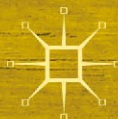


# **Union Education in Nigeria**

Labor, Empire, and Decolonization since 1945

**Hakeem Ibikunle Tijani**



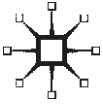
# UNION EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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UNION EDUCATION IN NIGERIA  
LABOR, EMPIRE, AND DECOLONIZATION SINCE  
1945

Hakeem Ibikunle Tijani

palgrave  
macmillan



UNION EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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In memory of Late Senator Raji Ayoola Adeleke

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## PREFACE

As additional official documents become accessible to the researcher, one is propelled to retool analysis and evaluation of British colonial rule in Nigeria as elsewhere in the Empire. Decolonization and the transfer of power continued to be multidimensional and fascinating. Efforts at dissecting the impact of the “civilizing mission” and modernization of colonies and the colonial peoples remained an enterprising endeavor. Modernity, with its many aspects, seems to be central to the success of the colonial enterprise. After all, decolonization after 1945 was aimed at preparing the new native African elites who were educated in the West to take over from the British. Part of its institutional legacy includes the creation of departments or ministries and the development of human resources or workers to manage the institutions needed to function in an international community that transcends traditional Africa generally.<sup>1</sup>

This book is partly about the development of the Labour Department (later Ministry of Labour) and its personnel, training of labor union members to manage the unions, and labor officers for various Western companies operating in Nigeria. Ultimately, to sustain its labor policy of “sound industrial relations,” the colonial state aimed at creating an informed group of workers and leaders in what is considered the most essential part of British modernity in Nigeria. As in all colonial states’ offices before independence, Britain invested enormous financial resources in training (formal and informal, degree and credential, etc.) of personnel for the Labour Department. These departments or ministries continued to highlight British modernity and the transition of Nigeria into global relations with the wider world.

Beginning in the late 1930s, two levels of modernizing the Nigerian workers were pursued. First, constructive efforts were made to develop a Labour Department and train Nigerians to manage it as part of her Majesty’s benevolence and modernity. Second, labor union education became essential in industrial relations and as a pathway to opportunities

such as promotion and high status in the Western model of administration. Concerning the former, the colonial state was successful in developing and transforming what began as a three-man department into a vibrant ministerial institution by the mid-1950s. On the issue of labor union education, the colonial state had to struggle with emergent Marxists who had dominated the labor movement and gained some ground before 1950. Although in the post-1950 era the colonial state had gained the upper hand and stultified leftist attempts to take over the unions, the dichotomy and divergence between the Nigerian Marxists and the colonial state in what is considered the best education for union leaders and the workers remained throughout the years of decolonization and after independence. In this division emerged the internationalization of labor union education. In a Cold War era, leading labor union organizations like the International Confederation of Trade Unions, the World Federation of Trade Unions, and the United Nations' International Labour Organization, to mention the dominant three, all engaged in worker education aimed at creating sound industrial relations.

The theme of labor union education in Nigeria is centered around decolonization of Nigeria leading to its independence on October 1, 1960. The appendix documents, like the chapters, will enrich readers' understanding of the complex nature of labor union education in Nigeria (and beyond) since the late 1930s. I have included tables from government annual reports to show the progression of the colonial state and the national government training programs for workers, their leaders, and particularly the Department/Ministry of Labour personnel. In addition, it is hoped that this book will complement studies in the field of the modern history of Africa and improve general knowledge of the decolonization era as well as postcolonial efforts at educating the workers.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The zeal to research and write this book started in 2005, when I was completing my first book. The Lord has been merciful to me in all ramifications. My first appreciation thus goes to my creator, the alpha and omega of my intellect, and the guardian of my probing instinct.

Men and women have been kind, generous with their time and assistance in many forms during the years of research and writing. In Nigeria, I thank the following people: Professors Abubakar Momoh, Ayo Omotayo, Bayo Lawal, and Michael Ogeidi for their time and hospitality. The numerous labor activists and archival staff at Ibadan are worthy of appreciation. In England, special thanks go to the archivists, librarians, and staff of TUC library, Metropolitan University, British Archive, Kew, the British Library, National Museum of Labour History and Archive, Manchester, and the British Newspaper Library.

In the United States, my warmest appreciation goes to my colleagues in the history department at Baylor University: Professors Jeffrey Hamilton, Joan Supplee, Timothy Kidd, George Gawrych, and James SoRelle for their generosity and kindness. Eileen Bentsen, Kenneth Carriveau, and other librarians in the Inter-library and Hughes Special Collections sections of Baylor University library deserve special thanks. They were great, compassionate, and reliable throughout my research.

In Amsterdam and Geneva, the librarians and staff at the International Institute of Social History (IISH) and International Labour Office (ILO) respectively readily assisted in finding materials and making available additional sources such as published works sponsored by the bodies in the past.

I thank Professors David Ngong, Ugo Nwokeji, Saheed Aderinto, Elizabeth Schmidt, Lynn Schler, and Elsa Peterson for reading and making useful suggestions. Elsa was particularly generous with her time and I deeply appreciate it. Lynn was kind to send me copies of her works, and for directing me to some materials in Amsterdam. For their assistance

in compiling the index, I would like to thank the following, Omotola, Monisola, Precious, and Said. However, I solely take the glory and accolades that may result from this endeavor, as I am responsible for any shortcomings therein. To my wife and children, I say thanks for the endurance and perseverance.

Hakeem Ibikunle Tijani  
February 2012

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AMCONGEN	American Consulate General
ANTUF	All Nigerian Trade Union Federation
AFL	American Federation of Labor
BC	British Council
BNA	British National Archive
BTUC	British Trade Union Congress
CO	Colonial Office
CGT	Confederationale Generale du Travail
CPGB	Communist Party of Great Britain
CRO	Commonwealth Relations Office
CTUC	Commonwealth Trade Union Council
FEANF	Federation des Etudiants d'Afrique Noire en France
FO	Foreign Office
GCAWEA	General Confederation of African Workers of Equatorial Africa
GCWC	General Confederation of Workers of the Cameroons
KFLO	Kenya Federation of Labour Organisation
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
IFIR	International Federation of Resistance Fighters
IISH	International Institute of Social History
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOJ	International Organization of Journalists
IUS	International Union of Students
MI	Military Intelligence
MHLR	Museum of History and Labour Research
NAI	National Archive Ibadan
NARA	National Archive and Records Administration

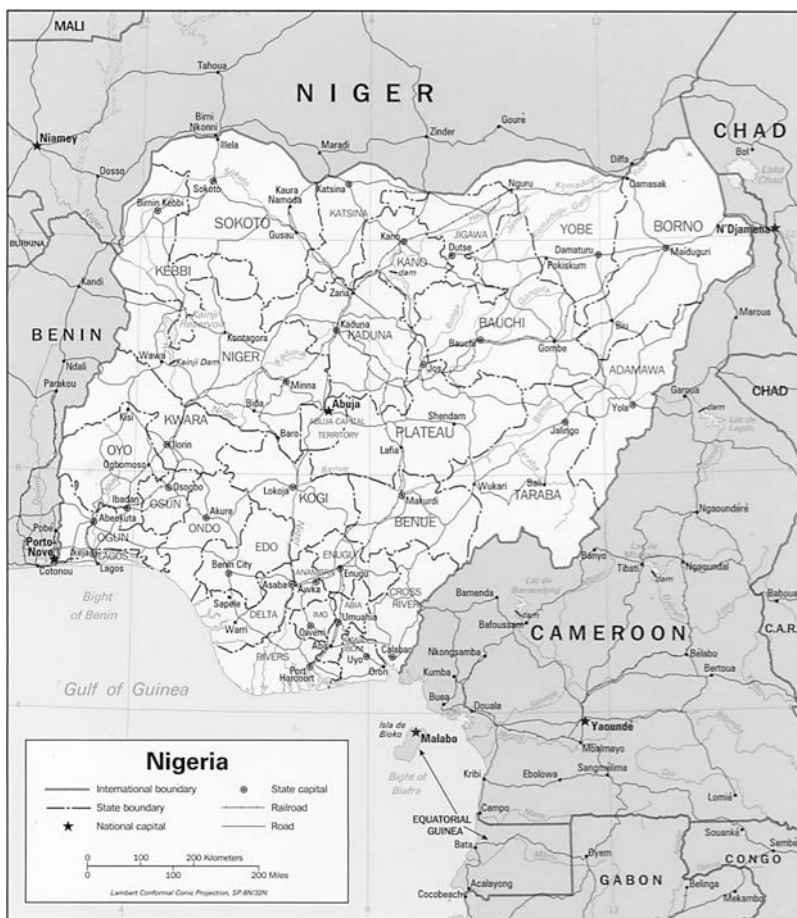


NLC	Nigeria Labour Congress
OTA	Overseas Technical Assistance (Agreement)
SFS	Soviet-African Friendship Society
TUC	Trade Union Congress
TUCN	Trade Union Congress of Nigeria
UGTAN	Generale des Travailles' Afrique
ULC	United Labour Congress
USIS	United States Information Service
UWPP	United Working Peoples Party
WASU	West African Students Union
WFTU	World Federation of Trade Unions
WIDF	Women's International Democratic Federation
WO	War Office
WPC	World Peace Council

# TIMELINE OF NIGERIAN LABOR HISTORY

- 1897: Lagos Labor Strike
- 1912: The Civil Service Union was established in Nigeria
- 1931: Nigerian Union of Teachers
- 1931: Nigerian Railway Workers Union
- 1938: Trade Union Ordinance
- 1941: March on Colonial Government House, Lagos
- 1942: Order Banning General Strike
- 1945: General Strike
- 1945: Labour Code Ordinance
- 1947: Michael Imoudu, president of the Railway Workers Union, is the first recognized labor leader of Nigeria
- 1949: Iva Valley miners' riot
- 1949: Enugu Colliery Coal Miners' Strike
- 1957: Nigerian Postal Services Clerks' Strike
- 1958: Trade Disputes Act legalize unions
- 1959: Nigerian Union of Seamen Strike
- 1960: Nigerian Trade Union Congress and United Labour Congress founded
- 1964: General Strike
- 1965: Yoruba farmers' revolt
- 1971: Nigerian Industrial Fund Decree
- 1974/1975: Udoji salary increase
- 1976: Government commission on reorganization of labor unions
- 1978: Military Government reorganized labor unions
- 1982: Country Women Association of Nigeria founded by Chief Bisi Ogunleye
- 1991: Movement for the survival of the Ogoni people established
- 1994: General Sanni Abacha dissolved NLC's National Executive Council

- 1995: Ken Saro-Wiwa led protests against oil pollution in Ogoniland region of Nigeria
- 1997: Villagers seize oil station protesting local elections
- 1999: An attack on a Chevron oil rig
- 1999: Adams Oshiomhole elected president of NLC
- 2000: National strike against government refusal to reduce fuel prices
- 2002: General strike in response to Labor Congress' Adams Oshiomhole and other activists' arrests
- 2002: Arutan and Igborodo women seized Chevron-Texaco oil stations demanding that the company should build schools, and provide electricity and irrigation systems for the villagers.
- 2002: Chevron-Texaco seized by unarmed Ijaw women for ten days
- 2003: Striking workers captured 100 workers on various offshore Oil Rigs
- 2003: General strike to protest rising fuel prices
- 2003: Nigerian police returned 74 child workers to Benin Republic after they were sold to traffickers for hard labor in southwestern Nigerian granite quarries
- 2004: National strike against Chevron and Shell Oil Company
- 2004: General strike against rising oil prices
- 2005: Demonstrators at a main oil export station
- 2005: Multiple riots to protest rising oil prices
- 2005: Formation of Trade Union Congress of Nigeria (TUCN)
- 2006: Armed protesters seized an oil station, demanding jobs and aid
- 2007: Union fuel strikes
- 2007: Abdulwaheed Omar elected president of NLC
- 2009: Nigerian workers' protest
- 2010: Nigerian Labour Congress threatened a national strike



## CHAPTER 1

# BEFORE THE WIND OF CHANGE: THE ORIENTATION OF LABOR UNIONS IN AFRICA

Our publicity services must do all they can to expose and explain to the Africans the true nature of these organisations, and the extent to which they are used by the Communist Powers to further their own influence and policies. Where appropriate, positive support should be given to the non-Communist international bodies in the different fields of trade unions, youth, women, etc., which form effective counter-attractions to the front organisations. At ostensibly harmless international conferences in Africa where Communists are present, arrangements should be made for delegates favourable to the West to attend so that our case does not go by default.<sup>1</sup>

(Foreign Office Official Report, 1959)

### INTRODUCTION

There is no history of sustained Communist influence in British African colonies, although individual union leaders with Communist sympathies appeared from time to time, particularly in West Africa during the colonial period. In Britain's East and Central African colonies, any political sympathies were directed by unions toward their respective nationalist groups, particularly in Kenya, where the general secretary of the Federation of Labor (KFOL), Tom Mboya, was also the leader of the African members in the Legislative Council.<sup>2</sup> This largely explains why World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) never succeeded in gaining a foothold in British East and Central Africa. In addition, the prohibition of the import of WFTU literature and colonial Africans'

difficulty in obtaining travel documents to travel to Iron Curtain countries. Furthermore, the relative “backwardness” of the Central and East African colonies compared with those of West Africa and the fact that the non-Communist International Confederation of Trade Unions (ICFTU) was able to gain a footing in the area since its inception in 1949 and exert its influence among most African union leaders were also reasons for the colonial government’s success in limiting Communist influence.

In the case of West African colonies (including the Gold Coast before 1957), however, the WFTU was able to exert a somewhat stronger influence. Nevertheless, the presence of a small number of Communist-trained WFTU supporters among the leaders of the West African labor unions led inevitably to differences of opinion regarding the affiliation of the national trade union congress. It also created different opinions and ways and means concerning labor union education curriculum, analyzed in chapters 5 and 8. Despite an attempt by the post-independence Nkrumah government in Ghana to create a unified labor union and consistent labor education with the Industrial Relations Act (1958), philosophical and ideological divisions remained between and within its labor unions.<sup>3</sup> However, the new Ghana Trade Union Congress (TUC) structure, while maintaining ICFTU affiliation, formed some contacts with the WFTU. Similarly, in Nigeria a breach occurred between the pro-Communist and anti-Communist elements in the All Nigerian Trade Union Federation (ANTUF) leading to the setting up of a rival National Council of Trade Unions of Nigeria (NCTUN). The breach was healed at a conference in Ibadan in 1958, when the two groups were reunited under a new Nigerian Trade Union Congress (NTUC). Although the NTUC aimed to be independent of external ideology and political influence, its president general, Michael Imoudu, was believed to be a Communist sympathizer (see Table 1.1).

### THE COMMUNIST “FRONT” ORGANIZATIONS IN AFRICA

We can posit that in a colonial setting, the short-term goal of Soviet (and its satellites) Communist policy in Africa was not to promote Communist parties there (for which the objective conditions did not generally exist) but—by supporting African nationalism and exploiting popular anticolonialism—to wean the emergent states away from the West.<sup>4</sup> One of the main Communist weapons used for this purpose was the network of international Communist “front” organizations. The modus operandi of the front organizations varied to some extent in each case; and their

Table 1.1 Summary of information on numbers of trade unions, 1959

Territory	Estimated total population	Approximate wage earnings population	Total no. of unions	Total union membership	Number of employees' unions	Membership of employees' unions	Number of employers' associations	Membership of Employers' Associations
<i>West Africa Federation of Nigeria</i>	36,095,000	324,000	297	233,570 (46 unions N.A.)	268	231,287 (41 unions N.A.)	29	2,283 (5 unions N.A.)
<i>Sierra Leone</i>	2,100,000	76,000	12	8,312 (2 unions N.A.)	10	8,303 (1 union N.A.)	2 (1 union N.A.)	—
<i>Gambia</i>	275,000	(Agricultural workers not included as they are mainly casual)	3	1,050	3	1,050	—	—

There are also 2 associations with a membership of 280

Table 1.1 (Continued)

Territory	Estimated total population	Approximate wage earnings population	Total no. of unions	Total union membership	Number of employees' unions	Memberships' employees' unions	Number of employers' associations	Membership of Employers' Associations
<i>East AND Central Africa</i>								
<i>Kenya</i>	6,261,000	596,800	30	18,605	23	18,357	7	248
<i>Uganda</i>	5,680,000	257,400	15	4,837	13	4,784	2	53
<i>Tanganyika</i>	8,783,000	480,500	27	33,933 (6 unions N.A.)	24	33,895 (unions N.A.)	3	38
<i>Northern Rhodesia</i>	2,240,000	254,000 (African) 26,500 (European)	19	25,279	19	25,279	NIL	NIL
<i>Nyasaland</i>	2,648,000	169,000	9	1,629	4	1,470	5	159
<i>Somaliland</i>	650,000	N.A.	There are no trade unions					
<i>Zanzibar</i>	280,000	86,300	16	3,063	15	3,053	1	10

Note: N.A. = not available.

Source: BNA FO 1110/1231—Revised Draft Trade Unions in Tropical Africa, 1959.



success depended on the obstacles they faced. In general, however, these organizations disseminated in Africa as much propaganda as possible and organized conferences and festivals to which Africans were invited as honored guests. At the same time, the local African leaders of the organizations were encouraged to improve their own standing by taking a prominent part in local government and public life and to unite any suitable small bodies or mushroom groups into larger organizations under "front" leadership.<sup>5</sup> In Nigeria, local leftist leaders like Eze, Ikoku, Goodluck, Idise, and Sidi, to mention a few, were responsible for maintaining contact with individual Communists visiting the colony before independence.<sup>6</sup> To underscore the extent to which these leftist organizations were active at the time, we identify six of those fronts that operated during 1945–1960 and focus on their general interest and operation in Africa. The following chapters analyze specific activities and policies of non-Communist international influence on Nigerian labor unions as part of the overall decolonization process.

The WFTU became the most important "front" after World War II. The British Trade Union Congress (TUC) and other non-Communist organizations originally supported the WFTU, which held its first World Conference in Paris in 1945, in which African representatives were present. Subsequently, the WFTU organized an African labor union conference at Dakar (Senegal) in April 1947 and called for the unification of African labor unions. One of the first Africans to be trained by WFTU was Abdoulaye Diallo, a French Sudanese. At the second WFTU World Congress, held in Milan in June 1949, Diallo was elected to the Executive Committee of the WFTU and subsequently served for some years as a vice-president of the organization.<sup>7</sup> By this time, the non-Communists had organized to set up the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), and the WFTU was completely dominated by the Communists.

The WFTU exported to Africa large quantities of propaganda material on the theme of "exploitation of Africans by the colonial powers." It also organized "solidarity" campaigns with African peoples. An additional post of Secretary to deal with Africa was created at WFTU headquarters, and a Sudanese, Ibrahim Zakaria, was appointed to the post. Africans who had received Communist training at WFTU headquarters or through the Confederation Generale du Travail (CGT) School in France established themselves on their return home in positions of influence in the fields of both labor and politics.<sup>8</sup> The movement had its main strength in the Maghreb and in French West and Equatorial Africa. With the notable exceptions of the General Confederation of Workers of the Cameroons (GCWC) and the General Confederation of African Workers

of Equatorial Africa (GCAWEA), the French African unions were not affiliated to the WFTU. There were, however, close links between the two, particularly in the case of the Union Generale des Travailleurs' Afrique Noire (UGTAN); and representatives from European WFTU-affiliated unions visited Africa on various occasions and attended African conferences. In British East and Central Africa, the main unions were affiliated to the ICFTU, and the WFTU did not make much progress. In British West Africa, however, the WFTU, made some progress. As discussed in Chapter 6, leftist leaders like Eze and Ikoku relied on propaganda material from behind the Iron Curtain to draft lesson plans for seminars and training of labor leaders and unionists generally.

Both the International Union of Students (IUS) and the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY) awarded scholarships to Africans for study in Iron Curtain countries, where attempts were made to indoctrinate them politically.<sup>9</sup> In French West Africa, there were many small youth groups individually affiliated to the WFDY. The central body, the Youth Council of Africa (CJA), was not affiliated to any Communist international organization, although the extremists in the Senegal Council of Youth (SCY), who maintained links with the WFDY, dominated it. Three Ghanaian youth groups were affiliated to the WFDY, and Kofi Batsa, a Communist sympathizer and president of the Takoradi Youth League (TYL) in Ghana, was a member of the executive committee of the WFDY. Several Ghanaians, Nigerians, and a few East Africans belonging to the youth groups were trained behind the Iron Curtain. The IUS usually initiated contact with Africans while they were studying in the metropolitan countries or when they visited those countries for IUS-sponsored conferences or youth festivals. When traveling to Iron Curtain countries, Africans usually paid their own expenses only up to their arrival in the country, after which the IUS provided financial assistance. The IUS also strove to be represented, and bring their influence to bear, at Pan-African student conferences such as those held at Makerere College, Uganda, in 1958, and at Tunis in July 1959. In addition, large student bodies in England and France, such as the West African Students Union (WASU) in London and the Federation des Etudiants d'Afrique Noire en France (FEANF), were affiliated to the IUS.

Another organization was the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF). It was also interested in colonial matters in Africa. Its tactic, like those of most left front organizations during the colonial era, and thereafter, was to send propaganda material to Africa in the form of magazines, leaflets, and films, slanted to interest women, on such subjects as the women's vote, child welfare, social and economic conditions,

and polygamy. In these materials, anticolonialism was promoted emphasized while the living conditions of Communist women, especially in the USSR and China, were glorified.<sup>10</sup> Mrs. Ransome-Kuti, founder and president of the Federation of Nigerian Women and who was prominent in encouraging antitax demonstrations among local Abeokuta women in southwestern Nigeria, was elected as the vice-president of the WIDF in 1953.<sup>11</sup> In addition, women from the French colonies were regularly included as delegates to WIDF conferences and several women's organizations from the French area were affiliated to the WIDF. Notably, three members of the WIDF were present at the All Africa Peoples Conference, in Accra in 1958, one of whom, Marthe Ouandie (assistant secretary-general of the Union of Democratic Women of the Cameroons—affiliated to WIDF), was the only woman speaker at the conference.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, a Soviet women's delegation, a group of Sudanese women, and a Ghanaian woman visited Ethiopia simultaneously early in 1959 for a WIDF meeting.<sup>13</sup>

Another leftist "front organization" that operated in Africa during the period 1945–60 is the World Peace Council (WPC). The WPC attracted well-meaning Africans as well as those with Communist sympathies. Most of the leftist leaders in labor unions and the nationalist parties were placed on a "no travel list" or "prohibited list"<sup>14</sup> by the colonial immigration and police unit; the leaders were often prompted to send messages to WPC conferences, which the WPC then used for propaganda. Typical themes exploited by the WPC were the campaign against France's testing of nuclear weapons in the Sahara and the relationship between the fight "against colonialism" and the fight "for peace." We should note that Abdoulaye Moumouni, a resident of Senegal and Guinea, was a vice-president of the WPC, representing sub-Saharan Africa. After independence, the Gold Coast and French Guinea became safe havens for WPC as well as other leftist international fronts partly because of the position of their leaders, Kwame Nkrumah and Sekou Toure, respectively. This made it easier for leftists like Ikoku, Nzimiro, and Gogo Nzeribe, to mention a few, to make contacts with WPC officials. The extent of contacts and resources given to Nigerian leftists before independence in 1960 is still unclear because of the lack of evidence and official record.

The sixth leftist "front organization" identified is the Soviet-African Friendship Society (SFS) formed in Moscow in April 1959. Its main purpose was to further "cultural" relations with Africa.<sup>15</sup> Professor Potekhin and the Russian Orthodox Archimandrite Nikodim, who visited Ethiopia in early 1959, were leading members of the society. Soviet friendship societies were formed in Guinea and Togo around 1958. The Nigerian-Soviet Friendship was formed in 1961 in Lagos with leading

personalities like Dr. Tunji Otegbeye as a founding member.<sup>16</sup> In the decades after the “wind of change,” that is, the period during 1960s when a record number of the former African colonies became independent, the Soviets planted Soviet-African friendship or cultural societies in other African countries. In addition to the activities of the “front” organizations discussed above, there were also others, notably the World Federation of Scientific Workers (WFSW), the International Organization of Journalists (IOJ), and the International Federation of Resistance Fighters (IFIR), interested in African labor unions as well as African affairs generally. Perhaps, it was in the spirit of the working class that labor leaders sought assistance from both ideological camps concerning how best their members could be educated and informed in “sound” industrial relations before independence. In addition, we could surmise that it was in a similar interest of the workers that the colonial state and the nationalists’ government that succeeded it pursued an antileftist labor union education since 1945.

#### **THE INFLUENCE OF NON-COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

Since its inception in 1949, the ICFTU has been a major force in labor union activities, particularly relating to antileftist union education. Beginning in 1950, it developed regional organizations (with the support of the colonial state) that have played an increasingly prominent role in African labor union affairs. The Ghana TUC and a number of labor union groups in the Congo before the 1960s were affiliated to it, while the Nigerian TUC under Adebola and Borha maintained a close link throughout the 1950s and 1960s. In East and Central Africa, its position seems to remain unchallenged.<sup>17</sup> The ICFTU also devoted a great deal of money to build up its influence in Africa. A good example was the expenditure of some £100,000 on the establishment of a Trade Union College in Kampala, Uganda. As discussed below, and in chapters 4 and 5, its assistance was welcomed by colonial officials and pro-Western labor leaders in British Africa during the colonial period. In 1958, the ICFTU set up in Accra, Ghana, a West African Information and Advisory Centre and appointed an ICFTU African representative, with a roving commission covering the whole continent. This was an attempt to herald greater ICFTU efforts in West Africa in particular.<sup>18</sup>

In addition to the activities of the ICFTU, the American labor union movement took a close interest in Africa during the period. The American Federation of Labor/Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL/CIO)

sent delegates to the first African regional conference of the ICFTU held at Accra in January 1957, although they had received no invitation. One member of the delegation, Mrs. Maida Springer,<sup>19</sup> who was also a member of the anticolonial wing of the American movement, subsequently toured Africa, and on return to the United States, she and her group persuaded the AFL/CIO to launch a program for training a substantial number of African labor unionists in the United States. After strong opposition to the proposal from the British TUC it was finally agreed that under the so-called “Atlantic City Agreement,” the AFL/CIO would in the future channel their aid to African labor unions through the ICFTU, particularly through its college at Kampala, Uganda. Because of this agreement, the investment or funding of the program for training African labor unionists in the United States became indirect. The logistics followed the pattern of funding during the government leadership training initiated earlier in 1946–1947. Yet, the AFL/CIO was not satisfied about the progress made during the colonial period. It had no option but to wait until after independence to deal directly with African governments and labor leaders.<sup>20</sup>

The influence of the British TUC in the development of labor unionism in the colonies is well documented.<sup>21</sup> The British TUC felt responsible for the development of democratic labor unions in the British African territories and gave assistance in the form of workforce, money, advice, and training. Help was given not only in response to appeals from the labor union movements in Africa but also indirectly by cooperating with the colonial government in finding British labor union officials to serve as labor advisers in colonial territories. The position of a labor officer, as will be seen in chapters 4 and 5, remained vital to colonial development of a labor ministry, and the implementation of the policy aimed at building sound industrial relations through Western-tailored labor union education throughout the colonial era. This institution—the Ministry of Labour—remained after independence and continued in the same legacy of antifetist labor union education.

We should note that, before 1959, assistance given by the British TUC received full acknowledgment from African labor unionists. Between 1957 and 1959, however, there was antipathy between the British TUC and some African leaders, notably John Tettegah of Ghana and Tom Mboya of Kenya. This antipathy stems from the nationalistic and anticolonial policies of some African labor leaders who showed far more interest in political than in genuine labor union activities. Contrary to the British TUC idea of separation of unionism from politics, most African labor leaders did not see any need for such separation.

**SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS**

There are eight chapters in this book. In Chapter 2, titled “Leftist Intelligentsia, Labor Union Education, and Decolonization,” the role of the Nigerian leftists after World War II is analyzed. Despite their cultural, educational, economic, and social backgrounds, the Nigerian leftists had a common goal of achieving freedom from the British through either taking “positive action” or working within a major nationalist party during the decolonization period. Either way, they were of the opinion that a labor union education predicated on Marxian dialectics and pedagogy would aid the realization of their ultimate goal. They were disappointed by the old guards such as Nnamdi Azikiwe, who abandoned them at the critical moment of support when they called for a revolution in 1950. They regrouped, reformed, and modified their strategies during the 1950s with the hope that a sustained leftist ideology and strategy would ensure the success of leftism in Nigeria. They reached out to the British Left, the Eastern bloc, to leftist world labor unions such as the World Federation of Trade Union (WFTU), and organized the Nigerian masses in major cities during the colonial period to make their aspiration known to the peoples of Nigeria. They organized education and training sessions for workers and wrote in local newspapers criticizing the colonial state. This chapter also highlights the primary goal of the British crown’s government labor union education as a better alternative to leftists’ curriculum. It analyzes official “sound” industrial policy as an inescapable pathway to Nigeria’s capitalist economic and “industrial” modernization. Toward this end, it created structural (Department of Labour) and institutional opportunities for Nigerians to attend various training and workshop centers locally and overseas, made available funds and scholarships for local and overseas training in labor matters, and set in motion a genuine Nigerianization process that excluded the leftists.<sup>22</sup>

Since decolonization is central to this study, Chapter 3, titled “Decolonization: Understanding the Conventional Narratives,” synthesizes the discourse about European colonialism and decolonization with emphasis on British West Africa. The chapter starts by noting that generally, the conventional approach of European colonial policies and systems in Africa prior to World War II was to subjugate local inhabitants. With forced subjugation or direct rule, European powers successfully enjoyed the spoils of their colonies’ resources. Moreover, colonial administrations were created to ensure that the metropolis, or motherland, could take full advantage of their hegemony. Under this system, dominated Africans endured the pain of having their land stripped away and the further insult of being expected to extract natural resources for European enrichment.

After World War II, however, European powers differed in the way they dealt with their African colonies. Britain and France, for example, began out of necessity to alter their visions for the future of their empires, as they came to the stark realization that changes in colonial policy were vital to enable them to continue to “exploit” or “develop” African resources. For the British Empire, the struggle for and winning of independence in India in 1947 foreshadowed the likely eventual loss of Britain’s hold on her African colonies. Pressure for reforms (liberal nationalists) and takeover or full independence (leftist nationalists) also came from the growing numbers of Africans receiving Western education, who began to closely evaluate and study the developments in India’s process of winning independence in order to apply these lessons to the benefit of their homeland.

In addition, the Pan-African ideology and cross-Atlantic links with peoples of African descent galvanized radical demand for reforms and decolonization after 1945. The most significant of all the Pan-African conferences was the 1945 Manchester meeting where notable and future African leaders resolved to end European colonial rule through sustained anticolonial movements and nationalist parties. With the general negative opinion of colonialism clearly rising, Britain took the lead in reforming and decolonizing its African colonies after World War II. The British Empire believed that fundamental changes in policy would provide continued cooperation among the colonies, as Africans were becoming increasingly vocal about independence. The British solution to appease those colonies came in the form of the Colonial Development and Welfare Acts of 1940 and 1945, which set aside funds for British colonial economic and social development. While the general convention is that the majority of this investment went to sectors already under European control, such as settler farming in Kenya and southern Rhodesia and mining in Gold Coast and Nigeria, the chapter highlights the significance of Colonial Development Welfare Authority (CDWA) funds in training labor officers, trades officers, and labor union leaders. Thus, contrary to existing literature, the chapter discusses how the fund provided little direct benefit for Nigerians. It fulfils one of the aims of the book by filling some of the voids in decolonization discourse in Nigeria.

Chapter 4 focuses on “The Colonial State and Organized Labor.” This chapter critically analyzes antileftist policies of Britain during the colonial era. It discusses official strategies to shape the development of labor organizations, to execute “sound” industrial relations, and to introduce a sustained labor union education curricular during the decolonization period. It emphasizes the colonial state’s attempts to deprive leftists within the Nigerian labor movement of any opportunity to foment antigovernment



propaganda or action. The development of “sound” industrial relations was important to successful antileftist measures in all ramifications. The chapter presents a historical narrative of the collaboration among the colonial state, officials of the British Trade Union Congress, the Nigerian private sector, procolonial government labor leaders, and the United States of America at the onset of the Cold War in 1945. It argues that the success of various measures taken in the labor sector was not insulated from the general antileftist policies implemented between 1945 and 1960.

In Chapter 5, “Labor Union Education before 1960,” I recontextualize the idea of training and education of labor union members and leaders in Nigeria during the decolonization era. It reviews previous scholarship and fills in the missing links for a comprehensive history of labor union education and training in Nigeria. The centrality of colonial government-sponsored workers’ workshops, on-the-job training by both the private and public sectors, and the opening of labor training centers in major cities and towns before 1960 was not solely based on creating “sound” industrial relations, as British officials would want us to believe. The idea was not solely part of general education for labor leaders, as Edmund Egboh juxtaposed about four decades ago. Neither were industrial relations in the colonies based on the imperial need to develop the labor union groups. At the same time, British educational development of its colonies was not limited to formal instructional system. I posit further that Britain’s formal and informal education of the colonial people was both a preventive and a curative effort with regard to the growing threat of Communism worldwide, and in particular, its inroads into the fabric of the Nigerian colonial state. This remained a covert policy until recent declassification of the Foreign Office (FO) and the Colonial Office (CO) files on “Countering Communist Policy in Nigeria” in 2006. These files validated annual reports of the Department of Labour (1938–1960) hitherto an unclassified document. Furthermore, the pursuit of “sound” industrial relations was predicated on the success of labor union education in the age of international Cold War rivalry between the two ideological camps. Britain as a colonial power (aided by its allies such the United States) was willing to do anything necessary to defeat leftist groups that formed and reformed in Nigeria during the 1950s. It concretized the idea of building a workforce before the official call for Nigerianization (Africanization) of the civil service in 1954. The colonial state as the leading employer of labor pursued an education policy that suited its political and economic goal of “sound” industrial relations. The chapter provides essential background for the chapters that follow, particularly Chapter 8, which highlights efforts of the independent Nigerian state since 1960 to formalize and concretize labor union education culminating in the



establishment of a state-run Institute for Labour Studies under the Third National Development Plan (1975–1980).

Chapter 6, “Champions of the Working Class: Samuel Grace Ikoku and Other Noble Men,” goes on to analyze the role of some of the most dedicated members of the Nigerian leftist intelligentsia during the decolonization period. While the emphasis is on Samuel Ikoku, the role of other prolific leftists such as Nduka Eze, Gogo Chu Nzeribe, and others is discussed. Being the son of the renowned leader of the Nigerian Teachers Union Alvan Ikoku, Samuel Grace (Goomu) Ikoku, like most veteran leftist intelligentsia, has not been given his due place in the annals of Nigerian nationalist struggle. A member of the Zikist Movement, he founded *The Nigerian Socialist Review* and advocated for the working class and a leftist takeover from the colonial state. This chapter focuses on the activities of the selected leftists within the larger picture of leftist intelligentsia during the period under study to analyze the Marxist view of colonial policies against leftist labor leaders, and their contextualization of an ideal labor union education. At their weekly meetings on the ideological education of members, discussion leaders like Eze, Ikoku, and Ogunsheye focused on one or another particular aspect of the Marxist perspective on labor unionism and labor union education.

The focus of Chapter 7, “On the Eve of Independence: The Nigerian Union of Seamen Dispute, 1959,” is an event that shaped colonial government attitude about labor matter in the maritime sector of the economy on the eve of independence. Yet, not much is known about the strike of 1959 that had many consequences.<sup>23</sup> The chapter details events of the last labor strike organized by Nigerians before independence. Between March 1958 and June 1959, the state of industrial relations in the shipping industry (as in other sectors of the economy) had been strained. The relationship between the Nigerian Union of Seamen and the corporate foreign shipping lines had degenerated. This chapter examines the organization of the Nigerian Union of Seamen and the Shipping Lines (particularly Elder Dempster Lines Limited).<sup>24</sup> In addition, it analyzes the state of industrial relations in the sector deemed central to Nigeria’s economic transformation before independence. It is within this context that the historic events of 1959 that began on board *MV Apapa* in the Atlantic Ocean en route to Liverpool remained significant to understanding labor relations and the success or failure of decades of labor union education in Nigeria. It also discusses changes because of the strike in the shipping sector and its workers’ union. Furthermore, it resulted in the creation of the Nigerian Maritime Board, the Nigerian Merchant Navy Establishment, and the Joint Committee, and the appointment of port officers by

employers of Seamen. Highly significant was the emphasis on education and training of union representatives and members in the sector.<sup>25</sup>

Chapter 8 is titled "Labor Union Education since 1960." This chapter concludes the study by identifying continuity between the pre-1960 and post-1960 eras. It identifies convergence and divergence that characterized both eras with the purpose of showing readers the significance of the theme, and the complexities involved in writing about the event. The first decade of postcolonial Nigeria has been rightly described as the era of dilemmas and unsettling for labor organizations in Nigeria. The new polity, Nigeria, was engulfed in political crises, which could be described as aftermaths of the unperfected union of many ethnic groups among other factors. There was no tangible effort on labor union education during the civil war era, 1967 and 1970. Rather, labor leaders in the Eastern Nigeria (Biafra Republic) complicated matters by forming the Biafran Trade Union Confederation (BTUC) a few months after the May 30, 1967, secession from the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Ben Udokpora, formerly on the executive of United Labour Congress, became Ojukwu's labor adviser. There was, however, unity on the part of labor leaders outside the Eastern region throughout the war period. The only exception was the failed attempts at centralization of labor unions. Concerning labor union education, efforts were geared toward Nigeria remaining a unified entity as perfected in 1914 by Lord Lugard. The post-civil war period, however, marked another phase in the narrative of labor education in Nigeria. This was the era of more concretized efforts to credentialed and structured labor education in traditional institutions of higher learning, or a labor education institute of the same status. It was also an era of continuity in the sense that workplace training and weekly and seasonal workshops continued to dominate workers' education in both the public and the private sectors. As it was during the colonial era, recently released records from the Modern Record and Archive located at the University of Warwick, Coventry, and the International Labour Organisation (ILO), indicate that the colonial state and its agents were not the sole organizers of labor union education after independence. The competition between the two ideological camps in labor movement worldwide continued as both the Trade Union Congress of Nigeria (TUCN) and the United Labour Congress (ULC) sponsored their members to attend many organized lectures and training sections, and they even organized their own sessions with financial supports from AFL/CIO, the British TUC, ICFTU, ILO, and WFTU. At a microlevel, individual unions also organized training sessions for their members without necessarily going through the macrounions. The chapter analyzes the activities of ILO, the Israeli Technical Group, the International Confederation of Free Trade

Unions, the United States Agency for International Aid (later Development), and the British Council. It discusses collaboration between them and the government of Nigeria in sponsored trainings and workshops for labor union officials and members between 1961 and 1965 despite the many crises that plagued the nation during the same period. In a post-civil war era, the Gowon administration had the wisdom of linking the success of rehabilitation, reconstruction, and reform with labor union education and the welfare of workers. The government promulgated the Industrial Training Fund in 1971. Under Decree No. 47 of 1971, both the employers and employees were mandated to contribute into a profit-yielding bank for the purpose of workers' training and development. Training and re-training of workers was central to the rehabilitation and reconstruction of a post-civil war Nigeria. The military governments (under General Yakubu Gowon) enacted a decree to jumpstart and rejuvenate interest in labor matters. The federal government was mandated to give an annual subvention to the fund, while employees were required to contribute 2 percent of their annual payroll to it. Furthermore, employers with at least 25 workers were mandated to enroll and contribute accordingly. Labor union education seems to continue to occupy a significant position in government affair despite a coup d'état in 1975. Despite ousting Gowon from the helm of affairs, the Murtala administration that came to power continued the legacy of ensuring "sound" labor education throughout Nigeria. Hence, in the Third National Development Plan, 1975–1980, the administration of Murtala Ramat Muhammed, and later, Olusegun Obasanjo, was concerned about labor education and the growing leftist group domination of labor unions. To its credit, the government excluded leftist labor leaders from engaging in labor education and participating in labor matters, including the planned transition to a civilian rule in 1979. It also set up a unified labor union throughout the country as well as a centralized labor training institution for all. However, it took two decades before a government-funded Institute for Labour Studies became effective and operational. Sadly, attempts at a unified and nationwide curriculum and institution remained elusive.

### CONCLUSION

Since the publication of scholarly monographs by Cooper, Iweriebor, Lynn, and Tijani, for instance,<sup>26</sup> many official files have been declassified at the British National Archive, the British TUC Library Collections (at the Metropolitan University, North London), the U.S. National Archive and Records Administration (NARA), The Modern Records Centre, and the National Archive, Ibadan.<sup>27</sup> This book aims to fill some

of the voids and contours in the narratives about labor unions, Nigerian leftists, and decolonization during the twentieth century.<sup>28</sup> It emphasizes the significance of labor union education in British decolonization, labor unionism, and British efforts at modernizing the human resources of Nigeria. Globally, the role of the workers is gaining ground among scholars. Yet, specific country or regional studies remained to be fully studied. For instance, although much has been written about the labor movement and the role of unions in the nationalist movement in Nigeria, little is known about the role of the leftist intelligentsia in labor union education. There is no study detailing the competing curricular for union education in Nigeria. Neither do we have a study relating labor union education as part of the process of decolonization in Nigeria. The study will fill these voids and present a new perspective about the process of decolonization, emphasizing the divergence between leftist unionism and leftists' labor union education perspective on the one hand and the colonial and postcolonial governments' perspectives on the other. The international dimension of the divergence is analyzed within the context of the Cold War and the significance of AFL/CIO, the British TUC, and the ILO in assisting to develop labor union education. The uniqueness of this study is that it ties together aspects of Nigerian labor history and the role of the leftist intelligentsia to juxtapose the dynamism of decolonization in Nigeria. In addition to existing secondary sources, it uses newly declassified documents from the metropolis and Nigerian archives to reexamine the multifaceted nature of British-Nigerian encounter during the last century.

In this book, I hope to give balanced coverage of the colonial movement as teachers strive to present a balanced history of Nigerian labor and nationalist movements in the context of British decolonization during the twentieth century. More importantly, this book gives a voice to the "unvoiced" groups that have been denied the opportunity to claim their contributions to Nigeria's modernity. Scholars generally agree that organized leftist groups and organizations did not emerge in Nigeria until the mid-1940s. They all posit that leftist ideology had been prevalent among nationalist and labor leaders since the late 1920s. Both official documents and oral histories indicate deep-rooted support for leftism in Nigeria, as well as anxiety among British colonial officials that this support threatened the Colonial Office's own perception and process of decolonization in the post-World War II era.

Although scholars have examined many aspects of the British-Nigeria encounter, this book is unusual in some respects. It does not aim to tell or retell the long history of the labor movement or trade unions. Given that labor, human resources, and management are key focal points in a

modernizing economy, such as Nigeria since 1945, this study captures the relevant events and processes of such transition to a “modernized” economy so far lacking in the historiography.<sup>29</sup> This is true of British rule in Nigeria, and it is part of the process of decolonization. The minister of Labour and Welfare (1957–1960), Chief M. J. Johnson, rightly concluded, “in the field of industrial relations, much has been done by the Department [Labour and Welfare] to maintain that smooth running of the wheels of industry without which our economic plans and programmes could not mature.”<sup>30</sup> This study is largely about the important role played by the Labour Department (later Ministry of Labour) during the decolonization period. It is not about the labor movement per se, but about the colonial government’s labor union education, which was regarded an essential part of the decolonization process. In addition, it details the role of Nigerian Marxists, hitherto unappreciated in scholarly works in the realm of labor union education. The divergence in labor union education did not stop with the independence in 1960. It continues to the present time. Clearly, this study explores the impact of labor union education between 1945 and 2010. The book by arguing that the creation of a Department of Labour in 1938 was essential to colonial government’s attempts to control labor unionism rather than de-politicize it, as it was the case in Apartheid South Africa for instance.<sup>31</sup>

The pioneer scholars such as Coleman, Sklar, Olusanya, Awa, and Ajayi—to mention a few—would want us to focus on a “top to bottom” history of the colonial moment. Even the second and third generations after them would concentrate on the “exploitation” by the British, rather than study in depth how individual members of the leftist groups in the labor and nationalist movements reacted to British attempts at building “sound” industrial relations. Neither do they focus on detailed analysis of policies aimed at denying leftists any role in the decolonization process. In addition, specialized studies in the field failed to relate labor union education with decolonization and British attempt at modernization in Nigeria. These include Rashid A. Aderinoye, “Labour Education in Nigeria: Structures and Implication for Nation Building,” *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (May–June, 1998): 192–198; Robin Cohen, *Labour and Politics in Nigeria, 1945–1971* (London: Heinemann, 1971): 122–126; Edmund O. Egbob, “Trade Union Education in Nigeria (1940–1964),” *African Studies Review*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (April, 1971): 83–93; Omole, Lanrewaju, “The Politics of Workers’ Education in Nigeria,” *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, Vol. 17, No. 5 (September, 1998): 291–306; Michael Omolewa, “Survey of the Development of Workers’ Education,” in M. Omolewa (ed.) *Workers’ Education in a Dynamic Society* (Ibadan: Department of Adult Education

& University of Ibadan Press, 1982); E. A. Tugbiyele, *Report on the National Conference on Workers' Education* (Lagos: Federal Ministry of Labour, 1991); T. M. Yesufu *An Introduction to Industrial Relations in Nigeria* (London, 1962); C. A. Orr, "Trade Unionism in Colonial Africa," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (1966): 65–81; W. Ananaba, *The Trade Union Movement in Nigeria* (London, 1970); R. Cohen, *Labour and Politics in Nigeria, 1945–1971* (London, 1982); "Michael Imoudu and the Nigerian Labour Movement," *Race and Class*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (1987): 345–362; M. Tokunboh, *Trade Unions in Nigeria* (Lagos, 1985); D. Otobo, *Foreign Interests and Nigerian Trade Unions* (Lagos, 1987); *State and Industrial Relations in Nigeria* (Lagos, 1988); G. G. Darah, "Imoudu and the Labour Movement," *Journal of African Marxists* (1986): 87–97; Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: The Labour Question in French and British Africa* (Cambridge, 1996); Bill Freund, "Labor and Labor History in Africa: A Review of the Literature," *African Studies Review*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (June, 1984): 1–58; Carolyn Brown "Dialectics of Colonial Labour Control," *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 1–2 (1988): 32–59; "We Were All Slaves": *African Miners, Culture, and Resistance at the Enugu Government Colliery*, Social History of Africa Series (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2003); Lisa Lindsay, *Working with Gender: Wage Labor and Social Change in Southwestern Nigeria* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003); and Ifeanyi P. Onyeonoru and Jimi O. Adesina, "Trade Unions in Nigeria since 1945," in Craig Phelan (ed.) *Trade Unionism since 1945: Towards a Global History, Volume 1: Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Africa and the Middle East* (Oxford: Peter Lang International Academic Publishers, 2009). I should mention that none of these works has access to recently declassified materials used in this book. In addition, neither did they relate labor unionism with labor union education and the politics of decolonization. They also missed the postcolonial dimension of labor union education and the divergence between the state and the leftists.

## CHAPTER 2

# LEFTIST INTELLIGENTSIA, LABOR UNION EDUCATION, AND DECOLONIZATION

### INTRODUCTION

In April 1960, the prime minister of Nigeria, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, stated at the annual conference of the Trade Union Congress of Nigeria (TUCN):

It is true that as representatives of workers it is your duty to strive to improve the working conditions and living standards of your members. But your duty does not end there. Those of you who have been entrusted with leadership of the trade union movement have another equally important obligation. You should educate your members to appreciate their economic, social and civic responsibilities toward the state and the community.<sup>1</sup>

Globally, the role of the subalterns is usually relegated to archival shelves and the footnotes of history books. Although much has been written about the labor movement and the role of unions in the nationalist movement in Nigeria, not much is known about the role of the leftist intelligentsia in labor education. Neither do we have a study detailing labor union education as part of the process of decolonization in Nigeria. This chapter, like the rest of the chapters in this book, therefore aims to fill the voids in the narratives, and present a new perspective, about the process of decolonization, emphasizing the mix of leftist unionism, labor education, and decolonization during the colonial and postcolonial periods. The uniqueness of this study is that it ties together aspects

of Nigerian labor history and the role of the leftist intelligentsia to juxtapose the dynamism of decolonization in Nigeria. In addition to using existing secondary sources, it employs newly declassified documents from the metropolis archives to reexamine the multifaceted nature of the British-Nigerian encounter during the twentieth century.

In this chapter, I hope to give a balanced coverage of the colonial movement as teachers strive to present a balanced history of Nigerian labor and nationalist movements and British decolonization during the twentieth century. More importantly, this chapter gives a voice to the subaltern groups that have been denied the opportunity to claim their contributions to Nigerian history. Scholars have generally agreed that leftist groups and organizations did not emerge in Nigeria until the mid-1940s. However, they all posit that leftist ideology had been prevalent among nationalist and labor leaders since the late 1920s. Both official documents and oral histories indicate deep-rooted support for leftism in Nigeria, as well as anxiety among British colonial officials that this support threatened the Colonial Office's own perception and process of decolonization in the post-World War II era.

Although scholars have examined many aspects of the British-Nigerian encounter, this book is unusual in some respects. It does not aim to tell or retell the long history of the labor movement or trade unions in Nigeria. Neither does it aim at discussing the whole history of the leftist group in all aspects of Nigerian history during the twentieth century. It is, however, a necessary account of the events during Nigeria's transition to a "modernized" economy that have heretofore been missing from the discussion. In a modernized economy (or an economy on its way to being modernized), it is taken for granted that the three focal areas are labor, management, and government.<sup>2</sup> This assumption was true during the British rule in Nigeria, and it was part of the process of decolonization. As the minister of labor and welfare (1957-1960) Chief M. J. Johnson rightly concluded, "in the field of industrial relations, much has been done by the Department [of Labour and Welfare] to maintain that smooth running of the wheels of industry without which our economic plans and programmes could not mature."<sup>3</sup> This study is largely about the important role played by the Labour Department during the decolonization period. It is not about the labor movement per se, but about the colonial government's labor education program, which was seen as essential to the process of transferring power to Nigerians.

#### **A SNIPPET OF NIGERIAN LABOR UNION HISTORY**

The history of the labor movement in Nigeria dates back to 1912, when civil service workers in the British colonial government organized



themselves into workers' representatives. This is the origin of the Nigeria Civil Service Union. The latter part of the 1920s to the late 1940s witnessed other workers organizing themselves for better conditions of service, among other reasons. The irony, however, was the elusiveness of a centralized union for all Nigerian workers due to many factors already identified by pioneering works on the labor movement in Nigeria.<sup>4</sup> Even the first decade of Nigerian independence was bedeviled by the same obstacles that prevented a unified central labor organization during the colonial period. Activists, labor leaders, and government and foreign corporations had diverging opinions concerning the leadership, tenets, and missions of a centralized labor organization in Nigeria. In 1975, the military regime of General Murtala Mohammed (succeeded by General Obasanjo after the February 13 coup d'état) banned the leftist intelligentsia from partaking in the running of labor unions. What emerged was a forced centralized labor organization with the hope of denying leftists any position in the new organization.

At this point, labor unions' goal of decolonization had apparently been achieved and the number of labor unions in Nigeria had proliferated to over one thousand. However, the unions continued to be polarized by an ideological divide that appeared to make centralization impossible. To address this situation, in 1976 the military government established a Commission of Inquiry into the activities of the various unions and appointed an administrator to oversee the unions and devise a more coherent structure for them. Toward the end of 1977, labor unions in Nigeria were restructured along industrial lines into 42 unions. In the realm of labor union education, the military government closed the various labor centers throughout the country and established a single labor center. Finally, in February 1978 the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) was inaugurated. Comrade Wahab Omorilewa Goodluck, Dr. Tunji Otegbeye, and other militant leftist leaders were denied a place in the new structure. With the promulgation of the Trade Union (Amendment) Decree 22 of 1978, all 42 affiliate unions became members of the new NLC. In 1989, the unions were restructured into 29 affiliate unions. An attempt by the civilian government of Chief Obasanjo to reduce the number of affiliate members of the NLC in 2004 was unsuccessful.<sup>5</sup>

### RATIONALE AND CONTEXT

Having taught for more than two decades courses that focus on colonialism, nationalism, Pan-Africanism, Britain and West Africa, and Nigeria during the twentieth century, I have been challenged by how best to introduce to my students a "history from below." How do I bring out the role of the unsung heroes? How do I lift up the significance of the

subalterns? Some scholars would want us to focus on a “top to bottom” history of the colonial moment. Even, some concentrate on “exploitation” using the “dependency theory”. The lacuna remained that we do not have an in-depth study of how individual members of the leftist groups in the labor and nationalist movements reacted to British attempts at building “sound industrial relations.” Neither do we have studies that focuses on detailed analysis of policies aimed at denying leftists a role in the decolonization process. I am of the opinion that our students, scholars, and the general public are better informed with a holistic history that emphasizes the role, contributions, foibles, and successes of the unsung heroes, as well as weaving together the many aspects of decolonization.<sup>6</sup> Thus, this book complements existing studies but at the same time presents a unique history of the period.

The recent declassification of British colonial archival records, the records of the Communist Party of Great Britain, and the Peoples Archives in England and the availability of private records in Nigeria that were previously unavailable to scholars allow me to give a new flavor to the dynamic and complex British-Nigerian encounter during the twentieth century.

With the onset of the Cold War and the internationalization of decolonization, Nigerian leftists became significant during the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s, leading to the country’s independence in October 1960. During this period, they organized themselves as groups in major cities, particularly Lagos. They organized the Zikist Movement and based their ideology on “Zikism.” The ban on their activities by the colonial state in 1950 did not deal a total blow to their resolve. Some of them chose to operate within the main political parties (Action Group or National Council of Nigerian Citizens—Nduka Eze Group) because of colonial measures, while others remained outside of mainstream nationalist parties, believing that their philosophy can succeed only through sustained “positive action.” Still others formed political parties of their own, as in the case of Aminu Kano’s Northern Element Peoples Party (NEPU). The Nigerian left, however, had a common goal: the end of British colonial rule and the overthrow of the pro-Western nationalist leaders from governance. While these aims proved futile in a colony such as Nigeria, the left nonetheless provided avenues for a postcolonial labor movement that remained a stakeholder since independence in 1960.

### **THE COLONIAL MOVEMENT AND EMERGENT LEFTISM**

Although effective colonization of the area now called Nigeria began in the first decade of the twentieth century, the ideology of the left did not

take effect until the early 30s, when colonial records indicate that the International Comintern had won a few minds and hearts in British West African colonies. Both Bankole Awonoor-Renner and Frank Macaulay are noted to have professed the ideology of the left without any regret whatsoever. By the end of that decade, however, Awonoor-Renner was repatriated from Nigeria to his native country of Sierra Leone for his leftist ideology and philosophy, and Macaulay died as the result of a tragic accident. Had it not been for his death, analysts might have written about a longer period of leftist activities in Nigeria. In addition, Frank Macaulay is reported to have never been ashamed of his belief in Communism and the urgency to defeat the British. He was not as pragmatic as his father, Herbert Macaulay, who along with other elite and traditional leaders in Lagos had formed a nationalist organization in the second decade of the twentieth century to seek better treatment for Nigerians within the colonial system. We shall return to the activities of Frank Macaulay in later sections of the chapter. He, along with Awonoor, pioneered the leftist movement in Nigeria and had great influence on Nnamdi Azikiwe, who later in his 1943 publication proposed a socialist pathway for political and economic development of Nigeria.<sup>7</sup> Azikiwe's "Blueprint" was a reflection of his support for leftist internationalism and Frank Macaulay and Bankole Awonoor-Renner's ideological leanings during the 1930s. An Ashanti from what was then the Gold Coast colony of Britain, Awonoor-Renner (Kweku Bankole), was one of the first Blacks to be admitted into Moscow's Communist University of the Toilers of the East (KUTV) in 1924, though he was not registered until November 1925.<sup>8</sup>

The British, for their part, did not seem to have made too much noise concerning the activities of Frank and Awonoor-Renner other than the 1933 deportation of the latter from Nigeria. In the post-World War II years, however, British colonial policy toward leftism changed drastically. The Cold War period was an era of intense wars of words to win the minds and hearts of many, particularly in colonial territories. Nigeria, like many Allied colonies, was significant in the battle for the minds and hearts of nationalists and their followers. As radical nationalism intensified, so did the ideology of the left gain ground. Between 1945 and 1950, Nigerian leftists built upon the momentum and organized toward total freedom for Nigerians. As I analyzed in another study, the colonial state and its allies formulated and implemented policies that checkmated leftists' activities throughout the period.<sup>9</sup>

In addition, antileftist measures were taken in the economic sector as in the Colonial Office's planning and development programs during the latter part of the decolonization era. This involved the colonial state's collaboration with foreign capitals, largely British, and courting of liberal

nationalist and labor leaders. With the Keynesian model being the economic basis of developmental planning, the Colonial and Foreign Offices and the men-on-the-spot embarked on an antileftist approach to development and planning, devolution of power, and the building of "sound industrial relations" before power was transferred in 1960.

### **THE COLD WAR AND THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT**

George Fischer<sup>10</sup> noted in 1962 that several factors account for the internationalization of labor union movements in the colonies. I should note that ideological differences of the post-1945 world were the dominant reason for the division between the West and East labor organizations. Each one strove to dominate and create a monopolized sphere of influence by propagating their ideology of "sound industrial relations" as being the best for the working class, and members and leaders of the labor unions. The colonies generally were not insulated from this global ideological division, and Nigerian labor unions witnessed such a division on a large scale from the late 1940s through independence. The root causes for the failure of attempts to create a nationwide labor union were the sustained colonial-era division and the colonial state's success in its antileftist policies generally. As noted earlier, it took a military fiat in 1975 to bring about a unified labor organization in Nigeria.<sup>11</sup>

Earlier, in October 1945, the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) replaced the International Confederation of Trade Unions, which had been founded in 1913. One of the ultimate goals of the WFTU was to pull together the converging Allied powers and organize a unified labor movement worldwide. This momentary unification of world labor organizations ended with the founding of the International Confederation of Trade Unions (ICFTU) in December 1949. The rivalry between the Eastern and Western bloc had reached the labor front with each strategizing and formulating policies to dominate the other. The race for domination and influence was felt worldwide, and no less so in Nigeria, this being the most populous (if not the most important) British colony under the sun.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) was the peacemaker between the two opposing world labor organizations after World War II. Although an organ of the United Nations, it seems to have offered some objectivity and transparency in its dealings with unions worldwide. Among other functions, the organizing and monitoring of labor union education in developing economies (colonial territories in particular) was of major concern to the body. It instituted its own programs as well as

collaborated with both union officials and employers' labor and industrial officers throughout member nations' territory. Its role as bridge between the opposing ideological international labor organizations seems to have been effectively carried out, given that there was no major complaint from either side.

Beginning in 1950, the ILO began to deliberate on ways to educate workers throughout the world. Its office of worker education became the focal point for pedagogy, methodology, and content in all matters on this subject. It was not until 1956, however, that a systematic workers' education program began in its office in Geneva, Switzerland. The scope of the ILO's workers' education program was based on its organizational structure and its competence in social and economic subjects in the labor field. It was designed to educate workers about industrial relations, social security, working conditions, occupational health and safety, and similar issues. Most important was workers' education itself—the methods, techniques, principles, and institutions required for educating workers. The general aim of ILO's educational program was to enable workers and their unions to protect against unfavorable repercussions of technological change, to help workers to secure a fair share of benefits, and to facilitate the adaptation to industrial transformation taking place globally.<sup>12</sup>

### THE STATE OF KNOWLEDGE

To understand the state of knowledge, I should note that studies about the nationalist and labor movements in Nigeria must be taken into consideration. The Nigerian leftist intelligentsias were not insulated from their counterparts along the west coast of Africa and across the Atlantic Ocean in the struggle against European colonization. As noble patriots, Nigerian leftists propagated their views through newspapers, intellectual debates, and political activism in youth organizations, the labor movement, and nationalist parties. As early as the 1930s, both I. T. A. Wallace and Frank Macaulay had corresponded with George Padmore and *The Negro Worker*, in which they published articles denouncing British colonial rule in Nigeria and exposing the problems in U.S. race relations. However, Frank Macaulay's sudden death in 1931 and Wallace's 1933 departure for his native country, Sierra Leone, halted Marxist orientation among Nigerians until after World War II. In fact, continued hostility against leftist ideology and the banning of Marxist, socialist, and Black radical publications from abroad only served to heighten the interest of Nigerian leftists. It is in this light that a historical narrative of the role played by Samuel G. Ikoku, Nduka Eze, Wahab Goodluck,

Gogo Chu Nzeribe, and Michael Imoudu, among others, remained relevant.

It was Nnamdi Azikiwe,<sup>13</sup> the first president of independent Nigeria, who concluded that leftism is suitable for adaptation but not for adoption in Nigeria. He further underscored the role of a few notable leftists during the struggle for Nigerian independence. On the other hand, John Hennings<sup>14</sup> and Hakeem Tijani,<sup>15</sup> in separate studies, identified reasons for varieties of Communism and socialism as an ideological leaning among African (Nigerian) intellectuals and nationalists during the “wind of change” that swept across Africa in the 1960s. Other scholars have since critically reviewed leftists’ role during the decolonization period. Notable in the case of Nigeria are Awa, Coleman, Dudley, Ikoku, Sklar, Olusanya, Narasingha, Abdul Raheem and Olukoshi, Madunagu, Iweriebor, Matusевич, Tijani, Schler, and Waterman,<sup>16</sup> all of whom have done extensive scholarly studies to lift leftist nationalists from the archival rooms or the footnotes of major studies about Britain and its Nigeria encounter. The focus on the leftist intelligentsia is to bring to the fore the advocates for the subalterns in Nigeria during the decolonization period and since independence in 1960.

Although formal Marxist organizations did not emerge in Nigeria until the mid-1940s, leftist ideology had been prevalent among nationalist and labor leaders since the late 1920s.<sup>17</sup> Their official documents, private diaries, newspaper reports, and oral histories indicate the deep-rooted support for leftism in Nigeria and anxiety among British colonial officials that this support threatened the Colonial Office’s own timetable for gradual decolonization. While attempts to establish a nationwide leftist organization in colonial and postindependent Nigeria failed, the ideology of the left remained strong among ideologues.

This leads us to the state of knowledge about labor union education in Nigeria. Not many studies are available to us when it comes to a detailed analysis of labor education, comparing the colonial and postcolonial periods, the relationship between labor union education and decolonization, and the like. The works of Aderinoye, Cohen, Egboh, Ngwu, Omole, Omolewa, and Tugbiyele<sup>18</sup> remain extant and pioneering. While their efforts are commendable, they were not privy to most records that remained classified at the time they were writing.<sup>19</sup> Other detailed works on the labor movement in Nigeria fall short of analysis beyond labor and mainstream nationalist politics. The works of Ananaba, Otobo, and Yesufu belong to this category, as does my previous account, published in 2005. The chapters that follow will elaborate further on these shortcomings, and thus make the present study invaluable.

### CONTEXTUALIZING DECOLONIZATION

After World War II, Africans stepped up their fight for independence from their European colonizers. This period became one of the defining moments in modern African history. Colonies gained their independence through methods varying from peaceful transitions of power to prolonged war and bloodshed. The type of transition typically depended on the response to the inevitable by the particular colonizing power and the climate of change in the colonies. Decolonization is the process of dismantling a colonial system by shifting full governance and liberty to the indigenous people. Essentially, decolonization means that the colony gains independence from the colonizing country. The postwar era marked the end of European rule in African colonies. In less than two decades after the end of the war, African colonies began to achieve independence. In many cases, after World War II, the colonial powers themselves began to initiate policies and methods aimed at persuading conservative African nationalists to become involved in a peaceful devolution of power in the colonies with the hope of building a sustained “special relationship” after independence.

The conclusion of World War II brought a new awareness of the instability of European empires and the weakening of their innate power. In its place, power displayed through the capital, labor, and natural resources that colonies generated for European postwar economies became invaluable. European nations understood that the resources that African colonies provided were a crucial asset to their industries at home. Yet Africans, after having helped Allied forces in the fight against fascism, realized that they were fighting to secure freedoms for the motherland, which, ironically, they had yet to experience. The surge of African national consciousness and the search for liberation from colonial powers created disorder in many colonies, which threatened the infrastructure of policies and systems that had been in place for decades. After 1945, both Britain and France, as leading colonial powers, were concerned about these increased local protests, labor strikes, and the militant nationalism in their colonies and began initiating reforms and courting liberal nationalist groups.

Both Britain and France came out of World War II economically weakened. They were faced with rebuilding the metropolis while at the same time contending with growing radical nationalism in the colonies. The failure to implement the Atlantic Charter, reliance on colonies' resources to rebuild the metropolis, and the increased high cost of living in the colonies were primary reasons for the surge in radical nationalists' demands for reform. The British and, eventually, the French response to

African demands did little to appease growing African discontent during this period.

African nationalism forced the Europeans into decolonization at a faster pace; indeed, in 1960 alone (which came to be known as the “Year of Africa”), 17 colonies gained their independence. The formation of nationalist political parties and labor movements geared toward anticolonialism became an effective tool to mobilize Africans. In addition, growing numbers of African newspapers, a greater number of radio stations, and increased literacy rates brought about by gradual colonial reforms gave Africans a stronger awareness and greater initiative to form nationalist parties, labor unions, pressure groups, and sometimes, “revolutionary groups.” These were the basis for sustained African demands for reforms, self-government, and independence. Nationalist parties such as the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons, the National Council of Sierra Leone, the African National Congress in South Africa, and the Convention People’s Party in Ghana, to mention a few, played significant roles in mobilizing their populations in the demand for independence. One unfortunate irony of the formation of so many nationalist political parties and pressure groups was the emergence of rivalry, ideological differences, ethnic issues, and competition among these groups after independence, resulting in internal discord in many African countries.

In addition, Cold War politics played a significant role in nationalist initiatives and colonialist reforms during the period. By 1945, both the United States of America (USA) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)—the Soviet Union—had emerged as new world leaders. Despite having been Allies during World War II, they now pursued different ideological paths—capitalism and Communism. Both nations would rise into power at a rate unparalleled by European imperialists, and both opposed colonialism. The United States believed that colonialism negated core American or capitalist values of free trade and self-determination. The Soviet Union opposed colonialism, because it contradicted Marxist ideology and represented the “highest stage of capitalism.”

African independence movements, largely made up of the working class and labor leaders, presented a chess game-like situation for the Cold War politics that became part of the decolonization process in many colonies. Ultimately, the fate of decolonization rested in the will of African nationalists and labor leaders who placed their lives on the line for independence. Despite many impediments, particularly against the leftist group, most African nationalists and labor leaders no doubt concluded that it was worth the effort to experience not only independence



but the true “new world order” they had been promised by the colonialists as early as the end of World War I.

### CONCLUSION

Despite their cultural, educational, economic, and social backgrounds, the Nigerian leftists had a common goal of achieving freedom from the British, through either taking “positive action” or working within a major nationalist party during the decolonization period. They were disappointed by members of the old guard such as Nnamdi Azikiwe, who abandoned them at the critical moment of support. These leftists stood up for what they believed and were not persuaded by the nature of British decolonization that created a “natured capitalist” state in 1960. They regrouped, reformed, and modified their strategies during the 1950s with the hope that a sustained leftist ideology and strategy would ensure the success of leftism in Nigeria. They reached out to the British Left, the Eastern bloc, and to leftist world labor unions such as the World Federation of Trade Union (WFTU), organizing the Nigerian masses in major cities during the colonial period to make their aspirations known to the peoples of Nigeria. They organized education and training sessions for workers and wrote articles in local newspapers criticizing the colonial state. They presented a leftist alternative to the British colonial devolution process and to the Nigerian nationalist leaders’ support of the British process of decolonization. They operated under the draconian rules, measures, and structures that prevented them from gaining employment with the government or with foreign corporations. They operated with meager revenues, but sustained their ideology and philosophy in the midst of colonial state stultification and draconic policing.

On the other hand, the primary goal of the British government’s labor education efforts was to present the merits of the capitalist economic and industrial system in Nigeria’s modernization. Acceptance of these ideas and attendance at the various training and workshop centers, availability of funds and scholarships for local and overseas training in labor matters, and the genuine Nigerianization process made many would-be leftist suspicious of what they read about the Communist model.<sup>20</sup>

While I have shed light on the leftists’ role and their struggle and contributions in a previous study,<sup>21</sup> this book highlights their role within the context of labor unionism, labor education, and decolonization. This book is distinctive in its analysis of labor union education in Nigeria partly because of its emphasis on labor union education and decolonization. Its emphasis on labor union education, “sound industrial relations,” leftist intelligentsia, and the role of the Seamen and the development

of maritime sector is unique. Never has any study about Nigeria connected the dots that led to a successful transition of power from the British to Nigerian leaders.<sup>22</sup> In addition, this book emphasizes the idea of continuity as central to pro-Western Nigerian leaders since 1955 when Nigerianization seems to have begun. Moreover, never has any study concretized the background of a nationwide labor institute in postindependent Nigeria. Lastly, this book provides the background to the creation of a National Institute for Labour Studies at Ilorin, Kwara, in 1990 and the concretization of labor union education in 2002 by the NLC. Named after the late Michael Imoudu, the leader of the 1945 general strike and a formidable exponent of the 1964 strike, the center remained the ideal state-controlled institution for labor education opposed to NLC's programs aimed at educating its members. After all, history is about the past and the present as it is about the interaction between the past and the present.

## CHAPTER 3

# DECOLONIZATION: UNDERSTANDING THE CONVENTIONAL NARRATIVES

### INTRODUCTION

After World War II, Africans stepped up their fight for independence from their European colonizers. The postwar period became one of the defining moments in modern African history, marking the end of European rule. Between 1945 and 1975, Africa—with the exception of Ethiopia and Liberia—was transformed from a colonized continent to a largely self-governing continent where only a few residual pockets of colonialism persisted in the southern region.

The conventional narrative is that transition in a given colony typically depended on two factors: the level of pressure for change in the colony and the response to the inevitable by the corresponding colonizing power. What has not been emphasized is that, in many cases, the colonial powers themselves began to initiate policies and methods aimed at persuading conservative African nationalists to become involved in a peaceful devolution of power in the colonies; this was undertaken with the hope of building a sustained “special relationship” after the colonial territory gained its independence.<sup>1</sup>

### THE CONTEXT

The end of World War II brought a new awareness of the instability of European empires and the weakening of their innate power. Power, displayed through the capital, labor, and natural resources that colonies

generated for European postwar economies, proved invaluable. European nations understood that the resources their African colonies provided were an asset that must be protected at all costs. At the same time, Africans, after having helped Allied forces in the fight against Fascism and Nazism, realized that they were fighting to secure freedoms for the motherland—freedoms, which, ironically, they themselves had yet to experience. The surge of African national consciousness and the search for liberation from colonial powers created disorder in many colonies, threatening the infrastructure of policies and systems that had been in place for decades.<sup>2</sup> After 1945, both Britain and France, as leading colonial powers, were concerned about these local protests, labor strikes, and the rising tide of militant nationalism in their colonies. In response, they began initiating reforms and courting liberal nationalist groups.

Both Britain and France came out of World War II economically weakened. They were faced with rebuilding the metropolis while at the same time contending with the need to pacify growing radical nationalism in their respective colonies. The failure to implement the Atlantic Charter,<sup>3</sup> reliance on colonies' resources to rebuild the metropolis, and the increased cost of living in the colonies were primary reasons for the surge in radical African nationalists' demands for reform. The British and, eventually, the French response to African demands did little to appease growing African discontent during this period.

African nationalism forced the Europeans into decolonization at a faster pace, so much so that in 1960 alone (which came to be known as the "Year of Africa") 17 newly independent African nations came into being. The formation of nationalist political parties and labor movements geared toward anticolonialism became an effective tool for mobilizing Africans. In addition, growing numbers of African newspapers, a greater number of radio stations, and increased literacy rates brought about by gradual colonial reforms gave Africans a stronger awareness and greater initiative to form nationalist parties, labor unions, pressure groups, and in some cases "revolutionary groups." These in turn were the basis for sustained African demands for reforms, self-government, and independence.

Nationalist parties such as the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons, the National Council of Sierra Leone, the African National Congress in South Africa, and the Convention People's Party in Ghana, to mention a few, played significant roles in mobilizing their populations in the demand for independence. One unfortunate irony of the formation of so many nationalist political parties and pressure groups was the emergence of rivalries, ideological differences, ethnic issues, and competition among these groups after independence, resulting in internal discord within many African countries.

In addition, Cold War politics played a significant role in nationalist initiatives and colonialist reforms during the period. By 1945, both the United States of America (USA) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)—the Soviet Union—had emerged as new world leaders. Although they had been Allies during World War II, they now pursued different ideological paths: capitalism and Communism respectively. Both nations would rise into power at a rate unparalleled by European imperialists, and both opposed colonialism. The United States believed that colonialism negated core American or capitalist values of free trade and self-determination. The Soviet Union opposed colonialism because it contradicted Marxist ideology and represented the “highest stage of capitalism.”<sup>4</sup>

African independence movements presented a chess game-like situation for the Cold War politics of the United States and the Soviet Union, as each superpower sought to prevent newly independent African nations from allying with its rival. The African nations thus became pawns in the competition for each Cold War superpower to strengthen its position against the other. Ultimately, the fate of decolonization rested in the will of African nationalists who placed their lives on the line for independence. Despite a long-fought and dangerous battle, most African nationalists would no doubt conclude that it was worth the effort to experience not only independence, but also the true “new world order” they had been promised by the colonialists so many decades before.

### COLONIAL POLICIES AND SYSTEMS

Generally, colonial policies and systems were formulated in the capitals of the European countries that established colonies in Africa—Brussels, Belgium; London, England; Paris, France; Berlin, Germany; and Lisbon, Portugal—often referred to as the “metropolis.” Thus, colonial policies and systems were shaped more by ideological orientations in the home country than by on-the-spot situations in African colonies. During the decolonization period, the implementation of these policies was carried out by European officials in Africa as well as by a few African nationalists included in the administration, and the African civil servants nationwide.

There are two schools of thought concerning the reasons for, or benefits of, colonial policies and systems during the twentieth century. These are generally referred to as the *Eurocentric* or *official colonial viewpoint* on the one hand, and the *Africanist viewpoint* (which transcends color, ethnicity, or nationality) on the other. The Eurocentric viewpoint promotes the opinion that colonialism is part of the civilizing mission that began in the late nineteenth century, with the ultimate goal of

“modernizing” African traditional infrastructures, people, and resources. Eurocentrists argue that colonial policies and systems are beneficial institutional structures and that Africans need such an influence in their transformation from traditional societies to “developed” economies. The Africanist viewpoint rejects the argument that “modernization” necessarily has to be “Westernization.” Africanists maintain that Africans did not need colonialism to modernize. Furthermore, they posit that European colonization and the policies and systems instituted during the twentieth century were implemented for exploiting the untapped natural resources in various regions of Africa for European industrial needs.<sup>5</sup> Certainly, the untapped resources in Africa did indeed fuel European factories, and at the same time, the modernization or Westernization of African societies created a vast market for the distribution of finished products from Europe to Africa.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, there is reason to lend practical credence to the Africanist viewpoint.

In their colonies in East and West Africa, the British largely adopted or modified existing traditional systems as part of the process of effective colonization. In many areas, the system of indirect rule was adopted; warrants were given to those whom the British believed would assist in collecting taxes and in administering British laws in their locality (the warrant chiefs). Some direct administration was also implemented, using the few colonial administrators on-ground in various parts of the colonies. British colonial administration recognized and supported the traditional authorities and institutions in areas where indirect rule was the main system of administration, such as Nyasaland (Malawi), British Uganda, and eastern and northern Nigeria. The indirect rule system allowed the native African rulers to continue to collect taxes and conscript native labor for public works. Chiefs, emirs, and warrant chiefs (in southeastern Nigeria), for instance, exercised considerable powers under the patronage of the colonial state. They executed colonial policies, such as meeting the revenue and public works goals. They often used forced labor for public works and were noted to be conservative in collecting taxes. In the case of the Igbo society in southeastern Nigeria, which has been called “acephalous” in reference to its lack of a cohesive leader or “head man,” colonial warrant chiefs were given a degree of power that was never before known in the community.

As stated earlier in this chapter, scholars are of two different opinions concerning the relative merits of the British indirect rule system in Africa. Most Africanists take the view that the system invariably divided and polarized many African societies. In various colonies, ethnic groups dominated these services, and in some cases, minority groups were elevated through their employment in the colonial civil service or enlistment in

the military or police services. In Nigeria, the Tiv dominated the military, as did the Acholi in Uganda and the Kamba in Kenya. As a means of suppressing anticolonial ethnic alliances and sustaining the colonial order, the British encouraged ethnic and factional rivalries and promoted opposing traditional structures of control.

The "Dual Mandate," as conceptualized by Nigeria's governor-general, Lord Lugard, in his famous book of the same title, was not necessarily a perfect or an ideal means of transforming what is considered a traditional society.<sup>7</sup> Neither was it totally in the interest of the Nigerians after all. Briefly explained, Dual Mandate is Lugard's premise that the British imperial goal of civilizing and developing African colonies would not necessarily hinder the existing traditional setup. The British considered their colonization a "civilizing mission" predicated on the use of existing traditional institutions. This is the position of the colonial school of thought led by Lord Lugard and most British scholars such as Gallagher, Perham, and Robinson, to mention a few.

From the mid-1920s to the 1930s, the impact of the Africanist viewpoint began to be felt in the British trusteeship system, whose goal was increased African participation in the new political structure. In areas where direct rule was the order of the day (i.e., Lagos and Accra), the Legislative Councils, primarily an advising arm of government, began to see changes as a result of demands by educated African elites. The inclusion of Africans in this body was largely the result of actions taken by Africans who criticized the Legislative Councils during the 1920s. More reforms came during the 1930s in the form of constitutional changes that embraced inclusion of more Africans into local administrative bodies such as the Legislative Councils, major reforms to the indirect rule system, and the abolition of the warrant chief system.

Substantive reforms, however, came after World War II when radical African nationalists took advantage of the postwar increase in the cost of living and taxes, fewer opportunities to advance in the colonial system, and volatile race relations within the colonies. The Atlantic Charter, militant nationalism, Pan-Africanism, Communist funding of colonial agitation, and the decolonization of India are other reasons for the constitutional, social, and economic reforms that took place after 1945 in the British African colonies.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, in the aftermath of World War II, reform of colonial policies and systems became rampant. As a result, the British colonies in Africa began to enjoy some degree of self-government with the establishment of a quasi-Westminster style of parliamentary government. There was increased representation of Africans in the Legislative Councils, with some Africans attaining cabinet positions. In addition, local government

replaced the system of native administration with elected representatives. These steps were part of the decolonization process that led to independence in many former colonies in Africa.<sup>9</sup>

Generally, education in many forms was an essential part of the process. With the exception of the French colonies, European Christian missionaries dominated educational service in colonial Africa from the nineteenth century until the end of World War II.<sup>10</sup> In most places, however, colonial administrations began to invest in state-sponsored public education after World War II. African natives called for the reform of the educational policies, specifically for a change from a Christian missionary curriculum to a secular curriculum and for more funds for training and educational infrastructure. Africanist scholars have criticized both private and public curricula during this period because of their emphasis on clerical and technical training to meet the lower-level administrative needs of the colonial state, and on arts rather than science and technology. In fact, there was no emphasis at all on science and technology; neither were there enough scholarships for Africans to pursue degrees in the fields of science and technology abroad.

After World War II, some opportunities for higher education were provided in various British-controlled areas—Uganda, Kenya, Tanganyika, Zanzibar, Malawi, and Zambia—but these were considered inadequate in terms of both human resources and infrastructure. At Makerere College in Uganda, for example, most of the students were offered vocational courses without the possibility of continuation to a degree program. In addition, many students who attended the Makerere Medical School were not fully credentialed; as a result they could practice only within the colonies. By 1937, there were only 31 medical graduates in East and Central Africa. In 1949, Makerere College was given a British Royal Charter to offer two-year general degree courses in arts and sciences. These Ugandan students, however, like their counterparts in West Africa, would have to wait until after independence to acquire degrees directly from the institutions. In addition, external baccalaureate degree programs at institutions of higher education such as Yaba Higher College, Achimota College, Fourah Bay College, and University College in Ibadan were inadequate for African students who sought training in teaching, science, and technology.<sup>11</sup> Although the British called their trainees “doctors,” these African graduates were not allowed to register as credentialed physicians in the colonies until 1940. In addition, the British Medical Council (the accreditation body in London) did not accredit them until 1957.<sup>12</sup> Before 1960, institutions of higher learning in African colonies, at least the British colonies, were accredited by universities in the metropolis for bachelor degrees. In British colonies, the Asquith and



Elliott Commissions, 1945 and 1948, recommended that Africans should reform the educational system to meet the post-World War II demands.

Furthermore, it could be argued that the Legislative Councils lacked the necessary structure to prepare Africans with experience in executive government. The councils became a training ground for corruption and political jobbery rather than excellence in governance. Many commissions of inquiry set up by the British between 1950 and 1957 in Nigeria, for instance, indicated that political corruption was rampant.<sup>13</sup> Such practices soon plagued many African nations after flag independence, resulting in instability that not infrequently escalated to include military coups and countercoups. Thus, in assessing colonial policies and systems, the question remained, was the training of Africans for constitutional governance uppermost in the minds of British colonial administrators? One should mention, however, that the imperfection of the British, like any colonial master, did not negate some benefits from the colonial encounter with Africans. Such cost and benefits have been analyzed by scholars and need no repetition here.<sup>14</sup>

#### **SYNOPSIS OF BRITISH PROCESS OF DECOLONIZATION**

Generally, the conventional approach of European colonial policies and systems in Africa prior to World War II was to subjugate local inhabitants. With forced subjugation or direct rule, European powers successfully enjoyed the spoils of their colonies' resources. Moreover, colonial administrations were created to ensure that the metropolis, or motherland, could take full advantage of their hegemony. Under this system, dominated Africans endured the pain of having their land stripped away and the further insult of being expected to extract natural resources for European enrichment.

After World War II, however, European powers differed in the way they dealt with their African colonies. Britain and France, as indicated above, began out of necessity to alter their visions for the future of their empires, as they came to the stark realization that changes in colonial policy were vital to enable them to continue to exploit African resources. For the British Empire, the struggle for and winning of independence in India in 1947 foreshadowed the likely eventual loss of Britain's hold on her African colonies. Pressure for independence also came from the growing numbers of Africans receiving Western education, who began to closely evaluate and study the developments in India's process of winning independence in order to apply these lessons to the benefit of their homeland. In addition, the pan-African ideology and cross-Atlantic links with peoples of African descent galvanized radical demand for reforms

and decolonization after 1945. The most significant of all the Pan-African conferences was the 1945 Manchester meeting where notable and future African leaders resolved to end European colonial rule through sustained anticolonial movements and nationalist parties.<sup>15</sup>

With the general negative opinion of colonialism clearly rising, Britain took the lead in reforming and decolonizing its African colonies after World War II. The British Empire believed that fundamental changes in policy would provide continued cooperation among the colonies, as Africans were becoming increasingly vocal about independence. The British solution to appease those colonies came in the form of the CDWA of 1940 and 1945, which set aside funds for British colonial economic and social development. The majority of this investment, however, went to sectors already under European control, such as settler farming in Kenya and southern Rhodesia, and mining in Gold Coast and Nigeria; thus, it provided little direct benefit for Africans.<sup>16</sup> However, Britain did have some success with effective reform in the form of expanded African health-care and educational facilities; specifically, more concerted efforts to prevent disease from the tsetse fly and malaria-carrying mosquitoes, and the establishment of additional universities throughout British colonies.

In an attempt to ease pressure from the international community and from African nationalist movements, Britain also began to allow limited African participation in colonial administrative duties. In an effort to maintain indirect rule, colonial administrators or sympathetic African rulers nominated African leaders for colonial legislative assemblies. British colonial administrators took care to ensure that leftist or Red-follower African nationalists were not considered for nomination; in the Gold Coast and Nigeria, for instance, in 1954 a ban was placed on the employment of Communists or anyone with links to leftist ideology. By the 1950s, however, African opposition to British-nominated leaders became clear as constitutions were drafted and elections (e.g., in British West Africa) created African majorities in the Legislative Councils and in township or local governments.

During this period, although the British envisioned and encouraged a form of gradual independence through these reforms, all was to no avail, as Britain lost control of its colonies quickly. By 1964, with the exception of southern Rhodesia (present-day Zimbabwe) and British holdings in the Union of South Africa, all of British Africa was independent. The process of decolonization, however, differed among British colonies in various regions, as we will discuss next, and at a greater length later in this book.

In the British colony of Gold Coast, reaction to the British constitution of 1945 (which required nomination of Africans to colonial Legislative

Councils as opposed to actual African direct elections) led to the formation of the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) to push for African self-government. The convention was attended by leading Gold Coast residents, who selected the Western-educated Kwame Nkrumah as general secretary. Nkrumah was perhaps the most prominent advocate in his day of Pan-Africanism, the belief in a united Africa—a “United States of Africa.” Being unafraid to use a grassroots form of activism to achieve independence, Nkrumah soon became a problem for both the British and the bourgeois of the UGCC, partly because of his more radical tendencies and anti-British position. His call to mass “Positive Action” against the government was antithetical to the liberal leadership in the UGCC. Finding the UGCC unwilling to accept his brand of politics, Nkrumah formed the Convention People’s Party (CPP), which gained widespread support in the southern region of the Gold Coast for Nkrumah’s platform of “Positive Action.”<sup>17</sup> The role of Nkrumah and the CPP during the 1948 Accra riot soon led to a government crackdown on all leftists. Nkrumah was jailed but released by the government after his party won an overwhelming majority in the elections of 1951 for the Legislative Council. With his party’s victory, Nkrumah became the “Leader of Government Business,” and worked in collaboration with British officials until the country gained its independence on March 6, 1957. At independence, Gold Coast became Ghana under the leadership of Nkrumah as prime minister.<sup>18</sup>

As Ghana became the first independent African nation south of the Sahara, its precedent would serve as a model for the remaining African colonies to achieve their own independence. The mass resistance that the CPP practiced proved too much for the British to subdue. Ghana also assisted other African nationals by providing moral and financial support to various movements. In December 1958, Ghana hosted the All African People’s Congress (AAPC), which brought together African nationalists and Pan-Africanists at a forum against colonialism.

In Nigeria, many regionally based political parties were formed during the late 1940s to mobilize the people for independence. The three major parties were the Action Group (AG), the Northern People’s Congress (NPC), and the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC). They were led, respectively, by Obafemi Awolowo, Ahmadu Bello, and Nnamdi Azikiwe. These parties were largely regional and ethnically based. Regionalism became a central issue regarding independence, because each region pursued a different timetable for independence. When the AG, led by a southerner, Obafemi Awolowo, traveled to the north to campaign for a 1956 independence date, riots ensued, and the north, under the leadership of the NPC and Ahmadu Bello, threatened to withdraw from the rest of the country. Hence, regional autonomy was

achieved by both the eastern and western regions in 1956, while the north gained autonomy in 1959.

Regional autonomy implies that nationalist parties in the region control the government, but under a British governor. For this reason, Nigeria was a diarchy for a time, governed by both liberal Nigerian nationalists and British officials; this paved the way for eventual independence as one nation in October of 1960. In preparation for that milestone, constitutional conferences were convened between 1957 and 1959 in London with the leaders of the three major parties, who deliberated upon matters such as minorities, census, security, and the Commonwealth, to name a few. The independence of Nigeria from Britain became a compromise of many ethnic groups who hoped that independence would allow them to live together and attain prosperity after independence.

In addition, the British colony of Sierra Leone won independence in 1961, followed by the Republic of The Gambia in 1965. Sierra Leone had a longer history of African nationalist agitation for self-rule than did The Gambia. Initially settled by freed slaves, Sierra Leone's coastal area, known as Freetown, was the core of a self-governing Black colony. When it lost its independence in the mid-nineteenth century, leaders such as Africanus Horton and James Johnson immediately began to demand independence within the British Commonwealth.<sup>19</sup> In 1961, when independence was finally won in Sierra Leone, Dr. Milton Margai, a member of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), was elected as the nation's first prime minister. The Gambia faced delays in getting independence, as it was initially granted independence as a constitutional monarchy within the Commonwealth of Nations. Further nationalist resistance to the status of constitutional monarchy led to The Gambia becoming a republic within the Commonwealth in 1965, with Dawuda K. Jawara as prime minister.<sup>20</sup>

### COLONIAL EDUCATION POLICIES

Before 1960, institutions of higher learning in African colonies, at least the British colonies, were accredited by universities in the metropolis for bachelor degrees. In British colonies, the Asquith and Elliott commissions of 1945 and 1948 recommended that the educational system should be reformed to meet the post-World War II demands by Africans.

Developing the human resources in the colonies was, perhaps, more significant. To increase the labor capacity of the country, Britain funded training of Nigerians in higher institutions overseas, and began informal training on-site or at the Extra-Mural Unit of University College, Ibadan. British labor union education therefore should be regarded as a matter

of urgency during the late 1930s to meet the growing demand for labor inspectors, labor officers, labor leaders, and workers generally. We shall return to this later in the next chapters.

### CONCLUSION

This chapter has given a general overview of African decolonization with emphasis on the territories of the British Empire. Because of the multidimensional nature of African decolonization, the following chapters discuss an important aspect of the process involved in decolonization in Nigeria, namely the issue of labor movement, labor unions, and labor education. Labor union education has not been given its due place in the annals of decolonization policies. Other than extensive histories of labor movement and the unions, less is known about the relationship among labor education, the policy of Nigerianization, and decolonization that led to independence.

## CHAPTER 4

# THE COLONIAL STATE AND ORGANIZED LABOR

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on British official and unofficial attempts to shape the development of labor organizations in colonial Nigeria. It emphasizes colonial state's attempts to deprive leftists within the Nigerian labor movement any opportunity to foment antigovernment propaganda or action. The development of "sound industrial relations" was important to successful antileftist measures in all ramifications.<sup>1</sup> The chapter presents a historical narrative of the collaboration between the colonial state, officials of the British Trades Union Congress, the Nigerian private sector, pro-British Nigerian nationalists and labor leaders, and the United States of America at the onset of the Cold War in 1945. It argues that the success of various measures taken in the labor sector was not insulated from the general anti-leftist policies implemented between 1945 and 1960.<sup>2</sup>

### THE CONTEXT

In correspondence with an official of the British Trade Union Congress in 1956, a leading Nigerian labor leader remarked that "the initial and most embarrassing problem is that the workers are wont to look up to Communist and Communist influenced International Labour Organizations for material and financial aid . . . . The psychological frailty and weakness of the average Nigerian worker, which—virtually—are engendered by want, insecurity and manumission, constitute the most fertile soil on which the baneful doctrine Communism thrives more than ever."<sup>3</sup>

During the colonial period, the colonial government remained the largest employer of labor. The percentage of the Nigerian working class

was put at 3 percent of the total population in 1954. An official figure indicates that there were 152,000 labor union members organized in 116 labor unions. Seven of the unions had more than 5,000 members. These were the Nigerian Union of Teachers (26,000), the Amalgamated Union of the United Africa Company Workers Union (19,000), the Public Utility Technical and General Workers Union of Nigeria and the Cameroons (12,000), the Nigeria African Mineworkers Union (11,000), the Railway Workers Union (11,000), and the Nigerian Civil Service Union (6,000).<sup>4</sup>

As the figures show, the majority of Nigerian workers were employed by the colonial government, which thus gave them a key position to exercise pressure on British rule, particularly after World War II. To Nigerian leftists, a labor union member should not stand aloof in the struggle against imperialism as practiced by the British. They seem to have imbibed the doctrine of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) outlined by its leaders. In one of their ideological classes, CPGB leaders noted that a "non-political trade unionism is a betrayal of the interests of the workers and of the national struggle."<sup>5</sup> They realized, however, that the colonial governments (under both the Labour and Conservative Parties) were determined to keep "trade unions subservient to the employers and the Government, and to keep them isolated from the national struggle."<sup>6</sup>

### ORGANIZED LABOR AND THE COLONIAL STATE

Having noted that the sector of society most vulnerable to leftist ideology was the labor and labor union, the colonial government took three major steps in an effort to combat the menace. These were the training of labor and industrial officers; the encouragement of the International Confederation of Trade Unions (ICTU) against the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU); and the encouragement of a pro-Western labor congress through the support of activists like Cole, Adebola, Borha, Adio-Moses, Porbeni, and Labinjoh.

The British colonial administration's effort at guiding and building labor unions and industrial relations in the colonies, however, predates East-West ideological differences. Lord Passfield (Sidney Webb), the secretary of state for the colonies, in a dispatch to colonial governors in 1930 warned them "to deal with trade unions with a spirit of tolerance and understanding." Regarding labor union development, he noted, "there is a danger that, without sympathetic supervision and guidance, organization of laborers without experience . . . may fall under the domination of disaffected persons, by whom their activities may be diverted to improper

and mischievous ends.”<sup>7</sup> This was the genesis of government intervention in molding labor unionism in the colonies.

Thus in 1938, the Trade Union Ordinance was enacted with a view to ensuring “sound industrial relations” between Nigerian workers and their employers in both the public and private sectors. Apart from this, during the 1930s the Colonial Office (CO) appointed Major J. Orde Brown as the labor adviser to the secretary of state for the colonies; it also created the Office of Labour Inspectorates (which became Departments in 1942) and appointed labor and trade union officers “to guide and train leaders in the art and practice of trade unionism” in the colonies.<sup>8</sup> During World War II, the efforts of the inspector of Labour in Nigeria, C. H. Crossdale, were aimed at nurturing the various unions for war needs and the maintenance of “sound industrial relations” between the government and European employers.<sup>9</sup> In fact, labor and welfare officers were often sent to sensitive government departments to act as the bridge between the government and its employees.<sup>10</sup>

Building “sound industrial relations” was not only a pathway to successful anti-Communist policies initiated during the period; training and scholarships for Nigerians was perceived as an integral component of the success.<sup>11</sup> The colonial government awarded scholarships to Nigerians to train at the University of London School of Economics and Political Science, Ruskin College, Oxford, or directly under British TUC officials in London. Between late 1940s and 1952, 11 scholarships were awarded to Nigerians in this respect.<sup>12</sup> The U.S. Foreign Leaders Grant was also made available for the training of some Nigerians in U.S. colleges and universities in labor and industrial relations. One of the first beneficiaries was Matthew Ayodele Tokunboh, who benefited from the British government scholarship during the war to study at the London School of Economics and was subsequently selected for the U.S. Foreign Leaders Grant to study labor and industrial relations at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. Other beneficiaries included Adio-Moses, Beyioku, Cole, Olugbake, and Porbeni.<sup>13</sup> These and others were the Nigerian agents of anti-Communist policy in labor unions during the postwar period and afterwards.

It must also be noted that training was not limited to overseas. In fact, it was more cost effective to organize local training during the period. Local resources and beneficiaries of government scholarships and U.S. grants were put to use. Between 1950 and 1960, the Department of Extra-Mural Studies of the University College, Ibadan, was charged with providing local courses/programs for future labor officers and unionists. Under the leadership of Ayodele Tokunboh, the university’s first director (1950–1957), guest lecturers were drawn from among progovernment labor leaders, officials of the British Trade Union and the ICFTU,



and the colonial state's trade/labor officers. These included Nancy Sears (LSE), W. Hood (British TUC), E. Hannah (U.S. Trade Union official), G. McRay (Trade Union College, Kampala), and G. Paxton (British TUC).<sup>14</sup> Materials and literature used for instruction were provided by the U.S. Department of Labor, the British TUC, the British Council (BC), the United States Information Service (USIS), and the CO. It seems that the agenda of the colonial government was clear: In order to nullify the leftists' influence, a proactive mind-bending through education and better opportunities must be made available to those who will implement various anti-Communist policies in the labor sector.

I must note that there were those who called for caution and modification of the syllabi at the Extra-Mural courses for labor union leaders during the period. For instance, some of the participants at the departmental conference in 1953 advised that "courses should not appear to have been sponsored, arranged, or unduly influenced by Government."<sup>15</sup>

In 1957, the colonial Department of Labour also introduced "Training within Industry" (TWI) courses "in job instructions and job relations involving industrial relations, apprenticeship, training and factory organization."<sup>16</sup> Moreover, by 1959, the department had been assisted by H. Tulaz, of the British TUC, in establishing a trade union school in Lagos where courses in trade union and industrial relations were conducted.<sup>17</sup>

Nigeria, like other British colonies, was not isolated from the international struggle for the hearts and minds of labor leaders. In a Cold War environment, and in view of the potentials in Nigeria, the International Confederation of Trade Unions became an important agent of the colonial government in its drive toward creating a pro-Western labor union group in the colony and protectorates. As early as March 1949, Roberts Curry, the labor officer in Nigeria, had written to Vincent Tewson, the British TUC secretary, concerning the activities of the WFTU in Nigeria and the need for TUC/ICFTU initiatives. Curry noted, "The W.F.T.U. will now be concentrating its energies on the backward countries and I have grave suspicions that Nigeria is one of the fertile grounds for their activities." He concluded, "The Government . . . is very concerned about the matter and I am advising Government on the methods to combat this menace of Communism from spreading its ugly head amongst these simple people."<sup>18</sup>

Early in January 1950, J. Oldenboek, the general secretary of the ICFTU, wrote to the secretary of state, Creech Jones, to support the visit of a panel of the ICFTU to British territories in Central and West Africa later in the year.<sup>19</sup> The primary motive was to assist in the development

of free and democratic labor unions. At its executive board meeting in November 1950, it was resolved that the goal of the ICFTU was to wrest the initiative from the Communists and Communist-led labor unions, a goal to which it was prepared to devote substantial resources.<sup>20</sup> The British Trade Union Congress (TUC) and labor officers in Nigeria supported this move.<sup>21</sup> On November 20, 1950, Sir Vincent Tewson of the TUC wrote to the secretary of state for the colonies that the TUC would be holding a meeting with the ICFTU in Douala toward the end of January 1951 in order to prevent a similar plan by the WFTU.<sup>22</sup>

In view of its concern about Communism in Nigeria, the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone, and The Gambia, the British TUC sent a six-person delegation to these colonies, prior to the Douala conference, to study the level of Communist penetration in their labor ranks and the feasibility of disorienting them from the WFTU, bringing them instead into the orbit of the ICFTU.<sup>23</sup> In fact, out of £250,000 raised to combat Communism, the British TUC was said to have contributed a sum of £100,000.<sup>24</sup> The secretary of state for the colonies was delighted about the British TUC/ICFTU initiative since it was difficult for the government to become directly involved in labor matters. Accordingly, administering officers, particularly in Nigeria where Eze's Labour Congress had affiliated with the WFTU, were directed to give every support to the delegation.<sup>25</sup>

The response from Nigeria was very swift. Accommodation and transport were arranged at the expense of the Nigerian government. In order not to create fear in labor circles and to disguise its anti-WFTU motive from the labor movement, the government insisted that only the ICFTU and not the government would carry out publicity for the ICFTU visit.<sup>26</sup> The ICFTU/TUC trip from London was funded by the CO.<sup>27</sup> The endeavor was seen as an important stabilizing influence on the labor union movement that would provide valuable combat against leftist ideology infiltration into the movement.<sup>28</sup>

On February 15, 1951, the ICFTU delegation arrived in Nigeria to propagate the aims of free democracy. These included, verbatim:

- (1) To inform trade union groups of the purposes and aims of the ICFTU;
- (2) To obtain the maximum interests and support for the West African Trade Union Conference to be held at Douala between 26th and 28th February 1951;
- (3) To endeavour to win over groups at present supporting the communist-controlled WFTU; and,

- (4) To inform the ICFTU on labor conditions and the stage of trade union development in West Africa.<sup>29</sup>

Although the delegation encountered some difficulties, it seems to have succeeded in most respects in Nigeria and indeed other British West African colonies.<sup>30</sup> The task of the ICFTU/TUC in combating leftist groups in organized labor was to bolster the moderate and responsible elements in colonial labor unions. It was also to encourage the production of more leaders opposed to WFTU interference. The first step in this direction was the setting up of an Information and Advice Center in Accra, which became a regional office of the body.<sup>31</sup> A second significant effort of the ICFTU during this period was its support for the Adio-Moses, Borha, Adebola, and Esua groups in their efforts to establish a pro-Western labor union. Despite Nduka Eze's attempt at bargaining for financial assistance as a prelude to withdrawing his section of the union's affiliation with the WFTU, the ICFTU delegation under Fred Dalley of the British TUC was only willing to assist Adio-Moses's group. It is not surprising that Adio-Moses, E. Cowan, and A. Cole were selected to represent Nigeria at the Douala meeting.<sup>32</sup> Adio-Moses later offered a motion at the Douala meeting on March 7, 1951, that the ICFTU should establish regional machinery for the coordination of labor union training in West and Central Africa, including the establishment of labor union colleges and the promotion of lectures. These proposals were adopted and machinery was set in motion to counter the Communist influence in labor movements.<sup>33</sup>

By the end of 1951, Adio-Moses—with the assistance of Cowan, Borha, and Cole—had been able to gain some ground within the Nigerian labor movement.<sup>34</sup> An action committee was set up under Adio-Moses through which the conference recommendations were carried out. The "Action Committee," or "The Council of Action," as it was variously referred to in the TUC record, aimed at (1) formation of a democratic national center and (2) building up of branches similar to British TUC/ICFTU unions.<sup>35</sup> One step toward achieving these goals was the setting up of labor union educational committees and mini-libraries at labor union secretariats in major parts of the country, with books supplied by the TUC.<sup>36</sup>

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Adio-Moses was one of the beneficiaries of TUC scholarships. Based on the advice of the TUC Colonial Advisory Committee, the general council offered him a scholarship to study trade unionism and industrial relations at Ruskin College, Oxford. At this time, Adio had already benefited from the TUC Educational Trust Fund, which had enabled him to spend some time attending meetings,

lectures, and conferences in England as far back as 1947.<sup>37</sup> In addition, there were beneficiaries from other parts of the British colonies during the period.

Activities of the ICFTU were felt in all parts of colonial Africa (and indeed in independent African states) during the period. Having its regional office in Accra, the ICFTU not only published *Africa Labour* (later known as *Labour Africa Survey*) but also organized conferences and lectures from time to time to ensure a democratic labor unionism on the continent. One such conference was the All-African Conference on labor unionism held at Accra between January 14 and 18, 1956. According to its organizers, this conference was part of a larger initiative toward combating leftist ideology or, indeed, any WFTU activities in Africa.<sup>38</sup> The opening of the Labour College at Kampala, Uganda, in November 1958 complemented this endeavor.<sup>39</sup>

In addition to the offer of scholarships to colonial labor unionists, the TUC general council assisted colonial labor union movements in providing educational facilities for their members in the form of Ruskin College correspondence courses. These were made available to labor unionists in the West Indies, West Africa, Burma, and Malaya, with the TUC meeting the cost.<sup>40</sup> The TUC also supported Extra-Mural courses at the London School of Economics and Political Science, as it did for Ruskin College and Glasgow, Southampton, and Manchester Universities.<sup>41</sup> The goal was to aid government efforts in building "sound industrial relations" with labor unions as a step toward combating leftist menace.

Between 1946 and 1952, 17 Nigerians benefited from TUC training facilities for overseas labor unionists. Of the 52 places in the general training courses since its inception in 1946/47, 12 were allotted to Nigeria, nine to Germany, six to India, four to the West Indies, three to Norway and Trinidad, two to Burma and Sierra Leone, and one each to the Gold Coast, Kenya, British Guiana, Malaya, Australia, Belgium, Sweden, Greece, Southern Rhodesia, Kenya, and Holland.<sup>42</sup>

### ROLE OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR

The private sector was not left out in the overall attempts to curtail leftist ideology in the colonies generally. European firms were generally apprehensive of Communist infiltration of their workers' unions. Thus, in England, these firms formed a pressure group called the Overseas Employers Federation (OEF). These included the Bank of British West Africa Limited, Barclays Bank (D.C.O), British and French Bank, John Holt, Rowntree-Fry-Cadbury, UAC, Elder Dempster, and Peterson Zochonis.<sup>43</sup> Hence, OEF soon became an important pressure group for

more anti-Communist measures in British colonies. The organization cooperated with the Labour Department and the British TUC on ways to build sound industrial and labor relations.

In response to Lyttelton's request of December 9, 1953, for cooperation between the Colonial Office (CO) and the TUC, the TUC General Council met with government officials on January 28, 1954, to work out modules of operation. It was agreed that private firms had a part to play in the development of "sound industrial relations." To that end, it was suggested that the Colonial Office should meet with the representatives of the Overseas Employers Federation. This was to be followed by a meeting between the three bodies.<sup>44</sup>

In a meeting in 1954 of the OEF, the CO, and the British TUC, it was agreed that steps against leftist ideology in colonial labor unions should remain secret.<sup>45</sup> In a response to A. Mellor, the director of the United Africa Company, the secretary of state for the colonies stressed that "while it was communism which made the job so urgent . . . communism itself could only be met by developing sound industrial relations."<sup>46</sup>

Leading commercial firms in Nigeria, such as Lever Brothers, the Leventis Group, John Holt Ltd., the United Africa Company, Van Der Bergh, and Elder Dempster, supported government anti-Communist measures through their disposition to notable Marxist labor leaders. For instance, the management of Lever Brothers and Van Der Bergh refused to recognize Wahab Goodluck as the representative of their workers' union during a trade dispute in 1957 partly because he was tagged a Communist.<sup>47</sup>

During the talks with the commissioner of Labour, George Foggon, a senior management staff of Elder Dempster Company, stated categorically, "all we had done was to prevent a communist from causing industrial chaos by being allowed unrestricted access to our premises."<sup>48</sup> The management of Lever Brothers and Van Der Bergh sought the support of the government in upholding their decision to restrict Goodluck and his cohorts from their premises, since, in their view, "government was serious in its declared attitude towards communism."<sup>49</sup>

Although I have devoted an entire chapter to discussing the dispute of 1959, let me briefly describe it here as it relates to employer and employee strife during the period. The director of Elder Dempster Lines Limited, Bruce Glasier, was also concerned about the attempts of Wari Orumbie (a.k.a. Sidi Omar Khayam), who was believed to have the backing of a Trotskyite group in Liverpool, to disrupt cordial labor relations between staff and management of Elder Dempster in Lagos.<sup>50</sup> The background to this was the seamen's strike on board the ship *M.V. Apapa* at Liverpool in 1959 and the subsequent dismissal of the workers by

the management of Elder Dempster.<sup>51</sup> Although the incident occurred in Britain, it nonetheless became an international issue involving the management of the shipping lines operating in Nigeria, the Nigerian labor officer, the minister of labor affairs, and members of the Nigerian Seamen's Union in Lagos.

Further government attempts at eliminating leftists' gains, if any, can be seen in their fostering of the National Council of Trade Unions, Nigeria (NCTUN), under Cole in 1957.<sup>52</sup> The background was N. D. Watson's memorandum of 1953, in which he argued, "it is no use trying to break communist leaders if there is nobody to step into their places."<sup>53</sup> He maintained that "quite apart... from any repressive or deterrent action in the administrative, legal or propaganda fields that H.M.G. or Colonial Governments may be able to take, the fact will always remain that resistance to communist infiltration must come from within the trade union movement itself."<sup>54</sup> As the secretary of state for the colonies summed it up, "it is by influence and persuasion that the work would have to be done."<sup>55</sup>

Like Nkrumah in the Gold Coast (Ghana), Balewa's government secretly sponsored activists like Labinjoh, Adebola, and Borha to join the leftist-dominated All Nigerian Trade Union Federation (ANTUF).<sup>56</sup> The return of these men to the ANTUF led to the resignation of Gogo Chu Nzeribe and his cohorts from the body and the temporary declaration of ANTUF support for ICFTU.<sup>57</sup> However, for Adebola this was not enough; the goal of the ICFTU at the Douala meeting was not to create another faction in the ANTUF but "to clean out the minority communist group and preserve ANTUF."<sup>58</sup>

The argument was that irrespective of the resignation of Nzeribe and his cohorts, Wahab Goodluck and Sunday Bassey still held official positions that could be wrested from them only through an election. The solution, according to Adebola, was that "ANTUF must be completely dissolved; a new center probably reverting to the old name of Nigerian Trade Union Congress, would be formed with the NCTUN as the nucleus; and membership would be considered individually and no union harboring known pro-Communist elements in its executive would be eligible for affiliation."<sup>59</sup>

These machinations soon paid dividends. On March 7, 1959, approximately 150 labor leaders representing 70 unions met at Enugu, Eastern Region, to found a new labor union organization. With the exception of M. Imodu, who was elected president-general of the new Trade Union Congress of Nigeria (TUCN), all of the officers of the new organization had been previously closely associated with NCTUN (an antileftist group).<sup>60</sup> L. Borha, who defeated S. Bassey, secretary-general of ANTUF,

by 85 votes to 52, captured the important position of secretary-general.<sup>61</sup> The deputy president-general elect was S. I. Eze, president of the Nigerian Transport Staff Union affiliate of NCTUN. O. Zudonu was elected first vice-president, and O. Egwunwoke as treasurer: the former was president, and the latter, secretary of the Marine Floating Staff Union, which was affiliated with NCTUN. I should note that both men had previously visited the United States and Caux (Switzerland) as strong supporters of the Moral Re-Armament Movement.<sup>62</sup>

To achieve this sweep of important offices in the TUCN, supporters of NCTUN caucused both before and during the merger and adopted a common policy.<sup>63</sup> As Theo Adams, the American consul, noted, "an internal split among ANTUF representatives to the conference combined with an apathy toward ANTUF on the part of the regional leaders defeated their aspirants."<sup>64</sup> The *Daily Times*, in its editorial of March 11, 1959, remarked, "the new TUC must look into the past and learn from the pitfalls of its predecessor, the old TUC" under Nduka Eze.<sup>65</sup> In the final analysis, the constitution of the new TUCN categorically stated as one of the objectives of the new labor movement that "it will safeguard against the projection of communism into the labor movement."<sup>66</sup>

### CONCLUSION

In a Cold War situation, the colonial state was not ready to lose the battle to leftist labor and nationalist groups. The evidence indicates that measures were taken during this period to deprive the leftists of any space to flower. The preceding narratives have shown that the colonial state was not alone in the process. Its success was largely a result of coordinated efforts and determination that "planned decolonization" is incomplete without successful implementation of antileftist measures in emergent labor union organizations during the period. I have stressed that success was not localized because the colonial state also engaged international bodies such as the British TUC, American AF-CLIO, and ICFTU in its determined efforts to deny Nigerian leftists the privilege of operating in the labor sector of the colonial structure. The next chapter will detail local measures taken to deprive leftists further gains among workers throughout the decolonization period.

## CHAPTER 5

# LABOR UNION EDUCATION BEFORE 1960

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter recontextualizes the idea of training and education<sup>1</sup> of labor union members and leaders in Nigeria during the decolonization era and after. It reviews previous scholarship and fills in the missing links for a comprehensive history of labor education and training in Nigeria. In the period before 1960, the centrality of colonial government-sponsored workers' workshops, on-the-job training by both the private and public sectors, and opening of labor training centers in major cities and towns was not solely based on creating "sound industrial relations," as British officials would have us believe. Nor was it solely aimed at general education for labor leaders, as Edmund Egboh's 1971 essay implies.<sup>2</sup> As the preceding chapters show, labor union matters were not solely a local affair. Neither were industrial relations in the colonies based on the imperial need to develop the labor union groups. At the same time, British educational development of its colonies was not limited to the formal instructional system. Informal education and continuing education, on-the-job training, workshops, and the like were part of the British government's education of the colonial people. I posit further that the Crown's formal and informal education of the colonial people was both a preventive and a curative effort to confront the growing threat of Communism worldwide and, in particular, its inroads into the fabric of the



Nigerian colonial state. Of course, this remained a covert policy until the 2006 declassification of the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office files on “Countering Communist Policy in Nigeria.”<sup>3</sup> These files validated annual reports of the Department of Labour, hitherto an unclassified document.

Furthermore, the pursuit of “sound industrial relations” was predicated on the success of labor education in the age of international Cold War rivalry between the two ideological camps. Aided by allies such the United States. Britain as a colonial power endeavored to do everything necessary to defeat the leftist groups that were formed and re-formed in Nigeria. This chapter outlines attempts made by the colonial state to establish labor union education centers, with training workers as an essential part of the overall labor policy during the colonial period and concretizing the idea of building a workforce before the call for Nigerianization (Africanization) of the civil service (see Table 5.1). The colonial state as the leading employer of labor pursued an education policy that suited its political and economic goal of “sound industrial relations.”<sup>4</sup>

Table 5.1 Trade unions’ registrations and membership, 1957

### A. Union Registration

Number of trade unions registered at the beginning of year 1957

Number of new unions registered

Number of unions whose registration lapsed

Total number of registered trade unions as of 31st March, 1957

### B. Membership

Membership	Total no. of trade unions	Total membership
50 and under	69	1,676
51–250	92	11,581
251–1,000	37	16,615
1,001–5,000	29	61,971
Over 5,000	8	106,422
Membership not available	45	–
Total	270	198,265

**C. Membership by International Industrial Classification**

	<b>Industry</b>	<b>Total no. of unions</b>	<b>Total no. of unions returning membership</b>	<b>Membership returned</b>
01	Agriculture inc. plantations	9	7	15,839
02	Forestry and logging	5	3	907
04	Fishing	5	5	579
11	Coal mining	2	2	3,378
12	Metal mining	6	6	19,594
13	Crude petroleum, and gas	1	1	235
14	Stone, clay, sand, pits, and quarries	5	5	413
20	Food manufacturing	5	4	540
22	Tobacco manufacturing	1	1	2,052
24	Clothing, footwear, other made-up textile goods	3	2	63
25 and 26	Wood manufacture, furniture, and fixtures	9	7	4,107
28	Printing	4	4	1,177
31	Chemicals and chemical products (inc. soap)	1	1	367
35	Metal products ex-transport and machinery	1	1	150
38	Transport equipment (shipping, rly, workshops, motor vehicles (inc. repairs))	5	4	1,379
39	Miscellaneous manufacturers	9	8	596
40	Construction (building, roads, etc.)	25	21	7,810
51 and 52	Electricity, water, sanitation	7	6	4,106
61	Wholesale and retail trade	37	30	6,251
62 and 63	Banking and insurance	4	4	734
711	Railways	9	8	31,170
712	Bus services	2	2	159
713	Road passenger ex-buses, taxis, hire cars, coach tours	8	4	496
714	Road transport—freight not elsewhere classified	17	16	3,857
715	Ocean transport	2	2	2,503

Table 5.1 (Continued)

	Industry	Total no. of unions	Total no. of unions returning membership	Membership returned
716	Water transport, ports, docks, etc.	8	5	6,412
717	Air transport inc. air ports etc.	3	3	318
73	Communications, posts, telegraphs	6	5	5,000
81	Government service inc. local Government	25	21	30,748
82	Education	10	8	39,830
822	Medical and health services	12	11	4,363
823	Religious organizations	2	1	67
830	Entertainment and recreation	4	2	40
841 and 845	Domestic servants and personal service	10	7	872
842 and 843	Restaurants, hotels, catering	2	2	580
90	General laborers' union	6	6	1,573
		270	225	198,265

#### D. Growth Factors

									Total no. of unions	Total membership
1956-57	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	270	198,265
1955-56	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	232	175,987
1954-55	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	177	165,189
1953-54	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	152	153,089
1952-53	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	131	143,282
1951-52	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	124	152,230
1950-51	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	144	144,358
1949-50	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	140	109,998
1948	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	127	90,864
1947	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	109	76,362
1946	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	100	52,747
1945	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	97	—
1944	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	91	—

Source: Ministry of Labour and Welfare Annual Report, 1957.

### DEFINING LABOR UNION EDUCATION: THE RECONTEXTUALIZATION OF INFORMAL EDUCATION

It is legitimate to ask the question, what is labor union education? What is informal education? Why do we need to recontextualize the idea of “empire and education”? Answering these questions will highlight the relevance of this study and identify lapses or inadequacies in previous scholarship about events leading to independence in Nigeria. It will illuminate and clarify the narrative about workers’ drift between the Western and Eastern ideological divisions that permeated global affairs after World War II. In addition, a recontextualization is significant in order to show that both ideological camps embarked on many measures (covert and overt) to actualize their goal—winning the hearts and minds of the colonial peoples—the working class being the most important group.

In the past and recently, labor education in Nigeria has been the subject of scholarly review. The works of Aderinoye, Cohen, Egboh, Omole, Omolewa, and Tugbiyele are noteworthy as they relate to Nigeria.<sup>5</sup> Labor education is nontraditional (largely during the colonial phase), nonconventional, not structured, and not credential- or degree-oriented. Yet, it is the pathway to workers’ promotion, to better opportunities, and to job security. It was an opportunity for most workers with primary-level education to garner skills at the end of the training. Labor union education transcends skills acquisition because it involves mental development. As a form of education in the workplace, its pedagogy is often hands-on or cooperative in nature. It is also about increasing workers’ productivity without necessarily being dogmatic or ideological. Although colored during the colonial era by the ideological race, it is ultimately about access to information and means for workers to improve themselves. Such improvement, it could be argued, was ultimately beneficial to the employers (government and the foreign capitals) in that it ensured profit maximization.

Labor union education<sup>6</sup> varies from one country to another. In the case of colonial and postcolonial Nigeria, one can define it as an attempt by all stakeholders (colonial and nationalist governments, unions, and corporations) to ensure workers’ success through access to information and skill acquisition. Skill acquisition, access to information, and “sound industrial relations” at the workplace were central to the success of the nontraditional or informal nature of labor education throughout Nigeria before the 1960s. Ghosh was right when he characterized worker education as “all kinds of educational activities which seek to provide workers with the equipment that will help them to develop fully their potentialities and enable them to fulfill more adequately their trade unions and related functions.”<sup>7</sup>

The idea of labor union education is contextualized in a variety of ways. Scholars have given various explanations to buttress their point of view.<sup>8</sup> Such view, as the history of Nigeria's labor union education shows, is often based on ideological position. In addition, the type and modules of education is based on changing social, economic, and political situation on one hand, and the nature of industrial relations on the other hand. Despite these varieties, one agrees with Whitehouse that, "workers' education or labour education is a structure and process specifically designed to involve trade union members in educative programmes and activities directly through their trade unions, or in joint cooperative developments with workers' education institutions sympathetic to, and having the support of workers' organisations."<sup>9</sup>

### **THE COLONIAL MOMENT AND ANTILEFTIST LABOR UNION EDUCATION**

The year 1938 was profoundly important in the history of labor union development in Nigeria, for in that year the Trades Union Ordinance was enacted by the colonial state to regulate labor movements and their activities within the colony and protectorates. The following year, an Inspectorate of Labour became operational with an inspector of labor in-charge. Moreover, in 1942, the Inspectorate was changed to a department with a commissioner as the overall boss. This gave labor a ministerial-level status, making it an essential part of the reforms that preceded the post-World War II reforms. Because of this change, several workers formed unions and became more organized. In addition, many union members and leaders sought better knowledge and education that would ensure union growth and development. However, the type of education and where or who gives the education became contentious issues between the colonial state and some labor leaders who were suspicious of any meaningful benefit from a colonial state education. The content of training modules and the personality involved were some of the additional issues grappled with by the colonial state and leftist leaders in both the nationalist and labor movements.

This struggle became ferocious after 1945, when the world became ideologically divided between the East and the West. In Nigeria, an explosive increase in the cost of living, together with continued disparities in the standard of living between the working class and colonial government officials, did not—to put it mildly—create an environment for cordiality. With the increase in the number of labor unions to 144 by 1950 and a membership of over 144,000, the colonial state was preoccupied with how to control and sway workers from the ideology of the left, as well

as what could be done to ensure sustained “sound industrial relations” between workers and employers. This issue was not limited to the public sector; rather, there was cooperation between the private and public sector when it comes to a pro-Western labor education and training program. It was in view of this that the colonial state began basic training in labor union organization and leadership early in 1940. Greater emphasis and more rigorous, but antileftist, union education was introduced after 1945. The activities of labor leaders mentioned in this book, Eastern bloc interest, affiliation with the World Federation of Trade Union (WFTU), and evidence of funding from behind the Iron Curtain are some of the reasons for the colonial state to embark on a sustained antileftist education labeled “sound industrial relations.” It was also the main reason for sustained antileftist union education, and general labor policy during the decolonization period.

Between 1939 and the late 1950s, therefore, labor officers, assistant labor officers, and exchange managers trained and mentored an African cadre of labor officers as part of a general education goal of increasing the number of African labor officers and ensuring a sustained pro-Western labor education for workers. Most of the Africans were employed as labor officers in training and sent to undergo training at the London School of Economics and Political Science. Upon completion of training, they were appointed as assistant labor officers with a few becoming exchange officers by the mid- to late 1940s. In addition, by the early 1950s, some of them had become labor officers in charge of many policy matters including training and general education.

It is worth mentioning the list of these pioneers that shaped and modeled the kind of labor education that pervaded labor centers and many workshops or on-the-job training throughout the decolonization era. In 1944, Africans in the Department of Labour included F. C. Nwokedi, Miss Ayo Adeniyi-Jones (later charged with overseeing the juvenile employment exchange), T. E. A. Salubi, M. O. Abiodun, N. O. A. Adeyemi, A. I. Obiyan, P. A. Quist, J. W. Kofi-Duncan, M. O. Ani, T. O. G. Ojiako, and G. G. Dibua. By 1947, other Africans had joined the list: F. O. Thomas, S. O. Jolaoso, O. A. Young, J. A. Ola, D. B. Adekoya, J. C. K. Odiah, J. A. Agboola, M. Kasumu, and S. A. Adewa.<sup>10</sup> An outline of the functions and duties of the officers as well as the Department of Labour and its sections indicate the significance of the empowerment of these pioneering Africans generally, and the multidimensional nature of the process of decolonization during the period under review.

The year 1946 was a golden year in the history of labor unions and the Department of Labour in Nigeria, although the official report from

the Department of Labour in 1946 would have us believe that it was a “year of suspended animation in the Nigeria Labour World”<sup>11</sup> due to the 1945 General Strike and the Report of the Tudor Davies Commission on Cost of Living and Salaries.<sup>12</sup> In that year, the Trades Union Congress Working Committee set up at the end of World War II began to meet monthly in order to bridge the communication gap between the Department of Labour and the labor movement. Among matters discussed was “Legislation affecting Trade Unions and labour conditions, Negotiating Machinery, Trade Union Education, Trade Union Administration and Trade Union Organization.”<sup>13</sup>

Labour Commissioner E. A. Miller and his staff were responsible during the 1946 period for labor education and training, among other duties pertaining to labor in Nigeria. They were charged with working with emerging labor union leaders and their members as part of effort at developing “sound industrial relations” in public and private organizations. They worked with labor union leaders and assisted them “in such matters as accountancy, administration and organization, to encourage the formation of benefit sections.”<sup>14</sup> In addition, they encouraged and educated labor union officials and members in the objectives and functions of conferences, the duties and responsibilities of officers and executive committees, and the proper function of local committees and members’ meetings. The Department of Labour seems to have attached special importance to the education of labor union leaders. This was so because the leaders were the men-on-the-spot who carried on labor union education work in the interest of the rank-and-file labor unionists.

The creation of a Trades Union Section (henceforth referred to as The Section)<sup>15</sup> in the Department of Labour in October 1946 was also a significant effort in combating leftist labor union leaders such as Nduka Eze, Wahab Goodluck, and Michael Imoudu. On the other hand, Robert Curry and M. A. Tokunboh were appointed trade union officer and assistant trade union officer, respectively, to oversee the duties and functions of The Section. Curry had a distinguished record from England, having arrived in Nigeria in September 1946 after serving in England as an organizer for the National Union of Toilers and Garment Workers in London and Eastern Counties. Tokunboh was formerly the secretary of the Nigerian Trades Union Congress (NTUC) and a recipient of a colonial government scholarship to study labor and industrial relations at the London School of Economics and Political Science.

With Commissioner Miller’s approval, The Section was given as large a measure of autonomy as possible to enable it handle matters relating to labor unions without any interference from the Department of Labour, and in particular from the Industrial Relations branch of the Department.

The mission of The Section was "to gain the confidence of the Trade Union leaders, to assist unions in such matters as accountancy, administration and organization, to encourage the formation of benefit sections, and above all to encourage and educate union officials and members."<sup>16</sup> The centrality of The Sections education program was "objects and functions of conferences, the duties and responsibilities of officers and executive committees, and the proper function of local committees and members' meetings."<sup>17</sup>

Another important event during the 1946 fiscal year was the training and appointment of industrial welfare officers and exchange managers. Industrial welfare officers were appointed as first-line officers in charge of general welfare matters, while exchange officers were in charge of employment matters, particularly with regard to the increasing number of secondary school graduates throughout the country. The training of this group of officers was taken seriously, as in the case of assistant labor officers or assistant labor officers in training. In March 1946, Miss L. B. Maslin was seconded from the United Kingdom to train staff for the Department in Lagos. Her previous credentials included a five-year instructor rank in His Majesty's Ministry of Labour and National Service in London. While the instructional mode was lecture, a considerable amount of seminal activities and experiential learning were adopted as part of the pedagogy and methodology throughout the course. Besides the lecture and theoretical training, a great of emphasis was placed on practicum and exercises at different locations. The six-month course also included industrial welfare officers from the United African Company (UAC) and the Nigerian Railways (NR), the leading employers of workers in the private and public sectors during the period. With Nduka Eze as the union secretary of the UAC and Michael Imoudu as the president of the NR, it seems reasonable that the colonial state's training of industrial welfare officers was a right step in combating leftist domination. It should be mentioned that the syllabus covered the following topics: The Principles of Industrial Welfare, Social Services, Labour Management, The Welfare Aspect of Industrial Psychology, Trade Unions, Welfare Outside and Inside the Workshop, Society and Group Problems, Club Leadership, and Food Problems in Relation to Workers.<sup>18</sup> In addition, all assistant labor officers and exchange managers had "Supervision" training to garner knowledge in supervisory duties. The foci included the qualities of a good supervisor, organization and methods, the training of clerks, and a supervisor's responsibilities.<sup>19</sup>

To realize its goal of adequate education among other missions, The Section under Curry and Tokunboh organized the first summer school for labor unionists in 1947. The creation of an instructor position within



the Department of Labour seems to have paid off, with the office holder working closely with all units in the department on training matters. The instructions for the first summer school lectures and hands-on training focused on “proper trade union organization, collective bargaining, functions of the Trade Union Congress, trade union accountancy, functions of the Labour Department, the wages questions and trade unions, and trades unions and the employer.”<sup>20</sup> It was reported that 62 people representing 29 unions attended the summer class. Apart from Curry and Tokunboh, other lecturers were Adio Moses, the secretary-general of the Nigerian Trade Union Congress, and P. H. Cook, a senior labor officer in the Department of Labour. To complement its success, a fortnightly meeting was held, with the Labour Department supplying the lecturers. In addition, to further labor union education, The Section became the bridge between the government and the executives and union members.<sup>21</sup>

With the exit of Nduka Eze and Michael Imoudu from the UAC and the NR unions in late 1947, one can deduce that efforts of the colonial state, and particularly that of the Department of Labour, in creating “sound industrial relations” had paid off. During the year, Curry and Tokunboh were invited as guests of the Railway Workers’ Union, the Station Staff Workers’ Union, Loco Drivers’ Union, the Federal Union of Native Administration Staffs, the Amalgamated Union of UAC Workers, and the NTUC. The annual conferences of these powerhouse unions from 1947 onward were addressed by either Curry or officials from The Section, and their friendship seemed destined to remain throughout the rest of the decolonization era. With the support of commissioner for Labour Miller,<sup>22</sup> Curry facilitated the visit of the British Parliamentary Delegation to Nigeria in April 1947 to labor union organizations such as Railway Workers’ Union and the NTUC offices. During this visit, the British delegates discussed sensitive issues such as “racial relations, land and housing matters, the Labour Department, economic well-being of Nigerian workers, and the political and educational problems of Nigeria and the attitude of the British Government.”<sup>23</sup> This seems to be a reassurance of British commitment to the process of decolonization; it validates the view that decolonization transcends constitutionalism, economic modernization, and creating a nationalist government.<sup>24</sup>

As in 1946, the monthly meetings of the Working Committee of the NTUC and the trade union officers continued to be an important dialogue and evaluation point as per the success of The Section in particular and the Department of Labour in general. Emphasis continued to be placed on labor union education, legislation, representation on colonial government committees, trade dispute resolution, labor union

reorganization, and matters affecting labor unions in Nigeria. Moreover, once every quarter the Working Committee met with the Commissioner for Labour to debrief him and evaluate programs.

By December 1948, officials were delighted to report that most of the Nigerian labor unions seemed to have a better understanding of the labor organization, and to be better informed and better disciplined in their approach to the principles of collective bargaining. It could be said that the appointment of full-time area organizers and the activities of the NTUC officers was partly responsible for the success of government's scheme of reorganization. Furthermore, reports indicate that there was a closer coalition between the headquarters and the local branch of the unions, and the Department of Labour. Subsequently, problems or issues that might have escalated into a crisis were quickly checkmated. Thus, such greater speed and efficiency in management discontent and friction often blamed on leftist groups within the unions seemed to be outdated. For instance, success under Mr. Esua and Imodu in the Nigerian Union of Teachers and the Nigerian Railway Workers' Union—the two largest employers after the colonial government—was considered noble and noteworthy.

The Department of Labour held the second summer school in Lagos from January 5 to 9, 1948, in furtherance of its goal of labor education. Ninety-four workers attended, indicating an increase in the number of workers and unions that continued to be interested in the opportunity for the scheme. There was also an unprecedented request from the executives of labor unions throughout the country for trade union officers, labor officers, exchange officers and their assistants to speak at conferences or during workshops organized by individual unions.<sup>25</sup>

As indicated in its annual reports for 1948 through 1950, the Department of Labour and its officers were concerned not only with building "sound industrial relations" but also with the best way to actualize such a goal. Labor officers directed their energies by way of lectures, discussions, courses of study in classes; by correspondence; and by daily meetings—all involving labor union officials, members, and prospective members. In addition, they focused on instruction and information about capitalist fundamental principles of labor unionism.<sup>26</sup>

I should point out that individual labor organizations were not left out in the labor union education endeavor. Early in 1947, the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) awarded a scholarship to its assistant general secretary, Fola Ogunsheye, to study at the London School of Economics.<sup>27</sup> While in London, he also interned with the National Union of Teachers.<sup>28</sup> This opportunity was to equip him with practical experience that would be beneficial to the NUT. In 1949, the Railway Workers' Union also awarded

a scholarship to its general secretary to study in London. Unlike previous scholarships and awards, he was to complete a four-year degree course in law and trade unionism.<sup>29</sup>

Furthermore, in early 1949, a committee on labor officer training appointed by the commissioner of Labour selected six labor union officials to go to the United Kingdom to study industrial relations, labor matters, and collective bargaining organized by the British Trades Union Congress.<sup>30</sup> The group departed Lagos in early 1950 for London, where they studied for over six months. The annual report of the Department of Labour indicates, however, that while success was achieved in this endeavor, many of the beneficiaries soon went seeking greener pastures because, at the time, union work did not pay much compared to the government or private sector. Of the six labor union leaders who were awarded scholarships in 1950, none returned to work for the unions; three accepted appointments in government service; two were employed elsewhere; and one stayed behind in London to study law.<sup>31</sup> This was a defeat of the main purpose for the scholarship.

This attitude raised doubts as to the feasibility of government sponsorship of labor unionists for study overseas. However, as the government was committed to a policy of establishing "sound industrial relations" between employers and employees, its exercise became a task that must be accomplished. Thus, a few years later the colonial state revised its policy and put in place measures to ensure that beneficiaries of its scholarship returned after studies overseas, and served in line with the primary objective of the scholarship.

By the late 40s, the colonial government's investment in training the trainers seems to have paid dividends. The Department of Labour could now boast of trainers to disseminate its program of antileftist education for the workers. Perhaps of much significance during the period were the fortnightly courses arranged for labor union members. The interest and success of the courses led to a weeklong summer school, jointly organized by the Nigerian Trades Union Congress and the Department of Labour in Lagos from January 6 to 10, 1949. The topic and facilitators included "Organising Trade Union Meetings and Conferences" and "Trade Union Accounts" by Robert Curry, "Collective Bargaining" and "The Wages Question and Trade Unions" by M. A. Tokunboh, "Functions of the Nigerian Trade Union Congress (TUC)" by A. A. Adio-Moses, and "The Functions of the Labour Department" by P. H. Cook.<sup>32</sup>

The year 1950 seems to be the year of consolidation of efforts at a sustained labor education in Nigeria. As chapters 2 and 4 indicated, there was increased international Communist interest in the labor movement, and the Nigerian labor movement was itself divided into two

ideological camps—capitalism and Communism. The Nigerian leftist group continued to disrupt colonial official attempts to dominate labor unions and the education of workers. In addition, leftists began a sustained Marxist education effort for members who were largely union leaders and workers. Matters came to a head in April 1950, when the new commissioner for Labour, Mr. Cozens, summoned all labor leaders to a meeting in Lagos; 198 labor union leaders and workers representing 83 labor unions accepted the invitation.<sup>33</sup> To the colonial state, the meeting was a voluntary gathering of stakeholders to reform labor union organizations and strengthen the ongoing informal education of workers. At the meeting, several issues were discussed, the most important being the issue of ideology and the urgency of educating the workers in all industrial matters and unionism. It was decided that a labor union education committee for Lagos and the Lagos Mainland should be set up immediately, as these areas were the cockpit of labor unionism and the center point for railway workers, seamen, electrical workers, and leading private companies during the period.<sup>34</sup>

As a follow-up, the Department of Labour began training classes in three centers: Lagos Island, Lagos Mainland, and Apapa. Although the classes were in Lagos, they nonetheless attracted an average of two hundred participants weekly. The Department of Labour Annual Report indicates that, at one point, instruction was conducted in Yoruba, the predominant native language in Lagos and the Western Region. One can infer that attendees might have been of Yoruba ethnic group with little knowledge of English language, and that the Department of Labour was so intent upon transmitting their antileftist message that they were willing to forsake their usual practice of requiring that the language of instruction be English. It seems clear that attendees were considered “foot soldiers” who would share or disseminate information obtained in classes to fellow workers. It was a smart way of getting the information to the workers directly rather than through their leaders. Emphasis, again, was placed on Western models of labor union organization, labor union accounts, elementary economics, the historical development of the British Trades Union Movement, and the role of the Department of Labour in labor matters.<sup>35</sup>

To win more hearts and minds, in July 1950 the Department of Labour began to organize classes in the provincial areas. The Western and Eastern regions were the first point of call in view of the vibrant labor union groups in the areas. The areas were also susceptible to leftist unionists' activities during the period. Toward the end of the year, major towns in the Northern region were added. Labor training centers in line with the Macpherson Constitution's delineation of Nigeria in 1950 became

functional in Benin, Oyo, Ondo, and Warri provinces of the Western Region; in Calabar, Cameroons, Onitsha, and Owerri provinces of the Eastern Region; and in Plateau and Zaria provinces in the Northern Region. The same year, 202 union members registered for the courses. The itinerant members of the Train Guards' Union (a section of the Railway Workers' Union) took advantage of the opportunities in the provinces to participate whenever their schedule permits. In late 1950, five members of the Train Guards' Union were reported to have successfully completed one or two courses.

The experiences gained from the working of the labor union education committee in the Lagos area made it clear that similar committees could be effectively employed and developed to bring about rapid progress in labor union education throughout Nigeria. A system of provincial labor union committees was adopted like the provincial training centers, to organize, monitor, and account for progress of the colonial state program for labor leaders and workers. The provincial committee met monthly to discuss issues such as what content to teach, problems of texts, and availability of texts.<sup>36</sup> It collaborated with the labor officers in various places, including Enugu, Ibadan, and Kaduna, and invited them to some of the training sessions and meetings.<sup>37</sup>

Despite what could be considered progress in the heated race for the hearts and minds of the workers in Nigeria by the capitalist colonial state and elements of proleftist labor leaders, there seems to be a major problem. Nigerian workers' demand for more reading materials, and the fact that materials for teaching the content at government centers were inadequate, became an issue that needed international collaboration. As I stated in chapters 2 and 4, an influx of leftist literature and many Marxist training workshops organized by Ikoku and others threatened the colonial state's success.

This difficulty of pro-Western labor union materials was alleviated by capitalist labor union organizations and nonlabor organizations outside Nigeria. By late 1950, publications of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), the British TUC, the United States Information Service (USIS), the American Federation of Labor/Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL/CIO), and the International Convention of Trade Unions (ICTU) soon flooded the Lagos port for distribution to the labor centers throughout Nigeria. It is worth noting that titles sent included *Free Trade Unions and the Guide Book for Trade Union Officials*, which sold more than 1,000 copies to union members.<sup>38</sup> Both the British TUC and the USIS complemented Department of Labour's publications by donating books and transporting them to labor centers throughout Nigeria.<sup>39</sup>

In addition, four more officials were selected to go to London for a six-month course in the principles and practice of labor unionism in early 1952. They were T. O. Songonusa, president, the Association of Nigerian Railway Civil Servants; A. F. A. Awolan, secretary, the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT), Ijebu-Ode; T. W. Wamuo, general secretary, the Township Workers' Union Eastern and Western Provinces; and Abubakar Liman Umaru, secretary, the African Staff Union, Zaria.<sup>40</sup> In the same year, the National Association of Local Government officers gave an award to N. M. Agada, the district organizer for the Eastern Region, to study in London for six months.<sup>41</sup>

A narrative of antileftist labor education in colonial Nigeria is incomplete without mentioning several training and workshops organized by the British TUC and the ICFTU during the 1950s. Without repeating what the colonial state and the Western labor organizations accomplished in the area of labor education, one should mention that many Nigerians were sent to Canada, India, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Kampala in Uganda, and West Germany for training and better education. They were sponsored by the colonial state as well as by a variety of benefactors, among them the ICFTU, the British TUC, and the United States' AFL/CIO, and foreign companies such as British Petroleum (BP) and Royal Dutch Shell.<sup>42</sup>

These remarkable accomplishments under the leadership of Couzens were noticed by Festus Okotie-Eboh in January 1955, when he wrote the foreword to the Ministry of Labour and Welfare's annual report for fiscal year 1953–1954. I should reiterate that by January 1955 the Nigerianization of ministerial positions under the Macpherson Constitution made it possible for nonleftist nationalists to assume headship of most offices, ministries, and parastatals, with the exception of the governor-general and defense. The three-year period leading to 1955 has been referred to as the era of "comparative industrial tranquility."<sup>43</sup> By late 1954, Nigerian officers in the Labour Department had completed special courses in Devonshire, England, along with British colonial officials. Seven officers in the rank of Labor Officer and Labor Inspector benefited from the jointly sponsored course by the Colonial Office and Her Majesty's Ministry of Labour and National Service. In addition, 13 assistant labor officers were granted government scholarships to attend courses in economics, social sciences, arts, and industrial relations. Among them was one assistant labor officer who attended the prestigious Fourah Bey College in Sierra Leone.<sup>44</sup>

Furthermore, labor officers stationed in the three regions (Eastern, Northern, and Western Nigeria) continued to give advice and assistance in

that aspect of the work relating to labor education and organization. The regional labor officers maintained the growing interest in union education, organization, and principles of labor unionism through the medium of lecture tours.<sup>45</sup> There were 19 local labor union education committees throughout Nigeria by the end of 1953. They continued to make a meaningful impact on labor education with the assistance and guidance of labor officers, labor union officers, assistant labor officers, and exchange officers.<sup>46</sup> Needless to say, the Department of Labour continued to invest in the training of its officers locally and overseas. In late 1953, eight Nigerian labor officers, including Miss. Ayo Adeniyi-Jones, attended a weeklong residential course in Accra, Gold Coast, organized by the Trade Union and Advisory Centre of the ICFTU.<sup>47</sup>

Okotie-Eboh's era could be considered a time of consolidation partly because there was a continuity of policy relating to labor education, and continued government sponsorship of training for officers, Nigerianization, and workshops for workers and their union leaders. His period as the minister for labor and welfare also witnessed a stronger partnership between the government and the Department of Extra-Mural Studies at Ibadan. The next section is devoted to the center's contributions in developing a vibrant labor education for Nigerian workers. I should mention, however, that while the constitutional change that became effective in early 1954 (the Lyttleton Constitution, named after the secretary of state for the colonies, Lord Chandos) did not affect the central functioning of the Department of Labour; it made its works and functions more complex. The constitutional change also reflected the regionalization of Nigeria, and the idea of a concurrent and exclusive function of the three main arms of government. In fact, the reorganization of the Department of Labour meant that its commissioner continued to enjoy an advisory position in all labor matters. Yet, the office holder was below the honorable minister who was a political appointee. Labor administration also came under the Federal Legislative concurrent list effective October 1, 1954. At the same time, regional governments were given power to oversee labor matters. There was, however, no uniformity in institutional names for labor matters in the regions. For instance, in Northern Nigeria, labor matters were placed in the Ministry of Social Development and Surveys under Shettima Kashim. In the Western Region, it was in the Ministry of Land and Labour under J. F. Odunjo. It was only in the Eastern Region under Dr. S. E. Imoke that a Ministry of Labour without any appendage existed. These men were responsible for disseminating labor education, among other duties within their region. There was a smooth continuity from the "old guard" to the "new guard" in the Ministries of Labour, thus creating a sustained labor union education



structures at independence. The regional administration now placed more emphasis on local languages as a medium of instruction and pedagogy in training and education of workers in their areas. In addition, despite the divisive nature of the regional politics, there seems to have been a trend toward unification in labor matters because the regional governments cooperated with the federal government without any rancor.<sup>48</sup>

### UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, IBADAN, AND ITS CENTRE FOR EXTRA-MURAL STUDIES

University College, Ibadan, was established in 1948 as an extension of the University of London, but more importantly, to serve Nigeria's rising demand for higher education generally. The cost of overseas education and scholarships in a post-World War II economy was becoming unbearable for the colonial government, and Nigerian nationalists and labor leaders welcomed the idea of an accredited college that would award or prepare Nigerians for baccalaureate degrees or diplomas. Since labor education had become central to the decolonization package, University College at its inception opened a continuing education extension popularly referred to as the Centre for Extra-Mural Studies. Here, continuing education, certificate, diploma, and nondegree courses would be the foci throughout the decolonization era.

Between 1952 and 1959, the UCI Extra-Mural Centre became an important forum for disseminating the ideal "sound labor education," and the focal point for both the colonial state and the private sector to garner support for the ultimate goal of defeating leftist ideology in Nigeria. Thus, in 1952 the Department of Labour and the UCI Extra-Mural Centre pulled together and organized "a week's residential course at Enugu, the capital city of the Eastern Regional government." The annual report of the Department of Labour for 1952/53 noted that the attendance was impressive and a success.<sup>49</sup>

This success was followed in August 1953 with the introduction of another course at Ibadan. It was a ten-day course tailored on trade union and industrial relations matters. Like 1952, it was well attended by labor union representatives from all over Nigeria. It was an avenue for "Gown and Town" to meet and dialogue because speakers and lecturers were drawn from University College, Ibadan; the Labour Department; and pro-Western labor organizations such as the ICFTU.<sup>50</sup> There is no doubt that establishing a sustained program of labor education had become a regular feature of the Extra-Mural Centre, UCI, and the Department of Labour by 1956 when they organized a weeklong residential course on



trade union affairs on the UCI campus. With a record number of 122 attendants, it was another successful attempt at winning the hearts and minds of the important labor force in a developing economy on its way to independence. A regular weekend course was also organized at regional centers throughout Nigeria beginning in 1958.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, on the eve of independence in 1959, there was an increase in the activity of Labour Department-sponsored courses directed by the UCI Extra-Mural Centre. Additional weekend courses were organized at Aba, Benin, Ibadan, Lagos, Kaduna, and Port Harcourt, to mention a few.<sup>52</sup>

Between 1956 and 1959, the process of Nigerianization of the labor department became much more functional. In 1956, Francis Nwokedi returned from his post as assistant commissioner for labor in Eastern Region to hold the Nigerianization process in the Federal Capital Territory, Lagos. T. M. Yesufu was transferred to the UCI Extra-Mural Centre to direct labor and industrial relations programs. Moreover, the designation of Assistant Labor Officer was altered to Assistant Labor Inspector.<sup>53</sup> In April 1956, a branch of the Marine Department known as the Seamen's Welfare and Employment Office was transferred to the Department of Labour for administrative purposes. Furthermore, three labor officers, two trades testing officers, and six assistant labor inspectors were appointed as part of the sustained labor education goal. Perhaps of more significance was the secondment of Miss. D. S. Johnson (former deputy chief inspector of Factories, UK) to the labor department to assist in implementing the Factories Act and training of labor inspectors. For nine months, Miss. Johnson organized technical training for inspecting staff throughout Nigeria.<sup>54</sup>

An interesting dimension was the increased investment in training schemes by both the government and foreign corporations. The majority of the larger industrial and commercial firms inaugurated and funded systemic training on the job, like the government's "Training in Workplace" program. They appointed permanent instructors at their various centers to ensure continuity and progress. Of note was the use of primary school teachers at the centers, partly because of the level of education of most workers and the better understanding of an effective pedagogy by this group of instructors for assuring students' (workers') success.<sup>55</sup> Trade Centres<sup>56</sup> became essential part of labor union education because they eliminated, or at least delayed, the potential for forming an ideological position unfavorable to the colonial government and the pro-Western Nigerian leaders. Trade Centres gave opportunities to Nigerians who did not have the resources to attend conventional schools for credential or degree purpose. The training lasted between two and five years and was directed by resident instructors. Upon completion, Ministry of Labour

and Welfare's Trade Testing officers conducted a Trade Test in preparation for the intermediate examination of the City and Guild of London. For the government this was a win-win situation whereby investments in workers' education indirectly stalled or eliminated leftist ideology's ability to gain ground.<sup>57</sup>

### CONCLUSION

This chapter ties labor union education with the general decolonization process as part of the British effort at modernity and labor development in Nigeria. It describes the ideological underpinnings of labor union education and the decolonization process during the post-1945 era.

Its focus is largely on the colonial state's response and measures to create an environment conducive for the implementation of its agenda in the labor force. The next chapter emphasizes the role of selected Nigerian leftists whom we refer to as the "champion of the working class."

## CHAPTER 6

# CHAMPIONS OF THE WORKING CLASS: SAMUEL IKOKU AND OTHER NOBLE MEN

### INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I analyze the role of some of the most dedicated members of the Nigerian leftist intelligentsia during the decolonization period. While the emphasis is on Samuel Ikoku, the role of other prolific leftists such as Nduka Eze, Gogo Chu Nzeribe, and others is put into perspective. Being the son of the renowned leader of the Nigerian Teachers Union Alvan Ikoku, Samuel Grace (Goomu) Ikoku was privileged to know about Western education and its significance in the new colonial dispensation at an early age. He studied at the London School of Economics and Political Science, University of London, and was one of the pioneer lecturers in economics at the University of Lagos, Akoka, a few years after Nigeria's independence from Britain. He was a Marxist and never shied away from that ideology throughout his lifetime, advocating tirelessly for the working class and a leftist takeover of the colonial state. Like most veteran members of the leftist intelligentsia, Samuel Grace Ikoku has not been given his due place in the annals of the Nigerian nationalist struggle. A member of the Zikist Movement and an ardent follower of Nduka Eze, Nigeria's "father of Leftist nationalism," he founded *The Nigerian Socialist Review* upon the demise of Eze's *Labour Champion* in 1950.

Ikoku's role in the nationalist movement vacillated between working outside mainstream nationalist parties and working within them. He utilized the print media to educate the working class, and propagated the idea of a takeover with the slogan, "Positive Action." To actualize

the goal of “Positive Action,” he was committed to sacrificing personal gains for a better Nigeria, free of Western domination and exploitation. This chapter focuses on his activities within the larger picture of leftist intelligentsia during the period under study. It also discusses Ikoku’s response to the colonial state’s policies as it relates to the working class and the masses generally. To underscore the Marxian view of colonial policies against leftist labor leaders, and their contextualization of an ideal labor union education, one needs to take a panoramic overview of the colonial enclave.

### THE COLONIAL ENCLAVE

There was pressure both inside and outside Nigeria, as elsewhere in the colonies, for colonial reforms and development after World War II. The years 1950 through 1953 remained the most crucial time in the history of the Nigerian leftist intelligentsia, because it was during these years that they were stormed by draconic colonial state antileftist measures. Understanding the situation during this period will shed light into the role played by Ikoku and other leftists during the 1950s. Leftist organizations generally did not trust colonial administrators in terms of their claims to develop the economy and social structure. To them, the goal of the colonial state was to consolidate its hegemony by all means, to police and sanction the leftist groups, and to ensure the integration of the colonial economy into the capitalist world. Constitutional development, socio-economic development plans, and inclusion of conservative nationalist leaders in administration were seen as camouflage and deceptive measures aimed at dividing the leftist group.

It seems there was an “imperial responsibility” on paper rather than in action as Nigerian Marxists, like their counterparts in the Gold Coast and the British and French Cameroons, gained momentum and regrouped to challenge the colonial administration and leading nationalist parties participating in the devolution program. In view of the poverty among the majority of the people—farmers, small business owners, market women, government workers, and the whole citizenry—there was a broad-based demand for reforms and redistribution of the nations’ wealth. What distinguished Ikoku and his ilk from mainstream nationalist groups was their vision of the road toward achieving reforms and wealth redistribution among the people.

For instance, in late 1949, when the new colonial governor John Macpherson (who later became governor-general) instituted a nationwide debate to review and revise the Richard’s Constitution of 1946, Nigerian leftists were not satisfied with the process.<sup>1</sup> The Richard’s Constitution

had been criticized partly because of its regionalism, nonconsultation with Nigerians, divide-and-rule tactics, and ethnic division. Although Macpherson allowed and encouraged participation by Nigerians in what later became Macpherson Constitution in 1951, Ikoku and other leftists saw the process as opposed to "pan-Nigerianism."<sup>2</sup> The ideals of collectivism, people's power, and socialism remained elusive. Instead, the perpetuation of regionalism and sectionalism, quasi-federalism, and continued disparity between the poor and the rich was all that was obtained.<sup>3</sup>

Anticolonial feelings were not, however, limited to internal events. Leading British scholars, organizations, and administrators did not insulate Nigerians from the growing pan-African ferment; Ethiopian defeat of Italy, the series of riots in British West Indies colonies between 1935 and 1938, and criticism of colonial government handling of the situation were some of the factors that made leftist ideas prevalent in the colonies. The role and writings of such eminent people as Richard Coupland, Lord Hailey, Margery Perham, William Macmillan, and William McLean are too well known to be retold here. Neither is it necessary to recount the eminent writings of nationalist leaders such as Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo, Kwame Nkrumah, Tafawa Balewa, and Mokwugo Okoye, to mention a few. It seems, however, that the most influential effort was from the British Fabian Colonial Bureau and the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB). The Bureau and the CPGB with their constant impartation of anticolonial views and their members' role within the British House of Parliament influenced Ikoku and other Nigerian Leftists in challenging colonial rule and heeding the call of freedom.

It was in this environment that Ikoku and other leftists committed to keeping the pressure on British colonial rule to reform and give political freedom to Nigerians. Since they were marginalized in the mainstream nationalist political parties, they formed groups in the 1950s that promoted ideological alternatives to colonial socio-political, economic, and cultural reforms through debates, newspaper publications, and protests as occasion permitted. They were, however, more influential in the labor unions, which I will discuss shortly.

### **NIGERIAN MARXIST GROUPS IN THE 1950S**

The CPGB identified at least six different Nigerian Marxist organizations operating in 1953, while also conceding that there may have been additional groups on which it had no facts.<sup>4</sup> In November 1950, Ikoku and Nduka Eze, undoubtedly the most outstanding defenders of the

Nigerian working class, had formed the Freedom Movement as a vehicle for the crusade to liberate Nigeria and Nigerians. The Freedom Movement aspired to replace the banned Zikist Movement and continue the struggle for Nigeria's independence under Communist auspices. It organized Marxist lectures and discussions and circulated Marxist literature on different subjects.<sup>5</sup> By October of 1951, however, ideological conflicts and stiff government opposition had rendered the group defunct.<sup>6</sup>

Earlier in 1951, another group had emerged in Ibadan (Southwestern Nigeria) called the Communist Party of Nigeria and the Cameroons. The only record of this organization is a letter sent to the CPGB office (London) from Ibadan on March 19, 1951, by Samuel Alamu and O. O. Gbolahan. A membership roster is not available, nor is a record of the group's activities, as is the case with most Nigerian Marxist groups during the period. This group was likely a clique of young people interested in obtaining assistance from the CPGB and the *Daily Worker* to sustain educational program for its members. The organization was a Communist party in name only and had no discernable impact on the contemporary political scene; remnants later became associated with the "Lagos Marxists," which established The League in February of 1951.

Formed as a result of the momentary fusion of two existing Marxist groups in Lagos (Eze and Ikoku/Ogunsheye factions), The League emerged to initiate, direct, and guide the building of a many-sided nationwide working-class movement on the basis of Marxism. This was the first time, and perhaps the last, when the leftists were united. By February 1952, the Ikoku/Ogunsheye group had formed another group called the Committee for People's Independence, which was soon renamed the Peoples Committee for Independence.

Even during its short life span, The League had considerable impact among Nigerian leftist intelligentsia and labor union members. Formed by Ikoku and 17 comrades, The League's activities were threefold:

- (a) To disseminate Marxist thought throughout the country;
- (b) To initiate purely Marxist ideas through trade unions, political and other organizations; and
- (c) To formulate policies for the individual of the Marxist organizations, i.e., trade unions, political parties, peasants, youths, women, student and ex-servicemen's organizations.<sup>7</sup>

At their weekly meetings on the ideological education of members, discussion leaders such as Ikoku and Eze focused on one or another particular aspect of Marxism and then led a general discussion on a topic of the day

in order to help comrades to move from the abstract and theoretical realm to the realm of action and implementation.

Over time, when leaders found that justice could not be done to the study of Marxism in these ordinary meetings, they arranged a series of special, mostly secret, meetings to cover both local and international issues, including:

- (a) Marxism as a scientific approach to the study of human society;
- (b) Social development and the laws that govern it;
- (c) The nature of capitalist society;
- (d) Imperialism;
- (e) The post-war tactics of imperialism;
- (f) Marxist tactics (general—in the trade unions, reactionary parliaments, compromise, etc.);
- (g) The dangers of overseas capital with special reference to Nigerian Government policy;
- (h) The Persian oil dispute;
- (i) The local political scene (from time to time); and,
- (j) The constitution.<sup>8</sup>

While it is difficult to evaluate the success of these programs, at least in terms of intention and indoctrination, they did mark an improvement in Marxists' efforts to influence the political modernization of the colonial state during the 1950s. By early 1953, however, The League had died, primarily because of personality clashes amongst its leaders. Those who left (Agwuna, Ogunsheye, Nzimiro, Ikoku, and others) formed the Peoples Committee for Independence (PCI), discussed in detail in later sections of the chapter.

A group calling itself the Nigeria Convention Peoples Party was formed in 1951, a few months after the creation of The League. This was not a political party, but yet another splinter Marxist group formed by Eze's former followers. Two of its leading members were Ikoro and Ikoku, former close associates of Eze. This group was more inclined toward the Gold Coast Convention People's Party (CPP) and made fruitless efforts to garner financial support from it. It should be noted, however, that Ikoku would later relocate to independent Ghana and work closely with Kwame Nkrumah as a columnist for *Spark*, a local leftist newspaper. (I shall return to Ikoku's sojourn in Ghana later.) As in the case of previously organized groups, one of the main reasons for this group's formation was the personality clash among Nigerian Marxists precipitated by the failure of the December 1950 labor strike. The group, nonetheless, preached "scientific socialism to the masses in the village, workers in the factory, unemployed

ex-servicemen, youths, and progressive intellectuals.”<sup>9</sup> With inspiration from Palme Dutt’s “Britain’s Crisis of the Empire,” its leaders (Ikoro and Ikoku) published a pamphlet titled “Imperialism versus the People,” castigating British rule in Nigeria and warning Nigerian Marxists that theory alone would not bring socialism to Nigerians.<sup>10</sup> Interestingly, unlike other groups, the Nigeria CPP openly stated its willingness to accept directives from the CPGB concerning its activities in Nigeria.

Perhaps the most formidable group emerging from Eze’s debacle was the Peoples Committee for Independence, formed in February of 1952. With its office in the Lagos suburb of Yaba, the new group’s declared ultimate objective was to build a mass and united nationalist movement, seize power, and establish a socialist society. This involved “waging an uncompromising battle against British imperialism and the reactionary forces within the ranks of our countrymen.”<sup>11</sup> For this group, Marxism was a guide to action, embodied and enriched by the experiences of common people all over the world struggling for national independence. Thus, Marxism was “open to adaptation and should not be seen as a set of ready-made rules.”<sup>12</sup> As had previous groups, they identified ideological education, the use of trade unions, and the pursuit of unity as absolutely vital to the success of leftist ideas. At a meeting on May 7, 1952, executive members of the PCI (Ikoku, Ogunsheye, Gogo Nzeribe, D. Fatogun, and J. Onwugbuzie) took a dramatic political stride, agreeing to form a nationwide Marxist-Leninist political party that would unify all existing pseudo-Marxist groups.<sup>13</sup>

This initiative, however, went aground, falling short of CPGB expectations, when Marxist sects attacked Ikoku and the others for posing as saviors and saints. Some members of the PCI were also involved in the formation of another group in July of 1952, the United Working Peoples Party (UWPP). Its first secretary was Ogunsheye, who was then replaced by Uche Omo, upon the former’s late 1952 appointment in the Labour Department.<sup>14</sup> It comprised some “returnees,” most notably Anozie, Anagbogu, and Onwugbuzie. This group distanced themselves from the main political parties, maintaining that the dominant position of the bourgeoisie in those parties thwarted the progress of Communism and foreclosed socialist solutions.<sup>15</sup>

In the absence of adequate information (even from the CPGB and the British TUC archives), it is difficult to assess the strength and influence of the UWPP. It is, however, clear that the group was confined to the eastern region of Nigeria. By 1955, they had modified their antiparty position and were openly working in alliance with the Action Group (AG) and the UNIP (Chike Obi’s party, a breakaway from the NCNC). In September 1955, the UWPP and the UNIP made futile attempts to disrupt activities



of the Azikiwe-led NCNC government in the Eastern Region. A joint statement calling for an army to fight “the combined forms of imperialism and reactionary leadership of the N.C.N.C.” was issued in Enugu. There is no indication that the Action Group was involved in this. When most of its leading members joined the main political parties or took employment in government departments, the UWPP died naturally before the end of 1955.<sup>16</sup>

### IKOKU AND THE NIGERIAN SOCIALIST REVIEW

Among the most prolific leftists during the 1950s was Samuel Grace Ikoku, initially one of Eze’s followers. With others, Ikoku broke away and in 1952 formed the Peoples Committee for Independence; later that same year he was also involved in forming the UWPP. In his various correspondences with CPGB and WFTU leaders, he emphasized the need for a sustainable press for the propagation of Marxist ideas. Ikoku had been joint editor of the *Labour Champion*, established in 1950, and he blamed Eze and Ezumah for the collapse of the journal.

In early February 1952, with support from the CPGB and the WFTU, Ikoku began publishing another newspaper, the *Nigerian Socialist Review*. Although the *Review* suffered the fate of its predecessor after a government crackdown on its editor in late 1952, Ikoku articulated several important ideological and tactical ideas. In the inaugural edition (February 29, 1952), Ikoku called for a new party of the working class in combination with Marxist intellectuals and the impoverished peasantry.<sup>17</sup> Defying Eze’s view that Marxists should work within existing political parties, the editorial asserted that this “new party” should “be the rallying centre of all the finest elements in the working class, who have direct connections with the non-Party organisations of the working class and frequently lead them.”<sup>18</sup> This latter category of nonparty organizations referred to the UWPP and PCI, both Marxist groups of which he was a member.

This new party was guided strictly by Marxist-Leninist theory. Leaders should “adopt the road of open and determined revolutionary struggle against imperialism and against all forces of exploitation and oppression. It must be an efficient and virile organization on a national scale.”<sup>19</sup> There is no doubting the fact that Ikoku and other members of the editorial board (C. O. Mba and Meke Anagbogu) were Stalinists. Their position as shown in the various publications before the government muzzled them in late 1952 and early 1953 was strictly Stalinist; indeed, they held that there was no alternative to Stalinism in the Marx-Lenin tradition. Emphasizing the need for a working-class party, Ikoku quoted Stalin to justify his

position that "Its function is to combine the work of all the mass organizations of the proletariat (i.e., the working class) without exception and to direct their activities toward a single goal, the goal of the emancipation of the proletariat."<sup>20</sup>

This was the first stage in the struggle, to use the new party to make leftists truly independent of the bourgeoisie. During the supposed second stage, a National Front would be formed to act as the army of the revolution. The successful completion of this stage and the defeat of British imperialism, Ikoku predicted, would usher in the third stage—completion of the democratic revolution (the fight for the security and guarantee of political rights for all).

Leftists' vision in Nigeria included acquiring political power and concentrating it in the hands of the "toiling masses." These were seen as the culminating stage toward Marxist "revolution" in Nigeria. Ikoku maintained that "this is the road for us to tread, this is our line of march." He concluded, like a true Stalinist, that "it is the only sure road to national independence and working class emancipation." Assurance of a victory, however, absolutely required this new party. In a short article entitled "A Young Socialist at Work," C. O. Mba supported this vision, reiterating the need for unity among leftist intellectuals as a prelude to a successful inauguration of a working people's party encompassing all existing Marxist groups.<sup>21</sup>

In the second edition of *Nigerian Socialist Review*, published on March 14, 1952, Ikoku concentrated upon the workers themselves. He argued that the workers could achieve the emancipation of the working class only by organizing independent parties, associations, and trade unions in order to propagate and realize the ideas of Communism. It was in support of this position that Meke Anagbogu asserted in his "Unfurling the Banner of Struggle for Independence and Socialism" that "only a revolutionary mass movement, headed by the working class and its political party, can effectively and sincerely fight for independence and socialism, not for reforms and capitalism." Predictably, the *Nigerian Socialist Review* was outlawed in January 1953, under the "Unlawful Publication Ordinance 1950." Its editor, Ikoku, was later jailed for sedition and unlawful possession of some copies.

### IKOKU AND THE "TRADE UNION UNDERMINED"

In 1962, Ikoku published *Nigeria for Nigerians*, in which he expounded upon his Marxian views about events in colonial Nigeria, and what he considered to be the wrong pathway to development of the country. To understand what he perceived as the continuous marginalization of the

working people, Ikoku implored readers to review the immediate colonial past and policies of Western-oriented labor education for the working class and labor leaders, and the domination of foreign finance capital in industries across Nigeria. He identified two reasons for what he referred to as “the mad rush” to strengthen capitalism and earn super profits for foreign finance capital in Nigeria:

- (1) The exploitation of workers and small farmers who produce the wealth, the lion’s share of which the capitalists claim as their own; and
- (2) The solution of all economic problems facing the state at the expense of the people.<sup>22</sup>

His explanation of the above is contextualized in sustained colonial state policies and cooperation with the foreign finance capital—companies operating in Nigeria—that made durable labor unions directed and organized by leftist intelligentsia impossible. As the driving forces for number one above, Ikoku cited long hours, unattractive conditions of service, low pay, and the high cost of living in the post—World War II period exacerbated by employers’ inability to meet working class demands for commensurate pay. Coupled with the problems faced by the working class is the colonial state’s emphasis on development or modernization, which was at the expense of the working class. According to Ikoku, “the economic problems of the state—to raise revenue for its various projects—are solved at the expense of the people.”<sup>23</sup>

It is worth noting that attempts by workers to resist and fight back against strangulation by the colonial state and its foreign corporate allies were made impotent through many measures, including destabilizing leftist intelligentsia groups and stalling their influence in labor union organizations. Ikoku was of the opinion that the colonial state and the foreign finance capital drove against trade unions in a three-pronged way: the managements and employers in the workplace, the pro-Western International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), and the government (colonial and nationalist) in its dealings with the trade unionists and in trade union legislation.<sup>24</sup> I should reiterate that, before independence, the ICFTU was given a free hand in Nigeria as elsewhere in the colonies. In the case of Nigeria, it continued to enjoy unparalleled influence after independence under the Balewa administration. It is no secret that most of the propaganda against the leftist intelligentsia in labor unions and the nationalist parties was disseminated at the behest of the ICFTU and other agents of antileftist measures. The ICFTU used its funding to prop

up pro-Western labor leaders; it also funded trade union education in many southern parts of Nigeria during the period. To Ikoku, the situation resulted in weak trade unionists and ineffective leadership that caused workers to lose faith in their unions.

In addition, employers in both government and private sector collaborated with the ICFTU. Managers and some employees used every stratagem to undermine the growth of active trade unions. There were many cases of militant (not necessarily leftist) workers being transferred to remote areas of the country or even sacked for their views. There were instances when management refused to engage labor union representatives in industrial disputes—namely, Imoudu in 1945, Nduka Eze in 1946, Gogo Chu Nzeribe in 1957, and Khayam in 1959, to mention a few. Not only did corporate management refuse to talk to these leaders at various times, they barred them from entering company's premises to conduct any trade union duty. To Ikoku, workers' treachery should never have been a way out, as it was among a number of workers who used the situation as an opportunity to rise to the top of the ladder in a company or government establishment.

#### **BEYOND IKOKU: EZE AND NZERIBE AND THE WORKING-CLASS STRUGGLE**

Previously in Chapter 4, I discussed the role of Eze and Nzeribe in labor unionism. In this section, emphasis is on their philosophy as it relates to labor union education during the 1950s. Both Eze and Nzeribe belong to the same school of Marxian dialectic as Ikoku. But unlike Ikoku, both men held positions in labor unions and had direct contact with union members and the employers. There is no denying that they were opposed to the colonial state conceptualization of labor education and pursued their own strategy to educate union members and leaders. Their philosophy of labor education was informed by Marxian philosophy, and their pedagogical methodology involved many one-on-one conversations, as well as covert teaching and execution of various lesson plans at many meetings held clandestinely throughout the 1950s. Considering the colonial state's punitive measures, they could not have come up with any other means than to be secretive in their countermeasures to the government's labor education predicated on "sound industrial relations" in both public and private sectors. Eze and Nzeribe viewed the labor unions as an essential part of the struggle to get rid of the British imperialists and their supporters. The idea of "violence" or "pacifism" also informed their conception of a sustained labor education. The foreign corporations and the colonial state were regarded

as the “enthroned aristocracy” that must be defeated through organized labor unions. Freeing Nigeria was not only a long, drawn-out battle but also a notion that inflamed inescapable conflict between the leftist intelligentsia and the capitalist perspective of the colonial state and the foreign companies in Nigeria. The only way out was to pursue a revolutionary movement and educate union members in Marxian tactics during secret meetings, seminars, and lectures in major towns and cities throughout Nigeria.<sup>25</sup> To these men, the idea of pacifism does not have a place in the ultimate goal of labor union freedom, and freedom for Nigerians generally. Pacifism is considered “a philosophy which seeks to attempt the avoidance of bloodshed and a sweeping demolition of values.”<sup>26</sup> Since the colonial state’s idea of “sound industrial relations” was predicated upon labor pacifism and compromise, Eze believed that pacifism would greatly impair the common people’s power, resulting only in halfway measures.<sup>27</sup> In a colonial situation, he opined, compromise always works against the common people. And, pacifism being a philosophy of compromise, this would invariably obscure the identity of the working people of Nigeria and thereby defeat the Marxian agenda put forward as labor union education.

It is interesting to note that Eze and other leftist intellectuals often quote historical precedents to juxtapose their position. To those studying industrial relations, all aspects of the field—labor negotiations and bargaining, collectivity, union organization, and labor law and its applicability in the colonial context—are rooted in historical experience. It is worth noting that two major world events became focal points or historical references for Eze and his ilk in educating workers during the colonial era. First, they cited the French and Russian Revolutions and the success of the working-class people against the tyranny and oppression of royalty and nobility. Second, and more relevant at the local level, they praised the peasant people of Abeokuta in Western Nigeria for their determination and success against the traditional King of Egba, the Alake Ademola.<sup>28</sup> With these two examples, they went beyond teaching the ideology of violence against what they referred to as “oppression and maladministration of the despot”<sup>29</sup> and began to operate within mainstream labor union groups.

## CONCLUSION

Despite their efforts, the leftist intelligentsia failed to overthrow the colonial state and actualize their dream of a leftist (Socialist) Nigeria. Samuel Ikoku identified two main reasons for the failure of the leftist intelligentsia during the colonial phase that seem to be applicable to

their postcolonial struggle with pro-Western leaders since 1960. First is the embedded internal crisis within the groups. Second is the sustained “right-wing” offensive in the trade union movement.<sup>30</sup> The uncooperative nature of anti-imperialist trade unions leaders—such as Mba (the Government Catering Workers Union), Egwuwoke (the Marine Engine Room and Deck Ratings African Workers Union), Obasa (the Postal and Telegraph Linemen Union), Awobiyi (the Seamen’s Union), Agwu (the Elder Dempster Workers’ Union), Nwasiashi (the Union of Native Administrative Servants), and Nwana (the Locomotive Drivers Union)—stalled colonial state attempts to orient major unions into a mainstream or government-controlled national union of labor.<sup>31</sup>

However, of much serious consequence is the sustained “right-wing” offensive against Marxist leadership during the period. As Ikoku perceptively states, “the greatest blow to our activities has been the total collapse of the Eze faction both in the N.L.C. and in the U.A.C. African Workers Union.” He continued his lamentation by stating that “our plans largely involved using this [Eze’s] group of trade unionists as a lever for re-organising the movement.”<sup>32</sup> Between the late 1950s and early 1960s, the leftist intelligentsia intensified their activities in Nigeria. In November 1960, a group of youths made up largely of members of the Nigerian Youth Congress formed the Communist Party of Nigeria in Kano. Official records indicate that the initial inspiration and subsequent sponsorship came from the Communist Party of Great Britain. Unfortunately, surviving records do not provide answers on, for example, why Kano was chosen over other areas, or who the group leaders were. What little information we have comes from a membership list, which, while still classified as to specific names, has an aggregate total higher than that of the Communist Party of Nigeria, formed at Ibadan in 1951. Interestingly, the Kano group’s constitution was based on the 1945 Constitution of the Chinese Communist Party. However, whether it received financial sponsorship and political directives from the Chinese Communist Party is not yet clear, as available records remain silent on the question. The only available evidence is that financial support came through Egypt and Ghana but, contrary to contemporary official views, was most likely intended for nationalism-building purposes rather than for the promotion of Communism. In addition, whenever they formed or regrouped, the leftist intelligentsia always claimed to be members of a labor union. If anything, this signifies the link between the two. It seems that there existed an umbilical cord between unions and leftist intelligentsia throughout the period under study.

## CHAPTER 7

# ON THE EVE OF INDEPENDENCE: THE NIGERIAN UNION OF SEAMEN DISPUTE, 1959

We, the undersigned, members of the M.V. Apapa have tried in the past to co-operate with your Company and your Representatives in charge on the ship, in spite of the humiliating circumstances under which we have had to work. While attempts to call the attention of your concern to intimidation have failed, the discriminatory attitude of your officers and their inhuman acts and provocations had created separate laws for white and black. The blind eyes that the officials have turned to them and their actions must now cease.

(Letter from Nigerian Seamen on  
*M. V. Apapa* at Liverpool, June 16th, 1959)

### INTRODUCTION

Writing about the first labor strike in Nigeria, Anthony Hopkins noted that the predominantly labor-intensive economy of colonial Nigeria implies that scholars must unearth all aspects of the history of colonial experience. The labor strike of 1897 in Lagos was therefore not necessarily a pioneering admonition to scholars, but was a trail-breaking exploration of what would become a phenomenon in “modernization” and decolonization in Nigeria. Like Hopkins, in this chapter I will attempt to rescue from obscurity the history of the last labor strike organized by Nigerians before independence.<sup>1</sup>

In mid-1957, the nationalist government of Sir. Abubakar Tafawa Balewa and the Colonial Office in London were delighted with the pace of decolonization as Nigeria approached its goal of independence in

less than four years. Several constitutional conferences in London that began in 1957 seem to have given further assurance of the special relationships between the pro-Western nationalist government of Balewa and the British imperial power. Issues that would derail assurance of independence or the pace of decolonization were viewed as serious threats against the perfection of a special relationship between “nurture capitalism” in Nigeria and the Overseas Sterling Area<sup>2</sup> under the British Commonwealth.

Foreign capitals, particularly the major shipping lines led by Elder Dempster Lines Limited, had been part of the special relationship between Nigeria and the imperial power. Since the late 1930s, they had engaged or served as “agents” of British antileftist measures in the private sector. They had been involved in fashioning the best education for labor union members and the building of “sound industrial relations” in Nigeria. They had become a major lifeline for the nascent “nurture capitalism” and remained vital to an economic boom—or bust, depending on the state of industrial relations between them and the Nigerian seamen.

The Nigerian Seamen’s Union had also come to play a vital role, partly as a result of increase in import and export business between the United Kingdom and Nigeria. Their members had become an essential tool for the shipping lines and many corporate businesses that had emerged in Nigeria by the late 1950s. While they had been at loggerheads with their employers in the past, the event that began on board the *M. V. Apapa* vessel on its northbound voyage from Lagos to Liverpool (June 2nd-15th, 1959) was of great concern to all stakeholders. From Liverpool to London, and from Lagos to the Colonial Office, stakeholders, including nonshipping corporations, were surprised at the success of the seamen’s walkout and its effects on the political atmosphere in Nigeria. The new Ministry of Labour and the shipping lines took the strike, and the fact that workers in Lagos ports and other labor unions soon joined in it, quite seriously.

Between March 1958 and June 1959, the state of industrial relations in the shipping industry (as in other sectors of the economy) had been strained. The relationship between the Nigerian Seamen’s Union and the corporate foreign shipping lines had degenerated. Things had fallen apart and the center seems to have had neither foundation nor pillars to hold it. The ideal of “sound industrial relations” remained futile, and the “Africanization” of the sectors had not really begun. There was lack of trust between union representatives and the employers in the shipping industry. This situation possibly led the new Minister of Labour, Mr. J. M. Johnson, to seriously consider applying his powers—for example, in the form of the Wages Board Ordinance, No. 5 of 1957—as a means of resolving the persistent crisis in the labor sector.



This chapter examines the organization of the Nigerian Seamen's Union; the shipping lines (particularly Elder Dempster Lines Limited);<sup>3</sup> industrial relations in the sector before 1959; the historic events of 1959 within the context of the general devolution process; and the effects of the events such as the creation of the Nigerian Maritime Board, the Nigerian Merchant Navy Establishment, and the Joint Committee, as well as the appointment of port officers by employers of Seamen, and the education and training of union representatives and members.

### THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

It is important to briefly narrate the origins and expansion of recruitment and service of the Nigerian crewmembers in the shipping industry for local duties and foreign-going vessels at this point. However, little is known about the employment of West Africans (Nigerians) in foreign shipping before 1945. It would appear that the labor demands of World War II gave new impetus to recruitment and retention of Nigerians by the shipping lines. By the end of the war, official records indicate that Nigerians had become a strong lifeline for economic stabilization and recovery in the shipping sector. For instance, Colonial Office records indicate that by 1949, 400 Lagos personnel were serving in foreign vessels alone.<sup>4</sup> Many Nigerians were either permanent employees or casual workers through the period. By mid-1959, about 1,700 Nigerians were in the employ of the shipping companies. I should mention that, until late 1959 when the Nigerian National Line Limited joined them, foreign (British) capitals monopolized the shipping industry.<sup>5</sup> In late 1959 there were a total of 83 vessels carrying not only the 1,700 Lagos personnel but also about 290 West African seamen with an aggregate annual wage estimated at about 600,000 pounds sterling.<sup>6</sup> Although the employers claimed that the seamen were well paid and enjoyed the best conditions of service, the workers and the union generally were of a different opinion. The huge overhead cost does not seem to have created "sound industrial relations" between the two. Conditions of service on board the vessels, at local ports, annual leave, sick pay, and the like became major issues of debate between the seamen and their employers.<sup>7</sup>

Organized labor in the shipping industry did not emerge until July 1942, when some Nigerian seafarers operating from Lagos organized themselves into a labor union known as the West African Union of Seamen (Nigeria). It was officially registered with the Department of Labour (later Ministry of Labour) on November 3, 1942. Its membership at registration was put at 254. Between 1942 and 1946, its dues-paying membership fluctuated between 6 and 19. Early in 1947, the organization

changed its name to the Nigerian Union of Seamen, perhaps a reflection of the ongoing fluctuation in membership and predominance of Nigerian seamen in its membership. By this time there was also a steady rise in membership, which continued and reached a record high of 2,250 in 1953. Membership remained strong thereafter; the figure reported in 1958 was 1,759.<sup>8</sup>

At its official inauguration, the union's objective was "to improve the conditions and protect the interest of all members of the union; to endeavour to obtain reasonable hours of duty and fair wages for members; to ensure improved and adequate accommodation for seamen in all vessels and seamen's establishments ashore; to promote the general welfare of seafarers; and, to regulate the relations between employers and employees."<sup>9</sup> There was no mention of education of members and leaders; nor was there any ideological statement or commitment at this point to warrant employers and the colonial state raising a red flag of concern over the union's aims. On the contrary, the union (as a West African group of seamen) seems to have been beclouded by internal strife, distrust, and disunity between 1942 and 1946, making it impossible to achieve a consistent and coherent accomplishment of their goals. Official records during the period tell the story of occasional litigations, rifts of members into factions, and absence of any union official holding office for the duration of his election. It was common that one faction often successfully overthrew another faction from office. Usually, existing officials were thrown out of office through the same methods of intrigue, which they themselves had employed to get into power. An official report states that "the Nigerian Union of Seamen is notorious for not appointing its officers constitutionally."<sup>10</sup> It is, however, not clear what role the management of the shipping lines played in the incessant conflicts among union members. What is undisputable is the fact that there was no formalized training or education for union members or their representatives during the period. In fact, personnel policy of the shipping lines was formulated in the United Kingdom.

Major accomplishments were, however, made in the realm of labor-management relations in the matter of networking with the UK union's representatives and the National Union of Seamen of Great Britain. Mainly, the assistance rendered by the UK seamen's office under Sir Thomas Yates<sup>11</sup> was toward the shipping lines in terms of how to deal with the Nigerian Union of Seamen. One favorable note is the British suggestion to the shipping lines in Nigeria that they should recommend the union that was created in 1942 by West Africans. London seemed to be directing affairs as it related to union affairs in Lagos, as well as what should be the direction of building an antileftist union and "sound

industrial relations.” One noticeable example of such influence is the 1948 agreement between the shipping lines and the Nigerian Union of Seamen. First, the shipping lines recognized the Nigerian Union of Seamen as the sole responsible labor union representing resident West African Seamen engaged in Nigeria for deep-sea and coasting vessels. Second, upon the advice of London, the shipping lines agreed to the establishment at Lagos of a Local Board composed of a representative of the Labour Department of Nigeria and local representatives of the union.

The setting up of the Local Board marked an important phase in the history of industrial relations between the shipping lines and Nigerian seamen for several reasons. It controlled recruitment and supply of seamen, as well as dealing with issues concerning the employment on board ship. It maintained a register of bona fide seamen, thereby keeping an accurate record of the number of Nigerian seamen and their personnel. In addition, it was concerned with vesting and reviewing of disputes arising out of agreements affecting wages or workplace conditions.<sup>12</sup>

There is no doubt that the board was made up of unequal partners, the seamen being at the bottom of the ladder while the National Union of Seamen in the United Kingdom under Sir. Thomas Yates, along with the shipping lines, dictated the terms of business. The goodwill with which the board was created in November 1948 soon became moribund; it collapsed after 15 months in operation. Although records of colonial officials cited protracted internal troubles within the union as the main reason for the board's demise, that alone does not seem to explain why it failed. One can infer that the union at this time lacked competent and energetic leadership, a weakness the shipping lines employed to destabilize any potential leader who seemed likely to forge unity among members. As will be explained shortly, the emergence of the British-educated Nigerian leftist Omar Khayam as the secretary-general of the Nigerian Seamen's Union in 1958 soon changed the dynamics of employer-employee relations.

It is worth noting that the background to the invitation of Omar Khayam was the failure of the shipping lines to facilitate the Local Board—the only avenue for the seamen to present their grievances to the shipping lines. In July 1954, members of the Nigerian Seamen's Union unsuccessfully requested an immediate resuscitation of the Local Board. They sent two representatives to the home office of the Shipping Lines in London with the hope of actualizing their request for immediate resuscitation of the board. The Shipping Lines, however, preferred to do away with the board, which, while unequal in its authority, nonetheless provided a forum for the seamen to engage with their representatives in any capacity. To save them from further embarrassment, the representatives, with the help of the National Union of Seamen of Great Britain, were

able to negotiate another agreement with the Shipping Lines in which all stakeholders agreed it would be propitious to allow a second chance at “sound industrial relations” in the shipping industry. Toward this end, a Joint Consultative Committee was established with an office in Lagos. While it fell far short of the 1948 negotiations that had created the Local Board, the establishment of this committee was the first step at achieving the elusive harmony between employers and employees—the shipping lines and the Nigerian seamen. Suffice it to say that the scope of the Joint Consultative Committee was limited, and the interest of the seamen was nothing but secondary in any matter. Other than serving to keep a record of the number of seamen employed and their personnel, the Consultative Committee was of little use. It was not surprising that the secretary-general of the Nigerian Seamen’s Union during the period, France Olugbake, resigned in March 1958 due largely to the ineffective and powerless nature of the Consultative Committee.<sup>13</sup>

#### THE HISTORIC EVENTS OF 1959 AND THEIR AFTERMATH

The walkout strike of June 1959 was largely a result of an accumulated breakdown of “sound industrial relations” in the shipping sector. It was also a result of the new leadership of the union under the reputed Marxist Wari Orumbie, also known as Sidi Omar Khayam. Omar was a close friend of Bassey, Goodluck, and Nzeribe, all notable leftists that had made an imprint in the labor movement generally before 1959. Omar did not shy away from his ideological inclination; on the contrary, he used leftist rhetoric to galvanize the seamen who by this time appeared to be completely lulled and devoid of any momentum. Not much is known about Omar’s early life except that during the mid-1950s he left for London to study and soon joined the Socialist Group in Liverpool. To the Colonial Office, Omar represented not only a security risk but also the person who was perhaps the brain behind the seamen’s walkout upon the *M. V. Apapa’s* arrival in Liverpool on June 15, 1959. As they had done with many before him in other labor unions, the shipping lines management refused to deal with Omar, viewing him as a troublemaking leftist who was out to create havoc, if not to derail their sustained hegemonic position over labor matters in the sector.

Bruce Glasier, the London-based director of Elder Dempster Lines Limited, was aware of Omar’s credential and potentials. In what may have been a proactive strategic move, Glasier had instructed officers in Lagos to begin effecting a better condition of service for the Nigerian seamen effective October 1, 1958—the very eve of Omar Khayam’s appointment as the secretary-general of the Nigerian Seamen’s Union. In a confidential

letter to Lagos, Glasier instructed that conditions of service for all African seamen must be uppermost among line leaders such as departmental officers, chief officers, chief engineers, and chief stewards. He reiterated earlier agreements between Elder Dempster Lines and the seamen regarding rates of pay and long working hours of seamen. He went further, admonishing European officers on the ground to follow working hours and pay rates for Africans (Nigerians) commensurate with those in the United Kingdom, meaning that they must acknowledge exceptional hours over and above routine or regular hours, with time-off pay in accordance with the United Kingdom standard. Glasier's letter ended with a strong warning that European officers of Elder Dempster Lines in Lagos should "adopt a fair and reasonable understanding attitude in their approach to any problem which the men [Africans] might have but they should also appreciate the need for patience and complete impartiality in dealing with their day to day affairs."<sup>14</sup>

Glasier had an excellent background in industrial management and seems to have been genuinely concerned about the state of affairs in West Africa in general. He was also aware of the significance of avoiding strikes and maintaining "sound industrial relations" in the ports and aboard the vessels in the developing economy of British West Africa. Lagos and the Nigerian seamen were considered the backbone of the emerging "nurture capitalist" economy in Nigeria, with strong ties to the Overseas Sterling Area. The Nigerian crew on the *M. V. Apapa*, for instance, was classified into three groups: engine-room ratings 9; laundry staff 5; and catering and bedroom staff 64. This is the lifeline of the company and the nations—The United Kingdom and Nigeria. An event like the 1959 walkout in Liverpool, which spread like wildfire to Lagos ports, no doubt dealt a severe blow to the economic heart of both Britain and Nigeria.

I should state that Glasier's admonition was apparently disregarded by shipping lines officers in Lagos; subsequent events indicated that there was gross disrespect for the seamen, among other issues. Knowing nothing of Glasier's letter, representatives of the Nigerian Seamen's Union issued three letters dated October 11, 15, and 18, 1958, to the management of Elder Dempster Lines, Lagos; the Shipping Master, Lagos; and Glasier in London, respectively. To the Nigerian seamen, the issue was the color bar during the era of "Africanisation" [Nigerianization] and the eventual transfer of power to the nationalists. The seamen's accusations of racial discrimination and other industrial issues were unacceptable to Glasier, who arrived in Lagos 12 days later to tackle the problem. One can infer that the heat was being felt—Omar's leadership style seems to have sent chill up the spine of the shipping management all the way from Lagos to London. On November 1, 1958, Glasier held a joint meeting

in Lagos at which all the members of the executive committee of the Nigerian Seamen's Union and representatives of the three Shipping Lines were present. Glasier's "shuttle diplomacy" paid off, as all parties agreed to establish mutual respect for each other, and on November 4, 1958, the Elder Dempster management wrote S. M. Ekore, president of the Nigerian Seamen's Union, validating their acceptance of the agreement of mutual respect for the seamen and their representatives. The letter states, *inter alia*:

The Lines welcome the assurance of your Executive that it will work to promote harmony and efficiency amongst Nigerian seamen serving in the Lines' vessels. We are glad to have received your undertaking that everything in your power will be done to prevent any reoccurrence of suggestion amongst the seamen of racial prejudice, and we are pleased to note that you will help the seamen to understand their responsibilities and duties to the Masters and Ships' Officers, and the need for good discipline and obedience of commands, just as the Lines will always ensure their Masters and Officers are aware of their responsibilities to treat the crews serving them, African and European, with every consideration.<sup>15</sup>

This letter contains three salient points. First, Elder Dempster's management would not tolerate any charges of color bar or discrimination from the seamen. It was not only sensitive but also necessary that any form of color prejudice be seen as antithetical to the special relationship that had been built in the past decades between Britain and Nigeria. Second, management was aware of leftists' use of color discrimination to fan antiemployer sentiment, culminating in strikes. In the past—that is, in the railway men's strike of 1945, the Iva Valley strike of 1947, and the Enugu Colliery riots of 1949—leftist union leaders had used accusations of color discrimination to create havoc and embarrassment for the British policy of "Dual Mandate" in Nigeria. Third, while Glasier's admonition seems to have made an impact on management in Lagos, the latter nonetheless continued to treat the crews as paramilitary men rather than civilian workers. They seem to have forgotten the fact that the ships were for commercial purposes and that "sound industrial relations" require *quid pro quo*. Glasier's response to the management's letter to the seamen indicated that he had a better understanding of the situation, for it was a rebuke of the military tone of the latter's letter. He emphasized the need for tolerance, patience, and understanding in the daily handling of African crew, and drew attention to his previous confidential letter before the joint meeting in October 1958.<sup>16</sup>

The seamen's dissatisfaction with the handling of affairs by management in Lagos informed two papers issued early in January 1959. On January 10, 1959, they submitted a "Memorandum of Minimum Demands" to Elder Dempster. This was followed ten days later by "N.U.S. News and Views." In both papers, the issue of racial discrimination was made prominent. In the "Memorandum," the seamen not only asserted emphatically that racial prejudice against African seamen existed aboard the vessels but also criticized the Shipping Lines in no less vigorous terms for denying the existence of racial prejudice on their ships. As is expected, the Shipping Lines considered these papers and the charges made therein as a breach of the joint agreement made during the November meeting. The disagreement and opposing views about issues again violated the mutual respect and cooperation between the seamen and the Shipping Lines. Furthermore, management's response to the seamen's demands was unsatisfactory, and the seamen became exasperated, taking the view that the promised new approach for mutual respect and cooperation as agreed at November joint meeting was no more than lip service.

Thus, by June 2, 1959, when the crew of 77 seamen sailed on the *M. V. Apapa* from Lagos to Liverpool, the disunity between them and the Shipping Lines was beyond repair. By the time they arrived in Liverpool 13 days later, the seamen had compiled a list of grievances against their European officers—whom they accused of gross color discrimination, inequality, and "slavery."<sup>17</sup> The ship's crew formally informed Bruce Glasier of their grievances, emphasizing the breakdown of harmony on the vessel throughout its voyage from Lagos to Liverpool. Glasier's investigation and response to the seamen was unsatisfactory: He concluded that there was no evidence of a color bar aboard the *M. V. Apapa*. Consequently, on June 20, 1959, the seamen walked off and abandoned the vessel in Liverpool, refusing to talk to Glasier or any representative of the Shipping Lines. On June 24, they picketed at Stanley House, a community center in Liverpool known for staging antiauthority protests. Within two days, their action had spread as hundreds of other seamen, both in Liverpool and abroad, went on solidarity strikes; noteworthy among these were the crews of five cargo ships in Liverpool and eight ships in Lagos harbor. The economic consequences remained classified in official record to this day, but the strike must have been a devastating event, not to mention an embarrassment to the Shipping Lines and its management. Despite several pleas from government officials, including the newly appointed Labour Conciliation Officer in the Ministry of Labour, Mr. Ola, and the Minister of Labour, Mr. Johnson, the seamen refused to

sail back to Lagos on board *M. V. Apapa*. After being dismissed from their employment, they were eventually flown to Lagos on June 28, 1959, at the expense of the government and the Shipping Lines.<sup>18</sup>

The question now is what are the implications of the events of June 1959? Foremost were the imperfect British colonial policy, and the free hand it gave to foreign capitalist companies to set up the nature of industrial relations in Nigeria. The issue of color bar on the eve of independence was not only embarrassing but was viewed as leftists' tactics to derail the special relationship between Britain and liberal nationalists who look forward to assuming power shortly. On a positive note, it reopened some of the unfinished or untouched aspects of decolonization in Nigeria. The "Nigerianization" of maritime business and the preparation of the new nation for international commerce were hardly begun. However, the events of 1959 indirectly shaped the pace of change in one of the most important sectors of the new "nurture capitalism" before independence on October 1, 1960.

Upon independence, the minister of Labour and the Ministry of Labour Affairs,<sup>19</sup> now under the authority of Nigerian officials, set up the Salubi Commission of Inquiry to look into the trade dispute, and recommend ways to improve "sound industrial relations" in the sector. Thompson Salubi was the acting industrial relations commissioner in the Ministry of Labour. Other members of the commission were Alfred McClatchey, secretary, Nigerian Employers Consultative Association; and Lawrence Borha, secretary-general, Trades Union Congress of Nigeria (TUCN). Preceding the minister's attempt at overhauling and sanitizing the shipping industry was the National Union of Seamen of Great Britain under Sir. Thomas Yates' initiative. As implied earlier in this narrative, the role of Yates and his decision to seize the opportunity to curtail leftist leadership among seamen in Nigeria (and West Africa generally) began in earnest after the Liverpool strike. It is important to analyze his position and contributions before identifying the overall impact of the strike on decolonization in Nigeria.

Sir. Thomas Yates was the general-secretary of the National Union of Seamen of Great Britain, the chairman of the Seafarers' section of the International Transport Workers' Federation, the chairman of the British Trades Union Congress Commonwealth Trade Union Advisory Council, and a member of the British government's Colonial Labour Advisory Committee. He was reputed to have been an influential antileftist in all spheres of life. He had a great deal of personal interest in the affairs of West African seamen as regards mentoring, education, and financial support. He used his position to render financial support to seamen when necessary, and was concerned about any opportunity for



leftist representatives to gain influence in the sector. It is not surprising, therefore, that when the strike broke out in Liverpool, he was the first to understand the need to bring all parties to the table and dissuade the seamen from any antiauthority pursuits. In his letter to Bruce Glasier, the director of Elder Dempster in London, Yates offered an olive branch to all parties, pledging that he would send two representatives from the National Union of Seamen of Great Britain to Lagos to assist in training and mentoring. It is relevant to quote some sections of his long letter to Glasier dated July 10, 1959:

I should like you to make it known in any way which seems most effective that my own and my Union's services would be readily made available in this country to bona fide representatives of Nigerian Seamen who would not lend themselves to the policies of racialism which have recently evidenced themselves in the Nigerian Seamen's Union. I would be prepared to assist in advising such representatives on the right kind of Constitution for the Nigerian Seamen's Union on the policies which I feel it should adopt, both Nationally and Internationally. I would also willingly assist representatives of the Nigerian Seamen on the form that Discussions and negotiations with the British Lines on new terms and conditions of service for Nigerian Seamen might take. Finally, I would advise Nigerian representatives and work with them in conjunction with your own people, in endeavouring to frame an overall long term policy for setting up in West Africa something on the lines of the Merchant Navy Establishment in this country, which I believe could only bring benefit to the West African Shipping as a whole.<sup>20</sup>

One can glean from Yates's letter that the shipping industry was facing a true crisis. More importantly, one can also observe that the colonial state had not done enough to build an enduring maritime economy in Nigeria. Since the shipping industry was considered one of the major lifelines of the nascent economy, Yates's letter was considered an urgent prescription for the healing shipping sector. To build "sound industrial relations," therefore, the colonial state, the Nigerian nationalist government, the shipping lines industry, and the seamen needed to work out a sustained policy that would make the industry comparable to those in other parts of the capitalist world. Education of the seamen and their leaders was part of the necessary recipe for "sound industrial relations." Total overhaul of policies and structures, with government involvement, was also seen as essential.

The Board of Inquiry set up by the Minister of Labour was not oblivious of these facts. They noted Yates's kind gesture and fully concurred with it in their report to the government. In fact, Yates's view was a

guiding light for the board members in their consideration of how to prevent reoccurrence of such incident in the future. In its report, the board acknowledged Yates for his projected move to assist in creating a cordial atmosphere in the shipping lines industry by educating the seamen about “sound” industrial relations and bargaining. It is not surprising that in its recommendation to the Minister of Labour, the board emphasized Yates’s admonition and voluntary offer of assistance in building a better relationship between the shipping line companies, the seamen, and in the maritime sector generally.<sup>21</sup>

### **THE BOARD, THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR, AND THE FUTURE OF THE SHIPPING INDUSTRY**

When the board completed its hearings on July 10, 1959, it resolved that there was an urgent need for a total overhaul of the maritime industry. In the short term, it recommended the shipping companies appoint port officers, who would be the first line of authority to resolve any industrial dispute at the ports. Their responsibility would be to work with crew managers and the personnel office of the Shipping Lines to handle individual and union grievances at their source, before they had a chance to spread beyond the port. In this way, the employers aimed to assure “sound industrial relations” and deny leftists the opportunity to foment antiemployer or antigovernment activities. In addition, the board implored the Minister of Labour to take advantage of Yates’s offer of a representative from the National Union of Seamen of Great Britain to Lagos to serve as the representative of the seamen, as well as begin to train and educate them about labor matters, industrial relations, and what is considered the best means of resolving issues. In fact, the British TUC, George Foggon (a senior officer in the Colonial Office), and Yates received copies of the board’s report before part of it was made known to the public.

In the long term, however, the board recommended the establishment of the following institutions: the Nigerian Maritime Board, the Nigerian Merchant Navy Establishment, and a Joint Committee. A joint body of representatives of both the seamen and employers, as in the previous decade, would be a forum for peaceful resolution of issues between the union and shipping lines employers. It was proposed that the Joint Committee would not be in the hands of the employers; rather it would be a joint venture aiming at fair adjudications for both parties. Upon approval by the Minister of Labour, the Joint Committee became a subordinate organ to the Nigerian Maritime Board. Its duties included dealing with minor disputes arising from the administration of the establishment,

the control of the Central Register, disciplinary matters, and such other matters as may be delegated to it by the Nigerian Maritime Board.<sup>22</sup>

It should be noted that the Joint Committee was considered the fundamental body upon which the Nigerian Merchant Navy Establishment (NMNE) and the Nigerian Maritime Board (NMB) were based. The NMNE was charged with employment, training, and recruitment of Nigerian seamen. It was also charged with maintaining records of seamen and many other administrative matters in a Central Register. It was patterned along the line of the British Establishment with the Nigerian Maritime Board being its overseer in all matters. The NMNE was authorized to impose penalties including "caution," "suspension" (as a precaution or as a penalty), or "termination of contract," should a seaman fail to carry out his obligations under the General Service Contract. The seamen, however, were protected because they could appeal any decision to the Joint Committee through the establishment, and if need be to the board.<sup>23</sup>

The Nigerian Maritime Board became the final arbiter of fair adjudication in all industrial matters. And whenever it failed to satisfy any party, the Ministry of Labour was to become involved and resolve the matter. Its functions thus included negotiation and determination of terms and conditions of service of all Nigerian personnel employed in foreign-going vessels. It also dealt with disciplinary matters and maintained a register of all seamen for an accurate count. These functions were the result of decades of neglect and inadequacy in the industry. Perhaps of more significance is the fact that the board administered the employment, training, and recruitment of Nigerian seamen. Education of labor union members should be seen as a larger effort of the colonial state to prevent leftist inroads into the hearts and minds of most people who could have seen matters simply as a reality of their colonial condition rather than color bar or racial discrimination. The board in this case worked closely with Sir. Thomas Yates and the National Union of Seamen of Great Britain. Although independence was less than two years away, it was nonetheless a significant achievement on the part of the colonial state, the nationalist government, the shipping lines, and the seamen's union. Some may argue that the seamen did not really benefit from the process and the institutions created thereafter. However, I argue that it indirectly benefited the seamen, as their case became a part of the decolonization package for Nigeria.

### CONCLUSION

The Colonial Office neither sat idle nor was it overshadowed by the men-on-the-spot on all matters concerning the colonies. The strike of

1959 had many implications, the most important being the way in which it emphasized the urgency of ensuring a smooth transition to Nigerian independence without any distractions. In addition, its political, economic, and social effects went beyond the end of British colonial rule because the indigenous governments that followed continued to build upon the legacy of the British in the maritime and port sector of the economy with greater emphasis on labor relations. With George Foggon in London working with Yates, Glasier, the Nigerian Minister of Labour, and senior officials in the Nigerian Ministry of Labour, efforts were made to ensure the success of “sound industrial relations” on the eve of independence. The legacy of this effort is the influence of the pro-West perception on labor matters, the shipping industry being no exception. The selected documents in the appendix highlight the international nature of workers’ education, emphasizing the role of the ILO in labor unions with particular reference to Nigeria. In addition, it served as a reference point for the postcolonial Nigerian government’s efforts at providing a sustained labor union education to all workers, among other issues confronting workers at the time.

## CHAPTER 8

# LABOR UNION EDUCATION SINCE 1960

### INTRODUCTION

Nigeria's independence from Britain on October 1, 1960, did not stop either the momentum and interest in labor education or the ongoing general informal education against Communism. The University College at Ibadan (later called University of Ibadan) and its Extra-Mural Department continued to be relevant as agents of government in implementing its general education policy, as well as in continuing education programs. At the same time, other regional institutions such as the University of Nigeria, Nsukka; University of Lagos; Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; and other postindependent higher education institutions competed for resources and enrollment in their labor and industrial relations courses. However, the University College at Ibadan has been dominant in organizing courses within and outside its campus, and in enrolling more students for these courses. For instance, in 1962 it conducted a three-day industrial relations course in Kano for 17 labor unionists from 12 unions across Nigeria. In the same year, a member of the staff of the UCI gave a talk at Enugu on the "Problems of Industrial Relations in Nigeria."<sup>1</sup> In June 1964, the Extra-Mural Department conducted a 20-week industrial relations course for 40 workers at Port Harcourt.

### LABOR UNION EDUCATION: LOCAL DYNAMISM AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

Both official and unofficial records indicate that the colonial state and its agents were not the sole organizers of labor union education during the colonial period and afterwards. There were competitions between

the two ideological camps in the labor movement worldwide as affiliates of the ICFTU and the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) organized their brand of informal education for workers during the period under review. Egboh rightly argued, "although Nigerian trade unions have limited financial resources, some of them, especially the bigger and better organised ones, have been able to take bold measures in trade union education by awarding scholarships to some of their members."<sup>2</sup>

It should not be surprising that both the TUCN and the NTUC not only sponsored their members to attend many organized lectures and training sections but also organized their own sessions during the decolonization era, and afterwards. At a microlevel, individual unions also organized training sessions for their members without necessarily going through the macrounions. One major factor is the ideological difference between the pro-Western TUCN, affiliated with the ICFTU, and the pro-Eastern bloc NTUC, affiliated with the WFTU. On one hand, during the first decade of independence many pro-Western international organizations continued to exercise strong influence over labor union education programs as they had done in the colonial era. The International Labour Organization, the Israeli Technical Group, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, the U.S. Agency for International Aid, and the British Council collaborated or sponsored trainings and workshops for labor union officials and members between 1961 and 1965 despite the many crises that plagued Nigeria during those years.<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, despite financial support from the Soviets and other leftist groups to Nigerian leftist intelligentsia, the goals of establishing a labor education center and creating a nationwide leftist-dominated central labor organization remained elusive. Notable in this regard was the annual grant, beginning in 1963, from the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) to the Nigerian Workers Council (NWC), which was led by Chukwura and Anunobi. In addition, the Bassey- and Goodluck-led Nigerian Trade Union Congress (NTUC) received funding from the WFTU. Yet, building a proleftist labor center in Lagos or anywhere in the country was difficult, largely because of persistent conflicts among leftist intelligentsia leaders in Lagos. As Cohen rightly noted, "as the assistance from the foreign bodies increased, the Lagos leaders were obliged to use some of the money to set up training institutes and provide seminar courses for their own trade union officials."<sup>4</sup> However, the most significant success came four years before the Nigerian civil war of 1967, when the Bassey and Goodluck leftist group used funds from the Soviets to establish the Patrice Lumumba Institute of Political Science and Trade Unionism (later called Patrice Lumumba Academy).<sup>5</sup>

I should mention that like the Marxists' seminars during the 1950s, the Lumumba Academy offered courses in basic English, Anthropology, Economics, Scientific Socialism (Marxism-Leninism), Political Economy, Marxist Philosophy, and the like. Furthermore, in 1966, a year before the civil war, the United Labour Congress (ULC) led by Adebola and Borha used funding from the Afro-American Labour Center (AALC) to establish a pro-Western labor center in Lagos. This is the Trade Union Institute for Economic and Social Development, where workers received lectures and certification in short courses like Industrial Relations, Trade Union Law, and Economics. Lastly, in 1966, the Nigerian Workers' Council led by Anunobi and Chukwura with the financial assistance of ICFTU acquired land in Lagos with the hope of constructing a permanent site for a Labor College.<sup>6</sup>

#### **CRITICAL YEARS (1960–1964): THE ILO AND WORKERS' EDUCATION**

The period between 1960 and 1964 is described as critical years for the young independent Federal Republic of Nigeria. Despite notable efforts made in workers' education between 1960 and 1964, the general strike of 1964 indicates that much needed to be done in creating sustained "sound" industrial relations. At independence in 1960, the British arranged technical cooperation agreements with many international organizations on behalf of the new republic. One of the technical agreements signed at independence was with the ILO to assist with training workers and building the workforce in the Ministry of Labour and Welfare.<sup>7</sup>

The ILO is an international agency dedicated to the promotion of equal opportunity, social justice, and intellectual development worldwide. Its emphasis is in the labor field where it has helped since 1956 to set standard and operational activities for workers' education and organization. Unlike the WFTU and ICFTU, it remained nonideological, although the Eastern Bloc in the Cold War era would disagree with this opinion. ILO's activities included conducting studies and reports of informative and instructive character, carrying out missions to advise national authorities and organizations on labor questions, workers' education, and so on.<sup>8</sup> Its program of worker education began in 1956 with emphasis on understanding local (national) needs. Rather than imposing a one-size-fits-all approach, the ILO systematically and methodically researched and reviewed issues in the country of interest. Based on its findings, the ILO came up with a customized workers' education package. This is one of the reasons that the Nigerian government during independence sought ILO's support to assist in workers' training, and more so in the

nascent Ministry of Labour and Welfare. In addition, its educational activities were concerned with issues of industrial relations, conditions of work and employment, social security, occupational health and safety, and union organization.<sup>9</sup> The organization invested in training facilitators of its educational programs in the best pedagogy and method of teaching, publishing material in major languages, and encouraging reproduction of the material in local or native languages. With its field office in Lagos, a library was developed and several filmstrips and audio-visual aids were made available for workers' education.

Additional specificities of ILO's activities in Nigeria before the civil war (1967–1970) are contained in its *Report* for 1960 and 1963. In 1960, it engaged in technical matters like the creation of an education committee; mapping out the education committee's activities; and implementation of an elementary course on labor unionism, a residential course on workers' education techniques, and study techniques. It put in place a follow-up mechanism as part of the quality assurance and monitoring to ensure success of its expert recommendations, discussed in the next section, after 1960.

The Nigeria–ILO partnership, however, began in 1959 when the Trade Union Congress of Nigeria (TUCN) submitted a request to the ILO for an expert service on workers' education. The request had the support of the Balewa government.<sup>10</sup> The expert's term of reference was as follows:

To advise on the planning and operation of a workers' education programme for the Nigerian trade union movement, on the preparation and dissemination of adequate and suitable study materials, and to start a training programme in methods and techniques of workers' education for the benefit of those Nigerians who will be expected to carry on the programme after the departure of the expert.<sup>11</sup>

Herbert Tulatz, principal of the Fritz-Tarnow-Schule (a labor union school under the auspices of the German Confederation of Labour—GCF), was appointed to carry out these objectives in Nigeria. On November 29, 1959, he arrived in Lagos and worked with labor officers, government officials, and workers generally until March 19, 1960, a few months before independence.

During his visit to Lagos, he also emphasized on the need for regional activities, and financial and material assistance for Nigeria. To accomplish these, however, Tulatz liaised with officials of the TUCN (Messrs Borha and Cole in particular) and the federal Ministry of Labour and Welfare (Messrs Abiodun and Salubi).<sup>12</sup> It is noted that



the success of Tulatz had to do with many “informal talks” he held with leaders across board, his flexibility, his visits to labor unionists’ homes, and his willingness to learn the history of unionism in Nigeria rather than imposing his ideas.<sup>13</sup> This process helped generate the famous ten objectives that remained the guardian principles for activities relating to developing a sustained labor union education program in Nigeria.

On December 20, 1959, Tulatz met with the TUCN working committee to get the ten objectives approved, which were unanimously supported. The objectives expressed both immediate and long-term goals of a pro-Western (my view) labor union education in Nigeria. They are as follows:

1. TUCN set up an Education Committee, whose principal task would be to plan and establish a workers’ education programme on a long-term basis;
2. TUCN set up an Education Subcommittee in each of the three Regions, operating under the general directives of the central Education Committee;
3. TUCN to appoint a full-time officer responsible for the planning and reorganization of workers’ education;
4. To convince all Nigerian trade union leaders that workers’ education constitutes a regular part of their day-to-day trade union duties;
5. Assistance to the TUCN with a view to conducting a one-week residential course for potential leaders on workers’ education techniques;
6. Assistance to the TUCN with a view to conducting a six-week pilot course on the basic principles of the trade union movement for rank-and-file members in Lagos area;
7. TUCN to select and eventually prepare suitable study material for use by rank-and-file members;
8. TUCN to liaise with both national and international agencies interested in promoting trade union educational activities in Nigeria;
9. TUCN to contact with an English-language correspondence school of the trade union movement; and
10. TUCN and its affiliate unions to appoint officers who would assume responsibility for workers’ education within their respective unions.<sup>14</sup>

The creation of an education committee was an important achievement of Tulatz's visit as well. On December 30, 1959 (ten days after the adoption of the above ten objectives), the working committee of the TUCN under the guidance of Tulatz came up with a number of proposals for the basis of its education committee. At the end of the deliberation, it was agreed that its objectives should include the following:

1. To set up an Education Subcommittee in each Region and to ensure central control by the TUCN Education Committee of trade union educational activities as a whole;
2. To cooperate with the TUCN Secretariat in publishing a weekly or bi-weekly information bulletin; and,
3. To carry out all other assignments given to it from time to time and report at frequent intervals to the Working Committee.<sup>15</sup>

At this meeting, Cole and Oti were appointed as chairman and secretary respectively of TUCN Education Committee. The *Report* indicates that graduates of ICFTU Labour College at Kampala, Uganda, were among the co-opted members of the Education Committee. The responsibility of a pro-Western workers' education rested on this group until the outbreak of the Nigerian civil war in 1967. During the new year, in 1960, the Education Committee began to design curriculum for rank-and-file members resident in Lagos. To mark the inauguration of the Lagos Workers' School (LWS), the TUCN invited government officials (its support base), labor union leaders, employers in the private sectors, labor officers, and the director of ILO African field office.<sup>16</sup> In his speech to the participants, the Minister of Labour and Welfare, Mobolaji Johnson, stated that, the government was more in favor of active labor union education than ever before. In addition, Tulatz used the occasion to emphasize the importance of workers' education to the country as a whole.<sup>17</sup>

Thus began the first elementary six-week course on labor unionism for Lagos Workers' School, held for two weeks from February 9 to March 17, 1960. The syllabus included topics such as the need to have a labor union; how a labor union functions; labor union structure; Nigerian industrial union law; and labor union and politics. The workers appeared in high spirits as many traveled considerable distances to the lecture location after their regular office hours two evenings per week. Study material included manuals, pamphlets, films, and a mix of cultural immersion throughout the meetings.<sup>18</sup>

Another achievement of Tulatz's engagement with TUCN during this period was the commencement of the residential course on workers' education techniques. The purpose was to train the trainers. The first class

enrolled ten students and took place between February 15 and 20, 1960, at Hotel Wayfarer in Lagos. Tulatz was the teacher and the principal of the program. Many guest lecturers were invited from diverse sectors of the community to model their pedagogy during the period. We should note that the participants were enlightened about ILO activities in Africa, the American Labor movement, and general workers' education techniques.<sup>19</sup> Like the elementary course, the course attracted potential leaders and aroused considerable public interest. Worthy of note is the attendance of high officials like Ogon (commissioner of Eastern Regional Government), M. A. Tokunboh (prime minister's office), and P. O. Ahime (director of studies of industrial relations courses at the University College Extra-Mural Department).<sup>20</sup> There is no doubt that Tulatz was successful in this endeavor and his foundation set the stage for future ILO engagement in Nigeria. He seems to have won the hearts and minds of stakeholders in the Nigerian Employers' Consultative Association that he was asked to contribute an article on the subject of workers' education that appeared in March 1960.<sup>21</sup> In addition, Nwokeji, the permanent secretary at the Ministry of Labour and Welfare, and the TUCN leadership impressed upon the ILO that there was a need for a follow-up mission with a focus on three major objectives:

1. To assist and advise the TUCN in the implementation of workers' educational activities in progress;
2. To organize and stimulate workers' educational schemes in the various Regions and provinces; and
3. To advise the major trade union bodies how to plan workers' education schemes within their own organizations.<sup>22</sup>

Indeed, a follow-up was made in 1963, when Charles Orr<sup>23</sup> was sent from ILO to assess and engage Nigeria union leaders, rank-and-file members, labor officers, employers, and all stakeholders in workers' education. The modus operandi for Orr was set out as follows:

1. To examine to what extent the recommendations of the previous workers' education expert, Mr. Tulatz, have been carried out by all trade union organisations concerned and how any difficulties might be overcome.
2. To advise the various union organisations willing to use I. L. O. services on the curriculum and other plans of an eventual labour college.
3. To stimulate regional and national educational efforts by conducting courses for trade unionists throughout the country.

4. The expert might have to examine with the Extra-Mural Department of the University College of Ibadan their plans for workers' education.
5. Moreover, the expert would have to hold himself available for consultation and assistance by all trade union organisations in Nigeria which wish to seek his advice and help.<sup>24</sup>

Professor Orr arrived in Lagos in July and stayed until September 1963, when he returned to his base. Obiyan (commissioner of industrial relations) and Tokunboh (permanent secretary, Ministry of Labour and Welfare) met Professor Orr, indicating continued government interest in labor union education. In fact, the Balewa government subsidized an annual seminar on industrial relations that brings together about 100 labor unionists and 50 representatives of employers for a two-week residential program at a cost of 4,000 pounds sterling (see table 8.1).<sup>25</sup> With his office located at ILO field office in Lagos, Orr began to strategize process for actualizing his mission before September 1963. These were turbulent years, as stated earlier, and the instability created initial impediments for Orr.

Notwithstanding the conflicts in labor unionism and politics generally, several stakeholders accomplished some remarkable feat in the field of labor union education. In 1963, several agencies successfully conducted small-scale programs of labor union education throughout the country. The ULC continued to compete with the TUCN by conducting its own intermittent evening classes in Lagos. In that same year, the NTUC in collaboration with the Nigerian Youth League Council (NYLC) inaugurated the Patrice Lumumba Institute of Political Science and Trade Unionism in Lagos.<sup>26</sup> In March 1963, another group of labor leaders under the auspices of the Nigerian Workers' Council (NWC) began a series of regional weekend courses.<sup>27</sup> This program competed with that of the Department of Extra-Mural Studies, which began early in 1962. The department, however, continued to collaborate with ICFTU Labour College to run short residential courses at Ibadan. In addition, Shell Company, the United African Company, and other private employers of labor continued to run their own industrial relations programs. The greatest challenge to Orr was the disparity and variations of labor union education throughout Nigeria despite efforts of his predecessor, Tulatz, and the Nigerian government to synergize and form a unified labor union.<sup>28</sup>

Charles Orr's first task was to meet with all stakeholders in Lagos, so he traveled to the interior, canvassing for unity and streamlining labor union education for workers. In Lagos, he met with officers of the

Table 8.1 Course for teachers and administration of workers' education, 1963

7-13 September 1963	5-6.30 P.M.	6.45-8 P.M.
Sept. 7	Instructions and introductions	"Workers' education in Europe and America"
Sept. 8	Group discussion (group A) "The organization and administration of trade unions"	"Teaching methods in Asia"
Sept. 9	Group discussion (group B) and workshop groups	Demonstration of an active lecture "The I.L.O."
Sept. 10	Group reports "The organization and administration of trade unions"	Group reports (continued)
Sept. 11	Workshop groups	Practice group discussion "Workers' education"
Sept. 12	"The International Labor Movement"	"The International Labor Movement"
Sept. 13	"Workers' education in Nigeria"	Farewell party and photographs

*Note:* Organized by the United Labor Congress (ULC)

Director of Studies: Professor Charles Orr, ILO expert in workers' education

*Source:* ILO Workers' Education Report, Geneva.

TUCN, the ULC, the NWC, the NECA, representatives of five large private employers and of one public service corporation, officers of four universities,<sup>29</sup> labor advisers of two foreign embassies (the United Kingdom and the United States), and representatives of international labor unions stationed in Nigeria.<sup>30</sup> Like Tulatz, Orr was a good listener, and he effectively used lessons from the many conversations to produce what is considered a pathway to retooling both administrative and pedagogical problems facing labor union education in Nigeria. To this end, he drafted, reproduced, and circulated widely a series of five articles about the organization of labor union education in African and Asian countries.<sup>31</sup> While this effort seems to have generated further discussion among stakeholders, his efforts to unify the curriculum of the TUCN, the ULC, and the NWC failed partly because of the ideological divisions among the leaders of these organizations. Orr, nonetheless, assisted each one of the groups by reviewing its program, preparing a model budget, and outlining model curricula for short-term residential courses. In addition, he conducted a survey of accommodations available for holding classes and for residential courses in view of their growing popularity among workers, employers, and union leaders.<sup>32</sup>

Orr's most significant accomplishment, however, is the fact that he did not limit his activities within the TUCN. He directed a series of seven evening classes organized by the ULC in Lagos and delivered two lectures on the organization of labor union education to the participants of the industrial relations seminar of the Extra-Mural Department of the University of Ibadan. While he was unsuccessful in bridging the division between the unions, he envisaged a plan of unified curricula and drafted "a large-scale programme designed to serve the educational needs of the broad mass of Nigerian workers."<sup>33</sup> The idea of a large-scale program was predicated on adequate financial support, employers' cooperation, government subsidies, hiring of full-time teachers and administrators, and, above all, the creation of the Nigerian Institute of Labour Education.<sup>34</sup> Orr intended to create a multipartite board of labor education, comprising members from all stakeholders in labor matters. With the federal Ministry of Labour and Welfare monitoring its overall affairs, Orr suggested that the board be autonomous and have local committees to operate local programs within the framework of the policies laid down by the board. He emphasized that the composition of the board (and local committees) should be agreed upon by the Ministry of Labour and Welfare in consultation with labor and professional organizations, and with universities. In Orr's opinion, rather than having several residential colleges envisaged by the three main labor unions (the TUCN, the ULC, and the NWC), a centralized institute would be cost-effective and ideal for Nigeria's experimentation.<sup>35</sup>

In brief, The Nigerian Institute of Labour Education was envisaged to function as:

1. The Board of Labour Education.
2. Labour Education Committees in those cities where the Board decides to set up Labour Education Centres.
3. A headquarters to be staffed by an Administrative Secretary and eventually by a Director of Studies, a Research Officer, an Accountant, etc.
4. A series of Labour Education Centres, each to be staffed by Administrative Officer and a group of Education Officers who shall organise classes for workers and direct the activities of the worker teachers.<sup>36</sup>

Unfortunately, events that followed between 1964 and 1966 culminating into a civil war stalled efforts at concretizing this idea. Any possibilities, it seems, had to wait until 1978, when the military government tried to create a centralized union and college for labor union education (see table 8.2).

Table 8.2 Government (colonial) training schemes

Department	Type of trainee	Total number of persons trained 1-4-56 to 31-3-57	Total number in training on 31-3-57
<b>Agriculture</b>	(i) Agricultural assistants and overseers	79	243
	(ii) Native administration agricultural workers	30	28
<b>Antiquities</b>	Museum technical assistants	–	1
<b>Broadcasting</b>	(i) Broadcasting officers (programmes)	37	–
	(ii) Broadcasting officers (general and administrative duties)	6	–
	(iii) Junior technical staff (engineering) (at Yaba Technical Institute)	11	13
	(iv) Technical officers (at Yaba Technical Institute)	–	5
<b>Cooperative</b>	Cooperative inspectors	6	8
<b>Commerce and Industries</b>	(i) Handloom manipulators (including weaving and dyeing)	56	21
	(ii) Pottery and brick makers	78	38
<b>Customs and Excise</b>	(i) Probationary assistant water guard officers	38	18
	(ii) Maritime officers	19	–
<b>Education</b>	(i) Teaching training colleges: Female teachers	385	624
	(ii) Teacher training colleges: Male teachers	1,434	3,613
	(iii) Clerks' training centers and technical institutes: Post standard VI:	633	136
	(a) Fitter machinist	214	1,377
	(b) Motor-mechanics		
	(c) Painters and decorators		
	(d) Cabinet makers		
	(e) Carpenters		
	(f) Wood machinists		
	(g) Bricklayers		
	(h) Sheet metal workers		
	(i) Black smiths and welders		
	(j) Coach builders		
(k) Electricians			
(l) Plumbers			
(iv) Technical institutes, Yaba: Junior Technical Staff (various courses)	221	1,033	
(v) Man O'War Bay Training Course in Leadership and Citizenship	257	43	

Table 8.2 (Continued)

Department	Type of trainee	Total number of persons trained 1-4-56 to 31-3-57	Total number in training on 31-3-57
<b>Electricity Corporation of Nigeria</b>	Artisan grade III (Linesmen, electrical fitters and cable joiners)	23	—
<b>Fisheries Service</b>	(i) Quartermaster (course in mechanized fishing, rudiment of seamanship and ability to handle little fishing boats)	4	17
	(ii) Artisan, grade III	1	4
	(iii) Assistant technical officer	2	2
<b>Forestry</b>	Forest assistants and forest guards	36	13
<b>Information Service</b>	(i) Process engraving	2	1
	(ii) Photographers	—	1
<b>Inland Revenue</b>	(i) Assessment clerks and clerical assistants	173	81
	(ii) Assistant executive officers	11	11
	(iii) Assessment officers	12	6
	(iv) Miscellaneous officers	2	2
<b>Labour</b>	(i) Assistant labour Inspectors	—	3
	(ii) Department training courses (overseas)	1	3
<b>Land</b>	Potential land officers	—	1
<b>Marketing and Exports</b>	(i) Accountancy courses (local and overseas)	1	3
	(ii) Weighting machines superintendents	—	1
	(iii) Produce inspectors training scheme (overseas)	1	—
<b>Medical</b>	(i) Laboratory technical assistants	18	—
	(ii) Nurses and midwives	335	488
	(iii) Chemists and druggists	147	113
	(iv) Sanitary inspectors and overseers	117	43
	(v) Dispensary attendants	16	17
	(vi) Dental technicians	—	25
	(vii) Assistant physiotherapist	2	2
	(viii) X-ray technicians	3	10
<b>Meteorological Services</b>	Meteorologist observers	29	25
<b>Nigeria Magazine</b>	(i) Training in story writing	1	1
	(ii) Photographers	2	2
<b>Nigerian Ports Authority</b>	(i) Marine cadets (technical apprentices engineering)	—	29
	(ii) Apprentice craftsmen and operators	—	232
	(iii) Management cadets	—	7
	(iv) Administrative assistants	—	7
	(v) Accountants	—	6



<b>Nigerian Railway Corporation</b>	(i) Probationary traffic staff-in-training (initial course)	200	126
	(ii) Goods guards (initial course)	104	—
	(iii) Traffic assistants-in-training	5	23
	(iv) Probationary telecommunications staff-in-training	10	18
	(v) Trade apprentices (civil engineering)	—	63
	(vi) Signal apprentices (civil engineering)	—	12
	(vii) Permanent way apprentices	—	54
	(viii) Technical staff-in-training	—	26
	(ix) Trade apprentices (mechanical engineering)	67	686
	(x) Technical assistants-in-training	1	13
	(xi) Accounting assistants-in-training	3	5
	(xii) Staff assistants-in- training (administration)	—	5
	(xiii) Stores assistants-in-training	—	4
	(xiv) Junior technical staff (printing)	—	17
<b>Posts and Telegraphs</b>	(i) Aeronautical wireless operators	44	—
	(ii) Police wireless operators	25	—
	(iii) Cable jointers	52	—
	(iv) Technicians subscribers apparatus maintenance	49	—
	(v) Technical officers-in-training	131	161
	(vi) Technicians teleprinter maintenance	12	—
	(vii) Workshop apprentices	29	—
	(viii) Supervising officers' course for senior technicians	43	—
	(ix) Assistant Instructors' Course	24	—
<b>Printing and Stationery</b>	(i) Compositors, machinists, and book-binders	31	118
	(ii) Typist	—	6
	(iii) Typewriters mechanics	—	19
<b>Prisons</b>	(i) Government wardens	113	31
	(ii) N.A. Wardens	—	41
<b>Public Works</b>	(i) Road overseers	58	22
	(ii) Accountant-in-training	—	1
	(iii) Civil engineering assistants	2	44
	(iv) Mechanical engineering assistant	—	11
	(v) Architecture engineering assistants	—	3
	(vi) Electrical engineering assistants	—	2

Note: N.A.—Native Authority

**POST-CIVIL WAR LABOR UNION EDUCATION**

The first decade of postcolonial Nigeria has been rightly described as the era of dilemmas and unsettling for labor organizations in Nigeria.<sup>37</sup> The new polity, Nigeria, was engulfed in political crises, which could be attributed to, among other factors, the unperfected union of many ethnic groups. There was no tangible effort on labor union education during the civil war era (1967–1970). Rather, labor leaders in the Eastern Region (the short-lived Biafra Republic) complicated matters by forming the Biafran Trade Union Confederation (BTUC) a few months after the May 30, 1967, secession from the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Benjamin Udokpora, formerly on the executive board of Nigerian United Labour Congress, became Ojukwu's labor adviser. Although there was unity on the part of labor leaders outside the Eastern Region throughout the war period—supporting the federal government against Biafran secession—they failed in their attempts to centralize the labor unions.<sup>38</sup> Concerning labor union education, efforts were geared toward Nigeria remaining a unified entity as perfected in 1914 by Lord Lugard. The post-civil war period, however, marked another phase in the narrative of labor education in Nigeria. This was the era of more concretized efforts toward credentialed and structured labor education in traditional institutions of higher learning, or a labor education institute of the same status. It was also an era of continuity in the sense that workplace training, and weekly and seasonal workshops continued to dominate workers' education in both the public and the private sectors.

Perhaps the first major effort by the Gowon administration was the promulgation of the Industrial Training Fund in 1971. Under Decree No. 47 of 1971, both employers and employees were mandated to contribute into a profit-yielding bank for the purpose of workers' training and development. Training and retraining of workers was central to the rehabilitation and reconstruction of a post-civil war Nigeria. The military government under General Yakubu Gowon enacted the decree to jumpstart and rejuvenate interest in labor matters. The federal government was mandated to give an annual subvention to the fund, while employees contribute 2 percent of their annual payroll to it. Furthermore, employers with at least 25 workers were mandated to enroll and contribute accordingly.

Labor union education seemed to continue to occupy a significant position in government affairs despite a military coup d'état in 1975. Although it ousted Gowon from the helm of affairs, the Murtala administration that came to power continued the legacy of ensuring "sound"

labor education throughout Nigeria. Hence, in the Third National Development Plan, 1975–1980, the administrations of General Murtala Ramat Muhammed and, later, Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo were concerned about labor education and the growing leftist group domination of labor unions. To its credit, the military government, like the Balewa nationalists' government in 1954, which had banned the employment of communists, banned leftist labor leaders from engaging in labor education and participation in labor matters, including the planned transition to civilian rule in 1979. It also created a unified labor union throughout the country as well as a centralized labor training institution for all. However, it took two decades before a centralized institute for labor education became effective and operational.

Another important aspect of the Third National Development Plan (1975–1980) was the military government takeover of centers of labor training established during the colonial era and the period before the civil war. The military government's effort in this regard seems commendable in view of its ability to bridge the gap between the leftist Patrice Lumumba Labour Institute (named in honor of the late president of the Congo) and the dominant Balewa administration–sponsored pro-Western labor training center called Trade Union Institute for Economic and Social Development. Thus, it took a military fiat via decrees and the promulgation of the Third National Development Plan to bring to end the over four decades' rivalry between the NTUC and the United Labour Congress of Nigeria (ULCN).

I should note that the civilian administration that took over in 1979 under Alhaji Shehu Usman Shagari continued with the proposition for a unified training institution for workers and thus it laid the foundation stone of the institute at Ilorin on May 4, 1983. Unfortunately, the military coup that sacked Shagari's government stalled the completion of the institute's building. However, the faith in the idea of setting up a labor institute continued despite a series of military coups in 1983 and 1985. Under General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida, military Decree No. 5 of 1986 was promulgated with emphasis on sustaining and establishing a unified labor-training center—the Nigerian Institute for Labour Studies (NILS). The institute was categorized as a statutory body under the new federal Ministry of Employment, Labour, and Productivity. The administration modified some aspects of the proposed institute under Act Cap 261 of the Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 1990. The act replaced Decree No. 5 of 1986 and permanently changed the name of the institute.<sup>39</sup> On May 1, 1992, the NILS was renamed the Michael Imoudu National Institute for Labour Studies (MINILS) in honor of the late labor leader Pa Michael Imoudu.

The institute's statute contextualized its tripartite nature. For the first time, the government, employers, and workers synergized labor education. The MINILS became the focal point for excellence in labor education in Nigeria henceforth under the headship of a tenured director general who was appointed to oversee both academic and other matters concerning the institute. Thus, the institute still now is involved in several activities in the areas of training, research, education, publication, and consultancy. It also undertakes extensive initiatives aimed at building the capacity of workers and their union, promoting exchange between industrial relations parties in the interest of industrial harmony, developing international linkages to encourage best practices and global solidarity, and advancing the frontiers of knowledge on labor matters.<sup>40</sup>

The question then arises, what are the objectives of the institute? To answer this, I turn to Section 2 of the 1986 Decree. Accordingly, the institute's objectives are as follows:

1. To provide workers' education generally so as to enhance the role of trade unions in the social and economic development of the country and equip trade union officials and managers with skills normally required for collective bargaining and joint consultation in fostering the growth of better Labour and management relations;
2. To provide opportunities for policy makers in the field of Labour and social policy in industry, in the trade unions and in government to acquire by personal experience a full understanding of the issues which confront them in their day-to-day work;
3. To provide and arrange comparative study and investigation of the principles and techniques of trade unionism and thereby assist Government in evolving a virile and well-organized trade union trade union movement capable of giving full and responsible expression to the needs of workers and the aspirations of the country;
4. To undertake, organize and facilitate study course, conferences, lectures, seminars and the like with a view to improving the standard of the trade union administration and infusing a sense of direction and accountability;
5. To promote research through collaboration with universities and Institute concerned with industrial relations and Labour matters;
6. To award grants, scholarships of travel fellowships for research in Labour studies and allied subjects;
7. To undertake and provide for publication of journals, research papers and books in furtherance of the aforesaid objectives; and,

8. We undertake, organize and facilitate study courses, conferences, lectures, seminars and research through collaboration with Universities and Institutes concerned with Socio-Economic issues; with a view to strengthening tripartite relationship and social dialogue in the workplace.<sup>41</sup>

The vision and mission of the institute elaborate on its history and its future. Its vision has been—and today still is—to be a regional center of excellence in labor studies and a globally renowned labor institution. As for its mission, the institute aspires to build the capacity of workers, employers, and government officials in labor and industrial relations through training, research, education, and interinstitutional linkages. Its ultimate goal is to promote labor–management relations, best practices, and industrial harmony for sustainable development. There is no doubt about a sense of history playing a dominant role in the outlined vision and mission of the institute. After over 60 years, the stakeholders in labor matters seem to have realized the best recipe for “sound industrial relations” based on nonideological education and a tripartite effort of government, employers, and workers.<sup>42</sup> The institute employed experts and professionals as faculty, and seasoned labor experts have been on its board and directorship. To actualize its goal of education for workers, the institute organized workshops on collective bargaining, including short- and long-term courses on base and several correspondence courses. It created a certificate and diploma degree course to further its image and improve workers’ ability to use training for promotion and receive other benefits from their employers. As Olanrewaju notes, “The Diploma programme is specially packaged to enable professionals in Labour and Industrial Relations to update their knowledge and skills in response to emerging challenges and opportunities in an ever-changing global economy.”<sup>43</sup> In addition, a regularly scheduled stakeholders’ forum has become part of the institute’s activities. The summit is a forum where all stakeholders of MINILS—namely, labor, government, employers, and academia—meet to review the state of the MINILS project, and brainstorm and proffer solutions and suggestions about “sound industrial relations,” the program, problems, and challenges of the institute.

#### **MINILS AND THE STANDARD FOR LABOR EDUCATION IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA**

In order to be relevant and internationally recognized, the institute has set an academic standard for training and accreditation of its programs.

In an age when certificate, diploma, and degree programs' end purpose is to help achieve a higher level and promotion, it becomes relevant for the institute to ensure its credibility through a standard academic requirement. In this regard, efforts were made to put into consideration prior knowledge and experience of workers as part of the requirement for a certificate or diploma course. The local general education requirement for postsecondary education also influenced the institute's requirement for admission into its diploma program. Below is a sample published MINILS requirement for admission:

*Diploma Programme*

*Admission Requirements*

The DILR programme shall admit applicants with the following educational qualifications:

Holders of Senior Secondary Certificate (SSC), WASC or GCE'O' level with four credits, including at least a Pass in English Language plus at least two years working experience;

Holders of Teachers' Grade II Certificate merit/credit including at least a pass in English Language plus at least two years working experience;

Holders of Certificate in Trade Unionism and Industrial Relations (Plus at least three years working experience);

Candidates with at least ten years relevant working experience, who can satisfy the Institute that they will profit from the programme, but have lower educational qualifications, will also be considered.

*Duration:* Two years (Low Residence)

*Mode:* Distance learning-Correspondence, e-learning.

*Programme Objectives:* In this era of globalization and tremendous change occasioned by rapid development in ICT, the programme will among others:

- Acquaint students with the rudiments of industrial relations practice.
- Equip them with necessary skills to apply basic Labour Management principles in their day-to-day activities.
- Introduce them to the world of ICT in order to function effectively in this time of rapid change. They would be grounded in basic knowledge of Trade Unionism and Industrial Relations.<sup>44</sup>

The course content and methodology also reflect the idea of a broadened education for workers and those who would assume positions of labor officials in government and private sector. The pedagogy and

methodology of content delivery also fits into modern trend in colleges and universities worldwide. The institute's published course content and methodology for academic year 2010 captures this view:

Course Content:

General studies History of Nigerian Trade Union Movement.  
 Industrial Relations: Principles and Theories  
 Collective Bargaining  
 Industrial Disputes and Conflict Management  
 Introduction to Computer Appreciation  
 Trade Union Organization and Administration  
 Labour Administration  
 Leadership Style and Management System  
 Research Project  
 Labour Economics and National Development  
 Labour Laws and Employment Regulations  
 Human Resources-Management

Methodology:

Correspondence  
 E-learning  
 Lectures  
 Examination of decided cases (Case Studies)  
 Syndicate discussions<sup>45</sup>

### **THE NIGERIA LABOUR CONGRESS (NLC) AND LABOR UNION EDUCATION**

As stated earlier, the postcolonial government in Nigeria under the civilian administration of Balewa worked closely on labor matters with international organizations, particularly the ILO. As the first permanent secretary at the Ministry of Labour, Francis Nwokedi aligned with the Borha-led NTUC to formulate strategies to continue preindependence achievements. The NLC, like the NTUC, continued the policy of seeking international support for its programs, emphasizing labor union education as the most significant. The other dimension, unlike before, was the need to empower women workers in the predominantly male unions and workforce and it in the area of providing education for its women members.

In 1988, two NLC education officers participated at ILO conference at the International Training Centre in Turin, Italy. It was here that they explored, with their Botswana and Lesotho counterparts, strategies for an inclusive labor education for women members and for increasing women participation in labor unionism. For Nigeria (and this could also be true of other former colonies), this was a break from the era of patriarchy that had become the norm in labor unionism. In April 1989, with the financial support of the ILO, the NLC began the Nigerian Labour Congress Women's Education Programme.<sup>46</sup> Four goals were set to dismantle the paternalistic nature of the NLC and bring about women's empowerment. These are as follows:

- To increase women's involvement in trade unions through education and enlightenment;
- To focus greater attention on the special problems of women, e.g., childcare facilities for working mothers, maternity benefits, and through positive encouragement, to enable them to attain the highest leadership positions in the trade union structure;
- To educate union membership on the conditions of women in society; and,
- To strengthen the trade union movement through the active participation and involvement of the entire membership in union activities.<sup>47</sup>

In order to realize these goals, a two-week workshop devoted to developing educational material for teaching about women in the labor force was organized in 1991. Moreover, early in 1992, the NLC published a 95-page *Women's Education Handbook*, which has remained a guiding text for women's labor union education at NLC training centers nationwide.<sup>48</sup>

In addition, as a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations and the Commonwealth Trade Union Council (CTUC), the NLC collaborated with the CTUC in the area of women's education. One of the first major collaborations was after the April 1989 initiation of the ILO-sponsored program on women's labor education. In November of 1989, a two-week workshop was organized with a focus on "women and trade union education." The following year, a five-day review workshop was organized to evaluate success and challenges, and steps that could be taken for the future. Lastly, in June 1991 a weeklong workshop was organized by the NLC and the CTUC for labor education officers. The focus was on how to synergize methods and pedagogy for teaching the content to women candidates at the labor education centers in the country. Simply put, the "modular system" of the ILO and the "active learning method"



of the CTUC were the foci reference of dialogue among attendees. The guiding principle was inclusive education for all and the acceptance of both methods for teaching the content and actualizing learners' (women) effectiveness. The effect of labor education for women members continues today. Throughout Nigeria, women's wings continue to increase awareness among women workers and to discontinue the paternalistic nature of the unions throughout the country.

Although Nigeria's federal government was able to unify all unions under the NLC, it was unable to prevent NLC from setting up its own institution for labor education. A few members of the leadership of the new NLC remained leftist in their ideological orientation and continued to mentor a greater number of the affiliate unions and members in leftist ideological philosophy. Workers and the government continued to be in opposition most of the time. On labor union education, the NLC set forth its policy and pursued an independent education program for its members. Such efforts only complicated and created continuous rivalry between the federal government institute at Ilorin and NLC training centers in Abuja and Lagos.

The policy of the NLC on labor union education has cut across all levels of its membership. From the lower-level worker to the management level, the policy has aimed at building political awareness among its members. The stated purpose is to "attain social change that deepens democracy and build a more equal society."<sup>49</sup> The NLC's aim is to "prepare unions to adapt to new challenges; provide workers with leadership training for trade union and societal responsibilities; and promote internal democracy, transparency and accountability within union structures."<sup>50</sup> The policy paper focused on the cost-efficiency and funding, gender with emphasis on women union members, methodology and pedagogy of training, and state and national leadership education projects.

In order to sustain its education programs, the NLC has encouraged a strong commitment on the part of its affiliate unions. To ensure sufficient funding for education, unions were encouraged to set aside at least 10 percent of their annual budget for member education. To close the gender disparity, a fair amount was suggested to be designated for women members. There was effort at education endowment where funds could be raised continuously for the NLC's education program. It is on the issue of how best to train workers that the policy papers do make a lot of sense to the ordinary citizen. The philosophy is to ensure that the learning process is inclusive and student centered, the pedagogy being "active learning method, brain storming, group work/discussion, case study, plenary sessions, role play, and lecture."<sup>51</sup> The policy on state

and national leadership education projects is aimed at helping affiliates throughout the federation to model NLC programs, thereby building their own state-level labor education. The national leadership education project is aimed at giving leadership an opportunity to reflect on key policy and organizational issues concerning labor union education nationwide.

As of 2010, the NLC has succeeded in most of its policy pronouncement relating to labor union education. It has established three levels of educational programs:

- Two National Schools: The school operates the traditional Harmattan and Rain semester system. It focuses on organization, leadership, and gender during the Harmattan semester, while emphasizing organizers, educators, and leadership during the Rain semester.
- State-level Schools: This is a continuous program throughout the federation including the capital territory, Abuja. It is usually a one-session ten-week program with only 30 participants of which 30 percent must be female. It is aimed at members in their middle-level “shop stewards.”<sup>52</sup>
- Accredited Certificate Course in Labor Law and Labor Relation: The NLC collaborated with the University of Jos to organize an extensive three-month program that begins in September and ends in December. The enrollment is limited to 30 participants drawn from its affiliates throughout the federation.

Despite the successes and benefits of the program, the NLC still faces some challenges. These challenges include low women participation, poor facilities, inadequate reference and teaching materials, and inadequate financial resources. Perhaps the greatest challenge to the NLC is its inability to replace the growing number of youth with workers that retired or about to retire.

Creating a labor union education free of government interference, as leftists dominated central unions before it, has remained one of its mottoes. It continues to promote the acquisition of skills, socialization and interaction of unions, sharing of ideas and experiences, and solidarity and networking among members throughout the country and beyond.

## **CONCLUSION**

This chapter has presented the history of labor union education in Nigeria emphasizing continued government interest, international dimensions, and continued marginalization of the leftists. It fills the voids in previous studies on labor union politics in Nigeria. It ties labor union education

with general postcolonial nation building and developmental efforts. This chapter transcends existing scholarship by bringing to the fore postcolonial efforts to establish a nationwide institute for labor education, and the tripartite efforts at bringing Nigeria's labor union education institute in par with similar institutions worldwide. Yet, the division between the mainstream labor organizations (the NLC and the ULC) and the government continues in conceptualization and curriculum.

## **A P P E N D I X   A**

# **THE INDUSTRIAL FUND, 1971**

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

This policy statement is the first revised training policy document of the Industrial Training Fund (ITF). (It should be read in conjunction with other extant documents of the Fund like the enabling ACT and other operational guidelines.)

### **TRAINING POLICY**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

The Industrial Training Fund (ITF) was set up under Act No. 47 of 1971 (as amended up to date) to promote and encourage the “acquisition of skills in industry and commerce with a view to generating a pool of indigenous trained manpower sufficient to meet the needs of the economy.” To finance the scheme the Act provides for contributions on the part of employers and for subventions on the part of the Federal Government. The Federal Government made available the sum of N1,000,000 (500,000) during the Plan Period 1970-74 as takeoff grant.

The Governing Council of the Fund decided that part of the contributions by employers will be disbursed for the development and support of training programmes. Consequently, the Fund will bear part of the cost incurred by employers in training their employees by reimbursing part of the cost incurred for courses undertaken. Employers should note, however, that training reimbursement is only a part of the return they can receive from the Fund. Other returns include the general availability

of trained and mobile manpower throughout the economy, the prompt attention and guidance of the training advisers of the Fund, and the access to the wealth of information and expertise which the Fund has built up over the years.

## 2.0 The Governing Council of the Fund

A Governing Council of thirteen members drawn from the public and private sectors will be appointed by the Federal Government to manage the Fund. This is to reflect the cooperative spirit of the enterprise, the need for private employers, organized labour, and the providers and users of training to cooperate in identifying training needs and devising training policy and system. The thirteen-member Governing Council of the Fund shall comprise of the following:

- (a) The Chairman;
- (b) The Director-General;
- (c) One representative each from the following Federal Ministries:
  - 1. Industries;
  - 2. Employment, Labour and Productivity;
  - 3. Education.
- (d) One representative of the Ministry of Budget and Planning;
- (e) One representative of the National (Nigerian) Employers Consultative Association;
- (f) One representative of the National (Nigerian) Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture;
- (g) One representative of the Nigerian Labour Congress;
- (h) One representative of the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria;
- (i) One person with extensive knowledge of and close association with industrial training; and
- (j) two persons who shall not come from the same state, to represent the State in rotation for two years at a time.

## 3.0 The System

### 3.1 The Support Machinery for Training

The Fund will support training in several ways, including

- 3.1.1 bearing a proportion of the direct costs incurred by employers in human capital development and performance improvement, focusing on current trends.

- 3.1.2 assisting and/or strengthening training capability and facilities throughout the country; as it relates to the application of information and communication technology in training
- 3.1.3 directly building up training facilities of its own; with emphasis on information communication technology
- 3.1.4 organizing research and studies into training as a support to other activities of the Fund.
- 3.1.5 publishing training guides and manuals.
- 3.1.6 giving ex-gratia awards

### 3.2 Direct Training Costs

The Fund will reimburse part of the cost involved in on-the-job and off-the-job training of Nigerian workers undergoing approved training courses. An "approved training course" is a course so defined by the Training and Research Committee of the Fund after satisfying itself that the course content and curriculum meet the requirement and standard set by the Committee through syllabuses, etc.

Prescribed forms for individual courses will be completed and submitted by employers sponsoring their employees in respect of courses for which they intend to seek the reimbursement from the Industrial Training Fund.

### 3.3 Training Procedures

As the larger part of training under the auspices of the Fund will be of an in-service nature, the role of employers in determining the training needs in the workforce is considered crucial. Employers will continue, to a considerable extent, determine the training needs of individual employees and the relevance of such training to the work process in the establishment. The Governing Council of the Fund will, however, for those courses attracting its support, ensure that the needs for specific training exists, that training standards are maintained, that the course content is relevant to the needs of the industry and the economy, and that in certain cases the programme, syllabus, curriculum approved by the Council or its Training and Research Committee, are met. Employers will be encouraged to adopt systems approach to training as major training delivery strategy.

### 3.4 Assessment of Training Requirements

The involvement of employers in deciding training requirements will ensure that training is purposive and that most trainees take up or return to jobs immediately after training. The Fund,

however, retains its responsibility to ensure that training carried out with its approval is decided on the basis of identifiable needs in the economy generally. For this purpose, the Fund will set up unit(s) which will collaborate and liaise with other relevant organizations in identifying training needs in the economy. At the national level, it will be necessary that training is so rationalized as to ensure that the training effort does not by itself accentuate unemployment problems.

### 3.5 Training Content and Standards

The Fund will seek to evolve flexible training systems suitable to the needs of the Nigerian economy. Under the guidance of the Training and Research Committee and its subcommittees, curricula and syllabuses will be built up for the use of employers and trainers. For this purpose, the Fund will have a specialist unit charged with the responsibility of researching into training techniques and methodology, their adaptation to local conditions, and the evolution of relevant training techniques, methodology, curriculum and syllabus for wide or specific use in industry and commerce. Therefore the unit will put in place a skills training standard. Ultimately, compliance with the training recommendations and standards of the Fund will be a condition attracting the approval and reimbursement of the Fund.

### 3.6 Training Aids

The Fund will embark on a continuing programme of research and development of training aids and will assist employers and trainers by making available the result of such research. To effectively improve the quality and volume of training for skills, the role of the Fund will be interpreted in terms of developing training infrastructure and strategy, backed by intensive research and the introduction of innovations for accelerated training. Jobs will be analyzed, syllabuses and curricula built up, and training manual and aids prepared.

### 3.7 Selection of Trainees

It has been indicated earlier that employers have a crucial role in determining the areas of in-service training and selecting the individual workers for such training. The duty of the Governing Council of the Fund to set standards for training courses that will attract approval and reimbursement of the Fund implies, however, that the number, status, grade or pre-training qualification of trainees, are set or approved by the Fund. For certain courses, the Fund will establish minimum standards to ensure

that trainees under the Fund are trainable and are being trained with an eye on job suitability.

In certain circumstances, the Fund will sponsor the training of persons not yet in employment. These cases include where the anticipation of new industries calls for training in new technology or where the training facilities within industry are not adequate for training needs in the short term. In such circumstances, the Fund will ensure that training has an employment objective. Candidates selected for such training will normally meet the minimum requirements set by the Fund.

To support the selection process, the Fund may encourage the development of counseling and guidance services and aptitude testing.

### 3.8 Trainers

One of the critical requirements for the massive training effort of the Fund is the availability of Human Resources Development Personnel. The Fund will embark on a programme of training trainers who will be direct employees of the Fund. At the same time, the Fund will encourage employers to appoint direct full-time training officers/instructors. For establishments having approved training centres or in-plant training facilities, the Fund may contribute to the cost of hiring trainers and instructors.

The Fund will encourage the growth of training consciousness by improving the status of trainers and instructors, supporting the development of training and development institutions and by organizing conference or seminars of stakeholders for the purpose of exchanging views on developments on the training scene.

### 3.9 Grants

As part of the Fund's mandate towards the promotion and encouragement of the acquisition of skills in industry and commerce, the Fund may give ex-gratia awards to employers who have contributed immensely to Human Capital development in the Nigerian economy. The criteria for ex-gratia awards will be determined by the Fund's management.

## 4.0 Training Centres and Facilities

### 4.1 Industrial Training Fund Centers

The rapid growth of technology in the world today has brought about a significant new dimension to the provisions for training the workforce be it internationally or locally. This dimension is the pressing need for efficiency as well as effectiveness in order



to reduce costs and raise the standards of training to promote remunerative employment at national levels.

The Fund therefore, instead of just supporting training, will directly set up and run its own training centres for the training and upgrading the skills of employees selected from among the nominees of employers or from the open selection process of the Fund. Nominal fees will be charged.

#### 4.2 Employer-Owned Training Centres

The Fund has a responsibility to help develop and strengthen training centres within establishments. This is with the view to meeting the challenges of our times which lie in the application of a systematic approach to training that embraces all the desirable elements of success. In this connection, a selective policy will be adopted to ensure that such support goes to credible or approved centres. Accordingly, the strategy of the Fund to training centres by employers will be as follows:

##### 4.2.1 In-Company Training Programmes

For each employer in this category owning and running programmes within the establishment, the Fund's training officers will liaise with the company's training officer, and such companies will be required to:

- (a) prepare for the prior approval of the Fund the annual training programmes within the training Centres;
- (b) prepare for the approval of the Fund the financial estimate of the training programmes;
- (c) direct and supervise the training programmes approved by the Fund;
- (d) be accountable to the Fund for the achievement of training targets under the programmes;
- (e) ensure that funds made available for training are properly utilized to meet the objectives of the Fund.

Only claims based on approved training programmes will be entertained.

##### 4.2.2 Trade-Group Training Programmes

To encourage greater involvement of employers, particularly small employers in the organization and direction of training, the Fund will encourage the establishment of training centers by groups of employers in certain areas of economic activity. In such cases, the groups will enter into Group Training programme agreements with the Fund playing supervisory and coordinating role.

Training programmes for the Centres as well as estimates of training costs should be submitted for approval to the Fund three months before the beginning of each accounting/training year of the Fund. The Centre should be at all times open to the inspection and supervision of the Fund's officials.

#### 4.3.0 Formal Training Institutions

The Fund will seek to harmonize its training efforts and support in collaboration with the activities of these training institutions and as well utilize their facilities for sandwich courses, etc. The training of craftsmen through apprenticeship schemes and other less expensive and less formal systems will also be carried out in collaboration with formal training institutions.

#### 4.3.1 Siwes Operation

SIWES operation should be fully funded by the Federal Government. This will include the payment of all allowances and the funding of the administrative support services, infrastructure and equipment.

### 5.0 General Conditions for Granting Training Reimbursements

Training Reimbursement may only be made if the following conditions are satisfied:

- (i) Claims for training reimbursement may only be entertained after a company has incurred the cost in question. Authenticated training expenses records must be presented in respect of internal or in-plant training programmes.
- (ii) Claims may only be made on the prescribed forms issued by the Fund and are payable to contributing employers not employees.
- (iii) ITF approval documents for all courses for which claims are made must accompany the claim forms submitted to the Fund. For on-the-job training, prior approval of the training programmes by the Fund is also a basic requirement for consideration of claims for reimbursements.
- (iv) The relevance of the training for which a claim is made to the needs of the trainees and of the firm and the cost-economy and effectiveness of the training are basic conditions for the payment of training reimbursement. Each training programmes will be based on identified training needs.

- (v) For areas of training and further education where the Fund has approved and published training recommendations, compliance with such recommendations, which will allow sufficient flexibility and adaptability, will be a condition for training reimbursement approval. Equally, for on beginning of each accounting/training year of the Fund. The Centre should be at all times open to the inspection and supervision of the Fund's officials.

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- (v) For areas of training and further education where the Fund has approved and published training recommendations, compliance with such recommendations, which will allow sufficient flexibility and adaptability, will be a condition for training reimbursement approval. Equally, for on-the-job training, compliance with the programme as approved or modified by the Fund will be a condition for training reimbursement.

#### 6.0 Management and Supervisory Training

The Industrial Training Fund will collaborate with relevant Government agencies in policy-formulation and the coordination of the various management and supervisory training efforts to ensure the relevance of courses to needs, that courses are not duplicated, and are provided economically.

For the purpose of a management-training reimbursement, a "manager" is described as an employee whose responsibilities include setting objectives, organization and planning, implementing policy decisions, and the general direction of operations for the company, or a division of the company.

Supervisors are distinguished from administrative managers by their responsibility for actual overseeing, inspection and direction in the area of operation. They include second-line supervisors (e.g., foremen) who direct the supervisory link and are immediately below management (e.g., assistant foremen and charge-hands) and working supervisors who combine supervisory duties with operative duties and have limited formal authority. The supervisor is concerned with the quality, quantity and cost-effectiveness of the product or service.

The Fund will not consider training claims for participation at meetings dealing with a company's plans and operations such as Director/Managers trips, holidays, etc. Training reimbursement will only relate to exercises with specific training relevance.

#### 7.0 Professionals, Technologists and Other Specialists

Training reimbursement may be made for this category of employees for following purpose:

- (i) Post-qualification internship;
- (ii) Sandwich Courses; and
- (iii) Block or Day-Release Courses leading to membership of recognized professional bodies.

## 8.0 Crafts Apprenticeship Courses

Apprenticeship is described as training for occupations in the category of skilled crafts and trades requiring a wide and diverse range of skills, knowledge, experience and independent judgment. The programmes consist of on-the-job training and work experience with related instructions in the theoretical aspects of the job. A basic assumption in an apprenticeship scheme is that the skill of the apprentice on the job improves steadily during the period of well-programmed training and his productivity pays for part of all the cost of training. The Fund takes account of this progression in determining training reimbursement levels to employers sponsoring apprenticeship schemes.

The following conditions are required before training reimbursement claims are considered for an apprenticeship:

- (i) The trainee should not be less than sixteen years of age.
- (ii) The trainee must have certified proof of literacy.
- (iii) There must be an approved scheduled of work processes and organized instruction design on which the trainee is to receive training and experience on the job. The Fund provides apprenticeship manual on which employers may flexibly base training.
- (iv) The employer must adopt an increasing schedule of wages for apprentices as the apprenticeship progresses.
- (v) An agreement between the employer and apprentice must be entered into and a copy deposited with the Fund. The Fund has a draft agreement for general use. Employers could adopt these agreements with or without modifications. An agreement should include the following among others: period of apprenticeship, wage schedule, length of probationary period, credits from previous training or trade experience, and the signature of the employer and apprentice. The first three months of apprenticeship are regarded as a probationary period by the Fund; a trainee's continuation on apprenticeship after this period will depend on a satisfactory report of performance during the period of probation.
- (vi) Proper records must be maintained on the programme.
- (vii) The training period should aim at the standard or qualification approved or set by the Fund.

The Fund will provide certificates to trainees on the satisfactory completion of an apprenticeship programme recognized and approved by the Fund.

### 9.0 Operative and Narrow-Skilled Workers

The Fund will consider training claims for the approved training of operatives and narrow-skilled workers.

### 10.0 Training of Training Staff

The Fund places great emphasis on the training of company training officers/instructors. A training officer assists management in identifying training needs and formulating and implementing training programmes to meet these needs. A training officer is engaged full-time in training workers on an organized programme of training—on- or off-the- job. Informal instruction as part of normal operational work is not regarded as constituting training for this definition. In recognition that certain small-sized firms cannot employ full-time trainers, the Fund may consider training claims in respect of employees who spend only part of their time on training duties.

Training reimbursement for the training of training staff are for training in

- (i) the administration of training activity and/or
- (ii) training techniques/methods. Reimbursement can only be claimed if the training programme had been submitted to and approved by the Fund prior to the start of training.

### 11.0 Safety Training

Safety training includes training aimed at preventing industrial accidents or training in first-aid/and or fire-prevention. Training reimbursement is considered for such training.

### 12.0 Information and Communication Technology

In today's globalised economy where information and communication technology (ICT) is significant, greater emphasis should be given by employers to the use of ICT; therefore the Fund shall encourage employers to pay adequate attention to ICT training as relevant to their operation.

### 13.0 Training in Other Areas

Applications for any other areas not listed above may be made to the Fund by employers in circumstances where they consider that training claims are valid. Such claims will be considered on their merit.

### 14.0 On-The-Job Training

Generally in on-the-job training, the following conditions should be met:

- (a) The training takes place in the job environment in which the trainee will work at the end of his training;

- (b) The trainee works with equipment and materials which he will use at the completion of training;
- (c) The job procedures are the same as will obtain after training.

As on-the-job training may vary from an extremely structured to a very unstructured or informal training system, the Fund requires that all on-the-job training programmes on which training reimbursement may be made should be cleared with and approved by the Fund prior to the start of training. The Fund will ensure that programmes have definite training objectives and are formulated on the basis of an analysis of the job in question. The analysis should include a breakdown of the job into processes and steps for specific tasks, and establish evaluation methods for measuring the progress of trainees.

The Fund recognizes that, because of the variations in actual personnel and training situations, small- and medium-sized firms are more likely to rely on on-the-job training than large-sized firms. Accordingly, for on-the-job training, the reimbursement system approved by the Fund recognizes this fact.

The general conditions for training reimbursement are:

- (i) that the training programme is cleared and approved by the Fund prior to the start of training;
- (ii) that the Fund is satisfied that the instructors to implement the programme are competent to instruct;
- (iii) that training for which claim is made must cover a whole working day or series of working days not necessarily consecutive. In exceptional cases, the Fund may accept training carried out in series of sessions of less than a whole-day's duration for which purpose a total of eight hours will make up a day. In cases where training runs concurrently or is sandwiched between normal operations, the Fund has the discretion to decide what proportion of the total time spent is attributable to actual training. The Fund shall from time to time monitor the implementation of the in-company training programmes.

#### 15.0 Overseas Courses

The programme for an overseas course for which reimbursement may be made must be approved by the Fund before training is undertaken.

Programmes for overseas training stating venue, syllabus, objectives, level of participants, period of course, course

sponsors, source of financial support, if any, course fees and other expenses, should accompany application seeking Fund's approval. At the end of the course, it will be the obligation of the employer to attach to his claim for training reimbursement all the necessary supporting documents.

#### 16.0 Industrial Experience for Students

Great emphasis will be placed on assisting certain products of postsecondary school system to adopt or orientate easily to their possible post-graduation job environment. The Fund will seek to work out a cooperative machinery with stakeholders whereby students in institutions of higher learning may receive training in industry or commerce compatible with their area of study.

The Fund will provide administrative support services, while the Federal Government will contribute the necessary Funds for the operation of the scheme.

#### 17.0 Conclusion

The Governing Council of the Fund has directed that the foregoing statement be issued for the guidance of employers without prejudice to any review of policy that may be necessary from time to time.



## APPENDIX B

# NLC LABOUR/ EDUCATION POLICY DOCUMENT, 2000

### **NIGERIA LABOUR CONGRESS (NLC)**

#### GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- 1.1 NLC Education must seek to build political awareness among the working class and must be geared to attain social change that deepens democracy and build a more equal society.
- 1.2 NLC Education programmes must prepare unions to adapt to new challenges. It must in addition be a tool to build organisational capacity and a way of mobilising members.
- 1.3 NLC education programmes must provide workers with leadership training for trade union and societal responsibilities.
- 1.4 Education should promote internal democracy, transparency and accountability within union structures. Education events should be a forum in which members could freely express their opinions.

#### *Affiliate Union Structures:*

- 1.5 Affiliate unions must be encouraged to show a strong commitment to union education, provide a budget, staffing and clear structures to develop and implement educational programmes. Funding and Cost-Efficiency:
- 1.6 NLC affiliates must strive to run education programs, which are sustainable financially and organisationally. In order to realise cost-effectiveness in the funding of education, unions must use their own facilities as well as those available in friendly institutions.

- 1.7 To ensure sufficient funding for education, unions should be encouraged to set aside at least 10% of the unions budget for education annually.
- 1.8 Some percentage of resources will be committed to women's education, which will take into account the ratio of men to women.
- 1.9 The NLC education endowment fund will be re-launch.
- 1.10 All educational programmes of NLC will be jointly funded with the affiliates.

*Women and Gender:*

- 1.11 Gender issues should be integrated in all educational programmes and activities.
- 1.12 Exclusive education programmes must be provided for women members.
- 1.13 Women should make up at least 30% of participants in all non-women exclusive education activities Methodology.
- 1.14 Education courses should be designed so that the learning process is centred on the experience of the learner as an important source of information and knowledge. Active learning methods should be encouraged.

*Education Networks:*

- 1.15 The NLC will promote the development of a network of educators within the union nationally and internationally.

*Evaluation:*

- 1.16 There must be a process of regular evaluation of education programmes by the Educators Forum and reported to the Annual Education Conference.

**NLC: POLICY ON AFFILIATE EDUCATION STRUCTURES**

- 3.1 The NLC Educators Forum will advise and assist affiliate unions to set up appropriate internal educational structures, which should include education departments and education committee.
- 3.2 The NLC educators forum will develop a set of guidelines suggesting how NLC and its affiliate unions could set up basic democratic education structures that will allow for popular participation. These guidelines should be proposed to the NLC and its affiliates for adoption.

## POLICY ON BUILDING AFRICA WIDE AND INTERNATIONAL LINKAGES

- 4.1 The NLC Educators Forum will through the appropriate channels provide the setting up of direct with union educators particularly on the African continent for the purposes of establishing joint training courses, and sharing of education materials and experiences.

## POLICY ON A MEMBERSHIP EDUCATION PROJECT

- 5.1 The NLC Educators Forum will assist in developing and disseminating basic information to union members. This information should include issues such as the policies, structures and operation of the NLC and its affiliates, what the rights of members are, etc. The information should be presented in appropriate media such as pamphlets, posters, newsletters, information booklets, audio and videotapes.
- 5.2 NLC Educators Forum will assist affiliate unions to develop basic membership information material. These materials should include information on the policies, structures and operation of NLC and its affiliate unions as well as cover issues on the economy, the political situation and general social issues.
- 5.3 Women and youth will be targeted as an important part of union membership.
- 5.4 In implementing all of the above, the work of affiliate unions must be taken into account.
- 5.5 The NLC educators forum will explore the possibility of setting up a mass membership education campaign in the preparation for the May 1, 2001, celebrations and advise accordingly.
- 5.6 NLC education must assist and encourage members to acquire basic education skills.

## POLICY ON A SHOP STEWARDS EDUCATION PROJECT

- 6.1 The NLC educators' forum will advice on and assist in a shop stewards education project aimed at developing education programmes for worker representatives/shop stewards at the workplace level.
- 6.2 The forum should develop systematic basic education materials for the training of shop stewards.
- 6.3 The forum should train trainers/facilitators within affiliate unions who will be able to run shop stewards training courses.
- 6.4 The forum should identify and encourage the development of a delivery strategy for shop stewards training.

- 6.5 The forum should encourage a systematic approach to shop stewards' education and discourage ad-hoc approaches. The project should build on experiences of best practise in shop stewards' education.

#### POLICY ON A STATE-LEVEL LEADERSHIP EDUCATION PROJECT

- 7.1 NLC Educators Forum will advice on and assist in a project aimed at providing basic education for all SAC/SEC members and women committee members of the NLC.
- 7.2 This project should be seen as both delivering education for NLC state structures and also develop a model, which affiliate unions could use to build their own state-level leadership education projects.
- 7.3 The education programme should include the following topics in the 2000-2001 programme.

#### POLICY ON A NATIONAL-LEVEL LEADERSHIP EDUCATION PROJECT

- 8.1 National leadership of NLC as well as its affiliates requires information, education, and training to support them in their leadership of the union and in the process of policy formulation.
- 8.2 The NLC Educators Forum will advise and assist in a series of Leadership Retreats aimed at giving leadership an opportunity to reflect on key policy and organisational issues and develop their understanding and skills in these areas.
- 8.3 NLC education should prepare regular information packs for leadership comprising of publications and other documents of relevance.

#### POLICY ON A UNION MANAGEMENT AND STAFF EDUCATION PROJECT

- 9.1 Union Management refers to national senior appointed and elected officers who are responsible for decision making on issues such as administration, staff and the control of resources. While the training of union management is a specialist task, it should be located within the principles of union education.
- 9.2 The NLC educators forum will be involved in the design and monitoring of all activities on management development in NLC.
- 9.3 The forum shall identify the specific training needs of the two categories of management i.e. national full-time and elected officers and advice accordingly.

- 9.4 The forum will assist so that courses in modern financial management, information technology, democratic management practises personnel management etc. are integrated into the training programme.

#### POLICY ON A UNION ORGANISER/FIELD STAFF EDUCATION PROJECT

- 10.1 Union organiser and field staff are full-time employees who are responsible for building the structures of the union, developing strategies to resolve members problems and representing and negotiating on behalf of members. The training here is seen as being more intensive and at an advanced level as compared to other union education.
- 10.2 The NLC educators forum will advice on and assist in a systematic and intensive education and training programme for organising/field staff of the NLC and its affiliates that will help them develop both practical organisational skills as well as theoretical perspectives.
- 10.3 This programme consists of intensive national courses and shorter regionally based workshops on specific issues.
- 10.4 A research project should be initiated to develop a detailed profile of current organisers and field staff and understand what their work related needs are so that an appropriate training programme could be designed.
- 10.5 The NLC Educators forum will assist in the dissemination of regular publications to organisers and field staff to keep them informed of developments on political socio- economic and trade union issues locally and internationally.

#### POLICY ON EDUCATORS DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

- 11.1 The NLC Educators Forum will advice on and assist in an educator development project.
- 11.2 The project should be designed in such a way that it includes both classroom work as well as practice in the field.
- 11.3 At the national level at least 3 persons from each union (at least one of whom must be a woman) should be trained in the design of education materials, facilitation skills and in the planning and management of education programmes.
- 11.4 At the state level at least 4 persons from each state (at least one of whom must be a woman) should be trained in basic facilitation skills and the use of education materials.

## POLICY ON EDUCATION FUNDING

- 12.1 The NLC must make strong efforts to mobilise local funds for education.
- 12.2 The NLC will strive to ensure joint funding of educational programmes between the NLC and the affiliate unions.
- 12.3 This conference has defined a programme for NLC education. The NLC should use this programme as the basis for negotiating funding for educational activities with funders.

# NOTES

## PREFACE

1. Unlike Olufemi Taiwo in his seminal work, *How Colonialism Preempted Modernity in Africa* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2010), 1–17, I have argued, using Nigeria as a case study, that the British model of modernity in her colonies was complex, and that we cannot solely blame postcolonial problems in Nigeria, for instance, on imperfect institutions and systems created by the colonial administration. In addition, see Toyin Falola and Julius Ihonvbere (eds.) *Britain and Nigeria: Exploitation or Development?* (London: Zed Books, 1987). Bade Onimode, “Imperialism and the Multinational Corporations: A Case Study of Nigeria,” *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 2, *Nigeria: Problems of Development* (December, 1978), 207–232. Jeremiah Dibia, *Modernization and the Crisis of Development in Africa: The Nigerian Experience* (Burlington: Ashgate Publication, 2006). Toyin Falola’s *Economic Reforms and Modernization in Nigeria, 1945–1965* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 2004) did not really say anything new; neither did he make any groundbreaking analysis concerning British attempts at modernizing Nigeria. In addition, none of these works on modernization analyzes issues concerning labor union education and human resource capacity as part of the decolonization process.

## CHAPTER 1

1. BNA FO 1110/1231: Revised draft—Communist “Front” Organisations in Africa: Western Policy, 3.
2. In Nigeria, leftists were divided on tactics and strategies that are best for actualizing their goal. The Eze group believed in joining a mainstream nationalist party like Azikiwe’s National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC). On the other hand, the Ikoku group opposed such an idea, and preferred to serve as the intellectual reservoir and mentors of union members and leaders. Their preference was a labor party with a sustained leftist philosophy.
3. For various attempts in Nigeria, see chapters 4 through 8 for details.
4. A scholarly work by George Lichtblau titled “The Communist Labor Offensive in Former Colonial Countries” is relevant here. See, *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (April, 1962): 376–401.
5. BNA FO 1110/1231: Communist “Front” Organisations in Africa, 108.

6. If the visitor is not placed on the colonial government's "Prohibited List," any leftist from other colonies or behind the Iron Curtain might visit. In most cases, particularly during the colonial phase discussed in this book, such "undesirable elements" are not issued visa to visit, neither was their local accomplice issued traveling passport to leave the colony. Same policy was continued during the first decade after independence.
7. BNA FO 1110/1231: Communist "Fronts" Organisations, 108–109.
8. *Ibid.*
9. These "front organizations" were instrumental to the establishment of the National Scholarships Board by Eze, Kolagbogi, and others in 1950. See, Hakeem I. Tijani, *Britain, Leftist Nationalists, and the Transfer of Power in Nigeria, 1945–1965* (New York/London: Routledge, 2005), 40–42.
10. BNA FO 1112/1231: Communist "Fronts" Organisations, 109–110.
11. She held the position for greater part of the colonial era. See, Cheryl Johnson-Odim and Nina Mba, *For Women and the Nation: Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti of Nigeria* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997).
12. BNA FO 1112/1231: Communist "Fronts," 109. For the role of African American women in international labor, see, Yvette Richards, "African and African-American Labor Leaders in the Struggle over International Affiliation," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (1998): 301–334.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Examples in Nigeria after World War II and before late 1950s were Nduka Eze, Ikenna Nzimiro, Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti, and Wahab Omorilewa Goodluck, to mention a few.
15. See, Maxim Matusevich, *No Easy Row for a Russian Hoe: Ideology and Pragmatism in Nigerian-Soviet Relations, 1960–1991* (New Jersey: Africa World Press, 2003), 80.
16. Tijani, *Britain, Leftist Nationalists*, 94–99.
17. BNA FO 1112/1231: Communist "Fronts," 102.
18. *Ibid.*
19. For details about the career of Springer, see Richards, "African and African-American Labor Leaders in the Struggle over International Affiliation," 301–334.
20. BNA FO 1112/1231: Communist "Fronts" Organisation, 102–103.
21. Yet, its role in labor union education is not fully discussed by existing scholarly works.
22. Lynn Schler perceptively identified this in her "Becoming Nigerian: African Seamen, Decolonisation, and the Nationalisation of Consciousness," *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (2011): 42–62.
23. Despite her seminal and pioneering study, Marika Sherwood did not cover the period after 1941 in her "Elder Dempster and West Africa 1891–C. 1940: The Genesis of Underdevelopment?," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (1997): 253–276. Some gaps are, however, filled by Lynn Schler in "Transnationalism and Nationalism in the



- Nigerian Seamen's Union," *African Identities*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (August, 2009): 387–398.
24. Elder Dempster Shipping Lines Limited was the largest of all shipping companies in Nigeria during this period. It is reported to have employed about 79 percent of Nigerian (West Africans generally) crewmembers compared to other shipping lines, who together employed 21 percent. Other shipping companies during the period are P. Henderson & Co (represented locally by Elder Dempster Agencies Limited), Palm Line Limited, and the Guinea Gulf Line Limited. In late 1959, the newly formed Nigerian National Line Limited was created as part the "Africanization" process.
  25. Peter Turnbull, *Social Dialogue in the Process of Structural Adjustment and Private Sector Participation in Ports: A Practical Guidance Manual* (Geneva: International Labour Organization, 2006) was only concerned with the Nigerian military government's merger of shipping and maritime sector's union in 1996 as a result of the economic downturn and request from the International Monetary Fund.
  26. Tijani, *Britain, Leftist Nationalists*; Martin Lynn, *Nigeria, Volumes 1 & 2: British Documents on the End of Empire Series* (London: HMSO, 2001); Ehiedu G. Iweriebor, *Radical Politics in Nigeria, 1945–1950: The Significance of the Zikist Movement* (Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University Press, 1996); Fredrick Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in French and British Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
  27. These are located at Kew Gardens (London), Holloway (North London), Warwick (Coventry), College Park (Maryland), and Ibadan (Nigeria) respectively. An article in *Ilorin Journal of History*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2003 by Olorunfemi, A. and Adesina, O.C. titled "Labour union and the decolonization process in Nigeria, 1940–1960," is a synthesis of existing studies and did not use recently declassified materials identified in this study.
  28. Even recent works did not focus on issues analyzed in this study. See, for example, Lisa Lindsay, *Working with Gender: Wage Labor and Social Change in Southwestern Nigeria* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003); Ifeanyi P. Onyeonoru and Jimi O. Adesina, "Trade Unions in Nigeria since 1945," in Craig Phelan (ed.) *Trade Unionism since 1945: Towards a Global History, Volume 1: Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Africa and the Middle East* (Oxford: Peter Lang International Academic Publishers, 2009), 363–412.
  29. This view is supported by the first Nigerian to head the Ministry of Labour and Welfare in 1955, Chief (Hon.) Festus Okotie-Eboh. See, Ministry of Labour and Welfare Annual Report, 1956, paragraph 187. J. M. Johnson succeeded Okotie-Eboh in 1958 as the minister in charge of labor and welfare. The debate about whether European "modernity" was accidental and exploitative or genuine and developmental has been the subject of scholarly studies in recent time. See, Bjorn Beckman, "Whose State? State and Capitalists Development in Nigeria," *Review of African Political Economy*, No. 23: 37–51; "Scandinavian Perspectives on Africa" (Jan.–Apr., 1982), 37–51. Toyin Falola and Julius Ihonvbere (eds.) *Britain and Nigeria*:

- Exploitation or Development?* (London: Zed Books, 1987). Bade Onimode, "Imperialism and the Multinational Corporations: A Case Study of Nigeria," Special Issue—"Nigeria: Problems of Development," *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (December, 1978): 207–232. Jeremiah Dibua, *Modernization and the Crisis of Development in Africa: The Nigerian Experience* (Burlington: Ashgate Publication, 2006).
30. See his "Foreword" dated July 1958 in the Ministry of Labour and Welfare Annual Report, 1956–57, Lagos, Nigeria, 1959.
31. See, Alex Lichtenstein, "Making Apartheid work: African Trade Unions and the 1953 Native Labour (Settlement of Disputes) Act in South Africa," *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (2005): 293–314.

## CHAPTER 2

1. *Annual Report of the Ministry of Labour, 1959–1960* (Government Printing Press, Lagos, 1960).
2. This idea is espoused by the first Nigerian to head the Ministry of Labour and Welfare in 1955, Chief Festus Okotie-Eboh. See Ministry of Labour and Welfare Annual Report, 1956, paragraph 187. J. M. Johnson succeeded Okotie-Eboh in 1958.
3. See his "Foreword" dated July 1958 in the Ministry of Labour and Welfare Annual Report, 1956–57, Lagos, Nigeria, 1959.
4. See Eskor Toyo, *The Working Class and the Nigerian Crisis* (Ibadan: Sketch Publishing Company, 1967); Robert Melson, "Ideology and Inconsistency: The 'cross-pressured' Nigerian Worker," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. LXV (1971): 161–71; Robin Cohen, *Labour and Politics in Nigeria, 1945–1971* (London: Heinemann, 1974).
5. For details about the event, see Dafe Otobo, "The Generals, NLC and Trade Union Bill," being a paper delivered at Department of Industrial Relations and Personnel Management, University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos, Nigeria, 2004.
6. For detailed analysis, see Hakeem I. Tijani *Britain, Leftist Nationalists and the Transfer of Power in Nigeria, 1945–1965* (London/New York: Routledge, 2005), 1–6.
7. Nnamdi Azikiwe, *Political Blueprint for Nigeria* (London, 1943). He renounced his support for socialist pathway and documented reasons for the position in *Ideology for Nigeria: Capitalism, Socialism, or Welfarism?* (Lagos, 1980).
8. Woodford McClellan, "Africans and Black Americans in Comintern Schools, 1925–1934," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (1993): 372–390.
9. Hakeem I. Tijani, "The Foundation of Anticommunist Policies in Nigeria," *African and Asian Studies*, Vol. 8 (2009): 47–66.
10. G. Fischer, "Trade-Unions and Decolonization," *Presence Africaine*, Vol. 6/7, Nos. 34–35 (1962): 127. He was not the only one in this position.

- See Gary K. Busch, "The Transnational Relations of African Trade Unions," *Africa Today*, Vol. 19, No. 2, *Labor and Development* (Spring, 1972): 22–32.
11. See Nigeria: *Third National Development Plan, 1975–1980*, Government Press, Lagos.
  12. "The Contribution of the I.L.O. to Workers' Education," *International Review of Education*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (1962): 140–149. See Chapter 8 for additional information.
  13. N. Azikiwe, *Ideology for Nigeria: Capitalism, Socialism or Welfarism?* (Lagos, 1980).
  14. John Hennings, *The Attitudes of African Nationalism towards Communism*, No. 10 (Duquesque University Institute of African Affairs, 1961).
  15. Hakeem I. Tijani, *Britain, Leftist Nationalists and the Transfer of Power in Nigeria, 1945–1965* (London: Routledge, 2005).
  16. Ema Awa, *Federal Government in Nigeria* (Berkeley, 1964); James Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism* (Los Angeles, 1958); Richard Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties: Power in an Emergent African Nation* (Princeton, 1963); Dudley, BJ, "Marxism and Political Change in Nigeria," *The Nigerian Journal of Economic and Social Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (July 1964); Edwin Madunagu, *The Tragedy of the Nigerian Socialist Movement* (Calabar, 1980); Ehiedu E. Iweriebor, *Radical Nationalists in Nigeria: The Significance of the Zikist Movement* (Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University Press, 1996); Maxim Matusевич, *No Easy Row for a Russian Hoe: Ideology and Pragmatism in Nigerian-Soviet Relations, 1960–1990* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2003); Samuel G. Ikoku, *Nigeria for Nigerians: A Study of Contemporary Nigerian Politics from a Socialist Point of View* (Takoradi, 1962); Gabriel Olusanya, "The Zikist Movement—A Study in Political Radicalism, 1946–1950," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 4 (1966); Tajudeen Abdulraheem and Adebayo Olukoshi, "The Left in Nigerian Politics and the Struggle for Socialism: 1945–1985," *Review of African Political Economy*, No. 37 (1986); Singh Narasingha, "Nigerian Intellectuals and Socialism: Retrospect and Prospect," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (1993); Tijani, *Britain, Leftist Nationalists and the Transfer of Power*; Hakeem I. Tijani, "McCarthyism in Colonial Nigeria: The Ban on the Employment of Communists," in Adebayo Oyebede (ed.) *The Foundations of Nigeria—Essays in Honor of Toyin Falola* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2004), 647–668; L. Schler, "Transnationalism and Nationalism in the Nigerian Seamen's Union," *African Identities*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (August, 2009); P. Waterman, "Communist Theory in the Nigerian Trade Union Movement," *Politics and Society*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (1973).
  17. Hakeem I. Tijani, "Britain and the Foundation of Anti-Communist Policies in Nigeria, 1945–1960," *African and Asian Studies*, Vol. 8 (2009): 47–66.
  18. Rashid A. Aderinoye, "Labour Education in Nigeria: Structures and Implication for Nation Building," *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (May–June, 1998): 192–198; Robin Cohen, *Labour and politics in Nigeria, 1945–1971* (London: Heinemann, 1971): 122–126; Edmund O. Egbob, "Trade Union Education in Nigeria (1940–1964),"

- African Studies Review*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (April, 1971): 83–93; Omole, Lanrewaju, “The politics of workers’ education in Nigeria,” *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, Vol. 17, No. 5 (September, 1998): 291–306; Michael Omolewa, “Survey of the Development of Workers’ Education,” in M. Omolewa (ed.) *Workers’ Education in a Dynamic Society* (Ibadan: Department of Adult Education & University of Ibadan Press, 1982); E. A. Tugbiyele, *Report on the National Conference on Workers’ Education* (Lagos: Federal Ministry of Labour, 1991).
19. Examples are the secret memoranda by ILO experts, and official British records between Nigeria and London between 1950s and 1965. In addition, many ILO reports on workers’ education that could have broadened the scope of analysis is missing from the sources cited in these workers.
  20. BNA CO1027/124: Countering of communist propaganda in Nigeria, London, September 1959.
  21. See Tijani, *Britain, Leftist Nationalists and the Transfer of Power*.
  22. A rare exception is Cohen, *Labour and Politics in Nigeria*.

### CHAPTER 3

1. Africanists such as Ade-Ajayi, Adu-Boahen, Robert Tignor, Samir Amin, Segun Osoba, and others have since challenged the imperial school led by Robinson and Gallagher. The imperial school, in the words of Tignor, is defined as “robustly Anglophilic; it is entirely rooted in the imperial archive; it conflates the official mind with the real world of [West] African economics and politics; and it employs the views of elite groups when dealing with subalterns.” See Robert Tignor’s review of *Merchant Capital and Economic Decolonization: The United Africa Company, 1929–1987*. David K. Fieldhouse, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994 in *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 38, No. 3 (1997): 514–515.
2. Recent analysis of colonial policies and systems is found in Hakeem I. Tijani, “Colonial Policies and Systems,” in *Africa and the Wider World*, edited Hakeem I. Tijani et al. (Boston: Pearson Education, 2010).
3. From August 9 through 12, 1941, Prime Minister Churchill and President Roosevelt proclaimed an Allied power declaration for a postwar global policy that included, among other things, renunciation of aggression; right to self-government; and assurance of liberty, independence, and justice.
4. See William R. Louis, *Imperialism at Bay: The United States and the Decolonization of the British Empire, 1941–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Hakeem Ibikunle Tijani, *Britain, Leftist Nationalists and the Transfer of Power in Nigeria, 1945–1965* (New York: Routledge, 2005).
5. See William Moseley, *Taking Sides—Clashing Views on African Issues*, 2nd Edition (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2007), 54–70. In addition, Crawford Young, “The Heritage of Colonialism,” in John W. Harberson and Donald Rothschild (eds.) *Africa in World Politics: The African State System in Flux*

(Westview Press, 2000); Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa* (Houghton Mifflin, 1998); Allen Isaacman, *Cotton Is the Mother of Poverty: Peasants, Work, and Rural Struggle in Colonial Mozambique, 1931–1961* (Heinemann, 1996).

6. One of the controversial issues in Euro-African encounter is the effect of colonialism. To some historians (e.g., Ajayi, Crowder, Duignan, Gann, Lloyd, Perham, and Robinson), its impact was, on balance, both beneficial and harmful to Africa. Other historians (e.g., Rodney, Williams, and Asante) contend that its benefits to Africa were accidental or nil. I argue that the difference of opinions is worthy of study for a reasonable analysis; students of African history must take note of both sides. See Adu Boahen (ed.) *General History of Africa—Abridged Edition—Volume VII: Africa under Colonial Domination 1880–1935* (UNESCO/James Currey, 1990), 327–339.
7. Lord Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, 3rd Edition (Edinburgh, 1926).
8. See Tijani, *Britain, Leftist Nationalists*; Hakeem I. Tijani and Ashley Carter, “Decolonization,” in Tijani et al. (eds.), *Africa and the Wider World* (Boston: Pearson Publishing, 2010).
9. Tijani and Carter, “Decolonization.”
10. See David Ngong, “Christianity and Christian Missions,” in Tijani et al. (eds.), *Africa and the Wider World*: Chapter 14 for a full analysis of the role of missionaries during the period.
11. See, A. Nwauwa, *Imperialism, Academe and Nationalism: Britain and University Education for Africans 1860–1960* (London: Routledge, 1997).
12. E. Ashby (with Mary Anderson), *Universities: British, Indian, African* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1966).
13. Robert L. Tignor, “Political Corruption in Nigeria Before Independence,” *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (June, 1993): 175–202.
14. See Patrick Manning, “Analyzing the Costs and Benefits of Colonialism,” *African Economic History Review* (Fall, 1974): 15–22.
15. See Marika Sherwood, *Origins of Pan-Africanism: Henry Sylvester Williams, Africa, and the African Diaspora* (New York: Routledge, 2010); Marika Sherwood and Hakim Adi, *The 1945 Manchester Pan-African Congress Revisited* (London: New Beacon Books, 1995).
16. Kevin Shillington, *History of Africa*, 2nd edition (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), 376.
17. “Positive Action” and the overthrow of colonial government were the central focus of the Zikist Movement in Nigeria before its ban in 1950. See Tijani, *Britain, Leftist Nationalists*.
18. John D. Hargreaves, *Decolonization in Africa*, 2nd Edition (London & New York: Addison Wesley Longman Limited, 1996), 130–131.
19. Olisanwuche Esebedo, “The Independence Movement in Sierra Leone,” *Tarikh*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 1974: 24–26.
20. *Ibid.*, 15–27.

## CHAPTER 4

1. Contrary to E. O. Egbob, "Trade Union Education in Nigeria, 1940–1964," *African Studies Review*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (April, 1971): 83–93, British attempts to build "sound industrial relations" in Nigeria was not just about educating the Nigerian workers and their leaders.
2. A scholar has addressed issues as it relates to the nationalist movement in another study. My emphasis here is the labor sector in view of the shortcomings in previous studies. See Hakeem I. Tijani, *Britain, Leftist Nationalists and the Transfer of Power in Nigeria, 1945–1965* (London/New York: Routledge, 2005; Reprinted 2007). Studies about development of labor and trade organizations in Nigeria have been the focus of academic and nonacademic since the mid-1960s. Some of the studies are written by those who participated in the actual development of "sound" labor union organization during the period. Scholarly works by Ananaba, Darah, Otobo, Tokunboh, and Yesufu fall within this category. One can refer to them as the nationalist school of thought based on their narratives and analyses. Other category includes former colonial officers, and American and European scholars. These include Brown, Orr, Cohen, and Cooper. See T. M. Yesufu, *An Introduction to Industrial Relations in Nigeria* (London, 1962); C. A. Orr, "Trade Unionism in Colonial Africa," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (1966): 65–81; W. Ananaba, *The Trade Union Movement in Nigeria* (London, 1970); R. Cohen, *Labour and Politics in Nigeria, 1945–1971* (London, 1982); R. Cohen, "Michael Imoudu and the Nigerian Labour Movement," *Race and Class*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (1987): 345–362; M. Tokunboh, *Trade Unions in Nigeria* (Lagos, 1985); D. Otobo, *Foreign Interests and Nigerian Trade Unions* (Lagos, 1987); D. Otobo, *State and Industrial Relations in Nigeria* (Lagos, 1988); G. G. Darah, "Imoudu and the Labour Movement," *Journal of African Marxists*, number 9, (July, 1986): 87–97; F. Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: The Labour Question in French and British Africa* (London, 1996); B. Freund, "Labor and Labor History in Africa: A Review of the Literature," *African Studies Review*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (June, 1984): 1–58; C. Brown, "Dialectics of Colonial Labour Control," *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 1–2 (1988): 32–59; C. Brown, *"We Were All Slaves": African Miners, Culture, and Resistance at the Enugu Government Colliery* (Social History of Africa Series) Portsmouth: Heinemann, Oxford: James Currey, and Cape Town: 2003. Because of its close relationship with nationalist movement during the period, specificity in labor study remained ambiguous and difficult.
3. Mss292/File 966.3/6: Anunobi to Tewson, July 27, 1956, Trade Union Congress (Hereafter refer to as TUC) *Registry Files*. Anunobi was the national secretary of Mercantile Unions of Nigeria and Cameroons during the period. He was a strong anti-Communist and influential labor leader during the colonial period.
4. Nigeria—Department of Labour Annual Report 1954 (Lagos, 1955), Nigeria National Archive, hereafter referred to as NAI.

5. CP/CENT/INT/48/01: The Working Class Movement and the Need for a Marxist Party, 1954, National and Modern Labour History Archives (hereafter referred to as NMLHA), Manchester, 16.
6. Ibid.
7. "Hunt to the Department of State," File745H.11/00/11-2157, October 8, 1957, National Archives at College Park (hereafter referred to as NACP).
8. M. Tokunboh, *Labour Movements in Nigeria: Past and Present* (Ibadan, 1985), 25–26.
9. Mss292/File 966.3/1: Nigeria, Correspondence/TU Development 1941–8, *TUC Registry File*, University of Warwick, Warwick, England.
10. For instance, W. G. Wormal was appointed as inspector of Labour in April 1939 after serving as a district officer in Lagos. During World War II, he acted as a relief Labour and Welfare officer at the colonial government-controlled Enugu Colliery. See, *Annual Labour Report: Section V—Annual Report on the work of Labour Inspectorate, Nigeria for the Year 1940* (Lagos: Government Press, 1941), 1.
11. See Hakeem I. Tijani, "Britain and the Foundation of Anti-Communist Policies in Nigeria, 1945–1960," *African and Asian Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (2009): 47–67.
12. I have devoted the whole of Chapter 5 to workers' education during the decolonization period and after. In this chapter, emphasis is placed on relevance to the narrative flow of events and a systemic analysis of issues as they relate to labor education generally. See TUC Colonial Advisory Committee File 1, 1948–49, December 15, 1948, 2; File 2, 1948–49, April 21, 1949, 6, *TUC Collections*, University of North London. Other beneficiaries include T. O. Sangonuga, A. F. A. Awolana, J. W. Wamuo, and Abubakar Liman Umaru. See Mss292/File 966.3/4: Winterbottom to Curry, March 4, 1952, *TUC Registry Files*, and this chapter.
13. Tokunboh, *Labour Movement*, 26. Adio-Moses also benefited from the U.S. Foreign Leader Program in 1951. See Mss292/File 966.3/2: Adio-Moses to Walter Hood, April 27, 1951, *TUC Registry Files*.
14. BNA CO554/329: Departmental Labour Conferences, Nigeria 1953.
15. Ibid. See, *TUC Annual Report (London, 1953)*, 212; *TUC Annual Report (London, 1956)*, 215.
16. Ibid.
17. Tokunboh, *Labour Movements*, 117.
18. Mss292/File 966.3/2: Curry to Tewson, March 23, 1949, *TUC Registry Files*.
19. Tokunboh, *Labour Movements*, 118.
20. BNA CO537/6704: Oldenboek to James Griffiths, January 8, 1950, London.
21. Mss292/File 966.3/2: Extracts from letter received from G. B. Lynch, labor union officer, Labour Department, Lagos, Nigeria, January 21, 1950; Lynch to Tewson, May 16, 1950; *TUC Registry Files*.
22. Ibid. Cutting from *The Times* (London), November 12, 1950.



23. BNA CO537/6704: Sir. Vincent Tewson to S of S, James Griffiths, November 20, 1950.
24. *Ibid.*
25. See "Fortnightly Newsletter," File745H.00/2-2552, February 11–23, 1952, NACP.
26. BNA CO537/6704: secretary of state for colonies to O.A.G of Nigeria, the Gold Coast, Gambia and Sierra Leone, December 5, 1950, PRO, London.
27. *Ibid.* O.A.G to S of S, December 16, 1950.
28. *Ibid.* Watson to Parry, January 13, 1951.
29. *Ibid.* James Griffiths to O.A.G (West Africa), January 16, 1951.
30. *Ibid.* ICFTU delegation to West Africa, 1950/1951, London. Also, Mss292/File 966.3/3: Extracts from report of visit to Nigeria by Mr. E. Parry, C.E. Ponsonby, and Dagleish to James Griffith, July-August 1950, *TUC Registry Files*.
31. *West Africa*, Editorial, London, January 27, 1951; Colonial Advisory Committee Minute (CACM), File 2 (1950–51), February 21, 1951, 7; File 3, May 10, 1951, 9–11; File 4, September 21, 1951: 13; *TUC Annual Report* 1952, 174.
32. See A. Carew, "Charles Millard, A Canadian in the International Labour Movement: A Case Study of the ICFTU 1955–1961," *Labour/Le travail*, Vol. 37 (Spring, 1996): 121–148.
33. CO537/6704: Smith to Gorsuch, April 2, 1951, PRO, London.
34. *Ibid.* Adio-Moses was appointed as a labor officer in the Western Region in 1958.
35. Mss292/File 966.3/2: Nigeria 1948–51, Walter Hood to Curry, May 7, 1951; *TUC Registry Files*.
36. Mss292/File 966.3/4: Nigeria 1951–53, *TUC Registry Files*; Couzens to Bartrop, November 20, 1951.
37. *The Christian Science Monitor* (Boston) had earlier reported that the basic drive of the ICFTU initiatives "is for free labor group." See July 2, 1956, edition. In addition, *Manchester Guardian*, November 20, 1956; *TUC Annual Report* 1957. It is worth noting that Adio-Moses later became a labor officer in the Department of Labour.
38. *African Labour*, No. 5, January 1959, 2.
39. *TUC Annual Report* 1950, 155. See chapters 5 and 6 for further discussion about the Labour Center in Kampala, Uganda.
40. *TUC Annual Report* 1951, 223.
41. *TUC Annual Report* 1952, 154.
42. *TUC Annual Report* 1954, 228.
43. Mss292/File 966.3/6: Nigeria—Background Notes for Meeting with Overseas Employers, February 1956, *TUC Registry Files*. I must state that declassification of the papers of these companies would shed more light into their role in anti-Communist measures during the period.
44. BNA CO537/6704: Smith to Gorsuch.



45. D. Goldsworthy (ed.) *British Documents on the End of Empire: The Conservative Government and the End of Empire—Part III* (HMSO: London, 1994), 374.
46. Ibid.
47. BNA CO554/1998: Labour Matters in Nigeria, 1957–1959, London. Also, *West African Pilot*, February 18, 1949.
48. Ibid.
49. BNA CO554/1998: Labour Matters.
50. Ibid. See Chapter 7 for detailed analysis of the seamen strike of 1959.
51. Ibid. Also, see “labour disputes on the M.V. Apapa, 1957–1959,” London; “Board of Inquiry into the Trade Dispute between the Elder Dempster Lines Limited and the Nigerian Union of Seamen Report, 1959,” Government Publications, Lagos, 1959.
52. “AMCONGEN to the Department of State—Status of ANTUF/NCTUN struggle for control of Nigerian Trade Union Movement,” File 845H.062/6-2658, June 26, 1958, NACP.
53. BNA CO859/748: Communism in the Colonial Territories and the Trade Unions—Memorandum by N.D. Watson, November 9, 1953.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid. Draft CO record of a discussion between Mr. Lyttleton and the representatives of the TUC and the Overseas Employers Federation, July 12, 1954. Influence and persuasion had been used to resolve the Malaya labor crises earlier in 1954. As the secretary of state for the colonies noted in the draft, “the situation in Malaya had been extremely dangerous a little time ago but the talks which had taken place with Mr. Narayanon and Mr. Ascoli were largely responsible for the happy outcome . . . .”
56. “Labor: Further developments in Nigerian Trade Union Movement,” File 845H.06/8-2057, August 20, 1957.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid.
60. “AMCONSUL, Lagos to D.O.S.: Conference of Nigerian labor leaders creates new national organization,” File 845H.06/3-2359, March 23, 1959, NACP.
61. Ibid. Also, E. O. Egbah, “Central Trade Unionism in Nigeria (1941–1966),” *Geneve Afrique*, Vol. vi, No. 2 (1967).
62. AMCONSUL, Lagos to D.O.S.: File 845H.06/3-2359—Conference of Nigerian Labor Leaders.
63. CP/CENT/INT/20/01: The N.E.P.U. Party of Northern Nigeria—Declaration of Principles, n.d. NMLHA.
64. Ibid.
65. Ibid.
66. *Daily Times* (Nigeria), March 11, 1959.

## CHAPTER 5

1. The late professor Godfrey N. Brown of the University of Ibadan was the first to notice scholars' misrepresentation of the origin of British educational policy in Central and West Africa over four decades ago. See "British Educational Policy in West and Central Africa," *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 2 (1964): 365–377. I define labor union education as the specialized training programs aimed at intellectual development of workers, their leaders, and labor officers since the late 1930s. Unlike general education directed by the Department (later Ministry) of Education, it is unique and purposeful, and usually ideologically inclined.
2. See Edmund Egboh, "Trade Union Education in Nigeria (1940–1964)," *African Studies Review*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (April, 1971): 83–93. Although a pioneering effort, it is rather a pedestrian and episodic account solely based on the annual reports of the Department of Labour (later Ministry of Labour). Egboh's account is a verbatim copy of the annual report on labor matters. Not surprisingly, he missed the ideological underpinning of the exercise, and its relevance to decolonization policies during the period.
3. Even my earlier study on *Britain, Leftist Nationalists and the Transfer of Power in Nigeria, 1945–1965* (London: Routledge, 2005) and late Martin Lynn's two edited volumes titled *Nigeria: British Documents on the End of Empire* (London: HMSO, 2001) were not privy to this significant file on anti-Communist propaganda in Nigeria compiled between 1957 and late 1959 by officials of the Foreign and Colonial Office respectively. See BNA/CO 1027/124: Countering communist propaganda in Nigeria, 1957–1959, for details. These files and the Labour Department reports give a new perspective about the process and dynamism of the whole exercise, making the narrative much more interesting.
4. Although the idea of establishing a Labor Institute was concretized under the Third National Development Plan, it was not until 1990 that an Institute for Labour Studies became functional. Part of this chapter is devoted to the activities of the institute.
5. Rashid A. Aderinoye, "Labour Education in Nigeria: Structures and Implication for Nation Building," *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (May–June, 1998): 192–198; Robin Cohen, *Labour and Politics in Nigeria, 1945–1971* (London: Heinemann, 1971): 122–126; Edmund O. Egboh, "Trade Union Education in Nigeria (1940–1964)," *African Studies Review*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (April, 1971): 83–93; Omole, Lanrewaju, *Labour Relations in Nigeria: Origin and Development of Union Education* (Ibadan: Cadalad Nigeria Limited, 1994); Omole, Lanrewaju, "The Politics of Workers' Education in Nigeria," *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, Vol. 17, No. 5 (September, 1998): 291–306; Michael Omolewa, "Survey of the Development of Workers' Education," in M. Omolewa (ed.) *Workers' Education in a Dynamic Society* (Ibadan: Department of Adult Education & University of Ibadan Press, 1982);

- E. A. Tugbiyele, *Report on the National Conference on Workers' Education* (Lagos: Federal Ministry of Labour, 1991).
6. Ibid. But I should add the works of Peter N. Ngwu, "Workers' Education," in Lekan Oyedele and Kobina Asiedu (eds.) *The Principles and Methods of Adult Education* (Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publishers Limited, 1990), 218–248; and Geoffrey C. Okogwu, *Workers' Education in the 90s: Problems and Challenges* (Ilorin: MILS Publications, 1993), 1–42.
  7. B. Ghosh, *Personnel Management and Industrial Relations* (Calcutta: World Press, 1979).
  8. See Okogwu, *Workers' Education in the 90s*, 16–17.
  9. Quoted by Ngwu, "Workers' Education," 221–222.
  10. Department of Labour Annual Report, 1944 (Lagos: Government Press, 1945), 1.
  11. Department of Labour Annual Report, 1946 (Lagos: Government Press, 1947), 2.
  12. Ibid., 2.
  13. Ibid., 11.
  14. Ibid., 1.
  15. This is the only organ of the Department of Labour that was not categorized as unit. The units consist of Administration, Industrial Relations, Employment, Legal, Statistics, and Technical.
  16. Department of Labour Annual Report, 1946, 10.
  17. Ibid.
  18. Ibid., 21–22.
  19. Ibid.
  20. Ibid., 10.
  21. Department of Labour Annual Report, 1947, 25.
  22. Miller was the first commissioner for Labour upon the creation of the department in 1942. By the time he retired in December 1948, he had worked in various units and departments in colonial Nigeria. He started in the Audit Department in 1919 but transferred to administration in 1920. He served in the southern provinces and the secretariat in Lagos until he was appointed as a resident in 1937. It is acclaimed that he was instrumental to the growth and transformation of the nascent Department of Labour in 1942 to a large one with reasonable number of African officers by the end of 1948.
  23. Department of Labour Annual Report, 1947, 26.
  24. This has been the traditional narrative for decolonization in Nigeria like many former colonies. The argument here is that the process of decolonization is multidimensional and infinite. More declassified official records would shed light into the process and validity of my thesis.
  25. Department of Labour Annual Report, 1948, 16–17.
  26. Hakeem I. Tijani, *Britain, Leftist Nationalists and the Transfer of Power in Nigeria, 1945–1965* (London/New York: Routledge, 2005; Reprinted 2007).
  27. Department of Labour Annual Report, 1947, 61.

28. *Ibid.*, 61.
29. *Ibid.*
30. Department of Labour Annual Report, 1949–1950, paragraph 85.
31. Department of Labour Annual Report, 1951–1952, paragraph 129.
32. Department of Labour Annual Report, 1949. P. H. Cook had become the deputy commissioner of Labour by the beginning of 1949. He had served as a labour officer and a senior labour officer respectively since 1942.
33. Department of Labour Annual Report, 1950—see paragraph 134.
34. *Ibid.*, paragraph 135.
35. *Ibid.*
36. *Ibid.*, paragraph 138.
37. *Ibid.*
38. *Ibid.*, paragraph 140.
39. Department of Labour Annual Report, 1952–1953, paragraph 119; Department of Labour Annual Report, 1950–1951, paragraph 136.
40. Department of Labour Annual Report, 1951–1952, paragraph 129.
41. *Ibid.*
42. *Ibid.*, paragraph 129–130.
43. Department of Labour Annual Report, 1953–1954, 6. The reason is that there were no reported industrial strike, labor unrest, etc. like in the previous years.
44. Department of Labour Annual Report, 1953–1954, 6.
45. Department of Labour Annual Report, 1953–1954, paragraph 108.
46. *Ibid.*, paragraph 109.
47. *Ibid.*, paragraph 111. I should note that in August 1953, an attempt was made (third in ten years) by pro-Western union leaders to form a nationwide labor union called All Nigerian Trade Union Federation (ANTUF). However, a few leftist leaders formed their own organization called The Committee of Trade Unionists despite ANTUF's neutralist policy in international labor movement.
48. Department of Labour Annual Report, 1954, paragraph 4–6. A good example of the need for collaboration and harmony was the composition of the delegation from to the International Labour Organization conference in Geneva in June 1955. A leftist union leader, Gogo Chu Nzeribe, represented labor unions while Chief Okotie-Eboh led the Nigerian delegation as the minister for Labour and Welfare. See Ministry of Labour and Welfare annual report for 1956 for details.
49. Department of Labour Annual Report, 1952, paragraph 118.
50. Department of Labour Annual Report, 1953, paragraph 110.
51. Department of Labour Annual Report, 1958, paragraph 83.
52. Department of Labour Annual Report, 1959, paragraph 75.
53. The background to this was the passing of the Factories Act of 1956 that will ensure safety and education of workers in the factories nationwide. The act became effective on September 1, 1956.
54. See Ministry of Labour and Welfare Annual Report, 1956–1957, paragraph 3–9.

55. *Ibid.*, paragraph 35–40.
56. Trade Centres became the institutional forum for government's training of workers during the late 1950s with centers in Lagos and regional administrative headquarters. They could be referred to as mini labor colleges for immersion and skill training.
57. Ministry of Labour and Welfare Annual Report, 1956–1957, 35.

## CHAPTER 6

1. Some nationalists objected to what they considered shortfalls in the constitution. An example is Samuel G. Ikoku, *A Nationalist Study of the Macpherson Constitution* (Lagos, 1952).
2. *Ibid.*
3. Hakeem I. Tijani, *Britain, Leftist Nationalists and the Transfer of Power in Nigeria, 1945–1965* (London/New York: Routledge, 2005—Reprint).
4. Communist Party Central File [CPCF], 1953.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Tijani, *Britain, Leftist Nationalists*.
7. *Ibid.*
8. CPCF, 1953.
9. Idise Dafe, Report on Nigerian Communists, 1952.
10. Amaefule Ikoro, CPCF, 1951.
11. CPCF, 1952.
12. *Ibid.*
13. Tijani, *Britain, Leftist Nationalists*.
14. Ikoku, CPCF, n.d; Tijani, *Britain, Leftist Nationalist*.
15. CPCF, 1953.
16. CPCF, 1956.
17. Editorial: *Nigerian Socialist Review*, 1952.
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*
20. *Ibid.*
21. C. O. Mba, *Nigerian Socialist Review*, December 1952.
22. Samuel G. Ikoku, *Nigeria for Nigerians: A Study of Contemporary Nigerian Politics from a Socialist Point of View* (Takoradi, 1962), 34
23. *Ibid.*, 33.
24. *Ibid.*, 34.
25. Nduka Eze, "A Discourse on Violence and Pacifism as a Struggle for Freedom," *Labour Champion*, May 13, 1950.
26. *Ibid.*, 3.
27. *Ibid.*
28. Late professor Nina Mba in *Nigerian Women Mobilized* (Berkeley: UCLA Press, 1982) discussed, at length, the role of late Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti. See, Tijani, *Britain, Leftist Nationalists* for details.
29. *Labour Champion*, 3.

30. Tijani, *Britain, Leftist Nationalists*, 104. Like the colonial government, post-colonial governments did not give room to the leftist intelligentsia. In fact, they pursued direct measures to deprive leftist ideology of any position in labor matters.
31. *Ibid.*
32. Ikoku, "Trade unions in Nigeria," CPCF, 1951; Tijani, *Britain, Leftist Nationalists*; "Foundation of British Anticommunist Policies in Nigeria, 1945–1960," *African and Asian Studies*, Vol. 8 (2009): 47–66.

## CHAPTER 7

1. Anthony Hopkins, "The Lagos Strike of 1897: An Exploration in Nigerian Labour History," *Past & Present*, No. 35 (December, 1966): 133–155.
2. This was a "common market" agreement for overseas areas where the British pound sterling was the prevailing currency.
3. Elder Dempster Shipping Lines Limited was the largest of all shipping companies in Nigeria during this period. It is reported to have employed about 79 percent of Nigerian (West Africans generally) crew members, compared to other shipping lines who together employed 21 percent. Other shipping companies during the period were P. Henderson & Co. (represented locally by Elder Dempster Agencies Limited), Palm Line Limited, and the Guinea Gulf Line Limited. In late 1959, the Nigerian National Line Limited was newly created as part the "Africanisation" process.
4. British National Archives (BNA): CO 554/1999: Labour Dispute in Nigeria, 1959: 4.
5. See Ayodeji Olukoju, "A 'Truly Nigerian Project?' The Politics of the Establishment of the Nigerian National Shipping Line (NNSL), 1957–1959," *International Journal of Maritime History*, Vol. XV, No. 1 (2003): 69–90; Lynn Schler, "Becoming Nigerian: African Seamen, Decolonisation, and Nationalisation of Consciousness," *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (2011): 167–187.
6. BNA: CO 554/1999—Labour Dispute in Nigeria, 1959: 4.
7. While main salary was not an issue in 1959 when the seamen went on strike, discrimination in rations and conditions on board the *M. V. Apapa* were issues central to their letter of petition to Mr. Glasier, the director of Elder Dempster Shipping Lines in London. For instance, while White Seamen and officers received bacon and egg, fish, steak, chicken, and turkey for their daily meal, Africans were fed with black pudding, mashed potatoes, pork belly, sausage, or lamb chop. See, BNA: CO 554/1999: Letter: 2.
8. *Ibid.*, 5.
9. BNA: Labour Dispute in Nigeria: 5.
10. *Ibid.*, 6.
11. I will elaborate on Yates's role during the seamen's strike on board *M. V. Apapa* in Liverpool, and his position in building "sound industrial

- relations” in Nigeria, and indeed, British West Africa during the 1950s, in the next section.
12. BNA: CO 554/1999: Report of the Board of Inquiry into the Trade Dispute between the Elder Dempster Lines Limited and the Nigerian Seamen Union, June 1959: 8.
  13. *Ibid.*, 10.
  14. BNA: CO 554/1999—Glazier’s confidential letter—“Conditions of Service for all African Seamen”—dated October 1, 1958.
  15. BNA: CO 554/1999—Report of the Board of Inquiry into the Trade Dispute between the Elder Dempster Lines Limited and the Nigerian Union of Seamen, June 1959: 12.
  16. *Ibid.*
  17. See *The Newsletter*, “Nigerian Seamen Work almost Round the Clock,” June 20, 1959. *The Newsletter* is a publication of the Socialist Labour League in London. Its members made use of the incidents to disparage the Shipping Lines and the “civilizing mission” of the British in Nigeria generally.
  18. BNA: CO 554/1999—Report of the Board of Inquiry . . . 16. Prime Minister Abubakar Tafawa Balewa also met with the striking seamen in Lagos port and implored them to allow the Ministry of Labour to look into the matter. This is an indication of the seriousness of the event and the fact that it was seen, though covertly, as a leftist machination under Omar Khayam.
  19. The minister of Labour was J. M. Johnson, and the permanent secretary in the ministry was Francis Nwokedi. The board was appointed under Government Notice No. 1501, July 16, 1959, published in official gazette No. 45, July 23, 1959.
  20. BNA: CO 554/1999—Sir. Thomas Yates to Bruce Glasier, July 10, 1959.
  21. BNA: CO 554/1999: Report, 59.
  22. *Ibid.*, 62. I should note that it was only in 1947 that a similar establishment was created upon unanimous approval of the British National Maritime Board.
  23. *Ibid.*, 62.

## CHAPTER 8

1. Ministry of Labour and Welfare Annual Report, 1962: paragraph 100.
2. Edmund O. Egboh, “Trade Union Education in Nigeria (1940–1964),” *African Studies Review*, Vol. 14. No. 1 (April, 1971): 83–93.
3. Department of Labour Annual Report, 1964: paragraph 83. See appendix for ILO technical assistance programs in Nigeria before the civil war.
4. R. Cohen, *Labour and Politics in Nigeria, 1945–1971* (London, 1974), 126.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. ILO/OTA/Nigeria/R.2: *Regular Programme of Technical Assistance* (Geneva: ILO Publication, 1960).

8. "The Contribution of I.L.O. to Workers' Education," *International Review of Education*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (1962): 140–149.
9. *Ibid.*, 141.
10. *Ibid.*, 1.
11. *Ibid.*
12. L. L. Borha was the president of TUCN while Cole was its secretary. Messers Abiodun and Salubi were industrial relations commissioners in the Ministry of Labour and Welfare in Lagos.
13. See ILO/OTA/Nigeria/R.2: Report, 2.
14. *Ibid.*, 3.
15. *Ibid.*, 4.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*, 5.
19. *Ibid.*, 6.
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*, 8.
22. *Ibid.*, 10.
23. Charles A. Orr was a professor of industrial relations and political science at Roosevelt University, Chicago. He is reputed to have an extensive and broad experience in international labor movement, including several ILO missions in Asia.
24. ILO/OTA/Nigeria/R.7: *Report on Workers' Education in Nigeria 1963* (Geneva: ILO Publication, 1963), 1.
25. *Ibid.*, 3.
26. In June 1963, the "defenders of the working class"—Ikoku, Goodluck, Otegbeye—set the institution in honor of the slain Congolese first prime minister, Patrice Lumumba.
27. Affiliated to International Federation of Free Trade Unions, the NWC under Anunobi and others announced in August 1963 that it had a promissory note of 20,000 pounds sterling from the ICFTU for its proposed labor college in Nigeria.
28. ILO/OTA/Nigeria/R.7: *Report 1963*, 4.
29. By now, three regional universities located at Nsukka, Ife, and Lagos had joined Ibadan in organizing Adult Education and Extra-Mural courses focusing on industrial relations and labor union matter.
30. ILO/OTA/Nigeria/R.7: *Report 1963*, 5.
31. ILO/OTA/Nigeria/R.7: *Report 1963*, 5.
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Ibid.*, 6. See Appendix G in the same *Report* for details.
34. This is the precursor of the Michael Imoudu Institute for Labour Studies discussed later in this chapter. Previous studies failed to identify this crucial proposal by Charles Orr before his departure from Nigeria in September 1963. See Report 1963, 7 and Appendix A for details.
35. He cited that even developed economy like the United States did not have separate residential colleges for labor union education. In addition, India



as a leading developing economy during the same period pursued a unified labor union education center as opposed to Nigerian labor leaders' differing positions.

36. ILO/OTA/Nigeria/R.7: Report, 14.
37. See Robert Melson, "Political Dilemmas of Nigerian Labor," paper presented at Michigan State University African Studies Program, 1968.
38. Cohen, *Labour and Politics*, 93–97.
39. See <http://www.minilsnig.org/about.html>, visited May 17, 2010.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid.
42. It is interesting to note that two buildings are named after Ollie Anderson and George Meany—both U.S. citizens and pro-Western labor unionists.
43. See Director General Message, <http://www.minilsnig.org/about.html>, accessed May 17, 2010.
44. <http://www.minilsnig.org/about.html>, accessed on May 17, 2010.
45. Ibid.
46. See J. Odah, "Using Trade Union Education to Promote Women's Participation in Trade Unions: The Case of the Nigerian Labour Congress," *Labour Education*, Geneva: ILO, Vol. 95 (1994): 16–22.
47. Ibid., 16.
48. Other challenges of the 1990s are adequately analyzed by G. C. Okogwu, *Workers' Education in the 90s: Problems and Challenges* (Ilorin: MIILS Publications, 1993).
49. NLC Education Policy—General Principles—2000, Abuja, Nigeria: 1.
50. Ibid., 2.
51. Ibid.
52. A "shop steward" is a trainer at the workplace. The aim was to avoid ad-hoc and uncoordinated education of members. In contrast, in unions in the United States, the shop steward is the designated union member employee (a regular worker alongside all the other union members) who represents the interests of union workers on the job site and deals with grievances as a sort of liaison with management and the union officers.

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