



# The-PEOPLE

- Mass Organ of the Amilcar Cabral Ideological School [ACIS] - **SPECIAL EDITION : January 2016**

## **ACIS Salutes Labour Icon - Hassan Sunmonu @ 75!**

But Whither the Nigerian Trade Unions as IMF- Big Profits Invade in Nigeria?

**The reversal of the ideological contestation in the Nigerian Trade Unions 1940s – 88 by the “1999 New Beginning NLC started by Adams Oshiomhole till date”, which in itself, was a reincarnate of the NLC 1988 – 94, has now clearly manifested in how IMF and so-called creditor nations leisurely stroll in and out of Nigeria to promote anti-poor and underdevelopment economic measures.**

**In celebrating Comrade Hassan Adebayo Sunmonu, revered by his contemporaries in the Nigerian Labour movement as HA @ 75, it is instructive to recall the Sunmonu and Ciroma era 1978 - 88, which towed the radical tradition pioneered by MAO Imoudu, Nduka Eze, Wahab Goodluck, etc. Were it to be that era, Nigerian workers would have led the students and the oppressed masses on the streets this week (January 4 – 7) to stop the IMF from coming to Nigeria. And such a necessary struggle would have been the most befitting Birthday Gift to Comrade HA.**

**But what a calamity to behold on the state of the Labour movement that the news report is:** “IMF MD, Christine Lagarde Arrives Nigeria on a four-day official visit for Economic Talks; in the course of which Lagarde will meet President Muhammadu Buhari to discuss how the relationship between the IMF and Nigeria could be strengthened. Lagarde is expected to also meet with principal officers of the National Assembly, business leaders, prominent women and representatives of Civil Society Organisations”?

### **The WORKER – HA**

**Comrade HA is truly a worker as an ideological working class conscious organiser, educator, mobiliser, activist, Pan Africanist, Socialist and ever consistent ally of the poor masses.**

**Comrade HA was a two-term (1978 – 84) President of the Nigeria Labour Congress (3<sup>rd</sup> NLC) formed in 1978. He served as the Secretary-General of the Organisation of African Trade Unions**

**Unity (OATUU) 1986 – 2013. The first and second NLC were formed in 1950 and 1975. His era was marked with outstanding working class struggle that included:**

1. Set up of State branches of NLC
2. May 11 – 12, 1981 Strike for a New Minimum Wage of N300 (\$600) and N125 (\$250) was won.
3. Launch of Workers’ Charter of Demands which articulated and agitated for:
  - The establishment of National Commission on Employment,
  - Public ownership and control of the national economy,
  - A National Minimum Wage policy,
  - A non-aligned foreign but Pan-Africanist policy for the country,
  - Establishment of the National Institute for Labour Studies.
4. Labour consistent agitation in the form of “Nigeria Not for Sale” and against the capitalist policies of IMF, World Bank and creditor nations under the Shagari regime and the Buhari-Idiagbon military dictatorship.
5. Resistance against anti-labour decrees and repressive measures to curtail the democratic operation of the unions in order to sustain the domination of the Nigerian economy by foreign capital.
6. Institution of formal alliance with National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS), Nigeria Medical Association (NMA), Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Nigeria Bar Association (NBA), Traders and other oppressed poor associations.

**A Working Class Party is the Way Out!**

We in ACIS celebrate Sunmonu because his era in Trade unions in Nigeria and Africa showed commitment to class line. The lesson of his celebration @ 75 is that the trade unions in Nigeria need a rebirth or else, it will remain at the service of the neo-liberal state and employers.

A working class party is a party opposed to neoliberalism. It is a party that should be for the masses of oppressed poor and exploited people - be it workers in

the industries, civil service, trade employment, farmers, academic, the unemployed, artisans, women, etc - who should be committed to struggle for Political Power with which to Defeat the rule of capitalist exploitation and institute a new form of production relations – working people who create the wealth should enjoy the wealth!

A working class party must in Government and out of Government INSIST on collective ownership of the productive forces.

A working class party is not the same as a party of workers in name with a leadership and followers that adopt and exhibit bourgeois values, bossy attitudes, temptations for selfish interest and greed for accumulation but hiding under the cover of Labour.

**Ideological Liberation of the workforce should be the priority Now!**

The trade unions in Nigeria cannot drive any meaningful change in Nigeria or elsewhere if its leadership and rank and file still lack ideological education with which to develop working class consciousness, and above all to imbibe working class commitment in its policies, organisation, values, struggle, leadership and its engagement with state and employers.

A trade union movement that has No Agenda on how to combat capitalist policies of Privatisation and NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa Development) shouldn’t be grand-standing on a struggle for change.

Without a class conscious and class committed trade union movement, it is going to be mere lipservice to change.

Trade unions need ideological education in order to be effective in waging political struggle. Every issue should be seen as political by workers, that is - contestation of power between capital and labour - on wage negotiations, on social welfare to the citizenry, on the direction of the economy, elections, etc