



THE MISERY OF A PEOPLE WITHOUT HOPE

By Abadom Lawrence Amechi



Hope is the sustenance that bridges the gaps between life's routine nourishments. Even when circumstances force us to skip meals, hope becomes the substitute that keeps us going. It is the elixir of life, the vital energy that fuels our existence and lubricates the engine of our being. Without hope, we are left with nothing but misery.

What our bad and clueless leaders have done in the past 25 years was to destroy every vestige of hope left for the common people. Every four years, our

politicians rearrange their lies and wrap them with the foil of hope and before we realise it, we are doomed for another four empty years. The current economic policies have pushed millions into abject poverty, with workers being hit the hardest. Nigerian workers are now among the most impoverished, traumatized and vilified globally. President Tinubu's leadership seems unconcerned about the worsening economic situation. Government has subtly undermined the buying power of the N70,000 new minimum wage.

Fortunately for the politicians, the labour movement with its robust and rich history of advocacy and struggle for workers welfare has gone comatose. Itself a victim of corruption, indiscipline and political manipulations. In the past, the movement kept the touch of hope aglow for years. It was in the forefront for the emancipation of the working masses from the shackles of labour slavery. It was involved in the independent struggle, and was deeply involved in the struggle to rescue the common people from the yoke of military rule.

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THE PRESIDENT MAY NOT KNOW, BUT WE'RE HUNGRY

By Ahmed Aminu-Ramatu Yusuf

Nigerians are hungry. But who will tell our president? Who will dare convey such treasonable tale to Bola Ahmed Tinubu? Which of his throng of information couriers and propaganda merchants would jeopardise their juicy positions by bearing such information? Anyone who dares may in fact be an agent of the opposition.

Rather than engage in such misadventure and be accused of carrying Russian flags, I will confine myself to revealing a state secret. The National Bureau of Statistics has revealed that 62 per cent of us, or some 140 million Nigerians, did not have enough food to eat in 2023. The figure is likely to be much higher now as the situation has gotten worse.

The crisis of poverty has resulted in the inability of the vast majority of the working people to make ends meet, take care of their traditional responsibilities to the extended family, or to be their neighbours' keeper.

The truth, which we can only whisper is "yes, we are facing hunger, the worst type in our history." Not even during slave trade or colonialism, the First and Second World Wars, or our Civil War, was our populace subjected to this level of poverty, deprivation or hunger. Many are simply unable to feed themselves and their families. We are suffering and in pain.

Skyrocketing inflation, especially in the prices of foodstuff and medicine, have rendered our incomes extremely insufficient, making them almost irrelevant. Many have lost their jobs.

Marriages are increasingly coming under strain, and some are breaking down. Children are forced by hunger to work for their own survival. People are just dying before their "time" due to wahala (problems), especially hunger. Some few, in desperation, are turning to crime or worse.



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INSECURITY? - HOW SHOULD SOCIALISTS START TO THINK ABOUT THIS PROBLEM?

Alex Batubo

Any form of ethnic or national chauvinism needs to be avoided at all costs as it divides and weakens the working class. So we should not even suggest that any ethnic group, foreigners or aliens are any part of the 'problem'. One of the most dangerous possibilities is the descent into inter-ethnic violence – Cameroon, Central Africa Republic, Sudan are all clear warnings of where that road may take us.

We need to concentrate on stopping future killings as well as catching the "terrorists".

Whoever does the actual killings, catching them will not bring the dead back to life. Revenge cannot bring peace and tranquillity. All killings and attacks should be subject to the full process of the law, but we also need to develop community cohesion and deal with the underlying causes of insecurity.

The roots of insecurity are economic.

Insecurity started with Boko Haram, in the NE, the poorest region of Nigeria. That is why it is worse now with the increased poverty over that last two years. Land poverty has been made worse by climate change, population growth and land grabbing by the rich and powerful. In many cases this has resulted in privatisation of the commons, where land available to all in the community for farming or grazing is now only available to a few rich 'owners'.

Joe Ajaero, President of the Nigeria Labour Congress, said in mid-April that militancy, kidnapping and other social vices would drastically reduce if the federal and the sub-national governments created more jobs.

Insecurity will only significantly reduce when inequality and poverty are greatly minimised.



Insecurity includes many different issues that may require different solutions.

Kidnapping, banditry, burglary, bank robbing, farmer/herder disputes cattle rustlers, cultists Niger Delta militants, Boko Haram insurgents all require different approaches. Beyond the key issue of reducing hunger and poverty.

We need an evidenced based approach that does not assume that there are easy answers.

Will ranching/cattle colonies etc really provide a viable solution in the particular circumstances in present day Nigeria? Ranching in Nigeria in the 1950s or Belgium or Bulgaria at any time are not really relevant. The experience in Senegal, Burkina Faso, Kenya and Tanzania are far

more relevant and do not provide clear and simple answers.

Communities are defending themselves, but this needs to involve the minimum use of violence or weapons. At best community security is only a temporary, short-term solution. We need to be able to move beyond this.

In general terms we want guns removed from the streets, we want the army to generally remain in the barracks and the police to reduce the level of lethal force that they carry on a daily basis. Police guns are generally an easy source of weapons for those going on to cause insecurity.

I am not sure that there is really a recent problem with impunity. We know that the

rich have been able to buy their way out of police custody for decades. The widespread use of bombing by the air force is extremely dangerous – in Borno, Zamfara, southern Kaduna, Benue etc. The Sultan of Sokoto says that seven out of 10 arrested kidnappers are Fulani – so some Fulani are being arrested.

Insecurity is a global problem. Often the result is the rich living in gated communities with armed guards – as in South Africa and the US. Crime and insecurity are higher in countries with more poverty. Crime increases when unemployment increases.

See this article on the Socialist Labour website for more details: <https://tinyurl.com/42fd52r6>

...PEOPLE WITHOUT HOPE

Cont'd from cover page

As we celebrate the 2025 May Day in the midst of harsh economic situation – global political and economic uncertainties, internal security challenges, rising cost of living, high level of corruption and myriad of other ailing issues; I raise my clenched fist in salute to all our past leaders, who passionately and courageously led robust collective action with the toiling masses.

The working people need the NLC now like never before. One can argue that many of our civil society organisations are now run by impostors without the requisite commitment and capacity to effectively provide the needed advocacy and sensitisation to confront the forces and elements undermining our dreams. All voices of opposition appear to have been stifled. Peter Obi may be the only voice being heard in the wilderness, and efforts are being made to silence him.

The labour movement has a huge role to play! It has to provide leadership that can effectively galvanise the energy of the civil society. This must not be toyed with. Nigeria is now in complete disarray! The working people are at the epicentre of darkness, the fog of hunger, insecurity and

uncertainty tends to cover our socio-political sphere. Life has become so cheap. Cost of living, bad governance, threats of ethnic division, religious extremism are trending.

In the midst of these crises, the workers are most affected, most traumatised, most dehumanised. If he or she has not lost someone in Benue, he may have lost one in Zamfara, Borno, Imo, Edo, Kogi or elsewhere around the country. The working masses live in perpetual fear, the next minute is uncertain. Anything can happen. How do we explain a situation where salary earners go to bed hungry with their families several days every month?

Our leaders have watched everyday grievances and worries crystallise into terrorism, banditry and militant activism. Our present state of despair has put unbridled assault on the existence of the working people. We no longer have leaders who believe in selflessness and sacrifice. We no longer have leaders who are capable of mentoring future generations. The working people are in dire straits. Our purchasing power has waned due to bad economic policies; life has become so precarious and uncertain.

Our working masses have no real hope of still being in employment by the end of the year. He or she may be redundant or turned into a casual worker. Some employers will even abandon their businesses and run from debt, leaving the worker to its fate.

Except our capacity for deep reflection is completely eroded, the workers and masses have no reason at this time to celebrate May Day. It is supposed to be a time for deep sober reflection. The working masses of today appear to be alone; they have heavy hearts and seemingly insurmountable burdens. The Nigeria Labour Congress leadership of today is inept and as clueless as the state of today. The leadership of most of the affiliate unions are as corrupt as the politicians.

NLC leadership has completely abdicated its core values and objectives. The unwarranted gruesome killings, high electricity tariff, frequent kidnappings, high cost of transport, high cost of medical bills, high petrol prices, do not appear to be enough to wake the leadership of the Congress from its protracted slumber.

Our labour leaders, in almost all the affiliates of the NLC, have not only

turned completely partisan; they have unabashedly become cheerleaders of corrupt politicians. It was Ayn Rand; a Russian-American writer, who said: "When you see that in order to produce, you need to obtain permission from men who produce nothing – when you see that money is flowing to those who deal not in goods, but in favour – when you see that men get richer by graft and by pull than by work and your laws don't protect you against them, but protect them against you. When you see corruption being rewarded and honesty becoming a self-sacrifice, you may know that your society is doomed."

The working peoples are clearly doomed without real change! Those who have the platform and capacity to speak up should not keep quiet. The silence and docility of the NLC leadership is very dangerous. The government has muzzled hope and silenced all opposition. The working masses still have hope in the NLC and the trade union movement. We have to make their hope a reality. History has shown that when the millions of members of the trade union movement act then the rest of civil society will move in support and real change will be delivered.

HOW THE COURTS STOPPED ILLEGAL SUSPENSION OF LEGISLATORS IN NIGERIA

Femi Falana SAN

Femi Falana has listed a number of cases handled by his firm and others since 2010 that clearly demonstrate that the recent suspension of Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan is illegal and unconstitutional.

Based on these cases, Femi Falana concludes that:

In view of the definitive pronouncements of the several High Courts, the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court on the illegality of the suspension of elected members of legislative houses in Nigeria, the suspension of Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan is the height of legislative recklessness. The illegal suspension

should be lifted without any further delay. Since the Federal High Court had restrained the Senate Ethics Committee from hearing the complaint against the embattled Senator pending the determination of the motion on notice the Senate ought to have stayed action in accordance with the rule of law.

Finally, the official impunity of suspending legislators at the whims and caprices of leaders of the federal and state legislative houses must not be allowed to continue in Nigeria.

The full listing of the cases by Femi Falana is available from the Socialist Labour website:

<https://tinyurl.com/SocLab20252>



WHAT CAN SOCIALISTS DO ABOUT THE GLOBAL RISE OF THE FAR RIGHT?

Tina Nkechi

The global far right has been growing over the last three decades. This now includes Donald Trump in the US, Narendra Modi (Prime Minister of India since 2014), former president Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, president Javier Milei of Argentina (elected in 2023) Recep Erdoğan of Turkey (President since 2014) and various European parties.

They join more traditional authoritarian regimes such as those in China, Russia and Iran. They also include authoritarian regimes across Africa including those in Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, Tchad and the military juntas of West Africa (Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali and Niger).

Thomas Hummel (of Tempest in the USA) argues that because the rise of the global far right defines our historical period, socialists must revive the strategy of the united front to challenge the new authoritarianism. His full article can be read here: <https://tinyurl.com/SocLab202513>

The characteristics of the new authoritarians or neo-fascists include:

- An upbeat presidency, replacing

militarism with mass media support, persuading the population that the government – especially the public sector (in particular social services) – is the enemy while strengthening the repressive capacity (police, army and prisons) of the state;

- initiating resentment and antagonism against ethnic or sexual minorities;
- publicising the fictitious qualities of the free market, pursuing tax and spending measures that redistribute income upward, etc.

The united front today

Much of what defined the united front strategy against fascism in Europe in the 1930s is still applicable today in the struggle against the new authoritarians. If the Left's weakness and rise of the far right are indeed the defining features of the current period, then united front work has once again become essential.

We saw an excellent example of what this looked like with the experience of Golden Dawn in Greece, where an anti-fascist organization, KEERFA (United Movement Against Racism and the Fascist Threat), operating on the principles of united front work, completely smashed the ascendent

fascist party. KEERFA built a large coalition of working class organizations, from unions to socialist groups, that shared a basic common interest in keeping Golden Dawn from growing.

We also had the mass movement including a general strike in Argentina in April, against the far right president elected last year, see: <https://tinyurl.com/SocLab20256>

These must be mass campaigns operating openly, that, while taking security seriously, do not prioritize a paranoid security culture above openness and effectiveness.

A new united front strategy answers questions about the specific role of socialist organization today. If we accept that re-building the vanguard of the working class through movement work is an essential part of meaningful left strategy today, then it has often left a question about what role remains for the socialist organization. In this period of growing reaction, it is clear that outside of the propagandistic role of socialist organization, its activist role must be in leveraging its embeddedness in specific struggles to build the anti-authoritarian fronts that unite those struggles, bring them closer in action to socialist politics, and work to smash the threat of the right.

Other books

Several other authors have written on this subject. This includes, David Renton's book, *The New Authoritarians - Convergence on the Right* (2019).

See: <https://tinyurl.com/SocLab20257>

David says that: The eighteen months between June 2016 and the end of 2017 saw the victory of Leave in Britain's EU referendum, the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States, and unprecedented support for Marine Le Pen of the Front

National in her campaign for the same office in France. Nearly a decade after the great financial crash, it is these figures and the alarmingly confident and radical version of right-wing politics they represent that have gained the initiative over a moribund centre and a still weak left.

For a more recent article by David published last month, see: <https://tinyurl.com/SocLab20258>

Another recent book, *Disaster Nationalism – The Downfall of Liberal Civilisation* (2024) by Richard Seymour was reviewed earlier this year by two comrades in Namibia: <https://www.namibian.com.na/is-fascism-back/>

They say that Richard Seymour points out fictional catastrophes such as the 'white' genocide in South Africa, the Great Replacement of 'white' Americans by "brown" immigrants, and the 'Romeo Jihad' of Muslim men against Hindu women (in India).

This is not yet classic fascism but the emergence of a different kind of fascism promoted by a civil society network, culture wars and the goal of a constitutional rupture towards an authoritarian democracy. More details about Richard's book are available here:

<https://tinyurl.com/SocLab20259>

We can learn from this international experience, but we have to develop our own analysis of the T-Pain regime and how to fight it. The key lesson is that the left has to unite and work together in close co-operation if we are able to defeat this latest threat from the right. We also have to teach the new generation the dangers of authoritarian right-wing nationalism in either its civilian or military forms.



WORKERS' RIGHT TO DIGNITY: THE PENSION CRISIS AND STATES' FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THE 2014 PENSION REFORM ACT

By Ivo Takor



Introduction
In March, 2025, the National Pension Commission (PenCom) raised concerns that only 11 states, Lagos, Osun, Kaduna, Ekiti, Edo, Ondo, Delta, Benue, Anambra, and Jigawa, along with the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), are complying with the provisions of the Pension Reform Act 2014.

PenCom also noted that several states have enacted laws to adopt the CPS but have yet to make significant progress in its implementation. These states include Abia, Adamawa, Bauchi, Bayelsa, Ebonyi, Enugu, Gombe, Imo, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Kogi, Nasarawa, Niger, Ogun, Oyo, Rivers, Sokoto, Taraba, and Zamfara. PenCom urged them to accelerate efforts toward full implementation, particularly the timely remittance of both employer and employee contributions.

Furthermore, PenCom observed that some states, Akwa Ibom, Borno, Kwara, Plateau, Cross River, and Yobe, have not yet commenced CPS implementation. It strongly encouraged these states to fast-track the enactment of CPS laws and take immediate steps toward full implementation to ensure a secure and sustainable pension system for their workforce.

The Constitution Guarantees Pension Rights for Public Servants in Nigeria
The 1999 Constitution of the Federal

Republic of Nigeria (as amended) enshrines workers' right to a pension, ensuring financial security in retirement. This constitutional safeguard is not merely a privilege but a legally enforceable right designed to guarantee that retired public servants can maintain a standard of living reasonably comparable to what they enjoyed during their active years. Any attempt to undermine or withhold these entitlements is not only a violation of constitutional and statutory provisions but also an affront to the principles of fairness, social justice, and the rule of law.

Constitutional Provisions on Pension Rights
Section 210(1) of the Constitution states: *"Subject to the provisions of subsection (2) of this section, the right of a person in the public service of a state to receive pension or gratuity shall be regulated by law."* Further reinforcing this right, subsection (2) provides that: *"Any benefit to which a person is entitled in accordance with or under such law as is referred to in subsection (1) of this section shall not be withheld or altered to his disadvantage except as is permissible under any law, including the code of conduct."*

Additionally, subsection (3) mandates that: *"Pension shall be reviewed every five years or together with any State Civil Service salary reviews, whichever is earlier."*

These provisions ensure that retired public servants are not deprived of their earned benefits and that their pensions are periodically adjusted to reflect economic realities.

The Pension Reform Act 2004 and Its Impact
The Pension Reform Act, 2004 introduced wide ranging reforms. These were amended with another act a decade later. Section 2(1) of the Pension Reform Act 2014 establishes that the Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS) applies to all public sector employees across the Federation, including those in the Federal Capital Territory, states, and local governments, as well as private sector workers. However, in accordance with the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended), state governments have the constitutional authority to regulate pension matters within their jurisdictions. Consequently, each state is required to adopt the CPS by enacting appropriate pension legislation.

The Implications of Non-Enactment and Poor Implementation of Pension Laws on Public Servants and Retirees
The issue of pension rights protection for public servants and retirees has become a major concern, particularly in states that have yet to enact pension laws or those that have adopted the Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS) but failed to implement it effectively. This exposes retirees to severe socio-economic hardships, including financial insecurity, poor healthcare access, destitution, and increased poverty.

Retirees' Welfare: The Reality of Delayed or Unpaid Pensions
Retirees in states without pension laws or those with poorly implemented CPS experience delayed or unpaid pensions, leading to severe hardship. Many retirees rely entirely on their pensions for survival, and irregular payments result in financial struggles, dependency on family or charity, and a loss of dignity. The inability to afford healthcare for age-related conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, and arthritis worsens their situation. In

extreme cases, unpaid pensions push retirees into destitution, forcing them to beg or live in deplorable conditions.

Healthcare Challenges for Retirees
In states where pension schemes are either non-existent or poorly implemented, retirees often lack access to affordable healthcare coverage. Many state retirees must pay for medical expenses out-of-pocket. This financial burden leads to untreated ailments, increased health complications, and premature deaths due to financial and psychological stress.

Destitution and Poverty Among Retirees
Retirement should be a period of rest and dignity after years of service, but in many Nigerian states, the absence or poor implementation of pension laws forces retirees into economic hardship, homelessness, and untimely death. Many pensioners struggle to afford rent, food, and medical care, leading to severe psychological distress. The anxiety caused by unpaid pensions contributes to depression, loss of self-respect, and deteriorating mental health, reducing many retirees to a life of begging.

The Way Forward: Ensuring Pension Protection for Public Servants and Retirees
To address these challenges, state governments must take urgent steps to protect pension rights and improve retirees' welfare. This includes enacting pension laws in states that have not yet adopted them, ensuring full implementation of the CPS where it exists, and prioritizing the regular payment of pensions and gratuities. Additionally, a mandatory health insurance scheme for retirees should be introduced to ease their financial burden, and pensioners' welfare boards should be established to address their concerns and grievances.

This is a shorter version of an article originally published by the National Record. The full article is available from: <https://tinyurl.com/SocLab202510>

THE PRESIDENT MAY NOT KNOW...Cont'd from cover page

President Tinubu may, after all, not be unaware of our dilemma. This I assume is why he and his team are pleading with the people to bear any economic suffocation and hunger in the interest of democracy and tomorrow's prosperity.

But how can anyone tell their family to tolerate hunger for democracy and tomorrow's greatness? If the adults understand, definitely the children will not.

For those in power, at the federal, state and local levels, at the civil and customary levels, in the executive and legislature, in elected and appointed positions, let them know that nobody has successfully preached tolerance and patience to the hungry. Hunger knows no sex, ethnicity, religion, or political party. It knows not, and respects no geopolitical divide. It humbles the religious, the bravest and the strictest.

But to be fair to President Tinubu, hunger has been part of our history. In his book, *Silent Violence: Food, Famine and Peasantry in Northern Nigeria*, Michael Watts gives a detailed account and analysis of hunger during World War II, particularly in Hausa land. The Talakawa or commoners described the hunger of the era

as "Baban Yunwa" (Great Hunger), which they attributed to "akin mutum" – the handiwork of (government) people.

Just as today's hunger is compounded by external forces like the International Monetary Fund and World Bank – in collaboration with their Nigerian allies, so was the Great Hunger of the 1940s caused by the British imperialist forces working in-hand with the traditional rulers.

The Great Hunger was triggered by government's war time policies of excessive increase in taxation and tariffs, the compulsory production of export crops, forceful conscription of people into army and mines, and obligatory grains requisitioning.

Today's hunger is triggered by the IMF-World Bank policies, implemented by this not too reflective administration. Policies which include the excessive increase in the prices of petroleum products, high increase in electricity tariffs, unwarranted increases in taxation, huge devaluation of the naira, and the refusal to make salary and wage increases correspond with the cost of living.

Just as the Great Hunger deepened the antagonism between the state and society,

so does today's hunger. But while the civil society groups in the 1940s were well organised, vibrant, critical and supported by the nationalist politicians, the reverse is the case today.

All the major political parties today are fixated on power, not the people. They concentrate on primitive accumulation and monopolistic acquisition, not in democracy and development.

Yesterday, political parties offered the populace alternatives. Today, there are none as all the major parties are neoliberal-driven and anti-people. This is the problem. But the problem is a big challenge. It is a crisis.

The German-American sociologist, economic historian and Latin Americanist, Andre Gunder Frank, argued that crisis, "is a decisive turning point, filled with danger and anxiety, possibly meaning life or death for a diseased person, a social system or historical process. The outcome need(s) to necessarily be death but, could be a new life, if in our case the economic, social and political body is able to adopt and...undergo a regenerative transformation during the crisis."

If the hunger of the 1940s and the struggles against it is anything to go by, it means civil society groups have to organise

against poverty and hunger. It means that the present race of politicians cannot be relied upon to save the common people.

The situation in the country does not call for lamentation, rather it demands action. That was also what Fela Anikulapo-Kuti meant in his *Army Arrangement* album, when he sang: "My condition don reach make I act."

Therefore, in the same way the Great Hunger of the 1940s contributed immensely in paving the way for the attainment of the first independence, so today's hunger is crying for the emergence of a Second Independence Movement, which will usher in a new society built on human rights, equality of all ethnic nationalities and religious groups, democracy, development, and a just federal system.

History and posterity have assigned this task of ushering a Second Independence Movement, and attaining the Second Independence on to labour, professionals, traders, farmers, students and youth movements, and other forces committed to emancipatory politics. If we are united, we can never be defeated.

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01 MAY 2025

**HAPPY
MAY DAY****WORKERS DAY**

**AMALGAMATED UNION OF PUBLIC CORPORATIONS, CIVIL SERVICE TECHNICAL AND
RECREATIONAL SERVICES EMPLOYEES'S (AUPCTRE) FRATERNAL GREETINGS
ON THE MAY-DAY 2025 CELEBRATIONS.**

Amalgamated Union of Public Corporations, Civil Service Technical and Recreational Services Employees(AUPCTRE) Leadership felicitate with the Labour Movement all over the world on the occasion of 2025 May-Day Celebration of which Nigeria is no exception.

Internationally, May 1st of every year is recognized as "workers Day". In many Countries of the world, workers have won the right to Celebrate this Day, National Public holidays are normally declared and rallies, held to commemorate the occasion.

In 1981, May 1st was first declared a National Holiday in Nigeria after along history of tortuous struggle during the time of Comrade Hassan Sunmonu, the then President of Nigeria labour Congress (NLC) (a product of AUPCTRE).

Once again, the Leadership of Amalgamated Union of Public Corporations, Civil Service Technical and Recreational Services Employees (AUPCTRE) is using this auspicious occasion to salute the ruggedness and the resilience of the Nigeria working class in this era of hyper inflation, insecurity, Banditry, despite the inhuman Minimum Wage of #70,000.00, which no doubt is a slave wage by all ramifications.

We are fully aware that the history of the working class since the emergence of the capitalist system has been a history of class struggle.

Amalgamated Union of Public Corporations, Civil Service Technical and Recreational Services Employees (AUPCTRE) share in this historical moment and specially congratulates all the organs of the Unions for been steadfast and keeping the flag flying despite the tumultuous challenges.

Finally, our best wishes goes to the Leadership of NLC/TUC for providing the leadership at this challenging time in the life of our Nation.

**Once more, Happy May-Day 2025 to all.
Aluta continua!**

**Comrade
Oluwole Adeleye Sunday**
*National President, NCSU &
National Vice President, NLC*

**Comrade
Bomoi Mohammed Ibraheem**
*General Secretary
NCSU*

**Long live AUPCTRE!
Long live Nigeria Labour Congress.**

**INTERNATIONAL
LABOUR DAY**

Transport for London's SHORT-TERM LICENSES: A WIN FOR THE DRIVERS BUT STILL MORE TO FIGHT FOR

The IWGB Union was called into an emergency meeting with Transport for London this morning. As many of you will now be aware after an email from Transport for London, at this meeting it was announced that Transport for London will issue 3-month "short-term licences" to drivers who have submitted a complete renewal application pack and their licence has subsequently expired. Those drivers will not have to re-apply after 3 months - instead they will be issued a full licence for 2 years and 9 months.

Clearly this is an admission of guilt from Transport for London and a step forwards from where we were a week ago when Transport for London denied the scale of the crisis and refused to admit that short-term licences were possible or even necessary. This is clearly the result of massive pressure on Transport for London from the IWGB. Hundreds of drivers, unionised with IWGB, have used their collective power to force Transport for London to take action, but the new short-term licences do not yet fully meet the demands of our campaign.

For the last few weeks the IWGB has been using every tool at the union's disposal to force Transport for London to end this crisis. To every driver who joined the WhatsApp group, helped to organise the campaign on Zoom, shared their story in the press, and turned up in force at Transport for London's office last week to protest: you did this. You stood up not only for yourselves but for every driver suffering due to Transport for London's licensing hell. Your actions forced Transport for London to take emergency measures, and that's a sign driver power is growing. Up until now, Transport for London have refused to even recognise there

was an emergency, so this is a significant development.

Transport for London also responded to the union's demand for digital licences to resolve ongoing issues with drivers being kept out of work even longer while waiting for their licences to arrive in the post. Taking this step has forced Transport for London to work with the apps to ensure they accept these emergency measures. This demonstrates our power as a union to force the apps to work in drivers' interests through pressure on Transport for London and sets an important precedent for our movement.

However, there are limitations to the win. In the meeting with Transport for London we continued to demand that licences be extended to all drivers who are unable to work. But drivers whose cases are stuck with Occupational Health are currently not being considered for short-term licences, and Transport for London have offered no solution to this bottleneck. We know this is an issue which continues to force many drivers into debt and hardship. The short-term licences will also not address problems faced by drivers who are currently experiencing DBS issues. The short-term licences will only be issued to drivers who have passed SERU and the English Language Test. And, given Transport for London's incompetency, we know we will need to keep holding their feet to the fire to ensure the proper implementation of these short-term licences. If there are any issues, we need to call these out and hold Transport for London to account.

No driver should be out of work. No driver should have to hand back their car, go without food, or drown in debt. The power to

win justice for every driver is in our hands. As a union we have shown that when drivers are united, organised, and ready for action we can pressure Transport for London to meet every demand and open the door for wins against the apps as well. For too long Transport for London and the apps have colluded to exploit us, but we the drivers are taking the power back into our hands and showing we can force them to act in our interests.

Throughout this crisis, drivers who have had their licences renewed have continued to fight for other drivers who are out of work. We can see today that this solidarity is crucial for victory. Now is the time to keep our foot on the pedal. Tomorrow - Wednesday 9 April

1pm - we will return to march on Transport for London's office a second time, and now more than ever our numbers matter. Transport for London have made this decision hoping it will appease drivers and dissuade us from protesting. It's on every one of us to prove them wrong and show Transport for London that we won't rest until every driver is back on the road.

Many similar workers in Nigeria are organising their own trade unions. If you are a taxi driver, especially with Uber or similar companies, you can join them by joining the Amalgamated Union of App-based Transporters of Nigeria (AUATON) – through the website (www.auatwon.org). Cost is N2,000 a month.



The Independent Workers' union of Great Britain (IWGB) is a grassroots member-led union fighting for justice for workers. The following account demonstrates the collective power of the unions and the ability to win concessions when the class fights back! For more information on IWGB see: <https://iwgb.org.uk/en/page/about-us/>

EKPEIN APPAH: WHEN STUDENTS FOUGHT FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

By Owei Lakemfa



Forty-seven years ago, in 1978, students took a stand against military dictatorship. They insisted that every child should have a right and access to education. They, therefore, rejected increases in school and feeding fees, insisting that education should not be commercialised.

An enraged military regime sent out soldiers against the students. What followed was a massacre.

The Murtala-Obasanjo regime zeroed in on four student leaders: Segun Okeowo, Bukar Mbaya, Offiong Aqua, and Ekpein Appah, leader of the University of Benin, UNIBEN, Students Union. Appah had most infuriated the Head of State, General Olusegun Obasanjo and his Deputy, General Shehu Yar' Adua.

To mark the 47th Year of the uprising, I drew Appah out of his shell in Kiama, Bayelsa State to present the uncommunicative hero to the world.

He had attended primary schools in

Kiama, Abeokuta, Lagos, Enugu and Kaduna; secondary school in Yenagoa and higher school in Port Harcourt, before being admitted into UNIBEN in the 1976/77 Session. His active participation in student unionism was fortuitous. He was an off-campus student and the Students Union had decided that those students should be represented in the parliament. So he came to represent the off-campus students.

Appah teamed up with some other students to present a candidate for the union presidency. Their candidate won, but turned out to be a disappointment. So Appah moved a motion for his impeachment. The union then decided to re-write its constitution. He was made the Chair of the Constitution Review Committee. The Committee visited universities like Ibadan and Lagos to apprise itself of their student union constitutions. When he returned, he found that in his absence, the student union had decided to put in place a Caretaker Committee, and he had been presented as the Chairman.

This was when the NUNS was

consulting various groups against the military's decision to commercialise education. UNIBEN students were in full support of the student agitations and Appah immediately joined other national student leaders. They met a delegation of the military regime led by General Yar'Adua. In Ekpein's analysis, the talks broke down because General Obasanjo believed that Chief Obafemi Awolowo, who was agitating to be elected President on a programme for free education, was the brain behind the students agitation. So, the ruling Supreme Military Council was insistent that it would make no compromise.

Appah insisted there was no such external influence, and that indeed, there was no influence from any quarters as the students were well informed about local and international issues which were often debated across campuses. He said the NUNS position was that if the leakages in public expenditure were blocked, there would be enough money to fund and maintain free education. The NUNS had listed some of those leakages.

He said the students also felt that if Ghana, which did not have the resources of Nigeria, including oil wealth, could provide free education, there was no reason why Nigeria could not do same. The students insisted that there could be no increase in school fees without the military consulting them, their lecturers and parents.

Appah said when ABU students and other citizens were shot in Zaria, the anger of the students and the general populace could no longer be contained.

Students decided nationwide to carry out symbolic burial of the victims. Appah told me what happened next in UNIBEN: "We had two campuses: Ekenwa and Ugbowo. We carried coffins from Ekenwa to Ugbowo. The police stopped us on the Lagos-Benin highway and ordered us back. The Deputy Commissioner of Police, Aliyu Attah, who later became IG (Inspector General of Police, 1990-93) told us the police would not allow us to proceed. I told him he should either allow us or shoot us.

He argued that the burial we wanted to carry out was merely symbolic, so there was no issue whether we actually carried out the burial or not. I replied that in Africa, burials can be symbolic. It was a tense situation as some of the students were military personnel on in-service training and had guns. I myself carried a knife for

self-defence.

Attah then told us the Commissioner of Police, Etim Inyang, later IG (1983-86) wanted to see us. We told Attah we would see the CP but would not trek to the Police Command. So they provided vehicles. We had started our march at 7am and did not leave the Police Command until 3pm. They carried us back to Ekenwa where we held a strong rally. During the rally, only one car was destroyed. It was an official car with the inscription, 'Bendel State Hospital Board', which was burnt."

The regime which prided itself as being strongly anti-Apartheid, was livid when Appah in a letter to General Obasanjo wrote that while Apartheid South Africa was killing Blacks, he could not use Nigerian guns to kill Nigerians.

Appah was invited to see the Police Commissioner from where he was whisked to the Kingsway Road, Lagos offices of the secret Nigeria Security Organisation, NSO. He was then moved to the NSO Headquarters on Awolowo Road where he met detained lecturers like Ola Oni, Bade Onimode and Laoye Sanda. He was later moved to the Kirikiri Maximum Prison where he spent a total 49 days. He said he had a lot of introspection in prison as he had no access to books.

After schools were reopened, he was about taking his examinations when an announcement was made expelling him. He was not allowed to return to school until 1982 when he was admitted by the University of Ibadan, to read Classics and Philosophy.

The Ibadan students were unaware of his presence on the campus until the campus press came to interview him. His former co-detainee, Bade Onimode, a Professor, then called him and said: "You can't hide."

On the current state of the country, including 18.3 million out-of-school children, Appah told me in our interview: "Wherever we are, whether in the village, town or country, we must be able to fight for it. Until you die, there is no rest. Until he died, Fidel Castro did not rest, Mandela did not rest. We must be ready to die for our society".

This article was originally published in Premium Times:

<https://tinyurl.com/socLab202514>

THE LABOUR PARTY – WHAT HOPE FOR A NEW SOCIETY?

By Boney Akaeze



The first generation of Labour Party type political parties was spearheaded by socialists and social democrats in Europe in the late 19th century. The overarching mission was to educate and organize the ever growing population of labourers and wage earners so as to turn and utilize their mass strength to win state power on their behalf. A good example was the German Social Democratic Party. It has gone through phases of its existence to become the oldest political party in Germany today.

It was formed in 1875 through the merger of the General German Workers' Union and the Social Democratic Workers Party of Germany. The Party enjoyed mass appeal and by 1913, it had become the largest political party in the country with over one million active members. Right from its inception, it was clear that the Party was constructed as a mass-based party in contrast to the cadre party model of conservative political parties.

The aristocracy and the bourgeoisie believe that the right of their estate to

govern others is divine. On the other hand, those with a socialist orientation share the ideology of social justice and equal opportunity as the safeguard for a stable and prosperous society. They reason that this is only achievable through a State that prioritizes the well-being of the citizenry. This is why they contend that such a State ought to be governed by true representatives of the people freely chosen by them (the citizenry).

A political party does not become a Labour (pro-workers) Party because it is registered with and known by such name. Structurally and operationally, the party must reflect its mass-base, it must have organic mass appeal and be organized on and pursue social democracy principles. These include popular ownership, participation and parliamentary democracy, optimal economic mobilization, regulation and stabilization as well as social security and social equilibrium etc.

Since 2002 there has been a political party in Nigeria registered and known by the name; Labour Party. The preamble of the

Constitution of the Party proclaims it as a party of social democrats made up of the working class, professionals, intellectuals, students, women, environmentalists, patriotic businessmen and women and all others who accept the ideas of social democracy. But this party has not been mass-based. Neither has the party ever shown any commitment towards mobilization of the masses into its fold. It has not been organized and managed in a manner that will result in mass appeal. This is needed to make it a suitable political alternative for the transformation of Nigeria on the basis of social democracy.

So the task ahead is basically the task of reclaiming the Labour Party from the stranglehold of bellicose and intransigent crooks. They have so used the party for duplicitous and transactional politics that they have become a clog in its wheel of progress. These elements have so flourished in their sudden and unimaginable affluence on account of their perfidious activities in the name of the Party. They are currently concerned about losing their gold mine to forces poised to reclaim the party and restore it to its natural and original mission.

The coming of Peter Obi and his followers into the Labour Party ahead of the 2023 General Election and the electoral impact they created has awoken a realisation in many people that the Party can be a new platform for a possible democratic revolution. It is obviously in the best interests of the masses for those elements who are fermenting the leadership crisis in the party to retract their steps. They should acknowledge that their time is up and that change is an opportunity not a threat. The wisest of all artists is the one who never destroys his work because he knows when he has applied the last brush.

Many are disgusted with those who were

elected on the platform of the Labour Party in the 2023 General Election. They have either dumped the party or have remained indifferent in the face of the battle for the soul of the party. Those guys only rented a vehicle from Julius Abure & Co, they have arrived their destination and have left the vehicle.

The leadership of the Nigeria Labour Congress has occasionally indicated its willingness to join the fight for the soul of the Labour Party. But it has not consistently organised its millions of members to that end. We cannot now rely on the NLC to complete this vital task. This will have to be undertaken by individual socialists and social democrats.

For those who are blaming the national President and his ruling party for orchestrating the crisis as a strategy towards the destabilization of their main opposition, there is nothing new about these politicians and their approach to power politics. They are ferocious, know no rule of fair play and will stop at nothing to win and retain political power either by hook or by crook. Those who want to wrestle power from them should double-down on their effort, tact and strategy, and be ready to meet them at the barricade and triumph over their forces in the arena. So, if we want to take back control of the Labour Party as a social democratic party, it will depend on the hard work and commitment of many individuals. We call on those who want to see a fairer government to join us in the Labour Party. The fight to change its direction and win it back to consistent social democratic policies will not be easy. The creation of a truly mass based the Labour Party will require hard work, but the prize will be worth the struggle.

PRIMITIVE OR ORIGINAL ACCUMULATION

by David Harvey



Extracted from his 2020 book *The Anti-Capitalist Chronicles*, David Harvey puts his sharp intellect to work unpicking one of the most important parts of Marx's *Capital*, dealing with the remarkable story behind the concept of primitive or original accumulation, and how it manifested from the origins of capitalism to the daily violence of expropriation, expulsions and evictions occurring in our society today.

Part Eight of *Capital* deals with what Marx calls primitive or original accumulation, which is the story of

how capital came to be and how it came to power...

The story that Marx tells of the origins of capital is one which went against then prevailing bourgeois opinion and accounts...

The main story Marx wants to tell is the violent means by which the mass of the population was deprived of access to the means of production – most notably the land – and deprived of the possibility of reproducing their daily life outside of selling their labor power as a commodity to the nascent capitalists...

This is a very good moment to look at the return of many of these violent forms of expropriation, expulsions, evictions, and the like which Marx describes as being present in the very origins of capitalism. It turns out that a lot of this sort of thing is going on all around us today.

The fraudulence, and the lying, the mystifications to cover over the egregious appropriation which is going on by the wealthy and the powerful, preying on the vulnerable and the small groups in the population.

This is an interesting moment to contemplate how we are currently being haunted by the violence of primitive accumulation...

This is a remarkable story that Marx tells in *Capital*. And he tells it in various ways. But one of the things that is very striking about it is the tremendous hypocrisy upon which this system is founded...

The reason I think this is important is to ask the question: to what degree are the processes of primitive accumulation that Marx describes still with us?...

But if we look at the way in which society is being organized today, we see a great deal of violent expropriation going on, and a great deal of violence and coercion in relationship to the employment of labor. We are surrounded by a daily violence actually occurring in society. It appears as if the original sin of capital perpetually returns to haunt us. In our own times, this is becoming a crucial question: how to confront what in effect is the illegality of capital? Unfortunately, it is not the case that the theory of capital proposed by utopian classical political economy prevails. It is no longer the case, if it ever was, that capitalism can be construed as a peaceful, lawful, and non-coercive system. In fact, what we're dealing with here is not only the continuation but the resurrection of systems of violent expropriation that occurred in the past.

We live with a form of capital based not upon the equality of exchange but a certain violence of expropriation and dispossession.

A longer extract from David Harvey's book is available from: <https://tinyurl.com/SocLab202511>

THE CONTRADICTIONS OF FREE MARKET ECONOMY.

By Richard Inoyo



Lazy assumptions, blinkered vision and self-serving notions all work together in the mind of free marketer cum neoliberal economists' thinking. Misleadingly, they claim a free market economy which entails privatisation of public financial and industrial bases, liberalization of international trade, deregulation of finance and industry practices, reduction on investment in welfare and reducing of income tax will create a more equitable society. This is based on the notion that a free market economy will produce the most efficient and just outcome for all. This uses the assumption that the most forward thinking firms and hard working individual will get rewarded for their productivity.

These claims they all make using the metaphor that: "a rising tide lifts all boats".

Today, the contradictions are even loudly perceptible to the ears of the deaf. For close to 40 years, more than

three decades of research has shown that since the 1980s when the world mobilized itself for a free market economy, the results have been:

- social inequality, urban-rural gentrification, mass poverty and societal instability
- the plantation of both imperialism and capitalism, the former being an up setter of egalitarian equilibrium, and the later, being tireless extorter of cash from the poor to the superbly rich respectively.

In their denial of many realities, adherents and enthusiasts of the free market economy are pointing us to China and India where hundreds of millions of their citizens have been moved out of poverty and want us to thank neoliberalism for it.

Researchers like myself were quick to repoint them to many facts showing clearly that neither China nor India went full throttle on free market economy. They recreated

their economies and refused to give up public assets and government regulations on major sectors.

Both countries refused to accept the false assumptions that government has no business in business. They did not accept the ridiculous claim that government lacks the necessary information and incentive to make sound decision and improve the lives of communities.

Rather, people like us understand the followings:

1. Human decisions, especially decisions by those who have the power to set the rules, make things happen in the way they happen, and that:
2. Community must engage their government to invest in things that improve citizens' lives and community sustainability for a fairer outcome. Hence:
3. Without our active economic citizenship, we will always be the

victims of people who have greater ability to make decisions, who tell us that things happen because

they have to and therefore that there is nothing we can do to alter them, however unpleasant and unjust they may appear.

In conclusion, this is why I feel engaging in the political process and encouraging more citizens, through all means necessary, is the greatest way to alter the future of statistics on issues bordering on livelihoods, welfare, sustainable communities and ethical outcomes.

For this reason, I urge us all to identify with any political party that aligns with specific ethos that can guarantee real development and not empty promises of neoliberal economists' thinking that spread social inequality and poverty in the world we live in.

BEHIND TRUMP'S SPIRALLING TARIFF WAR: AN INTERVIEW WITH MARXIST ECONOMIST MICHAEL ROBERTS

By Michael Roberts & Federico Fuentes



In this interview with Federico Fuentes for LINKS International Journal of Socialist Renewal, Roberts explains the recent raft of tariffs announced by US President Donald Trump on April 2, which Trump dubbed “Liberation Day” but was described by the Wall Street Journal as “the dumbest trade war in history”.

Where is all this going? Well, it means a slump in production in the US and most major economies; and it means a revival of inflation, particularly in the US. It has already led to a fall in the price of oil which will reduce government incomes in Nigeria.

Roberts outlines how they fit into Trump's broader project to reassert US global hegemony, and what a left response could look like.

Could you explain the significance of, and motivation for, Trump's new tariffs? Are they likely to achieve what Trump wants?

Trump's tariff rises on US imports of goods is the largest in more than 130 years, taking the effective average tariff rate to more than 25%. This will severely hit goods exports to the US from poor “Global South” countries, which are not exempt. On the contrary, a country such as Vietnam faces a tariff hike of 45%, while China faces a tariff hike of 59%. All countries are getting a 10% tariff hike, even if the US does not have a trade deficit with them.

Trump's administration claims these

tariff hikes are needed to end the “robbery” of US manufacturing by other countries through “bad practices”, unfair taxes, quotas and subsidies. The aim is to cut or eliminate the US trade deficit and force foreign manufacturers to invest and sell directly in the US. The aim is also to enable US domestic manufacturers to replace foreign-made goods with US manufactures — and thus “Make America Great Again”.

This is nonsense. The US started running a trade deficit with other countries in the 1980s because US manufacturing shifted its operations to the Global South and Canada in order to take advantage of cheap labour and the latest technology. Much of the goods exported to the US come from US companies based in Mexico, Canada, China, etc. Vietnam exports millions of shoes to the US, made in 59 US-owned Nike factories there. Tesla makes most of its electric cars in China. US manufacturing costs at home are way higher than abroad, not only because labour is more expensive, but because productivity abroad is rising much faster with new technologies, particularly in China.

What these tariffs will do is, first, cut imports of needed goods for US consumers and businesses, and/or raise their prices. So, the US economy will be hit. Second, if there is retaliation — as there will be — then US exports will suffer accordingly, resulting in hardly any change in the deficit. A spiralling trade war will lower growth, raise inflation and lead to recession in the US

and other economies already on the brink.

If Trump's tariffs point towards further economic decoupling, could this create space for Global South countries to pursue more autonomous development strategies?

Some argue that “decoupling” — that is, relatively decreasing trade and capital flows between Global South countries and imperialist core countries — will allow major Global South countries to introduce more progressive economic “industrial strategies”, escape the grip of imperialism and start “catching up”. I am sceptical. US imperialism has weakened in the past few decades. This partly explains Trump's rise. But the US is still the dominant financial power (the US dollar still rules) and the world's largest military power. It still has the backing (mostly) of the other imperialist countries.

The alternative BRICS group [led by Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa] is diverse politically and economically, and has no real financial or military sway. Most BRICS countries are run by autocratic dictatorships (Russia, China, Iran, Saudi Arabia) or weak neoliberal capitalist regimes (South Africa, India) that do not represent working-class interests. Breaking with imperialism and pursuing independent economic development would require public ownership of the major sectors of these economies, planned state-led investment, working class democracy and an internationalist foreign policy. That does not exist, even

in China. Instead, BRICS leaders strongly oppose such policies.

Trump has framed his tariffs as a way to “bring jobs back” and “protect US workers”. What position should working class forces take towards these tariffs and talk of retaliatory tariffs from other countries, whether in the Global North or South?

Many US trade union leaders are backing the tariffs in the belief this will deliver more jobs and revive domestic industries. This is mistaken because the tariffs will only cut US exports, accelerate inflation and drive the US towards recession. Moreover, Trump is preparing huge tax cuts for the rich, to be paid for by huge government service, medicare and welfare cuts. US labour leaders should: oppose all service cuts, demand higher taxes on the rich and big business, and call for the takeover of the banks and the Magnificent Seven, together with developing a state-led investment plan to boost jobs and productivity. Labour leaders should oppose nationalist, protectionist and anti-immigrant policies, and look to form alliances and establish joint policies with workers in other countries.

In the Global South, workers' leaders should not only oppose the tariffs but demand the end of capitalist control over their economies. They should link up with workers' organisations in the Global North to establish joint policies for free trade, ending oppressive debt burdens and effective climate control measures, as global warming is already decimating areas globally.

The full interview is available from: <https://tinyurl.com/SocLab20253>

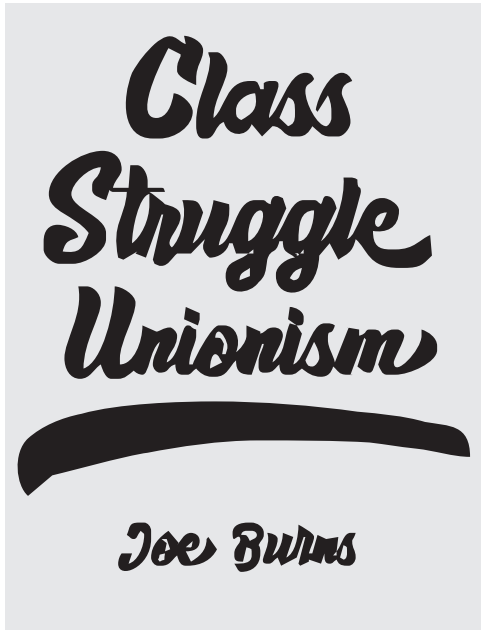
Michael Roberts is a Marxist economist who worked in the City of London for more than 40 years and writes on economic issues at The Next Recession (see this blog for his more recent analysis). He is also the author of The Long Depression: Marxism and the Global Crisis of Capitalism and Capitalism in the 21st Century: Through the Prism of Value (with Guglielmo Carchedi).

For further analysis on the Trump tariff trade war see: <https://tinyurl.com/SocLab20254>

To read a recent interview with Stephanie Kelton on the “Disastrous Republican Economic Agenda” go to: <https://tinyurl.com/SocLab20255>

CLASS STRUGGLE UNIONISM

BY JOE BURNS



A guide for trade union members who want to organise to win victorious strikes. Written in the US with many lessons for trade unionists in Nigeria. Published 2022.

For those who want to build a fighting labour movement, there are many questions to answer. How to relate to the union establishment which often does not want to fight? Whether to work in the rank and file of unions or to take staff jobs with trade unions? How much to prioritize broader class demands versus shop floor struggle? How do we support the best trade union leaders? And most critically, how can we revive militancy and union power in the face of corporate

power and a legal system set up against us?

Class struggle unionism is the belief that our union struggle exists within a larger struggle between an exploiting billionaire class and the working class which actually produces the goods and services in society. Class struggle unionism looks at the employment transaction as inherently exploitative. While workers create all wealth in society, the outcome of the wage employment transaction is to separate workers from that wealth and create the billionaire class. From that simple proposition flows a powerful and radical form of unionism. Historically, class struggle unionists placed their workplace

fights squarely within this larger fight between workers and the owning class. Viewing unionism in this way produces a particular type of unionism which both fights for broader class issues but is also rooted in workplace-based militancy.

Drawing on years of labor activism and study of labor tradition Joe Burns outlines the key set of ideas common to class struggle unionism and shows how these ideas can create a more militant, democratic and fighting labor movement.

This important book and many pamphlets are available for free download from Iva Valley Books: <https://tinyurl.com/SocLab202512>

STRIKE AND LITIGATE TO ENFORCE PAYMENT OF NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE

By Femi Aborisade



The National Minimum Wage Act, 2019, was amended in 2024 by inserting new Sections 3(1) and 3(4), which provide for a national minimum wage of not less than N70,000 per month by establishments employing not less than 25 workers (s. 4(1)(b) of the Act) and a review of same after three years, respectively.

The amendment of the national minimum wage law was a product of tripartite collective bargaining processes involving governments (Federal and State), the private sector employers and organized labour.

By virtue of Section 254C(1)(j)(i) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, as amended, collective agreements are binding and enforceable by the National Industrial Court. Indeed, the national minimum wage of N70,000 has now become law by the exercise of assent and signing into law by the President on 29th July 2024.

According to the National President of the National Union of Local Government Employees (NULGE), about 20 States of the Federation have not been paying the national minimum wage to teachers and local government workers. This raises the question of how to legally enforce the national minimum wage.

By section 254C(1)(J)(i) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of

Nigeria (CFRN), 1999, Collective Agreements (CAs) are enforceable by the National Industrial Court (NIC). The section empowers the NIC to interpret and apply (i.e. enforce).

By the judicial authorities of *Esther & 2 ors v. Skye Bank PLC* (Suit No. NICN/LA/31/2010). Judgment was delivered on 22/10/2015 at pages 42-44 and *ENYINNAYA AMUGO V. SKY BANK PLC* (Suit No. NICN/LA/258/2016, judgment of which was delivered by Hon. Justice B. B. Kanyip, PhD, OFR, (now President, NICN) on 13/3/2018 at paragraph 25, collective agreements are binding and enforceable on the strength of constitutional provisions.

The next question is how can the new national minimum wage be enforced? Enforcement of the new minimum wage may be approached by social mobilisation, mass peaceful street protests, industrial strikes, and, as a last resort, litigation.

Sections 30(6)(b) & (c) of the Trade Unions Act permit strikes where the dispute involves dispute of right or breach of contract of employment or Collective Agreement. The new national minimum wage is not only legally sanctioned, it is also a product of collective tripartite bargaining and agreement. It is thus a right under the National Minimum Wage Act and under the agreement reached before it was passed into law. Non-payment of the

national minimum wage therefore qualifies as a dispute of right over which strike actions may be embarked upon legally.

The Court of Appeal in *UNION BANK OF NIG. PLC V. MRS. EDET* (1993) 4 NWLR (PT 287) 288 at page 298 paragraph H, has given judicial blessing to employment of strikes “whenever an employer ignores or breaches” a term of an agreement.

In the unlikely event that employers, particularly governments as employers of labour refuse to pay the national minimum wage in spite of strikes and peaceful protests, unions and their central labour organisations, the NLC and TUC, may then embark on litigation. Section 9(2)(c) of the National Minimum Wage Act makes the defaulting employer liable to pay **interest** at a rate not less than the CBN lending rate over the unpaid cumulative sum.

In *Mr. Ojutalayo John Folayan v. Morlap Shipping Company Ltd* [SUIT NO. NICN/LA/472/2012, Judgment of which was delivered on 4th December 2015 by HON. JUSTICE B. B. KANYIP (OFR), now President of the National Industrial Court, the Court awarded *N750,000.00 (Seven hundred and fifty thousand Naira) general damages/compensation against the employer and in favour of the worker on the ground of unjustifiable withholding of the worker's salary. The Court justified the order for general damages for withheld salary on the reasoning that “an employee's salary becomes due and his right to it is vested at the end of each*

month. All of this no doubt justifies some sort of compensation for the claimant given the power of this Court to do so under section 19(d) of the NIC Act 2006. Accordingly I award the sum of Seven Hundred and Fifty Thousand Naira (N 750,000.00) as general damages/compensation to the claimant.” (p. 15 of the judgment), relying on the Supreme Court authority of Underwater Eng. Co. Ltd v. Dubefon [1995] 6 NWLR (Pt. 400) 156 SC.

To summarise, the road to ensuring enforcement of the national minimum wage is the road of struggle, in the streets and in the labour courts. The national industrial court, per Hon. Justice B. B. Kanyip, PhD, OFR, President, NICN, in the 2020/2021 Legal year ceremony Lecture tagged “Dignity of Labour and Labour Justice Lecture” has sent a strong message to the employers that:

“We have never ceased to stress that an employer cannot treat an employee *shabbily and expect a pat on the back from this court*”.

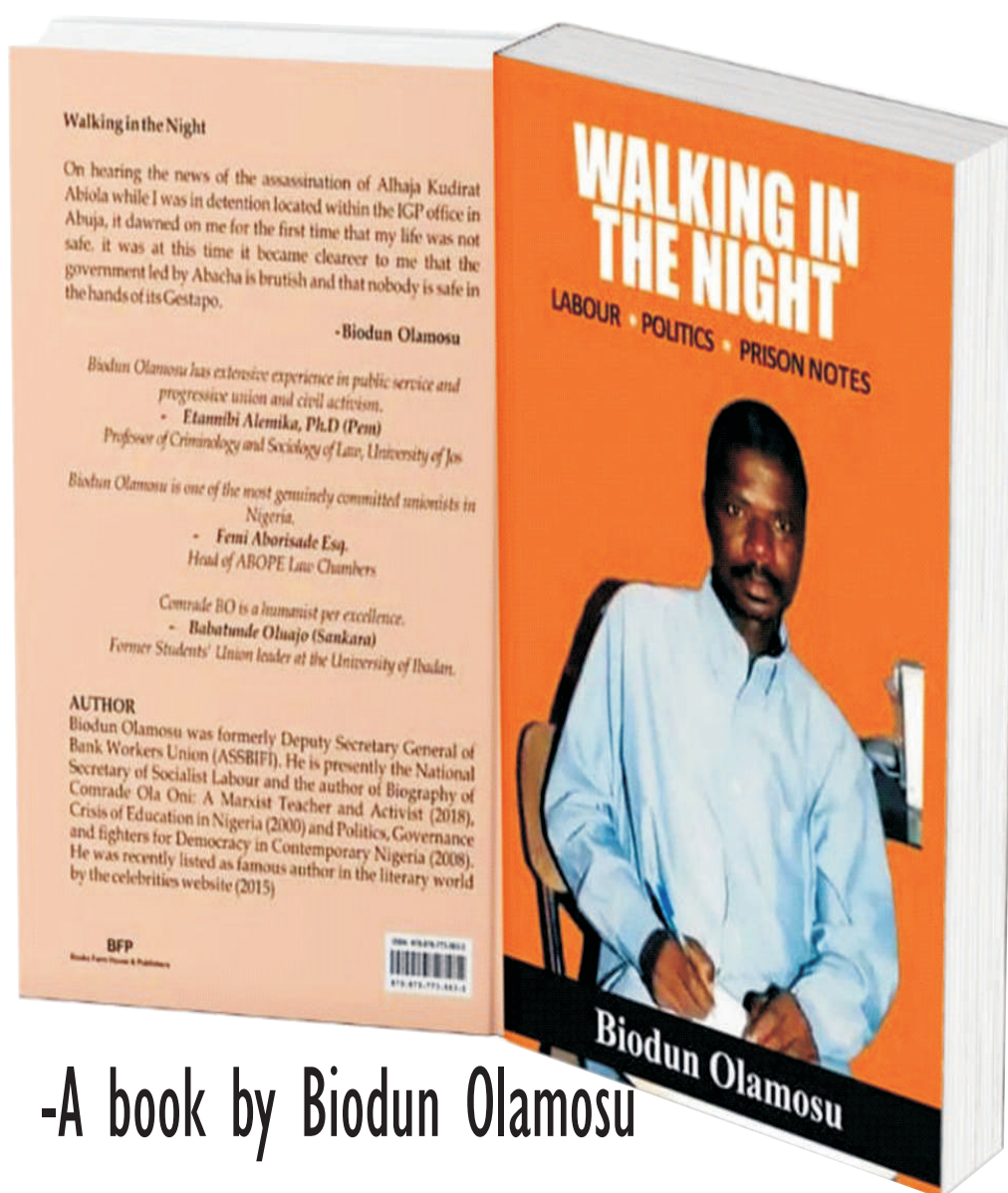
Organized labour should take to peaceful street protests and litigate over the non-payment of the national minimum wage to give an opportunity to the Court to demonstrate its commitment to labour justice.

This article is an extract from submission made at the Webinar organized by the Employment Labour & Industrial Relations Committee (ELISC) of the NBA on 8th April 2025.

In early April, the National President of the Nigeria Union of Local Government Employees (NULGE), Haruna Kankara, said about 20 states had yet to implement the N70,000 new minimum wage for local government workers and primary school teachers.

These states include Zamfara, Yobe, Taraba, Niger, Kogi, Kaduna, Imo, Gombe, Federal Capital Territory, Ebonyi, Cross River, Borno, Benue, Adamawa, Abia and five others. Many other states have not fully implemented the law with full arrears back to July 2024. We need action in all these states to ensure the law is fully implemented.

WALKING IN THE NIGHT – LABOUR – POLITICS- PRISON NOTES



What happens when you stand up for justice in a system designed to break you? *Walking in the Night* is a powerful firsthand account of political struggle, imprisonment, and survival under Nigeria's harsh military regimes.

Biodun Olamosu takes you inside the brutal detention centers where activists were locked away, revealing the untold realities of political oppression and resilience. From prison cells to courtroom battles, this book exposes the fight for democracy and the price of speaking truth to power.

In the darkest corners of oppression, where chains seek to silence and cells attempt to break the human spirit, one man refused to surrender. *Walking in the Night* is more than just a memoir, it is a gripping account of resilience, political struggle, and the raw realities of Nigeria's prison system under military rule.

Biodun Olamosu, a seasoned labour activist and political fighter, takes you on a journey through the brutal detention centers of the Babangida, Abacha, and Abubakar regimes. Arrested multiple times between 1992 and 1998 for his unwavering stance against tyranny, Olamosu shares his firsthand experiences from various prisons, police stations, and secret detention facilities across the country.

Through his eyes, you will witness the inhumane conditions inside Nigeria's so-called "correctional" facilities, places that,

instead of rehabilitating, turn the forgotten into hardened criminals. Yet, amid the suffering, there is an undeniable spirit of resistance. Olamosu unveils the bonds formed among prisoners, the unlikely alliances with security officials, and the radical ideas that took root behind bars.

But *Walking in the Night* is not just a prison diary. It is a powerful chronicle of the labour movement, political activism, and the historic fight for democracy. From his role in the National Conscience Party's battle for political inclusion to his encounters with the O'dua Peoples Congress, Olamosu reveals the inner workings of Nigeria's revolutionary movements, how they strategized, how they endured, and how they ultimately changed the cause of the nation's history.

This book is a must-read for anyone who seeks to understand Nigeria's past struggles, the price of political resistance, and the unbreakable spirit of those who dare to stand against oppression.

They tried to silence him. Instead, his story will echo through generations.

Are you ready to walk through the night?

☐ If you believe in justice, freedom, and the power of resistance, this is a must-read!

Get your copy now!

<https://selar.com/walkinginthenight>



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ABOUT US

We are socialists and Marxists

The economic, environmental and Covid-19 crises have made clear that capitalism is a conflict between two classes: the vast majority who create the wealth, and a tiny minority who profit from it. Attempts to reform capitalism have failed: the only solution is to replace it with a truly democratic socialist society.

Capitalist rulers will only give up power if forced to do so. We need a mass democratic movement to bring about socialism. Events, such as the Russian Revolution of 1917, January 2012 in Nigeria and the uprisings in Sudan and Algeria in 2019, show what is needed.

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