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KRUMEN "DOWN THE COAST": LIBERIAN MIGRANTS

ON THE WEST AFRICAN COAST IN THE 19TH CENTURY*

By Jane Martin

This paper discusses migrant laborers from eastern Liberia called Krumen who worked along Africa's west coast in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the system of which they were a part. The study focuses on areas where Britishers were working. British traders and British officials who established themselves in areas of present-day Nigeria, Ghana and Sierra Leone in the nineteenth century depended on Africans for the day-to-day operation of their activities. When they did not find willing helpers close at hand, they recruited Africans from other West African countries. Skilled artisans and clerks came from Sierra Leone and Ghana. Unskilled laborers - who worked on one- or, at most, two-year contracts - were brought from eastern Liberia. Men from along Liberia's eastern seaboard had worked for Europeans on shipboard since the eighteenth century; in the early nineteenth century they began to work on shore.¹

Europeans called both the mariners and the laborers down the coast "Krooboy" and defined them by their occupations and their cost. So Richard Burton, stopping over at Cape Palmas in the early 1860s, talked of the "£5000 of Krumen" they would carry to the Oil Rivers.² Harry Johnston spoke of "the indispensable gang of Kru boys who perform all the rough labour . . . on the Oil Rivers," and George Goldie agreed with him.³ Elder Dempster's A.L. Jones used these laborers not only aboard his sea-going vessels but also for his local operations. British colonial officials like Ralph Moor enlisted them to do the dirty work of the colonial administration.⁴ They had a good press in Western accounts and were praised as vigorous, hard-working and diligent. They were given many sobriquets: the "Bedouins of the African Seas," "the Chinese of West Africa," "the scavengers of the world."⁵ Yet rarely did those who attached the labels or gave the praise know who the "Krooboy" really were.

In reality, the men called "Krooboy" - whom I will refer to as Krumen - represented many different peoples of eastern Liberia and present-day Ivory Coast. Mariners were first recruited, so it seems, from five towns which have become most closely identified with the Kru name - Settra Kru, Nana Kru, Little Kru, Krobah, and King William's Town. Later others took part in mariner work. The migrant workers do not seem to have come from the five towns. According to the records and their own testimonies, they were recruited from among the Kru and Glebo of Grand Cess, the Glebo living in the towns around Cape Palmas, the Bapo, Glebo and other peoples in and near Tabou now in the Ivory Coast and, by the turn of the century, from Kru of Sasstown. Later, Nyambo peoples, Sabo and others from the near and far interior as well as Gola and Vai from western Liberia began to engage in migrant labor and were also called Krooboy.⁶

The migrants came from complex, small-scale societies where an individual's strongest affiliations were and are with the members of his or her dako and yet where there were and are many cross-cutting ties. A dako is a small community with a territorial as well as a social identity. Glebo peoples do not use the term dako but their sections, identified by specific town names

correspond to dakwe (pl.) as identified elsewhere along the coast. In a dako, historical ties link a number of families whose ancestors settled the region. Yet members of a dako community may have historical and blood links with families from other dakwe (as Glebo people do with Grand Cess) and the community itself may have long standing alliances with other groups. To the unknowing outsider, it seemed that peoples shared the same way of life and spoke a common language. There were many rivalries between towns or sections, however, and even today social distinctions among the Kru, Glebo, and other peoples appear to be more important than the linguistic and cultural ties that may bind them.⁷

It is important to recognize these complexities because Krumen reflected their varied attachments and localisms when working down the coast. Headmen recruited workers from all the dakwe where they had relationships and traders recognized the value of securing laborers from compatible groups. Sometimes animosities between towns on the Liberian coast would be reflected among the workers abroad. Certain groups did not want to be identified with others: the Glebo dockworkers, policemen and stewards disliked being classed with the Kplepo Kru of Barclayville who were often nightsoil men.

Usually, however, Glebo and Kru down the coast, wherever their homes, found security in identifying with the other Liberians working in the same town. So the "Krooboy" label stuck, associating enemies with friends, strangers with strangers, those who were Liberians with those "on the French side," perhaps creating in this context a new identity, the consciousness of being part of a wider group.⁸ Elizabeth Tonkin has suggested that "a whole Krooman culture had evolved, covering behavior at home and abroad."⁹ Certainly the system of labor migration which had developed by the late nineteenth century, though minor when compared to other large scale circular labor migrations, was patterned, continuous, integrated with life at home, and considered an important part of a mature man's development and the community's life. Migrant life down the coast contributed its own dynamic to the life to which it was linked at home. Kru migration occurring on this edge of the West Coast, symbolic of the beachhead between African and Western cultures, was comparable to the similarly situated though elitist intellectual culture developed and represented by the Blydens, Casely Hayfords, and educated Saro along the coast.

It is important to recognize that this Kruman culture, like the intellectual culture, was a marginal one, despite its integrity and identity (and I would stress its internal vitality); it existed on the rim of a capitalist world economy which grew more aggressive as the nineteenth century progressed.¹⁰ Krumen were members of communities which were peripheral when seen in the context of Western economic developments. While Western products seeped in, Krumen spread out to serve the needs of Europeans at the core of the system as they imposed and intruded upon other African societies in Ghana and Nigeria.¹¹ The Europeans paid the Krumen low wages and assumed no obligations for these men who conveniently came down the coast in the prime of life. Their early nurture and their old age care were provided back home, although some did not make it back. The Krumen were the Europeans' intermediaries, sometimes cushioning and supporting them as they in turn were supported by their masters. Krumen recognized their dependence on Europeans when they were away from home; the Glebo term for those who went down the coast is kobotabo, meaning "those who chew off white people."¹²

It is my contention that the dependence of Krumen on their British masters in Nigeria and Ghana and the symbiotic relationship which developed had as much to do with the Krumen's relationship with the Liberian state as with their uncertain status in these temporary working places. In the years up to 1880 or so the Liberian state had little impact on the peoples of Eastern Liberia. During these years there is some evidence of Kru readiness to object to conditions or employer actions which they considered unfair. Later in times of colonial expansion, the Liberian government tried to contain these mobile subjects with a weakly constructed net of laws, regulations, and customs personnel. Krumen down the coast did not identify themselves as Liberians and often rejected that affiliation. As Liberia threatened their homelands, the migrants turned for assistance to the British and showed themselves aggressive and challenging at home while generally more docile down the coast. As we shall see, they did not benefit appreciatively from this recourse to the British. In the end it was the British and other colonialists who may have gained the most from the tensions and outright hostilities existent between the Kru and the Liberians.

In the following pages the system and the above theory will be examined in more detail. The characteristics of the force and the circumstances contributing to the Kru migration as well as the actual operations down the coast will be examined so that the reader can understand the interrelationships of the fields at home and abroad. The integration of the migrant role into the life of the home communities and the dependence of the British on Kru labor as well as their control of it will be discussed. Finally the paper will illustrate the efforts of the Liberian state to control the Kru in a time of imperial expansion and the way in which the Kru sought to keep their independence by turning to England, the greater imperial power.

The Spread and Development of the Work

The first Kru workers abroad were those who went up to Sierra Leone after the initial settlement of blacks of the diaspora in Freetown. They came as crewmen on British naval and trading vessels and were soon working as laborers in the lumber industry. Colonial authorities encouraged them to settle in Freetown and the law which created Krootown as a special reserved area in 1816 is still in force today.¹³

Soon they were laboring all along the coast. By 1809, according to Thomas Ludlam, former governor of Sierra Leone, they were employed at every factory between Sierra Leone and their Liberian homes and were found on other parts of the coast in groups of 15 to 40.¹⁴ By the 1830s many were employed on the cocoa plantations of Fernando Po and their shore work during the Niger Expedition of 1833 may have spread their reputation and led to further work.¹⁵ By 1848 they were employed as far south as Calabar. Demands for their labor increased as British merchant activities developed in the Niger Delta, and steamships transported laborers. When the Oil Rivers Protectorate was established in 1891 Krumen were employed by the consuls and later by the governors of Southern Nigeria. In Lagos, where a settled Kruman community developed, they were hired by Nigerians as well as by Europeans. The picture is somewhat hazy but it appears that the bulk of Kru laboring activities was concentrated in the Oil Rivers and Lagos up to the First World War and gradually shifted up the coast to Ghana where Krumen had been employed early in the century in the

gold mines, and later worked in Accra, Sekondi, and even Kumasi. This paper will examine specifically the work in Nigeria.

Krumen were accomodating workers ready to assume almost any task for a fee, and their reputations as well as their fields of activity grew. They worked in the Congo and present-day Angola and in the West Indies.¹⁶ There was a proposal to raise a Kru batallion to serve in India at the time of the Mutiny.¹⁷ Their labor was sought for the building of the Panama Canal in the 1880s and used by the Dutch in Sumarag a few years later.¹⁸ Greek contractors were ready to ship them to the Transvaal in 1911, and, although this did not happen, some Krumen did go to South Africa.¹⁹ Even Liberians living up the St. Paul River near Monrovia hired Krumen from Cape Palmas to work on their farms.²⁰ Thus one can see the extraordinary geographic range of Kru migration.

The number of men involved in this migrant labor force was never large and since they were scattered all over the map, figures are not easy to coordinate. Sources give isolated examples: about 2,500 to 3,000 men travelled to the major centers of Nigeria and back with the English steamers yearly during the mid-1870s, some 400 Krumen were working for merchants around Calabar in 1872, and 400-500 laborers serviced the British government stations of the Oil River Protectorate in the mid-1890s.²¹ At the end of the nineteenth century the number of Krumen going down the coast was estimated at approximately 5,000 a year, 10,000 a year, and 20,000 a year.²² In other words, no one really knew.

The censuses of 1921 in Nigeria and Ghana give us more definite information about later times. There were 13,000 Liberians in the Gold Coast in that year, most probably Krumen, while 2,635 Liberians were enumerated throughout southern Nigeria.²³ Many more Liberians had worked in Nigeria in earlier years.²⁴ After the First World War, however, the British determined to restrict the hiring of "native foreigners" and sought Nigerian laborers.²⁵

No census can yield a correct figure of Kru and Glebo men who participated in the work because Krumen rotated in their jobs, staying a year, resting at home a while, and then going down again, often to another part of the coast. All of my informants had tasted life in several towns, going first perhaps to Calabar, next to Sapele or Warri or Lagos, and then to Sekondi or Accra. Because new groups came each year the total number of men who were involved in the work over a period of several years might reach 15,000 or 20,000 persons. The number seems surprisingly modest when one reflects on the importance British employers attached to it, yet the number seems surprisingly high when one considers the sparse population of the area where the migrants originated.²⁶ Both observations indicate the importance which Britishers and Krumen attached to the laboring enterprise.

Links between Life at Home and Life Down the Coast

By the middle of the nineteenth century, "shuttle migration" had become a tradition for some, like shipwork for others. The old men of today point out that they went because their fathers had gone before them and because it was part of growing up. In the area around Cape Palmas, before World War II, to go down the coast was to serve an apprenticeship and almost every man did it, sometimes fifteen times, like elder Kla Mle Dabe.

"Going down the coast" had not led to the disintegration of traditional life, nor to its revitalization, but it had led to some transformation. A new official called the kobotagbude remained in some of the Glebo towns and had special obligations and powers relating to the men down the coast.²⁷ There is some evidence of an association of kobotabo who were members of the kinibo age grade who gained some training for later life by going down the coast. Glebo and Kru societies placed and still place importance on age grades. Among the Glebo, the kinibo was the association for young men preparing for warrior status and leadership. Sedibo were formerly warrior groups which in the twentieth century became the administrators of towns. The nyekbade among the Glebo were the elders and the major decision-makers. The small children constituted the pidinyinibo who cleaned the town. Most of the elders to whom the author spoke gave up their year-long ventures when they were in their late thirties and returned home to settle down as sedibo members.²⁸

The African headmen provided links between home and the migrant communities abroad. They were middlemen whose positions had developed early to meet the needs of ship captains on the one hand and Kru seamen on the other. The shore system demanded a somewhat different method of recruitment. A headman was chosen by the European trader or official, probably from among experienced men who had been in foreign employ before. He returned to his home and recruited a gang of fellow townsmen and relatives, numbering anywhere from 25 to 100. Most of the recruits came from his own extended family and village but mother's and perhaps wives' patrilineages and towns were other sources of recruitment. The headman carried with him an order from the employer which guaranteed the ship captain that the group's passage would be paid. Often the system worked on a six month basis; at the end of six months a second headman would be chosen to return to the Liberian coast, usually to the same town, and another group would come down. The second group arrived in time to learn the work from the seasoned laborers before they in turn departed for "we country" as they still call their home. The regularity of the system is indicated in the Hope Waddell Training Institution Logbook, Calabar, where the October changeover in Krumen was regularly described.²⁹

Headmen were not merely servants of the outsiders who sought Kru labor. It is true that they were responsible to employers for the good conduct of the laborers and were expected to take charge of discipline and distribute food. They also had obligations to the men and their families, however. They performed traditional rituals at home before carrying the men down the coast and they were responsible to the town and the mothers of the men for their safety and proper treatment.³⁰ When headmen went back home to get new men they carried messages including letters in Glebo from the many literate Glebo "Krooboys," and cloth. Although headmen were favored and sometimes managed to rake off part of the men's wages, it was rare - indeed unknown - for men to reject their headmen. Instead, headmen were supported by their gangs who would strike when a headman was mistreated, or join him in actions against a disliked employer.

The system of migration seems to have developed gradually and patterns were voluntary rather than forced. In the early days, there were few pressures on eastern Liberians to assume migrant status, except perhaps the pressures of headmen in a society where migrant work was a tradition. The Liberian government demanded no taxation and there had been no expropriation

of land. During the 1830s and '40s and '50s, records indicate that agriculture was prospering along the coast. Later, communities had greater difficulty obtaining food because of conflicts between peoples of the coast and interior, but some coastal settlements such as the Glebo towns established interior farming towns. Perhaps up-the-river food resources complemented down-the-coast labor gains, though which developed first no one knows.³¹ Such interior towns may have provided laborers as well.³² In any case the labor changeovers down the coast seemed to fit the agricultural cycle; laborers went down after the harvest and the returnees were back in time to brush and clear the next farms.

Uneven economic development along the coast encouraged the migration of Kru labor. There were more opportunities for wage labor down the coast than at home. Liberia had no large-scale plantation or mining developments in which to work for cash. The Kru and Glebo earned bride wealth for wives and bought goods such as guns and ammunition and especially cloth and clothing which they could not get in Liberia. As the Sasstown chiefs wrote to the colonial governor in Lagos in 1909: "The British pay our boys cloth and all things, but Liberians only buy palm oil from us and only pay pots and tobacco and stock-fish and salt."³³

Liberians were poorer than Nigerians and other West Africans it seems, and Krumen were willing to work for low wages. To the merchants of Lagos and the officials of the Protectorate, they were a bargain, at 1 pound a month or 9d daily.³⁴ European employers argued that they also paid the round trip fare from Liberia and the cost of recruiting, but this still made Kru labor cheaper than labor in the Gold Coast or than Portuguese labor in the Transvaal.³⁵ John Holt, head of a well known merchant house, defended the low wages: "We are not all gold miners in Africa, wasting for the most part other people's money, but we have to do with conditions where economy in a competitive business or industry is absolutely necessary in order to exist."³⁶ Holt's observation makes it quite clear how marginal Liberian migrants really were.

Such low pay was not attractive to Nigerians who evidently rejected Krumen jobs at home and went abroad to find better work in areas like the Gold Coast, where 21,118 Nigerians were residing at the time of the 1921 census. In 1903 the British and Nigerian members of the Central Native Council of Lagos tried to limit Nigerian migration but unanimously agreed - in discussing jobs in the Forcados held by Kru migrants - that wages would have to be increased before Nigerians would take on this work. As Anthony Hopkins has commented, migrant labor may not have produced the low wages but it allowed the British to maintain such standards.³⁷ At least one labor protest in Lagos in 1897 may have failed because the British were able to secure cheap labor abroad for civil service and manual labor needs.³⁸ We have no evidence that Krumen took part in the protest.

Thus one sees that the prosperity and "ease" of Kru migration were purely relative. As time passed, the needs of employers may have led to increased pressure on the migrants. Recruiting agents, both foreign and Liberian, were active along the coast by the 1860s. The establishment of the Native Shipping Bureau by the Liberian Government and the effort to channel the migrant laborers through ports of entry and Liberian officials made further abuses possible. The forced labor to Fernando Po which occurred in the 1920s was not repeated for other centers of migrant labor along the coast, but the scandal

did illustrate the potential of the system for such abuse. In general, however, Liberian actions seemed more likely to restrain than encourage participation in the system.

There was always room for exploitation, and the trip down and back was a struggle. Often laborers were given half of their pay in goods and half in money and they might not receive their pay until their contracts were ended. Employers might give rum and gin instead of wages and headmen might take a share.³⁹ It is not surprising that Krumen - enterprising in any case - developed other sources of income outside their jobs. Some bought merchandise and worked up their own businesses, in one case peddling paddles and parrots on the trip home.⁴⁰ Others made contacts with traders and ship pursers which later resulted in trade for their homes. Many laborers suffered on their return to Liberia. Heavy customs were extracted, sometimes unfairly, at ports of entry, and men were often mugged as they made their way from ports to their towns. Yet even though the pay was low, and obstacles were many, Kruman home communities became slightly more prosperous than the Liberian settler towns whose residents depended on local resources - another evidence of the uneven economic development in this West Coast borderland.

The Nature of the Work and Life down the Coast

If the pay for Krumen was low, the work was hard. The "indispensable gang of Krooboyes" carried on a variety of tasks, primarily connected with trade, commerce and public works in the rivers area and in Lagos. Their jobs were heavy and supposedly unskilled but they often demanded practice and experience. Most of the men did not specialize. All were versatile, assuming many different tasks. Certainly this was true of twenty-three present-day elders from eastern Liberia who talked with me about their work in Nigeria and Ghana in the years from 1897 to 1920 and beyond. From their experience, and from the information recorded by outsiders, one can document the Kruman jobs and Kruman relationships with Britishers and Africans.

Consistently throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, they worked at the ports and up the rivers for shippers and merchants. They were stevedores, cargo lifters, boiler cleaners, steermen, chainpullers, winchmen, launchdrivers for the lighter boats which carried cargo from ship to shore and deckhands who threw the ropes which draw the boats to the docks. They were woodcutters, wood gatherers and stokers for the small wood burning steamers which plied the Oil Rivers. They pulled and cleaned the dozen and a half Niger Company boats and the official fleet - the "Lily," "Orchard," "Daisy," "Violet," or the more appropriately named "Sultan of Socoto" owned by Miller Brothers. In the early decades, during the nineteenth century the Krumen were carriers, carrying salt on their backs from one trading house to another, relaying messages for the African Telegraph Company, acting as porters on any occasion. They helped in stores and "washed plate and passed chop" as stewards in expatriate homes. They were especially skilled at handling the tasks of the palm oil trade. It was Krumen who heated the oil in great cauldrons and put it in new casks, each weighing nearly a ton, and then loaded the casks onto the decks of the outgoing ships. Sometimes they had to transport the heavy containers by surfboat to the ships, a task which demanded great care. In places like Calabar, this palm oil work was their major business, and even in the 1920s when Kru labor was restricted, their services were still preferred for handling the palm oil casks.⁴¹

During the establishment of British colonial rule in Nigeria, the migrants lived as transients under the protection of their masters on old hulks moored in the rivers and later in dormitories on the shore.⁴² They accommodated to British needs in their encounters with Nigerian peoples in the 1880s and 1890s. They rarely fought as members of the troops, and there is no evidence that they made up "the forty thieves," an independent and rapacious police force of the British official "Annesley Baba,"⁴³ but they did take part in skirmishes usually wielding machetes or even canoe paddles instead of rifles. They helped with supporting tasks during British military expeditions, running the boats of the "water force" which backed up Hausa and Yoruba soldiers, building stockades and cutting track for the troops and acting as porters on the way to Benin or Aro. On British orders they impressed debtors or burned towns such as Old Town, part of Old Calabar. Secure in the knowledge that their employers had the superior force, they whipped chiefs and local traders, were arrogant messengers and on one occasion committed murder without suffering the penalty the traditional community would have demanded for that crime.⁴⁴

The Kru also suffered more than the British when peoples' anger broke into action, especially in the days before colonial authority was stabilized. They were stopped and flogged when carrying messages through a troubled region, seized when people did not want outside traders like Millers Brothers cutting wood and occupying their bush. They were the few trading company employees murdered at Asaba, the majority of the two hundred carriers who fell victim in the first expedition to Benin, and the forty to one hundred and twenty Royal Niger Company employees who were killed when Brassmen attacked at Akasa.⁴⁵

In the first two decades of the twentieth century, new types of work and new patterns of living developed. The migrants continued to serve the colonial interests, sometimes benefiting as their British masters became more powerful. At the same time they developed more links with the Nigerian communities. Informants spoke of helping to "build Nigeria," and Dwede Glee of the Glebo town of Cavalla went so far as to call the system "our kind of Peace Corps."⁴⁶ Men were especially proud of their participation in the construction of the Lagos port. They also helped build the railroad which went north from Lagos as they had helped in building rails north from Abidjan and Takoradi. During World War I they defended the British colony against the Germans in the Cameroons, but did so no more willingly than the Nigerians. Many eastern Liberians - some with many years of Western education - worked as civil servants, on the railroad, as postal clerks, and for the police and fire departments. The Fire Brigade of Lagos was almost a Glebo preserve. Former migrants remember how they were called out in 1921 when Herbert Macaulay and Chief Oluwa returned from London, dampening with their hoses the enthusiasm of those who welcomed the two Nigerians at the docks.⁴⁷

Instead of relying on headmen for recruitment, both men and women began making their own way down the coast, or acting independently once they got there. Some came just to stay with relatives who had remained down the coast; others sought medical help. Men leased land and made farms with their wives who also traded in the markets. A few Krumen carried their Efik or Itsekiri wives or girl friends back to Liberia for visits. Laborers changed jobs while in Nigeria. Tom Bestman gave up his contract job working on the Niger Bridge and turned to trapping and hunting.⁴⁸ Stevedores jumped ship and took up

shore tasks. The ports themselves may have been informal labor pools where any employer could turn up a willing Kruman for his business.⁴⁹

Small boys as young as 6 or 8 years old began to tag along with older relatives when they came down the coast, to the annoyance of Liberian and shipping line authorities who could collect no fees from them.⁵⁰ They worked as messengers and store helpers, "on seat," complete with singlets and short pants. One of their main tasks was to "mind the box" for an elder relative. All of the men had trunks, still stacked high in Glebo houses, in which they banked the cloth and clothes to be sent or carried back to families and elders.

Some boys went to school down the coast. Nnamdi Azikiwe first heard of Liberia through a "Krooboy" at Hope Waddell Training Institution in Calabar where a score of Glebo and Kru boys were schooled in the years before the first World War.⁵¹ These boys were supported in school by relatives and British patrons who occasionally tried to get British government funds for them. As one official at Bonny wrote, however, "it is not meet to take the S.N. (Southern Nigerian) children's educational bread and cast it to Krooboy."⁵²

Life became more settled. Although Krumen did not intend to take up permanent residence in Nigeria, individuals began to live outside of dormitories and stay longer than a year. Informants declared that some people "got lost in Nigeria," and never returned to their homes. One incredible story cites a Glebo town behind Lagos whose inhabitants refuse to recognize their Glebo origin.⁵³ In Calabar, some Krumen had houses in Duketown and some lived at the missions, but no settled community developed there despite Ralph Moor's effort to encourage it.⁵⁴ Only in Lagos, where a majority of the Krumen had gone since the 1870s, did a permanent Kru and Glebo community develop. In 1897, the same year in which the Liberians established a Consulate at Lagos staffed by J. S. Leigh, a long-term Lagos resident, Captain G. C. Denton, acting governor, estimated the "floating kroo population" of Lagos at 1,200 persons and declared that it was "impossible to supply its place from local resources."⁵⁵ In 1911 it appears that there were more Krumen in Lagos than in Freetown (2,680) from where some of the Lagos Krumen may have come, illustrating another facet of Kruman peregrinations.⁵⁷

The Kru community was centered on Lagos Island, back of Tinubu Square. Three of my informants were born there, and some eastern Liberians whose fathers were migrants live there today. Many were Christian. Mojola Agbebi held regular services for a Kru congregation of around 350 at his Baptist Chapel and numerous Liberian visitors came to talk.⁵⁷ Others attended St. Andrew's Episcopal Church. The CMS reprinted the Glebo hymnal in 1924 after many copies had been destroyed by Liberians during the confiscation of weapons in eastern Liberia in 1919.⁵⁸ A Glebo primer written by Hne Nyema Killen was also issued in Lagos.

Relations between Kru and other residents of Lagos were not always smooth. They were suspected of theft and on at least one occasion caught and charged. In 1916 the police searched and confiscated some of their boxes and Krumen and women processed to the governor's residence to complain. The Lagos Weekly Record wondered if they would strike. According to E. G. Hodge and S.Y. Wallace, two former travellers down the coast, tension in Lagos erupted

around the water taps in these years for every Kru was suspected of being a night soil man and bringing his pail to the taps.⁵⁹

Such conflicts may have stimulated government effort to provide a reserved area for Krumen at Lagos. A "model village for Krooboys of the better class and their families," housing perhaps 500 Krumen, existed at Apapa as early as 1910.⁶⁰ In 1913-1914, an official effort was made to persuade Kru to move from Lagos Island to Apapa. Two Glebo men did take up the option and still own lands there but informants declare that Krumen did not want to remain permanently in Nigeria or to live in "that bush."⁶¹

One might summarize this section on life and work down the coast by noting that while Kru migrants were hard working and poorly paid, loyal and for the most part uncomplaining toward their British mentors, this description only applies to their life in these alien communities. For, as has been suggested, no Kruman intended to make his home down the coast. What he did in Nigeria was designed to benefit and defend life back home. In the early days, as Krumen moved freely up and down the coast, they did sometimes act aggressively against European shipmasters and merchants when their interests were denied and limited. It was later, during the end of the century and in the early twentieth century that, seeing their homes threatened by Liberian action, they took a somewhat different approach and sought British aid against Liberian efforts to control them and their communities.

Krumen between Liberia and the British

Krumen in the mid-nineteenth century had occasionally reacted strongly to bad treatment by British employers. Ibrahim Sundiata has recounted the situation in the 1840s when Krumen rebelled against their employer, the West African Company, on Fernando Po. They established a short-lived community of 400 at Northwest Bay which was not dispersed until 1846.⁶² Workers who were ill treated on shipboard or at the places where they worked often initiated action against those who mistreated them through their chiefs who complained to authorities or boycotted ship captains.⁶³

An especially interesting effort to improve Krumen conditions was the set of "Krooboy" regulations devised by the National Council of the Glebo in 1874. This council represented chiefs and mission-educated men who had established the Glebo Reunited Kingdom, a confederation of several dako or sections within, but not in opposition to, the Liberian state. The laws were published in the African Times, distributed from London, and they reveal some of the main concerns of migrants.⁶⁴ Krumen were only to be shipped if money was paid to them in advance. No one mistreating Krumen or detaining them for over twelve months would be allowed to recruit again. There was to be no collective punishment for one man's theft. Sick men were to be sent home. Merchants down the coast were to assure that the Krumen would have secure passage directly to their homes.

There is no evidence that the regulations were put into effect. The Glebo Confederation became involved in a war against the Liberian settlement at Cape Palmas less than a year after the laws were made, and the Glebo were forced to surrender by a U.S. warship. After the war, however, similar regulations were issued - this time by the chief of Cape Palmas and the Liberian county superintendent. They were equally pro-Kru and included advance payment of \$4 to

each Kru laborer and heavy fines if Krumen were not returned on time to the places from where they were shipped.⁶⁵ Ship captains and merchants objected strongly to these rules and there is no evidence that they were effective.

In the 1890s and the early 1900s the ship captains and merchants still objected, but now the situation was quite different. The commercial forces and institutions which stood above or behind individual shippers and merchants had grown and joined. It is important to recognize the collusion of these interests and their wide control over the economic situations in which Krumen were involved. A. L. Jones, director of Elder Dempster Shipping Lines, stood at the pinnacle of the interests which determined the terms under which Kru men migrated and worked. He had complete control of all British shipping lines to West Africa. Through the West African Shipping Conference, established in 1895, fixed rates and shipping patterns had also been established with the only shipping line outside his control, the Woermann Line. More important, all the West African merchants had agreed to ship their goods via the Elder Dempster Company controlled lines in return for a 10% rebate. Elder Dempster owned all the shore operations for which Krumen worked, all off-loading services, and controlled the subsidiary companies such as the West African Lighterage and Transportage Ltd., the stores to house palm oil, the coaling companies, the Bank of West Africa. Jones had bought up all the branch line services which employed Krumen. The low wages, which the Lagos Native Council complained of in the Forcados, were probably set by subsidiaries controlled by J.L. Jones.⁶⁶

The situation was made more dramatic by the increased efforts of the Liberian government to control the Krumen. The Liberians began to squeeze the migrants for funds as well as to try to control their home communities. The state was in deep financial trouble. The Liberian state felt continued pressure from British bondholders who had contributed to the loan of 1871, and customs receipts (including taxes on Krumen) were one of Liberia's only sources of funds.⁶⁷ Moreover, Liberian leaders were stimulated to action by increased European aggression in West Africa. They feared the resistance of peoples such as the Glebo and Kru as well as imperialist pressure.

Before the 1890s, the Liberian government had had little impact on the flow of Kru labor. The Port of Entry Act of 1864 had restricted the shipment of Krumen (as well as the trade in goods) to and from the five ports of entry - Cape Mount, Monrovia, Buchanan, Sinoe and Cape Palmas - but the law and a later act of 1873 were not enforced and workers had moved freely back and forth down the coast. Now further legislation was passed and increased efforts were made to control the traffic.

In 1891, the Liberian Legislature established a Native African Shipping Bureau. The Bureau set up a register of all departing workers and of all deaths down the coast as well as a schedule of fees: a two dollar charge for laborers recruited for enterprises down the coast and one dollar a head for stevedores. Liberian consuls were to be appointed in coastal centers to execute articles of agreement with the employers at a fee of \$2.50 per man. The consuls were also to assure the fair treatment of the workers and their safe return. Shipping masters were to provide boats for landing the Kru who were to pay for this service. This was just the beginning. The act of 1891-1892 was supplemented and changed by further legislation passed almost each year from 1897-1898 to 1908-1909. The laws grew more restrictive and the fees higher.

The legislation, like the operations of the Native African Shipping Bureau was often ineffective. The weakness lay partly in the limits of the Liberian bureaucracy which was small and unprepared for the record-keeping and over-seeing operations. The major problem, however, lay in the disregard of the laws by the shippers and merchants who - with the noteworthy exception of the German shippers - were quick to ignore the laws, to ship from wherever it pleased them along the coast and to avoid the tax by claiming that the laborers they carried were only "passengers."⁶⁸ Thus Jones and his representatives not only determined the conditions under which Krumen worked, they also made it difficult for Liberian control of Krumen to become effective.

Jones and the other commercial interests hampered the efforts of the British government, as represented by Foreign and Colonial Office officials and especially Governor Cardew of Sierra Leone, to mediate between the British commercial interests and the Liberian government at the turn of the century. In such negotiations, the Liberians often appeared conciliatory, willing to give up the tax on Krumen or the requirement that shipment take place to and from ports of entry, but not to concede on both.⁶⁹ Liberians were also willing to consider, and suggested, other arrangements. They were resorting to all sorts of alternatives on their own since the laws of the Liberian Legislature had proved ineffective. They overrode the laws and made bilateral arrangements with nations and even individuals. The most important of these, the Humplmayr Agreement, allowed a German citizen (who later turned the right over to a German firm) the exclusive right to ship small groups of laborers to all places except Fernando Po.

The efforts of the British government to mediate terms for the shipment of labor culminated in a Conference on Kroo Labor in October 1902 attended by representatives of commercial and shipping as well as government interests. Governor Cardew attributed the failure of the conference to the diversionary tactics of A.L. Jones. Said Cardew:

Elder Dempster etc. would, I think, rather go on as they are, contravening the Liberian customs regulations, embarking Kroo boys at ports of non-entry and paying the poll-tax on them or not at a port of entry as suits their convenience, than have the matter properly regulated with the Liberian authorities and the necessary restrictions placed on the traffic in the interests of the Liberian Government and the Kroo boys.⁷⁰

Cardew indicated that A. L. Jones's proposals at the conference "savoured somewhat too much of the piratical methods of Hawkins, Frobisher and other worthies of Elizabethan times."⁷¹

The Krumen had no voice and no power in these negotiations, nor in the Liberian efforts at regulation. Following the conference of 1902, John Holt, a conservative businessman himself, noted what little interest conference participants had shown in protecting the interests of the Krumen against carriers and masters and how they had failed to make provisions for proper lodging, food and wages for laborers down the coast.⁷² A. L. Jones's manipulative approach to the Krumen is illustrated in his presentation of the workers as "splendid fellows," "the finest race amongst those teeming millions

of coloured subjects of the King," when he was discussing the Liberian regulations which hampered them and him, but "a shifty and unstable lot of people" when the issue was the conditions under which they worked.⁷³ Even those officials who criticized A. L. Jones were primarily concerned with the Krumen as recruits. Indeed, while trying to persuade the Liberians not to tax Krumen in Liberia, Her Majesty's Government was imposing restrictions and exactions on the Krumen of Sierra Leone.⁷⁴ In later years the British government was to suggest that the Liberian government might refrain from "meddling in the affairs of the Kroo Coast" if each Kru community would pay a fixed sum to the Liberian government.⁷⁵

The Liberian government did not take up the cause of the migrants. In their contests with the British shippers and merchants and government, they were less concerned with the Krumen than with the position of the Liberian state. In these years Glebo migrants complained and petitioned the Liberian government about the exactions from their salaries by merchants down the coast or the collection of customs duties and head taxes at home. Minor alleviations resulted. Some items were excluded from customs duty and some reductions were made in the head tax.⁷⁶ In general, however, Kru migrants suffered rather than benefited from Liberian government actions. Liberians treated the Krumen as commodities. The Legislature negotiated contracts which would allow Greek recruiters to ship laborers off to the Transvaal or Spaniards to recruit for Fernando Po. As a commentator in the Lagos Weekly Record wrote, Americo-Liberians could go abroad without any hindrance but Kru got penalties, "an invidious distinction not designed to inspire Kru loyalty."⁷⁷ As will be noted below, the money gained by taxing Krumen was used against them to purchase or service the gunboats which bombarded eastern Liberian ports whose citizens defied the government.

Krumen complained about the Liberian regulations to the merchants and officials who hired them. They well knew their continued importance as laborers to the British and they recognized that they could depend on British employers down the coast. More and more they sought to transfer that support to situations in Liberia, to help them maintain the independence of their home communities. Two cases illustrate the way Krumen marshalled their contacts from down the coast to the advantage of their homes. One describes the initiatives taken by the Glebo of Cavalla when their town was in revolt against the Liberian Government, 1888-1896. The other indicates the actions of the Kru during tensions in 1908-1909 between Grand Cess and the Liberian Government.

Cavalla, a major center of laborers for Lagos and the towns of South-eastern Nigeria, and a major center of trade, objected to the increased restrictions of the Liberian government in the mid-1880s. Cavallans declared their independence, and they used all their international connections to maintain it: Wm. Woodin, a Bristol trader, whom they knew as a former purser on Elder Dempster ships, was persuaded to send agents to the town; Cavallans travelling to Liverpool made contact with Irish traders as well as Liverpool merchants.⁷⁸ When Liberians finally secured a gunboat, the Gorrannah, and used it to blockade Cavalla, Cavallans turned to their British government contacts down the coast. They wrote to the British consuls in Opobo and Calabar.⁷⁹

Consul Ralph Moor of Calabar wrote to the Foreign Office about the situation. He used the argument he (and the Krumen) knew would have most effect.

"Any interference with the natives in their free engagement for service must materially affect British trade," he said.⁸⁰ The British government, through Governor Cardew who visited Monrovia, urged Liberian President Arthur Barclay to removed the gunboat and stop the blockade.⁸¹ The interdict ended, but the victory of the Liberian forces and not British intervention led to this result. Thus one can say that, although Cavallan contacts made during their labor down the coast assisted them during their independence, these contacts did not allow them to maintain that freedom.

In Grand Cess, resistance was more spontaneous and less organized than in the Cavalla revolt. The people of Grand Cess had challenged the Liberian government earlier, in 1897. In 1908 they - and the people of Sasstown as well - refused Liberian authority. In 1909, they tore the Liberian flag to pieces and drove out the Liberian commissioner.⁸² When, as a result, the Liberian government held 52 returning laborers at Cape Palmas and confiscated their boxes, the chiefs of Grand Cess immediately sent letters to Fosbery, governor of the Southeastern Province in Nigeria. As Sasstown chiefs had done a year earlier during similar unrest, they claimed that they were really British subjects and referred to a treaty that their ancestors had signed with the British.⁸³ The chiefs urged the British officials to try to procure the release of the men and their belongings.

In Lagos, the Grand Cess Kru backed up their request with demonstrations. On January 24, 1909, about 3,250 Krumen marched down Broad Street and through the center of town. They held a meeting and decided to petition the Governor about the problems they met when returning to Liberia.⁸⁴ In February, a deputation of over 500 Krumen visited the agent of Elder Dempster, to request that he ask A. L. Jones to use his influence in Liberia to gain ports of entry.⁸⁵ Concern mounted. The Lagos Chamber of Commerce, the Colonial Secretary, and the Lagos Weekly Times all expressed anxiety over Liberian restraint on Kru labor and informed others.⁸⁶

The appeals had limited effect, however. The British consul in Monrovia, Braithwaite Wallis, discussed the matter with President Barclay who took steps to release the men and assure against further molestations. But the larger issues which concerned Kru freedom to travel without restraint were not settled in the favor of the migrants, and the town of Grand Cess was forced to pay heavy fines, probably contributed by Kru migrants, for the earlier defiant acts.⁸⁷

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to illumine some characteristics of migrant Krumen culture. The fact that Krumen came from a variety of communities in Eastern Liberia, often hostile to each other, may have prevented them from recognizing the common elements of the migrant life that they shared. Moreover, the culture was not represented by one common community down the coast any more than it reflected a common community at home. The number of participants who migrated yearly was small, even though large numbers were involved over time. Yet what is so fascinating is that the workers shared a cosmopolitan travel and work experience, unusual in any age. Each person had worked on so many different jobs and in so many different communities that the intersections among them were many.

One aspect of Kruman migrant culture which remained constant throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was the extraordinary attachment which they all maintained for their home communities. As has been illustrated, the system of migration was integrated with the institutions of the societies of which they were members along the coast. The men themselves always stressed the temporary nature of their work down the coast, even when as in the twentieth century they began to stay abroad for longer periods of time. It is interesting that the Krumen were most aroused against employers not by poor wages or living and working conditions but by the failure of employers to send them home promptly at the end of their year's contract, and to ship them straight to their homes. Thus, though they took on a proletariat status down the coast, readily selling their labor, consistently performing their jobs, it was their rural communities and the lives there to which they were most attached.

It was this consistent identification with the societies into which they were born which accounts for their cooperative stance toward their employers down the coast. George Brooks in his study of the Kru mariners found an almost total absence of any reference to Kru strikes or violent threats to their employers.⁸⁸ In Nigeria, they were not evident troublemakers but further research may reveal that they played aggressive roles in such protests as the labor uprising of 1897, the disturbances at the Lagos docks in 1919, and the Marine Department Strike of 1920.⁸⁹ The attachment to their British employers, as we have seen, was not merely a result of the fact that they "chewed off white people" down the coast. They also sought British support against the Liberians who loomed as the greater antagonist because they threatened the homes which the Krumen cherished most.

Yet the Krumen were not particularly well served by British interests. The British shippers and merchants and officials sometimes met the desires of their Kru constituents by objecting to Liberian laws regulating Kru labor, because of course this coincided with their own interest in acquiring cheap labor. The diplomatic pressures which were exerted by the British government on Liberia rarely had much effect. The supports from Western countries generally including Britain and the U.S. for use against the communities to which the Kru migrants belonged were substantial and effective. For example, the gunboat which Liberia used to blockade the port of Cavalla in the 1890s was made in the same Liverpool whose commercial sectors objected to the blockade. The Lark which bombarded Grand Cess in 1909 was also English, purchased with funds raised from the tax on Krumen. In 1910 and in 1915, when peoples in eastern Liberia became involved in widespread wars against the Liberian government, the state was able to depend upon battleships from the U.S. Navy to threaten these centers of migrant labor with bombardment, as they had depended upon the U.S. in 1843 and 1875. In the face of such contradictions, we should not be surprised at the ineffectualness of British support for Kru interests, nor at the Liberian ability to survive.

Students of Liberian societies still continue the search to understand how the communities of eastern Liberia are organized, how they relate to each other, the boundaries that they maintain, the identities which they recognize and the changes which have occurred in this last century. The migrant labor system has played a role in the changing development of these societies. These changes, including the confrontation of new "seaboy" groups with the old order, the development of petty merchants, the new tools which Christianity

furnished for fighting old and new battles are the focus of other studies such as those of Elizabeth Tonkin.⁹⁰ One of her conclusions adds to the contradictions revealed in this study: the new "seaboys" of Sasstown who challenged the Liberian authorities when they were down the coast were to take on a different stance in later years. They challenged the traditional order, and, in the end, became the agents of Liberia in their home towns.

A Note on Sources

The materials for this study have been collected from a large number of diverse sources, both written and oral. The following archives have been consulted:

Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, Protestant Episcopal Church Archives, Austin, Texas: DFMS

Colonial Office and Foreign Office records of the Government of Great Britain, Public Record Office, Kew, England: C.O. and F.O.

National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, Nigeria: NAE

National Archives of Nigeria, Ibadan, Nigeria: NAI

Republic of Liberia Archives, Monrovia, Liberia: RLA

The following persons discussed "going down the coast" with me on several different occasions. All but two were over 70 years of age and six (+) were in their mid-eighties or over when I spoke with them in 1976.

Wia Sie Emmanuel Shems, Sunday Neufville, +Nyeble Kla, Dode Sie, +Yudubuo Griffith, +Kla Dio, +Kla Mle Dabe, +Kla Budu, Kwia (Dwede) Glee, Glee Hneye, Gbede Collins, +Wudi Wah Bedell, all from the town of Cavalla; Himie Toe, from Fishtown

DoSame Wallace, Dominic Merriam, Thomas Wa Allison, David Nyenati Elliot, +Edwin Cahie Hodge, and Philip Seton, from Harper, Cape Palmas;

Walter Too Hodge and Yabo Gyide Hodge from Barrake.

Although the written sources have been numerous, the references have been few and rarely comprehensive or authoritative because of the contemporary writers' ignorance of the authentic life style of the Krumen. The study is somewhat skewed because oral evidence was collected primarily from Glebo elders.

Notes

¹George Brooks has done an interesting and thorough study of The Kru Mariner (Newark, Delaware: Liberian Studies Association, 1970) which describes and documents the history and nature of their crewing activities. Christine Behrens has given information about crewing and migrant labor activities in Les Kroumanes du Côte d'Occidentale de l'Afrique (Bordeaux, France: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1974), no. 18. Ronald Davis's Ethno-historical Studies on the Kru Coast (Newark, Del., 1975) has also been helpful for this study .

²Richard Burton, Wanderings in West Africa (London, 1863), Vol. II, 34.

³Johnston to Salisbury, "A Report on the British Protectorate of the Oil Rivers," Dec. 1888, F.O. 83.1882; George Goldie to F.O. October 30, 1902.

⁴See for example, Ralph Moor to Secretary of State, Sept. 24, 1892. CSO 2/2/1. CALPROF, NAE.

⁵Nnamdi Azikiwe, Liberia in World Politics (London, 1932), 23; Edgerton to Crewe, Dec. 8, 1908, F.O. 367.138/1909 File 1101; Joseph Casely Hayford, William Wade Harris (London, 1915), 14. The Ghanaians and Nigerians among whom the Krumen worked were not so complimentary as the Europeans. The Fanti of Ghana referred to them, in a derogatory song, as dabo (a mountain deer with facial markings like those of the Kru). The relations between Fanti and Glebo Krumen is not helped by the fact that the Glebo men believe dabo is not a mountain deer but a beetle which eats excrement (nyini di nmako in Glebo). The Efik people of Calabar called the Krumen menekusi or nwinikosi, variously interpreted as "How much does it cost?" or "the Windward Coast" and possibly derived from the word mena, the term used by the Glebo about Kru from the five towns, and thought by missionaries like J.L. Wilson to apply to all Kru peoples. Mary Kingsley, Travels in West Africa (London, 1965 reprint), Appendix I "Trade and Labour in West Africa," 646; Hugh Goldie, Dictionary of the Efik Language (Franborough, Eng, 1964 reprint), 628; Chief E. E. Ekpenyong of Calabar, Interview; J. L. Wilson, Western Africa (London, 1854).

⁶According to MacDonell of the British Foreign Office, Liberian migrant laborers were divided between those from western Liberia such as the Vai, Gola, Dei and Kpelle who shipped to Fernando Po, Cameroon or the Congo and wanted to have some advance in pay before they left, and those from eastern Liberia who went primarily to Ghana and Nigeria and preferred to be paid in English money. The records of the Native African Shipping Bureau, 1891-1894, RLA, also reveal this distinction but it must be remembered that Kru and Glebo as well as Vai and Gola and other western Liberian went to Cameroon and Namibia. MacDonell to F.O., May 20, 1903, F.O. 47.36.

⁷L. B. Breitborde, "Some Linguistic Evidence in the Study of Kru Ethno-linguistic Affiliation," Liberian Studies Journal, VIII, 2 (1976-7), 109-120.

⁸Grebo conventionally refers to the interior as well as the coastal peoples who speak related languages. Glebo is used only for those "seaside" Grebo who live in the area from Fishtown to the Cavalla River. Several scholars of Liberia have contributed to the discussion of Grebo-Kru ethnicity, including L. B. Breitborde, Frederick D. McEvoy ("Understanding Ethnic Realities Among the Grebo and Kru Peoples of West Africa," Africa XLVII, 1 (1977), 62-79); Jo Sullivan ("Settlers in Sinoe County, Liberia, and their Relations with the Kru c. 1835-1920," Ph.D dissertation, Boston University, 1978), Ibrahim Sundiata, and Elizabeth Tonkin ("Sasstown's Transformation: The Jlaio Kru, 1888-1918," Liberian Studies Journal, VIII, 1 (1979), forthcoming).

¹⁰In the effort to place Kru transit migration in a broader context I have benefited from a variety of studies including Samir Amin, ed., Modern Migrations in Western Africa (Oxford, 1974), especially the introduction; Giovanni Arrighi, "Labor Supplies in Historical Perspective: A study of the Proletarianization of the African Peasantry in Rhodesia," Journal of Development Studies VI, 3 (1970), 197-234; "Migration and the Transformation of Modern African Society," 1978/1 issue of African Perspectives edited by H. A. Meilink and Wm. M. J. Van Binsbergen; Colin Newbury's "Labour Migration in the Imperial Phase: An Essay in Interpretation," The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, III, 2 (Jan., 1975), 234-256; "Migration and Underdevelopment," by Alejandro Portes, Politics and Society, VIII, 1 (1978), 1-48.

¹¹There is a brief discussion of "peripheral domestic communities" in the introduction to "Migration and the Transformation of Modern African Societies," by Binsbergen and Meilink, African Perspectives, 1978/1, 15.

¹²E. Shems, Interview, September 3, 1976, Monrovia, and confirmed widely by other informants.

¹³Barbara Harrell-Bond, Allen M. Howard, and David E. Skinner, Community Leadership and the Transformation of Freetown (1801-1976) (New York, 1978), 71.

¹⁴Thomas Ludlam, "An Account of the Kroomen on the Coast of Africa," African Repository I (1826), 44.

¹⁵Behrens, Les Kroumanes, 44.

¹⁶Johnston to F.O., January 15, 1887, F.O. 84.1839.

¹⁷Burton, Wanderings, II, 21.

¹⁸A Proclamation of President H.R.E. Johnson, R.L., January 23, 1887 gave permission for up to 5000 laborers to be shipped to Panama. Quoted in I. K. Sundiata, "The Rise and Decline of Kru Power," Liberian Studies Journal, VI, 1 (1974), 28-34. Kroomen to Dixon, Mar. 5, 1892, Records of the Native African Shipping Bureau, RLA.

¹⁹Barclay to HMG Acting Consul Gen., June 9, 1919, Department of State, Foreign Correspondence 1912-19, RLA; Baldwin to Secty of State, F.O., April 7, April 27, July 22, 1911, F.O. 367.233.

²⁰African Repository XL, 10(October, 1864).

²¹The first figures are derived from statements of Kroomen passengers carried by steamers of the British and African Steamship Company, Mar. 1875 - Mar., 1876, and April 1876 - Mar., 1877. Cunliffe to F.O., May 4, 1877 (enclosures). F.O. 84.1498. Brass Pan, alias Bagary and others, Old Calabar, to the American Missionaries of Cape Palmas and Cavally, Feb. 26, 1872, DFMS, discuss the workers at Calabar. "The Estimate for the financial year 1896-7 for the Niger Coast Protectorate," and the letter enclosing the estimate, gives information about the Krumen working in the Public Works and Marine Departments, etc. MacDonald to F.O., January 1, 1896, F.O. 2.100.

²²Ibid.; Cardew to F.O., Feb. 15, 1900, F.O. 47.30.

²³Anaury Talbot, The Peoples of Southern Nigeria, Vol. IV: Linguistics and Statistics (London, 1969 reprint of 1926 edition), 24, 152; Raymond Leslie Buell, The Native Problem in Africa (London, 1965 reprint of 1928 edition), Vol. II, 774.

²⁴Talbot, The Peoples of Southern Nigeria, Vol IV, 180; Legislative Council Papers no. 10, 1912. Subject: Census Reports, 1911, NAE Library.

²⁵H.N. King, "Memorandum Respecting the Importation of Labor from Liberia," Dec. 14, 1925 (Confidential Print), F.O. 371.11135; Memorandum from Maxwell, Secty, So. Provinces, to the Resident, Calabar Province, Aug. 6, 1918, CALPROF 5/5/576, NAE.

²⁶Tonkin, "Sasstown's Transformation," forthcoming.

²⁷Joseph Reading, A Voyage Along the Western Coast of Newest Africa (Philadelphia, 1901), 97; John Whitford, Trading Life in Western and Central Africa (Liverpool, 1877), 55.

²⁸See Sundiata, Black Scandal, 166, n. 13.

²⁹Primary School Log Book, 1894-1908, Hope Waddell Training Institution, Calabar, Nigeria.

³⁰Wm. Blanchard, Supt. African Direct Telegraph Co. to Annesley, April 22, 1890, Confidential Print, F.O. 84.2020.

³¹Tonkin, "Sasstown's Transformation," forthcoming. Frederick McEvoy, "Traditional and Contemporary Patterns in Sabo Labor Migration," Liberian Studies Journal, II, 2 (1970), 154-5. My own researches indicate that the upriver farming areas of the Glebo increased and became more important to them in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

³²Ibid.

³³King Wuseh and King Wiah and all the chiefs of Cesstown to the Colonial Governor, Lagos, CALPROF, CSE 3/1/1 B.125/09, NAE; After World War II, said Mr. Dominic Merriam, people who came back from "down the coast" found their friends and relatives in Liberia better dressed than themselves and he declared that this was one reason for the decline in the labor traffic. Interview, May 10, 1976, Harper.

³⁴O. J. Payne, Payne's Lagos and West African Almanack, 1886 (Ibadan University Library, Ibadan, Nigeria), 55 gives some representative figures.

³⁵F.O. to Holt, Dec. 31, 1903, F.O. 47.36.

³⁶Holt to F.O., Feb. 6, 1904, F.O. 47.36. In the answer to this letter Foreign Office officials agreed with Holt, June 13, 1904, F.O. 47.36.

³⁷Anthony G. Hopkins, An Economic History of West Africa (N.Y., 1973), 225, 231.

³⁸A.G. Hopkins, "The Lagos Strike of 1897: an Exploration in Nigerian Labour History," Past and Present, XXV (Dec., 1966), 145-47.

³⁹H.C. Moorhouse, Secty, So. Provinces, to Commissioner, Calabar Provinces, Sept. 4, CALPROF, 5/4/471, c.895/14, NAE.

⁴⁰Bindloss, In the Niger Country. 128-9. Anthony Hopkins mentions other sources of income for migrants, but does not elaborate in "The Lagos Strike," 148-9.

⁴¹For Kru participation in the palm oil trade, see Joseph Reading, The Ogowe Band (Philadelphia, 1890), 190-1; Archer Crouch, Glimpses of Feverland (London, 1889), 25-45. Behrens, Les Kroumanes, 70. The records of the Maryland Colonization Society reveal that the palm oil business had been actively practiced by the peoples of Grand Cess since early in the 1840s.

⁴²These hulks were former "East India men" bought cheap by merchants in England, sailed out around July and August and stripped and roofed in thatch. Alexander Cowan, "Early Trading Conditions in the Bight of Biafra," Journal of the African Society," part II, XXXIV (1935), 397; Crouch, Glimpses of Feverland, 9-11.

⁴³J.C. Anene identifies the "forty thieves" as Kroomen in Southern Nigeria in Transition (Cambridge, Eng., 1966), 106, but I have not been able to confirm this identification. The name is given in MacDonald to Salisbury, Aug. 8, 1891, F.O. 403.171.

⁴⁴Annesley to Secty of State, June 28, 1890, F.O. 84.2020, describes a murder by Krumen in Calabar and the "battle" between the Grand Cess Kru and the Efiks afterward.

⁴⁵For Asaba see Hewett to Granville, Nov. 16, 1882, F.O. 403.18; for Akasa, MacDonald to F.O., Feb. 4, 1895 with enclosures, F.O. 2.83. Fourteen Kru children were returned and were carried back to Liberia on the same ship with Bindloss. Bindloss, In the Niger Country, 100-2.

⁴⁶Dwede Glee, Interview, April 19, 1976, Cavalla.

⁴⁷Sunday Neufville, Interview, Dec. 19, 1977, Monrovia.

⁴⁸Bestman to Provisional Commissioner, Sept. 15, 1913, CALPROF 14/6/1132, NAE.

⁴⁹Elliot Berg, "The Recruitment of a Labor Force in Sub-Saharan Africa" (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1960), 222 n. 62.

⁵⁰Moore to Dixon, January, 1894, Records of the Native African Shipping Bureau, RLA; Adansi Inquiry, enclosed with Jones to Langley, Apr. 21, 1909, File 15143, F.O. 367.138.

⁵¹ Superintendent's Roll Book, 1894-1913, Hope Waddell Training Institution, Calabar, Nigeria. Dr. Yudubuo Griffith, Cavalla, who spent several years at Hope Waddell, told me that 24 Cavallans were studying there in the late 1890s and early twentieth century. They may have been registered under Efik names since many Glebo men had such names given them by Efik friends; Azikiwe, My Odyssey, 31-2.

⁵²Douglas of Bonny to Provisional Commissioner, Calabar, 1906, CALPROF 16/1/143, NAE.

⁵³DoSame Wallace, Edwin Gahie Hodge, Interview, May 2, 1976, Barrake.

⁵⁴Moor to F.O., March 13, 1896, F.O. 47.30.

⁵⁵Denton to F.O., April 5, 1897, F.O. 47.36.

⁵⁶Talbot, The Peoples of Southern Nigeria, Vol. IV, 180.

⁵⁷Lagos Weekly Record, April 10, April 17, 1909; Oct. 4, 1913; Oct. 3, 1914.

⁵⁸Copies of the original Glebo Hymnal had been destroyed in 1919 during a Liberian Government raid and bookburning in Cavalla. S. Neufville, Sept 10, Sept. 19, 1976, Monrovia; DoSame Wallace and Edwin Gahie Hodge, Interview, May 2, 1976, Barrake.

⁵⁹This information comes from interviews only and has not been mentioned in written records. Sunday Neufville, Sept. 10, 1976, Dec. 15, 1977; Edwin Gahie Hodge, June 13, 1976. Both indicated that the riot occurred in 1913-1914. A similar riot also occurred in Sekondi in the 1920s according to informants.

⁶⁰Ibid.; "Annual Report on the Medical Department for the year 1910," Legislative Council Papers, 1912, no. 3, NAE Library.

⁶¹Interviews, Sunday Neufville, Sept 10, 1976, Dec. 15, 1977, Monrovia.

⁶²Sundiata, "Rise and Decline of Kru Power."

⁶³Two articles by the Commander of HMG Ship "Torch" in the African Times, XII (July 23, 1872), 133; Cunliffe to F.O., March 28, 1872, F.O. 84.1498. The reports of the investigation by the Board of Trade have been destroyed.

⁶⁴"New Regulations in Hiring Kroomen at Cape Palmas," issued by Sear Nybar Weah, King of the Cedeboes or Kroo people at Cape Palmas and parts adjacent, January 29, 1874, printed in African Times, XIII, 154 (April 30, 1874), 39.

⁶⁵"Regulations for Hiring Kroomen," enclosed with Griffith to Elder Dempster, March 21, 1877, enclosed with Cunliffe to F.O., Mar 28, 1877, F.O. 84.1498.

⁶⁶See P.N. Davies, The Trade Makers: Elder Dempster in West Africa, 1852-1972 (London, 1973), 107-126.

⁶⁷For information on Liberian financial obligations to the British bondholders as well as other aspects of British-Liberian relations see David M. Foley, "British Policy in Liberia, 1862-1912," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of London, 1965), chs. 2 and 3.

⁶⁸Henson to Dixon, May 25 and Aug. 27, 1892; Dixon to Moore, Aug. 10, 1894, Records of the Native African Shipping Bureau, 1891-94, RLA. It was estimated that no tax was paid on 1/3 to 1/2 of the Krumen who left Liberia to work abroad.

⁶⁹Cardew to F.O., June 14, 1894 and May 17, 1895, F.O. 47.24; Agreement enclosed with Cardew to F.O., June 3, 1897, F.O. 47.30; Wingfield Co. to F.O., Jan. 13, 1899, and Cardew to F.O., Mar. 10, 1897, F.O. 47.30. Proposal attached to Aug. 8, 1892, Gibson to Cheeseman, Executive Mansion General Correspondence, 1888-92, RLA.

⁷⁰Cardew to Campbell, Oct. 4, 1902, F.O. 47.36.

⁷¹Ibid.

- ⁷²Holt to Foreign Office, Oct. 15, 1902, F.O. 47.36.
- ⁷³Lagos Weekly Record, Jan. 8, 1910; Jones to F.O., Sept. 24, 1902, F.O. 47.36; Jones to C.O., July 10, 1900, Confidential Print, Oct. 30, 1902, F.O. 47.30.
- ⁷⁴Buell, The Native Problem, I, 13.
- ⁷⁵Minute by Lister on Edgerton to Crewe, Dec. 8, 1908, F.O. 367.138, 1909, File 1101.
- ⁷⁶Barclay to chiefs, Aug. 7, 1907, enclosure with Secty of Navy to Secty of State, June 1, 1910, NA 882.00/367; Fray to Wilson, Mar. 9, 1903, XXVIII, 2 American Colonization Society Records, Library of Congress; Acts of the Legislature, Republic of Liberia, 1908-9; 481 "The War at Cape Palmas," Lagos Weekly Record, July 9, 1910.
- ⁷⁷Lagos Weekly Record, Jan. 30, 1909. John Payne Jackson, the editor of the Lagos Weekly Record had spent his early life in Liberia and moved to Lagos in the 1870s. He expressed ambivalent feelings toward the Liberian government in his paper. On the one hand, he defended the independent black state from expressions of imperialist attitudes. On the other hand, he criticized Liberians for their disregard of the original inhabitants. See for instance an article of March 13, 1915, against the Nigerian Pioneer newspaper which was trying to "saddle Liberia with the responsibility of the backwardness or non-progressiveness of the Kroos." The editors proclaimed that Liberia had done more for the native element than any European power.
- ⁷⁸Jones to Cheeseman, January 19, 1894, Executive Mansion General Correspondence, RLA; Valentine, Russell and Collins to Johnson, Apr. 23, 1887, Gibson to Johnson, July 13, 1888, Executive Mansion General Correspondence, RLA.
- ⁷⁹Cavalla men at Opobo to the Vice Consul, Opobo, Oct. 22, 1895, F.O. 47.24; Moor to Foreign Office, Nov. 7, 1895; Mar. 13, 1896, F.O. 47.24.
- ⁸⁰Moore to F.O., Nov. 7, 1895, F.O. 47.24.
- ⁸¹Cardew to F.O., June 3, 1896, F.O. 47.30.
- ⁸¹Williams, Adventures, 11.
- ⁸³Grand Cess had sent a deputation first to Accra and then to Sierra Leone in 1897, protesting Liberia's jurisdiction over their town and reminding the Governor, Cauldfield, of Grand Cess's treaty with Great Britain. Actually this was an anti-slave trade agreement which contained no article giving Britain rights over the territory. Cauldfield to the Foreign Office, Nov. a 4, 1897, F.O. 47.26.
- ⁸⁴Police Office James Owen, Jan. 28, 1909, CALPROF, CSE 35/1/24 NAE.
- ⁸⁵Elder Dempster Agent to F.O., Feb. 19, 1909, F.O. 367.138, File 1101.
- ⁸⁶Col. Secty to Secty of State, June 22, 1908, CALPROF, CSE 1/8/18, AN 3302/08, NAE; Lagos Weekly Record, Jan. 30, 1909.

⁸⁷Langley to Baldwin, June 24, 1909, CALPROF, CSE 73836, C/543/09, NAE; Lagos Weekly Record, Mar. 27, 1909.

⁸⁸Brooks, The Kru Mariner, 57.

⁸⁹Reference to these strikes appears in "An Emerging Nigerian Working Class: The Lagos Experience 1897-1939," by Arnold Hughes and Robin Cohen, African Labor History, ed. by Peter C.W. Gutkind, Robin Cohen and Jean Copans (London, 1978), 39.

⁹⁰Tonkin, "Sasstown's Transformation," forthcoming.