



The Effects of 'Working-Class Consciousness' on the Coal-Mining Industry in Eastern Nigeria under Colonial Rule

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Abstract.

This paper examines the characteristics and effects of 'working-class consciousness' and actions on the coal-mining industry in Enugu, Eastern Nigeria during the colonial period. From the inception of the industry in 1915, the 'working-class' shared similar economic motive that they protected through collective actions; the hallmark being the 1949 'go-slow' strike that led to the shooting incident at the mine. Drawing from both primary and secondary sources, the essay argues that management's efforts to create 'labour aristocrats' failed, but the working-class consciousness and actions later had positive effects on welfare at the industry. It concludes by placing the 1949 shooting incident in its proper historical perspective after a thorough re-appraisal.

Keywords: Working-class consciousness; Coal-mining industry; labour aristocrats; Enugu; Shooting incident

Introduction

The origin of the coal-mining industry in Eastern Nigeria dates back to the colonial period, which, many share the view, lasted in Nigeria from 1900 to 1960. Bituminous coal was discovered in Udi, near Enugu in 1909, while production commenced with the opening of Udi Mine at Enugu-Ngwo in November 1915 [1]. In subsequent years more collieries such as Iva, Ogbete and Ekulu

were built; but throughout the colonial period the Enugu collieries had a continuous existence as an enterprise that utilized labour in various forms. As a result of this, many able-bodied young men left the rural areas of Igboland in Eastern Nigeria for reasons such as tax demand, ethnic or communal obligations and desire for European goods to work as wage labourers in the mines [2]. This led to the creation of proletariats in Enugu and its surroundings.

The collieries operated the capitalist mode of production that required the buying and selling of labour power through the market mechanism. The sellers of labour power were compelled to sell because, they neither own, nor have access to the means of production [3]. The buyers of labour power own the means of production and therefore discriminated between sellers, thereby exercising stiff control over them leading to a further element of subordination. However, all the sellers of labour power belong to the same economic class and therefore comprise the "working class"; because no matter their status they all have similar economic motive. Thus V.L. Allen observes that:

an economic class consists of people who are in the same objective economic position. When people are subjected to the same economic pressure, then other things being equal they



will act in essential respects consistently and uniformly thereby satisfying the main criterion for belonging to class category [4].

It is against this background that series of working-class actions were noticed at the coal mines in Enugu during the colonial period. These actions were in form of working-class consciousness that protected their collective interests on several occasions [5]. The most publicized of these consciousness that commenced in 1925 was the 1949 'Go- slow' strike of the Colliery Workers' Union (CWU), which is a vital focus of this paper.

Generally, Nigerian historians have not laid much emphasis on working-class consciousness and actions. Few works that exist on the subject covered the Northern and Western sections of the country respectively. While B. Freund [6] and C. Gonyok [7] highlighted the activities of wage-labour at the tin mines in the Jos plateau and its environs; A. Olukoju examines the travails of wage-labour in the Lagos Metropolitan area during the inter-war years [8].

However, with reference to Eastern Nigeria, there exists dearth of literature on the subject. Although some studies made mention of the 'shooting incident' at the Enugu coal mines in 1949, but only few highlighted series of working-class consciousness that led to that incident. These are works by A. Akpalla [9] and W. Ananaba [10]. While the former treated working-class actions from the perspective of management/labour relations, the latter discussed events at the coal mines from the general view of Nigerian trade union movement. Similarly, these studies could not draw conclusion on the major effects of working-class actions at the coal industry.

Consequently, this paper examines series of working-class consciousness and actions that led to the 'shooting incident' of

1949. It analyses the effects of the shooting incident, and concludes (after a thorough re-appraisal) that the workers' actions at the mines were psychological and principally economically motivated. For purpose of analysis, this paper is divided into five sections. These are: origin of the coal industry, the emergence and classification of wage-labour; management and growth pattern of the industry; working-class consciousness, rise of unions and the 'go-slow' strike of 1949; effects of the shooting incident; and a conclusion.

Origin of the Coal Industry, the Emergence and Classification of Wage-Labour

Coal, "the pioneer of Nigeria's energy industry" [11], was until the late 1950s the most important source of energy in Nigeria. It was discovered as a result of the colonial government's desire for a cheap source of energy. Consequently, in 1903, the British Imperial Institute was mandated by the colonial government to undertake the mineral survey of Southern Nigeria [12]. This led to the discovery of coal (as observed earlier) in Udi, near Enugu in 1909.

With the discovery and with the outbreak of the First World War in 1914; establishing a coal-mining industry became a priority project to the colonial government in Nigeria. It was hoped that coal from the mine would lead to increase in local coal consumption; and as well benefit other British West African colonies of Gold-Coast and Sierra-Leone. The coal industry was also envisaged to facilitate the colonial administration's war efforts, especially boost export of agricultural and other allied raw-materials from Nigeria to Britain. As a result of all the above, in January 1915, Mr. W.J. Leck arrived Nigeria from Britain to take charge of coal mining operations in Southern Nigeria.



Major land for the development of the colliery and what later became Enugu township was acquired in two stages from traditional rulers of some communities in Udi Division (Chief Onyeama of Eke, Chief Chukwuani of Ozalla, and certain chiefs from Ngwo) between 1915 and 1917 [13]. This led to the establishment of the first mine, Udi, in November 1915. A second mine, was opened at Iva Valley in 1917, while the third was opened at Ogbete in 1918. By March 1936, the first mine, Udi, was worked out and closed down, while Iva mine and Ogbete became the nucleus of production up till the end of colonial rule in 1960.

Unlike the tin mines in the Jos Plateau (Central Nigeria) where the indigenous people had knowledge of tin production before British advent [14], coal production was developed by the colonial government. The first set of wage labour at the mines was from Onitsha Division. This was as a result of the indigenous peoples' refusal (due to their traditional beliefs) to take up initial mining jobs [15]. This first set of workers was assisted by prisoners drawn from the Udi prisons. The initial tools for coal extraction were local implements such as picks, shovels, diggers and head pans. This early miners had neither boots nor helmets [16].

From the inception of the coal industry in 1915 till 1937, procurement of labour was through contracts. This led to the emergence of labour contractors, with local chiefs being involved. Some of them, such as Chief Onyeama of Eke went as far as Bende in Owerri Division (a distance of about 120 kilometres) to recruit labour to work in the mines. As from 1916, the indigenous people changed their attitude towards mining; and thenceforth sought jobs as miners and became the principal source of labour at the mines. However, between 1918 and 1920, there was a decline in labour supply as a result of the

influenza and small-pox pandemic in Udi area during the period.

The supply of labour stabilized as from 1922. Specifically, in 1925, statistics of wage labour at the mines showed that the source area, Udi, had 57 percent; Owerri and Okigwe Divisions, 18 percent; Awka Division, 13 percent; Onitsha Division, 6 percent; while the other parts of Igboland contributed 6 percent of the total work force [17]. The workers were procured by contractors; who were paid by the colliery management; while each contractor paid the labourers through his 'boss-boy' (foreman). This trend at the mines was in line with Bill Freund's observation that in Nigeria, "labour recruiters and skilled workmen were often African; the number of European employees was tiny, and confined largely to management and petty stakeholders"[18].

With reference to the classification of wage-labour, generally, there were two categories of labour in the mines: the underground and the surface workers. The underground workers were those who extracted the coal from beneath the ground. They included the hewers, who dug coal; the tub-men, who carried the coal in tubs to the haulage rope and returned the empty tubs to the hewers to refill again. There were also the timber-men, who built support for the roof in the process of digging; the timber drawers salvaged timber from abandoned areas for re-use; the rail-men laid rail for trailing the tubs. There were also other underground workers such as the haulage-men and the machine-men, whose duties also facilitated the process of coal extraction.

On the other hand, the surface workers included administrators, managers, supervisors, clerical assistants, cashiers, messengers and runners, guards, lorry drivers, and special workers such as refuse collectors and disposers, cleaners, and the "hammock boys" (carried the white officials on specially



made tarpaulin to and from work). There were also interpreters, artisans and helpers [19]. The collective role of these workers enhanced the growth of the coal industry during the period under review.

Management and Growth Pattern of the Industry

From the inception of the mines in 1915, the colliery had a symbiotic relationship with the Nigerian Railways. Its first manager, Mr. W.J. Leck worked under the supervision of the Nigerian Eastern Railway [20]. However, in 1937; the colliery was granted partial autonomy when it became a Government Department under the Transport Directorate. Despite this, the colliery manager continued to receive directives from the Transport Directorate in Lagos, while the Chief Commissioner, Eastern Provinces, Enugu supervised administrative matters.

The colliery management's status changed in 1949 when the Enugu Colliery Board was inaugurated with members appointed by the central government. In 1950, through Ordinance No.29, the establishment of the Nigeria Coal Corporation was enacted, with the responsibilities of developing and managing Nigeria's coal resources and the coal industry [21]. This notwithstanding, the relationship between the colliery and the Railway remained; as the latter continued to act as the colliery's sales agent until 1960 when the Nigerian Coal Corporation created its marketing department.

Although (as observed from the above analysis), the colliery management seemed not to have had autonomy; but in reality, the internal colliery management ensured the day to day running of the industry. Consequently, throughout the period under review the management did all it could in ensuring industrial harmony. One of such measures was recruitment of workers on clan

basis. This policy became well noticed after the 1925 strike action that was championed by non-indigenes. From thenceforth, the colliery management preferred indigenes (Agbaja), who formed the major underground workers; whereas the non-indigenes took up clerical and other technical jobs.

No doubt, a major reason for the management's preference of the Agbaja was to ensure its firm control of the colliery, particularly wage matters. Whereas most of the non-Agbaja workers (especially those from Onitsha and Owerri Divisions) were relatively more enlightened and could voice their grievances; and therefore were regarded as 'trouble makers', the Agbaja were rather more submissive to the management [22]. However, it was observed that 'indigenous factor' also played a role to sustain this recruitment policy. This corroborates John Flint's assertion that: "during the early decades of colonialism, the indigenous chiefs facilitated European capital development in Nigeria" [23].

With regards to the growth pattern of the industry, more than 7,000 tons were produced in the few weeks of production in 1915; whereas the industry recorded its highest output of 905,397 tons in the 1958/59 financial year [24]. Generally, exigencies of given periods such as the general depression of the late 1920s and early 1930s affected production. Nevertheless, the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 led to a rise in production because of the closure of other sources of coal supply to West Africa due to the effects of the war.

At this juncture, it should be stressed that despite colonial government's seriousness in establishing the coal industry, the industry did not experience speedy growth as a result of many factors. Some of these were: the system of production that involved the non-application of modern technology; the problem of transport; constant



government control of prices and the problem of capital for further development. There was also the limited market for Nigerian coal that was deliberately designed by the colonial government to serve only few West African states and for internal consumption by government departments at subsidized rates [25]. Thus it can be argued that deliberate government measures inhibited the smooth growth of the industry during the period.

Working-Class Consciousness, Rise of Unions and the 'Go-slow' Strike of 1949

As observed earlier, all employees in the coal industry belonged to the working-class at the mines. It has been argued that at certain stage in the working-class/management relationship in the production process the working-class develops some form of class consciousness. R. Sandbrook and R. Cohen have outlined three levels of class consciousness [26]. Of this three, two are attainable: the simple acceptance by a group of workers of their identity based on similar roles in the production process; and a recognition that workers have common interest as a class, which need to be protected through collective action against opposing claims of other classes. However, the third level of working-class consciousness, which is the eventual replacement of the capitalist system, has been difficult to attain. In the coal industry, the first two levels were attained through collective action of workers on many occasions.

From the inception of the mines in 1915, the working-class showed series of consciousness especially with regards to their remunerations. The take-off wage in 1915 was 9 pence per day for underground workers. This was reduced to 6 pence in the first few months of 1918 due to the purported over-supply of labour [27]. However, between 1915 and 1937; there were series of work stoppages that numbered more than

eight. These were caused by either reduction in wages or non-payment of certain allowances [28].

The first noticed major working-class consciousness was the 1925 strike action that was organized by the non-Agbaja hewers who protested the reduction in their wages from 6 pence per tub to 4 pence. Their action led to stoppage of work for many days and eventually made management to sack the protesting workers and replaced them with the Agbaja; who lacked experience in underground operations. This incident marked the beginning of management's efforts to create 'divide and rule' among the workers. Although, few strike actions by the workers (such as the 1937 strike when wages that were reduced due to the economic depression of the early 1930s were restored) were successful, but most failed as a result of the non-existence of collective bargaining. It has been observed that any form of organization of workers generally emerge from their efforts to seek an improvement of existing conditions through collective bargaining [29]. This was lacking at the coal industry up till 1940 due to distrust among workers.

Efforts to form trade unions commenced in the late 1930s despite the fact that the colonial government had enacted Labour Ordinance Code No.1 of 1929 that made it possible for different categories of workers to form unions if they desired [30]. Even at that, the first step in collective bargaining was initiated in 1937 by the colliery management, which asked the workers to form a Representative Council on clan basis. By management's explanation, the Council was to play advisory role; but the truth was that the Council was used as a ploy to curtail the emergence of a virile trade union and to create 'labour aristocrats' (relatively privileged workers) [31], among the work force.



The passing of the Trade Union Ordinance into law by the colonial government in 1938 led to suspension of the Representative Council. The Ordinance specified that as few as five persons could combine to form and register a trade union. Consequently, two workers' unions emerged at the industry in 1940. These were the Enugu Colliery Workers' Union and the Enugu Colliery Surface Improvement Union formed by underground and surface workers respectively. The two unions pursued separate interests; but in the 1942/1943 Cost of Living (COLA) negotiations, the underground workers' union had a better bargain. This made many surface workers to enroll en-mass into the underground union.

However, in April 1944, both unions merged to become the Colliery Workers' Union (CWU). The first secretary of the amalgamated union was Mr. Okwudili Ojiyi [32], a literate employee who had benefited from the colliery training scheme initiated in 1938; aimed at assisting Nigerians to acquire the necessary mining techniques. At inception, the main objective of the CWU was to sustain workers' solidarity and destroy the management and government's policy of 'divide and rule'. Put in a wider perspective, the principal aim of the CWU was to fight a legacy of 'labour distrust' that had taken root in the industry over the years [33].

The first test of CWU was its demand made in 1944 for the improvement of wages and working conditions necessitated by the high cost of living caused by the Second World War. Management's refusal to negotiate led to a trade dispute that lasted till 1945; and resulted to management's dismissal of underground workers, and the banning of the CWU in April 1945. This led to the re-introduction of Workers' Representative Council on clan basis. During the June-August 1945 National strike in Nigeria, although there was no coordinated

participation of the CWU; but work was near stand-still because the Railway (the cooperating partner of the colliery) was on strike.

While the ban imposed on the CWU lasted, its leadership operated underground and sensitized workers on general labour trends in Nigeria; especially the recommendations of the Tudor Davies Commission on the 1945 National strike, which specified that Nigerian workers should adopt collective bargaining as a system of regulating relations with employers [34]. Consequently, the secretary of the proscribed CWU used that opportunity and tried to open contacts with colliery management through petitions to the Chief Secretary's office in Lagos; but the petitions were ignored by the colliery management.

However, between 1946 and 1947, the central government increased wages of government employees in the country. As the management tried to harmonize the new wages, the outlawed CWU saw the delay as a ploy to deny workers their legitimate wages; and on 4 November 1947, the secretary of CWU mobilized workers and taught them the '*welu nwayo*' (go-slow) method of work. This marked the genesis of the 'go-slow' as a mass action. It was a passive resistance whereby workers in all sections of the mines worked slowly with little output. In its face value, the 'go-slow' was not a legal strike because there was no work stoppage.

In a Press Release, the outlawed CWU executive argued that workers worked slowly because they were hungry. It was against this background that recognition was restored to the CWU, while its leaders entered into negotiation with management. An agreement reached with management in December 1947 provided for payment of the new harmonized wages and some arrears. This was victory for the CWU as the increment was backdated to January 1946.



The colliery management paid all the arrears in March 1948; and the CWU having noticed that its 'go-slow' was successful declared a second 'go-slow' action on 8 November 1948 over claims of the under-payment of certain category of workers in the March 1948 payments. Once again, the CWU was victorious in its demand, as the management yielded.

The third 'go-slow' action (that led to the shooting incident) was declared on 8 November 1949 as a result of another trade dispute with management over certain unpaid allowances. Irked by the constant use of strike by the CWU, the management took drastic action and sacked 200 underground workers. Concerted efforts made by the Ngwo community (on whose soil the colliery was located) to hold conciliatory talks with the two groups failed. Meanwhile, the dismissed workers and the CWU executive converted the 'go-slow' action into a sit-in-strike and refused to vacate the mines for days.

At this juncture (for fear that explosive at the mines might fall into wrong hands), the government decided on 17 November to remove the explosives at the mines. Consequently, on 18 November 1949, a senior superintendent of police, Mr. F.S. Philip was appointed to head 105 policemen in the operation to remove the explosives from the mines. The explosives were successfully removed at the Ogbete mine, but at Iva Valley mine, the dismissed workers resisted the removal [35]. By that time, about 1,500 miners had gathered with sticks, chanted war songs, and demanded that the explosives must not be removed. In the process, a struggle ensued between three policemen and some miners. In the ensuing melee Mr. Phillip ordered his men to shoot; and accordingly, the policemen shot indiscriminately at the protesting miners. The shootings led to the death of twenty-eight miners while more than fifty were injured.

Consequences of the Shooting Incident

The November 1949 'go-slow' strike was the hallmark of working-class actions at the colliery in Enugu. News about the shooting spread very fast and people from different parts of the country reacted spontaneously and described the incident as part of the excesses of the British colonial administration in Nigeria. One immediate effect of the shooting was that it aroused nationalist feelings, as some political activists set up a National Emergency Council (NEC) headed by Dr. Maja, while Mazi Mbonu Ojike was the secretary. Labour also set up a National Labour Committee to look into the incident. With this zeal (as an aftermath of the shooting), the NEC, and two political parties: the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC), and the Nigerian Youths Movement (NYM) made a call to grant Nigeria self-governing status.

The shooting incident also aroused the consciousness of the indigenous peoples of Enugu and its environs. After the shooting, some miners who survived cut down trees and laid ambush for the police. Similarly, some women from Abor, Ukana, and other neighbouring communities in Udi Division marched all the way to the mines to protest the shooting [36]. It was due to the above pressures that the colonial government set up a 4 member Commission of Enquiry, headed by Mr. W.J. Fitzgerald. Two members of the Commission were Nigerians. The Commission, announced on 28 November was inaugurated on 7 December 1949; and sat from the 12 December up till 5 January 1950. In its Report published in June 1950, both the government and the trade union leaders; particularly Mr. Ojiyi were indicted for the unfortunate incident at Iva Valley.

As it concerned the workers, the recommendations of the Commission among others, changed the names of African workers



at the mines in the roles they played [37]. For instance, before the shooting incident, foremen were called ‘boss-boys’; but after the incident, they became known as foremen. ‘Pick-boys’ became known as hewers, ‘tub-boys’ became known as tub-men; while the job done by the ‘hammock-boys’ was abolished. Thus the pride of African workers was restored as ‘racism’ was abolished from the mines.

The incident also created more consciousness among the workers, in terms of participation in trade union activities. Although the CWU was indicted, but working-class consciousness persisted in the 1950s. A new union, the Nigerian Coal Miners Union (NCMU) was formed and recognized by the management in April 1951. Like its predecessor, management interfered constantly in the affairs of the NCMU. T.M. Yesufu observes this to be the trend with labour unions in the 1950s; due to the interferences of politically motivated Nigerian indigenous Regional Governments [38]. Nevertheless, workers showed their unalloyed commitment to collective bargaining at every point in time.

Other benefits accrued to the workers after the shooting incident (observed by a commentator) were: the representation of Nigerians at the Colliery Board, the regularization of the appointment of miners (particularly casual workers), and the improvement of workers’ condition of service [39]. In the same vein, the gains accrued to African workers extended even to the post-independent era. For instance, between 1961 and 1962, the number of expatriate staff was reduced from 21 to 16; while the number of Nigerians in senior service positions rose from 45 to 58 [40].

It was in the course of these events that coal started to lose its status as a major energy source in Nigeria. Dwindling fortunes set in around the late- 1950s and the mid-

1960s. The Nigerian civil war compounded its problems as the industry was closed down for nearly three years. Its major customer, the Railway started dieselizing, while its use to generate electricity diminished, because at the end of the civil war, the defunct Electricity Corporation of Nigeria (ECN) found other sources of energy generation.

Conclusion

This paper has highlighted events at the Nigerian coal- mining industry in Eastern Nigeria during the colonial period. The origin of the industry, its growth and classification of wage labour were observed. Working-class consciousness manifested in various forms and at various times; and culminated into the shooting incident of 18 November 1949. The following observations emanate from the study in order to place events at the colliery in their proper historical perspectives.

Generally, it was observed that the colliery Management tried to create ‘labour aristocrats’ at the mines. The Council of Representatives on clan basis served Management’s interest to the detriment of the workers. Colonial labour policy was exactly what was implemented at the colliery by the management. T. Fashoyin observes that though the colonial government gave partial support to trade unions, but its labour policy did not give room to protests, whether occupational or otherwise [41].

In the course of analysis, it was also observed that workers had participated in strike actions before the formation of the CWU in 1944 and the subsequent ‘go-slow’, as a mass action. These reactions of the workers were in line with M. A. Tokunboh’s observation that: “a trade union is a function of the environment, the economic development and the culture pattern from which it grows”[42]. Similarly, as shown in the analysis, the entire workers operated in circumstances, with their primary aim being



to earn wages, which would enhance their standards of living. The miners were virtually of the Igbo ethnic stock, the same culture and therefore found cooperation with each other easier than in an enterprise with workers from diverse cultural backgrounds. Thus, the workers' collective actions at the colliery could be likened to the railway workers' strike in Lagos in 1920, which succeeded in getting the colonial government act to alleviate the suffering of wage labour [43].

At this juncture, it is worthy to stress that few existing works on this subject have not actually agreed on the trend of events at the colliery; whether caused by socio-economic factors or politically motivated. The studies emphasized the political motive, particularly the activities of the Nationalist movements during the period; such as the Zikist Movement (youth wing of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroon), NCNC, and the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) to have influenced the workers' actions. Mention was also made of the individual factor, in the person of Mr. Okwudili Ojiyi, the secretary of CWU as having motivated the rest of the workers [44]. Similarly, J.S. Coleman argues that a nationalist press in Enugu was at hand to advertise the activities of the workers; that this did heightened workers' commitment to 'their cause'. He concludes that later events were a signal to make the Zikist to move into action through mobilizing nationalists in forming the National Emergency Council [45].

However, these arguments can be debunked taking into consideration that while the political motive may be traced to the existence of nationalist press such as the West African Pilot; at the same time, most of the workers were not literate enough to read newspapers. The role of the Nationalists was only a coincidence, given that nationalist activities in Nigeria were at a lull in the

period preceding the shooting incident. In like manner, other forms of mass-media such as radio and television were not common then. The individual factor can be seen as part of leadership responsibility, dynamism and flexibility. Though Mr. Ojiyi, as leader 'on the spot' must have influenced certain workers, but this should not over-ride the major observed factors in the course of analysis.

Based on the above clarifications, this paper argues that the series of working-class consciousness and actions that culminated into the shooting incident of 1949 were psychological, and principally economically motivated. From the psychological point of view, it should be stressed here that mining all over the world is very tedious in nature. This has been illustrated by P. Abrahams, who opines that any form of mining weakens workers, and could lead to early death [46]. Considering that there were many fatal accidents at the Enugu collieries during the period [47], and given the fact that there was no social security for workers such as insurance policies, the Enugu colliery workers had to exert pressure on Management to pay the vital entitlements due to them.

Secondly, series of events at the colliery were economically motivated, because in the course of management/workers relations, there were disagreements that led to working-class actions. This showed that at all point in time, the workers as an economic class had primary economic interests to protect. On the other hand, the management as owner of capital and employer of labour tried as much as possible to subvert and suppress the collective bargaining power of the workers. The major issue at stake in the industry was that both management and workers had economic interests to protect, which manifested through



the chain of events noticed in the course of our analysis.

The economic motive is further elaborated in line with A.G. Hopkins' assertion that urban employees suffered a serious fall in their living standard in the period of 1930 to 1945 due to retrenchments caused by the World-wide economic depression and the Second World War [48]. Therefore; it became imperative that those workers who retained their jobs in the post-Second World War era strived to sustain themselves economically. There was also the need for the migrant worker to meet his financial obligations, both in the urban centre and send remittances to his family in the rural area. With these in mind, the workers did not relent in 'fighting' for their economic rights. Finally, that the series of working-class actions were economically motivated is further buttressed by the fact that many of the miners were migrants, whose sole reason for leaving the rural areas was to earn better wages and improve their living conditions. Furthermore, many of the miners invested their money wisely in properties. For instance, some houses that sprang up in Ogui and Abakpa-Nike areas (suburbs of Enugu township) in the late-1950s were believed to have been built by ex-miners, who invested their wages wisely [49].

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- [31.] Mr. Okwudili Ojiyi introduced the ‘go-slow’ strike and championed the chain of working-class actions at the colliery between 1944 and 1949. His role in the colliery will remain indelible in Nigerian labour history.
- [32.] Pa George Anyaegbu (84); former union leader; Interviewed on 6 May 2013



- [33.] For detail of the Tudor Davies Commission, see Ananaba; chapter 8, pp.59-65.
- [34.] An informant, Pa Simon Agu (an examiner) confirmed that the sacked miners feared that the removal of the explosives (which hewers depended largely on) meant that they had finally lost their jobs.
- [35.] Pa Stephen Ude(75); retired miner from Awkunanaw, Interviewed on 13 May 2013.
- [36.] Pa Eddy Ohuaja (83); retired miner from Orlu, Interviewed on 12 December 2013
- [37.] T.M. Yesufu, *Labour in the Nigerian Economy*, Lagos: Federal Ministry of Information Press, 1967, p.21.
- [38.] I. Kalu, "And the Coal Miners Died", *Satellite Newspaper*, Sunday 18th November 1990, pp.8-9.
- [39.] See: *NCC, 12TH Annual Report*, 1961/62, p.14.
- [40.] T. Fashoyin, "The Origin and Growth of Trade Unionism"; in G.O. Ogunremi and E.K. Faluyi(eds.) *An Economic History of West Africa Since 1750*, Ibadan: Rex Charles Publication,1996, p.188.
- [41.] M.A. Tokunboh, *Labour Movement in Nigeria, Past and Present*, Lagos: Lantern Books, 1985, p.15.
- [42.] A. Olukoju, "The Travails of Migrant and Wage Labour", pp.55-58.
- [43.] Earlier works (cited in this paper) failed to specify the actual factor(s) that motivated working-class consciousness at the colliery in Eastern Nigeria.
- [44.] J.S. Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism*, Benin-City: Ilupeju Press (Paper back edition) 1986, p.299.
- [45.] Life style of miners is well highlighted in Peter Abrahams' *Mine Boy*, London: Heinemann Books, 1977.
- [46.] One of such incidents took place on 17 June 1943, during which 3 underground workers lost their lives; see National Archives, Enugu (NAE) File No. 18099, Vol. 11; my informant, Pa Agu also observed that although mine work was tedious, but people were attracted to it because of the high wages when compared with work in the farms. He resigned from the mines when his friend was killed in a mine accident in 1953.
- [47.] A.G. Hopkins, *An Economic History of West Africa*, London: Longman, 1973, p.257.
- [48.] Most of my informants (mainly ex-miners) confirmed that many successful miners built their own houses in outskirts of Enugu such as Abakpa-Nike and Ogui. These areas are currently parts of Enugu metropolis, the present capital of Enugu State, Southeast, Nigeria