



The National Scholar

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ASUU AND THE WAR AGAINST COVID-19

Engage
The Youth
Don't Kill Them

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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” and “Nigeria: A Nation at Crossroads”.

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 is equally published. Also welcome are 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 **LETTERS TO EDITOR**.

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EDITORIAL

This edition of *The National Scholar* is unique in some ways. The first is that the events which have given the year, 2020, its tinge of *annus horribilis* (Latin: horrible year or year of horrors) have rubbed off on the edition. Like any other year, 2020 had rolled in with high hopes and expectations only for the news of a pandemic which has come to be known as coronavirus (covid-19, for short) to emerge coevally with the unfolding days and months of the New Year. This gave the year its initial sombre mood. Further, the frustration among Nigeria's university lecturers caused by government's indifference to their pathetic conditions of service and the state of disrepair in their various institutions had filled the academics to the brim and begun to overflow. Their morale had sunk to its nadir and a general mood of despair and melancholy hung around the campuses. Under their umbrella union, the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), the Federal Government had signed various agreements and memoranda of understanding with the lecturers covering such areas as provision of funds towards the revitalization of the country's public universities, renegotiation of the Union's agreement with the Federal Government towards stepping up their current scandalously low wages to a living wage level, to which was added the Union's frowning at the proliferation of state universities to the neglect of the existing ones. While these disquieting issues brewed across the campuses, the Federal Government stoked the already burning fire by adding to it the vexatious issue of forcing down the throats of the academics the obnoxious, corruption-prone Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) as the platform for paying the salaries of all its workers, including the lecturers. This dimension to the brewing crisis reached the precipice when the Federal Government stopped the salaries of the lecturers beginning from February 2020 to compel them to bow to the dubious payment platform. With Nigeria's lecturers in public universities still stuck to their 2009 starvation salary structure, which brings them far lower monthly salaries than their colleagues in colleges of education and the polytechnics earn; with the government having reneged on its various memoranda of understanding and actions covering funding, revitalization, earned academic allowances, renegotiation of its agreement with the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), all of which conduced to the all-time low morale, anger and frustration and murmurings among the lecturers, the atmosphere in the nation's public universities was ripe for the use of the only weapon the Government understood: strike. A fusion of the trauma from the covid-19 pandemic, which necessitated the lockdown of most parts of the world, with the strike consequently declared by ASUU on March 23, 2020, gave the year its dreary character like Europe's Medieval Period, during which human activities, especially in science and secular learning, were considered to be at their lowest.

Yet, like the phenomenal potency of many a bitter pill, the covid-19 pandemic turned out to be



the most practical event that exposed concretely and in a bizarre manner the poor state of health and educational facilities in Nigeria. This edition of *The National Scholar* is, hence, largely dominated by three broad issues. These are the various strands of reactions and responses to the ASUU strike and the covid-19 pandemic, which are surmised in the thrust of the cover story: “Covid-19 and ASUU's Struggles”; then Nigeria's October 1 Independence Day celebrations; and the routine stories from campuses across the country. These major events have, thus, yielded for this edition such other related stories as “The State of Our On-going Struggle”, “Varsity Teachers' Salaries Are again Suspended in Nigeria”, “NANS Supports ASUU Strike, Demands Waiver on School Fees for Students in Tertiary Institutions”, “ASUU Needs Solidarity to Win a Victory for All”, “Salute to ASUU for Defending the Last Bastion of Nigeria's Independence!”, “Rep Decries Government's Insincerity on Education and Agreements with ASUU”, “ASUU: The Misunderstood Vaccines, Not Virus”, “The Pandemic and the Politics of School re-opening”, and “COVID-19 and the Neo-liberal Assault on Nigeria's Recovery of the Money Spent on the Pandemic from the Poor and Hapless People in the Global South’.

From the walking past of October 1, 2020, as Nigeria's Independence Day, *The National Scholar*, as the mouthpiece of Nigeria's most patriotic and altruistic trade union, also gave prominence to the challenges of nationhood since the country's independence in 1960. There is the robust contribution, “Nigeria at 60: From Balewa to Buhari”, and also “Thoughts on Nigeria's University Education at 60”, both of which focus on the various aspects of our progression as a nation from our flag independence in 1960 till date. Further, ASUU President, Professor Biodun Ogunyemi, displayed the Union's solidarity with the rest of Nigerians by presenting a visionary Independence Day message, the text of which is also encapsulated in this edition. Outside the orbit of contributions on covid-19, the ASUU strike and Nigeria's Independence Day, this edition also houses contributions on routine issues such as NUPEMCO, the Sexual Harassment Bill, news on developments in our various campuses, as well as the usual cartoons, poems and jokes. This outing is also especially enriched with stories about the bowing out of service of a veteran of ASUU and past editor-in-chief of *The National Scholar*, Professor Desmond Wilson of the University of Uyo on attaining the age of 70; an essay in memory of the late legendary Trustee of the Union, Professor Eskor Toyo; an announcement of the sad passing of the revolutionary erstwhile governor of the defunct Kaduna State, Balarabe Musa; and a discussion with Professor Dapo Asaju, whose rare act of turning down a second term as vice-chancellor of a university is worthy of emulation.

Thus, in the same vein as Europe's Medieval period has been proved to still record some of the world's significant inventions in science, the year 2020, which we had described as *annus horribilis*, has also revealed so much about our nation, Nigeria, particularly in its unrepentant negative attitude towards education and health. Indeed, this year's events have displayed to Nigerians and their governments such a mirror of the nation that would have set everyone working hard towards healing its many sores if we were as serious with ourselves as other nations are with themselves. But, sadly, this has not been the case. A reading of the various reports and analyses of the state of the nation as captured in this edition of *The National Scholar* would thus give the publication the character of a fossil of the present government's neo-liberal and neocolonial callousness and disinclination towards the nation's public schools.



NIGERIAN RULING CLASS, ASUU STRUGGLES, CORONA VIRUS AND WASTING OF NIGERIAN STUDENTS

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Nigerian ruling class comprises past and present political elites and actors at both the federal, state and local government levels. These are a group of men and women, who had and or have the privilege of occupying one political office or another in the recent history of Nigeria. They cut across all ethnic, tribal, geographical and religious groups in the country. The list includes among others serving and past: local government chairmen and their councilors, members of various state houses of assembly, commissioners, governors, national assembly members, ministers of the federal republic and of presidents of the country. These are people of influence who control public treasury and resources. And when the resources are properly applied, shall result in progress and development and of course happiness among Nigerians. Unfortunately, this has not been the case for Nigeria in over the forty years.

Education has been described as the bedrock for the development of the human person and society. It is a common axiom that no nation can rise above the level of its educational development. What this implies is that for any country to develop and witness growth, it should as a matter of necessity adequately invest in the education of its citizens. Time there was when needed priority was accorded education in Nigeria and the country reaped bountifully from it. Regrettably such cannot be said of the country in the last forty years. Tertiary education, particularly university education, is actually the bedrock of innovation and advancement in nations. Tell me a country that is developed and I will name the tertiary institution (s) that catalyzed the development. According to Isaac Newton, action and reaction are equal and opposite. A massive investment in tertiary education shall produce a massive development in a country. Unfortunately for Nigeria, from the 1970s till date, the ruling elite has continued to pay less attention to funding of education and this has led to a series of struggles championed by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) since its formation in 1978.

The struggles of ASUU has largely been on adequate funding of education particularly university education. ASUU has embarked on a series of avoidable strikes just to get federal and state governments to adequately fund public universities. However, the gains of the struggles notwithstanding, not much could be said to be achieved as successive governments have failed to live up to expectation. Even the current All Progressives Congress (APC) Federal Government led administration has failed to improve the lots of education with its paltry budget of 7% average over the last five years even though APC promised to give at least 15% to education in its manifesto!

About 10 years ago, ASUU alerted the Federal Government of the rot in the Nigerian Public University System (NPUS) and this spurred the Federal Government of Nigerian to embark on Needs Assessment Study of Nigeria Public Universities (federal and states). The exercise produced the Needs Assessment Report of 2012. The summary of the Report was that Nigeria Government shall invest at least N1.3 Trillion Naira over a period



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reverse the rot and revitalize Nigeria public universities. It took a six month strike in 2013 to compel government to release the first tranche of the Needs Assessment Fund for the revitalization of public universities. Since then, virtually no release has been made even after the signing two Memoranda of Action in 2017 and 2019 with ASUU.

The Year 2019 witnessed the debut of a novel deadly virus called Coronavirus otherwise known as COVID 19, which was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) in the first quarter of 2020. Since the advent of the Coronavirus Pandemic, the world order was significantly altered. Countries had to lockdown for months to contain the spread of the virus which has killed over a million persons globally. The greatest disequilibrium associated with Coronavirus disease is felt in the education sector. Educational institutions including universities were shut. Following insights in the control of the pandemic, nations began ease of lockdown with educational institutions reopening. Nigeria, however, found herself at a cross road because serial failures to invest in education. It is so bad that not even one university owned by either the federal or state government could meet the guidelines of social/physical distancing in lecture halls and hostel accommodation as prescribed by the Presidential Task Force (PTF) on COVID 19. More worrisome is the fact that no public university can boast of functional and efficient water supply hand washing, another preventive and control measure for COVID 19. These situations are all avoidable had governments heed the admonitions of ASUU in implementing measures to revitalize public universities. The revitalization would even have allowed some universities to run two streams of academic session thus addressing the problem of admission space for qualified candidates. A stitch in time would have saved nine. The consequence of the failure of past and present governments to adequately fund universities is that while other countries (even in Africa) have successfully resumed university education, the almighty Nigeria is yet to resume thus wasting the youths who form bulk of the students. What a pity. It appears that the problem will persist as government is yet to meet ASUU demand for adequate funding of Nigerian public universities among others.

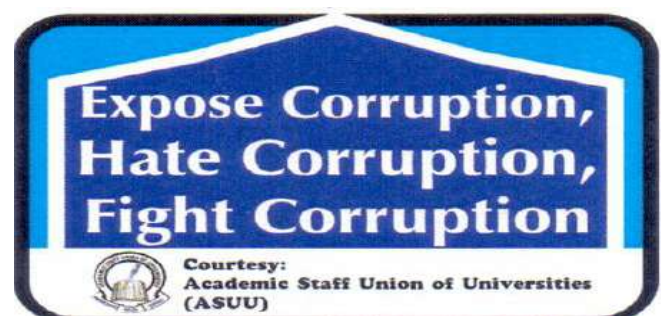
It is quite disheartening that the Nigerian ruling class cum political elite, who themselves are great beneficiaries of public education, are the ones supervising its destruction. The 2021 Federal Government budget proposal of less than 7% to education makes the situation even more worrisome. It is time for Nigerians to rise and demand adequate funding of education at all level. Students, parents, public spirited individuals, the labour movement and civil society organizations must rise and call federal and state governments to order. The demand should also include that children of public officers schooling either in abroad and in private universities should be withdrawn and enrolled in Nigeria public universities. There should also be a demand for a legislation making it mandatory that every public officer should enroll their children in public institutions. With these, there will be hope to address the rot not only in public universities but all public educational system in Nigeria and the country shall be better for it.

ON PRESIDENT BUHARI'S NO IPPIS, NO SALARY

By Biodun Ogunyemi

Mr. President did not say government will not pay ASUU members for not enrolling in IPPIS. The directive on IPPIS was meant for civil servants and university academics are not civil servants. We have an understanding with government to develop an alternative platform which would be sensitive to the operations of the university, accommodate the peculiarities of the university system and respect the autonomy of our universities as obtained globally. The idea of seeking clearance from the Head of Service or the Office of the Accountant-General of the Federation is alien to university operations because it will halt its flexibility. The University Miscellaneous (Provisions) (Amendment) Act (2003), which government gazetted as University Autonomy Act (2007), has vested the powers of managing personnel and payroll system issues in the hands of each university's governing council. ASUU has gone beyond the debate on this matter. On 9th January, 2019 when we visited Mr. President who is Visitor to all federal universities, we reached an understanding that ASUU would develop its proposed University Transparency and Accountability Solution (UTAS) for testing and adoption for managing personnel information and payroll system in the

universities. We have since done that and presented to the Federal Ministry of Education. What is left is to present to other major stakeholders, particularly in the Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning. The development of UTAS was done at no cost to government. We used contributions from the check-off deductions of ASUU members to finance the project and this cost us millions of naira. IPPIS was designed by the World Bank for the civil service. We are aware of the antics of bureaucrats, especially in the Office of the Accountant-General of the Federation, aimed at bringing universities under their control. ASUU will not fold its arms and watch the gains we made on the autonomy of Nigerian universities slip by. It took us several years of continuous struggle during the military to get here. So, let nobody hide under the name of President Muhammadu Buhari to attack the autonomy of public universities because Nigerian scholars are prepared to resist it with the last drop of their blood.



IPPIS and university staff

The open letter to Chief of Staff, His Excellency Ibrahim Gambari on IPPIS by Mohammed Bello Yunusa published in the Daily Trust of 07/10/2020 is apt.

I have been serving Ahmadu Bello University for over 43 years (31 years as a Professor) including five years as its Vice Chancellor. After my tenure as VC I went back to the classroom and have been teaching for 11 years. Despite this long service, I am now not receiving regular salary. For the only three months I was paid this year, I was paid basic salary only despite all efforts by ABU to see that I and other staff are paid correctly. I join Mohammed Bello Yunusa in urging the Chief of Staff to look into this IPPIS issue.

Prof SU Abdullahi, 0806 221 4155



ASUU vs FG; It is Time for the Public to Shame the "Greedy Lecturers"...

There was a discussion among colleagues a few days ago and a respected Senior colleague was bitterly complaining about ASUU, strike and the need to change strategy to seek for government's attention for education. Then a colleague with him informed him that the younger Lecturers are actually trying to make ASUU change strategy by demanding that ASUU fight for welfare alone and forget fighting FG for university funding. He then said, no! ASUU cannot do that. If ASUU stop the funding fight, who will do it? How will he be able to afford university education for his Kids?

He doesn't want strikes, he wants ASUU to fight for university funding, but can't suggest a workable alternative to strike?

Most Nigerians are in this category of people. They hate ASUU for strikes because of their effect on the academic calendar of their kids, they don't think ASUU is fighting for the public, but they still want ASUU to device a non-strike way to fight for university funding for their kids to be well trained. Meanwhile, they hate the idea of tuition in public universities.

If the public is actually against ASUU's struggle, let the public come out to say that ASUU should forget funding fight, and that they are ready to pay tuition. That will end the whole drama. 2 years ago, during one of the negotiations, FG team proposed N350,000 tuition for Art and Humanities, and N500,000 for Science and Engineering to fund universities. And ASUU rejected the offer for reasons that were well publicized. And the public were happy with ASUU's position.

About a year ago, Unimaid increased students' registration fee from 25k to 129k. There was large outcry and a large number were going to drop out. Stakeholders

intervened and it was dropped.

Meanwhile, there is an agitation from a section of ASUU members that the union should dwell more on members' welfare and abandon the funding fight if possible. But will that be in the interest of Nigeria? When we dwell more on welfare, it is an easier fight to win. The government will be more than glad to do that as long as we stop asking them to inject some hundreds of billions to revitalize public universities.

But then, good salary and poor facilities means, you have got enough to eat nice food and possibly get a nice car to cruise around, but watch as the public universities degrade till it collapse like primary and secondary schools while you are in it. Good salary with poor or no facilities to work with can't give you job fulfillment except you are just being hypocritical.

While we have funding problems in the existing universities, the governments at Federal and state levels are still busy establishing more tertiary institutions. And no long term funding plan for any of the established institutions. That's Nigeria politicians with our money.

Strike for now still remain the best language that the government understand if ASUU still wish to carry on with the burden of forcing government to fund the universities they established. Between 2018 and 2020, there were 3 strike actions by Lecturers in the UK universities to save their universities. As a Union of Intellectuals, we welcome suggestions on alternative ways that will make the unwilling and insincere government perform their responsibilities of funding education.

ASUU vs FG; It is Time for the Public to Shame the "Greedy Lecturers"...

ASUU believe they are fighting to save Nigerian universities for the people but the people don't think so. It is time for the people to shame the "Greedy Lecturers" and declare that they are ready to take the responsibility of funding public universities and willing to pay TUITION.

Every onlooker is either a Traitor or a Coward.

Abdelghaffar Amoka

ASUU ! Stay strong please , fight on , keep being resolute and determined in your struggle to protect University system and the profession you know best . No outsider can know better than the insider and no layman can know better than the learned . The only weapon they have against you and are

using to coerce you to submission is withholding your salary. By so doing they are making the salaries even more irrelevant to your lives. You must by now learn to live without salary, so what next? The strike had reached its tipping point and the Government is feeling the heat.

Keep on! Redirect your mental energy to something even better. Forget about them, situation will force them to appreciate your values, regret their impudence towards you and look for you themselves. By then you must have settled in your new but explored area and the bargain price will be even higher. Respect yourselves by keeping the tempo of the struggle for the future of the country. Aluta Continua !!

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Rep Decries Government's Insincerity to Education and Agreements with ASUU

By Adelaja Odukoya

On 10 March, 2020, Honourable Tajudeen Ayo Yusuf, representing Kabba/Bunu/Ijumu Federal Constituency, in the Federal



Hon. Tajudeen Yusuf
Kabba/Bunu/Ijumu Federal Constituency

House of Representatives, contributing to a motion on the floor of the House of Representatives to intervene in the

strike by ASUU submitted as follow:
 "Mr, Speaker, for the past twenty-something years, we go round in circle to discuss what is agreed on by men, I mean men, who should be men of honour, thrown into the bust-bin, they will come back again after about six-months. A four year programme becomes six-seven years. A child that goes into the university at the age of eighteen nineteen that has the hope of graduating at twenty-two- twenty-three graduating at twenty-seven. When he is applying for job they will say if you are beyond the age of twenty-five don't apply. What kind of wickedness is that? You kept him in school beyond what is necessary. You now begin to teach them to lie. They now go to swear affidavit and reduce age to meet the job qualification. Mr. Speaker, I want to appeal that there should be

parliamentary intervention. If two groups have been meeting and coming to an agreement for the past twenty years and we have not seen the end to it, the parliament should intervene because by implication there is lost of trust and confidence from both sides. That is why we come back every time to discuss ASUU strike every year. Mr. Speaker, I want to appeal that this motion should not only be passed but Mr Speaker, the leadership should take a special interest and see we have an agreement that is a public document that we could hold people accountable to. Mr. Speaker sir, some universities that Nigerian students go to, are worst than the mushroom primary schools in your neighbourhood. Hardly can you find a level eight-fifteen/sixteen civil servant in Nigeria that have their children in Nigerian public schools. And you are surprised why corruption is the order of the day. They have to pay. They have to meet those bills. Mr. Speaker, my dear colleagues, a nation that genuinely desire growth should know the value of education. The borrowing plan we are about considering, if NTA is qualify, why would education not be qualified? Is NTA more important than education?"



Varsity Teachers' Salaries are Again Suspended in Nigeria

By J.G. Nkem Onyekpe

Varsity teachers in Nigeria have been denied their salaries for the month of July 2020.

Payment was originally stopped in February 2020, because of the refusal by the teachers through their union, Academic Staff Union of Universities, ASUU, to enrol on the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System, IPPIS. However, the government yielded to public pressure and paid up to June.

Public opinion had been that it was utterly wrong, unreasonable, and insensitive for the government to have stopped salaries in the COVID-19 situation. In its wisdom, the government has again stopped varsity teachers' salaries. Perhaps, this is the government's way of celebrating its victory over COVID-19. But the questions that must be asked are: Has the war against COVID-19 been won? Was there any war declared against COVID-19 in the first place in Nigeria? It must be clearly stated that ASUU's disagreement with the government is far beyond the issue of IPPIS, which is but a recent issue concerning methods of payment of salaries.

ASUU's major problem had been and remains the blunt refusal of the government to recognise that there is a crisis in the nation's varsity system. The different angles to the crisis are poor funding of education, inadequate infrastructure and equipment, lack of autonomy, inadequate establishment/understaffing, poor remuneration for varsity teachers, and the refusal by the government to honour and implement, let alone renegotiate agreements freely reached and signed with ASUU. I have been a varsity teacher for 35 years; I can tell that there is no teaching or learning going on today in the real or active sense of the words, teaching and learning. The reasons are simple and straightforward. Apart from the challenges of poor funding and grossly inadequate infrastructure and equipment, teachers are absolutely demoralised and consequently demotivated as a result of abysmally poor remuneration. The highest-paid professors earn a monthly gross salary of ₦500,000.

The point, indeed, is that the government and the roguish and thieving wielders of political power have little or no interest in education, as can be seen from the scandalously wretched budgetary appropriation for education, usually 6-8% of the annual budget. It must be emphasised that leaders' concept of leadership in Nigeria is not that of service or progress but self-enrichment.

ASUU may be compelled to enrol on IPPIS, but that will not resolve the crisis in the varsity system. ASUU may even discontinue its principled and patriotic struggle for the survival of public universities, but, doubtless, that would be the last straw that will break the camel's back.

The choice before ASUU is either to continue with its principled and patriotic struggle, and thereby ensure the survival of public universities, or succumb to government propaganda and blackmail, and thereby enable the government to bury the remains of academia. But as an organisation of intellectuals, ASUU must continue to constructively engage the government on the necessity for the survival of public universities.

ASUU must continue to provide the leading lights. Members of ASUU are not elected members of the legislature or parliament as an organ of government. Indeed, but by virtue of their training, learning, exposure, experience, and global visibility, any government that ignores them and their perceptions does not mean well for itself, the nation, the people and their future.

For, as intellectuals, member of ASUU thinks for the larger society. As aptly noted by one scholar not too long ago, intellectuals are the legislators of the world, whether acknowledged or unacknowledged. And so, because intellectuals cannot stop thinking, they must continue thinking, and thinking not for the mere sake of thinking, but thinking to generate and articulate informed ideas and knowledge for public good and progress. Since some struggle is required for the progress of society, any such struggle is an objective inevitability. Indeed, whatever progress the nation has made in the development of public universities has been achieved through the principled and patriotic struggle of ASUU.

For example, ASUU's struggle led to the establishment of the Education Tax Fund (ETF), now known as the Tertiary Education Fund (TEFUND). As an interventionist agency, the Fund has financed the provision of structures such as hostels, auditoria, faculty and departmental buildings, library and laboratory complexes, etc. It has also helped to procure books and journals for libraries and equipment for laboratories.

Because ASUU cannot afford to ignore the role the varsities were established to play in the nation's development process, the union has continued to draw attention to the critical preconditions without which the varsities cannot effectively play their role as agents of development and progress. For example, university teachers cannot afford to abandon their commitment to

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university autonomy and academic freedom without which the varsity system will remain tethered and fettered and, so, incapable of effectively playing its role. In the absence of basic facilities for teaching and learning especially in the laboratory-based disciplines, courses such as engineering, medicine, and pharmacy are taught as religion, literature, and philosophy.

I had an encounter with an engineering student at a second-generation university during the 2003 ASUU strike. He was unsparingly critical of ASUU. But when I confronted him with the issue of the state of the laboratories at his university, his answer was: Truly, we do not have good laboratories. One of my teachers would always tell us in class, “attend classes, study your notes and you will excel. Am I not going to be your examiner? I am your teacher!” Besides, students' living conditions on the campuses are worse than those of lower animals. Then, university staff work in excruciating and agonising poverty, in grovelling and mucous penury. ASUU must continue to strive to achieve enhanced earnings for its members. The government and its ideologues and trumpeters have continued to contend that tuition fees must be introduced if staff earnings are to be enhanced. But ASUU's position has been that the introduction of tuition fees will ultimately price university education out of the reach of the poor. The argument of the union remains that, the survival of public universities without their commercialisation and the access of the children of the poor to university education is organically inseparable.

It has been the position of the present writer that, that tuition is free does not make varsity education free. Students pay some administrative charges and they are responsible for their accommodation, transportation, feeding, clothing, books, etc. Thus, free tuition cannot properly be said to be free education as students bear the brunt of many other costs and charges. The challenges raised in the preceding paragraphs are challenges that must be patriotically grappled with if public varsities are to survive, if they are to play their role as agents of national development and progress and if they are to become globally competitive.

Over the last three decades, ASUU has consistently drawn the attention of the government to these critical issues. But the government has not shown any serious commitment to resolving the issues. Agreements and memoranda of understanding reached by the government and ASUU are recklessly breached or even repudiated outright by the government. For example, a major agreement signed between ASUU and the military government in 1992 was later repudiated by the government, with the then Minister of Education, Professor Ben Nwabueze, arguing that it was an “imperfect” agreement. Then, during the administration of President Goodluck Jonathan (2010–2015) the needs

of public varsities were officially put at ₦1.3 trillion. It took an ASUU strike for the Jonathan administration to release ₦200 billion to the universities, and another ASUU strike for the succeeding President Muhammadu Buhari administration to release ₦30 billion. Besides, it took many strike actions for the academic and non-academic staff of public universities to be paid their earned allowances for the period 2009–2012. No allowances have been paid for the period, 2013–2019.

ASUU has again been on strike for over four months. The union has two straight and clear demands, namely, the full implementation of the 2009 ASUU/Federal Government Agreement and the renegotiation of the agreement as originally provided for. The current situation is a cul-de-sac artificially created by the government. ASUU and the Federal Government have a lot to do to find a lasting solution to the crisis in the nation's varsity system. Thus the union must continue to engage the government on the challenges of the varsities. But in its engagement with the government, ASUU must be conscious of one critical desideratum: there is a need for the union to embark on empirically-driven public enlightenment on the challenges as the varsities are public institutions. Given the place and role of the varsity system in the development process, the public cannot continue to be distanced from their universities and the problems of the universities. The public should have a say on the type of universities and the type of university education they desire. But for an enlightened public opinion to be formed on the disagreement between ASUU and the government, the issues in, and the facts of the disagreement must be bared.

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ASUU Needs to Win Victory for All!

After eight months of indefinite strike action from March 23, the ASUU strike is now at a crucial stage. The government has capitulated over its demand for lecturers to be paid through IPPIS. With a weak government, after the #EndSARS protests, now is the time for trade union solidarity to ensure an ASUU victory. However, the Government has not yet been defeated. It is claiming its latest ridiculous offer is 'final'.

The ASUU strike is now at an important point. A victory for ASUU would be a major success for the whole of the trade union movement and make other victories more likely. If ASUU does not clearly win major concessions from the Government after all the sacrifices of an eight-month strike, that will be a major defeat that may demoralise many other trade unions. "If ASUU cannot win after eight months – what chance do we have?" Could be raised in so many trade union meetings.

The 'final offer' from the government is insulting. It includes only a promise to pay some owed salaries (earned allowances) and only N25bn for "revitalisation" of the universities sector. At that rate, it would take 50 years to implement the 2012 Needs Assessment Report. This was a Government report that estimated that N1,300 billion was needed to revitalise the country's universities. Only N200 billion was ever paid, in 2013. This Government has yet to make any contribution to the program.

The Government failed to implement the 2019 FGN/ASUU Memorandum of Action that they freely signed to end the ASUU strike in February last year. The 2017 Memorandum of Action, the 2013 Memorandum of Understanding and the 2009 Agreement with ASUU were similarly not implemented. We know that some states and local governments in the FCT, for example, have yet to implement the minimum wage implemented into law in the middle of last year. Governments need to take action now before strike action is suspended pending implementation of other agreed actions. They have demonstrated time and again that their words are not worth the paper they are written on.

President Buhari claims that education is a priority for him. But when he came to power in 2015 education took over 12% of the annual budget. Each year since then, this has reduced and he is now proposing a paltry less than 6% for 2021. This pales in comparison with the standard set by UNESCO of at least 26% of a government's budget to be devoted to education.

In addition, a recent ASCAB study showed that the Federal Government has more than \$100bn in uncollected and unremitted revenue. This is far more than enough to fund all the ASUU demands for the revitalisation of the university sector in full.

To break this log-jam ASUU needs solidarity and support from other trade unions. After eight months alone, ASUU has barely begun to shift the Government's position. We need other trade unions at national, state and local government levels to send messages of support to ASUU. We need trade unions to invite ASUU speakers to explain their case and to educate their members on the importance of victory in this strike. We need trade unions to issue press releases on the importance of proper funding of the higher education sector and the failure of this, and previous governments, to come anywhere near international norms.

The workers united will never be defeated!

A victory for one is a victory for all!!

Solidarity with ASUU Strikers!



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Towards the Total Liberation of the Nigeria Masses: The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU)

Prof. Toba Alabi. tobalabi@yahoo.com

Towards the Total Liberation of the Nigerian Masses: The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU). One single factor that uplifts man from barbarism and savagery to a pedestal that puts him in a good stead in conquering the universe, the land, oceans, air and the outer space is knowledge, nurtured and ceaselessly mediated by objectivity, empiricism and facts. While the wise and the prudent will continuously seek knowledge, the savages will unrelentingly constitute themselves into creeping and debilitating immobilism in the march towards knowledge acquisition. Consequently, they turn themselves into palpable enmity to humanity that is manacled and chained by ignorance and backwardness. During the presidency of Ronald Reagan of the United States, the Space shuttle, Challenger, that was carrying the scientists for outer space exploration and research crashed. Reagan canceled all engagements for that day and addressed his fellow Americans from the Oval Office. One of the things he told the Americans that day was that America has never succumb to fear and that the crash of the space shuttle would not instill fear in America. A week later the Kennedy Space Research Center rolled up its sleeves and the space research continued with billions of dollars going into it. This is what the wise and the prudent will do but the fool does the opposite. He capitulates to inertia and despondency. One abiding destructive phenomenon in the developing world is lamentation. They mourn over their exploitation and the oppression by global capital. Yet, they turn aside from the path of self liberation and freedom. The United Nations recommends that a nation must spend a minimum of twenty six per cent of its annual budget on education. The West spends 35 per cent and above and the Third World spends three per cent and yet it will continue to bemoan its barbarism and backwardness. This is a paradox! There are about fourteen million kids of school age that are out of school in Nigeria today. This figure is more than the population of more than three countries in the West African sub-region. You spend more money on the security votes of the Governors and the allowances of the members of the National Assembly than you spend on education. And when the ASUU goes on strikes over chronic underfunding of the education sector, some folks accuse it of insensitivity. Yet, when they meet their Senator whose monthly allowance is N13.5 million in the mosque or church, they hold him in sanctimonious reverence! Someone that should be pelted with sachet water! What is going on in many of the institutions of governance in Nigeria today is nothing more than structural and legalized stealing. The situation in Nigeria today is so tragic. There is a phenomenal rape and dehumanisation of the Nigerian masses to a regrettable subservience and docility in such a manner that revolutionary forces and pressures suffer an imaginable atrophy and degeneracy. Not long ago, I overheard two state civil servants praising their governor to high heavens for paying salaries regularly, not minding the disastrous position of infrastructure in the state. Poverty when superimposed on ignorance leaves its victim traumatised, groping in the void of misery and hopelessness. This is why the masses today could not rise on these rotten Nigerian politicians, wage a sustained war on them until sanity is restored into the country. Most of the revolutionary forces have committed class suicide. Bribe the top echelon of the crucial trade unions like the NLC, PENGASAN etc, and the government would have its way in any anti-people policy. This is indeed catastrophic. But this is where the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has towered above others. It is incorruptible. It is resolute. It is a dogged and resilient fighter for the interests of the downtrodden masses in the acquisition of university education by their children. It is pertinent to ask this question: What is ASUU? 'The Academic Staff Union of Nigerian Universities (ASUU) is a trade union and a union of



Towards the Total Liberation of the Nigeria Masses: The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU)

intellectuals seeking not only the socio-political and economic/welfare interest of its members within the framework of promoting the cause of university education in Nigeria, but the entire good of Nigerians and Nigeria. The ASUU was formed in 1978, a successor to the Nigerian Association of University Teachers formed in 1965 and covering academic staff in all of the Federal and State Universities in the country. If there is any public university of substance in Nigeria today, it is as result of the doggedness and resilience of ASUU in fighting successive governments in Nigeria to a standstill in the areas of better funding, research, teaching and community service. The problems and the Precarious situation in which ASUU has found itself could be located in the nature of the leadership structure in Nigeria and the disastrous consequences of praetorialism and military adventurism in power. Out of Nigeria's sixty years Post independence experience, university degree holders had ruled the country for only eight years, that is between 2007 and 2015 when Umoru Musa Yar'adua and Goodluck Jonathan ruled the country. This in part, could be one of the reasons for the non-chalant attitude to the funding of university education and funding of research in Nigeria. Between 1981 and 1999 when the Nigerian education sector took a drastic plunge for the worse, the military was in power stealing and looting the resources of the country. Up till today, the 12 billion dollars windfall from the Gulf War in 1991 has not been properly accounted for. General Sani Abacha alone was reported to have personally stolen about five billion dollars from the till. No doubt, Military adventurism in power is the biggest disaster not only to the education sector but to the whole of the Nigerian economy. Between 1986 and 1999, thousands of Nigerian academics migrated from Nigeria to greener pastures abroad. Yet, while this was going on the military oligarchy was busy looting the treasury. This is however not to suggest that their civil counterparts are any better. No, not by a long short. Orji Usor Kalu was convicted of stealing 7.1 billion from Abia State. James Ibori was jailed in the United Kingdom for the billions of Delta monies he stole. Joshua Dariye and Jolly Nyameh are currently in jail for the billions they stole from Plateau and Taraba respectively. An Abuja high court in 2018 ruled that Aliyu Oshiomole must be docked for the billions he was alleged to have stolen when he was the Governor of Edo State. The bottom line is that both the military and civil fractions of the Nigerian elite work in concert in the ceaseless and sustained pauperisation of the Nigerian masses. And if the Nigerian masses are ever going to be totally liberated, they must first of all recognise their enemies. Their enemies are not ethnicity and religion. And neither is it their cultural and political divides. Their real enemies are the elite that have been stealing Nigeria blind over the years. If there is any friend of the masses today, it is the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) that has been fighting relentlessly to give their children university education. One potent instrument of oppression and enslavement of a people is ignorance. The parents are enslaved because they are not educated. Again, the uneducated children will be slaves to the children of the educated elite. Hence, the circle of enslavement continues. In order to break this unholy circle, ASUU has been in the forefront of saving the public universities in Nigeria from the destruction that befell the public primary and secondary schools in the country. People of my generation that attended public primary and secondary schools in the 1960s and 1970s would tell you of the high standards and proper funding of those schools in those days. Throughout my primary and secondary education, not once did our teachers embarked on strikes. Between 1980 and 1983 that I was in the University of Lagos, ASUU went on strike only once. A professor in the Obafemi Awolowo University who has been in the University for thirty years wrote not long ago that within this period the Federal Governments had

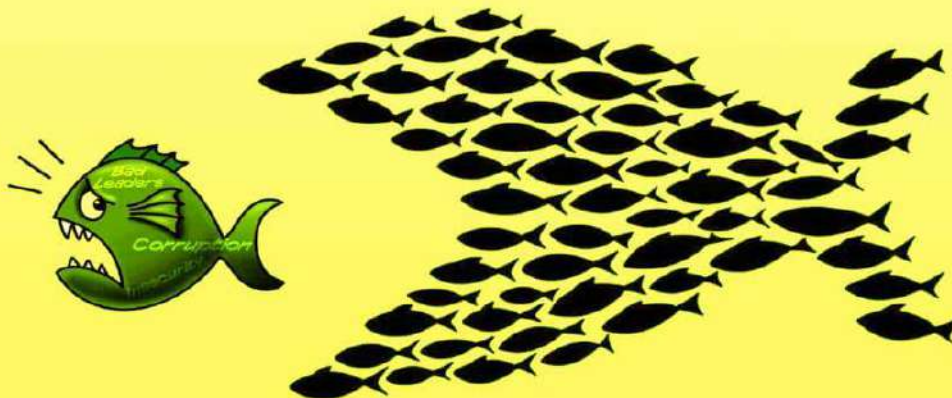
**Towards the Total Liberation of the Nigeria Masses:
The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU)**

stopped the payment of his salaries for close to fifteen times as a result of industrial unrest. What a national disaster! If there is any friend that the masses have today in their struggle for total liberation from the clutches of oppression and manacles of barbarism of the elite, it is the Academic Staff Union of Universities in Nigeria that are fighting day and night in making sure that their children acquire a university education. For far too long the government has been giving ASUU a bad name in order to hang it. Enough is enough. It is time for them to know their real enemies. Obey the UN today and let every stratum of government in Nigeria spend 26 per cent of its budget on education for seven years and let the nation watch the positive changes that will take place in that sector. Aluta continua. (Written exactly a year ago today, 16 May, 2020).

**WE CAN COMPLAIN, BLAME EACH OTHER
AND REMAIN PREY TO THE SYSTEM**



OR WE CAN ORGANIZE!





FG v ASUU: TIME TO CLOSE THE SHAME OF INDEFINITE STRIKE!

I just want to ask the FG under President Muhammadu Buhari a few basic questions in respect of the eight months old indefinite strike embarked upon by the Academic Staff Union of Universities.

(1) Are you aware that the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) single handedly doled out #620billion in 2009 to bailout some failing Banks (privately owned institutions)?

(2) Are you aware that FG set up AMCON in 2010 & injected over five trillion naira to mop up toxic assets from the banking system (a system dominated over 95 percent by private ownership)? More than eighty percent of the bad debts absorbed by AMCON remained irrecoverable even till this moment!

(3) Bailing out a distressed banking system (dominated by private ownership) & revitalizing a decayed university system (dominated by public universities & govt ownership) which should be a national priority?

(4) With over fourteen trillion naira (14 trillion naira) standing in Treasury Single Account (TSA), should FG genuinely lack funds (just #110billion) to revitalize the public universities?

(5) Assuming one of the Banks is distressed today & in grave danger of failure, will CBN allow it to collapse if what it requires is a paltry amount of #110b?

I have raised the above simple questions to show that this present FG lacks sufficient commitment to the future of Nigeria, the youths, education generally & universities in particular.

From the presidency to FME, FMF, FML&E and every other agency of government, you all should be ashamed that this ASUU strike has lingered due to your non committal approach, insincerity & lack of purpose. While you have ferried your children to study overseas & paying with looted public funds, you have wickedly frustrated our own children who struggled to gain admission in these public universities in Nigeria. To the extent that you have denied these students the opportunity to run their academics seamlessly, to that extent your investment in your own children either overseas or in private universities in Nigeria will go down the drain! Remember the law of Retributive justice; the law of Karna. Remember nemesis!



ASUU: THE MISUNDERSTOOD VACCINES NOT THE VIRUS

Since 1978, the Academic Staff Union of Universities has remained the "last men standing Union" defending the education of the common Man, even when they are accused of selfish demands; yet they still hold better cards than all other unions including the so called N. L. C.

Down the memory lane of the 1988, 1992, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2013, 2017, 2019 and 2020 strikes, we've experienced 42 years of constant struggle to uphold the 'Nigerian Educational standard'. Imagine public tertiary education in Nigeria without ASUU, even as it exists, those in the position of power continue to send their kids to foreign Universities while refusing to 'commit properly' to what will avoid ASUU strikes.

Let us try to analyze the future of a country with over 200 million citizens, but only allocate 6.7 % of the 2020 budget in it education sector, what do you think of the N13.08 Trillion, but only 5.6% goes to education. It is a shame 'the giant of Africa' to keep setting weak pace for others.

Let's revisit some bitter facts: Today is 21st November 2020, exactly 1year + 90 days that the Education Minister assumed office for his 2nd term since August 21, 2020 despite his inability to meet up with his Ministerial Strategic Plan (MSP 2016-2019). Can any student, lecturer or politician show any substantial transformation in our public tertiary Institutions?.

It is painful how some Nigerians side with the Government while blaming ASUU over there strikes. Imagine the fate of a commoner in the Nigerian Educational System without ASUU. Imagine the future of the Nigerian universities without Virtual lecturing facilities; by 2040 when the population of Nigerians may rise to about 500 Million people, how do you see our universities?.

How do you feel when 500-800 students are

packed like sardines in a lecture hall without microphone or even light to power the bulbs or fans in the hall?. How do you feel when you see Federal universities with no internet connection in this global era of the 21st century?.

How do you feel when you visit any of a departmental, Faculty or University's main Library only to find outdated Books, the acclaimed ICT resource centers are filled with obsolete, dusty, rusty and dead computers of the 1980's? Now that the Government utilizes both the pandemic and strike to suspend Universities' learning for close to 9 Months, did their children of the rich stop schooling abroad?

How do you feel as a father or a student to be running to the bush as toilet, walk kilometers in search of water, spend hours or even days without electricity, use street lights as the most reliable reading environment, trek several minutes because there are no shuttle buses etc. Do you understand what it takes to be called a "University student or lecturer?"

How do you feel when you see that almost all the private primary schools are having more standard facilities than almost all the Federal Universities (Except few) while the libraries and laboratories of our private secondary schools are better than those of our acclaimed Federal institutions (Except few).

Imagine the wages, allowances, welfare and unfair treatment of Lecturers that are believed to be the highest shapers of the future compared to those of the most unqualified political appointees!. Do you care to know how state governments treat Educational facilities compared to the Executive furnishings provide for their legislative assemblies and other offices?.

Do you care to know how junior lecturers struggle hard to get scholarships for further capacity



ASUU: THE MISUNDERSTOOD VACCINES NOT THE VIRUS

building?. Do you care to know the indispensable importance of visiting lecturers, especially senior lecturers that are scarcely available and specialized in certain courses?. Do you know that Nigeria of over 200 Million population requires at least 200,000 qualified lecturers instead of the existing fewer than 40,000 in Nigerian public Universities?.

It is statistically proven that our Federal Universities have less than 25,000 lecturers while the State Universities have fewer than 16,000 Lecturers. Do you know that Egypt has more than 60,000 Professors and teaching staff, just in their 24 public Universities?. South Africa has more than 4,034 Professors, just professors!.

We are a nation full of potentials but challenged by misplacement of priorities. Despite our challenges in the educational system, our science related students faces the worst. Our Medical students, Engineering, Technology, Chemical Sciences, ICT, Genetics, Biotechnology, Artificial intelligence etc; all are trained with obsolete tools. With all the facts on ground, how do you justify the negligence by the authorities and their insulting of ASUU?.

How do you expect our Educational system to work both at the Federal, states and local level when our Federal Ministers and States Commissioners of Education are free to own private Schools?. Imagine SUBEB Chairmen and E.S of local government having private Nursery and primary schools, what do you think will ever change?.

When the leaders of a nation prefer to send their children to the United Kingdom for degrees, how then do you blame ASUU for the strikes? Is it that you don't understand how men care less about what doesn't affect them? Before you blame ASUU, know that Fatima Buhari went to BUSINESS ACADEMY, Stratford, United Kingdom.

Know that Safinatu Buhari went to University of PLYMOUTH, United Kingdom; (Now Arden University, U. K). Halima Buhari went to University

of Leicester, U. K. Yusuf Buhari went to University of Surrey, United Kingdom. Zarah Buhari went to University of Surrey, United Kingdom. Hanan Buhari went to RAVENSBOURNE University in England.

The No. 2 citizen of Nigeria equally sent Fiyng Osinbajo to Warwick University in the same United Kingdom. Even the Executive Secretary, National Universities Commission send his kid to University of Aberdeen United Kingdom, while students at home continue to be hopeless, struggling through B. Sc to PhD, spending 7 years in a 4-year course. You think Nigerian education will ever get the right attention?.

In conclusion, I strongly recommend that the Academic Staff Union of the Universities should urgently consider the following submission to save the academic future of Nigeria and to regain their glory that's about to be completely insulted by politicians especially those in power:

1: Academics, especially Professors should desist from participating in electoral collation and returns. That's because the attitude of a lot of Professors as Returning Officers were considered disgraceful and unpatriotic; which is why the politicians even have additional temerity to treat ASUU as they do!.

2. Set up 'ASUU Special Orientation Club' in all Universities to intimate and engage Students on the social struggle. The union can only sustain its struggles if they have the popular support of the public and as it is. The Government have always succeeded in winning the public sympathy, especially because they use the media well. Education is the most sacrosanct defence of the common men; it should be protected at all cost.

Zaid Ayuba Alhaji (Sir. Kuli Kuli).

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Ban Overseas Studies for Public Servants' Children - ASUU

The zonal coordinator of the Akure Zone, Prof. Olufayo Olu-Olu, in a statement, said such a law would help to rebuild the nation's education sector.

The Academic Staff Union of Universities, Akure zone, has said the only way to end incessant strikes in the education sector is to promulgate a law banning the public office holders from sending their children abroad to study.

The zonal coordinator of the union, Prof. Olufayo Olu-Olu, in a statement, said such a law would help to rebuild the nation's education sector.

"Members of the ruling class and their cohorts have their wards schooling abroad, so they do not commit to ending ASUU strike since the political office has become occupational rather than public service.

"Until we domesticate two very important practices as laws in Nigeria, we may not get out of this doldrums -first, an act to compel all public office holders and government appointees to have their wards educated in Nigeria public schools from primary to tertiary level.

"Secondly, an act to compel all political office holders, appointees and their dependents prohibiting them from seeking medical intervention outside Nigeria. When these two laws are enacted, perhaps we will gradually see the end of needless ASUU strikes in the country.

ASUU and the Welfare of Academics!



Professor Hope Eghagha
University of Lagos

The last time I made a public comment on the ASUU and federal government ding-dong affair titled 'ASUU Members as National

Farmers', my tongue was in my cheek. That is, I entertained my readers (I think) to no end. This at the expensive expense of the Education Minister of State, judging from the reactions I received from different persons and the number of times the essay was forwarded. I was an 'Alawadite' in that essay. And for good measure I enjoyed the barbs because I caught myself laughing when I reread the essay! It was an expensive joke, you know! One could easily have been misunderstood! We know what once happened to a poet who wrote bad verses! Nigeria is very hot now especially with the youths whose tempers are boiling like a volcano and we must mean what we say and say what we mean! So there!

Today, for clarity, my hungry tongue has been brought out of my lean cheeks and I intend to make plain comments on welfare for ASUU members. My thesis is simple: ASUU should henceforth focus only on the welfare of its members. I refer to bread and butter issues! Nigeria has become a place where only bread and butter matter. How else can we account for the monthly Naira-millions which a Nigerian senator takes and the odd monthly-five-hundred-thousand Naira that a professor takes home at the peak of his profession? And except

we carry out the fight no one will remember us in the kingdom!

I am sure some of my colleagues and Nigerians will take umbrage with the 'selfish' thrust of my thesis. That should not be a problem. I recall what a professor told me in 1992 when ASUU was negotiating with government so that a professor could take home six thousand naira monthly. At that time the average monthly pay of the academic was about one thousand naira. 'Young man', he said, 'where do you think government can get that kind of money?' He was worried about government that did not care a hoot about him!

The Jega-led ASUU executive negotiated a monumental increase in wages for lecturers that year after an emir was reported to have observed that he paid some of his palace guards one thousand naira monthly! Whether this anecdote is true or false I do not know. The rest is history. At the core of my presentation is the folkloric Urhobo saying which crudely translated means 'ours is ours, but mine is mine! It was Achebe who eloquently advised us not to be forced into a situation where we 'can only enter our house through another man's door! ASUU, it is the salary that will be ours! That is why we have it as our union; not the nation's union!

The salary structure of academics is a welfare issue. The state of infrastructure and equipment in the universities is primarily the business of government or the proprietors. Strictly speaking, it is NOT the business of any union to press for more lecture rooms or laboratories to be constructed and furnished. Students' unions should demand these of the proprietors. Of course, we all recollect why and how ASUU started the struggle for government to pay attention to learning conditions in the universities. No one can fault ASUU on that. Classroom space and numbers were inadequate. Some universities had no lecture theatres. Students sat on and still sit on the floor to receive lectures in some institutions. Hostel accommodation was below standard,



ASUU and the Welfare of Academics!

dehumanizing in some cases. ASUU, standing in loco parentis, seeing the gradual erosion of the facilities and standards which some of us met in the university, decided to cry out. The problem now is that whereas infrastructure has improved, welfare and emoluments have remained stagnant. ASUU has cried more than the bereaved! Hehehehehe!

When I mention welfare, I think of the value of all the allowances, for example, hazard allowance or postgraduate supervision and all the earned allowances. Or travelling for international conferences. One could serve as Head of Department for three years and earn nothing for those years. Something is wrong. A union is as strong and healthy as its members. Too many members have suffered in silence as the earning power of the academic is daily eroded. Side hustles save the day when one is in a city that can provide alternative sources of income. In some universities, a retiring professor's salary is stopped three months to retirement for accounting purposes! Callous. Inefficient! Foolish, very foolish, in these days of computerized accounting!

I dare say that since after 1992, what ASUU has been trying to do is to enter its house through another man's door! Simply put: the 1992 agreement which gave academic staff a decent salary at that time has long been eroded by prevailing economic and political factors. Inflation is the main cause of the erosion. Through the years, ASUU has definitely fought for improvement in university conditions. But the pre-1992 slogan '*my take home pay does not take me home*' needs to be resurrected and vigorously pursued. When next ASUU calls its members out on a strike, lecturers' salaries should be, must be on the front burner. I am familiar with the argument that salaries can easily be slashed or taxed whereas allowances cannot be taxed or slashed. The reality on the ground is that the basic salary structure of academics is due for a radical review. The mechanism that is supposed to adjust salaries of academics has

failed as far as I know!

So, when next ASUU calls out its members or contemplates a strike, a salary review must be included on the list of demands. And that should be soon! Academics have made enough sacrifice for the nation, yet there is little appreciation from the public. A PhD holder who is Lecturer 11 in the university takes home less than one hundred and fifty thousand per month! None of our children want to take to university teaching seeing how their daddies struggled to make ends as highly-educated but poorly remunerated workers. I read a post somewhere when a bright guy changed his mind about taking up lecturing after he stumbled on the pay slip of his professor! It is not a joke. By training, academics are usually reticent about money matters. Job satisfaction is crucial, even fundamental. That moment, those years when one engaged young minds on intellectual issues, teaching, lecturing cannot be quantified in monetary terms. The feeling

Finally, I commend ASUU for the long years of struggle and tenacity, holding together all academics under one umbrella despite regional, religious, or ethnic differences. Only private universities have stayed out of ASUU. ASUU can manage diversity better than our regular politicians. I recall the forty-eight hours (all day and all night) NEC meeting in Maiduguri during the June 12 crisis and how wisdom prevailed in the end so that that imbroglio would not split ASUU. The communiqué that came out was a study in brinksmanship. It etched a mark in my memory on crisis management based on a deep understanding of the overall interest of a group. ASUU now requires that ancient wisdom to handle the stomach infrastructure question of academics as we position the university system to meet the demands of the 21st century in a largely mercantile and rapacious world.

Professor Hope Eghagha writes from the University of Lagos

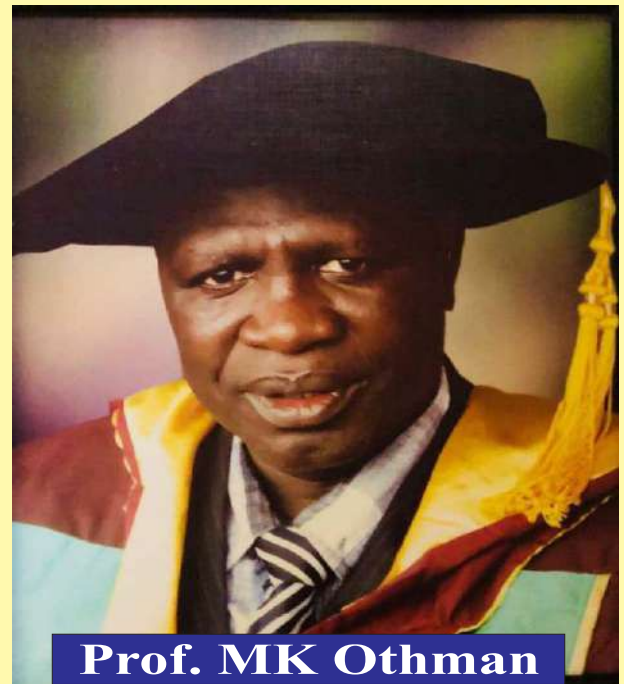
#EndASUUStrike: Buhari Should Save Nigeria

Prof. MK Othman

I have resisted writing on the ongoing ASUU strike because I believe there are many concerned Nigerians who have spoken and written eloquently on the issue. However, the fire burning in me cannot allow me rest until something is said. The issue is clear and simple; Government has the wherewithal to end the strike in no time. It is the same issue since the year 2009 when the Federal Government signed and sealed an agreement with the union. The current Minister of Education, Malam Adamu Adamu, back in 2013 before he was appointed minister, vividly and articulately analysed the reasons why ASUU was on strike and advised “If ASUU decides today not to embark on any strike again ever, this will not solve any of the problems of the education sector; rather, it will compound them... This nation owes a debt of gratitude to ASUU and the strike should not be called off until the government accepts to do and does what is required... So, instead of hectoring ASUU to call off its strike, the nation should be praying for more of its kind in other sectors of the economy.” But then, he was just a spectator and now he is the supervisor-in-chief of the Federal Ministry of Education and a key player in addressing the issues that made ASUU resumed the strike action eight months ago. One may wonder why the strike was not prevented in the first place. Why is the strike allowed to drag for this long?

In a more civilized clime, Minister Adamu Adamu may have resigned a long time for his inability to prevent the resumption of the strike and ending it earlier than now. However, would that have changed the situation? Perhaps, yes, perhaps, no, this is another topic for another day. Nigeria is a complex nation; the pressure of governance at all levels is gargantuan and requires strong-will and dedication to make the type of change ASUU is demanding for. It is a change from rots to prosperity, from decay to progress, the kind of progress the country needs to become a great nation, and a well-deserved position we all crave for. If we fail to meet ASUU demands of stopping the rots in the university system, the nation may be doomed sooner than later. May God prevent it.

The university system constitutes the critical



Prof. MK Othman

economic and developmental vibrancy depends on the intellectual capacity of her citizens particularly the leadership. This intellectual capacity is acquired as a product of a university system. When the system is rotten, it will produce engineers who do not know engineering, lawyers who do not know the law, accountants who do not know accounting, and other professionals who know next to nothing of the profession they claim to profess. Somehow, the nation is cursed to employ these unbaked professionals to manage it's affairs.

The consequences will be so dire to the nation, pushing it to an abyss of insecurity, squalor, and poverty. The picture of a rotten university system is best captured by a famous quotation of Nelson Mandela of blessed memory who said “destroying any nation does not require the use of atomic bombs or the use of long-range missiles...., it only requires lowering the quality of education and allowing cheating in the examinations by students, patients die at the hands of such doctors, buildings collapse at the hands of such engineers, money is lost in the hands of such economists and accountants, humanity dies at the hands of such religious scholars, justice is lost at the hands of such judges”.

The import of this message is that the collapse of a the

#EndASUUStrike: Buhari Should Save Nigeria

university system is the collapse of a nation. The system is designed to provide manpower development capable of solving the developmental challenges of a nation. That is why primary and secondary levels of education are used to provide sound preparation of students for university education. Currently, the public primary and secondary schools across the country have virtually collapsed, a situation that has made many people send their children to private schools. The public university system is yet to collapse, thanks to the persistent and dogged struggle of ASUU over the years. ASUU is the last man standing and when you are done with this last man, then we shall see the final collapse of the university system in this country. I fervently pray that President Buhari will not allow this to happen.

With goodwill, addressing the ASUU-FGN stalemate will not pose a problem. After all both the two parties have interest in preventing the collapse of the university system. How to go about preventing the collapse is where the parties differ.

While ASUU is asking the FGN to respect the series of agreements respectively signed from 2009 to date by investing more in the university system, FGN is not forthcoming in respecting the agreements. However, the FGN has offered a paltry sum for the strike to be suspended, a development rejected by ASUU. This kind of offer-and-taking has become a virtual circle since 2009 and has made the system very unstable with

consequences. Can we find a final solution to this problem?

Yes, first, the FGN team must come down from its high horse and listen to the ASUU voice of reasoning. Agreements and negotiations are subject to review following due process with mutual respect. When agreements are signed, one party finds it difficult to implement, the party can request for renegotiation and present transparently why such agreements cannot be implemented.

Secondly, if FGN has a problem and fear, share it with ASUU for a solution. For example, when FGN introduced IPPIS to regulate and control personnel cost, ASUU rejected it and was challenged to bring an alternative. ASUU created UTAS, which is a viable alternative to the payment of university personnel. So, FGN can even challenge ASUU on how it can sustainably and viably fund the university system in Nigeria. It was done before; today, TETFUND is the impressive result of that kind of challenge.

In conclusion, President Buhari has the magic wand of saving Nigeria by saving her university system. Granted that the President was fully briefed by FGN team, he should grant audience to ASUU team, he would see things the way we are seeing it today. He would realize that he has a key to unlock a solution end ASUU strike and bring progress to university system. May the Almighty open the door.

**UTAS fights
corruption better,
adopt UTAS
and STOP
IPPIS now!**

#NO2IPPIS





COMR. EGWU BENJAMIN LOTANNA
PRESIDENT, SUG UNIBEN

You are owing me,
beating me
and expecting me
to keep quiet!

Enough is enough.
pay ASUU what
you owe them

#EndAsuuStrike

ACADEMIC STAFF UNION OF THE UNIVERSITIES (ASUU)



THE DIRECTIVE BY THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION THAT TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS SHOULD RESUME THE SESSION BY ONLINE TEACHING

Following the call by the Honorable Minister of Education to VCs, Provosts and Rectors of tertiary education institutions to recommence their aborted academic sessions as a result of COVID-19 pandemic online, ASUU wishes to appraise Nigerians of the challenges involved in the implementation of the Ministerial directive. It is important to break what E-learning involves down to its constituents bolts and nuts. This is necessary in order not to leave anyone in doubt that the Honorable Minister is either engaged in political gimmickry or that he is not fully informed of the situation in the sector over which he presides. To this end, it is imperative to make the following categorical declarations:

1. The Minister needs to understand that E-learning is not the same as computer vending and supplies. It is not as simple as computerization, supplying of computers and accessories, or simply connecting institutions to the internet.
2. The production of power points slides and accessing MOOCS of overseas university is not E-learning.
3. Online learning is a type of E-learning that depends entirely on internet-based resources and support system. E-learning requires certain behavioural changes and regulatory adjustments in order to make it work for the learner. It cannot be established by mere Ministerial directive and bureaucratic fiat but through careful and detailed planning, funding and training by those involved. None of these have been done in Nigeria.

4. There is no Nigerian University today that is operating any form or model of E-learning because of poor internet access, high bandwidth costs and irregular power supply. On what infrastructure does the Minister expect the online delivery to run?

5. Over the years governments, in collaboration with some corrupt Vice Chancellors have dumped smart boards on Universities which are now largely used as marker boards because they are not internet enabled and have no electricity to power them.

6. Faculties in universities have become generator farms with attendant noise pollution in an attempt to maintain some degree of services. What does the Minister expect to happen to change the entrenched degenerative situation?

7. Online learning depends critically on an effective library system, with online resources and seamless access from across the globe. No Nigerian Library, including the National Library has a semblance of a kindergarten library in serious countries.

8. Online learning can only be effective where there is effective learner support online. For such support to be sustainable both learners and facilitators must have seamless access to the internet, and must be attuned to the new environment and culture of learning. This means that requisite training must have been done.



9. Learning content must be available in a format amenable to self-learning. This requires skilled design through collaborative efforts by specialists over time. MOOCS have been touted as replacement for well-designed content that is suited to the characteristics of the learner and adapted to the local context. We shouldn't be fooled.

10. If the objectives is learning and the focus is on the learner, preliminary studies ought to have been done to determine the learner characteristics and the diversities of the realities across the federation before modelling any approach to E-learning. The Minister is not properly educated to understand that online learning is much more than copying MOOCS and making power point.

11. Internet access is variable across geo-political regions, as well as linguistic and cultural parameters are highly different. One size fits all approach is ludicrous. Moreover, sustainable technologies should be the factor in determining the approach to E-learning not the excitement from improperly digested information from too much education tourism.

12. Nigeria today runs a rudimentary distance education system through a National Open University and approved dual-mode institutions that have distance learning centers. The approach to distance education by these institutions is at best characterized as blended learning, weighing more in the direction of face to face interaction. Some of these institutions are basically disguised part-time programs.

13. The distance learning operations are fraught with inequities due to the fact that they are set up primarily as fund raising platforms for IGR by their respective institutions.

14. There is no single University in Nigeria today that operates a mix-mode system. This is when students have option to take courses online or face to face. To seek to transit therefore to online delivery will amount to taking a plunge. We believe that as usual, contractors have cornered the government and have seen a business opportunity. While civil servants are once more using COVID-19 as a reason to defraud government.

15. The Nigerian university system had been defrauded for many years by federal agencies who dump substandard computers in universities from time to time at the end of the year, to justify last minute plundering of national resources in the name of supporting E-learning.

16. With the poverty levels in Nigeria today, we are not told how the online learning will be financed. Lecturers are already burdened by the fact that they have to finance the tools of their work from their salaries. There is no other profession where employees are required to pay for the cost of the tools of their work. On the average, a lecturer spends between twenty thousand naira and forty-thousand naira on data monthly, another twenty-thousand to buy fuel for generators. This is besides the fact that he bears the cost of purchasing a lap top for his work and contributing towards keeping indigent students in school. The Academic Staff Union of Universities wishes to call on Nigerians not to be deceived by the sudden love for online learning. The hounds have smelt an avenue to plunder our national resources once more. At such a time of serious emergency, when any right thinking person should be reflecting, we can see once again that they want to make money from the suffering of the poor masses.

April 2020



DAILY TRUST



Should government fail to fulfill its own part of the agreement, ASUU will resume its suspended strike as deemed necessary

PROF. BIODUN OGUNYEMI



CONTRIBUTIONS OF NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES TO THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19

By: Rose Umera and Susan Nwachukwu

The COVID-19 pandemic may have quieted down in Nigeria but the contributions of the Nigerian Academia during that period have proven that world class and renovate research and development is possible in Nigeria if avenue is provided for a well-funded research and development system.

No doubt the Pandemic exposed the extreme dilapidated and fragility of the Nation's health system but it also tested the strength of its innovative centres at harnessing the situation. Virtually all universities; federal and state governments have epidemiologist some of whom played pivotal role in developing models of the disease spread, taking into consideration the peculiarities of our country. For a start, the research grant for Nigerian Universities and Private research centres was increased from N5 Billion to N7.5 billion by the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) to tackle the Pandemic.

National University commission (NUC) equally released a Compendium which as of June 2020 showed that not less than 32 Universities were involved in various research and inventions to mitigate the menace caused by the Pandemic.

During that period, several institutions developed mechanical ventilators and prototypes that are currently undergoing clinical test and standardization. For instance, ABU, BUK, UNILAG, UNIBEN, UNIPORT and UNIJOS served as National testing and screening centres. Also, UNIJOS, ABU, UNILAG, OAU, OOU and Igbinedion University were in addition to drug research related to herbal and natural products to lead in the development of herbal and natural remedy. While other Institutions such as AUST, OAU and UNILAG designed and developed medical Facemask using the 3D technology.

At the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), the umbrella union of the Nigerian Universities, several efforts were put in place to mitigate the hardships posed by the pandemic. Apart from printing various flyers and pamphlets poised at educating members of the public on the COVID-19 Pandemic which were distributed all over the country, the Union equally saw to the welfare of its members by ensuring that welfare packages were distributed to all the members of the Union through its branches to cushion the effects of the hardship posed by the pandemic.

The UNIJOS chapter of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) during that period precisely in August handed over a 1,000 capacity lecture theatre worth over N63.2million to the school management to be used post-COVID-19 when schools are reopened. The contribution according to the Chairman, Dr. Lazarus Maigoro was part of the branch's contribution to the development of the University and to enable a conducive learning atmosphere post-COVID-19. The contribution he also reiterated was donations and personal contribution by ASUU, UNIJOS chapter.

At the Ebonyi State University branch of the Union, ASUU donated automated hand washing and

sanitizer dispenser to the management of the school. They also donated 500 face mask and copies of pamphlets on preventive measures against COVID-19

The contributions of the Nigerian Universities against COVID-19; be it in technology and material have echoed their unrivaled role as partners in developments. Such efforts must be applauded and encouraged and we call for a well-funded and robust organized national research and innovation system to pave way for more researches in Nigerian Universities as catalyst for national development.



The President, Prof. Biodun Ogunyemi at the Lagos Zone donate of Sanitizers for the Ogun State Covid-19 efforts at the Governor's Office, Oke-Imosan, Abeokuta, Ogun State



The University of Lagos Branch of ASUU, at the presentation of hand sanitizers to the Lagos State Government for the fight against Covid-19



Salute to ASUU for Defending the Last Bastion of Nigeria's Independence!

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This essay was to be an October 1, 2020 *Independence Day Salute to ASUU* leadership and its rank and-file for their continuing undaunted and courageous defense of Nigeria's Independence and the promise of a democratised public-funded education sector a major promise of Nigeria's Independence in 1960. The said promise was reiterated boldly and ebulliently in the 1976 National Policy on Education.

It is now five full months after ASUU embarked on the current leg of the four-decade long struggle to rescue the Nigerian University System (NUS) from the unrelenting stranglehold of IMF/World Bank forces of recolonisation and their indigenous Nigerian collaborators! Needless to say, Nigeria's independence, which was won on the blood of Nigeria's labouring people and their allies, was conceded close to two decades after the Bretton Woods institutions, among other goals, set today's agenda of underdevelopment for colonised territories like.

The death knell of all the promise of a public-purposed education sector was sounded in 1977/1988, as we observe below, under military dictatorship led by General Olusegun Obasanjo. That was also when the World Bank and IMF took definitive post-Independence control of Nigeria.

Before proceeding further, let me acknowledge overlapping generations of the leaders and members of the organisations of the academics and of the students' movement that paid the supreme price in the patriotic struggle of defending the education sector of Nigeria's sovereignty. To mention some of these, we remember Mahmud Modibo Tukur and Festus Ikhouria Iyayi, David Jangkam,

Jide Ojo, Eskor Toyo, Regina Odeh, Funmi Adewumi, Abubakar Momoh, Usman Abubakar, and Frank Dimowo, among others, in ASUU. Among members of the student movement, again to mention a few, we remember Abdulrahman Black, Chima Ubani, Chris Abashi, Emma Ezeazu and Bamidele Aturu.

The 1999 ASUU-FGN Negotiations, for the first and perhaps the last time *personally chaired* by General Abubakar Abdulsalami's Minister of Education (Dr. Olaiya Oni), was business-like and productive; although neither comprehensive nor conclusive because of the constraints of time.

From the very beginning of his Presidency in 1999, General Olusegun Obasanjo's public statements and body language did not leave many Nigerians in any doubt that, regarding the education sector, the ruling class was returning fully to the scene of their 1978/1979 crimes. This return was orchestrated in the ubiquitous and obnoxious company of the World Bank, and with the conspiracy and agency of the National University Commission (NUC). A critical element of the agenda of that conspiracy, which still subsist today, is the privatisation of higher education!

Concretely, in 1978/1979 when the World Bank seized Nigeria under Obasanjo's military dictatorship, the first definitive attack on Nigeria's public-funded education led to what became known as the "Alli Must Go" during the students' nationwide protests against increases in fees and charges. In 1979, The National Association of University Teachers also raised the first alarm about the decline in the public funding of education.

The direct *connection of the activities of*

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imperialism and the genealogy of the World Bank/IMF program of asphyxiation of the Nigerian University system was provided by our illustrious compatriot, late Dr. Yusufu Bala Usman in his book, *For the Liberation of Nigeria* (New Beacon Books Ltd, London; 1979: pp. 73-77) where he referred to a document, "Future Nigeria-US Linkages in Higher Education" which according to Dr. Usman, "was prepared for U.S. State Department, Washington, D.C. by Overseas Liaison Committee, American Council of Education, May 1977. Reference: AID/Sod C-15/HE008-792".

Dr. Bala Usman counselled us in that book: "The whole document merits closer study and action". He also observed, *inter alia*, "This plan [enunciated in the document referred to] seems to be in collusion with the National Universities Commission. . . . I find it very disturbing especially the apparent collusion of N.U.C.; the use of its growing power and the clearly dangerous intentions in these documents".

Bala Usman's prophetic warnings have been more than justified and vindicated in the last forty years. Western (especially U.S.) imperialism and its agencies have been particularly disruptive of the NUS using the interventions of World Bank loans and its influence on overlapping regimes of puppet governments to reduce funding of Universities, intimidate and coopt University administrations and even push curricula and curricula changes that entrench neoliberalism and the re-colonisation of Nigeria. The agencies also selectively decided where to locate the so-called *African Centers of Excellence*, and how many such centers there will be in order to openly relegate some of the universities not just in Nigeria, but across Africa. The relegation of universities has also been entrenched by politicians reducing them to what ASUU President Professor Biodun Ogunyemi called *constituency projects*

multiplicity of new, unplanned, and unfunded universities across the country.

Meanwhile, various categories of traders maneuvered themselves to the very top of university Governing Councils and administrations. The NUC, since about 2001 especially, seems to have completely forgotten that it was established to ensure the integrity of the university system especially via a robust advocacy of their funding, accessibility, academic freedom and autonomy. There are indeed many times it appeared as if the NUC was set up to promote privatisation of higher education and to help the political class intimidate and discredit the academics and the Nigerian University System.

In 2009, an FGN-ASUU Agreement was signed regarding the crucial *need to revitalise the public-funded segment of the NUS* and certain outstanding emoluments and allowances of academic staff. While the agreements on conditions of service were only partly and perfunctorily implemented, government ignored the question of revitalisation of universities completely. It took the 2013 reports of Government's own Needs Assessment Committee on public-owned universities (federal and states) to get government persuaded about the depth of the decay in the Nigerian University System. The Needs Assessment Committee Report suggested that a total of N1.3 trillion would be required for the revitalisation.

No such commitment of the FGN to revitalisation, not to talk of implementation of unimplemented elements of the 2009(!) FGN-ASUU Agreements, had taken place till todayeleven years after!

Early in 2017, and after protracted demands by ASUU, the FGN decided to engage ASUU in a Re-negotiation of the 2009 Agreement referred to above and constituted a government team led by a businessman, committed entirely to market-forces strategy of funding the



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universities, who insisted that Nigerians who cannot pay for higher education should go and borrow to pay proposing a resuscitation of the discredited “education bank” strategy which government touted and abandoned thirty years ago! What the leader of FGN's Negotiating Team did from 2017 to 2019 was not only to provoke ASUU team with gratuitous insults but to denigrate and deride our NUS which overlapping regimes and their agents have assailed and crippled in the last four decades!

Consequently, the FGN team in the 2017-2019 Re-negotiation of the 2009 FGN-ASUU Agreement simply occupied ASUU with a three year long charade.

It was towards the end of the three years of charade which they call Re-negotiation that the FGN, after the system-wide disruption of the Treasury Single Account (TSA) diversion, sprang the World Bank's IPPIS FRAUD on the Nigerian University System in a cascade of “Shock and Awe” tactic they learned from the World Bank Criminals!

Monumental fraud, incompetence among government bureaucracies and equally fraudulent and incompetent consultants and contractors are what the IPPIS FRAUD has imposed on the Nigerian University System in the last one year or so. Even various categories of staff who were deluded into believing that IPPIS had any merit and therefore collaborated with the fraud, were so traumatised that they started yelling!

Along with all the vicissitudes of the COVID-19 Pandemic and the general economic and security crisis, the siege on the Naira inflation etc., all categories of university staff became victims of amputated, and non-payment of, salaries since February 2020. There are members of ASUU and other categories of workers who have not been paid any salary since March 2020! Salaries were credited into wrong accounts in designated banks or paid into totally

wrong banks! And the so-called consultants who designed the IPPIS for them have since been smiling to their banks!

ASUU's insistence that it is ready with a more credible payroll software (UTAS), and which addresses the peculiarities of the university system in Nigeria, had met with filibuster and obfuscation by the office of the Accountant General, the Minister of Labour, the Ministry of Education, and even the “Presidency”!

Of course since July, salaries of all ASUU members in the Federal University segment have been seized by the FGN, confirming the clear message that the ruling class is sustaining the agenda of simply killing higher education in Nigeria!

Various observers of, and direct actors in, *How Nigeria's Ruling Class and the World Bank Underdeveloped the Nigerian University System*, that IPPIS is a tactical diversion in the overall demolition project of public-funded education!

We salute the courage of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), its leaders and its rank-and-file across the country, for the defense of Nigeria's education sector and the sovereignty of our peoples in the last forty years and, especially in the last six months!

When a ruling class becomes illegitimate and discredited, its tactics of governance produces a polity in which people are cowed, divided, confused and intimidated. Such tactics of governance can be maintained only through deceit, intimidation and orchestration of confusion. This situation is maturing fully in our country. And it is during disasters like the current COVID-19 pandemic that the degeneracy of governance dawns clearly on people in the impacted polity as Anne Applebaum (Staff Writer for *The Atlantic*) observed in a feature posted on October 3, 2020: “...epidemics, like disasters, have a way of revealing underlying truths about the societies they impact”!



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The above observation compels the identification of two underlying truths about the Nigerian crisis and the impact of the truths on the Nigerian polity. The first truth is that the same ruling circles (military, civilian, and those they recruit) that imposed itself on our people since the close of the 1970s is still on our back supervising the very same conspiracies with Nigeria's former colonial, now neo-colonial, tormentors. Under all the regimes of the class, the main pre-occupation is private accumulation of wealth! The second truth is that the predictions concerning the re-enslavement policies of our World Bank/IMF ruling-class governments of Nigeria since 1978, and which have completely debilitated our country, are being fully confirmed. **These are the crucial revelations concerning Nigeria under the strain of the COVID-19 pandemic.**

When these truths started emerging in Nigeria at the close of the 1970s, the future impacts of these truths were fully and clearly apprehended by segments of patriots and organisations of the working people of Nigeria. The labour movement, preeminently the Nigeria Labour Congress and specifically ASUU, the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA), National Association of Resident Doctors (NARD), and the students' movement under NANS, made strident calls to the Nigerian masses to rescue Nigeria from recolonisation spearheaded by the armed wing of the Nigerian ruling class. Various corroborative public documents are available in these regards in the archives of ASUU, the NLC, NANS and various other mass organisations of the Youth (like PYMN) and Women (like WIN).

The historical irresponsibility if not criminality of the Nigerian ruling class in regard to public purpose has been more than revealed by the complete helplessness and

confusion in government circles at all levels (federal, state and local) under the emergency of the COVID-19 pandemic. The decades-long collapse of our hospitals and health-care system generally confirmed all the fears of the NMA and NARD fears which they have been articulating since 1984! The complete uncertainty and the total confusion surrounding safe re-opening of educational institutions under the COVID-19 emergency is another revelation of the impact of the disastrous decades of neglect of the education sector which ASUU and the students' movement had been complaining about!

In the renewed and on-going siege of neoliberalism against Nigeria, we celebrate ASUU for continued defense of the Nigerian people by defending the public-purpose vision of education, perhaps the *very last bastion of Nigeria's Sovereignty*. The defense has been, and will continue to be *a duty*!

If anyone is in any doubt that the Nigerian ruling class has "dug in" in respect of the program of assailing this last bastion, he/she should listen to the statements of Dr. Chris Ngige (Minister of Labour) and the insolent statements credited to Chukwuemeka Nwajiuba on the on-going ASUU strike. Nwajiuba, Buhari's Minister of state for Education, thinks ASUU members will be more useful farming! This statement by Nwajiuba captures the mindset of a ruling class that is dismissive of higher, or any, education and contemptuous of segments of labour (in this case, farmers) who *actually sweat* to sustain Nigeria!

What this situation of siege calls for is, therefore, not anger. What it calls for is full awareness that Nigeria's ruling class is no more interested in pretending to court any semblance of legitimacy of their governance. The

Salute to ASUU for Defending the last Bastion of Nigeria's Independence!

Nigerian ruling class is back to bare-knuckle fascism. We have been there before. Working masses must revise the lessons they learnt! In doing that, **the patriots and intellectuals in ASUU and other professional groups have the burden of their duty defined for them. And they must continue to bear that burden with consummate courage and dignity. We celebrate them for continuing to do just that!**

The default mode of the ruling class in

a neo-colony (military, "civilian" or a hybrid of both) is fascism: that is what Nigeria's ruling class has been tinkering with since 1978! Fortunately for us, they cannot abolish the Nigerian people!

Viva ASUU!

Viva Nigeria's Working People!!

Viva Nigeria!!!



Nigeria at 60: From Balewa to Buhari

By Adekeye Adebajo

Nigeria. Africa's most populous country and largest economy remains a huge enigma of unfulfilled potential, as it commemorates its diamond jubilee. With nearly 200 million citizens and 250 ethnic groups, the country entered what Egyptian Nobel laureate, Naguib Mahfouz, described as “the Late Afternoon of Life”, turning 60 on 1 October. Following one civil war, seven military regimes, and three failed democratic experiments, many observers, drawing inspiration from Nigeria's foremost griot, Chinua Achebe, have noted that the country from the religious ferment of the volatile North, through the conflict-wracked Middle Belt, to the ravaged mangrove swamps of the oil-producing Niger Delta, to the marginalized East, to the “Wild West” is “no longer at ease.” Could things fall apart?

Deeply religious Nigerians will be able to relate to a biblical tale of their country's six decades resembling seven deadly sins: corrosive corruption, calamitous conflicts, coups d'état, competitive “tribalism”, chauvinistic misogyny, capricious politicians, and charlatan prophets.

Gulliver's Troubles

Despite Nigeria's rich talent and abundant natural resources, the country's leaders have clearly lacked a sense of noblesse oblige, resulting in a Miltonian Paradise Lost. Both politicians and soldiers have failed spectacularly to transform the country's fortunes, and Nigerians have declared a plague on both their houses. These leaders have been unable, in six decades, to establish a viable democracy, to guarantee the security of their citizens, to lift 70 per cent of their compatriots out of poverty, to build durable infrastructure, and to stem profligate corruption that has seen an estimated \$582 billion pilfered and siphoned off into foreign bank accounts.

While Nigeria can be likened to a Swiftian Gulliver, the metaphor of Lilliputian can equally be applied to many of its leaders whose gargantuan greed has prevented a country of enormous potential from fulfilling its leadership aspirations. In sixty years, Nigeria has been reduced to a giant

with clay feet, a “Tower of Babel,” built on the rickety foundations of oil rent that its leaders have simply collected and squandered. The country has earned itself the unenviable record of having the largest number of poor people in the world at 87 million. Oil still accounts for 90% of foreign exchange earnings and over half of government revenues, as successive administrations from Balewa to Buhari have failed to diversify the economy.

Buchi Emecheta wrote extensively about the plight of oppressed women in classic novels such as *The Joys of Motherhood* and *Second-Class Citizen*. Such misogyny remains rife across Nigerian society in sectors such as employment, education, and inheritance, with the COVID-19 pandemic exposing how rampant the scourge of gender-based violence has become. The political system is highly chauvinistic, with no female state governors out of 36, and only 21 out of 469 national legislators (a paltry 4.48%) being women: one of the lowest ratios in the world. Considering that women constitute half of Nigeria's population, this scandalous waste of talent must be urgently remedied through temporary quotas.

More positively, Nigeria's foreign policy was particularly active with the creation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 1975; membership of the “Frontline States” of Southern Africa in the 1980s; the deployment of over 150,000 military and police to global peacekeeping missions; and interventions in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea-Bissau in the 1990s and 2000s that resulted in over 1,500 Nigerian fatalities and cost the country over \$1 billion. This Pax Nigeriana has represented a unique sacrifice in blood and treasure.

A Play of Giants Basking in oil wealth, Nigeria hosted the World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC) in 1977, involving 70,000 artistes and delegates from 59 countries across Africa and its Diaspora at a cost of \$.75 billion in today's money. FESTAC involved durbars, regattas, musical performances, and traditional dances, as well as elaborate works of art. The festival

Nigeria at 60: From Balewa to Buhari

represented a national show-piece by a self-confident elite to mark the arrival into the ranks of the nouveaux riches of the world's largest Black nation. Nigeria sought to promote African culture as a sign of equality with a West that had often denigrated the continent's traditions.

The achievements of Nigerian writers and artistes have been impressive. Wole Soyinka's "Kongi" became the first African winner of the Nobel prize for literature, rewarded for his bountiful literary harvest in 1986. Chinua Achebe won the Man Booker prize, Ben Okri and Bernardine Evaristo the Booker prize, while Chimamanda Adichie claimed the Orange prize. In the world of music, the 1950s Highlife era was led by titans like Victor Olaiya, Rex Lawson, and Bobby Benson. Their heirs, Sunny Ade and Ebenezer Obey, battled for supremacy in juju music, while iconoclastic Afro-jazz superstar, Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, finally achieved global immortality through the 2008 Broadway musical *Fela!* Contemporary artistes like Tiwa Savage, Asa, Wizkid, and Burna Boy represent the voice of a new generation.

Nollywood has perhaps been the most potent symbol of Nigeria's cultural "soft power." It is the second-largest film producer in the world behind India's Bollywood, and ahead of America's Hollywood. This industry is thought to be the second-largest employer in Nigeria. Nollywood films are now widely available from Banjul to Baltimore to Bridgetown, and have influenced the dress of Kenyan politicians, Congolese pastors, and Barbadian women. Globally, Chiwetel Ejiofor was nominated for a best actor Oscar for *12 Years a Slave*, David Oyelowo and Carmen Ejogo shone in *Selma*, while Cynthia Erivo was nominated for a best actress Oscar for *Harriet*.

In the realm of sports, Nigeria's Super Eagles won the Africa Cup of Nations in 1980, 1994, and 2013, but like the country have failed to fulfill their huge potential at the World Cup. The team, however, won Olympic gold, along with long-jumper, Chioma Ajunwa, in Atlanta, in 1996. The men's 4×400 relay team also struck gold in Sydney four years later. Legendary Nigerian boxing world champions have stretched from Dick Tiger to Hogan Bassey to Henry Akinwande to Anthony Oluwafemi Joshua.

Half of A Yellow Sun

Politics during Nigeria's First Republic (1960-1966) was Hobbesian: short, nasty, and brutish. Political life centred around a system in which three ethnically-based parties dominated their respective regions. The "Founding Fathers" Ahmadu Bello, Nnamdi Azikiwe, and Obafemi Awolowo who are often uncritically revered as political deities, in fact, descended into ethnic chauvinism of the worst kind, playing out "A Dance of the Forests."

These were not Solomonic Wise Men from the East. As the inept politicians drifted from one crisis to another, the prime minister, Tafawa Balewa, and the premiers of the Northern (Ahmadu Bello) and Western (S.L. Akintola) regions were assassinated in a January 1966 coup. The Eastern-led military putschists provoked a Northern counter-coup which assassinated the hapless head of state, General Johnson "Ironsides" Aguiyi-Ironsi, six months later, and put Ironsi's chief of staff, Colonel Yakubu Gowon, a Christian Middle-Belter, in power. Northern mobs killed Easterners living in the North in bloody pogroms, and the charismatic Colonel Emeka Ojukwu's attempt to create the independent Republic of Biafra resulted in a 30-month civil war in which at least one million, mostly Eastern Igbos died. This enterprising group has shamefully never been fully reintegrated into Nigeria's national life. Kenyan author, Ali Mazrui's haunting 1971 novel of ideas, *The Trial of Christopher Okigbo*, captured well the tragedy of this contemporary Cain and Abel parable, when he "tried" Nigeria's greatest poet who had died fighting on the side of Biafra in an African Hereafter for betraying his art and for putting ethnicity before nation.

Of Mandarins, Soldiers, and Politicians

From 1970, General Gowon oversaw a spirited post-war reconciliation. Oil was to be the balm that would soothe the pains and agonies of the past "decade of troubles." The sudden spurt of the rich mineral from fields in the Niger Delta made Nigeria the world's eighth largest oil producer. This era also saw an alliance between powerful mandarins and military brass hats in pursuing the country's reconstruction efforts. Flyovers, dual carriageways, and bridges sprung up across Nigeria as a visible legacy of the heady oil boom of the 1970s. In this era of "Opera Wonyosi" excess,

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Gowon notoriously noted that the problem was not the money, but how to spend it. He relied heavily on “Super Permsecs” such as Allison Ayida, Philip Asiodu, and Abdulazeez Atta in relationships forged in the fiery furnace of civil war.

The dynamic minister of reconstruction and development, Adebayo Adedeji, oversaw national development plans, strengthened social cohesion through the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), and promoted regional integration through ECOWAS. By the time of his overthrow in July 1975, Gowon had reneged on a promise to return the country to civilian rule and corruption flourished, leading to a coup that saw the rise to power of General Murtala Mohammed. Nicknamed “the Sacker of Benin” for his brutal civil war role, Mohammed ironically became a national martyr, following his assassination in a botched coup in February 1976. In his seven months in power, he had waged a popular anti-corruption campaign, committed his regime to a return to civilian rule, and pursued an activist foreign policy. The era of Falstaffian General Olusegun Obasanjo saw the brutal unleashing of “Mad Dog” securocrats whom Fela memorably termed “Zombies” and “Yellow Fever” before returning power to civilians in 1979.

Nigeria's kleptocratic Second Republic (1979-1983) under the ineffectual leadership of Shehu Shagari, saw a descent into Sodom and Gomorrah. The democratic experiment of moving from a parliamentary to a presidential system proved to be short-lived, as widespread corruption saddled the country with a \$16 billion external debt. General Muhammadu Buhari and the strongman of the regime, General Tunde Idiagbon, abruptly ended civilian rule shortly after a flawed election in 1983. The heavy-handed regime launched a “War against Indiscipline” and clamped down harshly on the media. This volatile period also saw growing xenophobia with the shameful expulsion of three million West Africans, criminalized as “illegal aliens.”

Two Horsemen of the Apocalypse

Buhari was replaced in a “palace coup” by General Ibrahim Babangida in August 1985. At first

portraying himself as a “liberal” soldier, Babangida eventually earned the nickname of “Machiavelli,” as a ruthless and scheming dictatorship led to an endless democratic transition in a circuitous journey without maps. In the end, Nigeria's “Maradona” dribbled himself into a maze, forced out of power after an annulled election in June 1993, effectively killing the still-born Third Republic. By this time, Nigeria had accumulated an external debt of \$30 billion. Continuing the venal tradition of his predecessors, Babangida's administration was unable to account for \$12.4 billion of missing oil revenues in 1991, confirming its reputation as a “government of settlement.”

Nigeria's next military horseman in this “Army Arrangement,” the Macbethian General Sani Abacha (1993-1998), was the most tyrannical leader in the country's history. Abacha almost seemed to be pursuing a psychopathic “Samson option” of bringing the country down with him. The hanging of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight environmental activists in November 1995 was the nadir of his debauched rule, satirised in Wole Soyinka's play, *King Baabu*. Nigeria was subsequently suspended from the Commonwealth, and branded an international pariah. After his death in June 1998 reportedly in the company of Indian prostitutes Abacha's family had to return much of the estimated \$3 billion fortune he had illicitly amassed. Though his domestic reputation will certainly never recover, Abacha did contribute greatly to peacekeeping efforts in Liberia and Sierra Leone. After the tyrant's death, the level-headed General Abdulsalaam Abubakar led the soldiers back to their barracks, surrendering power to the elected government of Olusegun Obasanjo in May 1999, as retired generals occupied influential positions in the country's new politics.

The Emperor Without Clothes Obasanjo emerged from Abacha's jail to preside over the Fourth Republic suffering from messianic delusions in this “Second Coming” as head of state. He was to be a bridge between the military and civilians, between the North and South, a new broom to sweep away the corruption and abuses of military brass hats who had lost any sense of purpose beyond plundering the national treasury and pummeling innocent

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citizens into brutal submission. He had inherited a plethora of conflicts: Ogonis against Andonis, Ijaws against Itsekiris, Tivs against Jukuns, Chambas against Kutebs, Katafs against Hausas, Yorubas against Hausas, and Hausas against Igbos. Some of these conflicts continued under Obasanjo's rule, leading to an estimated 12,000 deaths from violence related to religious and ethnic feuds. Nigeria's "imagined communities" developed their own differing interpretations of the same history and proceeded to defend these on the basis of birthright and blood. Though these conflicts over land, religion, resources, and chieftaincy titles mostly had local roots, opportunistic politicians exploited them for their own parochial ends, realising how easy it was to light a fuse under simmering brush fires.

Nigeria's economic problems also forced many of its citizens to turn to religion for succour. The popularity of both Christian and Islamic fundamentalists increased, even as wealthy, ostentatious preachers "Brother Jeros" played on the gullibility of their desperate flock. Religion became a political weapon, as sharia criminal law was applied to a dozen Northern states. Communal riots between Muslims and Christians sporadically erupted, resulting in scores of deaths. Despite his flawed *fin de régime* in which he unsuccessfully sought an unconstitutional third presidential term, Obasanjo and his dynamic finance minister, Ngozi "Wahala" Okonjo-Iweala, were able to settle the country's \$30 billion external debt. Corruption, however, raged, as did armed militancy in the oil-producing Niger Delta. The country's infrastructure continued to crumble, despite billions of dollars being released by the treasury.

Sick Man and Bad Luck

In May 2007, Obasanjo, handed power, in a disgracefully flawed election, to Umaru Yar'Adua, the first university graduate to rule the country. This soft-spoken Northern aristocrat promised political and economic reforms, but died in office in May 2010 before implementing any real change. Yar'Adua's Ijaw deputy, Goodluck Jonathan, took over as president, and won presidential polls in April 2011. The zoologist oversaw five years of largely incompetent rule, with the oil minister, Diezani

Alison-Madueke, the most visible representative of the reckless profligacy that resulted in the government being unable to account for \$10 billion in oil revenues in 2014 that the Central Bank governor, Lamido Sanusi, exposed at the staggeringly corrupt Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC).

Perhaps the greatest symbol of Nigeria's persistent failure to fulfill its huge potential is the Ajaokuta Steel Complex planned since the 1970s, which having consumed \$5 billion, has effectively become a white elephant. The March 2015 polls achieved the first democratic change of government in Nigeria's history. Muhammadu Buhari had promised to sweep away the corruption of the widely discredited People's Democratic Party (PDP) under "Badluck" Jonathan. He would become the second former military ruler in 16 years to return as a civilian president.

Waiting For An Angel

Since 2015, the lackadaisical Buhari, nicknamed "Baba Go Slow," has been dogged by ill health and allegations of a corrupt cabal having hijacked his government. He took six months to appoint his first cabinet and spent five months in a British hospital. Reminiscent of the "euphoric planning" of the oil boom 1970s, Buhari's Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) envisaged tackling Nigeria's infrastructural deficit through building roads and railways, as well as promoting industrialisation, with the goal of creating 15 million jobs and achieving 7% growth rates by 2020. The government has, however, come no way near achieving these targets. Unemployment stands at 27.1%, with a perilous 14 million youths who represent 60% of the population out of work.

Insecurity between herdsmen and farmers has increased local conflicts across the country, even as Boko Haram and its breakaway Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) have wrought widespread misery in the north-east, with more than 50,000 deaths and over 2.5 million displaced. Attacks by Niger Delta militants had earlier shut down a third of Nigeria's oil production. Gulliver's troubles have prevented the country from playing an effective military role in stemming terrorism in Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso, with neo-colonial France instead acting as the regional hegemon.



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Nigeria's economic woes have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, amidst declining international oil prices. The country has amassed an unsustainable \$85 billion debt, using half of its government revenues, the same amount devoted to infrastructure, to service this debt, thus preventing sufficient funds going to employment, education, and health. An already stagnant economy continues to struggle, amidst persistent electricity black-outs: South Africa, with a third of Nigeria's population, produces ten times more electricity. The ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) is increasingly fractious, as various godfathers jostle for power ahead of elections in 2023.

Nigeria's continuing political intrigues recall the words of its most famous magician, Professor Peller: "Abracadabra! The more you look, the less you see!" The six-week postponement of the 2019 election was sadly not unusual, reflecting the state of gross decay of many of Nigeria's denuded institutions and dilapidated infrastructure. The last two polls in 2011 and 2015 were also postponed. Nigeria's parliamentary dunderheads not renowned for moral rectitude or legislative acumen have each allocated themselves a reported \$480,000 annually, making them among the highest paid lawmakers in the world. They have also budgeted as much money to renovate

their national assembly as to repair federal roads. Several state governors have acted as prodigal sons, accused of perpetrating massive corruption. Many business people, too lazy to use entrepreneurial skills which many lack, instead rely on personal connections to members of the ruling cabal to enrich themselves. Scores of religious leaders, rather than preaching a "liberation theology," instead practice a "prosperity gospel": these charlatans have built their mansions on earth, while urging their flock to await theirs in Heaven.

One hopeful sign for Nigeria has been the fact that its 1.2 million-strong global Diaspora sent home \$25 billion in remittances in 2019, representing a figure equivalent to over 80% of its annual budget. However, the COVID crisis is likely to reduce this income by 20% in 2020. As the country turns 60, Nigeria is a limping Leviathan unable to maintain the most basic responsibility of statehood: providing security to its citizens. The country's seven deadly sins have caused untold suffering in six decades of independence. Its prayerful populace appears to be awaiting a miraculous *deus ex machina*. But, might Nigeria instead be consumed by fire and brimstone in a millenarian apocalypse?

Professor Adekeye Adebajo is Director of the University of Johannesburg's Institute for Pan-African Thought and Conversation in South Africa

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Prof Mojeed Akinsola

VIEW POINT:

Public University Education in Nigeria: 60 Years after Independence

Public university education in Nigeria has suffered a precipitous decline in fortunes due to non-prioritization by the ruling class. In the 1960s, the first-generation universities enjoyed global reckoning for their quality. However, the waning support for university education by Federal and State Governments as from the 1970s gave rise to a situation where universities are now struggling to find their feet. The ruling class takes delight in creating new universities than developing the existing ones; turning universities to constituency projects which must be extended to every local government. This trend has done incalculable damage to university education in Nigeria.

BIODUN OGUNYEMI





ASUU's SANCTION ON LASU: WHY IT IS NECESSARY

By: Drs. Tony Dansu and Adeolu Oyekan

Lagos State University (LASU) for about 36 years of its existence remains in the limelight for its penchant for internally generated crisis. When the students are not at loggerheads with the university Administration over one welfare issue or another, the Administration is in conflict with the staff union(s) on matters of welfare, among others. In some cases, the issues affect both the students and staff unions. None of the eight substantive Vice Chancellors in the university's history can be said to have had a crisis-free tenure.

In many instances as alluded to, crises arise in the form of resistance against executive arrogance, incompetence, administrative recklessness, highhandedness, mismanagement of funds, non-adherence to the rule of law, and other forms of impunities on the part of the successive administrators of the university.

Professor Olanrewaju Adigun Fagbohun the current Vice Chancellor of LASU ranks higher than many of his predecessors on the scale of mal-administration and mismanagement. Since his assumption of office over four years ago, ASUU in the Lagos State University playing its role as the watchdog in the system, has raised issues bordering on numerous infractions of his administration, which run foul of global university best practices, as well as the Lagos State University Law, and its Conditions of Service. Some of these include, but are not limited to:

1. Appointments of non-recommended and non-qualified academics as Heads of Departments;

2. Replacement of an Associate Professor with a Lecturer Grade 1, who was still a PhD student in the University as a Director of an academic Centre, which is a clear case of patronage;

3. Several cases of double standards in management of staff affairs

4. Continuous victimization of staff perceived as enemies of his predecessor, Prof John Oladapo Obafunwa, who as his benefactor contrived to offer him a dubious professorship wrongfully and illegally backdated to a date not presented before the Governing Council, to qualify him for the Vice Chancellorship;

5. Doctoring of approved Conditions and Scheme of Service and insertions of obnoxious policies that are not workers-friendly, in breach of the negotiated version with all stakeholders;

6. Deliberate misinterpretation of the University laws to witch-hunt perceived oppositions among staff and students;

7. Providing cover for those responsible for the illegal access to, and the mismanagement of NEEDS Assessment Funds allocated to LASU;

8. Unilateral stoppage of the allowances of the internal members of Governing Council

9. Fraudulent admission process

10. Non-compliance with the laws of the University on the election of Deputy Vice Chancellors, and Directors of Academic Centres.

The above items are some of the issues the Union observed, and drew the attention of the Vice Chancellor to, from time to time. His intolerance of opposition, dissent and checks became the propelling factor (with the aid of some opportunists in the system and some members of the Union suspended by NEC for anti-union activities) in his project of seeking to annihilate the ASUU in



ASUU'S SANCTION ON LASU: WHY IT IS NECESSARY

LASU. To achieve this, the current leadership of the Union was marked out as one that must be destroyed and eliminated from the system.

The first targets were the Chair and the Vice Chair of the Branch, Drs Isaac Akinloye Oyewumi and Adebowale Adeyemi-Suenu who were dragged before the Joint Council/Senate Disciplinary Committee of the University, headed by an external member of the Governing Council, Mr Sunny Ajoseh on the basis of trumped up charges. The duo were dismissed from the service of LASU on the 7th of September, 2017. The rest of the Exco members carried on with the struggle, yet three other Exco members, Drs Tony Dansu, Adeolu Oyekan and Oluwakemi Aboderin-Sonibare, the Secretary, Assistant Secretary, and the Treasurer respectively, were dismissed again on frivolous allegations, on the 12th of September, 2019. This made it five Exco members targeted out of nine.

At the moment, two members of the Exco, Drs Adekunle Idris and Hamzat Edu, the Immediate Past Chair (IPC) and the Financial Secretary respectively, have been queried in another bid by the University administration under Prof Fagbohun to ensure the total weakening of the Union.

Prior to the dismissal of the last trio, the Vice Chancellor illegally stopped the remittance of check off dues to the Union from the month of January 2019. By December 2019, the Vice Chancellor, with the help of Profs Adeleke Fakoya, Biodun Akinpelu, and Ishaq Lakin-Akintola, and the suspended past leaders of the Union, put together an illegal group, and named them the new ASUU-LASU Exco. This illegal group led by one Drs Adeolu Bakare and Sylvester Idowu as Chair and Secretary respectfully, started their illegal activities by writing ASUU-LASU's bank (Wema Bank) to freeze the Union's accounts.

Strangely, Wema bank obliged them this request despite a letter from the President of ASUU not to recognize any group of people as Exco of ASUU-LASU apart from the Oyewumi-led Exco. The bank even went a step further to open another account for the illegal group in the name of ASUU-LASU. This illegal body for about a year now has been empowered by the Fagbohun-led University administration to operate in the name of the ASUU. They interact with the University, government and the public using the union's name.

After several failed attempts by the Union through the Lagos Zone, and repeated visitations of national delegations, ASUU at the NEC meeting of ESUT, Enugu, between 7th and 8th March, 2020, declared LASU Vice Chancellor, Prof Lanre Fagbohun, an enemy of the Union. NEC also sanctioned the University to the effect that external examinations, external assessments, conferences, workshops, research collaborations/visits, etc., to and from LASU should be stopped forthwith. These sanctions are to subsist until NEC reviews its position on LASU.

The sanctions imposed by NEC are geared towards redirecting the leadership of the University to the path of due process, rule of law and recognition of the right to dissent in a truly free academic environment. It is also noteworthy that all the cases of dismissal are being challenged in court by the affected comrades with the support of the Union. NEC in its wisdom has also decided, in line with its powers in the Union's Constitution not to hold any election at the Branch, but to continue supporting the Dr Oyewumi-led Exco until victory is attained.

Aluta Continua, Vitoria acerta.



REFLECTIONS

Naira Marley is the representative of the youth that the NPF chose to dialogue with on the SARS issue. Naira Marley ooo, not Olaoluwa Hallowed, the youngest PhD holder in Africa (Google him if you don't know him)

Laycon is now the youth ambassador in Ogun state, with a three bedroom flat and 5 million naira to flex with. Laycon ooo, not the best graduating student in OOU.

These three seemingly unrelated events clearly underscore where we are as a country, where our priorities lie and what's important to us. Clearly it is not education.

No matter how much schooling you've garnered under your belt, it is irrelevant in our society. Any wonder why the children of today are not really interested in education?

A real shame!



Quotable Quotes:

1. Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire William Butler Yates.
2. A people that elect corrupt politicians, impostors, thieves and traitors are not victims but accomplices George Orwell.
3. A friend is a second self Anonymous.
4. If a man neglects education, he walks lame all his life Plato.
5. An investment in knowledge pays the best interest Benjamin Franklin.
6. Change is the end result of all true learning Leo Buscaglia.
7. Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today Malcolm X.
8. The punishment suffered by the wise who refuse to take part in government, is to live under the government of bad men Plato.
9. Teaching kids to count is fine, but teaching them what counts is best Bob Talbert.
10. Tell me, I forget, teach me and I remember, Involve me, and I learn Benjamin Franklin.
11. The roots of education are bitter, but the fruit is sweet Aristotle.
12. A teacher affects eternity, he can never tell where his influence stops Henry B. Adams.

NEOLIBERALISM AND THE NEOLIBERAL ASSAULTS ON NIGERIANS

Idaevbor Bello, PhD

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Since the close of the 1970s when neoliberal tendencies began to intrude on the Nigerian economic space, in spite of a firm opposition from an ideologically committed wing of the intelligentsia with a strong socialist conviction, through the 1980s when the IMF finally got a firm foothold in the country with the introduction of the Structural Adjustment Programme, SAP, and the organised resistance to it, through the 1990s when the pretences of the Nigerian state as to its commitment to the welfare of the working people began to be discarded, and into the new millennium when the echo of 'government has no business in business' became the mantra of state actors who have been schooled in the political shenanigan of the IMF and the World Bank and their economic shibboleths, Nigeria and its people have been under severe economic assault. This intrusion into the Nigerian economic space has been speeded up as a result of the halfhearted, and, at times, a nonexistent resistance by organized labour that itself has been practically emasculated. And the attention of the intellectual class has been diverted to fighting a life and death battle for the survival of public education in the country. All these appear to have intruded to hinder a more robust action to rescuing the country which has been buffeted by the actions of a ruling class that has been mindlessly ruthless in its dealings

The events that led to the present situation have their tentative roots in the years immediately after independence. But then, neoliberalism and neoliberals could not make much advancement in the country as there was a loud and coherent intellectual response anchored on the new emergent intelligentsia with a firm ideological grounding and an organized labour leadership and a student body both of which equally had firm ideological underpinnings. It was under this politico-economic environment that the Nigerian students of the time, backed by these ideologically motivated groups, stood up in defiance of the attempt by the ruling class to erect the first neoliberal blocks and rejected in its totality the first onslaught against the psyche of the country that was clothed in the Anglo-Nigerian Defence Pact of 1962.

Neoliberalism, a reform of economic policies to achieve the elimination of virtually all forms of governmental control, reared its fangs just before the end of the first intervention by the military in the 1970s. Neoliberal reforms are designed to achieve a free market enterprise where the government's only role is the provision of the enabling environment for capitalism to have a free reign over the people's lives. In other words, in a neoliberal economy government acquiesces to: 1) allowing market forces to determine the direction of prices of essential goods and services as no control of whatever kind is encouraged; 2) a

deregulation of the capital markets with its resultant manipulative tendencies that give a false sense of growth; 3) removal of trade barriers thereby allowing all kinds of products to be dumped within the country, and, perhaps more importantly; 4) a total withdrawal of state influence in the economic direction of the country which is usually achieved through privatization of government enterprises and commercialization of hitherto regulated services. In fact, as Naomi Klein has pointed out, the three pillars of neoliberalism are "privatization of the public sphere, deregulation of the corporate sector, and the lowering of income and corporate taxes, paid for with cuts to public spending." And this, one can dare say, is the ugly reality of the Nigerian situation today!

As alluded to at the beginning of this discourse, the assault of neoliberalism on Nigeria and its people took firmer roots with the introduction of SAP in the closing years of the 1980s. Since then the IMF and the World Bank's stranglehold on the country's jugular has not had any reprieve. If anything, subsequent administrations since the Babangida years have opened the doors wider still for the continued onslaught. The Nigerian people have witnessed the gradual but steady devaluation of their lives since the reforms that even their protagonists have agreed need to wear a humane face!

It would appear that

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today in Nigeria, the restoration of western democracy has come with the objective of the total annihilation of the extreme poor in the reforms that the ruling class has imposed on the nation; yet we are told that these reforms are intended for the good of these Fanonian 'wretched of the earth' who have no voice in the direction that the wind of neoliberal reforms blows them. Nigeria today is classed as one of the poorest nations on earth, yet the system continues to strangle the common people with policies that are designed to further pauperize them. The value of the Nigerian life as it stands in the world at the moment amounts to nothing; it is ensconced in a strangulating economic environment that reduces its worth to mere drudgery.

The negative effects of the neoliberal assaults on the people's psyche are all too obvious for even the economically blind to see. When it is convenient for the protagonists of these reforms, they tout the marginal few who have scaled the poverty line to escape from the excruciating pain that is the lot of the very large majority. And the onslaught against the people is manifested in all facets of life in Nigeria. Unemployment rate in the country has become so alarming that the solution touted by apologists of neoliberalism and its attendant reforms is the introduction of so-called entrepreneurial curriculum that is at best a caricature of capitalist vision of growth. At other times, schemes are hatched that are supposed to make funds available to a huge body of the unemployed to assist them in growing a business. But the sad reality is that these schemes have largely become conduits for mindless stealing of national resources by

the political actors who anchor these schemes. And public services upon which the country ran from independence through the 1970s have all completely collapsed. Their once-upon-a-time existence have become tales that parents who experienced them regale their offspring with.

To compound the people's predicament, the government has recently withdrawn the so-called subsidy on petrol and at the same time raised tariffs on electricity; these on the back of an increase in the value added tax, VAT. It does appear that the unstated policy of the state at this time is the complete decimation of the populace by squeezing the economic noose around their necks as dictated by the World Bank and the IMF and their agents that have taken over the running of the country's economy at the turn of the millennium. In the midst of this, the people are made to live under the harsh conditions of a debilitating debt burden, the debt that has largely gone to fund the excesses of state actors whose appetite has not diminished in the least! The reality of the Nigerian situation is that whereas the working people are told to tighten their belt and be 'patriotic' and make sacrifices for the assumed growth of the country, members of the ruling class loosen their own belt as they guzzle down whatever is available; this has pronouncedly been the case since the 1980s. The Nigerian situation is, indeed, a contradiction that numbs any reasoning, all thanks to the theorists of neoliberalism.

Privatisation of national assets that was touted as the magic wand that would move the country and its people to economic Eldorado has only

turned out to be an organized criminal takeover of the people's commonwealth by government officials and their cronies who wear the disguise robe to masquerade as 'investors of note.' Nigerians are faced with a situation whereby public resources are used to fund entities that have been shared amongst erstwhile and current state actors and their allies. What thus exists now is the situation that Festus Iyayi used to describe as 'privatisation of profit and socialisation of losses.' This translates to mean that in the event of losses, the state makes public funds available to bail out these enterprises, but when they make profits they end up in private accounts. Head or tail, therefore, the working people who produce the wealth of the nation are the losers.

Perhaps it is in the field of tertiary education that neoliberalism has wreaked more havoc on Nigerians. The Nigerian youths that are supposed to be the inheritors of the future are today left at the crossroad. Following years of near total abandonment of tertiary institutions in the country as a result of deliberate poor funding, the objective of which was to force them to be fully commercialised, if not sold outright, a policy which the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) is vehemently, and with sound reasoning, opposed to, the government, in succumbing to the IMF dictates, decided that the way out was to allow the establishment of private universities. This was after ASUU, with good reasons had rejected the Brenton Wood's

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institutions' pill designated as NUSIP, the Nigeria University System Innovation Project. The main objective of that programme was to literally tie the administration of Nigerian universities to the apron strings of the World Bank.

So in consonance with their dictate to open the education of Nigerian children and their future to the determination of market forces, private universities were licensed to operate in the country. Today, the Nigerian state is working so hard at divesting from education. Private universities, as I write this piece, are mushrooming in all corners of the country. It is because of this unbridled objective of the Nigeria Universities Commission, NUC, to license them that Omotoye Olorode laments that it would appear that the primary objective of the Commission is to midwife the creation of new private universities at the expense of funding the public ones. But for the consistent intervention of ASUU, public universities would be near extinct in the counter.

The consequence of this is that the government and its agents are hell bent on introducing prohibitive fees that would deny the children of working class families access to university education. A major reason ASUU's negotiation to review the 2009 Agreement, an Agreement that was due for review in 2012, is the insistence of one of these neoliberal agents, Wale Babalakin, SAN, that the Union must accept the introduction of prohibitive costs on students and their already overburdened parents! And for over three years, discussions on

the review of that Agreement were literally stalled as progress could not be made. Emboldened by the government's acquiescence to his deliberate and provocative behaviour in stalling progress on the negotiating table, Babalakin took his act to the market square by resorting to truncating the law to achieve his purpose in removing the Vice Chancellor of the University of Lagos. I went this far to show that in their assault on Nigeria and Nigerians, agents of reforms and free market economists do not have patience with the law, their own law. For them, it is always a quick fix thing; their victims can seek justice that will take decades to come. When it does come, they would have been settled in the periled comfort of their illegality, and the state on behalf of which they acted would bear the brunt of that illegality.

One hears these days amongst neoliberal agents that every child must not have university/tertiary education. When they say this, they actually mean that children of working class parents do not deserve a higher education. This is plain enough! In their quest to make higher education a commodity that must be subjected to market forces, the cost of acquiring it would scale out of the reach of those at the bottom end of the ladder, and the result would be that they would be forced to stop the education of their children. These children who would then be forced to drop out of school would inevitably be made to learn a trade or the order and thus remain in perpetuity at the mercy of the children of those who are the architects and beneficiaries of this situation.

Just as the state has virtually abandoned primary and secondary level of education to market forces with the attendant implication that parents resort to public schools as a last resort, so they seek to turn tertiary education, especially the universities. The only saving grace has been the principled stand of ASUU in defence of public universities. But neoliberal agents, some of them academics, would wish the Union abandoned this path and allow market forces to determine the destination of the Nigerian youth in life. This is simply unacceptable.

The assault of neoliberalism on Nigeria and Nigerians since the later part of the 1980s as it has been shown here has been coordinated. It has become even worse with the advent of democracy at the end of the 1990s. Since this new order, the Nigerian economy has literally been handed over to the IMF and the World Bank as their agents have their fangs at the heart of the management of the country's economy. While they do this, the pronouncement of these agents is magisterial. There are usually no alternatives to their prescription for the management of the economy! Yet the reality is that ordinary Nigerians who bear the effects of the negative outcome of their arsenic pills are groaning.

Wages of workers have become meaningless in the face of the massive devaluation that the Naira has been subjected to through the decades; there is virtually no production going on in the country now because of the hostile economic climate arising from the reforms that have

NEOLIBERALISM AND THE NEOLIBERAL ASSAULTS ON NIGERIANS

happened. The steel industry that was to give the country a new leverage has been abandoned and// the private concerns that were touted as the messiahs that would resuscitate the still companies have cannibalized them so mindlessly that today no meaningful mention is made of them.

The list is endless. The fraud that is the privatisation of NEPA has left the people in a quandary as no respite has come the way of the people. If anything, the people experience more darkness that power with the privatisation! The people are now being made to pay for darkness. It

is even worse. Metering of consumers of electricity in the country is mired in a needless controversy. The private distribution companies who acquired the monumental assets of the erstwhile NEPA have deliberately refused to provide metres for the citizens. The outcome of this is that they force the people to pay estimated bills that are outrageous; and when they challenge this criminal intention, their premises are disconnected. The NERC that is supposed to act as ombudsman and give succour and protect the people turn around to put encumbrances in their way to

seeking justice. Simply put, all is grim, and the way out, in the view of this writer, is that the people must be mobilized in resistance to the virtual takeover of the Nigerian economy by neoliberalist ideology. The stranglehold by these elements is causing asphyxiation and only the timely intervention of the united force of the people can break the chains that bound their freedom.

JOKE OF THE DAY

Wife asked: *What are u doing?*

Husband: *Am Killing mosquitoes?*

Wife: *How many did u kill?*

Husband: *Total 5.* *Two females, 3 males.*

Wife: *How do u know their genders?*

Husband: *2 were near my wallet and 3 near the beer bottle* .☹☹





POEMS

Lamentation for the Chibok Girl

Muffled pain and silent anguish
Rivers of water from my soul
Mourning my daughter yet alive
Fretted away in religious fervour

Hope alive suddenly dimmed
Iron chariot in the dead of night
Innocence loss to corrupt crescent
In the belly of unassailable jungle

Utopian proposed without scruples
Blind men set to rule our word
Holding our future captive
Raping and maiming the future mother

Gazing at the horizon day and night
When cometh my baby home?
What manner of journey
embarked upon?
Without goodbye hug nor kiss

Heart bleeding tearful eyes
An innocence forever lost
Trauma in the heart, mind and soul
Even when home returned
Buratai confronts the brutal
Mouse runs and cat at chase
Arrogance of strength lies prostrate
With jack boot trampling the forest

Kano

The ancient rises, the modern
descends
A kiss of amazing splendour
Sea of men women unseen
Kano the Emir's abode

Plain horizon in sun crescendo
The crescent invites all to divine
Megaphone alluring lullaby
Kano the home of dome

Great wall and rising gates
Put asunder the now and then
The voice of old yet resounding
Preserves the purity of Kano

The walls crumbling without a care
Heritage of yesterday abandoned
The now attempt to swallow
Glory of the Kano dream

The city of Ado without much ado
Parachute on majestic horse back
Decrees issued from ancient palace
Confine infidels to Sabongeri

Olamakinde Olapegba

THE JOY OF VICTORY AND THE AGONY OF DEFEAT

Each time I receive a message from two of my friends with whom I communicate frequently, the subject of power tickles my mind, because each of them has a maxim about power in the signature section of their message box. One of them, “Power is transient”, focuses on the temporariness of power. This applies in particular to rotational positions, such as that of the Governor of a state or the Chairman of a committee. The other maxim, “Power is responsibility”, draws attention to the burden of accountability on the shoulders of anyone in a position of power.

Put simply, power is the ability or potential of a person or group of persons to dominate or control another person or group of persons. This is why Michel Foucault, a renowned French philosopher and social theorist, focused on the exercise of power. Indeed, for him, power exists only in its exercise as a form of social control through societal institutions.

We know from various examples of leadership roles that there are two basic ways in which leaders exercise power. One way is to use power to facilitate access to resources by empowering institutions and their agents. Those who exercise power this way are often interested in providing the greatest good for the largest number of people. This is what I admired in Rauf Aregbesola as Governor of the State of Osun.

Another way is to use power as a form of control of limited resources by bypassing institutions and even necessary agents, including diverting resources away from some stakeholders in order to benefit others, usually a small minority or even to benefit the power-holder him/herself. As we have discovered, such power-holders tend to be authoritarian. The outgoing President of the United States, Donald Trump, is a living example.

The key here lies in “bypassing institutions” and laid down rules as in the case of Dr. Wale Babalakin (SAN), the erstwhile Chairman of the University of Lagos Governing Council. As he often claimed, he did not use power to benefit himself. However, it was alleged that he empowered the University Registrar to disregard the Vice Chancellor, Professor Toyin



Ogundipe to the point that the VC's situation report allegedly did not even make it to the agenda of Council meetings.

Babalakin's attitude to, and treatment of, the VC attracted the attention of the university community and beyond. Various individuals and groups, including former

and serving VCs and Pro-Chancellors, appealed to Babalakin but to no avail. Matters seemed to have come to a head with the postponement of the UNILAG convocation in March this year, which Babalakin engineered. It was later alleged that the convocation date conflicted with a personal engagement he had outside the country.

I called Babalakin before my first article on the postponement (see UNILAG convocation: Hanging between Council and Management, *The Nation*, March 25, 2010) but I could not reach him. I later learned he was out of the country. As soon as I learned that he had returned, I called again to have his perspective on the same matter before writing my second article (Clarifications on the postponement of UNILAG convocation, *The Nation*, April 1, 2020). He picked my call and spent most of the time harassing me over the earlier article and threatening to sue me if I wrote nonsense.

When I first learned about the zealotry with which Babalakin went after Ogundipe, the analogy that came to mind was the excessive hatred Nwibe had for the madman in the lead story, titled *The Madman*, in Chinua Achebe's collection of short stories, *Girls at War*. When Dr. Babalakin eventually got Ogundipe removed as Vice Chancellor, I suspected that he might have given himself the Nwibe treatment.

Nwibe was a wealthy man, who was on the path to joining the hierarchy of titled men in his village. But there was a madman who walked through the village on market days, and Nwibe hated his guts. His children would throw stones at the madman. Nwibe himself once joined other men to bundle the madman out of a market stall. He also joined other passengers to assault the madman on the highway the madman had come to call his own.



JOKES

Dr Isaac Nwagwugwu

AN AWARD WINNING LOVE LETTER

My Darling Sunshine: I hope you are swimming in the ocean of good health. If so, doxology! You are the only sugar in my tea, the sum of all my arithmetic, and above all else, the only coat in the portmanteau of my heart. In short, if I am a sentence, you are the verb! The light of your soul burns in my heart like the Bunsen burner in the chemistry laboratory. You are my morning star. Whenever I think of you, my heart shakes jigjigi like railway. If you approach, I go very weak in the knees with the joyful sickness of love. Without you I am finished, patapata! If I look at the sun, I see you; if I look at the moon, I see you. In fact, you are everywhere, smiling at me like sunshine. Kai, I will simply die and bury myself inside the cemetery of your tender love. Mine is yours forever and ever. Even as I write now, I can feel you inside my skull dictating all the verbs and nouns, the adverbs and proverbs. Loving you is the only geometry I want to solve. Both of us are like simultaneous equations leading to only one answer: eternal happiness. We were created for each other by the one true God. You are indeed the bone of my bone, the flesh of my flesh, and the blood of my blood. You are my oxygen, the air of life and living. Without you I will expire in very fast seconds, kaput! My heart is so safe in the safe of your bosom. You are a guardian angel specially made in Heaven and celebrated on earth. I can feel your charming love in every petal and in all the flowers of the whole wide world. There is only one sweetness in the whole universe, and that sweetness is you, my beloved sweetheart, my darling angel, my queen of love, my crystal of beauty, my body and soul. I worship on the altar of your divine affection, singing soulful songs of soaring celebration. I shall follow you to the end of the globe and back again. There is no love in any other being other than you. Let truth be told, you are the owner of love. I live in the headquarters of love. You are without any question whatsoever the landlady of love. Every Funmi, Ngozi, Amina, Felicia or Jane is jealous of you. They are all looking for ropes to hang themselves because of your hot love for only me. Please pray for their poor souls: Amen! You are the only soup I want to lick: morning, afternoon and night, every day. My Tomato Jos, the juice of your love flows in all my veins. My medulla oblongata throbs with your majestic presence. You are my inspiration and my vision. Without you, I am totally blind. Baby Oku, you are hotter than all the models of the world. Every bachelor bows before you, but you have only chosen me. Neither Shekau nor Boko Haram can abduct our love. We are bound together like needle and thread. There is no pain whatsoever in our firmament and hemisphere and stratosphere. At this juncture, I wish to borrow the words of our favourite writer, Ogali A. Ogali, the doyen of Onitsha Market Literature, who in Veronica, My Daughter penned: "As I was descending from a declivity yesterday, with such an excessive velocity, I suddenly lost the centre of my gravity and was precipitated on the macadamized thoroughfare!" It was the feeling of your soft love and sugary care that stopped my bones from being mercilessly broken. I am so happy that you are not like Mabel in the book written by Speedy Erich entitled Mabel The Sweet Honey That Poured Away. You are my honey that can never pour away. Even William Shakespeare knows that beautiful music is the food of our love; that's why he wrote in Twelfth Night: "If music be the food love, play on, give me excess of it..." I will die for you and wake up again for you. The air you breathe nourishes me all the days of my life. You are that one special reason to explain the existence of God, because only the Supreme Being can create the immortal beauty that you are. Biko nu, where would I have been without your magnetic lovingitis? You are the last full-stop in the last sentence of the last chapter of the last book of my life. Your Slave in Love Joe Best

***Nigerian
government
only honour
agreements
with our oppressors,
World Bank & IMF,
they do not
respect agreements
with Nigerian
citizens
#EndASUUStrike***

**UNIONS
START WITH
YOU**



NUPEMCO: ONE YEAR AFTER



pensionnigeria



		
Fund III Return on Investment January to August 2020		
S/N	Pension Fund Administrators	Y2Date
1	NLPC Pension Fund Administrators Limited	24.84%
2	Investment One Pension Managers Limited	17.58%
3	Radix Pension Fund Managers Limited	14.78%
4	Fidelity Pension Managers Limited	12.45%
5	AXA Mansard Pension Limited	11.46%
6	APT Pension Fund Managers Limited	11.39%
7	Nigerian University Pension Management Company	11.14%
8	Crusader Sterling Pensions Limited	10.95%
9	OAK Pensions Limited	10.11%
10	AllCO Pension Managers Limited	9.75%
11	Nigeria Police Force Pensions Limited	9.56%
12	Stanbic IBTC Pension Managers Limited	9.55%
13	Leadway Pensure PFA Limited	9.46%
14	Sigma Pensions Limited	8.55%
15	Veritas Glanvills Pensions Limited	8.03%
16	IEI-Anchor Pension Managers Limited	7.78%
17	FCMB Pensions Limited	7.73%
18	Pensions Alliance Limited	7.70%
19	First Guarantee Pension Limited	7.33%
20	ARM Pension Managers Limited	7.12%
21	Trustfund Pensions Plc	7.11%
22	Premium Pension Limited	3.74%
Fund III Industry Average for 22 PFAs		10.37%
Return on Investment is not the only yardstick you should consider when investing. Growth is the Return on Investment (ROI) for the defined period. Past performance is not a guarantee for future performance. CAVEAT. The Fund Prices are from the PFAs.		
		Data by @PensionNigeria

ENGAGE OUR YOUTH, DON'T KILL THEM

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) was shocked to receive reports of violent attacks on protesting youth under the aegis of #EndSARS, killing and maiming a number of them, in Lagos and other states in the country. At the Lekki Toll Plaza on Tuesday, 20th October, 2020, light was switched off while armed security operatives swooped on the peaceful demonstrators who kept vigil at the venue. We condemn in strongest terms government's handling of the Lekki incident. The repression and killing of any citizen for exercising the constitutionally guaranteed rights to protest is unjustifiable and criminal. We call on the Federal government to get to the roots of the crisis and ensure that justice is done and seen to have been done to all victims of the dissent into brutality and murder.

ASUU fully identifies with Nigerian youth in exercising their constitutional rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and non-violent protest. Cumulative reports attest to the reckless, unguarded, and anti-people activities of the now-defunct Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) arm of the Nigeria Police Force. From all indications, SARS had become an instrument of oppression; intimidating, extorting and killing innocent youth and citizens on trump up charges. Those who survived the SARS experience tell gory tales. Mere name-change of the killer-organisation (SARS) is therefore not enough to erase the deep-rooted impression of betrayal by a security outfit supported with tax-payers' money. It will certainly not end the cruel murders widely perpetrated by SARS now changed to Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT).

ASUU notes with regrets that Nigeria has not grown beyond the conquest- subjugation orientation of colonial rule evident in police and military brutalisation of the civilian populace. Any approach to security that ignores the existential needs of the citizenry –

economic, social, cultural – is tenuous. Indeed, Nigeria's approach to security will endure only when it evolves within the prism of the fundamental objectives of the Nigerian state which situate security in the deep bowels of welfare and good life for the citizenry. Since we published *How to Save Nigeria* in 1984, ASUU has not ceased to condemn Nigeria's dependent and weak position within a declining and crisis-ridden world capitalist system. We have drawn attention to the presence of a local exploiting class whose members collaborate with foreign exploiting firms to steal Nigeria's wealth and transfer it abroad. Among the major causes of the current situation is the stealing, on a massive scale, by foreign and Nigerian contractors, politicians, distributors, and commission agents who do not contribute to production. These and other exploitative and rent-seeking tendencies have, cumulatively, precipitated the intractable crises engulfing virtually all regions of the country.

Nigerian workers, students and intellectuals have had a history of progressive defence of the constitutionally guaranteed rights of all Nigerians. Government after government has distributed the wealth created by workers to the rich and powerful (in all parties and all regimes). To confront our monumental security challenges, the conditions of life of the suffering Nigerians, not the rich and powerful, should be the starting point. Nigeria's constitution states clearly that the Nigerian state must be a welfare state. The youth's response is a reflection of the suffering imposed upon them by Nigeria's rulers and their partners from Europe and America. It is a suffering Nigerians of all ages are all experiencing. The youth's ongoing protest is a challenge to those who hold political power to urgently and rightly address the core issues of poverty, homelessness, unemployment, poor education, and lack of access to social services such as adequate healthcare, good

ENGAGE OUR YOUTH, DON'T KILL THEM

roads, housing and electricity for majority of Nigerians. The youth are carrying the burden of resistance, a burden which they have taken on behalf of other classes of the Nigerian society. The labour movement, the professional groups, the peasant farmers, the artisans, and the intellectuals must defend the rights of the people as guaranteed by the Constitution as the youth have done with the peaceful protest. It is a challenge to all those who want genuine change in Nigeria. We must intervene in manners that bring lasting impact; lest the genuine struggle of our youth is hijacked by self-seeking opposition politicians and miscreants as already happening.

The future of the young people in Nigeria is threatened. They are living in conditions of hopelessness, disintegration of families, and despair about the present and the future. So long as the prevalent deprivations persist, lacking a hope for a better satisfying life conditions, it is expected that they will lose confidence in the present set-up. The solution is, therefore, to embark as, an emergency, on a series of public programmes of economic and social welfare, as provided for in Chapter Two of the 1999 Constitution (amended) – provision of state-funded qualitative education, mass employment as well as other life-enhancing opportunities that characterise a welfare state. The Federal Government must lead the way in restoring peace and justice in Nigeria. Security operatives must be stopped from the senseless killing of armless youth protesters while infiltrators must be brought under check through active intelligence. For obvious reasons of past betrayal, the youth are right to insist on

seeing evidence of how well government has met their five-point demand – immediate release of all arrested protesters; justice for all deceased victims of police brutality and appropriate compensation for their families, setting up an independent body to oversee the investigation and prosecution of all reports of police misconduct; psychological evaluation and retraining of all disbanded SARS officers before they can be redeployed; and increase police salary so that they are adequately compensated for protecting lives and property of citizens. It is only by continuous engagement that this would happen, not by deployment of trigger-happy military personnel as reportedly done in the case of Lekki Toll Plaza.

ASUU commiserates with the families whose children's and wards' lives were cut short in the course of the #EndSARS protest nationwide. We equally empathise with youth and other citizens who are still nursing various degrees of injury, and we wish them full and speedy recovery. In the immediate, government should take measures to fish out the culprits and bring them to justice without further delay in order to calm all frayed nerves. Finally, our ruling class should always remember that only continuous engagements with the citizenry, especially the energetic youth population and the working class, would deepen Nigeria's democracy and guarantee lasting peace in the country.

Biodun Ogunyemi
President:

For and on behalf of the Academic Staff Union
of Universities (ASUU)
23 rd October, 2020



PROFESSOR ESKOR TOYO, 1929-2015

FIFTH YEAR ANNIVERSARY TRIBUTE TO NIGERIA'S FOREMOST REVOLUTIONARY INTELLECTUAL

Professor Eskor Toyowas born on 21st April 1929 in Ekim-Oron, a Niger Delta village located in Akwa Ibom State. He attended Methodist Boys High School, Oron (1936-1939) and Baptist Academy, Lagos (1940-1943). He obtained his Cambridge School Certificate in 1945; Bachelor of Arts in Economics, London (1957); and PhD in Macro-Economics, Warsaw, Poland (1973). Eskor Toyo began his professional career as Extra-Mural Lecturer, University of Ibadan (1960-1961); Lecturer, School of African Studies, University of Warsaw (1973-1974), Lecturer, North East College of Arts and Science, Maiduguri (1974-1977); Senior Lecturer in Economics, University of Calabar (1977-1980); and Professor and Head of Economics Department, University of Calabar (1981-1997). His active participation in labour and social struggles began as an Adviser and Advocate of the Nigerian Federation of Labour (1949-1951); Consultant, Nigerian Trade Union Congress (1963); Secretary, Socialist Workers and Farmers Party (1963-1964); General Secretary, Nigerian Labour Party (1964-1966); National Secretary, Nigerian Afro-Asian Solidarity Organization (1968-1969); Organizer, All Nigerian Socialist Conference (1977); Vice President, Nigerian Economic Society (1992-1994); and Trustee, Academic Staff Union of Nigerian Universities (1983-2015). Eskor Toyo died on Monday, 7th December 2015 at the age of 86, and his body was interned at his family compound in Ekim-Oron on Saturday, 5th March 2016.

Clearly, Eskor Toyo lived a long and productive life, making valuable contributions to the growth and progress of Nigeria. As an academic, he trained many generations of Nigerian students who now occupy various positions of

responsibility within and outside the country. As a social and political activist, he nurtured, guided or inspired a large number of individuals and groups to fight for the liberation of our nation from internal and external oppressors. EskorToyo was not a mere arm-chair theoretician or an isolated ivory tower crusader; he was also a committed practitioner of the revolutionary ideals he propagated. He was co-founder of the Calabar Group of Socialists, who established a Directorate for Literacy that conducted regular classes on workers' right and political consciousness. He travelled throughout Nigeria, advocating for popular democracy, social justice, economic development and socialism via public transportation, eating proletarian food and sleeping in modest hotels. For 40 years before his last illness in 2012, comrade Toyo never missed a single worker's May Day celebrations. Therefore, it is not surprising that attendance at his funeral comprised hundreds of activists from over a dozen labour and civil society organisations that included the Nigeria Labour Congress, Academic Staff Union of Universities, Socialist Party of Nigeria, Joint Action Forum, and the Nigerian Economic Society. The large attendance was a testimony to his towering stature, respect and admiration among academics, human right activists and the Nigerian labour movement. This fifth anniversary Tribute of his death is being written in honor of his service to humanity in Nigeria for over six decades.

Comrade Eskor Toyo was a unique revolutionary intellectual in a number of ways. First, he belonged to the first generation of Nigerian Marxists along with Tunji Otegbeye, Mokwugo Okoye, Ikenna Nzimiro, Wahab Goodluck, Dapo Fatogun, Nduka Eze and Ola Oni. Second, he lived long enough to struggle with, and inspire the second generation of Marxists that included Segun Osoba, Bade Onimode, Bassey Ekpo Bassey, Baba Omojola, Bala

PROFESSOR ESKOR TOYO, 1929-2015

Mohammed, Edwin Madunagu, Yusufu Bala Usman, Mahmud Modibbo Tukur, Dipo Fashina, Idowu Awopetu and Toye Olorode, among others. Third, he was the most prolific and widely read of all Nigerian Marxists in the 20th century, grounded in economics, history, sociology, anthropology, political science, mathematics and logic. Fourth, unlike many Nigerian Marxists, he was clear headed and never allowed his encyclopedic knowledge to capture or imprison him politically or ideologically. Finally, he was a gifted, fearless and combative orator capable of mobilising his audience into political action through the power of his words. He was in a true sense, as described by numerous commentators after his death, a knowledge pillar, mass mobiliser, heroic social crusader and a courageous torch bearer of revolutionary struggles throughout Nigeria, and possibly beyond. Quite expectedly, Eskor Toyo left behind a prodigious amount of literature dating back to the 1960's which, in the words of the respected Edwin Madunagu, are enough "to occupy a research institute of theoretical and applied Marxism." Therefore, it is not an exaggeration to state that comrade Toyo was the foremost Nigerian revolutionary intellectual of the 20th century.

Many tributes extolling the virtues of Eskor Toyo have been published in the Nigerian media after his death. This fifth anniversary Tribute seeks to honor him differently, so that readers who have not met or seen him in person can gain a little insight into his revolutionary struggles through his own words. Fortunately, Eskor Toyo has left behind many writings for us to use for this purpose, and one of the most appropriate for this Tribute is his *Open Letter to the Nigerian Left*, written in honor of the late Dr. Bala Mohammed and published in the Review of African Political Economy, No. 32, April 1985. Our choice of this particular essay is informed by two factors: 1) it is one of the best polemical writings of Eskor Toyo, and 2) it documents a major source for

the split among Nigerian Marxists that lasted over three decades. His critique was directed at members of the Left who opted out of the radical populist politics of the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) during the Second Republic (1979-1983). This essay shows Eskor Toyo at his best as a scholar and a revolutionary, deserving extensive quotations because of its potency, relevance and admirable freshness. He begins by demonstrating his mastery of the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary process by scolding the 'Left' thus:

The Marxists who sit in their armchairs to attack the PRP are not right. Of all the different 'lines' for Marxists in Nigeria, the most correct for the present phase is joining and working in the PRP. There are a number of reasons for this. First, the 'Marxists' are not doing politics at all who are not in the PRP. They are merely criticizing the bourgeoisie, not *mobilizing the people* against the bourgeois establishment. The time for merely criticizing the bourgeoisie in Nigeria is past. One has to find a platform for going into action. Bala Mohammed through *significant* action became more a threat to the bourgeois establishment than all the criticizing Marxists put together. That is why reaction killed him *in political action*.

He proceeds to defend the revolutionary character of the political manifesto of the PRP and justifies his criticism of those who opted out of its politics by arguing that:

the programme of the PRP is definitely not merely a democratic one but a revolutionary one. The PRP by its programme seeks the total abolition of imperialism, feudalism and capitalism. It seeks the substitution for the present day neo-colonial state of a new social order. This order is defined as one in which production relations are redefined to abolish all exploitation of man by man. This new order is to be brought about by a people's state, a people's democratic dictatorship. Quite frankly, I do not know what else the 'Marxists' say they want in the name of a revolutionary programme. I have the impression that they want the

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name 'Marxism' or 'Leninism' and some phrases such as 'class struggle' and 'proletariat' instead of a programme that the masses can understand. The non-PRP Marxists are infantile and subjective.

Eskor Toyo understood the history, complexity and dynamic nature of Marxist-Leninist revolutionary struggles, which he demonstrates by his strong defense of the peasant line of PRP politics in the following words:

the 'Marxists' who disdain the PRP may mouth the phrase 'imperialism', but they are not concerned with imperialism at all.... As Lenin insisted, there is no special form for worker-peasant alliance. The alliance takes place or can be made to take place daily by concrete acts..... No one can wage a mass-based revolutionary struggle in Nigeria against the feudal-imperialist-comprador establishment without detaching the peasantry from the on-going bourgeois campaigns for the consolidation of the status quo. This struggle to make the mass of ordinary people in town and country to turn from the status quo is what the PRP is founded for and what it has attempted to do so far.

.... the non-PRP 'Marxists' have a special form in their minds for the growth of a socialist movement. In their undialectical minds there must first be a 'Marxist party' to 'lead' the revolution. If such a party does not exist, one must not fight even where the daily experiences of the masses prepare them for political struggle against feudal rule and the nouveaux riches. To our stereotyped 'Marxists', let it be pointed out that there was no 'Marxist party' for Agostinho Neto, Samora Machel, Amilcar Cabral, Mengistu and the Sandinasta militants to join. In Cuba, there was a Communist party for Fidel Castro and his comrades to join, but happily they did not. That party was as dogmatic, sectarian and blind to the revolutionary potentialities of a broad anti-establishment people's movement as Nigeria's 'Marxist' parrots are.

The relationship between parliamentary politics and revolutionary struggles has been an intricate and contentious subject of debate among Marxists worldwide. Eskor Toyo was among a few in Nigeria who had a mastery of the interface between the two, arguing that, it was possible for the revolutionary struggle in some countries (as in Nigeria), under certain situations, to be advanced to the next stage on a parliamentary platform. He explains the complex relationship between the two in a simple, clear and effective manner as follows:

in Nigeria now it is impossible to mobilize the broad masses without parliamentary politics. One ought to do the politics of one's own country. Not to do so is to suffer isolation. The aim of parliamentary politics and its styles are many. The people's party can choose its own aims and forms. The anti-PRP 'Marxists' are very comfortable to watch the bourgeoisie, the imperialists and the feudal chieftains dominate the country's politics year in, year out. Short of a military coup d'état, how they are going to get into their 'revolution' without practical and meaningful ideological and political contests with the National Party of Nigeria, the Nigerian People's Party and the Unity Party of Nigeria beats one's imagination completely. If the 'Marxists' were practical and well-oriented revolutionaries, they would know that they also need a parliamentary platform, that is, a national forum for reaching the people and pitching their own solutions in real political combat against the solutions (or non-solutions) of the NPN-NPP-UPN bourgeois fraternity. They would know that one cannot fight the NPN in a Nigerian village with quotations from Marx that have not been brought into relation with Nigeria's type of parliamentary politics. They would know that without involving themselves in the on-going parliamentary struggles, they cannot bring the masses from parliamentary to extra-parliamentary forms of the struggle from the known to the unknown.

In spite of his vehement criticism of the

PROFESSOR ESKOR TOYO, 1929-2015

'Left', however, Eskor Toyo never got carried away by his involvement in the politics of the PRP. He admits the problems and challenges that confronted him and his fellow comrades within the party in a solemn, thoughtful and candid manner:

the People's Redemption Party is a daily school for the masses and for the 'Marxists'. One learns of the bourgeoisie of one's own country, not in text-books but in combat. No one has a static consciousness. Some workers are reactionary. Some petty bourgeois persons can abandon petty-bourgeois consciousness. If university lecturers can become 'Marxists', there is no reason why others cannot. Some peasants are traitors and others not. All romanticism and subjective a-priori assumptions are ended in practice. In the PRP struggle so far, many experiences have been gained, many lessons have been learnt, the radical masses have been led to test many things and draw many conclusions. Every PRP man or woman who has

been active comes out richer than the 'Marxist' who wants to take up 'class struggle' only of his own making, on his own terms.

Such was the depth of the knowledge, passionate commitment and combative polemics of comrade Eskor Toyo in the struggle for the emancipation of the oppressed in Nigeria during his lifetime. His death five years ago truly marked the end of an era, and it will be quite some time before someone of comparable stature will emerge to fill the vacuum. May his soul continue to rest in peace. And may we learn from his ideas and examples.

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Zaria, Nigeria.
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*Education is the most important
step to building successful nations.
We should be doing it right.*

Kamogelo, 17, South Africa





ACADEMIC STAFF UNION OF UNIVERSITIES (ASUU)



**FESTUS IYAYI NATIONAL SECRETARIAT COMPLEX
UNIVERSITY OF ABUJA MAIN CAMPUS, AIRPORT ROAD, ABUJA**

Press Release

ASUU Mourns Balarabe Musa, Describes Him as a Revolutionary

BALARABE MUSA: THE EXIT OF AN ICONIC REVOLUTIONARY

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) mourns Comrade Abdulkadir Balarabe Musa who passed on at the age of 84 years on Wednesday, 11th November, 2020. Comrade Balarabe Musa was a committed revolutionary who worked for the socialist transformation of the world's most populous Black Nation, in Nigeria.

The transition of Balarabe Musa is another major loss to the family of left-wing political leaders in Nigeria and Africa. Balarabe Musa belonged in the league of Eskor Toyo of Nigeria, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Steve Biko of South Africa and other leading African revolutionaries. His subscription to the socialist ideology of putting the welfare and

well-being of the poor at the centre of governance made him unpopular with ruling class reactionary elements of his generation. His radical politics and activism pitched him against the *status quo* politicians who did much to distract him from his socialist pathway for the development of his Kaduna State (now Kaduna and Katsina States) and Nigeria.



Comrade Abdulkadir Balarabe Musa

Balarabe Musa was a political disciple of Mallam Aminu Kano whose *Talakawa* agenda led to the founding of the People's Redemption Party (PRP) in 1978. When Musa was elected Governor of the old Kaduna State in 1979, he practicalised his socialist principles in ways that revolutionized education, health, housing, transportation, agriculture, and employment and brought about a quantum leap in the people's quality of life. His uncompromising stance against institutionalized corruption and politics of profligacy and self-aggrandizement incurred the wrath of right-wing political class who conspired to impeach him less than two years into his tenure on 23rd June, 1981. He however remained undaunted.

ASUU Mourns Balarabe Musa, Describes Him as a Revolutionary

Balarabe Musa remained focused as an Iconic leader of left-wing persuasion in Nigeria until he breathed his last. He was the Chairman of Conference of Political Parties (CPP) of the Fourth Republic as from 1999. Through the CPP platform, Comrade Musa made incisive and insightful contributions to national discourses and provided formidable opposition to the prevalent ideology of underdevelopment. He rejected clannish politics and unbridled religiosity used to manipulate, stereotype and exploit the mass of the Nigerian people by the kleptocratic ruling class. He unapologetically professed his commitment to the socialist path for addressing the multifarious and multidimensional problems confronting the Nigerian state. His advocacy for state-funded education at all levels and state financed health provision, transportation, housing and employment endeared him to the grassroots and left-wing politicians and activists not only in Kaduna State, but all over Nigeria and beyond. The gates to his house were practically wide open to all and sundry for much of the day. He placed himself and his meager resources at the disposal of whoever came his way for assistance. Yet Comrade Musa was regarded as the “poorest former governor in the history of Nigeria”; a tragedy of the Nigerian condition where wealth and status are measured in material possessions acquired through primitive accumulation.

ASUU has lost a great ally in Balarabe Musa's death. He was a major source of inspiration to the consolidation of ASUU principles. He stood by the Union all through the thick and thin of the 1980s and 1990s. He participated in our activities at very short notice. And, as if to bid us farewell, Comrade Musa gave the last National Delegates Conference (NDC) lecture of our Union at the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi (ATBU) on 4th May, 2018. His lecture titled **Ideology, Restructuring and the Liberation of Nigeria**, reminded us that “...in order to thoroughly and permanently liberate Nigeria from these bondages and controls which engender the controls and oppression which we largely suffer from as Nigerians, we must perforce totally change the old and new philosophies and systems that support and promote the domination and control of one set of people by another set of people.” That is the quintessential Balarabe Musa!

Balarabe Musa was in the tradition of the radicalisation and power of the political organisation of the oppressed. He realised that the oppressed would suffer perpetual oppression unless they had a political party of their own. He worked tirelessly, therefore, to unite socialists all over the country towards forming a party based on the struggle of the oppressed classes with struggles and politics.

Balarabe's ideal of a socialist Nigeria would have been a model for Africa. His departure is a challenge to the people's radical socialist movement in Nigeria to close ranks and unite the oppressed to form **their own party**; with the goal of fulfilling Balarabe's vision of Nigeria as a free and united people living in a socialist country.

May the revolutionary soul of Comrade Balarabe Musa rest in peace (Amen).



Biodun Ogunyemi
ASUU President

22nd November, 2020

NUC Transfers Ownership of LAUTECH to Oyo State

The National Universities Commission has transferred ownership of the Ladoke Akintola University of Technology LAUTECH Ogbomosho to the Oyo State Government while the Osun State Government is to take over the College of Health Sciences in Osogbo. The resolution followed the lingering crisis over ownership of LAUTECH over the years. The Executive Secretary of the National Universities Commission Professor Abubakar Rasheed who made this known at a media briefing in Abuja Friday, said both Governors Seyi Makinde of Oyo State and Adegboyega Oyetola of Osun State signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) on the development. The NUC boss expressed optimism that the new arrangement would restore peace to LAUTECH. Consequent upon the take-over, Oyo State has amended the university's law to reflect the new status of the institution which now belongs to Oyo State.



Inauguration of LAUTECH. new Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of Council, Prof. Ayodeji Omole

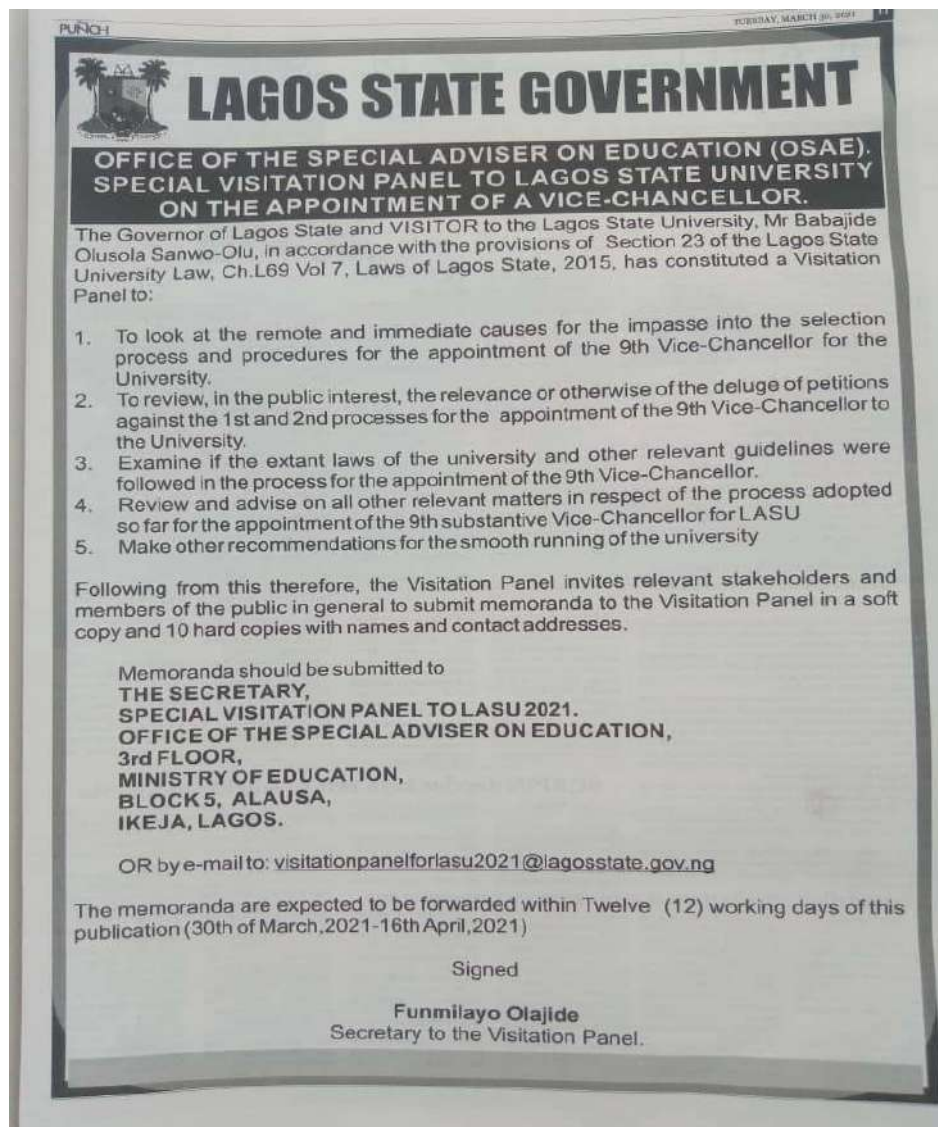


Inauguration of the LAUTECH Governing Council. Governor Seyi Makinde in the centre and to his left, the new Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of Council, Prof. Ayodeji Omole



Prof. Ayodeji Omole, pro- chancellor and chairman of LAUTECH council with the press after inauguration

LASU VC Crisis



The Governor of Lagos State, Babajide Sanwo-Olu with the members of the LASU Visitation Panel on appointment of a new Vice-Chancellor

ASUU KWASU, MALETE, RESOLVED ITS LINGERING UNION

ASUU KWASU, Maleta, today, **Tuesday, 20th April, 2021** resolved its lingering union crisis with new Excocos onboard through a Unity Congress. If you could remember, KWASU Observer Status granted at the 2015 IMSU NEC was withdrawn at PRE NDC NEC of 2018 in Bauchi.

Thank you all for your support and understanding, most especially, immediate and past ZC Ibadan Zone, all present and past Chairmen in the zone and all stakeholders of the union.

Dauda Adeshola
IPC, KWASU, Maleta.

**Stop
the
Proliferation
of
State
Universities**



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INTERNATIONAL WORKERS DAY: Liberation of Western Sahara – a point focus

The erudite scholar and astute freedom fighter – Comrade Dipo Fashina displayed his undying resolve for the freedom of all Prof. led a section of his foot soldiers in a 'frontline parade' at this year's occasion of the Commemoration of International Worker's Day.

As humans and lovers of freedom we must insist on the liberation and de-colonization of the last colony in Africa. We must insist that Western Sahara (Saharawi) is free from the annexation, occupation and oppression of Morocco and the hidden fingers of imperialist nations...

We've been on this movement for quite some years now, and we're not giving up anytime soon...Until the set goal of liberation is attained and sustained.



Comrade Dipo Fashina displayed his undying resolve for the freedom of all as he led a section of his foot soldiers in a 'frontline parade' at this year's occasion of the commemoration of International Worker's Day.

PROFESSOR DES WILSON BOWS OUT



PROF. DESMOND WILSON

It is always a great thing to be welcomed back from the farm after a full day of labour in the sun and, sometimes, in the rain, too. The inner feeling of joy is usually infinite in the farmer

himself and in his well wishers that the farmer has toiled all day and returned safely home. This feeling of joy is even more if the farmer returns without a sting by the bees or wasps, an injury to his leg, a stubborn speck getting into his eyes or a snake biting him. Further, the feeling of satisfaction reaches its acme if the harvest is good.

That was the situation at a recent meeting of the Congress of the Academic Staff Union of Universities, University of Uyo Branch, when an eminent professor of Communication Arts and long-standing veteran of the Union, Professor Desmond Wilson, announced to the Congress his imminent retirement. Members instinctively rose as one, sang the Union's solidarity song, and wept, thus infecting the Professor who responded with his own tears, too, on seeing the warmth and emotions of his comrades. He had been long in the vineyard of scholarship, toiling with his colleagues, serving as a strong stimulus and rare muscle in moments of crises and unfailingly steeling his comrades against surrendering. The announcement of his imminent exit came with the unexpressed apprehension about how, in the Branch, the vacuum his absence would create would be filled. And he made it worse for the members by devoting much of his emotion-laced farewell speech to strengthening them for all of the Union's struggles, emphasizing the need for his comrades to remain resolute and strong and firm and faithful to the Union and its principles and fearless, no matter the odds against them. Amidst the struggles to control his tears, Prof. Wilson

assured his colleagues that although he would henceforth be physically absent from their midst, he would always remember them and the struggles in his prayers.

Professor Des Wilson was born about 70 years ago at the Idung Uso village in Eket Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. At the age of five he was taken to live with his maternal grandfather, who then worked at the United Africa Company, UAC, at Koko in the present Delta State. On completion of his primary school education in Koko, he was later taken to his elder brother, the late Felix Isong Wilson, in Lagos, where he began and completed his secondary school education. After a stint as a staff of the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) and of the National Bank of Nigeria, Professor Wilson was admitted to the Department of English of the University of Ibadan in 1972. It was during his period as a member of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) in Lagos that the Professor met and fell in love with Mrs. Elizabeth Wilson (who had been Elizabeth Umana), and the two subsequently married and remained so until now.

Following the completion of the National Youth Service in 1976, Des Wilson, (as he is fondly called by friends, colleagues and fellow comrades in the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), was employed by the erstwhile College of Technology, Calabar where he produced many communication experts, including one who later became a Deputy Governor, and others who have been professors and commissioners. Having served for four years, Prof Wilson left the College of Technology (which then became the Polytechnic, Calabar) back to the University of Ibadan for the Master of Arts, now in the Department of Communication and Language Arts (which had metamorphosed from the former Department of Language Arts), and obtained the M. A. in 1981. He proceeded soon afterwards to the doctoral programme, having secured the score for direct admission to this programme at the end of his M. A. programme. Owing to interruptions from the political scene and strikes, he was only able to defend his doctoral thesis in 1987, in spite of his having had it ready by 1986, one year earlier.

Meanwhile, Professor Desmond Wilson had, by 1985, transferred his services from The Polytechnic, Calabar, to the then newly established University of Cross River State, Uyo. As a university don and public intellectual, Professor Wilson has been very many things. He has been a quintessential lecturer who specializes in non-verbal communication, and has churned out a huge number of students at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. He had been an activist and human rights defender who had fought many causes in Africa, Latin America, Europe, the USA, and has travelled to many countries in pursuit of his dreams for a world without tethers. He became the Human Rights Education Coordinator for Nigeria in 1988, and held several other offices in the Movement until 2001 when the Nigerian Office was closed down.



coordinator; member, Nigeria Union of Journalists, where he is currently the chairperson, Ethics and Disciplinary Committee, and a also a member, Nigerian Institute of Public Relations, where he holds the position of editor of its publications. In addition, Prof Wilson has earned many awards, both local and international, and he has served on all the Governing Councils of the University of Uyo except two or three, besides being an orator of the University from 1997 through 2010. He had also been Dean of Arts in his University of Uyo.

The retiring comrade is happily married, and has two children, one of who is undergoing a doctoral programme in England while the other has enlisted in the Catholic Seminary in the hope of becoming a priest. Apart from his children, Professor Desmond Wilson has most faithfully sponsored many indigent students both in the University of Uyo and in secondary schools.

The retiring Prof Wilson had been one of the most vibrant veterans of ASUU, having served the Union in various capacities, including being the chairman of the University of Uyo Branch of the Union, from where he rose to play other vital roles such as serving as the Editor-in-Chief of *The National Scholar*, Editor-in-Chief of *ASUU Journal of Humanities*, and on several committees of the Union at the national level. In his service to the Union as editor-in-chief of *The National Scholar*, Prof Wilson brought to bear his experience with some Nigerian newspaper, for example, *The Pioneer*, which he had served as columnist known for his most exciting Bitter Pills column, which thrilled readers in Akwa Ibom State and beyond. It is, however, interesting to note that both in *The Pioneer* and another newspaper, *The Sensor*, Prof Wilson's pills soon became too bitter both for the government and the politicians, and the contributions were rested.

Our Comrade Professor has also been a member of many professional bodies, some of which are the African Council for Communication Education (ACCE), which he had presided over as national

It is in view of this comprehensive rich yield of Professor Desmond Wilson, a yield which his University of Uyo and the entire Nigerian University System has lavishly benefited from, just as his beloved union, ASUU, his comrades and colleagues in the Nigerian University System, the Amnesty International community, his Eket community and the indigent students he has come across have all been done that the Congress of ASUU, University of Uyo Branch, stood as one in tears of joy as Professor Desmond Wilson formally announced his bowing out of the system in August, this year, and in good state of health. We, of *The National Scholar*, join his family, friends and well wishers all over the world to thank him for his meritorious services to humanity, the Nigerian University System, our great union, ASUU, particularly for being a former editor-in-chief of the publication. We wish him well in his future endeavours.

Professor Joseph A. Ushie



ACADEMIC STAFF UNION OF UNIVERSITIES (ASUU)



FESTUS IYAYI NATIONAL SECRETARIAT COMPLEX
UNIVERSITY OF ABUJA MAIN CAMPUS, AIRPORT ROAD, ABUJA

THE POSITION OF THE ACADEMIC STAFF UNION OF UNIVERSITIES (ASUU)

ON

THE PREVENTION, PROHIBITION AND REDRESSAL OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN TERTIARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION BILL, 2019

I. INTRODUCTION

Our Union, the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), is opposed to the enactment of the Bill. ASUU's position against the bill is predicated on the following grounds:

1. *The bill violates all known global norms and legal principles for a number of reasons.*

(a) As a global norm, universities and other tertiary institutions are established by law as autonomous bodies (e.g. The Universities (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Amendment) Act 2003 (otherwise called the Universities Autonomy Act No. 1, 2007). These institutions have their own laws regulating their affairs, including misconduct generally among both staff and students, with clearly articulated appropriate redress mechanisms. Any law or bill which seeks to supplant these laws violates the university autonomy. In this particular instance, the bill violates the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) and ASUU Agreement of 2009, and as such, should be rejected.

(b) As a cardinal principle of law, a law or bill must not be targeted at a particular person or a particular group of people only. Any law which is targeted at a distinct group ("educators") is referred to as *ad hoc*, *ad hominem* legislation. The bill, targeting sexual harassment in tertiary institutions alone, is an example of *ad hoc* legislation and therefore should fail on that ground.

(c) The bill fails the test of fairness. It is discriminatory in the sense that it particularly targets those in particular communities i.e. the tertiary institutions ("educators") for an act that is a general societal problem, and not peculiar to the tertiary institutions. The bill is thus in clear violation of section 42(1) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended) because it is discriminatory against a particular segment of people in tertiary institutions.

(d) The bill targets and seeks to make those in tertiary institutions ("educators") more liable for an act that is a general societal problem and is thus a clear violation of the principle of the equality before the law according to which everybody must be subjected to the same law. The issue is that the University Laws and extant Disciplinary Procedures fully address the matter of Sexual Harassment.

2. *The bill has failed to take cognizance of various extant legislations that adequately deal with the issue of sexual offences and which are quite wider in scope than the provisions of the bill. Some of these are:*

(a) Criminal Code in sections 218, 219 which deals with unlawful carnal knowledge of girls under the age of 13 and

THE POSITION OF THE ACADEMIC STAFF UNION OF UNIVERSITIES (ASUU) ON THE PREVENTION, PROHIBITION AND REDRESSAL OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN TERTIARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION BILL, 2019

16 years. Under section 220 it is even a defence in the case of a girl under the age of 16 that the accused person believed on reasonable grounds that the girl was of or above the age of 16. Section 223 also deals with cases of having carnal knowledge with a girl under the age of 18 years. Section 224 specifically deals with cases of procuring a woman or girl by threat, intimidation and false pretences in order to have unlawful carnal connection with them; while section 226 deals with cases of any person who detains a woman or girl against her will in order to have carnal connection with her. Section 227 is on conspiracy to induce any woman or girl by false pretence or other fraudulent means in order to have carnal connection with her. These provisions cover any person and are even wider than the narrow scope of offences covered in this bill.

(b) The Penal Code makes diverse provisions covering inducing a girl under the age of 18 and 21 years with intent to having illicit intercourse with her, trafficking in girls under 18 years for purposes of prostitution or immoral purpose, enticing a woman or girl for immoral purposes, rape, etc. (see sections 275, 276, 278, 281, 282).

(c) Section 11 of the Child Rights Act, 2003 protects the dignity of children generally from sexual abuse, abuse on their honour, etc.

(d) The Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act, 2015 in section 15 prohibits the inducement of persons under the age of 18 years for sexual exploitation of persons by means of deception, coercion or by any other means.

(e) The existing laws, rules and regulations on the incidence have not been proved to be ineffective with palpable dire consequences for learning in these institutions.

(f) The administrations of tertiary institutions have been negligent in the enforcement of extant laws, rules or regulations on the issues.

On the basis of a-f above, the logical conclusion is that:

The bill is discriminatory, selective, spiteful, impulsive, ad hominem, lacks logic and any intellectual base by attacking the character and persons of those in the tertiary institutions as if the act is peculiar to tertiary institutions rather than addressing the issue holistically.

II. ANALYSIS ON THE SPECIFIC PROVISIONS OF THE PROPOSED BILL

i. Section 4(6) makes provision to a ridiculous extent of wanting to criminalize “whistles”, “winks”, “screams”, “exclaims” or “jokes” by “educators”. This provision might mean converting the universities into a graveyard where “educators” go about in veil-like mannequins to prevent winking. In the first place, what would these acts relate to before they become a crime? By what means would these acts be measured to be successfully prosecuted? These provisions have no more than amusement values because they are immeasurable and therefore have no reasonable grounds upon which they could be successfully prosecuted. The other part of subsection (6) that seeks to criminalize making sexually complimentary or uncomplimentary remarks about a student's physique will suffer from vagueness which should not be allowed in serious legislative proposition because of the difficulty of determining what constitutes “sexually complimentary or uncomplimentary remarks about the physique of a lady”.

ii. A “prospective student” is not a student of a tertiary institution by any stretch of imagination but only a candidate; and there are established redress mechanisms in tertiary institutions to discipline any erring staff who is alleged to have sexually harassed any candidate in the course of performing their official duties. Besides, all matters which are outside the purview of the administration of a tertiary institution are handed

THE POSITION OF THE ACADEMIC STAFF UNION OF UNIVERSITIES (ASUU) ON THE PREVENTION, PROHIBITION AND REDRESSAL OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN TERTIARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION BILL, 2019

over to the appropriate government organ/agency to handle.

iii. The provision in section 4(6) to the effect that it shall not be a defence to any offence created in section 4 that an adult citizen who happens to be a student consented to the offence is legally untenable. This is because it is against the principles of criminal liability and personal autonomy that two persons willingly consent to a sexual act, yet, one party is made criminally liable.

iv. There is no basis for civil action in respect of a trust or fiduciary relationship because, as stated above in the comment on section 4, some of the bases could be on consent and personal autonomy. Acts between consenting adults based on personal autonomy are not deemed criminal under any law.

v. The provision of section 15 of the bill clearly acknowledges that tertiary institutions have established rules and regulations for the internal administrative discipline of staff in relation to sexual harassment and other forms of misconducts. Section 17 of the bill which also seeks to provide for Institutional Disciplinary Procedure is baseless. The bill does not show any evidence that the outcomes of most of the decisions of internal administrative mechanisms have failed, the bill should die naturally.

vi. The provision of section 15(3) would amount to punishing an offender twice and this would violate the principles of double jeopardy, since tertiary institutions are the creations of laws under which they derive their powers to recruit, promote and discipline staff.

vii. The bill approbates and reprobates by seeking in provision of section 15(4) to allow the courts to take into consideration, in passing sentence on an educator, the nature of sanctions that have already been imposed by internal

administrative or disciplinary mechanism but provides under section 15(1) that no disciplinary proceedings could be continued by virtue of the commencement of a criminal proceeding. Also, paragraph (c) is contrary to the provision of section 11 of the bill which prohibits the option of fine even in clear deserving cases. This is yet another instance of contradiction in the bill.

III. A PUZZLE

We are puzzled by the seeming equation of "Sexual harassment" with "Sexual Intercourse" in this Bill. We draw attention to the following definitions:

- **'Harassment'**: 'bothering', 'irking', 'provocation', 'vexing', (Merriam Webster's College Thesaurus).

- **"Harassment"**: "consisting of misplaced, unwelcome and often offensive sexual advances or remarks, especially from a senior colleague, male or female, in the work place."

Any concept employed to regulate proper and expunge improper dealings in all institutions must be

- i. Clearly defined, unambiguous, and clearly applicable

- ii. Used with regard to the moral principle of fairness.

From the standpoint of (i) and (ii), the proposed Bill falls far short of being satisfactory:

First, regarding fairness, is sexual harassment **unidirectional**? Second, if sexual harassment is morally offensive, we think it does not matter where, and who are sexually harassed: **lecturers or students, female workers, teachers, vendors on the street; law makers, etc. Again, are the females always at the receiving end? What of males?**

For the avoidance of doubt, we are here not justifying harassing female students and workers. We are only saying that a serious approach would show concern for sexual harassment in general. The position is not

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evidenced by research work which would give more or less accurate data on the extent and depth of the phenomenon of sexual harassment in general, in the educational institutions of all types, their comparison with government institutions, e.g. in the National Assembly, Ministries, parastatals etc.

According to Chambers 21st Century Dictionary, "Harass" means;

- i. To pester, torment or trouble someone by continually questioning or attacking them,
- ii. To make frequent sudden attacks on an enemy.

Harassment: from French 'harasser' to **HARRY**, perhaps a derivative form of 'harer' to set a dog on.

Given this definition, harassment need not be **sexual**. Harassment is sexual when the continual questioning, attacking, threatening is for the sake of extracting a sexual act. There are allegations that this practice exists in the experience of Youth Corpers and workers in the government institutions, including the Senate. **Suppose** we find male Senators, Members of House of Representatives and State Assembly members, harassing youth

corpors, female workers, etc. should there be a special law on sexual harassment in the Senate or House of Representatives, should there be a special law enacted to deal with this?

IV. CONCLUSION

The bill is dangerous and inimical to the educational institutions, and to the interest of workers in tertiary institutions, as it contains several loose and ambiguous words/terms which could also be used to harass, intimidate, victimize and persecute its targets, especially lecturers through false accusations.

While our Union would not condone cases of sexual harassment in any form, we submit that the Bill should fail because it is unwarranted, jurisprudentially weak, a bundle of contradictions, and has no probative value. Most important, the University and its organs, especially the Senate, have the responsibility to implement the Statutes of the Universities faithfully and scrupulously with University autonomy. For us in ASUU, this is the right path to solving the problem of sexual harassment.

Biodun Ogunyemi

ASUU President

17th February, 2020

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CORONA POEMS

By

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i.

When Corona comes calling . . .

When corona comes calling

Borders snap shut their mouths
Like metal snares at the season of vigilant
waiting

When corona comes

Tyrants lay supine like serpents
Bereft of their slithering wiles

When corona comes

Men in rituals of hourly ablutions
Watch over the treachery of sneaky virus . . .

When the missile of invisible gnat seizes
the global stage
It shatters the absolute wisdom
Of millennial theories
Indeed; Corona is here!

ii

Corona is here

Corona!
Hot and trendy like the breaking of a
strange tale
Decreases the dandy damsel
Out of the trendy streets
At the season of virus-aided sneezing

Empty stalls of mourning markets
Tell their tales in strange dialects
Of absent noises . . .

From Milan to Monrovia
Distance shrinks in the magical speed
Of the awful gnat . . . corona!

From Wuhan to Wales to Wula
Wailers lament the scourge fatal virus
In metaphors of unbroken tears . . . corona!

Alas! Sinews of stunning silence
From the fashion-draped streets of Paris
To the boisterous alleys of boastful Pretoria
The nagging question has defied our
tested wisdoms . . . corona?

iii

*Eeh Eeh eeh!
*Sonpono gelete o!

A curious tale struts the dozing street
Its introit; an orchestra of sneezing larynx
Punctured by bullets of cough drier than
The echoing clang of clashing metals

A lunatic tale; every phoneme of its name
Corrosive like the acid rain
From the wonder skies of Wuhan
China's gift to the helpless globe.

*Mountainous pestilence: An exclamatory
remark among the Yoruba to express
baffling wonder.

OMOTOYE OLORODE AT 80: A SALUTE TO INTELLECTUAL SAGACITY *(Goodwill Message by ASUU President, Biodun Ogunyemi, at the Celebration of the 80th Birthday Lecture in Honour of Professor Omotoye Olorode, 29th April, 2021)*

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) is delighted to be part of this epoch-making event to celebrate an intellectual worker, an irrepressible Marxist, a frontline nationalist, a labour activist and a prolific writer, for his enlistment in the Octogenarian Club. We can never find enough words to describe Comrade Olorode who we are celebrating here today. Every individual and organisation he has impacted in the last eight decades would certainly have something positive to say about today's celebrant, but none can say all that needs to be said of his many parts.



When Comrade Olorode is espousing what Paulo Friere calls “Pedagogy of Liberation”, he is there with the protesters against violation of human rights, meeting with the anti-SAP group or attending a pro-democracy rally. Professor Olorode has been an unwavering proponent of the revolution as the solution to the problem of the historical, socio-economic and cultural underdevelopment of Nigeria. His dialogic methodology is as engaging as entertaining. Comrade Olorode is never short of wits, jokes, anecdotes and hilarious proverbs that make issues lighter than they first appear. You stand to learn something from Olorode's encyclopaedic reservoir of polemics, history of ideas, political economy, literature, languages, and many more. He prides himself as a “Biology Teacher”, but he is not afraid to engage the Professor of Yoruba Language, Political Economy, History, Philosophy or even Law!

Comrade Olorode's labour activism is legendary, but time will only permit me to briefly comment on his role in the evolution, growth and viability of our Union, ASUU. The history of ASUU cannot be complete without an edifying account of Olorode's contributions. He was there at the very beginning in 1978 – the year the erstwhile Nigerian Association of University Teachers (NAUT) transformed from a confraternity of elite teachers into an intellectual



vanguard. He has been part of all the negotiations of ASUU with successive Nigerian governments over funding, conditions of service, academic freedom and university autonomy and other related matters from 1982 to date. Together with Idowu Awopetu, Dipo Fashina and his other comrades in the *Ife Collective*, they made University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) the epicentre of ideological barometer for intellectual activism not only for ASUU but for the entire leftist movement in Nigeria.

I recall participating at an *Ife Collective* event on the eve of the Orka Coup in 1990 under the chairmanship of then Comrade G. G. Darah. The platform was created to seek alternative pathway out of Nigeria's underdevelopment beyond the military. Shortly after our then fully bearded Comrade Femi Falana addressed the gathering, news of the ill-conceived putsch filtered in and, as then characteristic of the retrogressive military, members of the Ife Collective were linked with the coup attempt. Officials of the notorious State Security Services (SSS) swooped on OAU and whisked away Olorode, Awopetu and a few others while some of us managed to escape!

Comrade Olorode and other great patriots were persecuted by the military rulers and their allies for advocating the socialist alternative to the rent-seeking, predatory and parasitic capitalist rule in Nigeria. However, that may have been the country's undoing. Until and unless our ruling class embraces a framework that guarantees justice, equal opportunity and redistribution of wealth as advocated by Omotoye Olorode for well over fifty years, we may continue to grope in the darkness of worsening poverty, increasing insecurity and indescribable underdevelopment.

At 80, Comrade Olorode does not appear tired in his mission of the praxis of alternative pathway to Nigeria's development even when the ruling class appears indifferent. We in ASUU enjoy every bit of your mentorship our great teacher, ideologue and *youth leader*. We wish you many more of years of intellectual activism. As your age increases, may revolutionary energy also be renewed like the eagle's.

Mr. Chairman, permit me to try my luck in the language of the Ijeru people of Ogbomosholand: *Baba ke pe. Asodunmodun, asosumosu. Igba odun, odun kan o!*

Congratulations, Sir!

Humanities Also Offer Solutions



KAYODE KOMOLAFE
(THE HORIZON)

In his remarks at a meeting with the students of Kankara Science Secondary School released from captivity last Friday, President Muhammadu Buhari said something in passing that is worth pondering about the philosophy of education in

Nigeria.

The meeting took place on the second day after the 344 schoolboys kidnapped by armed men in Katsina state regained their freedom.

Among other things, the President said the Kankara boys were “lucky” to be in a science school with a brighter future of “getting jobs” unlike their counterparts who would major in “History or English.” The President seemed to have a dim view of the future of students interested in the humanities.

In terms of career aspiration, you could imagine what the impact of the presidential statement could make on a girl or boy in another secondary school in Katsina state planning to study History or Linguistics in the university.

More than 15 years earlier, Buhari's predecessor, President Olusegun Obasanjo, made a similar statement in a different context. In a radio chat, Obasanjo responded to the question of a caller on youth unemployment with an instructive anecdote. The story goes like this: a relation approached Obasanjo to help secure a job for his son. The former president asked for the Curriculum Vitae (CV) of the job-seeker and discovered that he was a graduate of Sociology. Characteristically, Obasanjo told the young man point-blank that “any one going to the university to study Sociology or Mass Communication has wasted his life.”

The contemptuous reference to the liberal arts and social sciences by Buhari and Obasanjo at the various periods is a different thing from the rational idea by universities about the proportions of students admitted to study science-based courses and the liberal arts. What is on display here is simply a perverted concept of education for all-round human development.

The imperative of huge investments in science education and research should not derogate training in the humanities. Come to think of it, the bankruptcy of policy is such that apart from the rhetoric about science education there is hardly any evidence of budgetary investment in that direction. Science education is not immune to the policy malaise of lip service paid to quality education at all levels. Students are admitted to study science courses in schools without equipped and up-to-date laboratories. Graduates of computer science are produced without computers.

For instance, after the dust of kidnapping must have settled it would be interesting to inspect the Government Science School in Kankara to know how much science is actually being taught in that place. It would be good to know the quality of teaching and the age of the equipment available for practical studies in the science school.

This facile pursuit of science without humanity is in sharp contrast with the trends in North America, Europe and

parts of Asia. An aspect of the much talked-about brain drain is that it is not only doctors, nurses and engineers that are being attracted to the developed world where their services are needed. Universities in those places also attract our poets, historians, philosophers, writers, political scientists, sociologists literary critics and artists. In recent times a lot of books have been published about Nigeria by those institutions abroad. Some Nigerian writings and writings about Nigeria have been consumed more abroad than in Nigeria itself. Departments of African Studies are developed in universities in other lands more than in Nigerian universities because of this contempt for humanities. Other societies value these scholars in humanities and their products who are the objects of denigration and insults from government officials and other members of the elite. Those other societies know precisely the importance of humanising scientific progress for existential equilibrium.

With presidents like Buhari and Obasanjo having this mindset that studying humanities is a useless venture, the strategic error in the formulation of education policies for national development could be imagined.

The statements by the two leaders are a poignant advertisement of the severe limitation of policy in the education sector.

The emergent questions are many in the situation. What's really the purpose of education?

What is the conception of development on the part of those who make policies? What is the consequence of failing to see the importance of humanities even for scientific progress to be meaningful to life? What will be the outcome of the development of machines without an organic engagement with humanity? There are questions to be asked about the technicist conception of human progress.

The condescending mindset about humanities is an old phenomenon in the policy arena in Nigeria. It informed the removal history from the curriculum of elementary and secondary schools at a time. Even in some universities, history has to be cojoined with international relations to attract students to the department.

Such was the moral violence done to the intellectual development of a generation of Nigerians by policymakers with a warped sense of education. School curricular were vandalised by those who were deluded about the dynamics of the global scientific revolution. Indeed, the ugly harvests of such a policy of ignorance have been huge. A student in the Faculty of Arts of the premier university, the University of Ibadan, walked up to a professor with a pointed question: “Who is this Zik?” The student was, of course asking about the great nationalist and the first President of Nigeria, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe. Ironically, the Ibadan School of History acquired a wide international reputation among scholars many decades ago with pioneering and monumental works of Professor Onwuka Dike and his colleagues. Recently, eminent historian, Professor Akinjide Osuntokun, recalled the story of students in Ogun State who knew about Obafemi Martins, the famous footballer, and not Obafemi Awolowo, the first premier of the old western region now “restructured” into nine states.

Today's policies are discussed without any ng was



Humanities Also Offer Solutions

reference to similar ones made barely 30 years ago. Pundits make statements ex cathedra on economic problems without any sense of the economic history of the country. In the needless heat generated about securing grazing lands for cattle, hardly does anyone remember that decades ago ranching was part of agricultural policies not only in the north; but also in the southern parts of the country. Ranching as a more efficient and modern solution than designation of grazing routes had been developed by some policymakers in the past who had a better idea of wholistic development.

The contempt for history is such that even keeping official records on ceremonial matters is treated with levity. Hence a prominent figure could be awarded with the Grand Commander of the Order of Niger (GCON), the second highest national honour, and 30 years later he could be kindly considered for the honour of the Officer of the Federal Republic (OFR), which is some steps below the GCON!

Keeping records as raw materials for writing history is not considered important because no one is planning to produce future historians, anyway. The job of the historian is not deemed to be a worthwhile one. This is despite the proposition by another great historian, Professor Jacob Ade-Ajayi, who drew the link between development and the study of history. Ade-Ajayi said that a nation pursuing development without the understanding of history is like a driver of a vehicle without a rear-view mirror. The risks of travelling in such a vehicle should be obvious to the driver and the passengers alike.

For clarity, the prejudice against the humanities exists in other places. The only difference is that unlike here, the problem is being grappled with in scholastic terms. The English philosopher, Simon Blackburn, reported his experience in his smart book, *Think: A Compelling Introduction to Philosophy*. The book is a useful guide even for the general reader on thinking about human existence and problems. At a point in his career, it was the lot of the professor to encourage his students who expressed worries about what they would do with their degrees in philosophy on graduation. Degrees in philosophy are not as marketable as degrees in chemical engineering or software engineering. By the way, in Nigeria the job market is full with graduates in humanities and science-based disciplines alike, which is an indication that the socio-economic problem of joblessness has deeper roots than studying humanities. Well, Blackburn told his students to respond to those who wondered what was the place of a degree in philosophy in the job market something like this: students of philosophy are studying “conceptual engineering.” They study the structure of ideas and interaction of concepts which are basic to all areas of knowledge. After all, a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) degree is awarded in the faculty of engineering as a proof of learning.

In all human endeavours clarity of ideas is basic to making progress. The philosopher as the engineer of ideas is important in getting various departments of human life imbued with clarity of thinking as the basis action especially policies implementation. Many policies have failed because of the poor quality of the thought-process informing their conception and implementation.

The production of knowledge in the realm of the humanities is even more urgent given the multi-dimensional crisis facing humanity. Here lies the essence of bolstering the training of some students in humanities.

The solution to the moral dimension of the crisis facing humanity cannot be found in any laboratory. Neither is it a job for robots. Software engineers are yet to develop the apps for strictly human solutions to problems.

Take the coronavirus crisis as an example. Some of the derivative questions in the management of the crisis are not all that scientists alone could answer definitively. In places where vaccines are being considered for approval, the board is not composed of only virologists, immunologists and epidemiologists. Siting with the scientists for a judicious and balanced consideration of issues are also ethicists. The ethicists are there for a philosophical bearing to the issues. The public health atmosphere is replete with a lot of bio-ethical anxiety. Hesitancy about vaccination has religious, historical and moral bases. These are not problems to which the scientists can find solutions in their laboratories. There is no algorithm that bio-statisticians could employ to solve the human problem. It is a matter for those trained in the humanities to think about such problems.

Similarly, the moral challenge of the climate change crisis is as huge as its science. The deniers of climate change are not hinging their arguments on science. The campaign against activities endangering the human habitat has to develop some moral muscle in addition to the scientific argument. There are life issues that the efforts of the technologists are better coupled with those of poets and playwrights for societal understanding.

In any case, Nigerian leaders are certainly behind times in insisting on promoting the false dichotomy between Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) on the one hand and the liberal arts on the other hand. In his book, *The Fuzzy and the Techie: Why the Liberal arts Will Rule the Digital World*, Scott Hartley calls a major in the humanities or social sciences a “fuzzy” and a major in computer or hard sciences a “techie.” Hartley is a venture capitalist and a startup adviser to organisations. He was a Presidential Innovation Fellow at the White House. He makes a strong argument for the necessary complementarity of science and humanities as follows: “...Bridge-building fields of study have been created already... Psychology, linguistics and neuroscience come together to make cognitive science.

Sociology and civil engineering have been combined in urban policy, computing and design have been combined in data visualisation, and psychology and computing have been combined in the usability research. More such explicitly fuzzy-techie majors should be fostered, such as combining philosophy and engineering into “design ethics,” anthropology and data science into “data literacy,” sociology and statistics into “human analytics,” literature and computer science into “narrative science..” and law and data science into “predictive regulation...”

Yes. The Buhari administration should design school programmes to make Nigerian students to be fully part of the scientific age. Conscious efforts to develop the humanities should complement these important efforts at promoting science education. This is necessary for equipping today's students to retain the control of themselves as human beings as they navigate the uncertain life of the future.

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WE HAVE NO MORE BLOOD TO BLEED! ORGANIZED LABOUR IN NIGERIA CONDEMNS AND REJECTS PLANS TO SLASH THE SALARIES OF NIGERIAN WORKERS A PRESS RELEASE

It was with huge shock that we read the statement credited to the Minister of Finance, Mrs. Zainab Ahmed, who said that the Federal Government was working to reduce the high cost of governance by cutting down on the salaries of Nigerian workers. The Minister was reported to have said this in Abuja at a policy dialogue on corruption and cost of governance in Nigeria organised by the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission. The Minister of Finance was also reported to have directed the National Salaries, Incomes and Wages Commission (NSIWC) to immediately review the salaries of civil servants as well as the number of federal agencies in the country.

It is most unthinkable that government would be contemplating to unilaterally slash the salaries of Nigerian workers at this time. The question to ask is “which salary is government planning to slash?” It certainly cannot be the meagre national minimum wage of N30000 which right now cannot even buy a bag of rice! The proposed slash in salaries is certainly not targeted at the minimum wage and consequential adjustment in salaries that some callous State Governors are still dragging their feet to pay!

It is public knowledge that the multiple devaluation of the Naira in a very short time and the prevailing high inflation rate in Nigeria has knocked out the salaries earned by Nigerian workers across board. Nigerian workers are only surviving by hair's breadth. Indeed, Nigerian workers are miracles strutting on two legs. It is, therefore, extremely horrendous for a Minister of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to pronounce salary slash for Nigerian workers at this time.

This call for salary slash by Mrs. Zainab Ahmed is tantamount to a “mass suicide” wish for Nigerian workers. It is most uncharitable, most insensitive, most dehumanizing and most barbaric. Nigerian workers demand an immediate retraction and apology by the Minister of Finance.

We call on President Muhammadu Buhari to call the Minister of Finance to order now before she sets Nigeria on fire with her careless statements. If there is any salary that needs serious slashing it is the humungous remuneration and allowances pocketed by political office holders in Nigeria who do very little but collect so much!

Workers generate surplus value and revenue for government. We do not constitute any unnecessary cost or burden to governance! It is also important to make the point that salaries are products of contracts governed by laws. They cannot be unilaterally adjusted.

While many countries of the world are increasing the salaries of their workforce, extending social security coverage for their citizens and providing all forms of palliatives to help their people through the terrible socio-economic dislocations occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic, it would be completely absurd for the Nigerian government to be thinking of salary slash. This move is not only at great odds with global best responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is also in violation of relevant ILO Conventions and Declarations on Wages and Decent Work.

We urge Government as a social partner to quickly respond to the demands by Labour for an upward review of salaries of all Nigerian workers. Nigerian workers have showed sufficient understanding with government through the tough patches of the pandemic. Now, Nigerian workers demand reciprocity of our understanding. Nigerian workers demand an increase in their remunerations and allowances.

Enough is enough!



Comrade Ayuba Wabba, mni
President, Nigeria Labour Congress
5th May 2021.

TOYE THE INTELLECTUAL

excerpted from the lecture delivered by prof. Poju Akinyanju on the commemoration of comrade Toye Olorode's 80th Birthday at University of Jos

This lecture is about Professor Omotoye Olorode who has been acknowledged nationally as a quintessential revolutionary intellectual. Being an intellectual is a choice. You may not be gifted with high intellect, in which case you cannot be an intellectual even if you want. But you may be gifted with high intellect and choose not to be an intellectual. Toye is gifted with high intellect and chose to become an intellectual. As Oloruntoba-Oju(2012) said

unlike academic work, the work of the intelligentsia is self-appointed; it is never motivated by pecuniary considerations and it is often unremunerated; it defies economic quantification. It is often motivated by a messianic zeal



The word intellectual is defined as 'of, appealing to or requiring or given to the exercise of the intellect (Concise Oxford Dictionary) while the same dictionary defined an Intellectual as a person possessing a good understanding or an enlightened person. Dictionary.com defined the intellectual as a person of superior intellect, a person who relies on the intellect rather than emotions or feelings, a person engaged in mental labour as a writer or teacher; a person who works with intellect instead of brawn. If the definition is pitched as the use of brain versus brawn, then the term intellectual will apply to a large number of non manual workers including clerks, typists etc but that is not what is in public consciousness about the intellectual. He is perceived as a gifted thinker, an egghead etc. Even then, the public consciousness also confuses two categories of people who use their intellect for work as we will show below.

The term Intellectual originated in tzarist Russia about 1860 to describe a section of university educated youth who were critically thinking personalities (Bullock & Stallybrass, 1977). For some time, Intellectuals were associated with the 'left' and were described in the Communist manifesto as a section of the bourgeoisie who attached themselves to the working class with the function of shaping the ideas of members of that class. Thus in Marxist philosophy the social-class function of the Intellectuals (the intelligentsia) is to be the source of progressive ideas for



the transformation of society; to provide advice and counsel to the political leaders; to interpret the country's politics to the mass of the population (urban workers and peasants); and, as required, to provide leaders. No society becomes independent and develops without organizing itself and there is no such organization without Intellectuals i.e. without a group of people specialized in the conceptual and philosophical elaboration of ideas.

An all encompassing definition of an Intellectual (Wikipedia) is the man or woman who engages in critical study, thought, and reflection about the reality of society, proposes solutions for the normative problems of society, and by such discourse in the public sphere gains authority from public opinion. Coming from the world of culture, either as a creator or as a mediator, the intellectual participates in politics, either to defend a concrete proposition or to denounce an injustice, usually by producing or by extending an ideology, and by defending one or another system of values.

The use of the term intellectual has moved away from its narrow placement to the left of the political spectrum as they are considered the bearers of culture. Thus they can be of the left or of the right. Thus we may have the progressive, conservative, fascist, reactionary, revolutionary, democratic, communist, Utopian Intellectuals.

The Intellect workers versus the intellectual. Even when individuals are engaged in deep use of the intellect, some authors have made a differentiation based on the philosophical underpinning of how the product of intellect is applied. Thus, the persons who apply high intellect in society have been differentiated into two: the Intellect worker and the Intellectual. The Intellect worker works with his mind instead of his muscle. According to Baran (1961) the Intellect worker has two features: (i.) narrowing the application of their intellect to their subject areas and (ii.) belief in outsourcing of produced knowledge- i.e. the product of intellect is released to whoever wants without caring for how it is deployed. The Intellect worker who works within existing order is preoccupied with the job at hand. He does not raise questions outside his assignment (sell a product –perfumed bread, public opinion or political candidate, produce graduates, study the genetic makeup of bacteria). The Intellect worker compartmentalizes societal predilections and seeks to solve the ones in his narrow area of activity without relating it to the origin, emergence and disappearance of broader values and ethical judgments. They are experts and produce expertise as ,for example, Physicians, Scientists, University Professors, Technicians, Purveyor of Culture, Corporate Executives. He may see his job as the production of graduates or even narrower as the contribution of his knowledge of atom structure to the production of chemistry graduates without giving a thought to how the economic situation of the student he deals with influences knowledge receipt or how the graduates he contributes to producing fit into national or international job demand influenced by socio-economic and political conditions outside of his institution. As Baran (ibid) further espoused



the purpose of the Intellect workers work and thought is the particular job in hand. It is the rationalization, mastery, and manipulation of whatever branch of reality he is immediately concerned with. In this regard he differs little, if at all, from the manual worker who molds metal sheets, assembles parts of an engine, or lays bricks in constructing a wall. Putting it in negative terms, the Intellect worker as such is not addressing himself to the meaning of his work, its significance, its place within the entire framework of social activity. In still other words, he is not concerned with the relation of the segment of human endeavor within which he happens to operate to other segments and to the totality of the historical process. His "natural" motto is to mind his own business, and, if he is conscientious and ambitious, to be as efficient and as successful at it as possible. For the rest, let others, too, attend to their business, whatever it may be.

The intellectual worker is ethically neutral. He makes no value judgment about happenings in the society in which he lives which in a way is an endorsement of the status quo

On the contrary, the Intellectual systematically relates the specific area of his thoughts to other aspects of human existence, the totality of the historical process (Baran, Ibid. p5)

what marks the Intellectual and distinguishes him from the intellect workers and indeed from all others is that his concern with the entire historical process is not a tangential interest but permeates his thought and significantly affects his work. the intellectual is systematically seeking to relate whatever specific area he may be working in to other aspects of human existence.

Intellectuals are found in all spheres of life though they predominate in the academy which is an environment conducive for their production though as Olorode (2012) clarified

We are not implying that all academics (members of the academy) are, or are going to be Intellectuals. ...But although the academy is the factory where Intellectuals are produced systematically, many Intellectuals, as products of the academy or of other experiences, are also outside the academy as lawyers journalists, artisans, peasants, traditional philosophers pastors, imams, trade union leaders, politicians and various categories of workers.

We can then highlight some of the critical attributes of the intellectual:

Seek and speak the truth

Be credible

Be consistent

Engagement with vital reality of contemporary times

Engage in the discussion of his thoughts in the public sphere

Courageous i.e. speak truth to power

Must possess moral courage (integrity)

Not opportunistic i.e. not self serving nor power seeking through his activities.

Intellectualism by our definitions has an inherent dose of activism. Indeed, some define activism as active political engagement by intellectuals. The force of the intellectual idea may



be sufficient to influence and change policies. Where this fails to happen, the individual intellectual may or may not possess the energy and wherewithal to (physically) pursue a campaign for his idea especially when met with the recalcitrance and hostility of the powers that be.

Activism may be pursued at the individual and organizational levels. Activist organizations may be segments of political parties with ideological/political goals or NGOs in specific areas such as human rights, environment, trade unions or religions.

However, not all activism is altruistic and therefore not necessarily beneficial to society. There could be positive and negative activism. Some activists promote issues (such as promotion of racial superiority in a multi racial society) that may cause problems in society. Usually counter activism emerges in such situation. Activism could also be a front for opportunism.

Activists do not necessarily aim to personally replace power but seek to highlight and cause changes in existing policies. The fear and interpretation of established order imbues activism with an aura of power. Authorities would allow freedom of thought if it would not be expressed. Once a critical thought is expressed and promoted and it causes discomfort to the established order, it is then blackmailed as extremism or militancy or in the more recent times terrorism! The relationship between the intellectual and the powers that be is captured by Baran (ibid, pp9-10)

An intellectual is thus in essence a social critic, a person whose concern is to identify, to analyze, and in this way to help overcome the obstacles barring the way to the attainment of a better, more humane, and more rational social order. As such he becomes the conscience of society and the spokesman of such progressive forces as it contains in any given period of history. And as such he is inevitably considered a "troublemaker" and a "nuisance" by the ruling class seeking to preserve the status quo, as well as by the intellect workers in its service who accuse the intellectual of being utopian or metaphysical at best, subversive or seditious at worst.

We have identified Omotoye Olorode as a quintessential, indeed revolutionary intellectual, what are the attributes he exhibits for this identification and which we can learn from?

Bishara (2013) defines the role of the intellectual thus:

The role of the intellectual is to question over and over what is postulated as self evident, to disturb people's mental habits, the way they do and think things, to dissipate what is familiar and accepted, to examine rules and institutions and on the basis of this reproblematicize and to participate in the formation of a political will.

The activities of Toyé is captured by this quote.

He possesses deep and broad vision about the improvement of humanity. He trained as a Botanist, more specifically as a geneticist and taxonomist. And he has acquainted himself as an



excellent professional but his vision is much broader. It is about society. In a world where political larceny, lack of justice, corporate greed of global capitalism is generating numerous crisis, Toye's anti-imperialist, socialist vision is noticeable and desirable especially as the rank of public intellectuals appear to be thinning out in Nigeria and Africa. Toye has clearly gone beyond his specialization to engage the public on issues of state and society. Even in his expert studies, he digs into the local environment and links aspects directly to humanity. Examples are his publications on

'Aspects of Plant Naming and Classification among the Yoruba'

'Life Sciences and Development in Nigeria'.

'Biodiversity, Globalization and Poverty'.

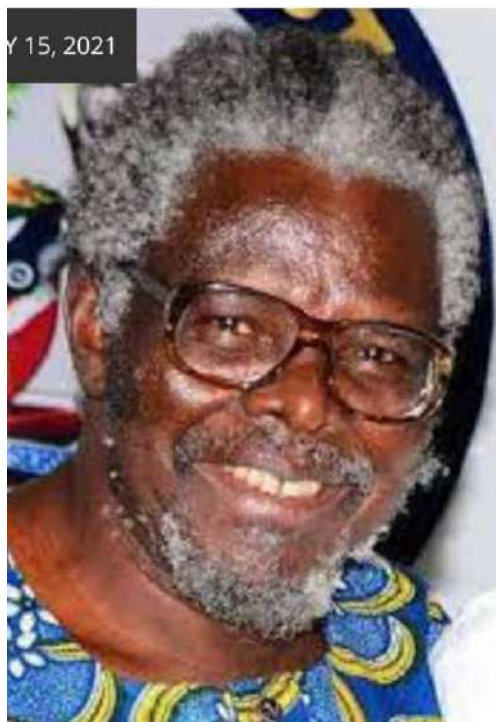
'Life Sciences and the Humanities.'

Toye possesses strong political will. He engages with political organizations and the trade unions where he consistently pushes his line thus assisting these organizations to greater clarity, relevance and functionality. He has done this for many decades and is not tiring even at 80! He has demonstrated courage in speaking truth to power many times on behalf of the people. He has consequently been visited by many travails as indicated earlier: job losses, harassment, libel suits, arrests, detention and even trial for coup plotting merely for continuing to organize people not only at the peak of arrogance of power by the military but when intra-military conflict made political activity very dangerous.

He possesses the ability to inspire others, share collective and organization consciousness. He is proactive and adaptable and possesses moral courage. His political staying power is legendary.

EDWIN MADUNAGU: CELEBRATING THE MARXIST PEDAGOGUE AT 75

Comrade Edwin Madunagu is a reputable mathematician, scholar, nationalist, political theorist deeply committed to a thoroughgoing Marxist revolutionary thought and practice as the most promising ideological basis and route to the emancipation of Africa. The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) proudly identifies with this great son of Africa, fondly called Eddie in radical and revolutionary circles, on this joyous occasion of his 75th birthday. Our Comrade is one of the most articulate proponents of the application of Marxism to understanding contemporary issues of Nigeria's and Africa's undeserved descent into the abyss of underdevelopment. From parliamentary to executive powers, restructuring to resource control, military dictatorship to cosmetic civil rule, nationalism to internationalisation, Eddie has never shied away from controversies in undertaking the revolutionary diagnosis of nascent national and global issues.



Edwin Madunagu holds a doctorate degree in Mathematics. Yet his writings are so simple and clear for the barely-literate to digest and act upon. In the 1980s and early 1990s, his Thursday column in *The Guardian* was a must-read for undergraduates and young lecturers who were struggling to master the A, B, C of Marxism. Madunagu interpreted *The Communist Manifesto*, *Das Kapital*, *The German Ideology*, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, *Theories of Surplus Value*, *The Civil War in France* and many other writings of Karl Marx in the context of confronting the hydra-headed problems of poverty, misery, want, miseducation, unemployment, insecurity and underdevelopment in Nigeria and Africa. Eddie predicted the events which gave rise to *Glasnost-Perestroika* and the subsequent dissolution of the Soviet Union in the late 1980's. His logic resonates of a mathematician and a dialectician that he is, but his unique historicity elevates dialectical materialism to the plane of historical criticism. Budding "leftists" in the 1980s-1990s did not need to read the almost inexhaustible volumes of Karl Marx's



collections to see the relevance of the revolutionary pathway out of Africa's development *cul de sac*; all they needed was a close study of carefully selected commentaries of Edwin Madunagu. What a great pedagogue!

Eddie remains one of those academics the military tagged "*those teaching what they are not paid to teach*". He lost his job as a mathematics teacher at the University of Calabar on this allegation of radicalising students by Nigeria's bankrupt, neo-colonial, instrumentalist military dictators. But Madunagu has been undeterred by the retrogressive elements in *khaki, agbada, babanriga* and what-have-you. He continues to write and work for the unity of the Left to herald the Nigerian revolution. You may not agree with Eddie's method, but you cannot fault his sincerity and commitment to the socialist transformation of Nigeria and, indeed, Africa.

Comrade Eddie remains one of the most practical gender activists we know in ASUU. The inseparability of his thoughts and activism from those of his heartthrob and academic soulmate, Bene Madunagu, suggests a marriage made in heaven. As we can attest, Comrade Bene would proudly tell anyone that cares to listen: "*There is nothing he (Eddie) writes that I don't read, and there is nothing I (Bene) put together that he doesn't also read*". This

is a profound testimony to an uncommon bond in a patriarchal society such as ours. Their story deserves further sociological research to assist the Nigerian Left establish the secret of Eddie-Bene's bonding for expanding the base of female participation in the struggle, and the acceleration of our revolutionary momentum!

We cannot fully capture the contributions of Comrade Edwin Madunagu in thoughts and lifestyle to the growth of the Nigerian Left within the little space available for this tribute. The good thing, however, is that we are celebrating a hero who is alive; our Eddie and his darling wife are still much around to inspire, to mentor and to teach us on *What is to be done* as we work for the socialist transformation of the IMF-World Bank recaptured and dependent capitalist Nigeria and Africa.

We wish the Madunagu's many more years of healthy service to the Nigerian Left in the struggle for emancipation not only in our country but in all Africa and the rest of the world.

Congratulations, Sir!!!

Biodun Ogunyemi
ASUU President
8th May 2021



You are a conscientious **ASUU** member !

Therefore:

Stay away from

LAGOS STATE UNIVERSITY (LASU).

ASUU's sanctions on LASU subsist, do not flout them.

DO NOT PARTAKE WITH LASU IN

- Academic Conferences
- Workshops
- External Moderations
- Sabbatical Leave
- External Assessments
- Accreditation Exercise
- and other academic activities.

LASU is presently ravaged by the virus of lawlessness,
and will be in isolation until further notice.

Keep your distance and avoid sanctions.

Seek for more clarification from your Branch Chair.

Courtesy of ASUU, LAGOS ZONE.



Solidarity Forever

Pete Seeger, Si Kahn, ...

Solidarity forever
Solidarity forever
Solidarity forever
For the union makes us strong

When the union's inspiration through the workers' blood shall run
There can be no power greater anywhere beneath the sun
Yet what force on earth is weaker than the feeble strength of one
But the union makes us strong

Solidarity forever
Solidarity forever
Solidarity forever
For the union makes us strong

It is we who plowed the prairies, built the cities where they trade
Dug the mines and built the workshops, endless miles of railroad laid
Now we stand outcast and starving midst the wonders we have made
But the union makes us strong

Solidarity forever
Solidarity forever
Solidarity forever
For the union makes us strong

They have taken untold millions that they never toiled to earn
But without our brain and muscle not a single wheel can turn
We can break their haughty power, gain our freedom when we learn
That the union makes us strong

Solidarity forever
Solidarity forever
Solidarity forever
For the union makes us strong

In our hands is placed a power greater than their hoarded gold
Greater than the might of atoms, magnified a thousand fold
We can bring to birth a new world from the ashes of the old
For the union makes us strong

Solidarity forever
Solidarity forever
Solidarity forever
For the union makes us strong



ASUU 2021 NATIONAL DELEGATE CONFERENCE

**ASUU holds
its Biennial Delegates Conference
at Nnamdi Azikiwe University,
Awka, Anambra State.**

**This is wishing
all delegates happy deliberations
and memorable interactions as we
congregate to move our Union forward.**

SOLIDARITY FOREVER

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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.

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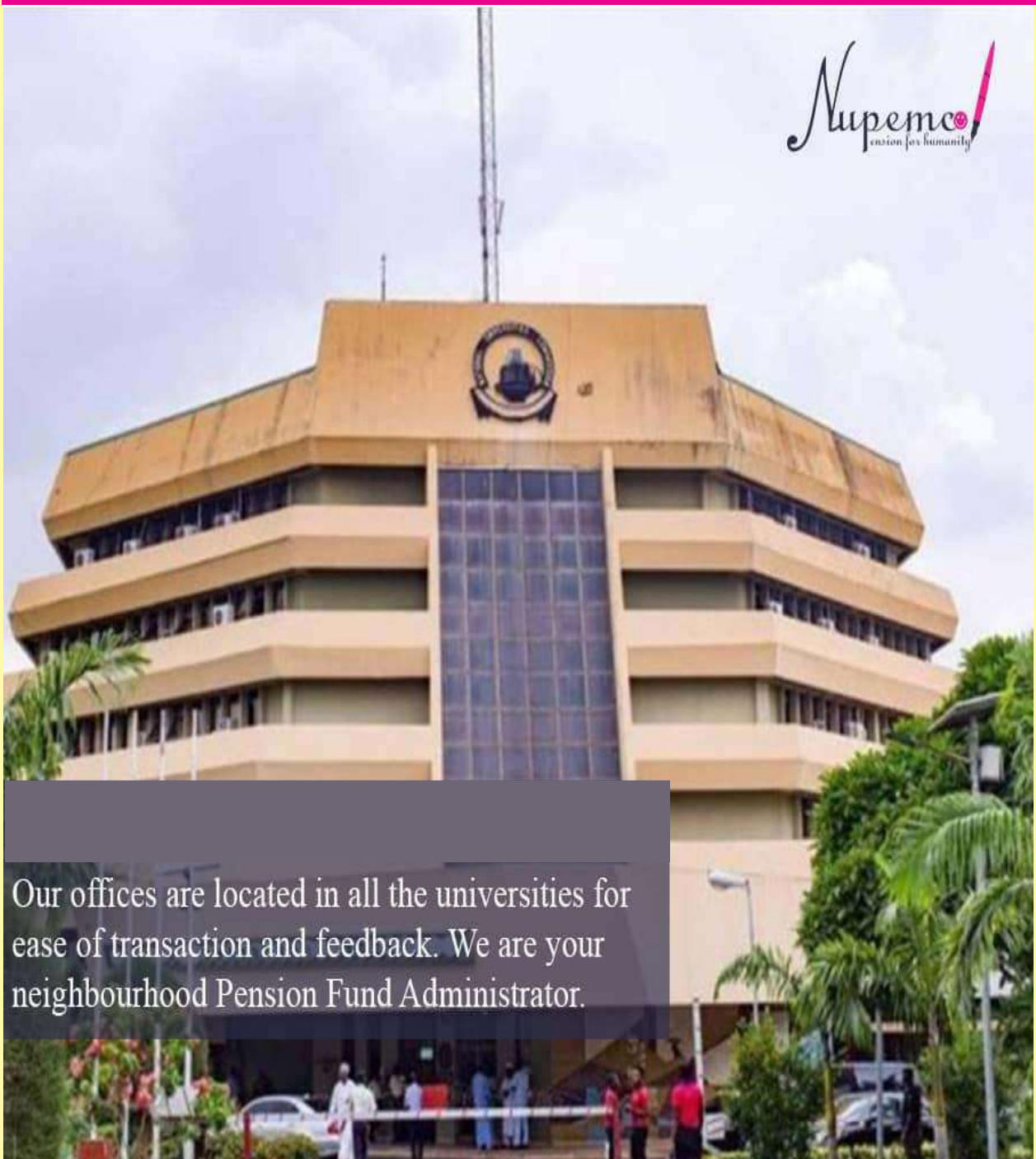
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