

EXCLUSIVE: CONVICTED TERRORIST-SUPPORTER FOUND TO BE ON PAYROLL OF NORTHERN BAR CIRCUIT AND LIVERPOOL CITY COUNCIL.

That would be one way of describing today's event. It would certainly be the mainstream media's take, if its record of reporting on current and recent events in Palestine, Ukraine (remember that?) and elsewhere is anything to go by. I appear before you in possession of a criminal conviction, obtained for taking direct action to disrupt the operation of an Israeli-owned arms company operating on British soil, and exporting weapons to the Israeli Defence Force for use against Palestinians and their neighbours. I recently declared solidarity with those Jewish people in Israel and elsewhere who refuse to condone atrocities perpetrated in their name as a result of which I have been accused of supporting Hamas, with a "chilling inhumanity." That the Northern Circuit bought so many tickets to an event that St. George's Hall invited me to hold for its Black History Month programme can therefore be spun to produce the headline above. The kind of Black history that interests me is that which acknowledges and celebrates the civilisations of Africa prior to the arrival of malevolent Europeans, and of our resistance to oppression since, many examples of which - to both settler (as in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Kenya for example) and other types of colonialism, are retold in today's play. Some younger folk may not realise that the much-lionised Nelson Mandela was once branded a terrorist for being one of the leaders of the Anti-Apartheid struggle, notwithstanding the fact that the ANC almost always deliberately avoided harm to civilians. A figure no less than the late Archbishop Desmond Tutu described what he saw pertaining in Israel/Palestine as akin to South African Apartheid, yet I don't recall the South African regime plunging the depths that we see unfolding before our eyes: depths that few leading politicians or commentators dare to condemn. There are so many examples of double standards going on that one cannot but conclude that it smacks of racism. Attempting to justify anything that white or European-descended people can do or enjoy that others can't have or be criticised for, smacks of White Supremacy. That cap fits when considering which immigrants are welcome here or how suffering emits different levels of sympathy depending on origin, religion and/or skin colour. As for starving innocent men, women and children of food, water and fuel, and carpet-bombing them indiscriminately in hospitals within an open-air prison, that I confidently, unreservedly describe as chilling inhumanity.

Tayo Aluko, Writer, Performer. Tayo was born in Nigeria, worked as an architect in Liverpool for many years. He has fronted orchestras as baritone soloist in concert halls, and has also performed lead roles in opera, musicals and oratorio. His first play, *CALL MR ROBESON* has won numerous awards at festivals in the UK and Canada, and continues to be performed after 16 years. He delivers a number of lecture/concerts and talks on Black Political Resistance using art and song. He researched, wrote and narrated to camera a piece on West African History before the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, which forms part of the permanent exhibit at Liverpool's International Slavery Museum. His 15-minute play, *HALF MOON*, which also deals with ancient Africa, has been performed several times in the UK. He has developed a piece titled *WHAT HAPPENS?* featuring the writings of African American writer Langston Hughes, for performance with live jazz accompaniment. He has been published in *The Guardian*, *The Morning Star*, *NERVE Magazine*, *Modern Ghana*, *Searchlight Magazine*, *Counterfire* and *Counterpunch*. His latest production is a radio play, *PAUL ROBESON'S LOVE SONG*, recorded during lockdown with actors from the USA and Canada, and now streaming online. He has recently had two poems published, and developed one of them - "*GREATNESS*" IN A TIME OF COVID - into an online international performance and mapping project and a workshop examining colonial history. Talks he gives include *ART AS A WEAPON - SOME PAN-AFRICANIST EXAMPLES*, a survey of artists in the African Diaspora. His third one-man musical play (a work in progress), is *COLERIDGE-TAYLOR OF FREETOWN*, inspired by the life and music of the Black British Composer, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor. He is also working on a screenplay telling the story of Pastor Daniels Ekarte (d. 1964), known as the African Saint of Liverpool.

Robert Chesters, Piano. Robert has been a pianist from the age of five. While studying at the Royal Northern College of Music with John Gough, he won the 2006 Bach Prize and graduated in September 2008 with a Master of Music degree. In addition to teaching piano, Robert performs with instrumentalists, solo singers and choirs, including Opera Viva Merseyside and the Southport Bach Choir. He has also appeared as an actor on numerous TV and film productions for the BBC, ITV and Sky Television.

Just An Ordinary Lawyer was premiered at the Edinburgh
Fringe on 4th August, 2016 by Tayo Aluko,
with Angus Carmichael on piano

Directed by **Amanda Huxtable**
Designed by **Emma Williams**
Dramaturgy: **Esther Wilson**
Lighting Design: **Mark Loudon**
Sound Design: **Noel Inyang & Tayo Aluko**

Future Performances Include:

25 October, Liverpool: Words Behind 4Wings @10. Performance by
4Wings members and staff writings by Tayo Aluko, inspired by stories
shared by the women. St. George's Hall.

26 October, Liverpool: Participant, Book Launch. Pastor Daniels
Ekarte and the African Churches Mission. Liverpool, 1931-1964.
Writing on the Wall BHM23

**27 October, Bolton: This Little Light (A Paul Robeson
presentation).** Bolton Socialist Club

**29 October, Faversham: Art As A Weapon – Some Pan-Africanist
Examples.** Faversham Guild Hall.

31 October, London: Just An Ordinary Lawyer.
The Courtyard Theatre, Shoreditch.

7 November, Cambridgeshire: Call Mr. Robeson. St. Ives Library

8 November, Cambridgeshire: Call Mr. Robeson. St. Neots Library

**10 November, online: Art As a Weapon – Some Pan-Africanist
Examples.** Yorkshire Festival of Story

Tayo Aluko & Friends

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**St. George's Hall Events,
The Northern Circuit**

AND

TAYO ALUKO & FRIENDS
present

JUST AN ORDINARY LAWYER

— (?) —

A PLAY, WITH SONGS

Written and performed by Tayo Aluko,
with Robert Chesters, piano

**St. George's Hall, Liverpool
Friday, 20 October, 2023**