THE LIBERIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM WITH EMPHASIS ON PROPOSALS FOR CHANGE

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ABSTRACT

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The general theme of this thesis is education as related to social and economic development in Liberia. As in many newly emerging nations, the goal of providing appropriate educational programs is beset with many problems. The nature and magnitude of some of these problems are appraised in this thesis. Among the more prominent problems are these: providing adequate elementary education for a rapidly growing school age population; the high drop out for both students and teachers; and inadequate resources for education resulting in inadequate facilities and supplies. The thesis also contains recommendations, including the training of school administrators and the development of an educational philosophy appropriate to the needs of Liberia. In addition, the recent closing of the Booker Washington vocational school as a consequence of a student strike is detailed using social organizational principles.

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PREFACE

Among the many problems of the emerging nations striving for development, none is more difficult than that of providing an appropriate and acceptable educational system. The problems involved in providing educational services in Liberia often seem insurmountable, but meaningful development cannot take place without effective education.

This thesis is an attempt to address some of the issues and problems in Liberian education and to provide some guidelines for further discussion. These guidelines, it is hoped, will prove useful to the UNESCO team in Liberia concerned with education. More specifically, the purpose of the UNESCO team is to work with Liberians to reform curricula and to train community school leaders at the elementary level. The broad concern of the United Nations, of course, is that of achieving economic development. The UNESCO team working with Liberians is engaged in the preparation of an educational program, the aim of which is to develop the natural resources of the country. Among the severe problems that must be dealt with in Liberia is the high attrition rate of both students and teachers.

As a UNESCO trainee in the U.S. and as a member of the faculty of the Kakata Rural Teacher Training Institute where a group of the UNESCO experts are stationed, I wish to use this thesis to explore

the educational situation in Liberia and to offer suggestions concerning educational reform. My purpose, then, is to add to the dialogue between UNESCO experts and Liberians concerned with education. It is hoped that this thesis will contribute to the question of educational reform in Liberia.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: LIVING A REVOLUTION

Introduction

John Kenneth Galbraith has said that: "In the past it has too often been assumed that because a particular organization or service--a government department, educational institution or agriculture or industrial service--exists in a more advanced country it makes an important contribution to development. Therefore, it should be recreated in the countries that are in the less advanced stages. It will aid their development" (Clower, p. 337). The uncritical borrowing from "developed" countries has been the basis of educational and economic development efforts in Liberia and in many African countries. Recently, beginning in the 1940's, Liberia recognized the need to adapt institutions to her own particular situation and is striving to create a system of education relevant for the development of her resources. But to have a new model in education requires some rethinking about the past and a clear definition of any new direction.

This thesis focuses on the educational situation found in Liberia today. Attention is given to a number of problems in education, especially to educational resources as related to a growing school-age population, to drop-outs, to recruitment of teachers, and to needed curriculum reform. Several proposals for reform are offered. In addition, an organizational frame of reference is used to analyze the

closing of the Booker Washington Institute, a vocational high school in Liberia.

The Geographical and Anthropological Setting

The Republic of Liberia lies just south of the bulge on the west coast of Africa (see Figure 1). This country was founded by The American Colonization Society in 1822. Liberia has an area of 43,000 square miles, about equal to that of Louisiana or Ohio (Anderson, p. 3).

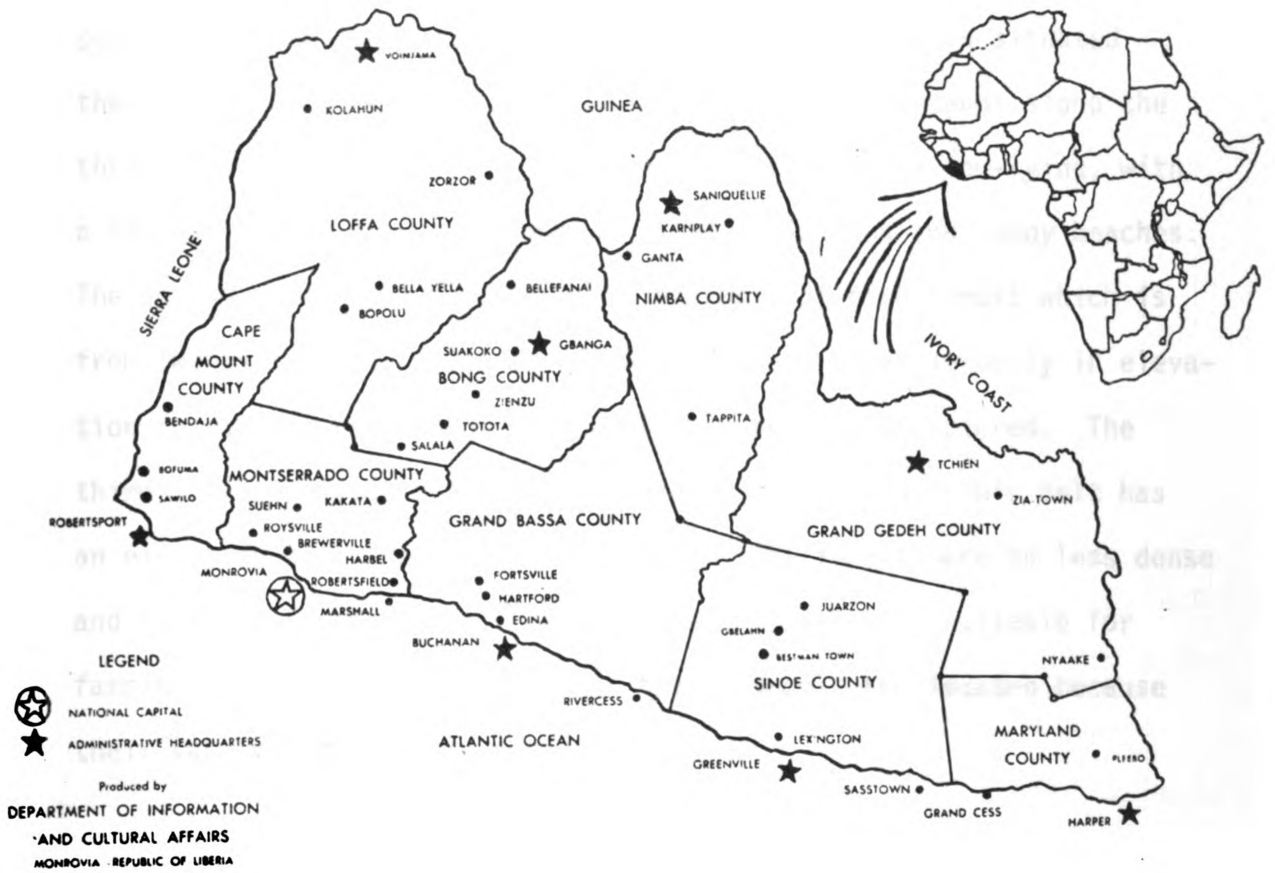


Figure 1.--Political map of Liberia showing the countries, major cities and location in relation to Africa. (Source: Robert Clower, et al., Growth Without Development. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1966.)

It is typically tropical, lying a few degrees north of the equator. Its southern tip is at latitude 4 -13', and its northern edge is at 8 -35'. The climate is moderate to hot. The temperature seldom rises much above 80°F. Nights are cool and refreshing. There is the usual alternation of wet and dry seasons. The rains start about the first of May while the dry season begins around December. The average annual rainfall on the coast amounts to 180 inches and from 80 to 100 inches in the higher lands of the interior.

There are three distinct belts, differentiated mainly by elevation and rainfall. The first is the coastal belt where the principal settlements are located. Monrovia, the capitol city, is situated there. The belt is about forty miles in width and extends along the three hundred and fifty miles of the seaboard. It is low-lying, with a few hills, and many grove swamps, shallow lagoons and sandy beaches. The second typographical feature is the belt of high forest which is from twenty to sixty miles in width. The land rises abruptly in elevation to form an escarpment. Much of this belt is unexplored. The third is the plateau belt of the Liberian hinterland. This belt has an elevation of a thousand feet or more. The forest here is less dense and rainfall is also less. This is the area which is suitable for farming and it is here most of the tribal people are located because their survival depends on agriculture.

The Tribal People

Social scientists divide the Liberian tribes into four main groups: Mande-tan, Mande-pu, West Atlantic, and Kru (see the location of tribes in Figure 2). This division or classification is based mainly

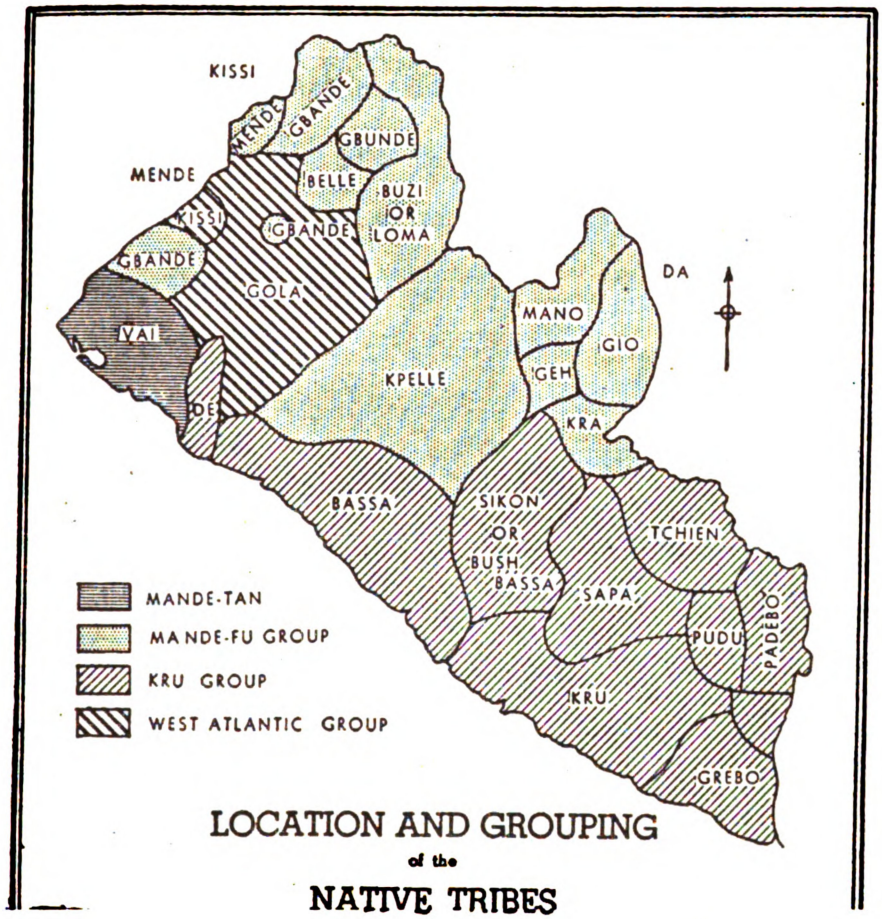


Figure 2.--Map showing the distribution of tribes in Liberia. (Source: R. Earle Anderson, Liberia: America's African Friend. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1952, p. 13.)

upon two factors: language similarities and the directions from which the various tribes came into the country. The classification of tribes either as Mande-tan or Mande-pu is based on the word "ten" in the counting system of some tribes in Liberia. Some tribes belong to large language groups which have "-tan" and "-pu," respectively corresponding to the Arabic or Roman number ten. The suffixes in Mande-tan and Mande-pu mentioned above show this characteristic. The Kru, another major class of tribes, owes its name to the major activity of this group

before the coming of the settlers. The Kru are seafarers, perhaps due to their location by the Atlantic Ocean and navigable rivers. However, Anderson mentioned that the Kru is the name of the most important member of this tribe. The grouping of the Liberian tribes is as follows:

I. Mande-tan
   1. Vai

II. Mande-pu
   1. Kpelle
   2. Loma
   3. Gio
   4. Mano
   5. Gbande
   6. Mende
   7. Geh

III. Kru
   1. Pudu
   2. Grebo
   3. Padebo
   4. Bassa
   5. Sapo
   6. De

IV. West Atlantic
   1. Kissi
   2. Gola

V. Mandingo
   (The Mandingos do not fall under any of the major tribes but they are also Liberians who believe in Islamic religion.)

Although the tribes have some distinctions, they are not to be thought of as political units. The unification and integration policy has as its priority the aim of unifying all the tribes as Liberian citizens with national pride and one purpose--the development of Liberia.

Liberian/American Relationships

Unlike most African countries, Liberia was not colonized by a European power but has had a traditional, informal affiliation with the United States. Robert Clower pointed out that Liberia owes its origin as a nation to a group of American philanthropists (Clower, p. 3). Liberia was nourished during its early years by United States government funds and, at critical moments, it was protected against European colonization by U.S. diplomacy. The Firestone Rubber Company of Akron, Ohio, was the first foreign company to undertake large-scale plantations in Liberia. The contract between Firestone and Liberia was signed in 1926 (Buell, p. 885). The world at large and other African countries recognize or regard the United States as in some sense responsible for Liberia. Clower says:

> Liberia views the United States as a friend, ally, relative. After America's entry into World War II, Liberia declared war on Germany and allowed the United States to establish an important air-ferry base at Robertsfield, which is about thirty miles away from Monrovia. English is the official language, the United States dollar is the national currency, and the United States flag (with only one star) is the national emblem. In 1838 a Harvard professor drew up Liberia's constitution on the American model and in the 1950's lawyers from Cornell University codified its laws (Clower, p. 4).

Despite its rich resources of iron, fertile soil and its long association with the technologically most advanced country in the world, Liberia still seems to lag in educational, economic, and political development. About two thirds of the Liberian population live in tribal communities and receive the bulk of their livelihood from subsistence agriculture, principally from growing rice and cassava. Commercial activity and cash crops are minor sources of income in tribal economic life. Cocoa, coffee, and sugar cane are some examples of cash crops.

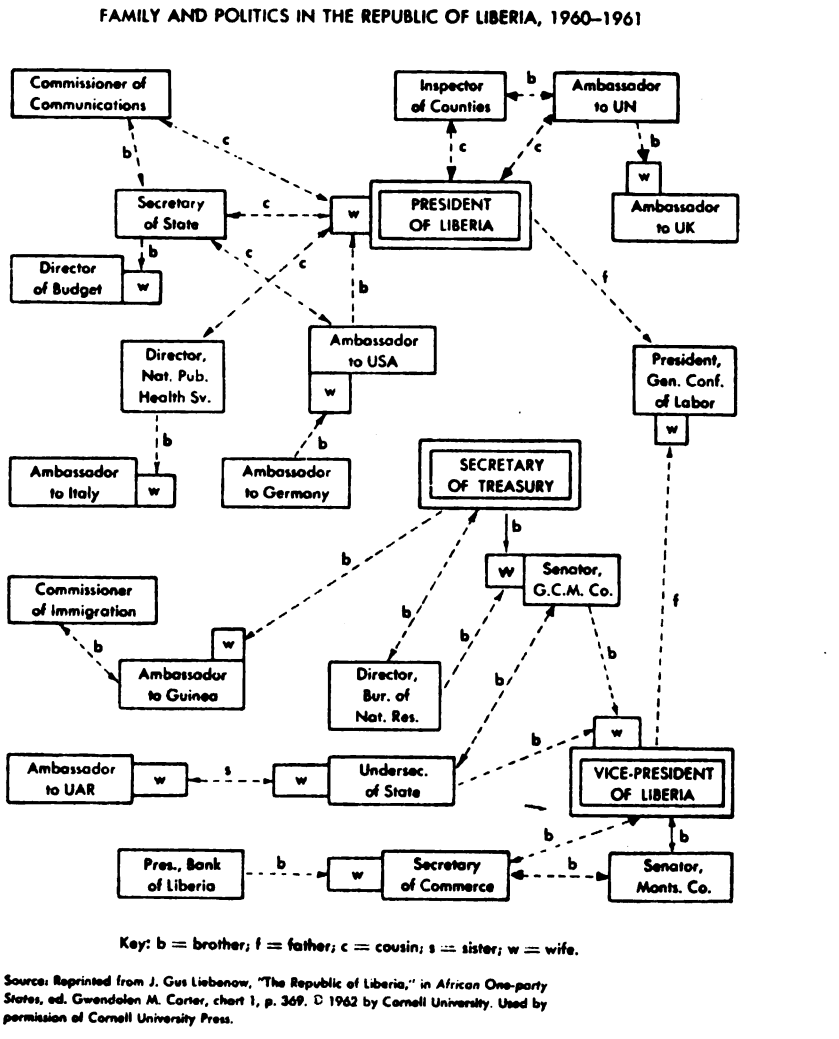
The modern economic sector consists primarily of foreign firms: American rubber plantations, American and European iron mining companies, American construction firms, Lebanese wholesalers and retailers. Liberia is an example of "enclave and dual economy" (Clower, p. 5). However, the Liberianization program seeks eventually to have Liberians trained and have them participate directly and actively in the economic activity of the country. Also renegotiation of some contract terms signed between the government and some companies in Liberia is being considered.

Politically, Liberia is divided into nine counties and five territories. Liberia has a democratic form of government based on the United States pattern but lacks the two party system. There is only one political party in Liberia. As shown in Figure 3 prepared by Gus Liebenow for the period 1960-61, political posts are commonly held by members of the family of those in power. Much the same situation holds true today.

The Educational Background and Setting

A schoolboy walks eagerly along a trail, down a country road, or perhaps on a cement sidewalk of an urban community. It matters little whether he is leaving his mud and stick hut in a village, his zinc shack in a town, or his cement block house in the city. What does matter is that he is on his way to the Future--a future that is promised by the school building he is about to occupy.

Across the country, across the nation, throughout the continent, he looks the same. His uniform may be well worn but it is immaculately clean. He can be barefooted, wearing sandals, or comfortable in the



Key: b = brother; f = father; c = cousin; s = sister; w = wife.

Figure 3.--A chart showing the political structure and family relationships in Liberia, 1960-1961. (Source: Robert Clower, et al., Growth Without Development. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1966.)

latest shoe fashion. He may carry books (if he has them) deftly balanced on his head, or he can be driven to school by a uniformed chauffeur. Books, uniforms, and modes of transportation are incidentals or, better yet, are the accidentals of learning. What is vital is that

having followed some prescribed course, assimilated some rubrics, conformed to some pre-ordained pattern, he will find himself, after a specifically set number of years, eligible to begin his ascent up the ladder of economic and social success--or so he thinks.

That the teacher, who may or may not be qualified, is not regularly in attendance is of small consequence. That needed books and materials may be in short supply or non-existent is unquestioned. What is important is that he is attending school. Attendance is an end in itself because somehow, some way, he is being educated. Faith--faith in a system that he does not see as inappropriate--is all that matters. One day, if he endures, his faith and his attendance will have prepared him for what his country and its economy have to offer.

To the African schoolboy this dream is rapidly dissipating as he sees technology demanding more than a school certificate; as he sees unemployment rise even among those who have obtained certificates. His principal hope to reconstitute his dream is to obtain additional education or to hope that planners will somehow find a place for him and his younger sisters and brothers in a society that has advanced too rapidly for the schools to accommodate. The demand for education is by far greater than the available resources can accommodate. Many of the illiterate parents have acknowledged the importance of education, and strive for their children to get an education. Of his two options, the search for higher education may find him in the same situation upon the completion of additional attendance. He will be "educated" but still unemployed. Thus his more realistic hope is a rapid adjustment of the economy and the restructuring of the system that will allow him to participate in that advancing economy.

Speed of change is not generally considered endemic to Africa but when one realizes that it was but ten years that thirty-two newly independent African states met together for the first time, the rate of change has been revolutionary. Looked at in this light he may not have too long to wait. What may be more hopeful, however, is not so much that rapid change is occurring, but that change provides options. The real hope of the future is not so much bound up in faith, but in the fact that there is a choice. The real problem facing African nations, then, is accelerating and making more specific the opportunity to choose, for in the words of Basil Davidson, ". . . this has become a continent in the full ferment of deciding, of trying to decide, its course into the different years ahead" (Davidson, p. 16). The nation needs to establish its own identity, to throw off the yoke of foreign domination which has been fundamental in the very formation of the nation-states themselves. This has not been and will not be an easy task because of the indelible mark left by the colonial masters:

> The liberated cannot go on in the old way, for their old masters have departed. They have to find a new way. This new way may be a shadowing of their one-time rulers; or it may be largely an exploration of fresh terrain. Or it may be one of the many intermediate solutions, ranging from the mere letting-things-slide, at one extreme, to the other extreme of trying to change everything overnight (Davidson, p. 16).

Inherent in the solution that each nation seeks must be a realistic appraisal of its own wants and expectations. Here, care must be taken to underscore the word "wants" for very often when planning for the future, Africans are warned to think in terms of their needs not wants. But in view of the rapidity with which modernity has arrived in Africa it is fruitless to think in terms of basic needs.

The nation's wants are its driving force. Warner makes an essential point in Trial by Sasswood when one of her characters indicates that all Europeans suffer from a disease called "the Wants." The inference is: do not create unattainable expectations completely unrelated to the country's own situation. Once out of hand wants become needs and their satiation finds the country once more turning outwardly for help and in so doing it begins to lose its identity. Nyerere offers a different but allied caution:

> There is enough Wealth in every state for every individual to satisfy these basic needs. But the moment individuals in any single state begin to use Wealth, not for the abolition of poverty, but for the purpose of acquiring power and prestige, then there is no longer enough (Nyerere, p. 162).

The question no longer remains as to how quickly the African nations can devise policies and programs that will allow them to evolve slowly and deliberately from a pre-industrial society into an atomic age. The question is not evolutionary speed for evolution is no longer pertinent. The question is revolution--for revolution is here. And with it come the intolerable pangs of rapid growth and expansion; the need for technological change amidst the absence of technicians; the adaptation of the beauty and simplicity of tribal leadership to the harsh and aggressive self-aggrandizing power of inter- and intra-national politics. This is not to say that the onus of leadership responsibility rests more heavily on African leaders, but it is to imply that unless leaders within their own countries and, ultimately, leaders throughout the world learn quickly to harmonize their own differences; unless there is respect for the individuality of thought, then the absence of cooperation will lead to the resounding clash of

collision. The result internationally will be obliteration; the result nationally will be the turmoil of coups.

One of the hopes of mankind seems to reside in education. Certainly, within Africa, education is spoken of as the prime prerequisite for the resolution of other problems. Yet the presently existing educational programs are too slow to change. They are the essences of conservatism in that society dictates to the school. Herein lies the dilemma that is not unique to Africa. The school as the historian and preserver of the past, tends to look backward as the preparer of youth for the future. It must be innovative and creative developing a situation in which it must be conservative and liberal at the same time. Despite fears for the contrary, the school by nature will continue to be an agent of change simply by virtue of its extended cultural role. It will continue to liberalize attitudes; to develop tolerance and humanism; to secularize. In so doing it will have a major impact on the direction of each country and its leaders.

If the school, then, is caught in a revolution yet must progress cautiously, is there a practical way for it to move with careful haste? To find out, let us assume that if success can be found in one nation, we can induce that its success will be applicable to other African nations. And so let us turn to the Republic of Liberia.

The African society of today is now at a point striving for modernization through a revolutionary process, especially in education. The priorities have to be set in line with the demand of the type of manpower Africa needs and can afford to train. To do this, she must consider her economic resources and devise an educational system which should carefully consider a number of factors. Among these are:

1. the culture and sub-cultures of the nation;
2. economic resources and population growth;
3. basic needs: food, shelter, health;
4. the immediate economic productivity of education; and
5. the problem of bicultural ambivalence.

On the seal of the Republic of Liberia is inscribed the national motto, "The Love of Liberty Brought Us Here." In addition to its representing the country's heritage, it reflects concerns that the nation's leaders must face in the coming years. Politically it represents the fact that the present structure of the country was developed by the settlers who went to Liberia as repatriated slaves from the United States. As such they have been called in the local vernacular, "Come Heres." One wag has been reported to have jokingly said, "The love of liberty brought us here, the lack of money kept us here" (Lanier, p. 259). Descendents of the indigenous Africans are heard to say, "It didn't bring us here." Sensitivity to these sources of origin as well as the problems of assimilation and unification were prime concerns of William V. S. Tubman when he assumed the presidency in 1944 (Tubman, p. 7). During the twenty-six year period of his leadership, he worked assiduously for the elimination of such terms as "aborigine" and "native"--euphemisms for the tribal people who were indigenous to the area where the Pioneers landed. He substituted, instead, "Sons of the Soil." Likewise he sought to see dropped the expressions, "Americo-Liberian" and "Settlers," to be replaced by "descendents of the Pioneers" (Meisler, p. 1). The present president, William R. Tolbert Jr., uses only the term "Liberian" and in so doing sets the

tone for recognizing that the past must be buried in the hopes and plans for the continuing unity of the country's future. Writing in the Washington Post, William Raspberry captured the present attitude when he wrote,

> The overwhelming majority of Liberians have no connection with America; their antecedents were here long before 1822, when President Monroe started negotiating with native chiefs for the cession of land for American freedmen (Raspberry, p. 12).

But if the political overtones of separateness as implied in the national motto have been carefully yet precipitously put aside, there remains the fact that the direction that the country has taken up to now has been strongly influenced by those who led the way to the present form of government. Nowhere is that influence more likely to be observed than in education. In this regard, Liberia is no different from other nations of Africa in retaining the imprint of the hands of its earliest leaders. "Any notable educational advancement during the period before World War I was primarily due to the activities of the Christian and Muslim missionaries who had entered the interior" (Zack, p. 133). Mission schools coexisted with the secret society or "bush" schools, though their respective aims may have differed. Presently gaining favor in educational circles are the terms "formal" and "non-formal" (Coombs, p. 14) and it is in this context that the difference between the two schools can best be seen. Mary Antoinette Brown describes this difference well:

> These (bush) schools provided education for all youths in the tribes which had the institution--(most tribes did)--equipping these youths to effect subsistence from their physical environment, to recognize and assume their social and moral responsibilities. What these schools taught was basic to life in these simple, nonliterate, homogeneous societies which they

> served--what, everyone in these societies seemed to have agreed was important to be learned (Brown, p. 3).

Of the formal education of the mission school, she writes:

> . . . its principal objectives were Christianizing and "civilizing" the people to whom this education was brought, that is, changing their religious beliefs and their way of life. . . . Product of a literate setting, Western education naturally emphasized literary skills--rudiments of reading, writing, and arithmetic--plus an elementary knowledge of the English language . . . (Brown, p. 3).

Through informal education children learn by doing. The home and the community were the school (Kenyatta, p. 99). There is no way of measuring statistically the worth of the tribal schools, but surely their success may be inferred by the very fact that they were sustained throughout the ages and that they were able to pass on the tribal heritage as well as prepare their students for the society in which they were to live. Care must be taken, however, not to "glamorize and romanticize tribal education. It was limited in scope . . . had a past orientation . . . ignored innovation and creativity and, since there was no writing or reading, memorization and recall of information played the key role . . ." (Kajubi, p. 9). As important as the bush school has been in the development of Liberia, its influence is on the wane. Delafield says:

> The student of the Poro Society's Bush School is aware that he is considering a dying institution. A secret organization based on fear and mystery loses much of its power on exposure. . . . Tribal Liberians speak of Guinea where Seku Toure is "breaking" the Poro. . . . As the civilized school gains strength, the bush school loses it (Delafield, p. 10).

Caine, the former Secretary of Education comments as follows concerning the Poro and Sandi culture: "Sandi culture is supported by a small subsidy. This is an integral aspect of Liberian life, both social and

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educational, and the present level of subsidy might well be increased. A subsidy might also be given to Poro culture" (Caine, p. 38).

To the social scientists, especially to the sociologist and anthropologist, education is much broader and includes all learning mechanisms. Whether or not it is formalized, it results in the acquisition of culture by the individual, the formation of his personality, and the process of his socialization--his learning to accommodate himself to life as a member of society. In all societies, then, education is a continuous process which begins at birth and progresses with greater or lesser intensity throughout the entire life of the individual. By virtue of this process, the individual learns the ways of his culture and comes to participate more or less fully in it. He also acquires a personality which is a complex pattern of rational perceptions, ideas, habits, and conditioned emotional responses (Dennis, p. 127).

While the enrollments in the mission schools in Liberia are steadily declining (Azango, p. 5), their influence persists because in the early years of the Republic the only secondary education was provided by the missionaries. Most of the nation's leaders, as a result, are missionary trained. In addition, the mission schools concentrated on the Four R's--religion being the fourth--which prepared the students only for the secondary schools which were classically oriented. The end result was the graduation of a student who was alienated from his native culture, yet not completely assimilated into Western culture. The confusion and conflict inflicted upon such a person is poignantly

recalled by Mugo Gatheru in his book, Child of Two Worlds, and with compassion and tragic grandeur by Chinua Achebe in his Things Fall Apart.

The revolution in education in Africa is real, and to prevent things from falling apart as well as to gently transfer a child from and into one world, a new concept is needed, a concept that will refuse to reshape the old and be willing to re-think the new. Hanson says:

> What Africa needs today is unconventional minds capable of finding unconventional answers to problems certain to stagger any but the most imaginative. If education would serve to treat the ills, present and potential, of the new African states, . . . an orientation must get quickly beyond happy educational sloganeering about "meeting needs" and must amount to a genuine educational revolution (Hanson, p. 3).

This thesis, then, is an attempt to paint a picture of the social and cultural setting of the relationship between education and modernization in Africa generally and in Liberia in particular. The subsequent chapters will focus on the circumstance and problems of education, proposals for educational change in Liberia, and an analysis of the closing of the Booker Washington high school.

CHAPTER II

THE EDUCATIONAL MILIEU AND ITS PROBLEMS

This chapter is an attempt to describe, insofar as data are available, the current situation in Liberia in regard to education. Particular emphasis will be given selected problems including growing school enrollments, incidence of student drop-outs, the recruitment of teachers and drop-out rates, and teacher salary levels. Also included in this chapter will be consideration of government expenditures for public education. Unfortunately, the desired data necessary to fully document conditions and trends are not always available.

The School-Age Population, Enrollments, and Drop-Outs

As shown in Table 1, the school-age population numbered approximately 627,000 in 1970. More than half of this population was female, and a large percentage (70.6%) resided in rural areas. This table also shows literacy rates for age groups within the school-age population. For all youth between the ages of 5 and 25, 32% were literate. Literate rates are higher for youth in urban than in rural areas--43.6% as compared with 27.5%. Furthermore, literacy rates for males exceed those for females.

The rapid population growth rates in Liberia are reflected in the estimated enrollment rates throughout the country. Enrollment

TABLE 1.--Number of Literate* Youths Among the School-Age Population, by Age Group, Sex, and Rural-Urban Residence, 1970.

Age Group	Total	Male	Female
All Areas:			
Total School Age Population	626.9	309.5	317.4
All Literate Youths	202.2	134.1	68.4
5 and under 10 years	35.3	19.8	15.5
10 and under 15 years	72.1	46.5	25.6
15 and under 20 years	62.2	42.9	19.3
20 and under 25 years	32.6	24.9	7.7
Rural Areas:			
Total School Age Population	442.9	214.2	228.7
All Literate Youths	121.8	81.1	40.7
5 and under 10 years	21.9	12.4	9.5
10 and under 15 years	47.7	31.3	16.4
15 and under 20 years	36.6	25.2	11.4
20 and under 25 years	15.6	1212	3.4
Urban Areas:			
Total School Population	184.0	95.3	88.7
All Literate Youths	80.4	53.0	27.4
5 and under 10 years	13.4	7.4	6.4
10 and under 15 years	24.5	15.2	9.3
15 and under 20 years	25.5	17.7	7.8
20 and under 25 years	17.0	-	-

*Literacy refers to English

Source: Republic of Liberia Economic Survey 1969, Department of Planning and Economic Affairs, Monrovia, June 1970, p. 144.

figures by level and sex for 1970 are shown in Table 2. Slightly more than 138,000 persons were enrolled in school, approximately one-third (31.6%) of whom were females. Of the total enrolled population, 58.1% were in elementary school, 11.2% were in secondary (general) school, and only 0.8% were enrolled in higher education. The remainder were

TABLE 2.--Total Enrollments by Level and Sex, 1970.

Type of Schools	Total (1)	Boys (2)	Girls (3)	(3) as Percent of (1)
Pre-Primary	40,028	24,649	15,379	38.4
Elementary	80,217	56,031	24,186	30.2
Secondary General	15,494	11,875	3.619	23.4
Secondary Vocational	887	709	178	20.1
Secondary Teacher Training	390	325	65	16.7
Higher Education	1,109	871	238	21.4
TOTAL	138,125	94,460	43,665	31.6

Source: Republic of Liberia Economic Survey 1969, Department of Planning and Economic Affairs, Monrovia, June 1970, p. 144.

in pre-primary (28.9%), secondary vocational (0.6%), and secondary teacher training (0.3%).

As indicated in Table 2, proportions of girls enrolled in school are much below those for boys. For example, 30.2% of those in elementary school are girls and 21.4% of those in higher education are girls. At the national level female students totalled 43,655 or 31.6%. Of this total, 74% were registered in the third grade or below. Two possible conclusions are suggested: first, that parents, especially in the rural areas, are now realizing the value of investment in education of girls and/or second, that the drop-out rates for girls increase rapidly as they climb the educational ladder.

Liberia has experienced an enormously rapid growth of school enrollments. School enrollment was estimated to have been 21,389 in 1949 and 61,427 in 1960 (Clower, et al., p. 343). As we have indicated, school enrollment stood at 138,125 in 1970. Thus, within ten years school enrollment had more than doubled, or 2.2 times as large in 1970 as in 1960.

A high drop-out rate for students is characteristic of Liberian education. An indication of the drop-out situation at various school levels for 1960 is shown in Table 3. Drop-out rates ranged from 39% to 59% for the various levels. While data are not available to show trends over time, the drop-out phenomenon continues to be a severe problem in Liberian education.

TABLE 3.--Enrollments and Drop-Out Rates in All Schools, 1960.

Level	Enrollment (000)	Dropout (000)	Percent
Pre-school	23.6	13.7	58
First Grade	9.6	5.8	59
Fourth Grade	4.1	1.6	39
Sixth Grade	2.5	1.1	44
Eighth Grade	1.4	.6	43
Tenth Grade	.8	.4	50
Twelfth Grade	.4	.4	50

Source: Robert Clower et al., Growth Without Development. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1966, p. 346.

Type of Schools, Teacher Recruitment and Drop-Outs

As indicated earlier, the operating authority for schools in Liberia is diverse but a large proportion are government or mission operated. The number of elementary and secondary schools, by type, is shown in Table 4. This table shows a total of 1,084 schools of all types in the country, 846 or 78% of which are elementary schools. Of the total number of schools, 65% are government operated, 21% are mission operated, and 14% are under the auspices of other types of management.

TABLE 4.--Number of Elementary and Secondary Schools, by Level and Type, 1970.

Type	Level			
	Total	Pre-Primary	Elementary	Secondary
All Types	1,084	43	846	195
Public	709	38	584	87
Mission	225	-	147	78
Others	150	5	115	30

Source: Republic of Liberia Economic Survey 1969 (Monrovia: Department of Planning and Economic Affairs, June, 1970), p. 144.

The problem of recruiting and attracting teachers is of great concern in Liberia. It is a problem having numerous sociological dimensions. Therefore, after attempting to lay out the current situation and trends, the various facets of the problem will be discussed in some detail.

Tables 5, 6, and 7 depict the number of teachers, Liberians and expatriates, as well as trends in numbers and attrition rates. In the period 1965 to 1968 the number of teachers rose from 264 to 293. During this period the ratio of Liberian to expatriate teachers

TABLE 5.--Number of Teachers, Liberians and Expatriates, for the Years 1965, 1966, and 1968.

Year	Liberians	Expatriates	Total
1965	146	118	264
1966	160	130	290
1968	166	127	293

Source: Igolima Amachree and Jabaru Carlon, Factors Affecting the Supply and Retention of Teachers in Liberia: A Field Survey (Monrovia: University of Liberia, 1968), p. 74.

remained relatively constant, or at about 1 to 0.8. As shown in Table 6, the attrition declined in this period. Table 7 indicates that for high school teachers, the attrition rate for expatriates was about twice as great as for Liberians between 1965 and 1968.

TABLE 6.--Teacher Attrition Rates in Liberia for the Years 1965, 1966, 1967 and 1968.

Year	Number of Teachers	Number of Teachers Leaving	Percent Loss	Ratio of Stayers to Leavers
1965	264	60	22.7	4.4 to 1
1966	290	71	24.5	4.1 to 1
1967	292	54	18.5	5.4 to 1
1968	293	40	14.0	7.3 to 1
Total	1139	225	20.0	5.0 to 1

Source: Igolima Amachree and Jabaru Carlon, Factors Affecting the Supply and Retention of Teachers in Liberia: A Field Survey (Monrovia: University of Liberia, 1968), p. 75.

TABLE 7.--Teachers Leaving High Schools, Liberians and Expatriates, for the Years 1965, 1966, 1967, and 1968.

Year	Liberians	Expatriates	Total
1965	20	40	60
1966	24	47	71
1967	18	36	54
1968	10	30	40
Total	72	135	225

Source: Igolima Amachree and Jabaru Carlon, Factors Affecting the Supply and Retention of Teachers in Liberia: A Field Survey (Monrovia: University of Liberia, 1968), p. 75.

The problem of attracting and retaining teachers in Liberia is somewhat parallel to the condition of economic crisis symbolized in caveat emptor, in that we can consider the teacher as an economic good and the Ministry of Education as the purchaser of that good. According to the study reported by Amachree and Carlon all persons interviewed indicated that the status of teachers in Liberia is not high and that it has been declining. A career in teaching is not as highly regarded as it once was. Teachers held higher status in former decades because they were among the privileged few who possessed a formal education, a highly desired commodity. It is quite clear that the secondary teacher, especially the graduate teacher, enjoys higher prestige than the elementary teacher. Graduate teachers in the Monrovia Consolidated School system were reported to have higher status than most other secondary teachers.

Various reasons are given for the decline in social status of the teacher, including low, irregular salaries, generally poor conditions of service, few opportunities for advancement, and increasing importance of material rewards as contrasted with altruistic motivations. Amachree and Carlon show that, according to the perception of Liberian secondary teachers, the chief reasons for not going into teaching are low salaries and lack of prestige. The major reasons for going into teaching, as perceived by teachers, do not include prestige, respectability, or status (Amachree and Carlon, p. 36). Instead, the reasons given for going into teaching are: (1) "only job they can find"; (2) "love for teaching"; (3) "to help humanity"; (4) "as a stepping stone"; and (5) "job easy to get." Another significant finding of their study is that

". . . the teachers feel, by and large, more respected in the school than in the community and in the country at large" (Amachree and Carlon, p. 40).

Adding to the difficulties in improving the image of teaching as a profession is what appears to be lack of adherence to an established teacher certification code. Certification standards are reported to exist, but they are not closely followed, due perhaps to a lack of a qualified supply.

Due to the expansion in the public and private sectors during the past two decades, many attractive employment opportunities have arisen which compete favorably for qualified Liberian personnel. During the same period similar expansion has occurred in the need for qualified Liberian secondary teachers. Employment in the government and private sectors has consistently been very appealing to Liberian secondary teachers and to potential teachers among the secondary school students.

Prospects of better salaries and other conditions of service, increased status, and improved opportunity for advancement has placed careers in teaching at a disadvantage. Amachree and Carlon found that an alarming number of secondary teachers and principals are alienated from the profession, that they would turn to other fields given the opportunity to do so. On the other hand, the general tightening of economic conditions and prospects in recent years has tended to reduce the number of such propsects. Although it is not likely that the opportunities will dry up completely, it is clear that there will be fewer in the immediate future. This should have the effect of making

more persons available for teacher training and reducing attrition from the ranks of practicing teachers.

A teacher retirement system is outlined in Educational Laws of Liberia 1926-1967. Application for retirement pension is made through the Secretary of Education to the Office of the President of Liberia where each case is considered. Very few teachers, however, have benefited from the retirement scheme. In fact, retirement under the plan is rare. According to the UNESCO publication, Shortage of Secondary School Teachers: "The retirement time for teachers is after thirty unbroken years of service but the retirement benefits are so meagre that very few teachers retire voluntarily" (Amachree and Carlon, p. 45).

Although a standard salary schedule for teachers in government service was enacted in 1955, it has never been fully implemented. Various reasons for this are given, including the lack of sufficient government funds. Salary rates are not fixed, but vary somewhat according to conditions. In addition, salaries vary from one government department to another.

Bachelor degree holders without professional educational qualifications receive $125 to $150 per month for 12 months, bachelor degree holders with professional education qualifications receive $150 to $175, and master degree holders are reported to receive about $200 per month. Salaries of vocational teachers are slightly more favorable. Salaries paid to mission teachers vary considerably and salaries of concession school teachers are regarded as being the best. A practice of several years standing is to allow some qualified teacher to teach two sessions, particularly in the Monrovia area. In this manner

salaries of up to $315 are paid to some teachers. Apparently this policy will be extended rather than reduced.

A teacher usually stays at his initial salary for many years. He cannot look forward to annual or regular salary increments. Promotion to principalship, acquisition of additional qualifications, and double session teaching are about the only avenues for achieving increments in government service. Salaries have been steady in recent years but it is reported that the cost of living has risen about 20% during the last three years.

The fundamental incentive for Liberian teachers and prospective teachers is favorable financial reward, according to the Annual Report, 1967: ". . . The Liberian teacher can no longer be sustained mainly by the approbation of his students. He must have material reward as well--or decent salary on which he can procure housing, food, and medical service for himself and his family and a college education for his children" (Amachree and Carlon, p. 48).

The Department of Education has recommended that the budget be increased so as to establish a teacher incentive fund which would provide biannual increments for deserving teachers based on merit. Merit would consist of effective teaching and self-improvement. The Secretary of Education also recommends that "a 5% increase in the salary of teachers who have taught for five years without change in salary" (Annual Report, 1967).

There is no doubt of the desirability and necessity of achieving salary improvements for secondary teachers. The seriousness of need is stated in the Education Sector Plan, 1966-70:

> It cannot be doubted that steps must be taken to improve teachers' salaries during the planned period. Unless this is done, all other efforts will be largely fruitless, since the prime movers of the educational system--the teachers themselves--will lack both the drive and the quality to carry them through. The average salary for a primary teacher should be raised by about $20 to $75; and of secondary teachers by $35 to $200 (Amachree and Carlon, p. 54).

But the prospects are dismal indeed because of restrictions imposed by sharply austere economic conditions now and in the near future.

A positive incentive is the practice of continuing the salaries of teachers undergoing full-time schooling in teacher training institutions. A similar policy of paying costs and allowances to prospective teachers while attending teacher training colleges serves to attract persons to teaching. It provides educational opportunity which might otherwise be unavailable to them in any form. Establishment of policy and practice which would more effectively link successful completion of pre-service and in-service courses with salary increments is clearly needed for its incentive value.

Teacher Salary Scales

The following salary scales, based on data in Berth Baker Azango, Education Laws of the Republic of Liberia, present salary scales but these scales have never been implemented. Both initial salaries and increments are awarded more in light of monies available than in light of the official scale. The scale is thus of greater interest in that it expresses the intent of the Government than in that it indicates actual salaries of teachers.

Elementary and Secondary School teachers are classified in accordance with their professional training and experience as follows:

Salary Class	Academic Preparation
XII	Below eighth grade
XI	Eighth grade
X	Eighth grade plus teacher education
IX	Grades 9-11 inclusive
VIII	Grade 12
VII	Grade 12 plus teacher education
VI	Grades 13-15 inclusive
V	B.Sc. or B.A. degree
IV	B.Sc. or B.A. degree plus teacher ed.
III	M.A. or M.Sc.
II	M.Sc. or M.A. plus teacher education
I	Ph.D. or Ed.D. degree

The minimum salary for elementary and secondary school teachers is thirty dollars per month. The minimum and maximum salaries established by class are as shown in the following schedule. Increments begin with the first year of successful service and are supposed to be granted yearly until the maximum salary within the salary class is reached. However, an increment may be withheld from a teacher whose teaching has been unsatisfactory for the year in question. The number and amounts of such increments are as shown below (Hanson, et al., p. 115):

Salary Class	Minimum Monthly Salary	Maximum Monthly Salary	Number of Increments
XII	30	46	4
XI	40	56	4
X	50	70	5
IX	60	90	6
VIII	70	112	7
VII	80	128	8
VI	90	144	9
V	100	160	6
IV	125	195	7
III	150	230	8
II	200	290	9
I	300	450	10

Teaching is neither an honored nor a remunerative profession in Liberia. This is reflected in the high rate of teacher attrition. However, there is a great pressure from within and without the country to improve the quality of teaching and provide an atmosphere in which teaching and learning would be an attractive and honorable occupation or profession. Until this is achieved, the country will continue to rely heavily on foreign personnel to provide the trained teaching staff where needed for its educational ane economic development.

Public Expenditure for Education

Some indication of the Liberian government's input into the educational sector is shown in Table 8. As indicated in this table,

TABLE 8.--Public Education Expenditure by Purpose, Level and Type of Education, 1970.

Item	Total	Percent Distribution	Primary Education	Secondary Education	Teacher Training	Vocational Education (BWI)	Adult Education	Vocational Extension	Higher Education	Miscellaneous
Central Administration	$ 596,090	8.9	$ 435,625	$ 50,440	$ 10,287	$ 12,318	$71,440	$ --	$ --	$ 5,480
Principals and Teachers	1,130,090	47.6	2,304,784	333,486	81,520	89,460	1,200	5,480	--	14,160
Non-Teaching Staff	339,924	5.6	141,164	23,078	89,400	106,722	--	--	--	4,560
Other than Personnel Cost	116,184	1.8	73,928	8,971	23,276	9,759	--	--	--	250
Materials and Supplies	540,882	8.2	233,622	29,715	130,272	146,158	--	--	--	1,065
Subsidies	330,706	5.0	6,127	1,658	--	--	--	--	--	322,918
Scholarships	1,090,972	6.6	--	32,992	42,920	43,800	--	--	965,500	5,760
Furniture and Equipment	59,828	.9	24,147	2,522	7,576	1,922	--	--	--	23,661
Construction/ Renovation	229,100	3.5	76,465	107,535	--	--	--	--	--	49,100
Miscellaneous	124,902	1.9	23,786	10,743	8,393	7,069	44,479	--	--	21,433
TOTAL	6,578,625	100.0	3,324,648	906,140	393,644	417,708	117,118	5,480	965,500	448,387
Percent of Each Type of Total	100.0	--	50.5	13.8	6.0	6.3	1.8	.1	14.7	1.8

Source: Republic of Liberia Economic Survey 1969, Department of Planning and Economic Affairs, Monrovia, June 1970, p. 141.

the government spent about 6 1/2 million for education in 1970. About half of the total budget went for the support of primary education and about equivalent fractions (14% and 15%) for secondary and higher education. Slightly less than half of the total budget (48%) was spent for principals and teachers salaries, about 9% for central administrative costs, and about 8% for materials and supplies. Only about 3.5% of the total budget was allocated for construction and renovation in a period of rapidly expanding enrollments.

CHAPTER III

EVALUATION OF EDUCATIONAL REFORM AND A PROPOSAL FOR IMPROVEMENT

This chapter is devoted to a consideration and critical evaluation of the present government plan for the improvement of education in rural areas of Liberia. This is followed by a concrete proposal for the improvement of education. My approach to the task is of necessity selective and modest. To appraise and evaluate all the dimensions of the educational system would be impossible as well as presumptious in the context of a master's thesis.

The Government Program of Education Reform

According to Dr. Joseph Morris, Assistant Minister of Education, the government has embarked upon an integrated program for improvement of education in the rural areas of Liberia, and the development of rural schools to function as the center for community development activities (Africa, 24 August, 1973, p. 83). This comprehensive program consists of the following objectives or goals:

1. Development of 200 rural schools in Phase One of the program.
2. Training a new type of teacher who will also be working as a community promoter.
3. Upgrading in-service personnel (teachers, principals and supervisors) and re-orienting their training toward rural development techniques.

4. Reformation of elementary school curriculum and production of new instructional materials including textbooks.

5. Pilot projects for community education, including adult literacy, agriculture extension, health education.

6. Communication and information activities to educate the inhabitants of the rural community about the benefits of the program and to win their support for active involvement and full participation in it.

The first phase of the program involves the physical improvement of 200 rural school buildings to provide more educational facilities to rural children and to make these facilities available after school hours for adult education activities. In order to have successful results from this program, the ministry has found it necessary to train a new type of teacher who will be familiar with techniques of community development which is crucial to the whole program. Two rural teacher training institutes have been established to train the new type of teachers for the rural elementary schools.

Elementary Curriculum

Every formal socialization process should have basic, clear goals set. At a more fundamental level, it might be important to point out that Liberia's uncritical acceptance of American philosophy of education is the source of some of the problems she has today. Certain positions, if critically viewed, do not fit a developing African country such as Liberia. Here are a few example of educational goals:

1. Free Compulsory Education: This leads a developing country to stress the number of students enrolled as a measurement of national educational development and;

2. Emphasis on educational trails like home economics, physical education and extra curricular activities as they exist in the U.S.A., at the cost of quality education in basic academic subjects (Clower, p. 354).

It should be remembered that Great Britain did not provide free elementary education for all until the 1870's, well after its industrial revolution. Hence, while we emphasize free universal education, we should also be aware of the productivity or quality of education and the financial status of the state. Furthermore, the problem of the high rate of student and teacher attrition should be considered in connection with the idea of mass education being considered as a measure or indicator of development in a developing society.

Gus Libenow shares similar views with Robert Clower in regard to the economic benefits of a system of formal education that is entirely based on a foreign philosophy. Libenow pointed out that in the absence of accurate figures on school enrollment and reliable evaluation studies of both the government and missionary efforts in this field, any assessment of the Liberian educational system is bound to be impressionistic (Libenow, p. 179). In reference to the first goal mentioned earlier, one could ask what percent of school age population is enrolled in school. In 1967, the Secretary of Education claimed 120,000 children were enrolled in elementary and secondary schools; neutral observers placed the estimate at a fraction of this figure--less than 10 percent of the school-age population (Libenow, p. 181). Even accurate, basic data of this kind for Liberia are rather rare.

The adjustment of a curriculum to the social and intellectual growth of children is a perennial task. Hence the curriculum once prepared should be kept continually under review and revised periodically. The first systematic attempt at formulating a new curriculum for elementary education on a national scale in Liberia was made in 1953. This was followed by the book, Liberia--Curriculum and Sources of Study Guide for Elementary Education, which was prepared in 1959. It was done by utilizing the American Curriculum and Course of Study Guide, series A (32). Since then, mimeographed "Guides to Teachers" for grades 1-6 have been issued by the Department of Education. Similar guides have also been done for secondary grades. The government of Liberia has set up curriculum committees charged with the task of selecting and writing textbooks as well as bringing out handbooks for teachers.

Admittedly, the first task before the curriculum committees will be to lay down the objectives of education at each stage. A number of considerations will guide the formulation of these objectives, such as the society in which we live, the society in which we should live, and our philosophy of the educational process. After the objectives have been accepted by the government, material of instruction should be selected and organized to meet these objectives. The draft curriculum should then be tried out in some schools and adjusted before it is finalized.

In regard to the objectives in the draft of the 10-year plan prepared by the Department of Education, one of the goals of

education is expressed in the following words:

> . . . It is believed the school must be brought into close relationship with the home and the community so that each may react on the other, preserving all that is good and providing for growth and change in the community as well as in the child. It is further believed that education should be adapted to the mentality, aptitude, occupation and interest of individuals as well as to the traditions of the people to whom it is directed, conserving as far as possible all sound and healthy elements in the fabric of their social life. Without this relationship and adaption education is unreal and ineffective . . ." (UNESCO/ED PLAN/LIB/1, p. 53).

The framers of this curriculum have also to bear in mind the fact that the general standard of education in Liberia is low and there is need for a continuous effort of teachers to raise it. The low standard is indicated by the fact that in the National Examinations held in 1961, only 9% at the elementary level passed in mathematics and only 30% at the senior school level passed in social science. However, the standard of education in Liberia is improving and it has been confirmed by the university and college teacher that better students are coming to them now than before. At the same time the University of Liberia is planning remedial courses for their students before putting them in regular University work.

The prosperity of the masses in Liberia lies to a larger extent in training the youth to become better farmers and workers in rural occupations. The recent advances in technology have almost revolutionized the methods. The school curriculum should, therefore, foster an appreciation of the importance of agriculture and stimulate modernization of agricultural methods. This approach seems essential in raising agricultural productivity, in increasing employment

opportunities in rural areas, and in reducing the flow of rural youth to urban areas in search of jobs which may be non-existent.

The curriculum, particularly in lower grades should be interesting to the child and practical in character. This is particularly necessary in the areas where education is provided for the first time. Further, in rural schools, illustration should be liberally given from agriculture. It has been estimated in 1968 that about $8.7 million were spent on imported rice and the indication is that this figure rose in 1969 and is currently rising because right now a 120 pound bag of imported rice costs about $25.00 (Amachree, p. 1).

In training elementary teachers and at the same time thinking about the direction of elementary school curriculum, it is important to note these significant findings from A Follow Up Study of 113 Kakata and Zorzor Rural Teacher Training Institute Graduates--After their Completion of One or More Semesters of Teaching (Headd, pp. 25-26).

The following were the major findings of the investigation:

1. The rural teacher training institutes have enrolled students on the pre-service and in-service levels from all nine counties of Liberia. Of the 113 graduates represented in this study, forty-five entered the training program as in-service teachers and sixty-eight as pre-service trainees.

2. The largest number of participants of this study were residents of Loffa and Maryland Counties, respectively.

3. In 1966, 98 percent of the participants were employed in their home counties and 98 percent were teaching in government schools.

4. Thirty-one percent of the participants taught in one-, two-, and three-room buildings in 1966, and fewer than 10 percent were in school buildings with eleven or more classrooms.

5. Seven of the 113 graduates were employed in one-teacher schools with enrollment ranging from thirty to 120 pupils.

6. From 70 to 74 percent of the RTTI graduates felt that they were best prepared to teach elementary school science, arithmetic, and social studies, and 59 percent felt adequately prepared to teach language arts, and 23 percent felt fully prepared to teach all elementary school subjects.

7. The social studies and professional education courses were judged most helpful by 75 to 77 percent of the participants, whereas less than 17 percent expressed similar opinions towards agriculture, bible, arts and crafts, and music. The courses judged least helpful by 12 to 18 percent of the participants were French, mathematics, arts and crafts, and language arts.

8. In schools where the 133 participants taught in 1966, there were 126 other teachers whose training was reported on the eighth grade level or below, and seventy-five others had not completed high school.

9. The five top-ranking problems reported by 35 to 72 percent of the participants were: (1) lack of textbooks, (2) lack of

libraries, (3) lack of instructional materials, (4) poor buildings, and (5) lack of community cooperation.

10. Among the miscellaneous problems reported by participants were lack of curriculum guides, heavy teaching loads, irregular attendance by pupils and fellow teachers, and a low level of reading ability among pupils.

11. The top-ranking RTTI courses reported as helpful in finding solutions to administrative problems were educational psychology, social studies, and physical education.

12. New courses recommended by the largest number of participants as possible measures of improving the curriculum were methods of teaching remedial reading, elementary school organization and administration, additional basic English, English as a second language, and methods of teaching new mathematics.

13. From 34 to 56 percent of the participants recommended that more emphasis be placed on the following courses: English, mathematics, and methods of teaching.

14. Thirty-seven percent recommended that agriculture be eliminated from the curriculum and 16 percent suggested that it be given less emphasis. Similar opinions were expressed in regard to arts and crafts and physical education.

The significance of the follow-up study may be summarized as follows:

1. It serves as a feedback to the Teacher Training Institutes as an indicator of the general trend of the program in regard to the function of their output in the elementary schools.

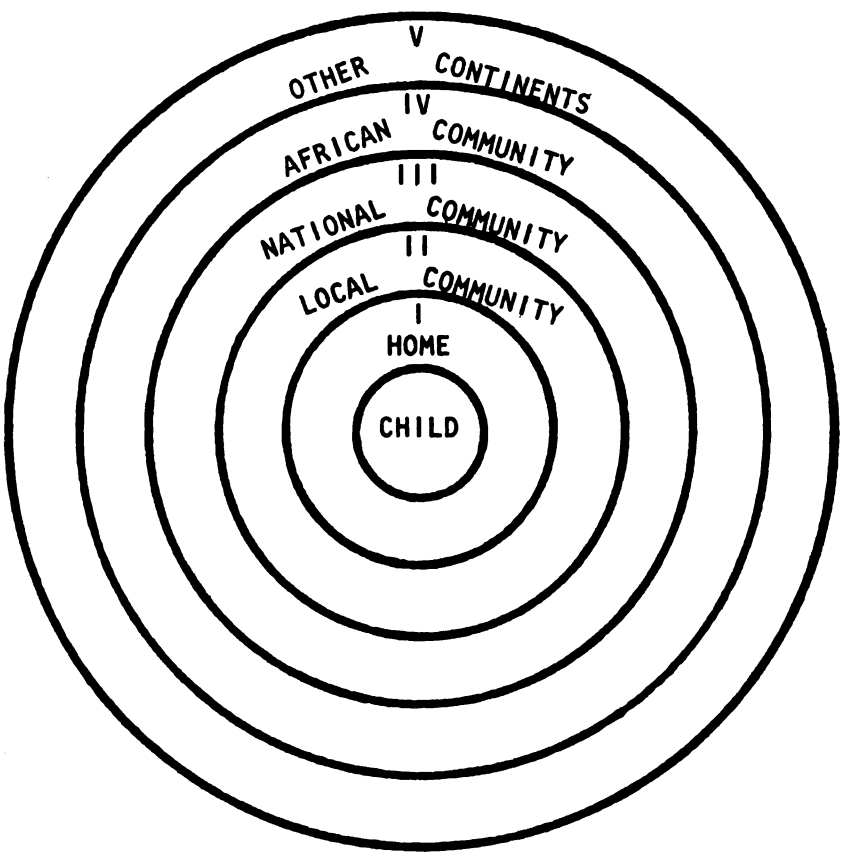
2. It indicates the aspiration of the graduates in reference to the importance and application of what each subject area offered them during the required period of training.

3. The study also shows that Agriculture, one of the priorities of the nation's development program, was considered less important by the population that was studied. Perhaps the inclusion of 4-H type activities would enable the graduates to apply their agricultural skill more successfully in the community school. Some elementary knowledge of cooperative action might well be relevant for the purpose of establishing cooperative activity within the community.

Since there is a serious problem of school drop-outs in Liberia, the Agriculture portion of our Teacher Training Institute should be practice-oriented and reemphasized in order for the elementary teachers to be able to stimulate the interest of elementary and junior high youth in agriculture. This would seem important so that if some drop out as is often the case, they will be more useful in the agricultural sector of the country. This idea should equally be applicable in senior high schools in which there is a significant number of drop-outs. This means in framing our elementary and high school curricula, we should bear in mind that agricultural production is one of the felt needs of the country. As previously stated, the modernization of agriculture does not mean absolute Europeanization or westernization which in the Liberian case would likely generate a "plantation economy" and attendant unequal distribution

of income and population (Beckford, p. 154). Liberia, it would seem, should be thinking of modernization at an individual level which corresponds to the development and growth at the societal level. Modernization is not the same as Europeanization or westernization. The source of the word comes from western or European nations; but modernization itself is the synthesis of old and new ways and differs in various settings (Rogers, p. 404).

A replication or duplication of the old curriculum which is highly foreign-oriented should be avoided. I learned about Lake Michigan, for example, when I was in the fourth grade but did not know anything about Lake Piso, which is located in Liberia. The new curriculum, it seems to me, should reflect the following concentric pattern.



It is indeed obvious that many Liberian youth will never have the opportunity to visit Lake Michigan, know its economic advantages and disadvantages. The foundation of meaningful and useful learning should always be built strongly at the elementary level where the child begins his formal socialization process. A preliminary outline of the content and emphasis in the curriculum is proposed in the following:

I. Home and Family
   - A. Economic activities
   - B. Historical Setting
   - C. Social activities
   - D. Health and Recreational activities

II. Local Community
   - A. Economic activities
   - B. Historical/Political settings
   - C. Social activities
   - D. Health
   - E. Interdependent and interrelation of Home/Family and Local Community

III. National Community
   - A. Urban Environmental Characteristics
   - B. Rural Environmental Characteristics
   - C. Political, Historical, and Social Aspects
   - D. Economic Interdependence of Urban/Rural Environments

IV. African Community
   - A. Political/Historical/Economic Relationship of Liberia to the Neighbouring African Countries and the rest of Africa
   - B. Similarities and Dissimilarities of Culture

V. The Other Continents of the World
   - A. Liberia/Western Relationships - Political, Economic, Diplomatic, Technical, and Educational
   - B. Liberia/Eastern and Asiatic Relationships
   - C. The Other Continents/Africa Relationships

The outline presented above is simply a preliminary attempt and, in my opinion, could serve as an initial starting point to frame a new curriculum.

Improving Education: A Concrete Proposal

It is now the intent to suggest a plan for the rapid improvement of education within the Republic of Liberia. My primary intent is to bring to focus the creative and innovative minds of Liberian educators on a potential solution to the problems we face daily. If precision and timing are used the plan can be implemented in due time. What is urged at the outset is that deliberate effort be expended to envision the merits of the plan and to begin the thought processes now that will lead to its ultimate operation. In the words of Senghor, "All we intend to do, all we can do today, is to pose the problem. This will not be, as is too often the case at meetings of African political parties, a catalog of grievances or campaign promises, but the definition of a method . . ." (Senghor, p. 26).

"Recent cross-national studies have produced data that appear to justify the high investment of the new states in education. The percentage of national income devoted to education is highly correlated with per capita income, and a minimal level of literacy apparently spurs initial growth" (Abernathy, p. 6). President Tubman showed his belief in this position by his continued and even increased support for education (Henries, p. 12). His persistent exhortation to his people about their responsibility to educate themselves has

created a dilemma for his successor, President Tolbert, because the response has been so overwhelming that the government finds it economically impossible to keep up with the demands. As more and more people respond to the urging of their leaders, the greater becomes the burden of accommodating them. The country is now in the position of either discouraging school attendance or coming up with sufficient money to provide for the growing numbers who have responded to the call. Philip Coombs impresses the magnitude of such a project when he points out that most developing countries will virtually remain in place even considering their present extended efforts (Coombs, p. 56).

The Ministry of Education has performed commendably in simply managing the logistics of educating the vast numbers who are annually enrolling. The nature of its responsibilities has been such that trying to keep up with the needs has been an all-consuming task. Occasionally, the Ministry expends extra effort to improve the quality of its output, only to be swamped again with the need of accounting for sheer quantity. The question arises, then, how does one accommodate vastly increasing numbers while at the same time improving the quality of what exists? The usual and persistent answer is, "More money." This, of course, is actually a non-answer in view of the austerity measures the government imposes upon all ministries during the present years of limited budgets.

It is well to admit that more money is needed, but what must be rejected is the concommitant notion that there is no hope unless money is made available. There is an answer and Liberian educators

have been so totally absorbed in the magnitude of the job of keeping the schools running in the presence of so many obstacles that they have not had the time to think. Once caught on the treadmill of operation, plans are based more on urgency, crisis, and tradition than on logic and creativity. What is proposed, then, is a plan that will not only tap the country's best minds but at the same time will create an environment for improving the quality of the schools and, perhaps, find an answer to the dilemma of providing more schools in the face of the decreasing availability of money.

Leaders in the field of educational thought in Liberia have received their training and advanced degrees in various parts of the world. The result has been a conglomeration of theories from Germany, Great Britain, Nigeria, the United States, and elsewhere. Of necessity these people have been indoctrinated by their specific universities. The time has come to throw off the predispositions they have toward their universities' way of doing things, and extracting from their training those philosophies and theories that have utility in Liberia. As Obote has written: "We cannot afford to build two nations within the territorial bounds of one country: one rich, educated African in appearance but mentally foreign; and the other, which constitutes the majority of the population, poor and illiterate" (Obote, p. 12). This means a slow, careful, and perhaps painful evolution of the educative process as it applies to Liberian youngsters. It means that instead of adapting foreign methods to Liberian needs and considering the constraints imposed by the economy, find a Liberian answer. What may ultimately evolve will be a totally new

concept of education--one involving formal and non-formal education--with a completely different set of guidelines.

It should be recognized at the outset that one of the most difficult tasks facing educators is the composition of a statement of philosophy that can describe the role and goal of education in such a way as to be acceptable to all who will be touched by schools functioning under that philosophy. The end of formal education ought to be to render formal education unnecessary. Thus a permanent philosophy of formal education ought to be defined in a way so as to provide for its own existence. If that is too harsh then surely it should account for a projected diminution of its importance. A philosophy regarding non-formal education should be so fluid and changing as to be no philosophy at all.

The point being made, if it is not already clear, is that the development of a philosophy is the wrong place to begin when trying to establish a program of educational improvement. A gathering of educators produces a little more than argumentation for the simple reason that each sees the importance of education in terms of his own community's needs. A national program will have meaning only insofar as it accounts for the unique needs and contributions of its parts. It is futile to assume that an area, steeped in tribal tradition and proud of its own individuality will drop all that it stands for in order to meet the total needs of an artificially defined boundary, especially when policies, needs, and goals are established from a distant locale. What must be accomplished initially, then, is to look dispassionately at what each area,

chiefdom, village or quarter is presently doing and, following careful assessment, determine how each individual entity can be improved for its own purposes while, at the same time, contributing to the national needs and goals. It must be remembered that the function of education ought to be to provide the opportunity for each person to realize his self-potential--the end result of which is inequality.

Implementation

There is in Webo, Maryland County, an existing campus that was built with the intention of being a teachers' training isntitution. Since its completion in 1962 it has lain idle. It can be put to use as a Center for Educational Thought, as well as a training site for school administrators. Its isolation is ideal in that it is far removed from the distraction of the other cities. It possibly could cause the participants to get away from the references that they might ordinarily try to use, i.e., the information available from the institutions in which they were trained.

I propose that a staff be invited to Webo, the nucleus of which would be the most innovative and creative minds in the country, along with a small core of international educators. The fact that the latter would be foreigners need not be contradictory, if their primary role is to serve as catalysts. Their role as passive observers would encourage fresh thinking and constantly discourage the resurrection of the past. They should be consultants, not directors. Also, students would come to the Center who, in this

case would be presently employed school principals as well as young teachers who have been identified as potential school administrators.

Objectives

It is not a profound observation to say that the very best run schools in the nation are those that are handled by a good principal. Here, perhaps, is the crux of the problem--and herein lies its solution. For the immediate improvement of Liberian education we must raise the proficiency of the principals.

Every year a greater number of trained teachers are entering the classrooms. The success of the teacher training institutes has become evident. The teacher scholarship programs have added more teachers to the rolls. Continued emphasis on teacher training is for naught, however, unless there is a concomitant effort to upgrade the quality of the school principal. There are any number of examples of schools that are staffed with a cadre of good teachers but their effectiveness is diluted by a principal who does not run his school in a responsible manner (Brown, p. 11 ff). Conversely, there are schools with an inadequately trained teaching staff, but given the guidance of a superior principal, the teachers perform satisfactorily. The first objective of the Center of Educational Thought, then, would be to train principals.

What has been said of the school principals is true, though to a different degree, of supervisors and others not assigned directly to the school, but bearing the important role of support personnel.

Hence, the second objective would be to give in-service training to support personnel.

The third and paramount objective would be to isolate and define that body of knowledge that is uniquely relevant to Liberian children and their environment, culture, economy and future. The fulfillment of this objective makes it possible then to launch a Liberian educational program that meets the Republic's needs along with a system that is designed to achieve the nation's goals.

Modus Operendi

The Center should be set-up in a manner that will provide the maximum amount of interchange among members of the education profession. All effort must be expended to obtain diversity of participation. The more varied and more extensive the participation, the greater the chances of unity and of acceptance of the ideas developed. Promulgation and implementation of plans will be easier when more people have participated--when they feel they have a stake in the project.

Initially, the program must be small. To keep ideas flowing and to retain the original freshness, no member of the staff should ever become permanent. Set tours of attendance should be established. No immediate advancement should be anticipated. No degree should be awarded. Simple, prestigious, but not valuable recognition will have to be devised. The fundamental reward that should accrue to those attending is the knowledge that they are contributing to the improvement of Liberian education; that their own competency is being

enhanced and ultimately, it would be hoped, prestige will be gained by having participated in the activities of the center.

The schedule would operate on a cyclic basis. During the first period, the principals together with the staff would discuss and study in depth those factors that are important in the day-to-day operation of a school. They would discuss organization and administration--concentrating on problems as they occur in the schools. From these discussions would emerge a series of hypotheses about Liberian schools. The principals would then return to their schools to test the newly elaborated hypotheses. At a later time, they would return to the Center to review their findings and help establish new hypotheses for themselves and for in-coming groups.

During these same periods, the permanent staff would reevaluate what is currently occurring in the schools based on reports as well as from visits. Whenever and wherever possible the staff members must take time to teach; to test and to try to implement the center's emerging ideas. What is found to be irrelevant will be discarded. Some fundamental questions need to be asked and some creative answers must be found. Does compulsory education for all improve or dilute learning? Should the Carnegie unit be a basis of operation? Is there another way of teaching vocational education other than the highly expensive vocational school? Must school buildings be built for permanence? Scanlon's report of bringing education to the village might have meaning (Solomon, p. 72). The crucial point, however, is that now is the appropriate time to be asking questions, because the answers will point the direction of Liberian education for years to

come. Expansion is clearly needed; it is equally clearly financially impossible. It is possible to educate, and to educate well, for Liberia's needs; to increase the numbers to be educated and to reduce costs at the same time. It will be done when Liberian educators define the word "educate" in Liberian terms. At that time most of the insurmountable problems will be resolved and their resolution will come from the Center of Educational Thought.

Costs

No attempt has been made to estimate the cost of operating the Center and the proposed program. This is a deliberate approach because more often than not thinking stops before it is hardly underway when it is suggested that no money is available. What is needed initially is thought. Ideas must be generated and enthusiasm aroused. Once creativity and effort are stimulated, a method of financing can probably be found. Part of the exercise might well be a creative approach to the situation of funding. It is evident that money presently being spent is not bringing a satisfactory return. Reallocation of some of presently available money could well be a simple answer. In any event it must be made clear that these are to be studies, not administration and finance. The Center must not be seen as an intellectually oriented research proposal, but a project-oriented scheme with clearly and explicitly stated objectives, program planning, and periodic progress reports.

When a definitive proposal is ready it would be logical to seek support from agencies that have shown interest previously.

USAID, UNESCO, the Ford Foundation, Peace Corps, UNESCO/L, the Concessions, and the Rockefeller Foundation might well be interested. Better yet, however, would be to find support from the private or business sector within Liberia. They have the most at stake and now would be a good time to begin testing the will of those who are dedicated to the growth of the Republic.

There could be no better time to begin a dialogue about the needs and future of Liberian education. What presently exists cannot continue under current conditions, nor incidently, should it be presumed that anyone should want to continue what now exists--not at least, until there has been an opportunity to re-evaluate the present and to look to the future. The Center, producing both thought and educators, is the logical place to begin that process.

CHAPTER IV

THE CLOSING OF BOOKER WASHINGTON INSTITUTE: A CASE

This chapter is devoted to a description and brief analysis of the recent closing of the Booker Washington Agricultural and Industrial Institute, established nearly 50 years ago, in Liberia. It is the intention, insofar as possible with the existing literature and personal knowledge to analyze the case of the Institute's closing in terms of selected parts of social system theory (Parsons) and development organization principles as used by Professor Sower (Sower).

The case to be described and analyzed in the following pages is an excellent example of a "development organization," the original aim of which was to provide vocational training and skills in the early stages of Liberia's economic development. Organizational principles and concepts to be used in the analysis will first be briefly presented. This will then be followed by a presentation of the case in terms of the principles and concepts used together with an analytical commentary.

Organization Principles and Concepts

A social organization is perceived as a collectivity of individuals who interact in the process of achieving its goals. Any social organization or system has linkages and relationships with other systems,

and does not function to attain its goals in isolation from impinging organizations. The social system concept permits us to identify the most relevant social systems for analytical purposes. In the present situation, we identify three such systems, namely, the resource input system (the Government of Liberia), the resource receiving system (the Booker Washington Agricultural and Industrial Institute), and the product-using system (the student clients). Sower regards these three systems as "organizational anchor points." These systems will be characterized more fully later in the analysis. It is necessary only to point out here that each system has its own norms and goals which may or may not coincide with those held by the other systems. At one point in time, the goals of the systems may coincide closely while at others they may vary widely.

Every social system is comprised of a number of elements, including norms, social rank, status roles, power, ends or goals, and value orientation. It is necessary for this analysis that our attention be focused on a limited number of the social system elements. We will be most concerned in applying the following concepts in our case analysis:

1. Status roles--Status roles within a social system refer to the expected behavior or expected action on the part of actors or position encumbents. The concept includes the notion that any role has a level of prestige, respect, or ranking attached to it.

2. Power--Power within a social system may be defined as the ability to control others. Power may be derived from a particular status role (such as President) or from one's special abilities, or both. It is obvious that power means the ability to grant or withhold resources and hence is extremely important in all organizational behavior.
3. Goals (Ends or Objectives)--Ends and objectives may be regarded as the end product sought from the operation of an organization or system. Such goals can be very broad and diffuse or they can be explicit. The solidarity and effectiveness of organizations is related to the degree to which individual members share common ends and objectives. A concensus with respect to goals in complex organizational structures among all impinging organizations is extremely important to effective functioning.

For purposes of this analysis, we have not set as our goal the full exploitation of the structural and value orientation elements of social systems. It is not our intention to suggest that norms, social rank and value orientation, for example, are not important in analyzing organizational behavior. In the absence of in-depth interviews and richer source material, it is necessary to limit our analysis to roles, status rank and goals.

The BWI Case

The Booker Washington Agricultural and Industrial Institute offers vocational and technical training designed to insure long-range

economic development of Liberia by preparing young men and women for worthwhile life service in their local communities. Concerted effort was directed toward the training of skilled workers for independent trades, commercial workers for independent business and craftsmen. This task, initially, was the responsibility of three administrative groups--the Ministry of Education, the Board of Missions and the Administrative Officers of the Institute. The Board of Managers exercises direct supervision over policies, with the principal as Chief Executive responsible for the fluid operation of institutional affairs (B.W.I. Bulletin, p. 13).

The instructional organization of the Institute comprised three departments--academic, agricultural, and trades. The curricula of these departments were designed to give optimum results in basic high school training and to establish a firm concept of modern civilization from a practical point of view. "Emphasis is placed on practical education as an indispensable requisite for all in the important duties of life" (B.W.I. Bulletin, p. 13).

A Short History of B.W.I.

In 1921, Ex-President C.D.B. King made an official tour of the United States in behalf of Booker Washington Agricultural and Industrial Institute of Liberia. When questioned by top officials in the United States as to what impressed him most during his travel, he replied that if it were possible to transport Tuskegee Institute to Liberia, he would be glad to do so. The officials expressed their hope that President King's wish would one day become a reality.

It was at this same time that Olivia Phelps-Stokes came to know about Booker Washington's work among his people in the United States and she set out to perpetuate his name in the land that gave birth to his race (B.W.I. Bulletin, p. 14). As a consequence she provided in her will for the founding of an Agricultural and Industrial Institute in Africa to bear his name. Miss Phelps-Stokes made her purpose known to Dr. James L. Sibley, a personal friend of Booker Washington, and to Dr. Washington's successor, Robert R. Moten.

On July 1, 1925, Dr. Sibley became educational advisor to Liberia on behalf of a group of Mission Boards and American colonization societies that helped to ship the first loads of freed black men to Liberia in 1822, as well as to the Phelps-Stokes Fund. He worked for three years with the Liberian Government and studied educational conditions at first. Booker Washington Agricultural and Industrial Institute was chartered by the Republic of Liberia on November 29, 1928 (B.W.I. Bulletin, p. 14).

When ex-President King convened a council of twelve native chiefs in Kakata for the settlement of certain political issues, Dr. Sibley took advantage of this opportunity to present his proposal to the public. Through their concent and the cooperation of President King himself and the government of Liberia, the Booker Washington Agricultural and Industrial Institute of Liberia was founded on March 17, 1929.

The Liberian Government granted 1,000 acres of land and $5,000 toward the construction and maintenance of the school. Control was vested in a Board of Trustees known as Booker Washington Institute,

Incorporated, which represented such contributing organizations as the following:

The Phelps-Stokes Fund
The American Colonization Society
The New York Colonization Society
The Foreign Board of the Methodist Church
The Lutheran Board of Foreign Missions
Harvey S. Firestone, Jr. (B.W.I. Bulletin, p. 14).

The Government of Liberia continued its subsidy of $5,000 annually until about 1949, when the late President Tubman urged the National Legislature to increase this amount by $2,500. This annual subsidy again increased during the following year to $11,250. However, it was evident that the Government of Liberia appreciated highly the work of the Philanthropic organizations and therefore, would assume an increasingly significant role in the life of the Institute. On July 1, 1953, Booker Washington Institute of Liberia passed into the hands of the Government of Liberia.

As a result of a contractual agreement made in 1954 between the Government of Liberia and the United States, Prairie View A and M College of Texas extended its services to this Institution by supplying technicians for the implementation of the vocational program already in operation at the Institute at that time. This expansion program was being operated under the joint Liberian-United States Commission for Economic Development with the objective of training of young men and women to fill the essential needs of their country by taking advantage of real working situations and opportunities found in the various communities (B.W.I. Bulletin, p. 15).

The specific objectives of B.W.I. are as follows:

1. To prepare prospective teachers in the skills of the builting trades, metal trades, motor machines, arts and crafts, agriculture, clerical and secretarial work, and distributive education.
2. To improve the economic condition of the people of Liberia, particularly the low income people.
3. To train a large body of skilled independent or non-governmental workers.
4. To stimulate a broader base for commercial trading.
5. To discover and improve talents and creative ability among Liberians.

As we have indicated in the previous chapters, the Liberian educational system is faced with many problems--among them a large number of schools and school-age population, student and teacher attrition, and lack of proper staff and materials. Still another problem involves the closing of schools brought about by a variety of circumstances. Due to the high cost of materials and perhaps limited subsidy from the government, some of the Mission schools recently have had student revolts protesting the existing school environment. Such a strike was responsible for the closing of Cuttington College, an institution of higher learning located about 100 miles from the Coast as well as the Booker Washington Agricultural-Industrial Institute. B.W.I. was the only government-supported vocational high school, was closed on July 8, 1974 because students refused to attend classes. The B.W.I. Parent Teachers Association's apology to Dr. William R. Tolbert, the President of Liberia, is worth quoting:

> We feel very strongly and sincerely, all of us without exception, Mr. President, that our children have let us down; they have let themselves down; and, as your precious jewels, we dare say that they have let you down too, Mr. President. We, their parents and guardians, being conscious of this fact, have come to apologize to you, Mr. President, for their impropriety, and for their gross disrespect our children have shown you personally as chief of state (The Liberian Age, p. 8).

In response to this apology and petition for the reopening of B.W.I., Dr. Tolbert assured the parents and guardians that B.W.I. would reopen. He added: "I hope I could reopen it tomorrow, but it is not possible." He indicated that he would not reopen the Institute until it was ready to accommodate the students and train them for the development of the country. "We need a good Principal," the President cried out, "a man who can control things with authority. I hope we can find one" (The Liberian Age, p. 1).

Analysis

As indicated earlier in this chapter, three systems are identified as being crucial in developments that led B.W.I. to close its doors. Each of these systems, in turn, will be described more fully and will be examined from the point of view of status roles, power, and goals. The resource input system up until the Government assumed full responsibility in the 1950's was composed of exterior groups who collaborated with the Liberian government through the Board of Education. Funds, expert help and technical aid came largely from the United States. Significant technical aid and resources as well as the initial idea to form a vocational institute were vested in status roles from outside the country. Power in the form of influence evidently was

substantial on the part of outside groups. Ultimate power in decision-making, however, rested with the president and secondarily in the Board of Education. A structural change in resource input systems came in the mid-50s when the government took over and outside resources were greatly reduced.

The resource receiving system can best be conceptualized as the functioning Institute, although indirectly the receiving system ultimately would be the entire developing country. This system is visualized as comprising the Institute, its principal and teachers. To be sure this system was linked to the previously-mentioned system through its Board of Governors and especially the Board of Education. Two hierarchically arranged roles having differential power are the principal and teachers. We have no evidence that the principal and teachers did not share in the objectives designated by the resource in-put system.

The product-using system is seen as representing the student body--those directly receiving the instruction and training. In general it can be said that students commanded little power and were on the low end of the totem pole. No doubt the students were not an undifferentiated mass but no data are available to specify status role differences among them.

This then is a systemic picture of the relevant interacting systems at the time of the student strike that led to B.W.I. closing its doors. For some years the resource in put system was able to put adequate resources into the school and to attract and hold a relatively competent staff. The students trained by the resource-receiving system were adequately trained and performed competently in the job market.

Then, due to a series of circumstances including the reduction of exterior input, the performance of the resource receiving system gradually deteriorated. The deterioration was evident in a poorer quality of staff and in the quality and quantity of school supplies, books, and equipment. At the end of the chain and in a world atmosphere of unrest, the students believed they were being short-changed. Graduates trained as auto mechanics, for example, could not perform in the job market due to inadequate training. Hence, the product output system took action in the form of a student strike. The resource input system then took the action of closing the school.

It would appear that the crux of the problem leading to the closing of B.W.I. was not one of conflicting goals as to the need for vocational training at this stage of Liberia's development. Rather it seems to be a resource allocation problem on the part of the input system combined with a problem in communication. If students were able to communicate their dissatisfaction to their teachers, their teachers were unable to convey the dissatisfactions to those in authority in the resource input system. It is also entirely possible that the competing demands for the limited national budget went against the resource needs of B.W.I.

Therefore, while an adequate description of this case would require additional on-site field work, we have sufficient information to illustrate the dilemma that role dissensus plays in the educational problems of a nation which is in Liberia's state of national development. An hypothesis for guiding such decision-making is that development will be enhanced as all groups within the nation can increase their

willingness to work cooperatively with other groups to maximize the amount of human energy that goes into development, and to minimize the amount that goes into conflict. Finally, it is important to realize that any and all recommendations for change in the educational system of Liberia must be achieved within the context of the interplay of forces that now exist between the national government, the professionals in the education system, and the apparently increasing awareness of young people that they want to make contributions to the educational policy decisions that affect them as they and their nation move into a future of maintaining satisfactory adjustments to a very rapidly changing world.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

This thesis has focused on the educational system and its problems in the Republic of Liberia. Data covering the educational situation and trends have been presented. The government plan for educational improvement has been given critical appraisal, and a concrete proposal has been made to foster educational thought and thus improve the educational process in a developing country. In addition, a social organizational perspective has been used to analyze the closing of the Booker Washington vocational high school.

About the most important findings from this investigation of education in Liberia are the following:

1. Rapid population growth in Liberia, characteristic of many developing countries in Africa and elsewhere, has led to a very large school-age population.

2. The relatively recent emphasis on mass education has resulted in large and rapidly growing school enrollments. School enrollments have more than doubled between 1960 and 1970, placing extreme pressure on Liberia's resources to provide educational facilities.

3. Drop-out rates among both students and teachers are high in Liberia. For students, drop-out rates are great at all levels of

schooling and are particularly high among girls at the lower levels. Thus, the retention of students is a major problem and is compounded by the inability of the government to keep pace with climbing enrollments both in terms of qualified teachers and facilities.

4. The recruitment and retention of teachers is another major problem in Liberia. Not only are qualified teachers in short supply but also teachers fail to remain in the profession of teaching. The role of teacher is not viewed as an attractive one and the prestige attached to this role is declining. Improved salary levels, with regular, scheduled increases combined with a systematic retirement system, would seem essential if the teacher role is to become more prestigeful.

5. Educational reform is in process and among the goals is that of training community school teachers and modifying existing curricula. Many public schools have a major management problem, that of inadequately trained and ineffective administrators. Hence, a proposal has been made to upgrade the effectiveness of principals, combined with the organization of a center for educational thought.

6. An organizational analysis of the closing of the Booker Washington vocational high school highlights the problems faced by developing countries. Lack of resources leading to deficient teaching personnel and supplies led to a student strike and closing of the school. Despite the shared objectives as to the need for this type of training at this stage of development by all relevant systems, this school has been forced to close.

This thesis has given the highlights of the Liberian educational system and concrete proposals for change. But because of the many problems and frequent adjustments associated with the Liberian educational system in order to cope with society's felt needs, other studies on this topic are urgently needed. Not only should future research focus on trends in the educational system but also on specific problems, such as: (1) the attitudes and aspirations of graduates from the Teacher Training Institutes; (2) the impact of Principal-Teacher relationships for the quality of education within the school system; and (3) the impact of the school environment on the problem of both student and teacher drop-outs.

Discussion

The free, universal education in Liberia and in many African countries has multiple implications because of the limited funds available. For example, the trends in elementary education are likely to influence the speed and direction of secondary education development, and consideration of the former is relevant here. The official policy of the Department of Education with respect to elementary education is one of preferring qualitative improvement to quantitative growth *per se*. Although other policies favoring more nearly equal distribution of educational opportunity throughout the country, transforming presently incomplete schools (schools without all grades) into complete schools and reducing student attrition, almost necessarily imply further quantitative growth. Like most African nations which participated in the Addis Ababa Conference, Liberia set the achievement of universal

primary education by 1980 as a target (Hanson, et al., p. 11). Policy statements prepared as recently as four years ago continued to set high priority on expansion of elementary education. The Sector Plan, 1967-1970 looked for continued growth in enrollments at a rate of 7 to 8 percent through the plan period, while the Annual Report of 1966, prepared by the Department stated: "For primary education the target is to increase enrollment each year by an additional five per cent of six-year olds; so that with about 50 per cent enrollment in 1967, full enrollment of all school-aged children will be achieved in 10 years" (Caine, p. 25).

As plans were formulated, however, it was realized that limited financial resources and an adequate supply of teachers, placed the Addis Ababa target date beyond the realm of possibility. Movement toward achieving the goal of providing universal primary education will therefore necessarily be more gradual than was anticipated in 1961.

However, pressure from the general populace for more schools continues to increase. It will be increasingly difficult for government to administer a policy which gives greater weight to qualitative improvement than to quantitative increase in the face of demands from localities which have no schools, need expanded schools, or wish government subsidies.

The idea of quantitative expansion of education in a developing or pre-industrial society might seem good to those who equate growth with literacy per se and don't see or consider the result of growth which should be overall economic development. While we are addressing ourselves to the problem of expansion of education, we should also be

prepared to find solutions to such questions which this approach generates. Do we have options in our economy to absorb the educated population? Are our elementary school graduates adequately prepared to enter the secondary level of education? Can our secondary schools accommodate the output of the elementary schools? How should we solve the problem of high elementary drop-out rates?

The Annual Report of the Department of Education, 1967-1968, for example, estimates the drop-out rate to be 67 per cent by the end of elementary school. The extent and reasons for attrition as reported in this document are:

> Most over-aged boys and girls drop out of school before finishing the first level because of economic pressures and marriage in the case of girls. Due to lack of adequate material facilities--textbooks, school buildings, laboratory equipment, etc. Many of the younger children such as do enroll, do not progress through the grades annually. The average age for those who registered for the 6th grade National examination in 1966 was 17.6 years. Consequently, the number of elementary school graduates is rather small compared to enrollment at that level, and their average age is comparatively high. In 1966 only 2,644 pupils completed the 6th grade (less than 3% of the total enrollment of 110,635 in grades 1 through 6 and their median age was about 16 years compared with the normal age of 12 if school is started at 6 (Hanson et al., p. 13).

Careful thought and planning are needed to solve the many problems involving education in Liberia. This thesis has sought to address many of these problems, and to offer suggestions for further discussion concerning educational improvement now an urgent need in the Republic of Liberia.

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