

POLITICAL TRANSITION IN
RURAL SIERRA LEONE,
1951 - 1961

Thesis for the Degree of M. A.
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
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1964

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
EAST LANSING, MICHIGAN

POLITICAL TRANSITION IN RURAL SIERRA LEONE,
1951-1961

A Thesis for partial
fulfillment of the
requirements for a
Master of Arts Degree
in African History,
in the Department of
History, Michigan
State University.

by

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Abstract

It is the purpose of this study to investigate the process of political transition in rural Sierra Leone between 1951 and 1961. This shall be done by a systematic analysis of the strategies used by members of four key elite groups, by an examination of the process of political transformation within these groups, and by an analysis of the ways in which political power was used by each of these groups at any given time.

The study is based upon selective study of existing government documents, field reports, periodicals, scholarly journals, relevant books and personal experience in the field.

All this has been done with a view towards demonstrating how a traditional African and a Europeanized political system have interpenetrated with the result that a new elite, combining diverse elements, has come into power, and that its power is the result of a compromise with powerful traditional elements who control local politics.

INTRODUCTION

This study is the result of an idea first conceived during Peace Corps duty in Sierra Leone, West Africa. While working as a teacher in a secondary school in the Northern Province of Sierra Leone, this writer became acutely aware of the importance of local government in the process of political change which is transforming most of Africa. During work as a Census Field Officer between February and May of 1963, the tenacious hold of traditional forms of government in the rural areas became most obvious to this writer, and several of the problems outlined in this paper became a frustrating part of a daily routine. To any careful observer the compromises and expedients which characterize so much of local politics, especially in relation to the ties between the chiefs and the central government, appear to be inadequate and dangerous. So little is known of the details of political development in the Sierra Leone Protectorate, that any research into the workings of local politics seems more than justified. It is hoped that this paper will provide a valid interpretation of some of the events which shaped political transition in rural Sierra Leone, and perhaps answer a few important questions.

I would like to express deep appreciation to Dr. James R. Hooker of the History Department at Michigan State University for the many hours he has spent in reading over this paper, and for his constant encouragement and constructive criticism. I would also like to thank Dr. Martin Kilson of the Center for International Studies at Harvard University for his courtesy and aid during a

fascinating week's work in his office, and for his permission to use his personal files, and to consult his unpublished manuscript on Sierra Leone politics.

CHAPTER I

Background to Political Change

Sierra Leone is typical of many new nations in Africa, especially in West Africa. The little country is situated flush on the Atlantic coast, and it was one of the first areas "discovered" by the Portugese in the 15th century. The magnificent harbor at Freetown has long been a place for shelter, fresh water and food for generations of sailors. Sierra Leone has been right in the path of the migrations and shifting tides of slavery, rebellion, war, plague, colonialism and lately nationalism which have shaped West Africa. Her tribes are in no way unique and they have inspired several good anthropological studies. Her political problems are typical of other former British colonies and her present development as a modern state is hindered by illiteracy, poverty and cultural resistance to change.

Sierra Leone is a product of that peculiar mixture of altruistic humanism and hard-headed imperialism which so often characterized British colonialism in Africa. Her capital city was originally settled by former slaves from Britain in 1787, and the new settlement was appropriately called Freetown. It was in Freetown and the surrounding "colony" located on a mountainous peninsula about twenty miles in length, that the repatriated slaves absorbed new arrivals from along the coast and developed a new Westernized African society known as Creoledom.¹ Until

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A.T. Porter, Creoledom, (London, 1963), pg. 10.

the 1890's the British government had no jurisdiction or ambitions in regard to the hinterland which spread hundreds of miles inland from the colony. Then in response to rapid French expansion in nearby Guinea, the British signed an agreement with the French in 1895 which fixed the boundaries almost as they exist today. A Protectorate was declared over the hinterland and administered through five districts by the system known as Indirect Rule.² One famous Temne Chief, by the name of Bai Bureh Kasseh, resisted a hut-tax placed on his people, and in 1898 led his people in rebellion against the new colonial rulers. British troops successfully defeated the Temne in this Hut-Tax War, but not without a fierce and protracted struggle, which earned the respect of the British and created a legend around Bai Bureh's name which has lasted to this day.

The history of Sierra Leone from 1893 to World War II is hardly unique. A new constitution was introduced in 1924 with an enlarged Legislative Council, and education began to spread into the Protectorate largely as a result of missionary effort. From 1937, Native Administrations modelled after those in Western Nigeria, were introduced gradually into the chiefdoms and the people's share in power was theoretically broadened.³

After the second World War, several changes were introduced. In 1946 District Councils, made up of representatives from each chiefdom, were set up, supposedly to regulate local taxes more efficiently. Each Council was empowered to send representatives to a Protectorate Assembly which met in Bo, thus instituting a

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separate branch of government for the Protectorate itself. A new Constitution was drawn up in 1947, allowing fourteen members from the Protectorate to sit in the Legislative Council. This frightened the Creoles in the colony who saw power and influence slipping finally into the hands of the Protectorate. They violently opposed the new Constitution, arguing that about 90% of the Protectorate people were illiterate and technically not even British subjects. Under the leadership of Dr. Bankole-Bright and I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson (founder of the West African Youth League) the Creoles forced the government to delay until 1950, when the Protectorate people acted. In the same year, Dr. Milton Margai, the first doctor from the provinces, founded the Sierra Leone People's Party (henceforth cited as the SLPP). This party preached unity and adoption of the new Constitution. In 1951 the Constitution was introduced, an election was held and the SLPP gained an overwhelming majority over the other parties in Sierra Leone.⁵ This is a very brief historical background to the eventful decade which led to Independence in April of 1961, and with which this study is concerned.

Any understanding of the events which characterized political development in Sierra Leone between 1951 and 1961 requires some knowledge of the traditional structure of the societies or "tribes" which played such important roles in the process. In fact, any study of political change in the rural areas of Sierra Leone necessarily means that a great deal of emphasis must be placed

4

Ibid., pg. 173.

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Ibid., pg. 175.

upon the traditional political system and how it works.

Sierra Leone is dominated by two large tribes, the Mende and the Temne. The Mende occupy a large part of the Southern and Southwestern area of the country, and the Temne occupy most of the North and West. Several other tribes fill out the remainder, but they have little political influence (with the exception of the Kono, in the diamond rich areas). Many of these tribes are dominated by one or the other of the larger tribes. For example, the Lokko live among the Temne and share political institutions with them; the Sherbro have close connections with the Mende, and the Limba with both the Temne and the Mende.

The Mende are a Patrilineally organized people, who by the mid-19th century had established themselves in large towns, "... each formed of a cluster of small towns, strongly stockaded with high fences." ⁶ Each of these towns had its own ruler, ususally a man who had gained his reputation in war. Often these "chiefs" owned large numbers of slaves captured in war, and plunder from battle was a main source of wealth. It was, therefore, in the interest of these warlike leaders to see that there were plenty of small wars, and trade and commerce suffered accordingly. The great majority of Mende were peaceful farmers however, who lived in relatively self-sufficient small villages. It was over this structure, loosely organized as it was, that the British imposed their hegemony, with consequences which shall be discussed later in this study.

The Temne are also an agricultural people, who invaded northern Sierra Leone from the Futa Jallon plateau late in the 18th century. Unlike the Mende, the Temne had a highly organized political structure, with powerful chiefs who possessed certain mystic qualities. Descent was claimed through patrilineal clans, superimposed over kin-groups. These possessed great potential for political organization:

During the nineteenth century there was a tendency for Temne chiefdoms to increase in size under the leadership of powerful kin-groups. In 1822...Temne country was divided into four districts, each having a separate chief. 7

The British conquest of Temne country was not an easy one, as has already been shown, and in more recent times the most serious disturbances have been centered in Temneland. Political changes and adaptations have been more drastic there, and the consequences far-reaching. In fact, any careful analysis of political development in Sierra Leone, must concentrate largely on events in Temne country, especially in the post-war era. A good part of this study is therefore devoted to the process of political transition in the Temne political structure, and the Mende are discussed only in comparison and where "modernization" has created situations of conflict and tension.

Economic development in the Protectorate has been largely neglected and in comparison with several other emerging African nations, it is still largely unexploited. Education has only recently spread widely throughout the districts, in 1950 only two secondary schools existed in the entire Protectorate, and

these were primarily established for the sons of chiefs. Cash crops, such as cocoa, palm-nuts, and ground-nuts are rarely produced by farmers in any but the most haphazard way, trade is still largely internal and the mineral wealth, diamonds and iron-ore for the most part, is mined and sold by British companies with rather outdated concessions. The result is that the rural areas of Sierra Leone have had less prolonged contact with the outside world, and traditional ways still have a powerful hold. Chiefs' powers are largely undiminished, and even nationalism in Sierra Leone originated as an alliance between the chiefs and the new political elite from the provinces. Many of the elements which have created contemporary African Nationalism have only just emerged in the Protectorate, and few of Hodgkin's well-known conditions exist even today. Hodgkin's list is as follows:

The demand for constitutional reform; the transfer of political power; opposition to the economic power of the extra-territorial firms; opposition to the spiritual power of the missions; the movements to strengthen the position of the peasants against that of the chief; the reawakening of interest in national history and culture; the protest against poverty and demands for improvement in the standard of life. 8

Certainly many of these do not apply to the Sierra Leone Protectorate (now known as the Provinces) even now. This is of great importance, and as we shall see, it has largely determined the course of political transition. But, the emergence of subterritorial group sentiment, often called tribalism, has been a prime factor in the political alignment and even in party allegiances since 1950. In the case of the SLPP:

The bond of unity has been a mixture of apprehension shared by leaders in the Protectorate, regarding the historically dominant position of the Creoles in Freetown, a common awareness of being far more underdeveloped, and therefore weaker than the colony, and a tacit agreement to use their unity plus their numerical superiority to achieve and hold power in the emergent state of Sierra Leone.

This development is of utmost importance and it shall be investigated in detail further on. The division of Sierra Leone into two areas, the Colony and the Protectorate, with two different peoples in each, created a political situation that had little in common with that of neighboring countries. The entry of the provincial peoples into politics (through the SLFP) does not fit Hodgkin's classification of the origins of African parties, as extra-parliamentary bodies. Rather it rose in the background of a parliamentary situation, made up of several semi-political bodies organized to meet the needs of an unofficial African majority in the Legislative and Executive Councils, as designated under the 1951 Order in Council. ¹⁰

These are some of the factors which form the background to political change in the Sierra Leone Protectorate. Apart from Liberia, the Protectorate is unique in some ways, in others quite typical in its politics. Many scholars have felt that the strongest counter forces to the tendency towards unity and centralization are tribal and traditional forces. Certainly Sierra Leone is an excellent example of these forces in operation,

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James S. Coleman, "The Emergence of African Political Parties," in Africa Today, (ed) Groves Haines, (Baltimore, 1955), pg. 239.

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Martin Kilson, "Sierra Leone Politics and the Approach to Independence," West Africa, June 18, July 9, 1960, pg. 668. (Henceforth cited as "Sierra Leone Politics")

and whether the political consciousness and enlightenment of the traditional authorities is enough to make a necessary and inevitable transition to modern centralized government in local affairs, is a question of utmost importance.

It is hoped that this study will illustrate some of the political conditions in the rural areas of Sierra Leone, as well as explain the process of transition itself. Equally important, an attempt has been made to use certain new methods in the theoretical framework of the study. Many old analytical methods have been cast aside, particularly in Chapter V and Chapter VI, though most of the documentation is according to established historical method. Certain sections are highly theoretical, and in these instances an attempt has been made to apply some of the tools of the behavioral scientist to rather commonplace historical events. Perhaps a greater understanding of the significance of these events will result, providing that the techniques are consistent and the conclusions valid.

A good deal of this study is based upon an experience of eighteen months in the Northern Province of Sierra Leone. Personal observations, especially if not carefully annotated and documented, are always dangerous. But a good deal of chieftom politics, particularly in the strong chiefdoms in the North, is not amenable to factual analysis. Much of the knowledge in this area comes only through conjecture, hearsay and the most subjective personal analysis of others' opinions. This is unavoidable. Wherever opinion which is not documentable enters this study, it shall be designated as such, and there shall be no attempt to project personal feelings in the form of prophesy or prediction. Needless

to say a great part of the theoretical framework of this study is the direct result of this writer's personal observation of how politics works in rural Sierra Leone.

Now we shall proceed to the task of investigating and examining the four elite groups which acted in the drama of political transition in the Sierra Leone Protectorate in the decade prior to Independence. The various groups which interacted in the drama of transition have been arbitrarily classified into four "elite" groups, which have broad enough definitions that all the important elements can be included, and analysis is much simpler. One hopes that these classifications do not cloud the events studied here, but rather that they clarify and bring into light the conflicts which determined so many of those events.

CHAPTER II

Four Elites

At this point a more extensive investigation of the four elites already mentioned would be in order. The division of the power structure in Sierra Leone into four groups might seem artificial, even arbitrary. In a sense it is, but there is no doubt that for purposes of definition and comparison, this division is helpful. Also, at any point in the post-war history of Sierra Leone, these four distinct groups could easily be recognized and it is the interaction between them which makes the political history of the Protectorate.

In analysing the criterion of political power, it is important to define those elements who make the decisions. Professor A.T. Porter mentions three such groups in his book Creoledom:

In colonial areas, one can distinguish three classes which fit these conditions. These are the leaders in traditional societies, the European or alien rulers and the western educated Africans whose status is rooted in the coastal towns. All three groups have supplied those who have wielded or still wield political power. ¹¹

To the three groups listed here, I have added a fourth; the "new elite", which has been recruited from educated Protectorate Africans who opposed the urbanized Creole influence, and constituted another force for change in local politics.

The first and initially the most important of these groups is the "colonial elite". This group, composed exclusively of the British colonial officials sent out by the colonial office,

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Porter, Creoledom, pg. 121.

held ultimate power in local affairs right up to independence, and to a certain extent after. For our purposes, the most important men in these groups, were the District Commissioner (henceforth D.C.) one for each of the twelve districts, the Provincial Commissioner, one for each Province and the Chief Commissioner, responsible for the whole Protectorate. These men literally ruled the Protectorate until self-government came in 1961. They always had the ultimate sanction of the British government behind them, and they are extremely important to any study of political transition in the Protectorate.

In his district, the D.C. had power of life or death over anyone under his jurisdiction. To be sure he rarely intruded into the affairs of the Paramount Chiefs and their councils, except when corruption or criminal acts were obvious. But every Paramount Chief (P.C.) and every Tribal Authority (T.A.) knew he had the power to negate their acts and if necessary, to enforce his decisions with force of arms. He was the last local legal resort beyond the chieftom courts, and usually directed the economic and educational development of his district personally. The lesser colonial officials, such as the agricultural officers, district engineers, medical officers and foresters, were responsible to him as well as to their superiors in the Secretariat in Freetown:

...the District Officer (or Commissioner) was often more important than his colleagues in the Secretariat ...because of the degree of discretion permitted him. Upon him depended the maintenance of an orderly legal framework of political life, improvement of health and sanitation, collection of taxes, enforcement of financial regulations under his jurisdiction. His scope also widened

as the colonial administration widened its interest to include education, agriculture, forestry, mining, commerce, husbandry, etc. ¹²

Even after self-government, the D.C. (the title was changed to District Officer in 1963) held basically the same powers, and often he was British. This man was the link between the colonial government in Freetown and the traditional authorities and through more than six decades of colonial rule he kept the peace and solely represented the British government to tens of thousands of Africans.

With the possible exception of the period between November 1955 and April 1956, when the tax riots occurred, the D.C.'s prestige was always great. Nearly everyone, no matter what his status, felt that his grievances would be heard by the D.C., and the greater authority of the central government invoked if necessary. This writer often witnessed examples of the District Commissioners' authority and prestige as farmers, traders, sub-chiefs, and even Paramount Chiefs would come to the District Office to seek the D.C.'s aid in problems which were beyond their control. Often the most humble of rural peasants would appeal to him for aid in legal problems involving their own chiefs and usually they were fairly certain of success. As long as the British ruled Sierra Leone, the D.C. was the most powerful decision-maker on the local level and in his person he represented the entire strength and resources of the colonial government, as well as the British government itself.

The Provincial Commissioner was the next step up the chain of command, and he represented the link between the D.C. and the Chief Commissioner, who was the man responsible for the government of the entire Protectorate. The Provincial Commissioner and the Chief Commissioner possessed great power, but they had little to do with local politics, and they usually presided over the administration of the provinces through their D.C.'s and passed orders down to the local level whenever necessary. They concern us here only when they report to the governor himself. Often the reports they drafted determined decisions made in the Secretariat which had profound effects on local affairs.

The second group in our discussion is the Creole elite. Members of this group usually occupied important secondary posts in the provincial administration, the District Offices, the governmental departments and the Tribal Authorities themselves. It should be made clear that this elite group does not by any means include all Creoles. We are concerned only with those Creoles who lived in the Protectorate and who exercised important decision-making positions. Often their positions were nominally unimportant, but by virtue of their superior education and skills they played a vital role in the political transition in the Protectorate. They were also an elite because they had a "superiority" of a general kind, and were imitated by the Protectorate Africans in the sense that their manner of acting and living set standards for others. They were acutely conscious of their role and as Professor Porter writes:

...they expected in due course to fall heir to the political structure of which they were a part on the eventual withdrawal of the British government. Their built-in conservatism,

however, militated against any pressure for radical change or for a hurried acceleration of political development. 13

This conservatism and this desire to dominate the Protectorate peoples by virtue of an alleged superiority and sophistication, led the Creole elite into direct conflict with the traditional elite, the colonial elite and the rising new elite from the provinces. In some ways this conflict was a result of the cultural dualism natural to an emerging nation, but it was a unique situation in that the Creoles had identified with the British colonial elite and considered themselves British citizens first. As events will prove, this led to tremendously important developments which largely determined a good deal of the political development, especially as regards the parties, in the Sierra Leone Protectorate.

Today, many Creoles still hold important positions in local government (in District Offices especially). They still dominate clerical posts in the offices of the various branches of the government. Many are Native Administration clerks, and many even have positions in the senior service. But today they have identified with modern African Nationalism, and they have learned to work with their fellow Sierra Leoneans from the Protectorate.

Perhaps here an explanation of the terms "Protectorate" and "Colony" would be helpful. The term "colony" refers to an area directly governed by the British, where British law and justice

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A.T. Porter, "The Social Background of Political Decision-Makers in Sierra Leone," Sierra Leone Studies, June, 1960, pg. 9.

prevail. In general the term came to mean any area in the British Empire which was under the direct authority of the colonial office and in which no traditional government functioned. The Colony of Sierra Leone refers to the mountainous peninsula immediately around Freetown, in which most of the Creole population live, and which was settled by them in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Today it is called the Western Province. The word "protectorate" refers to an area indirectly governed by the British colonial office, usually through local chiefs. In a protectorate, local laws still have force, and British law is used only on a appeal. In Sierra Leone the term Protectorate refers to the remainder of the hinterland outside the Freetown peninsula. Today it is called the "Provinces".

Early in the century it was often Creoles who first spread the ideas of African nationalism down the West African coast. They were usually the first doctors, lawyers, missionaries and teachers to penetrate beyond the coastal cities. They spread western lifestyles into the hinterland of Sierra Leone, as well as parts of the Gold Coast, the Gambia and Nigeria, and they were generally thought of as progressive and enlightened arbiters of change. Their alienation from the British in the last two decades of colonial rule and their opposition to Protectorate political power was a natural result of their own shock at the loss of their once dominant position in commerce, culture, the professions and politics.¹⁴ Not until they realized that they were a minority

and that they must take their place as part of a new nation ruled by Protectorate Peoples, did they adjust to reality and cease their active opposition to the other groups which clamored for power.

The presence of the Creoles as an element in the struggle for power in Sierra Leone created a rather uncommon situation in contrast to that of Ghana or Nigeria, where the educated Africans were original members of the indigenous society. The Creole presence complicated political development in the Protectorate, and as we shall see, precipitated collaboration between the traditional elite and the new African elite.

The third group in our discussion, is the traditional elite. This powerful group, composed of Paramount Chiefs, sub-chiefs, and the Tribal Authorities (formerly the chieftom council), is basically the same group which ruled prior to British rule, and they have retained most of their political power on the local level in all the years since.

When the British came in the last decade of the 19th century, they instituted a system known as Indirect Rule. This allowed Paramount Chiefs and their councils to govern largely unhindered in their chiefdoms, with the D.C. only overseeing the administration to assure fairness and legality, and to represent the colonial government. Indirect Rule was considered desirable largely because it broke the shock of Western annexation, it kept the peace, and it, "...induced a sympathetic inquiring attitude in colonial officials towards African society."

The system of Indirect Rule was designed so that the real responsibility for decent local control would rest in the D.C.'s hands, originally because there were so few qualified and able men available to administer vast regions of colonial Africa. In certain areas, such as Northern Nigeria and the Sierra Leone Protectorate this was the most effective system which would least disturb the indigenous structure.

Behind this ingenious system was the implicit theory that eventually the native institutions, properly guided by the British administration, would evolve in a more democratic structure, and local government would become the mainstay of independent national states. Of course, no one predicted that anything less than a century of such "evolution" in local government could possibly result in self-rule.

It was the most effective system which the British could introduce and still not upset the traditional political and social structure, and it required only a handful of officials, as Lord Lugard, its originator in Nigeria, discovered. In theory, it was believed by the colonial elite that over a long period of time the traditional institutions would slowly evolve in a more democratic structure, and certain measures were introduced to help this "evolution" along, most of which proved failures. ¹⁶

The traditional elite was, and still is, authoritarian in

its local form, particularly in Temne country. Chiefs, especially Temne Chiefs, often had a mystic quality to their power, and with the support of various secret societies and ancient tribal customs, they ruled nearly as autocrats. Of course, they were always subject to the advice of their councils, but the members of these bodies reflected the traditional awe of the indigenous peoples towards the ancient structure of law and government.

Wherever the basic pattern of life has remained unchanged, the political power of the traditional elite has continued largely undiminished. In fact, this group remains the strongest force counter to the tendency towards centralization and unitary government in Sierra Leone, though at present they share power with the new elite, who govern from the capital. Some think this is a good thing, since too much power in the hands of the national government on the local level can mean tyranny. But, as this study will make clear, too little control over the traditional elite can produce local tyranny just as easily.

The Sierra Leone Protectorate is one of those places where "modernization" in political forms has been late in coming and traditional ways still exercise great force. The common people have not been politicized to the modern techniques of local government by legal representation. Those who have been prepared in this way to accept Western ideas, or adaptations of Western ideas, have not tried to break tribal ties, but, "... rather both to use them and to transcend them; to strengthen

their own movements by securing tribal support and yet to develop trans-tribal links."¹⁷

The situation in the rural areas has always been quite different from that in the cities. Even among the educated Africans, tribal loyalties are strong, and contacts with members of the extended family are extensive and intimate. As Professor Gluckman says:

...in the rural areas membership of a tribe involves participation in a working political system, and sharing domestic life with kinfolk; and ...this continued participation is based on present economic and social needs, and not merely on conservatism.¹⁸

Much of the economic structure of the rural areas still revolves around the traditional elite. Paramount Chiefs and sub-chiefs control large tracts of land, and as we shall see, Chiefs often abused their political power for economic gains. Since the political power of the traditional elite has actually increased in some instances, it appears that the colonial elite were quite wrong in their assumption that the traditional political structure would evolve in the general direction of a broader and more democratic base. The political skills and strategic position of the Chiefs in the Protectorate were held essential to the original consolidation and maintenance of colonial rule, and the traditional elite were therefore able to bargain for a continuation of their preferred position, and found their niche in the new system of power.¹⁹ Many

¹⁷ Ibid., pg. 13.

¹⁸ Max Gluckmann, "Tribalism in Modern British Africa," Cahiers d' Etudes Africanines, Vol. 1, 1960, pg. 55.

¹⁹ Martin Kilson, Political Change in A West African State: A Study of Political Modernization, (Unpublished Manuscript) pg. 80. (henceforth cited as Political Change)

of the politicians in the central government realized this and they rarely directly opposed the Chief's entrenched position. Unlike other parts of West Africa, where the educated (new) elite have directly opposed the traditional authorities in the struggle for local power, the channeling of legitimate political activity through the traditional structure has had several important and interesting results for the Sierra Leone Protectorate:

In the first place it forced the modernist--the party politicians of the urban centers--to carry their appeal to the native authority councils of the most remote bush villages. Elections were not the esoteric pastime of the barristers, clerks and marketmen of the main centers--a rally of the faithful, as nationalist leaders desiring direct elections would have preferred--rather they involved campaigning throughout the countryside, with the courting or intimidation of the traditionalists. ²⁰

This leads us directly to the last of the elite groups which interacted with the other three to form a pattern of political development in the Protectorate since the war. This group is perhaps the most important, since it now holds power in the central government, runs the political parties, and is ever-increasing in size and influence. Eventually, it seems that this "new elite" will dominate all phases of government as it now does in Ghana and the southern regions of Nigeria. But as has been indicated above, the new elite in the Sierra Leone Protectorate has compromised with the traditional elite in local politics and an uneasy partnership prevails throughout most of the provinces.

Often members of the traditional elite (members by birth and allegiance) are also members of this new elite and they have a vested interest in maintaining the situation as it developed prior to Independence and as it has largely remained to this day.

This new elite rose gradually as a result of the spread of education and western culture into the hinterland of Sierra Leone. Prior to World War II this group numbered only a handful in the Protectorate. The Creole ascendancy in the urban areas also made it extremely difficult for the few educated men from the rural areas to exercise any influence in the same way they did in rural Ghana or Nigeria. The only way they could enter the power structure was through the traditional political system, thus aligning themselves with the Chiefs. The alternative, open and active opposition to the existing structure, was hardly conceivable before the war, since this rising new intellectual elite numbered so few. Furthermore, the Creoles dominated the lesser positions in which an educated African could work. The war changed all this, but not as drastically as might be expected. The return of soldiers who had served in the army, primarily in Burma, provided an impetus to the growth of the new elite, but many of these soldiers had little education and were not really eager to enter political activities. The political division of Sierra Leone into Colony and Protectorate further complicated the situation, since many soldiers found employment in Freetown where traditional values had long undergone considerable transformation. The economic and educational backwardness of the Protectorate was not substantially altered

until well after the war, and besides, the system of local government supported by the colonial rulers did not promote political and social change on the local level. The absence of large scale development and social revolution spared the traditional elite the shock effect which broke Indirect Rule and Chiefly authority in Ghana. The fact that in 1950 only two secondary schools existed in the entire Protectorate is glaring evidence of the state of the Protectorate in terms of modern development. There were simply few places for the educated African from the provinces to go, and this remained so until the 50's. As Dennis Austin wrote:

Not until the formation of District Councils in 1946, and the 1950 provision for increased non-chief membership of the Councils, was there any official outlet for non-traditional educated opinion.²¹

Of course there were the "associations" which often provided a limited outlet for educating Protectorate Africans. Some of these were actually tribal associations which played an active part in the education of the new elite, "...not only through providing scholarships for the children of tribesmen, but also through founding and managing their own independent schools.²² As early as the mid 30's, Youth Congresses, such as I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson's West African Youth League, provided another means of political expression. But such organizations could do

21

Dennis Austin, "The People and Constitution of Sierra Leone," West Africa, Sept.- Oct. 1952, pg. 893.

22

Thomas Hodgkin, Nationalism in Colonial Africa, (New York, 1957), pg. 87.

little to provide avenues of direct action outside of the cities.

Perhaps the first really politically oriented Protectorate organization was the Sierra Leone Organization Society, (SOS) founded in 1946 by Dr. John Karefa-Smart, the first Temne doctor, and soon joined by Dr. Milton Margei, the first doctor from the entire Protectorate, and a Mende. It first had as its organizational program the promotion of co-operative agriculture in the Protectorate, but it became a political organization during the 1947-51 crises over the new Constitution.²³ The SLPP, which became the first political party in 1951, still depended heavily on the Paramount Chiefs for support, though led by the new elite, and it was not a mass party as was the Convention People's Party in Ghana or the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons. in Nigeria. The long period of conflict between the Creoles and the Protectorate Africans, "...had made the latter fully pre-disposed to any political organization which might emerge among themselves against the former,"²⁴ and because of this split it was not essential to create a body of political beliefs or even a nationalistic attitude to get the support of the masses. The issue of Creole supremacy, not colonial rule, was the main rallying cry in the SLPP's struggle for power and it was therefore essential to work with the powerful traditional elite, rather than against them.

23

Austin, op. cit., pg. 893.

24

Kilson, "Sierra Leone Politics", West Africa, pg. 688.

Therefore, the educated Protectorate Africans, led by a few professional men, but largely clerks in government offices, or in branches of merchantile firms, teachers and technicians, only recently began to take an active part in national politics, and to exercise their potential as an elite. At present they still govern in partnership with the traditional elite, and will probably continue to do so for some time.

With this background in mind, we shall investigate some aspects of political transition (or transformation) as they relate to the colonial elite.

CHAPTER III

Transformation and the Colonial Elite

The process of transformation within the political elite in rural Sierra Leone has its roots, as we have seen, in the interaction between four groups; the colonial elite, the Creole elite, the traditional elite, and a rising new African elite. We have already discussed the nature of these groups in some detail, but here some more precise working definitions might be in order.

The term "elite" is defined as any small but powerful group who exercise decisive power in decision-making on the local level of government. The membership of any elite group mentioned has been determined primarily by their position in the social structure, for influence generally goes with position in traditional societies.

Transformation is defined here as change in the form and structure of the local political system in Sierra Leone, especially the methods of governing. The following chapters are concerned with which group or groups make the political decisions on the local level and how they make them at any given time. They shall also investigate the process of interaction between the elite groups and how this process influenced the process of transformation within the elite groups. One scholar has explained this all-important process of change as follows:

...A fundamental transformation in a political system when support has shifted from one set of authorities to a different set, in which the organization, solidary symbols (that is, symbols validating and defining limits of power) and central characteristics with regard to

the way ²⁵ in which power is used have all undergone change.

Power is not so easily defined. But Professor A.T. Porter has cleverly applied a classical definition to the African situation:

Power, according to Max Weber, consists in the probability that one of the parties in a social relationship will be able to carry out his will despite the opposing will of the other authority. To say for example, that a person has political authority is to say that a political formula assigns him power and that those who adhere to that formula expect him to have power and regard his exercise of it as just and proper. ²⁶

Often in these chapters, the men who hold power also have authority, but this is primarily because in the traditional society there have never been many avenues to power. In most cases Paramount Chiefs have both authority and power and the people regard their exercise of it as natural and proper and never challenge the authority which many in fact serve as a basis for that power. In other instances, as with certain Creole administrative clerks, power has nothing to do with authority, and great difficulty in defining the extent of that power and how it is used naturally results.

In any case, transformation, as defined above, shall be examined by means of analysis of certain strategies used by members of the elite groups, and by an analysis of colonial policy, chiefdom politics, and nationalist party politics.

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Martin Kilson, "African Political Change and the Modernization Process," Jr. of Mod. Af. Studies, Vol. 1, 1963, pg. 425. (Henceforth cited as "African Pol. Change".)

Some theoretical guidelines have been provided by Professor Sidney Verba. He writes:

...that the processes studied within the small group are of social and political importance, and that knowledge of them should operate to improve our understanding of political processes. ²⁷

And to further extend the framework to fit the peculiar circumstances of rural Sierra Leone, Professor Verba also provides some ideas:

The pattern of decision-making is most evident in those cases in which group membership is highly important to the individual--in traditional groups for instance, where relations among members are diffuse, deeply affective and have existed for an extended period. ²⁸

Such ideas help provide part of the conceptual framework for these chapters, and they serve to clarify the detailed examination which follows. The Sierra Leone Protectorate between 1951 and 1961 was a society in rapid change, as it still is, and conflict between the elite groups is natural to such an order. The late S.F. Nadel wrote in respect to such societies in transition:

...the conflict between rural elites is most acute in societies undergoing change, when traditional and anti-traditional conceptions come into conflict. In this sense, an "old elite", perhaps based on aristocratic descent, may be opposed by a "new elite" deriving its claims to pre-eminence from technical skills or economic importance. ²⁹

²⁷ Sidney Verba, Small Groups and Political Behavior. (Princeton, 1961), pg. 5.

²⁸ Ibid., pg. 27.

²⁹ S.F. Nadel "The Concept of Social Elites," International Social Science Journal, Vol. 8, 1956, pg. 420.

In Sierra Leone Protectorate the new elite did not directly oppose the traditional elite for reasons which will become clear later, but there did occur a conflict situation, natural to the cultural dualism of any transitional society. The nature of this conflict, which we have already discussed in terms of the traditional political structure, determined the majority of the events studied in these chapters.

The European colonial elite who ruled in the Sierra Leone Protectorate were typical of that peculiar breed of able, dedicated civil-servants who ran the British Empire from Bathurst to Hong Kong. Most of these men, such as the District Commissioners, who as we have seen were perhaps the most important, were primarily concerned with maintaining peace and orderly development in their areas. In fact, the entire framework of local political life depended upon the District Commissioner (D.C.), and he was the one man from the colonial government who watched over the legal framework of the traditional society.

This colonial elite held actual power primarily by means of prestige. For armed force the local D.C. could usually only depend upon a telegram to the capital asking for a contingent of police who might arrive a day later. Authority was delegated directly from the central government and the colonial office, but rarely did any local officer have physical force at his disposal. Power for the D.C. rested upon the awe and respect

in which he was held by the local people, and the remarkable thing is that his power was rarely if ever tested by the great mass of Africans in any given local area.

This writer can testify to the enormous status held by more than one British D.C. (now called District Officers), even after independence. Generally everyone, from the Paramount Chief down to the peasant farmer showed constant respect and deference for the D.C.'s person, and the office itself seemed to lend a kind of dignity to the man, however petty he might be in private life.

Most of these officers, however conservative, had long been aware that their day was passing, and for the most part they did a good job in making the process of transformation as smooth as possible.

The process of transformation as regards the colonial elite, always represented on the local level by the D.C. and his subordinate officials, was largely willing and self-directed. As the pressures for self-government mounted, and as the nationalism of the post-war era spread even to the remotest regions of the Protectorate, the colonial elite tried their best to adapt and adjust rather than to oppose the inevitable change. After all, it had always been maintained by the colonialist that, "...the cornerstone of Indirect Rule was the progressive adaptation of indigenous political institutions to meet the needs of modern government... within the framework of traditional authority."³¹

As early as the thirties the colonial elite had made concessions to change in the structure of traditional societies. Some of these we have discussed. But, we are primarily concerned with the decade prior to independence, and it is in these ten years that the great changes took place and that the colonial elite cleared the way for "africanization" of the entire civil service, a process not yet complete.

Attempts to democratize the Native Administration, are typical of the strategy of peaceful evolution, directed from above, which characterized so much of the colonial elite's actions. They did not always work, but the intentions of the officials who instituted some of these changes, were basically good. They wanted to ease the process of transition and render it more viable. It may appear naive to attribute such foresight and even altruism to the colonial elite. But it seems indisputable that the colonial rulers in Sierra Leone did recognize the necessity for change in local government, and by the mid 50's they were consciously aware of the fact that they could not remain much longer in power. Accordingly, they willingly legalized the process of transformation whenever and wherever possible, by attempting to prepare the local political system for independent and responsible action. This was a primary but unspoken policy of the British government from 1945 on.

A good example of colonial policy which worked towards an orderly and lasting transformation of power would be the executive order of the Ministry of Local Government, sent out six-months after the tax riots of 1955-56. This order greatly expanded the representative principle in the composition of the Tribal Authorities,

by expanding the membership.³² This supposedly meant more democracy in local government, but it is interesting to note that the same order gave the D.C. a greater role in the central government's scrutiny of the Native Authority system:

...This was natural for they (the D.C.s) represented the unit of central government that was in daily contact with the N.A. It was found particularly important that the D.C.'s powers of intervention in any aspect of Native Administration through inquiry, be strengthened in the postwar period.³³

Thus, while the colonial government extended more legal representation to the people on the T.A.s on the one hand, it gave the all-important D.C. more direct power over the T.A. on the other hand. It seems that the strategy in this case was one of strengthening the hand of the central government for any future contingencies, at the same time that it placated popular opinion on the local level. As we have already indicated this did not work particularly well.

Another tactic which made up part of the colonial elite's strategy was the amalgamation of administrative units on the local level. The government hoped that an effective policy of amalgamation would solve some of the problems that rose out of the demographic irrationality and unviable tax structure of many chiefdoms, where Paramount Chiefs used illicit tax powers and riots often resulted, as in 1955-56. Here the colonial elite saw a chance to use the influence of the new African political leadership that had emerged with the rise of party politics in 1950-51. The party leaders were willing to go along, since they would automatically gain if

³² Kilson, Political Change in a West African State, ps. 321.

³³ Ibid., ps. 324.

they had a hand in the creation of new chiefdoms. Thus amalgamation was pushed by all the resources at the disposal of the colonial government and by the African party leaders, and it resulted in some drastic changes, some unforeseen. Professor Kilson comments in reference to one such change:

A fascinating instance of this was in Sowa Chiefdom, Pujihn District. The Chiefdom's political life was characterized by major social change, stemming from the diamond mining industry, and by concomitant political conflict between traditional rulers and populist groups which entailed widespread violence, killing and property destruction.³⁴

It is evident from the above that such strategy did not always result in peaceful change. In 1951 the whole Southeastern Province was threatened with unrest due to the Sowa Chiefdom description above.³⁵ This technique of forcing changes in the structure of tribal society from the outside (via the central government through the D.C.) backfired on several occasions as we shall see, and often actually made the transformation more difficult and less justifiable from the colonial viewpoint.

Another common policy was to use the Paramount Chiefs to aid in local change in their own chiefdoms. Where the effects of the war, and the undermining of law and order in diamond areas had reduced the chief's prestige the government often bolstered their authority by direct support from the D.C. One observer, who sat

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Ibid., pg. 328.

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H. Childs, Annual Report on the Sierra Leone Protectorate for the Year 1951, (Freetown, 1953), pp. 2-3.

on the Cox Commission in 1956, saw the veneration of chiefs in Temne land as, "...a unique opportunity to smooth the transition from old to new",³⁶ by channeling resentment against the Chief away from him and towards reform in the Tribal Authority and District Councils. Eventually this was attempted and it alleviated tension, though it hardly removed the cause of unrest, which stemmed from growing resentment with the chiefs' constant abuse of their powers in local government. In short, wherever the power the power of the chiefs remained intact, no reforms in the other bodies of the Native Administration would likely prove successful. When local power was centered in the hands of the chiefs, the people knew where it lay, and the fact that the colonial elite continued to support the chiefs, made any reforms in chief-dominated bodies like the Tribal Authority appear meaningless. Any powerful Paramount Chief would naturally comply with changes in form which he knew would satisfy the government officials, but would not substantially reduce his own power over the councils. Some of the details of reform in the N.A.s will be discussed in more depth in the chapter on the traditional elite.

Though it failed, this policy was part of a conscious effort by the colonial elite to adjust local government to the changing circumstances which modernization was bringing, and thus to make the transformation (at least with regard to the way in which power is used) more valid and lasting.

Another technique used by the colonial elite from the very beginning of their rule in the Protectorate was to employ Creoles from Freetown in the lesser posts of the district administrations and to place them as clerks among the tribal authorities. This was not part of any policy to ease the process of change, but was rather a simple expedient. Only recently have there been enough educated Africans from the provinces to fill the many junior posts. Even when not directly brought by the Europeans, the Creoles entered the Protectorate under their approval and protection. The result generally was that the Creoles had secondary relationships with the local Africans and were free to deal with them largely as they saw fit. Being marginal to both Africans and Europeans, they still benefited from the presence of British rule and made the most of it.

Until the post war period the colonial elite complied with the Creole domination of administrative posts and even encouraged their status. However, with the rise of nationalist sentiment, the growth of education in the Protectorate, the spread of a money economy and the emergence of political parties in the 50's, the British rulers withdrew their strong support of Creole dominance in the Protectorate. For a long time the Creoles had played a role as a bridge between the indigenous Africans and the colonial elite. They had largely accepted the economic and political organization of the British authorities and they resented their abandonment. As we shall see, this Creole elite attempted to secure their faltering position in the Protectorate (as well as in Freetown) by supporting one political faction against another and by generally opposing movements towards independence.

The reversal of British policy towards the Creoles in the Protectorate is not easily documented (though it certainly is in the Colony, as Professor Porter has shown), but it is a generally recognized fact that the new nationalist party leaders as well as the chiefs became the prime concern of the colonial elite. The Creoles who backed either of these groups or both, were in fair positions to protect their interest, but those who opposed them were abandoned to their own resources and many lost their jobs and status. It is doubtful however, that any Creole in an administrative post in the Protectorate was replaced simply because he was a Creole.

Perhaps the most noticeable and direct policy used by the colonial elite was to implement constitutional change which had a direct effect on local politics. The Legislative Council, an institution established in most of the West African colonies in the 19th century, had always carried with it, "...the strong, implicit assumption of a progressive climb up the constitutional ladder to the final goal of responsible self-government." ³⁷ For a long time this council was the only recourse Africans had to a voice in government, and only an advisory voice at that. In addition, only Creoles and Europeans were allowed to sit on this body until 1924, when an enlarged Legislative Council included three Paramount Chiefs appointed by the governor. This gave no genuine representation to local Africans, since the governor and officials still retained all power. In 1946 District Councils were instituted, giving local representatives in each district

power to discuss taxation and spending, and each District Council was empowered to send representatives to a Protectorate Assembly which first met at Bo in 1946.³⁸

Real constitutional change came in 1951. The Stevenson Constitution, drawn up in 1947, was delayed by Creole opposition (led by Dr. Bankole-Bright and I.T.A. Wallace Johnson). So Dr. Margai founded the SLPP as a means to get the Protectorate people behind the constitution. The new party succeeded in its demand that the constitution be adopted, and in the elections which followed won an overwhelming victory over the National Council (an ultra-Creole party) and secured a large majority in the new Legislative Council. Soon after, the governor with approval from Dr. Margai chose only SLPP members to sit on the Executive Council. Thus the first step was taken towards responsible cabinet government in Sierra Leone, with the willing aid and compliance of the colonial elite. By 1956 the Legislative Council had been renamed the House of Representatives, and true government by the majority had begun in Sierra Leone, with the SLPP representing the masses of people in the provinces.³⁹ The colonial elite could feel reasonably sure that independence was safely on its way under the leadership of a moderate party which claimed the support of most of the rural populace. But on the local level things were not as they appeared on the surface, and many problems remained to be worked out. Because the colonial elite always had ultimate power

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Fyfe, op. cit., pg. 173.

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Ibid., pg. 178.

in their hands, they could choose the Africans they wished to succeed them. By the time full self-government was achieved in April of 1961, the colonial elite must have been aware that they had made some serious mistakes in grooming certain elements in the new African elite for power, and even more important, in their plans to change the structure of local government.

The transformation of power from the colonial elite to the responsible Africans has not yet been completed. Actual political power still resides to a large extent with certain European officials who continue to work in the name of the central government. As late as the summer of 1963 there were still at least two white D.C.s in the Protectorate, and many other officials at lower levels. The process of Africanization is rapid, and the transformation in those positions where power in local political affairs lies is nearly complete, but it may be several years before the other administrative officers are completely replaced by the new African elite.

CHAPTER IV

Transformation and the Creole Elite

By the 1950's the conflict between the Creole elite and the Protectorate leaders had come to a head. Following the war the Creole elite had still dominated most of the administrative positions in the provinces. They were officers of all sorts, in the junior civil service, N.A. clerks, workers in medical facilities, public works, and district offices. Some were senior service officers (often assistant D.C.s) and they dominated the legal and medical professions. For decades, this elite had set the standards for local Africans aspiring to modern ways and they provided most of the social leadership. One anthropologist wrote as late as 1951 that:

Creoles still hold a large number of the senior posts in the Protectorate Administration and in the medical and technical branches of the Service, but there is an increasing challenge from educated Protectorate-born individuals.⁴⁰

Since they were becoming very politically conscious and generally scorned the "aborigines" of the provinces, the Creole's fear of losing their privileged position was well-founded. They had become aware that their power coincided with that of the colonial elite, and they strongly opposed the efforts of the provincial peoples to gain representation and political power, even in local politics. This opposition to any advancement by the Protectorate peoples was not lost to the leaders of the rising new elite, and it, "...had made the latter fully predisposed to

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Little, "Structural Change in the S.L. Protectorate," pg.218-219.

any political organization which might emerge among themselves against the former."⁴¹ The Creoles were known to the rural population as colleagues of the white men, and in the Mende rising of 1898 Creoles had been murdered along with missionaries. The Creoles in turn had not forgotten this and they found it distasteful to have to accept as equals those who despised their British citizenship and their loyalty to the Crown.⁴²

Thus, after World War II the Creole elite found themselves on the defensive, though for a while they still held many key positions. Indeed a change in their status had been long in the making. Years before, British policy towards the Creoles had begun to change, though few had been aware of it. Professor Porter wrote in reference to the policy change which began around the turn of the century:

Creoles were no longer the trusted partners of the British in their self-appointed mission of civilization and colonization. The roles envisaged for them were now the subservient posts in the civil service.⁴³

It is hardly surprising therefore, that when they did become aware of the progressive loss of their status, many, especially the older generation, were disturbed. Some, realizing that they had been slowly undermined by colonial policy, blamed the British directly, feeling they had been betrayed. They could look back to the "golden

⁴¹ Kilson, "Sierra Leone Politics", pg. 688.

⁴² Scott, "The Sierra Leone Elections in May 1957" Five Elections in Africa, (ed) Robinson and Mackenzie, (London, 1960), pg. 169.

⁴³ Porter, Creoledom, pg. 67-68.

age" of Governor MacCarthy when Creoles had led in commerce and the professions, and were emulated by all the educated Africans from Port Harcourt to Dakar. Most of the Creole elite who had important positions in the Protectorate, long frustrated by the lack of opportunity to advance within the colonial structure, were quick to take the offensive against any local Africans who might threaten their already tenuous positions; and as Porter adds:

Others are hesitant and mistrustful about sharing power, not because they believe that leadership from the provinces is now so different or inferior, but because they see, behind the line of western-trained provincial men with whom they can agree and co-operate, the formidable mass of tribal people with different cultural patterns, amongst whom, some Creoles conclude, they will be swamped and completely over-powered. ⁴⁴

Such feelings had profound implications for the development of local politics. The old techniques could no longer work, the recruitment of political leadership from the Creole elite was disturbed and fewer Creoles sought their fortunes in the Protectorate, thus leaving the way open for more educated Protectorate men. As Professor Porter writes, this accounts, "...for the high proportion of successful Creoles who in the pre-independence period did not wish to return home to appointment but preferred to serve in other countries." ⁴⁵ Many Creoles felt that nothing they could do would change a situation already beyond their control. The majority however, fought hard, using every political technique at their command to protect what they had left

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Ibid., pg. 70.

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Ibid., pg. 71.

of their old power in local affairs.

It might be argued that all this was a result of the leisurely attitude towards political change on the local level which characterized the Creole elite in the decades prior to World War II, when they seemed to be quite oblivious to the emerging group of educated Africans who were becoming more and more important in local politics, as well as national affairs. But this attitude had been challenged as early as 1933, when Mr. I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson founded the West African Youth League. Mr. Wallace-Johnson, a Creole born near Freetown in 1895, was one of the first of the modern breed of African nationalists who broke ground for those who came later. He had worked as a strike organizer in the twenties, by which time he had travelled extensively in Africa, published a sheet called the Seafarer, visited Moscow for a World Labor Conference, written for the Negro Worker, and eventually was indicted for an article he wrote in the African Morning Post,⁴⁶ which was published by Azikiwe in the Gold Coast. Wallace-Johnson spent most of the war years in detention, returning to active politics in October 1944. We shall hear more of him later. The Youth League initially had quite an impact in Sierra Leone, since it included Protectorate Africans in its membership. Its official newspaper, the African Standard, agitated for greater representation of Africans in government. The movement, like most of the organizations connected with Wallace Johnson, was radical. It attacked the

exclusiveness of Creole attitudes, the colonial elite, and the government in general. The Youth League helped a little to bridge the gap between the Creole elite and the militant young Protectorate Africans, since it proved that Creole nationalists and provincial Africans could work together for a common cause. But it had little lasting effect because of its radical nature, and after the war other movements and other methods took the fore.

One of the movements which later attempted to heal the rift between the Creole elite and the new African elite, was the People's Party created in 1949 by a Creole clergyman, the Rev. E.M. Jones, who took the name Laminah Sankoh in order to get tribal support. But this party, like the Youth League, had little success, because the cleavage between Creole opinion and the ambitions of the rising Protectorate leaders had grown too great. In fact, the National Council, a party founded in 1950 by Dr. Bankole-Bright, was much more reflective of Creole feeling and it committed itself to safeguarding their interests. Many Creoles in the Protectorate joined, though the majority of its members were from the Colony. As we have already indicated, the only large Protectorate political group at this time was the Sierra Leone Organization Society (S.O.S.) which, like its offspring the SLPP, was anti-Creole in orientation and achieved much of its success from the high feeling against the Creoles in the Protectorate.

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Kilson, "Sierra Leone Politics," pg. 639.

48

Ibid., pg. 639

When the new Constitution came into being in 1951 it provided for an elected unofficial African majority and party rule. In the meantime Dr. Margai had formed the SLPP (by merging the S.O.S. with Laminah Sankoh's People's Party), and easily won a majority.

The country was committed to party politics. The National Council, the majority party in the limited field of declared party contest, was partially aggrieved, and the militantly anti-Creole, or at least Protectorate-first views expressed by the SLPP leaders in the Protectorate Assembly during the preceeding year, left a large part of Creoledom resentful and suspicious.⁴⁹

Hence, transformation among the Creole elite was most rapid and decisive after World War II, and it was accelerated in the decade prior to independence. Many Creoles, especially those who had committed themselves to oppositionist tactics, lost all their old prestige and power. Often the kind of power they had exercised was not in any way connected with authority. For example, clerks who had access to money had great power and could make decisions through indirect control of payrolls. If a man were a chieftom Clerk, graft was particularly easy because of the lack of literacy among the members of the Native Administration. In relation to this problem Kenneth Little commented:

It tends, also in chiefdoms where the Chief is himself non-literate, to place an extraordinary and quite anomalous degree of power and responsibility in the hands of the Chieftom Clerk, who though nominally the most subordinate official of the Native Administration, is the only member required to be able to read and write.⁵⁰

Today, local men in similar positions often use the same methods. This writer knows of one who made use of his access to funds to

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Scott, op. cit., pg. 191.

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Little, The Mende, pg. 209.

bribe voters in an election as well as to make more money available for road repairs near his village. Of course, this is not so common today as it was ten years ago, and more often than not members of Native Administrations now have some education. But education does not necessarily mean less corruption and the use of the "dash" for a wide variety of purposes is a typical way for administrative officials to implement their decisions.

The primary strategy of the Creole elite was therefore to oppose the Protectorate peoples through party action and oppositionist tactics. The tax riots in 1955-56 provide a good example of how this strategy was put into practice. The riots were largely directed against the chiefs and they were of alarming violence and quite unexpected. The findings of the Cox Commission revealed great provocation on the part of some chiefs, especially in Temneland, and an inadequate mastery of the situation by the administration. Since both facts tended to incriminate the SLPP indirectly, the Creole leaders tried to appeal to the Temne distrust of a predominantly Mende government and publicized a view of the disturbances as tribal political ambition run riot.⁵¹

If opposition parties like the National Council could insert a lever here, demolition of solid party government in the Protectorate might result. However, the Temne and other lesser tribes continued to accept the leadership of the SLPP, at least until they could build up a share of their own political power. As Dr. Scott says in his study of the 1957 election in Sierra Leone:

In the Protectorate constituencies tribal divisions were important in determining support for individual candidates, but had little effect on party attachment, and the significance of the tribal factor diminished because no tribe was a political unit.⁵²

This attempt to undermine the Protectorate government failed sadly. In fact, parties which had their base in Freetown usually suffered from identification with Creole interest. The United Progressive Party, not a "Creole" party in reality, was smeared with the name of the "Creole Party" during the election of 1957 and lost considerable votes as a result. This involved some interesting sidelights as Scott noted:

One chief was persuaded by a distinguished visitor to take a card, and only afterwards mentioned it to his chieftom clerk who explained that it was the "Creole Party" (meaning the UPP); whereupon, it was said, the chief threw away the card lest Dr. Margai should depose him.⁵³

Only in Port Loko West constituency did the UPP maintain control of the local situation through election time, a position it seems to have won as a result of the tax riots. And it is significant that this party was not actually a Creole party at all, but appealed openly for tribal support.

Thus the only strategy which the Creole elite felt they could use with effect failed, and their only recourse was to complain about corruption and hold themselves aloof from developments beyond their control. All they achieved in the long run was a split within the structure of Sierra Leone society which only recently began to mend. The so-called ultra-Creole argument failed to stem the

⁵² Ibid., pg. 173.

⁵³ Ibid., pg. 204.

tide of change and Protectorate dominance inevitably continued to grow. The division thus created was not however, between Colony and Protectorate, as many believe, as much as it was a result of the struggle by the long-established Creole elite, "... to retain their monopoly of leadership rather than to see it pass to the control of others..."⁵⁴ The split was nearly as noticeable in Freetown, where by the mid 50's about half the population came from the provinces, as it was in the Protectorate, where the Creole elite were greatly outnumbered.

One other tactic which failed deserves mention. Most of the Protectorate Africans are either Moslem or Pagan, or a mixture of both. The Creoles are largely Anglican and they attempted to use their Christianity as a ploy in preventing the growth of political power among the "pagan" provincial peoples. They appealed to the common Christianity of the colonial elite and even spread some stories of atrocities common to the "aboriginal" peoples of the Protectorate.⁵⁵ Needless to say, this proved as much a failure as the other tactics, and like the rest, it only made co-operation more difficult in the future.

Perhaps the only good result of this conflict between the Creole elite and the Africans from the Protectorate, was that the diverse elements which made up a potential new elite were united in a common cause to achieve representation for themselves. It must also be said, by way of postscript, that in 1960, just before independence was achieved, a United Front was founded as a coalition government to lead Sierra Leone into independent status.

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Austin, op. cit., pg. 873.

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Little, "Social Change and Social Class," pg. 12.

This United Front included Creole elements, especially the Creole members of opposition parties like the All People's Congress,, and once again Creoles began to participate in the government of their country even at the ministerial level. The leadership from the provinces felt strong enough by this time to share a little power with the old Creole elite, and the gap was on its way to being closed. This also made itself felt at the local level, and recently there has been an increasing participation by Creoles in occupations which were rare in earlier years. Accountants, teachers, trade-unionist, and many others whose jobs depend neither upon traditional culture nor on a privileged cultural status, now can achieve power, though of course they must identify themselves as Africans and not as Creoles.⁵⁶ Since independence most Creoles, especially those who have been raised in the provinces, have become reluctant to identify themselves as members of a separate group.

CHAPTER V

The Background to Transition in the Traditional Society

With the emergence of conflicting elements in African society, the traditional method of anthropological analysis, using the "integrated whole" as a concept for research may no longer prove adequate. Perhaps a new referent would be in order, one in which the phenomena observed may be subjected to analysis leading to greater understanding of the connections between events, whether these relate to harmony or discord.⁵⁷ In this connection one scholar has written:

...the disharmonious elements of a society may be studied just as fruitfully as the harmonious ones, since presumably no society is ever either completely integrated or completely at odds with itself.⁵⁸

It seems that such an approach might be especially rewarding if applied to Sierra Leone, where African and European social systems have interpenetrated, with the result that new political institutions embodying diverse and conflicting elements have come into being on the local level. The purpose of this chapter shall be to consider some of the changes that have taken place within the political structure of the two major traditional societies in the Sierra Leone Protectorate prior to 1961. The first part shall examine some transitions within the Mende political system, and the second shall examine the Temne in the same fashion.

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Lloyd, Fallers, "The Predicament of the Modern African Chief", American Anthropologist, Vol. 57, 1955, pg. 292.

58

Elliott P. Skinner, "Strangers in West African Societies", Africa, Vol. 33, 1963, pg. 309

Emphasis shall be placed upon the effects of "outside" influences on the political systems in question and the means by which the chiefs and their councils reacted to these pressures.

One element in this development of "modern tribalism" which has generally escaped systematic treatment is the conflict between Africans indigenous to an area and the other African "strangers", Creoles in this case, who "entered the foreign area under the aegis of the Europeans even when they were not directly brought by them." The Creoles in Sierra Leone were marginal to both African and European influences. As we have seen, they held important positions in the local administrative bureaucracies and even in the traditional structure, but they generally failed to appreciate that their position was a function of colonial rule and that with the eventual passing of colonial power, their status would also change. So when the transition towards political independence was already under way in Sierra Leone, the Creoles sought to maintain their former power by supporting one tribal faction against the other, or one political party against the other.⁵⁹ But, the attempt of the Creole elite to halt the transition was too late, and it resulted in the creation of new social considerations which worked towards the development of new political forms on the local level.

For a long time the Creoles had been instrumental in spreading Western ideas and ways in the Sierra Leone hinterland. They had set the standards for local Africans aspiring to a more modern

way of life. They even provided a good deal of the social leadership, as well as the political direction in administrative affairs. For example, perhaps the most significant practice which the Creoles propagated was that of assembling in public and mixing with persons outside of their own kin-group for purely social and recreational purposes.⁶⁰ In the traditional Mende culture, people only left their home to meet in public for some specific economic or religious cause, and once the matter was over they dispersed. Now people met more freely and openly, and one result was more participation in local politics and a better informed local electorate. It is one of the ironies so common to developing nations that a technique used by a group once in a position of great power was eventually one of the causes for its political downfall.

The Creoles, as descendants of the original settlers of Freetown and the colony, had been in long contact with England and they had evolved a social system of their own. In many ways they identified themselves with the British and quite naturally took administrative positions in the provincial government. As late as 1950 their influence was very strong, despite the increase in schools in the Protectorate, and "...they still hold the majority of the better and more responsible jobs in public service all over the country."⁶¹ For the first half of this century the Creoles were the cultural arbiters to the Protectorate peoples,

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Kenneth L. Little, "Structural Change in the Sierra Leone Protectorate," Africa, Vol. 30, 1955, pg. 218. (Henceforth cited as "Structural Change")

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Kenneth L. Little, "Social Change and Social Class in the Sierra Leone Protectorate," American Jr. of Sociology, Vol. 54, July 1948, May 1949, pg. 14. Henceforth cited as "Social Change"

and the use of Krio * as a lingua franca between tribes, certain styles of dress, religion, leisure time, and even food-taking habits, were all results of this influence. It was almost inevitable that when the political situation began to change after 1950, the Creole elite in the provinces would be identified with the colonial rulers with whom they had worked so closely and that their power and prestige would suffer. Yet it was their presence that largely created the social changes necessary for the emergence of nationalism and modern political organization. As Kenneth Little says in his fine monograph on the Mende:

It is...appreciated that political advancement depends largely on Western forms of knowledge and that, lacking these, no commoner has much hope of finding his way into the Legislative Council (now the House of Representatives) let alone achieving Ministerial rank. ⁶²

All this might serve as an example of the connection between disharmonious elements in a society and the eventual creation of political unity between the diverse tribal elements. It has been amply demonstrated by several scholars that the Protectorate opposition to Creole power was one of the catalysts which led to the creation of a united party (the SLPP) in 1951 and eventually to political independence.

Against this background we can better understand the process of political transition among the Mende of Sierra Leone. However,

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Krio is a language created in the 19th century by the Freetown Creoles. It is similar in some respects to Pidgin, and may have grown out of it. It combines elements of English, Yoruba, and other tribal languages. In the provinces it is spoken in a patois form much like Pidgin.

62

Little, "Structural Change," pg. 227.

we must also investigate the background of British colonial policy as regards the tribes in the rural areas. When the British declared their Protectorate over the hinterland in 1896, they consolidated what they believed to be the existing political frontiers between the many Chiefs with whom they had already signed treaties. Thus it was an arbitrary arrangement, putting all "native rulers" on the same footing as Paramount Chiefs, no matter what their actual political status among the people. ⁶³ The result was that in Mende country the P.C. came to depend almost entirely upon the British government for his power, and the old prerogatives which had been based on his military leadership and his legal position no longer had the weight of social sanction. The Chief still retained a great deal of his former privileges to be sure, and chiefdom labor, tribute of rice and palm-oil, and the force of the Poro secret society * all helped maintain his position as leader. In the traditional society all the chief's powers, all of his hereditary prerogatives, were subject to some degree of popular control, partly through the chief's council and again through a chiefdom council. The British only modified this system and it has remained much the same in substance.

The Chief's own council was made up of the Speaker, a kind of chief's deputy; and a number of "big men" related to the chief, and the restraining influence was probably less than the full chiefdom

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Little, "Structual Change" pg. 227.

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The Poro Society is the most powerful men's secret ritual society in both Mende and Temne Country. Traditionally all boys are initiated into manhood by Poro at Puberty and as they grow older, achieve various ranks in the society.

council:

...which comprised all the title holders in the chiefdom, including the Speaker, sub-chiefs and their deputies, the headman of large towns and villages, and representatives of the principal "kuwasia" (councils).⁶⁴

If there was any uniformity in government among the large number of separate and remotely scattered communities of Mende country, it was probably the Poro Society, which acted as an arbiter in the most important cultural and religious aspects of Mende life. Little wrote:

Indeed, in so far as the Mende chief is a purely secular figure, lacking the ritual sanction with which chiefly authority is associated among the neighboring Temne people, it might well be held that Poro is his religious counterpart in the field of government...the Poro society was in all likelihood the means by which a uniform system of government and set of customs was possible among the larger number of politically separate and remotely scattered communities of MendeCountry. ... Indeed so far as the Mende Chief is a purely secular figure lacking the ritual sanctions with which chiefly authority is associated among the neighboring Temne people, it might well be held that Poro is his religious counterpart in the field of government.⁶⁵

The Mende Paramount Chief was traditionally appointed by the chiefdom council from among several candidates in a "royal" family. The technique was modified directly by the British and the chief is now chosen by electoral methods rather than direct inheritance. Candidature is open to anyone who puts forth his claim. The Tribal Authority (another British innovation) sifts the rivals and decides with the assistance of outside Chiefs appointed by the Government assessors. The role of the Government

64

Ibid., pg. 183.

65

Ibid., pg. 184

is only supervisory, the senior administrative officer in charge of the election holding preliminary hearings and deciding which candidates will be allowed to retire for final election. The result is that more candidates come forward, and bribing of the Tribal Authority has become more common. The institution of Chieftainship has also suffered considerably, though it was made officially more "democratic". (Of course the chiefs no longer have to fear deposition through Foro or tribal wars, and in this sense they are much more secure than before). This gradual conversion of "chiefly" authority into "chiefdom" authority finally culminated in the Native Authority system of local government modelled after Nigeria. In 1950 Professor Little wrote:

It is now the Tribal Authority, i.e. the former chiefdom council, and not the chief, which is responsible for the administration of justice, public disbursement, etc. The chief himself is merely the principal executive officer and judicial authority in the chiefdom. ⁶⁶

This system placed a premium on the mere possession of literacy, because written reports and chiefdom estimates (an annual budget) now determined a great deal of the relationship between a chief and his Tribal Authority and the government. Another result was that the Chiefdom clerk, usually one of the few literate persons in the area (and hence often a Creole, until very recently), exercised a great deal of power and responsibility, though nominally the most subordinate official in the Native Administration. In some cases the Clerk actually performed some of the functions of the traditional Speaker and became virtual manager of the chiefdom.

The chief still retained his image as "father of his people" ⁶⁷ and still supported a large number of dependents, dispensing hospitality and upholding the prestige of his people. But there was a more solid basis for popular participation in chiefdom affairs, and the chief was deprived of a large measure of his natural role as supreme leader of his people. One really significant result of the changes in the political structure has been the desire of educated young men to "short-circuit" the long tribal traditions of seniority, and to look elsewhere for power and status. ⁶⁸ It has been in this way that the new political elite in Mende country have been recruited from the same sources as would normally have provided leadership in the traditional system. In Mende country more of the able sons of chiefly families go into active party politics than into the traditional political structure, though they retain their ties with it.

Thus the way was opened for an eventual compromise between a changing traditional structure and a rising new elite who would finally inherit the power of the central government itself. The young men who began to look to African Nationalism as a means of political expression still had close connections with and played an active part in family affairs.

Many show a "patriotic" interest in native institutions by sponsoring performances of native dancing, wearing native clothes on specific occasions, and by deploring

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Kenneth Little, "Mende Political Institutions in Transition," African Affairs, Vol. 52, 1954, pg. 8. (Henceforth cited as "Mende Political Institution".

68

Ibid., pg. 22.

the deteriorating effect on native life of European and Creole habits. ⁶⁹

This then is another example of disharmonious elements operating to create new solutions to new problems and actually easing the process of political transformation among the Mende. Though the transformation is far from complete, and could be considered lagging in contrast to other African states, it is remarkable that there has been little reaction and virtually no bloodshed in Mende Country since the "uprising" in 1898, and that even the conflict between the British colonial government and the traditional elite resulted in a generally more workable system.

The political transition in Temne country has been quite different, especially since the war. In order to understand the process we must examine in some detail the traditional society as it existed prior to British rule.

As we have seen, the Temne are an agricultural people (like the Mende) who grow rice, cassava, ground-nuts, etc. and occasionally sell some palm-kernels and kola nuts for cash. During the nineteenth century, they showed a tendency for expansion and several Temne chiefdoms increased in size under the leadership of a few powerful patricians. One source says that in 1822 Temne country was actually divided into four districts each under a separate chief. ⁷⁰ If this is true, the Temne had evolved a political system capable of more central control than was possible

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Ibid., pg. 22.

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McCulloch, op.cit., pg. 51.

among the Mende, and more recent events support this contention. During the famous "hut-tax rebellion" in 1898 (which was indirectly linked to the Mende "rising" of the same year), the Temne, under the leadership of remarkable warrior-chief named Bai Burch, showed a great degree of unity in their resistance to the British and even more restraint in their tactics. In Mende country hundreds of Creoles and scores of white missionaries were murdered, but in Temne country only two outsiders lost their lives.

Ironically, centralized power in the hands of the Temne chief caused more difficulty for the Temne people in the 1950's than did the relative weakness of the Mende chief.

The Temne Paramount Chief is still chosen from among:

...the oldest suitable male member of the ruling house of houses, i.e., the kin-group which traces descent from the first settlers of the chiefdom, or more often from men who gained power through conquest or wealth. Usually there are only two or more abuna or patricians which are most strongly represented in the chiefdom and whose leading lineages share the succession to the chieftainship and provide a chief in turn, the principal advisor being chosen from the other house. ⁷¹

The Paramount Chief (P.C.) had nearly absolute power over his sub-chiefs and could decide legal cases as he wished, though there was room for appeal to a chief of another chiefdom if his decision was opposed to recognized pattern. He could not, unlike the Mende chief, be deposed, and this remains true today, to the extent that a Paramount Chief retains the title although removed from office

by the government.⁷² The connection between the P.C. and the Poro (as well as the Ragbenle society and others) society is strong, as it always has been. The Chief is installed by one or the other depending on the chiefdom, and he is in fact, a semi-religious figure, unlike the Mende chief. He is considered as a priest, and officiates at the important rites of the secret society which holds sway in his chiefdom, and is considered as immortal as the tribe itself.⁷³

The Chiefdom Council, now known as the Tribal Authority, is made up of the Kumrabai, a man who acts as the Chief's principal advisor and a member of the alternative ruling house; the sub-chiefs (or section-chiefs, whose role is similar to that of the Mende section-chief) called Alimani, the Kaprs (only where Poro is predominant) who correspond roughly to magistrates and who lose office at the Chief's death; and the Santigis who are elected from among the principal men of the chiefdom section by the section-chiefs.⁷⁴

When the British changed the name of the Chiefdom Council and attempted to invest it with more power and use it as a check on the chief's power, they upset a delicately balanced system. It only caused friction between the chief and his people and in almost every case the P.C. was able to quickly dominate the Tribal Authorities in much the same way he had dominated the

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Vernon J. Dorjahn, "The Changing Political System of the Temne," Africa, Vol 30, 1960, pg. 120

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McCulloch, op.cit., pg. 62

74

Ibid., pg. 64

Chiefdom Councils. It provided a "democratic" facade under which the P.C. could more easily pursue his own ends, and convinced the mass of people that the colonial government was only further bolstering up the P.C.'s already authoritarian rule. It was against this background that the first really significant political upheaval since 1898 took place in Temne country in late 1955. These so called "disturbances in the provinces" are an excellent example of how certain British innovations in the political structure of the Temne failed, and how a few succeeded. They also indicate once again the connection between events which seem outwardly to promote discord but which actually play an important part in the evolution of what some have called "modern tribalism".⁷⁵ These disturbances were triggered late in 1955 by objections to the payment of local taxes instituted under the Local Tax Ordinance of 1954, which went into effect in 1955. However, the root of the troubles went deeper. The Commission set up to investigate the cause of the riots wrote in its subsequent report:

We have found and therefore described, a degree of demoralization among the people in the customary institutions and in their approach to the statutory duties with which they have been entrusted, which has shocked us.⁷⁶

It would seem that they had no cause to be shocked, for the stage had been set well in advance. Chiefs generally venerated

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G. Carter, and W.O. Brown, Transition in Africa, (Boston, 1960), pg. 13.

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"Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Disturbances in the Provinces November 1955-March 1956," Crown Agents on behalf of the Government of Sierra Leone, Journal of African Administration, Vol. 9, 1957, pg. 49. (Henceforth cited Gov. Commission)

by the people had been undermined and their legal prerogatives largely taken over by a formerly subservient council (now called the Tribal Authority) which caused the chiefs to act in extra-legal ways, and to resort to uncustomary methods to maintain power in their chiefdoms. This reaction by the chiefs caused a deep distrust in turn by the people and authority was undermined. As a result the Commission felt that many "customary" practices had to be changed, (though the abuses were often extra-legal by customary standard). They recommended that the chiefs become less dominant in local life and the the elected District Council play a more important role. ⁷⁷ (Again the Commission failed to notice that the "dominance" of the chiefs was largely a result of their reaction to the changes in the traditional structure of government forced upon them by the government). Several malpractices had grown up, such as multiplication of licences, chiefs holding "courts" outside the framework of the native court system and exaction of fines by illegal means. The Commission also recommended that collection of fees by chiefs be abolished and that a simpler tax system be established. But, as many observers later pointed out, this was only treating the symptoms and not the cause.

The Commission concluded by stating, "...that chiefs should not be associated with any political party and that party officials should not enter local politics." ⁷⁸ This will be examined in detail further on, but it seems a rather naive view, for if this

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District Councils were formed by the Government in 1950. Their membership included the Paramount Chief, and members elected by the Tribal Authority and co-operative members.

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Cox Commission Report, op.cit., pg. 51

were the case, the chiefs would surely have lost all their power and prestige with independence. If they wished to maintain it they had little choice but to join a party and work for its success (as they subsequently did).

The Sierra Leone Government, in a statement released after the Cox Commission reported its findings, denied that the "disturbances" were a surprise, but were rather the, "...culmination of a long train of events starting in the years after the war for which it would be quite unreasonable to hold the present government responsible".⁷⁹

Perhaps the best appraisal of the situation is an article by a member of the Cox Commission Mr. A.J. Loveridge, who says that the chiefs are generally venerated by the people, that a certain mysticism surrounds them, and that it is significant that the Cox Report made:

...no suggestion that chiefs are outmoded or that the chieftdom is not an area with an intense feeling of cohesion. ...It is perhaps strange that there should be no real evidence of an attack upon the chieftaincy as an institution in a country where the pursuit of "modernity"⁸⁰ is as ardent as elsewhere among political neophytes...

Certainly the effect of many soldiers returning from the war, the undermining of law and order in areas where the chief's prestige was reduced, and the general impact of western culture, all had

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"Statement of the Sierra Leone Government on the Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Disturbances in the Provinces," Journal of African Administration, Vol. 9, 1957, pg. 155.

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A.J. Loveridge, "The Present Postion of Temne Chiefs in Sierra Leone," Journal of Af. Adm. Vol. 9, 1957, pg. 115

their effect. But in Temne country the extra-legal practices had continued until, "...increasing contact with other tribesmen changed an attitude of tolerance into one of bitter resentment."⁸¹

Such resentment of the Chief by a people who hold the Chief in awe is a revolutionary thing and it could hardly remain long confined to the Chief's person. Loveridge still saw an opportunity to smooth the transtion from old to new if the chieftom authorities were modified quickly without deprivation of the Chief's traditional powers. The Tribal Authority, as set up by the British, had magnified rather than limited the Chief's position, for he dominated the discussions and "cloaked⁸² his edicts with the respectability of law."

The Tribal Authority had also been enasculated in 1955 when many services were transferred to elected District Councils and the chiefs were blamed for unjustifiable taxation because one third had gone to the District Councils, which the people did not comprehend, and less than one third was spent by the chiefs on visible benefits to the taxpayers. As long as the chiefs exercised their traditional prerogatives all went well, but:

When the time came to broaden the political base upon which they worked they neatly sidestepped the tribal authorities; when the time came for the tribal authorities to perform a few simple functions of local government, they faltered. Ultimately, when they were expected to do what was unknown to custom... they showed signs of acute distemper; their methods of levying taxation have resulted in their being given purgatives by their own people and sophorics (sic) by the Government.⁸³

Thus the sanction of Government behind the chief greatly

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Ibid., pg. 116

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Ibid., pg. 118

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altered the power structure and the traditional checks and balances in the Temne political system were largely eliminated with nothing appearing in their place. Still supported by Temne religious beliefs and with the Government behind them, the Chiefs, "...used their position for personal economic gain, 84 pursuing too well perhaps, the changing values of the times."

Since the 1955 riots, several Temne Paramount Chiefs have been reinstated, and at least one is a member of the House of Representatives and an active member in the SLPP. It would seem that the ultimate effect of the "disturbances" was rather more good than harm, for adjustments have been made, the transition to self-government has been peaceful and present changes are going on quietly withing the structure. However, the implications of still powerful chiefs working with the SLPP are difficult to foresee, and we shall look at this in more detail below. At least some of the disharmonious aspects within the traditional political structure have become forces for peaceful change, and the inherent strength of the Temne political system remains intact.

For a final example of the impact of the West, let us look briefly at a modern industrial town in Temne country. Lunsar is a mining town which has grown up since 1930 around an open-cast iron mine in Marampa chiefdom in the Northern Province. Better than half of the Company's local employees live in Lunsar and nearly 70% of the population there is Temne. The town has become the commerical and administrative center for the chiefdom, and it

is an ideal place to study the impact of new ideas and institutions.⁸⁵ This writer spent several months in Lunsar in 1963 directing Census operations for the chiefdoms in the immediate area. The striking thing about the political structure of the area is that political power has remained almost exclusively in the hands of the traditional elite. The young people from the families of skilled workers are mainly interested in getting on in life by virtue of their individual skills, education, training and opportunities for advancement, and have little interest in politics. The unskilled workers are primarily interested in day to day existence (like the traditional farmers). They do carry over into the urban situation many traditional institutions and attitudes, since contact with the rural villages remains close.⁸⁶

Only two groups, the chiefly families and the families of clerical workers, civil servants and teachers, show any deep interest in political matters. The latter are active in "improvement societies" and political parties but they achieve little, for their influence among the people is almost nil. They usually support the opposition parties. It is the chiefly clans which provide the present leadership, as they have always done. Here traditional culture plays a vital role in the upbringing of children and even though they are sent to school, they retain much of their notions of superiority and they mix little

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David P. Gamble, "The Temne Family in a Modern Town (Lunsar) in Sierra Leone", Africa, Vol. 33, 1963, pg. 209.

86

Ibid., pg. 225.

with outsiders.⁸⁷ The result is that the transition in political power has taken place within the system, with educated sons of chiefly families maintaining political authority by means of their still valid position in the society. The chief and the local authorities have certainly had difficulties, and they have had to adapt to new contingencies:

...though a chief is less able to exploit a heterogenous urban population (Lunsar), control over the rural areas has changed little. In recent years a system of political parties has evolved, but at the local level rivalries are still fought out on traditional lines. Chiefs support the political party in power (the SLPP) and those who oppose the chief and his supporters therefore take the labels of the opposition parties.⁸⁸

In summary, the general effect of Creole influence has been to change social patterns, to create new political situations and ultimately to unite Mende and Temne in a common pursuit of dignity and autonomy. The general effect of British innovations in the political structure of both Mende and Temne institutions has been to create minor crises between chiefs, tribal authorities and the people, which were only partially resolved in the struggle for independence. Many faults in both systems were brought to light, many strengths were clarified and in the end the transition has been marked by compromise and concession rather than violent upheaval and discord.

There are still many problems to be faced and as the process of modernization continues, new problems will arise. Perhaps the very structure of traditional Mende and Temne society will be changed in the end, with revolutionary consequences as regards the

⁸⁷ Ibid., pg. 212.

⁸⁸ Ibid., pg. 213.

political structure. However, if the change is gradual and peaceful within the society, and as long as the traditional elite themselves recognize the necessity for change, it is likely that future political transition in both areas will follow a pattern similar to that in the past.

Now we must turn an investigation of the process of transformation within the traditional elite as it took place in the context of rural politics.

CHAPTER VI

Transformation within the Traditional Elite

The arbitrary arrangement which the British used in setting up a Protectorate over the Sierra Leone hinterland has already been discussed. As we have seen, this created several problems. In Mende country, where the chief had depended upon war tribute and services owed him by members of the sections under his military rule, the traditional structure was weakened by the intervention of British administrators. But, since the Mende Paramount Chief was largely restricted by his chieftom council, which comprised all the title holders in the chieftom, the restrictions on his sources of wealth did not prove disastrous, because he could now depend upon the colonial government to back him up, and he had less fear of being deposed.⁹⁰ Mende P.C.s did not, as we have mentioned, possess any mystic powers. They were patrons of the powerful secret societies and were expected to perform certain ceremonial functions in return for their direct support. In times of peace the Mende chiefs most probably relied on the support of the Poro Society for their political power.

In Mendeland therefore, the colonial rulers found a relatively "democratic" system, in that the chiefs mixed freely with their people and even depended upon the secret societies for any religious sanctions which they could not command themselves. In some instances women even held great power, and a few were chiefs (and still are).

In Temneland the British found quite a different situation.

Temne Paramount Chiefs were most powerful, having almost absolute authority over their sub-chiefs and near autonomy in deciding legal cases. The Temne P.C. was at the head of a complex political system which had managed a remarkable degree of political unification, as we explained previously. Power was largely derived from the chief's mystical role and he could never be deprived of his title, if in fact he were removed from office.⁹¹ The anthropologist McCulloch says; "Unlike the Mende Chiefs, he is a semi-religious figure..." He was considered a priest as well as a king by his people and as one Temneman said, "... he and our country are one, he is as immortal as our race."⁹²

The traditional powers and prerogatives of the Temne Paramount Chief were such that the British immediately recognized in him a means to stable government, on the model created by Lugard in Nigeria. The system worked in Temne country as long as the society remained somewhat isolated from the dynamism and change of the Western world, but it broke down quickly after World War II. On the contrary, in Mende country the chiefs were largely deprived of their old power sanctions. Since the British chose to administer the Protectorate through the chiefs, they gave no official recognition to the secret societies and, "... to a large extent therefore, changes brought about administratively to Mende political institutions are reflected in the altered status, significance and implications of the chief's office."⁹³ Thus the Mende

91 McCulloch, op.cit., pg. 62.

92 Ibid., pg. 60.

93 Little, The Mende, pg. 202.

chiefs lost some power through loss of the overt support of the Poro and other societies, as well as through loss of their old means of getting wealth (which in a traditional society as well as a modern economy, means power). One result was the gradual conversion of chiefly power into chieftom power which eventually culminated in the Native Authority system of government, a system with which we are directly concerned in the period between 1951-1961. In Temne country a similar system was arbitrarily introduced over a structure of traditionally powerful chiefs with mystic sanctions, and the result was that these chiefs turned to extra-legal means to maintain their local autocracy.

Thus by 1951, when the SLFP had won a majority in the Legislative Council and party government was on its way, the traditional elite were still tremendously powerful in local government. Even the most conscientious D.C. rarely intervened in the everyday government of the chieftoms in his district. In Temne country chiefs still had the ultimate decision-making power, though the Tribal Authority supposedly shared power with them. In Mende country the chiefs remained figureheads under which the councils (now in the form of the T.A.) still governed by traditional means.

Of course, the influence of western culture was not lost on the traditional elite. By the 50's many P.C.s had a compound both in their chieftom and in Freetown. Their children would be educated in the infant years in the traditional fashion, usually under the guidance of an elderly woman, then they would be sent to school for a modern education. These children were however, carefully instilled with notions of their inherent superiority to others and

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mixed little with other children. Several chiefs were themselves educated to a greater or lesser degree, but education had little moderating influence on the exercise of political power in their chiefdoms. In the same way it can be said for other members of the Tribal Authority, and as we shall see, education tended to worsen the traditional elite's abuse of power in local government.

In many cases the traditional elite especially in Temneland, were only too willing to comply with a limited degree of British control through the D.C., since they had repeatedly gained from their association with the colonial elite.

Since their ruling skills and strategic position in African society were held essential to the consolidation and maintenance of colonial rule (especially in British Africa and somewhat less in French Africa), the traditional rulers were capable of bargaining for a preferred role in the new system wealth, authority and power.

Transformation within this elite has been gradual and incomplete. In fact, there has been little change in the basic structure of local government, though there has been some change in form and method, or as Professor Kilson put it, "... certain characteristics with regard to the way in which power is used have all undergone change."⁹⁶ This process, as far as it has gone, is most important to our study and a great deal of space has been devoted to an investigation of the techniques, strategies and powers of the traditional elite during the decade prior to independence.

⁹⁴ Gamble, op. cit., pg. 212.

⁹⁵ Kilson, Political Change, pg. 80.

⁹⁶ Kilson, "Political Change and the Modernization Process," pg. 425.

Political transformation, however incomplete among the traditional elite, is closely related to similar change among the "masses":

This is revealed in the ambivalent attitude of the masses towards indigenous institutions; traditional rulers represent the authoritative unit of colonial political change nearest to the masses, who attack them as a cause of the complex political change they experience, and yet still depend upon them as the only known sources of values capable of providing the stability necessary to any people undergoing relatively rapid socio-political change. 97

The nature of this "elite-mass nexus" as Kilson calls it, has become, "...the focal point of political change as the situation shifts from conflict between the colonial and African modernizers to competition with the African community." 93 It is this ambivalence on the part of the rural peoples which has played so well into the hands of the traditional elite. They can pose as modernizers and yet rule as tyrants in their own chiefdoms.

Since our concern is primarily with the traditional elite and its actions, the following analysis of some abuses common to chiefdom politics is centered on the chiefs and the tribal authorities. But the transformation which has occurred did not take place within a vacuum, and this discussion necessarily (refers) to the conflict between the masses and the traditional elite, as well.

No other single aspect of traditional authority has been so thoroughly documented as the way in which chiefs use their tax powers and other means to wealth, nor has any other raised

97
Ibid., pg. 425.

98
Ibid. pg. 436.

so many problems. Furthermore, no other facet of traditional power so clearly illustrates the whole range of ways in which the traditional elite operates.

It had been obvious to the colonial elite for a long time that the workability of the indirect rule system rested upon the just and effective role of the chiefs and their councils. In his annual report on the Protectorate for 1951, Chief Commissioner H. Childs wrote:

One District Commissioner reporting on his district for the year 1951 goes so far as to express the opinion that the success or failure of a chiefdom administration as an instrument of local government is entirely dependent upon the character and caliber of the Paramount Chief. When there is a good chief all may be well, but where there is a weak, corrupt, lethargic, or unpopular chief, a Chiefdom administration can hardly be expected to function successfully. His conclusion is that the system of native administration as applied to chiefdoms in Sierra Leone is merely a method by which a chief rules or misrules, and that it primarily reflects his own personality. 99

As later events were to prove, this D.C. was largely correct in his appraisal, and by 1956 the basic weakness of the system of local administration had caused severe shock to the entire system indirect rule as applied to the Sierra Leone Protectorate. The basic failure of the British to devise a satisfactory means for the discharge of day to day chiefdom business proved to be a flaw which shook the whole structure and caused many to doubt that the traditional elite ought to be allowed any power at all.

Let us look in detail at some of the financial muddle which led to direct changes in the form of chiefdom politics. On the

17th of November, 1955, a crowd of some two hundred farmers from Rofenka in Maforki Chiefdom in Port Loko District went to see the D.C. at Port Loko to protest against tax assessment and alleged abuses by the Paramount Chief. (The tax in question was a five shilling surtax on all taxpayers in Maforki Chiefdom to pay for P.C. Alikali Modu III's new house). Since the D.C. was away the delegation was dispersed by its leader, a Peter Kamara. On the morning of November 21, the D.C. at Port Loko, Mr. D.C. Dixie, met a crowd of some one thousand five hundred, some with weapons, near Port Loko, and hasty arrangements were made to hold a meeting outside the town. Meanwhile the crowd grew to over three thousand and entered the town, going to the District headquarters where its leaders, including Peter Kamara and another popular man, Abu Sankoh, repeated their protests about the assessment for the Chief's house. In answer, Mr. Dixie stated that the tax rates were the business of the T.A. and that he was not authorized to discuss them. This led to a large meeting on the 25th of November, which was dispersed after a promise to secure a Minister to see and hear the crowd on December 2. Soon after riots began which resulted in violence to people and property, the use of slings, stones and spears and arson.¹⁰⁰ The mood of rebellion which started in Port Loko spread rapidly to nearly every chiefdom in the Northern Province and to several in other Provinces. As the Cox Commission stated in its report on the riots:

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Sierra Leone Report of Commission of Inquiry into Disturbances in the Provinces, November 1955-March 1956, (Crown Agents for Overseas Governments on behalf of the Government of Sierra Leone, 1956) pg. 19-21. (Henceforth cited as Cox Report)

Out of twelve districts five, Port Loko, Kambia, Bombali and Tonkilili in the Northern Province and Moyamba in the Southern-western Province were seriously affected by the disturbances. 101

These disturbances reflected an alarming degree of loss of confidence by the local people in the government by the traditional elite, especially the chiefs. Most of the animosity expressed during the riots, especially in Kambia District and Port Loko District, was against the chiefs, though sometimes it was aimed at the T.A.s and sub-chiefs, as well. Usually, as the Commission of Inquiry discovered, the immediate cause was the abuse of tax powers by the P.C. or the chieftom authorities, and this led to the expression of many other grievances which had long been building up over the years. In reference to the riots, Dr. Kilson writes:

In the report of inquiry into the tax riots in 1955-56 it was revealed that the Chiefs generally provided themselves with modern concrete houses, motor cars, and sundry other modern conveniences through the abuse of their tax powers and functions. In one instance a Chief-Paramount Chief Bai Sherbro Yunkella II--endeavored to have his Chieftom fund two-thirds cost of a 5000 modern house for his private use, while he already owned several modern houses and in the report's words, was living in a "modern three-story concrete house." 102

This would indicate that chiefs, in Freetown country especially, as the holders of traditional power, used their revered positions for personal gain and took only residual interest in the welfare of their people. As long as they could get away with this abuse of power they took no steps to modernize the system of local government and, in fact, warped the few changes made by the colonial

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Ibid., pg. 80.

102

Kilson, Political Change, pg. 82.

elite to their own ends. Another example of this would be the commercialization of traditional economic relations. Such traditional institutions as the chief's customary rights to tribute and labor, were important part of the mechanics of social and economic transition. Many of these rights were left undisturbed by the colonial government during the early years of rule, and some were included in colonial law. With the rise of a money economy, the chief's customary rights to tribute or labor were easily changed from a type of wealth in kind to actual wealth in cash. Traditional rulers had been among the first to enter the market economy through the production and sale of cash crops. As early as 1937 when the Native Administrations were set up, chiefs surrendered many customary rights in return for regular salaries (a policy used throughout British Africa when establishing local government through indirect rule). Actually these tributes were allowed to continue by the colonial elite, except in those cases where rebellion resulted. It was not until 1956 after the shock effect of the tax riots, that the government put a step to the exaction of customary tributes and forced labor by chiefs. ¹⁰³ As long as these means of wealth were available to some chiefs, they were able to equal or even exceed the affluence of more modernized Africans such as businessmen, doctors, traders and lawyers, a growing group in the Protectorate after 1945. This meant that the style of life of some chiefs was quite like that of urbanized modern groups, though they functioned in a traditional setting, continuing to preside over the ceremonial aspects of tribal life. This became a significant factor in the political

relationship which developed between the chiefs and the modernized "new elite". It accounts for the fact that many chiefs are actually members of both the new elite and the traditional elite.

It is worth noting that the rioters never demanded the destruction of the existing system of traditional authority (thus never meeting the definition of revolutionaries). Rather, they only documented a demand for changes in the use of power by the traditional elite, especially in financial matters. The fact that such violent uprisings never developed into actual revolution against the rather antiquated system, illustrates the ambivalent attitude of many Africans towards the traditional elite, as well as their awareness of the overwhelming British power.

A more detailed examination of the behavior of one chief might help to clarify the problem. Between October and November of 1956 a special inquiry, following the general inquiry held by the Cox Commission, was held at Port Loko to investigate complaints against the Paramount Chief Alikali Kudu III. The complaints were as follows:

- 1) Forced labour on his farms;
- 2) Infliction of heavy fines on various villagers in cases where villagers had died through being bitten by snakes, baboons, and alligators, and no receipts issued for such fines, and also inflicting of a collective fine on a village for non-disclosure of the identity of the person who killed a mare belonging to the P.C.;
- 3) Forcing tax-payers to pay a tax in rice in 1950, and selling such rice a few months later at a considerable profit;
- 4) Levy of a five shilling surtax on all tax-payers in 1953 to provide for the house for the P.C. and an attempt in 1955 to impose an identical levy for the same purpose;
- 5) Indulging in trade and creating for himself monopolies in various commodities to the detriment of ordinary traders;
- 6) Imposition of an illegal levy by Tax Assessment Committees on each village to the extent of two shillings and six-pence for the P.C.;

- 7) Taxing on non-existent persons, or persons exempted for paying tax, whereby villages had to pay extra illegal tax on;
- 8) Cruelty to individuals who did not pay their tax or who were late in doing so;
- 9) Preventing persons from bringing complaints to the D.C. and disparaging the post of the D.C.; 104
- 10) Confiscation of houses and land without compensation;

This list of abuses would do justice to any petty tyrant, and yet it typified the normal behavior of many Fonne Paramount Chiefs prior to 1955, and even after, as subsequent reports proved. This writer knows Paramount Chief Alikali Nodu III personally, and can testify to his general enlightenment and geniality, as well as his relatively advanced education. As a private person he seems the perfect gentleman. He apparently deceived the government equally successfully.

Even though four charges were dropped, this was still a damning indictment of the use of power by a relatively progressive chief. Mr. Willan, who presided over the inquiry, wrote in reference to complaint number one, "I hold that the P.C., who is a very intelligent person, has used forced labour on his farms when he knew full well he should not have done so, and thereby caused considerable resentment amongst the people of Maforki Chiefdom." 105

He arrived at similar conclusions on the other five charges, and ended by saying, "I can find no extenuating circumstances in favour of the P.C., his conduct is unworthy of a P.C." 106

104

Harold Willan, Reports of the Commission of Inquiry into the Conduct of Certain Chiefs and the Government Statement Thereof, (Freetown, 1957), ps. 55

105

Ibid., ps. 56

106

Ibid., pg. 60.

An interesting contrast to the report on Kaforki Chiefdom was the report on nearby Marampa-Masinera Chiefdom by the same commissioner. The P.C. there, Bai Koblo Pathbana, was exonerated of the charges against him, though his "first speaker" (a leader of the Tribal Authority or former chiefdom council) was found guilty of conduct, "subversive of the interest of good government." ¹⁰⁷

Eventually Alikali Modu III resigned as P.C. in Kaforki under pressure from the SLFP (which could hardly afford to continue to support him under the circumstances), a pattern which was repeated all over the Northern Province after the reports on the disturbances were all complete. At this time the SLFP had won the Temne chiefs to its banner. If the party was aware of corruption among the chiefs it did little to show it and only acted after the facts were obvious. Some P.C.s and I.A. members were expelled outright, though none were prosecuted under the law. It is worth mentioning that Chief Alikali Modu III was soon recalled as P.C. of Kaforki Chiefdom, and in 1962 he ran for a seat in the House of Representatives and won. He apparently convinced the SLFP leadership that he would not continue abusing his power, and would loyally work for the party in the future. It seems he has done so, since he was awarded recently an M.B.E. by the Crown for his services to his country.

The point of all this is that political transformation within the traditional elite did not take place smoothly, nor will it likely continue in an orderly fashion. Chiefs like Alikali Modu III are quite typical of those who rule by traditional

authoritarian methods long after all justification for such methods were gone. He also abused many ancient customary practices, at the same time that he worked openly for increased educational facilities, and backed the government "reforms" in the Native Administration.

Another point is that many chiefs could no longer simply be categorized as members of a "traditional elite", though we have continued to use the term. Their authority and political power had already been affected by their participation in the colonial economic process. In reality men like Alikali Modu III combine characteristics of both the traditional and new elite, a situation which has had great consequences for the political power of the chiefs. They can call upon both traditional and modern sources of power, but they no longer rule in a static situation. The riots of 1955-56 made it abundantly clear that the processes which transformed certain chiefs into a traditional-modern elite have equally shaken the masses of the rural people from their ancient allegiances. As a result:

...the traditional rulers may be expected to support that political arrangement which will enable them to 1) maximize modern sources of their power, and 2) simultaneously maintain as much as possible of traditional sources of authority. 108

So, in the period between 1951 and 1961 the traditional elite shifted slowly but decisively away from accommodation to colonial rule towards an alliance with the most powerful nationalist groups, especially the SLPP. This was part of their strategy during the years just before self-government, and it largely determined the elite transformation.

After the riots the exercise of power by the traditional elite was modified by government action, and an uneasy alliance between the chiefs and the SLPP government was patched up for a time.

Now, we shall see how the methods of governing, and some of the outward forms of local government, were changed. In 1950 new local bodies called District Councils (already referred to in some detail previously), were set up by the colonial government, "...so as to maximize the validity and usefulness of whatever African advice it might need on postwar development and local government."¹⁰⁹ The act recognized that the traditional elite were the main authoritative force on the local level (as indeed they were) and the P.C. in each chiefdom was allowed to sit as an ex-officio member of the new council. At first direct elections were not introduced, and the members of the District Councils were appointed by the old Tribal Authority (which in Temneland at least, remained firmly under the hand of the Paramount Chief). Thus the chiefs were able to determine the membership of the councils and limit the influence of any elements within the new elite.

The District Councils were given executive functions at the start, but the District Commissioner could still supervise action and thus negate any decisions if he wished. In addition they were financed after 1954 by the Native Administrations, which assessed taxes, as we have seen, by traditional techniques. This meant that the Tribal Authority and the chiefs, who controlled

revenue, could easily determine the rate of local finance granted to the District Council, and then literally dictate policy. After the 1955-56 riots, the colonial government imposed a standard precept in all districts, independent of the Native Administrations, and this helped stabilize the revenue and gave the District Councils more independence. But, in the meantime, an ordinance passed in 1954 had made provision for the District Council to govern the membership of the D.C., who could not be a member of the Council if another presiding officer was elected by that body. (An unsuccessful attempt to make the District Council even more autonomous). As Dr. Kison observed, this reflected:

...the not inconsiderable differences that prevailed in local government between chiefs (as well as their SLPP allies at the national level) on the one hand, and the colonial officials on the other. As such, the provision denying membership to District Commissioners except when they presided, represents the first occasion when chiefs freed themselves of direct colonial government supervision in the performance of local government functions. 110

Thus for a while the chiefs actually gained power relative to the shift in the structure of local government. They could control things even more thoroughly, especially monetary matters, through the very council originally created to check their power and broaden the base of local government.

Another source of traditional elite influence upon the Council was through kinship ties, for a large percentage of members were closely related to the chiefly families. The chiefly clans continued to manipulate the policies of the District Councils by means of indirect control over their membership.

Finally in 1956 a local franchise for direct election to the District Councils was established, though the chief remained as an ex-officio member and dominated the presidency of many councils. (In 1960 half of the twelve Councils had P.C.s as presidents.)¹¹¹

The chiefs also utilized the financial opportunities represented by a new scheme for building materials introduced by the SLPP government. This scheme was financed by the government and \$300,000 were allotted to it in 1961. Actually it seems that this scheme was simply a way of rewarding the traditional elite for their support. As might be predicted from previous events, the chiefs' influence was largely irresponsible, and tens of thousands of pounds were granted from the schemes funds as loans to chiefs. The abuse of funds allocated for local building materials by the chiefs would seem to, "...reflect the considerable dependence of the SLPP upon the chiefly class in local society."¹¹² In addition, it indicated that the government's approach to local development in recent years has been both unrealistic and short-sighted.

The traditional elite--although it has merged to some extent with the new elite-- still holds almost supreme power in local affairs and only the methods have changed. Chiefs now make their decisions through the District Councils rather than the T.A. which they so long dominated, and they do this by exercising a large measure of control over the membership of the Councils themselves.

111

Ibid., pg. 356

112

Ibid., pg. 360

Most people in the rural areas still vote as the chiefs direct them. Judging from the results of the election in 1957 and in 1962, the chiefs are still able to influence a great majority of their people to vote for the party in power. ¹¹³

In effect, therefore, the chiefs continue as the simple legitimate possessors of traditional authority in the eyes of most of their subjects. Even the disturbances of 1955-56 did not substantially shake personal and group loyalty to the chiefs, and in the context of the transformation of power within this elite, this is very important. What it means is that the nationalistic new elite in local government. This is a good example of a group who possessed authority (as defined previously), patronizing a group who still possessed power on the local level. The distinction between the two is clear in this instance. It is to the "new elite" that we must now turn for a conclusion of this investigation of transformation in the rural areas of Sierra Leone.

CHAPTER VII

Transformation and the New Elite

Sierra Leone, like Liberia was late in producing a nationalistic indigenous elite, especially in comparison with nations such as Ghana or Nigeria. The pre-existence of the Creole elite in Freetown, as well as in the Protectorate tended to discourage the spread of education and change in the hinterland. Though Sierra Leone was looked upon as a center for the spread of nationalist ideas and organizations down the coast, this was the result of the activities of Creoles such as Casely-Hayford, Herbert Macaulay, and I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson who did most of their agitation in the urban areas of other colonies, and seldom took an interest in the neglected hinterland of Sierra Leone. After the war this small nationalistic Creole group lost its lead and none replaced it. The result was that a handful of educated Protectorate leaders took it upon themselves to push for autonomy and development and in doing so they rejected the conservatism of the local Creole elite and went to the chiefs for support.

In addition, the Sierra Leone Protectorate was characterized until recently by its lack of economic development and social change. Farmers still cultivated subsistence crops and rarely grew cash crops, and most of the populace remained politically unaware. The entire Protectorate (as we have noted previously) lacks resources and arable land. Diamonds and iron ore are the only developed industries worth mentioning, and these have enriched only a few Africans and the British companies which own the concessions. Education fell far behind that of Nigeria or

Ghana, and the system of local government, as we have seen, was designed to support recognized traditional authority rather than to promote political and economic change. ¹¹⁴

The above- mentioned 1950 provision for non-chiefly membership of the District Councils was the first official move to provide any outlet for non-traditional, educated Protectorate feelings. By this time officials had begun to realize that it was imperative that the rising new elite be allowed forms of expression. In a report on the Protectorate for the year 1951, Chief Commissioner Childs stated:

Another development in the Southwestern Provinces in the growing realization of the necessity of giving the "young men" a larger share in chieftdom affairs, and in many instances they have been used to elect representatives to the T.A.s. The Provincial Commissioner observes that it is hoped by these means to evolve a more balanced system of chieftdom administration and so calm the spirit of restlessness and rebellion which has been an unfortunate feature in some chieftdoms during the past five years. ¹¹⁵

Surely this is a revealing statement of the shocking lag in both official policy and local development in the Protectorate. At a time when nationalist groups were most active in Nigeria and the Gold Coast, even in the most "bush" areas, officials in the Sierra Leone Protectorate were just beginning to recognize the need to accommodate an antiquated system to modern contingencies. In fact as this quotation clearly shows, the main concern was to prevent "restlessness and rebellion" rather than to accelerate change and adapt the system to meet the obvious needs of the future.

114

Austin, op. cit., pg. 186

115

Childs, Report for 1951, pg. 9.

All too often the government's attitude towards Protectorate development could be summed up in the same way.

In a similar report for the year 1949-50, Commissioner Childs wrote in reference to some disorders in the Southeastern and Southwestern Provinces:

A regrettable feature of these events is that the Paramount Chiefs who figured in them were in almost every case the product of secondary school education. Whether it is that educated chiefs are apt to be more exacting in the demands they make of their people, or that they are out of touch with and less sympathetically disposed towards their people than chiefs who have not had the advantage of education, or that they are less bound by the restraints of custom and tradition, it is evident that there has been something lacking in their approach to their duties and responsibilities, and perhaps in the educational training they have received. ¹¹⁶

He goes on to say that there is nothing "new or alarming" about the disorders and cites examples of similar difficulties in the 30's. It seems incredible that a man as capable and knowledgeable about Protectorate affairs as Childs could have reached so naive a conclusion as to blame upon the disturbances which had their roots in the unviability of traditional methods of rule in a society long overripe for change, the kind of education that a handful of chiefs had received. Childs, in the same report defends the District Councils under the new Ordinance of 1950 as, "...deriving power and resources from the chieftdom and ultimately therefore from the people as well as from the central government." ¹¹⁷ One cannot imagine an assumption more erroneous, as events in 1955-56 proved. As late as 1955 there was simply

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H. Childs, Report on the Protectorate for the Year 1949-1950, (Freetown, 1952), pg. 4.

117

Ibid., pg. 13.

no adequate check on the chief's power, whether he was educated or not, and the "young men" as the rising nationalist elite were called, were not satisfied by a legal manoeuvre. As Professor Kilson points out in his forthcoming book:

Pressures for change in local political institutions were first assented by the so-called "young men" among the rural populace, and especially this term "young men" was often used in the reports of colonial officials to describe two types of groups within the rural and town-dwelling hinterland population who were most active in asserting local political demands. 118

One of these groups was simply the younger members of the population who had a little education (in some cases quite a lot) and were most active in challenging the power of the traditional elite, and another was the young men who had returned from the war and had increasingly broken tribal ties through limited education and work experience in a modern economy. There were also a few of the richer members of the educated class who opposed the chiefs for one reason or another, though this element of the new elite usually supported the chiefs.

It was perfectly natural that these elements, as well as the best educated elements of the new elite, saw the political significance of the postwar unrest and acted accordingly. The most radical of the nationalist groups which have grown up since the war, such as the Kono Progressive Movement, the All People's Congress and the People's National Party, tried to link themselves directly with the several disturbances that broke out in the mid 50s. In this they achieved some success, but political development was not far enough advanced in the Protectorate to really

upset the traditional elite and the situation changed little, only certain methods of implementing power being transformed, as we learned earlier.

The dominant political organization, the SLPP, made little attempt to associate with the rebellions, a significant fact which again shows how far it had gone in its alliance with the traditional elite. The SLPP was not really (and still is not) an active mass party, though led from the top by members of the new elite. It was organizationally based, (as it still is) upon the traditional elite in the provinces. In 1952, at a meeting of the Protectorate Assembly Dr. Margai the leader of the SLPP, moved that the assembly express its disapproval of the outbreaks of "lawlessness" in parts of the Protectorate and he urged the government to look closely into the complaints and take the "firmest action possible" against the instigators of the disorders.¹¹⁹ He makes no mention of taking action against the very obvious cause for disorders, the chief's abuse of their customary powers. He was apparently only interested in the instigators, who represented a threat to his organization.

The new elite was seldom very radical in the Protectorate. It is interesting that the S.O.S. founded by Dr. Karefa-Smart (now Minister for External Affairs) had as its aim the "promotion of co-operative agriculture in the Protectorate."¹²⁰ It never grew into a true elite party with militant anti-colonial aims and direct opposition to the traditional rulers in local government,

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Ibid., pg. 294.

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Austin, op.cit., pg. 893.

as did the CPP in Ghana or the NCNC in Nigeria. It seems obvious now that its offspring, the SLPP was willing to play down its differences with both the colonial elite to subdue any alarming popular uprisings, whether or not led by elements of the new elite itself. This seems to indicate, if the Sierra Leone Protectorate is a valid example, that there are cases in which a new elite may have more in common for a time with the colonial rulers and traditional authorities, than with the more radical elements within its own structure. As certain events we have discussed between 1951-1961 amply demonstrate, this is largely directed from above (from the Colonial Office). The element within the new elite who direct the strongest political organization had after all quite sure they would soon enough inherit the power at the center held by the colonial authorities, and too many radical disturbances, whatever their causes, could
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upset the orderly transfer of power.

The early easy success of the SLPP caused it to adopt a rather cautious policy and to seek an easy solution to the great problems of consolidating power in the rural areas. Its strategy has largely been to compromise with the local authorities in opposition to the Creole elite, for purposes of solidifying tribal unity. Eventually the new elite (that is those elements now in power) will have to face the issue of chieftaincy and local government in which a traditional elite still continue to rule by methods hardly conducive to progress in a modern state. If the SLPP does not do it, then it will most likely be

replaced by a radical new party which will break the chiefs' power in local affairs, perhaps by force if necessary.

All this is not to say that the new elite remained docile in the ten year period discussed here. As we indicated above, oppositionist elements within this elite group were active in many of the riots which so disturbed the provinces. In 1956, the Cox Commission stated:

Party politics too has played its part, if not in the starting, certainly in fostering disorders. The influence of party politics was noticed in Loko Massama, and Kaffu Bullom. In Samu we received evidence that one party had persuaded its strikers to subscribe to its funds in return for a membership card, the possession of which it was believed, would save the holder from arrest. ¹²²

The party mentioned here was undoubtedly one of the opposition parties, as the report stated later, which indicated that the more normal pattern of the new elite opposing traditional authority was not unknown. The reader should remember, however, that the Commission recommended that Paramount Chiefs, "should not be associated with any party and that party platforms should be used in local affairs." ¹²³ Again a rather naive conclusion, considering the obvious partnership of the SLPP with many P.C.s. To assume that the policies of the nationalist parties should have, ¹²⁴ "no application to local affairs," seems to indicate a profound misunderstanding by the Commission of the inevitable role which any new elite, however moderate, must take in a transitional society. The Commission seemed to think that a reorganized system of local government still under the traditional authorities, could

¹²²

Cox Report, pg. 147

¹²³

Ibid., pg. 147

¹²⁴

Ibid., pg. 148

adequately direct the necessary reforms in local government. The Commission made the same mistake that several individual officials had made all along. It assumed that local affairs were the concern only of the Native Administrations, and not of outside parties, whether representing the central government or not, and concluded that only the traditional elite, (along with the highly inefficient District Councils--already proved a failure as new agents of local government) could govern successfully according to customary law.

Such a stand by the Commission only encouraged the SLPP which owed all its local security to the almost inviolate position of the chiefs. It also tended to discredit opposition parties (like the vigorous All Peoples Congress) in local affairs, at a time when the British system of active oppositionist party politics might have helped to speed transformation in local government. It is ironical that an English commissioner deplored the introduction of party politics into local affairs. Sierra Leone, it is true, remains one of the few nations in Africa in which legal opposition parties are active, but none of them have so far been able to shake the SLPP's strength in local politics. Both the traditional elite and the SLPP owe each other support, and continue to bolster each other's interest.

It is still difficult to find a significant number of rural people, enough uprooted from traditional society and sufficiently educated to act on direction from opposition parties, because this means opposing their chiefs. As a result the new elite in the rural areas has become so closely identified with the

traditional elite, that it is often hard to distinguish between the two. Young men from the chiefly families easily fit into the system of local politics as it has developed since 1951, rather than going off on their own independent courses of action. They prefer the secure means of attaining influence and power.¹²⁵

Thus the SLPP finds itself supported in the local areas, even by the young men who have kinship ties with the traditional elite.

The irony of all this is that the colonial elite never seemed to recognize the trend until it was too late to stop or reverse it. The attempts at setting up District Councils as viable units of local government, perhaps someday to supercede the P.C. and his T.A., have failed in their purpose, and with the SLPP in power at the center, the present system has become firmly entrenched. In the 1957 elections, as well as those in 1962, the SLPP candidates in most rural areas received overwhelming support, in spite of the fact, as Dr. Scott pointed out, that the SLPP is badly organized as a mass party in rural areas.¹²⁶ In 1957 the SLPP gained 26 out of 39 seats in the House of Representatives, with 77,220 votes cast out of a total of 165,478 recorded.¹²⁷ The SLPP has neglected its organization and had as late as 1960 only twelve branch offices, three of them in the Colony. It had no more than a dozen organizers at that time and used only four Land Rovers for the whole country. This is quite a contrast to the CPP in Ghana, which has 2,885 branches as early as 1955.¹²⁸ It is all the more proof of the

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Gamble, op.cit., pg. 213.

126

Scott, op. cit., pg. 214

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Kislon, "Sierra Leone Politics," pg. 639.

128

This pg. 639

alliance of the politicians (including independents who support the SLPP) with the traditional elite for the maintenance of power in local affairs. They combined, each for its own purposes, and any continuation of the system necessitates a continued alliance. How long this can continue without a reaction, no one can predict, but the events of 1955-56, and of 1962 in Kambia, seem to indicate that it is a precarious balance and cannot go on, especially if economic and social change continue to accelerate. The Cox Report has one paragraph in it that seems rather ominous in the light of all this:

...there is a large and prosperous element in the population which made itself obvious before us and which is moved by a sense of political urgency to prove forthwith the efficacy of representative institutions and with this object to demonstrate the miracle of democracy in local affairs. The element is particularly strong in the classes from which the District Council and their staff are drawn.¹²⁹

It may not be a particularly prosperous element by western standards, but its strength was partially felt in November of 1955, when the disturbances caused the ultimate dismissal of at least a dozen Paramount Chiefs and as many T.A. members. The fact that it does belong to a "class" now sharing a degree of local power is also significant, for this is a part of the new elite. Eventually the pretenses of both chiefs and politicians will no longer be a substitute for real achievement in local government, and it is likely that this group, already in a limited position of power, will inherit local power or simply take it.

The tenacious habits and customs of the traditional society

in the Sierra Leone Protectorate have already been seriously challenged, and they have at least twice, "proved unable to control and restrain the heady effervescence of the new ideas which are gaining currency."¹³⁰ Transformation cannot cease where it has in local government. More than the methods by which power is used must change. Political power on the local level must be gradually transformed to a new elite which can direct the economic and social development of the provinces within the context of modern resources and a broad base of political representation from the people. If not, more disturbances will probably occur, and the only recourse may be to violent revolution. This is not to say that Chiefs and their supporters will ultimately have no place in local politics. Some have already adapted to the obvious pressures of an emerging state, and these are leading the vanguard as members of a new elite using traditional techniques to ease the process of transition. A few of these progressive leaders (whether nominally members of the traditional elite or of the new elite, or both) have made it obvious that they are aware that they must someday relinquish their own power, when a more viable modern system is constructed.

Whatever the course of events, it seems likely that the process of elite transformation will continue, either gradually, or violently, and that eventually the new elite, perhaps still combining certain traditional elements within it, will exercise actual power in local government.

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H. Childs, Report on the Administration of the Provinces, 1956 (Freetown, 1957), pg. 6.

CHAPTER VIII

Conclusion

The system of "modern tribalism" as it has been called, has its dangers, and in Sierra Leone the nexus of the new elite, the traditional elite, and the mass of rural people, has created a situation full of internal tension, though outwardly fairly stable. Many of the forces that have transformed certain chiefs into a traditio-modern elite have equally influenced the rural peasantry and its ancient loyalties. In this study we have isolated some of the points of tension, we have investigated the strategies and methods used by the important groups which interacted in the process of transformation, and we have indicated some areas where trouble may be expected to spread and blossom.

Conflict within a society does not necessarily mean that the society ultimately suffers disunity. As we have seen, it may lead to unlikely union between tribes which have little in common, and it may even promote change where change is not expected. The system of local government which has developed over the past ten years in the Sierra Leone Protectorate has great faults. We have enumerated most of them and analysed their causes. The system has not resulted in revolution yet, though the possibility remains. The colonial rulers made plenty of blunders, as we can easily see from our vantage point, but probably no more than should be expected. The changes which were prompted from above were largely for the welfare of the people, and where they have not worked they

reflect little more than normal human error. Something of a balance may have been reached after all, for there is more flexibility in the structure as it now exists. The traditional elite have merged to a large extent with elements of the new elite, and with a growing political consciousness. Tribal loyalty, still very important, and modern political organization, reinforce each other, and the result is that a new elite of decision-makers which is learning how to transcend tribalism and parochialism, yet at the same time to strengthen their own movement through tribal support, is growing up in the Protectorate. There is nothing inherently bad in an alliance between chiefs and party politicians, though usually the results seem to retard progress. The problem rests with the kind of leadership provided by the leaders in both groups. If, as with the leadership during the years prior to independence, they sacrifice the risk of rapid transformation for expediency, they will probably only delay an eventual violent upheaval by local peoples. If they are receptive to new ideas, willing to risk a little local support while pushing local reforms and not too much concerned with short term palliatives, they may succeed in presiding over a peaceful but rapidly changing society, which can meet its challenges without violence and bloodshed.

It will be most interesting to see whether the system of "modern tribalism" that has evolved in the Sierra Leone Protectorate can adapt to change. If successful, something worthwhile will have been preserved, and something new created.

Annotated Bibliography

Primary SourcesPublished Documents

Childs, H. Report on the Sierra Leone Protectorate for the Year 1949-1950. Government Printing Office, Freetown, 1952.

This report, like the three following, is typical of the annual written reports submitted by the Chief Commissioner of the Sierra Leone Protectorate. Such reports are made up of material gathered by the Chief Commissioner from his Provincial Commissioners (there were three of these in the period covered by this study) and the purpose is to inform the governor and the colonial office of the state of affairs in all parts of the Protectorate, and to bring all problems out into the open. For research on political change such documents are invaluable, and they provide the second best primary sources. Only official letters to the colonial office (not available) or files in District Offices would prove more decisive.

Childs, H. Annual Report on the Sierra Leone Protectorate for the Year 1951. Government Printing Office, Freetown, 1953.

Basically the same as the above report, this particular document proved most useful because of the detailed accounts given by Commissioner Childs of the efficacy of the Native Administration system.

Childs, H. Report on the Administration of the Provinces for the Year 1955. Government Printing Office, Freetown, 1956.

Like the above documents, this report reflects the opinions and findings of one man, as he reviewed the reports of his subordinates. It is particularly interesting because it refers directly to the riots of 1955 in the provinces, and attempts to appraise them in the light of subsequent events.

Childs, H. Report on the Administration of the Provinces for the Year 1956. Government Printing Office, Freetown, 1957.

This report is interesting because it sheds some light on the workings of the colonial mind as it deals with trouble which was largely unforeseen. In contrast to the earlier reports by the same man, it is quite fascinating. It also gives some important hints as to forthcoming policy changes, and thereby explains their causes.

Sierra Leone Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Disturbances in the Provinces, November 1955 to March 1956. Crown Agents for Overseas Governments and Administrations on behalf of the Government of Sierra Leone, 1956.

This is perhaps the most important single document used in this study. It is a voluminous report of nearly every aspect of the tax riots which disturbed the Northern Province of Sierra Leone in 1955-56, and which caused a considerable shake-up in both the central government and the local administrations. As a source for information about the behavior of chiefs, as well as their advisors and Tribal Authorities, it is invaluable. It runs to several hundred pages and covers such a wide range of matters relating to Native Administration and local government, that a very selective use of relevant parts is necessary.

Willan, Harold. Reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the Conduct of Certain Chiefs and the Government Thereof. Government Printing Office, Freetown, 1957.

This document is a more detailed inquiry into the matters brought into the open by the Commission of Inquiry cited above (known as the Cox Commission), and it investigates the most minute incidents which relate to the use of power by certain Paramount Chiefs. For this research it proved most valuable.

Secondary Sources

Published Books

Davidson, Basil, and Ademola, Adenekan (ed.). The New West Africa. London, 1956.

This collection of essays by several well known Africanists, is useful for a synthetic view of nationalism, how it developed and the changes it provoked. The essay by Hodgkin on the steps towards self-government is especially pertinent.

Carter, Gwendolyn, and Brown, W. C. (ed.). Transition in Africa: Studies in Political Adaptation. Vol. 1. Boston, 1960.

An anthology of essays released by the African Research and Studies Program at Boston University, this book is useful in much the same way as is the above collection. The sections by David E. Apter, and Robert Lystad, and the essay on local politics by L. Gray Cowan, are good for a general view of party politics and local democratic processes.

Fyfe, Christopher. A Short History of Sierra Leone. Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd. London, 1962.

Fyfe's brief survey is little more than a good reference. He intended it to be no more than that. For those who want a more comprehensive history there is none better than his voluminous History of Sierra Leone, published by Oxford University Press in 1962. The larger volume does not cover the period considered in this study, so it is not needed here.

Haines, Groves. (ed.) Africa Today. Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1955.

Another collection of essays useful for general reference. The contribution of James S. Coleman on the emergence of political parties is an excellent one.

Hodgkin, Thomas. African Political Parties. Penguin Books Ltd. London, 1961.

One of the most valuable short guides to the origins, aims and methods of the various African parties. It is of great practical value, but it is also full of astute observations and insights. For background information it is one of the few books which was always within easy reach.

Hodgkin, Thomas. Nationalism in Colonial Africa. New York University Press, New York, 1957.

This is one of the best studies of African Nationalism available. Hodgkin brings a wealth of knowledge and a lucid style to a very complicated subject. The chapters dealing with change in local government and the references to Sierra Leone politics are especially pertinent. Like Hodgkin's other book, it was repeatedly referred to.

Little, Kenneth, L. The Mende of Sierra Leone: A West African People in Transition. Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1951.

This fine monograph provides the clearest picture available to date on the structure of Mende Society. It is indispensable as an anthropological source as well as useful as a guide to Mende political behavior. In addition, the book is highly readable.

Mackenzie, W.S.M., and Robinson, Kenneth. (ed.) Five Elections in Africa. Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1960.

The only part of this book useful for the purposes of this study was Chapter V, which deals with the elections in Sierra Leone in 1957. The author of this chapter, D.J.R. Scott, discusses the events leading up to the election with great skill and provides some excellent data about the election itself.

McCulloch, M. The Peoples of the Sierra Leone Protectorate. E.S.A. International African Institute, London, 1950.

This anthropological survey provides some of the important facts about Temne tribal life and political organization. It also deals with the other tribes in a brief manner. As an ethnographic survey it is excellent, but it has little value in regard to political change.

Perham, Margery. The Colonial Revolution. Collins, London, 1961.

A brief but highly literate study of colonial policy and its implications, this book is another fine reference. The author deals with Indirect Rule in a most comprehensive manner and thoroughly examines its consequences.

Verba, Sidney. Small Groups and Political Behavior. Princeton University Press, 1961.

The theoretical framework of the study is largely based upon Mr. Verba's book. Though it says nothing at all about Sierra Leone or Africa, it has great value in explaining the significance of small groups in the process of political change.

Unpublished Sources

Milson, Martin. Political Change in a West African State: A Study of Political Modernization in Sierra Leone. Unpublished Manuscript.

Dr. Milson graciously offered the use of this manuscript for my research during a trip to Cambridge. It is perhaps the most valuable secondary source cited here. Professor Milson has done extensive work in Sierra Leone politics, and probably no one else knows as much about it. The manuscript is full of decisive data and very revealing insights. A good number of the ideas which provided the basis for whole chapters of this study came originally from this scholarly monograph, which will be published this fall. It will surely be the definitive work on Sierra Leone politics for a long time to come.

Articles in Periodicals

Austin, Dennis. "The People and Constitution of Sierra Leone," West Africa, (September 13, 1952), pp. 846-942.

A journalist's account of some of the more obvious facts about the government of Sierra Leone and how it was changing.

Dorjahn, Vernon, R. "The Changing Political System of the Temne," Africa, Vol. 30, (1960), pp. 110-139.

This covers some of the important changes in the structure of Temne society between 1880 and 1956. Very useful for an understanding of the administrative hierarchy of Temne chiefdoms.

Fallers, Lloyd. "The Predicament of the Modern African Chief," American Anthropologist, Vol. 57, (1955), pp. 290-305.

Fallers provides some interesting new theories as to methods for social anthropological analysis. Some of the ideas apply very well to a study of this sort.

Gamble, David, P. "The Temne Family in a Modern Town (Lunsar) in Sierra Leone," Africa, Vol. 33, (July 1963), pp. 209-225.

One of the most useful articles cited. The information about the activities of families divided into several social classes, is very rewarding. The references to chiefdom politics and how the chiefly families retain control are also good.

Gluckman, Max. "Tribalism in Modern British Africa," Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines, Vol. 1, (1960), pp. 55-70.

Provides some insights into tribalism in urban areas as contrasted to rural areas, and destroys some of the myths about the tenacity of traditional values.

Kilson, Martin. "African Political Change and the Modernization Process," Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol. 1, (December 1963), pp. 425-440.

Kilson discusses modernization as an analytical concept. The article applies to Sierra Leone directly, since Dr. Kilson has done most of his work there, and it provides some excellent ideas about change.

Milson, Martin. "Sierra Leone Politics," West Africa, (June 10-July 9, 1960), pp. 688-9 & 773-4.

These articles are a good historical survey of the political development of Sierra Leone after the war. Milson deals with the parties in some detail, and contrasts the Sierra Leone case with other nearby African states.

Little, Kenneth, L. "Kende Political Institutions in Transition," African Affairs, Vol. 52, (1954), pp. 8-32.

Most of the material in this article, Dr. Little has already dealt with in more detail in his book, The Kende of Sierra Leone. It does provide some important information about the social structure and its influence on the chiefs.

Little, Kenneth, L. "Social Change and Social Class in the Sierra Leone Protectorate," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 54, (July 1948-Dec. 1949), pp. 10-21.

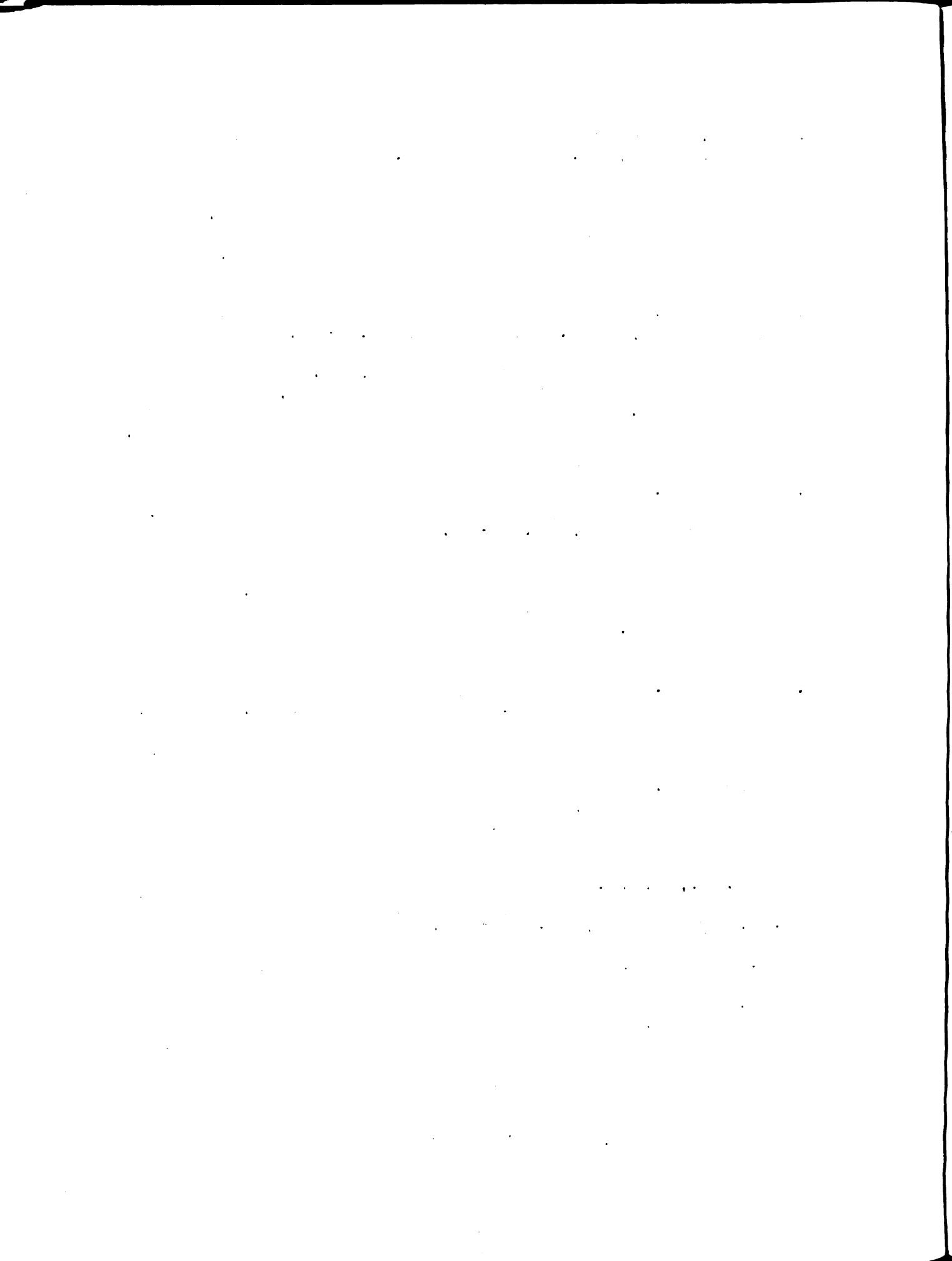
This article has some interesting comments on the attitude of Creoles towards local people in Kende country. It also discusses the problems facing the literate African in a changing society.

Little, Kenneth, L. "Structural Change in the Sierra Leone Protectorate," Africa, Vol. 30, (July, 1950), pp. 213-220.

Little has divided this article into several sections, each dealing with various "classes" in the structure of Kende society. The sections on the educated class is particularly helpful, and the references to voluntary associations are equally so.

Loveridge, A. J., O.S.B. "The Present Position of the Kende Chief in Sierra Leone," Journal of African Administration, Vol. 9, (July 1957), pp. 115-120.

Mr. Loveridge, who sat on the Sen Commission, has here reviewed its findings in the light of the chiefs' role and status. This is one of the most useful articles consulted for this study. It is especially valuable for the insights it provides into the attitudes of one colonial official. It shows a deep and profound knowledge of local politics and administrative problems.



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Nadel, S. F. "The Concept of Social Elites," International Social Science Bulletin, Vol. 3, (1956), pp. 420-422.

Nadel's article provides a classic definition and explanation of elites. It provided part of the conceptual framework for this study.

Porter, A. T. "The Social Background of Political Decision-Makers in Sierra Leone," Sierra Leone Studies, No. 13, (June, 1960), pp. 2-12.

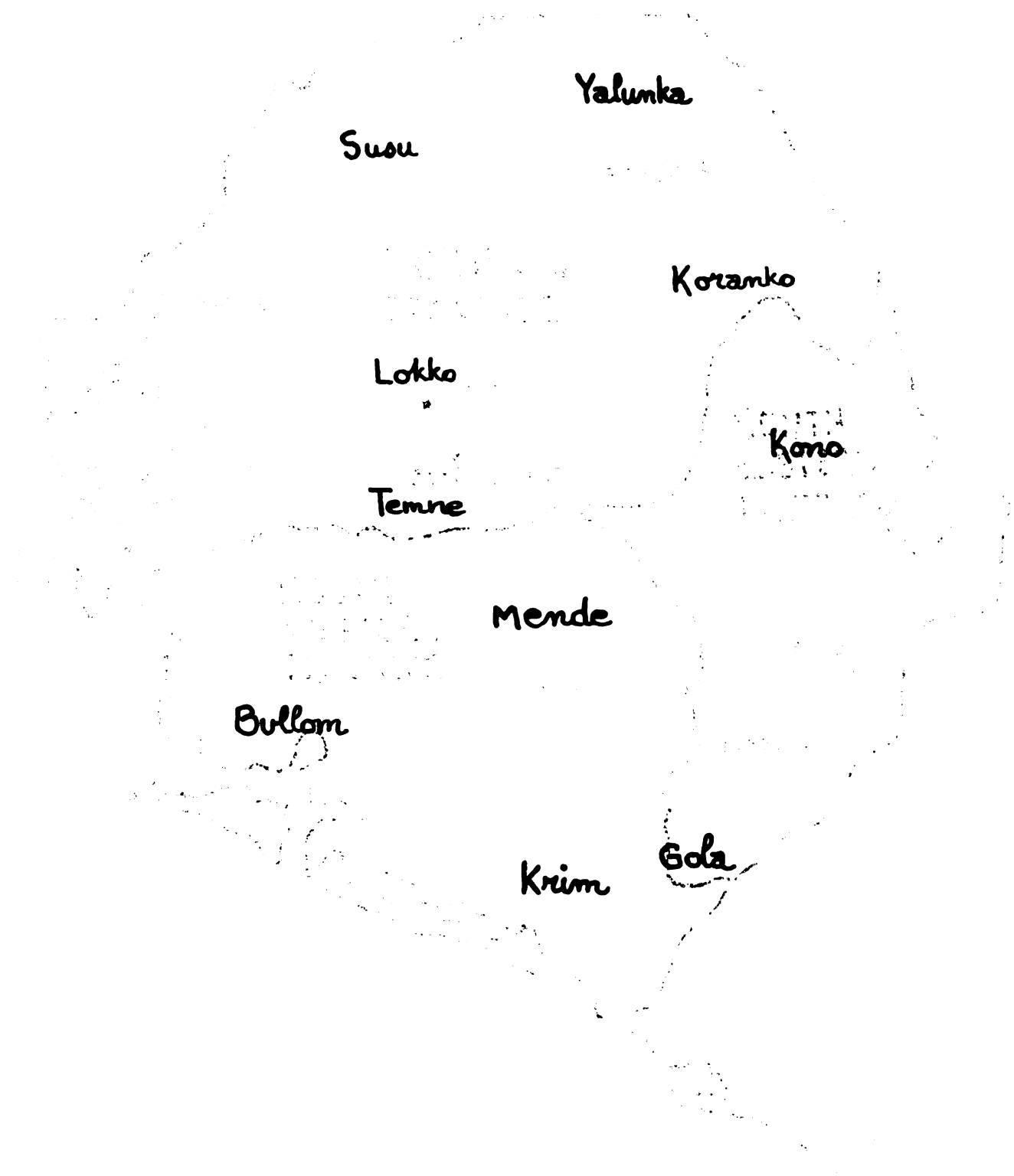
A most valuable study of the roles and positions of individuals, their values and the degree of participation in political activities, which a change in these may provoke. Professor Porter also defines the types of elite groups which operate in Sierra Leone, and raises some important questions about the proper methods of analysing them.

Skinner, Elliott, F. "Strangers in West African Societies," Africa, Vol. 33, (October 1963), pp. 307-320.

This article is especially useful in understanding the conflict between the Creoles and the Protectorate Africans which shaped so much of the politics in Sierra Leone in the years prior to independence. It provides an excellent explanation of some of the causes for tensions of this sort, and puts the problem in the context of social transition.

"Statement of the Sierra Leone Government on the Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Disturbances in the Protectorate, November 1955-March 1956." Crown Agents on behalf of the Government of Sierra Leone, Journal of African Administration, Vol. 9, (1957), pp. 54-55.

This summary of the government statement in answer to the Commission Report, is valuable since it provides a contrast to the report itself, and explains the government's stand on the issue of transition in local government.



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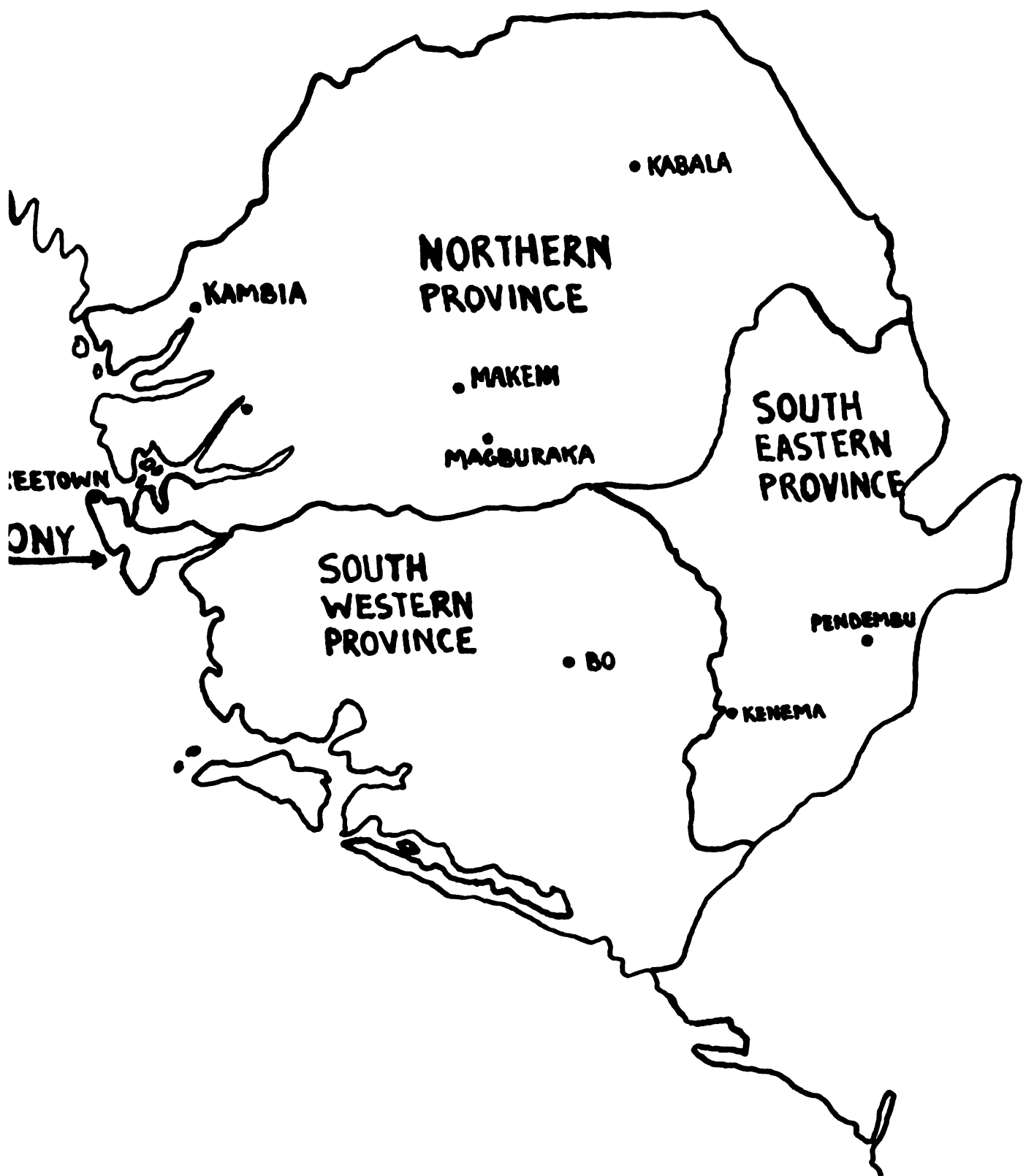
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