



THE NATIONAL SCHOLAR

A Publication of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) May, 2018 Vol. 12 No. 2 N400, \$ 5



NIGERIAN WORKERS **IN A QUANDARY: ONE DESTINY, TWO PARENTS.**

· NLC @ 40

· Humour from the Tower

· 2019: Here we go again!

· Ballot season

OUR MISSION

The *National Scholar* is the official magazine of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) published with the goal of agenda setting for public discourse on the enormous developmental challenges facing Nigeria and Africa. Past editions of the magazine have addressed themes like “ASUU-FGN Dispute: The True Story”; “The World Bank and Nigeria”, “Industrial Conflict in Nigerian Universities”; “Private Provision of Higher Education in Africa”, “Perspectives on Private Universities in Nigeria”, “Deregulation and Funding of Universities”, “Nigeria” A Nation at Crossroads” and Nigeria: The Challenge of Leadership”.

The *National Scholar* welcomes contributions from individuals and groups within and outside the academia. Contributions could be in form of opinion articles, research reports, book reviews and commentaries. Information on opportunities for fellowship, research grants and conferences are equally published. We also welcome contributions in form of poems, cartoons and other art media. Contributions with evidence of profound scholarship are accorded a higher priority. Contributors are, however, liable for the correctness of all information provided, and ASUU does not accept responsibility for any incorrectness or misinformation.

Readers are encouraged to forward reactions to contributions in any issue of the National Scholar. Such reactions, which may be edited for reason of space, will be published under **LETTER TO EDITOR**.

© 2015 Academic Staff Union of Universities
(ASUU)

National Secretariat, Festus Iyayi Secretariat
Complex

University of Abuja Permanent Site, Giri,
Federal Capital Territory (FCT)

E-mail: thenationalscholar@gmail.com

Materials in this publication can be reproduced for scholarship and enlightenment purposes. However, due acknowledgment must be given to the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Nigeria.



ASUU NATIONAL EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

President

Biodun Ogunyemi

Vice President

Victor Osodeke

Treasurer

Mutakka Usman

Financial Secretary

Abdullahi Musa

Welfare Officer

Emylia Jaja

Legal Adviser

Rabiu Sani Shatsari

Investment Secretary

Charles Ononuju

Internal Auditor

S. O. Ighalo

Immediate Past President

Nassir Fagge Isa

Trustees

Assisi Asobie

Dipo Fashina

Abdullahi Sule Kano

Hassan Sumonu

EDITORIAL COLLECTIVE

Editor-in-Chief

Desmond Wilson

Managing Editor

Ade Adejumo

Business Editor

Ifeoma Njoku

Associate Editors

S. S. Noma

M. K. Aliyu

Bayo Okunade

Secretary of the Board

Onesimus Mahdi

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Editorial: NLC @ 40: What Next?
2. Nigeria Labour Congress at 40: Its Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow
2. Gombe ASUU - NEC
3. APO 6 Officer promoted to AIG
4. Herdsmen-Farmers' Clashes Today: Ecology, Class and Categorical Politics
5. Ballot Season
6. The Nigerian Economy and the 2018 Budget
7. 2019: Here we go again!
8. Nigeria Labour Congress Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow: National Unity and Social Justice
9. Need for Indigenous Languages as Nigeria's official languages
10. Problems facing University Education and its products
11. The Bretton Wood Institutions' strategies and the fate of developing nations
12. Humour from the Tower/ Cartoons
13. Campus Corruption: A Bird's eye view
14. The change we need
15. News Tit Bits
16. Who will save Nigerian Education?
17. Conference Alert



EDITORIAL

NLC @ 40: WHAT NEXT?

The Nigeria Labour Congress, the largest labour union in Nigeria, recently marked its 40th anniversary nationwide and at the nation's capital. Forty years is a landmark year in the life of an organization, nation or person and the NLC no doubt attempted to paint the nation red in its ruby year. As a child of circumstances having been midwived through the deft footwork of committed patriots and the opportunistic proclamation of the Babangida junta in 1988, we have a union which has 22 trade or industrial unions under its umbrella including the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU).

These past forty years have been years of agony, blood, sweat and tears. The NLC has grown in stature because of the high profile and commitment of some of its leadership some of whom unfortunately, have turned out today to be ideological turncoats. The fiery ideological dispositions of Wahab Goodluck, Haroun Adebola, Samuel Basse, Tunji Otegbeye, Hassan Sunmonu and others who worked resolutely towards placing Nigeria on a moral strong footing and the welfare of the Nigerian worker on a fair, equitable and justiceable pedestal has helped to hold us together this far.

Labour has made some progress in raising the moral high tone of public discourse on the future of employer-employee relations but regrettably its ideological platform has often been weakened by politics, religion, ethnicism, as well as regional and linguistic differences which have attempted to turn labour agitation topsy turvy.

The National Scholar believes that the NLC has to pick up the pieces from the schism at the Eagle Square in 2016. The present situation is not new to labour watchers and activists. The future can be brighter if the Comrade Waba – led NLC is able to

manoeuvre through the land mines laid by political fortune seekers and oppressors of the Nigerian humanity and allows truth to prevail.

The current crisis facing the NLC and its rival the United Labour Congress is a clear warning against future leadership struggles. It tells us that we must never enter into agreements that we have no intention of keeping. Whatever its form, (written or oral), gentleman's, clearly negotiated terms, we must avoid horse trading which often leads to the present kind of crisis. Knowing government to be a spoiler in such situations, we must do everything to avoid them.

Therefore, in the next decade leading to our golden jubilee, we must do everything to get all the unions united under an umbrella so that we can speak with one voice. As the NLC is trying to reach an agreement on a new national minimum wage let us hope that all the negotiating partners: labour, the federal government, state governments, and private sector employers will deal with each other honestly and work together to produce a document that is acceptable and fair to the workers.

It is clear to us that if this is achieved that industrial peace may be our portion in the years ahead. And as we make progress in matters affecting all our membership – those within and those without – we must always remember the dictum: united we stand, divided we fall. For in spite of our unsteady steps into the future, it is also clear to everyone whether they are in any of the umbrella unions or not that it would have been worse without the NLC. Truly, if God and the NLC had not been on our side the Nigerian worker would have been totally broken and crushed by the oppressive forces superintending over Nigeria today. Therefore, even as we criticise the NLC for its shortcomings we must never forget this fact: there is no alternative to a united labour force. *The National Scholar* hereby joins millions of other Nigerians in wishing the NLC a happy birthday and a more purposeful and committed leadership in the future.



Nigeria Labour Congress at 40: Its Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

Comrade Des Wilson

University of Uyo, Uyo

Being the 40th Anniversary Lecture of the Akwa Ibom State
Council of the Nigeria Labour Congress held at Grace's Rendezvons
and Restaurant, IBB Avenue, Uyo on Friday February 23, 2018

Introduction

Anniversaries are events celebrated to mark notable achievements and successes of an individual, organization or country. Forty years in the life of humans represent half a life time for many. And as the NLC marks forty years of its founding or creation in, many have asked: What is it that the NLC has achieved in these forty years that has called for the rolling out of drums and sounding ululation across the land? Even if it has not brought them to the Promised Land, some have said there is joy in living even if it is a life short of our expectations. NLC's past, as we also know has not been one garlanded with flowers nor is it gilded with precious gold. Labour's colonial past could be described as a murky, grubby journey whose paths were strewn with booby-traps because the task masters at the time would not brook any act of black people pretending to be human beings at the expense of a benevolent race!

Take for example the offensive racist slogan which our ignorant grandparents adopted for a work song. At the labour sites the colonial masters ordered those tired and weary bones: 'Apes Obey' and our people turned it to 'Eshobay' and it worked for them and their task masters.

Comrades today, I am not going to dwell long on this murky yesterday but I cannot attempt any historicity of labour activities in Nigeria without mentioning the leaders who got us to where we are. For them it was a struggle for the people they led, not for themselves; and it was a sacrifice that led them to the heroes' paradise. They were indeed heroes who when they chanted the Spanish call phrase: 'Aluta Continua' it indeed meant the struggle continues, but not the sleazy and shameless chant of today 'the looting continues as the future is uncertain'. So, we must go back a few years before and honour our legends.

Our African aphorism says: If you forget history, it rebels. Even a line in our national anthem says, 'the labour of our heroes past shall never be in vain and a writer has noted that 'This can only be achieved if the heroes do not go into extinction in the hearts of Nigerians...' (buzznigeria.com).

In the political sphere, the heroes have frequently received mention either in the popular media or at public functions. What has Nigeria done for Pa Michael Imuodu, Wahab Goodluck, Haroun Adebola, Samuel U. Basse, Comrade Basse Etienam, Hassan

Sunmomo and many others who offered service to this nation as labour leaders? Is it because they did not end up building exquisite resorts and mansions as some of the labour leaders have done today? It is not that it is a crime to acquire property through your own sweat but certainly it should not be through the betrayal of trust, a betrayal of the people. At the national level what national monument have we built or named after Michael Imoudu?

In Akwa Ibom State, the only house Comrade S. U. Basse had in Eket has been pulled down by modernisation. Today his family is in disarray and the grandchildren are wondering what crime their grandfather committed to lose his resting place all in the name of a botched civilisation.

For the benefit of the young generation of activists, we must know that it was S. U. Basse, Michael Imuodu, Gogo Chu Nzeribe and Wahab Goodluck that made up the activist wing of trade unionism in Nigeria in the First Republic.

When Wahab Goodluck became the President of the Nigerian Trade Union Congress S. U. Basse was the Secretary General. With Goodluck, Tunji Olegbeye and himself they formed the Socialist Workers and Farmers' Party in 1963 because they knew and believed that the First Republic politicians would never protect the interest of workers.

In 1974 while attending the funeral ceremony of one of their colleagues, some of the hitherto estranged comrades on ideological grounds, signed a resolution to fight on a common front and then they established a working committee that convened a conference of all labour unions. This resolution was known as the 'Apena Declaration of Trade Union Unity' and it laid the foundation for the present NLC.

We should see all these past events as building blocks for Nigeria's labour unions today. It may be comforting to report that splits in labour resulted from ideological differences between the radical left and the conservative or moderate right; all of them products of the East-West ideological war of the 1950s till the 1990s. Today there appears to be very little commitment to workers' welfare. When welfare issues



are raised today, it seems it is an opportunity for the labour chieftains to blackmail the political leadership in order to get their personal share of the dwindling Big Cake!

Today as we look back forty years, from and find that the NLC an umbrella union for 42 trade organizations with a membership of about 4 million across the country tottering, we can ask, in hopeful and honest expectations, what the Union has achieved in those years. As an amalgam of four different organizations namely Nigeria Trade Union Congress (NTUC), Labour Unity Front (LUF), *United Labour Congress* (ULC) and Nigeria Workers' Council (NWC), the NLC is today the mother of about 22 Unions. Its birth was a product of the wide national, civil society and labour agitations against military rule and the need to promote democracy.

Just as in the past there had always been factionalisation. Today Joe Ajaero's United Labour Congress (ULC) has only replayed the labour factorisation music of the past with the consequent macabre dance adversely affecting the workers. At a time, when Labour is trying to negotiate for a reviewed minimum wage with an unwilling Federal Government, they are distracted by a babel of voices which the Government appears to enjoy.

It is important to note that the NLC, as we know it today is different from that of Comrade Hassan Sumonu, now a member of the Board of Trustees of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), and even more different from Pa Michael Imuodu's Workers' Union and Prof Escor Toyo's vision of a true labour movement.

Comrade Hassan Sumonu fought for the institutionalization of a national minimum wage and a minimum pension scheme and used the May 1981 strike to press for these and reached a compromise with the President Shehu Shagari Government. Is it not those same issues we are still trying to get the Governments from Jonathan to Buhari to review? What really has been our achievement? And what has really changed?

In one of its fourteen aims and objectives, the NLC says it is organised 'to promote and defend the rights, well being and interests of pensioners and ensure their recognition by the society'. In my opinion, it has failed to achieve this. If Congress were proactive and committed to this objective, there would have been no way a few robbers would have sat down in Abuja and stolen billions of naira meant to be used to pay pensioners and they would do nothing but throw up their hands in helplessness and hopelessness.

Can Nigerian workers imagine politicians, top civil/public servants retiring and not receiving the jumbo sums they approved for themselves? Certainly, the heavens would have fallen! Is it because these helpless Nigerians are no longer considered to be

relevant? It must not be so. The NLC must put the fight of the pensioners in its front burner. These Nigerians have cried for too long. These voiceless people must get back their voices.

Again, the NLC has neglected the teachers. They are so badly exposed that when their salaries are denied they are reduced to beggars and led into temptation. The civil servants are also neglected because some of them do not have enough work to do and so are tempted by the free time they have and therefore become traders, farmers and extortionists. Congress is not preaching morality to the workers. It is not sensitizing workers to give their best service but agitates for more pay to those who are not fully engaged primary school teacher in Calabar asked pupils in a class of 50 to bring 20 oranges each for her to use to teach them circles. One thousand oranges to teach circles to a class or like some academic staff who must sleep with their students (boys or girls) before they can pass their examinations, we see a total failure of mobilization on the part of the affiliate unions.

Today, the NLC stands condemned for failure in its objective '*To promote and sustain the unity of Nigerian Trade Unions, ensure total unionisation of all workers irrespective of creed, state of origin, gender and their political beliefs*'. The NLC has failed to promote and sustain the unity of Nigerian trade unions: It gloats over the refusal of some employers of labour to allow unionism in their work places simply because the leaders of erstwhile unions in those places rebelled against the apex union's authority. They have not fought against private universities which continue to engage workers in slave labour. We must wake up now.

The time has come when we have to let the leaders of the union know that their main interest should not lie in taking up leadership positions, in competing with politicians in acquiring property while neglecting the roles they are called upon to play. Members of our affiliate unions should seek to know what their leaders are doing rather than engage in whispering alleged misdoings to inappropriate ears. Members must call their leaders to account and should not be cowardly in engaging them. It is for the good of the leaders, the members and the health of the Unions.

Transparency and accountability must be the watchwords of our unions. No one should be a sacred cow in our desire to give the unions the equivalent of a full body scan. When we are in good health, we should be able to look leaders in government, and employers straight in the face and demand for what is the due of the workers. If those we negotiate with see that we are men and women of integrity, they will take us seriously and their present tactic of blackmailing union leaders will fail.

Today's unionism must move away from the personality cult of the past because such persons around whom we built a larger than life image have always abandoned us at the slightest opportunity of inducement either by the



political aphrodisiac or material benefits.

Have we ever asked ourselves why labour leaders of the recent past abandoned the political party their Union set up, and moved on to the 'Chop-Chop' pedestal?

If the NLC is sure of a solid base of 4 million today why can't it organise and win elections? There is no political party in Nigeria that has such a dedicated base. Never mind the dubious claims by all of them.

Lech Walesa, the Polish labour activist emerged from the ruins of the ideological collapse of the Eastern bloc to become the President of Poland. Why can't Labour support its own party and produce a leader that can run this country in peace? Many think the NLC is not serious when they see its former national President abandon the Labour Party to contest an election under another platform.

Beyond the phoney chants of Labour leaders and their followers, are we ready to take labour and Nigeria into the bright future which lies before us but which we are not ready to embrace? I am therefore urging the Nigerian workers to go back to their mandate and examine the fourteen aims and objectives which they set for themselves and see how they can reclaim these and restore their image in the future.

In spite of its apparent shortcomings, it is very clear in my mind that, without the NLC it would have been worse. I am not alone in this thought. It is better to have a limping dog with the potential to bite than have nothing. And having carried out some self-criticism, I realise that this is good for us. It is my mother union and my professional union is a prominent member here.

Do I have any suggestions for the future? Yes. I have already suggested that we need to re-examine or review our mandate. This should be the time for stocktaking. What is left of the union after sloganeering? The NLC should be re-jigged to face the challenges of the future. And its greatest problem here is the re-education of its leadership. There are leaders of its many affiliate unions who do not understand labour issues beyond demanding for a higher pay and allowances.

For example, in an ongoing strike by some of its affiliate unions, the members failed to understand that the non-members of their unions who had earlier embarked on a strike which they did not participate in also had a right not to embark on another strike whether in solidarity or a strike of their own. What some of them did was shameful. They ensured that utilities in the system did not work, stopped people from going to their offices, lectures and visitors and students from engaging in their legitimate businesses. It was clear that these 'comrades' did not know what a strike is. These actions posed a threat to inter-union harmony in the workplace. Education on different

aspects of unionism becomes imperative here and now. Clearly, the striking unions did not know these were acts of sabotage which could be punished after the strike.

Have we heard about the strike fund? The NLC must discuss this issue and get our unions to set up strike funds so that in the event of a strike action, they may not be bullied back to work when they hear government officials and employers of labour proclaim their 'no work no pay' mantra. This instrument of blackmail will cease to be potent if a strike fund is established.

The future of labour will be more difficult as employment opportunities continue to dwindle by the day. We must ready ourselves for a time which begins now, when employers of labour become more ruthless and insensitive. But when they know labour will not be coerced there will be a general readiness to negotiate and avoid strike actions.

The NLC must be ready to elect leaders who are honest and dignified and understand what trade unionism is about. They must be men and women who are ready to give their all in times of sacrifice. How can NLC overcome ethnicism which is the bane of our society? Today national interest is subverted by those who use ethnicism to promote their selfish interests. We will kill labour if we allow ethnic considerations to rule us. Evidence already abounds when sections of the country often back out of strike actions when the interests, welfare and the general development of the nation are at stake and those at the helm of our affairs are from our ethnicities. Yet when the struggle succeeds we join in enjoying the benefits. The attitude is despicable and shameful.

Another issue which has also contributed to weakening the NLC is the destructive use of religion to sabotage labour struggles. If religion were important to the leaders we claim to support, then we would have no reason to agitate. All true religions exist to serve God and God has enjoined us to treat those who work for us fairly, equitably and justly. No religion seeks to illtreat human beings even though some faiths recognise the existence of slaves as a historical fact. Even here those faiths enjoin fair treatment of them as human beings.

Sometimes, in the leadership of the Unions, we allow issues of what faith a comrade embraces to affect our decision to vote for him at our elections, rather than commitment, competence and his or her leadership qualities. We must grow away from these baser feelings and attitudes in order to liberate our unions so that when we intone the workers' song, 'We shall overcome', it will be meaningful and confirmed by our faith and resolve.

Indeed, we shall overcome and labour shall rise again. Therefore, let us rise once again and speak with one voice. There is no gainsaying the fact that only unity and critical bonding will save us from our present state of disarray. Who will spearhead another 'Apena Declaration' to ensure labour unity.?

God bless us as we strategize for our golden jubilee.



Gombe ASUU – NEC: A Bird's Eye View

Gombe City is a small and serene city in the politically volatile North East. But it is like an oasis in a stormy, steamy environment. With a population of three and a half million, its ambience is what many Nigerian towns are seeking to be – a peaceful, orderly, well-planned city with well-paved streets many of which are dualised highways with decently arranged infrastructures, housing estates and verdant street flowers and plants which could be the envy of many southern Nigerian cities. Even during the dry season, the plants and flowers were still as lush green as if they were in the coastal regions of Nigeria. How did the authorities get here?

This was the city where ASUU held its National Executive Council meeting in January 2018. The campus of the state university was not left out in this seemingly, spiritually carved out haven of earthly bliss. Although a small university, the Gombe State University is a delight to see with state-of-the-art buildings most of which came from the generosity of TETFUND such that one would ask in amazement if the headquarters of the intervention agency were on the GSU campus.

There was order in the hospitality arrangements except that there were expected hitches here and there which affected those delegations that arrived a bit late. The sanitation at the venue of the meeting was super. We did not have toilet floors drenched with leaking water. The sanitation officers were always on hand to keep the place neat and dry.

The university's motto 'Primus inter pares' is apt for a young university with its prodigious reputation. The university reflects the multiculturalism of the state and its multi-faith history. It is one place in the North East that Boko Haram has not succeeded in causing its havoc because the people are resolved in maintaining their character as a peaceful, non-sectarian environment with a history of accommodation of all its diversities. Even the fabled acts of lawlessness of tricycle riders commonly experienced in various Nigerian cities are almost absent in this city. Its 'international' airport is, for now capable of meeting its needs but airline operators may soon have to review their schedules to meet the demands of the business, academic and political classes.

I look forward to another visit to this hauntingly captivating city.

APO 6 OFFICER PROMOTED AIG

Danjuma Ibrahim, one of the police officers implicated in the killing of six persons in Apo, Abuja was recently promoted Assistant Inspector General of police (AIG). He was alleged to have conspired with five others to kill the victims while they were on their way home from a night party. Even though the courts acquitted him in 2017 alongside two other officers, he carries with him a moral burden given the strong evidence adduced against him. The offence which was allegedly committed by him and two of his colleagues in 2005 still stands as a milestone in our judicial history. The deceased were not found committing any crime nor in a crime scene. Their offense to be that they were sighted by trigger-happy policemen at that time of the night.

Culled from NAIJ.com

Herdsmen-Farmers' Clashes Today: Ecology, Class and Categorical Politics in Contemporary Nigeria.

Omotoye Olorode, Ibudo Oranyan, Odoje, Ogbomoso.
omotoopo@gmail.com

Introduction

The conflict between the needs (and the practitioners) of livestock agriculture and arable-crop agriculture is not unique to our country Nigeria or to our time although it has escalated in Nigeria recently for various reasons we address below.

Overtime, and in different parts of the world, various methods have been adopted to address the needs of pastoralists. These include free-range grazing, enclosure livestock husbandry, and various mixtures of both. Arising from the profitability of wool in Europe between the 16th and 18th centuries, for example, the enclosure system became rampant in the UK generating major changes, especially landlessness and rural-urban migration and, riots (such as The Midland Revolt, Newton Rebellion of June 1609 and Western Rising of 1630-1632) and sundry social crises (Wikipedia, January 25, 2018). It has also been suggested that unimpeded access to free pasture (extensive husbandry) is, more economically viable especially in locations like Nigeria where many consumers of animal products are also low-income populations. Consequently, ecological factors (climate change, increased aridity, vegetation decline, diseases and removal of ecological constraints) and other factors that limit or enhance access to free and better pasture are bound to affect the economic behaviour and movement of pastoralists, although ecological crisis is one of the fundamental causes.

In this presentation, we also show that ecological problems and climate change crisis do not exhaust the causes of herdsmen-farmers' conflict. We try to show, on one hand, that the herdsmen-farmers' narrative in the public domain in Nigeria today is compounded by ethnic-nationalist and confessional or religious antipathies that are being manipulated and promoted for political mobilisation. I have tried

to demonstrate that these elements of the conflicts are typical when a ruling class is faced with palpable possibilities of open resistance by, and conflict with oppressed classes of society as a class. And, on the other hand, I tried to demonstrate that because of the fear of the prospects of a class war, both the ruling class and



their media insist on an entirely ethno-religious rather than a class rendition of the story of herdsmen-farmers' conflict. The preferred rendition by the ruling class, however, simply deepens the crisis by mutual attempts by the contending forces to mutually criminalise one another without resolving the problem itself. This is partly because of this that the extant political economy which entrench the crisis is the handmaiden of the ruling class whose economic and political interests reproduce the crisis.

The neo-liberal ambience of the herdsmen-farmers' clashes.

We must locate the current escalation of herdsmen-farmers' clashes in the development of the neo-liberal siege that had various manifestations since the close of the 1970s.

The siege assumed a particular form in agriculture and agricultural development and

land use especially in regard to imports of food, agricultural inputs and machinery and massive intervention of international finance institutions (World Bank) of multi-national corporations, and construction companies (such as Impresit Bakalori). In various ways these interventions enabled foreign contractors, corporations, and other interests to extract massive surpluses from Nigeria and availed various wings of the Nigerian ruling class opportunities to engage in unprecedented private accumulation especially of landed property. Abba, et al. (1985) noted in regard to World Bank ADPs as follows:

The ADPs especially in the areas where they were initially established, have also raised the value of land. This has led to large scale land appropriation from poor peasant households in favour of rich peasants, traditional rulers, bureaucrats, top military officers and business tycoons who have taken this opportunity to become large-scale landowners. In this way millions of peasant household are being pauperised or their holdings are reduced to such a size that it becomes uneconomic to cultivate.

The foregoing is also generally true for the Operation Feed the Nation of the late 1970s and the River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs) and the National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP) of the 1970s and 1980s. Abba et al. (Ibid.) articulated the issues pertaining to these World Bank-inspired programmes in detail. We are raising these matters here in anticipation of the point we address later that a huge class dimension exists in relation to accessibility to land by farmers – a dimension that has to do with the scourge of the rise of capitalist farmers, ranchers and land grabbers and which mainstream media and scholarship have generally down-played or completely ignored.

Ecology and the Politics of Resource Scarcity

Human ecology is about human habitat in all its ramifications: physical and biotic, including “other” human beings in the environment. The ecology of any organism is, or is about, its “house” or “home”; to be tenable as such it must secure life and means of sustaining life. To do both, the ecology has to be itself secure, sustainable and capable of being so in a reliable and predictable way.

Over the last six centuries especially, rapidly growing human population, improved health care and technology have all helped man,

allegedly, to conquer nature. All these have also created hegemonies, enhanced exploitation of peoples on global scale, generated unprecedented individual wealth and, at the same time, created unprecedented inequality among regions and countries of the world and among individuals inside national borders. The situation had also created massive stresses on the capacity of human environment everywhere. These stresses on the environment had generated unprecedented and often intractable conflicts among neighbours who have co-existed in solidarity, cooperation and peace. Mohammed (2013) observed in regard to the pastoral Fulani of Nigeria:

The effect of climate change in far northern Nigeria has assumed such magnitude that the minimum vegetation cover in Katsina, Sokoto, Zamfara, Kebbi, Kano, Jigawa, Bauchi, Yobe, Maiduguri, Taraba and Adamawa states respectively (sic) has already fallen below 10% as against the ideal requirement of 25% ecological cover recommended by UNEP to support Fulani man his herds (sic).

The predominant Fulani herdsman of the lower Sahel and Sudan savannah ecologies from Northwest and Northeast Nigeria are now migrating and gradually becoming natives in the middle-belt region- -to find greener pasture for their herds.... The farmer has the fears that Fulani herds will destroy his farmlands. The natural result is clash over rights to the land.

Even where religion-cultural factors facilitate Fulani migration as the north-southwest migration, it was also shown by a number of studies (Blench and Dendo, 2003) that ecological factors are pivotal:

The climate regime of the south-west is such that the derived savannah loops south wards west of Oyo, almost reaching the coast in Benin and the Togolese Republic. this creates relatively open land without the high humidity associated with forest proper and therefore reduces the disease risk of two Zebu cattle.

We may generalise this section by observing that direct conflict over resources and land do not exhaust the sources of native-immigrant hostility. The 1845 migration of the Irish following the potato famine resulted in considerable prejudices and hostility from even fellow European colonists in America. And in the case of the Middle East and the Maghreb which

Europeans are now scattering with their war machine, we see the amount of hostility to immigrant populations in Europe. These are strictly ecologically-induced migrations!

It may be appropriate to conclude this section with the following quotation (rather in reversed sequence) from Mohammed (2013):

Broadly speaking, Nigeria's systems of Common Pool Resources evolved in periods when resources were abundant, when forest, wildlife, grazing, water etc. were abundant in relation to the population exploiting them. Nigeria, for example, may have had a population of 35million in pre-colonial times but now there are at least 165million Nigerians, CPR regimes that were perfectly rational in former era have now become inappropriate in a period of population explosion, rising pressure on resources and extended trade networks.

Politically, we need to think out of the box and avoid politicising the conflict between farmers and fulani's (sic) in Nasarawa State, it is purely a 'Natural Resources Conflict', it happens in Taraba, Benue, Kwara, Southern Kaduna and recently some parts of Abuja, and outside Nigeria, it's also a cyclical events (sic) in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Mali and this is exactly what led to separation between North and south Sudan.

The National Political Ambience of the Herdsmen-Farmers' Clashes in Nigeria

The debates and sabre-rattling over the herdsmen-farmers' clashes in certain parts of the country and the incendiary statements by certain alleged leaders of ethnic nationalities are typical of national elites that have run out of tricks concerning how to create and sustain certain illusions among the oppressed. The essence of this war is to divert the attention of the oppressed from crimes of the ruling class so that the latter can sustain their hegemony.

What are the crimes of the ruling class? The main components of the crimes are the sale of our country, the abandonment of the people, the destruction of Nigeria's economy and cultural institutions, the unending debt slavery, privatisation of everything and continued subsidy to privatised institutions (power, banking and finance , public works etc.), continued division of our people along ethnic and religious lines, unending corruption at various levels, continued commercialisation of elective posts, bloated sinecures, bloated cost of

governance, unpaid salaries, and continued precarious state of public security.

The elections of 2015 enabled the ruling class to re-jig the illusions but today, once again as towards the end of the the previous ruling-class regime, the ruling class has reached the end of the road. They claimed that the "recession" is over. But only rich people are taking the claim seriously. The political parties are all in crisis as the godfathers who made public shows of tearing their party cards are forming new conspiratorial intervention fronts!

And all the "Who-is-whos" are yelling about "restructuring", state police, resource control, control of labour and wage matters by states. They are even threatening secession! All these are being orchestrated after the ruling class have shared GRAs, Abuja, OPLs and public properties among themselves!

The Federal Government will now be able to abandon its responsibilities (institutions, infrastructure, civil servants, roads, schools and universities etc.) to the state. Even the ruling APC's own committee on restructuring is on all fours with most of these proposals for "restructuring"!

It is in the ambience of the foregoing threats of the collapse of the illusion that the Nigerian ruling class erected in the last two decades especially that the largely ecological phenomenon of herdsmen-farmers' clashes acquire their potency for politics and political exploitation enabling mind-bugging stereotyping on all sides of the conflicts.

To be sure, the crisis of the polity and the crisis of neoliberalism have generated, and continued to generate, other categories of conflict such as religious (Christians vs. Muslims, Muslims and Christians vs. traditionalists) and various degrees of violence and bloodletting even within linguistically, culturally and confessionally homogenous groups and communities.

A few weeks ago, there was a huge massacre in a church somewhere in eastern Nigeria; it was not about tribe or religion. On November 4 2017, NAIJ.com (an online news outfit) reported that 5 women were killed in an Ebonyi-Cross River border dispute while three others were declared missing by John Nnabo, Chairman of Ikwo Council Area. On June 4 2017, NAIJ.com also reported that many people were feared dead while many were declared missing in a clash of Tiv and Jukun communities of Benue State (see



also Olorode, 2017).

Ruling classes always prefer ethnic and religious wars to class wars!

Why are various wings of the Nigerian ruling class so worked-up on the herdsmen-farmers' conflicts and similar conflicts while studiously avoiding the concerns and causes of the masses that cut across ethnic and confessional divides? Causes such as the right to jobs, education and health care, to clean drinking water, to generalised availability of land for agriculture? Why are they all abandoning unpaid workers, public funded education at all levels and the struggle for generalised narrowing of inequality gap in Nigeria? Why are they generally more interested in wars at ethnic and sub-ethnic levels mobilising the same citizens that they have decided to abandon?

The answer is usually straight-forward. The current economic and social crisis in Nigeria portends a class war. Class war itself is often preceded by the oppressed and the under privileged turning their anger against members of the oppressed or against self (including rise in suicide rates) or simply by groups and individuals taking the law into their own hands via crimes and criminal activities. In such situations, the ruling class in nation states seek foreign wars to stifle class dissension while sub-nationalities incubate wars with other sub-nationalities or religious groups or with rival groups to hold themselves together and especially to retain the legitimacies of their being recognised as "leaders" (Powell, 1988: p. 199-208). The Nigerian ruling class and segments of it may actually need a war or wars to legitimise themselves. But as Powell, (Ibid, pp. 141-143; p. 208) noted:

As a ruling class grows feeble and rigidifies, it loses capacity for creative adaptation to changing conditions.... Then it seeks to hold on by the resort to force and tries to restore cohesion through involvement in war. The ruling class resorts to war to avert revolution and thereby creates the disaster it seeks to avoid.

In times of peace, war looks like a rational, ordered enterprise serving as an instrument of cohesion as well as of policy. Herdsmen-Farmers' Conflict in Nigeria: The class Dimensions of the Crisis.

In colonial and post-colonial Nigeria, the main thrust of economic "development" as we

mentioned earlier had been the extraction of surpluses from the territory by foreign and, as a subaltern force, indigenous accumulating interests. Economic and social "transformation" had occurred largely as ancillaries of that thrust and especially as responses to the pressures and agitations of the Nigerian labour movement and other segments of the nationalist movement and particularly since 1960, as the demands for the promises of national sovereignty; the struggles for which were carried out almost entirely by the labour movement and its allies.

As Claude Ake (1978) insisted, the main post-independence revolutionary pressures in Africa, and as exemplified by Nigeria, had to do with the struggle of the oppressed against the singular preoccupation of the ruling with [wealth] accumulation. Consequently while ecological forces, as we earlier observed, had been building up to traumatise farming and herding communities, political and economic muscle had been mobilised to alienate land in favour of moneyed individuals and largely alleged public purposes.

To be sure, since colonial days, various laws and ordinances have been promulgated for the regulation of land use, land acquisition and land alienation. There had, thus, been specific laws and public policies for settling the pastoralists. (Adamu, 2014; Majekodunmi et al., 2014; Mohammed, 2013; Nuhu and Aliyu, 2009; Oshio, 1990; Awogbade, 1987; Blench and Dendo, 2003; Iro, undated; Nwocha, 2016).

Indeed, at least prima facie, the Grazing Reserve Law of 1965 promulgated by the then Northern Regional Government demonstrated clear altruism as Awogbade (Ibid.) noted:

The broad objective was to provide livestock owners with legal grazing laws and title to land, as a response to increasing pressure on traditional grazing lands by arable farmers and government agricultural projects.

The two elements of the increasing pressure had escalated especially since the late 1970s as a result of the activities, as we observed earlier on, of the ADPS, the NAFPP and the emergence of large-scale capitalist, largely absentee farmers and ranchers. This development implicated the 1978 Land Use Act as a law enacted fundamentally to promote the class interest of the ruling class—retired generals (from Ota, to Ore-Benin and Mambila; from Katsina to Ebonyi, Niger,

Sokoto Oyo, FCT, Ondo, Taraba, Ogun, and Cross Rivers etc. etc.), business men, retired senior civil servants and foreign companies (NTC, Leventis, Cadbury, John Holt, etc.) fronted for by them. We may note that the purported intent and actual implementation of the Land Use Act of 1978 notwithstanding, large chunks of land continue to be forcefully occupied, purchased or alienated via the influence and political and money power of the so-called traditional rulers, politicians and other members of the ruling class. And it is not just agri-business that has created land hunger and mass poverty that exacerbate today's ecological crisis. From tin mining on the Plateau since the colonial days (Freund 1981; Olorode, 1998) to the current frenzied extraction of minerals from Zamfara to Nasarawa states and oil mining in the Nigerian Delta, we see various pressures on arable land and ecological crisis that the ruling class media do not, or hardly, factor into the current ecological conflicts.

The total loss of sensitivity to the consequences of the build-up of landlessness and land hunger and the fanatical commitment of decision-makers can be further exemplified by at least two issues. One is the continual seizure by political decision makers of arable land such as creation of entire new towns and suburbia and summary abrogation of land use rights to the original owners (Nuhu and Aliyu, 2009). In a report by Tony Adibe et al. (2016) Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) claimed that "115 Grazing reserves in Nigeria [had been] taken over" for facilities like airports. This insensitivity and irresponsibility on the part of the Nigerian state and those who run it was also particularly registered by the importation of white farmers from Zimbabwe by President Olusegun Obasanjo and Bukola Saraki (then Kwara State Governor) to take over a huge acreage of peoples' land in Malete (Kwara state) for private commercial agriculture! Lawal's (2010) study of the Zimbabwean farmers' phenomenon at Malete (in the Abstract) observed among other things:

The study which used both primary and secondary data showed that only marginal improvement in terms of employment creation and infrastructural development can be attributed to the policy as the policy was entirely elitist. While the Zimbabwe farmer

project has employed a few residents of the areas and the Malete youth farm school has graduated the first set of students there are a number of flaws inherent in the implementation of the policy to the advantage of the people of the state.

Finally, in this section, we need to ask in relation to the herders-farmers' clashes, and the class dimension of the crisis who actually owns the cattle?"

In the so-called Hausa-Fulani North, which Hausa or Fulani actually own the cattle whose forays into farms are generating so much heat in the Nigerian polity? I do not have systematic data on this question but I suspect that answers to this question lurk in some previous studies especially in relation to average number of cow herds owned by Fulani pastoralists. I know for a fact that in northern Nigeria including non-Hausa/Fulani states, rich businessmen and women, politicians, serving and retired public servants and bureaucrats, retired and serving military top brass, the so-called traditional rulers and university professors and administrators own hundreds of herd that are husbanded by Fulani herdsman! I also know for a fact, that the foregoing is true in south western Nigeria where large herds owned by members of the ruling class are husbanded by Fulani thus constantly putting the latter in direct line of fire!

A large number of Fulani herdsman now branded "terrorists", "Jihadists" "criminals" are, therefore, mere exploited working class who work for rich Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo, Fulani, Idoma or Tangale absentee owners. And when people ask, "Why do herdsman need Kalashnikov rifles?" It looks like some people have not heard about cattle rustlers! An acquaintance informed me recently, for example, that in a single cattle-rustler assault, seventy (70) of his cows were stolen. Somehow, it appears perfectly normal that Nigerian Police and private security companies regularly post their men to guard rich peoples' residences and to banks to keep vigil over their money. This same rich people need to protect their cattle using the herdsman proxy!

Conclusions: how do we respond?

The fundamental perspective of this contribution to the current public discussion on the herdsman-farmers' clashes is that farmers, especially smallholders, and pastoralists represent a numerically significant segment of Nigeria's working people. They also represent some of the most neglected segments of our society in spite of

their contributions to the sustenance of our society. It is also true that both segments (crop production and livestock production) which together contribute close to 25% of Nigeria's GDP annually, and consistently, between 2010 and 2014 according to ARCEN (2015) draft documents' references to National Bureau of Statistics (2015) figures.

We have shown earlier on that in spite of huge public expenditure on agriculture since the late 1970s, the failure of policies had been the result of dependence on neo-colonial finance and political institutions, primitive and private accumulation by the Nigerian ruling class, increased pressure of adverse ecological forces and human demographic factors. Appropriate responses to the present state and elements of the crisis have two main legs: the first is immediate and strategic amelioration and stoppage of the current trends of violence between herdsmen and farmers; the second are long term state and popular people's responses to the ecological crisis including the revitalisation of the state-led revitalisation of grazing reserves. Both responses must be activated immediately and simultaneously.

Two important categories of causes tend to deepen the crisis of herdsmen-farmers' clashes. Firstly, prejudices, fear and ignorance had been promoted by ethnic and religious warlords who tend to insist that only war and/or adversarial cessation of all contacts between herdsmen and farmers can solve the problems on ground. Secondly, as in all wars and violent clashes certain groups have developed that derive considerable economic and political leverage from the crisis. These include, but are not restricted to gun running, looting, cattle rustling, robberies and seeking political advantage of being recognised as "leader" of ethnic or religious group. Authentic and informed citizens peace groups (rather than those that have turned "peace-building" and "conflicts resolution" into business), will be required for the task of reinstating contact and solidarity in conflict zones. Public enlightenment and intense small-group interactions will be necessary to impress it on all concerned that the crisis is not about Fulani-Yoruba, Fulani-Agatu, Fulani-Igbo or Fulani-Takor irreconcilable differences! The report by Tony Adibe et al. (Ibid.) showed beyond any reasonable doubt that the deepening of the crisis

has to do with fears, prejudices and ignorance; the report also showed that a huge amount of goodwill remains among and between the various contending groups.

Of course, state actors have to show greater sense of commitment and responsibility especially in supporting citizens' movements' interventions. The resolution is not just about policing and military action; neo-colonial law-enforcement institutions (police, armed forces, law courts, soldiers) have retained their colonial antecedents in essential forms, content and psychology! Their colonial antecedent and actual post-colonial records of the law-enforcement at Ibadan (1960s), Modakeke (1970s,1980s), Zaria (1986), Bakalori (1980s), Odi (2000s), Zaki Biam (2000s) are not flattering in "peace-keeping" matters.

This contribution asserts firmly that the tensions arising from the clashes can be doused significantly if Nigeria's working people calls the Nigerian ruling class to order on all counts. A peaceful resolution of this burgeoning crisis is not only possible, it is desirable.

It is also the firm belief of this contribution that a return to the Grazing Reserve Strategy (GRS) holds the most viable promise for the resolution of the crisis in spite of the previous problems that arose from shoddy implementation and undemocratic management of the reserves. A good account, indeed critique, of the development of grazing reserves as state-led response was given by Iro (undated). Following the pioneering efforts of the mid-1960s, various advanced plans for improvement and enlargement of the reserves were made and gazetted. According to Iro (Ibid):

At the close of 1992, the government has identified over 300 areas with twenty-eight million hectares for grazing reserve development. About forty-five of these areas covering some 600,000 hectares have been gazetted. Eight of these reserves totalling 225,000 hectares are fully established. Already, 350 of the projected 950 pastoral families and 17,000 of the planned 46,000 cattle are using these reserves (NLDP record 1992). Apart from acquiring the land, the government regulates how the Fulani should use these reserves.

In the mid-1970s and early 1980s, the crisis of environment and escalation of poverty in rural

environments especially in the peripheries of capitalist and imperialist agri-business instigated massive debates. Today's environment crisis and the violence they created were clearly presaged (Fedder, 1976; George, 1979; Mooney, 1983; Abba et al. 1985; Juma, 1989). But the alleged "triumph" of capitalist globalisation that produced today's crises generated and sustained its own hubris. In spite of the neoliberal capitalist peripheries like Nigeria being back on square one with all-round crisis in the agriculture and rural sector, the ruling class and their intellectuals are re-inventing the said hubris. At the onset of the current herdsmen-farmers' clashes several months ago, an opinion by a regular member of the commentariat in *The Punch* (Nigeria) valorised Uruguayan cattle ranching as an example of success. What we were not told was the consequence of large-scale latifundist commercial ranching for landlessness and poverty in rural Uruguay.

Let us return to the intent and possibilities of the GRS as a general model of a state-led revitalisation of rural life, production and innovation not just for pastoralists, but also for the communities of arable farmers. Regarding the aims of Grazing Reserves, we quote again from Iro (Ibid.):

....government aims to foster peaceful coexistence [between herders and cultivators] by making the grazing reserve a zone of no-conflict. Improving land use and herd management, providing social welfare amenities to the Fulani and increasing national income.....(Laven, 1991).The government hopes the game reserves will become the center of agro-pastoral innovations, a guarantor of land security, a nucleus for nomadic Fulani settlement, a precinct for crop-livestock systems integration and a place for small-scale rather than large-scale holder-oriented production (Bako and Ngawa, 1988). Ademosun (1976) lists some of the gains....as easing seasonal migration, improving the quality of herds, multiplying outlet for bovine product, and enhancing access to extension and social services.

The alternative being actively pushed by capitalists and land speculators and their intellectuals is the large-scale mechanised, enclosure latifundist model; it will simply lead to massive landlessness and general and more

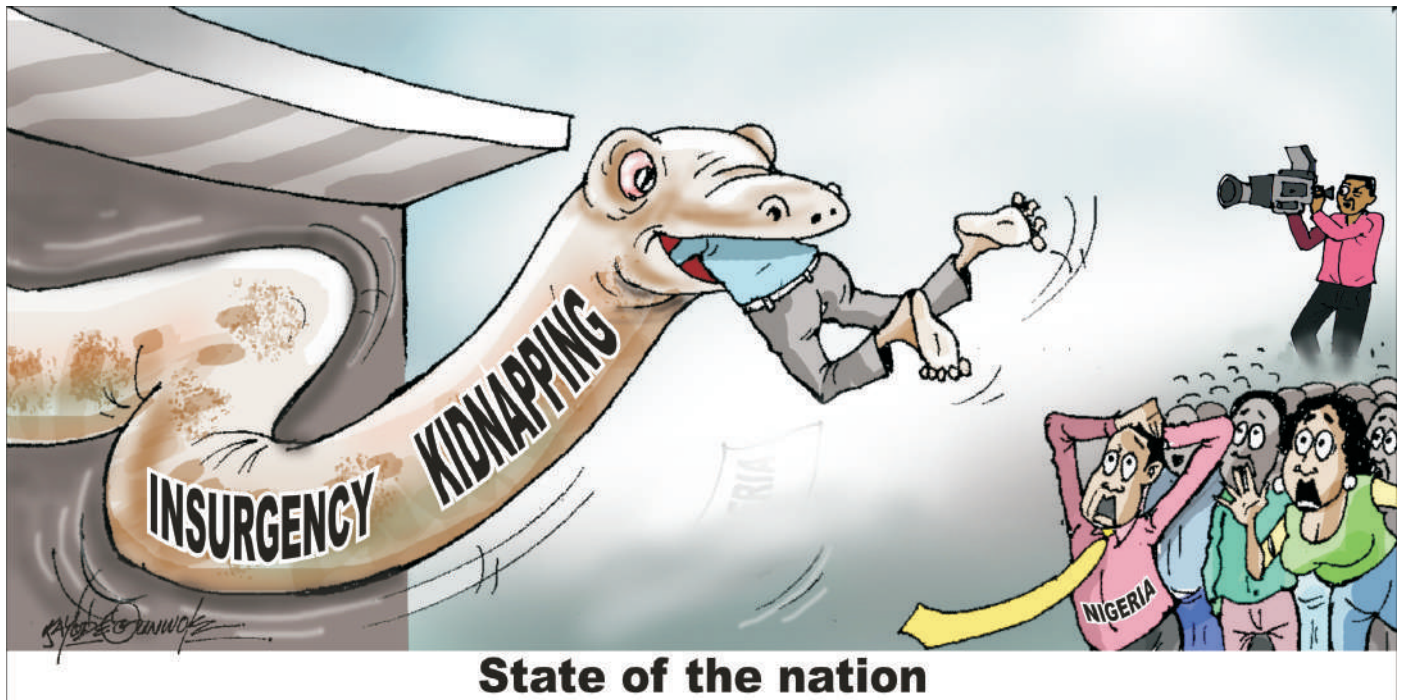
intense environmental disaster without stopping or ameliorating the current herdsmen-farmers' c l a s h e s .

The meaning of all these is the urgent need for the Nigerian labour movement, and especially its intellectual wing, to return to a comprehensive re-think towards a people-oriented and patriotic strategy, not just about herdsmen but also about arable-crop producers. This strategy will be basically in the direction of building infrastructure for production and welfare (power, water supply, health-care delivery and education) of rural populations and in the general context of a radical state-led alternative strategy for national development. The overall alternative national development strategy will necessarily integrate livestock production and crop production horizontally in the rural sector. We must emphasise that the rural sector in the Nigerian economy does not exist in isolation from the urban sector of the population and economy. Consequently, a necessity for vertical rural-urban integrations is implicated in the envisaged strategic re-thinking which must link trade unions, urban consumer cooperatives, educational institutions and artisans' organisations to rural communities and production cooperatives of livestock and crop producers. These links will encourage and enhance mutual economic and political support and development, begin to generate national integration and solidarity among Nigeria's working people and, hopefully, arrest the spread of urban decay to rural locations.

The foregoing perspectives are not new. They have produced phenomenal developmental results in China and Latin America. The directions are also implicated in the literature of our own movement (Abba et, al. op. cit., NLC, 1984; NLC, 2010; ASUU, 1984; Olorode 2014) these are all commended for our close scrutiny.

The task ahead of our people is thus about understanding the political economy and political ecology of the current crisis. Only a mass-based, pan-Nigeria, working people's movement, armed with class and political consciousness, can carry out that task.





State of the nation

Ballot Season

Ade Adejumo

Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomosho

*...at the elephant's funeral
eager knives of diverse shapes
assail the hunting square.
(Yoruba adage)*

All hail Our ballot Season
harbinger of competing lies
on the tarmac of shameless tongues
when empty castles are built with bricks
of deceitful dictums of scam

Our season of ballots
where phoney mandates are wrought
in the illogical calculus
of stuffed boxes;
tumbling figures, scanty voters
in the market of commercial franchise!
hapless people marvel at the magic of tall
numbers

Here comes our ballot season

when crisp notes of expatriate currencies
from the vaults of hoarded fortunes
seize our streets like seasonal masquerades

Say, this is our season of ballots
When emergency champions of public good
bearing gospels of plastic kindness
suddenly abandon the cossy caress
of their fluffy fortresses for our gullied shanties...

Yes! here comes
Ballot season, banal slogans
Ballot season, venal dealings
Ballot season, murderous conclaves
At the verge of dark schemings

Ah! Ballot season
Highway to the kingdom
of light-fingered Lords

THE NIGERIAN ECONOMY AND THE 2018 BUDGET

IFEOMA STELLA NJOKU
FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY OWERRI

The Nigerian economy has wobbled over the years, and only recently the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Economic Outlook in Washington DC, United States, at the World Bank Annual Meeting, January 2018, declared that Nigeria is out of recession and projects economic growth rate of 2.1% in 2018, but insists that the economy is still weak and would remain undermined due to the population growth rate of 2.7%. This speculation is not in isolation but tied to the global economic activity, continuous growth with emphasis on the two important policy objectives which tie the advanced, emerging and developing economies together as the need to raise potential output growth through structural reforms, to enhance labour force participation and productivity; while making sure that gains from growth are shared widely.

However, despite new liquidity conditions in Nigeria, the IMF maintains that “difficulties in accessing finance and high inflation continued to weigh down on companies”. High inflation rate means that deficiency remains in Nigeria, and the monetary policy should address structural reforms to accommodate growth. To achieve growth, fiscal policy should increasingly be modeled with a framework of achieving long-term goals that consist of fiscal sustainability and productivity. The Fund outlines the factors that contribute to raising the ratio of interest payments to the Federal Government revenue to unsustainable levels to include: “high fiscal deficits driven by weak revenue mobilisation, delayed fiscal policy implementation which, when combined with tight monetary policy necessary to reduce inflationary pressures, increase pressure on bond yields and crowd out private sector credit.” This situation calls for measures to achieve growth rates that could significantly impact on reducing poverty and

unemployment, and these require a new comprehensive set of policy measures.

THE BUDGET IMPLICATION FOR NIGERIA

The annual budget presentation and approval have consistently generated issues of submission and resubmission of document between the executive and legislative arms of government. The National Assembly has shifted the passage of 2018 appropriation bill into law three consecutive times; December 2017, April and May 2018. This development has drawn the nation backward and necessitated questions from Nigerians on when budget defence and implementation will have a smooth sail? Over the years the budget deliberations and passage in Nigeria have been a yearly brouhaha of recurring mistakes and expecting a good outcome. Sadly, inflated budget estimates, low revenue, corruption, budget instability, unrealistic projections and assumptions of income and expenditure, result in poor implementation and performance. This unhealthy situation of a failed process has repeatedly stalled improvement in



public services, economic and infrastructural development.

On 7th November, 2017, the President presented an appropriation bill of N8.612 trillion for the 2018 fiscal year before the joint session of the National Assembly. The President tagged it 'The Budget of Consolidation' after the 2017 'Budget of Recovery'.

The 2018 Budget is meant to consolidate on the previous budgets and also to build on Nigeria's Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP 2018 – 2020). According to the President, the 2018 Budget will return to a cycle that starts from January and ends in December 2018.

BUDGET INDICES

The breakdown of 2018 budget presented by the President, shows that the Proposed Recurrent Expenditure will take N6.18tn, Proposed Capital Expenditure will be N2.42tn, bringing the total proposed budget size to N8.6tn.

KEY PARAMETERS AND ASSUMPTIONS OF THE BUDGET

The Budget total estimate of N8.612 trillion is 16% higher than that of 2017 with projections of:

Benchmark crude oil price – US\$45 per barrel

Oil production estimate – 2.3 million barrels per day

Exchange rate – N305/US\$ for 2018

Real GDP growth of 3.5 per cent

Inflation Rate of 12.4 per cent

The aggregate expenditure consists of recurrent costs, N3.494 trillion; debt service of N2.014 trillion; statutory transfers of N456 billion; sinking fund of N220 billion; and capital expenditure of N.428 trillion. The budget, when passed, is expected to result in a deficit of N2.005 trillion, amounting to 1.77 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). The budget deficit is expected to be financed partly by new borrowings estimated at 1.699 trillion naira. Fifty percent of this borrowing will be sourced externally, while the balance will be sourced domestically. The balance of the deficit of 306 billion naira is to be financed from proceeds of privatization of some non-oil assets by the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE). Total Federal Government revenue for 2018 is projected at N6.61 trillion, with oil revenue amounting to N2.4 trillion (36.9%) and non-oil tax revenue includes proceeds from the proposed restructuring of FGN's equity in joint ventures in the oil and gas sector as well as recoveries and proceeds from the on-going tax amnesty programme (Voluntary Asset and Income Declaration Scheme).

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION: A MIRAGE

Incidentally, the delayed passage into law of the

2018 Budget has significantly constrained budget implementation. Despite, the 1999 Constitution that authorized necessary Federal Government expenditures before the 12th of June when the 2017 Appropriation Act was signed into law, the question is, if the 2017 budget is not reasonably executed by March, 2017 when will the passage of 2018 appropriation bill and its implementation be? The fact remains that delay in passing the 2018 bill has resulted in low budget performance of 2017 and low roll over of proposals to 2018 which is a structural problem that hinders continuity.

Despite the President's appeal that the Appropriation Bill is signed into law by the 1st of January, 2018, massive irregularities and controversies found in the document have hindered the initiative. The problem with the budget started when Senate discovered that Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) had allegedly padded and duplicated items, varied budget information from MDAs and the executive, lack of budget roll over, unrealistic proposals and no tactical relation with 2017 budget and less than 50% performance of 2017 budget.

In this situation of inappropriate budgeting, how can Nigeria compete in the World economy and create an enabling environment for business to achieve a positive movement in the World-Ease-of-Doing-Business Index? Nigeria has experienced a decade-long decline in this ranking. In 2008, Nigeria, was ranked 120th. By 2015, the situation deteriorated to 169th of the 189 countries surveyed. Though a recent World Bank business ranking report announced that Nigeria was in the 145th position in 2017 and was among the top 10 reforming countries in the world, Nigeria's Tax-to-Gross Domestic Product (GDP) ratio of about 6% is one of the lowest in the world. The non-oil sector accounts for over 90 percent of total Nominal GDP, as the Government's revenues are not remitted to the appropriate authorities thereby diverging an all-inclusive revenue sources and generation thus breeding corruption.

THE ISSUE

Despite the IMF statement that Nigeria is out of recession, the economy of the country is still a challenge due to the urgent need for macroeconomic and structural reforms to support sustainable private sector-led growth. Nigeria's fiscal consolidation should be driven by a monetary policy stance that remains tight to further reduce



inflation. The external market-based exchange rate should be strengthened to potential external capital and unified market flow growth to reduce the risk of capital flow reversals. It is pertinent at this point for Nigeria to structurally reform budgetary implementation, diversification of the economy through private sector empowerment inspite of heightened security issues, provision of infrastructure, building on existing economic successes to improve the business environment, strengthening transparency initiatives, accountability in governance and fostering financial liberation.

The overarching threats to sustained economic growth in Nigeria remains, high fiscal deficits driven by weak revenue mobilization, poor policy implementation, forex market segmentation and fragile banking system.

The major challenge to the Appropriation Bill is that the agencies generating revenue for government do not generate enough money to fund the budget due to lack of accountability and non-remittance of generated funds. This is important at this time because oil revenue alone cannot fund the budget.

Late implementation of budgets has continued to be the order of the day. Late passage of the budget, prolonged contractual negotiations, and other matters remain big challenges as 2017 budget is yet to be implemented and the 2018 budget is yet to be passed into law.

Lack of continuity in ongoing and strategic projects hinder efforts to provide an enabling environment for growth and sustainability.

High deficit rate creates avenues for debts and financing part of the budget by borrowing the sum of N1.699tn from external and domestic sources will create high debt profile and further impoverish the nation.

The economic template of Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) used by the government has unmatched economic potentials and execution priorities hence, does not address the major areas of national needs for sustainable development.

The Executive inconsistency in modeling, submission, and resubmission of the MTEF shows lack of competency on the part of the economic council.

The absence of new policies and delayed policy responses create risk in the near-term outlook. Risks to the outlook include tighter external

market conditions, heightened security issues and delayed policy responses.

Nigeria's fiscal consolidation should be steered by a monetary policy stance that remains tight to further reduce inflation. The external market-based exchange rate should be strengthened by potential external capital and unified market flow growth to reduce the risk of capital flow reversals.

Poor appropriation, inaccuracies, inconsistencies and errors in budget modeling by MDAs hinder budget procedures and processes.

In line with the above considerations, the budget of consolidation cannot actualize the economic growth recovery plan of the government without good implementation process. The 16% increase in 2018 budget will add no value if it does not address the economic and infrastructural needs of the nation. However, taking a cue from the underperformance of the 2017 budget implementation, the Federal Government of Nigeria will need to take steps that will ensure full implementation of the budget in 2018 to facilitate the achievement of set goals for the year. Nigeria requires a comprehensive set of new policy measures that address the immediate needs of the nation in achieving a respectable growth rate, reduce poverty and create employment. Thus, there is the need to increase economic reactivity to financial regulations, provide adequate balance sheet, improve financial resilience and implementation of the fiscal budget. Economic consolidation should be accompanied by a monetary policy that remains tight to further reduce inflation. In the absence of new policies, the consolidation promise of the budget remains a mirage. However, this situation calls for quick intervention measures to contain vulnerabilities and achieve growth rates that could make a significant impact in reducing poverty and unemployment.

THE WAY FORWARD

There is urgent need for policy implementation, macroeconomic and structural reforms to support sustainable private sector-led growth in near-term outlook. The economy's long-term, investments in infrastructure and competitiveness should reflect on the people's development as well. This is because people are key to a sustainable economy and a globally competitive environment.



2019: Here we go again

The 2019 General Elections are just nine months away and it's already 'party time' for some. The liars are abroad, name callers are reveling in their insidious art, dissembling old politicians are crafting new strategies, wayfarers in the hall of infamy are on pilgrimage, dubious government officials are moving from one lying session to another, critical bystanders are hailing them frustratingly in their aborted hopes, completed projects are lining the industrial areas by the grace of photoshops and the befuddled nation is moving on in surreal fantasy.

Let us now take the liberty to review our unsteady motion on the road we have taken. The journey began in 2015 with trepidation and hurtful memories of the road not taken by the President Jonathan Government. It was like the excitement of a woman entering a new matrimonial bond.

Many had hoped that the rhetoric of instant turn-around would translate to a national celebration. Pessimists and realists as well, well beyond the divisive party lines, had a different picture of what would happen. So, when the N1 to \$1 dollar exchange rate tale turned sour, some were baffled when the denial game took over. Even the N5,000 dole to the unemployed has fizzled out.

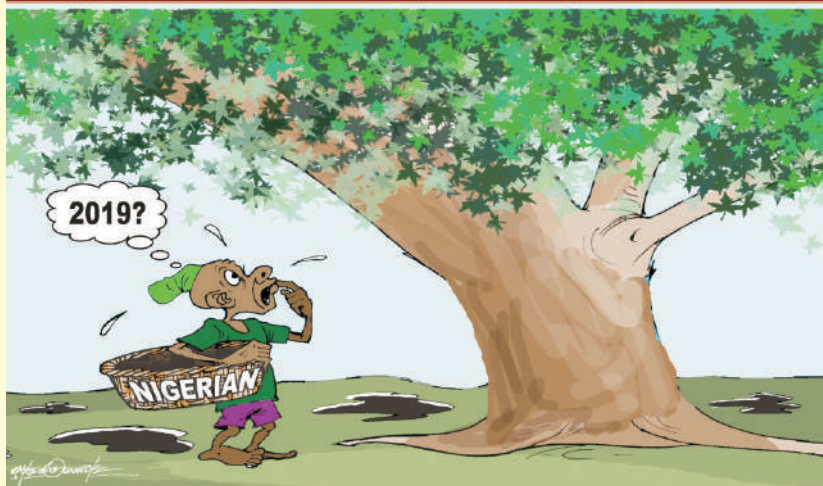
When a man takes a new wife, he does not tell the new wife that it would take him as long as the former marriage lasted to bring glory to the family. It is a slippery customer that creates a make-belief world and then distances himself from his dream when things don't fall in place.

Nigeria had a new husband in May 2015 – the slim and gangling ex-military leader was generally known to be austere and laconic in speech but whose mysterious body language was known to be the standard for every policy action. The blind only ignored the

'The Year revolves and I again explore
The simple annals of my Parish poor,'
George Crabbe, *The Parish Register*

nonverbal communication of the man with little external flesh at his or her peril!

The success of any administration is never measured by the length of the rhetoric of its officials nor by the



Where are the PROMISED FRUITS?

vituperations of its naysayers and apologists. We are in a 'signs and wonders' generation. Everyone expected a miracle from this government given the power of its rhetoric and the stupendous failures of its predecessors. You promised a luxury liner but in the end you could not even deliver a dug-out! Children whose parents are unable to deliver at meal times are not often charitable towards them. That is why the three-year basket of excuses and blame game engaged in by the present administration ring hollow in the ears of Nigerians.

Nigerian workers in the public and private sectors have waited for more than three years to negotiate a new wage deal. There is no hope that this will fall through by 2019. Unions in tertiary institutions have been engaging government since 2014 without any real hope of an end to this seemingly endless weaving by Odysseus' wife! Implementation of freely reached agreements has been lacklustre, inconsistent, and in some cases breached for convenience without any recourse to the other parties.

The economy which went into recession soon after



the present government came to power remained comatose for a long while until recently when official sources began to sing hallelujah because of a seeming resurrection from the 'dead'. Many had taught that we were in a depression. But the rule of thumb for any vibrant economy is always that fewer people are out of job than before, and more people have more to eat than before. This is not quite looking up.

Even when oil prices have gone up there is still very little to cheer. This economic challenge is not at the centre alone. Many states are unable to pay their workers for several months. Even some workers have forgotten when they were paid last.

If the local government elections which took place in some states recently are anything to go by, then 2019 may be a harbinger of a harvest of deaths and mindless violence. Political thuggery, vote rigging, ballot box snatching, under-aged voting, administrative fraud, wrong use of armed state officials (legal and illegal) all add to the impending political imbroglio envisioned for 2019. Thus the prognostications for 2019 are real and could play out at the national theatre if the institutions set up to rein in these acts of political recklessness and rascality are not ready to do their duties and feel more committed to a free, fair and transparent electoral process. The question is: Can the present government guarantee a credible election where underaged supporters are allowed to vote and party officials come to tell us that they were undernourished and that was why they looked small and underaged?

There are wanton killings and acts of terrorism by so-called Fulani herdsmen who have recently been promoted to just herdsmen, the sporadic bombings by faceless groups under the umbrella of Boko Haram, acts of terrorism by other groups around the country, invasion and kidnapping of school girls by randy terrorists who also use it as a source of revenue, other unreported kidnappings of women and youths for recruitment by terrorist bands, unresolved legal matters and executive

lawlessness through noncompliance with court orders and so many other issues bedeviling the nation for which we do not have any clear response.

Thus between 2015 and some months before the next elections the country has made no visible progress even in its Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index. Thus we have moved 12 places backwards from 136 to 148; that is showing that corruption is higher now than when Buhari took over from the 'fantastically corrupt' administration of Goodluck Jonathan. With this, I don't know how David Cameron, Prime Minister of Britain, would have described Nigeria now when corruption is said to be at its highest level.

We have a situation where the tale of the lizard is being repeated even in hallowed places: 'I congratulate myself'. Some say, it could have been worse without the present posture of government. I don't agree when the situation is said to be worse. But won't have been better to make better laws to strengthen our institutions and to wit our nation?

Here we go again. The boat is still being tossed around at sea, rudderless it seems, and until the so-called opposition parties are ready to work for a strong united Nigeria alongside the ruling party, there may be no real hope for 2019.

The progress we have made so far seems to be that reflected in the lyrics of the song: 'One step forward, two steps backward'. Will the present governance structure carry us through to 2023? I think it will do with some drastic surgical operation while offloading some of its self-inflicted dead human burdens. These have been the reasons for its inability to take that long stride of progress preferring to engage in political flagellation to compensate for a vainglorious past while shielding evil doers from within. With all that we have enumerated above, it seems our 'parish' is in danger and our exploration has yielded no good fruits.

Des Wilson



NIGERIA LABOUR CONGRESS YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW: NATIONAL UNITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE.

Omotoye Olorode
omotoopo@gmail.com

Introduction

I wish to begin this presentation by congratulating the Nigeria Labour Congress for its effort, as limited as it may have been, to spear-head the struggles of Nigeria's working class in the last forty years.

In doing this, I will like to backdate this congratulation and appreciation of the aforementioned effort to the overlapping generations (since 1912) of labour leaders, leaders of the labour movement, the Nigerian women, the Nigerian youth, and the nationalists who made monumental sacrifices for the independence of our people and of our country and who have continued to struggle toward the liberation of our people.

Arising from the foregoing, I will crave your indulgence to dedicate this lecture especially to our comrades, young and old that served our movement faithfully till the end of their illustration and patriotic lives. The list cannot exhaust the entire span of the struggle of our people since imperialism seized our country definitively more than one century ago. Consequently, I will be particular about the leaders of our movement and other patriots who gave everything, including life itself, since the late 1970s when imperialism, through its political forces, financial (the World Bank, the IMF), and trade/commercial forces (the multinational corporations), started the re-colonization of our country in what they started calling globalization.

In this category I will like to make reference to labour leaders and activists, journalists, women

leaders, patriotic members of the armed forces, lawyers, students, and leaders of peasant and farmers' organizations, teachers, human-rights activists, etc., who have passed on.

NLC: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow: National Unity and Social Justice

Before I address the specifics of “Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow” of the NLC and the relationship between “national unity and social justice”, I need to be categorical that the elements of this discussion have been on the agenda of NLC and the labour movement since the early years of the first half of the last century.

Clearly, “yesterday” is about the history of NLC and the labour movement and the constellations and dynamics of national and international forces that shape that history. Whichever way we periodise “Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow”, the development of the NLC with the state of the national unity and social justice in Nigeria, is a continuum as today is the product of yesterday, and tomorrow will be the consequences of today.

Tentatively, then, we may divide the history of Nigeria's trade union movement into three epochs. The first epoch was the development of the movement up to 1951 when the first Nigeria Labour Congress was formed. This epoch that we refer to as “the first” had its roots in the first ever Nigeria Trade Union—the Civil Service Union in 1912: two years before the famous amalgamation of the Southern Protectorate and the Northern Protectorate to form one administrative entity named Nigeria. The second epoch or phase, as we shall see below, pertained to the development of the labour movement between the early 1950s and 1975 when the events that produced the Second NLC, the current one,



was inaugurated under the military wing of the Nigeria ruling class (at that time headed by General Olusegun Obasanjo in 1978—forty years ago. That “Second NLC” is NLC today. It is the foundation of the “tomorrow” on which we are asked in this celebration to deliberate upon.

Because of the confusion that Nigerian's prodigal ruling class is creating, after auctioning Nigeria to foreign business interests and its members, over national unity (and regarding the cacophonous manipulation of ethnic and religious antipathies among people), placing the question of national unity and social justice on the agenda of this celebration is a well-considered imperative. It will enable us to clarify the fundamental issues and release the stranglehold of Nigeria's ruling class, fully represented among the various ethnic notables across our country, on the working oppressed and *manipulated masses of our people across Nigeria.*

For the Nigerian labour movement, its class and political allies, commitment to unity within the movement had always been an animating force and condition for effectiveness and survival; evidence for this will be canvassed below. Just as colonialism and its post-colonial subalterns discovered the strategic import of dividing Nigerian people along ethnic and sectional lines, the Nigerian Labour movement has consistently struggled to unite Nigerian people across tribal and regional lines. This, in deed, is why it was the labour movement that spearheaded the struggle for Nigeria's independence! It is the labour movement that sustains Nigeria's sovereignty and social justice (basic human rights; economic, social

and political rights) on Nigeria's national agenda. It is the Nigerian labour movement alone that is defending, today, Chapter II of the Constitution—the *de facto Grundnorm* of the 1999 *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria* (Objectives and Directive Principles of the State Policy), and especially its sections and 16(1) and section 16 (2). In this regard, we can be categorical, without any further delay, that the ruling class political parties and alliances have criminally, and consistently, breached these sections of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The Economic and social foundations of working class perspectives and struggles concerning national unity and social justice.

In this section, we summarize the scientific and empirical foundations of our, i.e. working class, perspectives on the development Nigeria's working class movement “yesterday, today and tomorrow” on one hand, and working class conceptions and perspectives on national unity and social justice on the other. A clear articulation of these scientific and empirical foundations enables us to understand why, in spite of the illusions that the riling-class (the exploiting class) periodically orchestrate and promote, the class interests of the oppressed (the horses) and the oppressors (the horse riders) are irreconcilable.

First and foremost, various specific structures of society such as the organization of society itself, social organizations and degrees of equality or inequality, who holds and controls political power, the nature and powers of law courts, are all important for understanding social classes and analyzing class relationships.

The character of laws and law enforcement agencies (the police, and the arms forces), and

For the Nigerian labour movement, its class and political allies, commitment to unity within the movement had always been an animating force and condition for effectiveness and survival



ideological institutions such as religious and educational and cultural institutions, all reflect and correspond to the material and economic foundation of society. By these material and economic foundations we mean how human needs are produced, how production is organized and who owns the means of producing them—factories, land, farms, mines financial institutions (banks, insurance companies etc.) service industries (hotels, restaurants, transport, educational institutions such as school and universities, hospitals and health centers etc. Generally, depending on the specific stages of the development of productive forces, these facilities are either collectively owned by the whole society or by individuals or small groups.

In most modern societies, the economy is categorized into two as the *public sector* or the *private sector* depending on whether the economic activities are controlled directly by the government which is the segment of the ruling class that controls the apparatuses of the state at any particular period of time. A distinction is also often made between what they call the *formal economic sector* and the *informal sector* or between/what they call *organized private sector* and the *informal sector*. Many of these distinctions and the interpretation of their relative importance are matters of political perspective and commitment. Needless to say, there are distinct working-class viewpoints on these matters. For example, regarding inter-sectoral mobility among many highly-placed and high-income employees of the public sector, the distinction between public and private sectors is spurious.

In the public sector, most people earn their living as wage workers although they are in different categories depending on how much decision-making power and power to appropriate from the resources

available to the public sectors. In the private sector, apart from self-employed people and even among them (artisans, farmers, petty traders, etc.), a large number of working people today are wage workers, i.e. they work for somebody or some organization that pay for their labour; they sell their labour power to live.

“Labour Creates Wealth” but Labouring people are poor in economies like Nigeria's

The motto of the Nigeria Labour Congress. “Labour Creates Wealth” says it all. Implicit in that motto is the question “Why is the large majority of those who labour poor? How this question is answered depends on the class and social interests and the understanding of the social and economic history by those answering the question – The Labour Class.

The summary of the working-class perspective on the matter is that poverty is the result of exploitation, i.e. that when economic activities are organized in particular ways, a class of exploiters is created it functions and reproduces itself

The summary of the working-class perspective on the matter is that poverty is the result of exploitation, i.e. that when economic activities are organized in particular ways, a class of exploiters is created it functions and reproduces itself generating and reproducing an exploited class

generating and reproducing an exploited class. These exploiters-exploited situation existed under slave-ownership societies and feudal societies. It is the essence of capitalist system into which Nigeria got coopted after the colonial conquest. In such a system investment and production is for profit. Labour is engaged if the capitalist (the so-called investor) is assured of profit. The source of investors' resource is



through accumulation assured through control of political decision-making (privatization, forceful and violent land acquisitions auctioning of public property, consultancy, commissioned agencies, etc.) and profits from investments in real estate, banking, finance, real estate etc.

In the foregoing type of situation of exploited-exploiter dynamic there is, throughout human history from slave-owning society till today, a constant struggle for justice and equality in society. This class struggle at times endangers the ruling class so much that fundamental concessions must be made by the ruling classes to the oppressed in order to avoid being overthrown and stripped of its material base. It is class struggles of various intensities, at times producing social revolutions, that won for the oppressed the right to organize trade unions, the right to vote, the right to national independence, the right to minimum wage, right to education, health and social security, the right to work and to decent working conditions, and even the right of workers to form their own political parties. *Some political philosophers actually insist that the history of all human societies is the history of class struggles.*

Many of the concessions won by the oppressed, as we mentioned immediately above, are all elements of what is referred to as social justice. Even in the interest of its own survival as a class, the ruling class spells out some of these in its party policies, electioneering campaigns and even as constitutional imperatives such as Chapter II of the Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria.

For Nigeria's working class, the agenda of social justice and national unity are closely linked and cardinal. The struggle of working class on one hand, as we shall see

For Nigeria's working class, the agenda of social justice and national unity are closely linked and cardinal

below, has always been about integral unity of the working class and the labour movement *as a working class*. On the other hand, the struggle has always been, and should always be, about unity of Nigerian people(s) across regional, ethnic-national, confessional (religious), gender, and generational boundaries. Hence, the labour clarion calls: *Solidarity forever, for the Union makes us strong!; Workers of the world, unite!*

The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) Yesterday

As hinted above, I characterize NLC "Yesterday" as the NLC from the formation of the First NLC in May 1950, to its resuscitation and forceful dissolution in 1975 by the military wing of Nigeria's ruling class. This characterization will of course take appropriate cognizance of its [i.e. NLC's] antecedents in the evolution of Nigeria's labour movement from about 1912 when trade unions started being organized as such.

We do not have time to systematically go through the history of the trade union movement in Nigeria since the formation of the first one, the Civil Service Union, in 1912. Fortunately for the Nigerian labour movement very good records of this history or at least summaries of it, are available. A very recent one in this category is Edwin Madunagu's (2016) *The Nigerian Left: Introduction to History* (Clear Lines Publications Ltd., Calabar).

In consonance with the theme of this celebration of NLC at 40, I mainstream the question of national unity and social justice into *NLC Yesterday* by first, highlighting the development of trade unions in the period; second, by examining the development of Labour movement's struggle to enhance and entrench its own internal unity; thirdly by outlining the development and problems of simultaneously building the labour movement and



generating *the political, class and nationalist consciousness* which enabled the working class to defend the freedom of the Nigerian people, win national sovereignty for Nigeria, continuously struggle for social justice, and definitively defend the unity of Nigeria's peoples against the antics of various divisive exploitative forces during the colonial and post-colonial periods.

As we noted above, the first trade union in Nigeria, the Civil Service Union was formed in 1912. The Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) and the Railway Workers' Union (RWU) were formed in 1931 and 1932 respectively. But the Trade Union Ordinance (1939) was introduced for the regulation of trade union activities. *It is of course a notorious fact of history that the exploiting class, everywhere and always, start by considering trade unions illegal until agitations force their recognition.* It is also the truth that the colonial situation had its own specific character because colonialism was maintained by force of occupation and the ideology of racism. Even after the 1939 Trade Union Ordinance, the Colliery Workers Union of the coal miners, founded in 1940, was not recognized until 1948! The British colonialists had been mining coal in Enugu since 1915!

Since the mid-1940s, Nigeria's labour movement advanced organizationally as its ranks grew numerically. As we will observe below, major trade union and political activities followed the traditions of the 1941 Great Trek and the 1941 COLA agitations of Africa Civil Service Technical Workers Union (ACTWU). Among the most important *direct* trade union activities in these general regards were the General Strike of 1945 and that of 1964. The termination of the First Republic by the January 1966 military coup and the subsequent Civil War (1967-70) demobilized the trade union movement significantly until the *Apena Declaration* of December 1975 whose thrust of re-invention of the movement was smothered by *the ruling military dictatorship that accused the*

labour leaders of running a political party.

As we intend to show below, pardon this digression, the crisis of accumulation under neocolonialism, its negative consequences for the cohesion of Nigeria's neo-colonial ruling-class and the huge price that Nigeria's working class had to pay during the divisive civil war years, is being ominously reproduced today: Five decades later!

Internal unity of Nigeria's working class had always been central to its growth and the strength of its organization even before formal trade union structures emerged. Thus, over one hundred and twenty years ago on 9 August 1897, a major workers' strike involving 3000 workers occurred in what was then known as Lagos Colony under British colonial occupation. There were many similar actions of the oppressed in various parts of what became Nigeria in 1914. These all were the foundations of the tradition of unity and resistance of today's working class in Nigeria.

Since trade unions became formal structures of industrial relations landscape in Nigeria in the late 1930s and early 1940s, the practical necessities of survival (and organizational efficiency) of the working class and the increasing deadliness of the exploitative and divisive colonial state, compelled creative initiatives for unity in the labour movement. In November 1942 the Federated Trade Union of Nigeria (FTUN) was founded.

In 1943, the Trade Union Congress of Nigeria (TUCN) was founded by the leaders of FTUN. It was in 1950, pursuant to the imperative of uniting the labour movement, among related political and nationalist tasks of the movement, that three labour centers merged to form *the First Nigeria Labour Congress* (NLC). The three centers were TUCN, NNFL (Nigeria National Federation of Labour) which was already formed in 1948 led by Imuodu,



Nduka Eze and Coker, and the Amalgamated Union of the UAC African Workers (UNAMAG).

In 1953, All Nigeria Trade Union of Nigeria Federation (ANTUF) was founded under Michael Arthokamien Omnibus Imoudu to, among other things, fight for labour's right for *Collective Bargaining*. In 1959, in the year before independence in 1960, ANTUF and NCTUN (National Council of Trade Unions of Nigeria), that was formed in 1957, merged to become TUCN (Trade Union Congress of Nigeria).

Basically, the foregoing were the trade-union and labour-center formations that, in complex ways, and varying degrees, engaged the colonial and immediate post-colonial Nigeria state in the articulation and defense of the unity of Nigeria's peoples, defense of their sovereignty and struggled for social justice and the broad social, economic and political rights of Nigeria's working people.

Many of the trade unions, their federations and labour centers, and the trade union activists as groups and individuals were directly involved in political action as trade unions and/or as part of affiliations or alliances with political parties, quasi-political formations, youth movements and social-cultural groups. The political activities of the labour movement were audacious, strategic and unabashed, thus yielding no quarter whatsoever to the ruling class as to their right or legitimacy of political activities *as a class*. It was the legitimacy of these activities that the military wing of Nigeria's ruling class abrogated in 1976. We need to cite a few specific

The political activities of the labour movement were audacious, strategic and unabashed, thus yielding no quarter whatsoever to the ruling class as to their right or legitimacy of political activities as a class

labour movement engagements since the early 1940s in regard to the bold and consistent combination of trade-union activities with political, nationalist and anti-imperialist popular engagements. It can be asserted categorically that the agitation for Nigeria's sovereignty and ultimate independence and for national unity was powered largely by the Nigerian working people in the trade union and labour movements and in the political alliances they spear-headed or helped to midwife.

As early as 1930, a *workers'* political party, Nigeria Labour Organization, was formed while the African Workers' Union, a political party was founded in 1931. By 1937, Worker Education classes were being organized in Lagos by the NYM.

On August 26, 1944, the NCNC (National Council of Nigeria and Cameroons), a political party of nationalists, was founded in a rally organized by Nigerian Union of Students (NUS); many trade unionists and over forty organization's attended the rally.

The year 1946 was a particularly momentous one in the history of Nigeria's labour movement because of the coming together of many events.

First, it was the year of the inauguration of the Zikist Movement—a *radical, nationalist, anti-imperialist, revolutionary, and socialist organization*.

Also in 1946, NEPA (Northern Elements Progressive Association), the antecedent of NEPU was founded in Kano and led by Habib Raji Abdallah who also became a member of the Zikists Movement. In this same 1946, *even religious organizations* such as the National Church of Nigeria became part and parcel of Nigeria's nationalist and anti-imperialist movement and, as Madunagu observed, “It



developed relationship with the Zikist Movement and the Labour Movement and also became formally affiliated to the NCNC". The Zikist Movement was of course affiliated with NCNC. Even whole labour centers like TUC and NNFL at different points between 1946 and 1948 were affiliated with NCNC.

In this same 1946, the NCNC organized a national tour of Nigeria to campaign against the Richard's Constitution [of Nigeria] which sought to 'regionalise' the governance of Nigeria. The nationalists saw this as divisive and separatist! We must note that this was the period of the separatists, divisive and incendiary regionalist and tribalist statements which inform, and are congruent with most of today's vocabulary of "restructuring", "self-determination", secession etc.

One consequence of the foregoing development was that Nigeria's *radical patriotic labour movement* started to part ways with politicians who started to play increasingly regionalist and tribal cards and began to build regionalist political parties on those platforms. Needless to say, the virulence of the colonial state elicited in bans (as that of the Zikists' Movement and others), took its toll on radical anti-imperialist nationalist and labour movement.

The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) Today (1978-2018).

The period under review is really what we refer to as the last *Forty Years of the Nigeria Labour Congress* or the period of the *Second NLC*—an independent initiative of the labour movement smothered and then hijacked by the agents of imperialism who have seized the Nigerian state since then. The period may be divided into two segments of unequal durations: 1978 to 1988, and

1988-2018. As we show below, the 1978-1988 segments was, to the extent that the movement struggled to re-enact militant working-class heritage in Nigeria, more creatively productive, more conscious and more formidable.

The period between 1973 and 1978 witnessed frantic efforts by the progressive segments of the labour movement to unify the labour movement in Nigeria in order to strengthen them. The military dictatorship from Yakubu Gowon to Obasanjo made equally frantic efforts to stultify the unity moves in, and to take control of, the labour movement. Decree 31 of 1973 prevented the attempted merger of the four labour centers. In December, 1975 the four labour centers merged and inaugurated a single labour center: the Nigeria Labour Congress. The General Olusegun Obasanjo-led military dictatorship orchestrated the final steps of turning the NLC into a parastatal, instigating fifth columnists inside the labour movement and using military decrees to intimidate and neutralize patriotic labour leader's like Wahab Goodluck and Michael Imoudu and to take control of the Congress. The Trade Unions (Disqualification of Certain Persons) Act 15 of 1977 and the Trade Unions (Amendment) Decree 22 of 1978 were the pivotal instruments in this regard (Adewumi, 1997); they set the general stage for the development of the progressive subversion and degeneracy in the labour movement since then.

We need to put on record, however, the achievement of the coalition of the labour movement (represented by the NLC), the Nigerian intellectuals (represented by the Academic Staff Union of Universities--ASUU), the professionals (represented especially by the Nigerian Bar Association and the Nigeria Medical Association), women (represented especially in Women in Nigeria—WIN) and the Students' Movement, which also demonstrated clearly during 1977/78 to 1998 (and especially 1978-1988)



what commitment and creative organizational effort could achieve. For, in spite of the viciousness of military dictatorship (in the mid-70s) and fascism within the 1979-1983 civilian interregnum, the aforementioned coalition of patriotic forces struggled gallantly against imperialism and its local agents.

Early in its life, the Summoned NLC produced the *Workers' Charter of Demands* which became a basis of engagement with the various tiers of post-

Early in its life, the Summoned NLC produced the Workers' Charter of Demands which became a basis of engagement with the various tiers of post-military political formations after October 1, 1979

military political formations after October 1, 1979. And the resultant May 11, 1981 General Strike for Minimum Wage was a major struggle by the NLC. In 1982, the students' movement under the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) issued *NANS Charter of Demands*. Following the Buhari-Idiagbon-Babangida coup on December 31, 1983, both the NLC and ASUU (which already became an affiliate of the NLC) issued powerful policy statements (see ASUU's *How to Save Nigeria*, 1984 and NLC, 1980; 1984; 1984a; 1986) stating the expectation of Nigerian patriots and toilers. These various organizations also engaged imperialism and its agents robustly in the NMA Strikes (1984-85), the so-called IMF Debate (1986), the Political Debate (1986), the Killing of ABU Students (May 23, 1986) and the anti-SAP uprisings and debates (almost every mid-year between 1986 and 1989). By 1988 when Babangida handed over NLC to John Holt's Ogunkoya, the Congress was almost fatally wounded. Consequently, after Ali Chiroma, the labour movement had not recovered till today.

In terms of bidding directly for state power, the labour movement had not forged any serious labour-



based party since the 1950s and the 1960s. The effort to form a Labour Party in 1989 was squandered by some of the trade unionists when they ended up in bourgeois political parties.

By the opening of the 1990s, it was the radical intellectuals, the students and some of the professionals, all scattered in NGOs, the so-called “human rights” movements, even ethnic-militia movements, and “pro-democracy” movements that led most of the anti-SAP and the anti-military struggles on the streets. With the exception of the brief spell of the involvement of the oil workers (PENGASSAN and NUPENG) in these struggles, organized labour (in NLC) avoided the anti-dictatorship struggles like a plague. It is therefore not surprising that when the dust of *administrator* control of NLC settled in 1998, Congress was handed over to some of the trade unionists all over again!

The weakness of the popular struggles in the 1990s can be accounted for largely by the complete distancing of

The weakness of the popular struggles in the 1990s can be accounted for largely by the complete distancing of organized labour from the efforts

organized labour from the efforts. This situation also deprived the popular forces of the education which popular struggles enhance among the oppressed. It partly explains, too, the central role that divisive

ethnic and confessional groupings have come to play to the detriment of pan-Nigerian solidarity in the labour movement and generally among the oppressed.

The failure or the limited achievements of popular resistance, especially in so far as it did not coalesced into a pan-Nigerian toilers-based movement, is also what enabled the remnants of the Buhari-Babangida-Abacha dictatorship to regroup and, in 1999, hand-over power to Obasanjo in what they then called *democratic dispensation* or *nascent democracy*.

The Labour Movement (since 1999) under an alleged democracy

In what ways have the conditions of working people and the masses of the Nigerian people changed for the better in the last two decades of the so-called democratic dispensation? Apart from the increasing hunger, insecurity, unemployment and general surrender to hopelessness, the constant economic demands by the NLC and the “civil society” groups—an increased minimum wage, opposition to deregulation of the down-stream sector of petroleum industry—show that the current democratic dispensation had dispensed with the welfare and future of the Nigerian people. Beyond those immediate demands of NLC and the civil society organisations, the general decay in the education and rural production sectors, in the quality of roads and environment, in power supply, health-care delivery services, public security, etc. are all dominant features of the present.

In the eight years or so (1998-2006) that followed the 1988-1998 eclipse of the NLC, the same general loss of capacity of NLC to effectively lead the labour movement remained. Ten years ago, during the celebrations of NLC@30, while acknowledging “remarkable achievement that the NLC has, in spite of the effort of the state to divide and weaken it,

maintained its organizational unity” the Anniversary lecturer, late Comrade Festus Iyayi observed, among other things that, “In spite of the record of achievement from the point of view of consistency, the history of the NLC has not been a happy one.” In that lecture, Comrade Festus Iyayi referred to three of NLC's controversial positions which have since wounded the labour movement almost fatally— the so-called “politics of registration” that consistently compromised labour's independent political [party] program, the strategic 'blink[ed]' by NLC in 2003 over Obasanjo's privatization program, and the “tacit support of the NLC “for whatever results” came out of the General Elections of that year.

While NLC led a few pickets here and there against job casualisation and fuel price increases, the twin pillars of Obasanjo's economic policies went ahead unabated. More importantly the NLC remained too weak to stop the auctioning of public assets (privatisation), the massive sack of workers in the public sector or the massive rigging of elections in 2003 and 2007! Consequently, although NLC got Obasanjo to raise minimum wage *in the public sector*, it was not able to prevent loss of jobs due to retrenchments, collapse of industries and privatisation.

We can contrast the foregoing deterioration in the condition of the masses with the unprecedented private wealth that have been accumulated by individuals and groups of the various wings of the ruling class especially among professional politicians and their friends in the legislature and executive, in the bureaucracies and parastatals and among the members of the commercial classes (especially in the stock exchange, the petroleum importing and oil-lifting rings and the banks) and the consultants and contractors. Where do they get the private resources from? Most of it is from the public treasury at different tiers of government and from the manipulation of laws



and state power as the PTDF and the privatisation democracy, public welfare and Nigeria's sovereignty. rows showed.

As for democracy itself, the dispensation has simply turned out to be a blackmail which the ruling circles have appropriated in the sustenance of private primitive accumulation and progressive dispossession of Nigerian people. By 1998, it became clear to both imperialism and its Nigerian agents in uniform and the civies that accumulation could not proceed by means of direct military dictatorship or by civilianisation of the incumbent military administration. Imperialism, through a few murders here and there and retooling the solidarity among the surviving big soldiers and their civilian friends, settled for a civilian regime that will be led by retired soldiers and their civilian friends. Media reports thereafter have shown that even Obasanjo's kinsmen (and kinswomen) who were opposed to his emergence in 1999 started negotiating with him subsequently (2003) on how to retain the South West while Obasanjo continued as Nigeria's President. And three retired generals and former Heads of State of Nigeria were reported to have gone to the 10th Anniversary of General Abacha's death to declare that Abacha did not loot any money.

As we now see, both dictatorship and its continuation by “democratic” means since May 29, 1999 have produced devastating effects on Nigeria and its peoples. However, while it was always possible to disown the military as usurpers of the peoples' power, it has not been easy or totally credible to disown an allegedly democratic regime-- nascent or mature! This is the strategic import of their politics of liberal democracy and democratisation since 1998. The ruling class started by registering only three political parties all of which had the same pedigree. By the time they were forced to register more parties, they had settled down to subversion of

To underscore the total contempt for the Nigerian people, the World Bank openly sent its agents into our key ministries and the Central Bank and the war against the people proceeded in high gear in what Obasanjo's government called *Reforms* (“The Mafia takes over” *Tell*, May 17, 2004: pp.16-21). Okonjo-Iweala (2012: pp.6-7; pp.130-131) told us how the “international community” (the World Bank, IMF, Jim Wolfensohn, Gordon Brown, Tony Blair, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, Anne Kruger, Condoleezza Rice, George Soros, and Bonos) cobbled the “mafia” together. She acknowledged they were powerful allies “to support reforms in a developing country by speaking out or backing reformers” The resulting impunity was festooned with arrogance of power and Obasanjo was reported to have insisted that by electing his government, Nigerians have surrendered their sovereignty to that government.

And what has the ruling class done with this alleged surrender of peoples' sovereignty which we call democracy?. Essentially they have used it to deepen the suffering and the servitude of the working people to dispossess the polity and to feather their own nests. In specific terms, apart from the disenfranchisement of Nigerian people in what they call elections, they have forged electoral laws (see *Insider* Vol.16, April 22, 2002); they have alienated Nigeria's patrimony through the BPE and privatisation, they have crippled the public education sector through underfunding and privatisation, they have demobilised the other social services sector (housing, healthcare even public security) through privatisation and what they call deregulation; they have subverted public morality, and they have institutionalised cynicism in public affairs.

More concretely, it is significant that Nigeria's working

As we now see, both dictatorship and its continuation by “democratic” means since May 29, 1999 have produced devastating effects on Nigeria and its peoples



people have suffered more direct and more sustained attack under post-Abacha democracy than at any other time. Every segment and every generation of working people is under siege—able-bodied workers, the youth and the aged (the pensioners and senior citizens).

From the 1950s to the close of the 1970s, the labour movement sought internal unity, national unity and social justice through, trade regular union work and political engagement including alliance with liberal and not-so-liberal parties and politicians. But from the 1950s especially, and in spite of internal splits and divisive and anti-people state actors with imperialist support, the radical socialist, patriotic core of the movement soldiered on and reproduced itself in the core trade union organisations, among the youth (and especially in the students' movement) in the peasantry, among women and among the intellectuals up till the mid-1970s.

Thus in 1976 when the armed wing of Nigeria's ruling class under the close watch of global imperialist forces renewed the criminalizing its aspiration to engage in what Mokwugo Okoye in 1986 styled "The Politics of Liberation", the movement was ready to respond appropriately and patriotically.

That was the posture of the movement in 1977 when the Nigerian ruling class armed as a military dictatorship under General Olusegun inaugurated the current NLC; bureaucratized and stripped of its tradition of political engagement and fights political affiliation that action, forty years ago, had been what had narrowed effective political intervention almost

exclusively to the money class that have also obliterated the divide between public treasury and private wealth: the so-called businessmen and women, the new rich, retired top government bureaucrats, contractors, consultants, commissioned agents, retired generals and their friends, currency and estate speculators and plain looters!

The Nigeria Labour Congress Tomorrow

The task that has confronted the NLC in the last twenty years, is how to reinstate that potential in spite of the limitation imposed by internal disabilities and external siege, the masses of working people even when they say "NLC is doing nothing", still expect the NLC to continue the struggle for unity and social justice. Again, as Comrade Festus Iyayi asserted categorically ten years ago, "In all areas, NLC has captured the imagination of the country as the defender of the common man and as the repository of the best values of

Nigerian society.... This imagination is so robust and so alive that ordinary man and woman in Nigeria, not only identify with NLC but expect it to be the answer to all their problems".

This is still where we are today. It is from here that we must rebuild the labour movement so that it can harness the potentials of organized labour and its experience of over

one century to defend national unity and labour unity, and promote and entrench social justice. It is the organization which developed these potentials and garnered this goodwill that trivial and self-serving internal bickering and sustained ruling-class machinations have been trying to dismantle in the last thirty years!

The more recent documents and activities of the NLC



continue to be faithful to the ideological foundations of and principles that forged NLC's public image. Eleven years ago, the 2007 NLC Policy Document of February 7, 2007 stated clearly as follows:

The crisis is essentially a product of the domination of Nigeria by global capitalism with its ideology of the rule of market forces, liberalisation, globalisation and the rule of international finance institutions. Successive Nigerian regimes, including the present [2007] civilian government, have subscribed to this ideology.

Congress [NLC] envisions a people-driven people-centered and people-owned process of economic management pursued through an activist developmental and popularly controlled state.

We believe that the trade union movement is best placed to provide leadership in building a just society and sustainable democracy in Nigeria.

We shall work towards a planned and performing

We envision an economy founded on twin-pillars of state led industrialisation and agricultural development within the context of wholistic (sic) national development plan

Economy

We want to see an end to industrial backwardness, mass poverty, illiteracy, the collapse of health and

social services and institutions, foreign economic dependency, gross exploitation of labour and political dictatorship and instability.

We envision an economy founded on twin-pillars of state led industrialisation and agricultural development within the context of wholistic (sic) national development plan.

An objective appraisal of organised labour in Nigeria reveals [that]: With a population of over 110 million the wage labour force in the formal sector which is rapidly expanding is largely not unionised. Some indigenous employers and some foreigners are

hostile towards unions. The existing trade union law prohibit some segments of civil employees from unionisation.

NLC will work towards ensuring that:

All un-unionised workers in the formal and informal sectors are unionised.....Existinglabour legislation, which undermine voluntarism, rights of workers, unions and trade union independence are repealed.

Earlier in this decade, i.e. between 2010 and 2013, the Education Department at the NLC Headquarters carried out extensive work on NLC's Agenda for National Development while Congress also produced NLC Agenda for Economic Revival in 2015.

At the last May Day symposium on April 29 2017, congress deliberated extensively on “Labour Relations in Economic Recession: An appraisal”. The various contributions showed clearly that as in 1975, 1982, 1991 and since 2009, the bogey of “economic recession”, the periodic and regular crisis of crisis of capitalist economic order, become an excuse usual for the Nigerian ruling class to abandon its responsibilities to the working people, pile more burdens on them, privatize public assets, bail out capitalist enterprises, refuse to pay salaries, but continue to enlarge their class capacity for legendary p r i v a t e accumulation.

On 23rd August 2017, Congress organized a N a t i o n a l Colloquium with the theme, “The

On 23rd August 2017, Congress organized a National Colloquium with the theme, “The Labour Movement and the Future of National Unity

Labour Movement and the Future of National Unity: What Role for Restructuring” in response to the debate instigated by various segments of Nigeria's ruling elite. In this regard, I know that there was a



committee set up by Congress to produce a comprehensive position reflecting working class aspiration on restructuring and rejecting the divisive diversions of the restructuring debate as popularized by the ruling class and their media.

As the NLC and the Nigerian labour movement struggles to recover from both internally-generated and externally-inflicted wounds of the last thirty years (i.e. 1988 to 2018), the Nigerian ruling class, backed to the hilt by imperialism, had achieved three strategic advantages for itself. Firstly, it has stripped Nigeria of strategic public assets and resources and made laws for the public to continue public subsidy on these privatized assets: ERGP and the sustained fraud of private-sector-led economy are strategic continuation of the neocolonisation program that the military imposed since 1978!

Secondly, the Nigerian ruling class has monopolized the political and ideology space with the power which the economic and wealth power seized by it had conferred. The personnel of that political power has maintained and reproduced itself through its preoccupation with private and primitive accumulation. The contradictions of that preoccupation have also created considerable intro-class instability and violence. In the third place, the manipulation of ethnic-nationalist and religious-cultural antipathies has been strategic in the maintenance of its class hegemony and in the constant grouping and regrouping in the horse-trading alliances they call political parties.

Let me call your kind attention to the growing consolidation of the programme of the ruling class to deepen the economic and social crisis of Nigeria for ruling class advantage of dividing Nigeria's working people and dominating them. From on-line news reports, the ruling party's "restructuring" proposal of El-Rufai Committee has come out with an agenda that seems have collated, aligned and homogenized the views of the various segments of Nigeria's ruling class. The Committee had proposed, among other things, resource control, decentralization of police and prisons services, decentralization of Labour and wage matters etc. Suffice it to say these are proposals that ignore Nigeria's experience with state electoral commissions, abuse of local government and native-



authority police, inter-communal violence on land matters, water ways, etc.!

But for a ruling-class that has looted public assets and auctioned other assets it could not loot to itself and their friends at home and abroad, the grandiose myopic

project of what they call "restructuring" figures.

Labour's Agenda for Tomorrow

Having gone through the details of the events of the past and their effects on the present, we are persuaded that our agenda for tomorrow are evident from the deterioration of the conditions of Nigeria's working-class are entrenching the deterioration. Two elements of the agenda for tomorrow are evident. First we must reinstate working-class ideology through practical struggle to defend working-class interests. We must back many of the organizational and material advantages which the working classes have lost in the

last thirty years. We must renew our commitments to working class ideology of socialism that is state-led, nationalist and self-reliant planned economic development. The achievements of the labour movement in the past, including the resounding and robust interventions of the NLC in the 1970s and 1980s, during the IMF loan and Political debates of 1985/1986, were all powered by working-class ideology.

The second, element of the agenda for tomorrow is the question of organization. There are two legs to this question of organization.

Firstly, the trade union movement must get out of the mode in which the state councils are so isolated from the national headquarters of NLC and from one-another. In relation to this problem, the complete collapses of our efforts of the early 1980s towards establish virile Local Government chapters of the NLC have shown how far backward our movement had done! i have constantly complained about these degeneracies in the NLC rain and Harmattan Schools since the Jos school of 2010 or so!

The second leg of the organization element of the agenda is the continuing urgency of a political platform of the labour movement. The task of the platform will be to give political and ideological support to the trade union movement. While the goal of the political platform may include electoral politics, its most important function today is not necessarily about electoral politics, but the immediate goal is to take Nigeria back from imperialists and their local agents and in doing so, intensify and deepen class-consciousness and solidarity among the working class across the length and breadth of Nigeria.

All the foregoing Agenda for tomorrow are best

pursued simultaneously. A real test of whether the Nigeria Labour Congress will be able to reinstate the Labour movement's heritage of the mid-1980s will be whether Congress can, and will spearhead the implementation of the Agenda for tomorrow outlined above.

A Basic Manifesto for the NLC Agenda for Tomorrow

As a general foundation for canvassing Nigerian Labour Movement's agenda for tomorrow, I commend the following Seven-point “manifesto” for adoption, necessary enrichment and expansion towards an immediate, nation-wide and mass-based campaign.

Nigerian Working Class Manifesto for true Independence of Nigeria: Seven-Point Agenda for National Unity, Economic Restructuring and Social Justice.

1. We must wage a new patriotic struggle for political and economic independence of Nigeria from the **two vultures**. Nigeria's working people must take their country back by declaring that the masses, not a few rich and their foreign masters, own Nigeria.
2. Our movement must insist that to wipe out poverty, inequality, illiteracy, violence and crimes, **Nigeria's economy needs planning and with market mechanisms controlled by the interests of the masses of Nigeria's working people.**
3. We insist that to enable planning, maximise use of our human and material resources and stop wastes, public ownership and control of the commanding heights of the economy in production, distribution and exchange had become necessary; education, health, water supply, housing and environmental protection



must also be principally in the public sector.

4. All the IMF- and World Bank-inspired policies of reduction of the public sector, devaluation of the Naira, unending debt slavery, liberalisation of trade, removal of subsidies, sale and privatisation of public assets, etc. must be reversed immediately. Education, public health and agriculture must receive public subsidies as a priority.
5. We insist that corruption is the product of the ideology of capitalist accumulation of private-sector-led economies. We see Chief Executives in handcuffs in USA and other capitalist countries almost every day; that has not reduced corruption there. Corruption will not disappear because a few scape-goats are disgraced or imprisoned. Capitalism produces and reproduces corruption because the rich also fund the ruling-class political parties. There are always members of the ruling circles that cannot be punished.
6. We insist that only socialist economic planning arising from public control of the economy can cure an economy of the disease of periodic changes from “prosperity” to “recessions”; there is no Policy Document cure for this disease under the so-called “market-forces” economies.
7. All of Nigeria's public assets that were looted through what they call **privatisation, concessioning, PPP**, etc. must be taken back from the looters. Since no political party told Nigerians that public properties and assets would be sold or auctioned, all public officers and political office holders who do not accept a people-oriented organisation of the Nigerian economy as stated in Chapter II of Nigeria's Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria must resign immediately.



NEED FOR INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES AS NIGERIA'S OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Dr. Aboderin Shonibare O. A

— LASU —

It has been observed that English Language is already overstaying its welcome in Nigeria as our lingua franca. This is because studies show that the economic and technological advancement of developing countries stem from their steadfast, consistent and compulsory usage of their mother tongues. Examples abound in the case of Japan or China. The Nigerian economy, and overall development dwindles yearly and if the advancement of the above mentioned countries has anything to do with the way they use and showcase their indigenous languages, then, Nigeria must, as a matter of urgency, take a cue from that.

The style in developing countries such as those mentioned above and in other advanced countries like the US and the United Kingdom is that, immigrants are forced to learn their own home language before studying or even securing a stay for any business there. Discountenancing our various mother tongues does more harm than good to Nigerians.

Nigeria, has not only stayed with using English as her lingua franca, some government functionaries also publicize the teaching of Chinese (Mandarin) in schools not minding what damage that can also cause to our development as a nation. A former governor of a state in Nigeria, chose to promote a foreign language over an indigenous language in his state, thereby granting the Chinese in his state

the opportunity to do business and engage in major contracts and promotion of Mandarin Language. This kind of decision makes us Nigerians to lose at both ends.

They have come in to take our money, and rather than us forcing them to learn our indigenous languages dictated by the environment they have come into as would have been the case if we had travelled to their own country, but here we are forced to learn their language instead. The case of a stakeholder advocating, or worse still, compelling the Nigerian child to learn Mandarin is a deviation from the norm.

However, the current Lagos State Governor has moved towards the desired goal through the current Indigenous Language Bill passed into law recently, which advocates the use of an indigenous language, i.e. the language of Lagos

State's immediate environment and in this instance, Yoruba Language, to teach in the primary and secondary schools and to be included in the curriculum of all educational institutions in Lagos State.

This is a positive move towards the development and preservation of a major Nigerian Language the Yoruba in Lagos State. This policy should be extended to other major Nigerian Languages in Nigeria. This stance will eventually aid the development of Nigeria. The positive dreams we have about Nigeria will be actualized faster based on the mother tongue or first language. This stunted growth and development being experienced by Nigeria will take a 360° turn for the good of all. This is an enviable weapon

The positive dreams we have about Nigeria will be actualized faster based on the mother tongue or first language



Problems Facing University Education and its Products

Excerpt from I.E. ADAMU's article

(Institute of Education, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria)

Nigeria today is passing through a lot of changes in virtually every field of her citizens' endeavour. These changes are no doubt, more on economic development. We are in a period of business and industrial changes using new methods and techniques. There is an increased search for skilled workers and specialists in various fields. University education has a role to play with regards to long range unemployment of university products. There is a declining job market for university products that lack skills or ability to utilize the knowledge acquired from the university. Many Nigerians cannot ascertain where the problems of university products lie, is it that the lecturers transmit impracticable education from the colonial masters or is it that lecturers themselves are not capable of imparting functional skills. It is common for a holder of B.Sc. Degree, (Mechanical Engineering) to tow his broken down vehicle to an illiterate road side mechanic for repairs. B.Sc Agriculture graduates are known not to be able to operate a tractor or any other agricultural equipment and holders of B.Sc computer science who cannot type and print their application letters abound. There is also the tendency of well to do Nigerians to travel overseas for mere medical checkups in spite of our numerous medical personnel in the country. These occurrences are real and mind boggling. The curriculum aims at the total educational development of the individual through the acquisition of skills, knowledge and attitudes while the syllabus is purely examination focused and hence, contains only the content that will enable students to achieve academic excellence. The aspect that needs to be looked at closely is the content of the curriculum studies and the acquisition of specific knowledge, skills and attitudes. If we compare the curriculum in engineering in a Nigerian University with what obtains in a University in Ghana, the content will most likely be the same. The curricula of universally accepted courses or programmes in Nigeria are not in any way inferior to any that may be obtained in countries with similar courses. There may be environmental and cultural differences here and there but the basics are essentially the same. The point is that if standards are to be measured by the curriculum content of academic programmes of Nigerian universities, the quality measured will be

The aspect that needs to be looked at closely is the content of the curriculum studies and the acquisition of specific knowledge, skills and attitudes

similar to those found elsewhere in similar programmes. The problem may be lack of delivering and clear translation of the content to the understanding of the students. Lecturers need to meet the standards clearly stated in the National Policy on Education (2004). The policy prescribes that all teachers in educational institutions, including universities, should be professionally trained. According to Ivowi (1999) in Baikie (2006), the import of this provision is to give lecturers competence in their respective subject matter, pedagogy-exposure, and experience in principle and practice of education, skill processes, resourcefulness, behaviour motivation and finally evaluation of self. With regards to the above policy requirements, lecturers are not trained. Majority of lecturers argue that they have been in the university for many years lecturing so they do not need to obtain teacher training certificate to lecture. Nigerian universities present problems which are summarized as follows: Universities admit students with diverse educational background and this leads to students studying courses for which they have no aptitude and are therefore exposed to learning material for which they are ill-prepared to assimilate. Universities are faced with the problems of facilities and under funding. A large number of students have to use limited classrooms, hostels, and technologies. Universities produce large numbers of graduates, and all of whom expect to join the labour force. According to JAMB figures for 2012, Nigeria has one hundred and eight Universities. The existence of these implies that there is a large production of young men and women who are willing and ready to work. However, some employers in the country now insist on the acquisition of second - class upper degree as a prerequisite for employment, while others require years of working experience (Sun New, 2004). Globally, the public sector is under intense pressure to reposition its operations to become relevant in this ever changing world. It is thus necessary for both developed and non developed countries to search for result-oriented ways of undertaking, organizing and managing public services and ultimately, redefining the role of modern states. The new paradigm advocates "the application of private sector management practices into the public sector, strengthening the prerogatives of managers, measuring performance, increasing competitiveness and cost cutting". The traditional role of the state as the primary employer of labour, is not plausible as public



sector management is now concerned with concepts such as “down sizing” “right sizing” and “contracting”. This development has practically heightened the state of insecurity, distrust and even discontent among a large number of university products who seek public employment. Teaching itself involves the process of imparting knowledge to an individual with a view of creating permanent useful changes in the individual. This involves prudence, skill; organizational acumen, effectiveness and proficiency in language. The effectiveness of language is pertinent because communication in the universities is pertinent whether from teachers to students or students to students. Poor command of language is a factor militating against university education because their products do not care to learn correct pronunciation, syntax and semantics of the language. It is obviously difficult for a graduate who has poor command of English language to pass down a message. According to a recent World Bank study, employers complain that the quality of university products especially their communication skills have fallen continually for two decades (Boltag, 2002). New corrupt strategies are being devised. Peter Eigens, the chairman of transparency international (TI) observes that there is no end in sight to the misuse of power by those in public office and corruption levels are perceived to

be as high as ever in both developed and developing nations (Deleone and Green, 2004). Thus, corruption is clearly seen when it comes to employment. Adedokun (2003) captures the situation by saying that appointments into various establishments may be influenced through corrupt practices. Factors that are taken into consideration include ethnicity, god-fatherism etc. No matter how brilliant the performance of a candidate may be during an interview, he/she may not be appointed while someone with low performance is appointed. Therefore, most university products go through aptitude tests and interviews whose outcomes are hardly known. Due to these facts poverty and unemployment have reached embarrassing levels and the lack of employment opportunities for young graduates has led to frustration, insecurity and uncertainty about the future. The lack of employment opportunities for graduates is a great loss to the society in view of the amount of resources that had been invested by parents and government and the consumption demands which the unemployed graduates make on the economy. Therefore, the question now is to what extent will university education in Nigeria help in eradicating unemployment in the country and enhance economic development of graduates and citizenry through entrepreneurship education.

merely posted by ibomforum@yahoo.com



THE BRETTON WOOD INSTITUTIONS' STRATEGIES AND THE FATE OF DEVELOPING NATIONS

Des Wilson

Nigeria is one nation in the world that appears to defy standard economic and political rule books both in its sovereignty, arrangements and enslavement of its citizens. In many instances, it is the global policemen midwived by international organizations and corporate institutions that sometimes remind the economic and political rulers of the need to be humane in their actions against their people. Such act of benevolence often endears these external institutions to the ordinary folks who periodically reminisce on the good old days' of colonialism.

The very source of Nigeria's loss of its humanity is the mindless acts by successive governments to privatise the resources of the country including its soul, and adopting the industrialized world's secret weapon of modern-day slavery and subjugation – globalization. The sad thing to note is that Nigeria prides itself with being part of the club of exploiters running the economies of different 'developing' countries when it is a prime victim of international conspiracies.

Globalization has been widely touted by apologists for western economic imperialism as the magic wand to lift the rest of the world into a common market. Fortunately, for us, we now have a discordant note from the leader of this army of ravaging economic hitmen unleashed on the rest of the world. In the Trump world, this only masntia is: 'America, America and America', Trump's 'America first' policy is threatening the possible dismantling of the western hegemony over the less developed economies.

We have always known globalization to be a grand scheme which employs bribery, a stranglehold on debt repayment, and the imposition of a Structural Adjustment Programme (by various names), which pressures Central Bankers to seek currency devaluation, cut in social funding, and which introduces trade liberalisation which favours the elite nations, undertakes privatization through IMF/World Bank economists who coerce or force on the rulership to envelop one of their own man or women in the Ministry of Finance of these debtor nations.

As John Perkins, the forthright former CIA operative has stated, the IMF and World Bank are two external institutions which have been largely responsible for the increased poverty in poor countries. This can be seen in the entrapment of rulers in these poor countries where the IMF/World Bank projects have only achieved at best 40-45 percent success. With mounting debts, the rulers are blackmailed into accepting loans which further opens

up their countries to exploitation by the rich countries. When such rulers refuse to cooperate because they have a sense of national history, the biggest cat organizes a coup, civil unrests, assassinations, poisoning, plane crashes, or any action including militancy, terrorism and even civil war to ensure such leaders do not survive.

Given the seeming lack of a liberating educational system and the paucity of good ideological foundation, there are usually pockets of malcontents and armies of unemployed ready and willing to join forces with foreign agencies including multinational companies to undo their country. Added to these, is the mindless corruption in these countries, which often helps to fuel the discontent.

Everyone knows that the World Bank is a US bank because its financial base is built on US resources. The US is responsible for the bulk of its funds. And the world, in the words of John Perkins, the author of the highly visceral revelatory account of the insidious activities of the American CIA, 'the world is a college of corporations' and I say of businesses, fake and extremely corrupt business moguls and fiendish politicians who know of nothing else but money. It is a world of free market for the so-called free trader. What is a free world when the poor cannot shop in it? It is also a world of conditionalities whereby all disadvantaged nations have to mortgage their future to please the barons in Wall Street, London and Paris Clubs.

Clearly, the world's resources are being taken over by a financial cult run by a handful of heartless economic troubadours who have connived to bring the large segment of humanity on their knees while feeding on their greed. Ironically, while their resources swell to bursting limits they have inadvertently fueled a new sport in Latin America, the Middle East, North Africa, West Africa and, to some extent, planted pockets of disorder and political confusion all over the centres of our new civilization.

Sadly, in all these spates of confusion, and deliberate suppression of growth in disadvantaged parts of the world, few fail to reflect on the social and political counter-indicators of mindless capitalism and globalization. The champions of these acts of modern slavery do not seem to realize or perhaps pretend not to know that these many years of ghoulish economic undermining acts and subtle deprivations along with brutal breaches of social, economic and political rights have been the foundation for today's world wide reign of terror.

Even in Nigeria, an eminent member of the family of predatory capitalists, (their version is what can be aptly described as primitive capitalism) for, unlike its western counterpart, the Nigerian capitalist



is a hoarder of valueless capital. The Nigerian capitalist warefarers do not really understand the working of capitalism which they claim to be their philosophy. Perhaps, every Nigerian knows that the rulership ring which has been in control of the resources of the country since independence has remained the same whether during civilian or military regimes. The circle has not changed in spite of the demands by some vociferous younger generation like the recent 'Not Too Young to Rule' group, (some of whom don't know they are lazy), social democrats and committed academics.

Nigeria, however, does not seem to be bothered by the gloomy picture that has enveloped them. They are largely consumed by the atavistic passions of ethnicity, religion and sometimes language and region. The muffled cries of the younger generation who lived at independence is beckoning on the nation to change the system from the roiling and putrid politics of the times to a humane and just nation.

Again, this year, our reckless ravaging of our environment has led us to a new weather phenomenon. The rains began early in February as the watering of the grounds against the harmattan dust. No one was in doubt then that this was the

usual early rains of the year to prepare the grounds for the planting season. Our predictions have been largely off the mark because ever since, it has been heavy rains almost everyday. No one is sure how long this will last. There is the palpating fear that the sudden ceasure of rainfall could lead to crop failure as we have

no coordinated system of irrigation of farmlands, and further aggravation of the ongoing war between herders and farmers. Even as I write, large areas in the northern part of the county have as yet not experienced a drop of rain.

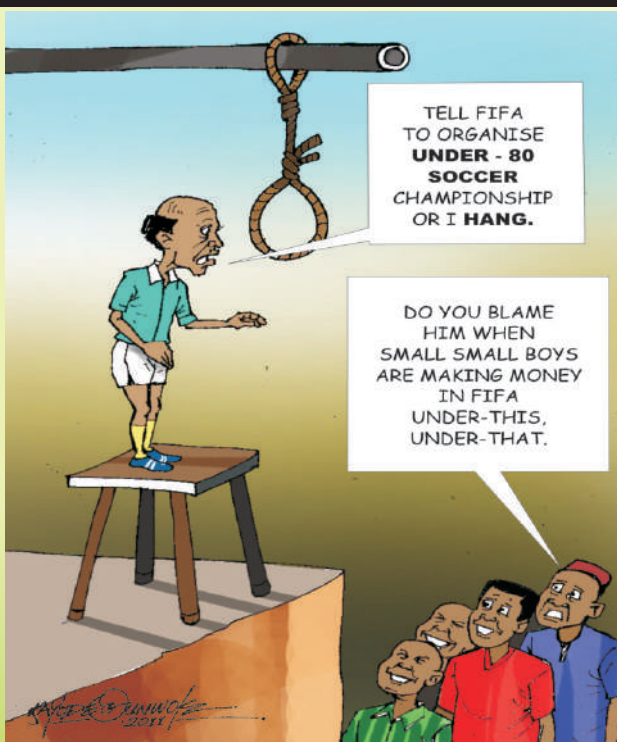
In the Northern and Southern poles, as the glaciers are melting, swelling the oceans and rulers, floods are overtaking hitherto safe areas. We have become blind to our sense of survival and the world is at risk of

implosion rather than of the fear of Armageddon or what Christians call end times'.

In the end, our world seems to be at risk of being run over by the college of corporations with its network of kleptocracy parading as democracy. Nigeria is in this ring and it is in no position to change anything until it has gone to school to secure a sense of justice, equity, fair play and true God. But before then, we are in a corporatocracy!

Nigeria, however, does not seem to be bothered by the gloomy picture that has enveloped them. They are largely consumed by the atavistic passions of ethnicity, religion

Humour



CAMPUS CORRUPTION: A Bird's eye view

S.S. Noma

Department of Soil Science & Agric. Engineering
Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto

Although corruption in its various forms and ramifications have entered all nooks and crannies of Nigeria and beyond, many still believe rightly or wrongly that universities are not terribly bedeviled by corruption. This for instance has led to the assumption that the only likely place of getting reliably uncorrupt individuals for some sensitive assignments, for example as election officials (Supervisors, Returning Officers etc.) is in the universities. Be that as it may, happenings across campuses in Nigeria have tended to disprove this assertion.

For example the report by Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP), early this year hinted that many federal universities are involved in unethical behaviours that can be tagged as corruption ranging from unfair allocation of grades, contract inflation, truncation of staff salaries on pay roll, illegal recruitment of staff including that of unqualified staff, certificate racketeering, examination malpractices,

sexual harassment, plagiarism and many more.

The practice of this type of corruption that may not attract the EFCC, varies from campus to campus and from individual to individual across the length and breadth of this country. If one is to write a book on this menace only God knows how many volumes that book will contain. This write-up intends to briefly mention some the corrupt practices witnessed in some of our campuses and the perpetrators of such acts. One may be right to say that there is no corruption free university in Nigeria; while agreeing that the menace varies from university to university or even discipline to discipline within a particular campus.

The table below gives an example of some corrupt activities and those involved in such acts in some universities in Nigeria:

S/No.	Type of corruption	Category of person(S) involved
1.	Admissions scandals	University staff involved in admission and candidates requiring admission
2.	Sex for grades and monetary inducement	Lecturers, result uploading personnel and students
3.	Certificate racketeering	Administration staff, and students
4.	Examination malpractice	Leakage of examination question aided by lecturers and/or computer operators and typists with students



5.	Sexual harassment	Lecturers and students
6.	Victimization of students	Lecturers
7.	Plagiarism	Lecturers and students
8.	Alteration of results	Lecturers, result uploading personnel and students
9.	Promotion scandals	Vice-chancellors, administrative staff and lecturers
10.	Ghost workers	Vice-chancellors and other administrative staff
11.	NYSC mobilization scandals	Administrative Staff and potential graduates
12.	Diversion of university funds	Vice-Chancellors, Bursars and other principal officers of the university
13.	Embezzlement of funds	University Management and other different categories of staff
14.	Discrimination in hostel	Deans of student affairs, Hall Masters

According to **Torulagha**, “It is time for the anti-corruption war to be extended to the educational sector. The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and other corruption fighting agencies should focus their investigative tentacles on educational institutions and compel those who have questions to answer to explain what happened under their administrative supervision of various educational institutions. It is not possible to wipe out corruption while educational institutions are allowed to cultivate corrupting and immoral behaviors”.

The consequences of the wide-spread corruption in our campuses culminates to lowering of standards of the graduates on the one hand as well as decay in resources at the disposal of such campuses. The

earlier the government through its concerned agencies pay attention to campus corruption the better for the already decaying educational system.

References

Priye S. Torulagha, The Corrosive Effect of Corruption on Nigerian Educational System.
<http://www.gamji.com/article6000/news7987.htm>
 accessed on 20/04/2018

Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) (2018). How federal universities are covering up corruption, sexual harassment.
www.vanguardngr.com/2018/02/federal-universities-covering-corruption-sexual-harassment-serap/
 accessed on 12/04/2018.



THE CHANGE WE NEED

Dr. Oshenga Abang
University of Calabar, Calabar

Nigeria as a nation is heavily endowed with human and natural resources. And Nigerians have attained great heights and are excelling in their chosen professions. Naturally, the nation is blessed with a landmass enriched by minerals that have been explored and exploited.

A few decades ago, the leadership of our great nation informed the global community that the problem of Nigeria was not that of sufficiency, but the capacity, perhaps the political will, then, to deploy this abundance into sustainable growth and development in terms of infrastructural facilities.

Although education in terms of preference has enjoyed a pride of place with the establishment of second and third generation universities, polytechnics, institutes of technology, and several colleges of education; the initiative then, as it is today, has never been a problem, but their maintenance and in millennial terms, their sustainability has been, and may remain the problem. There are changes but their speed is that of a snail. Today, Nigeria is a proud owner of over 250 universities and polytechnics jointly owned by the Federal and State governments and private individuals and organizations. But most of these institutions, to say the least, are nothing more than “glorified secondary schools” lacking in most infrastructural facilities and personal needed in tertiary education.

The few institutions – first generation and some second and third generation Universities –with visionary leadership and dogged determination to secure a ranking in the global index of university ranking are suffering from educational constipation and visible symptoms of malnutrition in terms of funding and grants for research, teaching and other services. Here, the process is still analogue not digitalized. Obviously, the rapid expansion in the nation's tertiary institutions seems to have failed to deliver the resources needed for growth and development let alone accommodate the increasing demand of digital processes in these institutions.

Indeed, for a country with over 180 million people, out of which about 62% of them are young people between 22-25 years of age, with ambitious and restless spirit for growth in the digital age, the budgetary projections for human capacity development is grossly inadequate when compared to the United States of America with about 5,000 tertiary institutions, and a population of about 319 million people.

At present Nigeria has provisions for only 600,000 students who are studying in severe austere conditions – no electricity and water supply, poor library facilities with low index in terms of global ranking. The change indeed is too slow. This is where functionaries in our tertiary institution should and ought to collectively work as a team in the bargaining processes for improved conditions of services, and in the provision of basic facilities for teaching, learning and research.

Perhaps it will not be out of place for the Academic Staff Union of Universities to lead in the “open-ended discourse” on the funding of university education in Nigeria. Such discussions and negotiations should explore ways in which severe cuts in the funding of tertiary education should be reviewed if only to redress the worrisome issues of incessant strike actions by academic and non-academic staff when provoked.

There is indeed, no denying the fact that our “Ivory Towers” are gradually and consistently losing the honour and prestige hitherto enjoyed by them. From frequent increases in tuition fees to the deterioration of basic facilities and the near absence of scholarship, tertiary education is now living in its past glory.

The question may be asked, is this the change we anticipated or we are clamouring for? There was a time when educational policies were anchored in the philosophy of “Every child needs a teacher and every child that is in school needs to be taught by a qualified teacher”. Has this been achieved? The answer to many is NO.

Outside the provision of basic facilities, universities in Nigeria today are suffering from a dearth of academic staff, a situation that has necessitated the approval of adjunct lectureship



appointments even within the same university. With a large population of students at the undergraduate level, the staff strength in our Universities today is less than 200,000, a situation that makes it difficult if not impossible for academic staff to vigorously teach and research, let alone effectively supervise students at the graduate level.

Against this backdrop therefore, the stand taken by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) on funding, for research and development is both timely and commendable. This is because adequate funding does not only seek to achieve as well as effectively implement the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organizations (UNESCO) guidelines on education, but such funding will, to a greater extent, inject new blood into the fast declining productive capacities in our education system.

Besides, it will improve on both the quantity and quality of education to meet international best practices Nigeria, many observers believe, is now lying prostrate due largely to some intervening factors, some of which include the fact that her institutions aren't flawed fundamentally to the extent that the nation has more 'strong' men, including Vice-Chancellors instead of strong institutions.

Our universities now have powerful Vice-Chancellors; who twist lecturers' hands to respond to their egos and whims, a situation that

is gradually leading to the politicisation of the academia, and in some cases, avoidable challenges against the administration. Next to this, our unions seem to have weak institutional arrangements with weak regulatory mechanisms to superintend over them. This has also created a situation where it is always difficult to adequately mobilize union members to participate in meaningful, and rewarding negotiations with their employers – Government and University Managements.

The truth is that, many of the leadership flaws in ASUU and other NLC – affiliate unions is that the formulation and operations of policies especially as these concern the calling out of ASUU members on strike and their premature suspensions has left much to be desired.

The key to all human progress is the strength of its institutions. We desire a change that impacts positively on the union and its members: We need a negotiation that can bring about the restoration of members full salary, earned academic allowances, grants for research and a conducive environment for teaching, learning and research. **That is the change we need.**

News Tit Bits

The Vatican City has the highest crime rate in the world! With a population of around 500 people and a little over one crime a day, the Vatican crime rate is above 100 per cent, per capita.

Although the fact is shocking it should be remembered that the Vatican is about one square mile in size, and has nearly 20 million visitors annually.

Most of the crimes are pick pocketing, purse snatching and other petty offences committed by outsiders.

This news could be cold comfort to cities like New York and Lagos!

Culled from catholic.org on 5-4-2018

10 very interesting facts about the catholic church you probably didn't know!



WHO WILL SAVE NIGERIAN EDUCATION?

— Biodun Ogunyemi —

At The Platform Lecture in Lagos in October 2017, Roman Oseghale, alluded to a 2014 report of Guardian UK to make the point that only South Africa and Egypt among African countries could attract international students because of the huge investment they make in education; with the prospects of high returns for their respective national economies. According to him, "If we choose not to compare Nigeria to Mighty United States and Great Britain, one thing is certain from top 20 countries that attract foreign students, they all invest massively in education. Coming to Africa, the South African government has demonstrated the same model of investment in their economy, government's total expenditure for 2016 is R1.46 trillion (US\$106 billion), and 20% is to be invested in education, that is US\$21.2 billion, and has always averaged between 19% to 20% annually. The Egyptian Government Expenditure in 2014 was EGP105.3 (US\$12 billion) from an EGP790 billion (US\$90) budget, representing 13.3% of the budget".

When compared to countries like South Africa, Egypt or Ghana, it is obvious why Nigeria's public educational system has remained in a comatose state in the last two decades or so. Between 2010 and 2018, the highest allocation to education in annual budgets of the Federal Government was in 2015 with 10.78%. More specifically, the trend has been on a continuous slide for four years running; moving from 10.78% to 7.92%, 7.40% to 7.04% in 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 respectively. However, the reverse appears to be the case in the other three African countries. The UNICEF's estimates indicate that, in the year 2017/2018, South Africa's budget "for school children remains at 17% of total government spending." In Ghana, the education expenditure, as a percentage of GDP hovered around 6-8% between 2011 and 2016, while education expenditure as a percentage of government expenditure was around 22% -27%. Indeed, allocation to education in the Ghanaian budget "increased by 11% from GH¢ 8.33 billion in 2017 to GH¢ 9.26 billion in 2018".

Federal allocations to education are no doubt paltry, but Nigeria's state governments are worse culprits. Nothing illustrates this better than the lukewarm and lackadaisical dispositions of governors towards the implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Act of 2004. The Act provides for counterpart funding of the nine-year compulsory and free (primary and junior secondary) education. But many governors would give the lame excuse of dwindling monthly allocations from the

Federation Account for their failure to provide the 50% matching grant to enable them access the UBE allocations to their States. Rather, they insist on the funds being released to them unconditionally! Sadly, some States hitherto reputed for history of universal education are among the lead defaulters; with their



unaccessed UBEC funds accumulating for upward of three years.

The net result is the shaky foundation Nigeria's federal and state governments are laying for the development of children of the poor. Perhaps the editorial comment of the Vanguard newspaper of November 23, 2017 sums it better: "It is a major symptom of the rot in the quality of leadership in the country that many states have failed to provide the counterpart

Federal allocations to education are no doubt paltry, but Nigeria's state governments are worse culprits. Nothing illustrates this better than the lukewarm and lackadaisical dispositions of governors towards the implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Act of 2004

funds required to collect their shares of the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) funds. It has been established that out of the N35.2 billion set aside by the Federal Government to fund basic education in the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) (in 2017), only 19 states and the FCT have claimed their N19 billion share, leaving N16.2 unclaimed by

the rest 17 states...All over the country, school infrastructure are in decay. The teaching profession has been degraded to the point where many teachers are worse than illiterate due to corruption and lack of training to upgrade their knowledge. Nigeria has the highest number of out-of-school children in the world."

It is clear from all this is that governments in

Nigeria no longer see public education as a priority issue. Unlike in the 1960s and 1970s, no child of politically exposed Nigerians - starting from the area council level to the federal - is likely to be found in any of the abandoned public primary or secondary schools. Again, what do they stand to gain? Fixing public schools by releasing the UBEC counterpart funds would deny these high-and-mighty a chunk of what comes back to them from phantom contracts for which they have an insatiable appetite. In addition, it is now a matter of status symbol for the novae riche to boastfully parade the number of their children attending primary and secondary schools abroad! Those upcoming members of this league of sojourners in Britain or America are, for a start, turning to the western and southern coasts of Africa in search of quality education.

It is then no surprise that a huge slice of the country's hard-earned foreign currencies currently goes into paying tuition fees and sustenance allowances for Nigerians schooling in Europe, America and other parts of Africa to the detriment of the Nigeria's public educational system. It was estimated in 2016 that as much as 15 per cent of the foreign exchange allocation or about US\$20 bn by the Central Bank of Nigeria went into paying school fees abroad. This amounts to between N1.5tr - N1.8tr annually, depending on the ex-change rate. Ghana, which is the new-found destination for the not-too-rich, makes as much as US\$1 bn (over N300 bn) out our children and youth attending their educational institutions. This is well in excess of the 2018 budgets for three states - Yobe (N92.2bn), Ekiti (N96.0bn) and Taraba (96.5 bn) - put together. Apart from the humongous fees paid by individual families for educating their children in South Africa, several billions of Nigeria's foreign currencies also go into training Nigerian academics for higher degrees with grants from intervention agencies like the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) and Petroleum Technology Development Fund (PTDF) in South Africa.

It must be stressed, however, that not all the quests for foreign education are ignited by the burning desire for quality education. Writing under "The madness for foreign education", an Editorial of the Daily Trust puts the picture in a clearer perspective: "The painful aspect of it is that Nigerian students even go to study in countries that Nigeria assists with teachers under the Technical Aid Corps scheme. While Nigerian kids once went essentially to UK, USA and Russia, Nigerian students in thousands can now be found in Benin, Ghana, Sudan, Kenya, Uganda, South Africa, China, Malaysia, Turkey, Cyprus and Singapore. It is

It must be stressed, however, that not all the quests for foreign education are ignited by the burning desire for quality education

no longer news that foreign universities are profiting from Nigeria's misfortune as Nigerian youths pay huge sums as tuition fees to foreign universities. This ugly phenomenon must stop."

The American sociologist, Randall Collins, explained way back in 1971 how the functional and conflict theories are at the roots of educational stratification. According to him, the technical-functional theory states that educational requirements reflect the demands for greater skills on the job due to technological change while the conflict theory stresses that employment requirements reflect the efforts of competing status groups to monopolise or dominate jobs by imposing their



cultural standards on the selection process. Collins used the two theories to explain the dynamics of education and employment on the one hand, and how this translates to class structure in the American society on the other. Collins then concluded that "The main dynamic of rising educational requirements in the United States (in the 1960s and 1970s) has been primarily the expansion of mobility opportunities through the school system, rather than autonomous changes in the structure of employment".

Collins' conflict theory will possibly explain the inability of the Nigerian ruling class to apprehend the crisis of the public educational system for human capital development and national transformation. Successive governments since independence in 1960 have always talked around the issue, but it appears the political will has consistently eluded them. Take for instance, in his welcome address at the Inter-ministerial Retreat in November 2017, Nigeria's Minister of Education, Mallam Adamu Adamu, had declared: "Yes, education offers us the way out of our current vicious circle, and to the emergence of an equitable and stable society characterized by inclusive development and driven by positive values. Education is our collective responsibility and its failure can well be taken as the failure of the entire country. We are all involved in education because it affects us all... But from what has

Conference Alerts

	2nd Sep 2018	5th Sep 2018	Verona, Italy
<u>29th International Conference on Diamond and Carbon Materials</u>	2nd Sep 2018	6th Sep 2018	Dubrovnik, Croatia
<u>ECSA 57: Changing estuaries, coasts and shelf systems - Diverse threats and opportunities</u>	3rd Sep 2018	6th Sep 2018	Perth, WA, Australia
<u>Fourth International Conference on Railway Technology: Research, Development and Maintenance</u>	3rd Sep 2018	7th Sep 2018	Sitges, Spain
<u>The Tenth International Conference on Engineering Computational Technology</u>	4th Sep 2018	6th Sep 2018	Sitges, Spain
<u>The Thirteenth International Conference on Computational Structures Technology</u>	4th Sep 2018	6th Sep 2018	Sitges, Spain
<u>Bioavailability</u>	10th Sep 2018	13th Sep 2018	Norwich, UK
<u>12th Vaccine Congress</u>	16th Sep 2018	19th Sep 2018	Budapest, Hungary
<u>Twelfth International Conference on Fatigue Damage of Structural Materials</u>	16th Sep 2018	21st Sep 2018	Hyannis, MA, USA
<u>2nd International Conference on Bioresource Technology for Bioenergy, Bioproducts & Environmental Sustainability</u>	16th Sep 2018	19th Sep 2018	Melia Sitges, Spain
<u>Cell Symposium: Aging and Metabolism</u>	23rd Sep 2018	25th Sep 2018	Sitges, Spain
<u>3rd Aquaculture Conference 2018 - Recent Advances in Aquaculture Research</u>	25th Sep 2018	28th Sep 2018	Qingdao, China
<u>4th International Conference on BioTribology</u>	26th Sep 2018	29th Sep 2018	Montreal, Canada
<u>Cell Symposium: TCGA Legacy: Multi-Omic Studies in Cancer</u>	27th Sep 2018	29th Sep 2018	Washington, DC, USA
<u>Cell-NERF Symposium: Neurotechnologies</u>	30th Sep 2018	2nd Oct 2018	Leuven, Belgium
<u>3rd Global Conference on Emergency Nursing & Trauma Care</u>	4th Oct 2018	6th Oct 2018	Leeuwenhorst, The Netherlands
<u>NuMat2018: The Nuclear Materials Conference</u>	14th Oct 2018	18th Oct 2018	Seattle, USA
<u>5th RNA Metabolism in Neurological Disease Conference</u>	1st Nov 2018	2nd Nov 2018	San Diego, USA
<u>14th International Conference on Molecular Epidemiology and Evolutionary Genetics of Infectious Diseases</u>	6th Nov 2018	9th Nov 2018	Sitges, Spain
<u>32nd EFFoST International Conference</u>	6th Nov 2018	8th Nov 2018	Nantes, France



2019 Conferences — CPE Conferences

Medical Conferences in 2019 | International CME Conferences 2019

<https://www.emedevents.com/medical-conferences/medical-conferences-2019>

eMedEvents provides all the information of International and national CME Medical Conferences which is held on 2019 in global USA, Europe, Asia etc.

5 Apr 2018 - 21 Dec 2019

[APRN Pharmacology ...](#)

5 Apr 2018 - 16 Dec 2019

[APRN Pharmacology ...](#)

5 Apr 2018 - 30 Jun 2019

2019 Conferences – Athens Institute for Education & Research

<https://www.atiner.gr/2019conferences>

Date, 2019 Conferences Organized by ATINER. ATINER is organized into 37 Units and 7 Divisions. Each one organizes at least one annual conference. Academics are more than welcome to propose a session/stream to be organized as part of a conference. The current list of streams is available here. Important Note on ...

Upcoming conferences - Elsevier

<https://www.elsevier.com/events/conferences/upcoming-conferences>

3rd International Brain Stimulation Conference, 24th Feb 2019, 27th Feb 2019, Vancouver, Canada. 6th International Conference on Multifunctional, Hybrid and Nanomaterials, 11th Mar 2019, 15th Mar 2019, Meliá Sitges, Sitges, Spain. 3rd Agriculture and Climate Change Conference, 24th Mar 2019, 26th Mar 2019 ...

[Anniversary World Congress ...](#) · [Senseasia](#) · [Green and Sustainable ...](#) · [Eco-Bio](#)

2019 Conferences - Wessex Institute

www.wessex.ac.uk/conferences/2019

2019 Conferences. The excellent reputation of the WIT Conference Programme in different parts of the world continues to grow and serves as an ideal medium to achieve the Wessex Institute's International knowledge transfer objectives. The Institute is committed to acting as a link between professional and academic ...

2019 IEEE International Conference on Industrial Technology (ICIT)

<https://www.ieee.org> › Conferences

The scope of the conference will cover, but will not be limited to, the following topics: Robotics; Mechatronics; Industrial Automation; Autonomous Systems; Sensing and artificial perception, Actuators and Micro-nanotechnology; Signal/Image Processing and Computational Intelligence; Control Systems; Electronic System on ...

ICC 2019 - 2019 IEEE International Conference on Communications

<https://www.ieee.org> › Conferences

The 2019 IEEE International Conference on Communications (ICC) will be held from 20-24 May 2019 at Shanghai International Convention Center, China, conveniently located in the East Coast of China, the region home to many of the world's largest ICT industries and research labs. Themed “Smart Communications”, this ...

happened to our education since independence, it is clear that our educational system has failed our people, and has been unable to prepare our children for life as responsible and creative citizens of the twenty first century. Our recent poor performance in meeting our commitments to the Millennium Development Goals adequately illustrates the extent of such a failure. In short, our education is not achieving the desired results and there is a need for urgent action."

The Minister, in the same speech, went further to say: "...nobody has the moral and resource capacity to intervene promptly, substantially and sustainably in all areas of education provisioning better than the government. Unfortunately, from 1999 to date, the annual budgetary allocation to education has always been between four per cent and ten per cent. None of the E9 or D8 countries, other than Nigeria, allocates less than 20% of its annual budget to education. Indeed even among sub-Saharan Africa countries, we are trailing far behind smaller and less endowed nations in terms of our investment in education." He then ended his address by inviting the Federal Government to declare a state of emergency in order to "change the fortunes of education in Nigeria". Yet, at the end of it all, allocation to education was a paltry 7.03% in the 2018 Federal Government's budget!

As a critical observer once posed and answered the question, "Why has the Nigerian state not funded education adequately? It has been shown by Brazil, South Korea, Thailand, Malaysia, Kenya, South Africa, China and India, that their level of economic development is related to their expenditure on education. On the average these countries spend over 4% of their GDP on education. The low (budgetary) allocations to education from 1960 to date can only be explained in terms of the ideological orientation of successive Nigerian leaders, from Tafawa Balewa to Obasanjo and now Buhari... Why successive Nigerian governments have underfunded education so badly beats any rational person's imagination. But its logic can be situated in the conservative spectrum of economic political thinking". Idowu Awopetu went further in that publication to state that, whereas the earlier editions of Nigeria's National Policies on Education (NPE) emphasised the purpose of education for national development, more recent editions talk about education being for personal advancement. Hence, there has been a shift from the idea of education for knowledge to education for skills acquisition and entrepreneurship. And, to all intents and purposes, the unhindered penetration of the IMF and World Bank's neo-liberal ideology has convicted the country to sloganeering about cost-recovery, public-private-partnership, commercialization, privatization and other enslaving concepts which translate to lesser and narrower access to quality education for children of the poor.

In the 1960s, Nigeria was classified with China, India, Malaysia, and Singapore as "developing countries". But, if development is about qualitative and quantitative improvement in a people's life, recent indices from the yearly Human Development Report of

the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have shown that Nigeria is nowhere close to any of her peers at independence. Singapore, China, Malaysia and India have since attained 96.8%, 96.4%, 94.6% and 72.1% literacy levels among their respective populations while Nigeria trails far behind with 59.6%. At the same time, wide gaps in unemployment rates are evident between these countries when compared to Nigeria. China, with the highest figure, has just 4.1% of her citizens living without gainful employment. In Malaysia, unemployment rate is 3.5% while the rate in India is 3.4% and 2.2% in Singapore. With 13.9%, unemployment rate in Nigeria is estimated to be one of the highest in the world. Similarly, life expectancy in Nigeria is the lowest among her league. In Singapore, it is 85.00 years and, in China, life expectancy is 75.99 years. The average Malaysian is expected to live for 75.00 years while the Indian could aspire to carry on with life for 68.50 years and a Ghanaian also hopes to live for 66.60 years. However, it will take 'divine grace' for the Nigerian to live beyond the national average of 54.07 years.

In the hand of a visionary leader, education is the catalyst to issues of development including security, economy and corruption. The educated citizenry are an empowered people. With education comes enlightenment that the people need to transform themselves, their communities and nation. With education, individuals become more cooperative and appreciative of the maxim - I am because there are others. Educated people are difficult to sway, cheat or cajole, but easy to govern. Conversely, poor education or lack of any denies people - young and old - access to life-enhancing opportunities and self-rediscovery and predispose them to the antics of insidious individuals and groups - be they local or foreign. Thus, it is not a mere coincidence that quality of life indices correlate perfectly with investment in public education the world over.

So, we ask: why have members of the Nigerian ruling class made Chapter 2 of the Constitution (1999, as amended), which specifies citizen-friendly educational, cultural, political and economic objectives, within the context of a welfare state, non-justiceable or optional? Why are they tying the people's hands to their back and expecting them to climb the ladder? Why has none of the civilian administrations since 1999 opted to implement these pro-poor constitutional provisions? For as long as those who control the reigns of governance continue to deny the pauperized majority access to quality education, no miracle will break the poverty cycle, nor allow upward social mobility for the poor. What this means in practical terms is that members of the Nigerian ruling class are not in a position to save Nigerian education and secure the future of the Nigeria people. No preachments or sermonization will and can do it. The only way out, as we see it, is to work for a regime that reverses the equation in favour of the poor and the oppressed. So, as the Buddha saying goes. "No one saves but ourselves. No one can and no one may. We ourselves must walk the path".



PATRONISE ASUU PUBLICATIONS

● READ

● CONTRIBUTE

● BUY



Contact:
Research and Publications Committee,
Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU),
National Secretariat,
University of Abuja Permanent Site,
Giri,
Federal Capital Territory (FCT)
Or
Any ASUU Branch Chairman

Website: <http://www.asuunigeria.org>
E-mail: thenationalscholar@yahoo.com

For electronic copy visit online:
• thehumanitiesjournal@gmail.com
• thesciencejournal@gmail.com
• asuujournalofsocialsciences@gmail.com

NOTE TO CONTRIBUTORS

The National Scholar welcomes articles and essays from contributors within and outside the academic community.

Contributors should address issues of general interest to the society. Priority will be given to issues related to Education and Development, the Nigerian Condition, Arts, Sciences, etc.

The National Scholar welcomes researched articles, news previews, reviews, commentaries, announcement of fellowships and grants, conferences, new academic programmes, etc. Information leading to publishing outlets and journals are also welcome. News from the ASUU National Executive Committee (NEC) and branches, major developments in Nigeria Universities, etc will feature prominently.

The National Scholar solicits cartoons and photographs, poems and other art media that are very topical. The National Scholar will not publish articles, cartoons, photographs or other forms of contributions, which in the opinion of the Editorial collective, are anti-social, negative, progressive or injurious to the norms of civilized conduct.

Contributors should send two copies of their contributions to the Editor and a CD on Microsoft Word where available. The Editorial Collective will not enter into correspondence with any contributors for any reason over unpublished contributions.

All correspondence should be addressed to

THE NATIONAL SCHOLAR

Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU)
National Secretariat, Festus Iyayi Secretariat Complex
University of Abuja Permanent Site, Giri,
Federal Capital Territory (FCT)
E-mail: thenationalscholar@gmail.com

ISSN: 1596-4868