Not a Kobo increase in Fuel Price!

The government has not done anything for the past 5 years, the poverty levels are still in plunser, private companies are being brought in to take over the revenue section of PHCN workers. Several paid adverts have been placed in major newspapers in Nigeria combined with several publications against PHCN workers.

Privatization, Deregulation & Anti Worker Programs

Currently, the sale of the power stations has commenced secretly. Several power stations, transmission stations and district offices in Nigeria have been ‘willed’ secretly to private companies. The unions are being brought in to try to take over the union offices but the army is there and all other atrocities are still continuing. A major misinformation and propaganda war has also been declared on PHCN workers. Several paid adverts have been placed in major newspapers in Nigeria combined with several publications against PHCN workers.

All of a sudden the victims became the accusers PHCN workers have all of a sudden become responsible for the crisis of the power sector in Nigeria. The truth about the real situation must be told to the Nigerian masses that are on the receiving end and who invidiously suffer the consequences of these imposed draconian programmes.

Reinstate all Victimized Dangote Pasta Workers!

Gbemiga Alabi

Gone are the days when the government is to be served with a show and tell. The government is consciously under-valuing various PHCN infrastructures nationally in order to dispose them cheaply to themselves. Already tariffs have been increased and further increase would take place very soon. Private companies are being brought in to take over the revenue section of PHCN workers. The government has not done anything to address the question of infrahuman conditions of work in PHCN till date. Casualization of labour is still in plunser. There are thousands of casual workers in PHCN who are placed under infrahuman conditions with very low wages and no job guarantees.

These workers are responsible for several important jobs from manning power stations to finding power faults to collect revenue. The government is not only in this for profit but also in profit. A large proportion of this money remains in poor or very poor condition with only 15 percent of federal roads in good condition. It is sad to note that rural roads, which are statutorily referred to as local governo in spite of promises.

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Continued from page 1

therefore is “what will happen when the price of oil crashes and the income crumbles?”

The rising debt

The Obasanjo regime, in an extremely dubious deal of April 2008, celebrated the exit of the state from any form of foreign entanglement, which was then estimated at 35 billion dollars. The celebration alone cost 2.4 billion Naira and he was beating his chest as a man who has done the impossible. Less than 5 years later, Nigerian debt has eaten its way through the Nigerian economy, a fact that clearly surpasses the earlier figure.

The significant difference between the present debt and the earlier one is in its composition. In the 1980s and 90s, the debt was predominantly foreign, the current debt structure leans more towards the domestic debt. With a rising national debt, the government has not only to borrow money to pay off its foreign creditors, but also to pay for its domestic creditors.

Another significant portion of this debt is owed to contractors who are constructing more roads. This has led to a lot of questions from Nigerians, which roads are being constructed and which one are being abandoned.

Therefore, a booming Nigerian economy has only widened the gap between the extremely rich minority and the overwhelming majority of the working masses. While this accelerates the accumulation of immense wealth in the hands of a few, it pushes more people into the abyss of poverty and want; it robs the poor to pay the rich. It calls on the already impoverished majority to tighten their belts and be prepared for hard times, while the ever diminishing fat cats continue to grow. It scars people with rising debt, while channeling the public wealth into private pockets. We are going through a boom, a bubble, presently lives billions Danang, Akongila and Buhari’s private debts are public debts, as so, to stave off the people of Nigeria from despair.

Does this mean that the Nigerian ruling elite are mere appendages of the western market. Yes, this clearly explains why the Nigerian ruling class is ask ing Nigeria’s masses to bear the burden of their excess.

Anyhow we consider the issue, there is nothing to do but keep on paying. They have provided an example of what is to come.

The economic policies part of which is fuel price control, people have to pay more to do the same jobs. The local electricity was subsidized at N450 billion for last year. However, the Nigerian elites realized that this method was abandoned in the last years.

In the case of the fuel price control, the government has not released the cost but they have been increasing the petroleum product price, a move that has been met with mixed reactions by Nigerians. A lot of Nigerians have been asking why the price of petroleum is being increased, especially when the country is sitting on a huge petroleum reserve.

The general consensus is that the increase in fuel price is only one of the many measures that the Nigerian government has taken to control the rising cost of living. However, the government has not provided a clear explanation for the increase.

The government has kept quiet about the increase, as they have been focusing on other issues such as the fight against corruption. However, the increase in fuel price has been met with mixed reactions by Nigerians, with some calling for a reduction in the price of petroleum.

Many Nigerians have expressed their dissatisfaction with the increase in fuel price, as they believe that the government is only using the price as a way to control the rising cost of living. However, the government has not provided a clear explanation for the increase.

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**Workers' Fight Back**

The PHCN workers have remained opposed to the privatization program of the government. They have seen from experience that it is a step in the wrong direction. They know it would lead to job losses, high power tariffs, closing down of power plants and loss of pensions. However, many people are not usually impressed with PHCN workers, thinking that they are the ones responsible for the poor power situation in the country. This is far from the truth.

**Workers' Struggle Nine months after**

Since February 2011, when the over 50 workers of Dangote Pasta were sacked, they have remained committed to the struggle for their rights on other Dangote companies. This is the time to rally round the victimized workers and to insist on the demand that the victimized workers be restored to the Dangote Pasta plant.

In the short and long run the policy is inevitable creates serious problems. These policies include further increment in PHCN tariffs, sacking of thousands of workers and liquidating PHCN. Currently, it is reported that the NLC intervened in the current facetoff and issued an ultimatum to government. This should be followed up with action and not abandoned. Committees of actions should be set up and workers should be mobilized nationally in support. In the face of a national action the regime would back down.

**Socialist Alternative**

The current crisis in the power sector cannot be resolved by existing order; there has to be a system change. Those responsible for the crisis can never offer a way forward. The only policies the regime has ever put its hands on are the IMF-World Bank, which caused the crisis.

The PHCN like other government corporations have been plundered heavily over the years by the elites with no reinvestment in its infrastructure in spite of trillions of naira that was spent on it and the billions the corporation has made. The current regime is now forced to sink, while they smile to be banks.

Workers take over and democratic control of the power sector remains the only way forward. That is the nationalization of the power sector under workers' democratic control and management. Only the workers have the requisite experience and funds to keep PHCN and providing constant power that can power growth.

Workers must have a say in all levels of management and appointed professional management personal must be approved by workers democratically. This can power growth.

However, this can never happen except the Nigerian workers take political consciousness. The workers must be educated for their jobs, against privatization and myriad draconian policies, they must also transform their organizations and build a strong workers' party that can contest for political power.
The square. These are very important risers and workers’ formations marched to materialise. Despite this, several factions. But due to the fact that no national leaders were on strike and had occupied their summing up the essence of the situation. “vendor barely making a living,” he said studied business and now I am a street business. I demand that the field marshalGamal Abdel Nasser, who swung far to the left during his rule in the 1960s, is eating its way into the fragile social base of the Junta. Opponents’ revolts A clear indication of this was seen on Friday when, along with millions of ordinary men and women, several army officers joined the crowds in Tahrir Square fearing their military uniforms. The officers, who were carried on the shoulders of a sea of people, publicly exposed the real situation within the army, when it is clear that the ordinary soldiers and lower ranking officers are not at all with the SCAF. This open and public defiance of the officers was a warning to the generals that they could easily end up being a military high-command with no army. “We must be in cohesion with the Egyptian people once again. This is the best way. We must resort to the hammer blows of events.” Another army officer, Major Tamer Samir Badr, told The Guardian: "I want the people to know there are army officers with them, who feel the pain of the people, dying, and the army gave the orders for us to just stand and watch. I’m supposed to die for these people, not them for me. Now I’m ready to die for the square, and I’m not afraid of anything." Speaking next to an open window that the.military men had broken to escape, Badr insisted was left open so that he could hear the crowds, the 37-year-old claimed to be in the regime. The revolution is that of the officers was a warning to the generals that they could easily end up being a military high-command with no army. The most important ally of the SCAF in the last nine months has been the Mus- lim Brotherhood. The organisation, that was the loyal “opposition” during the Mubarak era, has retained its loyalist role of being the second line of defence for capitalism in Egypt. The Brotherhood has now lost all au- thority with the revolutionaries. An indi- vidual to a new level. It is clear to all parties, that Ganzouri is not the man for the job. It is clear that the fall of the SCAF is merely a question of when and how. The most intense struggles between the masses and the SCAF and the old ruling cliques – the SCAF and the Central Security Forces. Day after day hundreds of thousands have gathered in Tahrir Square and fought with the police and the army. More than 40 protesters have been killed and countless more injured. At the same time the Muslim Brother- hood has come out fully in opposition to the revolution. Not only did it come out against the 18 day revolution but in a move aimed at dividing the move- ment, it called for a separate demonstra- tion called the “Friday of Last Reaction”. All the forces that once appeared as a unified bloc are now separating into separate camps, between police, black- pilots and the excluded. On the one side there are the men of business, i.e. the Muslim Broth- erhood, the Islahists, the Pajamas and the Arthurian. On the other side you find the youth, the workers and the poor, i.e. the workers movement at the present. A recent poll has demonstrated with threats of chaos and terrible reper- cussions of Mubarak in his last days. He has been a military man for a long time; it is not easy for him to change. The pro- testers against the rule of the Junta have put forward their demands: They have declared the top brass of the army appeared more and more isolated. It is clear that the fall of the SCAF is merely a question of when and how. The SCAF has drawn up the elec- tion, but the SCAF maintains that the new government will be a coalition government. Continued on page 6
The situation of the health sector is critically embarrassing one. On a continual basis, thousands of Nigerians continue to die due to conditions that are clearly preventable. For example, more than five thousand individuals died in the last year of last year due to preventable preventable conditions that are highly preventable with provision of portable water; unfortunately in Nigeria this is a luxury to come by for more than 50% of the population. In a month the same vein, according to statistics from the World Health Organization (WHO), 90% of all deliveries in the country, and a country like Nigeria, deriving almost equal proportion of the Nigerian workforce, including the Nigerian masses is the challenge of a credible political alternative.

The present state of the party
Nigerian Labour Party was formed in 1979 by the leadership of NLC. Since then, the trade union leadership has not done anything towards building the party, and making it a genuine workers' party. It has effectively changed the other bourgeois party by mobilizing its members into it, but they choose instead to abandon the party. A striking confirmation of this was what happened in 2007 general election where Comrade Adams Oshiomhole (former President of Nigerian Labour Congress), who was once respected by workers for leading some struggles in the past and who also was instrumental to the establishment of the present political parties and their aspirants, do not represent that alternative. They all belong to the same Nigerian bourgeois political class who have plundered the country for the past 50 years and also defended the status quo.

With all this lamentable state of things in the country, a genuine working class based social democratic party would be the best party not only in Nigeria but also in Africa considering the size of the Nigerian working class, which is 55 million. It is also clear that the Organization has not been the victim of any political manoeuver, but unfortunately the party has been abandoned by the people who they had the greatest trust in, i.e. NLC and other organized trade unions. But unfortunately the party has been abandoned by the people it had the greatest trust in, i.e. NLC and other organized trade unions. The Nigerian masses are desperately looking for an alternative that will cease to make many Nigerians die due to conditions that are clearly preventable. For example, more than five thousand individuals died in the last year of last year due to preventable preventable conditions that are highly preventable with provision of portable water; unfortunately in Nigeria this is a luxury to come by for more than 50% of the population. In a month the same vein, according to statistics from the World Health Organization (WHO), 90% of all deliveries in the country, and a country like Nigeria, deriving almost equal proportion of the Nigerian workforce, including the Nigerian masses is the challenge of a credible political alternative.

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Continued from page 5

The Guardian correctly observed: “The leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood has declared against the protests. This clarifies the real face of those people who were perceived to have sided with SCAF against the people. They’ve caused a split amongst a layer of youth.”

If they are really concerned about subsidies, they should increase the price of the naira to the level it was before devaluation. The same applies to fuel prices.

The money they make from this crime will only go to factions local and foreign debts, and go into private pockets of the elites.

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Continued from page 8

This is one of the reasons why the workers are calling for increase in retirement age. The call is a response to the growing population calling for the lowering of the retirement age, a call for the lowering of the retirement age in the earlier years of the previous administration.

As the government continues to cut down funding for education, the children of the poor are left behind, with thousands of students in schools abroad. British schools are said to receive over N800 billion from Nigerian parents as school fees for their students studying in the UK. When going overseas for education is now an exclusive property of the rich in Nigeria.

According to the CBN Governor, Sanusi, over N150 billion is spent on the schools overseas of the top 71,000 Nigerian students in schools abroad. British schools are said to receive over N800 billion from Nigerian parents as school fees for their students studying in the UK. When going overseas for education is now an exclusive property of the rich in Nigeria.

The impression always given is that the regime is weak, lacking legitimacy and in a deep crisis. However, in spite of this, they want the masses to continue to carry the burden of the crisis they created. They have no other alternative.

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The best and clearest communiqué comes from the ASUU Strike. ASUU correctly identified the class structure of Nigeria and identified the fact that the Nigerian ruling class and their imperial master are responsible for the crisis in education in Nigeria. The struggle ASUU is waging is quite commendable, and the entire Nigerian labour & youth movement have a lot to learn from them. Having the leadership of the revolution that is capable of leading the masses to totally hands off funding of the universities. This would mean that the university in the hands of the ruling elites will longer want funds devoted for social services.

The elections that were improvised on the transformation of the NANS. The struggle ASUU is waging is quite commendable. This is the time for students to rebuild their organizations and fight back against the bosses. It is on record that the trade union in Nigeria has already lost much of its legitimacy. The only reality is that the ruling elites want the masses to continue to carry the burden of the crisis they created. They have no other alternative.

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The balance of forces is overwhelming in favour of the masses that are con- fident and unafraid. At the same time, the regime is weak, lacking legitimacy and in a deep crisis. However, in spite of this, they still controls the state and the command- ing heights of the economy remain in the hands of the ruling imperialists. They no longer see the need to edu- cate the people or produce more gradu- ate labour, the masses are left to fend for themselves. They are now interested in sucking blood from the people without giving anything for it. They no longer want funds for the universities or for social ser- vices like education, health care, etc; they want such funds made available to them when they want.

Therefore, a much more political programme and organisation is neces- sary. ASUU correctly identified the terrible realities facing education and Nigeria in their recent communiqué. This is one of the clear and mighty lives at the expense of the poor and less privileged. Most of these funds go directly to private pockets. How do such funds go directly to private pockets? This would mean that the university in the hands of the ruling elites will longer want funds devoted for social services.

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The fact is that this time – having nothing to show for the huge funds being wasted over the whole campus, the and the rich who back it – he will be clearly seen the revolutionary potential of bourgeois compromise, he failed mis-

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Leakage of information is in the absence of a genuine democratic structure the answer is the same. On in-

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Sale of land and land related charges. Land is precious in Lagos the way oil is precious in Nigeria. The list of funds coming to Lagos remains endless. However, in spite of the fact that the civil service has agencies assigned to collecting income from various things which have been contracted to private interests in Lagos.

The amount required to provide and qualitative education in Lagos is quite insurmountable. At the same time, the regime is weak, lacking legitimacy and in a deep crisis. However, in spite of this, they still controls the state and the command- ing heights of the economy remain in the hands of the ruling imperialists. They no longer see the need to edu- cate the people or produce more gradu- ate labour, the masses are left to fend for themselves. They are now interested in sucking blood from the people without giving anything for it. They no longer want funds for the universities or for social ser- vices like education, health care, etc; they want such funds made available to them when they want.

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**Support the ASUU Strike!**

Support the Struggle against Underfunding of Education

**by the time the current strike of Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), commenced on December 5 2011, it had been two long years after they had an agreement with the Federal Government. That was in 2009. The 2009 Agreement is actually a review of the 2001 Agreement. Earlier in September, ASUU had embarked on a one-week warning strike and the union shifted lots of grounds by extending the period for dialogue with the hope that the federal government would be sincere.**

Nigerian universities have been on the downward slide for years, same goes for factories closing down daily, businesses struggling and unemployment is paralyzing growth. The expectations for the 2009 Agreement are very low, same goes for the 2001 Agreement, ASUU activists victimized there are yet to be fully reinstated in spite of the judgment of the Supreme Court in their favor. The major objectives of the 2009 Agreement according to ASUU’s December 2 2011 communiqué are:

- "to arrest the rot and reverse the decay in the university system in order to restore it to greater responsibilities in nation-building;"
- "to reverse the brain drain, not only by enhancing the remuneration of academic staff but also by dispensing them from encumbrances of a unified civil service wage structure;"
- "to restore Nigerian universities through immediate, massive and sustained financial intervention; and"
- "to ensure genuine university autonomy and academic freedom."

In the breakdown of the 2009 Agreement, ASUU did try to offer several detailed ways out of the crisis but the government choose a totally different agenda. The IMF-World Bank inspired agenda of the government is to destroy education in general. They are committed to cutting funding, commercializing and privatizing it, stifling thinking and creating an environment where mediocrity reigns.

**Support LASU Students’ Struggle against Fee Hikes!**

- Oppose fee increase in all Lagos State Schools
- Defend the Right to Education for All!

Ayo Ayodeji

Support LASU Students’ Struggle against Fee Hikes!

Since the LASU authorities declared in October the draconian increment in school fees, LASU students have embarked on a heroic struggle against this grand assault on education. They have not only boycotted lectures they have embarked on exam boycott and mass protests.

The over 75% fee increment was authorized by the Fasola led ACN government in Lagos. The fees were quite outrageous to say the least and it exposed the true nature of the ACN for what it really is – an anti-people party making pretension to be ‘progressive’.

From the new fee table, the least paying student would pay N198,750.00 per session, while as much as N348,750.00 per session will be paid by medical students. Students are currently paying about N25,000.00. If a ten-long year ago school fees were hiked from N20,000 to the current N25,000.00 by the CAN regime of Timbu.

No doubt this is another major step towards making education an exclusive preserve of the rich as there is no way the children of the working class can such huge sums of money.

Currently the Lagos State government says it is paying N18,700.00 to the least paid worker in Lagos but has not implemented the 140% wage increase across the board in line with the new minimum wage. How can an average worker of the Lagos State government afford to send his kid to LASU?

How can the overwhelming majority of citizens of Lagos afford LASU, with factories doing own daily businesses folding up, with the available jobs paying peanuts as wages with terrible working conditions, etc. Unemployment and poverty is indeed widespread.

Education normally gives an edge to the individual and no matter from which back ground. However, with these fees, the children of the working masses cannot have access to higher education; therefore they are sentenced to life of permanent poverty.

Is Hike in Fees Justifiable?

The irony of the situation is that those spearheading the imposition of these outrageous fees paid all paid next to nothing for their own higher education in the past, thanks to the struggles of the Nigerian students and masses that made tertiary education almost free in the past.

For instance, the governor of Lagos state, Fasola also from a humble back ground paid no tuition fee in University of Benin in the 80s to study law. Had it not been the case, had notations been imposed in UNIBEN from him and millions of Nigerians would not have had access to education.

2009 Agreement (MoU)

In 2001, the government entered into an agreement with ASUU on various issues pertaining to the state of university education. This came into being because of the struggle of ASUU then. It was agreed that the Agreement shall be reviewed every three years.

The agreement was on review in 2004 but that did not take place until 2007 and the final agreement came in 2009. This was due to uninterest of the government.

In essence, it is still the 2001 Agreement that is still in place ten years after. Within the same period, we have seen a systematic collapse in education fund. Fundings has continuously been cut, intellectually bankrupt management imposed on the institutions, fees introduced and in creased arbitrarily, etc. Attacks on trade union rights continue, till date ASUU is still battling to get University of Benin and all ASUU activists victimized there are yet to be fully reinstated in spite of the judgment of the Supreme Court in their favor. **

The reason is not far from the cuts in funding for education and other draconian policies. Today, government allocation to education is as low as 8%. This is contrary to the UN recommended 26%. Even the 8% allocated is grossly mismanaged.

For the 2012 budget, education gets 9.23% about N400.15 billion; this is actually less than the amount allocated for education in 2008, as the naira has been devalued from N18/1.00 in 2008 to over N190/1.00 today.

Though there had been increases in wages due to the struggles of the ASUU and workers in the university over the years, the wages still remain one of the lowest in the world and is being cut via the devaluation of the naira and inflation. Working conditions remain terrible and the tools to work are not available. This is why no Nigerian university is listed in the top 6,000 universities in the world. This is a big scandal when one considers the fact that Nigeria has made billions from oil over the years.

The pensions of workers are under attack; there are thousands of university workers, lecturers and non-academic staff, who have retired years ago and are yet to collect their gratuity and pensions.

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**WHAT WE STAND FOR**

- For an end to fuel price increases and against the deregulation of the oil sector, for the nationalization of the downstream oil sector.
- For a halt and reversal of all IMF/World Bank inspired ‘reform programmes’ such as privatization, deregulation, cutbacks, public spending, etc.
- For the nationalization of the commanding heights of the economy and placing them under the democratic control and management of workers.
- Against the hypocritical and selective anticorruption crusade that has no real effect, we stand for the trial and confiscation of the properties of all those who have stolen and mismanaged public funds by panels made up of the working masses.
- For the payment of all outstanding arrears of pensions and gratuities to all workers nationwide and the abolition of all bureaucratic bottlenecks aimed at frustrating pensioners. And the abolition of the reformed pension scheme aimed at shortchanging workers.
- For Free and Qualitative education for all levels. For the cancellation of all outrageous fees imposed on Nigerian students.
- For Free and Qualitative health service for all. For National Health Service, free to all at the point of need.
- For a N52, 200.00 National Minimum Wage linked to the cost of living.
- For a Labour Party with a Socialist Programme.
- For Socialist policies in the interests of the working people.
- For an end to fuel price increases, for the nationalization of the downstream oil sector.
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