

Restarting the nation-clock

Manifesto *of* Democratic Front for a People's Federation



I. PREAMBLE

BACKGROUND

The Democratic Front for a People's Federation (DFPF) originated as a movement for a truly democratic and federalist agenda in Nigeria. The founding members and associations of the present organization have emerged from pro-democracy movements of the National Liberation Front of Nigeria (NALICON) and the United Democratic Front of Nigeria (UDFN) which were at the fore-front of the anti-Abacha struggle between 1994 and 1998.

From a quietly operational monitoring and pressure group for the preservation of the democratic goals of that anti-fascist origin, publicly Interrogating the very structure and credentials of a Nigerian nation and the conduct of the first-in-line political leaders, the DFPF has now resolved to take the step of transforming itself into a political party, aimed primarily at representation at the grass roots levels of governance, then advancing, in a pyramidal fashion, into a nation-wide political party with the definite goal of taking control of the nation's destiny at the centre. It should be clear therefore that the DFPF sees itself as a party of the future, one which however, fully intends to participate at all levels of political representation, beginning from now.

DFPF AND THE CURRENT POLITY

The major achievements of the past decades of governance are gross moral insolvency, stagnation in national development and increasing societal decay. In concrete terms, this distressful state is manifested, among other negativities, in a markedly decreased access to citizen opportunity and security, a collapse of the nation's educational systems, a decrepit, haphazard and mostly privileged health delivery system, a perilous level of unemployment, and an escalation of corruption at virtually all levels of society.

Also to be remarked is an alienating, indiscriminate absorption of external values and consumption habits that play havoc on sound economic planning as much as it does on a people's internal productivity and cultural self-assurance. Taken together, one identifies, in the main, the ruinous legacy of prolonged military rule, and even the alienated and egotistical mentality of past civilian mandates. At whatever level of governance the DFPF is represented, the party commits itself to a radical correction of these anomalies, altering the social direction of the present and plotting the future of the nation in a progressive, inclusive, fiscally prudent and publicly accountable manner.

The following indisputable facts should be brought to the foreground of Nigerian thinking: The nation was manipulated, indeed coerced, into abandoning a unique opportunity, after the demise of the dictator General Sanni Abacha, to determine its own future, not as a colonial imposition, not as an opportunistic, surrogate self-perpetuating concoction of the military, but as the result of deliberate self-formulation by chosen representatives, meeting as equals, representing the various national entities that were forced into one nation capsule in conditions that were patently motivated by external, imperial interests.

The present party formulation is a usurpation of the Transitional Government of National Unity, as proposed by the UDFN, NALICON, and a number of other progressive forces, a transitional arrangement that would have operated in tandem with a Sovereign National Conference. The DFPF has the duty, therefore, to remind Nigerians that the 1999 elections which were



held in abnormal circumstances and without any constitution, were, for the most part, an impudent fraud! The contest constituted a further slap in the face for the Nigerian people who had undergone unspeakable anguish under past military regimes, of which the Abacha dictatorship, to state the obvious, was easily the most vicious and unconscionable. A sizable proportion of those who hold positions of authority today were notorious collaborators of that regime. They owed their so-called electoral victories to a lavish use of the very resources that they had accumulated under a proven autocracy of torturers, murderers and looters of the national treasury.

Better described as associations of personal vested interests, what has emerged from the post-Abacha hotch-potch political dispensation is described at best as an illegality, at worst, as a cynical usurpation of the authentic political voice of the Nigerian people. The DFPF aims to terminate this anomaly and reinvest in the Nigerian people a truthful articulation of their political will at all times, and arm them with the culture of democratic choice. The DFPF pledges itself to the eradication of the tendency towards the privatization of parties, megalomania and intolerance of dissent at the helm of leadership. It shall eschew the politics of self-aggrandizement, an obscene scramble for outrageous perquisites of office by the ruling elect, the result of monetization of offices, and cronyism in appointments. The DFPF does not pledge to eradicate, as if by a magic wand, the culture of corruption that has wasted the best resources and manpower opportunities of this nation. It will however make corruption a most unpleasant venture for all its practitioners, with a policy of open exposure and legal penalties at all levels. The DFPF pledges itself to terminate the ploy of phantom projects that continue to haemorrhage the resources of the nation, one that has turned government into a lucrative 'phantomocracy' - enrichment through phantom projects of the few, by the few, for the very few.

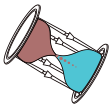
PUBLIC SERVICES AND DEVELOPMENTAL DECAY

Public services remain chronically dysfunctional. With the exception of one or two states, health delivery is a notion that serves only the privileged. Education has continued to atrophy for lack of commitment. High level of unemployment of our youth routinely feeds violent crimes. The opportunism of a cynical breed in manipulating religious and ethnic sensibilities for their selfish ends has cost the nation sobering material and human losses that have not been witnessed since the 1966 massacres.

The fundamental question of the relationship of the parts to the whole especially in the field of revenue allocation - remains relegated to a peripheral status in the fashioning of an integrated but participatory development policy. Federalism is absurdly defined and practised in the contradictions of a centralist fallacy and power play of reactionary interest groups, which desperately promote their agenda by fawning on the centre. The sight of state governors dancing attendance on the Presidency at all opportune and inopportune moments, is a glaring misunderstanding of the nature of federalism. The DFPF is committed to the termination of this anomalous system of governance wherever the party wields influence or has representation. The watchword of the DFPF, both politically and economically is - DECENTRALISATION!

A CASE FOR REPLACEMENT OF POLITICAL MATERIAL

The re-cycling of jaded and desiccated political material continues to stymie the possibility of political regeneration. Youth has become disillusioned, cynical and opportunistic like the



incorrigible old brigade. Discredited generals of the same Military Mafioso that was largely responsible for the malformation of the nation are audaciously queueing up to resume their career of despoliation or else, place and manipulate surrogates at the heights of policy making and implementation.

The DFPF sees no evidence of political will on the part of the majority of elected representatives to begin to address these anomalies in any structured manner. Indeed, we have discerned not just resignation, but a seeming contentment with the current dismal state of polity, a frame of mind that enables the bloated few to exercise the preferments of privilege over the privations of the majority. This trend can and must be arrested. The creeping apathy that has resulted from these anomalies can be reversed and the destiny of our people restored to their own hands.

The DFPF declares itself ready to join forces with like-minded organizations and movements - political, civic, labour, non-governmental organisations etc. - within Nigeria in the promotion of a new political consciousness which drastically parts company with the past in its very formative process. This process, one without precedent in the history of this nation; will imbue all membership of the new entity with a totally new sense of belonging, a clarity of vision, commitment, and real participation. We acknowledge that the task of making of a new nation-being is immense. We are convinced however that the energies and resourcefulness of our people can be harnessed and channelled by a visionary leadership, towards the attainment of the highest, and all-embracing social goals.

The Party will not attempt the task of a national salvation from the apex. Instead, it will address its energies to the very base of political commitment and challenge the citizenry to play a fundamental role in its own redemption. It is not interested in short-lived gains that pander to immediate gratification, and promises no instant redress of the criminalities of the past. Instead, it opts for a planned, long-term, sustainable and rational programme that guarantees the future of all and the future of our children. It is on this basis, then, that we call on our people to be ready and become a part of the process of formation and a shareholder in the new-born alliance of progressives, nurturing it to full bloom.

II. MISSION SUMMARY

The mission of the DFPF derives logically from the foregoing: the party is committed to restructure a secular, federal Nigerian nation on a just and equitable basis, create equal opportunities for her citizenry, restore the creative potential of the people, reinvest political power in the electorate, promote their sense of belonging both as individuals and as collectivities, and enthrone the principle of justice in all material and social dimensions.

III. MEMBERSHIP

Founding membership shall be offered to all individuals who have demonstrated, through their actions and/or public interventions, a consistent commitment to the social principles that contribute to the establishment of an authentic democratic culture, a just society, and a progressive, federated nation. Membership- shall be open to all adult Nigerian citizens, both at home and abroad.



IV. RESOURCES

The DFPP can only be a party of Zero Resources. What this means is that the party will not partake in any competition with the 'moneybags' of the political landscape, mostly erstwhile collaborators in civic mismanagement who dole out pittances to the people while they cream off the wealth of the nation, then utilize this act of robbery to guarantee their continuation in positions of power and affluence. The DFPP will offer no bribe to any man, woman or child, to any trade unionists, traditional rulers, farmers, petty traders, business magnates or clerics in a bid for the inordinate influence that some of them wield among small or large communities, business or religious groups. What the initiators of this Party have to offer, however, are ideas, vision, creativity, and a demonstrated ability to identify, attract and mobilize talent and efficacy - both at home and abroad - in those areas of nation-building resource management and development where they acknowledge themselves as lacking in expertise. In actuality, therefore, such a party, while it materially describes itself as a Party of Zero Resource is a Party of Infinite Resources, since the Human Resource, of which its initiators are amply endowed, is unquantifiable.

The Democratic Front for a People's Federation seeks to provoke what has been observed as the dormant, untapped intelligence of a resourceful people, a people who, we dare hope, are tired of being manipulated, marginalized, exploited and despised. For its requirements, The Party will appeal directly to such people saying: we need this item, and that item, in order to function on your behalf, in order to lay down structures that are essential to success. Give just whatever is within your means to make real and palpable a new political ideal. We shall declare to the people: be monitors of your own contributions and guarantors of their prudent management. Own the party as shareholders in the future.

V. POLICY PROJECTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

The various dimensions of the Party. programme radiate from the already stated focus. So does the methodology of achieving such a programme, as now follows.

A. CONSCIENTICIZATION, RESEARCH AND ELECTIONS

- The party will go among the people, utilize every opportunity to debate, explain and promote the 'Nigeria Project' from the perspective of the base unit of grassroots constituencies. Find out the real issues of day-to-day societal survival for the masses and lay down an attainable programme, tailored to each material environment, for their rectification.
- Identify the 'moneybag' captive sectors in every constituency and wean the people away from this demeaning syndrome of self-enslavement.
- Encourage members to 'test the waters', that is, contest elections at the local, state and national levels, even without any material resources. Innovate new methods of nullifying the attraction of money politics.
- Form monitoring units to rigorously check malpractices even at elections in which the Party is not participating.
- Investigate candidates' past, verify facts and disseminate appropriately to the public, irrespective of whether or not the Party is contesting that specific political position.



Publicise a 'roll of dishonour' to keep the people's memory alive and steer them away from perpetuating social traitors in office.

- Campaign against political violence, expose in advance any plans to defeat the democratic process.

B. EXTERNAL OUTREACH

- Resurrect the international reach of pro-democracy agitation by association with other democratic movements on the continent.
- Develop especially close relations with labour and peasant movements continent-wide.
- **FEDERALISM:** Restructuring, National Conference, Revenue Allocation and Conflict Resolution.
- Adhere to the principles of genuine federalism - partnership on terms as outlined in the ensuing paragraphs.
- Encourage state and local governments to identify their priorities and key areas of resource capacity and development.
- Liberate the collective energies of Nigerian people via the promotion of a healthy competitive spirit between the states and local governments through prudent and creative management of their own resources.
- Intensify the agitation for the National Conference of the Nigerian peoples through a continuing critical analysis of the current national structure. Vigorously counter the false and diversionary notion that the clamour for restructuring is designed towards the breakup of the nation.
- Insist that common services and participation by the federal in the affairs of states and vice versa should exist only in areas of mutual accord, with such agreements reached in bilateral arrangements, or at a National Conference.
- The blood-letting and material destruction resulted from, indeed sometimes preceded agitations over boundary disputes have become a matter of shame to the nation - Uguleri/ Amuleri, Zongo-Kataf, Ife/Modakeke, Urhobo-Itsekiri, Tiv/Jukun etc, etc, The DFPF will create a **STANDING COMMISSION OF LAST RECOURSE** for both state and local government boundary disputes and institute policy of state recompense for the adversely affected.
- Overhaul the revenue allocation formula with the goal of leaving the states and localities in greater control of the revenues they generate.

C. FUNDAMENTAL, NATIONAL AND MINORITY RIGHTS AND EQUALITY

- Promote a culture of governance and social conduct that takes off from the principles of Universal and Fundamental Human Rights through the evolution of a national social ideology that is based on the equality of all. Criminalize policies or acts of discrimination against any citizen on the basis of sex, religion, place of birth or origin, etc.
- Ensure adequate representation of minority ethnic nationalities at the Federal. State and



Local levels to allay the fears of domination by any ethnic group.

- Promote a practical affirmative action programme that will enable the full participation of women in all spheres of national development.
- Increase the potential for intellectual inputs to national development from neglected and despised sources by rehabilitating the physically disadvantaged, restoring self-confidence in their own potential. The DFPF shall pursue a public policy that insists on the understanding that a physical handicap is not the same as brain damage.
- Establish state-assisted and subsidized centres for the aged within communities based on traditional principles of home-care. Provide a conducive environment for tapping the matured potentials of the aged. Review the current practices of compulsory but premature retirement in relevant public services and institutions.
- Create a permanent and completely autonomous office of the Ombudsman that will be responsible for the investigation of violations of Human Rights and crimes against humanity, and recommend appropriate measures.

D. NATIONAL SECURITY, SOCIAL POLICY AND CITIZENS' RESPONSIBILITY

- Develop a structural and holistic approach to the broad issue of national security by examining it from cause-effect perspectives: poverty, hunger, unemployment, discriminatory health and educational access, youth disillusionment and consequent alienation, social disempowerment, religious and ethnic manipulation etc.
- Initiate leadership development programmes mainly focused at the youth, commencing from post primary school level through tertiary levels. Increase present structures for acknowledgement and reward of excellence.
- Encourage active participation in extra curricular activities, as a way of learning requisite social skills, through the creation of a functional national directorate for youth development as well as the establishment of local youth centres.
- Adopt a systematic and developmental approach in tackling related issues of crime, violence and sundry social evils through an articulate social security policy. **A PRIORITY OF THE DFPF WILL BE TO SET UP A MACHINERY FOR THE PROVISION OF SOCIAL SECURITY TO ALL CITIZENS.**
- Introduce a gradualist approach towards ending the Brain Drain by offering incentives to the intellectual and professional class, instituting overseas personnel training, setting up attractive programmes that will encourage intellectuals and professionals in exile to contribute to national development through periods of home service on an annual basis, The nation can be salvaged, and the current exile community of skilled Nigerians have a critical role to play in the process.
- Establish and operate a social policy that recognizes the individual of both sexes - from birth to adulthood as an integral and productive member of society, through schemes that are especially tailored to their age-grades and maturity.



E. HEALTH PROVISION

- Integrate rural areas into an egalitarian Health Delivery System, through the adoption and modification of the best suited to the nation's resources and environment among the available models that exist all over the world. Community integrated models such as obtain in Cuba especially recommend themselves to the developmental state of our nation.
- Revamp ailing government hospitals and equip existing university teaching hospital complexes.
- Initiate a workable and effective National Health Insurance Scheme.
- The DFPF believes that every citizen must have access to affordable health care, any time, any where, and any how.
- Combat the menace of fake drugs and drug addiction by instituting an effective drug importation monitoring agency and an internal inspection unit with wide powers for unannounced visits to pharmacies. Institute rigorous penalties for fake pharmacies and importers of expired drugs.
- Promote research through grants and establishment of research centres and institutes.

F. EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

- Develop an 'ignorance-proof' educational policy that is geared towards the total development and emancipation of the human being starting from kindergarten level.
- Ensure free and compulsory education from primary to secondary school level.
- Encourage the setting up of more schools at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels and ensure the return of affected educational institutions to their original private owners. A government should not bite more than it can chew, and the compulsory acquisition of private schools has contributed in no small measure to the rot in the nation's educational system and degradation of social values.
- Resuscitate tertiary institutions and, where necessary, encourage the merger of campuses and institutions for the purposes of more effective and better economic management as well as the maximization of intellectual resources.
- Institute a sustained inspection policy to ensure acceptable standards in primary and secondary schools, both governmental and privately owned.
- Maintain and make publicly accessible a register of schools that have governmental approval in order to expose sub-standard and mediocre institutions.

H. AGRICULTURE AND FOOD PRODUCTION

- The goal of this responsibility is zero hunger and food security.
- Increase food production with less reliance on chemical fertilizers, using traditional farming as well as biotechnological methods.



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- Promote the culture of replacement cultivation and continuous yielding.
 - Promote interest in farming in the youth by making rural areas attractive through provision of basic social amenities, recreation facilities and adequate security. Resuscitate farm camps for youths.
 - Pursue, vigorously, the maximum yielding potentials of the plantation system.
 - Identify, through institutional research, neglected sources of food within the nation's vast natural resources.
 - Expand the cultivation of marine (fish ponds) and exotic food resources such as ostrich, snails, etc.

G. SHELTER

- Pursue an aggressive national housing policy, based on aesthetic, ecological and economic principles, and guided by the ideal of dignified and affordable shelter for man.
- Demolish old and unsafe structures - methodically, preceded by replacement construction. Ensure that the displaced have first call on the refurbished structures.
- Encourage private investment in estate construction and ensure a controlled tenement rate.
- Initiate a national housing loan scheme for workers based on the principle of apartment or house ownership.
- Review the nation's barracks system with the ultimate goal of decongesting the police and military barracks and control crime.
- Decongest the metropolises by building satellite towns.

H. TRANSPORTATION AND ROAD SAFETY

- Ensure an efficiently run, disciplined, comfortable and affordable mass transit system.
- Resurrect the moribund railway system and increase track mileage.
- Standardize used vehicles and spare parts' importation.
- Develop a comprehensive water transit system for the riverine communities - including water favoured cities such as Lagos.
- Resuscitate an independent Road Safety Corps for the containment of the national road carnage.

I. SANITATION, AND ECOLOGICAL REHABILITATION.

- Effect a radical departure from present relationship with oil exploration and other mining companies, and establish a code of conduct that makes them accountable for all environmental damages along internationally accepted standards.
- Introduce a scientifically based ecological programme, especially for the badly degraded oil producing areas.



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- Introduce a sustained programme of re-forestation for drought-stricken and badly eroded parts of the country.
 - Resume an effective scheme for the containment of the ocean surge.
 - Promote the consciousness of environmental conservation. Set up a conservation agency directly responsible to state governors and the presidency.
 - Both in urban centres and villages, reconstitute abandoned systems of waste disposal and general sanitation. Build public toilet facilities, utilizing the latest models of cheap, self-servicing, nature-disposal units.

J. SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

- Commence an aggressive programme of aligning the nation with technologically developed nations of the world.
- Raise a young generation versed in the language of technology and the sciences. All school pupils to be made computer literate.
- Provide incentives for technological innovations through awards, grants, problem solving competitions, etc.
- Provide research and development scholarships for young inventors.
- Commence a scheme for the development and marketing of successful patents through state participation.
- Develop a comprehensive science and technology policy of updating, universalizing and modernizing traditional and local skills and knowledge.
- Promote interest in the emerging 21st century technologies such as information system and biotechnology.
- Ensure a biotechnological framework for the protection of, and maximum benefit from, natural heritage in the area of patenting useful biochemical extracts from our forests and agricultural resources. Scholarships to be awarded to students for study in countries noted for this expertise, such as Japan or China.
- Set up a national commission of experts to examine the bio-engineering of crops by advanced nations and ensure that the current trend is not inimical to the improvement of our indigenous species. The standardization mentality that is current in those nations should not be blindly accepted as the norm.

K. INDUSTRIALIZATION

- Institute a policy of manufacturing and commercial partnership with private enterprise.
- Promote mass establishment of small-scale cottage industries, borrowing a lesson from countries like India - the Inventors' Village.
- Pursue a policy of specialized industrialization and product manufacturing from the



perspectives of levels of proficiency, availability of raw materials and environmental suitability in the geo-political zones, states and local governments with the aim of discouraging the over-concentration of industrial development in particular areas, leading to rural depopulation and urban over-population.

- Pursue a purposeful product control and standardization policy with the view of boosting export trade.
- Discourage the importation of products and utilities that can be easily manufactured at home. Aggressively promote the local consumption of home-made goods
- Pursue a healthy symbiotic industrialization culture through the activation of feeder / raw material manufacturing industries and ensuring their patronage by bigger ones.

L. ENERGY, POWER AND STEEL

- Explore the potentials of the power of steel to advanced industrial and technological development through the activation of the nation's ailing steel rolling mills as well as the completion of the Ajaokuta iron and steel complex.
- Explore the possibility of constructing micro hydro-electric power dams especially in the south, to solve the frequent problem of power and energy shortage due to over dependence on the Kainji dam.
- Explore the possibilities of wind energy where appropriate, looking into the wind technology of experienced nations like the Netherlands
- Pursue a vigorous policy of development of solar energy by expanding the present meagre experimentation with solar-powered villages and communities. Establish solar-powered commercial as well as recreation centres. Set up awards for architectural designs that are based on solar energy.

M. TOURISM AND LEISURE

- Develop the nation's water transportation and boost the tourist potentials of both the coastal and inland areas.
- Develop recreational centres and green spaces in cities.
- Inculcate the culture of vacation - within the nation - in the citizens.
- Through organized tours, encourage youths to take an interest in the attractions of the nation's environment.
- Assist potential entrepreneurs in appreciating that tourism means foreign exchange earnings.

N. CULTURAL REARMAMENT

- Move indigenous cultures from ghetto confinement into contemporary and mainstream creative vitality.



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- Instil in the youth a sense of pride in their heritage and racial identity, thus guiding them into a recovery of artistic idioms for the evolution of original designs for the aesthetic transformation of the environment and the nation's technological backwardness.
 - Embark upon an all-embracing policy of culture exportation, cultural retrieval, rehabilitation and repatriation with the aim of correcting the ruptures of slavery and colonialism as well as redressing the imbalance of globalization.
 - Develop a comprehensive cultural policy with a focus on the promotion of local languages in schooling from primary to tertiary levels as well as the translation of literatures and books in various Nigerian languages.
 - Revive indigenous cultural festivals at the local levels as a means of restoring traditional communal regeneration and feeding the tourism and leisure industry.
 - Use both regional and national Arts Festivals as a bridge of understanding and unifying sensibility across ethnic and religious differences.
 - Examine the functional relevance of culture-related university departments and institutes to a nation -oriented cultural development, empowerment and independence.

O. STATE AND RELIGION

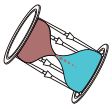
- A policy of total insulation of the state from religions matters, except in guaranteeing freedom of worship and the peaceful co-habitation of all faiths.
- Protect the right of all to worship in the manner of their choice of faith.
- Respect the observance of religious holidays as is appropriate to each religion.
- Create an enabling environment for non-profit organizations to operate agencies for religious pilgrimages.

P. TRADITIONAL AUTHORITY

- Facilitate a process whereby communities will determine the role of their traditional institutions based on their collective experience.
- Isolate traditional rulers from partisan politics, thus channelling their authority and influence into building secure communities and harmonizing peoples even across the boundaries of their own zones of authority.
- Encourage structures that enable traditional rulers to meet periodically in contributing to national development.
- Involve traditional rulers in the settling of boundary disputes where they have no vested interests.

Q. FOREIGN POLICY

- Articulate a responsive and dynamic foreign policy, with a primary focus as the re-vitalization of the African continent.



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- Encourage an active practical connection with the African Diaspora for mutual benefits and restoration of our collective human dignity within a global context.
 - Project a functional foreign policy that would position Nigeria at the forefront of campaign for global peace and harmony and a new, egalitarian world order.
 - Make development a priority, in all its ramifications, as the pivot of the nation's international relations, especially with respect to the technologically and scientifically advanced nations of the world.
 - Ally with democratic movements on the continent, lending both material and moral support wherever possible to those embroiled in the struggle to replace autocratic and repressive regimes. The security of any one democracy on the continent remains precarious without the full democratization of the entire continent and the enthronement of the rule of law.
 - Be a contributing part of economic arrangements that are based on self-reliance rather than a continuing indentureship to foreign aid.
 - Pursue a policy of interaction with major world powers that is based on mutual respect and understanding, not dependency.
 - The image of the nation abroad will be a primary concern of DFPF. Negative tendencies that bring the nation into disrepute will be tackled and the root causes eradicated both internally and through frank dialogues on international fora. Embassies will be instructed to make this their priority and specialized personnel attached to missions abroad for this purpose.

R. INTERNAL REFORM, ETHICS AND CODE OF CONDUCT.

- Address and undermine the rampant culture of cronyism and nepotism. The culture of a parallel exercise of informal power, under whatever guise, must be eliminated.
- Promote the culture of meritocratic responsibility accorded the deserving, of either gender, in programmes for public benefit.
- Institute both analytical and pragmatic approaches, operating in tandem, to the total eradication of the menaces of corruption, bribery and fraud in civil service, police, customs service, immigration and other government parastatals. Establish a programme of open rewards and punishments.
- Decongest the prisons. Humanise our places of correction.
- Terminate the syndrome of chronic criminality that results from throwing first-offenders among hardened criminals.
- Introduce an immediate programme towards prison reform and turnaround our prisons to true centres of human rehabilitation and development. Make prisoners contribute to national economic development by relevantly challenging their intellect and creativity.
- Create a new national awareness and sense of belonging in the military by involving its various arms in appropriate social projects, tapping into their technological expertise where available and bringing them into open brain-storming sessions on national affairs.



(For instance, the Military should be represented at a National Conference.) Re-vamp the curriculum of training schools - Jaji etc. to inculcate a distinct commitment to public service and introduce sessions on the implications of treason. Set up grievance committees wherever the military is stationed to arbitrate civilian-military tensions before they erupt into costly clashes and threaten the security of the nation.

S. LAW AND JUSTICE

- Existing reports on the state of the judiciary will be aired and updated. Indicted magistrates and judges will be given a chance to defend themselves. Where the case is proven, they will be dismissed.
- The DFPF is committed to a genuine and transparent integrity of the Judiciary. To this end, the Judicial Services Commission will be overhauled and given full autonomy.
- The Police will be effective only when its personnel are made to operate - in the main - in their place of origin where they understand the language, habits and can build up a rapport with the populace. At present, the police operate in largely alien (and often hostile) environments where they are distrusted and cannot count on civic assistance in the performance of their duties. Emphasis will be placed on Intelligence work and prevention of crimes above pursuit after the event.
- Corruption is however the main enemy of police efficiency and civic acceptance. This will be tackled by the creation of a secret force within the police, augmented by civilian volunteers, to monitor police conduct and report on abuses to an independent commission. The Police Mafioso is the greatest threat to national security and must be broken. Only then can an effective police-civilian partnership in the eradication of crime commence.
- Hand in hand with internal reform, police welfare will be undertaken by a police-civilian commission, created specifically for this purpose

IN CONCLUSION

We can only reiterate what was stated at the beginning: this is a party for the future of our battered humanity, but one whose commitment has already commenced, since it is only a continuation of what those goals of human dignity and fulfilment for which the nation fought, sacrificed and suffered, but now watches helplessly as the promises of liberation are frittered away by a minority that has lost - if it ever had - a public conscience. The hands of the nation clock stopped moving at a point where the rest of the world soared into an accelerated tempo, achieving quantum leaps in all areas of development. Restarting that clock will not be a simple, linear journey on flat ground, but a difficult, tortuous and often frustrating one. The alternative is to sit supinely and watch the aspirations of millions thwarted, their faith in a progressive national community desecrated. The Chinese sage has summed it all up: *Even the longest journey commences with a first step* – Let us take that first step, together.

Arguments over when and by whose agencies the nation clock stopped ticking - like an arrested heart - will continue to exercise many minds. That is only to be expected. The important task is to get the clock re-started.

Abuja Oct. 2002