



**Empowering Citizens to  
Transform Society.**

[centrelsd.org](http://centrelsd.org)



*3B, Niger Avenue, Villa Nova Estate, after  
Cedar Crest Hospital, Apo Dutse, Abuja.*



centrelsd.org

# **EXPERIENCES OF REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT, MASS MOBILISATION AND COLLECTIVE ACTION IN NIGERIA POLITICS: 2012, 2019 AND 2023 IN FOCUS**

By

Otive Igbuzor, PhD

Founding Executive Director, Centre LSD





centrelsd.org

# **OBJECTIVE OF PRESENTATION**

- 1. To underscore the trajectory of societal history and the place of revolutionary movements and moments.**
- 2. To identify revolutionary moments in Nigeria and the defining characteristics.**
- 3. To explicate on the factors that contributed to revolutionary moments in Nigeria.**
- 4. To identify the conditions for change and lessons from experiences of revolutionary movements and moments in Nigeria.**





centrelsd.org

# **OUTLINE OF PRESENTATION**

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Revolutionary Moments**
- 3. Factors that contributed to the Revolutionary Moments**
- 4. Conditions for Change in any society**
- 5. Lessons from the Experiences and the Way Forward**





# 1. INTRODUCTION

- **Since society became divided into classes with some people having privileges and capacity to enjoy their rights more than others, struggles began between those who want to maintain the status quo and those who want to change it.**
- **Historical materialism which is the study of the general laws of development of society points to the fact that society moves from one socio-economic formation to another: Communal, Slave-owning, Feudalism, Capitalism and Socialism.**





# ...INTRODUCTION

- **Society develops based on the three laws of dialectics:**
  - 1. The Law of the unity and conflict of opposites.**
  - 2. The law of transformation of quantity into quality and**
  - 3. The law of negation of the negation.**





# ...INTRODUCTION

- **The division of society into classes and the struggle for change led to the rise of revolutionary movements, organisations dedicated to carrying out a revolution.**
- **In the course of history, there are revolutionary moments. Revolutionary moments are pivotal junctures in history that catalyse profound and often radical transformation within societies. Revolutionary moments are characterized by mass mobilization, collective action, protests and conflicts.**





centrelsd.org

# 2. REVOLUTIONARY MOMENTS

- There has been several revolutionary moments in Nigeria when there was mass mobilization and collective action for Social Change:

a. **Independence Movement:** The disruption caused by World War II created environment conducive to Nationalist sentiments. Nationalist figures like Herbert Macaulay, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo and Aminu Kano contributed to the independence struggle. Formation of Political Parties and participation in elections contributed to the struggle. Examples of specific actions include the Aba Women Protest of 1929 and Coal Miners strike of 1949.







# ... Revolutionary Moments

**b. Anti-SAP Movements of the 1980s:** SAP in the 1980s led to currency devaluation, trade liberalization and fiscal austerity measures. The Anti- SAP movement was led by Socialist platforms such as Socialist Forum Collective (SFC), the Bala Mohammed Memorial Committee (BMMC), Alliance for Democratic Rights (ADR), Patriotic Youth Movement of Nigeria (PYMN), Nigeria Association of Nigeria Students (NANS), Women in Nigeria (WIN), Socialist Working Peoples Party (SWPP), Socialist Congress of Nigeria (SCON), Patriotic Labour Movement (PLM), Mass Line and Democratic Socialist Movement (DSM).

They engaged several platform of workers, students, professional organisations (NBA, ASUU, NMA, Concerned Professionals), citizen groups.

The mobilization was so effective that the Political Bureau set up by the IBB regime in 1987 recommended Socialism as the preferred system of government.





centresd.org

# ... Revolutionary Moments

**c. Pro-Democracy Movement of the 1990s:** The pro-democracy movements were essentially campaigning against military rule and advocating for restoration of democratic governance. Organisations included Civil Liberties Organisation (CLO), Centre for Free Speech (CFS) Constitutional Rights Project (CRP), CDHR, CD, GFSA, NADECO and DA.

There were mass protests, civil disobedience, legal action and international lobbying efforts.

It succeeded in terminating military rule but Socialists and activists made a strategic error by not participating in the 1999 elections.





centrelsd.org

# ...Revolutionary Moments

**d. Anti-Neoliberal Movements/ Occupy Nigeria/ January 2012 Uprising:** The civilian regime continued the Neo-liberal policies of the SAP era.

The January uprising was in response to fuel subsidy removal by the FG of GEJ on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2012.

The protest involved all progressive forces –labour, student groups, human rights organisations. The middle class participated actively. The length and breadth of the uprising was unprecedented.





centresd.org

# ...Revolutionary Moments

- e. **Resurgence of Activists to contest elections in 2011, 2015, 2019 and 2023:**
  - Limited success because of entrenchment of god fathers and persons without democratic credentials.
  - No united front for all activists
  - Entrenchment of anti-democratic forces and consolidation of ways of winning elections through monopolistic and oligopolistic strategies and difficulty of utilizing distinctive strategies (mobilisation).
  - Five Gods of Election in Nigeria- Money, INEC, Judiciary, Security and Mobilisation.
  - Failure of emergence of a strong third force in 2015 and 2019 despite the poor performance of the 2 big parties.
  - Emergence of Obidient Movement in 2023 and the phenomenal performance (won 12 states and broke the jinx of two dominant parties).





# ... Revolutionary Moments

## f. #ENDSARS

- **The #ENDSARS was the greatest movement for social change in Nigeria in 2020.**
- **Leaderless movement of young Nigerians to end Police brutality.**
- **Series of protests against police brutality**
- **Social Media involvement was huge**





# ... Revolutionary Moments

- **#ENDSARS protest surpassed others in terms of geographical coverage, organisation, duration and resilience.**
- **The ruling elite panicked. They accepted all the demands without meeting or negotiation (Vulnerability of the ruling elite and the power of organising)**
- **Emergence of a middle class that is not dependent on government can be turned into a revolutionary force.**
- **Vanguard organisation, leadership and structure are critical to the success of revolutions.**





centrelsd.org

# **3. FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE MOMENTS**

- i. Objective Conditions**
- ii. Irresponsibility of the ruling elite**
- iii. Increasing poverty and economic disparities**
- iv. Changing youth demographics**
- v. Consistency of the Left and Activists**





# 4. CONDITIONS FOR CHANGE

- **Change will happen in any society when the conditions are ripe. In our view, for change to occur in any society requires the presence of objective and subjective conditions.**
- **Objective conditions exist when situations are evidently abnormal with huge contradictions which can only be resolved by change.**
- **The subjective conditions are the organizational preparations required to bring about change.**







centresd.org

# ...CONDITIONS FOR CHANGE

- **There is no doubt that the objective conditions for change has been existing in Nigeria for a very long time.**
- **There is high level of poverty in the midst of plenty. Corruption is widespread, endemic and stifling progress. The wealth of the country is concentrated in the hands of a few. There is social disintegration with high levels of promiscuity and divorce. Rape is on the increase. There are several cases of incest. There is high level of greed, selfishness and nepotism. The state of affairs is not sustainable.**
- **The challenge has been the absence of the subjective conditions with the requisite organization and platform to mobilize for social change.**





centrelsd.org

# **5. LESSONS FROM THE EXPERIENCES AND THE WAY FORWARD**

- 1. There is a changing context and nature of the Struggle (Independence, Military and Civilian) (Socialists, Human rights activists, activists).**
- 2. For change to happen requires objective and subjective conditions to be met. The objective conditions are ripe. We have a responsibility to create the subjective conditions.**
- 3. The Struggle for change must be waged in several dimensions: political, economic and ideological. Socialists, activists, professionals, decent and good people must participate in politics. It is a major form of struggle.**





centrelsd.org

# ...Lessons from the Experiences and the Way Forward

- 4. For change to occur requires united action of all progressive forces opposed to the maintenance of the status quo.**
- 5. For change to happen requires leadership, organisation and programme for change. From a class in itself to a class for itself. Awareness-Consciousness-Organising for Change.**
- 6. The role of vanguard organisationn in planning and guidfing revolutionary change cannot be replaced.**
- 7. Every election period is a potential revolutionary moment that can be used to wage political struggle.**
- 8. There is the need to give attention to leadership and Strategy for Social Action and Change.**





[centrelsd.org](http://centrelsd.org)

...Building strategic leadership for sustainable development in Africa





...Building strategic leadership for sustainable development in Africa

**[centrelsd.org](http://centrelsd.org)**