

WORKERS' PERCEPTIONS OF CLASS, ETHNICITY AND POLITICS

INDUSTRIAL WORKERS' PERCEPTIONS OF
CLASS, ETHNICITY AND POLITICS
IN THE NIGERIAN MIDDLE BELT

By

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Dorcas
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ABSTRACT

This work is a study of urban industrial workers in the Nigerian Middle Belt. The major objective is to examine the attitudes and behaviour of urban industrial workers regarding class, ethnicity and politics in Nigeria. My concern with the subject arises from debates on the role of African working classes in social and economic development of the continent.

The debates center, at one level, on the issue of whether African working classes can be dismissed as constituting a conservative labour aristocracy, with no revolutionary political significance, or regarded as constituting at the very least a potential revolutionary political force. At another level the focus of the debate is on the relationship between class and ethnicity, the key issue being whether ethnicity constitutes an asset, a liability, or is irrelevant to working class (revolutionary) political behaviour.

In this study I argue that Nigerian industrial workers constitute neither a labour aristocracy nor a revolutionary political force, rather a complex interplay between class and ethnicity renders revolutionary conceptions of the Nigerian

working class premature at the moment. Class and ethnicity represent concrete social and economic realities in the Nigerian political economy, and whereas the ruling classes manipulate ethnicity as a political ideology for their accumulative interests, the poorer classes, including the working class, also utilize ethnicity as social, economic and political mechanisms to survive in their conscious conditions of subordination. Under conditions of the contemporaneous development of class and ethnicity in Nigeria ethnicity constitutes an integral element in the process of class formation among urban industrial workers. The incorporation of politicized ethnicity as part of this process, I suggest, weakens working class political solidarity, and hence their political significance. The experience of post-primary education reduces the ethnic element among workers and politicizes their consciousness, but even the influence of education has not been sufficient to make workers constitute themselves into a revolutionary proletariat.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A.G.	Action Group
G.N.P.P.	Great Nigeria Peoples Party
N.A.P.	Nigeria Advance Party
N.C.N.C.	National Convention of Nigeria Citizens
N.P.C.	Northern Peoples Congress
N.P.N.	National Party of Nigeria
N.P.P.	Nigeria Peoples Party
P.R.P.	Peoples Redemption Party
U.M.B.C.	United Middle Belt Congress
U.P.N.	United Party of Nigeria

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

A. The Problem

This work is a study of urban industrial workers in the Nigerian Middle Belt. The major objective is to examine the attitudes and behaviour of urban industrial workers regarding class, ethnicity and politics in Nigeria. My concern with the subject arises from debates on the role of African working classes in social and economic development of the continent.

In general there are two major perspectives regarding the study of social classes: the Marxist perspective which lays primary emphasis on modes of production, and the Weberian perspective which focuses on social status and stratification. However, in Africa, the Marxist perspective is dominant in debates on the role of social classes in economic development.

According to the Marxist perspective the colonial period in Africa marked both the incorporation of the continent into the capitalist world economy and the emergence of internal social structures in which class and ethnicity have become very prominent features.¹ Three broad social classes can be identified; the bourgeoisie, the urban proletariat and the peasantry.² The dominant class, the bourgeoisie, consists of individuals who own or control the

means of production and accumulate surpluses from the labour of other individuals. A salient feature of this class in Africa is that because of the policies of the various colonial states to limit African access to, and control over the process of capital accumulation,³ the indigenous bourgeoisie that was being formed in the colonial period and came to prominence in the post-colonial period seriously lacked a strong material base. To consolidate its base for effective accumulation, this class lays high premium on access to and control over the state apparatus, a point I will return to.⁴

The urban proletariat can be categorized into wage workers - the working class proper - and the unemployed. In the former category are people recruited to work in factories, mines, commercial companies, offices and construction as manual workers, clerks, messengers, technical and supervisory personnel. The unemployed category grows increasingly sophisticated as secondary, high school and university graduates join the ranks. Finally, the peasantry, a social category created during the colonial period, consists of individuals engaged in producing commodities both for the international and internal market.⁵

Among these classes the bourgeoisie is usually identified by leftists as constituting the major obstacle to

social and economic development both through selfish accumulative tendencies and the policies implemented by the ruling arm of this class.⁶ Consequently the solution to the problem of underdevelopment has come to be seen in terms of the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeoisie. Claude Ake represents this view:

In Africa as elsewhere the greatest obstacles to development are social and institutional ones such as class structure, and the vested interests tied up with these obstacles are such that they cannot be removed by anything short of a revolutionary upheaval.⁷

Such formulations assign a central, or at least a crucial position to the proletariat, especially that section of it involved in urban wage employment. Thus Babu asserts,

A new class emerges ... the proletariat, the class of the industrial worker who has nothing except his wife and children and who must sell his labour power in order to live. This is the most dynamic class in history, in whose hands lies the future destiny of Africa. While it is still very small and limited, it is, however qualitatively and strategically very strong, especially since by the very nature of its position in production it represents the future and so is a revolutionary force.⁸

Similarly but in a less dogmatic manner, Richard Sandbrook, in a most recent analysis of the poverty problem in Africa, maintains:

I venture to suggest that the future power and orientations of African working classes will have an important bearing on whether, and if so how, assaults on poverty will be undertaken.⁹

In the specific Nigerian situation, a recent attempt to map out a possible direction for the country's social and economic development assigns a key role to Nigerian urban industrial workers. Having asserted that "only a revolutionary transformation of the debilitating system of production and politics will bring underdevelopment to an end,"¹⁰ Okwudiba Nnoli goes on to say that "The first and most dramatic step in the socialist reconstruction of Nigerian-type societies is the nationalization of the local economy."¹¹ But he also raises the question of a possibility of the emergence of "bureaucratic capitalism (following nationalization) to the benefit of a managerial elite."¹² The solution to this very real possibility Nnoli finds in the urban workers.

the pressure of the vast number of underprivileged workers in the nationalized enterprises, applied through workers' supervision of management, workers' participation in management, and eventually workers' self-management of the enterprises, is capable of insuring that the management of the nationalized enterprises remains true to the national interest of eliminating economic dependence, overcoming underdevelopment, and in general catering to the welfare interests of the vast majority of the population. 13

Can workers in Nigeria or similar societies perform such a complex revolutionary role? Nnoli's answer to this question is:

This revolutionary role of the workers in production is possible because the working class of Nigerian-type countries represent one of the major segments of their national societies whose interests are deeply antagonistic to those of foreign capital They have a personal and class interest in overthrowing these institutions and replacing them with others in which labour is dominant over capital. 14

Such emphasis on the significance of the role of industrial workers in Africa or Nigeria makes studying them a worthwhile effort; hence my concern with their thinking and behaviour in this study. And I have decided to focus on class, ethnicity and politics because the role of industrial workers as outlined above is decidedly political, and, I will suggest, class and ethnicity interplay to influence the political role of workers. My efforts here represent a modest intervention in a considerable debate on the political role of industrial workers in Africa.

The debate centers, at one level, on the issue of whether African working classes can be dismissed as constituting a conservative labour aristocracy, with no revolutionary political significance, or regarded as constituting at the very least a potential revolutionary political force. At another level the focus of the debate is on the relationship between class and ethnicity, the key issue being whether ethnicity constitutes an asset, a liability, or is irrelevant to working class (revolutionary)

political behaviour. In what follows I will outline the major elements of the debate, develop a critique and state my central thesis.

Labour Aristocracy/Revolutionary Proletariat

Among those who deny African workers political significance are Elliot Berg, J. Buttler, and Henry Bretton who maintain that from the colonial to the post-colonial period African urban workers have not played any significant political roles.¹⁵ But more important still are those who hold that the urban workers actually constitute a conservative labour aristocracy. Thus Frantz Fanon has described the African wage workers as a whole as being the most privileged and favoured section of African societies, lacking any revolutionary political potential.¹⁶ Giovanni Arnghi and John Saul move a step further to identify a section of highly paid workers whose income levels put them in a privileged position making them identify upwards. They maintain that:

Higher wages and salaries ... foster the stabilization of the better-paid section of the labour force whose high incomes justify severance of ties with the traditional economy. Stabilization, in turn promotes specialization, greater bargaining power, and further increases in the incomes of this small section of the labour force, which represents the proletariat proper of tropical Africa. These workers enjoy incomes three or more times higher than those of unskilled labourers and together with the elites and sub-elites in bureaucratic employment in the civil service and expatriate concerns, constitute what we call the labour aristocracy of tropical Africa. 17

In a subsequent reconsideration of the thesis John Saul seems to have restated it in its essential form and content:

The 'more privileged' and better organized workers have been encouraged to identify upwards ... to become partners (albeit the most junior of partners) in the jostling for surpluses among the internationally and domestically powerful (including most prominently in the latter category the elites and sub-elites themselves) - rather than to identify downwards with the even more 'wretched of the earth', the urban marginals and the average inhabitant of the untransformed rural areas. 18

Sharon Stichter argues that this view of working classes in tropical Africa applies fairly accurately to the Kenyan situation. She maintains that "the interests of the 'labour Aristocracy' and the state bourgeoisie are congruent:

neither class is likely in the near future to support an independent strategy of development inimical to the interest of international capital."¹⁹ Raphael Kaplinsky moves a step beyond and points out that not only are the privileged workers unlikely to be "a progressive political force in developing countries," but that "when a real threat to the distributive system arises, they are quick to come out in active support for the existing balance of power."²⁰

Irving Markovitz's view of post-independence African trade union leaders is that "they embodied the qualities of a rising middle class in their life styles and aspirations," and that "if the workers are an aristocracy in comparison

with the peasantry, the trade union leaders are an aristocracy vis-a-vis the rank and file - a double aristocracy doubly privileged."²¹ Finally Dennis Cohen asserts:

The labour aristocracy concept can be used to stratify the proletariat into a high-paid aristocracy of skilled, white-collar and/or multinational corporation-employed workers on the one hand, deemed to be conservative in political orientation, and a mass of low paid, exploited workers, urban and rural, on the other hand, the revolutionary class described by Marx. 22

Thus from the labour aristocracy perspective sketched above - to be criticized later in this chapter - African workers or a section among them can not be relied upon for revolutionary roles. However, and this takes us to the other side of the coin, a strong body of thought exists in the literature which is extremely skeptical of the validity of this perspective.

One of the few theorists antagonistic to the labour aristocracy perspective who not only reject the thesis but also unequivocally assert the revolutionary power and role of African working classes is Jack Woddis. He criticises Fanon; Arrighi and Saul; and Berg and Buttler mainly on the grounds that they ignore both the historic role of the working class arising from its objective condition in society and the historical record which, he argues, abounds with evidence of

working class revolutionary action in Africa. Thus he asserts "the historic role of the working class does not arise from some special subjective quality of the working class but from its objective status in capitalist society."²³ Consequently he identifies in Africa "the working class as the only modern class which can organize the struggle, win over other urban strata, including newly arrived peasants and young school leavers."²⁴ With regard to the revolutionary power and role of African workers Woddis presents massive evidence of strike action by workers of several African countries both during the colonial period and after attainment of political independence.²⁵ Thus rather than constituting a labour aristocracy, African workers and their unions, in Woddis' view, constitute a powerful revolutionary force to reckon with.

Eskor Toyo's perception of the political power and role of the Nigerian working class is similar to Jack Woddis' view of workers in Africa as a whole. He describes various aspects of "crisis" in Nigeria and raises the question "are the workers qualified?"²⁶ to bring about a revolution, to which much of his answer is in the affirmative. He cites Nigerian workers' participation in strikes both in the colonial and post-colonial periods as evidence of revolutionary power. He asserts:

As for political education the Nigerian working class is as conscious and as politically alert as any other in the country. What consciousness remains for the Nigerian worker to acquire is the consciousness that he can and should struggle for power ... the Nigerian working class is more politically conscious than is usually realized or than appears on the surface. 27

Commenting on one of the general strikes organized by

Nigerian workers early after independence, Toyo asserts that:

Only one thing stood between the working class of Nigeria and a determined bid for political power in 1964: the absence in the ranks of the working class of conscious, well trained and organized revolutionaries, the absence of a conscious, well trained and well organized workers' revolutionary party. 28

Thus for Woddis and Toyo there is no question or doubt that African or Nigerian workers clearly constitute a revolutionary political force. Others who reject the labour aristocracy thesis nevertheless do not always explicitly assert the workers' revolutionary power and role. Two major criticisms of the labour aristocracy thesis stand out in the critiques, namely, that (a) the economic or income gap between the skilled urban labour force and other urban and rural poor is in fact not such as is asserted by the thesis, and (b) sociologically and politically, the urban working classes tend to identify - in terms of common interests and social networks - downwards with the other urban and rural poor, and not upwards as suggested by the thesis. 29

In the specific Nigerian context, two assessments

of the relevance of the labour aristocracy thesis came up with the two standard criticisms.³⁰ Keith Hinchcliffe's empirical study in northern Nigeria³¹ attempts to show that the incomes of urban wage-earners are not significantly higher than those of rural farmers, and he draws attention to the "varying opportunities which exist for female employment in the urban areas" who are less likely to be employed in income generating activity than their village counter-parts which makes incomes of the urban wage-earning households more thinly spread.³² Nevertheless Hinchcliffe introduces a new element in the debate worth pursuing. He argues "it is not necessarily the urban labour-force as a whole which is an 'aristocracy', but only those members of it which have received at least post-primary and especially post-secondary education".³³ This brings to three the number of key variables in the labour aristocracy thesis: occupation, income and educational levels of industrial workers.

In a study of wage-earners in Lagos, Adrian Peace demonstrates that whether from the points of view of income levels, socio-economic status or political identification, the Lagos proletariat does not constitute a labour aristocracy.³⁴ Peace argues that from the colonial to the post-colonial period., Nigerian urban wages have been traditionally "minimal payments" which not only hardly keep

up with the cost of living, but have had to be necessarily spread to cover the maintenance of extended families, which does not place the urban wage worker in the privileged position suggested by the labour aristocracy thesis. Further, he maintains that rather than being a category alienated from other urban poor and traders, the Lagos proletariat has become the "political elite of the urban masses, a reference group in political terms for other urban strata who substantially rely on the prevailing wage structure for satisfaction of their own interests in the urban arena."³⁵ From this perspective, the political role of Nigerian workers cannot be dismissed on the basis of the labour aristocracy thesis.

Thus the labour aristocracy perspective that writes off African working classes as a revolutionary force is countered by what I term the proletarian perspective that views workers as constituting a revolutionary force, or short of that, constituting at least the leading edge of revolutionary forces, hence the continued emphasis on urban workers in discussions of poverty and underdevelopment in Africa. But this is one dimension of the debate. The other focuses on the complex issues of class and ethnicity, to which I now turn.

Class and Ethnicity

I pointed out earlier in this chapter that colonialism produced social structures in Africa in which the phenomena of class and ethnicity have become prominent. I also highlighted the character of the social classes from which the dimension of the debate outlined above has emerged. Similarly I will now highlight the character of African ethnicity, especially urban ethnicity, in order to present the debate on the issue of class and ethnicity. I consider Nelson Kasfir's definition of ethnicity appropriate as he conceptualized it in terms of a process:

- (1) Particular objective indicators associated with common ancestry
- (2) become the focus of subjective perceptions both by members within the unit and by non-members
- (3) through social solidarity created by a resurgence, or the fictive creation, of traditional unity. 36

In the Nigerian process Okwudiba Nnoli traces the development of this process to the colonial period and links the emergence of ethnicity to the prevailing urban social and economic insecurity especially during the Depression years. He identifies three major developments regarding urban insecurity:

First, many more people sought solace in communal solidarity. Between 1928 and 1949 there was about a sixfold growth in the number of urban based communal associations and a tenfold increase in their membership. Second, ethnic group-wide

associations emerged. In addition to members of the extended family, village, clan, district or dialect group, the individual was constrained to seek the support of all those who shared the same language. Ethnicity emerged. 37

The emergence of ethnicity was accompanied by inter-ethnic tension mainly because economic and political competition in the urban centers followed ethnic lines.³⁸ In terms of the debate on class and ethnicity, Nnoli's observation is significant, "The crucial question for analysis becomes: is ethnicity an asset or an obstacle to the working class in its revolutionary march to state power, why and how?"³⁹

The most outstanding aspects of this dimension of the debate are (a) the conception of ethnicity as an ideology of domination by the ruling class, and ethnic consciousness among workers as a manifestation of false consciousness; (b) the situational nature of class and ethnic consciousness among workers and (c) the possibility of interplay between class and ethnicity to determine the political behaviour of workers. I will elaborate briefly on each of these aspects.

The concept of ethnicity as ideology connotes the utilization of ideas, values and institutions as a cover-up, cloak or mask for unstated, hidden motives. David Apter defines ideology in this sense as "a cloak for shabby motives and appearances."⁴⁰ This is the sense in which ethnicity as a political ideology is used in the African literature and in this study.

The conception of ethnicity as a powerful ideology of the bourgeoisie in Nigeria is stated fairly clearly by William Graf who argues that the Nigerian bourgeoisie that emerged from the colonial era was non-productive, lacked a material base and thus valued access to the state apparatus; therefore "it had to seek out and display ersatz ideologies in order to retain a mass following and forestall social reform. Primary among these was the ideology of ethnicity."⁴¹ Richard Sklar and Archie Mafeje have conceptualized ethnicity in similar terms,⁴² and Mafeje utilizes the concept of false consciousness to account for the fact that the oppressed subscribe to the ideology.

He argues:

The fact that it works, as is often pointed out by tribal ideologists, is no proof that "tribes" or "tribalism" exist in any objective sense. If anything, it is a mark of false consciousness on the part of the supposed tribesmen, who subscribe to an ideology that is inconsistent with their material base and therefore unwittingly respond to the call for their own exploitation. 43

While the conception of ethnicity as a manipulative ideology in the hands of the bourgeoisie is considered a fairly valid hypothesis,⁴⁴ the idea of false consciousness is regarded by some observers as explaining nothing. For instance Nelson Kasfir charges that "False consciousness is still consciousness, whether or not the actor recognizes his "true" interests."⁴⁵ In the present work I am similarly inclined

to question the utility of the concept of false consciousness while utilizing the concept of ethnicity as both a socio-economic reality and a manipulative ideology.

The second aspect of the debate on class and ethnicity within the working class focuses on the issue that class and ethnicity become politically salient in the perceptions and behaviour of workers depending upon the nature of the situation at any given moment. This is so because of the multiple roles individuals play in the urban context, as Melson and Wolpe argue:

It is possible for the same person to join a trade union to advance his occupational interests, a communal association to promote his social or electoral objectives, and a religious interests group to lobby for educational reforms. 46

Thus to the extent that a particular situation threatens workers' occupational or communal interests, to that extent, the argument goes, will class or ethnicity become salient or overriding factors in workers' behaviour.⁴⁷

Finally, the most promising aspect of the debate, in my mind, is that which focuses on the interplay between class and ethnicity. Very crucial in this regard is Van den Berghe's position that:

Class and ethnic differences interact with each other in very complex ways ... neither class nor ethnicity is reducible to the other. Ethnicity is

not simply a special case of class, nor is class simply a kind of ethnic group. The two phenomena are qualitatively different, and, however, much they may overlap empirically, they must be kept analytically distinct. 48

The possibility of such complex interaction is argued forcefully by Nnoli who maintains that "a group may be conscious of its class position but seek to promote or change it through non-class mechanisms such as ethnic policies."⁴⁹ He identifies four key categories: (1) the class position, (2) class determined behaviour, (3) class consciousness, and (4) concerted class action, as basis for understanding the role of class in social life. Similarly he identifies four categories in terms of ethnicity: (1) the ethnic group, (2) behaviour in the interest of the ethnic group, (3) ethnic consciousness and (4) concerted ethnic action, and argues that "Through the permutation and combination of the four categories of the class element and the four categories of the ethnic element, numerous ethnic-class configurations will emerge."⁵⁰ With striking similarity Nelson Kasfir summarises the phenomena of class and ethnicity as they relate to political participation in four steps, suggesting that class and ethnic consciousness be regarded as processes that take place over time.⁵¹ Thus, class and ethnicity both have similar defining characteristics: (1) an objective socio-economic position - in the case of class, determined primarily by relationship to

the means of production; and, in the case of ethnicity, determined primarily by common customs, language ancestral background, and (in Nigeria) an identifiable territory; (2) a developing awareness of belonging to a social group in the same position, as opposed to belonging to another group with conflicting interests; (3) identification with others in the same position and (4) willingness to take collective political action on the basis of belonging to a given socio-economic position. In this regard Kasfir points out "a peculiar blindness among some Marxist writers who presume that when they have demonstrated a common objective class membership, they have proved that political action will occur on the basis of class."⁵² Accordingly he identifies four possible options for explaining political action: (1) class alone, (2) ethnicity alone, (3) class and ethnicity in conflict, (4) class and ethnicity in concert.⁵³ In terms of the revolutionary political role of industrial workers in Nigeria the options can be reduced to the question of whether class and ethnicity interact in conflict, obstructing revolutionary political consciousness; or in concert, promoting and facilitating such consciousness. I am inclined to suggest that the interplay between class and ethnicity hinders the development of revolutionary political action among industrial workers in the Nigerian Middle Belt.

Critique

Thus far I have tried to outline the key elements of the debate regarding the political role of urban industrial workers in Africa, the major issues being on the one hand whether industrial workers constitute a revolutionary proletariat or a conservative labour aristocracy; and, on the other hand, the nature of the relationship between class and ethnicity and how that affects workers' political behaviour. It seems to me that some issues and concepts have been uncritically imported to Africa from the western literature and conditions. For instance the assumption that African working classes will necessarily become a revolutionary force comes directly from the works of Karl Marx. Marx saw the emergence and development of industrial wage labour as a class process with an inbuilt class struggle. Based on the class nature of the struggle between wage workers and employers, Marx maintained that decreasing competition among wage workers as a class-in-itself and perceived eventual understanding of their commonly experienced conditions of exploitation under a commonly identified foe, turns them into a class-for-itself with a consciousness sufficient to impel them to revolutionary actions aimed at overthrowing the capitalist system.⁵⁴ The danger in assuming that African workers will

and can fulfill Karl Marx's predictions becomes obvious when one considers a caution such as is raised by Lubasz:

Marx's conception of a revolutionary proletariat is a composite which corresponds to no known historical reality. It conflates certain features of English, of French, and of German history in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and fits this abstraction into a quasi-Hegelian, scheme of social development. 55

I will return to this crucial observation in the concluding chapter. The second uncritical importation pertains to the concept of "labour aristocracy".

As applied in the African situation the concept of labour aristocracy seems to confuse two phenomena as debated in the western literature neither of which is occurring among African urban wage workers, namely embourgeoisement and labour aristocracy. Though both concepts are related to the larger question of the absence of a proletarian revolution, they refer, originally at least, to two different socio-economic strata: labour aristocracy applicable to independent craftsmen, and embourgeoisement to urban industrial wage workers. As originally used the idea of a labour aristocracy referred to the occupation-conscious organization of independent craftsmen in Britain in the 19th century with the conscious tendency to distance themselves from unskilled workers.⁵⁶ Thus the concept was used to refer strictly to independent craftsmen. Referring to the

concept Shepherd describes as "its natural constituency, the craft-proud independent artisan".⁵⁷ It was Lenin who extended the use of the concept to apply to industrial wage workers mainly on the basis of relatively high incomes paid to certain categories of industrial workers.⁵⁸

Nevertheless the concept remains appropriate not primarily for industrial workers as such but to craftsmen. Thus in his American study Gavin MacKenzie identifies a labour aristocracy among craftsmen "isolated both from the working class and from the lower reaches of the established middle class," and suggests that "craftsmen must be viewed as being in a class by themselves, largely as a result of their formal position in the division of labour and the amount of formal education to which they have been exposed."⁵⁹

The point is that the term labour aristocracy as originally developed was meant to apply to skilled craftsmen and artisans, not to industrial wage workers. I think Lenin confused the issues by extending its application.⁶⁰ I am suggesting here that the labour aristocracy theorists imported into Africa a concept meant for a different social category and introduced its misapplication to industrial wage workers. It would have been more fruitful had the debate been cast in terms of the concept of embourgeoisement, which specifically relates to wage workers.

The concept of embourgeoisement refers to a process whereby the working-class increasingly becomes bourgeois in lifestyles, aspirations and perceptions. Lenin touched on this when he expressed concern about a "stratum of bourgeoisified workers."⁶¹ Engels was particularly disturbed regarding this tendency among both British and American industrial workers. Thus regarding the British working class he notes that due to workers' benefits from British colonial expansion:

the English proletariat is actually becoming more and more bourgeois, so that this most bourgeois of all nations is apparently aiming ultimately at the possession of a bourgeois aristocracy and a bourgeois proletariat as well as a bourgeoisie. ⁶²

Engels lamented the fact that "the proletariat think ... the same as the bourgeois think,"⁶³ and he was repulsed by "the bourgeois 'respectability' bred into the bones of the workers"⁶⁴ and the tendency for the proletariat to be the "tag, rag and bobtail of the official parties."⁶⁵ In a series aimed at subjecting the embourgeoisment thesis to empirical test, Goldthorpe, et al. substantially concluded that the process is in fact not occurring in Britain.⁶⁶

It seems to me that it is the phenomenon of embourgeoisment that proponents of the labour aristocracy thesis seek to identify among African working classes, but that they incorrectly label it as labour aristocracy.⁶⁷

Unstated assumptions underlie controversies over labour aristocracies, revolutionary proletariat, and ethnicity in Africa, namely assumptions regarding the decline of community.⁶⁸ The labour aristocracy/revolutionary proletariat controversy rests upon an implicit yet questionable assumption that in the African urban context the traditional community has declined and the only mode of identification, association and political action by industrial workers is along class lines: that workers either identify upwards with the bourgeoisie and thus become non-revolutionary, or identify with the rest of the urban poor and spearhead and promote revolution. Similarly the class/ethnicity controversy rests on the implicit assumption that either the traditional community is dead, in which case political action will follow only class lines, or that the traditional community is reconstituted in the urban context in which case political action will follow mainly ethnic lines. I think the issues are more complex than this. Thus in this study I will address the issue by analyzing workers' urban social networks and involvement in urban voluntary associations because I am inclined to the position that at the same time as new social classes are formed in urban Africa, traditional communal institutions are being reconstituted in the same arena through inter-personal social

networks, ethnic associations and ethnic-based political parties. Thus the contemporaneous nature of the relationship between class and ethnicity becomes crucial in any analysis of the attitudes and behaviour of African urban industrial workers.

Against this background the central thesis of this work can be stated. Nigerian urban industrial workers constitute neither a labour aristocracy nor a revolutionary proletariat, rather, a complex interplay between class and ethnicity renders a revolutionary conception of the Nigerian working class untenable at the moment. Class and ethnicity represent concrete social and economic realities in Nigeria, and, whereas the ruling class manipulates ethnicity as a political ideology for its accumulative interests, the poorer classes, including the working class utilize ethnicity as social, economic and political institutions to survive in their conscious conditions of subordination. The experience of post-primary education reduces the ethnic element among workers and increases their consciousness, but even the influence of education has not been sufficient to make workers constitute themselves into a revolutionary proletariat.

The point is that African urban workers have been given a central place in discussions on economic

development. The question is, is this emphasis justified? We have seen in the literature reviewed above that the major concern with the problem has been to focus attention on the workers' objective position in the organization of production; income levels arising from differential skills, their objective condition relative to other social groupings in society; and participation in strikes. This focus is helpful. But beyond this, I would argue, it is also helpful to pursue the question: What are the workers thinking? This question is not novel. As Richard Sandbrook and Jack Arn have pointed out, "The question of what the poor are thinking (or should be thinking) is one which has perennially engaged the attention of analysts with diverse political persuasions."⁶⁹ But if the question is not novel neither has it been raised and addressed in a comprehensive manner in the context of urban industrial workers in Nigeria, and I hope part of the contribution of this work will be in that direction.

B. The Framework

Class analysis, a current approach to the study of labour in Africa, is adopted and adapted for the present study. Among other things this approach demands that attention be paid to "the character of the working class under the forms of capitalism prevailing in Africa, and the nature of class consciousness and class action."⁷⁰ Two major versions can be identified within the approach which are relevant to our purposes here. The first is the historical approach which relies on historical records to draw conclusions on the character, behaviour and consciousness of workers. The second relies on questionnaire data from surveys combined with observations to arrive at conclusions.⁷¹ The common fault with the first approach is that too often the workers have not been allowed to, as it were, speak for themselves. The underlying assumption is that what workers think or claim as their aim does not really matter, that their behaviour is and can be objectively determined by the material forces of history. Thus Peter Gutkind, who seeks to know what the poor think, nevertheless quotes Karl Marx and Engels to support this assumption:

It is not a question of what this or that proletarian, or even the whole proletariat at the moment considers as its aim. It is a question of what, in accordance with its being, it will historically, be compelled to do. Its aims and historical action is in its own life situation as well as in the whole organization of bourgeois society today. 72

I consider this brand of historical inevitability unwarranted as it presents workers as extremely malleable objects of history as opposed to subjects who can choose alternative courses of action or inaction according to their definition of the situation. Thus I prefer the second approach which combines survey data with observations and historical material.⁷³ Thus the model underlying this work involves specifying the character of the working class in Nigeria and analysing the contemporaneous relationship between class and ethnic consciousness among workers with emphasis on sources of variation in working class perceptions and experiences. I will argue that with the simultaneous development of class and ethnicity in Nigeria it is quite possible that the development of class consciousness and identification among industrial workers is likely to entail aspects of ethnic consciousness and vice versa.⁷⁴

Some studies have been undertaken in Nigeria which fall within the framework just outlined, albeit only in a very limited sense. Some of these include the works of Peter Gutkind, Peter Lloyd, Robert Melson and Paul Lubeck. The first two have not been concerned with Nigerian industrial workers as such. Peter Gutkind's concern has been mainly with the political fortunes and consciousness of the urban unemployed among the Yoruba people.⁷⁵ Thus based on 71

interviews in 1966 and 40 in 1973 (out of those interviewed in 1966) in Ibadan Gutkind reports that "political consciousness increases, however modestly, with the length of exposure to the conditions faced by the unemployed."⁷⁶ He also later reports aspiration to elite status by the Ibadan poor, the belief among the poor that the existing system can work, and the tendency among the poor to blame the rich for their misfortune.⁷⁷

Peter Lloyd's interview of 30 men in Ibadan in 1968 (ranging from farmers to senior civil servants) and an unspecified sample in Ibadan and Agege (Lagos) in 1971 leads him to findings similar to Gutkind's. He reports:

the responses of these Yoruba men indicate a general satisfaction with the pattern of the distribution of wealth in their society, save only that abject poverty should be alleviated. They seek for increased opportunities to rise in either of the two main employment hierarchies -- that of clerical work, determined by educational attainment, or that of self-employed business as farmer, craftsman or trader. 78

Robert Melson's study of over 500 workers in Ibadan in 1964 was designed to assess the political orientations of the respondents. He found that though many workers expressed support for a labour party in July 1964 just after a general strike, during the general elections in December of the same year most workers expressed actual support for ethnically-based political parties by voting for such

parties. He examined the effects of several variables such as the workers' ethnic group; length of stay in trade unions; education; age and income and came to the conclusion that "the Nigerian worker, like the worker in other countries, tends to support his ethnic group when that group is threatened."⁷⁹ Robin Cohen's analysis of the role of Nigerian labour organizations in the political process leads him to the conclusion that despite the internal splits of the unions, they represent a significant political force in Nigeria mainly demonstrated in the conduct of two general strikes and in the workers' ability to collectively press the state to set up wages and salaries review commissions.⁸⁰

Finally, Paul Lubeck's study of 140 workers and observations in Kano from the end of 1970 to mid 1972 was concerned with analysing class formation and class consciousness among the workers.⁸¹ He identified strike support as the sole dependent variable, which he "designed to be, par excellence, an indicator of class consciousness."⁸² The major independent variables he identified and used were industrial organization experience, urban residential experience; migrant status; age; participation in (Islamic) religious institutions; involvement with extended kin and literacy.⁸³ He uncovered a fairly well developed level of class consciousness as

measured by support for the Adebo strike, and found education, industrial organization and urban residential experience as variables exercising significant influence on class consciousness.⁸⁴

The Nigerian studies cited here and especially those dealing specifically with urban industrial workers certainly provide useful information about the workers and generate useful concepts for further research. But the studies also leave room for further contribution. For instance Sara Berry has charged Robin Cohen for making no effort to:

assess ... the relative importance to the workers of kinship, ethnic or other "traditional" affiliation vs union or other class-oriented activity. Thus while his evidence certainly shows the importance of class interests to many Nigerian wage-earners, it does not demonstrate the relative unimportance of other interests. 85

Though Sara Berry can be faulted for too neatly compartmentalizing class and ethnic interests, her suggestion that class and ethnicity be given simultaneous attention in analyses of the Nigerian working class is valid, and I hope to undertake this in the present work. Though Robert Melson examines the relative importance of both class and ethnicity in his study, he does not provide data as to what meanings the workers brought to bear on their strike support or voting behaviour. Finally, Paul Lubeck's unqualified view of strike

support among workers as an indicator of class consciousness "par excellence" over-simplifies the nature of the case, as he reduces the complex process of class identification and consciousness in Nigeria to a single uniform concept. Besides, the scope of issues covered in the Nigerian studies pertaining to the question of what Nigerian industrial workers are thinking is rather narrow. I think that bringing together more issues in a single study and establishing links will aid further understanding.

Hypotheses

Making use of the major variables and concepts generated in the literature I will broaden the scope of the issues by focusing on (1) the emergence of the working class; (2) workers' perceptions of social inequality in Nigeria; (3) workers' urban social networks (4) class identification and (5) workers' political orientations. I will introduce and expand on each of these themes in the relevant chapters. The analysis will be undertaken within the framework of three major hypotheses evident in the literature I have reviewed: (1) the labour aristocracy hypothesis,⁸⁵ (2) what I term the "proletarian" hypothesis and (3) a hypothesis regarding the co-existence of class and ethnicity. Labour aristocracy theorists variously stress the role of income, occupation and education in identifying a conservative labour aristocracy.

Thus I would expect to find significant differences in the perceptions, class identification, life-styles and political orientations of industrial workers based on their income, occupational or educational levels. Similarly, if entry into urban industrial wage employment has revolutionary political influences on the people concerned, as revolutionary theorists suggest, one would expect significant differences in perceptions and behaviour depending on the length of time workers have spent in such employment, the extent to which they are exposed to and interact with other people involved in similar employment (namely, the type of industrial sub-community in which they work and live), and whether or not workers possess and utilize means of livelihood other than the sale of their labour power. These two perspectives are examined in this study and found to be wanting, leaving us with a third, more plausible proposition that ethnicity constitutes an integral element of class formation among industrial workers in Nigeria. The major dependent variables of the study are (1) working class images of society; (2) class identification, (3) workers' urban social networks and (4) political orientations. These variables are identified and designed to give us a comprehensive view of the major attitudes and behaviour of industrial workers in Nigeria.

The major independent variables are identified in

line with the major hypotheses of the study. Thus for the labour aristocracy hypothesis the independent variables are (1) income, (2) occupation and (3) education. Respondents higher on these variables would be expected to evince tendencies towards constituting a "labour aristocracy" regarding their perceptions of society, class identification, urban social networks and political orientations. For the proletarian hypothesis the major independent variables are: (1) industrial sub-community: conceptualized in terms of the extent to which workers are exposed to and interact with other industrial workers both at the workplace and in the wider urban community; (2) involvement in land-cultivation and (3) years of wage employment. Respondents relatively more involved in and exposed to interaction with other wage workers, those not involved in land-cultivation or relatively more established in urban industrial employment will be regarded as "typical" proletarians as compared to their counterparts who differ on these variables, whom I will refer to as "marginal" proletarians. In this regard working in Jos, non-involvement in land-cultivation and five or more years of wage employment will be measures of "typicality", and working in Gboko, involvement in land-cultivation and less than five years of wage employment will relate to "marginality". Thus from the proletarian hypothesis it would

be expected that typical proletarians would be more likely than marginal proletarians to evince a working class outlook and behaviour in their perceptions of the Nigerian society, class identification, urban social networks and political orientations. Finally the hypothesis that ethnicity constitutes an integral element of class formation among industrial workers will be demonstrated by analyzing workers' participation in trade unions and ethnic associations; their personal urban social networks and political orientations. In other words measures of ethnicity will be participation in ethnic associations, involvement in ethnic-based urban social networks and ethnic political orientations.

C. Methodology

The underlying methodological assumption of this study must be made explicit. I take the position that industrial workers are not merely objects of history - whose actions are shaped and moulded solely by historical forces - but are also subjects with the capacity to define their life situations and choose courses of action or inaction in accordance with their definition of the situation.⁸⁷ This being the case, in my judgement, a proper understanding of the political role of the Nigerian working class requires that attention be given to both the historical forces that have influenced the character of the working class and

workers' subjective perceptions. This assumption underlies the approach taken in this study.

The location of the study is the Nigerian Middle Belt, a geopolitical region made up mainly of the present Benue and Plateau States. The two states with an estimated combined population in 1982 of 6,231,330 are inhabited by some of the Nigerian "minority" ethnic groups. Among these minorities the Tiv people with a population (2,188,580) half that of Benue State constitute one of the major ethnic groups.⁸⁸ I decided to focus the empirical investigation on Tiv urban industrial workers. The major methodological reason, advantage and strength of the decision to focus on workers of one ethnic group was that: (a) I could personally interview all respondents in their original language, Tiv, and thus more effectively penetrate their psyches, and (b) irrelevant ethnic differences were thus eliminated by having all respondents from the same ethnic group.

Having decided to study Tiv industrial workers, two industrial communities (and two specific industries) were identified. The criteria for the choice of the two industrial communities was the level of industrial development and concentration, and hence the extent of

industrial workers' exposure to and involvement in working class sub-cultures. Thus Gboko, a relatively ethnically homogeneous sub-urban community with only one major industry (established in 1975), was chosen, and a cement factory in the town was selected to represent an industrial community with a relatively less developed working class sub-culture. And to represent industrial communities with relatively well developed industrial working class sub-cultures, Jos, the ethnically heterogeneous capital city of Plateau State with greater industrial concentration and a long standing history of industrial wage employment, was chosen, and a textile factory (established in 1966) was selected.

Three kinds of data were collected for the study: historical material, interview material emphasizing both quantitative and qualitative information, and some participant observation. But the major source of data used for the study is the recorded interviews of a sample of workers in the two factories selected.

In the initial design for the research, 100 respondents were to be interviewed: 60 in Jos and 40 in Gboko, but mainly because of lack of sufficient numbers of Tiv workers in the clerical and supervisory categories especially in Jos, eventually 80 respondents were interviewed. But because some completed interview schedules

were lost in transit (in Amsterdam) the final sample for the study became 73 respondents.

The textile factory in Jos employs 1,200 workers, about 55 (or 5%) of whom are Tiv. Out of this, 42 workers were randomly selected from a compiled list of Tiv workers. The cement factory in Gboko employs about 600 workers, over 55% of whom are Tiv. Out of this, 38 workers were similarly selected from a compiled list of Tiv workers. The final sample and its distribution by industry and occupational category is shown on Table 1.1.

TABLE 1.1

Distribution of Respondents by Industry and Occupation

Occupational Category	Industry		% of Total Sample
	Jos Textile Factory	Gboko Cement Factory	
Manual	17	17	46
Clerical	13	8	29
Supervisory	<u>9</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>25</u>
Total	39	34	100

N = 73

Actual data collection was undertaken during the period of March to December, 1982. During the months of March and April the author started visiting the two factories obtaining permission to carry out the study, establishing rapport, undertaking tours of the factory and testing the suitability of the questionnaire by interviewing a sample (of 12) from the sampled population of workers. The questionnaire needed a few corrections, alterations and elimination of certain items, which were done accordingly. This was followed by the actual interviews. All interviews were done by the author in the respondents' original language, Tiv. The interviews were also all done in the factories, with management permission. At the same time relevant historical material was collected from scanty factory records at the cement factory and at the Benue State Ministry of Trade and Industry. In Jos hardly any records were available (or accessible) both in the factory and in the relevant government ministries, and so the author relied on unstructured interviews with factory officials as sources of historical data.

During the period of data collection I realized the extreme importance of having to do all the interviews myself. For one thing, because the interviews were conducted in the factories, it meant I spent several hours on each

interview day in the factories observing workers at work. Thus I was able to pick up key background interactions, orientations and attitudes I would otherwise have missed. Moreover, since the respondents' first language, Tiv, is also my first language, little information was lost or distorted through interpretation. This is particularly important as the interviews involved an extensive use of open-ended questions, responses to which have made up most of the data for this study. This is evident in the chapters dealing with data analysis. The importance of my having a common first language with the respondents is also underlined by the fact that most of the relevant Nigerian studies referred to earlier in this chapter have been done by non-Nigerians who have had to hire interviewers, interview in English language, use interpreters or learn only the basics of the relevant Nigerian languages to collect their data. Some of the possible shortcomings associated with these kinds of studies - unreliability of hired interviewers, loss or distortion of information through interpretation or translation - are eliminated or minimized in my data.

Moreover, as a secondary school and university student, I often spent school holidays with working class families and as a participant, observed the kinds of social networks that are reported in this study, and attended

several meetings of ethnic associations. During the time of research for this study, I attended one such meeting in Jos where most of the participants were members of the working class. All these factors, in my judgement give some methodological strength to this study.

Problems

The single most difficult problem of the research was lack of availability of, or access to, recorded information especially in Jos. At the textile factory in Jos an official said "We don't write anything. This is an Asian company and they don't want to expose their dealings." And at the offices of the Plateau State Ministry of Trade and Industries no records were available or accessible regarding the history of industrialization in the state. Nevertheless since the study does not wholly rely on historical data the available historical information gathered has been considered adequate in both laying the background for, and substantiating, the major arguments made in this study.

Data Analysis

The bulk of the data is presented in quantitative form. Since the key variables of the data are either ordinal or dichotomous, I decided to use Gamma in order to estimate the strength of the correlations between dependent and independent variables. I have used James Davies' "rule of

thumb" as a guide for interpreting the correlations, as follows:⁸⁹

<u>Value of Gamma</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>
+ .70 or higher	A very strong positive association
+ .50 to + .69	A substantial positive association
+ .30 to + .49	A moderate positive association
+ .10 to + .29	A low positive association
+ .01 to + .09	A negligible positive association
.00	No association
- .01 to - .09	A negligible negative association
- .10 to - .29	A low negative association
- .30 to - .49	A moderate negative association
- .50 to - .69	A substantial negative association
- .70 or lower	A very strong negative association

Partial gammas are used in order to control for the effect of other variables in any given relationship between two variables. Finally, I used statistical tests of significance in order to see to what extent the results can be generalized beyond the sample.

However, much of the data was not quantified, especially responses to many of the open-ended questions. Thus though the results of statistical analyses have been helpful, they were not the only basis of my arguments and conclusions.

The rest of the work is divided into six chapters. Chapter two dwells on the emergence of wage labour in Tivland; chapter three: workers' images of the Nigerian society; chapter four: class identification; chapter five: workers' urban social networks; chapter six: political orientations among the workers; and chapter seven is the conclusion. I now turn to chapter two.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Immanuel Wallerstein, "The Three Stages of African Involvement in the World Economy", in P. Gutkind and I. Wallerstein (eds.) The Political Economy of Contemporary Africa (London: Sage Publications, 1976), pp. 30-57; Samir Amin, "Underdevelopment and Dependence in Black Africa - Origins and Contemporary Forms", in The Journal of Modern African Studies 10, 4 (1972), pp. 503-24. I will pursue the issue of ethnicity later on in the chapter.

² Dennis L. Cohen, "Class and the Analysis of African Politics: Problems and Propsects," in D. L. Cohen and John Daniel, Political Economy of Africa. Selected Readings (London: Longman, 1981), pp. 94-101; Eme N. Ekewe, "Nigeria: Class Struggle and State Creation," Paper presented at the Canadian Association of African Studies Conference, University of Winnipeg, May 1-4, 1979, pp. 9-10.

³ This is one of the major theses of K. O. Dike's Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, 1830-1885 (London: Oxford University Press, 1956).

⁴ Dennis Cohen, op cit., p. 96.

⁵ Robin Cohen, "From Peasants to Workers in Africa", in P. Gutkind and Wallerstein, op cit., pp. 156-159. Gavin Williams "Taking the Part of Peasants, Rural Development in Nigeria and Tanzania", in Gutkind and Wallerstein, op cit., p. 132; Dennis Cohen, op cit., pp. 100-101.

⁶ Claude Ake, Revolutionary Pressures in Africa (London: Zed Press, 1978), pp. 65-69.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 68-69.

⁸ Abdul R. M. Babu, African Socialism or Socialist Africa? (Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Publishing House, 1981), p. 4.

⁹ Richard Sandbrook, The Politics of Basic Needs, Urban Aspects of Assaulting Poverty in Africa (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), p. 230.

- 10 Okwudiba Nnoli, "Path to Nigerian Development: Conclusions," in O. Nnoli (ed.) Path to Nigerian Development (Dakar: Codesira, 1981), p. 253.
- 11 Ibid. It is not clear what Nnoli means by "Nigerian-type Societies".
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- 19 Sharon Stitche, "Imperialism and the Rise of a 'Labour Aristocracy' in Kenya, 1945-1970," Berkeley Journal of Sociology, Vol. 21 (1973), pp. 20-21.
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- 21 Irving L. Markovitz, Power and Class in Africa: An Introduction to Change and Conflict in African Politics (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1977), pp. 266-267; 270-71.
- 22 Dennis L. Cohen, op cit., p. 100.

- 23 Jack Woddis, New Theories of Revolution (New York: International Publishers, 1972), p. 19.
- 24 Ibid., p. 173.
- 25 Ibid., pp. 114-165.
- 26 Eskor Toyo, The Working Class and the Nigerian Crisis (Ibadan: Sketch Publications, 1967), p. 33.
- 27 Ibid., pp. 36, 84.
- 28 Ibid., p. 97.
- 29 See Th., J. Gerold-Scheepreers, "The Political Consciousness of African Urban Workers. A Review of Recent Publications", in African Perspectives, 2 (1978), pp. 83-98; and Peter Waterman, "The 'Labour Aristocracy' in Africa: Introduction to an Unfinished Controversy" in Dennis L. Cohen and J. Daniel, (eds.) Political Economy of Africa, Selected Readings (London: Longuray, 1981), pp. 119-29.
- 30 The following sections dealing with the relevance of the labour aristocracy thesis to the Nigerian situation is taken, with slight modifications, from the author's earlier work; see James Zasha, "The State, Structure and the Development of the Nigerian Labour Movement" (M.A. Thesis, McMaster University, Hamilton, 1980), pp. 20-23.
- 31 Keith Hinchliffe, "Labour Aristocracy - A Northern Nigerian Case Study" in The Journal of Modern African Studies, 12, 1 (1974), pp. 56-67.
- 32 Ibid., p. 64.
- 33 Ibid., p. 67
- 34 Adrian Peace, "The Lagos Proletariat: Labour Aristocrats or Populist Militants?" in Richard Sandbrook and Robin Cohen, op cit. pp. 281-302.
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38 Ibid., pp. 15-20, James O'Connell, "Authority and Community in Nigeria," in Robert Melson and H. Wolpe, Nigeria: Modernization and the Politics of Communalism (Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1971), pp. 630-34; James Coleman, Nigeria: Background to Nationalism (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), pp. 332-352.

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40 See David Apter, "Ideology and Discontent", in Ideology and Discontent (New York: Free Press, 1964), p. 16.

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45 Nelson Kasfir, op cit., p. 369.

46 See Robert Melson and H. Wolpe, "Modernization and the Politics of Communalism: A Theoretical Perspective, in R. Melson and H. Wolpe (eds.) Nigeria: Modernization and the Politics of Communalism, p. 30.

47 This is a central idea in Howard Wolpe's "Port Harcourt: Ibo Politics in Microcosm", The Journal of Modern African Studies, 7.3 (1969), especially pp. 485-492; and Robert Melson, "Ideology and Inconsistency: The 'Cross-Pressured' Nigerian Worker" American Political Science Review, No. 1, March (1971), pp. 161-71.

48 Pierie Van den Berghe and George P. Primov, Inequality in the Peruvian Andes. Class and Ethnicity in Cuzco (University of Missouri Press, 1977), p. 2.

49 O. Nnoli, "Ethnicity and the Working Class", op cit., p. 64.

50 Ibid., p. 65.

51 Nelson Kasfir, op cit., pp. 373-74.

52 Ibid., p. 374.

53 Ibid., p. 378.

54 See Karl Marx, The Poverty of Philosophy (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 19), pp. 172-75; "The Coming Upheaval" in R. C. Tucker, (ed.) The Marx-Engels Reader (New York: W. Norton and Co., 1978), p. 520. The Communist Manifesto (with an Introduction by Satefan Possony, Chicago: Hery Regenery and Co., 1954), pp. 30-32, 132, "Inaugural Address of the Working-Men's International Association" in R. C. Tucker, op cit., pp. 512-513.

55 H. Lubasz, "Marx's Conception of the Revolutionary Proletariat", Praxis, Vol. 5, (1970), p. 289.

56 See M. A. Shepherd, "Origins and Incidence of the Term Labour "Aristocracy", Society for the Study of Labour History Bulletin, No. 37, Autum (1978), pp. 51-58.

57 Ibid., p., 57

58 V. I. Lenin, Imperialism The Highest Stage of Capitalism (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1920), pp. 13-14.

59 Gavin MacKenzie, The Aristocracy of Labour: The Position of Skilled Craftsmen in the American Class Structure (London: Cambridge University Press, 1973, pp. 162, 163.

60 V. I. Lenin, op cit., p. 14.

61 Ibid.

62 "Engels to Marx," Manchester, October 7, 1958 in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, On Britain (Moscow: Foreign Languages Press, 1953), pp. 491-92.

63 "Engels to Kartsy", Sept. 12, 1882, Ibid., p. 514.

64 "Engels to Sorge", December 7, 1889:, Ibid., pp. 522-23.

65 "Engels to Marx", November 18, 1858, Ibid., pp. 499-50.

66 J. H. Goldthorpe, et al. The Affluent Worker: Industrial Attitudes and Behaviour (London: Cambridge University Press, 1968); The Affluent Work: Political Attitudes and Behaviour (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969).

67 This is not to suggest that the process of embourgeoisement is taking place among African industrial workers.

68 A concise summary of the debate is offered by Barry Wellman in which he identifies three major positions regarding the community question. The first position is the "community lost" argument which holds that with the development of industrial bureaucratic urban societies, communal solidarities, especially those built around kinship ties, are attenuated. The second position is the "community saved" argument, essentially a negation of the "community lost" argument, and holds that "neighbourhood and kinship solidarities have continued to flourish in industrial bureaucratic social systems. The third position is the "community liberated" argument which maintains that industrial bureaucratic societies facilitate the expansion of urbanites' social networks but that urban conditions tend to weaken solidary attachments. See Barry Wellman "The Community Question: The Intimate Networks of East Yorkers," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 14, No. 5, March (1979), pp. 1201-1208.

69 R. Sandbrook and J. Arn, The Labouring Poor and Urban Class Formation: The Case of Greater Accra (Occasional Monograph Series, No. 12, Centre for Developing-Area Studies. McGill University, Montreal, 1977), p. 1.

70 "Introduction" in P.C.W. Gutkind, et al., African Labour History (London: Sage, 1978), pp. 24-25.

71 Sandbrook makes this distinction in The Politics of Basic Needs, op cit., p. 139.

72 See P.C.W. Gutkind, The Emergent African Urban Proletariat (Occasional Paper - Series No. 8; Centre for Developing-Area Studies, McGill University, Montreal, 1974), p. 47. Quote is from Karl Marx and F. Engels, The Holy Family (1958), p. 108.

73 This approach was used effectively by Richard Sandbrook and Jack Arn; See their, The Labouring Poor, op cit.

74 John Saul seems to hold this view but hesitates to state it categorically. See John Saul, "The Dialectics of Class and Tribe," in Studies in Political Economy: A Socialist Review, No. 1, Spring (1979), p. 28.

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76 Peter Gutkind, "From the Energy of Despair to the Anger of Despair ... " op cit., p. 196.

77 Gutkind, "The View from Below ..." op cit., p. 21.

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80 Robin Cohen, Labour and Politics in Nigeria (London: Heinemann, 1974).

81 Paul Lubeck, "Early Industrialization and Social Class Formation among Factory Workers in Kano, Nigeria", (Ph.D. Dissertation, North-Western University, 1975).

82 Ibid., p. 121.

83 Ibid., p.

84 Ibid., p. 136-48; 181-87; 251-52.

85 Sara Berry, review of Robin Cohen's Labour and Politics in African Economic History Review, Vol. 1, No. 2, (1974), p. 25.

86 Having questioned the conceptual applicability of "Labour Aristocracy" to industrial wage workers, I will nevertheless stick to the term in this study in order to demonstrate its empirical inapplicability to Nigerian workers.

87 Peter Bergen and Thomas Luckmann "The Social Construction of Reality. A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge. (London, Allen Lane, 1966).

88 These population estimates assume an annual rate of growth of 3% and are based on the 1963 census in which the combined population of Benue and Plateau State was 3,969,000 and that of the Tiv, 1,394,000. See Itia Ekanem, The 1963 Nigeria Census, (Benin City, Ethiope Publishing Corp., 1973) p. 72 and P. O. Olusanya, "Population Growth and Its Components The Nature and Direction of Population Change," in J.C. Caldwell, Population Growth and Socio-economic Change in West Africa (New York, Colombia University Press, 1975), p. 273, Table 11.22.

89 James Davis Elementary Survey Analysis (New Jersey, Prentice-Hall 1971), p. 49.

CHAPTER TWO

EMERGENCE OF INDUSTRIAL WAGE LABOUR AMONG THE TIV

My aim in this chapter is to outline briefly both the historical origin of industrial wage labour in Tivland in general and the immediate background and characteristics of the workers who constitute the major focus of this study. The history of the emergence of industrial wage labour among the Tiv does not differ significantly from the history of the origin and development of wage labour in Nigeria as a whole. Elsewhere I have outlined in detail the major features of this phenomenon for Nigeria over a 100 year period (1850-1960)¹, and here I will only briefly describe the process as it occurred nationwide to give a proper context to the more detailed analysis of the Tiv case.

The colonial state in Nigeria introduced wage labour under conditions of no substantial transformation in the traditional forms of land ownership and organization of production. To fulfil its mission of organizing local production to meet the raw material needs for British industrialization, the colonial state placed much emphasis on the production of cash crops for export with the neglect of

the establishment of manufacturing industries. Effective access to land by individuals combined with the state emphasis on cash crop production meant that the few enterprises requiring wage labour (such as railway and road construction, the mines and commercial companies) had to compete with cash crop production for available labour, especially given the monetary unattractiveness prevalent in the wage employment sector. This in turn led to shortages of labour in the wage sector with the consequent introduction of forced labour as a major recruitment policy. The overall consequence of the dynamics of the situation as sketched above was the emergence of a working class that was impoverished, numerically small, making up only 2% of the overall population at the time of independence; and with deep roots in rural homelands. The specific Tiv case fits the general Nigerian situation described here fairly well.

To present a broader historical perspective I will specify the mode of organization of production in pre-capitalist Tivland and analyze the impact that the imposition of the capitalist mode of production had on the emergence of a working class in the area. Accordingly, in the first section of this chapter I will describe the nature of organization of production in pre-capitalist

(pre-colonial) Tivland. In the second section I will dwell on the creation of wage labour during the colonial period; and focus in section three, on the post-colonial situations in the Benue Cement and Jos textile industries. In section four I will outline the major characteristics of the respondents in the study.

2.1 Organization of Production in Pre-Capitalist Tivland

In pre-capitalist Tivland (as indeed was the case in most of Nigeria) the most important factor of production was land, and the family constituted the unit of control both over land and over the organization of production. As Tseayo points out "Before the occupation of Tivland by the British, the unit of organization for the purposes of social and economic activities was the family group."² By virtue of belonging to a family within the community, individuals gained access to land for cultivation.³ Describing some aspects of land tenure among the Tiv, Laura and Paul Bohannan observe that:

Every married woman in Tivland has a right to a farm sufficient to feed herself and her dependents; it is the duty of her husband to provide it and to perform, or oversee the heavy work on it. Every man, also, has a right to sufficient land to make farms for his wives. This right is held, by birth and citizenship, in his minimal tar (community) though a man may be given land by collateral kinsmen or strangers in their minimal tar (community) for use so long as he lives with them

... It is considered the duty of the compound head to see⁴ that the men of his compound have sufficient land.

Thus we see that access to land, the most important means of production in pre-capitalist Tivland, was not restricted to or monopolized by any one dominant social group to the disadvantage of another.

Slavery was a common practice in pre-colonial Tiv area, but as was the situation all over Nigeria, slaves bought or acquired by whatever means, were incorporated into the household labour force and often had access to land.⁵ Thus on the whole, in pre-colonial Tivland, "the individual labourer alienated from all means of production"⁶ was not a common feature in the organization of production.

Other aspects of the organization of production involved "co-operation," a situation whereby men of various families would co-operate to help one another on their farms in turns, and women of various families would similarly co-operate among themselves. Nevertheless the family constituted the key unit of organization of production in pre-capitalist Tivland. The chief features of the Tiv economy during this period is summed up by Tseayo thus:

Prior to the colonial situation, the Tiv economy was built around the compound. Goods and services were produced mainly for domestic consumption and a little was left to exchange for other goods not

produced at home. This exchange was conducted by direct barter in a neighbourhood market. 8

This brief statement spelling out the organization of production in pre-colonial Tivland is meant to underline the point that at the time the British arrived on the scene to set in motion the process of creating a wage labour force, the social relations arising from the production process were such that no significant category of free wage labourers totally alienated from land or other means of production existed in the area. What I will consider next is how a wage labour force was created out of this situation.

2.2 Creation of Wage Labour

Though Europeans came in contact with Tivland as early as 1852, it was only as late as the first decade of the twentieth century that the area was effectively penetrated by the British, the last area of British penetration and subjugation in Nigeria.⁹ By 1934 the Tiv were organized into one administrative unit called the Tiv Division with its headquarters at Gboko. As was its policy in Nigeria as a whole, the colonial state recognized and preserved the form of land ownership it found in Tivland. Related to this policy was the emphasis of the colonial state on the production of cash crops for export to Britain, with the

neglect of the establishment of manufacturing industries in the area. I will spell out the significance of these policies for the emergence of a wage labour force below.

Three important factors contributed in varying degrees to the emergence of wage labour in Tivland during the colonial period: the introduction of coined currency; the imposition of taxes to be paid in cash; and forced labour. The most important of these factors was forced labour. The introduction of coined currency and imposition of taxation by themselves could not have significant impact on the decision to enter wage labour as there was the discretion to engage in cash crop production to obtain the currency.

When taxation was introduced in Tivland early in the colonial administration (in the 1930's) it was to be paid in kind, and even when it was later to be paid in cash, it was not always necessary to engage in wage labour to acquire the cash. As Bohannan observes:

The trading companies which had had "canteens" on the Benue for some decades were quick to co-operate with the government in introducing a "cash crop" which could be bought by the traders in return for cash to pay taxes and incidentally to buy imported goods. The crop which proved best adapted for this purpose in Tivland was beniseed (*sesamum indicum*).¹⁰

The general effect of the introduction of money, taxation and cash crops was the development of a colonial cash crop

economy in Tivland.¹¹ Few people were attracted to the wage earning sector of the economy, mainly, as we shall see below, because of low wages and extremely harsh conditions of work in the mines and on railway construction sites, which were the major areas demanding wage labour. Mainly because of this, the colonial state resorted to forced labour practices in its recruitment of labour for construction and mining projects. Forced labour became an established practice in Nigeria by 1890¹², and even though in compliance with International Labour Organization recommendations the colonial state officially banned the practice,¹³ it continued well into the 1940's in the case of the Tivs.

The recruitment process involved significant collaboration with elders and officials in the various communities.¹⁴ As Tseayo points out "The actual recruiting was done by the Hausa agents (couriers) through the District Heads, backed by the presence of District offices. This kind of labour was called "political labour".¹⁵ Principally due to the poor and inefficient system of payment on the railway and the low wages that eventually trickled down to the labourers, railway wage work continued to be unpopular. The

labourers were paid through middlemen, and "most of the earnings derived from railway labour was lost to the Hausa and other African middlemen".¹⁶ Besides the monetary unattractiveness of railway wage labour, working on the railway lines (especially the construction of the River Benue bridge at Makurdi) was associated in the minds of the Tiv with extreme physical suffering and death. Paul Unongo describes how these hardships:

were perpetrated by then British Administrations, beginning in the late twenties and continuing through to the early forties under two familiar names: ADOGON (reference to the railway construction and the work on the Makurdi Bridge over River Benue) and KUZA (reference to tin mining on the Jos plateau). Today in Tivland when you say some one has gone to Adogon (yem adogon), you mean he is dead. 17

Working conditions in the tin mines of the Jos plateau were extremely harsh, as Unongo points out:

During this period (the latter half of the thirties) once again, thousands of male able-bodied young Tiv were removed forcefully ... to the temperate cold of Jos Plateau without any financial compensation to themselves nor their families. Most died even before they arrived at their shacks ... many more died from the unfamiliar conditions. 18

Bill Freund also describes conditions in the mines as unbearable.¹⁹ He notes that in 1943, because of the high death rates among the Tivs, "it was finally decided to

withdraw Tiv labourers and cease all conscript recruitment from Tivland."²⁰ Thus by 1945 forced labour was no longer a dominant phenomenon among the Tiv.

The combined effect of the extremely hazardous conditions of wage work, its monetary unattractiveness, the demand for cash crops by the trading companies and the Tiv peoples' easy access to cultivatable land was a constricted development of a working class among the Tiv during the colonial period. Even those who were forced into wage labour still retained access to their cultivatable land, a situation which still exists as I shall soon demonstrate. Notwithstanding the limited factors analysed above, the fact remains that the colonial period set in motion the process of creating a working class in Tivland and pulled many into wage employment. In 1923 the total number of Tiv workers engaged in railway construction alone fluctuated between 1,000 and 3,000 during the year, the peak periods corresponding with non-harvesting or cultivating seasons.²¹ To escape being drafted either as railway or mine workers some people migrated out into neighbouring provinces to find work as messengers, mechanics and clerks. But for both those who went far away and those who stayed

near home to work on the railway, there was always a strong attachment to their rural communities.

To summarize, I have attempted thus far to outline the major social and historical factors that gave rise and shape to the emergence of a working class in Tivland during the colonial period. The imposition of the capitalist mode of production in co-existence with a mode of production that guaranteed open access to land led to the emergence of a working class by and large engaged in both wage employment and individual land cultivation. This situation is neither peculiar to the Tiv nor limited to the colonial period. The analysis fits the Nigerian working class for the most part both in the colonial and post-colonial periods. To this extent I consider it pertinent to examine how the workers' relationship to both land and to wage employment affects their behaviour and thinking as members of the working class. The brief historical analysis I have undertaken so far addresses the remote but important question of where the workers, whose behaviour and thinking I am concerned with in the study, have come from. In the next section I shall focus on their more immediate background, and later, analyse their major characteristics.

2.3 The Textile and Cement Factories

The workers who constitute the focus of this study work in two factories: the Benue Cement Company factory located on the outskirts of Gboko, Benue state, and the Northern Nigeria Fibre Textile factory located in Jos, Plateau state.

Benue is the home state of the Tiv, and in the last reliable census (1963) the population of the state was 2,427,000 out of which 1,244,185 were Tiv.²² There is a very low level of industrialization in the state. By 1978 there was a total of 409 firms employing 2 or more persons out of which only 15% employed more than 10 persons and only 3% employed more than 20 persons.²³ During the same period, estimated total employment in industrial establishments employing two or more persons in Benue state was 3,203, out of which 50% were employed in establishments with 10 or more persons.²⁴ Nevertheless this represents some increase in wage employment since independence in 1960, especially increasing involvement in industrial wage labour. Forced labour is no longer used as a recruitment mechanism. Benue Cement Company is by far the largest industrial project in Benue state, with an approximate total labour force of 600.

Benue Cement Company

Though the company was formally established in July 1975, actual construction of the factory buildings did not start until January, 1977.²⁵ This followed the report of a feasibility study commissioned by Benue state government and carried out by the Cement Engineers and Consulting firm of Italy, who later became technical partners to the company. The company started actual production in August, 1980.

The factory is located in a rural setting 15 km. from Gboko town and is one of two industries in the town. From its position as the administrative headquarters of Tiv Division from the colonial period (and even well into the post-colonial period) Gboko town has become the traditional centre of the Tiv. Most inhabitants of the town are Tiv. Thus outside the workplace industrial workers in the town interact within a dominantly Tiv milieu.

The cement company is owned jointly by the Nigerian Federal government, two state governments and some other corporations, with shares distributed as shown in Table 2.1.

TABLE 2.1
Shareholders of Benue Cement Company

Shareholder	% of Shares Held
Federal Ministry of Industries	39
Benue State Government	21
Plateau State Government	14
Cementia Holding Ag. (Italy)	11
The Nigerian Bank for Commerce & Industries	7
New Nigerian Development Company	5
Nigerian Industrial Development Bank	<u>3</u>
Total	100

Sources: The Regional Plan of Benue State Final Report, op cit, p. 295; Company History, p. 2.

Though the federal government owns the highest proportion of shares, the management of the company is under the Italian Cementia Corporation, the original agreement being that Cementia, who are also technical partners, handle the company for five years before handing over to Nigerians.²⁶ The company employs an approximate labour force of 600.

The major raw materials for producing cement are limestone and clay, both of which are found at the production site. The "dry" process of production (as opposed to the "wet" process which involves much water) is used.²⁷ But more relevant to the social relations and behaviour among the workers in the factory is the fact that cement production is achieved through the flow process which involves, to begin with, the blasting of limestone at the quarry and ends with the packing of the final product, cement, into bags at the packing plant to be loaded into waiting trailers. In between the blasting of the limestone and the packing of the cement the major stages of the flow process include blending the blasted and ground materials, passing it ("the raw meal") through a preheater system; then into the kiln; and next into the cooler, and quality control.²⁸ All these major stages of the flow process are executed in different locations within the factory site, relatively physically isolated from one another. Thus the workers work in small isolated and dispersed groups and since there is no common meal time or break time for them, contact and interaction among the workers within the factory is extremely limited. As we shall see, this situation contrasts sharply with that obtaining at the Jos textile factory.

The cement factory is open 24 hours a day seven days a week and operates on a three shift basis. The actual output is 700,000 tons per annum, 200,000 short of expected output.

The Fibre Textile Company

The Fibre textile factory in Jos (Northern Nigeria Fibre Textile Company) was established in 1966 and went into production in 1967. The factory is located in Jos, the Capital city of Plateau state. Jos is the most industrially developed city in the Nigerian Middle Belt. The town has a long history of industrial wage employment dating back to tin mining during the colonial period. Since independence many industries have been established in the town. By 1982 industrial establishments in Jos city employing 100 or more persons included Nasco Biscuits, Brytext; Plateau State Breweries, the Jos Steel Rolling Mills, and the Fibre textile company which is itself located in the area of Jos with the highest concentration of industrial establishments. Besides the higher industrial concentration in Jos (than in Gboko), the city also has a greater ethnic diversity. Thus whereas the Tiv are the dominant ethnic group in Gboko, they are one of the minor ethnic groups in Jos. Consequently both inside and outside the workplace, industrial workers in Jos are more

likely to come in contact with other industrial workers or wage earners of different ethnic backgrounds.

The ownership of the textile company is difficult to determine with certainty. The New Nigeria Development Company owns 27% of the shares and it would appear that the majority of the shares and ultimate control of the company rest with the Nasradin Company, an Asian/Ethiopian corporation. The company's technical partners are James Hackey and Sons of Britain.

The company started with an initial labour force of 3,000 but by 1982 the figure dropped by more than half to 1,200 due to production cuts. Jos and its immediate areas constitute the major source of labour for the factory. The major raw material is jute which is wholly imported from Bangladesh. The factory produces mainly jute bags and Hessian (kind of rough) cloth (production of an additional product, carpets was started in 1981).

The production process begins with batching of the jute and ends with woven cloth or sewed bags. The major production stages are spinning and weaving, and the machinery and workers are organized inside one large building with no isolated compartments: spinning is done in one half of the hall and weaving in the other. Thus contrary to the

situation in the cement factory, the production process in the textile factory permits extensive contact, interaction and conversation among the workers during working hours. But like the cement company the textile factory also operates a shift system: three shifts up to 1978 but two shifts since then.

2.4 Major Characteristics of the Respondents

The major characteristics of the respondents in both Gboko and Jos can be described under three broad categories: their demographic characteristics, their job histories and their relationship to land. I will discuss them in the order outlined above.

A. Major Demographic Characteristics

The major factors we will describe here are the respondents' places of birth, age, marital status, religion, educational attainment and parents' occupations and educational levels. Eighty-two per cent of the respondents were born in rural areas, and the same proportion have fathers whose occupation is farming. A slightly higher proportion (86%) have mothers whose occupation is also farming. Eighty-two per cent have illiterate fathers and 96% illiterate mothers. Thus in terms of birth place and

parental background the respondents are by and large homogeneous in their predominantly rural and low social status origins.

The respondents are moderately young. Table 2.2 shows their age distribution.

TABLE 2.2

Distribution of Respondents by Age

Age Group	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Below 20	4	6
20-24	23	31
25-29	25	34
30-34	9	12
35-39	9	12
40 and above	<u>3</u>	<u>5</u>
Total	73	100

The majority of the respondents (71%) are below the age of thirty and only a tiny proportion is above forty years of age. This age structure shows great similarity with that of

textile workers in Kaduna, a major industrial city in northern Nigeria. In a survey of 3,901 workers in 1972 Hinchliffe found that "Over half of all workers are aged 19-23 years and only just over one tenth are above 30 years of age ... Another feature of the distribution is that only 6.6% of the total work force are below 18 years."²⁹ Thus our sample can be regarded as fairly representative of Nigerian industrial workers in terms of the age structure.

All the respondents claimed Christianity as their religion; 56% were Roman Catholics and 44% Protestants. Data on marital status shows that 67% are married. Out of those married, 86% have only one wife; 45% have less than four children, while 22% have more than four children. The level of formal education of the respondents is fairly high, as can be observed in Table 2.3.

TABLE 2.3

Educational Attainment of the Respondents

Educational Level	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Above Primary Seven	37	51
Primary Seven	23	32
Below Primary Seven	<u>13</u>	<u>18</u>
Total	73	101

Compared with Hinchliffe's findings ten years ago this shows a considerable rise in the levels of formal education of industrial workers in Northern Nigeria. In his survey only 6% of the respondents had some post-primary school education; and 13% had no formal education.²⁷ In this study I will treat education as one of the major independent variables. I suspect that the experience of formal education has significant influence on workers' perceptions and behaviour.

B. Wage Employment Histories

The main factors to be discussed here are the respondents' reasons for engaging in wage employment; number of previous places and years of wage employment; the last job

prior to the current one, occupation, and income. I will first discuss the respondents' reasons for seeking wage employment outside their villages. Table 2.4 shows the major reasons. The question was open-ended.

TABLE 2.4

Respondents' Reasons for Seeking Wage Employment

Stated Reason	No. of Respondents	Percentage
To help parents and younger relatives	22	30
To earn a living	18	25
Inability to continue schooling	18	25
Found farming too difficult	6	8
Other	<u>9</u>	<u>12</u>
Total	73	100

An observation that can be made regarding the data is the relative absence of the element of force or coercion to engage in wage employment. The workers were neither physically forced into waged employment (as was the case in

the colonial period) nor were they compelled by landlessness to seek wage employment as the only alternative for survival. The reasons the workers gave for seeking wage employment suggest a fairly stable commitment to that mode of life.

Forty-one per cent of the respondents had no previous wage employment experience. But 52% had worked in one or two other places and 7% had worked in up to three places prior to their current employment. Thus up to 59% of the workers have had the experience of wage employment in at least two different organizations, where they worked as clerks, manual workers, supervisors, teachers, or were in the armed forces. Those who had had no previous wage employment experience came straight from school or from farming: either because they were unable to further their education or found farming too difficult. Nevertheless, on the whole the respondents have a fairly extensive experience of wage employment in terms of the number of working places. However, a more important measure of their experience of wage employment is the number of years they have spent in such a milieu.

As Table 2.5 shows, a fairly high proportion of the respondents can be regarded as relatively well established in

urban industrial wage employment. Close to 30% have been in wage employment for at least ten years whereas 32% have been in such employment for two years or less.

TABLE 2.5

Distribution of Respondents by Years of Wage Employment

Number of Years	No. of Respondents	Percentage
2 or less	23	32
3 or 4	16	23
5 or 9	12	16
10 to 15	13	17
Over 15	<u>9</u>	<u>12</u>
Total	73	100

As I suggested in chapter one if entry into wage employment dramatically affects peoples perceptions, orientations and behaviour, one would expect significant differences to be reflected in such varied experience of wage employment by the workers ranging from a few months to thirty years.

Accordingly I have chosen the workers' years of wage

employment to be one of the main independent variables in the study. Two other variables similarly chosen are the workers' occupation and income levels. These two variables are chosen so as to test the claims of labour aristocracy theorists. The main occupational categories have been listed already (see P. 36).

Table 2.6 shows the respondents' income levels.

TABLE 2.6

Distribution of Respondents by Monthly Income (In Naira)*

Income Range	No. of Respondents	Percentage
60-175	41	56
120-265	17	23
270-655	<u>15</u>	<u>21</u>
Total	73	100

* 1 Naira = .75 (US \$)

Minimum monthly wage = N125.

Nigeria's per capita income = \$598.

By the standards of the Nigerian wage structure the three income categories can be considered as representing

respectively the lowest, middle and highest income workers within the working class. As can be observed in the table, as the income level rises, the corresponding proportion of workers declines. It will be pertinent in this study to examine the effect of income levels on the thinking and behaviour of industrial workers. Accordingly I choose income to be one of the main independent variables. I will now finally discuss the last of the respondents' major characteristics, their relationships to land.

C. Respondent's Relationships to Land

An overwhelming majority of the respondents (85%) said they had access to cultivatable land of their own in their rural villages. And 75% of those who have access to land (or 64% of the sample) said they usually cultivate it, on weekends or during the several times they go back home each year. Thus we have a fairly high proportion of the respondents involved in both wage employment and land cultivation. Table 2.7 shows the category of crops cultivated.

TABLE 2.7

Distribution of Respondents by Crops Cultivated

Category of Crop	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Food Crops only	21	46
Cash Crops only	10	22
Food and Cash Crops	<u>15</u>	<u>32</u>
Total	46	100

Not involved in cultivation = 27.

Because land cultivation provides industrial workers alternative access to the means of production it constitutes a potential source of influence on the behaviour and attitudes of industrial workers; as such I will treat it as another of the main independent variables in the analyses in subsequent chapters.

To summarize I have endeavoured in this chapter to undertake a concise analysis of the emergence of wage labour among the Tiv, to present a short account of the cement and textile industries studies, and to outline the major characteristics of the respondents. Through this process I

have highlighted the major independent variables of the study, identified earlier in chapter one, namely the workers' industrial sub-communities, relationship to cultivatable land; years of wage employment; income, occupation and educational attainment. To achieve a comprehensive understanding of the major attitudes and behaviour of industrial workers, the main dependent variables have been identified as (1) working class images of society; (2) class identification; (3) workers' urban social networks and (4) political orientations. In subsequent chapters I will take up, in turn, each of the major dependent variables. Accordingly, in the next chapters I will undertake an analysis of workers' images of the Nigerian society.

FOOTNOTES

¹ James Zasha, "The State, Structure and the Development of the Nigerian Labour Movement". (M.A. Thesis, McMaster University, Hamilton 1980), Chapter Two. The description that follows is a summary of this earlier work.

² Justin Tseayo, Conflict and Incorporation in Nigeria. The Integration of the Tiv (Zaria: Gaskiya, 1975), p. 28.

³ See T.O. Elias, Nigeria Land Law and Customs (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1951), p. 93; Victor Uchendu, "State, Land and Society in Nigeria: A Critical Assessment of the Land Use Decree (1978)," in Journal of African Studies, Vol. 6, No. 2, Summer 1979, p. 65.

⁴ Laura and Paul Bohannan, The Tiv of Central Nigeria (London: International African Institute, 1953), p. 50.

⁵ Ibid., p. 46. For the status of slaves in the eastern parts of Nigeria, see Victor Uchendu, "Slaves and Slavery in Iboland, Nigeria", in Suzan Miers and Igov Kopytoff, (eds.) Slavery in Africa Historical and Anthropological Perspectives (University of Wisconsin Press, 1977), pp. 127-31; and K. Nwachuku Ogedengbe, "Slavery in Nineteenth-Century Aboh," in Miers and Kopytoff, op cit., pp. 136-52. For the situation in the western territories, T. O. Elias, op cit., p. 170, and for the northern provinces, see Thea Buttner, "The Economic and Social Character of Pre-Colonial States in Tropical Africa," Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, Vol. 5, No. 2, 1970, pp. 284-85.

⁶ Thea Buttner, Ibid., p. 289.

⁷ See Paul and Laura Bohannan, Tiv Economy (North Western University Press, 1968), pp. 72-76.

- 8 Justin Tseyayo, op cit., p. 117.
- 9 Laura and Paul Bohannan, The Tiv of Central Nigeria, p. 13.
- 10 Paul Bohannan, "The Impact of Money on an African Subsistence Economy" The Journal of Economic History. Vol. XIX, No. 4 (1959), p. 499. Another Crop, Soyabeans, was introduced after the Second World War.
- 11 See Bohannan, Tiv Economy. p. 247.
- 12 Wale Oyemakinde, "Railway Construction and Operation in Nigeria, 1895-1911: Labour Problems and Socio-Economic Impact" Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, Vol. 7, No. 2, June (1974) pp. 303-324.
- 13 Bill Freund, Capital and Labour in the Nigerian Tin Mines (New Jersey, Humanities Press, 1981), p. 137.
- 14 Tseyayo, op cit., p. 61.
- 15 Ibid., pp. 118-119.
- 16 Ibid., pp. 119
- 17 Paul Unongo, "Where Do We Go from Here?" (Unpublished Open Letter to the Tiv people, 1969), cited in Tseyayo, op cit., pp. 50-151.
- 18 Ibid. p. 119
- 19 See Bill Freund, op cit., pp. 144-150.
- 20 Ibid., p. 148
- 21 Tseyayo, op cit., p. 119
- 22 Deadline Data on World Affairs (Greenwich, Conn. 1982).
- 23 The Regional Plan of Benue State, Final Report. Vol. 3, of 3 Sectoral Studies (Makurdi, Ministry of Economic Planning, Benue State, Nigeria; Dar Al-Handasah Consultants, Nov. 1981), p. 283.

- 24 Ibid., p. 287
- 25 Company History. p. 1 (A Benue Cement Company Handout.)
- 26 Interview with Assistant Training Manager, April 1, 1982.
- 27 Cement Production Process in Brief, (Benue Cement Company Handout), p. 1.
- 28 R. Hammond (Training Manager), Cement Process Technology, pp. 2-3; Cement Production Process in Brief, op cit., p. 1.
- 29 Keith Hinchliffe, "The Kaduna Textile Workers: Characteristics of an African Industrial Labour Force," Savana, Vol. 2, No. 1, (June 1973), p. 29.
- 30 Ibid., p. 34.

CHAPTER THREE
WORKING CLASS IMAGES OF SOCIETY

Introduction

The main concern in this chapter is to analyze industrial workers' images of Nigerian society. I will pursue the questions: What images do industrial workers have of Nigerian society? Do workers perceive Nigerian society as fundamentally egalitarian or as characterized by structural social inequality? Do workers hold hierarchical images of social inequality or dichotomous images of a dominant class existing by exploiting a subordinate class? What are the workers' subjective perceptions of their objective socio-economic position?

These are time-worn questions. For instance Ralph Dahrendorf's review of the relevant western literature on "how people see society" leads him to identify two models of society, one hierarchical, representing order and integration, predominantly held by white-collar workers; and the other, antagonistic and dichotomous, suggesting conflict, and held by manual workers.¹ He suggests, "the idea that there is a fundamental division of society into "haves" and

"have nots", "above" and "below", "them" and "us" is still a force in the minds of many people."² Working within the framework of the general proposition that:

For the most part men visualize the class structure of their society from the vantage points of their own particular milieu, and their perceptions of the larger society will vary according to their experiences of social inequality in the smaller societies in which they live out their daily lives, 3

Lockwood identifies in Britain three different types of workers with corresponding types of "social consciousness": "First, the traditional worker of the proletarian variety whose image of society will take the form of a power model; second, the other variety of the traditional worker, the 'deferential,' whose perception of social inequality will be one of status hierarchy; and third, the 'privatised' workers, whose social consciousness will almost nearly approximate what may be called a 'pecuniary' model of society".⁴ An empirical test of Lockwood's hypothesis by Blackburn and Mann casts doubt on it. They "found wanting the hypothesis that workers possessed, either as a class or in subcultures, a consistent and coherent image of society".⁵ As indicated in the last chapter, Nigerian studies that have explored this theme are those by Peter Lloyd and Peter Gutkind, the main

focus of which is not urban industrial workers.⁶ However, while they do not uncover a structured image of the Nigerian society by their respondents, their findings showed the tendency among the urban Yoruba to be generally satisfied with societal distribution of goods and services⁷, to blame the rich for their misfortune, and to aspire to elite status with the belief that the existing system can work.⁸

The position taken in the exploration of the theme of working class images of the Nigerian society here is that, on the whole, workers perceive Nigeria as an inegalitarian society, and though they hold no coherent view of either the structure or socio-economic bases of Nigerian inequality, they nevertheless locate themselves as among the least privileged with little or no access to societal distribution of goods and services.

The hypotheses to be tested in this chapter are (1) workers' images of the Nigerian society will vary according to their extent of proletarianism; and (2) workers paid relatively higher wages, those in higher occupational groups or those with relatively higher levels of formal education (i.e. the "labour aristocrats") will hold an image of the Nigerian society significantly different from workers lower

on these dimensions. These hypotheses are relevant to the overall question of the revolutionary potential of the working class because they provide the framework for probing the extent to which workers as a whole or sections among them are acquiescent or evince attitudes that question or challenge the existing Nigerian social structure and the distribution of goods and services.

The chapter is divided into two sections. In section one I will probe into workers' awareness of social inequality in Nigeria, while in the second section I will dwell on workers' perceptions of the bases of such inequality.

3.1 Images of Class Structure

The respondents were asked several questions to determine their perceptions of the concept of social class. To determine the extent to which workers perceive society in hierarchical terms, the aim of one such question was to present to the workers the idea that the Nigerian society can be likened to a ladder, a situation where some members of the society are at the top of the ladder, some in the middle and others at the bottom of the ladder.⁹ A very high proportion of the respondents (87%) perceive the Nigerian society as a hierarchical structure. The extreme skewness

of the frequency distribution precludes further statistical analysis of the hierarchical image of society. However, the high percentage figure does suggest that the workers are highly aware of some form of social inequality in Nigeria; and whereas this hierarchical image may indicate, as Dahrendorf suggests,¹⁰ that workers overwhelmingly hold an integrative view of society, the situation is a bit more complex. As I will show below workers also hold a dichotomous, conflict model of society especially demonstrated in their perceptions of class relations at the factory and exploitation in Nigerian society.

Perceptions of Factory Class Relations

It is conceivable that despite the fact that an overwhelming majority of the respondents have a hierarchical image of Nigerian society, many would also perceive society, especially class relations at the factory in dichotomous, conflict terms. To determine this possibility the respondents were asked whether a factory can be likened to a football team with workers and management belonging to one team, or whether teamwork in a factory is impossible, there being actually two teams with workers on one side and management on

the other.¹¹ I was interested in finding out whether workers' perceptions of factory class relations would vary according to the extent of proletarianism or vary with their income, educational or occupational levels. I will first analyse the data as it pertains to the proletarian hypothesis.

It was hypothesized that typical proletarians (Jos workers, those not involved in land-cultivation or those with five or more years of wage employment) would be more likely to perceive factory relations in class terms than marginal proletarians (Gboko workers, those involved in land-cultivation or those with less than five years of wage employment). Table 3.1 shows the distribution of the responses to the question of the factory as one team or two teams by industrial community.

TABLE 3.1

Perception of Factory Class Relations
by Industrial Community
(in percentages)

Perception of Factory as:	Industrial Community		All Workers
	(Marginal) Gboko	(Typical) Jos	
One Team	60	32	46
Two Teams	$\frac{40}{100}$	$\frac{68}{100}$	$\frac{54}{100}$
	N = 37	N = 34	N = 71

Other = 2 Gamma = .51 ($p < .025$)

More than half of the respondents expressed a dichotomous, conflict image of factory class relations, and there is a substantial, statistically significant positive correlation between industrial community and class perception. The difference in the organization of production in the two factories seems to explain the correlation. In the Jos textile factory, manual workers work and interact together in a large room with no walls separating the various production sections. Clerical workers similarly work together mainly in a large room. This formal organizational structure of large collective work groups, absent in the Gboko cement factory, has the effect of emphasizing awareness of a common class position of manual, clerical and supervisory workers who work

together in large groups. The perception of clear class divisions within the factory is revealed, for instance in the thinking of a secondary educated clerical worker in the Jos factory:

As we work here, there are small people and there are big people. The managers are different. They own the company, we the small ones work for the company. It is management that really owns the company.

This view which clearly identifies two classes at the factory, the big people who own the company and the small people who work for the company, contrasts with the views held, for instance, by two workers in Gboko, one manual, the other a supervisor.

The factory is like a team because we are all human beings and if we are working together we must co-operate.

In the real sense of it we are aiming at the same goal whatever we are; we are aiming at producing cement and without co-operation there can't be production.

The idea that co-operation and teamwork are necessary for production to take place is a valid one,¹² nevertheless the fact that in spite of it a majority of the workers perceive the factory in class terms is an indication of some elementary form of class consciousness among workers. From the brief analysis, it can be suggested that this form of class consciousness is likely to be particularly developed

where the formal organization of production brings workers together in large work groups or occupational communities. In this regard the proletarian hypothesis is upheld as far as the analysis of the effect of industrial sub-community goes.

Other measures of proletarianism show no significant association with perceptions of factory class relations. The gamma for years of wage employment is negligible (-.08) and statistically not significant, and so also is the gamma for workers' involvement in land cultivation. This is not surprising as the formal organization of production has a more immediate and direct effect on how workers perceive factory class relations. I will now examine the data as it relates to the labour aristocracy hypothesis.

It was hypothesized that workers with higher income, educational or occupational levels would be less likely than those lower on these variables to hold a dichotomous class image of the factory. Table 3.2 shows a summary of the correlations between occupation, education and income and perceptions of factory class relations.

TABLE 3.2

Zero-Order and First-Order Partial Gamma
for Perceptions of Factory Class Relations by
Occupation, Education and Income

Social Class Awareness By:	Zero-Order Gamma	First-Order Industry	Partial Occupation	Gamma Education	Controlling For: Employ- ment Years	Income
Occupation	.35	.36	-	.49	.30	.27
Education	.25	.12	.54	-	.26	.24
Income	.29	.50	.16	.49	.30	N.A.

All Gammas (N.S.)

Though all the correlations are not statistically significant, there is a low or moderate positive association between occupational, education, or income levels of the respondents and dichotomous perception of factory class relations. Thus contrary to the hypothesized relationship, workers regarded as constituting a labour aristocracy are not less likely than the rest of the workers to perceive factory class relations in dichotomous, conflict terms. And in this dichotomous perception the relatively more educated, highly paid or skilled workers do not identify themselves on management side. The response of three secondary school educated, relatively highly paid supervisors in Jos to a

question regarding their experience of wage employment are illustrative:

Actually people are supposed to check what goes on here. But when the government sends people to come and check the conditions under which we work, they come and sit over there [pointing to the administrative block] and drink tea with them [management] and then go away. Nobody cares about us.

They don't consider people's human feelings ... I want to be considered as a human being even if I am paid very small money. I don't want to be regarded as a beast taken from the bush to be taught human language.

Not that I like this job. It's just because I have no alternative. There is no encouragement from management. They are indifferent. They want people they can manipulate.

The several references by supervisory workers to management as "they" indicates that in their dichotomous, conflict model of factory class relations, supervisory, clerical or highly paid workers do not identify themselves on the management side of the dichotomy. The conclusion one can draw from this analysis is that even though the respondents do not hold a uniform, coherent image of class structure in their perceptions of the Nigerian society and factory class relations, they evince a high awareness of the incidence of social inequality in Nigeria. What I will examine next is the extent to which workers perceive exploitation in class relations.

Perceptions of Exploitation

As part of efforts to assess the extent of political dissidence and perceptions of exploitation among the poor in Accra, Richard Sandbrook and Jack Arn asked the respondents the question "Do those who are enjoying do so at the expense of those who are suffering?"¹³ I have adopted and used the same question in the present study to analyze the extent to which workers perceive exploitation in Nigerian class relations, and to assess what in the workers' thinking the character of exploitation is. The Tiv translation of "those enjoying" (mba yan tar) as used in the interviews has a specific connotation to the rich and wealthy. Thus not only is the idea of the dichotomous distinction between the rich and the poor obvious in the question, the idea that the rich are rich by virtue of somehow cheating, depriving or exploiting the poor is central in the question. Thus I am primarily concerned here with workers' awareness of exploitation in the Nigerian class structure.

I hypothesized that typical proletarians would be more likely than marginal proletarians to express awareness of exploitation. Overall 64% of the respondents show such awareness. This shows a fairly high awareness of exploitation especially compared with Sandbrook and Arn's

findings of 36%.¹⁴ However, there is no difference in awareness between workers in Gboko and in Jos. The proportion of respondents who perceive the existence of exploitation in the Nigerian society is the same for the two industries - 64%. The Gamma (-.01) is negligible and statistically not significant. There is also no major difference in terms of respondents' years of wage employment or involvement in land-cultivation. Thus the hypothesized relationship between proletarianism and awareness of exploitation is supported only in the sense that the workers as a whole are fairly highly conscious of exploitation.

To test the labour aristocracy perspective I hypothesized that the higher the income, education and occupational level of workers the less the likelihood of their perceiving that exploitation exists. Table 3.3 shows the distribution of responses by respondents' educational levels.

TABLE 3.3

Awareness of Exploitation by Respondents'
Educational Levels
(in percentages)

Those Enjoying Do So at Others' Expense:	Above PR.7	Education Level PR.7 and Below	All Workers
Yes	73	53	64
No	$\frac{26}{100}$	$\frac{47}{100}$	$\frac{36}{100}$
	N = 35	N = 34	N = 69

"Depends", etc. = 4

Gamma = .44 ($P < .025$)

The table above shows that workers with post-primary school education evince more awareness of exploitation than those with formal education below primary seven. The correlation is moderate and statistically significant and controlling for the effect of other variables does not substantially alter the moderate association, as can be seen in the summary of first-order partial correlations in Table 3.4.

TABLE 3.4
Zero-Order and First-Order Partial Gamma
For Awareness of Exploitation
by Occupation, Education and Income

Awareness of Exploitation by:	Zero-Order Gamma	First-Order Industry	Partial Gamma For:			Income
			Occupation	Education	Employment Years	
Occupation	.26	.25	N.A.	.19	.33	.20
Education	.44	.47	.28	N.A.	.42	.41
Income	.42	.44	.50	.29	.40	N.A.

Gamma for Occupation and Income (N.S.)

Though the correlations for occupation and income are not statistically significant, the direction of the association is away from the hypothesized relationship. Moreover, education seems to be an important source of political dissidence among workers as seen in their perceptions of exploitation in class relations. The influence of education

seems to be related to the notion of status inconsistency. This is a theory that has been used to address the issue of increased levels of formal educational attainment in excess of skill requirements of available jobs. As Val Burns concludes, a central claim is that:

persons who occupy inconsistent positions on different dimensions of status - in this instance a high educational status and a low occupational status - will experience this situation as stressful and if efforts at mobility are blocked, are likely to express their discontent in the form of liberal or radical political tendencies. 15

I indicated in the preceding chapter that Hinchliffe's survey of textile workers in Kaduna, Northern Nigeria, showed that only 6% of his respondents had some post-primary school education, compared with my survey ten years later in which 51% of the respondents have post-primary school education.¹⁶ Thus there is an increase in the education level of workers over the years, and relatively more educated workers are doing jobs previously performed by workers with low educational levels. This situation is likely to create status inconsistency which in turn accounts for their social attitudes and orientations. I will expand on this theme in the concluding chapter. For the moment I will examine the final element in the workers' awareness of social inequality, namely, their perceived access to the distribution of goods

and services in the Nigerian society.

Complacency

In order to probe into the respondents' subjective perceptions of their individual objective positions in the Nigerian society in terms of equality of access to societal distribution of goods and services, they were asked whether, compared with other people in Nigeria, they thought they were having a fair share, a little or much less, of the good things of life.¹⁷ Together the set of response "fair share", "a little less" and "much less" is considered to make up an index of complacency ranging from high to low. A very high proportion of the respondents (76%) regarded themselves as having less than a fair share of goods and services, thus there is an overall tendency towards non-complacency. But I was more concerned with the class and political implications of such attitudes. While the analysis of the social bases of dissident attitudes is reserved for the second section of this chapter, it is worth noting the criteria by which a few of the respondents regarded themselves as relatively well-off. Some workers maintained that they are getting what is rightly due to them. Two manual workers and a clerk at the cement factory:

Everyone gets things according to how he is.
Nobody can get things more than he is, so I am all
right.

I am getting what I am supposed to be getting.

Everything has its own time, so at the moment, the
stage at which I am now, I am alright.

But by far the most common explanation they give
for their sense of complacency is religious. This attitude
is evident from responses given by four manual operatives at
the cement factory.

I have only had primary seven education and other
people who have finished Grade 11 haven't got what
I have. So all that God has reserved for me, I
have got.

All I have is God's gift and if I say I am getting
less, from where else can I get more? So I am
satisfied.

I have got what God has reserved for me.

I am satisfied with what God has given me. It is
God who decides to give things to people.

Such attitudes are not confined to workers in Gboko nor to
manual workers. Two clerical workers in the textile factory
in Jos also exhibit the tendency to explain their complacency
in religious terms:

It is what God has given me so I praise him for
it. For if I look around me I can see that I am
better than many others.

What God has reserved for me, I think I have got,
and I am satisfied.

Nevertheless the religious element is important only to those who regard themselves as relatively well-off. As we shall soon see the most common explanation by those who regard themselves as having little or no access to societal distribution of goods and services is that they do not have sufficient formal education.

To summarize, social inequality in Nigeria is a fact of which the workers are clearly conscious. Though the majority of workers hold a hierarchical image of the Nigerian society, this image co-exists with a dichotomous, conflict model demonstrated in workers' perception of exploitation in class relations and especially in their perceptions of factory class relations. The nature of the formal organization of production in the Jos textile factory facilitates the development of a common class position of manual, clerical and supervisory workers distinct from another class represented by management. Furthermore, the workers as a whole show a tendency towards dissatisfaction in their subjective perceptions of their individual objective socio-economic positions in the Nigerian society. While all this does not provide any evidence for identifying a conservative labour aristocracy, only very limited support is given for the proletarian hypothesis, given especially that

most of the correlations are not statistically significant.

3.2 Bases of Social Inequality

We have seen in the preceding analysis that workers are highly aware of the fact of social inequality in Nigeria and the somewhat vague notion that those who become rich do so at the expense of those who are suffering. What I will do here is probe further into what, in the thinking of the workers, constitutes the major causes of social inequality in Nigeria. Granted that workers have some image of the class structure of the Nigerian society, it is pertinent to examine what factors they regard as determining which class one belongs to; how exploitation manifests itself in Nigeria in the workers' definition of the situation; and finally who or what industrial workers hold responsible for their felt lack of access to the distribution of goods and services in the Nigerian society.

Determinants of Classes

As I have shown earlier, 87% of the respondents expressed awareness of hierarchical class distinctions in Nigeria. They were asked what factors determine one's position in the hierarchy. Table 3.5 shows the distribution of responses. The question was open-ended.

TABLE 3.5

Distribution of Respondents by Determinants
of Social Class

Determinant of Social Class	No. of Respondents	%
It's God's Doing	18	29
Money	16	26
Self-Effort	12	20
Education	7	11
It's Natural	5	8
"Other"	<u>4</u>	<u>6</u>
Total	62	100

No such thing = 11

Though a fairly moderate proportion of the respondents regard money as a determinant of social classes, in which the "rich" and the "poor" can be identified, some see the situation in terms of such inevitable factors as "God's doing" and "nature". Thus two manual workers in Gboko and two supervisors in Jos attribute class differences to God's work in the following terms:

God has not made people the same. Some people have to be greater than others.

It's the way God has given them.

It's God's gift, it's the way God has made things.

It's the way God has made it.

A similar sense of inevitability of social inequality is expressed by a supervisor and three manual workers in Jos:

Just as the fingers of the hand are not the same, so also is it with men. And if the fingers are not the same how can people be the same?

Some people are naturally better than others.

All animals are equal but some are more equal than others, so people are equal but one man is greater than another.

Some who do not think that social inequality is inevitable nevertheless think in terms of the character and hard work of individuals in identifying bases of inequality, as observed in the thinking of two manual workers and a clerk:

Some people's behaviour is not good, so they are below, other people's behaviour is good, so they are up.

Some people's effort is greater than others' and that is why they are up.

Those who are up have tried, those who are below have not struggled enough.

These images of a God-designed nature of social inequality, its inevitability, or inequality existing because some people try harder than others is not limited to the workers in the Nigerian Middle Belt. Peter Lloyd's Survey in 1971 shows that the same attitudes were held by the majority of the respondents in Lagos and Ibadan. As he puts it, the respondents saw inequality "as an inevitable feature of

society, one's own position in the hierarchy being determined by a not altogether immutable destiny, by one's own character (and hence efforts) and by the good or evil intentions of others - helpers or witches, rivals and the like."¹⁸

Sandbrook and Arn have reported similar findings for Accra though on a lesser scale than Lloyd's findings in Lagos and Ibadan.¹⁹ However, both in Jos and Gboko the workers evinced great awareness of other social and economic factors regarding class distinctions. In response to a series of questions regarding occupational cognition the respondents tended to classify for instance managers, businessmen and doctors together; and farmers, factory workers and clerks together. In their explanation for their classification the most frequent keyword for Jos workers was money (mentioned 83 times); and for Gboko workers, authority (mentioned 58 times). Thus the respondents are aware of real and objective determinants of social inequality in Nigeria, and as will be shown below the respondents have a fairly developed even if limited perception of exploitation as the utilization of authority to steal money.

The Process of Exploitation

We notice in Table 3.3 that a sizeable proportion (36%) of the respondents seem not to perceive exploitation in

class relations. The most common responses to the question requiring them to explain why the wealth of the rich can not be at the expense of the poor were "It is their hard work" (37%), "They are given by God" (22%), and "They help others" (15%). Among the majority of the respondents who expressed awareness of exploitation, the most common explanations given were that the rich "forget others" (57%) "block others' chances" (21%) and "embezzle money" (21%). Two conceptions of exploitation are evident in the thinking of the workers. One is a more or less passive aspect of exploitation whereby the rich "forget" the poor or block chances of the poor in terms of social mobility. The other is the dynamic aspect whereby the rich embezzle money meant for the welfare of others including the poor. The passive image of exploitation while dominant, seems to be expressed mainly by less educated manual workers while the dynamic image seems prevalent among secondary school educated clerical workers. Thus four manual workers with only primary school education, two from each factory express the passive image:

There are some people who have everything and others who have little. Those who have too much do not care for the little, poorer ones. For example when [gives actual name] was a Commissioner, and heard complaints over high school fees, she only said "don't mind poor people" ...

They are enjoying but not seeing those who are struggling behind ...

When they are in power they forget us the poor ones.

These who are rich are not thinking of those of us coming behind.

A clerical and a supervisory worker in Gboko think in similar terms:

When others are in high position they don't care about those below, others do;

Many people are crying, the leaders don't see the need for other people's comfort.

Built into the passive image of exploitation is also the perceived frustrations in the workers' chances of social mobility. As two manual workers in Gboko put it "Those who are enjoying have occupied positions which those who are coming behind would have occupied;" "Because when others want to rise they hit those at the top". This frustration is also evident in the responses of two clerical workers in the Gboko cement factory:

When others are enjoying they don't want other people to come near them. Once in a position they want to stay there forever. Those who are eating with their mouths full are not looking back, they don't want others to join them ...

Some people already occupy big posts and when they are transferred to other big posts, they prevent others coming behind from going up.

The dynamic image of exploitation is evident in the responses of a manual operative and two clerical workers at the textile factory in Jos:

Some people steal money and go and keep it somewhere and so we the poor ones are suffering.

We read in newspapers that these big men sometimes keep their money outside Nigeria and this makes other people suffer.

When a contract is awarded to some people they use the money meant for the contract for other purposes and so others suffer.

This view is not peculiar to workers in Jos, three clerical workers in the cement factory in Gboko see it in a similar manner:

They are eating our money. I was once a teacher and the money usually meant for us was diverted to private use by some higher people. So their enjoyment is at the expense of others.

When one is in a high position he counts all his previous sufferings and wants to get rich overnight, and so he packs all public funds for himself.

The rich take away the "food" that belongs to others, so their enjoyment is killing others.

The concept of exploitation in Nigeria now takes on flesh and blood: the exploiting group is identifiable as "big men", "people in high positions" and "contractors". How do they exploit? They "pack", "eat", "steal" or "divert" money meant for the public to private use, possibly by keeping it outside Nigeria. And who are the exploited? - the general "others" whose "food" is thus taken away, more specifically "we the

poor ones". This seems to tie in roughly with the characteristics of the Nigerian bourgeoisie made up of senior politicians ("big men"), bureaucrats in private and state-owned agencies ("people in high positions") and merchants/businessmen ("contractors" who are more involved in organizing and managing the process of private accumulation ("packing, "diverting, etc.) than that of production or manufacturing. One clerical worker'S thinking that "when one is in a high position he counts all his previous sufferings and wants to get rich overnight, and so he packs all public funds for himself" supports, or is supported by, the argument that because the Nigerian bourgeoisie seriously lacks a strong material base, it lays high premium on access to strategic positions in the state apparatus to consolidate its base for effective accumulation. The implications of existing class relations for future generations is perceptively stated by a secondary school educated, relatively highly paid clerical worker in Jos:

Some who are enjoying only want the lower ones to worship them like gods, not to progress but to rely on them. Those who are enjoying are "suffering" others. In our state big men don't care for poor people's schools. The primary schools are now closed and children of poor people are out of school while children of rich men are attending private schools. This will make the gap between the rich and poor continue even in the coming generations.

However such explicit class perception of exploitation is only relatively developed among the workers. This is slightly different from Sandbrook and Arn's findings in Accra where more people defined exploitation in more active terms.²⁰ In the Nigerian case at hand, exploitation takes on a more or less passive quality, people are exploited by their being "forgotten" or "unseen", not by the active process of the appropriation of the surplus value they produce.

This attitude, together with those of seeing exploitation in terms of people embezzling public funds of blocking others' chances of social mobility, may have something to do with the political economy of the creation of wealth in Nigeria. Over 80% of Nigeria's national revenue is generated from the highly capital intensive oil industry, not from the production of manufactured products using labour intensive technologies. The Nigerian bourgeoisie seeks and gains access to this "oil money" through favourable positions in the state apparatus. But having a share of this "natural cake" (Nigerian parlance for revenues from oil) is considered by everybody to be a right of every Nigerian. Thus a few workers regard as exploitation the practice of a few people

gaining access to the "national cake" and diverting it to private use, and blocking others any access to the "cake". But the majority of the workers, as we have seen, regard as exploitation the tendency of some people to enjoy the "national cake" and forget others with less or no access to it.

Nevertheless, the analysis suggests that the concept of exploitation of one class by another class certainly constitutes part of the workers' overall perception of social inequality in Nigeria. Before substantive conclusions pertinent to the proletarian and labour aristocracy hypotheses I will examine below workers' identification of "blame targets".

Targets for Blame

We saw in the first part of this chapter that 76% of the respondents regard themselves as having less than a fair share of the good things of life. I went on to consider why the remaining 24% regard themselves as having a fair share. In this section I will address the question of who or what the other 76% blame for their unfair or unequal access to the distribution of goods and services in the Nigerian society. Table 3.6 shows the frequency distribution of responses to a question which required workers to state what

they blame for their having less than a fair share of the goods things of life.

TABLE 3.6
Distribution of Respondents by "Blame Target" for
Unequal Access to Goods and Services

Blame Target	Number of Respondents	%
Lack of Education	19	34
I haven't tried enough	9	16
The government/management	5	9
I am too young	5	9
No luck/God has not given me	5	9
Poor family background	4	7
I don't know	4	7
Other	<u>5</u>	<u>9</u>
Total	56	100

Fair share = 17

The set of responses that came closest to identifying targets of blame in class terms is "the government or management", as expressed by a manual worker and a supervisor at the cement and textile factories respectively:

I have nothing. The government is to blame because it allows those on top to eat all things.

Nigeria is a different place. As you can see, overseas someone in our position can get anything at work; it is not so here. It is the fault of management that we don't get what we should be getting.

But the proportion of workers with this attitude is insignificant compared with those blaming non-class targets like their insufficient formal education, their not trying hard enough, their age and luck combined. The blame on lack of education is evident from four supervisors, the first at the cement factory and the remaining three at the textile factory,

In Nigeria, paper qualification is worshipped; and as for me I have not got enough paper qualification.

I am getting just a quarter of what I need, and it's because of lack of education.

I am not even near; it is lack of education and opportunity.

I did not go far enough in education.

Three clerical workers in Gboko show the same tendency.

I am not even close to where people are. So I am trying to seek help in paper qualification. Its

lack of education, if I can get a little more book-knowledge, I can add to what I have.

In our country, one has to "know book" but I have not got much education.

My father could not pay for my education so I could not study further. If my father had money I would have gone beyond this level of education.

Further still from a class perspective are workers who blame themselves for their disadvantageous and unequal access to goods and services. Three textile manual workers and a cement clerical worker:

It is all my fault. I have not yet reached that stage yet.

I have nothing and I blame myself. I can decide to misuse money.

I am trying, it is because I have not tried enough.

Thus even though a high proportion of the respondents recognize their subordinate position in the Nigerian society, there is very little explicit identification of ~~targets~~ class terms, rather a high proportion (over 70%) tend to see the cause of their condition in themselves in terms of their not being sufficiently educated, not trying hard enough, being too young or not being lucky enough. This tendency reduces the struggle to improve their conditions to a matter of struggle for personal survival, a case well put by a clerical worker at the cement factory in Gboko [his English]:

This needs a very dynamic expression. As we are working here, everyone has put on weapons for warfare and each person is fighting for himself. If one is related to the Personnel Manager, for example, he will get help. No one cares for any other person.

The quote may well reflect the attitude of the majority of workers insofar as they fail to identify a target of blame in class terms.

Conclusion

I set out in this chapter to probe into the question of industrial workers' images of the Nigerian society with the overall aim of determining the extent to which workers hold attitudes that question or challenge the existing Nigerian social structure and the distribution of goods and services. The data confirms Ralph Dahrendorf's assertion that people generally have in their minds "a fundamental division of society into 'haves' and 'have-nots', 'above' and 'below', 'them' and 'us'."²¹ However there is no clear pattern whereby white-collar workers hold a hierarchical model of society and manual workers a dichotomous model, as suggested by Dahrendorf. Rather, the vast majority of the respondents (87%) subscribe to a hierarchical view of the Nigerian society while at the same time holding a fairly developed dichotomous view of society whereby the rich get wealthy at the expense of the poor or

those who are suffering. Nevertheless, even though there is no coherent model of the Nigerian society in the minds of workers as a whole, workers in Jos evince a more developed consciousness of the dichotomous, conflict nature of class relations at the workplace, primarily due to the nature of organization of production in Jos. The influence of workplace on the social consciousness of workers in Jos also confirms Sandbrook and Arn's explanation of differences in perceptions between workers and the self-employed. They maintain "work settings conducive to the communication of ideas, socialization and organization are common among workers who congregate in the process of production, but are rare or non-existent among the atomized self-employed of the informal sector."²² The formal organization of production congregates workers in Jos but atomizes them in Gboko, hence the variation in their perceptions of class relations at the factory.

Not only do the respondents as a whole show a high awareness of social inequality in Nigeria, a very high proportion (76%) regard themselves as having unfair access to the distribution of goods and services. However, even though very few of the respondents express their understanding of the social bases of inequality in Nigeria and their

subordinate position in near revolutionary terms, there is little evidence in the data to indicate that the workers as a whole or sections among them constitute a conservative labour aristocracy. On the other hand very limited support is given to the proletarian hypothesis, to the extent that the workers have a high awareness of social inequality and some form of exploitation in Nigeria, and are conscious of their subordinate position in society. Nevertheless the tendency among the workers to attribute social inequality in Nigeria to such factors as nature, God, individual efforts or education; and to regard inequality as just and inevitable casts serious doubts on their revolutionary potential. The question of whether in spite of this, workers should and can be regarded as a revolutionary force in Nigeria, will be addressed in subsequent chapters.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Ralph Dahrendorf, Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society (California, Stanford University Press, 1959), pp. 281-84.

² Ibid., p. 287.

³ David Lockwood "Sources of Variation in Working Class Images of Society", in Sociological Review, Vol. 14, No. 3, November (1966), p. 249.

⁴ Ibid., p. 250.

⁵ R. M. Blackburn and Michael Mann, "Ideology in the Non-Skilled Working Class", in Martin Bulmer, Working Class Images of Society (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), p. 156.

⁶ Peter Lloyd, Power and Independence: Urban Africans' Perceptions of Social Inequality., (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), Peter Gutkind, "From the Energy of Dispair to the Anger of Despair: The Transition from Social Circulation to Political Consciousness Among the Urban Poor in Africa" Canadian Journal of African Studies, Vol. 7, No. 2, (1973); pp. 179-198; "The View From Below: Political Consciousness of the Urban Poor in Ibadan" Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines, 57, SV-1, (1975) pp. 5-35. Most other studies of workers' images of society do not deal with African conditions, hence I have limited myself to the ones cited above, besides my main aim in this introduction is to establish that concern with working class images of society is a valid sociological effort relevant to this study.

⁷ Peter Lloyd, op cit., p. 183.

⁸ Gutkind, "The View from Below ... ", op cit., p. 21.

⁹ Though the question seems complicated, it clearly communicated the idea of a hierarchical social structure and the workers understood its meaning without difficulty. Only in one situation did a respondent misconstrue the ladder illustration to mean those on top are people in heaven, those at the bottom, people who have died

and are buried and still remain 'in the ground', and those in the middle are all who are alive.

¹⁰ Ralph Dahrendorf, op. cit., pp. 281-284.

¹¹ The "football team" illustration has been criticized for ignoring the idea that the factory involves both ideas of team work and opposition. See Huw Beynon, Working For Ford (London: Penguin, 1973), p. 102.

Nevertheless I found it useful in assessing workers perception of factory relations.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Richard Sandbrook and J. Arn, The Labouring Poor and Urban Class Formation: The Case of Greater Accra. (Occasional Monograph Series, No. 12, Centre for Developing Area Studies (Montreal: McGill University, 1977), p. 43-47. Central to the concept of exploitation in a Marxist theory of the working class is the notion that in entering wage employment industrial workers produce a surplus value which is appropriated by owners of or managers of property and the means of production to the disadvantage of the real producers and hence their exploitation. Karl Marx, Wage Labour and Capital, (Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1974), p. 19; The Poverty of Philosophy, (Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House), p. 172-75; "The Coming Upheaval", in R. C. Tucker editor, The Marx-Engels Reader, (New York, W. Norton & Co., 1978), p. 520. The concept is broadened here to suggest processes whereby the rich become wealthy by depriving the poor.

¹⁴ Sandbrook and Arn, op cit., p. 43.

¹⁵ Val Burris "The Social and Political Consequences of Over-education" American Sociological Review, Vol. 48, No. 4, August (1983), p. 456. David Segal and David Knoke's study confirms this general position; David Segal and David Knoke "Social Mobility, Status Inconsistency and Partisan Realignment in the U.S." Social Forces. However, other studies have no conclusive evidence regarding the effect of status inconsistency on political attitudes and behaviour. See Alejandro Portes "Status Inconsistency and Lower-Class Leftist Radicalism" The Sociological Quarterly 13 (Summer, 1972), p. 361-82 and Leonard Broom and Lancaster Jones "Status Consistency and Political Preferences: The Australian Case" American Sociological Review, Vol. 35, No.

6, Dec. (1970), pp.

¹⁶ Keith Hinchliffe, "The Kaduna Textile Workers: Characteristics of an African Labour Force" Savana, Vol. 2, No. 1, (June 1973), p. 29-34.

¹⁷ The question is adopted from Sandbrook and Arn op cit., p. 44.

¹⁸ Peter Lloyd op cit., p. 184.

¹⁹ Sandbrook and Arn, op cit., p. 49.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ralph Dahrendorf, op cit., p. 287.

²² Sandbrook and Arn, op cit., p. 51.

CHAPTER FOUR
CLASS IDENTIFICATION

Introduction

In this chapter my primary objective is to examine the extent to which the respondents have developed a consciousness of a common class position and are prepared to engage in collective action or organization to advance their common interests. We noted in chapter one the tendency among revolutionary theorists to stress the importance of strikes regarding the revolutionary power of African workers.¹ I also indicated that workers' attitudes to strikes have been used both by Robert Melson and Paul Lubeck as an indication of class identification and consciousness among factory workers in Nigeria; and that Lubeck considered strike support to be a supreme measure of class consciousness.² In this study I will use strike support as a partial indicator of class identification among the respondents; but in order to present a more sophisticated picture of the character of class identification I will also examine workers' involvement

in both trade unions and urban ethnic associations. Thus the chapter is divided into two main sections. In section one I will examine workers' attitudes to strikes; and the analysis will be undertaken within the framework of the proletarian and labour aristocracy hypotheses. In the second section I will examine workers' involvement in trade unions and urban ethnic associations, and the analysis in this section will be guided by the proposition that ethnicity serves some social and economic interests of workers.

4.1 Strike Support

In order to assess strike attitudes the respondents were asked a series of questions regarding strike support: whether or not they support the idea of strikes generally, their reasons for favourable or unfavourable attitudes, and whether or not they supported the last strike in their factory and their reasons for supporting or not supporting.³ In this section I will present and analyse the responses to these questions. The analysis will be carried out in terms of the proletarian and labour aristocracy hypotheses. First, I will examine if typical proletarians (Jos workers, non-land cultivators or ^{those with} five or more years of wage employment) evince a greater propensity

than marginal proletarians (Gboko workers, land-cultivators or ^{those with} less than five years of wage employment) to support strikes, and if workers with higher educational levels, those on higher income or occupational levels (labour "Aristocrats") will be less likely than workers lower on these dimensions to support strikes. I will first examine workers' attitudes towards strikes in general.

4.1.A Strike Support in General

Proletarianism and Strike Support

The hypothesis to be examined is that typical proletarians will be more likely than marginal proletarians to support strikes in general. Table 4.1 shows the relationship between strike support and industrial community.

TABLE 4.1

Strike Support by Industrial Community
(in percentages)

General Attitudes to Strikes	Industrial Gboko	Community Jos	All Workers
Support	39	50	45
Non-support	$\frac{61}{100}$	$\frac{50}{100}$	$\frac{55}{100}$
	N = 33	N = 32	N = 65

"Depends" etc. = 8
Gamma = .21 (N. S.)

As the table shows there is a general tendency towards non-support for strikes. Fifty-five per cent of the respondents are against strikes in general, and the major reason given for this, as we shall see, is that strikes generally bring setbacks at work. But the data seems to support the proletarian hypothesis for even though the zero-order gamma is low, controlling for other variables shows education as having a suppressor effect on the otherwise moderate positive correlation between industrial community and strike support (first-order partial Gamma = .31). At both levels of education the Jos textile workers express greater support for strikes than the Gboko cement workers, but the relationship is even stronger for workers with post-primary education. Since education is correlated positively with strike support and negatively with industry, with a 10 point difference in the conditionals, it not only suppresses the correlation between industrial community and favourable attitudes to strikes, it also specifies the conditions under which such a correlation exists. In other words, workers in the Jos industrial community who are more exposed to and interact more with other wage workers, are more likely to hold supportive attitudes to strikes, but these supportive attitudes prove to be more dominant

among the relatively more educated workers. This analysis anticipates a rejection of the labour aristocracy hypothesis later on as it relates to strike support. But before doing that a further examination of the proletarian hypothesis will be made. Table 4.2 is a summary of correlations.

TABLE 4.2

Zero-Order and First-Order Partial Gamma Correlations
for Strike Support by Proletarianism

Strike Support For:	Zero Order Gamma	Industry	Occupation	Education	Land Cultivation	Employment Years	Income
Industry	.21	N. A.	.21	.31	.13	.20	.14
Land Cultivation	.03	-.03	.11	.04	N. A.	.00	.01
Employment Years	.15	.09	.18	.15	.00	N. A.	-.10
Attendance of Trade Union Meetings	-.01	.08	.03	-.13	-.15	.04	0

All Gammas (N.S.)

A number of observations can be made regarding the data in the table. In the first place, involvement in land-cultivation does not seem to have much effect on general attitudes to strikes. The zero-order gamma is negligible and even when it is raised by controlling for occupation the correlation is still too low to demand greater analysis than the observation that the relationship is in the direction predicted by the proletarian hypothesis. Non-land cultivating industrial workers show a slightly greater propensity to support strikes probably because they are much more dependent on wages for their reproduction and maintenance than those who supplement their industrial wages by the cultivation of food or cash crops.

Secondly there is a low positive correlation between strike support and length of stay in industrial wage employment which is explained by involvement in land-cultivation. Length of stay in wage employment alone does not seem to be a sufficient factor to create general favourable attitudes to strikes. Workers who have stayed in industrial wage employment for more than five years and who are also not involved in land cultivation are more likely to have favourable attitudes to strikes.

Thirdly there is a low negative correlation between strike support and attendance of union meetings (controlling for land-cultivation). This situation reveals again the effect of involvement in land-cultivation on the behaviour of industrial workers. For an examination of the control table reveals that whereas among non-land-cultivators those who attend union meetings are more likely to be supportive of strikes, the reverse is the situation among land-cultivators where even attendance at trade union meetings does not increase the likelihood of supportive attitudes to strikes in general. Thus though on the surface, the negative correlation appears to give room for rejecting the proletarian hypothesis, we see that it is actually involvement in land-cultivation that specifies the conditions for the existence of the negative correlation, and this specification is in the direction of the proletarian hypothesis. In the absence of a militant trade union sub-culture in the two factories - in one of the factories, as we shall see soon, the trade union officials actually have a secret plan for discouraging strikes - it is not strange that attendance of trade union meetings should have a negative effect on strike support especially among workers involved in land-cultivation.

To summarize, since the correlations are not statistically significant, thus precluding extensive generalizations beyond the sample, it can nevertheless be concluded that on the basis of the low correlations, the proletarian hypothesis has only very limited support in the analysis up to this point. We have seen, first, that workers involved in work and urban community subcultures with greater exposure to working-class influences show a high propensity to support strikes if their level of formal education is relatively high. Secondly, workers who are not involved in land-cultivation are more likely to support strikes. Thirdly, relatively more established workers who are not involved in land-cultivation express favourable attitudes to strikes. Before going into the respondents' reasons for supporting or not supporting strikes in general, and finally to consider their actual behaviour in strikes that occurred in their factories, I will examine the labour aristocracy hypothesis as it relates to workers' attitudes to strikes in general.

Labour Aristocracy and Strike Support

It was hypothesized that workers who were higher on income, education or occupation would be less likely to support strikes than others lower on these variables. Table

4.3 shows a cross tabulation of strike support by education.

TABLE 4.3

Strike Support by Education (in percentages)

General Attitude To Strikes	Educational Level		
	Above Primary 7	Primary 7 And Below	All Workers
Support	52	38	45
Non-Support	<u>48</u>	<u>62</u>	<u>55</u>
	100	100	100
	N = 31	N = 34	N = 65

"Depends" etc. = 8

Gamma = .27 (N. S.)

The low positive correlation becomes quite moderate when the suppressor effect of other variables is controlled for, as can be seen in the summary table below.

TABLE 4.4
Zero-Order and Partial Gamma Correlation for Strike
Support by Occupation, Education and Income

Strike Support by:	Zero Order Gamma	Industry	Partial Gamma Controlling For:				
			Occupation	Education	Land-Cultivation	Employment Years	Income
Occupation	-.17	-.17	N. A.	-.24	-.10	-.22	-.28
Education	.27	.33	.28	N. A.	.37	.26	.35
Income	-.03	.04	.11	-.10	-.03	-.11	N. A.

All Correlations (N. S.)

The table reveals education as a very important factor influencing the workers' general attitudes to strikes. Workers with post-primary school education who earn higher incomes or are working in the industrial community with greater working class influences are particularly supportive of strikes. To this extent we can conclude that the data relating to education does not support the labour aristocracy thesis.

But as Table 4.4 shows there is a low negative correlation between occupation and strike support. The negative correlation becomes stronger when the suppressor effect of education, (-.24), employment years (-.22) and income (-.28) is taken into consideration. However, a careful examination of the control tables shows that these variables are not only suppressors, they also specify the conditions under which the negative correlation becomes stronger. Thus supervisory workers with only primary school education, with less than five years in wage employment and earning low incomes express negative attitudes to strikes in general. Thus it is not higher occupational level per se that is negatively associated with strike support - a situation which would support the labour aristocracy thesis - but it is the structural location of some supervisory workers in terms of other variables like education, years of wage employment and income level that determines their negative attitudes to strikes. Thus I can conclude that on the whole the labour aristocracy thesis is not supported by the evidence on workers' general attitudes to strikes. Before I go on to consider the workers' general attitudes toward specific strikes that occurred in the factories, I will probe further into the thinking of the workers. Thus I

will seek to answer briefly the question why workers hold favourable or unfavourable attitudes to strikes in general.

Support and Non-Support for Strikes

We observed earlier in Table 4.1 that 55% of the respondents expressed unfavourable attitudes to strikes in general. Further probing into their reasons for holding unfavourable attitudes to strikes revealed that the most common explanations were "strikes are bad/strikes bring setbacks and backwardness at work" (67%); personal fears (17%), and preference for peaceful settlement of disputes (14%). The view that strikes are bad and that they bring setbacks at work is expressed by three manual workers, the first two in Gboko and the other in Jos, thus:

When we strike there is no progress at work and consequently no progress in the company.

Production brings food to us and when we strike we reduce the possibility of this happening.

Strikes bring backwardness at work and also give one a bad name.

This view is held alike by clerical and supervisor workers as can be noticed in the following quotes, the first two by Gboko clerical workers and the remaining three by a clerical and two supervisory workers in Jos

Strikes bring lack of progress both to workers and to the company.

It brings backwardness in every way You don't just strike.

Strikes bring backwardness at work. When we strike, production falls.

How can I like strikes? They are useless. They have no help.

Strikes bring trouble. We don't like them. We want to hold the boys together to be one so we stop strikes.

Thus we observe in the thinking of the workers a dislike for strikes on the grounds that strikes have a negative impact on the progress of the companies for which they work. And as we notice in the last quote some supervisory workers in Jos textile factory are not only against strikes, they "stop" strikes. How do they do this? Another supervisory worker, a trade union official, described mechanisms for containing dissent on the shop floor:

Shop stewards act or do the work of the C.I.A. [Criminal Investigating Department, an arm of the Nigerian Police System]. When they hear "complaints" from workers or when they "smell" unnecessary noise at the workplace they quickly report it to the Trade Union executive. The Chairman then invites those involved to a meeting and stops them from spreading the "noise". We don't like strikes. If workers strike against our wishes we dismiss them.

Closely related to the above view is that of concern for personal security as a reason for not supporting

strikes in general. This fear is expressed by a Gboko manual worker, a manual and a supervisory worker in Jos:

When there is a problem we must all sit together and settle it and not resort to trouble (strike).

We have a trade union and when there is a problem we tell our union leaders who have to discuss with management and we insist that things be settled by negotiation. It is from the work we do that management gets money to pay us, so if we stop work there will be no money.

Underlying all these reasons for not generally favouring strikes is the issue of workers' perceptions of factory class relations. As we saw in the last chapter, 55% of the respondents hold a dichotomous class image of the factory, and there is a moderate association between perceptions of factory class relations and attitudes to strikes in general. Fifty-six per cent of those who see teamwork as impossible in the factory are supportive of strikes compared with 33% of those who perceive the factory as one team with managers and workers on one side. Table 4.5 presents the relationship.

TABLE 4.5
Strike Support by Perceptions of Factory Class
Relations (in percentages)

Strike Support	View of Factory Relations		
	Factory As Two Teams	Factory As One Team	All Workers
Support	56	33	45
Non-Support	<u>44</u>	<u>68</u>	<u>55</u>
	100	100	100
	N = 34	N = 30	N = 64
	"Depends" etc. =9		
	Gamma = .43; (p < .025)		

Thus whereas those who hold negative attitudes toward strikes generally reveal a lack of awareness of factory class relations and a consequent failure to identify with strikes aimed at protecting their class interests, those with favourable attitudes to strikes reveal in their reasoning a fairly well developed conception of strikes as an effective weapon against management in the pursuit of the economic class interests.

Fifty-two per cent of those with favourable attitudes to strikes gave as their major reason the fact that strikes make management yield to workers' demands. Four manual workers, two each in Gboko and Jos put it this way:

If we have problems and management can't reason with us but instead start treating us like walking sticks, we can strike because Nigeria is not South Africa.

Strikes bring management to think along with workers and see their problems

Only strikes settle many of our problems with management.

In company work if you don't strike you will see a lot of foolishness.

This line of reasoning which reveals a sense of conviction regarding the effectiveness of strikes as a class weapon is not limited to manual workers. A clerical worker in Jos and three others in Gboko think in a similar way:

When workers are maltreated it is good for them to refuse to work so that they can be given their rights.

Sometimes strikes are good. When employers purposefully refuse to see workers' needs, and after several other ways have failed, strikes may move them.

If the union says something and management doesn't care, it is good to strike so that management will be serious.

Supposing we are demanding for certain things and

management is not reasoning with us, we can strike in order to get our demands.

And a supervisory worker in Jos puts it similarly "There are certain things really to be fulfilled but management fails to do so and if repeated consultations fail, workers can go on strike, for instance, ^{for} bonus promises. Assuming the time comes and management fails, we are bound to react by way of a strike or so."

Another category of those holding favourable attitudes to strikes (31%) maintained that they would only support "reasonable" strikes, but even they revealed an understanding of strikes as a class weapon. Both tendencies are seen in the views held by three such workers - a manual worker and clerk in Jos and another manual worker in Gboko -

If it is for a good reason, for example paying of bonus, house allowance etc., I can support strikes. We are the ones doing the real work but we are not getting these benefits.

If management is oppressing us because of little things, we can strike, but I don't like foolish strikes.

If it is a reasonable one, if they are not treating us well I will refuse to work so that I will be given what I like.

Thus we observe from the responses of the workers that while on the one hand, those generally opposed to strikes hold this attitude mainly out of their interpretation of the class nature of factory relations, on the other hand

those who hold generally favourable attitudes to strikes do so mainly because of their recognition of the nature of class relations at the factory and the further realization that the strike constitutes an effective weapon in their fight for their economic class interests.

In summary the foregoing analysis of workers' general attitudes to strikes provides little evidence for the labour aristocracy hypothesis. Though the majority of the respondents (55%) hold generally negative attitudes to strikes, the relatively better-paid, educated supervisory or clerical workers reveal a greater tendency to be supportive of strikes. The influence of education is important as even in Jos where the organization of the workplace facilitates greater interaction and communication among workers, and where the respondents have greater interaction with and exposure to other urban wage earners, it is the relatively more educated workers who are more supportive of strikes generally. Thus working class consciousness seems to increase with education and not the reverse as hypothesized from the labour aristocracy perspective. In the next section I will examine whether the workers' general, abstract attitudes to strikes analysed above have any relevance to specific concrete strike situations.

4.1.B Support for Last Factory Strike

The two most recent strikes in the two factories referred to by the respondents, attitudes to which will be analysed in this section, occurred at approximately the same time, 1981. At the Jos textile factory the issue at stake was payment of minimum wages. In September 1981 the President of Nigeria, Alhaji Shehu Shagari, signed a bill which raised workers' minimum monthly wage by 35% to N125 (approx. \$255).⁴ But the management was not quick in paying the workers on the new level. Those affected were mainly the most lowly paid workers. So the workers organized a strike to press management to pay the new minimum wage, and they succeeded in getting their demands.

In the cement factory at Gboko the issue centered on the behaviour of the Personnel Manager of the company. It appears that the Personnel Manager was notoriously harsh with the workers and they felt they had endured him to a point beyond which they could not go. So they organized a strike to protest his continued tenure of office at the factory. The Personnel Manager was removed from office and replaced by a new one. And in both cases the workers claimed success for their organized action.

Even considered by themselves the two strikes reveal the consciousness and organizational ability of the workers to press for their specific class interests, in one case monetary interests were at stake and in the other the workers resented the arbitrary use of management power by the personnel manager. As we shall soon see, 80% of the respondents supported the strikes, thus displaying significant collective action in defence of their class interests. However, since the support was not unanimous, it is of interest to identify the factors accounting for variation in actual strike support, to which I now turn. I will analyse these variations by examining first the workers' consistency in strike support; second, the proletarian hypothesis; and, third, the labour aristocracy hypothesis.

Consistency in Strike Attitudes

To examine the consistency between abstract and concrete strike support among industrial workers I cross-tabulated strike support in general by support for the last factory strike. Table 4.6 shows the results:

TABLE 4.6
 Support for Last Factory Strike by Strike Support
 in General (percentages)

Support for Last Strike	Strike Support in General		All Workers
	Support	Non-support	
Support	100	53	78
Non-support	<u>0</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>22</u>
	100	100	100
	N = 22	N = 19	N = 41

"No strike since employed", "Depends" etc. = 32

Gamma = 1 ($P < .025$)

There is a perfect consistency in the attitudes of those who support strikes in general as all of them (who were employed in the factories at the time of the strikes) expressed support for the last factory strikes. The strong positive correlation also bears this out. This finding also adds more weight to the analysis made regarding the workers' expressed general attitudes to strikes, namely, that what they express in the abstract has much relevance to what they

do in the concrete. And even the behaviour of the 53% of those generally against strikes who changed their position to support the last factory strikes is consistent with our accepting the proletarian hypothesis and rejecting the labour aristocracy thesis since the change is in line with what would be predicted from the first hypothesis and against the prediction of the latter hypothesis. I will specify this in the examination of the two hypotheses to which I now turn.

Proletarianism Labour Aristocracy and Support for Last Factory Strike

Since the number of respondents who expressed lack of support for the last strikes in the respective factories is rather small (9), I can only outline their major characteristics in terms of the properties of the hypotheses I have been considering and on this basis attempt to draw conclusions as to the status of the hypotheses. Thus in terms of (1) Industry: All except one were in Jos: (2) Years of Employment: All except one have five or more years of urban wage employment; (3) Land Cultivation: All except two are land cultivators; (4) Education: All except one have no more than primary level schooling; and (5) Income: All except two are in the lowest income group. Considering the first two factors, the proletarian hypothesis seems not to be

supported. But a careful consideration of the remaining factors reveals the interactive effect of other characteristics of the strike opposers who are more or less typical proletarians considered in terms of industrial community and relative establishment in wage employment. The fact that they are involved in land-cultivation and low on incomes and education, show that the combined effects of these attributes provide the real explanation for their negative attitude to strikes. Thus while this explanation reduces the doubts cast on the proletarian hypothesis, it also adds persuasiveness to rejecting the labour aristocracy thesis, since it is those with lower educational, income and occupational levels (5 were manual workers) who expressed non-support for the strike. Before bringing together substantive conclusions and making comparisons with Paul Lubeck's findings in Kano, I will briefly present the workers' reasons for supporting or not supporting the strikes in question.

Out of the 9 respondents who did not support the strikes in their factories, 8 were Jos textile workers. For four of them the reason for not supporting the strike was "I don't like trouble"; three said they did not understand what was going on; and one said there was still room for

negotiation, stating "I did not like the way the trade union leaders went about the whole thing. Management promised to look into the whole matter and the union ought to have been hesitant." Considering the fairly elaborate informal mechanisms developed in the Jos factory for checking strikes and dealing with workers who make "noise", it is not surprising that almost all non-supporters were in Jos, especially as half of them did not support the strike to avoid "trouble".

Of the supporters, 89% were specific about the issues of wage increase (in Jos) and the behaviour of the personnel manager (in Gboko); 6% said they just followed others and the remaining gave other reasons for supporting the strikes. Thus two manual workers and a clerk in the Jos factory expressed their reasons for supporting the strikes this way:

We were supposed to be paid our "Shagari" but management refused to do so, so it was good to strike.

They wanted to cheat us by not wanting to give us our "Shagari".

We were to be paid "Shagari" but we weren't paid so we went on strike.

What this thinking expresses is a well developed awareness by the workers of their specific class interests and willingness collectively to fight for those interests as

they are denied by management. This also explains why even those with generally negative attitudes to strikes supported this specific strike.

In Gboko workers were also specific about the threat constituted by the Personnel Manager's behaviour to their interests. Five manual workers at the cement factory put it this way:

Mr. _____ did not like workers' progress.

The Personnel Manager maltreated workers, and he ought not to have done so.

Our boss was troublesome so we wanted him to go.

The man was not doing the things he was supposed to be doing, like giving us our demands.

The P. M. never wanted to see or get anyone's idea so we thought he should not lead us.

A dimension additional to the workers' class interests was introduced in the comments of a supervisory worker in Gboko. He pointed out that:

The man against whom the strike was organized was a bad man. All the facts against him were bad. "They" [management] were encouraging tribalism.

The man had autonomous powers, whatever he wanted done was done even if it was bad. [respondent's English].

Thus judging from the fact that the majority of the strike-supporters pointed specifically at the Personnel Manager's negative attitude to workers' welfare, one can

infer that the class element was important.

To summarize, in the analyses of abstract and concrete strike support among industrial workers I have shown that urban industrial workers are more likely to hold generally supportive attitudes to strikes if they are (1) exposed to extensive working class influences and are relatively educated; (2) not involved in rural land cultivation; (3) relatively established in wage employment and are not land-cultivators; and (4) educated and earning relatively high incomes. Those particularly likely to be generally opposed to strikes are those who are involved in rural land-cultivations, and those with little education, or low incomes and with few years of wage employment. I found these expectations to be confirmed in the analysis of the workers' attitudes to specific strikes that occurred in their factories. Paul Lubeck's findings in Kano ten years prior to this investigation seem generally to be similar to my own. For instance he found strike support to be positively correlated with years of participation in industrial wage labour and urban experience. He also found that literate workers were not more likely to oppose strikes than illiterate ones, and that even though the lowest paid workers exceeded the higher paid ones in strike support, years of

participation in wage employment reduced such effects.⁵ He found the strongest determinant of strike support to be workers' years of work employment which led him to the general conclusion that:

As industrialization proceeds and urban industrial experience increases within the proletariat so, too will the degree of class consciousness. Similarly, the evidence informs us that as the proletariat ages in a city and becomes more secure in the tenure of their positions, then we can expect them to possess increased class consciousness. 6

My evidence on attitudes to strikes leads me to suggest that I can expect increased worker militancy within the Nigerian industrial proletariat as industrialization proceeds and the work force becomes more educated (as indeed it is becoming) with reduced links to the land through non-cultivation, and established in urban industrial wage employment. While this conclusion certainly provides sufficient grounds for rejecting the labour aristocracy perspective, it does not necessarily warrant an unqualified acceptance of the proletarian hypothesis insofar as the latter lays undue emphasis on the link between strikes and the revolutionary power of African workers.⁷ As we have seen, workers usually have very specific objectives for organizing and carrying out strikes and the success of strikes often means that management is forced to satisfy

or contain workers' demands within existing capitalist structures. Thus although strike situations are characterized by confrontations between workers and management, strikes as such serve as a rather unsatisfactory criterion on which to base the contention of a revolutionary working class in Nigeria. By the same token one can take issue with Paul Lubeck's view of strikes as a measure of class consciousness par excellence.⁸ I am inclined to argue that in the Nigerian context the ethnic element constitutes a key dimension of class formation among urban industrial workers. Thus to suggest that attitudes to, and participation in strikes as such cover the complexity of workers' social and political consciousness is to exclude certain critical issues. In particular, I am suggesting that just as urban industrial workers in Nigeria identify with their trade unions which often organize strikes to advance their interests as factory employees, so also do the workers identify with ethnic or kin-based urban institutions to advance their social and economic security interests as workers living in uncertain urban situations. I will examine this aspect of the interplay between class and ethnicity among workers in section two of this chapter by focusing on their involvement in trade unions and urban ethnic

associations. The main objective is to show that workers are as involved in kin-based urban associations as they are in class-based trade unions to advance their common interests as workers.

4.2 Participation in Trade Union and Ethnic Associations

To estimate the workers' contemporaneous identification with trade unions and urban ethnic associations, they were asked a series of questions regarding membership (of trade unions and urban ethnic associations); whether they held offices, or aspired to leadership in these organizations; how long they have been members; how well they knew the names and purposes of the organizations; how well they knew the leaders of these organizations, and how regularly they attended meetings of the organizations. The justification for using these questions is that they constitute a rough measure of the workers' identification with these urban institutions. Each of the respondents had a maximum score of 5 on a scale of five items: Membership, leadership position, aspiration to leadership, knowledge of organization name and knowledge of organization leader; and a minimum of 0. As an index of respondents' overall identification with the two institutions based on the five items, the mean score for trade unions is 1.80 while the mean

score for urban ethnic associations is 2.46. Thus compared with trade unions, the respondents seem to be relatively more closely identified with urban ethnic associations. The case of membership is particularly revealing: in both factories union membership is automatic from the date of employment, and thus all the respondents were expected to at least claim trade union membership. Yet only 59% claimed to belong to trade unions, membership of which is compulsory, as compared with 66% claiming to belong to ethnic associations, membership of which is voluntary. The apparently odd problem of some workers claiming not to belong to trade unions even though technically all workers are supposed to belong to unions is itself important as it suggests a low level of identification with trade unions on their part.

19% of respondents who claim membership in ethnic associations are officials in these institutions compared with 14% in the case of those who claim membership in trade unions. The fact that such a fairly high proportion of respondents hold leadership positions in urban ethnic associations is a strong indication of the predominantly working class nature of these associations. This is also evident from the aspiration to leadership positions in the two kinds of institutions. Fifty-seven per cent of those who

claim membership of ethnic associations aspire to leadership positions in these associations compared with 55% in the case of those claiming membership of trade unions. In fact it can be contended that urban ethnic associations are about as working class in membership and leadership as are trade unions. Related to this contention are three others (a) urban ethnic associations do in fact present before Nigerian industrial workers strong institutions of identification, (b) involvement in urban industrial wage labour and trade unionism does not seem to weaken the workers' personal and voluntary identification with urban ethnic associations, and (c) these two types of urban institutions, one class-based and the other ethnic-based, are both essential elements in the process of class formation in Nigeria. I will return to these contentions later. For the moment it is pertinent to examine if there are any substantive differences in the respondents' identification with the trade unions and ethnic associations in terms of industrial community, years of wage employment education and occupation of the respondents. Table 4.7 presents a summary of the mean scores.

TABLE 4.7

Summary of Mean Scores for Identification
with Trade Unions and Ethnic Associations
(on a scale of 0 to 5)

	Mean Trade Union Score	Mean Ethnic Association Score
All Workers	1.80	2.46
	Industrial Community	
Jos	1.08	2.97
vs.		
Gboko	2.21	1.99
	Years of Wage Employment	
5 Years and Above	2.21	2.89
vs.		
Less Than 5 Years	1.66	2.07
	Education	
Above Primary 7	2.74	2.06
vs.		
Primary 7 and Below	1.12	2.83
	Occupation	
Clerks and Supervisors	2.51	2.11
vs.		
Manual Workers	1.02	2.82

Difference between Ethnic Association scores for Gboko and Jos statistically significant at .05. All other differences (N.S.).

A few observations can be made regarding the data.

In the first place the Jos respondents have a high mean score of 3 for identification with ethnic unions as against a low mean of 1 for trade unions. Most of the Jos respondents claim membership of the Tiv Development Association and/or the various Community Development Associations representing

different sub-groups of the Tiv people in Jos. Several of the workers hold executive positions in these associations, one respondent, a supervisor, was the president of his branch.

Secondly respondents with five or more years of urban wage employment have higher mean scores for both trade union and ethnic association identification than those who have entered wage employment relatively more recently. Thus while workers' identification with trade unions is likely to rise as they spend more time in wage employment, their identification with ethnic associations is not necessarily likely to diminish.

Thirdly the more educated workers show a closer identification with trade unions than with ethnic associations, compared with a reverse situation among the less educated workers. The same situation obtains for occupation: clerical and supervisory workers evince relatively closer identification with trade unions and less with ethnic associations than do manual workers.

An explanation can now be attempted for these findings. I have suggested that urban ethnic associations constitute essential elements of class formation among industrial workers. But why is it the case? Furthermore,

why do the workers as a whole evince relatively closer identification with ethnic associations than with trade unions? Why do the textile workers in Jos evince this tendency more than the Gboko cement workers? Finally, why do the supposed "labour aristocrats" show closer relative identification with trade unions than workers on lower occupational and educational levels? An explanation to this situation is suggested in Okwudiba Nnoli's analysis, as he maintains that due to the fear of the political implications of trade unionism in colonial situations, the British failed to permit the formation of trade unions during much of the colonial period but allowed the existence of urban ethnic associations, adding that:

These ethnic associations performed necessary social, economic and cultural functions for the worker in a way which neither the trade unions nor even the government have been able to do. Consequently, they have secured the primary loyalty of the workers. Only much more limited functions, especially those which the ethnic associations were unable to perform, have been assigned to the trade unions, and therefore, only a much more limited and secondary loyalty has been attracted to these working-class institutions. 9

Similarly in his study in Jos, Plotnicov documents some of the economic and social activities of such ethnic associations done not just for the benefits of the members but for the development of their rural home communities.¹⁰

He observes that:

One of the main functions of some of the tribal associations, as the name "Improvement Union" implies, is uplifting the home community, particularly through the establishment of modern Amenities. Money collected from such branch unions in various cities is sent home to be used in building or improving roads, sinking wells, and constructing schools, hospitals, and churches. Most of their activities, however, are designed to benefit members living in the immediate alien areas. 11

He draws the general conclusion that:

In the absence or insufficiency of welfare, public health, unemployment insurance, retirement systems, and other social services normally associated with industrialized countries, traditional institutions are maintained not merely as romantic relics of the past, but because they have jobs to do. 12

Urban ethnic associations become essential elements in class formation because of the social and economic benefits they offer to workers. To some extent it is legitimate to consider urban ethnic associations as working class institutions notwithstanding the fact that they can be politicized and manipulated to serve the class interests of a class other than the working class, an issue I will return to in Chapter Six.

Granted that urban ethnic associations serve social and economic interests of the working class, the tendency of the workers as a whole to evince closer identification with ethnic associations than with trade unions can be explained

in terms of the quality and amount of social and economic benefits offered by both organizations. These benefits can be identified at two levels: the first level involves the personal security and survival of the industrial worker in the urban context. The second involves the survival and development of the rural home communities from which industrial workers come. In fact in both the respondents' statement of the purposes of voluntary associations and their reasons for joining them, these two levels are important. For instance 72% of the respondents' reasons for joining ethnic associations fall in the first category and 17% in the second category. In the Nigeriaⁿ urban situation the most certain form of organized social security system is the ethnic association. In the rural areas from which the workers migrate, too, most (in some cases, all) projects for social and economic development such as roads, hospitals, and schools are initiated and implemented wholly by ethnic or kin-based associations centered in the towns. Compared with trade unions, therefore, the amount and quality of benefits offered by ethnic associations is far greater and thus explains why workers as a whole should be more closely identified with these associations.

The second, related question of why the workers in Jos evince closer identification with ethnic associations than their Gboko counterparts can be seen in terms of distance from one's ethnic area, and the consequent increased degree of perceived social and economic insecurity. Not only is Jos a bigger city, thus making social and economic survival more difficult, but it is away from Tivland and thus the perceived benefits of associating with fellow Tivs become greater there than in Gboko. In fact Plotnicov observed that "in general the greater the distance of the homeland for Jos, and especially if it is in the South, the stronger the tribal union is. Consequently, the strongest unions are those of the Ibo and the Yoruba."¹³

Finally, that the more educated and skilled workers are less attached to ethnic associations than the less educated and unskilled workers can be explained by the fact that by being more educated and skilled, they are less insecure in the cities and thus have less need to identify with ethnic associations. As Nnoli observes "... the unskilled worker relies greatly on the ethnic associations not only to keep his job but also to help secure another in the event of retrenchment."¹⁴ And in this regard the educated and skilled workers have less need for such reliance

on ethnic associations.

To summarize, I have sought to argue in this section that together with trade unions, urban ethnic associations constitute important objects of identification for members of the working class; that in relative terms workers evince a closer identification with these associations than trade unions, and an explanation for this is suggested in terms of the greater scope of social and economic benefits offered by ethnic associations compared with what trade unions do and can offer. Nevertheless my suggestion that urban ethnic associations are in fact working class institutions touches on a critical interplay between class and ethnicity. On the one hand, workers' identification with urban ethnic associations can not be interpreted simply as evidence of ethnic consciousness on the part of workers because the membership, functions and leadership of these associations have as much class content as they have ethnic content. Urban ethnic associations in Nigeria tend to be led by members of the working class and they operate in urban areas mainly for the benefit of those destined by their class position to be more dependent on the social and economic security they offer. These associations constitute ethnic-based solutions to real social and economic

problems, problems particularly acute with regards to the poorer sections of the urban community. Irrespective of the particular ethnic groups they represent, ethnic associations deal with the same range of problems, namely ensuring the social and economic survival of the poorer sections of society within the urban context. This much can be said about the class character of ethnic associations.

On the other hand, however, when workers attend meetings of ethnic associations, (I have attended several such meetings as an observer) the dominant social psychological mood is not that of belonging to a particular social class but that of "brotherhood", a sense of belonging to a particular kinship or ethnic group sharing a common ancestral background. This sense of ancestral brotherhood is heightened by the use of a culturally binding common language, a language which the worker's childhood socialization must have predisposed him not only to be most familiar with but to use as a mark of social identification and solidarity. In this sense the development of class identification and class consciousness among urban industrial workers necessarily entails elements of ethnic consciousness. Under the circumstances, moreover, the conception of the situational nature of class and ethnicity needs to be expanded. As I will argue in Chapter Six, under

conditions of the incorporation of ethnic consciousness into class consciousness, class or ethnicity become relatively more important to workers in the explicitly political realm to the extent that either is politicised and made the dominant political ideology. I have laid the foundation for that argument in this chapter by developing and demonstrating the position that the ethnic element is crucial to social and economic interests of urban industrial workers in the Nigerian Middle Belt.

Conclusion

I have established in this chapter that urban ethnic associations do constitute a strong alternative (to trade unions) object of identification for the industrial workers and that in relative terms the workers as a whole evince a tendency to be more closely identified with these associations than with trade unions. An explanation to this situation has been suggested in terms of the scope of social and economic benefits offered by ethnic associations compared with what trade unions can and do offer.

I have also established that attitudes to strikes - both abstract and concrete - are positively correlated with our measure of proletarianism and labour aristocracy, thus confirming the proletarian hypothesis and rejecting the labour aristocracy hypothesis.

The picture that emerges from the analysis is that of an urban industrial proletariat fairly well organized, on the one hand, at the point of production and determined to fight for and protect its collective economic interests as defined by the formal organization of the labour process; and, on the other hand, even more deeply involved in ethnic urban institutions designed to ensure the personal social and economic security of individual workers in the city and the development of their rural home communities. As it is, Nigerian trade unions play a rather restricted role in the workers' individual urban biographies.¹⁴ Ethnic associations have a greater impact on these biographies ranging from the moment the job applicant arrives in town to the time he dies - burial and funeral arrangements often being the exclusive responsibilities of ethnic associations. In political terms what all this suggests is that depending on the specific objective at stake, two major and potentially effective organizational means of mobilizing the Nigerian urban industrial proletariat exist: the workers can be mobilized specifically on a class basis, with trade unions at the core of such efforts, or specifically on an ethnic basis, with ethnic associations at the core. As I have suggested, whether political mobilization of urban workers along class

or ethnic lines would attract the support and loyalty of workers depends, to a large extent on whether at any given moment it is class or ethnicity that is decisively politicised and ideologized in the Nigerian society as a whole. Accordingly, in Chapter Six I will argue that on the whole the general politicization and ideologization of ethnicity with the relative non-politicization and non-ideologization of class largely accounts for workers' response to political mobilization dressed in both ethnic and class terms. But before doing that, I will analyse, in the chapter that follows, the urban social networks in which the workers are involved.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Jack Woodis, Theories of Revolution (New York: International Publisher, 1972), pp. 114-165; Eskor Toyo, The Working Class and the Nigerian Crisis (Ibadan: Sketch Publications, 1967).

² Robert Melson, "Ideology and Inconsistency: The Cross-Pressured Nigerian Worker," American Political Science Review, No. 1, March (1971), pp. 161-75; Paul Lubeck, "Early Industrialization and Social Class Formation Among Factory Workers in Kano, Nigeria, (Ph.D. Dissertation, Northwestern University, 1975).

³ Included in this series of questions on strike support in the initial draft questionnaire was one referring to the General Strike in May 1981, but all the workers interviewed in the pilot study were not aware that there was a general strike, so the question was dropped.

⁴ West Africa, No. 3346, September 14 (1981), p. 2146.

⁵ Paul Lubeck, op cit., pp. 163, 251-254; 232-34.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 256-57.

⁷ Jack Woodis, op cit., Eskor Toyo, op cit.

⁸ Paul Lubeck, op cit., p. 121.

⁹ Okwudiba Nnoli, "Ethnicity and the working class in Africa; Consciousness and Praxis", UFAHAMU, Vol. 10, Nos. 1 and 2, Fall and Winter (1980/81), pp. 71-72.

¹⁰ Leonard Plotnicov, Strangers to the City, Urban Man in Jos, N Nigeria (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 1967), pp. 67-73.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 69.

¹² Leonard Plotnicov, "Rural-Urban Communications in Contemporary Nigeria: The Persistence of Traditional Social Institutions", Journal of Asian and African Studies, Vol. 5, 1970, p. 81.

¹³ Plotnicov, Strangers to the City ..., op cit., p. 67.

¹⁴ Nnoli, op cit., p. 72.

¹⁵ Even the impact of trade unions on the process of urban wage determination is a topic of substantial controversy in the literature. Warren, Kilby and Cohen are of the opinion that trade unions play a crucial role in determining the level of wages, but Berg and Weeks argue the opposite view; See W. M. Warren, "Urban Real Wages and The Nigerian Trade Union Movement, 1939-60," Economic Development and Cultural Change, Vol. 15, No. 1, October 1960, p. 21; "Urban Real Wages and the Nigerian Trade Union Movement, 1930-60: Rejoinder," Ibid., No. 17, October 1969, pp. 618-26; Peter Kilby, "Industrial Relations and Wage Determination: The Failure of the Anglo-Saxon Model," Journal of Developing Areas, 1 (July, 1967), pp. 496-501; also "Further Comment on the Kilby/Weeks Debate, Final Observations," Ibid., No. 5, January 1971, pp. 175-76; Robin Cohen, Labour and Politics in Nigeria, 1945-71 (London: Heineman, 1974), pp. 208-209; "Further Comment on the Kilby/Weeks Debate," Journal of Developing Areas, 5, January 1971, pp. 155-64; Elliot Berg, "Urban Real Wages and the Nigerian Trade Union Movement, 1939-60: A Comment", Economic Development and Cultural Change, No. 17, October 1969, pp. 605-17; John F. Weeks, "A Comment on Peter Kilby: Industrial Relations and Wage Determination", Journal of Developing Areas, 3, October 1968, pp. 8-9. Also, "Further Comment on the Kilby/Weeks Debate, An Empirical Rejoinder", Ibid., 5, January 1971, p. 174.

CHAPTER FIVE

KIN, CLASS AND SOCIAL NETWORKS

Introduction

In this chapter I will utilize the concept of social networks to develop further the proposition suggested in the preceding chapter that class and ethnic elements interplay as part of the process of class formation among urban industrial workers in the Nigerian Middle Belt. The concept of social network used here denotes "a specific set of linkages among a defined set of persons, with the additional property that the characteristics of these linkages as a whole may be used to interpret the social behaviour of the persons involved."¹ As a social science tool, network analysis is fruitful because, as Claude Fischer points out, not only does it have explanatory power, but "it bridges the gap between individual and aggregate models of social life, it incorporates the purposeful actions of individuals into models of social-structural processes".² In North America network analysis has proved useful in debates on the community,

especially in understanding the nature of social relations in industrial urban areas.³ The class and kinship implications of social networks is highlighted in the literature. Thus in their Detroit study Robert Jackson and associates maintain that "social class affects the selection and maintenance of a social relation by shaping the opportunities and constraints the individual faces."⁴ Though the Detroit study uncovered "the preponderance of friendship similarity on five dimensions: occupation, economic sector, education, ethnicity and age," the authors also noted the tendency for people in higher classes to have relatively fewer friends in their networks who were kin.⁵ The Detroit findings led Jackson to the conclusion that "segregation in social networks is the manifestation in informal social structure of a society's formal structure."⁶

The importance of kinship in social networks is stressed in Barry Wellman's Canadian study in East York where about half of the intimate ties are with kin even though the author found the relationships to be more of "differentiated networks" than as "solidarities".⁷ Furthermore, the importance of both kinship and class in social networks was pointed out by Barnes in his pioneer application of network

analysis. In the study Barnes discovered:

[a] network of social ties between pairs of persons arising from considerations of kinship, friendship and acquaintance. Most, but not all of these ties are between persons who regard each other as approximate social equals, and these ties of approximate equality we regard as one manifestation of the social class system, and shall call the class network. 8

In Africa network analysis is often utilized to understand the phenomenon of rural-urban migration and the process of migrants' adjustment in the urban environment.⁹ The significance of class and kinship in the social networks of migrants is emphasized in most of the African studies that employ this mode of analysis. Thus Epstein emphasizes the singular importance of kinship. "At the core of the network however, are those who are readily fitted into the elastic categories of kinship provided by a classificatory system of terminology and those who count as fellow-tribesmen."¹⁰ Peter Gutkind however suggests that kinship is crucial to migrants' social networks only in the initial stages of urban life, and that the longer and more established the migrant is in the urban area the less he associates on the basis of kin, and the more on the basis of class.¹¹ This view as it applies to industrial workers suggests a pattern of class formation in which ethnic or kinship elements decrease and class elements increase in significance the longer the

workers' experience of urban wage employment.

But other African studies of urban social networks point to the possibility that class and kinship both constitute important elements in workers' social networks. For instance in David Jacobson's study of Mbale in Uganda he not only found the absence of friendship ties between the "elite" (senior civil servants, managers, educated, skilled, high income earners) and "non-elites" (those doing unskilled and semi-skilled jobs, on low incomes and relatively uneducated); ¹² he also found that whereas "friendships among the elite Africans in Mbale are contained within the elite and cut across ethnic lines, ... the friendships of the non-elite Africans in town are organized along ethnic lines."¹³ Thus to the unskilled, low income and relatively uneducated workers, both class and ethnicity are important elements in social networks. Besides Jacobson, Michael Schatzberg also draws attention to the significance of both class and ethnic elements. Schatzberg's study in Lisala, Zaire, uncovers a tendency among bure^acrats to associate mainly "with people of their own social standing" but also to prefer within the same class, people of the same ethnic group.¹⁴

These studies provide some justification for my decision to utilize network analysis to advance the argument suggested in the preceding chapter. Ethnic elements are integral to working class formation, a process whereby workers get settled in urban wage employment and develop collective and personal strategies to cope with or overcome social and economic insecurities arising from their subordinate position. Just as identification with working class-oriented ethnic associations indicate the interplay between class and ethnicity, so do workers' urban social networks show the importance of both ethnic and class considerations in the biographies of urban industrial workers. This is one theme I hope to pursue in this chapter. Related to this theme are the implications of network analysis for the proletarian and labour aristocracy hypotheses. Given Robert Jackson's proposition quoted earlier in this chapter that "segregation in social networks is the manifestation in the informal social structure of a society's formal structure,"¹⁵ I predicted from the labour aristocracy perspective that the social networks of the relatively more educated, highly paid workers would be less likely to be limited to the ranks of the working class and other urban poor than networks of the less educated, low

income or manual workers. I will examine this in the present chapter. The implication for the proletarian hypothesis, implicit in Peter Gutkind's analysis is that workers relatively more established in urban wage employment would evince a greater tendency to be involved in "class networks" than in networks based primarily on kin.¹⁶ I will also examine this issue in the present chapter.

In order to determine the character of workers' urban social networks the respondents were each asked to supply the names of their six best or closest friends in their towns of residence and their three best or closest friends in their places of work, with additional demographic and other social information on each of the friends named.¹⁷ I have focused on respondents' choice of friends as an aspect of social networks because, as David Jacobson maintains, "the analysis of such choices reveals the principles which organized their social life outside the situation determined by the formal occupational structure."¹⁸ Thus data was collected on a total of 482 friends.¹⁹ I am concerned here with three characteristics of the workers' social networks: content, density and directedness.²⁰ I am interested in finding out the extent to which the workers have friends similar to them in terms of such variables as occupation, kinship, workplace and education, and whether such

similarities vary according to the extent of proletarianism or according to the workers' levels of education, occupation or income. Similarly, with regard to the density and directedness of the networks I am interested in the extent of familiarity and reciprocity among the workers and their closest friends.

The chapter is divided into three sections. In section one I will describe and analyse the general characteristics of the respondents' friends, in order to substantiate the proposition regarding the interplay between class and ethnic elements. The second and third sections will respectively dwell on how workers' social networks relate to the proletarian and labour aristocracy hypotheses.

5.1 Characteristics of Respondents' Closest Friends

In several ways the 482 friends were similar to the respondents in the sample. Though the respondents were not asked to supply the names of only male friends, almost all the friends named, 98%, were male. The respondents and their friends are also similar in terms of religion and age. The proportion of those who profess Christianity is 100% for the respondents (56% Roman Catholics); and 98% for their friends (51% Roman Catholics). The workers are also very similar to their closest friends in terms of age. In fact there is a

substantial positive correlation between respondents' age and the age of closest friends, as shown in Table 5.1.

TABLE 5.1

Age of Closest Friends by Age of Respondents
(in percentages)

Age of Closest Friends	Age of Respondents			All
	24 and below	25-29	30 and above	
24 and below	60	23	9	32
25-29	22	40	32	31
30 and above	<u>18</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>59</u>	<u>37</u>
	100	100	100	100
	N = 170	N = 175	N = 137	N = 482
	Gamma = .57 (p < .025)			

The similarity can also be observed in the educational attainment of the respondents and their closest friends, as shown in Table 5.2, which shows a summary of the marginal distribution for respondents' educational levels and the educational levels of close friends.

TABLE 5.2
 Comparison of Respondents' and Closest Friends'
 Educational Attainment
 (in percentages)

Educational Attainment	Respondents	Closest Friends
University Degree	1	3
Post-Primary (Below Degree)	49	42
Primary 7 or Below	50	50
Illiterate	<u>0</u>	<u>4</u>
	100	100
	N = 73	N = 477

Friends Education Not Known = 5

The proportion of respondents with post-primary education is 51% compared with 46% of friends with similar educational attainment. The fact that only 3% of the friends have levels of formal education significantly higher than most of the workers, and that the proportion of friends with primary seven education or less is higher than the proportion of respondents with similar education level shows that on the whole, the workers tend to choose friends of similar or lower

educational attainment. A cross-tabulation of closest friends' education by respondents' education shows a substantial positive correlation, as can be seen in Table 5.3.

TABLE 5.3

Closest Friends' Education by Respondents' Education
(in percentages)

Education of Closest Friends	Education of Respondents		
	Above Primary 7	Primary 7 and Below	All
Above Primary 7	64	25	46
Primary 7 and Below	<u>36</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>54</u>
	100	100	100
	N = 249	N = 228	N = 477

Friends' Education Not Known = 5

Gamma = .68 (p < .025)

An examination of the data regarding the occupations of the respondents' closest friends also shows that friends are generally recruited from among the lower occupational categories, as is evident in Table 5.4.

TABLE 5.4
Comparison of Respondents Occupations and
Closest Friends' Occupations
(in percentages)

Occupation	Respondents	Closest Friends
Manual	46	26
Clerical	29	22
Supervisory	25	12
Technical		8
Armed Forces		5
Business		5
Teacher		4
Unemployed		4
Student		3
Managerial		3
Farming		2
Security		2
Other		<u>4</u>
	100	101
	N = 73	N = 482

A high proportion (60%) of the friends fall within the general occupational category of the respondents (manual, clerical and supervisory); and the majority of the friends outside this category still fall within the range of occupations that can be regarded as being of low status; primary school teachers, students (mainly in institutions below university level); farmers, and the unemployed. Only 8% of the friends can be considered as involved in occupations of higher social status than most of the respondents (managers and business persons). Thus we can conclude that generally the workers tend to choose as closest friends people of similar or lower occupational status. There is a substantial positive correlation between friends' occupation and respondents' occupation. Table 5.5 shows the relationship.

TABLE 5.5
Closest Friends' Occupation by Respondents' Occupation
(in percentage)

Occupation of Closest Friends	Occupation of Respondents			
	Manual	Clerical	Supervisory	All
Manual	75	10	15	44
Clerical	17	73	33	36
Supervisory	<u>9</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>52</u>	<u>20</u>
	100	100	100	100
	N = 149	N = 82	N = 60	N = 291

Friends' occupations other than manual, clerical and supervisory = 191
Gamma = .74 (p < .025)

Since a majority of the friends fall within the general occupation level of the respondents, the question arises as to whether or not the majority of the friends would also come from the same factory as the respondents. Table 5.6 shows a tabulation of the responses to the question which required that the workers list the names of their best or closest friends in the respective towns in which their factories are located.

TABLE 5.6

Distribution of Workers' Friends by Place of Work

Friends' Place of Work	Number	Percentage
Same as respondent's	138	38
Different from respondent's	195	53
Not working	<u>35</u>	<u>9</u>
Total	368	100

Friends at respondent's factories specifically required in questionnaire = 114.

As the table indicates, a fairly moderate proportion of the respondents' closest friends (38%) are in the same workplace as themselves, thus showing a moderate influence of workplace contacts and relations on the workers' choice of personal friends in the urban context.

Up to this point I have tried to show the importance to industrial workers' social networks of such social variables as age, education, occupation and place of work. I have shown that not only are workers generally similar to their closest friends in broad age, educational and occupational categories but that when these categories are further examined, there are substantial, statistically significant positive correlations. These findings confirm other studies which also show the influence of such factors on the composition of urban friendship networks.²¹ But whereas such variables as education, occupation and workplace indicate the influence of social class on workers' urban social networks, considerations of kinship and ethnicity also play a very important role in determining who in the urban context becomes part of the workers' social network. The data on kinship is shown in Table 5.7.

TABLE 5.7

Distribution of Respondent's Friends by Kinship

Friend's Relationship to Respondent	Number	Percentage
Kin	274	57
Non-kin	<u>208</u>	<u>43</u>
Total	482	100

Overall, more than 80% of the respondents' closest friends were of the same ethnic group (Tiv) as the respondents. But because Gboko is located in Tivland and inhabited predominantly by Tiv people; and Jos is located away from Tivland and inhabited by a multiplicity of ethnic groups among which Tiv are a minority, the concept of kinship took on different meanings in the two situations. In Jos where Tiv people are just part of the multiplicity of ethnic groups, friends who were Tiv were regarded as "kin"; and in Gboko where the dominant ethnic group is Tiv, friends who were from the same clan as the respondent were regarded as "kin". I found this operationalization of kinship validated by the respondents' answers. Thus whereas respondents in Jos usually claimed kinship with friends who were Tiv, Gboko respondents declined such claims if the Tiv friends were not also from the same clan in Tivland.²² As a matter of fact the concept of kinship is capable of being theoretically and empirically narrowed down to apply to the immediate family members, or extended to include a whole ethnic group, depending on the nature of any given situation.²³ With this operationalization of the kinship concept, a substantial proportion of the friends (57%) are of the same kinship group as the respondents. In a similar Nigerian study of workers in

Ibadan, Deiter Seibel also discovered that "the best friend of 86% of the workers is of the same ethnic group, the best friend of 50% of the workers is from the same village or town of origin."²⁴

The picture of the content of workers' urban social networks that emerges from the foregoing analysis is that of multiplex relationships, that is the relationships are not generally based on one factor such as class or kinship to the exclusion of the other, but on both. In the industrial workers' personal, informal social relations both within and outside the factory, they evince a general tendency to closely associate with people of the same sex, age, religion, education, occupation and kin as themselves.²⁵ Before discussing the implications of this pattern of social networks for class formation among industrial workers I will examine briefly other aspects of the social networks, namely their density and directedness. Data on network density simply shows how well the respondents' friends know one another, but I am more concerned with directedness (or reciprocity) in the networks which shows the social and economic significance of networks to workers.

Density and Reciprocity in Networks

To estimate the density of the networks or the extent of familiarity among the respondents and their friends, they were asked how well their friends knew one another.²⁶ In 48% of the cases the respondents claimed their friends knew one another very well, and at least fairly well in 87% of the cases. In only 13% of the cases did the respondents indicate that their friends hardly knew one another. This shows a high density in the social networks or great familiarity among the respondents' friends.

And to estimate the directedness of the networks, or the extent of reciprocity between the workers and their friends the respondents were asked which of their friends relied on them for help in times of emergency; and on which of their friends the respondents in turn relied for help in emergencies. The question was aimed at eliciting responses regarding actual instances of social and economic help, and in several cases references were made to monetary assistance in emergencies. The data shows that in 57% of the cases, friends relied on the respondents for such help while in 62% of the cases friends provide help for respondents in times of emergency.²⁷ The pattern of reciprocity is revealed more clearly in Table 5.8.

TABLE 5.8
Aid Reciprocity Between Workers and Closest Friends
(in percentages)

Friend Gives Help	Friend Receives Help		
	Yes	No	All Friends
Yes	71	37	58
No	<u>29</u>	<u>63</u>	<u>42</u>
	100	100	100
	N = 297	N = 185	N = 482

This shows a high extent of reciprocity in the workers' urban social networks. Furthermore, in a greater proportion of the cases (58%) of the respondents are more likely to receive emergency social and economic help than are their friends. This further shows the extent to which industrial workers benefit from urban social networks in which they are involved. In the preceding chapter I argued that urban ethnic associations act as institutions of social and economic security for the workers. Here we see that in the informal and interpersonal relationships, dense and highly reciprocal social networks also provide social and economic security the workers require to survive in the towns. A further examination of the data also shows that manual, less educated, or lower income workers are more dependent on their social networks as means of handling personal urban emergencies. Tables 5.9, 5.10 and 5.11 show the relationships between dependence on close friends and income,

occupation and education. The tables are based on a question which required respondents to indicate on which of their friends they do depend for emergencies.

TABLE 5.9

Dependence on Close Friends by Respondents' Income
(in percentages)

Dependence on Friends	Respondents' Income (In Naira)			
	60-175	180-265	270-650	All
Yes	63	48	57	58
No	37	52	43	42
	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>
	N = 273	N = 124	N = 85	N = 482

Gamma = -.17 (NS)

TABLE 5.10

Dependence on Close Friends by Respondents' Occupation
(in percentages)

Dependence on Friends	Respondents' Occupation			All
	Manual	Clerical	Supervisory	
Yes	62	54	54	58
No	38	46	46	42
	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>
	N = 223	N = 142	N = 117	N = 482

Gamma = -.13 (N.S.)

TABLE 5.11

Dependence on Close Friends by Respondents' Education
(in percentages)

Dependence on Friends	Respondents' Education		
	Above Primary 7	Primary 7 and Below	All
Yes	52	64	58
No	<u>48</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>42</u>
	100	100	100
	N = 250	N = 232	N = 482

Gamma = -.23 (N. S.)

Though none of the associations is statistically significant (at $p = .025$), they are non-negligible and their direction suggests that in fact the respondents who are lower on income, education and occupation depend more on the social networks than do the respondents relatively higher on these dimensions. This pattern is an indication of the economic utility of workers' social networks. Adrian Peace's study in Lagos emphasizes the economic aspect of social networks where the migrants have fairly elaborate support systems. He sees the migrants' networks as "support units which allocate available surplus finances in such a way as to come to terms with insecure conditions of employment on the Estate."²⁸ His summary underlines the economic importance of such networks:

Above all the complex set of personal relationships with urban brothers are central to an individual's

continued survival in the Town and his gaining access to some form of employment on the Estate. It is these relationships, supplemented by dyadic ties with Elders and friends which allow recent migrants to ride out the most critical periods of their early years at Agege. 29

To summarize, up to this point I have shown that in their voluntary personal urban social networks, the workers on the whole tend to associate more with people of similar sex, age, educational levels, occupation, religion and kinship groups as themselves. I have also shown that the workers are involved in network situations whereby members know one another fairly well and are engaged in highly reciprocal relationships which benefit workers lower on income, education and occupational categories more than those higher on these variables. The argument I am making here has two components: (1) Social networks constitute critical support systems for industrial workers in the process of settling in urban wage employment and developing collective and personal strategies to cope with or overcome social and economic insecurities arising from uncertain urban conditions; (2) In this process kinship or ethnic elements

are of as much importance as class elements. This argument suggests that the ethnic element is not merely the basis for an ideology of domination by the ruling class, an issue I will take up in the next chapter, but that ethnic elements can also be used, and are used, by workers as institutions of social and economic survival in the urban context. This is demonstrated in workers' active involvement in urban ethnic associations and dependence on urban social networks with considerable ethnic content. Furthermore this economic utilization of ethnic elements by workers has the tendency to make the political manipulation of ethnicity by the ruling class more appealing and effective. I will return to these issues in the concluding chapter. What I will now consider is how workers' social networks relate to the proletarian and labour aristocracy hypotheses.

5.2 Proletarianism and Social Networks

We saw in the preceding chapter that workers in Jos evinced closer identification (relative to Gboko workers) with ethnic associations in the city and I suggested that the need for identification with such associations is stronger in Jos since it is a bigger city, more ethnically heterogeneous and more distant from Tivland, and thus problems of social and economic adjustment are more acute there than in Gboko.

A similar situation can be observed regarding the kinship content of the respondents' social networks. Table 5.12 presents data on closest friends kinship by respondents' industrial community.

TABLE 5.12

Kinship of Closest Friends by Respondents'

Industrial Community

(in percentages)

Friends' Kinship	Industrial Community		
	(Marginal)	(Typical)	
	Gboko	Jos	All
Same as respondents'	24	81	57
Different	<u>76</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>43</u>
	100	100	100
	N = 205	N = 277	N = 482

Gamma = .86 (p < .025)

Even though the very high positive correlation has to do with the operationalization of kinship and thus hides the fact that almost all the closest friends of Gboko respondents are also Tiv, the table clearly shows the significance of kinship

in Jos as less than 20% of the Jos respondents choose their closest friends across ethnic backgrounds. As can be seen in Table 5.14 the correlation is very strong even after the effect of other variables is controlled for.

A related issue is the effect of years of urban wage employment on the tendency to choose friends across kinship background. As I indicated earlier, Peter Gutkind observed in his study of social networks in the Mulago community in Uganda that:

Some networks are really class networks. As a migrant repeatedly returns to Mulago, or elsewhere in the Kibuga, he gradually selects his friends according to similar skills, wealth and education. Such relations generally cut right across tribal background. 30

I will examine below the extent to which this tendency is evident among the industrial workers being studied here. For instance, would the relatively more established workers be less likely than those less established to choose friends who are of the same kinship groups? Table 5.13 presents data on the relationship between respondents and their friends' kinship.

TABLE 5.13
 Kinship of Closest Friends by Respondents'
 Years of Wage Employment
 (in percentages)

Friends' Kinship Group	Years of Employment		
	Below 5	5 and Above	All
Same as respondents'	45	70	57
Different	<u>54</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>43</u>
	99	100	100
	N = 266	N = 216	N = 482

Gamma = .47 (p < .025)

There is a moderate correlation between respondents' years of wage employment and the tendency to choose friends on the basis of kinship background. Though the moderate correlation disappears when controlling for the effect of industrial community as shown in Table 5.14, the direction of the correlation does not confirm Gutkind's proposition.

TABLE 5.14

Zero-Order and First Order Partial Gamma Correlations
Between Kinship of Closest Friends and Respondents'
Industrial Community, Years of Wage Employment
and Involvement in Land Cultivation

Friends' Kinship By	Zero- Gamma	Partial Gamma Controlling For:					
		Industry	Occupation	Educa- tion	Land	Employ- ment Years	Income
Industry	.86	N. A.	.89	.83	.86	.85	.87
Land							
Cultivation	.10	-.07	.22	.15	N.A.	.13	.14
Employment Years	.47	.09	.41	.44	.45	N. A.	.45

Gamma for industry and employment years significant at .025

Since there is a substantive difference in the conditionals (conditional gamma for Gboko = -.002 and for Jos = -.13), there is a specification effect of industrial community (and distance from Tivland) on the relationship between length of

wage employment and the tendency to select friends of same kinship background. Granted that ties of kinship provide rational economic solutions to urban emergencies, such ties are not likely to diminish simply with prolonged stay in wage employment.

In this brief examination of the data as it relates to the proletarian hypothesis, it can be seen that even though (1) on the whole the workers tend to associate more with people of lower social status in the urban community; (2) I have not uncovered any tendency among the workers relatively more established in wage employment to be more likely than those less established to choose friends across kinship lines; instead, (3) workers in Jos (who are more exposed to working class influences) have exhibited a stronger tendency than those in Gboko, to be involved in social networks with considerable kinship content. Besides, though the workers as a whole associate - in their informal social networks - with other urban residents of similar low social status, I have not come up with any proletarianizing influence propelling them away from involvement in social networks with decreasing kinship content.

In the next section I will examine whether, and to what extent, workers' education, occupation or income are

sources of such influence.

5.3 Labour Aristocracy and Social Networks

I have already shown that in their informal social networks the workers on the whole tend to associate more with other urban residents of similar low social status thus dispelling the notion that they or a section within them constitute a labour aristocracy with a tendency towards upward social class identification. The basis for my use of social networks to test the labour aristocracy thesis is found in Robert Jackson's proposition stated earlier that "segregation in social networks is the manifestation in informal social structure of a society's formal structure".³¹ This being the case I predicted that the social networks of the relatively more educated, highly paid workers or those in higher occupational categories, would be less likely to be limited to the ranks of the working class and other urban poor than networks of the less educated, low income or manual workers. This has not been found to be so. Thus what I will do here is examine the influence of some aspects of labour aristocracy on workers' tendency to choose friends along kinship lines. In a study of inter-ethnic relations among industrial workers in Ibadan and Lagos between 1963 and 1964, Seibel found out that "A main factor

influencing the workers' attitude is education. Readiness to co-operate with different ethnic groups increases quite obviously with educational standards, specifically from 53% (illiterate), over 80% (primary VI) to 90% (G.C.E. and similar examinations)."³¹ I found education to be a similar source of influence in our study, as Table 5.15 shows.

TABLE 5.15

Closest Friends' Kinship Group by Educational Attainment
(in percentages)

Friends' Kinship	Respondents' Level of Education		
	Above Primary 7	Primary 7 and Below	All
Same as respondents'	42	73	57
Different	<u>58</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>43</u>
	100	100	100
	N = 250	N = 232	N = 482

Gamma = .59 (p < .025)

The tendency to engage in network situations with considerable kinship content is less among the relatively

more educated workers thus confirming Seibel's findings. And the correlation remains quite substantial even when controlling for the effect of other variables, as seen in Table 5.16.

TABLE 5.16
Zero-Order and First-Order Partial Correlations
for Closest Friends' Kinship and Workers'
Education, Occupation and Income

Friends' Kinship by Respondents'	Zero- Order Gamma	Industry	Occupation	Educa- tion	Land	Employ- ment Years	Income
Education	-.59	-.52	-.56	N.A.	-.54	-.56	-.45
Occupation	-.60	-.43	N.A.	.14	.01	.27	-.22
Income	-.35	-.40	-.44	-.16	-.38	-.50	N.A.

Gamma for education and occupation significant at .025

While the influence of occupation is less clear, we can see that there is a moderate correlation ($p = .025$) between workers' levels of income and the tendency to have closest friends across kinship lines. Those workers earning

relatively higher incomes evince a greater tendency than those earning lower incomes to be engaged in networks with different kinship groups.

Thus, not only do the workers as a whole show evidence of social behaviour contrary to the labour aristocracy view by identifying more with other urban residents of low social status. Indeed, it is that section of the working class regarded as a labour aristocracy that tends to identify more with other urban poor across kinship backgrounds. Education seems here to have the effect of breaking down ethnic and kinship barriers in the workers' inter-personal relationships thus giving their urban social networks a more specifically class content. Similarly, relatively higher incomes means that the workers are relatively more secure than those earning less, and thus less dependent on kinship and ethnic networks. I demonstrated a similar phenomenon in the preceding chapter whereby the more educated and skilled workers were seen to be less attached to urban ethnic associations than the less educated and unskilled ones, a situation I explained by the fact that by being more educated and skilled, they are less insecure in the cities and thus have less need to identify with urban ethnic associations. Thus what I have uncovered

here is that characteristics of urban workers which are seen by the labour aristocracy perspective to make them out as a labor aristocracy with upward social class identifications, are precisely those which orient them to identify with other urban poor, not necessarily along ethnic or kinship lines.

Conclusion

In the preceding chapter I analysed class identification among industrial workers by examining their involvement in urban ethnic associations and trade unions, and their attitudes to strikes. I argued in that chapter that by virtue of the membership, leadership and functions of urban ethnic associations, it might be appropriate to regard them as more or less working class institutions, even though they are ethnically-based. Related to this is the proposition that the ethnic element is crucial to social and economic interests of urban industrial workers in the Nigerian Middle Belt. In this chapter I have extended and applied the argument to the analysis of workers' urban social networks, the main aim being to determine to what extent it would be legitimate to regard these networks as a manifestation of class or kinship relationships.

The data shows that workers' urban social networks are not based on one particular set of considerations, for

instance, class, to the exclusion of other considerations, for instance, kinship or ethnicity. In their personal informal relations the workers associate with people of similar age, religious, occupational, educational and ethnic backgrounds in highly dense, reciprocal social networks. This suggests the importance of both ethnicity and class as bases of urban social identification among workers. Like urban ethnic associations, these social networks provide social and economic security for workers and constitute part of their collective and individual strategies for coping with conditions of urban wage employment.

Pertinent to the proletarian and labour aristocracy hypotheses, the data shows that neither the workers relatively more established in wage employment nor those in the relatively more developed working class community evince substantial tendency to identify less along kinship lines. Rather it is the relatively more educated and better paid workers whose social networks show more class than kinship content. Thus it can be concluded that whereas the workers as a whole tend to identify more with other urban residents of similar kinship group, it is the relatively more educated and better paid among them who are more likely to transcend kinship barriers and identify with other urban residents of

different kinship groups. Nevertheless, on the whole the significance of both class and ethnicity is evident in the network data.

As I suggested in the last chapter, the significance of both class and ethnic elements in the social and economic lives of workers means that in the explicitly political realm class or ethnicity will exercise relatively greater influence on workers to the extent that either is politicised and made the dominant political ideology. I will address this in the chapter that follows.

FOOTNOTES

¹ J. Clyde Mitchell, "The Concept and Use of Social Networks," J. C. Mitchell, (ed.) Social Networks in Urban Situations: Analyses of Personal Relationships in Central African Towns (Manchester University Press, 1969), p. 2.

² Claude S. Fischer, "Network Analysis and Urban Studies," in C.S. Fischer, et al. Networks and Places. Social Relations in the Urban Setting (New York: The Free Press, 1977), p. 28.

³ See footnote ⁶⁸ in Chapter 1, p. 36.

⁴ Robert M. Jackson, et al., "The Dimensions of Social Networks," in Claude Fischer, et al., op cit., p. 49.

⁵ Robert M. Jackson, "Social Structure and Process in Friendship Choice," in Claude Fischer, op cit., p. 78, p. 49.

⁶ Robert M. Jackson, op cit., p. 78.

⁷ Barry Wellman, "The Community Question: The Intimate Networks of East Yorkers," in American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 84, No. 5 (1979), pp. 1209, 1225.

⁸ J. A. Barnes, "Class and Committees in a Norwegian Island Parish," Human Relations, Vol. 7 (1954) p. 48.

⁹ Thus Philip Mayer finds it fruitful to advance a "network definition" for the process of African urbanization, suggesting that the nature of peoples' personal ties is a good indication of the extent to which they (the people) are urbanized. See Philip Mayer, "Labour Migrancy and the Social Network," in J.F. Holleman, et al. (eds). Problems of Transition (Natal University Press, 1964), p. 25.

¹⁰ A. L. Epstein, "Urbanization and Social Change in Africa," Current Anthropology 8, 4 (1967), p. 280.

¹¹ Peter C. W. Gutkind, "African Urbanism, Mobility and the Social-Network", in International Journal of Comparative Sociology, Vol. 6, 1965, p. 57.

- ¹² David Jacobson, "Friendship and Mobility in the Development of an Urban Elite African Social System," South-Western Journal of Anthropology, Vol. 24 (1968), pp. 124, 130.
- ¹³ David Jacobson, "Network Analysis in East Africa: The Social Organization of Urban Transients," Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology, 7, 4, (1970), p. 282.
- ¹⁴ Michael Schtzberg, "Ethnicity and Class at the Local Level," Comparative Politics, 13, 4 (July, 1981), p. 472.
- ¹⁵ Robert Jackson, op cit., p. 78.
- ¹⁶ Peter, C. W. Gutkind, op cit.
- ¹⁷ Barry Wellman used the same question for his East York Study. See Barry Wellman, op cit., pp. 1208-1209.
- ¹⁸ David Jacobson, "Friendship and Mobility," op cit., p. 125. In the present case I am concerned with choice of friends both within and outside the situation determined by the formal occupational structure.
- ¹⁹ The maximum possible number of respondents' friends (9 for each respondent) was 637, but many respondents reported less than 9 friends, thus the total ended up being 482.
- ²⁰ These are some of the key concepts usually used in analyses of social networks. See J. C. Mitchell, "The Concept and use of Social Networks", in J. C. Mitchell, Social Networks in Urban Situations. (Manchester University Press, 1969), pp. 1-29; Norman Shulman, "Network Analysis: A New Addition to an Old Bag of Tricks," Acta Sociologica; Vol. 19, No. 4 (1976), pp. 310-19. Mitchell lists the major characteristics of networks and observes that "These characteristics of personal networks have all emerged as relevant in the course of studies of networks... No one has taken into account all of these characteristics: one or the other of the characteristics, rather has been selected in one study as of major importance and another in a different study," Mitchell, op cit., p. 30. Thus in this study I choose to focus on network content, density and directedness.

21 For instance in a Lagos study Adrian Peace describes the factory workers' networks in these terms. "They comprise fellow hometownsmen on the whole, only occasionally do networks comprise migrants from two ethnic categories and very rarely more than two. The ages of network members are generally about the same as is length of time they have been migrant wage-earners. Members' wage-levels are usually much of a muchness [sic] ... In brief, migrants' social networks are relatively homogeneous social units;" Adrian Peace, Choice Class and Conflict: A Study of Southern Nigerian Factory Workers (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1979), pp. 29-30. See also A. L. Epstein, "Gossip Norms and Social Network" in J. C. Mitchell, *op cit.*, pp. 125-26; Robert M. Jackson, *op cit.*, pp. 68; 78; David Jacobson, "Friendship and Mobility", *op cit.*, p. 124.

22 Adrian Peace highlights this point in his findings in Lagos where, because Lagos is located in Yorubaland and inhabited predominantly by the Yoruba, the Yoruba workers he studied were involved in social networks with other people who were not merely Yoruba but came from the same area in Yoruba. He observed "a migrant from Abeokuta will generally count among his friends Abeokuta men or others from Egbaland, a migrant from Ode Ondo will usually have as his friends migrants from Ode Ondo or rural Ondo, and so on. See Adrian Peace, *op cit.*, p. 28. A similar duality is implicit, for instance in the operationalization of "ethnic groups" in some North America studies of social networks. For instance Jackson operationalized ethnicity in terms of respondents' pp. 65-67; while Lauman uses only nationality, e.g., Italian, French, Russian ethnic groups, etc.; See E. O. Laumann, Bond of Plurality: The Form and Substance of Urban Social Networks (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1973), pp. 43-50. Thus whereas Italians in North America (or anywhere outside Italy for that matter) might constitute an ethnic group, they can not be treated as one ethnic group in Italy.

23 Thus A. L. Epstein reports regarding an African respondent called Chanda in his study in the copperbelt, "In this way he [Chanda] speaks, for example, of Paula, the daughter of his father's father's brother's son, as his sister, and is addressed as father by the slightly younger Francis whose maternal grandmother was a classificatory sister of Chanda's own father". Epstein suggests that such a classificatory system of kinship does two things: "On the one hand, it reduces all possible relationships of kinship to a limited and readily manageable number of categories of kin

to whom behaviour is adjusted according to the appropriate kin relationship. On the other hand, it allows and even provides for the extension of these patterns of behaviour to an indefinite number of persons with whom actual genealogical connection may be extremely remote". See A.L. Epstein, "The Network and Urban Social Organization", in J.C. Mitchell (ed.), op cit., p. 98.

24 Deiter Seibel, "Some Aspects of Inter-Ethnic Relations in Nigeria", Nigerian Journal of Economic and Social Studies, Vol. 9, No. 2 (July, 1967), p. 224; Barry Wellman reports similar findings in East York, Barry Wellman, op cit., p. 1209.

25 This also confirms the general findings in a Detroit study by Fischer and associates summarized by Robert Jackson, See Robert Jackson, op cit., pp. 77-78.

26 Robert Jackson, Claude Fischer and Lynne Jones used "density" in their Detroit study to mean "the extent to which the men named by the respondent were, in his estimation, friends of one another"; and the question they asked the respondents was "Of your three best friends, how many of these are good friends of one another?" See Robert Jackson, et al. "The Dimensions of Social Networks," Claude Fischer, et al., op cit., pp. 46, 53.

27 Barry Wellman's findings in East York is that "only a minority of intimates 30%, help in emergencies ... East Yorkers can almost always count on help from at least one of their intimates, but they can not count on such help from most of them." See Barry Wellman, op cit., p. 1217.

28 Andrian Peace, op cit., p. 31.

29 Ibid., p. 45.

30 Peter C. W. Gutkind, op cit., p. 57.

31 Robert Jackson, op cit., p. 78.

32 Deiter Seibel, op cit., p. 223.

CHAPTER SIX

POLITICAL ORIENTATIONS

From the point of view of the politics of the common people in Africa, the relationship between ethnicity, working class consciousness and praxis ought to be approached within the context of the desire of African workers to improve their living conditions through political action In this regard there is no substitute for a working class political party motivated by the objective interests of the workers, dominated and guided by them and devoted to the implementation of progressive policies. 1

The above quote touches on the major theme to be focused upon in the present chapter, namely, industrial workers' perceptions and practice of organized politics in Nigeria. Built into the quote is a problem and a promise: the problem is the effect of ethnicity on the political orientations of industrial workers; the promise is the assumption that in spite (or because) of the ethnicity factor, workers can form a viable political party to pursue their objective interests. A proper assessment of the magnitude of the problem and the validity of the promise can be fruitfully made by a close examination of data pertaining to workers' overall political awareness, patterns of political party support among workers, and their thinking

regarding the formation of a specifically working class political party. This is what I intend to do in the present chapter. A theoretical guide for the analysis derives from the proletarian and labour aristocracy hypotheses, and from the proposition regarding the interplay between class and ethnicity. Thus I am interested in finding out whether, and to what extent, typical proletarians are more likely than marginal proletarians to evince an understanding of the political process based on a common class position. I am further interested in finding out whether, and to what extent workers relatively higher in education, occupation and income levels evince an understanding of the political process significantly different from, and opposed to, the interests of the rest of the workers. Finally I am interested in assessing the overall political attitudes and behaviour of workers as a class within the context of politicized ethnicity. The ultimate aim of the analysis will be to identify the major sources of the politicization and depoliticization of the working class in Nigeria. The analysis will be situated within the context of the wider historical and political developments in Nigeria at the time of the research. Accordingly this chapter is subdivided into four sections: section one outlines the political context; section two examines the overall political awareness of the

workers; section three analyses patterns of political party support among the workers; and section four takes up the workers' attitudes to the formation of a workers' political party and revolutionary seizure of state power.

6.1 The Political Context

I have tried to suggest in the last two chapters that the extent to which ethnicity is politicized relative to class in the Nigerian society sets the framework for understanding much of the political attitudes and behaviour of urban industrial workers. It is my intention in this section to briefly point out the process by which ethnicity has been politicised and turned into a dominant political ideology in Nigeria.

It was argued in the introductory chapter and later in chapter three that the Nigerian bourgeoisie that was emerging in the colonial period lacked a strong material base and thus laid high premium on access to and control of, the state apparatus to facilitate the process of accumulation. Thus even as members of this class fought to end colonial rule and gain national independence, they also struggled among themselves over strategic access to and control of the state apparatus on attainment of political independence. This intra-class struggle manifested itself towards the end

of colonial rule mainly in the process of forming political parties as part of preparations for independence in 1960. The various regional sections of the bourgeoisie found it convenient to organize and mobilize followers along ethnic and regional lines. Thus although political competition was an intra-class struggle it was usually dressed in ethnic terms.² The three major political parties, formed after the second World War, were organized around the three major ethnic groups in the three regions: The Northern Peoples Congress (N.P.C.) in the North was organized around the Hausa and Fulani; the Action Group (A.G.) in the West organized around the Yoruba; and the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons - later called the National Convention of Nigeria Citizens (NCNC) in the East organized around Ibos.³ Commenting on the dynamics of political party formation in the colonial period, Crawford Young observes that soon after the formation of the N.C.N.C. "Yoruba fears of Ibo domination produced the A.G., northern fears of southern domination gave birth to the N.P.C."⁴ The ethnic orientations of the political parties meant that even though there was the possibility of organizing parties based on trade unions, the parties either often emerged from ethnic-wide associations or sought alliance with such associations.⁵ In this regard Irving Markovitz's insightful comment on the political transformation of ethnic

unions in Senegal in the colonial period is instructive, as it points to:

A situation where an organization was created with an ethnic base to meet the purely modern and urban needs of newly arrived lower-class immigrants in the city; later, this organization was used by the traditional ruling classes as a weapon to gain a position of political eminence in the modern government. 6

Thus it was the case that the political parties that emerged during the colonial period were ethnic, not class parties.⁷ This marked the process of the politicization of ethnicity without politicization of social class. A corollary development was the transformation of ethnicity into an ideology, a manipulative tool in furthering the interests of the bourgeoisie. The case of the Tiv is illustrative.

Among the Tiv, a minority ethnic group in north, a minority political party, the United Middle Belt Congress (U.M.B.C.) was formed in 1955, with a Tiv, Mr. Joseph Tarka, as its president.⁸ One of the first things the U.M.B.C. did was to establish a link with an already existing ethnic association, the Tiv Progressive Union, "a family union for all Tiv."⁹ In political campaigns, Tarka was presented to the Tiv "as the local David fighting for the rights of Tiv against the Goliath of Sokoto," and as M. J. Dent observes:

Tarka's appeal to the Tiv was as a courageous person who would fight for their rights and as a prophet of the Middle Belt State which, when created, would bring them "life more abundant," even though some sacrifices would be demanded. 11

The manipulation of ethnicity in the political propaganda was evident and strong. Dent notes that:

The message of the party propagandists was openly tribal. "Are you Tiv or Uke (descended from Uke, the father of all non-Tiv and especially of Hausa, according to Tiv mythology)?", they would ask. To the reply "we are Tiv," the propagandist would answer: "Then you must vote for our party, not the Hausa, the N.P.C." ... Tiv who supported the N.P.C. were described as "Hausa men". 12

This manipulation of ethnicity was not limited to the Tiv. Dent further observed that:

An exactly similar line was being followed by the N.P.C. in the rest of the North, except that whereas the hostility of the U.M.B.C. was being directed to the Hausa, that of the N.P.C. was being directed to Southerners. 13

Thus a Provincial Commissioner in Zaria (N.P.C.) told B. J. Dudley in an interview "we had to teach the people to hate

Southerners; to look on them as people depriving them of their rights in order to win them over."¹⁴ In this way ethnicity was not only politicized but also turned into manipulative ideology by the bourgeoisie during the colonial period. By independence in 1960, as Crawford Young sums it up "Political competition in the Nigerian arena ... placed ethnicity in the center of public cognition of political struggle."¹⁵ In the general elections prior to independence the N.P.C. in alliance with the N.C.N.C. won at the federal level and thus formed the post-independence government that ruled Nigeria from 1960 to 1966. Because of the U.M.B.C. alliance with the A.G., the latter won the majority in Tiv area.¹⁶

Beginning from 1966 Nigeria went through a 13 year period of military rule and all through this period except the last year, there was a ban on party politics. As part of a preparatory process of handing over power to an elected government by October 1979, the military administration lifted the ban in September 1978, thus paving the way for a reemergence of party political activity. The lifting of the ban was followed by the formation of more than 50 preliminary political associations all hoping to become political parties to contest elections.¹⁷ The large number of potential political parties by itself indicates that the 12 year long

ban did not kill interest in political party activity. Nevertheless through regrouping and formation of alliances, only 19 of these political associations eventually applied to the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) to be registered as political parties. The rigorous demands and requirements set by FEDECO as qualification for political party status meant that in the end only five political parties were registered to contest elections. These were:

1. The National Party of Nigeria (N.P.N.), with Alhaji Shehu Shagari as presidential candidate;
2. The Unity Party of Nigeria (U.P.N.), with Chief Obafemi Awolowo as presidential candidate;
3. The Nigeria Peoples Party (N.P.P.), with Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe as presidential candidate;
4. The Great Nigeria Peoples Party (G.N.P.P.), with Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim as presidential candidate, and
5. The Peoples Redemption Party (P.R.P.), with Alhaji Amino Kano as presidential candidate.

While much can be said regarding these parties,¹⁹ I consider two main observations relevant for our purpose here: the first observation concerns the ethnic bases of these parties, the other their ideological orientations. Each of the parties had a dominant ethnic base. The N.P.N. of Shagari which had the greatest national spread, nevertheless, had its base in the north. The U.P.N. of

Awolowo had its base in Yorubaland; the N.P.P. of Azikiwe had its base in Iboland; the G.N.P.P. of Waziri had its base among the Bornu people; and the P.R.P. of Aminu Kano had its base among the Hausas of Kano. Thus each of the major ethnic groups in Nigeria became the base or constituency for one or the other of the political parties. As Bienen has observed, "The major parties continued to have a large ethnic group as their constituency base, and their candidates were selected with a view toward appealing to other ethnic groups."²⁰ As for the minority ethnic groups like the Tivs, though they did not form the base for any of the political parties, the question of which party became established in their region depended on the ability of the parties to identify and co-opt an influential "son of the soil" who would then sell the party to his people. In the case of the Tiv people it was the N.P.N. that finally got established through the influence of a prominent "son of the soil", Chief Joseph Tarka. The ethnic character of the parties, as sketched above, was clearly reflected in the results of the 1979 elections both at the state and federal levels, as will be shown soon. But before doing that, I will first look at the ideological position of the parties.

Richard Joseph has classified the Nigerian political parties into two ideological camps: centre-right

and centre-left.²¹ The parties he considers to be centre-right are the N.P.N., N.P.P. and G.N.P.P.; and the center-left ones are the U.P.N. and P.R.P. Similarly Larry Diamond identifies an ideological continuum:

On the far "left" may be placed the P.R.P. with its "democratic socialist" program. Next comes the U.P.N. which favours - rather like the "social democratic" parties of Europe - an economically interventionist, welfare state within the context of a mixed but still substantially capitalist ownership. Towards the centre of the Nigerian spectrum, but more "liberal" in contemporary terms, are the N.P.P. and the G.N.P.P. ... On the "right" is the N.P.N., the most boldly capitalist of the five parties. 22

These classifications by and large reflect the ideological disposition of the parties. Though all the parties were predominantly ethnic-based, some at least made populist appeals to the workers, the poor and unemployed. As Bienen points out "The two parties that consistently took populist stands were the Unity Party of Nigeria (U.P.N.), led by Chief Awolowo, and the Peoples Redemption Party (P.R.P.), led by Aminu Kano."²³

Awolowo presented to the electorate his "four cardinal programs" of (1) free education at all levels; (2) integrated rural development; (3) free health care and (4) full employment, which according to him would lay the foundation for a socialist Nigeria: "our determination is to build an irreversible basis for a socialist society by

implementing these programs"²⁴ And concerning the P.R.P., Joseph correctly points out that:

in many northern states, and particularly in the largest, Kano, the P.R.P. is clearly the most class-based party in the elections, embodying the interests of the talakawa (peasantry) and the urban masses The party consistently speaks of the need for a new social order in Nigeria and usually frames this in class terms i.e. the removal of the comprador ruling groups and the transfer of₂₅ power to the representatives of the broad masses.

It is against the background of the ethnic bases and ideological dispositions of the Nigerian political parties sketched above that I will be examining the workers' political awareness, political party support and perceptions of a worker's party. Before doing that, I will examine how the various political parties performed in the 1979 general elections.

The 1979 General Elections

The Nigerian general elections of 1979 consisted of five major elections which were held in the months of July and August to elect members of (1) the Senate, (2) the National Assembly, (3) State Houses of Assembly; (4) the 19 State governors and (5) the President. The tables below show the results of the federal level elections.

TABLE 6.1.A

Nigerian 1979 General Elections
Distribution of Senate Seats by Political Parties*

Political Party	Number of Seats	Percentage (of Seats)
N.P.N.	36	38
U.P.N.	28	30
N.P.P.	16	17
G.N.P.P.	8	8
P.R.P.	7	7
Total	95	100

*Source: West Africa, No. 3241, August 1979, p. 1572.

TABLE 6.1.B.

Nigerian 1979 General Elections
Distribution of National Assembly Seats
by Political Parties*

Political Party	Number of Seats	Percentages
N.P.N.	168	37
U.P.N.	111	25
N.P.P.	79	17
P.R.P.	49	11
G.N.P.P.	48	10
Total	449	100

*Source: West Africa, No. 3241, August 1979, p. 1572.

TABLE 6.1.C.
Nigerian 1979 General Elections.
The Presidential Vote**

Party	Candidate	Total Votes Cast	Percentage
N.P.N.	Shehu Shagari	5,688,857	33.8
U.P.N.	Awolowo	4,916,651	29.2
N.P.P.	Azikiwe	2,822,523	16.7
P.R.P.	Aminu Kano	1,732,113	10.3
G.N.P.P.	Waziri Ibrahim	1,686,489	10.0
Total		16,846,633	100

**Source: Kirk-Greene & Rimmer, Nigeria Since 1970: A Political and Economic Overview (New York, African Press, 1981), pp. 44, Table 6

The N.P.N. which made the least populist appeals in its campaigns came out the winner in all three federal elections and the P.R.P. which was the most socialist in its appeals came out among the least in electoral performance. Besides, the pattern of votes indicates a fair amount of consistency on the part of the electorate. The ethnic bias of the Nigerian electorate in the elections has been underlined by Bienen:

Chief Awolowo carried the Yoruba states of Lagos, Ondo, Oyo and Ogun Similarly, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe was extremely successful in the Ibo states of Imo and Anambara Alhaji Ibrahim was able to get a majority of votes only in Borno among his own Kanuri people ... Alhaji Shehu Shagari's strength was the most widespread of the candidates However, his support came predominantly from the North, although another northern candidate, Alhaji Aminu Kano, was able to carry his own home state of Kano. 26

The pattern at the state level of the general elections was not different from that at the federal level. Apart from

Kaduna state, the same party won in all the five elections in each state. Table 6.2 shows the situation in two states, Benue and Plateau, the justification for focusing on these two states being that the respondents in the sample are of Benue state origin and some of them live and work in Plateau state (the Jos textile factory respondents). Thus in Benue state the N.P.N. was the established party, and as stated earlier this came about through the influence of a prominent Tiv politician, Chief Joseph Tarka. Olu Akinyeye has correctly pointed out that "it was Senator Joseph Tarka who delivered Benue state to the N.P.N."²⁷ More significantly Okoli observes that:

partly because of his personal charm and charisma J.S. Tarka set himself as a standard for assessing other prospective Benue politicians. It got to the point that whatever J.S. said was unquestionably correct and seen as the best for the Benue people. It was in those circumstances that he was able to convince the Benue people in 1979 to vote for the N.P.N. which is regarded as the reincarnation of the N.P.C. which Tarka and his people had opposed and fought against during the First Republic. For instance where Tiv division had voted 90% Action Group (re-incarnated as U.P.N.) in 1959, it voted 70% N.P.N. in the 1979 presidential election, the highest percentage for the party in any state in Nigeria. 28

The case of Tarka and the Tiv is a clear demonstration of the extent and effectiveness of patron-client politics in Nigeria. In an unpublished speech (from information I gathered at a meeting in Jos) Tarka defended his change of political alliance on the grounds that during the first civilian regime Tiv people gained nothing by being in alliance with an opposition party so it might be more profitable going along with the N.P.N. which he judged was going to become the ruling party. Thus one person's change of political loyalty led to a corresponding change not just

TABLE 6.2

Nigerian 1979 General Elections: Party Electoral Performance
in Benue and Plateau States*

State	Party with Most Presidential Votes	State Governor's Party	Senate Elections Seats			House of Representatives Election Seats			State Assembly Election Seats			
			Total	N.P.N.	N.P.P.	Total	N.P.N.	N.P.P.	Total	N.P.N.	N.P.P.	G.N.P.P.
Benue	N.P.N.	N.P.N.	5	5	0	19	18	1	57	48	3	6
Plateau	N.P.P.	N.P.P.	5	1	4	16	3	13	48	10	35	3

*Culled, with modifications from Kirk-Greene and Rimmer, op cit., p. 43, Table 5.

by a few followers but by virtually a whole ethnic group. It is in this regard that John Saul's view that "politicized ethnicity is merely clientelism writ large"²⁹ makes sense.

What I have attempted so far is to demonstrate the view that notwithstanding the populist tendencies of some political parties, by and large political party appeal and support in Nigeria follows ethnic, rather than class channels. What I will seek to do next is examine whether and to what extent this general tendency is reproduced or negated within the working class. To do this I first turn to consideration of the workers' overall political awareness.

6.2 General Political Awareness

In as much as the issues I analysed in Chapter Four on social inequality centered on the workers' experience and perceptions of exploitation and unequal access to goods and services in the Nigerian political economy, to that extent I have already started dealing with the political consciousness of the workers. In that chapter I noted the workers' fairly well developed view of themselves as an exploited class. And even though the dominant tendency uncovered was ignorance of the class nature of their subordination, a few among the workers, especially the relatively more educated ones, expressed perceptions of their exploitation and subordination in clear class terms. To this extent I contend that I have

uncoverd some political consciousness tantamount to a limited "sense of shared grievance and hostility on a class basis."³⁰ But in this section I will go further and focus the analysis on workers' perceptions of organized party politics.

To estimate the extent of the workers' political awareness, the respondents were asked a series of questions concerning the number of political parties in Nigeria, whether or not they had discussed politics with someone during the previous two weeks; which political parties, in their thinking, represented the interests of workers and which those of the rich, finally, which group of people, in the workers' thinking, benefited most from the N.P.N. controlled federal government, and which group would benefit most if other parties were in control at the federal level.³¹ I will now present and analyse the responses to these questions both in quantitative and qualitative terms.

First, regarding familiarity with the number of political parties in Nigeria, close to 70% of the respondents knew the correct number of registered political parties and in nearly all cases they were able to name all the parties including their respective presidential candidates.³² Only 9% of the respondents specifically said that they did not know the number of political parties. As far as mere

knowledge of political parties is concerned, this indicates a fairly high level of political awareness. However, the level of awareness varies according to what can be expected from the proletarian hypothesis: 87% of the relatively more established proletarians as compared with 70% of the less established ones, knew the correct number of political parties, and 90% of those who attend trade union meetings regularly, compared with 77% of those who attend only occasionally or not at all, knew the number of the political parties in Nigeria. Similarly there are low positive correlations between awareness and levels of occupation, education and income, meaning that the supposed "labour aristocrats" among the workers evinced greater level of political awareness as far as familiarity with political parties is concerned. I will consider next the propensity of the workers to discuss politics with their friends.

Discussing Politics

The respondents were asked whether, during the two weeks prior to the interview they had discussed politics with someone, particularly discussions involving political parties and the impending elections. It turned out that 37% of those who answered questions on politics said they had discussed politics. This shows a moderate level of political awareness if we take political talks to be a fair indication of such

awareness. This becomes even more evident when the situation is compared with similar findings in another underdeveloped country, Venezuela, where "80% of the Caracas rancho residents polled reported that they had not talked about politics with friends in the past six months, although the survey was taken shortly before a major national election."³³ But I am interested in finding how the propensity to discuss politics with friends varied with respect to our measures of proletarianism. Would the typical proletarians be more likely than the marginals to talk about politics? Here, and in subsequent sections I will address the question raised by Nelson, "If low levels of political awareness, deference to authority, and perhaps political conservatism are part of the rural baggage migrants carry with them, what happens after prolonged urban exposure?"³⁴ Table 6.3 presents data aimed at examining the relationships between prolonged exposure to urban wage employment situations and the likelihood of discussing politics.

TABLE 6.3
Tendency to Discuss Politics and Number of Years
of Urban Wage Employment (in percentages)

Discussed Politics in The Past Two Weeks	Years of Wage Employment		
	Less Than 5	5 and Above	All
Yes	22	55	37
No	<u>78</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>63</u>
	100	100	100
	N = 37	N = 31	N = 68

"No answer" = 5

Gamma = .63; (p < .025)

There is a substantial positive correlation between years of urban wage employment and involvement in discussing politics among the respondents. And even after the effect of other variables is controlled for, the correlation remains positive and substantial as shown in the summary table below.

TABLE 6.4
Zero-Order and First Order Partial Correlations
for Involvement

Discuss Politics By:	Zero- Order Gamma	Partial Gamma Controlling For:					
		Industry	Occupation	Edu- cation	Land- Culti-	Employ- ment	Income
Industry	.23	N.A.	.28	.51	.33	.04	.64
Land Culti- vation	-.21	-.24	-.24	-.25	N.A.	-.22	-.45
Years of Employment	.63	.62	.66	.74	.62	N.A.	.62
Attendance of Trade Union Meetings	.41	.84	.51	.33	.28	.39	.29

All correlations (N.S.) except for years of
wage employment and attendance at trade
union meetings, significant at .025.

There is also a low positive correlation between industrial community and tendency to discuss politics, which disappears when the effect of years of employment is controlled for.

Another important observation from the table is the strong positive effect which attendance at trade union meetings has on the likelihood of discussing politics with friends. Thus on the basis of these findings it can be concluded that workers who are relatively more established and who participate in trade union activities are more likely to engage in political discussions than their counterparts who measure less on these variables. This confirms our expectation that the more proletarian respondents would evince greater political awareness than the marginals.

The propensity to discuss politics with friends also varies considerably with education, income and occupations of the respondents. The relationship between this propensity and respondents' educational level is presented in Table 6.5.

TABLE 6.5
Propensity to Discuss Politics and Workers'
Educational Level
(in percentages)

Discussed Politics During Past Two Weeks	Educational Level		All
	Post-Primary	Primary 7 and Below	
Yes	53	21	37
No	47	79	63
	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>

"No Answer" = 5
Gamma = .63 (p < .025)

As can be seen in the table, respondents with post-primary school education are much more likely than those with only primary school education to discuss politics with other people. And, like the relationship involving years of wage employment, the correlation remains largely substantial even when controlling for effects of other variables,³⁵ as Table 6.6 shows.

TABLE 6.6
Zero-Order and First Order Partial Correlations
Between Propensity to Discuss Politics and
Education, Occupation and Income

Discuss Politics By:	Zero- Order Gamma	Industry	Partial Gamma Occupation	Controlling For: Education	Land Culti- vation	Employ- ment	Income
Education	.63	.75	.57	N.A.	.65	.72	.31
Occupation	.38	.38	N.A.	.24	.36	.28	.09
Income	.55	.63	.55	.42	.53	.52	N.A.

All correlations (N.S.) except for education

The moderate correlation for occupation disappears as the effect of income level is controlled for. This is because while at lower income levels supervisory workers are as

likely as not to discuss politics - though more likely than manual workers - at higher income levels manual workers are also as likely as not to discuss politics. Moreover there is a substantial positive correlation between income and propensity to discuss politics. An explanation for the substantial positive correlation between both education and income and propensity to discuss politics can be suggested in terms of the workers' access to news media political information. In the Nigerian urban context the major source and mode of disseminating political gossip, rumours and facts is the news media, specifically the television, radio and newspapers. But access to these sources of information is limited both by the disposable incomes of the workers and their levels of literacy. Thus workers on relatively higher income levels have greater access to sources of political gossip and rumours. The relatively cheapest of the sources, the newspapers, which can also be borrowed, does require a minimum of literacy and reading orientation, a minimum which I can confidently say is some post-primary education. Thus it is the case that the workers with relatively more formal education or income evinced greater political awareness by engaging in some form of political discussion with friends. The validity of this explanation is strengthened by the fact that in almost all cases the content of the discussion was

based on some news media information.

But the analysis thus far does not specify the content of the workers' political awareness, that is, to what extent do the workers possess and express a class-based political awareness? To address this issue I will consider below two key questions, the first being whether the workers regard any of the political parties as representing their interests as members of the working class, and whether they perceive any of the parties as representing the interests of the rich.

Perceptions of Political Parties

The respondents were asked two separate questions as to which of the political parties they perceived as representing the interests of the workers, and which the interests of rich people. The responses to the two questions are summarized in Table 6.7 below.

TABLE 6.7
Respondents' Perceptions of Interests Represented by
Nigerian Political Parties (in percentages)

Political Party	Perceived to Represent Interests of:	
	Workers	The Rich
N.P.N.	66	22
N.P.P.	4	15
U.P.N.	3	6
P.R.P.	0	3
All Political Parties	3	4
None of the Parties	9	3
"Don't Know"	<u>15</u>	<u>47</u>
	100	100

Thus the N.P.N., which is generally considered to be the most conservative of the parties, was named by 66% of the respondents as representing the interests of workers. Only 3% named the U.P.N. (one of the populist parties) as representing workers' interests, while there was no mention of the P.R.P. (which regarded itself as a party for the poor and the working class) as a party representing workers. Among the 9% who felt that none of the parties represent workers, two respondents; a manual worker in Gboko and a post-primary school educated supervisor in Jos, put it this way:

The political parties in power have not done anything for us, so I think none of them represent us.

We in Nigeria do not have a workers' party. All the six registered political parties are capitalist parties. They are all capitalists, there is no workers' party [his English].

It is also important to note that a fairly high proportion (47%) of the respondents were not sure which of the parties represent rich people's interests. What all this amounts to will be specified later in this section.

The next key question to address is: who benefits? The respondents were asked which category of people in Nigeria benefit most from the current N.P.N. government under President Shagari, and which category would benefit most if any of the other political parties were in

power. Regarding benefits from the ruling N.P.N., Table 6.8 presents the responses. The question was open-ended.

TABLE 6.8

Workers' Perceptions of Who Benefits Most
from the N.P.N. Government Under President Shagari

Group Helped Most	Number	Percentage
All People	23	35
Workers, Farmers, The Poor	15	23
Rich People	8	12
Party Members	6	9
Shagari's Ethnic Group	2	3
Don't Know	6	9
Other	6	9
Total	66	100

No Answer = 7

A majority of the respondents hold that the N.P.N. government benefits all people or benefits workers, farmers and the poor more than either the rich or Shagari's ethnic group. Only a small proportion think that the government benefits rich people most. This thinking reveals a weakness in either ethnic or class based discontent by the workers with the

N.P.N. controlled federal government. Nevertheless those among the respondents most likely to hold the view that rich people benefit most from the N.P.N. government are those with post-primary education earning relatively higher incomes and on higher occupational levels. And those more likely to think that the government helps all people or helps the underprivileged most are those with lower educational and income levels. Thus we can conclude that even though the workers as a whole tend to evince conservative thinking in their political awareness, this conservative tendency is less among those wrongly termed as constituting a conservative labour aristocracy.

In the respondents' perceptions of the other political parties the ethnic factor comes to the forefront. Table 6.9 presents the respondents' perceptions of who would benefit most were any of the other parties to win the presidency.

TABLE 6.9
Workers' Perceptions of Who Would Benefit Most from a U.P.N., N.P.P., G.N.P.P. and P.R.P. Federal Government (in percentages)

Under:	Leader's		People Likely to be Helped Most					
	Ethnic Group	The Rich	Workers and the Poor	All People	Party Members	Don't Know	Other	
U.P.N. (Awolowo)	39	5	9	8	8	27	5	100
N.P.P. (Azikiwe)	39	5	3	8	8	33	5	100
G.N.P.P. (Waziri)	30	2	3	11	9	41	5	100
P.R.P. (Aminu Kano)	33	2	3	11	9	38	5	100
	No Answer = 7		N = 66					

All the other political parties are perceived as likely to be of benefit mostly to members of the respective leader's ethnic groups and none is perceived as being potentially of significant benefit either to the rich or to workers and the poor. In fact the class dimension is very low in the workers' perceptions of the potential performance of the other parties as in each case the lowest proportion of respondents mention the rich, workers and the poor as likely to benefit most from the political parties. This reveals the weakness of the class factor and the salience of the ethnic factor in the workers' perceptions of the other political parties and their potential policy of distributing political and socio-economic benefits. There was a marked difference between the respondents in Jos (Plateau State) and those in Gboko (Benue State) as in each case over 40% of Jos respondents compared with less than 30% of Gboko respondents perceived the other parties as being of potential benefit mainly to the respective leaders' ethnic groups. Furthermore, in each case less than 30% of Jos respondents compared with over 45% of Gboko respondents gave an "I don't know" answer regarding who would benefit most under a federal government controlled by any of the four other parties. Thus the workers in Jos were not only relatively more ethnically conscious in their perceptions of the other

political parties but also relatively more likely to be sure and definite regarding their perceptions of these parties. Thus as we move from the general to a more specific conception of political awareness, we see only limited evidence of what can be termed class awareness of political practice on the part of the workers. Rather there is a fairly strong tendency among the workers to identify most of the political parties along ethnic lines.

This tendency can be explained in terms of the politicization of ethnicity among the Tiv. We noted earlier the tendency during the colonial period to equate opposing political parties with particular ethnic groups, for instance the U.M.B.C. party propagandists portrayed the N.P.C. as a party for Hausa people, membership of which would make one a Hausa person. With the formation of the new political parties it was the U.P.N. and the N.P.P. that were being portrayed to the Tiv people by N.P.N. propagandists as Yoruba and Ibo parties. Thus the tendency of a high proportion of the respondents to perceive the U.P.N., N.P.P., G.N.P.P. and P.R.P. as of potential benefit mainly to the respective leaders' ethnic groups can be partially explained as an indication of the effectiveness of the manipulation of ethnicity by N.P.N. party propagandists among the Tiv. Thus, if politicized ethnicity constitutes "a mask for class

privileges,"³⁶ as is often argued,³⁷ it can also be pointed out on the basis of this data that this mask has become so visible to the workers as to effectively prevent them from seeing what lies beneath the mask. And it is becoming increasingly evident that this situation no longer renders itself capable of being branded as "false consciousness" among workers. For it is often the case that the visible, concrete socio-economic projects that happen to be implemented by governments follow ethnic lines of support. The most outstanding example of this situation (which is common knowledge in Nigeria) is the establishment of a university in his village by the former civilian governor of Bendel State. In the case of the Tiv, when Senator Tarka died in 1981 the N.P.N. initiated a fund for the establishment of an Institute for Political Studies (named after Tarka) in his hometown, Gboko.³⁸ In this regard Eddie Madunagu's comment on the nation-wide operation of cliental politics in Nigeria is appropriate. He maintains that:

The pre- and post-independence governments were essentially governments of Patronage. The government of each region would handsomely reward its main supporters with political appointments, awards of contracts, scholarships, loans, import licences etc. In addition, the main areas of the ruling party's support were set aside for special, an sometimes exclusive, social development. This special development was also a guarantee of future electoral success. 39

Similarly Okwudib Nnoli has observed "in order to win the support of the workers and unemployed in their ethnic homelands, political parties often attempt to ensure an advantageous redistribution of employment and promotion opportunities in their favour."⁴⁰

The point being established in the foregoing analysis is that the process whereby ethnicity has been politicized and turned into a dominant political ideology in Nigeria influences workers' perceptions of political parties. Specifically, it seems to me that politicized ethnicity is being incorporated into the workers' consciousness. This leads to a basic contention, namely that where class formation among industrial workers takes place under conditions of contemporaneous politicization of ethnicity, class consciousness among workers will necessarily entail elements of politicized ethnicity. Nevertheless even with the incorporation of politicized ethnicity, workers still think in terms of their class interests in politics, as will be shown below in the analysis of political party support among the respondents.

6.3 Political Party Support

The respondents were asked a series of questions as to which of the political parties they would rather have workers like themselves vote for, which parties they

individually actually voted for in the 1979 elections, and which parties they intended voting for in the 1983 elections. In each case they were required to explain their choice. Table 6.10 gives a summary of the responses to the questions on prescribed actual and intended choices of political parties.

TABLE 6.10

Workers' Prescribed, Actual and Intended Political Party Support (in percentages)

Type of Support	Chosen Political Party				
	N.P.N.	N.P.P.	U.P.N.	Don't Know	Any
Prescribed Support	63	10	4	12	9
Actual Support	67	5	0	28*	-
Intended Support	61	11	2	21	7*

* Did not/will not vote

N = 66

No Answer = 7

As the table indicates, measured in terms of prescribed, actual and intended support, N.P.N. was the most popular party among the workers. To understand this popularity we have to explore the workers' thinking as they explain their

choices. We consider first reasons for prescribed parties.

We see in Table 6.10 that 63% of the respondents mentioned N.P.N. as a party worthy of support by the working class, and only 4% mentioned U.P.N. which was one of the two parties with populist promises. The three most frequently given reasons (to an open-ended question) for the respondents prescribed party were "good performance" (39°5); "sympathy for workers" (18%); and good party leaders (9%). Thus, prescribing the N.P.N. on the basis of the party's performance two clerks and two supervisors at Jos maintain that:

Their programs are helpful, for example giving houses, food and clothing. No party emphasizes these aspects except N.P.N.

Because of the N.P.N.'s help which everyone accepts which I also see, for example opening new schools.

It's the party helping us. They have raised our wages and moved the Federal Capital from Lagos to Abuja.

It is this party that brought out the issue of minimum wages which is a great blessing plus the Green Revolution. [Federal government agricultural program].

Those who prescribe the N.P.N. as a party for workers explain their choice in terms of the increase in minimum wages introduced by the government, as expressed by two manual workers, one each from Gboko and Jos.

The N.P.N. has helped us a lot by way of money. It has raised our wages. We never thought our wages could rise so fast.

The N.P.N. is helping us. It has increased our wages and cancelled taxes.

And some who prescribe parties other than the N.P.N. do so precisely because of their perception that compared with the N.P.N. these other parties would be more sympathetic to the interests of workers, as can be observed in the thinking of the following respondents who prescribed respectively U.P.N., N.P.P. and G.N.P.P.:

The big shots (in N.P.N.) argue against giving too much money to civil servants. They live super-luxurious lives but refuse giving to the poor [his English].

During the campaign, N.P.N. promised helping the poor but they have not done anything yet.

The leader of the party (G.N.P.P.) sees workers more, and sits down to discuss with them.

Thus the reasons for the workers' choice of which political party the working class should support have more to do with their perception of the performance of the parties and especially how this performance relates to workers' interests than any other single factor.

Secondly, regarding actual party support, we observe in Table 6.10 that 67% of the respondents voted for the N.P.N., and since 70% of Tiv people as a whole voted for the same party, it is tempting to conclude that the major

reason why most of the respondents voted N.P.N. was ethnic. But only 15% of the respondents said they voted for the N.P.N. because of ethnic reasons; 31% voted on the basis of "good promises" made by the parties and 17% on the basis of "good leaders". This is not to dismiss the strength of the ethnic factor, for as we observe in the thinking of three manual workers, the first in Jos and the rest in Gboko, ethnicity is strong:

Because I am a Tivman, and Tarka, a Tivman brought this party [N.P.N.] to us, so we voted for it.

I knew that since the party was chosen at home [Tivland] we have to vote for it.

Our people say "termites follow their route" (hur ze sha gbenda na). Tarka told us to vote for N.P.N.

This thinking represents a strong and dominant tendency in Tivland to equate a Tiv cultural identity with any party chosen or favoured by Tarka, a tendency dating back, as we have seen, to the colonial period. The idea is well captured by Tseyayo and is worth quoting at length as it might well represent tendencies not peculiar to the Tiv situation:

One of the means employed by the Tiv elite to create support for the U.M.B.C. [defunct political party] was to preach that all Tiv, having a claim to a common ancestor, also possessed a unified attachment to a common goal. The U.M.B.C. was presented to the masses of the Tiv people as a party which represented the embodiment of this common attachment and common goal. Thus, any Tiv who appeared to deviate from the U.M.B.C. was not deviating so much from a political party as from that which is "Tivness" ... During the years of

fierce political contest in Tivland, from 1955 to 1956, the call to a common Tiv heritage became a powerful weapon in the hands of the U.M.B.C. The U.M.B.C. was presented to the masses of the Tiv, by their elite, as a Tiv party; being Tiv was synonymous with being U.M.B.C. 41

This ideology was still very strong at the time of this research. The N.P.N. was presented to Tiv people as a Tiv party, and its rival, the N.P.P. ^{was} portrayed by the N.P.N. leadership as an Ibo party not worthy of Tiv support. Thus under these circumstances, for only 15% of respondents to say that they voted because of the Tiv factor is an indication, I would argue, that ethnicity may not be such an overriding determinant of the voting behaviour of industrial workers in Nigeria as is claimed. 42

For if the ethnic factor was strong, so also was the workers' perception of good promises and good leadership a strong factor. The latter is expressed by a manual and three clerical workers in Gboko this way:

It was because of the good things they promised, for example hospitals, schools and roads.

I thought they would improve the conditions of the [Benue] state but they have not.

Because I understood their manifesto was the best as I read it.

Because before he came to power Governor Aper Aku put forth himself as anti-corruption crusader, but the reverse is now the case.

Their programs and the people contesting appealed to me.

The ethnic factor becomes even less salient as we consider, finally, the workers' reasons for intended political party support for the 1983 elections. In the first place slightly fewer respondents intend to support the N.P.N., and more to support N.P.P., in 1983 than the respective support both parties had in the 1979 elections, even though N.P.N. remains the most popular party. Secondly, incidentally, the three most frequently given reasons for intended support are the same as those most frequently given for prescribing which party to be supported by workers: "good performance" 33%; "good leaders" (17%); and "sympathy for workers" (10%). Only in 4% of the cases was specific reference made to the Tiv factor in the workers' explanation for intended support. And since the major reasons given for intended support are also the major reasons given for prescribing a party for workers' support it can be inferred that the interests of the respondents as workers are fairly more significant than the fact of their being Tiv, in their intended party support. Two manual workers in Jos explain their intention to vote for N.P.N. in terms that bear this out: "I can see help in the N.P.N. for poor people. The party has raised our minimum wages" - "The N.P.N. is the

party that has increased salaries for workers". And two clerical workers in Gboko: "In the three years they [N.P.N.] have ruled, they have done well, for example there has been no war" - They [N.P.N.] have achieved and monitored activities well. They will fulfill their campaign promise". A supervisory worker in Jos who was not sure which party to vote for, nevertheless explained his dilemma in terms of assessing the performance of all the political parties:

I am not sure yet. The present party has not done anything yet. And apart from the N.A.P. all the other political parties are controlling some states in Nigeria and they have done nothing, so if elected at the Federal level it will be the same.

The conclusion to be drawn from this analysis so far is that even though in their prescribed, actual and intended party support, the respondents largely favour the party which is also the most popular in Tivland, yet they do not do so as a category of ethnically minded people who are ignorant of their specific class interests. As suggested in Chapter One it is quite possible for a group of people to identify their specific class interests and yet choose entirely non-class methods for achieving their class objectives. And this is what seems to be taking place in the Nigerian Middle Belt. This is not surprising, granted in the first place, that no major Nigerian political party has established itself as a working class party devoid of ethnic

parochialism.⁴³ Secondly, within the geo-political sub-region of the workers, the two parties that claimed to be at least populist were unable to become as established as the N.P.N. and the N.P.P. principally because of their failure to recruit local political "heavy-weights" to sell the parties to the people. Among the Tiv the N.P.N. and N.P.P. got established and gained popularity mainly through the influence of Tarka and Paul Unongo, both influential Tiv men. Under these circumstances, for a large proportion of workers to express political party support in terms of perceived actual and potential performance, quality of leadership and working class sympathy by political parties is itself significant, even though the party they mostly supported was ethnically based.

A related contention which can be made as a corollary to the foregoing is the position that the emerging Nigerian political scene makes urban workers members of two major political constituencies: the ethnic group and the working class. And this analysis of the thinking of the workers suggests that even though they support a political party that claims to represent their ethnic constituency, the motives behind this support have more to do with what the party does to their working class identity than what it does to their ethnic identity. As no major party exists which

lays exclusive claims to representing the working class constituency it is pertinent to explore the workers' thinking regarding the idea of forming such a party. This is what I will turn to next.

Workers' Party

Eddie Madunagu has outlined several negative positions that emerged among Nigerian socialists as a response to the question of forming a workers' party when the ban on political activities was lifted by the military in September 1978. As he points out:

There was a group of "experienced and authoritative" socialists who maintained - or pontificated - that the Nigerian working class was too backward for anyone to envisage forming an exclusively workers' party ... This group believed that any workers' party formed at this stage of the revolution would necessarily become dictatorial (as a result of the backwardness of the workers) and might lead to fascism if it came to power. 44

In this section I will examine to what extent such negative perceptions by Marxist intellectuals on the question of forming a workers' party find expression in the thinking of the workers themselves. I will further examine to see if variation in the workers' thinking is in the direction we would expect both from the proletarian and the labour aristocracy hypotheses, that is: (1) would the typical proletarians be more likely than the marginal proletarians to support the idea of workers forming their own political

party? and, (2) would the supposed "labour aristocrats" be more likely than the rest of the workers to oppose the idea? Below I present the data first as it relates to the proletarian hypothesis. The data represents responses to a question in which respondents were required to express approval or disapproval of Nigerian workers forming their own political party to contest elections.

TABLE 6.11

Zero-Order and First Order Partial Correlations
Between Approval of Workers' Party and Proletarianism

	Zero- Order	Partial Gamma Controlling For:					
Approval Gamma by	Industry	Occupation	Education	Land Cultivation	Employment years	Income	
Industry	-.08	-	.06	-.02	-.01	-.06	-.16
Land- Cult- vation	-.14	-.12	-.14	-.15	-	-.13	-.06
Employment Years	-.04	-.01	-.13	-.01	0	-	-.01

All correlations (N.S.)

Overall 30% of the respondents were in favour of the idea of forming a workers' party to represent them in elections. This proportion represents a fairly moderate approval by the workers of the idea of forming such a party. However, some of those who favoured the idea nevertheless pointed out that they would not personally support such a party. Moreover, as Table 6.11 reveals there is no considerable correlation

TABLE 6.13
Approval of Workers' Party by Years
in Ethnic Association
(in percentages)

Attitude to Workers' Party	Years of Ethnic Association		
	Below 5 Years	5 Years and Above	All
Approve	30	9	25
Disapprove	<u>70</u>	<u>91</u>	<u>75</u>
	100	100	100
	N = 33	N = 11	N = 44

Those who do not belong to ethnic association and

"No Answer" = 29

Gamma = $-.63$ ($p \leq .025$)

There is a $.51$ correlation for attendance of trade union meetings which remains substantial even after controlling for the effect of other variables. On the other hand there is $-.65$ correlation for years of such membership and these correlations are not weakened by controlling for effects of other variables. What all these relationships suggest is the effect of involvement in trade union affairs in building up

working class political consciousness among the workers and the opposite effect of involvement in ethnic associations in reducing such specific political consciousness among the workers. But the negative effect of the latter is stronger than the positive effect of the former. This is because issues of more explicit political nature - such as which political party to vote for - are more likely to be discussed in ethnic association meetings than in trade union meetings. Thus the effect of trade union activities, though positive, is weaker than that of ethnic associations in influencing workers' perceptions of a workers' party. As a participant observer, the author attended a meeting of the Tiv in Jos where the major issue was the formation of a Tiv wing of the N.P.N. in Plateau State to persuade all Tiv to vote for the party. Many of the participants at the meeting were respondents in our sample or at least engaged in wage employment in Jos. I am aware of no corresponding arrangements in Jos or Gboko where industrial workers meet as workers to form a wing of a major political party in Nigeria and to persuade all workers to vote for such parties. Thus it is the case that proletarianism as measured by class influences in industrial sub-community, land cultivation and years of employment as such does not have much impact on workers' perception of a workers' party. And even the

between approval of Workers' Party and any of our measures of proletarianism. The major significant relationships found is that between approval of a workers' party involvement in trade union and ethnic association activities, as can be seen in Tables 6.12 and 6.13.

TABLE 6.12

Approval of Workers' Party by Attendance
at Trade Union Meetings
(in percentages)

Attitude to Workers' Party	Attendance at Trade Union Meetings		All
	Regularly/ Occasionally	Rarely/ Never	
Approve	40	18	32
Disapprove	<u>60</u>	<u>82</u>	<u>68</u>
	100	100	100
	N = 30	N = 17	N = 47

Those who do not claim union membership and
"No Answer" = 26
Gamma = .51 (p = .025)

TABLE 6.13

Approval of Workers' Party by Years
in Ethnic Association
(in percentages)

Attitude to Workers' Party	Years of Ethnic Association		All
	Below 5 Years	5 Years and Above	
Approve	30	9	25
Disapprove	<u>70</u>	<u>91</u>	<u>75</u>
	100	100	100
	N = 33	N = 11	N = 44

Those who do not belong to ethnic association and
"No Answer" = 29
Gamma = -.63 (p = .025)

There is a .51 correlation for attendance of trade union meetings which remains substantial even after controlling for the effect of other variables. On the other hand there is -.65 correlation for years of such membership and these correlations are not weakened by controlling for effects of

other variables. What all these relationships suggest is the effect of involvement in trade union affairs in building up working class political consciousness among the workers and the opposite effect of involvement in ethnic associations in reducing such specific political consciousness among the workers. But the negative effect of the latter is stronger than the positive effect of the former. This is because issues of more explicit political nature - such as which political party to vote for - are more likely to be discussed in ethnic association meetings than in trade union meetings. Thus the effect of trade union activities, though positive, is weaker than that of ethnic associations in influencing workers' perceptions of a workers' party. As a participant observer, the author attended a meeting of the Tiv in Jos where the major issue was the formation of a Tiv wing of the N.P.N. in Plateau State to persuade all Tiv to vote for the party. Many of the participants at the meeting were respondents in our sample or at least engaged in wage employment in Jos. I am aware of no corresponding arrangements in Jos or Gboko where industrial workers meet as workers to form a wing of a major political party in Nigeria and to persuade all workers to vote for such parties. Thus it is the case that proletarianism as measured by class influences in industrial sub-community, land cultivation and years of employment as such does not have much impact on workers' perception of a workers' party. And even the

positive effect of trade union involvement is lower than the negative effect of involvement in ethnic associations. I will next examine the data as it relates to the labour aristocracy hypothesis.

Table 6.14 shows a summary of the relationship between approval of a workers' party and correlates of "labour aristocracy".

TABLE 6.14

Zero-Order and First-Order Partial Correlations
between Approval of Workers' Party and Occupation,
Education and Income

Approval By	Zero- Order Gamma	Partial Gamma Controlling For:					
		Industry	Occupation	Educational	Land-Cultivation	Employment Years	Income
Occupation	-.10	-.07	-	-.19	-.07	-.03	.06
Education	.26	.28	.34	-	.24	.28	.46
Income	-.28	-.31	-.47	-.39	-.24	-.28	-

All Correlations (N.S.)

There does not seem to be a considerable correlation between occupation and approval of workers' party. And whereas there is a moderate negative correlation for income there is also a moderate positive relationship with education even though the correlations are not statistically significant. We have fairly consistently seen the workers' level of formal education as an important source of influence on the development of class consciousness among the workers. Here, too, we observe a similar influence of education on the political consciousness of the workers. It is not clear to me why education and income should have opposite effects here, nevertheless the trend establishes education as a fairly valid politicising factor hitherto not properly considered in the literature on Nigerian workers. I will return to this in the concluding chapter. What I will consider now is the thinking behind the respondents' approval or disapproval of the idea of forming a workers' party.

I have indicated that 70% of the respondents were not in favour of formation of workers' party. The strongest reasons given by those opposed to the idea were that such a party cannot take off and if it did, it cannot win elections; that a workers' party will be inefficient; and that workers are generally too young (as people) to be in power. The first line of reasoning is seen in the statements of the

following workers from both factories, all except one being supervisors.

Politics is a dirty game and before one can start it one must have money, so workers can't start it.

We workers are not more than villagers in numbers. If we cast our votes as workers only, we can't win.

Even if we start we can't make it. Everybody will like to be a leader.

It is difficult to agree because not all will be of the same mind.

We can't qualify. We can't co-operate.

Others expressed doubts regarding the efficiency of a workers' party. A manual, and two clerical workers put it this way:

Workers can't do as well as others because they will always have work at the back of their minds.

Workers don't know politics as much as those who are trained for that purpose.

There will be confusion. A workers' party will bring lack of progress or backwardness.

A few clearly did not see any rationale in the idea of workers alone forming a political party, as expressed by two manual workers, one from each factory: "Are other people not also human beings? How can we workers alone form a political party?" "It is not good. Workers are not the only human beings in Nigeria."

From the thinking of the workers as presented above was can see that the workers' disapproval of the idea of

forming a workers' party is not simply a manifestation of the workers' lack of awareness of their own class interests. Rather, the workers' unfavourable attitudes towards forming a workers' party is an expression of the workers' doubts regarding the potential ability of such a party to perform creditably, let alone meet their interests as workers. This again illustrates the point I have been stressing namely, that the concept of "false consciousness" does not explain much of the behaviour of urban industrial workers in Nigeria. The thinking and behaviour of the workers is at least rational and consistent enough with their identified interests and the means of achieving these interests to escape being explained by any notion of "falsity".

Related to the question of workers' attitudes to formation of a workers' party is that of revolutionary seizure of power by workers. The respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the idea of workers seizing power from politicians. Both the facial and verbal reactions of most of the respondents to this question was that of someone being confronted with an absurd and impossible situation. Eighty-seven per cent disagreed with the idea of the workers' revolution. Several of the respondents commented that overthrowing a government and taking over power is a matter for soldiers, not workers.

Taken together the respondents' attitudes to the formation of a workers' political party and revolutionary seizure of power by workers constitute a legitimate source of doubts regarding the revolutionary power of the Nigerian working class.

Conclusion

Towards the end of Chapter 4 I promised to examine workers' response to political mobilization in Nigeria dressed in both ethnic and class terms. This is what I have endeavoured to do in the present chapter. I have uncovered a fairly high level of overall political awareness among the workers. They evince some understanding of the ethnic character of Nigerian politics but do not show awareness of the class interests that ethnicity masks. Thus their pattern of political party support is predominantly ethnic. Nevertheless, beneath the ethnic political party support is the fact of the workers' awareness of their working class interests and the corresponding realization that the parties they support can address (or are addressing) these interests. The concept of the urban workers' double constituency captures the dynamics of the situation. Workers vote along ethnic lines not purely for ethnic reasons; and they show disapproval of a working class party not simply because they are conservative, but because of the perceived

inability of such a party to "deliver the goods" either to the workers or to the entire Nigerian population.

As long as a strong pro-labour political party devoid of ethnic parochialism fails to emerge on the Nigerian political scene, industrial workers will continue to support dominant parties in their ethnic constituencies with the hope of such parties' benefiting their (workers) working class constituency. This argument demonstrates a more sophisticated and complex form of political consciousness among Nigerian workers than is realized by either those who would brand them revolutionary or those who would brand them "labour aristocrats". As we have seen 80% of the respondents disagreed with the idea of a revolutionary seizure of state power.

Granted that a workers' vanguard political party hardly exists, we find education as exercising a fairly strong positive influence in politicising the consciousness of the workers in the direction of their specific class interests. As the educational level of Nigerian urban industrial workers rises - as it is bound to - I suggest that this politicising influence ^{is} likely to increase until workers begin to ask if voting fellow ethnics into power is after all the most certain means of assuring that their class interests are taken care of.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Okwudiba Nnoli, "Ethnicity and the Working Class in Africa: Consciousness and Praxis", UFAHAMU, Vol. 10, Nos. 1 and 2, Fall and Winter, 1980/81, p. 84.

² Stephen Hlophe's analysis of Liberian politics shows the dynamics of such intra-class struggle presenting itself in ethnic terms. He concludes, among other things that "ethnicity has ... served as the articulation and expression of various strategies most of which were at bottom power and class strategies. Competition between Mulattos and pure Black settlers being one indication of this strategy". Stephen Hlophe "The Significance of Baith and Geertz's model of Ethnicity in Liberia", in Canadian Journal of African Studies, Vol. VII, No. 2, (1973) p. 255.

³ See Richard Sklar, Nigerian Political Parties. Power in An Emergent African Nation (New York: Nok Publishers International, 1963), especially pp. 87-118.

⁴ Crawford Young, The Politics of Cultural Pluralism (University of Wisconsin Press, 1976), p. 291.

⁵ In this regard Audrey Smock outlines some of the political roles played by these ethnic associations: "(1) general community leadership, (2) the organization of community development projects, (3) the recruitment of candidates for political office, (4) the securing of patronage and community amenities, and (5) the channelling of communications between political representatives and constituents," Audrey Smock, "The Political Role of Ibo Ethnic Unions," in Robert Melson and Howard Wolpe (eds.), Nigeria: Modernization and the Politics of Communalism (Michigan State University Press, 1971), p. 334.

⁶ Irving Markovitz, Power and Class in Africa: An Introduction to Change and Conflict in African Politics (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: McGraw, 1977), p. 160.

⁷ Immanuel Wallerstein, "Class, Tribe and Party in West African Politics", in Seymour M. Lipset, and Stein Rokkan (eds.) Party Systems and Voter Alignments. Cross-National Perspectives (New York, 1967), p. 500.

⁸ M. J. Dent, "A Minority Party - The UMBC," John P. MacKintosh, Nigerian Government and Politics (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1966), p. 469.

9 Ibid.

10 M. J. Dent, "Tarka and the Tiv: A Perspective on Nigerian Federation," in Robert Melson and Howard Wolpe, op cit., p. 453.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid., pp. 451-52.

13 Ibid., p. 452.

14 B. J. Dudley, Parties and Politics in Northern Nigeria (London: Frank and Cass & Co., Ltd., 1968), p. 181.

15 Crawford Young, op cit., p. 6.

16 M. J. Dent, "A Minority Party", op cit., p. 469.

17 Anthony Kirk-Green, Nigeria Since 1970: A Political and Economic Overview (New York: Africana Press, 1981) pp. 31-33.

18 A Sixth Political Party, the Nigeria Advance Party (N.A.P.) was registered in 1982. The party to represent workers' interests.

19 For instance the political parties were essentially a continuation of the old ones formed before independence: the N.P.C. reemerged as the N.P.N.; the N.C.N.C. as the N.P.P.; the A.G. as the U.P.N.

20 Henry Bienen, "The Politics of Income Distribution: Institutions, Class and Ethnicity", in Bienen and Diejemaoh, The Political Economy of Income Distribution in Nigeria (New York: Holmer and Meier Publishers, 1981), pp. 142-43.

21 Richard Joseph, "Political Parties and Ideology in Nigeria", Review of African Political Economy. No. 13, September-December 1978, pp. 81-85.

22 Larry Diamond, "Cleavage, Conflict and Anxiety in the Second Nigerian Republic", The Journal of Modern African Studies, 20, 4 (1982), p. 636.

23 Henry Bienen, op cit., p. 142.

²⁴ Richard Joseph, op cit., p. 89, quoted from interview with Chief Obafemi Awolowo.

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 85-86.

²⁶ Bienen, op cit., pp. 142-43: Diamond similarly observes that "Awolowo secured 89% of all the presidential vote in the four Yoruba states, where his party captured 96% of the seats in these legislatures, while Azikiwe gained 84% of the vote in Anambra and Imo", Diamond, op cit., p. 637.

²⁷ Olu Akinyeye, "Towards 1983 the Legacy of Tarka", West Africa, No. 3378, May 3, 1982, p. 1191.

²⁸ Eukora Okoli, "Benue State Politics, The Tarka Factor", in West Africa, No. 3393, August 16, 1982, p. 2096.

²⁹ John Saul, "The Dialectics of Class and Tribe", Studies in Political Economy: A Socialist Review, No. 1, Spring (1979), p. 7.

³⁰ Richard Sandbrook and J. Arn, The Labouring Poor and Urban Class Formation: The Case of Greater Accra, p. 38.

³¹ Ten per cent of the respondents specifically refused to answer questions regarding political matters.

³² In the course of the research the N.A.P. was registered, bringing the number to six, and this change was reflected in the responses from that point on.

³³ See Joan Nelson, Migrants, Urban Poverty and Instability in Developing Nations (Occasional Papers in International Affairs, No. 22, Centre for International Affairs, Harvard University, 1969), p. 63.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 27.

³⁵ For a striking similarity consider the case of the U.S., Britain, Germany, Italy and Mexico where "Respondents with little or no education were consistently and substantially less likely to regard government as relevant to their daily lives, to pay attention to political affairs, to discuss politics, or to become emotionally involved in electoral campaigns", see Ibid., p. 62.

36 Nnoli, op cit., p. 79.

37 The strongest position in this direction is taken by Archie Mafe, in "The Ideology of 'Tribalism'", The Journal of Modern African Studies, 9 2 (1971), pp. 252-61.

38 Though both money was made available and a large piece of land acquired in Gboko the proposed Tarka Institute has not taken off.

39 Eddie Madunagu, Problems of Socialism: The Nigerian Challenge (London: Zed Press, 1982), p. 46.

40 Nnoli, op cit., p. 79.

41 Justin Tseayo, Conflict and Incorporation in Nigeria. The Integration of the Tiv. (Zaria, Gaskiya Ltd., 1975), pp. 147, 149.

42 Surely this conclusion goes contrary to those reached, for instance, by Robert Melson, "Ideology and Inconsistency: 'The Cross-Pressure' Nigerian Workers," American Political Science Review, Vol. 65; No. 1, March, 1971, pp. 161-71; and Howard Wolpe, "Port Harcourt: Ibo Politics in Microcosm", Journal of Modern African Studies, 7, 3, (1969), pp. 469-93; as both emphasize the saliency of ethnicity without paying attention to other factors that may be operating even in 'ethnic' voting. Our defence is that their conclusion are based only on their own interpretation of voting behaviour, while ours takes into account, in addition, the meanings that workers bring to bear on their voting behaviour.

43 Madunagu outlines the problems and inability of such a movement emerging between 1970 and 1978 and concludes: "with the movement lying heavily crushed under these (organizational) problems and with no capacity even to pose the proper questions of how to transcend them, the movement's influence on the daily lives and activities of the people or on national political questions could not but be marginal", see Eddie Madunagu, op cit., p. 67.

44 Ibid., p. 68.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

I set out in this study to examine the attitudes and behaviour of urban industrial workers in the Nigerian Middle Belt regarding class, ethnicity and politics in relation to the debate on the political role of African working classes. As I pointed out in Chapter One (p. 4) this debate has two levels: at one level is the issue of whether African working classes can be dismissed as constituting a conservative labour aristocracy, with no revolutionary political significance, or regarded as constituting at the very least a potential revolutionary force. At another level the focus of the debate is on the relationship between class and ethnicity, the key issue being whether ethnicity constitutes an asset, a liability or is irrelevant to working class (revolutionary) political behaviour. The thesis argued in this study can be stated as follows. Nigerian industrial workers constitute neither a labour aristocracy nor a revolutionary political force, rather a complex interplay

between class and ethnicity renders revolutionary conceptions of the Nigerian working class premature at the moment. Class and ethnicity represent concrete social and economic realities in the Nigerian political economy, and whereas the ruling classes manipulated ethnicity as a political ideology for their accumulative interests, the poorer classes, including the working class, also utilize ethnicity as social, economic and political factors to survive in their conscious conditions of subordination. Under conditions of the contemporaneous development of class and ethnicity in Nigeria, ethnicity constitutes an integral element in the process of class formation among urban industrial workers. The incorporation of politicized ethnicity as part of this process, I suggest, weakens working class political solidarity, and hence their political significance. The experience of post-primary school education both reduces the ethnic element and produces militant class consciousness among workers but not to any extent to lead one to regard the Nigerian proletariat as a revolutionary force.

The process of demonstrating the general thesis outlined above involved analyses of the emergence of an industrial working class among the Tiv of the Nigerian Middle Belt; workers' images of the Nigerian society, class identification, urban social networks, and workers' political

orientations.

The analysis of the historical process by which a working class was created among the Tiv shows how the imposition of the capitalist mode of production on an existing mode which allowed free access to land led to the emergence of an industrial working class largely involved in both urban wage employment and rural land cultivation. This characteristic differentiates the Nigerian working class from counterparts in Europe (and North America) who provided the empirical basis for the development of a revolutionary theory of working class behaviour.¹ This theory, I would suggest, has been largely uncritically applied to predict and explain the behaviour of African working classes and to assign to the working class a leading revolutionary role in overcoming underdevelopment.² So far the working class in Nigeria has not proved itself willing to play, or capable of playing this role.

The data on workers' perceptions of the Nigerian society reveals evidence of a fairly high awareness by the workers of social inequality within the Nigerian society, particularly of their subordinate position within the Nigerian social structure. But even though the workers show awareness of social inequality and the existence of social classes in Nigerian, the awareness of the link between class, exploitation and inequality is evinced only by a few

relatively more educated workers. The dominant tendency uncovered is for the workers to attribute both social inequality and their subordinate position to non-class agents and forces and to regard social inequality as somewhat just and inevitable. These attitudes make it difficult for one to seriously regard the workers as a class-conscious revolutionary force.

I found in the analysis of class identification that urban ethnic associations constitute strong objects of identification for workers and that, in relative terms, workers identify more closely with urban ethnic associations than with trade unions. Nevertheless, the picture we have is that of an urban industrial proletariat fairly well organized, on the one hand, at the point of production to protect their class interests as defined by the formal organization of the labour process, and on the other hand, even more deeply involved in, and attached to, urban ethnic associations in pursuance of their personal social and economic security. I pointed out that this is one sense in which ethnicity is incorporated in the process of class formation among workers. A similar interplay between class and ethnicity was pointed out in the analysis of the workers' urban social networks. The workers' urban social networks which constitute units of social and economic security are made up

of urban residents of similar kinship and class backgrounds. The key point regarding the nature of workers' involvement in urban ethnic associations and personal social networks is the fact that, when migrants move from their rural communities (or out of school) and enter into urban wage employment, they do not necessarily automatically become members of a working class with no other community attachments. Neither is it necessarily the case that as they stay longer in urban wage employment they become more attached to their class and less to their kinship or ethnic groups. Attachments to class and to kinship or ethnic groups are contemporaneous phenomena among the working class, especially insofar as their urban social and economic security needs are served.

Finally, (and what seems to matter most in terms of the revolutionary political role of workers) an analysis of workers' political orientations reveals interesting patterns. The workers reveal a fairly high level of political awareness, and demonstrate a clear understanding of the ethnic nature of Nigerian politics. However, the workers seem to lack an awareness of the class interests that ethnicity masks. Besides, a very high proportion of the respondents (70%) were against the idea of workers' forming a political party to contest elections, and an even higher proportion (87%) disagreed with the idea of a revolutionary seizure of power

by workers. Nevertheless I uncovered a form of political consciousness among the workers fairly more complex and sophisticated than is usually attributed to them. Industrial workers do not support ethnic political parties because they are ignorant of their class interests. Beneath the ethnic party support is the fact of the workers' awareness of their class interests, and the corresponding realization that the parties they support can address these interests.⁴

Similarly, workers' disapproval of both revolution and the formation of a specifically working class party is not simply a show of false consciousness, but their own realization of the inability of workers in power to "deliver the goods", whether to workers or to the Nigerian population in general.

Do the workers as a whole, or some section among them, then constitute a labour aristocracy? Richard Sandbrook correctly points out that "To constitute a labour aristocracy, a group of organized workers must not only be relatively privileged, but also perceive itself as having interests separate from, and indeed opposed to, those of the lower state or classes".⁵ In the data analyses I have not uncovered any attitudes to suggest that the workers constitute a labour aristocracy. In their thinking, the workers show an awareness of the Nigerian social inequality and their low, disadvantaged position in the social

structure, and some (especially the relatively more educated) even display some antagonism towards Nigerian "big men", "people in high positions" and "contractors" who "pack", "steal", "eat" or "divert" money or "food" meant for others especially "we the poor ones". But, like populism, such antagonistic consciousness must be considered as different from a "radical working-class consciousness", which Sandbrook insists "must include at least the identification of a common, economically-dominant class enemy, and a recognition that only the control or transformation of certain economic and political institutions through collective action would bring beneficial change".⁶ Neither in the present study, nor in any that I am aware of, do Nigerian workers evince this form of consciousness. On the whole, the workers regard their work, trade unions, urban ethnic associations, personal social networks and ethnically-based political parties as means of improving their positions and surviving within existing Nigerian capitalist structures. For Nigerian workers to think and behave in terms of overthrowing capitalist structures and establishing a working class regime would constitute, in Frank Parkin's terminology, "political deviance". This is a concept Parkin finds useful in accounting for the tendency among manual workers to vote for non-labour political parties beyond the usual Marxist

assertion of "false consciousness".⁷ He holds that because the dominant institutional order of British society is conservative and decisively anti-socialist, for workers or any social stratum to vote socialist constitutes political deviance, and that workers can develop anti-conservative political attitudes only to the extent that they are "involved in normative sub-systems which serve as 'barriers' to the dominant values of the society."⁸

I find Parkins' model useful in the Nigerian situation. The dominant institutional order of the Nigerian society is heavily ethnic-oriented. Those who would control and benefit from social inequality tend to mask their class interests in ethnic terms. That this strategy succeeds is not because of false consciousness on the part of those who are exploited, as Archie Mafeje, for instance asserts,⁹ but rather because, I would argue, in Nigeria ethnicity is at once both a social fact and a political ideology of those who aspire to state power. The non-falsity of ethnicity manifests itself in three main ways. In the first place prospective job seekers who move into Nigerian cities naturally find it easier, or at least choose, to stay with urban residents of the same ethnic background, and in their urban social networks they tend to interact more with people of the same ethnic backgrounds than with those of other

ethnic backgrounds, and tend to marry others of the same ethnic backgrounds. These forms of ethnic identification occur, I would suggest, independently of any ideological manipulation by the ruling class. By the time the applicants find jobs they are likely already to be members of one or the other of the ubiquitous urban ethnic associations, which takes us to our second point. Notwithstanding Nnoli's compelling suggestion alluded to (p. 149) that the historical development and encouragement by the colonial state of urban ethnic associations had political motivations; and even though these associations perform necessary functions for members of the working class, I would argue that urban ethnic associations also represent a clear and factual manifestation of ethnicity in Nigeria today. The urban ethnic association constitutes one of the most exclusive social institutions. It includes those who share the same ethnic background and excludes those who don't. Membership and participation in ethnic associations and access to social and economic security benefits offered by these institutions all serve to solidify ethnic identities without any necessary manipulation of ethnicity by the Nigerian ruling class. Finally, ethnicity as a fact manifests itself when members of the ruling class use their positions in the state apparatus to

provide employment opportunities and to establish concrete social and economic projects in the geographical areas of their ethnic constituencies. I suggest that this is where one has to locate the success of ethnicity as ideology. For ethnicity manifests itself as an ideology of the ruling class when, as I have shown, people are told that being a member of a certain ethnic group has to be synonymous with belonging to a particular political party, the implication always being that electoral victory by a given political party easily translates into victory for that party's dominant and supporting ethnic groups. While conducting the research for this study the author listened to N.P.N. - controlled radio programs urging the Tivs to go out en masse and register for the 1983 Nigerian General Elections because if they did not register in sufficient numbers, people of other ethnic groups would outdo them and make them slaves.

I am suggesting that as a political ideology of the ruling class, ethnicity succeeds, not because of any falsity connected with it, but precisely because at one level it is a Nigerian social fact. But as an ideology ethnicity has been raised to the level of dominance and masks the class interests it serves. Thus, the situation existing in Nigeria is one in which even though both class and ethnicity are concrete social and economic realities, whereas ethnicity has

been effectively politicized and turned into a manipulative ideology to serve the bourgeoisie, class remains essentially at the level of social and economic fact (its political manifestation effectively hid behind the mask of ethnicity). But this situation is only one out of several possibilities regarding the political implications for the working class of the co-existence of class and ethnicity. I have identified four such possibilities: (1) non-politicized ethnicity in co-existence with non-politicized class consciousness, (2) non-politicized ethnicity in co-existence with politicized class consciousness, (3) politicized ethnicity in co-existence with non-politicized class consciousness and (4) politicized ethnicity in co-existence with politicized class consciousness.

In the Nigerian situation the first two possibilities are ruled out. What obtains is the third possibility, and the political implication of this is obvious. For as Sandbrook points out:

Although a politicized ethnicity can co-exist with a hardy trade-union consciousness, it does obstruct the development of a worker consciousness encompassing solidarity in the political as well as the economic sphere ... where ethnic definitions of political life are entrenched it is a difficult task for a social movement to redefine political conflict in class terms In short, a politicized ethnicity is incompatible with a working-class political consciousness, except in those rare cases where class and ethnicity overlap. 10

In Nigeria class and ethnicity do not overlap. Granted this, one is faced with the problem of how to move from the third to the fourth possibility outlined above. In other words, this raises the question of what factors can and do contribute to the development of a "working-class political consciousness", the kind that can challenge the existing structures of exploitation and domination on a class basis. Specifically, the key question becomes: what factors are likely to (a) reduce the ethnic element within the Nigerian working class and also (b) politicize working class consciousness? My analysis of the influence of several variables in this study reveals the experience of post-primary education to be the single most important factor capable of both reducing the ethnic element among workers and politicizing workers' consciousness. I will elaborate on this.

Education and Class Formation

Workers' level of formal education is one variable which seems to have the most consistent influence on their perceptions, orientations and behaviour in this study. We have seen in the analysis of class identification and urban social networks that the more educated workers reveal a closer identification with trade unions than with urban ethnic associations compared with a reverse situation among

less educated workers. Besides, the tendency to engage in urban network situations with considerable kinship content is less among the relatively more educated workers. Thus education has the effect of breaking down ethnic and kinship barriers in the workers' interpersonal relationships, giving their urban social networks a more specifically class content. Moreover, the less educated workers are more dependent on their social networks as a means of handling personal urban emergencies. Analysis of strike support shows a moderate positive correlation between education and strike support. It is the relatively more educated workers who are more supportive of strikes. All except one of those who were opposed to the last strikes in their factories had no more than primary school education.

Indications of the politicizing influence of education is seen in several ways. In the first place, workers with post-primary education are more likely to perceive exploitation in Nigerian society, and to hold a view of exploitation as a process whereby the rich accumulate their wealth by actively depriving the poor and others who are suffering. Secondly, workers with post-primary school education are more likely than those with only primary school education to discuss politics with other people. Thirdly, respondents with post-primary school education evince a

greater willingness to support the idea of forming a specifically workers' party to represent the interests of workers. Thus more than any other factor, post-primary education seems to be the most important source of variation in workers' perceptions and behaviour.

The effect of education uncovered in this study confirms Alex Inkeles' observation that "in large-scale complex societies no attribute of the person predicts his attitudes, values and behaviour more consistently or more powerfully than the amount of schooling he has received"¹¹ Thus the experience of formal education by itself is important in shaping people's perceptions of society and political orientations. But education not only politicizes, it raises people's aspirations and expectations. We have seen how workers regard education as a sure means of social mobility and survival within the Nigerian society, and how some tend to blame their lack of access to societal goods and services on their limited levels of formal education. Thus the politicizing consequences of education can be contained if raised aspirations are met at least minimally. And this is where the phenomenon of status inconsistency, raised earlier on in this study, becomes crucial. In Nigeria, and in terms of the relationship between education and employment, status inconsistencies exist at two main

levels: at one level is a situation where people are fairly highly educated but unemployed; at the other level is a situation where people are fairly highly educated but employed in occupations not commensurate with their levels of formal education. The political implications of these two kinds of situations are legitimate areas for careful analysis, however, it is the second situation that is relevant to the present study. Crucial in this regard is Richard Sandbrook's observation that "with state-sponsored educational expansion, all African countries have undergone successive devaluations of higher levels of formal qualifications for the same job".¹² In the Nigerian situation, as I indicated in Chapter two, Hinchliffe's survey of workers in Kaduna (northern Nigeria) in 1972 showed that only 6% of the respondents had some post-primary education, and 13% had no formal education.¹³ Simi Afonja's survey in Ado-Ekiti (western Nigeria) in 1981 shows that 67% of the respondents had some post-primary education and only 7% had no formal education.¹⁴ And in the present study all the respondents have some formal education, 51% have post-primary school education. This trend is likely to have some influence on the orientations and perceptions of Nigerian industrial workers.¹⁵ Yet very little examination has been done regarding the probable impact of education,

especially of rising educational levels of workers, on the development of class consciousness. Thus Sandbrook identifies education as a "politicizing factor that is largely unexplored"¹⁶. He points out:

The relationship between workers' educational achievement and politicization is clear in principle. One would expect that the better-educated workers who considered themselves deprived or oppressed would not only feel more frustrated by their situation, but also be more capable of developing a theory of exploitation, than their less-educated colleagues. Whether this proposition is valid remains to be seen. 17

The evidence in this study suggests that the above proposition is valid to a large extent. In this regard the insufficient attention hitherto given to education in analyses of African industrial workers¹⁸ means, on the one hand, that a very strong premise for rejecting the labour aristocracy thesis has been largely ignored, and, on the other hand, that as far as the potential revolutionary power of workers is concerned, a major politicizing variable has been ignored. This seems to me to be a rather grave omission. For the relationship between education and class formation among industrial workers is a dynamic one. I have sought to establish in this study that ethnicity is an integral element in class formation among workers. I have also suggested that incorporation of politicized ethnicity as part of this process hinders the development of working class

political consciousness. However, education does two main things: (a) it reduces the ethnic element among workers and (b) it tends to politicize workers' consciousness. I will briefly examine the question of how this happens.

How does the experience of formal education reduce the ethnic element among industrial workers? In the first place the experience of post-primary education extends one's range of friendships beyond immediate kinship boundaries. Friendships made in school across kinship barriers, acquaintances made during inter-school sports competitions and related occasions tend to be readily renewed in urban contexts. Thus when post-primary school educated applicants arrive in the town, they have the choice of staying with former school mates or class mates with whom they do not share the same ethnic background. This means entering a network situation in which kinship or ethnicity is minimal. Besides, the experience of post-primary education provides some proficiency in the English language, an effective tool for communicating and making friends across language barriers. Moreover, we have seen that the relatively more educated workers are less dependent on urban ethnic associations than their less educated counterparts. All these factors tend to reduce the ethnic element within the working class. But the more important question is, how does

education account for the kind of antagonistic consciousness uncovered in this study? Part of the answer to this question has been suggested by other studies which have focused on the impact of education on people's attitudes and behaviour.

In a study of six countries (Argentina, Chile, East Pakistan, India and Nigeria) in which interviews were administered to a sample of peasants, recent migrants to cities and industrial workers - all male and with years of formal education ranging from 0 to 8 - Alex Inkeles found education to be a consistent source of "modern values and attitudes among the respondents."¹⁹ He explained the influence of education in terms of "the distinctive nature of the school as a social organization a setting for the more general socialization of the child."²⁰ He argues that "the school modernizes through a number of processes: reward and punishment, modeling, exemplification and generalization."²¹ Robert Grey's study of elementary and secondary school students in Ethiopia also led him to conclude that education affects people's attitudes, especially political attitudes.²² He identifies key variables which shape the cumulative impact of education on students: the characteristics of political messages explicitly or implicitly transmitted by schools through

teachers or textbooks; the extent to which such messages negate or reaffirm pre-existing student beliefs and the extent to which students regard the school as a legitimate source of information.²³ He then argues that in most third world countries, certain "messages" emanate from schools, and to the extent that students come from dominantly rural backgrounds with no prior strongly held political attitudes, to that extent will schools be effective in inculcating political attitudes in students.²⁴ Finally in assessing the consequences of formal education in southern Nigeria over a decade (1950-1960) David Abernethy points out how

[the] education explosion in southern Nigeria has without question had profoundly liberating effect on the younger generation, giving it an awareness of people, places, physical objects, and comforts that are beyond its immediate experience, and providing through literacy the means to enlarge this awareness...popular education did not produce a generation loyal to regional elites, in fact, the more students learned in school, the more disenchanted they became with politicians. 25

These studies point out ways in which school experience affects the attitudes and orientations of students. However, as far as the attitudes and orientations of educated workers are concerned, it is not enough merely to establish the effect of education, useful as this is. What is crucial, in my judgement, is to link the school experience with employment experience of workers. Such a link can be established in two main ways.

Firstly, as a formal organization, the school differs from an industrial organization only minimally. The hierarchical structure and authority relations - the class monitor, the prefects, headboy, headgirl, form master, vice-principal and principal - of the school find their equivalents in factory hierarchical and authority structures - the trade union representative, foreman/supervisor, shift superintendent, production manager, personnel manager and general manager. The tensions and deviant sub-cultures of disobedience built into these school structures are also present in factory situations. Thus secondary school educated workers tend to be persons who have spent a considerable number of years studying in hierarchically structured organizations with visible authority relations, and who enter the lower end of work organizations similarly hierarchically structured with visible power relations. The significance of this situation becomes clearer when we consider that the final year in Nigerian secondary schools is usually a year of experiencing all the social and psychological satisfactions and comforts of being in the senior class (exemption from most manual work and being served by first or second year students are the most visible of these comforts). The passage from this "senior" position to that of low occupational^{positions} with slim prospects of promotion in

hierarchically structured industrial organizations has its own social and psychological strains. That secondary school graduates find themselves in this situation is almost inevitable because by their design Nigerian secondary schools are not terminal institutions but more or less preparatory grounds for further education. Thus those who enter the job market after secondary school tend to be predominantly those who fail to make it either financially or academically to higher institutions,²⁶ and they also tend to be applicants who have not been trained for specific or attractive positions in the job market. The crux of the matter is that secondary school educated workers enter employment situations after experiencing a year or so of "senior position" in their schools and yet (a) their lack of training in specific occupations and (b) in any case the Unavailability of appropriate jobs both doom them to be engaged in occupations of low status in the hierarchy of industrial organizations, hence the development of status inconsistency.²⁷ Emerging from this, I would argue, is the tendency for educated workers to be critical of both relations at the factory, their position in society, and the distribution of goods and services in Nigerian society as a whole.

The above analysis is only one aspect of the link between the experience of formal education and employment

experience. The other aspect of the link, related to the above, pertains to student protests and industrial strikes. At one time or another during their stay in secondary schools, students participate in some form of organized protest. For instance Lerche's examination of various forms of protests and strikes in Nigeria from 1971 to 1978 shows that out of a total of 460 recorded incidents, students accounted for the highest proportion (39%), followed by wage workers (30%).²⁸ These school protests often differ from industrial strikes only in little ways. A crucial element common to both school protests and strikes is that both actions represent a challenge to constituted authority on a collective basis for defined collective interests: for students, invariably food; for workers, by and large, money. Thus it is often the case that secondary school educated workers in Nigeria enter the employment situation already fairly familiar with situations of conflict and confrontation. I would argue that this carry-over of school militancy into the work situation has a critical impact on the development of a conflict mentality or antagonistic consciousness within the Nigerian urban industrial working class. On the basis of this, one can expect increased militancy within the Nigerian working class as the proletariat becomes increasingly more educated.

In trying to spell out the relationship between education and class formation among Nigerian industrial workers, what I am suggesting here is that workers' experience of secondary school education is likely to increase militancy and the development of antagonistic consciousness toward the status quo within the Nigerian working class. But while this position is a reversal of the labour aristocracy perspective, it does not necessarily support the perspective that stresses the revolutionary image of the working class. To demonstrate, as I have tried to do here, that education facilitates the development of militant consciousness within the working class is entirely different from concluding that one has uncovered the development of revolutionary class consciousness among educated workers. We have seen that almost irrespective of educational level, the majority of the respondents in this study were against the idea of a revolutionary seizure of power. Besides, most of the reasons given by workers who were opposed to even the idea of forming a workers' party raise fundamental issues. The most important of these issues is whether workers can run or manage the Nigerian economy even if they somehow succeed in staging a revolution. The most likely solution to this problem is for workers to act in alliance with Nigerian Marxist intellectuals committed to a socialist revolution. However, some problems immediately arise in relation to such

an alliance. In the first place, as we have seen, Nigerian socialists lack a collective strategy for acting in alliance with workers. Secondly, such ^{an} alliance is likely to bring to the forefront the whole issue of ethnicity, and Nigerian Marxists have not shown that they can overcome politicized ethnicity.

I submit, on the basis of the above analysis, that the emphasis currently laid on African urban industrial workers for overcoming underdevelopment is misplaced.²⁹ It seems to me that this emphasis represents an uncritical application of theory and a theoretical overreaction to the myth of classlessness in Africa. The uncritical application of theory is seen in the unquestioned assumption that a proletariat would necessarily eventually be revolutionary, an assumption largely brought to bear on analyses of the working class and African under-development. I have already drawn attention to the danger of this Marxist assumption by referring to Lubasz's comment that "Marx's conception of a revolutionary proletariat is a composite which corresponds to no known historical reality."³⁰ In this regard to approach the study of Nigeria with a ready-made assumption of a revolutionary proletariat is taking too much for granted. Closely related to this, as I have suggested, is the issue of over-reaction to the myth of a classless Africa. Both early anthropologists studying African societies and emergent

African national bourgeoisies sought to present African societies as classless.³¹ This view has now largely been replaced by the established paradigm of class analysis. But within this dominant paradigm the assumption of a logical necessity for a working-class revolution takes priority over the historical and situational possibilities of such a revolution in analyses of African underdevelopment. The existence of social classes and class exploitation having been established, an unstated underlying logic seems to guide much analysis, namely, that where there are social classes, there will be class exploitation or class consciousness or class struggle or all three, leading to the overthrow of the exploiting class by those being exploited. Following the implicit assumption of a revolutionary proletariat, the working-class usually tends to be identified as the key class in the struggle.³² In Africa the tendency to identify the working-class in these terms is in turn based on two major considerations which are both open to debate.

The first consideration is the objective strategic economic position of the working-class in African or capitalist societies and how historically workers would be compelled and expected to behave, given that position.³³ The problem with this consideration is that it presents workers as slightly less than persons with manifest capacity to define their life situation and act (or fail to act) in accordance with that definition of the situation. Neither my

evidence nor any that I am aware of suggests that Nigerian industrial workers define their roles in terms of overthrowing an economically dominant and exploiting class. The second consideration is workers' organization and execution of general strikes. The political significance of general strikes tends to be overstated.³³ In Nigeria the issues over which general strikes are staged are usually those which can be accommodated within the basic capitalist structures. Certainly strikes topple regimes, but whether they can topple Nigerian capitalism is another question. Clearly the two main considerations on the basis of which revolutionary political significance is attributed to Nigerian industrial workers are not very compelling. Strategies for overcoming underdevelopment must look beyond industrial workers.

The logical connection between revolution and development in Africa is made very explicit by Claude Ake in his assertion cited earlier that "the greatest obstacles to development are social and institutional ones such as class structure, and the vested interests tied up with these obstacles are such that they cannot be removed by anything short of a revolutionary upheaval".³⁵ The evidence in this study makes it difficult to consider industrial workers as constituting a critical edge in bringing about such a revolution in Nigeria, but this is not because they

constitute a conservative labour aristocracy. Rather, as we have seen, a reverse situation seems to be occurring regarding the "labour aristocracy": it is those who have been labelled a labor aristocracy "deemed to be conservative in political orientation,"³⁶ especially those with secondary school education among the workers who have evinced relatively more dissident social and political orientations in this study. But even these dissident political orientations amount to far below what can be considered as revolutionary political consciousness. The ultimate conclusion to be drawn here is that revolutionary strategies for overcoming underdevelopment in Nigeria must begin to look beyond urban industrial workers.

Future Research

As a study of industrial workers in Nigeria the present study is very limited in terms of historical scope, sample size and focus on industrial workers as opposed to working class households as units of analysis. Future research should expand along these lines especially as I have suggested that the debate on workers ought to be cast in terms of embourgeoisement rather than labour aristocracies. In this regard the agenda for future research should focus on the question: Have Nigerian urban workers become affluent (both in absolute and relative terms and over time) and how does their affluence or non-affluence manifest itself in

their social and political consciousness and behaviour?

Such a research project should of necessity consider data pertaining to the working and household (living) conditions and patterns of income and expenditure of the earliest urban wage workers up to and including present workers. While such a research project might require teamwork by researchers it will provide critical data regarding the condition and history of the Nigerian working class in its passage through Nigeria's pre-oil boom, oil boom and post-oil boom periods. Such a project is likely to demonstrate conclusively that (a) Nigeria's affluence has visibly by-passed urban wage workers - thus burying the notion of workers as a labour aristocracy; and (b) even though they have been denied a reasonable share in the affluence they have contributed in producing, workers have shown little intention or capacity to overthrow the basic system oppressing them - thus casting serious doubts on their revolutionary power. Furthermore, such a research project which should also focus on the politicizing influence of education, is also likely to reveal education as constituting an important experience in the development of a working class political consciousness.

FOOTNOTES

¹ See Karl Marx, The Poverty of Philosophy (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 19), pp. 172-75; "The Coming Upheaval" in R. C. Tucker, (eds.) The Marx-Engels Reader (New York: W. Norton and Co., 1978), p. 520; The Communist Manifesto (with an Introduction by Stefan Possony, Chicago: Henry Regenerly and Co., 19540), pp. 30-32, 132; "Inaugural Address of the Working-Men's International Association" in R. C. Tucker, op cit., pp. 512-13.

² See for instance Abdul Babu, African Socialism or Socialist Africa? (Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Publishing House, 1981), p. 4.

³ See Howard Wolpe, "Port Harcourt: Ibo Politics in Microcosm", The Journal of Modern African Studies, 7, 3, (1969), pp. 485-92.

⁴ For instance several respondents cited examples wage increases.

⁵ Richard Sandbrook, "The Political Potential of African Urban Workers", Canadian Journal of African Studies, Vol. XI, No.3, 1977, p. 421.

⁶ Ibid., p. 430.

⁷ Frank Parkin, "Working Class Conservatives: A Theory of Political Deviance", British Journal of Sociology, Vol. 18 (1967), pp. 278-90.

⁸ Ibid., p. 282.

⁹ Archie Mafeje, "The Ideology of Tribalism", Journal of Modern African Studies, Vo. 9, No. 2 (1971), pp. 258-59.

¹⁰ R. Sandbrook, The Politics of Basic Needs, p. 195 (emphasis original).

¹¹ Alex Inkeles "The School as a Context for Modernization" International Journal of Comparative Sociology. SIV, 3-4, (1973), p. 163. Margaret Peil takes the opposite position that education has little effect on attitudes and orientations of students. Margaret Peil, "The Influence of Formal Education on Occupational Choice," Canadian Journal of African Studies, Vo VII, No. 2. (1973), p. 200.

¹² Richard Sandbrook, op cit., p. 171.

13 Keith Hinchliffe, "The Kaduna Textile Workers: Characteristics of an African Industrial Labour Force" Savana, Vol. 2, No. 1, June (1973), p. 34.

14 Simi Afonja, "Individual Choice and Situational Factors: Influence on Job Satisfaction and Commitment" Sociology of Work and Occupations, Vol. 8, No. 4, Nov. (1981), p. 397.

15 Paul Blumberg and James Murtha identify the development of this kind of status inconsistency as "the central dynamic for social discontent emerging in America". See Blumberg and Murtha, "College Graduates & the American Dream" in Dissent Winter (1977), p. 46.

16 Sandbrook, op cit., p. 216.

17 Ibid., p. 217.

18 In Nigeria Paul Lubeck's study revealed a moderate positive correlation between literacy and strike support which led him to predict that "as literacy increases, militancy and higher levels of class consciousness can be expected to follow:. See Paul Lubeck, "Early Industrialization and Social Class Formation Among Factory Workers in Kano, Nigeria" (Ph.D. Dissertation, North-Western University, 1975) p. 250. but very little has so far been done to confirm or refute Paul Lubeck's prediction.

19 Alex Inkeles, op cit., p. 167-178.

20 Ibid., p. 176.

21 Ibid.

22 Robert Grey, "Education and Politicization", in Victor Uchendu, Education and Politics in Tropical Africa, (Owerri, Conch Magazine Ltd. Publishers, 1979) p. 156-160.

23 Ibid., p. 156-57.

24 Ibid., p. 158-59.

25 David Abernethy, The Political Dilemma of Popular Education (California, Stanford University Press, 1969), p. 193, 233.

26 Margaret Peil points out that "[the] most consistent characteristic of school leavers in West Africa

(except perhaps those who do not go beyond the third or fourth year) is that they would prefer to continue in school". Her study of final year secondary school students in Accra showed that "only four of the 270 questioned admitted that they had less than a 50 per cent chance of getting into the highly selective sixth form as far as academic ability was concerned; a fifth though that lack of money would hold them back." See Margaret Peil, op cit., p. 210.

27 The above can be applied, with only slight modifications, to workers with post-secondary school education.

28 See C. O. Lerche "Social Strife in Nigeria, 1971-1978" Journal of African Studies, Vol. 9, No. 1, Spring (1982), p. 6. secondary school students alone accounted for 23% of the total Ibid.

29 For such emphasis see Jack Woddis, New Theories of Revolution. (New York: International Publishers, 1971), p. 173, and Abdul Babu, op cit.

30 H. Lubasz, "Marx's Conception of the Revolutionary Proletariat", Praxis, Vol. 5, (1970), p. 289.

31 See Peter Lloyd, "Class Consciousness Among the Yoruba", in P. Lloyd, The New Elites of Tropical Africa (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 331-33, 339.

32 See Jack Woodis, op cit., and Abdul Babu, op cit.

33 Ibid.

34 The most outstanding example of this is Ekor Toyo. See his The Working Class and the Nigerian Crisis (Ibadan: Sketch Publications, 1967), p. 97.

35 Claude Ake, Revolutionary Pressures in Africa (London: Zed Press, 1978), p. 69.

36 Dennis Cohen "Class and the Analysis of African Politics: Problems and Prospects", in Dennis Cohen and John Daniel, Political Economy of Africa. Selected Readings (London: Longman, 1981), p. 100.

APPENDIX

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

To some extent the research questionnaire appended here is based on questionnaire items from the following sources:

1. Richard Sandbrook and Jack Arn, The Labouring Poor and Urban Class Formation. (Occasional Monograph Series, No. 12, Centre for Developing-Area Studies. McGill University, Montreal, 1977), pp. 44-46.
2. High Beynon, Perceptions of Work Variations within a Factory. (Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp.162-188
3. Barry Wellman, "The Community Question: The Intimate Networks of East Yorkers" American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 14, No. 5, March (1979), pp. 1208-1209.
4. Margaret Peil, The Ghanaian Factory Worker: Industrial Man in Africa (Cambridge University Press, 1972), and
5. Dr. Stevenson's (unpublished) Questionnaire for Nigerian Wage Labourers.

- 9.1 Which of the following is your level of formal education?
- a) Above Primary Seven (Please Specify)
 - b) Primary Seven
 - c) Below Primary Seven
 - d) Illiterate
- 9.2 What is your father's and mother's level of formal education?
- F M
- 9.3 What does your father do for a living?
- 9.4 What does your mother do for a living?
- 10.1 Do you own or have access to cultivable land somewhere?
If "Yes" where?
- 10.2 If owns or has access. Do you at present cultivate your land?
- 10.3 If "Yes" do you use your land to produce:
- a. Food crops
 - b. Cash crops
 - c. Both food and cash crops?
11. In the place you are living in now, are you
- a. The owner?
 - b. Renting from someone else?
 - c. Living with a relative?
 - d. Other (Please specify)
12. IF RENTING How much rent do you pay per month?
13. How many people live with you whom you support?
14. When did you first come to work here at the Cement/Textile Company?
15. Did you work somewhere else outside your village for wages before coming to work in the Cement/Textile Company?
IF "NO" MOVE TO QUESTION 17, IF "YES" ASK QUESTION 16
- 16.1 Please give me the names of the places where you have worked and the jobs you did

24. Here is a list of things that might help a person to move up in the world. Which one do you think might help most?
- a. Ambition
 - b. Education
 - c. Hard Work
 - d. Knowing the right people
 - e. Intelligence
 - f. Luck
25. Do those who are enjoying do so at the expense of those who are suffering?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. I don't know
26. Please tell me how this happens?
27. In comparison with other people living in Nigeria, do you think that you are
- a. Getting your fair share or more of the good things of life?
 - b. Getting a little less than your fair share?
 - c. Getting much less than your fair share?
 - d. Don't know.
28. TO THOSE WHO SAY THEY ARE GETTING "LESS"
- Who or what would you say is mainly to blame for your not getting your fair share?
29. Do you agree or disagree with the statement that trade unions in Nigeria have too much power?
- a. Agree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. I don't know
30. Do you agree or disagree with the statement that rich people in Nigeria have too much power?
- a. Agree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. I don't know
31. Some people often say that the Nigerian Society is like a ladder: some people are in the lower levels of the ladder, others in the middle and others on top. What do you think?

32. IF INCLINED TO IDEA OF THERE BEING CLASSES

What things decide the ladder level one belongs to?

33. In Nigeria which do you consider to be more important in a person's life, one's ethnic group or one's social class?

- a. Ethnic group
- b. Social class
- c. They are the same
- d. Other - (Specify)

34.1 Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The higher classes are best able to run things, and others should be content with their positions in society and leave the big decision making to them. If everyone accepts his/her position in society then everything will be fine.

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Mildly agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree.
- d. Mildly disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

34.2 Do you agree or disagree with the idea that workers should rise in a revolution and take over power from politicians?

C. SOCIAL CLASS IDENTIFICATION

35. Do you belong to a trade union?

- a. Yes
- No

IF "NO" ASK QUESTION 36, IF "YES" ASK QUESTIONS 37-47

36. Why don't you belong to a union?

37. Are you a trade union official?

- a. Yes
- No

38. IF "NO" Do you desire to become one? Why?

50. Do you belong to any voluntary association?

a. Yes b. No c. Other

IF "NO" ASK QUESTION 51 IF "YES" ASK QUESTIONS 52-62

51. Why don't you belong to a voluntary association?

52. What is the name of the Association?

53. Have you fully paid your dues to the Association?

a. Fully Paid b. Paid about Half c. Paid Nothing

54. Are you an official in the Association?

a. Yes b. No

55. IF "NO" Do you desire to become one?

Why

56. When did you become a member of the Association?

57. Why did you join the Association?

58. What is the purpose of the Association?

59. How often do you attend the meetings of the Association?

a. Regularly c. Rarely
b. Occassionally d. Never

60. IF "RARELY" OR "NEVER"

Why is it that you don't bother with the meetings of the Association?

61. Who is the leader of your Association?

62. IF KNOWS

How well do you know him/her?

- a. Very well
- b. Fairly well
- c. Not much

63. Who are your 6 closest or best friends in Gboko/Jos town?

- a. d.
- b. e.
- f.

64. Please give me the following information regarding each of your friends.

a. Name

- 1. Sex
- 2. Age
- 3. Highest educational level
- 4. Religion
- 5. Occupation
- 6. Kin or non-kin
- 7. Place of work
- 8. "In Law"
- 9. Other (Please specify)

b. Name

- 1. Sex
- 2. Age
- 3. Highest educational level
- 4. Religion
- 5. Occupation
- 6. Kin or non-kin
- 7. Place of work
- 8. "In Law"
- 9. Other (Please specify)

c. Name

- 1. Sex
- 2. Age
- 3. Highest educational level
- 4. Religion
- 5. Occupation
- 6. Kin or non-kin
- 7. Place of work
- 8. "In Law"
- 9. Other (Please specify)

69. Please answer the following questions regarding the three friends.

a. Name

1. Sex
2. Age
3. Highest Educational Level
4. Religion
5. Occupation
6. Kin or non-kin
7. "In law"?
8. Other (Please specify)

b. Name

1. Sex
2. Age
3. Highest Educational Level
4. Religion
5. Occupation
6. Kin or non-kin
7. "In law"?
8. Other (Please specify)

c. Name

1. Sex
2. Age
3. Highest Educational Level
4. Religion
5. Occupation
6. Kin or non-kin
7. "In law"?
8. Other (Please specify)

70. Which of these people do you rely on for help in emergencies?

71. Which of these people rely on you for help in emergencies?

72. Do you feel that you belong to a definite social class?

a. Yes

b. No

73. IF YES: What would you call YOUR social class?

82. In the next election which political party will you vote for?

WHY?

83. Do you think it makes a difference which political party wins elections?

84. IF "DIFFERENCE"
In what ways do you think it makes a difference?

85. IF "NO DIFFERENCE"
Why do you think it would make no difference?

86. Which group in society do you think the present government is helping most?

87. If any of the following political parties were to be in power, which group in society will they be helping most?

- a. U.P.N. led by Awolowo
- b. N.P.P. led by Azikiwe
- c. G.N.P.P. led by Waziri
- d. P.R.P. led by Aminu Kano

88. Do you support the idea that all workers in your position should form one political party and stand for elections

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Other

89. Within the past few weeks, have you discussed "politics" with anyone?

- a. Yes
- b. No

IF "YES" With whom?

What was it about?

E. JOB SATISFACTION AND ALIENATION

90. Why do you work?

91. Considering your stated reason for working, do you feel satisfied with your present job?
- a. Very satisfied
 - b. Fairly satisfied
 - c. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
 - d. Fairly dissatisfied
 - e. Very dissatisfied
92. What do you like best about your job?
93. What do you hate most about your job?
94. How does your present job compare with the 1st job you did before coming here?
- a. Better
 - b. The same
 - c. Worse
95. What do you consider to be the most important thing about a job?
- What do you consider to be the next to this?
96. So far as these two things are concerned, would you say that your present job is
- a. Very satisfactory
 - b. Fairly satisfactory
 - c. Neither satisfactory nor dissatisfactory
 - d. Fairly dissatisfactory
 - e. Very dissatisfactory
97. Which would you prefer: a job where someone else tells you exactly how to do the work or one where you are left to decide for yourself how to go about it?
- a. Self direction
 - b. Direction from others
 - c. It doesn't matter
98. Which of the following statements represents your assessment of your present job?
- a. Interesting all the time
 - b. Interesting most of the time
 - c. Dull and monotonous most of the time
 - e. Dull and monotonous all of the time

99. How would you say that the Cement Fctory/Textile Company compares with other firms you know of as a company to work for?
- Better than most
 - About average
 - Worse than most
 - Other (Please specify)
100. How friendly are you with members of your work group?
- Extremely friendly
 - Quite friendly
 - Indifferent
 - Not very friendly
 - Don't know one another much
101. How friendly are you with your supervisor/foreman?
- Extremely friendly
 - Quite friendly
 - Indifferent
 - Not very friendly
 - Don't know him
102. Which workers get a better deal for themselves, those in the public sector or those in the private sector?
- Public sector
 - Private sector
 - No difference
103. Have you ever thought of leaving this job to look for another one?
- Yes
 - No
- Why
104. If you could have ANY OCCUPATION YOU'D LIKE, which would you choose
105. What prevents (has prevented) you from getting such a position?

106. Do you have a private "business" which you are running now?

a. Yes

b. No

IF "NO" have you ever thought of starting your own business?

107. IF "YES" Please tell me what efforts you have made towards this

108. If you had the chance to start all over again, would you choose the same type of job you are now doing or would you do something different?

a. Same job

b. Something different (Please specify)

This section of the interview is now over. Thank you for your patience in answering all these questions.

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