

McGILL UNIVERSITY

CLASS, ETHNICITY AND POLITICS IN LIBERIA: THE IMPACT OF AN
EMERGENT TECHNOCRATIC CLASS ON THE LIBERIAN OLIGARCHY
FROM 1944-1975

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ABSTRACT

The interface between class and ethnicity continues to be problematic in the study of the African political economy. Few, if any, full-scale studies at the macro level have examined the ramifications of this theoretical inter-relatedness.

From the analysis of state and social formations in a West African national arena in Liberia, this study has investigated the extent to which inter-family connections, educational training, secret society membership and the monopoly of state control has constituted effective strategies for class protection or the consolidation of ethnic interests.

The investigation in this study has revealed the formation of a state capitalism in the 1944-1975 period in which the Americo-Liberian families (the descendants of Black American settlers) have emerged as a political ruling class, through their control of the state and its benefits. The Indigenous-Liberians, on the other hand, have formulated a technocratic class by virtue of their control of the skills of administrative, military and managerial servicing of the state.

The power struggle between the new technocratic class and the political ruling class, since the death of President Tubman in 1971, has important implications for the survival of the Americo-Liberian hegemony in Liberian politics.

RESUME

Le lien entre la classe et l'ethnicité demeure problématique dans l'étude de l'économie politique de l'Afrique. Très peu d'études, s'il en existent, ont examiné d'un point de vue global les ramifications de cette relation théorique dans toute leur envergure.

Au niveau d'une analyse de l'Etat et des formations sociales de l'arène nationale de l'Afrique occidentale au Libéria, la présente étude tente d'évaluer la part des liens interfamiliaux, l'éducation, l'appartenance aux sociétés secrètes et la monopolie du contrôle de l'Etat sur le développement de stratégies efficaces pour protéger la classe ou consolider les intérêts ethniques.

La présente étude montre qu'il y a eu la formation d'un capitalisme d'Etat entre 1944 et 1975 -- période durant laquelle les Américano-Libériens, descendants des colons noirs américains, ont émergé comme classe dirigeante politique -- grâce au contrôle que ceux-ci ont eu sur l'Etat et les avantages qui s'y rattachent. Les Libériens autochtones ont, par ailleurs, constitué une classe technocratique grâce à leur monopole sur l'habileté administrative et militaire qu'ils ont mis au service de l'Etat.

La lutte du pouvoir entre la nouvelle classe technocratique et la classe politique depuis la mort du président Tubman survenue en 1971 laisse présager de sérieuses implications pour la survie de l'hégémonie américo-libérienne sur la politique du Libéria.

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INTRODUCTION

Perhaps the most classic case of the neo-colonial state in Africa today may be exemplified by the state apparatuses and the class formations found in Liberia. Launched by a philanthropic organization of American ruling class interests, Liberia became an extension of American political incorporation of the peripheral zones of the world-capitalist economy-- of which the United States was fast becoming a metropolis. Liberia provided the first American philanthropic experiment in the direct peripheral colonization of Africa which was further extended by European powers during the "Scramble for Africa" of the 1880s.

Liberia in West Africa, then, represented the outcome of the contradictions and the muted class struggle within the United States itself between the African slaves and the American "petty bourgeoisie" which was aggravated by the real class struggle already threatening between the Southern plantocracy and the "Northern" capitalists. The second chapter of this study discusses at length the emergence of these relationships and their implication for Liberian state formation.

The United States' creation of the Liberian colony in 1821 -- which later attained state sovereignty in 1847 -- assured the structural features of the new colony. It remained largely dependent on American philanthropic interests politically, ideologically and economically, which exercised considerable influence over the administration. The Government bureaucracy became one of the major arenas for appropriation and the

distribution of surplus labour. The contradictions which led to the assumption of sovereign status by the colonists, from the philanthropic American Colonization Society, merely contributed to the formation of state apparatuses which came to define Africa's earliest neo-colonial state.

The class place which the American philanthropic-interests created in Liberia, that is, that of the control and the servicing of the state bureaucracy to assure continuity of American economic and political presence in West Africa, formulated the first real class barrier between the Liberian colonists and the Indigenous African peasants and cultivators; later to result in a series of conflicts along which the class struggle between the Americo-Liberians and the Indigenous Africans would take place.

It is the objective of this study to examine in the following chapters the ramifications of this class struggle between the West Africans and the newly-formed state of Liberia from its inception to the present time; largely because of a number of unique features of this class struggle in relation to other struggles in West Africa.

Unlike most West African neo-colonial states, the Liberian state was not only launched one hundred and thirty years ago, but was founded without a national independence movement, characteristic of the new neo-colonial states in West Africa. Neo-colonialism in Liberia had a greater depth, which has not received sufficient attention in the African literature.

While the political structure of the Liberian state became a one-party system, in common with the future independent states in Africa,

the state apparatuses -- mediated by the urban Americo-Liberian family and the Masonic fraternal order -- maintained the unity and the political stability which was desired by the international economic interests for their exploitation of the resources in West Africa.

The masonic fraternal lodges and the Americo-Liberian family agents played a unique role in the maintenance of class consciousness and a class barrier for the ruling-bureaucratic bourgeoisie, against confrontations from both international Euro-American pressures and the national Indigenous-African threats on Americo-Liberian survival. The apparatuses of ideological domination and subordination resided in these institutions -- a unique feature in the regionally fragmented neo-colonial states in West Africa today.

However, while the colonial struggle in Africa created a class of workers, peasants and an educated technocratic fraction among the Africans, the Liberian confrontation with American philanthropic interests resulted in a state structure which has come to define the class and ethnic boundaries around which competition for resources was to be exercised. The Americo-Liberian ruling families have become the target of working-class antagonism -- an important feature in West Africa where class formation and its conscious expression have reached a stage where the masses of the people see themselves as an exploited structure by those in business and the government. It is the hope of this study to examine some of the social structural and change implications of this contradiction.

An interesting outcome of this Americo-Liberian against Indigenous-African masses' confrontation has been the emergence of a

technocratic-bureaucratic fraction from the ranks of the Indigenous working classes, since the launching of President Tubman's "Unification and Open-Door Policies" of 1944. This study will focus primary attention on the class implications of the emergence of this fraction on the neo-colonial state in Liberia. It is the first time in post-colonial Africa that a bureaucratic fraction has been formed from class contradictions of what is basically a Black "petty bourgeoisie" of ruling families who also earlier manipulated the state-bureaucracy to build their class structure.

Part two of this study looks at the role of the ideological apparatuses of the school system and the family institution in the class struggle and in the formation of the new bureaucratic/technocratic fraction of the Liberian working class. It is argued here that the presence of these institutions could not by themselves have produced a class-fraction which could possibly have led to the elimination of the social structural relationships these institutions were created to safeguard, namely, the survival of American international economic interests in West Africa through the Americo-Liberian ruling class-domination. The technocratic Indigenous fraction has emerged in spite of these institutions, rather than because of these ideological apparatuses.

Part three goes into the class struggle which has made its beginnings in the fierce confrontations in the universities and other educational institutes in Liberia, and above all the "silent" struggle taking place behind the scenes for positions in the economic apparatus of real estate and law firm business, the political apparatus of True Whig Party politics and the ideological apparatus of deploying cultural,

educational, religious and national identifications at the state level.

Above all, this is a comparative analysis of the Tolbert administration up to 1975 with the Tubman regime from 1944 -1971, with specific reference to the contributions of the state apparatuses of each administration to the Liberian class struggle. Underlying this analysis is the historical launching of the Indigenous-African educated stratum through the opening of the educational and governmental apparatuses to the Liberian indigenes by the Tubman regime. It would seem that this emergent technocratic stratum is attaining maturity in the Tolbert administration and has begun its long-awaited and much dreaded confrontation with the Americo-Liberian oligarchy.

The unique features of the Liberian social formations render much of the theoretical models which have been applicable to other regions in Africa and Latin America ineffectual in the study of the class-ethnic contradictions in Liberia. While ownership of the means of production in the form of land, local business and direct partnership with international corporate interests are easily delineated in some political arenas, in Liberia it is largely access to the State apparatuses which control the redistribution of political rewards and economic resources available through revenue funds, which determines the social formations. In addition, the successful manipulation of ethnic categories through change of family names and affiliation, life-style and incorporation into the ruling sectors present some problems in the separation of ethnic factors from the class situation in the Liberian political arena.

As a result of these limitations, an attempt is being made in this study to test the applicability of Robin Cohen's paradigm on class and ethnic stratification in Africa in his "Class in Africa: Analytical Problems and Perspectives", The Socialist Register 1972, and the theory of state capitalism in Africa by Issa Shivji and Mahmood Mamdani in Class Struggles in Tanzania(Heinemann,1976) and Politics and Class Formation in Uganda(Monthly Review Press, 1976). The radical departure of the above works from the classical position on class analysis in the literature has presented a persuasive argument for the applicability of the Marxian class analysis even to political arenas, such as Liberia's, which would normally be overlooked in such an analysis. The relevance of these models remains the task of the following chapters.

PART ONE

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

CHAPTER 1

THE THEORETICAL RAMIFICATIONS OF CLASS ANALYSIS AND SITUATIONAL ETHNICITY IN AFRICA

I TOWARD A THEORY OF SOCIAL CHANGE

No social order ever disappears before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have been developed, and new, higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society.

Marx (German Ideology)

Marx's propositional statement has given in a nutshell the gist of the nature of change in social change theory. It has also underscored the significance of total transformation of the social system in the process of change itself, stressing in effect, the necessity of the disappearance of all major structural features of a previously existing social system at the birth of a new social order, an indication of the completion of a given phase in the continuous process of change.

Marx's position was a clear departure from the notion of differentiation and complexity which characterized the grand theory of the classical evolutionists of the nineteenth century, who seemed to have confused structural development and internal growth for change, without a clear outline of the conditions for change in the various stages of transformation of the social organism. In Nisbet's view, "... a mere array of differences is just that; not necessarily change. The passing of time is just that; not change. And, obviously persisting identity

apart from anything else is the opposite of change."¹ Lawrence Krader, continuing on this critique, draws attention to the fact that

the nineteenth century social evolutionists as a rule thought of transition from one type to the next as an unexplained leap, save in the case of intervention of higher stages in the advancement of the societies at lower stages.²

At the outset, it could be argued, that while the literature on social change is perhaps the most extensive in the social sciences, very little in the line of theoretical formulations with explanatory propositions and axiomatic statements has appeared in recent times. Nor has the literature on social change provided systematic predictive statements that might generate a meaningful interpretation of both structural transformations and ideological shifts in a social system. In Wilbert Moore's view, the literature "explosion" in the field of social change has often been "... persuasive after the event and notably lacking in predictive propositions."³ We might add, as well, that the literature on social change has not paid sufficient attention to the question of the process of change itself, that is, a systematic analysis of the guidelines and social indicators of change in a social system.

The most systematic and comprehensive attempt at the study of social change appeared in the literature of the classical theoreticians

¹Social Change and History (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 168. See also Morris Ginsberg, "Social Change," British Journal of Sociology, IX #3 (September, 1958), p. 208.

²Lawrence Krader, The Asiatic Mode of Production (Assen: Van Gorcum and Co. Ltd., 1975), p. 5.

³Wilbert E. Moore, Social Change (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Second Edition, 1974), preface.

of the nineteenth century, partly influenced by the writings of the 1700's on human development and natural history by the philosophers of the period of the Enlightenment, particularly Hegel, Kant, Adam Smith, Rousseau, de Maistre and Hume among others.⁴ This effort produced the most creative and classical works in the social sciences, most of which became founding literatures in the fields of cultural anthropology, sociology and economics. The belief in the scientific method produced a strong spirit of positivism and faith in the "laws" of the biological sciences, which gave the works of the nineteenth century classical theorists an organicist orientation. As Morris Ginsberg sums up:

... In their early stages the social sciences had to make a case for the view that social phenomena were subject to laws, and this easily led them to assume that the laws they were in search of were akin to the laws of the natural sciences⁵

In spite of the misplaced criticisms of the works of the classical theorists, in the present time, an important contribution was made to the theory of social change, particularly the unit of analysis of change, that is the starting point of their analysis. Their concern was not so much with the analysis of history, as their Enlightenment predecessors contributed, but a search for generalized propositions on change, what they prematurely referred to as the "laws of human progress."⁶

⁴See Lewis A. Coser, Masters of Sociological Thought: Ideas in Historical and Social Context (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1971), pp. 20-29; and Robert Nisbet, pp. 140-147.

⁵Morris Ginsberg, p. 205. For further discussion of "organicism" see Don Martindale, The Nature and Types of Sociological Theory (1960).

⁶See Auguste Comte, Systeme de politique positive, 4 vols., 4th ed. (Paris: Cres, 1912), vol. IV, Appendix.

In criticising them for their ethnographic and historical shortcomings it should be remembered that they themselves admitted that this was not their objective as they took for granted "... the naturalness of change in time to the entity under consideration"⁷

The unit of analysis, or the social indicator of social change for the classical theorists varied from human knowledge fundamentally in the works of Comte; freedom for Hegel; the means of economic production through the ages for Karl Marx; democracy in the West for Tocqueville; the idea of kinship, property and civil government in Morgan to culture and religion for Tylor.⁸ Rather than concern themselves with social change in a particular political system or cultural area, they opted for a study of total systems at the world level, under the premise that change was natural, immanent, continuous, necessary, directional and proceeded from uniform causes.

In this search for uniform causes the classical theorists fell into Darwinian reductionism and biological evolutionism, which provided them both empirical data and a methodology. This uncritical and wholesale adoption of Darwinian evolutionism locked the founding fathers in the deterministic dead-end of positivistic organicism from which they never recovered. Bertrand Russell described this orientation as:

... an application to the whole of the animal and vegetable life of Malthus's theory of population, which was an integral part of the politics of the Benthamites -- a

⁷ Nisbet, p. 167. He also clarifies that social evolutionism was and remains, a typological construction (p. 162).

⁸ Ibid., p. 167.

global free competition in which victory went to the animals that most resembled successful capitalists.⁹

Social organicism erred in reading parallels and similarities between man and biological organisms and between biological man and social super systems, such as civilizations. As long as the biological sciences found inspiration in biological Darwinism, the social change theories of classical writers stood a chance of survival and credibility. However, the decline of Darwinism in the light of more refined theories in genetics and contemporary biology, and new knowledge from ethnographic studies in Asia, Africa and Polynesia dealt a death blow to social evolutionism, while "... the attempt to order differences by resorting to the 'stages' fell under both theoretical and empirical attack."¹⁰

Marx and Engels' avoidance of biological organicism and biological interpretations in their theories of social change assured their survival to contemporary relevance. By adopting a historically and objectively observable entity, the modes and relation of economic production, Marx and Engels were in a vantage position to apply the methods of "natural history"; the synthesis of philosophical systems (dialectics and materialism); the findings of cultural anthropological

⁹History of Western Philosophy (Allen and Unwin, 1946), p. 808. See also David Bidney, Theoretical Anthropology (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953), pp. 183-214.

¹⁰Wilbert Moore, Chap. 6, p. 119.

studies of Morgan, Maine and Tylor;¹¹ the theoretical models of economics; and the implications of power political strategies. This rich variety of investigations provided more refined explanatory premises of the entity under study -- the total social system -- thus assuring a grounded theory of social change. Such a grounded theory could not have been produced by the deterministic theories of Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, Lewis Morgan, Henry Maine, Edward Tylor and most other social evolutionists since the examination of concrete historical situations was not their chief concern, as shall be shown below. Their main contribution to social change theory, however, was their insistence on the macro-total systems as the basic frame of analysis, to which most of their works were addressed.

The abandonment of total systems as the unit frame of analysis by both diffusionists and structural functionalists "... following the dictum that each item of culture or social action is to be explained by the rest of the system ..." ¹² was followed by a period of ethnographic data gathering without theory or historical analysis, and a resurgence of theoretical paradigms without data. In David Bidney's view, "... the perpetual youth of anthropology was alleged as the reason for stressing fact gathering to the exclusion of theoretical, or 'philosophical',

¹¹ See especially The Ethnological Notebooks of Karl Marx, transcribed and edited with an introduction by Lawrence Krader (Assen: Van Gorcum and Company Ltd., 1972) and Frederick Engels, The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1972).

¹² Wilbert E. Moore, "A Reconsideration of Theories of Social Change," American Sociological Review, Vol. 25 (December, 1960), pp. 810-818.

speculation"¹³

It was mainly in the works of Karl Marx that the fallacy of ahistorical ethnography and positivistic organicism were refuted. Marx criticized and questioned the doctrine of social organicism of his contemporary social evolutionists on the grounds that it was not related to any particular concrete body of scientific data, its stages of progress were not related to specific human studies, while its uncritical reliance on the evolutionary doctrine of Darwinism precluded the detection of the "... deformation of man's character by civilization, a theme later taken up by Sigmund Freud."¹⁴

Marx expressed more criticisms and skepticism than either Lewis Morgan and Frederick Engels against the reconstructions of the past which emanated from the speculative assumptions of the organicists, whose characteristic concern was the attempt to avoid fantasy and the reality of periodization of societies and to resolve the contradictions between subjective arbitrariness and the objective necessity of periodization; the determinate and unique against the optional and multiple stages and periods.¹⁵

It was in the anthropological writings of Lewis Morgan that Karl Marx found a reliable starting point for his analysis of the origins of property relations and the antagonistic interests that emerged within

¹³David Bidney, preface. See also Alvin W. Gouldner, The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology (New York: Basic Books, 1970).

¹⁴Lawrence Krajer, in The Ethnological Notebooks of Karl Marx, p. 3.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 53.

society. Marx sought the origin of class society and the State system in the dissolution of the primitive social systems, which Morgan identified as the gens. Unlike Morgan, Marx attributed the process of reconstitution of the more complex systems, not necessarily to the laws of nature, but to human effort, that is, of man for and by himself. Hence it was primarily through contradictions within civilizations and antagonisms among civilizations that transitions from one social system to another took place. For Morgan the introduction of property and its accumulation along with territory constituted the major criterion of transition from societas to civitas.¹⁶

The abstract concept of property in Morgan's theory was further particularized and concretized by Marx into land and cattle, and, later with slavery, capital in money form. Morgan's gens, and categories of gentile societies were concretized by Marx into peasant communities, which for him provided an idealized model of the society in which the pursuit of personal and private wealth was substituted for collective institution of ownership. The peasant community also provided "... a material base for the doctrine of impermanence of property in its particular form as a private property, of the monogamous family and the State, already expounded in the Communist Manifesto and The Grundrisse..."¹⁷

In Marx, philosophical anthropology is given a solid empirical base, starting with the years 1841-1846 in his Critique of the Hegelian Philosophy of Right (1844) in which he develops his position on the

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 14-22. See also David Bidney, Chap. 7, pp. 209-214.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 6.

family, civil society and the State. This is followed by his analysis of the alienation of man in society and in nature, in his Economic Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844; the problem of man's production of himself in his labour and his relations in society, in the German Ideology in which Marx also discusses his theory of the development of productive forces from primitive communism to capitalism as "the various stages of development in the division of labour (which) are so many different forms of ownership" (Part I).

Marx's researches on the problem of man in the British Museum in the 1850's, 1860's and 1870's and with greater intensity between 1879 to 1882 were conducted simultaneously with his increasing involvement in revolutionary activities from 1848, which led him to conclude that "... the anatomy of civil society is to be sought in political economy"¹⁸

The question of economy and society in primitive social organizations was developed in Marx's Grundrisse der Kritik der Politischen Okonomie (1857-1858) and briefly in the Critique of Political Economy (1859) in which the primitive mode of production and the capitalist mode of production were compared and contrasted.

The systematic ethnological researches of Karl Marx together with his articles and letters¹⁹ on concrete events of the day relating to man and society, both in Britain and abroad, were partly responsible for

¹⁸Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁹See especially Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, On Colonialism (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1968).

Marx's concern with the evolution of civil society; the interests of economic classes and their antagonisms; the evolution of peasant collective institutions; the relations of family and advanced society; the relations of the State and society together with the problem of the division of labour, that is, the expenditure of disposable time and necessary time in "primitive" and capitalist production.

Marx's empirical anthropology together with his theories on peasant and pre-capitalist modes of production provided both a conclusive explanatory position on the problem and the theory of social change, as well as a clarification in the debate on the viability and feasibility of class formation, class consciousness and class conflict in the pre-capitalist politico-economic systems, characterized in recent times by Colonial Africa, Latin America and Independent African and Asian States.²⁰

The distinction in Marx's writings between the study of concrete, historical dialectics in the relations of production and the skillful analysis of the abstract modes of production (which he called "slavery", "feudalism", "capitalism" or "socialism"), contributed an important theoretical guideline to the formation of the theory of social change, namely: the separation of the abstract, constructed social systems, from the concrete, empirical and historically formed aggregates -- a major downfall of many attempts at theory construction in recent studies of

²⁰The question of pre-capitalist modes of production has been comprehensively analysed in Karl Marx, Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations, translated by Jack Cohen, edited with an introduction by E. J. Hobsbawm (New York: International Publishers, 1964); Samir Amin, Unequal Development (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976); P. Hirst and B. Hindess, Pre-Capitalist Modes of Production (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975); and Lawrence Krader, The Asiatic Mode of Production (Assen: Van Gorcum Company Ltd., 1975).

social change.²¹

While Marx drew generously from ethnological findings of Morgan, Tylor and Maine, from concrete facts of English history, and from current socio-political events, he never lost sight of the macro-level dimension in his studies and the importance of empirical data to support his assumptions and propositions on the theory of capitalism. "... It is well to remember that what alone had reality to Marx was the succession of construct social systems ..." ²² which provided analytical explanations for discrete, historical events. Hence, specific, isolated studies of single peoples were subordinated in importance, to the analysis of the larger entity of mankind and the total system. An approach also followed by the founding Fathers of classical evolutionism who, unfortunately, went into the opposite extreme and rejected the study of the specific and the historically concrete.

In spite of the diverse, sometimes contradictory positions emanating from the literature on social change, certain generalizations, which might be useful to the development of theory, can be deduced: that at the concrete, historical level, social change is neither directional in the progressive sense, nor continuous and immanent -- in the sense that macro-change at the total system level may be the sum-total of small-scale, linear micro-changes. On the other hand, it can be concluded that historical change is specific, and manifests itself

²¹For a review of these studies, see Robert Nisbet, "The Abuses of Metaphor," in his Social Change and History, pp. 251-267.

²²Ibid., p. 255.

as,

... change of something with specific identity -- whether this be a norm, a custom, a relationship, or an entire culture or nation. Failure to specify the identity of what it is for which change is claimed, from which study of actual change can proceed, is a frequent source of confusion.²³

Not only is this frequently confusing, but it also precludes the formation of theory. Only in the observation, analysis and explanation of the levels and entities of the social system undergoing change will a theory emerge. The identification of these elements affected by transformation, will provide a better understanding of the source, extent and repercussions to historical and theoretical analysis of these forces.

We cannot then, avoid the historical implications of social change. In Nisbet's view, it is the reality that social change is "... extricably involved in the historical processes of event and external impact rather than the assumed process of immanent developmentalism."²⁴ Consequently, that change involves crisis and external events and external intrusions.

It is the purpose of this study to demonstrate the process and the dynamics of social change as they have been manifested in a concrete political arena with socio-economic features partly similar to those referred to in Marx's Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations, and the German Ideology, whose historical evolution has been inextricably linked

²³Ibid., p. 272. Julian Steward also believes that "... the levels of sociocultural integration is a conclusion about culture change ... which cannot be explained by any other frame of reference." Theory of Culture Change (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1972), pp. 61-62.

²⁴Robert Nisbet, p. 284.

with the political-economy of the capitalist-metropolitan world system since the birth of European colonialism, and which has been greatly affected by external events in its West African arena since the Second World War and the crisis of structural formations within its social system. The objective of this exercise being the development of explanatory theoretical formulations on the manipulation of symbols and ideational systems of ethnicity in the articulation of class consciousness and the expression of class conflict in a non-industrial, pre-capitalist mode of production in West Africa.

II

CLASS ANALYSIS IN AFRICA

The omission of crisis in the ethnographies on change and the failure to observe the impact of external events and external intrusions in structural transformations has greatly hindered the study of social change in Africa. Commitment to micro-level studies of isolated peoples and cultural practices in the tradition of the structural-functionalism of the British school of African social anthropology has contributed more to the understanding of the internal structural system and its differentiation, without telling us much about the historical intrusion of both crisis and external forces. The generalizations which emanated from this ethnographic orientation provided a mosaic of static, internally coherent social systems, all held together mysteriously by their isolation, diversity and location in a culturally homogenous arena. Dynamics and transformation were not relevant in the analysis of these social systems, hence they had no mode of production, no structural differentiation beyond the kinship structures and no awareness of and division based on access to the means of production and political power. It is no wonder then that a conclusion was adopted early in the literature on the African socio-cultural systems, that no historical-problem oriented analysis of the African social structure was possible. Even less so, the Marxian class analysis, not regarding its contributions in the study

of pre-capitalist modes of production and the Asiatic mode of production.

The fallacy of the premises on which much of the literature of the British school of social anthropology was based came under systematic attack from both Marxist-oriented Africanists²⁵ and students of African history and oral tradition history.²⁶ This research revealed considerable historical data, which dealt a death blow to the myth of stability and slow change in Africa, while also throwing some light on the serious questions of the operation of a class structure in the African regional and ethnic competitive and conflict relationships.

The fallacy of the classless and changeless social system in the functionalist premises of the social anthropology of Africa was once again challenged in the findings of recent literature on the history of

²⁵ Especially Bernard Magubane, "A Critical Look at Indices Used in the Study of Social Change in Colonial Africa," Current Anthropology, Vol. 12, No. 4-5 (October-December 1971), pp. 419-444; also his "Pluralism and Conflict Situations in Africa: A New Look," African Social Research, Vol. 7 (June 1969), pp. 529-554. See also Talal Asad, Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter (Ithaca Press, 1973); and Monday U. Ekpo, "The Function of Functionalism: The Application of British Social Anthropology to British Colonialism in Africa," The Nigerian Journal of Sociology and Anthropology, Vol. 2, No. 1 (September 1975), pp. 7-36.

²⁶ Representative of this type of research includes among others, Walter Rodney, A History of the Upper Guinea Coast, 1545-1800 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970); Samir Amin, Unequal Development: An Essay on the Social Formations of Peripheral Capitalism (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976); Yves Person, "Chronology and Oral Tradition," in M. A. Klein and G. Wesley Johnson, Perspectives on the African Past (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1972), pp. 3-16; and J. Vansina, "Recording the Oral History of the Bakubar," Journal of African History, Vol. 12 (1960), pp. 43-51, 257-270.

the African political economy, which revealed the emergence of complex state organizations and trade relationships in Africa as early as the pre-mercantilist period. According to Samir Amin, the trans-Saharan trade enabled the whole of the Old World, including the Mediterranean, the Arab, and the European "... to obtain gold from what was the principal producing area before the discovery of America, namely, Upper Senegal and Ashanti" These trade relations contributed greatly to the emergence of class-oriented structural formations in tropical Africa, and were, in Amin's view, "... integrated at an early stage (the mercantilist stage) in the nascent capitalist system" The trans-Saharan trade, more than any other factor, produced socio-political conditions in Africa, which "... fostered the development of social differentiation, the constitution of states and empires, and progress of the productive forces (improvement in the instruments of production, adaptation of techniques and products, etc.)"²⁷

Contrary to popular belief and colonial literature, Africa's level of political and social advancement paralleled that of Europe and the World economy as far back (in modern times) as the early pre-mercantilist period. "The peoples of Europe and the Sudan might be as different from each other as the latitudes they lived in,"²⁸ Basil Davidson maintains, but, "the fundamental patterns of their social

²⁷ Samir Amin, pp. 49, 51.

²⁸ Basil Davidson, "Kingdoms of the Old Sudan," in his Old Africa Rediscovered (London: Longman Group Ltd., 1959 /1970/), Part Three, pp. 61-116. See especially E. W. Bovill, The Golden Trade of the Moors (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), and J. Spencer Trimingham, A History of Islam in West Africa (London: Oxford University Press, 1962). Davidson did not imply complete similarity between European urban centres and African towns, but tried to underscore the complexity of these structures even at this early period.

growth were often surprisingly alike. In both, there was the steady organization of central power and tribute against an economic background of peasant agriculture, pastoralism and an expanding use of metals." He concludes, that "Timbuktu and Djenne, Walata, Gao, Agades -- these were the Milans and Nurembergs of the medieval Sudan: much less magnificent, indeed, yet rich and powerful and imposing in their time and place."

Not only were there parallels, but there was also interrelatedness in trade and commerce within these pre-mercantilist zones; that is, Mediterranean Europe, the Arab world and the old African Sudan. In Amin's view, tropical Africa and the Mediterranean had reached such a complex level of involvement in each other's political economy, that,

the vicissitudes of one area had quick repercussions on the other, just as wealth and glory reached them all simultaneously. Thus the gradual shifting of routes from west to east found a parallel shift in the civilization and power of the nations both in North Africa and in the African savannah lands -- reflected, for example, in the successive might of the ancient Empires of Ghana and Mali, the Hausa cities, Bornu, Kanem, and Darfur. This also explains why there was a crisis in Africa when the centre of the newly born European mercantile capitalism moved from the Mediterranean towards the Atlantic²⁹

contributing also to the decline of the Italian peninsula, which since the thirteenth century had played an important role in the hegemony of the Mediterranean states; and the downfall of the Arab states.

Although the emergence of the pre-mercantilist states in Africa was attributed largely to their trade in gold and salt, it should be

²⁹ Samir Amin, "Underdevelopment and Dependence in Black Africa -- Origins and Contemporary Forms," Journal of Modern African Studies, 10, #4 (1972), p. 510. See also W. E. B. du Bois, The World and Africa: An Inquiry Into the Part Which Africa Has Played in World History (New York: International Publishers, 1965), pp. 169-175.

borne in mind also, that their origins and growth were the result of their environment and the efforts of their own population, long before participation in the external trade which was mostly trade in luxuries rather than in necessary commodities. "... It was only after they had a certain status that their ruling classes could express an interest in long-distance trade and could provide the security to permit that trade to flourish."³⁰ The expansion and success of external trade reflected the advancement of the internal structural and social arena, which would have been impossible without the development of the agricultural sector. Several species of millet were domesticated, along with rice, palm-kernel, piassava, kola nuts and cotton, among others. Agriculture, throughout the pre-mercantilist period, remained the principal activity of the population, who also participated in pastoral farming. Animals domesticated since this period, included cattle, goats, horses, mules and donkeys. These animals also played an important role in the trans-Saharan trade.³¹

Rodney³² contends that availability of food supplies was an indispensable factor for the production and marketing of resources which were needed in the long-distance trade, most of which sprang primarily from the products of agriculture. Among them were the unbleached fabric of Futa Djalon from local cotton; sandals; leather military jackets;

³⁰Walter Rodney, How Europe Underdeveloped Africa (Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Publishing House, 1972), p. 69.

³¹Ibid., pp. 66-68.

³²Ibid., p. 67.

leather pouches for amulets from cattle hides and goatskins; and transportation, from their Arabic horses and their donkeys.

Four major states emerged during the pre-mercantilist period, whose infrastructure and political organization had attained a sufficiently complex level of structural differentiation for their successful participation in the trans-Saharan commercial activities. They were all civilizations of the Savannah, built on urban trade and pastoral-agricultural economy, and located along the major river-regions of West Africa.

The earliest of these states was that of Ghana, founded in the 5th century A.D. It attained its peak between the 9th and the 11th century A.D. The second was Mali, which took its rise in the thirteenth century A.D. and persisted until the seventeenth century. The third was Kanem, which later became Bornu further to the east. This state along with the fourth, the Kingdom of Songhay attained supremacy between the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries.³³

As a result of expansion by warfare, these African empires integrated within their domains the major salt, gold, copper and iron producing regions of the Sahelian-Sudan, and subsequently, monopolized the marketing of these commodities throughout the Mediterranean, the Arab and the Saharan regions.

... Thus the imperial ambition of successive states in the Sudan, drawing their wealth from this international trade, would be to monopolize the southern sources of gold ... and secondly, to

³³Rasil Davidson, pp. 81-82; Klein Johnson, Perspectives on the African Past (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1972); J. P. Trimingham, A History of Islam in West Africa (London: Oxford University Press, 1962).

capture the principal salt deposits of the north Ghana managed the first but not the second; while Mali, after Ghana, would go far toward succeeding in both.³⁴

At the height of their hegemony, between the eleventh and the sixteenth century, the African Sudanic kingdoms had become the major world suppliers of gold and salt, and had launched such urban centres as Kumbi Saleh in Ghana, Jenne, Walata and Timbuktu in Mali, Gao in Songhay and Kano in Kanem Bornu among others. The fortunes of long-distance trade facilitated the consolidation of state power, the spread of Islamic learning, from which great scholars, such as Leo Africanus were produced, and the formation of a class of professional traders, within the Malinke ethnic group, commonly referred to as the Djulas.

The Dioulas handled a long list of African products -- salt from the Atlantic coast and the Sahara, kola nuts from the forests of Liberia and Ivory Coast, gold from Akan country in modern Ghana, leather from Hausaland, dried fish from the coast, cotton cloth from many districts ..., iron from Futa Djalou in modern Guinea, Shea butter from the upper Gambia, and a host of other local articles.³⁵

It was under their Mandingo supremacy, in the reign of Mansa Kankan Musa (1307), that the empire of Mali attained eminence, as the centre of commerce, religion and learning.

... Scholars sheltered in their relative ease and security. The literate culture of the Western Sudan, already in existence for several hundred years, flowered in Timbuktu during the years that saw, in Europe, the ravage of the Hundred Years War.³⁶

Thanks to this atmosphere of learning and scholarship, a

³⁴Basil Davidson, p. 87.

³⁵Walter Rodney, (1972), p. 69.

³⁶Basil Davidson, p. 91.

significant portion of the historical accounts of this great era in Africa was preserved for posterity in the writings of Leo Africanus, which he completed in 1526. They were published in 1563, with an English edition in 1600. His descriptions of Songhay and Mali and their commercial activities provided the rich and powerful merchants and statesmen in Europe with the most vivid, first hand accounts of the world beyond the North African Sahara; information they eagerly wished to obtain for the expansion of their commercial activities.³⁷

From the historical accounts of Africanus, and Arab scholars, such as El Bekri, writing at the height of the pre-mercantilist period, we also learn that the rulers of African empires not only knew the supreme value of gold, but also its effectiveness in the protection and advancement of the state. They also understood the value of the trading tribute, taxes, and custom tariffs. In the case of the King of Ghana, it is said that he exacted

... the right of one dinar of gold on each donkey-load of salt that entered the country, and two dinars of gold on each load of salt that went out ... A load of copper (entering Ghana from the copper mines of the Southern Sahara) pays him five mitchals /approximately 1/8 oz. of gold/ and each load of merchandise ten mitchals.³⁸

At the time when external invasions from the Moors of North Africa were devastating the empires of Mali and Songhay the distant ships of Columbus and Diaz were entering the seas of America and India. The richness of the fortunes to be plundered from these two regions were so

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 110-111.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 88.

vastly greater than those from the Sudanic African empires that trade relations with this latter region ceased. By 1655 the State of Songhay fell apart.

Between this period and French colonization in the nineteenth century, Songhay went through a number of conquerors, including among others, the Bambara of Segou, the Tuaregs from the Desert region, and finally in the eighteenth century, the princes of the Fulani.

The process of conquest and domination was finally completed by the French in 1884, who took Timbuktu in 1894, Gao in 1898 and offset Tuareg domination in 1900.³⁹

The decline of the African Sudanic empires was also the dawn of the period of systematic destruction of Africa, ushered in by the mercantilist period of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. This period saw the decline of feudalism in Europe and the accumulation of a new type of wealth, in the form of capital. The newly-"discovered" American periphery was to play a leading role in the accumulation of money-wealth, while Black Africa, via the Atlantic slave-trade, was to be incorporated in the world capitalist arena as a periphery of the Americas. "Reduced to the function of supplying slave labour for the plantations of America, Africa lost its autonomy. It began to be shaped according to foreign requirements, those of mercantilism."⁴⁰ The shift of the commercial centre from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, also led to the transformation of trade and population centres, from the Sudan-Sahel regions of the hinterland to the Atlantic littoral of West

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 112-116.

⁴⁰ Samir Amin, (1972), p. 511.

Africa.

The mercantilist period of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries was indeed the period⁴¹ of the peripheralization of Africa and its systematic destruction.

Africa's resilience and gradual revival in the second half of the twentieth century, exactly three centuries after its major decline, may have been a reflection of the depth of premercantilist impact on its political and social arenas; especially when it is taken into consideration that similarly destroyed civilizations, such as the Aztec, Inca, Maya civilizations of South America have not displayed the same type of resiliency in view of the type of colonial penetration they experienced.

Also revealing, during the mercantilist period of the peripheralization of Africa via the Atlantic slave trade, was the emergence of new empires on the Atlantic littoral of West Africa, directly as a result of their participation in the slave trade. Their neo-colonialist vulnerability manifested itself at their rapid decline when the European capitalist centre shifted its priorities from slavery to industrial manufacture, which required a more skilled manpower resource. Foremost amongst these states, were the empires of Ashanti, Dahomey and Oyo, which played an important role in the provision of slaves (the so-called

⁴¹The periodization of African development has been systematically attempted by Samir Amin, (1972), pp. 503-24 and (1976); Ivan Hrbek, in "Towards a Periodization of African History," in O. Ranger, ed., Emerging Themes of African History (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1968), pp. 37-52; Rodney, (1972), and I. Wallerstein, "Africa in a Capitalist World," Issue, Vol. III, No. 3 (Fall 1973), pp. 1-11; "The Three Stages of African Involvement in the World Economy," in P. C. W. Gutkind and I. Wallerstein, eds., The Political Economy of Contemporary Africa (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1976), pp. 30-57.

"slave-factories") to the European merchant ships, in exchange for fire-arms and gifts. With these the "slave-producing" African states were in a position to raid for more slaves in their hinterland. Hence, rather than slavery being their basic mode of production and exchange, it constituted instead, an external commercial activity, secretly monopolized by the ruling classes, for personal, rather than state benefit. It was a trade in "luxuries," hardly different from the long-distance trade in gold and salt, of the pre-mercantilist Sahelian-Sudan, except insofar as it involved human lives and active participation in the European capitalistic trade system.⁴²

Ashanti (and its analogues) thus became part of the periphery of the capitalist world-economy not by producing slaves but by raiding them from areas outside this world-economy

Thus the slave-trade served as the cutting edge of the peripheralization of Africa in the period 1750-1900, but it was also incompatible with it, because the production of slaves is less profitable than cash-crop production.⁴³

Africa's participation in the Atlantic slave trade as partner and later victim, shifted its position in the world economy, from that of an autonomous external arena to that of a sub-periphery of a periphery (the American plantation economy); thus preparing its political-economy for total incorporation into the capitalist world system, and the disappearance of all sovereignty by the end of the nineteenth century (with the Liberian and the Ethiopian types remaining only as token independent

⁴²This position is lucidly argued in I. Wallerstein, "The Three Stages of African Involvement in the World Economy," pp. 32-36, 51.

⁴³Ibid., p. 34. See also Walter Rodney, "African Slavery and Other Forms of Social Oppression on the Upper Guinea Coast in the Context of the Atlantic Slave Trade," The Journal of African History, Vol. 3, No. 3 (1966).

states).

The integration of Africa into the capitalist system at the turn of the twentieth century, reduced the significance of traditional institutional structures;⁴⁴ contributed to the beginnings of the reorganization of the class structure;⁴⁵ and provided a most convincing empirical support to Andre Gunder Frank's hypothesis that:

underdevelopment is not due to the survival of archaic institutions and the existence of capital shortage in regions that have remained isolated from the stream of world history. On the contrary, underdevelopment was and still is generated by the very same historical process which also generated economic development: the development of capitalism itself⁴⁶

Similar historical evidence was also provided for the premise that trade relations in a capitalist world-economy weakened the state-structures of the peripheral societies within its framework, while also weakening the "... role of the indigenous commercial bourgeoisie in the periphery. Trade with an external arena strengthens the role of the indigenous bourgeoisie."⁴⁷

The incorporation of Africa into the capitalist world-economy meant the radical transformation of African traditional patterns, which

⁴⁴Samir Amin, (1972), p. 524, and Daniel Chirot, Social Change in the Twentieth Century (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1977), p. 7, who maintained that "even in 1900 (and all the more in 1950) there were very few 'traditional' societies left in the world"

⁴⁵Wallerstein, (1976), p. 39.

⁴⁶"The Development of Underdevelopment," in Robert I. Rhodes, Imperialism and Underdevelopment (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970), p. 9.

⁴⁷Wallerstein, "Africa in a Capitalist World," p. 7.

had become the exclusive object of study for social anthropology. The destructive effect of the colonial trade activities distorted the traditional sector

... to the point of being unrecognizable; it lost its autonomy /and/ was not therefore, in transition to 'modernity' It consequently retained certain 'traditional' appearances which constituted its only means of survival This goal having been achieved, we must conclude that there are no traditional societies /italics added/ in modern Africa, only dependent peripheral societies.⁴⁸

With traditional cultural patterns in Africa significantly altered colonial anthropology's rigid and persistent reconstruction of these structural features as ethnographically unchanged simply perpetuated the myth and the distortion of the African social and cultural reality. True to its commitment to the structural-functionalism of Emile Durkheim and Radcliffe-Brown, British social anthropology rigidly stuck to social stability and the "social equilibrium" of the "social system" as an essential heuristic condition. Crisis, change and transformations presented to them a nuisance, which was seen as disturbing the neat pattern of the "system."

When stability was lacking -- as indeed was the case with most of the communities studied -- the anthropologist knowingly assumed 'as if' existence (Gluckman, 1968). In many cases the anthropologist concentrated on what he regarded as the 'traditional' part of a culture and lightly dismissed the rest under the heading of 'social change'.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Samir Amin, (1972), pp. 520, 521 and 524.

⁴⁹ Abner Cohen, Two-Dimensional Man (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), p. 18. See also Max Gluckman's colonialist position in his "Tribalism, Ruralism and Urbanism in South Africa and Central Africa," in Victor Turner, ed., Colonialism in Africa 1870-1960 (Cambridge: at the University Press, 1971).

III

CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS, ETHNIC SYMBOLISM AND POWER RELATIONS

The emergence of vibrant state structures in pre-mercantilist Black Africa; of an indigenous commercial bourgeoisie at the beginning of the mercantilist peripheralization of the African political economy; and the subsequent integration into the full capitalist world economy and its resultant destruction of the traditional African infrastructure have provided a rich and useful empirical, historical base for the construction of a more grounded theory of class analysis of the African political arena.

The image of an ancient, isolated and introverted Africa no longer belongs to this age: isolation -- naturally associated with a so-called "primitive" character -- only corresponded to an ideological necessity born out of colonial racism⁵⁰

The social formations which emerged from the different periods of African involvement in the world economy, particularly the capitalist world system, included among others, the kulak class of indigenous planters of rural origin, who employed paid labour and secured virtually exclusive appropriation of the land. They were exemplified by the Muslim Brotherhoods; the ground-nut and cotton theocracy of the Mourid Brotherhoods of Senegal; the Emirates of Nigeria; the Ansar and Ashigqa

⁵⁰ Samir Amin, "Underdevelopment and Dependence in Black Africa -- Origins and Contemporary Forms," p. 503.

in the Sudan; who kept the form of a tribute-paying mode of production in which the surplus product from the tribute payment was also integrated into the international capitalist economy as it was marketed.⁵¹

On the other hand, incorporation into the world capitalist economy also transformed the African political-economy into a vast surplus-labour reserve for the European mines, manufacturing industries and farms. The African traditional arena became a source of cheap labour and a reservoir for the supply of migrant workers from the rural areas. The autonomy and economic self-sufficiency of the traditional sector was permanently destroyed.⁵²

In the words of some, "... the colonial state in Africa, with its racist economic and political policies, polarized African society in such a way as to create a proletariat in both rural and urban areas ..." ⁵³ whose political consciousness and revolutionary potential was not only activated by the oppressive conditions of Colonialism itself, but were also displayed in the protest movements which they organized throughout the colonial period of domination in Africa. "... The considerable documentation on protest movements in Africa provides evidence that such consciousness established itself very clearly as a reaction to

⁵¹ See Samir Amin, (1972), pp. 520-522. The relevance of the 'kulak' class in Africa is also discussed in Shivji, Class Struggles... (1976), pp. 50-52.

⁵² Migration, in Amin's view, "had nothing to do with 'tradition'," (p. 519). See also his Neo-Colonialism in West Africa (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973).

⁵³ P. C. W. Gutkind, The Emergent African Urban Proletariat (Occasional Paper Series, No. 8, Centre for Developing-Area Studies, McGill University, Montreal, 1974), Preface.

domination"⁵⁴ This latter position on protest strategies by the African workers was a clear departure from the positions which had been advanced in the literature on the African workers, which saw them as mere migrants from traditional ruralism to urban detribalization. The African worker's consciousness was seen as rigidly anchored in his ethnic kinship institutions, from which he was never able to extricate himself long enough to create cross-ethnic, purely occupational social structures which could parallel what was considered a working class in the industrially advanced Euro-American political economies.⁵⁵

In contrast to the detribalization thesis of migrant workers, it could be argued that the shift from rural communalism on the part of the African to the urban labour market and principle may in fact have been a rejection of the view "... that deprivation is linked to forces like God and Fate; rather the migrant can see that his deprivation is linked to the economic and political power of other groupings in society, i.e. classes. When that stage is reached we can speak of proletarian consciousness."⁵⁶ (Italics added).

In order to understand the significance of the working class in Africa and its role in social change, it is imperative that the

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 2.

⁵⁵This position is held variously by Max Gluckman; Philip Mayer, Townsmen or Tribesmen (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1971); J. Clyde Mitchell, "Structural plurality, urbanization and labour circulation in Southern Rhodesia," in J. A. Jackson, ed., Migration (Cambridge, at the University Press, 1969) and A. L. Epstein, Politics in an urban African Community (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1960).

⁵⁶P. C. W. Gutkind, p. 34.

peculiar mode of production in which such a class is emerging be analysed, so that its class formations and relations of production be clearly defined together with the State system within which these social structures are being allowed to evolve. It will be the task of the remaining sections of this chapter to attempt this analysis.

1. Towards a Definition of Class and Class Consciousness in Africa: An Exercise in Theory Construction

The problem of the mode of production relevant to the African political arena has produced a curious body of literature, all seeking to identify a uniquely African mode of appropriation of surplus labour and the surplus product. The fallacy of this exercise will be discussed briefly below.

The origin of this search for a mode of production peculiarly African might be traced back to Marx's analysis of the five major modes of production, from the primitive communal, through the slave, the Asiatic, the feudal to the Capitalist mode of production. The misinterpretation of this Marxian theoretical-conceptual framework resulted in its confusion with stages of evolutionary growth of the nineteenth century evolutionists. Among Marxist theorists, this framework was sometimes treated as a descriptive historically real structural analysis, hence the controversy over the Europeanness of the major phases of modes of production, and their inapplicability to non-European political arenas. Attempts were then made by some to reconstruct further extensions of the Marxian model to accommodate political arenas which could not be fitted in the existing frameworks. In this connection a "tribute-paying" mode of production was added, along with

"the simple petty-commodity" mode and an "African" mode of production.⁵⁷ It was assumed by these latter theorists that before a given mode of production -- say capitalism -- was reached, that a political economy must historically have gone through the so-called preceding modes of production. In this way it was difficult for them to see how a political economy could be capitalist without having passed through the feudal mode of production. This uncertainty comes through in Samir Amin's observation that "... capitalism has become a world system But this world bourgeoisie and this world proletariat do not fit into the framework of the capitalist mode of production"⁵⁸ (Italics added).

The lack of a clearly defined theoretical position on the concepts of mode of production and their variation in different forms of development, constituted the foremost obstacle to the search for the "African" mode of production among its advocates, who were falling into the same fallacy as that of the advocates of an "African socialism," namely, creating a special ethnic, regional or unique brand of a system of social organization.

⁵⁷ Representative of this school of thought is Samir Amin, "Modes of Production," in his Unequal Development (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976), pp. 13-26; and Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, "Research on an African mode of production," in P. C. W. Gutkind and Peter Waterman, (eds.), African Studies: A Radical Reader (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1977), pp. 77-92.

⁵⁸ Samir Amin, Unequal Development, p. 360. See especially the debate on the African mode of production between Jean Suret-Canale's "Les sociétés traditionnelles en Afrique noire et le concept du mode de production asiatique," La Pensee, No. 177 (1964), pp. 19-42, and Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, "Research on an African Mode of Production," in Klein and Johnson, pp. 33-51.

The tendency to provide descriptive frameworks, after the fact, cannot but lead to theoretical confusion, arising out of the isolation of a case study from its global arena. To separate the African political arena from the world economy of which it had always been a part, either as external arena, a periphery of a periphery, or a neo-colonialist arena is a serious distortion of a political-economic reality.

According to Hindess and Hirst -- in a definitive theoretical analysis of the pre-capitalist modes of production -- "... there is no ... single general pattern or structure of transition from feudalism to capitalism to which all particular transitions must conform" They go on to clarify further that:

... there is nothing in the concept of the capitalist mode of production that requires that it be preceded by feudalism Nor, conversely, does the concept of the feudal mode of production ensure that it must be succeeded by capitalism.... There is no necessary sequence of modes of production.⁵⁹

There are no sequences simply because these modes of production are theoretical constructs, rather than historical case studies, and should be treated as starting points for analysis rather than for empirical testing.

The field of application of these concepts is not history. ... These concepts are abstract, their value is not limited by the analysis of the concrete. As concepts they can have a theoretical function even if concrete conditions to which they are pertinent do not exist, have not existed and will not exist.⁶⁰

⁵⁹Hindess and Hirst, pp. 289, 297.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 321.

From this clarification the theoretical categorization of the mode of production peculiar to political arenas at the periphery, such as Africa's can then be attempted. The role of colonialism in the erosion of traditional autonomy makes it imperative to re-examine the impact of external forces on pre-capitalist modes of production. Among the schools of thought which have emerged in the search for a relevant description of an African mode of production has been the French school of Marxist anthropologists, particularly Coquery-Vidrovitch, Suret-Canale and Meillassoux.⁶¹ A more recent orientation has been that expounded in the capitalist world systems theory which holds that

... Africa is today part of a single world system, the capitalist world-system, and its present structures and processes cannot be understood unless they are situated within the social framework that is governing them. Furthermore, this capitalist world-system has not emerged full bloom out of nowhere but rather has been the framework of African life ... for about two centuries. Prior to that, African world-systems were non-capitalist systems. They related as external arenas to specific other world-systems...⁶²

While this view of Africa as basically a peripheral mode of production within the capitalist world-system resolves the question of mode of appropriation of the surplus labour and product in Africa, it still leaves unanswered a number of questions pertaining to the

⁶¹ See especially their debate in Coquery-Vidrovitch, "Research on an African Mode of Production" in M. Klein and W. Johnson, eds. Perspectives on the African Past (1972), pp. 33-51. It is concluded here "... The African mode of production is based then upon the combination of a patriarchal-communal economy and the exclusive ascendancy of one group over long-distance trade" (p.45). Another position in support of the French school appears in Jairus Banaji, "Backward Capitalism, Primitive Accumulation and Modes of Production", Journal of Contemporary Asia, Vo. 3, No. 4(1973), pp. 393-413.

⁶² Immanuel Wallerstein, "Africa in a Capitalist World," p.10.

relations of production and the African social formations within the African political-economic arena itself. Foremost amongst these questions being the nature of class formation in Africa given the ownership of the means of production by internationally based business corporations; which raises the problem of class consciousness within such a peripheral political system and the creation and resolution of contradictions. Is there any awareness of political, economic and social contradictions in this arena; given the absence of the ruling classes and the owning classes? Once more the answer to these questions should be referred to our definition of the mode of production which was found relevant to the African political-economic arena.

Adopting Hindess and Hirst's⁶³ position, the concept of a mode of production can be defined as an articulated integration of the relations of production and the forces of production. The first tells us about the appropriation of surplus labour and the resultant distribution of the means of production, while the forces of production define the mode of appropriation of nature, or the surplus-product, together with the technological forms utilized in the organization of the labour process itself.

Also important in the definition of the concept of mode of production are the conditions of its existence. The conditions of the existence of any given mode of production have to be present in the economic, political and ideological levels of a determined social

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Hindess and Hirst, pp. 182-183; see also Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar's definition of the concept of mode of production in Reading Capital (London: New Left Books, 1970), Part III.

formation. In the capitalist mode of production the economic level is both dominant and determinant of other structural levels' while the feudal mode of production -- dominated as it was by Catholicism and the Master-Servant relationships -- was characterized by the significance given to the political structural conditions for its existence. As a cautionary note, Hindess and Hirst, also clarify the difficulty for any mode of production to reproduce within itself the structural conditions for its existence, which would give each system a perpetual existence and no change to other modes of production.

... The economic, political and ideological conditions of existence of the mode of production are secured, modified, or transformed as the outcome of specific class struggles conducted under the particular conditions of the economic, political and ideological levels of the social formation⁶⁴

The significance of each variation of appropriation of surplus-labour in a given mode of production is defined by its dominant structural level, rather than the nature of the social and economic system existing at a given period in history. Hence, the political structural conditions determined that tax/rent and titles should define the relations of production and the forces through which surplus serf-labour should be appropriated in the feudal mode of production. There was nothing inherent within this mode of production that by itself produced the social and structural relationships which came to characterize the feudal mode of production. The political level imposed these relationships.

The continued imposition of an external and usually contradictory

⁶⁴Hindess and Hirst, p. 15.

set of relations of production and forces of production upon a given social system also requires the mediation of a state and political structure to insure the continued existence of these relationships. The state and the political level is then created as a necessary mechanism of regulation of the antagonistic interests of the classes formed by a given mode of appropriation of the surplus-labour; while also functioning as the field of representation of class interests.

The representation of class interests can be considered a distinct structural level from both the economic and the ideological levels. It is, however, a manifestation par excellence of the political structural level. While the economic level and the ideological level are found as prerequisite conditions of existence for all social formations in the five or six modes of production in Marxist theory, the political level appears in class societies only.

In the primitive mode of production and the advanced communist mode of production, the appropriation of surplus-labour is by definition collective. There is then, no need for a state apparatus or a political level to regulate this form of appropriation, as there are no antagonistic interests to be supervised.

In all other modes of production in which the appropriation of the surplus-labour is not collective, the political level and the state apparatus become a condition of the existence of such modes of production. "The presence of a state and a political level are, then, conditions of existence for any mechanisms of appropriation of surplus-labour by a class If there is no state there is no political level

and no politics."⁶⁵

If we accept the position then, that Africa is part of the capitalist world system, we should also accept the presence of a state system and a political level in Africa whose role and function is the representation of the interests of various classes and the regulation of the mechanisms of appropriation of surplus-labour by the ruling classes. While this seems logical and applicable at the abstract theoretical level, its relevance at the concrete, empirical level remains problematic, and its systematic analysis in the literature has so far been a heuristic device and at best seminal.

If Africa is a periphery of the capitalist world system, its social formations should also conform to those that are characteristic of the peripheral state and political structures of the world-economy. As a guideline to this analysis, Samir Amin gives an outline of the four main characteristics of all peripheral formations, which he sees as:

- (1) the predominance of agrarian capitalism in the national sector;
- (2) the creation of a local, mainly merchant, bourgeoisie in the wake of dominant foreign capital;
- (3) a tendency toward a peculiar bureaucratic development, specific to the contemporary periphery; and

⁶⁵ Ibid., pp. 32, 29. Hindess and Hirst also explain that the state apparatus and its functions are closely interrelated with the political system itself. Hence "... the capture of state power does not consist in replacing the top men in existing apparatuses but in the transformation or destruction of the apparatuses themselves" (p. 36).

- (4) the incomplete, specific character of the phenomena of proletarianization.⁶⁶

It is not certain whether Samir Amin provides these characteristic outlines as pre-conditions for any political-economy to be classified as peripheral, or as the necessary consequences of any economy becoming part of the world-capitalist system. What becomes of an economic system which fails to satisfy some or all of these requirements for peripheral formations? As in his earlier analysis of the pre-capitalist modes of production Samir Amin fails to provide any theoretical parameters for his models, which tend to be presented as concrete, historical case studies -- an oversight which was convincingly refuted by Hindess and Hirst above. There is also a tendency in Amin's discussion of the four characteristics of peripheral formations to give independence of action on the part of certain formations. We are given the impression that ruling classes, landownership, urbanization and the emergence or failure of emergence of given economic structures were all the function or the result of a dynamism or lack of dynamism of a given political arena. The dominant and determinant role of the colonial economic system is not brought out to the fore to explain the presence or systematic repression of certain contradictory social structures. This shortcoming manifests itself strongly in his treatment of the African peripheral social formations; where he repeatedly slips into

⁶⁶ Samir Amin, "General Characteristics of Peripheral Formations," in his Unequal Development (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976), p. 333. A critical evaluation of this work appears in "On Some Statements by Samir Amin," The African Review of Political Economy, No. 5 (January-April 1976), pp. 103-109.

the overly descriptive, after-the-fact analysis so characteristic of the British social anthropology of Africa, even though he is quite aware of the danger of this analysis.⁶⁷

In my view, it would seem theoretically useful to analyse the conditions, both structural and ideological, of the class interests that emerge in a peripheral region for the appropriation of the surplus-labour and surplus-product on their own behalf, and the contradictory relationships which are generated by this mode of production. It would seem conceptually adequate then to maintain that:

In peripheral areas of the world-economy, however, the primary contradiction is not between two groups within a state each trying to gain control of that state-structure, or to bend it. The primary contradiction is between the interests organized and located in the core countries and their local allies on the one hand, and the majority of the population on the other. In point of fact then, an 'anti-imperialist' nationalist struggle is in fact a mode of expression of class interest.⁶⁸

This situation is amply supported by historical events of worker strikes and revolts throughout the period of colonization, which was in effect the period of control and suppression of "... the very class consciousness which all too many observers insisted was lacking in the African labour force"⁶⁹

⁶⁷ See especially pp. 337, 339, 341-343, in Samir Amin, (1976). Amin's oversight may also be attributed to his attempt at a cross-cultural comparative analysis.

⁶⁸ Immanuel Wallerstein, "Class and Class-Conflict in Contemporary Africa," p. 377.

⁶⁹ P. C. W. Gutkind, The Emergent African Urban Proletariat, p. 37.

The recent literature on the emergent African working class⁷⁰ is providing further insight into the question of the appropriation of the African surplus labour and surplus-product by the metropolitan colonial interests before independence, and the metropolitan foreign investment concessions after independence. Also brought out, is the African worker's awareness of this system of his exploitation which through the organization of work stoppages, strikes, riots and the nationalist movements against the colonial regime has demonstrated (1) his consciousness of his working class position and (2) the contradictory status of his colonial employer and administrator.

The shift of the African worker's struggle against the colonial bourgeoisie from its purely economic form to the challenge of the state structure itself, clearly exposed the African worker's consciousness of the role of the state apparatus in servicing the political-economic interests of the colonial ruling class, and the need to possess this apparatus as a prerequisite for the transformation of the entire social order. Whatever the historical outcome of these political aspirations a clear display of class consciousness and class mobilization was displayed, at least in the process of the dialectic itself, giving us some new guidelines in the search for class behaviour in peripheral zones

⁷⁰ Such as the work cited above, along with R. Sandbrook and Robin Cohen (eds.), The Development of An African Working Class (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975); Robin Cohen, Labour and Politics in Nigeria (London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1974); V. L. Allen, "The Meaning of the Working Class in Africa," The Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol. 10, no. 2 (1972), 169-189; and Richard Sandbrook, Proletarians and African Capitalism: The Kenyan Case 1962-70 (Cambridge: at the University Press, 1975) among others.

whose formations do not quite parallel the clear-cut formations sometimes observed in the metropolitan zones of the capitalist world economy.

The analysis developed above has attempted to unpack the multiplicity of Marxist positions on the mode of production most fitting and appropriate to given historical periods and regions. The difficult task of delineating just such an appropriate mode for the African political economy manifests itself even in the brief review of this literature above. Hindess and Hirst along with the proponents of the capitalist world systems model offer one further alternative to the Marxist spectrum. They make provision for the inclusion of social formations which may be unique to a given political economic arena. The explanation of the modes of production as theoretical constructs or ideal types by Hindess and Hirst draws attention to the amount of work still to be done in identifying unique modes of production. On the otherhand, the capitalist world systems' position on the role of the peripheral modes of production in the world-economy allows for a meaningful historical analysis of the African formations in the context of both their internal traditional economies as well as the external arena, without at the same time denying the periodic dynamism of one zone (the internal peripheral) or that of the other zones (the external metropolitan centres). ⁷¹

⁷¹ See Hindess and Hirst (1975); I. Wallerstein, "Africa in a Capitalist World" (1973); P.C.W. Gutkind and I. Wallerstein, eds. The Political Economy of Contemporary Africa (1976); and Samir Amin, Unequal Development (1976).

2. The Role of Conflict and Strife in the Articulation of Class and Social Formation

... The separate individuals form a class only insofar as they have to carry on a common battle against another class; otherwise they are on hostile terms with each other as competitors.

F. Engels, The German Ideology

Engel's statement has provided a useful guideline in the search for class and social formation in any political economy. It has been argued above that class formation originated in all modes of production in which the appropriation of the surplus-labour and surplus-product was not collective; also that class analysis required an essentially dialectical analysis. In other words, social classes "should be viewed as the expression of antagonistic relations of the components of the modes of production. Hence the significance of the study of class struggle in any class analysis."⁷²

While there might be agreement on the role of dialectical analysis in the determination of class formation, it is not equally clear and determinate as to what constitutes a class struggle. Very few struggles as such, particularly in peripheral arenas, manifest themselves as class struggles from the outset. Most of these struggles tend to take the form of ethnic struggles, and must be carefully analyzed to clarify the class categories actually contained in these struggles.

An attempt at setting out the conditions and analytical guidelines for any conflict to be labelled a class-struggle then would

⁷²Theotonio Dos Santos, "The Concept of Social Classes," Science and Society, Vol. XXXIV, No. 2 (Summer 1970), 166-193. Issa Shivji also maintains that "... built into the concept of class is the inseparable idea of the political struggle of classes," in his Class Struggles in Tanzania (Heinemann, 1976), p. 7.

require, as a first step, the clarification of the concepts of "ethnicity" and "class" and their interplay in social group strife. Since our discussion thus far might have clarified somewhat the nature of class formation in class-oriented modes of production, the need for a detailed definition of the concept of "class" would not be as pressing as that for the explanation of "ethnicity." Our concern with the concept of class would then center on the problem of the link between class and ethnicity in the class struggle. Our task, however, is the explanation of class conflict above all else.

In this task of the analysis of class conflict, an attempt will be made to demonstrate theoretically that while "class" relates to concrete-social aggregates or groups, that "ethnicity," on the other hand, relates mainly to the abstract symbol-system of a group, functioning largely as a repository of social categories which play an important role in group boundary maintenance and identification. If, as Weber clarified, classes were income groups with differentiated access to wealth, hence constituting a relation between person and thing, power underscored the relation between man and man.⁷³ We might add a further relational referent, that "ethnicity" is a relation between man and symbol (the symbol of the group and self-concept).

In our attempt at the clarification of the "class" concept and "ethnicity," it will further be shown that the point of contact between class behaviour and ethnicity is at the level of consciousness or ideology. By this is meant that as ethnic consciousness is as much

⁷³Max Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organization (New York: Oxford University Press, 194-), pp. 425-429.

ideological as class consciousness, that the point of confusion and manipulation would tend to take place at this level, thereby giving greater exposure to ethnicity which is a far more frequent explanation for social group strife than "class." However, if the conflict arose purely over cultural, individualistic, symbolic objectives, such conflict would be strictly ethnic in its manifestation and would have little or no class implications. If the objectives were concrete, economic and political rewards, such conflict would become class conflict regardless of the idioms in which it were rationalized or articulated. Class-conflict is objective, external and outer-directed. Ethnicity and ethnic conflict, on the other hand, is subjectively-oriented, introspective and inner-directed (especially when it reaches the level of "witch-hunting").

Ethnicity, then, can be summed up as an ideology of and for the maintenance of exclusive boundaries, which are ascriptive and highly imperative in the sense of restricting the number of roles and statuses opened to an individual, for the purpose of pursuing a specific set of major values which are not shared by others who do not ascribe to this affiliation. The significance of cultural categories is their arbitrariness, and mutability and manipulation by individuals and groups for interaction in order to gain power or to seek some good for the ethnic unit⁷⁴

What is emphasized in this definition of ethnicity is both the symbolic aspect of the concept and its situationality. Situational ethnicity allows for the flexibility of the ascriptive system and the constant manipulation of ethnic categories in varying transactional

⁷⁴Stephen Hlophe, "The Significance of Barth and Geertz' Model of Ethnicity in the Analysis of Nationalism in Liberia," The Canadian Journal of African Studies, Vol. VII, No. 2 (1973), 242-243.

situations. Rather than relate to the appropriation of a surplus-commodity or surplus value, as in the case of class relations, situational ethnicity constitutes a mode of appropriation of ascriptive categories, at the end of which a system of horizontal cleavages emerges. This implies also that ethnic ascription may be externally derived, coming from non-member labelling or categorization, or internally generated when the group itself adopts given categories for its boundary maintenance. As a result, individual members and the group may have several different ascriptive categories, all manipulated whenever a suitable social situation came about. "Language, religion, values, myth-of-origin, authority, and kinship are all natural candidates for inclusion ... [in situational ethnicity; so that] ... no single factor can explain ethnic identity"⁷⁵

The central distinguishing feature of situational ethnicity is its non-associational feature and its imperativeness, meaning that members are not free to affiliate or disaffiliate at will, as in associations. However, by embracing a wide range of ascriptive categories, situational ethnicity provides enough room for individuals and groups to explore their ethnicity. While outside its national boundary a group might see itself and be seen as "Nigerian," within Nigeria they might further be labelled and label themselves according

⁷⁵ John A. Paden, "Urban Pluralism, Integration, and Adaptation of Communal Identity in Kano, Nigeria," in Ronald Cohen and John Middleton (eds.), From Tribe to Nation in Africa: Studies in Incorporation Processes (Scranton, Penn.: Chandler Publishing Company, 1970), p. 244. See especially Ronald L. Fernandez, "Ethnicity As a Symbol System" (Unpublished Master's Thesis at McGill University, Montreal, Canada, 1972).

to their region of origin as "Westerners," "Easterners" or "Northerners." Within their respective regions, kinship, linguistic and clan affiliation might become relevant as Ijebu Yorubas, distinguish themselves from Lagosian Yorubas or the Ikale group -- all this taking place within what symbolically, is seen as an ascriptive, imperative and non-associational affiliation.⁷⁶

The vagueness of most of the categories manipulated within situational ethnicity, together with their multiplicity, complexity of values, contradictory meanings, provides them with unlimited value in transactional relationships and greater potency. In Cohen's view, it is, in fact, the nature of a symbol system to perform a multiplicity of functions, as the same symbol might contribute to the fulfillment of selfhood, objectification, continuity, communion and such organizational functions "... as distinctiveness, communication, authority and discipline"⁷⁷ Duncan⁷⁸ also concurs with this position in his

⁷⁶For the application of this theoretical framework, see John A. Paden, "Situational Ethnicity in Urban Africa, With Special Reference to the Hausa." Paper presented to the African Studies Association, Nov. 2nd, 1967, New York City. Also his "Communal Competition, Conflict and Violence in Kano," in Robert Melson and Howard Wolpe, Nigeria: Modernization and the Politics of Communalism (Michigan State University Press, 1971), pp. 113-144.

⁷⁷Abner Cohen, Two Dimensional Man, p. 32.

⁷⁸J. D. Duncan, Symbols and Social Theory (Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 7-8. See also Clifford Geertz, "Ideology as a Cultural System," in David Apter (ed.), Ideology and Discontent (New York: Free Press, 1963), pp. 47-76; and Ervin Goffman, The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life (London: The Penguin Press, 1969); and Dan Aronson, "Ethnicity as a Cultural System: An Introductory Essay," in Frances Henry (ed.), Ethnicity in the Americas (The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1976), pp. 9-19.

view that "... it is the ambiguity of symbols which makes them so useful in human society"

This symbolic feature of ethnicity has significant implications for inter-group relations. Ethnic categorization usually involves group boundary formation and maintenance against fellow group clusters within a single political arena. It is likely then that such boundary maintenance would occur at an increased rate during a crisis situation, where threats to a group's survival may be articulated in the ethnic idiom. As pointed out above, the appeal of ethnic symbolism is greatest when its meaning is ambiguous and flexible, at which point the more intense are the feelings that it evokes, hence "... the greater its potency, and the more functions it achieves."⁷⁹ We can conclude then that symbolic action by definition seems to involve the "totality of the person, including his cognition, feeling and sensation."⁸⁰

The contradictions evoked by the unfavourable relations to the means of production for some groups are most likely to trigger symbolic definitions of the situation which might lead to conflict. When this situation of conflict occurs, groups locked in the strife over economic and political differences would attempt to mobilize support using the most appealing cultural item -- which invariably tends to be ethnic ideology, or the appeal to ethnic consciousness. It could be agreed then, that "... there is a great deal of creative artist in the political leader who, through his rhetoric, slogans and tactics, manipulates

⁷⁹Abner Cohen, p. 32.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 55.

existing symbols or creates new onesWe 'see' groups through their symbols."⁸¹ The increasing involvement of groups in ethnically defined conflicts in recent times in the capitalist world economy throws much light on the role of ethnic symbols in the struggle for autonomy. From the Northern Irish strife and the Lebanese dispute between the Christians and the Moslems, using old religious symbols "in a violent struggle over economic and political issues ...;"⁸² to the French-English question in Quebec over language rights; the ethno-regional conflicts in Cyprus, Bangla-Desh and Africa, the theme has shown remarkable similarity, while the objective of the struggle has not shifted from the demand for ultimate attainment of control over property, political rights and the state apparatus itself.

Racial antagonism is part and parcel of this class struggle, because it developed within the capitalist system as one of its fundamental traits Cultural or national ethnics and racial ethnics are alike in that they are both power groups. They stand culturally or racially as potential or actual antagonists⁸³

In the African arena this power interest grouping, and struggles over the control of property, political office and wealth has been the major characteristic feature of most so-called ethnic or (derogatively) "tribal" conflicts throughout the major periods of African history.

Group struggles are by definition political struggles and ethnicity is essentially an articulation of a political phenomenon. The

⁸¹Ibid., p. 30.

⁸²Ibid., p. 39.

⁸³Oliver C. Cox, Caste, Class and Race (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1948), pp. xxx, 318.

separation of ethnic conflict from class struggles can only be an analytical, abstract exercise. At the concrete, empirical levels, power, class and ethnicity are closely related. In the African political arena, in particular, power, class and ethnicity function concurrently during conflictive situations, the only period perhaps, when old ethnic symbols are used in the forging of new ethnicities and new identities. Hence class formation in this political arena may in effect be taking place simultaneously with ethnic creation from the ashes of group confrontation.⁸⁴

The Nigerian War of 1967 was seen as the struggle for the liberation of Biafra by the Easterners in Nigeria. The aims were clearly class-oriented and political, rather than purely symbolic. The Hutu-Tutsi confrontation in Rwanda and Burundi had strong political and economic overtones as virtually all positions of power and prestige in Rwanda were dominated by the Tutsi ethnic group, who comprised only 16 percent of the population made up of the Hutu minority who were systematically excluded from such political office.⁸⁵ The disturbances which followed the downfall of Ethiopia's Emperor Haile Selasse assumed a clear class revolutionary form and were labelled by some as "the

⁸⁴ See especially R. Cohen, "Class in Africa ... " (1972), pp. 244-52.

⁸⁵ See Melson and Wolpe, Nigeria: Modernization and the Politics of Communism; M. Catherine Newbury, "Ethnicity in Rwanda: The Case of Kinyaga." (A paper presented at the Annual Meetings of the Canadian Association of African Studies, Victoria, B.C., February 18th-21st, 1976), p. 19. See also R. Lemarchand, Rwanda and Burundi (London: Praeger Publishers, 1970); Paula Barker and Rene Lemarchand, "Special Issue on Burundi," Issue: A Quarterly Journal of Africanist Opinion, Vol. V, No. 2 (Summer 1975).

decline and fall of the feudal autocracy: 1960-1974."⁸⁶ The liberation struggles against White domination in Mocambique, Guinea Bissau, Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa, on the other hand, were fought from the beginning along class rather than ethno-racial lines. Their objectives were the transformation of the state structures which supported an oppressive system of the distribution of the means of production and governance.

These conflicts which were triggered in the African arena by the divisive manipulation of European colonialism,⁸⁷ have not only set a chain reaction of social and political disturbances in post-colonial Africa, but have directly contributed to the formation of new State structures, new ethnicities and new relations between classes. The theoretical implication of these formations in Africa will constitute the main focus in the following section. Suffice it to say here, that the stage has been set in the African political arena for power confrontations by the creation of the artificial sovereign state boundaries, which in many cases cut across natural-regional ethnic boundaries throwing into one state-arena groups with no previous political

⁸⁶ Addis Hiwet, Ethiopia: From Autocracy to Revolution (Occasional Publication No. 1, Review of African Political Economy, London, 1975), pp. 93-109

⁸⁷ A classical case of the strategy of "Divide and Rule" by the Colonial system on African society is briefly discussed in Rene Lemarchand, Rwanda and Burundi, in which a special resident commissioner, Colonel Logiest, declares in a report of January 11th, 1960, that "... thus we must undertake an action in favour of the Hutu, who live in a state of ignorance and under oppressive influences. By virtue of the situation we are obliged to take sides. We cannot stay neutral and sit" (p. 175).

relationship, and by the distribution of political office and commercial privileges along ethno-regional and ethno-racial lines within a given State. The Asian-African problem in the countries of East Africa being an appropriate indication of this polarization.⁸⁸

3. The State and Class Formation in Africa

The capitalist world-economy, through its colonial ruling classes, thus mediated in the class and ethnic formations which have come to characterize the African peripheral arena. By giving prominence to the economic system as the dominant and determinant force, Colonialism gave further clarification to the conditions for the new mode of production in Africa. An important condition for the existence of this new mode of production was the replacement of traditional, subsistence, pre-capitalist forms of control and social formation. The autonomous village political-economy could not exist side by side with world capitalism.

The colonial bourgeoisie imposed relations of production on the post-colonial African State which were predominantly articulated in the ethnic idiom, both at the level of distribution of the means of production and in the organization of the forces of production. In this way a political arena emerged in which, as in Sierra Leone, the technocratic sector became predominantly Creole, and the political ruling class showed Mende and Temne domination, without interrupting the

⁸⁸For an insightful class analysis of this problem, see especially Issa G. Shivji, Class Struggles in Tanzania, and Mahmood Mamdani, Politics and Class Formation in Uganda (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976).

Euro-American control of the commercial and large-scale investment sector.⁸⁹ In Nigeria, a similar trilogy was observable within the Hausa-Yoruba-Ibo struggle for the hegemony of the State apparatus, which differed only in size from either the Ghanaian, Ashanti-Fanti monopoly of State and commercial office, and the Americo-Liberian control of the State at the expense of the Indigenous-ethnic sector. Throughout West Africa and the rest of Africa these neo-colonialist relationships have persisted with little variation.⁹⁰

Following Hamza Alavi's analysis, the neo-colonial state in Africa has been characterized by some as "overdeveloped" and bureaucratic, largely as a result of the original base of the state apparatus, which was inherited fully formed from the colonial society, and partly because the neo-colonial state in Africa appropriates a large part of the surplus-product locally which it deploys through bureaucratically directed development apparatus, making the state bureaucracy, the 'centrality' of the neo-colonial state in Africa.⁹¹

The "overdeveloped" state in Africa gives rise to a petty

⁸⁹ Martin L. Kilson, Political Change in a West African State: A Study of the Modernisation Process in Sierra Leone (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966).

⁹⁰ See Melson and Wolpe; M. Fraenkel, Tribe and Class in Monrovia (Oxford University Press, 1964); Roger Murray, "Second Thoughts on Ghana," New Left Review, Vol. 42 (March-April, 1967).

⁹¹ See Hamza Alavi, "The State in Post-Colonial Societies," The New Left Review, No. 74 (July/August, 1972). This paper provided inspiration for John Saul's "The State in Post-Colonial Societies -- Tanzania," The Socialist Register 1974 (London: Merlin Press, 1974); and his "The Unsteady State," Review of African Political Economy, No. 5 (January-April, 1976), pp. 12-38.

bourgeoisie of small capitalists and a bureaucratic salariat. A parallel, but slightly different position from Saul's, sees a polarization at the level of state bureaucracy, along which the state is used to create public property by the bureaucratic bourgeoisie, or alternatively manipulated for the creation of private property by the commercial bourgeoisie, thus creating a state-capitalism.⁹²

The social formations of the neo-colonial state in Africa discussed in the above literature also coincides with conclusions in the works of Frantz Fanon, Roger Murray and Amilcar Cabral, who foresaw the 'formation of an intellectual elite engaged in trade' and a 'national middle-class' during the period of decolonization.⁹³ This stratum was described by Amilcar Cabral as a "petty bourgeoisie," which he subdivided into three main fractions:

First, there is the petty bourgeoisie which is heavily committed, and compromised with colonialism: this included most of the higher officials and some members of the liberal professions. Second, there is the group which we perhaps incorrectly call the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie: this is the part of the petty bourgeoisie which is nationalist Next come the wage-earners, which you can compare roughly with the proletariat in European societies, although they are not exactly the same thing.⁹⁴

⁹²The foremost advocates of this thesis include among others, Issa G. Shivji, The Silent Class Struggle (Tanzania Publishing House, 1973), Issa Shivji, Class Struggles in Tanzania; Mahmood Mamdani, "Class Struggles in Uganda," Review of African Political Economy, No. 4 (Nov. 1975), pp. 26-61; Mamdani, Politics and Class Formation in Uganda; and Archie Mafeje, "Neo-colonialism, State Capitalism, or Revolution?" in Gutkind and Waterman, pp. 412-422.

⁹³See John Saul, "The Unsteady State," (1976), pp. 17-22.

⁹⁴Amilcar Cabral, "The Struggle in Guinea," The International Socialist Journal, Vol. 1, No. 1 (May 1964), p. 432.

From this analysis, Cabral concluded that in the period of colonization it was this petty bourgeoisie which inherited state power, at which point Africa would "return to history and thus the internal contradictions of our social and economic conditions break out again."⁹⁵

Cabral's analysis of class formation in the neo-colonial state in Africa provides some clarifications on the role of the struggle itself in the determination of class structure and class position; largely neglected by the advocates of state capitalism. By pointing out the return to history of the neo-colonial African formation, Cabral also demonstrates the stifling effect of colonialism on the class struggle in Africa: "I do not mean that the class struggle ... stopped completely during the colonial period; it continued, but in a muted way. In the colonial period it is the colonial state which commands history."⁹⁶

The focus on history and the class struggle in Cabral's clarification has indicated the direction of social change in the new state in Africa. Rather than confuse the neo-colonial state with the old colonial state -- a position implied in the notion of the "over-developed" state in Africa, inherited without modification from colonialism -- Cabral, in agreement with Hindess and Hirst's insightful theoretical analysis on the mode of production,⁹⁷ confirmed the

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 440.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 440.

⁹⁷ Hindess and Hirst, pp. 35-36, in which they clarify that the "... capture of state power does not consist in replacing the top men in existing apparatuses but in the transformation or destruction of the apparatuses themselves ..." (p. 35). (Emphasis added).

transition of the colonial state in Africa into a new set of state apparatuses constantly modified by "... powerful external contradictions conditioning the internal situation, and not just internal contradictions as before"⁹⁸

A review of the relations of production and the forces of production as they affect class formation at this point, might greatly enlighten the confusion over the neo-colonial state apparatus in Africa. The debate between the advocates of state-capitalism in Africa and the proponents of the "overdeveloped," "unsteady" post-colonial African state centers on the problem of the emergent class agents in the control of the state apparatuses. The question of the class position of these agents -- whether capitalist or national bourgeois or a fraction of the working class -- remains problematic to both groups.⁹⁹

While the advocates of state capitalism focus on the centrality of the state bureaucracy in the reproduction of class places and class agents, John Saul -- representing the opposing camp -- disagrees, maintaining instead that:

... any such formulation, while obviously suggestive, goes much too far and has led, at least in Mamdani's case, to the creation of a stark and misleading dichotomy between entrepreneurial and bureaucratic 'fractions' of the petty bourgeoisie which obscures much more than it illuminates¹⁰⁰

Saul prefers instead an analysis which would include the political class

⁹⁸ Amilcar Cabral, p. 440.

⁹⁹ John Saul's articles cited above provide a summary outline of this debate with Shivji and Mamdani, also cited in this section.

¹⁰⁰ John Saul, "The Unsteady State: Uganda, Obote and General Amin," p. 17.

of cabinet ministers, heads of state and other state functionaries, along with the bureaucratic salariat and the small capitalist traders in the one category of "petty bourgeoisie"; which should be seen as fluid and still plastic, insofar as it is liable to be influenced by the local economy and foreign capital, as well as the contradictory interests of the national, working class and peasants.

Social classes in Marxist theory are defined principally -- not exclusively -- by their place in the mode of production; that is, the economic sphere. They are also defined by their place in the social division of labour as a whole, which involves both the political and ideological levels. Governing these levels and underlying the process of class formation are both contradictions and the class struggle. "Classes exist only in the class struggle,"¹⁰¹ that is, they exist in the historical and dynamic dimensions.

Marxist theory also distinguishes class from its fractions and strata on the basis of differentiation at the economic, political and ideological levels. It should be pointed out that these fractions and strata are part of the class position and do not exist either independently of classes, or alongside social class. They include generally, the state bureaucracy and the intellectuals whose role assumes controlling importance at the political and ideological levels in their elaboration and dissemination of ideology. "... the fractions are class fractions; the commercial bourgeoisie, for example, is a fraction of the bourgeoisie; similarly, the labour aristocracy is a

¹⁰¹ Nicos Poulantzas, Classes in Contemporary Capitalism (London: New Left Books, 1974), p. 14.

fraction of the working class"¹⁰²

A non-collective mode of production, particularly the capitalist mode of production, would produce two major dimensions in the process of the class struggle: (1) the objective structural determination of the social division of labour, in which class places are reproduced -- namely, social classes, fractions, strata and categories; and (2) the dynamic-historical conjuncture of class positions in which "people", power blocs, social forces and strategies participate. The structural dimension plays a dominant and determinant role in the creation of class places of "working class", "the bourgeoisie" and "the state bureaucracies", from the relations of ideological domination and subordination; in conjunction with the relations of political domination and subordination and the relations of economic production.¹⁰³ Each class struggle, then, also imply by definition, an ideological struggle, a political struggle and an economic struggle; all of which are distinguished from their concrete-historical manifestation at the conjunctural -- "class-position" -- level.

Objective class place in the structural arena of the social division of labour should not be confused then with (1) the relations of the social agents among themselves, they "are not empirical groups of individuals, social groups, that are 'composed' by simple addition."¹⁰⁴ Relations among classes are not interpersonal relations. It is misleading

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 23.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 17.

to classify given individual social agents in giving social class places "since what really matters are the classes in the class struggle";¹⁰⁵ or (2) to relate social classes to some inequality of opportunity "... which implies that there is opportunity and that this depends wholly (or almost so) on the individuals" attaining the best positions in society;¹⁰⁶ or (3) to confuse social class distinctions with the Weberian distinction based on relative size of income, usually drawn between rich and poor. This relation is merely a consequence of the relations of production.

Relations of production consist then in the interplay between the agents of production and the productive forces on the one hand, and the interaction between man and man on their differential access to the means of production on the other. This results in two major conflicting class places of the direct producer (the working class), and the non-worker who owns the means of production (the capitalist), separated from the former by social class fractions and strata of bureaucratic technocrats and the lumpen-proletariat.¹⁰⁷

How does this Marxian class theory relate to the neo-colonial state in Africa? For one, Poulantzas' clarification dismisses the

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 17.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 17.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., pp. 18-21. See also Barry Hindess and Paul Hirst, Mode of Production and Social Formation (London: Macmillan Press, 1977); Norman Birnbaum, Toward a Critical Sociology (Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 94-129; and Ralph Dahrendorf, "Recent Changes in the Class Structure of European Societies," in F. Lindenfeld (ed.), Reader in Political Sociology (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1968).

fallacies and myths in the African class literature which assumed that social formations outside of class places and outside the class struggle could actively exist in a mode of production, particularly the capitalist mode of production. His review of the theory of state apparatus and the concept of strategy, has important implications for the explanation of the role of ethnicity in the class struggle in the neo-colonial state in Africa; while the resolution of the debate of the "overdeveloped" post-colonial African state and state capitalism, is also made in the same analysis.

John Saul and his opponents, dealing with the state capitalism viewpoint, failed to clarify the nature of the neo-colonial state in Africa, allowing their analysis to fall into the fallacy of institutional functionalism, in which social structures emerged as a function of given social institutions, such as the educational system, the family or the business institution. By granting class reproducing powers to the state-bureaucracy, Mamdani, Shivji may unintentionally give the notion of dominance and determinism to state-apparatuses over the class-struggle, exemplified by Shivji's explanation that "... with the Arusha Declaration the state and state institutions (including parastatals) became a dominant factor in the economy. Thus a new and the most important wing of the 'bureaucratic bourgeoisie' was created"¹⁰⁸

Saul, on the other hand, slips into descriptive categories, which are hardly different from occupational socio-economic status groups of Weberian idealist-empiricism. Without defining what

¹⁰⁸ Issa Shivji, Class Struggles in Tanzania, p. 85.

"petty-bourgeoisie" entails, he proceeds to identify concrete, occupational categories comprising this "petty-bourgeoisie" such as "intellectuals, teachers, higher civil servants, prosperous traders, farmers, professionals, higher military and police officers"; then concludes that "one of the outstanding features of the petty-bourgeoisie was that they overwhelmingly came from the urban-based occupations with some education"¹⁰⁹ (emphasis added).

The major oversight of both Saul and the Dar-es-Salaam School of Shivji and Mamdani, was their failure to distinguish social classes in the class struggle at the structural level and the agents of social positions at the concrete-historical dimension, which precluded a meaningful appreciation of the new state apparatuses now existing in the neo-colonial state in Africa. Colin Leys has brought out most of these shortcomings of the two opposing camps and concluded rather skeptically that:

In general, I am not convinced that the 'state bureaucracy' does now constitute a class, rather than having simply consolidated itself in its bureaucratic function ...; or that the bourgeois proper (abroad) has been really, rather than juridically, expropriated, under the nationalisation arrangements as these have been described by Shivji and others¹¹⁰

My own conclusion about the class formation of the neo-colonial state in Africa, is that the ideological, political and economic apparatuses of the new state are highly transitional, largely as a

¹⁰⁹ John Saul, p. 14.

¹¹⁰ Colin Leys, "The 'Overdeveloped' Post Colonial State: A Re-evaluation," Review of African Political Economy, No. 5 (January-April, 1976), p. 48.

result of the on-going class struggle which has thrown wide open a large number of contradictions, that is, ideological contradictions, political contradictions and economic contradictions. The fact that the struggle in the neo-colonial state in Africa has manipulated the ideological relations and the ideological apparatuses at the ethno-kinship and ethno-regional levels, does not minimize its political and economic dimensions, which continue to provide the motivational objective of the ideological contradictions in Africa.

What this further implies is the fact that the creation of the structural class-places in the neo-colonial African state has already been defined at the international center. It is at this center or core that the surplus-product is appropriated and distributed, forcing the neo-colonial state to assume a secondary and highly dependent role in the supply of surplus labour and surplus-product -- in the forms of raw material and energy supplies -- for the multi-national corporate interests and the metropolitan social structure.¹¹¹

The contradictory economic relations between the capitalist world economy and the neo-colonial state in Africa, through the ideology and politics of domination and subordination, created as early as the colonial struggle a clearly structured class place -- the working class -- whose class fractions have included the wage-earners proper, those who use their own and their families' labour power; those who trade for

¹¹¹ See Pierre Jalee, The Third World in World Economy (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1969); and Samir Amin, Neo-Colonialism in West Africa (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973).

a living and the lumpen-proletariat in the Marxist sense.¹¹²

In addition to the working-class structure, the independence-nationalist struggle forced the repatriation of the colonial state apparatus from Africa, leaving the control of the neo-colonial state in the hands of the Africans themselves. In this way, the world-capitalist-bourgeoisie created new neo-colonialist class relationships between the center and the African periphery, which were to be filled by the social agents at the control of the state-apparatuses; whose role was to maintain unity and stability to assure the smooth appropriation of the forces of production and the surplus-value, regardless of who these agents were.

It is for the control of the neo-colonial state apparatuses in Africa today that much of the struggle is being waged. The so-called "bureaucratic bourgeoisie" and its rivals, "the commercial bourgeoisie" are mere functionaries of this struggle, caught as they are between the ethno-nationalist interests of the African working class and the international demands of the world-capitalist economy, and to some extent, the interests actually in control of the state apparatuses.

The neo-colonial class struggle within the national arena in Africa has been waged along politico-ideological lines, with ethno-regional or ethno-kinship structures acting as social agents in the class positions. Hence the power struggle, and the 'power bloc' alliances are being channelled along ethnic lines -- a transitional definition of the contradiction, already described by Oliver Cox, when

¹¹²V. L. Allen, pp. 187-189.

he pointed out that "cultural or national ethnics and racial ethnics are alike in that they are both power groups. They stand culturally and racially as potential or actual antagonists"¹¹³

In the neo-colonial state in Africa -- using Poulantzas' interpretation of the Marxist class analysis -- the real agents at the conjunctural level, rather than being occupational categories or state functionaries; the real occupants of class position are the ethno-regional or ethno-kinship groupings. The state apparatuses in Africa today are in the control and domination of given ethnic agents. Hence the struggle in the neo-colonialist state in Africa is the class struggle of the ethnic agents, for class-places already defined and existing at the political and economic arenas.

The model of situational ethnicity and class analysis developed thus far will constitute the main theoretical model for this study. While this model might apply to most state formations in Africa, the manifestations of class and ethnic politics in any given arena in Africa is likely to be influenced by the unique features of that arena. In Liberia, however, the family and freemasonry have played a crucial role in state and class formation and have successfully concealed the financial and economic activities of the Americo-Liberian stratum. This data as a result, can only be inferred from the control of the state apparatuses by the ruling family sector.

¹¹³ Oliver C. Cox; see also Oliver C. Cox, Capitalism as a System (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1964).

CHAPTER 2

THE ORIGINS OF THE LIBERIAN STATE AND ITS SOCIAL FORMATIONS

The West Atlantic littoral from the Mano River to the Cavalla River has been the scene of political competition and power struggles since the fifteenth century, which led to the constant movement of populations and shifting centers of alliance among chiefdoms and confederations. European travellers of the eighteenth century gave accounts of groups who frequently changed their habitation, wandering in bodies of 400 or 500 each.¹ They also revealed that the De, Vai, and other coastal Africans were conversant in the languages of the Kpelle, Gola, Mande, Temne and Condo.² Westermann also gave accounts of "a type of king without land" in Kpelleland, similar to the phenomenon of the landless "big man" in the modern hinterland chiefdoms.³

These accounts partly revealed the successive domination of the West Atlantic by such linguistic clusters as the De and Vai in the

¹P. E. H. Hair, "An Account of the Liberian Hinterland Circa 1780," Sierra Leone Studies, No. 16, p. 225.

²See O. Dapper, Description de l'Afrique (Paris, 1681); and Warren d'Azevedo, "Some Historical Problems in the Delineation of a Central West Atlantic Region," Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, Vol. 96, pp. 512-538.

³Dietrich Westermann, The Languages of West Africa (London: Oxford University Press, 1952).

fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Temne and the Mande in the seventeenth century, the Mandingo Confederation at Bopolu in the eighteenth century and the Gola Confederation at Kongba in the nineteenth century.

In this chapter an attempt is made to analyse the class and ethnic implications of the poly-ethnic arena of Liberia since the beginning of the nineteenth century largely as a demonstration of the continuity of the awareness of differential access to commercial and power resources among various Liberian groups from the pre-colonial (pre-1820) West Atlantic hinterland chiefdoms to the post-World War II industrial Liberia.

The struggles for politico-economic hegemony among the West Atlantic chiefdoms led not only to periodic oligarchic exploitation of less fortunate groups, but greatly complicated the class relationships which subsequently emerged in this region, namely: those between the Africans and the settlers in the nineteenth century for land and trade; the Liberians and the Hinterland Africans for political domination in the early twentieth century; and above all those between the Americo-Liberian power structure and the Indigenous-Liberian technocratic stratum for State control since 1944.

A careful observation of the present Americo-Liberian power "struggles" against the Indigenous Liberian technocrats shows an adoption of the same type of strategies which existed in the nineteenth century, when Masonic Craft and family affiliation were heavily used for ascendancy and clique-boundary maintenance. The Indigenous-Liberians, on the other hand, have tended to slip into their pre-colonial (pre-1820) styles of lineage and chiefdom re-organization,

whenever an opportunity of intra-class advantage was availed to them by the Americo-Liberian "power structure."

Pre-Colonial Power Struggles in the West Atlantic Littoral

The westward expansion of the Mande-speaking peoples since medieval times forced the southward migration of smaller groups along the Atlantic littoral, among them being the Kwa-speaking De, Bassa and Kru, and the North-West-Atlantic Gola, Temne, Kissi and Ballom.⁴ The concentration of a number of lineage segments in this forest region resulted in intensive competition for the control of markets and trade routes to the coast and the monopoly of commercial exchange of salt, gun-powder, rum, cloth, tobacco and beads for ivory, slaves, gold, kola-nuts, rice, oil, camwood and palm kernels.⁵

Salt and gun-powder became the most important items in the expansion of trade contacts between the hinterland and the West-Atlantic littoral. According to Walter Rodney:

... the Senegal was involved in the great trade net of the Sudanic empires by virtue of the salt obtainable at Aulil, at the mouth of the Senegal River ... /while/ ... the Africans of Upper Guinea became more and more avid in the pursuit of guns and powder during the latter part of the eighteenth century⁶

There is very little evidence of the usage of gun-powder in the Central

⁴ See Westerman; and David Dalby, "The Mel-Languages: A Reclassification of the Southern West Atlantic," African Languages Studies, Vol. VI, pp. 43-56.

⁵ See Warren d'Azevedo, "A Tribal Reaction to Nationalism," Liberian Studies Journal, Vol. 1, pp. 4-5.

⁶ A History of the Upper Guinea Coast 1545-1800 (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1970), pp. 19, 176.

West Atlantic among the Mel and the Mande-speaking peoples or the Mandingos. However, search for salt was still a prominent commercial pursuit. Competition for trade routes to the coast between the Mandingo Condo Confederacy at Bopolu and the Gola Confederation at Kongba in the first half of the nineteenth century was largely motivated by this avid search for salt, among other commodities. Salt had in fact become the means of exchange, side by side with Kisi iron money. "Interestingly, a unit was referred to as gboloyila which means 'one salt'. One may speculate that a bar of salt might have been the unit of exchange, as was the case in the Congo area before the introduction of iron."⁷ In his travels in the Liberian hinterland, Whitehurst also noted in his journal that salt was an article in greatest demand, since it purchased slaves, gold, ivory and tobacco.⁸ Similar accounts were also reported by Anderson in his journey to Musardu.⁹ These developments seemed to indicate the emergence of consciousness of ownership, and some incipient class divisions in the Liberian traditional sector. The political instability and struggles for dominance revealed a sophisticated ability to engage in economically based confrontations, instead of the purely ethnic domination so characteristic of traditional group conflicts.

⁷ Benjamin Dennis, The Gbandes: A People of the Liberian Hinterlands (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1972), p. 64.

⁸ D. W. Whitehurst's Journal in The African Repository XII (3rd March, 1836).

⁹ Benjamin Anderson, Narrative of a Journey to Musardu Together With the Narrative of the Expedition Despatched to Musardu (London: Frank Cass and Company Ltd., 1874, 1971).

Oral historical accounts and narratives of journeys to the hinterland depicted the Central West Atlantic area in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, not only as an important outpost in the hinterland-coastal traffic in commercial activities, but also as a politically unstable region; partly as a result of power struggles between the Condo Confederacy at Bopolu and partly as a result of shifting alliances and centers of power among the Vai, De, Kpelle and Loma chiefdoms. Whitehurst's diary made repeated references to preparations for an attack on a Gola town of Sao Boso; while d'Azevedo's oral historical analysis of the Gola revealed great concern among the Gola elders about their historical struggles for power with the Mandingo at Bopolu.¹⁰

The Condo confederacy at Bopolu was established by Mandingo warlords in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Its capital, Bopolu, was the south westmost point of Mandingo sphere of influence in the Upper Guinea Coast. Bopolu functioned as a link between the littoral and the hinterland caravan trade routes to Bamako, Tangrela and Musardu. A variety of ethnic groupings had made their settlements in the Condo Confederacy under the protection and sovereignty of Sao Boso, a member of the Diula Mandinka of the Upper Guinea region. The Diula Mandinka were well known long-distance traders in the West African Sudanic region. Their commercial activities extended beyond the Upper Guinea coastal area from Senegal to the Mossi in Bamako and the Mande in Sierra Leone. Winterbottom referred to them as the

¹⁰See Whitehurst, and d'Azevedo.

"greatest merchants in Africa."¹¹ Because of their dedication to trading, they allowed a mixture of their Moslem religion with African traditional ritual forms. They were consequently regarded as "nominal Muslims," "compromisers," "sacrificers to many gods."¹²

Under the leadership of Sao Boso (referred to as Boatswain by the colonists) the Condo confederacy at Bopolu incorporated a sizable section of the Central West Atlantic region around the St. Paul River, including under its hegemony numerous Gbandi, Loma, Kpelle, Vai and De chiefdoms. Traffic to the coast through the St. Paul River, in slaves, gold, ivory and palm-oil was effectively monopolized by the Condo in exchange for which they were assured constant supplies of salt, rum, tobacco, gun-powder and other items by the coastal De and Vai chiefdoms.¹³

Inter-chiefdom conflicts in the Central West Atlantic during the early stages of the Condo and Gola Kongba confederation were at their minimum. Alliances with the Vai chiefdoms in the Lofa River area provided easy access to the coast for the Gola; while the friendly relations that existed between the De chiefdoms and the Condo at Bopolu facilitated access to the coast for the Condo. In the mid-eighteenth century when the Condo and Gola Confederacies were developing into

¹¹P. M. Winterbottom, An Account of the Native Africans (London: Frank Cass and Company, 1803, 1969).

¹²See J. B. Webster and A. A. Boahen, "Liberia 1822-1914: The Love of Liberty Kept Us Free," in their History of West Africa (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), pp. 147-165; and Rodney.

¹³Svend Holsoe, "The Condo Confederation in Western Liberia," Liberian Historical Review, Vol. 3, No. 1 (1966), pp. 1-28.

powerful political structures, competition resulted between them, which stirred up hostilities among the chiefdoms of the Lofa and the St. Paul River basin. This area became the most restless and politically unstable region of the West Atlantic throughout the nineteenth century.

Gola ascendancy to political domination in the mid-nineteenth century was attributed largely to their successful manipulation of the Poro secret society. By the turn of the nineteenth century the Kongba Gola had become custodians of the Poro secret ritual in the Central West Atlantic region, not only for distant Gola chiefdoms, but also for the Vai, De, Mende, Kisi, Loma and Gbande chiefdoms. Poro and Sande officials, called Dazoa and Mazoa respectively, were often sent from Kongba to administer the sacred rites to far flung Gola chiefdoms of Goje, Senje, Kone and Pokpa in the Southwest. Vai and De Poro ceremonials also awaited signals from the Kongba groves for their commencement, while most important ritualistic activities required Poro Dazoa from Kongba.

By assuming a central role in the Poro ritual of the West Atlantic region, the Kongba Gola became a powerful and unifying force among the warring, restless and competitive Gola chiefdoms. In this way,

Gola Poro accommodated to the political complexity of the frontier region -- and to the era of extensive warfare among emerging Gola chiefdoms of a new type -- by maintaining a degree of political neutrality and providing an instrument of secret diplomacy¹⁴

It is at this period that the power of the Poro came to transcend that

¹⁴ Warren d'Azevedo, p. 11.

of chiefdoms. The Poro could declare war upon a dissident chiefdom as well as bring about an immediate truce. In their Poro ritual vestments Dazoa were immune from harm even in enemy territory in the midst of battle. Since Dazoa often joined forces for their chiefdoms, entry of these Poro officials in the midst of battle allowed secret agreements to be reached among warring factions resulting in immediate cessation of hostilities.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century the Kongba Gola had established themselves as the center of a powerful confederation of chiefdoms in the upper Lofa region. Their influence extended southward to the Vai and De coastal chiefdoms, largely as a result of their skillful manipulation of the Poro rituals, and their peculiar system of women exchange. Gola women given in marriage to powerful warlords and leaders of ruling lineages were believed to be sufficiently influential over their offspring as to lead them to re-affiliate with their Gola patrikin. Gola descendants were then in a vantage position to infiltrate a chiefdom and its ruling lineages. However, it was the Poro institution which accounted "... more than any other, for the remarkable phenomenon of Gola hegemony and tribal consciousness which survived throughout the period of dispersion and growth of population"¹⁵

Mandingo Moslem affiliation and reluctance to intermarry with Gola women, together with the absence of the Poro institution among them, made Gola infiltration and subsequent domination of the Condo confederacy at Bopolu difficult. The Condo monopoly of the St. Paul

¹⁵Ibid., p. 10.

River commercial traffic to the coast and the establishment of the most highly centralized confederation under Sao Boso at Bopolu, not far from Kongba, presented a great challenge to the Gola, who also felt highly threatened by the expanding power of Sao Boso. Consequently, struggles for political power and dominance between Sao Boso and the Gola became the focal point for the formation of alliances and the extension of battle lines among West-Atlantic chiefdoms throughout the nineteenth century. The manipulation of this animosity by the 1820 settlers to Liberia led to an extensive erosion of the Africans' ability for resistance and self-perpetuation which led to the successful application of the policy of Divide and Rule by the Americo-Liberians at the turn of the nineteenth century.

Oral historical accounts and various narratives of journeys to the hinterland gave reports of impending wars and struggles between Kongba and Bopolu. Sao Boso was reported as disturbed by this competition as:

... he entered into a long account of his early friendship for the Colony, the hatred which he brought upon himself from the Goorahs (the Golas) for so doing, together with the distrust existing among some of his own people as to his sincerity in their behalf.¹⁶

Anderson also provided accounts of the hostile attitudes of the Gola, and the obstacle they presented to contact with wealthy marketing peoples of the Upper Guinea Coast.¹⁷ Throughout the nineteenth century the Golas were seen as the most hostile chiefdom towards the

¹⁶Whitehurst.

¹⁷Anderson.

Liberian colony.

The control of the Poro institution by the Kongba Gola gave them a vantage position in the manipulation of trade alliances with the De chiefdoms, who had provided the Condo with coastal depots in the past. As a result the Gola succeeded to cut-off trade links and the coastal commerce from Sao Boso at Bopolu. For the first time the Condo confederacy was isolated from the coastal trade.

By 1845 the Gola Confederation at Kongba had wrested control of Bopolu from the Mandingo. They took control, also of the southwestern region and dominated the De, Vai and Kpelle chiefdoms in this area. The rise of Zolu Duma, a Gola war-lord, coincided with this period. His confederation of chiefdoms included the Vai chiefdoms of the Gawula and Tomba regions, together with the coastal De chiefdoms.¹⁸

The Liberian settlers arrived in the West-Atlantic littoral at the height of the struggle for power between the Kongba Gola chiefdoms and the Condo Confederacy of Sao Boso. They arrived in what was predominantly De territory and entered into negotiation for land with King Peter, whose town, Gawulun, stood in Bushrod Island.¹⁹ At this period Sao Boso "held a treaty of friendship and non-aggression with Zolu Duma"; and had great influence over the De ruling lineages.²⁰

¹⁸ Svend Holsoe, "A Study of Relations Between Settlers and Indigenous Peoples in Western Liberia 1821-1847," African Historical Studies, Vol. IV, No. 2 (1971), p. 335.

¹⁹ R. R. Gurley, Life of Jehudi Ashmun (Washington, 1825), pp. 233-234.

²⁰ See Whitehurst.

From the outset, the settlers were peculiarly implicated in the chiefdom struggles of this region.

Relations between the Condo of Bopolu and the colonists were harmonious during the leadership of Sao Boso, partly because of favourable representation by Ba Caia, owner of Gomez Island in Mensurado Bay. During the period of disputes among the De chiefdoms and the settlers in the early stages of the Liberian colony, Sao Boso was called on several occasions to intervene.²¹

In a dispute in 1822 which involved a shipwrecked British cruiser which was attacked by the De, together with disagreement by De chiefs over the 1821 treaty between King Peter and the American Colonization Society, Ba Caia appealed to Sao Boso to mediate in the dispute. Sao Boso is reported

... to have said loftily upon his arrival that he had come 'not to pronounce sentence between the coast people and the strangers, but to do justice' In essence, he ruled that the Dei had sold their land by signing the treaty and had to accept the consequences. His decision was final and the Dei agreed to it for the time being.²²

After this incident Sao Boso became a strong ally of the American Colonization Society, which gave the colonists greater advantage in their trading activities with the interior. Exploratory journeys by Liberian explorers to the hinterland passed through Condo territory. The major hinterland journeys by Whitehurst in the 1830s,

²¹See J. Ashmun, History of the American Colony in Liberia From 1821 to 1823 (Washington, 1826); and Gurley.

²²Holsoe (1971), p. 337. See also Ashmun, pp. 116-119.

Benjamin Anderson in 1868-69, and again in 1874 and Blyden's in the 1870s were all directed to Condo territory at Bopolu and the Mandingo region at Musardu.²³ Sao Boso was also partly instrumental in the "Treaty of Gourah" signed between the De chiefs, King Peter, Long Peter, Governor, Todo and Jimmy and the settlers which marked the end of hostilities between the De and the colonists.²⁴

These friendly overtures to the colonists raised old suspicions and rivalry among the Gola chiefdoms, who were apprehensive about a possible trade alliance between Bopolu and the coastal settlements. It was probably due to this fear, that the Gola became hostile to the settlers in the first half of the nineteenth century, rather than to attitudes of hatred towards the Black-American colonists.

Gola orientation was essentially one of accepting the Liberians as members of a confederacy of much the same type as had characterized regional federations in the region in the past. Any threat to this new-gained hegemony stimulated fresh temporary alliances among chiefdoms to strengthen controls over territory and commerce. Thus, historical traditions reveal hostility to Liberians or to other groups in connection with those specific periods of conflict where self-determination and tribal power were placed in jeopardy²⁵

The struggle for the domination of trade and politics in the Central-Western region between the Gola and the Condo intensified after

²³ See Whitehurst; Anderson; and Edward W. Blyden, "Journal of a Visit to the Boporo Country," The African Repository, Vol. XLVII (1876), p. 236.

²⁴ See Charles Henry Huberich, The Political and Legislative History of Liberia, Vol. One (New York: Central Books, 1947); and Holsoe (1971), p. 341.

²⁵ Warren d'Azevedo (1969), p. 17.

the death of Sao in 1841. General unrest followed among the western chiefdoms which led to the victory of the Gola, who took over Bopolu from the Mandingo from 1845 to the end of the nineteenth century. Relations between the Gola at Bopolu and the settlers improved considerably and general peaceful co-existence characterized this region throughout the nineteenth century.

The Beginning of Colonial Politics in Liberia From 1821-1903

Colonial politics began in the Central West Atlantic littoral at the founding of the Liberian colony in 1821 by the American Colonization Society. This was a philanthropic organization established in the United States in 1816, for the purpose of repatriating slaves and Free Blacks from the United States. Its significant venture was the successful launching of a Black settlement in West Africa, which was to become the home for repatriated Free Blacks and manumitted slaves who saw no future within the United States. From 1817 to 1865 nearly 5,000 Free Black women, men and children settled in Liberia under the auspices of the American Colonization Society. They were to be joined in West Africa by 5,700 Africans recaptured by the American anti-slavery patrol, and an additional 8,000 slaves who were manumitted with the express proviso that they migrate to Liberia.²⁶

A large percentage of the Free Blacks and manumitted slaves who

²⁶ See The American Colonization Society, Memorial of the Semi-Centennial Anniversary of the American Colonization Society (Washington: January 1867), p. 190; and Tom Shick, "A Quantitative Analysis of Liberian Colonization From 1820 to 1843 with special reference to mortality," Journal of African History, Vol. XII (1971), pp. 45-59.

emigrated to Liberia in the nineteenth century came from the Southern States. Of those who reached Liberia by 1843 twenty percent came from the States of the north and northwest. The rest emigrated from the south, particularly the upper south; from these, more than one-fourth came from Virginia. About two-thirds came from the southern States of Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia.²⁷

During the 1850 to 1860 period the number of Free Blacks who migrated to Liberia from the Northern States reached approximately 1,094. Of these, two-thirds originated from Pennsylvania and New York. Migrations from the Southern states maintained a steady flow during the 1820 to 1860 period; except for a sharp rise in emigration in the year following the Nat Turner uprising in Southampton in 1831.

The settlement of the new emigrants in Liberia suffered a serious setback as a result of the high death rate of the new arrivals. One-fourth died within the first year of their arrival alone. The casualty rate increased sharply to forty percent within the first five years of settlement. The American Colonization Society census of 1843 showed that out of the 4,500 Black American emigrants who reached the shores of Cape Mesurado between 1821 to 1843, approximately 150 had returned to the United States and another 200 had left Liberia for Sierra Leone.²⁸

In spite of the arrival of the 4,571 emigrants up to 1843, only

²⁷ See American Colonization Society, A Census of the Colony (Washington, 1843).

²⁸ See Tom Shick, pp. 45-59.

1,819 were living in the settlements at the close of this period. Re-emigration to the United States and neighbouring African countries partly accounted for the low population figures. However, re-emigration was not the major source of population decrease, as the rate of persons leaving the colony was negligible. The military factor was also ruled out. Although fewer in number than the surrounding indigenous African population, the colonists were better armed and protected against serious attacks from the interior.

Poor medical facilities and high death rates arising from attacks from malaria accounted for the greater part of the depletion of the colonial population figures, than all other factors put together. The American Colonization Society census records of 1843 showed fever as the cause of death in 45.7 percent of all reported deaths of 1,918 in the colony from 1821 to 1843.

The experience of devastatingly high mortality when the newcomers were exposed to infectious diseases in a tropical environment without natural immunities is largely the reason for the retardation of settler demographic growth during the period²⁹

The Commonwealth of Liberia From 1838-1847

In spite of the high death rate and decreasing population figures among the colonists during the early stages of settlement, emigration continued intermittently under the sponsorship of the Colonization Societies, which had appeared at this time to carry out

²⁹Tom Shick, "A Preliminary Analysis of the 1843 Liberian Census." A paper presented at the Sixth Annual Liberian Studies Conference at the University of Wisconsin, April 26th, 1974, pp. 2-3.

the task of finding new homes for the Free Blacks in West Africa.

The founding of the Maryland States Colonization Society in 1824 stimulated settlement to other parts of the Liberian coast. In 1833 the Society landed more than two hundred settlers "down coast" at Harper; as a result the colony of "Maryland in Africa" was established. Two years later in 1835 a Quaker group under the name of "Youngman's Colonization Society of Pennsylvania" founded another colony at Bassa Cove at the mouth of St. John River, under the Governorship of Thomas Buchanan, a cousin of President Buchanan of the United States. In 1837 a town called "Buchanan" was established at Bassa Cove by Governor Thomas Buchanan. Another settlement was founded in 1838 at the mouth of the Sinoe River by the Mississippi Colonization Society under the name of "Mississippi in Africa," later renamed Greenville.

After the establishment of the Greenville settlement at the Sinoe River, and a few settlements along the coast, the Colonization Societies decided to amalgamate the settlements into a Commonwealth of States, not only for protection, but also for trade and territorial expansion. The American Colonization Society drew up a constitution with the help of Professor Greenleaf of Harvard College, which was adopted by the four major settlement units in Liberia. In 1838, the Commonwealth of Liberia, constituting Montserrado, Bassa Cove, "Mississippi in Africa" and "Maryland in Africa" was formally established, with Thomas Buchanan as its first Governor and Jenkins J. Roberts (a settler) as Deputy-Governor. When Buchanan died in 1841, Jenkins J. Roberts became Governor of the Commonwealth of Liberia, the first settler to be appointed by the American Colonization Society to a responsible position, after Elijah

Johnson's brief term as acting Governor in the 1820s.³⁰

From 1822 to 1827 the settlements of Montserrado County had expanded throughout the St. Paul River region. Among those founded at this period were Caldwell, Millsburg and New Georgia. Seven years later, Virginia, Clay-Ashland, Dixville, Louisiana and Whiteplains were founded, followed later by the rural settlements of Arthington, Barnesville, Bensonville, Brewerville, Careysburg, Crozierville, Gardnersville, Harrisburg, Paynesville and Royesville.³¹

The census of the American Colonization Society of 1843 showed a population growth of 2,247 colonists, with 20 Christian churches, 10 schools and four printing presses. These figures also included those of the African recaptives. The African recaptive-population grew steadily throughout the nineteenth century. In 1858 approximately 200 African slaves were recaptured from the slave ship "Echo" and repatriated to Liberia. A year later the "Castilian," the "South Shore" and the "Star of the Union" added another 1,639 recaptives. The Commonwealth gained another 10,545 persons from the "Mary Carolina Stevens" fleet by 1860.³²

The cost of repatriating the African recaptives reached an estimated \$36,500.00 for the chartered vessels, and another \$60,778.98

³⁰ See Ashmun; and Huberich.

³¹ See Willi Schulze, "Notes on Settlement Research in Liberia," Rural Africana, No. 15, pp. 73-87; Jangaba Johnson et al, A Brief History of Montserrado County (Monrovia: Department of Information and Cultural Affairs, 1965).

³² See Abayomi Karnga, History of Liberia (Liverpool: D. H. Tyte and Co., 1926), p. 40.

for the upkeep and relocation of the recaptives in Liberia. (Further discussion of the role of the recaptives in Liberia will be made in subsequent sections below).

With the expanding population, the first task of the Commonwealth was the extension of its territory. Because of the prestige of the colony at this time, more and more chiefdoms sought the protection of the colony by annexing their territories to the Liberian settlement. In addition, treaties were entered into with a number of Chiefs. On April 6th, 1840 a treaty was signed by Governor Buchanan with the Dei which gave the territory north of the St. Paul River as far as Digbe to the Colony.³³ In February 1843 Governor Roberts concluded a treaty with Koda of the Gola Chiefdom of the St. Paul area. Two years later, a treaty was signed with Chief Bob Gray of the Bassa which brought the territory between the Marshall and Junk Rivers and the Bassa settlements in the possession of the Commonwealth of Liberia.

By 1847 most of the territory from Cape Mount to the borders of the Maryland settlements were either purchased, annexed or passed over to the Commonwealth as its possessions.

From about 1830 the settlers were steadily building substantial foreign trade in palm-oil from the Kru coast, camwood from the St. Paul River and fibres from the raphia palm. Cotton, sugar and coffee (the famous "Liberica") flourished in the 1850s, while "merchant princes" such as R. A. Sherman, Joseph Roberts, the Governor of the Commonwealth, Francis Devany and E. J. Roye entered overseas trade.

³³ See Liberia Herald in The African Repository, Vol. XVI (1840), p. 216.

Raw products were brought and shipped not only in foreign bottoms to foreign markets, but also in ships owned by Liberian merchants and manned by some of our own citizens -- vessels like the 'Eusibia Roye' owned by Edward Roye, later President of Liberia; the 'Moses Shepard' and 'James Hall,' owned by the McGill Brothers; the 'Liberia,' or 'Goldelts' Schooner' purchased by the firm of Payne and Yates³⁴

Revenues which accrued from these commercial activities facilitated the territorial expansion of the Commonwealth and later the Republic. They helped the establishment of a newspaper, the Liberian Herald and the founding of Liberia College in 1862, which emerged as the second institution of higher education in West Africa after Fourah Bay College.³⁵

Prosperity and relative peace from interior disturbances drew the attention of settlers to their internal grievances within the colony. Dissatisfaction with the continued domination of the colony by the agents of the Colonization Society was freely expressed by the settlers. The "Report of the Managers to the American Colonization Society" which encouraged "personal and political independence" for the colonists, also criticized the "spirit of insubordination in a portion of the colonists" which was detrimental to Liberia "assuming an honourable stand among the Christian nations."³⁶ Dr. J. W. Lugenbeel's private journal reports how a Liberian colonist, Mr. Wilson --

... in his usual style of grandiloquence, and nonsensical egotism, boastingly and blusteringly asserted that the territory of Liberia belongs to the citizens of Liberia, as 'an inheritance from their forefathers'; that they are the proper descendants of the original proprietors of the soil He

³⁴Karnga, pp. 42-43.

³⁵See Karnga; and Webster and Boahen, pp. 150-151.

³⁶The African Repository, Vol. XII (1835), p. 17.

stated that the people of Liberia have heretofore allowed the Colonization Society to act as their trustees or guardians, but that they have now become of age, and are determined to manage their own affairs on their own territory³⁷

Adding to this unrest within the Commonwealth, were challenges by Britain and France over the legitimacy of Liberia's sovereign status. Its claim to territory, its right to collect revenue from foreign vessels trading along its shores and its authority to impose custom duties and taxes on goods moving in and out of its borders were seriously questioned by the European Colonial powers.³⁸

In February 1842, a French man-of-war hoisted a French flag at Garaway, and three years later laid claim to Cape Mount, Little Bassa, Butaw and Bereby along the Liberian coast. In retaliation, Governor Roberts purchased most of the 600 mile coastline from the Sherbro River to the San Pedro, on the east, with the help and support of the American Colonization Society.³⁹

Matters became greatly aggravated with the seizure of the "Little Ben," a vessel owned by a British trader, for failure to comply with the customs regulations of the Commonwealth. In retaliation, the Sierra Leonian Governor in Freetown captured the "John Seys" which belonged to a Liberian colonist. In the ensuing wrangle, Commodore Jones of Sierra Leone questioned Liberia's authority to impose customs dues, on the legal grounds that such authority was limited to Sovereign States only.

³⁷Huberich, pp. 522-527.

³⁸See Maryland Colonization Journal, Vol. III (April, 1846), p. 149.

³⁹See Karnga, p. 35.

"... I need not remind your Excellency," he argued, "that this description does not yet apply to Liberia"⁴⁰

To resolve these legal problems the American Colonization Society organized a general convention in Monrovia in 1845 for constitutional talks. The help of Professor Simon Greenleaf of the Harvard Law School was sought to draft the new constitution. In 1847, the American Colonization Society declared Liberia an independent republic, modelled after the republican form of government of the United States. With Joseph Jenkin Roberts as the first President, the first African Republic was born, guided by its motto: "The Love of Liberty Brought Us Here." Direct, formal, colonial administration of Liberia came to an end, while a new era of political and social transformation was introduced.

The Republic of Liberia: The Rise of the Republican Party From 1847-1870

The assumption of a non-administrative position by the American Colonization Society at the top of the administrative apparatus in Liberia left the affairs of the new republic firmly in the hands of the emigrants. Intra-settler divisions which had been brought under control during the early stages of the colony surfaced. Political differences which had produced the "true Liberian Party" and the "Old Whigs" reappeared.

At the pre-independence elections, Roberts' "True Liberian Party" gained a majority of votes over Reverend John Seys' "Old Whigs." The

⁴⁰Richard West, Back to Africa (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1970), p. 153; see also "Message of Gov. Roberts," Colonization Herald (June 12th, 1844); and The African Repository, Vol. XXI.

"True Liberian Party" was soon identified with the commercial elite and the civil servants in Monrovia. The "Whigs" identified themselves as the "Common People's Party." In 1857 the "True Liberian Party" became the "Republican Party" to follow an old American political party tradition.

In the opinion of a Liberian colonist:

... the people of Liberia and their fathers were, for the most part born and reared under republicanism; a republicanism, it is true which in its influence upon them as a people was anomalous All the associations of their childhood and youth, social, political and religious, are republican⁴¹

The new name which the "Old Whigs" adopted, the "True Black Man's Party (Dedicated to Africa for Africans)" underscored the colour differences and unmixed African descent as major political issues.

From 1847-1877 the administration of the Republican Party was deeply affected by the problem of colour status cleavages between the Monrovia "merchant princes" and civil servants and the rural settlement farmers. By 1869 the issue of skin pigmentation and occupational prestige split the ranks of the colonist into Republican Party "mulatto" oligarchy and a rural darker-skinned farmer's stratum.

Alexander Crummell and Edward Blyden took advantage of this pigmentation issue to vent their dissatisfaction with the "mulatto" oligarchy. Crummell's views were radically transformed, in 1870, when he was "stung by what he conceived to be mulatto slights upon his blackness"⁴² Blyden, also "of ebony hue" claimed descent from pure

⁴¹ Edward Blyden, "Our Origin, Dangers and Duties." An Annual Address before Mayor and Common Council of Monrovia, July 26, 1865.

⁴² Henry S. Wilson, Origins of African Nationalism (New York: Macmillan Company, 1969), p. 22.

black Ibo ancestors. Their views were also shared by Edward James Roye, one of the few darker skinned "merchant princes," who became a close associate of Blyden and the Reverend Crummell. He gained immense prestige among the pure black settlers when, as Chief Justice, he resigned in protest against treason charges which the government brought against the True Whig Party leaders.⁴³

Blyden used the high mortality figures among the mulatto settlers to condemn the ineptitude of the Republican Party to control political and commercial matters. In an annual address in 1869 he wrote:

But what has become of the half and three fourths white proteges? In the Alexandria high school we had Armistead, Miller, Fleming, Melville, Augustus ... all are dead. In Liberia College we had James H. Evans, J. J. Roberts, Jr. ..., all are dead I venture to affirm that if the names I have just cited had been negroes, three fourths of them at least would have been living today⁴⁴

According to Abayomi Karnga, these divisions among the settlers resulted in the formation of a "caste system" of the mulattoes and the darker-skinned group.⁴⁵ In his view, the system had four distinct "orders": the official class (including the "merchant princes"); the common people, who constituted mostly the labourers and small farmers; followed by the recaptives -- the "Congoes"; and lastly the Africans.⁴⁶

⁴³See Webster and Boahen, p. 154.

⁴⁴Blyden, "On Mixed Races in Liberia," Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institution, 1871.

⁴⁵Karnga. This stratum was "mestizo" in its mixture of European and non-Caucasian descent, rather than Creole. There was little or no cultural differences between the two groups.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 45.

Social intercourse and marriage with the lower status categories were "by custom forbidden" by the mulatto elite. The Masonic secret society, which was introduced by the mulatto settlers in 1848, became an all mulatto club. In this way merchants, politicians, administrators and church officials of mixed descent found a common bond of brotherhood in the masonic craft, which facilitated the distribution of favours, both political and commercial among themselves, thus helping maintain mulatto hegemony in the Republic.

The Republican mulattoes justified this discrepancy on the grounds that:

... the climate was more severe on the colonists with lighter complexion than on the blacks, and that for this reason the pure blacks should go to the soil for subsistence, whilst his brother with blue veins remain in the Government offices to conduct the affairs of the state⁴⁷

The term "fair," had a variety of meanings in the social world of the Republican mulatto settlers. According to Hall, a White Governor of "Maryland in Africa," "fair," signified various shades of colour, as a "little fair," "quite fair," "very fair," and "almost white."⁴⁸ The octoroon stratum was given the highest status in this "colour" hierarchy, which partly explained the nomination and election of octoroon settlers to the position of the Presidency of the Republic from J. J. Roberts to James Spriggs Payne (1876-1877).

The struggle for political ascendancy between the Monrovia-based

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 45.

⁴⁸ Abeodu Bowen-Jones, "The Struggle for Political and Cultural Unification in Liberia, 1847-1930." Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Northwestern University, 1962, p. 194.

Republicans and the settlement-based "True Whigs" was extended to all phases of public life in Liberia. The darker-skinned settlers opposed independence which they regarded as a mulatto excuse for taking over the control of the Republic. The mulattoes, on the other hand, opposed the extension of citizenship rights to the Africans in the interior, which Blyden had strongly advocated. The site for the new Liberia College became another issue for dissent among the settlers.

The dark-skinned settlers wanted Liberia College further in the interior, while the mulatto settlers preferred Monrovia; and the College was erected here. When Jenkins Roberts was President of the College, only mulattoes were admitted, while a few years later during Roye's administration, Edward Blyden as President of the College, favoured the dark-skinned students and the Congoes. Liberia College became a political football for the two factions in the Liberian political arena. It provided a base for politicians on the rise or those who were being quietly pushed into retirement amongst its principals. As a result, thirty years after its opening, Liberia College produced only eight graduates. In this way, "... an intellectual class did not arise to challenge the ruling oligarchy. Because of the fear that it might get out of control, the True Whigs did not encourage a Liberian merchant class,"⁴⁹

The settlers' struggle for power assumed new proportions when Edward Roye, a candidate of the opposition party, was elected President of Liberia in the elections of 1869 and inaugurated six months later in

⁴⁹ Webster and Boahen, p. 154.

1870. Roye's success was assured by the large number of lower status settlers, and the incorporation of the African recaptives, the "Congoes."

President Roye's term of office was short-lived. He inherited a civil service that was dominated by a Republican mulatto personnel, even though the House of Representatives had a True Whig Party majority. Roye's outspoken criticism of the mulatto oligarchy and his commercial success made him unpopular among the mulatto settlers, who tried all means to overthrow his Government. In 1871 Roye was ousted from office on the grounds that he wanted to extend the presidential term of office from two to four years, and for misuse of public funds arising from a loan from Britain. He was later assassinated, and an interim government was formed with Jenkins Roberts as President once more.

In the elections of 1877, the True Whig Party had sufficiently reorganized itself to attain the majority votes. The presidential nominee, A. W. Gardner, became President in January 1878. From this time to the present, the True Whigs had held political power in Liberia. The major victory of the True Whigs came in the 1883 election when Hilary R. Johnson, the son of former Governor Elijah Johnson, was favoured by both parties as a Presidential Candidate. During the elections, Johnson threw his support with the True Whigs, so ending the "mulatto" hegemony in the civil service and the commercial sector.

The Rise of the True Whig Party 1870-1903

While the Republican administration was concerned with the issue of skin colour, and the extension of the settlement territory along the coast, the True Whig Party administrations inherited more serious problems which threatened the survival of the Republic itself.

Although the issue of colour differences and skin pigmentation split the Liberian settlers into two antagonistic factions, the True Whig Party supporters resented the domination of Monrovia more. True Whig Party support was strongest in the small settlements outside Monrovia, and down the coast. Most of them were unskilled, poor farmers with little formal education. The manipulation of an emotion-laden category of skin pigmentation proved an effective strategy in the struggle against Monrovia -- and the Republican Party. The solidarity of the Republican Party itself was split over this issue. The nomination of a darker skinned presidential candidate in the election campaign of 1855 from the ranks of the Republican Party was seen as one indication of this division. It was partly this division which led to the victory of the True Whig Party in 1870.⁵⁰

Through appeal to African descent, the darker-skinned True Whig Party supporters easily gained the support of the Congoes and the newly arrived settlers from the West Indies. The West Indian immigrants who hailed from Barbados arrived in Monrovia in May 1865. There were 300 immigrants in all. President Warner described them as "people of industrious habits, pious seemingly withal." According to the American Colonization Society, "among them were coopers, carpenters, canoe makers, a wheel-right, printer and teachers with several who thoroughly understood the cultivation of cane and manufacture of sugar, and the

⁵⁰See Frederick Starr, Liberia (Chicago, 1913), p. 90, and Karnga, p. 39.

culture and preparation of all kinds of tropical products"⁵¹

Their arrival in Liberia at the height of the disputes between the mulattoes and the settlement groups was greeted favourably by the latter group, who saw them as allies in their struggles against the Monrovia merchant and administrator dominated Republican Party. After the True Whig victory in 1877, the issue and existence of skin pigmentation ceased to be of much importance in the politics of Liberia. The endorsement by the True Whigs and the Republicans of what was considered a favoured candidate, H. R. Johnson in 1883, clearly underscored the disappearance of pigmentation as a political issue in Liberia. The differential distribution of political office and commercial resources was the major underlying issue rather than colour as such. "Colour," however, was a formidable ethnic strategy which the poorer settlers easily manipulated to their advantage.

With internal contradictions and rivalries eliminated, the True Whig Party was faced with more serious issues of survival against European Colonial powers and the renewed hostilities from the interior.

The settler coffee and cotton plantations collapsed, followed by the elimination of the "merchant princes" as a result of cut-throat competition with Colonial commercial establishments. The world-wide depression of the 1880s destroyed Liberian commercial investments, while the partition of West Africa into European colonial possessions gradually pushed Liberian trade and commerce into the background.

⁵¹American Colonization Society (1867), p. 190; and Burleigh Holder, "A History of Crozierville," The Liberian Studies Journal, Vol. III, No. 1 (1970-71), pp. 21-30.

Attempts by the Liberian settlers to turn to a more vigorous exploitation of the hinterland trade and commerce met with opposition from the Poro secret society and the Duila Mandinka. The interior chiefdoms mastered an effective trade boycott of the Liberian settlements. "... Caught between the Mandinka and Poro in the interior and the Germans on the coast, many Americo-Liberians retreated into dependence for their livelihood upon the civil service, teaching and the priesthood."⁵²

The "Scramble for Africa" of the 1880s resulted in the partition of most of West Africa. By this period France had acquired "treaty claims" to the Upper Niger French West Africa and French Equatorial Africa. The British, on the other hand, had grabbed the "promising but undeveloped" coastal areas along the Gambia River, Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast, Lagos and Nigeria. Liberia's role and position became increasingly ambiguous and insecure. It was not long before the Colonial Powers challenged Liberia's territorial claims.

In a dispute with Britain over a treaty signed in 1842, Liberia lost Sherbro Island and the Gallina territories on her northern frontiers. Realizing Liberia's vulnerability, France laid claim to almost the entire coastal territory of Liberia. By the turn of the twentieth century, Liberia had lost the Southeastern coastal territory from San Pedro to the Cavalla, to the French, and approximately 30,000 miles of territory in the northwest to the British. Of its original territory of 167,000 square miles, Liberia ended with only a quarter of this

⁵²Webster and Boehen, pp. 156-157.

land.⁵³

With its territories annexed by European powers, its economy dangerously undermined, Liberia became more and more vulnerable to pressure and hostilities from the hinterland. The boycott of settler commercial overtures to the interior by the Gola Poro and the Mandingo in the 1880s became the first of a series of attempts by the Africans to challenge the continued existence of the settlers in the West-Atlantic littoral. Disturbances in the Kru coast with the Grebo and Kru traders, together with the Gola and Bassa uprisings, characterized African-settler relations. Attempts were made in certain cases to obtain support from the French or the British against the settlers (see the following section for detailed discussion).

Liberia was gradually forced into a position of isolationism and suspicion towards its Colonial and African neighbours. The emergence of elaborate forms of political bargaining in Government offices and revenues, within the Americo-Liberian arena, became the dominant mode of maintaining unity and morale.

The Emergence of the Americo-Liberian Oligarchy and the Rise of
Indigenous-Liberian National Consciousness From 1904-1944

Liberian internal politics became unstable and isolationist during the 1904-1944 period. Struggles for political power against the hinterland Africans raged simultaneously with the struggles for economic and political survival against European colonial intrigues. As both African

⁵³See also John Hargreaves, "Liberia: The Price of Independence," Odu: A Journal of West African Studies, New Series, No. 6 (1972), pp. 320; and Abeodu Bowen-Jones, p. 196.

hinterland chiefdoms and foreign European organizations were seen as threats to political survival, the Americo-Liberians adopted a xenophobic and isolationist attitude towards non-settlers. They cut social and political links with hinterland Africans, and created a complex system of settler family network structure and associational affiliation whose skillful manipulation by members guaranteed mobility and survival within the settler political arena. As a result, the family, the Masons, the Party, and the church emerged as major institutional support for solidarity, alliance, unity and self-perpetuation of the Americo-Liberian society. Centers of power and influence shifted periodically within the Americo-Liberian oligarchy, from the settler family networks in the "up-river" to the coastal family networks, with Monrovia as the main arena for competition.

For the first time in their ethno-history, the hinterland African chiefdoms and confederacies were brought under direct control of Monrovia, and found themselves subjects of the Americo-Liberian hegemony.

Whereas cross regional awareness was never apparent up to the nineteenth century among the hinterland Africans, in the twentieth century Americo-Liberian domination forced them for the first time to see themselves as "Tribal"-, "Native"-, and later "Indigenous"- Liberians as they were variously labelled by the settlers. Their lineage-based kingdoms and political organizations were turned into "Chiefdoms," with "Paramount" chiefs and "Clan" chiefs in the place of traditional kings, war-lords and the council of elders. National consciousness and the centralized authority of Monrovia constituted the basic mode of political organization in Liberia from the turn of the twentieth century to the

present.

The Rise of Americo-Liberian Nationalism

During the early settlement period, Liberian colonists perceived themselves simply as "Virginians," "Alabamians," "Georgians," according to the state from which they had emigrated in America. When the recaptive population was added to the settler population, new labels emerged to distinguish between the colonists and the captives. Referents such as "citizens" and later "Americo-Liberians" were used to distinguish from the "Congoes" (the captives), and the "tribal" people, or "natives," "uncivilized elements," as the Africans came to be labelled.⁵⁴

This fragmentation hindered the formation of a unifying nationalist sentiment in nineteenth century Liberia. It was only at the close of the nineteenth century, when the Republic was besieged with external problems that cross regional solidarity and awareness appeared. Threats upon Liberian survival as a nation and as a state contributed more to Americo-Liberian solidarity than the fact of sovereignty itself. Hence the period covering the turn of the twentieth century and the Second World War, constituted an important formative period for Americo-Liberian solidarity and the creation of nationalistic institutions.

Although Liberia attained its independence as early as 1847, the incorporation of all the coastal settlements occurred only in 1857 when

⁵⁴J. Bernard Blamo, "Nation-Building in Liberia: The Use of Symbols in National Integration," Liberian Studies Journal, Vol. IV, No. 1 (1971-72), pp. 21-30.

the colony of Maryland in Africa joined the Republic. The unification of various settler communities down the coast followed only after the resolution of the power struggles between the Monrovia supported Republican Party and the settlement-based True Whig Party around 1883. The resolution of this conflict also facilitated the incorporation of the West Indian settlers of 1865 and the African recaptives, the "Congoes."

By the turn of the twentieth century, a strong nationalist sentiment was developing among the Americo-Liberian settlers, which later contributed to the formation of an oligarchic structure whose dominance of the Liberian political arena persisted till the present time.

Within the Americo-Liberian social structure, the nineteenth century divisions surfaced periodically during inter-settler political competition. Among the social cleavages that often manifested themselves as factional units, were those of the "Monrovia Settlers," sometimes called the "Rock Boys," who constituted the "merchant prince" commercial elite and mulatto oligarchy in the early nineteenth century. Socio-political cleavages resulted between the Monrovia faction and the rural based up-river "settlers," who strengthened their ranks by incorporating other sub-factions such as the Barbadian Settlers and the "Congoes." Although Creole settlers from Sierra Leone, such as the King family, also played an important role in the factional politics of Monrovia, little is said about them in the literature.⁵⁵

These settler factions were described by some as the "four orders"

⁵⁵ C. L. Simpson, The Memoirs of C. L. Simpson: The Symbol of Liberia (London: The Diplomatic Press and Publishing Co., 1961), p. 128.

of Liberian society,⁵⁶ and recently as "family dynasties."⁵⁷ Whatever the implications of the characterizations adopted, attention was at least drawn to the existence of some form of socio-political divisions within the settler society in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The arrival of the Barbadian settlers in 1865 was accorded an enthusiastic welcome and approval by the "Up-River" settlers of the True Whig Party who saw them as an addition to their ranks. The entry of the Barbadians and the Congoes into Liberian politics greatly altered the balance of power between the Monrovia ("mulatto") elite and the "Up-River" settlers.

The Barbadians were found to be "... the most intelligent and well educated company of emigrants that ever came to Liberia, and equally industrious"⁵⁸ They made significant contributions to the Republic during its period of crisis involving loan and boundary disputes in 1871, 1884-1890, and again in 1906 and in 1926. The statesmanship and scholarship of their members, such as Arthur Barclay, President of Liberia from 1904-1912; Louis Arthur Grimes, one-time Secretary of State and Chief Justice, and Edwin Barclay, President of Liberia during the 1930 slavery crisis, was well known in Liberia. Arthur Barclay was described as a studious and hardworking individual, who had:

... arisen from a very humble station in life ... he had a very strong passion for books, and a great ambition to get an

⁵⁶Karnga.

⁵⁷Liebenow; and Webster and Boahen.

⁵⁸The New Liberia (Sept. 1873).

education. So that by dint of hard labour and assiduous application to his studies he rose from a salt-seller to the most exalted position in the State.⁵⁹

Although the "Congoes" were ostracized and sometimes exploited by the Americo-Liberians in the early stages of the Republic, change in the political climate of Liberia dictated their incorporation. They were not only given a seat in the Liberian legislature during the 1870s but were also rapidly assimilated into the ranks of the Americo-Liberians. In a letter to the Secretary of the Pennsylvania Colonization Society, the Congoes were described as remarkably pliant, industrious and peculiarly proud and ambitious of being called "Americo-Liberians." Because of their rejection by the hinterland Africans, they were forced to depend on the settlers. They adopted American habits, went to settlement schools and churches, and assumed Euro-American dress and life-styles and also spoke English. They also provided much needed reinforcement to the Liberian militia. "... So plastic is the Congoes' character, that they are easily moulded into Americo-Liberians and into their habits"⁶⁰

From 1877 they held the balance of power between the Republicans and the True Whig Partisans, which gave some of them access to the National Legislature, the Senate and House. Among these were Daniel Ricks, member of the House during President Johnson's administration; William Brown who succeeded Ricks; and other subsequent members of the House for the township of Louisiana, Montserrado, from this period to

⁵⁹Karnga, p. 53; see also Holder, pp. 21-30.

⁶⁰Alexander Crummell, "The Assimilation of Liberated Africans (Congoes)." Letter to William Coppinger, Esq., Secretary of the Pennsylvania Colonization Society (1862).

Abayomi Karnga's term in 1911. Among the Congo senators, were J. W. Worrell from Grand Bassa County and Jack Brown from Sinoe County. In addition to these individuals, Congoes were found in President King's cabinet, the judiciary and in the legal and military ranks of Liberia.⁶¹

Between 1847 and 1944 the Liberian socio-political arena was dominated by one settler faction after another. The control of the political machinery by the Republican Party from 1838 to 1879, represented the period of Monrovia-settler ascendancy to political power. It was the period of the "Merchant Princes" and the mulatto-dominated Government and Civil Service who were all based in Monrovia.

Education and administrative experience contributed to the ascendancy to positions of control for the Monrovia based Republicans. The American Colonization Society favoured the educated mulatto settlers with petty clerical positions in the colony. They were among the first group to emigrate to West Africa and the most successful in the early commercial ventures of the colonists. Monrovia's location and importance in the colony further improved opportunities for the mulatto Republican elite.

... Not only did it have the advantage as the administrative center for the colony but it was also the most active economic settlement of Liberia. When compared with other settlements, Monrovia was overrepresented with regard to both education and occupation⁶²

By allowing the True Whig Party to manipulate colour as a major political issue, and by using skin pigmentation as a rigid boundary

⁶¹Karnga, pp. 12-13.

⁶²Tom Shick, (1974), p. 10.

even within the ranks of the Republican Party, the Monrovia Settlers hastened their downfall. They alienated potential supporters from the Republican Party, who were darker skinned, but were themselves Monrovians with an education, such as the Reverend Dr. Alexander Crummell and Edward Wilmot Blyden,⁶³ and the darker skinned "merchant prince" E. J. Roye. The issue of skin colour split the ranks of the Republican Party and led to the victory of the "Up-River" farmers of the True Whig Party in the election of 1869, in which E. J. Roye became President of Liberia.

By the 1880s the settlement-based True Whig Party dominated both political and associational institutions in Liberia, becoming a major political movement up to the present time. The emergence of the West-Indian settlers within the framework of the True Whig Party, on the other hand, evolved as quietly as the assimilation of the "Congoes" in the last decade of the nineteenth century.

West Indian settlers occupied positions which were unpopular among the American originated groups, such as farming, artisan work and various levels of manual work, during their early period of settlement. They were not seen then, as a potential threat and as serious competitors for political office. When the period of crisis arrived in Liberia, there was an increasing demand for qualified citizens with a

⁶³It is interesting to note that Blyden's "... last venture in politics was his bid for the presidency of Liberia in the election of [sic] 1884. The oddity of his bid for office was that Blyden stood as a candidate for the Republican Party, the mouthpiece of the Mulattoes in Monrovia" He lost to H. R. W. Johnson who polled 1438 votes against Blyden's 873 (West, p. 248). The election was held in May 1883, while Johnson assumed office on the first Monday of January, 1884.

good legal background and administrative experience to represent the State in the many internal conferences and diplomatic negotiations which involved Liberia. Only the West Indian settlers had the needed qualifications to occupy these positions. The University of Liberia (at this time, Liberia College) was not producing enough graduates, as a result of the Government's neglect of the institution. Hence, many Americo-Liberians from prominent settler families failed to attain educational prominence. Only the industrious, highly motivated West Indians, "Congoes" and assimilated Africans took advantage of available educational training in Liberia during the first half of the twentieth century.

During the crisis era of 1880 to 1930, West Indian Liberians became a dominant force in the politics of Liberia. The ascendancy to office of President Arthur Barclay in 1904 started a period of West Indian rise to prominent Government office. Secretaries of State, from Ernest Barclay to Louis Arthur Grimes, were of West Indian origin, and so were others, such as Secretary of the Treasury, James Wiles, Postmaster General, Henry Waldron Grimes, Secretary of War, George S. Padmore, Secretary of the Interior, Richard N. Holder and a Speaker of the House, Richard S. Wiles.⁶⁴ The West-Indian settlers were on the rise in Liberian politics.

The ascendancy of the settlers of West Indian origin to positions of control left one more stratum in Liberian politics to be reckoned with: the hinterland Africans. Implications of their ascendancy to

⁶⁴See Holder, pp. 21-30; Jangaba Johnson, pp. 51-74.

political control is being examined as the main focus of this study, and would constitute a major theme of subsequent chapters.

The Implications of Americo-Liberian Solidarity in West Africa

The question of national consciousness has not been adequately clarified by what has seemed to be the politics of factionalism among the Americo-Liberians throughout their period of settlement in the West African coast. Even more confusing were the unique events surrounding the birth of Liberian nationhood. Founded by philanthropic societies, settled by migrants who were escaping harsh and oppressive conditions in their land of captivity, who were also seen as returning exiles to their fatherland, granted independence as a way of fulfilling legal requirements, Liberian nationhood emerged from conditions which have not yet been fully understood.

The three main phases of colonial settlement -- such as the planting phase, the frontier expansion phase and the phase of political consolidation and economic take-off, were not followed in the evolution of Liberian nationalism.⁶⁵ While the planting phase in the conventional colonial-settler situation (such as the American colonies and the Cape Colony in South Africa) was usually longer, lasting several hundred years with much support and guidance from the metropolitan society, the Liberian planting phase lasted from 1820 to 1847, with little support and guidance from a metropolitan society, save philanthropic organizations whose status was neither sovereign nor State sponsored. "... Without the resources of government or the motivation

⁶⁵ See Tom Shick.

of stock holders in search of profits the American Colonization Society support for the Liberian settlement was seldom consistent⁶⁶

The frontier expansion into the Liberian hinterland never developed partly as a result of reluctance on the part of the coastal settlers to venture beyond the Liberian littoral, and partly because of the impenetrability of the tropical rainforest. Rather than follow a course of expansion towards the interior, the Liberian settlers chose dispersion into scattered coastal settlements from Robertsport to Cape Palmas.

While struggles or resistance and outright revolution preceded the winning of independence in colonies (as in the American War of Independence of the 1770s, the Anglo Boer War of 1899-1902 and the New African States of the 1950s and 1960s), Liberian independence, as we showed above, was won "... through the prosaic circumstances of the law courts"⁶⁷ Both Blyden and Alexander Crummell strongly doubted the effectiveness of the easily gained independence. They felt that "... circumstances ... forced us rather suddenly into an independent position. What other nations have achieved only after years and years of trial, we effected within a very brief period"⁶⁸

The settlers took a long time before accepting Liberian sovereignty as their main national loyalty, partly as a result of strong

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Henry Wilson, p. 20.

⁶⁸ Blyden, (1865); and Crummell, "Our National Mistakes and the Remedy For Them." An Annual Address Before the Common Council and Citizens of Monrovia, 1870.

ties with their regions of origin in the United States and their first towns of settlement in Liberia. Hence parochial attachment greatly offset any sudden development of national sentiment and loyalty. Much of the wealth which accrued to the early colonial settlement from lucrative commercial ventures were squandered on items of conspicuous consumption and the superficial display of status and prestige. Little was invested in the national economy and development. In one colonist's opinion, the Liberian colonists' wealth and prosperity was not real, but false and fictitious. "...We have been in too much haste to be rich (italics his). ... The desire to be rich, or to appear rich, pervades all classes"⁶⁹

Group solidarity and attachment to the national Government was fostered upon the Liberian settlers only by adverse circumstances arising from European colonial encroachment on Liberian territory in the 1880s and 1890s, followed by intensification of hostilities from the African chiefdoms in the hinterland.

The years 1880 to 1914 demonstrated the growing isolation of Liberia from the American, European and African worlds, caused by her exclusion from the world trading systems and reduced contact with Africa after the partition. This forced Liberians to set up standards beholden only to themselves and become timid and defensive regarding foreign inquiries⁷⁰

The maintenance and regulation of these new standards was taken over by the True Whig Party and the Masonic Society, which functioned as major unifying institutions for Americo-Liberian nationalism throughout the

⁶⁹ Blyden, (1865). Here the colonists displayed some of the mannerisms of the neo-colonialist elites of the twentieth century.

⁷⁰ Webster and Boehen, p. 152.

latter nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Inter-settlement rivalry, family competition and the social control of political deviants were carefully regulated by these institutions.

The Politics of Indirect Rule: Settler-African Relations Before 1944

The hegemony of the Gola Confederation at Kongba and Bopolu in the Central West Atlantic region since 1845 suffered serious setbacks as a result of the Sofa invasions, and the subsequent schisms between the northern and southern Gola chiefdoms. Inter-chiefdom wars among the Golas broke out in the 1890s over the issue of renewal of hostilities against the coastal settlements. Southern Gola chiefdoms were prepared to submit to the settler government policy in exchange for support, patronage and protection against the uncooperative northern chiefdoms.⁷¹

The position of political weakness in which the settlers found themselves from the 1880s to the 1890s in their struggles against British and French encroachment upon Liberian territory rendered the Republic vulnerable to attacks from the Central Western and South Eastern chiefdoms. As a Gola elder put it:

... In the old days if someone put himself in power over you and deprived you of your rightful place, you looked about for a more powerful person to join you in destroying him. There was always some king greater than the man who wanted to rule you.... That is the way it was in the great days. But now it is different. Those who have conquered us will not be destroyed. But some great chiefs of the tribes did not see this. They thought they could join the English or the French

⁷¹d'Azevedo, (1969).

to destroy the Kwi (Liberians) They thought the English would save them. But the English were going somewhere else⁷²

In the Southeastern region the Grebo attacked the Liberian settlements between 1875 and 1876 and again in 1895 and in 1910. The Kru's unrest coincided with the period of World War I in 1915 and the League of Nations' investigations of slavery in Liberia in 1930. In Central and Southwestern regions the "Coleman" or "Suehn" War of 1898 brought the settlers into direct conflict with the Northern Gola chiefdoms who made other attacks at the settlers during the First World War period in 1918.

Settler-African hostilities at the close of the nineteenth century brought to relief "... the accumulating frustrations of this period and ... the growing attitude among many of the interior tribal peoples that the Liberian government was weakening and was unable to defend itself"⁷³

The appearance of the settler hegemony in the West Atlantic region presented a serious threat to the chiefdoms and confederations which had enjoyed political control over this region, such as the Kongba Gola, Condo Mandingo and the Greboes in the Southeast.

... There was increased awareness at the time of the Glebo War of 1875 -- that tribal peoples, unreconciled to Liberia, could drive the Americo-Liberians into the sea⁷⁴

In the 1890s the entire Northern and Southwestern region of

⁷² Ibid., p. 58.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 52.

⁷⁴ Jane Martin, "How to Build a Nation: Liberian Ideas About National Integration in the Latter Nineteenth Century," Liberian Studies Journal, Vol. II (1969), p. 23.

Liberia experienced disturbances arising from invasions by bands of marauding horsemen called the "Sofa," a detachment from Samori Toure's army in the Guinea highlands. Within a short period of time they had caused enormous damage. Several chiefdoms were destroyed, with their populations slaughtered or enslaved, and their farms ruined. Because of their settlement in the Northwestern region, the Gola suffered greater losses.

The Gola interpreted these invasions upon their confederation as acts of revenge against them by the Mandingo because of their capture of Bopolu a half century before. They were also seen by certain Gola chiefdoms at Kongba as conspiracies between the southwestern Gola and their Mandingo supporters against the northern Gola. There was a general conviction, however, that the Sofa invasions were re-establishments of old alliances between the settlers in Monrovia, the still powerful Vai chiefdoms along the northwestern coast and the Mandingo of the former Condo Confederacy, for the control of interior trade markets to the coastal settlements, and the removal of the Gola from their new territories.⁷⁵

Further hostilities broke out in 1896 and 1897 between the Gola and the Vai chiefdoms in the northwest because of the military support which the Vai and the Mende chiefdoms along the Mano River provided to the Sofa warriors. Hundreds of refugees from the north and central regions descended upon the southwest and the rural settlements along the St. Paul River, sparking further conflicts. The northern Gola were intent upon settling scores with all the chiefdoms suspected of providing

⁷⁵ See d'Azevedo, p. 43.

secret military support to the Sofa invaders.

When President Coleman in 1898 called a meeting of Gola chiefs at Suehn, feelings of animosity and suspicion still ran high. The northern Gola feared that the meeting was a plot to capture them. They suspected the existence of a league between their southern brothers and the De, Mandingo and the settlers. Rather than attend this conference, they dispatched several divisions of their army to Suehn. A brief and intensive confrontation resulted between the northern Gola and the settlers. The northern Gola suffered defeat and were forced to retreat, but not before they had attacked the major "towns" of the uncooperative chiefdoms.⁷⁶

The Sofa and "Coleman" wars revived Mandingo strength around Bopolu, and totally removed Gola control of this region achieved more than fifty years before. The most powerful Gola chiefdoms never recovered from these political and economic reverses, which greatly facilitated the control of the interior by the Americo-Liberian government after 1904.

The most effective policy of penetration and administration of the Liberian hinterland was adopted for the first time in 1904 by the Government of Arthur Barclay. Prior to this period various attempts were made to administer the interior with limited success.

The 1868-69 session of the legislature passed an act creating the Department of the Interior, and extending Liberian law, schools, as well as taxes to the hinterland chiefdoms. In 1875 a Liberian

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 48.

government resolution made provision for the appointment of commissioners to the interior who could keep the hinterland open by making treaties with the chiefs and encouraging education. Chiefs from each county were also invited to attend the meeting of the legislature "as referees and advisers" on matters relating to their territories. In 1875 a bill was passed which granted a \$100.00 (one hundred) stipend annually to a principal chief in each county. It also made provision for the collection of taxes from all hinterland African males. None of these measures proved effective, partly because of the lack of sufficient funds to administer such programs, and partly because of the lack of qualified and efficient personnel.⁷⁷

A vigorous program of self-rule for the Liberian hinterland was introduced for the first time in 1904. It was a program similar to that of the British colonial system of Indirect Rule, applied in Nigeria and the Gold Coast around the 1900s. President Arthur Barclay, its author in Liberia, described it as a policy which placed control of the interior in the hands of:

... leading native families. We ought to make it a point to recognize and support them and get them to work with us. The desired bill should be arranged on the following lines: Assimilation of tribal territory to township; rights of inhabitants to land within a specified area; local self-government granted to people; the recognition and administration of customary native law, both locally and by Courts of the Republic; supervision of native population by Commissioners living among them; the creation of two new

⁷⁷ See Liberia Acts of the Legislature, 1868-69 and 1874-75; and the "Resolution for the Appointment of Commissioners of February 4th, 1874," The American Colonization Society, Vol. XVII, No. 12.

Courts -- the Court of the native chief and that of the District Commissioner⁷⁸

In 1908 Barclay organized the Liberian Frontier Force which was to be manned by the indigenous groups under Americo-Liberian officers. It was later dominated by the Loma, the Gio, the Mano and some Krahn groups. The officers remained settler, with a predominance of the "Congoes" (the African recaptives). The major task of the Frontier Force was to maintain peace and order in the hinterland districts. It was also expected to prevent incursions and raidings by the hinterland chiefdoms into the territories of the neighbouring colonies, such as Sierra Leone, Guinea or the Ivory Coast. The suppression of inter-chiefdom feuds also came under their tour of duty, together with the enforcement of traditional laws and regulations which were recognized by the Liberian Government.⁷⁹

Barclay's policy of self-rule was announced to the hinterland groups at an executive council of chiefs in Monrovia in 1904. The policy was accepted with mixed feelings by some Gola chiefdoms and certain Grebo districts who still harboured negative feelings towards the Liberian Government for failure to carry out promises made after the Grebo Wars of 1875-76 and that of 1895.⁸⁰

The policy of Indirect Rule brought the settler government into

⁷⁸ Arthur Barclay, Message of the President of Liberia to the Second Session of the Twenty-Ninth Legislature, December 15th, 1904.

⁷⁹ See Handbook of the Liberian Frontier Force 1914 (Monrovia, 1914); and Harry Johnston, Liberia, Vol. One (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1906), p. 300.

⁸⁰ See Liberia, Acts of the Legislature 1881-82; and Jane Martin, p. 36.

the center of local hinterland politics. The traditional system of lineage stratification and rivalry was effectively manipulated by officials of the Liberian Government in the interior, who set one lineage segment against another, and sometimes by-passed duly appointed candidates for the paramount chieftaincy for others of their own choosing.

It is not clear, then, as some maintained, how the policy of Indirect Rule in Liberia was "... fully acceptable to many chiefs who viewed the arrangement as providing increased power and effectiveness in their dealings with the Liberian Government ..." ⁸¹ when the hinterland regarded its implementation as a form of subjugation under Americo-Liberian oppression, which was indicated by the revolts and the situation of unrest which characterized this period. The Grebo war of 1910, the Kru war of 1915, followed by the Gola war of 1918, the Jokele Kpelle war of 1920 and the Kru war of 1930 were all violent protests against hut tax, the porter carrier system, the plunder and repression of the Liberian Frontier Force, and the Interior Administration's disregard of traditional law and custom. ⁸²

During Howard's administration -- between 1912 and 1920 -- chiefs who were appointed by the council of ruling lineage elders were often dismissed in favour of individuals whose families had been known to be friendly to the settlers in the past.

... A particularly drastic case that of the chiefdom of Kpo in which he dismissed the chief on the ground that he was only a 'nephew' of the last great war king who had befriended the

⁸¹ d'Azevedo, (1969), pp. 47-48.

⁸² Karnga, p. 57. Certain chiefs among the Gola, Grebo and Kru resisted the Indirect Rule, while others in the Bassa, Loma and Mano chiefdoms accepted without fuss, a situation similar to that found in British Colonial Africa.

government during the 'Coleman' war Though old rifts were widened and new ones created by Howard's actions, the general effect was one of reluctant acceptance of government authority among competing and weakened interior chiefdoms⁸³

In 1912 a case was reported in which two commissioners -- James W. Cooper and Major Lomax -- dismissed eight Gbande chiefs for criticizing them for their extortions, which involved the unjust burning of villages. When this matter was reported to President Howard, Cooper and Lomax were transferred to other offices. However, before terminating their tour of duty, they hanged all eight chiefs at Kolahun. They replaced them with one paramount chief, Mambru. The fury of the community at this murder resulted in the slaying of Mambru in March 1913 by a relative of the murdered chiefs, Chief Bombokoli. The government intervened at this point and the Liberian Frontier Force was dispatched to the region to restore peace.⁸⁴

An American who was Commissioner General of the Interior since 1916 observed also that much of the Liberian hinterland disturbances were caused by incompetent and insensitive district commissioners, who devoted no time to the development of the country. Instead, the hinterland was practically bled to death by their corruption, extortion and graft.⁸⁵

A case in point was that of Commissioner James B. Howard and his

⁸³d'Azevedo, p. 51.

⁸⁴See D. E. Howard, Annual Message of President Daniel E. Howard, 1913; and Letter from Bundy to Secretary of State in Records of Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Liberia, 882.00/60 (Monrovia, 15th May, 1913).

⁸⁵Report of Work in the Hinterland during 1916-1917 and 1918. Record of the Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of Liberia, 882.00/591 (Monrovia, 30th May, 1918).

sub-commissioner, S. N. Smith, who was placed over the entire region between the Sierra Leonean boundary and the River Cess. Howard and Smith had little education and administrative experience in the interior, besides their service in the Liberian Frontier Force. They appointed station-masters, clerks, and messengers for Zorzor, Voinjama, Kolahun, and Belle Yellah -- which fell within their jurisdiction -- independently of Monrovia. In addition, they operated a lucrative smuggling business under the cover of "H and Co." at Kolahun, which dealt in smuggled gin, guns, and gun-powder from Pendembu in Sierra Leone. These goods were resold at higher prices to the local Africans, who were also forced to provide unpaid carrier service to the commissioner and his aides while they transported large quantities of rice plundered from the villagers to Pendembu. These excesses finally led to the Kongba War of 1918 in which the Goje and Kongba Gola of the northwestern region attacked government garrisons just beyond the Lofa River. When peace was restored, a government commission found Howard guilty of mal-administration and embezzlement of public funds, for which he was punished by a mere seizure of \$5,000 (five thousand) in his Bank of British West Africa account in Monrovia and removed from the hinterland service to his former position as lieutenant in the Liberian Frontier Force.⁸⁶

(a) Slavery, Forced Labour and The League of Nations

Corruption, extortion and the repression of the hinterland

⁸⁶ See J. L. Morris, Report of the Secretary of War and Interior (Monrovia, 18th June, 1918).

reached its peak during the administration of C. D. B. King, President of Liberia from 1920 to 1930. Extortion had reached a point where highly placed officials in the Government participated, with great profit to themselves, in the contract labour to the Gabon and Fernando Po cocoa plantations. The conditions under which this scheme was carried out were described later as tantamount to "... criminal compulsion scarcely distinguishable from slave raiding and slave trading"⁸⁷

Forced labour in Liberia appeared as yet another attempt by the insolvent Liberian economy to raise revenues by the exploitation of the hinterland Africans. In the 1920s the hut tax became an indispensable source of income with a total of \$151,237.70 collected in 1922 alone, which was supplemented by customs duties imposed upon the lucrative coastal commercial activities of the Kru and the Grebo.⁸⁸

By 1923 the shipment of contract labour to Gabon and Fernando Po was moving at a monthly rate of 350 men, with each man bringing in a fee of \$45.00 to the recruiting officials and certain relatives of President King. The fee was paid by the Gabon and Fernando Po plantations. Vice-President Yancy played an active part in the recruiting processes.

In the "Complaints of the Wedabo and Kplapo chiefs and sub-chiefs" (1930) filed against Allen Yancy, it was pointed out that the

⁸⁷Rennie Smith, "Negro Self-Government at a Crisis in Liberia," Current History, Vol. 34 (1931), pp. 734-735.

⁸⁸See Bowen-Jones, pp. 220-240.

Wedabo chiefdom was forced to provide 700 men for Fernando Po, for which they supplied only 350, who were transported aboard the Spanish steamer "Montserrat" in 1924. In a Chiefs' Council called by Yancy in 1928, certain chiefdoms were instructed to furnish a specified number of labourers for Fernando Po, or face the charge of \$10.00 for each delinquent labourer and possible destruction of their villages. Among these chiefdoms in Wedabo, the Zolokeh section was instructed to furnish 100 men, the Gbarnkeh, Judekeh, Yontekkeh and two beach towns were also required to provide each a hundred men. The figure for the whole area came to 1,020 men. Fines, tortures and forcible seizure of men followed, creating serious unrest in the Southeastern hinterland.⁸⁹

... It became common knowledge that the men were not only compelled to leave their homes under threats of severe reprisals against their chiefs and people, but that fines, beatings and other cruel punishment were inflicted so that the men dared not resist.⁹⁰

Complaints against the forced labour issue were made by missionaries and expatriates serving in Liberia; among them were the Reverend George Harley, Lady Simon (1929)⁹¹ and Buell (1928),⁹² who brought the mal-practice to the attention of the United States Government, which wasted no time in taking action. In a note delivered to President King

⁸⁹ See Jeremiah Harris, Report of the Secretary of the Interior (Monrovia, May 5th, 1930); and Arthur J. Hayman and Harold Preece, Lighting Up Liberia (New York: Creative Age Press, 1943), pp. 35-52.

⁹⁰ Bowen-Jones, p. 220.

⁹¹ Kathleen Simon, Slavery (London, 1929).

⁹² Raymond Buell, The Native Problem in Africa, Vol. 2 (New York: The Macmillan Press, 1928).

from Mr. Stimson (the United States Secretary of State) it was declared that:

Unless they [the twin scourges of Slavery and Forced Labour] are abolished and unless there is instituted by the Liberian Government a comprehensive system of reforms loyally and sincerely put into affect, it will result in the final alienation of the friendly feelings which the American Government have entertained for Liberia since its establishment nearly a century ago⁹³

President King not only denied the charges of slavery and forced labour, but also appealed to the League of Nations to make an on-the-spot investigation of the accusation, "by a competent, impartial and unprejudiced commission."⁹⁴ With the approval of the Liberian Government, the League of Nations and the United States Government, a commission of inquiry was created under the direction of an Englishman, Dr. Cuthbert Christy, who represented the League. Serving with him were Dr. Charles Johnson, a Black-American sociologist from Fisk University, nominated by the United States Government; former President Arthur Barclay, appointed by the Liberian Government, and P. G. Wolo, of Kru origin and a graduate of Harvard University, who was commissioned by President King to act as the Secretary of the Commission.

The inquiry lasted four months, during which time hearings were held in Monrovia, Kakata, and the Cape Palmas region. The record of the testimony contained 254 witnesses, 109 in Monrovia and 145 from other areas. Of these witnesses, twenty were Paramount Chiefs, eighty-two were sub-chiefs, three were cabinet ministers, with many

⁹³The League of Nations Report, 1930 in Simpson.

⁹⁴Simpson.

superintendents of counties, district commissioners and other public officials.⁹⁵

In its April 7th, 1930 report, the Commission outlined the following findings: (1) that slavery as defined by the Anti-Slavery Convention, in fact, did not exist in the Republic; (2) that domestic slavery was not participated in or encouraged by the Government of the Republic; (3) that the Republic employed forced labour for public and private purposes; (4) that shipment of Fernando Po and Gabon was associated with slavery because the method of recruitment carried compulsion with it; (5) that labour for private purposes was forcibly impressed by the Government, and used in the Firestone Plantations.⁹⁶ Among other items it was recommended that the interior policy be radically reconstructed; that the humiliation and degradation of chiefs should cease; that the tribal authority of chiefs be restored and that district commissioners be removed; that pawning and domestic slavery be made illegal as preliminary to total abolition; that shipment of labourers to Fernando Po cease; and that stricter controls of the Frontier Force be applied, with a review of their duties.⁹⁷

The publication of the League's Report caused great consternation among the Americo-Liberian community in Monrovia, and led to sharp criticism of the True Whig Party by the Liberian press and the

⁹⁵ See R. Earle Anderson, Liberia: America's African Friend (Chapel Hill, N. C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 1952), p. 105.

⁹⁶ See also Nnamdi Azikiwe, Liberia in World Politics (London: Stockwell, 1934), pp. 172-175.

⁹⁷ See The League of Nations Report, 1930.

Opposition Parties. In an editorial, a Liberian newspaper criticized the Government for taking the country to the brink of destruction by its "... reckless policy of oppression, ill treatment of the Natives and forced labour"⁹⁸ The Opposition People's Party, led by former President D. E. Howard and Faulkner, launched a strong campaign against the True Whig Party and the administration of C. D. B. King. At a mass meeting held in Monrovia in June 1930, the People's Party demanded drastic changes in King's administration.⁹⁹

The Christy Commission and its findings were discussed at length by the December 2nd, 1930 session of the Legislature, which recommended the expulsion of some members of the House of Representatives, and the dismissal with judicial prosecution of the District and Coast Commissioners.

A special House Committee, headed by Representative Richard S. Wiles of Montserrado County, recommended that Vice-President Yancy should resign immediately; which he readily and promptly did. The Committee stated in its report that while there was nothing in the Commission's findings to implicate President King he should nevertheless resign in order to satisfy public opinion at home and abroad¹⁰⁰

On the 15th December, 1930 an Act of the Legislature was passed which prohibited shipment of labourers to Fernando Po, followed by another on the 18th December prohibiting pawning and all forms of

⁹⁸The Liberian Press (15th January, 1930), pp. 3-4.

⁹⁹See Simpson, pp. 151-157.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 156.

domestic servitude.¹⁰¹

(b) "Indigenous-Liberian": The Emergence of a New Nationalism

Relations between the Americo-Liberians and the Africans took a different turn from 1930 to 1944 as both socio-political structures began to orient themselves to the same national political arena. The last Settler-African war was waged during the Nimley struggles of 1932. After this period confrontations between the two social structures were carried out in the national political arena and in the educational field. Strategies, other than war, became important to the hinterland Africans, among these being the adoption of the Euro-American culture, acquisition of formal education, participation in voluntary associations of Americo-Liberians, particularly the Masons, and affiliation through foster kinship and marriage with influential Americo-Liberian families. The hinterland African was made to fit his place within Liberia as an "Indigenous-Liberian" with first loyalty to the Liberian National flag, motto and anthem, rather than his chiefdom or lineage totems as was the case in the nineteenth century.

In the opinion of an Indigenous Liberian historian, the policy of indirect rule and differential incorporation emphasized cultural and political differences between the hinterland-Africans and the Americo-Liberians. Intra-ethnic divisions among the indigenous groups were maintained by the introduction of the centralized form of authority of

¹⁰¹ See Nathaniel Richardson, Liberia's Past and Present (London: The Diplomatic Press and Publishing Company, 1959), pp. 139-149; and J. K. Sundiata, "Prelude to Scandal: Liberia and Fernando Po, 1880-1930," Journal of African History, Vol. XV, No. 1 (1974), pp. 97-112.

the Liberian Government in the hinterland, where each chiefdom viewed its relationship with the central Government "... as one running directly from chief to centre"¹⁰²

The Americo-Liberian regime was legitimized by the role of the central Government in settling inter- and intra-chiefdom disputes in the hinterland and in the setting up of Monrovia as the focal point for benefits and political favour to loyal groups.

The Americo-Liberian strategy of "divide and rule" in the hinterland, reached its peak in the interior policy of Edwin Barclay, the successor of C. D. B. King and nephew of former President Arthur Barclay.

In 1932 the former five interior districts were reorganized into three provinces, the Western province, the Central province and the Eastern province, which came directly under the Department of the Interior. In July of that year all clans and chiefdoms were to be registered as a first step towards their regroupment into new paramount chiefdoms and clan chiefdoms. The new regulations were enacted into law by the national legislature in October 1932, thus giving greater autonomy and power to the newly organized units.

During the previous interior administrations every chiefdom under its "king," was given autonomy and recognition as a paramount chieftaincy. A multiplicity of administrative units all claiming equal and autonomous status before the central Government appeared, creating a serious administrative problem. As a result, Edwin Barclay ordered that paramount chieftaincies of the past be reduced to "clans," and all

¹⁰²Bowen-Jones, p. 192.

historically and geographically related clans be grouped under new Paramount Chiefs chosen by their council of elders. Hence, many former "Paramount Chiefs" were reduced to clan chiefs while chiefs who were formerly responsible only to their own chiefdoms, found themselves "Paramount Chiefs" over loose confederacies of "Clans." Their power and authority were considerably extended in the new system of administration.

With this new system of regroupment, intensive competition for status and political favour from the central government resulted among the hinterland Africans. Inter-clan and chiefdom disputes characterized the hinterland from this period to the present, partly as a result of the manner in which the "clans" were integrated, and partly as a result of the appointees to the Paramount Chieftaincy.

... Barclay encouraged this activity by sending representatives to numerous councils of elders and chiefs which were convened for the purpose of reviewing disputes over the legitimacy of contesting claims to local leadership, the nomination of candidates for the Paramount Chieftaincies, and other complex problems of transition into the new interior policy¹⁰³

In the Western region the old Gola-Mandingo rivalry was revived when the headquarters of the Western province were located at Bopolu and a number of Kpelle and Gola "clans" were integrated under the Mandingo Paramount Chieftaincy. In addition, the northern and southern Gola suspicion for one another was increased in the creation of the Lofa-Gola Paramount Chiefdom. As a further indication of profound reversal of fortune for the Northern Gola,

¹⁰³ Warren d'Azevedo, "Tribal Reaction to Nationalism: The Transition," (Part Three), Liberian Studies Journal, Vol. 2 (1970), p. 105.

... not only had Bopolu been made a major administrative centre for the Western Province, but the old spectre of a direct and free commerce between the large eastern tribes and the Liberians had become a reality¹⁰⁴

In the case of the Gbande chiefdoms, the interior administration integrated "clan" segments into a Paramount Chieftaincy, from divisions which the Gbande established in the 1920s in order to facilitate the distribution of the monthly quota of rice which was required for maintenance of their district commissioners and his aides. Under Commissioner Cooper (see above) each Gbande household was responsible for the provision of food and rice for his headquarters. As a result, Chief Mambru and other local chiefs organized themselves into six divisions to facilitate the supply of the required 100 bushels of rice monthly. "... These divisions of the Gbandes later became six clans and Gbandi-land one chiefdom"¹⁰⁵

In other areas conflicts followed after the regroupment of "clan" units. In the Central Province members of the Seye Clan appealed to the Liberian Government for the appointment of Quoiduokie as their Paramount Chief, to which the Interior administration stamped its approval. However, in the creation of the Saclepea Mano Paramount Chiefdom in the early 1930s serious problems ensued. The formation of this Chiefdom was effected through the integration of the Gbehye Clan, Lissohom Clan, and Wee Clans, great rivals in the past. Chief Gloglo of the Gbehye Clan strongly opposed the move, claiming that his "clan" was large enough to

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 107.

¹⁰⁵ Moulai Reeves, Case Studies in Liberian History. Monrovia: Mimeo, n.d., p. 208.

constitute an autonomous Paramount Chieftaincy and would not align his clan with Chief Voker's Lissohom clan, because of their disagreement on many issues. As a result of this attitude Commissioner Garnett was instructed to dismiss Gloglo. A new Acting Paramount Chief was appointed from the Wee Clan. Gloglo's Gbehye "clan" took exception to this action by the Government and decided to put great pressure on the new Paramount Chief, who reacted against the Gbehye clan by torturing and putting sticks through members who trespassed Wee Clan territory. In retaliation the Gbehye Clan tortured not only the people of Wee Clan who trespassed their territory but also those of the Lissohom Clan as well. At this stage serious skirmishes broke out.

Monrovia placed the acting-Paramount Chief under arrest at the Sanniquellie district headquarters for a period of one year (1930-1931). Dahn Gborwin, the leader of the Gbehye Clan, was also found guilty of "stirring up the spirit of the people against constituted authority." He too was arrested and imprisoned at Sanniquellie in 1932. However, he managed to escape from prison and attempted to run to Monrovia via Guinea so that he might bring this matter directly to President Barclay. Unfortunately, news of his escape was announced throughout the country and upon his arrival in Monrovia he was re-arrested. He stayed in prison until 1937.

At the settlement of the Saclepea Mah dispute in 1932, Chief Johnny Voker of the Lissohom Clan was made Paramount Chief of the Saclepe Mah Chieftdom, which at this time included the Gbannah Clan and the Zohn Geh Clans in addition to the previous clan segments.

An Executive Council was convened by President Barclay in 1940

at the Provincial headquarters at Ganta, for the settlement of the Saclepea Mah dispute, among other items. After listening to complaints and new evidence from the chiefs and the people of the district, President Barclay dismissed both Commissioner Dunbar and Paramount Chief Voker. In their place, E. C. B. Jones was appointed Commissioner, while the people of the Chiefdom were requested to nominate a candidate for the Paramount Chieftaincy. In their council deliberations, the people nominated Dahn Gborwin, the former spokesman of the "troublesome" Gbehye Clan, who had served two prison terms for his part in this dispute. He was accordingly appointed Paramount Chief of the Saclepea Mah Chiefdom to replace his dismissed rival Johnny Voker.¹⁰⁶ Once again, the authority of the Americo-Liberian Government was reinforced. Partly as a result of penetration of the hinterland local politics by the settlers, Barclay's interior policies gave an impression to some as a program which succeeded

... in effecting structural changes throughout the Provinces, which consolidated government control by means of a highly adaptive apparatus of state in the hinterlands. One important consequence of these developments in the 1930's and early 1940's was the unprecedented prestige which the national government had achieved in its relations with tribal peoples¹⁰⁷

It is difficult at this stage to make conclusive statements about the complete acceptance of Americo-Liberian oligarchic control by the Indigenous-Liberians, because of the repression and isolation of the hinterland following the 1930 Christy Commission, by the Barclay

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., pp. 253-357.

¹⁰⁷ Warren d'Azevedo, "The Tribal Reaction to Nationalism" (Part 4), Liberian Studies Journal, Vol. 3, No. 1 (1970-71), p. 6.

administration.¹⁰⁸ However, it can be demonstrated that an emergent stratum of acculturated and marginal hinterland Africans evolved after the 1930 period. Prior to this period, educated or "civilized" Africans along the coastal settlements were assimilated as individuals and separated from their locations of origin in the interior. They were treated as citizens of the Republic. Liberian officials hoped that individuals such as Nete-Sie Brownell -- a Grebo cabinet minister in the Barclay Government -- "a seedy lawyer with the shiny frock coat would never again dare to visit his own tribe without just such escort as protected President Barclay on this unexpected journey"¹⁰⁹ They were sometimes disappointed at the participation of some of these educated Africans in revolts against the settlers. M. P. Valentine, an educated Grebo, was alleged to have led the Grebo War of 1870-75, while in 1887, a Settler Senator refused to sit in the same seat in the Senate with William S. Seton, a Grebo member of the Legislature from Cape Palmas, because of his role in hostilities against the settlers.¹¹⁰

Educated Africans prior to the 1930s strongly believed in the unification of the settlers and the Africans and made public statements to this effect. Afric Russell wrote in 1906 that "... the cementing of the so-called Americo-Liberian and his brother native or African Liberian together, is one of the only safe-guards to the continuance of

¹⁰⁸ See Hayman and Preece; and Bowen-Jones.

¹⁰⁹ Hayman and Preece.

¹¹⁰ See Jane Martin, pp. 34-38.

Liberia's national existence."¹¹¹ This sentiment was shared by Didhwo Twe, of Kru origin, in his 1926 Matilda Newport address in which he affirmed that "... the blending together of these tribes with the civilized man to produce one people ... is one of the foremost internal problems of Liberia."¹¹²

Loyal hinterland individuals were periodically promoted to conspicuous positions, partly to refute international criticism of settler oppression of the Africans in Liberia, and partly as an attempt at manipulating indigenous Africans for assignments which required the suppression of the hinterland.¹¹³ Among these were Bishop Suffragan of the Episcopal Church in the nineteenth century; Dr. T. Momolu Gardner of Vai background; Hon. Momolu Massaquoi, Liberian Consul-General in Hamburg in the 1920s; Dr. B. W. Payne of Grebo origin, who was Secretary of Public Instruction from 1912-1930; Justice Baselow of the Liberian Supreme Court and Henry Too Wesley of Grebo origin, who became Vice-President of Liberia from 1922-1927.¹¹⁴

From 1930 to the present, a significant number of educated Africans emerged from the Central and Western regions. Contributing to the emergence of this stratum was the recruitment of thousands of

¹¹¹The Liberian Recorder (Feb. 24th, 1906), p. 3.

¹¹²"Our Foremost Internal Problem." A Matilda Newport Day Address, Dec. 1st, 1926.

¹¹³See Benjamin Dennis, pp. 283-306.

¹¹⁴See especially M. B. Akpan, "Black Imperialism: Americo-Liberian Rule Over the African Peoples of Liberia, 1841-1964," Canadian Journal of African Studies, Vol. VII (1973), pp. 227-228.

indigenous Africans to the Firestone Plantations at Harbel since 1926; the extension of Foreign Christian mission schools to the interior and the rural settlements; and above all, the appointment of hinterland groups to the innumerable petty posts in the interior administration; which mushroomed with the creation of interior Provinces in 1932.

The educated segment of hinterland Africans during the 1930-1940 period were mostly refugees from inter-chiefdom wars, and slave raids, who had fled to the rural Liberian settlements for protection and patronage. They made up the majority of the wards and labourers of rural Liberian families and the largest contingent in mission schools. In the lower St. Paul River area, they were mostly of De, Bassa, Kpele and alienated Gola background. Through inter-marriage and continuous close association with the "Congo" farmers, Americo-Liberian landholders and interior officials, they became a culturally marginal stratum in the rural settlements and the interior administration as messengers and mediators between the Government and the traditional authority system. Some accumulated wealth and political power, becoming virtually lords of feudal estates in the Liberian hinterland. Their influence was extended eventually over both rural Americo-Liberians and indigenous-Africans, as a result of their control of the hinterland trade, collection of commissions and fees, and the acquisition of lands for plantations. They also earned status through inter-marriage into the rural Americo-Liberian families, which gave them access to the extended kinship relations of the Americo-Liberian ruling elite.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ See d'Azevedo, (1970-71), pp. 1-19; and Gus Liebenow, Liberia: The Evolution of Privilege (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969).

It is this marginal stratum of educated hinterland Africans which has contributed to the new nationalism of "Indigenous-Liberians" more than any other in recent times. They were "... imbued with a righteous sense of identification with coastal Liberian society ..."¹¹⁶ and saw their destiny as implicated in a number of ways with that of the Americo-Liberians. The full implication of the role of this stratum in Liberian national politics during the Tubman and Tolbert administrations since 1944 formulates the main task of this study. An attempt is made to determine whether the manipulation of strategies of mission education, affiliation with important Americo-Liberian families, and voluntary associations (such as the "crowds" and the Masons), and various other techniques, have contributed to this stratum becoming a technocratic class, with control of certain political and economic advantages. If so, what their relationship is towards the Indigenous-Liberian masses in Monrovia and the Interior; that is whether they would play the role of a sub-nationalist leadership similar to that of the African nationalist leaders shortly before Independence. Above all what threats if any they posed to the Americo-Liberian oligarchy, particularly the ruling political class structure at the top, and what form might a class struggle between the technocratic indigenous-Liberian elite and the Americo-Liberian oligarchy take, if the rising indigenes begin to pressure for more power, as they seem to be doing presently.

¹¹⁶d'Azevedo, (1970), p. 11.

PART TWO

THE LIBERIAN STATE APPARATUS AND THE FORMATION
OF A TECHNOCRATIC CLASS

CHAPTER 3

THE SCHOOL AS AN IDEOLOGICAL SYSTEM AND ITS ROLE IN CLASS FORMATION

The fight against illiteracy through educational training has been the single most significant manpower investment since the coming of independence to Africa in the past twenty years. In the sixties, in particular, education became one of the largest State undertakings in developmental projects in many African states. The rising expectations of the masses and the belief in the sixties that education was the magic solution to all problems of under-development and backwardness, led most Western observers to remark on the "blind faith" in education among Africans. Yet to the African education spelled mobility in social status, survival in political autonomy and credibility in the international arena. This education, however,

was not an educational system that grew out of the African environment or one that was designed to promote the most rational use of material and social resources. It was not an educational system designed to give young people confidence and pride as members of African societies, but one which sought to instill a sense of deference towards all that was European and capitalist.¹

The purpose of African school training during the colonial period was the creation of a literate working stratum for the servicing

¹Walter Rodney, "Education For Underdevelopment," in W. Rodney, How Europe Underdeveloped Africa (Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Publishing House, 1972), p. 263.

of the lower levels of the colonial administration, that is, the clerks, the interpreters, school teachers and other units of the civil service. Liberia seemed to have extended the same privileges to the indigenous hinterland groups for similar purposes as the colonial governments in Africa.

A recent questionnaire during the fieldwork of this study revealed some of this manipulation of the school system by the Liberian ruling groups. Recruitment into the ranks of the Americo-Liberian stratum required extensive school education on the part of the Indigenous-Liberians, without which they were relegated to the ranks of the "illiterate people" or the "uncivilized." Responses to items #16 and #17² in particular, underscored the significance of school education. Forty-nine out of sixty-nine respondents selected education as the pre-requisite for a top position. Another twenty-five chose family connections as important, while twenty-one considered membership in the Free Masons as crucial.³

A college co-ed from an indigenous ethnic group at the University of Liberia observed that "formerly it was strictly on familial basis, but now it is education first, then connections." Since she was only sixteen at the time, this observation may have been

²Item #16 reads: "What should I do as a Liberian to get to these (top) positions?" -- Get Education ____ Training ____ Family Connection ____ Joining the Society ____ Other ____ . Item #17 reads: "What are some of the factors which can prohibit a Liberian from getting such a high position?" See Appendix.

³In responding to Item #16 of the questionnaire schedule, respondents were not restricted to only one of the four answers which were suggested in the questionnaire item.

partly influenced by her experience during the Tubman era. A member of the legislature for a hinterland precinct, who considered himself an indigenous Liberian (of Bassa origin) named as factors against political mobility, "being in bad books with the government, choosing the wrong families to get a wife from and not joining the Masonic society."

The importance of patronage as strategy for socio-political mobility was expressed in the references to the family and the Masonic craft in the questionnaire responses. Item #26, "What chances and opportunities do you think you have to make it to the highest position in Monrovia or in the Counties," elicited the following response from a high school student: "... my only chance is my involvement in the community and my education. I also live with hope that the Liberian society of tomorrow will not use family connections to decide, but rather on qualifications." Another respondent felt that "... being an aborigine and little education slim or no chance; I didn't go very far in school and education is what people are looking for. I don't think I stand a chance. I make enough money to support my family and I run my taxis so I am satisfied with what I have." A member of a "radical" movement in Monrovia who is also Americo-Liberian, boasted instead that "I am not interested in these positions, but if I was seeking them, I have the connections and contacts; and I am getting education which might qualify me for these positions."

In addition to the above responses, seven out of ten respondents who could be described as senior officials in the Government or highly placed persons in the socio-economic arena of Monrovia, cited education as the explanatory factor for their success, while family

assistance and personal contacts were each cited by four other respondents in the same category.

The significance of achievement as a factor for the successful mobility of individuals to middle and top level positions has reflected the use to which education and professional or technical training has been made by Liberians since the administration of President Tubman. What this data has clearly underlined has been the general self-complacency of the middle-level groups to their promotion and their perception of their chances for future mobility. However, what this data has failed to bring out was the different routes which individuals have followed to their present positions and the role of group support during this period. The routes towards socio-political mobility could be inferred from the analysis of the life and career histories of selected individuals in the Liberian Official Gazette obituaries and from personal interviews with the informants in the field.

From the Liberian Official Gazette issues of 1959 to 1973, the life and career histories of individuals who were not Americo-Liberian, showed close association with foster relationships or the local chiefdom administration. Communal participation in the form of church activities and fraternal associations constituted an important index for their success. The Gazette placed more emphasis on the participation of such individuals in the communal or national political activities than it did on their quality or extent of educational and professional training. Church affiliation together with fraternal associational activities features prominently. This was brought out in the responses to questionnaire Item #17 by a Rivercess Territory representative who singled

out marriage, non-membership in the masonic lodges and non-participation in the activities of the True Whig Party as foremost handicaps to political and economic mobility in Liberia.

The shift of emphasis from party and fraternal participation to education in the responses to our questionnaire on the Liberian political system could have been partly the influence of the Tolbert administration's adoption of achievement and training (efficiency) as the guiding principles of the new Government. In the words of President Tolbert: "A Wholesome Functioning Society ... where merit, not favouritism; productivity, not influence and connections; selflessness, not selfish individualism, form the criteria for real distinction."⁴ This shift was also indicative of the social change which many Liberians desired in the new administration.

The research questions to the dissertation proposal whether the middle-level groups from the hinterlands of Liberia will continue their competition or mobility to higher political offices using the strategies which led to their success remains unanswered in the absence of fairly detailed data on the careers of these individuals, which might clarify the exact strategies which were manipulated with success. The analysis of the data does not seem to support the "magic" strategy myth in the explanation of the political success of individuals. Traditional (local) influence in the hinterland, for example, was helpful in the case of one well-known paramount chief in the north-western Jorquelleh

⁴Robert A. Smith, His Challenge is Mankind: A Political Portrait of William R. Tolbert (Monrovia, 1972), pp. 220-221.

Chiefdom in the Gbarnga District, but he was also a member of the legislature in Monrovia, an Episcopalian who later converted to Roman Catholicism, an active member at the rank of 'Virtual Past Master' of the United Brothers of Friendship and a member of the Poro society in which he held a high rank.⁵

In the case of an influential paramount chief of the Kissi Chiefdom, local traditional politics provided a solid base for mobility. However, his son, a former Assistant Minister of Research in the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development and a graduate of an Italian university, was adopted and raised by President Tolbert, an act which strengthened the political ties which existed between the two families. In other cases, such as that of a late member of the Legislature and former representative of the Rivercess Territory, adoption as a ward by the Bowier family of Grand Bassa greatly facilitated political mobility. However, he himself agreed that this alone could not have brought him to his present position. His second marriage to an Americo-Liberian, his active participation in the Bassa poro and sande societies, his membership in the Free and Accepted Masons of Liberia and various civic and church organizations, greatly contributed to his political promotions. Here the lack of formal education did not present a total barrier to political mobility as other strategies of fraternal, family, church and party affiliation were effectively manipulated.

Indigenous and Americo-Liberian individuals who gained promotion

⁵See The Liberian Official Gazette, Vol. 1, #10 (Wednesday, October 3, 1973).

to key political positions during Tubman's time owed much of this to their loyalty to the President, the True Whig Party and their active associational participation. Family background and education always provided a base for recruitment to these positions, but did not seem to have given automatic political power and influence.

President Tolbert's administration at the beginning of 1971, gave the impression that more than ever before professional training and technical know-how had become the "magic" strategies to key political positions. Since 1972 Tolbert's cabinet showed a predominance of professionally qualified and academically trained individuals, most of whom had very little or no known True Whig Party active participation, or fraternal rank.* The offices of Deputy and Assistant Ministers became technical positions which were given to young graduates who were returning from abroad with senior degrees in various areas.

The Tolbert administration's uncertainty with its credibility among the older members of the Americo-Liberian community provided an opportunity for the rising indigenous educated stratum to take advantage of the factionalization of the Americo-Liberian oligarchy. Faced with a similar situation in 1944, President Tubman resorted to the indigenous chiefdoms to strengthen his political power outside the traditional Americo-Liberian base, where his power was both questioned and threatened by his sponsor, former President Edwin Barclay, his rival, Vice President Clarence Simpson, Sr., his exemplar, former President, C. D. B. King and the Monrovia ruling families. Since 1971 Tolbert has been making attempts to adopt this strategy in his attempt to recruit young educated indigenous Liberians into the Government.

* This group included both Indigenous and Americo-Liberian appointees who had recently completed their graduate degree programs abroad.

By endorsing the youth, whom he has often referred to as his "precious jewels," and by encouraging the formation of such organizations as the Urban Youth Council, the young wing of the True Whig Party; conferences such as the Executive Mansion National Conference on Youth, in April 1973;⁶ and the plans to create nine seats in the Legislature for Youth, Tolbert had advanced various types of rewards to attract the youth and the indigenous elements to his side in his struggle for a political base during his administration.

A recommendation in the report of the April 1973 Executive Mansion National Conference on Youth in Monrovia suggested that:

Being that the title "native and tribal affairs" of a position in the Ministry of Local Government suggests certain discrimination connotations that might be damaging and not in the best interest of the nation and its people, we hereby PROPOSE THAT the said title be changed.⁷

In February 1974 the Sedition Act was passed by the Legislature prohibiting public use of ethnic labels connoting racial inferiority. However, further debate on the exploitation of the hinterland was not encouraged. In addition, the Legislature, at the President's advice, suggested the revision of the constitutional preamble, the Liberian flag and the motto in the seal of Liberia: "The Love of Liberty Brought Us Here." These changes were disputed by the older Liberians, such as Albert Porte (a long time critic of Liberian presidential administrations since Daniel E. Howard's in 1912) who wanted these insignias preserved

⁶ See Report of the "Steering Committee and Secretariat of the Conference."

⁷ Ibid., p. 9.

for their historical significance and as a reminder of Liberian heritage.

Undermining ethnic stratification or the awareness of such cleavages in Liberia by the Tolbert administration appeared to be a belated and large scale attempt to co-opt the indigenous groups, particularly their educated stratum who were being made to feel that they no longer needed to pass for Americo-Liberians in life-style and family names, or resort to their traditional African affiliations to get promotions to top level positions in the Liberian society. The ethnic restlessness that surfaced during the university student elections at the end of 1973, and the growing radical attitude of some indigenous Liberian professors and students at this time indicated signs of growing impatience among indigenous youths against their continued denial of political recognition. The publication of a monthly bulletin, Revelation, constituted a major outlet for the expression of this frustration by the indigenous youths and their Americo-Liberian counterparts against the Liberian status quo.

The Sedition Act and the Constitution Revision Committee, in response to this growing restlessness, attempted to legislate away certain embarrassing aspects of the "caste-barrier" between the indigenous under-class and the Americo-Liberian oligarchy. The co-optation of dissidents by the President, the Party and the Masons became the main weapon of the Liberian oligarchy against threats to their hegemony during the Tubman and the Tolbert administrations.

The effectiveness of the strategy of co-optation manifested itself by the number of indigenous groups who were promoted to senior administrative positions in the Government. By 1975 ministries

requiring technical expertise, such as those of Lands and Mines (Dr. Nyema Jones), Education (Mr. Doe), and Information (Dr. Edward Kessely), were passed over to indigenous Liberians, while sensitive ministries, such as those of Foreign Affairs, Finance, Justice and Local Government, were securely held by Americo-Liberians.⁸

Field data, both interview and observational, strongly supported the assumption that the most significant power oriented arena in Liberia was the national political arena. Most aspects of group interaction in the public were highly responsive to the political arena including such primary institutions as the family and the commercial sector.

The highest and most influential office in Liberia was identified by 40 respondents (out of 52) as the Presidency. The Superintendency of counties was identified by 42 respondents as influential. The office of superintendent of counties was seen as top level in the interior local government, even though incumbents of this office were answerable to the Minister of Local Government in Monrovia, and in spite of the position of Paramount Chief. The bias towards the position of the superintendents may have been influenced by the experience of most indigenous-Liberians with the sweeping powers which were enjoyed by Provincial Commissioners in the interior during President Barclay's administration (1930-1944). For a long time this office was monopolized by

⁸ Exceptions included the election of Henry Too Wesley to the largely ceremonial office of Vice-President in 1924, Nete Sie Brownell as Attorney General in the '30s, and Momolu Dukuly as Secretary of State in 1957.

Americo-Liberians. Recently, however, a growing number of indigenous Liberians have also been promoted to the office.

The consistent identification of the Presidency with top positions in Liberia partly reflected the increasing political power in the hands of such incumbents as Tubman and Tolbert in the past twenty-seven years. As most politicians in top positions, particularly President Tubman and the present incumbent, have also been among the wealthiest businessmen in the nation, the Presidency has ranked high as a money-making institution. Other positions which were seen by informants as "top influential jobs," according to Item #7 of our questionnaire (see Appendix) and also among the top seven (out of 51 cited) included the following:

Cabinet positions which were mentioned by	23	respondents
Senators and members of the Legislature by	13	"
Medical doctors	11	"
Lawyers	10	"
Businessmen and Executives	8	"
Superintendents of Counties Ministers of the Gospel and Ambassadors of Foreign Missions	7	" each

The prestigious position accorded the educationally acquired professions of medicine and law may have been a reflection of the liberal influence of the traditional Americo-Liberian society. Medical titles, including academic doctoral titles, symbolized high occupational and academic attainment for the indigenous elite, while legal qualifications constituted a prerequisite for political mobility within the Americo-Liberian ruling family circles. It is noteworthy that the positions of businessman and business executive were accorded importance

slightly above the formerly popularly favoured diplomatic office of ambassador. At this time (1971-75) there was also a sudden increase in enrollment in a newly opened College of Business and Public Administration at the University of Liberia. In less than four years of existence this college became the university's largest faculty. The Liberianization of the private sector and the emergence of such business tycoons as Stephen Tolbert (the President's younger brother), Charles D. Sherman (the Senator of the Grand Cape Mount County), and Lawrence Morgan (the Senator of Grand Bassa County) may have greatly influenced the importance informants placed on commercial success.

It is interesting that individual offices or positions which respondents mentioned and ranked turned out to be political and administrative ones. Respondents were asked to arrange these offices in the order of their importance. The ranking represented the respondent's own perception of the position. The ranking order resulted in the following pattern:

The Vice-Presidency was ranked by	15	respondents	as	number	2	position		
The Chief-Justiceship	"	"	11	"	"	"	3	"
The Speaker of the House	"	"	11	"	"	"	4	"
The Minister of Foreign Affairs	"	"	9	"	"	"	2	"
The Minister of Finance	"	"	6	"	"	"	3	"
The President Pro-Tempore of Senate	"	"	4	"	"	"	4	"
The Minister of Justice	"	"	2	"	"	"	5	"

The ranking of these positions corresponded somewhat to their protocollary rank or political influence. Apart from the Vice-Presidency, the Minister of Foreign Affairs indeed ranked second after

the President in the Cabinet in the United States type of Government where the Vice-President was not a member of the Cabinet. On the other hand, the Speaker of the House ranked fourth after the President, the Vice-President, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Legislative Assembly, in spite of his political status in the Assembly. The same could be said of the President Pro-Tempore of the Senate in the Upper House. He too, ranked fourth after the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The ranking of the Minister of Finance as number three in the Government may have been partly influenced by the political influence of the incumbent at that time, Stephen Tolbert. As brother to the Chief Executive and the most successful businessman among Liberians, he was seen by many as the "Prime Minister," that is, the third ranking politician after the Vice-President. He was regarded as more influential and higher in status than the present Minister of Foreign Affairs who was also his employee (as legal counsellor for the Mesurado Group of Companies) and his hand-picked candidate for the office when a former Minister of Foreign Affairs resigned.⁹

However, several fairly influential and powerful positions were overlooked, particularly the Secretary Generalship of the Party, the Grand Mastership of the Masons and the Attorney Generalship (which was placed at the bottom of this hierarchy). The overlapping of political, administrative and business offices among incumbents, probably led

⁹It was rumoured in Monrovia that the former Minister of Foreign Affairs resigned as a result of personal disagreements with the Minister of Finance, arising from the latter Minister's bypassing the Foreign Affairs Ministry and in many cases taking over assignments which belonged to this Ministry.

informants to rank positions on the basis of the political influence of the incumbents rather than on the office as such. Also absent were positions presently occupied by foreign investors and Lebanese merchants. It would seem, therefore, that an important arena for the analysis of Liberian formations may very well be the state apparatus and the political arena.

The importance of the recruitment of the hinterland groups to the public sector and state politics could be appreciated against these findings above. By 1975 more than ninety per cent of the military personnel, eighty per cent of the police force, and seventy-five per cent of the civil service were Indigenous-Liberian, including most medical and Ph.D. graduates, as far as the writer could access during his fieldwork.

This sudden mobility to middle-level positions of the indigenous groups did not seem, however, to have threatened the firm Americo-Liberian control of top decision-making and managerial positions. No Indigenous-Liberian has as yet been promoted to head commerce, finance, justice and defense ministries. No Indigenous-Liberian has been elected to the powerful office of Secretary-General of the True Whig Party, the rank of Grand Master of Accepted and Free Masons of Liberia. Qualifications for mobility to these offices and ranks continues to depend exclusively on Americo-Liberian family affiliation.

The steady increase of Indigenous-Liberian youths in middle-level appointments in the private and the public sectors, did not seem to have affected the rate of literacy and school attendance in Liberia up to 1971. The illiteracy rate, the rate of attrition of teachers and the serious shortage of qualified teachers were higher than the African

average;¹⁰ which prompted Didhwo Twe, a Liberian statesman of Kru-Indigenous origin, to complain that:

In considering the future in Liberia the first item that comes up before one's mind is education. The greatest indictment against the Republic today is that the governing classes have studiously prevented the education of the masses and have also kept them dependent¹¹

Eighteen years after Twe's speech, the 1962 Official Census of Liberia revealed that 91 percent of the population was illiterate. This figure included 87 percent of the total male population and 96 percent of the female. In the opinion of an Assistant Minister of Education for Research in Tolbert's administration,

until very recently ... that is, since President Tubman's Unification Program began to take root, education was a luxury for the masses, and the few who benefitted from it considered schooling incompatible with manual labour.¹²

Prior to Tubman's Unification and Open-Door Policies, education played a minor role in Liberia. Its usefulness for training for civil service and technical positions was never given serious consideration. The curriculum emphasized the humanities and liberal arts. Little attention was paid to vocational and technical courses. In addition,

¹⁰ See the Liberian Research Association Journal, Vol. 3, No. 3 (1971).

¹¹ Didhwo Twe, "The Future in Liberia." An Independence Day address in Monrovia, Liberia, July 26th, 1944. Since the 1930's Twe has been one of the most influential Indigenous-Liberian statesmen, along with such Indigenous politicians as Too Wesley, Vice-President of Liberia in 1924, and Nete Sie Brownell, former Postmaster General in the Barclay administration in the '30s.

¹² Bertha B. Azango, "The Present Socio-Economic Situation in Liberia and It's Implication for the Educational System," Liberian Research Association Journal, pp. 16-17.

parents expressed no desire for education which was oriented towards the future placement of their children and the economic needs of the country. They looked forward to a type of education that prepared their children for positions which carried prestige, that is, the prestige value that was created by the society itself.¹³

The Hoffman Institute of Maryland County, a mission school established in the early Republican period in the 1840s, during its heyday, had a curriculum consisting mainly of English Literature, English Grammar, Geography, History of Rome, Spelling and Definition, Bible History and Vocal Music. A Monrovia public school established in 1863 which functioned as the Preparatory Department of Liberia College, also offered English, English Literature, Rhetoric, Algebra, Geometry, Latin, History of Civilization and Vocal Music. The famous College of West Africa, a Monrovia mission school established in 1889, also the training centre of the leadership structure in Liberia up until Tubman's administration, trained its students only in Algebra, Geometry, English Literature, Rhetoric, Botany, Physics, Zoology, Latin, Greek, French, History, History of Education, Psychology, General Knowledge in Quotations, Political Science, Music and Bible History.¹⁴ The aim of these educational institutions was to produce "civilized" gentlemen, rather than a manpower pool of trained technicians. The result was

¹³ See Bertha Baker-Azango and Joseph G. Morris, "Education and Development" (Paper presented at the National Education Conference in Monrovia, November 13th-16th, 1968, pp. 23-29).

¹⁴ Bertha B. Azango, "The Present Socio-Economic Situation in Liberia and Its Implication for the Educational System," pp. 16-17.

that there were no vocational or trade schools established throughout the pre-Tubman period.

The classical school curriculum had been encouraged by a colonizing Americo-Liberian elite of Southern origin whose own educational "deficiencies" had led both to a self-interested attempt at perpetuating its aristocratic values in the Liberian political arena and to apathetic support of a missionary dominated education.¹⁵ This left education in Liberia under American Mission control which was further encouraged by a Liberian legal statute which required all missionaries to have at least one school before operating in the country. The missionaries completely dominated Liberian education and had free reign over curriculum development. As late as 1944 more than 80 percent of the schools were in mission hands. Since mission schools, like the settlements, were found along the coastal areas, they too became "a monopoly of the elite settlers as distinguished from the indigenous population."¹⁶

Tubman's Presidency marked the beginning of a period of radical change in Liberia. The isolationism of the Barclay administration was directly challenged by the Open-Door Policy; the mission domination and the classical orientation of the school system was slowly reduced; while the dual system of Government for the Indigenes and the Americo-Liberians introduced by Barclay's 1931 policy of Indirect Rule was

¹⁵ See especially M. Fraenkel, Tribe and Class in Monrovia (London, 1964); Gus Liebenow, Liberia: Evolution of Privilege (Cornell, 1969).

¹⁶ Orin J. Martin, "Some Problems of and Solutions for Liberian Education." Paper presented at the Third Annual Liberian Studies Conference (Kalamazoo, Michigan, May 11th-13th, 1972), p. 2.

replaced by the "Unification and Integration" policies.

Although mission control of education in Liberia was directly challenged during Tubman's administration, the Bureau of Public Instruction came into existence as early as 1900. Its functions included the supervision of schools, and the examination and licencing of teachers. In 1912 this Bureau was raised to the cabinet Department of Public Instruction. The creation of this department, centralized education under the supervision and control of the Secretary of Public Instruction, whose authority extended to all schools in the country except institutes of higher learning, such as Cuttington College, Our Lady of Fatima and Liberia College. Today more than 70 percent of schools in Liberia are government schools, while total spending for schools has risen from \$800.00 in 1921 to almost \$3,000,000.00 in 1969.¹⁷

The sudden increase of interest in education in Liberia has often been associated with Tubman's "Unification Policy." It was believed that the incorporation of the hinterland chiefdoms into the Central Government and the concomitant development of the infra-structure as a result of this policy had positive effects on education in Liberia. The number of schools increased from 251 in 1944 to over 800 in 1962, and 1,160 in 1972. Enrollment, on the other hand, rose from 19,000 in elementary schools in 1944 to 139,045 in 1972, while government expenditure on education increased from \$84,000.00 in 1944 to \$7,395,651.00 in 1972 (see Table I). "Because education continues to be the highest single spending unit of Government," President Tolbert explained,

¹⁷Ibid., p. 3; Liebenow, p. 179.

TABLE I:

SCHOOLS, ENROLLMENT, TEACHERS AND THE EDUCATIONAL BUDGET

1944 - 1972

Year	No. of Schools		Enrollment				Teachers			Budget	
	Schools	Elementary	Secondary	Voca.	Teac. Train.	Hi. Educ.	K - 12	Voca.	Teach. Train	Adv. Educ.	Budget
1944	251	19,000	*	-	-	-	1,200	-	-	-	84,000
1949	253	19,880	680	-	-	12	1,331	-	-	-	306,025
1954	456	41,527	800	-	-	40	1,476	-	-	-	1,114,896
1958	602	55,132	3,046	145	-	450	1,769	-	-	-	1,165,379
1964	857	28,539	5,977	605	225	538	2,813	45	34	109	4,026,150
1969	995	130,309	14,374	823	359	1,229	3,568	81	30	154	5,744,442
1970	1,084	120,245	15,494	887	290	1,109	4,302	66	32	164	5,880,411
1971	1,121	128,768	17,803	762	290	1,199	4,316	66	30	158	6,624,541
1972	1,160	139,045	21,411	908	305	1,462	4,756	60	38	-	7,395,651

¹ Sources: Data for this Table were compiled from the following Annual Reports: The Division of Records and Statistics, Statistics of Education in Liberia-1970 (Monrovia: Department of Education, 1971) and Statistics of Education in Liberia - 1972 (Monrovia: Ministry of Education, 1973).

* Included in elementary figures

- Data not available

K-12 Kindergarten and pre-grades

"the 1972 Budget provided for educational services an appropriation of \$9.4 Million, representing 12.5 percent of a national Budget of \$75.1 Million, which nearly doubled the 1964 expenditure"¹⁸ This increase in school funds not only shows the high priority the Tolbert administration has placed on education (the largest single spending unit of Government), but it also reveals the much lower priority of, and lack of spending upon education during the Tubman administration. In brief, what is not shown in Table I with regard to the 70 percent of Liberian schools which are government administered, and this can be applied most specifically to the Tubman administration, is the way the government has fostered the development of an inadequate school system by using the school system to extend its political hegemony over the Liberian hinterland rather than developing quality education for all Liberians.

The growth figures showed in Table I do not reflect certain incipient problems which have plagued school education in Liberia since 1944, which could also be a reflection on the lack of a planned educational and economic policy on the part of the Government, despite Dr. Payne Mitchell's Ten-Year Plan (1962-71) during his term of office as Secretary of Education. Among them could be included the continuous high rate of illiteracy despite tremendous growth in educational facilities, lack of sufficiently trained teaching personnel, together

¹⁸Address delivered by Dr. William R. Tolbert, Jr., President of Liberia, at the Commencement Exercises of Cuttington College and Divinity School, December 3rd, 1972, p. 3. Since 1847 Presidential Annual Messages covered the fiscal period from October 1st of the preceding year to September 30th of the current year. The figures quoted by President Tolbert in this address apply only to the 1972-73 fiscal year rather than the 1971-72 figures in the 1972 column of Table I. The increased demand for a trained manpower in the rapidly expanding economy after 1944 and the need for an educated civil service necessitated increased funding for school education.

with insufficient supplies of school equipment, and textbooks, and the imbalance in the economic development between different regions of the country.

Although the elementary school enrollment in 1972 was estimated at 139,045, showing an annual increase of 10 percent, only 25 percent of children of primary school going age of 6-12 years attended school. Primary schools were filled, instead, by children between the ages of 12-15 years. This late enrollment at school was partly the result of the traditional "bush" school of the Sande and the Poro which affected Indigenous-Liberian youths of primary-school-going age level, who were also expected to help in cultivation, harvesting, herding livestock and household up-keep. "Trying to force an earlier entrance would conflict with traditional rules of obedience to parents and rather than gain their ill-favor and negative sanctions from the whole village, a youth may prefer to quit"¹⁹

At the secondary school level the rate of increase has been estimated at 20 percent annually with a teacher-student ratio of twenty to one in 126 schools of which 49 offered instruction up to the 12th grade. However, less than one percent of the secondary school-going age groups benefitted from secondary education today. In spite of this a growing interest among elementary school graduates to proceed to

¹⁹Orin T. Martin, pp. 4-5. The "Sande" and the "Poro" were initiation and circumcision institutions for girls and boys respectively, which took place once in three or four years, usually in a secret location in the forest under the supervision of a Mazoe or a Dazoe. See especially Benjamin Dennis, The Gbandes: A People of the Liberian Hinterlands (Chicago: Nelson-Hall Company, 1972).

secondary school was reported; of these pupils, 80 to 90 percent continued their education.²⁰ The overall conclusion is that the school-going population in Liberia has been rising steadily but its enrollment in school has not made enough headway to eradicate illiteracy. In addition to parental negligence or reluctance to send children to school early, available seats were often occupied by the over-age group in schools which were overcrowded, had poor instruction and brief school attendance. According to the Assistant Ministers of Education for Research and Secondary Education respectively, "this means that the school system is definitely losing the fight against illiteracy."²¹

Low spending for educational purposes on the part of the government during the Tubman administration aggravated many problems which had characterized the Liberian school system, such as teacher shortage and lack of professionalism, low teacher salaries, lack of relevant curriculum and textbooks and poor maintenance of school buildings and supplies. In 1965 the per pupil cost for the government was \$50.00 at the elementary school level, and \$75.00 at the secondary school level. This figure was reduced in 1966 and 1967 to \$31.06 and \$30.70 respectively, for an elementary school child and increased to \$83.71 and \$78.77 respectively per secondary school child. This per pupil cost compared unfavourably to those existing in other African countries. Ethiopia's figure in 1962, for example, was \$264.00, while Guinea's stood at \$207.00 in 1965. Nigeria's per pupil cost in 1962

²⁰See Liberian Research Association Journal, p. 13.

²¹B. B. Azango and J. G. Morris, p. 7.

was \$392.00 compared to Sierra Leone's \$143.00 in 1962. Liberian expenditure on scholarships abroad for elementary and secondary education of the elite on the other hand, increased steadily between 1965 and 1968. In 1967 the government spent \$1,778,223.00 for Primary and Secondary Schools Scholarships, against \$1,429,709.00 for Teachers' salaries at home in Liberia, and a mere \$25,000 for local vocational training scholarships.²²

The rate of attrition for teachers which plagued both the school system and the teaching profession in Liberia was among the more serious repercussions of the government's peripheral involvement in education. According to a survey of manpower in the high schools and teacher training institutes in Liberia conducted between 1965 and 1968 by Dr. Jabaru Carlon,²³ an indigenous-Liberian professor of education, a high rate of attrition for teachers was found in Liberian schools. For the 24 schools surveyed, 225 teachers had left between 1965 and 1968, which gave an attrition rate of 56 teachers per year. This rate compared with an overall national rate of 92 teachers a year (see Table II). Budgetary limitations and unattractive salaries accounted for 75 percent of the reasons for the high turnover of teachers.

²²Unesco Statistical Yearbook, 1966, together with Liberian Research Association Journal, pp. 30-32.

²³"Teacher Manpower Study in Liberia," Liberian Research Association Journal, pp. 46-54. The rate of attrition was higher among the expatriate group. Teaching in the rural areas was dominated by the Peace Corps volunteers from the United States

TABLE II

TEACHERS LEAVING THEIR SCHOOL, 1965-1968

Year	Liberians	Expatriates	Total
1965	20	40	60
1966	24	47	71
1967	18	36	54
1968	10	30	40
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	72	153	225

Source: Liberian Research Association Journal, p. 49.

Imbalance in regional development, together with the rural-urban migration, have greatly overshadowed the achievements of the "Unification Program" and the "Open-Door Policy," and greatly handicapped the staffing and operation of schools. Although 83 percent of the estimated population of 1.5 million in 1970 lived in the rural areas, most developmental projects centered around Monrovia to the exclusion of the rural sectors. This uneven distribution of resources resulted in average density which ranged from nine persons per square mile in one of the nine counties, to approximately 102 persons per square mile in the densely populated urban areas.²⁴ These urban centers were recently redefined by the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs to include such areas as Monrovia, Buchanan,

²⁴Romanus O. Ohuche and Bertha B. Azango, "Aspirations, Attitudes and Employment Promotions in Liberia," West African Journal of Education, Vol. 17, No. 1 (February 1973), pp. 105-106.

Harper in Maryland County, Robertsport in Grand Cape Mount County, Yekepa in Nimba (the LAMCO mining area), Bomi Hills (iron-ore mining area), Bong Mines, Gedetarpo and the Mano River mining area. Each of these centers had a population of 5,000 or more inhabitants. However, their total population in 1970 was 200,000 or 17 percent of the total national population. Monrovia alone had half of this figure.²⁵

The economic dualism of the urban and the rural areas, which has accounted for the high rate of urban migration, has also contributed to the uneven distribution of per capita income in Liberia. Although the average income per person in the working population in Liberia was \$158.00 a year, its distribution showed the average income per working person in the urban areas standing at \$346.00 and only \$43.00 for the rural areas. This meant that much of the rural per capita income was spent on subsistence items rather than on the production of a surplus of exportable agricultural commodities. The fact that Liberia has not attained self-sufficiency in such staples as rice and cassava, may be a further indication of the neglect of the rural sector.²⁶

Whatever relationship existed between Tubman's "Unification" policy and the growth of education in Liberia, the failure of the school system to eradicate illiteracy and to train skilled manpower greatly

²⁵"A Study of the Social Situation in Liberia," in The Demographic Annual of the Population Growth Survey: Series P-1 (Monrovia: Department of Planning and Economic Affairs, 1970), p. 27.

²⁶This point has been reiterated by a Liberian economist, Dr. Togba Nah Tipoteh, in several lectures and papers, particularly his "Self-reliance and Its Impact on the Economic Structure of Liberia," The Revelation: A Social, Political, Economic and Cultural Monthly, Vol. 1, No. 4 (November-December, 1973), pp. 43-45.

overshadowed this achievement. It also contributed to an educational crisis in Liberia which has imposed a heavy financial burden on the Tolbert administration and the Liberian economy. Faced with the serious shortcomings outlined above, the Liberian educational system during Tubman's administration could not by itself have produced an elite corps of well-trained and highly educated individuals, who could in turn have produced a powerful intellectual class, unless these individuals saw a chance for political ascendancy in attaining advanced education.

From the foregoing, it may be concluded that the political arena and the state apparatus have proved effective to the ruling stratum in Liberia. Its creation and sustenance by this stratum as the only avenue to socio-economic rewards of office, property, money, protection, prestige and status has given almost unlimited power to the Americo-Liberians to set the terms of access and promotion. Among these terms has been the total exclusion from participation of both the Lebanese and Indian expatriate commercial elites and the foreign investor supporters of the Liberian economy, partly through the inclusion of a constitutional clause which limited citizenship to persons of African descent, later required only citizens to own real estate, become members of the cabinet, the legislature, the senate and the True Whig Party. Even then citizenship continued to be restricted to persons of African descent. No further competition could come from the powerful economic expatriates who virtually owned the Liberian economy. In this way, new terms could be set by the ruling Americo-Liberians for the indigenous groups from the hinterland of Liberia who constituted more than eighty percent of

the nation's population. By separating the external commercial and investor elements from the indigenous masses, the Americo-Liberians protected themselves against a coalition of these powerful groups which could have seriously threatened Americo-Liberian control of the state apparatus.

It was in this socio-political environment that the creation of an Indigenous-Liberian technocratic stratum was allowed. Its necessity in the post-war economic boom and expansion of the Liberian administrative and commercial sectors gave the ruling groups very little alternative. They had to create such a stratum if Liberia was to survive economically and if the government was to be run efficiently.

What we see in the material presented above is a frantic attempt by the ruling Americo-Liberian stratum to supervise this emergent indigenous fraction so that it does not present the type of nationalistic threat which destroyed European colonial control of pre-independent Africa.

CHAPTER 4

THE LIBERIAN FAMILY AS A STATE APPARATUS AND ITS ROLE IN CLASS FORMATION

The dominance of the Liberian political arena by the Americo-Liberian family factor since the founding of the Liberian colony in 1821 has continued unabated to the present time. The family institution supervised and promoted the formation of a settler nationalism and ethnicity in the coastal region with the same force with which it also provided strategies for the survival of this pioneer group. The family factor's control of the state apparatus, the church, and the secret societies has transformed this kinship-oriented institution into a political-economic structure which has acted as an agency for social and class formation throughout Liberia's history.¹

In the 1850s, the family supervised the incorporation of West Indian immigrants into the Americo-Liberian dominated political arena in Liberia as craftily as it subsequently assimilated African recaptives, the so-called "Congos." No trace of either West Indian identity or "Congo" ethnicity remains in the present generation of Americo-Liberians

¹ See Chapter 2, "The Rise of Americo-Liberian Nationalism" above, for a discussion of the emergence of this stratum. The role of the family in Liberian politics appears for the first time in G. Liebenow, Liberia (1969), chapter 7.

who prefer to be identified only through pioneer family affiliation.²

The "family" has once more come to the fore in the grooming, training and recruitment of new members, this time from the ranks of the hinterland groups. The systematic selection of members from this indigenous sector is manifesting itself in the direct links or connections between the Indigenous-Liberian elite and the Americo-Liberian families. A research item from a key informant in Monrovia provided evidence of Americo-Liberian family connection in the political rise of a former Associate Justice of the Supreme Court from Lofa County in the northwestern region. Since he was an Indigenous-Liberian, his marriage into the well-known and wealthy Baker family of Maryland and career association with the Speaker of the House of Representatives, an influential Americo-Liberian, greatly influenced his politico-economic promotions. His name was also included among fifty Liberians who were graduated to the rank of thirty-third (33rd) degree Masons at the opening of the 68th Session of the United and Supreme Council held in Monrovia in October 1972.³ Similarly, adoption by the wealthy Anderson family of Maryland, together with marriage to President Tolbert's sister, helped the business venture of an Indigenous-Liberian mortician and his subsequent appointment as the first Superintendent of Montserrado County. In the words of an informant:

²The common tendency to refer to themselves as "Congo people" by Americo-Liberians since Tubman outlawed the ethnic label of "Americo-Liberian" with his Unification Policy, has no reference to identification with the African recaptives of the nineteenth century. See Chapter 2.

³See The Liberian Age (Tuesday, 31st October, 1972), p. 3.

... like every ambitious indigenous son, A. has kept close contacts with his people in Bomi Territory. He is very influential. For example, he is given more respect in Bomi Territory than the 'apolitical' Charles C. Dennis, Sr.⁴

An interview with a former Assistant Minister of State for Presidential Affairs, a former Ambassador and presently (1977) superintendent of Grand Cape Mount County in the northwestern part of Liberia revealed this relationship of sponsorship between the Americo-Liberian families and the Indigenous-Liberian elite. In this interview, the superintendent related his own experience as a product of the Episcopal Mission School of St. Johns in Cape Mount, and the College of West Africa in Monrovia. He made it to these educational institutions only through an Americo-Liberian family who sponsored him as a ward. In his opinion, however, the educated Indigenous-Liberian stratum was being promoted to technocratic, middle-management positions which were not likely to generate large financial fringe benefits. A diplomatic post in Europe, the United States and Japan had good financial fringe benefits and was not likely to be given to an Indigenous-Liberian.

This latter position of keeping the rising Indigenous stratum away from financially lucrative positions was supported in a previous interview by Dr. Tarpeh, the Academic Vice-President at the University of Liberia and Dr. J. Carlon of the University of Liberia's Teachers College. Dr. Carlon related an incident in which a junior official in the Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism, jokingly

⁴Fieldwork Report. Charles C. Dennis, Sr. is also the father of the present Minister of External Affairs, a member of the House of Representatives and has recently been married to Mrs. Marco Prout-Brewer. Interviews reported below were made expressly for use in this study, and informants were aware that the information would be included in this dissertation.

told him that although the "country-boys" are getting all the jobs in the government, that the Americo-Liberians are sitting tight on the money. That is, on positions which could generate healthy financial returns.

Another rising star in the Liberian political arena was identified by an informant as a young Indigenous-Liberian from Lofa County, formerly a Commissioner of Immigration and Superintendent of Lofa County up to 1975. He also held the position of Deputy-Minister of Commerce, owned several properties in Monrovia and in his native Lofa County, as well as being the only Indigenous-Liberian member of the all Americo-Liberian "Crowd 18" Club in Monrovia. He was a Tubman favourite and was given his adopted name of "Jones" by President Tubman who according to my informant, "... wanted young Kasselebah ... to adopt an Americo-Liberian identity through an American name," that is, Euro-American name.

It was also interesting to discover an adroit manipulation of family affiliation in the recent Party elections of 1975 in Liberia, by the then Representative for Rivercess Territory who was also the son of a local Paramount Chief. In the previous Tubman administration, he was married to a step-daughter of an Americo-Liberian Associate Justice of the Supreme Court. She was also related to President Tolbert. The union was dissolved and replaced with another in which the Representative married a woman of Kru origin. At the death of Tubman in 1971 and the coming into office of former Vice-President Tolbert as Head of State, the second marriage to the Kru wife was dissolved, and the daughter of the Associate Justice was remarried. Shortly after this

timely event the Rivercess gentleman was made Superintendent of Rivercess and later elected to the House to represent Rivercess.

It would seem that few, if any, Indigenous-Liberians attained promotions to top technocratic positions in the public or private sectors, in business and commerce, without the sponsorship and close supervision -- in one form or other -- of the Americo-Liberian family stratum.

The Liberian urban family, unlike other family clusters in West Africa, has constituted the focal point for participation at the national level. Throughout the Tubman and early Tolbert period, it was crucial for individuals or groups to seek alliance first with a family cluster before striving for or securing political office. The re-alignment of marital ties at the acceptance of political office by many cabinet ministers at the beginning of the Tubman administration was a partial indication of this use of family ties for political survival. The survival of a Tubman in the Barclay administration, a DeShield, Tolbert and Henries, in the Tubman administration, was largely because of wise manipulation of family and marriage connections. The Hon. McKinley DeShield partly strengthened his position by his second marriage, into the influential Cape Palmas Gibson family, Tolbert's daughter's marriage to President Tubman's son was very helpful to Tolbert's survival in the Tubman government, while Speaker Henries affinal ties to a Cape Palmas missionary and educator was to his political favour, even though his ex-wife rose to the status of President of the United Nations General Assembly and became very influential in Liberia.

Family names and places of origin were important only as labels for identification of the actors in the political arena. Inter-group

interaction was usually hampered when such family labels were not known, or unfamiliar ones introduced. The signalling of these family names greatly facilitated the location of a person on the socio-political map and class hierarchy. The name Sherman, for example, placed the incumbent either among the Cape Mount Shermans, or the Grand Bassa Shermans. Ethnicity and class position could be determined from ancestry from the Vai-Shermans, or the Bassa-Shermans or the Americo-Liberian-Shermans. "Americo-Liberian-Sherman" was applied only to persons with supposed consanguineal ties with the original Shermans who migrated from the New World in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Direct ancestry from the founder of the family "dynasty" was always associated with the elite members of the family, regardless of whether such prominent members were in fact direct descendants of the founding family. It was assumed that they achieved prominence because of the direct ancestry.

The family structure in the Americo-Liberian society is a loose network of nuclear units of both kinship and associational nature. Its membership incorporates a large number of units all bound by lineage ties to the founding members. As a result, consanguineal lineals and collaterals, as well as conjugal members, foster children, offspring of extra-marital liaisons and even servants who have chosen to adopt the family name, all become members of the "family." In this way, a "family" often always has important corporate ties to other families, hence making up a network or cluster of families. Practically every Americo-Liberian family can trace such network linkages to one or more families within the Americo-Liberian society.

Divorce and "family breakdowns" have had little effect in dismantling an established Americo-Liberian family, in the same manner as absence of offspring and the dying out of members. The disappearance of well-known families at the turn of the twentieth century was attributed to this membership attrition. Divorces were often seen as adaptations and social readjustments for political advantage.*

The Americo-Liberian family type in Liberia has not been exclusively Americo-Liberian. A few indigenous Liberian families have since the Barclay and Tubman administrations been recruited into this stratum. The Dukulys (who produced a Secretary of State in Tubman's administration, and the wife of Hon. Stephen Tolbert), the Massaquois, (who produced a Minister of Education), the Fahnbullehs, (who produced an ambassador, a Member of the House and a Superintendent of a County), and the Does, (who produced a Senator and Minister of Education) have been among the established urban families in Liberia today. In addition, many families whose names appear "Americo-Liberian," such as the Flama-Shermans and Freemans, may in fact have been Indigenous-Liberian. Even those families who have been conventionally associated with Americo-Liberian eliteness had mixed membership. Moreover, if the loosely extended nature of this family type was taken into account, it would not be surprising that ethnic differences within the same family were ignored even though they existed. Every family member in the network was expected to play an important role in the survival of the family.

Family affiliation, once attained, assumed greater importance to an individual than former ethnic membership. Change of established

* See Liebenow, (1969), p.137; and his "Liberia" in G.Carter, African One Party States(Cornell University Press,1962), pp. 325-394

family name into a previously abandoned Gola, Kpelle, or Bassa name by wards and adopted members was strongly discouraged by their foster guardians, who saw this as an act of hostility and ingratitude towards the sponsoring family.

The urban family type in Liberia differed from the traditional African family system in its corporateness and emphasis on existing network ties, rather than on past and remote clan ties. Unlike the traditional African family which is also bound by terminological clan relationships of both a classificatory or descriptive type, the Liberian urban family operated only on those corporate networks which were known and supportive of the family "community." It was a corporate group that individuals could affiliate to or disengage themselves from, depending on the political rise or fall of the family. It is misleading then, in the Liberian urban sector to conclude, purely from the family name alone, that an individual is an Americo-Liberian elite, or an indigenous-Liberian. The sharing of an elite family name did not automatically qualify such an individual into an established urban family. He had to be a known member. As in a political party, he had to be a "card carrying" member in good standing. Being known also meant participating in most of the activities of the family, such as weddings, funerals, seeing a member off at the airport or station, and maintaining active correspondence by mail, or by phone and visits on a regular basis.

An important feature of the urban Liberian family was its relative openness. Any member could rise to prominent status within the "family community" by his skill at manipulating both instrumental

factors of education, occupational position, and kinship networks, by maintaining an alliance with and doing favours for powerful members of the family. President Tolbert's victory over his elder brother for the Montserrado seat in the Legislature in the 1940s was a case in point; James W. B's ascendancy into a legislative position as representative for Rivercess Territory, was another indication of the prominence that a ward of an established family could attain. In his case, he was the most successful member of this family. There were many cases of former wards, who were the only prominent members of their foster families, and in a few cases, patriarchs and chief heirs to the family fortunes.

The urban family in Liberia has functioned as a small community unto itself, whose role has always been political insofar as it benefitted from the success of members and as it functioned as a link to the external system (that is, the national political arena) for the individual. A rising member succeeded largely as a result of the family, rather than his own independent competence. In a political arena, where the Party, the Masonic Craft and the President directly controlled the final outcome of political decisions and distribution of office and economic rewards, an individual's skills and efficiency were greatly overshadowed. It was only such family units that could bring about meaningful interaction with the political system on behalf of individuals.

The role of the family in the Liberian political and business activities today was emphasized by many informants in my recent field-work in Monrovia. In a term paper for a Sociology of the Family course,

an Americo-Liberian senior observed that "... people use the family as the best strategy for political and social mobility. All men strive to materialistic gains in a situation of extreme competition." An interview with a member of the legislature for Rivercess Territory also underscored the important role of the family in Liberian politics. He pointed out how his adoption as a ward into his sponsoring family gave him the first push to the top. After holding different local government positions, he felt that marriage into an established family could prove politically expedient. He then improved his marital situation with his present wife which proved helpful in his election by the True Whig Party as a Representative for Rivercess Territory. In his opinion, politically ambitious Liberians never marry for love or emotional involvement. "You have to marry a woman with political weight, because there is no need to 'put poor on poor'." He gave examples of certain individuals who were helped by their marriages from a number of legal problems they fell into. Their in-laws did not permit them to stay in prison even for one day. Family influence was used to their advantage each time they had trouble with the law.

A successful businessman in Monrovia, who is also an "outside" child of an established Bensonville family, told me how this kinship affiliation and the wise and vigilant coaxing from his mother greatly helped in his career. The help of his wealthier half-brothers facilitated the completion of his university education and successful launching of his private practice as an accountant and businessman. When I expressed my surprise at this close-knit inter-family attachment among Liberians, he assured me that this was perhaps the single most

crucial observation I had made about Liberians in my fieldwork. This^{*} inter-family attachment and its political implication was reiterated in many informal talks with students and faculty of the University of Liberia, and in many interviews on career and family histories. It seemed that this complex alliance and affiliation which was begun in the family continued in all other spheres of the social, economic and political life. Voluntary associations became extensions of family alliance, where individuals were representing their family interests. Associations, such as "Crowd 18," the Circle Club, the Literary Club, and the Junior Chamber of Commerce, among others, provided centers of elite network formation for political and economic advancement. The membership of the powerful 'Crowd 18', for example, included a Junior Secretary of the True Whig Party, a Minister of Foreign Affairs, a Minister of Commerce, a President of a Bank and several young Americo-Liberians who were most likely to inherit political and economic power in Liberia. When Sumo Jones, the only indigenous member of the crowd was dismissed from his office as Superintendent of Lofa County in 1975, William E. Dennis -- a Minister of Commerce and a bona fide member of "Crowd 18" -- found a ready spot for him as Deputy Minister of Commerce.

It seems plausible at this stage that the most significant advantage of Americo-Liberian family connections in Liberia has been the opening of opportunities to political, commercial, real estate, and various financial resources for internal consumption which remain to the state treasury after the repatriation of the major portion of capital profits by foreign investors and the Lebanese commercial groups, who owned most of the Liberian economic resources.

* See also Liebenow(1969), p. 135.

Questionnaire Items #9 and #10 of the schedules administered during our fieldwork in Monrovia, elicited some revealing identifications of leading Americo-Liberian families in Liberia.⁵

In the Grand Cape Mount County, Senator Charles D. Sherman's family was singled out by 35 respondents (even though he lives in Monrovia). In Grand Bassa County, both Senators Harmon (14 respondents) and Morgan (21 respondents) caught the attention of the respondents. The late President Tubman's family was selected by 35 respondents as the wealthiest and most influential family in Maryland County. In the new counties a slightly different outcome resulted. Vice-President Greene's family was identified by 22 respondents and Senator Grigsby by 17 respondents in Sinoe County. Superintendent White of Grand Gedeh County was the only family selected by 19 respondents for this county. The only indigenous Liberian individuals mentioned were former Superintendent Sumo Jones of Lofa County by 12 respondents and Paramount Chief Tamba Taylor of the Kissi Chiefdom by 11 respondents.⁶

The families cited above as the most prominent in Liberia were all relatively new in the Liberian political arena. Together with Tubman's family, they acquired wealth and political influence only during President Tubman's administration. Prominent older families, such

⁵ Questionnaire Item #9 asks simply, "Which families do you take to be the richest and influential in Monrovia _____, in Cape Palmas _____, in Grand Bassa _____, in Cape Mount _____, in Nimba _____," Questionnaire Item #10 reads thus: "Were these families (in #9) in the same position before 1960? If not, who were the "Big Shots" at this time?" See Appendix.

⁶ See Table III for the complete list of families cited.

TABLE III

THE RULING FAMILY STRATUM IN LIBERIA

MONTSERRADO COUNTY	CAPE MOUNT COUNTY	MARYLAND COUNTY	SINOE COUNTY
The Tolberts	The Shermans	The Tubmans	The Greenes
The Coopers	The Davids	The Andersons	The Witherspoons
The Dennises	The Hofffs	The Gibsons	The Bings
The Grimes	The Jones	The Yancys	The Grigsbys
The Simpsons	The Gaylors*	The Wilsons	The Taylor-Majors
The Goodridges	The Freemans	The Cox Family	The Pellhams
The Dunbars	Also important	The Bakers	The Mitchells
The Weeks	but not mentioned		
The Shermans	by respondents in		
The Brights	our questionnaires:		
Tommy Bernard	The Fahnbullehs*		
The Parkers	The Massaquois*		
The Padmores	The Dukulys*		
The Wiles			
The Family of			
Richard A. Henries			
The Family of			
McKinley A.			
DeShield			
<hr/>			
GRAND BASSA	NIMBA COUNTY	GRAND GEDEH COUNTY	LOFA COUNTY
The Harmons	The Does*	The Whites	The Liberties
The Morgans	The Farngalos*	The Harrises	Chief Tamba-Taylor*
The Williams	The Vokers*	The Karngbes*	Superintendent
The Roberts	The Dahns	The Rancys	Sumo Jones*
The Flamma-Shermans	The Tuazamas	The Boboyons*	Chief Ziam Belleh*
The Johnsons			
The Reeves			
The Findleys			

Source: Responses to Questionnaire Item #9 (see Appendix) administered to 68 respondents in Monrovia -- 1973. This list is not exhaustive, but merely illustrative of the family factor in Liberian politics.

*Indigenous-Liberian

as the Coopers, the Dennises, the Massaquois (indigenous), the Colemans, the Dunbars were overlooked, probably an indication of the interplay of politics and the family fortune in Liberia. These latter names occurred infrequently among prominent Senators, Cabinet Ministers or Party members during the Tubman administration. The re-emergence of the Dennises in the Tolbert government may be an important departure from the Tubman family alignment.

A substantial portion of economic resources for internal consumption came under the control of the ruling families. Real estate, which was available only to Liberian citizens, was dominated by members of the elite families listed in Table III above. This included not only farming land, but also housing, which was usually leased to foreign missions accredited to Liberia, and to most stores and warehouses operated by the Lebanese and Indian merchants.

The buying and selling of land in the last ten years reached such feverish proportions in Liberia, that a special section was set aside in the government subsidized daily newspaper, The Liberian Age under the heading of "Public Land Notice." In the December 18th Land Notice of 1973, the Josiah Dunbar family gave notice of a title deed for 700 acres in Bassa, while a Mrs. Amanda Stubblefield showed purchase of 500 acres in Kakata along with the Hon. Jonathan Goodridge who purchased 500 acres of land in Montserrado.

An interesting contrast in the land buying spree reported in the Liberian Age was the participation of hinterland and clan chiefdoms. The December Land Notice of 1973 listed the purchase of 2,880 acres of land in Nimba by Bonnah Silah and the People of Yarmien; 1000 acres by

James Dokie and the people of Sehyi; 2,838.37 acres in Cape Mount by Saku Dose et al; while in the February 5th, 1974 land notice, the President of Liberia signed a title deed of 1,500 acres to the Chief and people of Kpatami in Lofa.

The largest single purchase of land by an individual family in Liberia was signed by President Tolbert in the February 5th, 1974 Public Land Notice to Senator Harrison Grigsby in Sinoe County, who acquired 6,400 acres. Purchases were also published for Wilmot Dennis, Jr. for 600 acres in Bong County; Robert G. W. Azango for 500 acres in Montserrado County; J. Samuel Melton also for 500 acres in Kakata; while Fred D. H. Johnson submitted 1,000 acres of land in Bassa for Presidential title deed approval, along with Jacob Harmon and G. Y. Kpave (1,000 acres in Bassa) and Levi R. and Florence E. Johnson (also 1,000 acres in Bassa) on June 11th, 1974. (See The Liberian Age -- Tuesday, June 11, 1974).

The family factor in real estate ownership was also associated with Liberian participation in the rubber industry. The founding executive and membership of the powerful Rubber Planters Association of Liberia was launched in 1967 with William E. Dennis, Sr. as Chairman, R. S. Bright as Vice-Chairman, Ellen G. Cooper as Secretary and Nathan C. Ross, Sr. (former Mayor of Monrovia) as Executive Director. By 1972 the membership of the Rubber Planters Association not only spiralled to seventy-eight, but also covered the major Americo-Liberian ruling family groups (see Appendix for membership list), most of whom seemed to have established a family law firm to oversee the legal aspects of the family enterprises. Most law firms in Liberia were

owned and operated by Liberians. No foreigners were allowed by law to practice in Liberia.

Among the twenty law firms listed in the Liberian Directory and Who's Who (1970-71) the following ruling family establishments were identified:

1. The Barclay Law Firm (established in 1956) owned by Anthony Barclay and T. G. Collins.
2. The Beysolow and Cooper Law Firm (1944) owned by Joseph A. Dennis, W. S. Thompson and Monolu S. Cooper.
3. The C. Cecil Dennis, Jr. Law Firm (1965) owned by the Hon. C. Cecil Dennis, Jr. (present Secretary of State).
4. The Dunbar Law Firm (1965) owned by Tilman and Stephen Dunbar, Sr.
5. The Findley, Marsh and Hopkins Law Firm (1969) owned by Joseph Findley, Nathaniel Marsh and Herman L. Hopkins.
6. The Garber Law Firm (1961) owned by Philip Brumskine.
7. The Henries Law Firm (1944) owned by Melton Richard A. Henries.
8. The Horace and Morgan Law Firm owned by S. Raymond Horace and Edwin L. Morgan.
9. The Jacob Willis Law Firm (1966) owned by Jacob H. Willis and John B. Gibson, Sr.
10. The Morgan, Grimes and Harmon Law Firm (1960) owned by Lawrence A. Morgan, Rudolph Grimes and Emmett Harmon.
11. The Nete Sie Brownell Law Firm (1938) owned by Nete Sie Brownell.
12. The Richard F. D. Smallwood and George Law Association owned by Richard F. O. Smallwood, Nathaniel Thorpe and Albert Peabody and Peter Amos George.
13. The Simpson Law Firm owned by C. L. Simpson, Jr.
14. The Tubman Law Firm (1970) owned by William V. S. Tubman, Jr., Robert Tubman and Winston Tubman; and

15. The Tolbert Law Firm (1971) owned by A. B. Tolbert (President Tolbert's son).⁷

Legal practice and resources from law firms constituted a major source of income for many Liberian elite families from the turn of the twentieth century till the late 1950s, when this income was supplemented by capital from real estate holdings in the form of housing, farms and trading areas. Some families have also made significant gains in their successful operation and ownership of large manufacturing concerns, hence participating side by side with foreign investors and concessionaires. Among these the Mesurado group of companies, owned by Stephen Tolbert and President William R. Tolbert, became the largest corporation wholly owned by Liberians, with branch companies in other West African countries including Nigeria, Ghana and Sierra Leone. Other participants in large manufacturing concerns included the Parker family, with its "Parker Industries, Inc.," a paint manufacturing concern owned by P. Clarence Parker, Jr., established in 1965. The Parker family also owned the "P. Ernest Parker Associates, Inc.," an auditing, accounting and credit firm, established in 1968; "The National Business Management and Consultants" founded in 1969 by Lester Parker as a brokerage for precious stones, numismatic and rental services, and Clave's "International Pharmacy" owned by P. Clarence Parker's wife, Clavenda W. Parker, established in 1964.

Leroy Francis, the Mayor of Marshall City, has since 1964 been operating a successful distilling, blending and bottling firm for

⁷See A and A Enterprises Inc., Directory and Who's Who in Liberia (Monrovia: A. and A. Monrovia, 1970-71), pp. 190-192.

"Pioneer's" and "Stockton" gin and rum in his "Liberian Industrial Development Corporation" (LIDCo.) which also imported and distributed rice, built boats, operated a sawmill and brickworks. The Leroy Francis enterprise also owned the "Commercial Bank of Liberia," several restaurants and retail outlets.

The "Arthur Sherman Enterprises" founded in 1960 for construction and maintenance work; the "West African Agricultural Corporation," established in 1967 for the production of palm oil, palm plantation in Grand Cape Mount by Charles D. Sherman; the "West African Investment and Finance Corporation," and Arthur Sherman's "Macars Enterprises Company," a real estate business established in 1961, have been some of the successful business ventures undertaken by the Montserrado and Cape Mount Shermans. This business concern parallels others, such as "Auriole Enterprises," established in 1968 by the Weeks Brothers for the distribution of school and military uniforms, air-conditioners, refrigerators and household appliances; the "Monrovia Airline Inc.," established in 1963 by Emmett Harmon, Clarence Simpson, Sr., and Alfred Harris, for airline transport service of non-scheduled cessna flights; the "Liberian National Trading Corporation," established in 1968 by Ernest E. Dennis for the importation and distribution of consumer goods, wholesale and retail drinks and provisions, and distribution of Marlboro and Benson and Hedges cigarettes; the "Continental Construction Company Inc.," a firm of architects and engineering contractors established in 1969 by Allen Williams, Prince N. A. Brown, Winston Tubman and C. C. Dennis; "Deepest Services and Service Inc.," a pest control sanitary maintenance, real estate brokerage established in 1965 by John Robert

Reed; the "Lofa Construction Company" and the "Lofa Timber Corporation" owned by the Padmore family; and "Yes Transport Service," the largest car, truck, bus, pick-up and limousine rental company in Liberia, owned and operated by Tommy Reeves-Bernard, former Director of Police and Consul General of Haiti in Liberia.

The commercial and corporate activities of the Americo-Liberian ruling families have not only provided this group with a substantial financial base, but have made inter-family politics a financially rewarding undertaking as well, while making the Americo-Liberian top families a virtual national bourgeoisie and political class stratum, which could, if it so wished, use its economic base to co-opt rising indigenous-Liberian elites, and its family-base to appease the working and peasant groups in the rural and urban centers, a strategy which was successfully applied by President William V. S. Tubman in his twenty-seven year government of Liberia.

The names of families identified in Table III above have also recurred in the board of directors of private corporations, while the family law firms have also provided the legal counsel in these corporations. An annual report of the Liberian Iron Ore Ltd. of 1976 which owns LAMCO (The Liberian American-Swedish Minerals Company) included among members of the board, Oliver Bright (the current Minister of Justice, formerly Minister of Health and Welfare), his uncle, Robert E. Bright, who was also the member of the Liberian House of Representatives and President of the Robert Bright and Sons Inc. in Monrovia. It also included James T. Phillips, Jr. (the present Minister of Finance), James Milton Weeks (former cabinet

minister in the Tubman administration) and Adolph W. Yancy (the present Deputy Governor of the National Bank of Liberia and former son-in-law of President Tolbert). The legal counsels representing LAMCO were the Henries Law Firm, and the Morgan, Grimes and Harmon Law Firm.

The business connections among the ruling Americo-Liberian families, shown in the law firms in particular, represented an important inter-family linkage, which exceeded in significance connections by virtue of marriage into a given family. Marital ties as well as consanguineal ties provided merely a base for inter-family dealings and trust in business, real-estate holdings and bureaucratic favours.

Ruling family status did not per se result in inter-family trust of one another in Liberia. Rivalries among prominent families were common throughout the Tubman-Tolbert periods of administration, some involving families sharing a similar family name and lineage. A case in point being the dispute over 200 acres of land in Paynesville (now Paynesward) near Monrovia, which involved the Dennis family. The Liberian Age of Tuesday, June 22nd, 1971 reported in a headline the Liberian Supreme Court's decision which divested the legal title to the above-mentioned acreage from Angela Dennis-Brown, Louise Dennis-Alston, the late Henry W. Dennis, the late Gabriel L. Dennis, Sr., and Louise Ricks-Samuel, and invested this land to Sam Ford Dennis, an appellant in the case.⁸ Further discussion of family rivalries among the Americo-Liberians is made in Part Three below. It could be pointed out at this point, however, that as a result of this competition, some families

⁸The Liberian Age, Vol. 25, No. 48 (Tuesday, June 22nd, 1971).

rose to top level positions in the political arena, while less achievement oriented family clusters remained at the bottom.

The Americo-Liberian family has played a significant role in molding and shaping the Liberian political system as we know it today. By operating at an associational level, where membership could open and close, depending on expedient situations, it assured the survival of settler political institutions. The assimilation of the Congoes, the Mulattoes and the Pure Blacks into a family based ethnic grouping variously called "Americo-Liberians," "Settlers," or "Coastal People," led to the emergence of a ruling class system with unique features for Africa. The emphasis on family ties for solidarity and manipulation of positions in the government, the party and voluntary associations seem to have given some stability to the Liberian one-party (family) Government. The absence of major political disturbances in Liberia, the continuity of its government since Independence in 1847, and the commitment of its masses (the ruling Americo-Liberian family groups, the technocrats from Indigenous-rural orientations and the peasant and working masses) to the maintenance of the system could be counted as indications of the effectiveness of family politics in Liberia since Independence in the nineteenth century.

As the field data has shown above, the Indigenous-Liberian technocratic stratum has conformed to the Americo-Liberian family manipulation by their increasing marriages to Americo-Liberian families and maintenance of close career and associational ties with politically powerful Americo-Liberian families. As a result, it has mainly been those Indigenous-Liberians with Americo-Liberian marital,

career, or foster ties who have been allowed into certain sensitive party and masonic lodge positions in the past thirty years. Cabinet ministers, ambassadors and county superintendents of Indigenous-Liberian background during the Tubman and the first five years of the Tolbert administrations have been individuals with either an Americo-Liberian wife, Americo-Liberian foster relationship or Americo-Liberian sponsorship.

This selective assimilation has slowly divided the technocratic indigenous stratum into the Americo-Liberian favoured, and the non-sponsored groups. While the Americo-Liberian favourites are being trained for participation in the ruling family politics, the non-sponsored groups, consisting mainly of mission school educated and supported graduates have been finding their way into the hinterland where their connections and ethnic ties with the local administrators have provided them with some socio-economic benefits. The relationship between these two sectors of the Indigenous-Elites, particularly at the University of Liberia, has become increasingly ambiguous and sometimes even embarrassing to the technocratic stratum itself.⁹

In Part Three below, an attempt has been made to explore the political and class implications of the factionalization of the

⁹In the campus political campaigns for Student Representatives at both Cuttington College and the University of Liberia in 1973 and 1974, contradictions between Indigenous-Liberian students from well-known indigenous-Liberian families with Americo-Liberian sponsorship, and those coming directly from the rural hinterland counties with no Monrovia connections, resulted in serious clashes and angry verbal exchanges, which led to the intervention of the University authorities (see Chapter 7 below).

emergent Indigenous-Liberian technocrats and the gradual breakdown of the Americo-Liberian oligarchy.

CHAPTER 5

THE ROLE OF THE MASONIC SOCIETY AND THE VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS IN CLASS FORMATION

In political arenas where merit has been evaluated only on the basis of family connections and influential social ties, secret societies and informal associational membership have played an important role in the struggle for the control of the state apparatus and the boards of directors of business corporations.¹ The lodge, the private business men's club and the informal social clubs have provided convenient locations for secret strategies and reallocation of political favour and economic rewards. They have also served as an institutional base for the maintenance of social ties and solidarity among ruling elites and the bourgeoisie, and as centers for the grooming of new recruits to this stratum. As the need for the careful supervision of the recruitment of a new membership cadre and the maintenance of strict group boundaries increased, the importance of demonstrating loyalty and authenticity became paramount. Only active, overt participation in these secret lodges, voluntary associations and

¹An informative discussion of the secret societal factor in political mobility has been attempted in William Muraskin, Middle-Class Blacks in a White Society (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975); Abner Cohen, "The Politics of Ritual, Secrecy," Man: The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, Vol. 6, No. 3 (1971), pp. 427-447; and Edward Palmer, "Negro Secret Societies," Social Forces, Vol. 23, No. 2 (December 1944), pp. 207-212.

private clubs assured confidence to the ruling elites or the bourgeoisie of the members' ability to promote and protect the interests of the class stratum. In Abner Cohen's view:

... freemasonry offers two major functions to its members: an exclusive organization and a mechanism for the creation of a brotherhood. Through upholding the principle of secrecy, Freemasons are able to develop, maintain, and run a vast, intricate, efficient, and highly complex organization, with its symbols of distinctiveness, channels of exclusive communication, structure of authority, ideology and frequent socialization through ceremonials....²

In Liberia, Freemasonry in particular, was not only given social importance, but was also raised to the level of a state apparatus, which along with the Americo-Liberian family apparatus, supervised nation-building. According to a recent masonic report of Grand Lecturer (a masonic office) James A. A. Pierre, who is also the present Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Liberia:

... Liberia has been rightly called a Masonic Country. The names of the vast majority of the men who have been in the past, and who are today in charge of the affairs of Government, adorn the Roster of our Grand Lodge and those of the subordinate lodges. From the earliest days of this Grand Lodge, Craft Masonry and the Government of Liberia have worked in the closest harmony, and Freemasonry has thrived under the Country's protection.³

Chief Justice Pierre's report was further confirmed by Tubman and Tolbert in their addresses to Grand Masonic Conventions in the past thirty years. President Tolbert went so far as to describe

²Abner Cohen, "The Politics of Ritual Secrecy," p. 447.

³James A. A. Pierre, The Proceedings of the Seventh Masonic Convention of the Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, Republic of Liberia, held at Lower Buchanan, Grand Bassa County (Sunday, Jan. 6th-11th A.D., 1957).

Liberia as:

... a nation whose destiny has been inspired from its incipency by the living Gospel of Jesus Christ and the lofty ideals, precepts and principles of Craft Masonry, ... of the nineteen Presidents of Liberia, thirteen have hailed from the Masonic Craft while from among our twenty-eight Grand Masters, we can list five Presidents, three Vice-Presidents, two Speakers of the House of Representatives and one Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Also worthy of note is the fact that a long line of eminent statesmen, jurists, clerics, politicians, administrators, technicians and public servants from all walks of life, have continually emanated from the Craft⁴

The involvement of Craft Masonry in State politics had deep roots, extending to the early sixteenth century in Europe. In the period following 1721 wealthy patrons and members of the aristocracy occupied top ranks in the Masonic lodges. As a result of this patronage,

... the list of past grand masters up to mid-twentieth century includes the names of eight princes who later became monarchs: George IV, Edward VII, Edward VIII, and George VI of England; Oscar II and Gustav V of Sweden; and Frederick VIII and Christian X of Denmark.⁵

The Liberian Craft Masonry emerged as an offshoot of Prince Hall Masonic Craft in the United States. Prince Hall Freemasonry was the Afro-American branch of the worldwide Masonic Order which was founded in the American Colonies in 1775 by a West Indian "octoroon," Prince Hall. Since its founding the Prince Hall Order "has served as one of

⁴William R. Tolbert, Jr., Address at the State Banquet in honour of the 86th Annual Session of the United Supreme Council of the Ancient Free and Accepted Rite of Freemasonry, Prince Hall Affiliation, U.S.A., Europe and Liberia (October 29th, 1972), pp. 4-5.

⁵"Freemasonry," The Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. 9 (1969), p. 844; J. Hobsbawm in The Age of Revolution, 1789-1848 (New York: 1962), pp. 37, 106, 147, also reviewed the masonic participation among the rising bourgeoisie and the progressive elements in the aristocracy of Europe at this time.

the bulwarks of the black middle class."⁶ The Liberian branch of Prince Hall Freemasonry was established in 1851 by the Liberian settlers, under the name of "Independent Restoration Grand Lodge in the Republic." Among the early Grand Masters were Thomas H. Amos, J. J. Roberts (the first President of the Republic), Beverly P. Yates, Charles B. Dunbar, Reginald A. Sherman, Alfred B. King, William D. Coleman (Liberian President from 1896-1900), and Hilary W. Travis, among others.⁷

Since 1867 the Grand Lodge of Liberia has authorized the establishment of subordinate lodges under its jurisdiction. Among these were the Oriental Lodge No. 1, in Montserrado County, Saint Paul's Lodge No. 2, also in Montserrado County, together with Saint John's Lodge No. 3 in Montserrado. In Sinoe County, the Excelsior Lodge No. 4 was established, while the Rising Sun Lodge No. 5 followed in Grand Bassa County, the Morning Star Lodge No. 6 in Maryland County, Widow Son Lodge No. 7 in Grand Cape Mount County, Evening Star Lodge No. 9 in Grand Bassa County, Amos Lodge No. 10 in Grand Bassa County and Hiram Lodge No. 11 in Grand Bassa County.⁸

In addition to these subordinate lodges above, auxiliary

⁶Muraskin, Middle-Class Blacks in a White Society, p. 26. See also William H. Grimshaw, Official History of Freemasonry Among the Colored People in North America (New York, 1903).

⁷See Proceedings of the Seventh Masonic Convention of the Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, Republic of Liberia, pp. 5-6. For a complete list of the Grand Masters of the Masonic Lodge of Liberia, see Appendix.

⁸See Proceedings of the Seventh Masonic Convention, p. 6. With the expansion of membership, new subordinate lodges are established throughout the country. For a complete list up to 1974, see Appendix.

fraternal orders have also existed in Liberia, such as the Odd Fellows, the Order of the United Brothers of Friendship, the Order of the Eastern Star (which accepted women), as well as the all-female Sisters of the Mysterious Ten, and the International Order of Good Templars (I.O.G.T.).

These lodges and fraternal orders, along with the many voluntary associations which were launched in Liberia, provided the Americo-Liberian group with sufficient arenas to demonstrate their loyalty to the status quo and their commitment to Americo-Liberian control of the State apparatuses. The speedy promotion of active members of the masonic craft in the public sector and in the Party ranks led many of our Liberian informants during fieldwork to consider the craft as the most powerful voluntary association, with decision-making powers. It was also commonly believed in Monrovia that most important Government and Party decisions were made in the Masonic meetings. The alleged pressure on a former Foreign Affairs Minister to join the Masonic Craft prior to his appointment into the Tolbert Cabinet, was seen as an indication of such control over State matters by the Masons.

In the opinion of a key informant, the Liberian masons, stand as a group that coordinate (so to speak) employment activities of the Government, as many people in the Masons are quickly given government jobs, and these jobs are maintained as long as the subject does not do anything that is against the will and pleasure of the President who is always a ranked Mason. Others in the private sector such as the Lebanese, join the group to protect their business operations in the country⁹

A teacher at the predominantly indigenous Liberian St. Patrick's High

⁹A. Boima Konuwa, Jr., "The Role of the Masons in the Social, Economic and Political Stagnancy of Liberia." A term paper in Sociology at the University of Liberia (21st November, 1973), p. 5.

School (a non-mason), also believed that the Craft was the only way to get known in the community, particularly the semi-qualified persons. Education was secondary to masonic affiliation.

The low priority accorded to efficiency and achievement in the public sector during Tubman's administration was underscored in the cases cited below by a key informant:¹⁰

Case 1: Dennis T. Y. Slopper, Lieutenant in Tubman's Special Security Services, and a Mason, claims that he joined the forces and was a private for over five years, even though he was a high school graduate unlike most of his superiors. But he noticed that most people in his department without proper qualifications for their jobs were members of the masonic craft. "I joined the Masons, too, my boss (at the time, James Bestman, was Chief of Security) being a Mason. In less than a year I was a sergeant and seven months later, a lieutenant." In his view, the membership fee exceeded his annual salary. However, the benefits he derived from this membership more than compensated for the initial sacrifice. As a result of his Masonic membership, Slopper can now meet the Grand Master-Emeritus (the President) as a masonic brother and be sure to get whatever he wanted from him, in spite of his low education and brief training in police science.

Case 2: Junius Slarion, an indigenous element who joined the Masons after only two years of high school and secretarial

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 6-9.

training in a local commercial school. When an obviously more qualified applicant than himself was interviewed for a position by the Actual Past Master and Warden Emeritus (the current Chief Justice), "the shaggy looking, less qualified Slarion was selected for the job."

Biographical data and career histories in official documents, such as the Liberian Official Gazette, never failed to make special mention of church affiliation and participation in church activities, the masonic lodges and the "crowd" membership. The more prominent an individual, the larger the number of voluntary and masonic associations attached to his biographical history and the longer his list of State decorations. The YMCA, the Masonic lodges, church societies, the United Brotherhood and Friendship, together with its brother lodge of the Grand Order of Odd Fellows were among the voluntary associations most recommended by our respondents to Item #33 ("Which voluntary associations, social clubs, and fraternities would you strongly recommend for a Liberian young person to join if they wanted to succeed in their careers and business?"). A respondent (an Assistant Minister of Defence) commented that "if the mobility aspired to is political, then the Masonic Craft. Other than that no voluntary association can help."

A naturalized Liberian journalist in the Ministry of Information, Mr. Bill Frank, after thirteen years as a senior journalist, editor of several newspapers and author of a number of commissioned editorials on President Tubman, supported the commonly held belief on masonic influence in the Liberian political system. Positions of power and influence were increasingly held by members of the craft. In his opinion, a

rank of Deputy Master, Worshipful Master or Grand Master of the Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, the United Brothers of Friendship, the Sisters of the Mysterious Ten, the International Order of Good Templars or the Grand Order of Odd Fellows opened avenues to political power and economic success in Liberia. Mobility to positions of political influence, and access to economic wealth was not possible in Liberia except via Masonic membership and active participation.

An old masonic member, a Worshipful Master of the United Brothers of Friendship Lodge in Rivercess Territory, and a representative for this district, agreed that "most State matters and secrets are freely discussed in the Masonic lodge-meetings." In this way maximum secrecy was assured for classified and sensitive information which the ruling families did not feel necessary to discuss in the legislative assembly or within Government ministries. Only masonic "brothers" could be trusted with sensitive State matters. Only masonic advice was in the best interest of the State (which in Liberia's case was also synonymous with the Americo-Liberian oligarchy).

The relationship between the Government and the Masons has been the most intimate in Liberian political history. As far back as 1920, the Grand Masters of the Free and Accepted Masonic Lodge of Liberia have also occupied key positions in the church, the Party and the Government. Edwin Barclay, in 1920, was not only the Grand Master but also the Secretary of State in President C. D. B. King's administration, whom he immediately succeeded after the Fernando Po slavery scandal. Barclay was succeeded by Louis Arthur Grimes as Grand Master in 1930. Grimes was soon after promoted to the position of Secretary of State

during Edwin Barclay's administration and later became Chief Justice in Tubman's government. Grimes passed the Grand Mastership to Clarence L. Simpson, Sr., who was Chief Justice in Edwin Barclay's administration and President Tubman's Vice-President in 1944. Simpson was succeeded by W. V. S. Tubman, who later became President of the Republic of Liberia in 1944.

In 1974, Jonathan Goodridge became Grand Master in addition to his positions as both Chairman of the True Whig Party and Minister of Local Government.¹¹

There was feeling among some informants that the Masonic Craft was adopted by the settlers as an attempt to preserve their political domination over the rest of the non-settler groups in Liberia. According to Walter Moore, a former Mason and an executive secretary to President Tubman, "... all immigrants to this part of Africa were not from the same States. Thus, to know each other, they had to form an association that could bring them together; bind them as some kind of family: the masonic craft was just the ideal entity"¹²

Although the masonic craft in other socio-political situations paraded as benefit organizations aimed ultimately at the assistance of members in times of need, the Liberian masonic craft developed strongly familistic characteristics and was strongly dominated by the Americo-Liberian stratum. The Grand Master became in effect a type of

¹¹For a comprehensive list of the relationship between the Government, the Party and the Masonic Lodges, see Table IV below.

¹²A. Boima Konuwa, Jr., pp. 18-19.

"Godfather" and supreme patriarch of the Americo-Liberian settlements in Liberia. His powers sometimes exceeded those of the President unless the President was also a Past Grand Master. I was informed by the son of a former Grand Master of the Liberian Masons that when the message of the death of President Tubman in June 1971 was cabled to the Secretary of State in Monrovia from London, England, the first Government official to be informed was not the Vice-President, but the Grand Master of the Masons, McKinley A. DeShield, Sr. It was suggested by some informants that the Acting President at the time had favoured his own installation as the new Head of State, as the Vice-President was not in Monrovia at that time. It being a weekend, the Vice-President was at his farm, about two hundred miles from Monrovia. This suggestion from the Acting President was not supported by the Grand Master who proceeded to place the Cabinet, the Senate, and the Army Chief of Staff under Masonic house arrest, pending the return of the Vice-President from his farm. No one could challenge this ruling as it was given under Masonic order.

In the Masonic Craft, the Grand Master had absolute power and could never be questioned on any decision or action that he chose to take during his tenure of office. Members were under strict Masonic law to help one another in times of need. An appeal for help from a "brother" could not be ignored or turned down, even in the exercise of one's legal duties, such as passing a guilty verdict or bringing down a prison sentence.

This fraternal theme in the Liberian Masonic Craft was also emphasized in key voluntary associations. Top on the list of these were the "crowds," which were peer group clubs formed mostly among

school-going youths who either completed high school together or entered public life at the same time. In the biographical histories of Tolbert's Cabinet in 1972 the President, the Minister of Defence, the Minister of Local Government and the Minister of Finance (who was President of the crowd) were classified as belonging to "Crowd 13," the Chief Justice to "Crowd 15"; while a majority of the younger ministers were members of "Crowd 18." In addition to "Crowds," other associations such as the Rotary, the Circle Club, the Literary Club, the Inner Wheel Club and the YMCA, also provided socio-cultural contexts for filial ties and networks necessary for the mobility of new arrivals.¹³

The number of associations providing chances for contacts has increased considerably since Tubman's administration because of the large urban migration of indigenous groups from the hinterland. These associations have proved useful to most upstarts in finding effective networks in their search for scholarships, job offers, promotions and politically strategic marriage partners. In short, it has been through these voluntary associations that the Indigenous-Liberian elite has been gaining acceptance into the Americo-Liberian socio-political arena.

An interesting feature of the symbolic and instrumental strategies observed in Liberia has been their focus on manipulating family affiliation and identity. Much emphasis has been laid on

¹³ Press and Publications Bureau, "The Liberian Government: The President-Junior Ministers and Selected Curricula Vitae" (n.d., mimeographed).

Americo-Liberian cultural categories, among these being the constant reference to "brotherhood" and "sisterhood" in voluntary associations which encouraged alliance with persons categorized along these lines and the maintenance of social distance from non-members. With it also came the justification of various types of nepotism and corruptive practices. A "brother" in distress deserved greater and more prompt attention than government efficiency, national development and the application of justice. Euro-American patterns of conspicuous consumption and life-style were the minimal requirements for entry into key associations. With these external features entry into politically privileged families through marriage or god-parental relationship was greatly facilitated. This enhanced the popularity of a participant in Monrovia, making him more acceptable to the (Americo-Liberian) community. Popularity, active participation in voluntary associations and being associated by the community with the ruling class families, in effect improved an individual's chances of acceptance in the ruling stratum in Liberia to a significant degree; and with this acceptance a chance to accumulate political and economic fortunes.

This role of Craft Masonry in Liberia, as the apparatus of exclusive manipulation by the Americo-Liberian stratum, paralleled Sierra Leone's Craft Masonry, which was also controlled by an elite stratum, the Creoles. According to Abner Cohen, membership in the Freetown Masonic Lodges was overwhelmingly Creole with no "native" presence.¹⁴ The exclusion of native or indigenous Sierra Leoneans --

¹⁴Abner Cohen, "The Politics of Ritual Secrecy," pp. 427-447.

the Temne, the Mende and the Fulas -- was rationalized on the pretext that these groups were Moslem or preferred their own poro and sande secret societies. Membership and expansion of lodges also coincided with the periods of direct and serious threat to Creoldom, particularly the 1947-52 period which preceded the restlessness associated with political developments leading to independence in 1961, and the 1965-68 period of the Creole struggle against Albert Margai, the Prime Minister.

... The very men whose power was most threatened in this way, mainly the civil servants and members of the professions, were those who filled the freemasonic lodges in Freetown. ... The developing threat to Creole power and the increase in Freemasonic membership, are significantly interrelated¹⁵

In Liberia where the threat to Americo-Liberian hegemony was less dramatic in the political arena, the Masonic Craft tended to swell its membership and the launching of new subordinate lodges only with the expansion of the economy. The economic boom of 1944 which saw Liberia growing economically into an industrializing nation,¹⁶ significantly increased the resources which the Americo-Liberian stratum were able to secure through the State apparatus. Rather than the mere redistribution of public offices to members of the stratum as in previous administrations, now direct financial benefits from the iron ore mining concessions, and the expanded commercial sector became readily available,

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 440.

¹⁶ See Robert Clower, George Dalton, et al, Growth Without Development (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1966), and Russell McLaughlin, Foreign Investment and Development in Liberia (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1966).

and more effective techniques of redistribution of these resources to fellow Americo-Liberians had to be found. It was at this period from 1944-1975 that Craft Masonry in Liberia assumed significant importance and attained great complexity, notwithstanding the fact that this was also the period of political and bureaucratic incorporation of the hinterland. The presence of this new economic fortune to Liberia made it easier for Americo-Liberians to leave the tedious day-to-day administrative concerns of the State to the rising Indigenous groups from the hinterland, who were coming out of the newly expanded mission and public school system. Americo-Liberians, instead, concentrated most of their activities on the money-making family law firms which now provided legal counsel for the new industries in Liberia, on the family rubber farms and small businesses, and fraternal activities.

As the ranks of the civil service in Liberia swelled with Liberians from the hinterland, a system of checks and balances became necessary to assure stability. Loyal and trustworthy Indigenous-Liberians had to be recruited from the ranks of the civil servants to keep an eye on their fellow groups, in the interest of the ruling Americo-Liberian stratum. It was partly for this reason that the Liberian Freemasonry, unlike its Sierra Leonean counterpart, included in its membership a few Indigenous-Liberians, Lebanese and other non-Liberian elements, who could be used by the ruling stratum from time to time to report developments in their respective ethnic sectors (see Table IV below).

Both Sierra Leonean and Liberian Freemasonry showed,

TABLE IV

THE PARTY, THE CRAFT AND THE GOVERNMENT IN LIBERIA*

NAME	PARTY	MASONS	GOVERNMENT	ETHNICITY
1. William Tolbert	Standard Bearer	Grand Master Emeritus	President of Liberia	Americo-Liberian
2. James Greene	Deputy Standard Bearer	Deputy Grand Master	Vice-President	Americo-Liberian
3. E. J. Goodridge	National Chairman	Grand Master	Minister of Local Govt.	Americo-Liberian
4. J. D. Anderson	Vice Nat'l. Chairman	Actual Past Master	Superintendent of Maryland Co.	Americo-Liberian
5. E. R. Townsend	Party Sec.	Snr. Warden	Minister of Presidential Affairs	Americo-Liberian
6. McKinley A. DeShield	Secretary General	Grand Master Emeritus	Minister of Postal Aff.	Americo-Liberian
7. Frank Tolbert	Local Chairman	Grand Master Emeritus	Senator, Mont. Co.	Americo-Liberian
8. Richard Henries	Legal Counsel	Grand Master Emeritus	Speaker of the House	Americo-Liberian
9. George Henries	Member	Grand Secretary	Associate Justice	Americo-Liberian
10. Allen Williams	Committee Chairman	Past Master	Minister of Defense	Americo-Liberian
11. A. B. Curtis	Local Chairman	Past Master	Deputy Minister of Defense	Americo-Liberian
12. James Pierre	Member	Past Master	Chief Justice	Americo-Liberian
13. C. L. Simpson, Jr.	Member	Past Master	Attorney General	Americo-Liberian
14. Charles Sherman	Local Chairman	Past Master	Senator, former Finance Minister	Americo-Liberian/native
15. J. Rudolph Grimes	Member	Past Master	Former Foreign Minister	Americo-Liberian
16. Frank Gailor	Local Sec.	Worshipful Master	Senator	Native
17. James Brown	Local Chairman	Actual Past Master	Court Sherriff	Americo-Liberian

	NAME	PARTY	MASONS	GOVERNMENT	ETHNICITY
18.	Robert Azango	Member	Worshipful Master	Associate Justice	Native
19.	William Dennis, Sr.	Treasurer	Worshipful Jr. Warden	Former Finance Minister	Americo-Liberian
20.	E. Sumo Jones	Member	Past Master	Superintendent of Lofa	Native
21.	Henry Fahnbulleh	Member	Worshipful Master	Asst. Minister of Presidential Affairs	Native
22.	Alfred B. Konuwa	Member	Actual Past Master	Asst. Minister of Defence	Native
23.	Wm. Tubman, Jr.	Local Chairman	Worshipful Master	Senator, M'land.	Americo-Liberian
24.	Jackson F. Doe	Local Official	Actual P.M.	Minister of Education	Native
25.	Lawrence Morgan	Local Official	Worshipful Master	Senator of Bassa	Americo-Liberian
26.	R. F. Okai	Member	Worshipful Master	Deputy Min. of Foreign	Togolese Liberian
27.	George Padmore	Member	Worshipful Master	Former Ambass. at Large	Americo-Liberian
28.	Sylvester Thomas	Member	Grand Supporter	Asst. Min. of Defence	Americo-Liberian
29.	H. K. Johnson	Member (ex-officio)	Worshipful Master	Army Chief of Staff	Native
30.	James Garnett	Member	Actual Past Master	Chief of Codification	Americo-Liberian
31.	J. Henry Swaray	Member	Past Master	Deputy Min. of Post and Telegraph	Native
32.	L. Kwie Johnson	Marshall	Drill Leader	Public Relation Officer	Americo-Liberian
33.	Roland Barnes	Member	Worshipful Brother	Solicitor	Americo-Liberian
34.	J. Jenkins Peal	Member	Past Master	Minister of Labour	Americo-Liberian
35.	Isaac David	Member	Worshipful Observer	Former Senator Cape Mount	Americo-Liberian
36.	Robert Kennedy	Member	Actual Past Master	Asst. Minister at Labor	Native
37.	E. Harding Smythe	Member	Worshipful Brother	Asst. Minister of Labor	Americo-Liberian

	NAME	PARTY	MASONS	GOVERNMENT	ETHNICITY
38.	Nelson Broderick	Local Official	Past Master	Superintendent of Sinoe	Americo-Liberian
39.	Abraham Jackson	Local Official	Past Master	Superintendent of Cape Mount	Americo-Liberian
40.	Harrison Grigsby	Local Chairman	Grand Worshipful Master	Senator of Sinoe County	Americo-Liberian
41.	Frank O. Robert	Member	Worshipful Brother	Asst. Minister of Public Works	Americo-Liberian
42.	Joseph Brent	Member	Worshipful Brother	Accountant in Legislature	Americo-Liberian
43.	Henrique Smith	Member	Past Supporter	Dep. Min. of Local Gov't.	Americo-Liberian
44.	Alfred Henries	Member	Actual Master	Director, Gen. Services Agency	Americo-Liberian
45.	Ephraim Smallwood	Local Official	Master	County Attorney	Americo-Liberian
46.	Felix Lawrence	Local Official	Past Master	Supt. of Marshall Territory	Americo-Liberian
47.	L. T. DeShield	Member	Actual Past Master	Chief of Protocol	Americo-Liberian
48.	Ben Page	Member	Member	Dep. Min. of Information	Native
49.	H. W. Brewer	Member	Member	Dep. Min. of Labor	Americo-Liberian
50.	Jonathan Mason	Member (ex-officio)**	Past Member	Deputy Chief of Staff	Americo-Liberian

*Source: Term Paper in Soc. 301: Introduction to Sociology entitled "The Role of the Masons in the Social Economic and Political Stagnancy of Liberia." University of Liberia (November 21st, 1973), by Alfred B. Konuwa(a second year student at the University).

** Member, but since Army Code prevents political affiliation, he dis-associated himself.

... a close relationship between wealth and position in the non-Masonic sphere on the one hand, and ritual authority within the order on the other. The prominent men in the Masonic order are indeed the prominent men in Sierre Leone in general. There is a close relationship between the two spheres.¹⁷

The relationship between the Americo-Liberian factor, Craft Masonry, the True Whig Party and the Public Service could be inferred from both Table III in Chapter 4 above and Table IV in the present chapter. Top position in the Masons coincided with Americo-Liberian elite family status. The "native" Liberians, mentioned in Table IV below, also recur in Table III in Chapter 4 directly or indirectly. Although the names of Konuwa, Okai, Swaray may not have been mentioned by informants in the list of prominent families in the counties, these families were closely attached to other established Americo-Liberian families, which partly explained their promotion to top level positions in the political arena.

Since 1944 Craft Masonry in Liberia has emerged as the innermost circle of political and social involvement. In his research on Liberia, Liebenow¹⁸ characterized political control and participation in the State apparatus as "a series of concentric circles, in which the outermost is least influential and the circles closer to the core have greater influence over the course of events and the actual decision-making process." He identified three circles of involvement, from the outermost circle of political privilege in the election of the President and the members of the House of Representatives, through involvement in the

¹⁷ Abner Cohen, "The Politics of Ritual Secrecy," p. 442.

¹⁸ Liebenow, Liberia: The Evolution of Privilege, pp. 132-135.

second circle of participation in the nominating conventions for members of the Legislature to a third inner circle of Americo-Liberian family control of the political system.¹⁹ Although Liebenow rightly identified the inner circle of Americo-Liberian family control, he failed to locate just precisely which arena became the exclusive monopoly of this stratum. The Party, the Church and the Public Service were of lesser significance for exclusive domination and ritual secrecy as too many "outsiders" had already been allowed into these apparatuses as a result of Tubman's Unification and Integration policies of 1944. The Americo-Liberian family stratum mobilized their strategies of control through the Masonic Craft. The rise and fall of families could be read from the roster of the Grand Lodge in Liberia. Families who were on the rise appeared more frequently in the senior ranks of various lodges throughout Liberia, while those on the decline slowly disappeared from positions of significance in the Craft. Hence Americo-Liberian families could not afford to ignore the Masonic Craft during the Tubman and, to some extent, the Tolbert periods.

In 1949 a new order of Craft Masonry -- 32 and 33 degree Masons, the highest degree in the Craft -- was established in Monrovia under the name of the Consistory. This represented the revival of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry in Liberia. It would seem that once again an attempt was being made to create a further inner circle for exclusive Americo-Liberian membership. Up to Tubman's death in 1971 the Consistory had no Indigenous-Liberian members. The launching

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 134-135.

of subordinate Consistory lodges permitted the promotion of a few Indigenous Liberians and Lebanese. By 1974 the Consistory included the Valley of Mesurado Consistory No. 237 in Monrovia (the founding lodge), the W. R. Tolbert, Jr. Consistory No. 310 in Schieffelin, Marshall Territory and the John G. Lewis, Jr. Consistory No. 311 in Grand Bassa County.²⁰ The membership roster of these Consistory lodges in 1974 included such well known figures as President Tolbert, his Vice-President, James Greene, the Chairman of the True Whig Party, E. Jonathan Goodridge, and Minister of State for Presidential Affairs who was frequently Acting-President when the Head of State was not in the country, E. Reginald Townsend, President Pro-Tempore of the Liberian Senate, Frank Tolbert, Attorney General, C. L. Simpson, Jr., Chief Justice, James A. A. Pierre, Business tycoon, Charles B. Sherman, Maryland's Senior Senator and son of President Tubman, William V. S. Tubman, Jr., Secretary General of the True Whig Party, M. A. DeShield, Sr., and former President of the University of Liberia and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Rocheforte L. Weeks, among others.²¹

Promotion then, into the key decision-making sectors of the Liberian political arena required the active and successful manipulation of a multitude of strategies, each having an interlocking

²⁰ See the Souvenir Programme of the Silver Jubilee of the Valley of Mesurado Consistory No. 237, and the Revival of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Prince Hall Affiliation, Southern Jurisdiction, U.S.A. in Liberia (Monrovia, Masonic Temple, April 11th-14th, 1974).

²¹ For a complete membership, see the Souvenir Programme of the Silver Jubilee of the Valley of Mesurado Consistory No. 237 ...

relationship to others. While school education constituted the elementary strategy for access into the Liberian patronage system, this alone was not sufficient. The position and influence of a sponsoring Americo-Liberian contributed greater help than technocratic skill alone, while also elite family affiliation by itself remained only an effective weapon unused. Its effectiveness remained to be tested in the social clubs, the "crowds," the fraternal orders, the Masonic Craft, and the Church. Recognition in these associations through promotion to their top ranks also meant automatic access to the lucrative patronage system controlled and closely supervised by the ruling Americo-Liberian family stratum.

The voluntary associations and particularly the Ancient Free and Accepted Masonic Lodges of Liberia have represented the key State apparatuses within which the ruling stratum has emerged since Tubman's regime and through which the Indigenous-Liberian technocratic stratum has received training in the art of state craft, a craft that promoted Americo-Liberian hegemony.

In Part Three below, the struggle for ascendancy to the ruling stratum within the ranks of the Americo-Liberian families is presented, showing in effect that the formation of a new stratum of Indigenous-Liberian technocrats and Indigenous-Liberian politics, within the Liberian State apparatus, was the result of this inter-family struggle since the 1930 Slavery Crisis in Liberia.

PART THREE

THE "SILENT CLASS STRUGGLE" AND THE EMERGENCE OF A
NEW STATE APPARATUS

CHAPTER 6

STRATEGIES OF CLASS REPRODUCTION AND THE MANIPULATION OF STATE APPARATUSES SINCE 1944

If administrations in Liberia were to be given labels of identification, the King-Barclay administrations (1920-1944) would be identified with the "politics of the elite families," since family position at this time played an important role in political mobility and survival. The Tubman administration, on the other hand, concerned itself with the "politics of Loyalty to the President." Tubman tolerated no other political person or institution in his drive for power and influence in the Liberian political arena. He was careful not to allow elite family cliques, the Party, the Government, the Church, the Hinterland and the Masonry to become more powerful or more influential than himself. Loyalty to his administration guaranteed promotion and survival in the political system.

The Tolbert administration's first four-year term has been characterized by attempts to align the Government with the "politics of Efficiency and Total Commitment" to the advancement of the public service and the economy. By adopting this policy, Tolbert has been drawing a line between his Government and the administrative shortcomings of the Tubman government in the hopes of attracting the youth, the educated groups and the disgruntled elite families toward his policies. It was precisely these groups that Tubman alienated and

mistrusted in the latter period of his administration.

In order to see the Tubman government and the Tolbert administration in their proper historical perspective, it is important to review some of the features that preceded each administration and how they played a significant role in the success of its programs.

When Tubman was elected President of the Republic in 1944, both former President Edwin Barclay and his arch-rival C. D. B. King, were alive and active in the Liberian political arena. Tubman's election was supported by Edwin Barclay -- the former President -- against other politically stronger candidates, such as C. L. Simpson, Sr., who was subsequently consoled with the Vice-Presidency. According to sources in Monrovia, Barclay picked Tubman, a politically obscure and less influential (non-Monrovia) politician, in the hopes of continuing his control and dominance of the government throughout Tubman's first eight-year term, after which Clarence Simpson was to be made President as promised.* Simpson's strong credentials, that is, his elite family position in Monrovia, and his promotion through the key political ranks (as Secretary of State, Grand Master of the Masons, and Secretary-General of the True Whig Party) made him too powerful for President Barclay to manipulate easily.

Tolbert, on the other hand, assumed the Presidency by default, that is, the sudden death of an incumbent, which at once removed a major stumbling block to his administration. Only the Secretary-General of the Party and the Speaker of the House were surviving members of Tubman's first cabinet. Their survival in Tubman's government was attributed to their lack of family and political influence

* Tubman's marriage to Barclay's niece Antoinette Padmore upon resuming the Presidency probably gave Barclay the re-assurance that Tubman would not give him too much trouble.

and their mastery of the art of loyalty to the Chief Executive. They were not likely then to present too much competition to Tolbert's administration. In addition, there was no former President in active political service, while even former Vice-President Simpson had died. Thanks to Tubman, very little trouble was forthcoming from the elite Americo-Liberian families.

In his first eight-year term of office, Tubman had to contend with several opposition parties, one of which was subsequently formed by his sponsor, former President Edwin Barclay, to oppose Tubman. An attempt was made on his life, the only assassination attempt on a Head of State in Liberia since E. J. Roye's assassination in the 1870s. An opposition party was only being rumoured in the Tolbert administration.

Tubman's administration began at the post World War era of economic boom, when much of Africa was strongly under colonial domination. It survived the development of nationalist movements which brought about the independence of Ghana, Guinea, the Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone and the Organization of African Unity. The isolationist strategy from the 19th century to the Barclay Government's policy of Indirect Rule over the interior were subjected to a radical transformation as a result of these changes in the African political arena.

The only external pressure that confronted the Tolbert administration, on the other hand, was the Africanization of its constitution, the Liberian flag, and lifestyle. It was no longer fashionable for Liberians to claim American descent, when Black-Americans themselves had begun searching for their African roots, and questioning

their American heritage.¹ Recourse to American heritage was not likely to endear Liberians to member States of the Organization of African Unity or their immediate neighbours.

Associational participation and personal contacts played an active part in the hiring, promotion and appointments to crucial political positions in Tubman's Liberia due to the administration's concern with loyalty to the President. Only persons of known participation in social, church and party activities were trusted enough to be allowed to move up the political ladder. They held these top positions as long as their loyalty remained unquestioned, which partly explained the short cabinet careers of most of Tubman's government. Out of the ten members of Tubman's original cabinet, only one member, the Postmaster General, survived till Tubman's death in 1971.*

In his drive for loyal supporters to his government, Tubman did not hesitate to incorporate the indigenous groups within the ranks of the True Whig Party. According to a headline in the Liberian Age, this move was seen as a major event in Liberia's history.

It marked for the first time in the history of Liberia the installation of representation of aboriginal Liberians in the Legislature of the Country. It is unique in that never

¹See especially Alex Haley, Roots (Doubleday and Company, 1976). The issue of the Liberian flag was raised by Chief Justice James A. A. Pierre in his "Opening Address for the October A.D. 1975 Term of The Supreme Court" (Monrovia, 13th October, 1975) when he complained that: "... much has been said about changing the flag of Liberia. Some citizens have been in favour of doing so, and others have been against it. Perhaps it might be well that we have a good look at our Flag, and consider what it really represents to the patriotic citizens of our Country As a citizen of this country, I shall never give my consent to change that lone star and eleven stripes" (pp. 4 and 6).

* His loyalty as the longest serving Secretary General of the Party and Grand Master of the Masons contributed significantly to this survival.

before in Liberia has the aboriginal element (sons of the soil) been given representation in the Liberian Government²

This representation was not extended for the creation of a leadership structure to represent hinterland aspirations. It was intended for Tubman's support. The True Whig Party adopted a similar strategy in the 1870s when they quickly assimilated and enfranchised the "Congoes" (liberated Africans from slave ships on their way to America) to oppose the Mulatto-dominated Republican Party. It was also partly as a result of the obsession of the Tubman government with loyalty, that the local political system in Liberia failed to play an important role in Liberian politics (as was the case, for example, in Sierra Leone). Indigenous Liberians and Americo-Liberians in the hinterland even after 1964 were never allowed to develop popular mass support from their local areas for seats in the Legislature. The True Whig Party, under the direct control of the President, had a final say in the nomination of candidates for the Legislature and the Senate. It was concluded in a recent report that "... popular votes and recourse to the masses is not a sure-footed step to political ascendancy, the last word comes from the Machinery, which is ultimately controlled by the President and National Standard Bearer of the True Whig Party in Liberia."³ An articulate leadership structure among the educated indigenous and the Americo-Liberian youth could not develop in Liberia under these conditions.

The traditionally dominant coastal families, such as the Grimes,

² November 15, 1946, pp. 4-5; see also the Program for their qualification.

³ Fieldwork Report (November, 1973).

the Simpsons, the Barclays, the Coopers, the Kings, the Dennises, and the Colemans, suffered great political losses in the Tubman administration, as a result of the recruitment of newer family groups, such as the Tolberts, the DeShields, the Henries and such indigenous families as the Dukulys, Massaquois, the Fahnbullehs and the Does, to positions of political control. It was the duty of the elite families to see to it that none of their members challenged the authority and the position of the President, which could result in a direct confrontation between the President and the family itself. The disappearance of the Colemans, the Barclays, the Nete Sie Brownells from the ranks of the True Whig Party leadership and from top government positions since the 1960s is an indication of the repercussions of such resistance against an incumbent president in Tubman's administration.

Tubman's administration averted many threats against its existence which similar governments were forced to succumb to, partly as a result of its skillful manipulation of factional divisions and political groupings in Liberia and the removal of all props of security and independence from state institutions, so that no given group or organization felt more politically secure than another. Such politics of uncertainty also meant that the hopes and aspirations of the rising indigenous stratum rather than being discouraged and frustrated were, in fact, enkindled by the appointments among their midst of aspirants, such as Momolu Dukuly in 1957 as Secretary of State, together with Nathaniel Massaquoi as Secretary of Public Instruction and Dr. J. T. Togba as Director General of the National Public Health Service. The increasing number of indigenous senior Civil Servants and educators

not only encouraged them to seek more positions in the public sector, but limited any attempt to challenge the system or develop a pressure group against the government.

The problems of the Tolbert administration in its five years of existence are too recent to allow a detailed analysis. However, trends have already emerged in its move towards internal power control. Liberia's negative international image as a dictatorship and Africa's most corrupt State⁴ has provided Tolbert with a platform from which to build his power base in Liberia. By exposing the shortcomings of the previous administration, Tolbert has hoped to gain the respect of the international community and by so doing, that of the Liberians as well. Liberians most likely to appreciate these achievements were not the "Old Guard" of Tubman's supporters, who benefitted both politically and financially from the manner in which the system was run. They were not likely to come from the indigenous chiefdom leadership which was required to demonstrate only verbal loyalty to Tubman to be given free reign in their exploitation of the villagers. Only the educated indigenous groups, the Liberian youth and the expatriate African and non-African elements were likely to appreciate the administration's achievements in this regard. At the same time, both the "Old Guard" and the indigenous Chiefdom leadership were likely to suffer great political and financial losses in the event of socio-political changes.

The dismissal by Tolbert of many cabinet ministers, Paramount

⁴See R. Clower, G. Dalton et al, Growth Without Development. While Liberia was not the only corrupt State in Africa, it did rank among the more corrupt ones. Tolbert's taking advantage of this shortcoming might be comparable to "de-Stalinization" in Russia and the recent criticism of Mao in China.

Chiefs and civil servants for inefficiency, corruption and loss of confidence, left much of the "Old Guard" insecure and critical of Tolbert's government. The suspension of Tubman's Public Relations (PRO) payments to persons who were informing for the State meant loss of income to many Liberians who had come to depend on this activity for their source of income.

At the commencement exercises of Monrovia College in December 1973, Abayomi Cassell, former Attorney General in Tubman's cabinet for thirteen years, revealed a plan to launch an Opposition Party to carry out reforms in the government. This created a major disturbance among the ruling family members, reminiscent of the rift of the 1950s. The most serious political cleavage within the ruling Americo-Liberian family networks occurred in the crisis of 1955, which was the first major threat to the Liberian oligarchy since the nineteenth century confrontation between the Mulatto and the Pure Black Settlers.⁵

The nomination of William V. S. Tubman as presidential candidate for the 1944 elections in Liberia by outgoing President Edwin Barclay created restlessness and resentment among the Monrovia-based family networks who were eagerly expecting the nomination of a more "aristocratic" and politically more qualified Clarence L. Simpson, particularly

⁵An insightful discussion of this confrontation has been made in Tuan Wreh, The Love of Liberty: The Rule of President William V. S. Tubman in Liberia (London: C. Hurst and Company, 1976). See also the Liberian Information Service's The Plot That Failed (Monrovia: The Department of Information and Cultural Affairs, 1959).

as Barclay's plans for the nomination of the weaker candidate backfired when Tubman refused to step down from office after his second term in 1951. According to the secret deal of 1944, Tubman was nominated on the understanding that Simpson would be his running-mate, who would later be promoted to the Presidency when his turn came at the end of Tubman's first eight-year term of office. All this with the supervision and paternal guidance of Edwin Barclay.⁶

In his memoirs, Clarence Simpson commented on the election campaign of 1943 which involved Tubman and himself, that:

... the two of us had of course, agreed that in view of war conditions ... we would not oppose one another at the Party's national convention and risk splitting our national organization

Mr. Tubman's own County of Maryland enthusiastically supported him. On the other hand, some leaders of the party organizations of Montserrado County and Grand Cape Mount warmly supported me, while others supported him.

... At this stage, Senator E. A. Morgan of Grand Bassa took the lead in enlisting the support of "leeward county" partisans for Tubman on the ground that all Presidents since Jos. J. Cheeseman had come from Montserrado County and it was time the country had a President from a leeward county. This argument carried much weight with people who were themselves from coastal counties. My own supporters might legitimately have countered it by arguing that in the tribal and coastal sections of the community it was time to have a President of mixed descent. More ... as Secretary General of the True Whig Party, I had considerable influence and could conceivably have used it to endeavour to secure the nomination at the national caucus

We then went to see President Barclay who, on hearing of our decision, said he was happy we had come to an agreement and that he felt it would be a good thing, at this time to have a President from the leeward county. (*italics mine*).

⁶See C. L. Simpson, The Memoirs of C. L. Simpson (London: The Diplomatic Press and Publishing Company, 1961) and Smith, We Are Obligated: An Interpretive Analysis of Twenty-Five Years of Progressive Leadership (Hamburg: 1969).

... He suggested alternatively that I should become one of the four Associate Justices of the Supreme Court, ... or that I should stand for the Vice-Presidency as Tubman's running mate.⁷

It is also important to note that Opposition parties also contested the 1943 election: The Unit Whig Party led by Senator S. David Coleman and the Democratic Party led by James Cooper who was described by Simpson as "one of the wealthiest men in the country." Cooper's running mate was a wealthy rubber magnate, R. A. Sherman, while Coleman was the son of former President William David Coleman (1896-1900). The impressive "aristocratic" credentials of Presidential candidates at this election made Tubman insignificant by comparison, in view also of the family qualities of his running mate. Robert Smith describes William V. S. Tubman as: "... a small town lawyer and a graduate of a teacher training institute. Besides being a county attorney of Maryland, he has never held any important post in the government other than that of an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court"⁸

With this social handicap against him, Tubman felt most severely restricted in the exercise of his executive prerogatives. He was made to appoint his unsuccessful opponents into his first cabinet, James Cooper as Secretary of Agriculture and S. David Coleman as Secretary of Interior, and Simpson as his Vice-President.

The ruling families' uncertainty about Tubman's ability to execute his Presidential duties increased considerably when he extended

⁷The Memoirs of C. L. Simpson, pp. 236-237.

⁸We Are Obligated, p. 69.

the franchise to the Indigenous-groups from the Liberian hinterland and qualified four Paramount Chiefs as members of the House of Representatives.⁹ The long-standing fears of hinterland takeover of the Liberian political machinery were revived by this constitutional amendment.

The incorporation of the hinterland groups was the first move by the Americo-Liberians to involve the Indigenous-Africans in their power struggles. This strategy was soon adopted by other Americo-Liberian factions. Dihdwo Twe, a well-known Liberian statesman of Kru origin, was approached by a few prominent Monrovia families to form the Reformation Party to contest Tubman's re-election after his first eight-year term in 1951. Not only was Twe unsuccessful but he was accused by Tubman "... of treachery and perfidy against the country." But more revealing was Tubman's statement that "... men like Mr. Twe's civilization and contact with things government are not sufficient to enable them to take control of this hard earned heritage"¹⁰

At the following elections of 1954, Samuel D. Coleman, a former Tubman Cabinet Minister, decided to reorganize the Independent True Whig Party to oppose President Tubman at the polls. In this move he easily received the support of the disappointed former President Edwin Barclay, S. Raymond Horace, Mr. C. Adolphus Richards, an editor of a local newspaper, Mrs. Diana Coleman-Cooper and Mrs. Coleman-Cole, two Coleman relations with marital links to prominent Monrovia

⁹ See complete coverage of this historical event in The Liberian Age (November 15th, 1946), pp. 4-5.

¹⁰ See The Liberian Review, Vols. 1 and 2, and Tuan Wreh, The Love of Liberty ..., Chapter 7.

Americo-Liberian families. Nete Sie Brownell, a former Attorney-General in Edwin Barclay's government and a Grebo by origin was approached to resurrect the then defunct Reformation Party of Dihdwo Twe. In the coalition, Brownell became the running mate to Edwin Barclay.

At the formation of the Reformation Party, the True Whig Party threatened to destroy this party formed by what it termed:

... a group of disgruntled Partisans of the Party -- The True Whig Party, led by Hon. N. S. Brownwell, former Postmaster General who was requested to hand in his resignation by the President; Mr. Jude F. Reeves dismissed Provincial Commissioner; Mr. G. B. A. Johns dismissed Rent Control Officer; Councillor S. C. M. Watkins demanded to resign for cause as Revenue Solicitor; Mr. W. Pitman Kennedy dismissed Chief Clerk of the Interior Department. Hon. W. H. Blaine, octogenarian; former Kroo Governor Koon; Mr. Arthur B. Walker and a few others, mortified and chagrined because of their forced retirement from Government Service have grouped themselves together and in a secret meeting resolved to form a New Political Party under the name and style of Reformation Party of Liberia The Liberian Age is resolved to break up this party: not because it is opposed to the organization of any party in the country, but because the party's purpose is selfish and malicious and is calculated to disturb the smooth operation of our progressive Government.¹¹

The outcome of this division between Tubman and the Monrovia ruling families was both violent and bitter. An attempt on Tubman's life was made by a hired assassin while the re-election of Tubman was legally contested by former President Edwin Barclay.

The failure of the ruling Monrovia families to remove Tubman also spelled their downfall and loss of political and economic influence, merely on a simple Liberian premise, that 'unless you are in

¹¹The Liberian Age, Vol. 5, No. 4 (February 1950). See also Doris A. Banks-Henries, A Biography of President William V. S. Tubman (MacMillan Co., Ltd., 1967), pp. 135-137.

public political or governmental office, your access to channels which bring financial and economic wealth is permanently closed'. Without wealth and office in Monrovia, there can be no political power and influence.

The outcome of this ruling family power struggle was a resounding victory for Tubman and his new allies from the Liberian hinterland, the indigenous Africans. It also meant the political disappearance of the Barclays, the Colemans, the Coopers, among others, throughout the remaining years of the Tubman era. Compromise positions were given from time to time to these former "aristocrats" in the foreign service as ambassadors, consular generals, secretaries of charge d'affaires. The new "aristocrats" were joined by such newcomers as the Tubmans, the Tolberts, the DeShields, the Henries, the Weeks, and the Goodridges, to name a few. Members of the new ruling families were mostly first generation with their leading patriarchs not only in power at the present time but all of them Tubman creations.

As in former times the indigenous African supporters of the Tubman and the Monrovia Family power struggles were never given much share of the political and economic power. While Tubman generously rewarded loyal Liberian indigenous African supporters, he was slow in admitting them to the center of decision and policy making in the party, the fraternal lodges, and in the distribution of economic resources. He, himself, as an Americo-Liberian, felt insecure at the possibility of Indigenous African takeover or development of an Indigenous-Liberian political power bloc which could prove difficult to handle. The Fahnbulleh Treason Trial of 1968 exemplified just such an attempt to destroy the

power base of an Indigenous-Liberian family whose influence and prominence was attained without the benefit of loyalty to Tubman or the patronage of Tubman. The fact that the Fahnbulleh and the Massaquoi -- who became prominent as early as the King's administration of the twenties -- were also being posted to diplomatic missions along with the old ruling families, clearly spelled their share of the fate which threatened the old elite families during Tubman's twenty-seven-year era.¹²

Tubman's politics of loyalty and centralization not only weakened the power base of the "old" elite families, but also gave increased hope for political mobility to the rising Indigenous elite from the Liberian hinterland, who actually witnessed Tubman's masterful political "show-down," which ended in the fall of the former "big families" and the rise of Tubman and the Liberian hinterland.

The transformation of the Liberian interior provinces into counties by an Act of the Legislature in 1964 removed the last political barrier to full participation in the Liberian government for the hinterland regions and also marked the official termination of the policy of "Indirect Rule" which was introduced in the Barclay (Arthur and Edwin's) administrations. It was also the high point of Tubman's "Unification and Integration Policy." This policy, together with "The Open Door

¹²For further discussions of the Fahnbulleh trial, see The Liberian Star (July 1968); J. Gus Liebenow, The Evolution of Privilege (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969), pp. 215-216; and Martin Lowenkopf, Politics in Liberia: The Conservative Road to Development (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1976), pp. 163-166. When Tolbert took over the Government of Liberia, he not only released Fahnbulleh from prison, but also promoted him to a cabinet position as Assistant Minister, and later to Superintendent of Grand Cape Mount County.

Policy" did much to extricate Liberia from the isolationism and "inner-directed politics" of the previous government of Edwin Barclay.

The impact of the "Unification" and "Open Door" policies on the Liberian economy were phenomenal. The Liberian economic growth after 1950 became second only to that of Japan's.¹³ This meant not only unlimited social support from the hinterland chiefdoms for Tubman, but also an extensive amount of financial resources from the revenues generated by the mining concessions to guarantee total independence from the wealthy Liberian "aristocratic" family opponents of Tubman.

The growth of the Liberian economy (even without the development of its distributive sectors), and the political incorporation of the hinterland, marked the beginning of the end of the ruling family hegemony. A hegemony whose mainstay and basis was hinged largely on a small and financially wealthy plantation economy, which allowed for easy domination and control by a cartel of family networks. Ruling family clusters often lost their politico-economic influences in an expanding and much diversified economy, which permitted greater participation of foreign investor and merchant groups. As a result, the families' control over the social, economic and political rewards of the new economy was significantly reduced, making them more vulnerable to political challenge by the rising groups.¹⁴

¹³For a comprehensive analysis, see Robert Clower, George Dalton et al, Growth Without Development.

¹⁴An interesting analysis of elite formation in industrial societies is made by Norman Birnbaum in The Crisis of Industrial Society (London: Oxford University Press, 1969).

The location of the new mining industries in the hinterland of Liberia, together with the resultant infrastructural development in the form of all-weather roads, schools, hospitals and various social facilities, provided the hinterland with a viable socio-economic alternative, and emancipation from Americo-Liberian coastal plantations.

Occupational alternatives to the subsistence rice farming of the Central West Atlantic region were provided as early as 1926 by the mineral concessionaires in this region. The Firestone Plantations were established in 1926 in the predominantly Kpelle area; the Bomi-Hills Iron Ore (the Liberian Mining Company) was opened in 1951 in Vai and De territories; the LAMCO Iron Ore Mines were later established in 1963 in predominantly Mano and Gio areas; the Bong Iron Ore Mines (DELIMCO) and the Mano River Mine (the National Iron Ore Company), both began operation in a Gola, Mande, Mandingo and Kpelle area; while the Wologisi Range Iron Ore Mines were being explored in the largely Kissi, Gbande and Loma territories.

The establishment of concessions in the Liberian hinterland also stimulated infrastructural improvements of roads and public facilities, linking the interior regions with Monrovia. Prior to 1944 no public roads were available northwest of Careysburg (about 27 miles from Monrovia) to the hinterland; by 1949 there were 220 miles of road throughout Liberia, which was further expanded to 900 miles in 1961, and 2,400 miles in 1969.

The expansion of the Liberian interior and the extension of infrastructural facilities opened the hinterland to new social and political ideas from neighbouring West African states; the most

important being that of African nationalism during the early stages of independence in Africa. Among the first three African states to attain independence and international attention were Ghana (1957), Guinea (1958) and Nigeria (1960), all West African neighbours of Liberia.

The repercussions of the victories of African nationalism against colonialism were deeply felt by the Americo-Liberian ruling stratum, whose colonial hegemony over the indigenous population of Liberia was seriously threatened. The removal of such ethnic labels as "Americo-Liberian -- Civilized and Uncivilized," "Tribal" and "Country-Boys" from conventional public usage by Tubman, partly reflected the Americo-Liberian elite's awareness of the threat of African nationalism. Similarly, the hasty appointment of prominent loyal Indigenous-Liberians as department secretaries and deputy secretaries in the State Department, the Department of Education and the Department of the Interior, attempted to counter any possible criticism of exclusion of the Indigenous-Liberians from political office.

These criticisms were already being heard from the Liberian youth, whom Tubman denounced as:

... impressionable and irresponsible ones who seem to be still obsessed with the idea of tribalism and have fallen easy prey to propaganda and indoctrination that is secretly and stealthily being disseminated amongst them -- that the land and territory of Liberia belong to them and that they have been deprived of their heritage; that the only way to retrieve the situation is to engage in subversive activities, treason and sedition and overthrow the Government by force and murder, establish a socialist system of Government, expropriate the properties of those who by their many years of labour, sacrifices, toil and sweat, acquired their possessions and then distribute these properties among themselves.

This doctrine is being disseminated by certain foreign agencies and it is finding its way into some of the schools of our nation, particularly Cuttington College, the College

of West Africa, the University of Liberia and other schools. The authorities of these institutions are or should be aware of the infiltration of this ideology¹⁵

This reaction to criticism against Liberian "settler-colonialism" revealed Tubman's sad realization of the unexpected outcome of his policies of incorporation of the hinterland and its opening to foreign investment.

Tubman's policies had sowed the seeds of discontent and contradiction in Liberia. The emergence of a young stratum of educated technocrats from the hinterland groups presented great concern among the ruling family elite, who resented the educated technocrat's takeover of an increasing share of middle-level positions in the civil service, the military, the police force and the educational sector. Above all, Tubman himself, seriously underestimated the impact on the Liberian youth of his active participation in the formation of the Organization of African Unity with radicals of African nationalism -- Ahmed Sekou Toure and Kwame Nkrumah -- since the July 1959 first West African Summit Conference at Sanniquellie-Liberia. By active participation in African affairs, Tubman not only endorsed the African nationalist ideology, but also underlined the contradiction between his "Unification Policy" and the ruling family colonial domination of the Liberian political economy.

¹⁵Tubman's address at the opening of the Third Biennial Unification Council, Kolahun, Lofa County (14th February, 1963), in E. Reginald Townsend, The Official Papers of William V. S. Tubman (Longman's Green and Co. Ltd., 1968), pp. 222-223.

The restlessness of the Indigenous-Liberian youth towards the end of the Tubman administration increased sharply during Tolbert's first four-year term of office, partly because of great expectations for radical change as a result of Tubman's death, which was received with joyful relief by many Liberians at home and abroad, and partly because of Tolbert's promises of a new Liberia "... a wholesome Functioning Society where people are totally involved, where merit, not favouritism; productivity, not influence and connections; selflessness not selfish individualism, form the criteria for real distinction."¹⁶

In this statement, Tolbert not only condemned Tubman's corruption and maladministration, but also gave the youth the impression that family contacts, masonic affiliation and voluntary associational friendship networks were no longer prerequisites for social, economic and political mobility. As a result, the youth hailed him as a "Liberator" and regarded his coming to power as the period of true independence for Liberia -- what a Monrovia journalist called the "Year of the Revolution because ... many Liberians see the direction which Tolbert is taking primarily in terms of salvation from the 'Yoke' of the Tubman

¹⁶"A nationwide broadcast by President Tolbert on the policy of his administration on September 10th, 1971," in The Presidential Papers: First Year of the Administration of President William R. Tolbert, Jr. (Monrovia: The Press Division of the Executive Mansion, 1972), p. 154. A new policy of 'Humanistic Capitalism' was outlined by President Tolbert in his Sixth Annual Message to the Second Session of the 48th Legislature (Monrovia: MICAT Press, 1977), which he claimed: "... accords to the individual the right to acquire legitimately, through his own initiatives and without restriction, as much as possible, and likewise, the right to enjoy such lawful possessions without hindrance or deprivation in any manner." (p. 52).

administration"¹⁷

The "honeymoon" period of Tolbert's coming into power was short-lived as the youth began to see through the new administration's superficial promises and its commitment to the maintenance of the old practices of Tubman. What the Liberian youth failed to perceive in Tolbert's slogans and policies of "total involvement" and "self-sufficiency," was his administration's manipulation of the aspirations of the youth and the technocratic Indigenous elite in his struggle to grab political power from the "old guard" of the Tubman regime, while establishing a power base for himself among the youth, whose numerical strength have often been above the fifty percentile point of the demographic census figures.¹⁸

The gains which the rising indigenous groups had attained during the Tubman era, gave them greater security and determination to challenge the oligarchic control of the political system by the ruling families. In this connection, the institutes of higher learning became centers of resistance and outspoken criticism of the status quo in Liberia, while student groups and the youth took the lead in exposing existing contradictions in the socio-political arena.

¹⁷ See Bill Frank, "Liberia: The Year of the Revolution." Printed at the Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism (July 27, 1972).

¹⁸ In January 1972, Tolbert raised the Bureau of Youth to the rank of a Ministry under the Ministry of Labour and Youth. He adopted his popular reference to the Liberian youth as his "precious jewels" and lowered the voting age from twenty-one to eighteen, while also promising to create nine seats in the Legislature for the youth.

The foremost contradictions to receive the attention of the radical groups were those found in the Liberian Constitution itself, which were pointed out by Dr. Abeodu Jones, a Vai-Liberian historian, now Postmaster General, in her Sesquicentennial address in January 1972 in Monrovia.¹⁹ In his July 26th independence oration, Dr. Edward Kesselly, a Loma-Liberian, now Minister of Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism, also cautioned that:

... in the spirit of the time, our present motto 'The Love of Liberty Brought Us Here' should be replaced with the motto, 'Unity, Justice, Equality'. For the present motto implies that only those who came here are citizens and not those who were here.²⁰

These observations were finally acknowledged by President Tolbert two years later in his Third Annual Message in 1974, when he agreed that the "... need to make these changes in our Constitution and also the Flag, Motto and National Anthem is imperative, because, as can be readily observed, they do not correctly and appropriately reflect our African heritage"²¹ As a result, he appointed a National Commission to study the matter and make its recommendations and report to the Legislature.

A more serious contradiction found in the Liberian Constitution

¹⁹Dr. Abeodu Jones, "Criteria For the Future." Sesquicentennial Address, in Monrovia on the 7th January, 1972.

²⁰Dr. Edward Kesselly, "Five Points For the Future." An Oration marking the 125th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, in Sanniquellie on the 26th July, 1972.

²¹Dr. William R. Tolbert, Jr., Third Annual Message delivered to The Third Session of the 47th Legislature, January 23, 1974 at the E. J. Roye Building, Monrovia, Liberia.

at this time was one pertaining to the purchase of land, which was open only to Liberian citizens and "... none but negroes or persons of Negro descent" Article V, Section 14, however, excluded Indigenous-Liberians from citizenship and ownership in its provision that:

the purchase of any land by any citizen or citizens from the aborigines of this country for his or their own use, or for the benefit of others or estates or estates in fee simple, shall be considered null and void to all intents and purposes.²²

Although the land purchasing provision of Article V was subsequently repealed, a Liberian senior at the University of Liberia in 1974 remained unconvinced about the sincerity of the administration, because of the introduction during the constitutional controversy of an Act of the Legislature to amend Section 52 of the Penal Law to enlarge the crime of sedition, in order to eliminate "tribalism, sectionalism or parochialism." He felt, along with others, that the amendment was also aimed at the critics of the Liberian political system and opponents of the government, particularly Counsellor Abayomi Cassell, who threatened in a December address to organize "eighteen determined and fearless men, two from each of the nine political subdivisions of the country" to form a new political party.²³

It was the bitter criticism of a young Kru-Liberian reporter,

²²"The Purchase of Public Land," in Dr. William R. Tolbert, Jr., Third Annual Message, pp. 86-87.

²³C. Abayomi Cassell, "As I See It," a Commencement Address delivered at the 1973 Exercises of Monrovia College, December 11th, 1973. Bitter reaction against this address followed from a number of senior Government and Party officials (see The Liberian Age, Tuesday, December 18th, 1973, p. 2; Wednesday, December 19th, p. 5; Friday, December 21st, 1973, pp. 2, 5 and 6).

Rufus M. Darpoh, in the Liberian Star of March 19th, 1974, which finally brought down the rage of the government. Darpoh was immediately fired from his position following the publication of his article and charged by the Senate and the Legislature under the very Act he had criticized.

In this controversial article, Rufus Darpoh deplored the suppression of public opinion, pointing out that the legislators had gone so far as to deprive even themselves of the right to express independent views, and their constituents' right to redress government shortcomings. In addition, he was appalled by the sectionalist tone of the amendment which,

... smells of tribalism or sectionalism because it differentiates between a Liberian and a native or an aborigine. Who is the Liberian and who is the native? Does this not conflict with the Integration Policy?

It says 'Any Liberian who has any intercourse with any native town or tribe or with any inhabitant thereof in revolt against the Government of the Republic ...' is guilty of sedition.²⁴

When a contradiction similar to that criticized by Darpoh was exposed in the Ministry of Local Government, by the Americo-Liberian dominated Urban Youth Council in their Executive Mansion Conference of April 1973, no attempts to condemn the Council were made. The Urban Youth Council went so far as to recommend in their report,²⁵ the changing of the title of a Ministry of Local Government's bureau of

²⁴Rufus Marmah Darpoh, "Pulling the Rug," The Liberian Age, Tuesday, March 19th, 1974. The Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism reacted strongly against Darpoh's article in its defence of the government's position in The Liberian Age, Friday, March 22nd, 1974.

²⁵See Report of the Executive Mansion National Conference on Youth, held in Monrovia, April 11th-15th, 1973.

"Native and Tribal Affairs." This title, to them, suggested sectional-ist and discriminatory connotations.

Darpoh's article appeared at the height of a crisis for the Liberian Government, generated largely by family groups and students who were getting impatient with the slow process of change in the Tolbert administration. The confrontation between Albert Porte and Stephen Tolbert in 1974 brought the crisis situation to a head. Albert Porte's open condemnation of Stephen Tolbert's Mesurado Group of Companies' takeover of a number of business firms operating in Liberia resulted in a series of law suits and court battles, which provided a convenient arena for the youth and disgruntled family groups to demonstrate against the Tolbert government. The conflict quickly polarized into the pro-Stephen Tolbert supporters and the Albert Porte's "Citizens of Liberia in Defense of Albert Porte" (COLIDAP).²⁶

Albert Porte received the support of the students, the youth and a number of supporters who were alarmed at the persecution of Porte by the Tolberts. Mass demonstrations and rallies in support of Porte's cause were organized in Monrovia with a defense fund opened to meet the legal demands of the case. COLIDAP became the organizing group behind Porte's trials. Such actions were unheard of in Liberia as most forms of public demonstration against an official of the government had

²⁶ See Albert Porte, "Liberianization or Gobbling Business" (September, 1974) mimeographed. See also Samuel Jackson, "Stephen Tolbert Dies," The Revolution: An Official Publication of the Progressive Alliance of Liberia, Vol. 1, No. 1 (June-July, 1975).

stopped with the 1955 crisis in Monrovia.²⁷ The death, by a plane crash of Stephen Tolbert on the night of April 28, 1975, brought the crisis to a close, leaving Tolbert and the ruling family oligarchy greatly weakened.

The Albert Porte-Stephen Tolbert confrontation was at bottom a family faction fight, involving the West Indian origin Weeks against the American origin Tolbert-Dennis-Cooper families. As a West Indian descendant, Albert Porte found it easier to rally his support alongside the Weeks rather than the Tolberts, on an issue which involved the threatened takeover of a Weeks owned and operated business concern, "Auriole Enterprises Inc." by the Mesurado Group of Companies. The takeover of the African Fruit Company, co-owned by the Ernest Dennis family, did not attract Porte's attention.

However, the conflict of the Weeks against the Tolberts, once taken over by Albert Porte -- a known political agitator from the days of President C. D. B. King in the twenties to the present -- became the battling arena for other factions. The "Old Guard," led by former Attorney-Generals Abayomi Cassell and J. F. Chesson, together with Natty B. Davis, Webster Wade Appleton, Sr. and J. Emmanuel Berry, formed a five-man defense team for Albert Porte, while the youth and student groups, led by executives and founders of MOJA -- Movement of Justice in Africa -- Dr. Amos Sawyer, Dr. Togba Nah Tipoteh and Dew Mason, all

²⁷ For details of events of the Albert Porte crisis, see The Revelation: A Social, Political, Economic and Cultural Monthly Special Edition November 1974 (three issues); and Vol. 3, No. 1 (January 1975); and The Liberian Star, Friday, November 1, 1974, p. 4.

university professors, organized the Citizens of Liberia in Defense of Albert Porte (COLDAP). The Revelation, a monthly newsletter printed by Monrovia youths and edited by Vittorio Jesus Weeks, son of Dr. Rocheforte L. Weeks, co-owner of the Auriole Enterprises, covered the Albert Porte side of the confrontation.

Stephen Tolbert, on the other hand, had the entire machinery of government on his side, together with a team of nine lawyers, among whom were such well known politicians as Senator Joseph Finley, Senator Alfred Raynes, Representative M. Fahnbulleh Jones and Counsellors McDonald Acolatse and Stephen Dunbar.

Albert Porte was subsequently found guilty of a libellous offense and charged a quarter of a million dollars fine, while the leading members of COLIDAP, including Sawyer, Tipoteh and Mason, were dismissed from their jobs and threatened with either assassination or kidnapping. The Revelation was banned and its editors and reporters fined a total of \$17,000 or a jail sentence. They chose the jail sentence, but were bailed out by their families.

Radical Liberian youths often took advantage of the disturbances which occurred in Monrovia from time to time to test their organizational ability among the masses, and to voice their dissatisfaction with the socio-political situation existing in Liberia. The support they often gave to individuals or groups under unjust prosecution by the State greatly irritated the ruling families, who failed to see the purpose of the restlessness of the youth against constituted authority. In the trial of Henry Fahnbulleh in 1968, and the treason trial against Prince Brown and his associates in 1973, the youth were strongly

represented and did not hesitate to disrupt the court by jeering and booing down proceedings.

Indeed, students who attended the trial were warned that they were guilty of disloyalty in their cheering of the defendant and booing of the prosecution witnesses. It was apparent that the government was alarmed²⁸

The Albert Porte case was merely the most flagrant case of injustice and contradictions that the Liberian youth have had to witness.

The youth reacted angrily towards the Tolbert government over the Albert Porte prosecution, largely because of the continued harassment of certain university professors and university students who had become brave enough to question the actions of Dr. Advertus Hoff, Rector of the University of Liberia since his appointment as Rector on March 24th, 1972. Dr. Hoff's disregard of the rights and privileges of his faculty, staff and students started a confrontation against him which ended three years later with his removal from the University of Liberia in October 1975 and the appointment of his antagonist, an Indigenous-Liberian sociologist, Dr. J. Bernard Blamo, as his successor.

In the induction address for Dr. J. Bernard Blamo as President of the University of Liberia, Tolbert remarked that:

Under academic freedom, divergent views are necessary and should be welcomed. But the university should never become a place for uncompromising dissensions, irresponsible action or a breeding ground for disorder, disrespect, disruption, sectionalism, tribalism and national division.²⁹ (Italics mine).

²⁸Gus Liebenow, Liberia: Evolution of Privilege, p. 216.

²⁹Remarks by the President of Liberia, Dr. William R. Tolbert, Jr., as visitor of the University of Liberia, on the occasion of the induction into office of Dr. John Bernard Blamo as President of the University, October 22nd, 1975.

* Hoff was a cousin to Tolbert, whose mother was also a Hoff, see Robert Smith, His Challenge is Mankind: A Political Portrait of William R. Tolbert (1972), p. 63, 65-70.

Tolbert's address gave further credence to the pressure exerted on his decision by the opponents of Dr. Advertus Hoff, who at this time included a cross section of the university faculty, among them, Dr. Antoinette Grimes-Sherman, then Dean of the W. V. S. Tubman Teacher's College, Dr. Togba Nah Tipoteh, the radical chairman of the Economics Department, and Dr. Amos Sawyer of the Political Science Department.

The threatened resignation of Dean Antoinette Grimes-Sherman, following Hoff's refusal to grant her an overdue sabbatical leave, brought the crisis to a climax. While the dismissal of Tipoteh in the early stages of this confrontation was followed by little disturbances, other than written protests to the Board of Trustees and the President, the resignation of Dr. Grimes-Sherman could not be easily overlooked by the Board of Trustees³⁰ and the President, since this immediately embroiled the President in another "big" family conflict.

As daughter of Louis Arthur Grimes, of West Indian origin and a former Chief Justice, after whom the University of Liberia Law School was named, Dr. Antoinette Sherman's resignation became a showdown between the Tolbert family and the ruling families of West Indian origin. This confrontation coincided with the Weeks-Stephen Tolbert

³⁰The Board of Trustees itself was made up of members of the ruling families, who also constituted the leadership structure of the True Whig Party. The Board's President was Richard A. Henries, the Speaker of the House of Representatives and Legal Advisor for the T.W.P.; the Secretary was William E. Dennis, who was also General Treasurer of the T.W.P.; while the Treasurer was the notorious Frank E. Tolbert, President Tolbert's elder brother and President Pro-Tempore of the Liberian Senate. The President of the Republic acted as the Chairman of the Board ex-officio in his capacity as visitor of the University.

controversy. In addition, Dr. Antoinette Grimes-Sherman's brother had become unpopular with the Tolberts when in 1971 he attempted to snatch the Presidency from Tolbert. As Secretary of State in the Tubman administration, J. Rudolph Grimes had served as Acting President of Liberia on many occasions, and was seen as Tubman's logical successor by some political analysts of Liberia.³¹

The death of Stephen Tolbert, which brought to a close the Albert Porte and the Weeks family dispute against the Tolbert owned Mesurado Group of Companies, left the President in a much weakened position for yet another Tolbert family instigated faction fight against a rival ruling Americo-Liberian family. To avert such an energy draining confrontation, Tolbert recapitulated to the anti-Hoff forces at the University of Liberia by removing its Rector, Dr. Advertus Hoff and transferring him to the Ministry of Education as its new head.

The fractionalization of the Americo-Liberian oligarchy during the Tubman administration discussed above, merely represented a successful attempt by one faction -- the Tubman group -- to consolidate its political power within the Liberian arena at the expense of the older and more established Monrovia family elites -- the so-called "Rock-Boys." The recruitment of the Indigenous-Liberians to

³¹ See Liebenow, Evolution of Privilege, pp. 155-158; and Martin Lowenkopf, Politics in Liberia (Hoover Institution Press, 1976), p. 110.

consolidate Tubman's position in the power struggle was neither a new strategy nor an attempt to lift the class barriers which traditionally separated the Indigenous-Liberians from the Americo-Liberians.

The emergence of a technocratic stratum among the Indigenous-Liberians in the course of this struggle was more by accident than by the design of the ruling family oligarchy in Liberia.³² In fact, an incipient technocratic stratum from the hinterland groups could never have emerged without the help of the divisive contradictions which weakened the Americo-Liberian oligarchy in their twenty-year power struggles between 1930 and 1950.

With the Monrovia family elites finally out of the political power struggle, the new elites created by Tubman, now in control of the state apparatus, found themselves in direct line of confrontation and challenge from various groups who were still denied access to the means and privileges of governance. It was only a matter of time after Tubman's passage before open confrontation threatened the new Americo-Liberian ruling family class. The student disturbances during the first term of Tolbert's administration began the first wave of direct confrontation against the governing classes from the 1972 student strike against Dr. Advertus Hoff -- Rector of the University of Liberia and cousin to President Tolbert -- to the challenge by students and youths against Minister of Finance, Stephen Tolbert's harassment of Albert Porte in 1975.

³²The emergence of the technocratic stratum of the Indigenous-Liberians is further discussed in Randle Nelsen and Stephen Hlophe, "Education and Politics in Liberia and the United States: A Socio-Economic Comparison of Colony and Colonizer," Umoja: A Scholarly Journal of Black Studies, New Series, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Spring 1977), pp. 55-71.

CHAPTER 7

THE BEGINNINGS OF CLASS CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE POLITICAL RULING CLASS AND THE TECHNOCRATIC STRATUM

In recent African political struggles, the ideological apparatus of education and the 'intelligentsia' has played a crucial role in social change. The African colonial state apparatus faced its strongest confrontation from the ranks of the educated groups. Their successful leadership of the nationalist movements brought down colonial control in Africa and introduced the independent state apparatus. Similarly, the theocratic control of Ethiopia by Emperor Haile Selassie and the Amharic aristocracy was systematically and persistently challenged by the Ethiopian Student Movement. The successful mobilization of the peasants and the Imperial Bodyguard of the Emperor contributed to the downfall of Haile Selassie and the aristocracy. According to John Markakis:

... the only group within the modernizing sector to manifest overt and sustained opposition to the regime is the student group, led by the university students of Addis Ababa. The radicalization of the students is a recent, yet swift process that caught the government by surprise and put it on the defensive¹

¹John Markakis, Ethiopia: Anatomy of a Traditional Polity (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), p. 358. See also Addis Hiwet, Ethiopia: From Autocracy to Revolution, Occasional Publication No. 1, Review of African Political Economy (London, 1975), Chapter 5; and John Markakis and Nega Ayele, Class and Revolution in Ethiopia (London: Onyx Press for the Review of African Political Economy, 1976).

An interesting parallel to the Liberian situation was that the Ethiopian student force also emerged after the Second World War. The educated stratum of both countries had a similar period of formation.

Any developments then in the educational sector having possible repercussions on the political arena in Liberia should merit serious evaluation, in view of the impact of the educated stratum on social change in Africa in recent times. The underdevelopment of a strong labour movement in Liberia and the lack of a peasant organization in the hinterland leaves the educational arena as the most important institution for political change in Liberia at the present time. Signs of challenge against the ruling family stratum and attempts at the creation of a leadership structure for Indigenous-Liberian workers and peasants are beginning to surface in the disturbances at institutions of higher education in Liberia.

The strategy of involving members of ruling Americo-Liberian families in confrontations against the governing stratum in Liberia has been frequently resorted to by the Indigenous technocratic radicals who were often at the bottom of most of these struggles. University student strikes and demonstrations, since the Hoff administration in 1972, often turned into pitched battles between the authorities and the children of the ruling families, who were placed into conspicuous leadership positions by the predominantly Indigenous-Liberian student body during periods of crisis. In the May 1972 student strike at the University of Liberia, a public statement was made by the Student Association, petitioning President Tolbert to redress their grievances against Dr. Advertus Hoff whose "... policies have created an atmosphere of fear,

tension and intolerance with adverse effect on the climate of an Institution of Higher learning ... and exemplified in every degree a dictatorial and reign of terror attitude in the administration of his office"² This statement, however, was not signed by the Indigenous-Liberian students who had drafted it and had instigated the strike, but by students from elite Americo-Liberian families who made up the committee for the statement. Among these were George Dunbar Knuckles, as Secretary; Joseph Dennis, Esther Richards, C. Walker Brumskine, and Seward Cooper, as members; and Willard Russell and Amos C. Monger as Chairpersons.

The launching of the "radical" bulletin, Revelation in June 1973 by Monrovia youths, and the founding of the Movement for Justice in Africa (MOJA), a radical youth organization on March 21st, 1973 pushed the Liberian student movement a step further. MOJA and the Revelation were established in the same year and owed their existence to the radicalizing influence of some Indigenous-Liberian faculty at the University of Liberia and the dominance of the student body by students from the Liberian interior. The faculty members involved in the organization of these movements, were also active in other anti-establishment demonstrations which developed over the issues of the legalization of gambling, under the organization of "Citizens of Liberia Against Gambling" in July 1974; "Citizens of Liberia in Defense of Albert Porte" in September 1974; and in a number of demonstrations and exposures of

²A statement of the Student Association of the University of Liberia to Dr. William R. Tolbert, Jr., President of the Republic of Liberia (May 24th, 1972).

Liberian business dealings with South Africa and the secret visit to Liberia of John Vorster of the Republic of South Africa. The leadership of the movements, however, was dominated by the sons of the Weeks, the Coopers, the Russells, the Brandys, the Cassells, the Knuckles and other leading families.

The difference between this type of family mobilization by the radical Indigenous-Liberian technocrats of the Tolbert era, and that of the early Tubman, was their active manipulation and control by the Indigenous groups, as opposed to the manipulation of the radical Indigenous supporters by Americo-Liberian ruling family factions in the forties and fifties. A Nete Sie Brownell and a Didhwo Twe in the 1940s and 1950s could only be effective by operation through already established Americo-Liberian organizations, in which the Indigenous reformers were more liable to be co-opted to goals and objectives which were beneficial to the ruling families rather than the Indigenous-Liberians as such. Tipoteh, Dew Mason and Khona Khasu, on the other hand, created their own organizations in which ruling family factions were being manipulated for the cause of their movements. They gained considerable influence among the youth and the Liberian masses as a result, and are increasingly becoming a serious opposition to the ruling groups in Liberia at the present time.

The radicalization of the most active and highly feared member of the Indigenous technocrats, Dr. Togba Nah Tipoteh (alias Rudolph Roberts) began after his return from the United States in 1971 where he completed a doctoral degree in Economics and was requested by President Tubman to return to the country for a position as Chairman

and later Dean of the College of Business and Public Administration (a newly formed faculty of the University). In 1972, when the Dean of the Business College was appointed, Dr. Tipoteh was overlooked. A member of the ruling Americo-Liberian families and the President of the Bank of Liberia, Romeo Horton, was made Dean instead.

Tipoteh's disappointment was further aggravated by the deception of the warm welcome he had received from the Monrovia community after his return to Liberia which had given him the impression of assured mobility to the top. He became the popular Liberian national tennis champion, an active member of the YMCA, the Rotary Club, the Junior Chamber of Commerce, the Circle Club and was even voted "Bachelor of the Year" in 1972 by the powerful "Crowd 18."³ He was well on his way to assimilation into the ruling family oligarchy, thanks also to his father's adoption by an Americo-Liberian family and rise to the position of Auditor General and 33rd Degree Mason. For a Godfather, Tipoteh had no less a person than Hon. McKinley DeShield, the Secretary General of the True Whig Party and the then Grand Master of the Masons in Liberia. At this time Rudolph Roberts (later Tipoteh) had the family, associational, academic and occupational advantages which had carried aspiring individuals into the political top of the Liberian hegemony in the past.

Tipoteh's disillusionment with the Americo-Liberian ruling stratum and the socio-political system as a result of the many

³He was also named "Man of the Year, 1973" by the staff and editors of Revelation, "... for his devotion, his fight for freedom, liberty and equality, his love for the truth" The Revelation, Vol. 2 #1 (March-April, 1974), pp. 7-12.

contradictions he had encountered, brought him into frequent conflicts with the government.* He was dismissed from his position as Economic Advisor to the President after a quarrel with his boss, Mr. Frank Stewart, the Director of the Budget. He experienced some problems with his Dean, Romeo Horton, and the President of the University, Dr. Hoff which resulted in his dismissal from the university on more than one occasion, but was saved each time by the intervention of the students, the faculty and his Godfather, McKinley DeShield. Each rebuttal made Tipoteh more adamant in his fight against the Americo-Liberian dominated political system, which he rejected even in the name he carried, which he changed from Rudolph Roberts, when he returned to Liberia in 1971, to Togba Nah Roberts throughout 1973 and finally to what he claimed was his original Kru family name, Togba Nah Tipoteh since 1974.

Although the then Dean Zamba Liberty of the University of Liberia felt that Togba Nah was largely treated as belonging to the group of Indigenous persons already accepted by the ruling families, and his persecution merely an attempt to bring him closer to the Americo-Liberian stratum, it still seemed doubtful at that time, in view of the Albert Porte-Steve Tolbert fiasco, that the ruling families did not regard Tipoteh as a dangerous radical threat to Americo-Liberian hegemony. He was singled out as the worst enemy of the State, and according to a statement by President Tolbert in December 1974, "trouble makers are enemies of the State and all enemies of the State must be destroyed!" Khona Khasu was arrested shortly thereafter and sent to the infamous Bella Yella prison camp after being mistaken for Tipoteh -- at the

*In his public lectures and publications in the Revelation and other newspapers Tipoteh was outspoken in his criticism of the Liberian Government.

alleged instruction of Stephen Tolbert who had been rumored to have sought the removal of Tipoteh. When Stephen Tolbert's forces discovered the mistake, Mr. Khona Khasu was released, but not without some rough treatment and shaving a figure of a cross on his hair from back to front, and from his right to his left ear.⁴

It is difficult at this stage to determine whether Tipoteh's frustrations were representative of those of other Indigenous-Liberian youths, some of whom had displayed solidarity to Tipoteh's struggle against the status quo; or that he was accorded a charismatic role of leadership which had been lacking in Liberia since Diahwo Twe's in the 1950s. It is more likely, however, that Tipoteh had assumed the role of the people's spokesman so as to criticize the Tolbert administration's failure to bring about the radical socio-political changes which were so eagerly expected shortly after the end of Tubman's twenty-seven year regime.⁵ Tipoteh was perhaps thrown into this politically dangerous path of attacking the government by his fellow Indigenous technocratic group, operating out of the University of Liberia and symbolized by the "Movement for Justice in Africa" (MOJA) and the newsletter, Revelation, with the sponsorship of the anti-Tolbert "Old Guard," led by Cassell and

⁴ See Revelation Extra-ordinary, Vol. #1 (November 1974); The Revelation, Vol. 3 #1 (January 1975); and Ezekiel Johnson Cooper's Letter to the Editor in The Revelation, Vol. 1, #1 (June-July 1975), p. 5. No public evidence was provided for this rumour, but many informants seemed to have believed it.

⁵ See Bill Frank, "Liberia: The Year of the Revolution"; in which he explains the coming of the Tolbert Government as "... a revolution that is inspired by a strong determination to lift any people from lower heights to "higher heights" /and/ ... also a change of attitudes and a re-orientation to a completely new modus operandi" (pp. 2-3).

Chesson and supported by Anglican Bishop Browne (of Kru origin) and political activist, Albert Porte.

As a result of the organizational tactics of this pressure group, a number of active youth and mass movements appeared in Monrovia from time to time over controversial issues. From the events of the two-year period ending in 1975 (see above), it would seem that this counter-movement against the ruling families' political control had been surprisingly effective.

The most significant repercussion of the Tipoteh movement against the ruling family elite was its impact on the youth from the hinterland of Liberia, who for the first time since the Nimley War of 1930, began organizing openly against the Americo-Liberian hegemony and making public critical statements against the Americo-Liberian domination of the social system.⁶

A series of bitter letters addressed to President Tolbert appeared in Monrovia in 1975 with copies to Generals Henry Korboi Johnson (Chief of the Armed Forces), Biyan W. Kezzelly of Lofa County, the Cabinet, the Special Presidential Commission, the Superintendent of Lofa County (Sumo Jones), Bishop Browne, Order of the Holy Cross in Voinjama, the United Nations Headquarters, the Doyen of the Diplomatic Corps, the Ambassadors and the Liberian Star and Liberian Age newspapers.

In the first letter dated May 7th, 1975, the writer who signed

⁶Liebenow reported subdued expressions of dislike for the Americo-Liberian hegemony in the graffiti found on public toilets and buildings, as early as 1968. Very little direct attacks against Americo-Liberians as such were made prior to 1971. See Liebenow, p. 217 (footnote 5).

himself as Frederick Korvah of Voinjama, Lofa County, revealed that:

... A gem of loitering intelligentsia wishes to campaign for the Legislature but you American exslaves prefer our unlettered Representatives (Willie Bellah, Jusu Dunor, Mama Dukuly in Lofa County and Candidate Bai Dordor of Cape Mount, etc. who constitute the majority, so that they can always support your political iniquities because they are literally blind.

.....
... Since 1846, our Government has never encouraged nor allowed College graduates, in particular, Aborigine College graduates, to enlist in our Army unless illiterates, 8th Grade and unqualified high school students, including Generals Henry Korboi Johnson, Biyan W. Kesselly, Lt. Colonels Stephen J. Koffah, James A. Sumo, etc.; as a result the Army hesitates to attempt coup d'etat and assume the reins of Government due to its intellectual incompetence.

.....
... The Americo-Liberian and his Banks (Bank of Liberia, Bank for Development and Investment) are getting richer and richer. In spite of the 153 years socio-politico and economic injustices, our Army and Intellectuals keep silent, imbibe cane juice, chase prostitutes, then go to deep slumber. Our stupid Generals sit down unconcerned and permit our sesquicentennial Americo-Liberian Sire to steal all our money, all our land, industries and companies (e.g. African Fruit Company, etc.) and do nothing.⁷

Following the much publicized case of counterfeiting United States dollars by certain members of the ruling families, who were subsequently arrested and charged, Mr. Korvah distributed his second letter addressed to President Tolbert with copies made to the same individuals and institutions as in the first letter, and dated October 24th, 1975. In this letter (reproduced extensively below), Korvah charged that:

⁷ In analysing this research data, it must be borne in mind that no one in Liberia has as yet been able to identify the writer of the open letters to the President, nor the immediate motives of the wide distribution of these letters. The message, however, seemed clear and generally accepted by most Indigenous Liberians who were approached on this matter in Monrovia shortly after the appearance of these letters during my last fieldwork trip at the end of 1975.

... The legacy of Tubman's corruption has crept in your regime and that the Tolbert Triumvirate /William Tolbert, Stephen Tolbert and Frank Tolbert/ is another exemplary Sanctuary of economic greed and corruption because you are too greedy; that you, Chief Justice James A. A. Pierre, Stephen Tolbert, Ministers E. Joanthan Goodridge, Lawrence A. Morgan and Chief of CID John Reeves, are accomplices in the counterfeiting, accessories before and after the fact, collaborators with John Payne, Isaac E. Perry, Arnold Stewart, etc., because all the counterfeiters are Americo-Liberians excluding foreign nationals, implicating Police Director Andrew Togba Davis, and /sic/ aborigine, is just a malicious falsehood. If he were involved, both he and John Payne Tucker would have been fired by you on the same day. Andrew Davis has never been arrested for any offense since he entered Government service. No wonder why your confident Local Government Minister E. Jonathan Goodridge, Chairman of the True Whig Party, often heaps praises upon you like Mark Anthony worshipping Great Caesar. No wonder why you, Honourable E. Jonathan Goodridge, Richard A. Henries, C. C. Dennis, Frank. Tolbert, J. C. N. Howard, etc. used poor countryman A. Boima Anderson, Superintendent of Montserrado County as a masquerade to collect money from us, the serfs, to finance your 1976 Inauguration after our treasury had been ransacked by Stephen Tolbert and the Nation flooded with false money; but later, you and the same Honourable E. Jonathan Goodridge went over the air to deny the true rumour. Right now Vice President Edward Greene is ferreting money, busy squeezing funds from the Sinoeans aforetime for 1977 Independence Day Celebrations in Sinoe County so that he and his Americo-Liberian clique in Sinoe County will again squander the widow's mite before July 26th, 1977.

Counterfeiting now in Liberia is an Americo-Liberian economic conspiracy and connivance so as to economically strangulate and exploit us, the Natives, as usual and as before, to perpetuate and perpetuate incessant taxation and austerity collection (e.g. since 1950, our austerity deduction has not yet ended despite increase in revenues).

.....

You Americo-Liberians are the most immoral, incestuous, insatiable greeds, corrupt and murderous species ever to be condemned. You are sodomists and lesbians (e.g. Honourable Gabriel Tucker is married to Mrs. Tubman's daughter, Cocoo Tubman; and John Payne Tucker, the elder brother, is loving Mrs. Tubman. What an immorality! A shame and disgrace for their lineage. Of course, Mrs. Tubman is no stranger to us because we know that she is a whore of old. Her adulterous career has been a disgrace to the nation ever since C. Frederick Taylor, a noted West Indian Journalist was jailed by Tubman for 20 years after he (the Journalist) had published an article about Mrs. Tubman's prostitution).

You, Dr. William R. Tolbert, President of the Republic of Liberia, are a THIEF; because the very night your brother Stephen Tolbert died in the ocean, you went to the Finance Ministry early

the next morning about 5:00 A.M. in Steve's office and stole Government documents in order to cover up the financial deficits, discrepancies and shortages of your brother. Is the Ministry of Finance or any other Ministry a personal Office? You are justified because we Liberians are damned cowards and stupid asses like our Generals Henry Korboi Johnson and Biyan W. Kezzelly. Nowhere in the world would such an affront and humiliation be tolerated except in Liberia. Our \$24,000 Rally Funds \$17,000,000 paid from our revenues to Montserrado Fishing Company employees are still locked up in Bentol vault and have not yet been accounted for.

You intentionally condoned your brother Stephen Tolbert's roguery, economic greed and corruption. Stephen Tolbert plundered our revenues to outright purchase Liberia C. A. W. Headquarters, African Fruit Company, Shoe Factory, Liberia Trading Corporation, Swiss African Trading Corporation, etc. thus proving your economic contrivance and collaboration beyond all reasonable doubts. Why did your wealthy brother Stephen Tolbert not acquire these properties during Tubman's administration until you became President?

PUA (Public Utility Authority) bills are still being deposited in Bank of Liberia, owned by you Americo-Liberians instead of our National Bank or Ministry of Finance.

We periodically travel through the country to see the plight of our fellow aborigines (e.g. in Harper City only two Natives own a home each in The Cape. They are the Honourable Kolenky and former Assistant Attorney General Francis Gardiner). Others are clustered in Hoffman Station, Bassa Community and around the air strip. Since and Maryland are the Ku Klux Klan Counties of Liberia.

Conclusion

We have come to the conclusion that Lofa County will eventually overthrow the Government no matter how long it may take or if even the Americo-Liberians wriggle as usual, to still their Colonial Monarchy as Joshua commanded the Sun at its Zenith to 'stand still'.

We are determined to continue our publication. Henceforth be patient with us because we have since 1822 been chained by these U.S. old slaves, Uitlanders and gringos.

Signed: Frederick Korvah
Voinjama, Lofa County,
Republic of Liberia
October 24th, 1975.

Korvah's antagonism against the Americo-Liberian ruling stratum surfaced among students during the disturbances which followed campus elections at the University of Liberia, Cuttington College and Booker Washington Institute between 1973 and 1974. In the case of Booker

Washington Institute (popularly referred to as BWI), a student strike occurred over the serious neglect of the technical institute by the government in its failure to provide much needed equipment and relevant facilities.⁸ The Industrial and Agricultural Institute was subsequently closed down for one semester and its principal, Samuel J. Mentee, dismissed. As a technical institute, BWI was almost exclusively Indigenous-Liberian. Americo-Liberians often looked down on technical training, preferring the liberal professions instead (particularly law, medicine and administration).

In the campaigns preceding the 1973 student elections for Student Council at both Cuttington College and the University of Liberia, serious divisions occurred which polarized the student body into politico-ethnic divisions. Political parties reflecting the major class cleavages in Liberia were quickly formed to contest the elections. At the University of Liberia the Student Unification Party (SUP) representing the hinterland students contested against the Americo-Liberian backed Student Democratic and Progressive Party (SDPP). At Cuttington College, on the other hand, Kukaa Tono was formed by the Americo-Liberian students to contest the elections against the Cuttington United Party (CUP) an Indigenous-Liberian supported party.

On the eve of the election, the CUP fearing defeat because of the

⁸From an enrollment figure of 867 students in the first semester of 1973, 93 per cent failed miserably at the end of the first semester exams, according to a headline in The Liberian Star of Wednesday, October 24th, 1973. See also The Liberian Star of April 1st, 1974 for the coverage of the student strike and campus disorder at BWI.

impressive campaign mounted by Kukaa Tono, produced a strongly sectional-ist leaflet calling all Indigenous "Up-Country" students to unite against what it termed "The Americo-Liberian Careysburg"⁹ dominated Kukaatono Party. The leaflet, which was made public about half an hour before the opening of balloting on the 9th of November, warned that:

We are all acquainted with the history of Liberia and know fully well that from the time of independence in 1847 to the present day /sic/ political power has been and continues to be exclusively in the hands of a manority /sic/ group who call themselves the 'AMERICO-LIBERIANS'. These 'Americo-Liberians' who constitute about 5% of the entire population of the Republic look down upon the 'Countryman' and regard him as an inferior being and a second class citizen. As search /sic/ they regard mingling with the 'Countryman' as an act committing social as well as political suicide and have gone as far as to prohibit him (the countryman) from holding highest office in any political organization.

But realizing that the majority of the students on campus are from tribal backgrounds a certain group of 'Americo-Liberian Youths' headed by 'CAREYSBURG-CLIOUE' have found a political party under a tribal slogan written in kpelle language so as to fool the tribal majority, win their votes and gain political power. This party functions under the slogan 'KUKA A TONO' -- meaning 'we are one'. From the time of independence to this day these people have not regarded the 'countryman' as their equal. Are they in effect saying this 'Late Day' that because it is election time and they want our votes that 'We Are One'? Let no 'countryman' be disillusioned. These boys mean business. They intend to win last minute ballots by the display of wealth. We the 'country people' have no time for elite sophistication and as such will not vote for them

(Signed: 'Black November')¹⁰

⁹"Careysburg" is an Americo-Liberian "up-river" settlement approximately thirty miles northwest of Monrovia, noted for the conservative attitudes of its citizens who, for the most part, were still mulatto or of lighter skin colour than other local groups. President Tolbert's son, A. B. Tolbert, was elected representative for Careysburg in the 1975 General Elections in Liberia.

¹⁰See Appendix "E" p. 313 ~ ; Allen Ziami, "1973 UL Student Elections," Revelation, Vol. 1, #4 (November-December 1973), pp. 37-39, 42.

The victory of CUP in the elections of that day by a mere seventeen votes was less important than the type of political ideology and strategy which was used in this struggle for political office. What is of greater significance was the manipulation of ethnicity, calling upon the section of the population which was seen as having no political power to unite against the ruling groups, when in fact Indigenous ethnicity of "Countryman" was never an administrative or social fact. Liberians usually identified with the twenty-three traditional groupings recognized by Government, and never on a cross-ethnic level involving all the twenty-three together, unless they were expressing political class deprivation and denial of civil rights to members of a hinterland grouping.¹¹

A Dean of the College of Liberal and Fine Arts at the University of Liberia felt that the supporters of the Students Unification Party since its establishment in 1971 have come to be dominated by the Lofa-Loma students, as was shown in the structure of the SUP leadership over the years. Its Secretary General, Joseph G. Dahnkuan, and its Chairman, Ben Togba in 1973 were both Loma from the up-country region of Lofa. In the Dean's opinion, the SUP represented the incipient indigenous middle class which had pushed itself to University level, without going through the conventional channels of socio-economic mobility in Liberia.

¹¹For a list of ethnic groups existing in Liberia and recognized by the government, see Article 4 of the "Revised Laws and Administrative Regulations for Governing the Hinterland, 1949 (Department of the Interior), and the 1962 Population Census of Liberia (Bureau of Statistics Office of National Planning, Republic of Liberia, 1964). See also George Schwab, Tribes of the Liberian Hinterland (Papers of the Peabody Museum of American Archeology and Ethnology, Vol. 31, 1947).

Conventionally, an "up-country" aspirant was required to adopt the mannerisms and lifestyle of the Americo-Liberian social stratum in order to move from bush school through the mission school or the foster home to a high school in Monrovia, and later university education.

The typical supporter, on the other hand, had come to Monrovia directly from the hinterland. They came to Monrovia, on their own, hardly knowing anyone in the city or having any friends apart from contacts established after arrival with clan members and "homeboys" largely through the help of the ethnic voluntary associations in the Loma, Buzi, Vai or Bassa quarters, among others.¹² As a result, they felt isolated and suspicious of the sophisticated city boys, whether they were Indigenous or Americo-Liberian.

This observation by Dean Zamba Liberty -- himself a Lofa County resident and son of an Americo-Liberian Senator of Lofa -- throws much light on the important question of the relationship between the Indigenous Liberian technocratic structure with considerable ruling family backing and the SUP supporters. Those Indigenous-Liberians who joined the Americo-Liberian backed SDPP and Kukaa Tono parties in the 1973 student elections tended to be those with ruling family loyalty and sponsorship. Their contact and familiarity with the hinterland cultural and linguistic patterns was usually poor and greatly lacking, leaving them feeling ambivalent in the presence of fellow ethnics directly from the rural hinterland, with no previous Monrovia experience. It was this

¹²For a comprehensive analysis of the ethnic associational activities in Monrovia, see Merran Fraenkel, Tribe and Class in Monrovia (Oxford University Press, 1964).

latter group of the SUP supporters who were returning to the up-country towns and villages after the completion of their studies to fill administrative and teaching positions in the Liberian interior. This gave them greater access to the hinterland local political system and much influence over the rural peasant groups.

The restlessness of the youth during the Tolbert administration has increased the pressure on the ruling families to accommodate or be "conciliatory toward others."¹³ Tolbert's constant appeal against sectionalism, tribalism and national division demonstrates not only his concern about the youth's agitation for radical socio-political change, but above all his fear of the technocratic element among the Indigenous Liberians, and his reluctance to question the monopoly of political and economic power by the ruling Americo-Liberian families. The absorption of the emergent Indigenous technocratic element into various occupational positions in the government and the private sector partly explains Tolbert's complacency with Americo-Liberian domination, insofar as this signified to him a form of sharing with the Indigenes.

However, the agitation of "radical" elements of the Indigenous-Liberian youth has baffled the ruling Americo-Liberian families, as this has been the group which has enjoyed the most patronage and support from the ruling families. Although they represented a small segment of the emergent Indigenous technocratic sector, they have in fact articulated

¹³Lowenkopf, 1976, Chapter 12 correctly observed that although the Americo-Liberian elite "... still dominate the political arena and use their power in their own interests, they now have to be conciliatory toward others" (italics added), p. 171.

the frustrations of the rest of the silent Indigenous-technocratic majority, as well as the grievances of the rural and urban masses (indicated largely by the support they received from students, workers and the community during disturbances and crisis situations similar to the Albert Porte crisis and the Tipoteh demonstrations).

It would seem that the "non-radical" Indigenous technocrats have preferred to use the old strategy of silent infiltration rather than that of open confrontation against the Americo-Liberian system of domination, largely because of certain institutional controls set by the system and their hope of greater gains through demonstration of loyalty to the ruling families. The institutional controls that have been used against the silent technocrats included firstly, marriage to Americo-Liberian wives whose influence on the offspring of these unions has been significant. The Indigenous technocrats in effect have found themselves surrounded by an offspring which strongly identified with its matrilineal kin who were Americo-Liberian rather than its patrilineal Indigenous relatives. Associational loyalties particularly at the fraternal lodge level which were a prerequisite for mobility constituted another control on the rising Indigenous technocrats. Continued loyalty resulted in substantial political and financial rewards, while the questioning of the political system, particularly the very sensitive area of Americo-Liberian domination, brought immediate reprisals.

While the strategy of marital and associational affiliation was effective in facilitating mobility for the Indigenous Liberians, its disadvantages were not detected until the aspiring individual was nearing the top. As a result, the true Indigenous technocrats in the True

Whig Party, in the Tubman and Tolbert cabinets, in the fraternal lodges and the economic sector (in terms of rubber plantations, real estate ownership and business concerns) became the most silent in the face of the ruling elite's disregard of the rights of the Indigenous masses.¹⁴

This co-optation of the Indigenous-technocrats by the ruling families may have contributed to the radical response of the Americo-Liberian youth, the Indigenous-Liberian students and lecturers, to controversial issues in the past five years. The lack of leadership direction from the older technocrats promoted the rash behaviour of the youth. Korvah's letter made repeated reference to this leadership crisis in his complaints that "... we Liberians are damned cowards and stupid asses like our Generals Henry Korboi Johnson and Biyan W. Kezzely ..." (italics added); and also that "... a gem of loitering intelligentsia wishes to campaign for the Legislature but you American exslaves prefer our unlettered Representatives ..., so that they can always support your political iniquities because they are literally blind" More specifically, Korvah charges that "... in spite of the 153 years of socio-politico and economic injustices, our Army and Intellectuals keep silent, imbibe cane juice, chase prostitutes, then fall to deep slumber"

What is more important for this analysis in Korvah's tirade against the ruling class, or the university students' political campaigns for Student Representatives or Tipoteh's restlessness and activities in MOJA

¹⁴The only exception to this category included Henry Fahnbulleh, former Ambassador to Liberia in Kenya, and Didhwo Twe, a great Liberian statesman who clashed with Tubman in the 1950s.

and the Revelation, is the attention they have drawn to the new consciousness of "Indigenous-Liberian" or "Countryman." Although the politicization of the Indigenous African groups was effected by the colonial administration of the Barclays in what we called the period of the colonization of the Liberian Hinterland, their training and maturation was greatly helped by Tubman's system of benevolent manipulation. As a result, there has been a tendency in the Liberian arena to resort to the dichotomous cleavages of the "countryman" vs. the "Americo-Liberian" whenever situations of political and economic contradictions were being underlined or brought to public attention. On the other hand, in situations relating to purely cultural forms narrow regional ethnic affiliations have assumed importance, so that reference is made to the Kongba Gola, the Pokpa Vai, the Guma Mende or the Bopolu Kpelle, on the Indigenous-Liberian side; and the Crozierville "framehouses," the Careysburg "superiority complex," the Clay-Ashland "lodges" or the Monrovia "big shots" on the Americo-Liberian side of the ethnic boundary.

The political dichotomy of Indigenous vs. Americo-Liberian, appeared more explicitly in the Cuttington United Party supporter's warning that:

... political power has been and continues to be exclusively in the hands of a manority /sic/ group who call themselves the 'AMERICO-LIBERIANS'. These 'Americo-Liberians' who constitute about 5% of the entire population of the Republic look down upon the 'Countryman' and regard him as an inferior being and a second class citizen¹⁵

¹⁵ See Fieldwork Report (November 1973).

The confrontations discussed above were not purely ethnic but had strong class overtones. The appeal to "countryman" or "Americo-Liberian" was directed at economic class distinctions rather than cultural symbolic categories, since these were often identified with specific regional, kinship, or other cultural labels. At the height of the struggles between the Americo-Liberian ruling families and the Indigenous-Liberian youths the slogans of 'countryman' seemed to highlight the subordinate class position of the members of the twenty-three Liberian ethno-regional groupings; and this was characteristic of the technocratic groups.

The preceding developments, however, have represented the early beginnings of a struggle against Americo-Liberian family control of the State apparatus. The outcome of the confrontation which would follow, the type of contradictions it would unfold, the real social class formations which would result at the resolution of this struggle, would be largely determined by the forces which are presently in operation in this peripheral arena and the impact of the capitalist world economy.

PART FOUR

CONCLUSION

CHAPTER 8

A SUMMARY REVIEW OF THE STATE AND SOCIAL FORMATIONS IN LIBERIA

The formation of the State in Liberia between 1847 and 1947 was marked by major economic and military crises, whose impact on the development of the social structures which emerged subsequently have not been adequately examined. In spite of these obstacles the Liberian State produced a full-fledged national bourgeoisie of the famous "merchant princes," a constitution modelled after that of the United States, a frontier force trained and commanded by American senior officers of the military, which assured the stabilization of the Liberian Hinterland.¹

The haphazard launching of the Liberian colony by a philanthropic association with no state or sovereign authority contributed to Liberia's failure throughout its early history to maintain itself economically and to extricate its revenue and customs collection from foreign receivers. Hence, it was not until the amortization of the Firestone debt in 1956 that Liberia fully gained control of the internal management of its economic apparatus. This experience in colonization on the part of Liberia differed sharply from similar settler

¹This does not imply, however, that the Americo-Liberian settlers were helpless puppets controlled by external forces, but accentuates the continued emotional attachment to the United States on the part of the settlers, whose stability and survival was a contribution of the Americo-Liberian family and masonic fraternal bonds, more than any other factor.

colonization projects in South Africa's Cape of Good Hope, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, among others. These latter colonies were not only carefully planned and established, but also received considerable financial and administrative servicing. Between 1870 and 1936 British West Africa alone received public and private capital amounting to £116.7 million, while the Belgian Congo was boosted up with foreign investment totalling £143.3 million of which £107.5 million was private. Liberia received less than \$10 million for the same period.²

Even more crippling to the Liberian economy before 1926 was its loan-agreements with European private interests, which made default in repayment inevitable and direct administration of its customs and revenues by a foreign customs receivership a fait accompli, partly because of the inflated rates of interest charged for the loans. The 1871 loan-agreement negotiated at £100,000 (\$500,000) between President E. J. Roye and a London Banking firm, netted Liberia less than £30,000 after discounts and advance interest payments. The situation was none the better in 1906 when Liberia once again negotiated a \$500,000 loan "through the medium of Sir Harry Johnston, the African explorer." The loan was made in London with the agreement that part of the loan was to be turned over to the Liberia Development Company, a rubber plantation owned by Sir Harry Johnston. It took a loan of \$1.7 million in 1912 to pay off the 1906 British debt, which was refunded by a group of New

²See George H. T. Kimble, Tropical Africa, Vols. 1 and 2 (New York: The Twentieth Century Fund, 1960); also Russell McLaughlin, Foreign Investment and Development in Liberia (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1966), p. 45. Colonial Powers contributed to their settler dependants militarily, economically and politically. The United States displayed great ambivalence in its responsibilities to the Liberian Colony, even though the U.S. Congress in 1816 appropriated \$100,000 to finance the establishment of the Colony (see George Brown, The Economic History of Liberia).

York bankers, including the Rockefeller interests. According to the Chicago Defender of 17th March 1923, the new loan was secured by the customs revenues, import and export revenues, head tax revenues and rubber tax revenues.³

The new 1912 Loan-Agreement also brought into Liberia a consortium of American, French, British and German bankers, who formed a multinational customs receivership, which removed whatever pretences to administrative autonomy which existed at this time. Liberia's national fiscal system was wholly under the control of the multinational consortium.

The 1871, 1906 and 1912 Loan-Agreements assured complete dependence of the Liberian State on the European centered capitalist-world economy, while also permitting the formation of a neo-colonialist elite from amongst the leading Americo-Liberian families. The period from Independence in 1847 to the close of the nineteenth century represented an important formative stage for the Liberian commercial bourgeoisie who manipulated the State apparatus for commercial advance. This period also represented the earliest attempts on the part of the Americo-Liberian commercial bourgeoisie to enter into alliances with the African Chiefdoms in the hinterland for trading purposes. These alliances were carefully monitored by the American sponsors of the Liberian State so as

³See McLaughlin, pp. 45-46; Raymond L. Buell, Liberia: A Century of Survival 1847-1947 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1947); and George W. Brown, The Economic History of Liberia (Washington, D. C.: The Associated Publishers, Inc., 1941). Brown points out that in 1874, "... the Liberian Government declined to pay interest charges on the loan (of 1871) and started to negotiate readjustments of the terms" (p. 144).

to preclude the Americo-Liberian bourgeoisie from developing into a powerful political force which might have threatened French and British interests in the West-Atlantic region of West Africa, which partly explained British and French threats to Liberian sovereignty throughout this period.⁴

The emergence of the Liberian "merchant princes" before the close of the nineteenth century also meant direct exploitation of the indigenous hinterland groups by the Americo-Liberians and the Liberian State through the hinterland policies, forced labour and hut taxes. In their commercial relations with the Africans the Liberian government and the Americo-Liberian traders signed land treaties with the African chiefdoms which included stipulations regarding the construction of trading factories in the hinterland, while the American Colonization Society helped in maintaining favourable prices of goods traded by the Africans to the settlers.⁵

When several groups of Africans ... boycotted colonial trade in 1824 in an attempt to obtain higher prices for ivory and camwood, the colony countered with a boycott of its own. A similar attempt by De and Gola traders to fix prices in 1827 was frustrated by a colonial ordinance which forbade colonists to pay more than current rates for rice and camwood⁶

⁴See George Brown, pp. 107-146; and M. B. Akpan, "Black Imperialism: Americo-Liberian Rule Over the African Peoples of Liberia 1841-1964," Canadian Journal of African Studies, Vol. 7, No. 2 (1973), pp. 217-236.

⁵See Ashmun's letter of the 22nd August 1824 in Ralph R. Gurley, Life of Jehudi Ashmun (New York: Robinson and Franklin, 1839), p. 49.

⁶Dwight Syfert, "A Survey of the Liberian Coasting Trade, 1822-1900." (Paper presented at the Eighth Annual Liberian Studies Association Conference, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, 8th-10th April, 1976), p. 6.

From the outset the Americo-Liberian settlers seemed to have received good training from their American sponsors in their new task of exploitation of the Liberian hinterland.

Although most of the Liberian settlers had little or no previous trading experience prior to their emigration, many of them learned the new strategy of survival when they reached the West African coastal region. The demand in the world market for such Liberian commodities as palm-oil, which was used in the manufacture of soap and candles, and camwood (a dyewood which produced a deep red colour), stimulated the largest commercial activity among the Liberian settlers, which contributed to the development of a Liberian-owned fleet estimated at 8 to 10 vessels in 1828, 9 vessels in 1834, 12 to 15 vessels in 1838, 12 in 1844, 18 to 20 in 1853. "... In all, 58 Liberian owned vessels are known to have existed prior to 1848 most of which were active in the coasting trade"⁷ At least 139 vessels were owned and operated by Americo-Liberian settlers between 1847 to 1871. They ranged from small sloops of a few tons to square rigged vessels of several hundred tons which carried the Liberian lone star flag to ports as far as New York and Liverpool.⁸

The Liberian Herald and the African Times reported a wide range of prices in the sale of camwood and dyewood. Camwood sold in Monrovia for \$70 per ton in the 1850s and brought \$80 in the American market,

⁷ Ibid., p. 8.

⁸ See George Brown, pp. 134-135; and Abayomi Karnga, History of Liberia (Liverpool: D. H. Tyte and Company, 1926), pp. 42-43.

while dyewood in the 1870s sold for \$80 to \$85.00 per ton in Monrovia and fetched anywhere from \$125 to \$200 per ton in the United States, and from \$100 to \$165 per ton in the United Kingdom.⁹

A typical coasting voyage was reported in the Liberian Herald to bring in a profit of \$399.60, while Ashmun estimated profits of \$4,000 annually to the American Colonization Society from the direct operation of a single coasting vessel.¹⁰ Camwood was so heavily in demand that merchants in Liberia used it as a currency from time to time.

The wealth which accrued to the Liberian settlers as a result of the coastal trading in camwood and palm-oil, together with trading in rice, gold, country cloth, arrowroot, ginger, hides, pepper, gums and indigo, was displayed in the wealth of Liberian President Stephen A. Benson whose commercial operations were estimated at \$14,000; James B. McGill, partner of the McGill Brothers enterprise which was worth \$15,000; and the Payne and Yates partnership which had accumulated a coastal vessel, business and stock worth \$34,000.¹¹

By the end of the nineteenth century, the Liberian experiment had successfully launched a new political class -- a commercial bourgeoisie of Americo-Liberian families -- as a result of the skillful manipulation of the State apparatus on the part of the emergent commercial

⁹See The Liberian Herald, New Series (18th August, 1852); and 3rd December, 1856); Vol. 12 (24th July, 1873); Vol. 15 (1st February, 1875); Vol. 26 (2nd February, 1885), p. 29.

¹⁰The Liberian Herald, New Series (4th June, 1843), p. 43; and Ashmun in The Annual Reports of the American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Colour of the United States, Vol. 11 (1828), pp. 37-38.

¹¹See Dwight M. Syfert, pp. 10-11.

bourgeoisie.¹² While this stratum was allowed to dominate the internal administration of the state apparatus, it was not encouraged to assume economic autonomy, although it was made a partner in the under-development of Liberia along with the European powers and United States corporate interests. From this period onwards, Liberia developed a viable state-capitalism which set the pace for similar state structures in the post-independent African States of the mid-twentieth century.

As a result of the 1871, 1906 and especially the 1912 Loan-Agreements, the fortunes of the Americo-Liberian commercial bourgeoisie became insignificant at the national level, where the revenues of the Liberian State were directly under the control of the Loan's consortium of transnational capitalist interests such as J. P. Morgan and Co., Kuhr Loeb and Co., the National City Bank of New York, Robert Fleming and Co. of London, Banque de Paris et de Pays Bas of Paris, M. M. Warburg and Co. of Hamburg, and Hope and Co. of Amsterdam.¹³ With this financial venture the capitalist-world economy assured its position as the sole owner of the economy in Liberia, thus relegating the commercial bourgeois interests in the Liberian State-capitalism to a

¹²The concept of "commercial bourgeoisie" and its political-economic implications is discussed in Issa Shivji, Class Struggles in Tanzania (London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1976); and Mahmood Mamdani, Politics and Class Formation in Uganda (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976).

¹³See Raymond L. Buell, The Native Problem in Africa, Vol. II (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1928), pp. 865-880.

peripheral status.¹⁴

Liberia's role in the world economy as a raw material reserve was underscored by the United States' involvement in the defence and protection of Liberian sovereignty, whenever reports of such threats to the "duly constituted authority of the Liberian constitution" were made. The protection of the Liberian constitution in the first one hundred years of the Republic of Liberia became the very cornerstone of Liberian foreign policy and the most effective political strategy on the part of the Americo-Liberian ruling stratum to obtain aid and assistance from the United States government. Secretary of State Huntington Wilson was explicit in pointing out in 1909 that political stability in Liberia was the condition on which American interests such as "commercial concerns" and "immigration" were to be built.¹⁵ In the First World War period, reports of starvation of the Americo-Liberians as a result of the bankruptcy of the Liberian economy brought very little response from the United States government. However, when the constitutional authority of Liberia appeared to be threatened by the Kru War of 1915 the United States "... did respond to pleas for a war vessel to prevent European

¹⁴For a more systematic analysis of peripheral formations, see Samir Amin, "General Characteristics of Peripheral Formations," in his Unequal Development (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976); and I. Wallerstein, "Africa in a Capitalist World," Issue, Vol. III, No. 3 (Fall 1973), pp. 1-11.

¹⁵See correspondence of Acting Secretary of State, Huntington Wilson to Minister Lyon, March 19, 1910. Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States (Washington: Kraus Reprints, 1904-1933), p. 705. It is important to note as well that while Liberia desired more American concern for its survival, Britain, Germany and France as leading World Powers at the time, imposed themselves on Liberia and were also used by Liberians in return for various types of aid.

intervention and to transport troops and arms to the Sinoe coast"¹⁶

America's hesitancy and ambivalence towards the colonization and effective occupation of Liberian territory at the early stages of its foundation, partly revealed the United States' secondary status to Britain and France in the capitalist world economy and also the United States strategy of expanding its influence through the expansion of corporate capitalism in the underdeveloped regions of the world

"... through the use of dollar diplomacy, military intervention, social and religious value systems of the United States' corporate capitalism"¹⁷

Firestone's rubber venture in Liberia became the first and most crucial experiment in corporate expansion in Africa by the United States. This venture coincided with the British exploitation of cocoa in Ghana, groundnuts in Nigeria, tea, coffee and cotton in Uganda and sisal in Tanzania. The need for an Open Door policy in Liberia was strongly emphasized at the close of the First World War by Britain, France and Germany.¹⁸ This policy in Liberia facilitated American penetration and American rhetoric without progress and without development to Liberia.

¹⁶Larry R. Brim, "The Eagle, The Sparrow and the Vultures: Utilitarian Origins of America's Open Door Policy Towards Liberia 1909-1933." (Paper presented at the Ninth Annual Conference of the Liberian Studies Association at Western Illinois University, Macomb, Ill., March 31st-April 2nd, 1977, p. 16.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 1.

¹⁸See correspondence of J. C. Grew to Acting Secretary of State Frank L. Polk, April 17, 1919, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, p. 473.

The events which led to the introduction of Firestone's rubber investments also gave the United States Government an internationally acceptable pretext for preserving the constitutional government of Liberia, consolidating the Americo-Liberians in power in the Liberian political economy, and above all, the promotion of the Open Door Policy.

In November 1922 the British Colonial Office raised the price of rubber in the British Empire, and restricted further production and supply in order to influence the prices. In a retaliatory move, the American rubber corporations decided to expand their capital so as to finance the independent production of rubber by the United States.¹⁹

Liberia became the answer to this desire for United States' independent production of rubber after alternate regions were tested and found either productively deficient or politically unstable and beyond the American sphere of influence. In addition, Herbert Hoover, Secretary of Commerce, encouraged American rubber corporations to increase rubber production for which the United States Congress was requested to appropriate \$50,000 to enable the Department of Commerce to investigate the possibilities of rubber production and other raw products.²⁰

Harvey Firestone, taking advantage of the rubber crisis of 1922, began a serious investigation of Liberia in 1924 as a location for a

¹⁹ See Harvey Firestone to Secretary of State Charles Hughes, December 10th, 1924, Foreign Relations (1925), p. 384. On March 12th, 1923, Churchill issued a statement to the effect that: "One of our principal means of paying our debt to the United States is in the provision of rubber" See James Lawrence, The World's Struggle With Rubber 1905-1930, p. 37.

²⁰ See The Studies of the Department of Commerce on "Essential Raw Materials," United States Statutes at Large, Vol. 42 (1923), p. 1536.

possible rubber plantation. Firestone found Liberia ideal for production and politically secure but heavily committed in debts which were owed to British, French, German, Dutch, as well as American interests.

... Because of the Firestone Company's aversion to non-American control of rubber producing areas it was desired to have the Loan of 1912 replaced by one from an entirely American source. Strongly supported by the United States Department of State, Firestone and the Republic of Liberia negotiated a loan agreement to supplement the Planting Agreement of 1926²¹

A bill was passed by the Liberian Legislature in December 1926, binding the Liberian Government to secure a loan of \$5 million from the Finance Corporation of America -- a trust company created by Firestone for this purpose. This constituted an integral part of the agreement in which Liberia granted the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company the right to grow rubber on a maximum of one million acres of land. As a result of this loan-agreement, Firestone leased up to one million acres of rubber growing land for ninety-nine years, at a fixed rental of five cents per acre during the first six years of operation, after which ten cents was to be paid per acre.²²

In permitting the exploitation of its raw material by the Firestone Company, Liberia also committed herself into issuing a \$5,000,000 forty-year bond at an interest rate of 7 percent. The Firestone Corporation of America was to appropriate these bonds from the Liberian Government. In addition, Liberia was required by the United States Government to appoint and pay a salary of (1) a financial advisor,

²¹Russell McLaughlin, p. 53.

²²See George Brown, pp. 195-196.

(2) five officials to organize the customs and the internal revenue administration of Liberia, and (3) four American army officers to lead the Liberian Frontier Force.²³

Ten years after the launching of Firestone's rubber company in 1936, its investment was estimated at \$10,000,000 from 64,000 planted acres and 16,000 acres of mature trees. Rubber exports rose from 60,000 pounds in 1932 to 3,307,397 pounds in 1936.²⁴ In spite of this increase, Firestone did very little to improve the Liberian infrastructure, while even defaulting on the stipulation of Planting Agreement No. 3 on the Monrovia harbour construction. According to Brown:

Nothing has been done in the ten years to improve the harbour facilities, or to fulfill the terms of the agreement beyond the observations, calculations, and preliminary work of the J. C. White Engineering Corporation²⁵

Perhaps the most articulate statement of Firestone and the United States' underdevelopment and humiliation of Liberia was expressed in 1956 at the occasion of the amortization of the 1927 Loan-Agreement with Firestone. As a commemoration of the repayment of the \$5 million debt four years earlier, President W. V. S. Tubman erected a statue in Monrovia within the grounds of the University of Liberia, with a plaque inscribed:

²³ See Frank Chalk, "The Anatomy of an Investment: Firestone's 1927 Loan to Liberia," The Canadian Journal of Africal Studies, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 12-32.

²⁴ See George Brown, "Ten Years of Firestone," in The Economic History of Liberia, pp. 203-212.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 203.

This Monument erected by the people of Liberia is dedicated to the great relief brought to the Country by the Tubman Administration on the retirement of the (1927) Loan with its humiliating and strangulating effects on the Economy of the Nation.²⁶

The policy of divisiveness in Liberia reached its peak during the period of the establishment of the Firestone Rubber Company in 1926 to the end of World War II in 1944. The myths of Indigenous-African hostility, and of "rebellions" and "revolts" against the constituted authority of the Americo-Liberians were further highlighted in the events which followed the 1930 slavery crisis in Liberia in which the League of Nations received a mandate to investigate allegations of slavery and forced labour in Liberia.²⁷

American commitment to the separation of the hinterland from the Americo-Liberian coastal settlements was carried out by President Edwin Barclay in his policy of "Divide and Rule," which was enforced by the Liberian Frontier Force through the interior administration. The need to extend effective Liberian control of the hinterland chiefdoms became a necessity for the Firestone investment and the appropriation of millions of acres of Indigenous-African territory. Moreover, Firestone's encouragement of Americo-Liberian participation in rubber production in 1941 accelerated the process of encroachment upon hinterland African territory. By 1950 more than 150,000 acres of land were planted in rubber owned by more than 4,200 Americo-Liberian farmers.

²⁶ Quoted in Frank Chalk, p. 32.

²⁷ For a comprehensive discussion of the 1930 crisis, see C. L. Simpson, The Symbol of Liberia: The Memoirs of C. L. Simpson (London: The Diplomatic Press, 1961); and Nnamdi Azikiwe, Liberia in World Politics (London: A. H. Stockwell Ltd., 1934).

In a recent address to the powerful Rubber Planters Association of Liberia, President Tolbert underscored this eminent position of rubber in the Liberian society, when he described it as "the one single industry in which Liberians in all walks of life have the largest investments."²⁸

The incorporation of the Liberian hinterland into the mainstream of the national economy destroyed the autonomy of Indigenous-African traditional political structures in Liberia, thus assuring an abundant and accessible supply of cheap labour to American corporate interests operating in Liberia. The hinterland cultivators became part of a new peasant and working class in Liberia.

Liberia's role as a periphery of European and American corporate interests was accentuated by the construction of an airfield and port facilities largely as a result of the war effort (of the Second World War). While Firestone and Pan-American Airways operated the airfield facilities, the airfield's position during the war proved highly useful and strategic to the United States when:

... following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour in December, 1941, and the entry of America into the war, Wake Island was captured by the Japanese and air communications across the Pacific were cut. To reach Australia and New Zealand planes from America now had to fly east through Liberia and the Middle East instead of West²⁹

The American military mission in Liberia was stepped up following

²⁸Douglas Greve, "Rubber Industry Pays Half the Country's Wage Bill," African Development (July 1972), p. 38. For a more extensive discussion of the repressive policy of the hinterland by Edwin Barclay, see Akpan, "Black Imperialism: Americo-Liberian Rule Over the African Peoples of Liberia 1841-1964."

²⁹C. L. Simpson, p. 227.

the Defence Areas Agreement between the United States and Liberia. The airfield facilities were extended and new port facilities created in the Monrovia harbour. In 1943 Liberia was even graced with the visit of President Roosevelt himself on his way back from a summit conference in Casablanca, Morocco. This became the first visit ever paid to Liberia by a foreign Head of State. Liberia was now a full-fledged member of the United States periphery and was shortly after Roosevelt's visit extended ambassadorial relations with the United States -- the last major power to recognize Liberia diplomatically.

The security of the constitutional authority of Liberia and the firm control of the state apparatus by the Americo-Liberians was now permanently assured, while threats from the hinterland were made less ominous by the United States military presence in Liberia. The time was now ripe for the Open Door Policy. The United States had favoured such a policy for Liberia since the Loan-Agreement period of 1912. * With the Open Door Policy, American foreign aid was extended to Liberia in increasing amounts. Between 1944 and 1951, United States assistance to Liberia totalled \$28 million, while between 1951 and 1961, this figure jumped to \$79 million. During the 1951-1961 period, the U.S. Aid Program spent \$37 million in loans to private enterprises in Liberia. "... of more than \$437 million of foreign private investment as of 1960 firms wholly owned by United States investors were responsible for \$106 million or 24 percent of the total"³⁰ Liberia's economic growth

³⁰ Russell McLaughlin, p. 46. See also Stephen B. Tarr, "Factors Affecting Liberian Fiscal Effort." (Paper presented at the Bi-Annual Meetings of the Liberian Studies Conference, Monrovia, Liberia, May 18th, 1973).

* The European powers were also keen on an 'Open Door Policy for West Africa.

after 1945 exceeded that of most countries except Japan.³¹

It was in this climate of the post-war economic boom that the Americo-Liberian ruling sector allowed the emergence of an educated stratum among the Indigenous-Liberians. Tubman's Open Door Policy and particularly his Unification and Integration Policies did much to extend educational, occupational and social opportunities to the hinterland Africans, leading to their virtual incorporation in the Liberian State system.

At the death of President William Tubman in 1971, the Indigenous-Liberian educated stratum was not only extensive, but completely dominated the civil service, the police, the military forces, the educational sector, and were slowly rising to important decision-making positions in the Legislature, the Cabinet and the Judiciary system as lawyers, magistrates and associate justices. A technocratic-bourgeoisie from the ranks of the hinterland groups now formulated an intermediate social stratum between the Americo-Liberian ruling sector and the mass of the workers and the peasants.

The entry of the Indigenous-Liberian educated stratum into the Liberian political economy coincided also with the emergence of a new merchant stratum of Lebanese and Asian traders who were rapidly assuming the status of a commercial bourgeoisie formerly held by the Americo-Liberian traders at the turn of the nineteenth century. The divisive colonial ethno-racial labels of "civilized vs. the uncivilized," "Americo-Liberian," "countryman," and "aborigines" were discontinued in

³¹See Robert Clower, George Dalton et al.

official public usage and the media after 1964 when Tubman emphasized the creation of a new Liberia in which all its citizens were simply Liberians, rather than "Americo-Liberian" and "Tribal People."

The political incorporation of the Africans into the Americo-Liberian controlled state apparatuses during the Tubman and the Tolbert administrations removed the last vestiges of isolationism for survival among the Americo-Liberians. New strategies for the maintenance of their hegemony became necessary at this period. Once more, the family and the masonic craft proved most appropriate, discreet and easily justifiable institutional strategies for this task. The resurgence of fraternal participation and elite family connections at the height of the Tubmanic administration assured the stability of the Americo-Liberian ruling class, while it also consolidated the political power of President Tubman.³² Since Tubman came to power, it became crucial for aspirants to the political ruling sector, particularly candidates from the Indigenous-Liberian sector, to demonstrate their loyalty and commitment to Americo-Liberian family paramountcy through active and faithful participation in the Accepted and Free Masons of Liberia before gaining the confidence of the Americo-Liberian family stratum.

³²See Gus Liebenow, Evolution of Privilege, pp. 112-147; and Tuan Wreh, The Love of Liberty.

The Theory of Class and Ethnicity in the Specific Context of
the Peripheral Mode of Production of Liberia Since 1944

False consciousness -- whether it be evidenced by individualism, chauvinism, religious fanaticism, aestheticism, or nature worship -- does not result from a random ordering of phenomena: It is the reflection of a conscious choice by dominating classes and their agents, i.e., distortion of reality to prevent communal actions threatening the power structure.³³

The use of symbolic formalism in the government and voluntary associations in Liberia was given greater significance than the concrete goals signalled by these ritualistic activities. More than any other State in West Africa, the Liberian State placed greater emphasis on sterile formalism, which contributed to the distortion of reality.³⁴ Tubman's administration raised formalism to a level of a religious cult. By informing the hinterland that its incorporation into the Americo-Liberian dominated state politics was already a legislated fact in 1964, Tubman sought to avoid the painful structures in preference for empty rhetoric. This proved effective in countering criticism against

³³H. C. Greisman and Sharon S. Mayes, "The Social Construction of Unreality: The Real American Dilemma," Dialectical Anthropology, Vol. 2, No. 1 (February 1977), p. 66.

³⁴See especially Thomas Wrubel, "Liberia: The Dynamics of Continuity," The Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol. 9 (1971), pp. 189-204; and Liebenow (1969), pp. 81-84

Americo-Liberian domination, since Tubman could rightly claim that his government outlawed "Americo-Liberianism" in a public address in which he explicitly stated that:

... We must now destroy all ideologies that tend to divide us. Americo-Liberianism must be forgotten and all must register a new era of Justice -- Equality and Fair dealing for everyone, from every part of the country, regardless of tribe, clan, section, creed and economic status.³⁵

His Unification and Integration Policies became the watchwords for the justification of the suppression of the hinterland under the pretext that, "... we are all Liberians now. Americo-Liberianism and Country-manism are things of the past, dead and buried in the beautiful casket of Unification by President Tubman."³⁶

Ritualistic formalism and all types of symbolism characterized the Liberian state apparatus of Tubman and continued into the Tolbert administration. In a society where the disproportions of access to political and economic resources were as blatant as Liberia's, this ideological distortion of reality proved helpful, reminiscent of Marx's reference to religious ideology as the opium of the masses.

By this act of symbolic and ritualistic formalism alone, the Tubman and the Tolbert governments opened the gate for the manipulation of ideological strategies.³⁷ This obscured the real changes which were

³⁵ President Tubman's address at the Convocation of the National Council, Maryland County, Liberia, May 20th-June 27th, 1954.

³⁶ The Liberian Star (May 2nd, 1968), an article by D. Nyeka Chie.

³⁷ See especially Abner Cohen, "Political Anthropology: The Analysis of the Symbolism of Power Relations," MAN, Vol. 4, No. 2 (June 1969), pp. 215-235.

taking place in the national political arena, as Americo-Liberian family groups increased their fortunes through the manipulation of state structures. Though a poor lawyer at the beginning of his administration, Tubman died a multi-millionaire with fortunes extending from real estate to ownership of companies in Liberia.

The signalling of symbolic-ideological strategies proved most effective in the consolidation of ethnic structures and ethnic boundaries. Ethnicity as manifested in the manipulation of family, regional and linguistic affiliation, constituted the major strategy for gaining control over resources in Liberia. While all Liberians shared a common national affiliation, further displayed in the adoption of Euro-American family names, which obscured the real identification and distinction of individuals and groups, the cleavages among the various social groups manifested themselves in the disparity of wealth and economic resources.

The pre-capitalist mode of production of the rural peasant and village stratum remained subordinated as an appendage to the urban landowners, small traders and capitalist farmers, all of whom were Americo-Liberians. Local government in the interior provided easy access for Monrovia politicians and bureaucrats to the wealth of the interior and its cheap labour force represented by the rural peasants and villagers. The villagers also provided an unskilled, cheap labour force in the rubber plantations of both concessionaires and Americo-Liberian farmers, in the rice and cash crop farms of the Indigenous-Liberian elites and those of the Americo-Liberians, in the logging industry dominated by the Americo-Liberians and foreign concessionaires.

The urban sector of Indigenous-Liberian civil servants held a

higher position than that of their fellows in the labour force and the rural sector, most of whom were also employed by the Indigenous-Liberian technocratic civil servants as domestics, chauffeurs, taxi-drivers, assistants in the innumerable corner stores, bars, and retail outlets in the open markets. Along with the Lebanese traders and the Americo-Liberians, the Indigenous-Liberian technocratic stratum in the urban arena also participated as an employer group.

The ruling wealthy sector of Liberia continued throughout the Tubman-Tolbert periods to be strictly limited to the descendants of the settlers of the nineteenth century, the Americo-Liberians.

Regardless then of the amount of rhetoric and formalism on unity, anti-sectionalism, and representation of the state Legislature, the access to the resources present in the Liberian society continued to be disproportionately distributed, with the Americo-Liberian family stratum possessing the largest piece of the pie. In addition, the occupational structure of the Liberian national arena continued to be identified with linguistic ethnic groups. The Liberian militia and national guard were dominated by the Loma, the Mano and the Gio of the northwestern region of Liberia. Their loyalty to Monrovia provided a favourable role in this sector, rather than their fighting prowess, which in Liberian history was attributed to the Gola, the Grebo and the Kru. The wars between these groups and the Liberian settlers in the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries were well-known. The professional, managerial and educational categories, on the other hand, showed a predominance of the Vai, the Grebo and the Kru, who had come into contact with explorers, European slavers, missionaries and subsequently the

settlers earlier than any of the other ethnic groups in the Liberian interior.³⁸ Throughout the Tubman-Tolbert periods, the higher levels of the State apparatus in the bureaucratic sector continued to be dominated by this Vai-Grebo-Kru triumvirate. This left the lower levels of the occupational structure in the control of the Kpelle and the Bassa, who could be found working as domestics, labourers, farm hands, loggers, tappers in the Firestone plantations and unskilled workers in the Lebanese commercial outlets throughout Liberia. As the largest ethnic group numerically, and as the group which have traditionally been seen as weaker and subordinated in the hinterland, they seem to have continued to be relegated to the working stratum throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The position of traders and itinerant hawkers in luxury goods and clothing became the preserve of the marginal Mandingoes from Guinea. Liberians continued to see Mandingoes as outsiders, inspite of their involvement in Liberian nation-building since the early period of the Liberian Colony. Mandingoes at present dominate the tailoring and jewellery business (mostly itinerant) in Liberia, and seem to be given preference as operators and drivers in the taxi and transportation business.

From the analysis above, it can be deduced that ethnicity and class in Liberia are "... intimately related to each other and to the concentration and distribution of political power" in the words of Robin Cohen.* His model of inter-connectness between class and ethnicity at four key levels seems most applicable to the Liberian political arena, that is, in situations where ranking or position along both class and ethnic hierarchies is co-incident. In this situation differential incorporation is neatly paralleled by divisions of skill or status, as was the case in the

³⁸ See Appendix H: Economic and Demographic Statistics.

* In his "Class in Africa" (1972), pp. 250-251

establishment of the Firestone Rubber and Tyre Company in 1926, and in the implementation of Tubman's "Open Door Policy" since 1944. During this period large numbers of hinterland ethnic groups were incorporated into the modern sector as labourers. Their participation here was mainly on the basis of regional ethnic lines.³⁹

Cohen's second level of inter-connectedness occurs in situations of conflict where ethnic identity predominates, shown in Liberia's incorporation of the hinterland's local governmental structure into the Liberian legislature. This act has placed the traditional elite in an ambivalent situation, since the requirement for promotion to membership in the legislature was loyalty to the Americo-Liberian dominated True Whig Party, on the basis of the aspirant's nomination by the local, traditional supporters at the chiefdom level. Here ethnic membership and support played an important role for entry into the ranks of the technocratic stratum.

The next level of inter-connectedness is found in situations of conflict between class and ethnicity where class identity predominates. This situation in Liberia has been characteristic of the emergence of the political ruling class since the founding of the Republic, where family, regional and colour differences gave way to the formation of a class group and a State structure. From this State apparatus a technocratic stratum of Indigenous-Liberians has emerged in which ethno-regional affiliation plays a secondary role to socio-economic achievement.

A final level of inter-connectedness in Cohen's model, that in which conflict between class and ethnicity is unresolved or could go either way is characteristic of the strategy of name changing and marital re-alignments.

³⁹ See especially Merran Fraenkel, Tribe and Class in Monrovia (1964) and J.B. Cole, "Traditional and Wage-Earning Labor Among Tribal Liberians" An Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation in Anthropology at Northwestern University, 1967.

The Liberian Class Structure

The detailed analysis of social formations in Liberia's political history of the past one hundred and fifty years, along with the struggles which characterized various periods, particularly the interfamily rivalry of the 1944-75 period, has revealed a complex politico-economic arena.

Two arenas have emerged in the Liberian peripheral mode of production dominated by two sets of structures. One of these is the international arena whose role is economic, since it is at this level that the means of production have been owned and controlled. This is basically an external arena dominated by the forces of transnational corporations, rather than the major social agents of the Liberian internal political arena. Although the commercial sector of the international arena has partially penetrated this internal arena through the Lebanese and the Indian merchants, it still continues to play an indirect role in the social, political, and religious life of Liberia. The officers of international investments and the Lebanese-Indian merchants seem content to leave the control of the State apparatus in the hands of the Americo-Liberian ruling families. It is this external arena, therefore, which has represented the metropolitan centre of the capitalist world economy in Liberia throughout the history of Liberia.

The second arena, which is subordinated to the international arena by its dependence on the capital of this arena, is represented by the Liberian State apparatus. Since 1944 the Liberian State apparatus displayed interesting features which have made it a unique state structure in Africa. The formation of this state structure and the

relations within its peripheral mode of production have been closely associated with the nineteenth century settlers from the United States. Since 1944 the State apparatus has been used by a tight-knit stratum of family groups to generate revenues and property for its own private commercial use. In its control of the State machinery this family-based stratum virtually became the major employer of most Liberian civil servants, police, soldiers, and all government officials, while continuing to act as employers in the private sectors of farming, forestry and cash-crop production. In addition, the settler family stratum became the landlord stratum through their ownership of lucrative real estate on which most Lebanese and Indian commercial outlets were situated and in which urban residential areas were developed. This was also the stratum which operated large logging and rubber farms in the hinterland of Liberia, most of which incorporated several rural chiefdoms. This incorporation reduced the pre-capitalist mode of production of the rural areas into a sub-periphery of the urban areas. The rural peasants and villagers virtually became tenant farmers of the urban classes.

By virtue of the control of the State apparatus through which vast revenues for private commercial interests have been generated, the stratum of the descendants of nineteenth century settlers, the so-called Americo-Liberian families can be considered as the political ruling class of Liberia. Their manipulation of the State for wealth makes Liberia a state capitalism, which, unlike Tanzania's and Guinea's state capitalism, has produced a commercial bourgeoisie of ruling families who have used the state to increase their private commercial

enterprises.⁴⁰

As a result of the struggles for the control of the State apparatus among the Americo-Liberian ruling class, a new stratum of educated, technically trained individuals emerged after 1944. Since this new stratum owed its economic sustenance on the salaries they obtained from their positions in the administrative sector of the government, they too came to be dependent on the Americo-Liberian ruling families who also acted as their sponsors during periods of training. This stratum later developed into a powerful group of technocrats who played a major role in the servicing of the State apparatus as senior administrative officials, educationists, health specialists, engineering experts, military and police personnel. They too employed workers in their homes and in their private business concerns.

This new stratum differed from the Americo-Liberian ruling family class by virtue of its ethnicity. It was a stratum of Indigenous-Liberians who had gained entry into the State apparatuses through education, adoption as wards by Americo-Liberian families, and assumption of Euro-American names and lifestyle. As a buffer stratum between the political ruling class and the masses, the Indigenous technocrats were also being used by the Americo-Liberians in the suppression of the hinterland masses, through the Frontier Force, the state-appointed chieftainships and the superintendencies of county administrations.

By virtue of their control of the skills necessary for the operation of the state machinery and the private sector, this stratum

⁴⁰Ibid. See also Chapter 1 above.

of a bureaucratic salariat in Liberia could be considered a technocratic class.* As a technocratic class, it was distinct from the working stratum proper as it employed workers, subordinating them to their bureaucratic authority. It was in the ranks of this technocratic class that restlessness and mobilization for a struggle to challenge the hegemony of the Americo-Liberian ruling classes was beginning to make its appearance.

At the bottom of the state-dominated arena in Liberia was a stratum of workers, peasants, semi-skilled taxi drivers and chauffeurs, market traders and the unemployed who provided the cheap labour force for the ruling and technocratic classes along with the international multinational corporate and commercial interests. Partly as a result of the co-optation of its leadership structure by the Americo-Liberian ruling family class, the Liberian workers have not been in a position to create effective labour union organizations. This stratum has not developed a group awareness for the consolidation of its resources, and improvement of its lot largely as a result of its fractionalization into ethnic divisions, most of whom have been locally rather than nationally based. Despite the fact that a stratum depending on wage labour exists, it is not clear to what extent full demonstrable consciousness exists in this stratum. Attempts are being made by the radical wing of the technocratic class to recruit the working and peasant stratum in its fight against the political ruling class. One of the organizations now in operation for this purpose has been the mutual help organization led by Dr. Togba-Nah Tipoteh, called

* Robin Cohen refers to this category as the "intendant class", a term designated to illustrate the group's service function. He sees this class as "structurally linked to the status quo in a much more rigid sense than the working class proper in that their primary function is to service the state apparatus and the interests of the external estate ..." ("Class in Africa", p.. 249.

Susukuu.⁴¹ This organization has a difficult task ahead in its politicization of the Liberian peasant and working groups.

Towards a Theory of Social Change

The effectiveness of the analytical premises of dialectical theory in the study of social change in political arenas which do not lend themselves to easy social demarcations has been partly demonstrated in this study. It is the writer's strong belief at this point that theoretically confusing social systems such as Liberia's cannot be meaningfully understood, except through a careful, detailed study, using the historical and dialectical perspective of the various structural features undergoing change and their effect on one another. A static, descriptive analysis of an arena such as Liberia's is likely to generate great confusion and inadequate conclusions which might account for the theoretical shortcomings of much of the descriptive studies on Liberia.⁴²

A look at the state and social formations in Liberia in the past forty years shows marked changes in social structure after 1944. Only a historically dialectical analysis of this transitional period between 1930 and 1950 could have helped in the understanding of the major

⁴¹See "Susukuu: A Development Advisory Service For the Poor of Liberia." (A funding request document presented by the staff of Susukuu, May 25th, 1976).

⁴²Liebenow, The Evolution of Privilege, by adopting the conflict analysis in its study of the Liberian political system, and Merran Fraenkel, Tribe and Class in Monrovia, in its detailed focus on one small case study, made a clear departure from the generalizing, descriptive studies which characterized Liberian research at this time. Their contribution to the theoretical understanding of Liberia has been significant.

changes which were unfolding in Liberia at this time. On the surface, little seemed to have happened as the change of government from Barclay to Tubman occurred peacefully. However, Tubman's incorporation of the hinterland chiefdoms into the central government, and his invitation of investors to come to Liberia through his Open Door Policy transformed the isolationist state system of Barclay into a dynamic open system unprecedented in Liberian political history. The social relations which evolved from this State system could no longer be equated with past ones. We can now conclude that the class struggle within the Americo-Liberian family stratum which led to the radical transformation of the state into an industrially-based political economy, and to the emergence of a political class of ruling Americo-Liberian families and a technocratic class of Indigenous-Liberians, represented the creation of a new Liberian State apparatus.

Although the economic and financial dealings of the ruling class continue to be kept a State secret, important links still exist between the Americo-Liberian ruling families and the foreign commercial and transnational corporate interests, largely through the legal services of the Americo-Liberian law firms, the Americo-Liberian owned land leased to foreign business concerns, the State ownership of 50 percent of the shares of most Liberian concessions and the financial dealings in Liberian consulates and embassies in Europe, the United States and Japan for the registration of companies and commercial vessels (see Appendix A and the Liberian Yearbooks since 1944).

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

FIELDWORK AND METHODOLOGY

The fieldwork for this study was carried out in Monrovia from April to December 1973, May to August 1974 and November to December 1975. Several methodological techniques were used in the gathering of the data. In the absence of comprehensive studies on the Liberian political arena and useful statistical or survey material on the occupational breakdown in the public and private sectors, a thirty-four item questionnaire schedule was constructed. This schedule was in turn applied to sixty-eight informants who represented the various social categories found in Monrovia, such as the students, teachers, workers, traders, civil servants, diplomats, cabinet ministers, superintendents of counties, members of the legislature, traditional chiefs and members of the judiciary and the legal profession among others. This permitted an extensive survey of the various definitions of the political arena from both Liberian nationals and non-Liberians who were stationed or resident in Monrovia (see Appendices B, C and D).

A second questionnaire was administered in Monrovia with the aim of securing data relating to the voluntary associations which informants found crucial for access to jobs, government offices and channels of wealth. The initial list of associations which were selected for the sample was taken from responses to items #22, #33 and #34 in the first questionnaire schedule and from the Liberian Yearbooks. This latter questionnaire proved useful in the evaluation of the role of voluntary associations, such as the "crowds," the clubs, and the masonic

lodges, in the political mobility of groups and individuals in Monrovia.

Statistical reports and surveys from the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs, and the list of registered business concerns in the Registry of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Transportation provided basic background data on the distribution of economic resources. Ownership of business concerns, real estate and petty trades was also found in the public notices of title deeds in the "Liberian Age," The Liberian Directory and Who's Who, and from interviews of informants with regard to their participation in share, stock and investment ownership in the various concessions. However, this data was not sufficiently comprehensive as to provide a meaningful picture of total ownership.

Data collected through these survey and statistical sources during my extended fieldwork in 1973, provided a basic frame-of-reference for the observation of the processes which took place in the political arena. The delineation of group competition for political power, the patterns of emergence of the oligarchic and the technocratic structures, and the definition of kinship and ethnic boundaries became the major methodological task of the main fieldwork of 1973.

Strategies of political mobility were observed not only in the network and gossiping behavioural patterns of informants, but also from a systematic study of the family, the voluntary associations and school system. Family histories and informants' genealogies were found useful in the understanding of the relationship between family affiliation and politico-economic control. Much of this data on family politics was collected from information in the Liberian Official Gazette, sociology and anthropology students' term papers (which were assigned by the

researcher while he was lecturing at the University of Liberia in 1973) and from genealogical histories of informants.

Career histories of some key informants in Monrovia, together with the questionnaire study of the main voluntary associations, provided useful insight into the manipulation of voluntary associations as political strategy. I was also permitted access to associational meetings, social activities and achievements, which allowed a first-hand observation of their relevance and impact on the informants' lives and politico-economic survival.

Material relating to the educational system in Liberia was made available by the various bureaux of the Ministry of Education in Monrovia. This gave me access to their research documents, surveys and published material. Statistics on the school system from 1944 to 1971; papers from conferences on education in Liberia; annual reports and policy statements of the Ministry of Education, constituted the main source of documentary data in my study of the manipulation of education as political strategy in Liberia. Interviews with Liberian educators and directors of the Bureaux of education in the Ministry gave me some insight into the significance of the educational data in the behaviour of various competing strata in Liberia.

An analysis -- through participant observation and content analysis of documentary sources -- was made with reference to the manipulation of symbolic (kinship) strategies and instrumental (associational) strategies during the Presidency of William V. S. Tubman (1944-1971) and the current administration (1971-1974). Among the material surveyed were primary source documents on major socio-political events (such as The "Unification

Councils," the assassination attempt of 1955, the treason trial of Henry Fahnbulleh, among others). Speeches of public officials, reports and policy statements of Government offices, the collected papers of the Louis Arthur Grimes Collection, the Yancy Collection, the Albert Porte Papers and the writings and papers of Jangaba Johnson and those of Fatima Massaquoi-Fahnbulleh (from the African Imprint Library Services Microfilm), together with the University of Liberia Micro-Film holdings and Americo-Liberian family letters and papers, provided the main source of documentary data on the political strategies. The remaining information was secured by means of participant observation at State-functions, political rallies and independence-day celebrations and through constant personal calls on prominent officials in the Government, the Party and the local areas, together with immersion into the day-to-day activities of Americo-Liberian and Indigenous elite families in Monrovia as a researcher.

Fieldwork data on strategies of political mobility depended largely on the informants' explanation of their behaviour. Close contact and familiarity with events and people was essential in the understanding of current happenings in Monrovia and their relationship to other events in the past. Very little happened among the elites in Monrovia which escaped the scrutiny of the "grapevine" in Monrovia -- from moral scandals in bars and hotels, to highly classified Government information in the parlours of the Executive Mansion and the Masonic Temple. It was essential for a researcher to stay close to informants in order to keep abreast of these important activities in Monrovia. The informant's explanation of symbolic behaviour and seemingly unrelated activities was enlightening in the

understanding of kinship and ethnic boundaries in political competition. What constituted a struggle for political office and politico-economic control could be brought into focus only by the informants' interpretation of activities which to the outsider seemed trivial and inconsequential. As a result, these explanations in informal conversations in people's homes, at lunch breaks in the university cafeteria, the Ministry of Finance Cafeteria and Rosylin Cafe (which was strongly patronized by the Liberian elite during lunch hours), and in the many social functions both state and private, provided much of the data on symbolic and instrumental strategies.

Information pertaining to the masonic lodges and fraternal orders were made available mostly through the help of key informants who were students at the University of Liberia at the time. The ritual of secrecy which was imposed on most financial, business and commercial activities of the most prominent members of the Liberian freemasons, and fraternal orders, presented a major obstacle to the collection of crucial data pertaining to ownership, availability of capital, its repatriation, its use in Liberia and abroad, and the precise role played by the Liberian ruling class in the economic arena. The extensive outlay of capital in masonic and fraternal parades, membership initiation rituals and the countless festivities, along with the tight control of the entire state apparatus, the real-estate market, law-firms and individual rubber planting, clearly indicated the presence of extensive economic activity among the ruling families in Liberia.

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE SAMPLE

November 1973

CATEGORY	NUMBER	POSSIBLE RESPONDENT
1. STUDENTS	2 Males 2 Co-Eds	
2. UNIVERSITY INSTRUCTORS	1 Liberian 1 Foreigner	
3. SCHOOL TEACHER	2 Liberians	
4. MEMBER OF A YOUTH MOVEMENT	Any two	
5. URBAN YOUTH COUNCIL	1 Member in the Executive	
6. THE MOVEMENT FOR JUSTICE IN AFRICA (MOJA)	1 Member	
7. CIVIL SERVANTS	1 from each of the 16 ministries:	
		1. Foreign Affairs 2. Finance 3. Justice 4. Postal Affairs 5. Defense 6. Local Gov. Rd. & Ur. 7. Education 8. Public Works 9. Agriculture 10. Health and Welfare 11. Commerce, Ind. & Trans. 12. Inf. & Cult. Aff. & Tourism 13. Plan. & Econ. Affairs 14. Presidential Affairs 15. Lands and Mines 16. You-Labour & Sports 17. Public Utilities Authority
8. WORKERS AND/OR MEMBERS OF THE CIO	Any two	
9. LIBERIAN TRADERS	Any two	

*AL = Americo-Liberian

*IL = Indigenous-Liberian

CATEGORY	NUMBER	POSSIBLE RESPONDENT
10. TAXI AND BUS DRIVERS	Any two	
11. DOMESTIC AND FARM HANDS	Any two	
12. MIGRANTS AND TRANSIENTS (THE GURLEY STREET CROWD)	Any two	
13. MERCHANTS AND BUSINESS	1 Lebanese 1 Indian	
14. EMPLOYEES OF FOREIGN CONCERNS (NON-LIBERIANS)	Any two	
15. DIPLOMATS, UNDP STAFF AND PEACE CORPS	Any three	
16. MISSIONARIES AND MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL	2 non-Liberians 2 Liberians	
17. LIBERIAN MANAGERS OF FOREIGN COMPANIES	2	
18. MEMBERS OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION	Any two (AL & IL)*	
19. DIRECTORS OF BUREAUS AND ASSISTANT MINISTERS	2 (AL)* 2 (IL)*	
20. HEADS OF MINISTRIES	2 (IL & AL)	
21. SUPERINTENDENTS AND COMMISSIONERS	Any two	
22. MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES	Any two	
23. PARAMOUNT, CLAN OR TOWN CHIEF	Any two	
24. THE MILITARY	Any two	

TOTAL

APPENDIX C

A STUDY OF THE PROFESSIONAL AND CAREER ASPIRATIONS OF
LIBERIAN YOUTH IN URBAN AREAS

CONDUCTED BY:

DATE: November 1973

Professor Stephen Hlope
Dept. of Anthropology and Sociology
The University of Liberia.

1. What is your job? _____
2. What is your present permanent address? _____
3. If you do not reside in Monrovia, where do you reside? _____
4. How long have you lived in Monrovia? _____
How long have you lived in Liberia? _____
5. Which is the highest job that any Liberian can get in Monrovia? _____
in counties? _____
6. Which is the highest job that you want to get? _____
7. Which occupational positions are taken by all Liberians to be the
top influential jobs? _____

Enumerate them according to their rank from the
highest to the lowest:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

8. Is it possible to become the richest man in Liberia if you had the
jobs you mentioned under (7)? How? Explain. _____

9. Which families do you take to be the richest and influential in
Monrovia? _____ in Cape Palmas? _____
in Grand Bassa _____ in Cape Mount _____
in Nimba _____ in Lofa _____
in Sinoe _____ in Grand Gedeh _____

10. Were these families in (#9) in the same position before 1960; if not, who were the "Big Shots" at this time?

in Monrovia _____
in Cape Palmas _____
in Lofa _____
in Grand Bassa _____
in Eastern Province _____

11. Are the top jobs that you mentioned under (#7)

Political _____
Business _____
Military _____

12. Who decides which job or profession is the highest in Liberia?

The people _____
The government _____
The concessions _____
The foreigners _____

13. In your opinion why are these jobs (in #7) top jobs?

The size of the pay check _____
The cars, houses and office _____
The number of people you meet _____
The different places you travel
to for meetings now and then _____
The number of people you control _____
The number and type of important
decisions that you have to make _____

14. Is it necessary that you be a Liberian to get these jobs? _____

15. All the people who have these jobs, are they all Liberians? If not, how then did they get these jobs?

16. What should I do as a Liberian to get to these positions?

Get education _____
Training _____
Family connections _____
Join the society _____
Or other _____

17. What are some of the factors which can prohibit a Liberian from getting such a high position?

18. Do you have any friends or relatives in any of these jobs? Who are they?

19. What kind of material things do the successful Liberian families own?

20. What are you doing to attain one or all of these high positions?

21. What is the highest standard of education or training you have reached so far?

Poro/Sande School _____
Elementary _____
Secondary _____
Technical School _____
High School _____
University _____

22. Are you a member of any voluntary association (clubs) such as the YMCA, the Circle Club, the Go-Getters, etc.? Please give the names and your rank in the club.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Are you very active in all these clubs or some of them? Which ones?

23. Which Liberian dialects do you speak fluently?

24. Do you consider yourself a member of any Liberian ethnic group? Which one(s)?

25. Why do you consider yourself a member of the Liberian ethnic group you mentioned in (#24) above?

26. What chances and opportunities do you think you have to make it to the highest position in Monrovia or in the counties?

ITEMS FOR SENIOR LIBERIAN CIVIL SERVANTS AND PROFESSIONALS

27. How do you account for your success in your professional career?

Education _____
Personal Contacts _____
Family Assistance _____
Other factors _____

28. Is your occupational achievement unique for a Liberian or would you describe it as usual? Why?

29. Are you also engaged in business and/or real estate and private enterprise which you could consider as successful? If so, which ones? _____

30. Would you encourage Liberian youth with high aspirations to use you as their model of success?

31. What specific aspects of your success would you encourage them to follow?

32. Which Liberian individual could you claim as having provided an example and model for your success?

Was this Liberian individual also partially instrumental in your success? How?

33. Which voluntary association(s), social clubs, and fraternities would you strongly recommend for a Liberian young person to join if they wanted to succeed in their careers and businesses?

How far up the socio-economic ladder do you think such active associational participation would carry them?

34. What other advice do you have for Liberian youth at the university and technical/training school level?

APPENDIX D

A STUDY OF LIBERIAN YOUTH'S PARTICIPATION IN
VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS

1. Name of the club _____
2. When founded _____
3. Criteria for membership
 - (1) _____
 - (2) _____
 - (3) _____
 - (4) _____
 - (5) _____
4. Purpose for launching the association.
5. What are some of the association's accomplishments since its establishment?
 - (1) _____
 - (2) _____
 - (3) _____
 - (4) _____
 - (5) _____
6. Who are some of the prominent members of the association?
7. Is their prominence attributed to joining the club (association)?
How?
8. If not, would membership help in an individual's improvement? How?
 - (a) Occupationally - how? _____
 - (b) Financially - how? _____
 - (c) Educationally - how? _____
 - (d) Politically - how? _____
 - (e) Socially - how? _____
9. Is this club open to all people regardless of educational and professional background?

If not, what categories of people qualify for membership? Are they exclusively Liberian?
10. Are members expected to help one another in times of distress?
11. Does the club also help its bachelor members to meet prominent female partners for marriage?

12. What are the activities of the club during the club's season, e.g.
in 1973 _____
1972 _____
1971 _____
1970 _____
13. Who are the founding members of the association?
14. How is the association improving in its membership since the beginning of 1973?
15. What are members expected to contribute in terms of their activities to the association?
16. How do you deal with members who seriously fail in their responsibilities?

Have you had to enforce this disciplinary measure on members recently?
17. Among the current members do you have any who are very fluent in a Liberian dialect? Who?

APPENDIX E

GRAND MASTERS OF THE GRAND LODGE OF THE ANCIENT, FREE AND
ACCEPTED MASONS OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA FROM
1867-1975

Thomas H. Amos
Jenkins J. Roberts
Beverly P. Yates
C. B. Dunbar, Sr.
Reginald A. Sherman
William M. Davis
C. T. O. King
Alfred B. King
Hilary W. Travis
William D. Coleman
A. Benjamin Stubblefield
C. B. Dunbar, Jr.
C. D. B. King
Nathaniel A. B. Cassell
W. O. Davies-Bright
Joseph S. Dennis
John C. A. Gibson, Sr.
Joseph Fulton Dunbar
Anthony Barclay
Louis Arthur Grimes
C. L. Simpson, Sr.
W. V. S. Tubman
Christian Abayomi Cassell
C. T. O. King, II
Richard Abrom Henries
Frank E. Tolbert
William R. Tolbert, Jr.
McKinley A. Deshield, Sr.
Everett J. Goodridge
James E. Greene

Source: Proceedings of the Seventh Masonic Convention of the Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons, Republic of Liberia, held at Lower Buchanan, Grand Bassa County (Sunday, January 6th to 11th, 1957) and the Official Souvenir Programme for the Installation of the Most Worshipful Grand Master, Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons, Republic of Liberia (Thursday, December 27th, 1973).

APPENDIX F

LIST OF SUBORDINATE LODGES OF THE ANCIENT, FREE AND
ACCEPTED MASONS, REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA -- 1974

1. Oriental Lodge No. 1 -- Monrovia
2. St. Paul Lodge No. 2 -- Clayashland, Montserrado County
3. St. John's Lodge No. 3 -- Monrovia
4. Excelsior Lodge No. 4 -- Greenville
5. Rising Sun Lodge No. 5 -- Grand Bassa County
6. Morning Star Lodge No. 6 -- Maryland County
7. Widow's Son Lodge No. 7 -- Grand Cape Mount County
8. Unknown -- Problems within lodge led to its suppression (Bassa County)
9. Evening Star Lodge No. 9 -- Grand Bassa County
10. Amos Lodge No. 10 -- Grand Bassa County
11. Hiram Lodge No. 11 -- Grand Bassa County
12. Alexander Tubman Lodge No. 12 -- Rivercess Territory
13. Mount Mariah Lodge No. 13 -- Kakata
14. Cedar Lodge No. 14 -- predominantly Lebanese (Monrovia)
15. W. V. S. Tubman Lodge No. 15 -- Lofa County
16. Harmony Lodge No. 16 -- Bomi Territory
17. Blazing Star Lodge No. 17 -- Schiefflin, Marshall Territory
18. Eureka Lodge No. 18 -- Bong County

APPENDIX G

RUBBER PLANTERS ASSOCIATION OF LIBERIA
REGULAR MEMBERS AS AT CLOSE OF BUSINESS
ON 31st DECEMBER, 1972

ABCO PLANTATIONS
AFRICAN FRUIT COMPANY LAEISE & COMPANY
ALAN L. GRANT COMPANY (LIBERIA) LIMITED
ATKINS, Kenneth J. (Dr.)

BEER, Thomas Max
BERNARD, Thomas W-
BESTMAN, James P.
BEYSOLOW, J. D. (Estate)
B. F. GOODRICH (LIBERIA) INC.
BLANTON, Daniel M.
BRACEWELL, J. Pholman, Jr.
BRIGHT, Richard S. S.
BROWN, Marie (Dr.)
BUTLER, Mary E. Ricks (Mrs.)
BUTLER, Samuel H.
BUSH, James, Sr.

CAMPBELL, C. Wellington (Estate)
CLEMENS, Major E.
COLE, Samuel B. & Oretha E. Phelps
CONSTANCE, J. Nyema
COOPER, C. E. (Estate)
COOPER, Charles Edward
COOPER, J. F. (Estate)
COOPER, John L. (Enterprises)
COOPER, John W. (Estate)
COOPER, Roland H.
CUMMINGS, Alexander B.

DAHN, Samuel G.
DENNIS, Ernest E.
DENNIS, Jacqueline A. (Mrs.)
DENNIS, Francis A.
DENNIS, William E., Sr.
DESHIELD, McKinley A. Sr.
DOE, James B.

FARNGALO, Gabriel G.
FIRESTONE PLANTATIONS COMPANY
FREEMAN, Austin M.

GOAKAI, Lawrence M.
GORGLA, T. Hector Milton
GRIGSBY, John W.
GRIMES, Doris D. (Mrs.)

HALLOWANGER, John C. H.
HOFF, Edward
HOFF, Henry D.
HORACE, S. Raymond
HORTON, A. Romeo (Mr. & Mrs.)
HORTON, D. R. (Estate)

JOHNSON, Marie Davies (Mrs.)
JUPITER, Williette O. (Mrs.)

KAMARA, J. Momolu
KETTER, M. Alexander

LAWRENCE, J. Dudley
LIBERIAN AGRICULTURAL COMPANY (UNIROYAL)

MAJOR, Taylor E.
McCLAIN, Edward B.
McGILL, Charles S.
MIRANDER, Joyce Brown (Mrs.)
MORGAN, J. Edwin
MORGAN, Lawrence A.
MORGAN, Lavfayette K.
MORRIS, Harry L.

PADMORE, George A.
PADMORE, Rocheforte
PEAL, S. Edward

REEVES, Eden C.
RENNIE, C. H. (Estate)
RICHARDS, Joseph G.
ROBERTS, Charles B.

SALALA RUBBER CORPORATION
SHERMAN, Arthur
SHERMAN, Charles D.
STEWART, Frank J.
STEWART, William E.
SMYTHE, Edith (Mrs.)

THE LIBERIA COMPANY
THOMSON, Wheaton S.
TOLBERT, William R., Jr.
TUBMAN, William V. S. (Estate)

WARNER, Daniel B.
WILES, Reid
WILLIAMS, Allen H.

VICENTE MUNARRIZ CORPORATION

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP AS AT THE CLOSE
OF BUSINESS ON 31st DECEMBER, 1972

ADORKOR, Jeffries K.

BAKER, Goda M. W. (Mr. & Mrs.)
BONDO, Wesley K.
BREWER, Herbert R. W.

CLEMENS, Cynthia (Mrs.)
COOPER, James E.
COOPER, Joseph N.

JOHNSON, Archibald C. (Dr.)
JOHNSON, Catherine (Mrs.)

KARNLEY, Samuel D.

MOORE, George T. MOLLEY, Moses
MORRIS, Chauncy J.

RICHARDS, Christine

SMALLWOOD, Ephraim W.

TOOMEY, Thomas T.
TUBMAN, Moses N.

WEH, Jacob Ben
WESLEY, Edward J.
WILLIAMS, Florence E. (Mrs.)

APPENDIX H

ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC STATISTICS

TABLE I

MAJOR OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS OF THE WORKING POPULATION 10 YEARS AND OVER, BY ETHNICITY AND SEX: 1962

SEX AND ETHNIC ORIGIN	MAJOR OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS					
	ALL OCCUPATIONS	* Professional Technical and Related Work	* Administrative Executive and Managerial Workers	Clerical Workers	Sales Workers	* Farmers and Lumbermen
1 Ethnic Groups	411,794	7,615	2,116	4,537	11,080	319,025
le	263,560	5,590	1,923	3,956	7,186	180,920
ssa	41,159	707	215	574	823	25,768
lle	1,322	25	2	9	20	911
y	1,355	24	3	20	26	1,000
andi	7,027	139	14	94	129	5,073
o	22,452	133	102	100	279	18,450
la	12,205	210	50	198	188	8,899
ebo *	17,487	536 *	159 *	328	149	13,146
elle	57,180	435	105	405	609	48,502
ssi	10,811	96	39	68	121	8,457
ahn	12,102	186	104	123	171	8,304
u *	17,510	875 *	282 *	632	185	9,012
na	14,058	316	51	252	219	8,886
ndingo	8,856	114	34	59	2,124	3,674
no	19,740	162	76	164	228	15,276
nde	1,986	77	10	79	71	1,026
i *	6,889	218 *	70	183	205	3,619
ner Liberian Groups	680	44	12	30	25	241
erico-Liberian	7,500	1,142	563	445	1,465	545
ate	1,932	17	5	42	41	12
ner Africans	863	92	19	112	85	77

MAJOR OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS

SEX AND ETHNIC ORIGIN	* Fishermen and Hunters	Miners and Quarrymen	Transportation and Communication Workers	Other craftsmen, operatives and labourers	Service and Recreation Workers	Production Process and Related Workers	Other Workers not adequately described
All Ethnic Groups	5,233	6,990	6,104	12,366	8,034	21,786	6,908
Male	5,078	6,773	5,980	11,941	7,010	21,041	6,162
Bassa	428	585	1,198	2,291	2,503	5,438	629
Belle	8	10	25	61	49	66	136
Bo	6	14	38	35	23	150	16
Bandi	24	114	129	264	136	747	164
Bo	171	872	330	573	384	689	369
Bola	43	356	273	492	183	1,173	140
Grebo	179	171	294	801	397	1,105	222
Belle	106	588	747	2,062	811	1,868	942
Bassi	17	275	155	627	163	680	113
Bahn	150	959	216	504	264	744	377
Bu	1,884	167	590	1,313	631	1,510	429
Boma	36	130	440	662	428	1,416	1,222
Bandingo	16	1,365	483	216	66	584	121
Bund	145	484	240	1,324	518	829	285
Bende	19	160	86	104	63	259	32
Bi	40	248	282	227	141	1,494	162
Other Liberian Groups	10	19	29	47	39	142	42
Americo-Liberian	138	136	290	276	175	1,634	691
Bante	1,599	1	28	4	4	192	19
Other Africans	39	53	62	44	21	225	34

Area and Population: 111,369 sq.km. Total Pop.: (1962) 1,016,443; (1970 estimate) 1,171,000 or 10.5 per sq. km.
 Monrovia : (1962) 80,992; (1970 estimate) 96,226

Source: The Republic of Liberia 1962 Census of Population (Monrovia: The Bureau of Planning Statistics, Office of National Planning, PC-B, July 30th 1964), p. 1-24. See also United Nations Demographic Yearbook 1970.

* The Vai-Kru-Grebo Dominant Technocratic Groups

TABLE 2: VALUE OF EXPORTS BY LEADING COUNTRIES OF DESTINATION 1964-1966
(Figures in U.S. \$)

Country of Destination	1964		1965		1966	
	Value	Percent	Value	Percent	Value	Percent
All Countries	125,672,244	100.0	135,418,231	100.0	150,458,592	100.0
United States	57,324,838	45.6	49,972,828	36.9	52,322,250	34.8
West Germany	26,873,464	21.4	36,210,818	26.7	42,511,005	28.2
United Kingdom	14,242,833	11.3	10,021,044	7.4	12,726,421	8.4
Netherlands	6,791,002	5.4	7,178,932	5.3	8,459,579	5.6
France	5,298,305	4.9	5,949,701	4.4	7,790,666	5.2
Belgium	5,253,660	4.2	8,174,102	6.0	8,238,739	5.5
Italy	5,250,660	4.0	12,189,877	9.0	11,538,517	7.7
Japan	1,471	0.1	1,705,826	4.3	2,203,661	1.5
Sweden	-	-	-	-	1,631,927	1.1
Other Countries	3,744,362	3.0	4,015,103	3.0	3,036,007	2.0

TABLE 3: VALUE OF IMPORTS BY LEADING COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN 1964-1966
(Figures in U.S. \$)

Country of Origin	1964		1965		1966	
	Value	Percent	Value	Percent	Value	Percent
All Countries	111,153,162	100.0	104,789,504	100.0	113,664,416	100.0
United States	44,079,288	39.7	49,539,618	47.3	50,641,746	44.6
West Germany	21,844,703	19.6	12,697,902	12.1	14,317,218	12.6
United Kingdom	10,744,573	9.7	10,506,844	10.0	10,587,221	9.3
Japan	4,613,216	4.1	4,970,493	4.7	4,033,074	3.5
Sweden	4,439,731	4.0	3,782,299	3.6	4,033,074	3.5
Netherlands	6,506,784	5.9	3,689,596	3.5	4,494,994	4.0
Italy	1,766,978	1.6	2,702,389	2.6	1,942,733	1.7
France	2,367,642	2.1	2,124,880	2.0	3,045,439	2.7
Other Countries	14,790,202	13.3	14,775,472	14.1	17,149,910	15.0

Source: Department of Information and Cultural Affairs, Liberia: Open Door to Travel and Investment (Monrovia, 1967), pp. 42-43. What these figures have not shown is the amount of Grants-in-Aid to Liberia from the United States. Between 1946 and 1969 the total U.S. Official flows to Liberia

amounted to \$217.1 million nearly 50% of which was Grants-in-Aid. To the U.S. flows of the 1946-1969 period must be added \$19.7 million from European Countries. (See Assistant Minister of Revenue, Dr. Byron Tarr, "Factors Affecting Liberian Fiscal Effort" A Paper presented at the Bi-Annual Meetings of the Liberian Studies Conference, Monrovia Liberia, May 18, 1973, also by the same author, "Efficiency in Revenue Generation: A Measure of Ability to Promote Economic Development," An Unpublished Dissertation in Economics at the University of Illinois, 1972).