

**LABOUR GROUPS AND NIGERIA'S UNITY: A CASE STUDY OF THE COLONIAL PUBLIC WORKS
DEPARTMENT (PWD) WORKERS, 1925 – 1960**

Lawrence, Chichebem Solomon

Department of History and International Studies, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria

E-mail: cs.lawrence@unizik.edu.ng or lawrencesolomon2016@gmail.com

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Obiakor, Nwachukwu

Department of History and International Studies, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria

E-mail: nj.obiakor@unizik.edu.ng

Abstract

Admittedly, the thought that amalgamation alone would crystalize into unification has in Nigeria's case proven to be a mirage. Nigeria currently stands on a dangerous precipice. Centrifugal and other forces have combined to weaken the fabrics of its unity. Incessant secessionist calls are gaining momentum from various quarters and are tightening the noose on the entity called Nigeria. Worse still, lack of inclusion in the running of the affairs of the government has also brightened the prospect of total collapse. How can this impending tragedy be prevented? There is no better time for scholars to start searching for better nation-building strategies that will consolidate, bolster and save Nigeria's unity. In doing this, history cannot be ignored as it shows the link between the past and the present and holds a pool of viable solutions to man's present existential needs. The history of the area now called Nigeria is replete with unity-promoting efforts by various individuals, entities and groups. Studying and reappraising these efforts are important as they will show how more hands are to be engaged in the business of nation-building. This paper therefore examines the contributions of the Public Works Department (PWD) workers to the unification of Nigeria during the colonial era. The aim is to show the relevance of labour groups in the process of national unification. The paper contends that national unity has a huge maintenance cost that cannot be offset by only the political class, and thus would require a more holistic and inclusive approach that places the hands of every group in the country on the deck. Primary and secondary sources of materials are used in this paper, including archival materials, government gazettes, texts books etc.

Keywords: Labour groups, Nigeria, Unity, Colonial, PWD

Introduction

Since the attainment of political independence, Nigeria has continued to grapple with the challenge of nation-building. One of the greatest obstacles in this drive is lack of national cohesion and integration. National integration is paramount to nation building. However, efforts at achieving integration have not yielded much fruit. Perhaps, the thought that amalgamation alone would crystalize into unification has proved to be illusive and refutable. Nigeria currently stands on a dangerous precipice. The country has in the recent times witnessed a gradual wearing away of the cords that bind its peoples together. Centrifugal and other forces have combined to weaken unity and patriotic commitment to one nation, thereby tightening the noose on the entity called Nigeria. Incessant secessionist calls are gaining momentum from various quarters as Nigeria is seen as a mere 'geographical expression.' Worse still, lack of inclusion in the running of the affairs of the government has also helped to undermine integration. Going by the Global Fragile States Index, which measures the extent to which states are vulnerable to conflict, Nigeria currently ranks 14th from the bottom among 163 countries assessed.¹ Nigeria's unity is currently in the balance. Scholars are now considering how to promote the unity of the country to save it from total collapse.

If there must be a way forward however, one must ask, why have efforts at national integration so far considerably failed and how can it be better achieved? To obtain reasonable answer to this question, one must turn back to history, one of Nigeria's greatest assets that has been largely underutilized. Nigeria's history shows that what helped to keep the unity of the people that now make up Nigeria during the pre-colonial and even colonial era was the activities of individuals and groups. These included warriors, traders, craftsmen and other workers and their guilds who

spearheaded and enabled close interaction among the peoples of Nigeria. Indeed, Nigeria's history corroborates the fact that the greatest agent in moving any nation forward and keeping it united is her human capital.

Workers or labour groups perform productive and pressurizing roles. Their productive roles such as food production, infrastructure provision, transport service provision among others contribute immensely to nation-building. They also perform pressurizing roles which they carry out more on the platform of unions. Although labour unionism has an element of selfishness imbued in it, it is not purely anti-nationalistic, but also contributes to nation-building. For instance, the activities of trade unions help to reduce or compress economic disparities and class-based inequalities.ⁱⁱ It also propels citizens' engagement by showing the populace how to speak with one voice and hold the government accountable to adopt the right policies and deliver on good governance which is an essential part of nation-building. Moreover, the role of labour groups and trade unions transcend the traditional role of protecting workers welfare and class liberation.ⁱⁱⁱ They play productive roles which can be harnessed for national unification as this study will show. Unfortunately, the political class has tried to oppose, weaken and threaten the existence of labour unions, seeing them to be 'anti-nationalistic, and have not motivated workers enough.'^{iv} To fast-track national integration, this narrative has to change. The political class alone cannot achieve national unity. If anything, the failure of amalgamation to unite Nigeria has shown that national unity cannot be achieved by administrative magic wands. It requires collective efforts, including the efforts of labour groups.

Beginning with A.G. Hopkins' seminal work, which focused on the Lagos Strike of 1897, the subject matter of labour unionism in colonial Nigeria has received significant scholarly attention. Some of the scholars who have contributed include R. Cohen, Wale Oyemakinde, T.M. Yesufu, Ajayi Rotimi, R.O. Nwabueze among others.^v One thing that is common among all their works is the revelation that labour unions played both economic and political roles in colonial Nigeria and beyond. This is crucial to the present study. However, none of them focused specifically on labour groups in the PWD. Works on the PWD are hard to come by. The few ones include A.G. Hopkins' Lagos Strike of 1897 and Ibiyemi Salami's. While the former relates the story of the Lagos Strike of 1897, the latter focused on the composition and output of PWD's architectural unit between 1900 and 1960. The overall aim of the work is to find out the circumstances that shaped and influenced colonial architectural forms in Nigeria.

None of all the works reviewed so far however studied labour groups in the context of their contributions to Nigeria's unity. Although many scholars have recognized the role of labour unions in facilitating national development, they have been mostly silent on the aspect of its contribution to unity. True, some scholars like Damilola Adebayo,^{vi} Nnamdi Erondi^{vii} and others have passingly touched on the importance of labour unions to national integration and scholars like Tajudeen Alabede^{viii} and others have harped on national integration as an independent subject. Yet, none of them showed the practical contributions of labour groups, let alone PWD workers, to the achievement of national integration in Nigeria. This work attempts at closing this gap. Exploring this aspect of the body of literature is vital as national development cannot be fully achieved without a united nation. Establishing through studies that labour groups have the potentials to fast-track national integration will help convince the government that labour groups are partners in progress, not enemies and should be given sufficient encouragement and space to function.

It is against this backdrop that this study explores the numerous contributions of the PWD workers in keeping the country united during the colonial era as a way of establishing and affirming that labour groups are useful hands in the forging and maintenance of national unity. The study picks up from 1925 and terminates in 1960. The year 1925 was the year that Mr. H.E. Walker, the then Director of PWD was commissioned to prepare a scheme for a trunk road system, to enable the general road system to become a coordinated whole.^{ix} The PWD was then given the responsibility of constructing and managing the Trunk A Roads, which provided the main grid, linking the major administrative centres in the country.^x However, apart from the provision of socio-economic infrastructure that helped to facilitate closer interaction between the peoples of Nigeria, the PWD made many other contributions as this paper shows. The paper contends that labour groups should be purposefully engaged in the process of fast-tracking national unity.

The rest of the paper is divided into three sections. The first section traces the historical background of the PWD and its workers/labour unions. The second focuses on the contributions of the PWD workers to national integration in Nigeria while in the third, concluding remarks are made.

Historical Background and Evolution of the PWD and its Workers' Unions

Before the advent of colonial rule, traditional form of trade unions existed in Nigeria. These included organization of hunters, blacksmiths, carvers and weavers, and could be regarded as trade unions because they regulated trade practices, offered mutual aid and fixed prices/wages for their services.^{xi}

The history of modern labour unions including the Public Works Department Workers Union can be traced to the establishment of the civil service in Nigeria. On July 24, 1874 when Lagos was separated from the West African Territory headquartered in Sierra Leone, was merged with the Gold Coast and constituted as an independent territory.^{xii} Apart from the stationing of a Lieutenant Governor in Lagos, some departments such as the Marine, Harbor, Custom, Public Works Department (PWD), Posts and Telegraphs, Treasury among others were established to act as the civil service.^{xiii}

Prominent among these departments established was the Public Works Department (PWD). Although the PWD officially started operation in Nigeria on July 24, 1874 the PWD, it was merged with the Survey Office. A publication on Saturday, 27th of February, 1886, in the Government Gazette, notifying the public about the employment of some workers in the 'Public Works and Survey Department' buttresses this point.^{xiv} It remained merged with the Survey Office until 1896 when it regained its independence and officially became an independent government agency.^{xv} With the establishment of these departments, workers which gradually grew in number were employed to work in them, including the PWD. Some of the well-known Nigerians employed by the PWD at one time or the other include Herbert Macaulay, Joseph Ayo Babalola, W.A. Dawodu, Obidigwe Okonkwo Ngige (father of Dr Chris Ngige, the current Minister of Labour and Productivity) and many others.^{xvi}

The PWD workers were charged with the duty of infrastructural development for the whole country. They were to connect and link the Nigerian geographical space through road transport networks and other communication facilities. It must be realized that the success of the colonial officers in exploiting the resources of Nigeria hinged largely on the ability of the PWD to use socio-economic infrastructure to unite the country and make it a connected whole. This task was executed through the PWD workers including apart from clerks, messengers, drivers, time-keepers, bricklayers, carpenters, road men, fore-men, also much later, supervisors, assistant engineers, engineers and so on. With time these began to unionize.

Although the seed of unionism was sown in the PWD in 1897 with the PWD Lagos Strike that took place in that year, the dissatisfaction with the operational mode of the NCSU,^{xvii} the first recorded trade union to be formed in Nigeria on Monday, August 19, 1912, was the immediate cause of the rise of labour unions in the PWD. The Lagos Strike involved more than 3,000 PWD workers who protested against the government decision to drive down their pay while at the same time increasing their workload. Although the workers didn't act as a 'union,' but they acted in unison. Nonetheless it was part of the formative stages in the development of unionism in the PWD.

The next stage was the coming together of workers in the same profession or trade within the PWD to take uniform decisions. They grouped themselves according to their trades and work specializations such as carpenters, messengers, artisans among others and acted in unison, though not going by the name 'union.' A good example is the PWD carpenters that joined their colleagues in the Railway Department for a strike in 1920.^{xviii} In 1921 again, many PWD workers joined their colleagues in the Railway Department to go on strike.^{xix} It was the docile disposition of the NCSU that made the springing up of other unions like Railways, Marines and Public Works Department unions inevitable as they had to pragmatically fight for their rights without waiting for the NCSU.^{xx}

What can be deduced from the foregoing is that before the 1920s, formation of quasi labour unions had begun to take place within the PWD and elsewhere. Also before the passage of the Trade Union Ordinance (TUO) in 1938, full blown trade unions had existed in the PWD. For instance, the African Staff of Electrical Workers Improvement Union (ASEWIU) which later metamorphosed into Nigerian Electrical (PWD) Workers Union (NEWU) had been formed and was in operation before the TUO was passed. The ASEWIU was passed in January 1938. After the enactment of the TUO more unions were formed within the PWD. Examples are the PWD Progressive Ex-Servicemen Union, the Public Works Department Workers Union (PWDWU) among others. Although these unions had members drawn from across the regions of the country, the PWDWU was the most inclusive. The NEWU was the second most popular.

While the PWDWU was open to all categories of workers in the PWD, the NEWU was open to only all categories of workers in the electricity unit. The PWDWU was officially registered with the government in 1941.^{xxi} In 1945, after the General Workers Strike, the NEWU was amalgamated with the PWDWU and became PWD General Workers Union.^{xxii} Hence, it became the main union and voice of all categories of workers in the PWD, and had more than 30 branches across the zones and cities of country.^{xxiii} Thus there are four main discernible stages in the evolution of unions in the PWD. These are the momentum/(foundational) stage (1897-1920), the mono-trade-based unionism/primary stage (1920s), the unit-based unionism/secondary stage (1930s) and the unifying/departmental/tertiary stage (1940s till date)

Contributions of the PWD Workers to Nigeria's Unity

The PWD workers contributed to the unification of the peoples of Nigeria in many ways. This section examines these contributions.

It must first be understood that PWD workers contributed to Nigeria's unity through their productive activities. By the virtue of the nature of work committed into their hands, they were able to facilitate the integration of the peoples of Nigeria. The PWD workers were in charge of managing, constructing, improving and maintaining important roads that linked the peoples together, making it easier for them to be in closer touch with each other. Although before the mid-1920s, road building efforts of the PWD were not well coordinated, starting from 1925 however, the country's major road networks were harmonized by the PWD, making movement within the entire country a lot easier. Examples of such roads were Lagos-Ibadan road, Benin-Asaba road and others which linked major cities in the West and beyond. In the East, the Onitsha-Enugu road was one of these trunk A roads. Other major roads constructed in the Eastern Region apart from the Onitsha-Enugu Road, include Aba-Opobo Road, Port Harcourt-Ogoni-Kono Road, Abakiliki-Obubra Road among others.^{xxiv}

However, the PWD was involved in and contributed to the building of roads in the small polities too. This is contrary to the general belief also contained in literature that the PWD only concentrated on the central government. The PWD either rendered technical assistance in the building of the roads there or got involved through one of its workers, an NA seconded officer. The PWD also took over the development and maintenance of NA roads as the usefulness of the roads increased. They also maintained the roads to ensure free flow of traffic by mending pot-holes, cutting grasses and trees growing into the roads etc.^{xxv}

It must be stated that the efforts at ensuring free flow of traffic was also an effort to ensure free flow of relationship among the people of Nigeria. Although the colonial government used the road networks to serve their administrative and exploitative ends, the roads equally acted as bonds for the peoples of Nigeria by facilitating and spurring the easy movement of goods and services across the regions. It needs to be emphasized that huge transportation infrastructure deficit also results in integration deficits. When people find it difficult to reach themselves, relating together will be difficult, let alone understanding each other. Most of the advanced countries where national integration has succeeded to a very great extent were able to reduce their transportation infrastructure deficit to the barest minimum. The PWD workers made significant contributions to reducing the infrastructure deficit during the colonial era.

The development of road transportation infrastructure led to the development of road transportation-related services. In the Southeast for instance, indigenous transport service providing firms such as Ulasi L.P., Ojukwu, Albert Igbokwe, A.E Ilodibe, F.N. Okonkwo among others sprang up beginning from the late 1920s. They also had their branches in many important towns and urban centers in Nigeria such as Onitsha, Aba, Port Harcourt, Nnewi, Enugu in the Southeast, Lagos and Ibadan in the West, Makurdi, Kano and Kaduna in the North.^{xxvi} What these developments achieved was the further promotion of national unity. Through the activities of these transport service providers, commercial ties and relations between the people of Southeastern Nigeria, their neighbours and other regions in the country were promoted.

Apart from roads, the PWD workers were involved in building houses and administrative buildings in places like Lagos, Ibadan, Enugu, Kano, Kaduna, Port Harcourt and in many other places across the country. These became relevant points of interaction among the various peoples of Nigeria. The PWD architects produced identical building designs used across the country in constructing the administrative buildings. For instance, there were Type A1, A2, A3, A4, B1, B2, B3, etc designed and built across the country.^{xxvii} This created a sense of oneness among the peoples

of Nigeria. They also built, maintained and monitored residential buildings and advised the government on all matters relating to housing and other infrastructures. These no doubt contributed not only to economic development and nation building but also to 'nation-bonding' as these infrastructures served as meeting points.

Moreover, the provision of quarters for the PWD and other government workers served as another platform for the PWD workers to relate and contribute to national unity. The PWD had staff quarters mainly for its permanent workers. These were built based on grade and areas of work. For example, there were 1st class clerks staff quarters, Secretariat Clerk Staff Quarters, Messengers quarters, Artisan Quarters etc.^{xxviii} In these quarters housing workers from different parts of the country, interactions that helped to strengthen national unity took place. Apart from the relationships that budded within the quarters, tenants also related with quarters administrators. They also reported damages or anything that could lead to damage and proved that they were not responsible for the damage. A Yard Superintendent was in charge of taking care of each of the quarters.^{xxix} He also related with the tenants. The PWD Divisional Engineer which played a supervisory role over the quarters within his area of jurisdiction and carried out regular inspection of the quarters from time to time to ascertain the condition of the yards also interfaced with the workers.^{xxx}

Apart from staff quarters, commonly used facilities like hospitals also facilitated national unity. PWD and other government workers were encouraged to use Government and African hospitals within the areas of their primary assignment. In the old Eastern Region for instance, there were government hospitals in Itu [Calabar], Port Harcourt, Ogburn, Ogoja, Owerri, Abakaliki, Afikpo, Okigwe among others.^{xxxi} In all of these Government and African hospitals, workers were given free medical treatment.^{xxxii} Interactions among PWD and other government workers also took place in these hospitals and helped to strengthen national unity.

Also important in facilitating national unity were the pre-building, building and maintenance operations of the PWD that produced the infrastructures delivered. The operations involved in the construction of roads and houses for instance included forest cutting, stone gathering, quarrying, brick-making, wood processing, building materials sourcing and importation, soil testing, architectural drawing, foundation-digging and excavation, piling, brick-laying, plastering, painting, tarring/bituminous surfacing, bridge building, road construction, road-clearing, pot-holes filling, work supervision etc. These were largely social works that enabled people to relate together. The construction sites for instance were points of interaction among artisans, building professionals, food vendors, building material suppliers among others.

Also, one of the factors that helped to consolidate unity among the various peoples that make up Nigeria during the colonial era was the migration and free mobility of labour. Apart from migrant labour who worked and settled in various parts of the country at different times, employees of private companies and government departments also moved through official transfers and reposting. The PWD had branches scattered all over the country. Workers could be sent or transferred from a branch in the North to anyone in the South and vice versa. For instance, one Mr. D.O. Alabi, an African PWD 1st class clerk (a Yoruba man), who was working in Enugu and resident in a 1st Class Clerk Quarters in Enugu, was later transferred to Port Harcourt in 1931.^{xxxiii} Such transfers were done not just in the 1930s but also beyond. The policy of transfer adopted by the PWD helped to cement the unity of the people of Nigeria. It created an atmosphere of unity and togetherness among the various groups that made up the country. As a scholar has pointed out, "initially, Southern and Northern migrants to Northern towns lived together peacefully with their hosts..."^{xxxiv} When transferred, the worker had to learn the language of the people and by so doing got more integrated. Some even established their own firms where they relocated and became contractors.

Another way the PWD workers contributed to national unity was through the free and fair awarding of contracts to indigenous contractors across the country and keeping relationship with them. By 1939, the use of contractors by the PWD had become more pronounced. Some of the indigenous contractors used by the Federal PWD and the highest value of the contract they got were Mr G. Akin Taylor (£13,228), Mr S.B. Bakare (£13, 152), Messrs T.A. Oni and Sons Ltd. (£13, 042), Mr F.O. Mbadiwe and Sons (£8, 721), Mr M.A. Nigumi (£4, 707), Eastern General Contractor (£2, 885), Mr I.A. Bolade (£2, 627), Mr A.O. Karunwi (£2, 430), E.O. Amene (£2, 007), and Messrs Abdulai and Awomolo (£1, 716).^{xxxv} The PWD workers and administrators maintained relationship with these contractors by entering them into the Federal Works Register of Contractors. Contractors so registered were eligible to be invited to tender for future contracts. The relationship continued except the contractor proved dishonest or incapable. The PWD

maintained a black list where the names of those contractors who had proven worthless and incorrigibly dishonest were entered.^{xxxvi}

Other productive activities of the PWD workers also helped to encourage socio-economic development which helped to maintain relative happiness and facilitated nation-bonding. For instance, gainful work opportunities like car mechanics, spare parts dealings, vulcanizing, car washing and other related occupations were created. These were inter-dependent and so facilitated social relations. It is estimated that Nigeria had about 47,000 people employed in the road transport industry alone by the time of independence.^{xxxvii} These people had to relate one way or the other. Moreover, documentary evidence at the National Archives at Ibadan shows that the PWD workers also built aerodromes, provided water, and for a long time acted as the electric power supply authority throughout Nigeria.^{xxxviii} They also operated sawmill and wood workshops, maintained stores, had a mechanical branch for the repair and maintenance of plants used by it and those of other departments.^{xxxix} In playing these roles, the PWD branches in various parts of the country had to keep interacting.

The PWD workers also contributed significantly to the development of football game in Nigeria, which has not only contributed to the growth of the sports industry but has also acted as a vibrant unifying tool for the country. During the colonial era, many of the government agencies and departments had football teams made up of select number of their employees.^{xl} These represented them in football competitions across the country. This was the formative period of football in Nigeria. The PWD football team was particularly significant as it was popularly known and its members spread football awareness by taking the game to wherever they were posted.^{xli} The Nigeria Football Association (NFA) owes its rise and development to colonial government departments' football teams, and the PWD football club played important role in the whole process.^{xlii} This was another way the PWD contributed to national integration and to the unification of Nigeria.

The PWD also contributed to national integration through their technical training schools in which students from different parts of the country were trained.^{xliii} The headquarter PWD Training School was located at Ijora, Lagos, which is now a workshop of the Federal Ministry of Works. From the 1940s, even the Native Administrations sent willing trainees to the PWD for training.^{xliv} This shows the extent to which labour groups can complement the efforts of the government in the provision of education and other things that promote national development and integration. The trainers were PWD workers. The PWD also partnered with the Education Department to organize evening classes for the apprentices. After their training, these apprentices were employed and injected into the workforce of the Department. Through the training school the PWD workers did not only contribute to educational improvement and economic development, but also helped in national integration through the interactions between students and teachers from various parts of the country and through the injection of their trained hands into the labour force.

Through the administrative structure and functioning of the PWD and its unions, national unity was also promoted. The PWD and its union had branches across the country and they exchanged information and policies and were in touch with each other. For instance, the PWD Workers Union had thirty branches across the zones and cities of the country. The Southeastern branches included, Iju (Iju Water Works) Aro (Aro-Quarry) Aba, Onitsha, Calabar, Abakaliki, Port Harcourt, Enugu, and Afikpo, nine branches altogether. Southwest had 13 branches, the North had only five branches and the South-south and middle belt had the remaining four.^{xlv} These branches had their activities co-ordinated and harmonized at Lagos, where they had their headquarters, by the General Secretary and Assistant General Secretary. The whole process of interaction and consultations helped in no mean way to encourage national unity.

The PWD workers also contributed to national unity during the period of study by joining hands with other labour unions in the country to put pressure on the colonial government to listen to the unanimous demands of Nigerian workers for increase of Cost of Living Allowance by 50 percent back-dated to April, 1944.^{xlvi} For instance, labour groups in the PWD were involved in the labour politics that led to the 1945 General Workers Strike. These were the PWD Workers Union, Nigeria Electrical (PWD) Workers Union and PWD Ijora (Sawmill) Workers Union. They joined other labour unions to sign the Cost of Living Resolution which was championed by the African Civil Servants' Technical Workers Union (ACSTWU) and also heralded the strike.^{xlvii} The 45-day strike by workers that followed after a month ultimatum, led by Michael Imoudu (a foremost Railway Department labour leader), made the government to concede to the demands of the workers.

The PWD workers also contributed to national unity by supporting the nationalist struggles that saw the independence of Nigeria. Their involvement in the 1945 General Workers strike which was a form of nationalist struggle is a good example. The strike which was supported by the nationalists was part of the struggle to free Nigeria from the shackles of colonialism. Another way the PWD put up the nationalist struggle was by defending maltreated Nigerian workers and putting pressures on colonial administrators to respect the rights of workers. For instance, the PWD Technical and General Workers Union warned and cautioned, in clear terms, a European designated as an African Boss, on the 22nd of November 1946, for slapping two “valued members of the Union,” an action which was pointed out to have become his stock-in-trade. The man was further told that the Union was acting based on its principle that “If one member suffers, all the other members suffer also,” and that his action was an assault on the Union.^{xlviii} This was one of the ways the PWD workers helped to maintain unity among themselves and by extension in the country since the workers were from different regions of the country.

Thus, the PWD workers played a vital role in the nationalist struggle for political independence which was realized in 1960. The colonial government employed the tactic of divide-and-rule in many ways to keep Nigeria in colonial bondage. Consider the disagreement between North and South over the time of independence. The struggle to wrest Nigeria from colonial hold was thus a fight for national unity in which the PWD workers were involved.

Conclusion

This study has aptly demonstrated, using the PWD workers as a reference point, that in the quest for national unity, labour groups have great roles to play and so cannot be dispensed with. It has shown the contributions of the PWD workers in the colonial era to the forging and maintenance of Nigeria’s unity in various ways. These contributions have emanated from their productive efforts and activities, pressurizing moves against divisive elements and policies. In all, these contributions are significant and organic as they are coming from people, part of whom the process of nation building seeks to unite. Successive Nigerian governments have paid undue attention to the use of structures and institutions and little attention to people such as civil society groups like labour unions in the bid to achieve national integration. Apart from the fact that these institutions are disconnected from each other and are not operating under a coordinated system, institutions and structures alone, being largely under political control are not as effective as people in engendering unity. As this study has shown, people-centred approach to nation-building is, a bottom-top approach, is very effective.

Apart from not utilizing their productive efforts to forge and fast-track national integration, the political class has often maintained anti-workers /labour stance. Workers are part of the masses of any country. Anti-labour stance is therefore a stance against the people and is usually more pronounced where the political class is detached from the masses, having carved out richer enclaves for themselves within the society. In Nigeria and in most African countries, this detachment is very real because the average political elites are insulated and disconnected from the masses and their plights unlike in developed countries. This explains why the labour-government relations is often more acrimonious in the African continent. The government needs to widen the integration participatory space and extend the hand of fellowship to labour groups in the bid to achieve national integration. Workers or labour groups should be given the necessary encouragement and conducive environment to contribute to national unity.

Endnotes

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- ^{xxi}PWDWU to the Honourable, Director of Public Works, H/q Lagos, 4th June, 1945; PWD/ C. 650 Vol. III
- ^{xxii}PWD/C. 650, Vol. III, 193; "General Meeting of the PWD General Workers Union," Held at St. John's School-Room, Aroloya, 24/11/45, PWD/ c. 650, Vol. III, 210
- ^{xxiii}It had branches in Aro, Onitsha, Calabar, Enugu, Port Harcourt (all in the Southeast), Ikoyi, Ijora, Apapa, Ibadan, Osogbo,, Akure, Oyo (all in the Southwest) and Kaduna, Yola, Mina, Makurdi, Zaria, etc (all in the North) See "General Meeting of the PWD General Workers Union," Held at St. John's School-Room, Aroloya, 24/11/45, PWD/ c. 650, Vol. III, 210
- ^{xxiv}NAE, AR/EN/A69, Nigeria Colonial Report: Annual Report of the PWD, 1956-57, Printed by the Government Printer, Eastern Region Enugu, 16
- ^{xxv}Johnson Solola (82), in an interview, 16 July, 2018, at his residence, Sibiri, Ojo Local Government Area, Lagos
- ^{xxvi}D.I. Ajaegbo, "Road Transport Entrepreneurs and Road Transportation Revolution in Igboland, 1920-1999: A Case Study of the Nnewi Igbo of Nigeria@ in *International Multidisciplinary Journal*, Ethiopia, Vol. 7 (4) No. 31, 2013, 165
- ^{xxvii}Nigeria Colonial Annual Report, 1931
- ^{xxviii}NAE, CSE 1/85/4402, S.P. 7981/30,"Vacation of Quarters", Divisional Engineer, PWD, Enugu, to the Honourable Secretary, Southern Province, 30th June 1933.
- ^{xxix}NAE, CSE 1/85/4402, S.P. 7981/30, Memorandum, Divisional Engineer, PWD, Enugu, to the Honourable Secretary, Southern Province, Dec, 1932.
- ^{xxx}NAE, CSE 1/85/4402, S.P. 7981/33, 16th Jan, 1933
- ^{xxxi}Schram, *A History of the Nigerian Health Services*, 171
- ^{xxxii}Nigeria Blue Book, 1938, A12
- ^{xxxiii}NAE, CSE 1/85/4402, S.P. 7981/16, November, 1931
- ^{xxxiv}Erondu, Labour Unrest...p.2

^{xxxv}Nigeria PWD Annual Report, 1956-57, 34-37

^{xxxvi}PWD, "Report of the Advisory Officer,"⁶

^{xxxvii}O.O. Olubomehin, "The Nigerian Motor Transporters Since the 1920s," in *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, Vol. 2 No. 12 (June 2012), 230-237

^{xxxviii} See N.A.I. , PWD 1/1-1/4, "Cases of Theft of PWD Tools and Materials" Some of such items include motor spare parts, nails, iron rods, 'bushes and worms', driving bolts, sparkling plugs, steel bars, khaki drill, Lucas batteries, *gea box*, brass hinges, bags of wires, sewing cotton, cement bags, tar drums, 'axle assembly and so on; See also, A. Akinfemiwa, 'A Special List of Records,' 12

^{xxxix}A. Akinfemiwa, 'A Special List of Records,' 12

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^{xli}Wiebe Boer, "A Story of Heroes and Epics

^{xlii}Wiebe Boer, "A Story of Heroes and Epics

^{xliii} M. T. Oladejo, Mutiat Titilope, "A Historical Analysis of Vocational Education in Western Nigeria, 1930s-1960s," *International Journal of Arts and Humanities (IJAH)* Bahir Dar-Ethiopia Vol. 5(1), S/No 16, January, 2016:108-122, <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ijah.v5i1.9>

^{xliv} M. T. Oladejo, Mutiat Titilope, "A Historical Analysis of Vocational Education"

^{xl} PWD Workers Union to the Honourable, Director of Public Works, H/q Lagos, 4th June, 1945, PWD/ C. 650 Vol.

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^{xlvi}Owei Lakemfa, "Colonialists Wrong Steps Caused 1945 General Strike," Tuesday 5TH February, Vanguard Newspaper, accessed at <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2012/08/colonialists-wrong-steps-caused-1945-general-strike/>, accessed 22nd February, 2019

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