REPORTING AFRICA

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The seminar on "Reporting Africa" is the seventh seminar that the Scandinavian Institute of African Studies has organized since 1963. As a part of its function as a Scandinavian documentation and research centre on African problems, the Institute has tried to choose topics for these international seminars that would be of interest to academics as well as to planners, administrators and politicians. These topics have included refugee problems, boundary problems, problems of adult education, co-operatives and rural development. Scholars from abroad—mainly, of course, from Africa—have been invited to discuss their special topics with Scandinavian specialists and other interested persons.

The theme "Reporting Africa" was chosen mainly because of its immediate relevance to another of the Institute's main functions: the disseminating of factual information on Africa in Scandinavia. The big Scandinavian newspapers and the national television and radio corporations have their specialists on Africa, but the small papers do not. However, all have to choose from a wealth of material produced by international news agencies and other sources. All too often Africa is discussed in terms of crises—Congo, Biafra, Uganda—which sometimes precludes sensible treatment and sensible commentary. As interest in the Three Continents is steadily increasing, we hoped that a conference in Scandinavia on this topic would attract attention, which indeed it did.

At the same time it is difficult to discuss the flow of information on African affairs in the international mass media without discussing the situation of the Africa mass media, since these media provide the basic sources of what is made available to the international audience. This in turn necessitated a discussion on the working conditions of African jour-
nalists and editors and, of course, ultimately on the freedom of the press.

We decided on one limitation on the almost innumerable topics that we found might be discussed: to concentrate mainly on English-speaking Africa and on the problems of newspaper reporting.

For the first time, the Seminar was held outside Uppsala—at the Säästöpankkikopisto in Matinkylä outside Helsinki. It was organized in co-operation with the Finnish UNESCO Commission and Ulkoliittinen Instituutti, Helsinki. Contributions towards the cost of the seminar from the Scandinavian assistance agencies—the Danish International Development Authority (DANIDA), the Norwegian Agency for International Development (NORAD) and the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA)—and Hufvudstadsbladet, Helsinki, are gratefully acknowledged. We also wish to thank the Finnish Broadcasting Company for help with the showing of televised reports from Africa.

Uppsala, May 1971.

Carl Gösta Widstrand
Social communication is an important field to study for a variety of reasons. It may be a key to the understanding of different political systems and the variety of processes that take place in these systems. This is neatly summarized in a comprehensive observation by Wilbur Schramm:

... the structure of social communication reflects the structure and development of society. The size of the communication activity—the development of mass media and their audiences, the transfer of the individual communication roles of traditional society to organizations, the stretching out and multiplying of communication chains—reflects the economic development of society. The ownership of communication facilities, the purposeful use of communication, the controls upon communication—these reflect the political development and philosophy of society. The content of communication at any given time reflects the value pattern of society. The patterns of communication networks, which determine where information flows and who shares it with whom, reflect the homogeneity of culture and geography within a society.¹

From a different angle, social communication—and the knowledge of how it may function or actually is functioning—may also be an instrument of change, improvement, and development.² Such changes or developments may, of course, take place in a variety of directions. Whether such changes are considered to be improvements or not will depend on the values, aims or priorities of the observer.

Social communication within a political system takes place in many forms; most interactions may be included. Also institutionalized communication covers a broad field, and includes,
among other sectors, organized education. In this volume the focus is limited to only one sector—the African mass media. In fact we are concentrating on the general-interest press in Africa and are focusing especially on three newspapers in three English-speaking countries with a relatively well-developed press: Ghana, Kenya and Nigeria.

The mass media have a variety of functions. Their classical functions include information, education, mobilization and entertainment—and combinations of such functions. In new nations, some functions may well be more important than they are in older nations.

In nations with a relatively short history as one political unit, the mass media may have the function of nation-building. The national mass media—in the first place, the national broadcasting services, but also the national newspapers—may cut across divisions in the society at a variety of structural levels: most important, perhaps, are the nationality barriers between different ethnic groups, social classes, ideologies (including religions) and geographical regions. The mass media may have the function of national and social integration but they may even have the opposite effects at these levels. Such media—and again, the radio has so far been most instrumental in this regard—may identify and focus on national symbols instead of local or regional symbols, and focus on national interests, values and aspirations instead of particularistic interests, values and aspirations. Thus, they may create national instead of particularistic identifications and loyalties.

The national mass media may also provide a direct link between the government and the governed, bypassing the multitude of intermediate links provided by the many levels of vertical (hierarchical) and horizontal (geographical/regional) administrative structures and by organizations of various kinds in most societies. They may provide a similar link also between the national executives of nation-wide organizations and their grass-roots organizations: communications need not necessarily be filtered through the many horizontal and vertical levels of such organizations to reach the basic unit or the individual member. Even the feedback function may to some extent be supplied by the national mass media, but not as
easily—especially because they tend to be situated and have their staff concentrated in the editorial headquarters in the capital. The national mass media are almost everywhere in Africa the predominant media. However, this is not the case to the same extent in all African nations; regional, provincial, and even local mass media exist to some extent in several African nations—at the regional or state level, especially in Nigeria.

Other functions of the mass media concern the development efforts of many African countries: to provide information at the level of adult education in various fields, and to mobilize the population for development efforts by motivating and stimulating such efforts and by directing attention to the achievements. Most governments—in Africa and elsewhere—may put as much emphasis on another function of the mass media: their role as instruments for moulding public opinion with regard to values and policies. Of specific concern in this respect is the vested interest most governments have in creating a public opinion favourable to their own achievements, aims, aspirations, policies and values.

Since the mass media have the potentiality of performing such politically important functions, several questions become of crucial importance. Who is to decide the priority of such functions? Who is to define the agenda and to guide the content of the messages? Which of several conflicting principles that at the normative level serve as guidance for the mass media will provide for the most efficient and effective performance of the various functions? Should the mass media perform a watchdog function vis-à-vis the political and administrative authorities—as the Fourth Estate—or should they primarily act as instruments of these authorities in facilitating the aims, aspirations and policies of the government?

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It is on these questions that we focus our attention in Part I. Colin Legum discusses the African mass media as institutions of the various African political systems. Eddie Agyemang, Mamman Daura and George Githii discuss problems connected with editing national newspapers in three different
countries in West and East Africa. Their emphasis is on the role of the editor and the expectations with which he is confronted from the social environment, from the government and from the professional mass-media ideology. This discussion is followed up in an article on "Communication in Africa—Freedoms and Functions" by the present writer.

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The main communication flow tends to go from the centre to the periphery. At the international level the bulk of the communications seems to go from the highly industrialized to the less industrialized countries, and from the bigger countries to the smaller. Most attention seems to be directed to a few highly developed countries that are also predominant in international politics. Here we shall focus on the opposite communication flow—the flow from Africa.

Very little quantitative research has indeed been done so far on this communication flow. Impressionistic observations still rule the roast. However, such impressionistic observations—especially if made by experienced observers or by prominent participants—may be of great value at the initial stage of any area of research, by providing propositions that later on may be empirically tested. With few exceptions, we are treading on pre-empirical ground when we speculate on the state of affairs in the communication flow from Africa to the industrialized world, and construct propositions on the basis of a variety of observations, systems of logic and general communication theory. The validity of such propositions is still to be tested by systematic empirical research. Yet, in the meantime they may guide actions.

Before the dawn of independence during the late 1950s, the international news agencies of the two major colonial powers—Reuters and Agence France-Presse (AFP)—had what amounted to almost a de facto monopoly of the mass-media communications to and from English-speaking and French-speaking Africa respectively. During the years after independence, the international news agencies of other major powers, and some medium powers, extended their organizations to Africa. Several of these agencies entered into agreements with
a growing number of national news agencies in Africa. A few African international news agencies were also established. During the late 1950s and early 1960s the Ghana News Agency was the most prominent of these, south of the Sahara and north of South Africa, and the Cairo-based Middle East News Agency the most prominent north of the Sahara. However, Reuters and AFP maintained a prominent position also after independence. At an initial stage they provided technical and professional assistance in setting up the national news agencies in Africa. This was especially the case with the AFP in French-speaking Africa. Thus, before 1960 a large proportion of the news from Sub-Saharan Africa came via Paris and London. After 1960, a great proportion of the communication flow from Africa continued to come via the former colonial metropolises, but not to the same extent as previously, since other international news agencies had extended their services to Africa.

A large proportion of the total mass-media communication flow from Africa is transmitted by the international news agencies. They constitute the major sources of most mass media with regard to international news, even though some media of most countries occasionally supplement such bureau reports with reports from their own roving correspondents. There are few specialists on African affairs and even fewer permanent correspondents stationed in Africa. Internal or international crises in Africa have, therefore, been one of the major reasons why the majority of the media have sent special correspondents to Africa.

News communications, therefore, pass through many links during transmission from the source somewhere in Africa to the readers, listeners or television viewers outside Africa. At each level interesting processes take place. The selection that takes place at every level, and ultimately even in the audience, is probably the most important. Which factors influence these selections at the various levels? What kind of filters do the news reports pass through from the source to the recipients or rather from a variety of sources to a variety of recipients? The selections which take place at the last levels may in fact be as interesting and decisive as the selection which takes
place close to the source. The criteria guiding the selections later on may strongly influence the selection that takes place at the source.

The factors at work when the mosaic of Africa, as transmitted by the international mass media, is created are probably more or less the same as those influencing the international communication flow in general. However, specific structural or cultural traits may give this specific communication flow some qualities of its own.

In Africa, as elsewhere, the national mass media constitute a major source of the outgoing information flow. Many prominent journalists on African mass media contribute to the first selection of this flow also by acting as part-time correspondents of international agencies. The governmental information services, especially of the English-speaking African countries, constitute another important source for the African mass media as well as for correspondents or stringers of the international news agencies. At a different level are the non-professional communicators on whom the mass media outside Africa may rely as sources: occasionally, academic specialists, a variety of "experts" who have stayed in African countries for varying periods, missionaries, visiting business men or even tourists—in the first place nationals of the country concerned. The ability of this kind of communicator to collect and interpret information may, of course, vary extensively. However, their perspectives and knowledge may often be limited, and this may in turn affect the scope and quality of the information transmitted.

To direct the focus towards the sources may be useful for several reasons. It may provide an important basis for the assessment of the communications which are transmitted. Thus, it may be of interest to know, for instance, the degree of government control on the mass media, the national news agency or the stringers or correspondents of the international news agencies in the different countries. Such information may explain the actual selection that is made or the restraints that are imposed on the news transmitted. The government control is direct with regard to the governmental information services; it may be direct or indirect also with
regard to the national mass media. Commercial agreements between international news agencies and the national news agency, which in most African countries is owned by the government, is another basis for exerting influence on the output. The need of the international news agencies and other resident communicators to have access to the sources (and the government constitutes everywhere an important source) or even, in some cases, to be allowed to stay on in the country is yet another basis.

Such factors may influence the picture that is transmitted from the various African countries. However, there are wide differences in this regard from one country to another; some African governments are more sensitive and apt to make use of such potential control opportunities than are others. Such control mechanisms, where applied, may influence the permanent structures most: journalists on African mass media acting as part-time stringers or correspondents, resident correspondents of international news agencies, and resident journalists in general. It may also apply, though somewhat more loosely, to correspondents specializing in Africa and specialist magazines or journals on African affairs. A roving reporter of a medium which does not depend on good relations with the specific government is probably the least exposed to such influences. At the same time he will probably also be less able than the resident or the specialist correspondent to report the social reality he is out to cover, because his knowledge and information contacts may not be sufficient.

Such variations from one African country to another may have important effects on the coverage provided by the international mass media and other communicators. However, other structural factors may be much more important for the selection that actually takes place. Such factors include the values, the Weltanschauung, and the perceptions of the professional communicator. Probably the most important single factor is his perceptions of what kind of news is important to his audience, what kind of news his audience wants to hear and what is "good news"—news which may reach the headlines. Such perceptions may be influenced by his experience of the kind of reports that actually have reached the headlines. They
may also depend on the formal—but mainly on the informal—expectations of the headquarters, the home government or the audience. Such expectations may vary widely, and will probably be different in London (Reuters), Paris (AFP) or Moscow (Tass), just to mention the locations of the major European news agencies.

Some research has been done on factors that influence the perception of what is "good news". These research efforts have been mainly concentrated on western—and especially North American—communicators, mass media and audiences. There is therefore a probability that communicators, mass media and audiences of different political and cultural systems may have slightly different priorities.

It seems that the news value of a report is correlated with a variety of factors. The news value tends to grow when the report appeals to the feelings of the audience. Different people may, however, perceive and react differently to the same communication. The news value may also grow if something unusual is reported. If what is reported is so strange that there is no basis for identification, however, the news value may decrease. News that focuses on changes is preferred; the bigger and more abrupt they are, the more attention they are given. Less attention is given, generally speaking, to evolutionary developments in one direction or another. It is widely assumed that "negative news"—alarming news, accidents, crises, scandals, especially if they involve well-known people—is considered to be "good news", and is given priority in the selection and the editing processes. Such news is seldom suppressed, though it may be for a variety of reasons and to varying extents in different media. However, only quantitative research can provide the answer to such basically empirical propositions. There are probably wide differences between different types of mass media within the same political and cultural system, and between media in different political or cultural systems. My proposition is that "positive news"—comforting news, reports of achievements, praise of well-known people, including statesmen, and happy events—may be as prominent as "negative news" in terms of space, frequency or editorial position in most mass media.
Another dimension concerns the links between social levels provided by the communication flow. To what extent is the actual communication flow from Africa vertical or horizontal? To what extent does it concentrate on topics and events involving the common man and his problems in Africa? An interesting aspect here may be the extent to which those mass media which have a mass circulation or a mass audience make efforts to satisfy their audiences by bringing information about the common man in Africa and his problems. Obviously this is not something to be taken for granted. Nor, of course, is the assumption that such news will necessarily be of special interest to their mass audiences.

Only a small proportion of what the local correspondent reports daily is included in the main services of the international news agencies. However, an even more drastic cut is made at the next major level of the transmission chain, when the services of the national news agencies or the national bureaux of the international news agencies are edited. The national media which receive these services undertake a new selection, which is even more important. However, the most important selection is undertaken by the individual reader, listener or television viewer. As already noted, the perceptions of what the audience wants (or, at times, varying with different media and political cultures, the communicator’s perceptions of what the audience ought to know) may have a strong impact on the actual selection at each level. Few news agencies go on presenting news or features on topics which are seldom or never used by their customers. What considerations guide the selections that are made by the national news agencies, the national mass media and their audiences?

Obviously it is necessary to distinguish between different media in the same political and cultural system as well as between media of different political or cultural systems. Specialized journals on African affairs are in a category of their own, even though they may differ widely. Fortunately several such journals exist. Another category is the quality (elite or prestige) media. Some news and features concerning African affairs will almost automatically be published by these media, because of their aspirations to provide world-wide coverage.
of major events. However, reports on African affairs have, of course, to compete with reports from elsewhere. Also in the rest of the national mass media, reports from Africa have to compete with other international, national and provincial news. This competition is apparently very strong, and reports on African affairs have difficulties in bypassing the gatekeepers. Why is this so—and why are the news and features from Africa which pass through the many filters actually selected?

The news item or the feature has to be relevant. Its relevance is probably correlated with the extent of identification with the message on the part of the communicator at the various levels, and ultimately on the part of the audience. Such an identification (or lack of identification) may be a function of the closeness (or the distance) of the event reported—the geographical closeness or distance, as well as the closeness or distance based on cultural, ideological (political or religious) or economic interests. The communicator's and ultimately the audience's understanding (or lack of understanding) of what is communicated may also affect the relevance, as conceived, in a positive (or negative) way.

The perception of the utility of the communication may be an even more important criterion. Such considerations are probably important with regard to the selection undertaken by the audience. Readers, listeners or television viewers may give their attention to news or messages according to the extent to which the communication is perceived to give them immediate or future rewards in terms of pleasure or utility in their widely different environments. This will probably be an important criterion also for most media in selecting and editing the items to be communicated.

For the national mass media, the international and the regional "agenda" may be one of the most important factors which decide the selecting and editing process with regard to international news. The national "agenda" may, however, be of similar importance: international news which is of relevance to the "national agenda" will be given priority. In general, preference will be given to news which directly or indirectly concerns national interests (as perceived), nationals of the country or their activities and prevalent national values,
including political ideology and religion or those of close (political, cultural, economic or security) partners. It is therefore very likely that the selecting and editing of news and features from Africa—and hence the picture of Africa that is transmitted by different national mass media—will be strongly influenced by the ideology, the national political agenda and the economic or cultural interests in Africa of the different countries in which they are published. Mass media in some political systems may, however, belong to different sub-cultures, and may, accordingly, reflect different ideologies, agendas, economic or cultural interests.

International and intercultural communication covers a wide spectrum and includes interactions within the fields of politics, arts, economics, religion, science, sports, tourism, etc. The amount of attention given to these matters may vary, but politics, including items from most other fields, is probably of primary concern. The international news agencies are among the most important agents in the transmission process. However, many national mass media of the industrialized world have their own correspondents to cover world affairs in general, and some even Africa in particular. Then the intermediate links become fewer, but the filters suggested with regard to the selection of news and the prominence given to different kinds of news may still be operative. It will always be a question of priorities and resources, including costs, space and knowledge. Few mass media can afford to have a crowd of specialists on African affairs at their disposal.5

The selections made at different levels are important and affect both quantitatively and qualitatively the picture of Africa which is communicated. The interpretations given to the different items of information concern mainly the quality of this picture. Again we are confronted with the core problem of intercultural communication: the problem of cultural translation. This problem is as easy to define in general terms as it is difficult to live with. It involves, in the first place, the professional communicator,6 and ultimately the general audience. When the social environments, the general Weltanschauung, the standards and values, the religious beliefs, the way of life, and the customs, traditions and attitudes are
different, communication across such barriers becomes a difficult art. Misinterpretations are apt to occur and may result in misunderstandings. The lack of mutual understanding may constitute an additional barrier to the communication. Only extended knowledge at all levels can help to reduce this problem.

The core problem of intercultural communication stems from the fact that we all tend to have a more or less fixed perception of what the world is like and should be like, and we take it more or less for granted that this picture is the correct one. This Weltanschauung is based, first of all, on our impressions and experiences, most of which are limited to our own immediate social and cultural environments. When such images of the world—values, behavioral patterns, way of life, social and political organization—which we consider are self-evident are contested, this may easily result in communication problems.

Ideas, norms, Weltanschauung, behavioral patterns and social organization may vary widely, as do economic and social conditions. What are taken for granted as normal patterns at one place may be surrounded with taboos at other places. It is therefore not easy for people of one cultural environment to understand or to accept the different or even conflicting ideas, norms and behavioral patterns of other cultural settings or vice versa. Most people tend to overestimate the quality of their own norms, attitudes, belief, behavioral patterns and social organization and to underestimate or even downgrade the quality of different or contrary cultural traits. The cultural differences need not be large before such reactions become discernible.

The content of communications from one cultural environment to another will be interpreted on the basis of the norms, ideas, attitudes and behavioral patterns prevailing in the cultural environment of the audience. This makes factual information alone insufficient in many cases. There will always be a need to give the context of a news item which is presented and to explain its relevance or its importance. Within the same political or cultural system, this is especially important with regard to vertical communication, for instance,
when the results of scientific research in various fields are to be communicated to a mass audience. It is less important with regard to horizontal communication at different levels, because then the new piece of information will only add to a picture which is already established: the background against which it has to be interpreted can be taken for granted. Such background knowledge very seldom exists, as regards intercultural communication. What background knowledge actually exists may very often be based on stereotypes and even prejudices stemming from a heritage of cultural misinterpretations and misunderstandings. Therefore, in reporting African realities in the mass media, it is important to provide background information, in addition to the factual information about events and policies, in order to transmit a "true" picture. In some instances, factual information alone may in fact convey a false picture and add to the stereotypes and prejudices prevailing in the audience, even though the facts reported were true.

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Attention is directed to several of these aspects in Part II of the present volume. Ulf Himmelstrand discusses the problem of cultural translation in the reporting of African social realities, using the coverage of the Nigerian civil war by the international mass media as his main illustration. David Williams focuses on the reporting of Africa in the British mass media, and discusses some general and some more specific problems in this connection. Clyde Sanger comments on the picture of Africa conveyed by the North American mass media. Ahmed Baba Miské discusses the picture of Africa provided by the French mass media, with emphasis on French-speaking Africa, and comments on some filters that operate at various levels. Ladislav Venyš provides a quantitative analysis of the absolute and relative coverage given to African affairs in the major dailies and the leading periodicals on international affairs of the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia. He also focuses on the regional and political distribution of their attention in reporting Africa. Bo Bjelfvenstam, Yrjö Länsipuro, Jørgen Flindt Pedersen and Knut Sogstad comment briefly on the coverage given to African affairs by the
Scandinavian television services. Colin Legum discusses, on the basis of his own experience, the situation confronting an international special correspondent on African affairs.

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True solidarity between different cultural settings, between different nations and peoples, has to be based on mutual understanding of and respect for both the common and the different cultural traits. Such understanding has to based on knowledge.

Knowledge of Africa is important. This continent comprises 42 of the 127 members of the United Nations. The picture of Africa transmitted may provide the basis for political decisions that in various ways may affect Africa and African nations or societies in this age of growing interdependence. While the mass media cannot substitute for the educational institutions in providing general knowledge about Africa, they have an important task in stimulating interest in Africa, and in keeping the general knowledge up to date. Unfortunately, the educational institutions have not so far provided us with a sufficiently extensive knowledge of Africa. During this transitional period it is therefore up to the mass media everywhere to provide also the basic knowledge on African affairs. Such basic knowledge is also necessary for a different reason: the extent to which an audience is able to absorb, interpret, understand, and even care about information on African affairs is correlated with the general level of knowledge.

At the seminar on "Reporting Africa" all the participants were aware of the need to extend and improve the general knowledge of Africa and the communication flow within and from Africa. This may be a good omen for the future. The participants themselves are in a position to influence and make contributions towards such improvements.

Notes

2. Several authors have focused on the role and the tasks of mass communication in the development process and discussed the conditions under which mass communication may stimulate or obstruct such a development process. However, this literature is not very extensive, and there are few case studies which have tested the various propositions offered by quantitative research. Most of this literature seems to have been published in the early 1960s, and little follow-up research has been done in the last few years in this important field. For literature dealing with these aspects, see, *inter alia*, Lucian W. Pye, ed., *op. cit.*; Daniel Lerner and Wilbur Schramm, eds., *Communication and Change in Developing Countries*, East-West Center Press, University of Hawai, Honolulu, 1967 (second ed., 1969); Wilbur Schramm, *Mass Media and National Development*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, and UNESCO, Paris, 1964; and Charles A. Wright, “Functional analysis and mass communication” in *Public Opinion Quarterly* 24 (1960). See also “Mass media in the developing countries. A Unesco report to the United Nations” in *Reports and Papers on Mass Communication*, No. 33, UNESCO, Paris, 1961.

3. For such observations, see, *inter alia*, Wilbur Schramm, *op. cit.* (1964), Chapter 2, especially pp. 58–60. According to James W. Markham (*A Comparative Analysis of Foreign News in Newspapers of the United States and South America*, Pennsylvania State University, 1959 (mimeographed), as quoted by Einar Östgaard, *Nyheter til salgs*, Aschehoug, Oslo, 1967, pp. 60–61), who measured the volume of the news flow between the United States and Latin America and vice versa, the flow from the United States was 20 times as great as the flow in the opposite direction. A similar trend is indicated by William A. Hachten (*A Pilot Study of the African Press*, University of Wisconsin, 1966 (mimeographed)) on the basis of a survey of five newspapers from Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa: 54 per cent of the news came from the rich nations, whereas China, India, Indonesia, Japan and Pakistan shared 6.5 per cent of the news. News from all African nations put together constituted 26 per cent of the sample; the same percentage came from Great Britain alone (here quoted from Östgaard, *op. cit.*, pp. 61–62).


5. This point is illustrated by the following story told by David Williams at the seminar:

"A very experienced reporter on a leading London daily was covering a murder case in the East End of London. Then there was an air crash in Malta. It so happened that they decided that he had better go to Malta, and he left the murder and went to Malta. When he was in Malta, there was an air crash in the Niamey area. So the news editor, who had no notions of airline time-tables, said, 'Well, old Fred is in Malta, and this place is near at hand, let him go there'. Fred suddenly finds himself for the first time in his life in Africa, covering this air crash, which he did very competently. And then, believe it or not, there was an announcement that there were to be elections in Ghana. So they said, 'There is old Fred in Kano, let him go to Ghana and cover the elections'. He did that. And then we had that affair of Dr Azikiwe and the African Continental Bank in Nigeria; so they said, 'That sounds to be a good story, let Fred go and cover this'. Now, the last time I saw Fred was in the Catering Rest House in Enugu, asking for a map, because they had told him to go to Amman, and he had no idea of where Amman was."

David Williams added: "Well, this is what happens with coverages very often. It is nobody's fault, this is how a daily newspaper operates."

6. It is probably not always easy to live up to such expectations as those which are implicit in the following "definitions" by James W. Carey: "A professional communicator is a broker in symbols, one who translates the attitudes, knowledge, and concerns of one speech community into alternative but suasive and understandable terms for another community". ... "The distinguishing characteristic of the professional communicator ... is that the message he produces has no necessary relation to his own thoughts and perceptions. The professional communicator operates under the constraints or demands imposed on his side by the ultimate audience and, on the other side, by the ultimate source. His skill is not so much intellectual and critical as a skill at interpretation and communication (or obfuscation)" (see James W. Carey, "The Communications Revolution and the Professional Communicator", in Paul Halmos, ed., op. cit., p. 27 and p. 28 respectively).

7. It is easy to agree with Gerhard Maletzke's observation that "Wieweit Individuen oder Gruppen einander verstehen, nicht verstehen oder missverstehen, hängt von dem Ausmass ab, in dem sich
Colin Legum

The Mass Media
—Institutions of the African Political Systems

It is frequently asserted that since independence the mass media in African states have increasingly become less free. This assertion prompts four questions:

1. How much freedom did the mass media in Africa have to lose?
2. What do we understand by press freedom?
3. What is the true state of the press in Africa today?
4. What are the conditions for a genuinely free system of mass-media communications?

1. How much freedom did the mass media in Africa have to lose?

Before independence all radio and information services were wholly in the hands of the colonial governments; this pattern was taken over and maintained by the new states after independence. (Gambia was exceptional in that it had a small, private, commercial, radio station before independence.)

No African countries had television before independence, except for the Western Region in Nigeria, which had a commercial company. After independence television was operated on the same basis as radio—it was wholly owned and controlled by the government, usually under the direct authority of the Ministry of Information or a commission, corporation or board under Ministry supervision.

The case was the same with the news services. Those that existed before independence were under the direct control of
the colonial government; this practice has been continued. In most countries, contracts have been entered into by the government with one or more international agencies for the local distribution of news by radio, television or the press. But the selection and distribution of items from these external services are controlled by government appointees. However, independently owned newspapers (see below) subscribed to one or more of the international news agencies, a practice continued after independence.

Many African countries had no daily or weekly papers of any kind before independence; at best they had government information publications. In countries which did have a press, one can distinguish three different categories:

(a) Monopoly papers, owned wholly by expatriate capital, usually under metropolitan control.

(b) Two, seldom more, competing newspaper groups, owned by expatriate firms.

(c) Locally owned papers (mainly in anglophone West Africa, the Sudan, Zambia, and Uganda), mainly controlled by a single owner or by a political group or commercial association. These papers were mostly poorly produced, constantly in financial trouble and often in difficulties with the censorship laws. For them the struggle to survive economically was often as taxing as their struggle against political pressures. They had few economic or technical resources, and, for the greater part, their circulations were derisory. Nevertheless in countries like Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast, Nigeria, the Sudan and Uganda, they often had a considerable influence that was wholly disproportionate to their circulations. Nigeria was exceptional in that Dr N. Azikiwe did manage to establish a viable newspaper group which was entirely indigenous. In the early 1950s, when the Nigerian States achieved autonomy, a number of modern newspapers were started, either with funds supplied by the State or by public corporations or in association with expatriate interests.

(d) Vernacular newspapers; these were particularly significant in Uganda. Like other indigenously owned papers, they existed precariously, and most appeared sporadically.

All the colonial governments, without exception, maintained
severe forms of censorship, either directly, as in francophone countries, or indirectly through sedition and other laws.

One other factor which helped to determine the policies of post-independence governments to the press was that, with notably few exceptions (for example, the Mirror Newspapers in West Africa and the Aga Khan's East African papers), all the expatriate-owned papers were conspicuous for their opposition to the nationalist independence movements; they uniformly reflected the economic and political interests of the old colonial period.

It will readily be seen, therefore, that the circumstances or opportunities for a free press or for other forms of mass media were hardly propitious. Yet there was a strong and old tradition (especially in Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast, the Sudan and Nigeria) of press freedom. This has persisted after independence.

To sum up, the major newspapers which existed in Africa were wholly or largely owned by expatriates; they were primarily concerned with defending special interests, often linked with the perpetuation of colonial rule, or in defence of bourgeois, nationalist, political, social or economic attitudes and interests. Press ownership was chiefly the privilege of a tiny minority; mostly this minority was an alien group; less often it was a private, profit-making, commercial company or a political group. The mass media were, in fact, the media of expression for either the colonial rulers or for an elite.

However, the limited opportunities which did exist in some colonial societies for private ownership of newspapers and journals of opinion made possible some expression of non-governmental and anti-governmental opinions. The struggle to maintain and widen this right was a marked feature of the early nationalist struggle.

2. What do we understand by press freedom?

While it is easy enough to propound idealistically the principle that "freedom of speech and press is close to the central meaning of all liberty", it is not so easy to establish universal criteria for the application of such a principle. The "free
press” in the capitalist societies and social democracies of the west are anathema to Communist societies, and vice versa. Here, at once, one identifies a correlation between the role of the press and the value system and organisation of a particular society. Western culture produced the concept of a free press, which notionally offers to everybody the right to start and operate a newspaper or journal, provided only they have the means to do so and the ability to withstand economic and political pressures; whereas Communist society favours the view that a free press can exist only for clearly defined purposes and under the ownership and direction of the State.

A radical statement of the rights and functions of a free press is offered by Professor Charles Beard:1

Freedom of the press means the right to be just or unjust, partisan or non-partisan, true or false, in news column or editorial column ... In its origin, freedom of the press had little or nothing to do with truth-telling ... most of the early newspapers were partisan sheets devoted to savage attacks on party opponents.

(This latter remark will win immediate recognition in Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone.)

But let us take two less extreme views to illustrate the differences in approach adopted by western and Communist defenders of a free press. First, the western view:

An ideally free press is free from compulsions from whatever source, governmental or social, external or internal; from compulsions—not, of course, from pressures, since no press can be free from pressures except in a moribund society empty of contending forces and beliefs. An ideally free press is free for the achievement of those goals of press service which its own instinct of workmanship and the requirements of the community combine to establish; and for these ends it must have command of all available technical resources, financial strength, reasonable access to sources of information at home and abroad, and the necessary staff and facilities for bringing its information and its judgments to the national market. An ideally free press would be free to all who have something worth saying to the public; and the selection of the voices thus deserving to be heard must be a free selection, arising from the preparatory processes of free speech, not from the desk of owner or editor alone.2

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Now for the Communist view:

All dissertations on "objective and complete" information are liberal hypocrisy. The aim of information does not consist of commercialising news but in educating the great mass of workers, in organising them under the exclusive direction of the Party for clearly defined tasks. This aim will never be attained by objective reports of events. Liberty, objectivity of the press, these are fictions. Information is the means of class struggle, not a mirror to reflect events objectively.\(^a\)

Professor Hocking's idealistic definition derives from the values and resources of a society in which it is at least notionally possible to establish the elements of a free press, as defined by him, whereas Kuzmichev's ideological definition approaches the press purely and simply as an instrument of mass education in the service of the dominant values of the State system. In Hocking's view, everybody should be free, at least in principle, to express their own opinions through a network of independent communications. In Kuzmichev's view, everybody should be free to contribute to developing the view of the ruling party's ideology and then only within a system of State-owned communications.

These two views are irreconcilable. The first is tenable only in an open society; the second is typical of the ideological or closed society. I here use the concept of "open society" not in the classical Weber sense, but in the sense of a pluralistic political system, in which it is possible for opposition parties, trade unions and other labour, professional, cultural, academic and trade organisations to exist independently of, and in opposition to, the government. In such societies one would expect to find a reasonable measure of free expression of opinion in speech and writing, a reasonable semblance of independent institutions (such as the judiciary, the electoral system, etc.), as well as organised political opposition to the ruling party. It is also characterised by the existence of competing pressure groups within the political, economic and social systems. A "closed society" is exemplified by the Communist or Fascist political systems. Although some single-party states in Africa have the characteristics of the "closed society", this is by no means true of all.
3. What is the true state of the press in Africa today?

With few exceptions no modern African societies are completely open, so that the western concept of the free press is relevant only as an ideal. A large number of African societies are wholly or at least partially "closed", i.e. they are single-party States, dominated by a ruling elite, with the rights of opposition varyingly restricted; however, they are not ideological states within Kuzmichev's meaning. In these countries the press is mostly an instrument of power, controlled and directed by the ruling groups.

However, the majority of African societies are neither one thing nor the other; neither fully open nor fully closed. Predictably, therefore, one finds in them a mixture of state-owned and privately owned papers, co-existing uneasily. The level of independence enjoyed by papers in these situations varies considerably. Most African countries today possess State-controlled papers or papers that are owned and controlled by the ruling party.

Since independence, the papers supporting the opposition parties have been considerably reduced; in one-party states they have been almost wholly eliminated. The expatriate-owned papers have progressively been taken over, either by deals with the government or through nationalisation. But even before their elimination, the general trend of expatriate-owned papers was towards self-imposed censorship, avoiding direct or open criticism of the government as a deliberate means of avoiding being taken over. In fact, many of the newspapers in this category adopted a policy of kow-towing more to the established government than even some of the official papers. Although their final elimination meant a loss of private ownership, it did not necessarily involve any real loss to a free press, since they had been emasculated long before the final act of nationalisation.

In those countries in which a multi-party system still operates, one still finds a variety of newspaper ownership and of press opinion. This is true, for example, of Nigeria, to a
lesser extent of Ghana, and much less so of Sierra Leone, Zambia, Kenya, Uganda and Congo-Kinshasa.

But the unmistakable tendency is towards the growth of official government and ruling-party papers. Thus, in Tanzania, the Nationalist is the organ of the TANU, while the Tanzania Standard is a government paper. This combination of government and ruling-party ownership seems to be the evolving pattern in the majority of African countries. So far, though, there is no ban on independently owned papers in most countries, but it is uncertain what the future would be for vigorously independent papers, if these were to be established.

Because most African governments and ruling parties are not themselves entirely homogeneous, the internal divisions within the ruling elites often allow for a variety of opinion within the same paper or as between one official paper and another. There is also a considerable difference of editorial independence allowed to editors, depending partly on the calibre of the editor himself and on his board of directors, and particularly on the editor's personal relations with the President.

Only three African countries—Nigeria, Kenya and Ghana—provide conditions for a diversity of newspaper ownership to continue; to a much lesser extent this also applies to Morocco. Although there are no government-owned papers in Kenya, the two existing newspaper groups owe their survival largely to the care they take in giving broad support to the government, and in avoiding overt criticisms of its policies. They are relatively free, however, to criticize social and economic affairs, and even political questions, provided they avoid particularly sensitive issues at times of high emotion.

Nigeria, more than any other country, has succeeded in maintaining the elements of a free society, even under military rule. This is largely due to the existence of powerful political interests based on the diversity of the 12 states, which makes it possible to express views different from those of the central government. Equally important is the Nigerian habit of independent expression of opinion, which has persisted even under military rule, so that even government papers
often carry a diversity of opinion. Another Nigerian feature is the existence of small, independent publications run by trade unions, sectional political groups, and university-based journals of opinion. Furthermore, the combination of military and civilian rule has tended to favour a tolerant attitude to dissident views; lapses from this behaviour are more remarkable than the normal practice. Ghana's open society was seriously undermined during Nkrumah's regime; its successor re-established the principle of press freedom while retaining government ownership of the Graphic Group and the Ghanaian Times Group. It also permitted purely party papers to be established for the ruling Progress Party as well as for the Opposition. More recently, the Government has reacted to the sharply critical weekly, The Spokesman, started by a former Nkrumah editor, Kofi Badu, after his dismissal as editor of a government paper. Although Badu has been prosecuted in the courts under the normal laws, his paper has not been faced with censorship or a threat of banning. Another encouraging development was the initial success of the Legon Observer, a fortnightly review which wielded tremendous influence in the years of National Liberation Council military rule; it has suffered from internal disagreements since the restoration of civilian rule.

The Legon Observer proves that it is possible, in some countries, for a group of determined people to mobilize the technical and material resources needed to establish an independent journal—provided they are not expatriates; this is an important pointer to what is possible not only in Ghana but, potentially, also in other African countries. The Legon Observer is based on the campus of Legon University; the Nigerian Opinion operates from the campus of Ibadan University. The establishment of journals by the academic staffs or students' groups in the universities is a growing phenomenon in the struggle for an independent press in Africa.

The system of control over government or party-owned newspapers varies considerably. There is considerable scope for experimenting in creating institutions for the control of the mass media. What is badly needed is a comparative study of
the different methods and institutions devised in Africa to control and direct radio, television and newspapers.

Here are two examples. In Egypt the newspapers are run as guilds, with management and editorial control vested in the employees of each group. The Editor-in-Chief is appointed by the ruling party, but he and his staff then have freedom to run their own papers, subject always, of course, to the veto of dismissal if their policies should prove unacceptable to the ruling junta.

The second example is that of the Sudan, where the Revolution Command Council (RCC) nationalized the press in 1970. Even though all the papers were locally owned and controlled, they were still, in President Numeiry's view, "stooges of foreign powers". The RCC established an entirely new institutional structure for publishing. At the top of this structure is a General Press and Publishing Corporation, with a board of directors representing a cross-section of opinion; it is under the chairmanship of the former chief editor of the Khartoum daily Al-Ayam, who is perhaps the most widely respected and professional of all Sudanese journalists—an almost natural choice for the job. The Corporation's duties include the supervision of two newly established rival printing houses, to which all the papers, magazines, and printing presses have been transferred, and of a new Sudan National News Agency. The News Agency's General Manager is Abdul Karim el Mahdi, who was formerly manager of the old Sudan News Agency—again a man appointed on his merits. Two quite different Editors-in-Chief have been appointed to control each of the printing houses. Dayed Mahmoud Hasseeb, who is in charge of the Ayam Printing House, is an academic with a Communist orientation, yet is not accepted by the orthodox Communists. His group will publish two daily papers, a series of provincial papers and a new women's journal. Sayed Ahmed Jamal, in charge of the Rai al-Am organisation, is a former ambassador, scholar and author; he holds strongly independent radical and democratic views. His appointment was much criticised by the orthodox Communists especially. He will publish Arabic and English daily papers, a weekly paper, and a new monthly journal of opinion.
4. What are the conditions for a genuinely free system of mass-media communications?

I start from the premise that no society can have a free system of mass-media communications unless it is itself “free”, i.e. a society in which pluralistic interests can operate as pressure groups to compete with each other on reasonable terms for the attention of the government and other decision-making bodies, as well as for influence over the electorate in a representative system of parliamentary government.

There is a direct correlation between the nature of a society and the quality of independence of its press. Put in its most extreme form: it is as unthinkable that a free press could exist in a state like Nazi Germany as that a Nazi-type press could hold a monopoly in Scandinavian or other western European societies.

A truly free press remains everywhere an ideal; it does not exist in the sense defined by Professor Hocking anywhere in the world. But it is much freer in some countries than in others.

To talk of the “decline of the free press in Africa” is to talk of something that never existed. However, in some countries in which there were some elements or potentialities of a free press, these have either ceased to exist altogether or have been somewhat diminished. The system replacing the earlier framework of press ownership and control is, on the whole, more rigid and often less promising for the growth of an independent press than was the case before. The destruction of alien-controlled papers has often been accompanied by the elimination of indigenously owned papers as well, due to either economic or political pressures.

There is also a direct correlation between the movement towards single-party states and the diminishing opportunities for creating an independent press. It follows, therefore, that it is not possible to analyse the condition of the press and of other mass-media communications, without relating it to the total societal changes of any particular State.

“The Press” has no independent existence of its own; it
cannot be isolated from the other institutions in a society. It is as much an institution as any of the other institutions—Parliament, the Cabinet, political parties, the Civil Service or the Army. In the words of Professor William Hocking: "The free press is not an isolated value: it is a function within a society and must vary with the social context; it cannot mean the same thing in every society at all times." And to quote John Stuart Mill: "Each society must recapture for itself on its own terms, and by its own individual explorers, the beliefs it needs to live by." For me these two texts provide the framework for any meaningful discussion about the nature of the press in any country.

At a time when we are witnessing a massive breakdown of institutions in Africa and, in some countries, a radical transformation of institutions, it would be surprising if the press were not subject to the same vicissitudes as all other institutions. Only by recognizing this process of institutional change is it possible to consider what reforms might be suggested to begin building up "today's press in today's community".

Those of us who are principally concerned with the mass media should be in the forefront of Mill's "explorers" in analysing and reporting on what is wrong with today's set-up in each individual society, and in putting forward relevant remedies that bear some relationship to the political forces and value systems operating within it.

To talk largely of "press freedom" in idealistic terms is useful only as a guide to action, but it becomes meaningless sloganising if we simply go on to assert the principles by which a free press should be judged, without at the same time relating the conditions for the existence of a free press to the circumstances of the society and its times.

As is true of all institutions, their value and independence can best be promoted by men who are themselves independent-minded, highly professional in their own skills, and possessed of the necessary courage to fight for the maximum measure of freedom possible at any time. This struggle can only be waged by indigenous journalists imbued with a spirit of independent-mindedness and willing to make the sacrifices often required in standing up to the political and economic class,
who, in most countries, wish to see the press shackled to their own particular interests or ideologies.

The journalist who is concerned only with his own job is too easily suborned; he becomes a time-server and a lackey of the ruling class of the day; he is, as we have reason to know, corruptible. In this lack of virtues he is no different from the other elite elements in every society. What we should look for, and encourage, are journalists who, in all societies and at all times, have dared to challenge their own establishments if they sought to create a wholly servile press. There is a world of difference between a servile press and a press that is not entirely free. Even a partially free press can be vigorous and can set an example in cultivating the habit of critical scrutiny of the actions of the government and of all other institutions. The successful role of the ombudsman in Tanzania is one example of the kind of role a responsible press can play in societies evolving towards more representative forms of government.

Notes

1 St. Louis Post-Dispatch Symposium on the Freedom of the Press, 1958.
3 B. Kuzmichev. Quoted in Hocking, op. cit.
Mamman Daura

Editing a Government Newspaper in Nigeria

The appreciation of the problems of editing a government newspaper may start from a number of basic observations, each of which has different implications. By far the most important and the most pertinent to consider first is the nature of the political system and the political situation within the country concerned. The highly political nature of much reporting and comment in the press makes this factor paramount, whatever region one is talking about. Generally, but in Africa in particular, one can distinguish two different types of political systems: (i) a populist–collectivist model and (ii) a populist–pluralist model.

These two terms are preferred to the western use of such terms as totalitarian and dictatorial, on the one hand, and the eastern use of such terms as capitalist and bourgeois, in talking about each other's political systems. This is really an attempt to get at the root of the situation and to avoid adopting the attitude which all systems have of idealising their own models in preference to any others. The distinction between the two—a distinction which has some significance in discussing the present topic—lies in the different orientation of each to the problem of the opinions and philosophies allowed.

In the first, there is likely to be only one viewpoint accepted, namely, the revolutionary nationalist variety. Such is the case with all those polities which are in a hurry to attain certain goals and which moreover feel a sense of vulnerability, imagined or real, from internal but more certainly from external forces. In this kind of polity there may be a number of newspapers but usually only one or two are allowed to exist, under strict control and direction by the government. The obvious African examples are Tanzania, Guinea, the United Arab Republic and Ghana under Nkrumah.
The second type of polity is likely to allow different viewpoints. There will be a variety of newspapers, which, within the legal and other conventional constraints existing in the society, will express a variety of opinions, including some opposed to the government. Such a condition usually exists in a secure polity which is in an advanced state of social integration and/or economic development. Examples of this second type are found more easily outside Africa, but Sierra Leone, Ghana under Busia, Kenya and Uganda approximate more closely to this type. But a variety of newspapers expressing highly divergent viewpoints can exist in a polity where the conditions found in a settled and developed community are not fulfilled. In such societies divisions between different communities are either so deep or so real that no government can ignore them.

The Nigerian case fits exactly into this category. Here the society is a plural one in several senses. There is regional pluralism, now replaced by state pluralism with the creation of twelve states. There is ethnic pluralism, in a society which contains an estimated 250 different ethnic groups. Similarly, the population is split into Islamic, Christian and animist groups, although only the first two are mobilised to any extent. In addition, there is the familiar problem of differences between the urban and the rural populations and the differences between the traditional elite and the educated elite and the political class. Much the most important of these has been regional pluralism, which has also tended to coincide with ethnic pluralism. The competition, political and economic, which exists between these, at the centre and at home, together with the importance of groups and regions or states in national life, means that, whatever the character of the newspaper, the central government cannot silence it, and a regional government may be forced to start a new paper to fight its own case, whatever its real feelings about the institution of the press. The point is that the extent to which a government newspaper editor encounters certain types of problems is heavily influenced by the facts enumerated above in the Nigerian case.

The New Nigerian, the paper which I edit, was born out
of a previous paper called the *Nigerian Citizen*. It was started in January 1966 by the then Northern Nigerian Government, which ruled the Northern Region and was locked in the most fierce competition with the two other big regions of the Nigerian Federation. This conflict basically had its origin in the differing cultural characters of the north and the south. The orientation of the north was rather different from that of the south. The north believed in controlled modernisation and emphasized the need for the changing traditional society to adopt modern methods without destroying its own qualities. The south believed in an unthinking gallop towards everything European and western, without considering its relevance or its dangers to the community.

In this caution, not to say suspicion, of western methods, notably education, lay a source of danger to the Northern Region, because the north became educationally backward, and thus was likely to suffer in the distribution of national jobs. The then Northern Government was subjected to pressure by the northern elite not to let the north suffer. The north therefore had to have a voice to put across. It was a society with an old history and revered administrative and legal traditions, which the south (and the colonialists) neither understood nor liked. But in the new Nigeria, where paper qualifications were the primary criteria in the distribution of jobs, the north was at a great disadvantage.

So a government paper—the *Nigerian Citizen* and its successor, the *New Nigerian*—was necessary for the following reasons:

(i) To get across the views of the government to the northern elite and mobilise them in order to achieve its goals.

(ii) To fight the northern case in all disputes at the centre.

This is the background against which the problems of a newspaper like the *New Nigerian* must be considered, though these perspectives have changed. It may be true that both points still apply to a limited degree, though, as I have stated, the *New Nigerian* is now a national newspaper with national aspirations. Most of the paper's real problems spring directly from its *raison d'être*. These problems can be considered under the following major headings.
Problem of identity
What can be termed the problem of identity has several facets. The *New Nigerian*, in spite of its origins, is a national paper. In fact, it is true to say that as a partisan "northern" newspaper, the *New Nigerian* was still-born. Two weeks after the first issue came out, the military took over and emphasis on regionalism was discouraged. But after the July 1966 coup—which reversed the January coup of that year—regionalism as an issue re-asserted itself throughout the Federation, especially in the east, the erstwhile champion of integration. Of all the major newspapers, the *New Nigerian* at the time championed the Federal cause most strongly, even though it was going against public opinion in the north, where the deep traumas of January had not been cured and where certainly, if a referendum had been held, there would have been a substantial majority in favour of secession from Nigeria.

Today, the *New Nigerian* is the strongest nationalist newspaper in the country. Even our most bitter critics will readily concede that, when it comes to speaking on Nigeria's national interests, the *New Nigerian* is in the forefront.

But this has not convinced many people—and some very influential people—in some southern parts of Nigeria that we are no longer the *Nigerian Citizen* in another guise. This is largely due to a fundamental misunderstanding of the consistent stand we have taken over a number of national issues. An example will illustrate my point. Since my predecessor, M. Adamu Ciroma, assumed office as editor, the *New Nigerian* has argued that potentially the most dangerous political and social issue in Nigeria is the uneven educational and economic development in the country and the accompanying maldistribution of amenities between the north and the south. We have urged that the north should be developed to catch up with the south and eliminate this danger, but critics of the *New Nigerian* have argued that this is a camouflage and that our real intention and that of the six northern state governments is to promote the cause of the old north. It is not often appreciated that even in the north we persistently urge governments not to concentrate amenities in towns, but to spread them also to the countryside. For example, we have even ar-
gued that the Northern States should put a moratorium on building town hospitals and spend the money on rural health centres.

The second major problem under this heading is the conflict between the public interest, as seen by the editor, with his own knowledge of what the community wants, and the public interest, as expressed purely in the programme and periodic statements of the Government. Newspaper readers in Nigeria, as indeed in many countries, are suspicious of newspapers that are in any way connected with the Government. Even at the best of times they suspect Government interference. It may be hard to believe this, but the New Nigerian has not been subject to sustained Government interference.

This is not to say that there were no occasions on which an irate member of the Government or some official showed his displeasure at a story we carried. A newspaper of influence in society must expect from time to time to receive representations, complaints and criticisms from all quarters—officials, commercial and industrial, as well as from private individuals. But the New Nigerian has never been subject to persistent pressure or interference from the Government. Indeed, we are, by common consent, more "independent" than the commercially viable and independent Daily Times. We have been able to withstand Government pressure more successfully than they have. But it is an invidious situation, in which we are owned and subsidized by the Government and yet we frequently criticise their actions. It is an anomaly neither properly understood by the people generally nor particularly liked by some Government officials. No Nigerian Government-sponsored newspaper has managed to steer this middle course.

Another crisis of identity for the New Nigerian arises with regard to the increasing social cleavages between the elite class and the common man. It is a fact that African elites are a severe disappointment when it comes to safeguarding the interests of the people they are supposed to lead. In general, it is not too unkind to say that, outside the UAR and Algeria under Boumedienne, the indifference of the elites to the common man is practically absolute. Nigeria is no exception, and
the *New Nigerian*, in the four short years of its existence, has sought to remind the elites of their duty and responsibility.

One of the ways we carry on this campaign is to pick on certain real and practical issues. Let me give one example—health policy. We run a series on town hospitals. We tell readers that 80 per cent of Nigerians live in rural areas, yet a similar percentage of the health vote goes to town hospitals, to the detriment of rural health centres. We show villagers flocking into town hospitals and queuing for hours and sometimes waiting for a day or two without getting their medicine. Often when they eventually get their prescription, it is only after a lot of unnecessary hardship and frustration. We argue that, if health centres were built in the country, there would be no need for people to drift in *en masse* to town hospitals, except in occasional cases of emergency or need for specialist treatment.

But we suffer from one major handicap. By reason of the newspaper's very medium, the English language, we belong, without equivocation, on the side of the elite. Less than 1 per cent or 560,000 of Nigeria's population are estimated to be able to both read and write English. Our daily circulation is a mere 60,000 to 65,000. We therefore cannot escape being regarded as a newspaper for the elite. Nonetheless we always espouse the cause of the ordinary man—the farmer, the small trader, the labourer and the factory worker.

These, then, are the inherent problems—the real and probably lasting problems—of a government newspaper such as the *New Nigerian* and, of course, they are the most important. Others are more likely to be technical problems and pertain more to the impact and circulation of the newspaper and they do not differ appreciably from the problems faced by other Nigerian newspapers. I will summarise the salient ones under the following headings.

*Communications*

Nigeria is a vast country of 373,000 square miles, almost as big in area as Sweden, Norway and Finland, but the country is served in only a rudimentary way by internal telegram, telephone and teleprinter links. The technical infrastructure
provided by the Electricity Corporation is not very broad or very efficient. Consequently, it is normal to have a frustrated reporter in an outstation with a story but quite unable to get in touch with Kaduna immediately. To make matters worse, the postal system is so slow that invariably stories are stale by the time we receive them.

**Distribution costs**

Having produced saleable products, the problem is then to place them on the market at the right time. Our problem is the more urgent in that yesterday's paper is like yesterday's fish—stale and bad. Even today we are only able to distribute the *New Nigerian* in Lagos and a number of places in the more southerly parts of our distribution area a day after the day of publication. In areas where we can sell on the day of publication, the distribution costs are enormous. Indeed, the biggest managerial problem for the *New Nigerian*—and for other newspapers—is the prohibitive distribution costs. All our distribution is now done by road. Our vans travel an average of 1.5 million miles a year. In some remote areas we deliver at a really frightful cost. (In Maiduguri, which lies at an average distance, it costs 1s. 1d. to deliver a copy of the *New Nigerian*, for which we get 1 1/2d. back after the vendors and agents have taken their commissions.) It may be wondered why a newspaper should be produced and distributed at a substantial trading loss. The simple answer is that there was an initial policy decision—which has not been changed—that the newspaper should reach the major towns of Nigeria, irrespective of cost. It was and is frequently said in Government political circles that "The *New Nigerian* must get there".

**Readership habits**

Nigeria has an extremely poor newspaper readership habit. In 1961 the UNESCO suggested a target guideline for newspaper readership in developing countries of 1 per cent of the population. In the Nigerian context this would mean a readership of 560,000 (1 per cent of the Nigerian population; vide the 1963 census). The total daily newspaper sales in the country
are 241,000. Literacy is a factor, but inadequate communications and distribution difficulties play their part.

Finally, the New Nigerian, as a newspaper, suffers from one pervasive problem: whether it should cut the umbilical cord and become a thorough-going, independent, commercial organisation by horizontal diversification, or remain a quasi-governmental organisation performing basically a social service and subsidized by the Government. The present situation is a schizophrenic one, which is satisfactory neither to us nor to the Government. In the resolution of this dilemma lies the future character—and problems—of the New Nigerian.
Eddie Agyemang

Freedom of Expression in a Government Newspaper in Ghana

The advent of political independence in Africa has seen the dwindling of the number of privately owned and independent newspapers on the continent. Most of the newspapers of the colonial days were unquestionably fearless and indeed, through their columns, spearheaded the agitation for "freedom", but it is ironical to note that, if they still exist at all, the majority of them are only shadows of their former selves. Those newspapers which, after independence, thought that they could maintain their independence or their role as the watchdogs of the governed or the underdog found, to their chagrin, that they were treading on dangerous ground.

In many African countries, independence meant an end to press freedom in the real sense. The press in newly independent countries is expected to assume a new role automatically—to mould public opinion in favour of the government and to slant stories and comments to reflect the policies of the ruling party. Political leaders the world over are always naturally irritated by press criticisms and the African leaders are no exception. They are always arguing that they are the established authority and that they also have a mandate from the majority of the people to rule. Therefore they view press criticisms as an affront or an undue interference by inquisitive and self-opinionated journalists, who represent nobody but their newspapers.

Politicians cannot bring themselves to accept the right of journalists to criticise their actions or policies or to suggest how they should go about their duty of governing, a field in which they believe they are more qualified than the news-
papermen. In the popular democracies of the world, that is, in the western world, politicians rarely take retaliatory political action against pressmen for adverse or critical comments made about them. The farthest an aggrieved western politician would probably go would be to seek redress in the courts, if he felt that he had been libelled. However, there is one instance in which politicians are believed to have pressured a London newspaper to take retributive measures against a dissident writer. It is believed that it was the British Labour Party which instigated the directors of the International Publishing Corporation, the publishers of the Daily Mirror, to remove their chairman, Cecil King, for writing scathing attacks in the Mirror on Harold Wilson when he was Prime Minister.

The situation is, however, different in Africa. Here the politician carries his resentment of press criticisms to extremes. Press criticisms are usually countered with accusation that the editors or authors are either in the pay of opposition parties, if there are any, or of foreign powers, to subvert the government or to create confusion. Such rather baseless accusations usually have disastrous repercussions, as experience has shown in Ghana.

Newspapers or journalists who get the message and "co-operate" are allowed to operate without much interference or intimidation, but those who resist the new "masters" do so at their own peril. Even the privately owned newspapers hardly escape the political onslaught. In a subtle way the politicians kill off critical and non-co-operative papers by either withdrawing government advertising or constraining private advertisers to do so.

No matter what part such papers once played in the "freedom struggle", they are not spared if they have incurred the displeasure of the politicians or refused to become subservient. In Ghana, the privately owned Ashanti Pioneer, printed in Kumasi, which was in the forefront of the agitation for self-government, found itself bitterly opposing the government of former President Kwame Nkrumah after independence. On account of the paper's outspokenness, the Nkrumah regime rushed a bill through Parliament in 1963 to ban it. Some of
the paper's political commentators later found themselves either languishing in jail or in self-imposed exile. The ban on the paper, now renamed Pioneer, was, however, lifted after the overthrow of Nkrumah in 1966.

Modern newspapers appeared on the English-speaking West African scene in the early part of the 1950's, when the "free Africa" agitation started gathering momentum. These newspapers were all British-owned and this fact, coupled with the timing of their arrival—at a period when the political awakening in Africa had reached its peak—created suspicion among the politicians as to their real mission. Their suspicion was rather based on what looked then like cogent reasons. The Africans were up in arms against British colonial rule; then, all of a sudden, British companies started flooding the colonies with newspapers. However, contrary to expectation, the British-owned papers realized the uneasiness among the Africans very early and identified themselves with their aspirations.

The Daily Mirror Group, now known as the International Publishing Corporation, established newspapers in Sierra Leone (Daily Mail), Ghana (Daily Graphic) and Nigeria (Daily Times). These papers, with their modern equipment and well-organised news coverage and circulation networks, more than supplemented the work and mission of the African-owned papers, which used mostly antiquated machines and could neither print enough copies nor circulate beyond their immediate neighbourhoods.

Whether by design or accident, the Daily Graphic rather fanned political awakening among Ghanaians more than the African-owned papers, because the paper reached the man in the remotest village with news and pictures of the political happenings in the urban areas. The Daily Times in Nigeria has remained in private ownership, but the Daily Graphic and the Daily Mail have been acquired by the governments of the respective countries.

However, in Ghana, as in many other African countries, foreign-owned newspapers never won the confidence of the politicians, whatever contribution they made towards the agitation for "freedom". Although the Daily Graphic has since its inception been edited by Ghanaians, the politicians never
ceased to look upon it as a relic of colonialism, until the State acquired it in 1962.

Perhaps the reason for the conflict between the politicians and the newspapers, especially the foreign-owned ones, in post-independence Africa is that these papers choose to pursue an independent policy, a decision which in the eyes of the African politicians amounts to sabotage or subversion or an attempt to undermine their authority.

The political leaders in developing Africa, perhaps more than their counterparts in other parts of the world, are almost always more concerned with remaining in power than with fulfilling the numerous vote-catching promises embodied in their various manifestos. They are thus always anxious to put only their best foot forward. Therefore they become easily offended or vindictive when uncomplimentary reports are published about their policies or doings, however fair such reports may be.

The politicians have put forward several excuses to back up their demand for a "moderate" and "co-operative" press in Africa. "Africa needs all the energies of her sons and daughters for nation-building and therefore cannot afford the luxury of encouraging dissident newspapers" is one excuse. African newspapers, they say, should use their columns to inform the people of government policies and achievements and the great things that the African is capable of doing. Perhaps the role the African politician expects the African journalist to play can be eloquently illustrated by quoting from a speech made by former President Nkrumah to a conference of African journalists in Accra in 1963. He said:

Through the pages of African newspapers written by the pens of African journalists let the people read of the great deeds of our continent which made African unity ... imperative and of the greatest urgency; let them read and learn the advantages ... of central direction and planning not only of the political affairs of the continent but also the economies as well.

A former Information Minister in the Nkrumah regime in a speech in 1962 said:

The African journalist is fully conscious of the responsibility that rests on the shoulders of Africa's new journalists—that of keeping
the people informed of the new developments in the country, the continent and the world; exposing imperialism and neo-colonialist machinations, projecting the African personality and contributing to the African liberation struggle and building of African unity.

The new African journalist keeps cheap sensationalism out of his duties and lays emphasis on the positive things that go to help in building the new Africa—does not relish the stories which do no credit to the advancement and education of the people.

From the above quotations the message to the Ghanaian journalist is explicit enough. They were to become propagandists at the cost of their true convictions as journalists.

At that moment, the then state-owned papers, the Ghanaian Times and its sister paper, the Evening News, in response to this exhortation or directive, dutifully intensified their propagandist roles. These papers even arrogated to themselves the role of the policeman, the prosecutor and the judge, all in the name of nation-building. They went so far as to lay down the law as to what made news and how it should be written, presented and interpreted to the reading public. The aim of the government and its press was that all news items or comments emanating from Ghana, both for internal and external consumption, should be "doctored" to suit the prevailing political thinking. Under those conditions, no paper in Ghana at that moment could present its readers with a true or even a fair picture of events.

The result was that journalists, under political pressure, had no alternative but to adulterate the ethics of journalism by descending into the abyss of propaganda. The irony of the situation was that, while the politicians were systematically inflicting mental torture on Ghanaian journalists by asking them to print only what was politically pleasant, they went about shouting themselves hoarse about the existence of the freedom of the press in the country. This freedom, however, existed only in their imaginations or when it suited their purposes.

The Daily Graphic, then still British-owned, all along tried to steer an independent course and consequently suffered bitter attacks from the politicians and the government-owned newspapers. The Graphic even stopped carrying editorials for
some months as a silent protest against the persecution but, instead of appeasing the politicians, this defeatist attitude rather provoked accusations that the paper had cynical motives. The attacks on the Graphic continued unabated. Some of the politicians even suggested that the paper should be banned. But before such an action could be contemplated, the government acquired the Graphic on 2 July 1962 at the suggestion of the proprietors.

The proprietors did not give any reasons for turning the Graphic over to the government. However, it is known that two reasons precipitated their decision. First, with their long tradition of press freedom, the proprietors apparently did not want to have anything to do with a muzzled newspaper or the kind of propaganda sheet that the Graphic had become. Secondly, the laws of Ghana forbade the wholesale repatriation of their profits. Under the law as it existed then, foreign investors in Ghana were obliged to re-invest 60% of their profits in their own businesses. The remaining 40% was, of course, subject to stringent foreign-exchange controls before its repatriation.

Signing on the dotted line to effect the change in ownership also marked the surrender of the independence of the Daily Graphic until the overthrow of ex-President Nkrumah on 24 February 1966. The change in ownership also marked the change in policy. A new politically orientated editor, a veritable yes-man, took over, with clear directives to change the face and content of the paper so as to reflect the political order of the day. A new board of directors, mostly members of the party cadres, was appointed to make sure that the paper became a propaganda sheet.

The politicians regarded the Graphic as their bona fide property and therefore issued strict instructions that the reporting of whatever they did or said should take precedence over everything else. This was not all. The order of the day was to boost the leadership of the ruling Convention People's Party (CPP), that is, ex-President Nkrumah. There were even specific instructions that the ex-President's photographs should always be used at the top of the front page. No word of criticism of the ex-President or his party should be allowed to
appear in the pages of the paper. Under such conditions, freedom of expression in the *Graphic* was nil, if not a crime.

All the writers on the paper became pipers playing for their paymasters. Friends of the politicians became automatically the friends of all the writers. In the same way the adversaries of the politicians became the adversaries of the journalists. Ghanaian newspapers were specifically ordered to castigate such African countries as Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Senegal and Togo, whose policies did not please the President. Also nothing done anywhere in the western world was deserving of praise in any of the state-owned papers. Lavish praises were to be showered on eastern European countries for the minutest thing that they did. In short, during the period of the Nkrumah regime, Ghanaian journalists were not expected to follow the dictates of their consciences but rather those of the government.

One may ask why many of the journalists in Ghana did not resign from their jobs rather than compromise their principles? The answer is that it was dangerous at that time if it leaked out that a journalist had quit his post because he disagreed with the official policy. That was the period when several hundred opponents of the regime were languishing in jail without trial. It was therefore deemed foolhardiness or inexpedient for any rational being to demonstrate in any way against the regime. Ghana was then flooded with security men, whose only job was to eavesdrop on people's conversations and report the slightest unfavourable comment about the regime to the authorities for the necessary action. Furthermore, job openings for journalists were limited and, if one left his job on a government paper, his chances of securing another job were slim indeed. No organisation, private or otherwise, would dare to employ such a person for fear of incurring the displeasure of the government. Therefore fear and the lack of enough job openings for journalists kept several journalists working on the gagged government newspapers against all the ethics of the profession as well as against their consciences.

Foreign journalists were not treated any better than their Ghanaian counterparts. Most of them got thrown out of the
country on the flimsiest excuse. Some foreign journalists were deported for attempting to file stories which the government's censors decided were uncomplimentary to the regime. Many others too had to leave Ghana in reprisal for an unfavourable comment made by their papers in their respective countries. Ghana became hysterically intolerant of criticisms and resorted to all kinds of methods to ensure that nothing unfavourable got out of the country, by virtually closing our shores to foreign journalists.

The outcome, however, was disastrous. The closed society that the Nkrumah regime tried to build up rather created suspicion and provided the world press with enough material for hostile comments about the government. The overthrow of the Nkrumah government, however, restored to the press its lost freedom. The army and the police, which jointly overthrew the CPP government, specifically called on the press to criticise them when they went wrong.

However, the hope of press freedom was shattered a few months later when four editors were sacked for criticising an agreement which the military-cum-police administration had signed with an American pharmaceutical firm, which was to operate a pharmaceutical factory built by the CPP government. It was an unfortunate blunder which seriously tarnished the then rapidly growing image of the military government. Nevertheless the subsequent tolerance displayed by the soldiers manifestly reassured the press that they could go about their work again without fear of intimidation. Press freedom has since then become patent and, save for the unexpected, Ghana can claim to be one of the few African countries with a free press worthy of the name.

Although the main national newspapers—the Daily Graphic and its sister weekly paper, The Mirror, which I edit, the Ghanaian Times and the Weekly Spectator—are still state-owned, no calculated attempt has been made yet by the civilian government to dictate policies or to tell them what they should or should not print. The two companies running the four state-owned papers are run by separate boards of government-appointed directors comprising uncommitted university lecturers, accountants, lawyers and private businessmen, who,
by choice, limit their responsibilities to the commercial interests of the companies.

There are two other papers, the privately owned daily Pioneer, published in Kumasi, and the opposition bi-weekly, The Spokesman, which regularly give the government hell. The governing Progress Party publishes a bi-weekly The Star. Two other bi-weeklies, The Echo and The Post, support the Progress Party.

In present-day Ghana, it is not uncommon to see in the columns of Ghanaian newspapers comments and readers’ letters which are as critical of the government and the politicians as they are forthright and blunt. Naturally the politicians complain and at times issue threats, especially against journalists working on state-owned newspapers. This should, however, be expected, especially in Africa, where the notion that “he who pays the piper may call the tune” is still a political reality.

On the whole, journalism in present-day Ghana has been given a further lease of life. However, Ghanaian journalists, especially those working on the state-owned papers, are unanimous in their opinion that as long as the government continues to own the newspapers, the independence of these papers, although guaranteed by the constitution, will be limited. The reason for this fear is cogent, although the politicians will not admit it. But the fact is that the editors of these papers have to be appointed with the approval of the government and this naturally places a limitation on how far they will go in their criticism or appraisal of government policies and actions. It actually looks like a case of self-censorship without an officially appointed censor for the sake of our jobs.
George Githii

Press Freedom in Kenya

In order to discuss press freedom, it is necessary to define its meaning. To some, it means the area of one’s freedom to report and comment on news, without the fear of political and sometimes legal consequences. To others, it connotes the relative efficacy and power of the press as an institution in a wider political framework, and also the way it is affected by the various centres of power, and the political climate in which it exists.

Defined in this way, the term “press freedom” is necessarily narrow, perhaps crude. Press freedom is not just a matter of the tolerance or intolerance of one centre of influence by others—of elites in the civil service, the judiciary and the executive—when faced with news reports and articles expressing controversial opinions.

It is generally agreed, I think, that tolerance can be repressive as well as constructive, and so both aspects perhaps ought to be investigated in contexts greater than the scope of this short summary permits. While the importance of this aspect cannot be underestimated, our definition of press freedom should be broadened to embrace powerful social, economic, cultural and managerial factors, whose ineluctable influence—or perhaps its absence—imposes or implies constraints and limitations on an editor’s freedom. From this viewpoint, press freedom is defined in terms of the multifarious forces that prevent or hinder factual and truthful reporting as well as the difficulties inherent in the expression of genuine and dissentent opinions in editorial columns.

This analysis therefore entails discussions of what doors are open when decisions are being made about matters of principle; it entails the choices that are available when an editor makes decisions—primarily in terms of results and consequences.
The comments that follow are strictly within the ambit of journalism in Kenya. But they are equally valid, with differences of detail, in other countries in sub-Saharan Africa, where relevant circumstances obtain. Broadly, this analysis covers three main spheres: (1) economic and managerial matters, (2) social and cultural matters, and (3) the press and politics.

Economic and managerial matters do not necessarily lead to a denial of freedom, because they do not necessarily involve the deliberate actions of men, but they are worth some mention. Economic constraints partly consist in the absence of efficient road, rail, and airline networks, the low level of literacy, the nature of population distribution, and the limited extent of newspaper-reading habits outside the main urban areas.

In Kenya, there are approximately 12 newspapers per thousand of the population (the world average is 92) and there are even less in the neighbouring countries. Consequently, expansion is slow, difficult and costly. Second, since the majority of newspaper readers are themselves members of elites of various definitions, it is understandably difficult, though not necessarily right or sensible, for them always openly to give effective and necessary support to newspaper editorials. When elites are threatened, they tend to unite or to withdraw.

In this context, that ever-elusive tyrant—sometimes gladiator—namely, public opinion, is prickly and elusive. It is formed at political rallies, in small intimate circles of friends, or even across supper tables, most readers preferring to express their opinions in this way rather than to write letters to the editor.

Economic pressures, namely, the deliberate actions of economic groups to promote their interests or to hinder others, are even stronger. They emanate, in my opinion, partly from advertising firms and partly from newspaper managements. Most advertising firms and their clients are conservative in disposition.

Conventional conservatism opposes social experimentation; it relies on tradition, on habits and conventions transmitted from past to present and future generations. Ultimately, however, conservatism has to rely on some ideal, indescribable entity, such as religion or tradition or the charismatic
power of leaders. Nothing concrete can be drawn from the last three, especially if they are taken in the formal sense. Conservatives do tend to rely on ideology, while at the same time denying this reliance. In this context, they oppose social reforms or advocates of social equality, on the basis that these doctrines—whether right or wrong—depend on ideology; while, in fact, conservatism, to be a coherent doctrine, would have to rely on some sort of ideology.

On such inconsistent arguments, they oppose, sometimes overtly and sometimes covertly, the concept of an ideology, either as a single idea or as a set or a cluster or galaxy of ideas, even when such definitions of ideology imply peaceful change through legislation. Therefore, when great issues of principle arise, conservative-oriented opposition to newspaper policies has often been expressed in terms of the withdrawal of advertising. And so, here, in a strictly economic sense, management pressure creeps in.

The editor, the management says, is, of course, free to express his opinion, but he must also remember that he represents and is also a custodian of a huge investment. In this situation, the editor faces some sort of intellectual crisis, mainly about the sorts of choices and doors that would be open to him if he took a certain course of action rather than another. In many cases, the doors and choices are many. They may range from friendship with those in authority to formal relationship with them, and from formal relationship to ostracism. The spectrum of choices and doors can be infinite. If it is narrowed down to two choices, shall we say, between truth and press freedom, on the one hand, and financial investment, on the other, then the consequences become grave and disturbing. If the former, an editor must lay down his pen and go. If the latter, he must recant and tone down his advocacy of reforms; perhaps he must also become a member of one or two exclusive business clubs in town.

Nor is management pressure limited strictly to this economic aspect of investment. It also arises out of an insatiable craving to ensure the survival of the newspaper qua investment in an alien land. Perhaps this aspect might be better illustrated by an example. In evaluating a project, a potential newspaper
entrepreneur considers as the relevant criteria the following aspects: the marginal and perhaps internal rate of return, the marginal cost of borrowed funds, and various expectational variables. At any rate, this is the sort of evaluation of newspaper projects that goes on in the western world.

In the situation under review, the criteria are the survival of the project, followed by calculations of marginal and internal rates of return etc., in that order. In other words, the "survival criterion" sometimes imposes rigid and almost immutable limitations on an editor’s freedom; choices could be narrowed to two—truth and newspaper opinion, on the one hand, and survival of the project, on the other. What happens to the editor depends on what standards of morality and principles of action he has decided to follow.

By way of illustration, I shall give some relevant examples. In doing so, however, I wish to point out that none of them concern the chief shareholder, the Aga Khan, for whose ideas and actions I have the highest respect and admiration. At all critical times, he allowed me the greatest possible freedom in my activities as a newspaper editor, as far as was consistent with the laws of the land and common decency.

It was my management that once demanded the withdrawal of an editorial on General de Gaulle—not strictly on the merits of the issues at hand but because the chief shareholder lived in Paris. It was feared, quite naturally, that an editorial that was not acceptable to de Gaulle might make matters difficult for the chief shareholder in Paris.

In another case, reporting and commenting on Moise Tshombe’s fateful—it was sometimes described as disastrous—flight to Ibiza was severely criticised by the management, not on matters of detail or the merits of the report, but this time because the chief shareholder had extensive business interests in Sardinia, from where Moise Tshombe was supposed to have embarked. I suspect that fears of the consequences to his investment lurked behind the management’s reactions.

In yet another example, the management successfully recognised as de jure an administration whose head later publicly admitted that, at the material time, his government was de facto and ultra vires. The editorial was written in the
editor's absence by the managing director. It has to be emphasized here that press freedom as such, truth, and the legal and political issues were set aside; the main consideration was the fact that the newspaper group had other interests in the territory in question. I must mention that these comments are not necessarily a personal evaluation of the individual in question; my concern here is with an institution. Damage to press freedom, therefore, can arise from the management's actions and it can be very disastrous.

Cultural restraints are even more intractable. In almost every editorial, the writer has to consider the cultural and religious differences of the communities he serves, especially in a small and ethnocentrically fragmented country like Kenya. He must synthesize, by a process of abstraction, the morally acceptable codes of the different races he serves and sometimes prescribe desirable codes of conduct.

Were this the only problem, an editor's job would be very easy. However, it is safe to say that cultural origin and identity have played, and continue to play, a significant role as necessary and sufficient conditions of ownership in African areas previously ruled by the English.

The English type of democracy à la John Locke arose out of a desire to guarantee the freedom of associations and of property owners. If we apply this concept to newspaper investment, it becomes immediately clear that, ideally, press freedom in this context means laisser faire, laisser aller; it is a diminution of this "liberty", on this argument, for an investor to be persuaded to transfer management and editorial decision-making functions to people of other cultures on any ground. The only exception that comes to mind is the Mirror Group's transfer of both roles to Nigerians on the Daily Times in Lagos.

Now freedom for the pike might mean death for the minnows; and what the English democrat regards as free may well be dangerous, as can be illustrated by comparing it with the French tradition à la Jean Jacques Rousseau. It is germane to point out, however, that this criticism does not imply approval of the atomization of individuals and the pulverization of associations, such as is inherent in totalitarianism. On the
contrary, my view here is that we should *let the mushrooms grow*, and regard racial or ethnocentric origins as irrelevant.

Nevertheless, if a time comes when an African editor has to choose between English or French values and African values, disagreement may conceivably arise, unleashing mighty emotive forces, which sometimes lead to nationalisation.

This is not the place to discuss ideologies or socialism and democracy. Suffice it to say that an aspect of this struggle may involve nationalization based not necessarily on ideology, but on cultural self-assertion. Perhaps also a revolt against domination of an important part of the mass media by a foreign culture. In these and other contexts, it may be perfectly logical to argue that nationalisation, as a term, has a meaning which is not exhausted by ideological considerations alone. Within what may be called the western liberal background of democracy, then, interference with press freedom may be said to exist if, and only if, indigenously owned newspapers are nationalised by indigenous governments.

Perhaps the emotive feelings may be illustrated by an example. What would the respective governments do and say if there existed a Stockholm *Herald Tribune* owned and edited by Americans? Or a Paris *Daily Telegraph and Express* owned and edited by Englishmen? The cultural clashes described here are socio-anthropological and fall outside the scope of this paper, but it seems to me that the examples are enough to drive the point home—that press freedom largely depends on who is speaking about it—the owner, the management or the representatives of the economic, ideological and cultural interests.

The last point concerns the relationship of the press with politics and politicians. One aspect which immediately comes to mind is the sensitivity and insecurity of some politicians. The editor has continuously to assure them that he means well and that he is not personally interested in political power *per se*. Sometimes he has to take unwarranted criticism nonchalantly and deny the non-existence of associations in which he is supposed to participate.

The question that arises then is this: how far can an editor
go in voicing his opinion? Some illustrations will help to answer this question with regard to Kenya in my days.

On two occasions, my newspaper printed comments—without prior knowledge, much to my chagrin—on legal proceedings which had not been completed in court. The Chief Justice and the Attorney-General decided not to prosecute the newspaper for contempt of court. I found out about this months later and was, of course, grateful for the tolerance demonstrated by the judiciary.

The newspaper which I edited had good relations with Parliament as an institution. Mr Humphrey Slade, the Speaker, a lawyer and a man of great talent and integrity, impressed upon me the importance of Parliament as an institution where people could air their views. While the utterances of members of Parliament could be critically evaluated, care should be taken not to damage Parliament as an institution. I agreed entirely with his analysis and his views, which were roughly on these lines.

Relations with the executive depended on the issue in hand, and on the individual involved. Personally, I found President Kenyatta very, very tolerant. Once my newspaper printed editorials against preventive detention, which angered some members of the executive. At that time, I regret to say, one of my reporters got deported, wrongly, I think, in retaliation. But the public debate continued, and I continued running the editorials and articles and was not harassed or persecuted.

Eventually, I made an appointment to see the President. His reaction was: "Those were your views; now remember to print ours". We did. We lost the campaign, the loss being explicable in terms of lack of public support rather than of repression by the government. Preventive detention became the law of the land.

In yet another political campaign, questionable practices by a minister were involved. A judicial commission was appointed, the minister was suspended, and the findings justified the campaign.

The minister was reinstated later. An editor might have objected to the reinstatement; but, then, one has to realise that politics is an art, not only of compromise, but also of
power alignments, of log-rolling, and of indirect pressure. Some might say that politics ought, ultimately, to be inextricably intertwined with morality. This is an aspect of moral theology, which is outside the scope of this article. Others regard the moral aspect as being less important.

Finally, my newspaper opposed the importation of a Rolls-Royce by the then Mayor of Nairobi, on the ground that profligacy might be the prerogative of princes (this too is often contested) but is certainly never the prerogative of public servants. President Kenyatta eventually reacted by banning the importation of the Rolls-Royce from Britain as an official car for the Mayor.

These are some of the major political issues which I faced in my short but fascinating career as an editor. I found the President as tolerant to honest journalism as any statesman can be. He seemed willing patiently to promote the evolution of values and institutions. I can say truthfully that, from the perspective of political press freedom, I was as free as any editor could be, bearing in mind the limits of the law, the limitations of my own knowledge, and other matters. I dare say many will look back upon this period as the golden days of press freedom.
Olav Stokke

Mass Communication in Africa
— Freedoms and Functions

The many facets of press freedom, as conceived, obviously hold a greater attraction for those actively working with or within the mass media than for outsiders, such as interest groups, governments and politicians in general. And what is more natural? Most editors and journalists in most political systems are apt to consider directives from outside as limitations on their professional performance, and hence as something contrary to their interests from a professional point of view. Most professions will react in the same way to outside interference, but not so strongly. The willingness to accept directives from outside is probably much more developed within other organizations of most political systems, whether such directives come from an outside board of directors, representing the owners of the organization (private or official), from customers or from the other interest groups affected.

In most political systems the mass media have established a special status for themselves. Freedom of expression has been integrated in most constitutions, since it was established as a major principle in the American Constitution of 1789, even though its actual interpretation has been subject to wide variations in different political systems. According to this ideology, outside interference is considered as an interference with professional integrity and the free communication of the truth. The principle of freedom of expression has more often than not constituted the major barricade for the press freedom fighters.

The efforts to influence the output of the mass media generally come from governments, political parties and individual
politicians, pressure groups of various kinds, including groups of those who traditionally (especially in the western liberal democracies) pay the bill: advertisers and readers, especially the former. These are the major groups that are directly affected by the mass-media output, and by what is not communicated, for that matter. The influence of such outside groups has been considered as a nuisance by the professional mass-media people. However, the main opponents, from the point of view of most press freedom fighters, have been the political authorities.

The perspectives of the professional mass-media people and the outsiders naturally tend to be different. The major concern of the mass-media people in most political systems, to varying degrees, however, is to defend their right to make decisions about the product they are creating or to fight for this right. The outsiders, however, tend to look at the actual performance of the mass media and the actual and potential role and functions of the mass media in the social environments in which they operate. In such a context, the framework of reference of these outsiders tends to be their own broader or more limited aims, values and strategies, and not so much the principle of freedom of expression for the individual working journalist or editor—as far as the principle involved does not constitute an important part of their aims, values and strategies.

The concept of press freedom

The concept of press freedom may be defined more or less extensively. Attitudes to the principle and comments on the actual state of affairs along this dimension vary according to the definition and the interpretation of the concept. Colin Legum introduces\(^1\) the definition given by Professor Charles Beard: "Freedom of the press means the right to be just or unjust, partisan or non-partisan, true or false, in news column or editorial column."\(^2\) He also introduces the definition by Professor William E. Hocking: "An ideally free press is free from compulsions from whatever source, governmental or social, external or internal."\(^3\) The key symbol in this definition
is "compulsion". Pressures of various kinds were explicitly excluded.4

However, the border line between "compulsion" and just "pressure" of various kinds will in most cases be blurred, and the distinction is only meaningful when the context is given. Formal criteria alone are obviously not necessarily sufficient.

The actual effects of the pressure exerted on the output are probably the crucial test. If outside interference is measured by its effects on the output, formalized "compulsion" may actually in some media in some political cultures result in less subjection than what just informal hints may bring about in other mass media in other political cultures.

Within a given political system, "compulsory" interference may be distinguished. However, interference of this kind covers a broad spectrum, including both formal and informal interference. An important sector of what may be called "formal interference" is press legislation. The content of this may vary from one political system to another and be more or less restrictive. Interference of this kind may be accepted by the professional mass-media people or it may not. Press legislation in some sectors has met with an almost universal acceptance by the professional milieu affected. This is the case with the interferences imposed by the law of libel, the restrictions that exist in most political systems as regards publicizing arrangements that might affect national security, etc.5

We enter the field of what are called self-imposed restrictions and may easily forget that the professional milieu has not been alone in creating these restrictions, even though this milieu, as a part of the wider society, has come to accept the values which the society has gradually incorporated into the law. From the point of view of fundamental principle, however, there is no difference between compulsory interference of this kind, covering a few matters, and legislation covering a broader spectrum—provided the professional milieu concerned accepts the values on which the legislation is based. The effects on the actual output may, however, be both quantitatively and qualitatively different, according to the actual differences in the legislation.

Formal compulsory interference may also be exerted by the
board of directors of the medium concerned, acting on behalf of the owner's interests, whether the owner is a private citizen, interest groups or the government. Such interferences may not necessarily be perceived to be compulsory interference from outside by all the professional milieus affected, in all political cultures, though most will. However, in some mass media this may even be accepted as a normal pattern, in the same way as when reporters accept control, guidance and directives from the editor. Directives from the board of directors may be formalized or may be informal. Such differences will probably not affect their impact.

Several other channels for exerting influence exist for various interest groups, differing from one political system to another. Such influence is mostly informal and to a large extent also indirect. The most effective censor in the world is probably "perceived reaction".

Ownership influence may be exerted directly, through the board or the management. In this context the management may be considered as an outside structure, and in most organizations it probably exerts much more influence than the board. The board and the management may exert influence formally or informally. Formal influence is exerted by establishing, for instance, a general instruction, a code of conduct or by decisions by the two structures. However, most ownership influences through these structures are probably exerted informally.

In addition to the ownership influence, the prevailing cultural and political values and attitudes in the social environment normally exert powerful influences on the mass-media output. Offences against such values may affect the standing of the mass medium concerned, including its circulation and influence, even its very existence. Such pressures need not be formulated or even expressed or represented by a pressure group to be effective.

Advertisers, especially the large ones or when organized in blocs, as is often the case, constitute another important influence group. Influences from such groups are most probable where and when the values or interests of the social groups to which they belong are concerned. Such influence may be offensive, seeking active support for values or policies ap-
proved of by such groups from the mass media concerned, or defensive, seeking to fend off attacks on such values or policies. However, the advertisers will have the opportunity of exerting influences of this kind only on mass media which are dependent on advertising, for example: profit-making organizations in a private enterprise or a mixed economy. The weaker the economy of the mass medium concerned within such systems, the greater will be the opportunities which big advertisers will have of exerting pressure of this kind.

Most privately run mass media in Africa have extremely weak financial bases, and are therefore open to pressures from both domestic or domestically based advertisers, especially the larger ones, including, of course, the government, and expatriate advertisers. Most privately owned mass media in English-speaking Africa used to rely heavily on advertisements from British firms, collected by agencies in London. In French-speaking Africa the French advertising agency Havas-Afrique once had what in practice amounted to a monopoly position. However, the fact that such channels of influence actually existed does not necessarily imply that they were actually used to exert influence or that it was necessary to activate them to obtain the desired effects, for that matter.

Another important distinction should be made explicit, namely, the distinction between internalized influence and influence imposed from outside. Nobody would consider internalized influence as compulsory interference or as interference at all. However, such influences may have an even larger effect on the actual output than most influences imposed from outside. This point may be illustrated by the following example. If the editor of the newspaper of the ruling party was a member of the party executive and politically belonged to the centre of the party, he would probably have no inhibitions about fighting for an issue vital to the government. The editor of the same newspaper who held a dissident view on the issue in question would probably experience the party's or government's expectations that he would give it full support in a somewhat different way. Influence of this kind is exercised by those who are responsible for selecting the editor, pro-
gramme director, etc., who are known to have the values, attitudes, etc. which are wanted. It may, of course, be exerted by private owners as well as by governments, by domestic groups as well as by foreigners, where the structure provides foreigners with the opportunity.

The different channels of influence briefly referred to above may all, in one way or another, affect the output of the various mass media. They will vary in extent and quality from one type of mass medium to another, differing with the type of ownership, the political system, and the cultural setting or the system of values. What really matters in this context is the effects of such influences on the actual output. A definition of the freedom of the press that only includes explicitly formalized and compulsory interferences is, therefore, felt to be insufficient in many ways. It seems to be insufficient as a basis for a comparative study of press freedom in different cultures and political systems. At the same time it gives an incomplete and therefore a false picture of the communication processes that actually take place in most societies.

Such considerations provide ample reasons for broadening the classical definition of press freedom by including the ability of the mass media to resist pressures of all kinds. Mass-media freedom, then, would be a situation in which the mass media were free from all influences from outside: formal as well as informal, direct as well as indirect, internalized as well as imposed. The degree of mass-media freedom that actually exists in various cultures and political systems may then be conceived of as scores at different levels, the various channels of influence constituting the levels on which these scores are to be measured.

Naturally, the problem of operationalizing such a definition, including the assessment of the relative weightings of scores in different sectors, will still remain and may create fresh problems, if applied. However, the major benefit of a definition along such lines would be that it would constitute a basis for a comparative study of mass-media freedom within different mass-media institutions, cultures and political systems. It would also give a better description of the communication processes that actually take place within and between

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different cultures and political systems, and the functions and roles of the different media in this process.

Colin Legum's own contribution to the definition of press freedom is explicitly related to western culture: the right of everybody to start and operate a newspaper or journal, provided they have the means to do so and the ability to withstand economic and political pressures. Hocking's definition, which includes the absence of compulsory interference only, is implicitly countered by George Githii, who also takes into consideration influences from "powerful social, economic, cultural and managerial factors", that "impose or imply constraints and limitations on an editor's freedom". So also does Mamman Daura, when he talks about the systematic suppression of unwanted news by the mass media themselves, without formalized pressure from outside, and gives the example of the speech made by the Black Panther leader, Stokely Carmichael, who, after the murder of Martin Luther King, asked his black brothers to take up their arms. No major American newspaper ever reported this speech. This was part of the self-censorship which the mass media exercised. In many countries the law of libel provides a basis for this, and consequently certain news items and certain pieces of information are not used and thereby the freedom of the press in the west is restricted by the press itself.

Government and mass media

During the last decade the mass media in Africa have gradually come into government ownership. Radio and television were introduced into most African countries as government institutions. There are a few exceptions to this general rule. In Nigeria, for instance, private enterprise (foreign) was substantially involved, especially in establishing the regional radio and television facilities. However, government initiative and involvement were also prominent here from the very beginning, and the regional governments took over completely after an initial period. Governments have progressively taken over most newspapers in countries where privately owned news-
papers previously existed, and several commercial newspapers have closed down. Most newspapers started in Africa during the 1960s were established by governments. The national news agencies have also been established on government initiative and are run by governments. A factor that has contributed to this growing government participation is the costs involved, even though this is probably not the sole explanation. What are the implications of this extensive government involvement in the ownership and the running of mass media? To what extent does this affect the relations between the mass media and the government? Obviously the type of ownership alone gives no complete answer as to the character of this relationship.

Colin Legum considers the mass media as institutions of the political system to which they belong. In such a context, the emphasis will be on the characteristics of the political system concerned, not on the type of ownership. By implication, the type of ownership may actually be considered to be secondary in importance to system criteria of a more fundamental nature.

Legum makes a broad distinction between closed societies and open societies. Press freedom is considered as a function of the political system and exists in a meaningful sense only in the pluralistic open societies of the west, being non-existent in the closed societies of the east. These societies constitute the two extremes. Most African political systems may be found somewhere between these two poles, with a few close to the two extremes. Many African political systems have several of the characteristics of closed societies, for example, they are single-party states (or have a military government, one may add) dominated by a ruling elite and with the rights of opposition restricted to various extents. However, they are not "ideological states".

The classification of political systems into open and closed societies may perhaps give some guidance as to the actual degree of independence vis-à-vis the government enjoyed by the mass media. However, these categories are too imprecise and too broad to serve as an instrument for grading the freedom of the press. Some characteristics of the various political

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systems may, however, be meaningful as guides to the degree of press freedom in general or at the various levels on which it may be analysed. This presupposes a more complex classification of the various political systems. The degree of press freedom may be directly correlated to only a few of the criteria for such a classification. Therefore, system characteristics influencing this relationship may just as well be isolated and discussed without direct reference to the political system to which they belong—several characteristics may even be the common property of different political systems and may appear in different disguises in the various systems.

Several factors may influence the degree of control and direction of government-owned newspapers and of non-governmental mass media as well. The most important variable in this regard is probably the attitude to the role and functions of the mass media prevailing, first of all, within the government but also within the predominant social and political environments in general, especially at the elite level. Attitudes of this specific kind may also be part of a broader system of values and attitudes of a more general nature. As important, of course, are the predominant attitudes in the professional mass-media milieu as to its own role. To a large extent these may be considered as functions of the prevalent attitudes in the social environments. However, an important qualification should be made: professionalism may generate attitudes among the mass-media people that emphasize independence from government direction and control, even in political cultures that favour extensive government control. However, in political systems with a low degree of political consensus, and where social and political conflicts are polarized, with the government as one of the poles, conflicts between the government and some mass-media professionals will be probable, if the mass media are not allowed to reflect dissident views and attitudes on the various controversial topics.

What are the most important factors in creating the predominant attitudes to the role and functions of the mass media, including their relationship to the government of the day? Such attitudes are the result of complex processes, even though some factors—varying from one political system to another—
may be more important than others. Within a closed system such attitudes may generally be considered as functions of the interests and needs (as perceived) of, first of all, the professional milieu and the mass-media owners (whether they are individuals, private enterprises, interest groups, political parties or the government), but also of other organized groups of various kinds in the society under consideration. However, few political systems are so closed that influences from outside are completely excluded.

With few or no exceptions, outside influences have been extremely strong in the African countries, due to the fact that most of them were included (as dependencies) in the extended political systems of either Great Britain or France during the period when the mass media were introduced. During the colonial era, the prevailing attitudes of the colonial powers were exported in many ways: through education and means of communication at the elite level in general; through the building of institutions and the training of mass-media personnel, to a large extent provided by institutions of the colonial power at home or in the colony by expatriate nationals of the colonial power; in several instances also by transplanting mass-media institutions or subsidiaries to the colony. Many of these contacts were maintained after independence at various levels, though their monopolies have been broken and their importance has probably decreased.

What was the main content of this western cultural export? Even though significant differences may be discerned between the British and the French traditions, as regards press ideology and institutions, a major component of the ideology was the idea of the press as the Fourth Estate, independent of the government. The most sacred function of the press (and the mass media in general) was to act as a watchdog over the government's activities.14

However, a distinction should be made between the ideology and the actual practice of the mass media in the two colonial powers, as well as in their colonies. The actual independence of the government of newspapers owned by the ruling party or by owners who were closely connected with the ruling party or were even MPs of the ruling party and
members of the government and the independence of newspapers with editors with similar loyalties or positions may be questioned and probably varied considerably. Some obviously maintained a large degree of independence against heavy odds. The real independence of government influence of such government institutions as the radio, television and news agencies may also be questioned, as it in fact has been. As regards the practice of the ideology in the colonies, the colonial administrators did not exactly demonstrate that they enjoyed having a critical nationalist press, where this existed. The powers at their disposal were used to punish the sectors of the press that practised a watchdog role in relation to the colonial government.

However, the predominant press ideology in the colonial powers had, as previously stated, a strong impact on elite attitudes in most African countries, especially in the professional mass-media milieus of these countries, during the years preceding independence. The fact that the nationalists in these countries were at that time able to make use of this ideology instrumentally in their fight for national independence contributed to this. The ideology met high priority needs, as defined by the counter-elites of these countries at that stage.

The actual impact of this ideology of the colonial powers varied with the extent to which mass media were developed. In this respect there were great variations between different countries. In French-speaking Africa south of the Sahara, a national press (not owned by French capital) was virtually non-existent before independence; in several British colonies, especially Nigeria, it flourished and its ownership differed. As regards radio (and to some extent also TV, which is weakly developed in most African countries) and news agencies, government institutions were the general pattern in French-speaking Africa, and there was a high degree of centralization (including, in some countries, radio sets for community listening that could only receive the national programme). Government institutions were also the rule in English-speaking Africa, but here also combined government and private-enterprise (foreign) institutions were established, and the centralization was generally speaking less rigid.
In most African countries, these institutions were established after independence. However, the two ex-colonial powers (including their private enterprises) played an important role in the establishment of these institutions, in training etc. Especially training programmes at British and French institutions for African mass-media personnel provided an important basis for influencing the professional norms and values of African mass-media milieus, including the internalizing of the Fourth Estate ideology prevailing in these European institutions: that the mass media should be independent of the government. The discrepancy between such an ideology and the hard facts of life was most obvious in French-speaking Africa, where press freedom was limited.15

However, domestic needs, as perceived by the ruling nationalist elites, changed radically after independence: Now, the idea of the mass media being free from government control and direction had the greatest attraction for the post-independence opposition elites, where a multi-party structure still existed. However, attitudes seldom change completely overnight, nor do institutions. During the 1960s conflicting values in this regard have been generated, especially in English-speaking Africa, and these will probably still prevail during the 1970s.

The ideological heritage of the professional milieu and of the ruling elite, however, is not alone in influencing the actual degree of freedom from government control and direction of the mass media. Differences in the institutional set-up may be considered as expressions of such heritages or prevailing attitudes. Such institutional differences may also constitute the basis of a variety of actual independence. Even so, it should be emphasized that institutional set-ups are probably of only secondary importance: what matters, really, is the attitudes of the government, since the ultimate control remains with the government. This is obvious with regard to government-owned mass media. It will to a large extent also be the case, with some qualifications for variations in accordance with differing economic and political conditions in the different African political systems, with regard to what remains of the privately owned mass media. Ruling party newspapers—in both
one-party and multi-party systems—constitute a category of their own in this regard.

The political ideology of the government may also influence the degree of independence of the mass-media. If the regime claims a monopoly of opinion the political ideology of the regime may circumscribe the field in which the mass media may be free to operate. However, such regimes will not be content with passive and non-commital mass media, but will consider them as instruments to be actively used to perpetuate their ideology and the regime and will expect such involvement from the media.

Such ideologies may have widely different contents, but their effects on the independence of the mass media may be of a similar kind, varying in rigidity, however, with the degree of rigidity and intolerance of the ideology as interpreted and practised. Ideologies that claim a monopoly of opinion cover a broad spectrum, and proponents of such ideologies include regimes with completely different aims, from fascist governments, like those of Mussolini, Hitler and Franco, to socialist governments that only allow mass-media criticisms that are based on socialist values. The Christian commandment "You shall have no other Gods, besides me" claims the same monopoly of opinion in another sector.

The situation that confronts the mass media of political systems with governments that demand a monopoly of opinion, may, however, vary with different mass-media institutions. The political ideology and the achievements of such regimes may be most strongly and favourably reflected and the dissident or critical reports and comments may be most consistently excluded when the mass media are owned by the government (or by the ruling party or junta). In such institutions the regime will be able to formulate its expectations in guidelines or instructions, and to see to it that these guide-lines are faithfully followed by the mass media. The regime will control the policy and the appointments. Privately owned mass media (where the regime allows them to exist) may be slightly differently situated vis-à-vis the government. The principal instrument with which such regimes will subdue the privately owned newspapers, or mass media in general is formulated
expectations combined with censorship. However, censorship is not a safe method of securing compliance, and is even less suitable for creating loyalties or enthusiastic support in the mass media. Independent-minded editors and journalists have developed many techniques for getting the desired messages across to their readers, irrespective of censorship. A condition for such practices, however, is the feeling that they have tacit or explicit support from their board or the proprietors. Without such support, any independence may disappear: if the board or the owners of such newspapers give in to pressure from the regime and choose to comply with its expectations, in order to save their investments or their earnings, this may result in the mass media being even more servile than those owned by the government. Editors and journalists who are independent-minded or do not share the ideology of the regime may then choose between complying with the new order or looking out for something else to do.

However, the distinction between publicly and privately owned mass media should not be over-emphasized. Even "monopoly of opinion" regimes, of the kind that allow privately owned newspapers to be published, may in time secure faithful co-operation and support from mass media over which they have no ownership control. The regime will have at its disposal many methods of making certain that the mass media concerned will be manned by editors and journalists who are faithful with regard to the ideology and co-operative vis-à-vis the government and its policy, irrespective of the ownership. However, the mass-media traditions and values of the culture concerned, the extent to which there exists consensus with regard to the political ideology of the regime in the society, and the extent to which the regime is established or accepted in the political system concerned, may well account for variations in the actual practices and abilities in this regard of the various regimes of the types discussed.

Traces of such ideologically based claims to a monopoly of opinion are found also in African governments, including such socialist governments as those of Tanzania, Guinea, the United Arab Republic and the Ghana of Kwame Nkrumah. However, the actual limits set by these different regimes may vary
widely, as does the strictness with which formalized or tacit circumscriptions are applied and the actual control and direction by the governments concerned.

The motives may be mixed. They are principally justified on utilitarian grounds: there is a need to mobilize all the forces of the society to realize national, economic, social and political aims. Prominent among such aims are efforts to secure the national independence, social and national integration, and economic development. The mass media should (or are expected to) participate in a concerted effort to fulfil such aims. Dissident mass media may have the opposite effects and prevent the attainment of these goals and are therefore a luxury that poor developing countries cannot afford, according to the prevalent ideology. Of course, socialist or progressive regimes have no monopoly of this justification for circumscribing the activities and relative independence of the mass media, as is demonstrated by several non-socialist African regimes. Such justifications may be put forward by any regime that wants to silence inconvenient criticisms in their mass media—even criticisms from editors (media) aiming at the same general goals as the repressive government. Obviously, there is an important difference between the desirability of certain established aims and the desirability, usefulness and effectiveness of employing stimulating or repressive means to attain such aims.

Another motive for the rigid direction and control of the mass media by some African governments—whether they are impatiently pursuing progressive and even revolutionary goals or not—may be that they feel that their positions are insecure or vulnerable, threatened by domestic groups or outside forces, real or imaginary. There are probably exceptions to this; the Tanzanian Government has probably no such motive for its mobilization of the mass media to participate in the efforts to attain the political aims it has set out to realize. However, the degree of independence allowed to the domestic mass media may be correlated with the degree of security, as perceived by the government, with some qualifications. Such a correlation may exist irrespective of the type of political system or the prevalent political ideology of the government—even
though the ideology may influence the framework of the actual independence. The degree of security (as perceived) may affect the degree of mass-media control and direction exerted by the government in both open and closed societies, in both multi-party systems and one-party states, in countries with a military regime or in autocracies of a pre-political-party type.

The relative independence of the mass media, as regards government direction and control, may also be correlated with other factors. Such correlations may exist in all kinds of political systems, irrespective of the type of government. However, the characteristics of the political system and the ideology of the government, its political ideology as well as its ideology with regard to the role and functions of the mass media, may also here be decisive in establishing the framework within which variations in the degree of independence may be allowed. Such factors include the attributes of the society. As already indicated, the degree of mass-media independence may be correlated with the degree of stability of the political situation. This stability may be affected by the actual degree of political, social and cultural integration within the political system. However, the degree of mass-media independence may also be correlated with the degree of pluralism at the various levels (political, economic, social, cultural, religious and even geographical) within the political system concerned, especially when such pluralism is reflected in the composition of the government. In most political systems, the independence of a mass medium will to some extent be dependent upon its professional quality, as well as the political, social and professional status of the editor and his relations with the government or with political leaders.

Eddie Agyemang illustrates several of these relations in describing the different phases of press independence in Ghana. The changes involving a gradual strengthening of the government's control and direction of the mass media up to 1966 were correlated with changes in the government's ideology with regard to the feasibility of the existence of an opposition and the role and the functions of mass media within the society, and were thus also correlated with the changes in the type of political system. His picture of the mass-media situa-

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tion in Ghana after 1966 illustrates another of the above propositions: a military government with a monopoly of enforcement powers could allow a great degree of independence to the mass media. However, past experience has an impact on current performance: During the 1957–66 era some sectors of the professional milieu in Ghana, under the influence of the British mass-media ideology, only reluctantly complied with the new expectations which the Government had in relation to the mass media. After 1966 the experiences of the mass-media milieu during the previous era—and new experiences during the National Liberation Council regime—subdued any bold exercise of the extended freedom. The return to a civilian government, which was more vulnerable than its military predecessor, made the professionals tread lightly and cautiously. However, Eddie Agyemang does not mention the dramatic and instant change of mass-media policy that took place overnight after the coup d'état. The day after the coup, the Ghanaian mass media had switched their loyalties to the new rulers, with only small changes of the staff, mainly at the top level.

Colin Legum maintains that some government-owned newspapers in Africa may have extensive independence—or actually have it—as a result of the heterogeneity of most African governments and ruling parties; internal divisions within ruling elites allow for a variety of opinion on the same paper or between one official paper and another. Some governments have devised different institutional systems to allow for some degree of mass-media independence. One model is the more or less independent public corporation established by the Nigerian Federal Government, for example. The institutionalized government control is here indirect—through the government-appointed board of directors. A similar example is the trust system established after the public take-over of the *Graphic* by the Ghanaian Government in 1963, which had *The Observer* set-up as a model. Colin Legum gives the examples of the United Arab Republic—where the editor is appointed by the ruling party and is at liberty to run the paper in any way he likes, subject to the possibility of dismissal if his way is found unacceptable—and the Sudan.
—where two press corporations have been established with the nuances of political opinion (within the limited framework of the government's ideology) built into the institutional structure at both the editorial and the administrative levels and with a leading journalist at the top.23

However, as is amply demonstrated by the actual performance of the Graphic after the take-over by the government, what really matters is the mass-media ideology of the government, not so much the institutional set-up, however nicely constructed.24 This may also be the message in the contribution by Mamman Daura,25 who maintains that his paper, the New Nigerian (owned and run by the six governments of Northern Nigeria), had never been subject to persistent government pressure or interference and was actually more "independent" and had been able to withstand government pressure more successfully than The Daily Times, a privately owned newspaper which has by far the largest circulation in Nigeria.

The professional quality of the editors may vary, as may their degree of independent-mindedness, and their real independence may vary accordingly.26 The situation that may confront the independent-minded editor is amply illustrated by Eddie Agyemang27 when he introduces the two conflicting legitimacies: The editor, with the (assumed) professional standard that the press should be independent and a watchdog of the public interest in relation to the government's policy and its actual administration. The government (if this role of the press is not accepted, as is the case in most African states) may argue, on the other hand, that the government (if elected) has received a mandate to rule from the majority, whereas critical journalists represent nobody except their newspapers.

Mamman Daura poses this as a dilemma of identity for a government newspaper's editor: should the loyalty of the newspaper (the editor) be to the government, who own and subsidize the newspaper (implying that the government is to define what are the public interest and priorities, expressed in government programmes and statements), or should the editor base the newspaper's policy on his own perceptions of what public interest and priorities are? Should the govern-
ment's definitions or the editor's perceptions prevail, if they conflict? His own attitude to this dilemma is interesting: A conflict was predictable between the editor and the government, if the editor identified his newspaper with the needs and interests of the common people, because most African elites, from whom the governments were recruited, are mainly concerned with their own needs, problems and interests and define the public interest accordingly. However, the New Nigerian identified itself with the interest of the talakawa—the common man. Belonging, as an English-language newspaper does by definition, to the elite, and addressing itself to the elites only, the New Nigerian tries to alert the elites to their duties and responsibilities towards the talakawa—according to its editor.28

The role and functions of the mass media—differences in concepts and priorities

We have previously several times related the degree of mass-media independence to the concepts and attitudes prevalent in the political culture with regard to the role and functions of these media. Such differences may easily be over-emphasized, as they often are. A distinction should be made between the prevalent ideology and the actual performance. It is possible to identify political systems with a predominant ideology that expects active support from the mass media, in moulding public opinion in favour of the government's policy and aspirations, where the actual performance of the mass media in fulfilling such expectations is at a low level. On the other hand, it is possible to identify mass media in political systems with no such expressed expectations in relation to the mass media, where these media make major efforts to fulfil just such a function, and even have this as an explicit aim.

However, expressed expectations as to the role and functions of mass media do vary with different political ideologies. The prevalent ideology of the western democracies, as previously indicated, is that the mass media should carry unbiased information and should be free to comment on any problems.
The mass media should be open to every point of view. They should act as independent watchdogs on the government and criticize government policy, if they deem it necessary.

Colin Legum confronts the different views of Hocking, as the representative of the view of the western democracies, and Kuzmichev, as the representative of the Soviet view, as to the role and functions of the press. According to the Soviet view, the principal task of the mass media is to educate the mass of the workers and to organize them for clearly defined tasks, as laid down by the Communist Party. In the western democracies, the mass media should ideally be open to all for the purpose of achieving those goals which its own instinct of workmanship and the requirements of the community combine to establish. It is not easy to identify all the implications of the last formula. One possible implication is that it is up to the mass media themselves to define what are the requirements of the society, but the exclusiveness of the mass media in this regard is, on the other hand, contradicted by other statements in the context. Kuzmichev is more exact: the press should be an agent of the government (the party), reflecting its values and aims.

In discussing these aspects, it is imperative to distinguish between the ideology as to the role and functions of the mass media, and the actual effects of such mass-media ideologies. Much confused thinking may be avoided by this obvious distinction. The implications are self-evident. Thus, for instance, the effects of the ideology in which the mass media are an arm of the government may vary with the actual policy of the particular government, along a broad spectrum—from supporting a feudal, commercial, educational or ideological/religious elite to fighting for egalitarian values at the various levels. The effects of Hocking’s liberal mass-media ideology may also vary almost along the same spectrum, with the important difference that such variations may appear at the same time within the same medium (ideally) or in different media within the same political system. In practice, however, the bulk of the mass media in existing systems with a liberal mass-media ideology will reflect the predominant interest groups of such societies, especially the economically strongest groups and the
prevalent views. These may vary from one political system to another.

The distinctions made isolate the ideology, as regards the role and functions of the mass media, from the systems which have adopted these ideologies and the prevalent political ideology, values and policies of such systems. The focus is on the actual functions of the mass media, irrespective of the predominant mass-media ideology. Such a distinction will reveal a fact which is probably not very familiar: the functions and role of the mass media—and even the priorities—may be the same in different political systems which have conflicting mass-media ideologies, and the functions may be different from one political system to another, although they have the same mass-media ideology, whether it is that represented by Hocking or that represented by Kuzmichev.

The African scene displays mass-media milieus and governments with mass-media ideologies all along the spectrum from Hocking's to Kuzmichev's, few of them at the two extremes, however, as regards the ideology, and even fewer, as regards the actual practice. There are, however, great differences as regards the overt concern with mass-media ideology. Most governments practise an ideology closer to that of Kuzmichev than that of Hocking, but few make an ideological matter out of it. The only exceptions to this are actually a few governments with a militant and socialist type of political ideology.

The Nkrumah government in Ghana was the most explicit and consistent African advocate of the ideology which considers the mass media as an extended and important arm of the government and its policy. A closer look at the ideology, as adapted to African needs (as conceived by the Nkrumah government), may therefore be useful for our purpose. The actual practice of this ideology by the Nkrumah government is an equally important but different matter and will not be discussed in this context.

An excellent text for studying this ideology is the speech of President Kwame Nkrumah in opening the Pan-African Journalists Conference in Accra in November 1963. In this speech, his mass-media ideology, his expectations as to the
role and functions of the African mass media, and the values and interests for which he thought the mass media should fight were most explicitly presented.

... our Revolutionary African Press must present and carry forward our Revolutionary purpose. This is to establish a progressive political and economic system upon our continent that will free men from want and every form of social injustice and enable them to work out their social and cultural destinies in peace and at ease.21

To the true African journalist, his newspaper is a collective instrument of mobilization and a collective educator—a weapon, first and foremost, to overthrow colonialism and imperialism, and to assist total African independence and unity.22

These two quotations include the principal aims of the mass media, as repeated several times in Nkrumah's speech: to fight for African nationalism, freedom and independence, political unity and the cultural and material development of the African continent, to support the trade unions, to work for equality and to inspire and educate the masses to fight imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism.23

Professional ethics were explicitly integrated in his ideology: the information should be true, accurate, reliable and honest.24 Within the framework of the broad political goals listed and with due regard to the professional ethics, the journalists (and the mass media) had extensive freedom of expression— independent and critical journalism was actually explicitly expected:

The African journalist must be ... vigilant against our own faults and defections; and against our dilatoriness and unwillingness to make a reality of African unity. His is the duty to guard our African Revolution and see that it moves forward in the right direction.25

In the socialist one-party state, the mass media were explicitly given the same role as a watchdog of the government as the classical role attributed to the press in western democracies, again within the value system defined by the government. The terminology, however, indicates a different heritage.
Because we want strong and yet democratic governments in our African Revolution, we must guard against the dangers inherent in governments whose only opposition to tyranny and abuse lies in the folds of the ruling party itself. A ceaseless flow of self-criticism, an unending vigilance against tyranny and nepotism and other forms of bribery and corruption, unswerving loyalty to principles approved by the masses of the people, these are the main safeguards for the people under one-party rule.

Who is best able to exercise that vigilance, to furnish the material for self-criticism, to sound warnings against any departure from principles, if not the press of Revolutionary Africa?36

Nkrumah was aiming at an African one-party system, in which the values, priorities and political aims of the government were internalized in the professional mass-media milieu. He maintained that in such a system the mass-media people enjoy full and true freedom.37 From the point of view of fundamental principle, the situation is not basically different for mass-media people working within such a system (the model, not the actual system) than it is for journalists working, for instance, on a newspaper in western Europe, owned and run by a political party or even only aligned to it—provided the values and aspirations of the owner are internalized in the staff. The actual policy, of course, may vary.

The strictness of the demand on the mass media to line up behind the government’s values and aspirations may vary from one African political system to another—even among the militant socialist systems. This may be illustrated by comparing the quotations from Nkrumah’s speech with the ideology put forward by President Julius K. Nyerere in commenting on the Government take-over of The Standard, formerly owned by private foreign interests: While emphasizing that the newspaper should serve the interests of the people of Tanzania—as defined by the Government—“support the socialist ideology as defined in the Arusha Declaration, Parts 1 and 2”, and give general support to the policies of the Tanzanian Government, he said that the newspaper

... will be free to join the debate for and against any particular proposals put forward for the consideration of the people, whether by Government, by Tanu, or by other bodies.
Further, it will be free to initiate discussions on any subject relevant to the development of a socialist and democratic society in Tanzania. It will be guided by the principle that free debate is an essential element of true socialism, and it will strive to encourage and maintain a high standard of socialist discussion. The new "Standard" will be free to criticise any particular acts of individual Tanu or Government leaders, and to publicise any failures in the community, by whomever they are committed. It will be free to criticise the implementation of agreed policies ...

Obviously, this must go beyond the rules as laid down by democratic centralism.

There may also be variations as regards the discrepancy between ideology and practice in the various political systems. The policy and the aspirations may vary widely among African governments that explicitly or tacitly have the same expectations with regard to the domestic mass media as a Nkrumah or a Nyerere. However, there may also be similarities in aims and aspirations between governments that do not share the same mass-media ideology (explicitly or tacitly). Thus, several of the political aims put forward by Kwame Nkrumah are not exclusive to militant socialist African governments: they may be part also of the policy and aims of less ideological governments, even though the emphasis and the language may differ.

A similar assessment of the present needs of African societies results in Mamman Daura arriving at a similar mass-media ideology—but with a difference: African societies are not yet articulated, "... there are so many forces that have to be balanced. The press, therefore, should be an agent in mobilizing the society, in educating the society, in consolidating independence or, in one or two cases, revolution." His framework is not the one-party state, nor necessarily a socialist ideology. He sees no contradictions between this role of the press and the existence of a free press: "Because of the fundamentally pluralistic nature of so many African societies, there will not be a suppression of the freedom of the press, because these divisions are so deep and so real that you are bound to get different viewpoints side by side."

Ulf Himmelstrand holds a different view on the last point:
African societies are to a large extent administered societies, relying heavily on planning and administration for the purpose of development. Political discussion is not so important in such societies as it is in Europe. His view of the primary function of mass media in administered societies comes close to that recommended by Nkrumah—with a difference: Such societies need mass media playing the part of the ombudsman. The emphasis in administered societies tends to be on general rules of an universalistic nature or on general political themes, and as a consequence there will necessarily be neglect of more particular substantive issues—the small problems of the common man are bound to be forgotten. The task of the press should therefore be to champion the little man and his neglected issues and problems. Such a role is one of the priority tasks of the mass media also according to western norms, even though the actual practice may vary.

A slightly different emphasis is given by George Githii, who stresses the importance of the watchdog function. In this regard the needs of Africa are not significantly different from those of western Europe or other societies, nor are the values: “Corruption is just corruption, and nothing else. And injustice is injustice whether you are in Africa or Europe. Social evil is social evil. An honest editor cannot see corruption, injustice or social evils and then say, ‘Well, because I am in Africa I shall not print it, but concentrate on something else’. There would be no excuse for that line of action.”

Several important functions of the mass media have been excluded from my discussion. I have focused on functions that are prominent in a political context. Thus, for instance, the entertainment function, important as it may be, has been left out. I have not discussed the extent to which the allocation of priority to this function may be correlated with the type of medium: whether commercial mass media are more apt than others to give priority to the entertainment function rather than to the political functions of educating and mobilizing their readers for development.

An important role attributed to the mass media is to act as a linkage between the government and the governed. Within the framework of a political system (excluding relations
with the outside), this presupposes a two-way communication: on the one hand, to report (and, as an "independent" contribution, to explain and comment upon) government activities, aspirations, priorities and strategies; on the other, the feedback function of reporting the reactions to the government policy from the various social structures of the society.

A major difference between the attitudes and expectations of various governments in relation to the role of the mass media may well be found in their different emphases in this regard. Most governments may have an inclination to put most emphasis on the communication flow from the government, whereas the appreciation of the feedback function may vary according to whether the content is that of approval or consent, and whether it is in line with the government's priorities or not. Such allocation of priority by the government may influence the actual role of government-owned mass media as well as ruling-party newspapers. Commercial mass media and opposition-party newspapers (if any) may, on the other hand, have an inclination to give priority to the feedback, if this is critical of the government or generally to "watchdog" reports and news that are unfavourable for the government, though for different reasons—commercial ("bad news" and criticism are generally assumed to sell better than "good news" and praise) and political reasons respectively. However, even though the inclinations of most governments may be similar, the ideologies and even the practices differ.

Thus, in calm political situations, most western European governments (Greece, Portugal, and Spain are prominent examples of the contrary) would accept and expect—though not appreciate—occasional criticism and "bad news", even from the government-owned mass media and ruling-party newspapers. This may also be the case in some African countries; it is traditionally so in Nigeria and is so in Tanzania and was even a part of the ideology of the Ghana of Nkrumah (though some active journalists had a different experience of the reality).

In other political systems the emphasis is on the communication flow from the government, and the feedback or "bad news" for the government or its policy is not tolerated in
practice—even though the ideology of some of these governments may welcome "constructive" criticism within the framework of the government's political aspirations or ideology. These systems include not only the eastern European governments, but also among others several African states—with and without some brand of socialist ideology.

The last distinction is important in discussing attitudes to the freedoms and functions of the mass media. Such attitudes may vary with varying power positions, though not necessarily. The varying attitudes of different Communist parties in this regard may illustrate the point. I have already quoted from Kuzmichev to illustrate the view of the Soviet Communist Party, as regards the functions of the mass media: this view does not prescribe a critical role for the mass media—on the contrary. A Communist Party that is not in power is confronted with a different situation. The prevalent mass-media ideology of the political environments may cause variations from one Communist Party to another, as may differences in its relationship to the government and the ruling party. However, the example of the Algerian Communist Party (ACP) may serve as an illustration. After independence, when the FLN government banned the ACP and its newspaper *El-Hourriya* (after having decided to create a single-party state—the ACP had declared its willingness to join forces with the FLN in accordance with the Cuban model, but the FLN had rejected it), another ACP newspaper, *Alger Républicain*, which was allowed to continue, stated that "We will continue to work in the direction we have chosen: to support all positive measures taken by the government while maintaining our freedom to criticize constructively everything that seems to us to go against the real interests of our people." The major function of the newspapers was the same in the two different political systems: to be the spokesman of the policy defined by the Party. Its relationship to the government differed and hence its attitude to the general principles of press freedoms and functions: in the political situation in which the ACP newspaper found itself, the right to criticize the government, on which it insisted, was important for it in the performance of its primary political function.
This illustrates an important distinction. Whereas critical journalism and independence of the government may be conceived as a general (and normative) principle in some political cultures, including, for instance those of Nigeria, Tanzania, and most countries of western Europe, other political cultures, including most Communist societies and structures, may consider such a principle instrumentally.

Foreign influence on mass communication in Africa

The framework within which non-African engagements in mass communication in Africa are considered, first of all, is that of the political, the cultural, and indirectly also the economic influences they provide. Such channels for influences have been established at several levels. I have already referred to the engagements in colonial Africa by privately owned companies of the colonial powers, mainly British and French: newspaper establishments, participation in the development of radio and TV services, training programmes for journalists, etc. After independence, the United States and the Soviet Union were prominent among the newcomers. Even though the means may vary, the intention of exerting influence, especially at the political level, is probably as important for the numerous United States Information Services established around Africa as it is for Tass when it participates in the establishment of African national news agencies and offers its services at low cost or for the Soviet Union when it establishes high-power radio stations in Africa for its own use. The Christian radio stations established in Africa to disseminate the Gospel are similar manifestations on the cultural level.

However, it is necessary to distinguish between the different forms of such external influences and between the various contents such influences may have. It is also necessary to differentiate with regard to the actual effects of the various channels of influence.

The primary concern of African governments in this regard has been the newspapers established and run by foreign, pri-
vately owned companies. In English-speaking West Africa the London-based Overseas Newspapers Ltd., a subsidiary of the International Publishing Corporation Ltd. (IPC), which also controls the London *Daily Mirror*, is the example of a successful foreign-owned newspaper chain. The main newspapers were the *Daily Times* and *Sunday Times* in Lagos, the *Daily Graphic* and *Sunday Mirror* in Accra, and the *Daily Mail* in Freetown—all commercial newspapers that had by far the highest circulations and the largest incomes from advertising in Nigeria, Ghana and Sierra Leone respectively. In French-speaking Africa, the Breteuil chain, operating the only dailies in Dakar and Abidjan, was the most prominent example. A Catholic weekly, *Afrique Nouvelle*, was also of importance. It was published in Dakar, but had a circulation also in the other capitals of French-speaking West and Equatorial Africa. In East Africa the *East African Standard* is just one example of newspapers owned by expatriates.

From the very beginning, militant African nationalists considered these newspapers with the utmost suspicion. There were several reasons for this. To varying degrees, they supported the colonial administration and the interests of the foreign community of the country during their initial period, especially in eastern Africa. Eddie Agyemang notes a fact that obviously contributed to arouse suspicions of these papers on the part of the nationalists: the modern newspapers appeared (in English-speaking West Africa) when the “free Africa” agitation started gaining momentum.

Another factor might have created a similar dislike. Everywhere these newspapers were the successful competitors of a still weak nationalist press. The nationalist press competed against heavy odds: the foreign-owned newspapers were ahead in the competition for scarce advertisements, because of their larger circulations and because they had centralized advertisement collection in the colonial metropolis. The chain system made a rational exchange of printing machines and technical facilities among the members possible, and provided African journalists with opportunities for training on the same level as the journalists on the major paper of the chain as well. Training schemes and a sound economy made it possible to
attract and keep the best people at the journalistic, technical and administrative levels, and thus to establish the basis for further expansion. For a nationalist press with a weak economy, outdated technical facilities, and a poorly developed distribution system, the foreign-owned newspapers were strong competitors.

Even though this competition actually led to improvements of the nationalist press, privately owned African newspapers were gradually squeezed out of the market. In the long run the African-owned newspapers that survived the competition were either ruling-party or government newspapers. After independence, most of the foreign-owned newspapers were nationalized—among the exceptions were the Daily Times and Sunday Times in Lagos and The Nation group in Nairobi. However, the governments were in no hurry with this nationalization; President Nyerere waited until 1970 before he nationalized The Standard.

To what extent did these foreign-owned newspapers actually function as agents of colonialism (before independence) and neo-colonialism? In other words, to what extent did these newspapers actually constitute channels for transmitting information and values aimed at the maintenance or the development of neo-imperialist relationships at the political, the economic or the cultural levels between the African country and the (former) colonial power or new powers seeking political or ideological proselytes in the third world? Extreme neo-imperialist relations at the cultural level mean briefly that the dominant power (for instance, the former colonial power) provides the teaching, the training and the creative work (and even the language), while the dependent country (the African ex-colony) is the more or less passive recipient. At the economic level such a relationship means that the dominant power provides the services, the means of production and the processing and the dependent country provides the raw materials and the market. At the political level the dominant power provides the ideology, the standards, the decisions and the priorities, whereas the dependent country accepts, imitates or obeys these ideologies, standards and policies. Within the mass-communications sector the dominant power could in the ex-
treme case provide the means of communication (including the mass media) and the news production, and the dependent country the events (for export), the buying market and the consumption (reading). In a neo-imperialist relationship, mass communications may also, as I have already pointed out, have the additional function of fortifying or developing such relations at the other levels mentioned.

To complicate the model somewhat further, elite groups in the dependent country may serve as bridgeheads for elite groups in the dominant power in establishing and maintaining neo-imperialist relationships at the various levels. Such relationships are characterized, first of all, by the dominant power being the active party to which the initiative belongs, while the dependent country plays a passive role, responds and imitates. The crucial factor deciding whether a relationship is neo-imperialistic or not, and possibly the degree of neo-imperialism, will be the degrees of passivity or activity of the two parties, to what extent the output is related to the needs of the African country, as defined by this country itself, and whether such decisions are taken by the non-African or the African party.

As regards the newspapers owned by foreign private companies, there is obviously a need to make a distinction at several levels. One distinction concerns their intended as distinct from their actual role and functions. As regards the intentions (of the proprietors), these probably vary with the varying motives behind the engagements and with the varying involvement of the company in other sectors of the African country concerned.

For a newspaper owned by a foreign company that has no other economic interests in the (African) country, the primary concern of the proprietors will probably be to make the newspaper a profitable enterprise (additional motives may, of course, be prominent if the principal shareholders themselves have other interests involved in the African country or belong to a milieu that has such interests). The engagements in West Africa of the Overseas Newspapers Ltd., are probably examples of this type of enterprise, whose principal purpose is profit-making. The prospects, as conceived at the time when
the engagements started, looked bright from such a perspective. The African colonies were heading towards independence, with the prospect of a rapidly expanding market for newspaper consumption stimulated by extensions of educational programmes, and the prospect of expanding incomes from advertising, growing with expanding economic activities. The advantages of being the largest enterprise, established at an early stage of this process and without too strong domestic competition, appeared probably sufficiently attractive from a commercial point of view to motivate the engagements—with or without the additional motive of developing the mass media in the three countries concerned. As it turned out, the expectations were probably too optimistic—even though the IPC subsidiaries became successful business enterprises.

The commercial motivation may also be prominent for the owners of newspapers belonging to the expatriate milieu of the African country in which they were published. In fact, such papers were all (with the exception, perhaps, of *Afrique Nouvelle*) commercial undertakings in the first place. However, in such cases (for example, the *East African Standard* and even the Breteuil chain, though the company was based in Paris) the additional motive of fighting for the (established) economic interests of the British and the French settler communities, respectively, may be considered to be as important.

The intentions of the owners regarding the use of the newspaper to exert political, economic or cultural influence of the kind discussed may therefore vary extensively, from being subordinate commercial aims to ranking as a first priority task. Variations as regards the ideology in the newspaper milieu of the dominant country may also influence such intentions. Thus, it is not very probable that private British companies, like the IPC or the Thomson Organisation, would consider it to be a priority task to act as an arm of any British government, either at home or in Africa, but other groups might.

However, the intentions of the proprietors are not alone in deciding the actual role such newspapers play in this regard and are not necessarily the most important factor. Differences in the social environments of the newspapers may be just as decisive. On the one hand, there are variations as re-
gards the influence of the local expatriate milieu (subscribers and advertisers) on the actual role of the mass medium concerned, and on the other, there are equally important variations in the pressure from the African nationalist milieu in this regard. Most expatriate-owned newspapers in Africa tended to be much more feeble in their attitudes to the government after independence than newspapers owned by Africans or even government newspapers.51

Other structural factors may also affect the actual role of the foreign-owned newspapers. I have already touched upon most of these factors, though in a different context. The output (the transmission of events and values) of the different newspapers may vary with the cultural background and the attitudes of the journalists, editors and managers. The extent to which such newspapers are (or were) written, edited and managed by Africans, with their cultural backgrounds, social links and values based in the African country where the newspaper is (or was) published, or by Europeans, bringing with them the cultural heritage and political values of their own countries (such perceptions and values may, of course, vary extensively) is one important distinction that may affect the actual output, and hence the role of the single newspaper.

Along this dimension, significant regional differences existed in Africa. In English-speaking West Africa, foreign-owned newspapers were at an early stage progressively manned by Africans at all levels—as is illustrated by the practice of the Overseas Newspapers Ltd. chain and by the papers in Lagos in which the Thomson Organisation Ltd. had interests during the early 1960s, the Daily Express and the Sunday Express. In French-speaking West and Equatorial Africa, however, the few dailies that existed were largely owned by French companies, and written, edited and run by people of French origin up to the 1960s.52 Also the foreign-owned newspapers in East and Central Africa were to a large extent written and edited by expatriates up to the mid-1960s.53

Even though such differences in the degree of Africanization may be important in explaining variations between foreign-owned newspapers, as regards their actual role in this context, there may also be variations from one newspaper to

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another in this regard, even on the same level of Africanization. The African staff was subject to several different influences. As previously noted, the African journalists were part of their social environments and might reflect the prevalent values of these societies in various ways: in the selection of national or international news, in the editorial attitude to policy questions, etc. The social environments may, of course, be more or less extensive, even restricted to an urban social class. Many African journalists on foreign-owned newspapers also identified themselves with the predominant nationalism in their environments—this was especially true of the journalists on the newspapers in English-speaking West Africa. Differences in the policy and the expectations of the governments after independence may account for variations of this kind.

However, at the same time they were also part of a structure which subjected them to influences from outside: from the prevalent values, perceptions and attitudes of the professional milieu of the parent paper. Such influences occurred whether the training on the job took place under the guidance of experienced expatriate staff on the African newspaper or occasionally at the premises of the parent newspaper abroad. Another structural factor had a similar potentiality: the exchange of news services, etc. Such exchanges may make the subsidiary reflect the prevalent attitudes of the dominant power, in so far as these attitudes were reflected by the major paper of the chain. These effects may not even be intended by the foreign investor in the African newspaper, especially as regards subsidiaries with profit-making as the primary objective. In such a perspective the concern of militant African nationalists and socialists may be explained.54 The absence of any intention to seek influence at the political level may also explain the contempt and ridicule with which such concern is treated by the expatriate proprietor.56

Outside the newspaper sector, few mass-communication enterprises in Africa have been owned by foreign companies. There have been some joint enterprises involving co-operation between foreign companies and governments in establishing broadcasting services—as was the case with the establishment
of the Nigerian regional broadcasting services. After independence, however, new structures were established, which may have an even stronger impact of the kind I am discussing. I am identifying structures with neo-imperialist potentialities, without necessarily implying that such potentialities are actually exploited.

Channels of influence of this kind include news agencies, journalist training, courses and scholarships, and the exchange of programmes (radio and television). The traditional channels provided by Embassies and High Commissions came to Africa with independence, and the information departments of the missions of the former colonial powers and the two super-powers were well developed at an early date. The actual impacts of such activities may vary. However, in countries with poorly developed mass media, where a large proportion of the journalists are badly paid and have a low social status, educational standard and level of professional integrity, and where these drawbacks are not balanced by a dedication to professional ethics or a cause provided by a political faith, these agencies do not find it too difficult to get the messages they wish across through the existing mass-communication channels.

The degree to which joint enterprises within the mass-media sector in which a foreign partner is involved—the international news agencies, journalist training, courses and scholarships, exchanges of programmes or subscriptions to programme services, etc.—actually constitute channels of influence of the kind here discussed may vary widely, and may be dependent upon the kind of relationships established. This involves considerations of quantity as well as of quality. Thus, the actual neo-imperialist impact of an international news agency, for instance, may vary with the content of its services as well as with the extent to which its services are actually used. In many African countries such services are hardly used at all by the newspapers: few newspapers actually subscribe directly to any of the services of any international news agency, because of the high costs involved. During the independence period, just before and after 1960, several national news agencies were established. The services of the international news
agencies are to a large extent channelled through these national agencies. Even so, their impacts may vary extensively. In general, very little of the material provided is used by the newspapers; more is used by the broadcasting services. The impact of the different international news agencies may vary with the degree of monopoly they have actually managed to establish. Again, significant regional differences exist in this regard.

In French-speaking West and Equatorial Africa, the Agence France-Presse (AFP) had established what in practice amounted to a monopoly—due to a combination of the French colonial traditions, the language links, and the relations at government level between the French and each of the African states. During 1959–61 nine national news agencies were established to replace the former AFP bureaux, and in seven of these cases the governments made contracts with the AFP. Most of them not only received technical help and journalists on loan from the AFP but inherited the existing AFP bureau as well.66 One clause in the almost identical contracts between the AFP and the African agencies gives an ample illustration of the relationship: the African agency undertakes "to distribute automatically and immediately, without omission or modification, the radio-teletype service received from A.F.P.".67 At that stage few African agencies had the capacity to transmit anything else.68

Also with regard to the exchange of radio programmes, what in practice amounted to a closed system was established between the metropolitan power and most of the sub-Saharan French-speaking broadcasting stations. Between 1960 and 1970 France participated in the establishment of 28 radio stations in Africa, and approximately eighteen thousand hours of radio programmes a year were sent from France to Africa. In 1969 L'Office de radiodiffusion-télévision français (ORTF) took over the activities of the OCORA (Office de coopération radio-phonique). The activities of this Office were extensive at several levels, fortifying and developing relationships that at the institutional level come close to what we have defined as neo-imperialistic.69

No wonder that such a structure is attacked from the Marx-
ist point of view. Thus, Ahmed Baba Miské asserts that this is a device of the former colonial masters to maintain the former control by the use of information and propaganda. With a few exceptions, the new African states have not, according to Miské, created any new information policy, and have in fact allowed neo-colonialist domination to take place in new forms. The "sources of information (news agencies, correspondents, etc.) are directly subject or firmly tied to European and American governments or their representatives, the directing 'beneficiaries', and report only the favourable news to their countries about the colonial and neo-colonial establishment in Africa or about the system of exploitation". Under such circumstances, the mass media is means of domination, "a means by which one class imposes its ideology, and exerts its power. No conscientious person thinks that the European 'bourgeoisies' never use these media for themselves".

In most of the African Commonwealth countries, Reuters holds a predominant position, though not so predominant as that of the AFP in French-speaking Africa. It had to defend its position against competition in the first place from the AFP, the American international news agencies, Tass and Ceteka. During the 1960s its organization in Africa was extensively improved. A specially designed African service was started, emphasizing news from Africa and the current policy of the African governments. To finance such an expensive investment, Reuters approached the African governments to establish contracts, and encouraged these governments to set up national news agencies for the purpose of buying the Reuters service, distributing it in the country and collecting news to be sent out of the country through Reuters—a practice not very different from that of the AFP. Reuters also participated in the establishment of national news agencies, and provided blueprints for planned agencies in Ethiopia, Libya, Malawi, Nigeria, Tanzania and Uganda during the early 1960s. Previously it had provided training for Ghanaian journalists, when the Ghana News Agency was established, and it participated also in the establishment of the Kenya News Bureau. When the Kenyan Government later on (1963) decided to establish the Kenya News Agency, however, it was the Ceteka
which provided technical aid and journalist training in Prague. Thus, Reuters had no de facto monopoly in English-speaking Africa like that of the AFP in French-speaking Africa.

However, the AFP and Reuters, although they had by far the greatest impact, were not without competition in providing services, participating in the establishment of African national news agencies and offering technical aid and journalist training. By 1964 Tass, for example, had established exchange programmes with 15 African governments and had provided technical aid to set up 12 national news agencies.

The actual impact at the level under discussion of the fact that both international and African news and events are transmitted to African mass media mainly by non-African international news agencies belonging to the competing superpowers or to the former colonial powers may vary with the degree to which the international news agencies reflect the prevalent political, ideological, cultural and economic interests of the political systems to which they belong. If such services are established on a commercial basis, between equal partners, the customers may have the opportunity of influencing the content of the services provided. If the services are provided basically as grants, with only a symbolic fee, such influences from the customers (that is, the African governments) will be negligible. The impact may also depend on the quality of the extra filter introduced during the 1960s: the national news agencies. Several of these subscribe to more than one international news agency. However, the degree of predominance of the main service (the AFP or Reuters in the French- and English-speaking countries, respectively) may vary. The loyalties, attitudes and perceptions of the staff, and hence the priorities in selecting from the extensive amount of information that flows in, may also vary extensively, being influenced by the training provided and by the predominant standards in the milieu that provided this training—during the first half of the 1960s even by the national backgrounds of the staff.

Agreements involving journalist training and subscriptions to or exchange of radio and television programmes between African stations and foreign commercial or government agen-
cies may be considered in a similar perspective. I have already stressed the extensive services provided by the ORTF to French-speaking Africa, and the one-way character of this transmission, as well as the French involvement in setting up radio stations in French-speaking Africa. London-based companies—in the first place commercial enterprises like the Granada Television Ltd., Rediffusion Ltd., The Thomson Organisation Ltd. and the Television International Enterprises Ltd.—have participated in various ways in establishing, running or assisting African radio and television companies, and by providing services. However, the ultimate control has always been with the African government. Training has been provided by the BBC and the Thomson group for radio and television journalists. Journalist education at university level is to-day provided by a few African institutions, including institutes at the Universities of Lagos and Nsukka (Nigeria) and Cairo (U.A.R.). However, journalist training has also been provided by different non-African organizations. African radio and television companies have been flooded with programme offers from foreign commercial companies as well as from government agencies, especially from the former colonial powers and the super-powers, free of charge or at nominal rates.

To make the implicit explicit: the real nature of any co-operation across the north-south axis may to a large extent be dependent on the actual relationship between the partners and the framework of the co-operation. If the exchanges at the level of mass communication come as a supplement to the relationships at the political level (involving relationships between governments), or at the cultural or economic levels (involving non-governmental structures as well) previously defined as neo-imperialistic, it is highly probable that such exchanges will actually (intentionally or not) fortify or develop these relationships. Furthermore, such environmental relationships may also be influenced by the relationship between the mass-communication partners. If such a relationship is characterized by a strong and resourceful non-African partner and an African recipient who is financially weak and professionally poor and passive, the probability of a one-way traffic of stand-
ards, policies and ideologies is great. This may also be the case if the transmission takes place more or less directly from the outside source to the African mass medium, depending, of course, on the professional quality and the resources of the editorial side of this medium. If the transmission is indirect, the probability of such influences may be less, depending, however, on the quality of the intermediate filter in the African country. Where, for instance, a national news agency is run and staffed by the foreign agency, the effects of this filter may be reduced to the effects of the local environmental expectations, as experienced by the expatriate staff (which may vary); if run by nationals of the African country concerned, the effects of the filter may, inter alia, vary with the expectations of the African government and the customers, the internalized standards and values of the professional staff and their milieu and the professional quality of this staff, as well as with the kind of relationship between the outside agency and the African one in terms of equality or inequality, grants or subscription, the kind of contract, etc.

All communication from one political or cultural system to another will involve the transmission of standards, values and perceptions. With regard to the incoming communication flow, it becomes, from the point of view of the African editor, a question of selecting between different prevalent standards, transmitted by the many different sources, bringing with them traces of the prevalent values of their different origins.

At present most relationships are characterized by more or less inequality, the African being the weaker party. In such a situation it becomes a necessity for the African party to enter into relationships in which it is the one who decides the framework and the content of the co-operation, based on the needs of the African society, as perceived. In such a context, it is of subordinate importance who defines the needs of the society—whether it is the government, the editor, or the interest group behind the newspaper, the radio or the television station. Whoever decides, the outcome may differ from one organization to another, from one report to the other. The important task for the future is to establish relationships between equal partners that may be able to provide
a genuine two-way transmission of standards, values, ideologies, policies, priorities and perceptions in general along the south-north axis.

Notes

1. This article was stimulated by the discussions that took place at the "Reporting Africa" seminar organized by the Scandinavian Institute of African Studies on October 11–13, 1970. The discussions were taped, and a written record of most of the proceedings was prepared later on. When points of view or factual information from these discussions are introduced in this article, reference is made to the Proceedings or to the papers appearing in this volume.


3. Idem.

4. Idem.

5. Wilbur Schramm (Responsibility in Mass Communication, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1957) discusses several aspects of this problem, as related to the three freedoms of the press: the freedom to know, the freedom to tell, and the freedom to find out (p. 107). See especially Chapters 6 and 7 (pp. 103–216).


8. See Proceedings, p. 29.

9. For the involvement of foreign companies elsewhere in Africa, see infra, notes 49 and 57.

11. Colin Legum attributes this development also to political pressure (op. cit., p. 36).


13. Ibid., pp. 31-32. Mamman Daura makes a similar distinction as regards political systems in Africa: between "populist-collectivist" and "populist-pluralist" types. See Mamman Daura's paper, "Editing a Government Newspaper in Nigeria" in the present volume, p. 39.

14. This role of the press was once formulated by a former editor of The Times, London (Delane), in the following way: "We cannot admit that (the Press') purpose is to share the labours of statesmanship, or that it is bound by the same limitations, the same duties, the same liabilities as that of the Ministers of the Crown. The purposes and duties of the two powers are constantly separate, generally independent, sometimes diametrically opposite. The dignity and the freedom of the Press are trammelled from the moment it accepts an ancillary position. To perform its duties with entire independence, and consequently with the utmost public advantage, the Press can enter into no close or binding alliance with the Statesmen of the day, nor can it surrender its permanent interests to the convenience of the ephemeral power of any Government ... We are bound to tell the truth as we find it, without fear of consequences—to lend no convenient shelter to acts of injustice and oppression, but to consign them at once to the judgement of the world." Quoted from Rosalynde Ainslie, The Press in Africa: Communications Past & Present, Victor Gollancz Ltd., London 1966, p. 213.

15. On the eve of independence, J. de Benoist, the former editor of Afrique Nouvelle, Dakar, made the observation that "Freedom of the press is guaranteed by all the Constitutions [of the states of French-speaking West Africa] and so far the legislation adopted is based to a large extent on French legislation, particularly on the 1881 law, but with certain, more stringent, modifications." However, "the press is closely watched by the Governments: the Information Agencies must bear their reactions in mind, especially in the editing of news, though one cannot speak of an actual censorship. Several newspapers were seized in the past year, because they published the communiques or statements of political groups hostile to the Government. In some states, which have no local press, the police check the contents of newspapers coming from outside before allowing them to be put on sale." See J. de Benoist, "The Position of the Press in French-speaking West Africa", in Report on the Press in West Africa prepared for the International Seminar
on “Press and Progress in West Africa” (University of Dakar, May 31 to June 4, 1960), mimeographed, p. 2.

16. Wilbur Schramm (op. cit.) introduced four “press theories”, with reference to press ideologies and the practices of different types of political regimes. His classification has since been the one used in dealing with these problems; see, for instance, J. C. Merrill, C. R. Bryan, and M. Alisky (op. cit.). Schramm distinguishes between (1) the authoritarian theory (he included the authoritarian or totalitarian regimes of Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany and Franco Spain in this category); (2) the Communist theory, with reference to the Soviet regime; (3) the libertarian theory, referring to the governments and the press of western Europe during the last few centuries; and (4) the social-responsibility theory, referring to the ideology that demands social responsibility of the press. In this article I have found little reason to distinguish sharply between (1) and (2), and (4) is just considered as a function of most mass media, irrespective of the political system, though with some variations, as regards the emphasis on this function by different political ideologies.


18. The motives for strict government control and direction of mass media may include most arguments in favour of the one-party state, including the dubious argument that this is in accordance with African political traditions. For a brief (revised) discussion, see K. A. B. Jones-Quartey, “One-party states and the role of opposition in contemporary Africa”, The Legon Observer, Vol. V, No. 26 (18–31 December, 1970), pp. 4–8.

19. Mamman Daura (op. cit., p. 40) illustrates this point by referring to the Nigerian situation.


22. For this take-over, see, inter alia, Eddie Agyemang, op. cit., pp. 52–53. It was also dealt with by David Williams in a prepared
statement at the seminar (see Proceedings, p. 37).


24. The double loyalties of the editorial staff of former foreign-owned newspapers is amply illustrated by the following extract from an interview this author had in October 1964, with Mr M. Therson-Cofie, then editor-in-chief of the Daily Graphic and Sunday Mirror in Accra:

“I felt that we must now concentrate on the development of our own country first, before anything else. And in this respect ... no pressure has been brought on me by the President or the Party. ... I just feel my own discretion. As I recently ... (felt) that it was necessary to criticize the Minister of Trade—I did it, and without fear ... And I got information that it was praised by the President himself.”

The two roles of the press (assumed to be contrary to each other) were combined! On the one hand, the old loyalty to the British heritage—that the press, as the Fourth Estate, should criticize the government, if it considered such criticism necessary; on the other hand, the new loyalty to the new role which the government expected of the mass media—to assist the government and the party in fulfilling the established aspirations and development efforts. And the President appreciated the criticism.

25. See Mamman Daura, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

26. This point was made and illustrated by several discussants, including Colin Legum, *op. cit.*, pp. 33, 37–38.


28. See Mamman Daura, *op. cit.*, pp. 43–44.

29. See Colin Legum, *op. cit.*, pp. 30–31. However, the author (or his source, Prof. W. E. Hocking) compares two unequal phenomena in the context referred to—the western and the Soviet views on press freedom. The western approach is illustrated by Hocking’s idealist definition of a free press, whereas the quotation selected (by Hocking) to represent the Soviet attitude does not concern press freedom (except that this is disclaimed) but the role and functions of the press.


33. See also *ibid.*, pp. 5, 11, 18–19, 23, 27, and 30–31.

34. *Ibid.*, pp. 1, 6, 11 and 30–31. He maintained (p. 6) that “To tamper with the truth is treason to the human mind”.

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also maintained that "the press cannot function in accordance with a strict regard for the sacredness of facts" within the competitive system of capitalism, where the bulk of the journalists and mass media distort facts due to systematic factors like profit considerations, interests of owners and advertisers (pp. 6–7 and 10).

35. Ibid., p. 27.
36. Ibid., p. 29.
37. Ibid., p. 10. He asserted that "The true African journalist very often works for the organ of the political party to which he himself belongs and in whose purpose he believes. He works to serve a society moving in the direction of his own aspirations. How many journalists of the imperialist and neo-colonialist press have this satisfaction?"


39. Eddie Agyemang (*op. cit.*, pp. 51–53) reveals that in the professional milieu of the former foreign-owned *Daily Graphic*, the mass-media ideology of Kwame Nkrumah was not internalized, and the staff felt the government's direction as an (unwanted) interference from outside. Elly Jannes tells a different story of *The Standard*, Tanzania (see "Vi chockerade sade Nyerere", in *Vi*, Nr 41, 10/10, 1970, Stockholm, pp. 20–22). Interviews with President Nyerere and the newly appointed editor of *The Standard*, Frene Ginwala, indicate close relations ideologically and politically between the President and the editor, and a high degree of mutual respect and trust. This, combined with the President's expressed expectation of seeing criticism in the paper (obviously genuine), creates a sense of great editorial freedom. A statement by the editor conveys this: "When the paper was nationalized, its programme was presented as being twofold: to present the view of the people to the government, and the government's view to the people. So far we have only had a start with the first half of the programme ... The reason for this is perhaps that previously I have always been engaged in activities of liberation movements and preoccupied with criticizing governments."

41. *Idem*.
42. Ulf Himmelstrand, in a prepared statement (*Proceedings*, p. 41). Returning to this question in a later discussion (*ibid.*, pp. 105–6), Ulf Himmelstrand maintained that a free debate in an African society would mainly be a debate among the members of the elite, attacking each other or expressing different views. What is important is not this horizontal conversation within the elite but a
vertical scrutiny, to find out what the issues are. George Githii pointed out (ibid., p. 106) that discussions in mass media were an elite affair in most societies, not only in Africa, and referred to the "Letters to the Editor" column of The Times, London.

43. Ibid., pp. 41-42.

44. Ibid., pp. 100-101.


46. Before independence, this chain also published La Presse de Guinée, launched in 1954 and appearing three times a week. It was printed in Dakar, but had a permanent correspondent in Conakry. A few months before independence it became a daily, and shortly after independence—in December 1958—the paper was forbidden. Other papers in the chain (in addition to Paris-Dakar (later Dakar Matin) and Abidjan Matin) were La Presse du Cameroun and a Moroccan newspaper. The principal shareholder was M. Charles de Breteuil, and his son, M. Michel de Breteuil, was the chief editor of the Dakar-based newspaper.

47. Founded in 1947 by the Catholic Mission of West Africa.

48. At the International Press Institute annual meeting in Paris in May 1962, the late Tom Mboya was invited to discuss the relations between the press and the governments in Africa. He emphasized that "What attitudes or relations are created as between the press and the new African governments will depend to a large extent on the background and reactions in the period of the national struggle. The most important factors that must weigh heavily in deciding these future relations would include such questions as: Was the press hostile or sympathetic to the national cause? Was it reactionary or progressive? Was it identified with imperialist forces and money interests in the former colonial countries and elsewhere, and how far is it still regarded as a tool of foreign penetration and an agent for neo-colonialism?"

He went on to provide the answers:

"I have to explain and comment on the remarkable fact that a nationalist struggle in Africa for self-determination, freedom in all its forms, the elementary rights of man, has been carried on so frequently amid a general chorus of protest from the press. I have to deal with the strange but simple fact that in many countries, especially in East and Central Africa, independence has been attained or brought within early reach despite—this is the point—despite a general press hostility. By the press, in this context,
of course, I mean the national newspapers and reviews of Africa, edited and published by experienced overseas technicians, ..."


50. For the story of the start of the IPC venture in West Africa, as viewed through the monocle of its chief architect, see Cecil King's biography, *Strictly Personal* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969, pp. 147–64). King's own perceptions of politics and politicians then active on the West African scene and his relations with the colonial administrations are also illuminated in this chapter.


52. See, *inter alia*, Benoist, *op. cit.*, p. 6:

"Most of the professional journalists now working in French-speaking West Africa are of French origin. With one or two exceptions, the African journalists hold subordinate positions."

53. According to Ainslie, *op. cit.*, p. 99, "The centre of gravity of the white settler papers, which are still the dominating force in the Press throughout the area, remained in Britain. Their editors prided themselves on their place in the British Empire, and felt involved with events in Europe rather than in the rest of Africa. ... Whereas in West Africa, newspapers developed as a voice to express the protests of the ruled, in East Africa they were from the beginning vehicles for the culture and concepts of the rulers, with the considerable resources of white capital at their command."


55. See, *inter alia*, a statement by David Williams:

"My firm, the Overseas Newspapers, which is a subsidiary of the *Daily Mirror*, no longer controls in any sense the *Daily Times* in Nigeria. We are the major but not the majority shareholders ... But in the days when we owned it completely, and used to give a fairly substantial news service from London, various Nigerian politicians ... literally took a slide-rule to every issue to measure how many lines were given to Mr A, how many to Mr B, etc., and assumed that at the London end we too used a slide-rule and decided that Mr A should have this space, Mr B should have this space, etc." David Williams rejected the assumption of such highly organized practices as baseless (*Proceedings*, p. 207).

56. See Rosalynde Ainslie, *op. cit.*, p. 206. The two significant exceptions were Guinea, which had technical advice and assistance from Tass, and Mali, which received aid from the Czech agency
Ceteka. Another important exception should also be noted: the Algérien Press Service, established (in exile) in Tunis in December 1961, was created in opposition to AFP by the FLN (ibid., p. 208).


58. According to Ainslie (ibid., p. 207), "A.F.P. therefore still has a virtual monopoly on foreign news distributed internally, for it sends out some 20,000 words a day to Africa, and if this service is to be distributed in toto, there remains very little transmission time, unless the agency is exceptionally well equipped, to distribute anything else, including, in some cases, the country's own domestic news!"

However, during the early 1960s, the exclusive monopoly of the AFP decreased slightly. The news agencies of Congo (Brazzaville) and Gabon received Reuters; the news agency of Dahomey received Reuters and DPA; the news agency of the Ivory Coast received AP, DPA, and Reuters, and had exchange agreements with Cameroun, Chad, the Central African Republic, the Congo (Brazzaville), Dahomey, Gabon, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Togo, and Upper Volta; and the news agency of Senegal received Reuters, UP, DPA, and AP. The news agency of Guinea received Reuters, UPI, Tass, and Hsin Hua; the news agency of Mali received AFP, Reuters, UPI, Tass, Ceteka, ADN, and Hsin Hua. Up to 1965, no national news agency was established in Chad, Mauritania, Niger, Somali, Togo and Upper Volta, which all depended on the AFP services. When the Senegalese and the Congolese news agencies later planned an expansion of the services, Reuters was asked to provide the plans.

59. See Jeune Afrique, No. 527 (mardi, 9 février, 1971), pp. 47-48. The following extract gives a brief indication of the extent—and the one-way character—of this co-operation:


Les programmes. L'ORTF fait parvenir, sur leur demande, un certain nombre d'émissions dans les pays africains.

Les missions de programme. A la demande des gouvernements africains, l'ORTF réalise des programmes de campagne radiophonique sur des sujets spécifiques (Haute-Volta : • la Commercial-
lisation des produits •; Gabon : • Campagne éducative par la télévision •, etc).

La formation. 200 stagiaires africains viennent chaque année en France s’initier aux techniques de la radio et des moyens audiovisuels.

Coopération en matière de télévision
La coopération a permis, dans ce domaine, l’installation en Afrique de 6 stations de télévision (Abidjan, Libreville, Ouagadougou, Brazzaville, Kinshasa, Tananarive).

Chaque station diffuse environ huit ou neuf heures d’émissions par semaine.

Actualité-magazine. Le volume des envois s’est élevé, en 1970, de soixante à quatre-vingt-dix heures d’émissions télévisées, recouvrant plusieurs centaines de sujets. Les stations auxquelles sont envoyés ces documents décident de leur utilisation.

Coproduction franco-africaine. En 1970, a été décidée la réalisation d’une série de 13 documentaires (de vingt-six minutes) intitulés • Des arts et des hommes •.

Reprise des programmes ORTF. Chaque trimestre, un catalogue de programmes (variétés, feuilletons ...) est envoyé aux stations africaines qui font leur choix. En 1970, les stations d’Afrique et de Madagascar ont reçu chacune environ cinq cents heures de programmes.

Coopération cinématographique
La coopération en matière cinématographique reste très en deçà des réalisations en matière de radio et de télévision. Les circuits de distribution en Afrique francophone (220 salles) restent contrôlés par des sociétés françaises. En l’absence de compagnies nationales de production, celle-ci, pour les films africains, dépend étroitement des maisons commerciales traditionnelles. Quelques films ont cependant été financés par les centres culturels français, par le secrétariat d’État aux Affaires étrangères ou par le Centre national du cinéma (tel • le Mandat • d’Ousmane Sembène).

Coopération au niveau de la presse écrite
La coopération a contribué à la création de cinq quotidiens dans les pays africains.

Par ailleurs, un secrétariat général du comité technique pédagogique regroupe les écoles spécialisées de journalisme au sein de l’Institut français de presse : Centre de formation des sciences de
l'information (Tananarive), Ecole supérieure internationale de journalisme (Yaoundé), Centre d'enseignement supérieur des techniques de l'information.

60. See Proceedings, pp. 121–22.
61. See Ahmed Baba Miské, "The French Mass Media", in the present volume, p. 145.
62. Ainslie (op. cit., p. 200) maintains that, when the African countries became independent between 1956 and 1963, "Reuters found itself caught napping. Not so Agence France Presse".
63. Ibid., p. 202. According to Ainslie, Reuters had no permanent correspondents in Africa before 1960, and relied on a network of stringers. In 1965 it had 24 staff correspondents and 50 stringers in Africa. Sixty to seventy per cent of the 16 000-words-a-day special African news service was news from Africa, the rest international news and sport. The service was "written in such a way as to reflect the non-aligned policies of African governments".
65. Ibid., pp. 204–05.
66. Ibid., p. 211.
67. The Granada Television Ltd. participated with E.M.I. Electronics Ltd. and the (then) Northern Nigeria regional government in establishing and (until 1970) running the radio and television services of the Broadcasting Company of Northern Nigeria. Rediffusion Ltd. established and ran radio and television services in Liberia (together with the government), and a radio-rediffusion service in Nigeria (and also in Johannesburg, South Africa). The Thomson Organisation Ltd. (Thomson Television International) set up, provided the senior staff for, and participated in the running of the television services of Ethiopia, the Ivory Coast and Sierra Leone, held shares in the Rhodesian television company, and established the Kenyan television service. Television International Enterprises Ltd. were engaged in buying television programmes abroad for the television companies of Ethiopia, Sierra Leone and Kenya. The London-based company Lonrho, which is heavily involved in mining and land-owning in southern Africa, was involved in the Zambia television service. See, inter alia, Ainslie, op. cit., pp. 228 and 236–39.
68. Other African schools of journalism include Ecole Supérieure du Journalisme, Alger (Algeria); Certificat Complémentaire de Journalisme, Université Lovanium de Kinshasa, Institut d'Enseignement Supérieur du Journalisme, Kinshasa, and Institut Social Africain, Bukavu (Congo, Kinshasa); Institute of Journalism, Accra (Ghana); Institut Polytechnique, Programme de licence de Journalisme, Con-
akry (Guinea); Kenya Institute of Mass Communication, Ministry of Information, Nairobi, and School of Journalism, University College, Nairobi (Kenya); Department de Journalistes et Techniciens de l'Information, Université de Madagascar, Tananarive (Madagascar); Centre de Formation pour Journalistes, Friederich Naumann Stiftung, Rabat (Morocco); Communication Section, University of Zaria, Zaria (Nigeria); Department of Journalism, American University, Cairo, Institute of Information, Ministry of Information, Cairo, and Centre for the Training of Arab Journalists, Pan-Arab Union of Journalists, Cairo (U.A.R.); Université Radiophonique de Gitarama, Gitarama (Rwanda); Centre d'Études des Sciences et de l'Information, Université de Dakar, Dakar (Senegal); Publicity Media Institute, Social Training Centre, Nwanza (Tanzania); Institut de Presse et des Sciences de l'Information, Université de Tunis, Tunis (Tunisia); School of Journalism, Kampala (Uganda); Department of Communication, College of Further Education, Lusaka, and All Africa Literacy and Writing Centre, Mindolo, Kitwe (Zambia).


70. The role of the ORTF has already been related. See also Ainslie, *op. cit.*, pp. 231–34: the British Central Office of Information offered a free radio service through its Transcription Services; the BBC provided taped radio programmes, approximately 200 hours a month, for a nominal fee only; and the Voice of America (Packaged Programmes Service) provided approximately 72 hours a week of radio programmes.
Ulf Himmelstrand

The Problem of Cultural Translation in the Reporting of African Social Realities

There is a classical psychological experiment which can be used to illustrate the predicament of an average European reader of news from foreign and rather unknown continents. In a completely dark room a point of light is fixed in front of the experimental subjects. In fact the point is completely immobile. But, as a result of what psychologists call the auto-kinetic effect, most subjects perceive small movements of this light in the completely darkened room. This is due to the absence of any contextual stimuli that would enable the subjects to relate the shining point to some other points of information, and also to the constant eye movements characteristic of the human animal. In another related experiment it was shown that social influence mediated by information about how other people perceive the illuminated point is very powerful in determining the magnitude and direction of the perceived movements of the immobile point of light. Even very simple suggestions drastically influence these perceived movements.

The average reader finds himself in a somewhat similar situation when he confronts a point of information regarding some dramatic event in a distant and foreign continent. In the absence of any contextual information, he can easily be led to believe that the spot of information he has received signifies a major change of a political or social nature in one or the other direction. The information received may indeed signify such a change, but the direction of that change can easily be misapprehended through processes of social communication and influence in the absence of relevant contextual information.
Also commentators in the press who happen to be fairly ignorant of the particular context of the reported event but who are obliged to write something on it anyway face a similar situation. Such commentators may come to share an interpretation of the given events which is very wide of the mark, not to say distorted and false, as a result of social influence in the absence of contextual information. As more information flows onto the editorial tables, many commentators may already have become so convinced of the reality of their interpretation that dissonant pieces of information are rejected as coming from less reliable sources.

The crux of the matter, then, is the absence of relevant contextual information at a time when commentators in our countries feel compelled to assess and evaluate the events anyway, because of the hunger for headlines and early comments.

Having made the distinction between contextual information and spotty information, that is, points of information concerning events without any accompanying information regarding their background and the issues involved, etc., I wish to indicate the particularly forceful impact of certain kinds of spotty information of a visual nature. A skilfully made photograph of a starving child from "Biafra" with protruding ribs and an old man's face is a very effective kind of spotty information, but it does not answer any of the following kinds of questions: What are the issues of the conflict from which this child is suffering such terrible consequences? Are the issues at stake of such a nature that they justify the price paid by the hundreds of thousands or perhaps the million who are starving to death? Are those who wage the war, from which not only this particular child is suffering, concerned with the security and well-being of the people they proclaim to be defending as much as they are with waging the conflict itself? Is this an Ibo child or perhaps a child from one of the minority ethnic groups who were unwillingly drawn into the conflict, and who suffered even more from it than those who initiated the secession of Biafra?

There are other more detailed questions that would supplement and follow up questions like these. None of these questions is answered by the kind of spotty information conveyed
by pictures and statistics of suffering. Yet these are the kinds of questions that must be answered—and answered on the basis of the best possible evidence available—if the full significance of the news reported is to be realized.

In fact both commentators and readers could have arrived at conclusions very different from those they actually arrived at, concerning the Nigeria-Biafra conflict, had they found answers to some of these questions, which were left unanswered in a large part of the news media.

A colleague of mine and two research assistants are at present involved in the design of an empirical study that is intended to assess the proportions of spotty information and contextual information at various stages of the Nigerian conflict, as reported and commented on in a number of weekly political magazines published in the industrial countries of the world. But even before we have obtained the necessary quantitative data regarding the performance of these magazines, I dare say two things on the basis of my impressions from reading a great number of them all through the tragic civil war in Nigeria. Firstly, they were oriented primarily to events and not to issues, background, consequences and other contextual types of information. Secondly, when contextual interpretation was indeed given, it tended to be of a most primitive nature, displaying an almost complete ignorance of the nature of the conflict.

Admittedly this is not a particularly exhaustive and scientific way of characterizing the performance of parts of the international press with regard to its ways of reporting and commenting on the Nigerian civil war. Once we have the quantitative figures from our study, we may have an opportunity to repeat the characterization with more precision and further qualifications as to which magazines performed less well and which performed better. For the time being, my main purpose is to provide food for thought and discussion about ways and means of improving the reporting of African affairs in our weekly and daily news media.

I would like to suggest eight different types of factors as possible contributors to deficiencies in understanding, reporting and commenting upon African developments and African
politics. The first three factors relate to the work of non-African journalists in Africa and to their relationships with the editorial offices back home.

1. Many journalists and most editors are not familiar with the multi-ethnic structure of the new nations in post-colonial Africa; because of their western notions and prejudices, they lack the conceptual tools for analyzing and understanding political events in such structures. I will have more to say about this later on.

2. In the absence of such an understanding, non-African journalists in Africa easily become victims of all kinds of popular interpretations derived from the people with whom they fraternize in hotels, bars and private homes. It should be added here that the popular views of Africans are not necessarily more enlightened than those of expatriates.

3. Even if journalists, in some cases, do understand the significance of political events in multi-ethnic social structures, they inevitably find it difficult to communicate such structural insights, with the necessary contextual detail, in a way deemed newsworthy by editors at home in Europe or America. Spotty information on dramatic or appealing events taken out of context is more likely to be considered "news". Some journalists may therefore tend to produce the kind of "news" they think they are expected to produce, even though it goes against the grain of their own beliefs, particularly if they work on a free-lance basis and have a financial interest in delivering the kind of news expected.

In addition to these three factors, there are a number of conditions which probably operate exclusively among "gatekeepers", editors and commentators in the metropolitan editorial offices of newspapers and news magazines:

4. "Gate-keepers" and editors in metropolitan editorial offices are influenced not only by their notions of what is newsworthy at a particular point in time; the quality of their coverage of political events in Africa will be determined in a most crucial way by their way of defining "news value" over time. The faster the news value of a certain chain of events decreases, the less likely it is that the coverage, and the comments based on such coverage, will result in an overall
picture satisfying even the lowest standards of quality in reporting foreign events. As more information about the events comes in to make the picture more complete, the "news value" of these events may already have decreased so much that information correcting and supplementing the first headlines and the first reports never gets published.

A crucial and much-neglected factor in explaining the deficiencies of reporting Africa, then, is the rate at which the news value of events in that continent decreases, as measured from the onset of some dramatic event that makes headlines. On this point I think that the Scandinavian mass media in particular have a rather poor record, which is not difficult to explain. In contrast to France and the United Kingdom, the Scandinavian countries have few links with most countries in Africa, and therefore, for instance, a military coup in this or that African country is less interesting to the public in Scandinavia than in countries which recently were colonial masters on the African continent. The news value of these events probably decreases more rapidly in Scandinavia than in the countries that were colonial masters, and the stereotypes communicated at the time of the coup thus remain uncorrected. But please note that the crucial factor here is not the absence of colonial experience, as such, but the way it affects the definition of "news value", particularly with regard to the speed with which news value decreases before a complete and more reliable picture of events has emerged.

5. A factor which may or may not be related to the news value of African events in Europe and the Americas is the availability in the editorial offices of news magazines and newspapers of African specialists who can "file" information on African events in their own brains at times when there is an ebb in the flow of marketable news from Africa. An interpretation of a given chain of events in Africa can start not from scratch but on the basis of some knowledge, once African events again hit the headlines, only if some mental or physical files are available in the editorial offices of the media. Without such files and archives, newspapers in countries where African events are deemed less newsworthy will never be able to get out of the vicious circle of sudden and intermittent
spurts of headlines and deficient reporting at each new incident in a chain of events.

6. Even though most news magazines freely mix comments and reporting in their news stories, it would still seem useful to single out certain factors that operate particularly to distort the vision and the range of interpretations of commentators, as distinguished from reporters of African events in our mass media. I am thinking here especially of the tendency to perceive conflicts as raging between good and evil forces. This way of perceiving conflicts tends to foreclose the whole case at a stage when in fact nothing even remotely similar to definitive information is yet available. This unfortunate consequence of viewing conflicts simply as a struggle between good and evil forces (in which, of course, you feel obliged to support the good) is much more serious when conflicts on the African scene are involved than in cases of conflict in the industrialized world.

When a commentator takes sides in a conflict back home in his own hemisphere, he himself and a lot of his readers are bound to know at least something about what it is that may be considered good or bad in the conflict. Furthermore, such commentary will most likely be counteracted by commentators who take the opposite view. But in the case of African conflicts many commentators are likely to be fairly ignorant and readers completely uninformed about what it is that may be good or bad about one side or the other. Finally, there are less likely to be voices opposing those predominant commentators who, under the influence of shared values and common misinformation, rally around what most of them consider to be the "good cause" of one particular side in the struggle.

It would generally be more fruitful to base our comments about conflicts on the understanding that they stem from structural conditions in which both sides were placed by historical circumstances. As commentators, we must learn to understand what these structural conditions were. The fact that we look at things retrospectively does not mean that we sacrifice our right and ability to criticize or favour one side or the other when facing the present and the future, once
we have taken care to look into the structural conditions involved. This way of looking at conflicts demands only that we first try to find out what structural conditions seem to give the best guarantees for the kind of society we favour, with the greatest possible rights for various minorities, and then give our support to the party which we find, after careful inquiry, gives the best guarantees for such conditions.

Furthermore, after making such a structural analysis, we are in a better position to decide which powers and parties to oppose. Those whom we oppose may possibly be honest and well-meaning people, but as spokesmen for structures which, for instance, have documented themselves as being suppressive and as threatening the lives of millions of people, and as pregnant with risks for future conflicts, we must still oppose them.

The demand to let inquiry precede judgement should receive particular emphasis when we are as ignorant as we indeed are with regard to African societies and political events. When, as commentators, we wish to support humanitarian causes on the African continent, we should again remember this principle.

By definition, humanitarian impulses should deal primarily with human beings, with people who suffer—not with states or governments. Common people who have suffered and continue to suffer always have a cause; a humanitarian concern for their suffering can never be unjustified. Therefore, for instance, no one can justifiably reject a humanitarian involvement with the Ibo people who suffered from large-scale massacres in 1966, and who under the supposedly protective schemes of the "Biafran" leader Ojukwu and the assault of the federal Nigerian forces suffered even more.

But to extend one's humanitarian concern for the Ibo people to an acceptance of "Biafra", a state pretending to protect and represent the "Biafran" people which was also known to comprise 5 million unwilling non-Ibo peoples, was neither logically nor morally justified without questioning the composition, tenability and prospects of that imaginary republic. Once again, the distinction between a humanitarian concern for people and a recognition of a political entity
must be kept in mind. When we see human suffering on a large scale, there can be no room for questions as to whether we are right in trying to help; but there is always room for questions with regard to claims made by governments and heads of states—particularly if they are not duly constituted.

Again, we must realize that questions such as these are much more difficult for us to answer with regard to African than with regard to western realities. Therefore we must be extra cautious as commentators when we find ourselves tempted to transfer our humanitarian concern for people suffering in Africa to political entities which claim to represent and defend the security of these people.

Biafra turned out to be a cruel trap for the common Ibo people and for those non-Ibo minorities who were unable to leave the trap in time. But most commentators in the world press seemed to hail the "Biafran" leader Ojukwu as a courageous hero, with the security of the Ibo people as his guiding light. In fact, those Ibos who were on the federal side during the war were more secure than those who were in "Biafra". At that time very few commentators understood that Ojukwu was fighting for a policy of regional "security" and consolidation which he shared with the worst representatives of the old Nigerian federation—Akinola of the Western Region and those Northern politicians who, by organizing the Ibo massacres in the North in 1966, tried to elicit a chain reaction of regional secessions which would have preserved the Northern Region as a power base for these politicians. Few of the commentators in the world press understood that there was more similarity between the policy of Ojukwu and the policies of the old federal politicians than between either of them and the new federation. Through the creation of more states the new Nigerian federation not only gave various ethnic minorities a voice which they never had in the old regions but also created a new system of security based not on strong and dangerous regional powers but on the interdependence of smaller, less powerful units within a much more polycentric federal structure. The few commentators who did understand these matters—like David Williams and Colin Legum—did not have much of an impact on other commentators.
It would indeed be interesting to know something about the reading habits of editorial commentators in our major news magazines and newspapers. My impression is that commentators writing on the editorial pages of Swedish newspapers were ignorant even of the news on the Nigeria–Biafra conflict reported on the pages of their own newspaper. And they were surprisingly ignorant about the articles published in their own paper by independent commentators and African specialists—or perhaps they could not care less about them.

7. A rather obvious and therefore perhaps somewhat less interesting factor that leads to deficiencies in reports and comments on African events is the influence of domestic or international political commitments on these reports and comments. Obviously the London Times, for instance, was interested in finding suitable targets for critical attacks on the Wilson Labour government, and Wilson's support for the Nigerian federation and lack of understanding for the Biafran cause served well as a suitable target for such criticism. It has been alleged that some French newspapers, as well as the French Government, because of their anti-British feelings, particularly with regard to issues in which former colonial ties with West Africa were involved, were influenced to take a strong pro-Biafran stand. I am not in a position to say whether these allegations are well founded. In any case they are not completely unreasonable. It is quite probable that domestic or international political commitments influence gatekeepers, editors and commentators in the press. Anyone claiming the opposite has an even more difficult case to prove than those who believe that such allegations are true.

8. The existence of racial prejudice in Europe and the Americas is not unknown. There is no reason to believe that all those who work in the news media of these continents are completely free of racial prejudice. The “Biafran” Ministry of Information seemed to have a good grasp of this. The “Biafrans” were said to be the most westernized, the most faithfully Christian and therefore, of course, the most civilized of the Nigerian peoples, while the rest of the lot were simply called “vandals”.

It is very tragic indeed that Africans should exploit in this
way the racial prejudice against Africans existing in Europe and the USA. There are those who should have known better than to fall into this trap.

There were a few western journalists who tried to find out what was happening to Nigerian citizens of Ibo origin during the civil war and who found, to their surprise, that not only Ibos in territory controlled by the federal Army but also Ibos inside "Biafra" were treated as Nigerian citizens. The property they had left behind in various parts of Nigeria was protected, while inflowing rents were accumulated in bank accounts to be collected by the rightful owners after the end of the war. But little or nothing of such reports was ever published in the western news media during the war. How could primitive Africans possibly be as civilized as these reports seemed to indicate, when even civilized Americans during the Second World War seriously maltreated American citizens of Japanese descent!

In my discussion of the various factors presumably responsible for deficiencies in reports and comments on African events in European and American news media, I have mainly used illustrations from the Nigerian civil war, but I think that what I have said has much broader implications. If that is the case, we should now ask what can be done more generally to improve the situation with regard to the eight different distorting factors mentioned in my discussion?

Looking at the problem in a reformist perspective, the most obvious task would seem to be the training of journalists and editors involved in reporting Africa to make them understand better both the nature of African societies and political events, and to realize the special obligations involved when reporting events in countries about which both editors and readers of the news media have little or no background knowledge. In this context it would seem particularly desirable to provide retrospective background stories to correct distortions often introduced in earlier phases of reporting African events. Another task concerns the utilization of files and archives with cumulated African materials.

In discussions in which I have advocated such reformist programs, I have sometimes been attacked by critics with a Marx-
ist interpretation of the relationships between the news media, the market for such media, and the international capitalist system. In fact I agree with much of this Marxist critique.

The capitalist system of news production does indeed seem to foster the culture of "newsworthiness", which includes the tendency to make "news" out of dissonant or radical themes only when they seem marketable—but only after having cast-rated and transformed them into pop-culture or vague humanitarian appeals. But I am not convinced that there is an absolute and direct one-to-one economic determination of "news culture".

There are several more or less strategic links between the economic basis and the superstructure of a news-making organization with its "news culture", and these links are made up of people. Even Marx himself acknowledged that people, strategically placed, can influence events so as to bring about radical change at branching points of history, once they have become aware of the historical process, and committed themselves to bringing about the change necessary.

Anyway, there are those of us who are not satisfied to sit with our arms crossed, waiting for a "revolutionary situation" to emerge within the news media. Therefore I will very briefly indicate two aspects of a reformist program designed to improve reports and comments on African events in our media. Firstly, a few hints as to the possible contents of such a training program; secondly, some remarks about the power needed to make those responsible interested in such programs.

Of course, I cannot possibly claim to give anything but a very sketchy picture of what in my opinion and in my experience ought to be the substance of the training which western journalists and commentators need. It also goes without saying that ultimate answers are out of reach at this symposium.

The problem of cultural translation and of understanding and reporting African realities seems to stem from a number of rather questionable western-type assumptions, of which the following is a small sample:

(a) In contemporary African societies, conflicts which seem to have an ethnic element are a result of "tribalism", that is,
of traditional ethnic loyalties. This constitutes a cultural lag that disturbs the effectiveness of modern government and administration, and holds these societies in the grip of backwardness.

(b) Traditional ethnic loyalties, on the one hand, and modern nationalism and national citizenship, on the other, are opposing principles.

(c) The only hope for Africa is detribalization, for instance, through the creation of a new westernized African elite trained firstly to follow certain basic administrative and economic principles of an universalistic nature which emphasize criteria of efficiency as well as equality before the law, and trained also to disregard particularistic loyalties with one’s own kin and tribe.

I am not saying that these assumptions are 100% wrong; they may contain some small element of truth—say, 10%—and some ideal worth maintaining. But their wholesale application in the interpretation of African events, and their use as prescriptions for development and “modernization” leaves very much to be desired. I would like to suggest the following three sets of statements as an alternative:

(d) In contemporary African societies conflicts of an economic nature involving different ethnic groups become infested with “tribalism” as a result of the competitive strain of transitional and modern political and economic structures. Tribalism in the contemporary sense of the word is thus not simply an extension of traditional ethnic loyalties; it is not a manifestation of cultural lag. Tribalism is the result of the exploitation of traditional loyalties by contemporary educated elites involved in the political competition required by modern schemes of factional party politics and professional career patterns. Africans less educated and less “westernized” are on the average less ruthlessly tribalistic.

(e) Traditional ethnic loyalties have contributed positively to the process of nation-building in African societies, both as vehicles for economic mobilization and community development, and as spring-boards for a broader national involvement.

Apart from the nationalism of the political elites who were
involved in the struggle for independence from colonial rule, nationalism in Africa has at least two important sources. Firstly, some immigrants from one part of a country to another need a valid national identity, and therefore support and identify with the development of national institutions over and above regional or ethnic groupings. This is the source of nationalism closest to the western interpretation of nationalism. But, in addition, a broader nationalism may develop also as a result of a need for a national centre capable of giving support and protection to smaller ethnic groups squeezed between larger and more dominant ones. Note that such a nationalism springs from stronger loyalties with one's own ethnic group, and from the desire to use the national centre as a means of improving the lot of one's own people. While ethnic loyalties and a broader nationalism may seem somewhat contradictory among large and dominant ethnic groups, they are supplementary and reciprocally facilitating principles among smaller ethnic groups.

(f) In spite of their variations with regard to the degree of centralization and degree of inequality between rulers and ruled, most pre-colonial African societies seem to have contained some mechanism of reciprocation and redistribution between rulers and ruled. In contrast to what one could find, for instance, in the pre-colonial political systems of India, as ruled by the conquering Moguls, this redistributive mechanism prevented a continuous accumulation of wealth in the ruling circles of most pre-colonial African societies. Chiefs and kings who did not fit into this scheme where de-stooled or removed by other means.

Colonial rule, which in the British case was designed according to the principle of "indirect rule", changed this pattern of reciprocal responsibility. Indigenous rulers were made responsible to the colonial government and not to their own people. But the people in many cases continued to be loyal to their traditional rulers, and this loyalty was fused with an element of dependence of a new kind as a result of the patronage handed out by the ruler as a mediator between the colonial government and the people. This implied a new asymmetry in the relationship between ruler and ruled. The ruler no
longer depended mainly on his people, as a result of the colonial system, but the people depended on their rulers. This asymmetric pattern has to some extent survived into the post-colonial era.

The prominent and successful "native son" of a local community who has found his way into contemporary politics, education or business does not depend much on his people back home. Western "universalism" in education, administration and business has to a considerable extent cut him off from close particularistic and diffuse relationships of loyalty with his own people. But his people depend on him for patronage, and thus become his "clients". For some time such a patron-client relationship may be interpreted by patrons and clients alike as a continuation of traditional patterns, and as a guarantee of continued loyalty from the people. It is tempting to exploit such a diffuse asymmetric loyalty.

However, such a patron-client relationship becomes increasingly unwieldy, indirect and unsatisfactory, as urban overpopulation builds up. At some critical juncture it may be transformed into a class conflict between the "haves" and the "have-nots".

The "haves" are more "westernized" than the "have-nots", but it is questionable whether these westernized elements represent the progressive forces in this kind of conflict. Progress under the leadership of local and thus more "particularistic" elites is at least equally possible. However, this requires a combination of decentralization and centralization of the political system such as is found in Tanzania and in the design of the new Nigerian federation. In such a political structure it may be possible to bring about a fusion of traditional ethnic loyalties and support for a strong national centre designed and willing to support local efforts. But this also requires a new breed of central administrators and politicians who are sufficiently "de-westernized" to understand the potentials of African societies, and willing to give up the roles of patrons deriving wealth and power from positions in the international metropolis-satellite relationship, and from attempts to exploit the loyalties of "clients" in their home community.

Assuming that this or some other image of African social
realities is at least more correct than what is usually taken
to be the truth about Africa, our next question is how to
convey knowledge of these realities to journalists and editors
so that they are helped to solve the problem of cultural trans-
lation in reporting Africa. This is a practical question, to
which we may wish to address ourselves in the discussion to
follow. Let me only point out one crucial fact in this con-
text: the power of those who do the editorial job at the
metropolitan offices of our news media. As an illustration of
this power I would like to mention some observations I made
one week after the end of the Nigerian civil war in January
1970.

*Time Magazine*, which in my opinion had given a very
poor and distorted coverage of the conflict during the war,
turned out an admirable and in many ways excellent sum-
mary of the background, the course of the war and the pros-
spects for the future in the issue appearing only one week after
the war had come to an end. How was this possible? Of
course, all this information could not have been collected
and put together in less than a week. By inference and also
on the basis of conversations with journalists in Lagos working
for American news magazines, I conclude that most of this
material had been sent in earlier by journalists in the field
who were fairly well informed, as a result of long familiarity
with the scene and the issues. Those aspects of their earlier
reports which did not fit well with the rather pro-Biafran
attitude taken by *Time Magazine* had not been published,
probably, but had been filed. Once the war came to an end,
it became opportune to publish also these aspects of earlier
reports as part of a general summing up of the war and its
background.

What I have just said is a hypothetical reconstruction of
what possibly happened in the metropolitan editorial offices
of a large American news magazine with a world circulation.
I hope some day to be able to find out whether my hypo-
thesis is more than just plausible. For the time being, I think
it is reasonable enough to be used as an illustration of the
great power of metropolitan editors of international news
magazines. In view of the fact that this power can be abused
in the ways indicated, to the detriment of the political development of nations in the third world, I think one can draw only one conclusion. Something must be done to reduce the power of metropolitan editorial offices of international news media. I have no means of knowing whether it can be reduced by pressures from below, that is, from the reporters and journalists who are the workers in the news industry and who sometimes do a really excellent job in the field but find their reports truncated, distorted or unpublished, as a result of arbitrary editorial power at home.

Again, I am afraid that those of us who do not belong to the profession and who are eager for a change cannot wait for the revolution from below. Other means must be used as well. There is an increasing volume of research on the ways in which the world press handled the Biafra episode and the Nigerian civil war. As I said earlier, I am myself about to launch a research project in this field. I hope that it will be possible within a few years to assemble the results from such research projects in a neat and readable form, and to submit such a report to the Organization of African Unity, with a suggestion that steps be taken to bring this matter up in the United Nations and its sister organization, the UNESCO, to help create an awareness of the magnitude of the problem and of the pressures that can be brought to bear on both the professional organizations of editors and journalists and the proprietors of international mass media.

A friend of mine, a well-known Swedish editor, said that this would amount to an infringement of the freedom of the press. My answer was that the word “freedom”, when used in the political rhetoric of industrialized nations, in most cases seems to be a freedom for those who already have power, influence and control over important resources—a freedom for them to continue to exercise power, influence and control over others. But what about the freedom of the less powerful? The freedom of the international press too often implies that the countries of the Third World, which most need to be covered by reliable background stories, to make it possible for us to understand the spotty information provided about
these countries by headlines and brief reports, are the countries least likely to receive such background coverage at the time when it is most needed. This kind of freedom of the international press may be worth sacrificing.
David Williams

The British Mass Media

One day last October a London evening newspaper carried a headline stating that Zambia brides might be freed. The story was, in fact, about the unhappy Zanzibar girls, who were forced to marry members of the ruling junta. On the following day a London daily newspaper carried a caption for a photograph illustrating an article on the conference of non-aligned nations in Lusaka: "Street scene in Lusaka, capital of Gambia".

In 1956, before Ghana's independence, I was in the north of the Gold Coast with a party of British M.P.s, who were observing the pre-independence elections; with us was a very experienced reporter of a mass-circulation London daily. It was the rainy season and, as we moved southwards along a perfectly good road, we came to a point where a bridge had been carried away. It was easy to cross the swollen river on foot, using rocks and pieces of the broken bridge, and cars were waiting on the other side. There was, in fact, almost no discomfort or delay. My colleague filed a report on the incident, at the end of which he wrote: "I was there, repeat I was there". I asked him why. "It means", he said, "don't change the story, because that would bitch me—I will still be with this mob when the newspaper arrives here with the report". "What could they change?" I asked. "They would say", he replied, "M.P.s wade crocodile-infested river." All sub-editors, he was sure, were convinced that all African rivers were crocodile-infested. Only last year I saw this time-hallowed description in a perfectly reputable newspaper.

When the Queen visited Nigeria, I was consulted each night in London by the night news-editor of a national newspaper about the spelling of names and similar matters. The first night he read me his correspondent's story, and when he came
to a reference to "jungle-drums", I said firmly: "No jungle-drums". He was astonished but, on learning that this might give offence, immediately deleted the phrase. To him, it was merely picturesque—but the place concerned was the capital city of a great federation.

All reporting is difficult, because of the shortage of time, because of the weakness of communications, because many of those concerned in getting a story into print are badly informed, because the writer wants to attract the reader by recognising at least some of these prejudices (hence, I think, "jungle-drums", because the correspondent was in fact deeply sympathetic to African political aspirations). The examples I have given are intentionally exaggerated, though true. They did no particular harm and my African colleagues will agree that equally startling examples can be found in their newspapers every day. I recall a photograph of the Kasbah described as the Kremlin—or was it the other way round? But my examples concern a particular process—the innocent intervention of sub-editors or caption-writers, who are supposed to know about everything but cannot know, or the desperate attempt of a correspondent of a mass-circulation newspaper to make contact with his readers.

That is half the trouble. It is hard to convince Africans of this, but the picture of happy jungle-dwellers, who probably do not have to work for a living, who have perpetual sunshine, and who probably have rather more sexual licence than people in western Protestant communities, appeals to most people in the west. The Englishman in his council house who does not want a West Indian neighbour would still like to join the grass-skirted maidens on a tropical African beach. Nkrumah, Nyerere and the rest do not fit into this picture, and people love their prejudices.

Hence the use of stereotypes, which are not confined to Africa. My own country (Wales) sometimes suffers. Soviet reporters who describe London as though Charles Dickens was a contemporary are the victims of their own propaganda. Readers may be misinformed and confused as a result, but all this is an inevitable result of the existence of instant reporting, itself a result of technical change. This applies, too, to televi-
sion and radio, but, because their mistakes are not committed in a permanent form, they sometimes escape criticisms more easily than do newspapers and magazines, although in general television is today the most important medium which gives the British their ideas about other countries.

Sometimes, however, one cannot resist the feeling that the policy, which any newspaper or independent means of communication is entitled to adopt, shapes what is reported. I may attach too much importance to the particular example I am going to cite, because it concerned me deeply, but it is a good one. In August 1968 the Biafrans were in retreat, and I crossed the Imo River on the southern front to join a Federal battalion which had recently established a bridgehead to the north of the river. All the bridges were down and, like the battalion, I crossed the river on an oil pipeline which had survived.

The day before, there was a front-page report in the London Times, saying that this battalion had just massacred a specified number of Ibo civilians—something over 3,000. Alerted from Lagos and Port Harcourt via London, the brigadier of the brigade to which the battalion belonged came across to investigate. I accompanied him. There was no evidence at all of the presence, dead or alive, of civilians. An under-strength battalion, numbering, say, 500, could scarcely have buried the evidence; it was raining hard, there was a shortage of ammunition, and no transport. The battalion would, in any case, be in a precarious position if the Biafrans counter-attacked. In fact, all the civilians had fled before it, but if there had been any civilians, there were more important tasks for the battalion than to massacre them. No correction ever appeared in the London Times, which got its story from Agence France Presse, which got it from the Ojukwu propaganda office, Markpress, in Geneva.

As between east and west, even as between the United States and western Europe, such stories can sometimes be attributed to malevolence. Because newly independent African countries cannot rid themselves of the "conspiracy" theory of history; because of the idea that the western world grudges independence to Africa, and wants to belittle its worth; because so
many Africans cannot believe that the news media in western countries do not constantly have to refer to their governments; because of all of this, anything which seems to be not just critical of any particular action of an African government, but critical of the idea of independence itself, is seen not as the work of an individual or a private body, but of a government.

At the beginning of last October, to my own regret, Odumegwu Ojukwu was interviewed on Britain's independent television. I know that the Foreign Office would have preferred that no such interview should take place. But a persistent British TV producer finally managed to arrange the interview, against the wishes even of the Ivory Coast Government. Will it be possible to persuade the Nigerian Government that all this was purely private enterprise? More important, at a time when Nigeria, at peace, was celebrating ten years of independence, and a strong "official" delegation of "unofficial" Ibos was attending the celebrations in Lagos, did newspapers, television or radio abroad emphasize this? By implication, perhaps, they did; but in Nigeria the Ojukwu interview would seem more important.

Sometimes I think that there is no field in which cultural differences are more marked than in people's attitudes to news and reported views, although on both sides the media are technically the same and there is much interchange. The West African journalist feels free to impute the vilest crimes to western countries without the slightest first-hand knowledge. But if a western correspondent suggests that anything is reprehensible in an African country, he may be accused of implacable hostility to all Africa. I must say that I myself have always been treated with the greatest courtesy and friendliness, but probably I have been insufficiently critical, while the private attitudes of West African journalists are often very different from their public ones. African newspapers which are manifestly government-owned or controlled are allowed to attack other governments, but if an entirely privately-owned publication in a western country carries even a signed article mildly critical of an African government, this may lead to an official protest.
At the centre, however, as far as concerns relations between Britain and Africa, is the BBC. My own experience is that, provided you turn up at the right place at the right time and are reasonably sober, the BBC producer concerned with any programme—whether radio or television, whether for home consumption or for the overseas services—is satisfied. You may say what you like. (But I don’t know what happens higher up.) You may impose a self-censorship—not wanting to say anything inflammatory or wounding to people you know—but you can tell the truth. The trouble is that the truth has many faces, and the choice of people to tell it can affect the impression a programme gives.

This has been particularly true of the reporting of the Nigerian civil war, and even more true of the situation in the East-Central State since the war ended.

Perhaps this, better than anything, illustrates the problem of reporting the African scene in the international mass media. How many Africans really believe that the BBC can be free of detailed government control? (One important figure who believes it, as he told me himself, is President Tubman.) Historically, newspapers, radio and television in Africa have been either in violent opposition or closely government- or party-controlled. The Nigerian Daily Times (I declare my interest in it) is a significant but now lonely exception in West Africa. So Africans easily assume that all newsmen everywhere are time-servers, an assumption which colours their attitudes to them. The overseas newsmen who prides himself on his independence is often riled to find that—although nobody blames him for it—he is assumed to be in somebody’s pay. Sometimes his reporting reflects his irritation. I recall one Nigerian Minister at a London news conference making so plain his view that all journalists were corrupt and servile that everybody walked out.

In Washington in 1969 I was told that the biggest obstacle to good Biafran propaganda was the visiting Biafrans, who clearly did not care about relief but wanted arms. Their job had been done much better by Time and Life photographers, who had recorded the plight of the civilians, particularly the children. To the photographers, and to the magazine’s readers,
the appeal was clear: these babies must not be allowed to
starve (black babies are particularly attractive to white folk,
for reasons which psychologists, historians and art critics must
explain). Objectively the outcry about the plight of the chil-
dren was political, since it pointed an angry finger not at
Ojukwu, who was really responsible, but at the Federal Gov-
ernment, which had in fact shown almost unprecedented com-
passion in allowing relief supplies into the rebel area.

Western newspapers, radio and television do not apply dif-
ferent standards in reporting Africa from those they use in
reporting, say, Wales. The trouble is that rubbish reported
about Wales is offset by some knowledge of Wales on the
part of the audience or at least some idea of what might be
true or false. There are opportunities for those who feel ag-
grieved to reply. Africa is a different world and the mis-
informer can more easily get away with it. Nor are the oppor-
tunities for refuting him often taken.

Here I must speak of African government information
services abroad. All journalists suspect these services, but reluc-
tantly I admit that they have a job to do. Yet they do not
do this job. It may be divided into three parts: the provision
or checking of straight-forward information about names, spell-
ings, etc. for publications which are using their own reports,
and the arrangement of press conferences; the issue of re-
leases about routine events (often very important); and the
anticipation of events which might affect the reputation of
the country. The last almost never happens, although discreet tele-
phone calls to the small number of journalists who specialise
in African affairs may be invaluable. The employment of
expensive public-relations "consultants" is usually a complete
waste of money, except for very limited purposes, such as the
visit of the head of a state which has no information service
in the host country.

The High Commissions and Embassies, however, do not get
the information from their home countries. Their governments
want the results of successful public relations abroad, without
making the effort to achieve them. Many a report damaging
to an African government could have been modified or even
killed, if its London mission had had the information in time.

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(I am not blaming the London men—I know their troubles.)

I am deeply dissatisfied with the reporting of Africa in western Europe. This is not only because all reporting tends to emphasise disaster rather than achievement, which for a long time made the Congo the African stereotype state, a stereotype easily transferred to Nigeria. It is because Africans, whatever their protestations, really care what other people say about them. This stems from the newness of independence, and the African consciousness of the ignorant and bigoted view held of them by so many non-Africans. Apart from one or two Foreign Office men, nobody in Britain cares twopence if a Nigerian newspaper gravely misrepresents British Government policy or the situation in Britain. But misrepresentation of an African country in a British newspaper is always liable to produce official protest or unofficial resentment. There lingers in Africa the belief that the British, with their old African connections, have no right to make mistakes.

This is the basic problem about reporting Africa in Britain—the same, as we have recently seen, is true to a similar extent of India. If awareness of this problem results in reporting on Africa in Britain becoming more accurate, that is all to the good. Unfortunately, that is not the result that is likely to be achieved.

I have not dealt with the quantity, as opposed to the quality, of reporting in Africa. Some smaller states resent what they regard as the ignoring of their affairs. I am inclined to think that there is too much superficial reporting of African events, and too little analysis and background. But Africa is not the only sufferer.
Ahmed Baba Miské

The French Mass Media

On the international scene, information on Africa is characterized by inadequacy, both quantitatively and qualitatively. I had been concerned with this problem for years, and for years had discussed it with friends. We were not merely passively concerned but decided to remedy this state of affairs, at least partially. The result was *AfricAsia*.

Our declaration of policy, in the first issue, stated that:

The aim of *AfricAsia* is to bridge the gap existing between the information on Africa and the Third World and the reality. The people of the Third World are ignorant of struggles elsewhere and the industrialised world remains uninformed about conflicts in the Third World.

What is true of the Third World in general is particularly true of Africa. On the quantitative level, it is enough to have a look at the newspapers, especially those in French, which I know the best, to listen to the radio or to watch the television programs: one is immediately aware that there is hardly any news about Africa. When any particular event is in progress, it is, of course, publicised in the mass media, as long as public interest lasts. Otherwise, there is nothing. For example, a strike in Europe always warrants news coverage; should the strike involve the occupation of a factory or conflicts between rioters and the police, this will be important news. A riot in Northern Ireland, even if no one is killed or injured, always attracts attention. Similar conflicts in Africa are usually ignored. Now and then, events resulting in many people being killed and injured are hardly mentioned in the European news media.

In May 1968, there was an extremely serious incident in
Mauritania, in which soldiers opened fire on strikers and killed several of them. There was no mention of it in the French press, and even less on the radio or television. The situation became news only when the Mauritanian Embassy in Paris was occupied by students. But, of course, this took place in France.

In 1969, there was a massacre of students in Congo (Kinshasa). There may have been some reference to the event in the papers, but no serious mention of it was made.

Chadians and Frenchmen are being killed every day in the war of colonial re-conquest taking place in Chad. There is no mention at all on the radio or television. It is months before any newspaper devotes any space to this struggle.

It is impossible, at this moment, to go into the various possible fields of information, not only on the political level, but also on the cultural level, so I shall give you a quotation:

French film producers have no imagination as to this subject and they refuse to take an interest in it. They have never made films with coloured people. It is astonishing that at no time since France colonised Africa has there ever been a film showing coloured people. There are not even paternalistic films, which are, after all, a common feature in America. In America, there was paternalism, involvement and now even the slogan "Black is beautiful". This never happened in France, not even in the theatre. On the French cultural scene, it is as if coloured people never existed.

These words are taken from an interview with Med Hondo, the African film-maker, published in *AfricAsiA*, issue No. 25.

As regards the quality of the reports on Africa, I must also mention the constant distortion of the news. I do not mean that the whole press is lying all the time; some newspapers do, of course. The more serious newspapers, which claim to be objective and are sometimes even "involved", use a more subtle method. They accept certain appearances of reality as a basis of falsification. This method, let alone the adoption of attitudes, is actually founded on the belief or implied belief that African governments are truly independent and representative of their people. I have carried out some interesting research with students of universities at which I have lectured. We would take any newspaper and look for examples of this dis-
tortion. It is possible to find additional examples in publications about Africa. The press discusses the economic system. This is also exemplified in the way in which the European press refers to Africa's economic standing, to international aid, to development and to economic organisation. Thus, they arrive at a reality which is far removed from the truth. That which is described as aid is, in fact, organized exploitation of Africa's riches. So we founded AfricaAsiA in protest against the present situation, in which news is either distorted or not reported at all.

In theory, newspapers and news agencies are free to report about Africa. They are actually not free or only partially free. If they do report about Africa, the news is quite distorted. Do you think this distortion is fortuitous? I do not think so. The news media are free as long as they follow the "line" of the established system. Anyway, the sources of information (news agencies, correspondents, etc.) are directly subject or firmly tied to European and American governments or their representatives, the directing "beneficiaries", and report only the favourable news to their countries about the colonial and neo-colonial establishment in Africa or about the system of exploitation.

The very few Leftist newspapers which desire to report objectively on Africa do not have the means to take up the information on the spot. They may be allowed to appear to maintain the illusion of democracy. They may at least be tolerated and subjected to a stranglehold which enables them to survive without posing any dangerous problem: the perfect alibi. The mass media are turned, in fact, into means of domination, a means by which one class imposes its ideology, and exerts its power. No conscientious person thinks that the European "bourgeoisies" never use these media for themselves.

No excuses are needed for Africa, as the very existence of the so-called nationalist governments means that the European powers do not need even to keep up the appearance of democracy. I may give an example. In several French-speaking African countries, the only local correspondent works for the AFP. It does happen, on occasions, that these correspondents are honest and endeavour to send objective reports. So they are
subjected to all kinds of pressure and solicitation. If they do not "understand", they are soon expelled, with the blessings of both the countries involved. The only ones allowed to remain are those who agree to be satellites of the local French Embassy and creatures of "M. le Président". The world is informed of events transpiring in these countries only by the cables sent by these press agents. It is very easy, indeed, to judge the quality of such information when one knows the sources.

I do not believe either that the freedom of the press in Africa means that we have to leave to the papers of the ex-colonial powers, which represent, by and large, the capitalists of these countries, the power to dominate the press of the colonies that have now become the neo-colonies. The result is that these metropolitan European papers dominate these neo-colonies in the same way as the economic trusts and companies dominate the neo-colonies in the economic field. They just make them into appendages, and prevent and make possible the prevention of any real national progress in the economic field and the very existence of a national economic policy in these countries, just as the European culture and language oppress and dominate the cultures and languages of the colonies.

When we founded AfricAsia and tried to run it, we encountered, of course, a lot of difficulties. The greatest was to find advertising, because advertising revenues are important for us, as we are not linked with any political parties or governments. The capitalist advertisers were very reserved, despite the excellent response that AfricAsia received from the public. There were, however, a few important exceptions. We also got some advertising from some progressive or socialist countries, including Algeria, Romania, Korea, the Congo (Brazzaville) and East Germany. But this is, of course, insufficient, on the whole.

There has been no lack of good advice about "moderating" our attitude. If we had adopted a neutral attitude or had refrained from comments adverse to the imperialist interests and their "protégés" in Africa, we would have had quite enough advertising. It would have flooded in and we should
have made a fortune. This would also have been the case if we had been content to publish articles on air pollution or similar problems. But in the case of the oppressed countries, it seems difficult to stay neutral. What would you say of a Scandinavian country which was concerned about pollution and therefore amiable toward the occupying power's puppet government? A kind of "Quisling government" under German domination? Ninety per cent of the African governments are variations of the "Quisling" government. Anyway, our aim in creating AfricAsia was not to make a fortune, but to defend our ideas and to liberate the oppressed peoples. This liberation has various aspects—political, economic and cultural—in the widest sense of the word. So even if we limited ourselves to pollution, we would still encounter opposition, as everything in Africa comes down to one issue, without which action is futile—the question of national liberation. AfricAsia prefers to continue with these difficulties and will not abandon its raison d'être. It can only keep going because it has a very devoted team—which works without pay to a large extent, while the remainder of the staff accept very low wages.

This is due also to the extraordinary warmth of public support since the very first issues. We were prepared for this response, owing to our awareness of the need of objective information, but we had not dared to hope for such an immediate and such a great success. AfricAsia, in a single year of publication, has acquired thousands of subscribers.

We have encountered difficulties of distribution on account of the European monopolies. We have also been faced, though more rarely, with government seizures and confiscations. Cases of confiscation have been fewer than we first feared, but confiscation was a force against which we had to fight, without antagonizing. We have to say that we do not provoke attacks; we keep away from all provocation, personal attacks, etc., but we are determined to say the essential things about our subjects, the essential things that remain unsaid by the others. We also report in depth and do not only glide over the surface of the "daily news".

This is one of the reasons why AfricAsia has become a valuable instrument for the study of the Third World, and
Africa in particular. On this point we have the testimony of professors, students, and research workers in universities all over the world.
Clyde Sanger

The North American Mass Media

I am going to concentrate on Canada, which has been my home for the last 3 1/2 years, but what I shall say will apply almost as much to the United States, with some reservations which I shall make later.

The audience for serious or detailed news from Africa is quite different in Canada from the audience to be found in Europe—or in western Europe, at any rate. Whereas in Europe there are tens of thousands of people who have solid links with parts of Africa and a background of personal knowledge against which news items can be properly interpreted, this is not the case in Canada. Among Canada's 21,300,000 people there are only a few thousand who have lived and worked in Africa or have close relatives who have lived and worked there. Nor has Canada any strategic or large commercial interests in Africa, compared with elsewhere. Its two-way trade with all of Africa amounted in 1969 to C$240 million, or less than 2 per cent of Canada's total foreign trade. It has (thank goodness) no colonial links with Africa.

Things are changing a bit. Groups of Canadians who have worked for a few years in Africa and feel a personal involvement in the development of the continent are increasing in number. Missionaries, I suppose, were the first among these groups: the United Church in Zambia and Angola, Catholic priests and sisters in francophone Africa and Lesotho, Presbyterians in eastern Nigeria. Others came later. There are 1,200 Canadian University Service Overseas workers abroad at present, and half of them are in Africa. These CUSO workers may contribute only marginally to the development of the African state which is their host for two years, but they become a vocal interest group when they return to Canada. (There

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are about 2,500 "returned volunteers" back in Canada now.) There are a few score of outstanding academics, also—men whose knowledge of Africa goes back further than that of Canadian Government officials. Cran Pratt, for instance, was working at Makerere years before there were any Canadian Government missions in black Africa.

What this means is that there are smallish groups of people in many centres across Canada who are fairly well informed and feel personally involved in Africa. The proof of this is the existence of about a dozen groups who try their best to badger the Canadian Government into pursuing a more active policy over southern Africa. (The Government, I should add, is half responsive. It is withdrawing its own investments from South Africa and making a large loan to the newly launched Botswana mining industry. Pierre Trudeau has made clear to Heath and Douglas-Home his disapproval of British arms sales to South Africa. Before him, Diefenbaker and Pearson played positive roles in Commonwealth Conference discussions on southern Africa.)

What sort of coverage of African events do these people get from Canadian newspapers, radio and television? I am bound to say that it is generally poor. The articles and commentaries are usually too basic for them. Except for a few details that constitute the topical "peg", most of the articles do not advance their knowledge at all. There are a few exceptions which I should mention. The Observer Foreign News Service has several clients in Canada. But from The New York Times service, which is also used by several papers and most extensively perhaps by the Toronto Globe and Mail, I only remember one series of articles, written by R. W. Apple, Jr, during a short tour, that seemed really useful to any group of concerned readers.

Are there not others among the millions of Canadian readers, listeners and viewers who are at all concerned about Africa? Of course, some are. Looking at the success, over the last four years, of the "Miles for Millions" walks, you would think a lot of people are. For hundreds of thousands of Canadians have gone out on the highways on Saturdays in the spring or fall, and raised money for development assistance
by walking up to 40 miles. But it is a failure of the organisers—and of the local newspapers—that not many of those walkers know anything about the developmental needs and achievements of the countries to which the "Walks" money will go. Aside from the "Walks", there is a growing Canadian concern about the problems of its own 500,000 Indians and about the 20 per cent of all Canadians who live in poverty. For those who preach "integral development" on a world scale, this increasing concern at home should have its effects abroad. In one of the better passages of the Canadian Government's recent White Paper on foreign policy, you can find the following:

... A society able to ignore poverty abroad will find it much easier to ignore it at home; a society concerned about poverty and development abroad will be concerned about poverty and development at home. We could not create a truly just society within Canada if we were not prepared to play our part in the creation of a more just world society. Thus our foreign policy in this field becomes a continuation of our domestic policy.

Fine words, and maybe that is how quite a few Canadians think. Certainly the Government, in a time of general financial stringency, is appreciably raising its allocations of development assistance—but not as fast towards the target of 1 per cent of the GNP as the Scandinavian governments are. For many Canadians, however, the horizon of their concern does not go beyond the limits of their own vast country.

One reason for this is that there are no Canadian journalists or radio and television men who are based in Africa or make regular trips there. There is no easy bridge which a Canadian reader can mentally cross to identify himself or herself with an African situation. The Globe and Mail, which claims on its masthead to be "Canada's national newspaper", has tried three times in the past decade to establish a bureau in Nairobi—with Bill Stevenson, Bob Miller and Charles Taylor. Each experiment was considered a failure (for different reasons in each case), and The Globe's management is chary of trying again: it considers the expense not worth the yield, compared (for instance) with the prestige and profit of having a correspondent in Peking. Several witnesses who appeared during
the past year before the Senate Special Committee investigating
the Canadian mass media complained of the lack of Canadian
correspondents anywhere abroad, let alone in Africa. These
complaints prompted John Bassett, publisher of The Tele-
gram of Toronto, to boast that this paper spent more than
any other Canadian paper on foreign correspondents. But last
fall (1970) the dwindling sales of his evening paper (com-
peting with the Toronto Daily Star) have led him off on
another track, plugging the line that it is "a community-
oriented paper" and in fact changing its title to The Toronto
Telegram. No doubt its foreign travellers, like Peter Worthing-
ton and Freddie Nossal, will feel the draught.

The one single exception to this tale of the low priorities
given to African topics by Canadian journalism in recent
years was the Nigerian—Biafran war. Even then the concern
rose slowly. Charles Taylor, I remember, made one visit to
Lagos and Calabar in the early months, but it was a full
year before the horror of the war struck Canadian readers.
Then there was one week in July 1968 when the first photo-
graphs of the starving children, with bloated stomachs and
innocent eyes, were splashed across the front pages. Later,
when some Canadian MPs flew into Biafra and an extra-
ordinary venture—the fleet of Super-Constellations used in
the operation called Canairelief—was launched mainly
through the drive of the Presbyterian Moderator, the war had
a clear Canadian dimension. The public pressures were event-
ually sufficient to push the Prime Minister into announcing
a grant of C$1,000,000 for Canairelief, even though this
support came close, in Nigerian eyes, to a recognition of Biaf-
ran independence and certainly to defiance of Federal wishes.
(The C$1,000,000 was, in fact, never paid over to Canairelief,
because Colonel Ojukwu fled the same weekend as the an-
nouncement, and Biafra collapsed. The Nigerians were able to
smile at this maladroitness, in the first flush of victory.) The
horror of the war had been brought home to Canadians, I
think, to a large extent by Canairelief and the means it pro-
vided for Canadian newsmen to visit the area. The Federal
side was mostly covered, in Canadian papers, by agency mes-
sages, which may have filled more column-inches over a period
of time but certainly did not have the same individual effect as Canadian-written stories from Biafra. For this and other reasons, I think that the net result in readers' minds was a bias towards the Biafran side.

The Nigerian civil war was certainly not the story beyond all others which African leaders would like to have taken precedence over other news from their continent in these last few years. Ten years ago, of course, it was another civil war—in the Congo. Halfway between, there was the Rhodesian rebellion. Submerged under these sorry events are the steady achievements of a decade of independence and the transformation of many people's lives and several governments' policies, which, because they were often gradual, were also unspectacular. I should mention the work of one news service that has tried to report these positive achievements and these important advances in a way that is intelligible and digestible on the other side of the world—the Gemini News Service. Although Gemini spans the Commonwealth, several of its staff had their training in reporting Africa and in 1969 some 80 of its articles originated in Africa. (This service, which goes to more than a dozen main Canadian papers (as well as to American papers, such as the San Francisco Chronicle and the Washington Star), has had an important influence in giving a more positive picture of Africa during these last few years.

The publication with the widest readership—and so, arguably, the greatest potential influence—in both Canada and the United States is the Time magazine. Obviously the question pops up: what view of Africa would a reader of Time gain if he or she did not look at anything else? Checking through the issues so far in 1970, you would get a fairly mixed picture. Its section called "The World" has had, by my count, only 16 items on Africa in 37 issues. (This has not been the newsiest year for Africa, with the invasion of Cambodia and the fighting in Jordan crowding out other stories, but still . . .) Perhaps one-third of those articles smacked of the style of the late Robert Ruark, for example, "Chad: The Last Beau Geste", "Lesotho: Death in the Hills", "Ghana—Golden Enstoolment" and (of the conference of non-aligned nations) "Tears in
Lusaka". The only article it ran on South Africa was clearly misleading: its headline on Vorster's election victory was "Step towards the Centre", while the cut-line under his picture added "Out of the covered wagons". On the other hand, there were serious and good pieces on the social effects of the new dwarf wheat and rice varieties ("Seeds of Revolution"), on the completion of the Aswan Dam, on Mobutu's achievements in Congo-Kinshasa, and a large picture feature in August on the new power of African women. All in all, Time gave a mottled and certainly inadequate account of Africa this year.

The African image on Canadian radio and television is not very different from that in the newspapers. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) has nobody based in Africa, but relaying the BBC World News once a day helps to fill in gaps on the radio. The CBC sent television teams to the Nigerian war, while Radio-Canada (CBC's francophone wing) flew in men, for instance, to the Niamey Conference this March, when a technical-cooperation agency was established among the French-speaking states. Le Devoir, the best-regarded French-language paper in Canada, also had its special correspondent in Niamey—but this is hardly to anyone's credit. The Niamey Conference was important in Canadian eyes because it was a crucial round in the elephantine argument between Paris and Ottawa about the future of Quebec. Canada's fast-growing aid program in francophone Africa has its basis in domestic politics. A poor basis, but happily in this case the grass has not been trampled on: Niger, for example, is getting a C$13 million loan to construct a "route de l'unité" to its eastern areas.

In the United States the situation is a bit better than in Canada. The Washington Post–Los Angeles Times syndication service, which also draws upon the Manchester Guardian corresponderents around the world, was first organised by a former editor of Africa Report and offers a fairly sophisticated level of features and interpretative articles. Again, a tour such as the black columnist Carl Rowan has recently made of South Africa helps to bring home to Americans something of the dismal horror of that country. On the other hand, the links which 20 million black Americans might be expected to feel
with Africa are still tenuous. In his book *Freedom and After* in 1963, Tom Mboya said:

Most of them have lost touch with whatever was African in their background ... his new strength of pride in Africa is not entirely a culture. It is a pride in the context of modern values, and does not include the native values of the African in his tribal and cultural setting ... it is difficult for the African heritage and the American heritage to merge in him like two streams feeding a river, because he has for so long been cut off from the African culture.

I do not believe that Mboya changed his views on this subject during the following six years, despite the spread of dashikis and Afro hairstyles, for, in his last appearance in New York before he was murdered, Mboya found himself in a sharp argument with a black American audience on this general subject. The gap which the Atlantic poses for most black Americans is almost as great as it is (for instance) for a Canadian Indian.

Although there have been some good single television feature films for American viewers—and this year has been particularly good—to my knowledge there has not been any sustained effort in a series of films on the networks to give any profound portrait of Africa. In contrast, the television series which were shown most often while we lived in Connecticut were based on the tourist's stereotype of East Africa, as their titles suggest: "Daktari" and "Cowboy in Africa". Late in 1970, however, a television film was shown which had a wide and important impact in North America: this was "End of a Dialogue" the film about the conditions of the blacks in South Africa that was apparently made by members of the liberation movement.

The crucial question is: What can anyone do about all this? I cannot accept that the pattern will remain unchanged, and that Africa will be of interest mainly to groups of semi-specialists in North America. These groups themselves are certainly going to expand. But I think that a greater concern will grow among the wider public. Canadians are pre-occupied by issues close to home—the future of Quebec is high on the list, but American economic domination and the needs of
Canadian Indians are also topical. American pre-occupations are well-known. I think that this pattern can be changed to include a full concern for the development of Africa. The most effective way is to build onto these domestic pre-occupations, and to draw the parallels (for instance) between American dominance in parts of Canada's economy and the dominance which the industrialised countries have over vital sectors of the Third World, between the treatment the Canadian Indians have suffered and the treatment of other colonised peoples. René Levesque, the Quebec separatist leader, has already been drawing these parallels, for he refers to the rich English-speaking businessmen of Montreal as "the Rhodesians of Westmount".

But who is to stimulate this expanding interest? Who is to send the news out of Africa to North America? Rather than have men from The New York Times on a short-term assignment writing about Africa as outsiders, it would be infinitely preferable to have mainly African writers—as long as they can write uninhibitedly and with a proper idea of the different kind of readership abroad. I wonder, too, if the time has not come for Reuters and Agence France Presse to increase the flow of African news which they send outside the region. These last two points together lead to a third question: with improvements in inter-African telecommunications, is not the establishment of a Pan-African news agency now nearly a feasible plan? I hope that a Pan-African news agency will be one of the achievements of this Development Decade. Now that I have given up being a foreign correspondent, I can recognise more clearly the elements of neo-colonialism in that job!
Ladislav Venyš

The Soviet and Czechoslovak Press

For a variety of reasons, western scholars and students specializing in African affairs have misgivings about the ability of the eastern European mass media to inform the general public of the developments on the African continent in at least a fairly reliable manner. Some of the doubts are substantiated, others are not. Even though it would be relatively easy to put together various ideological arguments about the infallible nature and credibility of the mass media in eastern Europe, this research paper ventures a different approach, in an attempt to determine the characteristic features underlying the reporting on Africa in the Soviet and Czechoslovak press.

The period surveyed in this study is July 1968 through June 1970, i.e. 24 months. One daily and four scholarly journals for each country were selected. They were as follows:

The Soviet Union: Prawda, Azia i Afrika segodnia (AAS), Narody Azii i Afriki (NAA), Mirovaia ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otosheniia (MEMO), and Mezhdunarodnaia zhizn'.

Czechoslovakia: Rudé právo, Nový Orient (NO), Archiv orientální (AO), Mezinárodní politika (MP), and Mezinárodní vztahy (MV).

Prawda and Rudé právo are leading national dailies, the official organs of the Communist parties of the two Socialist countries. Altogether 150 copies (i.e. 20–25 per cent of the total) of each of the newspapers were selected and examined in detail. Their choice, made more or less at random, followed only two rules, namely, that an average of 1–2 copies of Prawda and Rudé právo per week was selected and that always the same date was chosen for both the dailies to make them comparable. The selection appears representative enough to serve as the basis for drawing valid and relevant conclusions about
the daily press reporting on Africa in the two countries under review.

As far as the selected journals are concerned, all of their issues in the two-year period were surveyed in detail. Two of the four journals are specialist scholarly periodicals dealing with the developing countries of Asia and Africa. The other two do not concentrate on any special area but, rather, on the fields of international politics, international relations and world economics. Drawing on my knowledge of various bibliographies of Soviet and Czechoslovak articles on Africa, I do not hesitate to suggest that the journals selected for this survey publish more than two-thirds of all Soviet and Czechoslovak articles dealing with the African continent. This selection can be therefore regarded as highly representative.

The paper has three parts: the first one surveys each of the ten periodicals; the second draws conclusions from the survey; and the third presents an annotated bibliography of major articles on Africa published in the journals and dailies under review during the period surveyed. The bibliography is, of course, selective, containing over 100 titles, two-thirds of which come from the USSR and one-third from Czechoslovakia.

The Survey

A. The Soviet Union

A.1. Pravda. Pravda is a national newspaper, the principal daily and the organ of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. It is published in Moscow seven times a week. Its regular size is six pages, of which an average of two pages (i.e. about 2,000 lines) are reserved for international events. During the period reviewed, Pravda had five permanent correspondents in Africa: two in the north (Cairo and Algiers), one in the west (Lagos), one in the east (Dar es Salaam, Nairobi and Kampala), and one in central and southern Africa (Brazzaville and Lusaka). Apart from them, several special correspondents toured the continent.

Altogether 287 news items on Africa were recorded in 150 surveyed copies. Approximately 30 per cent of the reports come
from Pravda’s permanent correspondents in Africa (more than one-half of the direct reports originate in Cairo, focusing mostly on Egypt’s involvement in the Arab–Israeli conflict). Ten per cent of all news from Africa is contained in long articles (200–500 lines) or commentaries (about 100 lines) by Pravda’s special commentators, analysts or correspondents. The remaining 60 per cent are TASS-supplied news, ranging from brief comments and announcements (5–20 lines) to a few long reports or commentaries (500–700 lines). (TASS—the official news agency of the USSR—had, during the period under review, permanent correspondents in Cairo, Algiers, Addis Ababa, Khartoum, Mogadishu, Dar es Salaam, Brazzaville, Lusaka, Dakar, Bamako and Conakry.)

The surveyed sample suggests that the space reserved for Africa in the international news section of Pravda is on the average 100 lines, i.e. 0.5 per cent of the total. Naturally, on a few special occasions (such as President Nasser’s visit to the USSR, Mr Podgorny’s visit to Algeria in March 1969, President Nyerere’s visit to the Soviet Union in October 1969, or the coups d’état in the Sudan, Libya and the Somali Republic), as much as one-quarter of the international news may deal with Africa.

The geographical distribution of the Pravda news coverage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographical area</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northern Africa</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(the Arab countries)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Africa</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Africa</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Africa</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Africa</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa in general</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table II. Pravda: Distribution of news by countries (percentage).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.A.R. (Egypt)</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sudan</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique and Angola</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo (Brazzaville)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South African Republic</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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of Africa is rather uneven and has the pattern shown in Tables I and II. Reports concerning the African political scene quite clearly predominate, the most frequent topics being Egypt's involvement in the Arab–Israeli conflict (30 per cent), the national-liberation movement in southern Africa (10 per cent) and various political events in the African countries following the "non-capitalist path of development" (40 per cent). The civil war in Nigeria attracted little attention (3 per cent) and so did political events in African countries lying outside the sphere of present Soviet interest (7 per cent). Reporting Africa's economic and cultural events does not exceed 10 per cent of the total news on the continent.

A.2. Asia i Afrika segodnia (Asia and Africa Today). This is a scientific, social and political journal published 12 times a year in Moscow jointly by the Institute of Asian Peoples and the Institute of Africa of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. Its regular size is 60 pages, with an average of 25 articles per issue. The contributions are not footnoted and have partly a scholarly and partly a popular character. The average page-space devoted to Africa during the period surveyed is 22 per cent of the total (18 per cent in 1968, 25 per cent in 1969 and 24 per cent in 1970). Altogether 97 articles on Africa were recorded in the 24 issues of the journal. Table III gives

Table III. AAS: Distribution of articles by geographical areas (in numbers of articles).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>General</th>
<th>Northern</th>
<th>Western</th>
<th>Eastern</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Southern</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table IV. AAS: Distribution of articles by topics (in numbers of articles).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>1968a</th>
<th>1969</th>
<th>1970b</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography and travel</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General and miscellaneous</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>22</strong></td>
<td><strong>53</strong></td>
<td><strong>22</strong></td>
<td><strong>97</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

aJuly–December. bJanuary–June.

their breakdown by Africa's major geographical areas. The topics discussed in the articles can be classified as shown in Table IV.

A.3. *Narody Azii i Afriki* (The Peoples of Asia and Africa). This scholarly journal is published six times a year in Moscow by the African Institute of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. Its regular size is 250 pages, of which an average of 150 pages is devoted to major articles; the rest is taken up by reviews, comments, bibliographical notes, etc. All articles are footnoted and based on a variety of sources.

On the average, 15 per cent of the space reserved for major articles is devoted to the African continent (15 per cent in 1968, 14 per cent in 1969, and 16 per cent in 1970).

A total of 33 major articles concerning Africa was recorded in the 12 issues of the journal. As Table V demonstrates, one-half of them discussed Africa in general and the subjects of the others were fairly evenly divided among the five principal geographical areas of the continent. The topics discussed in the articles have the pattern shown in Table VI.
Table V. *NAA*: Distribution of articles by geographical areas (in numbers of articles).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>General</th>
<th>Northern</th>
<th>Western</th>
<th>Eastern</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Southern</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1968a</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970b</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table VI. *NAA*: Distribution of articles by topics (in numbers of articles).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>1968a</th>
<th>1969</th>
<th>1970b</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography and travel</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General and miscellaneous</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


A.4. *Mirovaia ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniiia* (World Economics and International Relations). This scholarly journal is published 12 times a year in Moscow by the Institute of World Economics and International Relations of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. The regular size of a copy is 160 pages, with an average of 15 major articles per issue. Articles are footnoted and draw on a variety of sources.

Of the total page-space, an average of 4 per cent is taken up by articles and comments concerning the African continent (4 per cent in 1968, 3 per cent in 1969 and 5 per cent in 1970).

Altogether 23 articles on Africa appeared in the 24 issues surveyed for this purpose. Almost one-half of them related
Table VII. MEMO: Distribution of articles by geographical areas (in numbers of articles).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>General</th>
<th>Northern</th>
<th>Western</th>
<th>Eastern</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Southern</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1968a</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970b</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table VIII. MEMO: Distribution of articles by topics (in numbers of articles).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>1968a</th>
<th>1969</th>
<th>1970b</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General and miscellaneous</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


to Africa in general and the rest were distributed in the manner shown in Table VII. The articles were on the topics shown in Table VIII.

A.5. Mezhdunarodnaia zhizn’ (International Life). This scholarly journal is published 12 times a year simultaneously in Russian, English and French by the Znanie publishing house in Moscow. It deals mainly with problems of the foreign policy and diplomacy of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, with international relations in general, national-liberation movements, the development of the newly independent nations, the politics and economics of the capitalist world,
and the like. Its regular size is 160 pages, with an average of 12 major articles per issue; it also publishes book reviews and numerous brief comments.

The average space reserved for Africa is only slightly over 2 per cent of the total (2 per cent in 1968, 3 per cent in 1969 and 2 per cent in 1970). It is true that there are only 13 major articles on Africa in the 24 issues surveyed of *Mezhdunarodnaja zhizn*'. Apart from them, however, 36 brief comments and informative notes concerning the continent appeared in the journal during the period under review. As is demonstrated below, the attention paid to Africa by the editors of *MZh* is not out of proportion to that paid to other parts of the developing world. Table IX gives a comparison of the number of articles and comments on Africa, Asia and Latin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Africa</th>
<th>Asia</th>
<th>Latin America</th>
<th>The developing world in general</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table IX. *MZh*: Comparison of articles on developing countries (in numbers of articles).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Africa</th>
<th>Northern</th>
<th>Western</th>
<th>Eastern</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Southern</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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America published in the journal during two periods especially chosen for this investigation, namely, July–December 1968 and January–December 1969.

If we take into account—apart from the 13 major articles—also the 36 comments and notes on Africa that appeared in the journal during the 24 months under review, we arrive at the distributions by geographical areas and topics given in Tables X and XI.

Table XI. MZh: Distribution of articles and other contributions by topics (in numbers of articles and comments).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>1968</th>
<th>1969</th>
<th>1970</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography and travel</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General and miscellaneous</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


B. Czechoslovakia

B.1. Rudé právo. This is the principal daily and the organ of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, published six times a week (except Sunday) in Prague. Its regular size is eight pages (Monday four pages, Saturday eight pages plus an eight-page supplement). International news absorbs two pages (i.e. about 2000 lines). The daily has no permanent correspondents in Africa (the Arab–Israeli conflict is covered by its permanent correspondent in Beirut). For this reason, it bases its reports almost solely on ČTK press releases. ČTK is the official news agency of Czechoslovakia. It has at the moment a permanent correspondent only in Cairo. It has, however, its so-called “local collaborators” in the following African cities: Rabat, Algiers, Tunis, Khartoum, Addis Ababa, Lusaka, Lagos, Mogadishu, Dakar and Bamako. In 1968–69,
ČTK had permanent correspondents in Cairo, Algiers, Accra, Bamako, Lagos, Dar es Salaam and Nairobi.)

Altogether 184 news items on Africa were recorded in the 150 copies surveyed. The vast majority of Rudé právo reports on Africa are brief, informative, uncommented announcements, ranging from 5 to 30 lines. Longer articles and special comments (100–500 lines) represent not more than 10 per cent of the total. The space reserved for Africa in the international section of the newspaper is on the average 60 lines, i.e. 0.3 per cent of all international news. Tables XII and XIII give a breakdown of the frequency of Rudé právo news reports on various parts of Africa, as well as on a few selected countries during the two-year period under review.

Table XII. RP: Distribution of news by geographical areas (percentage).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographical area</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northern Africa (the Arab countries)</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Africa</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Africa</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Africa</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Africa</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa in general</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table XIII. RP: Distribution of news by countries (percentage).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.A.R. (Egypt)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sudan</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo (Kinshasa)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reporting the political scene of Africa quite clearly predominates over any other topics. The Nigerian crisis attracted more attention than any other major event (20 per cent), followed by political developments in the Sudan, Algeria, the U.A.R. (Egypt), the Congo (Kinshasa) and a few other countries (altogether 50 per cent of the total). The Arab–Israeli conflict was given relatively little publicity (6 per cent) and so was the national-liberation movement in southern Africa (4 per cent). Reports on economic and cultural events do not exceed 10 per cent of the total and the same is true of the news on general topics concerning the African continent.
B. 2. *Nový Orient* (New Orient) This scholarly journal is published in Czech 10 times a year by the Oriental Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences in Prague. Its regular size is 30 pages, with an average of 10 major articles per issue. Of the total space, 16 per cent is on the average devoted to Africa (20 per cent in 1968, 19 per cent in 1969 and 9 per cent in 1970). Altogether 35 articles on Africa were published in the 20 surveyed issues of the journal. Their area and topic distributions are shown in Tables XIV and XV.

Table XIV. *NO*: Distribution of articles by geographical areas (in numbers of articles).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>General</th>
<th>Northern</th>
<th>Western</th>
<th>Eastern</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Southern</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table XV. *NO*: Distribution of articles by topics (in numbers of articles).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>1968</th>
<th>1969</th>
<th>1970</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography and travel</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General and miscellaneous</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B.3. Archiv orientální (The Oriental Archives) This scholarly journal is published four times a year by the Oriental Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences in Prague. Its average size is 160 pages, one half of which is devoted to long, well-researched, fully footnoted articles and the other half to reviews and brief comments. The articles and other contributions are written in English, French, German or Russian.

Only three articles and eight reviews on Africa appeared in the journal during the period examined. Thus, the total space devoted to Africa is on the average less than 4 per cent. Two of the articles were on West Africa and discussed social and linguistic problems; the third article dealt with ancient Egyptian monuments.

B.4. Mezinárodní politika (International Politics) This monthly is published 12 times a year by the Socialist Academy in Prague. The journal was discontinued in January 1970. Its regular size was 48 pages, and the average number of articles 20. The page-space dedicated to the African continent did not exceed 6 per cent of the total. Altogether 22 articles and 2 reviews were published in the 18 numbers of the journal examined for this survey. Their area and topic distributions are shown in Tables XVI and XVII.

Table XVI. MP: Distribution of articles by geographical areas (in numbers of articles).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>General</th>
<th>Northern</th>
<th>Western</th>
<th>Eastern</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Southern</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1968*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*July–December.

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Table XVII. MP: Distribution of articles by topics (in numbers of articles).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>1968</th>
<th>1969</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General and miscellaneous</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*July–December.

B.5. *Mezinárodní vztahy* (International Relations) This scholarly journal is published four times a year by the Institute of International Politics and Economics in Prague. Its average size is 80 pages, with an average of seven major articles and a few reviews and comments. The journal is published in Czech; it is fully footnoted and carries long English résumés of major articles.

Only three articles and four reviews on Africa appeared in the journal during the period of research. Two articles dealt with West Africa (Guinea’s state ideology and the Nigerian civil war) and the third discussed planning in Africa. The total space devoted to Africa is on the average 6 per cent.

Conclusions

As far as the daily press is concerned, *Pravda* provides its readers with approximately 50 per cent more news on the African continent that does *Rudé právo*. The pattern of area focus of the Soviet newspaper shows, however, a greater unevenness than that of the Czechoslovak daily (cf. Tables I and XII). In both the newspapers, reports on the African political scene quite clearly predominate over the economic, social, cultural and general themes. Whereas about one-third of the Soviet news reports come from *Pravda*’s permanent or special correspondents in Africa, *Rudé právo*, not having its own correspondents on the continent, bases its news on ČTK press
releases. The amounts of space taken up by news of Africa in the international sections of Pravda and Rudé právo are on the average 0.5 and 0.3 per cent respectively.

It is easy to detect the characteristic trait underlying all Pravda reports on Africa: a deep, unequivocal, ideological commitment to the Soviet interpretation of Marxism–Leninism and, consequently, to an uncompromising struggle with imperialism and colonialism permeates the news, furnishing them with the distinctive style, tone and content. Of course, this commitment is bound to predetermine the choice of countries to pay special attention to, as well as the selection of topics to report on. For this reason, Pravda reports on the U.A.R., Algeria, the Sudan, Libya, and the Congo (Brazzaville), on the one hand, and the racist and colonial regimes in southern Africa, on the other, absorb two-thirds of its total Africa news coverage. For the same reason, the prevailing topics include the defence of Arab interests in the conflict with Israel, the liberation struggle in southern Africa, support of any “progressive movements” on the continent (such as, for example, the new regimes in the Sudan and Libya, the governments of the Congo (Brazzaville), Tanzania or Uganda, the national-liberation leaders in Rhodesia, Mozambique, Angola, South-West Africa, etc.), and criticism of Biafra’s separation from Federal Nigeria.

The ideological differences between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union that came to the open in 1968 manifested themselves in the party newspaper Rudé právo, influencing to some extent also Czechoslovak reporting on Africa. The survey has shown that in the first half of the period examined, Czechoslovak attention, unlike Soviet attention, was focused more on Nigeria than on the U.A.R. (the ratio of reports was almost 2:1), on the Congo (Kinshasa) than on the Congo (Brazzaville), and on eastern Africa rather than on southern Africa. Rudé právo reports and commentaries in 1968–9 voiced support for Biafra and remained relatively neutral in reporting the Arab–Israeli conflict. From about mid-1969, however, Rudé právo and Pravda were again in perfect unison.

The total number of articles and other contributions dealing with Africa published in the four Soviet journals during
the period surveyed slightly exceeded 200; those published by
the four Czechoslovak periodicals reached a third of the Soviet
output (for details, see the tables in the Survey). It is surpris-
ing that the difference is so small. Not only the general public
but particularly the number of Africanists are much greater
in the Soviet Union than in Czechoslovakia: during the period
under review, approximately 400 Soviet scholars focused their
attention and research efforts on the African continent (see
NAA, No. 3, 1970, p. 211), whereas hardly a tenth of that
number did so in Czechoslovakia. It is only fair to say, to
the credit of the Soviet scholars, that the articles on Africa
that appear, particularly in NAA and MEMO, are much more
extensive than those in the Czechoslovak Oriental and other
journals under review. Surprisingly enough, the average page-
space devoted to Africa in the four Soviet journals is 11 per
cent of the total, as compared with 8 per cent in the Czecho-
slovak case (for details, consult the relevant tables in the
Survey).

It would be both difficult and pretentious to attempt here
anything more than a general assessment of the quality of the
journal articles under discussion. Apparently, most of them
are relatively well-researched studies that try to contribute to
scholarly knowledge of African life by speculating about the
numerous problems facing the continent, by proposing ways
of meeting Africa's most pressing needs, and by popularizing
the results of their authors' research endeavours. It may be
interesting, though not too surprising, to note here that most
of the reference materials, literature and sources listed in the
footnotes of Soviet journal articles on Africa are of western
origin. Hardly anyone can be taken aback by the statement
that an ideological bias permeates all the Soviet articles on
African political, economic and social themes. This is an es-
established fact that no Soviet social scientist would try to deny.
In a way, the same is true of Czechoslovak journal articles
on Africa in the field of politics and economics, even though
several exceptions were recorded in the first half of the period
surveyed. The numerous Czechoslovak articles on African lit-
erature and art, however, remain free of an ideology-centred
approach.
This brings us to the themes of the journal articles under review. At this point it is interesting to note that, while African political and economic problems represent about 50 per cent of the topics of articles on Africa in the two Soviet journals specializing in Asian and African studies (AAS, NAA), the two Czechoslovak journals on Africa and the Orient (NO, AO) concentrate on African culture (mainly literature and art), leaving only 8 per cent of their African themes to politics and economics. In the case of the four remaining journals, the prevalence of political and economic topics is, of course, guaranteed by their nature (MEMO, MZh; MP, MV). On comparing the subject matter of Soviet and Czechoslovak journal articles with the news reports in the party press, we may arrive at the conclusion that, whereas the two dailies are very heavily weighted towards African topics of an ideological and political nature, the journals tend to offer a greater variety of themes (cf. the relevant tables in the Survey).

The last and perhaps the most interesting finding of this research paper concerns the difference in the area focus of Pravda news reports, as compared with journal articles. While the Soviet party press informs its readers more about the Arab countries of northern Africa (57 per cent of the total) than about any other part of the continent, the scholarly periodicals give this area no special preference (13 per cent of the total). The attention paid to Africa in general is much greater in Soviet journals than in Pravda. On the whole, the major areas of the African continent are discussed in a more balanced way by the journals than by the daily press. Similarly,

Table XVIII. Distribution of Soviet and Czechoslovak journal articles by geographical areas (percentage).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>General</th>
<th>Northern</th>
<th>Western</th>
<th>Eastern</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Southern</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soviet journals</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czechoslovak journals</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table XIX. Distribution of Pravda and Rudé právo news items by geographical areas (percentage).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Africa</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pravda</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rudé právo</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

the Czechoslovak scholarly press gives a more balanced account of Africa’s major geographical areas than the party daily. Tables XVIII and XIX summarize the relevant data, in order to illustrate the points made in this paragraph and to conclude the survey.

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For a list of the abbreviations, see the first page of this paper.

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Supplement

*A List of Other Soviet and Czechoslovak Periodicals which Occasionally Report on Africa (Scholarly and Popular)*

**THE SOVIET UNION**

*Strany i narody Vostoka* (monthly)

*Mehdunarodnye otnosheniiia* (monthly)

*Sovetskaia etnografiiia* (bi-monthly)
Voprosy istorii (monthly)
Vneshniaia torgovlia (monthly)
Novoe vremia (fortnightly)
Novyi mir (monthly)
Kul'tura i zhizn' (monthly)
Agitator (monthly)
Kommunist (monthly)
Vokrug sveta (monthly)

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Acta Universitatis Carolinae: Orientalia Pragensia (annual)
Asian and African Studies (annual)
Annals of the Náprstek Museum (annual)
Solidarity/Solidarité (monthly)
Lidé a země (monthly)
Zápisník (monthly)
Otážky míru a socialismu (monthly)
roo + r zahraničních zajímavostí (monthly)
The Nordic Television Services

One member of the staff of each of the Nordic television services who cover Africa for their respective services was invited to comment on the coverage of African affairs by his service at the "Reporting Africa" seminar. The instructions they received were deliberately rather vague: Tell us how the African scene is presented by your television service, describe your priorities, and bring a film extract (feature or news) as an example of your coverage. Each contribution was planned to take 15–20 minutes. The choice was left to the contributor. What kind of films did they bring?

Jørgen Flindt Pedersen, of the Danish Broadcasting Corporation, brought an extract of a documentary film he had made of the Nigerian civil war. Yrjö Länsipuro, of the Finnish Broadcasting Company, presented a film made by Gideon Weinraub on South African apartheid. Erik Bye and Øystein Stabrun, of the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK), presented an extract of a film made by Per Ö. Heradstveit on the Southern Sudan question, and Knut Sogstad, of the NRK, brought an archive film on the liberation movement in Angola. Bo Bjelfvenstam, of the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation, Television Channel 1, presented an extract of a film he had made on the Eritrean liberation movement.

These contributions were discussed in a session of the seminar. The discussion is not included in the present volume, since comments of this kind have to be related to the pictures shown. Criticism of the selections made was invited from the African participants in the seminar, who maintained that the coverage of Africa was crisis-oriented. This was, however, denied by the representatives of the Nordic television services, most convincingly by Bo Bjelfvenstam. Of the approximately 15 films he himself had made on African affairs, the one shown was the only "crisis" film.
After the seminar, we asked four of the contributors to write a short comment on (a) the extent of the Africa coverage by their television service, and the proportion of this coverage that was made up of their own production, (b) their priorities with regard to their own documentary films and the selection of news and features from Africa, and (c) their problems in reporting Africa. The results will be found in the next few pages.
To begin with, I can assert that there is no question of the Danish Broadcasting Corporation having any complete policy with regard to what is taken from abroad and how it is presented to the public. It is true that seasonal plans are approved by the central controlling bodies in the Corporation, but this is only formal. The whole initiative and the real decisions are taken by the program departments—on the television side, the current-affairs and the cultural departments, and on the radio side, the culture and current-affairs department and the news bulletins.

This means, again, that it has to a large extent been left to the individual staff members to make suggestions about journeys to Africa, for example, but at the same time these staff members have, for financial reasons, to have an eye to what they can sell to the higher authorities. For example, at the start the Nigeria–Biafra conflict was just about unsaleable, but the situation changed when the Scandinavian relief work really got under way.

From the point of view of news, Africa plays a very small part. Of course, we receive the normal agency material, but it is only the comparatively big events that are passed on to the Danish viewer or listener in the news broadcasts. Naturally coups and changes of government are reported and, on the whole, everything that smells like a crisis. On the other hand, there is very little following up of the events reported in the news. For example, one is often informed in the television news that a coup has taken place, but one does not get to know anything later about what happened afterwards. However, on the radio side there is a somewhat better tradi-
tion of a running background coverage with the aid of Danish experts. On the other hand, the Corporation has no corres-
dpondents in Africa.

If Africa is given low priority, purely from the point of view of news, I may say that, on the other hand, a comparati-
vely large number of general programs on African countries are produced. I am referring to both specifically political
programs and to more cultural and sociological broadcasts. In recent years much time has been devoted to develop-
ment problems in Africa and on both the radio and the television sides large-scale projects are at present in hand in this field.

We are very much aware of the danger that everything will be regarded through European spectacles and have therefore
arranged a special Africa week on television, in which African-
produced films on Africa will be broadcast every evening. In
the same way we find it natural to enter into collaboration
with the local African broadcasting services during recordings
in Africa.

Within the last three years—to my knowledge—the Corpor-
ation has had special correspondents in the following African
countries: Algeria, the Sudan, Uganda, Kenya (several times),
Tanzania (several times), Zambia, Rhodesia, Nigeria (several
times), Ghana, Senegal and Ivory Coast: We have purchased
reports from free-lance correspondents on South Africa, Mo-
zambique and Angola.

If the coverage of Africa is compared with those of Latin
America and Asia, it actually looks as if Africa comes at the
top of the list, as regards reporting trips and more general
material, but at the bottom of the list, as regards the daily
news coverage. In general it may probably be said that the
former French colonies in Africa are neglected in comparison
with the former British colonies. This, again, is connected
with the language problems, which, in their turn, have led to
the Danish development-aid efforts largely being made in
Commonwealth countries, especially Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania
and Zambia. These efforts have probably helped to increase
Danish interest in Africa but at the same time they have meant
that the coverage of the African continent has been lopsided.
Another reason for the former British colonies being favoured

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is our dependence on material from the English television companies.

I can see a number of reasons why the news coverage of Africa is so scanty. In the first place, communications with some parts of the African continent are still uncommonly poor. Everyone knows this who has had the experience of waiting a whole day for a telephone call to Scandinavia, which, when it finally comes through, is completely incomprehensible. In addition, there is the fact that the Danish people are not particularly receptive to details about Africa. They find the names very strange and there seems constantly to be a little element of the attitude that one "negro chieftain" is as good as another. Again, this may be connected with a certain feeling of disappointment, which manifests itself in attitudes which may be summarized in the statement "Now that we have been so good as to give them self-government, they cannot in decency destroy the super-democracy we have given them".

Finally, the fact that the Great Powers have not been particularly engaged in Africa in recent years has also probably played a certain part. Thus, one notes how the news coverage immediately increases when a western power is involved, as in the case of Great Britain's plans to sell arms to South Africa.

The most recent problem in the news coverage of Africa is the African authorities' suspicion of western journalists, a suspicion which was strengthened—not without reason—by the treatment of the Nigerian civil war in the western mass media. There will certainly be increasing African demands for positive reporting and this will offend against our general journalistic principles about not being dictated to by anyone.
Yrjö Länsipuro

The Finnish Broadcasting Company

Our reporting on African affairs has been fairly modest in recent years. On the news and current-affairs side, Africa has been displaced, even when the "wind of change" seemed to be increasing in strength. When the wind died down, fresh clouds came sailing up from other directions—south-eastern Asia and the Middle East. The internal crises in the United States and problems of European integration and security have dominated world politics and African matters have again been pushed aside, out of the picture. In the last two or three years, only one "big story" has been born—and died—on the Black Continent—the story of Biafra.

On the news side, a relatively small and financially weak company like the Finnish Broadcasting Company has in most cases to rely on the big international news and news-film agencies. It is extremely rarely that it does its own reporting and then only in connection with major crises, such as the Nigerian war. (During the Nigerian war three reporting trips were made altogether, all with the minimum team of one reporter and one cameraman.)

Our experience has not been particularly encouraging. It is difficult to compete with the big television companies, which send out regular expeditions, furnished with adequate staff, equipment and money. In most cases we received the actual news material from one of the big companies via Eurovision. For the two-man team on the spot, it was a question of keeping a cool head, leaving the reporting of "hot" news to other people and concentrating instead on news items which would "keep" for at least 3-4 days.

The news statistics for January–May 1970 show that our television news service broadcast 6,600 foreign telegrams, of
which 590 or about 8% dealt with African topics. Of these, a good 30% came from Reuters, about 16% from Agence France-Presse (AFP) and about 12% from Associated Press (AP). The remainder—about 40%—were compiled with material from two or all three of these agencies.

As regards news films, the main suppliers are Visnews and UPITN (the film agency owned by United Press International and Independent Television News), the international film agencies which are still responsible for the greater part of all the film material which comes from outside Europe and North America. It is already possible to discern a tendency which will perhaps upset the monopoly status of these agencies. African television companies are associate members of Eurovision. Up to now, they have not had any opportunity to take part in the daily exchange of news between Eurovision members. Now North African television companies are gradually coming into the picture and one must only hope that black Africa will also come into the picture in the future. All that is necessary is a distribution satellite which will cover Europe and the greater part of Africa, with earth stations also in African countries. A satellite like this has been on the drawing board for quite a long time, but it is not very likely that it will be launched before 1975. Such a satellite is also the only sensible solution of the problem of exchanging news between the African television companies, if and when such exchange becomes a topical matter.

In the period 1968–70 the Finnish Broadcasting Company's own production on the news and current-affairs side was limited to the above-mentioned trips to Biafra and a trip to Tanzania. Now and then, the foreign correspondents in Europe or America have produced film reports on questions concerning Africa, for example, in connection with United Nations reporting from New York or Geneva. Africanists visiting Helsinki have been interviewed for current-affairs programs, which in other respects were based on Visnews or UPITN material. Finally, it must be recorded that the "Reporting Africa" seminar gave rise to a foreign magazine program, which attempted to examine critically the reporting of the Nigerian civil war.

On the program side (programs other than news and current
affairs) the company's own production has been even smaller. At most two programs on Africa have been produced—one on Tanzania and the other on the problems of southern Africa. I have perhaps not been successful in collecting complete program statistics, but it seems certain that in 1969–70 we did not broadcast a single documentary film of our own production on Africa. On the other hand, many foreign documentary films on Africa were seen on Finnish television in 1969–70, including "The Heart of Apartheid" (BBC), "Sahara" (NBC), "The Legacy of Albert Schweitzer" (Warner Bros.) and five instalments of Granada's "The World in Action" which dealt with Africa. In September we also broadcast the Swedish television series entitled "Colonialism in Africa" in three instalments.

How is the material chosen? On the news side, the "news value" is, of course, decisive—whatever "news value" may mean. We have certainly tried to define this ambiguous concept afresh, in such a way as to enable the journalists to see and avoid the pitfalls that Galtung, Himmelstrand and others have warned us against. We have tried to give up the usual "this-is-what-the-people-want-to-see" attitude and have tried instead to attach greater importance to the real consequences which a certain "news event" may have. We have tried to avoid exoticism and curiosity value as criteria of what is news and to make room for more important, though less colourful material.

I assume that "news value" also plays a certain part on the documentary side. One willingly buys documentary films which have a connection with the news situation. Otherwise I suppose that the same criteria are applied as in the purchase of other documentary films.

All that has been said here can be summarized very briefly. Both on the news side and on the program side it is the British and the Americans, sometimes the Germans and the French, but extremely seldom the Swedes or even the Finns, who describe for the Finnish public what is happening in Africa. The situation is by no means typical of reporting on Africa alone—it also applies to the coverage of the whole of the "third world". Nor does it prevail only in Finland; I
think that it prevails in many relatively small countries with small and poor television companies. The basic problem remains, in spite of satellites and sporadic forays into war centres. The old colonial institution of the "middleman" survives; the journalistic dialogue with Africa is still not a direct one.
Knut Sogstad

The Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation

The coverage of Africa on television by the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK) will mainly be by the News Department and the Department for Cultural and Current Affairs. The coverage given by the News Department will chiefly be the regular news coverage and background material for the news, together with political reporting. The feature coverage will mostly be by the other departments, although in practice this distinction is more or less blurred, depending on the people and the topics concerned.

In the following remarks I shall restrict myself to the News Department coverage only, and concentrate on the television coverage.

On sound radio the News Department takes care of the regular news coverage, whereas the political background material is supplied mainly by the Foreign Department. Feature material will also on sound radio be mainly in the hands of the Department for Cultural and Current Affairs. In so far as the coverage given by sound radio is mentioned, I shall restrict myself to the coverage of the Foreign Department, i.e. news commentaries, background material, and political reporting.

Policy in setting up priorities for the coverage of African topics

It may, with some justification, be said that priorities are very seldom set in advance in a planned fashion. It could also be said that policies, that is, long-term planning for setting priorities, do not exist, except for one type of cover-
age—reporting done by individual staff members. But even then, the priorities, interests, etc. of the person doing the job will probably be of great importance for the kind of programme that is eventually produced, and also for the selection of topic, geographical area, etc. These points could, of course, be argued back and forth. What is important is that, even if the persons responsible for the coverage should want to set up elaborate priorities for the coverage to be given different areas, this would be next to impossible to follow through.

The "political" coverage given to Africa, and any other area, for that matter, is roughly speaking of two different kinds: (1) news commentaries, generally with a duration of 1 to 3 minutes, and (a) more general background coverage and reportage. In the NRK this is given in a fortnightly "magazine" of 35 minutes' duration. Again, roughly speaking, what decides whether or nor Africa will be covered under the first category is whether there is any "big" news from Africa. The question "What is big news?" is, of course, of crucial importance for reporting Africa in any of the mass media. Suffice it, in this brief sketch, to say that what is "big" news is to a great extent decided by the international news agencies, on which also the NRK relies for daily information. In other words, what is reported from Africa in the form of news commentaries is decided mainly by what is on the telex day by day. I would say that this holds true also for sound radio.

Coming to the second category, the more general background reportage, this is decided not so much by what is in the news, as by what material is available. Generally film material for this kind of coverage comes from three kinds of sources: (a) the international film agencies, (b) other broadcasting corporations, and (c) material produced by staff members on reporting excursions. As I have already mentioned, for the last category it is meaningful to talk of the setting of priorities. However, even this may be illusory, for the following reason. Due to the shortage of financial resources, what is done in the field of reporting by staff members is rather limited. It may therefore be tempting to cover oneself what has not been covered by the other two kinds of sources.
Thus one's own priority and actual field work may be pre-
decided by the international coverage as a whole.

As regards the material coming from other sources, the ques-
tion is not one of setting priorities; it is more a question of seeing what can be used from the collection of material offered. This problem, of course, does not exist in the same way on sound radio, which is not dependent on showing au-
thentic pictures, on "having been on the spot". My impres-
sion is that what is covered is, to a great extent, decided by the individual "news communicator's" interests and field of knowl-
edge. The same holds true to some extent of television cover-
age, with the major qualification that the selection takes place
within the sometimes rather narrow framework of the film
material available.

One final factor which may influence the NRK coverage
of Africa, and also of other regions in general, is Norwegian
interests. This may make otherwise inconspicuous incidents
"big" news; it may also make film material from private
sources more easily available. Examples from Africa are not
difficult to come by. Eastern Nigeria—Norwegian mission-
ary activity; Ethiopia—Royal visit and Norwegian naval training;
East Africa—Norwegian development aid. This final factor,
"the Norwegian element", is probably very important and may
override other factors that influence the coverage of Africa in
Norwegian television and radio.

Also the involvement of the great powers in a matter will
make it more probable that the matter in question will be
covered by the mass media. It must be stressed, however, that
these factors are not particular to the coverage of Africa; they
influence the coverage of any region or part of the world,
and seem to be more or less "endemic" to mass-media com-
munication as a whole.

Crisis reporting

Our critics have maintained that the television coverage of
Africa (again, any other region can be substituted for Africa)
seems to be "crisis-oriented". This has been denied by the
television people. It may well be that both the critics and the
television "defenders" have a good point. Not all television coverage of Africa is by any means concerned with crises. Here it may be fruitful to go back to the tentative distinction between "news commentaries" and "general background coverage" established earlier.

I think it is correct to say that crises make the news more easily than many other types of events. A coup d'état will in many cases be "bigger" news than a change of government by peaceful and regular elections. Guinea is another recent example: almost nothing was heard from that country for quite some time until the attempted invasion last fall. Thus the allegation that television is crisis-oriented may have some validity, as concerns the news commentaries. As regards the more general background coverage, the allegation seems to me more doubtful, although this conclusion is admittedly based on personal impressions and not on concrete data.

One problem peculiar to the television coverage is the use of archive material. This concerns primarily the "truthfulness" of the medium. This again ties up with the more general problem of whether the tiny "slice" of reality that is communicated gives the "right" picture of the reality which it is intended to portray. This problem tends to be aggravated with the use of archive film. Archive films are used where contemporary film coverage is missing or inadequate, and the fact that "old" film may thus be used to illustrate contemporary events may result in a more or less distorted picture—even more so, as the pictures generally predominate over the spoken commentary. Furthermore, archive films often have no sound track, which means that sound patently not authentic has to be applied. Nevertheless, archive materials sometimes have to be used, as the choice may often be between not covering a specific event, due to lack of "up-to-date" film, and covering that event by using the archive films available.
Bo Bjelfvenstam

The Swedish Broadcasting Corporation

The agreement between the Swedish State and the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation states that the Corporation "is responsible for informing the public about current events in a suitable way, supplying them with background information on cultural and social questions, and stimulating them to discuss such questions". Since the end of 1969 the Corporation has broadcast on two channels, TV 1 and TV 2. The policy document which was prepared for TV 1 at that time includes the statement that, "when confronted with the task of reporting current events in our society—which obviously does not mean only Swedish society—it is important to see that the journalistic alertness to a spectacular story does not lead to essential but less intensely observed subjects and discussions being neglected".

These guidelines say nothing about the scale and direction of the foreign coverage and there is no special policy for the coverage of Africa or other particular regions. The African material presented on TV 1 may be of the following kinds.

1. "Factual news"

In the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation we have tried to distinguish between "factual" and "explicative" news. The central news department is responsible for the factual news. It has nothing to do with the two channels and works independently. The news supplied by the central news department consists of "news spots" and its scope is, of course, dependent on the events which take place in Africa and the news value of these events. It is evident that the greater part of these news items will consist of crises and conflicts.
2. Explicatory foreign news
Since January 1971, TV 1 has been devoting half an hour a week to explicatory foreign news. These programs are to a large extent devoted to analyses of current events, either those which have just happened or those which, it may be assumed, are about to happen. However, it is also possible to make room for programs primarily of a feature character. These explicatory foreign-news programs may be produced in Sweden or purchased from abroad. In this case, as in the case of factual news, the scope of the African material will depend to a large extent on events in Africa, though somewhat greater space may perhaps be found for deviations from the traditional news evaluation.

3. Features
Features are included in the category of program entitled "Politics and Society". About 2 1/2 hours a week have been reserved for this category of program. In order to give the reader an idea of how little scope is given to foreign-news coverage in general and Africa in particular, I enumerate below the fields which are considered to be included under the heading of "Politics and Society" and which are consequently to be accommodated in the 2 1/2 hours a week allotted to this category.

International relations, peace movements, relief work, international co-operation, the disarmament question, regional international co-operation.

Political science and political affairs, both domestic and foreign, popular representation, civil rights, the party system, political opinions, the government, elections.

Central, regional and local administration, the committee system, knowledge of local government, environmental questions, social planning.

Jurisprudence, law, criminology, the police service, the treatment of offenders.

Social questions and social policy, labour-market topics, questions of cost, emigration and immigration, segregation and racial questions, social welfare and the care of old people, the temperance movement.

Statistics.
Insurance.

Co-operation.

Finance and business, political economy, the financial system, commercial and industrial life, the customs administration.

Business economics.

The home and the household, consumer questions, fashion.

Trade.

The postal service and telecommunications.

Military organization.

You may think it remarkable that any programs on Africa are broadcast at all!

In order to cope in anything like a satisfactory fashion with the large number of subjects which are to be dealt with, we usually decide to give priority to definite regions during a definite period of time. However, no such priority has been allocated to Africa during 1971.

4. Other alternatives

About 1 hour a week is reserved for foreign documentary films, which are hired from television companies or individual producers all over the world. Here also we concentrate on different subject fields which have been planned in advance. This is done and will certainly be increasingly done in cooperation with the group which works on “Politics and Society”. No priority has been allocated to Africa during 1971, as regards foreign documentary films either.

Every other week, half an hour has been reserved for a magazine program devoted to cultural matters, which may very well contain material from Africa. Now and then, there are children’s programmes with African themes.

It seems as if just now we are experiencing a sort of saturation, as regards Africa, owing to the fact that in previous years our offerings have been fairly extensive. This is one aspect of the problem of covering Africa. The other aspect will probably become much more serious. I refer to the increasingly strong reaction from the developing countries, including those in Africa, against our manner of reporting these countries. Some of these reactions appeared at the UNESCO General Conference in the autumn of 1970. All the represen-
tatives of the developing countries seem to have been un-
aminous in their criticism of the reporting on their countries
in the mass media of the developed countries, especially by
the radio and television services. It was considered that the
recorded reporting is ethnocentric and gives a negative and
distorted picture of the problems of the developing countries
and the attempts being made to solve these problems. The
developing countries seldom get an opportunity to put for-
ward their own views. It was also considered that spectacular
conflicts and violence receive such detailed treatment that the
public in the developed countries must get a totally erroneous
picture of the developing countries. Amongst other things, it
was suggested that there should be an international agreement
to prohibit radio and television reporters from producing ma-
terial that has not been approved by the authorities of the
country concerned.

The developing countries' charges are directed at the whole
of the developed part of the world, including Scandinavia.
It is very difficult for us to refute these charges. At the be-
inning of the 1960s we made many programs about Africa
which must have appeared to Africans to be indulgently pa-
ternalistic—favourable in most cases but with a superior atti-
dude throughout and often drawing quite erroneous conclu-
sions. This type of program was considered, at any rate by
us, as a great improvement on the type of presentation to
which Africa had previously always been subjected—the exot-
c presentation, in which the emphasis was always placed on
strange rites, savage dances and curious customs.

A third type of presentation has appeared more and more
often in recent years and is perhaps the one which has caused
the Africans to react most vigorously. This is the "crisis pro-
gram" type, primarily, of course, about Biafra.

If the developing countries carry out their threat about
checking film material, the amount of reporting on African
affairs will undoubtedly decrease. Many television reporters
will refuse to work on such conditions. In that case the ques-
tion for the developing countries will be: Which is worse for
us—to be incorrectly reported or not to be reported at all?
The question for the mass media in the developed countries
will be: Which is worse for us—not to get any reports from the developing countries or to get reports that have been “checked” by the authorities in those countries? Is some form of co-operation conceivable—a form in which the views of the reporter from the developed country do not necessarily predominate by placing too strong an emphasis on dramatic conflicts or in which the “defensive attitude” of the representative of the developing country does not necessarily idealize the real conditions.
Colin Legum

Some Problems Confronting a Correspondent Specializing in Reporting Africa*

We should start by recognizing that all journalists everywhere—whether in the western democracies, the Communist countries or in the Third World—are faced with special problems that inhibit their maximum effectiveness as independent and well-informed writers. In one sense, therefore, all journalists are "prisoners" of the system within which they work; there is really no point in one lot pretending that their system represents maximum freedom. Personally, I would rather work within the western liberal democratic system than in any other, but I would at the same time be the first to criticize the serious shortcomings of the western press. I do not pretend that we have all the virtues, for plainly we do not.

One of the disturbing features of the western press is what might be called "crisis journalism"—the tendency to devote a large amount of space, resources and efforts to reporting the "abnormal" in home and international affairs. Of course, crises must be dealt with at length and seriously, but too often this type of journalism is carried to the length of under-reporting the "normal" events and, too often, the crisis is allowed to drop right out of sight once the "heat" goes out of the story. My special criticism is of the inadequacy of the in-depth reporting of situations which have not yet reached the point of crisis or of the failure to stay with the situation in the post-crisis period. Thus, I may be aware that things are going badly wrong in, say, Sierra Leone, but who, ask my

* This article contains some of the points made by Colin Legum in the discussions at the seminar. He has knitted these points together at the request of the editor of this volume.
colleagues, is interested in Sierra Leone? The first time readers often become aware of a country’s problems is when there has been a military coup, bloodshed or violent change. Only then is there an “appetite” for information; but at this point most papers are usually much more concerned with reporting the actual events than in devoting a lot of space to serious background reporting—what I call the “roots of the problem” journalism.

This complaint is true not only of foreign affairs but also of home affairs. Here we journalists are up against very real problems. Since most of us work for papers which owe their economic survival to mass circulations, it is natural (even if unacceptable to ourselves) that the paper should concentrate on publishing what is of particular interest to its readers. Unfortunately, in every society in which readers really do have a free choice of papers, they prefer to read the “abnormal” rather than to follow the important but not always the exciting unfolding of events. By and large they are interested in Chile or South Africa or Outer Mongolia or even Finland or Sweden only when there is some “crisis” situation or something rather unusual going on. So this is a very real problem: it raises the question of how to promote more interest in the serious treatment of international and national affairs by the mass media.

This problem is directly linked to a second: the role of specialists in journalism. At this point the cry goes up from young people and from the “revolutionaries” about “elite journalism”. But what, may I ask, are the “underground press” and revolutionary magazines if not elite journalism par excellence? One has no quarrel with serious writers who prefer to write in their own way in small exclusive magazines, hoping to appeal (in some undefined way) to a great mass of readers who do not, after all, read their magazines. But it is hard to see what their quarrel is with other serious writers, who choose to work for the mass media and who prefer to make some compromises in order to enable them to reach as wide an audience as possible on a regular basis—provided, of course, that the compromises they make do not involve them in compromises of principle, such as following an edi-
orial line against one's own better knowledge and judgment. I merely want to say that in the 21 years I have worked for The Observer I have never once been asked to change what I have written in deference to the editorial discretion of others. What I have written has always been my own, and what has not appeared in the paper has always been left out for reasons that have nothing to do with what I have written; nor has there been a single occasion when anything I have written has been excluded from the paper on the ground of editorial disapproval. Often, of course, it happens that what I write or what I propose to write is not published at the time, but this has always been for reasons of space being devoted to competing interests or because what I wrote was not felt to be of "sufficient interest" at a particular time.

Who is to decide what is of "sufficient interest"? Here is another important question that faces all newspapers everywhere. Every specialist writer obviously feels that what he writes in his own field is of over-riding importance—and that is how it should be. But clearly somebody must arbitrate between the many priority interests of different specialists, and be concerned with establishing a proper balance in the presentation of different categories of news and articles, so as to satisfy the needs of the majority of the paper's readers. There can surely be no serious argument about this proposition; yet there will be a great deal of argument about who the arbitrator should be. Clearly, it must be the responsible editor; but should it be he alone or should he be advised by a body of associate or assistant editors? As in all matters, it is obviously better that questions affecting both judgment and knowledge should not be left to the decision of any single person; on the other hand, the idea of a collective responsibility with the entire editorial staff involved is not really practical. What is important is that editorial decision-making should belong to the editorial writers, and should not be dictated directly or indirectly, by proprietors, directors or by outside interests.

So I come out in favour of "elite journalism" and of collective decision-making at a senior editorial level, in determining what gets published in any particular issue of a paper. From my personal experience, I can testify that it is possible to
retain one's integrity as a serious writer for the mass media. Of course, if one is an ideologist and wants to propagandize openly, one must choose one's paper carefully.

I want to turn now to the problem of specialist writers who are strongly committed to certain causes. I believe that the essence of good journalism lies in specialisation, whether it is in crime, in fashion, in politics, in Latin America or Africa or whatever. A great newspaper is made up of its specialist journalists. The trouble is that too few papers employ enough specialists or give sufficient encouragement to competent journalists to specialize. Specialist journalists are very often frustrated, because they feel that they do not always get enough of a show; some do not have the stamina to stay in journalism or they simply lose interest. It would be interesting to see a study done on the employment and use of specialists in newspapers.

What of the committed journalist? Firstly, we all know that there is no such thing as "objective news". There are, of course, neutral facts; these are mostly statements about simple events. But immediately one moves on to discuss an event that has a number of angles to it, one inevitably becomes involved in selectivity. What matters then is what one chooses to put in and what to leave out, and how one arranges the selected facts, the order in which they are put, the qualifying adjectives and adverbs, and the juxtaposition between different sets of facts. Selectivity does not necessarily lead to distortion, but since it involves value judgments, it loses any claim to absolute objectivity. All serious journalism is to some degree "slanted", in the sense of being selective.

I am a committed journalist; this predetermines the way I see things and the way I write. But this does not absolve me from the responsibility of trying to present a balanced picture of events when I am engaged in my role as reporter. While "balanced reporting" should be the aim of all serious journalists, it is, of course, devilishly difficult to take a balanced view of almost any event, and especially of events that involve conflicting interests and opinions. Contrary to the popular view, I believe it is easier for a committed person with a serious interest in his subject to produce a balanced report
than it is for a person who lacks either specialist knowledge or a particular commitment. Lack of commitment often goes with a serious lack of interest or of feeling; besides, the fact that one is not committed by no means guarantees that one is without prejudice. Neutral people are fortunately rare. If I were ever an editor, I would start by sacking all the journalists on my staff who had no strong convictions. People concerned with public affairs are the better for having strong feelings and views; at least one knows where one stands with them.

The Nigerian civil war—like all civil wars—was extremely difficult to report in a balanced way. For one thing, it was extremely difficult to visit both sides, and it was almost impossible to get to the front lines at all. Then, too, emotions were deeply involved. It was perhaps easier for somebody like myself who supported the idea of a “united Nigeria” and yet understood and sympathized with the suffering of the Ibos and disliked a good many of the attitudes displayed by some Federal leaders.

But for those who went overboard for either the Biafra or the Federal cause, it was obviously impossible to provide anything but a distorted picture of the conflict.

This choosing of sides is both justifiable and human, but it does not make for balanced reporting. However, one must accept that every civil-war situation will produce strongly partisan journalism.

There are other situations in which it is similarly difficult to get balanced reporting. For example, journalists who go to South Africa mostly report either how absolutely wonderful the country is or how terribly bloody it all is. Both views can be substantiated by pictures, descriptions and facts, but a more accurate view would be one that showed how wonderful it is for some people in the country and how terrible it is for others. South Africa is, after all, an extremely complex society; only by describing its complexities can one build up an informed international public opinion. To overlook the fears and insecurity of the white minority is as misleading as it is to overlook the denial of most of the elementary human rights to the black majority. A committed journalist should attempt to describe as fully as possible the total situation;
distortion, even for worthy motives, is objectionable; besides, it is mostly self-defeating.

I want to go on to discuss another difficulty about reporting in Africa. Many people, especially in the Third World, feel there is some kind of conspiracy by the so-called western press against Africa. Now, if there is any kind of conspiracy, it is largely one of silence. In the last five years or so, the western press has progressively come to lose interest in Africa; it has ceased to be a continent with any kind of priority of interest, except when crises occur. Today you find fewer journalists employed on western papers specialising in Africa, there are fewer correspondents than ever based on the continent, and much less money is being provided in the budgets of newspapers and radio and television services for correspondents to make trips through the continent. The result is not just that fewer reports are being published but that there is less accurate information coming out of Africa: often the reports that appear are not always as factual, well-informed and well-researched as they were when more careful specialist attention was being paid to the continent's affairs.

Yet this is true not only of Africa; it is perhaps even truer of the western press coverage of Latin America and Asia. So what I am really talking about is a general lack of interest in the western press in conditions in the Third World.

The answer to this complaint by those in control of the western mass media is that this lower priority in the coverage of the Third World represents less interest among their readers. Indeed, this may be so, but the point surely is that, if serious papers want to be taken seriously, they should continue to deal seriously with the affairs of the world at large.

It is unhappily true that people everywhere—not just in the west—are more interested in what goes on in their own back gardens than what occurs far from home; this goes as much for the Russians and the Chinese as for Europeans and Americans, and it goes equally for the peoples of Africa and the rest of the Third World. In fact, in any month, there is, even now, more coverage of Third World affairs in any serious western paper than in any African paper. We are dealing here with a universal phenomenon, and not just with
the shortcomings of the western press. The analysis produced at this seminar of the amount of coverage given to Africa in the Czechoslovak press, for example, shows that the situation in the Communist world is even more deplorable than it is in the west; but this should give us no cause for satisfaction.

One should try to avoid the mistake of generalizing largely about "the western press" or "the capitalist press" or the "Communist press". One must remember that within the western press or just within the British press there are differences so great that any large statements made about them are wholly misleading. For example, the way The Observer or The Guardian reports African affairs is completely different from the way they are reported by The Daily Telegraph or the Daily Express. There is, in fact, no "British press", let alone "western press" attitude to Africa or the Third World.

The difficulties of reporting Africa are by no means limited to western or other foreign correspondents. African journalists have even greater problems. Not only do they have fewer resources to enable them to travel and send cables, but they have fewer papers and less space for their reporting; they are also often limited by political and governmental pressures. The special problems an African editor or journalist faces in surviving in his job while trying to tell the truth about his own societies have been well described by other participants at this seminar. This is a serious question. What concessions should the editor make to survive? What are the consequences of his making concessions to his proprietors or to Ministers or to the Government as such? At what point is it better for him to resign than to stick to his job, trying to retain what he can of his independence?

These same questions come up in a different form for the foreign correspondent in Africa. At what point do I, as a journalist, decide that I am going to report all the facts of a situation that are known to me, even though I know that it will almost certainly result in my not being allowed to return to the country in question again? I would be less than frank if I were not to confess that, if I reported the situation in a large number of African countries with as much frankness as
I report affairs in Britain, I would be declared *persona non grata*. So what is my responsibility? To publish and be damned? To write myself out of one country after another? There were critical situations at times in, say, Kenya, where, if I had written without any restraints whatever, I would have found myself excluded not only from that country but also from Tanzania and Uganda, since these three countries operate a rule that to be a prohibited immigrant in any one automatically excludes you from the others as well. So one is forced to exercise one's right of independent criticism with some care and discretion—much more, of course, in some countries than in others. But there is a point at which one feels one is obliged to be frank and to accept the consequences. The point at which one makes that decision is entirely a question of one's own judgment. The penalty is not simply one of being excluded; no less important is the fact that it often results in making it more difficult or even almost impossible at times to get access to information or to travel about freely—so much so that the restrictions are almost as good as a ban. This condition is by no means unique to Africa; many correspondents have had the same experience in the Communist world, and in Asian countries; latterly especially in India, alas. So the same kind of problems that faces those of us who specialize in Africa faces all journalists in many parts of the world: here, again, we are talking about a problem that goes far beyond reporting Africa. We would do well to bear this in mind.

My most difficult decision was when I deliberately wrote what I knew would lead to my exclusion from South Africa and subsequently, but predictably, from Rhodesia too. Several conflicting choices faced me in making my decision over South Africa. At a personal level it involved exile from my homeland and separation from my family; at a professional level the choice I had to make was whether it was more useful for me to be discreet, thus possibly enabling me to continue to return to South Africa and so to keep myself abreast of events (which I could turn to use in my anonymous writing) or whether to describe the situation there regardless of the consequences. My decision about South Africa was largely a personal one;
in all other cases it has been a question of judgment. It is not really possible to criticize anybody for his personal decisions; but it is different when one's professional judgment is involved. It might well have been better if I had risked being banned from some countries in order to report more robustly about certain situations; on the other hand, by remaining *persona grata*, I was able to remain *au courant* and to complement my more discreet personal reports with less discreet anonymous articles. There can, surely, be no simple answer to this dilemma. For those of us committed to Africa, our hope is to be able to travel widely and freely over the face of the continent: it is not easy for us to accept the need to write from afar or to be restricted, and there is no question of our simply switching to a different field of interest. It is much easier for the "fireman" journalist with no permanent commitment to write without any restraint and not to worry about whether he gets back to Africa or not, but the drawback of "fireman" journalism is that the correspondent cannot be expected to have the depth of knowledge or the range of experience and contacts of the specialist. There are undoubtedly advantages for both types of foreign correspondent.

Nevertheless, one's personal and professional integrity demands that one should always go on asking oneself whether a particular situation is sufficiently serious to justify running the risk of being banned. But I do not want to leave the impression that what I write is not critical—at times even vigorously critical. Those familiar with my writing will be able to form their own judgment.

In the light of what I have just said, can you trust what I write? The answer is, absolutely, yes. Everything I write is what I believe to be accurate and true. I prefer not to write anything at all rather than to water it down to the point where it has either little or no point at all or where it produces a wrong impression. It is possible—and necessary—for journalists like myself to find outlets to write more critically about issues that cannot be fully exposed in popular newspapers; this alternative outlet is, in my view, essential to the role of the specialist journalist.
Contributors

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Ulf Himmelstrand, b. 1924, is Professor and Chairman of the Department of Sociology, University of Uppsala, Sweden. From 1964 to 1967 he was the Head of the Sociology Department of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. He has published extensively in the fields of political sociology and mass communications. At present he is working with Nigerian colleagues on a book about social and political change in Nigeria on the basis of a large-scale sample survey which is part of the Cross-National Project in Social and Political Change. This project also involves countries like India, Japan, the USA, and Yugoslavia. In May 1969 he published a book in Swedish on the Nigeria–Biafra conflict and its background.

Colin Legum, b. 1919 (in the Orange Free State, South Africa), has been the Commonwealth Correspondent of The Observer, London, since 1949. He became the editor of a Labour weekly paper when he was 21. For several years he was prominent in South African politics. His published works include Must We Lose Africa? (1955), Bandung, Cairo and Accra (1959), Attitude to Africa (1953, with a joint author), Congo Disaster (1961), Pan-Africanism (1962), South Africa: Crisis for the West (1964) and The Bitter Choice (1968); the last two were written with his wife. Colin Legum is the general editor of the Pall Mall Library of African Affairs. He is also the editor of several reference books on African affairs, including Africa Handbook and Africa Contemporary Record, Annual Survey and Documents (with a joint editor).

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David Morgan Williams, b. 1913 (in Brecon, South Wales), has been the editor of West Africa, London, since 1949. He was educated at Llandovery College and Corpus Christi College, Oxford, where he took his M.A., and went into journalism in 1936. After the second world war, he returned to Oxford to do research (1946–7). Before taking up his present position, he wrote on Africa for the Central Office of Information. Since becoming the editor of West Africa he has also been (and still is) director of the London parent company (now a minority shareholder) of the Daily Times group in Nigeria.
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List of Abbreviations

AAS  Azisia i Afrika segodnia (USSR)
ACP  Algerian Communist Party
ADN  Allgemeiner Deutscher Nachrichtendienst (German Democratic Republic—D.D.R.)
AFP  Agence France Presse
AO  Archiv Orientální (Czechoslovakia)
AP  Associated Press
BBC  British Broadcasting Corporation
CBC  Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
Ceteka  Československá tisková kancelář (The Czechoslovak News Agency)
CPP  Convention People’s Party (Ghana)
ČTK  See Ceteka
DANIDA  Danish International Development Authority
DPA  Deutsche Presse-Agentur (Federal Republic of Germany)
FLN  Front de Libération Nationale (Algeria)
IPC  International Publishing Corporation
MEMO  Mirová ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniiia (USSR)
MP  Mezindrodní politika (Czechoslovakia)
M.P.  Member of Parliament
MV  Mezindrodní vztahy (Czechoslovakia)
MZh  Mezhdunarodnaiia zhizn’ (USSR)
NAA  Narody Azii i Afriki (USSR)
NCG  National Broadcasting Company (USA)
NO  Nový Orient (Czechoslovakia)
NORAD  Norwegian Agency for International Development
NRK  Norsk Rikskringkasting (The Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation)
OCORA  Office de coopération radiophonique
ORTF  L’Office de radiodiffusion-télévision français
RCC  Revolution Command Council (Sudan)
RP  Rudé právo (Czechoslovakia)
SIDA  Swedish International Development Authority
<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>TANU</td>
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<td>TASS</td>
<td>Telegraphnoye Agenstvo Sovietskogo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>UP</td>
<td>United Press</td>
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<td>UPI</td>
<td>United Press International</td>
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