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University Abdel Hamid Ibn Badiss of Mostaganem**

Faculty of Foreign Languages

Department of English



MASTER II

**Liberia and the Clash between African Tradition and Modernity
(1847-2003)**

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Submitted by: Bekri Zahia

Board of Examiners:

Chairperson: Ms. Rezgua

Supervisor: Ms. Aissat Djamila

Examiner: Ms Ghernout

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my family, all my professors, my friends who encouraged and supported me, and all the people in my life who touch my heart.

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Abstract

The founding of republic Liberia began in the early of ninetieth century. The American Colonization Society founded Liberia as a colony for freed slaves from the United States, over the next few decades, thousands of freed slaves were sent to Liberia. In 1847, the Americo-Liberian declared the independence of the Republic of Liberia, and it became the first independent nation in Africa. Americo-Liberians are Liberians of African American descent, however, from the beginning the relationship between the African-American arrivals and indigenous Liberians who were already present in Liberia, was similar to the European colonialism in the rest of Africa. This study shows how Americo-Liberians were impacted by the White supremacy and western culture, and established an oppressive regime over the indigenous people, which led to the rise of conflict between the two groups and entered the country in a long brutal civil war. The objective of this study is to explore the historical roots of the Liberian crisis.

Key words: Liberia, Americo-Liberians, Civil War.

List of abbreviations

ACS The American Colonization Society

U.N.I.A the Universal Negro Improvement Association

AFL Armed Forces of Liberia

USA United States of America

ECOWAS Economic Community of West African States

INPFL Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia

LURD Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy

MODEL Movement for Democracy in Liberia

NPFL National Patriotic Front of Liberia

TRC Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia

ULIMO United Liberation Movement

TWPT The True Whig Party

PAL The Progressive Alliance of Liberia

PRC Peoples Redemption Council

NDP National Democratic Party of Liberia

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General Introduction

Liberia is one of the two African countries that remained independent during the European Scramble for Africa. The fact that Liberia has never been colonized especially during the scramble for Africa motivated me to read more about this country; in 1822, the American Colonization Society founded Liberia as a colony for free African Americans, the (ACS) controlled the colony until the settlers declare their independence from the Society in 1847. Before the coming of American expatriates, many ethnic groups were already present in the area. The settlers known as Americo-Liberians marginalized the indigenous Liberians, and dominated political institutions and controlled the country's economic resources; they ruled the country until the military coup of 1989.

From the beginning the Relation between Americo-Liberians and indigenous Liberians was marked almost by mutual ethnocentrism, which led in turn to conflict and rise of clashes between them, the question here is what led to the clashes between the Americo-Liberians and the indigenous people, and what are the results of these clash?. It was hypothesized that Americo Liberians adopted western culture, also Ethnicity and the difference between Liberians led to the conflict between the two groups. This dissertation divided in three chapters:

First, chapter one dealt with the establishment of Liberia from the formation of American Colonization Society and the direct control until the independence from (ACS), and I will discuss the idea the Back to Africa movement which led by Marcus Garvey, Garvey wanted for African-American and afro-descendant return to Africa and establish an independent black state, Garvey sees Liberia as the best place for the repatriation of the afro-descendant, but Marcus Garvey failed in his project.

Chapter two dealt with the long settlement of Americo-Liberians and the Americo-Liberian hegemony over the indigenous Liberians, I will tackle with how these settlers affected by western culture and established an oppressive regime over the indigenous people, and they saw them as “uncivilized”, they treated them as enslaved people; the indigenous Liberians were the victims of racial oppression.

Despite the effort of Presidents Tubman and Tolbert to reach out to the indigenous peoples and increase their involvement in government and society, but their efforts were insufficient. The antagonistic relationship between the Americo-Liberians and indigenous Liberians ended by the military coup led by indigenous Liberians.

Finally, in the third chapter I dealt with the rise of the clashes between the Americo-Liberians and indigenous Liberians and the results of these clashes. By the 1970s, the tension within Liberia was escalating, when Tolbert proposed to raise the price of rice, Riots broke out in 1979, These unresolved crises exacerbated the Liberian situation led to the military coup of 1980 led by indigenous Liberians, who ended the Americo-Liberian rule of 133 years, intensified ethnic tensions increased, civil war broke out in and continued until 2003.

The civil war devastated the nation, and caused the death of thousand people. I argue that the hostility between the Americo-Liberian and indigenous people was the main cause of the Liberian crisis.

Historical Background

Introduction

The Portuguese explorers were the first who reached the Liberian coast in 1461, they gave it the name Grand Cape Mount, Cape Mesurado (Montserrado), and Cape Palmas, later the area became called the Grain Coast because of it was rich by the malagueata pepper grains. (Van Dar Kraaiji)

Before the arrival of Portuguese, there were several distinct ethnic groups living in Liberia for a thousand years. With the rise of the transatlantic trade, Coastal groups traded several goods with Europeans, such as slave trade. The European traders relied on Kru¹ sailors who became the primary middlemen in the trade, the Kru began working with European traders, and because of that the Europeans began referring to the coast as Kru Country, although the Kru was one of the smaller ethnic groups in Liberia.

By the Beginning of the nineteenth century, the tide started to rise in favor of the abolition of slavery, and as a reaction to America's social crisis created by the use of Africans as slave labor, a group of prominent Americans formed an association, which became the American Colonization Society, and they suggested that Grain Coast is a suitable home for freed American slaves, and they started a movement to return free African-Americans to the land that they selected which later became Liberia.

I. The establishment of Liberia

I.1 The American Colonization Society

The establishment of the American Colonization Society (ACS) eventually led to establishment of the Republican State of Liberia, The founding of Liberia began in the early of nineteenth century, it was motivated by the domestic politics of slavery in the United States because of the number of free blacks increased and also because of U.S. foreign policy interests. In 1816, a group of white Americans made up mostly of Quakers², clergymen and

¹ The **Kru** or Kroo are a West African ethnic group who originated in eastern Liberia and migrated and settled along various points of the West African coast.

² A Christian movement founded by George Fox c. in the seventeen century, formally known as the Religious Society of Friends, the Quakers belief is the 'Inner Light'; it means the presence of God exists in every person the 'Inner Light'.

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slaveholders founded an organization named the American Colonization Society (ACS), the Quakers opposed slavery, and the slaveholders opposed the freedom of Blacks, they wished to rid the United States of free black people who might have challenged the institution of slavery, and others were pessimistic that blacks and whites could ever live together in peace. The Quakers also saw repatriation as a way of spreading Christianity through Africa, while both positions agreed on one thing that Black Americans should be repatriated to Africa. The Society's members were supported by the Congress and the President of United States.

Between 1818 to 1847 the American Colonization Society (ACS) started the process of emigration and repatriation of free persons of African heritage back to Africa. In 1819, the ACS received \$100,000 from Congress, and in January 1820 the first ship *the Elizabeth* sailed from New York headed for West Africa with three white the ACS agents and 88 emigrants. (M. Juang and Morrisette 2008)

The ship arrived first at Freetown, in Sierra Leone then sailed south to what is now the Northern coast of Liberia and made an effort to establish a settlement. All three whites and 22 of the emigrants died within three weeks because of yellow fever, the remainders returned to Sierra Leone and waited for another ship, it was difficult for the early settlers, who were mostly of free-born blacks to adapt because of the hard conditions in the west coast and the diseases, and most of them were not born into slavery, but were denied from the full rights of American citizenship. The native Africans resisted the expansion of the settlers resulting in many armed conflicts, nevertheless, in the next decade thousands of African-Americans migrated to the area, also, the colony entered an agreement with the U.S. Government to accept freed slaves captured from slave ships.

In 1819 the USA banned the slave trade, the president of American Colonization Society Bushrod Washington was granted permission by President James Monroe to execute the

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Congressional Act in Africa, and US ships intercepted ships carrying slaves. In 1822, the first 86 voluntary, Black emigrants landed on Cape Montserrado on what was then known as the Grain Coast, they arrived with white agents of the ACS who would govern them for many years. Many others followed, settling on land sometimes purchased, sometimes obtained more forcefully, from indigenous chiefs.

The colony of Liberia was founded on the west coast in 1822 and in 1824 the settlement was named Monrovia after the fifth US President James Monroe, who before becoming president had been a prominent member of ACS, and the colony became the Republic of Liberia. Before independence of Liberia the American Colonization Society controlled every aspect of settler life because they had all political and judicial power in the colony. According to the ACS the emigrants were incapable of self-sustainment and self-government; thus emigrants were not entitled to make laws or elect their own leaders.

The objective of ACS was not only to establish on the coast of Africa a colony for the removal of free and enslaved African Americans, but also appealing to any potential supporters who were interested in spreading an empire of American culture, civilization, Christianity, and commerce.

By the 1840s, the Americo-liberians became sufficiently strong to demand independence from the ACS. On July 23, 1847, Liberia declared independence from the American Colonization Society in order to establish a sovereign state and create its own laws governing commerce, J.J. Roberts was elected as its first President, the Americo-Liberians assumed the duties of running the nation, and they made it clear that the land will belong only to people of African descent.

^{3 3} In 1819 Congress passed an act to interdict slave traders, the law also provided that the slaves be returned to Africa, rather than being sold. , The act authorized the president to send ships of the United States, to be employed to cruise on the coast of Africa to rescued slaves and return them to the continent of their birth.

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London was the first to extend recognition to the new republic, signing a treaty of commerce and friendship with Monrovia in 1848. Because of fears of the impact this might have on the issue of slavery in the United States, Washington did not recognize the nation it had played a role in creating; the United States did not recognize Liberia as an independent nation until 1862, when the US federal government abolished slavery during the American Civil War.

II. Liberia land and people

Liberia is Located in the West African Forest Zone, modern Liberia is bordered by Sierra Leone to the west and Ivory coast to the east, It has a population of about 4.5 million people and more than 20 local languages are spoken, English is the official language, but is spoken by only about 20% of the population, traditional religions are practiced by about 40% of the people; another 40% are Christian, and 20% are Muslim.

The population in Liberia is ethnically diverse, prior to the arrival of American expatriates, in the territory resided about 16 major ethnic groups: the Kru, Melreside, Gbandi, Bassa, Gio, Dei, Gola, Grebo, Kissi, Kpelle, Kuwaa (Belle), Loma, Ma (Mano), Mandingo, Vai, and Krahn. They practiced indigenous African religions or Islam. There were also secret societies called Poros and Sandes that served important roles in maintaining social norms and traditions, indigenous African communities followed their traditional patterns.

Liberia's population divided into two categories, indigenous Liberians and Americo-Liberians. Indigenous Liberians are descendants of African ethnic groups who already inhabited the area when the first African American settlers arrived and constituted the vast majority of the population (about 97%), Americo-Liberians comprising 3% of the population, they are largely made up of the descendants of three groups: African American settlers who

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founded Liberia consisting largely of “Mulattos⁴”, freed Afro-Caribbean slaves, and Africans captured on U.S.-bound slave ships by the U.S. Navy also known as “Congos”².

After the turn of the century, the settlers had established a system of military and administrative control over what was known as the “hinterland,” or the interior.

This area consisted of the land outside of the colonization society settlements that had been recognized by the international community as under the control of the settler-led government in Monrovia; the hinterland made up the vast bulk of Liberian territory.

The Liberian Frontier Force, which later became the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), was used as the primary instrument of control in the hinterland.

Liberia, whose name means "land of freedom," has always struggled with its double cultural heritage that of the settlers and of the natives Africans. The effect of slavery and racism in America had a huge impact on Liberia's ruling class and thus Liberia's destiny, the Americo-Liberian conveyed the European culture supremacy, the oppression they characterized was virtually identical to European colonial rule during the scramble for Africa, they saw themselves as a superior cultural group, and they saw the indigenous as a collective inferior cultural group.

III. Marcus Garvey and Liberia

"A people without the knowledge of their past history,
Origin and culture is like a tree without roots"
Marcus Garvey

III.2 Back to Africa movement

In the Beginning of 1822, the American Colonization Society (ACS) resettled thousands of freeborn blacks and freed slaves in a region in West Africa that became Liberia. The motives

⁴ Mulattos” light-complexioned people of mixed Black and White ancestry

⁴ many of slaves captures were originally from the Congo River region of Africa, they were called Congos.” For much of Liberia's early history, the Congo were classed below the Americo-Liberians.

However, over the years the two groups joined and the terms “Americo-Liberian” and “Congo” were used interchangeably.

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behind the resettlement of free slaves was that many in the group genuinely wished to end slavery and resettle blacks for their own welfare, other's reasons was a politically expedient way to handle a growing number of freed blacks in the upper South. Many freed blacks asked to return to Africa, most had never seen Africa, but they always imagined as the home of their ancestors.

By the early twentieth century, Marcus Garvey championed a back-to-Africa movement, He was a Black Nationalist leader, and a Pan Africanist, Marcus Mosiah Garvey was born on August 17,1887 in St. Anne's Bay, Jamaica, West India; Garvey's parents were not wealthy, they couldn't send him to secondary school and college in England, but he received entire formal education at a local elementary school, he wasn't aware of any racial segregation during his young life, Garvey was raised in segregation of whites and blacks, he had a few white childhood friends, one of his white friends called him "nigger", Garvey was told to his white friends were not allowed to see him anymore (Sewell 18), and this was the first taste of racism; at age 14, Garvey was forced to leave school, and he apprenticed to learn the printing with his godfather; in 1904, Garvey found employment at one of Jamaica's largest printing firms, the P.A. Benjamin Company in Kingston, three years later, he took a part in a printer's strike, with this event his love for political activism started. By 1910 Garvey had made a name for himself in Jamaica, he joined The National Club, the first organization in Jamaica which introduced anti-colonial thinking into Jamaica, Garvey became a writer and politician. He traveled throughout Central America to see if blacks were treated the same way in other countries, and he worked as a newspaper editor, Garvey experienced the same condition around Central America as he found in Jamaica, but when he traveled to England, he was surprised that the blacks in England were not segregated, like in the west; during his stay in England, Garvey identified closely on the Pan-African movement, and became a Pan African nationalist strongly influenced by Booker T. Washington.

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In 1914, Garvey left England and returned to Jamaica, and founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association (U.N.I.A.). The main objective of this organization was to set up a separate but equal collegiate educational system for Black Jamaicans, because Garvey was convinced that education was the means to liberate his people and to develop a Black consciousness so that Black people could reach political, economic and cultural independence. The U.N.I.A purpose to improve the lives of blacks around the world and to help and elevate its community by advocating redemption through repatriation, and to unite people of color globally.

Marcus Garvey moved to the United States in 1916, in the hope of sharing his views with Booker T. Washington, but unfortunately when he arrived Washington was dead by this time. Garvey settled in Harlem (New York), and he set a branch of UNIA there, he ended up spending many years in the US strengthening the back-to-Africa movement he started.

He came at a perfect time because it was the beginning of strong African-American movements to further the black race, he promoted a separatist philosophy of social, political, and economic freedom for blacks; Garvey believed that Blacks couldn't live free and be respected in the USA, he urged American Blacks to be proud of their race and preached their return to their ancestral homeland. The UNIA in the United States attracted a large following, its ideology attracted a strong working class following, According to Edmund D. Cronon, it “contained 2,000 members within three weeks.” (Cronon, pg.43, 46-46) And within a few years, Garvey became one of the best known Black leaders in the USA and perhaps in the entire world.

With the success of his movement and support from his people, he felt some kind of economic stronghold should be started, in 1919, Marcus Garvey and the U.N.I.A launched the Black Star Line, a shipping company, that should serve a repatriation project to Africa and

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establish trade and commerce between Africans in America, the Caribbean, South and Central America, Canada and Africa. Today, everyone agrees that Marcus Garvey's Black Star Line stands as a strong symbol of Pan-Africanism (Kroubo Dagnini 2008). Garvey started the Negroes Factories Association, a series of companies that would manufacture marketable commodities in every big industrial center in the Western hemisphere and Africa. By 1920, the UNIA had become a very powerful organization with hundreds of chapters all over the world, international conventions and even a weekly newspaper called the Negro World, Garvey also launched the Liberian Construction Loan program to raise two million dollars, for the UNIA settlement in Liberia and a sizable loan to the Government of Liberia, He developed plans for settling black Americans in Liberia, the only country in Africa governed by Africans, He negotiated an ambitious project with the Liberian government, he wanted to acquire land for African American, Afro-Caribbean, Afro- Latinos, who were interested to return to Africa, He proposed sending a limited number of African Americans with skills, professions, and capital to settle in, he offered the Liberian Government a Construction Loan, inaugurated on October 1920, and had raised \$2 million dollars down payment to the Government of Liberia to buy land for the resettlement of a few number of skilled (Joseph E Holloway p 430.). At first, the Liberian government was enthusiastic about the project ,but unfortunately they refused grant entry to any returnees, despite having initially assured the movement of its full cooperation, the reason behind this refuse was the jealousy and pressure of colonial powers, they forced Liberia to give the land to an influential American company Harvey Firestone, supported by the American government, also the US state Department worked to destroy the UNIA movement in Liberia, they made it seem like a threat to the Americo-Liberian ruling group, they convinced them that Garvey had a secret plan to take over the country, three years after the project fell apart.

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Liberia was an important focus for Garvey, he viewed Liberia as the ideal place to start the return to Africa, and reconnecting Black Americans to the African Diaspora, he wanted to promote the establishment of a strong and powerful African empire for and governed by Africans, he believed that his mission to be their president his ideas led to come into conflict with other contemporary Pan-Africanists like W.E.B. Dubois, they fought each other, because Du bios was an integrationist, he believed that the way to fight racial discrimination was to prove to the Whites Americans that there were no differences between white and black intellect, unlike Garvey who believed that because of racial discrimination African Americans needed to create their own land, he wanted to unite all Black people and to give them a racial self-confidence that would enable them to throw off white oppression.

Garvey is often called the "Black Moses" and Liberia as promised land, He inspired millions of people all over the world to press for better conditions and independence, his greatest achievement was his ability to change the consciousness of black people, also he used a more religious focus in his teachings and preaching, he was a Christian but believed in a Black version of Christianity.

On June 23, 1923, Garvey was convicted and sentenced to prison for five years; After serving five years in prison Garvey was deported to Jamaica, he continued his political activism and the work of U.N.I.A. in Jamaica, then moved to London, in 1939 he supported The Greater Liberia Act created by non white supremacists, this Act deport 12 million African-Americans to Liberia at federal expense to relieve unemployment. The act failed in Congress, and Garvey lost more support among the black population. (biography.com)

On June 10, 1949, Garvey died of heart attack in London, due to travel restrictions during World War II, his body was interred in London. In 1964, his ashes were transferred to Jamaica, where the government proclaimed him Jamaica's first national hero and re-interred him at a shrine in the National Heroes Park.

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There are many critiques in Garvey's ideology, and his ideas they considered it as Contradictor. First, concerning the race he advocated "Africa for the Africans" based on the same nationalistic concept of Europe for the Europeans, Marcus Garvey responded to violence, racism, and nationalism of the White society of the time with the same weapons, namely racism and xenophobia. But, such an attitude did not uplift the Pan-African movement, it undermined the credibility of it instead, he looked up to Hitler, Mussolini, and he felt they were people who also felt racial pride and wanted to see their people excel in this world, he even began a close association with the White racist group named the Ku Klux Klan, his alliance with this racist group was more than controversial. It could be perceived on the one hand as totally insulting to Black people, and on one other hand as a real pact with the devil. (Kroubo Dagnini.Report)

Second, Marcus Garvey was a Christian, his Afrocentric version of Christianity, the fact remains that it was Christianity, namely the religion of the colonizer. This approach was different from the concept of a Pan-Africanist which supposed to be intrinsically linked with the notion of African pride, the Pan Africanists must be proud of their African cultural heritage, and for Marcus Garvey had to return to the spirituality and religions of his forefathers.

Garvey used the English language in order to give White people proof of his equality to them, if not superiority, which is completely justified, he supposed be aware and proud of his African background, and should have used Jamaican language in his various writings and speeches not necessarily always but at least sometimes, because he was not only aimed at a Jamaican audience, but at the whole Black Diaspora, specially Black Americans, but at least sometimes, instead of focusing on English.

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Finally, another significant cultural element of Western civilization is clothing taking the form of suits or uniforms, he was photographed dressed in a dark suit, a ceremonial robe or a Napoleon-like uniform with a plumed hat, his behavior could be seen as rather weird. Garvey supposed to praise African cultural heritage, and worn traditional African attire as Jomo Kenyatta or Kwame Nkrumah proudly did, which would have been more in line with his Pan-African speeches, instead of wearing a clownish uniform like Napoleon.

Marcus Garvey played an important role in Pan-Africanism, especially with the UNIA, the Black Star Line and the back-to-Africa movement, he gave us an impression that he wanted to create an African version of Western society. to wit, it seems that he wanted to build an African empire modeled on Western society with its same socio-cultural codes, same politics, same kind of Leaders, same racism, same religion, same education, same economy, same elite, same language, same music, same clothing etc. Garvey did not take at all African cultural heritage into consideration, an approach that surprisingly is in direct contrast to Pan-Africanism.

Garvey's idea of wanting to build an African empire modeled as Western empires clearly seems to result from intellectual colonization. Pan-Africanism is a political doctrine, and a movement, which seeks to unify and uplift African nations and the African Diaspora as a universal African community, But uplifting Africa can only take place through African pride and through the preservation and promotion of African heritage, and in other words, African cultural heritage and African pride is the foundation of Pan-Africanism.

Conclusion

The failure of UNIA settlement program in the Republic of Liberia was related to the Liberian upper classes was averse to Garvey's plans which would have undermined "Americo-Liberian hegemony" over the country; i think that Garvey was affected by western culture like the

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Americo-Liberian who established their country based on American culture. since Liberia became a sovereign nation under Americo-Liberian rule in 1847, the Americo-Liberians controlled every aspect in the country, they excluded the Indigenous people from political participation; in the second chapter we will see the long settlement of Americo-liberain in Liberia and the Americo-Liberian hegemony over the indigenous people that led to several socio-economic problems.

Introduction

Unlike other parts of Africa, Liberia did not experience European colonialism, but she experienced an internal form of colonialism the African-American arrivals, known as Americo-Liberians, bore many similarities to European colonialism in the rest of Africa, they attempted to retain the culture they had brought from the United States and for the most part did not integrate with the native societies, all power was concentrated in the hand of the African-American settlers who became known as Americo-Liberians. Americo-Liberians comprising less than 3 percent of the population, maintained economic, social, and political control of the country until the military coup of 1980.

I. Evolution of Settlers Hegemony

When Liberia declared its independence in 1847, Joseph J. Roberts was elected as first president; Roberts and his senators, all American-born, resolved to create a country based on the principles of justice and equal rights; but the reality was opposite.

In the new environment Americo-Liberians created communities based on their American cultural baggage, they were from the beginning American rather than African in outlook and orientation; the settlers proceeded to enslave the ethnicities, their return which should have been a reunion between separated peoples turned rather into a nightmare for the indigenous people.

The Americo-Liberians were mixed African and European ancestry, they were lighter skinned than the indigenous native blacks. They achieved respect that they could never attain in America, but they failed to include native Liberians into their power base, the oppression characterized the Americo-Liberian was virtually identical to European colonial rule during

the scramble for Africa, they showed hostile to the beliefs, customs of their African ancestors and to the natives.

Americo-Liberians created a system of segregation in which they were on the top, they saw themselves as a superior cultural group, and they saw indigenous as a collective inferior, they did not see themselves as Africans, and separated from natives by creating a separate and unequal society. The effect of slavery and racism in America had a huge impact on Liberia's ruling class and thus Liberia's destiny, it was based on a philosophy of segregation, the Settlers took the behavior of their slave master, and they forced the Indigenous population to take the position of servants in their own native land, they took their land taxed them, and controlled their trade, farmlands became sources of friction, this led to a bloody war between both groups of peoples.

Americo-Liberians conveyed the western culture, raised the English language to the status of national language, that, appeared to be superior to the indigenous languages, they wore European clothes and disapproved of the scanty dress worn by many of the locals, whom they regarded as semi-nude," savage, they preferred American food, and seldom intermarried with the indigenous peoples, they built churches in defiance of the local Vitalism (animism), they despised African forms of religion as paganism. They believed that only Christianity can civilize a man.

Liberia was the Prototype for a United States of Africa, their political institutions were modeled on those of America with an elected president supported by a Senate and a House of Representatives, and the Liberian flag was copied from the one of the USA. Americo-Liberian hegemony was established, and they dominated the indigenous through political, economic, and social exclusions enshrined in the apparatus of a one-party state that relied on a caucus system for elections, Although other political parties existed, opposition the True Whig Party

dominance was oppressed; the Indigenous did not have the opportunity for the Liberian nationality until 1904, they sought to assimilate themselves into the new republic but they found there was no place for them in Liberia's oligarchical political order. Liberia also took a more active role in international affairs, as a founding member of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity.

The Americo-Liberians professed a preference of democracy, though 133 years of segregation resembled nothing close to multi-party democracy or pluralistic democracy. In other words, the abuse of power somehow overshadowed the other branches of government in which supposed to be independent of each other; this led to corruption which spread to virtually all sectors of the Liberian government. All these aspects helped to fuel conflict in Liberia, and exacerbated the Liberian situation which prolonged both national and regional conflicts.

II. Economic problems

During the early years, the Liberian economy flourished, in the next few decades, the economic difficulties began to weaken the state's dominance over the coastal indigenous population, especially when the ACS withdrew its support to Liberia, conditions worsened and the government tried to find solutions through modernize its largely agricultural economy. The cost of imports was far greater than the income generated by exports, the loans increased and became burden heavy on the government, by 1909, the government was bankrupt and forced to borrow, the large part was from the United States.

To bring in more revenue, the Liberian state leased large areas of land to American companies. In 1923, the Firestone Rubber Company explored the possibilities of establishing a rubber plantation in Liberia, In fact, the conditions in Liberia were ideal for rubber trees and a one million acre plantation was established in Herbal, this was a great economic boost for

the state due to the employment of big number workers, shortly afterwards, the government secured a loan that allowed Liberia to consolidate and bond all internal and external debts.

Liberia's economy was very much dependent on the economy of the rest of the world and especially the United States of America. When the USA was suffering through the great depression of the 1930s, Liberia also had a depression. And because the Government had made a loan secured by the Firestone Company; however, by the year 1931, it became apparent to the Liberian administration that payments on that loan were impossible, the government asked for consideration from the lending bank and Firestone to no avail. Therefore, the Liberian Legislature past the Moratorium Act suspending payment of this loan until terms more suitable to Liberia ability to pay could be negotiated, the Council of the League of Nations was willing to assist Liberia with certain stipulations, one of these conditions was the League's requirement to have their delegates place in key position in the administration of the Liberian government. The president Barclay and other Liberian officials considered this as an infringement of sovereignty of Liberia. The negotiations took nearly a year to solve this problem; but with limitations set forth by the Liberian government, Loan payment was continued with the aid of the League.

III. The president Edwin James Barclay and the conflict of Kru tribe

Edwin Barclay, having completed the last term of C.D.B. King¹ became President of Liberia in 1930 and served until 1944. During his tenure, President Barclay had to deal with a campaign against the Kru Tribes of Sinoe County, economic depression, and the beginning of World War II.

The 1931 Kru revolt, turned into one of the most serious tribal insurrections in Liberia's history. One of the causes of the Kru revolt, were the unsettlement of the population, and disputes over tribal boundaries, power struggles for political supremacy within the tribes, the resentment of the tribes whose social economy was disturbed by the rigid enforcement of the Act with regard to inter-tribal slavery; and economic distress resulting from the world wide trade depression.

The passive resistance toward the Liberian government increased, and the tribesmen refused to pay the hut tax, refused to allow movements of the interior tribes to the coast land, and exacted heavy toll on the trade passing through their land. These conditions became the source of conflicts between the tribes.

Barclay dispatched a special Commission with one company of troops to patrol the Kru Coast from Maryland County to Nana Kru, their mission was to settle conflicts between warring tribes but avoid hostile conflicts at all cost and no reprisals toward any tribe for any reason. The beginning of the endeavor was carried out without incident. As the Commission began traveling up the coast from Maryland, one chief near Sinoe refused passage, this led to a conflict; the passage resumed to Sasstown where Chief Nimley refused to cooperate

¹ Charles Dunbar Burgess King was president of Liberia from 1920 until 1930, he was of Americo-Liberian and Freetown Creole descent.

with a planned meeting of chiefs. The next day, Nimley's tribesmen attacked the Government troops and after hours of fighting, the chief's two principle towns were captured and destroyed. Similar unrest was dealt with successfully in Bassa, and in some western province without the need for force; as consequences the British government breaks off diplomatic relations with Liberia. The Liberian Frontier Force later was put under American command.

As a result of the tribal unrest, Barclay reorganized the native administration, and a consistent new land policy was established to remove the inequalities inherent in the previous policy, all notables of the tribes involved gave approval.

IV. President Tubman era (1944-1971)

William V.S. Tubman, elected president in 1944, Tubman considered as the last of the repatriate hegemonic leaders, he followed Arthur Barclay policy and others in traditional authoritative structures. During his tenure, he modernized Liberia's economy and developed some of Liberia's infrastructure. Tubman proceeded to manipulate interethnic political cleavages, he also introduced some pivotal policies that obviated constant confrontation between locals and settlers, Tubman took the policy of "unification", "open door" and "integration," which meant to redress historical inequalities or disenfranchisement of indigenous Liberians from the political and economic sectors; Tubman introduced some groundbreaking measures to ensure the unification of Liberians, he slowly increased the access to governing structures for indigenous Liberians. Therefore, the stratification of Liberian society between Americo-Liberians and indigenous Liberians persisted. In 1951, with the aid of the True Whig Party-controlled Legislature, President Tubman unilaterally sponsored a constitutional amendment that removed the 1935 provision on presidential term. The new clause permitted one eight-year term, followed by successive four years terms. This incongruous act of constitutional manipulations created precedent that haunted Liberia

throughout the twentieth century. His presidency period marked with acquire of full control of the TWP political machine, and the culture of extermination of political opposition, invidious destruction of lives and property, and more importantly, the rise of authoritarianism and political brutality. The huge influx of foreign money caused the economy to become distorted and increased social inequalities caused by the hostility between the descendants of the settlers and the natives. This event forced Tubman to concede that the indigenous Liberians would have to be granted an amount of political and economic involvement in the country, by gave them voting rights. Tubman ruled for 27 unbroken years; during his reign power native Liberians never occupied key positions reign in power, he held the view that sensitive political positions should not be given to them. Tubman consolidated his position by joining powerful tribal societies like the “Poro,” and became its grand master. However, he consolidated his hold on power, and he suppressed efforts to organize opposition parties, both by the growing indigenous intelligentsia and by dissident members of the Americo-Liberian elite.

Conclusion

Since the independence of Liberia, the Americo-Liberians became the ruling class, they led the country and enjoyed all the privileges, and the indigenous was kept in subjugation. The Americo-Liberians established an oppressive regime similar to the one they had escaped from in America, relations between Americo-Liberians and indigenous Liberians were marked almost mutual ethnocentrism, which led to rise of conflict. Americo-Liberain marginalized the indigenous population, and excluded them from power, they enslaved them in the name of a “civilizing mission.”

President Tubman’s authoritarian reign laid the structural foundation for the continuation of Americo-Liberian hegemony, the Americo-Liberians imposed a kind of apartheid toward

indigenous and unfortunately, this hostility led to national chaos, military coup took place in 1989, the state break down ,all this led to deadly conflict between 1979 and 2003. In the following chapter i will discuss the rise of clashes between Americo-Liberians and the indigenous people and the results of these clashes.

The Rise of the Clashes and Aftermath

Introduction

In 1971, William Tubman died; following his death the vice president, William Tolbert assumed the presidency. Tolbert promoted a program to bring more indigenous persons into the government, but this initiative lacked support of Tolbert's administration. Many indigenous Liberians faced hardships because of widespread poverty, lack of basic amenities, and political domination by the Americo-Liberians. The country suffered from various economic crises. By the end of 27 years of dictatorial rule, many Liberians had a belief that the time for change had come, but Unfortunately Liberia would never be the same again.

In April 1979, Tolbert proposed to raise the price of rice, PAL announced that will stage a public demonstration to protest the impending increment in the price of rice on April 14, 1979, the Government banned the demonstration, and warned the citizens if anyone found on the streets and will be shot on sight. This led to protests and demonstrations, known as the 'Rice Riots',

Hundreds of people protested, and conflicts between police and demonstrators resulted in demonstrators being shot, this protests brutally suppressed by the government further entrenched the socio-economic and ethnic disparity in Liberian society. The civil unrest of 1979 was the beginning of the long-running civil crisis that engulfed Liberia.

The domination of the Americo-Liberians continued until the military coup 1980 when Samuel Doe, put an end to the government that was led by William Tolbert. The coup d'état of April 12, 1980 had a negative effect for the future peace and stability of the nation.

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I) Samuel Doe- the Military Coup 1980

The military in Liberia was neglected, overlooked, underpaid and underestimated, they were generally illiterate tribesmen, the military received substandard military and academic training, they were trained to be brutal on the whole, and they were used to suppressing native Liberian insurrections and to enforce the law in indigenous communities; collect government taxes, expand, expand the boundaries of the new state. The military was incensed at government's actions by the incident of April 14, 1979.

In April 1980 a military coup took place led by sergeant from the krahn ethnic group, named Samuel doe, doe and 17 group indigenous soldiers murdered the president Tolbert and executed 13 government ministers bringing an end to the Americo-Liberian rule of 133 years, and for the first time since independence Liberia was led by members of the indigenous majority. After the coup doe headed Peoples Redemption Council (PRC) to rule the country.

In October 1985 the elections were held, Doe's National Democratic party of Liberia (NDPL) was declared winner of Liberia's first multi-party elections; many said that the elections were characterized by fraud and rigging.

One month later Thomas Quiwonkpa a former command and an ethnic Gio from Nimba County attempted to topple Doe through coup but he failed. After killing Thomas Quiwonkpa the Kahn dominated Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) started to revenge from "Gio" and "Mano" ethnic groups in Quiwonkpas native Nimba county where they quelled them, this to causing a loss of life.

The violence used against the Nimba people made Doe increasingly unpopular and isolated; his regime posed a great threat to human rights in Liberia, Doe revenged from the tribes who

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was connected to the government he disposed of, and also of those who were opposition to his government.

During Doe reign, politics were based on ethnically, human rights abuses, corruption and ethnic tensions increased this led to heightened level hostility between karahns dominant and other ethnic groups.

I think that Doe's government failed in governing the country because it adopted an ethnic outlook; Doe's government repeated the same mistake as the previous government (Americo-Liberain rule), which supposed to resolve all ethnic and political differences, and unit all Liberians and integrate all the ethnic groups to one society.

Doe's regime was marked by brutal against other ethnic groups, the country suffered from major economic problems. Unfortunately, this led the country to long-running civil war, and because of these problems the country suffered from major economic problems.

In my opinion, Doe's government had to leave all the problems that previous government did, and try to focus in developing the country, and to seek national integration.

II) The Liberian Civil war 1989-2003

Liberia has had two civil wars, the first Liberian Civil War was from 1989 until 1997, and the second civil war began in 1999 and ended in 2003, without forgetting that the conflict began in 1979 with civil unrest.

Doe's regime was characterized by the repressive and brutal policies and human rights violations; the favoritism towards his ethnic tribe of Krahn created ethnic tensions between them and other ethnic groups. This led to set off two civil wars that lasted 13 years.

The first civil war began when Charles Taylor showed up; Taylor was an Americo-Liberian, after the military coup he returned to Liberia to work in the Doe administration as head of the

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General Services Agency. Taylor Accused of stealing nearly \$1 million, he fled to the United States. In 1984, he was arrested in Massachusetts and, while being held and awaiting deportation, he escaped to Libya, where he was trained in guerrilla warfare. Taylor has played an infamous role as rebel leader during the civil war 1989. Taylor headed the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL). (TRC. Final report VOLUME II).

In December 1989, on Christmas Eve, Taylor, returned to Liberia and with his National Patriotic Front of Liberia, the rebel leader Charles Taylor invaded Nimba County from the Cote d'Ivoire. The (NPFL) crossed to Butuo town, in the Nimba County, which encountered plenty of support from the Gio and Mano ethnic groups that were persecuted under Samuel Doe's regime after the 1985 attempted coup.

The Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) responded with a ruthless on Taylor's forces, they targeted Manos and Gios in Nimba County were they killed civilians, burning villages. Over 160,000 civilians fled to Guinea and Ivory Coast between January and May 1990. On September 9, 1990 President Samuel Doe was captured and brutally killed by a rebel leader from Nimba County.

From 1989-1997 fighting continued, the civil war had gripped Liberia. These eight years saw the war's deadliest battles, thousands of civilians (men, women, and children) were killed, civilian population lived under fear, threatened, brutalized and killed; all this left Liberia in ruins confronted by big problems.

During the civil war period, there were many efforts to bring the country into peace but unfortunately, all these efforts failed. In 1997, a ceasefire was negotiated. Soon after, elections were conducted, Charles Taylor the former head of the NPFL, was elected president of the country. By electing Taylor many of Liberians believed that was the only solution to

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end the war. But Unfortunately, Peace in Liberia was short lived, and after two years the conflict between ethnic groups renewed to.

Taylor government was marked by corruption and repression of dissent, exploitation of ethnic divisions; and most Liberians suffered from poverty, all this led to another civil war began in 2000 lasted four years.

In the second phase of the Civil War, two opposition groups attempted to oust Taylor from power, this groups were Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) based largely in northern Lofa County, and who had been fighting President Taylor since 1999, the second opposition group was the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL), based in southern Liberia. Fighting between the government forces (AFL) and LURD continued through 2002.

in April 2003, the (MODEL) began incursions into Liberia from Côte d'Ivoire; the fighting accused of widespread human rights violations against innocent civilians, this led to large-scale population displacement.

The security situation in Liberia, including the capital Monrovia, was at its worst rebels, and became a humanitarian catastrophe, LURD forces controlled two-thirds of Liberia, and fighting intensified in and around Monrovia.

Finally, in August 2003, a negotiated ceasefire, Taylor accepted an ECOWAS-brokered peace deal that offered him asylum in the Nigerian government; after that Taylor's vice president finished the remaining term and was followed by a transition interim government.

The Liberian civil war claimed several thousands of lives which will surely remain one of the sordid points of the country's history.

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This sad chapter in Liberian history, regarded as one of Africa's bloodiest civil wars, civil war had a big impact on the country, causing killing hundreds of thousands of people, where the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) estimated that 250,000 people were killed by the conflicts, and one million were displaced, and other egregious human rights abuses.

The main cause of the first civil war in Liberia was ethnicity between the tribes of Liberia, which pushed brothers against brothers and ethnic groups against ethnic groups.

The years of civil war had a much effect on socio-economic and political, all sides to the conflict committed extreme acts of violence against Innocents civilians, they force recruited young boys, destroy homes, buildings, and infrastructure, the civil war was also ruined Liberia's economy, which was characterized by an extremely low growth rate, high foreign debt, and an unemployment rate increased, most major businesses destroyed and drive out foreign investors.

III) The failure of national integration

The administrations of Presidents William Tubman and William Tolbert sought to reach out to the indigenous peoples and increase their involvement in government and society opening limited access to opportunities. However, their efforts were insufficient.

The causes of the rise of the clashes between the settlers and locals were lack of ethnic equality, fair distribution of resources, and cultural misunderstanding, Americo-Liberians were committed to Western values, and capitalism of labor exploitation, They denied the indigenous people the right to vote in elections and put in place other legislations,

Which generally oppressed the indigenous Liberians Americo-Liberians were not indigenously Liberians and accounted for a very small percentage of the total Liberian

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population, the conflict between the Americo-Liberians and the indigenous Africans was further exacerbating.

The prescribed form of integration was decidedly on Americo-Liberian terms and conditions, namely the indigenous should accept of various facets of the settler culture, which was supposed the settlers should also accept the lifestyle of the locals. They created legislation, which ensured that they remain in power, and they ensured that the members of indigenous communities could not be allowed to vote until 1946.

Although the indigenous adapted with the Euro-American culture, and the government gave them the right of citizenship, they faced a apartheid; for example in 1916, the ruling class began the imposition of an annual hut-tax of one dollar for each hut occupied by an adult indigenous person.

There, national integration has appeared elusive because of the centralized nature of governance that has institutionalized separatist policies such as the Liberia “native policy” in the 1840s and the indirect rule of the ACS in the early of 1900s. The “native policy” was advanced by the settler ruling class to try to assimilate the indigenous groups into Western values through Christianization African mores; they had attempted to found a black nation on American principles. The pursuit of national integration would need to of local governments and sub-national groups.

Therefore, so as to achieve national political and economic integration there must be a broader involvement from the citizenry, and bringing together culturally and socially the discrete groups into a single territorial unit and the establishment of national identity.

Like this, Brinkerhoff and Ogbaharya suggest that “one of the tools that need to be included in the toolkit of sustainable peace building is the role of communal institutions.”

The Rise of the Clashes and Aftermath

Conclusion

The main factors that led to the collapse of the Liberian state were the inequity between the ruling class (Americo-Liberain) and the majority indigenous population, intertribal conflict, and pervasive corruption. The similarities between Doe's reign, Taylor era and the period of Americo-Liberain rule prior to 1979 demonstrate a cyclical nature to the conflict. The conflict in Liberia was a product of what came before. Currently Liberia is recovering from the pangs of civil war, i think that the government from the beginning had to tackle the underlying problems, which was mainly been lack of ethnic equality that led to the civil war.

Americo-Liberains did not do the work of cultural assimilation that would have made them authentic Africans again; the inequality in the Liberian society with some groups of people being superior to others were the main factors that led to the first and second Liberian civil wars.

General Conclusion

Although Liberia had existed as an independent African nation and a symbol of hope to the African peoples which was under the rule of colonial powers, but because of its complex history it was bedeviled by a prolonged upheaval following and became a source of conflict and disunity. The bad Governance and the oppressive dominance of the Americo-Liberian over the indigenous Liberians led to the clashes between the settlers and indigenous people.

The conflict in Liberia has its origin in the history and the founding of the State, Ethnicity and divisiveness of Liberians, clashes over land were the main factors that led to the rise of disputes. The relations soured between the settlers and members of indigenous populations ensued, setting the stage for a military coup in 1980. Social inequalities were no doubt contributors to the Civil War; as a result Liberia was engulfed in armed conflict from December 1989 to August 2003.

The civil war has been fueled by ethnic animosity and individual struggles for power, all factions were responsible for violation of human rights including war crime's violations, they ignored the national interest, Civilians suffered most and were killed in far greater numbers than combatants. They were subject to arbitrary arrest and detention, harassment, torture, rape, mutilation, and executions, even Children were no exception, they used them as soldiers.

Americo-Liberian hegemony was established on the basis that they are civilized, and committed to western culture, they considered African culture and all its attributes as primitive, backward and uncivilized. Culture is the most important element of people's identity, those settlers were supposed to work on cultural assimilation; according to Edward Wilmot Blyden the indigenous African culture had merit and the treatment towards indigenous Liberians was wrong. Americo-Liberians had to abandon their doomed attempt to

build a Christian state on a European model. If Americo-Liberians did not they would continue to be “the most infertile and the most contemptible of beings-hypocrites.

To conclude of course, African-Americans have exercised their legitimate right to return to Africa, but Liberia’s policy was from beginning wrong; i think that the government must be able to understand the reasons of civil war in order to avoid them at any cost, and had to tackle the main issue that led to the prolonged civil war.

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