

ردمد
٢٥١٨-٩٣٧١
ردمد الالكتروني
٢٥١٨-٩٣٦٠



مركز الدراسات الإفريقية
مركز الدراسات الإفريقية
مركز الدراسات الإفريقية

مجلة دراسات إفريقية



مجلة فصلية محكمة
تُعنى بشؤون القارة الإفريقية
تصدر عن مركز الدراسات الإفريقية

العدد العشرون

المجلد الثاني

ربيع الأول ١٤٤٧ هـ

أيلول - ٢٠٢٥ م

المحتويات

٢١	حيدر جواد كاظم جاسم الشافعي	نشأة حركات التحرر الوطني في الصومال - جيبوتي الأسباب والتطورات حتى عام ١٩٧٧.
٥٣	دينا إيهاب محمود	نيجيريا ومجموعة البريكس: دراسة في الأهداف والمآلات
٩٣	مونيكاً وليم	دراسة حول الدور الروسي والصيني في غرب أفريقيا مع انحسار النفوذ الفرنسي: دراسة في التأثير والتحديات
١٤٣	عماد الدين حسين بحر الدين عبد الله	استشراف مستقبل الصراع بين قبائل الهوسا والهمج بإقليم النيل الأزرق
١٦٩	هند محروس محمد الجلداوي هادي محمد حسين برهم	الجرائم ضد الإنسانية كجرائم دولية
٢١٧	غيث سليم الزركاني	السفراء والرسل بين العراق ومصر خلال العصر الآشوري القديم (٢٠٠٠-١٥٢١ قبل الميلاد)
٢٣٩	حنان رضا الكعبي ليث شاكر محمود هيام عودة محمد	الكوارث الطبيعية من خلال كتاب (الانيس المطرب بروض القرطاس لأخبار ملوك المغرب وتاريخ مدينة فاس) لأبن أبي زرع الفاسي كان حيّاً سنة: ٧٢٦هـ/ ١٣٢٥ م

٢٧٧	أحمد عبد الدايم محمد حسين	تجربة جمهورية جنوب أفريقيا التعددية وسياساتها اللغوية في الفترة من ١٩٦١-٢٠٢٢
٣١٩	شيماء حسن علي	من الرعاية المفيدتين الى الرعاية الارهابيين لماذا صُنفت نيجيريا لاكوارا "منظمة إرهابية"؟
٣٤٧	محمد كريم جبار الخاقاني	شخصية العدد: ليوبولر سيرار سنجور
٣٥٣	بسام رضا محمد	عرض كتاب: دولة المستوطنين في روديسيا الجنوبية
٣٦١ ٣٩٠	م.د. لؤي جمعة فاضل	تطور الحركة العمالية في سيراليون (١٩١٩-١٩٥١) والموقف البريطاني منها The Development of the Labor Movement in Sierra Leone (1919 - 1951) and the British Stance on It



**The Development of the Labor Movement in
Sierra Leone (1919 - 1951) and the British
Stance on It**



The Development of the Labor Movement in Sierra Leone (1919 - 1951) and the British Stance on It

M.D. Loay Jumaa Fadel

University of Maysan

College of Basic Education

loaay.j.f@gmail.com

Absrract

The period between 1919 and 1951 was a crucial phase in the development of the labor movement in Sierra Leone. The economic, political, and social conditions resulting from British colonial rule contributed to its evolution. This period witnessed key moments of labor organization and protest, met with varying reactions from the British authorities.

Received:

25/07/2025

Accepted:

30/07/2025

Published:

1/9/2025

Keywords:

Labor Movement,
Sierra Leone, British
Stance, colonization

Journal of African Studies

volume (2)

Issue (20)

Rabi' al-Awwal 1447 H

Introduction:

The First World War contributed to igniting the resistance movement against British colonial rule across the African continent, including Sierra Leone. Various segments of society, including the educated, workers, and the unemployed, participated in this resistance. This movement marked the beginning of the emergence of liberation thought and national consciousness in the continent, which later materialized into organized political parties following World War II. These parties did not emerge by mere coincidence or personal will but were the result of the activities of associations, unions, and students. The labor union movement was one of the early manifestations upon which political and armed struggle in Sierra Leone was built. It fostered solidarity and sympathy among workers, especially since one of its most powerful tools was the strike, which greatly troubled the colonial authorities. Strikes were a true expression of the awareness of the Sierra Leonean individual, shaped by years of oppression, exploitation, and plundering of resources under the rule of the white man. At the same time, they reflected the people's aspirations for self-rule and the enjoyment of their country's wealth, free from oppression and colonial domination. Accordingly, this study aims to shed light on the development of the labor movement in Sierra Leone during the period (1919 - 1951) and the British colonial stance towards it.

First :The Impact of World War I on the Development of Labor Protests in Sierra Leone – The Strikes of 1919 and 1920:

Sierra Leone⁽¹⁾ participated in World War I through the Sierra Leone Battalion, which fought alongside regiments from other African countries under British rule. The Sierra Leonean military units succeeded in defeating the German colonial forces in Togoland and Cameroon⁽²⁾.

The war led to famine in Sierra Leone due to a shortage of agricultural products, which were exported to support the British war effort. Additionally, work in maritime and commercial establishments⁽³⁾

(1) Sierra Leone: Sierra Leone is located on the west coast of Africa, and it is one of the countries in the West African region. Geographically, it lies between latitudes 6.55° and 10° north, and longitudes 10.16° and 13.18° west, placing it in the humid tropical zone. Sierra Leone has a significant geographic location that enabled it to connect with the New World since its discovery, through caravans of ships carrying Africans who were forcibly taken from their homeland as slaves to serve new settlers, particularly in North America. Its position became a major center for the slave trade along the West African coast. George Alexander Lethbridge Banburg, *Sierra Leone or The White Man's Grave*, Swan Sonnenschein Paternoster Company, London, 1889, P. 52.

(2) Judy Hasday, *Sierra Leone*, Mason Crest Publishers, Philadelphia, 1957, P. 26.

(3) H. C. P. P., *Colonial Reports*, Number 939, Sierra Leone, Published by Aegis Library, London, November 1917, P. 641.

in Freetown⁽¹⁾ came to a halt. As a result, a large number of locals lost their jobs, and diseases and epidemics spread⁽²⁾ leading to a major crisis characterized by economic stagnation, a decline in rural labor, food shortages, inflation, unemployment, and a drop in trade exchanges throughout the war. The economic downturn negatively impacted government revenues, prompting the colonial administration to cut spending by reducing its development projects and administrative expenses⁽³⁾. The British government also mobilized workers and farmers for construction and military service, which further harmed agricultural activity in the protectorate and created a severe labor shortage in rural areas. This labor shortage naturally led to decreased agricultural production, which in turn affected the health of the remaining rural population, with women and children bearing most of the burden of food shortages. The lack of agricultural tools also

(1) Freetown: Freetown is located at the northern tip of the Freetown Peninsula, which is named after it. It is bordered by the Western Highlands to the east and the Atlantic Ocean coast to the west and north. It was initially a settlement for immigrants to Sierra Leone, and as their numbers increased from Europe and America, urban development expanded. Mahmoud bin Suleiman Al-Aqeeli, *The Geographical Encyclopedia of the Islamic World*, Saudi Arabia, 1999, P. 819.

(2) Bnawal Airport, Sierra Leone Medical Department, 31 December 1917, P. 45.

(3) Cox George N. A, *Financing and Development in West Africa: Sierra Leone Experience*, D. Dodson, London, 1961, PP. 171172-.

made life even more difficult for them. Despite this, the colonial government attempted to mitigate the crisis by purchasing and distributing 100,000 machetes to farmers⁽¹⁾ Workers who remained in Sierra Leone resorted to cultivating fast-growing and high-yield crops such as cassava⁽²⁾ often referred to as “lazy man’s farming.” However, their struggles were exacerbated by the colonial government’s confiscation of large quantities of rice through tribal chiefs to feed its workers and soldiers. This rice was often taken without payment or at prices below market value⁽³⁾.

The difficult conditions endured by the population led to an uprising in 1919 that spread across almost all of Sierra Leone⁽⁴⁾ The immediate cause of the uprising was a dispute between railway officials and daily wage workers over their exclusion from the end-of-war bonus, which had been granted to other categories of railway workers, as well as daily wage workers in the medical

(1) Ismail Rashid, Epidemics and Resistance in Colonial Sierra Leone During the First World War, *The Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 2012, P. 7.

(2) Cassava: Grown in tropical and subtropical regions, cassava is one of the most drought-resistant crops, and its cultivation is very simple and easy. It is a staple food in developing countries. Cassava and Tapioca, *Al-Muqtaf Magazine*, Volume 21, 1897, P. 443.

(3) Ismail Rashid, *OP Cit*, P. 7.

(4) H. C. P. P., Colonial Reports, No. 1065, Sierra Leone 1919, Printed and Polished by, London, March 1921, P. 328.

sector, police, and soldiers⁽¹⁾ of the West African Frontier Force⁽²⁾ In response, daily wage workers, clerks, and laborers from the Public Works Department went on strike⁽³⁾ The situation was further aggravated by the rising price of rice, the staple food of the population. Syrian traders were accused of hoarding rice to drive up prices, leading to attacks and looting of their properties. Despite police efforts to protect their assets, their forces were insufficient to handle the unrest, which resulted in the killing of a Syrian trader. As a consequence, the British governor called for additional military forces, leading to the arrest of over 200 people. It is noteworthy that attacks on Syrian traders were more severe compared to those on European and Creole⁽⁴⁾ traders, whose

(1) C. O 267 /583, The Colonial and Provincial Reporter, 19 July 1919, P. 6.

(2) West African Frontier Force: Formed in 1897 to resist French presence during the critical period of Anglo-French competition over the Niger, the British government decided to create a standing military force for emergency situations to strengthen British influence in West Africa and to conquer and control the region's countries. S. C. Ukpabi, The Origins of the West African Frontier Force, Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, Vol. 3, No. 3, December 1966, P. 486.

(3) Sierra Leone, Weekly News, 19 July 1919, P. 8.

(4) Creoles: The Creoles were groups that came to settle in the Sierra Leone colony, and they were referred to as the "Miserable Regiment." This group included 400 freed slaves, accompanied by 60 white men and women who had been living in Britain without work or shelter after the Mansfield ruling of 1787 that freed them. The second regiment, Nova Scotia, arrived in 1792 and consisted of African Americans who had fought on the British side during

properties were targeted but not their lives⁽¹⁾.

The Colonial Office reacted harshly, sending telegrams recommending military intervention and the imposition of martial law to restore order. It also suggested deploying troops from neighboring colonies if Sierra Leone's forces were inadequate. As a result, trained European police officers were sent to the colony to assist in investigating the disturbances⁽²⁾. In response to the events, the Colonial Office enacted the 1919 Riot Prevention Act, which imposed imprisonment with hard labor on those involved in the unrest, effectively bringing the strike to an end by early 1920⁽³⁾.

As soon as the 1919 uprising ended, railway workers launched another strike to protest delayed wages, pay deductions, unfair sick leave policies for daily wage workers, and mistreatment of employees. The strike was led by the Railway Workers' Union, which had been formed in 1920 by skilled workers and had 30

the American Revolution. Later, the Maroon Regiment arrived in 1800 from Jamaica. These groups formed the Creole community, which positioned itself as aristocratic relative to the native population. Roger Anstey, *The Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition 1760-1810*-, Humanities Press, New Jersey, 1975, PP. 5270-.

(1) H. E. Conway, *OP Cit*, P. 53.

(2) C. O. 267 / 582, District Commissioner Sherbro District, to Colonial Secretary, 3 August, 1919.

(3) H. E. Conway, *OP Cit*, PP. 5354-.

members under the leadership of one of the workers⁽¹⁾ By the end of the first day of the strike, 16 union members had been dismissed. On the following day, the strikers resumed work. The British Secretary of State for the Colonies praised the governor of Sierra Leone for his handling of the situation, particularly for dismissing the strikers, stating:

“I approve of your action in dismissing the ringleaders, and I assume you have also consulted the Attorney General regarding possible legal proceedings against them for unlawful assembly, rioting, or any offense under the Railway Act or any other colonial law.”⁽²⁾

Second :The 1926 General Strike in Sierra Leone and the British Response

Under these circumstances, the national movement gained momentum among workers. On January 14, 1926, a railway strike broke out, led by the Railway Workers' Union, which had been established in April 1925. The strike was a protest against the government's policy of making the railway financially self-sufficient through increased freight charges. The rise in shipping fees led to higher prices for food and other essential goods that relied on railway transportation. As a result, the living conditions of

(1) Ibid, P. 54.

(2) Quoted in: C. O. 267 / 587, Secretary of State to Governor Wilkinson, 22 October, 1920.

the working class, including railway employees, did not improve, and the policy had a severe impact on workers' livelihoods⁽¹⁾.

The government viewed the strike as a political battle "to the death", with British Governor Ransford Slater determined to end it from the outset, believing it would only last a few days⁽²⁾ He even described the strike as a rebellion, stating:

"This is a revolution against the government carried out by its own servants."⁽³⁾

Compared to the 1919 strike, the 1926 railway strike was more organized. It was orchestrated by the Railway Workers' Union, which, from its first meeting, aimed to unite all railway employees. The union declared:

"Our union was formed to improve the conditions of all members of the railway administration, including clerks, craftsmen, and others who have joined as members. We operate under the principle of collective responsibility, and as members, we advocate for and address the grievances of any

(1) C. O. 267 / 615, Memo by Fiddian, March, 1926.

(2) Akintola J. G. Wyse, H.C. Bankole-Bright and Politics in Colonial Sierra Leone 1919–1958, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge – United Kingdom, 1990, PP. 7980-.

(3) Quoted in: Ioan Davies, African Trade Unions, C. Nicholls & Company Ltd, Great Britain, 1966, P. 75.

one of us.”⁽¹⁾

The strike faced a violent response from the colonial authorities, who called in military forces and opened fire on the strikers and their supporters. However, the residents of Freetown fully supported the strike, as they had many grievances against the colonial government. In solidarity with the workers, they established a relief fund for the strikers, raising approximately £500. Meanwhile the Colonial Office in London offered full support for any decision taken by the governor to end the strike. In response, the governor dismissed employees who were eligible for retirement if they had joined the strike and reduced the wages of many workers. Additionally, the Railway Workers' Union was banned. In reaction, African members of the Legislative Council openly supported and defended the railway workers. On the other hand, the Colonial Secretary proposed suspending the constitution and halting any further constitutional developments. As a result of this policy, Freetown's municipal council was dissolved after the strike ended, with the official reasoning being the council's lack of experience, financial shortages, and general mismanagement⁽²⁾.

This response clearly demonstrates that the colonial government

(1) Quoted in: H. E. Conway, Labour Protest Activity in Sierra Leone during the Early Part of the Twentieth Century, Labour History, No. 15, November 1968, P. 55.

(2) Joe A. D. Alie, A New History of Sierra Leone, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1990, PP. 175-176.

in Sierra Leone was hostile to any labor strike, viewing it as an act of rebellion. The authorities consistently labeled the strikers as revolutionaries or insurgents and referred to workers as servants, reflecting the British colonialists' condescending attitude toward the people of Sierra Leone, particularly the working class. Despite these challenges, spontaneous strikes became a defining method of expressing dissatisfaction with colonial rule.

Third : Political Developments in Sierra Leone and Their Impact on the Labor Movement (1938–1951)

The period between 1938 and 1951 was a crucial phase in Sierra Leone's history, marked by significant political developments that had a profound impact on the growth of the labor movement and the struggle for political and social rights. This period helped shape the national consciousness among the local population. A key event was the return of (Wallace Johnson)⁽¹⁾ to Sierra Leone on April

(1) Wallace Johnson: An African politician and journalist born in Wilberforce on February 6, 1895. After completing his education, he worked in various fields, including customs administration and Freetown's city council. He was a frequent traveler, politician, and journalist, visiting many countries in Africa and Europe, editing several newspapers, and enrolling in Moscow University in the Soviet Union. He also organized several labor unions in the Gold Coast and Nigeria. In 1934, he, along with other trade unionists, founded the West African Youth League in the Gold Coast to advocate for workers' rights and constitutional rights for all people. He returned to Sierra Leone in 1938, and with the outbreak of World War II, Wallace Johnson and his supporters were arrested. Elizabeth Esici, History of West Africa Since

23, 1938, after spending twelve years in Britain. He founded the West African Youth Association (WAYA)⁽¹⁾, which played a major role in mobilizing workers. Johnson and his association members adopted a strategy of reading speeches he had written at public meetings, encouraging their supporters to gather information on wages, working conditions, and the cost of living without the knowledge of the colonial authorities. These findings were then used to raise awareness and mobilize support among workers and the broader population. WAYA was not limited to the colony alone; it also had branches in key towns in the protectorate, particularly in mining areas⁽²⁾. Wallace Johnson and his colleagues frequently visited these branches, discussed workers' grievances, and reinforced their demands for better conditions. The association openly condemned poor working conditions and, in a lengthy memorandum, criticized the British colonial government in Sierra Leone not only for allowing the exploitation of workers⁽³⁾ but also

1800, Africana Publishing Company, New York, 1977, P. 55.

(1) West African Youth League: Founded by Wallace Johnson in Sierra Leone in May 1938, it adopted the slogan "Freedom or Death" and its membership was open to all Africans of African descent. Its members referred to each other as "comrade. Martin H. Y. Kaniki, *Politics of Politics in Colonial West Africa: The Sierra Leone Experience*, A Journal of African Politics, Development and International Affairs, Vol. 4, No. 3, 1974, P. 433.

(2) Ibrahim Abdullah, *OP Cit*, P. 204.

(3) Leo Spitzer and Laray Denzer, I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson and the West African Youth League Part II: The Sierra Leone Period 1938–1945, The

for actively participating in it.

The memorandum identified the lack of negotiations between workers and the colonial government as the root cause of labor issues and exploitation. Instead of enacting laws that benefited workers, the colonial administration passed legislation that made it nearly impossible for workers to form labor unions. WAYA submitted this memorandum to the Secretary of State for the Colonies on behalf of the workers. The significance of this memorandum lies in the fact that it represented the first organized protest addressing labor issues in Sierra Leone. Wallace Johnson used it to emphasize that the colonial administration was ultimately responsible for these conditions⁽⁴⁾. The memorandum urged the Colonial Secretary to intervene and improve the situation, which led to significant outcomes. As a result, the Colonial Office pressured the colonial government to address the economic and social issues affecting the local population more constructively⁽²⁾. Governor John Jardine later acknowledged this shift in policy, stating:

“It can be said that Johnson has succeeded beyond our expectations. There is no denying the fact that Johnson’s presence in Sierra Leone is an embarrassment. If a strike

International Journal of African Historical Studies, Vol. 6, No. 4, 1973, P. 582.

(4) Martin H. Y. Kaniki, OP Cit, P. 436.

(2) Hakim Adi, OP Cit, P. 356.

were to occur at one of the ports, there would be a potential risk to peace and order in the country.”⁽¹⁾

As for the workers and as a result of these developments, the British government in Sierra Leone adopted a new policy aimed at improving their conditions in certain areas such as health, housing, and granting workers compensation⁽²⁾. Additionally, with the British Labour Party taking power during World War II and its alliance with labor unions in Britain to reshape the working class, the British government was willing to consider certain points to prevent anti-colonial movements from taking over the thriving labor movements in the colonies. This policy shift led to the appointment of (Edgar Barry)⁽³⁾, whose new mission was⁽⁴⁾ to ensure wage equality for workers, reduce the number of labor unions, and encourage union leaders to focus on industrial unions

(1) Quoted in: Martin H. Y. Kaniki, OP Cit, P. 438.

(2) John D. Hargraves, *The End of Colonial Rule in West Africa Essays in Contemporary History*, Barnes & Noble Books, London, 1979, PP. 6568-.

(3) Edgar Barry: A former official in the trade union and municipal services who arrived in Freetown in early summer 1942 as an assistant labor officer. He was a well-respected figure in the colonial office, and in 1948, he returned to London as an assistant and later deputy labor adviser to the Secretary of State. John D. Hargreaves, *The End of Colonial Rule in West Africa*, Barnes & Noble Books, New York, 1979, PP. 6566-.

(4) Ibrahim Abdullah, *Colonial State and Wage Labor in the Post-War Period Sierra Leone, 1945-1960-*, OP Cit, P. 89.

to keep them away from political organizations⁽¹⁾.

The primary goal of this policy was to reduce labor strikes and prevent a recurrence of the strikes that had occurred before World War II, especially with the spread of socialist ideas opposing capitalism. Socialist movement leaders had benefited from the truce between the Soviet Union and the West during the war.

Barry met with several union leaders in an informal meeting, where he explained the benefits of labor unions in their country. He stated, **“Union organization in this country is extremely poor, and to achieve any meaningful change, union leaders must first and foremost secure a respectable membership to enable them to gain recognition from employers. If they were willing to reorganize their unions based on specific industries, it would be possible to request state officials to establish a sufficient number of bodies through which wages, conditions, and settlements could be negotiated and determined”**⁽²⁾.

Barry’s meeting indicated that workers should organize themselves into specific unions based on their professions, focus on the industrial aspect, and stay away from political life. Organizing into unions would allow them to negotiate with company owners regarding their wages and other work-related demands. He

(1) David Locke, *Workers’ Party and Parastatal Politics in Sierra Leone*, Lanham, MD, 1984, P. 35.

(2) Quoted in: David Locke, *OP Cit*, P. 35.

described union representation as very weak, as union demands were primarily focused on improving working conditions before they evolved into political demands.

To implement his new policy, Barry recommended the establishment of a joint industrial council for state employees to help them acquire the necessary skills⁽¹⁾. On October 12, 1946, a decree was issued to establish a Wage Council that set minimum wages in industries where wages were low⁽²⁾. This was meant to address the economic hardships that had long been present in Sierra Leone, where thousands of illiterate workers were unable to negotiate wage increases with employers⁽³⁾. The Wage Council was also authorized to reform the leave system and overtime pay. Additionally, it recommended that state officials should not be appointed as representatives. Furthermore, the decree stated that failure to comply with Wage Council decisions would make employers subject to legal action, potentially resulting in fines. The decree also required employers to keep payroll records for all workers⁽⁴⁾.

(1) Edgar Barry, *Colonial Trade Unions*, Corona 7, 1949, PP. 2021-.

(2) Sierra Leone, *Debates of the Legislative Council*, Freetown, 12 October 1945, P. 12.

(3) Hugh Conway, *Industrial Relations in Sierra Leone, with the Private Sector Reference to the Development and Functioning of a Bargaining Mechanism Since 1945*, Ph.D., University of London, 1968, P. 138.

(4) *Ibid*, P. 139.

In its effort to address workers' problems, the British administration had Edgar Barry establish a Wage Council for mine workers in January 1946. This council consisted of three government-appointed representatives and five representatives appointed by employers and workers. The following year, he established the Board of the Seafarers' Union, which included seven representatives appointed by employers and workers, while three were appointed by the government⁽¹⁾.

The results of the new policy toward the working class were fruitful, as workers' conditions improved, and the labor class gained respect. In addition to organizing themselves into labor unions, workers received wage increases. Negotiations conducted by miners with the Wage Council led to an increase in their wages, and transport and construction workers also saw wage increases. Moreover, wages were standardized in Freetown and remote areas. This period was considered a golden age for workers, as not a single strike occurred in Sierra Leone between 1946 and 1949. Wages increased compared to the pre-World War II period, and the cost of living remained relatively stable from 1945 to 1949.

Although the new policy required unions to negotiate with employers before going on strike, it also forced employers to comply with workers' demands. National consciousness among

(1) Ibrahim Abdullah, *Colonial State and Wage Labor in the Post-War Period Sierra Leone, 1945-1960*-, OP Cit, P. 90.

the working class grew, as they quickly realized the benefits of striking and the ability to pressure the British administration into implementing further reforms and easing its restrictive measures against them.

On October 2, 1950, a strike erupted involving approximately 2,700 seafarers and iron mine workers in Marampa. The following day, workers at the Pebble Company also went on strike for three days, accompanied by some violent incidents. Their main demands were⁽¹⁾:

1. Wage increases.
2. Rejection of company-imposed rent on worker housing and the lack of compensation.
3. Inadequate medical facilities and transportation services.
4. Non-payment of salaries and gratuities⁽²⁾.

Similarly, on April 30, 1951, around 2,600 diamond miners went on strike without prior notice. While officials from the Ministry of Labor were not surprised by the strike itself, they were astonished by the strikers' refusal to discuss their demands with any European representatives. The strike lasted about ten days and involved

(1) Colonial Reports, Sierra Leone, Report for the Year 1950, Own Stationery Office, London, 1952, P. 15.

(2) Ibrahim Abdullah, Colonial State and Wage Labor in the Post-War Period Sierra Leone, 1945-1960-, OP Cit, P. 94.

minor violent incidents. The striking workers demanded wage increases, despite the Wage Council having granted a raise just a month earlier. As a result, several meetings were held between union officials, Ministry of Labor representatives, and company officials. They agreed to form an investigative council, which was placed under the supervision of a judge. After reviewing the evidence presented by workers' representatives, the judge, with the agreement of both parties and the governor, proposed resolving workers' grievances through negotiations overseen by the Labor Commissioner. In his report on the negotiations, the Labor Commissioner drew official attention to the following statement:

“There is a spontaneous growing sentiment among workers in general that current wages are insufficient to enable them to buy the necessary food for themselves and their families”⁽¹⁾.

He also warned that workers' demands should be met and not excessively resisted—not only to prevent further strikes but also because there was a strong justification for their claims⁽²⁾. Previously, wage increase requests were handled through negotiations within the Wage Council. However, Sierra Leonean workers began seeking wage adjustments through direct negotiations with company management. The reason was that workers had realized

(1) Ibid, P. 95.

(2) Ibid, P. 95.

the Wage Council was being used by companies to maintain low wages. As long as companies treated workers fairly, there was no need for fear⁽¹⁾.

This demonstrates that the national movement grew within the working class, despite the colonial government's new policy of establishing the Wage Council and encouraging workers to organize into profession-based unions to demand their legitimate rights. Nonetheless, strikes and demands for higher wages persisted.

Conclusion

Based on the above, we conclude that the labor movement in Sierra Leone served as a means of expressing anti-British colonial sentiments and grievances faced by the local population. Additionally, workers played a significant role in fostering national awareness and liberation thought in Sierra Leone. The primary goal of British colonialism was to exploit the country's resources, using the ordinary Sierra Leonean as a commodity for white capitalists—whether in agriculture, industry, or even administrative and educational sectors. Through these sectors, the British colonizers sought to use Sierra Leoneans to spread Western ideologies among their own people. However, the ordinary Sierra Leonean worker did not remain a passive follower of British

(1) Ibrahim Abdullah, *Colonial State and Wage Labor in the Post-War Period Sierra Leone, 1945-1960*, OP Cit, P. 96.

colonial laws and ideas. Instead, he actively organized and united efforts to achieve his demands by joining any labor organization that could free him from colonial dependence and rallying around any African leader who called for resistance against the colonizers. The primary weapons workers used to express their rejection of colonialism and its methods were strikes, boycotts, and work disruptions to achieve their demands. After World War II, the labor movement evolved to include various social segments beyond just workers. Labor unions transformed into political parties that negotiated with the British colonizers to expel them, gain independence for their country, and govern themselves without the presence of the white man, allowing them to enjoy their nation's wealth.

List of Sources:

22 October, 1920.

Unpublished Documents:

4- C. O. 267 / 615, Memo by Fiddian, March, 1926.

• **House of Commons**

Parliamentary Papers:

Colonial Reports:

1- H. C. P. P., Colonial Reports, Number 939, Sierra Leone, Published by Aegis Library, London, November 1917.

1- Colonial Reports, Sierra Leone, Report for the year 1950, Own Stationery Office, London, 1952.

2- H. C. P. P., Colonial Reports, No. 1065, Sierra Leone 1919, Printed and Published by, London, March 1921.

2- Cox George N. A., *Financing and Development in West Africa: Sierra Leone Experience*, D. Dodson, London, 1961.

• **Colonial Office Documents:**

Theses and Dissertations in English:

1- C. O. 267 / 583, The Colonial and Provincial Reporter, 19 July, 1919.

1- Hugh Conway, *Industrial Relations in Sierra Leone, with the Private Sector Reference to the Development and Functioning of a Bargaining Mechanism Since 1945*, Ph.D., University of London, 1968.

2- C. O. 267 / 582, District Commissioner Sherbro District, to Colonial Secretary, 3 August, 1919.

3- C. O. 267 / 587, Secretary of State to Governor Wilkinson,

Books in English:

1990.

1- Akintola J. G. Wyse, *H.C. Bankole – Bright and Politics in Colonial Sierra Leone 1919–1958*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge – United Kingdom, 1990.

2- David Locke, *Workers' Party and Parastatal Politics in Sierra Leone*, Lanham, MD, 1984.

3- Edgar Barry, *Colonial Trade Unions*, Corona 7, 1949.

4- Elizabeth Esici, *History of West Africa Since 1800*, Africana Publishing Company, New York, 1977.

5- Ioan Davies, *African Trade Unions*, C. Nicholls & Company Ltd, Great Britain, 1966.

6- Joe A. D. Alie, *A New History of Sierra Leone*, St. Martin's Press, New York,

7- John D. Hargraves, *The End of Colonial Rule in West Africa: Essays in Contemporary History*, Barnes & Noble Books, London, 1979.

8- John D. Hargreaves, *The End of Colonial Rule in West Africa*, Barnes & Noble Books, New York, 1979.

9- Judy Hasday, *Sierra Leone*, Mason Crest Publishers, Philadelphia, 1957.

Journals and Published Research in Arabic:

1- *Cassava and Tapioca*, *Al-Muqtataf Magazine*, Volume 21, 1897.

Journals and Published Research in English:

1- H. E. Conway, *Labour Protest Activity in Sierra Leone During the Early Part of the*

Twentieth Century, Labour History, No. 15, November 1968.

Newspapers in English:

1– *Sierra Leone*, Weekly News, 19 July, 1919.

2– Ismail Rashid, *Epidemics and Resistance in Colonial Sierra Leone During the First World War*, The Canadian Journal of African Studies, 2012.

3– Leo Spitzer and Laray Denzer, *I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson and the West African Youth League Part II: The Sierra Leone Period 1938–1945*, The International Journal of African Historical Studies, Vol. 6, No. 4, 1973.

4– Martin H. Y. Kaniki, *Politics of Politics in Colonial West Africa: The Sierra Leone Experience*, A Journal of African Politics, Development, and International Affairs, Vol. 4, No. 3, 1974.



تطور الحركة العمالية في سيرااليون (١٩٥١-١٩١٩)
والموقف البريطاني منها





Journal Homepage: <http://studies.africansc.iq/>
ISSN: 2518- 9271 (Print) ISSN: 2518- 9360 (Online)

تطور الحركة العمالية في سيراليون (١٩١٩-١٩٥١) والموقف البريطاني منها

م.د. لؤي جمعة فاضل

جامعة ميسان - كلية التربية الأساسية

loaay.j.f@gmail.com

ملخص البحث:

تعد المدة بين ١٩١٩ و ١٩٥١ مرحلة حاسمة في تطور الحركة العمالية في سيراليون إذ اسهمت الظروف الاقتصادية والسياسية والاجتماعية التي افرزها الاستعمار البريطاني في تطورها وقد شهدت تلك المدة محطات رئيسية من التنظيم والاحتجاج من قبل العمال وسط ردود افعال متباينة من قبل السلطات البريطانية.

تاريخ الاستلام:

٢٠٢٥/٧/٢٥

تاريخ القبول:

٢٠٢٥/٧/٣٠

تاريخ النشر:

٢٠٢٥/٩/١

الكلمات المفتاحية:

الحركة العمالية، سيراليون، الموقف البريطاني، الاستعمار، بريطانيا.

المجلد الثاني العدد (٢٠)

شهر ربيع الأول - ١٤٤٧هـ

أيلول ٢٠٢٥م