



NLC, STARVATION WAGE AND THE TRIUMPH OF HARDSHIP.

Abadom Lawrence Amechi



Workers have long suffered under the weight of poor governance, corruption, and money grabbing from those in power. The past three years under President Ahmed Bola Tinubu have been particularly tough.

The president came prepared to unleash the anti-masses programme of the Bretton Woods institutions. His policies, such as removing fuel subsidies, floating the naira, and increasing electricity tariffs, have worsened living conditions, seemingly aligning with Western powers' interests despite his controversial past.

Three years in, it is clear this government's direction is off track. Even the World Bank acknowledges the reforms are not delivering, at least for the poor. Funds from subsidy removal, tariff hikes, and other measures were supposed to bolster weak economic areas and ease the burden on citizens. Instead, the money's are nowhere to be found and the government is borrowing heavily even with nothing to show for it. Good governance shouldn't be complicated - well-crafted policies, even painful ones, earn people's patience if they see potential gains.

Three years of hardship, misery, and unrelenting pain. The N70,000 minimum wage is practically useless, with many states even refusing to implement it. Prices have skyrocketed - eggs are N6,000 a crate, fish is N6,000/kg, and cooking gas is N1,500/kg. School fees have soared, even in public institutions, and medicines are unaffordable. Workers are forced to rely on faith healing when sick, as N70,000 can't even cover basic needs. Even N200,000 might not be enough to break the cycle of unnecessary struggle created by the economic mess of Tinubu's government.

The NLC is right to say that the current wage is a "starvation wage" and is demanding that the government addresses the high cost of living. The labour centre is demanding an immediate review of the current N70,000 national minimum wage, which was signed in July 2024, citing rapid inflation and skyrocketing living costs. The labour unions are proposing a new minimum wage of N154,000 and pushing for a 120% salary adjustment.

May Day, 2026 has been scheduled as a protest day against states that have failed to implement the current N70,000 minimum wage. We also need to demand a new minimum wage for all.

Workers are at a breaking point, trapped by insecurity, economic hardship, and crumbling values, nonchalant political elites, with no clear way out. Many can't afford school fees, creating a cycle where their children become vulnerable to exploitation by the same politicians that created the hardship situation. In contrast, the elites' kids are in top universities. Basic healthcare has become a luxury; people die in under-equipped hospitals. It's telling that a contractor building a hospital in Akwa Ibom prioritized a mortuary, reflecting the harsh reality of the healthcare sector's collapse.

It is true that a higher minimum wage would boost purchasing power, benefiting the economy and potentially reducing insecurity and social issues. Logically, it'd be a win-win for the government. But APC's track record says otherwise - Buhari's presidency disappointed many, and Tinubu's policies seem to favour the elite.

The working class needs to see this as a class issue: the ruling elite is using poverty to maintain control. The labour movement, once a champion of workers' rights, has fallen prey to manipulation. Today, it's heavily policed and ethicised, a far cry from its apolitical past. The rot that plagued the civil service has infiltrated trade unions, making them a microcosm of the society they serve. Labour leaders openly flaunt their ties to political parties, especially the ruling party. Affiliate unions are divided into political blocs, swayed by the highest bidder. Even state chapters of the NLC brazenly display their political allegiances.

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'REVOLUTION IS THE CHOICE OF THE PEOPLE'

CRISIS AND REVOLT IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA



Revolution is the Choice of the People' is simultaneously a study of the underlying causes of rebellion in the Middle East and North African regions and a celebration of the mass protests of the Arab Spring. But this book is far more than a historical account. It is an unparalleled contemporary Marxist discussion of socialist revolution in the modern world. It deserves to be widely read by all socialists. This book has a very peculiar history in Nigeria. During the #takeitback / #endbadgovernance protests in August 2024, the police raided Iva Valley Books, a labour movement themed bookshop in NLC HQ in Abuja. The book was later used publicly by lawyers for the prosecution as evidence against the Comrades who had been arrested. The case was dismissed in December 2025 as the prosecution failed to present their case. This is why this book should be read by all radicals and change seeking elements

Alexander summarises the importance of

the uprisings:

"The revolutionary wave which swept the Middle East in 2011 showed the potential for a region united horizontally through the ties of social class which connected the fates of the impoverished majority with each other and pitted them against the kings, generals and big businessmen who rule. It demonstrated the possibility of a future where ordinary people could liberate themselves from all kinds of oppression, whether on grounds of gender or religious belief. This promise was both explicitly written into the demands of popular protests and strikes, which raised anti-sectarian slogans and implicit in the mass participation of women and oppressed religious groups.

She emphasises the role of the organised working class, showing that where they were central to revolutions in 2011, the revolutionary process went furthest. This is also true of the more recent "second wave" rebellions in countries like Algeria and Sudan where strike action and further working class

organisation proved decisive at key points in the struggles.

Some of the most valuable sections of Alexander's book are where she locates the revolutions in the context of the regions' history. Both the colonial past, and the imperialist present - which means that in addition to the impact of European colonialism, US and Soviet imperialism, Alexander also discusses the regional forces that shape economic and political context. Her sections on the role of Israel in the context of US Imperialism and how this shapes the Palestinian resistance are particularly insightful.

The "neoliberal turn" in the region, since the 1980s, she argues, demonstrated a shift in the role of the state "towards a focus on its role as facilitation and organisation of capital accumulation and a relative reduction in direct production or provision of services". This helped create the conditions of revolt by undermining the support structures of the masses and forcing groups of workers into confrontation with the state and employers. The close links between the state, big business and the military in many countries helped this process - and framed the ruling class response to rebellion.

Despite the difference in their political ideologies, Islamists in Egypt and the heterogeneous mixture of "technocrats", representatives of "traditional" Islamic Parties and reformist movements making up the civilian FFC [Forces, Freedom and Change] component of the Sudanese Transitional Government found themselves facing versions of the same problem. The generals had no intention of relinquishing their dominant role in the state.

The question of the State then becomes of supreme importance. Alexander explores how even radical reformist movements in the region have failed to understand the role of the state and thus led movements into traps placed by the counter-revolutionaries. She shows how theories of change based on "non violence", fail to achieve democratic change because they do not aim to defeat the state machine.

Returning to the classical Marxist tradition Alexander shows how the ideas developed by Marx and Engels and then developed by Lenin,

Trotsky and other socialists, are directly applicable to these revolutions. This is not to say that the ideas of those thinkers can simply be transferred without development. Alexander points out, for instance, that in the region military institutions have "acted as direct agents of capital accumulation" with an enormous involvement of military officers in capitalist enterprises. She explains that this is distinct, but complementary to the "classic role played by military institutions in capitalist states as indirect agents of capital accumulation, as mapped out by Frederick Engels, Vladimir Lenin and Karl Liebknecht". A great strength of Alexander's book is how she develops classical Marxism to understand contemporary capitalism in the region.

Alexander shows how self-organisation of workers - organisation that poses the potential to become the basis for an alternative workers' state to the capitalist state - developed, or didn't develop. There were small beginnings of this process in Egypt, and the revolution in Sudan threw up thousands of Resistance Committees.

In her discussion on neoliberalism, Alexander makes a point which is frequently forgotten. Neoliberalism is "still capitalism" and "capitalism needs workers". The fact that the region has a huge and powerful working class meant that workers' revolt was always a possibility. The Egyptian revolution in particular went furthest in 2011 because its workers' had seen a succession of major revolts over the preceding decades that had created networks of activists who understood how to organise. The centrality of workers to capitalist production gives them enormous strategic power.

As Alexander concludes:

"As we have seen, the presence of organised workers engaged in mass strikes often proved decisive in shaking loose the grip of authoritarianism enough to open a period of political reforms or at least creating conditions for ordinary people to take some of their democratic rights to assemble and organise by storm."

WHEN THE POWERFUL CONVERGE: A LESSON FOR THE MASSES

Bashir Bello

On 29th March, 2026, Nasir El-Rufai's mother was buried in Abuja. This convergence of the high and mighty; politicians, clergy, business tycoons and royalty, offers a profound lesson for ordinary citizens. It is a moment that should compel the poor and the struggling to sheath their swords, to pause and to reflect deeply on the nature of the battles w so passionately fight.

In a society as politically charged as ours, it is common to see fierce loyalty among supporters of different leaders. These loyalties often manifest in heated arguments, hostility, and sometimes outright conflict. Yet, when the curtain is lifted, what becomes

evident is a different reality entirely: those perceived as rivals in the public space often share cordial relationships behind closed doors.

Take, for instance, figures like Nasir El-Rufai and Uba Sani. While their supporters may engage in endless battles in their names, the reality suggests a level of closeness and mutual understanding that transcends the divisions projected to the public. This raises an uncomfortable but necessary question: who truly benefits from the animosity among the masses?

A blind supporter of any political figure may spend years defending, arguing, and even fighting on behalf



of their preferred leader. Yet, it is almost certain that such a supporter would never enjoy the privilege of having that same leader attend their funeral, let alone that of a loved one. This is not to diminish the humanity of leaders, but to highlight a fundamental imbalance in the relationship between the powerful and their followers.

This burial reveals the enduring truth

that politics at the top is often governed by pragmatism, shared interests and class solidarity, not by the emotional and sometimes reckless loyalty displayed at the grassroots.

It is therefore time for the poor masses to rethink the nature of their struggles. The real divide in society is not primarily between individuals or political personalities. Rather, it is

WHY MARXISTS LOOK TO THE WORKING CLASS

The classical Marxist position sees the collective self-emancipation of the working class as the motor for the liberation of the whole of humanity. This is not because the working class is the poorest or most oppressed class, but because of the collective nature of their working lives and the form their protests take, primarily trade union led strikes.

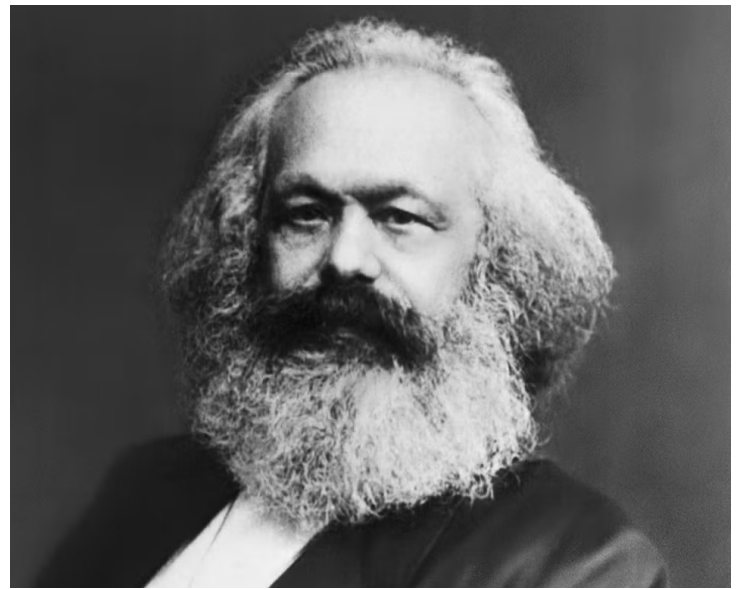
The way that the working lives of workers are organised and the pressure of capitalist competition inevitably leads to conflict between workers and their bosses. In the right conditions, with enough self-confidence, strikes can develop into mass general strikes and ultimately workers councils forming an alternative way of running society. This provides the basis for socialism, the free and democratic association of producers.

Marx's conception of the elementary process of social revolution is that it is the

process by which the mass of people press beyond the limits of capitalism in the course of their class struggle (whether they think that is what they are doing or not). It is in this sense that every strike is a sort of rehearsal for socialist revolution – not in the minds of the strikers, but from the point of view of the Marxists.

This position is contested, some socialists, for example, Frantz Fanon, claimed that socialism will be built through a coalition of the peasantry and the urban lumpen proletariat. Ken Olende, in the current issue of ROAPE, restates the classical Marxist position with reference to the struggle against colonialism in Kenya.

Use this link to read the article:
<https://tinyurl.com/4yhhytff>



THE USA-ISRAEL WAR ON IRAN AND DANGOTE OLIGOPOLISTIC PETROL PRICES

Izielen Agbon

On February 28, 2026, 100 United States and Israeli planes attacked Iran with the goal of imposing “regime change” and stopping Iran from developing nuclear weapons. The planes bombed more than one thousand targets in the Iran. Iran responded with drone attacks on US bases in Bahrain, Cyprus, Kuwait, Qatar, Jordan, UAE, Iraq and Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, Iran closed the Strait of Hormuz, thereby reducing the world's crude oil and liquefied natural gas supply by 20%. This led to a rise in the price of crude oil, petroleum products and natural gas.

Petrol prices increased worldwide. The price of crude oil rose from \$60/barrel to over \$100/barrel. In the war affected middle east nations, petrol prices rose to N515/litre in the open market in Iran, N465/litre in Kuwait, N705/litre in Qatar, N835/litre in Saudi Arabia, N840/litre in Oman, N840/litre in Bahrain, N880/litre in Iraq and N915/litre in UAE. Even in the USA, one could buy petrol on March 24, 2026, at the Valero petrol station on 401, W. Commerce Street in Fairfield,

Texas at \$2.59/gallon or N945.7/litre (\$1/N1,382). But, in Nigeria, petrol prices rose to N1,330/litre as Dangote Refinery increased its gantry price at the refinery gate to N1,275/litre.

This Dangote Refinery gantry price is an artificially high oligopolistic petrol price arising from the small number of suppliers. The NMDPRA and Dangote Refinery claimed that the high petrol prices in Nigeria were due to “current fluctuations driven by market forces and supply dynamics under deregulated regime” and the world wide supply disruption caused by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

However, unlike other nations, NNPC did not offer any buffer against the external international crude oil price disruption. NNPC has a 30 days supply strategic reserve, as the supplier of last resort, to protect the Nigerian economy from international price shocks and fuel shortages. Apart from this, Dangote Refinery has a strategic supply tank inventory of 5.36 billion litres or 99 days production at 100% operating capacity. These strategic

petrol reserves were not released into the market. Rather, a “rocket” model was imposed with an immediate high oligopolistic petrol price hike. Yet, whenever crude oil prices fall, Dangote refinery lowers petrol prices slowly under a “feather” model to maximize its oligopolistic profits.

Dangote Refinery prices are very high oligopolistic petrol price aimed at ripping-off the masses on the short term because of the USA-Israel war on Iran. First, the components of petrol prices are made up of crude oil (50%), refining (15%), distribution and marketing (10%) and taxes (25%). Internationally, in a competitive market, a \$1 per barrel rise in the price of crude oil lead to a \$0.025 per gallon (N9/litre at \$1/N1382) rise in petrol prices. In January 2026, the Qua Iboe crude oil price was \$64/barrel while Dangote Refinery gantry petrol price was N699/litre. In mid-April, Qua Iboe crude oil price was \$104.73/barrel while Dangote Refinery gantry petrol price was N1,275/litre.

Thus, for Dangote Refinery, a \$1 per barrel rise in the price of crude oil lead to a N14/litre rise in petrol prices. The 56% difference between Dangote's N14/litre increase in petrol prices and the international competitive N9/litre increase for a \$1/barrel rise in crude oil price is oligopolistic pricing leading to oligopolistic profits. These oligopolistic profits are won at the expense of the workers and the masses. It constitutes an exploitative transfer of wealth from the working class to Dangote Refinery shareholders. Secondly, petrol prices in Nigeria should be compared to petrol prices in other OPEC oil producing nations, not to those in neighbouring nations like

Benin and Chad that produce little or no crude oil. Petrol prices in most OPEC nations are lower than those in Nigeria. In mid-April, petrol prices were N30/litre in Libya, N45/litre in Venezuela, N440/litre in Angola and N480/litre in Algeria.

Finally, increased petrol prices impose poverty and under-development on the Nigerian working class. The wages and disposable income of Nigerian workers are fixed. The minimum wage is fixed at N70,000 per month. The major household expenditure patterns of a working class household are food (56%), fuel/power (5%), transport (6%), education (6%), health (6%), housing (5%), services (6%) and clothing (5%).

An increase in the price of petrol leads to an immediate increase in the prices of food, fuel/power, transport, housing, services, clothing, education and health. These constitute an immediate increase in 95% of the household expenditure of a working class household on a fixed salary.

The working class is forced into multi-dimensional poverty. In 2026, 150 million Nigerians or 62% of the population of 240 million citizens live in abject poverty. Dangote's oligopolistic petrol prices appropriates more wealth from these suffering masses for the pecuniary benefits of its refinery's shareholders. Workers, students, trade unions and civil society organizations must organize to fight for lower petrol prices, higher wages, higher household disposable income, strong anti-trust laws against oligopolies and the repair of the four government owned refineries.



FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS ARE ONLY ENJOYED BY THE RICH

Femi Falana



Fundamental human rights are only enjoyed by the rich in any oppressed society. The rich can hire the best lawyers to enforce their fundamental rights in any court. The poor are regularly subjected to human rights abuse as they have no access to lawyers to defend their fundamental rights.

The Legal Aid Council established by the federal government and the Offices of the Public Defender set up by state governments to provide legal services for poor people are ineffective due to poor funding. Hence, they are unable to challenge the violations of the fundamental rights of poor people in the society.

Bourgeois lawyers and journalists usually wax eloquent in the defence of a few fat cats who are briefly detained and granted bail and even allowed to go for medical check-up abroad while

their cases are adjourned. But the elite hardly speak for the poor who are locked up in jail houses for years without trial.

As a result of increasing poverty in the land under the Bola Tinubu regime, many citizens are forced to steal tubers of yam and loaves of bread to feed themselves and their family members. The system has no sympathy for them. Hence they are jailed. A few of the cases may interest concerned citizens.

On May 6, 2024, two employees of FoodCo, Ring Road branch, Ebenezer Olusesi, 31, and Ibrahim Adeniyi, 41, were docked in an Iyaganku Chief Magistrate's Court in Ibadan for allegedly stealing two loaves of bread worth N2, 600 from their employer. We briefed a comrade, Femi Aborisdade Esq in Ibadan to defend them. He took up the matter pro bono and was able to secure their freedom.

On September 3, 2025, a Magistrate's Court in Osogbo, capital of Osun State sentenced a 28-year-old ex-convict, Jimoh Akeem, to three years imprisonment for stealing yam worth N35,000. We instructed a lawyer in Osogbo, Mrs Fatima Adesina to challenge the conviction of the poor man in the High Court.

On January 23, 2026, a Chief Magistrates Court sitting in the Okitipupa area of Ondo State remanded a 25-year-old man, Ayo Ajibade, in Okitipupa Correctional Centre for allegedly stealing four tubers of yam valued at N10,000. We have contacted the Attorney-General of Ondo State to ensure that the convict is given an option of fine, which we are ready to pay.

Our law firm intervenes in these pathetic cases, from time to time. We are strengthened in defending poor criminal suspects charged for stealing food to feed themselves by relying on the Italian case of Roman Ostriakov, a homeless man who was convicted and sentenced to six months in jail for stealing €4.07 worth of cheese and sausages in 2011. But Italy's Supreme Court of Cassation quashed the conviction on the ground that stealing small amounts of food out of immediate necessity to survive is not a crime.

Concerned citizens must always consider the class character of the criminal law in the country before joining the so-called politically exposed persons to accuse anti-graft agencies of persecution. On a daily

basis, poor criminal suspects are handcuffed and leg chained in Nigeria. Young internet fraudsters (yahoo yahoo boys) are paraded by the EFCC. Have we asked why a former governor who allegedly stole N180 billion was never paraded? Why has the Accountant-General of the Federation facing a N90 billion fraud case not been handcuffed?

For goodness sake, is it persecution to ask a former governor to explain the criminal diversion of over N400 billion under his watch? Is it persecution to arraign a man in court for saying that he has been tapping the telephone conversations of the National Security Adviser? Is it persecution to investigate a man who disclosed on a national television how a Nigerian disappeared under his watch about 7 years ago?

Whenever politically exposed persons are politely invited by the EFCC or the ICPC to explain the criminal diversion of hundreds of billions of Naira, lawyers usually accuse the anti-graft agencies of engaging in gestapo tactics. But lawyers do not complain when the police pounce on poor suspects or capture innocent citizens in lieu of their family members who are wanted by the police.

As we watch the ongoing intra class feud among the delinquent members of the ruling class, we must not forget the larger struggle for the establishment of a socialist society where rich and poor criminal suspects shall be treated equally by the police and anti-graft agencies.

...NLC, STARVATION WAGE

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The labour movement used to have a robust and enviable history. The movement 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 us from the yoke of military rule. We can certainly say that the labour movement, in the past, lived up to its objectives and core values.

We saw how Adams Oshiomhole, a former NLC president, aligned the Congress with APC, backing Buhari over Goodluck Jonathan. Ayuba Wabba's presidency also seemed tied to supporting Buhari.

Under Buhari, NLC acted like APC's labour wing. But in 2017, workers turned on Oshiomhole at an NLC colloquium, realizing he'd led them astray and wasn't true to their cause.

The state has deteriorated under APC

rule, with institutions crumbling and branches of government reduced to serving the executive's whims. Problems have mounted beyond PDP's tenure, and the future looks grim with no clear direction.

Now should be the time for NLC, organised labour, and progressive civil society to courageously challenge misguided policies and rescue the poor labouring masses. The Congress must lead the charge.

Can Joe Ajaero lead the fight for a living wage? Workers need a wage that matches today's reality. Will Ajaero stand firm or has he been silenced? As they say, "strike the shepherd, scatter the sheep" – is it a case of weak leadership or just not enough fighters? One comrade said, "The harvest is plenteous, but the labourers are few" – are we lacking numbers or grit?

WHEN THE POWERFUL CONVERGE:...

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rooted in class. As Karl Marx famously argued, history is shaped by the struggle between classes - the "haves" and the "have-nots," the oppressors and the oppressed, the exploiters and the exploited.

When ordinary people direct their anger at one another over political allegiances, they risk missing the larger picture. Such divisions only serve to weaken collective strength and distract from the structural inequalities that affect their daily lives.

This is not to suggest that politics or leadership choices do not matter. They do. Policies have real consequences, and leadership decisions shape the trajectory of nations.

However, blind loyalty to individuals at the expense of reason, unity, and self-interest, ultimately serves neither the individual nor society.

What is needed instead is a shift in consciousness:

- From personality-driven politics to issue-based engagement;
- From division among peers to solidarity among equals;
- From emotional reactions to informed, strategic action.

The struggle, as it stands, is not a personality contest. It is a deeper contest of class and conditions. And like all such struggles, it carries profound consequences. It may lead to a transformative reconstruction of society or, if mishandled, to the collective ruin of all involved.

The choice, ultimately, lies with us, the common people.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IS A TRADE UNION ISSUE Amina Usman



According to the UN, more than 4,500 cases of conflict-related sexual violence were verified in 2024, although the true number is likely far higher due to stigma, fear and collapsed reporting systems.

The deputy secretary-general pointed to alarming patterns in several crises. In Sudan, UN experts have reported widespread sexual violence and

attacks on women human rights defenders.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a child has been reported raped every half hour, while in Haiti, sexual violence against children surged dramatically in recent years.

In Minab, a small city in southern Iran, 170 children arrived at the Shajareh

Tayyebah Girls' Elementary School on an ordinary morning of 28th February. By the time the dust settled, at least 148 of them were dead. The missiles that killed them were American. The intelligence that selected the target may have been Israeli. The school was next to a military complex.

One in three women in Nigeria experiences physical, sexual or

intimate-partner violence; is victim of trafficking or is subject to violent social norms. This is made worse by insecurity and kidnapping. Young women face increased sexual assault, forced marriage and loss of schooling.

Better funding of public education and health services is particularly important for girls and young women.

Break The Silence!

1. Speak-up if you have experienced any form of violence.
2. Listen if someone tells you about having experienced any form of violence.
3. Report to the authorities so that perpetrators, whoever they are, do not go unpunished.
4. Support survivors of physical violence by telling them that you believe them
5. Discuss this issue in your trade union branch by sharing and discussing the following pamphlet:

<https://www.unicef.org/nigeria/reports/16-facts-about-violence-against-women-and-girls-nigeria>



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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RESISTANCE



SOCIALISTS SHOULD BE TRIBUNES FOR ALL OPPRESSED PEOPLE

Amina Usman



The issue of HIV and AIDS raises urgent questions that socialists cannot afford to sidestep. As socialists, we must fight against anything that divides the working class or weakens the collective struggle of working people against those who exploit us. Division weakens us. Repression weakens us. We must oppose the persecution of anyone.

This is why we argue against all forms of ethnic chauvinism, divisions between Christians and Muslims, northerners and southerners, and every other manufactured boundary used to keep working people from recognising their common interests. It is why we oppose every form of oppression against women. And it is why we must oppose the criminalisation and persecution of gay people, however uncomfortable that position may be for some.

This is a basic socialist principle. Rosa Luxemburg called for socialists to be “tribunes of the oppressed.” This was not a call to defend only those whose oppression is convenient or popular. The persecution of gay people — through imprisonment, violence, social exclusion, and increasingly severe legal penalties — is a real and concrete harm inflicted predominantly on the poor. The wealthy can buy silence, privacy and protection. The poor cannot.

There are those who would be rightly horrified at the extension of Sharia criminal penalties to non-Muslim citizens — and who would loudly demand exemption from such laws on

grounds of personal freedom and religious difference. Yet some of the same people enthusiastically support legal bans on homosexuality and abortion. The principle being appealed to — that the state should not impose one community's moral code on all — applies equally in both cases, or it applies in neither. Socialists should be consistent where others are not.

It is also worth knowing where this legislative push is coming from. Right-wing American evangelical organisations have been actively campaigning across Africa to increase the criminal penalties faced by gay people. This is not a spontaneous expression of African values — it is a well-funded foreign political intervention by some of the most reactionary forces in the United States. Socialists who would rightly oppose American imperial interference in African economic policy should apply the same critical eye here.

Unfortunately, the repression of gay people is being increased by many African governments. In Nigeria, in the run-up to the 2015 elections, Goodluck Jonathan increased the penalty for gay marriage to 14 years in prison. Organisers of a gay club or society now face a penalty of 10 years in prison. In March 2026, the largely progressive Prime Minister of Senegal, Ousmane Sonko, supported a law that doubles the penalties homosexuals face. This was the first law he had supported in their National Assembly since being elected in 2024.

The consequences of this repression are not abstract. Over the last decade,

incidents of assault and battery have more than quadrupled against gay people. They face the risk of blackmail and extortion, and supposed gay events risk being raided by the police.

The oppression of gay people also has severe health impacts. According to UNICEF, approximately three million people in Nigeria are currently living with HIV. While the virus disproportionately affects certain groups — including men who have sex with men, sex workers, and intravenous drug users — the majority of new infections in Nigeria occur through heterosexual transmission, affecting men and women across the general population alike.

Increasing the legal persecution of gay people makes the HIV crisis significantly worse, as does the criminalisation of prostitution. When HIV is stigmatised as a “gay disease”, people across the population become reluctant to get tested, for fear of being associated with a criminalised group. Untreated, they unknowingly transmit the virus to their partners. Repression does not contain HIV. It drives it underground and accelerates its spread.

This is, at its core, a class issue. The rich can protect themselves. They can afford regular testing, quality healthcare, and, if necessary, treatment abroad. Antiretroviral drugs, taken consistently, allow people with HIV to live normal lives for decades. But the annual cost of standard antiretroviral treatment in Nigeria runs to around

₦150,000 per person. That sum is trivially affordable for the corrupt elite who pass and enforce these laws. It is out of reach for the majority.

Newer treatment options, such as Lenacapavir, an injectable drug requiring far less frequent dosing, carry an estimated annual cost of around ₦60,000 per person in Nigeria. This is cheaper than older daily regimens, but the question remains: cheaper for whom? When sixty percent of Nigeria's population lives in poverty, even ₦60,000 per year is beyond reach for millions. The failure of successive Nigerian governments to adequately fund public healthcare, compounded by recent deep cuts to international donor programmes — particularly PEPFAR under the Trump administration — means that the public programmes which have kept people alive are being dismantled at precisely the moment they are most needed.

Socialists should be tribunes of all oppressed people. We understand that laws against homosexuals, like all laws under capitalism, are applied selectively. It is never the rich and powerful who fill the prisons. It is always the poor, the visible, the vulnerable. The increases in criminal penalties for homosexuality in Nigeria and several other African countries serve no progressive purpose. They divide working people, they worsen a public health crisis, and they are being driven by foreign reactionary money. We cannot support them, and we should say so clearly.

01 MAY 2026
WORKERS DAY



Happy May Day

FRATERNAL GREETINGS FROM THE AMALGAMATED UNION OF PUBLIC CORPORATIONS, CIVIL SERVICE TECHNICAL AND RECREATIONAL SERVICES EMPLOYEES (AUPCTRE) ON MAY-DAY 2026 CELEBRATIONS.

The Leadership of the Amalgamated Union of Public Corporations, Civil Service Technical and Recreational Services Employees (AUPCTRE) felicitates with the Labour Movement across Nigeria and the World on the occasion of the 2026 International Workers Day.

May Day in Nigeria has a rich and defiant history. Since it was first marked by Nigerian Workers in 1980 and later declared a National Holiday in 1981, it has remained a rallying point for the struggle against exploitation, Poor Wages, and anti Labour Policies. Today, that struggle continues. Nigerian Workers are still battling to survive amid biting hardship, rising insecurity, and the persistent refusal of the Federal Government to approve a living wage, even as the political class continue to enjoy jumbo pay and privileges.

This May Day, the Labour Movement in Nigeria is united in one clear demand: a living Wage that truly addresses the suffering and hardship of Workers. Equally urgent is a comprehensive review of our Labour Laws to reflect the harsh realities Trade Unions and Workers now face. Laws drafted decades ago cannot protect workers in today's economy.

As we mark this historic period in the Labour Movement, AUPCTRE remembers and honours all its past Heroes and Heroines whose sacrifices laid the foundation we now stand on. We Congratulate all organs of our great Union, from the Branches to the National level, who have worked assiduously to keep AUPCTRE strong in good and bad times. We also salute the Leadership of the NLC, TUC and JPSNC for their tireless commitment and sacrifices in championing the cause of the teeming Nigerian Workers.

Congratulations and Powers to all Workers on yet another May Day.
Forward Ever, Backward Never.

Comrade Benjamin Anto, Mni.
National President- AUPCTRE

Comrade Aliyu Mohammed-Phd.
General Secretary- AUPCTRE

Aluta continua!
Long live AUPCTRE!
Long live Nigeria Labour Congress.

INTERNATIONAL
LABOUR DAY

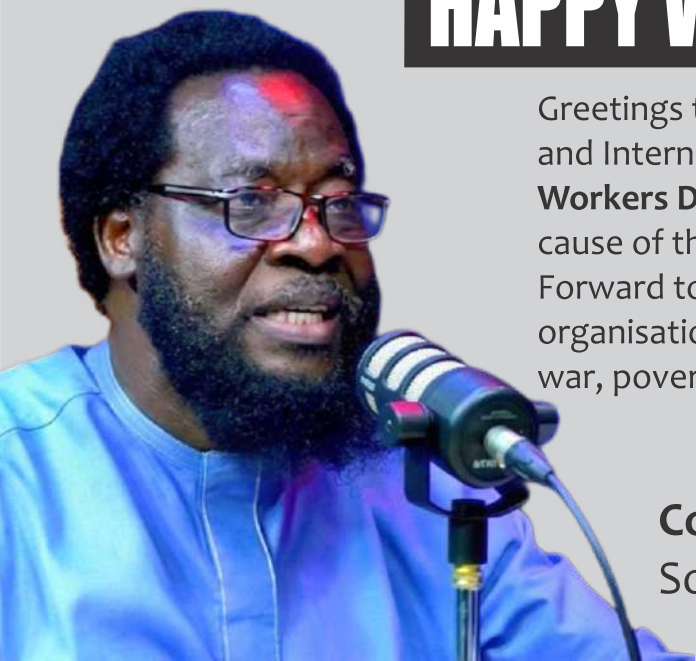


1ST MAY 2026

HAPPY WORKERS DAY

Greetings to all working people in Nigeria and Internationally on May 1st: **Workers Day**. The cause of Labour is the cause of the liberation of humanity! Forward to independent working class organisations! Forward to a world without war, poverty, exploitation and oppression.

Comrade Femi Aborisade
Socialist Labour



TUC: 25 YEARS OF ACTIVISM IN NIGERIA

Jatau David Polang



For 26 years (1978–2005), the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) was the sole labour centre. In 2005, however, the Trade Union Congress of Nigeria (TUC) was registered as a second labour centre. The Federal Government, under Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, through an executive bill to the National Assembly, enacted the Trade Union (Amendment) Act, 2005. The registration and formal recognition came in a letter dated 8 August 2005. The Registrar of Trade Unions wrote: “Honourable Minister, Federal Ministry of Labour and Productivity has given approval to register TUC as a Federation of Trade Unions with 18 trade unions as initial affiliates, with Dr. (Mrs.) Peace Nkiruka Obiajulu as the President-General and Chief John Kolawale as the Secretary-General.”

The popular expectation in government circles was that the creation of the TUC would water down organised labour. This expectation soon backfired during the January 1, 2012 petroleum price hike protest, when the government faced angry backlash from both the NLC and the TUC. Together, they constituted a formidable force in Nigeria's socio-economic and political development, mobilising the masses and vehemently protesting the obnoxious policy.

It is on record that the NLC and the TUC have jointly celebrated Workers' Day every 1 May and have periodically embarked on joint picketing, protests, and street demonstrations against anti-labour policies and bad governance. In many instances, the labour centres intervened and jointly prosecuted union actions, especially in cases of mass sackings. One of the major objectives of labour unionism is not only to ensure the availability of jobs but also to protect existing ones. Thus, the sacking of workers invites prompt attention from labour leaders.

One such instance was in 2014, when about 95 workers of the Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria (CRIN), Ibadan, were sacked after protesting the non-payment of their salaries and management's refusal to allow them to join trade unions. The relevant unions — NASU, ASURI, and SSAUTHRAI — brought in their respective centres, the NLC and TUC. The labour centres intervened, and the Minister of Labour ensured that parties signed a memorandum dated 17 February 2015 to reinstate the workers and allow them to unionise.

The labour centres also intervened in crises over non-payment of salaries and victimisation of labour leaders in states including Nasarawa (2016), Benue (2017), and Kogi (2018). Between 2019 and 2023, government

took four major actions that affected labour relations: airport concessions, increased electricity tariffs, and repeated increases in petroleum pump prices. All were resisted by organised labour.

The education sector also saw repeated strikes. ASUU alone went on strike for a total of 655 working days between 2016 and 2023. Other unions — SSANU, NASU, and NAAT — also embarked on actions, including joint strikes lasting 116 days between 2017 and 2019. On 31 August 2020, aviation workers under NUATE and ATSSAN protested planned airport concessions. In 2020 alone, government increased fuel prices four times: ₦121.50 on May 1, ₦140.80 in July, ₦145.80 in August, and ₦151.56 in September.

The year 2020 was marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, which claimed 3,155 lives in Nigeria by December 2023. Health sector workers, who managed patients across the country, agitated for hazard allowances and were themselves victims of infection. Resident doctors went on nationwide strikes twice in 2020, and between 2015 and 2023, doctors under NARD, NMA, and JOHESU went on strike for a total of 153 working days.

Electricity tariff protests continued. On 13 May 2024, organised labour picketed NERC and DISCO offices nationwide to protest tariff hikes from

₦66 to ₦255 for Band A customers.

Now with 33 viable affiliates from both public and private sectors, the TUC celebrated two decades of existence in April 2025 at its first quadrennial conference in Abuja, electing leaders into its Central Working Committee for a four-year tenure. In September 2025, the TUC mobilised affiliates for a nationwide strike during the crisis between PENGASSAN and Dangote Refineries over unionisation, which led to the sacking of over 800 workers. The NLC expressed solidarity.

In April 2026, amidst astronomical fuel price hikes and attendant socio-economic hardship, the TUC called on the Federal Government to urgently reverse the policy and invest 60 percent of oil revenue into local refineries to boost production and reduce prices.

As the Congress marches into its third decade of activism, the urgent task before the TUC is to reposition itself more vibrantly, intensify mobilisation of affiliates and members — most of whom are senior workers — and confront governments at all levels with the clear intent of winning a better life for workers and their dependents.

OIL, WAR AND IMPERIAL DECLINE: THE US-ISRAEL-IRAN CONFLICT IN PERSPECTIVE

RASHEEDAT ADESHINA



Introduction: War in a Time of Crisis

On 28 February 2026, the United States, in alliance with Israel, launched a major military strike against Iran. Among the targets hit was a school in Minab, reportedly killing dozens of children. This war is not an isolated tragedy. It is part of a broader pattern of escalating aggression that includes the June 2025 bombardment and years of sanctions and strategic pressure. This immediately raises a central question: why has the United States returned to open war at this particular moment? To answer this, we must move beyond official justifications and examine the deeper dynamics of imperialism under conditions of crisis.

The current war was not triggered by a sudden breakdown in diplomacy. On the contrary, the negotiations that preceded the attack were largely performative. They served as a cover for intelligence gathering and military preparation. This follows a familiar imperialist pattern: diplomacy is used not to avoid war, but to prepare for it. The strategic objective was clear. Washington aimed to deliver a rapid and decisive blow, eliminate key elements of Iranian leadership, destabilise the state, and ultimately impose a regime aligned with its interests. This model has been applied repeatedly from Iraq to Libya. However, this expectation has not materialised. Iran has not collapsed. Instead, the state has demonstrated resilience, reorganised its forces, and consolidated internal support. This outcome is not accidental. It reflects a broader historical tendency: external aggression often strengthens internal cohesion, even in politically contradictory societies. Imperialist war does not liberate populations; it frequently reinforces the regimes it seeks to overthrow.

To fully grasp the current escalation, it is necessary to situate it within a wider pattern of imperial behaviour. The abduction of Nicolás Maduro under the direction of Donald Trump exposed the growing boldness of US imperialism. The seizure of a sitting head of state, outside any legal

framework, did not provoke meaningful resistance from global institutions. This lack of consequences has reinforced a dangerous assumption within the US ruling class: that its power can be exercised without limits. The aggression against Iran must be understood within this context. It reflects not only strategic calculation but also ideological overconfidence. Yet this confidence is increasingly detached from reality. Iran is not comparable to previously targeted states, and the global balance of power has shifted. Actions taken under conditions of declining dominance carry far greater risks.

The war also exposes the real character of so-called international law. In theory, global institutions exist to regulate conflict and uphold sovereignty. In practice, they operate within the limits defined by dominant powers. When those powers choose to act outside these limits, legal norms are simply disregarded. This reveals a fundamental truth: the international order is not governed by neutral rules, but by relations of power. Law follows force. It does not constrain it. What is presented as a rules-based system is, in reality, a hierarchy enforced by military and economic strength.

Beneath the political rhetoric lies a decisive economic reality. Iran occupies a critical position in the global energy system. It possesses vast reserves of oil and gas and is located near the Strait of Hormuz, through which a significant portion of the world's oil supply passes. Disruptions in this region have immediate global consequences. Energy prices rise. Inflation spreads. Supply chains especially in food and fertilisers are disrupted. These effects are not abstract. They translate directly into higher living costs for working people across the world. From Lagos to Latin America, the burden is the same. It is the working class that pays for imperialist conflict.

The behaviour of the United States must also be analysed within the context of its

changing global position. While it remains a dominant power, it no longer enjoys uncontested hegemony. Prolonged wars, rising debt, internal inequality, and the emergence of new geopolitical competitors have all weakened its position. On the economic front, China is seriously challenging the influence of US. China is now Africa's largest trading partner, with trade exceeding \$295B in 2024, China has also significantly surpassed the US in global manufacturing now producing over 28% of global output compared to roughly 16% for the US, China export is now 80% of world economy. The aggression everywhere is to see how they can regain the influence back. This does not indicate immediate collapse, but it does signal a shift toward more aggressive and unstable strategies. The current conflict reflects this transition.

From a Marxist standpoint, the nature of the conflict is clear. This is a war of imperialist aggression. It must be opposed. The actions of the United States and Israel represent an attempt to impose domination through force. At the same time, this position does not imply political support for the Iranian regime. Iran remains a capitalist state with its own internal contradictions and repressive features. However, history demonstrates that imperialist intervention does not produce liberation. Instead, it generates chaos, fragmentation, and long-term instability, as seen in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria. The right of Iran to resist external domination must therefore be defended, while maintaining political independence from its ruling class.

War produces contradictory effects. In the short term, external aggression can strengthen national unity and stabilise ruling regimes. However, this unity is temporary. The underlying social and economic contradictions remain unresolved. Once the immediate threat recedes, these contradictions re-emerge, often in sharper form. Workers begin to confront their own ruling class over

living conditions, wages, and political rights. At the same time, failures or prolonged conflict can deepen divisions within imperialist countries themselves, opening space for renewed class struggle. War, therefore, does not resolve contradictions. It displaces them. Calls for a peaceful resolution are understandable, but they must be analysed critically. Under capitalism, peace is not a stable condition. It is temporary, conditional, and shaped by unequal power relations. As long as global production is organised around profit, competition between states will persist. This competition inevitably produces conflict. War is not an exception within capitalism; it is one of its outcomes.

The current conflict is not simply the result of policy errors or individual decisions. It is the expression of a system under strain. The same forces that produce war also generate inequality, exploitation, and instability across the globe. The abduction of Maduro and the bombardment of Iran are not separate events. They are interconnected expressions of an imperialism that increasingly relies on coercion to maintain its position. Yet in doing so, it reveals its own limits and contradictions. For Marxists, the task is clear. Opposition to imperialist war cannot be separated from the struggle against capitalism itself. Appeals to international institutions or ruling-class diplomacy offer no solution. The working class must act independently, building solidarity across borders and organising against all forms of domination. The question is no longer whether the system can be reformed. It is whether it can continue to function without producing deeper crises and more destructive wars. The answer is already visible. This system generates war. It sustains exploitation. It cannot deliver peace. It must therefore be replaced. The future will be decided through struggle that is organised, conscious, and international. Imperialism has reached its limits. The task now is to end it.

WE WIN WHEN WE FIGHT Izielen Agbon



History teaches us that Nigerian workers win their demands when they unite under their trade unions and fight very hard. Let us look at a few recent examples from 2025-2026.

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) initiated a two-week warning strike on October 13, 2025, over unresolved issues including the review of the 2009 FG-ASUU agreement, payment of unpaid salaries/earned allowances, and improved funding for public universities. Following negotiations, the strike was suspended on October 22, 2025, with a one-month window for the government to address demands. The 2025 FGN-ASUU Agreement was signed. ASUU won

many of its demands. These included (1) Upward review of lecturer's salary by about 40% and improved condition of service. (2) Annual allowance of about N1.4 million for Professors and N840,000 per year for Readers. (3) Nine types of Earned Academic Allowances (EAA). (4) Retirement age for Professorial cadre is fixed at 70 yrs and pension is calculated at 100% of annual salary. (5) Six months maternity leave for female academic staff and 2 weeks maternity leave for male academic staff member. (6) Full cost of University Staff Primary schools and capital cost of university staff secondary schools paid by FGN (7) Additional non-salary benefits including group life insurance, research leave, sabbatical leave, annual leave, sick leave and deferred

leave or compensation for denial, injury pensions and the provision of office accommodation and facilities. (8) N30 billion for the Stabilisation and Restoration Fund to be disbursed by the FGN in three equal instalments of N10 billion annually from 2026 to 2028. (9) Research funding from 1% of GDP in a National Research Council Bill to be forwarded to National Assembly. (10) the review and amendment of the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) Act; National Universities Commission (NUC) Act; Education (National Minimum Standards and Establishment of Institutions) Act; Universities Miscellaneous Provisions Act; Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) Act and other laws that impede university autonomy and academic freedom.

In February 2026, the Joint Health Sector Unions (JOHESU) suspended their 84-day nationwide strike, with members returning to work following an agreement with the Federal Government. Key outcomes included the withdrawal of the "No Work, No Pay" directive, and the immediate payment of January 2026 salaries. The government has indicated that salary adjustments for non-physician health workers are being factored into the 2026 Appropriation framework. The union is entering a new phase of negotiations under the Collective

Bargaining Agreement (CBA) framework: Formal negotiations are scheduled for April 15 and 16, 2026. These talks will cover the adjustment of the Consolidated Health Salary Structure (CONHESS) to ensure equity with doctors' salary scales. On April 7, 2026, NARD suspended its planned indefinite nationwide strike following high-level interventions. The key details of this agreement and the government's response include (1) Professional Allowance Table (PAT): The Federal Government reversed its decision to remove the Professional Allowance Table from the remuneration structure. (2) Arrears Payment: The government commenced the payment of promotion and salary arrears for doctors across various federal medical centres as of April 13, 2026. (3) Medical Training Residency Fund (MTRF): Assurances were given regarding the prompt conclusion and payment of the 2026 MTRF. NARD adopted a position of "cautious optimism" and issued a two-week ultimatum for the full implementation of these assurances.

These examples show that workers win their demands when they are united and fight under pro rank and file trade union leadership. Nigerian workers will face many struggles in the coming years. It is imperative that they remember that WE WIN WHEN WE FIGHT.

FIVE YEARS LATER, HAVE THE JUNTAS KEPT THEIR PROMISES?



Five years after the coup in Mali, followed by those in Burkina Faso and Niger, **Jeune Afrique** asks: "Have the juntas kept their promises?"

In all three countries, the military seized power in the name of security imperatives:

"The rhetoric is well-rehearsed," notes the pan-African website: "Only the military can win the war that civilians have lost. Gone are the diplomatic delays, the constraints of defense agreements with

Paris, the qualms about human rights, or the need to open a dialogue. Instead, there is a 'total' war, waged by soldiers who know the terrain, supported by new partners, Russia foremost among them, free from Western scruples or even ulterior motives. The result? Nothing to boast about..." exclaims Jeune Afrique.

In Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger, "the security situation has deteriorated. (...) Everywhere, the same logic is at work: an extreme militarization of the response,

indiscriminate repression of populations accused of complicity with jihadists, massive recourse to foreign auxiliaries—Africa Corps in Mali and Burkina Faso, local militias everywhere." And the same result: increased insecurity, unbridled violence, populations caught between the jihadist hammer and the military anvil.

A change of guardian

Jeune Afrique paints an equally catastrophic picture on the economic front: the juntas had promised "sovereignty, a break with neo-colonial dependence, and the regaining of control over national resources. Goodbye to the CFA franc, a symbol of monetary servitude. Goodbye also to the Western 'predators' who plunder African wealth. Make way for an economy finally at the service of the people, free from foreign control."

The result: "Russia, China, and Turkey have rushed into the vacuum left by the West, negotiating contracts that are not necessarily more advantageous for the populations. The proclaimed economic sovereignty turns out to be nothing more than a change of guardian."

Accountants in front of no one

Finally, "it is perhaps on the political front that the record is most revealing," laments Jeune Afrique. "Because, beyond the security and economic promises, these coup leaders had all sworn, hand on heart, to hand power back to civilians after a brief 'transition.'"

Nothing of the sort happened... And we have ended up with "a hijacking of political debate, a prohibition on thinking differently, an impossibility of democratically sanctioning leaders who, precisely, owe nothing to the ballot box. For this is the crux of the problem," observes the pan-African website: "these juntas are accountable to no one. They fear neither a change of power nor popular retribution. Their sole legitimacy rests on the force of arms and propaganda."

And Jeune Afrique concludes: "These lines will certainly draw the wrath of the apologists for these apprentice sorcerers in fatigues. 'To speak the truth in times of universal lies is a revolutionary act,' wrote Orwell in 1984. (...) History will judge harshly these regimes that have betrayed the hopes they had raised."

THE UNPAYABLE DEBT OPPRESSED PEOPLES OF THE WORLD OWE THE CUBAN PEOPLE



On 29th January 2026, President Donald Trump invoked the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) and the National Emergencies Act (NEA) to issue an Executive Order categorizing Cuba as an “unusual and extra-ordinary threat to US national security and foreign policy”. The Order imposes additional duties on goods imported from any country that directly or indirectly sells or provides crude oil or petroleum products to Cuba. The renewed onslaught on Cuba has been described variously as a predatory calculation as well as the most wicked, cruel, crushing, vicious, brutal economic blockade targeted at existential stifling of the wellbeing of the masses with the intention of provoking the masses to embark on mass protest, the ultimate purposes of which is, to exploit the crisis to violently bring down the regime, and compel a forced system change back to the pre-1959 era.

In order to understand the full import of the renewed onslaught on Cuba, we need to interrogate the 14th February 2026 speech of the US Secretary of State, Marco Rubio, which he delivered at the Munich Security Conference. The essence of the speech is a concern for restoration of colonial property relations, not only in Cuba and other Latin American countries but indeed, on a global scale. The speech agonises over the contraction of Western influence following decolonization and “communist” revolutions. Rubio called for a new Western century and challenged European leaders not to be shackled by guilt and shame over their colonial past. Specifically, Rubio

stated that Cuba's “only path forward” is to open its economy and grant political and economic freedoms to its citizens. Earlier in late January 2026, Rubio had publicly expressed preference for regime change. Thus, on the whole, the essence of the economic attacks on Cuba goes beyond Cuba. Cuba is merely being used as a dress rehearsal. The insane and predatory President Trump has a recolonization agenda, which threatens the hard-won freedoms of all oppressed and industrially undeveloped world, in particular.

Cuba freed itself from Spain's Latin American Empire in 1898. Thereafter, the US dominated the economy. By 1924, American-US sugar barons owned 63% of Cuban sugar production. By the 1950s, 80% of all Cuban imports came from the US. 83% of available land was devoted to sugar and sugar made up at least 80% of exports. By 1959, Cuba's capital city, in reality, was Washington, not Havana. Between 1924 and 1933, an ex-Director of General Electric in Cuba, Gerardo Machado ruled Cuba with iron hand. He was overthrown in 1933 by a workers' revolt and replaced for a few months by Grau San Martin who was in turn removed by ex-Sergeant-Clerk Fulgencio Batista who ruled from 1934 to 1959 when he was removed by the 1959 Revolution that was led by Fidel Castro's Guerrilla movement with widespread popular support of workers and the peasantry.

The 1959 revolution carried out massive nationalisation through land reforms involving land seizure and land redistribution, nationalization of private property, mainly U.S.-owned; oil refineries; banks; insurance,

chemical, mining, and agricultural companies. These nationalisation programs are the very reasons why the deranged President Donald Trump categorized Cuba as an “unusual and extra-ordinary threat to US national security and foreign policy”. The nationalisation policy and the gains it has established in terms of free health care, free education opportunities, etc, are what Trump and the US imperialism term the sponsorship of Terrorism by Cuba. The ultimate target of the unprecedented economic strangulation of Cuba is therefore, not just a question of “regime change”; it is in reality a focus on “system change”, i.e. a reversal to the pre-1959 property relations. There were over 600 failed CIA plots to assassinate Fidel Castro in the hope of cutting short the worldwide influence of the Cuban revolution on resistance to colonial, neocolonial enslavement, and imperialist domination all over the world.

Since the 1959 Revolution, Yankee Imperialism has continued to cruelly attack Cuba, economically, physically, psychologically, culturally, informationally, through multilevel warfare, including invasions, executions, biological and chemical warfare, economic sanctions, blockades, trade embargoes, and military actions. We owe the Cuban people a debt of international solidarity that we can never fully repay for the thousands of Cuban soldiers' lives lost (and those fatally injured) in the course of Cuban military internationalism in supporting the cause of self-determination, political independence, liberation, emancipation and human dignity in Africa, Latin America and the

Caribbean, in Angola, Zanzibar, the Congo-Brazzaville, Benin Republic, Namibia, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Vietnam, Ethiopia, and more recently, Venezuela. We owe the Cuban people a debt of international solidarity for the healthcare internationalism which Cuba has demonstrated for the benefit of the world, in sending not less than 400,000 health personnel to not less than 134 countries of the world, and in which Cuba either paid fully or partially for the health services rendered in many of these cases.

There is an urgent challenge for the oppressed peoples of the world, organized and unorganized, employed and unemployed workers, peasants, students, traders, professionals, to reciprocate Cuba's military internationalism, medical Internationalism and educational internationalism. Cuba has given unconditional active, not passive, support to the emancipatory struggles of oppressed peoples all over the world, particularly in Africa and the Caribbean. Now is the time to reciprocate in every way we can! Cuba needs concrete material support. Cuba needs concrete financial support and Cuba needs concrete mass action support by social movements, including and particularly the trade unions. The Nigerian Labour Movement should put pressure on all levels of the Nigerian Governments to regularly donate funds and materials to Cuba on humanitarian ground.

We solemnly declare, along with the Cuban people, the age long battle cry: *Patria o Muerte!* (Fatherland or death!) *Venceremos!* (We shall overcome!).

Socialist Labour

WORKERS BLEED WHILE THE STATE LOOKS AWAY — By Maxwell Adeyemi



There is a particular kind of cruelty in being poor and sick in Nigeria. It is not the cruelty of fate or biology—it is the deliberate, institutional cruelty of a state that has collected taxes, borrowed trillions in the people's name, and delivered almost nothing in return.

Nowhere is this betrayal more brazen than in our public hospitals, where the sick are bled dry before they are treated, where electricity is rationed like a luxury, and where survival itself is commodified.

This is not abstract. It is personal. And, it is political.

A few weeks ago, my wife gave birth in a public hospital in Abuja. What should have been one of the most joyful moments of our lives became a harrowing lesson in what it means to be an ordinary Nigerian navigating a healthcare system designed, whether by intent or neglect—to grind the poor into dust.

The ordeal began long before the delivery. Antenatal care at the public hospital, supposedly the affordable option for working families, cost just below the national minimum wage. Think about that: the minimum wage—the legal floor for workers' survival—is barely enough to carry a pregnancy to term in a public facility. What hope does a market trader, a factory hand, or a domestic worker have?

Every scan, every test, every consultation came with a separate bill. We paid. And paid. And paid again.

When my wife passed her estimated delivery date by two weeks, we returned to the hospital. She was in visible distress. I begged a doctor privately: could he perform the caesarean section that morning? His answer was a catalogue of systemic failures dressed up as professional constraint. There was no stable electricity. He was the only doctor on duty. Hundreds of patients were waiting outside. He could not. He would not.

So we waited. Tuesday became Wednesday. Wednesday became Thursday. The surgery was eventually scheduled two full days after a woman in documented pain had presented at a government hospital needing urgent care.

When the hospital finally prepared a list of items we needed to purchase before the surgery could proceed, the bill came to ₦250,000. By the end, with additional drugs and injections, our total expenditure climbed past ₦300,000. In a public hospital. For a birth.

On that list was blood. The hospital had none of the type my wife required. I was directed to a private hospital, where I paid ₦35,000 for a unit of blood, then another ₦3,000 for verification at the public hospital. The blood was never used. Not a kobo was refunded.

We paid for surgical gloves. We paid for disposable lab coats. We paid for every consumable item that, in any functioning public health system, the state would have provided as a basic matter of course.

And then, after the surgeries were done, there was no surgical plaster in the hospital to dress wounds. The nurses used cello tape! Yes—electrician's tape pressed across fresh surgical cuts of women who had just given birth. In a public hospital. In 2025.

Let us be clear: this is not about individual incompetence. The doctors and nurses in our public hospitals are, by and large, dedicated professionals working in conditions that would break most people. The failure belongs squarely to the Nigerian state and the ruling class that controls it.

Nigeria's health sector consistently receives a fraction of the budget allocation recommended by the Abuja Declaration, signed over two decades ago, pledging at least 15% of national budgets to health. Year after year, the Nigerian government falls catastrophically short of that target while billions disappear into private pockets through procurement fraud, inflated contracts, and outright theft.

The result is a public health system stripped bare. No consumables. No blood banks. No reliable power. Too few doctors. Too few nurses. Patients buying their own gloves so that a doctor can operate on them.

The minimum wage cannot cover the cost of having a baby in a public hospital. It cannot cover the cost of a serious illness. It cannot cover emergency surgery or cancer treatment or even a sustained course of medication. For the vast majority of Nigerians, serious illness is a financial

catastrophe—and for many, it is a death sentence.

This May Day, as workers across the world mark 140 years of struggle for dignity and rights, Nigerian workers must name this clearly: the collapse of public healthcare is a class issue. The wealthy fly abroad for treatment. The politically connected access private clinics on government expense accounts. Their children do not queue behind a hundred patients at the National Hospital or Nyanya General Hospital. They do not clutch blood bank receipts and wait for a generator to come back on.

The working class bleeds so that the elite can be comfortable. We are expected to patch our wounds with electrician's tape and call it a healthcare system.

Publicly funded, universally accessible healthcare is not a utopian fantasy—it is a political choice. Every country that has achieved it did so because workers organised, demanded, and refused to accept anything less.

The delivery room should never be a site of exploitation. Motherhood should never come with a ₦300,000 price tag for people who earn poverty wages. Life itself should not be rationed according to your ability to pay.

That is what we are fighting for. That is what May Day means.