



# Socialist Bulletin

*A Monthly Publication from Socialist Labour*

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## How Do We Stop Further Tragedies Like the Kaduna Train Attack?

Obviously all the deaths on the Abuja-Kaduna train are a terrible loss. Losing Musa Lawal, the General Secretary of the TUC, the Chair of Kwara State TUC and the young doctor, Chinelo Nwando, with her life ahead of her, is a devastating blow. We also mourn the deaths of the two cleaners and workers, Loretta and Abdul, and the others who died during the attack.

But we need to be clear about the causes and possible solutions to avoid more such tragedies in future.

Merely calling the people who carried out the attack “terrorists” and asking for more resolute action by the security forces will not solve the root causes of insecurity. Until these are addressed we will all continue to suffer burglaries, theft, kidnapping and worse.

The people of Kaduna State have suffered wave after wave of retrenchments over the last 20 years. The textile mills employed tens of thousands, but are now gone. Their workers lost their jobs, in many cases without being paid their entitlements – even where the factories were owned by the state governments. Then the state also inflicted retrenchments including tens of thousands of teachers in 2017 and more recently.

Young people in Kaduna State are suffering fantastic levels of unemployment and they all know family members who have been retrenched or pensioners who have not been paid their gratuities. They can also see the wealth of Kaduna represented by the outrageous convoys that transport top politicians, military officials and others.

It is not surprising that a few turn to crime, and worse, when they know so many of the rich gained their wealth from corruption.

We need to be clear that nobody was born a criminal or terrorist. Criminals and terrorists are essentially, and in the main, products of our unjust society. They are people pushed into committing illegal acts. The only enduring solution lies in policies that move towards far more equal societies. There is enough wealth in society to satisfy everyone's needs, but not the greed of the few.

The loss of one of our better trade union leaders must make us redouble our efforts to ensure that the trade unions are more successful in future.

The three day strike in Kaduna last May was successful in that El-Rufai was frightened. He then stopped further retrenchments and paid entitlements for teachers whose jobs he took from them four years previously. The active strike with daily mass protests made a difference, but it was not enough. There are thousands of pensioners in the state who have yet to receive their gratuities.

The Kaduna strike was important as it showed a way forward. United action of all trade unionists with direct and public support from the national NLC. Wabba himself led the daily protests despite threats that he would be arrested.

If we want to stop such unfortunate events repeating in the future, we have to ensure that trade union action is successful, this needs maximum unity, solidarity and active strikes. If all states paid a reasonable minimum wage and paid their pensioners their full entitlements, that would be a start. It would give young people hope for their future and begin the end of the temptations of get rich quick, criminality, kidnapping and worse.

Visit: [socialistlabour.com.ng](http://socialistlabour.com.ng)

# The Economy Is In Meltdown, The Polity On Life Support And The Ruling Class In Disarray -

BY JAYE GASKIA - Member TPAP-M Secretariat

This ruling class, including all of its factions and fractions have failed.

They are the cause of our current, ongoing and historical crises of existential proportions and cataclysmic dimensions. It is the main driver of the deepening scope, scale, nature and character of the exploitation and oppression inherent in and characteristic of this capitalist system, and its current neoliberal ideological guiding principle.

This ruling class, as exemplified by the permanent crisis of stagnated development over which it has for decades been presiding, is incapable of rising up to the occasion, and leading the process of liberatory human development that is so urgently required to extricate our people, the working class and the toiling masses, from the abyss of subhuman existence, and the retrieve them from the very edge of societal disintegration.

If not the ruling class, then who? The answer is simple - the working class and the toiling masses; this class and people, who in throwing off the yoke of exploitation, oppression and repression, stand the chance to truly humanise themselves, remake society, and achieve our liberation from the clutches of local and imperialist domination.

Our task is to build and consolidate the process of building a Mass Political Movement of the working people and toiling masses; a movement dedicated to organising the resistance of the people; a movement oriented on taking and wielding power. We need to combine economic resistance with street protests, and channel this towards political engagement and contestation with the ruling class for power, including through electoral participation.

We are in the process of building such a movement The Peoples Alternative Political Movement (TPAP-M); a movement dedicated to the emergence of a Mass Workers Political Party and the Socialist Transformation. A movement that understands and can navigate the nexus between the Tactical Urgency (of the moment), and the Strategic Patience (required to build a political movement that can take and wield power); a movement that understands the relationship between the national character of its immediate task, and the international character of its ultimate goal.

Such is the character of the current situation; such is the nature of the task that confronts us now.

To play your key role in building The Peoples Alternative Political Movement (TPAP-M) in your community or trade union please provide your details at: <https://forms.gle/Bn7P4gEfk1JvtGpZ6>

We urge each of you, to talk to others, to canvass for the movement, and to establish circles of the TPAP Movement in your communities, places of work, or places of instruction (school/campus).

The Political Action Program and the Economic Action Program, along with other primary documents of the TPAP Movement, can be found at: <https://thepeoplesummit.org/download>

## The devastation of Ukraine: NATO, Russia and imperialism

Joseph Choonara

The ultimate outcome of the Russian invasion of Ukraine remains uncertain. However, the brutality of the offensive is beyond doubt. This was epitomised by the siege of Mariupol, where shelling and air-strikes were said by Ukrainian officials to have killed thousands. Across Ukraine, although the number of deaths remains unclear, the United Nations has announced that ten million people, a quarter of the population, have been displaced.

Joseph discusses the various approaches that socialists have taken to the Russian invasion of Ukraine in an extended socialist analysis. He says that we should take heart in the level of protests against the war in Russia itself and against NATO in Western Europe. <http://isj.org.uk/devastation-of-ukraine/>

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## Socialist Provides Lead Paper at NLC “Workers Political Conference”



Professor Yusufu Ali Zoaka was the lead presenter at the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) “Workers Political Conference” in early March. The theme of the one day conference was Commitment to National Emancipation and Development Through Effective Political Engagement by Nigerian Workers. As an academic and an active trade unionist, Prof Zoaka identified the first of the main impediments against political engagement by trade emancipation as unity among the labour forces, the numerous socialist groups and civil society groups:

*More than ever before there is an important need for the entire labour unions in Nigeria to close ranks and take the historical role placed on it by the failures of the political class that have tried to navigate unsuccessfully the ship*

*of state from collapse... Recently the Peoples Alternative Political Movement (TPAP-M), which I am serving as its FCT acting Chair, organized meetings with the workers in all the area councils... [The labour unions should] unite to objectively and honestly task themselves with the responsibility of driving the process of emancipation of the people. This cannot be achieved singly by any union but in solidarity with all the unions we shall overcome our oppressors converting them into prisoners to construct manually the roads they have stolen from the people the schools health clinics they have stolen from the people.*

He concluded by calling on the working people to close ranks under the leadership of the NLC to lead all into a more prosperous society that should promote equity, justice and fair play for all, saying:

*The country is currently at a cross roads with the abysmal failure of the two leading political parties. Therefore there is a political vacuum (space) that has been created by the failure of the political class. This calls on labour to be ready to serve as the vanguard of the people so as the galvanize the strength and energies of the people towards emancipating all. The struggle will not be an easy one as the class that is sending itself by itself into oblivion has done so successfully by looting and converting itself into a lootocracy instead of using the peoples wealth to promote good governance.*

The full paper is available from the Socialist Labour website: <https://socialistlabour.com.ng/2022/03/15/prof-yusu-fu-zoaka-paper-presentation-at-the-nigeria-labour-congress-nlc-workers-political-conference-march-2022/>

## Free Imoleayo Michael – one of many still threatened with prison over #EndSARs protests

Imoleayo is still facing prison for taking part in the #EndSARs movement. We demand his unconditional release and the dropping of all charges.

Two weeks after attending the #EndSARs protests, Imoleayo was taken from his home in the middle of the night. 20 armed men raided his home in Abuja. His family were locked in a room. He was taken by the authorities. Imoleayo, a young computer programmer, promoted the protests online using the viral hashtag #EndSARs.

After they took him away from his family, the authorities brought Imoleayo to the state security service (DSS) headquarters where they held him in an underground cell for 41 days without access to a lawyer or his family.

Imoleayo suffered pneumonia and was eventually released on bail in December 2020. He is now facing trumped-up charges of ‘conspiracy with others to disturb public peace’ and ‘disturbing public peace’. Imoleayo is one of many people still at risk of punishment for speaking out about police violence.

For more details of his campaign led by Amnesty International: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/petition/nigeria-imoleayo-michael/>  
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## Gender Equality should be a Human Right

*Happiness Ntuenibok S.*



Gender equality is a human right, but our world faces a persistent gap in access to opportunities and decision-making powers for women and men.

Globally, women have fewer opportunities for economic participation than men, less access to basic and higher education, greater health and safety risks, and less political representation. Too few women do not even have the basic right to choose when or if to become pregnant.

Guaranteeing the rights of women and giving them opportunities to reach their full potential is critical not only for attaining gender equality but also for meeting a wide range of international development goals. Empowered women and girls contribute to the health and productivity of their families and communities, creating a ripple effect that benefits everyone.

The word gender describes the socially-constructed roles and responsibilities that societies consider appropriate for men and women. Gender equality means that men and women have equal power and equal opportunities for financial independence, education, and personal development.

Women's empowerment is a critical aspect of achieving gender equality. It includes increasing a woman's sense of self-worth, her decision-making power, her access to opportunities and resources, her power and control over her own life inside and outside the home, and her ability to effect change. Yet gender issues are not focused on women alone, but the relationship between men and women in society.

Women have decided to make the decisions themselves now, just like the case where the National Assembly decided to make a mockery of women in the same month that women were supposed to be celebrated. I think it is time that our society realises that women have the full potential, as human beings, to make decisions, lead, manage and take care of political affairs if they deem fit to run or speak.

The time for belittling women have gone. We are in the era of DO IT YOUR SELF. Women are ready to take the mantle without fear or favour.

It is wickedness to see or hear a man talk down on any woman, saying they can't hold power or office. It's a big shame and a disgrace to the men who have mothers, sisters, wives etc.

Join the fight for women's equality with the following groups:

Campaign for Women and Reproductive Rights, WhatsApp group:

<https://chat.whatsapp.com/CF9glYCMFut35HGO5K3k8f>

Womanifesto: <https://www.womanifesto.ng>

## 2023 Elections, Women's Rights and Women in Politics - Sisí Afrika

Our society literally belongs to men, upper class men precisely, with many lower class men foolishly gallivanting about like they're also in power, repressing women for the ruling class and their society.

It is interesting that NO presidential candidate for the coming 2023 election has EVER recognized Patriarchy or Sexism as one of the ills to tackle! The best they can talk about is Women's Rights. Just as no presidential candidate has come out to say that it is the capitalist society that is the problem.

Shall we ask if it's enough to just call for women emancipation only on paper to gain women's trust to vote for them or to REALLY have women's interests at heart?

If a candidate already has this kind of apathy towards women we have a problem. They just draft some half-hearted calls for "women's rights" in their manifesto to keep those feminists' mouths shut. Give a few of them money, connections and opportunities, and you win their hearts and loyalty for life. Any candidate who is not openly a feminist is only contesting to maintain the status quo.



As for our dear feminists obsessed only with political powers; I need you to understand that there is really no power for women in a country where women can't even decide what happens to their bodies!

Where issues that matter to the majority of women (like effective contraception, abortion rights, gay rights, rights of sex workers etc) are not touched upon with this energy.

Should we be fighting for

women taking the indigeneship of their husbands' states or fighting against women's identity crises that make women only take on their identities of their fathers and their husbands and they never having their own true identities?

Now tell me how many women are hungry in this poverty-stricken country? How many women are able to decide when and if they become pregnant? How many women are in need of protection as sex workers? How many women are paying through their noses for expensive unsafe abortions? Was a young girl not arrested by the police in Ogun State for buying pregnancy test strips?

Equality can only be achieved by ALL women, and not just by these condescending rich class women who don't even know the hell the poor class women go through.

The crux of the matter here is there's no messiah anywhere. It is impossible for one person or a few people to fight FOR millions of other people in this country. There are roughly 213 million people in Nigeria and there's no messiah anywhere.

YOU are your own saviour!

Together we will set ourselves free!

Stand up on your feet and let us fight for our rights!

The full version of this article is available from: <https://figurefeminists.com/2023-elections-womens-rights-and-women-in-politics/>

## Privatization of Public Enterprises -perceptions or reality?

**Bonney Akaeze**

In spite of the obvious evidence to the contrary, the drivers of capitalist ideology have entrenched the perception that public enterprises are antithetical to economic development. The Bretton Woods institutions (IMF and World Bank) and most faculties of higher educational institutions repeatedly claim that neoliberalism is the only way forward. They push the view that sustainable socio-economic development is only possible if all economies are deregulated through privatization and commercialization of their economic assets.

It is claimed that citizens gave up part of their individual liberties to the modern state in return for their safeguard against the brutishness and cruelty of people in a society where might is right. The welfare of citizens remains the only rational ground for the existence of a modern state. This now includes health and education services and some protection against poverty.

China is now the second largest economy in the world, yet it still operates a vast number of public enterprises. Statoil ASA was founded in 1972 as a public enterprise in Norway. The company is credited with the huge success of management of the country's oil wealth. How about Debswana Diamond Company Limited which is a joint venture between the State of Botswana and De Beers; the South African Diamond Company. Even in Nigeria; we can look back and credit the regional governments with a good measure of success stories over the management of their public enterprises.

History is replete with evidence of failed private businesses more than for public enterprises. The failure of public enterprises, especially in Africa, is the failure of states. Africa is the domain of weak states, states that are weak against the strong, but strong against the weak. In contrast, we need a model of a socialist system that is sustainable, protects its citizens when they fall ill, provides decent education for all the youth and protection against unemployment.

We should therefore take it as our responsibility to redirect our society back to our original African heritage of a socialist system that did not just emphasize wealth generation, but also wealth distribution. Our model should be the state where state policies and actions are detected by public interest, fair distribution of national material resources, a system that is knowledge driven due to free access to functional education for its citizens. A system rooted in transparency and accountability because the rule of law is held sacrosanct with little possibility of escape for culprits of its infraction. Above all; a society which guarantees social safety for the citizens.

## I Had 4 Abortions, Oya Arrest Me! - The Diary Of An Almost Aborted Pro-Choice Feminist - Sisi Afrika

This book is the stunning autobiography of a young woman from Ile-Ife and how she survived. How an unwanted girl child, brought up by her grandparents, survived capitalism and patriarchy. Why she is angry at the system and fighting to change it. She came to believe that it is capitalism and especially patriarchy that is the problem, rather than her abusive mother.

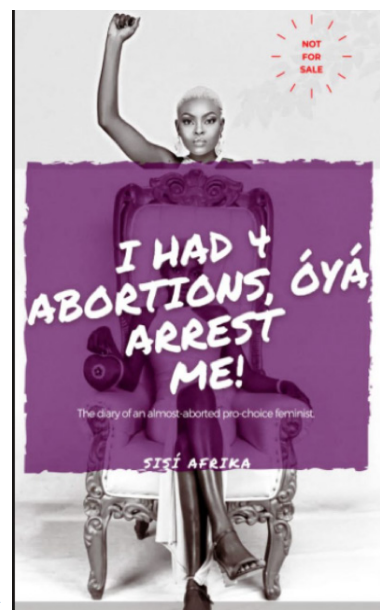
Mother and daughter both suffered horribly and their histories make us question what is wrong with our society and how we need to begin to change it. Sisi provides detailed descriptions of their lives and explains how it was patriarchy/sexism, rather than individual failings of the people involved, that were the real problems.

Read Sisi's story and join us in the fight to make the world a better place, especially for our daughters.

Women should read this book to direct their anger at the proper target. Men should read the book to appreciate the challenges that their mothers, daughters, partners and other women face and why they should support their fight back.

Download the book for free via this link:

<https://ivavalleybooks.com/2022/03/18/i-had-4-abortions-oya-arrest-me-the-diary-of-an-almost-aborted-pro-choice-feminist/?v=330a840f8637>



## General Strike in Niger State – what were the gains?

The primary teachers in Niger State were on strike for most of the first three months of this year. They were supported by a strike of all state and local government workers from early March. We congratulate the workers of Niger State for this action, but unfortunately, it was not enough. The strikes were eventually suspended three weeks later without major gains having been achieved.

The strike was over the payment of percentage salaries, the failure to pay pension gratuities for several years and the failure of the state to make other payroll related payments. The teachers and the workers in different local governments were only paid per centage salaries over the second half of 2021. The four main demands of the strikes were:

- payment of pension gratuities for state and local government workers (including teachers) which had not been paid since February 2020;
- payment of 30% salaries from June 2020 to state workers;
- payment of third party deductions including subscriptions to trade unions;
- payment of arrears of salaries to local government workers – they had been paid different amounts in the different local governments for months.

It is not as if Niger State does not have enough money. The State has plenty of money to pay its workers properly, it is just choosing not to do the needful. State revenues are increasing each year and the state is spending massive amounts on capital – nearly two thirds of the budget for 2022 is dedicated to capital projects. In contrast, less than half of its spending is on salaries and pensions for its workers.

Despite this the combined strike by the NLC and the TUC across the state was not able to win any significant concessions from the state:

1. Pension gratuities – the State has committed to pay N200 millions from arrears of N20 billion (so only one per cent) for those workers who were on GL 1-6.
2. June 2020 state salaries – the arrears for all State workers have been paid
3. Third party payments – the State has committed to pay N200m and then to pay N100m a month in future. It is not clear how long this will take to pay the full arrears.
4. Local government salaries – the State promised to pay the February salary in full (but it was not paid until after the strike was called off). There is no clear undertaking on when the other salary arrears will be paid.

We can only hope that Niger State Government delivers by the end of May, the deadline given by the trade unions. But the lessons from other states and especially the Federal Government is that governments never keep their promises.

For example, we currently have national strikes by ASUU and the research institutes, purely due to the government not fulfilling their previous promises. Niger State has stolen billions from its workers and has now only promised to repay a few million. Is this really acceptable? The State politicians need to be taught a harsh lesson that they will remember.

It would be good to know why the strike was suspended in late March and not after checking that the March salaries had been paid properly the following week.

We need high profiles strikes with clear support from the national level, as was the case in Kaduna in May 2021. Large daily protests were organised and the mass of workers were actively involved in the strike. After only three days the governor was frightened. Entitlements were quickly paid to tens of thousands of teachers retrenched several years earlier and there have been no more retrenchments since the strike.

In Niger State, in contrast, the mass of workers were not actively involved in the strike. One of the strike alerts merely said: “Workers are enjoined to stay at home and pray”. This strategy did not work in Niger State. It had previously failed in Cross River and other states.

We need unity and solidarity for strikes to be victorious. The working peoples of Nigeria desperately need this to happen for them and their families to survive. After the success of Kaduna, the NLC should then have moved on to address similar issues in other states. The governors need to be frightened to ensure that they pay their workers and pensioners properly, as and when due.



# 7 Nigerian Laws that Discriminate Against Women

## The Police Act

Regulation 127 of the Police Act stipulates that "an unmarried woman police officer who becomes pregnant shall be discharged from the force, and shall not be re-enlisted except with the approval of the inspector-general".



## Citizenship

Section 26 of the 1999 constitution as amended explains that the constitution does not allow a male foreigner who marries a Nigerian woman to become a Nigerian citizen.

## Spousal Rape

Section 282(2) of the Penal Code, which is applicable in the northern region, states that "sexual intercourse by a man with his wife is not rape, save and except the wife have not attained the age of puberty".

This implies that a man may only be found guilty of raping his wife if she has not reached puberty.



## Assault and Battery

In Nigeria, indecent assault committed against females carry lesser punishment than that of males.

Under Section 353 of the Criminal Code Act, "any person who unlawfully and indecently assaults any male person is guilty of a felony and is liable to imprisonment for three years".

However, Section 360 of the same act says that "any person who unlawfully and indecently assaults a woman is guilty of a misdemeanour and is liable to imprisonment for two years".

## Abortion

The combined effect of Sections 228, 228, and 230 of the Criminal Code is to the effect that any woman who, with the intent to cause her own miscarriage, unlawfully gives any poison or other noxious substance to herself, or any person who aids her in doing so, faces a sentence of three to fourteen years in jail.



## Consent to Marriage

Section 18 of the Marriage Act requires the written consent of the father of either party who wants to get married if he or she is below 21 years of age.

The mother's written consent is only permitted when the father is dead, of unsound mind or out of Nigeria.

## Discriminatory Labour Laws

Section 55 of the Nigerian Labour Act prohibits women from working at night with the exception of female nurses and women in management positions who are not engaged in manual labour.

Under 56(1) of the Labour Act, women are also prevented from engaging in underground work in any mine.

Also, while Section 34(1) of the act allows men who are employed in the public service to be accompanied to their place of posting "by such members of his family (not exceeding two wives and such of his children as are under the age of sixteen years) as he wishes to take with him," there is no such provision made for women.

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## **STOP ALL WARS! NO TO RUSSIAN AGGRESSION!! NO TO NATO!!!**

The Putin led war of Russian aggression and invasion against Ukraine that has caused the death of not a few people and the surge refugees into other countries is condemnable, so also the Ukraine state is responsible for the death of tens of thousands of people in the country fighting for their right for self-determination in the past one decade.

The Statement by Socialist Labour on the Russian invasion of Ukraine is available from our website: <https://socialistlabour.com.ng/>

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## Summary of Workers Strikes - March 2022

**Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU)** extended its ongoing strike by eight weeks from 14th March. The strike is over the refusal of the Federal Government to honour the Memorandum of Agreement reached with ASUU to end its nine month strike in December 2020. Student union governments and trade union branches should send messages of support to:

Emmanuel Osodeke, ASUU President - president@asuu.org.ng

Chris Piwuna, ASUU Vice President - piwuna01@gmail.com

Copied to Omotoye Olorode omotoopo@gmail.com

**The Joint Action Committee of the Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU) and Non-Academic Staff Union of Allied and Educational Institutions (NASU)** declared a two-week warning strike from 28th March. The main demands are to re-negotiate the 2009 agreement; payment of earned allowances; payment of minimum wage arrears and the funding of state universities. Trade union branches should send solidarity messages via WhatsApp to the NASU Secretary (08037056585).

**The National Association of Academic Technologists (NAAT)** directed its members to shut down all university laboratories, workshops, studios and farms. NAAT with a two-week warning strike with effect from 21, March, 2022. The main demand is to re-negotiate the 2009 agreement.

As a result, all the main trade unions in the university sector are now on strike. It is to be hoped that what is now an effective joint strike will continue until the Federal Government shows its willingness to fund the tertiary education sector properly.

**Primary school teachers of Niger State, members of the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT)** continued their strike from the beginning of the year. On 3rd March it was decided that all affiliate unions of **NLC operating at local government level in Niger State** were to proceed on a seven Days Warning Strike effective 12 midnight of that day. In addition, all affiliate unions of **NLC and TUC working at State level** were directed to proceed on a similar strike from 12 midnight on Sunday the 6th of March, 2022. These strikes were converted to indefinite strikes before they ended.

The strike was over the payment of percentage salaries, the failure to pay pension gratuities for several years and the failure of the state to make other payroll related payments.

The indefinite strike was suspended until 31st May on 24th March without any significant gains having been made (see also the article on page seven(7) of this Bulletin for more details).

**Teachers in public primary and secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State** commenced an indefinite strike on 16th March. They were demanding for payment of eight years leave grant and six years of promotion arrears. The strike was called off on 20th March.

## Socialist Labour Depends on its Supporters for Finances

*Socialist Labour depends on its members and supporters for funds. We need more financial support so that we can be more active, expand and grow. If you are able to make a modest financial contribution that would be really helpful. We would also like all readers of this Bulletin to consider fully joining Socialist Labour by paying monthly subscriptions.*

*The standard rate is N1,000 a month, with a lower rate of N500 for students or unem-ployed and N5,000 for higher paid comrades. We can all afford something - every little helps.*

*Please make your contributions to the following bank account:*

**First Bank Nig. Ltd. Account No. 3158880328**

**Account Name: Aborisade Albert Femi**

*The account is only used for Socialist Labour purposes.*

## Socialist Labour-JOIN US

The economic, environmental and Covid-19 crises have made clear that society is a conflict between two classes: the vast majority who create the wealth, and a tiny minority who profit from it. Attempts to reform this have failed: the only solution is to replace it with a truly democratic socialist society. The corrupt elite will only give up their power if forced to do so. We need a mass democratic movement to bring about socialism. Events, such as Russia in 1917, the January 2012 protests in Nigeria and the mass uprisings in Sudan and Algeria in 2019, show what we need.

For more details of the basic ideas and policies of Socialist Labour see: [www.socialistlabour.com.ng/about-us/](http://www.socialistlabour.com.ng/about-us/)

To join the Socialist Labour supporters WhatsApp group use the following link: [tinyurl.com/SocialistLabour](https://tinyurl.com/SocialistLabour)

We would love to receive letters, comments or suggestions from our readers. We want to hear from you with suggestions for articles for our future editions or questions on any articles in this issue.

We especially welcome news about protests and strikes in your community or town.

**Please join Socialist Labour, by submitting the following details:**

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**State:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Workplace address/university/school:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Trade union:** \_\_\_\_\_

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