the LCC noted in a release that "since christians have been favored in every aspect of the country as stated by the Muslim Council of Liberia, we the christians are prepared to assist you to achieve your goals in a decent and civilized way than to fight; but if you are determined to fight, go ahead and try it."

Editorial comments in the newspapers also called upon the Interim President, Dr. Amos Sawyer, not to ignore the demand by the muslims and that the bishops and sheikhs should sit down and discuss the issue amicably rather than plunging the nation into another civil war on religious principles. Many Liberians in the U.S. believe that Konneh's statement is a debatable issue that can foster proliferation of ideas for a better Liberia.

Historically, the early settlers of West Africa were muslims who migrated from the sudanic empires. Many of them fought religious wars as they made their way into the heart of the fertile region. The freed black slaves who found the Liberian settlement in 1822 met on arrival indigenous people who practiced their religions, including muslims. As the new Liberian nation expanded to incorporate the hinterland, they became part and parcel of the Liberian nation. Christian schools were established by missionaries for the propagation of christianity. This endeavor produced statesmen influenced by christian values who lived harmoniously among the muslims and non-believers.

The muslims, too, set up their schools and cultural institutions through which they intermingled with other Liberians. The incorporation of Islamic teachings into the curriculum at Liberia College (now University of Liberia) by Edward Wilmot Blyden and the proposed relocation of the college to Bopolu, an Islamic training center, are fine examples of historical linkages between christians and muslims.

Statistics gathered by international institutions reveals that there are 20 percent muslims in Liberia while there are 15 percent christians in Liberia. The rest of the people are non-believers. There were about three million Liberians prior to the war.



The Islamic religion (muslims) is prevalent among the Mandingo, Vai, Gbandi, Loma, Mende and Gola ethnic groups in Liberia. Outside the mainstream of politics, muslims are buyers and sellers at market stalls, farmers, drivers and mechanics and shopkeepers. In short, they are successful business people, and form the middle class along with the Lebanese and Indian traders.

According to the Minister of Internal Affairs, Thomas N. Brima, Liberia is a secular state where citizens are free to practice any religion according to their own conscience. It is not the policy of the government, he told our reporter in an interview, to give preferential treatment to christians over muslims. Konneh's statement, according to various sources, can be considered for a debate but came at a wrong time when the nation was trying to embalm its wounds inflicted by a tribal war.

**Thomas Christian Hendrix:  
1916-1994**

*Thomas Christian Hendrix*, executive secretary-treasurer of the Liberian Studies Association, died unexpectedly at his home in Bloomington, Illinois, March 14, 1994. Although he was seventy-eight years old, he was seemingly in excellent health and his activities were undiminished.

Tom grew up in the states of Missouri and Illinois and followed in his father's footsteps by becoming a pastor, serving in the United Methodist Church for forty years. He pastored both rural churches in downstate Illinois and urban churches in the Chicago area, retiring in 1980. Tom pursued his academic work at four universities earning degrees from DePaul University (BA, 1938); Duke University Divinity School (MDiv, 1941); Boston University (MST, 1951); The University of Illinois at Chicago (MA, 1972, and PhD, 1985). He received his doctorate six months before his seventieth birthday. His intellectual curiosity, his consuming desire to learn, accompanied by a sense of action, led him from theology to history, from ministering to people in a religious setting to educating people about Africa.

Liberia was very special to Tom, was the subject of his dissertation, and caused him much agony in recent years. The apartheid of South Africa was so very disturbing to him, but he held high hopes for the emerging democracies of the continent. He taught short-term classes and spoke in many places in Illinois to educate mid-westerners who often knew almost nothing about Africa. He was quite active in the disinvestment crusade and worked toward the

disinvestment of funds held by the Board of Pensions of the United Methodist Church from which his pension checks came.

Happily, he was able to be a part of study and research trips to Liberia (1979 and 1981) and to South Africa (1992) as well as Sierra Leone, Ghana, and Zimbabwe.

Although Tom remembered asking his high school history teacher why their texts did not include Africa, his specific pursuit of African studies was the result of a remark by a parishioner in the early 1960's who said, "Africa has no history." He spent the rest of his life learning that history and educating other adults so they might better understand current conditions. Less than twenty-four hours before his death he had taught the third in a series of classes on South Africa to a church group. His wife Ellen, daughters Lillian Hendrix and Charlene Sprenkle, son-in-law Dr. Douglas Sprenkle, and six grandsons caught from him his contagious interest in and concern for sub-Sahara Africa.

Tom was always a champion of the neglected, the abused, the poor, the oppressed, the forgotten, and the shunned, suffering vicariously with them while taking what action he could and educating others in his sphere of influence to help bring justice and peace to this world.

Ellen R. Hendrix

Widow

**A Tribute to the Life and Work of The "Great Cotton Tree"  
Father Joseph Gibson Parsell, Order of Holy Cross  
1905-1994**

The "Great Cotton Tree" of Bolahun Holy Cross Mission has fallen. Father Joseph G. Parsell, OHC passed away on February 9, 1994, his birthday. He was the symbol and patriarch of the Holy Cross Mission. For many of us who were once students of that institution, he was the symbol of strength and all virtue. For many of us, the Holy Cross Mission was Parcell's Episcopal Mission.

The seed of this great tree was planted on October 8, 1933 when Fr. Parsell, a young graduate of Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York, arrived in Bolahun. From that day, that seed germinated and became the Great Cotton Tree of life that provided the shade of life and wisdom to all who associated with the mission.

I first met this patriarch shortly after I entered the Holy Cross Mission in 1967, as a student. This mission became my home for seven years. During my

earlier years at Bolahun, I was given a work-study privilege as the mission driver to take critically ill patients to Zorzor or Phebe hospital. At times I drove Fr. Parsell or one of the brothers or priests to the Leprosy Colony to administer medication. On those trips, I was often told of the achievements of the Holy Cross Mission in the region. It soon became clear to me that almost every major infrastructural development of the mission was undertaken during Father Parsell's tenure. Every building, road, including roads between Liberia and Koindu, Sierra Leone, were constructed during his tenure. He established many churches and the Leprosy Colony. Major literary works including the development of the Gbandi Alphabet, the translation of the scripture, and the Book of Common Prayer into Gbandi was done by him. Like all cotton trees, Father Parsell continued to serve his people even during his old age. He continued to return to Liberia to visit and serve and continued to nourish the many seeds he planted; the people he educated, provided medicine for, and gave hope to when hope, for them, was hard to find.

My last encounter with our patriarch was in 1988 when I returned to work for Cuttington University College and Father Parsell had spend a day at the college guest house. He had just returned from Bolahun from a visit and was accompanied by one of the Bard College students who had come to spend some time working with him. During that evening of conversation, he started to tell us of his years at Bolahun. Even though I had heard many of the stories before, this particular story telling had a profound effect on me. It was then that the degree and zeal of his dedication to serve Bolahun and, indeed Liberia, struck my emotion and reasoning simultaneously. I was listening to him not as a student at Bolahun, but as a grown-up who too believed he had returned home to serve. After listening to him, it became cleared to me, unlike any other previous time that this was not an ordinary man. He was a man of God, dedicated to serve humanity. Of all that he said that night, the one that struck me most was "When I die, I want to be buried in Bolahun in the old church grave yard." I wish our civil war was over so this wish of his would be fulfilled, that he be buried under the old cotton tree in the grave yard of the old church.

Henrique F. Tokpa

Cuttington University College

## UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

FIFTH PROGRESS REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE  
UNITED NATIONS OBSERVER MISSION IN LIBERIA

24 JUNE, 1994

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted in response to Security Council resolution 911 (1994) of 21 April 1994, by which the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) for a period of six months, until 22 October 1994. The Security Council took this decision on the understanding that it would, by 18 May 1994, review the situation in Liberia, including the role played by UNOMIL in that country, based on a report on whether or not the Council of State of the Liberian National Transitional Government had been fully installed, and on whether there had been substantial progress in the disarmament and in implementing the peace process. Accordingly, on 18 May 1994, I submitted to the Security Council a report (S/1994/588) describing progress on these aspects of the peace process.

2. On 23 May 1994, the President of the Security Council issued a statement (S/PRST/1994/25), expressing the Council's satisfaction with the full installation of the Council of State and with indications that the Liberian National Transitional Government had begun to assume its responsibilities and functions throughout the country. At the same time, however, the President expressed the Council's concern that political differences and renewed violence among and within certain factions had stalled the disarmament process. The Council reaffirmed its intention to review the situation in Liberia on or before 30 June 1994, including the role played by UNOMIL, progress with respect to the effective operation of the Liberian National Transitional Government, disarmament and demobilization, as well as preparations for the holding of elections on 7 September 1994. The Council also requested me to prepare options by 30 June regarding the future implementation of UNOMIL's mandate and its continued operations.

## II. Political Aspects

3. Following its seating on 7 March 1994, in accordance with the Cotonou Agreement (S/26272, annex), the Council of State began the task of swearing Cabinet Ministers into office. To date, all Cabinet Ministers have been sworn into office and the Cabinet held its first meeting on 13 May 1994. As regards positions of Deputy Ministers, those allocated to the Interim Government of

National Unity (IGNU) and the National Patriotic Front for Liberia (NPFL) have been filled. The internal conflict within the United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO) has, however, held up the assignment of the Deputy Ministerial posts set aside for that party.

4. The Council of State has met on a regular basis. Quite recently, both the Council and the Transitional Legislative Assembly have embarked upon a series of visits to Gbarnga, Tubmanburg and Buchanan to carry messages of peace and reconciliation to the leaders of the warring factions. In this way, attempts are being made to extend civil authority and give a lead to the national reconciliation process. Furthermore, consideration is being given to the appointment of local government officials, to the reactivation of economic activities and to the restructuring of State-owned enterprises. The Liberian National Transitional Government is, for example, having discussions with officials of the Firestone Company with a view to reopening their plantation and thereby creating jobs. This would be a major incentive to disarmament.

5. However, the issue of appointing heads of the autonomous agencies and public corporations remains unresolved. NPFL and ULIMO consider that it is their prerogative to nominate candidates to head these institutions. Such appointments have, in the past, been made by the executive branch of the Government, i.e., the Council of State. The Cotonou Agreement, however, did not specify the body now responsible for them. NPFL and ULIMO have advanced the argument that if the Government is to include the participation of all the parties, the parties should be responsible for the allocation of these posts. A compromise is being sought which, while acknowledging the legitimate role of the Council in this regard, will also facilitate full consultations with the parties. If not resolved, this issue could further delay the peace process.

6. Beyond the difficulties the Liberian National Transitional Government is experiencing in the filling of the vacant posts, the continuing fighting within and between parties constitutes the most serious obstacle standing in the way of the peace process. As I pointed out in my previous report (S/1994/588), prior to the installation of the Council of State, a dispute arose within the leadership of ULIMO, along ethnic lines, between Chairman Alhaji Kromah (Mandingo) and General Roosevelt Johnson (Krahn) over ULIMO nominees to the Council of State. This dispute resulted in an outbreak of fighting in the western region among the ULIMO forces and the displacement of some 36,000 people since February 1994. Mediation efforts involving Chairman Valentine Strasser, Head of State of Sierra Leone, UNOMIL, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), Liberian organizations specializing in conflict resolution, elders of both ethnic groups and other prominent Liberians resulted, on 6 May, in a cease-fire and an agreement for further negotiations. Regrettably, the negotiations collapsed and serious fighting resumed on 26 May in Tubmanburg.

7. The central issue in the ULIMO negotiations is the question of how to meet the Krahn's desire for representation in the Transitional Government. The Council of State has indicated its readiness to facilitate this and has encouraged consultation among the ULIMO groups. In the search for a solution to the ULIMO conflict, the Special Representative has cautioned the leaders of both groups that the disintegration of ULIMO as an organization could disrupt and possibly destroy the peace process.

8. In the eastern part of Liberia, attacks by the Liberian Peace Council (LPC), an armed group formed after the signing of the Cotonou Agreement, against the NPFL constitute another major impediment to the peace process. LPC, comprising essentially Krahn combatants, has attacked and occupied several areas previously controlled by NPFL. This conflict has been directly responsible for the displacement, since February 1994, of an estimated 50,000 persons to Buchanan. In addition, NPFL remains unwilling to disarm as long as LPC continues its offensive. The Liberian National Transitional Government, UNOMIL and ECOMOG continue to pursue mediation efforts to bring about a cease-fire between the two parties that, if successful, would lead to disengagement of forces and formal involvement of LPC in the disarmament and demobilization process.

9. The parties' mistrust for one another has, in the case of some parties, extended to ECOMOG. In this context, ECOMOG's role as a peace-keeper has become increasingly complex in the performance of its security role.

10. Soldiers of the Nigerian and Ugandan contingents have recently been abducted and held for varying lengths of time by Mandingo elements of ULIMO and LPC, both of which have claimed that ECOMOG has become involved in the conflict. Two soldiers are yet to be released by ULIMO and UNOMIL continues its efforts to obtain their release. Furthermore, ECOMOG has been accused, primarily by NPFL, of arbitrariness and inflexibility in its surveillance of Liberians who travel to and from NPFL territory, especially on the Gbarnga-Monrovia axis. The Liberian National Transitional Government is consulting with ECOMOG on how it might best assume a greater share of responsibility for the country's internal security, as civil authority is extended.

11. NPFL has also asserted complicity between some elements of ECOMOG and the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) in supplying material and logistical support to LPC. In view of the potential implications of these assertions for the peace process, my Special Representative has discussed the issue with the Chairman of ECOWAS and the Field Commander of ECOMOG. He has advised me that ECOMOG is treating the assertions with seriousness and that the Field Commander has undertaken an investigation of the matter. Meanwhile, the Chairman of ECOWAS and the Field Commander reaffirm that it is not the policy of ECOWAS or ECOMOG to support any faction in the Liberian conflict.

There is no doubt, however, that the level of mistrust between NPFL and ECOMOG has been heightened as a result of these claims.

12. However, ECOMOG's role in the four-year civil conflict in Liberia has been widely acknowledged as an innovation in regional peace-keeping. The addition of troops from the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda has added a highly-valued Organization of African Unity (OAU) dimension to the operation. The efforts of ECOMOG, though questioned by some factions, have been greatly appreciated by most Liberians, as well as the international community, which recognizes the human and financial sacrifice made by the West African Governments.

13. Nevertheless, under the present circumstances of mistrust and hostilities between and within some factions, and despite the efforts of ECOMOG and UNOMIL, the parties have refused to engage actively in the disarmament of their combatants or to give up control of territory. As a result, the Council of State has found it difficult to exert its authority throughout the entire country and this impedes the advancement of the peace process.

14. An additional cause for serious concern is the failure of the international community to provide financial support for those Governments which have contributed to ECOMOG. At the summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity at Tunis earlier this month both the President of Nigeria and the Chairman of ECOWAS, President Soglo of Benin, drew my attention to the financial burden that the troop-contributing countries, particularly Nigeria, were carrying as a result of their contribution to ECOMOG. Nigeria specifically said that it would have to withdraw its contingents unless a solution could be found to the problem. I urged them that troops should not be withdrawn precipitately and undertook to endeavour to obtain additional financial support from Member States which are in a position to provide it. I am actively pursuing this matter and will report to the Security Council as necessary.

### III. Military Aspects

15. In accordance with its concept of operations, UNOMIL had planned to deploy 39 military observer teams in three phases, by March 1994. By mid-June, however, owing to the security situation in various areas of the country, only 29 teams had been deployed in their respective locations (see attached map). Since December 1993, there have been 12 incidents in which United Nations military observers have been harassed, their possessions taken and/or United Nations vehicles and radios confiscated. ULIMO has been responsible for six, LPC for one, and NPFL for five of these incidents. Only in three cases have the items been recovered.

16. In the western region, insecurity in upper Lofa county impeded the deployment of military observers. Aerial reconnaissance in this region was carried out in May and deployment will be undertaken subject to improvement of the security situation and to the deployment of ECOMOG forces. Problems resulting from fighting within ULIMO necessitated the temporary withdrawal in May 1994 of the Kongo-Border Crossing Team in Grand Cape Mount county to Monrovia. This team will be redeployed to that area once UNOMIL has received the necessary assurances regarding its security.

17. Full deployment has been completed in the central and northern regions. In the eastern region, only four out of nine teams have been deployed. Efforts are being made to obtain the concurrence of NPFL in undertaking reconnaissance missions in the areas near Tobli and Zwedru, which are a necessary preparation for any further deployment in the area.

18. Over the past three months, ECOMOG has deployed its troops further west and north. In the western region, ECOMOG deployed in the towns and villages of Kle, Robertsport, Tubmanburg, Tiene, Bo and Kongo. In the northern region, deployment has only been effected in Gbarnga. ECOMOG's plan to deploy throughout the country has not yet materialized. Mutual mistrust between NPFL and some elements of ECOMOG, stemming from the period when ECOMOG undertook peace enforcement measures and from the assertions referred to above, has greatly inhibited further ECOMOG deployment in the northern and eastern regions.

#### IV. Demobilization And Reintegration

19. According to the information provided by the parties, it is estimated that a total number of approximately 54,000 adult and 6,000 child combatants will have to be demobilized. Three months after the start of demobilization, a total of 3,192 combatants have been demobilized (ULIMO, 739; NPFL, 731; AFL, 685). During this period, 1,951 weapons, 166,079 rounds of assorted ammunition and 19 pieces of plastic explosives were surrendered by the warring parties.

20. Four demobilization camps are operational. Only an average of 10 combatants a day are currently being disarmed. Before NPFL declared that it would stop the disarmament of its combatants, 1,500 NPFL combatants had been congregated in one assembly area ready to disarm. These combatants are still in the area and are receiving food rations from UNOMIL. As noted earlier, mistrust, lack of commitment and, in some instances, open hostility between and among the various parties and other armed groups have been and continue to be the principal reasons for the slow pace of disarmament.

21. Three rehabilitation centres for child combatants have been opened and 180 child fighters have been disarmed and demobilized. Of those, 130 have been successfully reunited with their families and 50 remain in the centres for longer



care. Twelve children attempted to leave the programme prematurely but returned after a short period. Psychological support is given to the children by a team of social workers under the supervision of a psychologist. Substance abuse, particularly marijuana, is evident among the children. This programme, run by a local non-governmental organization, is financed through voluntary contributions.

22. Recognizing that employment is a major incentive for ex-combatants to return to normal life, the World Food Programme (WFP) has initiated a food-for-work programme involving 1,200 ex-combatants in a National Volunteer Scheme of labour-intensive tasks. Such tasks include urban sanitation, agricultural and other activities in Monrovia and Konola. Resources permitting, this approach will be replicated around the country.

### V. Electoral Process

23. The Security Council will recall that in my last report (S/1994/588), I indicated my intention to send a team of international experts to Liberia in order to consult with the Liberian National Transitional Government and the Elections Commission. The team visited Liberia from 26 May to 4 June 1994 and met with members of the Council of State, the Cabinet and the Legislative Assembly. The team also participated in three public forums, including one held in Monrovia with 200 officials of more than 20 political parties, and two held in Gbarnga and Harper.

24. The team's discussions centred on the timetable for the forthcoming presidential and general elections and the operational and other constraints to be overcome if elections are to be held on the scheduled date of 7 September 1994. Such constraints include, *inter alia*, voter registration, identification of candidates, constituency boundaries, and resource requirements. There was widespread agreement among the Liberians with whom the team consulted that substantial progress in disarming combatants was an absolute prerequisite for the holding of free and fair elections. One political party, however, while reiterating its commitment to disarmament, observed that it was also of critical importance that elections be held on the schedule date.

25. Officials of the Transitional Government and the political parties have requested more information on the system of proportional representation, which, under the prevailing circumstances, would facilitate the organization of the elections. The political parties have requested my Special Representative to convene a series of meetings with the Elections Commission, the UNOMIL Electoral Observer and the United Nations Development Programme Electoral Adviser to review preparations and assist in establishing ground rules for the elections. Eventually, the choice of the electoral system in Liberia will be made by the Liberian authorities.

## VI. Humanitarian Assistance

26. Reports on food distribution indicate that of a possible 1,500,000 people in need, approximately 1,100,000 are receiving humanitarian assistance at this time. An estimated 400,000 people are inaccessible in sections of the south-east, Lofa and, most recently, Cape Mount and Bomi counties. Of the total number of beneficiaries, 800,000 are registered as displaced, of whom 150,000 were displaced within the last six months. This brings the monthly requirement of food for distribution to 12,000 metric tons. For 1994, 70 per cent of the estimated food needs have been mobilized by the international relief community, including the United Nations agencies and organizations and non-governmental organizations.

27. Owing to intra-factional conflict within ULIMO, 20,000 people fled to Monrovia in February and March. Since fighting broke out on 26 May, 16,000 people have been displaced in Tubmanburg, taking refuge at the UNOMIL and ECOMOG bases and the hospital. These people are in need of food, medical care, shelter and water. Humanitarian convoys accompanied by heavy ECOMOG escorts are reaching them with supplies. ECOMOG confirms its ability to provide adequate security and the population has displayed its confidence in this by massing around the ECOMOG base.

28. Fighting in the south-east continues to be disruptive. Civilians displaced from that area, totalling 50,000, have been arriving in Buchanan since February. Reports have been received indicating that 2,000 civilians are trapped in the Liberia Agricultural Compound where LPC has restricted their movement.

29. On 17 May, an inter-agency assessment took place in Greenville, Sinoe county, facilitated by an ECOMOG vessel. Food was also delivered to civilians who were found to be malnourished. The hospital was depleted of supplies. A second mission in mid-June replenished the hospital and delivered 105 metric tons of food.

30. An increase in malnutrition has been noted in some accessible parts of the country, such as in Nimba and parts of Bong county. In Nimba, an international non-governmental organization has reported that the severe malnutrition rate increased from 4.3 to 6.7 per cent between February and May 1994. Among the factors related to the increase in malnutrition were the arrival of some 20,000 repatriating refugees and newly displaced persons from the south-east and Upper Lofa county, as well as deteriorating road conditions during the rainy season. Bridge repairs are being carried out along the main distribution routes to ease the delivery problems, and emergency food distributions to the displaced population have also been accelerated in the past month.

31. A positive impact of returnees, especially in Nimba County, is the reopening of 106 schools with a registration of 16,000 students. This is because of the return of many teachers and school-feeding programmes supported by the World Food Programme and the non-governmental organizations.

32. Satisfactory improvement in nutritional status continues to be seen in other parts of the country, especially in Montserrado, Margibi and Buchanan, where coordination among the relief agencies has improved.

33. In the past two months, 1,800 metric tons of seed rice have been distributed in five counties, including Maryland in the south-east. In addition, 40,000 farmers have benefited from tool distribution. It is anticipated that by the end of June, 40 per cent of the seed needs will have been met throughout the country.

34. Organized voluntary repatriation of the 700,000 Liberian refugees has been equally affected by the slow pace in the peace process. However, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) continues to facilitate the spontaneous repatriation of refugees. An average of 1,000 persons have been returning every month from Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone to areas in Nimba and Bong counties as well as to Monrovia and its environs. Depending on the success of the spontaneous returns programme and on advances in the peace process, UNHCR is considering launching a pilot project for organized repatriation to areas which are safe and accessible. This will be accompanied by fund-raising for rehabilitating basic social infrastructure in areas of return to improve the absorptive capacity of those communities. Assistance to Sierra Leonean refugees in Upper Lofa has not resumed because of insecurity in the area. UNHCR is looking into the possibility of mounting a cross-border operation to Upper Lofa from Guinea, if security permits.

## **VII. Protection Of Human Rights**

35. The civil conflict in Liberia has been characterized by major abuses of human rights. All factions share the blame. The use of 6,000 children in combat is a flagrant example of disregard for the rights of the child. The Lutheran Church massacre in 1990, which claimed the life of 600 innocent civilians, and the Harbel massacre of June 1992, where another 600 innocents were slaughtered in a five-hour period, are but extreme examples of atrocities which have been committed throughout the country.

36. Disregard for human life continues in some quarters. My Special Representative has visited Buchanan, where he has spoken to displaced civilians who report abuses such as branding with scalding machetes and other methods of torture which they firmly attribute to LPC.

37. Women, who have throughout the conflict been victims of mental and physical abuse, continue to suffer. In Buchanan, the non-governmental organization Assistance to Women and Girls (AWAG) is providing counselling to 90 women, all of whom, since February, have been raped by combatants. The youngest victim receiving care is 12 years old.

38. The widespread allegations of human rights violations have not as yet been transformed into verifiable data by either international human rights groups or by the four main Liberian voluntary human rights organizations, namely, the Centre for Law and Human Rights Education, the Justice and Peace Commission, the Liberian Human Rights Chapter and the Liberia Watch for Human Rights. These institutions are currently the repositories of hundreds of preliminary reports of violations in all parts of the country. However, the institutions have so far been unable systematically to verify reports of abuses because of continuing insecurity and other technical and logistical difficulties.

39. My Special Representative has been holding discussions on these and related issues with the Liberian human rights organizations. In pursuance of Security Council resolution 866 (1993) of 22 September 1993, which mandated UNOMIL to report to me any major violations of international humanitarian law, a joint plan of action has been developed. The principal objective of this plan is to increase public awareness of human rights and their relationship to the reconciliation process. It is hoped that these collective efforts will enhance the Liberian capacity to investigate and verify incidents of abuse; develop a technical capacity for storage and retrieval of relevant data and information; set minimum standards for reporting and monitoring; and stimulate greater public understanding of individual and community responsibility for the reporting of abuses, which may ultimately become a deterrent against perpetrators.

40. In this respect, consideration is also being given to the establishment of a national committee on human rights that would involve the appropriate agencies of the Transitional Government, the Liberian Bar Association and the four human rights organizations mentioned above. Agreement has already been reached by representatives of these organizations on a draft questionnaire to be used for the collection of data. Work is also proceeding on defining the elements for standardized approaches for checking, verification and subsequent investigation of these reports. A public information programme is being developed aiming to increase awareness of the contribution that social justice, fairness and equity can make to improved governance.

### VIII. Observations

41. The continuing hostilities of recent months have led to new population displacements and have placed additional demands on relief organizations in Liberia. In addition to the political imperative of complete disarmament and

demobilization in accordance with the Cotonou Agreement, I would appeal, on humanitarian grounds, to all armed factions in Liberia to cease their hostilities and extend full cooperation to organizations engaged in the delivery of humanitarian assistance. I commend the efforts of the United Nations agencies and NGOs in responding to those in need in Liberia, often under dangerous and difficult conditions. I would also encourage donors to continue to respond positively to the requests addressed to them for assistance in meeting the urgent needs of newly displaced persons.

42. There are pockets of security in Liberia where the Liberian National Transitional Government is attempting to extend its civil authority and I encourage the Transitional Government to continue its efforts to this end. Emergency humanitarian assistance will be required in Liberia well into the future but as conditions improve in several counties Liberians will be able to redirect their efforts to self-sustaining and productive endeavours.

43. The present insecurity and restricted commercial activities constrain Liberian efforts to energize the reconciliation process, to speed up recovery and to establish a sustainable basis for improved governance and greater public participation. The impact of the economic sanctions currently placed on certain areas of Liberia has also contributed to the sluggishness of the economy. My Special Representative has advised me that the Liberian National Transitional Government is addressing these issues on several fronts and that it is planning to discuss with ECOWAS the issue of economic sanctions. It has also set out policy considerations in important economic and human development areas by proposing a linkage between the reintegration of ex-combatants and economic development and the restructuring of public sector management. The Government's concerns about these issues are to be presented at an informal consultation of donors in Abidjan scheduled to take place during the week of 20 June 1994. These initiatives are important steps forward in the reconciliation process and they represent a necessary focus on the immediate and medium-term requirements of recovery. I encourage donors to support the Liberian National Transitional Government in this direction.

44. The deployment of the ECOMOG forces and the UNOMIL observers in all part of Liberia will be critical in generating confidence among Liberians throughout the country. In this regard, the Cotonou Agreement recognized the neutrality and authority of ECOMOG in supervising its implementation. I remain satisfied by the collaboration between UNOMIL and ECOMOG at senior levels. It is n to remind the international community that ECOMOG continues to require its financial support in order to fulfil its responsibilities in accordance with the Cotonou Agreement, and I call on the international community to contribute to the United Nations Trust Fund set up for this purpose. I am also pleased to learn that ECOMOG is investigating alleged reports of

misconduct by some of its soldiers, as the effective disarmament and demobilization of the warring factions require the continued confidence of all Liberians in ECOMOG.

45. In his statement of 23 May 1994 (S/PRST/1994/25), the President of the Security Council conveyed the Council's request to me to prepare options by 30 June 1994 regarding the future implementation of UNOMIL's mandate and its continued operations. As I have consistently stated in previous reports, I believe that the basis for the establishment and maintenance of lasting peace and stability in Liberia is the faithful implementation of the Cotonou Agreement. I continue to believe that UNOMIL's mandate is relevant to the circumstances in Liberia and that the Mission's efforts are critical to the implementation of the Cotonou Agreement and to assisting the Liberian National Transitional Government and the Liberian people to achieve national reconciliation.

46. With the full installation of the Transitional Government and its various administrative instruments, significant progress has been made in the implementation of the Cotonou Agreement. The Transitional Government is a most important building block for the future. At the same time, however, it is my view that the various Liberian interests, and in particular, the leaders of the warring factions, have not yet addressed national reconciliation with the necessary resolve, compassion and commitment. Their lack of resolve has led to increased suffering, especially among the displaced population. UNOMIL can only assist the Liberian National Transitional Government and the Liberian parties to bring peace to their country; the main responsibility is with the Liberian National Transitional Government and the parties.

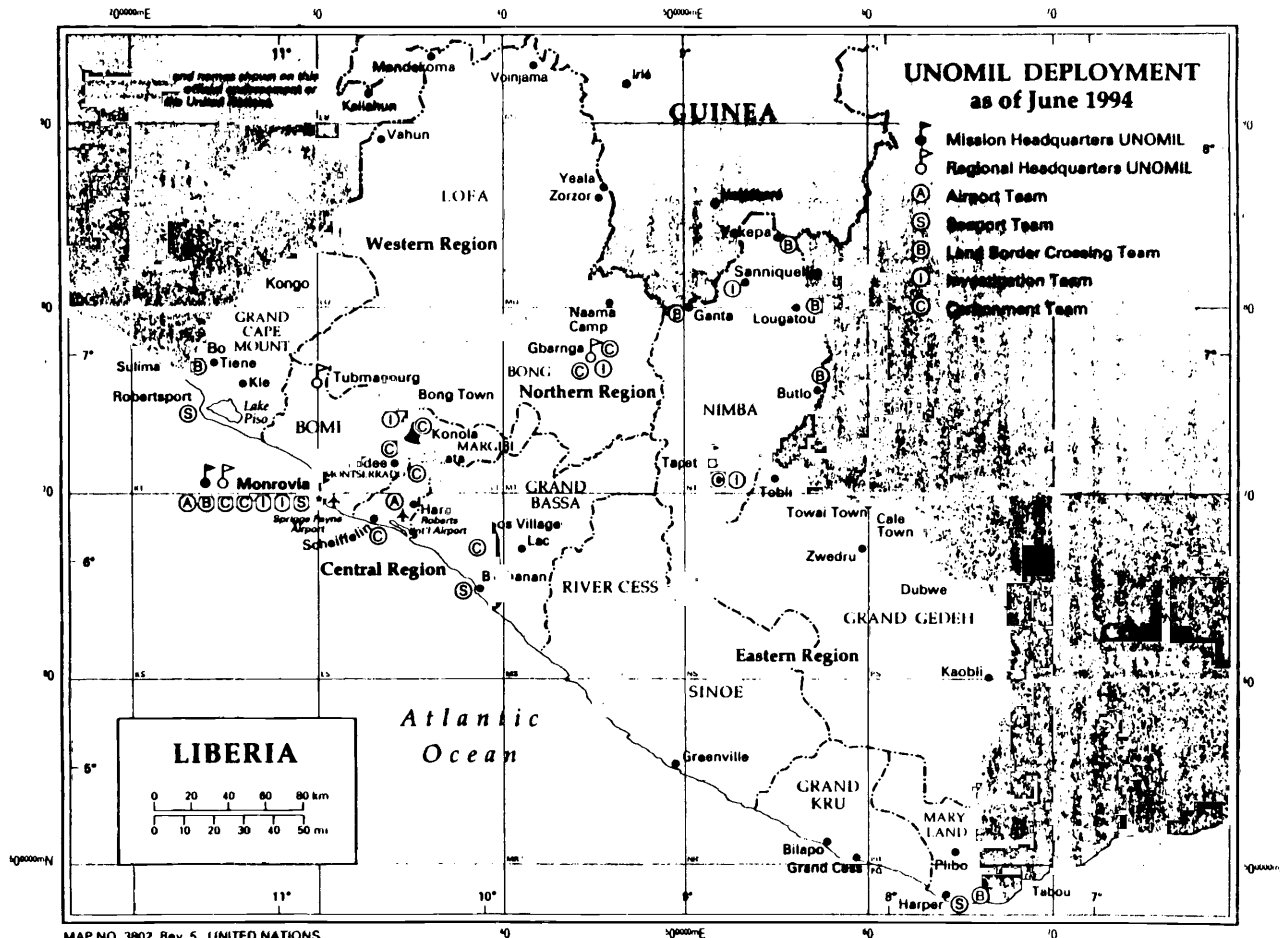
47. Bearing this in mind, it is imperative that all the Liberian parties extend a greater cooperation to ECOMOG and UNOMIL in order to move the peace process forward and achieve the objectives outlined in the Cotonou Agreement, including the holding of national elections. The delays which have been experienced in the implementation of the Cotonou Agreement cannot be allowed to continue. The Security Council may accordingly wish to consider the possibility of laying down specific monthly targets which must be met by the Liberian parties, particularly with respect to disarmament and demobilization of combatants. My Special Representative will be ready to advise the Liberian parties on how targets set by the Security Council can be met.

48. The emergence of two new factions in Liberia after the signing of the Cotonou Agreement, and the split within ULIMO, have substantially added to the difficulties of implementing the Agreement. I call upon the Liberian National Transitional Government to exercise the responsibility of bringing together all the parties in Liberia with a view to agreeing and carrying out measures aimed at addressing the problems raised by the new factions (the Liberian Peace Council and the Lofa Defence Force) and the split within ULIMO.

49. The Liberian National Transitional Government must also take drastic measures to advance the peace process and pave the way for elections in accordance with the Cotonou Agreement. Liberians must quickly decide on the electoral system that will be most feasible in their present circumstances, bearing in mind that an estimated 40 per cent of the voting population is displaced. Taking all these factors into consideration, it is essential that the Liberian National Transitional Government, with the cooperation of ECOWAS and the assistance of UNOMIL, bring all the Liberian parties together to agree on specific steps that must be taken to ensure that the elections are held on schedule. Time is now very short. Unless the Liberian National Transitional Government, the Elections Commission and the Liberian parties take drastic measures now, there is a serious danger that they will not be able to hold the elections on schedule.

50. I should point out that there is a limit to the extent to which the United Nations and the international community can continue to accept delays by the Liberian parties in the implementation of the Cotonou Agreement, which they voluntarily signed. Delays by the Liberian parties in advancing the peace process necessarily compound the financial difficulties experienced by the ECOMOG troop-contributing countries in maintaining their contingents in Liberia. Should the peace process experience further undue delays, some ECOMOG troop-contributing countries may be compelled to withdraw their contingents from the force, thus jeopardizing the successful implementation of the peace process. Obviously, without the necessary support and cooperation of ECOMOG, UNOMIL would not be able to carry out successfully the mandate entrusted to it by the Security Council. Should the Liberian parties fail to maintain their commitment to the peace process, I will have no alternative but to recommend to the Security Council that the involvement of the United Nations in Liberia be reconsidered.

51. Finally, I urge the Liberian factions to set a date for the complete cessation of hostilities, which is necessary for disarmament and preparations for elections to begin, and to live up to this date. I will report on progress made in this regard, including the continuation of UNOMIL's mandate in my next report to the Security Council. The warring factions, which have been responsible for so much death, suffering and destruction, must realize that it is they who are delaying a new dawn of hope for the Liberian people. It is they who must show the necessary political will and flexibility in finding solutions to the present impasse. It is important to realize that in the absence of tangible progress in disarmament, it will be increasingly difficult to sustain the commitment of the troop-contributing countries and the international community to supporting the peace process in Liberia.





**United Nations Security Council,**  
**Fourth Progress Report Of The Secretary-General On The**  
**United Nations Observer Mission In Liberia**

**18 May, 1994**

**I. Introduction**

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 911 (1994) of 21 April 1994 in which the Council decided to extend the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) until 22 October 1994 on the understanding that the Council would, by 18 May 1994, review the situation in Liberia, including the role played by UNOMIL in that country, based on a report by the Secretary-General. Specifically, the Council wished to be informed on progress with respect to the full installation of the Council of State of the Liberian National Transitional Government; progress on disarmament and demobilization; and the implementation of the peace process as a whole.

2. The installation of the Council of State of the Liberian National Transitional Government was to be within the time-frame stipulated by the Security Council, including the seating of the full cabinet and the Transitional Legislative Assembly to bring about a unified civil administration of the country and conditions for the preparation and holding of the national elections scheduled for 7 September 1994. The Security Council called on the parties to cease all hostilities and cooperate fully in facilitating the safe delivery of humanitarian assistance to all parts of the country by the most direct routes.

**II. Political Aspects**

3. I am pleased to report that the Liberian parties have now succeeded in implementing one of the major tasks called for in the Cotonou agreement (S/26376) as well as in resolution 911 (1994), namely the full installation of the Council of State of the Liberian National Transitional Government. The Liberian National Transitional Government Cabinet was able to hold its first meeting on 13 May 1994 and issued a statement in which it expressed its profound gratitude to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), other African countries that have contributed troops, UNOMIL, the United Nations and its specialized agencies, international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the entire international community for the support and assistance provided to Liberia, which has helped the country to reach the present stage of the peace

process. The statement also called on leaders of all warring factions and armed combatants to surrender unconditionally all their arms and other implements of war to the ECOWAS Military Observer Group (ECOMOG) and declared, *inter alia*, that the Liberian National Transitional Government was henceforth the government authority throughout the territory of Liberia. This has enabled the parties to bring to an effective end all factional claims to territory.

4. As I pointed out in my third progress report to the Council of 18 April 1994 (S/1994/463), the Liberian parties were experiencing some difficulties in agreeing to the allocation of certain key cabinet portfolios, namely defence, finance, foreign affairs and justice.

5. On 19 April 1994, after intense negotiations between the Council of State and the Liberian parties, the Council allocated the Ministry of Justice to the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), the Ministry of Defence to the Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU) and the Ministry of Finance to the United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO). The three Ministers were confirmed on 20 April 1994 by the Transitional Legislative Assembly and inducted by the Chairman of the Council of State.

6. In my continuing effort to assist the leadership of the Liberian National Transitional Government, I held a meeting on 19 April 1994 with one of its members, who briefed me on the progress made and the obstacles experienced in this process. For my part, I emphasized to him that Liberia must meet the deadline of 7 September 1994 for the holding of the elections. This required rapid progress in the complete installation of the Liberian National Transitional Government; in the seating of its full cabinet and National Assembly; and in disarmament and demobilization. All of these steps were necessary to establish appropriate conditions for the preparation and holding of the elections and to sustain the peace process in Liberia. I also emphasized that the international community was facing increasing difficulties in financing peace-keeping operations, including UNOMIL, especially if the impression was given that the parties concerned were not making the necessary efforts to solve their problems.

7. On 22 April 1994, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia announced its decision to permit the seating of its members in the Transitional Legislative Assembly and the swearing-in of those cabinet nominees whose posts were not in dispute. The Vice-Chairman of the Council (National Patriotic Front of Liberia) also resumed his activities in the Council.

8. On 30 April 1994, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, in my absence from New York, discussed the situation in Liberia with President Nicephore Dieudonné Soglo of Benin, Chairman of ECOWAS. The meeting afforded an opportunity to reaffirm the excellent cooperation existing between ECOMOG and UNOMIL and to emphasize the need for progress in the implementation of the Cotonou agreement by the parties in Liberia within the

time-frame approved by the Security Council. President Soglo confirmed that the outstanding problems between the parties in Liberia were being resolved. With respect to the electoral system, he welcomed the dispatch of the high-level electoral team that would advise the Liberian parties on the various possibilities.

9. On 11 May 1994, after further protracted negotiations involving the Council of State and the Liberian parties, the Council announced its decision to appoint the National Patriotic Front of Liberia nominee for the post of Minister for Foreign Affairs. The newly appointed Minister is scheduled to be formally inducted on 19 May 1994. This resolution of the last of the four remaining ministerial posts has removed a major impediment to the full seating and functioning of the Transitional Government.

### III. Military Aspects

10. At the time of my last report on 18 April 1994, a total of 2,200 combatants from the three parties had been disarmed and demobilized. During the period of negotiations between the parties on the distribution of the four remaining cabinet posts, the pace of disarmament slowed considerably. Nearly 2,900 combatants have now been disarmed. With the full installation of the Liberian National Transitional Government, the parties have recommitted themselves to the complete implementation of the Cotonou agreement, including disarmament. It is therefore expected that the pace of disarmament will quicken in the days and weeks to come. I therefore again call on the Liberian parties to respect the terms of the Cotonou agreement, commit themselves to a timetable for disarmament and ensure that their combatants lay down their arms.

11. As noted in my report of 18 April fighting had erupted in the eastern part of Liberia between the National Patriotic Front of Liberia and the Liberian Peace Council, an armed group formed after the signing of the Cotonou agreement. The Liberian National Transitional Government, UNOMIL and ECOMOG have intensified their efforts to bring about a cease-fire between the two groups and to bring the Liberian Peace Council into the disarmament and demobilization process. I will provide details of progress in this regard in my next report to the Security Council.

12. In my third progress report (S/1994/463), I had also referred to the mediation efforts by ECOMOG and UNOMIL to resolve the dispute between the Chairman of ULIMO and the ULIMO Field Commander. This dispute had resulted in an outbreak of fighting among the ULIMO forces along ethnic lines. Since 6 May 1994, under the auspices of ECOMOG and UNOMIL, there have been daily meetings between the two groups to resolve this dispute. A cease-fire agreement between the groups in ULIMO was initially signed on 6 May 1994 by their respective front-line commanders. The two groups also reaffirmed their

commitment to the Cotonou accord and its full implementation. On 9 May 1994, ULIMO's President Alhaji Kromah and General Roosevelt Johnson signed an agreement in the presence of the representatives of UNOMIL and ECOMOG confirming the agreement of 6 May. The conflict had prevented ULIMO's participation in the Council of State and the agreement thus paved the way for its effective participation in the Liberian National Transitional Government. The agreement also facilitated the reopening of the roads and the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the south-western region.

#### **IV. Electoral Process**

13. I had indicated in my progress report of 18 April 1994 that I intended to send a team of international experts to consult with the Liberian National Transitional Government and the Liberian Elections Commission on how best the United Nations could assist in the conduct of the elections.

14. This team, which will arrive in Liberia on 22 May 1994, is scheduled to stay in the country for two weeks. As stated in my earlier report, the team will be advising the Elections Commission to enable it to determine the modalities of the electoral system to be used. The terms of reference for the electoral team are accordingly:

(a) To discuss with officials of the Liberian National Transitional Government and the Elections Commission the efficacy of various electoral systems, in particular, the system of proportional representation and the experiences of various countries that have applied this system;

(b) To provide advice to political parties, other national governmental and non-governmental organizations and Liberians on the various options for electoral systems that may be considered for use in Liberia;

(c) To review the Constitution of Liberia and the related electoral regulations and, in this context, to provide advice and guidance on the constitutional, legislative and other implications of particular options;

(d) To advise on the steps that might contribute to increasing public awareness through the widespread dissemination of information on various electoral systems by stimulation of local, regional and national discussion through the public media, public seminars and discussion forums.

## **V. Observations And Recommendations**

15. Provided that the Minister for Foreign Affairs is inducted on 19 May 1994 as scheduled, the progress described in the present report provides a reasonable basis for optimism that the Liberian National Transitional Government, with the help of the international community, may soon succeed in resolving the tragic conflict that has caused so much suffering to the people of Liberia and the destruction of the country.

16. The overall efforts of the parties in Liberia, with the assistance of UNOMIL and ECOMOG, are now finally yielding some positive results. Nevertheless much remains to be accomplished by the Liberian National Transitional Government, especially in the areas of disarmament and demobilization, and there is no room for complacency. I call on Member States to support the Liberian National Transitional Government in the discharge of its responsibilities under the Cotonou accord. In this context, I have instructed my Special Representative on Liberia to advise me on concrete measures that Member States may take in this regard. I shall continue to keep the Council fully informed of the situation in Liberia and of the progress being made in the implementation of the Cotonou agreement.

## **United Nations Security Council**

### **Third Progress Report Of The Secretary-General On The United Nations Observer Mission In Liberia**

**18 April, 1994**

#### **I. Introduction**

1. The present report is submitted in response to Security Council resolution 866 (1993) of 22 September 1993, by which the Council authorized the establishment of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) for a period of seven months, until 21 April 1994.

2. In accordance with resolution 866 (1993), I submitted reports to the Security Council on the progress of UNOMIL on 13 December 1993 (S/26868) and 14 and 23 February 1994 (S/1994/168 and Add.I). The President of the Security Council issued a statement (S/PRST/1994/9) on 25 February, welcoming the agreement reached by the three Liberian parties to install the Liberian National Transitional Government on 7 March 1994, concomitantly with the start of disarmament, and to hold free and fair elections on 7 September 1994. In my briefing to the Security Council on 9 March, I reported that the Council of State, the executive arm of the Transitional Government, had in fact been installed on 7 March and that disarmament had commenced on the same day.

#### **II. Political Aspects**

3. The Liberian parties have now successfully completed a number of important steps in the implementation of the Cotonou agreement (S/26272, annex). The installation of the Council of State of the Transitional Government on 7 March was witnessed by several dignitaries, including President Nicéphore Dieudonné Soglo of Benin, Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Foreign Ministers of Cote d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Guinea and Nigeria, and my Special Representative for Public Affairs.

4. On 11 March the Transitional Legislative Assembly was inducted into office. In accordance with the Cotonou agreement, the United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO) was given the responsibility for naming the Speaker of the Assembly. The Transitional Legislative Assembly commenced business with the elections of the two deputy speakers from among members who had been nominated by the Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU) and the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), respectively. The Assembly proceeded to carry out confirmation hearings. The Ministers nominated by IGNU and ULIMO, whose posts were not in dispute, have been sworn in and have taken control of their Ministries.

6. Notwithstanding the positive achievements since the installation of the Council of State, a number of obstacles remain in the search for durable peace in Liberia. The parties have yet to resolve the long outstanding issue of the distribution of the four remaining Cabinet posts (defence, finance, foreign affairs and justice). My Special Representative, Mr. Trevor Gordon-Somers, has urged the parties to demonstrate maximum flexibility in arriving at an acceptable accommodation in this regard. The Cotonou agreement recognizes the prerogative of the parties to allocate the cabinet positions. In this respect, the Council of State has no formal role to play, although, in the absence of a solution, the Liberian people expect leadership and guidance from that executive body. Several options have been discussed among the parties and within the Council of State but no solution has yet been found.

8. The question of the allocation of posts to head the public corporations and autonomous agencies has also created an obstacle to the peace process. During discussions at Cotonou in November 1993, NPFL and ULIMO jointly took the position that those posts should be allocated in the same manner as Cabinet ministries and signed a document to reflect their joint agreement. IGNU maintained the view that this interpretation was contrary to the provisions of the Cotonou agreement and therefore did not sign the document. Discussions among the signatories to the Cotonou agreement on a suitable and equitable distribution of those posts have yet to yield positive results.

10. UNOMIL disseminates a weekly brief of its activities to the local population and this has become an important source of information on the peace process. It provides a credible basis for public understanding of disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, repatriation and, eventually, elections. Such proactive public information strategies have contributed to confidence-building among Liberians.

11. My Special Representative has reported to me that the Liberian signatories to the Cotonou agreement continue to search for solutions to the many problems that have emerged since the installation of the Council of State. In his discussions with the Council and the leaders of the parties, he stresses the need for maximum flexibility in their dealings with each other. In response to pronouncements of the Council regarding the dissolution of the parties, the Special Representative believes it would be desirable that the parties continue to exist until the completion of disarmament, in order to provide a much needed liaison function. However, the leaders of the parties should avoid any interference in the functioning of the Council. For its part, the Council will need to demonstrate to the Liberian people a commitment to national rather than parochial interests, going beyond the concerns of narrow constituencies during this short transition period leading to elections.

### **III. Electoral Process**

12. In his acceptance speech on 7 March 1994, the Chairman of the Council of State, Mr. David Kpomakpor, confirmed that the holding of free and fair elections on 7 September 1994 was a foremost concern of the Liberian National Transitional Government. In view of the relatively short time period remaining before the elections, the Elections Commission has intensified its organizational work in order to develop and finalize a detailed calendar of activities leading up to elections. The Commission recently developed and adopted a set of rules and regulations governing its internal operations.

13. The Elections Commission has finalized and submitted a draft electoral budget to the Council of State for its consideration. On the basis of a draft budget prepared by a joint mission of the United Nations and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems in September 1993, the Elections Commission has estimated that an overall amount of US \$13.7 million will be required to carry out the electoral process. It is reported that the Transitional Government will endeavour to provide some \$8.5 million of this amount and will seek international support for the remaining \$5.2 million.

14. Implementation of technical assistance for the electoral process from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is well under way. This assistance focuses on reinforcing the institutional structure of the Elections Commission and strengthening its technical capacity to organize and adminis-



ter free and fair elections. UNDP has provided the Commission with minimum office requirements to commence its operations and an internationally recruited, full-time electoral expert. A number of issues in the electoral process must be addressed, including voter education, the repatriation of refugees and displaced persons and the mobilization of resources required for the elections. A chief technical adviser is due to arrive in May and will take up these and other urgent issues.

15. While the Elections Commission is now focusing on technical preparations for elections, there are a number of other issues that need to be addressed under the very short time-frame until 7 September. If elections, in accordance with the Liberian Constitution, are to be based on single-member constituencies and registration of voters is to take place, then it will be necessary for the refugees and displaced persons to have returned to their constituencies of residence before the end of the registration period, which should be well before the election date in order to ensure their participation in the electoral process.

16. Several technical missions to Liberia in the recent past have indicated that, if elections are to be fairly organized on the basis of the existing electoral system in Liberia, namely, single-member constituencies, it will not be possible to organize them before the agreed time-limit of 7 September; it would take a year, or even more. They have suggested that if elections have to be held before 7 September, they can only be held on the basis of proportional representation in a national constituency.

#### **IV. Military Aspects**

17. UNOMIL, having attained its total authorized strength of 368 military observers in early January 1994, has proceeded with the deployment of United Nations military observers throughout the country. In accordance with its concept of operations, UNOMIL has so far deployed military observers in 27 team sites out of a total of 39 projected sites (see map). Four regional headquarters have been established and are operational at Monrovia (central region), Tubmanburg (western region), Gbarnga (northern region) and Tapeta (eastern region). The eastern regional headquarters had originally been designated for the town of Zwedru. However, owing to the absence of any logistic support and to insecurity in the area, the headquarters has, instead, been established at Tapeta. The military observers are engaged in the patrolling of border crossings and other entry points, observation and verification of disarmament and demobilization and the investigation of cease-fire violations.

18. In recent weeks, ECOMOG has deployed into the western (Tubmanburg) and northern (Gbarnga) regions. Deployment of both UNOMIL and ECOMOG in Upper Lofa has been impeded by insecurity in the area. Likewise, deployment in the south-east has been curtailed by the activities of the Liberian Peace

Council (LPC). UNOMIL and ECOMOG are currently engaged in consultations with ULIMO and with the NPFL and LPC in order to reach western and south-eastern regions.

19. LPC, which emerged in the south-eastern part of Liberia after the Cotonou agreement was signed in July 1993, has engaged in skirmishes with NPFL for the past five months. Recently, LPC has aimed its activities north, at the town of Zwedru. UNOMIL and ECOMOG are consulting with LPC and NPFL on their deployment into the area, and on the disarmament of combatants, with a view to creating a buffer zone between NPFL and LPC areas. LPC combatants are included in the overall plan for disarmament and demobilization in this area.

20. During the last weeks of March, the security situation in the south-western part of the country deteriorated because of the internal conflict within the ULIMO leadership along ethnic lines. The conflict escalated when ULIMO Krahn and Mandingo groups clashed in the town of Tubmanburg. Since public reconciliation of the ULIMO leadership was announced on 1 April, the situation in the south-western region appears to have stabilized.

21. Once UNOMIL and ECOMOG are fully deployed in the eastern and western regions, in accordance with the Cotonou agreement, buffer zones will be established within Liberia on the borders with Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone. The Governments of Cote d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone have written to me seeking the assistance of the international community in providing resources, such as vehicles and communications equipment, to enable them to create buffer zones within their borders with Liberia. In my view this would greatly facilitate the effectiveness of surveillance in the buffer zones and improve security in those areas. Member States may wish to provide such assistance to those Governments on a bilateral basis.

22. Following the deployment of UNOMIL and ECOMOG, the Joint Cease-fire Monitoring Committee (JCMC) has been replaced by a Violations Committee, chaired by the United Nations Chief Military Observer, in accordance with the Cotonou agreement. The Violations Committee is the forum through which UNOMIL and ECOMOG address issues of cease-fire violations with the parties. To date, four violation reports have been received by the Committee, three of which have been investigated and settled.

23. At the time of its dissolution, JCMC had received a total of 101 reports of cease-fire violations. It had investigated and resolved 79 of those reports; 10 others were investigated but have not yet been resolved. The 22 remaining cases were not investigated, owing to lack of information or inability to move freely in order to carry out the investigations.

24. Three demobilization centres, one for each of the warring factions, were opened on 7 March. It is reported that the total number of combatants of all parties is approximately 60,000 soldiers. In the first month of disarmament, more than 2,200 combatants, from all parties, were disarmed and demobilized. Owing to political difficulties, however, disarmament has been slower than it technically could have been. Intensive consultations sponsored by my Special Representative, the United Nations Chief Military Observer and the Field Commander of ECOMOG, have taken place with the parties, with a view to keeping the process on course. Assuming the full cooperation of the parties, it is estimated that disarmament could be completed in two months.

25. Combatants are brought to assembly areas and encampment sites under the command and control of their respective parties. The parties remain responsible for them during their processing at encampment sites. Although ECOMOG is charged with disarming the fighters, monitored by UNOMIL, disarmament is greatly facilitated by the presence of liaison officers of each party at the encampment sites.

26. The demobilization process includes the gathering of information on each ex-combatant in regard to his background and future plans, issuance of an identification card, a medical examination, counselling and sensitization, after which a reintegration package (second-hand clothes, rice, simple agricultural tools) is given to each ex-combatant. Finally, each individual is transported to the community of his choice.

27. Flexible arrangements have been put in place to accommodate specific target groups, including detainees. To date, 642 NPFL detainees have been processed and released from detention in Monrovia. The child ex-fighters create a special problem and are taken to demobilization sites coordinated by the Children Assistance-Programme, a national non-governmental organization. By the end of March, 136 children had been transported to 3 different sites. Fifteen of those children have since been reunited with their families while the remainder will continue with counselling prior to going home. It is expected that a total of 6,000 child fighters will be disarmed through this process.

28. Sensitization of communities throughout the country is an important prerequisite for national reconciliation. Prior to the opening of demobilization centres, sensitization workshops were held for military and civilian personnel of the NPFL and the Armed Forces of Liberia. A similar workshop was planned for ULIMO but this was postponed because of internal strife within that party.

29. The paucity of resources and logistical problems are major challenges in demobilization, which are exacerbated by exaggerated expectations communicated by the leadership of the factions to the ex-combatants. Feeding demobilizing combatants in assembly areas in advance of disarmament has increased the costs of the operation.

30. Furthermore, the mandate of UNOMIL does not include the medium-term and long-term requirements of reconstruction and rehabilitation. Accordingly, UNDP and the United Nations system, the African Development Bank, the Bretton Woods institutions and Governments supportive of the reconstruction of Liberia are urged to work closely with the Liberian National Transitional Government in addressing the priority needs for the transition and beyond.

## V. Humanitarian Assistance

31. At present, 1,400,000 needy civilians are receiving humanitarian assistance in Liberia, while another 300,000 are inaccessible because of security problems. Since my last report, 1,185 tons of humanitarian assistance have been delivered to ULIMO areas, except in Upper Lofa, and 3,000 tons have been delivered in NPFL areas using the Cote d'Ivoire route and the Monrovia-to-Gbarnga highway.

32. Since February 1994, approximately 40,000 civilians have been displaced from the south-east region and Grand Bassa county, as a result of LPC attacks against NPFL, while 10,000 have fled from Lower Lofa to Bong county claiming severe harassment by the Lofa Defence Force (LDF). United Nations agencies joined efforts with non-governmental organizations in bringing relief to the displaced.

33. Skirmishes between Krahn and Mandingo elements of ULIMO impeded the distribution of assistance in Cape Mount and Bomi counties. In addition, some 150,000 displaced persons and refugees in Upper Lofa remained cut off from any relief assistance. Those constraints on access should be overcome with the deployment of ECOMOG and UNOMIL to the areas in question. However, the movement of humanitarian assistance to the needy population in those areas remains problematic because of recent ULIMO activities.

34. Logistical problems also inhibit the delivery of relief supplies, compounded by the deteriorating roads during the rainy season. Many bridges are in urgent need of repair if they are to withstand heavy traffic. An airlift of food aid to Upper Lofa is once more under consideration. Implementing agencies, both international and local non-governmental organizations, that distribute food are often hampered by limited transport capacity.

35. Two inter-agency assessment missions were carried out in accessible areas of the south-east and in Cape Mount and Bomi counties. Nutritional status was found to be within normal limits in the areas visited where security was satisfactory and there had been a reasonable harvest.

36. A non-governmental organization survey carried out in Upper Margibi, an area where in December 1993 a malnutrition rate of 40 per cent had been reported, showed a dramatic improvement, with a rate of 4 per cent. However, in the absence of household food security and with the cultivation period due, a general rice distribution accompanied with seeds and tools was recommended.

37. In many parts of the country, distribution of seeds and tools could contribute significantly to building food security. Three thousand tons of seeds for distribution are already in stock, representing 50 per cent of the country's requirements. In addition, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has recently received a substantial donation for the acquisition of seeds and agricultural tools. The potential coverage is, however, limited by security and logistical factors.

38. The Minister of Planning recently convened a meeting of donors and United Nations and non-governmental organizations, to establish a coordinating forum for relief, resettlement and rehabilitation activities throughout Liberia. The Government is beginning to assume responsibility in those areas since the country has been unified.

39. Some 700,000 Liberian refugees are registered with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in five neighbouring West African countries (Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria and Sierra Leone). The majority of them have expressed their intention to return as soon as security and peace are restored throughout the country. Since the signing of the Cotonou agreement, approximately 60,000 refugees have returned, including 30,000 assisted by UNHCR. It is expected that an additional 150,000 will return before organized repatriation begins. UNHCR has an ongoing programme of assistance for spontaneous returnees in three counties, which will be extended to other counties as the security situation improves.

40. It is estimated that 414,000 refugees will opt to repatriate with the assistance of UNHCR, the majority returning directly to their areas of origin or of their choice. A package of assistance consisting of food, household goods, seeds and agricultural and shelter construction tools will be given to each family.

41. A large number of refugees are engaged in agricultural activities and have already enrolled their children in schools in the countries of asylum for the 1994 academic year. For those reasons, many refugees may choose to begin repatriation in the latter part of 1994. Sample surveys among refugees indicate that a number of them may wish to return only after the general elections and installation of an elected Government.

42. Preparatory work for the return and reintegration of the returnees has commenced with the identification and rehabilitation of reception centres and an estimation of the need for basic services, such as water and health-care facilities. Some roads and bridges to the reception centres and to drop-off points will also require repairs. Resource availability constitutes the main constraint for preparatory work to start.

## **VI. Financial Aspects**

43. The General Assembly, by its resolution 48/247 of 5 April 1994, authorized the Secretary-General to enter into commitments for the maintenance of UNOMIL, at a monthly rate not to exceed \$4,359,100 gross (\$4,232,900 net), for a period of three months beyond 21 April 1994, should the Security Council decide to continue the Observer Mission beyond that date. Therefore, should the Council decide to extend the UNOMIL mandate as recommended in paragraph 51 below, I intend to seek the additional resources required for the maintenance of the Mission from the General Assembly at its current session.

44. As at 31 March 1994, of the \$39.8 million assessed on Member States, unpaid assessments to the UNOMIL Special Account amounted to \$26.4 million.

45. With regard to the Trust Fund for the Implementation of the Cotonou Accord on Liberia, as at 31 March 1994, voluntary contributions received amounted to \$15.16 million from the Governments of Denmark, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America, of which expenditure totalling \$11.7 million at the time of the present report has been authorized.

## **VII. Observations And Recommendations**

46. The four years of civil conflict in Liberia have been marked by deplorable atrocities against civilians. With every outbreak of fighting, innocent civilians are displaced, harassed and killed. Flows of humanitarian assistance are interrupted. In accordance with Security Council resolution 866 (1993), by which the Council requested UNOMIL to report to me any major violations of humanitarian law, my Special Representative has been in close contact with national and international institutions in order to monitor such violations. I call on all parties to extend their full cooperation to the international community in order to ensure the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian assistance throughout the country.

47. For the reasons described in paragraph 16 of the present report, and given the importance of holding free and fair elections within the agreed timeframe, I urge the Liberian authorities to give favourable consideration to organizing these transitional elections on the basis of a single national constitu-

ency with proportional representation. I am ready to send immediately to Liberia a team of international experts to consult with the Liberian National Transitional Government and the Elections Commission on how this could be done.

48. In my past reports on UNOMIL, I have appealed to Member States to contribute to the Trust Fund for Liberia. I wish to thank those Member States which have so generously contributed. However, support for ECOMOG, for the demobilization and reintegration and for the holding of elections remains urgently needed. With specific regard to the election process, my Special Representative has reported that, without external financial support, the Liberian National Transitional Government will not be able to meet the resource requirements of holding the elections. I therefore renew my call to Member States to continue their support to the peace process in Liberia, especially at this critical juncture, by contributing to the Trust Fund.

49. I am pleased to report that collaboration between UNOMIL and ECOMOG is of the highest professional order. With the advance deployment of United Nations military observers, ECOMOG has been able to benefit from information on the terrain and physical facilities in different locations, as well as from the building of confidence that the military observers were able to generate throughout the country.

50. The Liberian parties have achieved progress in their search for peace with the installation of the Council of State and the start of disarmament on 7 March, and the agreement to hold free and fair elections on 7 September 1994. However, the disposition of the four remaining Cabinet posts, which has still to be determined, constitutes a major impediment to the full installation of the Transitional Government. Continued military conflict involving various parties also impedes the implementation of the Cotonou agreement. I urge the Liberian parties to make a concerted effort and to cooperate with one another in order to overcome the remaining impediments to the full installation of the Transitional Government. I also call on them to respect the terms of the Cotonou agreement in ensuring that their combatants lay down their arms.

51. Taking into account the progress made thus far in the implementation of the Cotonou agreement, I recommend that the Security Council extend the mandate of UNOMIL for a further period of six months, which will include the elections scheduled for September 1994. Provision must also be made for the liquidation phase of the Mission, which would end by 31 December. However, if the question of the disposition of the four remaining ministries is not resolved within two weeks and if there is no further progress in the peace process within this period, I will request the Council to review the mandate of UNOMIL. In this connection, the parties should be aware that while the international community

has been generous in its support of the implementation of the Cotonou agreement, this support cannot continue indefinitely if the necessary cooperation is not forthcoming from the parties.

52. I shall continue to keep the Council fully informed of the situation in Liberia and of progress being made in the implementation of the Cotonou agreement. I shall recommend that the Council review the situation in Liberia at any stage should developments warrant such a review.





**TRANSCRIPT OF  
STATEMENT BY HON. TOM WOEWIYU  
MINISTER OF LABOR  
LIBERIA NATIONAL TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT  
DELIVERED IN MONROVIA JULY 19, 1994\***

"Gentlemen of the press, I called this conference because I would like to clear up certain information concerning myself and other members of the NPFL who took their positions in the LNTG coalition government, and also to try to brief the Liberian people on the nature of the NPFL, its objectives and goals and try to see if I can clarify what the problem is at this time. This is the purpose for which I called this conference.

I am a founding member of the NPFL. I was there when there was no NPFL and we put the NPFL together along with others. Even if I wanted to, I don't think I could get out of the NPFL, so the notion that I am not with the NPFL any more, Samuel Dokie is not, Supuwood is not, is a fallacy and is merely a divisive scheme by those who have actually used the NPFL and its noble goals to frustrate the Liberian people.

Yes, there is a problem in the NPFL, and in this country. The NPFL itself is a very very good organization. It is an organization made up of men and women dedicated to a cause. Most of you can recall that when the NPFL launched this revolution almost everybody in this country supported it. There were very few that did not support the idea that a people's force had to be used to remove the dictatorship of Samuel Doe. It was not the fighting men or the method of fighting that frustrated and derailed this noble goal. It was the leadership of the NPFL that led to all of these problems.

The NPFL, of course, as you know, is being headed by Charles Taylor, who as a matter of fact, was made leader of the NPFL as a result of a series of coincidences. Charles Taylor is not the founder of the NPFL. The NPFL was founded by the late Thomas Quiwonkpa and after the failure of his attempt, it was continued by those of us who felt that we had to continue the struggle until things changed. It could have been led by several other prominent Liberians; it could have been led by myself, Tom Woewiyu; it could have been led by Moses Duopu; it could have been led by Harry Yuan. These are people who were actually there at the resuscitation of the NPFL. Taylor was a part of that and by a series of coincidences, we agreed for him to lead the organization. Over the years, he has abused that agreement. He has abused the trust of a group of noble men and of course, we have worked along with the organization to see if we could solve the problem and maintain the goal of the organization which was to change things in this country for the betterment of all. Therefore, over the years, we went from one thing to another and everybody seemed to have given

the NPFL all the opportunities to accomplish its goals through politics, but Mr. Taylor has consistently obstructed that, insisting that he must be president of this country by force, not even by election, or else, the war will not stop.

Those of us who took the decision to join the LNTG recently thought that this was the best opportunity in the history of the struggle for us to put an end to this charade on the part of Taylor. Taylor knows that in no way could he be elected in this country. He has done things in the name of the NPFL that he has to answer for, and he knows that so he continues to dwell on armed struggle as a way of trying to bring himself to power and, of course, we have to try to find a way to end this.

Over the years, those of us who led the NPFL had known that Taylor and a handful of people have turned the noble goal of the NPFL into a revenge adventure. 'Americo-Liberians versus country people'—that type of revenge. What we started off doing with everybody, all of the tribes in this country—Americo-Liberians, Gbandi, Gissi, everybody came and joined hands to solve the problem, including the Krahn who were members of Doe's tribe, all came along to join the NPFL to change the situation for the betterment of the Liberian people, but Taylor and a handful of people decided that this was an opportunity to avenge the 1980 coup, which led to the killing of 13 leaders of this country who were from the Americo-Liberian tribe. Taylor himself took part in that decision to execute them, but in his quest for power, he has turned around trying to convince others that he is the Messiah for them—the so-called Americo-Liberians. All of these things Taylor is doing because now he and others have decided that they are going to use the so-called country people against themselves. Those young children who fought in the NPFL, and died, were not related to Taylor, and did not even come from his background. While his children even in the midst of the war are in private schools in Geneva and other parts of the world, he takes pride in walking around with other people's eight-year olds dragging AK-47s behind him, but he knows that those children belong to a group of people that he has no regard for. This has been the nature of this war; this has been the nature of how the NPFL, with its noble goals, has almost lost those goals by following Charles Taylor.

Other warring factions have come about because they have to resist this particular move by Taylor; some of them may not be aware that most of us in the NPFL were aware of this problem. If they knew it, they probably would not have mounted more warfare in order to get rid of Taylor. You take the situation with ULIMO. It got strengthened very much when Taylor's brother in Lofa Bridge, Nelson Taylor..... He killed, killed, killed until the ULIMO people had to launch resistance on that side with the help of the indigenous people in that area. He moved on to Bong Mines, did the same thing and ULIMO got the support of the

environment [local community]; he moved on to Bassa, and the same thing happened; he moved on to Sinoe, he harassed and killed the people until LPC came along. LPC and ULIMO are mostly NPFL fighters who had to run for their lives. LPC, in particular, most of these fighters who started the war in Sinoe and Bassa are NPFL fighters whose ears were cut by John Richardson, Charles Bright and Kuku Dennis, in their revenge against the so-called native people; they know it, LPC knows that. LPC knows, and we know, what Nelson Taylor did in Sinoe which gave rise to the creation of the LPC.

So what the NPFL has had to do is to admit that we have a problem. Today I want the public to know that the NPFL, the organization, is not the problem. We the people in the NPFL are not the problem. We recognize that we have a problem. That problem is our leader, Mr. Charles Taylor. He is opposed to any peace in this country; he is opposed to the LNTG. You can see now he is no longer talking about the seating of the rest of the NPFL representatives to the LNTG. He is now on to the formation of a new army by the factions. Obviously, the Liberian people will not tolerate the formation of a prominent army by a bunch of gun-holding factions. This is a country with a constitution. The army is based on that. Taylor is not in any position to demand an army based on sovereignty, because he is only sitting in one house in Gbarnga that does not form the sovereignty or the territorial jurisdiction of the Republic of Liberia. Others involved in the conflict do not feel that the issue of sovereignty is any longer an issue that should stop the peace process, but he is still using that as an obstacle and therefore we want to say here today that the NPFL leadership will deal with the issue of the problem within it. We will avoid violence, and this is what Taylor doesn't want. He wants us to reduce ourselves, our noble goal, to the situation that happened within ULIMO wherein it reduced a people's movement: a movement for justice, a movement for democracy to a tribal conflict. Two tribes of this country, the Mandingoes and the Krahns, most of whose members are not involved in this warfare, their names are now used to fight a war. We are not going to bring the NPFL down to that. We believe that by publicly acknowledging within the NPFL that our leadership is the problem we will solve the problem. We believe in calling on the NPFL fighters to stop fighting anybody, ULIMO, AFL, LPC, Lofa Defense Force. They are not the enemies of the NPFL. Taylor is the enemy of the NPFL. This they must know.

We call upon all of the other factions to recognize our admission of this problem, and our desire to correct the problem without resorting to further destruction of lives and property. We believe that the NPFL is capable of handling its own leadership problem without any further bloodshed, and therefore, we call on the LPC, LDF, ULIMO, LNTG and the international community to urge all to stop the violence, and pause while the NPFL tries to resolve this problem of leadership internally. Mr. Taylor is an enemy to this society. He is an enemy to the NPFL. He has distorted our ideals and wasted blood on the noble goals of the people of this country. It is not an accident that

several people showed up behind the lines disappeared. Jackson Doe was not captured in combat, he walked over to our side, led by some of our fighters joyously to Kakata where there was a very very big festival in the middle of the war to celebrate that a leader of our people had been saved; a leader who Doe wanted dead was saved. He was escorted to Harbel to Mr. Taylor. He was received. At the time I was in Sierra Leone. Taylor informed me that Jackson Doe was with him and that I should inform Amos Sawyer, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and all the politicians that Jackson Doe was safe, only for me to arrive in Harbel one week later and he could not tell me where Jackson Doe was. He could not tell me where Alfred Flomo was, where Stephen Daniels was, where David Toweh was; Prof. Yekesson, all of these people were taken to Buchanan and given housing, then they disappeared. Then there was Cooper Teah; I went personally to Freetown and urged him not to mount another insurrection, another warfare on our people, he being a Nimba citizen. Nimba had already suffered so much and we felt that there was no reason to double the jeopardy by him launching another war under the leadership of my dear brother Boima Fahnbulleh, and Cooper Teah agreed and came along. Fahnbulleh thought that that was a mistake and we tried to get him to understand that we were all one and that there was nothing that was going to happen to these people. Cooper Teah came and sat in the Harbel Club, he never got out of the clubhouse. I went away to the United States and came back, but I could not find Cooper Teah. Taylor could not tell me what happened to Cooper Teah. About a year ago, I took 18 of the 43 men out of jail in Gbarnga. He had jailed these Cooper Teah men and they stayed in jail for almost two years. I felt responsible for whatever happened to the rest of them and I felt I had to do everything to save some of them, and they were saved. If you look at the background of all of these people, Gabriel Kpolleh and others, you will see that they all come from a common background of the so-called country people or indigenous people. It appears that this was not an error; this was a calculated decision on the part of Taylor. Quite recently, this decision has been very very prominent in public knowledge that the revenge against the so-called country people has been the backdrop of the actions of Mr. Taylor and a handful of people. Mrs. Grace Minor, Charles Bright, Kuku Dennis and others are in the background of this.

I must be very clear that those of us in the leadership of the NPFL are very very much aware that these people in no way represent the aspirations of the Americo-Liberian tribe in this country. They are a bunch of confused people, including Mr. Taylor who wants to use any kind of excuse, and I am sure that Mr. Taylor in the beginning tried to show that he was fighting a country man's war against others when he took part in the decision to execute the 13 Americo-Liberian leaders of this country. I am sure that he was trying to convince the "country boys" in the PRC that a group of prominent citizens of this country should be wiped out to satisfy his personal wishes.

This clarification is not intended to put any shadow of doubt on the Americo-Liberian tribe as being part of Mr. Taylor's conspiracy. It is only intended to try to show to our people that we must not fight for any reason at all on behalf of people that tend to divide this country along certain ethnic and tribal lines. It is our intention that the NPFL fighters know that Taylor does not see their struggle as a political struggle for a change in this country, but rather as a struggle to bring him to power whatever his motive is. We know for sure that if Taylor had come to power most people, including Americo-Liberians and natives, and anybody that he saw as an obstacle to his desire for power would have been erased and we know for sure that Taylor has committed more atrocities, probably more than we were aware of from the Doe regime and therefore I make this plea today to all of the fighters from all of the fighting forces, to all of the leaders of all of the leaders of the different forces, some of the other organizations, the LPC, ULIMO who may have their own problems, and their own Charles Taylors too, and the nation and all of us are poised to help them to get rid of those problems without any further bloodshed. We must all realize that we all are one. This nation belongs to all of us, all Liberians born in this land, and the fourth and fifth generations of Liberians should not be identified by tribe, but identified internationally by their country of origin, even though we must respect each other as a diverse group of people and try to capitalize on the opportunity and the unity that diversity brings with it. Therefore, I call upon all the fighters of the NPFL to stop fighting the LPC, stop fighting ULIMO, ULIMO stop fighting NPFL. ULIMO stop fighting ULIMO because those that you are fighting for they are the problem, the people that you are fighting against are not the problem. We hope, we pray that the LNTG government will be subastained. The LNTG government must not fail. The LNTG government must lead us to free, fair and democratic elections. We are aware that the international community can no longer tolerate the selfish aims and objectives of a handful of people who just continue to create a nightmare for our nation. They will not tolerate this. The United Nations and the world have expended a whole lot of money in this country to solve our problem and through the LNTG the solution to this problem must come, the elections must come and those of us that are in the leadership of NPFL are committed to the LNTG. Mr. Taylor, Mr. John T. Richardson are not the NPFL. John Richardson was a displaced person who we picked up from Duport Road. He does not know where the NPFL is coming from. He is only looking at the NPFL from a racist point of view. Mr. Charles Bright was a businessman fighter with Prince Johnson and any other group that he can take advantage of. So these are not the representatives of our people across the nation for this noble goal. The NPFL is the same as LPC. It is the same as ULIMO; it is the same as AFL. We are all one and the same people trying to bring a better Liberia for all of us. It is unfortunate that we had to use weapons, but those of us that were involved in the fight are prepared to put the weapons down and let politics prevail, so therefore we call

on the State Council to maintain its vigilance; we call on the TLA, [Transitional Legislative Assembly] to maintain their vigilance; we call on ECOWAS to maintain their vigilance; we call on Nigeria, in particular, and thank them and thank the people of Nigeria, the citizens of Nigeria, the leaders of the Republic of Nigeria for their endurance, for their perseverance, for their dedication to Africanism, to the survival of this nation as a nation, and we call upon them to maintain their vigilance, and see this conflict to an end as a regional power. I look forward to the day, when this conflict comes to an end with all the ECOWAS flags, Nigeria's flag leading, in a parade in this city of Monrovia and around this country in celebration of the victory of the people of Liberia in the sustenance of their sovereignty. If Mr. Taylor cannot see that then he will just have to get out of our way and we must not continue to kill each other for this purpose. We would like to call upon the international community, the UN, OAU, ECOWAS and all the regional leaders, Ghana, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, the entire ECOWAS Countries, especially the regional countries that have contributed troops here, to maintain their vigilance in the name of the Liberian people, in the name of Africa, and not to dwell on the failures but on the successes and the relative peace that is coming and I pledge, and the people in the NPFL pledge that they will do their best to bring this situation to an end through politics, through democratic means as quickly as possible.

I thank you."

Sgd. Tom Woewiyu

Tom Woewiyu Esq.

Minister of Labour, LNTG  
Monrovia, Liberia

\*Woewiyu had been a close associate of Charles Taylor since the civil war began, and carried the title of "Defense Minister" in Taylor's "National Patriotic Reconstruction Assembly Government."

Editor's Note

## United Nations Security Council

## RESOLUTION 911 (1994)

*Adopted by the Security Council at its 3366th meeting,*

*on 21 April 1994*

**The Security Council,**

**Recalling** its resolutions 813 (1993) of 26 March 1993, 856 (1993) of 10 August 1993 and 866 (1993) of 22 September 1993,

**Having considered** the reports of the Secretary-General dated 16 December 1993 (S/26868), 16 February 1994 (S/1994/168) and 18 April 1994 (S/1994/463) on the activities of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL),

**Welcoming** the progress made towards establishing the Liberian National Transitional Government but concerned about subsequent delays in implementing the Cotonou Peace Agreement,

**Expressing its concern** over renewed fighting between the Liberian parties and the negative impact that this fighting has had on the disarmament process, the effort to provide humanitarian relief, and the plight of displaced persons,

**Commending** the positive role of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in their efforts to help restore peace, security and stability in Liberia and urging them to continue their efforts with the aim of assisting the Liberian parties to complete the process of political settlement in the country,

**Recognizing**, as noted in the Secretary-General's report of 4 August 1993 (S/26200), that the Peace Agreement assigns the ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) to assist in the implementation of the Agreement,

**Commending** those African States that have contributed troops to ECOMOG, and those Member States that have contributed to the Trust Fund or by providing other assistance in support of the troops,

**Welcoming** the close cooperation between UNOMIL and ECOMOG and stressing the importance of continued full cooperation and coordination between them in the implementation of their respective tasks,

**Noting** that the revised timetable of the Peace Agreement established on 15 February 1994 in Monrovia calls for legislative and presidential elections to take place by 7 September 1994,



1. **Welcomes** the Secretary-General's report dated 18 April 1994 (S/1994/463) and the progress the parties have made towards the implementation of the Peace Agreement and other measures aimed at establishing a lasting peace;

2. **Decides** to extend the mandate of UNOMIL until 22 October 1994, on the understanding that the Security Council will, by 18 May 1994, review the situation in Liberia, including the role played by UNOMIL in that country, based on a report by the Secretary-General on whether or not the Council of State of the Liberian National Transitional Government has been fully installed, and on whether there has been substantial progress in disarmament and in implementing the peace process;

3. **Decides further** that the Council will again review the situation in Liberia, including the role played by UNOMIL, on or before 30 June 1994, on the basis of a report of the Secretary-General, such review to include consideration of whether sufficient progress has been made in implementing the revised timetable of the Peace Agreement to warrant continued UNOMIL involvement, in particular, the effective operation of the Liberian National Transitional Government, progress in carrying out disarmament and demobilization, and preparations for the holding of elections on 7 September 1994;

4. **Notes** that if the Council considers, during either of the above reviews, that progress has been insufficient, it may request the Secretary-General to prepare options regarding UNOMIL's mandate and continued operations;

5. **Urges** all Liberian parties to cease hostilities immediately and to cooperate with ECOMOG forces to complete the disarmament process expeditiously;

6. **Calls** on the Liberian parties as an urgent priority to complete installation, within the time-frame established in paragraph 2 above, of the Liberian National Transitional Government, especially the seating of the full cabinet and the national assembly, so that a unified civil administration of the country can be established and other appropriate arrangements completed so that national elections may be held as scheduled on 7 September 1994;

7. **Calls again** on the Liberian parties to cooperate fully in the safe delivery of humanitarian assistance to all parts of the country by the most direct routes, in accordance with the Peace Agreement;

8. **Welcomes** ECOMOG's ongoing efforts in furthering the peace process in Liberia and its commitment to ensure the safety of UNOMIL observers and civilian staff and urges the Liberian parties to continue to take all necessary measures to ensure the security and safety of UNOMIL personnel, as well as of the personnel involved in relief operations, and strictly to abide by applicable rules of international humanitarian law;

9. **Encourages** Member States to provide support for the peace process in Liberia by contributing to the Trust Fund or by providing other assistance to facilitate the sending of reinforcements by African States to ECOMOG, assist in supporting troops of participating ECOMOG countries and also assist in humanitarian and development activities, as well as the electoral process;

10. **Commends** the efforts made by Member States and humanitarian organizations to provide emergency humanitarian assistance;

11. **Welcomes** the continued efforts by the Secretary-General and his Special Representative to promote and facilitate dialogue among all parties concerned;

12. **Decides** to remain actively seized of the matter.

**Resolution Of The Liberian People  
By And Through Their National Organizations Of  
Political Parties And Interest Groups\***

**WHEREAS**, We the people of Liberia, by and through our national organizations of political parties and interest groups in meeting assembled at the Unity Conference Center in Virginia, Liberia, on 24 June, 1994;

**NOTING** with deep appreciation, the efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the United Nations (UN), and, particularly the sacrificial services of countries contributing troop to ECOMOG—Nigeria, Ghana, Guinea, Sierra Leone, The Gambia, Senegal, Mali, Uganda and Tanzania in the search for peace in Liberia;

**RECALLING** that, under the auspices of ECOWAS, supported by the OAU and the UN, the parties to the conflict in Liberia assembled in Cotonou, the Beninois Capital, on 25 July 1993 and signed an agreement named and styled the "Cotonou Accord" which provides for the peaceful resolution of the Liberian conflict through a process leading to internationally supervised free and fair elections;

**NOTING** that the Liberian National Transitional Government (LNTG), as a national unifying authority was installed on March 7, 1994;

**NOTING** also, that in spite of the successful implementation of the political component of the Cotonou Accord, the armed factions have interposed, and continue to create impediments to the implementation of the military aspects of the Accord, particularly the provisions dealing with the encampment, disarmament and demobilization of the armed groups to the extent that, ECOMOG has not been fully deployed to assume security responsibility throughout the country and the combatants have not been encamped, with only 3,000 out of 60,000 having been disarmed;

**GRAVELY** concerned about the current deteriorating situation in the country, that is the continuing proliferation of armed groups, the intensity of intra-factional hostilities, the massacres of innocent civilians, including women, children and the elderly, and the continuing displacement of the population; and

**FURTHER** concerned about the spill-over of the war into neighboring Sierra Leone and Guinea, and the general destabilizing circumstances the conflict continues to create in the West African sub-region;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, we, the people of the Republic of Liberia, by and through our national organizations of political parties and interest groups, do hereby resolve:

**THAT** we, Liberians hereby commit ourselves to effectively strengthen the authority of the LNTG so that it may successfully discharge its mandate in accordance with the Cotonou Accord;

**THAT** we unreservedly commit ourselves to the restoration of peace and normalcy in Liberia and do declare that the Cotonou Accord provides the best framework for the achievement of peace;

**THAT** we will engage in popular actions for disarmament, peace and democracy through mass rallies, demonstrations, community meetings, etc;

**THAT** our political parties and interest groups shall increase contacts and consultations within the sub-region and the international community for the advancement of the peace process in Liberia;

**THAT** we the people, through our political parties and interest groups, shall intensify our efforts towards national reconciliation and the resolution of the Liberian conflict, and, in furtherance thereof, shall establish a Central Secretariat on the Peace Process to monitor developments;

**THAT** we affirm continuing confidence in ECOMOG and declare that we shall give the peace Keeper all the support necessary and possible for the successful pursuit of their mission in Liberia;

**THAT** we call on the LNTG to effectively discharge its mandate as envisaged by the Cotonou Accord and the Riverview Communique, in order to create an enabling environment for the holding of free and fair elections;

**THAT** all Liberian national organizations are hereby called upon to re-assemble on September 14, 1994 to review the implementation of the Cotonou Accord and determine the political future of the country, taking into account the tenure of the LNTG;

**THAT** the LNTG and ECOMOG ensure that Monrovia and all other ECOMOG secured areas remain a safe haven, and that such areas are not utilized as staging posts for propaganda and hostile activities by one faction against another and/or the Liberian people;

**THAT** all armed groups must scrupulously adhere to the Cotonou Accord and the Riverview Communique by disarming to ECOMOG, and demobilizing their forces for re-integration to civil society;

**THAT** believing and noting that the process of disarmament of the armed groups may not be achievable by the voluntary compliance of the armed factions, we appeal to the countries of ECOWAS to continue and increase their moral, political, diplomatic, material and financial support to ECOMOG to enable same to effectively carry out its mandate under the Cotonou Accord;

**THAT** we appeal to the United Nations and its member-states, particularly the United States of America to provide increased material, financial and other forms of support to ECOMOG and the peace process and to help pressurize the armed factions to submit to ent;

**THAT** further appeal to the United Nations to continue to provide humanitarian assistance to the Liberian people who are victims of the Liberian conflict, and to give diplomatic, political, material, financial and all other support necessary for the Liberian National Transitional Government (LNTG) to fulfill its mandate of repatriation, resettlement and the conduct of free and fair elections; and

**THAT** we, the participants of this National Conference, do hereby agree to continue consultations for the purpose of enhancing the Liberian peace process.

DONE THE 24TH DAY OF JUNE, A.D. 1994  
AT THE UNITY CONFERENCE CENTER  
VIRGINIA, REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

**POLITICAL PARTIES**

Liberian People's Party (LPP)

Liberia Action Party (LAP)

United People's Party (UPP)

Liberia Unification Party (LUP)

National Democratic Party of Liberia  
(NDPL)

Progressive People's Party (PPP)

**INTEREST GROUPS**

National Teachers' Association of  
Liberia (NTAL)

Liberia Bar Association (LBA)

Liberia Marketing Association  
(LMA)

National Women Organization of  
Liberia (NAWOL)

\*Dr. Togba-Nah Tipoteh,  
Chairman of LPP, has been a spokesperson  
for this initiative.

See *West Africa*, 1-7 August 1994, p. 1345

Editor's Note

**ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION  
OF THE  
LIBERIAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION**

**ARTICLE I**

**Name and Objective**

1. We, the undersigned, desiring to form a non-profit association for the purpose of effecting cooperation among persons interested in furthering research concerning the Republic of Liberia, and adjacent areas, do thereby constitute ourselves a voluntary association under the name of THE LIBERIAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION.
2. THE LIBERIAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION is a scholarly organization created to provide a means for effective cooperation among persons interested in furthering research in all scholarly disciplines, including the sciences, social sciences, and humanities, on topics relevant to the Republic of Liberia, and adjacent areas; to publish and otherwise disseminate the results of such research; to cooperate with scholarly organizations, and cultural, scientific, and educational institutions, nationally and internationally, having mutual interests in the exchange and presentation of information and ideas resulting from research in the subject field; to encourage interest in Liberian affairs; and to stimulate and facilitate academic contacts and educational exchanges between Liberia and the United States. The Association shall not take any official corporate positions on or seek to influence any legislation or policies of the United States or the Republic of Liberia.

**Article II**

**Office and Duration**

1. The office of the Association shall be located at the institution or organization at which the Secretary-Treasurer has official residence; or at such place as the Board may from time to time determine; or as the business of the Association may require.
2. The duration of the Association shall be perpetual.
3. The death, removal, or resignation of any member of the Association shall not result in the dissolution of the Association.

**ARTICLE III**

**Membership and Dues**

1. Membership in the Association shall be open to all persons who wish to support its objectives. Application for membership shall be communicated

to the Secretary-Treasurer in a manner provided for by the Board. All members in good standing may vote, hold office, and participate in all the activities of the Association.

2. A member shall be enrolled upon receipt of the first payment of dues.
3. The schedule of dues shall be determined by the Board and submitted for approval by a majority vote of the members present at the annual business meeting of the Association.
4. Dues shall be payable on the first of January. Any member failing to pay dues within six months after they become payable may be suspended from membership. Formal resignation from membership may be presented to the Secretary-Treasurer of the Association.

#### **ARTICLE IV** **Meetings of the Membership**

1. Meetings of the Association shall be held at such time and place as the Board shall determine. There shall be an annual business meeting and its location shall be determined by the Board.
2. A full and true statement of the affairs of the Association shall be submitted at the annual business meeting by all responsible officers. A summary of the transactions or proceedings of the meeting shall be prepared by the Secretary-Treasurer and shall be published in the first issue of THE LIBERIAN STUDIES JOURNAL to appear subsequent to meeting or otherwise notified to the membership.
3. At meetings of the Association, each member shall be entitled to one vote. At any meeting of the Association, any vote shall be taken by secret ballot if any member so requests. Voting eligibility shall be established upon personal recognizance as a member.
4. Those members present at a meeting shall constitute a quorum. The vote of the majority of the members present shall decide any question.

#### **ARTICLE V** **Government**

1. The government of the Association, the management of its affairs, and the regulation of its procedures, except as expressly otherwise provided in these Articles of Association, shall be vested in a Board composed of the officers and two (2) members elected by the Association. If a vacancy shall occur on the Board or in any of the offices it may be filled by the Board, and the person designated shall hold the position for the unexpired term of the person vacating it. All actions of the Board shall be by majority vote in person or by correspondence.

2. The Board of the Association shall have the control and management of its affairs, policies, and business. The Board shall exercise all of the powers of the Association and undertake all lawful actions which are not reserved by the Articles of Association to the membership at large.
  - a. Members of the Association shall annually elect, one member of the Board by a majority of the membership present. Each such member shall hold office for two years or until his successor is elected and qualified. Members will be elected and officially installed at the annual business meeting.
  - b. Board members shall be eligible for re-election.
  - c. An up-to-date copy of the Articles of Association shall be available to any member upon request to the Secretary-Treasurer.

## ARTICLE VI

### Officers

1. There shall be four officers of the Association, viz. a President, a Vice President, a Secretary-Treasurer and the Editor of the Association's journal, THE LIBERIAN STUDIES JOURNAL. All officers shall be elected at the annual business meeting. The President and Vice President shall be elected for terms of one year and shall serve until their successors are elected. They shall be eligible for re-election. The Secretary-Treasurer and the Editor shall be elected for three-year terms, and shall be eligible for re-election.
2. The President shall be the chief executive officer of the Association, shall preside at all meetings of the members and of the Board, shall have overall responsibility for the management of the Association and shall see that all decisions of the Board are carried into effect. The President shall present an annual report to the membership.
3. The Vice President shall preside at meetings of the members and of the Board, if the President is prevented from carrying out this function. In the case of the death, resignation, or disability of the President, the latter to be determined by majority vote of the Board, the Vice President shall succeed to the Presidency to complete the unexpired term.
4. The Secretary-Treasurer shall combine the functions and duties of Secretary and Treasurer of the Association. In case of the death, resignation, or incapacitation of the Secretary-Treasurer the Board shall appoint a qualified member to assume the full duties of the office for the duration of the unexpired term.



- a. As Secretary, —or in the absence of the Secretary-Treasurer, an alternate designated by the President—shall record the proceedings of the meetings of the Association and Board. The Secretary-Treasurer shall receive and maintain the records, archives, and membership lists of the Association and carry on such correspondence as pertains to the Secretary's duties.
  - b. As Treasurer, the Secretary-Treasurer shall collect, receive, and have custody of all funds of the Association, and as directed by the Board shall have authority to disburse such funds. The Secretary-Treasurer shall keep full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements in books belonging to the Association; and shall deposit all moneys and other valuable effects in the name and to the credit of the Association in such depositories as the Secretary-Treasurer may designate with the approval of the Board. The Secretary-Treasurer shall process applications for membership. The retiring Secretary-Treasurer shall within one month after the expiration of his or her term of office deliver to the newly elected or appointed Secretary-Treasurer all money, vouchers, books, and papers of the Association in the Secretary-Treasurer's custody. Any or all of the members of the Board may be given signature authority to act for the Association by a majority vote of the Board.
5. The Editor shall be responsible for the publication of THE LIBERIAN STUDIES JOURNAL, which shall be the official organ of the Association. The Editor shall recommend editorial policies to the Board. There shall be an Editorial Advisory Board whose membership and length of service shall be determined by the Board of the Association. The Editor shall consult with the Editorial Advisory Board on editorial policy and with the Secretary-Treasurer on all matters concerning the business management, financing, and distribution of THE LIBERIAN STUDIES JOURNAL.

## ARTICLE VII

### Records

1. All minute books, correspondence, and other records of the Association shall be preserved by the Officers. Records that have ceased to be of use for the conduct of the affairs of the Association may, by the direction of the Board, be turned over for preservation to a depository designated by it, or discarded.

### **ARTICLE VIII**

#### **Committees**

The President may appoint committees from time to time in consultation with the Board.

### **ARTICLE IX**

#### **Dissolution**

In the event of the dissolution of the Association its property, funds, and other assets shall be transferred to whatever organization or organizations operated exclusively for charitable, educational, and/or scientific purposes as the Board may determine, provided such organization or organizations qualify as tax-exempt under the Internal Revenue Code of the United States or Liberia.

### **ARTICLE X**

#### **Amendments**

Amendments to these Articles of Association may be made by a two-thirds majority of the members of the Association present at the Annual Business Meeting.

### **ARTICLE XI**

#### **Publications**

1. Subject to the availability of funds, the Association shall publish THE LIBERIAN STUDIES JOURNAL and such other publications as the Board, in consultation with the Editor and the Editorial Advisory Board, may determine. Members in good standing shall receive the JOURNAL. Subscription rates for non-members and institutions shall be determined by the Board.

### **ARTICLE XII**

#### **Rules**

1. Roberts Rules of Order (most current revision) shall govern the proceedings of the Association, except as otherwise provided in these Articles of Association and special rules which may be adopted from time to time.
- I, THE UNDERSIGNED, HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing is a true and

correct copy of the duly adopted Articles of Association of Said Association as amended at the Annual Business Meeting of the Association at Charleston, South Carolina, USA, April 8th, 1994, to the date of this certification.

Sgd. Arnold Odio  
Secretary-Treasurer  
8 April 1994

## CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

**C. William Allen**, author of two successful novels about Liberia, is currently Assistant Professor of Communication at Xavier University of Louisiana (New Orleans). He is past President of the Press Union of Liberia.

**Theodora Nmade Brooks** is a priest in the Episcopal Diocese of Liberia. She is currently Vicar at St. Margaret's Episcopal Church in The Bronx, New York.

**Herman B. Browne** is a clergy of the Episcopal Church of Liberia. He is currently a Ph.D. candidate and tutor, Simon of Cyrene Theological Institute, London (England).

**Warren L. d'Azevedo** is Professor Emeritus of Anthropology at the University of Nevada-Reno.

**Janet Fleischman** is Washington representative for Human Rights Watch/Africa, a nongovernmental human rights organization.

**James S. Guseh** is Assistant Professor and Director of the Center for Alternative Programs at Shaw University. He holds the J. D. in law (Syracuse) and the Ph.D. in Political Economy (University of Texas at Dallas).

**Thomas C. Hendrix** (1916–1994) was Executive Secretary–Treasurer of the Liberian Studies Association. He held a Ph.D. degree in history from the University of Illinois at Chicago, and an M.Div. from Duke University.

**Momo K. Rogers, Sr.** is Associate Professor of Journalism at Middle Tennessee State University.

**R. Drew Smith** is Assistant Professor of Afro–American Studies at Indiana University, Bloomington. His research focuses on the intersection of religion and politics in the U.S. and Africa.

**J. Chris Toe** is Professor of Economics and Director of Graduate Studies at Strayer College. A specialist in international agricultural development, his most recent publication is *MACROFOUNDATIONS OF AGRICULTURAL PERFORMANCE IN LIBERIA* (Center for International Studies, 1993).

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