

# National Hunger: The Shege Promax and IwoLokan



There is this popular adage that says that when digging a trench for your enemy, make it shallow. You may be the one who will fall into the trench. When Buhari used ASUU to perform the Shege experiment (the starvation policy), everyone praised him. The No-work-no-pay policy for the patriotic struggle, a protest strike for the system, was highly celebrated. You expected the public to support such a struggle, but it was seen as if the Union of Lecturers were fighting to protect their father's property. Someone made a comment while the strike was on that it was a selfish fight to protect my job. He said I would be jobless if public universities should die. So, my struggle was for me not to lose my job. That is one of the many views of the public about the strike. Nobody looked at the merit of the ASUU strike. A lot of people were not looking at the impact of the state of the university system on the future of our kids. Many did not look at the validity of the demands of the University workers. Nobody was asking why the government allowed the strike to happen in the first place. Nobody asked why the government was still dragging a renegotiation that was due in 2012. Nobody asked why the government sustained the strike for 8 months. Nobody was seeing the benefit of the strike to the public university system and Nigeria. Nearly everyone was like the "selfish strike loving" ASUU must be dealt with. Their wings must be clipped. Have you ever seen someone celebrating that someone was hungry? Nigerians were celebrating the starvation of their intellectuals. Lauretta Onoche's write-ups were trending. The Nigerian intellectuals were dehumanized. They were turned into beggars in a fight for the survival of a public institution, the public universities. They refused to give up despite the adopted starvation strategy by the government agents. The government had to use the court to force the strike to an end. The renegotiation was dumped in the bin. Everyone got paid their allowances but the Earned Academic Allowance, a legitimate allowance, is not paid. There was no university revitalization fund. There was nothing. The parents aren't bothered. All they want is for their kids to be on campus irrespective of the sorry state of the campus, and get taught anyhow. It's all about the acquisition of the paper called the degree certificate. They are willing to Manage It Like That (MILT).

No work no pay was seen as a success on ASUU, the strongest and toughest workers Union in Nigeria, and becomes normalized. The government was celebrated for such a feat. The poor professors were mocked. ASUU wings are said to be supposedly clipped and celebrated. Any insulting articles on the intellectuals were trending. Workers are now scared of strikes to force collective bargaining for fear of salary stoppage. We entered the era of "Take it or Leave it". Not even the military regime treated Nigerian workers this way. But this is democracy. Is it really democracy or should we better call it by its name; Plutocracy? The government of the wealthy where the voice of the people does not matter. Buhari and Ngige became the heroes of the moment. They thought it was a win against ASUU. The people are too shortsighted to see the bigger picture. They didn't realize the food they were cooking for Nigerians. They didn't see that it was rather a victory against Nigerian workers and the people. Then, it was time for election and the people that celebrated the victory over ASUU wanted to change the APC government. Haba mallam! Why will you change such a successful government, especially with their victory over ASUU and by extension Nigerian workers? Nah! We need to re-elect the party to feel the Shege Promax that is in the waiting in a couple of months. It

was a resounding victory for the master strategist, the man that "built Lagos". A few minutes after he took over and before he could get to his office, he said the fuel subsidy was already gone. The beginning. He didn't leave the podium when the price of fuel instantly increased from ₦162 per litre to ₦580 per litre.

Then his floating of naira devalued the currency from ₦400 to a dollar to over ₦1,000 to a dollar. Fuel is imported and every naira devaluation will of course affect the fuel pump price and purchasing power of the people. Not sure if their IMF agents didn't inform them. The effect of the naira devaluation was seen affecting the fuel price every month. Fuel price was increasing by ₦100 monthly till it got to ₦770 per litre last month. The impact of the unusual inflation on the cost of foodstuff and basic needs is another discussion. All these of course reduced the purchasing power of the people, the poor Nigerians. But unfortunately, the highly rated master strategist has no strategy to improve the purchasing power of the people that his policies have impoverished. There was a battle for minimum wage by NLC. NLC and TUC were asking for ₦450,000 as the minimum. 14 months after subsidy removal, NLC dropped from ₦450,000 to accept ₦70,000 as the new minimum wage. Nigerians have no say. But guess what? The price of fuel was just increased from ₦770 per litre to about ₦950 per litre while the minimum wage paid a few days ago for August was still ₦30,000. The reality now is that the monthly minimum wage can only buy 30 litres of fuel at the moment.

There was a hunger protest, and some people were shocked with the president's speech. He was like you have the right to protest even though it won't change anything. Since you cannot understand that the hunger imposed on you is in your interest and you want to protest, do not just destroy. The speech did not shock some of us. I learned some of the protesters are being prosecuted now. We should be praising this government for this achievement if we can celebrate the persecution of lecturers. I am glad that the APC government was re-elected. How would you have experienced the Promax of the Shege that the ASUU members experienced in their hands in a fight for the survival of our public universities if you had changed the government?

I just remember that while NNPC could not make its refineries work for several years, Dangote refinery is to refine fuel and give it to NNPC to sell. Incidentally the price of fuel increased at the time Dangote refinery fuel got into the market. Isn't that amazing? There was a question asked if Nigerians can ever be stretched to breaking point. No way! All the results from the social experiment revealed that our elastic limit is limitless, thanks to our docility. A reckless political class + Docile citizens = Limitless MILT index with lamentation.

Just as the lecturers have to endure the Shege that they are yet to recover from, please endure the Shege Promax and be patient with the government. Enjoy the sacrifice and pray for the leaders as our paid Imams have advised. The political class as they swim in opulence meant well for you and the country just the way they meant well for the lecturers and public universities.