

## THE LIBERIAN REVOLUTION: FORWARD MARCH, STOP: ABOUT-FACE TURN

by  
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### INTRODUCTION

The *coup* in Liberia on April 12, 1980, which toppled the administration of President William Tolbert, also brought to an end 133 years of minority settler rule over the indigenous people of that country. The new Head of State, Master Sergeant Samuel Kanyon Doe (now Dr. and Commander in Chief of the armed forces) and his Peoples' Redemption Council (PRC) as well as cabinet ministers, have described the *coup* as a 'revolution.' Since April 1980, the words '*coup*' and 'revolution' have been used interchangeably by government officials and commentators alike, giving the impression that the two words are synonymous. Besides, slogans have also been invented by the new administration to give substance to the perception that the *coup* is indeed a revolution.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, Doe has himself publicly stated that one of the objectives of the PRC is to create a 'new Liberia' and a 'new society' in Liberia which would be drastically different from that which was presided over by Tolbert. The rhetoric and slogans have led government officials and civilians in the country as well as foreign commentators, to believe that what happened on April 12, 1980, in Liberia was much more than an ordinary *coup d'etat*.

It is the thesis of this article, however, that in spite of the rhetoric and slogans, the death of Tolbert as well as the execution of 13 of his former officials, there has not been a revolution in Liberia. What happened on April 12, 1980, in Liberia was merely a *coup*, a successful rebellion by a handful of soldiers against the 'constituted' civilian authority. This argument is based on the belief that since the *putsch* three years ago, there have not been any far reaching structural and institutional alterations in the country.

### WHAT IS A REVOLUTION?

There is no universally accepted definition of what constitutes a revolution, or indeed, revolutionary change.<sup>2</sup> According to the *Dictionary of the Social Sciences*, a revolution in contemporary usage denotes "sudden, radical changes which take place both in political and social conditions, that is, when an 'established' government (as well as racial and legal order) is suddenly, sometimes violently replaced by a new one." A revolution thus involves "changes of a radical political character even if the changes in question take place slowly without violence . . ."<sup>3</sup> While this definition could be used to describe some of the events of April 1980 in Liberia, such as the assassination of Tolbert

and the execution of thirteen of his officials as well as the changes in political leadership itself, it would not be useful in evaluating the changes that have since taken place in the social, political and economic structures of the country. To be useful for our purpose, a definition must be able to indicate the nature of change and how extensive the change that took place has been. In other words, the acceptable definition must give us some idea regarding the extent of the change that occurred after the overthrow of the old government. This is necessary because without concern for the character of the change, then, almost any successful *coup* could be described as a revolution. Other definitions support this idea.

According to Cohan, "a revolution may be measured by the amount of change that occurs over a particular time span . . . if the change is minimal, then a revolution cannot be said to have occurred. If on the other hand, the change is 'radical' then, it may be said that a revolution has occurred." "The mechanism by which the transfer of power occurred," Cohan continued, "is not itself of great significance. Thus, some coups may be part of a revolution but a coup in itself is not a revolution simply because it represents illegal change."<sup>4</sup> The nature of the change and its extent as opposed to the way change is brought about, has also been emphasized by Hannah Arendt, in her definition of a revolution. Accordingly, she has argued that ". . . violence is no more adequate to describe the phenomenon of revolution than change; only where change occurs in the sense of a new beginning, where violence is used to constitute an altogether different form of government, to bring about the formation of a new body politic . . . can we speak of revolution."<sup>5</sup> Finally, Cohan has reminded us that "one of the hallmarks of revolution when compared with other forms of social change is the degree to which the new state of the system differs from the original state of the system. . . ."<sup>6</sup>

The implications of the above definitions for our analysis of the Liberian *coup* are obvious. First, that the *coup* cannot be regarded as a revolution simply because it involved some violence and a change of government. The second implication is that the Liberian *coup* could only be called a revolution if it involved drastic changes in the country's body politic. Third, the *coup* could be regarded as a revolution if the domestic alterations are followed with a revamping of the country's international relations.<sup>7</sup> Using these criteria, then, we can say that the *coup* in Ethiopia in 1974 is a revolution. In the same vein, we can also say that the events of 1979 in Iran which led to the overthrow of the government of the Shah and the installation of the Muslim fundamentalists under the leadership of the Ayatollah Khoumeni, also denoted a revolution. In both cases, the systems brought into being after the overthrow of old authorities are fundamentally different from their predecessors. In Ethiopia, a Marxist-Leninist regime replaced a feudal-capitalist political and economic order under late Emperor Haile Selassie, while in Iran, a Muslim Republic was formed whose political, economic and value systems were completely different from those of Iran under the Shah.

In their external relations too, both Ethiopia and Iran pursued policies which were a complete departure from those of their predecessor regimes. For Ethiopia, there was a dramatic move from the pro-western policies of the Emperor to closer ties with the Soviet Union and other socialist states in Europe and Africa. In the case of Iran, the hitherto ultra-pro-American policy of the Shah was replaced with a very nationalistic and non-aligned foreign policy with the major objective being the promotion of Muslim fundamentalist ideals in the Gulf area and, indeed, throughout the world. In both countries the change of government was followed by a 'radical' alteration of their societies. In each, the modifications involved: 1) "a change in the composition of the elites," 2) "the elimination of the previous political institutions and their replacement by others," and, 3) "changes in the social structure which would be reflected in the class arrangements and/or the redistribution of resources and income."<sup>8</sup>

In evaluating the policies of the Peoples Redemption Council in Liberia to determine whether the April *coup* is a revolution, we shall be concerned with two broad areas: the domestic and the foreign policies of the PRC. In both cases, the policies must be assessed against the background of the objectives which the *coup*-makers set out for themselves soon after overthrowing Tolbert and the actual policies since 1980. These policies and their results will further be juxtaposed with those of Tolbert whose administration the PRC overthrew.

It is this paper's position that, after the initial shockwaves resulting from such events as the death of Tolbert and the killing of thirteen of his former officials as well as the formal end of 133 years of minority rule by the Americo-Liberians<sup>9</sup> had passed, the PRC administration halted what was initially conceived as a revolution. Since that point, there has been no fundamental alteration in the political, economic and social structures of the country. Nor have there been any radical departures from the foreign policies of Tolbert.

## **DOE IDENTIFIES THE PRODROME**

The major grievances of the indigenous Liberians that had prompted the *putsch* were identified by Doe soon after he became the new Head of State. In a nation-wide radio broadcast, the then Master Sergeant told his country that:

There has been uncontrolled corruption that we can see all around us in the form of conflict of interest, the selling of influence, the use of official positions for private gain, and other forms of corruption. . . . In our country, the unemployment situation is so bad that there are more people looking for work than those who are employed. . . . The cost of food is too high, and most of our people cannot afford \$20. for a bag of rice. The health situation in the country is so terrible that nearly one out of every five newly born babies dies before reaching the age of one year. . . . Corruption was accepted as a way of life. Most govern-

ment officials . . . regard their positions as opportunities to embezzle large sums of money which they used to support their lavish lifestyle. . . .<sup>10</sup>

In addition to the domination of the political machinery by the settlers, there were also other serious grievances against the Tolbert administration itself. However, all complaints and injustices could be grouped together under the following broad categories: 1) the exclusion of the majority of the indigenous Liberians from government, 2) the rampant corruption of high government officials, 3) the very high incidence of misuse of official positions by political appointees, 4) an inefficient government machinery (a result of widespread corruption), 5) the high rate of unemployment in the country especially among indigenous youth, 6) the very high cost of living in a country where the average minimum wage was \$70, and, finally, 7) the very poor state of the nation's health care. The victims were, for the most part, the native Liberians.

It was not surprising, therefore, that the major objective of the coup-makers was to overhaul the corrupt, inefficient and rather discriminatory political, economic and social order they inherited from Tolbert. The "PRC government has its principal objective, the building of a new society based on justice, equality, freedom, equal opportunity and full participation of all the nation's inhabitants."<sup>11</sup> Doe further elaborated regarding the objectives of his administration by saying it would be concerned with "bridging fast the economic and social disparities within Liberia, ensuring a more equitable distribution of the benefits of the nation's resources and promoting genuine national unity."<sup>12</sup> These objectives were by no means overambitious given the fact that the establishment which the PRC replaced was a highly unequal one.<sup>13</sup> However, exactly because of these inequalities, and the fact that the system had operated for over 130 years, the successful implementation of the PRC's programme would entail a complete restructuring of the Liberian society; in short, it would require a revolution to achieve the goals of the *coup*. The next section examines the PRC's internal policies since 1980.

### **LIBERIA AFTER THE COUP: FORWARD MARCH, STOP: ABOUT-FACE TURN**

In his *Theories of Revolution*, Cohan identified what he calls "dimensions of revolution." These include: 1) alteration in the value structure (or the myths of the particular system), 2) alteration in the social structure, 3) change in the political institutions, 4) elite alteration either in personnel or social composition, 5) legality or illegality of the change, and, 6) violence. In this analysis of the Liberian *coup*, we shall be concerned only with the first four dimensions, combining change in the political institutions with alteration in the composition of the elite as it has been argued elsewhere<sup>14</sup> that the government of Liberia under Tolbert — and indeed during the time of President



Tubman — was a reflection of the elite structure in the country. The two are therefore inseparable. Value structure is used here to mean the Liberian peoples' attitudes with regards to the phenomenon of corruption in their society before and after the military take-over in 1980.

### **Institutional Changes Since the Coup in Liberia**

The PRC government of Doe has not embarked upon any major institutional alterations since it came to power three years ago. The changes that have so far occurred are mundane in nature. They involve: 1) suspension of the Liberian constitution, 2) a ban on open political activities, and 3) dissolution of the legislature. They are, in fact, changes which every successful *coup*-maker in Africa has always made. The precedent goes as far back as the first *coup* in independent black West Africa which toppled the regime of Sylvanus Olympio of Togo in 1963. Further, the *coup*-makers in Sierra Leone in 1967 suspended the constitution, banned open political activity and dissolved parliament. Similarly, the *coups* in Nigeria and Ghana in January 1966 and February 1966, respectively, saw similar alterations in the political institutions of both countries. In the Liberian case, all other institutions, besides those named, remained the same. The judiciary, for example, remained unaltered and all government ministries retained their old nomenclature. What seemed to have been a departure for the Liberian *coup* was the destruction of the Masonic Temple building. The move is, however, understandable given the fact that, in Tolbert's Liberia, the Freemasons constituted the most powerful non-political institutions in the country. Members of "Crowd 13," for instance, were reputed to be not only above the cabinet but actually made all the crucial political, military and economic decisions in the country.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, the attack on the Masonic Temple was only symbolic. The PRC government did not ban the organization nor were its members prevented from holding important government positions after the *coup*. In fact, many of the Americo-Liberians brought back into the military administration by the PRC were members of the Masonic Temple. The open attack on the Freemasons simply drove the movement underground and, given the situation, it is plausible to expect its open revival under a civilian administration sometime in the future of Liberia.

An important point to bear in mind when discussing institutional change/personnel alterations in the context of the Liberian *coup* is that such shifts were both short-lived and rather superficial. For the first six months — or even less — all the major political posts were held by indigenous Liberians for the first time in 133 years. The PRC was exclusively composed of indigenous non-commissioned army officers. Doe was Head of State and Chairman of Council, while Thomas Weh Syen and Nathan Podiear were, respectively, Co-Chairman and Speaker of the Council. Among the cabinet ministers, the strategic ministries of Economic Affairs and Planning, Foreign Affairs and Justice, went to Togba-Nah Tipoteh, Gabriel Baccus Mathews and Chea Cheapoo,

respectively,<sup>16</sup> The first two had been leading opponents and critics of the Tolbert administration. Less than twelve months after the *putsch*, and due mainly to pressure from the United States, the PRC embarked upon a policy of reconciliation with the old "True Whig Party" led, settler dominated, Americo-Liberian establishment. The 'reconciliation' campaign led to the freeing of all political detainees. Additionally, all self-exiled Liberians — except former Vice-President Bernie Warner — were pardoned and asked to return home by Doe. All confiscated properties of former detainees were returned to them except for the estates of the executed officials and Tolbert. Consequently, 157 houses and agricultural estates were restored to their 'rightful' owners. Apart from the restoration of seized properties, the reconciliation between the PRC government and the Americo-Liberians saw the absorption of important personalities among the latter group into very sensitive positions within the military administration. In July 1982, for example, Mr. Winston Tubman, nephew of late president Tubman, who had been Liberia's permanent representative at the United Nations under the Tolbert regime, was appointed Minister of Justice. He replaced Isaac Nyeplu, an indigenous Liberian, who had earlier been dismissed following the exposure of a corruption scandal in his Ministry.<sup>17</sup> Not long after Tubman's appointment, another prominent Americo-Liberian was brought into the administration. He was William Clarke, who under the Tolbert regime, held the sensitive post of Chief of Security, in charge of the three repressive security agencies in the country.<sup>18</sup> Under Doe, Clarke replaced Edward Masquoui as Chairman of Joint Security Services.<sup>19</sup>

The official daily of the PRC, the *New Liberian*, commented that the restoration of property, the release of prisoners and the new appointments was an expression of government's "respect for and guarantee of the right to private ownership of private properties in the country . . . (and it) would bring about genuine reconciliation, engender the spirit of unity, peace and stability . . ."<sup>20</sup> While such reasoning is largely correct in the context of an ordinary military takeover, it could not hold in a situation where a genuine revolution is taking place. The PRC's reconciliation with the Americo-Liberians resulted in the virtual reconstitution of the government and social apparatus which it had overthrown in 1980. With their re-absorption into the government and civil service and with their prominent positions in the professions and the economy of the country, the Americo-Liberians continue to occupy a dominant place in the elite structure.

### **Alteration in the Social Structure**

Many of the important political and social revolutions of our time have involved drastic alterations in the old economic structures they inherited. This is particularly true of socialist or Marxist-Leninist revolutions, usually because in the pre-revolution societies, domestic economic inequalities are among the major grievances of the makers of revolutions. Thus, for instance, the Bolshevik revolution in Russia in 1917 involved a complete transformation of the feudal agricultural

system to a socialist-centrally planned economy. The means of production were expropriated by the state and land previously owned by absentee landlords was distributed to the landless peasants, who were later grouped into collectivized farms. A similar transformation of the social structure through the manipulation of the economy took place in Cuba in 1959. Under the Agrarian Reform Law of May 1959, 13  $\frac{1}{4}$  million acres of land were taken over by the government and placed under the control of the National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA). As Huberman and Sweezy have pointed out in their 1960 study of Cuba, the reform "not only provided for a basic change in the system of landholdings, it also established a dynamic agency capable of taking positive action to realise the potential of the new system."<sup>21</sup> In effect, the Land Reform Law laid the groundwork for the reconstruction of a new society in Cuba after 1959. Finally, the feudal capitalist economic institutions in Ethiopia were transformed into a socialist system not only through the nationalization of land and its distribution to farmers, but also through the expropriation of all banks in the state. These measures fundamentally led to a redistribution of resources in the country and a revamping of the economy.<sup>22</sup>

Unlike the revolutions mentioned above, the Liberian *coup* has not witnessed any far-reaching structural, societal change. The PRC government has not made any serious attempt to expropriate the means of production in the state. Likewise, no serious efforts have been made to redistribute economic resources among the Liberian people, nor has the government taken over control of the banks. In short, then, the Liberian economic and social systems have remained unaltered. The economy is a typical enclave economy dominated by foreign multinational corporations (MNC's) whose nationalities are mainly American, German and Swedish (see Table 1). The MNC's still control the country's major foreign exchange earners — namely, the iron ore, the rubber, the logging and the diamond mining industries. All commercial banks are also either foreign-owned or foreign-dominated (see Table 2). Most importantly, these MNC's operate in an environment which has given them the most favourable investment climate in the whole of the continent. Under the Tolbert administration, they did not contribute much to Liberia's development efforts because the subsidiaries in the country were not committed to promoting local technology and thus freely repatriated all their dividends and capital. This situation, which some American economists delineated as *Growth Without Development*<sup>23</sup> in Liberia, has remained after the military *coup* in 1980. That there would be continuity in the economic policies of the PRC and those of Tolbert, was emphasised soon after Doe came to power. In one of his first key policy speeches, the new Head of State said of the economy:

The government of the Peoples Redemption Council confirms its commitment to the free enterprise system of economic pursuit. In this context, government will guide and protect the rights of private property and the fruits of hard and honest labour.

**Table 1**  
**MAJOR FOREIGN CONCESSIONAIRES OPERATING IN LIBERIA**  
(As of December 1976)

Name of Concession	Major Activity	Size Concession in Acres	Total initial Capital Investment U.S.\$m.	National Affiliation	Duration of Concessions	Current Value of Concession U.S.\$m.	Employees	
							Liberian	Foreign
Firestone	Rubber Plantation	1,000,000*	n.a.	U.S.A.	99 years	24.16	12,157	67
B.F. Goodrich	Rubber Plantation	n.a.	n.a.	U.S.A.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Liberia Agric. Comp	Plantation Agriculture	600,000	8.01	U.S.A.	70 years	24.02	3,306	23
Van Ply**	Lumber and other forest Products	n.a.	n.a.	U.S.A.	30 years	47.31	800	62
L M C	Iron Ore mining	25,000	11.26	U.S.A.	70 years	20.64	†	†
N I O C	Iron Ore mining	10,144	39.59	U.S.A./Liberian	70 years	36.55	1,923	40
B M C	Iron Ore mining	14,101	85.26	Germany	70 years	240.02	2,842	363
LAMCO JVC	Iron mining	187,859	75.50	Swedish Liberian American	70 years	222.64	4,396	617
Allen Grant	Rubber Products Processing	n.a.	n.a.	U.S.A.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Salala Rubber	Rubber Plantation	n.a.	n.a.	Germany	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Liberian Refinery Co	Oil Refinery	10	17.0	U.S.A.	25 years	28.32	350	10

Source: Concession Secretariat, Ministry of Finance, Monrovia, Liberia.

Note: \* 181,000 Acres are under cultivation

\*\* New Operation

† Liberian Mining (LMC) Operation phased out on the 31st March 1977.

**Table 2**  
Major Liberian Banks and their Foreign Parents

Local Commercial Bank	Foreign Parent-Corporations
1. Bank of Liberia	1. Chemical Bank of New York Trust Co., New York (U.S.A.)
2. The First National	2. The First National City Bank New York (U.S.A.)
3. Chase Manhattan Bank	3. Chase Manhattan Bank, New York, (U.S.A.)
4. International Trust Company of Liberia	4. International Bank of Washington, Washington D.C., (U.S.A.)
5. Liberian Trading and Development Bank	5. Medico Banca, (Italy) and Bankers Trust Co., New York (U.S.A.)
6. Commercial Bank of Liberia	6. Intra Bank, Geneva, Switzerland.

Source: *Surveys of African Economies*, vol. 6 (Washington D.C.: IMF, 1975) pp. 263-264.

Government will continue an open investment policy encouraging both local and foreign private investment. . . . There will be no nationalisation of private business interests in Liberia. . . .<sup>24</sup>

The policy statement was almost a duplication of the Open Door policy enunciated by President Tubman in 1944 and subsequently upheld by Tolbert. The continuity was evident in the new investment policy of the PRC which provided for: 1) an open invitation to foreign investment, 2) guarantee of non-nationalization and non-sequestration, 3) absence of restrictions on the remittance of profits, dividends and repatriation of capital, and, finally, 4) attractive tax and other incentives.<sup>25</sup>

Liberia under the PRC is still an investor's haven and brashly capitalistic in orientation. Nor surprisingly, the economic inequalities have continued to grow during the PRC's administration. This situation has taxed the conscience of some of the more ideologically minded officials in government. In November 1982, the Foreign Minister, Boimah Fahnbulleh, who had been a member of MOJA (Movement for Justice in Africa), commented on the opulence of the government elites living side by side with the squalor and poverty of the masses. He openly criticized the PRC government officials for their preference for "big cars, luxurious houses and the practice of living higher than

the ordinary man" which he labeled as among "some of the corrupt values which continue to breed in our society."<sup>26</sup> In other words, the military had not abandoned the economic and social ethics of the Americo-Liberian administration it replaced. The PRC leadership, like that of the Tolbert era, was not averse to a luxurious and corrupt lifestyle at the expense of the very masses it ostensibly came to power to protect from minority settler exploitation and domination. This was, indeed, Doe's own position. He suggested that "if he [Fahnbulleh] wants the government to sell the car assigned to him and use the proceeds for the masses, we will be too happy to approve that." Doe then remarked "if Minister Fahnbulleh feels that he should remain a poor man in society, there is nothing wrong in that but he should not condemn those who want to live a better life."<sup>27</sup> The message was clear; the self-proclaimed saviours of the masses have all but abandoned the basis on which they had criticized the Tolbert government.

It would appear, therefore, that the proletariat have not gained much from the April *coup*. It is true that they have been relieved of some of the burdens of the tax system that operated under the Tolbert regime. It is also a fact that the lowest paid government officials and the soldiers had their salaries more than doubled when the PRC fixed their minimum wage at \$200. a month. However, the poor performance of the economy since the *coup* has wiped out all these gains. The inflation rate has risen sharply from 17 per cent in 1980 to 30 per cent in 1982. More significantly, the price of rice — the staple food and one of the issues that triggered the *putsch* — has been allowed to rise between twenty-two and twenty-four dollars a bag to ease the burden of subsidy on the government. This price compares unfavourably with the twenty dollar price under Tolbert's government which Doe had then claimed was too high and beyond the means of the ordinary man.<sup>28</sup> These problems have been exacerbated by a falling growth rate in the economy which dropped by 10.7 per cent in 1981 — and it has continued to fall.<sup>29</sup> The culmination of these adverse economic trends has been the introduction of austerity measures by the PRC. Beginning from 1 January 1983, all public servants earning \$1,500 and above had their salaries reduced by 25 per cent. Those with incomes from \$750 — \$1,500 will suffer a 20% reduction in their pay. Finally, the lowest paid, those with wages ranging from \$1 to \$750, will have their earnings reduced by 16.23 per cent. The new fiscal measures will improve government finances directly by \$27 million per annum while government parastatals will save \$3.6 million annually.<sup>30</sup> In summary, then, the lot of the masses on whose behalf the PRC seized power in 1980 has not in any way improved economically. For them, the change of government represents 'no change at all' in their economic fortunes. The squalor, the poverty and the deprivations have continued essentially unchanged. The Liberian revolution has certainly floundered.



### Changes in Social Values.

Most theorists on revolution “would consider the alteration of values to be a critical and perhaps most important feature of a revolution.”<sup>31</sup> Pettee, for example, has argued that “a great revolution is one in which the reconstitution of the state association is coincident with the substitution of one myth for another as the main integrating guide in the culture.”<sup>32</sup> This view of revolutionary change is supported by Huntington who has suggested that a revolution involves “a rapid, fundamental and violent change in the dominant values and myth of a society.”<sup>33</sup> Whatever the case may be, the perception of makers of revolution is that the “old order which is about to collapse would be swept away from the stage of history.”<sup>34</sup> In other words, revolutionaries believe that revolution replaces an old social order with an entirely new one. In much the same way, the makers of the Liberian *coup* believed they would drastically restructure the old society. In particular, they had a vision of post-*coup* Liberian society that would be devoid of corruption and economic inequality. Corruption had been accepted as one of the dominant ‘values’ in Liberian society under Tolbert.

Doe lamented that ‘value’ in one of his broadcasts to the nation soon after he assumed power. The country, he said, had become

... so rife with corruption that it was accepted as a respectable way of life. . . . To succeed in anything, the emphasis was not placed on individual initiative, discipline and legitimate hard work. Success more often came as a result of making the ‘right’ contact, knowing the ‘right’ people.<sup>35</sup>

He continued, however, that

... the armed forces of Liberia intervened because they wanted to save the nation from greed, selfishness and dishonest management of the affairs of the people. They wanted a government that would genuinely serve the interest of the governed.<sup>36</sup>

Doe and his colleagues toppled Tolbert because they wanted to instill new values into the Liberian society. The *coup* was thus expected to signal “the beginning of a new era in the history of Liberia . . . a period of real commitment to the creation of a new society dedicated to eradicating oppression and rampant corruption.”<sup>37</sup> The new Liberia was intended to be a meritocracy. This position is supported by Doe when he said: “gone are the days of ‘who do you know’ and ‘do you know who I am?’, we now enter a time of what can you do” for Liberia. The rest of this section will evaluate the success of the PRC in altering the values of the Liberians with regards to the issue of corruption by government officials.

Although the PRC set up a Special Theft Court to try cases of corruption and embezzlement soon after the *coup* in 1980, and in spite of the rhetorical commitment of the Council’s members to fight and eradicate corruption in Liberia, little success has been made in that direction so far. It is doubtful whether public officials in Liberia are

much more selfless and dedicated to their duties now than they were under the Tolbert regime. In fact, three years after the *coup*, no one would seriously say that the PRC has succeeded in eradicating rampant corruption in Liberian society. In short, then, the government of Doe has not altered the social values of Liberians with regards to corruption. Events in early 1982 demonstrate the pervasiveness of this vice under the military administration in Liberia.

In that year, Doe summarily dismissed the Chief Judge of the Peoples' Special Theft Court, William Godfrey, and his deputy, Joseph Sando, for corruption and other malpractices involving their ministry. Not long after that, another highly placed official, Moses Tandanpolie, President of the Liberian Marketing Association, was suspended by the Board of Directors, for allegedly misappropriating more than \$15,000 of the Association's funds.<sup>38</sup> The publicity given to the offenses, as well as the summary dismissals, has not deterred officials from spending government money unlawfully. In October 1982, Doe dismissed Hilary Dennis, the President of the National Housing and Savings Bank, for allegedly embezzling 2.9 million dollars from the Bank.<sup>39</sup> Even more embarrassing, perhaps, was the corruption discovered at the Executive Mansion, Doe's official residence. Gibson Sackor, Chief Accountant at the Mansion, was abruptly dismissed by Doe for improperly spending \$75,000. in government funds. The high incidence of corruption among highly placed state officials has embarrassed Doe personally and the PRC administration in general. The Head of State was constrained to observe publicly, while dismissing the President of the Special Theft Court, that the behaviour of certain government functionaries has not been in "conformity with the aims and objectives of the revolution." Doe regretted that despite the repeated calls for probity in the public service, the response has been disappointing. There are "glaring irregularities in ministries and [government] agencies. Payroll padding, misappropriation of government funds and equipment, nepotism, indiscipline, conflicts of interests and bureaucratic red tape,"<sup>40</sup> a situation very much akin to that which existed under the Tolbert administration.

A number of factors explain the PRC's inability to stamp out corruption. Some of these we have already discussed. Others include the nature of the problem itself. Corruption is not committed in the open. It can only be uncovered if public servants and citizens are willing to report offenders to the government agencies charged with wiping out this social evil. However, at the moment, those who could help to identify corruption in Liberia also collude with the culprits, leading to the second and most important factor for the PRC's failure, which is that the regime itself is not seen as above corruption by the rest of society. Additionally, the PRC has not imposed stiff penalties for offenders apart from their dismissal from government employment. In some cases, culprits are not even required to refund the ill-gotten money or goods. Furthermore, some of the miscreants later get absorbed back into the government. This point is rather important

because in contrast to other countries such as China, where there is a campaign to eradicate corruption in Chinese society, some of the more serious offences carry the death penalty. Under the present circumstances in Liberia, the punishment for corruption is not great enough to deter senior government officials from taking risks. It is not surprising, therefore, that three years after the *coup*, the PRC has not succeeded in establishing new social values in the country.

As for the charge of nepotism by Doe against government officials, there is little evidence to show that PRC appointments are themselves based on merit alone. While the practice of employing relatives in sensitive and senior government positions is less pronounced under the PRC, there is an emerging trend where people closely associated with anti-Tolbert resistance movements are given preference over others in making appointments. It is no secret, for instance, that almost all the leading members of MOJA and PAL were given cabinet posts and other senior positions by the PRC soon after it came to power. Three examples readily come to mind: Nyondweh Monokonnah, Deputy Minister of Labour, Bai Gbala, Political Adviser to Doe and Charles Wilson, Director of the General Services Agency (GSA), the powerful government parastatal that is responsible for procuring all supplies for the government and its agencies in the country. These three men, who had been sympathetic to Movement for Justice in Africa while in the United States, became prominent in 1979 after they successfully interrupted Tolbert's address to the UN General Assembly in his capacity as Chairman of the Organization for African Unity.<sup>41</sup>

It is patently clear from the foregoing comments that the military regime of Doe has not fundamentally altered the social values of Liberians, with one of the major reasons for this failure being that the PRC is too ill-equipped to bring about a social revolution in the country. While the behaviour of some of the PRC members is itself not above reproach<sup>42</sup> civilian officials are prepared to take risks because conviction on charges of corruption does not in itself make the officials outcasts from society and neither does it lead to permanent loss of favour with the government.

### **Liberia's Foreign Policy Under the PRC: A Case of 'New Wine in Old Bottles'?**

In this section, we shall concentrate mainly on Liberia's relations with the West generally, and with the United States in particular. Liberia's foreign policy has traditionally been aggressively pro-American especially on cold war issues. Under the Tubman administration, for instance, diplomatic, economic and cultural relations were almost exclusively with the West. America was Liberia's biggest market for imports and exports and the U.S. was also the biggest single aid donor to Liberia.

Under the Tolbert regime, relations between Washington and Monrovia remained close and special, though Tolbert did make some

attempt to diversify the country's foreign ties. In 1972, for instance, he established diplomatic relations at ambassadorial level with the Soviet Union, Rumania and Czechoslovakia. The move remained purely symbolic, however, an "appreciation of the fact that the Soviet Union is a super power and could not be ignored by a small state like Liberia indefinitely."<sup>43</sup> Consequently, the economic, diplomatic and trade relations of Liberia remained largely with the West.

The enlightened, indigenous Liberians resented the close ties with the West, and America especially, for a number of important reasons. First they argued that the main beneficiaries of the policy were the Americo-Liberian elites. The Americo-Liberians controlled all the aid funds, a substantial proportion of which they converted for unofficial uses.<sup>44</sup> As a result, Liberia remained "an appalling, depressing slum"<sup>45</sup> despite the millions of dollars that the United States pumped into the country in aid. Secondly, the Americo-Liberians were able to use their close links with the U.S. and the U.S.-based MNC's to secure scholarships for their children to study in America and Europe, while indigenous Liberians found it difficult to gain admission into the poorly equipped and limited schools in their country. Thirdly, the indigenous Liberians advocated a non-aligned policy because they believed that close identification with the U.S. was damaging to the image of Liberia, portrayed as either a 'step-child' of the U.S. or as a 'rubber republic' because of the Firestone Company's extensive rubber plantations in the country.<sup>46</sup> Fourthly, they argued that the special relationship with America had ceased to yield economic dividends to Liberia because its support for the U.S. was already taken for granted.

Given the above considerations, it was reasonable to expect that Liberia's foreign policy under the PRC would be drastically different from that of Tolbert especially with regards to its relationship with America. This perception was supported by some of the early foreign policy moves made by Doe. First, there was the announcement that the country's foreign policy would henceforth be strictly non-aligned. Second, and closely related to non-alignment, was the appointment of Gabriel Baccus Mathews, one of the foremost opponents of Tolbert before the *coup* and a self-confessed socialist, as Foreign Minister in April 1980. The third factor was the execution of leading officials in the Tolbert administration, including the Foreign Minister Cecil Dennis. Their deaths enhanced the belief that the PRC was determined to steer Liberia into a new course in foreign policy. Fourth, the Soviet Union was very much linked with the anti-Tolbert dissident movements in Liberia prior to the military take-over.<sup>47</sup> This fact, coupled with the quick recognition of the PRC by Russia and the invitation to Doe to visit Moscow, was also seen as evidence of the 'new foreign policy' of the PRC. Finally, Liberia received immediate recognition from radical African states particularly Libya and Ethiopia, at a time when moderate states like Nigeria, Ivory Coast and Sierra Leone were campaigning vigorously to ostracize Doe on the continent and abroad.<sup>48</sup>

All these developments led to the expectation that Liberia's foreign policy under the PRC would not be the same as that of Tolbert. As we would see presently, this perception was premature. The PRC's honeymoon with the 'new policy' and non-alignment was short-lived. Indeed, less than twelve months after it came to power, the PRC had successfully geared foreign policy towards a course which led to closer ties with Washington than had been previously experienced in the long history of Liberian-American relations.

### **LIBERIA'S RELATIONS WITH AMERICA: STOP, AND ABOUT-FACE TURN**

American aid to Liberia since 1980 has surpassed the amount of assistance given to that country for the ten years preceding the military take-over. Between 1946 to 1980, American aid to Liberia totalled 480 million dollars<sup>49</sup> representing an annual average of 14.1 million dollars over the 34 year period. In 1979, a year which can easily be described as the most turbulent during Tolbert's nine years in power, U.S. assistance was 20 million dollars. Yet, since the *coup*, aid has risen sharply: 68 million dollars in 1981 and 74 million dollars in 1982<sup>50</sup> making Liberia the highest recipient of American aid on a per capita basis under the Foreign Aid Act.

A breakdown of the components of this aid also shows some interesting and novel features in Liberia-U.S. relations. About two-thirds of the aid is in budget support, a type of assistance given only to countries where America "has political as well as a developmental interest." The two most prominent recipients of such aid currently are Israel and Egypt. Between 1980 and 1982, America paid 35 million dollars directly to Saudi Arabia for crude oil supplies to Liberia, presumably to ensure that the PRC government does not run out of this precious commodity and risk a rebellion in an already perilous economic situation. Liberia under the PRC has had much closer military relations with the U.S. than ever before. This is reflected in the military aid as well as the presence of American military personnel in Liberia. So far, over seven million dollars has been spent by the U.S. on the armed forces of Liberia. The money goes towards the building of new barracks for the soldiers. The emphasis on the barracks construction is significant because one of the major grievances of the rank and file in the army was the squalor in which they lived in the barracks. The U.S. objective, then, is to ensure that the soldiers are relatively more comfortable when they return to their barracks in 1985 and not tempted to stage a come-back in politics. Besides the financial aspect of military relationships, there have been frequent visits by American Green Berets to Monrovia. The first trip occurred on 10 April 1981, two days before the first anniversary of the *coup*, as a contingent of one hundred Green Berets arrived in Monrovia to underwrite the security of Doe and the PRC following reports of a possible *coup* plotted to coincide with the anniversary celebrations. On 12 April 1981, the U.S. de-

stroyer USS *Thorn* berthed at the Freeport of Monrovia, ostensibly on a goodwill visit. The real purpose of the trip, however, was to reinforce the Green Berets and so give the PRC a greater sense of security and safety during, and after, the anniversary ceremonies. Again, during the second anniversary of the *coup* in April 1982, about forty-four Green Berets arrived in Liberia to take part in joint military manoeuvres with the Liberian army. The event was the first of its kind in 133 years of U.S.-Liberia diplomatic relations. It was also the first time the American army had undertaken such joint manoeuvres in Africa south of the Sahara. The joint exercises demonstrated the increasingly close links between Washington and Monrovia under the Doe administration. (At the time of writing, the Green Berets were busy training the Liberian army.)

As in previous Liberian administrations, America's involvement in Liberia is not entirely selfless. The Americans have political, economic and strategic interests to protect in that country.<sup>51</sup> More specifically, U.S. aid — both economic/financial and military — has been used to promote what we can call American 'value assumptions,' such as the promotion of capitalism and free market economy and the opposition to left-wing regimes in Africa and elsewhere. In doing this, America is trying to make the ruling PRC pliant and highly receptive to its suggestions and influence.

There are, as might be expected, a number of serious implications for Liberia's freedom of action, arising from its close links with America. First, America now has a much stronger grip over the administration in Monrovia than at any time before. Second, the U.S. has much more control and influence over the armed forces of Liberia under Doe than previously. The control over the army has its own peculiar implications: a) America can keep the PRC in power only for as long as it is seen to be serving U.S. interests in Liberia and elsewhere, and, b) America could alter a civilian successor regime in Monrovia and replace it with a military government if the civilian regime was seen to be pursuing anti-American policies domestically and externally, that is, tighter control over MNC's and a more non-aligned and balanced foreign policy.

The second point that has emerged from the analysis of American involvement in Liberia is that the military government has been completely pacified and has been divested of all its earlier flirtations with a non-aligned foreign policy. This means, of course, that closer relations between Monrovia and Moscow have had to be shelved. Between 1980 and 1982, the Soviets suffered a series of rebuffs in Liberia. First, was the expulsion of their Second Secretary in 1981, followed by the reduction of the staff of their mission in Monrovia from fifteen to six in March 1981.

A third result from the close ties between the PRC and the Reagan administration in Washington is that America is now much more appreciated in Liberia than ever before. Evidence of this could be extracted from Doe's speech in the U.S. in August 1982:



We can continue to count on America's understanding and support for the fulfilment of the objectives of our revolution. This is a most welcome assurance. It demonstrates the Reagan Administration's commitment to maintaining the United States' economic and strategic interests in Liberia. Our country serves as a mirror through which African nations can assess America's support and commitment to developing countries. . . .<sup>52</sup>

A further indication of the increasing influence and appreciation of America in Liberia is evident in the role of its ambassador in Monrovia, William Swing, transferred from the Congo to Liberia to take over the task of redirecting the Liberian 'revolution.' Swing's influence in Liberia lies in the perception among leading military and civilian figures that Swing could always 'deliver the goods' to Liberia when they are most needed. He has deftly manipulated America's great economic and military resources to bring about the desired changes in Liberia. American aid is offered, but only at a pace which would keep the PRC on the leash. William Swing has also used his tremendous experience to make structural suggestions and changes in Liberia. In fact, America is currently involved in the drafting of the new Liberian constitution.<sup>53</sup> Such American interference is acceptable to the military junta because the PRC has taken a 'realistic approach' to the problems of Liberia after the *coup*. The junta, deciding that it must survive, believes that the only country which can ensure such survival is the United States.<sup>54</sup> Therefore, they see nothing wrong in collaborating wholeheartedly with America. However, the 'realistic' approach fails to appreciate that the major objective of the *coup* was to transform Liberian society, to make it more independent of external manipulation and to raise the masses from 'mats to mattresses.' But in the circumstances prevailing in Liberia at the moment, none of the above objectives could be, or has been, achieved.

The about-face turn in the PRC's foreign policy and subsequent closer ties between Monrovia and Washington is further evident in Liberia's African policy. Under successive Americo-Liberian administrations, Liberia was portrayed as a surrogate of the United States in Africa because of its special ties with that country. Under the Tolbert government, however, serious efforts were made to enhance Liberia's image in Africa. Tolbert wanted to do this by playing a Pan-Africanist role on the continent, to carve out a name for himself as one of the "progressive" African leaders. Thus, in 1975, he successfully reconciled Guinea with two of its francophone neighbours, Ivory Coast and Senegal. He also played an important — though not entirely successful — mediatory role in the Tanzania-Uganda dispute in 1977. Finally, as chairman of the Organization of African Unity for 1979/80, Tolbert hosted a number of *ad hoc* OAU committees set up to bring about the pacific settlement of intra-African conflicts. The most notable of these committees was that on Western Sahara which met in the Liberian capital in December 1979. All of these activities portrayed Tolbert as a 'true' African leader and statesman who was always

ready to promote harmony in Africa. This consideration undoubtedly influenced the refusal by Nigeria, Ivory Coast and Sierra Leone, to permit Doe to assume the mantle of OAU chairman after the assassination of Tolbert. It also helps to explain the move by the three states to ostracize Doe in the continent — as during the special OAU economic summit meeting held in Lagos and the annual meeting of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Lome, in April and May of 1980, respectively.<sup>55</sup>

The first indications that the PRC might not continue with the 'progressive' African policy of Tolbert came not long after the *coup*, with its relations with Libya, Ghana and Ethiopia. In May 1981, the PRC asked the Libyan Peoples Bureau to close its offices in Monrovia. Then, early in January 1982, Doe recalled his ambassador to Accra for consultations because the new regime of Flight-Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings in Ghana had allowed the Libyan Peoples Bureau to open an office in Accra. The Liberian diplomat returned to his post two weeks later but the move strengthened speculations that Liberia under the junta might be the 'errand boy' of the Reagan administration in Africa. This view of Liberia's foreign policy role in the continent was further buttressed by the summary dismissal of sixty-seven adult education teachers who had been trained in Ethiopia. In explaining the termination of their appointments, the then Minister for Education Boimah Fahnbulleh, said that "there has been a long controversy over these fellows, and of course, we are trying to make things easy for people who have not been feeling easy about these guys."<sup>56</sup> The Minister did not name the people who were uneasy about the presence of Ethiopian trained teachers in Liberia's adult education schools. Nonetheless, a variety of reasons could be suggested for their unexpected dismissal. First, it is possible that Doe himself saw the teachers as a threat to his regime's security. It must be remembered, in this regard, that the idea of a *coup* against Tolbert was first proposed to Doe during his evening classes at the Marcus Garvey Memorial High School which were then run by Togba Nah Tipoteh and Dew Mason, members of the Movement for Justice in Africa.<sup>57</sup> Doe perhaps saw a remote parallel between what the Ethiopian trained teachers were likely to tell their students and what he used to hear from his own socialist teachers during evening classes. Secondly, the dismissals were in line with PRC's already very close links with America. From that perspective, the termination of the teachers' appointments could be seen as a continuation of the 'witch hunt' for socialist or people perceived in Liberia to be connected with socialist countries, particularly those who could influence the attitudes of other Liberians towards their government. Finally, and closely tied to the last reason, is that the dismissal of the sixty-seven teachers marked the final abandonment by the PRC of any traces of radicalism/socialism in its domestic and foreign policies. The move thus emphasised the convergence of Liberia's and America's African policies which could only serve to increase U.S. influence in Doe's Liberia.

The convergence of the foreign policy objectives of both countries on some key African issues can be seen in Monrovia's attitude to the OAU's admission of the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) in February 1982 and in Liberia's position on the Western Sahara dispute generally.

In February 1982 at Addis Ababa, Liberia, together with Morocco and seventeen other pro-Moroccan countries, walked out of the OAU Ministerial Council meeting in protest over the decision by the Organization's Secretary-General Edem Kodjo, to admit the SADR as a full member of the OAU. The walkout brought the meeting to an abrupt end.<sup>58</sup> In addition, Liberia boycotted the OAU's nineteenth annual summit meeting in Tripoli (August 1982) over the issue of SADR's admission. Although the Liberian action was ostensibly based on the alleged 'illegality' of Kodjo's action in admitting the SADR, the link between the PRC's pro-Morocco stance and U.S. policy objectives on the conflict, and the fact that the OAU summit was held in the Libyan capital, could not be hidden. It is a well-established fact that America, under Ronald Reagan's conservative administration, is the foremost Western supporter of King Hassan's claim to the Western Sahara. *Were it not for the huge military and economic support given to the King by the U.S., Morocco would not have been able to continue with the war in the Western Sahara.* Further, as has been indicated, America under Reagan is violently anti-Gaddafi. Since a successful OAU Tripoli summit would have automatically made the Libyan leader the titular, influential 'President' the chief spokesman of Africa for the next twelve months, Reagan believed that Gaddafi would use such a position to embarrass America when, for example, he was scheduled to address the UN General Assembly in October 1982. Also, the OAU chairmanship could have increased Gaddafi's prestige and standing not only in Africa but overseas as well, which was, again, perceived as against U.S. interests in Africa, especially given the very strained relations between Libya and America. All the above considerations tempted the Reagan administration to look for ways and means of frustrating the Tripoli summit. Since Liberia, as has been argued, was one of America's closest friends, it seems reasonable to suppose that it would also be one of the first countries to be 'persuaded' by America to share the U.S. position on the Western Sahara conflict and the Tripoli summit. Doe's first major trip outside Liberia took him to two of the most pro-American states in Africa — Egypt and Morocco — in May 1982, significantly, three months after the SADR's admission but two months prior to the proposed Tripoli summit. (Doe was also the only black African leader to attend President Sadat's funeral in October 1981).<sup>59</sup>

The PRC's extremely pro-American foreign policy did not receive the total support of some of the Council's members. The more radically inclined within the Council, particularly its late Vice Chairman General Weh Syen, have questioned the propriety of the policy. Shortly before his trial and execution for allegedly plotting against the PRC

and Doe, Syen warned his PRC colleagues to beware of what he called "wolves in sheep's clothing." He advised the Head of State not to listen to "dictatorial advice" and expressed his "disgust over the attitude of some PRC members" whom he said, "were fond of making pronouncements that seem to be interference in the normal affairs of other countries."<sup>60</sup> Of course the "dictatorial advice," but from what was already known about the role of the U.S. and its ambassador in Monrovia, there was little doubt that Syen was referring to their advice. Meanwhile, Doe announced ideological continuity in Liberia. The PRC would not introduce any "ideologies alien to the way of life of the Liberian peoples." As long as he was Head of State, "Liberia's ideology would remain the same."<sup>61</sup> Capitalism and the free enterprise system would be the guiding principles in the country's domestic and foreign policies. The domestic economic inequalities would therefore continue while, in foreign policy, ties with America would continue to be very warm under the administration of Doe. The initial forward march by the PRC has not only been called to a halt, the marchers have also been compelled to make a complete about-face turn.

## CONCLUSION

In this concluding section, reasons will be suggested for the non-revolutionary character of the "Liberian revolution," and inquiry will be made as to why has the Liberian *coup* of April 1980 failed to lead to fundamental alterations in the 'state of affairs' inherited from Tolbert?

Three broad reasons are responsible for the non-revolutionary character of the Liberian revolution. First, the Liberian *coup* was unplanned. It was an off the cuff, spur of the moment affair by a handful of enlisted men whose major motive was to rescue their ethnic brothers from what they perceived as eminent execution by Tolbert.<sup>62</sup> The *coup* took between 60 to 72 hours to plan and execute and, consequently, its makers had no blueprint which they could implement after the successful overthrow of Tolbert. This proved important given the fact that the Americo-Liberian dominated system which was toppled in 1980 had been ongoing for over 130 years. To change drastically such an entrenched order would require a lot of background planning and self-sacrifice which the PRC government was not capable of producing.

The second reason is equally important. The chief actors (in this context, Doe, Mathews and Tipoteh) in the *coup* were ill-equipped for the roles which they found themselves playing after the *putsch*. Doe was undoubtedly the most important personality of the actors. He had never been to a formal school and had not even completed his secondary school education, through evening classes, at the time of the *coup*. The new Liberian Head of State was thus basically apolitical. He had never read the history of any of the contemporary great revolutions nor had he the needed dedication to fulfil his self-ap-

pointed role. He was, as would be expected, unable to compare Liberia's experience with either neighbouring West African states or with the countries of Europe and America. Finally, like all enlisted men in the Liberian army of Tolbert, Doe had never lived what we call a 'modern lifestyle.' The former Master Sergeant did not own, and he had not been driven in, a luxury car prior to the *coup*. His accommodation, moreover, was shabby like that of all other enlisted men in the army at the time. Not surprisingly, his dream, and that of other enlisted men, was to live a life of luxury like the Senators and legislators in Liberia whom he both admired and envied.<sup>63</sup>

Given Doe's mundane background and experience, as well as that of the majority of the PRC, the military leaders in Liberia could easily be deflected from their avowed 'revolutionary' path with a dose of some of the better things in life, the things which they had longed for, and had been deprived of, by the greed of the Americo-Liberians. This situation explains, in part, why the Americans were able to successfully blunt the revolution of April 1980. Doe and his PRC colleagues who actually ruled Liberia lacked the intellectual sophistication to withstand the diplomatic offensive which the U.S. launched soon after the military take-over to preserve its interests in Liberia. Furthermore, the military government was essentially an ideological tripod: 1) the PRC composed of soldiers, unsophisticated and largely apolitical but with guns and thus effective power, 2) the MOJA members, the intellectuals and the gradualists who were also the ideologues, and 3) Baccus Mathews, whose PPP was essentially a mass movement. Under the circumstances, it was difficult for the PRC government to function effectively. Each group was suspicious of the other in the 'coalition,' since African politics is a zero-sum game. This fact is evident in the series of *coup* plots against Doe and, the presence of only two MOJA members, Boimah Fahnbulleh and Patrick Boley, in the cabinet at the time of writing.

The last factor which hindered the realization of a 'true revolution' in Liberia was the state of the economy after Tolbert's fall. The Liberian state was essentially bankrupt with only five million dollars cash at hand in April 1980. Unwittingly, the PRC increased the salaries of junior civil servants and non-commissioned army officers as already indicated. The move instantly added a four million dollars to the nine million dollars monthly pay bill of government for a total of thirteen million dollars. In addition, the violence which accompanied the *putsch* scared existing and potential investors from the country leading to a serious depletion of bank reserves in the country. Bank deposits, for instance, dropped from 153 million dollars in early April to 146 million dollars at the end of that month and finally to 105 million dollars in December 1980.<sup>64</sup>

Given the adverse economic circumstances described above, Liberia needed a dedicated and selfless leadership to see it through the most perilous period after the *coup*. The leadership, as has been argued, was totally lacking. Requests were sent out for aid, first to the

Soviet Union and Libya. However, when there was no immediate response from those sources, Doe turned to America to fill the gap. The resultant massive U.S. response, as has been discussed, was conditional: aid would be exchanged only for closer relations between the PRC and Washington. The tacit acceptance of that condition by Doe effectively sealed the fate of the Liberian 'revolution.' What initially appeared as a forward march in Liberia became a stop, and finally, an about-face turn.

#### Footnotes

1. See for instance, "In the cause of the people, the struggle continues," or, the daily insertions in the semi-official *New Liberian*, such as "2 years of revolutionary progress" and "show the light, the people will find the way."
2. Different authors have tended to emphasize different criteria in defining what is a revolution. See A.S. Cohan, *Theories of Revolution* (London: Nelson, 1975); Crane Brinton, *The Anatomy of Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1965); and, Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (London: Faber and Faber, 1965).
3. Julius Gould and William L. Kolb, *A Dictionary of the Social Sciences* (London: Tavistock, 1964), p. 602.
4. Cohan, *Theories of Revolution*, pp. 29-30.
5. Arendt, *On Revolution*, p. 140.
6. Cohan, *Theories of Revolution*, p. 30.
7. I shall not go into the whole issue of acceptability of the government here. This has been treated in Amadu Sesay, "Le Coup d'Etat du Liberia: facteurs internes et effets regionaux," *Politique Africaine*, 7 (September 1982), pp. 91-106.
8. Cohan, *Theories of Revolution*, p. 31.
9. The expression 'Americo-Liberian' is used to describe the descendants of the free American slaves who settled in modern Liberia in 1822. For details on the nature of their rule until 1980, see M.B. Akpan, "Black imperialism: Americo-Liberian rule over the African peoples of Liberia, 1841-1964," *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 7, no. 2 (1973), pp. 217-336.
10. *The Master of Sergeant of the Revolution* (Monrovia: Ministry of Information and Cultural Affairs [MICAT], June 1981), p. 3.
11. *Overview of Liberia's Growth and Development* (Monrovia: MICAT, no date), p. 7.
12. *The Revolution of April 1980: Causes and Objectives* (Monrovia: MICAT, 1981), p. 14.
13. For details, see Amadu Sesay, "Societal inequalities, ethnic heterogeneity and political instability: The case of Liberia," *Plural Societies*, 11 (Autumn 1980), pp. 15-30.
14. For details, see Amadu Sesay, "Elite Structure and foreign policy in Liberia," *Nigerian Journal of International Studies* (forthcoming).
15. In preparing this article, I had the privilege of interviewing two Liberian officials who were also key participants in the events that led to the *coup*. For obvious reasons, I shall not disclose their names. One of them has since left government service and I call him "ex-Liberian official," while the other is still in his job. This one I call "Liberian official." In this particular case, the interview was with "Liberian official," January 1983.
16. For a full list of members see *West Africa* (London), 21 April 1980, p. 689.
17. For details of the scandal, see *West Africa*, 12 July 1982, p. 1840.



18. The services are, National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), Special Security Service (SSS) and, the most powerful of all, the National Intelligence Service.
19. *West Africa*, 12 September 1982, p. 1840. Mr. Massaquoi is an indigenous Liberian.
20. Quoted in *West Africa*, 2 August 1982, p. 1977.
21. See L. Huberman and P.M. Sweezy, *Cuba: Anatomy of a Revolution* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1960), pp. 119-120.
22. The author was in Ethiopia for four weeks in September/October 1982 and saw for himself the remarkable changes that the socialist system has brought about in that country.
23. For the impact of MNC's on the economy see Clower, *et al.*, *Growth Without Development* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1966) and G. Lanning with M. Mueller, *Africa Undermined* (Hammondsworth: Penguin, 1979), Chap. 11.
24. *General Economic Policy: The Government of the PRC* (Monrovia: MICAT, June 1981), p. 1.
25. *International Herald Tribune* (London), Special Feature on Liberia, August 1982. Compare the PRC's code with that of Tolbert which includes: "Freedom from taxation, freedom from nationalization, freedom from all currency controls . . . freedom from government and labour pressures," *Liberia Industrial Free Zone Authority* (Monrovia: no date), cover page.
26. *West Africa*, 10 January 1983, p. 68.
27. *West Africa*, 10 January 1983, p. 66.
28. See the quotation for footnote 10 in text.
29. *Africa Research Bulletin* (Economic and Technical Series), (15 July — 14 August 1982), p. 6528.
30. *West Africa*, 10 January 1983, p. 68.
31. Cohan, *Theories of Revolution*, p. 14.
32. Quoted by Cohan in *Theories of Revolution*, p. 14.
33. Quoted by Cohan in *Theories of Revolution*, p. 14.
34. Cohan, *Theories of Revolution*, p. 15.
35. *The Master Sergeant of the Revolution*, p. 5.
36. *Ibid.*
37. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
38. *Liberian News Agency* (LINA) (Monrovia), 4, no. 120 (July 1982), p. 1.
39. *West Africa*, 15 November, 1982, p. 2951. Others dismissed were Herman Greene Managing Director of Liberian Water and Sewer Corporation, for embezzling \$10,000 worth of plastic pipes and his deputy, Elaine Youlu, for allegedly embezzling \$4,000 worth of plastic pipes.
40. *West Africa*, 15 November 1982, p. 2952.
41. What actually happened was that Monkonmnah infiltrated the UN Assembly with eleven other Liberian students to interrupt Tolbert's speech at various points by shouting him down one at a time. The exercise continued until security men had taken out all the twelve students from the Assembly Hall. Interview with "Liberian Official."
42. Harrison Pennue who became famous in Liberia overnight because he claimed to have personally shot Tolbert dead, was reprimanded several times for misuse of power. He was demoted from the rank of deputy Commander General of the armed forces in early 1981 for harassing mine workers. In August that year he was arrested and detained indefinitely for beating up the manager of the Liberian Broadcasting Corporation, Edward Wonkoyoh, for overtaking his (Pennue's) Official car. See *Daily Observer* (Monrovia), 27 August 1981, for more details.
43. Interview with Elwood Dunn, then Special Assistant to the Liberian Foreign Minister, the then Cecil Dennis.

44. *Liberian Age* (Monrovia), 31 December 1969. The allegation was made by a Peace Corps volunteer who wondered why Liberia was so underdeveloped in spite of the huge U.S. aid to that country.
45. The comment was made by an aide in Dr. Kissinger's entourage during his visit to Monrovia in April 1976. The comment was meant to be a self-reproach, "a painful recognition of the fact that after 130 years of exploitation by American enterprises, Liberia has not become the show place for democracy and prosperity that it might have been." *Liberian Age*, 31 May 1976.
46. For more nicknames, see *Los Angeles Times*, 10 August 1972.
47. See Sesay, "Societal inequalities and ethnic heterogeneity."
48. See Sesay, "Le Coup d'Etat du Liberia."
49. U.S. International Communications Agency Press Release, *Liberia and U.S.: A Long History of Friendship and Cooperation, 1946-1980* (November 3, 1980).
50. *International Herald Tribune* (Special Feature on Liberia), August, 1982.
51. For a catalogue of U.S. interests in the country, see *West Africa*, 8 September 1980, p. 1704. The U.S. has an Omega Navigation station in Liberia that handles diplomatic traffic between Washington and all U.S. embassies in Africa South of the Sahara, there is also a powerful VOA transmitter in Liberia that covers the whole of Africa, the Middle East and parts of the Soviet Union. Finally, U.S. private investments in Liberia amount to more than \$500 million.
52. *New Liberian*, 20 August 1982.
53. Interview with "Liberian Official."
54. *Ibid.*
55. See Sesay, "Le Coup d'Etat du Liberia."
56. *West Africa*, 7 December 1981, p. 2953.
57. Interview with "Liberian Official."
58. See *Africa Research Bulletin* (Political series), 1-28 February 1982, pp. 6356-7.
59. Doe later visited Saudi Arabia and South Korea, both which are known for their very close and special ties with America.
60. *West Africa*, 24 August 1982, pp. 1922-23.
61. *Ibid.*, 16 February 1981, p. 350.
62. Interview with "Liberian Official." The two men involved are Patrick Boley, now Minister of Education and Baccus Mathews, for Minister of Foreign Affairs and now Director of Cabinet Affairs.
63. Interview with "ex-Liberian official."
64. *International Herald Tribune* (Special Feature on Liberia), August, 1982.