



Socialist Bulletin

A Monthly Publication from Socialist Labour

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Solidarity with ASUU – Forward to Victory!

A SUU members have now voted to continue their strike action with an indefinite strike. This is an important turning point and the organisation of the strike needs to reflect this. We cannot afford to let the strike remain as a stay at home type – ASUU members need to reach out to explain the importance of their strike. We also need wider and sustained solidarity action from across the trade union movement to ensure a victory for ASUU and to secure the future of public education.

The NLC delivered on its promise to organise wonderful protests in every state capital. It also promised to organise a three day warning strike if the government did not implement its agreements with the tertiary education trade unions within two weeks. It was then promising to organise an indefinite general strike if the government still refused to act. We need to encourage the NLC to deliver on these promises.

The ASUU strike is over the refusal of the Federal Government to implement the Memorandum of Agreement it signed with ASUU at the end of the last strike in December 2020, after nine months. This included:

- **Re-negotiation of the earlier 2009 Agreement**
- **Establishing visitation panels and publication of their results**
- **Replace Integrated Payment Payroll Information System (IPPIIS) with UTAS**
- **Funding of University and Tertiary Education Sector**
- **Earned Allowances for both Academic and Non-Academic Staff of Nigeria’s Universities**
- **End the proliferation of state universities that cannot be funded.**

These demands have not been met. Ministers came to the last meeting with a “take it or leave it” demand to return to work! The Government has yet to implement anything, at best they are only making promises to make payments next year. We can no longer trust Government promises. It never delivers on them.

We need ASUU branches and their members to brief their students, parents and the general public. Each ASUU branch should reach out to local trade union branches to offer speakers to explain the reasons for the strike to their members. In each university, ASUU should organise regular town hall meetings and other activities to gain support for the strike with fliers.

We need all trade union members and branches to support the ASUU strike. Trade union branches should organise general meetings of their members to allow ASUU to explain why they need solidarity. ASUU needs solidarity messages, support and action from local, state and national trade unions. We need calls from trade union branches to state and national trade unions and the NLC to organize the solidarity that is necessary for ASUU to be victorious.

The ASUU strike is vital for the future of public education and the relationship between the government and the trade unions. If ASUU is victorious, this success will set the tone for the funding of education by the next government. Privatisation and commercialisation of education mean that spending on education is now a significant part of every families expenditure. So the outcome of this strike will affect every family’s expenditure.

We know that the issues we face are far wider than just the terrible underfunding of education. We need an increase in the minimum wage and to stop increases in the cost of fuel, electricity and tuition fees. We also need to end the threats of “no work – no pay” policy. Striking ASUU members have not been paid since February. They must not be starved back to work!

The power and solidarity of the wider trade union movement can ensure victory for ASUU and better funding for education. This will give confidence to more people to vote next year for a government that we hope will begin to build a fairer society for us all and not just the corrupt elite.

More details of the ASUU demands and the Government’s very limited response are available from: <https://socialistlabour.com.ng/2022/08/24/what-has-the-government-offered-asuu-after-six-months-of-strike%ef%bf%bc/>

Visit: socialistlabour.com.ng

How ASUU Decides to Strike and Why It Deserves our Support

By Izielen Agbon

ASUU makes all its key decisions democratically. Arguments against strike action are often made in ASUU meetings in response to the Government ignoring ASUU demands or failing to implement signed agreements on a timely basis.

Most lecturers usually start by advocating discussions and negotiation with government. All non-strike options are first utilized by ASUU. During these periods which can last for months or years, it soon becomes clear to a majority of lecturers that something more serious must be done. Rank and file agitation for more serious and direct action to force the Government to honour its agreements start to mount on the ASUU leadership. The ASUU leadership usually resists the pressure and calls for patience.

ASUU members are intelligent and mature academics with all kinds of professional and personal responsibilities. When these responsibilities can no longer be met under the prevailing conditions, branch chairs are forced to put the option of strike to National Executive Committee (NEC) by rank and file votes in different branches. If the NEC thinks enough branches are agitating for strike action to be put on the table, NEC mandates all chairs to conduct a strike vote in their branches. If the majority of members in a branch votes for a strike, then the branch votes yes for the strike when the NEC is reconvened.

If a majority of the branches vote yes for the strike, then the national leadership will warn the Government that the NEC has had a majority vote of its members to call a strike. All members are informed of NEC decision.

The national leadership must seek all means to bring the Government to the negotiation table with the threat of strike action and the impact it will have on students, parents and lecturers. If this pressure fails, ASUU members are told to prepare for strike action as a last resort.

A warning strike action is called, to ensure that the Government understands that the NEC decisions will be implemented if ASUU demands are not met. If the Government still ignores the warning strike action, then a strike of limited duration is called. If the Government refuses to negotiate in good faith or honour its previous agreement, the NEC extends the strike action. If the strike is becoming protracted, the NEC seeks a renewal of its mandate from the rank and file members.

ASUU is always willing to negotiate and to be reasonable. The Government is always unreasonable, obnoxious and unreliable. It always fails to implement any agreements that it has signed with ASUU on a timely basis. An NEC yes vote flowing from majority rank and file yes votes in a majority of the branches is required before strike action can be called off.

It is funny to see critics who earn more than their professors and who paid little or nothing for their education to make all kind of illogical arguments. There is no ASUU members who cannot get a better paying offer outside the country. Those who remain do so for patriotic reasons. They can get better paying jobs elsewhere if it is just their love for teaching and research that drives them. ASUU members who migrate to the USA or are on sabbatical do very well and earn 12 to 20 times their Nigerian salaries.

ASUU members are dedicated to giving future Nigerian generations the kind of university education that was given to them by the nation. Unfortunately, the nation's leaders do not understand the value of human capital in nation building. Neither do most of these arm chair critics who think they are smarter than their teachers and lecturers.

In these circumstances, ASUU members who are now on strike deserve maximum support and solidarity. They are fighting for the future of public education. If ASUU is not able to win this important strike future generations will only be able to attend university on the basis of their parents ability to pay fees at private universities.

#jointheresistance



When Will We have a Decent Minimum Wage?

By Alex Batubo



The National Bureau of Statistics announced that the cost of kerosene and gas had doubled in the year to July 2022. In addition, the law allows electricity companies to increase the cost of electricity twice a year. How can workers afford to cook their food if the minimum wage is only increased every five years or more?

When the minimum wage was introduced in 1981 it

was worth about \$200 a month. Now it is worth less than \$50. When the minimum wage was increased to 18,000 naira in 2011, it was worth around \$120 a month. Eight years later when the current minimum wage was introduced its value had fallen to only \$83. Over three years later, it is now worth less than \$50 a month.

Workers may win the occasional battle for a decent minimum wage, but overall the war is being lost. The major reason for this is the very infrequent increase in the minimum wage. Since the end of the military era, the minimum wage has only been increased three times. That is an average of once every seven years.

In contrast, many governments across the world increase their minimum wage every year as is the case in Britain. According to the International Labour Organisation:

Most frequently, countries adjust their minimum wages once a year. Some countries, adjust rates every six months, while others have 2-years intervals. Annual adjustments seem adequate in periods of low or moderate inflation

http://www.ilo.int/global/topics/wages/minimum-wages/setting-adjusting/WCMS_439254/lang--en/index.htm

The last time the minimum wage was increased in Nigeria was in 2019, this was eight years after the previous increase in 2011. Several states have still yet to implement the last increase well over three years later!!

The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) Charter of Workers Demands calls for a:

Reasonable Living National Minimum Wage for Nigerian Workers and the Review of the same periodically as the national economic situation demands.

In 2015, when Buhari came to power, the Federal Budget was on N4 trillion, this year the budget is around N17 trillion or four times as much. If the minimum wage had increased as much it would now be worth N72,000 a month. In 2015, the monthly average income in Nigeria was around N45,000 now it is around N80,000. That is an average for every woman, man, child.

So for an average family of five people that would be an income of N400,000 a month. So to have an income of half the average for Nigeria, with both the husband and the wife working, they would need an income of at least N100,000 each.

We all know that the NLC is losing the battle for decent wages, we know that we can buy less with our salaries than we could five years ago or ten years ago. The minimum wage now is worth well less than half of its value a decade ago.

In May 2021, the NLC demonstrated how to win in its fight with the Kaduna Governor, el Rufai. In only three days of active strike action it brought one of the most powerful governors to his knees. Towards the end of July, the NLC organised wonderful protests in every state capital. We need this kind of action to win a decent minimum wage and to ensure that it is increased annual to retain its purchasing power.

Is Nigeria a Failed State?

For those on the minimum wage, Nigeria is clearly a failed state. In 1981 the minimum wage was \$150 a month now it is less than \$50. For those with executive jets, houses in London, whose children have just graduated from the best European universities Nigeria is one of the most successful states in the world.



Unpaid Retirees in Delta Organise Protests

Tom Okechukwu

In 2007, Delta State adopted a contributory pension scheme to replace the old pension scheme. However, up to 2015 when the current Governor assumed office, no money was paid for past services (ie the old pension scheme) and the outstanding sum amounted to over N100 billion. State officials now claim that the outstanding accrued benefits from the old pension scheme has reduced to N50bn.



For those who retired from the State's MDAs, those in the junior cadres in 2020 are currently being paid. For those who left in the senior cadres, the 2017 batch are now being paid, For the retirees from the Local Government Service and the primary schools, it is the 2017 and 2015 batches respectively who are being paid. More recent retirees are yet to be paid.

The greatest culprits are the public service trade unions especially the Nigeria Union of Local Government Employees (NULGE) and the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT). The members of these two unions are the worst hit, but their unions have yet to take any action (unlike their colleagues in Enugu State).

Unpaid retirees have been subjected to untold hardships and many have lost their lives. For this reason, the surviving victims have staged two protest marches in Asaba within the year. The first protest was staged on 10th March while the second was on 18th July.

Such protests are also being organised in many other states and there this now the beginnings of co-ordination at a national level. If you are involved in such protests in other states and would like to link up with others in this struggle then please email socialistlabour.ng@gmail.com We would also like to include news of such protests in future issues of this Bulletin.

What are the main tasks for progressive people?

Isaac Eju

The major task before any progressive person is to defend human rights, especially those of the more vulnerable. Progressive people should not be defending or making excuses for foreign and local imperialists.

What are the facts and figures to substantiate claims that the Government is broke? What facts and figures show that people earning poverty wages can afford school fees?

Some have chosen to defend the Government's claims that over taxed parents should be made to suffer more tax through the payment of school fees. Perhaps the Government should make us pay for police services, to pay tolls on roads, to pay for healthcare? All this since it is claimed the government can no longer afford to fund public services. But the Federal budget for this year is more than four times larger than in 2015.

What those who defend the Government as having no funds fail to realize is the role of education (a combination of intelligence and character) in national development.

Education determines the quality of the mind. A poorly funded education results in poor thinking. It is this thinking stage that determines the state of security and insecurity, it determines the level of innovation, research and the value of your currency.

So we want insecurity to end, invest massively in education, not in weapons.

We want Naira to equal the dollar, invest massively in education, not policies.

You want corruption to be eliminated, invest massively in education, not EFCC, ICPC.

This is the way the Japanese went about it, in Germany the same, in Rwanda the same.

Until you have a crystal clear understanding about education, you will keep throwing stones at ASUU, and keep chorusing that the Government has no money.

We need class struggle trade unionism!

For those who want to build a fighting labour movement, there are many questions to answer. How to relate to the union leaders who often do not want to fight? Whether to work in the rank and file of unions or to take staff jobs with trade unions? How much to prioritize broader class demands versus shop floor struggle? How do we support the best trade union leaders? And most critically, how can we revive militancy and union power in the face of corporate power and a legal system set up against us?

While workers create all the wealth in society, the outcome of the wage employment transaction is to separate workers from that wealth and create the billionaire class. From that simple proposition flows a powerful and radical form of unionism. Viewing unionism in this way produces a particular type of unionism which both fights for broader class issues but is also rooted in workplace-based militancy.

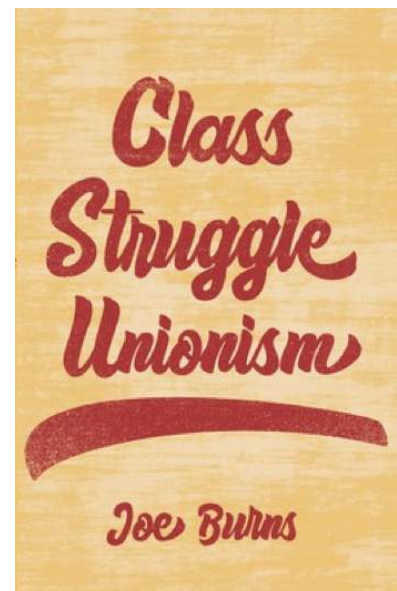
Drawing on years of labour activism and study of labour tradition Joe Burns outlines the key set of ideas common to class struggle unionism and shows how these ideas can create a more militant, democratic and fighting labour movement.

Joe Burns' book is available for free download from:

<https://ivavalleybooks.com/2022/08/17/class-struggle-unionism-by-joe-burns>

Further reading on class struggle trade unionism and organising rank and file trade union members, based on the experience in Britain, is available from: <https://socialistworker.co.uk/long-reads/an-activists-guide-to-trade-union-leaders-and-the-rank-and-file/>

We are keen to make contact with trade union members who want to implement these ideas of class struggle trade unionism. We need to organise those who want to fight to promote change in each trade union. Please contact us on socialistlabour@gmail.com



Socialist Labour has been Successful, but further growth is necessary -

Socialist Labour, Co-ordinating Committee

Socialist Labour has done extremely well in the first two years of our existence. But if we are to begin to make a key difference to the appalling conditions that most people in Nigeria suffer, Socialist Labour needs to reach out to far more people. This is an appeal to all our members and supporters to find one or two more people to follow us on FaceBook or to join our WhatsApp supporters group.

If we had more members we could begin to organise better. We need to organise in the trade unions; to assist the campaigns for pensions to be paid on time; we need far more women to organise for their rights; and to seek justice for so many people incarcerated in the prisons without having had their day in court. There are so many other cases of injustice and inequality that need to be campaigned over.

We need all our members and supporters to be active in their trade unions. Where possible, they should try and become branch officials and so extend class struggle trade unionism. We need to approach branch officials to see how they can extend their solidarity with the education strikes. The NLC protests at the end of July were magnificent, but we now need more pressure on the government to force it to fund public education properly.

To read more details on the politics of Socialist Labour go to: <https://socialistlabour.com.ng/about-us/>

We need all our members and supporters to help to distribute our monthly Socialist Bulletin. Many people are forwarding the Bulletin to their colleagues and some are posting it on their trade union branch groups. We need more people to give out our Bulletin so that we can find more supporters. We also need more people to provide contributions to the Bulletin so that it can report on the views of wider groups of our supporters.

We are holding successful monthly public Zoom meetings, but we need more people to attend. We need all our members and supporters to help to advertise the meetings and to encourage their friends and work colleagues to attend.

We are also beginning to hold physical meetings in some towns and cities where we have a few members. We need more comrades to help to organise in their own localities. If you are prepared to help to build Socialist Labour in your state then please get in touch.

Finally we need more funds to be able to employ full time organisers and to print and distribute our newspaper, Socialist Labour, on a more regular basis. We can all afford something - every little helps.

All this will allow us to grow, become more influential and assist the trade unions and others to become more successful in building a fairer, more equal and peaceful society. All supporters of Socialist Labour should help us to build on our successes so far. We look forward to hearing from you!

For more information on why we need to build a socialist organisation and its basic strategy, see: <https://socialistworker.co.uk/features/five-questions-on-revolutionary-organisation/>

Acoustics of divisions.

by Ipogah Michael

**In the air,
On land
And Everywhere.
So much emotional razzmatazz.
Discordant ventilations.
Heightened positing.
Voices so loud,
None hears the other
Or don't want to.**

**Let's pray for calmness
To see us through
This deafening noise
Increasingly loud
And becoming so loud
That ears can no longer absorb.**

**Eardrums exploded
The hearing impaired beyond care
Tongues gone above wagging
Guttural epistles of meaninglessness**

**I shudder.
Am overwhelmed
With others too**

**At this
Ceaseless and endless
Acoustics of divisions.**





Repression against Protests in Sierra Leone and Guinea

In the middle of August, clashes pitted young Guineans against the security forces in the suburbs of Conakry. The capital was partially paralyzed following a call to demonstrate against the military junta that came to power in early September, 2021. The authorities deployed gendarmes and police in large numbers. They shot dead two teenagers.

The National Front for the Defense of the Constitution (FNDC), a coalition of parties, trade unions and civil society organisations called for peaceful mobilizations. This was despite the ban on all demonstrations decreed three months earlier, the detention of two FNDC leaders in July and the banning of this coalition by the junta the following month.

The FNDC had campaigned against the third-term bid by the previous president and was also behind the banned demonstrations organized at the end of July. Five people were killed during these protests over the “unilateral management of the transition” by the junta that plans to stay in power for three years. The FNDC is planning further protests on 5th September.

Around the same time, protests erupted in Sierra Leone. At least 27 people died in the anti-government protests due to the heavy handed response by the police. As a result, six police officers were killed.

Hundreds took to the streets in frustration at economic hardship and a perceived failure by the government to cushion the impact of rising prices. Officially, inflation nearly reached 30% by June. In South Africa the two trade union centres, COSATU and SAFTU organised a one day strike with protests against inflation towards the end of August in at least 10 major cities. In Nigeria, the previous month the NLC organised magnificent protests in all state capitals. However, if these protests are not built on, for example, by the promised three-day warning strike from the NLC, then violent protests are more likely to break out, as in other countries of West Africa.

Meet Nnete Okorie-Egbe



Nnete Okorie-Egbe was 63 years old in 1929 when she led the women's war against colonial taxation in Aba, Eastern, Nigeria.

Nnete was a princess and revolutionary leader from Akwete. She was the fearless leader of the 1929 women's Aba riot, protesting against the unfair taxation of women.

She was imprisoned by the British Colonial Administration for two years in Port Harcourt. She was later released to a hero's welcome. The British Colonial Administration backed down and reversed itself, by abolishing the taxation on women.

She was able to lead the protests, including women from other ethnic groups like Opobo, Ibibio, Andoni, Ogoni and Bonny. It was a strategically executed anti-colonial revolt over economic, social and political injustice against women who were not allowed to hold leadership positions.

Indeed, she and her fellow Amazonian women of that era were the 'pioneers' of true and sensible feminism in our clime. She died at age 102 in 1968 during the Nigerian/Biafra Civil War.

Excerpts from Simon Kolawole's Article... This Day, 14th July 2022

Take a good look at the ongoing case of Ahmed Idris (the suspended accountant-general of the Federation); he is being prosecuted alongside an accomplice in person of Godfrey Olusegun Akindele, a Yoruba man. They are being defended by the chambers of Kalu Uche & Co; all before a Yoruba Judge - Adeyemi Ajayi. So, in summary, a Hausa/Fulani man stole, his partner in crime is a Yoruba man, he is being prosecuted by the EFCC headed by another Hausa/Fulani man but engaged the services of a Yoruba prosecutor... and the accused are being defended by an Ibo man.

Those who steal our common patrimony are always united in corruption, irrespective of tribes and religions; but whenever they want to hoodwink the unsuspecting citizens for their own gains, they amplify our fault-lines". That is my point. We are all victims of insecurity, kidnapping, terrorism, corruption, inadequate infrastructure, economic hardship, and poor governance. Yet, we have managed to allow ourselves to be hoodwinked into promoting ethnic hate through profiling and identity politics. When those destroying Nigeria gather to plot and plunder, the last thing on their mind is ethnicity or religion. I hope we would wake up to this reality someday.



Summary of Workers Strikes - AUGUST 2022

We need your assistance to ensure that this monthly report is comprehensive. Please submit details of any strikes or other protests in your state or community to tpapsnigeria@gmail.com. All these strikes and protests need our support and solidarity. We call on all trade union branches to send messages of support and to organise solidarity visits to any strikes in their localities.

The **Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU)** has been on indefinite strike since 14th February. They have not been paid since the end of February. The strike is over the refusal of the Federal Government to implement the Memorandum of Agreement reached with ASUU to end its nine month strike in December 2020. This includes:

- Re-negotiation of the 2009 Agreement
- Establishing visitation panels and publication of their results
- Challenges with the implementation of the Integrated Payment Payroll Information System (IP-PIS)
- Funding of University and Tertiary Education Sector
- Earned Allowances for both Academic and Non-Academic Staff of Nigeria's Universities
- End the proliferation of state universities that cannot be funded.

Student unions and trade union branches should send messages of support to:

Emmanuel Osodeke, ASUU President - president@asuu.org.ng

Chris Piwuna, ASUU Vice President - piwuna01@gmail.com

Joint Action Committee of the Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU) and Non-Academic Staff Union of Allied and Educational Institutions (NASU) suspended their strike for two months from 20th August. The strike had lasted for nearly five months from 28th March and they had not been paid for July and August.

National Association of Academic Technologists (NAAT) suspended their strike action in the tertiary sector for three months from 25th August, 2022.

Colleges of Education Academic Staff Union (COEASU) suspended their nine-week strike on 10th August.

The strike by the **Joint Research and Allied Institutions Sector Unions (JORAISU)** continues. This involves members of the Non-Academic Staff Union of Educational and Associated Institutions (NASU) and the Senior Staff Association of Universities Teaching Hospitals Research Institutes and Associated Institutions (SSAUTHRIAI). The indefinite strike has now lasted nearly ten months having started on 13th October, 2021. Workers in the 67 research institutes nationwide are on strike over the failure by the Federal Government to fully implement an agreement reached with the unions in 2010. Trade union branches should send solidarity messages via WhatsApp to the President (08030933357) or Secretary (08037056585) of JORAISU.

AUPCTRE members at the **Abuja Environmental Protection Board (AEPB)** threatened to shut down all public cemeteries if their demands were not met. The three day warning strike started on 16th August over the failure of the FCT Administration to implement a new salary structure.

Electricity workers under the joint umbrella of **National Union of Electricity Employees (NUEE)** and **Senior Staff Association of Electricity and Allied Companies (SSAEC)** embarked on a strike on 17th August. They picketed the Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN) Kaduna Regional station that covers the four north-western states of Kaduna, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara. Power distribution was halted completely across the entire South-East States and other areas of the country. The electricity union was protesting the non-payment of outstanding arrears owed to former workers of the defunct Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) and other issues. The strike was suspended in the evening after a meeting with the Minister of Labour & Employment.

Members of the **National Union of Local Government Employees (NULGE)** and the **Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT)** in Enugu State went on strike from 28th July. The strike is over the failure to pay the N30,000 minimum wage consequential adjustment. The strike was suspended on 26th August. The arrears are to be paid from the August salary.

The **Joint Union Congress of the Police Service Commission** announced an indefinite strike will commence on August 29. **Nigeria Civil Service Union (NCSU)** and **Association of Senior Civil Servants of Nigeria (ASCSN)** Previously there was a 3-day warning strike from 24 January, 2022.

Socialist Labour Depends on its Supporters for Finances

Socialist Labour depends on its members and supporters for funds. We need more financial support so that we can be more active, expand and grow. If you are able to make a modest financial contribution that would be really helpful. We would also like all readers of this Bulletin to consider fully joining Socialist Labour by paying monthly subscriptions.

The standard rate is N1,000 a month, with a lower rate of N500 for students or unem-ployed and N5,000 for higher paid comrades. We can all afford something - every little helps.

Please make your contributions to the following bank account:

First Bank Nig. Ltd. Account No. 3158880328

Account Name: Aborisade Albert Femi

The account is only used for Socialist Labour purposes.

Socialist Labour-JOIN US

The economic, environmental and Covid-19 crises have made clear that society is a conflict between two classes: the vast majority who create the wealth, and a tiny minority who profit from it. Attempts to reform this have failed: the only solution is to replace it with a truly democratic socialist society. The corrupt elite will only give up their power if forced to do so. We need a mass democratic movement to bring about socialism. Events, such as Russia in 1917, the January 2012 protests in Nigeria and the mass uprisings in Sudan and Algeria in 2019, show what we need.

For more details of the basic ideas and policies of Socialist Labour see: www.socialistlabour.com.ng/about-us/

To join the Socialist Labour supporters WhatsApp group use the following link: tinyurl.com/SocialistLabour

We would love to receive letters, comments or suggestions from our readers. We want to hear from you with suggestions for articles for our future editions or questions on any articles in this issue.

We especially welcome news about protests and strikes in your community or town.

Please join Socialist Labour, by submitting the following details:

Name: _____ **Email:** _____ **WhatsApp number:** _____

State: _____

Workplace address/university/school: _____

Trade union: _____

Minimum suggested monthly subscription levels are:

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