Mass line

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PERSONAL

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We People of this Land have suffered enough
OUR CHAINS MUST FALL!

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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CALABAR RESOLUTION

On April 13 to 14, 1989, the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) and the Federal Government's Directorate for Mass Mobilization jointly organised a workshop at Calabar on 'Labour and the Political Transition Programme'. The next day, April 15, the National Executive Council (NEC) of the NLC met. Among other things it considered the communique issued by the workshop. At the end of its deliberations NEC decided unanimously to sponsor a political party of the working people when the ban on politics is lifted. It further resolved that the mission of this party is to fight for socialism.

For historical record we shall refer to this event as the Calabar Resolution.

This is not the first time that NEC of the NLC has decided that socialism is preferable to capitalism in Nigeria. It did so in 1986 in its memorandum to the Political Bureau in that year entitled 'Towards a Viable and Genuinely Democratic Future: Working Class Position'. However, recommending socialism is one thing; fighting for it is another. This time around, NEC is not only recommending socialism; it has decided to sponsor a political party as the vehicle of power struggle without which socialism cannot be realised.

It is very noteworthy that the Calabar Resolution was unanimous. The NEC of the NLC is made up of all Presidents and General Secretaries of the forty-two affiliated trade unions, all Chairmen and Secretaries of the 21 State Councils of the NLC and all members of the Central Working Committee of the NLC. All these amount to more than 130 unionists country-wide. That such a large body could reach such a unanimous decision is momentous.

Let it be pointed out in passing that at no time in the history of our country have the bourgeoisie displayed such a unanimity. It is a portent of things to come. Divisions serves exploiters rather than the people.

The Calabar Resolution has a great historical significance. By this resolution the organised working class movement in Nigeria has passed - or is about to pass - from watching the power struggle among bourgeois groups to fighting for power for the people. It is a watershed in the history of Nigeria.

By this resolution also the organised working class movement in Nigeria is set to translate socialism from a yearning of the poor into concrete reality.

This development marks two things. First, it marks the advance that political consciousness within the working class movement has made since independence. In particular, it marks the development of class political consciousness since 1986 from a passive consciousness, in which one merely criticises the bourgeoisie and calls for socialism, into an active consciousness in which one launches the struggle to make socialism a reality.

This metamorphosis is a blinding slap in the face of and, hopefully, a lesson to those - some of them Marxists - who took a static view of things, lacked confidence in the Nigerian working class, pursued sectarian lines of thought and action and

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AT SCHOOL WITH COMRADES: [illegible]

SIGNIFICANCE OF MAY DAY

(EXTRACTS FROM A MAY DAY LECTURE TO AKWA IBOM STATE NLC)

By

Dr. Akpan H. Ekpo

INTRODUCTION

Today is very important because workers of this state have for the first time joined their counterparts in Nigeria and the world in celebrating May Day. For Akwa Ibom State, this is its very first May Day celebrated under the first NLC leadership in the state.

We are gathered here to show not only solidarity among ourselves but to tell everyone that we, the Nigerian working people produce the goods and services which sustain this Republic. We are here to re-affirm our commitment towards the emancipation of the Nigeria working class and the entire Nigerian polity.

What we are celebrating here was not always a public holiday in Nigeria. Labour leaders and workers fought tiredlessly and gallantly to make this day a free day for workers. The fight which was started by people like Michael Imoudu alias No. 1 and his stalwarts was finally achieved during the Shagari era. We are gathered here to show gratitude to workers who have died while struggling, to those who have been persecuted for defending the interest of workers and to those who are still fighting so that the oppressed peoples in Nigeria and the world will one day drink from the fountain of freedom - freedom from all kinds of exploitation.

May Day started 103 years ago with the militant struggles in North America and Europe for an 8 - hour work day. During that period workers used to work for 12, 14, 16 and 20 hours a day in very terrible conditions and for very low wages.

It was on May 1st 1886 that factories all over the United States were shut down. Three hundred and fifty thousand workers (350,000) went on strike for an 8-hour work day.

On May 3rd, 1886, the government of the USA hit back at the workers. The police opened fire at the workers in Chicago and killed six. The next day, May 4th, in a peaceful protest march at Hay Market Square in Chicago, a bomb was thrown at the police. Police again opened fire wounding several workers. Workers leaders were jailed and offices smashed. Several leaders were tried and four labour leaders were hanged for demanding an 8-hour working day.

May Day unites men/women of labour all over the world. It is a day to remember those who laid the foundations of the modern labour movement and to honour those who laid down their lives and made the supreme sacrifice in the fight for workers emancipation. One thing is clear - if workers went

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