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Strikewave in Nigeria

Sam Mbah, Awareness League

July 2001

Dear comrades,

Our immediate comment on the current wave of strikes, that have all but paralysed the health and educational sectors is that, the immediate post-military transition period in the country, has presented labour and the toiling masses of our people a unique opportunity for self-rediscovery of their historical role, as agents of change. It has since dawned on organised labour that the minimum wage of N5,500.00 (less than USD 50 per month), which the Obasanjo Administration holds as something spectacular is indeed a mere pittance, an empty shell, vis-À-vis the gale of retrenchment set in motion by the outgoing privatisation bazaar in the country.

Curiously, the strike bug reared its head in an unlikely quarter recently; as workers of the leading national newspaper The Guardian embarked on an industrial action which forced the paper off the streets for two weeks. You will recall that the Newspaper wrote the editorial opinion that accused the central labour Union NLC [Nigerian Labour Congress] of “anarcho-syndicalist tactics.”¹ It is an eternal credit to the struggles that the Awareness League has

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From the Awareness League in Nigeria, the Workers Solidarity Alliance received the following lettering concerning recent workers struggles:

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¹ “Labour’s Undue Radicalism”, The Guardian (Nigeria), 28 May 2001

had to wage that today, words like “anarchism” or “anarchosyndicalism” are being used in public discourse. We are not relenting all the same.

Samuel Mbah