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From Utopia to Dystopia: The Legacy of the Transatlantic Slave Trade in Liberia and Sierra Leone

Introduction

"[S]ix million Jews were systematically exterminated rather than just shipped to other countries. Yet it is not the common view that the Holocaust made the survivors less entrepreneurial and self-confident;" thus Robert Calderisi dismisses the Atlantic slave trade as a possible cause of the current economic backwardness and socio-political instability that characterise most African countries.[1] His analogy is fundamentally flawed. Unlike the Africans, the Jews were Western-based, familiar with Western lifestyle and values and, often, wealthy agents of Western capitalism. The Holocaust, however traumatic and devastating, could not have deprived Jewish survivors of the capitalist skills that the overwhelming majority of Africans still lack. Despite this, experience and years of analysis nonetheless induce me to agree with Calderisi that rather than the transatlantic slave trade, it is decades of bad governance, cultural malpractice, corruption and, above all, dictatorial regimes often backed by the West, that explain the sorry state of most African countries nowadays.

This contention does not, however, apply to Liberia and Sierra Leone. While their recent civil wars have entrenched these African states' "unenviable reputation

for chronic instability and strife" in the eyes of foreign observers,[2] the woes of these West African countries are indeed mainly attributable to the pernicious legacy of the transatlantic slave trade. My premise is that rather than an exhilarating reunion of Africa's long-separated children, the arrival and settlement of freed slaves there proved to be a time bomb fatally loaded with racist misconceptions about Africa and Africans, intra-racial discrimination and, subsequently, resentment.

Historical Overview of Sierra Leone

The republic of Sierra Leone covers an area of 71,740 sq. km. (27,699 sq. miles) and has an estimated population of six million. It is bordered on the north by Guinea and to the south-east by Liberia.

In the pre-colonial period, the populations of the land that became Sierra Leone lived under a socio-political system structured around cultural, religious, linguistic and historical ties. The main peoples were the Mande-speakers and the Mel-speakers. The former included the Mende, who represent 30% of Sierra Leone's current population and, among others, the Mandingo, Vai, Kono, Loko, Soso and Yalunka. They were former citizens of the predominantly Muslim Mali Empire who left their fatherland following the steady decline of the Empire in the fourteenth century. The Mel-speakers included the Temne, who also represent 30% of the country's present-day population, and the Limba, Gola, Kissi, Krim, Sherbro and Bullom. While they are less certain, the origins of the Mel-speakers probably lie in Central Africa.

Pedro da Cintra, a Portuguese navigator who arrived in the Sierra Leone peninsula in 1462, called it Serra Lyoa (lion mountain) because "the sound of thunder resounding across the estuary of the Rokel River reminded him of the roar of lions."[3]

Soon, Cintra's compatriots began to purchase ivory, gold and slaves from the Sierra Leoneans. They were joined in the sixteenth century by the French, Dutch, Danes and, above all, the English. Many English traders married local women, thus creating Anglo-African families such as the Caulkers, Curtises, Clevelands and Rogers, who enriched themselves mainly through slave trading.[4]

While England was not the primary destination of the slaves, there were between twenty and thirty thousand blacks in that country by 1785.[5] Some had been brought there as domestic servants. Others were freed slaves who had sided with Great Britain during the 1775-1783 American Revolutionary War. Racism, fear and prejudice induced large sections of the local population to advocate the repatriation of these blacks to Africa. Others, like the Evangelicals—or "Saints"—were motivated by their desire to help the "poor blacks" and their abhorrence of slavery and the slave trade. Prominent Evangelicals included William Wilberforce and Granville Sharp. The latter actively championed the idea of a colony for free blacks in Sierra Leone, to which he referred as "the Province of Freedom."[6]

The Treasury agreed to fund Sharp's plan in early April 1787. A ship carrying 411 people including 340 blacks and seventy white women—prostitutes, wives or mistresses of black passengers—left Plymouth shortly afterwards and reached the Sierra Leone peninsula in May. They gave King Tom, a coastal Temne leader, beads, hats and a few muskets, and he ceded them land in exchange. The newcomers named their colony Granville Town, after Granville Sharp, and elected Richard Weaver, a black settler, chief. Most of them succumbed to dysentery within a year.

A Parliament Act, setting up the Sierra Leone Company (SLC), was passed in 1791. The SLC appointed John Clarkson—brother of the writer and Evangelical Thomas—governor of the colony, and financed the shipment of 1,190 blacks from

Halifax, Nova Scotia, to Sierra Leone in 1792. Clarkson gave Granville Town the new name of Freetown. He and his successors, William Dawes and Zachary Macaulay, encouraged the colonists to grow rice and vegetables, and export crops such as cotton and sugar cane. Another group of settlers, 550 Jamaican maroons, arrived in 1800.

After the abolition of the slave trade by Great Britain in 1807, the government took over the control of the Freetown colony from the struggling SLC through the Sierra Leone Transfer Act, thus making Sierra Leone a Crown Colony. The peninsula was used as a naval base for British anti-slavery patrols, and more than 84,000 freed slaves were sent there between 1808 and 1864.[7] The Creoles—also known as Krios—the descendants of the settlers, represent 10% of the current population of Sierra Leone.

As in many other colonies, the British resorted to "indirect rule" to control Sierra Leone, i.e., they used rulers of small territories, rather than a central administrative structure. They also relied on committed Anglican missionaries, such as those who founded the famous Fourah Bay College—now part of the University of Sierra Leone—in 1827. Although they were initially reluctant to expand the colony, the British proclaimed a protectorate over the Sierra Leonean interior in August 1896 in order to control human, natural and agricultural resources and, above all, to halt the French expansion in West Africa. The Hut Tax, introduced in 1898, led to an armed revolt, brutally crushed by the British army.

There were waves of Lebanese immigrants between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although the British colonisers built a railway and boosted the production of palm products and peanuts, the country remained underdeveloped since, as David Keen rightly says, colonial officials regarded development "as a potential threat that could disrupt traditional authority and widen opposition."[8]

Neither did they encourage social unity through education. For, as Keen adds, colonial educational policy "had actually set out to strengthen 'tribal patriotism,' apparently reflecting British instincts to 'divide and rule'" and desire to preserve some native customs.[9]

Like other African populations, the Sierra Leoneans became more politically active after the Second World War. Two main political parties emerged: the All People's Congress (APC) in the north, dominated by the Temne, and the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) in the south and east, dominated by the Mende. Sierra Leone became independent in April 1961, with Milton Margai of the SLPP as prime minister. When he died in 1964, he was succeeded by his brother Albert. Although Siaka Stevens of the APC won the 1967 general elections, he was toppled by supporters of Albert Margai, led by Brigadier David Lansana. There followed a period of political instability and social unrest until 1971, when the Parliament proclaimed Sierra Leone a republic and Siaka Stevens president.

Neither Stevens, who ruled till 1986, nor his successor, Joseph Momoh, managed to unite, democratise or develop the country. They relied on patronage, corruption, intimidation and violence to remain in power and satisfy their whims. The Revolutionary United Front (RUF), an armed group led by Foday Sankoh, launched an insurrection in 1991. The RUF's stated aim was to rid the country of its corrupt elite and give power to the people. However, it soon acquired an unenviable reputation for unspeakable cruelty and brutality towards these same people.

Momoh was toppled in a military coup in April 1992. A multi-party election won by Ahmad Tejan Kabbah of the SLPP put an end to military rule in 1996. Kabbah signed a cease-fire with the RUF shortly after becoming president. Yet, he was overthrown a year later by the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), a

military junta led by Johnny Paul Koroma. Sierra Leone descended into total chaos. Neither the reinstatement of Kabbah by the forces sent by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 1998, nor the deployment of UN peacekeepers in 1999, nor even the arrival of British troops in 2000, stopped the civil war. Most fighters financed themselves through illegal gem trafficking. Diamonds, which are abundant in Sierra Leone, played such a central role in the perpetuation of the conflict that they became known as "blood diamonds." It was only in January 2002 that, after an estimated 70,000 dead, the war was declared over. When elections were held four months later, President Kabbah was re-elected for a further five years.

Historical Overview of Liberia

The modern African republic of Liberia is bordered on the west by Sierra Leone, on the north by Guinea and to the east by Côte d'Ivoire. It covers an area of 99,067 sq. km. (38,250 sq. miles) and has an estimated population of four million.

Prior to the arrival of Western settlers, the populations of the territory later known as Liberia lived, like those of Sierra Leone, under a socio-political system structured around cultural, religious, linguistic and historical bonds. The main peoples were the Mel-speakers; the Mande-speakers and the Kwa-speakers. The origins of the last can be traced to Mozambique in pre-dynastic times and they include, among others, the Dei, Bassa, Kru, Krahn and Grebo.

The Portuguese were the first Westerners to establish trading contacts in the fifteenth century with the inhabitants of the land that became Liberia. Later, they were followed by the Dutch and the British. They all built trading posts on the coast, and primarily engaged in the triangular trade, a commercial activity that would lead to the creation of present-day Liberia.

In December 1816, a group of white Americans, including philanthropists, clergymen, abolitionists and even slave-owners, founded the American Colonisation Society (ACS) in Washington D.C. Their main aim was to promote the establishment of a colony in Africa for freed black slaves, for most regarded the assimilation of blacks into the white American society as impossible, while others feared and wanted to rid their country of this "useless and pernicious, if not dangerous portion of its population."[10]

In 1820 *The Elizabeth* became the first ship financed by the ACS to head for West Africa, with three white agents and eighty-eight blacks. By the time it reached Cape Mesurado—or Montserrado—in April 1822, the vessel carried more than two hundred other blacks who had been rescued from slave ships. The newcomers settled in Providence Island, near where Monrovia, the present capital, is situated. They soon expanded their colony, which they called Liberia—from *liber*, the Latin for freedom. Local chiefs were generally coerced into ceding land in exchange for, among other items, beads, guns, gunpowder and barrels of rum. Liberia was controlled by the ACS, and it was only in 1842 that a black man, Joseph Jenkins Roberts, became governor.[11]

While some natives fiercely resisted their expansion, the biggest threats to the colonists were the French and the British who sought to dominate West Africa. Fearing the forced annexation of their territory into the British-controlled Sierra Leone, the settlers declared Liberia a free and independent republic on 26 July 1846, with Joseph Jenkins Roberts as their first president.

While the ACS continued to send freed black slaves there throughout the nineteenth century, Liberia remained mostly inhabited by native Africans. Nowadays, the Americo-Liberians represent roughly 5% of the population. However, they maintained exclusive control over the country's politics and economy. The True Whig

Party, which was founded in 1867 and ruled Liberia until 1980, refused admission to the natives until well into the twentieth century. Neither William Tubman, president from 1944 to 1971, nor his successor, William Tolbert, managed to bridge the social, economic and educational gulf between the ruling Americo-Liberian elite and the overwhelmingly poor indigenes.

In April 1980, a young Master Sergeant of Krahn origin, Samuel Kanyon Doe, led a successful coup against William Tolbert, thus ending the 133-year domination of the Americo-Liberians. The new leader promised to introduce "African socialism," and named his junta the People's Redemption Council (PRC). But this denomination was highly misleading, as Samuel Doe ruled for himself not the Liberian people. He looted the country and resorted to brutal repression, routine execution and exile to retain power.

In December 1989, Charles Ghankay Taylor, an exiled half Americo-Liberian and half Gola, crossed into Liberia from Côte d'Ivoire with a small group of men. Taylor and his followers, who called themselves the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), quickly overwhelmed Doe's army. Within six months, the NPFL controlled 90% of the Liberian territory.

Samuel Doe was executed in September 1990 by the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL), a splinter faction of the NPFL led by Prince Yormie Johnson. Far from ending the war, however, Doe's death intensified it, as the NPFL and the INPFL fought each other, as well as the Liberian army and the Economic Community Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), the troops sent by the members of the Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS) to restore order in Liberia.

Despite a peace agreement signed in 1995 that led to the election of Charles Taylor as president, fighting resumed in1999. The combined pressure of the international community as well as rebel groups such as Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) triggered Taylor's resignation in September 2003. This ended a civil war that has claimed roughly 250,000 lives. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the current president and a US-educated economist, became modern Africa's first elected female Head of State in 2005.

The Past Utopia

"It was really a very great pity that we ever came," for "this country does not agree with us at all."[12] This extract from a letter of a black settler in Sierra Leone , written in July 1787 to Granville Sharp, highlights the main flaw inherent in the idea of establishing colonies for freed black slaves in West Africa. While they were indeed descendants of black Africans, most of these colonists were born in the West. Hence Sierra Leone, Liberia and Africa in general, were as alien to them as they were to white Westerners.

The settlers who came from Britain sought to replicate the society and lifestyle they left behind. For instance, most of the villages of the Sierra Leone settlement were named after British towns, royalty or historical events: Leicester, Gloucester, Charlotte, Hastings, Waterloo, and so forth. Similarly, in neighbouring Liberia, the settlers modelled their territory after the only socio-political entity they knew: the United States of America. Their American background was reflected in, among other things, their flag, motto ("the love of freedom brought us here"), constitution, and the names of their colonies such as, Monrovia (named thus in honour of the US president James Monroe), Mississippi and Maryland.

Many freed slaves fancied Africa as a paradise where they could live without the racism and discrimination to which they had been subjected in Europe and America. However, their views on this continent had been shaped by those of white Europeans and Americans. Hence the mixed feelings most of them harboured before leaving the West, as Kenneth C. Barnes points out in his study of the back-to-Africa movement in Arkansas at the end of the 1800s:

> for late-nineteenth century black Arkansans, Africa connoted a bundle of dialectical oppositions: attraction and repulsion, hope and dread, an eden but also a pagan savage place, a promised land but a dark continent.[13]

There were similar contradictions in the arguments of the white supporters of the establishment of colonies in Africa for freed black slaves. Thus Henry Clay, chair of the founding meeting of the American Colonisation Society, admitted that he and the other members intended to purge the US of its lazy and evil blacks; yet he also claimed that their settlement in Africa could lead to "the spreading of the arts of civilized life, and the possible redemption from ignorance and barbarism of a benighted quarter of the globe."[14]

Once in Africa, the settlers did not adopt African ways and resolved to distance themselves from the natives. Initially, because of their fairer skin, they considered themselves racially superior to black Africans, and set out to transform the colonies into mulatto autocracies.[15] Then, as their skin darkened, they began to rely on their Western cultural background to belittle and dominate the indigenous populations. They saw themselves as "civilised," unlike the "savage" natives. Thus most Americo-Liberians agreed with Charles C. Boone that:

> The civilized Liberian, to maintain his standing as a light and a ruler of the country, must live in some way aloof from the people he governs. This is the custom in America and it is far more necessary in Africa.[16]

A similar situation prevailed in neighbouring Sierra Leone. While the Creoles sought and valued education, they did not intend to acquire it in order to develop their country or help the natives improve their living conditions. Instead, as J. Peter Pham points out, "Krio society found in education and attachment to European, especially British, ways the hallmarks of their social standing."[17]

Division, intra-racial prejudice and separateness were the cornerstone of the Sierra Leone and Liberia settlements, rather than unity, mutual appreciation or common purpose. While the utopia of African colonies ruled by blacks freed from white discrimination was used for decades to rid the West of the unwanted descendants of the slaves, the seeds of the current dystopia were relentlessly being sown. When they failed to earn a living from agriculture after their arrival in 1787, both the white and black settlers of the Granville Town colony quickly resorted to slave trading. Richard West illustrates this by highlighting the case of Henry Demane, a black man rescued from slavery by Granville Sharp in 1786, who, by 1789, had become a prosperous slaver.[18]

Certainly, slavery and pawnship were practised in Africa—and elsewhere, of course—long before the introduction of the triangular trade. But, as Paul E. Lovejoy asserts, "the reality of these institutions was far different from the stereotypes that were common then and now about the commonly understood forms of racialised slavery in the Americas."[19] The reasons leading to the enslavement or pawning of an individual varied from politics to indebtedness and misconduct, but rarely included the racial element. Depriving another human being of their freedom is always an

abhorrent and condemnable practice. However, it must be noted, as Peter Haenger does, that in Africa, "some of the slaves were regarded merely as capital investments by their owners, but we also encounter people who, while regarded as bondsmen, nevertheless fulfilled important military or political functions within their society."[20]

Ideally, the freed slaves who settled in Sierra Leone and Liberia should have identified with the natives as their fellow denigrated blacks. They should have embraced them as their long-lost brothers and sisters. But they could not do so for three main reasons. First, as I have already pointed out, they harboured the same prejudices and misconceptions about Africans as the whites of the Western society from which they came. Therefore, many Freetown Creoles were opposed to the inclusion of "the unwashed aborigines" of the Sierra Leonean interior into their colony.[21] Those who supported it did so mainly because "they saw in the expansion of British colonial rule the protection of their economic interests."[22]

Which brings me to the second reason why the settlers failed to mingle and unite with the natives: their lack of political autonomy. Had they been free to rule their colonies as they saw fit, the descendants of the slaves might have been tempted to recreate the lifestyle of their African ancestors, and they might have turned to the natives to help them do so. They certainly thought that they were sailing to freedom. But from the moment the Sierra Leone Company and the American Colonisation Society paid for their passage, and they settled in the land owned by these organisations, they had no liberty.

The Freetown settlement was governed by its British sponsors as soon as it was established, and became a Crown Colony a few years later. As Eliphas G. Mukonoweshuro points out, Britain, like other colonial countries, "was the organizing power of the entire colonial social formation,"[23] and did not hesitate to encourage the

black settlers to regard themselves "to be equally as much representatives of the metropolitan ruling class as the resident European colonial bureaucracy."[24]

The natives who, generally, neither spoke English nor had access to education, soon found themselves at the bottom of a hierarchical social structure, doing menial jobs and even sometimes becoming domestic slaves for the black settlers. John Grace, in his study of domestic slavery in West Africa in general and in the Sierra Leone Protectorate in particular, asserts:

> it is clear that the arrival of the Europeans in West Africa at first strengthened and encouraged the institution of domestic slavery there. […] The domestic slave fulfilled a wide variety of economic roles—as an agricultural labourer, as a worker for the community, as a house builder, as a domestic servant, as a carrier of goods, as a medium of exchange and as security for debts.[25]

This state of affairs led to the third reason for the lack of fraternal union between the black newcomers and the indigenous populations: resentment. The natives viewed the black settlers as part of the oppressive colonial power. They resented having their land taken over by the Krios, whom they found "distant and disdainful."[26] Even when fate, not the Krios, was to blame, they resented the colonists. Richard West recounts that when the eldest son of Naimbana, king of the Temne, who had been studying in England, died in February 1793, his younger brother accused the British of poisoning him, and for "generations afterwards the Temne held his death against the Sierra Leone settlement."[27]

There was also resentment of the black settlers in Liberia. In their constitution, the colonists defined Liberians "as originally inhabitants of the United States."[28] Supported by the American Colonisation Society, many soon enriched themselves through trade; and "this oligarchy of Americanized Africans held absolute sway over

the country and dominated its pre-existing indigenous peoples."[29] The ensuing resentment of the natives was exacerbated by events such as the 1915 revolt by the Kru and the Gola, brutally crushed by soldiers and arms provided by the USA, and the forced labour and even slavery to which many of them were subjected.[30]

The Current Dystopia

With so much simmering resentment, the outbreak of civil wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia was ineluctable. Nowadays, they are among the poorest countries in the world, their infrastructure is in ruins, and they rely almost completely on foreign aid for their reconstruction. Yet both states are potentially rich, for they are replete with natural resources: diamonds, iron ore, cocoa, coffee, timber, to name but a few.

It would be heartening to believe that the earnings generated from the commercialisation of these products will be used to rebuild these shattered countries, foster reconciliation, and accelerate the reintegration of former soldiers, who are often children, into society. Unfortunately, there is little room for optimism for two main reasons: the great control of the business sector by foreigners, and corruption.

In his analysis of the Sierra Leone economy in the early twentieth century, Eliphas. G. Mukonoweshuro highlights the reluctance of foreign firms, which controlled the imports and exports, to support the country's industrialisation.[31] He also identifies the existence of a comprador bourgeoisie "whose interests are 'constitutively' linked to foreign imperialist capital, and which is thus completely bound politically and ideologically to foreign capital."[32] Unfortunately, his words can still be used to describe the situation in Sierra Leone as well as Liberia a century later. Because of the monopoly of the economy by foreign investors, a large proportion of the earnings generated from the export of natural resources stays in neither of the

above states. The main concern of foreign business people is not to industrialise or develop these countries to which they have no emotional attachment, or to create jobs—the unemployment rate is well over 60% in both Sierra Leone and Liberia—but to enrich themselves as much as possible.

While it might benefit the two countries, the presence of an important Asian community—mainly Lebanese and to a lesser extent, Indian—also has the potential of being a source of tensions. The members of this community are very entrepreneurial and contribute greatly to the post-war reconstruction effort. But, as David Keen notes in his study of the socio-economic situation in Sierra Leone, "some sources perceived an unwillingness—continuing to the present—among banks to lend to Sierra Leoneans rather than Lebanese."[33] This, combined with the economic disparity between the wealthy Asian minority and the poor black majority, could lead to racial confrontations, as happened in Eastern Africa. Furthermore, the Lebanese, who had sometimes been "prepared to pay for the protection of political leaders,"[34] have contributed to the spread of corruption, one of the major problems currently facing Sierra Leone and Liberia.

Corruption was, like division, a defining characteristic of both countries from the start. In the case of Sierra Leone, the British relied on influential local leaders, known as "paramount chiefs," to ensure the success of their indirect rule. In exchange for their loyalty, the colonisers closed their eyes to almost all the excesses of these native rulers, and made no effort to foster or encourage the development of a democratic culture.

The abolition of the slave trade and slavery is often used to justify Western colonisation of Africa, and cited as a proof that "Europe has given Africa the aspirations for freedom and human dignity."[35] Yet, to secure the support of native

rulers, the British let them practise both slave trading and slavery.[36] Furthermore, these rulers abused their own people and indulged in corruption with total impunity. This situation did not change with independence. For postcolonial leaders were hand-picked by the colonisers and willing to perpetuate the previous system controlled by a corrupt elite eager to rely on patronage.

"As Africa's only independent black republic," Liberia might have "encouraged and symbolised race pride for African Americans" and other blacks in the late nineteenth century.[37] But it was irremediably permeated by corruption for two interrelated reasons. First, it revolved around a small Americo-Liberian elite reluctant to see democracy flourish, the members of which were eager to help each other achieve wealth and influence through mutual favours. Second, like the British, the Americo-Liberians often relied on corrupt, autocratic and self-serving native chiefs to control the main population. Liberia, like Sierra Leone, currently faces the daunting challenge of ridding itself of a deep-rooted culture of corruption and political unaccountability, largely responsible for the popular resentment and alienation that led to civil wars.

Conclusion

For most freed slaves, Africa represented a paradise where they could live without the racism and discrimination to which they had been subjected in Europe and America. However, after their settlement in Sierra Leone and Liberia, they too discriminated against the natives. The reasons for this were manifold, including their racist misconceptions about Africa and Africans, and their lack of political autonomy. Decades of division, intra-racial prejudice and discrimination, and corrupt

undemocratic rule led to widespread resentment which, in turn, triggered the recent civil wars that have devastated Sierra Leone and Liberia.

Recently, as I listened to a speech by Professor Debey Sayndee, director of the Kofi Annan Institute for Conflict Transformation in Monrovia,[38] I was filled with optimism. His appraisal of the past and current circumstances of Liberia and, by extension, Sierra Leone, was accurate, insightful and illuminating. I felt that there are, within these countries, the desire and human resources necessary to achieve what I view as the antidote to the mistakes and horrors of the past: the development of a common sense of nationhood.

Despite this, I cannot help wondering whether the Liberians and Sierra Leoneans can really fulfil the *sine qua non* prerequisite for the creation of this common sense of nationhood. Given the adverse role that the UK and the USA have played there in the past, the people of Sierra Leone and Liberia need to distance, though not divorce, themselves from these Western countries. Furthermore, I wonder, in view of the recent conflicts, whether most of the descendants of the freed slaves might turn their backs on Africa and look to the West. Kenneth C. Barnes who, after the civil war in Liberia, spent some time there with the descendants of the Arkansas emigrants, concludes: "many of the descendants of the Arkansas emigrants to Africa who have never seen the United States dream of America as a place of escape from the physical danger and economic privation of Liberia."[39]

Notes

[1] Robert Calderisi, *The Trouble with Africa: Why Foreign Aid Isn't Working* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 21.

[2] Ikechi Mgbeoji, *Collective Insecurity: The Liberian Crisis, Unilateralism, and Global Order* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2003), 1.

[3] J. Peter Pham, *The Sierra Leonean Tragedy: History and Global Dimensions* (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2006), 1.

[4] There is a fascinating insight into this aspect of Sierra Leone's history in J. Peter Pham, ibid., 3-4. Pham quotes the Sierra Leonean historians Earl Conteh-Morgan and Mac Dixon-Fyle, who discuss the extension of the scale of the slave trade by capitalists of Anglo-African descent in their *Sierra Leone at the End of the Twentieth Century: History, Politics, and Society*, and write:

> The progeny of the British slaving factors and local women, at times educated in England, extended the trading activities of their white fathers, amassed great wealth, and often became rulers themselves. They presented Sierra Leone with their first set of mulatto big men.

[5] Richard West, *Back to Africa: A History of Sierra Leone and Liberia* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1970), 15.

[6] Ibid., 26.

[7] Pham, 12.

[8] David Keen, *Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone* (Oxford: James Currey, 2005), 10.

[9] Ibid., 14.

[10] Speech of Henry Clay, one of the founders of the ACS, as quoted by Richard West, 99.

[11] Although I found no evidence to substantiate the claim, I was fascinated to hear recently from the Hon. Benetta Tarr, Planning and Administration Deputy Minister in the current Liberian government, that J. J. Roberts' unknown white father was the US president Abraham Lincoln.

[12] Ibid., 30.

[13] Kenneth C. Barnes, *Journey of Hope: The Back-to-Africa Movement in Arkansas in the Late 1800s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 123.

[14] West, 99.

[15] A point discussed at length in "The Myth of African Statehood," the first chapter of Ikechi Mgbeoji's book, 1-47.

[16] Charles C. Boone, *Liberia as I Know It* (Richmond: Negro Universities, 1970), 51.

[17] Pham, 13.

[18] West, 31.

[19] Paul E. Lovejoy, introduction, *Slaves and Slave Holders on the Gold Coast: Towards an Understanding of Social Bondage in West Africa*, trans. Christina Handford (Basel: P. Schlettwein, 2000), xii.

[20] Peter Haenger, foreword, in Lovejoy, xiii.

[21] Keen, 14.

[22] Pham, 20.

[23] Eliphas G. Mukonoweshuro, *Colonialism, Class Formation and Underdevelopment in Sierra Leone* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1991), ix.

[24] Ibid., 8.

[25] John Grace, *Domestic Slavery in West Africa: With Particular References to the Sierra Leone Protectorate 1896-1927* (London: Frederick Muller, 1975), 4, 11.

[26] Pham, 21.

[27] West, 39.

[28] Mgbeoji, 5.

[29] Ibid., 2.

[30] A commission of inquiry, set up by the League of Nations, confirmed in 1931 that Americo-Liberians were using indigenous Africans for forced labour, tantamount to slavery.

[31] Mukonoweshuro, 25.

[32] Ibid., 31.

[33] Keen, 13.

[34] Ibid., 21.

[35] Thomas Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa: 1876-1912* (1991; London: Abacus, 2006), 680.

[36] A point also made by David Keen, as he notes that African chiefs loyal to the British "kept large numbers of slaves well into the twentieth century." Keen, 10.

[37] Barnes, 2.

[38] Debey Sayndee, "Working from Anarchy to Recovery: The Liberian Experience," Strand Bridge House, London, 7 March 2007.

[39] Barnes, 193.