

Mass Line

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**The People of this Land have suffered enough
THEIR CHAINS MUST FALL !**

Banner

AFTERMATH OF THE APRIL STRIKES

Much has been said about the alleged 'betrayal' of the April uprising by some trade union comrades who assumed leadership of action in a situation where the government sought to deny the working class of leadership and collectivity. Without the active role of some comrade trade unionists the Chiroma group, now the Interest Group, would not hold together. Let us give that credit.

Some comrades are sour about the calling off of the action because, according to them, it was ill-timed, was based on inadequate concessions by the government and let down the students.

In the view of 'Mass Line', the timing of the calling off of the action was right, because the political purpose of the strikes had been achieved. Their purpose was to show that when the NLC warned against the increase in petroleum prices, it was not merely barking, to demonstrate workers' opposition to the dissolution of the NLC, and to make clear which camp really had the working class with it. All this was already demonstrated by the time the action was called off.

Only if the working class had been prepared to assume political power would it have been necessary to continue the strikes. As the situation is, its continuation would only have given a handle to fascists in the armed forces. It is a good general who does not expose his forces to possible decimation for no good reason, when its limited purpose has been achieved, in order to keep them intact and in high morale for actions in the near future.

The calling off of a joint action depends on the state of things among the actors. If, as we learn, some workers were already resuming work in Lagos and some internal rifts had shown up within one of the unions leading the action, the only sensible thing to do was to call off the action before such developments could be used for purposes of demoralisation.

It must also be noted that the workers' strikes countrywide were called by the Interest Group. The decision to call it off was a joint decision of the Interest Group, according to information available to 'Mass Line'. It was undemocratic, sectarian and foolish for any simple union secretary, in obedience to any external advice, to defy the collective decision of the Interest Group. A comrade that behaved that way would at once lose the confidence of the collective and this could be the beginning of the disintegration of the Interest Group - something the working class cannot afford.

As for the question of concession from the Government, prolonging the strike would not have made the Government abandon SAP. Workers will end their sufferings only by taking political power into their hands in 1992. If the strikes were prolonged and disorder started in workers' ranks, the Government would move in for the kill. The strike would collapse. A new retrenchment wave would be unleashed.