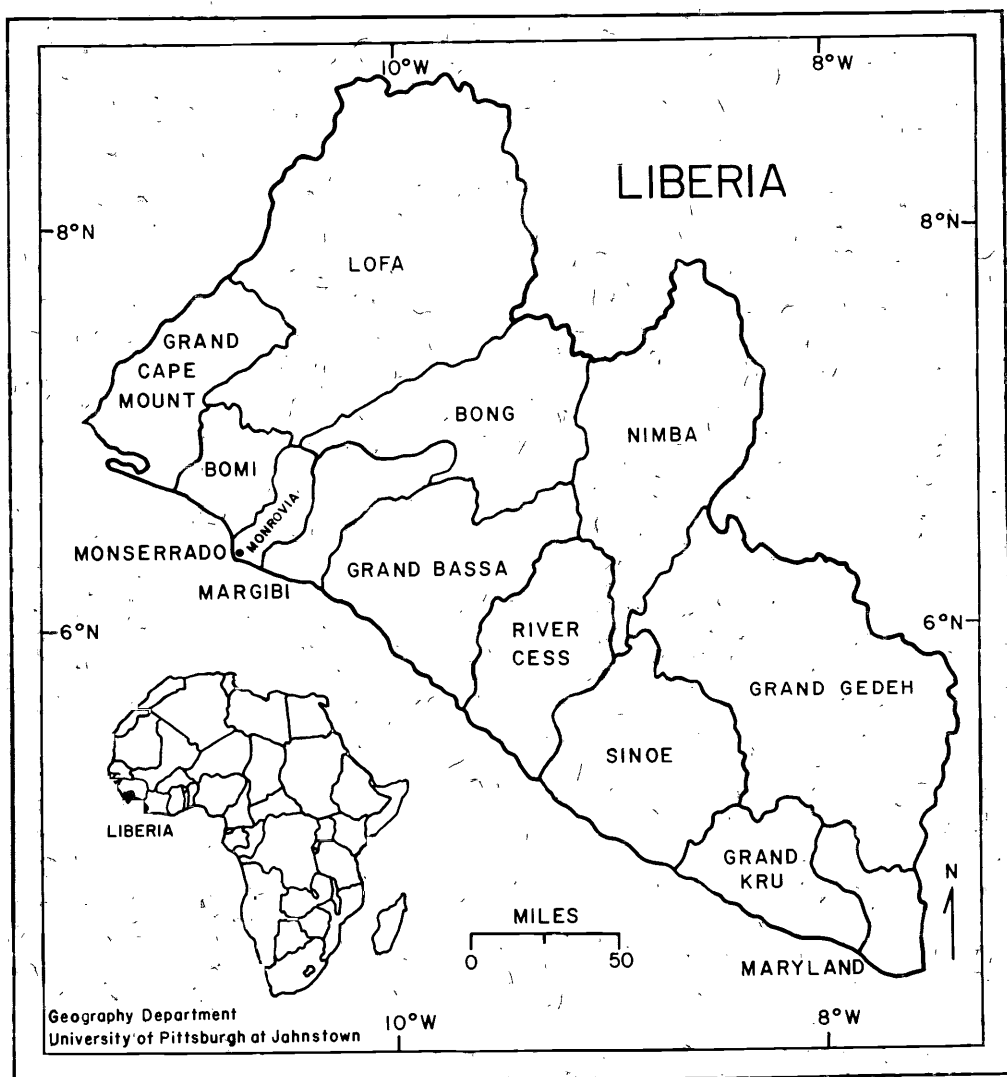


LIBERIAN STUDIES JOURNAL



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LIBERIAN STUDIES JOURNAL

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A referee journal that emphasizes the social sciences and humanities, the LIBERIAN STUDIES JOURNAL is a semiannual publication devoted to studies of Africa's oldest republic. The annual subscription rate is \$30.00, \$15.00 for students and \$45.00 for institutions, and includes membership in the Liberian Studies Association, Inc. All manuscripts and related matters should be addressed to The Editor, Liberian Studies Journal, Division of Fine Arts, Languages and Literature, The University of South Carolina at Spartanburg, 800 University Way, Spartanburg, SC 29303. Subscriptions and other business matters should be directed to The Executive Secretary, Liberian Studies Association, Albany State College, P.O. Box 31222, Albany, Georgia 31795-2791.

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FROM THE EDITOR

This editorial letter is going to appear in each issue of the *Journal*. It is intended to be a tool for bringing our reading public up to date on issues related to this publication. It will also serve as a forum for summarizing the articles, reviews and other information contained in each issue.

As we take over the reins of editorial leadership of this journal, we like to extend our thanks and appreciation to the outgoing editor, **D. Elwood Dunn**, for the standard of excellence he and his staff brought to this publication. We can only hope to maintain that standard and, if need be, improve upon it.

We also welcome five new members to the Editorial Advisory Board of the *Journal*—**D. Elwood Dunn**, **M. Alpha Bah**, **Momo K. Rogers**, **Yekutiell Gershoni**, and **Romeo E. Phillips**; their nomination was approved by the Board of Directors of the Association.

We are grateful to the Division of Fine Arts, Languages and Literature of the University of South Carolina at Spartanburg for housing the *Journal*.

As this issue went to press, the warring factions in Liberia had agreed to a cease fire and a six-person Council of State had been sworn in. We are cautiously optimistic that this development will signal a lasting peace to the six-year-old civil conflict that has torn Liberia apart.

In this issue, **Similih Cordor** writes a brilliant and critical review of James Youboty's book, *LIBERIAN CIVIL WAR: A Graphic Account*. **Jacob Pereira-Lunghu** offers some policy options and strategies for post-civil war Liberia which could minimize some of the fiscal problems inherent in past government budget deficits. **Elaine Armour Wolo** in her article on Pragmatic Pluralism, offers some practical tips for educational curriculum development in post-civil war Liberia.

Once again, we are grateful to **Similih Cordor** for his review of Steven H. Gale's book, *West African Folktales and Instructor's Manual*. We also thank **Alfred Konuwa** for his review of Elwood Dunn's book, *LIBERIA; World Bibliographical Series Volume 157*. **Benjamain S. Lawson** has given us a meticulous mix of facts and fiction with his piece on George Schuyler.

Boikai S. Twe, the President of the Liberian Studies Association and this

year's conference Director of the 27th Annual LSA Conference, has provided us with a report in the News and Notes section.

Our Documents section contains three documents dealing with various aspects of the Liberian Civil War and peace process. We also acknowledge, with thanks, William R. Davis' contribution via the African Section of the Library of Congress, two letters exchanged between G. Baccus Matthews and the late President William R. Tolbert, Jr..

We are pleased also to include in this issue, an index of Volume XX.

The Editorial Board invites your comments and suggestions as we strive to continue the good works others before us have done. We are also looking forward to seeing you at next year's LSA Conference which will be co-hosted by **Walter Wiles** and **Gloria J. Braxton**, both of Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, March 20-23, 1996.

The Editor.

**Making Sense of the Civil War in Liberia-
A Review Article
of James Youboty's
*LIBERIAN CIVIL WAR: A Graphic Account***

Similih M. Cordor

The Challenge of Chronicling the Liberian Civil War

Civil wars generate news, rumors, human suffering, destruction, massive societal changes, and historical wounds that fester in hate, guilt, fear, distrust, and spiritual collapse of a people. Consequently, soldiers, journalists, writers, and photographers journey together through intense and brutal human experiences of armed conflicts. The Liberian Civil War is not an exception.

Liberia has joined the catalogue of human miseries of famines, starvation, coups, and wars of this century with her recent experiences of sociopolitical instability such as the 1979 rice riots, the 1980 military coup, the 1980-1990 numerous coup attempts, the 1985-88 genocide, and now the bloody civil war which began on Christmas Eve 1989 and appears to be subsiding as this article goes to press.

To make sense of all these recent sociopolitical crises is now a major task for all Liberians. Though this task is painful, we the literary, journalistic, and scholarly Liberians and Liberianists must undertake it. The war is our war; Liberians created the war because they created or allowed the conducive atmosphere that made the outbreak of war possible. When people make peaceful revolutions impossible, they make violent revolutions possible; when people create and nurture hate, deceit, envy, divisiveness, injustice, poverty, poorly constructed and undemocratic institutions, underdevelopment, gross abuse of human rights, and false notions of nationhood, they are planting the seeds of war that will germinate and explode in their faces. But now we must document the war to reflect its origin, its causes, its aftermath, and the prospect for emergence of a New Liberia for all Liberians irrespective of their ethnic, social, cultural, economic, religious, and political backgrounds. The good news is that the challenge of chronicling the Liberian Civil War has already begun to attract Liberian writers, journalists, and scholars. Thus, we have a few books, booklets, pamphlets, and periodical articles from Bill Frank Enoany (1991), G. Henry Andrews (1993), James Youboty (1993), and other Liberians.

In this short review article, I am going on a brief journey through James

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Youboty's *Liberian Civil War: A Graphic Account* (Philadelphia: Parkside Impressions Enterprises, 1993). This work is a massive book of 608 pages of text of 32 chapters with an 11-page prologue; 48 unnumbered pages of photographs of some of the faces of people who paved the road to the bloody Liberian Civil War; some dozen pages of other materials; five appendices, and a few pages of an index of numerous names of people that reads like a roll-call of makers of Liberian tragedies of the past 150 years. This great attempt of the chronicling of the Liberian Civil War painfully but dramatically unveils the brutal realities of our armed conflict.

Summary of the essence of Youboty's *Liberian Civil War*

Though the book is on the Liberian Civil War, about 35 percent of it is on pre-war materials. This preliminary section is but a background to the bloody war that has almost destroyed the Liberian nation. Chapters one to sixteen comprise Part One, which the writer calls the "Revolution" in Liberia. I have not lived through any revolution in Liberia, but some writers have seen things in Liberia that I have yet to see or experience. These pre-war materials chronicle the rise and fall of the First Republic of Liberia and events up to the civil war. Themes of the pre-war chapters include topics like the ex-slave establishment of the Liberian Nation; the demise of the True Whig Party; reviews of the Tubman and Tolbert presidential administrations; the rice riots of 1979; the hosting of the OAU Summit in Monrovia in 1979; the 1980 army coup and its subsequent decade of military rule by Samuel K. Doe and other army officers.

After chapter eight, the book continues to run events upon events until it gets to the civil war, begins to scream, and readers can literally hear voices of people rising to the heavens like a conflagration. After an account of the 1985 elections, events unfold in rapid successions, and Youboty tries to capture the drama of the social, economic, cultural, ethnic, legal, and political crises of this restless and turbulent era of Liberian history. He goes on rather quickly to such events and situations as the Thomas Quiwonkpa coup attempt of November 1985, the flight from Liberia to America of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, American State Department officials' visits to Liberia, and Doe's frantic attempts to keep his hold on the government up to the eve of the Liberian Civil War.

Part Two of the book is the section titled, "The Civil War," and it starts Youboty's alleged eyewitness, investigative, and interpretative methods of reporting. His details are graphic, sometimes so graphic and brutal that some readers would vomit to stay long with them. Chapters seventeen through twenty-four chronicle the war before the arrival of the ECOMOG forces. These pages detail the rise of the Charles Taylor and Prince Johnson warring faction, and violent scenes of warfronts. These chapters (especially 22-24) read like fiction.

The remaining chapters, twenty-five to thirty-two, deal with the capture and torture of Samuel K. Doe and the era of multiple presidency in Liberian history: "Presidents" Charles Taylor, Prince Johnson, David Q. Nimley, and Amos Sawyer. Chapter thirty-one is on the arrival of Amos Sawyer's interim government that was created in exile in the midst of constitutional debates and challenges that involved the very man who presided over the making of the New Liberian Constitution of the post-coup era. The last chapter is on "The All-Liberian Conference." The epilogue and appendices as well as the list of sources and the index follow the last chapter. The appendices include position statements and declarations of organizations and excerpts from news magazines on aspects of the Liberian Civil War.

Critique of Youboty's Accomplishments in *Liberian Civil War*

Reading Youboty's work was an experience for me as a writer who has written on some of the major events of recent Liberian sociopolitical instability: The 1979 rice riots, the 1980 coup, the abuse of civil and human rights during the military decade of 1980-1990, and the civil war itself; but the reading process has become a task for me as a reviewer. Therefore, I am presenting a brief analysis of Youboty's massive publication and his stylistic accomplishments and deficiencies. My review article is but an examination of a writer and his work; it is not an exercise in denigration of an artist or his art work. For me, reviews and other kinds of literary and scholarly analyses are nothing but intellectual exercises with no intention of pursuing any personal objectives.

Not long ago some Liberians used to say that one of the reasons why Liberia has not produced great writers or great literature was the absence of major national social, economic, and political events, situations, and other sources of materials to excite people to write about. John Singler's article in *Research in African Literatures* (Vol. 11, No. 4 Winter 1980), Momo Rogers' essay in *The Liberian Outlook* (Vol. 1., No. 12, 1978) along with his doctoral dissertation, "Liberian Journalism 1826-1980," Southern Illinois University, 1988; and Robert H. Brown's recent article on Liberian literature in the *Liberian Studies Journal*, Vol. XX, No. 1, 1995 have all touched on the limitation of great literary works from Liberia. The Liberian Civil War has changed all that. It has given us enough dramatic, exciting yet tragic, and intense human experiences that ought to inspire Liberians to produce great novels, poems, plays, and other literary works. James Youboty's book is one of the early starts in this direction.

Youboty's Style

Youboty's venture into stylistic variations in his book has put his writing skills under severe pressure. He combines eyewitness reporting with investigative and interpretive methods of journalism; on top of this, he branches out into

sociopolitical analysis of the background to the Liberian Civil War. It would take a journalist of greater skills and abilities to produce a masterpiece with such stylistic attempts. Eyewitness report is a serious art; so is investigative or interpreting reporting.

One of the problematic areas of the book is the writer's selectivity of materials for inclusion or exclusion. Though he undertook an ambitious literary and journalistic project, he did not have to squeeze into his book so many types of materials--events, analyses, personal comments, rumors, and other types. Eyewitness reporting requires a keen sense of selectivity because journalists and writers tend to gather more materials than they need or than they can possibly incorporate into their works. Thus, they have to be very selective and organizational in structure. Without this, readers would experience frustration from crisscrossing and repeating of facts, events, and other materials in the book. Youboty did not handle the task of selectivity and organization of materials very effectively.

Another area that is worth talking about is the manner of handling source identification and documentation of materials in the book. Youboty's work is primarily an eyewitness account of the Liberian Civil War, but, as I have noted earlier, he crossed over into investigative, interpretive, and scholarly writing techniques. But some of these areas demand rigid rules of documentation or identification of sources (except in case of confidential sources where the writer must simply state that his sources are from confidential or personal sources). Youboty has taken the concept of writing the "I-was-there" accounts close to the limits. It is not always clear whether or not he is reporting events that he himself witnessed or he is telling of events that some other people told him. It seems that the "I-was-there" reporting was not enough for the writer; therefore, he ventured into other techniques of journalistic and scholarly writing. But he did not always draw the line between eyewitness reporting and secondhand recreation of events and other data other people told him. However, sometimes Youboty used a proper source of identification or documentation. He even has a list of sources on page 609, though the list is rather useless because the items on it lack some of the basic bibliographical data such as dates and places of publications and full names of authors of the publications; the list also does not include significant materials relevant to this era of Liberian historical and sociopolitical analysis.

Youboty did a pretty good job at identifying some of his sources; some examples are on pages 223-226 and 234; on these pages he clearly indicates either that he was there with his own eyewitness reporting, or he provides the sources of his information. Also, for important passages like meetings, press conferences, and exchanges of dialogues, readers will find that pages 179, 222, and 278

were properly handled. But in some places like on page 182, he reported events for which he failed to supply the essential journalistic "W's": the **whos**, **whats**, **whens**, **wheres**, and **whys**. Such omissions may impinge on the writer's objectivity, authenticity, and technical competency.

One of my last major critical statements is about the writer's interpretation of certain political news, his personal comments, and his use of words loaded with emotion. Some readers are going to quarrel with Youboty or even threaten him with libel law suits, or verbal attacks because of his personal comments on some key players of recent Liberian politics. Using words like henchwoman, selfish, jealous, and deceit in references to people in books can create problems for some writers. But it is difficult to write a book on such subjects as corruption, military governments, and civil wars without stepping on the toes of some people. Youboty's book is on hot topics of the Liberian society and the steam from this heat is surely going to burn some people.

Death Warrant

One question of interpreting sociopolitical events relates to the issue of the late President William R. Tolbert's intention of signing death warrants for members of the Progressive People Party (PPP) who were arrested and imprisoned. On pages 39 and 40, the writer noted that as President Tolbert was planning a foreign visit, "the popular PPP executives languished in jail awaiting a court trial." Then he said that a plan had been made that an Acting President in care of the Liberian government during Tolbert's absence from the country, was "given the authority to sign death warrants" for PPP members and officials in prison awaiting trial. The writer did not handle this piece of sensitive material (which includes rumors, unsubstantiated facts, and other confusing details) very properly.

The writer should have used his interpretive reporting skills to offer some explanations because this story has grown bigger since the 1980 coup and any writer touching on it should give all the sides to the story with great care. J. Gus Liebenow, in *Liberia; The Quest for Democracy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), touched on this subject briefly, but he offered some explanations and cited documented sources including a reference to an article in a news magazine. Skilled writers, journalists, or scholars on the Liberian political setting would not just throw this story into a book without properly treating it.

It is not clear that President William Tolbert could have left instructions for an official acting in his place to sign death warrants. This is not compatible with the practice of doing things in Liberia. Liberians do many wrong things, but they usually use some of the correct procedures of doing things. When government officials want to eliminate someone, like during the Doe military

regime, they would fake a coup attempt, announce it, arrest and detain suspects; then they would try, convict, and sentence the suspects to death even if it is in a kangaroo court. Shortly after the sentencing of the "convicted" alleged suspects, executions would take place, publicly or secretly. When Liberians want to put someone in a major public office like a president, they would hand-pick a candidate, announce elections, hold nominations, campaign (sometimes vigorously), hold elections, announce results, and inaugurate the person.

Liberians go through tedious formalities even if the results of what they are doing were a foregone conclusion. Now, based on this concept of doing things through the basic formalities, some sociopolitical analysts would doubt seriously that Tolbert could have left death warrants behind to be signed for people who had not been tried, convicted, and sentenced to death.

First, Tolbert had a politically controlled judiciary that could have found all the PPP members and officers guilty and sentenced to death. If Tolbert had the courts to do the dirty work of sentencing innocent people to death, why couldn't he wait to just sign the death warrants—which is but a presidential duty? Human rights organizations and many people would protest, but the protests could not capitalize on the signing of the warrants; they could focus on the judicial processes and the mockery of trials; if Tolbert would take any heat, it would be his not granting pardon to the people rushed through the courts.

Second, Tolbert was not a fool to execute people without trial or conviction or sentencing. Tolbert was aware of his international image as a religious leader of the Baptist World Alliance and as a peacemaker or negotiator in the OAU; he was also aware of the tension in the Liberian society at that time. Therefore, he would not have done anything irrational like this except perhaps at gunpoint or with a knife at his throat. Tolbert knew that if these PPP people were executed without trial or conviction, he alone would take the blame; he would be saving the necks of the judges and officials of the Justice Ministry. Why would Tolbert, who had taken lots of blames before, want to take blames again when there were people in the Justice Ministry and the Liberian Judiciary who could be made scapegoats? Why would Tolbert execute prisoners when Liberian (and other African) politicians have a history of leaving prisoners to languish in jail for years? What could have happened if the PPP people had been left in prison? As Youboty himself has reported on page 39, "President Tolbert said that all the alleged perpetrators were to get a speedy and fair trial and that those convicted were to face the full force of the law." Why couldn't Tolbert wait for the full force of the law?

And, finally, Tolbert was not a coward when it came to signing death warrants. He was not even in office for a year when he began to sign death

warrants. Whom would Tolbert had been afraid of to sign death warrants, that he had to delegate the signing to an acting official in his absence? Tolbert had signed some controversial death warrants in his administration, and technically speaking, nothing happened to him (except he took blames, cusses, and swearings from family members and political enemies).

The writer should have expanded on this material because many rumors, reports, and stories have grown around it. The subject needs a good journalistic investigation. Many Liberians want to know the full story, and a few paragraphs in a book like Youboty's *Liberian Civil War* is not doing any justice to this sensitive political subject. However, it is not necessary to make a big deal out of this story; it has become part of the larger story of the rise and fall of the Liberian nation. We can only point to technical, journalistic, and interpretative skills about writing on this subject.

A Question of Competence

My last points on Youboty's book include such things as the incorporation of dialogues, factual errors, and a few other stylistic flaws. I highly appreciate the inclusion of dialogues or conversations into both fictional and non-fictional works, but writers should do the incorporation with some skillfulness. Youboty has included numerous dialogues; if one were to figure out the percentage of space the dialogues have taken up, it would be about 35 percent of the book. The writer has captured voices of people on the streets, in offices, on radio, on television, on battlefronts, in military barracks, churches, and other places. The sheer number of dialogues is remarkable, but some readers will get confused because of the problems posed by the numerous dialogues; first, it is not always clear who is talking to whom; second, some of the dialogues are too sketchy and not very relevant to the thematic structure of the book.

On the question of factual errors, I did not go in the book hunting for minor mistakes (such as spelling errors, some of which are in Youboty's book). I read the book for an analysis of it. I personally do not look for errors that writers can easily blame on typists, typesetters, and proofreaders. Such factual errors as saying on page 15 that "America refused to recognize the independence of Liberia until 1865" (and not 1862) do not detract from the quality of the book. But sometimes factual errors may reflect on the writer's lack of diligence in proper checking of facts and figures of his or her works. Sometimes they may also indicate problems of authenticity, objectivity, and professional skill.

A Note on Ethnicity

Another point that is worth a passing reference is the revelation of the writer's ethnic identity. On page 225 and other pages in the book, Youboty identified himself as a Krahn man or that he belongs to the same ethnic group

as Samuel K. Doe, the key figure in the midst of all the upheavals of the last fifteen years of Liberian history. It was rather a sensible thing for the writer to come into the open with who he is; of course his ethnic background was going to surface at some point in time in the discussion of his book since some readers would know it anyhow. Some readers might say it was a good idea that he came forward with his true self, but some other readers might see this dramatic self-disclosure as a problematic factor on the credibility and objectivity of the writer. However, one must be careful with drawing conclusions based on the writer's personal identification. Youboty's book has many passages that have nothing to do with tribe, or tribalism, or even with Doe himself. The book has some great materials of factual reporting of events and analyses that do not show any ethnic biases. Belonging to a tribe or ethnic group is not an evil thing in itself; this is just like being a member of a race, nation, or society; these are facts of life that we have no control over because we do not select in advance what family, town, color, race, country, or tribe to be born into. We find ourselves in these social, cultural, national, and ethnic affiliations long after we were born into them.

Capturing Photographic Images of War and Peace in Liberia

The photographic achievement of Youboty in his book deserves some commendation; his visual recreation of aspects of Liberia's history is remarkable in a number of respects. Youboty's talent and skill in capturing a national sense of history of Liberia in visual images of people, places, and things have portrayed him more as a photographer than as a journalist or writer. His photographs (more than 166 of them in different sizes and postures) are important because they tell stories of Liberia from the founding of the nation to the present--up to the civil war. The photographs reveal faces of people who helped to build the Liberian nation; but they also show faces of people who helped to destroy the Liberian society. The faces of Liberians who closed the door to peace and opened the door to war are lying side by side with faces of Liberians who strived for peace, stability, and socioeconomic development for all Liberians.

Some of the faces are historic and easy to identify such as Presidents J. J. Roberts, E. J. Roye, Charles D.B. King, William V. S. Tubman, and William R. Tolbert, Jr.; some are new, restless, dangerous, and fiery looking such as Charles Taylor, Prince Johnson, and Alhaji Kromah. Some were presidential hopefuls like Edward B. Kesselly, Jackson F. Doe, and William Gabriel Kpolleh, who never made it to the Executive Mansion before the civil war. Some of the faces are intellectuals like Amos Sawyer, Togba-Nah Tipoteh, Boima Fahnbulleh, and Mary Antoinette Brown Sherman; many are warriors and soldiers both from Liberia and other West African countries in the ECOMOG forces; few of the faces are of women and children, including those dead and dying from the

brutality, famine, and starvation of the Liberian Civil War.

The photographic images also captured faces of people who are not Liberians, but who have been plunged into the recent affairs of the Liberian nation. They include former American Presidents Ronald Reagan and Jimmy Carter; former Nigerian President Ibrahim Babangida; former U. N. Secretary-General Javier Peres de Cuellar; American Civil Rights Leader Jesse Jackson; Pope John Paul II (seen praying for peace in Liberia), and Israeli government leaders including President Herzog. Youboty also captured the faces of artists, musicians and journalists such as Vanjah Richard, Zack Roberts, and Kloh Hinneh.

The photographic works of Youboty also includes places and things. Among the places of conspicuous importance is the Executive Mansion (both the old and the new ones). The Mansion has been the seat of government for years and several decisions about the fate of the country and the people of Liberia have been made here. Planning for peace and war took place in this historic building. Pictures of other important places include bank, church, and government buildings. Among the things or objects is the statue of "The Unknown Soldier" by Liberian veteran artist Vanjah Richard (one of the fatal victims of our bloody war). Some of the memorable photographs include starving, wounded, sick, and dead children, some of the most tragic victims of the civil war; child soldiers with machine guns that are half of their body weights; skulls of many persons who have lost their lives in the war; rioting scenes in the streets during the April 14, 1979 rice riots; Samuel K. Doe's first national address to the Liberian people after the April 1980 coup; Doe's mutilated and tortured body, lying in public at a Bushrod Island medical clinic; the body of Thomas Quiwonkpa on public display at the Barclay Training Center in Monrovia; ECOMOG amphibious and war tanks and other military weapons in the streets of Monrovia.

All in all the photographs depict the rise and fall of the Liberian nation; the coming and going of the First Republic, and the vacuum that lies between the Old Liberia (before the war) and the New Liberia (that will come after the war). The many faces of historic and non-historic figures include many who have died, some dying for Liberia, others dying for other reasons; the faces also include people who are still alive, but who should have been dead along with those they have killed. Some readers will notice omissions like Edward W. Blyden, Edwin J. Barclay, Louis Arthur Grimes, D. Tweh, H. Too Wesley, Bai T. Moore, Yatta Zoe, and some great Paramount Chiefs from various ethnic or tribal groups; however, no writer can satisfy every reader's taste in selection, inclusion, or exclusion of materials.

A few concluding words

James Youboty's *Liberian Civil War* (1993) is a grand attempt to document the bloody armed confrontations among Liberians. It is one of the serious and ambitious attempts to meet the challenge of chronicling the Liberian Civil War. The hundreds of pages, dozens of chapters, and some 166 photographs of Liberian people, places and things make the book an important publication on Liberia. The book is a daring attempt to juxtapose eyewitness reporting over investigative and interpretative methods of journalistic writing; it is also an ambitious attempt to super-impose factuality on rumors, opinions, justifications of violent and criminal behaviors, and voices of people from the streets and many other places.

The principal significance of the book is its resourcefulness. Youboty's book is a work of events, facts, rumors, dialogues, intrigues, violence, hate, genocide or ethnic cleansing, and other recent tragic events of Liberian history. The book also contains a myriad of other types of materials such as historical and sociopolitical data that will give readers and future writers on the Liberian Civil War much to work with.

The challenging task of writing authentic, serious, and comprehensive studies of Liberia might begin with the chronicling of the civil war. Liberians have a challenge to write well-documented, definitive studies in major academic disciplines and principal areas of the society, culture, and people of Liberia. Such definitive studies still await us--including me, one of the waiters, and one of those people are waiting on to produce major literary works on Liberia. I hope that some writers, journalists, and scholars from Liberia will take up this challenge and produce great literary and scholarly works for Liberia--in the nearest future.

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Trends in Government Deficits in the Liberian Economy From 1912 to 1990; Implications For Fiscal Policy in Post Civil War Liberia.

Jacob Pereira-Lunghu

Introduction

Modern States, irrespective of their origin¹, are characterized by formal governments that oversee the administrative functions of the State carried out by agents who must be remunerated. Governments derive their revenue from taxes, rents and dues, printing of fiat money, or borrowing either domestically or externally; but borrowing, printing of fiat money and taxation have their undesirable side effects in the economy.

Thus the existence and functioning of every government will undeniably depend on a certain revenue base. What cannot be claimed to be common among States is their ability to either generate, use productively, or to manage these revenues. Part of the problem is that the State bureaucrat is an endogenous maximizer of returns (power, position, votes, etc.) who, in a democratic setting, must have to satisfy certain politically effective coalitions in order to endure periodic reelection constraints (Niskanen, 1971; Von Mises, 1944; Tullock, 1965).² Thus in seeking to optimize his own interest, the politician impacts upon the entire economic system through fiscal policy. This partly explains why it is difficult to balance public budgets.

In general, however, when public expenditures turn out to be more than expected revenues it makes urgent the question of deficit financing. The search for revenues by the State to finance public deficits may carry along far-reaching implications for the economy in terms of its evolution and structure.

In a *laissez-faire* economy with its emphasis on private ownership of resources, it is believed that the crowding-out of private investment in the economy by possible excesses of the State in its search for revenues, can be avoided through balanced budgets.

The advent of Keynesian economics since the 1930s has however implied an ever growing need for State revenue for normative, counter-cyclical policies. This may be accomplished by the use of revenue generated either partly through taxation or public borrowing (Keynes, 1936).

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Under Marxist ideology, because of the notion of inevitable class conflict between labor and capital in the capitalist system, State ownership of the means of production gives the State direct access to both resources and revenue (Richman, 1965).

The need for State revenue often motivates groups of individuals to conquer other groups so as to have either direct or indirect control of their political, cultural and social lives as well as human and non-human resources.

Finally, the search for State revenue may often result in enclave-economies in which private investors are more interested in profit generation than in intersectoral integration of the economy, while the policy makers often have a vested interest in further development of the enclaves because of the personal convenience, pressure to show results quickly, and the need to secure foreign exchange earnings for an allegedly development project (Ake, 1986).

The Case of Liberia

The purpose of this article is to take a look at the nature and causal factors of government budget crises and their possible implications in the Liberian economy.

Since its inception, the Liberian State seems to have been subjected to a series of revenue crises in the form of government budget deficits. Brown (1941) is accredited with having scholarly narrated these revenue crises, while the potential implications of such crises for the economy was somewhat alluded to by McLaughlin (1966) who noted that the behavior of the iron ore royalty payments along with taxes paid by other concessions held the key to success of Liberia's economic development. Dunn (1979), writing about Liberia's foreign policy, made mention of how accommodative the Liberian State was to direct foreign investment which had become a major source of government revenue. Kraaij (1983), using secondary sources such as Brown, recounts these budget crises up to the late 1970s. Since then, very little has been written on the possible new trends of government deficits in the Liberian economy.

In its first four sections, this paper extends the period of analysis from 1912 up to 1990. In its fifth section, the author suggests means of avoiding some of the fiscal problems inherent in past government budget deficits in post civil war Liberia for ensuring a more sustainable economy; followed by some concluding remarks.

Explaining the Nature and Causal Factors of the Budget Crises in the Liberian Economy

Even though the revenue crises of the Liberian State can be traced as far back as the 1800s we shall only take a look at five of these revenues crises: the 1912 up to 1926 revenue crises, those that followed in 1945, 1963, 1968-1969, and 1980-1990.

In 1912, the Liberian State could not balance its budget. Between 1913-1917, Liberian exports had fallen from a high level of \$1,288,915 to \$618,536, a decrease of more than 50 percent. This happened largely because the British had instituted a sea blockade of Liberia for its neutral policy in the war against Germany. Germany also severed its relations with Liberia when Liberia joined the Allies and declared war on Germany in 1917 (The Secretary of the Treasury, 1919). The Liberian State never really benefitted from having taken sides in that conflict; it neither boosted its exports nor ensured any inflow of foreign aid. One thing is clear, though, about this incident: the desire to ease out of the state revenue constraints arising from Liberia's neutrality in the war drew the Liberian State into that war at the cost of endangering her own sovereignty.

Between 1917-1926 even though the Liberian State continued to borrow from British banks, borrowing from the U.S. government had become increasingly difficult because of the accumulated debt service and salary arrears. It is against this background of financial stress that led to the granting in 1926 of concession rights to Firestone Rubber Plantation to establish its corporation in Liberia. This concession was tied to a loan agreement of \$5 million to cover Liberia's public debt that stood at \$2 million at the time (Akpan, 1975a; 1975b).

In 1945, total reported expenditures of \$2,041,999 exceeded revenues by \$108,293. There followed the 1946-1950 Development Plan which the National Treasury could not finance from domestic resources. The Liberian State presented the plan to the U.S. Government with a request for assistance which it failed to secure. The following year, in a bid to attract more direct foreign investment, the Liberian State through its Press Release of September, 1947, reaffirmed publicly its unabated commitment to its Open Door Policy (Sherman, C.D., 1948). Through this major policy package, the Liberian State continued to show its generosity toward direct foreign investment. The policy attracted hundreds of millions of United States dollars worth of investment into the extractive mining sector; five mining companies started operation as a result of the Open Door Policy. Between 1960-62, direct private investment in this sector was a little over \$200 million (Research Staff of the National Bank of Liberia, 1985). The rubber and mining sectors were to remain the mainstays of the Liberian economy and sources of state revenues for a long time.

Thus the search for state revenues in the early 1920s and 1940s must have influenced the shape and form of government financial policies, and the direction in which national resources were to be used.

In 1963, with an annual total revenue of less than \$40 million, the Liberian State faced a public debt amounting to nearly \$135 million in principal, with an additional \$34 million in interest (Qureshi et.al., 1964). The crisis which was partly the result of a fall in prices of iron ore and partly due to a delay in the construction of the Swedish American Mining Enterprise (LAMCO), made it difficult for Liberia to secure the expected royalties from the iron ore sector in that year.

It is this financial crisis that led to the gradual development of an Investment Incentive Code which was completed and enacted in 1966 (Kraaij, 1983). This Code, which is the embodiment of the Open Door Policy, was aimed at further attracting new direct foreign investment to generate additional revenues for the treasury. In addition, cuts in expenditures, the enforcement of existing tax legislation and the improvement of administration were undertaken at the same time, without much success, however.

Rubber and mining activities generated lots of employment. LAMCO alone had a work force of 4,500 employees in 1973. These two industries also generated a lot of government revenue. For example, government revenue increased from \$3.8 million in 1950 to \$36.2 million in 1962 (Bekely, 1973). The Open Door Policy and its Investment Incentive Code of 1966 also attracted investment in retail shops (Geijer and Winefred, 1964) and small scale enterprises (National Workshops on Industrial Strategy, 1988) out of which a small scale manufacturing sector producing batteries, shoes, petroleum products, oxygen, explosives, chemicals, etc., accounted for 8 percent of the Gross Domestic Product in the 1970s.

The foregoing analysis on the budget crises of the Liberian State seems to reveal two important propensities: One is the extreme reliance on foreign resources (trade and direct foreign investment) to solve underlying state revenue crises. The other is the borrowing of money from incoming foreign concessions in anticipation of royalties.

On theoretical grounds, this paper advances that the strategies of calling for direct foreign investment to solve underlying state revenue crises, and of borrowing money from incoming foreign concessions in anticipation of royalties may weaken the negotiating capacity of the recipient country because it puts the latter in no position of strength vis-a-vis the donor

country. Strong negotiating capacity on the part of the country receiving foreign aid often enables it to set its own terms of agreement with the donor country (Doornbos and Gertsch, 1994).

The above argument need not apply to the Liberian situation. However, others have indicated that the alleged weak negotiating capacity of the Liberian government particularly during the 1960s may be attributed to corruption and lack of commitment to national development. Because of the inequitable nature of the concession agreements, the United Nations in the 1970s provided legal experts in international mining agreements to assist the Liberian government renegotiate these agreements. However, because of corruption and lack of commitment to the national interest, the government did not fully utilize the services offered.³

The 1968-1969 Budget Crisis as a Prelude to a New Turning Point

The 1968-1969 period may be considered as the beginning of a new turning point for the Liberian State in terms of its inability to further attract new direct foreign investment, and a shift of emphasis from rubber and iron ore to timber and smallholder farming as sources of government revenue.

In that period, the Liberian State was faced with a deficit of \$4 million and at one point could not pay employees. In 1967 the country's iron ore profits were eaten up by its debt payments (Draggs, 1970).

As the situation continued, the financial crisis was exacerbated in the 1970s by a drastic fall in revenue from iron ore and rubber exports due to fluctuations in prices on the world market as a result of the global economic crisis, and the recession in some industrial countries. The 1973 oil crisis added momentum to this already deteriorating economic scenario.

The final outcome was that in 1977 the Liberian Mining Company, the oldest iron ore mine, closed down, while the other three iron ore mining companies (the National Iron Ore Company, the American Swedish Mining Company, and the Bong Mining Company) were on the brink of bankruptcy as they continued to sustain losses in their operations (Kraaij, 1983).⁴

Acting within its tradition, the Liberian State made attempts to secure new direct foreign investment in the untapped Wologish iron ore deposits in Lofa County. The project however could not materialize because (1) the investment needs were estimated at \$1 billion (Ministry of Finance, 1976/1977); (2) infrastructural development necessitated large investments; (3) the

Japanese group of investors insisted that the Liberian State should bear the cost of developing the needed roads and railways leading to the seaport of Monrovia (Jones, 1972); (4) slump in the world steel industry in the mid-1970s. Many observers however have noted that the Liberian State provided enough incentives to override any reasons to postpone investment (Kraaij, 1983). The incentives were:

- (a) a depletion allowance with a maximum of 50% of gross income;
- (b) contractual freedom of exchange control regulations;
- (c) freedom from customs duties, excise taxes, etc;
- (d) tax deductions on all payments to the government except corporate income taxes;
- (e) a government-controlled trade union organization;
- (f) the absence of an obligation to supply a portion or the whole of the production to a Liberian steel company.

Another question that needs to be answered is whether the Japanese Group was really interested in actual mining or simply in buying the iron ore.

However, one or two important lessons seem to emerge from this episode: 1) Unlike in the past, the strategy of extreme generosity in giving incentives does not always attract direct foreign investment (Lim, 1994). 2) Foreign firms may not only be attracted by the availability of Liberia's natural resources and long-term political stability, but partly by the efficiency of the transportation and communication infrastructure (Hobday, 1994). 3) Other factors such as financing, profitability and the world economy at large should be taken into account.

The Emergence of Smallholder Farming and Timber as New Sources of Government Revenue

The failure to attract Japanese investment to the untapped Wologish iron deposits in 1972 coupled with the decline of the domestic iron ore sector must have resulted in a policy shift from rubber and iron ore to timber and smallholder farming. It is this revenue crisis scenario of the early 1970s that preceded the conceptualization of the 1976-1980 National Socio-Economic Plan in 1974 designed to diversify the production base of the economy, among other things.

Table 1 : Government Revenue (in millions of current dollars)*

Tax Revenue	1977	1978	1979	1980	Average Percent- age Change	1981	1982	1983	Average Percent- age Change	1984	1985	1986	Average Percent- age Change
Iron Ore Profit Sharing	19.5	11.2	10.4	8.4	-11.9%	7.3	3.0	3.9	+0.35%	9.4	8.1	3.6	-8.35%
Stumpage Tax	5.6	7.9	9.3	11.2	+10.2%	6.2	4.4	4.0	+4.65%	3.4	3.7	2.9	+ 9.1%
Rubber Sales	1.0	2.1	1.1	1.9	+ 1.66%	1.5	0.8	--	N.A.	0.4	--	0.1	N.A.

* This table does not include 17 other sources of government revenue.

Source: National Bank of Liberia, Annual Reports, 1978, p. 16; 1982, p. 18; 1984, p. 21; 1986, p. 15.
Computations of the average percentage changes were done by the author.

This plan was expected to bring on self-sufficiency in the production of rice for domestic consumption, thus helping the state save heavy amounts of foreign exchange used in the importation of rice; while cocoa and coffee production were to expand the export basis of foreign exchange earnings. Under this development plan, about three Integrated Agricultural Development Projects (in Bong, Nimba, and Lofa Counties) were created to work with smallholder production schemes of cocoa, coffee and rice.

The financial implications of this plan were that the Liberian State embarked upon a scheme of heavy borrowing from international circles to finance the total planned expenditure of \$712 million. Of this amount, 36.0 percent was allocated to infrastructure and, surprisingly, 26.0 percent to the construction works for the hosting of the Summit Meeting of the Heads of States of the Organization of African Unity by Liberia in 1979. 19.0 percent went to social and regional development.

These loans, some contracted at interest rates of over 10.0 percent per year, and others on a short grace period, were feared to have serious future reverse flow effects on the capacity of the Liberian State to finance needed development directly (Jeffy, 1975; Akpa, 1979). Besides, it is argued that foreign loans do have a tax-effort-reduction effect on the recipient country (Heller, 1975). Likewise, foreign capital inflows are viewed by many as having contributed less to growth through increases in public or private consumption of most of the less developed countries (Weisskopf, 1972a; Papanek, 1973; Griffin et. al., 1970). And in this particular instance, some observers have questioned the desirability of allocating 26.0 percent of the budgetary resources to the hosting of the OAU Summit (Kraaij, 1983).

Within this period, timber had also become one of the most visible resources and a leading export earner of foreign exchange. The overall number of forestry concessions were on the increase. Between 1957-1977, 33 timber companies exploited the country's rich forests on the basis of timber concession agreements. In 1988, the number of such companies stood at 46.

In 1978/79 the state income taxes from wood and forestry amounted to \$15.3 million, exceeding the other two concession sectors, iron ore (U.S. \$14.7 million) and rubber (U.S. \$7.9 million). The share in sales proceeds from wood and forestry achieved during this period was 25.5 percent while those of iron ore and rubber were 4.8 percent and 9.0 percent respectively (FGU Kronberg Consulting and Engineering, 1982).

Table 1 (p. 22) shows that on the average, during the 1977-1980 period, while government revenue in the form of iron ore profit sharing decreased by

Table 2: Outstanding Domestic and Foreign Debts (in millions of dollars)

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988
Domestic Debt	95.1	156.0	206.1	258.3	335.0	363.0	378.5	412.6	459.4	507.0
Foreign Debt	350.5	435.8	498.2	511.4	559.7	585.1	982.1	1121.0	1306.4	1427.1

Source: Government Finance Statistics, YEARBOOK, IMF, 1993; p. 341.

11.9 percent, the revenues from stumpage tax increased by 10.2 percent. In the period 1981-1983, while iron ore profit sharing improved by less than one percent (0.35 percent), the stumpage tax recorded a positive percentage change of 4.65 percent. In the period 1984-1986, iron ore profit sharing again recorded a decline of 8.32 percent while stumpage tax recorded a positive average change of 9.1 percent.

Deficit Financing Through Printing of Fiat Money in the 1980s

The year 1980 was marked by capital flight and a lack of fiscal discipline that followed the military takeover. In 1986, the economy registered an average annual growth rate of 1.0 percent out of the projected growth rate of 6.8 percent, but an overall negative average growth rate of -2.8 percent between 1980 and 1986 (Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs, 1979; 1986). The decline in government revenue during this period was due to a combination of several factors: capital flight, lack of fiscal discipline, and decline in economic activity.

Unable to meet monthly payrolls, the Liberian State had to mint a five dollar coin in 1982 to assist in the financing of government domestic debt and expenditures as well as to provide the public with sufficient money for daily transactions (Tubman, 1986). The minting of the five dollar coin further reinforced the disappearance of the U.S. dollar bill through Gresham's Law⁵ and caused the prices of imported commodities to rise (X-Ray Magazine, 1986). And soon there developed a parallel market for the U.S. dollar.

Domestic and International borrowing continued at an alarming rate. By 1984, Liberia had incurred an outstanding foreign debt of \$581.1 million and a domestic debt of \$363.0 million. By 1988, Liberia's foreign debt stood at \$1,427.1 million and the domestic debt at \$507.0 million (see Table 2 and the International Monetary Fund Yearbook, 1993.)

When the Liberian State could not honor its debt commitments, international donors suspended all new loans to Liberia. This decision resulted in a halt of all the externally funded projects in the country such as the Integrated Agricultural Development Projects which had been designed in the late 1970s to generate state revenue from coffee and cocoa exports.

Failure to attract new foreign investment, coupled with the decline in the iron ore profit sharing which registered an average percentage change of -8.35% in 1986, and the failure of the Integrated Agricultural Development Projects, had narrowed the revenue base of the Liberia State to the timber sector. Stumpage tax registered an average percentage change of about +9.1% between 1984-1986 and, as of 1988, the number of such companies had increased from 33 to 46.

This situation poses the immediate question of how sustainable the timber industry could be as a viable source of government revenue in post civil war Liberia. Experience has shown that in the 1970s, because of the personal interest of high ranking public officials had in the timber industry, foreign concessions failed to comply with timber concession laws (Kraaij, 1983). Mass deforestation is therefore possible in the nearest future unless pressure from the global environmental movement to preserve the 'rain forest' ensures adherence to the legal requirements.

Policy Options and Strategies to Strengthen the Production Base of the Economy as a Source of Government Revenue in Post Civil War Liberia

The Future of Agriculture: With the eminent phasing out of some of the mining concessions, timber resources could easily get depleted. Besides, farming through the Integrated Agricultural Development Projects (IADP) might not be viable because: (1) farmers become indebted to these projects within a state-controlled relation of production (William, 1981).⁶ In the Liberian case, government credit cooperatives that operated under the IADP were faced with serious problems of recovering loans extended to farmers in the 1980s (Ministry of Agriculture - Bong County Agricultural Development Project Annual Reports, 1984/1985); (2) IADP does not guarantee rural transformation since, in the Liberian case, the evaluation criterion of these projects became the achievement of production targets of rice, cocoa and coffee to be met by smallholders. Many would question the validity of such an approach under the circumstances. One would expect changes in production techniques and organization to be the most accurate measure of agricultural progress rather than the mere attainment of production targets by peasants (Oluwasanni, 1966). For in this context, agricultural development calls for a simultaneous increase in productivity and rural transformation. Increases in productivity guarantee adequate production of food and agricultural exports but rural transformation should guarantee those in rural areas some access to national resources and ensure their participation in those areas of decision making that are vital to their livelihood (Mabogunje, 1984); (3) Many authors (Wrigley, 1959; Berry, 1983; Hyden, 1986) have argued that as long as African states, through their governments and agricultural extension services, adopt this *top-down* approach to agricultural development, they may fail to motivate farmers who might perceive these policies as detrimental to their own interests. For example, farmers may perceive these policies as sources of coercive taxation and forced labor. This insight might be instructive to a country like Liberia with a long history of coercive taxation of those in the rural areas (Glower et. al., 1966); (4) in smallholder cash cropping, labor productivity remains the same as in traditional agriculture. And even though it generates accumulation and enterprise on a small scale, it may not generate an agricultural surplus because

its activities are not structurally differentiated according to a strategy of specialized production nor is labor specialized (Hart, 1982).

This might lead the Liberian State to becoming an agrarian capitalist entrepreneur through the formation of state farms. This, however, remains to be seen and, moreover, with the exception of the often-cited successful Gezira Project in the Sudan (Gaitskell, 1959), empirical evidence seems to suggest that state farms have not been too successful in Africa. The list of failures is quite long (Hance, 1967; Seabrook, 1957).⁷

Irrespective of the existing arguments for or against small and large scale farming (Drake, 1952; Schickele, 1941; Heady, 1947; Johnston and Kilby, 1975; Ellis, 1988; Uchendu, 1975; Levi, 1979; Levi and Havinden, 1982; Lele, 1975; Hart, 1982; Johnston, 1982), an alternative is to adopt a bimodal strategy of agricultural development. In most cases small farms are used to produce market supplies of domestic food crop while large farms produce traditional export crops (Venezian and Gamble, 1969; Ruttan and Binswanger, 1978; Kanel, 1975; Levy, 1966; Jaeger, 1992).⁸ This can be achieved by encouraging joint-private efforts. The existing results on the early attempts to mechanize rice farming in Foya, Lofa County, in the 1970s are indicative of possible large-scale capitalist farming in Liberia. The Foya project, which was under the management of the Agricultural Development Company, International, cleared 2,500 acres of lowland and swamp land and 1,000 acres of irrigated fields. This project had the potential to triple the yield per acre. The returns per acre of upland rice ranged between \$3.36 and \$51.16; and those of irrigated swamp between \$34.94 and \$321.74 (Ministry of Agriculture, 1972). The project was later abandoned.

The Need to Integrate the Industrial and Traditional Sectors of the Economy:

Liberia's pattern of industrial development has, for many years now, taken the form of an import substituting strategy. Overall industrial activities however never accounted for more than 8 percent of the GDP during the 1970s and were reported to be valued in nominal terms, at \$53.7 million, in 1978 (Pereira-Lunghu, 1992). This strategy leads to stagnation and underutilization of capacity because of balance of payment problems, as the Ghanaian experience and that of other countries with import substitution policies show (Steel, 1972).⁹ There is a need to turn the import substituting industry into one that will be resource based, while the neglected traditional crafts sector complements it in order to fully utilize indigenous technologies which are resource based (local materials and skills) (Staley et.al., 1965; Bryce, 1960; Reynolds, 1975; and recently, Byrd and Qingsong, 1990).

The integration of both the industrial and traditional sectors of the economy must be buttressed by an active domestic technology policy package that finds expression in an educational programme with greater emphasis on skill building through vocational and technical institutions as opposed to general education (Hetzler, 1969; Unoh, 1972; Lim, 1994).

Expanding Liberia's Industrial Frontier Through Economic Co-operation:

Liberia could also seek to expand her own domestic industrialization frontier region even though African regional integration has always been an object of controversy (Robson & Lury, 1969; Lipsey, 1960; Hance, 1967; Rothchild, 1968; Robson, 1968; Hazlewood, 1967; and Adedeji, 1979).

In the area of agricultural products, Liberia should also take advantage of the existing opportunities with some of its trading partners, i.e. Europe (Germany, France and Belgium) and Asia (Japan). These are reliable external markets for wood-based panel (International Trade Center UNCTAD/GATT, 1987).¹⁰ The European Economic Community (EEC) countries also are good markets for tropically-grown fruits and vegetables, African textile and art, provided they are of high quality (La-Anyane, 1985). There is also an opportunity for South-South economic activity with other African, South American, and Asian countries.

The Budget as an Instrument for Attracting Domestic and Foreign Investment:

The experience of the Asian countries seems to indicate that direct foreign investment is attracted by the efficiency of the transportation and communications infrastructure, the supply of human resources (Hobday, 1994), sound fiscal, monetary and budgetary policies in the form of improvement in the overall government budget balance, and increases in the real interest rate which encourage domestic savings. Monetary policies are expected to keep the inflation rate low and the real interest rate high, while judiciously resorting to foreign borrowing (Lim, 1994).

Such are the lessons to be learned from Asia! Unfortunately, post-civil war Liberia will have to contend with a \$1,427.1 million foreign debt and \$507.0 million in domestic debt (1988 figures). Payments of these debts will increase government consumption and decrease gross domestic savings. Already, between 1984 and 1986, gross domestic savings was less than \$100 million per year, in real terms, since gross savings ranged from 202.5 to 236.4 million Liberian dollars at current prices. This is not likely to close the gap between planned savings and investment. Our projection indicates that a projected gross

domestic output of \$980.4 million for the year 2000 (at 1971 constant prices) would require \$650.12 million in gross fixed investment (Pereira-Lunghu, 1993).

Liberia's budget needs some restructuring so that salary arrears and accumulated debt service do not become recurring phenomena as in the past. Data on Liberian budgets reveal some inertia on the part of policy makers to cut down government expenditure in the face of a declining revenue base. For example, in the 1980s while state revenue fell approximately by \$23.98 million per year, its expenditures fell only by \$14.629 million, and government net borrowing was therefore increasing at \$9 million per year (Pereira-Lunghu, 1989).

There are a number of studies showing the inadequate performance of public enterprises in Liberia due to political intervention in the enterprises, scarcity of skilled managers and several other factors (Report of the Comptroller-General, 1978; International Labour Organization Report, 1986).¹¹ In post-civil war Liberia, the 1986 report of the National Review Commission should be revived and implemented on (a) divestiture or liquidation of public enterprises, (b) improved systems for monitoring and evaluating enterprise performance, and (c) improved procedures for policy development, among others. These structural changes coupled with an internal management development program would promote and improve efficiency and the revenue generation capacity of these enterprises, helping to lower the size of the overall public deficit by reducing transfers to these enterprises.

A restructured public budget therefore should cut down on conspicuous and wasteful government consumption to improve its financial management, while reorienting its expenditure patterns to raise the quality of its services such as primary and secondary education, health, transportation infrastructure, and research and extension, among others.

One strategy that may help in the restructuring of the public budget is the Wicksellian (1896)¹² way: to submit alternative financing and spending proposals to a public vote so that the approved budget would be the result of choice on the part of the public and the State rather than the result of endogenous dictates of a 'council of decision makers' alone.

One may argue however that this recommendation does not appear to be realistic given the Republican form of government with three branches that is provided for under the Liberian Constitution. Notwithstanding, we think that a referendum on, say, whether to undertake large-scale borrowing of money from international bodies is one way of meeting the suggested Wicksellian approach. Former President Ibrahim Babangida of Nigeria had such a referen-

dum in the initial days of his presidency and it won him support from the Nigerian public. Also, in Ghana under the present constitution, the government, through television, newspapers and radio has earnestly tried to encourage the public to submit in writing to the Parliament Secretariat their views on major bills to be debated in Parliament.

It has been noted that Liberia's public deficit records between 1912 and the early 1970s reveal a high correlation between calls for foreign investment and the underlying state revenue crises on the one hand, and state borrowing from incoming foreign concessions in anticipation of royalties from these concessions on the other.

Such strategies should be reversed as they do not place the recipient country in a position of strength in terms of capacity to negotiate vis-à-vis the donor country. For the Liberian case, however, it is recognized that the negotiating capacity of the State, particularly during the 1970s, was mostly affected by corruption and lack of commitment to national development. To this end, there is need for an effective legal order that strengthens democratic channels to all in society. Such an order would ensure that decision making to solve vital problems that affect everyone's livelihood is made by all in society — the governors and the governed. The governed should demand accountability from those entrusted with public offices to handle the State finances and other resources and charged with the administrative functions of the State to protect and maintain law and order (Seidman, 1978). The governors must provide enlightened leadership with a motivation to build a prosperous nation, as a goal.

Conclusion

By expanding the period of analysis on the budget crises of the Liberian State up to 1990 and probably beyond, this paper has added a new dimension to the analysis of trends in government deficits in the Liberian economy. The present analysis brings into focus the extent to which the search for State revenue may influence the shape and form of government financial policies; the direction in which national resources are used up in the economy, and possible impact of uncontrollable public deficits on the economy. The final bad news is the shrinking economic base of State revenue which has occurred over time.

The paper has offered policy options and strategies which could address some of the fiscal problems inherent in past government budget deficits in post-civil war Liberia for ensuring a more sustainable economy.

Endnotes

¹States are born out of either conquest (Nadel's theory), contract (Hobbes' theory) or conflict (Bodin's theory). States born out of conquest are maintained by force; States born out of social contract are the result of an agreement by men to accept a common power which limits some of their egoistic liberties which otherwise put men in continuous fear, in favor of peace. See Elman R. Service, 1975. *Origins of the State and Civilization: The Process of Cultural Evolution*. New York: W.N. Norton and Company. Inc.

²See Robert B. Ekelund, Jr. and Robert F. Hebert, 1990. *A History of Economic Theory and Method*. New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc.

³The discussions suffered a serious setback with the plane crash in April, 1975. The renegotiations were discontinued after his death. See "Report on the Status of the Renegotiation of the 1926 Planting Agreement of Firestone Fire and Rubber Company" by Gerald Padmore, Acting Chairman, Concession and Investment Commission, September 13, 1975.

⁴In 1978 LAMCO reported a loss of about \$16 million whereas B.M.C. suffered a \$20 million loss in that year. This meant that government revenue in the coming years looked grim as the companies would carry forward these losses.

⁵Gresham's Law states that bad money drives good money away. In this case the new Liberian five dollar coin drove the U.S. dollar away.

⁶See Richards, P. 1985. *Indigenous Agricultural Revolution Ecology and Food Production in West Africa*. Boulder: Westview Press.

⁷The Damongo or Gonja Scheme in Ghana; the Mokwa Scheme in Nigeria; The Niger Project in Mali; the Ankole Ranching Scheme in Uganda; the Paysannoat Indigene Systems of Kongo-Kinshasa; the Saynnerton Plan and the Land Settlement Scheme in Kenya. Add to this list the notorious groundnut Scheme in Tanganyika.

⁸Other sources are Gleave, 1977; Shepherd, 1981. See Richards P. 1985. *Indigenous Agricultural Revolution Ecology and Food Production in West Africa*. Boulder Westview Press.

⁹Import substituting strategies are based on the importation of raw materials, and therefore generate very little local employment. It is mostly based on the consumption patterns of the city dwellers, thus failing to fully tap the existing domestic market potentials.

¹⁰Developing countries enjoy duty free entry under the Generalized Systems of Preference.

¹¹See Jacob Pereira-Lunghu, 1988. "Approaches to Improving Management and Efficiency in Public and Private Enterprises." Paper delivered at the Joint Seminar on Privatization held at the Liberian Chamber of Commerce, Monrovia, Liberia, on December 15.

¹²See Robert B. Ekelund, Jr. and Robert F. Herbert, 1990. *A History of Economic Theory and Method*. New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc.

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**Pragmatic Pluralism for Intercultural Unity and Education in Liberia:
Literature for Children**

Elaine Armour Wolo

Introduction

The Republic of Liberia, located on the western bulge of the African coast, was known as the Grain Coast until it was declared a sovereign republic in 1847 [See cover of this Journal]. Dunn and Tarr report that:

... over a period spanning several centuries, various cultural speakers are said to have entered the Grain Coast in successive waves in response to sociopolitical and economic disturbances in the great Sudanic empires. (1988:9)

These cultural speakers moved about freely, trading, communicating in their indigenous languages, conducting schools, ceremonies of life/death, and religious activities. This lifestyle was interrupted intermittently by explorers from other lands, slave traders, and intertribal warfare. When the slave-trade began to subside, some of the Africans who had traveled to the United States and Europe via the slave-trade returned to West Africa.

This paper discusses pragmatic applications in literature for intercultural unity and education in one of the nations formed as a result of former Africans returning to Africa as free people from another land. These settlers/repatriates from the United States

went to Liberia as cultural Americans. This was not a group going back to Africa, but rather a group going to Africa for the first time. (Holsoe and Herman, 1988:17)

Descended from parents born in the United States, they, like other Americans, were imbued with American ethnocentrism — especially since any vestige of any possible “Africanness” was systematically discouraged during the system of slavery. Holsoe and Herman present thoughts included in the Liberian Declaration of Independence:

Among the strongest motives to leave our native land — to abandon forever the scenes of our childhood, free from the

agitation of fear and molestation, we could, in composure and security approach in worship the God of our fathers [a Christian God]. . . (Holsoe and Herman, 1988:17)

Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria suggested over sixty years ago that Liberia should be very proud of its Constitution and its possibility of arousing the lethargy of Africans at home and abroad toward freedom and democracy, but warned that the document's failure to recognize the political acumen and the social and material cultures of indigenous Liberians would result in the persistent recurrence of the aboriginal problem in Liberian history (Azikwe, 1934:27).

C. E. Zamba Liberty, a Liberian historian, seems to agree with Azikwe. Quoted by Dunn and Tarr, he states that "within Liberia there are several Liberias and several Liberian pasts," (1988:27).

Holsoe and Herman (1988:18) indicate that indigenous Liberians were accepted into the settler/repatriate community and permitted to participate as equals only if they acculturated and accepted settler standards. This meant that they had to deny their cultural heritage.

In a study of colonial America, Beeman (*American Quarterly*, 1977:422-33) refers to Redfield's study where social organization of physical space held members of a particular community together but acculturation resulted from communication with persons in that space. In Liberia, settler communities were affected by the African people with whom they interacted and settlers acculturated to some of the practices of the indigenous people (Dunn and Tarr, 1988). Oral reports indicate that settlers adjusted their farming techniques to fit the tropical soil and adapted local foods. Dunn and Tarr (1988) state that rice became the main staple along with mangoes, bananas, and other tropical fruits. Further, the tripartite separation of powers spelled out in the Liberian Constitution gradually changed with the executive branch becoming the dominant segment, paralleling the indigenous system where all power was vested in a paramount chief, i.e., the president becoming the paramount chief of the nation. And, the Constitution may not have sanctioned the consolidation of power within the executive branch, but, in practice, it was condoned by both the settler/repatriate descendants and indigenous Liberians.

Thus the meaning and nature of cross-cultural communication has varied from the earliest beginnings of modern Liberia. This communication became a focus of the Liberian educational system without relevant texts and school materials to implement cross-cultural goals of education. Children

from several of the indigenous ethnic groups attended Poro and Sande Society schools, often referred to as *bush schools* where children were taught in indigenous languages and trained in life skills, following a preserved, secret curriculum, while parents rejected the attempts to enroll them in government or mission schools. A compulsory school attendance Act was passed but difficult to implement. Government schools continued to develop, using imported texts from Europe and the United States. Like Albert and Triandis (1985: 391-397) wrote, Liberian educators desired children to function in their culture of origin and in the new culture but without the means to effect the changes. Until recently, very few indigenous languages were written and a small percentage of materials used in schools presented Liberian culture from the Liberian point of view.

Against this backdrop, this writer, while an educator in Liberia, proposed materials for a multicultural curriculum using common elements of culture from the Liberian society. Proposed activities would leave room for children from the various groups to interact in their own languages at home while learning the English equivalent at school.

For children speaking English as a first language (settler/repatriate children and/or children of parents who learned English as a second language) there would be opportunities for them to acculturate experiences such as songs, stories, modes of dress, language, dance, styles of learning, hair styles, and foods. This approach to educating Liberian pupils will engender a sense of pride in them, their history and culture. All would learn basic elements of Liberian society experienced by most Liberians— important historical events, ways of life of the various indigenous and settler groups, seasons, climate, and other aspects. This would replace the imported texts where children learned of cities, climate, and peoples of the world before learning about their immediate African environment. Learning would proceed from familiar to unfamiliar rather than the reverse. At this writing, Liberia is in the *aftermath of a civil war* and participating in peace negotiations where intercultural issues must be considered if peace is to be certain, and civilian government a reality.

Definition of Terms

Terms used to describe Liberians are *settler/repatriate* for persons who came from the United States to settle in Liberia [sometimes referred to in the literature as Americo-Liberian or Congo people]; and, *indigenous/tribal* to describe persons directly descended from cultural groups that moved to the Grain Coast from other areas of Africa (Dunn and Tarr, 27).

The term, *pragmatic pluralism* was proposed by Dr. St. Clair Drake, an American sociologist, as a scheme to evaluate the diverse cultures of Africa,

especially those of emerging national states ruled by what he termed *African elite* (leaders, educated persons) and often comprised of peoples of varying levels of development and of several diverse cultures; suggestions that new elites have to decide what phases of their cultures they will defend, which they will ignore, and which they will denounce. Listing traits surviving from traditional African cultures and traits characteristic of new transitional societies, Drake defines *pragmatic pluralism*. Figure 1 defines pragmatic, pluralism, and the term, pragmatic pluralism. Characteristic of pragmatic pluralism (Drake, 1959,29) are detailed in Figure 2.

Figure 1

Definitions: Pragmatic, Pluralism, Pragmatic Pluralism

PRAGMATIC

of or relating to practical affairs; concerned with the practical consequences of actions or beliefs.

- Webster Dictionary

PLURALISM

a condition in which ethnic and other minority groups are able to maintain their identities in a society without conflicting with the dominant culture.

- World Book Dictionary

PRAGMATIC PLURALISM

a thought style "situationally congruous" with the kind of societies the new African elites are dealing with. . . a basic socio-cultural reality; an evaluative scheme of detached and careful studies of the customs of African peoples in order to make intelligent decisions.

- St. Clair Drake (1958, 29)

Table I. Judgments of Educated Elite from a Survey by St. Clair Drake
(Drake, 1958, 32)

JUDGMENTS OF EDUCATED ELITES	TRAITS SURVIVING FROM TRADITIONAL AFRICAN CULTURES	TRAITS CHARAC- TERISTIC OF THE NEW TRANSI- TIONAL AFRICAN SOCIETIES
HIGHLY DISAPPROVED	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. gustatory cannibalism 2. ritual cannibalism 3. Pharaonic operation 4. human sacrifice 5. sorcery/witchcraft 6. mutilations at initiation 7. inefficient technology 8. tooth filing and evulsion 9. pawning and slavery 10. consulting oracles for serious decisions 11. secret societies which murder 12. complete public nudity on the part of adults 13. inter-tribal warfare 14. cruel punishments 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. increasing sexual promiscuity 2. juvenile delinquency 3. gangsterism and hoodlumism 4. neglect of hygiene and sanitation 5. drunkenness 6. illiteracy 7. political apathy
MODERATELY DISAPPROVED	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. curing disease by magic 2. ornamental scarification 3. eating of foods which the West defines as disgusting 4. semi-nudity in public on the part of adults 5. polygyny 6. animal sacrifice 7. trial by ordeal 8. kin avoidance and other taboos 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. lack of thrift by masses 2. <frivolity> of youth 3. tendencies toward political dictatorship of new elites 4. half acculturated behavior in public 5. new professional and trade

**Table I cont.. Judgements of Educated Elite from a Survey by St. Clair Drake
(Drake, 1958, 32)**

JUDGMENTS OF EDUCATED ELITES	TRAITS SURVIVING FROM TRADITIONAL AFRICAN CULTURES	TRAITS CHARAC- TERISTIC OF THE NEW TRANSI- TIONAL AFRICAN SOCIETIES
APPROVED IF IT DOES NOT HAMPER PROGRESS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. excessive discussion of problems by elders 2. lavish hospitality 3. retention of native clothes 4. ancestor cult 5. matrilineality 6. marriage-gifts 7. celebration of funerals 8. extended family ties 9. communal land tenure 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. paid employment for urban women 2. voluntary associations 3. Christianity 4. Islam

Figure 4. Characteristics of Pragmatic Pluralism
(Drake, 1958, 29)

1) concedes that all of the varied Schemes for living on the African continent have had their usefulness but...faces the fact they are ...all suffering from social disorganization incident to accelerated contacts with the products of Western thought and technology and with Islam and Christianity.

2) implies the acceptance of responsibility on the part of intellectual and political elites within so-called backward and underdeveloped areas for trying to guide the process of reintegration ... pragmatic in that no fixed goals are set up, and no doctrinaire methods of dealing with change are accepted ... pluralistic in that it does not evaluate any one society and its cultural products as being more desirable than another, and it accepts the desirability, as well as the inevitability, of cultural diversity within the emerging new nations.

3) does not view social disintegration as an unmitigated evil, but rather as a dialectical process in which social disorganization. (Old culture forms are constantly undergoing modification because of the impact of outside ideas and because of changes induced from within the social system.)

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4) accepts only one value as the key value toward which all other values should be originated, and that value is the desirability of increasing the productive capacity of group and its per capita income and of raising the material standard of living of the people. All customs are judged first in reference to whether they do or do hamper the expansion of productive effort.

5) involves an eclectic approach toward specific borrowings from other societies. . . leads to a refusal to condemn either capitalist or socialist systems whole sale or to accept either in to.

6) accepts economic priority as a planning and engineering device, fully realizing that the new economic values are the real ends of human endeavor. . . [goals are not set; they grow] . . . recognizes that the media of mass communications and the agencies of rapid transportation, as well as political and commercial factors, have bound all the societies of the earth into one world, whether they like the fact or not. . . great debate goes on as to what kind of basic values all will eventually adhere to . . . tries to involve everyone in the debate. (Example: UN Economic and Social Council with representation from all over the world, debated to frame the Charter of Human Rights.)

Drake (1958, 29), derived his philosophy from judgments of educated elite tabulated in Table I. He determined that most of the traits listed as highly disapproved have already been eliminated, leaving the traits from transitional societies for today's populations.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s Liberian educators studied characteristics and traits from the several indigenous groups and settler groups to determine common items of culture to be used in the development of school textbooks. This research was used by this writer in the development of and/or revision of textual materials for the Armour Wolo Foundation (AWOFO), a private family business and school located in Kakata, Liberia. The writer was also a part of the textbook committee of the Ministry of Education, Liberia. After the 1980 *coup d'etat*, the writer conducted a survey to determine relevant items of culture necessary for education and unity in the changing Liberia. When parents, teachers, students and community persons responded, suggesting strongly that local culture and materials replace items from imported countries, Wolo's materials were again revised, as appropriate, and produced for Kindergarten through Grade 3— for teaching colors, months of the year, holidays, riddles, songs, stories, basic reading, and math skills, among others. Some of the materials were revised again in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Liberian Culture

The cultural group for this paper is the Republic of Liberia in West Africa, a nation where English is the language of law, government, business, public and mission education. Sixteen languages are spoken nationally that are recognized by the Liberian government. Several dialects pertain that are spoken by various populations. Languages are listed in order of number of native speakers in Table II (Robson, 1984: 5).

The bulk of the Liberian population is comprised of groups named for languages spoken. Speakers of English as a first language are usually from the settler/repatriate group(s). The population also includes expatriates from neighboring African countries and various continents, namely, North America, South America, Asia, Australia and Europe. (Schulze, 1973, 54)

Table II.

1984 Estimate NUMBER OF NATIVE (INDIGENOUS) SPEAKERS	
Liberian Language Spoken	Percentage of Population Speaking the Language
Kpelle	19.8
Bassa	14.2
Dan (Gio)	8.6
Kru	8.0
Ma (Mano)	7.3
Lorma	5.0
Krahn	4.7
Gola	4.5
Mandingo	3.8
Kissi	3.4
Vai	3.2
English	2.8
Gbandi	2.0
Mende	0.5
Belle	0.5
Dey	0.4

English is the *lingua franca* of Liberia and is spoken as a second language by persons from the language groups. Intercultural communication continues within and across language groups and between English and non-English speakers. The Liberian government has considered the use of one or two of the indigenous languages for government school instruction but plans have not been completed.

****The Robson report does not include data on the Grebo language.**

**Source: Barbara Robson. *Liberia: Country Status Report*.
Center for Applied Linguistics
(Washington, D.C.: 1984), 5.**

The writer was fortunate to live and work in Liberia, intermittently, for more than two decades. Personal observations assisted in understanding several aspects of non-verbal communication and body language, as follows:

- 1) *Greeting*: a hand-shake where two persons meet; each person extends a right hand- - after shaking hands once, each person slowly slides the hand from the grip, until the fingers meet in a

snap of third fingers to end the handshake. This is referred to as "The Liberian Handshake."

- 2) *Yes*: swift movement of the head upward, then downward; or lift head and lift both eye brows.
- 3) *No*: shake head from left to right.
- 4) *Bye, Bye (Good-bye)*: wave hand from side to side, as if gesturing "No" in the U.S.
- 5) *Come Here*: lift hand, move fingers in downward movement toward body, as if pretending a digging motion.

Cognitive growth in the Liberian population is determined by performance in various schools: indigenous, mission, private, and government. Indigenous schools, sometimes referred to as *bush schools*, have their own language and standards. Private and mission schools have entrance requirements and their own performance standards. Government schools determine cognitive growth by performance on exit tests in grades 6, 9, and 12. Thomas J. Brown, a school principal in the U.S., spells out a need for multicultural education as an aid to cognitive growth. He writes:

educating those who possess traits, characteristics, and other lifeways that run counter to those of the mainstream. . . is probably the most difficult challenge this nation will face during the next two decades. (Brown, 1988: 305)

Liberia faces the challenge of educating students to pass exit exams based upon imported materials. If cognitive growth is to be meaningful, curricula must be revised. Principal Brown suggests seven postulates accompanied by guiding principles to facilitate implementation of multicultural education. Given the many cultural groups in Liberia, the nation fits the definition of a multicultural society which may benefit from Brown's principles:

1. Teaching is interaction that facilitates learning.
2. Most students can learn the same things, but they learn for different reasons.

3. Use what students already know in helping them acquire the skills you want to teach.
4. Values are neither right nor wrong; they simply exist in all of us.
5. Differences should not only be tolerated; they must be affirmed.
6. Freedom to choose is one of the most precious rights we have.
7. Those who dare to teach must never cease to learn.

Principal Brown's principles, like the Drake philosophy, seems to argue well for intercultural literature, education, and unity.

Teaching Intercultural Literature, Education, and Unity

David Perkins (1993) and his colleagues at the Harvard Graduate School of Education analyze the meaning of understanding as a concept. They formulate a conception of understanding as a *performance perspective* on understanding. This perspective "helps to clarify what understanding is and how to teach for understanding by making explicit what has been implicit and making general what has been phrased in more restricted ways. . . by definition they must be thought-demanding; they must take students beyond what they already know," (1993: 29).

James A. Banks observes:

We should teach students that knowledge is a social construction, that it reflects the perspectives, experiences, and the values of the people and cultures that construct it, and that it is dynamic, changing, and debated among knowledge creators and users. . . when, due to such factors as immigration, colonization, etc. such individuals are forced to function in a different cultural environment, they are likely to experience stress, alienation, and other negative consequences. . . We propose that an important objective of education should be to prepare such individuals to function effectively in *both their culture of origin and in their new*

culture, (1985: 391-397).

The educators quoted above give excellent material on multicultural education which the writer believes can assist education and unity in Liberia, *once teachers value the cultures from which children come, while introducing them to the overall culture of Liberia and expecting behavioral changes*. Children should be encouraged to use their own languages at home and in the first three grades at school (Kindergarten, Pre-First, First). By Grade 2, they can move into a diverse curriculum where the national language, English, if retained in post-civil-war Liberia, would be the major language of instruction. As teachers and children use the national language, children should realize that there are other ways of behaving and viewing the world. Adult education for parents would be a plus for the intercultural program. Parents could understand how children from different backgrounds can work together to learn about their country, and indeed, themselves as contributors to that society, in spite of the multicultures from which they come — which are really subsets of a major Liberian culture to which all belong.

Materials/Book Development

Materials developed by the writer for AWOFO add to the store of Liberian literature and education, and ultimately, to the store of world literature and education. In the *MY THINGS TO DO BOOK* (Wolo, 1974/1988), items about colors speak to the beauty of the night sky spangled with stars; red, in palm oil — where a lesson could lead to the nutrients or lack of nutrients of certain products; orange, as a color of fruit; green, the color of grass in rainy season; brown, for cassava (manioc, yucca); white, for latex, that flows from the rubber tree. Items about months of the year use seasons, holidays, political symbols and climate. The choral reading, riddles and songs include animals, foods and events in the local environment. Three stories/novels by Wolo, *JOHN AND THE DIAMONDS* (1977; 1990); *WHERE IS SUMO?* (1977; 1990); and *NIPPEH GOES FISHING* (1977; 1990) detail exciting, informative experiences of children in rural and urban setting in West Africa.

John and the Diamonds is the story of a boy and his father. The father is the county government agent for the diamond business, living in Kakata, Liberia. They travel to a rural area to see how diamonds are mined. Father explains the uses of diamonds in the economy. The scenes show a good relationship between a boy and his father. The family name is Bell, a name from the settler background, yet, the experiences involve persons from various ethnic backgrounds.

Where is Sumo? is the story of a boy and his big brother on the family farm

in central Liberia. Sumo does not listen to his parents or big brother and gets lost on the farm. Big brother, Nippeh, is there for him until he is found and returned home. Sumo learns a good lesson in this story. The story shows respect for different ethnic groups in that children are given non-traditional names for brothers — one name is from the Kru ethnic group; the other from the Lorma ethnic group, while sharing the same parents.

Nippeh Goes Fishing is the story of three children, Tanneh, Jappah, and Nippeh. The children's names are from the Kru ethnic group but their family lives on a farm in central Liberia, far from the original settlements of the Krus in Sinoe County. Tanneh shows how the women fish in the local community; Jappah uses another method; and, Nippeh decides to use the fishing pole he made to catch a fish for his mother. Tanneh and Nippeh are siblings; Jappah is their cousin.

Conclusion

Unity seems to be the overriding factor for post-civil-war Liberia. Education is also a significant entity. Education will need to be a unifying force in the restructured society. Pragmatic pluralism is a necessary ideal for decision makers to determine "what phases of their culture" the Liberian people "will defend, which they will ignore, and which they will denounce" (Drake, 1988). Educational, political, and religious leaders will need to determine priorities in government and education. Private entities, such as AWOFO, have a role in assisting the Liberian government as it strives to educate/reeducate its populace. Literature for intercultural unity and education is important in the Liberian nation in the aftermath of a civil war that has divided the nation. There must be cooperation between the public and private sector to ensure meaningful communication. Materials developed must help the nation to unify, while developing learners of all ages to their fullest potential. To be effective, materials must include aspects of the indigenous/tribal experience and the settler/repatriate experience in the overall Liberian culture.

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A 1930s African-American View of Liberia: George S. Schuyler

Benjamin S. Lawson

Introduction

During the 1930's, one of the most notable African-American writers concerned with the domestic affairs and international image of Liberia was novelist-journalist-social critic George S. Schuyler. So intrigued by Liberia was Schuyler that he wrote several essays and editorials about the land, and the whole or the part of two novels. Not satisfied with theoretical knowledge, he spent three months of 1931 living in Liberia, months appropriately accounted for in his autobiography. Schuyler focused in his writings on both the fate and the fable of Liberia, on what the nation was for West Africans and on what it meant, symbolized, for African Americans. If Schuyler's views seem complex or, even, self-contradictory, possibly they are. These very contradictions and complexities themselves communicate a great deal about the cultural milieu of the period, about what black intellectuals thought Liberia was, about what they wanted to be. Beyond this, one must always keep in mind that one is dealing with image as often as fact and that Schuyler was a complex man with personal agendas, whose attitudes changed somewhat with the passage of time. He also calculated effects according to the expectations of the various audiences for whom he knew he was writing. The demands and constraints of genre—Schuyler wrote autobiography, essays, editorials, newspaper reports, lectures, and fiction—always widen the breach between life, a "truth" outside language, and art, each genre in its own way. Here, for the most part, Schuyler's thoroughly-calculated views in his full-length books will be discussed: his autobiography and the two novels.

Schuyler's Works

Schuyler characteristically treated Liberia, the idea of Liberia, within the context of a possible or presumptive black political, social, and cultural internationalism. Thus, in his autobiography, *Black and Conservative* (1966), he not only describes the nation itself but also uses its relations to other nations to exemplify black separatism and nationalism. Liberia was in the forefront as the oldest independent black country on the continent. Black nationalists "doted on the country as a symbol of modern black independence" (*Black Empire* 274). Could it be a new promised land in a time of continued disenfranchisement and racial tension in the United States, a time when even Europe and America were suffering from the Great Depression and the fallout from a Great War? Should

defenses be shored against continued European colonialist ventures, the most notorious example of which during the 1930s was Italy's incursion into Ethiopia?

To turn to Schuyler's actual reactions to Liberia seems a mean affront to a grand design, for he saw folly in specific present realities and in even the desirability of grand designs. Schuyler was predisposed to perceive faults because the purpose of his trip to Africa was to investigate and expose them. In 1930 white publisher George Palmer Putnam had contacted Schuyler about traveling to Liberia and, subsequently, writing newspaper articles, perhaps even a book, about it. Putnam "was much disturbed about conditions in Liberia where a League of Nations mission (whose secretary was Charles S. Johnson) had rendered its frightening report on the selling of 'boys' to the Spanish plantations on the island of Fernando Po off the coast of Nigeria and on the deep involvement of the President and highest officials of Liberia" (*Black and Conservative*, 173). Schuyler arrived in Monrovia in February of 1931, "quite unprepared," he reported, for the squalor, filth, and degradation I encountered," (181)¹. After interviewing President Edwin Barclay in the executive mansion, Schuyler was conducted on a tour of the rural districts, gathering impressions on the selling of labor, oppressive and punitive taxation, and divisiveness within Liberia, including continued resentment between Americo-Liberians and the aboriginal majority. The government seemed to be preying on its people, and the people seemed to consider themselves peoples, ethnic groups who maintained autonomy and even mutual hostility. "They were all black," wrote Schuyler, "but there any similarity ended": "talk about uniting the black brothers was grimly laughable" (184). He avoided an imagined poisoning by "some witch doctor" (182)—Schuyler's smug Americanness sometimes preempted diplomacy—but did come away from Liberia with another token of his visit: malaria. Back in the United States, he recuperated and wrote six newspaper articles on Liberia², the later "Monrovia Mooches On," and the novel *Slaves Today: A Story of Liberia* (1931). He recounted that his newspaper reports became quite "the talk of the town," especially among 'black nationalists' who expect a Negro newspaperman to lie to satisfy their egos" (186). "Schuyler attacked DuBois's silence on the exploitative role of the Liberian elite" (Sundiata, 151).

Schuyler used his experience in Africa to bolster his already notorious arguments against pan-Africanism, separatism, and Marcus Garvey. Afrocentric schemes were not only misguided but also irrelevant, for to Schuyler the African American was principally an American, who "had no more recollection of, connection with, or interest in Africa than any other American." Such an attitude, he realized, "was treason at a time when there was so much talk about African heritage" (157), but to him "a time when the independence of the Dark

Continent was the sheerest wishful thinking of a few racist zealots." Schuyler described Garvey as a precursor of Hitler, "a short, smooth, pig-eyed, corpulent West Indian" (*Black and Conservative* 120); "all Garvey ever freed Negroes from was their hard-earned cash" (*Black Empire* 275). He lumped Garveyites together with members of the Ku Klux Klan, "professional Anglo-Saxons" "and other race fanatics, black and white" (194-95) as an instance of a recurrent mental "infantile paralysis" (225). The title of "The Separate State Hokum," which appeared in DuBois's *Crisis* but expressed views antithetical to the journal's editor's, signals Schuyler's stance that racial separation was "a complete surrender to segregation and therefore acceptable to every Klansman, Fascist, and Nazi" (214, 227).³ Schuyler, thus, could hardly envisage Liberia as a utopian locale or model for African or African-American civilization. If de facto slavery was based in Mississippi, he wrote, it was equally an evil in Liberia. Not only did he see failings in the African nation historically and geographically closest to the United States,⁴ he also possessed little faith in even the desirability of linking the concepts of race and nation, in Africa or in the United States.

The Liberian Paradox

Substantial contemporary commentary on the plight of Liberia during the 1930s exists, and furnishes a revelatory context for Schuyler's dissenting—for an African-American intellectual—views. Predictably, Edwin Barclay, president at the time, makes "the case of Liberia" by blaming his country's woes on the world economic depression and on "anarchistic groups in the pay of foreign interests" (40). Nnamdi Azikiwe's 1932 essay "In Defense of Liberia" devolves into an attack on European imperialism and a positing that many "faults" of Liberia are common in Western nations—he instances forced labor in the American South—and have been exacerbated in Liberia through colonial interventions. Here and in *Liberia in World Politics* (1934) Azikiwe's target is a Euro-American insensitivity and misunderstanding of West African ways, like the tradition of "pawning" a person's labor as an element of the economic and social system. The fact that practices like polygamy "are abhorrent to the Occidental mind does not make them unethical" ("In Defense of Liberia" 45). The West has imposed an inflexible capitalism upon "the sole democratic government in all Africa" (*Liberia in World Politics*, 175), and Firestone Rubber Company's monopoly of rubber production forced the Liberian government to impose compulsory labor. The concessions to the American company—including a ninety-nine year lease of a million acres and tax exemptions partly to balance a large loan—have not led to the creation of a truly better or "modern" state. Azikiwe in fact finds the Firestone agreement in violation of Liberian laws, but recounts the fear of many "that should Liberia renounce this contract, the United States will find ample ground justify armed intervention in Africa" ("In Defense of Liberia," 34). Both Barclay and Azikiwe felt that, left to its own devices and

control, Liberia would meet its challenges and that, for example, the government itself had instigated the League of Nation's investigation into possible human rights violations. Certainly, neither mention contention between indigenous peoples and an allegedly corrupt and exploitative Americo-Liberian ruling minority. Their line of reasoning and political outlook mirror those of the majority of notable African-Americans and West Indians of the time, like DuBois and Walter White, Garvey and George Padmore.

Although he did charge that "the United States connived with the Firestone interests for economic imperialism in Liberia" ("In Defense of Liberia" 30), Raymond Leslie Buell otherwise represents a more moderate view of the situation. While acknowledging the government's mishandling of many problems of funding and labor use, he finds in the intrinsic makeup of Liberian society ample reason for these problems as well as room for improvement. A lingering slave tradition, a lack of adequate education, economic deprivation and the absence of a large prosperous middle class—these factors have led to the nation's problems, but they are problems which can be remedied through domestic reform and a truly international aid which assures the nation of its continued independence and avoids too great a reliance on the United States and its vested interests ("The Liberian Paradox"). Writing in protest and on behalf of the Grebo, Kru, and other indigenous peoples, W. M. Morais attacked the Monrovia regime as despotic, self-seeking, and heartless, concluding "Liberian Natives Tell Their Story" with a plea and lament: "We are dying daily" (273). The spectrum of 1930s perspectives is completed by a strange, paternalistic, racist book titled *Unknown Liberian*. The authors of this volume in the primitive-exotic vein perceive Liberian problems as typical for any black nation, attributable to "the Negro mind," "the savage unchanged" who will always be "creeping back to his old voodoo" even if "educated up to any level of civilization" (125).

Sundiata and Beyan

Modern commentators like I. K. Sundiata and Amos J. Beyan have profited from earlier research and written inclusive and somewhat more disinterested summary treatments of 1930s Liberian labor and political history. Tracing the nation's past to its beginnings and the American Colonization Society, Beyan concludes that there have always been two interpretive communities: "those that indict Liberia and the ones that defend the West African republic" (20). Among the latter are those who, in their zeal to protect Liberian Independence, have slighted civil affairs and the oppression of the indigenous people. In *Black Scandal: America and the Liberian Labor Crisis, 1929-1936*, Sundiata describes the many domestic and foreign controversies of the

era. He implies that racist, economic, and imperial motives led to the government of the United States leveling charges of abuse at Liberia in 1929 rather than, say, Spanish Guinea. During its tribulations of the early 1930s, "Liberia stretched forth its hands to blacks in North America and the Caribbean" (107) while simultaneously serving African-Americans and the rest of the world as a possible model of black independence.

Enter George S. Schuyler, who voiced, according to Sundiata, the "one strident and divergent black response to the 'native' question." "Schuyler saw himself as the Afro-American expert on Liberian labor conditions and the scourge of the Americo-Liberian ruling group" (151). *Slaves Today: A Story of Liberia* is little more than fictionalized propaganda, simple expose. The mundane title and the forward propose that "this modern servitude is strikingly ironic because this black republic was founded by freed Negro Slaves from the United States a century ago as a haven for all oppressed black people. Its proud motto reads 'The Love of Liberty Brought Us Here,' but the aborigines find little Liberty under their Negro masters" (5). Schuyler defends the narrative as autobiographical: "all of the characters are taken from real life," some with names unchanged. The nearest thing to apology and disclaimer concludes the forward: "if this novel can help arouse enlightened world opinion against this brutalizing of the native population in a Negro republic, perhaps the conscience of civilized people will stop similar atrocities in native lands ruled by proud white nations that boast of their superior culture" (6).

Schuyler's Fictional Liberia

The first three chapters of the novel depict, respectively, corrupt and ruthless Americo-Liberian rulers, the folk culture of the Gola people of the villages, and the confrontation of the Monrovia aristocrats with the villagers. President Sidney Cooper Johnson, descendant of Philadelphia freedmen and educated in the United States, prefers "a life of ease, political intrigues and polite conversation" (11). He maintains that the ruling class "must be supported in leisure by those whom it ruled" and that "he must select officials of slight scruples who would keep the flow of food and taxes coming down from the hinterland" (13)—and maintains the iron fence and heavily-armed soldiers that surround the executive mansion. Meanwhile, in the village of Takama, the chief's daughter's wedding night is celebrated with feasting, dancing, and songs of "legendary heroes of the Gola people, whose history embrace five thousand years" (36-37), "ancient and dignified with the pride of long tradition" (55). This grand banqueting consumes much of the food requisitioned by and for the staff of the Commissioner of the First District—who with his entourage now most inconveniently arrives in Takama, outraged that mighty preparations do not await him. The sensual, dissipated, Anglicized commissioner, David

Jackson, orders the unthinkable—that the chief be whipped. When Bongomo resists, he and seven or eight others are summarily shot. The dispirited, shamed, powerless, and resentful Gola must furnish the government rice and palm oil, along with a twenty-five pound fine. Tolo, the so-called “witch doctor,” finds a scapegoat for these troubles in Zo, Pameta’s groom, who is punished as indirectly responsible for the crisis, since celebrating his marriage feast had exhausted resources and distracted the people from the Commissioner’s visit. Pameta herself is taken as a possible fresh, new concubine for Jackson.⁵ The Gola’s only recourse and revenge, apparently ineffectual but a portent, lies in Tolo’s escaping to the jungle where he creates and punctures a small image of Jackson.

Much of the rest of *Slaves Today* concerns itself with Zo’s Candide-like misadventures as he tries to find and rescue Pameta, episodes which furnish Schuyler the opportunity to describe a variety of Liberian scenes and institutions. Zo manages to break into the Commissioner’s compound in the neighboring town of Boloba, only to be taken, bound, and beaten. Pameta, one of nearly forty in the harem, smashes a jar over Jackson’s head but unfortunately causes only minor damage. Zo now suffers from an involuntary servitude, as he is forced to join the many carrying rice and oil to Monrovia. Quicksand puts an end to an escape attempt. The forty porters are met in the city by the redoubtable Vice-President Samuel (“Sammy”) Williams, popular and greedy “preacher with the almost fanatically Christian Americo-Liberians (136). Formally educated in the United States, Williams’s informal education there had followed his overspending and forging a check: “Sammy was sent to Sing Sing where he learned much from his associates that was useful when he entered Liberian politics later on” (137). Williams’s antagonist in the city is the businesslike Liberal publisher and gadfly, Tom Saunders, who threatens Williams with disclosing governmental graft, fraud, and other illegalities to the outside world. President Johnson assures Williams, however, that the United States, which comes first to their minds, is too uninterested to intervene in the internal affairs of a fellow member of the League of Nations. And Johnson knows he can always play the trump card of race by accusing Saunders of “playing into the hands of the white imperialists, and thus endangering the independence of Liberia” (244).

Fernando Po

Zo and his co-workers next undergo a brief but frightful Middle Passage, as they are shipped off, “just cattle” (156), in the cramped and unsanitary hold below decks of a steamer bound southeast for Fernando Po, where they are “engaged” for two years of low-paying hard labor tending cocoa and coffee trees, cutting and carrying wood, loading and unloading ships, and constructing roads. In futile attempts to break the monotony, the men waste

their meager earnings on cheap prostitutes and cheaper liquor. Zo becomes acquainted with a chauffeur and his "friend," the alluring and light-skinned prostitute Marie,⁶ who for eighteen dollars promises to obtain for Zo the clothes and ticket needed for his escape. Marie and the chauffeur, predictably, pocket the money and betray the disillusioned newlywed. Zo now endures even harder work and harsher working and living conditions which, with an unvaried and unhealthy diet, contribute to his joining the many who fall to chills and fever. He regains strength, and is released from a hospital which is full of "revolting disease" (209). Zo survives the entire two-year ordeal, and shows himself tractable enough not to be punished with a longer "sentence." His anticipating the return to Liberia is tempered by his having heard from new recruits that the government's violations of civil rights in the homeland have grown increasingly flagrant.

The scene shifts to Liberia and the story of Pameta, who, against her will and despite two escape attempts, has become Jackson's favorite and, therefore, is resented by the aristocratic Americanized Mrs. Jackson. The Americo-Liberians, we are told, were well-intentioned in wanting to "establish in Africa a replica of America" but, in fact, have been conquered by Africa, in that they "adopted the worst habits and customs of the aborigines they exploited and despised" (228-29) without absorbing the best elements of native cultures. Although Mrs. Jackson—with her B.A. from a historically African-American college—criticizes Jackson for his "African" ways, "like most of his colleagues, he knew very little of native life, and cared less. His primary interests were accumulating money and gaining promotion" (235-36). In this same chapter Schuyler also stages a satire of self-serving Christianity by having Saunders confront the white Bishop of Liberia, Henry Briggs, with charges of expediency and hiding atrocities from the world. Saunders wants to know "'what good it does a country like this to be independent when the masses of the people are enslaved'" by "'grafting crooks'" (244). He believes that the Liberal Party could be victorious if there were international investigations and a supervised election. To Saunders, Briggs altogether lacks the social gospel commitment to the people, which here causes Saunders to dismiss him with "'I certainly long to see the day when the Christian church will try to practice Christianity'" (246). Saunders does gain a recruit when Rufus Henderson, the Attorney General, outraged that the notorious Jackson has been promoted to the position of Director of Public Works, joins forces with him in hopes of a better future.

Continuing to alternate passages of general political and social criticism with the fictional plot which exemplifies and supports that criticism, Schuyler returns to the ill-fated love story of Zo and Pameta. Zo's searches for Pameta have been interrupted by his being unjustly arrested in Monrovia for disturbing

the peace; he is fined the typical amount by the judge whose business it is "to mete out justice or its Liberian equivalent" (264): all that he has, the "fruit of two years' toil" (266). Soldiers impress him for road work—"he was slave again" (269)—but he escapes into the jungle. Meanwhile, Pameta has grown weak from disease that she is unable to come at Jackson's summons. Infuriated, Jackson goes to her quarters, where even he is horrified at her condition and appearance. Soon after, Zo happens by and sees her lying by the roadside, where the two are briefly reunited as Pameta dies. Like an "avenging angel" (280) Zo rushes to David Jackson's cottage, where he confronts Jackson and stabs him repeatedly, enacting in fact Tolo's earlier symbolic and ritual killing. Before he can flee through a window, Zo is shot by a sentry.

Election Day

Tom Saunders and the Liberal Party stand no chance of winning because the Conservatives distribute thousands of phoney deeds (only property owners can vote) and allow the compliant and pliant to vote twice. All will be as before. Servants will continue to say "yassah, massah": "their forefathers had come to this expanse of jungle to found a haven for the oppressed of the black race but their descendants were now guilty of the same cruelties from which they had fled" (100-101). President Sidney Cooper Johnson concludes that the murdered Jackson was perhaps too ambitious in any case, and installs the equally unscrupulous petty tyrannical Captain Burns as Director of Public Works. Liberal prospects go unheeded, and thoughts that the only viable alternatives are supervised elections or the overthrow of the present regime are expressed only privately. But Tolo lurks in the forest and in readers' minds, as he might well in the minds of those who made Liberians "slaves today," as a haunted and haunting nemesis. And an ominous intimation of eventual and final bloodletting lies in the description of the exotic "full, red, tropical moon" which hangs "over the city like a huge, swollen tangerine" (285).

Schuyler's Style

Black and Conservative and *Slaves Today* constitute perhaps typical and vintage Schuylerian fare: independent, satirical, caustic, critical. What, then, can be made of the recently reprinted and pseudonymous *Black Empire*, which, according to Henry Louis Gates, Jr., is "an Afrocentrist's dream" (43)? Here, Liberia figures as the capital of a vast black kingdom ruled over by Dr. Henry Belsidus, a "W.E.B Dubois, Booker T. Washington, George Washington Carver, Marcus Garvey rolled into one fascist superman" (Gates 42). Is this narrative sincere wish-fulfillment or a bizarre parody and *riductio ad absurdum* of the sorts of black nationalist schemes to which Schuyler otherwise objected? The answers to these questions are complex, and lie in Schuyler's uses of persona,

his responses to choice of genre, and his relationship to his readers. The purpose here is simply to describe how Liberia is presented in the novel itself. Issues of authorial intent and consequent ambiguity must be left to one side for the moment. This leaves to the side a great deal, indeed, as Schuyler was "greatly amused by the public enthusiasm" for the book, "which is hokum and hack work of the purest vein. I deliberately set out to crowd as much race chauvinism and sheer improbability into it as my fertile imagination could conjure. The result vindicates my low opinion of the human race" (letter of April 1937, quoted in *Black Empire*, 260). Schuyler himself often questioned human motives, and to some readers the motive behind *Black Empire* will seem to be that a worthy and advanced black civilization can exist only as a science-fictional fantasy.⁷

Black Empire actually consists of two separate stories which ran in the *Pittsburg Courier* from 1936 until 1938 under the name Samuel I. Brooks: "The Black Internationale" and *Black Empire*. (Only in 1991 have the texts become generally available, thanks to the editorial labors of John A. Williams, Robert A. Hill, and Kent Rasmussen.) The monomaniacal and megalomaniacal Dr. Belsidus in the first story organizes an international black conference and, soon after, masterminds a scheme to create black economic independence and a power base in (white) America by instituting "factories, farms and powerhouses" and other "far-flung enterprises" like airports, making optimal use of the talented tenth (66). Propaganda and the dionysian "Church of Love" promote racial unity and psychological commitment: "'Our love must include all black people, all brown people, all yellow people, for together these colored people are soon to rule the earth'" (65). The ruthless and revengeful Belsidus creates havoc by exploiting divisions within white America, meanwhile (and secretly!) training five thousand soldiers in Texas. The "period of conquest has begun" (87). Can the Stern Belsidus actually conquer the United States? This turns out not to be his intention. He plans instead to use his army as an expeditionary force to conquer Africa—for its own good, he takes for granted. He orders his men to board military transport ships named the *Nat Turner*, the *Fred Douglass*, the *Sojourner Truth*, and the *Phyllis Wheatley* (again, is this tribute to or ridicule of Garvey's Black Star Line?). Against this background, a love story develops between the reporter and narrator, Carl Slater, and the brilliant and, of course, gorgeous aviatrix, Patricia Givins.

The most salient aspect of Schuyler's depiction of Liberia and other African venues in *Black Empire* is that he does not really depict them at all. Liberia becomes merely a space or a temporary inconvenience to Belsidus's will to power. Liberian culture is not described, and certainly not cultural, social, and political conflicts within the nation. The subject of *Slaves Today*, in which Liberia could scarcely rule itself, has seemingly been forgotten. No mention is made of animosity or even resentment at the new foreign invasion in a newspa-

per column of 1930 (see *Black Empire* 274). Its sole purpose, however, would be to overthrow the Liberian regime, not ultimately to make Liberia the headquarters of a black empire. With prohibitive force, Belsidus simply annexes Liberia, imprisons the President and other leading politicians, and appoints himself as a "King of Kings" (111) who plans to overrun—in his mind synonymous with "liberate"—the rest of the continent. From the new capitol, safer because farther inland at Kakata, he embarks on supportive strategies of ridding Africa of whites, defeating European imperialism, and so sabotaging and dividing the European powers as to render them no future threat. These objectives are carried out in the last third of "Black Internationale," as tens of thousands of whites are exterminated, French designs on Liberia thwarted, and hostility among European nations fomented by Black Internationale operatives—some of them white—planting explosives in Westminster Abbey and aboard a British battle cruiser, on an Italian ship, and, for good measure, in the French Chamber of Deputies. Chapter 31 is titled "European Nations Plunge into War as Africa is Redeemed" (130). The story ends with Africa's (black) people consolidated under a single rule and Dr. Belsidus addressing a great conference in newly-prosperous Kakata, preaching pride, former and present glory, separation and African unity. Carl whispers to Pat, "'Tomorrow.'" "She smiled and whispered back: 'Yes, love. Tomorrow we, like Africa, shall be united, after so long. United forever'" (142).

A United Africa

This united Africa flourishes, in the sequel, under the leadership of Belsidus. Great advances are achieved in science and technology through the labors of black genius: quick-freezing techniques and a perfect diet, the virtual elimination of disease (though incurables, along with traitors, are simply put to death), superior radio and television, the photoelectric eye door opener, a precursor of the fax machine, a "stratosphere" plane. Science-fictional elements become more significant, making the narrative what science fiction critics might call a near future utopia (or dystopia?) or, in the end, a future-war tale.⁸ Envious European nations, once more at peace, unite to oppose this "greatest revolutionary organization the world had ever seen" (145). Executives of the empire are called to Kakata. Belsidus preemptively strikes first, bombing the great cities of Europe with—rats, "a strange and deadly army" (169) infected with cholera, spotted typhus, bubonic plague. Belsidus's further terrorism has become bacterial warfare. Slater bails out near London to join other subversives in executing "Plan Number One"—not just to destroy factories, but to cripple production capability by killing those few thousand toolmakers who make the machines that make the machines. The European fascination with things "primitive" is turned against these machinists as many are gassed at a recital of Della Crambull and her black dance troupe, staged as a West African village. Carl

and Belsidus's most trusted white lieutenant, Martha Gaskins, alias the Countess Maritza Jerzi, must shoot their way back to the Internationale's estate after their rescue plane crashes in the fog. As they return to Africa aboard Mrs. Pat Slater's plane they light the skies over London with thermite incendiary bombs, but are themselves shot down in Africa, near Fez, by French aircraft. Although they parachute to safety in the desert, they are stranded until they can repair their plane—which in short order runs out of fuel, leaving the Black Internationale group prey to a band of cannibals who seem convinced that they have taken captive a French force. Slater and his comrades are surrounded by figures "swaying rhythmically with the barbaric music," dancing "wildly, grotesquely, obscenely" (234)—though therefore much in the manner of the celebrations of the Church of Love.⁹ Literally out of the blue arrives a squadron of the Black Empire's air force to snatch our heroes to safety "just as natives prepare to light fire and roast them" (235).

At a council of war, Belsidus informs his cabinet of the development of the Super Weapon, a Doomsday Device, a "death-ray" machine which generates a proton disintegrating beam and, simultaneously, a radio beam that can disable machines and their power sources. "Like huge prehistoric monsters" (248), Belsidus's Big Guns roll into Monrovia and summarily annihilate the offshore navies of France and England. The Black Empire soon routs remaining foreign armies in Africa. All that remains is for Belsidus to deliver an inspiring speech about the new Africa being and remaining honored, feared, free, and independent. His emphasis seems quite different from earlier, his final words suddenly more conciliatory and consistent with the message of *Slaves Today*: "'You must not make the mistake of the white man and try to enslave others, for that is the beginning of every people's fall. You must banish race hatred from your hearts, now that you have your own land, but you must remain ever vigilant to defend this continent which is rightfully ours'" (257).

Assessing Schuyler

The key, then, to assessing George S. Schuyler's views on Liberia (and much else) lies not so much in his texts per se as in his attitudes toward his texts. What he says—or has his characters say—is clear enough; how the reader is to take it often is not. Schuyler played variations on a range of satirical, ironic, and parodic modes, and expected the sophistication in his readers necessary to being understood (in the lack of which he was capable of insulting his readers). He directed his work at a variety of publics—black, white, and mixed, an elite and a mass market—and calculated effects accordingly. The medium being the message, his messages were also affected by consideration of genre, by expectations of what can be stated and believed in editorial, essay, science fiction, autobiography, realistic novel. There are inconsistencies even within

the confines of a single book like *Black Empire*. Is the demagogic Dr. Belsidus on the last page stating, finally, his "real" attitudes, having previously hidden them? Has he changed his attitudes, perhaps consistently, in the light of a new security and empowerment? Does he become Schuyler? If Belsidus advises not to "enslave others" and to "banish race hatred," he must begin with himself. Belsidus's creator did drastically change, especially during the thirties when other American intellectuals were turning to socialism and communism, becoming an outspoken anticommunist and, by the time he wrote his autobiography, championing the John Birch Society and Barry Goldwater. At times, even during the thirties, he seemed assimilationist, at other times, race conscious if not black nationalist. (In any case, as Ann Rayson has pointed out, denying the importance of race differs from thinking race unimportant.) The divisions in Schuyler have created divisions in his critics between those who see him as a split personality (Young, Rayson, Gates) and those who conclude his was a personality unified and defined by a quality like "American-ness"—albeit hounded by other, spectral, selves (Davis). Simply taking Schuyler's statements at face value, for all these reasons, leads to a naive reading.

Much, however, can definitively be said about his views on Liberia. As Hugh Gloster stated, *Slaves Today* "ranks as another manifestation of the growing concern of the American Negro for the welfare of colored people in other parts of the world" (157). Young quotes Schuyler's attack on African Americans during the Italo-Ethiopian crisis for their lack of "solidarity with their brothers across the sea" (90). Liberia, as independent black African nation and as central locus for international cultural and political movements, fascinated Schuyler. If some past and present Liberian realities depressed him, the promise of Liberia raised his spirits. No matter the measure of hoax and hokum in his pulp science fiction, when he imagined a capital for the Black Empire he thought of Liberia. Liberia. The echo of the word and its meaning must have resonated in his mind as Schuyler pondered possibility and repeated in the forward to *Slaves Today* the nation's "proud motto": "The Love of Liberty Brought Us Here."

Endnotes

¹Schuyler seized this and other opportunities in his autobiography to contrast Africa unfavorably with the United States: "To be sure it is not easy being a black man in the United States but it is easier than anywhere else I know for him to get the best schooling, the best living conditions, the best economic advantages, the best security, the greatest mobility and the best health." But, he added in a typically if unconsciously elitist clause, "only by travel and reading can this be found out" (121).

²These accounts appeared in the *New York Evening Post*, the *Buffalo Express*, the *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, and the *Washington Post*. Characteristically, Schuyler congratulated himself on being perhaps the first African-American foreign correspondent for major metropolitan newspapers.

³Schuyler's use of the word "hokum" links this political essay with his parallel earlier controversial statement on African-American aesthetics, the 1926 "The Negro-Art Hokum," the incitement to on-going arguments with other intellectuals like Langston Hughes. Thus labelling African-American expression, to Schuyler, made it all too easy for non-blacks to limit and trivialize what could then be dismissed as the merely parochial and, therefore, irrelevant. African-American art itself could only and inevitably be American and, as art, of little interest to the masses. Ten years later Schuyler could pronounce the New Negro Renaissance—what he called the "Sambro Era" or "Coon Age"—happily ended as the "Cult of the Negro" gave way to what he saw as more trans-racial and objective standards of aesthetic appraisal. "Personally," he wrote in 1937, "I am opposed to worship of things Nordic as I am of things Negroid" (*Black Empire* 297, 300).

⁴Well into the 1960s Schuyler was still insisting that "there was not a single one of these African countries prepared for independence, educationally, socially, economically, or spiritually." On all these fronts, Africans and Asians "were the victims of arrested development who, without European and American investment and direction, would have fallen farther behind each year until chaos and stagnation engulfed them" (337-38).

⁵Since the Gola expected and valued virginity in their brides, Pameta's fate becomes especially horrific, following so closely upon her nuptials. On the morning after the wedding night the bed sheet showing a "large irregular red spot" (27) had been joyously paraded through Takama as proof of Pameta's virginity and special cause for gratefulness. This blood of generation, and of generations of Liberians, contrasts throughout *Slaves Today* with what might be called the blood of degeneration, the mark of killing and of the lash mainly

associated with the Americo-Liberians. Schuyler often follows the practice in this novel of employing the word "Liberian" for only the aboriginal peoples.

⁶The point which Schuyler makes here is not quite the expected one about the relative prestige of different skin tones. What interests him are not the absolutes of color but rather the effects of color difference. Schuyler digresses to state that "there is a certain affinity between individuals of opposite colors. The fascination of the unknown is so alluring that mutual stimulation is inevitable" (183-84). Perhaps the man who opened his autobiography by paying tribute to both his African and his European forebears was not the man to champion black Africa. In 1929, Schuyler had published an entire book on interracial marriage, and himself married the "blond and shapely" Josephine Cogdell who "was liberal on the race question without being mawkish and mushy. She saw Negroes as I saw whites, as individuals" (163). To her he dedicated *Black and Conservative*.

⁷Perhaps the key and operative word in his statement is therefore "imagination," since in his nonfictional and patently autobiographical fiction Schuyler seems to oppose black nationalism. The intent of his earlier fantasy, *Black No More* (1931), was largely to attack black and (especially) white racism rather than to promote or demote racial separatism or nationalism. Dr. Crookman's skin-lightening and hair-straightening process in the novel leads, in fact, to a confusing and hilarious integration of American society. Schuyler posits the destructive arbitrariness of racial definition, and directs satire against African-Americans who lack self-assurance and therefore mimic whites. "Blue-vein" societies and Madame Walker's empire are ridiculed quite as much as Schuyler had ridiculed the idea of an autonomous African-American art or the pseudo-primitivism of whites when "Harlem was in vogue." But Schuyler took credit and responsibility for this book in the sense that it was published for a mainstream readership and bore his name. *Black Empire*, on the other hand, was written for a mass and black audience, and allowed Schuyler, under a pseudonym, to be someone "else" and give free reign to the greatest improbabilities and absurdities of wild imagining in a genre which seemed to call for these excesses. Basing his conclusions on *Black Empire* and other works, Gates finds Schuyler a preeminent example of a genuinely "fragmented" man with the "double-consciousness," African-American and American, written of in the opening of *The Souls of Black Folk*. In the present case, Schuyler gave his alter-ego a name, Samuel I. Brooks, and through him expressed not only an altogether militant "black" self, but did so in a "subliterary" medium, pulp fiction, to be read by a literate but unsophisticated black mass audience which he elsewhere often disdained. To adapt a Freudian phrase, *Black Empire* is an overt and adulterated (black) power fantasy. Schuyler did, however, promote a black and independent Ethiopia and did write a "serious" nonfictional companion

piece to *Black Empire* called "The Rise of the Black Internationale," in which he found reason to counter white imperialism, the "White Internationale." But even here he tempered "Marcus Garvey stirred the imagination" with the modifying "of the ignorant and romantic" (*Black Empire* 335).

⁸See the recent *Voices Prophesying War: Future Wars 1763-3749* and *War Stars: The Super Weapon and the American Imagination*. Neither book, however, treats Schuyler's obscure title.

⁹These inconsistencies and condescending stereotypes furnish matter to those who see Schuyler as ironist and satirist. Here the actual inhabitants of Africa do not even recognize differences among the various earnest combatants—they are all interlopers on their lands. Such critics could marshal other examples: the black nationalist leader being portrayed as cold and unsympathetic, one who hypocritically espouses his political cause while recruiting whites for sexual as well as ideological reasons; the unasked imposing upon Africa of a foreign (French, perhaps, the cannibals thought), industrial, technological regime; Della Crambull's surname and her entertainers'—does Josephine Baker figure here?—satisfying white audiences' post-Freudian desire for the exotic with portrayals of pseudo-Africa; the Church of Love constructing armaments in its basements and preaching hate; crazed Africans in a ludicrous frenzy of revenge beheading white victims, their "hands and feet cut off to be dried as charms, and their bodies thrown to crocodiles" (129).

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D. Elwood Dunn, *Liberia: World Bibliographical Series, Volume 157*, Oxford, (United Kingdom): CLIO Press, 1995. 207 pp.

D. Elwood Dunn has compiled one of the most comprehensive and exhaustive bibliographic listings of Liberia in this volume. The author succeeds in his attempt to offer a bibliography that blends the country's pre-Liberia experiences with its Westernized and indigenous cultures. The volume is one in a series of 176 compilations by CLIO Press covering as many countries in the world. CLIO Press has a goal of eventually including in this series every country and principal region in the world.

Liberia's representation in this venture is timely. During a period when events in Liberia have engendered renewed research interests in providing contrasting theories about the causes, consequences and future implications of the country's six-year-old civil strife, Dunn offers a multi-faceted, multi-disciplinary and inclusive annotation of published and unpublished works to facilitate such research efforts. The volume reflects the author's own research style in many of his contributions to Liberian studies. He has been critical of modern day scholars in Liberian studies who fail to establish analytical links between pre-coup and post-coup Liberia, a phenomenon he considers vital to understanding the uniqueness of contemporary Liberia. This purview is especially evident in a review article, "Liberia Reconsidered: A Review," in the *Canadian Studies Journal* (1987) where he took Katherine Harris, Hassan Sisay and Yekutieli Gershoni to task for this failure in their own analysis of events in Liberia (this article is listed as #318 in the book). His effort to comb through a vast source of writings on Liberia to include entries that considers pre-Liberia and modern, twentieth century Liberia, belie this style and seem to suggest to the user that there is more to understanding Liberia than the myopia of a disciplinary focused study.

The book is divided into 31 different topics and three indexes of authors, titles and subjects. There is also an extended list of theses and dissertations by Liberians and non-Liberians. The book has 656 annotations of selections covering history, politics, religion, flora and fauna, economics, education, culture as well as other bibliographies on Liberia. The selections are continuously numbered, beginning with the earliest published work in the book, Johan Buttikofer's *Reisebilder aus Liberia* (Recollections of Liberia, 1890) listed under the topic dealing with The Country and Its People. That the author would include other bibliographies is significant, for it reveals the injustice done to the vastness of materials on Liberia. Previous bibliographies on Liberia have either been discipline specific (for example Francis Ingemann's "A Bibliography of

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Liberian Languages," 1978, listing #643), or a brief part of a cumulative regional study (for example listing #644, *Cumulative Bibliography of African Studies* or Santosh Saha's attempt to include Liberia in bibliography of West African Agriculture, 1990; this is not carried in Dunn's book).

The introduction presents a taut background on Liberia, its history and people, leading up to the civil war, and the intervention by the Economic Community of West African States, ECOWAS.

The author, in the preface, makes a clear case for any omissions that users might perceive: the task to include hundreds of writings on Liberia was enormous, and therefore, some measure of normative selection criteria was eminent. As such, readers will notice two annotations on the Lagos Plan of Action advocating state-led economic development in Africa without the report's antithesis or nemesis, the Berg Report (Accelerated Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: An Agenda for Africa, World Bank, 1981). Also, the inclusion of Patrick Burrowes' *Liberian Studies Journal* article that presents an eloquent critique of the class-based or Marxist assumptions of three major works on Liberia (#235) without including the rejoinder that was published in a subsequent edition. This is a classic case of the quality of debates and the alternative views on major issues of Liberian studies that has begun to emerge as Liberians and scholars of the country take a critical look at its social infrastructure. Many of the numerous articles published in the only scholarly journal devoted principally to Liberia, *The Liberian Studies Journal*, are also absent, even though the journal is listed under the Media and Periodicals section, #605. Those who have taken to the electronic medium to lessen research burdens will note that even with its selectivity, the book offers a more comprehensive listing on Liberia than CARL Uncover or Meryvl. Obviously, this book will be represented in the citations of these research databases.

Issues of the standardization of nomenclature in Liberian studies are also clarified in the author's decision to use certain phrases and time periods to describe Liberia. For example, Dunn's preference of the phrase 'settler-Liberians' to describe repatriated Liberians contrasts the 'Americo-Liberians' used in the listing for one of Tom Shick's works, *Behold the Promised Land*, #238, or Augustus Caine's use of the word 'settler' to describe the same group. What may seem as arbitrary selection of nomenclature or time periods, which is aptly defined by the author, underlie this basic lack of standardization reflected in Liberian studies.

In a few cases, the author cross references works that reflect ongoing debates on the state of African affairs. Augustus Caine's *Liberian Studies Journal* article on the Mano River Union, MRU, (#431) presents conflicting results to the

dissertation listing of Mohammed Abdulah, #420. Caine has related what continues to be a practical inhibition to the fulfillment of regional economic integration in Africa: the absence of properly functioning national economies which is a necessary condition for the attainment of the goals of harmonized trade structures and private-sector integration. This has led to the lack of any significant progress in intra-trade development among Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone, the three principals in the MRU, and the majority of similar unions in Africa today. Abdulah's reflection of the unqualified success of the Union in 1984 may have manifested the political will to integrate, which, given the vagary of the personalities and ideologies of rulers of Africa, can be heralded as a major accomplishment. However, this is not isolated from the underlining economic and social institutional structures that are so vital to such undertakings. Dunn's cross reference in this instance seems to be a subtle message to researchers about the consequences of the finality of our conclusions when salient variables are excused in our analytical considerations.

The book, in its annotation of sources of research on Liberia, reflects the character and variety of approaches to African Studies in general. For example, all major interdisciplinary models used as a basis for analyzing the African scene are present in the variety of works selected. They include the Pan-Africanist, Marxist, Traditional and Colonial Models, which respectively discuss Black pride and unity, class distinctions in development, the role of tradition and culture and the juxtaposition of foreign political influences.

However, like similar books on African Studies, there is a skewed distribution in the number of Anglo or non-Liberian representations in the authorship of research articles on Liberia. Although Liberian scholars have argued about the need to take the leading role as promoters of knowledge and advocates of the cause of the country, few efforts towards this end can be counted as successful. While Liberians were successful in taking over editorial control of the *Liberian Studies Journal* since 1985, research contributions to the journal remain largely non-Liberian. While this is not a flaw in the universality of scholarly pursuit, this does not augur well for the many Liberians who have acquired post graduate degrees in the United States. For some, the unreliability of data sources on Liberia has forced the consideration of topics relevant to foreign countries; and this relevance has continued to the point where research production functions eliminate a Liberian input variable. The unequal distribution of research by Liberians in Dunn's bibliography should be a challenge to Liberians to actively complement other academic accomplishments with expansive literary achievements.

Two criticisms of the book suffice: For one, the dissertation and theses section provides a wealth of resources on a variety of topics and issues on

Liberia. However, it is difficult for the user to easily utilize these sources since the listings are alphabetically arranged by the names of the authors. As such, a researcher interested in monetary policy in Liberia will have to painstakingly work through over 300 citations before coming to Robert Sherman's dissertation on the monetization of the Liberian economy. The task is not made any easier when the enormity of the author's endeavor forces him to be very selective in works that he decided to include among the 656 annotations. Perhaps categorizing the dissertations and theses by discipline and alphabetizing the author listing under these categories would make a significant difference.

A second criticism is one that seems to undermine the major strides made in African studies since the founding of the African Studies Association in 1957. One accomplishment by African scholars is the respect that has been gained for African religions (formerly referred by Anglos as 'animist' or 'paganism'). Today African traditional religions co-exist with Islam and Christianity. Like Islam and Christianity, African traditional religions have a belief in a supreme being, life after death, a religious personnel that serve as a medium between man and the spirits, a sacred place of worship, and divinity. However, citations under the Religion section in this book are mainly works dealing with Christian and Islamic influences on Liberia, although one (#276), Father Robert Tikpor's dissertation, attempts to investigate the African theological foundation before the spread of Christianity in Liberia. Some features of African traditional religions are evident in the rituals and symbols of the *Bush School*, or *Poro Society* or *Beli*. However, either because of the title of works dealing with these institutions or the background of their authors, they were considered under the section dealing with Social Conditions and Welfare.

These criticisms do not detract from the aim of the author to provide a major source of research from pre-Liberia to events leading to the county's contemporary existence. This book is a must for anyone interested in any aspect of Liberian studies. Elwood Dunn should be commended for this sterling scholarly accomplishment.

Alfred B. Konuwa
Butte College

Steven H. Gale (compiler/editor). *West African Folktales* (203pp.) and *Instructor's Manual for West African Folktales* (56pp.). Lincolnwood, Illinois: NTC Publishing Group, 1995.

This compilation or anthology of folktales and the accompanying teachers' manual are among the recent efforts of scholars on Africa to continue the use of African materials in American educational institutions. Though the momentum for African area studies in American colleges and universities declined sometime ago, teachers and students still need more important materials on Africa for classroom use as well as for general educational purposes. Thus, Steven H. Gale's 15-nation anthology and its teachers' manual will be useful materials. The compilation contains some 42 tales, half of which are from Liberia. All 15 West African countries are former European colonial territories, except Liberia. The folktales are of various lengths, but most of them are rather short, some so short as to appear incomplete and sketchy. The longer tales tend to tell better stories that most readers will enjoy and appreciate their contents and stylistic qualities.

The compilation and the teachers' manual complement each other — in quite a beautiful way. Teachers — especially lazy teachers — tend to love instructor's manuals that contain study and discussion questions, tests, examinations, bibliographies, and summaries of the materials in the main textbooks. Thus, teachers will find both the collection of West African folktales and the teaching materials useful. The two publications have introductory and other types of materials. The anthology has some interesting tales like those on pages 3-9, 15-21, 79-81, 123-125, and 179-185. These samples are fully developed in narrative structure, thematic pattern, and stylistic clarity. These tales and a few others have great moral lessons that reveal some salient universal aspects of humanity.

Gale's brief notations on the folktales include identification of the origins of the tales, their writers or collectors, and a few other descriptive comments. Readers ought to know that African folktales do not come from nations; they come from ethnic groups or tribes; perhaps this is why Gale gave both the ethnic and national origins of the tales. And, because European colonialists or, in the case of Liberia, American imperialists, philanthropists, and evangelists, drew artificial boundaries of African countries, folktales have become multi-national, multi-ethnic, and transcultural entities in modern Africa. Some of the ethnic or tribal groups cross two or more countries like the Kissi, Lorma, Mende, and Mandingo in the Mano River Sub-Region-Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea. Another point worth mentioning is that Gale has

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given names of people who wrote the folktales; actually African folktales have community authorship. Most do not have single, individual writers who take credit for their creation. Tales in African traditional societies belong to ethnic communities; therefore, people only collect, record, and, if necessary, translate them into English, French, Portuguese, Swahili, Arabic, or any other languages.

But, on the whole, Steven H. Gale has produced a rather readable, teachable, and resourceful compilation and its manual. Teachers, students, scholars (especially in folklore and cultural anthropology), and the general readers will find Gale's publications useful. The introductory and other background materials in both the compilation and the teachers' manual have added to the importance of the two publications. Some of the data — especially on the 15 West African countries from which the compiler drew his folktales — are out-dated; however, readers will forgive Gale for these factual problems because most facts and figures on Africa get out-dated rapidly. Even weekly or monthly periodicals do not catch up with the social, economic, cultural, and political changes and upheavals of modern Africa. The volume of the tales is slim, but readers can continue their interest in African folktales in larger and new compilations of tales from the African continent.

A final point to the readers is that folktales are not just ordinary samples of oral traditions. They constitute a significant category of African traditional literature (which comprises oral poetry and drama). Folktales (which include legends, myths, fables, and animal tales) and other categories of traditional literary works helped to lay the foundation of modern African literature like novels, plays, poems, and short stories. And some of the prominent voices of contemporary literature from modern Africa such as Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, and especially, Amos Tutuola of Nigeria; Kofi Awoonor of Ghana; and Bai T. Moore and particularly, Wilton G. S. Sankawulo of Liberia, have either heavily drawn from or incorporated into their works materials from folktales and other types of traditional literature from African ethnic societies or cultures. Therefore, producing anthologies of folktales should be a worthwhile project. Folktales function as educational as well as entertaining materials in African societies and they are important in understanding and appreciating the cultural nuances of Africa.

Steven H. Gale has added recipes to his collection of folktales in the instructor's manual. These are not recipes for African folktales; they are recipes for African foods. The readers should take them seriously because story-telling in African villages and towns usually goes hand in hand with eating and drinking. Of course readers do not have to eat or drink anything African in order to understand, enjoy, or appreciate the folktales. But it would be a good idea to combine studying these folktales with eating African foods and drinking palm wine or rum from Africa; the combined tastes of folktales, foods, and drinks

might be good for the readers.

Similih M. Cordor
Professor of Humanities & Communications
Florida Community College at Jacksonville
Jacksonville, Florida, U. S. A.

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REMARKS ABOUT THE 27TH ANNUAL LIBERIAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

The Liberian Studies Association (LSA) had its 27th Annual Conference at Sinclair Community College in Dayton, Ohio, April 19-22, 1995. This was the first time the annual meeting was held at a community college. The theme of the Conference was "Transitions in the West African Community." The Conference drew scholars and papers from Israel, Nigeria, England, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Liberia and several areas of the United States. Eleven sessions were held with more than twenty-five papers on topics such as the present and future of West African states, mass communication, linguistic and cultural unity, education and art, human rights, economic development, the Liberian civil conflict and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Sierra Leone.

The conference was opened to the local community in two public events supported, in part, by a grant from the Ohio Humanities Council. Dr. Amos Sawyer, former Interim President of Liberia gave a public lecture on "Resolving the Liberian crisis: Difficult dilemmas and unpleasant choices" and Willis "Bing" Davis, Chair of the Art Department of Central State University, Ohio gave a multi-media presentation on "Adornment as art and culture." Both events were attended by over one hundred and thirty-five people and led to spirited interactions between the speakers and the audience.

The Conference was immediately followed by a Liberian Unity Workshop organized by the Dayton Area Liberian Association for Liberian associations in the US to deal with national issues of trust, reconciliation, leadership and coordination of relief activities. This workshop involved more than forty Liberians in soul-searching activities and discussions.

As the conference director, I would like to thank Sinclair Community College, the Dayton Sister City Association and all those who attended the conference for making it a success. As the current president of the Liberian Studies Association, I would like to welcome all the new members of the LSA and congratulate the newly elected to the executive council, Doris Railey, Dr. Walter Wiles and Dr. William Allen, the new editor of the *Liberian Studies Journal*. I would like to also thank the past editor, Dr. D. Elwood Dunn for his excellent service and continued leadership in Liberian studies.

It is my hope that the LSA will continue to face the challenge of applying Liberian studies to help preserve human life and rights in Liberia and Africa as a whole. However, the LSA must do more to help the people of Liberia at this

critical time in our history. If each of us could come to our next meeting — which will be hosted in March, 1996 by Dr. Gloria J. Braxton and Dr. Walter T. Wiles of Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana (phone #504-771-2008) — with practical ideas, relevant educational materials or prayers for the Liberian people, we could begin to accept some of the responsibility for the reconstruction of Liberia. None of us is blameless in this crisis and therefore, a sacrifice could help us to accept and let go of the past and to begin building a vastly more ethical and meaningful future.

Boikai S. Twe, President
Liberian Studies Association
Sinclair Community College
Dayton, Ohio

**ABUJA AGREEMENT TO SUPPLEMENT THE COTONOU AND
AKOSOMBO AGREEMENTS AS SUBSEQUENTLY CLARIFIED BY THE
ACCRA AGREEMENT**

This Agreement amends and supplements the Cotonou Accord, the Akosombo Agreement and its Accra Clarification.

**Section A
Article I
CEASEFIRE**

The Parties to this Agreement hereby declare a ceasefire and the cessation of hostilities effective at 12:0'clock midnight August 26, 1995.

**Section K
Article 12
SCHEDULE OF IMPLEMENTATION**

The parties hereby agree to abide by the schedule of implementation attached to the Agreement on the Clarification of the Akosombo Agreement with such modification in terms of dates as required by virtue of the delay in the implementation of the said agreement

**Part II
POLITICAL ISSUES
SECTION A**

EXECUTIVE

- i. The parties agreed that during the transitional period leading to the inauguration of an elected government, the executive powers of the Republic of Liberia shall be vested in a six-member Council of State to be composed as follows:
 - a) NPFL Mr. Charles Taylor
 - b) ULIMO LTG. Alhaji G. V. Kromah
 - c) COALITION Dr. George E. S. Boley, Sr.
 - d) LNC Oscar Jaryee Quiah
 - e) Chief Tamba Tailor
 - f) Mr. Wilton Sankawulo
- ii. The Chairman of the Council shall be Mr. Wilton Sankawolo. All other members of the Council shall be Vice Chairmen of equal status. In case

of permanent incapacitation, a new Chairman shall be appointed within the ECOWAS framework.

- iii. The parties hereby agree that the allocation of Ministries, Public Corporations and Autonomous Agencies agreed by the Parties to Cotonou, Benin on November 3-5, 1993 shall be maintained. The parties however, agree that the allocations for the erstwhile IGNU shall revert to COALITION. LTG Hezekiah Bowen, Francois Massaquoi, Thomas Woewiyu, Laveli Supuwood and Samuel Dokie shall be given ministerial or other senior Government positions.

ULIMO-J shall occupy the following positions:

MINISTRIES

1. Minister of State for Presidential Affairs
2. Minister of Transport
3. Minister of Rural Development
4. Minister of State Without Portfolio

PUBLIC CORPORATIONS/AUTONOMOUS AGENCIES

1. National Bank
2. Corporative Development Agencies
3. Agricultural Industrial Training Board
4. Forestry Development Authority

Deputy Ministers

1. Ministry of Post and Telecommunication
2. Ministry of Justice
3. Ministry of Education
4. Ministry of Information

DEPUTY MANAGING DIRECTORS/DEPUTY DIRECTORS GENERAL

1. National Insurance Corp of Liberia
2. National Housing Authority
3. Liberia Water and Sewage Corp.
4. National Housing and Saving Bank
5. Fire Service
6. General Auditing
7. Institute of Public Administration
8. National Food Assistance Agency

SECTION C
Article 15
ELECTIONS MODALITIES

The operations of the Elections Commission shall be monitored by
ECOWAS, OAU and UN.

Section D
Article 16
TENURE AND A MANDATE OF THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT

1. The Transitional Government hereby established shall be installed within 14 days after the signing of this Agreement.
2. The Transitional Government shall have a life span of approximately twelve (12) months commencing from the date of its installation.
3. Holders of positions within the Transitional Government as defined by the Cotonou Accord who wish to contest the election provided for under the Schedule of Implementation shall vacate office 3 months before the date of elections. They shall be replaced by their nominees or by persons nominated by the parties represented in the Council of State.
4. The Chairman of the Council of State shall be ineligible to contest the first Presidential and Parliamentary elections to be held pursuant to this Agreement.

SECTION G
Article 8
Peace and Enforcement Powers

1. Enforcement of violations of ceasefire shall be in accordance with the terms of the Cotonou Accord.

All provisions of the Cotonou Accord and Akosombo Agreements as clarified by the Accra Agreement not herein amended shall remain in full force and effect.

Done At Abuja, Federal Republic of Nigeria this 19th day of August 1995 sgd.

Charles Ghankay Taylor, leader, National Patriotic Front

LTG. Alhaji G. V. Kromah, National Chairman, United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy (ULIMO)

Dr. G. E. Saigbe Boley, Sr., Leader, Liberia Peace Council (LPC)

Major-General Roosevelt Johnson, United Liberation Movement of Liberia
for Democracy (ULIMO-J)

Francis Massaquoi, Lofa Defence Force (LDF)

Jucontee Thomas Woewlyu, National Patriotic Front of Liberia Central
Revolutionary Council (NPHL-CRC)

Chea Cheapoo, Liberia National Conference (LNC)

WITNESSED BY

Dr. Obed Asamoah, For and on behalf of His Excellency Flt.Lt. Jerry
Rawlings, President of the Republic of Ghana and Chairman of ECOWAS

Chief Tom Ikimi, For and on behalf of His Excellency General Sani Abacha,
Head of State, Commander-in-Chief of the Nigerian Armed Forces

His Excellency President Canaan Banana, OAU Eminent Person in Liberia

His Excellency Anthony B. Nyakyi, U.N. Secretary-General's Special Repre-
sentative to Liberia.

**ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST
AFRICAN STATES**

**EIGHTEENTH SESSION
OF THE AUTHORITY OF
HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT
ACCRA, 28 - 29 JULY 1995**

The Eighteenth Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was held in Accra, Republic of Ghana, on 28 and 29 July 1995 under the Chairmanship of His Excellency Flight-Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings, President of the Republic of Ghana.

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

- His Excellency Nicephore Dieudonne Soglo,
President of the Republic of Benin,
- His Excellency Henri Konan Bedie
President of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire
- His Excellency Flt.-Lt. Jerry John Rawlings
President of the Republic of Ghana,
- His Excellency General Lansana Conte
President of the Republic of Guinea,
- His Excellency David Kpomakpor
Chairman of the Liberia National
Transitional Government,
- His Excellency Mahamane Ousmane
President of the Republic of Niger,
- Honourable Carlos Alberto Wahanon de Carvalho Veiga
Prime Minister and Head of Government
of the Republic of Cape Verde,
- Honourable Manuel Saturnino Costa
Prime Minister of the Republic of Guenea Bissau,
representing the President of the Republic
of Guinea Bissau,

- Honourable Hermann Yameogo
Minister of State
Minister of Integration and African Solidarity
representing the President of Burkina Faso,
- Captain Edward David Singhatey
Vice-Chairman of the Armed Forces Provisional
Ruling Council and Minister of Defence of
the Republic of The Gambia,
representing the President of the Republic of The Gambia
- Honourable Traore Dioncounda
Minister of State, Minister of Foreign Affairs,
of Malians Resident Abroad and of African Integration,
representing the President of the Republic of Mali,
- Honourable Ahmed Ould Minih
Minister
Secretary-General, Office of the President
representing the President of the Islamic
Republic of Mauritania,
- Lieutenant-General Oladipo Diya
Chief of General Staff
Office of the President
representing the Head of State of
the Federal Republic of Nigeria,
- Honourable Moustapha Niasse
Minister of State
Minister of Foreign Affairs and of Senegalese
Resident Abroad
representing the President of the
Republic of Senegal,
- Honourable Dr. Alusine Fofanah
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs
and International Cooperation, representing the President of
the Republic of Sierra Leone,
- Honourable Elom K. Dadzie
Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance
representing the President of the Togolese Republic,

3. Attending the Session as observers were:

- The Executive Secretary of the West African Clearing House (WACH),
- The President of the Federation of West African Chambers of Commerce (FWACC),
- The Secretary-General of the West African Women's Association (WAWA),
- The Executive Director of the West African Health Community (WAHC),
- The representative of the Executive Secretary of the Economic
Honourable Dr. Alusine Fofanah
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs
and International Cooperation, representing the President of
the Republic of Sierra Leone,
Commission for Africa (ECA),
- The United Nations Secretary-General's Special Representative on Liberia,
- The Governor of the BCEAO and Chairman of the Committee of Governors of Central Banks in West Africa,
- The representative of the African Development Bank (ADB),
- The representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP),
- The representative of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)
- The representative of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO),
- The representative of the United Nations Fund for Women in Development (UNIFEM)
- The representative of the Pan-African News Agency (PANA),
- The representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR),

- The representative of the United Nations Conference of Trade and Development (UNCTAD),
- The representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO),
- The representative of the West African Development Bank (BOAD),
- The representative of ECOBANK Transnational Incorporated,
- and a large number of High Commissioners and Ambassadors accredited to the Republic of Ghana

Twentieth Anniversary of the Community

4. The eighteenth summit of the Authority of Heads of State and government provided and appropriate occasion to mark the twenty years of existence of the Economic Community of West African States. The Authority paid glowing tribute to the Founding Fathers of the Community for their foresight and strong belief in West African integration. It was recalled that ECOWAS had provided an invaluable bridge for crossing the linguistic barrier inherited from the colonial era, and over the past twenty years, Member States had endeavoured to keep alive that initial spirit of regional solidarity and sought to deepen the integration process. Particular reference was made, in this regard, to the adoption of not only integration programmes in the key socio-economic sectors such as free movement of persons, trade liberalization, monetary integration, regional infrastructural development and harmonization of the production base of the regional economy. It was also noted that ECOWAS had provided the basis for cooperation in the field of regional peace and security.

5. Heads of State and Government reaffirmed their belief in regional integration, particularly in view of the evidence in past years of limitations of the development in isolation of national economies. The Authority also felt inspired to pursue the regional approach to economic development by the enthusiasm with which countries in both the developed and developing regions of the world had been embracing regional cooperation and integration. The Authority, therefore, urged all the governments and their various public agencies, the West African business community and all the other segments of the population in the region to play their respective roles in the regional integration process, to ensure that West Africa could face successfully the challenges of the 21st century.

6. While recognising the limited real impact that ECOWAS had made on the economies of Member States, the Authority reflected on the factors which had held back regional cooperation and integration. The Heads of State and Government reviewed the various effects of the economic crisis on regional intergration and focused considerable attention on the chronic problems of implementation of Community Acts and Decisions, arrear of contributions to the Institutions of the Community and the multiplicity of inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) in West Africa. The Authority noted, however, that appropriate measures had already been initiated to resolve most of these problems.

7. Heads of State and government decided that, in commemoration of the twentieth anniversary and to immortalize the Community ideal, a principal street in each national capital should be named "ECOWAS Street".

Review of the West African Economy

8. The Heads of State and Government, in a review of the economic performance of West Africa, noted that the estimated 1.8% growth recorded in 1994 was lower than in the previous year. The Authority expressed particular concern at the declining economic growth, since it was well within the means of Member States to control some of the factors responsible for the poor performance. It was recalled that, with a population growth of about 3%, the West African economy ought to be expanding at a much faster rate in order to arrest the falling standard of living.

9. The Authority focused its discussion on appropriate strategies for overcoming the socio-economic difficulties facing Member States. There was a review of measures initiated at national, regional and international levels to enhance the development of the West African economy. The Authority noted that over the past twelve month, there were fresh initiatives to improve upon national economic management policies. The Heads of State and Government expressed satisfaction at the concerted effort that continued to be made by Member States to coordinate and harmonise national economic policies. The hope was expressed that this regional initiative would facilitate the integration process and the continued pursuit of economic development in Member States, and would also lay the needed foundation for the creation of an integrated regional economy.

Minimum Agenda for Action (MAFA)

10. In recognition of the need to focus the attention and energies of the Community and Member States on selected priority areas of integration, the

Authority emphasised its determination to continue with the execution of a series of annual minimum agenda for action. It was recalled that this programme was initiated by the Authority to encourage Member States to raise the level of implementation of some key community programmes. The Authority, therefore, invited all Member States to ensure the effective application of the measures under the current MAFA which is exclusively devoted to promoting the free movement of persons, and enhancing the impact of regional integration on the ordinary Community citizen.

Reduction of the Debt Burden of Member States

11. Heads of State and government noted with concern and dissatisfaction the continued expansion of the debt stock of Member States. The Authority noted that this was in spite of the efforts made by Member States to keep up with their debt service obligations and the initiatives at the international level to accord debt relief to developing countries. It was noted that even though the "Naples" terms for debt restructuring introduced during the year was an improvement on previous debt relief initiatives, much greater magnanimity needed to be shown by the principal creditors of Member States.

12. Given the growing size of the West African debt owed to multilateral creditors, the Authority called for fresh initiatives in the treatment of this type of debt. Heads of State and Government, however, urged Member States to continue to pursue sound economic management policies in order to generate the necessary level of credibility to attract favourable attention from the international capital market.

Monetary Integration Programme

13. The Authority expressed satisfaction with the general progress made, under the different national structural adjustment programmes, towards the liberalisation of the monetary sector. This trend had led to the emergence of realistic exchange rates and, in a few instances, conditions close to free convertibility of the national currency. Heads of State and Government were further encouraged by the progress recorded in the discussions of the ECOWAS consultative Forum towards the harmonisation of macro-economic and financial policies of Member States. It was stressed that continued regional coordination of policies would give all Member States the same orientation and facilitate the attainment of the goal of a single monetary zone. For this reason, the Authority requested that action should be expedited towards the adoption of an appropriate regional framework for the harmonisation and multilateral surveillance of economic and financial policies

14. In a review of the implementation of the specific activities under the monetary integration programme, Heads of State and Government endorsed the decision of Council that all debts in the West African Clearing House should be cleared by May 1996. the Authority called for concrete proposals from the ECOWAS Committee of Governors of Central Banks on the modalities for the creation of a credit and guarantee facility within the Clearing House to improve the regional payments arrangement. All Member States were called upon to continue with the pursuit of sound monetary policies and ensure the early elimination of non-tariff barriers of a monetary nature.

Financial Situation of the Community Institutions

15. Heads of State and Government lamented the poor financial situation which continued to plague the institutions of the Community. The Authority noted the the slowness in the integration process was due in part to the inadequacy of resources available to the institutions, a situation which had hampered their operations. It was recalled that the functioning of the Community depended principally on contributions from Member States. An urgent appeal was therefore made to all the Member States concerned to honour the terms of the negotiated schedule of payment of arrears, and avoid the unpleasant necessity of applying the statutory sanctions envisaged under the revised Treaty.

Global Environmental Facility

16. Heads of State and Government welcomed the opportunity for West Africa to show its regional solidarity to the rest of the world by selecting, through consultation, the two West African representatives to serve on the Executive Council of the Global Environmental Facility. The Authority requested the Republic of and the Republic of to fill the two positions on behalf of the region.

17. The Authority recalled its previous decision on the harmonisation of national positions and requested that, in future, Member States should notify the Executive Secretary of details of any such international post for which West Africa was eligible, so that necessary steps could be taken to adopt a common regional position.

Entry into Force of the Revised Treaty

18. Heads of State and Government noted with satisfaction the entry into force of the revised Treaty following its ratification by the required number of Member States. The Authority requested the Executive Secretary to take the

necessary steps to ensure the application of the novel provisions, such as the encouragement of private sector participation in the integration process.

Regional Peace and Security

19. Heads of State and Government expressed their disappointment that, in spite of the high hopes entertained over the signing of the Cotonou Accord, the Liberian Parties failed to abide by its provisions. The Authority lauded the persistence of its Chairman with respect to the efforts he made during the year to secure a workable agreement among the parties to the Liberian conflict. It was noted, in particular, that both the Akosombo and Accra Accords were within the framework of the Cotonou Accord and should have facilitated the implementation of the ECOWAS Peace Plan for Liberia.

20. Heads of State and Government observed that, due to the general lack of cooperation from the warring factions, very little progress had been made with respect to the vital issues of encampment, disarmament, demobilisation and rehabilitation. It was regretted that, instead of getting less, the problem of armed conflict had grown more intractable with the emergence of new warring factions and dissensions among the old ones. The Authority noted that the continued fighting had aggravated the problem of refugees and displaced persons.

21. The Authority praised the selfless sacrifice being made by the troop-contributing Member States in their continued support of the ECOMOG peace-keeping mission. Particular mention was made of the peace havens that ECOMOG forces had managed to create in five of the thirteen counties of Liberia and exhorted the ECOMOG Field Commander and his forces to persevere in their humanitarian mission. The Authority noted with regret the withdrawal of the troops from Tanzania and Uganda for lack of support from the international community. In this regard, a strong appeal was once more made by the Heads of State and Government for substantial support of the ECOWAS peace initiative in Liberia. A special appeal was made to the United Nations not to withdraw its observer mission in Liberia (UNOMIL), since it was playing a very vital role in the Liberia peace process.

22. Heads of State and Government noted with concern that dissensions among the warring factions had hampered its functioning and retarded the peace process. It was also observed that the current impasse that was being faced related to the formation of a new interim government. The Authority made a strong appeal to the Liberian leaders to rise above their personal interests and show the statesmanship need to reach a workable compromise, particularly as the issues over which there were disagreements did not appear

to be vital. Indeed, Heads of State and Government warned the Liberian leadership that the patience of the outside world was wearing out, and the persistent intransigence was destroying the very foundation of the nation.

23. The Authority requested its Chairman to continue to mediate in the Liberian crisis. All Member States were called upon to see the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone as problems of regional peace and security, and to facilitate the ECOWAS search for lasting solutions.

24. Concerning the merchant ship, MV Sea Rose, in the custody of ECOMOG, the Authority directed the Executive Secretary to study the issues involved and make appropriate proposals on its disposal. In the meantime, it was decided that the ship should remain in ECOMOG custody.

Election of Chairman

25. Heads of State and Government unanimously elected the Republic of Ghana as Chairman of the Community for 1995-1996.

Date and Venue of Next Summit

26. At the invitation of the President of the Republic of Ghana, the Authority decided to hold its Nineteenth Session in Accra, at a date to be determined later.

Vote of Thanks

27. Heads of State and Government paid glowing tribute to His Excellency Flight-Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings, President of the Republic of Ghana for the diligence and dedication with which he directed the affairs of the Community during the past twelve months. The Authority was particularly appreciative of the untiring efforts of its Chairman to secure peace in Liberia. Heads of State and Government further expressed gratitude to President Rawlings, his government and the people of Ghana for the genuine fraternal welcome extended to all delegations and for the excellent facilities made available to ensure the success of the 1995 Annual Statutory Meetings of the Community.

DONE AT ACCRA THIS 29TH DAY OF JULY 1995

**BASSA-A HUMAN TRAGEDY
A ONE DAY PRELIMINARY FACT-FINDING HUMAN RIGHTS
REPORT
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1995
A REPORT OF THE JUSTICE AND PEACE COMMISSION OF THE
NATIONAL CATHOLIC SECRETARIAT
FEBRUARY 10, 1995**

INTRODUCTION

During the preparation of this report, it was difficult to arrive at a written description of what I saw in Buchanan City, Grand Bassa County. Buchanan is one of Liberia's oldest cities. It is about 86 miles away from the city of Monrovia. It is predominantly inhabited by the Bassa speaking tribe of Liberia. In pre-war days, it is said to have embodied a population of 15,000 to 20,000 persons. The population has now swelled to more than 100,000 persons due to renewed hostilities in areas surrounding the city of Buchanan. As I entered Buchanan and finally departed, I became convinced that the description "TRAGEDY" does not reflect extreme emotions but rather the reality.

THE JOURNEY

Although I have made a series of visits to Buchanan in the past, this visit was significant for two major reasons: Firstly, it afforded me an opportunity to come into direct contact with recent events since renewed fighting commenced and to witness the depth of human sufferings inflicted on armless people, and secondly, an opportunity was provided to travel to Buchanan along with two very important and well respected personalities in the Liberian society. Both personalities are extremely knowledgeable of Liberia's socio-economic and political history and have made extensive travels throughout Liberia.

These two individuals kept me awake throughout the visit with detailed and often meticulous accounts of history. I sat quietly as they analyzed our present situation while pondering over the effects of the civil war and the prospects for reconstruction. Intermittently, they would remember me and murmur "The responsibility of reshaping this country rest on young people like Kofi because we are on our way out. Kofi, do you think it is possible?" Embarrassingly, I would quip, "It is difficult but we will try." I remained virtually silent trying to learn from their fountain of knowledge and wisdom. Not many young people would manage to benefit from such company. Indeed I was privileged. We set out during the early morning of February 6, 1995 driving through Paynesville, Harbel towards Buchanan.

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The stark difference along the way was easily discerned. The highway after Harbel laid bare and desolate, sparsely inhabited and, in most instances, uninhabited villages and towns are absolutely neglected.

My elders often discussed the scene, reflecting on the previous appearance and the post-war effects. They lamented the destruction, wondering whether they would ever become lively again.

This is Owensgrove, this is Fortsville, this is Harrisville, this is Camp Mechlin, etc.

At some point, they would remark, this is the home of Former Associate Justice Tellewoda. Entering Buchanan, one said, is that T. Nelson's House? Joshua Harmon's House burned? But we were startled by the human explosion as we entered Buchanan. People all over the streets. People pauperized by the on-going civil conflict. Hopelessness consumed their looks. Frustration and suffering dominated their expressions. Is there hope? I said to myself.

HUMANITARIAN EFFORTS

Approximately eight non-governmental organizations operate in Buchanan, namely; Action Internationale Contre la Faim (AICF), Medicin Sans Frontier (MSF), Special Emergency Relief For the Elderly (SERE), Save the Children Fund (SCF), Red Cross, Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission (LRRRC), Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and the Catholic Church Emergency Relief Committee. These Institutions offer services in areas ranging from health, material assistance, to food, etc.

Through a combined reception committee, they register and assist new entrants at the various entry points. Three major entry points have been established for this purpose. One located at the intersection leading to Rivercess County where approximately 100-115 persons enter daily while the other two points are located along the sea shores where 25-30 person appear daily by canoe from Sinoe and Rivercess Counties. During weekends, these numbers swell.

Those fleeing from Rivercess and Grand Bassa Counties testify to renewed fighting between the Liberia Peace Council and the National Patriotic Front of Liberia. Evidence of torture, flogging, rape and other forms of abuses, coupled with a frailed state of health are glaring upon sight.

Upon registration, they are sent to already overcrowded displaced centers operated by the Catholics and other church related institutions.

GENERAL WELFARE

All of the displaced persons are in crippling conditions suffering for malnutrition, diseases (scabies, rash, etc) and scars of atrocities committed by fighters. Civilians from Sinoe County link their immediate plight to the lack of food and medication while those from Rivercess, Bong, Grand Bassa and other surrounding parts attest to similar experiences which are compounded by continuous abuses such as denial of freedom of movement (hostage-taking), rape, flogging, forced labor, etc. Most civilians survive on roots. With the ever increasing population of about 80,000 persons, a population explosion is inevitable.

THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION

The human rights situation is appalling in these areas. There are revelations of mass destruction of villages by retreating fighters of both the National Patriotic Front of Liberia and the Liberia Peace Council. Some surrounding towns affected include Yah Town, Weayea Town, Karngar Town, Zeagar Town, Goll Town, etc.

A) RAPE, MURDER, AND ACTS OF CANNIBALISM

A number of interviewees revealed the egregious human rights abuses which persist. They indicated that approximately 6,000 persons are being held in areas around the Liberia Agricultural Company (LAC) particularly around Compounds #3 and 4 where they are held hostage thereby denied their basic rights to freedom of movement under the guise of safety.

The hostages are victims of constant harassment and torture. Married and unmarried women are constantly raped by the fighters of the Liberia Peace Council. Civilians have to pay \$100.00 for pass to leave on a fruitless journey which ends at the last check point, Big Joe Town, where the pass is usually torn and they are turned back. They also have to pay \$20 to fetch food in the bushes.

Both men and women are used for forced labor by LPC Fighters who include Mullato Boyah, James Smith, Battle Commander Charlie Born Trouble and Grand Commander Superman Mohammed Jalloh. Civilians are forced to fetch palm wine, coconuts, water, and cook for fighters.

One old man told me how his young wife was taken away for days by LPC Fighters. Another displayed bruises on his back inflicted by LPC fighters when he was forced to work without food. A 40-year-old man told me how his friend Mark, a former Private Security to Edward Sackor, was killed and eaten by

Superman Mohammed Jalloh. His Son Isaac Toby was beheaded by LPC fighters led by Mohammed Boyah. The fighters had requested the sum of \$25,000.00 which he could not produce except for \$5,000 of the amount. His son was beheaded with a cutlass in his presence on May 10, 1994. He was 22 years old.

One Isaac Vah, a former Chief Cook for LAMCO was also killed last Wednesday by LPC fighters. Most of the fleeing civilians displayed varying scars of severe torture as a result of bayonets, gunshot wounds, flogging, etc.

There is also a glaring absence of a clear civil structure organized by the LPC in their controlled areas thus rendering it difficult to deal directly with a command structure. A feudal system or fief structure is in place with warlords and marauding gangs of both the LPC and NPFL all over parts of central eastern Liberia.

CORPORATE CONSPIRACY

In the midst of a severe human catastrophe, there is a visible contradiction of a booming business environment. Several companies are engaged in lucrative business ventures where thousand of United States dollars are accrued from sale of rubber, log, gold, diamonds, etc.

These companies owned by Lebanese, Italians, Dutch, Liberians and other businessmen include TIMCO, AGRO, NELCO, CHADI. The significance is not the business climate but eyewitnesses accused these companies of direct involvement with the Liberia Peace Council in the midst of a prevailing economic sanction against factions in the country. The resources are provided at the expense of wretched civilians who are placed into forced labor by fighters of the Liberia Peace Council. People are being tortured and dehumanized to work.

The major question now is, who sanctions this kind of commerce and how does it operate.

RECOMMENDATIONS, APPEALS, CALLS

In the wake of massive human suffering we are:

Appealing to the NGO community for increased presence and support to meet the immediate needs of civilians fleeing fighting to Buchanan;
Requesting NGO's to increase food rations to the displaced.
Calling on the leadership of the Liberia Peace Council to take urgent steps to release all civilians being held hostage in Compounds #3 and 4. Their freedom of movement must be guaranteed. There must be an immediate

halt to acts of torture, murder, and cannibalism;

Calling on the Leadership of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia to take urgent steps to release civilians and halt all atrocities;

Calling for an immediate cease-fire in strict compliance with the recently signed Akomsobo Agreement concluded in Ghana last year;

Calling on the United Nations to strictly monitor and report violations of the cease-fire;

Calling on the Government of Liberia to immediately launch an investigation into the case of businesses or members of the business community who are engaged in direct business ventures with various factions in the country, especially in the midst of a prevailing economic sanction;

Recommending that the NGO Community develop the moral courage to request that a comprehensive assessment is carried out in areas controlled by the LPC in order to ascertain the plight and deliver needy relief.

VIOLATIONS OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LAWS

Actions by both the NPFL and LPC are in total contravention of the mandate of both national and international laws. On the question of slavery, forced labor, murder and hostage-taking, the Geneva Convention relative to the protection of civilian persons in time of war of August 12, 1949 prohibits the taking of hostages.

Article 3, Section 1 (a) states:

In the case of armed conflict not of an international character occurring in the territory of one of the High Contracting Parties, each Party to the conflict shall be bound to apply, as a minimum, the following provisions:

(I) Persons taking no active part in the hostilities, including members of armed forces who have laid down their arms and those placed hors de combat by sickness, wounds, detention, or any other cause, shall in all circumstances be treated humanely, without any adverse distinction founded on race, colour, religion or faith, sex birth or wealth, or any other similar criteria.

To this end, the following acts shall remain prohibited at any time and in any place whatsoever with respect to the above-mentioned persons:

- (a) violence to life and person, in particular murder of all kinds, mutilation, cruel treatment and torture;
- (b) taking of hostages;
- (c) outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment;
- (d) the passing of sentences and the carrying out of executions without previous judgment pronounced by regularly constituted court, affording all judicial guarantees which are recognized as indispensable by civilized peoples.

The Liberia Constitution, Chapter III on fundamental rights Article 12 and 13 states:

No person shall be held in slavery or forced labor within the Republic, nor shall any citizen of Liberia nor any person resident therein deal in slaves or subject any other person to forced labor, debt bondage or peonage; but labor reasonably required in consequence of a court sentence or order conforming to acceptable labor standards, service in the military, work of service which forms part of normal civil obligations or service exacted in cases of emergency or calamity threatening the life or well-being of the community shall not be deemed forced labor.

(a) Every person lawfully within the Republic shall have right to move freely throughout Liberia, to reside in any part thereof and to leave there from subject however to the safeguarding of public security, public order, public health or morals or the rights and freedoms of others.

This preliminary fact-finding report was prepared by Samuel Kofi Woods, II, Director of the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, as a result of a one day visit to Buchanan on February 6, 1995.

* LPC- Liberia Peace Council

NPFL- National Patriotic Front of Liberia

These are two of several warring factions in Liberia.

As a result of this preliminary report, a two-member mission is on its way to Buchanan for a more extensive fact-finding endeavor by the Justice and Peace Commission.

Samuel K. Woods, II
Director, JPC

Editor's Note

Mr. G. Baccus Matthews, the leader of the group called PAL (Progressive Alliance of Liberia), which planned and master-minded the April 14, 1979 violent demonstration in Monrovia, wrote a letter from custody appealing to President Tolbert to forgive him and his collaborators.

The letter from the PAL leader, dated April 25, 1979, is reproduced here. Also reproduced here is President Tolbert's reply on the same day he received Mr. Matthews' letter.

Monrovia

April 25, 1979

His Excellency Dr. William R. Tolbert, Jr.
President of the Republic of Liberia
The Executive Mansion
Monrovia, Liberia

Dear President Tolbert:

(I appreciate the fact that the authorities have permitted me to write you this letter.)

Sir, permit me to express regrets of behalf of myself and my collaborators and to note the dilemma which we, young people, face. Your thoughts and actions, Sir, are based upon experience of things as they have been, as they are and, therefore, as they can possibly be. We unfortunately know only the present; we are the **now** generation — but, being young people, our minds are fertile for visions. We want things as we think they ought to be, but we lack the experience of the process by which they have reached this far. This is our problem. Yes, the costly lesson we have learned tells us that we are going nowhere for nothing unless we can rely on the experience and wisdom of men such as you.

After much reflection, I have become convinced that those of us who were so confident about our methods now have every reason to thoroughly re-examine them. We invite you to help us develop a true perspective of the forces we ought to work for and not against. You would be making a lasting contribution to the future of our country. If we, young people mean much to you then, Sir, the challenge is yours.

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On behalf of all of us, I appeal for your fatherly consideration to permit us to utilize our energies in helping to carry out a meaningful program of national reconstruction, to heal the wounds, under your direct supervision.

I plead that you constitute all of us into a Special Committee for National Reconstruction. Its duties may include, as you see fit, the awakening of public spirit for the OAU Conference; promoting a nationwide "All Liberians Are One" campaign; reassuring business houses that the events of April 14 are behind us and will not be repeated; and, with the assistance of our associates abroad, a well-ordered public relations campaign to raise high again our country's image abroad.

We would commit our energies to this Sir, if you would guide our work whereby we can learn something from you.

It would be fine, Mr. President, if the world can see that unity of purpose persists among the Liberian people and we remain one nation, under God, indivisible.

We appeal to you for this unique act of statesmanship. There are reasons you are President and, as I told you once, you are far from being just another African Head of state. As my father used to say, "God made some people, But he created others."

In the cause of the people,

Respectfully,
G. Baccus Matthews
CHAIRMAN, PAL

P.S. We would be honoured to discuss this in detail with you, Sir.

April 25, 1979

Dear Friend:

I acknowledge with thanks your letter of today's date in which you expressed regrets on behalf of yourself and your collaborators, and noted the dilemma which you, young people, now face as a consequence of the unfortunate events which occurred over the Easter weekend because of the action taken by you.

I am delighted to know that you have now come to understand that wisdom is the principal thing, according to the Good Book.

When it comes to the reconstruction of our country, I have made it clear that I desire all the people of the country to participate in this national endeavour. This country is ours and we must together build it through Total Involvement, Self-reliance and a firm faith in Almighty God. This is the basis of my consistent policy for national development and progress, so that all our people might enjoy a higher standard of living.

In the process we must first of all reconstruct ourselves morally and spiritually. We must change our attitudes, and our ideologies foreign to the Liberian way of life, to enable us to physically reconstruct our country for benefit of all of us. The governed must operate together with the Government.

You can rest assured that I shall give your appeal timely consideration.

With kindest regards at RALLY TIME!

Faithfully Yours,
IN THE CAUSE OF THE PEOPLE,
W. R. Tolbert, Jr.

Contributors To This Issue

Similih M. Cordon is a Liberian writer and humorist. He is Associate Editor of this journal and a Professor of Humanities and Communications at Florida Community College at Jacksonville.

Jacob Pereira-Langhu is a lecturer at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana. He was Assistant Professor of Economics and Dean of the Social Science Division, Cuttington University College, Suacoco, Liberia.

Elaine Armour Wolo is Field Coordinator, Pathways to Teaching Program of the Center for Education at Tulane University, New Orleans. For over 15 years, beginning in 1962 with Operations Crossroads, Africa, She was a teacher and/or administrator in Liberian education.

Alfred B. Konuwa, a Liberian, is the Samuel J. Walton Free Enterprise Fellow at Butte College where he teaches economics and business. He is also on the faculty at California State University, Chico, where he teaches African economics in the Center for International Studies.

Benjamin S. Lawson is Professor of English at Albany State College, Albany, Georgia.

Samuel K. Woods, II, is Director of the Justice and Peace Commission of the (Liberian) National Catholic Secretariat.

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