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A State of Underdevelopment: Sovereignty, Nation-Building and Labor in Liberia 1898–1961*

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Abstract

In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, Liberia was in the unusual position of being a colony with no metropole. Without military or financial support, the settlers' control over their territory remained weak. Surrounding European empires preyed on this weakness, and Americo-Liberian rule was often at risk from coalitions of European forces and indigenous African resistance. From the early twentieth century, the political elite took on the concept of "development" as a central part of government policy in an attempt to gain political and economic control of the hinterland areas and stave off European incursions. This policy involved the extension and reinforcement of labor policies and practices that had developed through the nineteenth century as means to incorporate settlers and indigenous people into Liberian society. When these plans failed, huge swathes of territory were turned over to foreign commercial interests in an attempt to bolster Liberian claims to sovereignty. And after the Second World War, new policies of "community development" introduced by international agencies again tried to solve Liberia's "land and labor" problem through resettlement. At each stage developmentalist rationales were deployed in order to facilitate greater government control over the Liberian interior territory.

Liberia and Development

"Development" became central to Liberian government policy from the end of the nineteenth century. The sovereignty of this African republic was repeatedly challenged in this period on the basis of its lack of "effective occupation" of the areas outside its coastal settlements by both European colonial governments and international observers. The Liberian economic and political elite used "development" as the rationale to violently enforce political control; to court foreign investment from both private business and international and government agencies; and to expropriate land. In many ways, the practice of development in twentieth-century Liberia drew on and worked alongside a preexisting "civilizing mission" that had legitimized the exploitation of the indigenous population for manual labor and deprived them of the right to own land.

Unlike the other areas under scrutiny in this special issue, Liberia was an independent African republic. However, a small elite, described by the League of Nations head of investigation commission as a "closed family community," controlled much of the nation's economic and political life until the 1980 coup and ensuing civil war.[1] Before this, Liberian society mirrored many of the structures of the colonial state in Africa. But in the late nineteenth century, the Liberian government found itself under threat from encroaching European

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colonial powers and sought to stave off their claims to its territories by making the concept of "development" central to governance. For the Liberian government, "development" was, as Frederick Cooper termed it, an "indigenous category", one which the Americo-Liberian controlled government self-consciously deployed from the early twentieth century to describe their own activities.[2] They pursued "development" first by recruiting and deploying a military force to enforce political control, and next by encouraging a private corporation to develop rural areas, and finally by accepting US and UN aid to build infrastructure.

By handing some of their control over economic and material development to outside influences, the Liberian government hoped to maintain its hold on political power. This would have profound influence on the lives of the people who would work to implement these ambitious development programs. Workers were torn between competing sets of obligations: on one hand, to be wage laborers in private plantations; on the other hand, to fulfil expected "communal labor" duties. By the 1960s, it appeared as though the government's development program had failed. Despite a period of exponential economic growth, Liberia was described as "an extreme example of underdevelopment." This diagnosis of a state of "underdevelopment" was blamed on "traditional social organisation, culture, and politics."[3] The lifestyle and working habits of the indigenous population were regarded as the main obstacles to economic and social improvement and were the target of the state's intervention. In the view of the Americo-Liberian government, themselves descendants of freed slaves from the Americas, Africans had to be taught how to perform manual labor, to become industrious citizens, and, thus, part of the political process.

The first section of this article briefly summarizes the establishment and colonial occupation of the Liberian Republic. It highlights how a two-tier system emerged in Liberia over the course of the nineteenth century, dividing the descendants of settlers from the local population, but also how apprenticeship schemes were used to incorporate both new arrivals and native people into their settlements. The second section examines how the Liberian state initially used the idea of "developing the hinterland" in order to stave off early European efforts to either encroach on its borders or to take the republic over outright. The third section looks at "privatized development" in the interwar period, when the government relinquished some control over economic and material development to the Firestone corporation, in an effort to maintain their minority rule. The final section looks at US aid and UN development cooperation in the postwar period when the "problem" of Liberian underdevelopment became the source of international attention.

Migration and Colonization

A variety of "push" and "pull" factors brought free blacks and emancipated slaves from the United States to the Grain Coast. The American Colonization Society (ACS) sponsored many of these migrants throughout the nineteenth

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century, though a few funded their own passage. Some were emancipated by their masters on condition that they emigrate; others sought out the opportunities presented by trade in West Africa. Between 1820 and 1870, around thirteen thousand settlers, most born and raised in the United States, made new homes in settlements spread along the coast from the Gallinas River to Cape Palmas.[4] Liberia's national motto proclaims, "The Love of Liberty Brought Us Here," and its citizens benefited from a progressive convergence of trans-Atlantic notions of race, emancipation, and politics. They brought with them the legal knowledge and zeal for freedom that allowed them to write a revolutionary constitution for the newly founded Republic that abolished slavery, restricted ownership of property to Africans and their descendants, and enshrined the economic rights of women.[5]

But these progressive policies for settlers and their families contrasted sharply with the repressive and often violent rule enforced on pre-existing communities. Relations had been fraught since the establishment of the first settlement where, during negotiations over land at Cape Mesurado in 1821, US Navy officer Lieutenant Robert F. Stockton held a gun to the head of Dei leader King Peter.[6] In the following years, communities continued to contest the rights of chiefs to sign away land to the colonists or launched attacks on newly-built towns. The settlers, organised into militias, attacked slave-trading forts and struggled to expand the reach of their settlements.[7] The founding of a Department of the Interior in 1868 marked a new phase in Americo-Liberian colonization, as District Commissioners were appointed by the government to surveil and tax the native population.[8] The indigenous inhabitants of the land were designated "aliens" and land was expropriated.

The settlers were also confronted, from the outset, by a shortage of labor. Thanks to political changes in the US through the nineteenth century, the ACS failed to recruit emigrants in the numbers it had anticipated.[9] In addition to this, the colony was beset in the early years by an extremely high mortality rate.[10] This led to a shortage of people with which to establish the planned farms and plantations. Even if the settlers survived, the unfamiliar environment, crops and lack of North American beasts of burden made agriculture difficult. However, a new stock of migrants, between 1846 and 1861, helped the settlers to overcome their labor shortage. Some 5,700 freed slaves, hailing from a variety of places in West-Central and southern Africa, were brought to the Liberian settlements after they were rescued from slave ships stopped by the US anti-slave trade patrol.[11] Known as "Congoes", they proved to be vital to the working of the colony, providing a vital link between settler and indigenous populations, and bringing with them essential knowledge about agriculture in Western Africa.

Americo-Liberians took Congoes on as apprentices, alongside indigenous workers. In 1846, settler Peyton Skipwith wrote that now he was "very well situated and has several apprentices with me Exclusive of some of the Barque Pons Cargo of Congoes".[12] The employment of these "apprentices" served several purposes. First, it filled the labor gap left by the high mortality rate and low

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numbers of settlers. Second, it provided a means of incorporating the newly-arrived recaptives, who were often only teenagers and completely without family or resources, into settler society.[13] Finally, the use of such labor in the households of the wealthy freed Americo-Liberians to pursue a so-called "civilised" lifestyle.[14] The status of "civilised" became central to Liberian life and politics. The 1847 constitution, for example, stated that local people could only claim citizenship if they could prove they had "conformed to the forms, customs and habits of civilised life."[15] This became the key distinction that allowed Americo-Liberians to exclude others from political life.

The constitution explicitly laid out a mission to prioritize manual labor amongst surrounding communities; "agriculture and husbandry" were described as "wholesome branches of industry" for Africans.[16] Later in the century, Americo-Liberian explorer and educator Benjamin Anderson would make a series of recommendations to the government intended to aid greater exploitation of the inland regions. In particular, he pointed to the danger of "bookishly educating our natives" instead of providing training in "manual and artizan [sic] labor".[17] Anderson's advice presaged US American interest in "Industrial Education" for the free African-American population.[18] This form of training, aimed at transforming African-Americans into industrious workers, was exported from the U.S. to Liberia through educational schemes, starting with Cuttington College in Cape Palmas in 1889.[19] But as Anderson's advice and the preexisting apprenticeship system shows, Americo-Liberians had already put the idea of a "manual education" for native Africans into practice.

From the 1840s, the settlers set off on an expansionist path. The first Black Governor, Joseph Jenkins Roberts, who served from 1842 to 1848, embarked on a treaty tour along the coast in 1842, considerably expanding the colony's jurisdiction. The governor of Maryland-in-Liberia, John B. Russwurm, undertook a similar journey in 1846. These treaties demanded peaceful relations and assured the colonists access to trade with the surrounding communities. Coastal expansion was matched by a corresponding exploration of the interior from the late 1850s onward in an effort to improve communications and trade. M.B. Akpan characterises this period as an age of "Black Imperialism" as Liberians sought to forestall British and French attempts to establish trading posts nearby and to rapidly expand a Liberian sphere of civilising influence over surrounding areas.[20]

The Scramble for Liberia

Faced with internal unrest, economic instability, and territorial threats, Americo-Liberians acknowledged a need, from the 1860s onward, to develop public works and create commercial opportunities in the interior. In 1871, President Roye accepted a £100,000 loan from a British bank. The punishing terms of the loan meant, in the end, the treasury received only twenty percent

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of the loan amount, which resulted in rioting on the streets of Monrovia. Roye was deposed and, Sir Harry Johnston claims, drowned trying to escape disguised as "an ordinary native or Kruboy."[21] Despite the loan, the Liberian government struggled to maintain the value of the Liberian dollar and "endure like good soldiers the present hardships."[22] A poll tax was introduced in 1860 in order to raise funds, and between 1879 and 1882, the tax increased. Refusal or inability to pay was punished with compulsory labor, which allowed a legal avenue for the impressment of young men into work on private plantations.[23]

While the government suffered from a lack of funds, colonists appeared to be prospering in the second half of the nineteenth century. Americo-Liberians were able to build on the experimental farms developed in the first half of the century, as well as the capital brought by wealthier settlers and earned in the propagation of trade to develop a thriving export market in coffee and sugar.[24] These plantations were staffed mainly by the recaptive apprentices or laborers employed from surrounding areas.[25] The success of these crops, the high prices they attained on the world market, and the cheapness of labor allowed Americo-Liberians to invest in their towns, as well as in the material trappings of success.[26] But the commercial riches of the colonists attracted the attention of outside observers.

European colonial governments started pressing at Liberia's borders in the 1860s.[27] But the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885 marked a new phase in competition for territory in Africa. While Liberian merchants had long jostled for trading space with European merchants along the coast, the French and British colonies in West Africa began encroaching on Liberian land in the interior from the 1880s.[28] President Johnson's inaugural address in 1884 noted the problem and suggested that the solution was "the establishment of settlements at the northwestern and southeastern boundaries of the Republic."[29] These efforts were rarely successful due to a lack of resources and the rival European nations were able to claim that the Liberian government failed the test of "effective occupation" in much of its hinterland areas.[30] Various schemes were proposed by the British to gain control of Liberian territory, including an explicit suggestion by Sir Leslie Probyn in 1908 that the Colonial Office take over the northwestern area. As a result, in total Liberia lost roughly twenty-five to thirty percent of its land to its neighbors between 1885 and 1911.[31]

In 1885, the British colonial government at Sierra Leone took possession of the coastal region between Sherbro and the Mano River.[32] And in 1892, the French occupied Liberian lands in the southeast adjacent to Cote d'Ivoire.[33] At the same time, the bottom fell out of the export economy in 1898, when competition from higher-quality Brazilian coffee caused a dramatic fall in the price of the Liberian product.[34] The sugar market faced a similar decline.[35] This precipitous market failure led to ever-growing reliance on foreign capital and investment.[36] Liberia's poverty, dependence on foreign capital and trade, and the predatory interest of European empires in her rich agricultural lands left the African republic vulnerable. At this point, the Americo-Liberian settlers

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started to show more interest not only in the natural resources, but also in the people surrounding them.

In 1898, President Coleman highlighted the "advantages of speedy training and incorporating them [indigenous people] among us"[37] in order to both stimulate the plummeting economy and stave off European efforts to take over. An earlier government had granted two concessions to American companies in the hope that they would be able to bring new immigrants and penetrate the interior region with settlements.[38] Both companies failed to fulfil their promises, but the idea of using foreign concessions to gain control of territory had not lost its appeal. It was at this point that "development" explicitly became part of the Liberian government's policy, as a means to incorporate hinterland regions and defend them from annexation.

In 1904, President Arthur Barclay announced that "we cannot develop the interior effectively until a satisfactory understanding with the resident populations is arrived at."[39] To reach a "satisfactory understanding," Barclay introduced a new provincial administration and a centralized armed force to back it up: the Liberian Frontier Force (LFF). The establishment of the LFF, with the assistance of African-American advisors, was first aimed at pacifying the intermittent violent confrontations between these groups, then at securing the region for the Liberian government to redirect trade and taxes through the coastal regions. Barclay introduced a practice of recruiting mainly from the Loma ethnic group, as well as the Gbandi, Mano, and Kissi, which he perceived as particularly "warlike." In fact, the Loma had long been victims of and participants in the regional slave trade, and the process of recruitment into the force offered the marginalized an opportunity for advancement and profit.[40] The force's recruitment tactics and processes mirrored the patrimonial relations established through slavery. The preference for recruitment from the so-called "warlike tribes" meant that few Americo-Liberians were brought into the armed forces. The Kru were also underrepresented. As a coastal people, they were both seen as "ethnically" unsuited to military service and lacking in necessary loyalty to the state. The LFF, like the similar Frontier Police in Sierra Leone, became a useful escape route in the rural areas for marginalized and politically excluded youth, including ex-slaves and their descendants. This flurry of action resulted in a withdrawal of some of the threat of French and British expansionist ambitions, and an agreement was signed in 1908 to establish borders provided the Liberian government agreed to bring borderlands under "effective control."[41]

The "development" of the Liberian hinterlands, also referred to as "pacification" or even "emancipation," relied from the beginning on the use of force.[42] Control over territory went hand in hand with control over the people. As George Ellis phrased it, "This important work of developing the native peoples of Liberia is inseparable from the development of the vast resources of Liberian hinterlands."[43] The "development" of the hinterland also entailed a supply of manual labor to build trade and communications infrastructure. The LFF was given the authority to oversee labor recruitment and ensure

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that chiefs provided the necessary manpower from their areas to build and maintain a new system of roads.

The force was also tasked with collecting the newly established hut tax. This tax quickly became a vital source of revenue for the government—within a decade it accounted for around one-third of gross revenue.[44] The tax forced people to seek paid employment wherever they could, often with ex-masters or local elites. Some even resorted to pawning their children for the cash.[45] Cuthbert Christy, who headed the League of Nations' commission of inquiry on slavery in Liberia in 1930, noted that even the Kru, who had not previously practiced pawning in order to raise cash or secure debts, resorted to it.[46] The practice of pawning varied between different groups.[47] Some used pawning as a source of income or pawns as plantation workers, as they were unable to effectively export crops. Meanwhile the Vai, who were also a more rigidly socially stratified society, made use of pawns as porters for long-distance trade, often as far as neighboring European colonies.[48]

In 1910, the Grebo rebelled against the imposition of the hut tax and forced labor, calling on the British to provide them protection. In response, the Liberian government called for the support of the US Navy. Support came, in the form of the USS Birmingham, but its commander, W. B. Fletcher, was sympathetic to the complaints of the Grebo and scornful of the Liberian government, arguing that "there are no public improvements under way inaugurated by the Liberians and there never will be while the country is in the hands of the present Government."[49] This conflict was followed in short order by a Kru rebellion in 1912, when the indigenous communities again called for British protection, even hoisting union jacks.[50] Conflict again broke out in 1912 with the Dan as a result of tensions between a British rubber concession and Mandingo traders from French-controlled Guinea. This was followed by further antagonisms with a group of Kru, apparently armed by Germans, over a prisoner charged with murder by the government.[51] The Liberian government was facing the prospect of alliances between European colonial powers and its own discontented population. At the same time, the government had taken out an even larger loan from American, British, German, and Dutch sources in order to service the previous debt burden. This entailed turning over control of customs revenue to British and American officials. President Howard justified this loss of sovereignty in his inaugural address by claiming, "If the temporary management in the hands of others of a part of our government machinery will result in actual and permanent independence and international respect, which I firmly believe will be the outcome, then it becomes our imperative duty as patriotic citizens to make such a necessary and noble sacrifice."[52] The Liberian government was losing its grip, not only on the hinterland, but also on central functions of the government.

The First World War increased tensions. T.C. Mitchell, commissioner general of the Hinterland of Liberia, ordered Liberian soldiers to ambush, capture, or shoot any traders from French-owned Guinea seen in the hostile areas.[53] The Kru again rose up against the Liberian government in 1915, this

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time siding with the Allies and declaring war on "Germany and Liberia."[54] British sympathies lay with the Kru: A suggestion was even made to approve an annual stipend to encourage the Liberian government to withdraw.[55] However, while previous Kru uprisings in the late nineteenth century had been met with a variety of diplomatic measures, in 1915 the strategic needs of the First World War meant that the government could call on US military support to forcibly quell rebellion.[56] An American gunboat and the Liberian Frontier Force left a wake of devastation in coastal settlements and a legacy of growing resentment.

British concern meanwhile was growing over the influence of German-owned shipping and trading companies until Liberia formally joined the Allies in 1917.[57] But German naval blockades and the abrupt end to German trade and shipping in Monrovia spelled financial disaster for the Liberians. The end of the war and dire economic circumstances saw a renewed flurry of protest against the Liberian government and requests for European annexation. For example, in 1919 the Gola requested that the British government take over Liberia. Young men of the area had been preparing the ground to build barracks for the soldiers, but after the soldiers plundered the towns of Joi and Degeh, the men refused to work for them. In retaliation, the LFF attacked and burnt several towns.[58] Harrison Akingbade claims that, on occasion, these kinds of violent encounters were the first interaction people had with the Liberian government.[59]

This labor recruitment was accompanied by the recruitment of workers, particularly the Kru and Grebo, for plantation labor in the Spanish colony of Fernando Po. While the Liberian government was not officially involved in this private recruitment system (though some officials did profit under the table from the recruiters), it did tacitly approve the system as a means to introduce wage labor to the provincial regions.[60] Observers noted that the government would demand taxes without notice, and when cash was not forthcoming, LFF officers would confiscate not only livestock and food supplies, but also "boys" to be transported abroad to serve as plantation workers.[61] Labor for the island was also sourced by private labor recruiters.

One such recruiter, Harold Robert Taylor, published a memoir of his methods in 1939. He claimed that the Liberian government positively encouraged the traffic in young men due to the lucrative "head-tax" paid for all recruits leaving the country. He described his favored method of recruiting:

> [T]o journey into the most remote districts of the hinterland and make an appeal to the cupidity of an impoverished Chief. On payment of so much per head, he would round up all the young men of his tribe whom he disliked, and probably suspected of having affairs with his many wives, and hand them over, body and soul.[62]

The prospect of transportation became so feared that young men would flee before the LFF or the recruiters arrived. The journal of a member of the Harvard Expedition of 1926 observed in one town that there were "only

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three able-bodied men in this town and some forty to fifty women. All the others had been taken away by the Commissioner to work for him or had run away from him. The same was true of the three towns we passed through yesterday."[63] In those cases, "old men then were held hostage and required to work on the private farms of government officials until the younger men for exportation returned from the bush and surrendered."[64] In 1924, ex-President D.E. Howard described the situation: "The native population is held in subjugation by the frontier force which in turn is composed of tribesmen whose savage psychology is such that they have no hesitancy in attacking their own people".[65] Internally divided and under tremendous pressure to prove "effective occupation" of their territory, it seemed as though Liberia could not survive as an independent nation. Barclay's development plan to bring the hinterland under centralized control had resulted only in exploitation of and violence towards the indigenous population.

The Firestone Development

It was at this critical juncture in Liberian history that Harvey Firestone was looking for a location for rubber plantations that would allow his company to control the entire production process, from tree to tire. The Stevenson Plan, implemented by the British government on January 1, 1922, had greatly restricted American access to rubber on the world market, and Firestone took it upon himself to find a solution. The slogan of the Firestone Corporation became "America must grow its own rubber." Experts took soil samples in 1923, and by 1926 Firestone had taken up a 99-year lease of up to one million acres of land. The Firestone corporate newspaper proudly announced the deal on its front page with the headline, "Concession of Million Acres for Rubber is Granted to Firestone: Reclaiming of African Jungles and Rebuilding Nation Comprise Plans For Great Development—Labor For Many Thousands When Gigantic Liberia Project is Well Under Way."[66]

The deal had the approval of the US State Department, who hoped that the huge contract would keep Liberia within the American sphere of influence, without necessitating direct governmental control. The last-minute addition of a twenty-five million dollar loan attached to the concession was intended to ensure that American corporate influence dominated. A financial adviser selected by the American president would control the Liberian Republic's finances, and a US officer would act as military expert to the Frontier Force.

The Liberian government hoped the deal would bring them the necessary financial and material support to develop, and thus control, rural areas. But Firestone was not the only organization attempting to court them. Just before Firestone arrived on the scene, Marcus Garvey's United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) had attempted to implement a Liberian development project. Garvey toured the Caribbean and Central America in 1920 to 1921, raising funds for the scheme through the sale of Liberia Construction Loan bonds. Garvey was also interested in establishing rubber plantations in

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Liberia and offered the government the prospect of a stream of American black emigrants. However, relations between the Liberian government and the UNIA quickly went awry. The major factor seemed to be that renegotiation of the 1912 US loan was underway, and the Liberians feared that involvement with the UNIA would sour the deal.[67] The rejection of Garvey's scheme in favor of the unpopular Firestone concession and loan suggests that the American financial hold over Liberian government policy was considerable.

The Firestone scheme was huge, both in its scale and duration. Preparations began before the first trees were planted, with improvements to the communications and transport systems. The building and maintenance of roads, which would be integral to the working of the plantations was devolved to local chiefs to organize. In 1925, T.E. Beysolow, associate justice of the Supreme Court of Liberia, wrote to Firestone to tell them that, "the chiefs have done their part well" and the roads were improving.[68] These intensive preparations were observed by the 1926 Harvard Expedition. Richard Strong counted some eighty-five men working on the road near the town of Zeanshue on August 30 and complained about ongoing problems with acquiring porters, suggesting a lack of available men for hire.[69] This huge amount of manpower for the Firestone plantations was mustered by the same systems of forced labor that had previously been directed toward public works.[70] In 1927, T.J.R. Faulkner reported that Firestone had granted contracts to Allen Yancy (who would later be the central figure accused of slave dealing in the 1930–1931 League of Nations investigation) to clear land in Maryland County, and that he was taking road laborers and forcing them to clear land without pay.[71] At the same time, the plantations rapidly took shape. By 1927, twelve thousand workers had planted three million rubber trees on fifteen thousand acres of land.

At first it appeared that men were keen to leave forced labor at home to get paid on the plantations. The Harvard Expedition reported that their hammock men would sing "Us pass on to Firestone, Where all is fine" as they took them through the country and that Firestone workers brought small tokens of their work back to home villages, which were regarded as lucky amulets, such as iron washers. Strong complained about ongoing problems with acquiring porters, suggesting a lack of available men for hire (he was offering roughly one shilling a day) and towards the end of his journey was forced to hire women.[72] However, Firestone had greatly overestimated the number of available workers. Harvey Firestone had originally claimed that the one million acre concession would employ 350,000 workers. Raymond Buell, a Harvard researcher who visited Liberia in 1925–1926, sarcastically noted that Firestone would need every adult man in the country on its payroll in order to achieve its objectives.[73] The British attaché in Monrovia also observed repeatedly that Firestone seemed to have overestimated the population of Liberia and that there would be great difficulties in recruitment.[74] And, despite the pressure on numbers, the transportation of laborers to Fernando Po continued, "against the interest of the farmers of Liberia, as well as the Firestone plantation works."[75]

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The Liberian government attempted to control the situation by reviving the defunct Labor Bureau (which had been established but never put to use in 1912 as part of the US loan agreement) to recruit and deploy laborers both for Firestone and public works.[76] The Bureau agreed to provide ten thousand workers for the plantations, for which Firestone would pay a local chief and the Liberian government each one cent a day per laborer. This meant that workers were recruited by local chiefs, who were under pressure to deliver. Thomas J. R. Faulkner, opposition candidate in the 1927 Liberian presidential election, reported to Sir Eric Drummond, secretary general of the League of Nations, that chiefs were fined for failing to provide workers and that the men often had to pawn their wives and children to pay the fines.[77] People were also being displaced; they lost land to the plantations and fled in the face of forced recruitment. Towns were destroyed by Firestone to make way for the planting of rubber trees. For example, in 1929, King Maya Gedebeo of Twansiebo complained to the Liberian legislature that nine towns had been destroyed and their oil palms cut down. He identified agents such as P.J.M. School and A.B. Harper as recruiters of forced labor for Firestone. These demands for forced labor often resulted in young men fleeing the district. King Maya and his delegation asked President King, "What is to become of the natives who have been ruined in the way? They can only choose between forced labor and emigration."[78]

The British government registered its disapproval of the Firestone scheme from the beginning by highlighting the potential poor treatment of African labor. As the British legate at Monrovia put it in May 1925, "The natives would soon be converted into wage-slaves with very little emphasis on the wage and a great deal on the slave."[79] In the British territories, laborers were being paid one shilling and sixpence a day, while the proposed pay on Firestone plantations was only one shilling, when converted from dollars. And, once the depression hit, even those low wages were slashed. In September 1930, Firestone began to make drastic cuts in response to the downturn in the world economy. Eight thousand laborers on the Du and Cape Palmas plantations were "discharged," those who remained took a pay cut, at first of ten percent, but within a week it was reported that wages were halved and that food rations were being distributed instead.[80] They also distanced themselves from the Labor Bureau, just before the scandal over the Liberian use of forced labor was about to break.

In 1929, the Liberian government was accused of tolerating and even profiting from labor conditions that resembled slavery. The League of Nations assembled a team to investigate, who took statements from complainants from various groups about the violence of the LFF and the problem of forced labor. This investigation raised hopes, particularly among the Kru, that the system of forced labor would come to an end. Paramount Chief Niminyo later told a British investigator, "We want a Government to help us build this country. Our only hope of salvation is centred in the British Government. That is the prayer of the natives from this beach to the French boundary and

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the whole of the Kru Coast. We are tired."[81] The Kru and Grebo, exhausted by Monrovia's constant demands for labor, still laid their hopes on a European Mandate over the country.[82] When none was forthcoming, the Kru Coast revolted yet again, and yet again resistance was violently put down by the LFF.

While the issue of forced labor for the plantations was acknowledged, Firestone's involvement was seen as a generally positive thing. The League eventually concluded that the company was in a better position than the government to effect economic and social change. The report concluded:

> [I]f those in charge of the Firestone interests introduced a labor policy which would attract the necessary native labor to the plantations and keep it there, the problem could be solved. If model native villages were erected near the plantation, cultivable land allotted and seeds and machinery advanced; if these villages were furnished with the conveniences and amenities of a normal i.e., a happy, healthy, family life, there is no doubt that numerous natives would leave their miserable forest haunts and become regular plantation workers.[83]

Unlike President Barclay, the League did not refer explicitly to "development." Instead the emphasis was on guiding the native population through gradual changes, which would not move too fast. For example, the League recommended that schools be delayed until more progress had been made; otherwise, "[t]he educated native child will not then try, as he does now, to escape from his debased environment and loaf about on the coast looking for a job in the Government offices, which are already overcrowded with Americo-Liberians."[84] On this, Harvey Firestone agreed. In a 1928 magazine interview Firestone described his labor policy: "We believe that respect for their usual mode of life keeps them contented. But we are studying their manner of living and expect to develop a program of improvement adapted to Liberian customs."[85] This "program of improvement" entailed the export of the "company town" model from Ohio to Liberia.

These towns were intended to not just provide worker housing, but also allowed the company to oversee many aspects of employees' lives. Firestone controlled education, the judicial system, and health-care provision in the villages established on or near plantations. However, complaints of inadequate provision, poor housing, and low wages dogged the plantations. Despite Sidney De La Rue's claim in his memoir that "[t]he production of rubber requires but little special skill,"[86] rubber production was dangerous and required some knowledge and experience to keep trees producing latex. Production involved three major stages: planting, production, and processing. All three stages involved specific tasks, which also relate to the life-cycle of the tree. Each tree is tapped with a cup to catch the latex that pours out overnight. These cups were collected and taken to a central processing point or "field station" where acid is added as the first step in processing.[87] Both the acid used for processing and the burning of the field to prepare for planting presented significant dangers to workers.[88] In addition to the dangers of the work,

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rates of pay were kept low by deliberate collusion between Firestone and Americo-Liberian private plantation owners.[89] By the 1940s, workers on the plantation had started to organize themselves to protest not just low wages and poor conditions, but also inadequate housing and poor provision of services on the plantations.[90] It is unsurprising then that even after Firestone gained the right to recruit its own workers, they continued to rely on the coercion of local government agents. A report produced by Verité (a "fair labor" campaigning organization) with funding from the United States Department of Labor in 2012 suggests that many people currently working on the Firestone plantations in Liberia are descended from those forcibly recruited. They estimate that by 1954 around sixteen thousand workers had been forced by chiefs to work on the Firestone plantations.[91]

The scandal around forced labor or slavery in the early 1930s focused on the shipping of laborers to Fernando Po because it more closely resembled the pattern of the slave trade and slavery. On the other hand, forced labor for private plantations or for public works could more easily be justified and regularized both as native custom and as necessary for progress. The main result of this international attention was that the export of laborers entirely ceased. But this was welcomed by the government and Firestone alike, as it helped ease the labor shortages faced by the plantations. Though Firestone claimed to be a major provider of "social overhead capital"—that is, schools, medical facilities, and roads—workers consistently preferred to work at the smaller, individually owned plantations. These small, local enterprises offered workers a place of work closer to home, the active involvement of the proprietor in settling any disputes, and, most importantly, access to land in order to farm.[92] But the end of the Second World War ushered in a new phase in development policy.

US Aid and Development

In his memoir of serving the US military in Liberia, George "Doc" Abraham wrote that "the Germans knew if they could capture Firestone's plantations, the Allies would be licked. An Army travels on rubber. The Germans had established a foothold in Liberia. Our mission: get them out and keep the rubber trees producing latex for the Allies."[93] In 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt announced on radio that Germany had moved on "a little place called Liberia" and pointed out to listeners that, "Liberia, of course, is awfully close to South America."[94] As well as its proximity to the Americas, the Allies would face major difficulties if the supply of rubber from Liberia were to dry up. With Japan occupying rubber-producing areas in Southeast Asia, the Liberian plantations were vital to the continued war effort.[95] As a result, the following year the US government signed a defence pact with Liberia, committing to further development of transport infrastructure; Robertsfield Airport was built with runways long enough to land B-47 bombers.[96] Roosevelt visited Liberia in 1943 after the Casablanca Conference and inspected the US troops stationed there, who comprised some of the few racially integrated units.

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Following this visit, and the election of President William V.S. Tubman, Liberia formally entered the war in 1944 on the side of the Allies. At the conclusion of the war, Liberia became one of the first recipients of Point Four assistance from the United States, a program of technical assistance in which US "know-how" would aid "underdeveloped" nations to raise standards of living.

The three stated objectives of the Department of State for Liberia were "orderly progress in political, social and economic development," "political independence and territorial integrity," and "maintain[ing] our [the US's] strategic and commercial positions in Liberia."[97] The Firestone rubber plantations were considered both a strategic and an economic interest. The US government took over one of Firestone's most ambitious projects, the building of a deep-water harbor in Monrovia.[98] The budget was controlled by Secretary of State Edward Stettinius and directed through the Liberia Company, formed in 1948 as a subsidiary of Stettinius Associates. Stettinius even wrote most of the Liberian Maritime Code of 1948.[99] Point Four Assistance resulted in the port of Monrovia, the founding of a ship registry, establishment of Liberian international airways with the redeveloped Robertsfield airport, the beginning of large-scale mining of iron ore in the region, and the creation of an international bank.[100] The United States was starting to take a significant official interest in its forgotten "stepchild."[101]

The feeling was mutual. President Tubman, elected in 1943, reinforced and expanded existing attempts to court the dollar with his "Open Door" policy, which matched the American drive to couple "profits and social progress in the underdeveloped world." This was accompanied by a "National Unification Policy," which built on previous President Barclay's attempts to "develop" the people of the hinterland and bridge the long-standing divide between the indigenous communities and the descendants of settlers. Symbolically uniting the two different forms of government, Tubman became the grand master of the Ancient Poro Society[102]. On the political front, he finally abolished the Act of Legislature of 1913, which had established two different legal systems for the coastal regions and the hinterlands. The most significant outcome of this policy was that women and so-called "natives" got to vote.

On the subject of labor, a 1949 regulation stipulated that "all male citizens" were liable for forced labor for public works, in both the hinterland and country areas. However, due to the manner in which forced labor was organized, only men who lived under the rule of a chief would be liable. The Liberian government fell back on the argument of lifestyle, claiming in response to a United Nations investigation that these labor duties remained encoded in law because of their "inability, for economic reasons, to provide modern substitutes for its citizens whose way of life was strictly tribal."[103] Various other restrictions were introduced in 1949 stipulating that men should not be forced to work outside their home area, or during the farming season.

These changes marked the beginning of a decade of extraordinary growth. Export of iron ore began in 1951 when the Liberian Mining Company made its first shipment from the Bomi Hills to its parent company, Republic Iron and

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Steel of Cleveland in Ohio. Between 1951 and 1965, the newly built railway brought twenty million tons of iron ore through the forests to Monrovia. The new mines attracted workers—and their families. In the early 1960s, at the Bomi Hills mine, the labor force numbered around twenty-five hundred, yet more than ten thousand people lived in or around the mine.[104] By 1965, Liberia was one of the main producers of iron ore: four out of the seven West African iron ore mines were located in Liberia, and rates of production suggest they employed more than twelve thousand workers. Production increased from twenty-eight tons in 1960 to fifteen thousand tons in 1965.[105] The Liberian shipping register, implemented by the Department of State in the immediate postwar period, proved popular thanks to its lax oversight and low cost. By the mid-1960s, Liberia had surpassed the United Kingdom as the world's largest shipping register.[106] It was a boom time, and Liberia's economy was only second to Japan's in terms of growth worldwide in this period. Between 1953 and 1962, growth measured 6.7 percent, and between 1963 and 1972, it leapt to a dizzying 19.2 percent. The newfound wealth allowed Liberia to finally divest itself of the restrictive loan from Firestone. In 1956, a statue of President Tubman was erected and a plaque attached which read, "This Monument erected by the people of Liberia is dedicated to the great relief brought to the Country by the Tubman administration in the retirement of the Loan with its humiliating and strangulating effects on the economy of the Nation."

The influx of capital led to rising employment and incomes as well as new roads, railways, and settlements. But little appeared to have changed in terms of conditions for workers. An investigation by the United States Department of Labor in 1959 found that Firestone still recruited laborers through "informal palaver," where the chiefs specified both the number of workers and the length of their term of employment in order to be able to control when they should return to assist in road building, land clearance, and other "tribal work." Chiefs often refused workers permission to take families with them to the plantations in order to ensure their return to home districts.[107]

A World Bank report of 1963 suggests that wage rates were marginally higher in the mining industry than on plantations for unskilled labor (at fifty cents as opposed to thirty-seven cents a day), and so coercion was needed to keep the rubber supply going.[108] The policy of forced recruitment maintained low wages, and a study in 1961 found that a strikingly small percentage of gross domestic money income (just over thirty percent) accrued to wage and salary employees in 1960 because of forced recruitment of unskilled workers.[109] The newfound wealth was accruing mainly to foreign firms and the Americo-Liberian elite. The government attempted to control the workforce through legislation. In September 1960 the *Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture and Commerce* suggested using the vagrancy law to fill gaps in employment. In 1964, Tubman's new vagrancy law permitted the mining companies to evict the families of workers who had accumulated in the nearby "boom towns."[110] State provision of services, particularly education,

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remained poor. While Firestone tried to fill that gap in order to attract and keep workers on its plantations, the lack of access to land or to social institutions to protect their rights continued to make workers reluctant to work there.

The 1960s saw various explanations put forward for this state of underdevelopment. Blame was popularly laid at the feet of the "native African." For example, journalist Harold H. Martin opined, "The African of the hinterland could not break his tribal bonds and hire himself out as a free agent without destroying the whole structure of the communal society under which he lived."[111] In academic circles, the fault was seen to lie with a combination of the natural environment and the Liberian leadership. In 1966 a landmark study was published, titled *Growth with Development: An Economic Survey of Liberia*, by a team from Northwestern University. They had conducted a two-year survey of economic and social conditions in Liberia and diagnosed the nation with a "resource curse." The rich seams of iron and fast-growing rubber plantations might have brought "Islands of modern industrialisation and settlement in the midst of a forest region of bush-fallow cultivators,"[112] but they had done little to improve the living conditions of the unskilled labor on which the economy relied. For the Americo-Liberian government, though, lack of foreign involvement was seen to be at fault. When President Tubman met Vice President Richard Nixon in 1957, he was keen to stress the economic and social advantages that colonized nations had over Liberia.[113] The Liberian government still lacked territorial control.

The United Nations: Community Development and Planned Resettlement

The continued reports of the use of forced labor, particularly for the Firestone plantations, triggered another investigation, this time in 1961 by the United Nations. "Development" was again the prescribed solution. Interest in the potential of development was at a high in the 1960s, as economist George Dalton (a member of the Northwestern team) put it: "Anthropologists, economists, historians, sociologists, political scientists—we are all developers now."[114] The United Nations launched a new program of development assistance, this time themed around the concept of "community development." This idea, which had also become popular in the British Empire, was defined by the UN as "processes by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of government authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities, to integrate these communities into the life of the nation, and to enable them to contribute fully to national progress."[115] The flagship project was one at Kpain, which was intended to be "a model community development project geared towards increased and efficient production."[116] The intention was to resettle families on small holdings in Kpain. The families could then be directed to produce a wide variety of crops, not only for substance, but also as cash crops. The project was designed to be self-sustaining and cheap. Families were responsible for the construction of their

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own homes assisted by the African "tradition of co-operative activity"—that is, free labor provided by their home villages.[117]

From the beginning, though, the provision of labor proved to be problematic. United Nations advisor William R. Miner noted in his first report that he had "heard a lot of talk about villages which do not cooperate and about making people do things … The use of force is all too prevalent."[118] Later, W. M. Harding, community development advisor, argued that the problem lay in the dislike people had toward what he called "statutory labor"—that is, labor for communal purposes. He observed that people willingly came together into well-organized work groups, called "kus," in order to work on projects to benefit other individuals, but shied away from anything that resembled the communal labor that had been organized by chiefs.[119] The second problem faced by the community development scheme at Kpain was the limited size of the smallholding. As Harding explained, a successful farmer would attract more dependents to his compound, but each settler family had only been assigned twenty-five acres of land. This made expansion of each household difficult. The project design, to separate the families from each other, each to their own small plot of land, worked directly against the familiar way of organizing an extended family and household. The project ended up largely as a failure, with the plots of land being taken over gradually by local villagers or "squatters."

The second threat to the government's development plan, apart from the planned resettlement, was to encourage the private ownership of land. To encourage subsistence farmers to convert to smallholders, the government introduced various policies intended to smooth the process for peasant farmers to obtain title to their land. However, it was generally the elites who took advantage of the sale of communal or government land, leading to "the purchase of large tracts of land which are left unused and unimproved."[120] Land titles were recognized as key to the problem of underdevelopment. The UN resettlement program found enthusiastic support in some quarters from government officials who saw the difficulties that had been caused by the granting of huge concessions to private firms and the acquisition of massive landholdings by elites. However, without access to the funds and legal know-how to benefit from the new land ownership policies, subsistence farmers found themselves ever more marginalized.

Conclusion

In 1972, a report for the International Labor Organisation concluded that Liberia's "phenomenal success" in stimulating economic growth over the past twenty years had failed to bring about an increase in the standards of living for the general population.[121] The Republic remained deeply divided. The primary problem facing the Liberian government had always been territorial. How could it lay claim to the hinterland regions with the small, unrepresentative settler society and government on the coast? The first scandal over forced labor

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in Liberia came at the end of a period of expansionist activity—as the Liberian government tried to "emancipate the hinterland" by exerting political and military control. While much literature on the League investigation has centered on the issue of the existence, or not, of slavery in the country, by putting the focus on development policies it is possible to see how the practice of forced labor emerged from the civilizing mission of the early settler populations.

In some ways the Liberian government was effectively able to deploy "development" as a means to assert their political dominance over their territories. The expropriations of land and labor that occurred through the early twentieth century were supported and defended by an ideology of development that defined the indigenous population as "underdeveloped" and in need of special assistance and extraordinary measures. External pressures, including the threat of further incursions by neighboring European colonies or of the imposition of an international mandate over the republic, accelerated the need to bring borderlands under "effective control," and foreign capital investment and expropriation of land could be justified as developmental measures.

In order to do this, without a large settler population willing to move into those regions, the government turned to systems of forced labor. The privatization of development policy between 1926 and 1946 resulted in the Firestone corporation wielding unprecedented power over the government. The collusion between Firestone and government officials to keep wages low and coerce workers onto the plantations was at best substantially overlooked, at worst regarded as a form of "development" in itself. With the arrival of substantial US government aid and technical assistance at the end of World War II, large-scale infrastructure projects could be completed. Yet, very little changed in terms of labor recruitment or conditions, as policies and practices keeping labor costs low were maintained.

NOTES

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1. Cuthbert Christy, "Liberia in 1930," *The Geographical Journal* 77 (1931): 515–40.

2. Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkley, 2005), 7.

3. George Dalton, "History, Politics, and Economic Development in Liberia," *The Journal of Economic History* 25 (1965): 569–91, 571.

4. Histories of the ACS settlers have primarily focused on movements from particular US American states.

5. William E. Allen, "Liberia and the Atlantic World in the Nineteenth Century: Convergence and Effects," *History in Africa* 37 (2010): 7–49, 11–12; Robert T. Brown, "Simon Greenleaf and the Liberian Constitution of 1847," *Liberian Studies Journal* 9 (1980): 51–66.

6. Eugene S. Van Sickle, "Reluctant Imperialists: The U.S. Navy and Liberia, 1819–1845," *Journal of the Early Republic* 31 (2011): 107–34, 109.

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7. Harrison Akingbade, "The Liberian Settlers and the Campaign against the Slave Trade 1825–1865," *Africa: Rivista Trimestrale Di Studi E Documentazione dell Istituto Italiano Per l'Africa E l'Oriente* 38 (1983): 339–68.

8. J. Gus Liebnow, *Liberia: Evolution of Privilege* (Ithaca, NY, 1969), 53–59.

9. Eric Burin, *Slavery and the Peculiar Solution: A History of the American Colonization Society* (Gainesville, FL, 2008), 15–16.

10. Antonio McDaniel discusses the high death rate and its causes in *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot: The Mortality Cost of Colonizing Liberia in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago, 1995).

11. This was funded by the US federal government after 1819. Between the abolition of the slave trade to the US and 1819, southern states retained the right to auction the recaptives. See Eric Burin, "The Slave Trade Act of 1819: A New Look at Colonization and the Politics of Slavery," *American Nineteenth Century History* 13 (2012): 1–14.

12. Peyton Skipwith to John Hopewell Coake, Monrovia, June 25, 1846. *National Humanities Center Resource Toolbox, The Making of African American Identity: Vol. I, 1500–1865*. First published in Randall M. Miller, ed., "*Dear Master*": *Letters of a Slave Family* (Cornell, 1978). Seven hundred fifty-six survivors of the slave ship Pons were left at Monrovia in 1845 by the U.S. Africa Squadron.

13. The settler press and officials often reacted with alarm at the arrival of hundreds of recaptives. Tom W. Shick, *Behold the Promised Land: A History of Afro-American Settler Society in Nineteenth-Century Liberia* (Baltimore, 1980), 68.

14. David Brown provides the most complete description of "civilization" in the Liberian context in "On the Category 'Civilised' in Liberia and Elsewhere," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 20 (2008): 287–303. In particular he compares it to Gellner's concept of "bobility"—that is, a status claim that established a boundary between the settlers and the native inhabitants.

15. Charles Henry Huberich, *Political and Legislative History of Liberia, vol. II* (New York, 1947), 886.

16. Taken from the text of the constitution reprinted in C. Abayomi Cassell, *Liberia: History of the First African Republic* (New York, 1970), 425–30.

17. Benjamin Anderson, *Narrative of the Expedition Despatched to Musahdu by the Liberian Government Under Benjamin J. K. Anderson, Sr., Esquire in 1874* (Monrovia, 1912), 40.

18. As emancipated slave and educator Booker T. Washington explained, "It has been necessary for the Negro to learn the difference between being worked and working." "Industrial Education for the Negro," in *The Negro Problem* (New York, 1903), 7–29, 9.

19. David McBride, *Missions for Science: U.S. Technology and Medicine in America's African World* (New Brunswick, 2002), 106.

20. M. B. Akpan, "Black Imperialism: Americo-Liberian Rule Over the African Peoples of Liberia, 1841–1964," *Canadian Journal of African Studies/La Revue Canadienne Des Études Africaines* 7 (1973): 217–36.

21. Harry Johnston, *Liberia* (New York, 1906), 262.

22. Statement of President A. W. Gardner to the Legislature, December 12, 1878, Foreign Relations of the United States, (FRUS) 1875 vol. II.

23. "Ordinance Related to Poll Tax, 1860," and "Ordinance Related to Poll Tax, 1879," (Louis B. Grimes Papers. Microfilm. Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York).

24. As William E. Allen notes, previous scholarship on Liberian agriculture, which placed the blame for the failure of agricultural production in Liberia on the "laziness" and "antipathy" of the settlers to manual labor failed to acknowledge the more significant role of lack of capital, labor, and expertise of the early settlers. William E. Allen, "Sugar and Coffee: A History of Settler Agriculture in Nineteenth-Century Liberia" (Ph.D. diss., Florida International University, 2002).

25. William E. Allen, "Liberia and the Atlantic World in the Nineteenth Century: Convergence and Effects," *History in Africa* 37 (2010): 7–49, 34.

26. M. B. Akan describes Americo-Liberians' fondness for American fashions and foods and similar expensive imported goods in "Black Imperialism: Americo-Liberian Rule Over the African Peoples of Liberia, 1841–1964," *Canadian Journal of African Studies/La Revue Canadienne Des Études Africaines* 7 (1973): 217–36, 219.

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27. A full description of the impact of the Scramble for Africa on Liberia is given in John D. Hargreaves, *West Africa Partitioned: Volume II, The Elephants and the Grass* (London, 1985), 83–100.

28. George W. Ellis, "Liberia in the New Partition of West Africa," *The Journal of Race Development* 9 (1919): 247–67.

29. Quoted in Yekutiel Gershoni, "The Drawing of Liberian Boundaries in the Nineteenth Century: Treaties with African Chiefs Versus Effective Occupation," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 20 (1987): 293–307, 297.

30. This test required government to have sufficient power to "protect existing rights, and, as the case may be, freedom of trade and of transit." Carl Schmitt argues that this article is aimed to provide "a guarantee of progress, civilisation, and freedom." Schmitt quoted in Matthew Craven, "Between Law and History: The Berlin Conference of 1884–1885 and the Logic of Free Trade," *London Review of International Law* 3 (2015): 31–59, 44, fn. 70.

31. J. Gus Liebenow, *Liberia: the Quest for Democracy* (Bloomington, IN, 1987), 34–37 and map on 26.

32. Christopher Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone* (Oxford, 1962), 384–85.

33. Gershoni, "The Drawing of Liberian Boundaries in the Nineteenth Century," 306.

34. A. Adu Boahen, *Africa Under Colonial Domination, 1880–1935* (Berkley, 1990), 127.

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36. Swiss zoologist Johann Büttikofer noted in the late nineteenth century that for at least twenty years, trade in Liberia had been carried out by three foreign companies: one German, one Dutch, and one American. Henk Dop and Phillip Robinson (trans.), *Travel Sketches From Liberia* (Leiden, 2012), 494.

37. James Coleman, "Inaugural Address," *Liberia Bulletin*, November 13, 1898, 35.

38. Hilary Richard Wright Johnson – XI President of LIberia: 1884–1892, "Annual Message to the Legislature December 30, 1889," in *The Annual Messages of the Presidents of Liberia 1848–2010: State of the Nation Addresses to the National Legislature*, ed. D. Elwood Dunn (Berlin, 2011), 369.

39. Robert A. Smith, *The Emancipation of the Hinterland* (Monrovia, 1964), 18.

40. Jairo Munive, "A Political Economic History of the Liberian State, Forced Labour and Armed Mobilization," *Journal of Agrarian Change* 11 (2011): 357–76, 359.

41. Martin Ford, "'Pacification' under Pressure: A Political Economy of Liberian Intervention in Nimba 1912–1918," *Liberian Studies Journal* 14 (1989): 44–63, 45.

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45. Munive, "A Political Economic History of the Liberian State," 361.

46. Cuthbert Christy, "Liberia in 1930," *The Geographical Journal* 77 (1931): 515–40, 537.

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48. Report to the Financial Adviser R. L., copy to H. E. the President, "Conditions in the Liberian Hinterland since the effective date of the New Interior Regulations which were Approved May 1st 1931," November 28, 1931. Treasury Department, Monrovia in Dunn (ed.), *Annual Messages of the Presidents of Liberia*, 813.

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50. Ronald W. Davis, "The Liberian Struggle for Authority on the Kru Coast," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 8 (1975): 222–65.

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55. Sawyer, *The Emergence of Autocracy in Liberia*, 133.

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63. Richard Pearson Strong diary: June 29, 1926, to November 21, 1926, 120. Available online at http://liberianhistory.org/items/browse/?type=18 (accessed October 12, 2016).

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78. UKNA, FO 458/115 Liberia: Firestone Plantations Concession, 1931, extract from the *Tribune de Geneve* of September 5, 1931: "The Firestone Plantations and Their Significance for the Liberian Natives."

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