



Socialist Bulletin

A Monthly Publication from Socialist Labour

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Prospects for 2025 – If the NLC Fights We All Win!

We have to be honest and say that the prospects for 2025 do not appear bright. They are not nearly as good, for working peoples, as our hopes were for this year. A year ago, we were hoping that the relatively newly elected leadership of the NLC would lead a robust fight over the minimum wage. This did not happen.

In addition, although we had relatively well supported protests in early August, the heavy state repression meant that this was not repeated in October.

On the electoral front, after the bitter near defeat of the Labour Party in the presidential elections early last year, the APC appears to be consolidating their hold and reducing prospects for change through electoral channels.

The NLC's demand for a N615,000 minimum wage not only crumbled, but the government's offer of 70,000 naira was met with three gbosas. Despite the claimed agreement that this modest increase would result in no further rises in the cost of petrol, prices continued to shoot up. The trade union leaders have failed to provide any adequate response to this situation leading to widespread cynicism with their behaviour.

There is some hope that some state trade union leaders may provide the necessary fight to ensure that the minimum wage is properly implemented. However, after seeing the national leadership accept the implementation date being shifted from the beginning of May to the end of July, trade union leaders in some states have accepted a further postponement to October or even December. But there may still be a fight in some states including Cross River, Katsina Zamfara...



We know the trade union leaders know how to fight successfully – it was Joe Ajaero himself who was operationally in charge of the strike in Kaduna in May 2021 that destroyed el Rufai in only three days. We just need to continue to argue for this action to be taken on a regular basis. This could bring the change we desperately need in only a few days.

Visit: socialistlabour.com.ng

Military Dictatorship - Any Way Forward? -By Izielen Agbon

There are misunderstandings and romanticisation of possible military rule. The armed forces (military, air force, navy etc), police and other paramilitary entities make up the coercive arm of any state. The ruling class controls state power and imposes its class dictatorship or bourgeois rule through a democratic political form. The specific national forms of parliamentary rule are determined by the historic nature of the class struggles between the ruling class and the labouring classes. Democracy takes varied forms in USA, Britain, Sweden, Ghana, Nigeria etc.

When the intensified struggles of the labouring classes threaten bourgeois rule and the internal division of the different fractions of the ruling class become magnified, the political arm of the bourgeoisie loses the capability to impose its class dictatorship on the labouring classes in a democratic form. The military option may then be accepted.

If the military takes control, it dissolves all form of democratic rule and imposes direct bourgeois class dictatorship by force. All organs of working class struggle are banned. For example, the military imposed a sole administrator on the Nigeria Labour Congress under Babangida in 1988 and again under Abacha in 1994. This is class rule under the barrel of a gun. Members of the ruling class that fail to unite are swept into jail. The whole society becomes a barrack factory where workers work under military decrees.

Work (waged and unwaged) is imposed as the organizing tool of the whole society and the appropriation of surplus value is maximized. Oppressive policies and conditions are imposed with immediate effect, ruthless efficiency and the gains of workers and peasants won in past struggles are reversed. It may take years of continuous struggles by workers and others before the army gives back its control of the State. Usually, working class forces are too weak to seize direct control of the State with the exit of the military wing of the bourgeois class.

In nations like Nigeria, where the ruling class have ethnic and religious power bases, disagreements amongst different fractions of the bourgeois class can appear as ethnic antagonisms. When the power bases of the different bourgeois fractions extend into the military, the struggle for supremacy amongst the different fractions of the bourgeoisie will be armed, violent and may end up in a national civil war. These were the underlining forces of the Nigerian civil war and in present day Sudan and the Central African Republic.

In our current situation, we cannot forget state violence against the working class under military rule because of the criminal use of armed paramilitary forces, the police and judicial institutions, against our peaceful struggles by the T-pain Government. Neither can we reject democracy because the particular national form of bourgeois democracy does not serve the interests of our labouring classes.

When the Nigerian working and peasant classes have gained enough power through their struggles to take control of the bourgeois state, they will dissolve the bourgeois state and impose a working class dictatorship. The military wing of the bourgeois class will be dissolved and replaced with a mass based peoples' army. The main purpose of the state will be the sustainable development of humanity in general and the lives (material, cultural, political, social, economic etc) of workers and peasants. Bourgeois democracy will be replaced with grassroot participatory democracy by autonomous working class and peasant class organizations. These are the first infant steps in the protracted effort to create a humanistic people-oriented socialist society where labour power (ability to work) is no longer a commodity.

The peoples of four West African states are now suffering from military dictatorships. The human rights attacks that have resulted are detailed in the following article:

<https://tinyurl.com/e3tmtyne>



Tobacco Kills Millions but is Still Legal!

900 are awaiting trial in prisons across Nigeria for supplying cannabis - eight million die a year from tobacco across the world. This new law is just another attack on youths.

<https://tinyurl.com/yphamykz>

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/tobacco>

Free All Protesters & Political Prisoners;



We are relieved that the case against the 119 protesters, including many children, who were dragged in front of the Federal High Court, Abuja, on Friday, 1st November, has been dismissed. But many more protesters remain in detention, many illegally.

There are the “Abuja 11” whose case was to have been held in the Federal High Court on Friday 8th November, but has now been postponed, at least they are out on bail. There are hundreds more protesters detained from Sokoto to Maiduguri and elsewhere. 11 protesters were in court on 4th November, in Borno State. Also there are many more detained by the police Intelligence Response Unit (IRT) in Abuja, some for as long as nine years, and at least a dozen #EndSARS protesters are still being held in prison in Lagos, still awaiting trial after four years.

For more details see: <https://tinyurl.com/4ms67rk2>



SOCIALIST LABOUR

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 last year, show what is needed.



#JOIN THE RESISTANCE

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One year on, Sweden's trade unions are more than a match for Elon Musk

In the first and only strike against Elon Musk's company, Tesla, anywhere in the world, Swedish workers have now been on strike for more than a year. Swedish industrial union IF Metall is demanding better wages, benefits and conditions for mechanics in Tesla repair shops across the country.

They have received a wave of solidarity strikes from 12 other Swedish trade unions and three foreign ones. These are stopping the shipping of Tesla cars to the sea ports, withholding postal deliveries and preventing Tesla charging stations being connected to the power grid.

For more details, read this article: <https://tinyurl.com/5y5ez82m>

#jointheresistance

President Tinubu's Tax Reform Bills—By Femi Aborisade

The primary objective of imposition and payment of tax ought to be to mobilize funds to execute government projects and redistribute wealth and income for the well-being of ordinary people.

The tension between the governors, national legislators and the Federal Government is more about who gets more from Value Added Tax (VAT), not about excluding ordinary people from paying VAT. Thus, the differences within the ruling class has nothing to do with protecting the poor, from the North and South, from unjust tax laws.

VAT is a sales tax, a tax on the value of goods and services provided whenever there is a sale or purchase transaction. VAT is a regressive tax because it places greater tax burden on the poor who spend a greater portion of their income on necessities for survival. This means that the many poor people tend to pay more VAT than the few rich people. This is contrary to one of the basic principles of taxation which stipulates that the rich should pay a higher rate of tax. Tinubu's tax advisor admits that: "the major VAT on consumption is from 82 per cent of low income earners in the country".

The concern of the northern governors, for example, is that if the distribution of VAT is based on the principle of derivation (which is more prominent in the Tax Reform Bills) is implemented, the Southern Governors could have more of the cake than the Northern Governors. The dispute therefore has nothing to do with protecting the Talakawa in the North and the South from an unjust law.

Paying tax or paying higher tax is desirable but it is the rich and their companies that should pay. Indeed, government ought to introduce progressive taxation. Government ought to increase Corporate Income Tax (CIT) from the current 30 per cent to 50 per cent or higher. But the Tax Reform Bills are more business friendly, targeting reduction of CIT from 40 per cent to 25 percent.

About the period of Nigeria's independence, CIT was 45 per cent and this continued until at least 1979. It is currently 30 per cent for larger companies and the Government of President Tinubu wants to tell the world it is more in love with businesses than with ordinary people by reducing it further to 25 percent.

The living standards of ordinary people have been attacked by various harsh policies of unprecedented rise in fuel price, devaluation of the national currency, inflation, high electricity tariff, as well as threatened increases in VAT.

The Federal Government should raise the tax payable by the rich and their companies. Government should raise the tax ratio (that is tax revenue/GDP). The IMF say the rate of tax revenue to GDP should be at least 15 per cent. In Nigeria, it is estimated to be about 7 per cent. While the Federal government is eager to implement IMF/World bank policies that impact on ordinary people negatively, the same government is eager to reject the Bretton Woods' institutions' recommended policies that may affect the profit interest of big business.

The Federal Government should adopt policies that provide succour for the masses regardless of the regions they come from rather than playing regional governors against each other through its tax reform bills.



OH, MY COUNTRYDICTION!

-bode.ekundayo@uniben.edu

We smile where we should frown
And frown where we should smile
We cry where we should laugh
And laugh where we should weep
We yawn where we should belch
And feast where we should fast
In public, our Kings and Queens

#jointheresistance

Celebrate carnivals of sacrilege
Excreting proudly on ancient shrines
Fouling World Assembly of Decency
With the thunderous blasts
Of their rotten national farts
The millipede of golden rings
Blessed with millions of legs
Runs an inch in a millennium
And loses the race to a centipede

They spin a yarn of yamless barns!
Of scorched and thirsty oceans!
Of serated, bald-headed forests!
Of hellish sandless Saharas!
Of pregnancies and keen labours
Bringing no births, no breaths!
Tell me a tale and reply:
How long is the trip to mirage
Oh, my 'Countrydiction'?

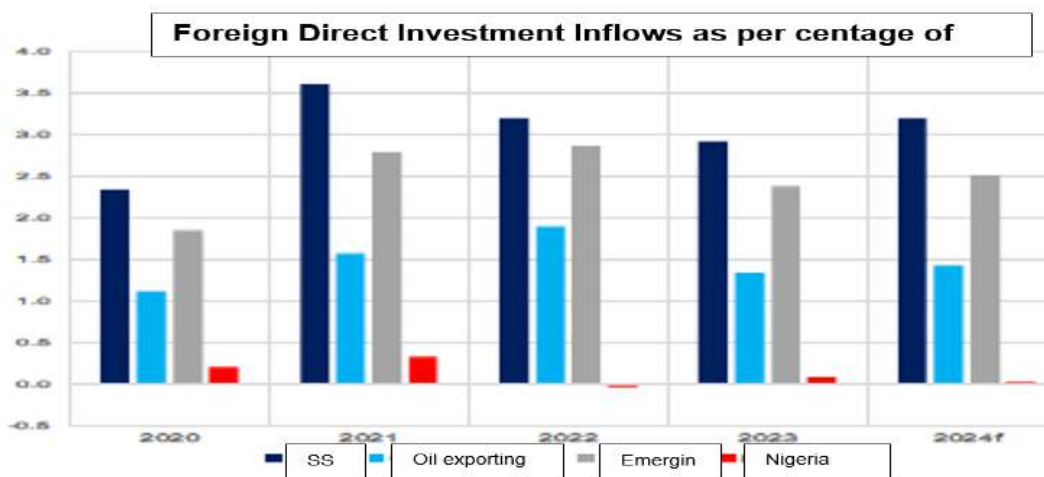
Bola T-Pain's Economic Strategy Cannot Win - By Alex Batubo

Bola Tinubu is implementing the standard economic reforms pushed by the IMF and World Bank since the 1980s. These aim to make companies more profitable and to attract foreign investment. The key policies now are removing petrol subsidy, allowing the naira to devalue and to increase taxation, especially VAT. All these have increased inflation, made the rich richer and the poor poorer. The Guardian confirmed this view causing anger in Asoro: <https://tinyurl.com/4e85dtje>

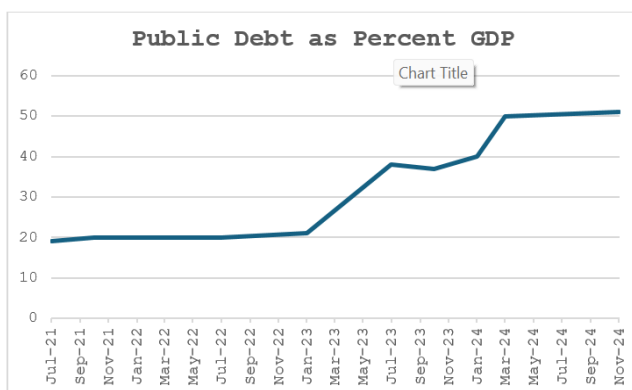
World Bank and IMF are celebrating Tinubu implementation of final planks of neoliberalism.

This was not the path taken by South Korea, China etc.

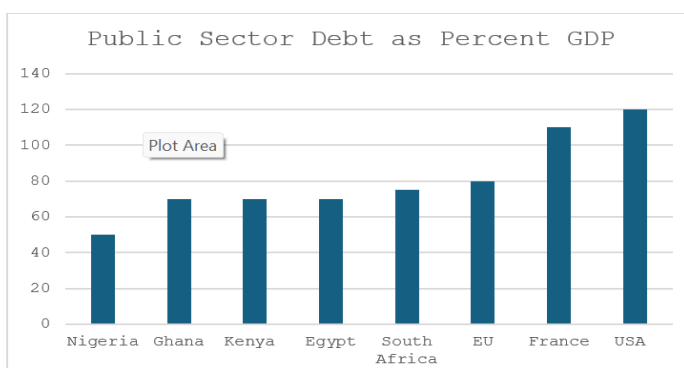
The aim is to attract foreign direct investment, but that is already comparatively low in Nigeria as the following graph shows. In addition, some international firms have left in the last couple of years, as they consider the risks from insecurity and corruption to be too high.



Nigerian public sector debt has increased rapidly in the last couple of years. This is strange as the Government claims to have saved so much money from ending fuel subsidy.



Despite this increase in government debt, the debt in Nigeria is relatively low in comparison to other governments as the following graph shows:



In addition, the public sector debt in Nigeria is mainly held locally in naira, so it has not been affected so greatly by the high depreciation over the last 18 months.

The Nigerian economy has grown massively in the last 25 years, but all the gains have been taken by the rich and the corrupt elite. Trade unions have the power to change this - we need to argue and organise for that power to be used now!

To read more on the Nigerian economy see:

<https://tinyurl.com/35zjb8pu>

Global Heating is Devastating the World-Tina Nkechi

The most recent international climate change conference has come and gone. Greenhouse emissions are still increasing and global temperatures this year are already 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels – the target of the 2015 Paris conference. The recent devastating floods across the Sahel and Nigeria are one of the impacts of climate change. They affected more than three million people, killing hundreds, causing further displacement, damaging vast areas of agricultural land and leading to a worrying increase in cholera and malnutrition. As Action Aid says: “The effects of climate change are hitting many of the world’s poorest people first, and hardest. And they’re making poverty worse.”

The greenhouse gases that cause global heating are mainly emitted by large companies in a few key countries. Half of these gases are emitted in China, US and India.

Country	Per centage of greenhouse gas emissions
China	30
US	12
India	8
European Union	6
Russia	5

This is really just a measure of the importance of manufacturing and industrial farming in these countries. Much of China’s contribution is then exported to the US, EU and Japan as manufactured goods – so their responsibilities are greater than these figures suggest (as are their historic contributions). Russia (and Nigeria) are major oil exporters and so

their impact is greater. China’s contribution is partly due to its massive population, but its per capital contribution is now even higher than that in Europe (despite China investing massively in solar and wind generation).

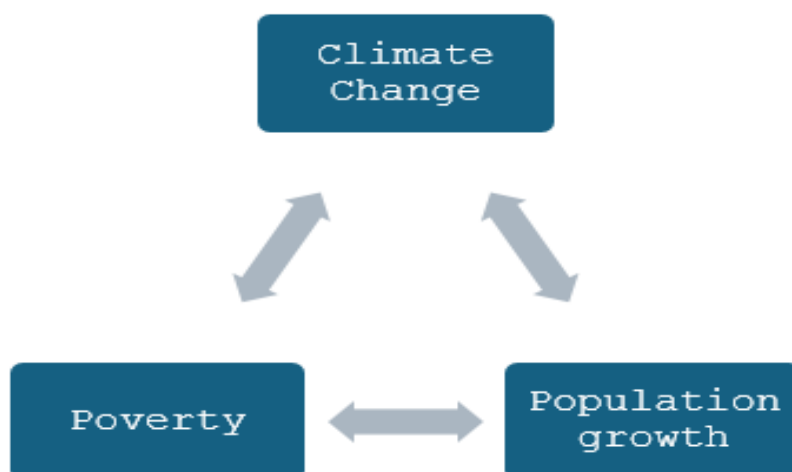
The real commitment of the governments of the US and EU to addressing climate change is shown by their tariffs for electric vehicles coming from China. EU has a tariff of 50% and US is proposing 100%. This is to protect their car industries, but the result massively increases the prices of electric vehicles and so discourages a move from petrol and electric vehicles.

Nigeria’s share of greenhouse gas emissions is only 0.75% of the global total, but its oil production is in the top 15 countries in the world. It could easily reduce its contribution by stopping gas flaring in the Niger Delta. Despite this small contribution, the poor of Nigeria are suffering massively.

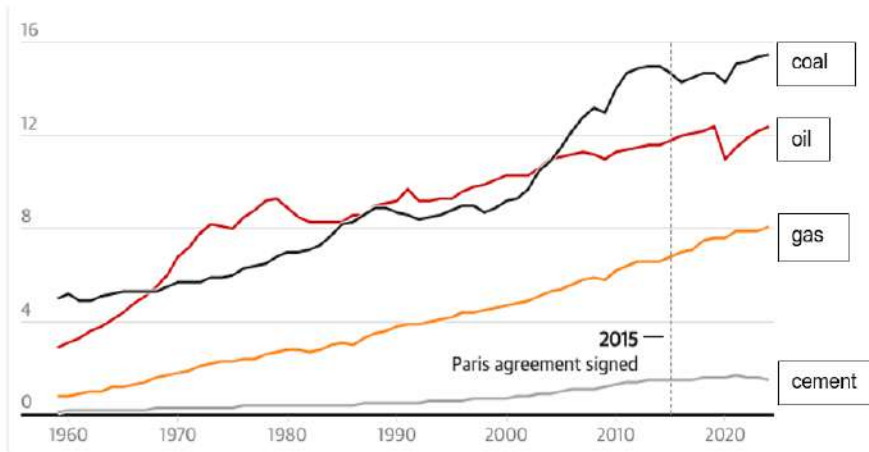
Nigeria has the second largest population exposed to the effects of climate change. These include:

- Less, but more uneven rain causing desertification in the north
- Flooding
- Raising temperatures
- Coastal erosion in Niger Delta and Lagos loosing.

It is the poor that are suffering from climate change. The rich can always buy their way out. Population change and poverty are making the impact climate change far worse. They are creating a vicious downward spiral – we have to stop this.



The rate of increase of greenhouse gas emissions has slowed over the last decade or so, as the rollout of renewable energy and electric vehicles has accelerated. So change is happening, just too slowly to stop much of the devastation. The Nigerian Government’s answer is to move from petrol to gas driven cars – this will obviously not help.



If global demand for oil reduces what will happen to the price of oil? How will this impact government income in Nigeria? Oil revenue accounted for a third of Federal Government income in 2023. Our reaction to global heating is to continue the fight against poverty, inequality and corruption. As always, a decent minimum wage would be a good starting point.

To read more on this topic see: <https://tinyurl.com/58t28mrs>

Unite and Win - The Workplace Organizer's Handbook

-by Emergency Workplace Organizing Committee (EWOC) - Edited by Daphna Thier

Overworked? Underpaid? Frustrated with your boss?

This guide, based on the collective experience of organizers and workers in non-unionized workplaces, is a critical tool to help you and your coworkers organize for justice at work.

Unite and Win covers the core elements of organizing at work — developing an organizing committee, having organizing conversations, taking collective action, and inoculating yourselves against the boss's inevitable response.



The Emergency Workplace Organizing Committee (EWOC) provides support and training to non-union workers organizing for better working conditions, with a goal of building a stronger, worker-led labour movement. EWOC was founded in March 2020 as a joint project of Democratic Socialists of America and United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America.

The Handbooks is available for free download from Iva Valley Books: <https://tinyurl.com/ykdnbwxd>

Since its founding, EWOC has trained and supported thousands of workers who want better working conditions through their free Foundational Training Program. This book is a companion to that program, along with other online and video-based resources. See: <https://workerorganizing.org/training/>

For a summary of what is needed to make our trade unions more effective, see: <https://tinyurl.com/25h8737d>

Sudan: revolution, war and imperialism

The most recent quarterly issue of the British SWP's quarterly journal is now online at: <https://isj.org.uk/>

The most relevant article for us is the following on Sudan:

<https://isj.org.uk/sudan-revolution-war-and-imperialism/>

This article provides useful background on the overthrow of the former long-term dictator in December 2018. The growth of the uprising and then the military coup and resulting civil war from last April. This war is being back by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) which are backing the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) militia and Egypt supporting the Sudanese Armed Forces.

The article argues that we should not take sides, but demand the end of the war, all the troops to return to the barracks and a return to civilian rule. As it says, "the SAF and RSF are both criminals and enemies of the people's revolution, which demands civilian rule for Sudan and the removal of military control from the wealth belonging to the Sudanese people."

The experience in Sudan is both an inspiration, with the Resistance Committees, and a warning that civil war can erupt and decimate a country. The authors also argue for the need to build a party to facilitate the victory of a popular uprising.

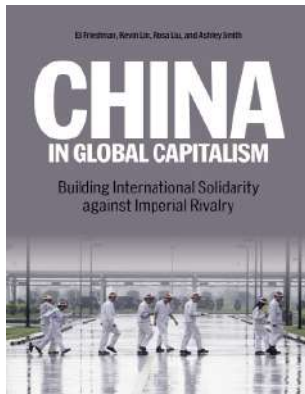
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China in Global Capitalism - Building International Solidarity Against Imperial Rivalry

by Eli Friedman, Kevin Lin, Rosa Liu, and Ashley Smith

<https://www.haymarketbooks.org/books/2228-china-in-global-capitalism>

Book review by Tina Nkechi



China, by many measures, now has the largest economy in the world. This is a massive change since the 1970s when it was an underdeveloped economy cut off from the world. This book allowed me to understand China in much greater depth. I encourage all members of Socialist Labour to read this book.

China in Global Capitalism forcefully makes the case that workers and socially marginalized people in both the US and China must oppose our rulers' claims that they have our best interests in mind as they ratchet up their rivalry. Rather, if we're to avert nuclear calamity, we must oppose imperialism in all its forms, and regardless of its source and rhetoric.

Through snapshots of China's growing social movements—from its labour struggles to feminist campaigns, and more — the authors provide some of the building blocks we'll need to construct a movement that centres international solidarity across borders.

“The global left today is deeply divided over the place and role of the People's Republic of China in global politics and economics. Many still insist that China represents an alternative to neo-liberal capitalism and deserves the support of the left in its struggles against both domestic “reaction” and the western imperial powers. China in Global Capitalism provides a powerful alternative to these claims. The authors document the Chinese transition to capitalism and its subsequent emergence as an economic and political-military competitor with the more established imperialist powers. As a result, China has been rocked by the same class, social and national struggles that mark the rest of the capitalist world, and pursue their imperial ambitions in much the same way as US, European or Japanese imperialism. For the authors, the left must reject alliances with either imperialist camp, and pursue the politics of solidarity from below—with working and oppressed people around the world.”

—Charles Post, member of the editorial board of *Spectre: A Marxist Journal*

Chapter Two from this book, on the recent emergence of China as a major global economic power, is available for free download from Iva Valley Books: <https://tinyurl.com/ycx7zuu4>

PASTE F Victory in Senegal – what hope for the working class? -Tina Nkechi



PASTE F won 130 seats out of the 165 seats in the parliamentary elections in November giving it 78% of the seats in the national assembly in Senegal. This was after Bassirou Diomaye Faye won the presidential elections in March of this year. This is unprecedented in Senegal since 1988 and the victory of Abdou Diouf's Socialist Party.

However, as in the 1980's, the election of 'progressive nationalists' may not bring direct benefits for the majority of the population. PASTE F are promising to fight corruption, revamp the fishing industry and maximise natural resources benefits. These are important reforms, but may not directly benefit the masses of PASTE F supporters. This is shown, for example, by the strikes in the health sector.

The Collective of Physicians, Pharmacists and Specialized Dental Surgeons of Senegal (COMES) announced a three-day strike of resident doctors to halt all hospital activities, from October 16, 2024. Their demands include salaries, maternity leave and other issues. Their public protest on 22nd November was banned. The also held a two day strike in September. COMES pointed out that, despite

promises made by the authorities, no tangible progress has been made to address the demands they raised in October.

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For Trump, America First... and Africa (well) after -Paul Martial

The billionaire's accession to the White House will bring an African policy centred on the interests of the United States and the promotion of conservative values in Africa.

We remember his claims during his first term that African countries are "shithole countries" and his lies when speaking about crimes against white farmers in South Africa. Two years after his installation in power, the US strategy towards the continent was announced. It could be summed up in a simple idea: this policy had to above all bring benefits to the US.

Three themes were outlined: trade favouring American companies; the promotion of aid only to allied countries and the fight against terrorism. In fact, Trump's policy has mainly been a disengagement of the United States from the continent and the elimination of visas for nationals of countries such as Somalia, Sudan, Libya, Ghana, Nigeria and Chad, which has contributed to reinforcing the marginalization of the USA in Africa.

The conservative Heritage Foundation outlines policies for Trump's second term. Of the 900 pages of its report, "Project 2025", only a page and a half is devoted to Africa. It emphasizes the importance of Africa for its natural resources, in particular the minerals needed for high-tech industries and its proximity to maritime routes. Its priority is to dispute the "malign influence" of China and secondarily of Russia.

In economic terms, this translates into targeting certain countries considered to be priorities rather than spreading aid across the continent. Aid that should favour the "free market" and "private growth" and be removed from countries that are hostile or that vote against the USA in international bodies. The security crisis in the Sahel is not seen as a vital threat to the United States, but as a potential danger on NATO's southern flank.

Although this program presents a certain continuity, it should not obscure the fact that today's Trump is much more radical, and that during his previous term he had to deal with a House of Representatives with a Democratic majority. Given the recent results, this will no longer be the case.

Certainly, Trump's election is an encouragement to all African autocrats.

To read more about Trump's advisors see: <https://tinyurl.com/2s46stff>

Summary of Workers Strikes - November 2024

We need your assistance to ensure that this monthly report is comprehensive. Please submit details of any strikes in your state or community. All these strikes need our support and solidarity. We call on all trade union branches to send messages of support and to organise solidarity visits to any strikes in their localities. To read more about how to organise effective strikes, see:

<https://tinyurl.com/solidarityunity>

NLC and **TUC** organised a two-day warning strike to protest the government's failure to implement the newly approved minimum wage in **Cross River State** on 25th and 26th November.

The magistrates of Cross River State held a three day warning strike from 27- 29th November. This is over non-implementation of agreements over allowances, promotions and maintenance of the courts.

The **Joint Action Committee** of the Non-Academic Staff Union of Educational and Associated Institutions (**NASU**) and Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (**SSANU**) started an indefinite strike early on 28th October. The workers were demanding their four month salaries from their strike in 2022 and improved remuneration, earned allowances and implementation of the 2009 agreements with the government. The strike was suspended on 5th November. Two months of the withheld salaries were to be paid one at the end of October, 2024, and the second to be paid at the end of November, 2024. Progress on other demands.

The strike at the Federal Institute of Industrial Research in Oshodi (FIIRO) over victimisation of the Chair of the **SSAUTHRIAI** branch was suspended for a month on Monday 4th November.

The **Medical and Dental Consultants Association of Nigeria** (MDCAN) declared a seven-day warning strike from 18 November. The position of Vice-Chancellor at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State is to be re-appointed. It also demanded the harmonisation of the retirement age for medical and dental consultants to 70 years to help curb the impact of doctor migration. Additionally, it calls for medical lecturers to be paid according to the Consolidated Medical Salary Structure (CONMESS), addressing disparities in their emoluments.

Socialist Labour-JOIN US

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

For more details of the basic ideas and policies of Socialist Labour see:

www.socialistlabour.com.ng/about-us/

Join the Socialist Labour supporters WhatsApp group by clicking this link:

<https://chat.whatsapp.com/KiOyN3OKGBllvtuh0ycDaU>

We would love to receive letters, comments or suggestions from our readers. We want to hear from you with suggestions for articles for our future editions or questions on any articles in this issue. We especially welcome news about protests and strikes in your community or town.

Socialist Labour Depends on its Supporters for Finances

Socialist Labour depends on its members and supporters for finances. We need more financial support so that we can be more active, expand and grow. If you are able to make a modest financial contribution that would be really helpful. We would also like all readers of this Bulletin to consider fully joining Socialist Labour by paying monthly subscriptions. The standard rate is ₦1,000 a month, **with a lower rate of ₦500 for students, pensioners or unemployed** and ₦5,000 for higher paid comrades. We can all afford something - every little helps.

Please make your contributions to the following bank account:

First Bank Nig. Ltd. Account No. 3158880328

Account Name: Aborisade Albert Femi

The account is only used for Socialist Labour purposes.

Please join Socialist Labour, by submitting the following details:

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State: _____

Workplace address/university/school: _____

Trade union: _____

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