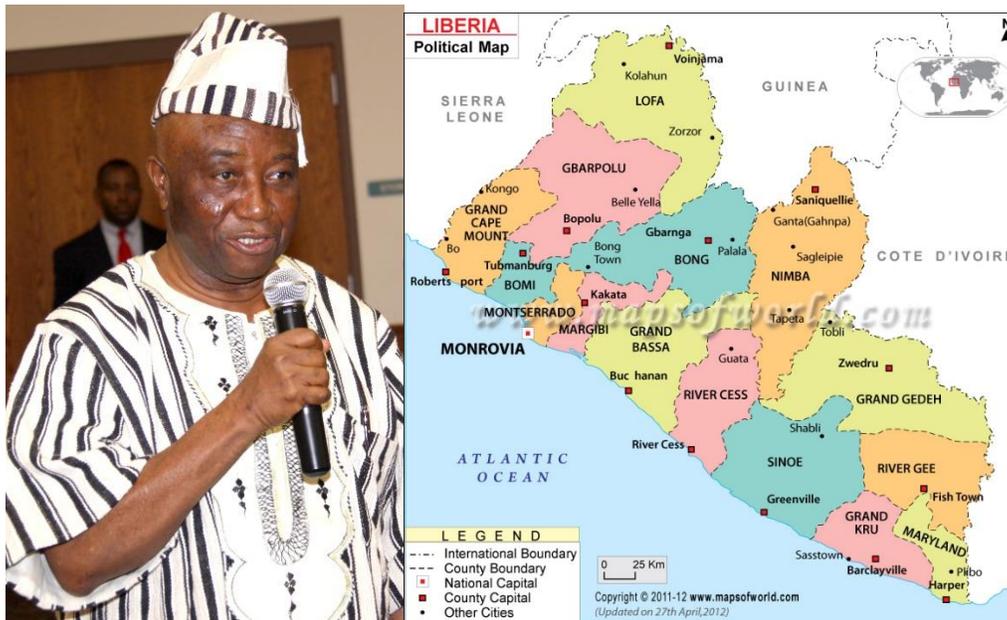


Behold the “Massagi”, the Father of the Liberian Nation and People!



Our African and Liberian traditions dictate that we respect our elders, cherish them, and learn from their fountain of wisdom and knowledge while they are alive. Also, there is a Krahn parable that states: “Good is never lost when the old wise one is under the palm wine tree.” Fortunately, Liberians can boast of a “Massagi” (a Lorma word that means “Chief” or “ruler”), the Father of the Liberian nation and people, who has served his people diligently for twelve years under the administration of the first female elected President on the continent of Africa. Indeed, that is groundbreaking for the Republic of Liberia, which is Africa’s oldest Republic and trailblazer of Black self-rule. Hence, prior to the civil war, Liberia had always been a haven for all Blacks and other races that come from across the globe to seek freedom and refuge from wars and political repression.

Thus, as a Massagi, His Excellency Joseph Nyumah Boikai humbly served as the second-in-command and as the father of our homeland with a single lady (formerly married and divorced) as head of the Liberian household. Of course, in our African tradition, it is usually the other way around, with the man being head of the household and that traditionally the President of Liberia has always had a spouse. However, in this modern-day time, accommodations were made, and the roles were reversed. Nevertheless, Dr. Boikai kept his cool. He did not complain or feel humiliated because his goal was to achieve peace and reconciliation while serving under a warlord whose ulterior motive is to use her global connections and power to destroy Liberia totally. Further, the presence of Dr. Boikai by the side of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf brought dignity and respect to our overall image of Liberia as a unified family with a father and mother team. It provided a balanced homely feeling for most of us who come from homes where both parents worked together to keep our families unified. It made us feel good to be led by a mother and father figure because Dr. Boikai humbled himself so that peace and reconciliation will prevail in our homeland.

However, despite the recent and abrupt change of color and deception displayed by Mrs. Sirleaf, the Standard Bearer of the Unity Party, who has openly displayed her usual deceptive characteristic in favor of George Weah, Standard Bearer of an opposing political party, Dr. Boikai did not go on an ego trip; he did not disrespect Mrs. Sirleaf but performed with due diligence his assigned task as Vice President of Liberia. Dr. Boikai has maintained his composure as a seasoned diplomat and politician even during the worst of times when Mrs. Sirleaf was utterly disrespectful and sometimes envious of Dr. Boikai's clean human rights record. Here, it is worthy to note for national and international record, that Dr. Boikai did not participate or finance the Liberian Civil War as his boss Mrs. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf did. She even admitted during the Liberia Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) hearing that she contributed financially to the initial launch of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), to invade Liberia and consequently cause the death of over a quarter million people.

Therefore, it is obvious why now after Vice President Boikai served Mrs. Sirleaf so faithfully, the President cannot say "Thank you, good and faithful servant" as every good leader ought to say to his or her faithful servant. Instead, she has glaringly neglected the Party that led her to victory on two separate occasions, to support an opposition leader that she can micro-manage when she leaves office to safeguard Mrs. Sirleaf and her supporters from being prosecuted for war crimes committed against the citizens of Liberia and Sierra Leone, respectively. This speaks to the hidden agenda of Mrs. Sirleaf to lead our homeland in turmoil when she exits the national stage in few months. Consequently, this brings us to the junction of roads at which we must make an informed decision regarding who takes over the helm of state after Mrs. Sirleaf leaves. Below are some key observations I would like to share with all Liberians and the international community regarding why I strongly believe Vice President Boikai will be the better of the two choices we have vying for the presidency.

Liberians at a Crossroad

Today, Liberians are at a crossroad: Soon, we will be going back to the polls to elect the successor to Mrs. Sirleaf. Fortunately, the choices have been narrowed down for us to two distinct individuals and candidates: Vice President Joseph Nyumah Boikai and former soccer star, George Weah. In terms of maturity and experience, in terms of who is more capable to rule as head of the Liberian household, and with respect to who can represent the Liberian nation and people with dignity and respect as a fatherly figure, and with eloquence, the opinion of most patriotic Liberians sways in favor of Dr. Boikai. The reason is because running a state requires seasoned statesmen and women who have sound political and leadership knowledge about the day to day affairs of state, the diverse peoples that constitute the demographics of the nation, and how to keep them united, especially after fighting a bloody civil war that has torn apart the entire infrastructure of Liberia.

Notwithstanding, this does not mean that George Weah cannot play a key role in the reconstruction process of Liberia. He can, but when it comes to a postwar society, a prolonged and bloody civil crisis that traumatized majority of the citizens, it requires a team of committed experts and patriots to clean up the mess that Mrs. Sirleaf, Charles Taylor, and their cohorts have created in Liberia. It requires a leader that will not be pulled by the nose by his proxies in the

background, just as Emmanuel Shaw did Samuel Kanyon Doe. Such background dictators were always in the habit of writing “by directive of the President” letters to get their aims accomplished when the President did not have the slightest notion what was taking place.

George Weah’s Deficiencies



George Weah may have the skills to dribble his way on the soccer pitch, and/or to gain the empathy of the Liberian people when he said” “I want be Senator for Monrovia”, and the Liberian people subsequently elected him Senator of Montserrado County without requesting from George Weah his political platform. This speaks to the blind loyalty of his supporters and their lack of civic education with regards to the democratic and electoral process. Consequently, Liberians allowed that to slide under the table, even though Mr. Weah has yet to ably demonstrate his competence to serve as Senator of Montserrado County.

On the contrary, it is completely different from being the leader of Liberia which calls for active interactions with other African heads of states and world leaders and governments. It is a different ball game particularly when it comes to being abreast of and contributing toward the global conversations of the twenty-first century. This is a key leadership attribute George lacks. Therefore, it is safe to say we cannot rely on George Weah being coached by his naïve circle of friends each time he is expected to represent us on the international scene.

We went through that embarrassment with Samuel Doe as President in name, while Emmanuel Shaw and the likes of him were in charge in the background. However, there are other pivotal roles Weah can play in the Liberian society such as focusing on what he does best—being a soccer icon, a world class sportsman—but not as President of Liberia—because he lacks the intellectual and lifetime experience to handle the affairs of the Liberian nation at this time.

Also, we all know what putting a misfit in high positions of public trust has led us to---a devastating civil war from which we are still desperately trying to recover. In addition, a George Weah leadership with Jewel Taylor as his Vice President could have some very serious political and historical repercussions. The following passage about “Plotters” or forced laborers and the “chamber bucket” story regarding how poor Liberians back in the day carried the chamber buckets of parents of Weah’s present day affiliates further explain details why we should not accept the present ticket of the CDC because it will be very dangerous for our hard-earned freedoms and liberties as citizens of Liberia, the majority of whom have for more than a century been subjugated to political, social, and economic neglect, neo-slavery, and the denigration of our cultural heritage as Indigenous sons and daughters of the Liberian soil.

The “Plotters” and “Chamber Bucket” Syndromes



I am aware that most of you reading this article may be what is now known as Millennials—meaning you were born in the late 1980s and during the twenty-eight-year civil war in Liberia. Here, I argue that the civil war continues unabated because even though the guns have been silenced, those who committed atrocious acts against Liberians and humanity are still roaming the corridors of power and wealth in Liberia, which is unlike the situation in neighboring Sierra Leone where warlords no longer exist! However, this does not mean that we who are your elders cannot share some historical facts and secrets with you. That is the purpose of history—to make us aware of our past and present so that we can chart a better course for ourselves in the future.

Back in the day in Liberia when “Who know you” was at its peak (George Weah was not born then) there were certain families in Liberia that were born with ‘silver spoons’ in their mouths. They were the privileged few and the rest of the population from the Indigenous sect and poor Congor and Americo-Liberian settlements constituted the poor of society. The fathers of the privileged few who are now supporting Weah’s candidacy ruled most of the Liberian people with iron fists: they made the poor people in the hinterland and on the coastal areas of

Liberia to pay taxes, but the masses were not allowed to hold any positions in government. Members of the ruling class treated the poor people as slaves. Poor Liberians were not allowed to vote as we are privileged to do today. The government of Liberia under the gavel of the privileged class (like those George Weah is affiliated with) used forced labor to implement government policies and the poor people they forced to do their work were called “plotters”.



The “plotters” used to carry heavy loads on their backs and heads and they walked long distances, like from Sanniquillie to Monrovia, or from Gbarnga to Monrovia, or from Voijama to Monrovia, or from Zwedru to Monrovia. They worked like dogs for the privileged class Weah is supporting without a dime in return for their labor! If the Native people or poor Congors and Americo-Liberians refused to carry the Commissioners in hammocks or to pay hut tax, they were tied, whipped, and made to lie in the burning sun with their faces turned to the sun as punishment. They even put Liberians from the Kru Coast which is now known as Grand Kru County on ships and sent them to do forced labor in fernando Po in the 1920s. This consequently led to the resignation of President C. D. B. King and his Vice President Allen Yancy.

So, if George Weah is a genuine Kru man as he claims, then he should know the history of the Kru people. He should know about the history and the suffering our forefathers went through under the reign of the ancestors of those who claim to love him. Weah should realize that supporting children of those who sold our people as slaves is counterproductive to the struggles of Jauh Nimely, D. Twe, Father Collins, Thomas Faulkner, and all those who fought the battle to free us from modern day slavery, that we might be returning to if we elect Weah and Jewel Taylor!

Also, back in the day when sewerage system was not well organized, the members of the privileged class used what is called “*chamber buckets*” to urinate and/or to poop. They used Liberian children from poor economic and social backgrounds that lived with them to take the chamber buckets out every morning to clean their poo-poos. This is what George Weah is trying to put us through by supporting people who killed over a quarter million of our family members, and that are using his popularity to divide and rule us.

Today, Liberia has been reduced to a nation of beggars when Liberia is one of the richest nations on the continent of Africa in terms of natural and mineral resources. Therefore, as your playwright and custodian of Liberian history and culture, I call upon all Liberians and citizens of the world to say “NO” to the “Plotters” and “Chamber Bucket” syndrome! We do not want any more “plotter” or “chamber bucket” business in this new Liberia. We want to enjoy our freedoms in a democratic and not an autocratic society! Therefore, those who perpetrated war and economic crimes must have their day in court soon.

The Straw that Broke George Weah’s Camel’s Back



George Weah’s tragic flaw, the straw that broke his camel’s back stems from his alliance with proponents of Charles Taylor and Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf’s rebel agenda to hold the Liberian people hostage through the barrels of guns. And, where it is impossible to use guns to regain power, they have chosen to capitalize on George Weah’s weakness and greed for money to entrap him in one of the deadliest snares of Liberian history. Hence, how George got himself entangled with perpetrators of heinous crimes against Liberians and humanity when all along he enjoyed our confidence, has all patriotic Liberians, and die heart CDC supporters gasping for breath! Nevertheless, over the years George had shown a pattern of using his political base, the Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC), to engage in money deals as a tradeoff to give another politician the opportunity to ride on his popularity and the CDC ticket to accomplish his greed for money. For instance, George Weah traded his presidential position in the past with Counselor Winston Tubman to serve as vice presidential candidate during the 2011 presidential election; and now today, here he goes again with Jewel Taylor, the wife of a murderous and notorious warlord, one of Africa’s most atrocious killers, to serve as his second-in-command!

Why Liberia Needs a Traditional Elder and Massagi Currently



Liberia needs a traditional elder and experienced statesman and Massagi at this time because we have drifted away from our culture. Over the past twenty-eight years, western agents the likes of Mrs. Sirleaf and her cohort rained terror on us with the approval of their imperial masters. They ransacked the coffers of Liberia and denied our children quality education, good health care and basic utilities such as electricity, safe pipe borne running water, and did all within their purview to destroy the cultural heritage of Liberia by shutting down the Kendeja National Cultural Village, a sacred shrine established by the government of Liberia by an act of Legislature. Besides, most patriotic Liberians, including myself, feel that George Weah has crossed the line! He has betrayed our confidence and trust by choosing the wife of Charles Taylor as his running mate. We strong feel this is a gross violation of the CDC struggle for human justice and fair play in the Liberian society. We feel George Weah has compromised the integrity of the Liberian people's struggle for his personal economic gains. Therefore, it is not a hidden secret that his love for money and self-aggrandizement will continue the corrupt and lawless practices of the Sirleaf government.

Also, critics of Dr. Boikai argue that he was part of the Unity Party's government set up for the past twelve years, therefore he is guilty by association. I beg to differ in that one thing Dr. Boikai's critics should bear in mind is that the role of the Vice President is not to openly oppose the President of the nation who happens to be his boss or running mate. Rather, the Vice President's role is to serve as President of the Senate and as principal lieutenant of the President. Hence, if the Vice President had gone contrary to his job description, there would have been a malfunction in the operation of the Liberian government. Subsequently, this might have led to coup d'états or violence and national crisis. Obviously, Dr. Boikai did not want to disrupt our fragile peace process of Liberia, so he remained calm and civil and law-abiding unlike his boss who took up arms against the Liberian people to revenge and hold us as hostages and slaves.

Therefore, it is but prudent that we give Vice President Boikai, a traditional Liberian elder and Massagi, a clean slate to prove his leadership ability not as the second but the first in

command. Also, awarding Weah the leadership position at this time, especially with the constitution of his present ticket, would mean rewarding perpetrators for the atrocities they committed in Liberia. It would signal to the international community that we do not believe in the rule of law as members of the comity of nations.

Against this backdrop, we must exhibit tough love by telling Weah at the polls that while we love him, we will not allow gravy seekers to use him as a scape goat to drag us back to the state of war or back to those days when our ancestors were *plotters* or *chamber bucket boys* for the fathers and mothers of those who support his candidacy. Furthermore, back in the day, their ancestors said our parents could not participate in government because they did not know book. So, our parents got angry, brushed farms, sold dried monkey meat, fish, eddoes, and other farm produces to send us to school so we could participate in government. But now that we are educated, their children who failed in school are now saying **“book is not important” therefore, anybody can be president of Liberia.** In this light to prove their hidden agenda, they decided to support the least educated of all Liberian candidates in the race. Therefore, any sensible Liberian should be able to read in between the lines and tell that their affiliation with Weah is not because they love Weah but because it is a ‘divide and rule’ tactic to keep the masses continually in mental, economic, and political slavery.

A Mandate to the Massagi

Let me close by strongly requesting the Massagi to prioritize our cultural traditions, to retrieve the sacred grounds where the Kendeja National Cultural Village was located, and to reinstitute the respect and dignity of the sacred secret societies and traditional institutions that were denigrated and shut down by the Sirleaf government: the Poro, Sande, Gborh, Negee, Kwi, Blonyon, etc. We should prioritize education, health, agriculture, transportation, and communications, and encourage qualified Liberians to return home to contribute their quota toward the reconstruction, rehabilitation, and reconciliation processes in post war Liberia. I personally promise to commit myself to helping to revamp the educational, cultural, and tourism sectors of our society, and organize and implement rehabilitation programs through the performing and visual arts, using my theatre company, Dehkontee Artists Theatre, Inc. (DATI), to educate and entertain Liberians about the rich traditions of our homeland. Happy Birthday, Father and Massagi. May the Lord grant you the wisdom and strength to lead Liberia in the following years to come. Amen.

Rabbi Prince Joseph Tomoonh-Garlodeyh Gbaba, Sr., Ed. D.

November 30, 2017