

PERSONAL

WHERE I STAND

There is too much congenital injustice, demonic oppression, ruthless dictatorship and agonising poverty in this country today. Until these destructive vices of governance are uprooted from this country, continuous imprisonment or even threats of assassination will not deter me from the peoples' cause.

The authorities violated my person. They seized my books. They confiscated my passport. They harassed me and members of my family. They charged me with several criminal offences. They detained me from time to time. They imprisoned me. They threatened to sell my personal and real properties. They place me under 24-hour surveillance daily. What is left for them is to kill me. Whatever they do, *I will not give up*. I shall continue until I succeed or until I die.

My struggle is not for my person. My struggle is the cause I pursue - the peoples' cause - the cause of God.

THE TRANSITION PROGRAMME

The withdrawal of the criminal case against me by the Federal Military Government in the Transition to Civil Rule Tribunal is not as important as the cause I am fighting for. The Government should go further and remove the political, social and economic burdens of the people, in order to galvanise the nation for sound and progressive development.

The transition programme is chaotic and undemocratic. Judging by world-wide reaction to collapsing autocratic rules typified by the command system of Eastern Europe, the Babangida's administration should scrap the imposed political parties and allow the people themselves to organise their own political parties with their free will. In this respect, we have a lot to learn from western democracy.

The people must be allowed to form their parties, present their own manifestoes, canvass for votes and seek elective offices to govern this nation. That is the only sane manner for the people to walk on their legs unfettered along the clear road to a true democracy.

The present style or method of imposing political parties, dictating manifestoes, blind-folding canvassers, regimenting the seeking of elective offices and removing political choices cannot work because the people are being made to walk on their heads along an unchartable and poisonous snakes-infested route to the discarded East European model of a collapsing undemocracy.

The *blanket ban* on all public officers and politicians (whether in civilian dresses or in military uniforms) from 1960 to the present government is unjust and insensately counter-productive. Those who did not steal, cheat, embezzle, misappropriate or mismanage are banned along with the rogues, the vagabonds, the miscreants and the brigands all in a deceptive and futile attempt to break with the past. The irony of the charade is that some of those in the corridors of power *today* contributed in no small way to the mess of the past and they are still pontificating. The blanket ban must be reviewed if the transition to civil rule is to have any meaning. The blanket ban is biblically wrong and koranically immoral.

The powers given to the President to sack elected Chairmen of Local Governments in the course of the transition portends a bad omen for the transition. It seems to me that the imposition and the regimentation of political parties (*SDP & NRC*), the unwise blanket ban on all public officers and politicians (whether of the military or of the civilians), the wide and wild powers of removal of elected Chairmen of Local Governments, acquired by the Military President Ibrahim Babangida, clearly and squarely question the sincerity of the entire transition programme.

The present Military Government must be told that:

- *Tyrannies* are collapsing all over the world.
- *The Command System* is lapsing into historical obscurity.
- *One man rule* is now becoming an obsolete object of museum obscurity.
- *Autocratic minority* is fast yielding leadership to democratic majority.
- *Crass dictatorship* is giving way to the governance of the people through their elected representatives.
- *The whole world* is now unfolding a new era of humane governance - governance by pure and sincere democratic choice and not by brute force. Nigeria cannot and must not be allowed to be different if political, economic and social stability and justice are to be promoted and achieved.

TWELVE (12) FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS AFFLICING NIGERIA

The economic, political and social policies of Babangida's administration lack conscience. These policies have not addressed the very fundamentals on which the very existence of the mass of our people depends. I call them twelve (12) conditions which must be met before there can be meaningful peace and stability throughout the length and breadth of this vast nation.

They concern:

1. Food
2. Shelter
3. Education
4. Health
5. Transportation
6. Electricity
7. Telecommunication
8. Pipe-borne water
9. Elimination of corruption
10. Employment
11. Rule of Law
12. Democracy

I have already treated Democracy. I will now deal with the rest:

Food: Food is man's most important need. Millions of Nigerians go about hungry in the midst of abundant natural resources and large national income. Starvation is now prevalent throughout the length and breadth of this country. One out of three Nigerians is hungry. One out of four is starving. This must stop. Serious efforts must now be made to combat this fundamental problem. Massive investments must be injected by both the Federal, State and Local governments into food production in collaboration with interested local and foreign entrepreneurs.

We demand cheap, affordable and available food for all our people.

Shelter: Housing programme of the Babangida's administration in terms of its delivery is ineffectual and its impact is not felt by the generality of the mass of our people. Many are homeless. Millions crowd their families into single rooms in various ghettos and slums under the most unhygienic environments, while leaders and their sycophants, minions and stooges live in luxurious mansions and palaces in the choicest parts of the country developed with the purse of the nation. Some able-bodied unemployed Nigerians live in the open in the streets. Some live under bridges. Time has come for a highly determined action to rescue the people from the aching problems of housing and accommodation. The Federal, State and Local Governments must get to grips with this explosive problem by pumping substantial money into an organised housing revolution as quickly as possible.

We demand cheap, affordable and available shelter for all our people.

Education: It is criminal that with the enormous national income derived from our natural resources, this nation has failed to introduce free Education at all levels. The time for free education at all levels is *Now*. There can be no tenable excuse for the government of Babangida to continue to deny the

people their right to free education at all levels. It is sheer hypocrisy on the part of this administration to make Free Education a cardinal manifesto of the SDP and also to include it as a right in the new 1992 Constitution (both documents being the handwork of this administration) and yet continue to deny the people of such a fundamental right.

Health: The health of the nation is in a very poor, precarious, deplorable and unproductive state. Health care delivery is unsatisfactory and grossly inadequate throughout the country. Hospitals, clinics, facilities, drugs, qualified personnel etc. etc. are clearly insufficient to meet the continuous needs of most of our people. Modern medicine is fast yielding place to native and religious cure and care. This is unhealthy for the country. The present condition of our health care demands urgent attention of this government. The honest dynamism of the Honourable Minister of Health, Prof. Olikoye Ransome Kuti is not met with the required massive funds from Babangida's administration to satisfy the health needs of the mass of our people.

We demand free medical services for all as a fundamental right.

Transportation: Rail, Road, Air and water transportations are in disastrous shambles. They are a major obstacle to our national development. Costly, unavailable, mismanaged and untechnological, the transportation system of this country needs an organised programme of action to meet the yearning and yawning needs of all the economic, political and social strata of the entire nation if the country must advance in this competitive world.

We ask for cheap, affordable and available Rail, Road, Air and Water transportation system.

Electricity Power Generation: The power of electricity is the heart of serious industrial growth and business, social and domestic upliftment. Electricity is not available to most of our people and where it is erratically available to a tiny minority, it is devastatingly costly, thereby pushing prices of manufactured goods to an unbearable height. This is unhealthy for our progress.

We ask for cheap, affordable and available electricity for all our people.

Telecommunications: The nation cannot maximise its internal and external business, manufacturing and trading needs and opportunities, its national and international social requirements, its political interactions amongst its citizens and with the outside world without an effectively efficient, massively available and technologically advanced telecommunications network. Our telecommunication is agonisingly poor and disgustingly ineffective. The situation must be reversed to make telecommunication affordable and reasonably cheap to our people.

Pipe-Borne Water: Clean and cheap pipe-borne water is still unavailable to most - I dare say 70% of our people, thirty years after independence and in an oil rich nation. This country needs a well funded pipe-borne water programme to encompass the entire nation. The Federal, State and local authorities must jointly set up a National Water Commission in collaboration with the organised private sector using local and foreign experts to unleash a water revolution for the country. We demand cheap, clean, pipe-borne water for all Nigerians.

Corruption: This is one national disease that is fatally fundamental. Corruption has tragically become a national political, economic and social culture. It has enveloped the national psyche. Not less than 40% (forty per cent) of our national income is disastrously eaten up by corruption and its twin brother, mismanagement. The whole situation has now reached the most disturbing and alarming stage. The present political leadership has done nothing to attempt either to reduce or to eliminate corruption. It has become a significant part of the system. Unless decisive steps are taken by the Babangida's administration to combat corruption in the country particularly in the corridors of power, the nation will continue to walk on its head to disaster, doom and destruction.

Employment: Once conscious, serious, honest, well organised and revolutionary efforts are taken to deal with the problems of Food, Education, Health, Shelter, Transportation, Electricity, Pipe-borne water, Telecommunication, Corruption, Rule of Law and Democracy in their pressing perspectives, the political, economic and social climate for mass employment would have been created in the country. You don't command employment by Decrees or Military orders. Employment generation is a consequence of serious political, economic and social policies of an effectively honest, dedicated, visionary, persistently hardworking and firm political leadership. You cannot induce and invite employment by double-standardism in public life, dishonest political manouvres, feeble, sterile and indeed rickety structural adjustments, unnecessary but egoistic dictatorship, utter disregard for the rule of law and its due process and above all a deceitful approach to an inverted democracy. The nation's citizens need jobs. Where the jobs are not available, the Federal Government must as a matter of duty and responsibility ensure that those without jobs receive monthly monetary assistance to keep body and soul from insanity and suicide.

I must mention the collapsed currency and the interest rate scourge. This administration must know by now that the collapse of the value of our currency now currently referred to in international circles as 'Toilet Roll' and the skyrocketing lending rate have stultified economic development and indeed growth. To continue with SAP which is the immediate cause of our pre-

sent misfortune and misery is for Babangida's administration to continue to alienate itself from the mass of our people with its resultant but dangerous effect on law and order in the country.

Rule of Law: The Government must allow the *Law* to rule. There is no substitute for the rule of law and its due process. The alternative is political instability, chaos and disorder. Both the governed and the government must subject themselves or be subjected to the laws of the nation and their due processes. The laws must of course be just and humane and they must promote the economic, social and political interests and well-being of the masses of our people instead of the narrow and selfish interests of a few.

There cannot be a rule of law in the face of an unrestrained dictatorship. Nigeria must shift from unrestrained dictatorship if the rule of law is to flourish. There is too much power concentrated in President General Ibrahim Babangida. This is totally unhealthy for the promotion of the Rule of law. *Never before in the history of Nigeria, has one man given to himself the power of virtually everything fundamental in the governance of this vast and diverse nation.* It is not right and it is not acceptable. We do not want Nigeria to continue to be an open prison of political, economic and social injustice.

I am opposed to absolute and unrestrained dictatorship. This is because History has informed us that unbridled and unrestrained dictatorship promotes the collapse of the rule of law and its due process and makes puppets of the interpreters of the law.

It enthrones rabid grovelling and degrading sychophancy. It turns reasonable human beings into pathetic and robotic animals.

It sees every criticism as nihilistic affront to the psyche of the dictator.

It uses with congenial relish the infliction of pain through detention, imprisonment and in some cases blood shedding as a substitute for the power of humane persuasion.

It heretically commands allegiance to itself instead of to God, the only Almighty, *by all sorts of sadistic, ruthless and hitlerite means and machinery like, 'Securitate' or 'Blackshirts' or 'Ton, Ton Marcoutes' or 'National Guards'.*

It prevents the people from asking how the peoples money is being used or misused; spent or mis-spent; managed or mismanaged; applied or misapplied; appropriated or misappropriated. Everything is shrouded in disgusting and nauseating secrecy.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MANDELA'S RELEASE TO NIGERIANS

On Sunday the 11th of February 1990, I jumped for joy in my cell No.10 Ikoyi Prisons when I heard of the unconditional release of Nelson Mandela the symbol of the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. He was impris-

oned by the minority government of South Africa from 1962 to 1990.

However, the propaganda Rally of the Federal Military Government of President General Babangida over the release of Mandela which (rally) took place on Wednesday the 14th of February 1990 in Lagos is hypocritical and ostrich-like. If Mandela is a Nigerian, he will today be fighting Babangida's Government for six reasons:

1. *Minority is ruling the majority in both countries - Nigeria and South Africa.*
2. *The majority is denied democratic rights in both countries - Nigeria and South Africa.*
3. *Repressive and oppressive laws are enacted in both countries against the majority by the minority ruling class.*
4. *In Nigeria, there is a Dictatorship of one man while in South Africa, there is a dictatorship of a minority group.*
5. *Poverty is explosively rampant in both countries amongst the majority unlike the undeserved opulence amongst the minority in both countries.*
6. *Both countries are open prisons of injustice - political, economic and social.*

The best way for the people of this country to solidarise with Mandela and his cause is to intensify the struggle against political, economic and social discrimination and injustice here in Nigeria - the most populated black nation in the world. That is the main significance to us of Mandela's release.

CONCLUSION

The people of this country want an end to Poverty, Injustice, Oppression and Dictatorship.

We want **TRUE DEMOCRACY**, not a twisted one.

We want **GENUINE FREEDOM**, not a castrated one.

We demand an economy with a '**SOCIAL CONSCIENCE**'.

We demand good and comfortable living standard for the mass of our people.

We are fed up with continuous violation of our Human Rights and we want the obnoxious Decree 2 completely abolished so that Nigerians can once more lead their lives as human beings instead of as animals incarcerated under stone-age conditions in a modern world.

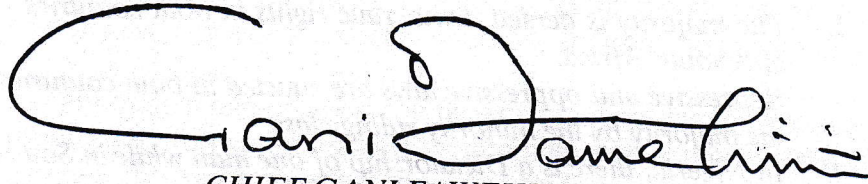
We want an immediate abrogation of the decimation laws of this Government, particularly Decree 47 of 1989, which (laws) are designed to kill students' activities in our Universities, Federal Colleges of Technology and other Institutions of Higher Learning if the Babangida's Administration has any genuine interest in National peace, order and stability.

We want a better Nigeria, politically, economically and socially. And this

is what I stand for and shall continue to fight for until victory is achieved for the people of this country.

THIS IS WHERE I STAND.

God bless you all.



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