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CRED Reprints
(New Series)
No. 4

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Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104

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Reprinted for private circulation from
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURAL CHANGE
Vol. 17, No. 4, July 1969

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In the October 1966 issue of this Journal, W. M. Warren argues that through political pressure, trade unions were successful in raising wages in Nigeria during the period 1939 to 1960. He sets out his intention as follows:

> It will be argued in the present article that however prevalent [its] internal weakness and external difficulties may have been, the Nigerian trade union movement has been able substantially to counteract their debilitating effects by mobilizing political sources of strength which have enabled it to raise the real wages of its membership and of urban wage employees generally.[1]

He concludes his article by "summarizing the sources and economic effects of Nigerian trade union strength" as follows:

> In Nigeria between 1939 and 1960, the actual and potential strength of the wage earning classes in the urban areas permitted the trade unions to mobilize political sources of strength and thus to counteract the handicaps under which they were operating, of severe internal weaknesses and unfavorable economic conditions, especially in the labor market. As a result, the trade unions have, in certain periods and over these years generally, been effective in raising real wages.[2]

This conclusion seems to bear out what is a general view—that labor organizations in the less developed countries are major influences on wage behavior, and that their activity explains certain important and widespread phenomena: rising real wages coupled with stagnant or declining employment, and declining internal agricultural (rural-urban) terms of trade.

Now it is true that wage rates for unskilled wage earners have become unmoored from the market, so to speak, in much of the underdeveloped world. Government wage policies and social policies have, since World War II in particular, become major determinants of wage behavior in these areas. The factors influencing government wage decisions, such as concern over industrial unrest, rising consumer price levels, the political influence of labor organizations, and trade union capacity to extend government wage decisions to private employers are therefore relevant to understanding what happens to wages in the less developed countries.

Because Mr. Warren is concerned with these aspects of wage determination, his paper raises interesting questions, not only about the specific case of Nigeria, but also about more general issues of methodology in these matters. In my view his analysis is wrong about Nigeria and inadequate in its general treatment of the problem.

Mr. Warren first of all makes so many exceptions to his central argument about the trade union political impact on wage levels that it is hard to see how he came to his conclusion from the discussion contained in the body of the article. It is indeed hard to see how a careful reader, even if he knew nothing about the subject, could avoid the opposite—and in my view—the correct conclusion: that the Nigerian labor movement's impact on wages *via* political pressures was negligible in most of the period under consideration. Secondly, Mr. Warren treats historical facts with a disturbing casualness. He makes assertions about the political significance of the Nigerian labor movement, for example, on the basis of the most fragile "evidence"; and he makes statements about the behavior of political parties (such as the Action Group in 1954) which, if true, has escaped the attention of the most careful students of Nigerian politics. Finally, Mr. Warren proceeds without a nod to the basic conceptual problems involved in any attempt to evaluate the impact of trade unions on wage levels. It is hard enough, as students of this problem in the advanced countries know, to determine the nature and extent of the trade union impact on wages through collective bargaining. When trade union political pressure, not only actual but "potential," is put into the wage determination equation, then it is obvious that exceptionally difficult methodological problems are raised, since every public sector wage decision can conceivably be aimed at heading off "potential" pressure. Mr. Warren does not consider these difficulties. He does not even make one distinction which is evidently necessary—between the influence of trade unions as institutions, and the influence of urban wage earners as an unorganized mass. A wage decision designed to deal with potential industrial unrest may have little or nothing to do with trade union pressures.

These problems, in any event, usually make it difficult or impossible to categorically deny that the political pressures of unions or of urban wage earning groups have affected wage levels. It is precisely because Nigeria is one of the few countries where it seems possible to say that the unions have had little effect on wages that Mr. Warren's contrary conclusion demands closer analysis.

Let us look at the methodological problem first. There is in Nigeria a system of wage determination such that the key wage rate in the economy is the rate paid by the government to its unskilled labor; changes in government's unskilled labor rate are the main determinants of changes in the general level of wages and the wage structure. The institutional arrangement through which the government rates are changed is the independent commission, appointed periodically by government to make recommendations on wage changes. Warren's argument is that the political pressure or influence of trade unions led government to higher wage awards than were indicated by conditions in the labor market, and (though he doesn't make this point explicit) higher awards than would have been made in the absence of trade unions.

It doesn't take much reflection to see the problems involved in any attempt to demonstrate the truth or error of such a proposition. The main problem is, of course, that government wage decisions, like all public sector decisions, are the consequence of a tangled network of causal factors, and that it is exceedingly difficult to isolate and evaluate the weight of individual causal elements.

How can we go about testing whether the organized labor movement in a given country has had "significant" impact on changes in wage levels? Putting to one side the problem of defining what a "significant" impact is, the obvious first step is to identify the main factors influencing wage level changes. A long list of such factors can be drawn up: changes in investment and output, in labor force participation, in productivity, prices, or profits; the structure of factor and products markets; government social and wage policies; the timing and extent of union organization; union wage policies; and so on. Although most of these are interrelated, they can be grouped for convenience into three categories: market forces, government policies, and trade union action. Market forces are those working directly through the supply and demand for labor—changes in employment and unemployment, in productivity, prices, and profits. Government wage policies refer to decisions directly affecting wages—minimum wage policies and salary policy in the public sector. Trade union pressures are of two kinds: economic pressure exercised directly on employers through collective bargaining, and those expressed through the political process, which would include varied activities such as lobbying, demonstrations, riots, threats, influence over political allies.

Even this abbreviated and simplified listing of factors affecting wage changes indicates the highly intractable nature of the problem at hand: how to isolate trade union effects from other factors in the conditions typical in less developed countries.

It is usually not too hard to evaluate the influence of market forces, even though this is not without problems. Because there is almost nowhere in the underdeveloped world meaningful unemployment data, and the concept itself is shaky, estimates of the state of the labor market must be based on qualitative considerations and on data of recorded employment. If the volume of employment is rising relatively rapidly, employers generally complain of labor scarcity, and turnover rates are high, then some market pressure on wages can be presumed. While this doesn't tell us much, it tells us something. If, for example, wages rise in the face of stagnant or declining employment, and amidst general talk of growing unemployment, it can be presumed that the wage rise is not related to labor market forces. Similarly—and this point is made by Warren—if wage structure changes occur in directions contrary to expectations based on qualitative knowledge of the labor market (for example, skill differentials narrow when total employment is rising slowly or not at all, or there is generalized scarcity of skilled workers), this can be taken as evidence of nonmarket forces at work.

It is thus possible to rule out strong market influences on wage behavior under certain conditions, as Warren properly does for Nigeria for most of the period 1939–60. Where the ticklish problems arise is in trying to separate the influence of government policy from trade union political pressures. For here we must ultimately go into the sources of political decision making, and this is a conceptual nightmare. Why does a government raise statutory minimum wages or the wages of its own unskilled employees by X percent in year Y? It is not enough to say that it does so because consumer prices have risen. It can, of course, choose to let real wages fall, since unskilled labor is abundant even at the lower real wage. Nor is it enough to say that the social policy of the government in question aims at protecting the real wages of low income wage earners, or at raising wages to the level of "minimum human needs." There still remain questions about why the rate of progress toward their achievement is slow or fast.

To clarify the range of causal forces in presence, it is useful to list the possible noneconomic reasons which might lead a government to grant a general wage increase.

(1) The increase might result from ideological preconception or from moral sentiments, from the ideas on social justice shared by ruling elites. These groups or classes might believe that it is "right" and "fair" to protect low wage earners against reductions in real income resulting from rising price levels, or—more positively—to raise the level of minimum wages to a level which is closer to meeting "minimum needs."

(2) The increase could be a response to unorganized dissatisfaction and discontent of which there has been some objective indication such as rioting or demonstrations.

(3) The increase could be "pre-emptive" in character, aimed at heading off potential discontent. In such cases there would be no unusual expression of discontent by wage earners, but the political leadership would have reason to expect such discontent, and fear it. In the category of pre-emptive wage increases, there are really two subgroups—the first aimed at the organized urban masses, the second aimed at preventing an organized labor movement from capitalizing on potential discontent to strengthen its political position.

(4) The increase could be of a more positive sort, designed to win friends for the ruling party or groups, rather than simply at preventing discontent. These popularity type increases also can be divided into two subtypes: those aimed at the wage earning population without regard for its real or presumed trade union spokesman, and those aimed at winning favor among trade union organizations and their leaders.

(5) The increase might be in response to organized pressure by trade unions and trade union leaders—by lobbying in party councils or administrative corridors, by systematic strike campaigns and organized demonstrations, or by alliances of trade unions with political parties.

Many fine lines are obviously involved in this kind of classification. It is also clear that any given wage decision is "explainable" by more than one "cause." But the exercise is not without benefit. Aside from suggesting that complexity of possible factors underlying any politically inspired wage decisions, it provides some framework for analyzing the significance of the trade union impact on government wage decisions.

With this framework in mind, let us turn to Mr. Warren's argument. He divides the real wage history of Nigeria between 1939 and 1960 into four subperiods or episodes. Between 1939 and 1946 real wages appeared to have been more or less maintained. They fell between 1946 and 1950; rose between 1950 and 1956; and fell again between 1956 and 1960.

Now what is strange about the behavior of wages during these different periods is that, except in the wartime episode, they do not show what Mr. Warren says they show. First of all, in two of the periods (1946–50 and 1956–60), real wages actually fell. In these two periods, clearly, neither trade unions nor anything else were able to "effectively raise real wages." Secondly, in the one postwar period when wages did rise (1950–55), trade union activity, whether political or other, had virtually nothing to do with it. The rise was due to competitive wage increases granted by the regionally based political parties. It was quite clearly a rise of the type mentioned above in category (4): a popularity-winning type of increase, arising out of an election campaign; it was aimed at wage earners as a group and not designed to respond to unusual discontent. There is not the slightest evidence that it was dictated by a desire to appease trade union demands or to win trade union institutional favor.

Mr. Warren recognizes the basic origin of the 1954–55 wage increases. He writes:

> . . . the competitive wage fixing of 1954–1955 was rather a special case, involving as it did initiative from above by the regional governments (page 30).

But then he goes on to say:

> However, in this case, "classical" elements of a defensive reaction to the threat of radicalization of the trade unions and the urban wage earners

> were present. In a national context, the wage increases granted by the federal, Eastern, and Northern governments were a defensive response, and one moreover designed to head off an attempt to gain working class support by the more radically oriented Action Group. Further, although the initiative was governmental, it was an initiative directed deliberately to a situation known to be shaped and partly dominated by the trade unions which were, after the autumn of 1953, nationally strong, militant, and once more united.

Now, of the many comments possible about this statement, the kindest is that it is just plain wrong. Warren's "evidence," in a footnote, is that before the 1954 federal elections, a particular group of Marxist intellectuals individually joined the Action Group (the political party dominant in the Western Region), that these intellectuals had been "closely linked" to the Nigerian Labor Congress (an ephemeral radical-dominated central labor organization), and that they believed in a "trade union base for left wing political activity."[3]

Let us be clear about how intellectually objectionable a procedure is involved here, and what great violence is done to historical reality. We have a set of historical events: the granting of substantial wage increases by the various governments in Nigeria in 1954 and 1955. The apparent explanation is political competition between regionally based political parties, since the increases followed campaign pledges; and once one region had increased its wage rates, it was practically impossible for the other regional governments to desist. There were no evident signs of unrest; it was, indeed, precisely because the "social and political conditions for revolutionary action seemed less auspicious in 1954 than previously . . . [that the radical intellectuals] agreed that it would be more realistic . . . to join one of the two major parties in Nigeria."[4] In spite of this, Mr. Warren asserts that the wage increases were a "defensive response" designed to head off an Action Group attempt to win working class support, and that this is demonstrated by the decision of a few radical intellectuals to join the Action Group in 1954.

The implicit assumptions involved here are: (1) that the entry of the radicals into the Action Group was in some meaningful sense a trade union act; (2) that their entry had some effect on Action Group policies; (3) that the Action Group in fact "made an attempt to gain working class support"; and (4) that the governments of Nigeria responded to this attempt by raising wages.

Not a single one of these assumptions is supportable from existing knowledge of the history and dynamics of Nigerian politics during the period under discussion. After 1950, what the radical intellectuals said or did meant very little in Nigeria. They were a small and ineffectual group, divorced from the mainstream of politics. Their influence in the trade union movement was slight and uncertain. The fact that some of these intellectuals with trade union ties decided as individuals to join the Action Group in 1954 implied very little, if anything, for the trade unions. Nor did the entry of these few men into the Action Group have any apparent effect on Action Group policies.

The statement that the Action Group "made an attempt to gain working class support" is not meaningful. In a vague and general way, all the parties were interested in getting votes of urban residents, including wage earners. But this had nothing to do with the trade unions as political institutions; political parties would be interested in worker votes even in the absence of trade unions. The Action Group made few if any special efforts to win over trade unions or their representatives. Aside from its ethnic character (Yoruba), it was a party dominated by the professional and business class.[5] No more than the other main parties in Nigeria did it take any concrete organizational initiatives aimed at the trade unions. Indeed, the only specific step in this direction was made in the Northern Region, where the Northern People's Congress organized and affiliated the Northern Mine Worker's Union in 1954. By all objective indicators, the political parties were almost wholly uninterested in trade unions during these years and did not consider them as a significant political force. After 1950 there were no formal links between unions and political parties except as noted above, in the North. Trade unionists, or people with even some trade union background and experience, were extremely few on party executive organs or in legislative bodies.[6]

It is the limited political presence of the trade unions, symbolized by the slight contribution of the labor movement to party and elected leadership, which led Sklar to conclude that "the only socioeconomic interest group of major importance that is not assimilated into the effective party system is organized labor."[7]

A Nigerian trade unionist provides an interesting final comment on the meaningfulness of Mr. Warren's statement that the 1954–55 wage increases were "a defensive reaction," and one "directed deliberately toward a situation known to be shaped and partly dominated by the trade unions." He writes:

> It should be clearly understood that the 1952 temporary award of 12–1/2% on salaries and wages, the 1954 Gorsuch salary review and the 1959 Mbanefo and other Regional Governments' awards were not the fruits of our direct fight. Lack of unity in the movement made us shy of the issues, and as a result, none of the awards could be favorably compared with our 1945 and 1946 achievements. Rather, I might be right to regard them as grudging acts of grace from the Government, or as a sort of manna from Heaven.[8]

In two of the three postwar periods, then, real wages did not increase at all, and in the third period (1950–56), the rise was due mainly to political competition unrelated to the trade unions. This leaves the war period to be considered. My own view is that the apparent rise of real wages during the wartime period is at least partly a statistical illusion, arising from understatement in the official price index of wartime price rises. Since I am the assembler of the price series used by Warren, it would be bad form for me to deny their validity. In defense, I will say only that it was with great reluctance that I used the available figures for retail price changes in Lagos during the war years, and that the dubious reliability of these figures is twice stressed in my article. It is certain that consumer prices rose by more than is indicated in the official index.[9]

As indicated in the tables given in my paper and used by Warren, import prices in general rose by much more than the official consumer price index. The "import purchasing power of wages" and the "textile purchasing power" series suggest substantial declines in real wage incomes during most of the war years. In any event, the data on prices are certainly not strong enough to bear the weight Mr. Warren would put upon them.

There none the less remains the puzzling question of why the wage earner in Lagos received a wage increase in 1942 which was relatively large by West African standards. Everywhere in West Africa, as in most parts of the world, increases in consumer prices during World War II led to money wage increases and cost of living supplements. But these increases were especially large in Nigeria, and it is their greater magnitude (as compared, say, with Ghana) which raises the possibility that special influences such as trade union pressures were at work. Given the conceptual difficulties involved in establishing lines of causation, and the rudimentary state of knowledge of events of that period, it is not possible to rule out some trade union influence. Union growth was rapid during this period, and there were some strikes and agitation, notably among railroad workers. But there is reason to be skeptical about the degree of trade union influence in the wage decision of 1942. For one thing, if the unions were able to pressure government into a generous wage award in 1942, why were they unable to do the same between 1942 and 1945? After 1942 prices undoubtedly rose appreciably. Yet no wage adjustments were made until the end of 1945. This occurred in spite of a promise by the governor of the time that the cost of living would be kept under constant review, and that allowances would be adjusted according to the rise in prices throughout the war.[10] This promise was not kept despite reminders by the unions and trade union displeasure on this issue.[11]

Are there alternative explanations of the magnitude of the 1942 wage increase? There is one set of factors which, though neither neat nor elegant, may have greater explanatory value than any other. The size of the 1942 increase may have been in a sense an accident, arising out of certain procedures adopted by the committee appointed to inquire into the cost of living in 1942, coupled with administrative or political exigencies which made rejection of the committee's recommendation difficult.

The 1942 wage increase was made on the recommendation of a Cost of Living Committee (the Bridges Committee), which was appointed by the Colonial administration to determine how much consumer prices had risen since the beginning of World War II. It was understood that the committee's findings would determine the size of the wage increase that government would grant its unskilled employees.

On the basis of an elaborate study (of dubious technical validity),[12] the committee found that the cost of living in Lagos had increased by 47 percent between 1939 and April 1942. They therefore recommended a cost of living allowance of 50 percent of the basic wage. But the committee did not stop there. It proceeded to confuse the "objective" issue of how much price levels had increased with the normative issue of what the "minimum needs" of the Lagos laborer were. On the basis of a "model minimum diet" and related considerations, they recommended an additional increase bringing the minimum rise in cost of living allowance in Lagos to one shilling a day, on the grounds that two shillings a day was a reasonable minimum subsistence income. Thus, the unskilled laborer in Lagos who was up to that time earning a basic wage of one shilling a day saw his starting rate doubled.[13]

Underlying this recommendation was a phenomenon common in the wage determination process throughout the underdeveloped world: the tendency for people who are appointed to commissions of inquiry, wage boards, wage tribunals, etc., to be moved by the poverty of the lowest paid urban wage earners, and for wage recommendations to reflect this humanitarian or moral impulse. The Bridges Committee recorded its reaction as follows:

> [We] have received overwhelming visual as well as oral evidence of the poverty and difficult conditions of life of the labouring classes—and this, of course, is no new discovery. In the present connection, the important significance of these adverse conditions lies in their indication that the labouring population generally lives from hand to mouth, with little or no margin of earnings left after expenditure upon essentials—meals, clothing, and a roof over their heads. Any increase in the cost of these essentials, therefore, however small, must profoundly affect this class of the population.[14]

Most of the answer to the 1942 wage puzzle probably lies here. The Cost of Living Committee, moved by the evidence of urban poverty it saw in Lagos, made a recommendation designed not simply to take account of price increases, but also to raise the real income of unskilled workers to a more "humane" level. The rationale for its recommendation was not only that prices had risen, but that the Lagos laborer lived in conditions of extreme poverty, so that "social justice" and equity demanded a higher real wage. In this sense, the 1942 Committee undoubtedly went beyond its terms of reference.[15] Once the recommendation was out, however, the Colonial administration could not easily reject it, particularly since the administrators were themselves not unmoved by these appeals to social justice. And even if they were cold to such appeals, it was politically and administratively difficult for them to reject the recommendations made by the Cost of Living Committee.

We have thus far considered two of the subperiods during which Mr. Warren argues that trade union political pressure pushed up real wage levels—the 1939–46 years and the period 1950–55. The two periods when real wages fell also require some attention. The years 1946–50 are particularly interesting. If trade union political pressure or "defensive" government wage policy were significant elements in determining wage changes, it should have been evident during the period 1946–50. For in these years consumer prices rose rapidly, nationalistic politics were at their peak of intensity, and the trade unions and union leadership were involved in political activity to an extent unmatched throughout the whole period. Yet real wages fell sharply.

Mr. Warren's explanation is that the colonial authorities "adopted a labor policy which identified labor issues with the political issues at a time when the authorities regarded repression rather than concession as the answer to nationalist politics."[16]

This "explanation" is scarcely consistent with the general argument that the labor movement's political influence induced government to raise wages. It implies that the government's decision not to budge on wages between 1946 and 1950 was determined autonomously; it was not influenced by trade union activity.[17] During the years when the Nigerian trade unions were most politically committed, most effective and most influential, the colonial administration ignored their wage demands and real wages fell substantially.[18] This striking conjuncture of events should have been enough to suggest the need for caution in putting forward general propositions about the trade union ability to raise wage levels through the political process.

In the second half of the 1950's, money wages again failed to keep pace with consumer price rises. It is not impossible, and in fact seems likely, that the trade union presence reduced the rate of increase of money wages during these years. There is no objective evidence to prove this point. I was told by high Labor Department officials in Lagos in 1958 that government had been ready for many months to raise wages, but the trade union representatives, at that time engaged in heated internal political struggles, had been unable or unwilling to present wage demands to government. Since a direct government initiative would only lead to demands for more substantial increases, government simply waited. If this testimony is to be believed, then the unions were at least partly responsible for the wage decline of the late 1950's.

There remains one final point. The assumption throughout Mr. Warren's discussion is that real wages in Nigeria did in fact rise "substantially" or "significantly" over the period he considers. The data, however, are hardly persuasive on this point; over the period 1949–60 the mean annual wage was only about 3 percent above its 1949 level; between 1949 and 1960 the compound rate of increase was 1.6 percent. Whether this is or is not "significant" is of course open to interpretation, but an average rise in the level of real wages of 3 percent or an annual rate of increase of less than 2 percent cannot be called a major economic event. It is interesting that between 1949 and 1960 real wages appear to have risen less in Nigeria than in any of twelve African countries for which I have attempted to calculate real wage series.[19] And in a number of these countries trade unions were either nonexistent or in an embryonic state (Congo, Southern Rhodesia, and Uganda, for example). Neither in absolute terms, nor compared to other countries in a similar stage of development, was the increase in real wages in Nigeria between 1939 and 1960 impressive.

This analysis, then, leads to conclusions directly contrary to those put forward by Mr. Warren. Real wages rose relatively little in Nigeria between 1939 and 1960, substantially less than in other African countries where there was only a slight trade union presence and where market factors do not seem to have been appreciably different than in Nigeria. To the extent that real wages did rise, trade union political pressures—actual or potential—had relatively little to do with it; the main direct union impact on wage levels (mentioned by Warren and not challenged in this note) was in extending government wage awards to the private sector.

When real wages rise in a situation where market forces are unfavorable, it is natural enough to see trade union activity as a major influence. But in most of the underdeveloped world the trade unions are too weak to have much of an influence on wage levels. The tendency to focus on them has diverted attention from what are probably the more basic and general factors—the ideological or intellectual environment which shapes the ideas of policy makers, and the nature of decision-making in the public sectors of the less developed countries. Thus, wage behavior cannot be explained without understanding the role of prevailing ideas of social justice and "fair" wages, and without taking into account the administrative process by which wages are fixed. Economic factors are not irrelevant either, though they tend to operate mainly in a permissive sense, and at the extremes; budget stringency tends to restrain wages and budgetary affluence makes them possible. Nor are trade union pressures altogether absent, as events in Nigeria in 1964 (when trade union activity did lead to a wage increase) indicate. In general, however, and certainly in the case of Nigeria between 1939 and 1960, trade unions are a minor factor in wage determination.

1 W. M. Warren, "Urban Real Wages and the Nigerian Trade Union Movement, 1939–60," *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (October 1966), p. 21.

2 *Ibid.*, pp. 33–36.

3 P. 31. Warren cites Richard Sklar's exhaustive study of Nigerian politics, *Nigerian Political Parties* (Princeton, 1963). Sklar in the pages cited by Warren mentions these facts, but his discussion shows the political isolation and powerlessness both of the trade unions and of the radicals in Nigeria during these years.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 270. It is interesting to note that between 1951 and 1955, man-days lost through work stoppages fell sharply as compared with the preceding five years. In terms of man-days lost, strike activities were as follows: 1951—10,000; 1952—69,000; 1953—13,000; 1954—23,000; 1955—10,000. For the 1946–50 figures, see note 18 below. I am indebted to John Weeks of the University of Michigan for this point.

5 Sklar, *op. cit.*, Ch. XI.

6 Of the 211 federal leaders of the three main parties in 1958, only eight were in the category "agents of cultural and political associations," among whom trade union officials would be placed; only four had a background of wage-earning manual labor. Sklar, *op. cit.*, p. 486. In the 1954 election which preceded ministerial government throughout Nigeria, of the total of 425 elected members of the four legislative assemblies, eight were trade unionists by occupation, and "It is difficult to know whether these got in in their capacity as trade unionists." A. Akpala, *The Prospects of Small Trade Unions in Nigeria* (Enugu, 1963), p. 26. Of the 84 Eastern and Western Region members in the 1957 Federal House of Representatives, only three had any trade union experience at all—or at least enough to think it worth mentioning in their official biographies. *Who's Who of the Federal House of Representatives* (Lagos, 1958).

7 Sklar, *op. cit.*, p. 495.

8 Eyo Okun Aka, *Our Labour Movement* (Lagos, 1963), p. 24.

9 E. Berg, "Real Income Trends in West Africa, 1939–1960," in M. Herskovitz and M. Harwitz, eds., *Economic Transition in Africa* (Northwestern University Press, 1964), pp. 203–10. As so often happens, the need to shorten the original draft of this article led to the dropping of certain footnotes and a

deletion of hesitant passages. It may be of interest to give one of the deleted footnotes:

According to the official Lagos cost of living index prices during the war changed as follows:

Date	General index	Food	Rent
Sept. 1939	100	100	100
April 1942	147	153	103
April 1943	159	167	106
April 1944	161	160	106
April 1945	176	185	111
Oct. 1945	175	184	111

The general practice in compiling the index was to take official prices, not actual prevailing market prices. Thus, there were some periods when certain foodstuffs disappeared almost entirely from Lagos markets; this is not reflected in the food price quotations. The rent item is obviously unbelievable; African trade union representatives claimed a rise of 400 percent had occurred in low-cost house rents between 1939 and 1945. See *Colonial Office Enquiry to the Cost of Living and the Control of the Cost of Living in the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria*, Colonial No. 204 (London, 1946).

10 *Report of the Cost of Living Committee* (Lagos, 1942), p. 93.

11 Cf. Agwu Akpala, *The Prospects of Small Trade Unions in Nigeria* (Enugu, 1963), p. 21.

12 The study was done by "volunteers . . . friends of the members of the committee . . . [who were asked to] distribute and collect forms for a survey of household budgets." *Cost of Living Committee* (1942), *op. cit.*, p. 96. A thousand questionnaires were distributed on 100 streets in Lagos. Of these, 256 were useable—"useable" being very generously defined. There were substantial difficulties in obtaining meaningful price quotations.

13 It is illuminating to see how the committee arrived at these recommendations. In part for normative reasons, and in part because of uncertainties regarding actual consumer expenditure patterns, the committee priced a laborer's "model minimum diet" as proposed by dieticians. Its cost had risen, they found, from 10d a day in July 1940 to 1/1d in June 1942. They then proceeded to determine an "appropriate" wage as follows: they first decided that the laborer probably devoted about a quarter of his wage income to the support of his family. So, of the prevailing wage of 1 shilling a day, he had 9d for himself. The committee then assumed that the laborer spent 50 percent of this for food. It deducted this 4.5d from the cost of the model minimum diet

(1/1d), which yielded the "right" amount to be granted as a wage increase—i.e., 8.5d. But this still left unaccounted for the rise in cost of other items of expenditure. It was assumed that nonfood expenditure had risen by 40 percent since 1939; 40 percent of nonfood expenditure, assumed to be half the daily wages of 1 shilling, gave 2.5d. An additional 0.75d was added for increased costs for the rest of the household. The committee thus arrived at a final cost of living allowance of 8.5d plus 2.5d plus 0.75d, rounded off to 1 shilling.

14 *1942 Cost of Living Committee*, p. 96.

15 An additional factor may have been the interim award made by the government while the Committee was sitting. This award was equal to the price rise as determined by the Committee. Since it is not "normal" for a cost of living committee to recommend no rise, the members may have felt compelled to add something more.

16 Warren, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

17 To the extent that political involvement of the unions led the colonial administration to identify labor issues with political issues, then one could argue that the effect was to reduce real wages.

18 This occurred despite relatively intensive strike activity. Man-days lost through strikes were as follows: 1946—51,000; 1947—134,000; 1948—61,000; 1949—581,000; 1950—294,000. As can be seen from comparable data for 1951–55 (note 4 above), these are relatively high figures.

19 Unpublished manuscript.

Volume 17 Number 4

Center for Research on Economic Development
CRED Reprints

No. 1. "Nigerian Government Spending on Agricultural Development: 1962/3–1966/7" by Jerome C. Wells. (*The Nigerian Journal of Economic and Social Studies,* November 1967)

No. 2. "Major Issues of Wage Policy in Africa" by Elliot J. Berg. (Arthur M. Ross, Editor, *Industrial Relations in Economic Development,* Macmillan, 1965)

No. 3. "The Myth of the Amorphous Peasantry: A Northern Nigerian Case Study" by Polly Hill (Mrs. M. E. Humphreys). (*The Nigerian Journal of Economic and Social Studies,* July 1968)

No. 4. "Urban Real Wages and the Nigerian Trade Union Movement, 1939–60: A Comment" by Elliot J. Berg. (*Economic Development and Cultural Change,* July 1969)