

LIBERIAN STUDIES JOURNAL



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The Editors and Advisory Board gratefully acknowledge the contributions of Dieter H. Haenicke, Institute for International and Areas Studies, the History Department, and the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Leadership, Western Michigan University.

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A refereed journal that emphasizes the social sciences, humanities and the natural sciences, the *Liberian Studies Journal* is a semiannual publication devoted to studies on Africa's oldest Republic. The annual subscription rate is US \$40.00, US \$15.00 for students, and US \$50.00 for institutions. It includes membership in the Liberian Studies Association, Inc. All manuscripts and related matters should be addressed to Dr. Amos J. Beyan, Editor, *Liberian Studies Journal*, Friedmann Hall, Department of History, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan 49008. Subscriptions and other business matters should be directed to Dr. Mary Moran, Secretary-Treasurer, Liberian Studies Association, Inc., Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Colgate University, 13 Oak Drive, Hamilton, New York 13346-1398. E-mail: mmoran@mail.colgate.edu

A Brief History of the Loma People

*Robert Leopold**

The Loma are a Mande-speaking people who practice swidden agriculture in a mountainous, sparsely populated region astride the border of Guinea and Liberia. Within the two countries there are perhaps 400,000 Loma, and despite regional variation in custom and dialect, dissimilar histories of colonization, and the political border that now crosses their landscape, Loma on both sides maintain frequent social relations and a sense of common identity.¹

The Loma are members of the Central West Atlantic culture area, an ethnically plural and linguistically diverse region that lies within the littoral forest zone bounded by the Scarcies River and Cape Palmas (d'Azevedo 1962).² Within this complex region ethnic groups of the Kru, Mel and Mande language families are present, and their members often comprise a significant portion of Loma towns. To the south of the Loma area are found the Kru-speaking Kuwaa (Belle); to the west live the Mel-speaking Kissi and southwestern Mande-speaking Bandi. To the north and east, the Loma region is bounded by the Kuranko, Manya and Konianke, speakers of northern Mande languages; the Kpelle, a southwestern Mande-speaking people are found in the southeast. A common history of ethnic movement, warfare, long-distance trade and political alliance has contributed to an extraordinary degree of heterogeneity that is one of the region's principal social and cultural features (d'Azevedo 1962, 1971).

The present distribution of ethnic groups is thought to result from the breakup of the Mande Empire in the 15th century, when Mande-speaking peoples dispersed toward the forested littoral in several waves of collective migration, incorporating or displacing autochthonous ethnic groups along the way. Portuguese geographers, navigators and traders along the Malaguetta Coast would write soon afterwards of a "Mane invasion," an era of sweeping geographical movement, political conquest and protracted ethnic warfare (Almada 1964, Dapper 1668, Donelha 1977). The social and cultural consequences of the Mane were profound. Into a region of small-scale stateless societies occupied by Mel (West Atlantic) and Kru/Kwa speakers came savannah peoples of Mande origin bearing sophisticated new technologies (such as iron smelting and cotton weaving), horses, superior weapons, and a form of social organization apparently well suited to conquest and territorial expansion. Over subsequent generations,

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the Mane developed elaborate chiefdoms and petty states, often founded upon their newly created relationships with European factors along the Atlantic coast (d'Azevedo 1962; Person 1968; Rodney 1970).³

Contemporaneous accounts of the Mane era mention the coastal groups with whom the Europeans traded — the Mel-speaking Bullom, Temne, Limba, Baga, and Nalu, whom they collectively called *Sapi*; but the hinterland peoples residing outside their sphere of commerce were apparently unknown to them or simply not recorded. “Boosee” — the term by which Americo-Liberians, Europeans and others would later refer to the Loma — does not appear in print until 1808 (Hair 1967) and “Loma” not until 1900 (Delafose 1900). Still, if Loma had established their present position just following the Mane invasion, as Person (1968) suggests, their participation as intermediaries in the 16th and 17th century coastal trade can scarcely be doubted. The Loma region lies between the headwaters of the Makona (Moa), Lofa, Lawa, and St. Paul (Diani) rivers, which flow southwesterly to the coast, and the Milo, Sankarani and Baoulé, tributaries of the Niger to the north. Though many of these rivers are barely navigable, for several centuries their watersheds provided easily traversed trade routes to the coast (Béavogui 2001: 55-86; Person 1968 Vol I: 558).

A principle center of long-distance trade from perhaps the late eighteenth century was the Condo (Hondo) Confederation, founded by Loma and Bandi some fifty miles inland from Cape Mount. From its capital at Bopolu, an inter-ethnic confederation of Gola, Vai, Dei, Kpelle, Fula and Malinke monopolized the interior-to-Atlantic trade for nearly a century. In exchange for the Africans' ivory, gold, kola, pepper and slaves, the coastal trading vessels brought salt, iron, munitions, and other items of European manufacture (d'Azevedo 1962; Béavogui 2001; Holsoe 1966, 1976/7; Rodney 1970). In addition to Condo's ready supply of slaves, the Europeans favored Cape Mount's location midway along their Atlantic route and its dense coastal mangrove swamps which helped conceal their vessels during Britain's anti-slaving campaign.⁴ Condo flourished under the Malinke leadership of Sao Boso (King Boatswain), and though Cape Mount was never a principal European entrepôt, it was a frequent port of call (Jones 1983). When Loma historical narratives mention long-distance trade with the coast, it is Bopolu to which they refer, just as all large-scale local merchants today are called *pôtekili* (Portuguese) in recollection of an earlier era of European trade.

The establishment of a colony of repatriated Americans at Cape Mesurado in 1822, coupled with Britain's efforts to suppress the Atlantic slave trade, slowly contributed to the Condo Confederation's demise (Holsoe 1967). Trade with the American colonists gradually replaced seafaring trade, but it did not lessen the importance of Bopolu or the interior trade routes, which were newly contested following the death of Sao Boso's son, Momolu Sao, in 1871. Loma from Bonde captured Bopolu in 1872, just as Samori Touré's empire began to expand from the savannah to the southern forests (Massing 1978/9: 56).

The Colonial Era

Samori's defeat of the Malinke⁵ war chief Saghadyigi Kamara in 1883 brought the upper Konian region under Samori's control and renewed the southward push of Malinke, exacerbating ethnic hostilities in the Loma regions of Gizzima, Ziama, Bluyeama and Koima (Bouet 1911; Person 1968; Massing 1978/9: 54ff). New leadership rivaled old as Loma, Malinke, and others jockeyed for control of greater territory. The north-south trade routes under Loma control became increasingly important conduits for the exchange of war captives for arms following France's termination of arms shipments through Sierra Leone. Today, Loma refer to this era of unprecedented ethnic warfare as *gilikilikôï*, the "rolling war," in recollection of the way Malinke soldiers from the Konian region swept through the landscape like rocks rolling down a hill (Cordor 1967: 25).

Among the most significant effects of Samori's military campaigns in the Loma area were the continued exodus of Loma from savannah to forest and the alliances they would forge with animist Malinke opposed to Samori's Islamic crusade. In coming years, Loma established alliances of convenience with neighboring ethnic groups that transcended a narrower allegiance to Loma ethnicity and identity. Multi-ethnic enclaves sprung up, particularly in the southern and eastern regions; intermarriage became commonplace; and large multi-ethnic confederacies, often under the command of non-Loma rulers, dominated several Loma *zuu* (territorial political units) along the frontier. When the Traveling Commissioner of Sierra Leone visited the Bonde Loma war town of Kpandemai in 1891, for example, he reported the presence of some 3,000 residents and *sofa* (infantrymen) drawn from surrounding Mende, Malinke, Bandi and Kissi (Alldridge 1901: 227-234; cf. Wallis 1910, Sharpe 1920). Like other Loma towns in the Baizia, Bonde, Wubomai and Lulama regions, Kpandemai would remain largely independent of Samori; but the repercussions of his military campaign and the French response were felt by Loma everywhere.

Samori was not alone in his quest for empire. Within decades of their settlement on African soil, the repatriated Black Americans of the Republic of Liberia began to make pretentious claims to an area of the hinterland extending three hundred and fifty miles to the north, based on a series of explorations that began with Seymour and Ash's tour of the interior in 1858 (Fairhead *et al* 2003: 31-91). A decade later, a more ambitious reconnaissance of the interior took Benjamin Anderson as far as the wealthy Malinke town of Musadu (now in Guinea); and when Anderson returned to Musadu in 1874, he signed several treaties of cooperation with Loma, Kpelle, and Malinke representatives.⁶ Anderson's journeys confirmed his government's confidence in the commercial promise of the Liberian hinterland. His written report of the mission called for increased trade with the tribes of the far interior, the establishment of military outposts, and a greater governmental presence. But at a time when the European powers were steadily increasing their West African territories, Anderson's appeals were largely ignored. The Black Republic had neither the military forces nor finances to

safeguard her territories beyond Monrovia's forty mile "constitutional zone." The absence of a Liberian presence along the ill-defined Guinea-Liberia frontier ultimately contributed to a political climate in which France would question Anderson's maps and publicly challenge the very occurrence of his exploration (d'Ollone 1903). In the decades following Anderson's mission, Liberia's territorial sovereignty was tenuous and its political border was frequently violated (Akpan 1973: 223-225; Murdza 1979).

By contrast, Britain's success in the Sierra Leone protectorate and her eventual pacification of the Kissi region (to the west of the Loma) had by 1907 resulted in a permanent military force on Liberian soil (Massing 1980/1; Abasiattai 1989), while the French campaign against Samori pushed its military successively further into Liberian territories. Thus by century's end (and often in violation of the territorial agreement of 1892), France had established permanent military outposts at Bofosso, Macenta, Beyla, Soundédou, N'Zebela and N'Zapa, virtually surrounding the Loma region (Bouet 1911).

Acceding to France's demand that it demonstrate control of the territory it claimed, Liberia reluctantly established the Liberian Frontier Force in 1908.⁷ Ironically, the force intended to establish a Liberian presence in the hinterland was composed in its first year of British soldiers entirely under British command (Gershoni 1985; Abasiattai 1989). President Barclay's expectation that a British military presence might arrest French progress in the Liberian hinterland also promised to bring additional revenues for Britain, which considered a buffer zone on the frontier useful to help avoid a direct confrontation with France. But the British force did not last. Rampant corruption coupled with ineffective leadership warranted the removal of the British agents by year's end, when Liberia invited the intervention of the U.S. State Department. In 1909, three American representatives arrived in the northwestern district.

France's claim to the Loma forests was better supported than Liberia's, but her interests were pursued with equal difficulty. Though France had begun to establish a formidable military presence in the forest zone, Loma everywhere offered unexpected and unusually strong resistance (Bouet 1911; Baratier 1913; Guilavogui 1968; Suret-Canale 1964, 1988b). Loma massacred several French reconnaissance and delimitation envoys (at N'Zebela in 1894 and N'Zolou in 1897); destroyed a newly erected customs post and surrounding cooperative villages (Diorodougou, in 1899); and summarily defeated the French military at Loma strongholds such as N'Zapa (1894), Kounkan (1902) and Busedu (1907), where French soldiers fled in embarrassment after confronting an unusually well-armed, palisaded village (Bouet 1911: 238-239; Béavogui 2001: 129-135; Suret-Canale 1964). Where the French made inroads, such as in M'Baléma and M'Balasso in 1906, Loma quickly returned and rebuilt their towns, crippling the appearance of French success.

It was not merely the vitality of the Loma response to colonial military operations that set the forest zone apart from other areas of French penetration. As Suret-Canale (1988a: 157-159) notes, the social organization of the forest peoples⁸ presented a fur-

ther obstacle. Whereas French colonization elsewhere (such as Futa Jalon) often relied upon powerful aristocratic rulers, or *almamy*, whose sovereignty over vast territories would make them appropriate paramount chiefs in newly created administrative *cantons* — and whom the colonists could often reliably co-opt to their advantage, the French discovered in the forest zone a surfeit of petty kings with only a limited, local territorial influence. In place of feudal Muslim states, social organization in the forest zone was founded upon local descent-group alliances under the leadership of councils of elders, big men and warriors with narrow influence, or initiation societies (*ibid.*; cf. Paulme 1960; Person 1960; Massing 1978/79).⁹ Suret-Canale's description is equally representative of Loma sections within Liberia.¹⁰

The French and Liberian forces faced Loma clansmen with different political loyalties, which further frustrated their respective military strategies. During the period 1880-90, Loma *zuu* in the northern and western Loma regions (Luloma, Zialor, Baizia, Wubomai and western Bonde) forged shifting, temporary alliances with Bandi, Kuranko and animist Malinke (Person 1968; Massing *ibid.*); while other *zuu* in the east and south (i.e. Koidu/Waiglomai-Woniguomai, Koima, Bluyecama, [Wai]ziama, Gizzima and eastern sections of Bonde/Boni) were either occupied by Samori's forces or allied with him voluntarily (Person 1968; Massing 1978/9).

For a short time, the border contest between Liberia and France allowed frontier towns and villages to play one colonist against the other, claiming allegiance (sometimes even paying taxes) to one party in anticipation of better offers from the other (Murdza 1979: 380). Each colonial power made gifts of territory and repeated assurances of safety in an effort to win labor and taxpayers to its side, since an individual town and its neighboring territory along the frontier might swell its loyal ranks by as many as two or three thousand citizens. Loma rulers with a following were especially courted, and many (such as N'Zebela Togba, who ultimately surrendered in 1907) increased their influence through the protection they received from French frontier officers.

France's capture of Samori at Zigita in 1898 brought a renewal of French efforts to pacify the Loma. Initial military successes notwithstanding, the Loma faltered when the *région militaire* (i.e., the forest region) was reorganized in 1907 under new leadership with superior munitions. When their military strongholds at M'Beléma, Busedu (1907), N'Zapa, Koima (1908), and Soundédou (1909) fell, Loma fled in increasing numbers to the towns of Zinta and Yela, just hundreds of feet across the Liberian border (Bouet *ibid.*: 236-241; Murdza 1979: 380, 431). In a show of might and in reprisal for their resistance, French soldiers indiscriminately burned Loma towns, destroyed crops, and reclaimed territory promised to individual leaders. The surrender of the towns of N'Zapa, Zolou and N'Zebela ultimately brought all Loma *zuu* south of the Makona permanently under French command.

As a consequence of Liberian military *impuissance*, French preoccupation with Samori, an inadequate knowledge of the frontier and Loma resistance, an interna-

tional border through Lomaland was virtually absent — despite three separate agreements — throughout the colonial period (Suret-Canale 1988b: 127; Murdza 1979 *passim*).¹¹ Whereas the 1907 Franco-Liberian agreement endorsed such natural borders as the Makona River, further south the line was inadequately delimited and frequently subject to revision. Within the traditional Loma sections of Gizzima, Zieme, and Vekema, the proposed border violated the land's natural relief and flatly ignored crucial social boundaries (Murdza 1979: 369). Loma compliance with the colonists' mandate varied accordingly. Loma *zuu* nearest the border, and in some cases actually divided by it (such as Fasolo/Woniguomai, Bonde and Gizzima), moved almost entirely to the Liberian side (Fahnbulleh 1936; Massing 1978/9; Murdza 1979: 364), while those farthest from the zone of military occupation (e.g., towns such as Kpandemai in Bondi) resisted or merely avoided incorporation through the 1920s (Suret-Canale 1988b).

Though Liberian colonization was strongly resisted elsewhere in the hinterland, Loma leadership apparently welcomed the Liberian administration (Currens 1974; Korvah 1995: 52; Massing 1978/9: 58).¹² At a round of meetings in Voinjama and Zigita (Zinta) between 1908 and 1911, where Bondi and Wubomai representatives were asked to choose Liberian or French rule, those present unanimously declared their allegiance to Liberia.¹³ According to Loma historian Paul Korvah, at the conclusion of the 1908 meeting the Loma sent a white horse, white country cloth, and ten white kola nuts to President Arthur Barclay in Monrovia to demonstrate their sincerity (Korvah 1995: 65.). Whether their decision to accept the "Barclay government" was based on historical ties to coastal trading centers,¹⁴ loyalty to Liberian Frontier Force officers, or their antipathy to the French, as Currens suggests (1974: 25-26), clearly Loma were also persuaded by the relative strengths of the two colonial powers. As Akpan (1973: 230; 1988: 27) correctly notes, the Liberian Frontier Force was understaffed, underarmed and unpaid, and Loma were scarcely subjected to actual force (cf. Clegg 1996: 11-12; Korvah *ibid.*: 52).¹⁵ Loma south of the Makona accepted Liberian rule at what must have seemed an opportune time, as French control of all contested frontier regions was by then nearly absolute.

Liberia's administration of the hinterland was modeled after the British system of indirect rule (Liebenow 1987: 54-56). Paramount chieftaincies under native rule were set up within larger administrative districts governed by Americo-Liberian district administrators. At its inception, the hinterland administration's presence was superficial and its effects on Loma social life inconsequential. On the one hand, the system of paramount chieftaincies allowed Loma to retain a *de facto* and *de jure* sovereignty over traditional land;¹⁶ on the other, the Liberian government unwisely installed as paramount chiefs former "kings" and war leaders such as the powerful Dikken Korvah of Wubomai. Hardly the compliant colonial agents the administration had hoped for, the already formidable rule of these popular leaders was unintentionally bolstered by the conferral of official titles, while the administration's power was ultimately eclipsed.¹⁷

Americo-Liberian policies toward Loma cultural institutions were tolerant. From the start of colonization, in the hinterland reorganization of 1931 and through the codified statutes of 1956, Loma who were not identified as "civilized" (*wui*) fell entirely under "tribal" jurisdiction. Because land claims, divorces, torts and criminal proceedings were handled by a native administration ("Tribal Authority") whose only federally appointed agent was the provincial governor (later, the county superintendent), most important social institutions in Loma society were not adversely effected by colonial rule. Though the paramount chief's role had no precedent among the Loma, the paramount chiefdoms were similar to traditional Loma territories (*zuu*) that existed at the advent of colonization; in addition, they were self-governing and relatively autonomous of state control. Even after the paramount chiefdoms were restructured and consolidated in the 1930s under President Edwin Barclay (see below), and a Mandingo paramount chief with presidential backing was temporarily imposed (Cordor 1967; Korvah 1995: 58-60), Loma soon regained their self-rule.

Unlike their Liberian counterparts, who strengthened their position, ironically, by accepting the leadership of the weaker colonial party, Loma on the right bank of the Makona and east of the St. Paul River were less fortunate. As early as 1904, all land in Guinea officially became the property of a European power which "turned into 'scraps of paper' the thousands of treaties of protection it had signed and thanks to which it had implanted itself successfully in Africa" (Suret-Canale 1988b: 139-140). Whereas Liberia was largely ill-prepared to administer or govern its newly won possessions, Guinean Loma were quickly subject to direct civil administration (above the village level) under colonial rather than local administration. A steady erosion of traditional social institutions followed. "Between 1890 and 1914," writes Suret-Canale (*ibid.*: 139), "... the old rulers — including those who had given most assistance to French penetration — were eliminated and the old political framework was turned completely upside down: ethnic boundaries ... were cut up and reshaped according to administrative necessity or fantasy."¹⁸ Though the newly created *chef de canton* was charged with the collection of taxes and the administration of "traditional" lands, he "remained an agent of the administration, without actually being an official. Tradition served here as a pretext for convenience and economy" (Suret-Canale 1988a: 160). Absent traditional modes of investment on the one hand, and on the other, the authority to govern (chiefs in Guinea could not even hear court cases), the authority of Guinean chiefs was arbitrary and maintained solely through coercion. Few had more than a fleeting purchase on their community's allegiance.¹⁹

Differences in French and Liberian modes of colonial administration reflected differences in their commercial interests and capabilities. Indirect rule in the Liberian hinterland meant, in practice, that taxes were collected infrequently, central markets were not established, and opportunities for wage employment outside of the Frontier Force were virtually non-existent. The primary source of wage employment between 1924 and the 1960s was the Firestone Plantations Company at Mount Barclay, a six-

to ten-day walk from Voinjama. In 1926, the Liberian government promised to provide Firestone with at least 2,000 men from each of Liberia's five provinces. Firestone paid paramount chiefs one cent per day for each laborer recruited for the plantation, and it is undoubtedly true that overzealous chiefs abused the system (cf. Carter 1972: 92-93; Liebenow 1987: 57). But even the most ardent critics of Firestone's labor policies note that Firestone advocated "free and unrestricted employment ... upon terms and conditions which are agreeable to the laborers themselves."²⁰ As Tucker (2000: 256) points out, "the arrangement was more flexible and non-coercive than labor recruitment in the French and Belgian colonies of central Africa at the same time: Firestone workers could leave at any time, and the chiefs might require them to return home for farm work or other responsibilities." In retrospect, the Loma probably benefited more from their relationship with Firestone than did the state — which didn't benefit at all (cf. van der Kraaij 1980).²¹

By contrast, France regarded the forest zone as a relatively maintenance-free source of revenue, labor and agricultural products, and it quickly established customs posts at thriving Loma markets and along traditional trade routes (Diorodougou, Koima, Kabaro, Macenta, Boola and Beyla). Like Guinea's other ethnic groups, Loma were expected to contribute to French commercial interests through *corvée* labor and forced cultivation (Béavogui 2001: 162ff; Fall 1987), and agricultural tribute to "traditional" chiefs was the preferred means for seeing that they did so. As late as 1949, writes Suret-Canale, "... the taxpayers of the Macenta circle had to make a forced contribution of almost 20 kilos of rice, which was then carried on men's heads over distances of dozens of kilometers to the appointed centres, where it was resold ... to European traders...." (ibid.: 141).²² The French scheme was further exacting, as Suret-Canale reports, because the state-operated rubber concessions (later coffee and mining) depleted the natural resources of the forest zone and slowly contributed to its change to savannah (ibid.: 133ff).²³

Ironically, the greatest disruption of Loma social institutions occurred immediately after the French colonists left Guinea. Under the postcolonial regime of Sekou Touré, the Parti Démocratique de Guinée sought to dispel those features of traditional religious beliefs and practices that conflicted with their Marxist image of the modern nation-state. The *campagne de démystification*, aimed largely at the nation's youth, attempted to eradicate "fetishism" — ancestor cults, sacrifices, initiation rites, bodily cicatrization, and other "superstitious" beliefs. The most significant social institutions in Loma society, the Poro (*pôlôgii*) and Sande (*zádegít*) cultural societies, were banned (Guilao 1967; McGovern 2004; Rivière 1969). Through radio broadcasts, the press and public theater, the PDG persuaded party supporters to publicly expose the secrets of these societies and destroy society masks and paraphernalia. The consequences of demystification were disastrous. Youths anxious for social change helped turn the societies' sacred groves into coffee and banana plantations over the objections of society leaders, many of whom fled to neighboring portions of Liberia hoping to preserve

their society accoutrements; others committed suicide or were poisoned. And though the party later granted permission to hold initiations, it had so greatly reduced the period of seclusion that its concession was flatly refused (Rivière, *ibid.*: 150).

Many Loma in Guinea nonetheless continued to practice their religion clandestinely, often sending youths to Liberia for their initiation (cf. Bellman 1981; 1984: 98-99; 136-137). In 1985, not long after the death of Sekou Touré, the image of a Loma Poro Society *nyangbai* mask suddenly appeared on the face of Guinea's newly issued 25 franc notes; however, it was not clear whether the PDG meant to signal a new attitude toward indigenous cultural institutions or merely to appropriate a powerful symbol. Højbjerg (1990: 170) writes that "with a shift to a more liberal attitude towards the practice of traditional rituals throughout the country on behalf of the Guinean government since 1986, a veritable explosion in the number of initiation sessions has occurred in the southeast forest region [near Macenta]. Changes can be observed in the number of neophytes joining the sacred grove and in the length of the initiation rites. Whereas the Poro initiation lasts for some weeks among the Mano, Mende and Kpelle, the Toma [i.e., Loma] have in recent years performed rites of a one year duration."²⁴

Political Organization

The hinterland political system in Liberia has undergone periodic changes in its administrative hierarchy but retains all the early features of indirect governance. The five original hinterland districts that became the Western, Central, and Eastern Provinces in 1932 were replaced in 1964 by a county system administered through county superintendents. The county superintendent (rather than provincial commissioner) is responsible for several district commissioners and their assistants, to whom Loma paramount chiefs report. There are two Loma paramount chiefdoms in Liberia, the Bondi-Wubomai and Loma chiefdoms, to the north and south respectively. In theory, the paramount chieftaincy is an elective office for which any Loma may run, although in practice the office is nearly always filled by a former clan chief.

The use of the term *clan* bears explanation. When the system of paramount chieftaincies was initiated during Arthur Barclay's administration (1904-12), traditional leadership was retained in all but a few instances. The administration's uniform recognition of the claims of numerous local "kings" (*zuimassagi*) eventually resulted in a proliferation of paramount chieftaincies of varying size and scope, "all pressing their own interests as equal and autonomous entities before the government" (d'Azevedo 1970/71: 104). In the early 1930s, in an effort to consolidate his administration's control of the hinterland, President Edwin Barclay reorganized the nation's paramount chiefdoms into political and territorial divisions called clans. Although the new clan chiefs retained authority over virtually the same jurisdictions (i.e., their former paramount chiefdoms), they now reported to a newly appointed (or sometimes reappointed) paramount chief, usually selected from among their group. While the change brought

increased authority to the “new” paramount chiefs, it spelled a loss of status for the clan chiefs, whose direct access to the hinterland administration was thereby lost (ibid.: 104-106). The term clan, in short, refers to politico-territorial units that were prevalent at the time of hinterland reorganization in the 1930s, but bears only a distant relationship to the term’s ordinary use in anthropological parlance (Liebenow 1987: 41-42).²⁵

With the reorganization of the hinterland into larger administrative units, Bondi and Wubomai were consolidated into what became known as the Amalgamated Bondi-Wubomai Paramount Chiefdom, and separated from a neighboring mixed Loma-Malinke chiefdom, Waiglomai-Woniglomai (later renamed Koidu-Boni). Today, the Bondi-Wubomai Chiefdom comprises three clans: Bondi (formerly Bondi Chiefdom), Upper Workor (*Workormazu*), and Lower Workor (*Workorbu*). Just as paramount chiefdoms include several clans, clans in turn comprise several smaller units called sections. A clan section is administered by a sectional town chief responsible for the towns and villages under his jurisdiction. Lower Workor Clan, for instance, has three sectional town chiefs representing a total of eighteen towns. Each town has a chief who is responsible for the villages in his jurisdiction and for ward (or “quarter”) chiefs, the smallest administrative unit.²⁶ Like the paramount chieftaincy, the offices of the clan chief, sectional town chief, and town chief are all elective offices.

Language and Ethnic Identity

Loma is classified as a Southwestern Mande language (Dwyer 1989; Greenberg 1963). Though Loma scoff at the suggestion that their language is derived from Mandekan (the language of their Mandingo, Maninka, Manya and Konianke neighbors), they recognize a linguistic affinity with the other southwestern Mande speakers, the Kpelle, Mende, and Bandi (whom they say speak Loma “upside-down”).²⁷ The fifth member of the southwestern Mande group, the Landogo (i.e., Lokko), live some two hundred miles to the west in Sierra Leone, perhaps as a result of the Mane invasions (Person 1961; Speed 1991); but the Loma and Landogo are apparently unknown to each other. The Manya, Konianke and Kissi refer to the Loma as *Toma*, an ethnonym widely adopted by Francophone ethnologists and American art historians which has all but replaced the terms Bousie, Buzi, Domar-Buzi and Waymar-Buzi used by an earlier generation of writers.²⁸ Today, Loma call themselves *Lômagiti* (or *Logomagiti* in some dialects in Guinea), “the Loma people,” and speak *Lômagui*. Many follow Liberian orthographic conventions and write about themselves as *Lorma*.

The four principal dialects distinguished by Loma in the Wubomai region are named for their provenance (Wubomai, Gizzima, Bonde and Lulama).²⁹ Popular legend attributes the distribution of these dialects to the territories settled by the seven sons of the Loma king Fala Wubo (hence *Wubomai*, “followers of Wubo”).³⁰ In addition to implying relative distance, dialectical differences also denote minor cultural differences among Loma. Wubomai Loma, for instance, describe differences in mortuary

custom and sacrificial rites between themselves, Bonde, and Gizzima, and profess to follow many of the customs of neighboring Lulama. Likewise, Gizzima Loma and speakers of the Lulama dialect apparently used birth-order names in the past, but today such names are absent. Finally, during initiation rites, all Loma are cicatrized on their waists and torsos (women) or backs (men) in a manner that easily identifies their place of birth or initiation (cf. Germann 1933: Plate 3; Gamory-Dubourdeau 1926: 342-343).³¹

Shared cultural institutions, multilingualism, pan-ethnic cults, a long history of multi-ethnic alliances, and the relatively small-scale, local nature of early political leadership, make it difficult to determine the extent to which Loma conceived of themselves as an ethnically distinct people prior to their incorporation into the colonial state and the imposition of administrative-ethnic borders (cf. Béavogui 2001; McGovern 2004: 319; Person 1968 Vol I: 557ff.). The relatively numerous but territorially small Loma *zuu* upon which the Liberian and French modeled local administrative districts, as well as the proliferation of Loma names for themselves well into the 20th century, suggest both the absence of political unification as well as geographically local conceptions of ethnic identity. André Arcin, for example, reported (1907: 61, 223) that his list of Toma *districts* in Guinea was derived from Louis Léonard's earlier list of Toma *tribes* (cf. Bouet 1911: 223).³² It is also quite certain that the Bonde did not identify themselves as Loma until fairly recently (cf. Schwab 1947, *passim*). Finally, in light of the fact that Liberia and Guinea both sought to consolidate ethnic polities wherever possible, the proliferation of Liberian clans and Guinean cantons and the adoption of the prevalent terms for Loma *zuu* suggest again their relative autonomy.

There are no natural borders separating Loma from surrounding ethnic groups. This is especially true at the geographical margins of the Loma area where towns and villages of mixed ethnic composition are more numerous and a motoring traveler can pass quickly and often unknowingly from one ethnic group to the next. In the south, many Loma towns are comprised equally of Loma and Kpelle (Bellman 1975; McGovern 2004: 21), while to the north and east mixed Loma-Kuranko, Loma-Konianke, and Loma-Many towns are numerous (McGovern 2004).³³

Loma represent their relationship with other ethnic groups in an alliance idiom whereby one group is perpetually a wife-giver (*keke*) to the other, its wife-receiver (*daabe*). According to Loma and Kissi legends, their alliance relationship began when a Kissi man gave his daughter Kumba to the Loma, whom the Kissi today call *Kumba-juku* (or *Kumba-jikui*), "the children of Kumba" (cf. Germann 1933: 13-14). One contemporary Loma narrative (Korvah 1971: 31) dates this marriage to the era of Loma migration to Liberia, while another (Eberl-Elber 1935: 167-168) relates that Kissi provided wives for Loma when they were abysmally few in number and subject to extinction. Today, Loma say that the Kissi are responsible for their life and continuity, and when Kissi pass through Wubomai they are invariably called *keke*, "my wife-giver," and shown the deferential behavior the term implies.

Just as Loma are collectively wife-receivers to the Kissi, so too are Mandingo (i.e., Malinké and Konianke) categorically *daabe* to the Loma. Repeated marriage exchanges between them are in fact rather common. Weisswange (1969: 57) reports that Loma and Mandingo marriages in Borkeza (a town in the Zieme clan) are always unilateral (Loma women marry Mandingo men). Carter (1972: 60) describes this "institutionalized relationship" in the town of Zolowo (in the Gizzima region) and adds that "Loma women marry Mandingo men but rarely the reverse." In both towns, Mandingo residents and more recent settlers complemented their wife-receiving status by adopting the corresponding ritual roles of *daabeveati* ('daabe-people'), a practice that hastened their assimilation. Mandingo are said to have provided the protective medicines (*sálé*) which Loma used to thwart inter-tribal wars (Carter *ibid*: 56-59), as well as the apotropaic objects (*zàlaxáí*) which Loma customarily bury in the central plaza when towns are founded. Mandingo in the Gizzima region also have acted as sacrificers on behalf of the Loma lineages to which they are affinally and ritually attached. When Loma imagine inter-ethnic relations in alliance terms, a relationship of hierarchy and territorial precedence is always implied.³⁴

Ecology and Economy

Most Loma settlements fall within the tropical rain forest zone or (furthest to the north) a transitional ecological zone where moist, dense, semi-deciduous forest gradually gives way to derived savannah. A landscape dotted with gently rolling hills along the coastal plane is accompanied by more steeply sided hills in the northern plateau, where elevations occasionally exceed 2,500 feet. The terrain throughout is characterized by massive domelike dolerite and granite outcroppings and myriad small, winding streams.

Early descriptions of the Loma region occasionally mention towns with populations exceeding 8,000 (see, e.g., L'Honoré Naber 1910; Alldridge 1901), but these were certainly exceptional instances where warfare induced Loma to gather in large numbers for protection. Lomaland is sparsely populated even by regional standards, with roughly 40 to 50 individuals per square mile (Nelson 1984; Hasselman 1979).³⁵ Prior to the recent civil war, the density of settlement was greatest in the areas surrounding the cities of Zorzor and Voinjama (Liberia) and Macenta (Guinea), which had multi-ethnic urban populations in excess of 5,000. Loma towns seldom have more than 500 residents and settlements with populations between one and three hundred are common.

Average annual rainfall in Voinjama District, Liberia, a point midway along the forest-savannah continuum, is 110 inches or roughly nine feet. The wet season (*sámái*) lasts six to seven months, beginning in late April or early May and ending in late October or early November. The seasonal oscillation of wet and dry that distinguishes the agricultural cycle is also responsible for a marked contrast in the social life of the community. During the more arduous periods of the wet-season agricultural cycle,

Loma families occasionally remain "on farm" in temporary, open-sided "kitchens" where daily meals are prepared and foodstuffs stored, and which house them during severe rains. Some reside with several other families in permanent "bush" villages near their seasonal farms, sparing them a lengthy walk from town to farm and back again each day. In the wet season, individual or family agricultural tasks render Loma towns quiet and nearly vacant. By contrast, the town's population during the dry season (*fówi*) is larger and considerably more gregarious. During this period Loma conduct significantly more community business (*taa-fai*), community sacrifices and funeral rites. Initiation into the men's and women's societies always occurs before the arrival of the wet season.

Loma grow several varieties of upland rice by a method of shifting cultivation (Currens 1974). Each year, numerous small plots of land are cleared, burned, and planted with a variety of cultigens, after which the land lays fallow for seven to twenty-five years. Upland rice is interspersed with beans, eddoes, maize, okra, peppers, plantain, pumpkins, sweet potatoes, tobacco, tomatoes, and cassava (whose leaves, rather than tubers, are most highly valued). Tubers often lay buried until the following year, when groundnuts and sugar cane may be planted in fields that have begun to return to bush. In addition to the independent swiddens which women occasionally maintain, they often cultivate small gardens close by their homes or on the periphery of town, where they grow various leaves for preparing sauces. Both men and women plant forest tree crops such as kola, banana, pineapple, orange, and avocado — legacies of European coastal trading. Though agriculture provides the bulk of their diet, hunting, fishing and gathering (principally palm kernel oil, several varieties of palm wine, leaves, *tobogii* and other spices) contribute substantially to Loma meals. Most Loma men cultivate cash crops such as coffee, cocoa, kola and groundnuts, as well as sugar cane, which can be distilled into an alcoholic beverage called cane juice. Land is held in trust by the community. All trees except the palm are heritable property.

Loma traveled through the Wubomai region on foot until 1959, when the construction of an all-weather laterite-surfaced road brought automobiles and trucks; a trip to Monrovia before that time meant a six-to-ten day walk over rough trails. Though many Liberian Loma have participated in a wage economy since the introduction of the hut tax and the arrival of the Firestone Plantations Company, there was no large-scale capital investment or development schemes in the Wubomai region until the late 1970s, when the Lofa County Agricultural Development Project (funded by the World Bank) became the region's largest employer. Within a decade, town-to-market feeder roads were built, agricultural extension agents arrived with improved varieties of rice seed, and farmers were offered small loans to buy coffee seedlings. Coffee was sold to the Liberian Produce Marketing Corporation (LPMC), formerly a Swiss-owned parastatal, although its record of poor pricing and late payments tempted many farmers to sell their crops on the black market. In Guinea, state-run coffee, tobacco and

flower cooperatives were established much earlier, but overall, the local economy was less monetized and wage-labor opportunities were somewhat more rare.

Conclusion

For hundreds of years, the Loma people's homeland provided an advantageous position from which to act as middlemen in the long distance trade in slaves, ivory, gold, kola, pepper and other products between the savannah and the Atlantic Ocean. In the late 19th century, Samori, the French and the Americo-Liberians wrestled for control of the Loma region to advance their respective imperial strategies. The Loma vigorously defended their territory and sovereignty against French and Liberian forces that were ill-prepared for their prolonged resistance. As a consequence, the Loma were one of the last ethnic groups in Liberia and Guinea to submit to colonial administration. For the last 100 years, their population has been divided between two nations.

As citizens of emerging colonial states with antithetical political and cultural policies, the Loma of Guinea and Liberia experienced decidedly different fates. In Guinea, the state compelled the Loma to serve as *corvée* laborers, dismantled their indigenous political systems, and eradicated their most fundamental cultural institutions. In Liberia, by contrast, the Loma retained their political autonomy to a greater degree and maintained their most significant social and cultural institutions. In both nations, the imposition of fixed administrative divisions, the status of the Loma people as a minority population vis-à-vis other Liberian and Guinean peoples, and their social and geographical distance from the nation's capital contributed to Loma ethnogenesis.³⁶

Ethnic and religious identities were polarized during the Liberian civil war, which claimed the lives of an untold number of Loma between 1989 and 2003. Ethnic cleansing, looting and destruction on a scale unknown in the 20th century embroiled every Loma town and village.³⁷ The entire population of Lofa County was displaced as Loma sought safety by moving into the bush, to IDP camps in Monrovia, or across the border into Guinea, where Loma settled among distant relatives or in refugee camps that were established between Macenta and N'Zerekore. Loma who survived the actual warfare were afflicted with cholera, tuberculosis and other diseases.

Loma began to return to Lofa County in August 2003, when Charles Taylor was granted asylum in Nigeria, and at present about one-third of Lofa's citizens have returned to their former towns and villages. In time, all Loma will return to their traditional homeland to rebuild their houses, farm the land, and sacrifice to the spirits of their ancestors.

Endnotes

- 1 This study is based on fieldwork conducted in the Bonde-Wubomai Chiefdom, Voinjama District, Republic of Liberia, between April 1985 and April 1987. I wish to thank Cuttington University College, the U.S. Educational and Cultural Foundation in Liberia, and the Institute of International Education for their support. I am also grateful to Paul D. Korvah for sharing his knowledge of Loma history with me. An earlier version of this article appeared in my doctoral dissertation (Leopold 1991).
- 2 Historically known as the Malaguetta Coast, Pepper Coast, Windward Coast, and more recently the Upper Guinea Coast (Rodney 1970), the core of the CWA region is roughly coincident to Baumann and Westerman's (1948) "West Atlantic Culture Circle" and Murdock's (1959) "Kru and Peripheral Mande"; for a discussion, see d'Azevedo (1962).
- 3 Critical discussion of the Mane include d'Azevedo (1962, 1980), Person (1968, 1971) and Rodney (1970). Against the popular view that the Mane were southwestern-Mande peoples (i.e. Loma, Kpelle, Bandi, Mende and Loko), Massing (1985) has convincingly argued for a northern Mande (Vai, Kono, Malinke) origin. In his view, the Mane "invasion" entailed several chronologically close but protracted periods of warfare, rather than a single wave of peoples (cf. d'Azevedo 1959; Hair 1967). d'Azevedo suggests (1980: 84) that the Mane invasion resulted in an accretive (rather than abrupt) social and cultural transformation, with changes affecting *both* groups.
- 4 That Loma found themselves on both side of the Atlantic slave trade is evident from the Loma ("Baru") vocabulary collected by Clark (1848) in Jamaica, and the Loma-Bandi personal and geographical names provided in court testimony in Connecticut in 1839 by the "Balu" captives on the slave schooner *Amistad*, which originated in the Galinhas country on the border between present-day Liberia and Sierra Leone (Barber 1840; cf. Tellewuyan, n.d.). *Baru* and *Balu* are Mende and Bandi words for Loma.
- 5 As McGovern (2004: 18, note 22) points out, the historical literature generally employs the umbrella terms *Malinke* (in French) and *Mandingo* (in English) for ethnic groups that may include the Maninka, Manyá, and Konianke. When citing earlier literature, I have generally left original attributions as published unless the ethnicity of participants can be distinguished with confidence.
- 6 The content of these treaties is reviewed in Fairhead *et al.* 2003, pp. 69ff.
- 7 Liberia was not a party to the Berlin Conference of 1885, where the borders of other African nations were settled among the colonial powers.
- 8 In this case, Loma, Bandi, Kissi, Kpelle and Mano.
- 9 The point is graphically illustrated in maps depicting the distribution and relative size of Guinean cantons. Differences in population density can only partly account for the greater number of cantons in the forest zone; see, e.g., Mission Démographique de Guinée (1956: Carte N° 1).
- 10 Opposing this view, Massing argues from L'Honoré Naber's description of the large centralized Loma villages he saw in 1908 that Loma "chiefs came closer than any others to the idea which the Liberian government had of an African chief and, therefore, adapted best to the administrative division into chiefdoms...." (1978/79: 60).
- 11 Boundary agreements were signed in 1892, 1907, and 1911, although actual demarcation in most Loma areas was delayed until 1926. On Franco-Liberian diplomacy during this period, see Murdza (1979).
- 12 For resistance by Kissi, see Massing (1989); on the Bandi and Gola; see Akpan (1988); on the Dan, see Ford (1989). Gola responses to colonization are treated at length by d'Azevedo (1970/71, 1971).
- 13 These meetings related to the delimitation and demarcation missions of Richaud-Naber (1908-09), Schwartz-Lomax (1911-13) and Lee-Villatte (1914-15); see Murdza (1979: 340). The Loma representatives at the March 1914 meetings in Voinjama and Jinemai are listed in Cordor (1968: 14) and Korvah (1995: 53-54).

- 14 Asked to choose between the two colonial powers, Loma responded, "we will not forsake the 'Bopolo road'" (Currens 1974: 25-26).
- 15 In fact, the LFF relied upon Loma forces to quell indigenous resistance elsewhere in the frontier. In response to the 1919 Gola and Bandi uprising, for example, Major John H. Anderson, the commanding officer of the Liberian army, authorized Captain Samuel L. Smith to "employ one or two thousand Buzi [Loma] warriors to assist you should you deem or consider the same necessary. The only compensation to these auxiliary troops being that they can hold whatever they catch. Make this plain to them." (Dept. of War file, Anderson to Smith, Monrovia, November 30, 1919; cited by Akpan [1988: 28]). Korvah (1995: 55-57) states that his father, Wubomai chief Degein Korvah, assisted the LFF in battles against the Bandi in 1912 and the Gola in 1919. Loma comprised the largest proportion of the Armed Forces of Liberia until the mid-1980s (Nelson 1984: 268; Liebenow 1987: 192).
- 16 "You cannot too strongly impress upon these sub-commissioners, as well as the men who may be with or under them, the command of the government that they are to treat the chiefs as chiefs in their own country and as citizens of Liberia entitled to all the rights, privileges and considerations as they themselves, and also that the subjects and property of these chiefs are not to be ill treated or interfered with illegally or unlawfully. [...] You will also exert yourself to the utmost of your ability, by word and deed, to show and prove to the chiefs and their peoples the fixed determination of the government and people of Liberia to deal fairly with them and treat them as citizens of Liberia." (Pres. D. E. Howard to Lieut. J. B. R. McGill, Liberian Frontier Force and District Commissioner, July 9, 1912. Executive Correspondence 599/112. Liberian National Archives).
- 17 Major Charles B. Young, an African-American officer assigned to Liberia in 1912 to help reform the Liberian Frontier Force, indicated that its leadership had "lost complete control" over the conduct of subordinates. "Tellingly enough, even the Secretary of War, according to Young, was unsure of his place in the chain of command, having been trained as a preacher and more or less "thrust" into a field of government service of which he "knew nothing...." (Clegg 1996: 11).
- 18 On the local level, the process to which Suret-Canale refers continued thorough independence. First-order administrative levels (i.e., *cercles*) that were intended to parallel the distribution of Guinea's ethnic groups, but which did not, were later "corrected" at the canton level. In 1922, for example, the multi-ethnic Kolibirama and Konokoro cantons were divided into Toma and Malinké segments, and Koodou and Koadou were separated. The greater recognition of ethnic provinces was not intended, however, to provide greater recognition to local-level leadership. On the contrary, the number of cantons was steadily reduced. In the Cercle de Guékédou, encompassing the neighboring Kissi, the original 55 cantons were consolidated into just sixteen between 1914 and 1950; see Person (1960: 91, note 7).
- 19 Chieftaincy in French Guinea was abolished by decree in December 1957, just months before independence. See Touré (1958) and Suret-Canale (1966/1988a).
- 20 Harvey Firestone to President King, quoted in Van der Kraaij 1980: 238; cf. Kroll 1991.
- 21 From the start, Firestone had a better appreciation of the nation's commercial and human resources than did the Liberian government. Within its first few years of operation, Firestone sponsored research on the Kpelle language (Westermann 1930), a medical and biological expedition (Strong 1930), and an ethnographic-anthropometric survey the goal of which was to determine which Liberian ethnic groups were best suited for plantation labor (Schwab n.d.). For its part, the Liberian government did not even conduct a nation-wide census until 1962.
- 22 Although Loma in Liberia were also subjected to *corvée* labor, the practice was apparently promoted by hinterland administrators acting in a private mercantile capacity, rather than by national policy; see Akpan (1988: 17-18, 22).
- 23 Fairhead and Leach have demonstrated that the Ziama region was savannah/farmland rather than dense forest in the late 19th century — "highly peopled, economically vibrant, heavily farmed and covered by farms, fallow bush and grassland." (1995: 5); but they also refer to Anderson's description

(1870:88) of “many parts of Boozie country, where the sombre gloom of immense forests conceals all such things.”

- 24 The Demystification Program ushered in sweeping changes in Loma marriage institutions as well, as McGovern (2004) vividly describes in his historical ethnography of the state’s social engineering program in Macenta Préfecture, Guinea.
- 25 Though formally a territorial unit, clans may be composed predominantly of a single *nye*, a collectivity of lineages sharing a particular food prohibition.
- 26 Although towns (*táá*) are invariably larger than villages (*balaxi*), they are not distinguished by size per se. A settlement is a town by virtue of having its own town chief and a chapter of the men’s poro society.
- 27 On tonal inversion, see Dwyer (1981).
- 28 Schwab (1947) reports the just-so story of Loma en route to Monrovia who provide the name of their chief, Buzi, when asked what people they were. The names Buse and Buzi may derive from Mende or Gola respectively (Holsoe 1979); from *Buzye*, a mixed Loma-Malinke *zuu* in the Konian region (Massing 1978/79); from *Buzyé*, the Maninka term for the Ziama region (Person 1968: 576, note 1); or perhaps from the Loma word *Guze*, “human being.”
- 29 The number of Loma dialects is an open question. Heydorn (1971) distinguished five Liberian dialects (Wubömai, Bode, Ziema, Gizima, Bulima) and an additional three or four in Guinea; but he did not specify his criteria or indicate whether Loma recognized these dialects. Laverne de Tressan (1953: 192-193) reported four dialects — Lulama, Koima, Konokoro and a southern dialect comprising Guizima, Ziema, Koodu [Koidu] and Vekema; but the language he elsewhere distinguishes as Gbundé is certainly the Bonde dialect. Prost (1967) mentioned “several” Loma dialects in Guinea but did not name them. Vydrine and Bergman (2000) distinguished six dialects (Luloma, Ninibu, Shialu, Wuboma, Bunde and Gizima) on the basis of information provided by Christian Højbjerg on Shialu (Valentin Vydrine, personal communication, Nov. 3, 2002), which is apparently not reported in the literature.
- 30 Fala Wubo’s father was Fali Kama of Musadu (Korvah 1995: 11-14; Cordor 1968), known as Foningama among Malinke and Konianke speakers (Geysbeek and Kamara 1991). Just as the sons of Fala Wubo are mnemonics for the distribution of Loma sections, the travails of his brothers denote historic territorial alignments among the region’s ethnic groups. Of the other sons of Fali Kama, the most noteworthy here are Seimavila, who founded the mixed Loma-Malinke enclave, Fasolo (today the Kuadu-Boni Chiefdom in Liberia; see Fahnbulleh 1936), and Sisima, who founded Bonde (Korvah 1995: *ibid.*).³
- 31 In Guinea, Loma also invariably employ the names of their clan totems as surnames.
- 32 In his discussion of the use of *Toma* and *Loma*, Bouet remarks: “The thing is of little importance, anyway, especially as this tribe was also known, formerly, under the names of Bouzi, Busié, Ouéïma, Koïmaka, although these names seem to have legitimately been able to apply only to certain provinces of this country, undoubtedly made more famous for the presence of powerful chiefs.” (Bouet 1911: 223; my translation).
- 33 Délafosse (1900: 192) also noted that Manianka were numerous in Loma country, where each important village had an independent Manianka quarter.
- 34 I elaborate on the ritual and symbolic dimensions of the *keke-daabe* relationship in Leopold 1991; McGovern (2004) discusses its importance in the fields of Loma history and politics.
- 35 McGovern (2004: 15) derives a population density of 11 inhabitants per square mile from the 1996 census of Macenta, which included Liberian refugees.
- 36 On the development of Loma identity in the context of the Guinean state, see McGovern (2004).
- 37 For accounts of the Liberian civil war that focus on the Loma people, see Ellis (1999) and McGovern (2004).

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An Interpretation of the Legacy of the African Americans in the Republic of Liberia

*Abeodu Bowen Jones**

The last decade of the twentieth century witnessed a traumatic explosion of a civil war throughout the length and breadth of the Republic of Liberia with devastating consequences unparalleled in the history of modern Africa. The duration of the war, lasting for more than a decade, its magnitude and intensity were such brutal and shocking experiences, occurring after more than a century and half of relative peace and stability in a nation founded by Black nationalism in the early years of the nineteenth century, that many Liberian scholars have perceived the need for a revisionist paradigm so as to investigate its origins within a meaningful context of reconciliation and national unity. There were no doubts, as Liberians knew too well, underlying and immediate causes but in seeking to discover them a question which never failed to inspire a debate was, can any evidence of historical significance be determined as legacies of the African Americans and contributing factors of the roots of the civil war? Finding a response required an exercise in objectivity which also becomes a challenge when a culture of reconciliation is an outcome this paper intends to create. An examination of the legacies of the African Americans in Liberia must be undertaken in context before their arrival in West Africa in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Such a time line reveals certain circumstances of a global nature in which some states would be actors in a new age of European imperialism, while others would be acted upon. Liberia and its African American founders are to be classified in the second category. This historiographical approach originates from the tradition of Nnamdi Azikiwe's *Liberia In World Politics* and from a methodology to write the history of Liberia as a whole and from within.

Navigating an African Destiny Within the Context of European Globalization: Phase One

Things had long ago fallen apart when the African Americans, founder of the Republic of Liberia, arrived on the West Coast of Africa in 1820. (Chinweizu, 1970 and Harris, 1998). Before the ideologies of Social Darwinism, globalization and terrorism became popular vocabularies in our modern world, they were tested in their embryonic stages during the infamous era of the Trans-Atlantic Trade which lasted for

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four hundred years. These alien concepts even in medieval times in the history of West Africa, succeeded in creating a culture of prolonged violence, certain features of whose existence can still be seen in the permanent fixtures of Christianburg, Elmina, and other castles on the West Coast of Africa. They became symbols and institutions of a new world order created by European predators in West Africa in the process of establishing a violent relationship with certain traditional African rulers of the ethnic states of the region. Above all, these alien ideologies replaced the constitutional vacuum caused by the breakdown of Africa's own skillfully designed structures of power and authority which had been carefully established throughout the continent after 10,000 BC, so that by 1884, according to Roland Oliver, ten thousand political "units", centralized and decentralized, were in existence, the latter being the dominant type. (Oliver, 1991). Those that were centralized were located in the valleys of the Nile, Niger, Congo, Zambezi, and the Great Lakes of East Africa. On the West Coast of Africa, in the area known as the Grain Coast and Upper Guinea Coast was the home of sixteen decentralized ethnic states, many of them easy pickings for European predators in partnership with the new ruling African elites. State building was a slow process on the African continent, a land mass comprising nearly twelve million square miles. Various types of polities evolved by trial and error such as federations, kingdoms, empires, city states and numerous village and ethnic states. Some of the ethnic states on the Grain Coast seeking refuge from alien and local African predators became members of the Condo Federation controlled by King São Boso, and existed at the time of the arrival of the African Americans.

Whereas before the fifteenth century and the first phase of the European globalization of West Africa, peace and stability, law and order, justice and good governance were preserved by dependency on an extended and perpetual kinship system, religious sanctions, checks and balances, beliefs in divine and ancestral interventions, oracles, abandonment of undemocratic and tyrannical rulers, traditional secret schools, age grades and a tradition of positional succession, the European intervention and imposition of power and authority were based on sheer violence to obtain labor in exchange for weapons of mass destruction. This commercialization of captive and forced labor was conducted in a brutal and bestial manner the world had never before experienced. West African rulers were given the choice of a privileged advantage of having a European connection for access to firearms, or the disadvantage of not having a European connection, pandemic insecurity and instability. The power and authority of the traditional rulers became compromised beyond recognition in the game of survival. Capture or be captured; capture and be captured. Some tried, but all failed. The pandemonium could not be contained nor resisted. So overwhelming was the trauma, becoming worse over the centuries until it conditioned the descendants of the traditional rulers psychologically into becoming a new type of ruling

African elite surviving in a culture of violence by the nineteenth century at the time of the arrival of the African Americans.

The African Americans met the West African coastal peoples a transformed people. West Africans of the nineteenth century were certainly not the same as the West Africans of the fifteenth century. Moreover, centuries of violent relationships and rivalry with European predators continued in West Africa even after the arrival of the African Americans and up to the end of the century. Neither France nor Britain was willing to relinquish ties with the coastal ethnic states and peoples in the area where the African Americans established the modern state of Liberia. In informal alliances with several of the ethnic states attempts were made to undermine the rule and authority of the Liberian Government which led to the loss of territories by Liberia on its southeast and northeast borders to European predators seeking to preserve their imperial interests.

The African Americans were not the destabilizers of the lands and peoples of West Africa located in the valleys of the St. Paul, St. John, Cestos, and Cavalla Rivers. These areas were destabilized before their arrival because the nineteenth century European predators had established a policy of claiming "footholds" in the area which became Liberia and in other places along the West Coast of Africa for the strategic execution of their predatory expeditions. (Flint, Cambridge, Vol. 5, 1996). When the African Americans arrived they met the local African ethnicities speaking pidgin European languages mixed with their indigenous languages such as "palaver, beaucoup, King Peter, King George, King Bob Gray." Many African rulers had a new dress code distinguished by the wearing of top hats, coats, and neckties along with the traditional wrap around skirts. A mediator between them and the African rulers was a mulatto, John Ellis, residing on Providence Island in 1822. The Kru claimed that they were equally as westernized as the African Americans through their own maritime connections with the European predators, and further rendered assistance to the African Americans in the negotiations for land for settlement in 1822, a silent history no doubt invoked by Didwo Tweh in his bid to become President of Liberia in 1955. (Huberich Vol. 1, 1947; and Flint, *Supra*).

Traditional African sovereignty on the West Coast of Africa was certainly almost totally lost by 1820, and in its place the dominant form of law and order which survived was economic partnership forged through weapons of mass destruction and resignation by African rulers to an uncontrollable and uninvited fate. West Africa was a breeding ground for a new type of elite leadership followed by the disappearance of the traditional ruling elites and sovereignty during the trauma to survive between the 15th and 19th centuries. Those were indeed centuries of European predatory invasions for African labor to meet the insatiable and competitive demands of Europe's agricultural and commercial capitalism. This first phase of European globalization in Africa had torn the political and good governance fabric of West African traditional coastal societies to shreds.

Into such a destabilized African environment of the West Coast came the African Americans. They were themselves a new breed of Black people equally traumatized as their ancestral West African homeland where as descendants they now re-entered, both

land and peoples traumatized, ancestors and descendants. Strangely, they were accompanied by their traumatizers who would traumatize them further by ruling them for twenty-five years until left on their own eventually declaring the independent state of the Republic of Liberia.

Revisiting the American Heritage for Nation Building

In 1822, following occupation by the African Americans, the Grain Coast first became the site of an American Asylum, to be followed by the creation of a Commonwealth in 1838 and later the Republic of Liberia in 1847. During these three phases of nation building by the African Americans, the disastrous Trans-Atlantic Trade was still in existence. It caused many of the weaker ethnicities to forge various types of alliances, both temporary and permanent against the ravages of the trade perpetuated by European traders and their African partners. The planting of an American Asylum afforded them yet another opportunity for an alliance against their more powerful traditional African neighbors and their European partners. In due course both lands and peoples were annexed to the American Asylum thereby gradually increasing its size. The African Americans were not passive observers of the Trans-Atlantic Trade when they arrived on the West Coast of Africa, but vigorously participated in its abolition for laying the foundation of the modern state of Liberia. (Huberich, *Supra*): Their involvement was led by Joseph Jenkins Roberts from Richmond, Virginia, later to become the first president of the Republic of Liberia. An energetic engagement in the abolition of the Trans-Atlantic Trade and the initial dissatisfaction over the outcome of the first land deal between the American agents and the local ethnic rulers on the Grain Coast were the earliest evidences of the roots of sour relations between the two groups of Black peoples.

The Condo Federation, led by King Sao Boso, a leading Mandingo trader, was the most powerful of the alliances existing in the St. Paul, Mesurado, and Lofa River valleys. It was also strategically located at the crossroads of two significant trade routes, one leading toward the traditional Trans-Sahara Trade and the other linked to the European imperial Trans-Atlantic Trade. Sao Boso was invited by the participants in the latter trade as a mediator in a dispute which threatened the trade routes and trade on the Atlantic Grain Coast. He rendered a historic decision upholding the rights of the African Americans and their American benefactors to the land purchased in the Mesurado River valley in December, 1821, but after which certain kings of the federation voiced a change of heart repudiating the negotiations for land because all of the kings did not participate in the sale of the land. (Azikiwe, 1934). Significantly, the white American agents on behalf of the African Americans were the negotiators for the asylum. The African Americans, though present, took no part in this event. The crisis was resolved but not forgotten by many descendants of the federation. It created for them a powerful myth that the African Americans arrived and took their land at

gun point. The myth became an underlying cause of the civil war originating in 1980 at which time they sang, "Who owns the land? My papa's land!"

In going to West Africa, the African Americans and their white American agents were given a confused mandate embedded in certain Instructions as a code of conduct for good governance. President James Monroe admonished them not to go to Africa with plans for colonizing the Africans. (Huberich, Supra). They were being sent as agents of the United States government to work jointly with the American Colonization Society in implementing the anti-slave trade acts passed by the United States in 1808. An asylum would be located where the African Americans would construct homes to receive Africans captured from European slaving vessels. Upon the completion of this task, they had the option of either remaining in Africa or returning to the United States. The American Asylum which would receive the recaptives would remain a place of refuge, a 'foothold' in the midst of long established ethnic governments whose friendship Monroe had warned the African Americans they would need and should cultivate in order to survive in West Africa. The American Asylum was also established in the midst of European 'footholds' on the West Coast of Africa, those of Britain, France, Spain, Holland, and Portugal for the purpose of facilitating their predatory trade in the area. Did the Americans enter a place overcrowded with 'footholds' and rivalry? Did their presence there in any way contribute to power politics between Africans and Europeans to which must now be added a new and similar experience, that between the Africans and African Americans? We have a glimpse of the international rivalry on the West Coast at this time when Elijah Johnson, an African American proclaimed in the early days of the Asylum, "For two long years have we sought a home, here we have found one, and here we shall remain." (Azikiwe, Supra). Later in the declaration of independence to the world the African Americans wrote, "the West Coast of Africa was the place selected by our benefactors to be our home." To guarantee that the Instructions would be adhered to in a rigid manner, the Asylum, also known as the American Colony in Africa, was governed for twenty-five years by white American agents until independence.

It would appear that the Instructions created in the African Americans an enclave mentality reinforced later by several constitutions given by their benefactors as the status of the Asylum changed into a colony, followed by the establishment of a commonwealth in 1838 and a republic in 1847. Recaptives from European slaving vessels became wards and a similar status was granted to the defenseless Africans who fled to the Asylum from their more powerful African neighbors. The majority of the African Americans were content to remain within the confines of their asylum. The exception were those persons commercially inclined to establish linkages with the Trans-Sahara Trade routes into the forests as middlemen to tap Africa's tropical resources such as palm oil for the new demands of Europe's export trade seeking lubricants for its manufacturing industries before the discovery of petroleum. An enclave mentality originating from the Instructions further bred a culture of isolationism and dependency rein-

forced by an outward looking tradition across the Atlantic Ocean. The enclave culture caused a protracted indifference to cultivating an inward looking environment into the interior of Liberia barely forty miles from the coast. Edward Blyden was often critical of the enclave mentality among African Americans which he thought made them insensitive to a future mission in retuning to Africa.

The Instructions were supported by the Abraham Lincoln treaty of a belated recognition of the independence of Liberia in 1862 which provided United States protection for Liberia. "There shall be perpetual peace and friendship between the Republic of Liberia and the United States of America." The Lincoln treaty also promised the Liberian government that the United States would come to its defense in any event of hostilities between the Liberian government and the Africans. (U.S. Treaties, 1863). The Lincoln treaty was later however rescinded by the Franklin D. Roosevelt government in 1938 during the resolution of the Kru crisis when the United States decided to take a neutral role in Liberian affairs. But from its inception Liberia was conditioned by the Instructions to remain dependent on United States foreign policies relating to defense needs for survival. From this dependency syndrome came the exaggerated allegation that there existed a "special relationship" between the United States and Liberia. The kings of Mesurado thought otherwise, still believing in their tradition of an extended family as a dependable institution for protection. When the white American agents negotiated with them for land for the asylum they told the kings, "We have brought back to you your children and we need - land to build homes for them." We come among you not as predators who even now surround you, but in peace and friendship." The agents were faithful to the latter and intent of the Instructions. The kings replied, "If you have indeed brought back to us our children, you can leave them with us and return." (Huberich, Supra). But this was not what transpired after diplomatic expressions on both sides. The times did not reveal a trust and confidence building atmosphere. A culture of forced enslavement of Africans still existed and there was fear among the Europeans and their African trading partners that the American presence would undermine their centuries-old trade relations. The African Americans also were afraid of being recaptured and sent back to America.

Despite the constraints embedded in the Instructions, the African Americans, soon upon their departure for Africa while sailing on the *Elisabeth* from New York harbor on February 1, 1820, had visions of a new existence in Africa to which they would contribute in the birth of African nationalism. Although they appreciated their mandate as active American agents sent to implement the 1808 Anti-Slave Act of the United States Congress by building homes to accommodate recaptives from the Atlantic Ocean, while yet in the famous Middle Passage began to perceive themselves to be more than ordinary artisans. Their vision of the future was to become builders of a Black Nation in Africa. They discussed the allocation of government positions among themselves when neither land nor home was assured. They were ultra-Black nationalists who had consented and fled from the United States forty-one years before the outbreak of its

civil war. From the start, given no part in the government of the Asylum, through agitation, rebellion and complaints to their white benefactors in the United States, the constitutions of the colony, commonwealth and republic provided for their inclusion and participation initially as junior officials until the ultimate goal of independence and the presidency were achieved. Independence gave the African Americans, now Liberians, a place of honor in the annals of African and world history and as pioneers of Black nationalism.

An enclave culture became fertile grounds to sow seeds of statism. The Liberian presidents inherited from the white governors who ruled them for twenty-five years basic principles of statism relating to government, sovereignty and governance embedded in the Treaty of Westphalia after the Thirty Years War in Europe in 1648. The Treaty guaranteed the recognition of no authority higher than the state which was further granted absolute sovereignty. There was no law above the constitution of a state. The state possessed absolute rights and security such as eminent domain which became the focus of much of the crises between the Liberians and the ethnic states and peoples. Nothing was declared about good governance, sovereignty, and rights and security of the citizens which became matters of great debate in the twenty-first century. The great exception was the preservation of the rights of citizenship in the independence constitution which proclaimed that "none but Negroes and persons of Negro descent can become citizens of the Republic of Liberia," a significant contribution of the African American legacy in Liberia which is still upheld. The French Revolution would later take up the cause of the common man in 1789. During the mentorship of the American governors, the Liberians further inherited the basic principles of the Articles of Confederation, the first constitution of the United States which created an all-powerful unicameral congress with no separation of powers. The thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth amendments attached to the federal constitution of 1789 granting freedom, citizenship and suffrage to African Americans after the civil war were yet unheard of, and when the time came to consider them they would be executed with all deliberate speed in a distant future. At the time of the founding of Liberia, citizens worldwide had no universal civil or human rights which many world leaders have only begun to appreciate and grant to their peoples quite reluctantly since the creation of the United Nations in 1945 and the promulgation of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights in 1948.

Although the 1789 federal constitution supplanted the Articles of Confederation and provided for a citizens bill of rights, checks and balances, and the separation of power between three branches of government, the constitutions planted in Liberia by American benefactors appeared to have empowered the white governors to rule Liberia as if the Articles of Confederation was still the rule of law in the United States. The white governors were all powerful. The powers of all three branches were embedded in a powerful executive with absolute powers. Accordingly, the presidents of Liberia succeeding the American governors after independence became equally as powerful, never

relinquishing an aorta of power even after the cessation of the first phase of the civil war in 1997. This was not an enviable legacy.

Along with an entrenched enclave mindset breeding isolationism, dependency and statism were outreach policies of limited inclusion and a dual mandate providing for patronage and gradualism. The policies emerged with a sense of expediency and reality among the African Americans while still adhering to the Instructions forbidding the principle and exercise of colonialism. The concept of a dual mandate appeared in the establishment of ward ship and the protection given to weaker ethnicities who were also in need of an asylum. It was later legalized in the independence constitution which stipulated that care would be taken to include Africans in the republic by providing them with basic agricultural services, but that this policy would be limited to the availability of financial resources after the needs of the ruling elite were fulfilled. Accordingly, those areas first to become urbanized and westernized were Monrovia, the capital city of Liberia, Buchanan, Greenville, Harper, and Robertsport all located on the coast. By the 1990's when Liberia was self-inflicted by an unending conflict the groups in the coastal areas were acculturated to the extent that they would be classified as "Congoes" and "Americo-Liberians" by less acculturated ethnicities who performed the major role in the genocide. A policy of limited inclusion would be determined and implemented based on certain external criteria indicating the extent by which the ethnicities were westernized by African Americans families and foreign white missionaries. The general requirements were evidence of the use of the English language, conversion to Christianity, achievements in western education, a display of western fashion, membership in Free Masonry, and a demonstrable appreciation and respect of the symbols of the Republic of Liberia.

Black nationalism and the Founding of the Republic of Liberia

The Instructions given to the white Americans who accompanied the African Americans as agents of the United States government and the American Colonization Society set the stage in the American Asylum in West Africa to de-traumatize the African Americans, or reinforce yet another traumatized experience of being without roots for the third time in coming face to face with Africans who would remind them of what must have been the appearance of their ancestors centuries ago. They certainly must have been further traumatized by encounters with the European slave dealers who were still entrenched on the West Coast in their individual "footholds." When the Instructions stated that the Americans and the African Americans were forbidden to exercise in Africa any principle based on colonialism, only taking care to patiently establish friendship with the existing governments on the West Coast of Africa, the identical site of their own foothold soon to become an asylum, the trauma increases as to how the African Americans would cope with the existing new ruling elites and the European predators entrenched in their "footholds." The wailing expression of Elijah Johnson in the memorable words uttered in 1822 that they had sought a home for two

years and having found one in West Africa there they will remain, was a cry of desperation arising out of the trauma of their engagements with the two groups, Africans and their European partners for survival. As if to re-emphasize the mandate of the Instructions, the African Americans in their declaration of Independence to the world mentioned more words for posterity: "No desire for territorial aggrandizement brought us to these shores. Liberia is an offspring of the most grinding oppression," thereby revealing to all the intensity of the trauma they yet felt even after removal to Africa.

From asylum to a republic within twenty-five years, reflecting upon the totality of their previous experience and knowledge in a distant land of trauma, was indeed a remarkable achievement. They must have been fast learners, achieving what the people in the land of their captivity did not achieve in twenty-five years but after one hundred and sixty-nine years from 1607-1776. All African Americans were observers of the political process of nation building in their land of exile. Many gleefully celebrated the fourth of July long-before the founding of Liberia in 1822.

The African Americans brought back to Africa the same asset which led to the capture of their ancestors centuries ago, assets covets and demanded by European predators, that is, the productive power and strength of their labor as demonstrated in alien and western agrarian societies by which these societies would be jettisoned into the modern industrial age. It was the plan of the American benefactors that returning to Africa, African Americans would continue to display further demonstrations of their productive power, however, not to industrialize their African homeland lest in due course they would compete with the products of their former homeland. Expectations were high that they would provide for the industrial needs of western societies in the same manner their ancestors had provided earlier for western agrarian development and large profits margins which became the engine of their industrial development. The transition from an agrarian society which the African Americans left behind in the United States in 1822 to an industrialized society emerging after the civil war was a slow process. The impact of this legacy greatly impeded the growth of Liberia from its inception until the era after the Second World War. It was the plan that Liberia would also become an agrarian society and that the productive energies of the people would be utilized accordingly. But the African Americans possessed certain unique perceptions of their own emanating from the knowledge and experience of land use policies in the western world. What they saw and knew as the underlying and immediate cause of their ancestors being captured and transported thousands of miles away from West Africa was trade, even when the vehicles for such a trade destined to last for four hundred years were wooden vessels challenging the hurricanes, tornadoes, and storms of the Middle Passage of the Atlantic Ocean which would inspire the famous slave merchant, John Newton, to pen his celebrated rescue hymn: "Amazing Grace How Sweet The Sound That Saved A Wretch Like Me!"

Slavery and slaves were incidental to the motives of the western predators whose objective was to break the commercial monopoly of the Arabs over the global economy

by seizing the momentum for the merciless exploitation of African labor and gold. Who was responsible for such an aggressive transformation in the lives of Africans and African Americans? Was it the traditional African elites of the fifteenth century who had no knowledge of Europe's need and greed for labor and gold? Europe being one of the smallest continents of the world in dire need for an enlarged living space with a greater carrying capacity had reached a critical path following several regular visits of the plague before the fifteenth century. What caused the removal of the African ancestors was trade which took millions of Africans across the Atlantic ocean in the largest mass migration the world had ever experienced in waves upon waves for centuries to the New World. Now returning to Africa and free to regain their lost freedom, trade became a key factor for their success creating a class of merchant princes for some as it was for thousands of alien predators who had commercialized their labor centuries before. Trade, not agriculture, became the development model for success in every avenue of life. The asylum was located between the Trans-Sahara and Trans-Atlantic trade routes thereby ideally creating a new class of elites, the merchant princes. Commercial motives accordingly contributed to the breakdown of the mandate of the Instructions and further led to competition with the European traders until the shipping enterprises of the African Americans were compromised by the dawn of the steam ship in the middle of the nineteenth century. Edward J. Roye from Ohio, later to become the first president of Liberia elected from the True Whig Party, was the best known of the merchant princes. Economic independence was a criterion as significant as political independence in the rise of Black Nationalism for the founding of the Republic of Liberia. This was a legacy of unparalleled importance for Liberia which was lost but later usurped by the trans-nationals from the western world, the Middle East, and East Asia who had an added value of offshore accounts attached to their comparative advantage of trading in industrial goods in exchange for Liberian agricultural and mineral resources.

If Africans were taken to serve western interests in strange and foreign lands, their descendants were returned for the implementation of European globalization phase two in the land of their ancestors. Always serving expatriate interests then and now was the master plan established since the fifteenth century between Africans and alien predators. During the nineteenth century it would be a continuation of the old partnership, this second time not for African labor, but Africa's industrial resources such as African oils from palm oil and groundnuts vital as lubricants for western industries before they were substituted with petroleum products. The abandonment therefore of an agrarian policy which was determined as the growth model for an asylum and its inhabitants, realizing that agriculture was still the primary economic activity in the United States, created a sense of frustration among the American benefactors. It was an indication that while they could control every decision and action of the African Americans away from their African homeland, they simply could not exercise absolute control over them in Africa. The Liberian merchant princes not only competed successfully with

the European merchants while conditions were favorable for them, this competition became a powerful force in the rise of Black nationalism originating in Liberia. A free trade policy was declared by Europe in the nineteenth century which led to competition with the African Americans and several European governments to the extent that it became a serious breach in diplomacy between the United States and the European governments. They were constantly seeking from the United States a definition of the diplomatic status of the Asylum whose actions were increasingly becoming a source of perennial annoyance since they were akin to actions of a recognized state.

The commonwealth of Liberia was therefore advised by the American benefactors to declare its independence to the world thereby assuming the identical diplomatic status as the nations of its commercial competitors. Several of these nations continued their traditional friendships with various ethnicities who were their trading partners for centuries. It was difficult for Liberia to terminate this relationship which would exist into the twentieth century becoming a poison in the relationship between the African Americans and the ethnicities, especially among some of those residing on the West Coast. Liberia was determined to preserve Black nationalism in the face of European imperialism and an entrenched momentum strengthened by their centuries-old contacts with the local African ethnicities. Far from disrespecting the African ethnicities within the Republic, the perception is not lost that the African Americans had pity on them because of their lost vision, still unable to penetrate the minds of their European partners to discover and understand their rationalization or objectives for being in Africa all the time. The permanent presence of the Europeans made it quite difficult to create an environment of reconciliation between the two groups of estranged and traumatized black peoples. Nevertheless attempts were made in the form of several peace treaties with varying degree of success. As indicated earlier one such attempt in creating a climate of friendship was the exchange of remarks between the white agents and the kings of Mesurado at the time of the negotiation for land in 1821. Although the American agents did not return but remained to govern the African Americans for twenty-five years, inspite of their presence, Black nationalism eventually arose with Liberia in the vanguard. Its focus was directed toward the European predators and not the local African inhabitants who in any case were powerless then and now to perceive the real intentions of their alien trading partners in Africa even in the twenty-first century. It was doubtful if any African ruler ever heard the remarks of King Leôpold II of Belgium when he said on the eve of the Berlin Conference in the nineteenth century, "I am determined to have my share of the magnificent African Cake." Even though Europe declared the nineteenth century as an era of a new kind of trade with Africa, the real message was, beware those who would believe there was a change of heart in Europe. Statism was the prevailing ideology also in the nineteenth century intended it would appear for only western societies, so that Liberia and Haiti were considered anomalies in this new white world order. They would receive also zero tolerance and acceptance. Africans had yet neither any perception nor understanding

of what ultimately would be the outcome of Europe's partnership with them. Meanwhile, Liberia, governed by Black leadership born in the western world, could perceive in a large measure Europe's grand design for Africa as the source of sustainable development for its societies, but was powerless to undermine it successfully solely by its own strength. However courageously led by Joseph Jenkins Roberts who later became the first president of the Republic of Liberia, Liberians had participated in the anti-slave trade movement successfully in the waters of the West Atlantic Coast.

Declaring the birth of the Republic of Liberia in 1847, Liberia predated the establishment of European statism in Africa by thirty-seven years which the Berlin Conference of 1884 would eventually impose on the continent. What the Liberian government achieved was the successful creation of a superstate from sixteen existing decentralized ethnic states whose existence in 1820 the Instructions had recognized and warned the African Americans against any form of interference, but to co-exist peacefully with them for the survival of the asylum. These ethnic states were the Vai, Gola, Mende, Kissi, Gbande, Lorma, Gio, Mano, Bassa, Krahn, Grebo, Kpelle, Dey, Belle, and Mandingo. It required a large measure of time to gradually win the friendship of all of the sixteen ethnic states. Such a strategy as indicated earlier was pursued gradually beginning with the coastal states and extending into the interior beyond the coast peacefully, yet at times not so peacefully because of the inherent difficulties of refocusing the perceptions of the ethnic states as to who would be a more trusted ally, their traditional European partners or the African Americans?

In putting the Berlin Conference in its right context for understanding the history of Liberia, what appears to emerge would be two significant eras for the making of Liberia. The first Era was the founding of the Republic on the coast in the declaration of independence as a result of the anti-slave trade movement beginning in 1807 followed later by a second era for the founding of hinterland Liberia in 1884, an event which would exacerbate the difficulties of governance caused by the sudden creation of an oversized asylum doubling the area and population of coastal Liberia. The constitution of the Republic of Liberia designed for governance of coastal Liberia faced the challenge of accommodating a vast hinterland whose peoples now faced their own turn to become traumatized when they were divided into various European colonial enclaves by the Berlin Conference which also became the final arbiter to determine the national boundaries of the Republic of Liberia. As with the case of coastal Liberia, the British and French would encroach upon the interior lands of Liberia after the Berlin Conference. In the case with the French, their colonial boundary disputes will not be resolved until the decade of Africa's independence after the Second World War. In the final analysis the territorial size of Liberia was determined by American benefactors and European diplomacy. In the resolution of the boundary dispute with France, Liberia, in demonstrating a desire to settle all land claims peacefully preferred not to pursue them further, since after independence from European colonial rule the area would

cease to be a French colony and become the independent state of the Republic of Guinea.

To appreciate the Liberian contribution to the rise of Black nationalism and statism in Africa before the Berlin Conference is to reflect upon the disclosure by Roland 011v 1884 when Europe met to partition Africa, there were ten thousand political "Units" on the continent, assuming them to be states of numerous decentralized and centralized types, which upon the partition and colonization of Africa were reduced forcibly by Europe into various sizes of fifty European colonial states. While Europe considered statism to be its greatest achievement in modernizing Africa, it is an African American legacy that the Republic of Liberia established in 1847 predated this European claim and imposition by several decades. Black nationalism and statism were African American legacies whose place cannot be denied in the annals of Liberian and African history. Another achievement in statism was the amalgamation of the two Liberias, coastal and hinterland, and extending to them equal political status as counties in 1964.

There were critical paths in the planting of statism in Liberia. Confronted with the combined resistance of an enlarged patrimony after the Berlin Conference demanding accommodation in the 1847 independence constitution designed for the African Americans in keeping with the Instructions, and from the French and British who now embarked upon the extension of their coastal "footholds" into the interior, a gravely traumatized Liberia resolved to place her destiny into the hands of the traumatizers in the same manner in which the traditional African elites earlier on had placed their future destiny into the hands of powerful European predators so as to survive. Liberia requested the European colonial powers and the United States to be colonized by any of them thereby becoming like the rest of Africa leaving Ethiopia alone free from European colonial domination. Fortunately the Liberian invitation was rejected by all of the western powers. (Jones, Thesis, 1962). Strangely, when the western powers, however, recommended that Liberia be placed under "semitrusteeship" administration after the end of the two year interim rule supported by the United Nations, such a move was vehemently rejected by the Liberian people after nearly two decades of civil war protesting that the sovereignty of the state would be endangered. More than a century and half after its founding, the Liberian experience in statism had once again demonstrated its strength to surmount and survive another trauma as a legacy of the African Americans in the Republic of Liberia. There were no protests to return to the era of living in sixteen ethnic states.

The Burden of History

The African Americans arrived in West Africa from 1820 to 1865 bearing the burden of history in three separate ways: the burden of the Diaspora, the white man's burden and an African burden each of them to be undertaken in a chronological order. The first two burdens had contributed to making the western world become modern

and more productive leading to the industrialization of western societies. African labor in distant western lands created a robust modern economic growth process which dislocated the entire global economy within four hundred years. The white mentors who accompanied the African Americans did not go to assist them to reconstruct nor revive their lost African values, but to transplant in them alien values of capitalism, religion, and western civilization. Earlier, Europeans antedating the arrival of the Americans had successfully redirected the traditional import-export trade routes into Africa away from the Sahara Desert northward to the West Atlantic coast for gold and captive labor. The outcome was to force Africans to become a new people embracing both the West and East Atlantic worlds with the interior of the African continent receding in the process. This experience, together with the Instructions, developed in the African Americans an external growth and dependency model so that they postponed giving serious attention to the ultimate burden they carried, an African burden. It was difficult to relate to the African continent, so deep was the psychological alienation embedded in them for centuries until the Berlin Conference gave them a truly rude cultural shock which slowly reversed their external road map to an internal one for national development and survival. The Berlin Conference compelled the African Americans to move in the direction of the interior of the continent. In this forced engagement with the interior ethnic peoples, they borrowed many policies from European colonial rule in Africa such as indirect rule by employing loyal chiefs to rule their own people on behalf of the Liberian government, taxation, and in a rain forest environment not ecologically friendly for breeding beasts of burden, labor was impressed when necessary for official public works and community development projects.

In fulfillment of an African burden, however, the African Americans did not hesitate to participate in the dismantling of the Trans-Atlantic trade and its inhumane effects on the West Coast of Africa. Their participation was feasible because both Britain and the United States passed laws against the trade supported by the presence of the powerful British navy on the Atlantic Ocean. The Asylum became an enlarged living space accommodating both African American and African refugees contrary to the mandate of the Instructions of 1820. Did the African Americans then abandon the Instructions against colonization in Africa when the Berlin Conference, at which the United States was present as an observer, gave approval for the partitioning and colonizing of the whole of Africa? Was this second experience of Europe's globalization of Africa to be understood once again in terms of the game of survival in big power politics, 'act or be acted upon'? Caught as a pawn surrounded by European "footholds" the African Americans were forced to take action by staking claims to portions of interior lands home to the Lorma, Gbandi, Gio, Mano, Krahn, and Grebo, training and deploying many of them as a frontier force to safeguard the interior boundaries of Liberia. This act was the ultimate abandonment of the mandate of the Instructions which later bore serious consequences for the end of a dynastic rule of the African Americans from 1847 to 1980. If the loyalty of the hinterland ethnicities could be

trusted to protect the sovereignty of the Republic of Liberia, could not those same values empower them to occupy the highest position in the Republic? Liberia having acted in claiming extensions to its own coastal "foothold", it would be acted upon nearly losing its sovereignty to the British and French. Eventually portions of Liberia territory were ceded to them because of the inability to cope with the new weapons of machine guns deployed by the Europeans at the close of the nineteenth century. What saved Liberia was the invitation to be colonized by any of the western powers was denied due to intense rivalry among them.

Liberia was a coveted prize rich in labor and industrial resources. If one imperial power could not possess this prize then none would be permitted to do so. Still the imperial pressures continued unabated until Liberia became a helpless victim satisfying the insatiable demands for resources in a world fast becoming industrialized and modernized. Liberian labor and resources were primeval assets greedily envied by industrialized nations salivating for them. Nothing would soothe their voracious appetites until Liberia was forced into the jaws of global capitalism through international migrant labor contracts with Spain and France and a domestic one with Firestone, later to be followed by the arrival of a band of transnationals after the Second World War. Confronted with a threat of losing sovereignty, due to charges of forced labor, to become a League of Nations mandated territory after the first world war, the African Americans mounted successfully a heroic feat of nationalism legally and diplomatically in defense of the nation. For the second time black nationalism was triumphant as in the days leading to the declaration of independence in 1847. The experience heightened simultaneously a new feeling of national unity to face a hostile world, and more ethnic loyalty to the Republic when Liberia did not become a mandated territory as its enemies desired. Those western powers seeking the loss of Liberian sovereignty could only grudgingly respect a dignified and unusual manifestation of black nationalism. It was an astounding legacy created before the advent of Second World War. A deeper sense of unity and loyalty now existed than before the intervention of the League of Nations to investigate charges of forced labor in Liberia, and after several decades since independence. The legacy further established in Liberia the precedence of being open to international mediation in time of national crises. (Sundiata, 1980).

Consequently, compelled to undertake the white man's burden, the African burden would be postponed though not indefinitely. Coming into power in 1944 President William V.S. Tubman, it appeared, was eagerly waiting for windows of opportunity to embark upon Liberia's African burden in which, however, external pressures once again played no small part. Contrasting Liberia before 1944 and after would present a vast transforming intellectual, political, and historical experience. President Tubman's Open Door and National Unification and Integration policies, a robust domestic and foreign education policy providing for the education of thousands of Liberians at home and abroad regardless of ethnic origin, and the African Independence movement after world war two were catalysts which transformed Liberia into undertaking an African

burden in an aggressive and unprecedented manner. Gone were the days of gradualism. The Instructions by which the asylum was governed were cast into the dust bins of history. Suffrage and citizenship were extended to all adult Liberians. Several extractive mining industries were created, although controlled by transnationals, and a maritime industry, Liberia's Marshall Plan, also controlled by transnationals was established. Marginal profits accruing from the mines and shipping industry created sustainable and permanent offshore accounts for the Liberian government. The Liberian treasury no longer depended solely on revenue intakes from property and import taxes. Civil servants were paid on time. Liberia forged stronger diplomatic and economic ties with African neighbors and across the continent such as the Mano River Union, the Economic Community of West African States, and the Organization of African Unity. Liberia became a leader in the fight against apartheid and for the liberation of Namibia from South Africa. More than a century after achieving independence Liberia became Africa's role model for democracy and freedom in Africa. Ali Mazrui described the nation as Africa's "statue of liberty." On two historical occasions Liberia as an African nation, contributed to the creation of a new era in internationalism in the world by becoming a founding member of the League of Nations in 1919 and the United Nations in 1945. Liberia, accordingly, was in the process of implementing policies for the upliftment of an African burden when a savage civil war erupted killing one hundred and fifty thousand Liberians and displacing half a million more around the world as refugees.

One Nation Indivisible

Liberia though never colonized, succumbed to massive pressures of globalization by western industrialized nations desperate to reconstruct their economies destroyed during the Second World War. Inducements offered were too attractive to resist. Transnational investment agreements were top secrets which were never published. African American lawyers who were government officials also sat on the same side with the transnational investors at annual board of directors meetings held abroad. For the first time in its history, however, solutions appeared in the nature of shared profits from an Open Door Policy which solved the government's cash flow crisis. Funds were available not only to administer the payroll of a civil service but to implement a wide range of projects for national development throughout the nation. The outcome of external pressures controlled by unpredictable global capitalist market forces combined with domestic pressures of rising demands proved to be disastrous in the long run with paralyzing results especially when payrolls could not be met and were delayed for several months after the overthrow of the last African American president in 1980. A sudden change of events caused by depressed marginal transnational profit sharing schemes were sparks which ignited the flames of an interminable civil war throughout the length and breadth of Liberia. One hundred and sixty-seven years after the founding of Liberia, and one hundred and thirty-years after independence, the ruling

dynasty of African Americans came to an end. Meanwhile, Africa, liberated from European colonial domination, and a second grand scheme of globalization, witnessed Liberia victimized by uncompromising conditions for investment by a host of transnationals. Immense pressures to accommodate them, along with a vision to leap into modernizing Liberia in the twentieth century caused Liberia to nearly collapse under the weight of the combined burdens of history which came crushing upon it simultaneously. The profits from the Open Door Policy failed to materialize as planned. Notwithstanding the Liberian government relentlessly implemented various development plans for transition from agrarian to extractive mining industries and the provision of basic social services. The Liberian government further embarked upon the implementation of numerous unplanned national, regional and local infrastructural projects in transportation and communication. The growth rate of Liberia was second to none in Africa. Liberia was described by observers as Africa's Hong Kong.

The massive unplanned national development projects caused the Northwestern University team of economists and planners, invited by the Liberian government to evaluate the success of its development plans, to label the Liberian economy as a classic case of growth without development. Liberia was not experiencing a planned growth and development process although the resources for growth and development were indeed in abundance. Lacking too was a planned manpower policy for national development while millions of dollars were spent annually on an unplanned foreign and domestic educational program. To modernize an unplanned economy was a serious case of indigestion in growth and development. The transnational predators knew the Liberian dilemma too well and did not fail to take advantage of Liberia's inexperience and lack of knowledge of a planned growth and development process. Fortunately, the Israelis were brought in to correct the mistakes in the planning process, but their assistance was aborted by President William R. Tolbert after the 1973 Arab-Israeli war when pressures were brought upon all members of the Organization for African Unity by the Arab members to sever diplomatic ties with Israel.

The outcome of Liberia's Open Door Policy and unplanned economy nonetheless brought some benefits in the form of unfair profit margins but in such a lopsided manner that Liberia was unable to deliver over night and simultaneously, comprehensive growth and development packages for modernization as provided for in the investment enclaves of the transnationals, LMC at Bomi Hills, LAMCO at Yekepa, and DELIMCO at Bong Mines. These enclaves had wetted the anticipation of the workers and the masses into believing that the enclaves would be the model for growth and development throughout Liberia and that no one would be left behind. The slump in the global market for industrial resources such as iron ore upon which the Liberian economy depended undermined further Liberia's unplanned economy. It caused the transnationals to cut and run leaving the Liberian government with a depleted chest and unable to deliver even the unplanned growth and development packages for the people. Into this dilemma appeared various Liberian opposition leaders promising the

masses to deliver that which the Liberian government could not provide, such as subsidized rice. Unfulfilled and frustrated dreams and hopes plunged Liberia into a protracted civil war which lasted for nearly two decades destroying in a moment an emerging robust middle class and Liberian entrepreneurship.

It was on the eve of Christmas 1989 when the chaos of the days of the Trans-Atlantic trade in West Africa returned, it seemed, with unabated fury. The various ethnic states in a mindless killing orgy contested for power and violence to claim the seat of authority, not within their individual ethnic states, but the highest seat of authority in the modern state of the Republic of Liberia created by the African Americans. In various forms of alliances with alien and neighboring African predators they nearly destroyed the Republic in the ecstasy of a genocide, but now lived to regret bitterly their unconscionable ill-conceived act of bestiality. 'Liberia Does Not Live Here Anymore' was the title of a poem penned during the height of the civil war. Liberian exiles from the civil war living in distant lands were heard singing sad songs over the British Broadcasting Corporation for what they realized was a lost paradise. "When We Get Back To Liberia, We'll Be Glad!" A joyous and popular song was 'Give Me A One Way Ticket To Monrovia,' also 'Liberia Is My Home.' Liberians happily sang their national anthem everywhere, at weddings and other festive occasions: "All Hail Liberia, Hail! This Glorious Land Of Liberty Shall Long Be Ours." But it was President Edwin Barclay who penned the legacy of the African Americans best in his immortal 'The Lone Star Forever' during the dark days of the League of Nations intervention before the Second World War: "When freedom raised her glowing form on Montserrado's verdant height, She set within the doom of night, Midst glowing stars and thunder storms, The Star of liberty. Be ever ready to obey. 'Gainst treason and rebellious front, 'Gainst foul aggression in the brunt ... The Lone Star Forever! O long may it wave over land and over sea. Desert it no never, Uphold it forever."

Following the initial mediation of West African neighbors, a planned mission of the United Nations by sending 15,000 peacekeepers became necessary to restore law and order in Liberia in the midst of the revival of ethnic rivalry and rebellion. The ethnicities were armed in murderous combat to revive once more a super state experience uniting all ethnic states within the Republic of Liberia which they now accepted as the most permanent legacy of the African Americans in Liberia, Africa, and the world. Through the intervention of the United Nations they laid down their guns and picked up ballot cards in an act of allegiance to the Republic of Liberia as the ultimate bond of unity, peace, and common humanity among all of the people of Liberia.

Finally the African burden is triumphant after the excesses of the civil war. The bonding which the Instructions had prohibited in the beginning would eventually establish a legacy of Pan Africanism. The independence constitution declaring, "none but peoples of Negro descent can become citizens of the Republic of Liberia," became alive as a statement of principle and of fact reinforcing the great mission and vision of the African burden. The constitution legally could not create a culture of non-exclu-

sivity with such a declaration. It therefore proclaimed Liberia to be a nation of laws and not men with unveiled nationalism before the Berlin Conference in 1884. Liberia further predated the birth of Pan Africanism at the time of the independence of the Republic. Pan Africanism was destined to liberate the African continent from colonial domination and establish a sense of common destiny with the formation of the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union. To create a new tradition in the birth of a wider human community which never before existed, and to plant institutions for its development and relevance for all times is the message which this interpretation of the legacy of the African Americans in the Republic of Liberia has labored to transmit to those seeking for peace and stability in Liberia.

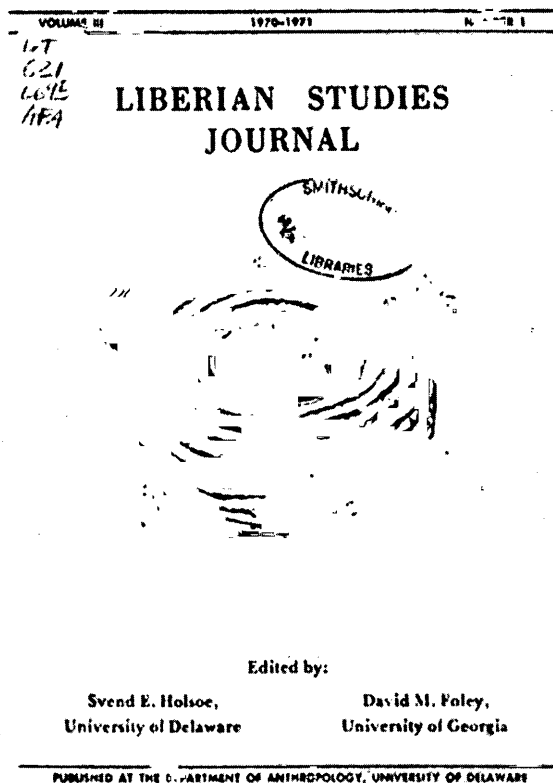
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NITIEN: The Curious Case of Kru Money

*Scott Shepperd **

The cover of *Liberian Studies Journal* volume III number 1 features a massive brass ring with four knobs with the caption: use unknown. called Dwin collected 1965 near Barclayville. This 27 pound 10.5 inch diameter object belongs to a corpus of heterogeneous ring-forms also known as tie, nitie or nitien, gova—and belatedly Kru money, representing some of the largest brass works in Africa. Yet they are rarely mentioned in the ethnographic and African-art literature and little known to most admirers of African art. They have been generally attributed to the Kru and Grebo ethnic groups along coastal SE Liberia and occasionally to the Kran, their neighbors to the north as well to Krou, Dida and Neyo¹ ethnic groups in neighboring SW Cote D'Ivoire. Their actual function has not been widely appreciated, and some scholars have doubted they were made by Africans at all. This paper by means of a literature review examines the broad cultural context surrounding these relics—including the outstanding written and oral commentary—in order to better clarify them as sacred objects of power, examples of the strongest medicine known to some



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Kru and Grebo groups, and inquiring further whether some may indeed represent the specific medicine and regalia of the Bodio, the ritual high priest, as well sacred-medicines of some clan lineages. This review by necessity encompasses several varied threads touching albeit briefly upon themes in African metallurgy, folklore and African traditional religion - particularly the nature of ritual objects and ritual secrecy -to better inform and interpret the sometimes less than explicit Liberian ethnographic record.

Description

It is important first to adequately describe this diverse group because their curious form and construction offer subtle insights which bear significantly on further discussion.

They are made primarily of brass and rarely iron, and appear in two distinct forms: a complete circular-ring form and an anklet or bracelet-form, a distinction of some

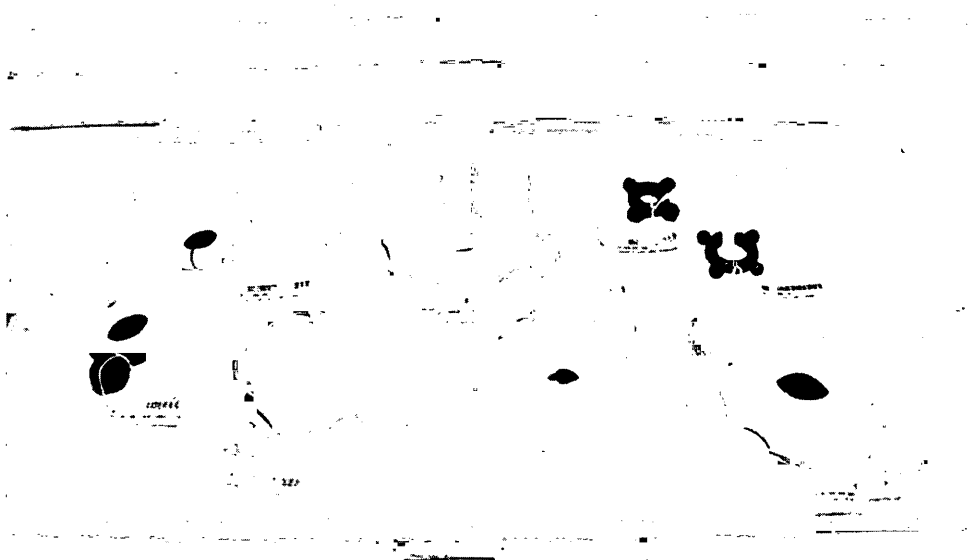


Image 6. Museum of Natural History, donated by Philip Agram.

apparent significance, united as one corpus by several hallmarks, the most obvious being the stereotypical presence of four squat knobs². They vary dramatically in size and weight, ranging from 2-12 inches in diameter and weighing from a few ounces to up to 40 pounds (see image 6). Some but not all of the anklet Nitien were actually worn (images 2, 3 and 5), whereas the closed rings were not wearable since they were in many cases too heavy, and always too narrow. The very smallest rings however have been described as suspended on a string worn on the ankle or forehead.³ Importantly,



Image 2. Collected by George Schwab, Peabody Museum

between the second and third knob. This highly conserved beveled pattern is also present on large bracelets worn by the Dan/Guere (ie. Kran or We) groups just to the north.⁴ At present, any symbolic meaning of the knobs or iconography to the Kru cannot be affirmed or dismissed despite their vague resemblance to metalware of some groups farther north where much smaller bracelets with somewhat similar projecting knobs and cones serve to ward off the evil eye and protect against witchcraft.⁵ But it should be noted that the knobs do not represent bells as anklets and bracelet with bells in Liberia were true bells and actually functioned.⁶

In their construction, the rings betray a wide spectrum of casting quality with many exhibiting obvious casting faults, as well as other unexplained casting irregularities. The oldest appear to exhibit the finest casting quality. Interestingly, many closed rings exhibit an apparent but unexplained casting asymmetry whereby the quality of the casting on the knobs appears somewhat sharper than on the body⁷ and by and large the sharpness and quality of the anklets are superior to the closed ring forms. Another notable hallmark is the significant damage which many rings display, ostensibly a function of wear and tear resulting from their great age. The damage may also be purposeful as many closed rings exhibit punched-out sides, reflecting the efforts of treasure-seekers searching for gold- according to informants, and alternatively the effort to ritually kill these objects as shall be

the anklets are unpaired, no matched pairs are known.

Decoratively, the knobs exhibit variable shape and iconography which often differ even on the same ring, although a simple striated pattern appears most commonly. In contrast, the central ring of the closed form often exhibits a stereotypical rough lamellar, whirlpool pattern, reminiscent of a symbol of a spiral, and also suggestive of the beveled or fluted pattern seen on the anklet-form Nitien

Image 3. Seattle Art Museum

explained. This damage consequently reveals an interesting finding: that many closed rings contain an interior clay core or organic matrix, a not unusual finding in large brass-works except that it appears to be found only in the closed rings. In contrast the anklet forms appear to be uniformly solid; so that closed rings weighing only a few pounds contain a clay core whereas anklets

weighing up to 15 pounds do not. Furthermore, extensive damage to several closed ring exposes the presence of an inner ring of iron beneath this clay core whose potential significance will also be reviewed. (image 7)

Finally, many larger rings now possess a heavy encrusted patina, typically rugged and battered, exhibiting either a dark brownish glazed or else a green archaeological patina⁸. However, when first manufactured these massive rings with their knobs and lamellar surfaces fashioned in fresh brass using the lost-wax process would have presented a bold shining glittering figure—standing out in noteworthy contrast to the generally spare and utilitarian physical culture of Pre-Liberia for which the Kru and Grebo were generally noted.⁹

Image 7. Damaged ring with exposed iron. 12' diameter, 20 pounds.

This last point is best underscored by considering the context of the ritual use of copper and its alloys in pre-colonial Africa so well documented by Eugenia Herbert in her book RED GOLD, whereby brass and copper, imported in great quantities¹⁰ into pre-colonial Africa for many centuries, preferred in many instances even to gold¹¹ and often reserved for ritual purposes or as a luxury good for royalty. These metals were then transformed – in some cases by the hands of brass-casting specialists¹² – into myriad prestige forms such as pendants, scepters, adornments for headdresses and applied as decorative strips and studs on prestige and ritual objects. Such examples include reliquaries, masks and ritual regalia for sacred altars and skeuomorphs modeled on older non-metal prestige forms such as leopard teeth,

Image 5. Collected by Ralph Gurley, Smithsonian.

wood masks, insignia hatchets, ceramic ware and organic ritual objects such as Ofo of the Igbo.¹³

For this reason, based on the broad experience in pre-colonial African, it cannot be overstated: the use of brass in the magnitude of these rings is quite striking, ostensibly associating them with wealth, status and power, and therefore with the highest level of religious and political authority among the Kru and Grebo. Yet remarkably these objects seemingly escaped the notice, recognition or comment of all local observers – including colonists, missionaries and traders – prior to the 20th century,¹⁴ suggesting the distinct possibility that at the time when these relics were traditionally used, in the manner of many other sacred relics, they were hidden from view. The remainder of documentary evidence in any case even since 1900 has been exceedingly spare.

Published References

Indeed, only four scholarly references by authors George Schwab, William Siegmann, Elze Bruyninx and Andre Blandin¹⁵ and one missionary account by Abe Guenter offer specific commentary on these rings. The most extensive account by George Schwab was published nearly 60 years ago, relying on data obtained in 1928. With the exception of Guenter's account, whose succinct valuable comments will be reserved for last, the other authors support but do not enhance the commentary by George Schwab recorded in *TRIBES OF THE LIBERIAN HINTERLAND*. Schwab was a missionary in Cameroon who spent an 8 month furlough barnstorming the Liberian hinterland as an amateur anthropologist in 1928. He acknowledged considerable difficulty obtaining willing informants and reliably interpretable data and did not publish the final work until 1947, and only then with great editorial assistance from Dr George Harley, the medical missionary at Ganta.¹⁶ As the most definitive, Schwab's comments, a collection of disparate accounts scattered in various sections of his 500 page work, merit citing at length.

Schwab encountered these rings personally among the 'bush' or interior Grebo but also recorded second hand reports he received about their use along the Kru coast. He noted the 'bizarre things' said about them, stating the interior Grebo deemed the rings to be actually alive and possessing special powers, calling them niatie, nitie and Nitien or water spirits and also 'water-meat' or water animals, and recorded folk stories told about these animals. These Nitien could be found playing near streams sometimes in groups, which if followed might lead one to gold or silver. They were capable of linking up to form a chain to a massive 'Father' ring found under the water. If they caught an unsuspecting traveler near the waterside they would pull even the strongest man to his watery grave—unless he possessed the antidote of iron, whose slightest touch would secure release. However, they could be captured in turn by applying drops of one's own blood or striking them with a leaf from a special plant. Thereafter, maintained in a container of water, its natural element (which kept them thrashing about and destroying the hut) or else tied securely with raffia fiber, their great powers were utilized,

Siegmann noted, to found and protect villages, to heal and deflect illness, cure infertility and stop wars. To replenish their strength, they required monthly feeding of rice, palm oil or blood usually during the full moon, before ultimately tiring out, losing their power and dying. In which case Schwab noted they would be kept in the hut of the Bodio, the high-priest among the Grebo and Kru, as a sign of his power and prestige. Among coastal groups these objects were described more simply as 'watch-dogs' deployed to protect the hut.¹⁷ Schwab also described a process whereby a diviner who knew the language of the spirits would dive into the water to communicate with the spirit-world, sometimes bringing up a "niatie bracelet or other object sent by an ancestral spirit to an individual with instructions to wear or use it and enjoy good fortune."¹⁸

He further recorded that when an owner died the rings were typically buried with him or inherited by the oldest son. They were also occasionally used also to purchase cattle or for partial bride wealth payments. Reviews of numerous accounts documenting bride-wealth practices among the Kru and Grebo¹⁹ compiled over the past 150 years however reveals no other single mention of Nitien, except one oblique reference in Kjell Zetterstrom's ethnographic survey of the Kru produced in the 1960's. His inventory of Kru bride-wealth lists a brass-bucket containing a "forest animal (brass ring)"²⁰—a perhaps unintelligible notation without reference to Schwab account of the rings as water meat.

Schwab notably obtained his data only from the oldest informants stating the young had never encountered the rings. And Siegmann and Blandin reported that in fact the Kru had no knowledge of their origin, as the rings were in the ground already when the Kru migrated into the territory, in the manner of nomoli in Sierra Leone. Siegmann wrote in 1977: "clearly no one in human memory has made one of these objects."²¹ Schwab recorded the earlier prevailing local European theory that they were copied from Portuguese cannon parts or brought in by ancient traders. He noted "*however this may be, they do not belong to any present local culture. All we can definitely say is that they are relics of a vanished race who either came or went by sea.*"²²

But strangely, elsewhere tucked away in a chapter on agricultural cycles and calendars, Schwab tersely recounted his report of a large brass ring with 4 knobs called GOVA in the territory of Tie located to the south of Tchien in the vicinity of the Putu mountain range—a mythical point of origin of migration for some Kru and Grebo groups—a location however where Schwab unfortunately spent only 6 days. He recorded simply that this large brass ring which received monthly sacrifice-offerings was the most powerful object among the tribes of SE Liberia.²³ He did not state if he actually saw the object nor did he explain his puzzling brevity or lack of follow up investigation—except by noting his 6 days spent there were the worst of the entire 8 month trip.

Most current scholars²⁴ were unable to add significantly to the above information. Most helpfully, Professor Mary Moran stated her awareness that bronze rings with knobs were kept as medicine to strengthen the health of the community in the hut of

the Bodio, and Professor Elizabeth Tonkin said that reticent informants initially offered her no information even in the 1970's, only agreeing a day later to a proffered suggestion from a third party that they were a "sort of Kru compass" that were occasionally buried under the Bodio's hut.²⁵ Robert Nooter, a trustee of the Smithsonian Museum of African Art, collected two specimens in the 1960's while attending an agricultural fair in Buchanan, one came from the Grebo pavilion and one from the Kru pavilion which he noted had slightly different patinas. He was told the Kru and Grebo maintained them in slightly different locations, one group keeping them in a sacred grove in the forest. According to Nooter, the rings were said to walk down the river on their knobs, and were used to sanctify the area where they were kept.²⁶

Unfortunately, there are only a few reports of Nitien actually found in situ, that is, in the ground. One example is an 11 inch diameter ring (image 4) obtained by George Harley from a Kran river bed,²⁷ currently in storage in the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University. Its original accession-note states it was a sacred object collected near Tchien which if lost the tribe would pay anything to get back.²⁸ In a paper titled "Grebo Graves", Cecily Delafield documented the recovery of 6 pound 5 inch wide ring with 4 knobs obtained during an archaeological dig on a burial-island off the coast of

Image 4. Collected by George Harley, Nasher Museum.

Harper in 1968. She referred to it as a water witch, and a Portuguese money piece without further explanation.²⁹ Delafield noted this island was used for burials for several hundred years, first by the Kru later the Grebo before colonial authorities banned the practice in 1857,³⁰ a date offering some guidance as to their age. Gabel obtained a radiocarbon date of 1725 during an archaeological survey work on this same island a few years later, supporting the distinct possibility that some of these rings are 200-300 years old.³¹ The oldest museum accession date uncovered thus far is for a pair of rings (image 5), donated to the Smithsonian Museum Natural History by Reverend Ralph Randolph Gurley in 1867.³² This Museum has a total of 14 rings in storage in fact (image 6), including eight donated by one man: Philip Abrams, a former US State Department employee. Of further note, four of the museum's rings were collected in Yayaken, Grand Gedeh County and accessioned in 1970 under the term 'walking iron'—although all four are ostensibly made of brass.³³ Although perhaps erroneous, this term 'walking iron' commands special interest since it remains at present unexplained, and appears otherwise unknown in the ethnographic record of Liberia.³⁴

Finally, there is the compelling and succinct report produced by missionary pilot named Abe Guenter who described pulling a seven inch 10 lb brass ring with four-knobs³⁵ out of the mud near the Cavally Firestone plantation sometime in the late 1940's. Guenter learned from a Deacon Carr that Carr's grandfather the big chief was so afraid of "spirits, sickness, war and other people witchcraft" that he beseeched the "big witch doctor" for the most powerful witchcraft that could be made. Therefore, the local blacksmith was commissioned to craft the brass-ring, which was then placed in the middle of the village beneath a small shelter especially built in one day, with cow tails attached to each knob. At night, Carr reported the village elders arranged for the sacrifice of a young boy whose blood was spilled on the ring, and thereafter village activities revolved around this "brass-god", but when the village converted to Christianity, they threw the ring away.³⁶ This obscure report is unique as it illustrates the ring's local manufacture by the blacksmith, its intended original function stated explicitly which complements very well Schwab's account of the ring named GOVA, and also how decisively it could be abandoned once faith in the object was lost.³⁷ It further illustrates how interviewing select willing informants in this case a leader of the community, a direct descendant of a former leader (as it was the practice to select leadership from certain families) can secure valuable information.

By and large, the sum of these diverse and fragmentary threads : the notable use of brass in the manufacture of these pre-colonial era relics, the odd silence of the record about them prior to 1900 combined with some of Schwab's ostensibly puzzling accounts of them as water meat and living water spirits that required feeding and Zetterstrom's reference to a ring as a 'forest animal' contrasting with the more straight forward account of Guenter's 'brass-god' and Schwab's GOVA are all in fact reconcilable to a lay person. Indeed, a brief examination of themes in African Traditional religion,- particularly with respect to ritual and ritual objects, and to secrecy and the language of secrecy³⁸ -reveals that the various accounts of Nitien or water spirits are consistent with the description of objects of power.³⁹

Power Objects

Objects of power, protean in form and well known over the entire continent of Africa are one example of broad elements of unity seen in African Traditional Religion, historically and to this day. This unity is exemplified as many scholars have noted in the widespread belief in many societies of a high god – for example called Nyesoa by the Kru – a high god who was all-powerful yet remote from their lives, approached only through the intermediation of the spirit-world, an invisible world inhabited by a host of entities including ancestor spirits, bush spirit, spirits of underdetermined origin as well as a variety of nature spirits, including earth spirits, spirits in caves, rocks, mountains, and particularly for our interest: water. According to one legend, Nyesoa gave the Kru an intermediary, the revered oracle Ku Jirople, a powerful spirit who

resided in a mountain cave in the mountains in the interior, consulted in times of war, famine and disease and leadership succession by groups from a wide area in SE Liberia.

The spirit world therefore had direct agency in the lives of mankind and for this reason was of primary concern because under this belief system good fortune and good health, which are in fact the same, were insured by proper propitiation and sacrifice to the spirits just as misfortune and poor health could reflect the action of malignant spirits or the failure to appease one's own ancestor spirits- who thus have become angry and brought misfortune-, or by failure to obey a taboo, or very importantly, by witchcraft. Indeed some individuals it was believed possessed more vital energy or life-force than others, and some possessed a substance within them responsible for witchcraft. Such a person could effect ill actions by his thoughts alone, even unknowingly and therefore cause injury through spiritual attack.⁴⁰ Therefore, accidents as such did not exist: an innocent death in western eyes may be deemed the result of anti-social spiritual forces or witchcraft.⁴¹

Consequently, Kru and Grebo groups like Africans continent-wide attempted to harness and channel the power of the spirit-world in order to improve their health and physical and social well-being and to gain protection from witchcraft. Achieving this not only through proper observation of taboos and proper sacrifice as stated, but also by deploying a host charms, amulets and medicines.⁴² These medicines assumed myriad forms traditionally which ranged broadly in purpose from minor magical pendants, bracelets or animal horns filled with secret substances to promote good fortune in hunting or fishing, to substantial charms or statues serving to protect a farm or hut from thieves to even more powerful medicines which could protect people, groups of people (clans) or whole villages, the most powerful of which was heretofore called a fetish⁴³ but more recently termed a power object. A fetish was defined as an object prepared through a process by specialists to localize and contain a spirit often an ancestor spirit through prescribed ritual, which might include blood sacrifice, sometimes human blood. The object was thus deemed "alive", and kept alive through proper sacrifice and periodic feeding usually during the full moon. Failing this the neglected spirit would flee the object, and the empty vessel is said to have died.⁴⁴ Their preparation and consecration required secret rituals and the use of carefully guarded ingredients which could not be discussed, (which could compromise their power). Even the name of the objects themselves sometimes kept secret to avoid compromising their power.⁴⁵ One must emphasize that the objects themselves are not worshipped precisely, they are simply tools used to manipulate the power of the spirit world.

Although certainly impossible to enumerate the great multitude of interesting ritual objects in Africa, surveying a few is instructive for the light shed on Nitien. One of the most celebrated power objects recognized in the western world are the nail driven carved wooded figures of the Kongo called Nkisis,⁴⁶ notable for their fearsome appearance, an accretion of various power symbols such as iron nails, fruit pits, seashells, brass studies and emblems of hunters regalia. Nkisi were empowered by the Nganga,

the ritual specialist who manipulated its spiritual power. Large figures served whole communities by promoting spiritual and physical health by appealing to ancestor spirits in the land of the dead, associated with the land across the water to hunt down wrong-doers and witches and drive away evil spirits. They were also used for purposes of divination and also for oath-taking and making pacts which were sealed by driving a nail or iron wedge into the figure. Smaller Nkisi serving individuals could be beseeched for a particular function, to promote fertility, or punish oath-breakers or thieves or other personal wrongs. Their true power emanated from the spirit animating the object, whose efficacy was facilitated by complex organic material called power substance concealed in a cavity in the head or abdomen of the object- which contained ritually significant ingredients of great spiritual power.⁴⁷

In Africa, there are many other remarkable objects of this nature but less well understood such as the Baman boli, a figure with a bovine shape encrusted with layers of accreted with complex interiors, and yet many others which appear quite mundane, such as bracelets on altars, personal stools or masks or are even as unremarkable as simple clay pots which are still used in many small communities, replaced in some cases with brass basins. In Liberia perhaps the most famous are the masks of the Dan, and the most infamous - the dreaded object of power of the Leopard Society, Borfima. The Dan masks were arrayed in a hierarchy under a grand Mother mask. Importantly, Vandenhoute noted what Harley missed, that some of the masks he collected were in fact not Poro masks but parts of an ancestor cult (as Vandenhoute put it) which actively resisted Poro. Moreover many important masks seldom appeared in public and in fact had been 'discharged' before Harley received them by the removal of magical preparations that had filled the back of the masks.⁴⁸ Similarly, Borfima, which required human fat and blood to maintain its potency, had a similar hierarchy of 'mother' and secondary Borfima,⁴⁹ the latter made from a small portion derived from its parent. Borfima's interior reportedly contained wax concealing an assortment of vegetable matter, blood, rice and elements of human remains.

Secrecy

One critical obstacle confronting any inquiry of ritual objects is ritual secrecy, so that many investigations have met with complete silence and concealment. Indeed, Schwab noted that the Grebo were particularly unapproachable and uncommunicative lest they reveal secrets.⁵⁰ He faced what Bellman and Nooter have noted were layers of ritual secrecy used to protect and obscure the details of sacred rituals and sacred objects. Most ritual objects as noted previously were very often simply not seen, or shown very rarely- and when seen could appear as quite mundane and unimpressive- or else presented exhibiting symbols intelligible only to those knowledgeable. Their true meaning would be known to just a few - who might use a language of secrecy: that is, a language of metaphors designed to conceal and misdirect the uninitiated and thereby hide reality in plain sight. Thus, the descriptions of Nitien as 'forest

animals' and 'water meat' references the village-bush/secular-sacred dichotomy, whereby a forest or a 'bush-thing'⁵¹ therefore refers to a thing of the forest, ie. a sacred thing, is an example of just such language. Bellman of course described this use among Poro initiates, but this is not to suggest that Kru and Grebo had Poro- as they had no Poro, no circumcision (except on the margins of Kru language contact zones) and in fact no bush schools. Secrecy is simply the tool of power, Nooter noted, and the Kru and Grebo were well aware of these tools.

This brief sketch of power objects so far creates a basis for sharpening this inquiry, providing a platform from which to now pose focused perhaps unexpected questions. For example, in regards to forms and surface, one may ask: is the luminosity and reflective surface of brass itself part of the armamentarium against witchcraft as described by Herreman, what Herbert describes as "aggressivity, the hue that brings down the thunder?"⁵² Do the various sizes of the rings correlate such that the smallest are for personal use and the largest for whole groups as seen with the Nkisi, and some Dan masks? Is there a hierarchy and linkage as seen with Dan masks and Borfima, as suggested by the earlier reference to a Father ring under the water?⁵³ Are the rings damaged because they have been ritually killed? And is the form of projecting knobs itself symbolic of the aggressive fight against anti-social which occurs in 4 directions? Is the basis for this form foreign or native and if so, is this form based on an organic precursor.⁵⁴

One must further reiterate that power objects despite their sometimes remarkable exteriors are ultimately simply receptacles; their true importance and powers derive from their sacred interiors, that is, what they contain, literally and figuratively. If the various figures, masks and pots are ritual containers, one must ask- what do Nitien contain? Because although a clay core ostensibly serves a structural purpose as scaffolding during the lost wax casting of a brass work, there is now some basis to ask: what is the ritual nature IF ANY of the clay core/organic matrix found in most of the closed rings, what is the ritual significance of the iron found in their interior? Indeed what is the nature of the spirit contained in the brass ring called Nitien or water spirits?

The first question is appropriate because clay itself was ritually significant in many Liberian contexts subject to multifold meanings. Some groups posed clay as a metaphor for human beings whereby the process of making citizens through initiation was likened to the firing of a pot.⁵⁵ Viewed as a symbol of the spirit world and "a vehicle for transformation," it was symbolically smeared on bush school initiates as protection against hostile spirits. Not just applied externally, it could be used as a base for ritual medicine which was taken internally (eaten) for strengthening and protection. Furthermore, since sources for the best clay were kept guarded one might ask: where did this clay come from? Indeed, citing the example of the oracle of Arochuku whose riverbed sand itself was used as medicine,⁵⁶ one may ask: did Nitien's clay come from the mountain oracles in the interior? Finally, does this organic matrix contain elements

of human remains of important ancestors⁵⁷ as seen in power objects over a wide area of pre-colonial Africa.

The presence of iron draws interest also because iron itself was esteemed as a powerful medicine,⁵⁸ either outright as in the case of certain iron axes and yinni (blacksmith's hammer) in Liberia, or concealed as seen in the case of large ritual King and Queen manilas, for example which have higher iron content than trade manilas.⁵⁹ Similarly, x-ray analyses of many ritual objects such as Ogboni Edan pairs in Nigeria, bovine shaped mud encrusted Bamana boli figures and Kran clay gle divination heads, to name just a few, reveal the presence of iron hidden in their interiors. Additionally, the ritual linkage of iron implements⁶⁰ with the foundation of new settlements as seen W Liberia also existed in SE Liberia as shall be seen, recalling to mind that one name recorded for these rings which have the power the found new towns is 'walking iron'.⁶¹

Finally, these rings have been called gova, dwini, niatie, nitie or nitien⁶² the latter meaning: water spirits. In fact, Ni-tie according to Grebo word lists actually translates to water-brass and it is unclear if there was a different Kru name.⁶³ The word dwini and tien may be homonyms for djinn and therefore a possible northern loan word for spirit. The meaning of Gova if recorded correctly is unknown and could not be found in any word-lists. It is also unknown if nitien is indeed the original name for these objects, certainly much linguistic analysis remains to be done in this regard.

However as water spirits, it is natural to inquire of any relationship to Mami wata, presently the most well known water spirit complex in West Africa, a flexible, adaptable, and capricious spirit of ambiguous gender- often described as a beautiful, long haired, faired skinned woman whose promise of great wealth often carried a terrible price.⁶⁴ However, Gore has noted "Mami Wata worship appeared in the early 20th century in the riverine areas of SE Nigeria"⁶⁵ before spreading to other parts of W Africa. Nitien of SE Liberia clearly predate the Mami Wata complex -perhaps by centuries, although the similar themes that Nitien, Mami Wata and the many other water spirits⁶⁶ express are quite old and widespread. Consider Robin Moore's findings during a casual investigation of brass work (torques, coiled bracelets, bells and brass skeuomorphs of carnivore skulls) associated with Ijo shrines in the Nigeria delta⁶⁷ where he complained that traditions surrounding the objects did more to conceal than reveal their actual origins. Invariably, the brasses were said have been made by water people or water-spirits, or in one case brought down to earth by a mythical hero - riding a python- a traditional symbol of water. Moore's experience recalls origin stories elsewhere, like that of the Golden Stool of the Akan, soul-bearer of that nation which descended to earth on a golden chain- or the brass Tano basins which descended from heaven during rain and used to contain sacred water of the Tano diety. In Dogon mythology and many others copper simply is water. Thus, the association of brass and copper with water, and water with the spirit-world appears to be an extraordinarily ancient and widely diffused phenomenon. The many complexes of water spirits have absorbed many regional themes and symbols which invariably expressed certain pow-

ers including healing, fertility, promise of wealth and well being, prophecy and divination. Perhaps the single purest expression of the meaning of water in this context is that it symbolizes the world of the spirits- the true source of all power which determines the fate of man on earth. One may note therefore, for all of the reasons above, the rings called nitien must have represented to the Kru and Grebo a formidable medicine in the on going aggressive battle against the ever present anti-social forces which seek destroy society: witchcraft. It is possible to get fleeting glimpses of objects of just such description in the ethnographic record.

Ethnographica

As noted, earlier, the rings have been attributed to Kru and Grebo groups, and in some instances to Kran/Guere, Krou, Dida, Neyo (Ivory Coast) groups, all of whom belong to the Kru Language Group family that occupies a large wedge of territory in SE Liberia, extending across the Cavally River into SW Cote D'Ivoire. The dilemma of multiple attributions renders Andreas Massing's supposition (presaged by Reverend Leighton Wilson more than 100 years before him⁶⁸) of a Kru Language Cultural Area⁶⁹ suggesting the cultural unity on some level of many of the different polities in this vast language territory somewhat attractive despite the obvious difficulties⁷⁰- as it helps address the question: how is it these rings are attributed to so many groups? However, this view although convenient for classification and useful in some respects, reflects a sort of outsider assessment of the history and culture of SE Liberia, and certainly does not reflect the groups' views of themselves.⁷¹ Wilson, McEvoy, Holsoe and quite a few others have noted the terms Kru and Kran for example were not used by the ethnic groups themselves. This is because the level of ethnic and social identity existed at the segmented lineage level, what some might arguably refer to as clans. For example, among the Kru, groups of lineages or pantons lived together in political/territorial units called a Dako (plural spelled either dake or dakwe), essentially mini-states, with a similar arrangement obtaining among the Grebo. Sullivan noted more than 40 Dakwe among the Kru in the 1960s that were often in vigorous competition and even at war with their neighboring dakwe. There was thus no unified "Kru nation" and no single history. Therefore, it is important to state that comments made herein about Kru and Grebo groups are made in general terms, recognizing that within their various lineages and social units that comprise these groups there is diversity and variation which should not be dismissed.

A brief thumb nail history of this region notes that in aggregate, there have been Kru language group speakers in SE Liberia for at least the past 4-500 years.⁷² These various groups, described by David Brown and others as decentralized or stateless societies are deemed to have migrated in disparate groups over generations from the far north-east from the general vicinity of northern Cote D'Ivoire, many -according to oral accounts -coalescing in stages near sacred mountains in SE Liberia, the source of life giving iron,⁷³ before making their way sporadically to the coast. Groups of Grebo,

Kru and Kran-Sapo speakers which fanned out over a wide area have strong oral traditions tracing their place of origin to a host of these sacred mountains, most notably Mount Gedeh in the Putu Mountain range in Kran territory, itself the location of the revered cave oracle *Tuobonika* consulted by delegates from groups over a wide territory. Another highly important oracle *Ku Jlople* located in Chelopo a little to the south was also notably consulted for important decisions and approval of various leadership positions among the Kru.⁷⁴ If the oral histories are correct, The Kru-proper and the Grebo appear to have arrived to their present location somewhat more recently over the past 200-250 years although these accounts must be evaluated and handled with great care, as Elizabeth Tonkin has shown.

Although reviewing the very complicated history of group movements for each dako is certainly impossible, mentioning a few critical factors influencing these movements is informative. The most thorough treatment by Professor Elizabeth Tonkin described the oral history of the fitful movements and counter movements of one Kru group, the Jlao, as they made their way to the coast. Their travels, punctuated by many battles, reversals of course and other setbacks, were facilitated by guidance from *Ku Jlople*, the oracle in the interior. More generally, some reports described Kru migrations as coming down the St John river before fanning out radially along the coast, but Sullivan recorded the traditions of Kru migrations as coming in three waves, the first wave down the Saint John river from the interior "guided by an idol which led them in their journey and advised them when to stop and settle along the way."⁷⁵ The idol whose description certainly resembles Nitien, was later reportedly stolen by another dako, the Gbeta. The second wave which included the Jlao came from vicinity of the Putu mountains and the third wave included dake whose dialects and lineages associate them with some Grebo groups.

The above reference to idols highlights the great difficulty and hazard of coherently describing the religious beliefs in SE Liberia because of the critical problem of ambiguity of language whereby old references to gods, idols, oracles, devils and spirits also known as ku or kwi were used almost interchangeably and imprecisely.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, most researchers convey the impression of a hierarchy of spiritual power, with *Ku Jlople* the mountain oracle referenced most often as the highest power worshipped by some Kru and Grebo groups, and also by various Kran-Sapo speakers.⁷⁷ Another oracle of regional importance and renown was the oracle at Hidie on the Cavalla River—more than 10 miles upriver from the ocean, referred by some writers as the Grand Devil of Cavally, who was not to be confused with Devil Rock, called Tule by the coastal Glebo, an impressive rock formation on the coast between Harper and half-Graway which was also the site of burials, sacrifice and propitiation to the ancestors.⁷⁸ However, in an early book review of Davis's work, Sullivan suggested her disagreement with the view that Kru groups were under the power of one powerful oracle by noting that each dako had its own oracle or god⁷⁹—which indeed also seems to be true. Certainly, each dako had its own 'god' or spirit and each lineage within a dako also had its own 'god', and

furthermore the town itself had its own spirit which received sacrifice- although it is unclear if this was the same as the Dako spirit. Therefore, although various Kru and Grebo dakwe sacrificed to and sought guidance from Ku Jlople, this did not preclude sacrifice to the various acknowledged named local spirits or ku which could be found in large cotton trees, water-falls and pools and such natural land formation as prominent rocks and hills, and it may be that Ku Jlople was originally a local spirit that rose to regional prominence because of its demonstrated efficacy. Wilson noted "they have consecrated rock and trees, where they go to perform some kind of religious ceremony, the particular nature of which is not known, as it is always performed in secret. The trees and rocks are not to be understood as the objects of worship, but the place where it is performed."⁸⁰ Perhaps the best understanding is presented by Kurtz⁸¹ who noted that in addition to sacrificing at the site of various natural land formations, ku could be sacrificed to through chidi- a generic name for high medicine which contained or otherwise represented ku. Such chidi could include the same array of town medicines, lineage medicines and personal medicines- which received sacrifice at prescribed intervals of rice, goats, palm oil and even cold water poured over the medicine.⁸² Therefore, ku could be localized to a fixed site such as an oracle-cave as well as to a transportable object such as the idols mentioned earlier. Importantly, Kurtz was told definitively and repeatedly that the proper translation for ku is the spirit of ancestors- not specific ancestors but the spirit of ancestors collectively. He was told "when trouble catches the whole town, they don't call to any one special ancestor. They go to the Bodio and he will give sacrifice to all the ancestors of all the families in the town. This offering is given during the season of the new moon. If any trouble comes they will wait for the new moon."⁸³ These views which require further understanding of their full complexity and variation across the many dakwe are consistent with religious beliefs of many polities throughout Africa, which suggests for the purposes of this paper that Nitien were used ultimately as vehicles to appeal for assistance from Kru and Grebo ancestors, and also that the spirits dwelling within nitien were potentially ancestor spirits as well.⁸⁴ The sentiments that Kurtz recorded included only rare mention or acknowledgement of Nyesoa. This is expressed in a Jabo proverb as explained by Charles Blooah: "We invoke God: we do not invoke eternity... We do whatever is in our power, but we can do no more than that." Mr Blooah then listed a hierarchy of ancestral spirits and a few national spirits including "ku je le" stating: "These are the spirits or gods which can be invoked, usually by means of charms...but zlo ne soa (ie. Nyesoa), the Eternal or Heavenly God- this power is beyond invocation by charms or any other means."⁸⁵

Bodio

Generally, in regard to social structure, the various Kru and Grebo dakwe were very similar but certainly not identical. Although essentially farming and fishing communities, they supplemented their economies by sending their young men down the coast

as krumen aboard ships and later on plantations to gain wealth and experience⁸⁶ for the benefit of the dako. Their government, described by Wilson as the purest form of democracy consisted of two main age groups, the elders and a warrior class, called the sedibo among the Kru, who discussed the important matters of the day at the palaver-house. There was also a priest-class (called witch doctors by missionaries) named the deya, or deyibo among the Kru. The deya were consulted on many occasions including the founding of a new town. Other important pre-colonial leadership positions included a secular leader called in some cases Krogba or Wóroba,⁸⁷ and a spiritual leader/ritual priest called the Bodio who served to protect the spiritual health of the community. Kurtz recorded that among various Grebo dakwe the Woroba was listed as the primary leader as often as not as the Bodio- who nevertheless maintained his priestly duties. As stated previously, nitien were linked principally with the Bodio's office by all reports.

The Bodio was chosen from a traditional lineage- often whose totem was the leopard. The choice was made secretly by the elders reportedly with the express blessing of the oracle whose imprimatur was signaled by an iron ring fastened to the Bodio's ankle. The Bodio was essentially informed when he was captured unawares and installed in his ritual hut called the *ji-won* or "leopard's mouth" among the Kru or the *takai* among the Grebo -which was built in one day. The Bodio's hut was a place of asylum where no refugee could be touched.⁸⁸ Because of the many ritual proscriptions on his activities- for example, he was not allowed to farm; he was not allowed to leave the town, or see a dead person or step in or crossover water-the obligations were quite onerous, and many were known to flee if they knew in advance they would be chosen. The Bodio "sacrifices himself"⁸⁹ for the village it was said. Indeed, he was a sort of living human sacrifice. The Bodio's job as high priest, Schwab noted, was to strengthen and keep the tribal medicines.

Installed in his hut containing a fire which must not be allowed to go out, the Bodio was shown a box kept there which housed the town's medicine, the tribes or lineage's medicine and also the Bodio's medicine named *tulunyepu*. "His house, with its contents, is the ultimate center of the town and the tribe." Kurtz recorded. "If the enemy comes, and sees this box (containing the medicines) the town is useless—you are defeated—you have no more foundation for the town."⁹⁰ To select a new town site, villagers would request the medicine from the deya, who then "went to a god who gave them medicine and said wherever the medicine dropped, they should build the town."⁹¹ This medicine was then buried in the center of town or as noted kept in the hut of Bodio. Unfortunately, although perhaps not surprisingly given the requirements of ritual secrecy, there are very few explicit in-situ descriptions of the the Bodio's medicine or of the various town and lineage medicines.

In addition to keeping and protecting these important medicines, the Bodio functioned to keep the peace, occasionally serving as a diviner and also protector and promoter of the spiritual health of the community. He was responsible for blessing the

start of the farming season, but held accountable for any crop failure or other major misfortune, and on this basis deposed. If accused of witchcraft and forced to endure a trial by sasswood (poison bark), his death would prove his guilt in which case he would be buried by tradition under a running stream.⁹² Schwab reported that in the past old infirm Bodio were secretly put to death by ritual strangulation, the new Bodio chosen before the death of the first announced. In this case, he might be buried honorably with his effects and quantities of food on one of several burial islands.

Bodio's Anklet

In the entire ethnographic literature, the most important reference to any culturally significant anklet or ring among the Kru and Grebo is the anklet of the Bodio.⁹³ *"His badge of office is this iron ring worn around the ankle, which is regarded with as much veneration as the most ancient crown in Europe, and the incumbent suffers as deep disgrace by its removal as any monarch."*⁹⁴ The anklet means he *"wears the people on his foot"* Kurtz was told.⁹⁵ In 1896, Missionary Agnes McAllister wrote this anklet was passed down from generation to generation. She recorded the story of the 'king' (ie. the Bodio) who was accused of witchcraft and therefore afraid for his life. When she urged flight, he replied he could not flee by virtue of the anklet he wore which was instantly recognizable to all. She did not describe this particular anklet unfortunately, but she described the anklet of another 'king' as a band of steel "beaten thin at several points and the edges brought together so as form little cups or bells."⁹⁶ Therefore very importantly these anklets clearly varied in appearance because Mckeel and others have described it as an iron anklet threaded with a fruit pit, noting that several of the elders in the leadership wore smaller versions.⁹⁷ In TRADITIONAL HISTORY AND FOLKORE OF THE GLEBO, the origin of this iron anklet was explained in connection to choosing their leader. A fetish-priest placed a tusk at the bottom of a pool, and said that any man brave enough to get the tusk would become leader. That brave man would have to overcome the optical trick of spears placed in the trees above the pool, so that one peering into the water seeing the reflection would think the tusk itself was surrounding by spears. Aware of this trick, one hero bravely plunged into the pool causing the tusk to instantly transform into an iron ring which closed around his ankle. The spirit residing inside the ring later possessed the new leader causing him to run feverishly until he located the new land where the group would found their new village.⁹⁸

Except for McAllister's discussion, there are very few written commentaries on the Bodio's anklet despite its significance. However, one may note interesting similarities between the stated powers of this iron anklet compared to earlier comments about Nitien. The revered Bodio's anklet can 'catch' people and is also an iron implement which encloses a spirit which can direct the leader where to found a new village, so one may wonder if the two are perhaps related, particularly since some nitien were reportedly made of iron⁹⁹ and since objects cast in brass often had precedents in other medi-

ums whether wood, organic material or other metals. It so happens that of the more than 1200 objects from Liberia in the Peabody Museum in Cambridge and of the 800 Liberian objects in the American Museum of Natural History in New York, there is not one iron anklet labeled or known to be that of the Bodio. Indeed, there does not appear to be one clearly marked example of the Bodio's anklet—ostensibly their cultures' single most important relic—in any reference book or museum collection worldwide at present. It may be that the oldest have simply rusted away or are unrecognized or are maintained in Liberia even to this day. Yet there are more than 20 massive brass anklets attributed to the Kru and Grebo in these same references and museum collections.

On the basis of a literature review alone it would be unwise to assert firm conclusions. The abbreviated commentary posted here must serve only as suggestions for further inquiry and discussion. Although some Nitien were made of iron and despite other correlations, it is NOT established that Nitien are the same as the Bodio's anklets and medicine, or the other lineage or town-medicines—only that the descriptions of their attributes and powers are identical. It remains to be seen if field research can ever show if these rings called Nitien are examples of or perhaps representational of the Bodio's anklet and the Bodio's medicine—the former containing highly conserved bold iconography in the form of stereotypical projecting knobs—the latter, known to have existed, but as yet never collected or identified. Nevertheless, on the face of it appears quite likely however that although certainly sacred objects other than nitien certainly known, that some of the largest rings may have functioned in some dako as either important lineage or town-medicines (and these may be the same in some cases) or perhaps as the sacred medicine of the Bodio.

We are left to wonder then and inquire further about the history and cultural context of these relics, but presently one might acknowledge them as a synecdoche, that is a symbol of a people's entire experience and worldview, symbolizing their migration from the savannah through the forest to the coast, expressing their hopes for prosperity and their fears of witchcraft, an object of power from another era, now barely recognized, pulled from the river beds only to languish in museum drawers around the world. In this light, the following quote by Merran Fraenkel seems quite appropriate."

"The palaver yard is overgrown and the elders no longer take their place there to hear cases...The Ji mwau (the leopard's mouth) is closed and crumbling into decay, and only the oldest people guess at the meaning of the ancient and neglected, but still revered, objects within it....the various forms of kpunga or medicine which protected them against evildoers, and the *heavy bronze rings* which the ancestors are thought to have brought with them on their long journey from the interior. The fire which has burned continuously in the ji mwau has long been extinguished..."¹⁰⁰

Endnotes

- 1 Cite references, websites. See Leuzenger p104 (Neyo), Guenneguez (Krou) p / Notes Africaines110 1966 item no. 24 (Neyo) Brincard (Dan-Guere).1984 p 64
- 2 Less commonly, rings with one, two, three and five knobs are known. Examples of Nitien can be seen online in the following museum collections: Peabody Museum, Cambridge; American Museum Natural History, NY; Seattle Art Museum; Musee Quai Branly, Paris; Museum Berg en Dal, Netherlands. Also, www.henrycollection.org (click ingots), www.tribalartforum.org (see archived essays) and www.liberiapastandpresent.org.
- 3 Schwab p 85. The fear that President Doe had a "fetish" brass ring concealed in his GI tract suggests another possible mode of utilizing these rings. See Ellis p10 and 26.
- 4 These Dan bracelets as described by Himmelheber although smaller can weigh several kilos themselves, typically exhibiting much finer, sharper casting quality. He noted the largest bracelet would be worn to demonstrate the authority of town business, whereas other bracelets were worn purely for prestige. One bracelet he described had the power to protect the wearer when a taboo was broken. He gave the example of one bracelet which was filed down for its brass-shavings which were then directly applied as medicine. Himmelheber suspected the Dan bracelets motifs contained symbolism but he declined to speculate as to their meaning.
- 5 See Cutsem p 32-35, Fisher p 261.
- 6 Nor is there evidence the number of knobs 4 or 3 which are the most common pattern denote male and female, a correspondence very well documented in other contexts. Taken altogether rings of this signature pattern are seen no where else in Africa, but they do recall style elements seen on some Dan/ Guere brassware, as well as brassware of several Voltaic ethnic groups such as the Fra Fra, Bwa and Bobo for example, where bracelets and anklets on a smaller scale exhibiting spaced pairs of projecting knobs, spikes and balls are well known.
- 7 It is unclear if this the results of melding knobs cast via the lost wax process to the central rings which may be possibly sand cast, but this casting difference is not noticeable on the anklets.
- 8 The brown glazed patina may reflect exposure to soot from fires while stored in the rafters of the hut, whereas the green archaeological patina reflects possible burial and prolonged exposure to water. The very small rings appear to be very shiny for most part consistent with more extensive personal handling.
- 9 See Brooks and Ludlam. or Durrant p 296-297 for representative description.
- 10 Garrard (1979) reported the importation of 25 tons of brass/year into Elmina in Ghana by the Portuguese alone in the 16th century, with similar caliber trade by other nations. see Herbert chapters 5-7.
- 11 See Herbert p 103.
- 12 Several African metal-casting traditions have attracted significant scholarly attention, particularly that of the royal courts of the Akan (Garrard) and Benin, and also of decentralized societies such as the Senufo (Anita Glaze), Lobi (Til Forrester) , Fra-Fra in Northern Ghana (Garrad) and the Dan/Guere in Liberia/ Ivory Coast (Bruyninx/ Himmelheber) but no such study exists for the Kru and Grebo. Bruyninx has noted no bronze has been found in the upper Cavally, which appears to apply to Liberia as a whole. The brass used in these objects was almost certainly of European origin, obtained through trade.
- 13 See Bantor African Arts Feb 1988 vol. 21 (2) for discussion of ofo – originally a sacrifice encrusted bundle of sticks or twigs which were used ritually for manipulating spiritual power. Ofo were also made of brass but used in the same fashion. Also Herbert p 261.
- 14 There appears to be no mention for example in African Repository and it remains to be seen if there is any mention in the Maryland Colonization Journal, or in private letters from missionaries or colonists undiscovered thus far.

- 15 See Schwab pp 346, 363-364, Blandin p131, 138-139 p, Siegmann 1977 p 82 and Bruyninx p 1993 pp 222-233.
- 16 Harley's wife reported he was therefore disappointed to be listed as editor rather as co-author. p 68.
- 17 This may potentially correlate with a decline in traditional practice. Becker-Donner lamented in the 1930 the significant erosion of traditions on the coast as compared to the interior. This was mentioned even in the early 19th century by Rev L Wilson. Some anthropologists have therefore directed their attention to interior groups, the Dan for example, who as a result are better known ethnographically and better represented in museum collections compared to the material culture of the Kru and Grebo.
- 18 Schwab p 329.
- 19 See McAllister p 186, Wilson p 112, Johnson 1957 p 109, Kurtz p 172-173, Brooks p 61 for just a few sample descriptions. I have also received an email report third hand from an a Swiss informant who passed on the report a traveller home on holiday in the Ivory coast who was told also that rings like these were used for dowry payment in special cases.
- 20 Zetterstrom p 36. Seigmann reported that ship captain Horatio Bridge saw objects like these made on the beach in the mid 1800's which were traded as common currency and for that reason called Kru Money, a phrase currently used for these objects by some African art dealers. Indeed, one ring from the Henry Collection (see www.henrycollection.org) was included in a Smithsonian Museum of African Art exhibit titled the "The Artistry of African Currency" in 2000. However, nowhere in his original text does Bridge actually use the phrase Kru money, which reads: "I have procured some of the country money, it is more curious than convenient. The 'manilly' worth a dollar and a half would be a fearful currency to make large payments in, being composed of old brass kettles, melted up and cast in sand moulds. The weight is 2 to 4 pounds," (see Bridge p106-107 original/ UMI reprint p 91). Bridge does not describe this country money in further detail. He does not mention knobs; and he in fact appears to be referring to the manufacture of manilas, a common c-shaped traditional African currency form, shaped like a bracelet with flared ends, well known and traded widely on the African coast and imported from Europe in great abundance for centuries- reportedly copying an original African ring form. The UMI reprint edition of Bridge's account indicates these objects were donated to the National Institute at Washington, whose own published inventory however contains no record of Bridge's donation. See Hunter's *A POPULAR CATALOGUE OF THE EXTRAORDINARY CURIOSITIES IN THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE*. The Smithsonian received many artifacts from the National Institute when it closed but they also has no inventory listing under Bridge.
- The phrase Kru money can be found in the literature used only in the generic sense, employed for example by Missionary Walter Williams who was stationed at Nana Kru in 1909 to describe a pilgrimage of "unwise men" to a mountain oracle- quite possibly Ku Jirople: "they passed the mission, a long line of them heavily laden with brass kettles, bolts of cloth and similar kru money. Their objective: a big devil doctor in the far, far bush." Williams p 37. Kru money here merely refers to trade goods used in lieu of currency, a description matching Rev Wilson's earlier account of the Kru exchange system: "the price of a wife is usually three cows, a goat or a sheep, and a few articles of crockery-ware or brass rods..it is a very inconvenient medium of exchange but the only one they have, and habit of longstanding has reconciled them to it. Wilson p 113. See similar from Brooks 61, Ludlam p44-45. Therefore, there is very little documentary evidence supporting the idea that these rings were designed primarily or even used secondarily as common circulating currency- unlike for example kiss pennies or manilas, both very standardized, regular portable and easily manufactured currency forms. See Quiggen on chapter traditional African currency.

The association with gold is most elusive. Schwab mentions that areas where gold was found were often declared sacred, one possible linkage of gold to nitien since these were kept in a sacred grove according to Nooter below. Brendan Sowerby, a UN worker in Liberia during the recent elections referred to me a third hand report (12/2005) that these rings were called 'gold-savers' and were used as an anchor to hide gold in a pouch, which was then thrown in a pool or river. However, the bril-

liance of the brass, and their resemblance to brassworks in other locales, combined with the small size of some of the rings would make them poor candidates to secure valuables when thrown into the sometimes vigorous currents of SE Liberian streams. See posting on www.tribalartforum.org (click discussion, then "Liberian brass figure"). Nevertheless, the strong association of gold and nitien remains.

- 21 Siegmann 1977 p 82.
- 22 Schwab p 363. This sentiment was echoed even recently in several discussions.
- 23 Schwab p 66-67.
- 24 The following scholars were kind enough to respond to my inquiries over the past few years: Svend Holsoe, William Siegmann, Elizabeth Tonkin, Elze Bruyninx, Mary Moran, Ronald Wayne Davis, Barbara C Johnson, Andreas Massing, David Brown, and Eugenia Herbert. Unfortunately, I was unable to reach Professors Ronald Kurtz, Dieter Seibel and Jo Sullivan.
- 25 Personal communication. Professor Moran 2003 email. Professor Tonkin several emails much appreciated 2003-2005.
- 26 Nooter conversation Fall 2004.
- 27 The precise location and collection details are not mentioned. See Winifred Harley p 68.
- 28 Nasher Museum at Duke Univ. visit 12/28/04.
- 29 See Delafield 31. She also uncovered several hundred bracelets, many of them iron and badly corroded. Ms Delafield did not have new information during a telephone conversation (9/19/05).
- 30 This island was called Deadman's island by European trading ships according to Richard Burton, but was renamed Russwurm Island. See Martin p 201. for discussion of events leading up to the ban on burials on this island.
- 31 Gabel 1975 p 130.
- 32 Accession numbers E5165-1 and E5165-0 in storage in the museum offsite storage facility Suitland, Maryland. They were erroneously accessioned as slave fetters, and later incorrectly reattributed as knobbed brass ringed money of the Dan by Margaret Plass in 1959. Plass curated an exhibit in 1957 titled LOST WAX which may be the earliest gallery exhibition featuring a ring, identified as item #13-3. Gurley (1797-1872) visited Liberia twice in 1824 and 1849.
- 33 They were donated by Nigel O Wolff and are not pictured in this paper. One ring is actually a fragment of an extremely rare brass bracelet with 8 equidistant spikes and incorporating the symbol of a knot, nearly identical to another pointed ring pictured in Blandin's reference (p 130) also in association with Nitien.
- 34 This phrase initially called to mind the old practice by the Loma in western Liberia of using iron kissi pennies to transport the souls of deceased relatives who have died far away from home back to their home village for burial. Similarly, Leopold 1991 ninth page of chapter 4, as well as Schwab p 36 document how an iron object was used to temporarily contain and carry the soul of important ancestors when their grave could not itself be moved during the founding and transfer to a new village. If this was not done, the new village could not be founded. The French colonial power used the precaution of guarding Loma burial sites to prevent their exodus from Guinea into Liberia. See Schwab p 255.
- 35 Guenter p 82 all quotes this section.
- 36 Two of Guenter's children Suzanne Bertness (summer 2004) and Darrell Guenter and his wife Donna (Nov 11, 2004) emailed that they did not know the whereabouts of this ring.
- 37 This abandonment matches Tonkin's description of the Jiao Kru Christians throwing their idols into the sea, as well as the remarkable success of the Prophet Harris in destroying ritual objects. The success of missionary efforts combined with commercial development of several burial islands may explain why many of these objects were collected in the 1960's and 70's, according to their collection history. In addition, the negative impact on the economy and traditional beliefs in this region of the failed Kru rebellion of 1915, and the failed Putu revolt of 1924 (where the priest of the oracle was killed) cannot be overestimated. The possibility of shedding further light on these objects at even at this late date is

illustrated by the work of Barbara C Johnson who was able to uncover the name of the well regarded brass-caster Ldamie first referenced un-named by Becker-Donner in the 1930s- 50 years after Becker-Donner published her reports.

See Nevadomsky for his discussion regarding a renown corpus of brass altar rings, also associated with human sacrifice..

- 38 To borrow Beryl Bellman's phrase.
- 39 Indeed, the author's original idea for this inquiry came more by deduction more than 4 years ago after simply noticing the resemblance between the description of the powers of Nitien and that of other known power objects.
- 40 Harley noted dryly that commonly witchcraft in theory was very real poison in practice see. *Native African Medicine* p 25.
- 41 Few travelers in pre-colonial Africa failed to mention the widespread practice of trial by ordeal to find witches.
- 42 The practice of which was continent wide and older than pharaonic Egypt. The term medicine when translated from numerous African languages has become an elastic catchall with wide meaning applied with no distinction between cures for physical and spirit illnesses.
- 43 Fetish derives from the Portuguese *feitico* or made-thing. See Harley 1941 p 136 sample discussion.
- 44 The objects by the same virtue could also be ritually killed, meaning rendered powerless by specifically damaging the object to neutralize its power.
- 45 This is another reason why what Bridge saw on the beach were unlikely to be nitien being manufactured.
- 46 Less well known, other nkisis were contained in simple clay pots.
- 47 These might include white clay, grave dirt, vegetable matter, matter from animals known for their aggressiveness and even human remains. Once the objective of Nkisis was achieved or its power had waned they might be kept in memory of its accomplishments, or discarded.
- 48 Vandenhoute pp 29, 37-38. This highlights the vexing methodologies used by Harley and Schwab (no controls, relying on hearsay, etc) for professional anthropologists.
- 49 Beatty p 23, 37, 47, 71 and 74. Strong p 101, Junge p 185.
- 50 Schwab p 310 and 461.
- 51 Bellman p 132.
- 52 Herbert p 280, see this association of the healing and protective powers of brass in Fisher p 225.
- 53 See Schwab p 275 for description of a ritual stone and daughter stones. The theft of which resulted in an insurrection among the Gola.
- 54 One of the reasons to support native origins is that objects like these are found nowhere else the Portuguese traded. But foreign stimulus cannot be dismissed given the example of kuduo which have been shown to have Mediterranean/ Egyptian origins. see Silverman in Ross (ed.) p 10-29. Another interesting example is the fetish of Adjue, Ivory Coast named Kragbin Je, reportedly a brass cylinder obtained from English traders according to Halliburton, p 78. Furthermore, Peek 1980 p 66 commented that the technology of brass-casting is closer to the technology of terracotta manufacturing as shown by the replacement of various ceramic altar figures, whether pots, modeled heads or figurines with identical forms in brass and bronze prompting speculation of a ceramic precursors to the Nitien ring form. Though it is no more than a coincidence, Hasselberger has documented a series of Voltaic ritual vessels with projecting knobs which are remarkably similar to the knobs on these rings.
- 55 Leopold 1983 p 28-29.
- 56 Parrinder (*West African Religion* p 55). See footnote 84 for example of medicine obtained from the Oracle at Hidie. Among the Urhobo, Perkins Foss noted clay was used to contain or enclose medicine (p 91 see footnote #6 in *Isoko Sacred Mud Sculpture*). Harley and many others offer similar reports.
- 57 See Schwab p 164, 239, 252, 255, Harley in *Notes On Native African Medicine* p 173.
- 58 Iron's association with occult power gave blacksmith fear and respect for their ability to work with this metal. T Garrard writing about the Fra Fra in Ghana recorded the telling comment "iron is the man,

brass is the woman" noting a pattern seen throughout African "objects which contain magical powers or medicine are invariably iron: those intended for display are of brass"- with the exception of brass-work used for shrines to ancestors or for "personal gods" – which were ornaments designed and worn for spiritual and physical protection. See Garrard 1986 p 251, Harley p 362 and Schwab p 362 for further discussion.

- 59 See Herbert p 292 for another example.
- 60 See Schwab p 24 for example of an iron hook ritually prepared by a diviner so that it would "catch" the new town when dragged along the ground.
- 61 A survey of closed rings using x-ray, bio-assay and thermo-luminescence would therefore be quite useful for addressing these questions.
- 62 Even Satien according to one informant: Jordan Holtam.
- 63 Schwab p 510 and Schroder pp 18 & 144 for similar possibilities in some Kran dialects. Anthropologist David Brown noted the Klowe, a Kran group, termed a group of brass and iron bangles Die and large bronze rings for public display as Nyodie. Brown 1984 p 46. The meaning of the suffix nyo- requires clarification but it recalls (to the non-linguist) Harley's NATIVE AFRICAN MEDICINE (pp 7, 11, 135-138) discussion of medicines called nye, which include certain types of bracelets with medicinal and magical powers. Harley p. However, Kurtz reported a Grebo word for a similar class of medicine as chidi. Kurtz pp 210-213.
- 64 Drewal has shown that this appropriated image was based on a well known chromolith originally printed in Hamburg in 1883. see Drewal 1988.
- 65 See Gore AA p 60 spring 1997.
- 66 Consider another water spirit: beautiful mask of Sowe among the Mende, which was 'found' in the water and was made by spirits, deemed to beautiful to have been made by human hands. The Mende used the metaphor of being 'under the water' to refer to when Sande was in session. See Boone.
- 67 Moore was not allowed to see some of these ritual objects. Others he was told could only be seen a few times a year when they appeared miraculously on their own volition and fully polished so that their brilliant patina produced a surprising effect. He even noted damage to one object by vandals searching for gold. (Horton pp 76-90).
- 68 Wilson p 98-102.
- 69 Massing chapter 2 forwards.
- 70 See Brown book review 1980.
- 71 This pro and cons of this topic is beyond the scope of this paper- which in any case must be limited because the relative inaccessibility of Ivory Coast data and because of space limitations to Liberian groups. Most of the erroneous attributions are by coffee table type publications. There is only one ring known reportedly collected in Bassa territory. Another ring's attribution to doubtful Baule provenance per Bruyninx 1993 p 231-232 may be deemed erroneous since Baule, as well as Dan metal-arts has been studied. These rings have not been recognized in their inventories. Therefore, the paper focuses on the Kru and Grebo noting that the possibility of Kran provenance remains an open question.
- 72 See Schroeder p 22 as well as Davis, Sullivan, Martin, McEvoy, Tonkin as well as the complete set of Ethnographic surveys of SE Liberia to review the very complicated discussion of population movements in this area.
- 73 Schulze recorded the evidence of a network of trade in high quality iron-work (Liberia has the highest grade ore in the world) centered in the Putu Range as early as the 16th century. It would appear the early exploitation of these iron-ore sources was a gateway which facilitated the relatively late movement into the dense feared forest of the iron-hungry populations, deemed to have occurred only in the last 1000 years according to the handbook of the Ivory Coast p. Schulze and Brown further commented on this nexus of spiritual and politico-economic power which may explain the prominence of these regions in the mythology of many groups in SE Liberia.
- 74 See Tonkin for the fullest discussion on these oracles.
- 75 Sullivan's dissertation 1978 p 417-423.

- 76 For example, Korte: "The Kru speaking people on the coast report special gods for their dako.. ministered by trained priests, who are asked for help in all important matters, especially in times of war, misery and suffering" Korte in Gnielinski p 64.
- 77 See Siebel p153/ Kurtz p 19, 206/ Zetterstrom p 45. It appears the prominence of the high god Nyesoa or lack thereof (who was not explicitly worshipped in any case) was quite variable and dynamic. See Hayden for an excellent extended discussion. Another regionally prominent oracle was the oracle at Hidie on the Cavally river (several miles upriver) spelled Bleniepa by Tonkin and Buliyemah by Richard L Hall's sources. Hall p 89, p 540. Schwab described one cave oracle which appears to be Ku Jlople as a "hole in a hill big enough for thirty persons to stand up in it. Here lives the spirit of Ku, the real and big doctor long dead. Ku was the son of one Bluyoyuma, a very big devil doctor who lived on the Cavally river". Schwab p 377. If interpreted correctly then these oracle-spirits were not generic ancestor spirits in this case but those of powerful people who actually lived. It furthermore demonstrates linkage (although perhaps manufactured) of the oracle at Hidie to Ku Jlople. Similar linkage has been described for the oracle of Arochuku to its satellite. See Parrinder in *West African religion* p 154. Martin documents that ethnic groups were not averse to consulting several pan-regional oracles-citing the example of Glebo King Freeman who had primarily sacrificed at Hidie, but also sent what was deemed a rare delegation to Ku Jlople. See Martin p 187.
- 78 See Johnson 1957 p 84-88 for description of the history Tule. One account told of a woman beseeching her grand-fathers spirit at Tule for assistance. All of these natural sites were not approached directly but through the assistance of diviners or priests. Kurtz recorded that some Grebo dako approached Ku Jlople at an alternate site, a rock shrine located on the coast in Sasstown, which may be the same rock formation referred by Nagbe as the 'wife of Ku Jlople'- named Ngmasno Klegbe.
- 79 Sullivan 1978 book review p 281.
- 80 Wilson in AR 10 Aug 1834, p 179.
- 81 Four ethnographic surveys of SE Liberia were published of the Bassa by Siegmann in 1969 (50 pages) and Kru by Zetterstrom in 1969 (50 pages), Kran/Sapo by Schroder and Seibel 1974 (166) pages, and Grebo speakers by Kurtz et al 1985 by far the most detailed report at 267 pages.
- 82 Kurtz recorded multiple statements about medicines kept in jars of water just as nitien. Harley noted water was used in lieu of rice and palm oil on occasion for sacrifice. Parrinder explained the power of medicine that had been buried or removed from water to fight witches. Parrinder p 115 in *African Traditional Religion*.
- 83 Kurtz p 216. Similarly, Ku Jlople was served by priests from one Jlaio clan, named Gboiampo and approached through kpatwe or intermediaries for those seeking consultation.
- 84 Missionary accounts typically refer to these spirits as devils and often do not explicitly comment if the spirits are ancestor spirits. It remains quite uncertain if absolutely every spirit recognized was an ancestor spirit, however consider an account from *African Repository* (AR vol. 31 Dec.p) recorded in 1855: "some men came from the Bwidabo tibe to consult the oracle Bwide-Nyema (the oracle at Hidie).. Their object was to obtain a war gree-gree. This, the oracle gave them...and it contained the spirit of a departed warrior chief... his name, Yibadia." See also Footnote # 77.
- 85 Herzog p 20.
- 86 See Brooks *The Kru Mariner*.
- 87 Siegman reported a similar title and role among the Bassa called the woloba.p.
- 88 This is interesting because in other parts Africa the blacksmith's forge was the place of refuge Schwab p 142 also 433.
- 89 Kurtz p 123.
- 90 *ibid* p 123.
- 91 *ibid* p 90. The significance and meaning of the town-medicine certainly requires further analysis. Hogan cited Bishop Collins diary (also cited by Tonkin in "Sasstown's Transformation" p 13) regarding the interesting account of a Bodio who attempted to steal away with medicines to a new settlement. "in December 1911 a King (ie. Bodio) in Old Sasstown decided to defect with the fetishes to

New Sasstown and was discovered in the act, the town oligarchy imprisoned him, dismissed him in ignominy and then replaced him. The loss of the King would have made little difference but loss of the fetishes was another matter. Possession of such sacred objects which predated the division of the town would have made New Sasstown the 'Big-town', and in addition Oldtown would have forfeited heavenly protection" (see Hogan p 67). Compare this account to the accessioning data recorded for Harley's ring earlier. This account is also reminiscent of the struggles over the graves of ancestors among the Loma noted previously. Collins described one Oldtown fetish as a carved object with a body made out of an iron bar. Hogan p 226. Though descriptions of these sacred fetishes are extremely rare, there are a few of town medicines described pots of honey bees.

- 92 This was done to prevent his remains from being used to make powerful medicines. See Schwab p252-253 and 265 on proper burial of the 'bad dead' or witches.
- 93 It took quite a bit of review to make this statement confidently. Tonkin 2001 p 145 describes a PAIR of anklets worn by the Bodios wife called klee, described as a stack of rings with rattles. These are a well known type of dance anklets described by Becker-Donner. See Schwab images 44 A & B (p) McAllister described a pair of large solid copper anklet weighing 8 pounds given to her as a gift by the "king wife" who said "when I was in darkness, I believed these anklets had a soul" McAllister p 243. Quite possibly the only photo in existence of the Bodio's (or else the woroba's) anklet is shown on p 957 of vol II of Johnston's LIBERIA.
- 94 Wilson pp 129-130.
- 95 Kurtz p 121.
- 96 McAllister pp 72-75,90-91.
- 97 Mckeel p 82, Merran Fraenkel , Earth and its Inhabitants p 220 etc. Anna Scott p 53, 58-59. The fruit pit very likely contained substances with magical/protective powers.
- 98 Johnson 1957 p 10-13.
- 99 I have seen only example a few years ago, a closed ring about 10 pounds and heavily battered with an incised pattern. I did not appreciate its rarity or significance at the time. I know of no published examples of iron anklet form nitien. One might note that an iron anklet which can found villages is a true walking iron indeed.
- 100 Fraenkel p 161.

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Formulation and Implementation of Educational Policy: Key Issues and Selected Strategies

*Sakui W. G. Malakpa**

A major preoccupation of education is to develop human resources for individual advancement and national socio-economic development. Educational plans and policies in Liberia pursued this course but until the early 1970s (The Indicative Manpower Plan, 1971), arguably, no human resource development education plan satisfied the key criteria to be systematic, comprehensive, and far-reaching. Since the 1970s, however, various plans and policies have been proposed to improve the education sector of the country. Because of changes and challenges in the country's history within the past two decades, these plans and policies have been short-lived and none has fostered a monumental difference. Thus, as the country embarks on new challenges in the face of an overwhelming optimism, the purpose of this work is to review and comment on the literature regarding key issues and approaches in the formulation and implementation of educational policies for national development with an eye on implications for Liberia.

Planning implementation of education is the first step toward amelioration of human resource development education, HRDE (Malakpa, 2006). However, educational planning must be based on educational policy. This is because, "planning that is not based on a solid understanding of educational policy making will fail; it will fail not primarily because of any technical planning errors but because the planners did not understand why and how these policies evolved and how planning results should lead to new cycles of policy analysis and formulation" (Haddad & Demsky, 1995, p 15). In other words, "an analysis of the education sector implies an understanding of the education policy process itself- the 'how' and 'when' of educational development" (p 16).

Clearly, educational policy formulation is a crucial step toward educational development. However, in both developed and developing worlds, the focus of educational policy formulation understandably has changed over time. It is hypothesized that this change has a direct impact on educational planning and the flow of aid from international donors (Nieuwenhuis, 1997). In 1995, this hypothesis was tested and analyzed

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in a study conducted in eight African countries: Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Lesotho, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The study showed that in the past, educational policy formulation in Africa was based on a conviction that education was a means of ensuring economic growth, restructuring the social order, and reducing social inequalities. While these remain crucial aims of education, the key finding of the study was disparity between formulation of educational policy and implementation of the same within the process of socioeconomic and political development (Nieuwenhuis): Results of this study therefore showed the importance of educational policy formulation as well as the importance of implementing same.

Commensurate with its importance, policy is viewed functionally as *“an explicit or implicit single decision or group of decisions which may set out directives for guiding future decisions, initiate or retard action, or guide implementation of previous decisions.* Policy making is the first step in any planning cycle and planners must appreciate the dynamics of policy formulation before they can design implementation and evaluation procedures effectively (Haddad & Demsky, 1995, p 17).

Implications for Liberia: In relating issues of educational policy making to Liberia, two crucial concepts are advanced, namely, strategy and admonition. Regarding the former, it goes without saying that the efficacy of a policy depends on the strategy employed in its formulation. Understandably, strategies are influenced by many factors, including internal realities and external forces. For example, within the last two decades, external forces have pressured governments in developing countries to conform to the market approach to development. Essentially, this is the Wall Street model advocated often indiscriminately by the IMF, the World Bank and some donors (Powers, 2006). In employing this strategy, governments have opted for privatization as well as “increased competition and the ‘user pays’ principle” (p 2).

While it is difficult to overemphasize the potency and influence of external forces, one point must be accentuated. It has been shown that, in practice, the use of the “Wall Street” approach to policy formulation has resulted in lower commitment by government sectors such as public education, health and social services. Likewise, employment of this strategy (especially without circumspection) has led to increased inequalities alongside major crises in the provision of education and health services, particularly for isolated and disadvantaged groups, and women (Powers, 2006; Samoff, 1994; Whitty, 1997).

In lieu of the Wall Street approach, some governments have opted to employ the Northern European Model which is said to be a socially and culturally sensitive path (Powers, 2006). This approach to educational policy formulation reportedly “recognizes the responsibility of government to develop policies and programs that are affordable and serve the common good” (p 2). However, while this approach emphasizes school affordability on one hand, on the other, it attaches importance to elite schools and highlights differences between private and public schools.

In light of the focus of the Northern European approach, it must be underscored that recent research evidence exposes the myth that education systems managed privately are more efficient than public ones in that the former lead to increased performance in developing countries (Befield & Levin, 2003). Rather, the evidence shows that countries coping best with poverty and its corollaries, and with drawbacks of globalization and insensitivity of multi-national corporations include those with strong education systems. Such systems ensure that the masses (not only the elite) have access to quality education (Powers, 2006; Befield & Levin, 2003). Furthermore, such governments invest heavily in providing education for all. Toward that end, such governments work assiduously with private and public schools as well as institutions of higher education and communities as a means of ensuring the contribution of education to the building of a nation that is both cohesive and productive (UNESCO, 2005).

Alongside the foregoing, Haddad and Demsky (1995) outline specific strategies to be considered in formulating educational policies. For example, "issue-specific policies are short-term decisions involving day-to-day management or, as the term implies, a particular issue" (p. 17). In the Liberian situation, such issues would consider whether students with disabilities should be included in regular schools and if so, to what extent. Should such placement be in terms of mainstreaming (where students with disabilities spend only part of the day with non-disabled counterparts) or should it be full inclusion (where such students spend the entire time in regular classes with services brought to them)? Other issues could include if, and how specific subjects ought to be taught in the school system.

As opposed to issue-specific policies, a program policy concerns itself with program design in a specific area (Haddad & Demsky, 1995). In the Liberian context, numerous program policy designs might be considered. To point out a few, there may be concerns as to how to design teacher training programs in parts of the country. Should such programs consider specific levels—preschool versus elementary education, middle school versus secondary education? How do we design programs in adult education, vocational or technical education?

In addition to the above are multi-program policy decisions; these refer to decisions regarding competing program areas. For example, should the meager resources be utilized to establish and renovate rural schools or improve urban ones? Similarly, policy decisions might vacillate between vocational and technical education, special and regular education, and science and art.

Another policy making challenge relates to strategic decisions. Such decisions "deal with large-scale policies and broad resource allocations (Haddad & Demsky, 1995, p. 18). For example, "how can we provide basic education at a reasonable cost to meet equity and efficiency objectives?" (p. 18). Other considerations might center around whether to introduce universal primary and/or secondary education, inclusive education, and computer-based training.

In the midst of limited resources, decision making at issue-specific, program, multi-program or strategic policy levels requires ingenuity and laboriousness. This is because, to provide access to education for the masses in general, not only elites, most (if not all) programs must be included in the national education system. This further means that resources must be allocated with care and sagacity. To this end, certain admonitions are in place. to begin, it need be realized that, the broader the scope of a policy, "the more problematic it becomes. Methodological and political issues become more pronounced such as, definition of the problem in conflictive societies; use of analytical techniques and optimization" (Haddad & Demsky, 1995, p 18)

It must be admonished further that educational policy making is complicated by equity considerations. Indeed, it is propitious and egalitarian to insist on equality (equal access to education) but everyone does not have equal means to education; decision making therefore must embrace equity. "An equity-oriented approach requires that the needs and circumstances of particular groups be taken into account when planning initiatives and compensatory mechanisms in order to level the playing field. Furthermore, such an approach requires the state to assume a steering role for meeting the basic learning needs of all students, including the most socially deprived children" (Matear, 2007, p 102). Meeting this goal requires more than a provision of additional resources; rather, there must be changes in the allocation of current resources. In addition, educational policy making within an equity context requires innovation to promote changes that will channel chances and choices to groups hitherto excluded. Such changes are based on a recognition that, socio-economic, cultural, and political inequalities beyond the school foster disadvantages among children and equitable policies can minimize (if not eliminate) such disadvantages (Matear, 2006; 2007; Samoff, 1994; Schiefelbein, 1998; Espinosa, 2002).

Another admonition centers on the reality that educational policies are characterized by tensions and contradictions. In one case (Matear, 2007), it was found that government's policy interventions were designed properly to address pressing issues such as equity and inequality, social mobility, and overall quality of education. These efforts were opposed, even contradicted, by a legislative framework which sought to perpetuate a market system which promoted competition and militated against equitable distribution of educational opportunities (Matear, 2007).

Tensions in educational policy making are exacerbated further by complex relationships among the state, competing interest groups, and market forces. These tensions can lead to drawbacks and contradictions. For example, depending on the skills and ideologies of policy makers, and depending on political will for change, the education system itself might reduce or reinforce the disadvantages it purports to change (Matear, 2007).

In sum, educational policy formulation is crucial to educational development. However, to have any effect, policies must be implemented. In this twin effort of formulation and implementation, success is likely where, in light of the various forces

impacting education, skill and circumspection are employed in utilizing policy making strategies and in dealing with competing interests. In like manner, given limited resources, it behooves policy makers to be mindful of admonitions regarding educational policies. In the Liberian situation, it is important to consider the post-war challenges on one hand and on the other, the importance of education in post-war development and progress. Finally, as policy makers face dilemmas and setbacks, it need be emphasized that, policy formulation and implementation are complicated because, policies "differ in terms of their scope, complexity, decision environment, range of choices, and decision criteria" (Haddad & Demsky, 1995, p 17).

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Liberty, Clarence E. Zamba, *Growth of the Liberian State: An Analysis of Its Historiography* (Nothridge, California: New World Afreican Press, 2002), 290 p.

Philosophy reveals a nation thinking, literature a nation feeling and history a nation in action. Liberia is no exception when one considers the functions of these three social sciences. The distinctiveness of Liberia as a sovereign, independent state and Liberians as a people have been taken for granted by foreign observers and citizens alike. Indeed, very few attempts by historians to encapsulate the distinctiveness and uniqueness of the Liberian nation have been made only marginally successful. One of the most celebrated, addressing itself to the principles and methodology of historical study and analysis of the works about Liberia and Liberians is Clarence E. Zamba Liberty's *Growth of the Liberian State: An Analysis of Its Historiography* published in 2002. Liberty's book, a Stanford University's PhD thesis in history, is divided into three parts: Part One is titled "Belaboring the Contradiction"; Part Two: "Defining the Contradiction"; and Part Three: "Fluctuating Assessments." The whole book consists of nine chapters, a Conclusion and an Appendix.

In Part One, Liberty explores two ways of viewing the emigrant ethnicity: (1) the "righteousness interpretation" and (2) the "deprivation interpretation." The "righteousness interpretation" views the emigrants in their nation-building and their eventual supremacy as a classic example of the historical expression of freedom, "an exemplary case study of group determination and preservation amid tremendous adversities; an epic band of formerly enslaved men who wrestled with an unreceptive and unresponsive environment, triumphed, and created a brave new world in the face of machinations by major European powers." (p 38). In other words, the emigrant ethnicity achieved unity and solidarity through clever political and diplomatic maneuverings. The "deprivation interpretation," on the other hand, perceives of the state-building and supremacy of the emigrant ethnicity as a result of outright knavery and "historical conspiracy" against the indigenes by an alien people who are essentially an outpost of American culture and Western Civilization. This group of people establishes a strong foothold in this part of the African continent through ruthless and "systematic suppression" of the rights and civil liberties of the indigenes.

Be that as it may, the author takes Gus Liebenow and others to task. He notes that Liebenow claims that the cohesiveness of the defunct True Whig Party is instrumental in maintaining its strong hold onto the supremacy in Liberian politics. Liberty states that in one of his publications, Liebenow does not analyze objectively why there is an historical disproportionate representation of the indigenes in the legislature. The question of how the emigrant ethnicity gains dominance in the legislature remains unanswered. Continuing his discussion, Liberty arranges and analyzes the literature on macro-

Liberia into three phases: (1) 1822-1900; (2) 1900-1944; and (3) 1944-1970. In the initial stages of the formation of its nationhood, Liberia encounters a lot of difficulties. France and Britain took away large sections of Liberia's land and annexed them to their colonies. However, during these three phases, Liberian presidents make concerted attempt at territorial expansion and political consolidation. Their attempts at territorial expansion include the purchasing of land from the indigenous ethnicity and using sheer force to obtain land.

To administer the country successfully and consolidate it politically, the leaders borrow a series of disastrous loans, the first being the loan of 1870 from Britain. The coffee boom does not sustain the economy. Foreign observers see this as a weakness. Therefore, they demolish the "righteousness interpretation." Maurice Delafosse is an exponent, who elevates the "deprivation interpretation." He, among others, view the nation-building as a failure. Delafosse is lauded for his monograph on not only the history of Liberia, but on its flora and fauna as well. As the country struggles to maintain its autonomy, some external sources want Liberia to be mandated either as an American, British, German or French colony. But President Arthur Barclay stands his ground in protecting Liberia's sovereign during this period of the partition of Africa by European powers. Thus, to save its sovereignty by paying off its debts, President Arthur Barclay appeal to the United States government. After much ado, President Taft grants the black republic \$1.7m. With American presence, European influence diminishes.

But historians such as Starr, Delafosse and Sir Harry Johnston view this as a weakness on the part of Liberian leaders. In his monumental two-volume work, *Liberia* (1906), Sir Harry Johnston is antagonistic toward the indigenes. He sees Liberia as three cultural components: (1) Christianized emigrants; (2) Islamized indigenes; and (3) animist indigenes. Starr sees four divisions that are tantamount to the caste system in Indian: (1) Christianized emigrants; (2) Islamized indigenes; (3) coastal animist indigenes and (4) interior animist indigenes. Unlike others, Starr does not sanction Liberia being mandated by Europe. He notes instead that the various indigenous ethnicities can be garnered to help in the political administration of the country. Libérty praises Buell for his work on Liberia. He notes that Buell views the emigrant ethnicity as wanting to design Liberia in their own peculiar image rather than model it on Europe. Buell is lauded for noting that the reforms made by Presidents Arthur and Edwin Barclay, C. D. B. King and Howard are noteworthy. The administrative divisions of Liberia into counties and districts and the creation of a Department of Interior make it rather easier to administer the country politically. For the first time in the history of the country an indigenous Liberian can stand and express his dissension about the state of affairs in his part of the country. Buell also asserts that the amalgamation of the indigenes and the emigrants by the processes of intermarriages and adoption is a step in the right direction. However commendable Buell's work is, Libérty takes him to task by noting that his depiction of Liberia is incomplete. Territorial

expansion, the author asserts was complete at the time, but political consolidation was incomplete. In the analyses of these works, Liberty sees a failure and a basic shortcoming in the authors separating rather than blending the political and the cultural. In the final analysis, Liberty asserts that some of those who wrote about Liberia seemed to have written a pile of notes rather than an interpretation of facts and events.

Liberty's compelling achievement in this memorable book is his brilliant attempt of the analyses of works by foreign historians, anthropologists and ethnographers, which will bring numerous rewards to its readers. *Growth of the Liberian State: An Analysis of Its Historiography* is a sophisticated and thoughtful analysis of the works of foreign observers. Liberty breaks new ground by taking these observers to task and coining new words that he uses in discussing these works.

The only adverse criticism I have to offer is Liberty's omission of the works dealing with the administrations of Doe and Taylor. Liberty was still alive when these leaders played their roles in the political arena of the country. Even though it is a thesis written before these regimes, a book of this magnitude should have updated its analyses of the works dealing with both administrations. The gaps tend to detract from the overall merit of the book.

The assassination of President Tolbert left a power vacuum at the center of Liberian politics.

The military and political machinations or maneuverings of Samuel Doe are too familiar to recount again. The decrees of the People's Redemption Council left Doe ascendant, but for how long? Doe and his lackeys or cronies were essentially paradigms of evil. Yet Doe was to quest after the golden fleece, which was the civilian presidency. The proliferation of decrees that might have been mere pebbles thrown into the already volatile Liberian political pond, generated ripples that increasingly had the force of tidal waves. They gave Doe's government and some members of the Krahn ethnic group a wider latitude of governance than was acceptable to the Liberian populace. Taylor, whose civil war got rid of Doe, seemed to be a fascinating relic of the Doe debacle. His administration was a reign of terror that brought about the total economic collapse of the country's resources.

Barring these gaps, Liberty has made a notable contribution to the canon of Liberian history. Commendable though the book is, the author makes some errors. For example, his footnote and bibliographical entries are incomplete. He cites works and their places of publication, but he omits the publishers. Then too, he numbers his footnotes consecutively from Chapter 1 through Chapter 9 and the Conclusion. The normal scholarly practice is to number the footnotes consecutively in one chapter and then to begin numbering in the next chapter from the beginning. In this regard, substance conquers meticulous, scholarly conventions. Furthermore, there are a lot of typographical errors, which are no fault of the author, but of the publisher. Finally, a book of this magnitude should have been indexed for ease of cross references. Despite

these shortcomings, the book is indeed a path-breaker. *Growth of the Liberian State: An Analysis of Its Historiography* is a credit to the late Dr. Clarence E. Zamba Liberty.

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New Studies on or Relevant to Liberia

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Why The Sirleaf Government Must Make Education Its Number One Development Priority

by
*Joseph Kweedy Solo**

Introduction

In the year 1937 a law was passed by the Liberian Legislature which made it mandatory for every child born and of school age to go to school. But during the administration of Liberia's longest serving president, William Vacanarat Shadrach Tubman (1944-1971) that law was abolished. I am not really clear about the history as to why the Compulsory Education Law was abolished. But I can conclude that the decision to abolish the law by the Tubman Administration was shortsighted and wrongheaded. It goes without saying that the late president did not clearly understand that no nation will have the foundation for sustainable development without an educated and well-trained population. Consequently after 27 years in office president Tubman failed to do for Liberia what the Osayefo Kwame Nkrumah did for Ghana during his tenure in less than 10 years. Nkrumah, as history tells us, was a Pan Africanist who was considered the father of the African Independent Movement. His approach was that the African should master the way of the white man and try to beat him at his tricks. As a result, upon independence, he made education in Ghana a number one priority. He expended the country's resources to build top class elementary and secondary schools. He also built modern polytechnics and universities and education was made free from elementary school to college level. Today, Ghana boasts of a well trained and educated population. In most cases, Ghana can not accommodate all of its trained and educated people and therefore they have to be disbursed throughout the world. For full disclosure, this author was taught by all Ghanaian and Nigerian teachers in high school. And I don't regret it one bit. It would be logical therefore to surmise that the foundation Nkrumah laid for Ghana is bearing fruit today because Ghana is one of the very few African countries that is used as model for stability which has the potential to be

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considered a developing country why Liberia without a foundation fell apart at its seams even though it is the first republic in Africa. In the midst of the Liberian civil war, a Ghanaian colleague engaged me in a conversation about the causes of the Liberian war and he said that he was in Liberia before but he did not think Liberians would behave themselves so savagely because he thought we were a friendly and classy people. Then he gave me a diagnosis which would get me upset. He said even though Liberia has had its share of bad governance like most African countries, one of the reasons why some Liberians were behaving like that is the high degree of illiteracy and ignorance in the country. I stopped talking and walked away. But when I started thinking about it I began to agree with the arrogant Ghanaian. According to the World Fact Book, even though Liberia gained political independence in 1847, by 1989, before the wars started, Liberia's illiteracy rate was as high as 75 percent. On the other hand, even though Ghana gained its independence in 1957, by that same time, its illiteracy rate was forty percent. And for obvious reasons, the rate of illiteracy in Liberia jumped to eighty percent in the last fourteen years. What is more, those who attended school throughout the crisis period got less than a substandard education because the war destroyed all the educational infrastructures and drove away or killed the qualified teachers.

Presentation

This paper offers suggestions to the Ellen Sirleaf's government on how to revamp the educational system in Liberia so that even though the country does not have a solid foundation educationally, going forward our country can begin to put some kind of system in place that would make our educational system and the people it produces competitive by international or even by African standards. I am not an educator neither am I an education major. But I am a public policy graduate who studied comparative politics and did a lot of comparative work using certain African and Asian countries as models. Particularly, my interest has been the different approaches to development by Asian and African countries. And what I found is that for nations like South Korea or Taiwan, the keys to their successes in transforming their societies from backward and rural to modern and developed societies is their religious pursuits of manpower development through education and training. This is the area in which most African nations are lacking. The World Bank concluded after numerous studies, that the decades of the eighties and the nineties were lost decades for Africa. This is because during those decades, the Bank and other economic analysis show that while most Asian countries were spending significant portions of their budgets on science and technology, most African countries were spending almost eighty percent of their budgets on military hardware and weapons for warfare.

For Liberia, these two decades saw a serious erosion in the modest accomplishments made in education in our over 100 years of national history. And the fact that we never had the foundation in the first place, made our situation worst than most African countries. Suffice it to say that the decision Liberians made to elect Madam

Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf as president instead of the footballer George Weah was a conscious decision to move the country forward instead of moving backwards. The Sirleaf Government must therefore make education its number one national development priority. The government should also rate education its top social investment target. Let us look at it this way: There is no development initiative whether in agriculture, health care, industrialization or infrastructural development, this or any government could undertake and be successful without a trained and educated homegrown workforce. After all, we are all interested in promoting a Liberianization policy. But you can not Liberianize anything with a literacy rate of less than 20% and thousands of individuals claiming to be high school and college graduates who can not write a complete paragraph without making mistakes.

The problem with Liberia's educational system is analogous to the problems that are responsible for unproductive rice farms in the hinterland. Anybody familiar with making a rice farm upland will be familiar with these scenarios. Liberia's educational system is like a man who is so lazy but wants to make a big rice farm hastily. He goes in the forest and without clearing the bushes, started felling the trees and setting the farm on fire so that the planting season will begin. If you can imagine that kind of farm, then you can imagine our educational system. No foundation, no potential to be productive. This is partly derived from our tendency to always take the easy way out. And this culture was reinforced after the April 12, 1980 Coup d'etat when men from the lower ranks of the Liberian Military bloodily seized political power in Liberia. Of course, that was one of the tragic unintended consequences of the military takeover. The takeover itself was not meant to take Liberia backward educationally. But backward we went because it reinforced the notion that if high school dropouts and illiterates can ascend to the country's leadership then what is the point of getting an education.

That notion still exists today. And this was the same thinking that propelled the George Weah's candidacy for president of Liberia. We know that under normal circumstances, someone of Weah's standing had no chance or could not possibly think of themselves as a presidential material not to mention actually running and almost winning the presidency of our nation in this modern age. Therefore, we must all look at this period as not a normal time in our country's history. Our government must look at the educational situation in the country as an emergency next in scope and urgency to national security. For the purpose of this paper, I offer the following suggestions for the government's consideration.

Suggestions

1. The government of Liberia through the Ministry of Education must do a comprehensive assessment of our entire educational system from pre-k to the university level to see where more efforts and resources needed to be spent as the first step towards revamping the entire system to make it standardized and productive.

2. From where I sit I see that historically the problems in our educational system have been the lack of enough qualified teachers, learning materials and physical infrastructures. The teachers in the Liberian educational system for the most part are not properly trained and are not sufficiently committed perhaps because of lack of incentives and simple respect. This got worst after April 12, 1980 when teachers were treated like trash because there was this hostility towards education and educated people. In fact this hostility is becoming a way of life in our country today. The government must make a massive effort to recruit and train teachers. If necessary, get into agreements with foreign governments (Ghana, Nigeria, US, China etc) for the recruitment of qualified teachers mostly in science and math. This should be temporary as serious efforts should be made to train Liberian teachers. More money should be spent to recruit the brightest and incentives should be provided for people to go into teaching.

3. The Teacher's college at the University of Liberia should be upgraded so that it could offer masters degrees in specific subjects in secondary education so that we will come to the point where nobody would teach in our high schools without a master's degree. The university itself should be decentralized so that opportunities would be provided to all Liberians to get an education. The Kakata Rural Teacher's Training Institute and the Zorzor Teacher's Training Institute should be upgraded so that they award Bachelor's degrees in elementary and special education. Special education should be emphasized considering that most of our youth have been traumatized by the war and some of them have not attended school at age 15 or older. Special expertise would be needed to teach these children. The government needs to contract with foreign countries for these kinds of specialists as I am sure we don't have those kinds of teachers in Liberia.

4. We need a strong elementary and pre-kindergarten curricula so that a strong foundation could be laid for our children in terms of reading, writing and arithmetic. The teacher training colleges should train more elementary and kindergarten teachers who should be armed with college degrees in these specialties. Get international help in order to realize those goals

5. Our vocational schools, Booker Washington Institute, Tubman Technical College, the Zwedru and Vojamin Multilateral High schools and others should be upgraded and the Ministry of Education in conjunction with the Ministry of Labor should work with private industries to develop curriculums that would be relevant to the needs of the domestic economy. Also, one of the criterias for entering these institutions should be a high school diploma making sure that we are training an educated and skilled workforce which will understand the theoretical basis of modern technology.

6. Spend money on our educational physical infrastructures. Like we used to spend millions building barracks, and millions more to buy weapons to kill each other so that certain people would have political power, we need to start spending millions building modern schools with modern libraries and laboratories stacked with upto

date books and learning equipments. Mostly in the rural areas, investments should be made to give the youth there the same opportunities urban youth have. I attended and graduated from a private school in Zwedru, Grand Gedeh County(Mike T. Wilson High, formerly the Assemblies of God High) without seeing or knowing anything about a science lab. While attending college in America, I was shocked and I freaked out on my first visit to the science lab.

7. Standardized our educational system so that a high school graduate from River Gee County or Barpolu County can compete with a high school graduate from Monrovia or Capè Palmas. Everyone teaching in our school system must be certified. If they are not, they must be discovered and encouraged to get in-service training for certification. Close all sub standard schools mostly those that conduct classes in the night in urban systems. They are polluting the educational system. But you must find alternative educational venues for the displaced students. Make the national exam as administered by the West African Exam Council comprehensive. The way those exams were set up they did not make the students to think because they were all multiple choice questions. They should include essays and questions on logical thinking and reasoning. Let students start testing in elementary schools.

8. As an emergency measure organize mobile crash courses taught by foreigners if necessary for would- be teachers throughout the country to improve the skills of people who are already teaching in the schools while you are designing your educational policies.

9. Reinstitute the Compulsory Education Law. Children of school age who are not in school, should be arrested by truant officers and taken to school and their parents should be held accountable. I know some of these youth have been child soldiers and have been involved in destructive and unwholesome activities. Create a functioning child welfare system whereby the government would provide assistance to families so that they would be able to support and care for their children. For those children who are orphaned, the government in conjunction with NGO's should serve as their guardian. Establish a juvenile justice system that would cater to the needs of displaced children. You can perhaps create a foster care system whereby other Liberian families will receive help to care for some of these children in their homes. That way, they can grow in a family setting that can nurture them and make sure they are protected and will get a better upbringing and some education.

10. Create a functioning adult literacy program so that our older population could learn to read and write. Get help from a country like Tanzania(90 % literacy rate), on how to make a literacy program work. Our market women, our farmers, laborers and every segment of our society should be made to know and appreciate the value of knowing how to read, write and tabulate.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we need to understand that a tremendous opportunity has been provided to us to transform our society. We need to seize that opportunity to change Liberia inside out. The first step towards doing that is the revitalization of our educational system. We need to think of Liberia as a country which is just now coming into the modern technological age and therefore needs some kind of foundation to build on. The government needs to set the stage by prioritizing what area of national development we need to tackle first and foremost. The Tolbert Administration in the seventies understood that and personally, president Tolbert had the vision to build a country with a solid industrial and technological base. He also concentrated on youth development and education in the first few years of his administration. But he failed because he was not able to challenge the ruling class to accept the inevitable change in addition to the unpleasant fact that he also needed the system in place to protect his interests and that of his family and friends. The rest is history. But since Tolbert left the stage, Liberia has not tasted any kind of radical social and economic change that would move the country forward. Unfortunately, 26 years after Tolbert's demise, our country is worst today than the way it was forty years ago. The Sirleaf's administration has the historical opportunity to change the direction of that country once and for all. Spending a significant part of the nation's budget to address the educational imbalance in the country would go a long way in laying the foundation for future growth and development.

Finally, I commend the president for trying to put some standards in our bureaucracy and security forces mostly the military. And I agree with her decision to select a Nigerian General who is neutral to restructure the Liberian Army. Neutrality is important because we don't want a military dominated by one or the other ethnic group because of fear of other groups. And I also applaud the decision to require at least a high school diploma before enlisting. I saw a cartoon on the Daily Observer website the other day where a fellow was telling his friend in Liberian English that he was going to school because this "book business is getting serious oh." That is the kind of mentality we need to nurture and promote in Liberia in this post-war period. I hope this also applies to the civil service and any service area in the public or private sector in Liberia. I know there is unhappiness in the ranks of the Liberian Army because none of them was selected to restructure the army. But some of these "generals" may not qualify to even enlist now if they were enlisting because they may not meet the criteria. So how can they be put in charge of restructuring the army?

Better days are ahead for our country but we all must understand what it is going to take to make things better. There are some of our citizens who take offense because some one dare to say that people should be placed in positions for which they are qualified and have some experience in order to be productive. We saw that a lot during the presidential elections. But there is no other way around it. Liberia is not an island and more over we are a dependent country; has always been. But even if we can afford

to be an island, we still have to participate in the global world. We therefore must identify our best and brightest to represent us on the world scene. We will be expected to be development partners with international agencies and foreign governments and we must know and understand the inner workings of the global system. Over all Liberians must develop the mentality as a patriotic duty to aspire for places in our society where they can be most productive. The task of nation-building is a monumental task and it would require the participations of all citizens contributing their quotas for us to be a successful nation. That means that those who can be good farmers, seek to work on farms, those who can be good plumbers, mechanics, masons, electricians, carpenters and other trades, seek to pursue those trades. In similar vein, those who can be good teachers, professors, doctors, nurses should seek to pursue those vocations. We can not move forward if those who have the potentials to be good laborers or farmers are aspiring to be something else. In other words, square pegs in round holes do not work. Square pegs should be placed in square holes. That has been the way forward for other countries, that should be the way forward for our dear Liberia.

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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS



DL/1-21235/'98

August 4, 1998

Mr. Chairman:

I have the honor to refer to *your* meeting with the then Permanent Representative of Liberia, H.E. Mr. William Bull, on June 10, 1998 at which time you provided the information listed hereunder and requested the response of the Government of Liberia to these allegations:

1. There are reports that many of the fighters supporting the former junta in the east of Sierra Leone are in fact Liberian nationals;
2. After clashes with junta elements, ECOMOG believes it has identified some of the combatants as Liberians;
3. ECOMOG has reportedly captured more than 100 fighters in the vicinity of Kailahun and in Kono Districts; and
4. According to ECOMOG in Freetown, there are 65 *persons in its* custody at Pademba Road prison who are considered to be of Liberian origin and who were taken prisoners.

It is recalled that prior to June 10, 1998 when you had earlier raised this matter with Ambassador Bull, he informed you that the Government of Liberia would never permit its territory to be used for subversive activities against Sierra Leone or any country for that matter. You were advised that since the commencement of Liberia's civil crisis in December 1989, Sierra Leone has hosted Liberian refugees. Some of those refugees later formed an armed faction which became one of the principal parties to the Liberian conflict. Additionally, over the past seven years, these armed fighters had aligned themselves with various Sierra Leonean para-military groups, including that country's army. Therefore, it was quite likely that Liberians could be involved in the fighting in Sierra Leone but that *they* were not sanctioned nor supported *by the* Government of Liberia. *Ambassador Bull* referred to the request of the Government of Liberia for the deployment of United Nations Military Observers on the Liberian/Sierra Leonean border. Moreover, he requested more specific information from your Committee regarding the allegations against Liberia. This request was honored during the meeting of June 10, 1998 referred to *gyp*.

H. E. Mr. Hans Dahlgren
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations and Chairman of the
Sanction Committee on Sierra Leone
885 Second Avenue, 46th Floor
New York, N. Y. 10017

Having brought this matter to my Government's attention, I wish to note the following:

The Government of Liberia has reaffirmed its unflinching commitment to the principles enshrined in the Charters of both the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity, particularly, respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all Member States and noninterference in their international affairs.

In respect of the allegations, outlined above, it is my Government's view that Liberian mercenaries could be involved in the fighting. However, it should be emphasized that they are not sponsored nor deployed by the Government of Liberia. For the information of the Committee, it maybe useful to provide the following additional information which will help to clarify the situation of Liberians in Sierra Leone.

a. It may be recalled that on several occasions in the early eighties, President Samuel K. Doe had to order the closure of Liberia's border with Sierra Leone. In fact, the failed invasion of Liberia on November 12, 1985 was launched from Sierra Leone across the Mano River Bridge linking the two countries. In view of the constant use of Sierra Leonean territory by Liberian dissidents, the Republic of Guinea sought to mediate in the dispute in the spirit of the Mano River Union binding the three countries. A security pact was concluded to enable all three countries to share security information on a regular basis and to prevent the use of their territories for subversive activities against each other.

b. The involvement of Liberians in the civil conflict can be traced to the propensity of the Sierra Leone Authorities; over the years, to allow their territory to be used by dissident Liberians and other groups seeking to launch armed attacks against Liberia. In other instances, Liberian nationals have been requited and served actively in the army and other para- military forces of Sierra Leone.

c. The Liberian civil war which erupted on December 24, 1989 forced many Liberians to seek refuge in countries bordering Liberia, i.e. Sierra Leone, Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire. Many of the Liberians fleeing to Sierra Leone were members of the Doe regime some of whom elected to form armed groupings in order to launch attacks against opposition forces.

d. Two (2) insurgent groups were organized in Sierra Leone and Guinea, respectively. In Guinea, the Movenlea for Redemption of Muslims (MRM) was organized, headed by Alhaji G.V. Kromah. In neighboring Sierra Leone, remnants of the Armed

Forces of Liberia and other security forces organized themselves into three United Defense Force (UDF). The UDF was headed by General Albert B.S. Karpheh, former Minister of National Defense and the then Liberian Ambassador to Sierra Leone.

e. In early 1992, the two groupings-MRM and UDF-resolved at a meeting held in Freetown to merge and form the United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO). It was Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone, which was chosen as the headquarters of ULIMO thus becoming the operational base of the then faction.

f. Having been trained and equipped in Sierra Leone with the consent, approval, and support of that government, ULIMO launched cross-border attacks in Grand Cape Mount County, an area of Liberia bordering Sierra Leone. After several failed attempts, ULIMO finally entered Liberia, captured Cape Mount and Bomi Counties and gained control of the Po River Bridge on August 24, 1992.

g. The majority of ULIMO's fighters concentrated their activities in Liberia; however, a sizeable number consisting of approximately 2,000 men under the command of Major David Bropleh, a Liberian and founding member of ULIMO, was posted in Sierra Leone to fight alongside the Sierra Leonean Army in resisting the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) of Foday Sankor. With the assistance of essentially a Liberian mercenary group, the RUF was held at bay, and sometimes routed in major military encounters. Major Bropleh kept an office at the Sierra Leonean Army Headquarters and was on the payroll of the Sierra Leonean Government.

h. In the face of their glaring support for a rival Liberian armed faction, the then Sierra Leonean Authorities complained that their territory was being attacked by Liberians. Sierra Leone elected to ignore the fact that the RUF was composed of its nationals but instead alleged that Liberians carried their war to Sierra Leone. In retrospect, it is common knowledge that Sierra Leone rather than Liberia has supported and/or encouraged foreign dissidents in their subversive activities against a neighbor.

i. Since 1992, successive Sierra Leonean leaders have utilized a group of Liberian mercenaries in the war against the RUF. That very group aligned itself with Johnny Paul Koroma after the coup of May, 1997. The coupists and the mercenaries collaborated, but unlike earlier leadership incorporated the RUF rebels into their fold.

j. Before its overthrow in February 1998, the AFRC junta addressed a letter to the Government of Liberia justifying the coup against the Government of President Kabbah and requested a meeting with the Authorities. In response, the Government of Liberia, refused to allow the AFRC to enter Liberia. However, it is important to note that in the said letter to the Liberian Government, Major David Bropleh who was associated with the then Sierra Leone regime, even before the coup, and had enjoyed its confidence, was listed as a member of the AFRC delegation.

k. It must be noted that the Kamajors militia also recruited and incorporated Liberians into its fold. The recruitment of Liberians in the Kamajors outfit had a double negative effect. First, it further increased the number of Liberian mercenaries in Sierra Leone. Secondly, it partially disrupted the ongoing demobilizing and reinte-

gration program of former combatants in Liberia. This situation is a threat to Liberia's national security, since there is no *guarantee that the armed* Liberians in Sierra Leone will not undertake subversive activities against the country.

1. The Government of Liberia would like to observe that while ECOMOG has, reportedly captured more than 100 fighters in the vicinity of Kailahun and Kono Districts and considers them to be of Liberian origin, as well as the 64 persons in custody at the Pademba Road Prison who were taken prisoners during combat, neither ECOMOG nor those captured as well as those in custody can categorically state that the newly-elected Government of Liberia has been engaged in arms trafficking or support to the AFRC, its remnants or members of the RUF.

In this connection, the Government of the United States mandated its Military Attache in Liberia, Col. Thomas Dempsey, in collaboration with ECOMOG to assess allegations of crossborder arms flow to Sierra Leone. Subsequently, Col. Dempsey briefed both President Taylor and President Kabbah of his findings, which the Liberian Government hopes will be communicated to the Security Council.

The Government of Liberia, consistent with its policy of good neighborliness, has made several overtures to the Government of Sierra Leone in an effort to build confidence and foster cooperation between the two countries. For example, it dispatched high-level delegations to the reinstatement ceremony of President Kabbah in Freetown on 10 March 1998; the funeral of the First Lady of Sierra Leone, Mrs. Patricia Kabbah on 14 May 1998; the Manor River Union Summit in Conakry, Guinea on 4 June 1998; and issued statements in support of President Kabbah's democratically-elected Government.

As a further means of strengthening ties between the two countries, direct talks were held between President Taylor and President Kabbah in Abuja, Federal Republic of Nigeria on 2 July 1998. The meeting, initiated by H. E. Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, was co-chaired by him and General Abdulsalam Abubakar, Head of State of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Chairman of ECOWAS, both of whom signed the Joint Communique issued at the end of that meeting. The Communique has been circulated as a document of the Security Council (S/1998/629), dated 10 July 1998. Following the Abuja meeting, the Government of Liberia reiterated its call upon all armed Liberians engaged in the Sierra Leonean conflict to cease all hostilities forthwith and return to Liberia. Further, it urged that those apprehended should be dealt with in accordance with the laws of Sierra Leone.

On July 20, 1998, as a further confidence-building measure, President Kabbah paid an official visit to Liberia. Both leaders reaffirmed their commitment to peace and stability in the sub-region and condemned the atrocities being perpetrated on innocent civilians in Sierra Leone. They also called for a speedy implementation of Liberia's request for the deployment of United Nations Observers on their common border. President Taylor also accepted the kind invitation of President Kabbah to visit Sierra Leone, the date of which will be arranged through diplomatic channel.

It is my Government's hope that the enhanced cooperation between the two Governments will enable them to take measures which would prevent their respective territories from being used for subversive activities and facilitate the punishment of those who persist in activities inimical to the peace and security of the two sisterly countries.

It is my hope that this letter clarifies the concerns raised by the Sanctions Committee (established in pursuant of resolution 1132 (1997) concerning Sierra Leone. In the absence of the requisite resources and manpower required to monitor the Liberian-Sierra Leonean border, the Government of Liberia will continue its resolve in preventing cross-border arms flow and shall strictly abide by and implement the provisions contained in Security Council resolution 1171 (1998) adopted on 5 June 1998.

In this connection, the Government of Liberia would be pleased were timely consideration be given to its request to deploy United Nations Observers at the Liberian-Sierra Leonean border.

Please accept, Mr. Chairman, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Famatta R. Osode
Charge d' Affaires, a.i.

LIBERIA

by
***CPSR Computer Professionals
 for Social Responsibility***

In 1994 Liberia remained a country increasingly divided factionally and geographically, even though warring factions did conclude an agreement in late December on ending the country's civil war. The Liberian National Transitional Government (LNTG) was seated after much delay in March as the successor to the Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU), which along with the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) and the United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO) signed the July 1993 Cotonou Peace Agreement under the aegis of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the United Nations, and the Organization of African Unity. The Cotonou Accord did not, however, resolve the basic factional differences over political power or lead to the projected demobilization of the warring factions, or to planned free elections. In fact, the three groups that signed the Accord mushroomed to seven competing political-military groups which renewed factional fighting, thereby preventing the LNTG from extending its authority outside greater Monrovia and the corridor to Buchanan (see Sections 1.g. and 3). Throughout much of the year, the shifting factional military action served to keep Charles Taylor's NPFL forces, which almost captured Monrovia in late 1992, on the defensive.

In the confusing Liberian mosaic of political/military forces, an eighth group, composed of civilian political parties and other interest groups, convened a National Conference in August to pressure the armed factions to disarm and implement other Cotonou Accord provisions. The Conference strongly opposed a new agreement reached on September 12 in Akosombo, Ghana, by the Cotonou signatories, including the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) replacing the dissolved IGNU, under the auspices of ECOWAS Chairman Ghanaian President Jerry Rawlings. The Conference participants insisted that the new accord excessively favored warring-faction interests. While fighting raged in Liberia between followers of the faction leaders meeting in Ghana, Rawlings continued to consult with the various Liberian parties, including the National Conference. Their leaders signed the Akosombo Clarification Agreement (three parties) and the Agreement of Acceptance and Accession (five parties, including the National Conference) on December 21 in Accra. The Accra Accords provided for a cease-fire on December 28 and established a 5-member ruling council to be inaugurated in early 1995 to govern the country, including conduct the November 1995 elections, until an elected government takes over in January 1996.

The key military force supporting the LNTG remained the ECOWAS Cease-Fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). At year's end, ECOMOG was composed of 6,000-8,000 troops—down from 12,000 in July—from six West African and two East African countries, although over half of the force was Nigerian. Initially a peacekeeping force, ECOMOG increasingly became the interim Government's de facto army and, in addition, assumed many police powers within the Monrovia perimeter. ECOMOG was effective in its military role in maintaining relative calm within the Monrovia-Buchanan perimeter and for promptly putting down a September 15 coup attempt by a general from the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), who deserted in 1990, and dissident AFL supporters. Some ECOMOG soldiers have, however, also earned an unenviable reputation for a variety of illegal activities. ECOMOG reassigned several officers who were believed by outside observers to be engaged in activities detrimental to the peace process. Despite continuing criticism of ECOMOG behavior by human rights monitors, the majority of ECOMOG forces conducted themselves well during the year.

The civil war-ravaged economy, previously based primarily on iron ore, rubber, timber, diamond, and gold exports, remained stagnant. Continued disruption of economic activity, 80 to 90 percent unemployment across all sectors except government, massive displacements of civilians, wanton destruction, and looting have all devastated the productive capacity of Liberia despite its rich natural endowments and potential self-sufficiency in agriculture. Massive emergency operations by the United Nations, as well as by American and other Western-based relief agencies and nongovernmental organizations (NGO's) continued throughout the year in ECOMOG-controlled areas. However, they were periodically suspended in other parts of the country because of fighting, harassment, and detention of relief personnel; looting of relief agency supplies and vehicles; and occasional seemingly arbitrary security restrictions imposed by ECOMOG.

The number of human rights abuses unquestionably rose with the increased level of conflict across the country, including the massacre of over 65 civilians by inconclusively identified attackers in a Monrovia suburb on December 15. There were many credible charges that all factions flagrantly disregarded fundamental humanitarian values. Human rights monitors also criticized ECOMOG for incidents of human rights abuse. Since 1989, when Liberia's population was recorded at 2.4 million, an estimated 300,000 persons, most of them civilians, have been killed or wounded as a result of the conflict, and close to 800,000 have taken refuge in neighboring countries. An estimated 1.1 million people have been displaced within Liberia since the war began. Approximately 130,000 Sierra Leonean refugees were also displaced repeatedly throughout the year, some landing finally within the safe haven of Monrovia. In all combat arenas, fleeing displaced persons reported villages looted and burned; use of excessive force; arbitrary detentions; impressment, particularly of children under the age of 18 into the NPFL and ULIMO-Mandingo forces; torture; individual and gang

rape; summary executions; mutilations and cannibalism. In the absence of progress on disarmament and demobilization, the U.N. Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) began drawing down its 443-member staff in August. The fighting and looting became so ferocious in September that all humanitarian assistance outside the Tubmanburg-Monrovia-Buchanan perimeter was halted, although several NGO's resumed modest food deliveries into the interior in November and December. No progress was made in resolving outstanding incidents of past human rights abuses.

Although obeisance was paid to the 1985 Constitution, the Penal Code, and the Labor Code, because of the violent conditions obtaining up country and the overcrowding and destitute conditions for a large percentage of people living in and near Monrovia, the rights provided by these documents were largely moot.

RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Section 1 Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom from:

a. Political and Other Extrajudicial Killing

Indiscriminate killings increased sharply from the previous year. Although professing adherence to the rule of law, the leaders of the warring factions condoned and, in some instances, seemingly encouraged the murderous savagery that affected the civilian population more than the combatants (see Section 1.g.). Despite claims to be the national army, the AFL acted as a warring faction, and AFL troops frequently engaged in a variety of human rights abuses, including alleged extrajudicial killings.

Individual ECOMOG soldiers, serving a dual role as peacekeepers and peace enforcers, committed several extrajudicial killings, such as the shooting death of a university professor on November 1 for running a checkpoint. The soldier was awaiting trial at year's end. In another case, ECOMOG court-martialed a soldier for killing a civilian and reportedly executed him. In contrast to the leaders of the warring factions, the ECOMOG high command was committed to bringing soldiers involved in crimes against civilians to justice. There were no reports of ECOMOG soldiers committing political killings.

On March 21, a Turkish citizen convicted of murder reportedly died of starvation in the Monrovia central prison. There was a cursory investigation undertaken by the LNTG's National Security Agency, but the authorities took no action to punish those responsible for the prisoner's death. Inmates credibly accused the guards of stealing the food provided for prisoners.

In the many killings committed by the warring factions, it was often impossible to sort out whether they were politically motivated or driven by tribal hatred. However, the savage killing of a judge of Lofa County in January by the ULIMO-Mandingo faction appeared to have clear political intent (see Section 1.g.). There were also unconfirmed but credible reports of Muslim ULIMO-Mandingo fighters executing civilians in Lofa County for religious and ethnic reasons (see Section 5).

There were no reports that factions punished fighters for politically motivated killings, but combatants of all factions were routinely executed for offenses in the eyes of their commanders, as in the case of Nixon Gaye, field commander of the largest NPFL unit. He was shot August 27 in his reported mutiny attempt against Charles Taylor and died of his injuries along with an unreported number of his supporters. Dissident NPFL cabinet ministers claimed Gaye was tortured to death after being wounded. Charles Taylor admitted on December 23 ordering the executions of several of his senior military commanders because of alleged connivance in the September loss of Gbarnga.

b. Disappearance

In the area under LNTG/ECOMOG control, there were no known disappearances. NPFL and ULIMO-Mandingo forces were responsible for many unexplained disappearances, notably by impressment of children (see Sections 5 and 6.d.). Many families remained divided among those living in Monrovia, those located in other parts of Liberia, and those who fled the country and have not yet returned. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has a family tracing program but, because of the inaccessibility of major sectors of the country throughout the year, located only a small percentage of the missing persons brought to its attention. In the wake of fighting in Bong and Maryland counties in September and October, a new wave of approximately 200,000 refugees flooded into Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire. Many of these refugees were unable to contact family members.

c. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

While the 1985 Constitution prohibits torture and other degrading treatment, inhuman treatment continued to be frequent. In the greater Monrovia area under ECOMOG control, with a better educated populace, a freer press, the presence of national and international human rights and humanitarian aid groups, there were fewer reports of torture than in the past (see Section 1.d.). Although the Supreme Court ruled that "trial by ordeal" or "sassywood"—commonly, the placement of a hot metal object on a suspect's body to induce confession in a criminal investigation—is unconstitutional, the Ministry of Internal Affairs continued to employ licensed agents who subjected suspects to this practice. A leading Monrovia-based human rights group brought suit in March seeking compensatory damages for injuries sustained by victims of the continuing practice of sassywood. Tribal courts, which use this traditional mode of justice, did not function because of the disruptions of the civil war.

Eyewitnesses report that ECOMOG soldiers beat and humiliated persons at ECOMOG checkpoints in Monrovia, often for curfew violations. After ECOMOG detained prominent businessman and Unity Party stalwart Peter Bonner Jallah in November 1992 for allegedly abetting the NPFL surprise attack against Monrovia, it released him in May. Jallah credibly claimed that ECOMOG and the preceding government's intelligence officers had beaten him in the head with a gun butt, admin-

istered electrical charges to his body, burned him about the genitals with gasoline; and handcuffed him so tightly that he now suffers nerve damage in his hands (see Section 1.d.).

NPFL fighters stripped, beat, and tortured civilians at numerous highway checkpoints in NPFL areas, usually in connection with extortion or other forms of intimidation. The NPFL reportedly detained and tortured two traditional chiefs who went to NPFL headquarters in Gbarnga in August to convince Charles Taylor to send representatives to the National Conference in Monrovia.

Roving bands of ULIMO-Krahn and ULIMO-Mandingo fighters raided villages in Cape Mount and Bomi counties, pillaging, beating, raping, and murdering civilians as they went. There are similar documented reports of primarily Liberian Peace Council (LPC) depredations in the southeastern counties. On June 28, ULIMO-Krahn fighters attacked the UNOMIL regional headquarters in Tubmanburg; beat and tortured six U.N. observers, and completely looted the headquarters.

All warring factions regularly committed various forms of torture and mistreatment of civilians, including individual and gang rape and other violence against women.

Conditions in government jails continued to be life-threatening. Officials frequently denied prisoners medical care, family contacts, and adequate food; cells remained small, crowded, and filthy. Female prisoners were held in separate cells in the central prison, but there were no separate facilities for juvenile offenders. In 1994, however, the LNTG and ECOMOG regularly granted human rights groups access to prisoners in Monrovia, and these groups frequently obtained needed medical treatment for their clients. In a number of cases, the pro bono work of human rights groups and interested individuals resulted in the release of prisoners, especially those whose cases were pending "further examination."

The conditions of detention outside Monrovia were even worse. When detained, prisoners were held in makeshift, substandard facilities and subjected to various forms of mistreatment, both physical and psychological—including beatings, rape, and threatened executions. More often, however, displaced persons reported that "authorities" either let prisoners go or shot them on the spot.

d. Arbitrary Arrest, Detention, or Exile

The 1985 Constitution prohibits arbitrary arrest and provides for the rights of the accused, including warrants for arrests and the right of detainees either to be charged or released within 48 hours. In practice, police officers often disregarded these rights and made arbitrary arrests. Many police officers accepted bribes to arrest persons based on unsubstantiated allegations. At times they failed to inform detainees of the charges against them, and often charges went unrecorded. The LNTG Ministry of Justice moved to protect citizens' rights by issuing new procedural guidelines to the Bureau of Corrections, limiting the persons authorized to commit suspects to jail, and filing writs of dismissal for detainees who were not processed correctly.

ECOMOG soldiers played the major role in policing the greater Monrovia area, and citizens continued to turn to ECOMOG soldiers rather than the unarmed police force to arrest and detain alleged criminals. Detentions by ECOMOG peacekeepers frequently did not satisfy internationally recognized standards, and there were unconfirmed reports that ECOMOG coerced confessions from suspects. ECOMOG did, however, regularly allow NGO's access to prisoners in its various detention centers. As a result of politician Peter Bonner Jallah's 18-month detention without charge, the Center for Law and Human Rights Education filed a writ with the Supreme Court calling for a definition of ECOMOG's arrest and detention powers. In its controversial September decision, the Supreme Court stated that ECOMOG "as a peacekeeping force has no legal right to arrest and detain any citizen." Toward year's end, ECOMOG and various Liberian security and law enforcement agencies established a "joint task force" intended to appropriately apportion responsibilities and overall security duties.

Although the AFL claims to be the national army, ill-disciplined AFL troops frequently committed some of the most serious human rights abuses (see Sections 1.a. and 1.g.). For example, on June 24, AFL soldiers entered the UNOMIL Demobilization Center at Schiefflin and detained the staff for 3 days after which they looted the Center. On September 15, under the direction of a U.S.-domiciled former AFL general, some AFL soldiers attempted a coup against the Government, seizing the executive mansion. ECOMOG forces swiftly put down the attempted coup and captured leader Charles Julue, 78 AFL supporters, and 5 civilians. After a 3-week probe, ECOMOG released 40 soldiers and detained 38 for court-martial. It turned the five civilians over to the civilian judiciary. The trial of the five began on October 14 but was suspended as of year's end because of procedural and security issues. The AFL court-martial of Julue, three other generals, and others began on November 16 but suffered repeated delays due to security concerns caused by dissident AFL soldiers.

While accurate arrest information was unavailable, charged and uncharged pretrial detainees in the Monrovia area formed a sizable portion of the total incarcerated population. Human rights groups reported that approximately one-third to one-half of the prisoners (average 75) at any given moment at the Monrovia central prison compound had not been tried. Modest reforms within the court system, such as limiting the time frame for argument, reduced somewhat the backlog of judicial cases. Except for the September coup suspects, there were no known political/security detainees in the Monrovia area under LNTG jurisdiction, but it was impossible to determine the number of such detainees elsewhere in the country.

On April 5, ECOMOG released 800 NPFL fighters who had been held for over a year following their capture during the NPFL's October 1992 "Operation Octopus" attack on Monrovia. UNOMIL, which had been charged under the 1993 Cotonou Peace Accord with supervising a demobilization program, included the 800 in its initial demobilization figure of 3,500.

The NPFL committed repeated arbitrary detentions in its territory where martial law has been in effect since the war began. NPFL fighters had almost unbridled power to make arrests without warrants. They exercised that power often and capriciously, detaining persons, including U.N. military observers, on spurious grounds or without charge for periods ranging from several hours to several weeks, as in the case in May of an AFL colonel held for 1 month. The NPFL held 350 orphans, whom the NPFL abducted from Fatimah Cottage in October 1992, at Cuttington University College until the fighting reached Gbarnga in September. At the height of the fighting, the children fled, with most of them joining the 150,000 displaced persons still held by the NPFL at year's end near Totota. UNOMIL was able to evacuate 58 of the orphans by helicopter before the security situation made flights impossible.

There were no reports of Liberians being subjected to forced political exile.

e. Denial of Fair Public Trial

The court structure is divided into four levels with the Supreme Court at its apex. Under the 1985 Constitution, defendants have the due process rights conforming to internationally accepted norms of fair trial. Most of these rights, however, were ignored in practice.

By 1994 all levels of the court system, which had been devastated by the years of civil war, were functioning in Monrovia, although erratically. While corruption and incompetent handling of cases remained a recurrent problem, some progress was made in addressing problems in the judiciary, including requiring that circuit court judges be law school graduates. The 1994 LNTG budget included the judiciary for the first time in 4 years, which resulted in judges being given office facilities and vehicles. The Supreme Court, composed of justices nominated by the warring factions, continued to operate.

In addition to the resurrection of the modern court system, customary law was also applied in Monrovia. The Ministry of Internal Affairs subjected persons accused of occult practices and other crimes to "trial by ordeal," submitting defendants to physical pain to adjudicate guilt or innocence (see Section 1.c.).

In the case of two AFL soldiers whom a military court found guilty of murder, a leading human rights organization on their behalf appealed the death sentence to the Supreme Court. The AFL, claiming no appeal was permitted from a court-martial judgment, initially threatened to execute the prisoners but subsequently delayed action after the Supreme Court issued a restraining order. By year's end, the Ministry of Defense had not constituted an appeal board.

Although in 1991 the NPFL also partially reactivated the court system in areas under its control, legal and judicial protections have been almost totally lacking since then. In the areas controlled by the other factions, there was little pretense of due process; swift judgment was meted out by the faction leaders. Given the continuing war, it was not possible to determine the total number of political/security detainees (see Section 1.d.) or political prisoners among the prisoners held by the factions.

f. Arbitrary Interference with Privacy, Family, Home, or Correspondence

While the Constitution provides for these rights, there were many serious abuses of privacy and home—including confiscation of property and failure to obtain required warrants—by the police and fighters of all the warring factions. According to the Constitution, the police must have a warrant or a reasonable belief that a crime is in progress, or is about to be committed, before entering a private dwelling. In practice, the police engaged in forced entry without a warrant to carry out arrests and investigations.

Combatants of all the warring factions looted villages during the year, with ULIMO-Krahn and ULIMO-Mandingo factions in Bomi and Cape Mount counties and LPC and NPFL fighters in southeastern counties and elsewhere drawing considerable public outrage. These forces pilfered virtually any item of value and regularly demanded scarce food and personal valuables from already impoverished residents or displaced persons, often robbing them of their clothes and physically abusing them, particularly at checkpoints. Confiscation of private homes and vehicles was common practice.

These factions also used forced entry for purposes of intimidation. For example, AFL soldiers made two raids on the Monrovia residence of a legislative representative to harass the representative for his support of the new police director. In one instance, an AFL soldier shot the representative's guard in the leg. The representative sent a formal letter to the Transitional Legislative Assembly accusing four members of the AFL high command of attempted murder.

g. Use of Excessive Force and Violations of Humanitarian Law in Internal Conflicts

In 1994 the warring factions inflicted considerably more harm on noncombatants than on each other. All factions indiscriminately ransacked villages and confiscated scant food supplies. They deliberately targeted, tortured, and murdered innocent civilians and regularly committed violence against women, children, and the elderly.

The number and complexity of warring forces increased in 1994. In addition to Charles Taylor's NPFL in the central counties, the anti-NPFL ULIMO split in March into its two ethnic components, the ULIMO-Mandingo faction and the ULIMO-Krahn faction. While there was intra-ULIMO fighting in the western counties, both ULIMO wings joined other groups, including the AFL, in fighting NPFL-Taylor forces in central Liberia. Made up of remnants of late President Samuel Doe's army, the AFL controlled pockets of terrain along the road to Buchanan and a few areas in and around the Firestone Plantation. The LPC, a predominantly Krahn group drawing major support from active and former AFL combatants, emerged in late 1993 and made serious inroads in 1994 against the NPFL in the south and eastern coastal region. Krahn ethnic loyalties closely linked the ULIMO-Krahn, the AFL, and the LPC. The Lofa Defense Force (LDF) provided sporadic challenge to ULIMO-Mandingo control of the northwest.

The NPFL also suffered a schism. In August a trio of dissident NPFL ministers, who took their LNTG cabinet seats in April, declared Charles Taylor unseated as Chair-

man of the NPFL's Central Revolutionary Committee. They joined other splinter groups in an anti-Taylor coalition which participated with ULIMO-Mandingo forces in a successful September attack on Taylor's Gbarnga headquarters which he reoccupied in December (see Section 1.a.).

There were many incidents throughout the year in which civilians died. On June 9, LDF fighters reportedly massacred or summarily shot 75 civilians at Russie village near Zorzor in Lofa county. On June 22, ULIMO-Mandingos massacred nine civilians, including women and children, in Brewerville, Montserrado county. Witnesses confirmed that ULIMO troops questioned the victims about their tribal backgrounds and then killed or tortured them and threw their bodies into a well. In late August, ULIMO-Krahn fighters massacred between 20 and 30 persons in Gbesseh town, Cape Mount county. In September there were numerous reports of a "massacre" by ULIMO-Mandingo fighters who attacked Phebe Hospital near Gbarnga, looting it and killing an unknown number of civilians, including several Phebe staff members. Subsequently, NPFL leader Charles Taylor implied the killings of civilians at Phebe had been committed by members of the NPFL. In mid-December, fighters of undetermined affiliation attacked the Paynesville suburb of Monrovia, shooting, hacking, and burning 66 civilians to death.

Credible reports indicated that NPFL, ULIMO-Krahn, ULIMO-Mandingo, and LPC fighters committed acts of cannibalism. In some instances, the fighters ate specific organs in the belief that it would make the fighter stronger. Human rights groups estimated that 3 to 6 percent of combatants participated. Displaced persons reported seeing severed extremities and extracted body parts, such as the heart of a Lofa county judge displayed in the streets of Voinjama after he was murdered by ULIMO-Mandingo forces. Often, it was impossible to know where the victim came from or what had happened; on September 21, a diplomat came upon an unidentified, naked and tortured corpse (pieces of rope on the deceased's wrist) along the main road through a Monrovia suburb.

The NPFL took credit for mining the Bong Mine-Kakata Road, the feeder roads to the Monrovia-Buchanan Highway, and threatened to mine the Totota-Kakata Highway if anyone attempted to save the 150,000 displaced persons in Totota. Three mine explosions elsewhere killed several civilians and two ECOMOG soldiers.

Relief organizations estimated that 1.1 million persons have been internally displaced since the war began. Most of these are dependent on humanitarian aid for survival. Upper Lofa county, for instance, where a \$1 million staging base in Vahunhad been gutted by ULIMO brigands in December 1993, remained bereft of relief operations throughout the year because the security situation was too unstable to allow relief workers to return. Fierce fighting in other sectors of the country hampered humanitarian work. Faction leaders and their followers, suspicious of the possible supply of aid to the enemy, often refused to allow international and humanitarian relief agencies access beyond their checkpoints to distribute food and supplies. U.N. and relief agen-

cies reported continuous harassment and detention of their staffs, confiscation of vehicles, and looting of foodstuffs, medical supplies, and gasoline.

In September interfactional warfare erupted in central Liberia with such renewed brutality that over 200,000 Liberians fled their homes, some to the bush and others into Guinea and the Ivory Coast. U.N. agencies and NGO's withdrew their up-country staffs after the NPFL took 43 U.N. observers hostage in various sectors of NPFL territory and after millions of dollars of U.N. and humanitarian assistance supplies and equipment had been stolen. Assistance outside the Monrovia and Buchanan areas ground to a halt in September but resumed to a few locations at greatly reduced levels late in the year.

Various factions attacked ECOMOG peacekeeping forces throughout the year and on a number of occasions took ECOMOG soldiers hostage. At least eight ECOMOG soldiers lost their lives, and many were wounded. Similarly, the warring factions detained UNOMIL staff members and at times tortured them.

ECOMOG soldiers also inflicted suffering on the civilian population. Individual soldiers committed a number of serious illegal activities, including systematic looting not only of small, easily transportable goods but also the stripping of entire buildings for scrap to be sold abroad. Credible reports indicated that members of ECOMOG facilitated the delivery of—if not delivering—weapons and ammunition to the AFL, LPC, and ULIMO combatants fighting to dislodge Taylor's NPFL. Allegedly, some ECOMOG soldiers engaged in the illegal drug trade (heroin and cocaine) and used Liberia as a transit point for drugs coming in from Nigeria and Ghana for onward shipment. ECOMOG soldiers were also accused of using children as young as 8 years of age as prostitutes.

Section 2 Respect for Civil Liberties, Including:

a. Freedom of Speech and Press

These freedoms are provided for in the 1985 Constitution and, with some significant limitations, citizens generally exercised these rights in Monrovia. Liberians are free to criticize the LNTG and ECOMOG, although they usually show restraint and self-censorship in favor of the temporary Governments.

Due primarily to continued economic stagnation, the number of publications in Monrovia fluctuated from month to month. At year's end, there were eight privately owned newspapers in Monrovia. While a restrictive, Doe-era media law providing the Ministry of Information wide discretion in licensing and regulating journalists remained on the books, official press censorship was not pervasive in Monrovia. Also, there were no newspapers forcibly closed during the year. Reflecting local opinion, most of the Monrovia press tended to be anti-NPFL; and some journalists admitted to self-censorship in favor of the interim governments.

Other journalists asserted that public calls by IGNU and subsequently LNTG officials for a "more responsible" press had a chilling effect on journalistic freedom. At

times, government officials and senior ECOMOG officers, offended by articles, insisted on meeting privately with journalists. Perhaps most chilling were the reported threats to individual journalists by persons claiming to represent one or another of the warring factions. After a group of citizens from ULIMO territory published a statement in Monrovia that ULIMO should relinquish control of the western counties to the LNTG, the ULIMO leadership threatened physical harm to journalists who published articles making such suggestions.

There was no overt general attempt to censor the press, such as the mid-1993 directive from IGNU that journalists submit all "war-related" stories to the Ministries of Information and Justice for clearance on national security grounds. At that time, the Press Union of Liberia (PUL) and newspaper publishers objected to the measure as a prior restraint, but the PUL and IGNU later compromised on guidelines for military reporting. Those guidelines continued in effect and undoubtedly constituted part of the basis for self-censorship. Except when fighting became too widespread, international journalists were able to visit contested zones and to file reports without official censorship. Because of the fighting, journalists from Monrovia cannot report on events in NPFL areas, and vice versa.

Outside Monrovia, residents of Liberia exercised extreme care in their criticism of the various factions. Although NPFL leader Charles Taylor affirmed publicly on several occasions his support of free speech, citizens in his area were subject to sanctions for criticizing the NPFL. There were two pro-NPFL newspapers intermittently published in NPFL territory, but no newspapers were printed in ULIMO- or LPC-controlled areas. Both NPFL papers were initially denied permission to circulate in Monrovia by the LNTG because they were not legally "registered." LNTG officials seized copies of one of the papers on at least one occasion.

ECOMOG, IGNU, and subsequently the LNTG supported a radio station (ELBC) which broadcast progovernment (and at times sycophantic) programming throughout 1994. Many credible journalists alleged substantial censorship of ELBC. A privately owned radio station began broadcasting from Monrovia in October 1993 but limited its news and commentary in order to avoid possible governmental interference. The NPFL continued to operate intermittently at least one radio station, which uncritically supported Charles Taylor.

The University of Liberia functioned throughout 1994 despite some delays caused by financial problems. Academic freedom was generally respected, although the university authorities and most of the student body criticized pro-NPFL expression.

b. Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association

The Constitution provides for the rights of peaceful assembly and association. ECOMOG, apparently with full IGNU agreement, imposed a nighttime curfew in Monrovia from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. after the NPFL attack in 1992; the curfew continued in force. ECOMOG soldiers enforced the measure strictly and arrested numerous

persons for noncompliance. ECOMOG periodically meted out corporal punishment to repeat curfew violators.

The LNTG and ECOMOG permitted political parties and other groups to organize freely and hold public meetings in Monrovia, but ECOMOG did prohibit an outdoor peace rally in July and generally discouraged parades or demonstrations for security reasons. The NPFL and ULIMO-Mandingo forces severely restricted freedom of assembly and association in their areas. In other factions' areas, residents felt intimidated and did not attempt demonstrations.

c. Freedom of Religion

The 1985 Constitution recognizes freedom of religion as a fundamental right, and Liberia has no established state religion. There was no evidence of systematic violation of religious freedom by warring factions, but there were isolated and sometimes violent incidents of religious repression by local fighters, especially by Muslim ULIMO-Mandingo forces (see Section 1.a.).

d. Freedom of Movement Within the Country, Foreign Travel, Emigration, and Repatriation

The Constitution provides for freedom of movement throughout Liberia as well as the right to leave or enter the country at will. ECOMOG monitored freedom of movement at checkpoints within Monrovia and around its perimeter.

Factional fighting interfered with freedom of movement, ranging from resettlement of displaced persons to ordinary commerce and travel. ECOMOG restricted the movement of civilians, humanitarian aid and staffers at various times throughout the year. All factions impeded the movement of relief workers and supplies and extorted, humiliated, and harassed citizens at checkpoints and makeshift barricades.

Of a total estimated population of almost 2.7 million at the end of 1994, approximately 1.1 million Liberians have been internally displaced since 1990, and 776,000 were refugees in neighboring west African countries, many out of fear of ethnic persecution. The number of refugees fluctuated depending on the intensity and proximity of the fighting to population centers. Many of the displaced went to Monrovia, including the 6,000 former refugees who returned to Liberia, reportedly because of the security and more reliable relief supplies.

There were approximately 130,000 Sierra Leonean refugees in Liberia as the civil war spilled over into Sierra Leone. Many Sierra Leoneans suffered mistreatment by both ULIMO factions and the NPFL as they were displaced from camps in western counties and made their way to camps in Lofa county, where approximately 70,000 reside, and camps in and around Monrovia.

Section 3 Respect for Political Rights: The Right of Citizens to Change Their Government

Despite constitutional and statutory provisions for free and fair elections, Liberians could not exercise the right to change their government. Implementation of the July

1993 Cotonou Accord and followup September 1994 Akosombo Agreement lagged as the factions continued to argue at year's end over the detailed arrangements and timetable for seating a new transitional government, disarmament, and demobilization. The December Akosombo Clarification Agreement postponed elections until November 1995 and the installation of an elected government until January 1996.

The LNTG installed in March 1994 is a weak transition Government comprised of representatives of the signatories to the Cotonou Accord—IGNU, NPFL, and ULIMO. There is a 5-person Council of State appointed by the signatory factions, a 35-member Transitional Legislative Assembly (TLA) also appointed by the factions, and the judiciary. At the end of the year, it remained to be seen whether the factions could implement the new LNTG called for in the December 21 Accra agreements.

There are no restrictions in law on the participation of women in politics; in practice, two women hold cabinet-level positions in the LNTG, and a few hold positions in the legislature and judiciary. Overall numbers of women in the LNTG and the various political parties are small.

Section 4 Governmental Attitude Regarding International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Violations of Human Rights

The interim governments have permitted domestic and international groups to operate freely. The few domestic human rights organizations are relatively new and underfunded but made progress improving their influence, visibility, and performance.

There were no domestic human rights organizations extant outside the ECOMOG-controlled areas due to the warring factions' hostility to such organizations.

Section 5 Discrimination Based on Race, Sex, Religion, Disability, Language, or Social Status

The 1985 Constitution prohibits discrimination based on ethnic background, race, sex, creed, place of origin, or political opinion, but discrimination exists in fact and in some cases in law.

Women

The status of women varies by region, ethnic group, and religion. Before the outbreak of the civil war, women held one-quarter of the professional and technical occupations available in Monrovia. Some women currently hold skilled jobs in government, including in the Cabinet, legislature, and judiciary. On the whole, however, the lot of women deteriorated dramatically with the onset of war, the closing of many schools, and the loss of their traditional role in production, distribution, and sale of foodstuffs. In the past 3 years, several women's organizations formed in Monrovia and Gbarnga to advance family welfare issues, to help promote political reconciliation, and to assist in rehabilitating former combatants as well as civilian victims of war. In

urban areas, women can inherit land and property. In rural areas, where traditional customs are stronger, a wife is normally considered the property of her husband and his clan and usually is not entitled to inherit from her husband.

Women in most rural areas do much of the farm labor and have only limited access to education. In the massive violence inflicted on civilians during the conflict, women suffered the gamut of abuses (see especially Sections 1.c. and 1.g.). Even prior to the war, domestic violence against women was extensive, but the Government, the courts, the media, and women's groups never seriously addressed the issue. There are several NGO's in Monrovia and Buchanan which have developed programs for treating abused women and girls and increasing their awareness of their human rights.

Children

In the civil war, the various sides have given almost no attention to the welfare of children, whose education and nurturing have been seriously disrupted. Many who were disabled, orphaned, abandoned, or "lost" during a military attack on their homes or villages, reportedly accepted the protection and sustenance that joining a faction brought. Both the NPFL and the ULIMO-Mandingos recruited and trained children as cooks, spies, errand runners, guards, and in many instances combatants. There were no precise figures on the number of child soldiers, but some sources estimated that 10 percent of the 40,000 to 60,000 combatants are under 15 years of age. Many children are substance abusers and depend upon the factions for supply. As a result, children have become both victims and abusers in the conflict. Many suffer from posttraumatic stress disorder. Some NGO's have initiated small retraining and rehabilitation programs for a limited number of former child fighters (see Section 6.d.).

International health experts have condemned female genital mutilation (FGM), including clitoridectomy, as physically and psychologically damaging to the girls and young women on whom the operation is performed. In some instances, female health professionals in the tribes have successfully participated in the ceremony to the extent of providing hygienic conditions and postoperative care. FGM is practiced primarily on young girls by northern, western, and central tribes, particularly in rural areas and among traditional societies. According to an independent expert in the field, the percentage of Liberian females who have undergone this procedure may be as high as 60 percent. Although there was one newspaper report of a failed attempt to force a girl in Monrovia to undergo the procedure, it was difficult to confirm the extent to which this procedure was practiced in 1994 by Liberia's uprooted, displaced, and often inaccessible population. The most extreme form of FGM, infibulation, is not practiced in Liberia.

National/Racial/Ethnic Minorities

Although the Constitution bans ethnic discrimination, it also provides that only "persons who are negroes or of negro descent" may be citizens or own land, thus

denying full rights to many who were born or lived most of their lives in Liberia. There has been no legislative initiative to repeal this racial test. The 1975 Economic "Liberianization" Law prohibits foreign ownership of certain businesses, such as travel agencies, retail gasoline stations, and beer and soft drink distributors. This law resulted in the rejection of several foreign-owned business proposals.

The roots of the civil conflict can be found in the historical division between the Americo-Liberian minority, who, despite representing less than 5 percent of the population, for over 150 years dominated the political, economic, and cultural life of the country, and the indigenous ethnic groups. The latter frequently complained of government discrimination in many areas, such as access to education and civil service jobs and to infrastructure development.

The authoritarian military-based regime established after the 1980 coup mounted by Sergeant Doe and other AFL noncommissioned officers progressively exacerbated ethnic tensions while subverting the democratic reforms embodied in the 1985 Constitution. During the Doe regime, resentment grew over domination of government by Doe's ethnic group, the Krahn, which represent approximately 4 percent of the population. Throughout the civil war, the factions have used an individual's language to identify ethnicity and often summarily executed those from groups considered hostile. The ULIMO faction split in March along Krahn-Mandingo lines and fought each other and the NPFL. The NPFL, supported by the Gio and Mano groups, waged war against four preponderantly ethnically constituted factions, three of them Krahn: The predominately Krahn AFL troops in and around Monrovia, the Krahn LPC along the southern coast and north into (Krahn) Grand Gedeh county, and the ULIMO-Krahn in Bong county. The ULIMO-Mandingos made incursions against the NPFL in Bong county and from early September until December held control of Gbarnga, the NPFL stronghold (see Section 1.g.).

Religious Minorities

While the law prohibits religious discrimination, there were claims of discrimination in practice. Some Muslims, who represent a growing share of the population, believe that Liberia's secular culture gives preference to Christianity in civic ceremony and observances, and that discrimination spills over into areas of individual opportunity and employment. The Muslim education system stresses religious as opposed to skills-based learning. As a result, the authorities frequently by-passed Muslims for the highly sought-after technical and bureaucratic jobs available in government. In addition, many Liberian Muslims believe that their access to jobs and roles in public life is restricted by an anti-Muslim bias in many sectors of Liberian society with a predominately Christian orientation.

People with Disabilities

The protracted civil war has produced a large number of persons with permanent injuries in addition to persons disabled from other causes. There is no legal discrimination against the disabled, but in practice they do not enjoy equal access to education, employment, and scant social services. There are no laws mandating accessibility to public buildings or services.

Section 6 Worker Rights

a. The Right of Association

The 1985 Constitution states that workers, except military and police, have the right to associate in trade unions (see also Section 6.b.). However, as with virtually all other organized activity in the country, unions disappeared during the height of the 1989-90 war. With the signing of the July 1993 Cotonou Peace Accord, many industries planned to resume, and affected unions began reorganizing and attempting to locate members. However, union efforts to reorganize generally faltered in 1994 as factional fighting increased. The most active organization was the Ship Workers' Union.

The 1985 Constitution is silent on the right to strike. While the Labor Code provides for this right, the Doe government issued a no-strike decree in 1980. Governments up to 1990 intimidated labor officials, assuring a generally docile work force and labor environment. Neither of the subsequent IGNU and LNTG legislative assemblies repealed or affirmed the no-strike decree, which was not challenged in 1994 as there were no strikes. During the year, the LNTG took no discriminatory actions against organized labor.

In 1990 the U.S. Government suspended Liberia's eligibility for trade benefits under the Generalized System of Preferences because of its violations of worker rights.

Labor unions have traditionally affiliated freely with international labor groups.

b. The Right to Organize and Bargain Collectively

With the important exception of civil servants, workers (including employees of public corporations and autonomous agencies) have the right to organize and bargain collectively. In the past, labor and employers negotiated agreements freely without government interference. In 1994 these rights were largely moot because of the lack of economic enterprise, especially in Monrovia, where only a few businesses resumed operations, usually with reduced staffing. There were no formal mechanisms in place for resolving complaints of discrimination against union workers.

There was no activity in Liberia's one export processing zone (EPZ) which has been inoperative since 1990 when fighting reached the free port of Monrovia. When operational, labor laws have the same force in the EPZ as elsewhere in the country.

c. Prohibition of Forced or Compulsory Labor

The Constitution prohibits forced labor, but even before the civil war local authorities widely ignored this prohibition in rural areas where farmers were pressured into providing free labor on "community projects," which often benefited only local

leaders. The warring factions used forced labor during the fighting, especially for moving equipment or supplies. According to credible reports, ULIMO-Mandingo fighters also used Sierra Leonean refugees to acquire food for them, occasioning the flight and repatriation of approximately 5,000 Sierra Leoneans from Vahun, Lofa county.

d. Minimum Age for Employment of Children

Under the Doe government, the law prohibited employment of children under age 16 during school hours in the wage sector. This law is still technically in effect, but there is no enforcement. Even earlier, enforcement by the Ministry of Labor was limited, and small children continued to assist their parents as vendors in local markets and on family subsistence farms. This practice persisted in 1994, particularly in those areas where school had been closed because of the war. During the conflict, the NPFL and ULIMO-Mandingos recruited young children as soldiers, many of whom had been orphaned; some were less than 12 years of age. Many of these children, especially in the NPFL, remained under arms in 1994 (see Section 5).

e. Acceptable Conditions of Work

The Labor Code provides for a minimum wage, paid leave, severance benefits, and safety standards. Before the economy collapsed, the legal minimum wage varied according to profession but did not generally provide a decent standard of living for a worker and family. (The minimum wage for agricultural workers was approximately 90 cents per day, with industrial workers receiving three or four times that amount.) Often workers were forced to supplement their incomes through other activities to maintain a minimal standard of living. Those not displaced turned to subsistence farming. The minimum wage was not enforced adequately by the Ministry of Labor.

The Labor Code provides for a 48-hour, 6-day regular workweek with a 30-minute rest period for every 5 hours of work. The 6-day workweek may extend to 56 hours for service occupations and to 72 hours for miners, with overtime pay beyond 48 hours. In view of the low level of economic activity during 1994, most employers ignored these various regulations, and there was very little attempt at enforcement in the country.

Prior to 1990, there also had been government-established health and safety standards, enforced in principle by the Ministry of Labor. Workers did not have a legal right to remove themselves from dangerous work situations.

England and Liberia

by
PRESIDENT ROBERTS

In his Annual Message, December, 1873, President Roberts reports his visit to England during the previous year, and says: "I was received most courteously by Earl Granville, Her Majesty's principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and discussed with his Lordship fully and freely the several international subjects with which I had been charged. With me the immediate settlement of the question relating to our Northwest boundary formed the first and most important consideration; and this I urged upon every ground of principle and justice that occurred to me. But while I have reason to believe that Earl Granville was favorably impressed by the arguments advanced in favor of an immediate settlement of the question, his Lordship informed me that 'Her Majesty's Government felt themselves precluded from departing from the arrangement come to in 1870 for settling the Liberian Boundary Question'; and that 'having again attentively considered the question, Her Majesty's Government would not feel themselves justified in acquiescing in the territorial claims put forward by Liberia without a preliminary inquiry into the subject on the coast.' "This Government has steadily resisted the idea of allowing the testimony of the native chiefs to be admitted as evidence against the validity of title deeds which they themselves or their predecessors had solemnly executed. And had not this course of admitting the testimony of the Chiefs been insisted upon by the British Commissioners at the Joint Commission which met in 1863, for the purpose of terminating this difficulty, the whole question would doubtlessly have been satisfactorily arranged at that time."

REV. DR. BLYDEN

Rev. Edward W. Blyden, D.D., arrived at London, August, 1877, commissioned as special Minister Plenipotentiary by the Government of Liberia, to adjust finally the Northwest territorial boundary of the Republic, and the correspondence on the subject is said to have been more extensive than any that preceded it. The result was that Earl Derby, Secretary for Foreign Affairs, stated that he felt obliged to adhere to the proposals already communicated to the Liberian authorities by the English Government, and that he would take immediate steps for their execution.

ENGLAND'S PROPOSALS

The following are the proposals formulated by England in 1870:

"First. That the British Government, while agreeing to recognize the actual limits of the Republic as comprising the coast line between Cape Palmas to the South and the South bank of the river Sugaree to the Northwest, cannot admit, without further inquiry, the claims advanced by Liberia to the line of coast Northward of this boundary, lying between the Sugaree and Shebar rivers.

Second. As some of the Native Chiefs within these limits have denied the alleged cession of their territories to Liberia, and repudiate her claims to them, the British Government propose that a Joint Commission, consisting of two British and two Liberian Commissioners, shall be appointed to investigate on the spot the disputed claims of Liberia, and to define the boundary limits.

Third. The Commissioners shall be fully empowered to inquire into the validity of the title deeds that the Liberian Commissioners may produce in support of their claims, and entertain all and every evidence to the contrary that the Native Chiefs or other claimants may desire to submit to them.

Fourth. The decision of the Commissioners to be considered as final and absolute, and, in the event of any disagreement between them, the points in dispute shall be left to the arbitration of the United States, who shall, if necessary, be invited to send out an officer to the Commission.

Fifth. The Commissioners are to limit their inquiry strictly to the question of the boundary, and are not to entertain any other subject of discussion."

COMMODORE SHUFELDT APPOINTED UMPIRE

It will be observed that the British Government, while making no claim to the disputed territory, assumes a protectorate over the Native Kings and Chiefs, and on their mere denial of their deeds of cession requires the Liberians to exhibit and maintain their titles. The Liberians, however, had no alternative. Too weak to assert their rights by force, they assented to the foregoing proposals, not by an express but a tacit acquiescence. The arbitration provided for in the fourth article was formally accepted by the United States Government, which thereby became a disinterested party to the compact, and the invitation to send out an officer to the Commission was responded to by appointing Commodore R. W. Shufeldt, U. S. N.

MEETING OF THE COMMISSION

The Mixed Commission, as originated and prescribed by England, organized at Sierra Leone February 13, 1879, and then adjourned to meet at Solymah April 1, the British Commissioners requesting the delay to obtain additional instructions from their Government. These were Hon. David Hopkins, Consul at Fernando Po, and Hon. W. W. Streeten, Chief Justice of Sierra Leone. The Liberia Commissioners were

Hon. J. W. Worrell, Senator from Grand Bassa County, and Hon. William M. Davis, Ex-Attorney General of the Republic.

Commodore Shufeldt arrived at Sierra Leone, January 15, in the U. S. S. "Ticonderoga," which left Norfolk, Va., December 7, 1878, and remained on the coast, part of the time off Solymah, until the Commission adjourned, the British Commissioners, however, refusing to allow the Arbitrator to preside at the sessions of the Commission.

THE BRITISH COMMISSIONERS REFUSE TO SUBMIT

The proceedings of the Commission are thus succinctly presented in a communication dated Monrovia, May 2, 1879, by Mr. Davis, one of the Commissioners, and a man deservedly held in high esteem for ability, integrity, and honor: "I returned last week from Solymah, a place about fifteen miles north of Cape Mount, where the Mixed Commission on the Liberia Northwest Boundary Question met according to its adjournment in February last, when at Sierra Leone. We began our labors on the 1st of April and continued for twenty-five days. There were six pieces of territory to which Liberia was required, by the British, to prove her right of sovereignty before they would acknowledge our claims, and the investigation began with the territories of Mannah Rock, Mannah, and Solymah.

"After some twenty days spent in examining witnesses as to the validity of our deeds, the right of the Chiefs, who signed our deeds, to convey, and as to the boundaries of the said territories, the British Commissioners admitted the validity of our deeds, but said that they were satisfied, from the testimony, that there were no countries known to the natives of the names of Mannah Rock, Mannah, and Solymah, and they were also satisfied that the Chiefs, who had signed our deeds, had no right to cede these territories to the Liberians. The Liberian Commissioners contended that we had fully established the claim of Liberia to these territories, and had clearly defined the boundaries of each tract of territory, and showed, by copies of treaties for the suppression of the slave trade, and for legitimate trade, made by Her Majesty's Government with the same Chiefs who signed our deeds, which treaties were made just about a year before our deeds of cession, that those Chiefs were, at that time, the rulers of those countries; and we also showed by oral testimony that the cession was made with the knowledge and consent of all the Chiefs and Headmen of those territories; and we contended, as there was a disputed question between the British and Liberian Commissioners as to whether or not the claim of Liberia to the territories had been sustained and proved, that question must be left to the decision of Commodore Shufeldt, the American Arbitrator.

The British Commissioners refused to submit any question to the arbitrator, but said they were willing to ask his opinion on the matter, with the reservation that Her Majesty's Government should not be bound by that opinion, unless it chose to be bound. The Liberian Commissioners replied that they could not agree to that proposal, for it was

contrary to the draft proposals of 1870, made between the British and Liberian Governments, on which this Mixed Commission was based, and was also contrary to the instructions given to the Liberian and British Commissioners, by which they are instructed to submit all disputed questions to the Arbitrator for his decision; and they also said that the proposal of the British Commissioners to ask the opinion of the Arbitrator, with such reservation, was an insult to the United States, and they, the Liberian Commissioners, would not consent to be a party to such an insult. They said that as the British Commissioners refused to submit anything to the Arbitrator, it was useless to continue the investigation, and they proposed that the Arbitrator be informed that the Mixed Commission had reached a stage where they could proceed no further, and that he would be furnished with an authentic copy of the proceedings. The British Commissioners agreed to this, and so the Arbitrator was furnished with a complete record of the proceedings, signed by all the Commissioners—which I hope he will lay before his Government, that they may see with what courtesy the English have treated their Arbitrator, whom they have sent out here at a great expense, at the request of the British Government.”

The Mixed Commission failed, notwithstanding the exalted character of the Government and the person of the Arbitrator, and the strict impartiality manifested in their conduct. The next attempt at settlement was by a British official at Monrovia, acting in the double capacity of Commissioner and Umpire, attended by a Naval force.

ENGLISH CLAIMS FOR DAMAGES

There have long been two disputed claims of British subjects against the Liberian Government. One was that of Mr. John M. Harris, residing at Solymah, amounting to some £9,000 for losses alleged to have been sustained by him through the enforcement of the revenue laws of the Republic at various periods in the years 1860—1880; and the other was the claims of three Sierra Leone traders, amounting to £848 19s. 8d. for damages alleged to have been caused by the destruction of their property in the Mannah country in 1871, during a war between Liberia and the natives of that region.

ARRIVAL OF FOUR BRITISH MEN-OF-WAR

March 20, 1882, A. E. Havelock, Esq., Governor of Sierra Leone and British Consul to Liberia, arrived at Monrovia in the colonial steam yacht “Prince of Wales,” preceded or accompanied by the British war vessels “Pioneer,” “Briton,” “Flirt,” and “Algerine,” and presenting his credentials from the Foreign Office, London, as a commissioner to settle the Boundary Question and the Harris and Mannah country claims. The President of Liberia appointed Rev. Edward W. Blyden, D. D., and Hon. William M. Davis Commissioners on the part of the Government to meet him. Before the Commission thus formed the claims above mentioned were introduced by Governor Havelock, and discussed on the 21st, 22d, 23d, and 24th of March. The

Harris claim was unanimously rejected. About the other claim, however, there was a difference of opinion, the Liberian Commissioners denying its validity altogether. Governor Havelock then demanded the cession of the Northwest territory of Liberia, the boundary of the Republic to be fixed at Cape Mount, in consideration of which he was empowered by his Government to cancel the Mannah country claim he had just presented; otherwise, he was to enforce its payment. This being strenuously objected to, he volunteered to recommend to his Government that the Mannah river be fixed as the boundary line, if the Liberian Government would immediately consent to it.

DRAFT CONVENTION BY GOVERNOR HAVELOCK

The Liberian Commissioners referred these conditions, penned by Consul Havelock in the form of a "Draft Convention," to President Gardner and his Cabinet, by whom they were accepted, subject to the ratification of the Senate of Liberia, the President promising to call a meeting at an early day for their consideration.

THE SENATE REJECTS THE PROPOSITION

The Senate met in special session April 10th, and on the 17th the members waited on the President, and, through Vice-President Russell, stated their unanimous opinion and advice, that the President "should not accept the proposition of her Majesty's Government fixing the Northwest Boundary of Liberia at the Mannah river or Cape Mount; nor should he sign or cause to be signed any Convention or Treaty ceding or relinquishing any of the public domain of Liberia, under any pretence whatever."

Letter from the Hon. James n, to the Secretary of the American Colonization Society, the Rev. R. R. Gurley.

Montpelier, December 29, 1831

“Dear Sir—I received, in due time, your letter of the 21st ult. and with due sensibility to the subject of it. Such, however, has been the effect of a painful rheumatism on my general condition, as well as in disqualifying my fingers for the use of the pen, that I could not do justice “to the principles and measures of the Colonization Society, in all the great and various relations they sustain to our own country and to Africa,” if my views of them could have the value which your partiality supposes. I may observe, in brief, that the Society had always my good wishes, though with hopes of its success less sanguine than were entertained by others, found to have been the better judges; and, that I feel the greatest pleasure at the progress already made by the Society, and the encouragement to encounter remaining difficulties, afforded by the earlier and greater ones already overcome. Many circumstances, at the present moment, seem to concur in brightening the prospects of the Society, and cherishing the hope that the time will come, when the dreadful calamity, which has so long afflicted our country, and filled so many with despair, will be gradually removed, and by means consistent with justice, peace, and the general satisfaction: thus giving to our country the full enjoyment of the blessings of liberty, and to the world the full benefit of its great example. I never considered the main difficulty of the great work, as lying in the deficiency of emancipations, but in an inadequacy of asylums for such a growing mass of population, and in the great expense of removing it to its new home. The spirit of private manumissions, as the laws may permit, and the exiles may consent, is increasing and will increase; and there are sufficient indications that the public authorities in slave-holding states, are looking forward to interpositions in different forms that must have a powerful effect. With respect to the new abode for the emigrants, all agree, that the choice made by the Society, is rendered peculiarly appropriate by considerations which need not be repeated; and if other situations should not be found eligible receptacles for a portion of them, the prospects in Africa seem to be expanding in a highly encouraging degree.

”In contemplating the pecuniary resources needed for the removal of such a number to so great a distance, my thoughts and hopes have been long turned to the rich

fund presented in the western lands of the nation, which will soon entirely cease to be under a pledge for another object. The great one in question is truly of a national character, and it is known that distinguished patriots, not dwelling in slave-holding states have viewed the object in that light, and would be willing to let the national domain be a resource in effecting it. "Should it be remarked, that the states, though all may be interested in relieving our country from the coloured population, are not all equally so; it is but fair to recollect, that the sections most to be benefited, are those whose cessions created the fund to be disposed of.

"I am aware of the constitutional obstacle which has presented itself; but if the general will be reconciled to an application of the territorial fund to the removal of the coloured population, a grant to Congress of the necessary authority could be carried, with little delay, through the forms of the constitution. "Sincerely wishing an increasing success to the labours of the Society, I pray you to be assured of my esteem, and to accept my friendly salutation.

JAMES MADISON

A FEW FACTS
RESPE **E**
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FOR GRATUITOUS DISTRIBUTION.
PUBLISHED BY THE AMERI
COLONIZATION SOCIETY
WASHINGTON:
PRINTED BY WAY AND GIDEON.
1830.

A desire that all the Churches and Congregations in this Union may, on the approaching Fourth of July, (which will occur on the Sabbath,) contribute to aid the design of the American Colonization Society—and the hope and belief, that the following facts will excite an interest in favour of this object,—and, especially, that they will, in some measure, assist those Clergymen who may be inclined, on that occasion, to present to their people arguments and motives in behalf of the cause of African Colonization,—have reduced the Board of Managers to publish, and invite to them the public attention. The collections on the Fourth of July, or on a Sabbath near to that day, have, in years past, (though limited comparatively to very few Churches,) proved of incalculable benefit: and the union of the Churches and Congregations, of every name throughout the country, the present year, in making such collections, would be auspicious beyond any event which has occurred in the whole progress of this Institution. The fund which would be realized, would not constitute the sole, perhaps not the principal benefit, of the measure. The scheme of the Society, its necessity, practicability, and vast importance, would be brought distinctly before the whole American people.

The managers have cherished the hopes that contributions to aid the enterprise in which they are engaged, would be deemed peculiarly appropriate to a day, consecrated in the memory and affections of this great, enlightened, and happy people, as the Anniversary of their National Independence: and that all who gratefully acknowledge the Divine Goodness, as manifested in our national freedom and prosperity, would gladly make their offerings to a cause approved by Heaven, and essentially conducing to the temporal and eternal happiness of a large, but long neglected portion of the human family.

To the facts, then, in this pamphlet, and to the measure here suggested, the Managers solicit the immediate and earnest attention of every friend to the Colonization Society in the United States. They invite and entreat the Clergy to come forward on the approaching Fourth of July, as with one spirit, and explain the views, state the necessities, and enforce the claims of this Society. They call upon the State Societies, and other Auxiliary Associations, to neglect no suitable means of promoting and securing the general, universal adoption, of the proposed measure. They respectfully request the various Ecclesiastical Bodies, which are about to assemble, to recommend this measure to all the Churches over which their influence extends. And, finally, they implore the Almighty, the author of all benevolent designs, pious efforts, to inspire our countrymen, universally, with a disposition to confer the inestimable blessings which they enjoy, upon the children of Africa.

Formation of the American Colonization Society.

This Society was formed at Washington, near the last of December, 1816. Though the objects proposed by the Society had, for a considerable time previous to its origin, occupied the thoughts of several enlightened and benevolent individuals, still the Institution owes its origin mostly to the philanthropic efforts of Rev. Dr. Finley of New Jersey, aided by Rev. Samuel J. Mills, and a few others of a kindred spirit.

Object of the Society.

The object to which the attention of the Society is exclusively directed, is to colonize, with their own consent, on the Coast of Africa, or such other place as Congress shall deem expedient, the people of colour in our country, already free—and those others, who may hereafter be liberated by the humanity of individuals, or the laws of the States.

Number of Auxiliary Societies.

In Maine, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Vermont, New-York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, Alabama, Tennessee, Kentucky, Ohio, and Indiana, State Societies have been formed, auxiliary to the American Colonization Society. Besides these, there have been formed more than 150 County and Town Auxiliaries, which have been reported.

Income of the Society.

It has hitherto had no direct assistance from the General Government, yet its annual reports exhibit a gradual increase in the sums received, which is a pleasing indication of the growing interest felt in this cause throughout the community. The income of the Society, during the thirteen years of its existence, has been about \$106,000. The contributions from the 20th of January, 1829, to the 18th of January, 1830, amounted to \$20,295 60.

Patronized by Legislatures and Distinguished Men.

The Legislatures of thirteen States have passed resolutions approving the object of the Society, and recommending a system of foreign colonization. These States are New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, Georgia, Tennessee, Kentucky, Ohio, and Indiana.

Eleven of these States have instructed their Senators, and requested their Representatives in Congress, to approve and promote, in the General Government, measures for removing such free persons of color, as are desirous of emigrating to Africa.

A large number of men of distinguished eminence, in different parts of the Union, have warmly espoused the cause of the Society. "Nearly all the ecclesiastical bodies of the United States have, by resolutions, solemnly expressed their opinion, that this Society merits the consideration and favor of the whole Christian community, and earnestly recommended it to their patronage."

Indirect good accomplished by the Society.

To say nothing of the assistance already afforded to the emigrants, in enabling them to establish themselves on the Coast of Africa, with so fair a prospect of future comfort and prosperity, the Society has accomplished great good by the diffusion of information, by provoking discussion, and by calling forth powerful sympathies in favor of the Africans generally. It has shown how manumissions may be effected without injury to any class of Society, and of the emigrants which it has removed to Africa, more than 200 have been slaves liberated by their masters, for the very purpose of Colonization.

Establishment of the Colony.

In December, 1821, Dr Eli Ayres, with Captain Stockton, of the United States Navy, purchased the whole of Montserado, and a most valuable tract of land on the river of the same name. The first settlers arrived at the Colony in June, 1822. In this year, Mr. Ashmun took charge of the Colony as Agent. To his zealous and persevering efforts, is the Colony greatly indebted for its prosperity and success. He died at New-Haven, August, 1828, exhausted with the toils and fatigues he had endured, in giving strength and stability to the infant colony. Dr. Richard Randall succeeded him. Dr. R.

died soon after his arrival. Dr. Mechlin is the present agent. The population of the colony is about 1500.

Favorable Location of the Colony.

Cape Montserado lies in about the sixth degree of north latitude. The first purchased territory presents the form of a tongue of land, twelve miles in extent. In 1825, Mr. Ashmun purchased of the natives an extensive and fertile tract of country, extending nine miles on the coast, from the Montserado to the St. Paul's, and indefinitely in the interior. The Montserado is a small river. The Saint Paul's is a noble dyer, half a mile wide at its mouth; its waters are sweet, its banks fertile, and it is connected with the Montserado by Stockton creek. To the original territory, additions have been made, as the growing wants of the colony; actual or anticipated, required. The country thus obtained, embraces large tracts of fertile land, capable of yielding all the rich and varied products of the tropics; possessing great commercial advantages, with an extent of sea-coast from one hundred and fifty to two hundred miles, and enjoying a climate, well adapted to the negro constitution, and not more fatal to that of the whites than many thickly peopled parts of the United States.

"The location of Monrovia is the most delightful that can be imagined."*

* Dr. Randall's Letter, 1828.

Fertility of the Soil

The colonists themselves, in an address to the free people of color in the United States, August, 1827, say, "A more fertile soil, and a more productive country, so far as it is cultivated, there is not, we believe, on the face of the earth. Its hills and its plains are covered with a verdure which never fades, The productions of nature keep on in their growth, through all the seasons of the year. Even the natives of the country, almost without farming tools, without skill, and with very little labor, make more grain and vegetables than they can consume, and often more than they can sell." "We have no dreary winter here, for one half of the year to consume the productions of the other half. Nature is constantly renewing herself, and constantly pouring her treasures, all the year round, into the laps of the industrious."

"The extent of fertile land is capable, with very moderate industry, of supporting a great increase of population; not the one hundredth part of that we have passed over being made any use of whatever."†

† Tuckey's Expedition to the Congo, p. 108.

"The lands on both sides of Stockton creek, are of the very best quality, being a rich, light alluvion, equal in every respect to the best lands on the southern rivers of the United States."‡

‡ Dr. Randall.

Agriculture of the Colony.

Animals.—"We have," says Mr. Ashmun, in 1827, "horses, cattle in abundance, sheep, goats in abundance, fowls, ducks, geese, guinea fowls, swine in plenty. Fish nowhere found in greater abundance."

Fruits.—Plantains, bananas in great abundance, limes, lemons, tamarinds, oranges, sousop, cashew, mango, twenty varieties of the prune, guava, pawpaw, pine apple, grape, tropical peach, and cherry.

Vegetables.—Sweet potatoes, cassada, yams, cocoa, ground nuts, arrow root, egg plant, oca, every variety of beans, and most sorts of peas, cucumbers, pumpkins.

Grains.—Rice, Indian corn, coffee of an excellent quality, pepper of three varieties, of which either is equal to the Cayenne, millet, and Guinea corn."

Commercial Advantages.

"The colonists carry on an advantageous commerce with the natives, by exchanges for ivory, gums, dye-stuffs, drugs, and other articles of African origin; and with the United States, which is annually increasing, and which amounted, in 1829, to \$60,000 in the produce of the colony, and in objects acquired by their traffic with the natives; receiving, in return, such supplies of American and other manufactures, as are best adapted to their wants."*

* Speech of Hon. Mr. Clay, before the Kentucky Colonization Society.

"The nett profits on the two articles of wood and ivory, passing through the hands of the settlers at Liberia, from January 1, 1826, to June 15, 1826, was \$30,786."†

† African Repository, vol. ii. p. 271.

"The trade of this place is now considerable, and is becoming greater every day, as its capital and number of vessels for carrying on the coasting trade increase. Besides six or eight smaller decked vessels, we now have, belonging to the colony, two large schooners, the one above thirty, the other above forty tons, employed in the coasting trade. I presume the whole amount of exports from this place, during the year 1828, may be estimated at sixty or seventy thousand dollars. In addition to this, our colony has offered facilities to American merchants, trading on the coast, to three times that amount."‡

‡ Letter of Mr. Randall, Dec'r. 1828.

Climate.

"I am much pleased," says Dr. Randall, "with the climate, location, fertility, and population of Liberia. The climate is; at this season, [December 28,] most delightful. It is not very warm during the day, and at night it is cool enough to sleep with comfort under a blanket." "I consider the town of Monrovia, quite as healthy as any of our southern cities; and the other settlements on the Stockton and the Saint Paul's, have even a better reputation for health. I am the more convinced, from all I see and hear,

that, with proper precautions, and even moderate prudence, emigrants may come out from any of the northern States, with but little risk from the effects of the climate." "What has proved so very destructive to the new comers, is exposure to the sun—carelessness during sickness, both as it regards diet and exposure."*

* Mr. Russwurm's Letter, 1829.

"After examination and reflection, I honestly think, that the climate presents all those obstacles which are the natural productions of a tropical soil, uncleansed and uncultivated—but that they will yield to proper precautions: and that nothing can prevent the consummation of your wishes, but limited means, bad counsels, or feeble efforts."†

† Captain Stockton's Letter to the Committee of the Colonization Society, July, 1821.

"In the early years of the colony, want of good houses, the great fatigues and dangers of the settlers, their irregular mode of living, and the hardships and discouragements they met with, greatly helped the other causes of sickness, which prevailed to an alarming extent, and was attended with great mortality. But we look back to those times as to a season long past and forgotten. Our houses and circumstances are now comfortable—and for the last two or three years, not one person in forty, from the middle and southern States, has died from the change of climate."‡

‡ Address of the Colonists, 1827.

Mr. Ashmun remarks, "I will only say of the healthiness of Montserado, that no situation in Western Africa, can be more salubrious. The sea air does all that can be done for it, in this climate. One peculiarity is, that the night air is nearly as pure as anyother."

Government.

"Our laws are altogether our own; they grew out of our circumstances; are formed for our exclusive benefit; and administered, either by officers of our own appointment, or such as possess our confidence. We have a judiciary, chosen from among ourselves; we serve as jurors in the trial of others; and are liable to be tried only by juries of our fellow-citizens, ourselves. We have all that is meant by liberty of conscience; the time and mode of worshipping God, as prescribed to us in his word, and dictated by our conscience, we are not only free to follow, but are protected in following."§

§ Address of the Colonists.

"What my sensations were upon landing, I can hardly describe. This town (Monrovia,) contains double the number of houses I expected. The colonists appear to be thriving. You here behold colored men exercising all the duties of offices, which you can scarcely believe; many fulfilling their important trusts with much dignity. We have a republic in miniature."*

* Extract from Mr. Russwurm's Letter, November, 1829.

Schools.

In 1827, there were six schools in successful operation. In the address of the Colonists, to their brethren in the United States, during the same year, it is stated, that "not a child or youth in the Colony, but is provided with an appropriate School." At present, the Schools are fewer in number, and in a less flourishing state. Mr. Russwurm writes, that some great effort should be made in behalf of Education in the Colony. To secure the establishment and operation of a system to promote this great object, will receive, as it obviously claims, the early and anxious attention of the managers of the Society. Mr. Russwurm has been appointed Superintendent of the Schools; and his liberal education (being a graduate of Bowdoin College, Me.) well qualifies him for this office.

Religious State of the Colony, and its Religious Influence.

There is at this time a Baptist and a Methodist Society, each of which has a preacher. The Missionary Society of Basle, Switzerland, have five missionaries in the colony. The Society for Domestic and Foreign Missions of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, are preparing to establish a mission there—three individuals are expected to go out in the autumn of this year.

The influence which the colony, if prospered, is destined to exert, in spreading Christianity and civilization over that dark and degraded continent, must be obvious to every reflecting mind. the emigrants are perhaps founding an empire, destined to exert a mighty influence over the whole continent. Viewed in this light merely, the colony is worthy of the patronage of every benevolent and philanthropic mind. The blessings which it may be the channel of conveying to Africa, are incalculable. Many tribes in the vicinity, are earnestly desirous of receiving religious-instruction. One of them numbers a population of 125,000, speaking one language.

It was the opinion of Mr. Ashmun, that the "African tribes might be civilized without expulsion from their chosen settlements, and without that fearful diminution of their population, which has, from causes that do not exist here, as in regard to the Indians of America, accompanied the march of civilization in that hemisphere." Indeed, Christianity may be expected to make rapid progress in Africa, as the systems of African superstition are far less firm and formidable, than those which exist in most other heathen countries. One native tribe has already placed itself under the protection and laws of the Colony; and many others, it is believed, will soon be inclined to follow this example.

Expense of transporting Emigrants to the Colony.

From the actual experience of the Society, it has been found, that twenty dollars, or less, will defray the whole expense of transporting an individual to the Colony. Estimating the annual increase of the free people of colour, in the United States, at 6,000, (it may, possibly, be 7,000,) at \$20 per head, the total cost of their transportation will

be \$120,000. The expense of removing to Africa the annual increase of the whole slave population of the Union, which is not far from 50,000, would be about \$1,000,000. It should be stated, however, that at present it is necessary to appropriate from six to ten dollars per head, for the support of emigrants after their arrival. As the Colony shall advance, this expense will doubtless be much diminished.

Number of the colored Population, and rate of increase in the United States.

- According to the last census, the number of slaves in the United States, amounted to ,538,123
- Do. of free persons of color, 233,530
- Total, 1,771,653
- Reckoned at the rate of three per cent. per annum, the yearly increase of the slaves amounts to 46,000
- The yearly increase of free negroes at 21/2 per cent. 6,000
- Total, 52,000

The census of the present year will probably show a black population, considerably above 2,000,000, and a corresponding ratio of increase.

Slave Trade.—Origin, Character, Extent, &c.

Henry, King of Portugal, under authority from three Roman Pontiffs, as early as the year 1454, took possession of several Islands and Havens on the Coast of Africa, and took thence many Slaves—some by force, and some by barter. The Portuguese first imported Slaves into Hispaniola, in 1508; and into their Brazilian Colonies, in 1517. For more than three centuries, some of the Christian powers of Europe have been engaged in this traffic; and, for more than a century and a half, it was prosecuted, by all Christendom, with extraordinary zeal and energy. The French Guinea Company contracted, in 1702, to supply the Spanish West Indies with 38,000 negroes, in ten years. In 1713, there was a Treaty between England and Spain, for the importation of 144,000 negroes, in thirty years. Some have estimated the whole number of Slaves exported from Africa, since the origin of this trade, at nearly 20,000,000. Of the nature of this traffic, Judge Story observes:—"It begins in corruption, and plunder, and kidnapping. It creates and stimulates unholy wars, for the purpose of making captives. It desolates whole villages and provinces, for the purpose of seizing the young, the feeble, the defenceless, and the innocent. It breaks down all the ties of parent, and children, and family, and country. It shuts up all sympathy for human suffering and sorrows. It manacles the inoffensive females, and the starving infants. It forces the brave to untimely death, in defence of their humble homes and firesides; or drives them to despair and self-immolation. It stirs up the worst passions of the human soul, darkening the spirit of revenge, sharpening the greediness of avarice, brutalizing the selfish, envenoming the cruel, famishing the weak, and crushing to death the brokenhearted. This is but the beginning of the evils. Before the unhappy captives arrive at the destined market, where the traffick ends, one quarter part at least, in the ordi-

nary course of events, perish in cold blood, under the inhuman or thoughtless treatment of their oppressors.

"Strong as these expressions may seem, and dark as is the colouring of this statement, it is short of the real calamities inflicted by this traffick. All the wars that have desolated Africa for the last three centuries, have had their origin in the slave-trade. The blood of thousands of her miserable children has stained her shores, or quenched the dying embers of her desolated towns, to glut the appetite of slave dealers. The ocean has received in its deep and silent bosom thousands more, who have perished from disease and want, during their passage from their native homes to the foreign colonies. I speak not from vague rumours, or idle tales, but from authentic documents, and the known historical details of the traffick—a traffick that carries away at least fifty thousand persons annually, from their homes and their families, and breaks the hearts, and buries the hopes, and extinguishes the happiness of more than double that number. "There is," as one of the greatest of modern statesmen has declared, "something of horror in it, that surpasses all the bounds of the human imagination."

The cruelties attending this trade, are probably greater now than at any former period. The Slave Ships are now crowded to excess, and the mortality is dreadful. In 1816, the African Institution ascertained, that one vessel, of 180 tons, took 580 Slaves; of which, 120 died on the passage to Tortola. Another, of 272 tons, received 642 Slaves; and lost 140. Another vessel lost 200, out of 600. Another 96, out of 500. Another, of 120 tons, took on board 600 Slaves; and though, when captured, she had sailed but 80 leagues, she had lost so, and many others were in a dying state. Dr. Philip, a distinguished missionary at the Cape of Good Hope, estimates the number annually exported, at 100,000. In 1823, Mr. Ashmun wrote from the Colony, that at least 2000 Slaves were annually exported from capes Mount and Montserado. In 1824, the African Institution reports 120,000, as the number exported from the coast, and presents a detailed list of the names of two hundred and eighteen vessels, believed to be engaged in the trade during that year. In 1827, one hundred and twenty-five vessels sailed from Cuba to Africa, for Slaves. Within the last eleven years, 322,526 Slaves have been imported into the single port of Rio Janeiro; that is, an average of 29,320 annually.

When first introduced into the United States.

The first cargo of Slaves was brought into Virginia, in the year 1620. "The legislature of the colony, at an early period, enacted laws to counteract the evil, by imposing restrictions upon their introduction. But these measures were always discountenanced, and the laws rejected by the queen in council, as injurious to the commerce and navigation of England."

Public opinion has been silently changing in Britain and America, in regard to this shameful traffic. In the year 1787, a motion was made in Parliament for the abolition

of the trade. This motion, though rejected, was renewed for twenty years, till, at length, it was enacted that, after March, 1808, no Slaves should be imported into the British dominions. In the same year, Congress passed a law prohibiting the farther introduction of Slaves into the United States.

All Christian nations have denounced this traffic, yet the pirates of many nations still engage in it, in defiance of the mandates of the law.

Colonies will put an end to the Slave Trade.

That no more has been done towards effecting this object, in the neighborhood of Liberia, is owing to the comparative feebleness of the colony. The case is different with respect to the English colony at Sierra Leone. The native chiefs of Sherbro district, through their great desire to be shielded from the ravages of the slave trade, have presented one hundred miles of coast, southward of Sierra Leone, to the colony. It is stated, that all the coast in the vicinity of that place, has been cleared of the slave-factories and slave vessels. Here, then, is an object of vast importance. Twenty or thirty colonies would put an end to the accursed trade. Several of the native chiefs in the vicinity of the Liberian colony, are ready to enter into arrangements to this effect. The Free Coloured Population demand our sympathy and aid. Their number is about 280,000. Though nominally free, they realize few of the blessings of freedom. Liberty degenerates into licentiousness, when the influences of knowledge, and the motives to virtue and excellence, exert not their restraints. Though there are many honourable exceptions—yet, as a class, the free people of colour exhibit few characteristics to encourage hopes of their improvement in this country. Loosed from the restraints of slavery, they utterly neglect, or miserably abuse the blessings which liberty would confer. Nor for this do they deserve our reproach, but rather our compassion. Change their circumstances, and we elevate their character, and improve their state. In Africa, they walk abroad with the feelings and spirit of freemen. They are no longer awed by superior worth and ability. Hope visits them, and their souls are animated with the noblest enthusiasm of liberty.

The Scheme of African Colonization, offers persuasive and powerful motives, and exhibits a safe and practicable method for the manumission and removal of slaves. Nothing has contributed more to retard the operations of the Colonization Society, than the mistaken notion that it interferes directly with slavery—and nothing is farther from the fact. It infringes upon no man's rights. Its object is noble and benevolent—to remedy an evil which is felt and acknowledged at the north and south—to give the free people of color the privileges of freemen—and to show how emancipation may be effected, with benefit to all parties, and with injury to none. That Slavery is a great moral and political evil, will admit of no question. That something, if possible, should be done to stay its increase, and prevent the evils which must attend its progress, seems to be the opinion of all the wise and good throughout the country. The Colonization Society, invites to the plan which they have adopted, the attention of

individuals and States, interested on this subject; but, whether the benefits of this plan are ever to be secured, depends, of course, upon the judgment of those concerned. That this judgment will be favourable, our recent experience, as well as our belief in the power of truth, give us great confidence.

Measures to be adopted, to aid the Society.

The establishment of State Societies, in all the States of this Union, with subordinate Associations in all the counties and towns of the several States, is an object of vast importance. In FIFTEEN States, Auxiliary State Societies have been already organized. It is, perhaps, desirable, that the County Societies should generally be auxiliary to the State Societies. These Auxiliary Associations collect and diffuse information, become organs of communication with the Parent Society, and combine the wisdom of age, and the ardour of youth, in the accomplishment of the object. But, it should not be forgotten, that for the consummation of its design, the Society has ever looked to the powers and resources of the National Government. Committees in Congress, have repeatedly considered the object, and presented Reports in its favour. Eleven State Legislatures have instructed their Senators, and requested their Representatives in Congress, to lend it their support. And what object was ever more worthy of national patronage? Was the purchase of Louisiana and Florida, more important? Was the voting \$10,000 annually, for Indian civilization? Was the relief of the distressed inhabitants of Caraccas? Were the large appropriations for the Cumberland Road, and other objects of internal improvement? Memorials, then, may most properly be addressed to Congress, soliciting its consideration of this subject.

A Union of all the Churches, of every denomination in the United States, in taking up Collections for the Society annually, on the Fourth of July, or on a Sabbath near to that day, is a measure inferior in importance, probably, to none which can be mentioned. On that occasion, so joyous and impressive, the prayers and charities of American Christians, may most appropriately be mingled, in behalf of Africa's deeply suffering and degraded children. The next Fourth of July, will occur on the Sabbath. What more appropriate than on the day of sacred rest, and on the day which commemorates our country's freedom, to remember the stranger within our gates; and, like the primitive Christians, to lay by on the first day of the week an offering for our poor brethren. Blessings inestimable, will result to Africa, from the measure. The day of her redemption is drawing near. The day star is soon to rise on her darkness. Ethiopia, in all her borders, will stretch out her hands to worship. Who does not wish to see that day? Who will not aid in hastening it?

Liberality of the Citizens of Philadelphia.—Liberated Slaves.

It being understood, some months ago, that several noble-minded masters were disposed to emancipate their Slaves, provided the means could be obtained of transporting them to Liberia, The Colonization Society of Pennsylvania resolved to make

an appeal to the citizens of Philadelphia, and to endeavour to raise the fund required for the removal of these liberated Slaves. Two vessels were, consequently, chartered; and the entire responsibility of defraying the expenses of such manumitted slaves, as might take passage in them, was assumed by the Pennsylvania Society. The result has been most cheering to the Friends of the African cause. Elliott Cresson, Esq. (a gentleman who has exerted himself with great zeal and energy for this object,) writes: "My list of subscriptions to this fund, (which embraces all but the amount of about \$400, sent to the Treasurer, or collected by Dr. Mitchell,) is \$3,589 50, including \$170, being the first payment on \$1700, subscribed in ten annual instalments—or, in other words,

- Donations, \$3,419 50
- Subscription, 1,700 00

This, of course, is independent of the accounts of Mr. G. Ralston, as Treasurer of the Pennsylvania Society's General Funds. In the two vessels, (the *Liberia* and *Montgomery*, the former of which has just returned from the Colony,) 113 liberated Slaves have sailed, and the entire expense of their removal has been defrayed, by the generous citizens of Philadelphia. But effects still more beneficial may be expected, from the influence of such an example.

Intelligence from Liberia.

Despatches of an encouraging character, have just arrived from the Colony. We here offer to the public, a letter from the Rev. George M. Erskine, a highly respectable coloured minister of the Presbyterian Church, from Tennessee—and some extracts from a letter of Mr. Joseph Shiphard, a very intelligent man of colour, late a Teacher in Richmond, Va. and an exemplary professor of religion:

Letter from the Rev. George Erskine, to a gentleman in Richmond, dated Caldwell, March 9th, 1830.

Rev. and Dear Brother:—We embarked on the 14th of January, 1830, and arrived at Monrovia, February 28, after a pleasant voyage of 42 days. It was, upon the whole, a pleasant voyage—the emigrants are in number 58. No sickness worth naming except that of the sea, on the way, nor as yet. We are all yet together in a house prepared for the reception of emigrants, where we expect to remain till we pass the fever, should we outlive it. There is a general satisfaction among the emigrants; they are pleased with their new country and present prospect; my own family have no desire to return. We were received by the agent and former emigrants with the strongest marks of friendship, and welcomed as citizens of Liberia. Our prospects of farms on which to live are inviting and flattering, being between Monrovia and Millsburg, on the bank of the St. Paul's. I presume the situation will be a healthy one, so soon as it becomes an open country—having a pleasant sea breeze from two directions. My dear Sir, I believe this

colony is a plant planted by the great husbandman of the universe—to it he hath already proved a guardian—around it he hath erected his pavilion and if the citizens only fear God and work righteousness, and continue in union under a wholesome civil government and laws, from the flourishing state of the colony, there is reason to believe it will grow into a great Empire. There is a large field for the labours of a gospel minister. If the Lord will, it will give me much pleasure, indeed, to labour in this part of his moral vineyard. But in this his will be done. My time in this country being short, it is but little I can say about it. This much I can say, my expectations in coming to it are already realized. Never did I feel so much like a freeman as I have since I came here. I would heartily recommend to every freeman of colour, to leave the United States for Liberia—and any one that wishes to do well; particularly those who have a little property. Was I in Virginia, and had 500 dollars to lay out at Richmond, I could in a short time convert it into a fortune.

The thing most to be deplored in this colony, is the want of a good school, and an enlightened teacher for poor children, whose parents cannot school them; for, in this tropical country, where there is an abundance of Gold, Ivory, Camwood, Coffee, and Sugar, Indigo, and many other lucrative fruits, we could have an enlightened Christian community. There is nothing to hinder it from rising to a level in point of eminence, wealth and power, among the most refined nations of the earth. There is no way in which those in America, who feel friendly to this infant colony, can confer so great a favour on it, as to establish a free school for the benefit of the poor children in it. This, I hope, you will influence them to do. There are many to whom I wish to write. Good morning, my friend. Your servant, GEORGE M. ERSKINE.

Extract from a letter from Joseph Shiphard, late a member of the First Presbyterian Church in Richmond, now in Liberia, to the pastor of that church, dated Monrovia, March 8th, 1830.

My dear Pastor and Brother in Christ:—

I have been absent, by order of the Governor, since the arrival of the Liberia, till midnight last, on a survey of a country to be the emporium of the American empire in Africa. Your eye, sir, surely never saw a more inviting spot—hitherto occupied by the natives, and overlooked by our people; it is now deserted by them for reasons I will write when time permit. While enjoying a short respite from great labour, in the midst of that fine forest, my mind rolled back to America, and recalled scenes never to recur with me. How many thousands of my brethren now languish in poverty, distress and thralldom at home, who might, if they really loved, and would make a trifling sacrifice for liberty, be lords of this fertile land, and masters of this majestic stream. Our comforts, sir, and conveniences, are daily multiplying and heightening, and I could dwell with pleasure on the beauty, fertility, and advantages of our country, particularly that part I have lately surveyed, until I should be disgusting to one who loved it less than you.

I am happy in the hope, that we too shall have here a house to worship in. Pray sir, join me, not you only, but I would fain desire all who love the cause of social and religious liberty, to unite with me in prayer for the preservation of brother Erskine—our church and brethren here—and the general prosperity of this the only asylum for my oppressed brethren of the U. States.

Say to Mr. Rennie, I disposed of the seed he gave me to many, having on my arrival but a small opportunity to cultivate a garden; some, however, I sowed, and nearly all came to maturity; and on a spot never before sown, though told by the old settlers it would produce nothing. I had the finest cabbage of different kinds ever seen in the Colony; several were 18 inches in diameter, and as sweet as the best I ever saw in the Richmond market: they gave me and many others great relief, for which I am now grateful.

From the first moment I resolved to come, I resolved to die here, and have never once regretted what I even now think was the direction of the Lord. With high esteem, yours in Christian bonds.

JOSEPH SHIPHARD.

[??] Any Clergymen who take up contributions for the Colonization Society, are entitled to receive, gratuitously, a copy of the African Repository and Colonial Journal, the monthly periodical of the Society.

[??] Richard Smith, Esq. of Washington City, is Treasurer of the American Colonization Society. To him contributions and donations may be forwarded, or to Charles Tappan, Esq. State Street, Boston; Grove Wright, Esq. N. York, or Samuel Stocking, Esq. Utica, N. York, Agents of the Society; or to the Treasurers of any of the Auxiliary State Societies. The following is believed to be a correct list of these: Of Maryland, John Hoffman, Esq. Baltimore; Pennsylvania, James Bayard, or Elliott Cresson, Philadelphia; New Jersey, Robert Voorhees, Princeton; Maine, (vacant,) Donations to be sent to Rev. Asa Cummings, Portland; New Hampshire, Wm. A. Kent, Concord; Connecticut, Seth Terry, Hartford; Vermont, H. D. Baldwin, or Rev. Chester Wright, Montpelier; New York, Richard Yates, Albany; Virginia, B. Brand, Richmond; Ohio, Nathaniel M'Lean, Columbus; Kentucky, Col. Edmund H. Taylor, Frankfort; Indiana, Isaac Coe, Indianapolis; Tennessee, Orville Ewing, Esq. Alabama, David Johnston, Esq. Tuscaloosa; N. Carolina, Daniel Dapre, Raleigh.

Letters requesting copies of the Annual Reports of the Society, or on any subjects relating to the objects of the Society, to be addressed to R. R. Gurley, Secretary, Washington City.

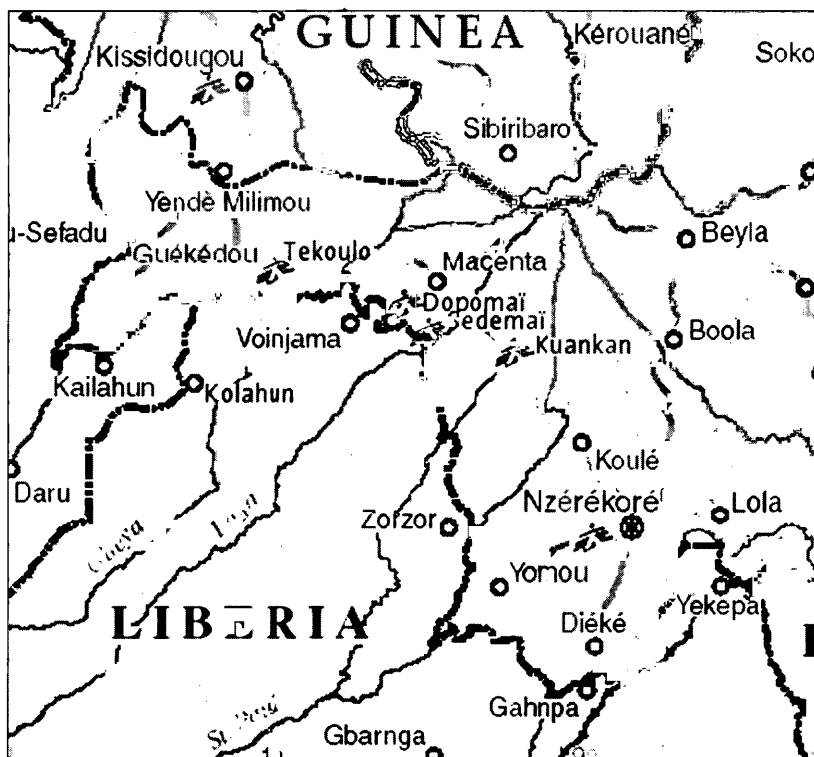
Orders for the Repository, to be addressed to James C. Dunn, Georgetown, D. C. Price of the work two dollars per year, payable in advance.

Voices From the Field

December 2002

Interviews conducted by MSF teams in Guinea

Testimonies from Liberian Refugees, July - August 2002



Forced enlistments, civilians exploited as weapon-bearers and sexual slaves:

"I am 24 and come from Kolahun district. My village was attacked last September. My father was killed. I fled with the rest of my family and all the people from the village who'd managed to escape. We spent seven months hidden in the forest for fear of meeting up with the soldiers or the rebels. At the end of April, we tried to leave. LURD fighters (rebel forces) captured us.

They made us carry their weapons and their equipment. I finally managed to get away.”

“I arrived in Guinea on July 13. My husband was killed in November. He had been taken by the rebel forces to carry their weapons and to work. (She begins to cry.) He was killed during an attack by the AFL (government forces). Later, they took six of my children, too. I fled into the forest with my baby on my back. My two little girls followed on foot. I lived in the bush for five months with other villagers. We ate what we could find. Finally, we decided to leave the forest to try our luck in town. There wasn’t anything to eat in Kolahun either. That’s where I heard about the camps in Guinea. The LURD rebels blocked us several times along the road. I finally managed to cross the border.”

Soldiers and civilian authorities on both sides of the border tightly control access to Guinea. Abuses are common while international oversight in assuring that the refugees’ basic rights are respected is irregular at best.

“Guinean soldiers arrested me at the border. They told me I had to give them 5,000 Guinean francs or they would throw me in prison. Since I didn’t have the money, I had to work for five days in the fields belonging to one of the soldiers to pay off my ransom. They let me go on the sixth day.”

Many men are refused entry into Guinea and returned to Liberia by force. Others are arrested or detained for several hours or days for “interrogation.” The border areas have simply become zones where no rights are respected.

For those who receive authorization to remain in Guinea, a long wait begins. Stuck in transit camps a few miles from the border, thousands of people are waiting to learn where they will be transferred. Their status is extremely uncertain. In violation of international law, they do not receive an official refugee card. The refugees’ treatment and care does not satisfy even minimal criteria.

Last spring, the media showed brief interest in the fate of tens of thousands of refugees and displaced persons in this West African region. Since then, fighting in Liberia has uprooted even more people, creating internally displaced persons and sending others to neighboring countries. The measures taken to protect and assist these people do not meet their needs.

These problems persist nearly five months after MSF published a report on the dire humanitarian situation in the Mano River region. The international community has not addressed the problems underlined in the report and have not taken the steps needed to ensure the protection of refugees, displaced people and returnees. Until then, war-affected civilians who seek a safe refuge will find continued abuse instead.

Read:

- Individual Interviews at the Tekoulo Transit Center (July 25, 2002)
- Interviews in Fassankoni Village (July 27, 2002), MSF Mobile Clinic Visiting Day

- Interviews in SedimaÃ- and DopomaÃ- villages, Macenta Prefecture (August 2-3, 2002)
- Liberians in Kuankan Refugee Camp, Nzérékoré province, Republic of Guinea (August 24, 2002)
- Interviews in the village of SedimaÃ- (July 26)
- Interviews in the Tekoulo Transit Center (July 15, 2002)

Individual Interviews at the Tekoulo Transit Center (July 25, 2002)

Steven

42 year-old teacher, born in the village of Woniahou, Foya District

Steven left his native village January 6, 2002 when it was attacked by government forces. He heard shots and panicked cries, then fled into the bush with his family. He says that his village has since been deserted, having been burned down by government troops. Several days after the fighting, he returned to see the damage. The village's entire population fled in different directions. He was in the bush with a group of some 30 others for several months, afraid of being captured by the fighters. They ate what they could find in the bush.

He heard that seven villagers were taken by government troops into the bush after a July 1 attack, but he did not observe the incident. He says that people were taken by government troops into the bush and were sent to Sierra Leone or other regions of Liberia where they had to work for the soldiers.

After hearing that the situation was relatively normal, his group, now numbering 50, emerged in Kolahun, a village that was subsequently attacked by government forces. They fled once more towards Voinjama, and, finally, to Nyandemoylahun, on the border with Guinea. His group arrived at this final village in mid-July. He confirms that his village, Zorzor, Kolahun, Voinjama and Nyandemoylahun are controlled by LURD. Civilians who wanted to flee to Guinea converged on this last village and awaited the LURD's authorization to cross the river, which constitutes the border. There are hundreds of civilians in the village waiting to flee into Guinea, but apart from these people in transit, the village is only a LURD military-administrative outpost. People must be interviewed in the LURD office and explain why they seek to cross the river. The wait authorization can last from several days to weeks.

Once they arrived on the Guinean side, the group waited 4 days at the Ouetkama border crossing post before being transferred to Tékoulo. In Ouetkama, they had nothing to eat, and there was no humanitarian aid or NGO presence (there is some in Tékoulo). He has been in Tékoulo for 10 days, hoping to be transferred to Kuankan. He is with his wife and their four children; two of their other children are already in Kuankan with his sister. He does not have a refugee card, but only an unofficial scrap of paper for food distribution. He has no freedom of movement : the Guinean soldiers guard

Tékoulo and they cannot leave the site, which is small and crowded. They are not allowed to go to the village to buy food or for any other reason.

He says that he has neither seen nor heard anyone talk about incidents in which Guinean soldiers have harassed the refugees (note: the refugees are nervous when asked to talk about what happens on this side of the border, while they speak willingly about violations by/of the DHs on the other side of the border or other actions by the military on the other side. One explanation for this is that they know they are in a precarious situation, a few kilometers from the border, without a refugee card and in a camp under the strict control of Guinean soldiers.) He also says that he saw young Liberian men turned back or stopped at the border while he was in Ouetkama (he does not know by whom), but has not seen people turned back since he was in Tékoulo. Of the nearly 30 people in the group he initially fled with into the bush, some 20 are in Tékoulo, including all the members of his family. The others did not manage to cross.

Kowoguilavogu

A mason in his late 50s, born in Kolahun village

Kolahun was attacked by government troops early in the morning on Monday, July 15, 2002 - market day. The AFLs encircled the town, fired their weapons in the direction of houses and shot a shell into the center of the village. Kowoguilavogu was in bed with his two children (approximately 7 and 10) when the attack began, while his wife and mother were in the village center. He fled immediately into the bush with his children. People ran in every direction to save themselves. His two older children had already left the village several days earlier for Guinea. They waited a few days in the bush until things calmed down. They had no food and they had left all their personal belongings behind. The village was sacked and partially burned. A few hours after the surprise attack, AFLs left the village, taking all the villagers' belongings. The LURD retook control of the village (Trans Q). In the bush, Kowoguilavogu learned that his wife and mother were killed during the attack. He decided to head for Guinea through the bush. There is no violence in the bush, he says, but the roads are very dangerous.

He says that government troops - but not the LURDs - oppress civilians. On the other hand, he acknowledges that the LURD strictly controls departures for Guinea. They reached Nyandemoylahun village where, supposedly, there were 500-600 civilians waiting LURD authorization to cross the river into Guinea. He says that the young men and women were not allowed to go to Guinea. They returned to their home villages or worked for the LURD. The only way for a young person to obtain a pass is to pay a large sum to the LURD or to make oneself valuable to the LURD.

He stayed in Nyandemoylahun for two days before obtaining a pass. He had to work a little for the troops (transporting food and material). He paid 50DL for the pass and 10DL for crossing the river by canoe. He had no possessions but he knew that prior to crossing, the LURD confiscates civilians' possessions. He was not taxed or stopped by soldiers on the Guinean side. However, he did see LURD forces with

Guinean troops at the Guinean border post. He had to wait 48 hours at the Ouetkama Guinean border post with another 500 people before being transferred to Tékoulo. Only 200 people were transferred to Tékoulo. The remainder stayed in Ouetkama. In Tékoulo, Kowoguilavogu found out that his two other children were already at the Kouankan camp.

Abraham

A 42 year-old blacksmith, born in Fassavoulou village, Kolahun District

Fassavoulou village, with 500-600 inhabitants, was controlled by the LURD when government troops attacked on June 28, 2002. Everyone fled into the bush. Abraham learned that two civilians were killed during the attack. The LURD retook control of the village, but his group decided to stay in the bush because they feared another attack. They remained there until July 10, the day they reached Nyandemoylahun. In fact, displaced people have to pass through this village before crossing the river into Guinea. It is impossible to cross directly from the bush because the river is the border, and the village is the only place where one can find canoes - the river is too large to swim across.

In Nyandemoylahun, there are 200-300 civilians waiting. They must obtain a pass from the LURD, which costs 50LD (note: I saw the pass with the LURD seal, signed on July 12 by LURD agent S-2, granting an ill man and his four children the right to cross to Ouetkama. According to Abraham, to obtain a pass you must be old, infirmed, or transporting an sick family member. You must also leave all your belongings behind. He had to leave oil supplies. He confirms that boys, in general, are not granted passes unless they pay a higher price or tell the LURD that they are sick. From his group, some 20 people were left behind on the Liberian side. To cross the river by canoe, one must pay 200FG.

On the Guinean side, the LURD are with Guinean soldiers. Abraham did not pay anything to the Guinean soldiers. Also, the Guinean soldiers sent people back to Liberia on the advice of LURD soldiers (especially young men and women who could not pay and who were of combat age). He was registered by the Guinean authorities for the first time. He remained in Ouetkama for three nights before being transferred to Tékoulo on July 15. According to him, the LURDs are present in Ouetkama with Guinean soldiers.

Three small groups arrived in Tékoulo after his. After their arrival in Tékoulo, they were registered a second time by Guinean authorities (accompanied by MSF.) He did not see any cases of people being sent back at this second registration, but he knows, of course, that the authorities separate people and do send some back at this stage, too, especially young, monied men who have managed to bribe their way through the two earlier checkpoints. He knows that men were sent to jail on Saturday, July 20, and that some, but not all, later arrived at the site. He never saw the HCR at the site, and that same HCR was not present at the registration in Tékoulo. He had only his LURD card

and the scrap of paper for food provided by MSF, and no refugee card. The refugees in Tékoulo could not leave the site guarded by the Guinean soldiers.

Humanitarian aid in Tékoulo is inadequate. He only had the right to one real meal daily (crushed corn) in the evening and a thin porridge in the morning. There has been no rice, even though that is key to their diet. They received just one blanket per family, while it was very cold at night during the rainy season. Finally, about 50-60 people were housed in a shared shelter with no privacy, and it was difficult to sleep. He was in the camp with his eight children. His two wives and other children were already in Kuankan.

Interviews in Fassankoni Village (July 27, 2002), MSF Mobile Clinic Visiting Day

(NB: There are supposed to be around 3,000 refugees in this village. The UNHCR has no presence and the subprefecture registers the arrivals. The HCR stopped by on June 27 to collect the refugee lists. The first refugees to arrive have been there since June 5-6 and are still waiting to be transferred to Kouankan. People have only one ticket for a future food distribution. The local population is under pressure as there is not enough food for everyone in the middle of the rainy season. The refugees have no freedom of movement. Certain men were separated from the group and sent to jail).

On June 19, 2002, a 35 year-old man, a Liberian refugee from Boukossans, Zorzor district, tried to intervene when the Guinean military arrested one of his friends accused of collaborating with the ULIMO rebels (c.f. next testimony). The man was threatened by the soldiers and "taxed" 10,000 Guinean francs (FG) for having intervened. He had to sell his shoes for 8,000 FG and borrow 2,000 FG from his friends to raise that amount.

28 year-old young man, Liberian refugee also from Boukossans. When he arrived in FASSANKONI with his wife and two children on June 15, 2002, the Guinean soldiers asked him his name. He had the same name as a ULIMO rebel sought for the attack on the village in October 2000. He was accused of being a rebel and imprisoned. He has been in prison ever since. His friend, who had wanted to intervene with the authorities, was taxed (c.f. prior testimony). His wife and two children have no food. On July 27, 2002, the Guinean military acknowledged that the man was not a rebel. He has still not been released and the soldiers are demanding that his wife pay 5,000FG for his freedom. He receives no food or medical care in prison.

– This testimony was taken on July 27 from his wife and the friend who sought to intervene with the authorities for his freedom. We did not meet the prisoner.

A 27 year-old young man, refugee from Zorzor, Lofa County, was arrested at the frontier by Guinean soldiers on July 21, 2002. The soldiers used extortion to get 5,000 FG from him. He had to pay or would be thrown in prison. The man did not have the amount demanded, and to avoid prison, he worked without pay for 5 days in fields belonging to one of the soldiers. He was finally released on the sixth day.

On June 14, 2002, six young Liberian refugee men were arrested by Guinean soldiers in Kouankan and were referred on to Fassankoni. They were accused of collaborating with the Liberian ULIMO rebels. After detention and questioning, they were found "innocent" but were required to pay 10,000FG per person for their release. The jailed Liberian men did not have the money. To pay back their 60,000FG debt to the subprefect, they arranged a "contract" under which they would be "paid" 1,000FG/day for working in the fields of Fassankoni residents. This day labor did not include food.

In the Fassankoni region, the wage for one day of fieldwork without employer-provided food is 1,500FG per person. With food, the day's wage is 1,000FG.

"I'm a 24 year-old man. My name is â | and I come from Boukossan's, in the Lofa region. On June 29, the Liberian soldiers took us into a forest with many men, women and children. During that time, our village of Boukossans was attacked by ULIMO rebels. After walking for three days in the bush, the rebels attacked the soldiers on July 3, 2002. We all panicked. We fled — my older sister, her son and I. My mother, 69, and the rest of the group and of my family are still in the hands of the Liberian soldiers. I entered Guinea at Fassankoni on July 23 with my big sister and her son. We have been housed in the allowed to leave the room. The soldiers block us. We've asked HCR for help, to be evacuated as soon as possible to the Kouankan refugee camp so that we can be free and receive food. Since we arrived, we've only gotten food from HCR once, on Friday, June 26, 2002."

"I'm a 38 year-old man and a Liberian refugee. Zorzor was attacked on June 4, 2002 and we fled the fighting into the bush. When my family (five people) and I reached the border on June 8, 2002, Guinean soldiers arrested us as we were leaving Liberia. When we reached the Fassankoni police station, they told us we had to pay 10,000FG for each person because we hadn't crossed the border by the main road, but in the bush. (*Refugees typically cross by the main road. Those who cross via the bush are systematically suspected of being rebels.*) After apologizing to the subprefect, we each paid 5,000FG. We didn't have the money. Since then, we have been working under contract in the fields every day to pay off that money. We earn 1,000FG/day, without food."

"I am a 45 year-old man and a Liberian refugee. I crossed the Liberia-Guinea border on June 7, 2002 with my wife and 18 year-old daughter. When we reached the first Guinean village, Y., the soldiers told us to continue on to Fassankoni. Lacking the means to pay for transportation to Fassankoni, we had to spend the night in Y. The soldier demanded that we give him my daughter for the night if we wanted to stay there and sleep in the village. What did we do? We gave him our daughter so that we could eat and go on to Fassankoni the next morning."

"I am a 32 year-old man and a Liberian refugee. During the attack on my village, Bonkossans, Zorzor district, on June 10, 2002, by ULIMO rebels, we fled toward the Guinean frontier. When we reached the first Guinean village, Y., after being stopped by soldiers who were looking for rebels. The women and children were freed. We, the 10 men, were arrested and accused of collaborating with the rebels who had attacked Fassankoni. During our detention, the Guinean soldiers tied the men together, two by two, with cords. The cords were very tight and were left in place for more than 12 hours. Some men were burned on their legs and arms by cigarettes and beaten with plastic tubes on their backs. When they were released, two of the men who had been tied together back-to-back could no longer use their hands. They couldn't hold a tool, couldn't feed themselves for a week and two weeks later, they were still unable to hold a pen."

"I want to tell you my story so that this will stop. When my hands are healed, I'll be able to write it myself. Our imprisonment lasted one week without our families knowing anything about our detention. We were attached, tied together and taken to the Kouankan military camp. We suffered through three days. They interrogated us. Then the soldiers understood that we were just simple refugees. They took us back to Fassankoni and demanded that we pay 10,000FG per person before being released. We had to ask the authorities to let us have contracts to work in the fields so that we could pay. We cleared the coffee and cacao fields for 12 days so that we would pay the 20,000FG. We gave that money to the authorities and finally we were set free."

Interviews in Sedima^Ã and Dopoma^Ã villages, Macenta Prefecture (August 2-3, 2002)

A 52 year-old Malinké farmer, originally from Kolahun

"I arrived in Tekoulo three months ago. I left Liberia on May 10 at 2 o'clock in the morning after attacks by the Liberian army against the rebels. I arrived in Tekoulo on May 15 after spending four days in the bush without eating.

I left behind my wife, my four sons and my daughter. When I arrived in Tekoulo, I was arrested by Guinean soldiers, accused of being a collaborator of the Liberian rebels that attacked Tekoulo in November 2000. All the women and children were free to pass, but Guinean soldiers arrested the men. We were taken to the Guekedou military camp, tied together, bound, accompanied by another group of nine refugees, also prisoners. We were locked up for two weeks in Guekedou. We ate once a day, scarce portions. After they conducted all the checks, we were all released on June 3, 2002 and they abandoned us in Guekedou. We didn't have the means anymore to get to Tekoulo camp.

One of my old friends at the small Guekedou market took me to his house, and I quickly left the others I'd been with. My friend took me to his home in Diomandou, in the Daro subprefecture, Macenta prefect. I stayed in Diomandou for a month. Then I asked my friend to help me get back to Tekoulo so that I could be transferred to Kouankan and also get news of my family. When I arrived in Tekoulo on July 15, I asked the representative of the Tekoulo refugee camp (he could not provide more precise information on the identity of this representative) to help me transfer to Kouankan.

Two days later, on July 17, 2002, I became ill. I had severe bloody diarrhea and malaria. I was transferred to the Macenta hospital in the HCR ambulance, which was leaving for Kouankan camp. The first and second days, I was treated for free. Since then, I have had no food aid or medications either from the hospital or from HCR. Every day, I eat thanks to the help of people from the therapeutic feeding center in Macenta. And I still have the same illness and same living condition. Three days ago I received a medical bill from the doctors for 40.000FG. If I don't pay this amount, I won't be treated so I'm asking all the NGOs to come help us.

I thank the MSF team, which intervened with the HCR doctor and allowed me to be admitted to the N'Zerekore hospital at HCR expense."

A 38 year-old Toma farmer, originally from Bokessa, Zorzor district

He is accompanied by a friend's two children, who were separated by their father during the attack and is still in Liberia.

"Our village of Bokessa was attacked on June 29, 2002, by ULIMO rebels. I was lucky to be able to get into a house and shut myself up there. Liberian soldiers took my my wife and my three children. (Government forces were in the village at the time of the attack. During their flight, they abducted women and children.)

Two days later, the ULIMO rebels took us all to the border, telling us that it wasn't safe in the village. We entered Guinea through DopamaÃ village. Our group stayed two days in awful conditions without food. In DopamaÃ, we found other refugees who were living in the same awful conditions and we all continued to SidemaÃ on July 5.

When we arrived in SidemaÃ, the village chief counted us all. That day, we were 450 refugees. We were asked to pay 1000FG per refugee to the village chief. Lacking money, we asked the chief if we could do day labor in the fields to pay. The second day, we all started working in the fields from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. For this work, we were each given 1000FG and food.

And we are still working for food and we don't have a house to sleep in and we must spend the night in the school, without a door or window. Since we arrived here, we received food once from the HCR (July 29 World Food Program distribution) and the villagers tell us to leave their village because famine is coming because the number of refugees grows every day and we are asking HCR for help to transfer to the refugee camp."

A 32 year-old Loma farmer, originally from Baziédou, Koyama district

"On June 15, 2002, our village was awakened by loud gunshots coming from Voinjama. We all fled towards the Guinean border.

We met a group of soldiers from the Liberian government's forces and they took us hostage, ordering us to stay and die for our country. We spent four days in the bush, still held by the soldiers, with nothing to eat but wild fruit. Two days later, we heard gunshots coming closer to where we were. We all fled (civilians and soldiers) towards the Guinean border. When we reached the Dopama entry station, the children and the women were allowed to pass. The men were closely guarded by Guinean security and then they let us enter freely. The five Liberian government soldiers were arrested and disarmed and the rest of us continued on towards the village of Dopama where we spent one night in very bad conditions (no food, sleeping outdoors).

The next morning, I went to the village of Sidema with my two wives and five children. When we arrived in Sidema, we were put on a registration list and he asked us to pay 1,000FG per person in registration fees. I had to sell my watch for 8,000FG to a Guinean soldier so that I could pay for my family. We were housed at the public school. I had to agree to daily fieldwork contracts so that I could feed my family, and since our arrival we've received food from the HCR only one time, on July 29. We don't have mats or blankets and we spend the night on the ground, exposed to all sorts of illnesses. Take my son, 3 years old, who has malaria. The MSF medical team help us. We asked the HCR for help to transfer to the refugee camp because the villagers hate us."

Liberians in Refugee Camp, Nzérékoré province, Republic of Guinea (August 24, 2002)

Anthony D.

32 year old student, originally from Voinjama District, now living in zone 12 of Kuankan

As he headed for the market in the center of Kuankan camp at 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, August 24, 2002, four well-dressed Liberian men (Mandingos) "jumped on him". He had never seen the men before, believes they were not camp residents. The men tried to force Anthony into a truck parked along the main road in site 8. A fight broke out, which drew a group of curious bystanders. The four unknown men said he had to return to Liberia to fight. They tore his shirt and, in the midst of the commotion and confusion of cries of protest from spectators, he managed to escape. He immediately related the incident to the chairman of zone 12, Monsieur Peter. He also told him that the fight was still underway in zone 8, and that the four men who were still looking for combat-aged men.

Very upset, Anthony and Peter notified an MSF staff member. According to Anthony, this was the first time such an incident occurred since he arrived at the Kuankan camp in mid-June 2002.

Ybasu Kpazuo Worday

31 year old student, originally from Zorzor District, now living in zone 12 of Kuankan

The story is almost identical.

Around 2 p.m. on August 24, 2002, Ybasu was walking along a secondary road in zone 8 toward the Kuankan camp market to buy some corn. Six well-dressed Liberian men (Mandingos) he'd never seen in the camp told him to follow them and climb into a truck parked a few meters away on the camp's main road. Given their appearance, Ybasu feels they were probably not refugees. The six men then asked him to identify where he was from in Libéria. When Ybasu said he is from Zorzor, they said that he had to get into the truck to join his brothers at the front in Lofa. He could see the truck with four men already on board.

They began to fight and furious refugees gathered. A Guinean soldier arrived and asked the men the whereabouts of their commander. During the discussion, Ybasu managed to flee, running back towards zone 12 to notify his chairman. He found the man with a friend and with an MSF staff worker.

According to Ybasu, that was the first incident of its kind since he arrived at Kuankan June 4, 2002. On Friday, he'd heard rumors that rebels would be conducting forced recruitment in the camp in the coming days. Even though he had never witnessed such an incident, he did say that rebel trucks frequently circulated along the camp's main road and on the main road running between the camp and the village of Kuankan, approximately 5 km away.

He said he also heard rumors about forced recruitment taking place in the camp and at the village market in Kuankan at the end of May 2002. He further said that the chairmen of the different zones complained to the Guinean authorities (the subprefect of Kuankan village, the head of the BNCR, the national refugee coordinating bureau, in the camp and the head of the Guinean army in the camp) and the HCR. Such forced recruitment ended temporarily after the complaints were made.

NB: Following these discussions, the chairman of zone 12 and the head of MSF drove to the camp entrance to alert the Guinean soldiers, the HCR and the BNCR to these developments. When they arrived at the camp's main road near the market, they saw the truck with a dozen refugees on board and some 50 furious onlookers. The truck took drove toward the camp's exit, followed by the MSF pick-up. At the camp exit, the Guinean soldiers, showed no resistance and let the truck pass. Questioned by the MSF supervisor, the soldiers said the truck was probably going to the market, but in the absence of the HCR, the BNCR supervisor and their commander, they were not authorized to stop the truck and they didn't want any problems.

Interviews in the village of Sedima^Ã (July 26)

Note: Approximately 700 refugees were in Sedima^Ã, equal to or slightly greater than the village population. Like the villagers, they are Thomas/Bandi. The village is a few kilometers from the border on the road to Zorzor. The river narrows, so the refugees swam across, and there is no military-administrative checkpoint on either side of the border.

Group interview (no privacy). The group leader is David S., a nurse in his early 50s, originally from Zorzor village, Zorzor District

He was in the bush when Zorzor was attacked in early May. He fled for safety before the attack because he heard rumours that one was imminent. The group of 600-700 people remained in the bush for a month because they feared they would be captured on the road by fighters or turned back at the border by Guinean soldiers. They had a hard time finding food. They reached Sedima^Ã on June 6. When they received assurances that the situation in Zorzor was stable, everyone left together and swam across the river. There were no controls either on the Liberian or the Guinean side of the border.

Since David's group arrived in Sedima^Ã, the U.N.HCR had conducted two short visits. On the first, HCR representatives compiled lists of refugee names that the village chief completed. On the second, June 26, U.N. representatives distributed two packets of biscuits per refugee and promised to transfer the refugees to Kuankan. Nothing had happened since. The sub-prefecture registered the group when they arrived. David had a coupon dated June 26 (for biscuit distribution, with the sub-prefecture's seal) but no refugee card. To survive while waiting, the group worked in the fields for Guinean farmers, but the food was not sufficient. The villagers were in a similar situation, as they had to share with the refugees even though there wasn't enough food for the rainy season. The group wants to be transferred as quickly as possible because tensions in the village are rising and the authorities are angry. More Liberians - nearly 50 people - arrived on July 20. In all, three groups of Liberians from Zorzor district have arrived here since the beginning of June.

Interviews in the Tekoulo Transit Center (July 15, 2002)

M.

24 year-old Bandi man, born in Kpanehew (Kolahun District), Instructor

The AFL attacked his village on September 27, 2001. He was ill at the time. The entire village fled into the bush and lived there for several months, not daring to return for fear of meeting up with AFL soldiers or LURD rebels. There are 10 other people in his family. His father was killed during the fighting. His mother, wife, a little boy, two sisters and five other relatives remain.

Any movement seemed impossible prior to April. The LURD prevented people from fleeing toward the north and required them to stay where they were. Beginning

in April, the pressure lifted (perhaps because fighting intensified and the LURD pulled back). People came out of the bush to flee. As they were leaving the bush, the LURD captured them and forced them to carry LURD supplies. Nonetheless, they managed to escape. They fled towards the north and reached Ouetkama on Monday, July 9. He spent a full week in Ouetkama without receiving any aid. He worked for some local people cutting weeds in a marsh in preparation for planting. In exchange, he earned a little money or food. He says he did not see any deaths in Ouetkama.

Several of his family members were brought to Tekoulo before he was. He was taken there on Monday, July 15 with his little boy. He says he did not have to pay for the trip. He was one of the first to leave the screening, which is somewhat odd for a young man, but he was alone and responsible for the little boy, who was ill. He heard that his family members were in Kouankan and hoped to be taken there.

R. M.

a young man, English-speaking, Bandi not asked his age (this was his first interview and he was not used to the process; his English was difficult to follow).

He arrived in Tekoulo on Wednesday, July 11.

He comes from the village of Koutoulahun Town in Kolahun district. When they saw soldiers coming to fight the ULIMO (United Liberation Movement for Democracy), they fled into the bush. Soldiers captured them and took them to town to work (Kolahun, where they stayed for a month). Living conditions were very harsh and they decided to flee again for Guinea. He left on his own, as the AFL had taken his wife. He says he left at least 10 family members behind when he fled into the bush. He has relatives in Kouankan (nearly 20 people from his village, who were supposed to have been transferred already), so he would like to go there. This is the first time he has come to Guinea.

A. K.

a woman who says she doesn't know her age, non-English-speaking (translation by Prince Koné), from Baloma (Loukosso), Bandi.

She arrived in Tekoulo on Saturday, July 13. Her husband died around November, killed by AFL forces in Kamata - Massala. He was brought there by LURD soldiers, who had taken him by force to carry their loads and to work in Kouankan (She begins to cry.) Later, around December 8, six of her children were seized by the AFL in Baloma. She fled into the bush with her three young children. With another 20 run-aways (from Baloma and neighboring villages), they lived in the bush for five months and ate what they found. They decided to leave the bush in hopes of finding a solution in town. They reached Kolahun, where they heard about the Guinea and Kouankan camps. They hadn't tried to reach the camps before because they had not known they existed. They fled Kolahun because there was no food there, either. They were abused several times on the road by LURD soldiers, who tried to keep them from passing and

wanted to send them back to Kouankan. It took her six days to reach Guinea from Kolahun. She carried her son on her back and her two little daughters walked. She says she had no problem crossing the border. She reached Ouetkama, where she spent three days without eating. She says her sister is in Kouankan and she would like to go there.

P. K.

a 42 year-old English-speaking Bandi, born in Gbandahéwa where he teaches and is the principal at a school with 15 teachers.

Around 45 LURD rebels arrived in the village. The inhabitants were not hurt because the rebels were also villagers. Two days later, the AFL attacked the village. This was the first time the village was attacked since the war began in Liberia, although there was fighting in Kolahun two years ago. His village destroyed, he fled to Kolahun where living conditions were very harsh. He took his 10 family members with him. On June 7, AFL forces attacked the village so they fled into the bush. Then he decided to send the entire family to Guinea, from where they should have been able to reach Kouankan. Many people were then fleeing Kolahun (according to him, this was the largest wave of departures, although the largest attack on the village was supposed to have been on Christmas Eve, 2001). P. K. stayed because he wanted to gather his belongings. He finally left Kolahun on Friday, July 6, walking for two days to reach Ouetkama. Along the way, he encountered LURD soldiers who took him captive. They had looted a car and used Prince to carry the tires. Following along with them, he entered Guinea without problem (he knows that the price at the border is usually \$50). When the LURD soldiers arrived in Ouetkama, they sold the tires and let him go. They hadn't given him anything to eat in two days. In Ouetkama, he slept in the school compound and did not receive any food. He estimates that some 600 - 1,000 people were waiting in Ouetkama (he knew that Telikoro then housed 600 people so his guess seems credible). There, the LURD soldiers decided to recruit porters again to carry bags of rice in the opposite direction. He took advantage of a convoy of 645 people. It took him two hours to reach Tékoulo from Ouetkama on foot. He says the Guineans did not mistreat him.

He wants to reach Kouankan where his family has taken refuge since early June. A refugee woman in Kouankan who came back to Kolahun to find her relatives brought him a letter from his family. They all know Kouankan because many people went there following the December attacks. Additionally, BBC News has a major following in the Telikoro camp.

He believes that MSF provides all the food in Telikoro. He does not distinguish between MSF, Action Contre la Faim (ACF), probably, the UN, whose representatives visited two days before the interviews. He received medication for his eye and is doing better, although he says there is not enough food and that he is ill. They sleep 60 to a tent. All the people are Bandi from Kolahun district.

According to him, the LURD holds Kolahun. There was no more fighting in Kolahun but considerable combat around the town. As long as fighting continues, he will not go home.

E. M.

a 78 year-old Bandi farmer born in Ngokorhun

He fled his village, which was attacked by government forces around six months ago (between December and February). He fled into the bush but LURD soldiers forced them to return to town. Otherwise, they would be considered rebels (by LURD rebels). The government attacked the town again and they fled once more, this time to a second village, Taninahun. They were subjected to another government attack and fled to a third village (Nyandemoylahun). The LURD was holding that village and refused to let young people flee to Guinea and the camps. He was able to pass because of his age, but he had to pay the LURD 50Â£. All together, they are a family of 10 and it is not clear if they all paid to pass. With LURD authorization, they crossed the border and reached Ouetkama, where they spent two days without food. They left for Tekoulo, where they arrived on Saturday, July 13, after walking for two or three hours. They were nine in the transit camp. One son, who arrived earlier, was already in Kouankan.

According to him, the people of Kolahun District fled into the bush en masse but were turned back each time by the LURD. They want to go to a refugee camp. They are relatively satisfied in Tekoulo but hope to go to Kouankan.

N. K.

a 27 year-old Bandi teacher, born and living in Gbandeewa, Kolahun District

It was not easy to get here.

The AFL attacked his village on April 7, 2002 and everyone fled into the bush. The LURD found them and took them all to Kolahun. They spent three weeks there working for the rebels. At that time he was with his blind parents, his wife and two children. They worked in the coffee and banana plantations. Living conditions were very harsh. They fled into the bush but were attacked by AFL forces who killed several fleeing villagers. They fled again and reached Gwoukwahou. The government attacked again and they fled towards Kyandemahoun. There they bought passes for the six people. They reached Ouetkama, where they spent three nights and he bought food. He did not see deaths in Ouetkama. He paid to come to Tekoulo (he is one of the few to say so, but perhaps that's because he is a young man). He reached Tekoulo on Saturday, July 13. He received food and will see a doctor.

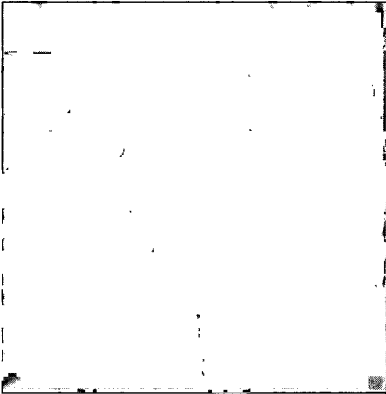
The Destruction of Lofa County

by

E. Sumo Jones

October 16, 2002

Editor's Note: This article, which was originally published by the New Democrat, has been sent to The Perspective for publication. The issues discussed in the article highlight the rigor of our plight, and as such we have decided to publish it.



Former Warload Albaji Kromah

It has taken me time to read, with immense interest, the ULIMO chief Mr. Albaji G. V. Kromah's reaction to my comments regarding his role in the tragic Liberian conflict, comments that appeared on the New Democrat website on 29 July, 2002. Mr. Kromah's reaction was the result of my appraisal of a commentary in the New Democrat on Mrs. Jewel Howard Taylor (Liberia's First Lady) to which I took exception because, I argued, the editor failed to mention Mr. Kromah's role in this tragedy, along with his collaboration with another warlord, Charles Taylor, in the destruction of lives and property.

I contended that this Taylor-Kromah collaboration resulted in the killing of many civilians in Monrovia in 1996 when he teamed up with NPFL warlord Taylor in a brutal armed uprising that killed hundreds of innocent people. I also reminded readers about ULIMO-K's cruel murders of innocent civilians in Lofa County. ULIMO's cruelties also led to the brutal killings, and looting of personal belongings of non-Mandingos and non-Muslims. Their towns, villages, churches, clinics and schools were burnt down upon the orders of, and under Mr. Kromah's command. This was part of his concocted plan and hidden agenda to ethnically cleanse Lofa County in order to create a predominant Mandingo and Muslim County.

But it is unfortunate that Mr. Kromah could deny well-documented facts regarding his role in Lofa as a warlord. Instead of accepting the facts, he opted to adopt his strategy of denials and blame-shifting. Mr. Kromah then proceeded to levy false accusations against me, claiming that I am anti Mandingo and anti Muslim. He also inferred that I am a wicked and even murderous person. He further claimed that I burnt down a rice farm of Dr. Samuel Guluma, and that I disliked the late Dr. Edward

Kesselly because, he claimed, I did not want for President Tolbert to carry him as his running mate.

He connected these claims to my tenure as Superintendent of Lofa County. I take these allegations and innuendos seriously because they ping on my character, something I have worked over the years to develop and uphold.

Let me say from the onset that I honestly harbor no ethnic or religious hatred against Mandingos nor any other tribe. I consider many Mandingos, amongst whom I have many friends, decent people. Tribes to me are not important when interacting with fellow men because all Liberians are equal in my eyes. I wish to sincerely declare that there is not an iota of tribal, ethnic, religious or racial hatred in my heart against anyone safe to say for the decent people of the Mandingo Tribe and/of the Muslim faith a numerous number of whom were and are my personal friends. As a matter of fact, I don't think about tribe and ethnicity when I am dealing with my fellowmen because I take everyone as Liberians only.

Regarding Mr. Kromah's malicious allegation that I am somewhat a supporter of President Charles Taylor because I defended his wife against criticism published by this paper, I will not dignify his allegation, and will not repeat my position on the issues and the polices of the Taylor administration.

Mr. Kromah accused me of being a wicked and even a murderous Superintendent of Lofa County. He gave as an example an allegation that I burnt down Dr. Samuel Guluma's rice farm. I appreciate the fact that he confessed that he did not believe that I burnt Dr. Guluma's rice farm. This fortunately represents the truth. I did not, and do not indulge in criminal practices. The facts state that the late President William Tolbert thoroughly investigated the allegation and found me to be absolutely innocent. Mr. Saama Smith, a cousin of Dr. Guluma and former Chief of Police of Lofa County who resides in Hyattsville, Maryland and former County Commissioner of Zorzor District, Lofa County, Honorable Peter W. Howard respectively can bear me out. As a matter of fact, the malicious allegation was made against me in 1972 during the second year of my administration as Superintendent of Lofa County and my services as Superintendent did not end before July 1975. Anyone knowing President Tolbert's policy knows very well that he was a man who left no stones unturned in investigating any complaint before him and that if one was found guilty, regardless of your relationship to him, he would fire you forthwith. On his allegation that I was even murderous, I categorically deny that I have ever shed any human blood in my life and do not believe that I will ever take another person's precious life for any reason. I am not the blood thirsty Alhaji Kromah who believes that everybody is a part of his murderous profession, which is very much enshrined in him.

With reference to his accusation that I heard about the massacre of the people in Barkedu Town in Lofa County and did not show any sympathy because they were Mandingoes and Muslims, that is, again, false and unfounded, in that when I heard the news while over here in the US that nearly all of the people in that town were killed

by NPFL fighters, I was sad and angry as I did when some of his fighters brutally killed my first cousin, Arthur Jones, in my hometown, Kiliwu, in cold blood before his wife and children. Arthur was the schoolteacher in the town appointed by the Ministry of Education where he had sacrificially served for seven years after graduating from ZRTTI. My cousin was an innocent civilian and unarmed. I was even told that Kromah sent some of his fighters to Kiliwu solely for the purpose of killing me as he thought that I was there and his disappointment led them to kill my cousin and burnt down the town including my beautiful home. I was fond of the people of Barkedu and I paid two official visits to that beautiful and prosperous town upon invitation from the elders of the Town accompanied in both instances by Honorable Mama Dukuly and one time by Dr. Edward B. Kesselly when I was Superintendent of the County. I must admit that I was helpless to do anything about both the murder of my cousin and the massacre of the predominately Mandingo/ Muslim people of Barkedu, particularly while I was over here in the US. In the meantime, I do not believe that any other tribes from Lofa County were involved in the murder of those people as the people of that town and the other tribes had lived peacefully together for years without any conflict.

Mr. Kromah also alleged that he was told that I did not like the late Dr. Edward B. Kesselly because he was an ethnic Mandingo and also because President Tolbert had decided to carry him as his running-mate. First of all, that is my first time learning that President Tolbert had intended to carry Dr. Kesselly as his running mate instead of the late former Senator Jackson F. Doe. In any case, I am not fond of defending myself against anyone who has passed away especially a very loyal citizen of Lofa County like Dr. Kesselly. I would therefore ask Mr. Kromah to please let Dr. Kesselly's soul rest in peace. If by Mr. Kromah bringing such false information up implies that he was fond of Dr. Kesselly, this is far from the truth. I do not believe it in that Mr. Kromah publicly denounced Dr. Kesselly's trip to Banjul, The Gambia, for the formation of the Interim Government in which Dr. Kesselly played a major role.

No doubt, Mr. Kromah was the one who disliked Dr. Kesselly, because of jealousy. If he ever liked Dr. Kesselly so much, why did he not memorialize him by joining the Party Dr. Kesselly established known as Unity Party (UP)? I want Kromah to understand that I am not an ingrate. Dr. Kesselly's father, the late former and renowned General Beyan Kesselly and former Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of Liberia caused a grand Party to be held in my honor in celebration of my appointment as Superintendent by President Tolbert in September, 1971. The party was hosted by the people of Lofa County residing in Monrovia. Is it General Kesselly's son I would hate because of his tribe or any other reason? The Party which was held in Lorma Community was well attended and lasted throughout the night, colored by the presentation of many gifts to show solidarity. For his information, Dr. Kesselly and I were on cordial terms. I joined the March he called here in Washington D. C. in 1990 on behalf of the Interim Government against the NPFL warring faction of Charles Taylor and that was the last time I saw this remarkable man.

Mr. Kromah is so full of ethnic bigotry to the extent that he, out of character, failed to note my numerous contributions in Lofa County, the County he claims to be a citizen of, although he murdered its innocent civilians with vengeance under the pretext of running a resistance force to liberate the people of the County. Anything that he knows that I did good for the development of the County and in the interest of the people, as numerous and visible as they are, he conspicuously failed to mention it. My administration was focused on implementing President Tubman's Unification and Integration Policy at all costs, along with undertaking massive development projects and vigorous pursuit of agriculture with the support of the hardworking people of the County. For an example, he stated that his uncle, the late Mohammed Kromah was one time Acting County Attorney and Acting Superintendent of Lofa County but intentionally failed to state during whose administration of the County his uncle served in those acting capacities simply because it was during my administration as Superintendent.

Some facts are needed here for readers. In September 1971, when I was appointed by President Tolbert as Superintendent of Lofa County while still serving as Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization, I left the County for Monrovia to turn over to the new Commissioner. I then left Attorney Mohammed Kromah, who was then the County Attorney, as Acting Superintendent. While I was in Monrovia, I received a report that the then Minister of Justice, Honorable Clarence L. Simpson Jr., who happens to be Mr. Kromah's father-in-law, had sent a special plane with a writ of arrest for Attorney Mohammed Kromah, my Acting Superintendent. Mr. Simpson's directive was that Mr. Kromah be handcuffed and taken down to Monrovia. This was despite the fact that the Lofa Circuit Court was scheduled to open the following Monday, which could not be possible without a County Attorney. Although Lofa County had a Court of competent jurisdiction where Mr. Kromah could have been given the opportunity to attend a preliminary examination to ascertain if there was a magnitude in the charge against him, he would have had to be suspended by the President before being arrested, since he was a commissioned Officer. Unfortunately, that legal process was not pursued, and Mr. Kromah was summarily arrested, hand-cuffed and whisked off to Monrovia by a special plane with no reference to me whatsoever. I was extremely angry about the situation, to the extent that I filed an exception with the Minister of Justice, the President and the Minister of Local Government, Honorable Everett Goodridge. I considered the deprivation of Attorney Kromah's legal rights prior to his being arrested and my being overlooked unjustified and illegal. Unfortunately for me, the only reaction I received was an order from the President through the Minister of Local Government that I recommended someone to be appointed as County Attorney in place of Mr. Kromah to coincide with the opening of the Court. I had no alternative but to carry out the order by nominating the late Benedict Kennedy who, Mr. Alhaji Kromah has admitted, one of his fighters brutally murdered in Voinjama during his military control of Lofa County.

During my administration as Superintendent of Lofa County, I did everything humanly possible to involve all Lofa County citizens in the affairs of the County by radio and television announcements, at times even in delivering Independence Day addresses, attending meetings called by the President for our citizens, etc. We convened meetings in the County for its development and the welfare of the people. Hon- orables Elijah Taylor, Rudolph Johnson and Isaac Randolph, to name a few, are all over here in the US, and are witness to this.

Throughout those years, 1971-1975, never did I see Mr. Alhaji Kromah attending any of those meetings or involving himself in the affairs of the County safe to say, for him to identify himself with the County as a patriotic citizen of same. I believe that Mr. Kromah, who was born in Monrovia, did not take himself to be from the "country" but a "Monrovia boy" and was ashamed of the name of the County he now claims to be a citizen of. Even throughout President Samuel K. Doe's administration when he and I served in that Government, never did I see Mr. Kromah actively involved in the County's affairs. I can vividly recall that on several occasions, President Doe granted us audiences to discuss matters affecting the County at the Executive Mansion, Mr. Kromah was nowhere to be found. Where was he and where did he stand then? I am referring to the Alhaji Kromah who has stated, in his Rejoinder to my letter and a long e-mail that he sent me, that he was born in Monrovia, lived in Kolahun District and that his home in Lofa County is Bopolu District where I never heard anybody to mention his name, safe to say, his having any kinship relation to the late King Sao Boso, the Mandingo warrior said to have been responsible for the settlers retaining their land purchased when the indigenous people ordered them to abandon the land they had purchased from them.

The Sao Boso claim requires further comment because in 1971, President Tolbert, asked me to search for and carry the descendants of King Sao Boso and I did carry them led by one Barbu Zinnah the great grand daughter of the king and the daughter of the late Paramount chief Zinnah who was the first member of the House of Representatives for the Bopolu Chiefdom and the name of Alhaji Kromah was never mentioned by them, the descendants of the King, as being any relative of the King or the Zinnah family. They showed the helmet and a sword that the King wore and used to the President who borrowed them to temporarily place in the Government Museum. Not one member of the family indicated knowing Alhaji Kromah. I don't know what Mr. Kromah is restless about claiming kinship with noble families and tribes. Mr. Kromah must be suffering from inferiority complex, by indulging in such practices.

Regarding his assertion that I have been politically inactive, just coming out of the closet and my getting on a bandwagon, because of his sheer ignorance exhibited in making such irresponsible statements, I will not waste my precious time in dignifying his allegation with an answer as I do not see any relevance in the premises to the issue at bar. The verbal and-written pieces of evidence of my total involvement in the political affairs of Liberia, especially in helping to find a lasting solution to the national

crises existing in Liberia since I have been in these United States as a refugee, speak for themselves. It was only last year that I got to know that Mr. Kromah was in the US after his wife met me at a funeral and informed me that her husband had asked her to give me his phone number for me to call him. Out of courtesy to her, I accepted his phone number and began wondering whether Kromah was crazy enough to ever think that I would call him after murdering our people, looting our properties, burning down our cities, towns, villages, places of worship, our schools and medical clinics clearly out of ethnic and religious bigotry. Furthermore, he and I were not friends at all in Liberia and never visited nor called each other before. Why was it necessary for me to call him now? This is the guy who claims that he is friendly with some of my daughters. If that is true, and that he is friendly with them since after he devastated our county in his ethnic and religious cleansing campaigns, I would appreciate his mentioning their names and the manner of friendship between him and them for my information.

For his information, I am one of the founders and the leader of the National Integration Party (NIP) a proposed political Party that participated in the political campaigns against the National Democratic Party of Liberia (NDPL) of Dr. Samuel K. Doe. I am not a member of any current political party of Liberia other than our Party. I have joined no bandwagon of any other party except he is referring to the Liberia Leadership Conference, which I attended in Bethesda last month, to uncomfortably sit at the same table with him and hear him loud mouthing and castigating others for the same murderous and illegal things he did similarly to others.

It was reported during the Civil War that when Alhaji Kromah, as leader of ULIMO-K entered Grand Cape Mount County with his fighters, after dislodging NPFL fighters, he personally ordered that one arm of each of the more than 20 prisoners of war be cut-off, and that cruelty was done in his physical presence, after which he happily stated that the amputated men released would be easily identifiable with one arm wherever they would be found. It is believed that it is from Kromah that the rebels of Sierra Leone learned the practice of cutting off the limbs of men, women and children they caught during the war in that country. With that kind of wicked record, is Kromah morally competent to sit among clean people and attack others of his likes when his hands are not cleaned? Mr. Kromah is like the "Emperor in his new clothes". The fellow is butt-naked and seems not to be aware of it. He is under the false impression of being a man of prominence. So he has tried to ridicule me for my alleged loss of prominence, as if I am one who seeks such a status like him. For his egotistical information, I consider myself as an ordinary man who does not solicit status, honors and titles like him. Privileges come to me unsolicited, which I accept with humility without boasting and bragging about them as he has done in his Rejoinder by even giving himself credit for a leadership position he claimed he were elected to when, in fact, it was given to him by Laveli Supuwood who declined it. As a result of the wicked and

bloody deeds that Mr. Kromah has committed, he is the one who has, forever, lost his credibility in the Liberian society and is fruitlessly trying to regain it in vain.

Mr. Kromah boasts of his military victory when, in fact, he drafted poor people's children whom he drugged and used as child soldiers to carry out his dirty deeds without their sound presence of mind. Now, he has eloped from them and left them holding the bag and managed by some hooks or crooks to join us over here as a bonafide refugee. And instead of maintaining a low profile by shutting up his mouth, considering his terrible human rights record in Liberia during the Civil War, he is found preoccupied with attacking everybody, including many of his victims who remind him and also take him to task for violation of their human rights. He even boasts about writing a book full of fruitless denials, contents of which we already have a pretty good idea of from the numerous and boring articles he writes and publishes on the Internet.

I wonder Alhaji Kromah thinks he is with any authority to rate my open performance as Superintendent of Lofa County by comparing my administration with a former Superintendent of Lofa County and former Superintendents of other counties in his malicious desire to unreasonably discredit the excellent performance of my administration? When I accepted the position of Superintendent of Lofa County upon preferment by President Tolbert to my absolute surprise, I did not do so with the sole purpose of competing with former superintendents, but with the sincere desire to motivate the people of the county to work with me cooperatively so that we, together, could move the County progressively from where we took off in the best interest of the people of the county and consistent with the policies of President Tolbert's administration. The fellow was so carried away with eliminating our people in his war of invasion of our county to the point that he became totally blind to the massive development projects that our administration undertook and implemented which hard sweat of mine he lived on during his ethnic and ruthless control of our county where he left nothing but destruction of what we left there and nothing constructive at all.

During my administration, I traveled all over the county by foot, car and air, motivating and encouraging the people to join the Agricultural Cooperatives and plant as much tree crops as they could plant and produce as much rice as they could produce, so that they could become self sufficient in feeding themselves, while exporting the surplus to other parts of other country. The people cooperated with me to the fullest extent and we together achieved our objectives beyond our expectation to the admiration of the President.

In 1973 Mr. Robert McNamara, then President of the World Bank here in Washington, D. C., visited Lofa County as my official guest. He was accompanied by the late Hon. Stephen A. Tolbert, Minister of Finance of Liberia, for the purpose of investigating if Lofa County would be suitable for a pilot project for the launching of an Agricultural Development program in Liberia. Starting from the Zorzor Teacher Training Institute in Fissibu, Zorzor District, the three of us jointly flew all over the county and finally returned to the Zorzor Training Institute where I bid them goodbye. It was

as a result of that trip and the fertile soil of Lofa County that the county was chosen as the pilot project and Voinjama City became chosen as the headquarters of the Lofa County Agricultural Development Project of the World Bank. The Project substantially contributed to the massive success of our farmers in obtaining appropriate training, which substantially enabled them to become more productive.

In 1973, President Tolbert authorized all Superintendents of the counties of Liberia to enter into a Rice Contest and offered a cash prize of US \$5,000.00 per year to any county that would produce the largest quantity of rice. The winning county would also be given a coveted Rice Contest Cup. Lofa County won the contest on two consecutive occasions and was given the \$10,000.00 prize, which we set aside as an initial scholarship fund for Lofa County students pursuing Agriculture at the University of Liberia and Cuttington University College respectively. The amount was deposited in a savings account at the Agricultural Development Bank in Monrovia and the deposit book was turned over to the late Honorable Alfred Fromayan then Assistant Superintendent of Lofa County as Treasurer of the fund. No county succeeded in capturing the Cup from us up to the year I was relieved of my post as Superintendent in 1975.

Mr. Kromah again alleged that I was so unpopular with the students of Lofa County attending certain schools in Liberia to the extent that when he nominated me to be their installing officer, the students refused to approve of my name. This is another foolish and unnecessary allegation he has brought up which absolutely has no bearing on the issue. All he is bent on doing is to discredit me with any lies he can cook up which is certainly fruitless. I don't even know what this miscreant is talking about. I therefore will not give credence to his allegation by dignifying it with an answer. For his ignorant information about me, I have addressed the student bodies of the University of Liberia, my alma mater on more than two occasions upon invitations and I have delivered a Commencement Address at the Lutheran Training Institute (LTI) on one occasion also upon an invitation unsolicited. I also once addressed the Lofa County students Association of Cuttington College and Divinity School upon invitation.

Now, coming to the formation of ULIMO in Freetown, Sierra Leone, as one unit undivided. I am asking Mr. Alhaji Kromah to let the reading public know what ever happened to General Albert Karpah the true and original leader of ULIMO in Sierra Leone. I have asked this question because I have not heard of any of his accounts about the death of General Karpah his former boss.

According to news reports received during the Civil War, Mr. Alhaji Kromah, as the then leader of ULIMO, appealed to Dr. Amos Sawyer of the Interim Government to ask ECOMOG to arm his men and cooperate with him to enable ULIMO, under his control, to enter Liberia through Grand Cape Mount County for the purpose of attacking NPFL then occupying the area. This was meant for him to proceed to other parts of Liberia under NPFL's control, positioning ULIMO as an arm of the Interim Government and not a warring faction, all with the intent of forcing NPFL leader, Charles Taylor, to attend the peace conferences convened by Dr. Sawyer since each

time Taylor agreed to attend, he backed out of the promises made. We were made to understand that Dr. Sawyer granted Mr. Kromah's request in keeping with his commitment made to serve as an arm of the Interim Government and not to become a warring faction in harmony with the Interim Government. We further heard that Mr. Kromah had a hidden agenda behind his request granted which was that upon reaching to Lofa County by then with ULIMO-K instead of ULIMO, he would comfortably settle there and embark upon ethnic and religious cleansing of the county with the sole intention of installing a predominantly Mandingo and Islamic County by eliminating the non Mandingo and non Muslim people of the county and would no longer take orders from the Interim Government. When he succeeded in capturing Lofa County, he immediately gave orders to his drugged fighters to wage a war of vengeance on all other tribal and religious people who were not Mandingoes or Muslims to be annihilated with their cities, towns, villages, schools, clinics and churches burnt down and all of the places looted. In the process, only the people of Kolahun District were saved along with their homes and personal properties while those Gbendi tribal people who were not Muslims were used practically as beasts of burden. But Mr. Kromah now lies by putting the blame of the murders, arsons and lootings on other tribal people under his command. Kromah's arrival in Lofa County with his ULIMO-K was a war of invasion and not a war of liberation of all of the people of Lofa County but only members of his tribe and religious faith.

For Mr. Kromah, as former leader of ULIMO-K, to refuse to take responsibility for his wrongdoing against our people during the war, while boasting that he is proud of his record in Lofa County during the war, and that he has no apology to make to anyone, he has created a huge wedge between the once united people of Lofa County and those who share his views and will find it very difficult to be forgiven for his arrogance. One important and relieving thing in the premises is that he does not represent the overwhelming majority of the Liberian ethnic Mandingos and the Liberian Muslims who do not recognize him as their leader. To those decent and wise Mandingos and Muslims all of us other tribal and religious people of Lofa County have no problem or qualms with you and we consider you as our brothers and sisters. I hope you peace-loving people would publicly disassociate yourselves from him because he continues to carry the impression that he represents your image as your chosen spokesman. I will be the first to admit that I am not the spokesman for all of the other tribal groups of Lofa County affected by Mr. Kromah's ethnic and religious bigotry, but I am a sincere concerned citizen and a proud son of Lofa County who struggled so hard along with all of my fellow citizens of Lofa County to develop the county as it was prior to the Civil War and as united and integrated as we were prior to the war and the Kromah invasion.

Mr. Kromah proclaims himself to be a popular citizen of Liberia from his activities during the war and even, without a remorse of conscience, and with a gross insult to the intelligence of the Liberian people, believes that the overwhelming majority of

Liberians want him to be elected President of Liberia. How absurd! Mr. Kromah will not succeed to be democratically elected as President of Liberia not because he is a Mandingo or a Muslim, but because of his extreme tribal and religious bigotry exhibited during the Civil War.

Mr. Kromah shamelessly did everything to undermine and discredit my very progressive and patriotic services rendered to my country, Government, county and people clearly out of tribal and religious bigotry or out of sheer ignorance of the facts. Mr. Kromah was present in Liberia when just after six months I was released from a maximum political prison in Belle Yalla. Right after this, the Head of State and Chairman of the Peoples Redemption Council left me in charge of the Military Government for three days when he went on an official visit to Bamako, Mali in 1981. I served effectively and won the admiration of the Head of State as stated by him during the Reception at the Parlors of the Executive Mansion upon his return home. Mr. Kromah also pretends to be unaware of the fact that I was elected unopposed as Senator for Lofa County in 1978 by the people of Lofa County. My election ensued four years after I was dismissed by President Tolbert as their Superintendent. Remember that the President was also the Standard Bearer in a one-party political system. He boldly opposed my candidacy. If, as he alleged, that I were a wicked and even a murderous Superintendent and disliked by my people, I wonder why did the same people unanimously elect me as their Senator when I was no longer their Superintendent, and was not a military leader like him to induce fear in them.

Mr. Kromah is certainly a dishonest and a deceitful man, and this is clear from his own boastful statement. He is quoted in his Rejoinder as advising Head of State Doe not to run for the presidency prior to the election because Doe was a military leader who ascended to power by force and yet, he also stated that he ran to be elected President of Liberia in 1997 while he was the leader of the warring faction ULIMO-K. As a matter of fact, why did he want for us to know about his advice to Doe when same is irrelevant to the issues that I have taken him to task for? We were aware of the fact that Mr. Kromah was a member of the famous Triumvirate a special confidant group to President Doe who trusted him and now he has no obligatory gratitude to the late President who caused him to be known today but to begin to disclose private conversations that he had with the man now that he is dead by betraying his confidence. What manner of character is this man?

As a further indication that I am not against people of the Muslim faith, I was the Superintendent who persuaded President Tolbert to visit the ostracized and remote, predominantly Muslim people of Vahun, Lofa County. The visit led the President to create Vahun as a County District on the same level of other districts like Kolahun under which Vahun originally fell. President Tolbert did not only make Vahun a District, but also develop it with electricity, decent road and renovation of the airfield there. That was the result of my having walked there on foot through Sierra Leone as the District was not then connected by a motor road with the rest of the District which

led the people there to trade only with Sierra Leone using only their medium of exchange, the Leone, instead of the US dollar that we were using then.

I also invited President Tolbert to Weasua, the famous diamond-mining town of Gbarma District, Lofa County, in order for him to see for himself the need for a motor road to be built to connect the town with the Headquarters of the District, principally to reduce or erase the high cost of getting to Weasua only by Zorzor flights. The President did honor my invitation and a road was subsequently built which has considerably reduced the cost of travel to Weasua. This road, I understand, was also of great benefit to Mr. Kromah, who we learned was one of the diamond miners there during the war, if not even after the war. The fellow lived at my expense in those places developed by me and yet is bent on discrediting my progressive achievements which he happily enjoyed.

Mr. Kromah, who claims to be very well acquainted with Lofa County and its physical developments, says he is its patriotic citizen, where he even claims his umbilical cord was buried despite the fact that he was born in Monrovia, I wonder he knows in whose administration as Superintendent of Lofa County the following developments were undertaken?:

- The City of Voinjama was electrified,
- The modern Telewoyan Hospital was erected in Voinjama,
- The magnificent Administration Building housing all the county offices was constructed in Voinjama,
- The defunct Voinjama Airfield was reconstructed and opened,
- The two guesthouses were constructed in Voinjama,
- The Presidential building was erected in Voinjama,
- The agreement for installation of a modern water system in the City of Voinjama was signed between the Governments of Liberia and West Germany as a grant from the German Government,
- The Voinjama Multilateral High School was begun to be constructed
- Mechanized farming was introduced in Foya District, Lofa County,
- Massive rural-highway and farm to market roads were undertaken and constructed throughout the county,
- The Farmers Cooperatives of Foya, Kolahun and Voinjama Districts respectively became very productive and thriving,
- Lofa County was reported to be the most progressive and development oriented county in Liberia,
- The National Convention of the True Whig Party was held for the first time outside of Montserrado County in Lofa County since the inception of the Party in 1869. The City of Voinjama became developmentally transformed by the Government as a result of the hosting of the Convention.

If Kromah did not consider those achievements to be progressive, what development project did he launch or complete during his military and ruthless control of

Lofa County? Mr. Kromah lived on my sweat in Lofa County and has no shame to discredit my progressive administration.

In his interview paper with The Perspective Newsmagazine again a copy of which he attached to his letter to me, he narrow-mindedly loud mouthed President Tubman's administration of the 60s as "dangerous years". I wonder what would he call his years of the 90s during which period he killed our innocent, unarmed and non-combatant people in comparison with the Tubman years of peace, economic boom and political stability?

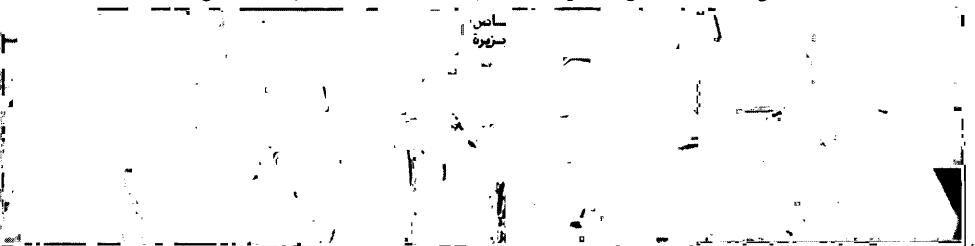
Kromah stated that I was brave enough to admit that I wrote the article in the *New Democrat* e-Magazine about him. Who is the fellow so much that he would imagine that I would have been afraid of admitting that I wrote the article? I consider that question to be nothing but one of his showy bluffs for public consumption because of the fact that I had expressed practically the same sentiments to him in his physical presence at a gathering. I therefore saw no need of his begging for an answer to that question when he read similar views expressed on a website.

Alhaji G. V. Kromah, where were you in the 70s and 80s regarding the interest, welfare and the development of Lofa County?

My intelligence information tells me that Mr. Kromah has a very dangerous hidden agenda and plan for Liberia if he ever succeeds in regaining some military or political power in Liberia. His hidden blueprint for Liberia and its people is very divisive, disuniting, disintegrative and fanatic, indeed.

In his attempt to make Fridays on par with Sundays in Liberia, Mr. Kromah once questioned in Monrovia why on Sundays in Liberia all businesses and Government offices are closed by law as Christian holidays and Fridays, the days of mass Muslim prayers, are not similarly observed pretending to be ignorant of the fact that Liberia was founded on Christian principles, though the Constitution guarantees freedom of religion and worship. I wonder a Christian would dare to publicly question why the Government of Saudi Arabia does not grant equal preferential status to public worship with that of exclusive rights Muslims enjoy in Saudi Arabia founded on principles of Islam.

But for the fact that Mr. Kromah accused me of burning down Dr. Guluma's rice farm and his alleging that I was a murderous man as Superintendent of Lofa County, I would have not given any credence to any of his garbage written against me because,



Alhaji Kromah

Osama bin Laden

Charles Taylor

Sadam Hussein

before I could publish this rebuttal, many concerned citizens began to appropriately deal with him upon reading his Rejoinder of lies, denials, boastfulness, shifting blames and self aggrandizement on my behalf, which was crowned up quite recently by (replace the with The Perspective website that rightly placed his photograph alongside Osama Bin Laden's.

My Rebuttal's delayed publication was due to the fact that I was waiting for Mr. Kromah's promised remaining Rejoinder on my letter of Comments associating him with his teaming up with Mr. Taylor during the 1996 bloody uprising in Monrovia. As I waited in suspense, without his fulfilling his promise, I had no alternative but to release this rebuttal to his Rejoinder.

About the author: E. Sumo Jones served as Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization (Liberia), Superintendent and Senator of Lofa County.

The Final Report of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone

External Actors and their Impact on the Conflict

Introduction

1. Non-interference of one state in the internal affairs of another state is a core principle of international relations. In reality, however, there has hardly been an intra-state conflict in the world that has not seen the involvement of external actors. These external actors typically provide military, political or moral support to one or a variety of competing factions, or they attempt to arbitrate and implement resolutions to the conflict.

2. There are many reasons and motivations behind the participation of external actors in intra-state conflicts. These parties may be lured into a conflict by a shared ideology with one of the factions, or by ethnic, religious or other identity sentiments. Furthermore, the strategic importance of the conflict-affected state, geo-political interests or economic considerations could also be taken into account before intervening in intra-state conflicts. The involvement of external actors could also result from compliance with obligations under international protocols or membership of regional or international institutions, like the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the United Nations (UN). The conflict in Sierra Leone was not a war imposed from outside: it was an internal armed conflict in which certain external actors became involved.

3. As part of its mandate to unearth the antecedents, causes and nature of Sierra Leone's conflict, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission ("TRC" or "the Commission") recognised the importance of investigating the role of external actors. There were two main parties to the conflict in Sierra Leone - the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and the Government of Sierra Leone. It should be accepted at the outset that each of these parties underwent numerous changes of character in the course of the conflict and formed alliances with other factions that were neither predictable nor enduring. Nevertheless, all the other factions that took part in the conflict can be loosely placed under one of these two parties, including the various external actors who offered their support in the course of the war.

4. For the purposes of analysis, the Commission has divided the Sierra Leone conflict into three phases. This chapter begins by examining the involvement of external actors in the pre-conflict years and the first phase of conventional “target” warfare from 1991 to late 1993. It then tracks these external actors, along with others who joined the conflict, throughout the second phase, from late 1993 up to March 1997, and the third phase, from 1997 to 2002.

External Actors in the Pre-Conflict Period up to 1991 and in Phase I of the Conflict: March 1991-1993

Libya: preparing revolutionaries in pursuit of ideology

5. The involvement of external actors in Sierra Leone’s conflict can be traced to the 1970s when attempts were made by different groups of Sierra Leoneans to undo Siaka Steven’s decade-old hegemonic grip on the country. These efforts included the nationwide student demonstrations of 1977, which largely failed in the face of a violent clamp down by state security forces. Since the demonstrations did not yield a regime change, the students resorted to political sensitisation on college campuses and among youths in greater Freetown. Initially the sensitisation took the form of study groups. On the Fourah Bay College (FBC) campus of the University of Sierra Leone, a number of study groups sprang up. Prominent among these was the Green Book Study Group.

6. The Green Book contains the political philosophy of the Libyan President, Colonel Muammar Ghaddafi, which is known as the Third Universal Theory. It advocates the creation of a Jamahiriya - a peoples’ state. Ghaddafi claimed that the Third Universal Theory is instrumental to the emancipation of the human race. The spread of Ghaddafi’s political philosophy became a key foreign policy objective of the Libyan state. Even before he began supporting revolutionary movements in different parts of the world, Ghaddafi offered diplomatic relations and foreign aid in furtherance of his aim of spreading his political philosophy. Libya gave financial assistance to Sierra Leonean Muslims in the late 1970s in order to perform the annual hajj pilgrimage to Mecca. The Libyan government also provided funds to assist the Sierra Leone government to host the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) summit in 1980.

7. As part of a wide range of foreign policy tools to influence events outside Libya, Ghaddafi provided a safe haven and weapons training for individuals who wished to instigate revolutionary struggle in their own countries. These were people who had been branded as terrorists, dissidents and insurgents by their own governments but who (in many cases) were engaged in resistance to overthrow dictatorial and colonial regimes. Ghaddafi also created front organisations for their operations in neighbouring states.

8. A number of formal bodies were responsible for the execution of Libya's foreign policy. These included the Foreign Liaison Secretariat, the Secretariat for External Security, the Divisions of General and Military Intelligence, the Libyan Special Security Forces, and the Secretariat of Justice.

9. As part of Libya's foreign policy strategy, Libyan Peoples' Bureaus and Revolutionary Committees /Councils facilitated the setting up of revolutionary movements in a number of countries. In 1985, a renewed drive was undertaken to extend Libya's influence in the third world.

10. Members of the Green Book Study Group at FBC had established contacts with Libyan authorities in the early 1980s. In 1985 three lecturers and 41 students were expelled from FBC following allegedly riotous conduct by students after a convocation ceremony, on and off the campus in Freetown. Alie Kabbah, the student union leader, along with some of the other students who were expelled, travelled to Ghana towards the end of 1985. The Commission received a variety of accounts of the steps that occurred next and the following descriptions can reflect only the experiences and perspectives of those cited.

11. The then President of Ghana, Flight Lieutenant John Jerry Rawlings, and his government had an avowed revolutionary posture. He was perceived as a proponent of pan-Africanism. The majority of the radical students who were expelled from FBC were members of the Pan-African Union organisation (PANAFU). Upon arrival in Accra, some of the students were received by the Chief of the Libyan Peoples' Bureau in Ghana. Some of the students gained admission into the University of Ghana at Legon to complete their studies. The Libyan government paid their fees and their upkeep on scholarships. While in Ghana, the student radicals were invited to attend seminars and conferences in Libya. Their trips were funded by the Revolutionary Council of Libya.

12. Alie Kabbah and his colleagues in Ghana subsequently worked out a programme with the Libyan authorities to train Sierra Leonean revolutionaries to overthrow the All Peoples' Party (APC) regime. About 25 Sierra Leoneans participated in such training in Libya between 1987 and 1989. In 1986 some of the students in Ghana travelled to Conakry to meet with members of PANAFU from Sierra Leone. It was resolved thereafter that four members of PANAFU would be sent from Sierra Leone for training in Libya. They travelled to Ghana where they stayed with Alie Kabbah and his colleagues in their hostel for a week before proceeding to Libya. They were joined by three others who had been based in Ghana. All of these Sierra Leonean dissidents travelled to Libya without proper travel documents. This suggests that the Ghanaian authorities were aware of their presence and movement. The government however declined to comment on the issue on an invitation by the Commission.

13. The training in Libya was mainly premised on ideology. It commenced in around August 1987 and ended in January 1988, Sierra Leoneans who subsequently

travelled to Libya received not only ideological training, but also military training. In 1988, another group of Sierra Leoneans was sent to Libya for training.

Liberia: assembling the RUF war machine and launching war

14. Liberians were under going military training during 1988 to begin a revolution of their own against President Samuel K. Doe. In the course of the training in Libya, a disagreement arose among the Sierra Leonean revolutionaries regarding the timing and manner of the proposed revolution in Sierra Leone. Contrary to what the Libyans and some Sierra Leonean radicals wanted, the group of student revolutionaries wanted a well-structured revolution that would be restricted to Sierra Leone. The student-led group became known as the Alie Kabbah group. The Alie Kabbah group wanted more time to plan such a revolution. The Libyans wanted the Sierra Leonean revolutionaries to join the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), in their revolution against Doe and then move on to Sierra Leone. Charles Taylor, who was leading the Liberians, was quick to take advantage of the split in the ranks of the Sierra Leoneans by aligning with Foday Sankoh, a former corporal in the Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces (RSLMF), who emerged as the leader of the more militant faction. Sankoh had no prior prominence within the Sierra Leonean revolutionary movement, but was willing to go with Taylor's NPFL to Liberia.

15. After the training of the NPFL forces concluded in Libya in 1989, Charles Taylor travelled to Sierra Leone and requested President Joseph Saidu Momoh to allow him to use Sierra Leone as a launch pad for his revolution into Liberia. The request was not granted because of the Mano River Union (MRU) Protocol that disallowed the interference of one MRU Member State in the affairs of another. Not only was Taylor's request turned down, he was also arrested and incarcerated at the Sierra Leone maximum security prison at Pademba Road. Nevertheless, it was alleged by President Kabbah that the APC Government received money from Taylor to look favourably on his request to use Sierra Leone as a launching pad for war in Liberia.

16. In 1990, the Economic Community of West Africa States Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) undertook 'Operation Liberty' in an effort to quell the crisis in Liberia. Sierra Leone was used as a forward base and as a launch pad for subsequent ECOMOG operations in Liberia. ECOMOG's success in preventing the NPFL from taking over Monrovia in 1990 was regarded by Taylor as a calculated move to prevent his ascension as President of Liberia. Taylor saw Sierra Leone as a major player in the success of ECOMOG's operations in Liberia. In early 1991 Taylor, in an interview with the BBC, vented his disappointment with Sierra Leone and vowed that the country would "taste the bitterness of war". Taylor had captured territories in Liberia, which he made available for the further training of RUF fighters. On Sankoh's request, the NPFL began turning over Sierra Leoneans captured in Liberia for training. Taylor also provided trainers from among his NPFL commandos. The recruits who received train-

ing from Taylor's men in NPFL territories in Liberia became known as the RUF "vanguards".

17. The RUF launched its insurgency without any independent direction or means, due to the sizeable presence of Taylor's men among them. As explained in the chapter on the Military and Political History of the Conflict, NPFL fighters outnumbered their RUF counterparts by four to one. In addition, as pointed out by one Sierra Leone researcher, "those Liberian NPFL fighters never took orders from Sankoh, but from Taylor or NPFL commanders". Taylor and his men were in control of operations at the initial stage; indeed, it has even been suggested that the presence of Sierra Leoneans was merely designed to lend an indigenous flavour to the incursions. It is perhaps best to relay the experience of local people on the ground at this time through excerpts from TRC statements in which Liberian or NPFL fighters are mentioned: "...On 23 March 1991, there was a cross border attack on Bomaru town, Upper Bambara Chiefdom... The elders resolved to send a fact finding mission to ascertain what happened... I led a team of seven men to Bomaru. On our arrival, we were shocked and dismayed about the killings of up to 13 civilians. We went to the point where Major Foday was killed. I met his body hanging through the roof and blood flowing freely on the ground. Among the 13 civilians killed were 7 men, 4 women and 2 children. They had bullet holes all over their bodies. We were informed that the conflict was... between the Sierra Leone Army stationed at Bomaru and rebels of the NPFL of Liberia..... Early in April, 1991, the Liberians launched the attack on a full scale... days later, the rebels attacked the chiefdom headquarter town of Pendembu. They entered the town firing and bombing from all angles... later they called the trapped residents to assemble at the town barray... The commander, speaking through an interpreter in Liberian pidgin English, explained the mission and their aim of taking on the APC Government. He announced his organisation as Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone... he was Colonel Sherita, a chartered mercenary for the mission..."[and] "...On the day my father was killed, he was at home discussing with his friends when the rebels attacked shooting indiscriminately with no specific target. These rebels were from Liberia...."

Burkina Faso: an early backer of the RUF's war efforts

18. Statements taken by the Commission show that fighters from Burkina Faso, known as Burkinabes, were involved in the early stages of the conflict. Burkinabes were fighting on the side of RUF. Sierra Leone military personnel found Burkina Faso identification cards on some members of the rebel fighters who were killed at battle front:

"It happened at Ngolawahun, Sorogbema in Pujehun district in May 1991 where Mr. Moseray was asked to hand over his cigarette to the Burkinabes

who were part of the RUF. The rebels captured and killed him for refusing to give them his cigarette.”

“It was in 1991 and I was staying with my aunt as a ward. When the RUF - Burkinabes - first entered Pujehun. I was at the stream with my companions. We were laundering clothes. We were caught and sexually abused by those rebels. I was eight years then and about three to four of them had sex with me. I was deflowered...”

19. Although there were no suggestions that Burkina Faso was involved at state level, the relationship between Taylor and Blaise Campaore of Burkina Faso is noteworthy. The two were close friends. Campaore had introduced Taylor to Thomas Sankara and Ghaddafi in a bid to establish contacts for the rebellion in Liberia. In 1991, six Burkinabes, led by Captain Ndola Wasando, were captured by Sierra Leone Army personnel in Kailahun.

20. The speed with which the RUF attacked other towns and villages after the attack on Bomaru on 23 March 1991 was greatly assisted by the involvement of Liberian NPFL fighters and the Burkinabes. The Liberians and Burkinabes were trained in guerrilla warfare and had prior experience in the war in Liberia. The Liberians and Burkinabes fighters devised the crude strategies around enlisting new fighters, including recruiting child combatants. Their intimidatory practices included forcing children to kill their parents in the full view of onlookers from community. The rationale was that those children, forever haunted by their actions, would then stay with the rebels. The Liberians and Burkinabes also committed atrocities ranging from systematic rape to cannibalism.

21. The initial response of the APC Government of President Joseph Saidu Momoh to the attack on Bomaru was to dismiss it as an act of banditry. However, when Pujehun District and other parts of the country came under attack, it was clear that a strong army was needed to curb the invasion of the RUF. The strength of the military in 1991 was about 3,500 (three thousand five hundred) men. The military had an almost empty armoury. It was under these circumstances that the RSLMF requested military assistance from the Republic of Guinea.

*Guinea: the first state to provide combat support
for the Government of Sierra Leone*

22. The bilateral defence pact between Sierra Leone and Guinea to provide defence assistance in times of crisis dates back to 1971. In 1971, Guinean soldiers were in Sierra Leone to help the government of President Siaka Stevens quell an attempted coup. In 1982 upon the request of the Guinean Armed Forces, the RSLMF sent a medical team to help Guineans in the face of a natural disaster.

23. Guinean Armed Forces personnel arrived in Sierra Leone three weeks after the attack on Bomaru and went straight to the battle front at Daru where: "the intervention of the Guinean forces at that time saved the lives of men and officers of the RSLMF who were at Daru barracks which had been surrounded by the rebel forces". The Guinean Armed Forces supplied much-needed arms and ammunition to the RSLMF up to 1993.

ULIMO: united with the Government in opposition to RUF / NPFL

24. Since the initial invaders of Sierra Leone were predominantly Liberians, the personnel of the RSLMF had reasons to be suspicious of anyone who had a Liberian accent. Liberians living in refugee camps in Eastern Sierra Leone were not spared such suspicion and in some cases they were targeted by personnel of the RSLMF. Some Liberians were killed in the process. The situation in the Liberian refugee camps became deplorable. This resulted in a meeting between Momoh and General Kapeh, who was a former Liberian ambassador to Sierra Leone under President Doe. At that meeting, Kapeh expressed his government's willingness to help the Sierra Leone government prosecute the war. Doe's government saw the war as an NPFL invasion. As a result of that meeting, Dar Youlou was asked by Kapeh to organise Liberians in the refugee camps and other parts of Sierra Leone into a fighting group to fight along side the RSLMF. Dar Youlou (alias D-Wah) named the group 'Liberian United Defence Force' (LUDF). The name LUDF was rejected and changed to United Liberation Movement (ULIMO). According to a senior officer of the group, the name LUDF was changed because they were not in Liberia and they were not fighting for the Liberian people, but for Sierra Leoneans.

25. ULIMO mainly recruited Mandingos and Krahns. Mandingos and Krahns were supporters of the Doe regime and therefore the main targets of the NPFL fighting forces:

"....At one time in Monrovia, my father called me and told me that the names Koroma and Kanneh were the names the Liberians didn't want to hear. If you were in Liberia and you carried any of those names, you would be killed. My father was a twin; Koroma was his name. When we crossed the river, they killed my father and took away all his belongings...."

26. Some former soldiers of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), who fled from the war in Liberia, were also in the ULIMO group and these soldiers were given guns and uniforms. One of the training camps of ULIMO was in an oil palm farm near Kpetema village along the Kenema and Zimmi highway in the East of Sierra Leone. Major James Yayah Kanu, who was the Brigade Commander in Kenema, was charged with the responsibility of overseeing the ULIMO training. After the training, ULIMO forces

were put under his command. The Liberian Roosevelt Johnson was named the field commander of ULIMO.

27. ULIMO was to set up a joint task force with the RSLAF at the war front to launch offensives against RUF positions and recapture RUF-controlled territories. However, from the outset ULIMO commanders were intent on establishing a corridor into Liberia to resume the war against Taylor's NPFL. A former ULIMO fighter told the Commission that the organisation also wanted to save the Liberians in refugee camps in Sierra Leone from the abuses of personnel of the RSLAF.

28. Internal ethnic divisions soon began to compromise the cohesion of the ULIMO force. In particular, fighters began to align themselves according to their allegiances to either the Mandingo or the Krahn ethnic groups, the two dominant tribes in the organisation. Ethnic Krahn fighters remained close to Roosevelt Johnson and formed a loyalist group called ULIMO-J. Meanwhile Mandingo financiers in Kenema and some Guinean officials rallied around rival commander Alhaji Kromah to create the splinter group ULIMO-K. In 1993 ULIMO fighters from both sets crossed into Liberia to fight against Taylor's NPFL. The weapons supplied for the war against the RUF were instead used by ULIMO to carry out its own fight against Taylor and the NPFL in Liberia.

29. ULIMO troops under the command of Charles Collins, who went to protect the diamond fields in Tongo in 1991, executed hundreds of civilians accused of being members or collaborators of the RUF. Most of the executions were carried out on a hill between Laliun and Giehun. This hill became known as 'Rebel Hill', a nickname that is still used by the locals today. Although ULIMO succeeded in retaking some areas, including Pujehun, the RUF invasion of the country persisted. Greater military strength was required to protect Sierra Leone from the incursions.

Nigeria: intervening to assist the Government of Sierra Leone

30. At the request of the Sierra Leone government, Nigeria sent a small force in late 1991 and they guarded RSLMF bases and installations. Apart from formal requests or protocols for military assistance, officials of both Nigeria and Sierra Leone pointed to socio-cultural ties between the two countries as good reason for Nigerian support. Socio-cultural ties between Sierra Leone and Nigeria have their genesis in the end of slavery and the establishment of Freetown as a haven for freed slaves. Slaves from Nigeria bound for the New World, freed by British naval boats, were resettled in Freetown. These ex-slaves from the Americas and Britain became known as the Krios, with a cultural identity that drew much from Nigerian heritage. President Olusegun Obasanjo talked about this 'blood relationship' between Nigerians and Sierra Leoneans as the foundation and justification for Nigeria's military and diplomatic intervention in Sierra Leone.

31. The desire to give a regional outlook to ECOMOG in Liberia also accounted for Nigeria's deployment of troops in Sierra Leone. Nigeria also supplied direct support to Sierra Leone's own military efforts. It sent soldiers to Sierra Leone to protect military installations and other strategic facilities so as to enable Sierra Leone send a contingent of troops to the ECOMOG mission in Liberia.

32. In April 1992 junior officers of the RSLMF moved to Freetown from the war front and overthrew the government of Momoh. They established the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) and promised to expel the rebels from Sierra Leone. In pursuit of this promise the NPRC embarked on mass recruitment into the army and thousands of youths who had little or no formal education found themselves in the army.

33. The NPRC continued the diplomatic and military relations between Nigeria and Sierra Leone, and a "Status of Forces Agreement" (SOFA) was signed with the Nigerian government, which led to the deployment of the Nigerian Armed Forces Training Group (NATAG). NATAG had a specific mandate to provide training to the Sierra Leone military. In spite of such support the fortunes of the Sierra Leone army at the war front did not change for the better and by the end of 1993 the RUF had taken much of the Southern and Eastern parts of the country.

Phase II of the Conflict: 1994-1997

Government of Sierra Leone searches for solutions through diplomacy and non-state private armies

34. By the beginning of 1994 disciplinary problems, due to factional fighting in ULIMO's ranks, began to take their toll on the organisation's prosecution of the war in Sierra Leone. There was a dispute between Kapeh and Youlou, commanders of ULIMO. Colonel Tom Nyuma, NPRC secretary of state for the Eastern province, called a meeting to settle the dispute. Youlou took the opportunity to express his anger and dislike for Kapeh. Following that, he ordered Mandingo fighters of ULIMO to kill Kapeh. Kapeh tried to escape, but was killed. Following this incident, in June and July 1994, all ULIMO personnel operating in Sierra Leone were disarmed by the SLA contingent at Waterloo and taken to the Allen Town camp in Mayami.

35. By the end of the year, the RUF had brought the war to the outskirts of the capital city, Freetown, when it captured Newton. The NPRC chairman, Captain Valentine Strasser, promising amnesty, asked the RUF to cease hostilities. The RUF turned down the request and continued hostilities.

The maiden intervention of the United Nations (UN)

36. In November 1994 the NPRC Chairman, Valentine Strasser, wrote a letter to the UN Secretary General asking the UN to facilitate negotiations between his government and the RUF. The UN Security Council responded by sending an exploratory mission to Sierra Leone on 15 December 1994 and the team travelled across the country. Following the report of the Mission, Mr. Berhanu Dinka of Ethiopia was appointed Special Envoy to Sierra Leone two months later. The role of the UN Special Envoy included facilitating negotiations between the Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF and returning Sierra Leone to civilian rule. However, the presence of the UN Special Envoy in Sierra Leone did not stop the terror campaign of the RUF.

37. It was in these circumstances that Strasser's government hired the services of the Ghurkhas Security Group (GSG) in 1995. The GSG was a privately owned British company formed in 1989 and specialised in recruiting former British army Ghurkhas officers and soldiers for security services. GSG was sub-contracted to the Sierra Leone mission by J&S Franklin Limited, a British manufacturer of non-lethal military equipment and a weapons sales agent.

38. The GSG was to train the presidential guards and the RSLMF in counter insurgency techniques and safeguard Camp Charlie - a military base at Mile 91. The GSG arrived in Sierra Leone in February 1995 with 58 Ghurkhas and three European managers. The NPRC had acquired two Russian Mi-24 helicopter gunships, manned by Belarusian mercenary pilots, and engaged in attacks on a number of RUF bases. The GSG refused to conduct offensive operations against the RUF, arguing that it did not form part of their contract. On 24 February 1995 the GSG commander, Mackenzie, and other personnel were killed in an ambush by the RUF and two months later the GSG withdrew from Sierra Leone. In their short stay, the Ghurkhas achieved nothing. The abrupt withdrawal of the GSG, at a time when the RUF had intensified its operations in areas close to the capital city, not only created a precarious security situation, but caused much embarrassment for the NPRC government which had promised to pursue the rebels by land, sea and air.

39. The NPRC government asked a former AFL soldier, Brigadier-General David Bropleh, to re-organise the disarmed ULIMO fighters so that they could fight on the side of government. The NPRC government and ULIMO authorities agreed, among other things, to drop the name ULIMO and the fighters were to be constituted as part of the Sierra Leone Army as a new unit called the Special Task Force. Members of the Special Task Force would serve under the laws and army rules of Sierra Leone. The recruited Liberians were issued with Sierra Leone military identity cards.

40. On 5 May 1995 the first batch of Special Task Force personnel was re-armed and sent with Sierra Leone Army personnel to fight at the Waterloo front against the RUF. On 10 June 1995 a second batch was re-armed and also sent to the war front in

the Bo District area. The Special Task Force went on to score significant successes at its various war front deployments. In spite of the successes, there were many areas that remained under the control RUF.

The enlistment of Executive Outcomes

41. The NPRC government secured the services of Executive Outcomes, a South African private security firm. Executive Outcomes was introduced to Strasser by Michael Grunberg and Anthony Buckingham of the mining company, Branch Energy. The contract required Executive Outcomes to provide between 150 and 200 soldiers, fully equipped with helicopter support. Executive Outcomes was to help repel the RUF from the Freetown area, secure government control of the diamond areas in Kono, help stabilise the whole country and retrain the army and the Kamajor militia. The company was to provide logistical support, sophisticated communications equipment and transportation for the army.

42. Executive Outcomes was set up in 1989 and was run by Luther Eeben Barlow, previously a Lieutenant Colonel in the South African military intelligence unit and a senior member of the Civilian Cooperation Bureau (CCB). Executive Outcomes, in its early days, developed a flourishing business relationship with the diamond-mining sector. In 1993 Executive Outcomes carried out its first significant military operation in Angola for the Angolan government against UNITA.

43. Between 1993 and 1995, Executive Outcomes changed its strategy and its company profile. It expanded and became a fully-fledged private army. British operations were established under Executive Outcomes (UK) Limited and registered in London in September 1993. Barlow registered Executive Outcomes as a private company in South Africa in 1994. Its men were mostly ex-commandos who had worked for the former apartheid government of South Africa.

44. Executive Outcomes was to be paid two million US dollars (\$2,000,000) a month by the Sierra Leone government. Executive Outcomes financed its own activities at the beginning, hoping to be reimbursed by the government of Sierra Leone when control over the diamond mining areas was regained. Executive Outcomes encountered financial problems between 1996 and 1997 because of non-payment for its activities in Sierra Leone. In all, the company was only paid about a third of its total fees for the eighteen month sit was in Sierra Leone. Part of these funds allegedly came from an IMF loan to the government. Executive Outcomes was also partly paid in the form of diamond concessions offered to Branch Energy, a diamond mining company with close links to Executive Outcomes.

45. Executive Outcomes, with its reconnaissance capabilities, air power, and guerilla warfare experience was able to beat back the RUF to Kailahun and the Liberian border. It retook Kono and destroyed Camp Zogoda, the RUF jungle base that acted

as its headquarters. All of these military and strategic gains were accomplished in only a few months.

RUF seeks foreign assistance in the face of defeat

46. The RUF was thrown into disarray but it was not annihilated. In order to continue its campaign in Sierra Leone, the RUF fell back on external support. Libya, which had provided training for Sankoh and other Sierra Leoneans, continued to give support to the RUF. In a letter to Brother Mohamed Talibi, the Ambassador of, the Libyan Arab Peoples Jamahiriya in Accra, Ghana, dated 26 June 1996, Sankoh wrote:

"I want to thank you and the other brothers at home again for the half million United States Dollars (500,000USD) which I received through you for the purchase of needed materials to pursue the military mission".

47. In the same letter, Sankoh went on to make a further request for \$(US)1 million to "purchase twice the listed materials for effective and smooth operation".

48. By the end of 1995 the NPRC clearly had the upper hand in the war as the RUF had been pushed through Kailahun District into Liberia. At this time, the people of Sierra Leone were anxious for a return to democratic rule.

Elections and diplomatic initiatives to end the war

49. In February and March 1996, multi-party elections brought the Ahmad Tejan Kabbah-led Sierra Leone Peoples' Party (SLPP) to power. External involvement in Sierra Leone's war remained insignificant, mainly taking the form of international diplomacy and the occasional condemnation of human rights violations and abuses taking place in the country.

Britain and the West: strategic contributions towards stability

50. Britain provided financial support for the elections of February and March 1996 with a contribution of some £17 million. The EU, the Commonwealth, the US and the UN also provided funds and technical support. The emerging opportunity for stability in Sierra Leone saw other countries bolstering diplomatic initiatives to end the war.

Libya: bridging the gap to Peace Talks in 1996

51. The Commission heard that Colonel Ghaddafi admitted supporting the RUF when he was confronted on the issue by Julius Maada Bio, the second Chairman of the

NPRC, in 1996. Moreover Ghaddafi provided Bio with vital information and direction as to how to get the RUF to the table for peace talks. Ghaddafi's counsel led – directly or indirectly – to the first peace talks between the Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF, which took place in Abidjan in 1996. Libya, which sent delegates to the peace talks, promised the withdrawal of its support to the RUF. The opening of those discussions was partly facilitated by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the UN to Sierra Leone, Mr. Berhanu Dinka. Following the general elections of February and March 1996, the talks that had begun between the RUF and the NPRC Government of Sierra Leone under Bio were taken up by the newly elected SLPP Government of President Kabbah.

Côte d'Ivoire: a host and a catalyst for Peace Talks

52. Konan Bedie, the President of Côte d'Ivoire and his foreign minister, Amara Essé, were also instrumental in bringing the SLPP government and Foday Sankoh together in Abidjan. Essé went to the bush to persuade Sankoh to attend the peace talks. The Abidjan talks resulted in the signing of a Peace Accord on 30 November 1996. The main elements of the agreement included the total and immediate end of hostilities, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of all combatants, the withdrawal from the country of all mercenaries and amnesty for RUF fighters.

53. Sierra Leoneans were generally uncomfortable with the Abidjan Accord. They were displeased, for example, with the fact that Côte d'Ivoire had allowed the RUF to establish an office in Abidjan. This gesture was not without precedent, however. Côte d'Ivoire also permitted UNITA, which was waging war against the Angolan government, to set up an office in Abidjan.

The RUF regroupes and poses a renewed threat

54. According to Kabbah, the RUF's signing of the Abidjan Accord was a deception. A few days after the signing of the Accord, the government intercepted a message sent by Sankoh to his field commander, Sam Bockarie (alias Mosquito), in which Sankoh told Sam Bockarie that he signed the Accord to relieve international pressure on the RUF. In the same message, Sankoh was said to have ordered his men to resume hostilities on an even bigger scale. A month before the Abidjan Accord, Sankoh wrote a letter to Talibi indicating that he had earlier received US \$29,000 through a certain Daniel Kallon. Sankoh said in the letter that he would use the period after the signing of the Abidjan Peace Agreement to "transact (my) business in getting (our) fighting materials freely and easily". He further requested US \$700,000 to help purchase fighting materials.

55. Kabbah, demonstrating commitment to the negotiated settlement of the war, terminated the contract of Executive Outcomes in accordance with the Abidjan Accord. The RUF had insisted on the early implementation of the clause that provided for the withdrawal of all mercenaries. This was to dramatically weaken the government's military position. Sankoh had refused to sign the document authorising the deployment of UN monitors. Although the Executive Outcomes contract was terminated several of the company's personnel stayed on in Sierra Leone and took up other security-related assignments.

56. After his election, Kabbah made requests to the international community for assistance in the areas of intelligence-gathering and training. The response of the international community was negligible. Kabbah's request to the US government to assist his government with weapons, when it became clear that the Abidjan Accord was not holding, was turned down. Another request for assistance in training soldiers at Benguema to the US and British governments, resulted in these countries sending five soldiers, two Americans and three British. The highest-ranking soldier was a sergeant. After a brief spell, the five trainers left without informing the Commander-in-Chief of the RSLMF.

Phase III of the Conflict: 1997 – 2002

The coup of 25 May 1997

57. In the early months of 1997 there was an alleged coup plot against the Government of Kabbah. The government requested Nigerian assistance to investigate the coup plot, which resulted in Johnny Paul Koroma and other junior military officers being charged with treason. The trials were taking place when soldiers of the Sierra Leone Army and a handful of civilians staged a coup on 25 May 1997. Following the coup, Kabbah and his cabinet fled to Guinea and the plotters established themselves as the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC).

Greater international community involvement to end the coup

58. The coup took place in an optimistic post-Cold War decade that had seen the collapse of undemocratic one-party and military regimes across the world. The coup was received with shock by world leaders as a setback for the growth of democracy in Africa. It was swiftly condemned.

ECOWAS, OAU and the Commonwealth enter the fray

59. On 4 June 1997, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) at its annual meeting in Harare, only one week after the coup, called on Africa and the world not to recognise the military junta in Sierra Leone. At the same meeting the OAU appealed to ECOWAS to assist the people of Sierra Leone to restore constitutional order. The OAU stressed the "imperative need to implement the Abidjan Peace Agreement" which, "continued to serve as a viable framework for peace, stability and reconciliation in Sierra Leone".

60. Consequently, in June 1997, ECOWAS heads of governments put forward three objectives on the Sierra Leone conflict. The objectives were: 1) to ensure the early restoration of the legitimate government of Kabbah; 2) the return of peace and security to Sierra Leone; and 3) the resolution of the issues of refugees and displaced persons. The OAU aimed to establish dialogue and negotiations with the AFRC junta. Failing persuasion it aimed to impose economic sanctions AFRC. The use of force to remove the junta from power was also considered. A committee of four was established to implement the action plan. The committee comprised the foreign ministers of Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Ghana and Nigeria. The foreign minister of Liberia was later added to the committee, making it a Committee of Five.

61. The Committee first sought and received the support of the UN Security Council for its initiatives in Sierra Leone. From 17 to 18 July 1997 the Committee met with representatives of the AFRC in Abidjan. The Committee and junta representatives agreed that the issues relating to the crisis in Sierra Leone should be peacefully resolved and a cease-fire was agreed upon. It was also agreed that the junta would be allowed to prepare to return the country to constitutional order. From 29 to 30 July 1997 the parties met again in Abidjan. While the meeting was in progress, the AFRC announced in Freetown that they would remain in power until 2001. This brought the renewed Abidjan negotiations to an abrupt end.

62. ECOWAS heads of government at the twentieth ordinary summit, in Abuja from 28 to 29 August 1997, proposed the imposition of economic and other sanctions on the junta. These sanctions covered weapons, petroleum and petroleum products, a travel ban on members of the AFRC and members of their families and an embargo on humanitarian aid. Recognising Article 53 of the UN Charter, which provides that "no enforcement action shall be taken under regional arrangement or by regional agencies without the authorisation of the Security Council", the proposals were tabled before the UN Security Council for approval. The UN Security Council Resolution 1132 of 8 October 1997 endorsed the sanctions but declined to endorse the use of force to remove the junta from power or an embargo on humanitarian aid. Under Article 7 of the ECOWAS decision, ECOMOG was mandated to "employ all necessary means to enforce the implementation of this decision". Prior to the endorsement of sanctions

and embargo, but after the coup of 25 May 1997, the UN Secretary-General appointed Mr. Francis Okelo of Uganda as the new Special Envoy to Sierra Leone.

63. The sanctions imposed by ECOWAS and the UN were broadly welcomed by Sierra Leoneans opposed to the AFRC. However, the measures took a heavy toll on the civilian population. The fact that ECOMOG targeted humanitarian aid in enforcing the sanctions partly contributed to the suffering of civilians. On 7 November 1997 the World Food Programme, warned that the health of thousands was at stake because humanitarian assistance had not been allowed to cross into Sierra Leone from Guinea. On 11 November 1997 the ECOMOG Field Commander, General Victor Malu, announced that clearance would be given for food aid to be brought into Sierra Leone "within days", but such clearance was not given until the end of the year. ECOMOG was also accused of sinking boats carrying food shipments as they entered the port of Freetown.

64. In spite of the worsening humanitarian situation, ECOMOG and the international community believed that the sanctions were vital to the success of the intervention. This was also the view held by most Sierra Leoneans. Peter Penfold, the former UK High Commissioner to Sierra Leone, remarked that "the people of Sierra Leone were resolved to undergo anything in exchange for democracy."

65. Testimonies to the Commission suggest that the sanctions and embargo greatly contributed to the junta's willingness to meet with the ECOWAS Committee of Five on 23 October 1997, in Conakry, Guinea for a fresh round of Peace Talks.

66. At the Conakry meeting of October 1997, the representatives of the junta and the ECOWAS Committee of Five agreed that the junta would handover power to President Kabbah on 22 May 1998, but that the sanctions and embargo provided for in UN Security Council Resolution 1132 were to be maintained. Provisions were made for the immediate cessation of hostilities and the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of all combatants. Disarmament and demobilisation of combatants was to commence on 1 December and end on 31 December 1997. Humanitarian assistance, which would be monitored by ECOMOG and UN military observer operations, would recommence on 14 November 1997. All those involved in the coup were granted immunity from prosecution. This agreement came to be known as the Conakry Peace Plan. In a communiqué issued by the Committee, it was recognised that Sankoh was expected to return to Sierra Leone in order to support the peace process.

67. In November 1997, the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, invited President Kabbah to attend the Commonwealth summit in Edinburgh as his personal guest. President Kabbah was given the opportunity to put across the problem of Sierra Leone to the summit. The summit condemned the military dictatorship in Nigeria and its abysmal human rights credentials, but noted "the positive contribution the country was making through ECOWAS in support of democratic government in the region". The summit also condemned the military junta in Sierra Leone and called for the rein-

statement of Kabbah's government. It suspended Sierra Leone from participating in the councils of the Commonwealth and Peter Penfold, British High Commissioner to Sierra Leone, went with Kabbah and his cabinet to Guinea to demonstrate the determination of the British government to support democracy in Sierra Leone. The British government also provided £250,000 to Kabbah and his cabinet while they were in exile in Guinea. These funds were used to run the government-in-exile. The British government also funded the setting up of Radio 98.1 FM. The radio station was an effective propaganda machine used by the government against the military junta.

68. The Conakry Peace Plan seemed like a viable framework for peace in Sierra Leone. In a press release issued on 5 November 1997, Kabbah stated that he found the peace plan acceptable and that the Conakry Peace Plan contained a number of positive elements, which would lead to the solution of the crisis in Sierra Leone. Kabbah pledged that his government would do everything possible to co-operate with ECOWAS and its monitoring group, ECOMOG.

69. In spite of the acceptance of the Conakry Peace Plan by all the parties to the conflict, each gave it a different interpretation. Questions in relation to disarmament, the Army, the release of Sankoh, and Nigeria's dominance in ECOMOG became the subject of several unproductive meetings between the junta and ECOMOG.

70. At its seventh meeting in Abuja on December 1997 the ECOWAS Committee of Five maintained that the Conakry Peace Plan remained the best framework for the restoration of peace and constitutional order in Sierra Leone. The reality was that the Conakry Peace Plan was rapidly collapsing.

71. The international community was not enamoured with the Nigerian ruler, Sani Abacha, who while leading a dictatorship back home presented himself internationally as a fighter for democracy in Sierra Leone. In its desire to distance itself from Sani Abacha, the international community declined to provide much-needed support for the Nigerian-led ECOMOG.

Sandline International: Kabbah brings in a non-state private army

72. The period following the 1997 coup saw the biggest diplomatic engagement on Sierra Leone since the start of the conflict in 1991. However, it became clear that force would be needed to remove the junta. Kabbah and his government sought the services of a non-state, profit-making military outfit. Kabbah contracted the British private military company, Sandline International. It has been alleged that it was the British High Commissioner to Sierra Leone, Peter Penfold, who introduced Sandline to the President. In an interview with the Commission, Penfold denied this version of events but acknowledged that Kabbah did consult him on the terms of the Sandline contract. Kabbah's contact with Sandline was actually initiated in mid-1997 by Rupert Bowen, a former diplomat and intelligence operative. Bowen was Sandline's representative in the West African Region and a friend of Penfold. By the middle of July 1997,

Tim Spicer, the head of Sandline International, had flown to West Africa to meet with Kabbah and ECOMOG.

73. Sandline was contracted in the sum of US\$1.5 million a month to provide training, arms and equipment support to the pro-government forces. Sandline International was also allegedly asked to plan, execute and co-ordinate an assault on Freetown. Sandline's operations in Sierra Leone were reportedly financed by a Vancouver-based Indian national, Rakesh Saxena.

74. Sandline was registered in the Bahamas and had its headquarters in Chelsea, sharing its premises with Branch Energy and Heritage Oil. It also had offices in the USA headed by Bernie McCabe, a former officer in the US Army Special Forces.

75. The operations of Sandline International in Sierra Leone had no independent structure. Sandline depended on ECOMOG, which co-ordinated the activities of the pro-Kabbah forces within and outside of Sierra Leone. Sandline may have been forced to operate covertly because of a UN arms embargo on the Government of Sierra Leone and the AFRC junta at the time.

76. By the end of 1997, the Conakry Peace Plan was in tatters. The Kamajors, a pro-government civil defence militia, had launched "Operation Black December", attacking several junta positions. The Kamajors succeeded in taking most of the major roads in the east and south of the country. By the beginning of 1998, skirmishes between the junta and ECOMOG personnel on the ground in Sierra Leone increased. As the security situation deteriorated, humanitarian assistance ceased. Rhetoric from the exiled Government, ECOMOG and the junta moved increasingly away from peace and back to war.

77. On 5 February 1998, the AFRC launched an attack on an ECOMOG patrol team. ECOMOG forces launched a full-scale attack and forcefully removed the military junta from power. On 10 March 1998, President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah was reinstated.

78. ECOWAS deserves credit for its role in the Sierra Leone. Nigeria's role should be highlighted. It provided the bulk of the military resources deployed in Sierra Leone in the name of ECOWAS / ECOMOG. Many ECOWAS Member States, like Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde, Niger and Benin, lacked the resources to do much beyond voting on resolutions at ECOWAS meetings. While there has been no suggestion that Ghana did anything to fuel the war, Ghana's contribution to the search for peace was not significant. Countries such as Burkina Faso and Liberia were covert backers of the rebels.

*Liberia, Libya and Burkina Faso: the network of
RUF backers coalesces around the AFRC*

79. Although the ECOMOG military intervention succeeded in removing the RUF/AFRC coalition from power and reinstating Kabbah's government, it did not

have the endorsement of the UN Security Council. On 16 March 1998, the UN Security Council, issued Resolution 1156 welcoming the return of Kabbah to power, followed by Resolution 1171 in June, prohibiting the sale of arms and related material to non-governmental forces in Sierra Leone. The Resolution included a travel ban on all members of the over thrown junta and their families.

80. When ECOMOG attacked Freetown, the junta forces and their RUF allies did not put up any resistance. They escaped through the Freetown peninsula to the northern part of the country and to the RUF strong hold in Kailahun in the east. This meant that the RUF and the AFRC did not lose significant manpower or equipment. Some nine months later the alliance was able to capture half of the country and occupy most areas of the capital for two weeks.

81. The war in Sierra Leone persisted during the third phase largely because the RUF controlled the diamond-producing areas. Taylor became the conduit for the sale of the diamonds on the international market. In return the RUF received arms and ammunitions through Taylor.

82. Liberia's involvement in the conflict was part of a wider network of outside support for the RUF, which also involved Burkina Faso and Libya. However, there is no evidence before the Commission that Libya and Burkina Faso shared Liberia's interest in the diamond resources of Sierra Leone. Although Libya had promised to withdraw its support for the RUF there are suggestions that following the coup of 1997, Libyan support for the RUF and its allies continued. Arms and ammunitions were flown from Libya via Burkina Faso and Liberia to the RUF. In a statement given to the Sierra Leone Police, Yair Gal (aka Yair Galklein), an Israeli "businessman", testified that while travelling from Burkina Faso to Monrovia in December 1998, he witnessed the loading of rifles into an Air Burkina plane. The plane flew into Monrovia. Upon arrival the rifles were loaded into a Jeep, and driven to the border with Sierra Leone.

83. In December 1998 two Ukrainian planes loaded with arms and ammunition from Libya flew into Monrovia at midnight. The arms and ammunitions were then loaded into four trailer trucks belonging to Simon Rosenbloom, another Israeli. Three of the trucks went to Lofa country from where the arms and ammunitions were transported to the RUF base in Kono. In his testimony to the Commission at the public hearings held in Makeni, Bombali District on 29 May 2003, Reverend Father Mario Guerra testified that, while he was in captivity, two hundred rebel soldiers – albeit mostly affiliated to the AFRC – received a large number of rifles of identical make. This was in contravention of UN Security Council Resolution 1171, which prohibited the sale of arms and other related materials to non-government forces in Sierra Leone.

84. Although Liberia, Burkina Faso and Libya constituted a network of support for the RUF, they did not share the same motivations. Ideology accounted for Libya's involvement in the Sierra Leone conflict. Libya wanted a revolutionary regime in

Sierra Leone but the RUF lacked the necessary organisational cohesion and revolutionary discipline. Many commentators have described Sierra Leone's civil war as one of the most brutish and deadliest wars in recent times. The RUF has been credited as one of the primary violators of human rights in Sierra Leone. As the civil war unfolded these facts could not have been unknown to Libya. The regime in Burkina Faso claimed to be revolutionary. It would seem that the strong relations between Burkina Faso and Libya resulted in Burkina Faso's involvement in the Sierra Leone conflict as an 'errand boy' for Libya. Individual Burkinabes also benefited from the arms and diamonds trade.

Misuse of the Red Cross emblem

85. Humanitarian aid was another dimension of the involvement of external actors in the conflict. International organisations were pivotal in meeting the medical, food and shelter needs of people directly affected by the war.

86. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was a leading agency in humanitarian intervention in the country. Under the Geneva Conventions and the Additional Protocols, the ICRC is mandated to bring neutral and impartial assistance and protection to victims of war, regardless of their race, religion, origin or sex. In carrying out its work the ICRC maintains contact with all parties to a conflict. The Red Cross emblem, depicting neutrality and impartiality, is relied upon for the protection and safety of ICRC staff, facilities and equipment. Sierra Leone is a party to the Geneva Conventions and the Additional Protocols.

87. In 1992 the ICRC established a permanent structure in Freetown as a sub-delegation managed from Abidjan. In 1995 the Government of Sierra Leone authorised delegates of the ICRC to assess the humanitarian situation in Kailahun District, which was under RUF control at the time. In February 1996 the ICRC established an assistance programme for civilians in RUF territories in Kailahun District and in the course of the conflict, the ICRC extended its assistance to victims of the war all over the country.

88. In the events leading up to the 6 January 1999 invasion of Freetown, there were reports of a helicopter bearing ICRC insignia flying above Sierra Leone for non-humanitarian purposes. The helicopter with the Red Cross emblem was reported to be delivering arms, ammunition and other supplies to the RUF:

"A helicopter was coming from Liberia to supply arms in Sierra Leone.

I saw one of those helicopters. The helicopter was covered with
ICRC flag so that people will not know...."

[and]

"There were helicopters operating out of Liberia coming in to the rebels.

We have fairly solid proof that the Red Cross helicopter

was supplying weapons to the rebels. Now, if it was on behalf of the Red Cross or whether it was being used by individuals for Red Cross, or they chartered it, I am not too sure..."

89. Neil Ellis, a government helicopter pilot, informed the Commission that the government had received repeated warnings about the use of ICRC-marked helicopters to fly arms supplies to the RUF. On one occasion, he was instructed to tail the ICRC helicopter and to shoot it down if it deviated from its flight path. In that instance, the helicopter kept to its flight path to Mabang in the Moyamba District.

90. In an interview with Radio Democracy 98.1 FM on 9 December 1998, the Minister of Information, Dr. Julius Spencer, noted that the government was investigating allegations that the ICRC helicopter had been delivering materials to the RUF. On 13 January 1999, the government asked the ICRC to leave the country. The ICRC was allowed to return in May 1999 and resumed operations but was restricted to government-controlled areas.

91. The ICRC supplied the Commission with a detailed letter in which it pointed out that its helicopters had flown over Sierra Leone for several years during the conflict period. The organisation provided model names and even code numbers for each of its helicopters, as well as specific years in which they operated. Based on this assessment, the ICRC contended that the specific allegations about its involvement in arms trafficking during late 1998 could not have been true.

92. After this initial response from the ICRC, the Commission was obliged to invite ICRC officials for an interview because they had mixed up certain dates in their submission. The officials furnished the Commission with further explanations, which satisfied the Commission that the helicopter in question was not an official ICRC helicopter. Moreover, the ICRC had logbooks and pilot verification procedures that prevented helicopters chartered by the ICRC and bearing its emblem being used without its knowledge and approval.

92. The balance of probabilities, supported by perpetrator testimony, indicates that ICRC emblems were misappropriated and used on "alien" helicopters by one or more of the fighting factions. The misuse of humanitarian emblems can seriously compromise the activities of humanitarian organisations. Such misconduct is strictly prohibited under International Humanitarian Law by virtue of an express provision in the Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions. The Commission calls upon peace-keeping forces and law enforcement authorities in conflict zones to be aware that those trafficking in arms may deploy vehicles or planes marked with the emblems of humanitarian organisations such as the ICRC. Extra vigilance and spot checks are required to stop this pernicious practice.

Charles Taylor's personal influence on the RUF

93. In the aftermath of the invasion of Freetown, on Thursday 25 February 1999, former ECOMOG Field Commander, General Timothy Shelpidi accused Charles Taylor of Liberia and Blaise Campaore of Burkina Faso of planning to destabilise the entire sub-region. As long as Taylor was in power in neighbouring Liberia, he said, the crisis in Sierra Leone was never going to come to an end.

94. The Liberian Government repeatedly denied accusations that it was supporting the RUF. It did admit, somewhat reluctantly, that there were Liberians fighting on the side of the RUF, but claimed that they were doing so without the support or backing of the Liberian Government. In a letter to the Secretary-General of the UN, dated 23 February 1999, President Charles Taylor wrote: "Liberians have been used as mercenaries in Sierra Leone for a long time by all governments of Sierra Leone. They have always been there, about 3,000 of them. But they are there on their own."

95. Charles Taylor's and his Government's denials of support for the RUF appear nonsensical in the face of overwhelming testimonies and evidence given to the Commission, not least by the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of the Sierra Leone Police. In a letter from the Office of the President of Liberia addressed to the Leader of the RUF on 3 November 1998, Taylor expressed continued support for the RUF organisation and its aim of taking over the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone.

96. Taylor's influence over the RUF was demonstrated on a number of occasions. Taylor personally intervened to persuade the RUF to accept the terms of the Lomé Peace Agreement. In May 2000, when the RUF took over 500 UN peacekeepers hostage, Taylor was instrumental in negotiating their release. An ECOWAS delegation met Taylor on 19 June 2000 and asked him to help secure the hostages' release. The Secretary-General of the UN, Kofi Annan, the Indian prime minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and the Nigerian president, Olusegun Obasanjo made a request on 21 June 2000 for Taylor to intervene in the hostage crisis in Sierra Leone. He responded:

"I have said to them that I will do everything within my own strength to help release the hostages in whatever way I can."

97. The Liberian Minister of Information, Joe Mulbah, told the BBC on 29 June 2000 that the hostages would be released "over the weekend". Before Mulbah's announcement, 139 Zambian peacekeepers held hostage by the RUF, were moved to Foya across the Liberian border and handed over to the Liberian authorities by Issa Sesay on 15 June 2000. On the day the announcement was made by the Liberian Minister of Information, 21 Indians were transported to Foya by Issa Sesay, who again handed the hostages over to the Liberian authorities.

98. It was not until November 2002, that Taylor openly admitted his involvement in the Sierra Leone conflict. Taylor maintained that:

“In the Sierra Leone crisis, for example, Liberia was not the only country involved. The other countries got off the hook because other major countries protected them. We had good reason for our association with the RUF (Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone) at that particular period, purely for national security concerns.”

An enhanced role for the United Nations

99. In July 1998, the UN Security Council established the UN Observer Mission to Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL). UNOMSIL had an initial strength of seventy military observers, fifteen medical staff and five civilians. Mr. Francis Okelo, the Special Envoy to Sierra Leone, was named the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) and Chief of Mission. Brigadier Subhash C. Joshi, from India, was the Chief Military observer. UNOMSIL's mandate under Security Council Resolution 1181 was to monitor the security situation and to advise on the disarmament and demobilisation of combatants. UNOMSIL never achieved full strength and is mostly remembered for its lack of impact.

100. It was no surprise that hostilities continued in spite of UNOMSIL's presence. By December 1998, the RUF/AFRC controlled a large portion of the country's territory. In January 1999, the mobs of thugs associated with the AFRC invaded Freetown inflicting widespread destruction and casualties. In the wake of these attacks, SRSG Okelo helped to initiate negotiations between the Government and the RUF/AFRC. On 18 May 1999, Kabbah and Sankoh entered into talks in the Togolese capital, Lomé. The United States, through its Embassy in Freetown, also assisted to bring the parties together in Lomé. On 7 July 1999, the Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF signed the Lomé Peace Agreement. The Lomé Agreement, among other things, made provision for a blanket amnesty for members of the warring factions; the establishment of a neutral United Nations group to monitor a cease-fire; and the creation of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

101. While recognising that the amnesty provisions in Lomé were “difficult to reconcile with the goal of ending the culture of impunity”, the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, hailed the Lomé Agreement as “a great step forward for Sierra Leone”. Annan further intimated that amnesty may not apply to international crimes and instructed the UN SRSG to enter a handwritten reservation explicitly stating that the UN did not regard the amnesty provisions as applying to international crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and other serious violations of international humanitarian law.

102. Although Lomé was heralded as the beginning of the end to the conflict in Sierra Leone, attacks on civilians recommenced almost as soon as Sankoh returned to Freetown. On 23 March 1999, the UN Secretary-General had recommended to the

Security Council that it should authorise the deployment of a substantially larger peace-keeping force in Sierra Leone. On 22 October 1999, the UN Security Council authorised the establishment of the United Nation's Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). The military and civilian components of UNOMSIL were transferred directly to UNAMSIL and the UNOMSIL mandate was terminated. The Secretary-General appointed Mr. Oluyemi Adeniji, a Nigerian diplomat at the UN, as his new Special Representative and Chief of Mission. UNAMSIL's brief included overseeing the implementation of the Lomé Agreement, establishing a security presence at key locations throughout the country and monitoring adherence to the cease-fire. In February 2000 the number of peacekeepers was increased to 11,100.

103. The hostage-taking incident seriously tainted the image of the peacekeepers and undermined the confidence of the people of Sierra Leone in the UN. However the UN did not give up on Sierra Leone. Annan declared that 'the situation in Sierra Leone remained tense and volatile under conditions that resemble civil war'. On 19 May 2000, two days after the arrest of Sankoh, the UN Security Council authorised an increase in the strength of the peacekeeping force to 13,000 military personnel.

104. In June 2000 the Sierra Leone Government requested the UN Security Council to establish a tribunal in Sierra Leone to prosecute those in the RUF who had breached the cease-fire "in order to bring and maintain peace and security in Sierra Leone and the West African sub-region." In July 2000, the Sierra Leone Government approved and sent a draft resolution to the UN formally requesting the Secretary-General to set up a criminal tribunal. The Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution on 14 August 2000 and endorsed the Government's request with the understanding that 'the amnesty provisions of the Lomé Agreement did not apply to international crimes.'

105. One crucial element that aided the consolidation of the peace was the intervention of the British military. In the aftermath of the UN hostage crisis, Britain raised its security profile in Sierra Leone considerably. It sent more soldiers to the country and seconded a military adviser to the government. When the RUF threatened the Freetown International Airport at Lungi, British soldiers halted their offensive. British forces also dislodged a band of former AFRC soldiers known as the West Side Boys, who were threatening the security of the city. These combat actions and Britain's military presence around the country may have convinced the RUF to opt for peace.

106. The Government and the RUF agreed to a renewed cease-fire on 10 November 2000. The cease-fire hardly held. The RUF continued sporadic attacks around the country. On 30 March 2001, the UN Security Council authorised the expansion of UNAMSIL to 17,500 military personnel. UNAMSIL became the world's largest peace-keeping mission and peacekeepers were located all over the country. This helped to facilitate the return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their communities of origin.

107. In June 2001 the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Re-integration (DDR) programme was established. The peacekeepers provided security at the disarmament centres and for officials of the DDR programme.

108. On 18 January 2002, President Kabbah declared that the war was over at a symbolic ceremony at Lungi Airport. Among those in attendance were numerous external actors, preparing themselves for participation in Sierra Leone's fresh efforts to achieve sustainable peace and development.

The project was fully funded by George Soros' Open Society Initiative of West Africa [OSIWA].

GUINEA: FUTURE IN THE BALANCE

Nzerekore is located in the Forest Region of southeastern Guinea, West Africa, close to where the borders of Liberia, Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire meet. In the words of Major Algassimou Barry, the Prefect (government administrator) of Nzerekore and the surrounding district, "We're at the heart of a region in turmoil." (July 2004, [Link 1](#))

BAPTISM SERVICE ATTACKED IN NZEREKORE

On Wednesday 19 October, a Christian baptism ceremony in the Gonia neighbourhood of Nzerekore was attacked by Muslims who were complaining that music from the church was disturbing their prayers in a nearby mosque. Ten people were injured, two seriously, and several houses were sacked. The Muslims rioted again on the Friday evening and razed a local video store. Elite soldiers, known as Rangers, had to be deployed to restore calm. Several guns were confiscated and a curfew was imposed. Over the weekend (22-23 October) some 100 people were arrested, with 56 still detained. ([Link 2](#))

The Christians belong to the Guerze ethnic group which has a long history in the Forest Region of southeastern Guinea. Most Guerze practise Christianity or African Traditional Religion (ATR). The Muslims are Konianke, a sub-group of the Mandingo (also known as Malinki or Mandinko) people who have been Muslim since the 13th Century. The Konianke, who are traditionally nomadic traders, migrated south from northern Guinea during the late nineteenth century when Guinea was under French rule and the French had established a colonial administration in the Forest Region.

Ethnic-religious violence had previously erupted in Nzerekore on 16 June 2004 when, according to the US Department of State Human Rights Report 2004, "a Guerze youth on a motorcycle collided with a crowd leaving a mosque". Of the 238 people arrested, 234 were Konianke and 90 percent were Liberian. Two people died in that clash, but the toll would have been much higher had the Guinean security forces not moved so quickly to quell the fighting. ([Link 1](#))

The incidents in Nzerekore arise out of several much larger issues: the ethnic tensions created by Mandingo southward migration; the religious tensions created by Muslim migration into regions historically populated by settled Christian and Animist tribes; the ethnic and religious superiority complex of many of the Mandingo Muslims, and the proliferation of weapons, bored ex-combatants and entrepreneurial criminals and soldiers for whom "war is more lucrative than peace".

Clearly, the Forest Region of southeastern Guinea must be viewed as a potential flash-point for future, major ethnic-religious conflict. Attention must be given to this region now, before disaster strikes and spreads like shock-waves.

ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS TENSIONS

The ethnic and religious tensions in the Forest Region of Guinea are similar in many ways to the ethnic and religious tensions that have manifest themselves around the wider region and all along Africa's ethnic-religious fault-line. Migration by Muslim tribes, into regions long inhabited and farmed by non-Muslim tribes, has created competition for land and resources. Increasingly over the past decade, religious tension has been exacerbated by the revival of Islamic zeal and orthodoxy. This has caused Muslim intolerance and anger to escalate in proportion to Muslim feelings of both superiority and victimhood. Once violence erupts it is virtually impossible to prevent it taking on a religious dimension. The main threats to peace come from Islamists stirring up feelings of Muslim supremacy and inciting conflict; and provocation by those who profit (financially or politically) from conflict. The primary needs are good governance, justice and disarmament.

Twelve months ago WEA RLC released a News & Analysis posting on ethnic-religious violence in Monrovia, in neighbouring Liberia, which touched on many of the same issues. Likewise, many of the WEA RLC posting concerning neighbouring Cote d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) over the past 3 years, and on the religious violence in Plateau state, central Nigeria, have dealt with the same issues. (Link 3)

The main difference in Guinea, when compared to the above mentioned nations, is that in Guinea, Christians are a very small minority (less than 5 percent) in a country that is more than 85 percent Muslim, making the Christians even more vulnerable.

"LIBERIA, THE LURD AND GUINEA'S FOREST REGION" (ICG)

Thrown recently into this pot of simmering ethnic-religious tension is the most dangerous ingredient of all: a large quantity of armed, bored, exiled Muslim Liberian ex-rebel fighters. Guinea's support for Liberian rebel groups has come back to bite it.

In an excellent report entitled "Stopping Guinea's Slide" (June 2005), International Crisis Group (ICG) looks at the Forest Region as a potential flash-point where conflict could have dire consequences. ICG warns: "For some time, both Guineans and Guinea-watchers have been worried that a conflagration in the Forest Region could spark a generalised meltdown throughout the country." (ICG report: Link 4)

There is considerable documentary evidence that the government of President Conte in Guinea trained, armed, funded and gave refuge to Liberian rebels fighting against the government of Liberian President Charles Taylor during the Liberian War. ICG maintains "LURD fighters trained at the Kankan and Macenta military bases and were armed by the government from 1999 if not 1998." (ICG report, p 21)

ICG notes that 80 percent of Liberian refugees are Mandingos who are unwilling to return to Liberia where they feel they are not accepted and are regarded as 'foreigners'. But as ICG also notes, "A similar dynamic exists in Guinea, primarily in Macenta and N'Zerekore prefectures, where tensions between Forestier peoples, who consider

themselves the original settlers, and Mandingoes, who are considered strangers, as in Liberia, are very high.” (p 21)

The tension has been stretched to crisis levels in recent years because, since peace was brokered in Liberia in August 2003, many hundreds of LURD rebels have moved across the border into the Forest Region of Guinea where they can blend in amongst the thousands of Liberian refugees and find protection amidst their fellow Konianke Muslim brothers and sisters. Tension is further exacerbated by the fact that Taylor was from the same ethnic group as the non-Muslim peoples of Guinea’s Forest Region.

The UN’s Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) reported in July 2004, “Residents in Nzerekore said the town was packed with hundreds of Liberian gunmen made idle by a peace agreement which ended 14 years of civil war in their own country in August last year. ‘The town is full of them, everybody knows that,’ a local human rights activist in Nzerekore told IRIN. ‘...we know that they’re still carrying their weapons and that they help their brothers the Konianke when the disputes explode between the two [Konianke and Guerze] communities,’ he said.” (Link 1)

The ICG adds a further layer to this situation. Under the sub-heading “LURD and the lost Mande Empire” (p 21), ICG explains that between 1905 and 1915, African warriors menaced the Manenta and Nzerekore prefectures and the wider region, preventing the French, English and American-Liberians from claiming control of the region.

LURD emerged in the Forest Region and is made up primarily of Mandingoes. The Mandingo fighters have a strong sense of history. They not only remember the warriors’ dominance of the region in the early 20th Century, but they also remember and long for the days of the great Mali (or Mande) Empire (14th to 17th Centuries), when the Mandingoes, the founding fathers of Mali, controlled trans-Saharan trade from the Middle East to West Africa. According to ICG, “These [LURD] fighters sometimes talk about their longer-term mission being the restitution of a glorious Mandingo empire.” (p 21)

ICG also notes that for many, “war is more lucrative than peace” (p 15). According to ICG, the military “has entrenched interests in pillage”. ICG claims the military is involved in cross-border trade and in regional arms flows, including to the rebel “Forces Nouvelles” in Cote d’Ivoire (p 19). But as ICG notes, what usually starts out as a simple economic interest, can develop into serious security problems.

FUTURE IN THE BALANCE

Only months after the Liberian war ended, ICG released a report on the possible consequences for Guinea. It was entitled, “Guinea: Uncertainties at the End of an Era”. (Africa Report No 74. 19 December 2003). ICG commented, “The large number of weapons and irregular combatants circulating in this region is one of the principal elements of concern. These armed groups with their unpredictable allegiances could

serve the interests of politico-military elites who seek to create disorder and or to take power by force.”

The June 2005 ICG report claims that today many LURD former combatants in Guinea are angry, believing that Conte has abandoned them. Also, in Liberia there are both pro- and anti-Guinean forces actively recruiting ex-combatants. ICG even comments that it is difficult to understand why no attacks have yet materialised. (p 21,22)

In the midst of this, Guinea is approaching a period of political uncertainty. President Conte is critically ill, there is no obvious successor, and the nation is soon to hold its first local elections for 10 years. On Sunday 18 December, Guineans will be able to vote for majors and rural councils in an election that will be seen as a test of the country's democratic reform process.

IRIN reports, “Guinea, where more than half the population lives on less than a dollar a day, has been ruled by Lansana Conte since he came to power in a 1984 coup. But his ill health and the lack of a clear successor in either the government or the opposition have led to worries that a dangerous power vacuum is looming.

“In its [June 2005] report, [International] Crisis Group said that disaster could only be averted if both the opposition and the international community engaged fully in the reform process, starting with these critical municipal elections. They will largely determine the quality of Guinean democracy. If they fail, the presidential succession will likely be disastrous.” (Link 5)

After decades of Marxist, pro-Islamic persecution of the Church, there is now religious freedom in Guinea, which is 85.4 percent Muslim, 9.7 percent African Traditional Religion (ATR), and 4.7 percent Christian. Operation World reports that the Guinean Church has embraced mission and in the past decade indigenous workers have begun witnessing cross-culturally to previously unreached people groups. The Guinean Church is growing. But many analysts fear that Guinea is “primed for instability” (IRIN), and heading for a crisis. IRIN reports that diplomats and aid workers have long worried that the Forest Region is “a powder keg waiting to explode”. For Guinea, and especially for the Church in Guinea, the future is truly in the balance.

Elizabeth Kendal

