NEWS AGENCIES, CULTURAL DOMINATION,

AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

A CASE STUDY OF THE PROBLEMS OF

NEWS AGENCY DEVELOPMENT IN SUB-

SAHARA WEST AFRICA

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a case study of news agency development
in West Africa, with particular reference to changes after
independence. It examines news agencies and cultural dom-
ination (in Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal and Ivory Coast) and how
they affect national development. It specifically addresses
the political and economic processes that have led to the role
of the news agencies as an instrument for westernization and
cultural domination. The methodology employed is historical,
analytical, and theoretical.

The thesis demonstrates that western emphasis on the
"free Flow" of information and the equation of its absence to
dictatorship has obscured the failures of the "free flow"
system in the study of news agencies as a viable factor in
national development. News agencies in West Africa tend to
reinforce the colonial ties which were supposed to have ended
at the attainment of independence. The thesis demonstrates
that: (A) the monopolistic structure of the world news agencies
and their domination of the flow of news in the third world
have precluded the countries of West Africa from establishing
an endogenous news agency; and (B) the governments of West
Africa have recognized the need for national news agencies as
a vehicle to express and promote their cultures and offer
news about their countries. But their policies have not
altered the traditional industry structure and one-way flow of
information. The thesis concludes that unless the various
West African governments change the structures of their news

agencies by way of legislation and a major effort is under-
taken towards endogenous communication, the development of a
viable Pan-African agency will not occur.

Two sets of policy measures are proposed to help set the
West African media and culture on an independent course:
(A) Measures that would assure the relevance (rather than
profitability) of African news in the international markets.
It will eliminate the argument of the western news agencies
that African news is not desirable or profitable in the market-
place, if the government-owned media in Africa eliminates the
profit factor and makes African news relevant to the world
community; and
(B) Measures that would assure the complete overhaul of the
West African educational system and curriculum, so that gradu-
ates would know more about African history and literature
rather than European history and Shakespeare. These two mea-
sures would assure that future elites and bureaucrats would
not have distorted images of Africa and things African.

DEDICATION

For the Wretched of the Earth in Black Africa and the
following comrades:

KWAME NKRUMAH

PATRICE LUMUMBA

FRANTZ FANON

AUGUSTIN NETO

AMILCAR CABRAL

STEVE BIKO

MALCOLM X

For the Freedom Fighters who gave their lives and those
who are still in combat on the African continent, especially
in Fascist Azania and Namibia so that Africa our beloved
continent will be free of European and American domination.

For the African nation to be, so that my children in future
will be able to walk on the soil of all Africa free of
Africaner obscenities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

> The history of colonialism had an
> equal impact on the growth of the
> international news media.[1]

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the problems of news agency development in Sub-Sahara West Africa, with the objective of determining the advantages and disadvantages of establishing an alternative endogenous news agency or agencies, in Sub-Sahara Africa in general and Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal and Ivory Coast in particular.

The various attempts made by the Governments of the four nations will be placed in their local, social, political, economic, and cultural contexts as well as the global, international environment in which they occur. For it is the fundamental assumption of this thesis that communications are an important factor of a society's organic composition and that innovations in news gathering, interpretation, and distribution can thus only be imported into the so-called "under-developed" Sub-Sahara West Africa according to how they match the overall development goals of the nations concerned.

The methodology employed is (A) historical (post World War II to the post independence years of the 1970's), (B) theoretical (the discussion of the administrative and endogenous schools of thought on development), and (C) analytical (a comparative review of the literature on theories of development).

The author's experience, knowledge and familiarity with
the region and its history also acted as a source of
reference in the research for this thesis. Growing up in
Accra in the sixties, I was a witness to several events,
notably the African Peoples Conference, the Ghana Guinea
Mali Union, the first Pan-African Conference on the African
continent attended by the then eight independent countries,
Frantz Fanon's presence in Accra as the representative of the
Algerian Provisional Government FLN, and Patrice Lumumba's
trip to Accra to ask for African support at the beginning of
the Congo crisis, which was to shape my outlook later in life.
I also witnessed the workings of neo-colonialism and cultural
imperialism in the late sixties through the several military
takeovers in Ghana and other African states.[2] I am drawing
on all these experiences as a source of reference for this
thesis.

Taped interviews conducted with some prominent bureau-
crats at the UNESCO offices in Paris, the Ghana News Agency
(GNA) head office in Accra, and correspondents from Nigeria,
Ivory Coast and Senegal attached to the Non-Aligned News
Agencies Pool regional office in Accra, Ghana were used as
part of the analysis. These interviews served to corroborate
the data found in the traditional sources. Unfortunately
it confirmed the bankruptcy of the developmental policies of
the West African Bourgeoisie.

Sub-Sahara Africa will be defined as the region south of
the Sahara desert and north of the white settler minorities

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of Namibia and Azania (South West Africa and South Africa).[3]
As this region covers a wide territory, I will concentrate on
four selected nations, all on the west coast of the continent.

Ghana and Nigeria are former colonies of England, and
Senegal and Ivory Coast are both former colonies of France.
Such a selection will enable me to examine the roles and pro-
blems of the wire services not only in English but also in
French speaking Sub-Sahara West Africa. Although these four
republics are all in the same region, their problems and
developmental difficulties are very common not only to the
region but to the entire under-developed third world in
general and to Sub-Sahara Africa in particular, before and
after the attainment of independence. It is therefore
appropriate to argue that the problems of the national news
agencies and the collection, interpretation, and distribution
of news in these countries, are also relevant and familiar to
the whole of Sub-Sahara West Africa.

This analysis will fully examine the uneven association
between the news agencies of the capitalist west (and their
governments), and Sub-Sahara West Africa before and after
independence. This thesis will give a brief historical back-
ground of the early years of the western news agencies in the
region, and how their presence stifled African development
and also created a dependency complex.

The main emphasis, however, will be on the immediate
period before and after World War II to the formation of the
News Agencies Pool of the Non-Aligned Nations in 1976, (ie.

Post 1945 to 1976).

THE PROBLEM

Communications are an important factor of a society's organic composition and development. Thus, the overwhelming presence and dominance of the powerful capitalist news agencies is to be considered a negative factor. Their presence and influence also leads to a dependency complex or what Schiller referred to as cultural domination.[4]

Several studies on the origins, growth and consolidation of the international production of news have illuminated the basic links between the international corporate capitalism and the news agencies. A summary view of the problem can be presented in Golding's words:

> Towards the end of the nineteenth
> century the newly established
> European news agencies concluded a
> series of cartel agreements by
> means of which they divided the
> world between them, according to
> prevailing imperial spheres of influence.
> These first links in the international
> news gathering and distributing system
> set a precedent for much that was to
> follow as the news agencies in developed
> and developing societies alike became
> progressively more involved in the
> corporate capitalist economy. 5

This statement by Golding is indicative of the obstacles faced by the four nations under study, in their efforts to develop independent news agencies. It is also supported by the study of P. Harris, who has also documented this view and arrived at the following conclusion: "The old spheres of influence still seem to hold true--Reuters supplies news primarily to English-speaking Africa and the Commonwealth, Agence France

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Presse supplies news to French Africa, and both Associated
Press and United Press International concentrate on Latin
America."[6] Furthermore, he adds: "where the dependence can
be seen to be of crucial importance it is in the definitions
of international situations which these news flow patterns
provide. The process by which international news information
is collected and disseminated is largely dependent on the
international news agency as the first step in that process.
Even in cases where individual news media within distinct
territorial confines support a large organization of foreign
correspondents and stringers, the international news agency
provides a crucial service in defining the interpretation of
the international arena upon which such individual news agency
act in deploying their correspondents. The news agency
functions to delimit the 'discussion area' in much the same
way as a map serves to delimit the area within which a general
may deploy his troops."[7]

Several researchers have shown that this 'discussion area'
which determines what is to be considered relevant in the
international opinion, goes to the mainstream of the culture
of international media system which is consonant with the
requirements of the international capitalist economy of which
it is a part. Within this system, the news agencies play a
fundamental role, not so much because of the functions they
accomplish, but because of what they represent and serve in
the developed world in general and Sub-Sahara Africa in
particular.[8]

As Somavia has put it, the main news agencies "are not in any real sense 'international' enterprises, they are transnational enterprises, each operating out of its head-quarters in an industrialized capitalist country. By definition their ownership structure is totally vested in their home countries."[9] However, the nature of their action is such that their power resides in their capacity of surveying developing conflicts and making the preliminary attempts to assimilate them, or to handle them within the frames and conflict-solving instances that the present international order imposes. In doing this, the news agencies act not so much as agents of change (i.e. decolonization), but just as one more mechanism for maintaining the status quo, (i.e. Neo-Colonialism and Cultural Imperialism) in Sub-Sahara Africa. Frantz Fanon discussed at great length this problem in his books Black Skin White Mask and Towards the African Revolution. Amilcar Cabral (in Return to the Source) argued that cultural imperialism is the most dangerous form of colonization.

COMMUNICATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT:

The first three chapters of this thesis, therefore, discuss the theoretical basis for analysis of the problems and the international context within which they take place, in order to arrive at a set of criteria for evaluation. In the sections that follow, the problems are described, evaluated, and relevant comparisons made, with other parts of the Third World.

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Originally when this exercise started, it was my intention to cover the period immediately after the second world War to what is generally referred to by Africanists as the Decade of Independence (the 1960's). However, as the research progressed, I realized the problems and limitations involved in trying to limit myself to this period - post 1945 to the 1960's. I therefore decided not to limit myself to that period alone, but rather to be flexible on the period to be covered. This meant that I had to back-track to the years before 1945 (whenever my analysis required), and also proceed to the years past the 1960's, to 1979 when the Pan-African News Agency was established, (at least on paper). This extension was necessary for historical and analytical continuity.

One of the several problems encountered during the research for this thesis was the difficulty in obtaining up to date and/or recent publication on the subject. The scarcity of publications caused unnecessary delays, thereby compelling me to settle in many instances for the use of materials published before the seventies. Several books and articles published in the seventies that I desired to use were not available in the libraries here and therefore I had to attempt to obtain them from other libraries in the U.S. or from the publishers in Africa or Western Europe. I was often unsuccessful, but this did limit the scope of the thesis in certain respects, although not in respect of its main themes.

I have gone to some length to analyse the nature of colonialism, post-colonial class structure, and development in Sub-Sahara Africa for the following reasons: (A) The question of news agency development in Sub-Sahara Africa cannot be treated as a separate developmental issue; (B) It is closely tied to (if not inseparable with) the whole question of development; (C) It is a major variable (if not the dominant factor) in national development and integration; and (D) In order to understand the predominance of cultural imperialism and news agency development, one would first have to understand the class structure in Sub-Sahara West Africa, and the role of the bourgeoisie. This author, therefore, sees news agency development as an important part of the whole process of national or regional development.

The most frustrating and possibly the most difficult part of all in writing this thesis was the question of language. During the process I had to use terms and connotations which I cannot defend or justify. However, in order to write a readable and acceptable thesis I found myself having to use such language, against my better judgement. To me, such language reinforces (or could be interpreted as an acceptance of) cultural imperialism and neo-colonialism by all those who use them. I therefore wish to point out my predicament to my readers, and advise them that my use of such words and terms does not constitute an acceptance of cultural imperialism and neo-colonialism. I have therefore added an appendix to this chapter, detailing the problems.

FOOTNOTES

1. P. Eliott and P. Golding; Mass Communications and Social Change: The Imagery of Development and the Development of Imagery, In Sociology and Development, p.235.

2. John Marks; Media in the Third World in Washington Post, August 27, 1976, p.A25.

3. The original African names for the two countries.

4. Herbert I. Schiller: Communications and Cultural Domination.

5. Eliott and Golding; Ibid.

6. Phil Harris; An Analysis of the West African Wire Service of an International News Agency, p.9.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. J. Jomavia; "Transnational Power Structure and International Information, Elements for a Third World Policy for Transnational News Agencies", p.21.

CHAPTER I

I. CULTURAL DOMINATION AND LANGUAGE

I wish to discuss certain terms and their connotations as used by (foreign) capitalist western journalists "reporting" about Africa and African affairs.

The words are illustrated by primitive, superstition, pagan-fetish, tribe, tribespeople, tradition, language-dialect, ignorant, illiterate, backward, bush-jungle, etc. These words were first used by (western) anthropologists and colonial technocrats to describe, define and label the dynamics of societies they encountered during the period of colonial expansion and consolidation. They were also intended, by the standards of the time, as scientific classifications, but more importantly were used in relative and dichotomous terms to highlight an inferior society vis-a-vis Europe in order to justify slavery, exploitation and colonialism itself.

But in spite of tremendous changes wrought on such societies, and a more detailed and informed study of Africa since then, which demanded a cautious approach in the use of such terms, journalists still use them as if the world has been static since the last century. Sadly enough, African journalists are equally guilty of this charge. A sign of western influence through professional association and education.

Thus a journalist reporting on government plans to "improve" agriculture by large-scale mechanisation writes: "The plan is aimed at increasing production since the African

peasant who uses primitive and inefficient implements..."
"The villagers are reluctant to use the new method because of
a local superstition..." The farmer is therefore portrayed
as obdurate and a hindrance to progress. The reporter,
unwittingly, becomes a propaganda agent for whoever stands to
gain from the mechanization, simply because no attempt is made
to find out why the farmer is reluctant. What is curious is
that when the context is altered, an opposite set of terms
are employed. A western capitalist financier who is reluct-
ant to invest in a new venture for fear that he might lose
his money, is hailed as shrewd, cautious and an expert on
finance keen on hedging his risk capital.

Now, if superstition is defined as "a notion maintained
despite evidence to the contrary," then many respectable
notions are superstitious. For instance, the ideological
belief in supply-side economics by Reagan and his Republicans,
and British Tory treasury ministers (cut taxes and public
expenditure, increase incentives and there will be an invest-
ment and employment boom) despite a substantial body of
evidence to the contrary, can be described as superstitious.
But one would be laughed at for making such a suggestion.

Matters are not made clearer when one defines super-
stition as "an irrational object attitude of mind towards
the supernatural nature or Allah." Most Catholics sincerely
believe that the Pope is half-human, half-spiritual. But an
African who ascribes supernatural powers to his ancesters is
seen as superstitious. At times, he is even described as

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having superstitious beliefs. What on earth is a "superstitious belief?"

One really gets into the thick of things with tribe, tribespeople and tribal. Most journalists procedurally present Africa as populated by tribes, not just people.[1] Thus while in England we have the Welsh simply as the Welsh, the English as English, the Irish as Irish; the same applying to nationalities in Belgium, Switzerland, France, Spain, etc. In Africa, however, we have the Ashanti not as Ashanti but as the Ashanti tribe. Thus we read: Gareth Jones, the Welshman, was born in Llanelli in 1940; but Kwenu Turkson, the musician, was born in Kumasi into the Ashanti tribe in 1954."

Ukrainians struggling against Russian domination are described as "resisting Russian cultural domination." If it were in Ghana it would be "Ewes are fighting Ashanti tribalism." The Basques in Spain are fighting for separatism, but during the Nigerian Civil War the Ibos were fighting for a "tribal nation-state." But here too there is an extreme example. The inhabitants of the Kalahari are not even a tribe, they are just "bushmen".

Last December when I was in London for the Christmas holidays, I was watching a quiz programme on BBC TV when a contestant was played several music types and was asked to identify them. He answered: "Scottish bag-pipe, Spanish Flamenco," but lo and behold, "African tribal drumming." The quiz master said: "Well, it is West African percussion, but I will give you your points." What makes Scottish bag-

pipe exactly that, but West African percussion tribal drumming? I immediately left the TV room, leaving my nieces and nephews alone to watch the show.

The same selectivity is discerned in the usage of tribes-people. This compound word is used as a pseudo-scientific term, its referent signifies a people living in a remote corner of the world. But what is remote? For instance, Chad and Saskatchewan are equally remote from each other. At the national level, one can propose that tribespeople are those who live in rural areas distant from major conurbations. But nobody in England refers to the crofters in the Shetlands, The Orkneys, or the Hebrides as tribespeople. As it is, tribespeople only live in such places as Uganda, Nigeria, Ghana and Uttar Pradesh (India). During World War II, the French who joined the Resistance to fight Nazi occupation were referred to as the Resistance, the Maquis, etc., their current counter-parts in Afghanistan fighting the soviets are, however, tribes-men.

"Ignorant", "illiterate", "backward", present the same problems. I have just read an otherwise informative article on the health problems involved in the uncontrolled spread of infant milk formula and feeding bottles in East Africa, then came across this astonishing statement: "The problem is made worse by illiterate mothers who use dirty water to wash the bottles." So illiterate women use dirty water even when clean water is available?

To describe an area as "backward" should imply the fact

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that it lacks certain basic amenities, but in some instances journalists distort it to mean a people who are idiotic, and thus, by implication, the cause of their own problems. And, of course, these people cannot have a language, only "tongues" and "dialects". "Ignorant" is most often used to mean "mentally deficient", rather than "lacking knowledge of a specific thing". Whilst the former may be a medical problem the latter is not and it is not confined to Africa. The fact that, several months ago, the man nominated by President Reagan for the post of Assistant Secretary of State could not name the Prime Minister of Zimbabwe at his nomination hearing is sufficient proof.

The words "bush" and "jungle" are used, gratuitously, to conjure Victorian images of the so-called Dark Continent. So are the words "pagan" and "fetish". When Fanti fishermen perform purification ceremonies before the start of the fishing season, theirs is a "pagan-fetish rite". Their Italian or Corsican counterparts who perform a parallel ceremony by parading effigies of Christ, the Virgin Mary and their patron saint perform a "solemn religious ceremony". "Moslem-fanatic" has become a set-phrase for journalists and "experts" unable to intelligently explain the so-called shock of the Iranian revolution.

Talking about "bush" brings to mind this ageless anecdote about the wittiness of Nnamdi AziKiwe. As the story goes: On an official visit to London just after Nigerian Independence, he was asked at a luncheon: "Is it true that even after

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independence you Nigerians still sleep on trees in the bush?"
"Yes", he replied, "when your queen came, we prepared the
tallest tree in the bush for her and in fact your High
Commissioner is my next branch neighbour." "Tradition" is
much more difficult to analyse, but it is generally used to
mean a stagnant culture averse to change. The problem is com-
pounded by the contradictory manner in which we Africans our-
selves interpret what is traditional. How far, for instance,
is female circumcision an African tradition? In Ghana, Henkes
Schnapps is a traditional drink. A girl who wears jeans is
often accused of being anti-cultural, but if she makes a
western-type dress from locally-made batik she is hailed as
being proud of her tradition and culture.

It has been argued that the above words are merely used
by journalists to show their love for adjectives. Thus, in
Britain we read not just left-wing but "extreme left-wing", a
"luxury cruise liner", "shock-horror revelation", "lovely
blonde divorcee mother of two", "burly coal miners", etc., so
why not "tribal African"? It has also been suggested that
these words are used as a form of shorthand jargon by papers
hard-pressed for space. However, when seen in their totality,
these words reinforce an image of Africa which if it were a
commercial jingle would go like this: "This is primitive
Africa, inhabited by mumbo-jumbo tribespeople with superstitious
beliefs, where there are tribal wars between ignorant Moslem
fanatics to the fetish cadence of bush/jungle tribal drumming,
and where illiterate mothers drink dirty water from traditional

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jungle pools."

This whole thesis therefore proves that for information to be decolonized, Sub-Sahara Africa will need more than a news pool or an African News Agency. Rather, attitudes will have to change, especially that of the educated African. This will call for what Frantz Fanon referred to as the creation or emergence of a NEW AFRICAN who will lead the struggle and show the way to the often biased western capitalist journalist.

Other than that, any new news agency will still use or rely upon the western connection of professional association and education, which in turn will reinforce the vicious circle of dependence. After all, the News Agency Pool of the Non-Aligned Nations and the Pan-African News Agency were faced with the same problems, and manned by the same western educated professionals. According to Fanon, they just reinforce the dependency complex.

The new man, therefore, will have to be the product of a completely new educational system and environment. Hopefully such a new African will emerge from the new generation, and only then will the cultural liberation of Sub-Sahara West Africa be attainable. The creation or formation of a new and completely independent news agency will be but applying a "band aid solution to a problem that calls for major surgery".

"In contrast with the surging growth of the countries in the socialist camp and the development taking place, albeit much more slowly, in the majority of the capitalist countries, is the unquestionable fact that a large proportion of the so-called underdeveloped countries are in total stagnation, and that in some of them the rate of economic growth is lower than that of population increase.

These characteristics are not fortuitous; they correspond strictly to the nature of the capitalist system in full expansion, which transfers to the dependent countries the most abusive and barefaced forms of exploitation. It must be clearly understood that the only way to solve the questions now besetting mankind is to eliminate completely the exploitation of dependent countries by developed capitalist countries, with all the consequences that this implies."

Che Guevara, 1964.

FOOTNOTES

1. <u>Vancouver Sun</u>; February 1, 1982, p.A7

CHAPTER II

II. <u>DEPENDENCY AND THE MEDIA: THEORETICAL BASIS FOR ANALYSIS</u>

At the beginning of this thesis I stated that the role of news agencies and what they communicate constitutes a very important (if not the most important) variable in the process of national or regional development. In the case of Sub-Sahara West Africa, the dominant News agencies are foreign and the ones established after independence in English and French speaking Africa kept the colonial connection through professional ties.

Thus, the news agencies that emerged in post-colonial West Africa faced two choices, namely: (1) those who advocated the continuation of the western mode of news agency development, and (2) those who advocated the following of an endogenous developmental path in regards to news agencies and development in general. This debate reflected the resolution passed at the 1973 Algiers Conference of the Heads of State of the Non-Aligned Movement, on cultural imperialism. In this chapter, I will analyse the sets of theories and arguments for the pro-western path to development as it affects news agencies in Sub-Sahara West Africa. I wish to state that the connection between news agencies and development is important because of all the variables which affect development, it is the most underrated. Communication or news dissemination is seen by many as necessary, but very little attention is paid to what it does to the recipients, thereby minimizing its cultural influence on developing societies. It is to be noted that

none of the world's great powers' (i.e. USSR, USA) or the developed nations' (i.e. UK, France, Japan, West Germany) news agencies and communication is dominated by a foreign nation.

It was inevitable that the wave of anti-colonialism washing across political structures around the world eventually would reach the highest marker of colonial domination—the colonization of the mind—but it has taken time. If the beginning of the end of political colonialism is put at the conclusion of the second world war, more than two decades elapsed before cultural domination began to be recognized as a still unassailed bastion of the old order. Since the late 1960's, with continuously mounting intensity, the battleground of anti-imperialism has been extended to the cultural sector, though the economic front remains pre-eminent.

Characteristic of almost all the struggles of decolonization that have been fought in the last four decades has been the tremendously unequal access to resources—military, economic, and informational—of the participants. The dominators (i.e. the capitalist west) possess the arms, control the finances, and have at their disposal the communications grids and facilities for message transmission and production. The dominated have generally one resource—though a singular one—their own will for independence and self determination. In Sub-Sahara West Africa, they have also, it should be noted, the support of the socialist sector of the world. The amount of this assistance varies naturally with many factors, not

least of which is the geographical proximity of the socialist
base.

With the condition of de facto political independence
now largely attained,--a large stubborn area of total economic
and cultural domination remains not only in West Africa, but
the entire continent--attention has centred on the interlocking
structures of global economic power that dispose of the re-
sources necessary for national development in Sub-Sahara West
Africa.

The challenge to the tightly knit worldwide system of
economic, financial and information authority has been sym-
bolized in the call for a new international economic and infor-
mation order. One of its palpable manifestations is the OPEC.
Others are UNESCO and UNCTAD. Many less influential bodies
and organizations also seek to redress the imbalances that the
prevailing economic power structure imposes on most of the
world-- especially the weakest part. Yet with the possible
exception of OPEC, the efforts of the poor nations to overcome
the economic authority of western and Japanese industrial
capitalism have been notably unsuccessful. The leverage to
exact concessions in ordinarily unavailable to those who are
by condition and practice disadvantaged to begin with. Still,
as the efforts persist, recognition developes that economic
objectives are inseparably intermingled with the informational
and cultural state of affairs.[1]

Awareness of the cultural and communications component
in the international system of market domination is relatively

recent though growing rapidly. It arises from the interaction

of three world wide forces active in the last thirty-five

years: the global expansion of American capitalism; the break-

down of colonialism with the rise of national liberation move-

ments and the enlargement of the socialist sector of the world;

and the development of an entirely new range of penetrative,

instantaneous, communication technology.

The United States, grown powerful through internal expan-

sion and benefitting from two world wars, emerged as the sole

capitalist super-power. It moved rapidly into the spheres

vacated by the exhausted and depleted European colonial powers.

Its military occupation troops stationed throughout the world--

including a base outside Monrovia, Liberia--together with U.S.

capital investments, facilitated the spread of communication

technology and American television programs, books, magazines,

movies, advertising messages, PR counselors, and opinion polls.

These latter developments were further assisted by the advent

of the communications satellite by which television programming

could be viewed globally by audiences numbering in hundreds

of millions. At the same time, a hundred new nations, erst-

while colonial possessions, achieved political independence

and recognition as sovereign entitles in the United Nations

and related organizations.

The impact of American economic and military power, sup-

plemented with advanced communication technology, on the world

at large and on the poor and newly independent countries in

particular has produced a deepening current of international

resistance to cultural domination and communication dependency. Initially noticeable in some mild and tentative statements expressed at UNESCO meetings at the end of the 1960's and subsequent years, the first full-blown statement of resistance to cultural colonization was registered at the Algiers conference of the Heads of State of the Non-Aligned Countries in September of 1973,[2] mentioned above. There, the chiefs of some seventy-five member nations declared:

> It is an established fact that the activities of imperialism are not confined solely to the political and economic fields but also cover the cultural and social fields, thus imposing an alien ideological domination over the peoples of the developing world.

> The Heads of State of Government of Non-Aligned Countries accordingly stress the need to reaffirm national cultural identity and eliminate the harmful consequences of the colonial era, so that their national culture and tradition will be preserved.

> They consider that the cultural alienation and imported civilization imposed by imperialism and colonialism should be countered by a repersonalization and by constant and determined recourse to the people's own social and cultural values which define it as a sovereign people, master of its own resources, so that every people can exercise effective control over all its national wealth and strive for its economic development under conditions ensuring respect for its sovereignty and authenticity, and peace and genuine international co-operation. [3]

Since Algiers, national, regional, and international conferences concerned with cultural sovereignty and cultural

domination have been frequent. They have been governmental and non-governmental, regional, individual and organizational, policy-making and research-oriented. The (identical) nature of cultural domination and the problems encountered by the countries of Sub-Sahara Africa, in their efforts to establish national news agencies would become clearer in the course of my analysis in this thesis.

2.1 ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS:

With few exceptions, most theories of economic develop-ment have been generated in the tradition of economic growth theory, i.e. the economic change process in advanced societies.[4] The starting point for these theories of economic development, according to Frey, is the distinction of basic factors of pro-duction--the familiar triad of land, labor, and capital.[5] The classicists, however, regarded land as fixed and labor (population) as a function of real wages with little indepen-dent variation. Hence the dominant dynamic factor in the scheme was capital, and capital formation was the key to economic growth. Marx, too, envisioned the same three factors of production but paid much more attention to technology.

Schumpeter altered the notion of technological develop-ment to include more qualitative consideration of markets and supply sources and the climate for economic change, but he is even better known for his stress on the importance of the entrepreneur. Economic growth was seen as dependent upon the appearance of such gifted entrepreneurs and assumed a sporadic,

discontinuous character.

Role of Communications:

Economic thinking has displayed very little direct con-
cern with or interest in non-manipulative or genuine com-
munication. True, at the start of their discussions many
economists insert a paragraph or two giving lip service to
the importance of values, the human factor, social institutions,
and so on; "but virtually without exception, the economists
who make such acknowledgements in passing them proceed to
present economic theories of growth as though they were the
full and sufficient explanations".[6] When a broader perspective
on development is adopted by economists, theirs is commonly
on values, political structure, and demography is very rarely
explicitly devoted to communications.

Close scrutiny, nevertheless, reveals that there are many
facets of economic theories of development in which communi-
cation plays a crucial, if latent, role. For example, the
price system can be viewed as a highly specialized and vitally
important communication system which ideally provides economic
decision makers at all levels with information essential to
rational calculation and planning. As Spengler observes, the
price system "also functions as a servo-mechanism in that it
enables decision-makers to modify their courses of action
whenever prices relevant for them undergo sufficient change."[7]

In discussing the economic theories of development,
Frey argued that one of the paramount problems for developing

societies is that such a communicatin system is lacking or at least inadequate, not merely in the gathering and disseminating of information but also perhaps in the encoding, decoding and interpreting abilities of significant actors.[8] Part of the process of economic development is the creation and improvement of this fundamental communications system.

2.2   SOCIO-POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Economic and psychological theories of development tend to define the underlying directionality of change in similar terms. Both operationally conceive of development as an increase in gross national product (GNP) per capita or some near equivalent, although the psychological approaches more often regard this measure as a token of deeper trends. When one considers political studies of development, however, one loses such consensus. The economic and psychological theories on the one hand and the socio-political theories on the other do not purport to explain the same things.

Students of political development have defined their focus in many ways--indeed, too many. Frey, for instance, listed four fundamentally variant conceptions and discussed a basic logical difference between economic and political notions of development, while Pye listed no less than ten conceptualizations of political development, only two of which refer primarily to the political changes attending economic development.[9]

The remaining conceptions are all at least denotatively

independent of economic development. They include such ob-
jectives as democracy, stability, mobilization and power,
administrative and legal institutions of a certain character,
and so on.

Many writers on political development see communication
as an extremely important aspect of the process. It has been
variously styled the "nerves", "blood", or "skeleton" of the
political system--metaphors that reveal the significance at-
tributed, although also the divergence of perceived function.
The most useful insights can be grouped under five main sub-
headings, reflecting aspects of the political developmental
process regarded as most affected by communication.

(A) The first involves provision of information for more
effective instrumental decision-making, since increased
rationality is considered a basic feature of political develop-
ment.

(B) The second involves communication as it affects power
and control. Here the focus is dual; communication for inte-
gration necessitated by the differentation, specialization,
and heightened collective aspirations attendant on development,
and communication for responsiveness by power holders to non-
elite elements necessitated by the demand for "participation"
that often accompanies development.

(C) The third involves consideration of the individual
psychic consequences of moderization that can be presumed
to have at least latent political significance.

(D) The fourth point refers more explicitly and analytically

to the change process itself, dealing with sequences and similar aspects of communication and development.

(E) Finally, the fifth point relates rather generally to inter-unit and inter-level problems of communication for political development such as unit/environment, domestic/ foreign, and macro/micro exchanges.

Information For Developmental Decision-Making:

A "modern" society and polity are seen as requiring much more information expressing national priorities than a pre- colonial or colonial "traditional" society and polity. One main reason for this is that decision-making is supposed to be more rational in the modern polity of Sub-Sahara West Africa. Ends-means calculations are regularly, deeply, and explicitly made and the growth of scientific understanding provides more elaborate theoretical indications of what types of information are necessary for various kinds of decisions. Not only is more and better information needed, but that information must be transmitted to the more specialized actors making the decision for which it is relevant. Since information does not necessarily arise at the locus of decision-making, a communication system adequate to distributing it to the critical control points must develop.

2.3 COMMUNICATION AND CONTROL (INTEGRATION AND RESPONSIVENESS):

The more the parts, the more the specialization, and the more the inter-dependence, the greater the need for communi- cation to bind the various elements (e.g. ethnic groups) to-

gether. Hence, the improvement of integrative and co-ordinative communication is seen as a crucial part of political development in Sub-Sahara Africa. The integrative aspects of communication, as they relate to political development have been inspected in many forms and fashions. In their summary of literature, Jacob and Teune (1964)[10] discussed ten factors adduced by various analysts as exerting integrative influence: (1) geographic proximity; (2) homogenity; (3) transactions or interactions among persons or groups; (4) knowledge of each other; (5) shared functional interests; (6) the "character" or "motive" pattern of a group; (7) the structural frame or system of power and decision-making; (8) the sovereignty-dependency status of the community; (9) governmental effectiveness; and (10) previous integrative experiences.

The communication aspect of most of these factors is obvious. As Deutsch had previously noted, interaction, complimentarity of interests, and structural involvement were generally seen to promote integration.[11] From communications perspective, the relevant insights in this area can be assembled under two main categories--orientations and structure. Certain outlooks and motivations are seen as conducive to developmental integration, and certain structural changes and problems also pervade the entire process.

Orientations:

The list of orientations that theorists have thought crucial for political development is long indeed. However,

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a much smaller set of orientations appears over and over again in the leading analyses. The role envisioned for communication can be adequately displayed through examining several of these, namely national identification, legitimacy, trust, and finally more comprehensive matter of consensus.

Developing societies encounter severe difficulties in maintaining critical structures of authority during the modernization process. Intrafamilial communication often breaks down, the authority of the family erodes, and other traditional institutions are similarly shaken. Hence, because of communication difficulties and other problems, this vital type of power may be less available to the political system just when it is most needed.

Structures:

Political development fundamentally implies change in the power structure of the society as well as the changes in the orientations of its members. The structural changes can generally be regarded as movement either toward greater ability to co-ordinate behaviors or toward greater sharing of power, although striking an appropriate balance between the two is the prime problem of politics. The basic obstacle confronting many developing societies on the integrative side is a paucity of structural links, both in communication and in power.

The overall "connectivity" of African society is so low as to preclude concerted action. Many crucial elements are unconnected with other elements. In fact, the paramount

structural difference between developed and underdeveloped

societies is not in the distribution of existing power,

communications, and other links, but rather in the overall

amount, density, or connectedness of links. Hence, one of

the first concerns of political development is to tie the

thousands of isolated villages and groups together into a

connected whole--to transform the traditional "sack of pota-

toes" as Marx characterized rural France, into a single

organic entity.[12]

Intraelite Communication:

As the West African society changes, the elite comes

under pressure to admit rising social groups or their rep-

resentatives to its ranks. These new entrants are usually

unfamiliar with the communication habits of the elite and

frequently possess a style of their own that is repugnant to

the former elite. Misunderstandings ensue and much of the

old ease of communication possible in narrower social con-

fines is lost, to the frustrations of all concerned and often

with a real drop in political effectiveness, as well as

tranquility.

Intramass Communication:

Ultimately, development must imply a marked and novel

increase in lateral or horizontal communication within the

mass sector. The probable outcome of this will be, at least

at first, to heighten mass consciousness, to reinforce mass

taste and mass resistance to elite cultural and political

hegemony, and to improve mass organizational capacities. At

least such has been common speculation by the classic writers De Tocqueville and Ortega y Gasset.

Elite-Mass Communication:

Most analytic attention regarding the relationship between communication and political development has been given to elite-mass and mass-elite interaction. The reason is that elite-mass bifurcation of the society is seen as perhaps the crucial problem for development, and the incorporation of the mass sector, especially the rural or peasant contingent, into active social, political and economic participation is viewed as perhaps the final hurdle in the contemporary development process.

Mass Media in many developing societies in general and West Africa in particular, are elite-oriented and, on the surface, ineffective with villagers, many of whom are extremely divergent from each other. The elite have much more influence than the masses and the communication system is much more attuned to pick up feedback from them, so the media became primarily elite instruments and entertainment. The very choice of language and cultural level is one conspicuous example. When the decision is made between sophisticated unintelligibility for the masses and understandable "vulgarity" for the elites, as Pool has described, the outcome is usually the former.[13] The problem may be compounded (or reduced) by the fact that mass sectors may be responding as to the direct content.[14] But in any event, the greater heterogeneity of transitional societies plus elite unfamiliarity with and even

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strong distaste for reciprocal interaction with the masses
makes appropriate development communication difficult.

Mass-Elite Communication:

The opposite side of the communications coin--the mass-
elite linkage--is no less significant than the elite-mass
connection for developing societies. For one thing, the
elite, often colossally ignorant of mass mores although
naively confident of the contrary, urgently needs feedback
from the masses to carry out its integrative objectives. For
another, as political development proceeds, considerations of
equality and participation loom larger and some mass elements
become an increasingly potent force in the nation.

Probably the most notorious aspect of mass-elite com-
munications that pertains to political development is the
political arousal of the masses that is said to occur. Great
danger is forseen if demand-arousing communication grows more
rapidly than demand-satisfying economic development and
demand-channeling political institutions.[15] The dread result
is the well known "revolution of rising expectations",
revised by Lerner to the "revolution of rising frustrations".
For Lerner, Huntington and others (e.g. Deutsch) communication
in general and the Mass Media in particular are important
tools of social mobilization.[16] From this perspective they
may appear quite threatening because they acquaint the poor,
who constitute the vast majority of the population of Sub-
Sahara West Africa, with all kinds of desirable things that
they do not have, and also because they stimulate a sense of

relative as well as absolute deprivation. For these same
reasons the news agencies of Ghana, Nigeria, Ivory Coast and
Senegal should not be dominated by foreigners, but rather
should be National oriented serving integrative and develop-
mental needs.

It is interesting to juxtapose this interpretation with
two other issues involving communication and development. One
is the superficially competing views of the media as "stimulant"
or "narcotic".[17] Against the arousal image of the media must
be placed the sedation image. Here the media are seen as
providing people an escape from reality. Through the media
the masses can retreat into fantasy or a more successful
vicarious existence. Rather than being stimulated and then
frustrated by the media, the masses are seen to be lethargized
and diverted from more constructive activities.

The other issue relates to the perceived effectiveness
of the Mass Media. As Pool suggests, the policy-makers of
non-communist societies seem to display a prevailing "dis-
illusionment" with the media as a developmental instrument.[18]
The Media are thought to be ineffective for changing actions
or behavior. Thus, like social science in general, the mass
media in developing societies, and in Sub-Sahara West Africa
in particular, are cast into a "damned-if-you-do and damned-
if-you-don't" role. They are at the same time seen to be
disastrously effective and disappointingly ineffective.

Communication Considerations:

In the economic and socio-political theories of develop-

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ment, communication played a rather latent and general role, albeit an important one if the theories are scrutinized deeply. I shall now consider communication theories of development, ie., theories that put communication at the heart of an explanation of modernization, and/or development in Sub-Sahara West Africa. On the whole, the development explained is that in the economic and socio-political theories, development is employed, such as increased electoral participation or certain kinds of attitudinal change, so that the outcome is altered.

The global process of modernization or development has, as mentioned previously, two fundamental aspects. One can be called "invention"--the original generation of the change process under examination; the other can be called "diffusion" or "innovation"--the process by which the invention is spread, copied, and disseminated (or endogenous in the case of Sub-Sahara West Africa). The communication theories of development can be fruitfully displayed under these two headings:

(A) Diffusion Theories:

While the diffusion theories may at first seem less interesting because they do not include the invention process, reflection may alter this judgement. One can argue that it matters little how the industrial system was invented. It may very well have been a unique historical accident. But whatever the reason, the crucial developmental process in the world for the past century had been diffusion/endogenous. None of the underdeveloped or developing societies need worry about inventing the technological and post-industrial system.

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Instead, the problem is how to explain their differential rates of adoption of available changes and, from a policy perspective, to know how to accelerate the process. There are three major areas, namely, (1) anthropological theories on cultural diffusion; (2) sociological theories on the diffusion of innovations; and (3) geographical or spatial models of diffusion developed primarily by Torsten Hagerstand.[19] The nature of this thesis however, will not permit me to cover these areas.

(B)   General Communication Theories of Development:

The diffusion theories attempt to model or explain the spread of social changes once these are invented. As noted, they do this primarily in terms of two types or variables: communication contacts and psychological orientations. The main emphasis, however, has been communication networks and individual attitudes.

There also exists a few more general communication theories of development that purport to probe even more deeply into the role of communication in modernization. This is done through explaining current communication contacts as a function of previous contacts and through explaining the psychological orientations relevant to both diffusion and invention as a function of communication. The more general communication theories of development address various aspects of these fundamental relationships.

Probably the most influential theory of this type has been proposed by Lerner. There is a provocative communi-

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cations core to the theory plus a number of other theoretical suggestions that are related but less clearly elaborated. At the core, the theory describes the process of modernization in terms of four variables: urbanization, literacy, mass media exposure, and "participation". The first three variables have standard meanings, but the fourth, "participation", is somewhat elusive. Lerner employs the "traditional-transitional-modern" continuum, regarding modernization as "the transition to a participant society".[20]

"Participation" is described to include political participation, economic participation, communication participation, psychological participation, etc. In general, it appears to be assumed that these various forms of "participation" all cohere--ie., are strongly and positively linked--and all figure similarly in the essential modernization process.

Lerner's fundamental thesis is expressed in two key passages of the Passing of Traditional Society. The first, more brief and simple exposition states that "everywhere... increasing urbanization has tended to raise literacy: rising literacy has tended to increase media exposure; increasing media exposure has 'gone with' wider economic participation and political participation (voting)."[21]

Expressed this way, the hypothesis takes the following simple schematic form:

$$U \longrightarrow L \longrightarrow M \longrightarrow P$$

Later in the book, this suggestion is complicated somewhat. Urbanization still causes increased literacy which, in turn,

increases mass media exposure, but this mass media exposure
feeds back to increase literacy in what Lerner styles "a
supply-and-demand reciprocal in the communication market..."
Hence, the more complicated core hypothesis can be schemati-
cally represented as follows:
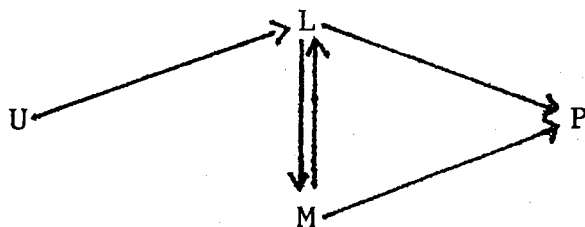
Just how applicable this theory is in West Africa is still
unproven.

There are several authors who address themselves to the
subject of development, however I limited myself to the works
of those discussed above because they also take into consider-
ation the communication factor, and how it affects develop-
ment. Others, such as Pye, Pool, Deutsch and Schramm were
quoted, referred to, or mentioned in passing because there is
a similarity between all of their works on this subject, and
to avoid repetition I concentrated on areas that have not been
covered already by the analysis of other researchers. There
are two schools of thought on the subject of communications
(news agencies) and development. The first school, which I
called the administrative theorists, (Lerner, Pye, Schramm
and Frey), are advocates of the western approach to development,
whereas the second group, that can be referred to as the pro-

gressives, adopts a different approach. This group realizes the flaws of the western approach and comes up with definite changes to remedy the situation, but the developmental problems of these nations require major reforms, not minor. Schiller, Nordenstreng and Smythe belong to this group. The problem here is that their approach is universal, which may or may not be appropriate to Sub-Sahara West Africa. After all, although Nigeria and Sri Lanka may both be underdeveloped, there are cultural, religious and socio-political factors that may be very different. Therefore, one cannot prescribe a general or universal remedy for all the developing world. The development of national news agencies in Ghana, Senegal, Ivory Coast, and Nigeria did nothing to remedy the neo-colonial position of the above listed West African states because again the policy makers made the same mistakes as they did with development, by committing their nations to follow the western methods.

The close working relations existing between the above named ex-colonies and France and Britain (their former colonial masters) played a very important factor in influencing policy directions and also professionalism.

In effect, the national news agencies were confronted with the lack of "true image", even after the formation of their own national news agencies from the late fifties and the mid-seventies.

The national news agencies are still very much dependent upon the western news agencies for the greater percentage of

their news, thereby indirectly following the policy and direction of the capitalist media.

Rosemary Righter argued in her book that "true image" is not the problem confronting news agencies (in West Africa) and that objective reporting by the foreign agencies strengthens freedom of the press (thus democracy), whereas what is being advocated by the Third World nations, in the form of government controlled national news agencies would aid (government) control of news flow.[22] This, according to Ms. Righter, will be the ultimate disaster, for the national news agencies will be nothing but a mouth-piece of the various governments concerned.

Sean McBride, however, takes the opposite view of Ms. Righter. According to him, the western news agencies indeed do give a negative image of the developing world due to their rather biased and slanted reporting to and from Africa and the third world.[23] To McBride, it is a question of differing policies concerning the role of wire services in news gathering, processing and distribution. Due to these differences, McBride supported the hypothesis that the developing world, (or West Africa to be specific) would be better served by the then proposed News Agencies Pool of the Non-Aligned Countries.

The differing approach to policy regarding the news agencies between the world agencies and West Africa can best be explained by the writings of Herbert Schiller on "Cultural Imperialism". Professor Schiller argued that the

capitalist policy concerning news agencies and communication is to treat communication as a tool to help the capitalist system.[24]   He argued that the methods that were invented or developed to sell mass-produced goods in the west is now being used in the processing and selling of news world wide. Schiller is not alone in his belief on this subject, others such as Tran Van Dinh, Nordenstreng, and Smythe share this theoretical position.   Thus, news is treated as a commodity by the capitalist wire services.   In effect, what this means is that this same policy is now being imposed or applied by the capitalist wire services in West Africa, hence the conflict between the advocates of the western developmental approach and those who favor endogenous development.

This thesis therefore attempts to examine the alternatives to this market-oriented wire service policy regarding news agencies and news gathering, processing and distribution in Sub-Sahara Africa.

This issue thus becomes one of the independence of West Africa or foreign capitalist control of culture; information gathering, interpretation and flow of communication within and among Sub-Sahara African nations; and how it affects the process of media development.

It is important for West African nations to control communications within and among themselves because what is communicated can be a favourable or unfavourable developmental factor to the region.   Many educated Sub-Sahara Africans fervently believe that the outside world is receiving a dis-

torted picture of events in Africa from foreign correspondents. Moreover, the Africans themselves receive this same biased version of the news when these same foreign agencies send their correspondents back into the region, thus compounding the distortion.[25] All the developed nations of the world (including some developing ones) control communication by way of private transnational corporations or state control and monopoly. This is true of the U.S.A., Canada, the U.K., France, West Germany, the U.S.S.R., China, Yugoslavia and India. Sub-Sahara Africa therefore can be no exception.[26]

As was stated earlier, this study considers communications as a fundamental and an important variable in the process of national, regional or continental development of Africa. This view regarding the importance of communication is backed by various resolutions of several international conferences and bodies over the past two decades. I will quote again from the declaration of the Fourth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, Algiers, September, 1973, regarding communications and development. The most far-reaching resolution was on a subject mostly neglected in the past by non-aligned countries: "cultural imperialism". Under the topic: Preservation and Development of National Culture, the conference stated that "It is an established fact that the activities of imperialism are not confined solely to the political and economic fields but also cover the cultural and social fields", and stressed the "need to reaffirm national cultural identity and eliminate the harmful consequences of

the colonial era". In Chapter XIII of the Action Program
for Economic Co-operation, the conference recommended a
"concerted action in the fields of mass communications" which
is almost totally dominated by the United States of America.

In this section of this thesis, I have analysed the
various administrative communication theories of development
by discussing the works of several researchers. This approach
enabled me to examine the several theories of development in
Sub-Sahara West Africa. In the next section of this thesis,
I will analyse the theories of endogenous development and their
relevance to Africa in general and to Sub-Sahara West Africa
in particular. In doing this, I will be concentrating on the
writings of Frantz Fanon, Kwame Nkrumah and Amilcar Cabral,
with passing references to Mao Tse-Tung, Mahatma Gandhi,
Samir Amin and André Gunder Frank.

FOOTNOTES

1. Fernando Reyes; "Information Bedazzlement of L.A." in <u>Development Dialogue</u>, 1981:2, p. 139.

2. Tran Van Dinh; "Non-Alignment and Cultural Imperialism" in the <u>Black Scholar</u>, December 1976, p.43.

3. A. W. Singham and Tran Van Dinh; <u>From Bandung to Columbo: Conferences of the Non-Aligned Countries</u>, p.161.

4. A. O. Hirschman; <u>The Strategy of Economic Development</u>, pp. 29-47.

5. F. Frey; "Political Development, Power and Communications in Turkey" in <u>Communications and Political Development</u>, pp. 298-326.

6. Everett Hayen; "On The Theory of Social Change", p.37.

7. J. Spenger; "Bureaucracy and Economic Development" in J. LaPalombara (ed), <u>Bureaucracy and Political Development</u>, p.211.

8. F. Frey; "Political Development, Power and Communications in Turkey", pp. 298-326.

9. Lucian Pye; Aspects of Political Development, 1966.

10. P. E. Jacob and H. Teune; "The Integrative Process: Guidelines for Analysis of the Bases of Political Community." in P. Jacob and J. V. Toscano (eds) <u>The Integration of Political Communities</u>, pp. 1-45.

11. K. Deutsch; Nationalism and Social Communication.

12. (a) F. Frey, Ibid, p.303; and
    (b) S. P. Huntington; "The Political Modernization of Traditional Monarchies" in Daedalus 95 (summer 1966) pp. 763-788; or
    (c) Political Order in Changing Societies, pp. 140-147.

13. I. De Sola Pool; <u>Mass Media and Politics in the Modernization Process</u>, pp. 244-245.

14. H. Hyman; Political Socialization, 1959.

15. D. Lerner; Communication and the Prospect of Innovative Development, and

    Huntington, Ibid.

16. K. Deutsch; <u>Social Mobilization and Political Development</u>, pp. 493-514.

17. W. Schramm; Communication Development and the Development Process, pp. 53-54.

18. Pool; Ibid, pp. 237-238.

19. T. Hagerstrand; "Qualitative Techniques for Analysis of the Spread of Information and Technology."

20. D. Lerner; The Passing of Traditional Society, 1958.

21. Ibid; p.71.

22. Rosemary Righter; Whose News, p.65.

23. President of the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems, views expressed in Many Voices, One World.

24. H. I. Schiller; Communications and Cultural Imperialism, 1971.

25. Schiller, Ibid.

26. Ibid.

III. THEORIES FOR ENDOGENOUS DEVELOPMENT

In the introduction of the thesis I mentioned Frantz Fanon, Kwame Nkrumah and Amilcar Cabral's analysis of cultural domination and its influence on national development. In the section that followed, I analyzed at length the administrative theoretical basis of dependency and the media, examining some of the economic and socio-political considerations. The theories analysed in chapter two belonged to what I will call the western concept and path to communications development, (ie. status quo).

I would now like to analyse the theoretical basis for endogenous development in Sub-Sahara West Africa, regarding the development of news agencies. Theories advocating endogenous development are important factors in this essay because they constitute an alternative to all the pre-western theories of the previous section, and they also represent the form of development that this writer considers to be appropriate for Sub-Sahara West Africa.

These endogenous development theorists also advocate the formation of news agencies that will serve the needs of the culturally dominated, whereas the pro-western theorists argue for a system which will end up serving the capitalist west.

There are comparatively few theorists who belong to this endogenous school of thought. I will therefore concentrate on Frantz Fanon and Kwame Nkrumah, whose theoretical writings on endogenous development and cultural domination are relevant

or applicable to Sub-Sahara West Africa.

Fanon's Thesis:

Fanon regards freedom as man's supreme goal. And the whole purpose of man's existence is to realize this supreme goal. As he puts it in Black Skin, White Masks: "No attempt must be made to encase man, for it is his destiny to be set free."[1] To Frantz Fanon cultural domination or imperialism is the worst form of colonization in the history of the people of Africa.

There are two main concepts of freedom in the thought of Fanon; the freedom of the state and the freedom of the individual. The freedom of the state, which I shall call Political Freedom, implies an absence of external control (as in communications) over the state. It is in this sense that Fanon talks of the underdeveloped countries fighting for independence and endogenous development. He recognizes, like Marx, that the state can be free without the individual being free, and political freedom in this sense merely indicates formal independence. This is what he calls

> a fancy-dress parade and the blare of
> trumpets. There's nothing save a min-
> imum of readaptation, a few reforms at
> the top, a flag waving: and down there
> at the bottom an undivided mass, still
> living in the Middle Ages, endlessly
> marking time. 2

This kind of political independence has hardly any effect on the lives of the majority of the people. This is what Fanon describes as "false" decolonization. It is merely legal independence. For "true" freedom it is necessary to combine

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both political independence and decolonization; the breaking
down of colonial social, cultural, and political structures
and the building of new structures that will enable man to
maintain and express his freedom. Decolonization is the
attempt to combine the freedom of the state and the freedom of
the individual as a single and inseparable social and political
process.

The second concept of freedom discernible in Fanon's
thought is the freedom of the individual. At the level of
the individual Fanon talks of freedom in two senses: Existential
Freedom and Social Freedom.[3]

In the examination of individual freedom Fanon argued
that alienation plays a very important role in the process, and
it also accounts for West African intellectuals' obsession with
foreign news as presented by the foreign news agencies such as
BBC and Voice of America and with western culture and mannerisms.
Unfortunately for the advocates of endogenous development, these
same alienated bourgeoisie are the policy makers of economic,
political, and communications development.

The colonialists socialized the natives into their value
system through the churches and the schools. Although every
government relies on some degree of force or threat to maintain
itself, it is unlikely that colonial rulers could have held
the colonies by pure force. Even in areas of permanent
European settlements such as Algeria, Kenya, Angola, Mozambique,
Rhodesia, and South Africa, where force and violence were
relied upon more than in other areas, it is doubtful that they

alone could have maintained power. Fanon's work <u>Black Skin,</u> <u>White Masks</u> describes at length the results of the socializing process that the natives of the colonized countries undergo and the attitudes and behavior patterns that they assume as a result of this mental and cultural colonization. To quote Nkrumah, "Practice without thought is blind; thought without practice is empty".[4] Kwame Nkrumah's analysis of the problems facing endogenous development in economics, politics, and communication was presented in three books: <u>Africa Must Unite,</u> <u>Consciencism</u>, and <u>Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism.</u> Only Frantz Fanon's theoretical analysis is comparable in details and relevance. In describing the links between the western news agencies and the intelligence agencies of the west, Nkrumah exposed the importance of news agencies and communication in general to the western capitalist system, and the attempts being made to entrench this system in the Third World.[5]

Fanon, Nkrumah, and Cabral's theses on culture are studies in the destruction and imposition of alien culture on Africa. As argued above, the endogenous theory of these men is the antithesis of the developmental theories discussed in the last section.

Fanon maintains that colonial rulers did not destroy African cultures in their entirety, but argues that they were robbed of their essential values and functions:

> The setting up of the colonial system
> does not of itself bring about the
> death of the native culture. Historic
> observation reveals, on the contrary,
> that the aim sought is rather a con-

> tinued agony than a total disappearance
> of the pre-existing culture.
>
> This culture, once living and open to
> the future, becomes closed, fixed in
> the colonial status, caught in the yoke
> of oppression. Both present and mum-
> mified, it testifies against it members.
> It defines them in fact without appeal.
> The cultural mummification leads to a
> mummification of individual thinking.
> The apathy so universally noted among
> colonial peoples is but the logical con-
> sequence of the operation. 6

What Nkrumah, and later Fanon, is maintaining is that African culture loses its autonomy and is tagged onto colonial rule so that it becomes one of the instruments of oppression. Anthropologists may dispute this claim, but there were several cases where the colonial administration kept in office chiefs who had violated all the customary restraints on the office, so long as they remained in the good graces of the colonial administrators. There were customs and traditions that were disallowed because they were offensive to the colonial rulers; others that were ridiculed and given low prestige value. In fact, the customs that were tolerated or promoted were those that the colonial administrators thought would contribute to the success of their rule or, at least, would not negate it. In this way the culture of the people becomes an agent of their own oppression. If that is the case, then one could argue that, though the naked and brutal aspects of colonial rule varied from area to area depending on the circumstances, (whether there was a colony settlement or not) or the strategy of colonial rule (direct or indirect), one has to note that though none of the colonial rulers rigidly followed

this pattern, the end result was the same. The African social
and political organization was used to serve the ends of the
colonial rulers, and in this way the institutions of the people
contributed to their own oppression. In such a situation,
whether colonial rule was tempered by paternalism or not, the
result was the same: alienation.

3.1 CULTURAL DEGRADATION:

Cabral and Fanon argue that one of the ways by which col-
onial rule causes alienation of the colonized is through cul-
tural degradation. Fanon discusses in some detail the cultural
factors that lead to such alienation. Of these perhaps the
most important are education and the language of the colonizer,
which remain the most potent instruments for the systematic
alienation of the African. In the colonial territory the
colonizer first imposes his language on the colonized. The
language of the colonizer becomes the official language, the
language of commerce and business. The ability to express one-
self well in that language grants one automatic entrance to a
higher status in the colonial (and post-colonial) system. The
language of the colonizer is not only a medium of communication;
it is a "social artifact". Thus, to adopt the language of the
colonizer in West Africa is to assume his cultural forms and
thought patterns. This includes preference to imported goods,
papers, magazines, clothes, food and BBC or VCA news broadcasts.
Fanon underlines the importance of language:

> I ascribe a basic importance to the
> phenomenon of language. That is why

> I find it necessary to begin with this
> subject, which should provide us with
> one of the elements in the colored
> man's comprehension of the dimension
> of the other. For it is implicit that
> to speak is to exist absolutely for
> the other. 7

The black man becomes whiter as he renounces his black-
ness (as in mental colonization) and his so-called "primitive
and savage" African culture. It is here that the degradation
of the black man's language and culture becomes ultimate
and complete.

I have been very careful through this essay in using the
concept of "revolution" or "armed struggle" as used by Nkrumah,
Cabral, and Fanon in their analysis of cultural, economic,
and political decolonization.[8] In fact, I make sparing use of
the term revolution or different dimensions of it, my fav-
orites being liberation, independence, and decolonization.

Independence generally refers to the freeing of a col-
onial territory from external control. This implies revolution
in the political sense of the word or the political dimension
of the concept. However, according to Kwame Nkrumah, by decol-
onization he means the concept of freeing a territory from
external, together with the destruction of the social, politi-
cal and cultural institutions of the colonizer and the building
of new institutions such as news agencies and reversed school
curriculum and relationships to reflect the reality of the
nation. The communication apparatus, therefore, would be at
the top of the list of priorities for the new African nation,
he continued. It is a fundamental change in the consciousness

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of the people of the nation.[9] With slight variations, what
Nkrumah calls decolonization, Herbert Marcuse calls revolution,

> the overthrow of a legally established
>
> government and constitution by a social
>
> class or movement with the aim of
>
> altering the social as well as the
>
> political structure.[10]

2.2   THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL BOURGEOISIE:

Marx pays generous tribute to the bourgeoisie of Europe
for breaking the back of the feudal society and taking a
leading role in the movement that built industrial capitalism
in the nineteenth century, though he castigates them for their
regressive role in the capitalist society.

Nkrumah and Fanon argue that in the underdeveloped
countries of Sub-Sahara Africa the bourgeoisie has not even
played this initial role. "The national middle class which
takes over at the end of the colonial regime is an under-
developed middle class. It has practically no economic power,
and in any case it is in no way commensurate with the bour-
geoisie of the mother country which it hopes to replace."[11]

The immediate reason for such a sad state of affairs is
that the bourgeoisie not only lacks a developmental ethic but
is also steeped in indulgence and conspicuous consumption, due
to extreme income differential between them and the general
population.[12]

> In the colonial countries, the spirit
> of indulgence is dominant at the core
> of the bourgeoisie; and this is be-

cause the national bourgeoisie ident-
ifies itself with the western bour-
geoisie, from whom it has learnt its
lessons. It follows the western bour-
geoisie along its path of negation and
decadence without ever having emulated
it in its first stages of exploration
and intervention. 13

Fanon argues that this sort of behavior is symptomatic

not only of the bourgeoisie of the urban areas. It is also a

feature of its class allies, the big farmers.[14] The national

bourgeoisie also lacks initiative, imagination, and entre-

preneurial skills; qualities indispensable for achieving decol-

onization. It is conspicuous in its inability to make use of

the techniques learned in European universities to solve local

problems. Moreover, it has failed to provide effective leader-

ship in the important function of achieving national unity and

nation-building.

Another reason why the national bourgeoisie of the under-

developed countries of black Africa fails to play a progressive

role in the decolonization process is its slavish imitation

of European patterns of thought and its unquestioning assimi-

lation of ideas to which it was exposed in Africa and during

its training in European universities.[15] For example, it im-

ports the notion of the multi-party system and parliamentary

"democracy" and "freedom" of the Press from Western Europe and

North America, and tries to apply it mechanically in Africa.

(A) The Urban Working Class:

. The leaders of Sub-Sahara West Africa try to replicate

the European notion of the workers' party in their own count-

ries. In many African countries much of the political action

against the colonial powers took place in the main cities, with the urban working or non-working class forming the backbone of the mass parties and the national movements that rose to challenge the colonial presence.[16] On account of this the working class has been wrongly equated with its European counterpart as a revolutionary class.[17]

Fanon, however argues that the revolutionary nature of the proletariat is related to the specific historical conditions of Europe and cannot be translated wholesale into the African situation. The African proletariat does not resemble the proletariat of Europe. It is in fact an urban petite bourgeoisie with a stake in the colonial system; it occupies a privileged position in the cities; and it is too small.

Fanon is not the only, though he was probably the first, to claim that the urban working class in Africa is pampered, and enjoys a privileged position.[18] Modibo Keita of Mali says of the African working class and its living standards: "We know that they (ie., the working class) were not the most exploited when they had work".[19] Senghor also thinks that the living wages of the urban working class put them far above the peasants. Evidence from the reports of various commissions set up in both the colonial and post-colonial eras on the wage scales of urban workers indicates, however, that the living standards of urban workers are far from desirable.[20]

It is not possible that through political education organized by the revolutionary intellectuals' the working class could be made to develop revolutionary consciousness, and

thus become an effective force in decolonization? It is surprising that Fanon does not consider this possibility.

(B) The Role of the Peasantry:

After discounting the national bourgeoisie and the urban working class, the peasantry emerges as the most revolutionary class. Why do Fanon and Nkrumah regard the peasantry of Sub-Sahara Africa as the most revolutionary? They think it has certain particular attributes that predispose it to revolutionary action. The peasantry, in its stern determination to maintain the social structure of the pre-colonial society, remains the most "disciplined element" of the population. Fanon concedes that the stubborn determination of the peasantry to maintain the social structure may sometimes give rise "to movements which are based on religious fanaticism or "tribal" wars.[21] However, it is in this determination and spontaneity that its strength lies.

It is much easier to arouse the peasants to political consciousness, since they have not suffered alienation, as have the urban working class and the national bourgeoisie. They have not been made to feel inferior, and they have not sunk to the psychological state of a feeling of impotence or of non-being. In addition, in their folklore the anti-colonial still looms large in a form that is not distorted by the colonizer. Fanon also argues (though Sartre makes the point more forcefully) that what contributes to the revolutionary potential of the peasant is his economic deprivation and suffering.[22]

Mao also regards the peasants as the most revolutionary group. Of the revolutionaries who regard the peasantry as revolutionary, the one whose ideas are closest to Fanon and Nkrumah's is Michael Bakunin. Unlike Fanon, however, Mao's main reason for regarding the peasants as the most revolutionary is economic. They are the most exploited class. Cabral, whose credentials as a revolutionary were unquestionable, did not share Fanon and Nkrumah's view of the peasantry as the main revolutionary force.

> A distinction must be drawn between a
> physical force and a revolutionary force;
> physically, the peasantry is a great
> force in Guinea: it is almost the whole
> population, it controls the nation's
> wealth, it is the peasantry which pro-
> duces; but we know from experience what
> trouble we have had convincing the pea-
> santry to fight. 23

As Cabral has pointed out, the fact that the peasantry does not constitute the main revolutionary force does not mean the revolutionary movement cannot be based on the peasantry. It still represents a great physical force.

Lin Piao, Mao's former chief disciple has gone further than any other in glorifying the peasantry. He extends his idealization on the peasantry to the village, which he regards in opposition to the city as the only base for revolutionary action.

> The village, and the village alone, is
> the boundless, vast field of action for
> revolutionaries. The village, and the
> village alone, is the revolutionary
> base from which revolutionaries set out
> on a march to win final victory.24

Lin Piao also goes on to characterize the industrialized nations

as the "city" and the developing world as the "village",
thereby imputing that it is only from the developing world
that revolutionary action can come. Régis Debray's thinking
also comes close to that of Lin Piao. He regards the city as
the centre of embourgeoisement, which has to be avoided:
"...Any man, even a comrade, who spends life in the city is
unwittingly bourgeois in comparison with a guerrilero..."[25]
He continues: "As we know, the mountain proletarizes the
bourgeois and peasant elements, and the city can bourgeoisify
the proletarians."[26] René Dumont, the French agronomist,
also shares the view of the revolutionary potential of the
peasantry, whom he calls "proletarians of modern times".[27]
In the final analysis, it is a union between the revolutionary
intellectuals from the city and the peasants that results in
the embryonic political organization.

(C)   The Lumpen-Proletariat:

    Another group of people that should be allied to the
peasantry in the struggle is the lumpen-proletariat. These
are the urban unemployed or unemployables whom I have mentioned
above. These consist of peasants who have left the rural life
for the city, but who have not become part of the social system
of the city. They form a "horde of starving men uprooted from
their tribe and from their clan".[28] They live on the fringes
of the city in the "shanty towns" or ghettoes. They are
located in almost every major city in Africa--Dakar, Abidjan,
Accra, Lagos, Nairobi, Kinshasha, and Johannesburg. Among
this group can also be found those born and raised in the city

who have only tenuous or no rural roots.

African politicians have made use of the urban unemployed in their struggle against the colonial regime and also against their local rivals. Nkrumah's "Verandah Boys", the "Action Troopers" of Kumasi, and Nnamdi Azikiwe's "Zikist Movement" are only a few examples. Since most of the African mass parties are urban-based, the support of this urban non-working class is considerable.[29]

It is possible for certain members of the lumpen-proletariat to be converted to revolutionary consciousness. The experiences of Malcolm X, George Jackson, and a number of Black Panther members support this. Malcolm X, and George Jackson, however, did not acquire their revolutionary consciousness through armed conflict. Throughout this section, I have attempted to draw attention to the extreme difficulties between the two sets of theories dealing with Sub-Sahara West Africa's News Agencies, Cultural Domination, and National Development.

In chapter two, I examined the theorists whose understanding of Sub-Sahara West Africa is from a distance. These theories were also very western or western-influenced, thus making their relevance very questionable. Their analysis was based on the premise that by following the western capitalist experiment, Sub-Sahara West Africa would ultimately be on the road to political, economic and cultural prosperity.

This reminds me of a discussion with Professor Smythe a few years ago. In one of our seminars, he recounted an experience in China when he was told that The People's Republic

of China was interested in catching up with the capitalist west, but how can two people going in completely different directions be in a race to catch up with a supposed leader?

The above statement is very relevant to the developmental problems of Sub-Sahara West Africa. The region's aim and objective should be the development of a society; politically, economically and culturally free of foreign (ie., western) domination. In this chapter, the theoretical basis is more relevant and applicable to the societies and the problems they faced. The chapter also serves as an alternative and is, I believe, preferable to the administrative theories advocated by the apologists of neo-colonialism.

The writers mentioned above are not the only theorists to have addressed themselves to endogenous development with emphasis on communication and culture. As I mentioned earlier there are others, but these are the ones who addressed themselves to the problems of Sub-Sahara Africa. Mao Tse Tung, Ho Chi Minh, Mahatma Gandhi, and Tran Van Dinh belonged to this school, however their attention was directed to other developing areas of the world. When Mao started his cultural revolution in China in 1966, the object was the elimination and/or reformation of foreign cultures (news agencies; rock, jazz, and opera music; lifestyles; thought; and all forms of un-Chinese media). According to Mao, by purging China of all of the above, the country would be better prepared for the difficult task of endogenous development, made difficult by the corrupting influence of alien cultures, over-educated and

bourgeois intellectuals, and dominating foreign news corres-
pondents. On the subject of culture and endogenous develop-
ment, Mao argued that in the world today all culture, all
literature and art belong to definite classes and are geared
to definite political lines. There is in fact no such thing
as art for art's sake, art that stands above classes, art that
is detached from or independent of politics. This is in fact
supported by the fact that foreign news correspondents cannot
detach themselves from their values and cultural norms in co-
vering the developing countries they are assigned to. Pro-
letarian literature and are are part of the whole proletarian
revolutionary cause; they are, as Lenin said, cogs and wheels
in the whole revolutionary machine.[30]   Revolutionary culture,
according to Mao,

> ...is a powerful revolutionary weapon
> for the broad masses of the people.
> It prepares the ground ideologically
> before the revolution comes and is an
> important, indeed essential, fighting
> front in the general revolutionary
> front during the revolution. [31]

Mao's views on endogenous development are also shared by
Ho Chi Minh. Ho always stressed the need for Vietnamese
nationalism and the urgency in purging Vietnam of French and
American cultural influence. Ho insisted that, apart from
eliminating French and U.S. cultural domination, the
Vietnamese revolution will also have to resist Chinese and
Soviet cultural influence as well. In effect, Ho Chi Minh
made the "national question" a major factor in Vietnam's
endogenous developmental efforts throughout the war of resis-

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tance first against the French then later against the United States. Among the first acts of the heirs to Ho after the victory was the expelling of all foreign correspondents (especially westerners) and the cultural purification of the whole nation. This included the complete revision of the national curriculum for education, magazines, films and western music. They did what Fanon called the "creation of a new man" and Nkrumah referred to as the "African Personality". What Ho and Mao tried to accomplish in Asia as part of their respective endogenous development programmes is exactly what is needed in Sub-Sahara West Africa with variations to suit the historical, political, and economic realities of West Africa. Another Asian leader, Mahatma Gandhi, tried endogenous development in India in similar terms. Gandhi's thesis is best exemplified by his rejection of the European dressing styles, and his preference for the Indian way of dressing. Gandhi also rejected the all-important cotton products from English factories and resorted to the loom and spinning wheel. These acts became a symbol of the developing world and its desire for simplicity and development through strength from within and trial and error. His total rejection is similar to the theories on development by Kwame Nkrumah, Frantz Fanon, Amilcar Cabral, and to some extent, Mao Tse Tung and Ho Chi Minh.

According to Mao there are people in the developing nations who oppose endogenous development because of their vested interest in keeping their countries underdeveloped. He referred to them as "running-dogs of Imperialism". Nkrumah, Fanon, and

Cabral all wrote at great length about the dangers of such people to endogenous development. Another theorist, André Gunder Frank, argued that the immediate enemy of national liberation in the underdeveloped world is the native bourgeoisie, and the local bourgeoisie in the countryside. This is so in West Africa--as in Asia and Latin America--notwithstanding that strategically the principal enemy undoubtedly in imperialism. According to Frank, the Latin America class structure was formed and transformed by the development of the colonial structure of international capitalism, from mercantilism to imperialism.[32] Through this colonial structure, the consecutive metropolises of Spain, Britain, and North America have sub-jected Africa to an economic exploitation and political and cultural domination that determined its present class and socio-cultural structure. Even though Frank's analysis deals with the developing world in general, it is very relevant and applicable to the present developmental problems of Africa in general and Sub-Sahara West Africa in particular.

Using Frank's thesis as a basis for analysis of the dif-ficulties of Sub-Sahara West Africa in establishing news agencies, resisting cultural domination and pursuing endogenous development, it becomes evident that these obstacles are com-plicated by the lack of ideological clarity, policy direction, and the weakness of revolutionary leadership and cadre. The ideological clarity about these problems becomes especially essential when the revolutionary movement is (weak or) tempor-arily slowed down, because it is at that time that ideological

firmness is necessary in order to resist the neo-colonial temptations--that the bourgeoisie always offers on behalf of its capitalist masters--to recede toward a reformist policy, suggesting, for example, the supposed possibility and necessity of a "democratic route", as the Convention Peoples' Party of Ghana and the Socialist Party of Senegal and the Action Group of Nigeria did in the sixties. To reach this ideological policy and theoretical clarity, Marxists will have to work intellectually, but more than intellectually as well, inspired by the example of Kwame Nkrumah, Frantz Fanon, Amilcar Cabral, Augustin Neto, and Che Guevara, who were revolutionaries first and then intellectuals.

To pursue this ideological, Pan-Africanist, and revolutionary objective, which is the real responsibility of the West African (or African) intellectual, and of the Marxists especially, will mean-- as Cabral and Fanon also found-- leaving the institutional bounds of West Africa (and African) imperialist bourgeoisie. The West African intellectual--and this is as true for the artist or writer as for the social scientist--will have to become conscious of the fact that he has been working for the bourgeoisie and serving the cause of neo-colonialism and cultural imperialism. He will have to realize also that, the more acute the contradictions become and the more the revolutionary process advances, the less the bourgeoisie will permit the West African intellectual to take of its bourgois institutions--universities, publishing houses, press, media and news agencies--for the endogenous development

of a really revolutionary Marxist theory and practice. In some parts of the continent (Senegal, Ivory Coast, and Nigeria), the hour at which the doors of the bourgeois institutions close to the Marxist has already come; in the remaining parts that time will come soon. The West African intellectual and Marxist will have to decide if he will remain inside, pursuing reformism, or outside with the people, making the revolution for endogenous development and cultural decolonization.

> We stand for self-reliance. We hope
> for foreign aid but cannot be depen-
> dent on it; we depend on our own
> efforts, on the creative power of the
> whole army and the entire people.
> - Mao Tse Tung--January 10, 1945.

Finally, I would describe this chapter as Sub-Sahara Africa's answer to the "White Man's Burden" theories of chapter two of this essay. In the next chapter, I will examine the news flow pattern during the colonial period in West Africa.

FOOTNOTES

1. Frantz Fanon; Black Skin, White Masks, p.230.

2. Frantz Fanon; The Wretched of the Earth, p.118.

3. These are not Fanon's terms. I have only categorized the terms in this way to make the discussion analytically meaningful.

4. Kwame Nkrumah; Consciencism, p.79.

5. Kwame NKrumah; Neo-Colonialism, pp. 240-241 and David Wise and Thomas Ross; The Invisible Government.

6. Frantz Fanon; Toward the African Revolution, p.34.

7. Frantz Fanon; Black Skin, White Masks, p.17.

8. See: The Wretched of the Earth by Frantz Fanon; The People are our Mountains by Cabral; and Revolutionary Path by Kwame Nkrumah.

9. Kwame Nkrumah; Consciencism, p.49.

10. Marcuse; "Ethics and Revolution" In Ethics and Society, p.134.

11. Frantz Fanon; The Wretched of the Earth, pp. 119-120.

12. Julius Nyerere; Uhuru na Umoja., p.18.

13. Frantz Fanon; Ibid., p.123.

14. Unfortunately the author's father belonged to both groups.

15. Nkrumah; Class Struggle in Africa, p.36.

16. Ibid., pp. 18-20.

17. There are writers who even question whether the American and West European working class as presently constituted is in fact revolutionary; see H. Marcuse; One Dimensional Man.

18. Nyerere; Ujama: Essays on Socialism, pp. 27-28.

19. Interview in Revolution Africaine, 9 March 1963, cited in Woddis New Theories of Revolution, p.102.

20. Report to the Constitutive Congress of the PFA, 1 July 1959, cited in Woddis New Theories of Revolution, p.102.

21. Fanon; The Wretched of the Earth, p.89.

22. Ibid., p.10.

23. Amilcar Cabral; Revolution in Guinea, p.61.

24. Lin Piao, quoted in Y. Krasin, The Dialectics of
    Revolutionary Process (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency, 1972),
    p.39.

25. Revolution in the Revolution? p.70.

26. Ibid., pp. 76-77.

27. False Start in Africa, p.21.

28. Fanon; The Wretched of the Earth, p.103.

29. For a description of politics in Ghana during the period
    of nationalist agitation, see Dennis Austin; Politics in
    Ghana; and for Nigeria see G. O. Olusanya; "The Zikist
    Movement" in the Journal of Modern African Studies 4 1966:
    323-333.

30. Selected Works, Vol. III, p.86

31. Selected Works, Vol. II, p.382.

32. Andre Gunder Frank: Dependence and Underdevelopment, p.425.

IV. NEWS FLOW

I stated at the beginning of this thesis that communication is the most important factor in national and regional development, and that news agencies are the most dominant of these factors. The news agencies influence the flow of news, and in the case of Sub-Sahara West Africa, the flow is "one-way". This pattern of news flow is clearly dominant, because it is represented by the big three western news agencies--Reuters, Agence France Presse, and Associate Press-United Press International.

In this chapter I will show how the news agencies and the flow of news contributed to cultural imperialism and domination by the capitalist west (ie., the U.K., the U.S.A., and France).

The bulk of the world's news flows around the northern hemisphere on an east-west axis between the great news centres of New York, London, Paris, Moscow and Tokyo. The nature and volume of world news is dominated by the four great powers. It is no coincidence that the five world news agencies-- Associated Press (AP), United Press International (UPI), Reuters, Agence France Presse (AFP), and TASS-have their home basis, respectively, in the USA (AP and UPI), the UK (Reuters), France (AFP), and the USSR (TASS). Most of their newspaper and broadcasting clients are in the USA or Europe.

The developing nations of the southern hemisphere, especially those in Sub-Sahara Africa, are seriously disadvantaged by this prevailing pattern of world news flow. They want to

participate fully in the modern world, and this requires an adequate exchange in news and information available at present only through a newsflow pattern that is essentially a legacy of colonialism. Although they depend on the world agencies for news, many Sub-Sahara Africans feel those agencies do not effectively serve the needs or interests of the new nations, due to the difference in policy directions and priorities, which was pointed out above, between the advocates of western and those in favour of endogenous development. Many educated Sub-Sahara Africans fervently believe that the outside world is receiving a distorted picture of events in Africa from foreign correspondents. Moreover, the Africans themselves receive this same biased version of the news when these same foreign agencies send their correspondents back into the region, thus compounding the distortion.[1] The foreign correspondents and the agencies they represent enjoy great advantages in the organization, experience, financial resources and technology required to run a worldwide news communication network. In Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal and Ivory Coast, neither the local media nor the governments have comparable facilities. Sub-Sahara African nations have limited choice but to use their services.

The foreign agencies, especially Reuters and AFP, have been aggressively and successfully selling their services to the new governments of Sub-Sahara Africa, and in many cases have helped to establish the national news agencies.

Although most of the new nations of Sub-Sahara Africa

have been independent since 1960, the news capitals of the region today are not the cities of Accra, Lagos, Dakar or Abidjan. They are London, Paris, and New York, the head-quarters, respectively, of Reuters, AFP, AP and UPI, the agencies that dominate the flow of news to and from Sub-Sahara Africa. This is due in part to the organizational ability of Reuters and AFP, and in part to the way tele-communications operate the Sub-Sahara Africa. Africa in general, and West Africa in particular, in effect, "hook on" to the east-west flow of news at London and Paris.

On a diverse continent where over 800 languages are spoken, news flows mainly in French and English. Most news originating in any of the fourteen francophonic nations, for example, goes directly by way of AFP to Paris, from which it radiates back to other African capitals. Paris is the hub of an enormous communication wheel for Africa's French speakers. It is the same in English-speaking Africa; the only difference is that Reuters usually carries the news and London is the hub. During the Nigerian civil war (for example), there was far more infor-mation about the conflict in the British press than was pro-vided by the West African news media. If a story breaks in Dakar, Senegal, the media in neighbouring Mail learn about it only after AFP flashes the story to Paris and then back to Bamako. News continues to flow in patterns established under colonialism.[2] In a way, news-flow patterns also reflect the economic situations of the new countries, which despite inde-pendence are often still economically dependent on their former

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colonial masters.

Little news in Africa moves laterally by merely crossing
the nearest border; usually lacking are the technical facili-
ties--cables, telephone, telex or radio equipment, or even
roads. A news dispatch, for example, has to pass through both
London and Paris to get from Accra, Ghana to Lome, in nearby
Togo--a distance of only 150 miles. In any Sub-Sahara African
capital it is easier to obtain news of Europe that it is to
find out what is happening in a neighbouring country or even
in that capital's own hinterlands. In any given place in Sub-
Sahara Africa, even a major city, it is difficult to learn
directly what is happening elsewhere on the continent. Hence
there is a great reliance on information from Paris and London
or New York.

4.1 NATURE OF COVERAGE:

Partly because it is on the lower fringe of the east-west
newsflow patterns, the African continent today is the most
poorly "covered" or reported of any major region in the world.
This is particularly true of the U.S. news media that assign
a small fraction of their correspondents to Sub-Sahara Africa.

In a 1969 survey, Ralph E. Kliesch found that the U.S.
news media employed 1,462 newsmen overseas.[3] Over half of them,
793, were stationed in Europe; 332 were in Asia and Australia;
169 were in Latin America (including the Carribean) and Canada,
and 76 in the Middle East. Only 92 were in all of Africa. But
of these 92, only 24 (less than one-third) were staff or full-
time employees. The great majority were non-Americans; only 11

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of the 92 were U.S. citizens and of the 11 Americans, only 7 were full-time correspondents and 6 of them were stationed in Niarobi (4) and Lagos (2).

The three major U.S. television networks maintained 155 correspondents abroad in 1965 and only four of these were in Africa. The ABC's correspondent also had responsibilities in the Middle East and was based in Beirut; the CBS man operated out of London.

The AP, the U.S. news media's major source for both foreign and domestic news, had 6 U.S. nationals in Africa in 1968 with one each in Cairo, Johannesburg, Salisbury, Nairobi, Kinshasa, and Lagos. UPI had no U.S. nationals covering Africa, relying instead on Western Europeans. Few U.S. newspapers have maintained resident correspondents on the African continent. The exception was the New York Times, which has had staff correspondents there since the end of World War II and stringers since 1950. In the mid-1960's there were Times staff correspondents in Nairobi, Lagos, Johannesburg, and Cairo plus 9 stringers.

Other U.S. papers which have had resident American correspondents in Africa include the Washington Post, Christian Science Monitor, Los Angeles Times and Chicago Daily News. In 1965 the only resident correspondent for the British newspaper was Clyde Sanger of the Guardian. The Times of London maintained its extensive African coverage entirely through stringers and the news services. The London Daily Telegraph often sent in reporters for short periods to cover specific stories such

as the Nigerian Civil War or the so-called "rebellion in Zimbabwe".

Time magazine had staff correspondents in Nairobi and Lagos, while Newsweek had two men in Nairobi. The lack of U.S. journalists in Africa meant the American news media carried relatively little news about Sub-Sahara Africa.[4]

4.2 COLONIAL COMMUNICATIONS:

Today's newsflow patterns are rooted in the earlier need of European governments for effective communications between their own capitals and the colonial administrative centres. Hence excellent communications facilities were developed between London and such Sub-Sahara African cities as Nairobi, Lagos, Accra, Freetown and Bathurst. Similarly, there were good communications between Paris and Dakar, Abidjan, Lome, Conakry and Bamako.

In 1879 a submarine cable was laid along the east coast of Africa via Aden to Durban and then by landline to Cape Town.[5] In 1885 a direct link was established between England and West Africa via a cable from England to Bathurst, in Gambia, through Cape Verde in Senegal. This can best be described as a system for Africa on feeder lines forming out from the cable heads. Domestic overland telegraphic systems were established afterwards, and much later telephones, and eventually international links by radio-telegraph and radio-telephone circuits. The great limitation of such a system was that the lines of communication all went toward Europe, in furtherance of European imperialism and capital accumulation.

The first direct radio, telephone and teletype circuits between Abidjan, Ivory Coast and Accra, Ghana, two major West African cities, were not opened until September 26, 1966. Abidjan has had good communications to Paris and Accra to London since the turn of the century, and especially after the second world war. Rosdale Ainslie points out that at the time of independence Africa's internal communications network consisted of the following:

> One telegraphic undersea cable (part
> of the Commonwealth common user system
> that skimmed off the continent from
> Ascension Island off the west coast
> around the Cape to Port Sudan and
> Aden); no telephone cable at all;
> overland, and often inadequate, tele-
> graphic and telephonic systems that
> crossed national boundaries only in
> exceptional cases (such as between
> Azania and Zimbabwe; between Kenya,
> Uganda and Tanganyika and between
> some countries of French West and
> Equatorial Africa); and most important,
> radio circuits that look on the map
> rather like two great fans, their bases
> in London and Paris. 6

By late 1969 a new cable was laid from London, via Lisbon, to Cape Town. This improved the service to southern Africa. The colonial systems of communication--highly dis-criminatory with special cable rates, radio telephonic rates, airline routes, and mail delivery patterns, all based on French, British, or Belgian colonial interests--have greatly inhibited inter-African communications. Abidjan cannot com-municate with Freetown, Dakar is out of touch with Accra, and Lagos cannot communicate with Lome--not without expensive and

inconvenient detour through Europe. Such a communication pattern has obvious political implications at a time when African leaders are trying to establish regional and continental political and economic ties through such groups as the OAU, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), and UNESCO.

Because they could get their African news in European capitals and because they had few customers in Africa (the few white-owned newspapers in Azania were an exception), the foreign (world) news agencies were late in arriving in Africa. However, two of them, Reuters and AFP, were there before the others and have been working hard to expand their positions of dominance in Sub-Sahara Africa.

FOOTNOTES

1. W. Hachtem; <u>Muffled Drums</u>, p.273.

2. Ibid.

3. Ralph E. Kliesch, quoted in William Hachtem; <u>Muffled Drums</u>, p.53.

4. All figures quoted above were supplied by Ghana News Agency (GNA) in their Accra headquarters.

5. J. Tunstall; <u>The Media are American</u>, p.111.

6. R. Ainslie; <u>The Press in Africa</u>.

CHAPTER V

V. THE FOREIGN NEWS AGENCIES

5.1 REUTERS IN AFRICA:

Unlike AFP, Reuters was not in colonial Africa in any
extensive way before 1960: in part, because Africa could be
covered from Europe and because British Colonial officials
did not particularly welcome foreign correspondents. The col-
onies relied mainly on the British Information Service (BIS)
and the BBC for their news.

As independence neared, Reuters sent Patrick Cross to
make a continental survey, and as a result Reuters greatly
expanded its African service in the late sixties and early
seventies. News from Sub-Sahara Africa flows into the London
headquarters of Reuters at an average rate of 20,000 words a
day--about 120 stories bearing a variety of datelines. The
agency claims to have 22 staff correspondents out of a network
of 106 on the continent.[1] However, Reuters appointed staffers
from London were located only at Algiers, Accra, Lagos, Kinshasa,
Lusaka, Dar es Salaam, Addis Ababa, Cairo, Nairobi, Johannesburg,
and Salisbury. The output of these correspondents is returned
to Sub-Sahara Africa in several "services" delivered daily by
radio-teletype or direct circuit to all African states except
Rwanda and Burundi. Reuters provides five services daily in
Africa, which reflect the differing political and linguistic
conditions a news agency encounters there. They include (1)
a South African service for South Africa; Zimbabwe; Angola;
and Mozambique; (2) a west African service in English; (3)

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an East African service in English; (4) a West African
service in French and (5) a twenty-four hour service to North
Africa in English and Arabic.

The three daily services to Sub-Sahara Africa are all
about 15,000 words in length. They are beamed from London by
radio-teletype for sixteen hours a day--seven hours in French
and nine hours in English. Basically the same report is sent
to all the three regions.[2]

The 15,000 word "Africa Report" is considerably shorter
than Reuter's 60,000 word "World Service". The shorter version
is closely edited and is heard on Short African news items
collected by Reuters staffers, plus more than 500 stringers.
This has been described or called "journalistic colonialism"
by progressive Africans because the capitalist agencies are
selecting news for Africans rather than letting them do it for
themselves.[3] Reuters answers that the small African media
cannot make effective use of a full news report, and are mainly
interested in Sub-Sahara African news anyway.

Another controversial aspect of Reuters service is that
it is often sold exclusively to an African government news
agency which in turn can redistribute it to its own media and
resell it at a profit to any private media. In Ghana, for
example, Reuters only client is the Ghana News Agency (GNA)
which redistributes it. This makes it very difficult for com-
peting news agencies (AFP, AP, UPI) to sell their reports,
due to the colonial and professional ties between Reuters and
GNA.

There is also the feeling among some newsmen that a wire service cannot maintain its independence when its principal (and sometimes only) client in the country is the government itself. Reuter's African service is expensive to maintain, and Reuters claims that it breaks even, but this is doubtful. It is an important factor in the maintenance of British influence in neo-colonial Sub-Sahara Africa.

In recent years, Reuters has been seeking clients in francophonic nations just as AFP has been among anglophonic nations. But the Reuters correspondents often find it difficult to gain access to francophonic government officials, many of them Frenchmen, who have been in the habit of dealing with AFP. And most newsmen in French Sub-Sahara Africa once worked for or were trained by AFP. On the whole, the news agency business is a competition in Sub-Sahara Africa between Reuters and AFP.

5.2   AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE:

The agency can trace its roots back to 1835, when it was established as Agence Havas in Paris by Charles Havas.[4] Two members of Havas' staff were Julius Reuter and Bernard Wolff, who later departed to form the English and German agencies bearing their names. Following the Armistice in 1940, Agence Havas was dissolved in France. It resumed service in London under the Free French as Agence Francaise Independente in 1944, when France itself was still under Nazi occupation. After the war, AFP took over AFI bureaus in Rabat, Algiers, Tunis and Cairo.

As the only other world agency with a full African service, AFP is in direct competition with Reuters, and the two have no agreements to exchange news. Building from its strong base in pre-independence French colonial Africa, AFP now has permanent French correspondents in the following Sub-Sahara African capitals: Addis Ababa, Novakchott, Ouagadougou, Abidjan, Lome, Cotonou, Lagos, Dakar, Nairobi, Kinshasa, Brazzaville, Bangui, Fort Lamy, Monrovia, Niamey, Tananarive, Bamako, Leberville and Yaounde.

All news comes to Paris by three main routes: (1) direct permanent radio-teletype links to Algiers and Johannesburge; (2) telex through post offices, and (3) normal cables. Each correspondent has a telex capability for contributing to the flow of news that comes into AFP in Paris at the average rate of 18,426 words a day.[5] There, at AFP's Place de la Bourse headquarters, the news is centralized, edited, rewritten, and broadcast back to Sub-Sahara Africa in four transmissions in French and one in English, each at the rate of 25,000 words daily.[6] The English service goes to both the independent black countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Kenya, and Tanzania, as well as the white-controlled nations of Southern Africa. There is a problem of writing the news in a manner acceptable to both areas. Important differences are found in the content of the two language services of which about forty percent is African news. The English wire has more spot news while the French wire is more concerned with area problems, reports, etc.[7]

The AFP reports are broadcast from transmitters at Paris and Toulouse and beamed to various parts of Africa where they are monitored by AFP customers, usually the African governments. Guinea, who severed all ties with France in 1958, has also monitored the service for years. At the same time, Guinea did not permit western correspondents to be in residence at Conakry, although TASS, NCNA, and other Eastern European agencies were represented. AFP, Reuters, and UPI kept up with news in Guinea by monitoring daily the broadcasts from the government station at Conakry.

Reuters and AFP appear to be the only world agencies, besides TASS, clearly subsidized by its government. According to both AP and UPI sources, AFP annually receives about $7.8 million in government subsidy for making the wire service available to various embassies and ministries. Most of the franco-phonic African governments that receive AFP services pay for the privilege. AFP, however, claims that since the new statutes of April, 1957, it no longer has government ties and is now an independent commercial agency.

After the war, AFP established bureaus in Rabat, Algiers, Tunis and Cairo and placed correspondents in Dakar and Tananarive. Its then semi-official status with the French government enabled it to become well established in black Africa in the years before African independence. AFP was so well entrenched in French West Africa that it was actively competing with what commercial press there was, owned and controlled by French settlers. Private publishers (usually French owned and con-

trolled) complained that the news bulletin AFP sold to its

customers cut badly into their already small circulations.

Because of its long involvement in French Africa and

France's close ties to most of its former Sub-Sahara African

colonies, AFP has made the transition to independence smoothly

and remained in a strong position.

5.3 ASSOCIATED PRESS AND UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL:

The two American news services, the AP and UPI, lag well

behind Reuters and AFP in Sub-Sahara Africa. According to U.S.

Information Agency Statistics, Reuters was received in 39

African countries, while AFP had clients in 33 countries in

the region. AP was received in only 14 countries and UPI in

19. Due to the size of U.S. news agency's involvement in the

region, I will limit my analysis of their role, and hence won't

examine them on the same level and depth as Reuters and AFP.

Unlike the two European agencies, AP and UPI have not

made a concerted effort to expand their African operations,

in part because the American services were not directly in-

volved in Sub-Sahara Africa before independence. AP finds it

difficult to compete because it does not offer a special

African service. It sells only its world service, which is

beamed into Africa by radio-teletype by way of New York and

London. This longer report, about 120,000 words, taking

17-1/2 hours to deliver, includes much information, such as

U.S. baseball and basketball (NBA) scores, which is of little

interest to Sub-Sahara African clients.[8]

AP's six staff writers in 1968 were all correspondents

with experience in Sub-Sahara Africa. AP was also represented
by 44 stringers in all capitals except Brazzaville and Conakry
(which would not let western correspondents in), Bamako,
Djibouti and Nouakchott.

The U.S. services find it difficult to obtain good stringers
and so often operate on a task force basis. When a big story
breaks, an AP staff man will fly in to cover the story with the
help of local stringers. At other times, a regional staff cor-
respondent, such as in Lagos, will make a tour of about ten
countries doing "backgrounders" on each one in co-operation with
the local stringer. Since there are so many countries and so
little saleable news (because AP lacks African clients), AP
concentrates on a round up story every six weeks or so.

AP in 1968 went into Ethiopia and into Liberia hoping to
go into Mali and Zambia as well, according to Mr. Stan Swinton,
an AP executive.[9] AP in 1968 started to beam some special
area news into Sub-Sahara Africa and the Middle East.

Because Reuters and AFP are so firmly entrenched, AP has
little incentive to expand its operations since it receives
no government subsidies and must pay its own way. AP does,
however, sell its service to some U.S. embassies in Sub-Sahara
Africa.

UPI has a slight advantage over AP because it operates
two separate radio beams sending news into Sub-Sahara Africa:
one service in French, edited in Paris, is transmitted six
hours a day, and an English service, transmitted from Kootwijk
in Holland, is edited in London. UPI's total cable and telex

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coverage from Africa is about 10,000 words filed daily. In 1968 UPI had five staff correspondents, twenty-three stringers, and three major bureaus in English speaking Africa at Nairobi, Salisbury and Johannesburg. Bureaus in francophonic Africa were in Abidjan, Rabat, Algiers and Tunis. The agency had what it called "firemen" correspondents in London ready to fly out, especially to West Africa, whenever a big story broke. The range and quality of UPI reportage in Africa were well below that of the other three major services, in part because it had less manpower covering larger areas. Most UPI men have heavy filing requirements; at ten points on the continent they must file daily.[10]

The West German agency Deutsche Presse Agentur, is not quite a world agency, but is increasing its involvement in Africa. DPA maintained four offices with the same number of staffers in Africa and a fifth desk based in West Africa was added in 1971. In addition, it had seventeen local correspondents. The agency received about twenty stories a day, averaging about 2,000 words from its African correspondents between the years 1965 and 1972.[11]

5.4 TASS AND SUB-SAHARA AFRICA:

TASS, and to a lesser extent the other major news services from Eastern Europe, are represented in some twenty-two African nations and thus contribute to the flow of news in and out of Africa. TASS, the fifth of the world news agencies, is becoming increasingly like a western news agency. It now pays more attention to news coverage and less to propaganda and

intelligence activities, and is trying to compete with western
services. But because of its close identification with the
Soviet government, TASS maintains bureaus and is received only
in those countries where the USSR is represented diplomatically
or has on-going aid programs: Algeria, Cameroon, Central
African Republic, Congo, Dahomey, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea,
Kenya, Liberia, Libya, Mali, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, Somali,
Sudan, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda and Egypt.

The other communist news agencies received in Africa are:
CTK, the Czeh agency; ADN, the East German agency; TANJUG, the
Yugoslav agency; NCNA, the New China News Agency from Peking;
and Presna Latina, the Cuban agency. These agencies transmit
to just a few Sub-Sahara African nations, principally Ethiopia,
Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Sudan, and Tanzania.[12]

But because communist agency reports are slower and less
complete than capitalist AFP, Reuters, AP and UPI in reporting
African news, their influence is more in the area of inter-
national political communication than in day-to-day news
coverage.

5.5 SUMMARY

The above description of the various world news agencies
now has to be examined. According to Rosemary Righter (1978),
the Third World's attack on the established world media is
based on three arguments: (A) they are too powerful--they
penetrate too widely and effectively; (B) they represent an
alien viewpoint, which is impressed on nations trying to
build an independent, modern identity. And (C) they lack the

attributes--of accuracy and objectivity, for example--on which they have based their claims to pre-eminency. Rosemary Righter never denied any of the charges, but rather argued that the marketplace ought to be the determinant of newsworthiness. By her argument, she implied that the western policy should be emulated by the Third World including Sub-Sahara Africa.

Sean McBride, however, agreed that it will be a mistake for the Sub-Sahara African nations to copy or adopt the policies of the capitalist news agencies,[13] McBride argued that 'eighty percent of the Third World complaints are justified'. His reasoning is the following: First, because the international agencies were not able to adapt to Third World requirements; secondly, because 'powerful financial, economic and political forces seek to dominate communications', blanketing small countries with an alien cultural civilization. These, according to McBride, are 'concerns which no one should ignore or under-estimate' and 'minor inaccuracies' do not weaken the case. This in effect leads to the admission that there are major policy differences between Sub-Sahara Africa and the world news agencies of the capitalist west.

The policy differences between the world news agencies of the capitalist west--ie. Reuters, AFP, AP, UPI--and the news agencies of the independent nations of Sub-Sahara Africa will be discussed further in the next chapter, dealing with the development of news agencies in the region.

5.6   DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICAN NEWS AGENCIES:

The influence of the western media and policy took a different turn when it came to establishing or the development of independent Sub-Sahara African media. The leadership of West Africa was faced with two choices: (1) following the capitalist policy of establishing a news agency that will act as a "gatekeeper", (or let the marketplace be the deciding factor); or (2) one that will serve as a factor in national development and information and serve as a factor in decolonization. The latter model or policy will certainly be the opposite of the former, for it will be national in origin and repudiate the main modus operandi of the former. In effect, a completely different policy than that of the western world agencies.

The argument for news agency development based upon different policy directives from that of the capitalist agencies was further given more weight by the findings of Sean McBride, Chairman, UNESCO International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems, and President, International Peace Bureau. In his case for a new policy directive for the Sub-Sahara African news agencies, McBride's thesis that the feeling of 'the information poor countries...that their independence and identity are threatened' could not be ignored or underestimated, he went on to pose three questions: 'Does the concept of a free flow of information necessitate any limitation? Is it not desirable that the free flow should be a balanced flow of information? Are there areas of information in regard

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to which the news agencies and the mass media have a special responsibility towards the public?' In trying to reconcile the needs of professionalism and that of protecting national image, the leaders and policy formulators of the news agencies in Sub-Sahara Africa came up with policies (in the early sixties) that were not clearly defined.

The most frustrating reality in writing about national news agencies in Sub-Sahara West Africa is the lack of information. I mentioned above the lack of, and the difficulty involved in obtaining, recent publications for this thesis. It was even worse when it came to writing the chapter on the national news agencies--Ghana News Agency (GNA), Nigeria News Agency (NNA), Agency Ivoirienne de Presse (AIP), and Agence de Presse Sengalaise (APS). The information provided during my visits to their Accra offices and embassies were in the form of proposals, government legislation and declarations at various international conferences. These were, in effect, hand-outs prepared for tourists. Information about these news agencies available in books, articles and other publications is usually limited to a paragraph or a few lines. In effect, they have been reduced to footnotes in the analysis of other subjects, such as information for tourists, or in the discussion of Reuters, AFP and to a lesser extent, AP and UPI.

Until the mid-fifties the only national agency in Africa was the South African Press Association, which began to supply domestic and foreign news to the press of South Africa, the Rhodesians (now Zambia and Zimbabwe) and some newspapers in

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Portuguese East Africa in 1938. The Portuguese agencies,

Lusitania and Agencia de Noticias e de Informacoes (both

founded in the mid-forties), send news to and receive news

daily from the former Portuguese colonies in Africa. The

Arab News Agency, founded with headquarters in London in 1941,

was set up in Cairo with the double task of collecting mid-

eastern news and supplying a varied file to Arabic-speaking

countries in and outside Africa.

Between 1955 and 1960, agencies were created in Somalia,

the United Arab Republic, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, Senegal and

Burundi. News agencies were also founded between 1960 and

1962 in ten Sub-Sahara African states: Cameroon, the Central

African Republic, Congo Brazzaville, Congo Leopoldville (Zaire),

Dahomey (now Benin), Ethiopia, Gabon, Guinea, Ivory Coast and

Mali. Togo and Nigeria joined those with their own national

news agency later, in 1965 and 1977.

All these agencies, as well as government information

services and press subscribers in Sub-Sahara African countries

where national agencies do not largely control news distri-

bution, rely for world news upon European, United States or

Soviet news agencies which also report African news to the

rest of the world. The exchange of news between African

countries south of the Sahara and north of the Limpopo River,

is still largely carried out by AFP and Reuters and, to a

lesser extent, by DPA, UPI, TASS, and AP in that order.

However, the Ghana News Agency (GNA) transmits news in English

and French daily to its London office, from where it is beamed

TABLE I

NEWS AGENCIES OF SUB-SAHARA AFRICA

Country	Name of Agency	By-Line	Headquarters	Date of Foundation
Cameroon	Agence Camerounaise De Presse	ACP	Yaounde	1960
Central African Republic	Agence Centrafricaine De Presse	ACAP	Bangui	1961
Congo-Brazzaville	Agence Congolaise D' Information	ACI	Brazzaville	1960
Zaire	Agence Zairois De Presse	AZP	Kinshasha	1960
Benin	Agence Dahomeenne De Presse	ADP	Benin	1961
Ethiopia	Ethiopian National News Agency	ENNA	Addis Abara	1964
Gabon	Agence Gabonaise D' Information	AGI	Liberville	1961
Ghana	Ghana News Agency	GNA	Accra	1957
Guinea	Agence Guineenne De Presse	AGP	Conakry	1960
Ivory Coast	Agence Ivoirienne De Presse	AIP	Abidjan	1961
Kenya	Kenya News Agency	KNA	Nairobi	1958
Mali	Agence Nationale D' Information Malienne	ANIM	Bamako	1961
Nigeria	Nigerian News Agency	NNA	Lagos	1977
Tanzania	Tanzania News Agency	TNA	Dar-Es-Salam	1969
Senegal	Agence De Presse – Sénégalaise	APS	Dakar	1959
Togo	Agence Togolaise De Presse	ATP	Lome	1963
Upper Volta	Agence De Presse Voltaique	APV	Ougadougou	1965
Chad	Agence Tchadienne De Presse	ATP	Nojemena	1968
Liberia	Liberia Information Service	LIS	Monrovia	1969
Malawi	Malawi Information Service	MIS	Blantyre	1967
Zambia	Zambian News Agency	ZANA	Lusaka	1966

FIGURE 1
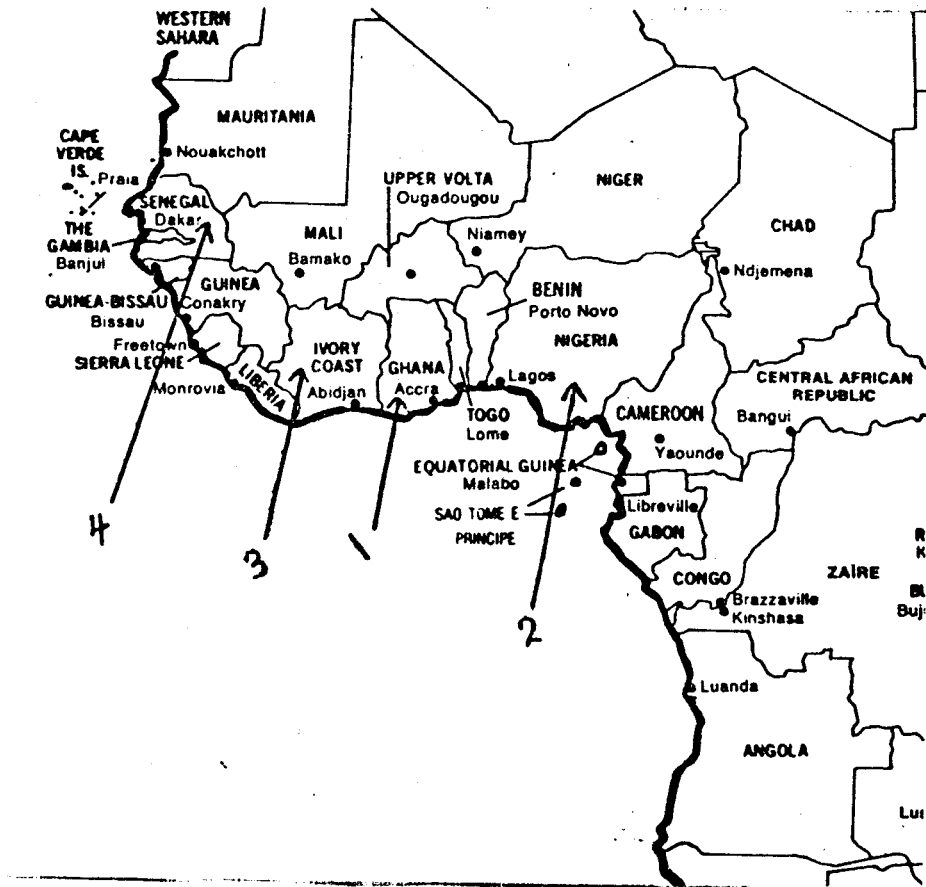
Map of Post-Colonial West Africa showing Senegal,
Ivory Coast, Ghana and Nigeria.

(Source: Africa Report, Vol. 26, No. 4, 1981)

FIGURE II

Map of Post-Colonial Africa showing Boundaries
Inherited by the New Nations at Independence.

(Source: Africa Report, Vol. 26, No. 4, 1981)

back to West Africa and received over an area stretching from Dakar, Senegal to Lagos, Nigeria. With the encouragement of France, the Agence Ivoirienne de Presse (AIP) in 1962 spearheaded plans for an exchange network among 19 conservative countries, (mostly ex-colonies of France), to which it sends weekly bulletins.[14]

The Maghreb Arab Press (MAP) proposed the creation of an African press pool in Morocco in 1961 for the exchange of news among African news agencies north and south of the Sahara, and its distribution to the rest of the world. It offered to put its telecommunication links with Asia, Europe and Latin and North America at the disposal of the other African agencies for the retransmission of news. For political reasons (which will be discussed later) this offer was never acted upon, it remained just that, an offer!

The greatest obstacle to developing adequate news agency services in Sub-Sahara Africa is poverty in telecommunications facilities. In the absence of direct links between countries, messages being sent between two points in Sub-Sahara Africa must often be routed through Paris or London.[15] Even within countries, landline and radio circuits are generally insufficient. The flow of news is also seriously hindered by high and often discrepant telecommunication costs, limited and expensive air mail rates.

FOOTNOTES

1. W. Hachten; <u>Muffled Drums</u>, p.59.

2. Ibid.

3. Among them are F. Fanon, <u>Towards the African Revolution</u>, 1958; A. Cabral, <u>Return to the Source</u>, 1969; and K. Nkrumah, <u>Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imerpialism</u>, 1965.

4. J. Tunstall; <u>The Media are American</u>, p.30.

5. W. Hachten; Ibid., p.62.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid., p.64

9. Ibid., p.65

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid., p.66.

13. I.P.I. Report 12:8 1978.

14. Interview with Mr. Maurice Yace, (August 21, 1978) Information Officer at the Ivory Coast Embassy, Accra, Ghana.

15. K. Nkrumah; <u>Africa Must Unite</u>, 1962.

CHAPTER VI

5.1 <u>THE FOUR COUNTRIES:</u>

To many observers the results of the takeover and control
of the medium of communications by the new African leaders
after independence did not vary considerably from the format
and pattern of the colonial press. Colonial press policy and
procedures, the subject of criticism before independence, were
followed in Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal and Ivory Coast without a
second thought, and also in many of the then post-independence
African states.

One area of continuing policy involved ownership. Where
once the colonial governments (ie., England and France)
operated and owned much of the communications media, the new
African governments assumed the same posture, with slight
modifications. Colin Legum wrote:

> After independence, television was
> operated on the same basis as radio--
> it was wholly owned and controlled by
> the government, usually under the di-
> rect authority of the ministry of in-
> formation or a commission...under
> ministry supervision. The case was
> the same with news service. Those that
> existed before independence were under
> the direct control of the colonial
> government; this practice has been con-
> tinued. 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 con-
> trolled by government appointees. 1

In some Sub-Sahara African countries, no real attempt was made
to decolonize the capitalist western model of communication

or to integrate the traditional Sub-Sahara African culture into more effective communications for the masses. The ruling elites, educated in Britain and France, continued to use the mass media for their own edification. In French West Africa, for example, the press is still criticized for only addressing itself to the more sophisticated town dweller with sufficient education to grasp discussions of political and economic issues. There also are strong links between the African elites and the former colonial power.

It is in this context that William Hachten has suggested that the need for an independent press may never have crossed the people's minds. He wrote: "A free press has never been known; negative criticism was considered irresponsible, and articulate critics were usually absorbed by the establishment of the president. If not, they left the country."[2]

6.2 GHANA:

In the first decade of its independence, the West African nation of Ghana acquired several important dates to celebrate. Although small, Ghana has influenced the new Africa far out of proportion to its size. As black Africa's first state to be free from colonial rule, Ghana under Kwame Nkrumah considered itself the catalyst for African liberation and political unification. Ghana (under Nkrumah) became a leader among the so-called socialist or progressive states--Guinea, Mali, Algeria, Congo (Brazzaville), and Egypt. Among these nations the view developed that mass media (and the medium of communication) should be completely under government control, to assure full

utilization and commitment to the urgent aims of national inte-
gration and modernization. All through Africa the news media
are to a greater or lesser extent controlled by government,
but Nkrumah carried the concept further than most (including
the other three: Nigeria, Senegal, and Ivory Coast) and pro-
vided an ideological rationale as well. Nkrumah espoused a
scientific socialist theory of the wire services under which
the mass media are an integral part of the state--an instrument
to further the purposes of the party, state and Pan-Africanism.
Mass media were to have no utility or purpose other than
serving the state.[3] He rejected private ownership of the
press. Opening the Pan-African Union of Journalists Conference
in 1963, Nkrumah said:

> It is part of our revolutionary credo
>
> that within the competitive system of
>
> capitalism the press cannot function in
>
> accordance with a strict regard for the
>
> sacredness of facts and that it there-
>
> fore should not remain in private hands.[4]

Kwame Nkrumah's approach to mass communications followed
that of Lenin, and as in socialist nations, he gave a high
priority to mass communications and brought Ghana's media
more and more under direct government ownership and control.

Ghana News Agency (GNA):

Kwame Knrumah--like almost all African leaders--was very
critical of what the western news agencies (Reuters, AFP, UPI-
AP) and press was saying about him.[5] He saw the potentialities

of a national news agency both to disseminate information at home and to extend Ghana's influence and Pan-Africanist doctrine abroad. Hence the Ghana News Agency (GNA) was developed, with considerable assistance from Reuter's, into the most extensive and effective agency of its kind in black Africa. Beginning in 1957 with four teleprinters in Accra, the GNA by 1960 had expanded to twenty-four teleprinters in Accra, three in Kumasi, two in Cape Coast, and one each in Takoradi, Koforidua and Tamale. GNA received various eastern-bloc news services such as TASS, ADN, NCNA, and TANYUG, but relied mostly on Reuters.

The transformation of the GNA into the All-African News Agency was to take place in October, 1961 and the GNA received a grant of $130,553 from Nkrumah's government for that purpose. The proposed new agency, with offices throughout Africa, was to provide better coverage of African news, as well as set up an information centre in Accra, a newsroom, and a hostel for journalists. This idea never came to fruition, due to political and ideological differences between the socialist and capitalist developmental policies of the post-independence African leadership. This division was further complicated by the economic ties with the former colonial powers. However, as a one time journalist himself, Kwame Nkrumah believed strongly in mass communications and an independent news agency, and despite Ghana's increasing financial difficulties, the government media were, by African standards, well financed. This was especially true of broadcasting.

The British Colonial administration established a broad-casting service in the Gold Coast in 1935, but it was not un-til the 1950's that it was expanded into a national system. Radio Ghana was on the air for seventeen and a half hours daily, broadcasting in English and six local languages, as well as in French, Portuguese, Arabic, and Swahili on Radio Ghana's External Service.

Television was not established in Ghana until August 1965. It was set up by the government in partnership with the Sanyo Electrical Company of Japan, which had built a television set assembly plant at Tema to produce cheap receiver sets. Nkrumah said of television: "Its paramount objective will be for education. It will not cater to cheap entertainment or com-mercialism. Television must assist in the social transformation of Ghana." He added that it would also be a weapon against imperialism and neo-colonialism.[6]

Just how effective were Kwame Nkrumah's efforts at mass communications and news gathering? At relatively great expense, he did build the foundations of one of the most comprehensive national media system in Sub-Sahara Africa. Radio Ghana, the Ghana News Agency (GNA), and his Ministry of Information in particular were quite outstanding, from a technical viewpoint, and are still models of their type. But as news media they were still closely tied to the British, through training and professional ties. This in effect limited their effectiveness in the struggle for cultural liberation.

The Ghana News Agency, despite cutbacks in its operations

after the overthrow of the Nkrumah government, continued to be

one of the most effective national news agencies in Africa.

It is involved in news gathering and distributing throughout

Ghana as well as abroad. A staff of 200 collected news from

eight regional offices (each with teleprinter facilities) and

redistributed it to all the news media, government offices,

and the foreign embassies which subscribed to the service.

The GNA had 30 reporters in Accra, 18 sub-editors, and 6 in

its overseas section. Twenty-four full-time staffers covered

news in the regions.

In nearby Nigeria, development was undertaken differently,

because the post-independence leadership was not committed to

scientific socialism. In fact, the ideological polarization

between the two nations made any joint development or co-

operation almost impossible.

6.3 NIGERIA:

Nigeria's system of mass communications at independence,

reflected the dominant positions of the three major ethnic

groups, Yoruba's in the west, Ibos' in the east and Hausa/

Fulani of the north. At independence in October 1960, Nigeria

had four systems of government-controlled mass communications,

not just one: a national system based in the federal capital

of Lagos; a western region system in Ibadan, the metropolis of

the Yorubas; a nearly self-contained system controlled by

the Moslem Emirs of the north; and another in the Ibo dominated

Eastern Region: A midwest region was created in 1965 and

initiated some communications activities. When the first mili-

tary coup of January 15, 1966, ended the first Republic, each
system had its own ministry of information, radio broadcasting
facility, television broadcasting facility, and official or
government newspaper.

Also because Nigeria then lacked a national news agency,
within the regions these official communications systems were
manipulated by the regional governments to their own political
advantage against both their local rivals and their political
counterparts nationally.[7]

But at the federal level, because of the uneasy balance
between the three regions, the political atmosphere permitted
a degree of healthy discussions and criticisms. These same
factors mentioned above made it almost impossible for the
federal government to establish a national news agency as was
done in Ghana immediately after independence.

Most African nations have only one government broadcasting
system, but Nigeria's federal arrangement spawned four: The
Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) or 'Radio Nigeria',
based in Lagos; Eastern Nigerian Broadcasting Service (ENBS)
in Enugu; Western Nigerian Broadcasting Service (WNBS) in
Ibadan; and the Broadcasting Company of Northern Nigeria (BCNN)
in Kaduna. This resulted in unnecessary duplication of faci-
lities and overlapping of programmes, but each regional gov-
ernment was eager to control its own radio outlet for political
reasons.

Radio Nigeria had a staff of thirty-two in Lagos[8] pre-
paring news programmes. For foreign news they relied on

Reuters, Associated Press (AP), and Agence France Presse
(AFP)-- a wider range of news sources than most Sub-Sahara
African stations had. For Nigerian news, they used staffers
and stringers who sent in stories by teleprinter to Lagos for
final processing before being aired.

The civil war provided a certain urgency to foreign broad-
casting; it was one devious way to sell the federal case
abroad. The NBC also had administrative control of the federal
government's television service--NBC-TV, which was organized
in Lagos in April, 1962 but did not start broadcasting until
1963. It was initially set up and managed by the National
Broadcasting Company (International) of USA, which contracted
to train Nigerians to take over the service by March 31, 1967.

Generally, radio and television broadcasting in federal
Nigeria, with the four systems (plus a limited Midwest Region
radio service added in 1965), was the most comprehensive in
tropical Africa. On radio, the variety of programmes and the
widespread use of vernaculars to reach the diverse population
made Nigeria's radio systems probably the most effective in
black Africa. Variety and quality, for both the modern and
the traditional sectors, were available to listeners. However,
it should be remembered that the ultimate effect of the
regional broadcast systems, both in news and general program-
ming, was to reinforce tribal and regional loyalties to the
detriment of national and "Nigerian" tendencies.[9] Moreover,
regional broadcasting was the captive of the regional political
factions. The insularity of the north and the disdain of the

of the Moslem Emirs for the south (which many of them con-
sidered to be a foreign land of infidels) were accurately re-
flected in the provincial outlook of northern broadcasting.
Often, major news stories emanating from the federal capital
in Lagos were not reported on Radio Kaduna because they were
considered of no concern to the north. None of the four tele-
vision services, each independent of the other, was able to
make more than a modest beginning; each offered only limited
programming to a handful of listeners situated near the trans-
mitters. The most important factor, however, was the absence
of a national news agency, serving all regions of the country,
and also gathering and distributing news nationally and inter-
nationally. In any case, the Nigerian mass media prior to the
civil war was in many ways a unique phenomenon for Sub-Sahara
Africa; diverse, outspoken, competitive, and irreverent. How-
ever, the outbreak of the civil war changed all that. The
news media of Nigeria may never be quite what they were during
the first republic.

In summary, for both Ghana and Nigeria, radio was the
most important medium both in terms of people reached and the
regularity of exposure. The GBC in Ghana and NBC in Nigeria
were particularly important in reaching the illiterate
majority in the rural areas where exposure to the press and
television was slight to non-existent. There was some evidence
that radio was considered more reliable than the press, in
part because of the importance of the oral tradition. The
audience of the printed word was much smaller, of course, but

it included the highest proportion of the educated and poli-
tically aware. This group also apparently made considerable
use of foreign radio stations, especially the BBC and to a
lesser extent, Voice of America (VOA).

And in the increasingly important area of news communi-
cation, Ghanaians and Nigerians, not European nationals, long
have had control over the direction of their broadcasting and
facilities. However, this control is also negated or heavily
influenced by the professional association (ie., training and
technical advice) with European and North American broadcasting
agencies and wire services (ie., Reuters, AFP, AP-UPI). There-
fore the direction and policies reflect the professional train-
ing and advice received from the advanced capitalist western
countries. It could thus be said that both Ghana's and
Nigeria's development in this area had always been an attempt
to duplicate these advanced systems, rather than attempting
endogenous development. The duration and nature of this in-
volvement have given them a decided advantage over their French-
speaking neighbors in West Africa.

6.4 IVORY COAST:

France has had a long relationship with a great portion
of Sub-Sahara Africa in general and West Africa in particular.
Within a 60-year span (1857-1918), by diplomacy and military
power, it acquired an area eight times the size of France over
which it sought to establish one law, one government and one
language. French authority and culture became the unifying
links of the new empire, and these influences had a profound
and lasting influence on the region's news media.

The permission given to Africans for the first time to
organize parties and to vie for political power led to a
flurry of journalistic activity between 1945 and 1960, when
36 papers surfaced and submerged. By independence nearly all
of Abidjan's newspapers had gone under. In English-speaking
West Africa, those seeking political power used the print media
for political and nationalist purposes.[10] Therefore the limited
role of the printing press and the lack of an African jour-
nalistic tradition in French-speaking Africa were legacies of
French colonial policies. The few Africans who were educated
were brought into the colonial establishment as black French-
men.[11] This, of course, provided close communication and a
common bond between educated French Africans and resident
Frenchmen. Almond and Coleman wrote that this "suggests the
existence of a marked discontinuity in communication between
the African elite and the African mass.[12] Compared to the
British colonies, this probably is true.

News collection, both domestic and foreign, was a major
problem, and to facilitate news dissemination a government
news agency, Agence Ivoirienne de Press (AIP), was started in
1961 with the assistance of AFP. AIP became the sole receiver
of news from abroad; daily news reports of AFP, Reuters, UPI,
and Deutsche Press-Agenteur (DPA) went directly into AIP
offices and then were redistributed by AIP's teletype service
to about 20 customers, mostly foreign embassies plus press
and broadcasting offices. Obviously, AIP was in what some
communicators call a "gatekeeper" position to censor news from

abroad if it so desired, but this caused few objections since most journalists work for the government. The most pressing problem for AIP was to work out a way to collect news from its own hinterland. Until fairly recently, virtually all important information, both current and historical, was transmitted orally, and, as elsewhere on the continent, the oral tradition was a significant factor in the development of communication media. Here too, trust in oral communication plus low literacy combined to make radio the only mass medium (the French-language press distinctly an elite medium).

Radio Abidjan broadcast on two services; Chaine National and Chaine Internationale. All four transmitters, both medium wave and shortwave, are in Abidjan. The French style of broadcasting pervaded Radio Abidjan; a listener could easily imagine he was tuned to a Parisian station. Music is mostly French or French version of American popular music. There is little indigenous music or even the popular west African "high life" music heard so frequently on Radio Nigeria and Radio Ghana.

Television broadcasting began on August 7, 1963, and as elsewhere, was well behind radio. Reception was limited to about ten kilometers from Abidjan for the estimated 2300 receivers and audience of about 12,000. Television was available (at the early stages) only from six to nine p.m. Officially, Ivoirien television is considered a medium of education, but in fact is an expensive status symbol, reaching a very limited audience.

It should be emphasized, however, that communicating

effectively to the diverse peoples of the Ivory Coast is an extremely difficult task and the news media reach and are understood by only a small fraction of Ivoiriens. Hence, interpersonal communication is still very important.

The development of the Ivory Coast's news agency and communications as with its economy in general, continued to be patterned on the French colonial model in that the whole system was (and still is) in the hands of the new government (which took over the monolithic colonial administration) either alone or in combination with French concerns. As long as Houphouet Boigny remained as chief executive, the continued development of press and broadcasting within that neo-colonial framework appeared likely.

6.5 SENEGAL:

News communications in Senegal and the environment in which they operated were similar to the Ivory Coast. Both are conservative francophonic nations that retained close and cordial ties with France. They enjoyed many of the same advantages; they also shared the same basic communication problems.

The national news agency, Agence de Presse Sénégalaise (APS) reflected the strong residual influence of Agence France Presse. APS sent out AFP first on its domestic wires (about 80 percent of APS's total foreign file was AFP), then transmitted some Reuters (20 percent), but little news from AP-UPI which it also received.[13]

The Senegalese news agency was started in 1959 with major

help from AFP, which provided the equipment and trained several Senegalese in France for news agency positions. APS at first (1959-1960) had a staff of five in Dakar, but had no journalists stationed outside the national capital. As a result, this national news agency collected very little news beyond city limits of Dakar.

APS was essentially a small government bureau for re-distributing the news from several world news service agencies which it resold to customers in Dakar. Clients included news-papers, the radio station, a few embassies and the president's office. As in Ivory Coast, there are few vernacular public-ations in Senegal or little printed material aimed specifically for the newly literate. For size of audience, in Senegal too (as in Ghana, Nigeria, and Ivory Coast) radio is the outstanding medium. Radio Senegal was well developed, perhaps because Dakar had been the centre for broadcasting in the AOF for so long. There are two services--Chaine Internationale, in French only and broadcast in both shortwave and medium wave, and Chaine Nationale, much more an instrument of rural and urban community development with local emphasis.

By francophonic African standards, Senegal has a com-paratively large number of radio receivers.[14] UNESCO sources estimated the total in March, 1967 at 220,000 as compared with 75,000 for the Ivory Coast. The government, interested in widely distributing transistor sets, imposed no license fees or taxes on radio ownership. There is also widespread group listening in villages where there are some 2000 wired loud-

speakers for that purpose.[15]

Unlike most African nations, Senegal did not leap "blindly" into television. Instead of launching a general television service, Senegal chose to go slowly and to assess the role of television by a five-year research project in experimental educational television in co-operation with UNESCO. Under a carefully controlled project started in 1964, all telecasting was in the Wolof language. For two days a week, various groups of up to seventy persons gathered around community television sets at social centres in Dakar to watch programmes lasting from fifteen to forty-five minutes. After the broadcast, at each listening centre, an instructor initiated a discussion and asked questions about what had just been viewed. It was hoped that the experience gained from the five-year project would provide guidelines for educational and general television for Senegal, as well as elsewhere in Africa.[16] However, the desire by the Senegalese elite to use television as a medium of entertainment was out over the more useful educational purpose.[17]

In French Africa the old rule about the rich getting richer seemed to operate. Dakar and Abidjan are far ahead of other French-speaking African capitals in their news media resources, meager though they are by developed-nation standards. There was reason to believe they would not only hold the lead over the other French-speaking nations of Sub-Sahara Africa, but extend it. But for the noncountry of francophonic West Africa, the real news centre and mass communications capital

still is located on the River Seine, thousands of miles to the north.

The French government under President Charles de Gaulle maintained a strong influence through technical assistance (professionalism, or professional development) and private investment in the media. This assistance was of major importance for news media development, policy and direction in Africa Noire. How long this influence (both English and French) will last in these four west African countries is a question that can only be answered in the years ahead.

6.6 SUMMARY:

After the development of national news agencies in the four countries of Sub-Sahara Africa, the problem of unbalanced coverage by the international wire services still prevailed. The realisation was that their respective wire services were captives, as well as the entire mass media, through the process of professional association, education and financial/technical assistance.

However, due to ideological differences between conservative and socialist leaderships in Sub-Sahara African politics, nothing collectively could be done. As far back as 1961, Kwame Nkrumah proposed the formation of the Union of African News Agencies, but the political polarization on the continent and in Sub-Sahara Africa doomed the proposal because of the wide differences brought about by the polarization.

It was at this juncture that the question of "cultural imperialism" and "true image" was re-examined once again.

The various governments came to the realization that
national news agencies, although a step in the right direction,
were far from being the solution to the problem of dominance
by the foreign news agencies. The national news agencies
lacked the resources, training and equipment (hardware) to
complete the AP-UPI, AFP, Reuters, (and TASS) in the collection,
interpretation, and distribution of local and world news. Be-
cause of the fact that ideological differences or colonial
ties made co-operation almost impossible, international agencies
like UNESCO were seen as a viable source of seeking technical
advice.

At several UNESCO conferences all over the world (Africa,
Asia, Europe, South America and North America) the topic of
cultural domination and an alternative form of a news agency
for the Third World or the Non-Aligned World became a recurring
agendum.

FOOTNOTES

1. C. Legum; The Mass Media--Institutions of the African Political Systems, p.27.

2. W. Hachten; Ibid., 1971.

3. Daily Graphic, April 18, 1963, p.4.

4. Ibid.

5. This is an issue that unites all African leaders; Socialists or Capitalists, Radicals, Progressives or Conservatives.

6. The Pioneer, Kumasi, p.13, August 3, 1965.

7. "Television" West Africa, June 3, 1965.

8. R. Ainslie; Ibid.

9. Dennis Wilcox; Mass Media in Africa, p.21.

10. K. Nkrumah; Revolutionary Path, p.219.

11. Fanon; Black Skin, White Masks, 1952.

12. Almond and Coleman; Politics, p.352.

13. Interview with AOS Bureau Chief at the NANP offices in Accra, Ghana, August 1978.

14. UNESCO Reports, 1967.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

17. The first report on the UNESCO-Senegal TV project is contained in 'TV and the Social Education of Women' by Pierre Fougeyrollas (UNESCO Reports and Papers on Mass Communications #50).

VII. WEST AFRICA AND INFORMATION MULTINATIONALS:

Before examining the role played by UNESCO in assisting
the Third World (among them the four countries under study) in
their efforts to establish a "news agencies pool", it is neces-
sary to first look at the professional relationship between
the information multinationals and the four Sub-Sahara African
states.

At present, Sub-Sahara African countries of West Africa
primarily depend upon four western capitalist news agencies,
namely Associated Press (AP), United Press International (UPI),
Reuters, and Agence France Presse (AFP), for news about each
other. News about Nigeria, more often than not, reaches the
people of Ghana through one of the four western capitalist
agencies. The selection, the style, the content, the treatment,
and the perspective of practically all the news flowing in and
out of Sub-Sahara Africa reflects the personality, preferences
and the needs of the western media, or (what is referred to
in West Africa as) the "colonial connection" by critical social
scientists.[1]

The lack of Sub-Sahara African (or Third World) per-
spective is obvious in the manner in which western capitalist
journalists covering the region, rightly or wrongly, discusses
the problems, such as employment, food, population, etc., con-
fronting the region. Their reports, more often than not,
either ignore or belittle the efforts of the region in parti-
cular and developing countries in general, to alleviate their

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problems. Reports by the western news agencies, for example, leave the reader with the impression that the governments of Sub-Sahara Africa (ie., Nigeria, Ghana, Ivory Coast, and Senegal) are guilty of deliberately ignoring agricultural development and are, therefore, responsible, in an insidious way, for creating starvation in the region.

They (the western news agencies) fail to mention the fact that Sub-Sahara Africa's agricultural production growth rate, averaging about 1.5 percent annually during the past 25 years, is almost astounding if compared with the 0.11 percent annual growth rate during the several decades preceding the region's independence in the 1960's.

It is not suggested or implied that the capitalist western news agencies should become subdued or less critical in their exposure of the enormity, as well as the urgency of problems bedevilling Sub-Sahara Africa. But the countries of the region do deserve a passing recognition of their development efforts, something missing from the western news agencies' reports. This is all the more true of "authoritative reports and commentaries" of roving capitalist western correspondents who claim to have become experts on developing countries' complex situations, after only a few day's visit.[2]

When Sub-Sahara African leaders criticize the western capitalist news agencies for biased and distorted reporting, they are not, generally speaking, questioning the factual accuracy of western news agencies or their correspondents. What they feel chagrined about is the lack of a Sub-Sahara

African perspective, as well as an appreciation of West Africa's information needs, in the news disseminated by the capitalist western news agencies.

Distortion does not necessarily mean a false presentation of events but rather an arbitrary selection and a slanted evaluation of reality, according to Juan Somavia, Director of the Latin American Institute for Transnational Studies in Mexico City. The alleged objectivity of news presentation, according to him, is belied by an arbitrary use of language, over-emphasis on events of no real importance, and the general practice of "making news" by presenting "isolated facts" as a non-existent whole. "Free flow", Somavia maintains, gives carte blanche for information to be slanted in the form most convenient or of most interest to a news agency, with the sole proviso that it should satisfy the demand of the news agency market.[3] In Sub-Sahara Africa, reference is made to the Marxist President Kwame Nkrumah or Sekou Toure, without any agency thinking or willing to speak of "capitalist" President Nnamdi Azikwei or Leopold Sedar Senghar. Progressive political leaders in the region are described as "extremists" or "rebels" but conservative or reactionary politicians are un-labelled. The international negotiators of progressive countries in the region are "rhetorical" while those of the capitalist world are "pragmatic". Pressed by limitation of space (in the case of printed media) and of time (in the case of radio or television), western capitalist correspondents tend to select only the news that they think is of interest to

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their readers/subscribers in the industrialized countries either because it is "sensational" or deals with something "strange or exotic". Wars, disasters, famine, riots, and political and military intrigues do make better copy than economic development. In this process, the information needs of Sub-Sahara Africa are either forgotten or are given very short shrift.

For example, Ghana's efforts to build up a national cadre of secondary school science and mathematics teachers may not be important enough for the western media, but it represents a model to many developing African countries suffering from similar problems. Similarly, the development of inland fisheries in Guinea Bissau and the introduction of animal traction for farming in West Africa may not warrant Western media attention, but are of great interest to developing African countries, showing as they do certain movements of the development front in the problem-ridden Sub-Sahara Africa. Also, development news acts as an agent of change since the individual's first motivation toward change often comes from "hearing it on the radio", "seeing it on film", or "reading it in the paper". Adnan Zmerila, Tunisia's representative to UNESCO, voicing a sentiment commonly expressed by Sub-Sahara African countries, stresses "If Swaziland implements a successful new system for irrigating orange groves, we'd like to hear about it. We also want to know what is happening in Kenya--not just what goes on in Paris, Washington and Moscow".[4]

Admittedly, it is difficult to make economic development

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news interesting. Third World journalists are aware of it; "High professional skills, higher than ever before, will be needed to make this other (development) news interesting and not dull, and credible to the public," admits Cameron Duodu, Director of the Ghana News Agency, "but it can be done."[5]

Some western correspondents and commentators have erroneously equated the increasing Third World demand for development-oriented news with government-controlled news and information hand-out. Development-oriented news is also not identical with "good" news, lack of which is constantly bewailed by government leaders in the western world. Development journalism, a relatively new genre of reporting in the Third World, is not much different from what usually appears in western newspapers in community or general news sections. But an international counterpart of community news is missing from western media files. Also, not all Sub-Sahara African editors and correspondents, who still operate under the influence of ultra-political orientation acquired during the anti-colonial struggle, have taken to development journalism kindly or eagerly.

Development journalism should also not be confused with Development Support Communication Programmes (DSC) which utilize various media--not just mass but any media--for promoting economic and social development. Development news reporting is only a very minor element of DSC, which in recent years has won many new converts among Third World planners and leaders, primarily due to the efforts of various UN agencies,

including the UNDP, UNESCO and UNICEF. Dr. Paul Fisher, Director of the Freedom of Information Centre, Columbia, Missouri, is probably referring to the DSC phenomenon when he says: "There is a tendency among leaders of developing countries to favor the views of technicians and specialists who see communication as a tool to achieve certain goals. They are talking about using journalism, using communication, to pre-determined ends."

Although Dr. Fisher's evaluation is accurate, his inferential criticism and apprehensions are misplaced. There is nothing Machiavellian or alarming in the desire of the developing countries to use communication for furthering economic and social development. The problem arises when the distinction between development communication, primarily a government activity planned and carried out as part of a country's national development programme, and the news agencies, whose effectiveness as a DSC component is inversely related to the degree of government intervention, is blurred. To most Third World leaders, information and communication have become synonymous and interchangeable, hence both are subject to government influence and direction.[6]

Some of the more extreme proposals for media control, such as those calling for "the imprisonment of foreign correspondents who insult or misrepresent host countries" or the "licensing of journalists" are merely a reflection of the tremendous frustration which Sub-Sahara African leaders feel about domestic as well as foreign media.

This is not to minimize the danger, in my personal view, of the growing trend in Sub-Sahara Africa toward direct government control of news media. The danger is accentuated by the need for government subsidies for the newly created national news agency, particularly in the first few years of its operation, in a developing African country. But a government-subsidized agency does not necessarily have to be government-controlled. The possibility, as well as the level, of official intervention in the operations of a news agency depends very much on the political philosphy and survival needs of those in power! There is also the fear that a national news agency, in the absence of competition, may willy-nilly become purveyor of official news. To some extent, it is a justifiable apprehension, but it need not always come true. After all, all Sub-Sahara African countries, as well as Britain and France, have only a national news agency covering the domestic scene but nobody accuses them of being offical spokesmen.

Contrary to what some critics of the Third World news agency would like us to believe, the flow of news in the world today is not totally "unfettered" or "absolutely" free. Media operations in almost all countries are subject to certain regulations which prohibit the publication of official secrets and news endangering national security. In most industrialized (ie., capitalist and western) countries, news management, which has been elevated to a fine art, is an every-day phenomenon. Governments can, and do, expel or deny a visa to any foreign correspondent at any time and for almost no reason. In all

of Sub-Sahara Africa, foreign news agencies are barred from supplying news directly to a newspaper or a radio station and have to go through a national news agency.

Thus, they already possess the means, if they so desire, to excise or rewrite any news article that they deem unfavorable or slanted. "We are not", says Somavia, who is an ardent critic of the western media, "advocating government control over the agencies' news flows." The same view is voiced by Raghaven who contends that national news agencies and the proposed news agencies pool of the non-aligned nations should be "free of governmental or bureaucratic control, direct or indirect (and should be run) professionally in such a manner that they evoke respect for the professional competence, integrity and credibility. They should not be vehicles of propaganda."

A vital element favoring the ultimate evolution of an independent Sub-Sahara African News Agency (as a component of a much bigger Third World news agency) is the heterogeneous nature of the Third World group. They do not constitute a monolithic, ideological bloc. Developing west African countries suffer from mutual rivalries, political as well as economic.

Some of them have deep-seated ideological conflicts.[7] They also differ on the interpretation, as well as implementation, of several important components of the New International Economic Order. In such an environment, a multinational (West African department of) Third World news agency, not free from government intervention, will flounder because

of conflicting national pressures. It will not succeed because governments will be averse to using or propagating material put out by an international agency which was nothing more than a vehicle for distributing official handouts across the border.

That this would be so was evident during the protracted discussions in New Delhi and Columbo which preceded the agreement, among the non-aligned countries, on the formation of a news agency pool. The "pool" falls far short of the desired objective of setting up a Third World news agency. In this present form, the agreement, for all practical purposes, provides for no more than a mechanism for exchanging official information or news handouts. Its usefulness, other than as a first step measure, is questionable, since participating governments are unlikely to force their media to publish news, received through the pool, whose credibility they themselves doubt, or whose contents collide with their or their allies' policies. A Third World agency will have to be independent and truly multinational. "We do not want to exchange British or American domination for domination by Indians or Yugoslavs", an African diplomat is quoted to have remarked in New Delhi, commenting on the intense competition between India and Yugoslavia on becoming the de facto leader in the proposed Third World news agency pool.[8]

Such negative attitues toward the newspool by some of the African countries later affected the credibility and operation of the pool in Africa. This became evident in the late

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seventies and the newspool has yet to recover from this setback.

FOOTNOTES

1. Frantz Fanon; Towards the African Revolution.

2. Usually these people are tourists who move from Hilton to Hilton with no contact whatsoever with the 'wretched of the earth".

3. Somavia quoted in UNESCO "Meeting of Experts on the Development of News Exchange in Latin America, Paris, Com-75, Conf. 603/4, August 12.

4. UNESCO General Conference Acts 19th Meeting, Nairobi, 26-30 October 1976, Vol. 1.

5. August 22, 1978 interview with the director in his office in Accra.

6. Ibid., Vol. II, Resolutions, V General Resolutions 9. 13.

7. Tran Van Dinh (ed) in From Bandung to Columbo.

8. Ibid.

VIII. COMBATTING CULTURAL DOMINATION

8.1 THE NEWSPOOL OF THE NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES:

The analysis so far proves that even after the establishment of national news agencies in the four Sub-Sahara African countries on the west coast, the problems described above remained. Nothing of substance changed, due to several factors, including the continued dominance by the foreign western capitalist agencies, namely Reuters, AFP, AP-UPI.

Once again the idea of a Union of African News Agencies was resurrected, in 1967. What seemed to be the main obstacle to such a co-operation was no longer there. When this idea was first brought up, there was an ideological problem facing the continent. Kwame Nkrumah, the then leading advocate of Pan-Africanism regarded the mass media and communications policy as an important tool in the process of decolonization and national development (nation building). He therefore viewed any attempt by the individual African nations to form their own news agencies as insufficient, weakening the chances of a continental union. This view of Nkrumah's was shared by a minority of the African countries.[1] Those who disagreed with him, also resented the domination and negative coverage by the western capitalist wire services, but were fearful of Kwame Nkrumah's so-called radicalism and Pan-African politics. All these labels, incidentally, were the doings of these same capitalist wire services. Kwame Nkrumah's so-called political ambitions were played to the utmost by the western agencies,

thereby reducing, if not totally negating, any possible
outside chances of the idea of a union of African news
agencies becoming a reality.

With the military coup d'etat in Ghana in February, 1966
and the exile of Kwame Nkrumah, the idea was once again re-
surrected, due to the overwhelming nature of the domination
by the western news agencies. In effect, the failure of the
various national news agencies and the overthrow of Kwame
Nkrumah introduced a whole new urgency to the idea. The absence
of a single most dominant Pan-Africanist convinced the Conser-
vative African leaders to try again.

This time, however, two unexpected factors killed the
idea of a union of African news agencies once more. The first
factor was the English-French colonial connection. Unfortunately
the former French colonies at last decided to concentrate on
an all-French effort, connecting the ex-colonies with the met-
ropolis. This not-so-clear idea was nothing more than a long
term proposal based on the good intentions and goodwill of
France.

The second factor which probably also influenced the first
was the outbreak of the Nigerian civil war in summer 1967.

The French nations led by Ivory Coast and Senegal decided
to recognize Biafra, and France also supplied military hard-
ware to forces of Biafra. This unfortunate tragedy further
complicated the already polarized English-French dichotomy,
thereby reducing further the slim chances of English-French
co-operation continentally. Also the fact that the ex-French

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colonies were more integrated into the French politico-economic life than their English counterparts made any such co-operation more difficult for the former than the latter.

However, the issue of cultural imperialism kept coming up at international forums such as the Non-Aligned Nations Summits and at the various UNESCO meetings.

Perhaps for the first time in communications history, there is a heated debate on the fundamental nature of information--whether information is a social good to be treated with moral and social responsibility or whether it is a marketable commodity whose production and circulation should be out of national and international control.

The debate that has been quietly building up ever since the United Nation's declaration on the Free Flow of Information has suddenly (1976) been sparked off by a political declaration of the non-aligned countries (including the four from Sub-Sahara Africa--Ghana, Nigeria, Ivory Coast and Senegal) that represent the Third World of their intention to forge a new information order by way of a non-aligned news agencies pool.[2]

The pool's operational target will be to strengthen news exchanges among the news agencies of non-aligned countries, so that third world countries will have events reported and interpreted by third world journalists instead of by the big capitalist news agencies. The basic complaint and consequently the basic assumptions on which the newspool move were based are that the western capitalist news agencies have continued to have an unchallenged monopoly over transnational information

collection and dissemination, and, in the absence of an effective third world competitor, have either disregarded the need to view third world events in the context of third world needs, problems and priorities or have deliberately slanted, filtered and funnelled information to suit the needs and interests of the industrialized capitalist countries.[3]

The four Sub-Sahara countries under study feel that instead of shutting out the foreign dominant wire services altogether (almost all Third World countries now subscribe to more than one multinational news agency) it would be expedient to establish a common newspool or be part of a non-aligned newspool through which hot news as well as interpretative analysis could be exchanged among themselves.

The political declaration of the non-aligned countries for the establishment of the newspool that finally gave the green signal for the much-doubted project alarmed the western capitalist dominant wire services; provoked public discussion of the issue both in the east and in the west; and caused some confusion as to the historical origin of the newspool idea; the issues involved on both sides and the implications for politicians and communicators.

Especially since World War II, and the gaining of independence from the colonial powers, there has been a gradual and steady move by Third World countries to assert their independence in the social, economic and political spheres. In some countries (eg., Ghana under Nkrumah), the process has not been very smooth and the variety of measures adopted by

the developing countries were viewed by the western capital-
ists (often ex-colonizers) with circumspection and sometimes
with overt displeasure. As one general manager Dr. Wolfgang
Neynen of Deutsche Press Agentur (DPA) put it, the Third World
countries have begun to develop a "deep-rooted distrust to-
ward the countries they once idolized, who taught them every-
thing they know, who looked after them and to whom they often
owe their very existence".[4]

Thus, in essence, the Third World in general, and Sub-
Sahara Africa countries in particular, to a large measure
resented the attitude of the western capitalist world in con-
tinuing to adopt a paternalistic colonial attitude toward them
and projecting this attitude in their news media. Slowly but
forcefully, most Sub-Sahara African countries began to com-
plain privately about the image that was projected by the
western capitalist news agencies of West African leaders and
their countries. Private complaints later became public and
when they found no conciliatory reactions by the western wire
services, they decided (together with the Third World) to form-
ulate their complaint into a formal proposal to counter the
effect of the "imagebreakers".

Apart from the question of the right image for Sub-
Sahara African countries, there were also the other issues of
"cultural imperialism", information imbalance and sometimes
allegations of "interference" in the nation's affairs.

The first attempt at a formal protest came from the
Andean foreign ministers in 1972. They lobbied non-aligned

countries' support for a scheme to provide a counterbalance to the pressures exerted by the western capitalist wire services. In 1973, the Non-Aligned Summit Conference held in Algiers took up the question of the need to treat information in such a way that its shape would logically lead to aiding development in the non-aligned countries, including Sub-Sahara Africa.

In 1974, the scope of the discussion widened and took on added dimensions at the United Nations special session on the role of information in the new international order. Immediately afterwards, in 1975, the non-aligned foreign ministers met in Lima, Peru and followed up the discussions which resulted in a special symposium of media-related government agencies which was held in Tunis in March, 1976.

The Tunis conference set about laying the ground work for the New Delhi conference of Information Ministers held in July, 1976. The Ministerial Conference, after intense discussions, drew up a constitution for the newspool and submitted it for the Non-Aligned Summit for approval of the project proposal.

At the Non-Aligned Summit held in Colombo in August, 1976, there was hardly a dissenting voice. They unanimously gave the go-ahead for the project and enunciated the rationale for the counterbalance in a political declaration. The Colombo Summit also set up an intergovernmental council for co-ordination of information and mass media, charged with the function of meeting regularly to plan news exchange programmes.

The political declaration was followed by a heated discussion

of the issue, but UNESCO managed to bring about a good deal

of understanding and a broad consensus on setting up the news

agencies pool at its nineteenth biennial conference held in

Nairobi, Kenya in November, 1976. The supporters of the UNESCO

draft resolution laying foundations for the newspool of non-

aligned nations also included its leading critic; the USA.

Firstly, the pool is intended to improve and expand mutual

exchange of information and further strengthen mutual co-

operation among non-aligned countries in their efforts to

promote and attain their aims; secondly, to provide objective

information with emphasis on progressive, economic, socio-

political and cultural development as well as mutual co-

operation and action; thirdly, to facilitate dissemination of

correct and factual information about non-aligned countries,

their mutual co-operation; other subjects of common interest

among non-aligned countries as well as the international com-

munity in general and, fourthly, to bridge the gap which exists

in this field by providing further information about the non-

aligned countries and their policies. News items included in

the Pool could also be made available to other news agencies,

mass communication media and other interested organizations.

According to the Third World leaders, "Non-aligned

countries must achieve these objectives through their own

efforts as well as by more active co-operation on a bilateral,

regional (ie., Sub-Sahara west Africa) as well as inter-

regional basis and by co-ordinating their activities in the UN

and other international forums. It is particularly necessary

for the non-aligned countries to strengthen their existing in-

frastructure and to take full advantage of the scientific and

technological breakthroughs already made in this field".[5] This

would facilitate more complete dissemination of objective in-

formation among their own public as well as the world at large

about developments in non-aligned countries in the social,

economic and other cultural fields and their growing role in

the international community.

The conference of Information Ministers and Directors of

the Press agencies of the non-aligned countries convened to

draw up a draft constitution of the press agencies pool.[6] The

press agencies pool of the non-aligned countries agreed upon

by non-aligned countries is intended to achieve the broad and

free circulation among themselves of news, informative reports,

features and photographs about each other, and also provide

objective and authentic information relating to non-aligned

countries to the rest of the world. The non-aligned Press

Agencies Pool is open to participation by press agencies wishing

to participate as members in full standing of the non-aligned

movement and of countries with observer status in the movement.[7]

None of the pool-participating agencies has a dominant

role. Co-operation is founded in the agreements reached on

the basis of full respect for democratic procedure and equality.

The co-ordinating committee of the pool can admit as an ob-

server the liberation movements, international organizations,

and professional bodies and especially the UN, and UNESCO

among others which have as an objective the decolonization of information in the world.[8]

8.2 OBJECTIVES:[9]

(1) The pool of news agencies of non-aligned countries is intended to improve and expand mutual exchange of information and further strengthen mutual co-operation among non-aligned countries, based on the decisions taken jointly at the meetings of the non-aligned countries, in their efforts to promote and attain their aims.

(2) Objective information is the basic premise of the pool, with emphasis on progressive, economic, socio-political and cultural developments as well as mutual co-operation and action.

(3) The pool is intended to facilitate dissemination of correct and factual information about non-aligned countries, their mutual co-operation, and other subjects of common interest, among non-aligned countries as well as the international community in general.

(4) The pool is intended to fill the gap which exists in this field by providing further information about the non-aligned countries and their policies. News items included in the pool could also be made available to other news agencies, mass communication media and other interested organizations.

(5) The pool is not intended to substitute news exchange arrangements already existing among non-aligned countries or to be a supra-national news agency but to fulfill the above-mentioned objectives.

8.3 SUB-SAHARA AFRICAN PARTICIPATION:

For an effective participation by the African continent, the Pool decided with African approval to encourage regional operation. Africa thus functioned as five regional centres, namely North, South, East, West and Central. The four countries discussed above--Ghana, Nigeria, Ivory Coast and Senegal-- all came under the western regional grouping. This region was further divided into two linguistic groups: English and French. Accra became the regional headquarters of the English-speaking west African Pool and the facilities of the Ghana News Agency were put at the disposal of the Pool. Nigeria at this juncture (1976) had no national news agency, thus making the selection of Ghana a very easy one.[10]

For French-Speaking West African group, Dakar, Senegal became the co-ordinating centre, and as in Accra, Ghana, the facilities of the Agence de Presse Senegalaise were put at the disposal of the pool. The emphasis on regionalism was an economic as well as practical one on the part of the News Agencies Pool of the Non-Aligned Nations. Correspondents from Nigeria as well as others from other parts of Africa are stationed in Accra, and by using the facilities of the Ghana News Agency (GNA) are able to cover events in Ghana and near-by countries. The same procedure was adopted by the correspondents based in Dakar, this time using the French language rather than English. Other regional centres in Africa followed the same procedure, using English, Arabic, French or Portuguese, all coming under the umbrella of the News Agencies Pool of the

Non-Aligned Nations.

Kwame Nkrumah had proposed the same continental news agency in 1961 when he opened the conference of the All African Journalist Union in Accra.[11] Nkrumah pursued this goal at all summits of African leaders throughout the years, but due to the political polarization and other "neo-colonial manouvers" (Nkrumah, 1964) the idea received no support.

The idea surfaced again in 1967, after the military deposed Nkrumah in 1966. This time, however, the lack of proper direction (politically) and planning killed the proposal immediately after the summit(s).

The early seventies gave the idea of a form of news agencies union new life in Africa when cultural imperialism became a frequent theme at various non-aligned and UNESCO conferences. The researchers and social scientists who had studied the subject and its effect finally convinced the planners of such summits that cultural imperialism is a reality that ought to be discussed, examined and defeated.

8.4 FUNCTIONS:[12]

(1) The News Agencies of Ghana (GNA) and Senegal (APS) act as regional centres of redistribution of news items within the framework of the pool, and do identify themselves for this purpose to other participation news agencies.

(2) Each of the participating news agencies in this group is entitled to and do transmit and distribute news items within the framework of the pool.

(3) All participating news agencies send daily an agreed

wordage to one or more of the distributing agencies is identified above.

(4) All the distributing news agencies do provide their daily transmission newscasts on a mutually agreed duration of time devoted to distribution of news received from other participants.

(5) Each participating agency prepares and selects all their information on the basis of mutual respect and common interest offered through the pool.

(6) The credit line of originating news indicates both the agency concerned and the pool.

(7) The modalities of collection and distribution of news among participation agencies was worked out through mutual agreement. The pool does not preclude bilateral arrangements between participating agencies or between them and other agencies, consistent with the objectives of the pool.

(8) All the news agencies and correspondents in this regional grouping (French and English) tries to the full extent of its possibilities, to promote utilizations of the news and information carried by the pool, by publications, and radio and television stations using its services.

(9) All pool-participating news agencies in this regional grouping including those acting as collector-distributors do maintain contact with all the other participating news agencies, keeping them informed on the quality of reception and even suggesting possible subjects and reports of particular interest to one or more agencies.

(10) Non-aligned Sub-Sahara African countries (ie.,

Nigeria before 1977) which had no established news agency are not excluded from participating in the pool.

The above conclusions on the Sub-Sahara African participation in the pool were drawn from two weeks of "visiting" the Ring Road West Office of the Ghana News Agency in Accra, in the summer of 1978. Further interviews with correspondents representing news agencies from other parts of the continent confirmed most of these conclusions. One fact emerged during my "visiting" and chats at the GNA offices, all those concerned agreed with my observation that the use of Accra and Dakar does not seem to give those two cities any special status, or the GNA and APS any privileges or control and influence. As I stated above, these two centres were chosen for practical and economic reasons.

The analysis above indicates that co-operation among the participating news agencies is on the basis of full respect for equality and democratic principles of functioning.

Countries participating in the pool meet at the level of governments and national news agencies at the beginning of each year in which a conference of the heads of state or government of non-aligned countries is to be held. At such meetings, a co-ordinating committee is elected (on the basis of equitable geographic representation) by the participants to facilitate mutual co-operation and attention to questions concerning the working of the pool at the regional level. The co-ordinating committee (as observed at the regional level in Accra) is constantly considering and exploring possibilities for tech-

nical co-operation between participating news agencies to improve their respective functioning and facilities through exchange of technical information and personnel. All the eighteen participating countries in Sub-Sahara west Africa reached an agreement in 1978 on reciprocal reduction of cable rates, and on improvement of mutual communication facilities.

The biggest problem facing the west African region as observed in Accra, Abidjan is finance and hardware. The pool was founded on the principle of being a self-financing activity at the regional level, with each participating agency therefore bearing the cost of its own participation. This means that the news agencies of origin, agencies handling editorial and translating work and those which transmit news items, reports and information bear all the expenses of their own work. News agencies who receive pool newscasts from collecting/ redistributing news agencies, also distribute to their subscribers at their own cost, ie., in keeping with the agreements reached with their subscribers.

In the final chapter of this essay, I will attempt to draw conclusions from the above analysis, and also some observations from my contact with the regional office on Ring Road West Accra. The expectations of the participating nations, as compared to the real accomplishments of the pool, will also be examined. Critics of the whole idea of the pool, and some of the concerns they raised (real or imagined) cannot be overlooked in any summary or conclusion.

In the next chapter of this thesis I will examine the

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disappointments of the participants in the pool concept

and the call for the creation of a Pan-African News Agency

in early 1979 (April).

8.5 PAN-AFRICAN NEWS AGENCY:

In the last section of this thesis I analysed the west

African participation in the Non-Aligned News Agencies Pool,

with particular emphasis on Ghana, Nigeria, Ivory Coast and

Senegal. Several advocates of this Pool later claimed that

it falls short of what the region or continent needed to free

itself from western cultural domination or "to stop seeing

ourselves from distorted mirrors". Thus, to be free of Reuters,

Agence France Presse and Associated Press-United Press

International, Sub-Sahara Africa would need an agency more

powerful and aggressive than the Non-Aligned News Pool.

Once again, the old idea of the Pan-African News Agency

(PANA) was resurrected.[13] After several months of ground

work, the Pan-African News Agency was formally established in

April, 1979 in Dakar, Senegal, with its headquarters in the

same city. All the fifty nations who belong to the OAU agreed

to becoming charter members of PANA. An interim director

general--Mr. Cheikh Ousmane Diallo of Senegal--was appointed

to head PANA for its initial two years; this period was also

to be used to lay the ground work for its direction and even-

tual operation.[14]

In December 1980, the PANA committee of experts met again

in Dakar, Senegal to review the progress made in implementing

resolutions adopted by the intergovernmental council and to

examine the results achieved by the technical committee. It drafted recommendations for measures to be undertaken or implemented so that the intergovernmental council and the conference of the ministers of information may be presented with complete, up-to-date, and thorough dossiers.

It was declared that the technical-economic studies to be carried out should provide estimates of the funds necessary for investment as well as for the functioning of the agency on the following basis:

(1) The present state of the existing equipment for communication between the countries, the headquarters of their respective pools and the headquarters of PANA in Dakar.

(2) The equipment necessary in each country for the daily transmission of 100 words, 200 words, or 300 words.

(3) The complimentary trans-receiving equipment necessary for headquarters of the pools for communication with the member states.

(4) The transmitting and receiving equipment necessary in the headquarters of the agency for ensuring the circulation of dispatches.

To reinforce the actions undertaken within the framework of the establishment of the agency, the director-general, Mr. Cheikh Ousmane Kiallo was asked to maintain contacts with UNESCO, the ITU, the specialized agencies of the UN, and the League of Arab States; initiate preliminary contact with (a) the newly created news agency of the OPEC: and (b) the

African Development Bank (ASB) in order to obtain their co-
operation in the outlining of the statue and the structure of
the fund for developing news agencies.

Like the News Agencies Pool of the Non-Aligned Nations,
the PANA is to operate on regional basis or national basis
if that is considered necessary by that nation or nations con-
cerned, but emphasis will be placed on regional co-operation.

8.6 CONCLUSION:

The problems of the Sub-Sahara Africa region—among them,
the fact of foreign control of the Channels of Communication
which cannot represent the interests of the under-developed
countries—are thoroughly examined in numerous gatherings and
publications.

The possibilities of overcoming the present situation
remain, however, tremendously obscure and demand ever more
attention and concerted action. In the case of the news
agencies, several possibilities have been presented. This
chapter aims at making a short critical summary of these posi-
tions, especially centered upon the west African experience
and context.

The Executive Director of Freedom House, Leonard Sussman,
thinks that

>threats against the major international
>news agencies tend to harm both the
>threatener and the threatened. Further
>reduction of international reportage in
>the Third World will deprive less devel-
>oped countries of the information they
>need in order to develop. Such reduction
>may also discourage western capitalist

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> investment in countries where accurate,
> impartial reporting of events and
> economic conditions is no longer avail-
> able--because the news media have be-
> come the hand-maidens of governments.15

He states further that "western news agencies are now properly
resisting those aspects of the 'new information order' that
would repress or harass the capitalist news agencies in their
reportorial functions around the world", and suggests that
American news agencies "may gain credibility for their pro-
fessional standards by listening attentively to complaints
that come from the non-socialist states", and "should open a
serious dialogue with appropriate Third World leaders".

Sussman's position illustrates well enough the imper-
ialist approach to the problem, to which no real change but a
mere rationalization of the system should be enough to calm
down Sub-Sahara West Africa's aspirations. What is central
to this approach is, then the will to keep the control of news
flow in metropolitan hands. The interests backing this stand
are clear as well, for it is openly related to the need for
maintaining the conditions necessary to economic and cultural
domination. Sub-Saharan west Africa, because of being massively
penetrated by U.S. and Western European interests, is especially
susceptible of being influenced by this will. As a matter of
fact, many of these "appropriate" leaders can be found in Sub-
Sahara west Africa, where the capitalist west takes care of
destabilizing those who are not.16 It is likely that some dia-
logue of the kind suggested by Sussman might have been possible
at a certain level. But recent development makes the creation
of alternative news channels unavoidable, as admitted by Sussman

himself.

For the majority of the twenty countries of Sub-Sahara
West Africa--and to some extent also for some developing and
developed countries who share the problems of cultural dom-
ination--it is evident that the solution of these problems
will not come in the form of a paternalistic gift and sudden
understanding of those who hold power. Thus, the insistance
in strengthening self-reliance is not so much a question of
dignity as a matter of necessity, if real solutions are to
be found for such problems. Always within this perspective,
it could be argued that a more equitable distribution of news
media correspondents on a worldwide basis would affect the
flow of international news in the directions expected by Sub-
Sahara West Africa in particular, or the Third World in general.
Phil Harris has considered this possibility and properly sig-
naled that this would mean an increase in the potential for
increased information, but it is unlikely that an increase in
the number of correspondents located in, for example, West
Africa, would dramatically increase the newsworthiness of the
region. He thus says: "It is in large part the newsworthiness
of an area which determines the deployment of the news media
correspondents, rather than vice versa." Moreover, the study
of Hester in 1974 showed that in Latin America, the problems
of biased reporting do not derive from the number of correspon-
dents but from the occupational ideology that members of the
AP staff hold, which is directly connected to their vision of
what the U.S. subscribers want.[17] The problem is not so much

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the amount of information but the outcome of the central pro-
cessing of it. It is here then, that the structure, rationale
and links of the transnational news agencies come up to show
that it is not possible to expect from them more than what they
are: machinery designed and created to provide information
and diagnosis useful to the conservation of the international
system of domination. Thus, it is unlikely that a real chal-
lenge can come up from the mere rationalization of the present
system, which is what the position of Sussman implies.

As pointed out by Schiller, the mass media have become
cultural and social "agents of influence". Their presence en-
compasses and traverses all social structures, acquiring omni-
present and active participation in the individual and collective
life of society.[18]

This participation, however, should be the axis around
which contemporary societies are to be built. Societies with-
out participation are mute societies, societies whose creative
capacity is slowly agonizing. Participation is the essence
of individual and social life. Participation cannot exist unless
there is "capacity to participate", grounded on permanent access
to adequate information. This is valid both for individuals
in their relationship with society and for states in their
relationship with the international community. Only informed
participation is true participation. For this reason, the
international capitalist news agencies--that Sussman defends--
must make the context of the events they describe understood
and must channel the capacity for expression of the different

societies in which they operate.

The analysis of the international western news agencies' contemporary role is situated in a wider context, as is the search for a new international economic order. This is indicative that Sub-Sahara West Africa's questionnings of the present transnational communications structure are but a reflex of a more general and profound questionning of the ruling economic structures. African countries demand, not only in communications but in all the other areas of international relations, an equality of opportunity that is denied by the present structures.

The aforementioned sets of elements lead to an image of a richer and more creative process of international communications for all societies. The objective is to move forward from a unidirectional to a multidirectional structure; from an ethnocentric to a culturally pluralistic and multidirectional perspective; from the receiver's passivity to active participation; from the preponderant transnational influence to a multinational balance; all of it on the basis of structures that permit true access and generalized social participation.

One of the most needed and urgent structural changes is the creation, by African countries acting individually or jointly, of information channels alternative and complimentary to those already in existence. Alternative, because the attempt would be made to offer "another information", devoit of the limitations that the African countries perceive in the present structures; and complimentary, because they would not

be meant to eliminate existing channels, but rather to offer--
a viewpoint stemming from an African perception of national
and international events. This is perhaps the most serious
and difficult challenge that must be faced. Until today, in-
formation from Sub-Sahara Africa has been disqualified, whether
because it was considered "professionally inefficient", because
it did not respond to the demand of the information market of
the industrialized world, or because it was created by instru-
ments or mechanisms related to governments and was therefore
considered to be lacking the necessary "credibility" and in-
dependence.

In the last chapter I discussed the Pan-African News
Agency (PANA), established in April 1979. PANA, like the news
agencies pool of the non-aligned nations, is facing serious
financial and hardware difficulties, and is also under severe
criticisms.

In spite of all the problems faced by PANA, it is supposed
to (according to the Director General) start operation in
August 1982.[19] The agency has been delayed by lack of money,
qualified staff, communications and also by delays in rati-
fication by its member states. According to its secretary
general, Mr. Ousmane Diallo, the agency, designed to free
Africa from dependence on the major western capitalist news
agencies, would send out 75,000 words a day (if it ever solves
its logistics problems) divided between English, French and
Arabic. PANA's council has also called on PANA's 49 member
states to give preferential cable rates for African press com-

munications. Of the 49 member states, only 17 had paid their dues so far, totally $624,000 out of the $1.75M budget, however, only seven countries had formally ratified the 1979 agreement setting up the agency, which should have started operations a year ago.

These are but a few of the problems presently confronting the new Pan-African News Agency. Their problems in effect are no different from those faced by the African Regional headquarters of the News Agencies Pool of the Non-Aligned Nations. Resolutions at the conferences do not make an organization, but rather it is the commitment and the dedication of all those involved, together with the avilability of hardware, money and qualified personnel that determines the success or failure of international agencies.

Thus it will not be an overstatement to argue that both the Non-Aligned News Agencies Pool and the Pan-African News Agency (PANA) were started with high expectations, but the actual reality of the operating circumstances has evaporated some of the dreams and expectations. It will also be fair to argue that to some, they are not the panacea hoped for by others.

FOOTNOTES

1. Among them were Sekou Toure, Patrice Lumumba, Julius Nyerere, and Gamel Abdel Nasser.

2. A declaration to that effect was passed at the Non-Aligned Summit in Tunis, Tunisia, March 1976.

3. Resolution of the Tunis Summit of the Non-Aligned Nations.

4. Dr. Wolfgang Neyen, General Manager of Deutsche Press Argenteur (DPA) quoted in The Media In Asia.

5. Ibid.

6. At Tunis, Tunisia in March, 1976.

7. "Aims and Objectives" of the newspool.

8. Ibid.

9. General Resolutions, Aims and Objectives of the 1976 Tunis Conference of the Directors and Information Minsisters of the Non-Aligned Movement.

10. The Nigerian News Agency (NNA) started operations in October 1977.

11. Daily Graphic, Accra, p.1, April 27, 1961.

12. See the Final Document of the Tunis Summit of Directors of News Agencies and Information Ministers of the Non-Aligned Movement.

13. The idea of a PANA was first introduced by Kwame Nkrumah in April 1961.

14. West Africa; January 5, 1981, p.46.

15. Leonard Sussman; "The 'March' Through the World's Mass Media" in Orbis Vol. 20 #4. Winter 1977, pp. 857-879.

16. Testimony before the U.S. Senate indicates that the CIA and other Western agencies were involved in the overthrow and murder of Patrice Lumumba, Kwame Nkrumah, and Modiobo Keita and Albert Memmi.
See also: John Marks; "Media in the Third World" Washington Post, August 27, 1976.
and; Phillip Agee; Inside The Company; and Victor Marchetti and John Marks; CIA and the Cult of Intelligence.

17. Phil Harris; An Analysis of the West African Wire Service of an International News Agency.

18. Schiller; <u>Mind Manager</u>.

19. <u>West Africa</u>; August 10, 1981, p.1852.

IX. ANALYSIS:

Throughout this thesis I have attempted to expose the link between the dominant western capitalist news agencies and cultural imperialism (or domination), and how this affected the efforts of the Sub-Sahara West African nations in establishing national news agencies. It could also be argued that this domination also affected the non-aligned news agencies pool and the Pan-African News Agency (PANA) to considerable lengths.

In these general conclusions, I will discuss the importance, objectives and implications of why a new international information order is important. For analytical purposes it is possible to distinguish several significant, if not easily separable, issues in the overall demand for a new pattern of international information flows. Some of these are: an extension of the national liberation struggle to information[1]; an appraisal of the effects of public, private, or mixed ownership of the operation of the mass media as well as on the general organization of information; and in inquiry into what constitutes democratization and generally accessibility of information, nationally and internationally.

9.1 THE EXTENSION OF THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE TO INFORMATION:

One lesson learned at great cost to poor and weak countries--from the time of their earliest struggles for political independence to their current, and thus far unsuccessful, efforts for economic liberation--has been the vital need to make the terms of the conflict understandable to the people

engaged in the battle. Almost as important is the imperative to explain and justify the struggle to the capitalist world opinion in the hope of securing support, or at least to avoid suffering "destabilization" and intervention from the dominators.

When the dominator defines, explains, and publicizes the issues, it is fanciful to expect an impartial account, or sometimes any account whatsoever. It has become painfully obvious that the ability to identify and to present the national version of events is one of the basic criteria of national sovereignty--along with control of the currency, disposition of the armed forces, and the determination of foreign policy. The argument that abuses may occur when the information system is under national direction (admittedly a strong possibility) in no way weakens the necessity for such control. Political independence can scarcely be maintained and economic self-determination is unthinkable without firm national control of the information system, as presently being experienced in Sub-Sahara West Africa. Issues which appear mysterious--such as the control of natural resources, fair value for the exchange of commodities in international trade, concern for the working force which is employed abroad, and many similar matters-- often made deliberately incomprehensible by those who want conditions to remain as they are under their direction.

Accordingly, the right and the necessity to control the national information flow--what comes in and what goes out-- is not some petulant demand, nor is it an expression of in-

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cipient despotism. It is an indispensable prerequisite for the preservation of sovereignty. It is in this light, therefore, that the strong insistence in Sub-Sahara West Africa for national news agencies and a pool of national agencies of the non-aligned countries to circulate news of themselves must be understood.

The national aspects of news, however, are no less subject to internal class relations than international flows of information are to international division of labour. Accordingly, if national news agencies are established, the focus of the struggle for socially useful information shifts to the internal sector.

Though it sometimes seems, and there is ample justification to believe, that the big western international news agencies (AP, UPI, Reuters, AFP) intentionally disregard the vital information interests of the weaker states--both in the news they export about these countries and the information they import for local consumption[2]--the element of sinister, deliberate distortion does not fully or necessarily explain the undeniably inadequate international news flow.

The simplest explanation of why the activities of the dominant western news agencies are inimical to the poor and voiceless everywhere is that the operations and information flows of these agencies are dictated by commercial considerations. The agencies, too, are components of a larger system; and the specifications of this larger system are not compatible with the genuine needs of most people in all nations.

For the poor countries, the incompatibility assumes disaster proportions. One of the strongest complaints, for example, made against the international news agencies is that they treat news as "merchandise". Thus the final document of the Mexico City conference on "The Role of Information in the New International Order" stated: "News has become a mere merchandise to be sold according to the 'logic' of the dominant market, and, consequently, cannot reflect the historical, cultural, and political realities that give facts their real dimension."[3] But this condition is fully in keeping with the workings of a market system in whatever arena it operates. The international news agencies, as presently constituted, can do little else than supply the requirements of the information market in their respective locales, and inevitably, they must pay attention to the dominant markets where their business is most important and lucrative or suffer losses. This means the United States and Western European economies.

The "news" that the profit-seeking private information monopolies desire has little or no correspondence with what developing Sub-Sahara West African peoples or nations require. The news markets of the developed, capitalist countries have been structured to satisfy the social characteristics that capitalism creates--personalization, sensationalism, trivialization, violence, and disaster. To the extent that national news agencies, when they are organized, reflect national and international market criteria, they too will inevitably treat news as a merchandise. It is this clash between the social

needs of the marginal peoples and economies and the commercial imperatives of the world market system that typifies and illustrates a second general factor in the Third World's call for a new international information order.

A Reconsideration of the Determinants and Character of National Development:

To many it has become evident that the prescriptions for development and modernization that gushed forth so freely in the 1950's and the 1960's from western academic and governmental centres assumed, at least implicitly, that the processes recommended would eventually result in market-type economies.[4] These, it was expected, would be similar if not identical in basic structural arrangements to the "models" operating for the most part in capitalist Western Europe and North America. "Modernization" was linked to mass communication, and the growth of the latter was regarded as evidence of the existence of the former, and in fact, there was much truth in this proposition.

The development of mass media systems in Sub-Sahara West Africa, adopting western standards in organization, operation, and financial support, introduced or reinforced significant market based institutional structures into the new nations. These provided as well the informational circuits which could be relied on to supply a continuous ideological back-up for the values of a market economy.

Thereby in one stroke the introduction of western capitalist-styled mass communications created a substantial component of a market system. Its extension throughout the rest

of the economy occurred "naturally" as the messages and images transmitted—mostly western material-nourished the popular consciousness into an acceptance and expectation of capitalist products and the arrangements that accompany such products.

Whatever may have been the intentions and aspirations of indigenous leaders for alternate social modes of existence, they hardly could withstand the communication and cultural ambience brought into the community at the individual and family level of the urban elites. Nothing less than the character of the community—locally, regionally, nationally—is shaped when the information system acts as a one-way channel for the introduction of a western market way of life. National communication policies may offer a way to combat these conditions, and more than news is involved. The larger frame of mass communication— as well as the entertainment, recreation, instructional, dramatic, and work-a-day programming—is seen as indispensable aid (or, as at present, a deterrent) to the attainment of a national development defined by the community and its own representatives. National policies for communications, there- fore, have been a subject of a series of UNESCO-convened inter- governmental meetings of experts and/or officials since the late 1960's, beginning with a meeting in Montreal in 1969. By the mid-seventies, communication policy-making at the national level had become a universal tendency, joining the non-aligned with highly developed industrial states.

To be sure, the unanimity does not extend to the area of

content of such policies. Here, great diversity and conflict naturally exist. Disagreement occurs between and often inside nations. For it is apparent that if national policy in communication is bound up with the character, structure, and direction of the nation's development, it is also directly relevant to the critical matter of determining in whose interest the policies and the development itself are undertaken.

This, in brief, is the ultimate issue of societal control, a question by no means settled in most parts of the world. So, national policy-making in communication is supported by diverse social groups for often contradictory ends. Yet at this point, insofar as the Sub-Sahara West African nations are concerned, general agreement seems possible on the basis of preferring national control to external domination. Still to be faced for most states is the issue of which social stratum in the national community shall exercise the power of determination. Also, the development and production of national communication technology to the greatest possible extent is seen as a means of reducing dependency, in this case on foreign hardware producers. It is not overlooked that U.S. communication equipment producing corporations produce the greatest share by far of the sophisticated instrumentation that goes into the current global communication system.

Summing up, alternative courses for national development can be imagined only with different perspectives and structures for the information system. The ability of nations and leaders to make meaningful choices concerning social goals and human

ends is bound up with the character and the control of the information system. The matter is far from settled either within or between nations.

Democratization of the Information Process:

The multinational information conglomerates and their advertising and public-opinion polling ancillaries are at present the powerful bulwarks of the international information system. Wresting control from these super-business units pre-supposes and requires far reaching transformations in the organization and social relations governing information, generation and transmission. Conventional methods of competing with the multinationals, given the strength of their corporate empires are unlikely to be effective. At best, they may be expected to imitate the overall system's way of carrying on business. This is especially observable with news collection and transmission.

If the prevailing western mode of treating news information as a commodity can be overcome, it will only be with an entirely different framework and purpose for information gathering and dissemination. The desire to regard information as a social good suggests at least the bare outlines for an alternate policy. It must be done

> "...directed at making citizens con-
> scious of their englobing (sic) real-
> ity, in order to ensure their complete
> understanding of the economic and
> political processes and of their in-
> herent conflicts at the national and
> international levels; in addition to
> fostering their ability to participate

in the decision-making processes...
                    Information must be an instrument of
                    liberation..."5

     In this unfamiliar (to the colonialist and capitalist
west, at least) perspective, the manner of securing and dis-
tributing information, as well as the character and the con-
tent of the flow, are dependent on the degree of openness and
and democratization of the total process. Tightly structured
organizational pyramids represent the prevailing system of
domination. Nations (and journalists) are kept separate from
each other, especially the majority of the poor and weak
states who learn about their closest neighbours (as in West
Africa) almost exclusively through the mediation of the col-
onialist and capitalist western communication controllers (and
dominators).

     The news gatherers, journalists, and broadcasters are
similarly isolated. Moreover, their training is still largely
dependent on capitalist western schools offering market models
and definitions of communication and information processes.
Presumably, alternative perspectives are now being made avail-
able in journalism training schools in non-market controlled
countries.

     Information democratization, consequently, is not a pub-
lic relations term when used by the classes and countries
seeking a new international information order. It suggests
thorough organizational levelling and de-professionalization
of news structures. The western professionals may emphasize
their competence and efficiency, but their end product--the

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information--is fragmented, biased and unassimilable. Anti-professionalism may be the fresh conception that can effectively challenge and overcome the communication processes that have worked so well in transmitting market values around the world.

9.2   THE QUESTION OF OWNERSHIP:

Closely related to the democratization of the information process is the question of ownership--private, public (state), or mixed.   It is a mark of the influence of the capitalist western, private ownership societies to have succeeded in associating objectivity and freedom of information with the private ownership of information facilities.   It is important, therefore, to understand the extremely limited extent to which this idea is valid.

The competitive nature of private media enterprise, derived from its profit seeking basis, has in the past permitted a limited range of access to material not always flattering to the system overall.   This occurs not because of an abstract respect for critical commentary by private media owners, though they are not reluctant to make this claim.   Actually, it arises out of the inherent connection between sales, upon which profits depend, and audiences.   Without audiences, sales fall off and profits disappear.   Much of the openness that has existed in the western mass media comes from the necessity of attracting readers, listeners, and viewers.   The extent of this pressure cannot be disregarded; neither should it be exaggerated.

Yet with the growth of monopolies in information and cultural enterprises, even this factor has been weakened. Profitability remains the goal of business in a monopolistic market economy, but the ability to control the audience/market is now considerable. Under present circumstances then, the issue of state versus private ("free" as the monopolists prefer to term it) ownership of information and communication facilities has to be re-assessed in Sub-Sahara West Africa. In some of the advanced industrial market societies, major political formations of the left are succeeding in winning significant parliamentary representation. Efforts now to exclude informational channels from public management frustrate the clearly expressed preferences of electorates for social reconstruction.

In many countries, especially those of the Third World, the issue of media ownership is still to be settled. Yet the widespread apprehension of state control, deliberately created by the capitalist and monopolistic multinations and their informational apparatus, must be overcome. State control of information, the historical record abundantly reveals, has been and may be tyrannical. But it is not an inevitability or a corollary. The character of state, the degree of its responsiveness to the people, the class structure of the society, and the national level of development are variables that can produce different situations. For example, in Nigeria one research study finds that the state media in no way can be regarded as less critical, restricted, or dominated than the

media in the private sector. If anything, the public media appear to be more flexible and open.

National Cultural Sovereignty as a Protection Against Western
One-Way Information Flows:

The political-economic conditions of early nineteenth century capitalism that promoted a wider public sphere of freedom for information have long since disappeared in advanced capitalist states. For developing countries, the international constellation of power precludes the reappearance of those conditions. To offer the early industrial capitalist experience in western Europe and North America as a model of informational freedom waiting for its introduction in the rest of the world is either naive or deceitful. In either case, it reveals a failure to grasp the reality of contemporary international relationships. The space, time, and resources necessary for a nation to develop autonomously under a liberal regime are simply not attainable in the modern world capitalist system. This is an era of multinational corporations, international financial transfers, communication satellites, and the global deployment of power that reinforces the worldwide structure of capital.

All the same, for a good part of the twentieth century, beginning well before the Second World War, the ideological thrust of American imperialism has been to tie private ownership to capital in information facilities to political freedom. State ownership of media, from this perspective, necessarily has been associated with the absence of freedom. In this self-serving definition, arrangements that suggest any social obli-

gation on capital invested in the informational sector have been rejected as intrusions against freedom. Whenever the monopoly media have been challenged inside the United States, their invariable defense has been to claim the right of individual freedom. Since the Second World War, the media conglomerates have labored quite successfully to extend this perspective internationally.

The doctrine of western informational freedom remained pre-eminent until the emergence of the technical possibility of direct broadcasting from communication satellites brought the question of national sovereignty in cultural matters to international attention. Though not immediately a prospect, the potential for direct broadcasting capability began to excite anxiety in the early 1970's. In October 1972 UNESCO (the original international source and support for the free flow in information principle) adopted a declaration of "Guiding Principles on the Use of Satellite Broadcasting for the Free Flow of Information". Article IX of the draft read "...it is necessary that States, taking into account the principle of freedom of information, reach or promote prior agreements concerning direct satellite broadcasting to the population of countries other than the country of origin of the transmission."[6]

The formulation of "prior consent" insisted on national agreement before direct broadcast signals from satellites could be admitted as legal transmissions. The implication of this declaration for other forms of international communication is

easy to recognize. So much so that when the United Nations General Assembly passed a similar resolution in November 1972, the United States cast the single dissenting vote.

And so, the preservation of national cultural sovereignty has become a major international concern. The prevailing global flow of information began to be perceived differently by the international community. For example, the Eighteenth General Conference of UNESCO, in the fall of 1974, approved a Medium Term Plan for 1977-1982, suggesting that the traditional concept of free flow of information "needs to be complimented by that of a more balanced and objective flow, both between countries and within and between regions" (UNESCO, 1974).

Another instance of the new climate with regard to national cultural matters was the final document approved at the European Security and Co-operation Conference in Helsinki in August 1975. The agreement, widely referred to in the United States as re-affirming "freer and wider dissemination of information of all kinds", at the same time enunciated the (not-so-widely pub-licized in the United States) right of a State "freely to choose and develop its political, social, economic, and cultural system as well as its right to determine its laws and regula-tions".[7] Otherwise put, this is the right of each nation to preserve its cultural sovereignty.

Further indicative of the new state of affairs was the background paper prepared by UNESCO for the Intergovernmental Conference on Communication Policies in Latin America and the Caribbean held in San Jose in July 1976. This document affirmed

that a national communication policy should "strengthen national-
al sovereignty in all its respects, particularly with regard
to culture". It observed further that "the economic imbalance
between highly industrialized countries and developing coun-
tries is reproduced in the cultural sector, establishing an
invisible but more deeply-rooted dependence which operates
basically through control of the information media and the
communication system..."[8]

In sum, since the late 1960's more and more nations,
developed as well as undeveloped, have been seeking ways to
assure their sovereignty in cultural as well as in economic and
political affairs. This has culminated most recently an ad-
vocacy of a new international information order. This could
place much of the world on a collusion course with American
informational and cultural monopolies and the governmental
policy which supports them--unless, and this seems increasingly
likely, some flexibility develops in U.S. official policy. The
agreement at the UNESCO general conference in Nairobi, Kenya
in November 1976 indicates the possible beginning of such a
shift. For the first time, the U.S. delegation supported the
proposal for assisting the creation of Third World news agencies.
Though still too early to make a final appraisal, this con-
cession suggests that U.S. policy makers and media monopolists
are prepared to work with and through national agencies which
may be competitive but which may also be directed to western
modes of organization and work.

9.3 PROSPECTS FOR A NEW WORLD INFORMATION ORDER:

Though the style seems to be changing toward one of accomodation and co-operation, the underlying objective of U.S. international communications policy remains unaltered. The effort to maintain global cultural hegemony, of necessity has to take into account the demands and aspirations for informational and economic independence (as being demanded by Sub-Sahara West Africa) of almost a hundred developing nations. But in doing so, distinctions now are being made by U.S. policy-makers on the class relations prevailing in each individual nation. Recognition, co-operation, and assistance of a sort may be accorded to those countries whose leaderships accept and whose social structures embody the essential characteristics of a market-determined international and domestic system.

Thus, the executive director of Freedom House, a non-governmental organization closely connected to high-level decision making, recommends to U.S. media owners and the government that aid and collaboration, rather than belligerence and opposition, be extended to the non-socialist members of the Third World community. "Western news organizations and governments have the opportunity to assist the information development of the Third World. In doing so, they will want to distinguish those Third World countries that recognize the exploitative nature of Marxist-Leninist ideology masquerading as information journalism [but] the pleas of these non-"socializing" developing nations, who clamor for informational assistance should be earnestly examined."[9]

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More diplomatically couched, but with much the same message, President Carter stated: "We will co-operate closely with the newly influential countries in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. We need their friendship and co-operation in a common effort as the balance of world power changes."[10]

In short, class relations within and between nations and the entire world system of dependency must be confronted if a new world order, economic or informational , is to be realized. While this confrontation will occur according to a tempo determined by each nation's specific historical conditions, it is important to remember that the informational conflict continues. And thus, an appropriate conclusion to this thesis would be the admonitory words (with respect to the slogans of the cultural dominators) of Antonio Pasquali:

> Regional research on the effects of
> local broadcasting leaves no room for
> intermediate or moderate stances.
> All the "freedom of information" is
> concentrated on the oligarchic elites
> of information, contrasting with the
> social right to be informed; there is
> "free flow" only in the non-reversible
> sector, going from the informer to the
> receptor; democracy as the free inter-
> play of public opinion authoritatively
> manipulated with the help of imported
> engineering.11

It is to give genuine substance to what is now the myth of the free flow of information that the world-wide movement toward a new international order for information develops. Its goal is not restriction but liberation of information. And in concluding it is worth noting that the decolonization of information that much of the world now seeks can only have

a salutary effect on the centre of the system of domination itself. If, in fact, the forces of change in the periphery do represent liberation from exploitation and class domination and not merely a shift in the ownership from international to local, they are bound to have a regenerative impact on the centre. Then, and then only, the new international information order may be expected to illuminate the global human condition without discrimination or distortion.

FOOTNOTES

1. Cabral, in an address at Lincoln University, Pennsylvania
   on October 15, 1972.

2. Schiller; Communications and Cultural Domination.

3. I.L.E.T. 1976:2.

4. Rogers; Ibid.

5. I.L.E.T.: Ibid.

6. UNESCO Reports, 1972.

7. Nordenstreng and Schiller; "Helsinki: The New Equation"
   in Journal of Communication XXVI (winter) pp. 130-134.

8. UNESCO Reports 1976, p.7, 18.

9. L. Sussman; "The March Through the World's Mass Media"
   in Orbis XX (winter) 1977, pp. 857-879.

10. New York Times; May 23, 1977, p.12.

11. Antonio Pasquali; "On Instrumental Use of Mass Media
    In America for Purposes of Dependence", p.20.

CHAPTER X

X. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Throughout this essay, I have attempted to analyse, both historically and argumentatively, the role of the western news agencies in the cultural domination and national development problems of Sub-Sahara West Africa. For the purpose of identification and clarity, I used Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, and Ivory Coast as case studies. In my analysis I discussed the administrative developmental theories of Hagen, Pye, Lerner, Schramm, Rogers, Sussman, Deutsch, Frey, Pool, and many more. I also examined critical theorists such as Schiller, Marcuse, Nordenstreng, Dinh, and UNESCO. The third group examined was the endogeneous theorists, who were African: Nkrumah, Cabral, and Fanon.

While the adminstrative theorists argued that a change was needed in the political, economic, and communications development, they still believed that such changes could be accomplished by following the western capitalist examples with slight modifications. I find such lines of reasoning and theoretical approaches preposterous and unacceptable to those who want an economic, political, and communications development free of foreign (western) control or domination.

After all, the present underdevelopment came about as a result of five centuries of a one-sided and unequal association with these same western institutions and governments. The critical theorists, however, presented a different thesis for the development of the underdeveloped areas of the world, but

their approach deals with two-thirds of the world, which is very diverse. The problems of India or Latin America may be similar to those of West Africa, but still there remain serious social, cultural, historical and traditional differences.

The third or the endogenous theorists, however, apart from being Africans, also lived and worked in Africa. Their theories therefore are not only very applicable but also relevant to the continent. In fact, Nkrumah and Cabral's theoretical writings were based on their actual experiences in Sub-Sahara West Africa, whereas Frantz Fanon's was based on his experiences in Algeria as a freedom fighter and administrator; and in Ghana as an ambassador of the FLN. There are other critical theories that are also relevant to this exercise, but were not fully examined for the reasons given above. They include Innis[1], Andre Gunder Frank[2], James Petras[3], and Dallas Smythe[4].

By discussing the contrasting views of the administrative and the endogenous theorists, the background was provided for the analysis of news flow during the colonial period, the capitalist news agencies in Sub-Sahara West Africa and how all of the above affected or influenced the development of national news agencies in general and national development in particular.

The kind of political structure envisaged is one that will enable the mass of people to participate effectively, not only in political deliberations, but also in the political and communication process itself. In this the leaders are expected to play the role of guiding the people in their decisions. They must not on any account impose their own

decisions on the people. After decisions have been reached,
they are to articulate and express the will of the people.

If the new completely independent West African society
were to emerge, art and culture will not be for entertainment
only. The concept of art for art's sake will have no place.
Art will be didactic and it will aim at promoting the ends of
society. This should also be the role of other branches of
learning like history, literature, painting, and so on.

In my opinion, the role of the news agencies (foreign
and local) and the press, too, is to be subordinated to the
goals of the society. The news agencies and the press are not
free to provide just any kind of information, but only that
which helps the people to arrive at the goals they have set
for themselves. Thus in Sub-Sahara West Africa, it is more
useful to know of Cuba's efforts to increase sugar production
or of Tanzania's efforts to combat starvation and poverty
through Ujamaa than to know of the scandals of the British
aristocracy. The questions that are always asked with regard
to such a line of reasoning by the capitalist west are these:
Who is to decide what precise information helps the people
arrive at the goals they have set for themselves? Is it
possible that there could be a conflict of opinion as to what
constitutes the "right" information?

However, it has to be noted that if a society is fashioned
on these lines, with such depth and pervasiveness of ideological
consensus and such close identification of the individual with
the nation, and such radical decentralization and meaningful

participation in decision making as my vision conjures, such problems would not assume the significance as to deserve much attention and are not likely to cause conflict. Of course, whether it would be possible to achieve this complete fusion of the individual with the nation is another matter. However, I do consider such a society realistic.[5]

It is my firm belief that analysis is useful only as a prelude to action. Just as Nkrumah, Fanon and Cabral argue that it is foolish for the bourgeoisie of the underdeveloped West African countries to apply mechanically what they have learned in European and North American universities to their countries, in the same way it would be foolish of me to try to apply Nkrumah's, Fanon's, and Cabral's ideas without any modification. After all, I belong to a new generation of Africans, and "the times they're changing!"

Finally I would like to propose two sets of policy measures to set the West African media and culture on an independent course free of foreign domination:

(A) The complete overhaul of West African educational system and curriculum from kindergarten to post-graduate level, so that graduates would know more about African history and literature (e.g. Kwame Nkrumah, Frantz Fanon, and Wole Soyinka) rather than European history and Shakespeare. Also this will prevent education from being presented in such a way that black children identify with the explorer, the missionary, "the bringer of civilization, the white colonialist who carries truth to the savage--an all white truth".[6]

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(B) Measures that would assure the eventual emergence of endogenous and developmental journalism, rather than profitability of African news and events in the international markets of the capitalist west.

These two measures would assure that future elites or bureaucrats of Sub-Sahara West Africa would not have distorted images of Africa and things African. Also, it will eliminate the argument of the western news agencies that African news is not desirable or profitable in the market place, if Africans themselves eliminate the profit factor and make African news a contributory and essential factor to the world community.

Finally, there is a lot that Africans and non-Africans alike can learn from Fanon, Nkrumah, and Cabral, but only if we make use of their ideas imaginatively and flexibly, making necessary modifications here and there to suit particular situations, in the same way that Mao made use of Marx and Lenin. It is only in this way that we shall derive much benefit from their work, and not by assigning to it the status of infallible scripture to be applied mechanically to all situations.

FOOTNOTES

1. William Melody, Liora Salter, and Paul Heyer; Communication and Dependency: The Tradition of H.A.Innis.

2. Andre Gunder Frank; Dependence and Underdevelopment: Latin America's Economy.

3. James Petras; Latin America: From Dependence to Revolution.

4. Dallas Smythe; Communications: Blind Spot of Western Marxism in A.W.Singham (ed) The Non-Aligned Movement in World Politics.

5. See Nkrumah; Africa Must Unite and Neo-Colonialism pp. 255-259, and
Cheikh Anta Diop; Black Africa: The Economic and Cultural Basis for a Federated State, pp.23-28.

6. Fanon; Black Skin, White Masks, p.147.

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