



The '76 generation back on the streets - this time as striking workers - with police in their traditional role

African solidarity forever

As South African public sector workers embarked on this country's biggest ever public sector strike, Nigeria's workers were preparing for a national strike.

Their demands included a 15% wage increase, an end to privatisation and the reversal of the fuel price increase that had triggered the strike. The strike was massively effective – streets in the major cities were deserted, schools and offices were empty and most economic activity was paralysed.

Within four days and despite harsh police action – including the arrest of 50 union leaders – the workers won, signing an agreement with the government on 23 June which included:

15% pay rise for federal employees back-dated to 1 January, 2007 reversal of the rise in Nigerian VAT.

10 Naira rise in price of kerosene and diesel to be reversed; petrol to be reduced from 75 to 70 Naira per litre and the price capped for 12 months review.

No worker to face any disciplinary action for participation in the strike.

The agreement stated: "In the spirit of the strategic partnership between Government and Labour enunciated by President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua in his letter of June 23, 2007 to the NLC and TUC, both sides further agree on the need for a mechanism for structured, proactive and routine interaction between Government and Organised Labour towards a qualitative development process."

The strikes led by the NLC and Cosatu – Africa's biggest union federations – were characterised by strong fraternal solidarity

On 16 May 2007 Cosatu publicly pledged its full support to its comrades in the NLC.

On 13 June 2007, the day of the national stayaway in South Africa in support of the public service workers on strike, a strong message of support was received from NLC General Secretary John Odah: "Having commenced a sustained campaign for wage improvements in Nigeria, we in the NLC appreciate the import of your struggle. Solidarity forever!" ●