

DEMOCRATIC ALTERNATIVE (DA)
Motto: For Democracy and Liberation
MANIFESTO OF DEMOCRATIC ALTERNATIVE

BACKGROUND

Nigeria, our beloved country whose progress and unity we have sworn to uphold, is in deep crisis. The magnitude of this crisis has been increasing everyday since the flag independence of 1960. The economy is in ruins, the military has taken over the political space like an army of occupation. Corruption, hyperinflation, crime and the near breakdown of all social infrastructures have ensured that the ordinary citizen's life is hell made real. The existing structures and processes of political leadership, whether under military or civilian rule, cannot guarantee democracy, the rule of law, justice or social and economic development. Things have become so bad that it is now embarrassing to be called a Nigerian in the International Community.

The country's present humiliating condition can be summarized as follows:

That since independence, the Nigerian ruling class made up of the corrupt, greedy and power-thirsty senior military officers and their equally corrupt, unpatriotic and totally unprincipled civilian class allies, has betrayed the people's hopes at independence and let the nation into political, economic and moral bankruptcy; that this same class is prepared, ultimately to drive this potentially rich and great country to disintegration, economic paralysis and permanent dictatorship.

That, apart from the role of imperialism, military dictatorship for 24 out of the 34 years of Nigeria independence aided by unpatriotic and inept civilian rule has been at the root of the present crisis;

That these two sets of rulers, exchanging the baton of Nigeria's leadership between themselves in a macabre relay race of bad leadership and veritable errand boys and commission agents of imperialism and its foreign domination, and have been executing economic policies meant to impoverish the majority of the people of Nigeria to the benefit of the developed countries of Europe and America;

That as a result, the Nigerian economy, since colonial times, has been organized to benefit only the tiny clique of corrupt and greedy military dictators, politicians, contractors and their foreign allies to the detriment of the majority of Nigerians who wallow in poverty, starvation, disease, homelessness, joblessness, lack of clean and safe water, transportation adequate supply of power;

That the near total breakdown of norms and values and the consequent rise in violent crime, sophisticated fraud, prostitution and general social decadence are a result of the bad political economy caused by a rapacious military with the connivance of its civilian collaborators;

That although the alternative political voice in Nigeria presently organized as human rights or pro- democracy groups have contributed immensely to the political education of our people and to the emergence of an organized opposition to military dictatorship and authoritarian civilian governments, they have not been able, due to their necessarily limited mandate and method, to provide an adequate national democratic platform to lead the Nigerian people in the battle to liberate themselves from the scourge of poverty and underdevelopment caused by this irresponsible and anti-people ruling class;

Yet it is a fact that the Nigerian people cherish freedom, democracy and social justice as is evident in the general struggle for independence, the Aba Women's Protests of 1929, the National Strike of 1949, the enduring students' struggles over academic and socio-political issues, the Bakolori, Agbekoya and Tive peasant revolts, the anti-SAP protests of 1989, and most recently, the June 12 uprising against military rule in 1993.

To liberate Nigeria from this severe crisis of underdevelopment and threat of disintegration, The Democratic Alternative, made up of patriotic individuals assembled in Benin City, Edo State, June 4, 1994, resolved as follows:

That only a national democratic movement located in all the states of the federation, guided by a revolutionary manifesto or charter and committed to the task of liberating the Nigerian people from the clutches of

backwardness and underdevelopment can stand as a potent and credible alternative, in pursuance of which the following manifesto has been adopted.

1. SOVEREIGNTY

- a) Sovereignty, and therefore, power, belongs to the people as an inalienable right; as a result, the people shall be entitled to participate in the government and administration of the country either directly or by their elected representatives.
- b) All who govern must do so only by the consent of the people freely given and withdraw able at the instance of the people.
- c) All Nigerians, irrespective of their class, ethnic nationality, religion, or profession shall have the right to vote and be voted for, insofar as where she is a civilian public officer and she is standing for election into political office, she shall be on a leave of absence from his or her public service appointment. Public officers employed in the armed forces, the police, the security agencies and quasi-military or quasi-security agencies shall be entitled to vote in their civil capacity as citizens shall not be eligible to stand for election into political offices unless they have previously terminated their appointment with those forces, services, or agencies.

2. RELATIONS AMONGST ETHNIC GROUPS

- (a) There shall be equal and just relations between and among all ethnic groups.
- (b) All citizens, irrespective of ethnic origin, shall have equal access to power and all impediments to this shall be removed by law and government policies.
- (c) All citizens shall have equal rights and status irrespective of their place.

3. OWNERSHIP AND ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES

- (a) All natural resources belong to the people.
- (b) The wealth derived from the exploitation of natural resources shall be shared between the federating state where they are found and the federal government in such a way that a just part of it goes to the people from whose land the wealth is derived, having regard to the needs of the federating states, especially those engaged in production.
- (c) All companies, local or foreign, involved in the exploitation of natural resources shall employ environment-friendly means that do not harm the environment and its communities.

4. THE ECONOMY

- (a) Government shall regulate the economy by enacting such laws and formulating such policies as will ensure national control and development of indigenous capacity as well as better management of the economy.
- (b) Production private and public enterprise, especially collective enterprise, such as co-operatives and small-scale industries, shall be encouraged.
- (c) There shall be worker-participation in decision making at all levels of production and management, there shall also be worker-ownership in order to entitle those who work to the benefit of their labour and bridge the gap between worker and owner of capital.
- (d) Government shall formulate policies aimed at developing, empowering and protecting strategic sectors of the economy, such as manufacturing, agriculture and mining, banking and finance.
- (e) Given that the embezzlement, theft, misappropriation of public funds and other forms of the illegal conversion of public wealth into private wealth are a major factor in the underdevelopment and structural crisis afflicting the nation, all past and present public officers and their associates who have engaged in these

and related practices will be brought to book and made to account to the people according to due process of law

5. AGRICULTURE AND LAND

- (a) In order to resolve the food question, banish hunger and produce local raw materials, agriculture shall be developed and encouraged by positive government intervention by way of subsidies, insurance schemes and competitive prices for produce.
- (b) Land shall be available to all who till it, especially peasants. Land tenure systems in the country shall be reviewed to protect the rights of peasant communities, and address areas of friction between neighboring communities
- (c) Laws relating to ownership of land shall be reviewed to ease access, to this end, laws and practices that vest ownership and control of land on traditional rulers and others who do not work it shall be abolished
- (d) Government shall assist farmers, especially peasants, with implements, improved seeds, fertilizers, tractors, dams and the ready-to-use results of agricultural research in order to boost production, save the soil and help the tiller
- (e) Land-grabbing by absentee landlords shall be abolished, and large-scale capitalist farming shall not receive special privileges not available to peasant farmers
- (f) The state shall pursue a policy of resetting the pastoral communities to protect them from losing their means of livelihood and secure for the nation more stable sources of food and animal produce
- (g) To boost food production and raise the income of peasant farmers and pastoralists. The state shall ensure that they control agricultural resources in the form of implements, machinery, improved seedlings. Fertilizers, water resources, storage facilities,

grazing grounds and ready- to-use results of agricultural and veterinary research through co-operation and rural-based NGOs.

- (h) The state shall actively encourage the mechanization of agriculture and the linkage and interaction of industrial and agricultural economic activities to create an agro-industrial complex.

6. EDUCATION AND CULTURE

- (a) Education shall be free, compulsory and universal at both the primary and post-primary level. Tertiary education shall be free, but not compulsory.
- (b) The abolition of illiteracy in all parts and levels of the country shall be a cardinal objective of the state.
- (c) Special education shall be provided for handicapped persons and adults unable to get a proper education as and when due.
- (d) Curricula policies shall be aimed at imparting relevant skills and training the people to love the nation and its culture, to cherish human brotherhood and solidarity, liberty and peace.
- (e) Institutions of learning and cultures shall be established, maintained and kept in dignified and productive conditions at all times. Teachers and cultural workers shall be respected and given the incentive to work for the inspirational development of the nation through the training of its people.
- (f) Technical and vocational education and manpower re-training aimed at industrial development and the constant improvement of the national work-force shall be encouraged by the state.
- (g) Government shall facilitate the discovery and development of national talent for the enhancement of science, technology and culture.
- (h) Higher educational institutions shall be autonomous; they shall involve staff and students in their management at all levels of decision-making.
- (i) Human rights and the history and culture of the nation shall be included in school curricula from the primary level to the tertiary level.
- (j) Art and culture shall be made accessible to the people.

7. WORK AND SOCIAL SECURITY

- (a) There shall be gainful employment opportunities for all, including programmes of assistance for the unemployed.
- (b) All workers shall be free to form or belong to trade unions to elect their officers to negotiate for improved wages and better conditions of work and to use without sanction, the weapon of strike as an ultimate bargaining strategy.
- (c) The state shall encourage workers' unions to develop and sustain internal democratic structures and cultures.
- (d) The phenomenon of domestic labour shall be properly organized to protect such workers from exploitation, inhuman and degrading treatment. Laws relating to labour and education, especially as they apply to minimum wage and compulsory schooling/vocational training, shall apply to the benefit of those employed in domestic labour.
- (e) Men and women shall receive equal pay for equal work.
- (f) There shall be a five-day, forty-hour working week, a review able national minimum wage based on the cost of living, paid annual leave for all workers and maternity leave with full pay for all working mothers.

8. THE ENVIRONMENT

- (a) The state shall formulate policies aimed at the development, protection and preservation of the environment, man's natural habitat, and shall respect and observe international instruments and obligations aimed at protecting, promoting and defending the environment.
- (b) All productive activities shall apply means that are environment-friendly.

9. HUMAN RIGHTS

- (a) The law shall guarantee human rights, including the right to life, liberty, dignity of the human person, freedom of expression, the press and of association, the right to privacy, freedom of movement, freedom of thought, religion and fair hearing. Preventive detention and all inhuman and degrading treatment shall be abolished.

- (b) Violations of human rights by the police and other law enforcement agencies shall be punished with exemplary sanctions.
- (c) The privacy of the home and person and their immunity from illegal search and violent arrest shall be protected bylaw. Any derogation from this shall be punished with exemplary sanctions.
- (d) Peaceful processions and rallies in exercise of the right to peaceful assembly and association be protected. The police may only be informed the purpose of maintaining law and order and no for the purpose of granting permits; they shall not facilitate prevent the exercise of the right.
- (e) All citizens whose human rights are violated for if they choose, have direct, free and unfettered access to court to seek remedy. To this end, all impediments of locus stand, ouster clauses, rigid court from and retroactive laws shall be abolished.
- (f) The state shall investigate all cases of abuse the power and the human rights of the people and pursue the perpetrators in accordance with local and international provisions.

10. THE JUDICIARY

- (a) The judiciary shall be independent and to uphold the rule of law and to review actions of the state as represented by the executive of the legislature.
- (b) The wages and emoluments of state and federal judicial officers, especially judges, including funds for the administration of the judiciary, shall form part of the consolidated revenues of the state or the federal government.
- (c) All judicial officers shall be of transparent integrity and moral rectitude. They shall be appointed by a clearly independent Judicial Service Commission after confirmation hearings in the legislative arm of the government.
- (d) Judicial officers shall be adequately remunerated and catered for in order to ensure sound administration of justice and to retain confidence in the judiciary as the last arbiter.

- (e) The state shall ensure that appointments in the judiciary are based on merit; to this end, an Independent Judicial Commission shall be established to administer the affairs of the judiciary. Appointment of judges at any level of government shall be made by the Commission with the consent of the relevant legislature; the disciplining of judges shall, however, be the sole responsibility of the commission in accordance with the principles of due process and fair hearing.

11. RULE OF LAW

- (a) All, including the state, shall be under the law and obey all court order. Government shall not delay compliance with an order of court not attempt to nullify it by administrative action or inaction.
- (b) Government shall be by law and a popular democratic constitution shall be the basis of government and of all other laws.
- (c) No one shall be imprisoned, deported, restricted, or in any way, prevented from the enjoyment of his rights and liberty, without a fair trial.
- (d) No one shall be condemned or jeopardized by the order or action of any government official without due process.
- (e) The armed forces shall be restricted to their constitutional role of defending the territorial integrity of the nation. They shall not intervene in, nor arbitrate, the process of government; they shall not take over government under any pretext.
- (f) Military coups, successful or not, shall be punished at all times.
- (g) All shall be accountable to the people through their democratic institutions.

12. STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT

- (a) Nigeria shall be a true federal state.
- (b) Nigeria shall have three principal units of government at the federal, the state/regional and the local levels. Additional units aimed at bringing government and government-aided development close to the people at the grassroots may be established without derogating from the federal system.

- (c) The relationship between the three principal tiers of government shall be such that greater power and resources are exercised and expended in the tiers closest to the people.

13. TRADITIONAL RULER

- (a) Traditional rulers and their institutions shall be deemed as cultural symbols and may continue to exist only in those places, and for those people that desire them.
- (b) Traditional institutions shall be maintained by the people who so desire them and the privilege of such traditional rulers shall not extend beyond their domains
- (c) The activities of traditional rulers shall be subject to law.

4. THE ARMED FORCES AND POLICE

- a) The armed forces shall be reformed in order to subject them to civil authority.
- b) The armed forces shall be reoriented from their present role as force of occupation to a patriotic force of the people.
- c) The armed forces shall be trained to produce men who will bear arms in defence of the nation rather than will bear arms in defence of the nation rather than soldiers of fortune that take the people's arms against them and the nation.
- d) The peace-time size of the armed forces shall be reduced to a manageable, efficient and cost- effective proportion Men of the armed forces shall in-between regular training engage in community development service and productive work an agriculture, direct labour construction and rescue were emergencies.
- e) There shall be a compulsory two the military training for all citizens in order to create a disciplined and patriotic reserve for the armed and to act as a counter-weight to coups. To this the compulsory National as a counter-weight to coups. To this the compulsory National Youth Service Scheme be converted to military training; any person which elects to military training on the grounds of must do two years of community development service.

- f) There armed forces, the police and coercive organs of state shall be trained in human pass in the dignity of the human person.
- g) The police and other coercive organs of state established for the maintenance and order shall be reformed and reoriented to make them friends, rather than enemies of the people. They shall also be adequately motivated and equipped enhance public security.

15. CHILDREN AND YOUTH

- (a) The state shall ensure that children are well looked after from birth to adulthood when they re expected to contribute to the development of nation.
- (b) A concrete programme of removing children and youth from the streets and rehabilitating them in schools and training centres shall be pursued.
- (c) The educational curriculum shall include a youth programme aimed at inculcating in them the fundamental principles of patriotism, respect for human rights and human dignity, discipline and social responsibility.
- (d) Crime, prostitution, child labour, drug abuse, delinquency and other social ills that plague children any youth shall be combated and eradicated,

16. CRIME AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

- (a) As crime and all anti-social behaviours have their sociological roots in the structure and operation of the social system, the state shall endeavour to bring into being a social system devoid of the materials, economic, social and psychological pressures which pre-dispose people to crime.
- (b) The state shall create a system of crime-prevention including counselling, youth retaining and motivation and the promotion of public morality.
- (c) Child prostitution, child labour, drug abuse, delinquency and other social ills that plague children any youth shall be combated and eradicated.

- (d) Penal institutions shall re-oriented towards a reformative objective and conditions in them shall be brought up to the strategies enshrined in United Nations instruments dealing with such matters.
- (e) The rehabilitation of offenders shall be a cardinal objective of the state.

17. WOMEN

- (a) Gender discrimination and all unfair practice against women shall be abolishes using such means as would best break the wails of entrenched prejudices.
- (b) Women shall earn equal pay with men for equal work.
- (c) The state shall promise equitable distribution of domestic work.
- (d) There shall be adequate and fair representation of women in key decision-making organs and in matters of state. They shall be encouraged to participate actively in the political economic, social and cultural life of the nation.
- (e) The rural woman shall be given a special focus with a view to eradicating her ordeal aggravated by an environment that lacks practically all the basic necessities of life, such as potable water, electricity, primary health care good shelter as well as competitive pricing for the products of her labour.
- (f) Child marriage, forced marriage; unfair widow-hood inheritance and succession practices; gender discriminatory tax laws and others relating to the woman and the family shall be abolished.
- (g) Special attention shall be given to the educational needs of women and, affirmative action programmes to redress historical imbalances shall be promoted.

18. EQUITY, JUSTICE AND UNITY

- (a) Equity and social justice shall form the basis of national unity and peaceful coexistence.
- (b) All ethnic groups in the country shall have an equal stake in the nation based on harmonious relations between and among them.
- (c) The Nigerian state shall exert itself to the utmost to redress any grievance capable of endangering national unity.

19. INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND SOLIDARITY

- (a) All the people and the government of Nigeria shall work for a great African nation based on the vision of Pan-African unity and the emancipation of all oppressed people of the world, South- South co-operation and the egalitarian development of the world.
 - (b) The state and people of Nigeria shall oppose a world order in which a tiny minority of rich and militarily powerful nations monopolize most of the wealth produced by the labour of the majority of the poor and militarily weak nations, leaving the latter in overwhelming poverty and misery.
 - (c) The state and the people of Nigeria shall work for a new world order based on equal and just relations between sovereign states, equity, peace, social, economic and political justice.
- BeninCityJune4, 1994