

BROADCASTING IN NIGERIA: A SURVEY OF  
RADIO, TV AND FILM INDUSTRY

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## PREFACE

This study traces the history of the Nigerian broadcasting industry from the pre-colonial period to the present condition. The author's primary objective is to provide a description and appraisal of the Nigerian broadcasting for readers in both Nigeria and the United States. The study describes various aspects of the industry's operation, organizational structure, and the roles it plays in furthering the educational, political, economic and social interests of the Nigerian Society. Much of the information is based on the author's personal seven years' experience as a radio journalist with the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation from 1968 to 1975 and from other sources such as newspaper articles, texts, lectures and seminars.

The conviction that such research should be done was increased when American friends, as well as Nigerians, pointed out that systematic and critical description of broadcasting in Nigeria would be interesting to them.

The author expresses sincere thanks to his major adviser, Dr. Rey Barnes for his guidance throughout the study. My gratitude also is expressed to Dr. William R. Steng and Dr. Walter J. Ward, committee members, for their suggestions on preparing the final manuscript.

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*Predecessor*

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Predecessor of Radio Nigeria: BBC London

Broadcasting started in Nigeria in 1932 when the British Colonial administration introduced a system of relaying the BBC Empire Service. This brought to a halt the monopoly and unrivaled dominance of newspapers.

The emergence of the "magic" box provided news from all over the world and offered education and entertainment. Radio suddenly became the main source of speedy and immediate information about what was going on in the world.

The significance of the Lagos Relay Station was that it brought the largest state in the African Continent into the world of modern mass communication, thereby providing additional enlightenment about problems associated with tropical broadcasting.

The British Broadcasting Company, chartered in 1923 as the sole authority to broadcast in the United Kingdom, was a private company. It was owned by radio manufacturers. The British Broadcasting Corporation was later established in 1927.

The BBC operates three domestic radio networks and one television network, in addition to being responsible for all British international broadcasting.

Service for the overseas audience, which Nigeria started to relay at that time, was named the Empire Service. In 1938 it was expanded to include broadcasting in languages other than English. London became a world center for international broadcasting when World War II broke out. It became a natural point of origin and relay for programs directed at Europe and other parts of the world under the auspices of External Broadcasting.

It presented 80 hours a day of programs in more than 40 languages. A transcription service was responsible for distributing recordings and scripts to stations in many countries. Important foreign broadcasts were also monitored. It provided liaison in the United Kingdom between the corporation and foreign broadcasting organizations, and maintained offices abroad for the same purpose. Foreign stations and networks originating programs in the United Kingdom could use the BBC studios and other facilities. The corporation was also responsible for the training and exchange of personnel with other broadcasting organizations, most especially those in the Commonwealth and British Colonies.

The BBC enjoyed a high reputation because of its honesty and the truthfulness of its broadcasts designed for listeners outside the British Isles. Despite the fact that the programs were for "propaganda" purposes, overseas listeners believed whatever came out of BBC saying, "It's true because the BBC says so."

The world events in 1938 and 1939 forced the External broadcasting to become a political instrument. Overseas listeners were soon categorized into three groups. The first group was in isolated areas who tuned directly to the big short-wave transmitters at Daventry.



The second group comprised local stations who re-broadcast the Empire Service Programs. Among these countries were Ceylon, Australia, New Zealand, India, Kenya, Southern Rhodesia and Canada.

The third group comprised listeners in small centers who received the programs by direct wire from a local wireless exchange. Relay stations were in Gold Coast and Nigeria in West Africa, and private enterprises in Gibraltar, Barbados, Trinidad, Malta and Jamaica.

The "projection of Britain" was always a function of External Services. The Corporation told the Beveridge Committee that its aim was

. . . to demonstrate that Britain is not only a country which stands for certain things in world politics, but is also a country worth living in, whose people are active and enterprising and know how to make British democracy in a living force.<sup>1</sup>

The unique cooperation that existed between BBC and the British government in respect to control of External Services was a typical example of how the British people could compromise.

A British government white paper on broadcasting in 1946 stated that

The government intends that the corporation should remain independent in the preparation of programmes for overseas audiences concerned with such information about the conditions in those countries and the policies of His Majesty's Government towards them as will permit it to plan its programs in the national interest.<sup>2</sup>

What actually happened was that the programs of External Services catered to the British citizen's interest and not to the interests of the colonies.

FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Paula Burton, British Broadcasting (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956), p. 398.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 400.

## CHAPTER II

### FORTY-SEVEN YEARS OF GROWTH OF THE NIGERIAN BROADCASTING SERVICE

The Lagos Relay Station of 1932 served as a useful start, but the Nigerian policy makers soon discovered the country needed a broadcasting service that would reflect the social, political, educational and economic trends in the country. Encourage the mixing of 20th Century ideas with age-old traditions and evolve a new generation of Nigerians capable of coping with the intelligent management of the various natural resources in the country.

A plan for the erection of a small station in Lagos, and for gradual expansion of broadcasting services into the provinces, was proposed but economic and social problems in the period 1936-46 forced the plan to be abandoned. Instead, a policy of simultaneous development in Lagos and several other urban centers was adopted to meet the needs of the country. The result was establishment of the Radio Distribution Service (RDS). Lagos was the site of the first RDS using the old Glover Memorial Hall and Ikoyi as studios. Many years later, new stations were constructed at Enugu, Port Harcourt, Ibadan, Calabar, Ijebu-Ode, Warri, Kaduna, Zaria, Kano, Jos, Maiduguri and Katsina.

The RDS was a one-way telephone extension service, distributing programs, rather than originating them. Programs from the BBC in London

were piped by landline from the posts and telegraph installations to loudspeakers paid for by the consumers.

In 1939, the first locally-originated programs were broadcast by the old Public Relations Office. Radio broadcasting in the sense of transmissions intended for general reception came in 1951 with the birth of the Nigerian Broadcasting Service. The NBS took control of all RDS stations and embarked upon modernization of both the equipment and program output.

It was against the climate of political regionalization, with its attendant projection of localized economic, educational and other interests, that the Nigerian Broadcasting Service became incorporated in 1957 by a law passed by the then Nigerian Parliamentary Act No. 39.<sup>1</sup>

The law made provision for independent and impartial radio and television broadcasting services for general reception throughout the Federation of Nigeria and overseas.

The Corporation's Home Service originated with the lone relay station of 1932. "Today it is perhaps the largest radio network on the continent of Africa."<sup>2</sup>

The Nigerian people soon realized and appreciated that, although both newspapers and radio performed the same functions of reaching the consumers, the character of each medium determined the nature and scope of its performance. Each organ has its own characteristics. There are certain things which newspapers can do better than radio. Similarly, radio's mobility, enhanced by the cheap transistor set and its absolute reliance on the spoken word, makes it more effective in Nigeria, a country of oral tradition.

Undeniably, radio, TV and newspapers in Nigeria are doing excellent jobs in fulfilling their obligation to mobilize massive support for

national development measures and programs, but the major problem is that of illiteracy. Only about 25 percent of the Nigerian population of eighty-million people can read and write. The vast majority of the people gather their news from broadcasting, not from the pages of newspapers and magazines.

Because of its colonial background, the Nigerian Broadcasting Service follows the example of BBC and never expresses an editorial opinion. Radio stations do review opinions expressed in newspaper editorials. "Editorial reviews should be considered by the radio as a national duty and not as a favor to their listeners especially at this stage of our national development."<sup>3</sup>

In order to correct these anomalies of disseminating the appropriate information on the sacrifices as well as the benefits which economic and social development of Nigeria promises, the federal government owned Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation was set up to serve as a platform for government to communicate with the people.

By contributing substantially to the amount and kind of information available to the people, and by focusing attention on problems and goals of development, the media will create an 'informational climate' which will stimulate development.<sup>4</sup>

#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Kunle Salu, 38 Years of Broadcasting in Nigeria (Lagos: Daily Times, January 9, 1970), p. 11.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>3</sup>Labanji Bolaji, General Manager of the Sketch Publishing Company, quoted in a radio program script, "Presenting the Western State," produced by Dokun Famubode (Ibadan: NBC, 1975).

<sup>4</sup>Andrew Mormeka, Getting Information to the People (Lagos: Daily Times, 1974), p. 7.

## CHAPTER III

### STRUCTURE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE NIGERIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Nigeria's large population is extremely diverse. There are more than 250 ethnic groups with hundreds of indigenous languages. English is the lingua Franca understood nationally and is used for broadcasting purposes. The ethnic diversity of Nigeria is actually reflected in its political organization with a federation of 19 states. Thus, both the federal and state governments have given broadcasting a major role in the task of national development (see Appendix A, Figure 4).

According to Christopher Kolade, the former Director-General of the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation, the broadcasting system of the country faces two major challenges: "How to reach the whole land area with an acceptable broadcast signal, and how to satisfy the program needs and desires of a very wide variety of sub-audiences."<sup>1</sup>

Functioning under the generic name of Radio Nigeria (adopted in 1960) the Home Service provides a three-tier system of broadcasting. The National Service in Lagos is at the top of this system. It is also the nerve center of the entire system that blankets the 373,000 square miles of the federation and the eighty million people who live within it (see Table I).

The base of the system consists of the 13 stations which formed the backbone of the old RDS located at Abeokuta, Ijebu-Ode, Ilorin, Sokoto,

Katsina, Zaria, Kano, Maiduguri, Jos, Calabar, Port Harcourt, Onitsha and Warri.

Each of these stations has the potential to serve two million people. But the transmitters are not that strong.

Between the apex and the base of the three-tier system of Radio Nigeria are the four area services centered on the old regional capitals of Ibadan, Kaduna, Enugu and Benin (see Figure 1). The stations source of existence is the NBC Act of Incorporation which enjoins the corporation to run services that give adequate expression to the characteristics, affairs and opinions of all the component parts of the Federation of Nigeria.

The largest area broadcasting service covers Kwara, North Western, North Central, Kano, North Eastern and Benue Plateau States.

Each of the four area services originates its own programs which are relayed by the local stations allied to it. In addition, certain national programs, designed to further underscore the common nationality of the various ethnic groups that inhabit the federation, are relayed from the national headquarters in Lagos or from the centers of the area services.

Broadcasting in Nigeria is a system of multiple stations, multiple owners and multiple services. The majority of domestic stations belong to the federal government.

The Western Nigeria Government Broadcasting Corporation has both radio and television stations based in Ibadan. Its call signs are WNBS and WNTV. Radio-Television Kaduna (RKTU), owned by the former six northern states, covers the northern part of the country.

Enugu in the East Central State of the country is the site of ECBS,



one of the state-owned stations. In 1972 the Midwest State government also set up a television station in Benin, and the Rivers State has also started a radio station in its capital in Port Harcourt (see Figure 3).

### Finance

Any Nigerian who owns a radio receiver is expected to pay an annual license fee of \$1.50. For a television set it is about \$7.50. About \$5 million is received annually from licenses fees. Total annual budget of all the broadcasting stations is about \$12 million. But revenues from broadcast licenses is about \$2 million, therefore, the government is the major financer of broadcasting operations in the country.

The broadcasting corporations are allowed to keep their commercial earnings and depend mainly on annual subsidies from government. Each government has taken this responsibility in establishing its broadcasting service.

"The first radio advertisements broadcast on any station in the NBC network were from Lagos on October 31, 1960."<sup>2</sup> In addition to broadcasts on the National network, the Commercial Service has services in each of the federation's 19 states. English, Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba are the languages broadcast most but others are used. Examples are Fulani, Kanuri, Edo, Ijaw, Itsekiri, Nupe, Tiv, Urhobo and Efik.

### Broadcasting Equipment

#### Studio

Microphones (Reslo; Apple and Biscuit) Moving Coil Types with 90<sup>0</sup>; 180<sup>0</sup> and 360<sup>0</sup> Live Side.

console and its cubicles

Receivers

Transmitters and aeriaks

Loudspeakers or radio receivers at home

From the National Network in Lagos, the NBC broadcasts programs designed for the entire country. There are also powerful transmitters at the state studios in Kaduna, Ibadan, Sokoto, Kano, Maidugun, Jos, Enugu, Port Harcourt, Calabar, Benin, and Abeokuta. The NBC also has provincial stations at Zaria, Katsina, Warri, Zapele, Onitsha, Abeokuta and Ijebu. These stations broadcast local programs to project the culture and traditions of their areas and also carry national programs believed to be of interest. Power of the transmitters in Lagos and state capitals range from 250 w. to 100 kw. This transmitting equipment enables audiences in any part of the Federation to receive the National Programs, particularly the news bulletin in full or news summary broadcasts every hour.

Past experiences have shown that radio reception often is poor and intolerable due to many geographical obstacles. This lowers quality of programs from Lagos. This problem often is blamed on faulty planning of the original transmitter network layout.

According to Christopher Kolade:

A survey conducted in 1969 found that the domestic medium wave transmitting facilities were installed with limited funds located on poor ground . . . (and) operated at low efficiency . . . Nearly all the transmitters are using the upper medium wave frequencies. This combined with low ground conductivity, characteristic of Nigeria, results in a further reduction of radio service.<sup>3</sup>

By the end of 1975, most equipment was replaced. At present there is 50 kw. medium-wave transmitter in each of the 19 states of the

Federation. These transmitters also have transmitter back-ups varying in power from 10 kw. to 20 kw.

Under the Federal Military government rule, development of radio and television facilities received a tremendous boost. In addition to powerful transmitters installed in the state capitals, acoustically sound-proof studios also have been built. Existing studios in each state have been re-equipped and enlarged. Most emphasis is being placed on local programming to cater to community convenience and need.

Currently in Nigeria, there are about 5 million radio receivers and about 1.5 million TV sets. Television receivers still are regarded as status symbols, and only the privileged rich can afford them. Wire services exist in all the 19 states of the Federation. These are designed for single-channel reception and fed only with programs originated by the NBC.

It has been estimated, that roughly 60 percent of the radio receivers in the country are concentrated in urban centers of high-density population.<sup>3</sup>

This indicates that cities like Ibadan, Lagos, Kano, Enugu and Benin have become targets for audience surveys for future development of radio. The story is the same for television. Nearly all receivers are concentrated in Lagos, Ibadan, Kano, Benin, Port Harcourt and Enugu.

In the past there was a popular idea of community listening in the country, particularly in the rural areas. Local authorities built special areas where people may listen to radio. Some areas in Sokoto Province were reported to have been "installing community listening Kiosks with dry battery receivers" in the mid-1950s, and the Nigerian Broadcasting Service at that time proceeded "cautiously with experiments

in community listening."<sup>4</sup> Much significant progress has been made since then. The emergence of cheap transistor radios in the country in the 1960s has wiped most listening Kiosks. Now only few are left in some scattered areas of the country. They are mostly for experimental community listening purposes.

#### Departments in Broadcasting (Divisions)

1. Programs Division
2. Engineering Division
3. News Division
4. Administrative Division
5. Accounts Division

Program officers include:

1. Studio Managers
2. Assistant Producers
3. Announcers (or Presentation Assistant)
4. Program Assistant in Charge of PBH
5. Producers

#### A. Head of Sections

- a. SSM
- b. SPA Presentation
- c. SPA Features
- d. SPA Talks
- e. SPA (Women and Children's Programs)
- f. SPA Nigerian Languages) - Nine Languages
- g. SPA (Variety and Light Entertainment)
- h. SPA Music and Music Research

- i. SPA Christian Religious Broadcasts
  - j. SPA Muslim Religious Broadcasts
  - k. SPA (outside broadcasts)
- B. Head of State Programs Division
- a. Head of Programs
  - b. Controller (e.g. OYO or Ogun State)
  - c. Controller (schools unit)
- C. 5 Directors In-Charge of Each Division
- a. Program Division
  - b. Engineering Division
  - c. News Division
  - d. Administrative Division
  - e. Accounts Division
- D. Secretary to the Corporation
- E. Director - General
- F. Chairman to the Corporation

#### Objectives of Radio Nigeria

Speaking at a management seminar early in February 1973, the then Director of News and Current Affairs, Mr. Horatio Agedah, emphasized the role of the NBC in the nation: "The role of any broadcasting organization is generally determined by the manner of its creation and the mode of its existence."<sup>5</sup> The Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation, Mr. Agedah went on, is a creation of statute. The aim of the policy was to remove broadcasting from the stature of a government department. A motion was passed by the Federal Parliament that government should

consider setting up a separate corporation to run the activities of the Nigerian Broadcasting Service to reduce the recurrent criticism by the Nigerian Press that the NBC is an organ of the Nigerian Government.

The government made provision for funding for the corporation and safeguards that the money would be properly spent without any government interference with the freedom of the corporation to play an impartial role in its activities.

The NBC is a creation of a statutory body. Its powers and duties are set out in the law creating the corporation as outlined in the statement of objectives:

1. To provide efficient broadcasting services to the whole Federation of Nigeria, based on national objectives and aspirations; and external audiences in accordance with Nigeria's foreign policy.
2. To provide a professional and comprehensive coverage of Nigerian culture through broadcasting; to promote cultural growth through research into indigenous culture, and to disseminate the results of such research.
3. To contribute to the development of Nigerian Society, and to promote national unity by ensuring a balanced presentation of views from all parts of Nigeria.
4. To ensure the prompt delivery of accurate information to the people.
5. To provide opportunities for the free discussion of important issues, and to provide a two-way contact between the public and those in authority.
6. To provide special broadcasting services in the field of education, and all other areas where national policy calls for

special action.

7. To promote orderly and meaningful development of broadcasting in Nigeria through:

- technical improvements
- the training of appropriate professional staff
- program and other exchanges with other broadcasting organizations in the country.

8. To promote research into various aspects of the communication media and their effects on the Nigerian Society. (This will include audience research, the investigation of fresh methods of production and the control indensation of the broadcasting media by Nigerians.)

These objectives show the nature and scope of the duties imposed on the NBC, and are carefully set out in the Ordinance of Incorporation - CAP 133, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 1558, Volume V.<sup>6</sup>

On the subject of interpretation Horatio Agedah concluded that the role may vary according to whether it is being volunteered by a government official or by a professional broadcaster. At the same time, the man on the street has opposite views:

Indeed the ordinary man in the street may have views about what NBC ought to do which are quite different from either the expectation of the government or the beliefs of professional broadcasters.<sup>7</sup>

The ordinary man on the street has his radio receiver. The government set out its objectives for the industry, and the professional broadcasters do their best, but the problem of poor reception still remains.

In the light of those experiences, both the NBC, in its plan, and Mr. John Marshall, the Canadian expert whose report "Technical Improvements To Radio Broadcasting: Nigeria," was published October 23,

1969, (have urged a complete switch-over to the medium-wave transmitters for the bulk of domestic broadcasts).<sup>8</sup> It is clear that medium-wave transmitters operate better than others in the hot climatic conditions of Nigeria. Kunle Salu, writing in 1970, perceived the problem:

"When that switch-over becomes a reality, most of the complaints about reception would cease to bother the broadcasting authorities."<sup>9</sup>



#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Sydney Head, *Broadcasting in Africa* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1974), p. 79.

<sup>2</sup>Ojewole Erinle, *Broadcasting in Nigeria* (Abeokuta: NBC, 1974), p. 4.

<sup>3</sup>Head, p. 81.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 82.

<sup>5</sup>Horatio Agedah, *The Role of the NBC in the Nation, NBC News* (Lagos: Design Production Nig. Ltd, January/March, 1973), p. 19.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>8</sup>Kunle Salu, *NBC 3-Tier System* (Lagos: Daily Times, January 9, 1970), p. 15.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*

## CHAPTER IV

### RADIO PROGRAMS

Radio Nigeria is a network with a National program broadcast from Lagos. Each station begins its broadcast at 5:30 a.m. Nigerian time and closes at midnight. Total daily broadcast time is 8 1/2 hours. The breakdown of content is as follows. Music and Entertainment - 43 percent; Education - 13 percent; Indigenous magazine programs - 11 percent; Religion - 8 percent; Current Affairs - 8 percent; Women and Children Programs - 4 percent; Sports - 3 percent; and miscellaneous - 7 percent. Most National programs originating from Lagos are broadcast in the English language. In addition to English, nine other Nigerian indigenous languages are used. The indigenous languages are Hausa, Ibo, Yoruba, Fulani, Kanuri, Edo, Tiv, Ijaw and Efik. The local stations utilize more than 27 other languages in their daily news (see Appendixes A and B).

According to Christopher Kolade,

NBC no longer rebroadcasts foreign programs directly, but the corporation has program-exchange arrangements with many stations and organizations in Africa and Europe, as a result of which special programs, such as 'Music of Other Lands,' are devised to carry material produced by foreign countries.<sup>1</sup>

Most NBC program exchange agreements are concluded with organizations such as Union of African Radio and Television and the Commonwealth Broadcasting Conference of which it is a member. Others are Asian Broadcasting Union and the European Broadcasting Union.

The Director General of the NBC is also an active member of the International Broadcasting Institute. Mr. Christopher Kolade was elected as the acting Chairman of the Institute to succeed Mr. Lester Pearson who was the chairman until his death in 1972.

Twice a year the program executives of the corporation meet to plan program schedules and reach mutual agreements. The National Planning Conference specifically was set up for this purpose. Programs broadcast by the National network and its state affiliates cover other areas such as education, current affairs, culture, and editorial opinions offered in the Nigerian newspapers.

As part of the cultural crusade by the NBC, the then East Central State Service of the corporation staged the first Cultural Night at the Enugu Civic Hall on Saturday the 25th of November, 1972.

Prime aim of the crusade was to revive the past, preserve and perfect the present, while at the same time attempting to design the future.

The Cultural Night was ample evidence of the remark by Chief Charles Abangwu, the former state commissioner for information who was the guest of honor.

What is required now he said "is the enthronement of the true African traditional arts and culture and the revival of the folklore and songs of our people."<sup>2</sup>

Earlier, when he opened the show, the acting director-general of the corporation, Mr. Horatio Agedah, told the audience that Radio Nigeria wishes to be acknowledged as the patron of the arts in the country. Because of this the corporation is offering opportunities

for development of artistic talents, as well as providing a forum for display of acquired skills.

Mr. Agedah, in calling for the cooperation of all citizens in the cultural crusade of the corporation, added that the NBC constantly is sponsoring creative individuals and performing groups to show examples of their works and to create standards for others.<sup>3</sup>

The second NBC cultural show in the Western State was at Obisesan Hall in June 1974. The first one occurred in May, 1973. Mr. Ishola Folorunsho, controller of the NBC West, explained that the corporation, since its inception, struggled to achieve the objectives promulgated by the management of the corporation by providing professional and comprehensive coverage of Nigerian culture through broadcasting.

In the Western State, he said, programs such as ITO IBILE, Yoruba Music and Custom and Cultural Heritage are a few of the specially designed radio programs presented in fulfillment of these objectives. Folorunsho added that:

One totally accepted vehicle of expression of a peoples' cultural heritage is through their dances, dresses and food. The advent of foreign culture has done its utmost to erode this vital aspect of the heritage of our people.<sup>4</sup>

It is against this powerful force, and to the external credit of the traditionalists in Nigeria, that the country has waged a war of survival against the incursion, Folorunsho concluded.<sup>5</sup>

#### Who Are the Listeners? - Program

#### Trends in the '70s

It is customary at every corporation Program Planning Conference to look for new directions and new programming efforts.

The year 1970 therefore was a take-off point for grand plans and grandiose statements by program executives of the corporation about what broadcasting must achieve in Nigeria.

On this issue, Kolade, the director of programs at that time, commented:

The major new development in the 'Seventies' is that we shall question ourselves more searchingly than before on many of our own activities . . . to identify those areas in which we are being usefully active, as well as those in which we are merely wasting our time.<sup>6</sup>

Who is listening? This is probably one of the most important questions with which all broadcasters are concerned. In order to answer this question, broadcasting organizations set-up audience research projects costing large sums of money and taking much time to complete. The most pressing problems of these research projects are lack of adequate experienced manpower in mass communication research, inadequate funds and insufficient data with which to work.

However, it is gratifying to know that the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation is moving forward in this aspect. It is of paramount importance to the broadcaster to have the listener listen more often and to have the listener establish a personal identification with the station.

### Sports

The NBC, as a powerful organ of information, education and entertainment is in the forefront in the crusade to promote sports in Nigeria and on the continent of Africa. In all its programs conscious efforts are made to promote national unity and preach good morals. As the premier broadcasting organization in the country, NBC has been

playing dynamic roles in producing capable and experienced sports-casters.

It is very difficult to talk about play-by-play radio commentaries on soccer in Nigeria without mentioning the names of Ishola Folorunsho popularly known as "It's a Goal," and Yemi Fadipe.

As early as 1969, the corporation embarked on programs for training young men interested in careers as sports commentators. Among those present at the first of such programs in 1969 were Messers Dele Adetiba, Yinka Craig, Emman Mohemeka, Teddy Oviasu and Elias Aduroja (the author). This was part of the corporation's staff training program.

One of the most outstanding jobs by the NBC was coverage of the Second All-Africa Games in January, 1973.

Addressing the World Press, Kolade, director-general of the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation, outlined the advance plans enunciated for radio and television coverage of the games and the approach made to the Federal Military Government for financial aid to enable NBC to purchase the costly equipment necessary.

He then announced that the Organizing Committee of the Second All-Africa Games requested the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation to handle all the broadcasting rights.

From a very humble beginning the Sports Division of the NBC has grown, covering all aspects of sports activities in the country, as well as international tournaments. Among these were coverage of boxing bouts of Hogan Bassey and Dick Tiger of Nigeria who were the respective reigning world featherweight and middleweight champions of the world in the early '70s.

### Educational Service (Schools Unit)

Establishment of a National School Broadcasting Service came with a \$75,000 grant from the Ford Foundation of America to the corporation in June 1960.

The Schools Unit was set-up in Ibadan in 1960. Experimental broadcasts began in April 1961 and, today, no less than thirteen series of programs jointly produced by states' government ministries of education are directed to listeners. Subjects covered range from agriculture to civics, science, history and foreign languages such as French. Other subjects covered include geography, home economics and English.

Topics under general title "Talks for Advanced Students" have included "Pre-Colonial Political Institutions," "The Rule of Law," "The Organization of African Unity," "The Study of African Languages," "The Nature of Science" and "The Contribution of Islam to Civilization."<sup>7</sup>

### Commercial Service

The first radio advertisements broadcast on any NBC station were from Lagos on October 31, 1960. Commenting on the commercial broadcasting in Nigeria, Mr. Oyewole Erinle, former program assistant in charge of the Provincial station of the NBC in Abeokuta, explained:

In addition to broadcasts on the National network the commercial service now has services originating from state headquarters in Kaduna, Enugu, and Ibadan, as well as thirteen local services broadcast from provincial broadcasting houses.<sup>8</sup>

English, Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba are the main languages of broadcast, but others are used (e.g.) Fulani, Kanuri, Edo, Ijaw, Itsekiri, Nupe, Tiv, Urhobo and Efik.

The corporation has a full-scale sales department which sells air time for spot advertisements and offers programs for sponsorship to advertising agencies both at home and abroad. Many products are advertised, alcoholic beverages excepted.

In past years the leading products advertised on radio included: baby foods, cosmetics, tobacco, non-beverages, airlines and cigarette manufacturers.

Not more than nine hours of programming may include advertisements on any day, and the advertisements may not exceed twenty-five percent of the total air time for the programs which carry them.<sup>9</sup>



## FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup>Sydney Head, Broadcasting in Africa (Philadelphia), p. 83.
- <sup>2</sup>Charles Abangwu, "NBC Cultural Night" (Inugu: NBC News, Jan./ March, 1973), p. 12.
- <sup>3</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>4</sup>Ishola Folorunsho, Welcome Address, 2nd Cultural Evening of Dances, Choral Music and Drama (Ibadan: NBC 1974), p. 3.
- <sup>5</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>6</sup>Christopher Kolade, Daily Times, "Program in the 70s (Lagos: Daily Times Nigeria Ltd, 1970), p. 11.
- <sup>7</sup>Head, p. 84.
- <sup>8</sup>Oyewole Erinle, Broadcasting in Nigeria (Abeokuta: NBC, 1974), p. 4.
- <sup>9</sup>Head, p. 85.

## CHAPTER V

### EMERGENCE OF TELEVISION AND ITS CHALLENGE TO RADIO IN NIGERIA.

In many advanced countries such as the United States, Great Britain, France, Western Germany and Canada, millions of people own television sets. Besides watching television they listen to radio when driving their cars or doing household chores, etc.

In Nigeria the situation is quite different. The majority of the population are not going to be able to afford a TV set in the foreseeable future unless the cost of a set drops to \$15.00. Many people still do not own a radio, but with the emergence of transistor radios, the situation is improving.

In many countries the challenge to radio is that people watch television, whereas in Nigeria, the challenge to radio is whether the radio stations can meet the tremendous expansion. In the words of Ian McIntyre "The challenge is an internal one - within the radio stations themselves."<sup>1</sup>

The problems are in three parts:

First: The physical expansion in the whole field of radio - more stations, more transmitters and the need for more people to purchase radios.

Secondly: Expansion of staff and more training programs.

Third: Actual program content which must be continually adapted

to a changing environment and a different listener as the ownership of a radio set becomes possible further down the socio-economic scale.<sup>2</sup>

### Emergence of Black and White Television and Color TV

History was made in Nigeria in October 1959 when the first television station (WNTV) in tropical Africa was opened. Since that memorable day, the Federal Republic of Nigeria has seen a great deal of activity in television. Two other television stations, Radio Television Kaduna and NBC-TV, Lagos, began their operations three years later, and a fourth station, Midwest Television at Benin, went into operation in 1972.

Before the Nigerian Civil War began in 1967, ENTV operated in Enugu, formerly Eastern Nigeria. It was re-opened after the civil war in 1973.

On July 29, 1975, Nigeria underwent an important political transition which ushered in an era of articulate, responsive and dynamic government dedicated to the welfare of the general public and committed to the enhancement of the nation's peace, progress and prestige. At the helm of affairs were the late General Murtala Mohammed and Lt-General Obsegun Obasanjo.

They initiated a series of programs designed to bring about a lasting solution to the thorny problems that plagued television in the country.

For the development of color television and the improved broadcasting services, the sum of about \$120 million was set aside in the Third National Development Plan.<sup>3</sup>

The then Federal Commissioner for Information, Major-General I. B. M. Haruna, while addressing the reconstituted Board of Governors of the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation, said, "the project involved the construction of transmitter buildings and broadcasting houses completely equipped for adequate broadcasting coverage throughout Nigeria."<sup>4</sup>

The government also decided to set-up a National Television Authority which will manage television services in Nigeria under the chairmanship of Alhaji Babatunde Jose, former managing director of Daily Times of Nigeria.

The current Development Plan provided an additional \$200 million for the color television project to provide countrywide television coverage in Nigeria.

Since 1977, color television has started operations in six main stations located at Lagos, Benin, Kaduna, Maiduguri, and Jos, implying a six-channel television network for Nigeria.

#### Television Programs

Television broadcasting is one of several means of spreading message to a large segment of the Nigerian population at the same time.

The mass communication media are important to modern social processes; they bring public issues before wider forums than they can be reached by public meetings or through parliaments.<sup>5</sup>

Today in Nigeria there is evidence that use of television has to some extent facilitated achievement of certain desired goals. In the words of Professor Alfred Opubo:

In Nigeria, the broadcast media, radio and television, are primarily entertainment media; they do not in general, carry those development-oriented messages which can move the society towards development goals.<sup>6</sup>

Television programming is a very inadequate contributor to economic and social development of Nigeria.

Looking at programming on Nigeria's television stations, a relatively low percentage is indigenous and locally produced. Foreign programs dominate the daily schedules of NBC-TV, for example. Of the 40 hours of transmission weekly, only about 20 hours feature locally-originated programs. This means almost a 50-50 division between foreign and local programming. Most foreign programs are imported from Western Europe and the United States.

NTV Lagos usually starts its broadcast daily from 2 p.m. and ends at midnight. Breakdown of programs is as follows:

- 2:00-4:00 p.m. - From Our Archives
- 4:00-5:00 p.m. - Science Fiction
- 5:00-6:00 p.m. - Youth Scene
- 6:00-6:30 p.m. - Devotional 1/2 hour
- 6:30-7:00 p.m. - Children's Time
- 7:00-7:45 p.m. - News Panorama
- 7:50-8:10 p.m. - Julies Choice
- 8:10-8:55 p.m. - Village Headmaster
- 8:55-9:00 p.m. - Commercial Break
- 9:00- - Network News
- 9:45-10:15 p.m.- Towards Civil Rule
- 10:15-11:45 p.m.- Movies
- 11:45-11:50 p.m.- News Summary
- 11:50-11:55 p.m.- Night Cap (See Appendix B)

As far back as 1972, the foreign program such as "Mission Impossible," "Mod Squad," "Mannix," "Danger Man," "Dan August," "Bonanza," and "The FBI," accounted for most programs broadcast.<sup>7</sup> Of the 20 hours of foreign programs broadcast, drama occupies 13, children's programs take 4 hours, while the remaining hours have music, comedy and documentaries.

In 1974 at a seminar marking the 15th anniversary of the Western State government-owned television service, WNTV, Professor E. A. Tu'gbiyele, head of Department of Continuing Education Center of the University of Lagos, urged television stations in Nigeria "to evolve possible ways of mobilizing the people in terms of social, economic, political and cultural development to enhance stability of the nation."<sup>8</sup>

In his own speech, Professor Okediji, of the University of Ibadan, urged television stations to plan their programs to satisfy the ordinary man. Professor Moyo, Institute of Mass Communication, University of Lagos, Nigeria, suggested that television services be extended to rural areas where 70 percent of the people live.

The government should set-up small scale industries where portable transistor television sets could be produced. This should be one of the future objectives of the government and television stations in order to be able to mobilize the people towards political and economic development.<sup>9</sup>

It is sad to note that none of these suggestions has been exploited by those connected with television authorities in Nigeria.

There are many reasons for the dominance of foreign programs. Chief among them is the question of money. Good television programs are expensive to produce. They require good equipment, competent personnel and a reasonable budget.

While television executives cannot be blamed for policy shortcomings on the part of the national leadership on the planning of television stations, one observes that even the limited funds available to our television stations are very poorly utilized.<sup>10</sup>

Television performing artists in Nigeria fall into two classes: the highly professional group - who are few and far between - and the more numerous lower-echelon types unguided by the norms of professionalism.

Among the indigenous artists who made a mark on the Nigerian scene is Moses Olaiya. Moses is a magician, a theatre agent, a choreographer, an actor, a producer and a band manager.

Apart from news, foreign movies, drama, music and entertainment programs, Nigerian television offers sports coverage. It had exclusive broadcasting rights to the coverage of 1973 All-Africa Games held in Lagos Nigeria. All programs for world coverage were transmitted by satellite by the Nigerian External Telecommunications Company.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Ian McIntyre, The Mass Media (Lagos: Sunday Times, May 14, 1972), p. 9.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Major-General I. B. M. Haruna, Radio-TV Nigeria Takes a Big Stride (Washington, D.C.: Federal Nigeria, Embassy Oct.-Nov.-Dec., 1976), p. 16.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Richard Aspinall, "A Manual for Training," Program Production (Paris: UNESCO, 191), p. 19.

<sup>6</sup>Alfred Opubo, The Problems of Television as a Means of Enlightenment (Lagos: Daily Times June 29, 1971), p. 7.

<sup>7</sup>Sydney W. Head, Broadcasting in Africa, New York, pp. 85-86.

<sup>8</sup>E. A. Tugbiyele, Use of Television in the Mass Mobilization for Nigerian Development (Ibadan: Presenting the Western State NBC, October 30, 1974), p. 1.

<sup>9</sup>Moyo OIa, Use of Television in the Mass Mobilization of Nigerian Development (Ibadan: Presenting the Western State NBC, October, 1976), p. 2.

<sup>10</sup>OIa Balogun, Making Proper Use of Mass Media (Lagos: UNESCO Conference Daily Times, April 2, 1975), p. 7.



## CHAPTER VI

### FILM PRODUCTION

In the continent of Africa, film equipment is very scarce, qualified personnel few and capital for film projects extremely difficult to raise.

In Nigeria the situation regarding cinema exhibition is even worse. Almost all films shown in Nigerian cinema houses are imported. Only a few African or Nigerian films are produced, directed and screened in Nigeria.

The West African film industry largely has been a Senegalese preserve, led by Ousmane Sembé, who had perhaps moved from being a national to an international film-maker.

In Nigeria, Eddie Ugboma is making films rooted very firmly in the contemporary scene, though the aspect of it which he sees is not very savory.

His first film was "The Rise and Fall of Dr. Oyenusi," which he described as a tale about the godfathers of crime who arise in the sort of corrupt society which he believes is far too widespread in Nigeria today. Ugboma's films lack the technical finish of the Hollywood machine but they are popular, as evidenced by the fact that Ugboma has recovered his investment and continues to make films. His message of moral indignation is not entirely lost in the entertainment. Ugboma himself was robbed by Oyenusi types.

His second film, "The Boy Is Good," tells the misfortunes of a young Nigerian who returns home, full of hopes and dreams after education and training (perhaps too long) in Europe, to find that doors are closed to him, that he has returned to a society where "whom you know" matters more than "what you are or can do." Success, however, nefarious, is more important than morality.

Ugboma's third film "Cash Madam" is still in progress. Here he turns his attention to the way the new Nigeria of fast money is spoiling its women. He explains that he picks his stories out of contemporary life in Nigeria.

The most astonishing aspects of Ugboma philosophy is that he hopes his examples will so inspire others, that in a few years there will be a real West African English-Language film industry.<sup>1</sup>

#### Total Neglect of Film Effort

According to Alfred Opubo, the behavior of public institutions in Nigeria often reminds one of the major thesis of the hilariously funny book The Peter Principle by Dr. Lawrence J. Peter and Raymond Hull, which states: "In Nigerian broadcasting, it would seem that when people reach their level of incompetence in programs and technical operations, they are rewarded with promotion into the administrative elite."<sup>2</sup>

This is a perverse and not-at-all-funny state of affairs which no society, in a hurry to change, can afford. Most of the people saddled with the decision-making in the broadcasting industry are short-sighted and have lateral thinking habits.

Thus, it is not surprising that the film effort in Nigeria is neglected. Successive governments, after 16 years of independence, have

done nothing to improve film-making in the country. The country has to import nearly all the films shown.

Lamenting on this situation, Dr. Ola Balogun, a prominent pioneer in the field, said:

Our people are not privileged to watch the heroic exploits of Jaja of Opobo on the cinema screen or to see the wonderful pageantry of the ancient empires of Ghana, Mali, Songhai and Bornu unfold before them. They cannot watch a funny actor from Benin somersault on the cinema screen or sympathize with a poor farmer from Gongola as he struggles with the earth for a living in a film that will depict the everyday life of such a farmer.<sup>3</sup>

Dr. Balogun further asked, "Is it not strange that so many films are made in other countries while so few have been made in Nigeria, and even those few can hardly be seen by the Nigerian public?"<sup>4</sup>

"Could it be that those who make films in other countries have two heads and four arms, or could it be that God has endowed them with certain mysterious qualities that Nigerians do not have?"<sup>5</sup> Dr. Balogun asked.

He made suggestions for a number of steps to be taken by Nigerian authorities to encourage and stimulate the growth of an indigenous film industry. Among them is funding to be made available to film production companies by individuals or by specialized private or public institutions such as banks or state film boards. Then the completed film is released in domestic film houses, as well as in foreign cinema theatres, and part of the money realized from public attendance in cinema houses to watch a particular film is paid to the original makers of the film, so as to enable them to recover the investment in the film.<sup>6</sup>

## Ethnographic Films

Frank Speed, a film-maker in Nigeria the past twenty-five years, exemplifies a creative tension between the demands of anthropological observation and aesthetic excellence. Apart from making medical film for University College Hospital in Ibadan, he is best known for his first ethnographic film, "Benin Kingship Rituals" (1962).

"Dumineia," made by Speed in 1966, was about spirit-possession during a water-spirit festival in the Eastern Niger Delta.

Speed and J. P. Clark made "Tides of the Delta: The Saga of Ozidi" in 1969. The film is also about water-people. The film attempts to give essence of a seven-day festival of the Ijaw and Orua peoples of the Niger Delta. The narrator, Ulli Bier, attempts to unravel the complicated plot, which is crowded with heroic actions, revenge killings and the intervention of various spirits.

Speed's most successful collaboration was with choreographer Peggy Harper. Their works include documentary films and archive materials stored at the University of Ife. Among these were "Studies in Nigerian Dance," "Dances from Yauri and Borgu" (1969) and the traditional "Theatre of the Tiv People" (1976) Kwagh Hir.

In "Today and Before Yesterday: Ngas View of Life" (1978), Speed's latest film, we see a whole society through the eyes of an old singer-storyteller: "His account is not only clear and cogent but also poetic and lyrical."<sup>7</sup>

The film is undeniably a model for collaboration between anthropologist and film-maker. "Today and Before Yesterday" goes further than any other of Speed's films in demonstrating that the ethnographic

documentary is most faithful to scientific objectivity when the sensitivity of the anthropological researcher is in full harmony with the aesthetic intuitions of the film-maker.

The cinema, like the other mass media in Africa, is concentrated in urban areas. There still are few mobile vans to take films to rural populations, which constitute 90 percent or more of the nation's citizens. Mauritania, for example, has only one indoor theater with 500 seats for a total national population of one million. In more urbanized nations of Africa, like Ghana and Nigeria, weekly cinema attendance numbers several hundred thousand.

"Reliance on foreign entertainment films has led to charges by Herbert Schiller and others that the cinema is a form of cultural imperialism."<sup>8</sup>

Africans are bombarded with foreign cultural values and lifestyles that have little relevance to their own lives. In addition, it is feared that films from more industrialized nations increase the frustration level of Africans who do not have automobiles, large houses, or even electricity.

According to Dennis Wilcox, these charges

. . . have some values from socialization standpoint. Consequently, most African governments have attempted to screen foreign entertainment films for upsetting material before they are released for public viewing.<sup>9</sup>

#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Eddie Ugboma, Films Out of West Africa (London: West Africa, Jan. 8, 1979), p. 48.

<sup>2</sup>Dr. Alfred Opubo, Problems of TV, Daily Times of Nigeria (Lagos: Tuesday, June 29, 1971), p. 7.

<sup>3</sup>Ola Balogun, Indigenous Film Effort Faces Total Neglect (Lagos: Sunday Times, February 11, 1979), p. 12.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid..

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Mario Relich, The Ethnographic Films of Frank Speed (London: West Africa, February 5, 1979), p. 209.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 211.

<sup>9</sup>Dennis L. Wilcox, Mass Media in Black Africa (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1975), p. 89.

## CHAPTER VII

### EXTERNAL BROADCASTING: VOICE OF NIGERIA

Voice of Nigeria reflects the mood of the nation and it is the purveyor of its culture, policy and public relations in the community of nations. It is the country's major image maker. Its role is very important and its operation very sensitive. Established in 1962, the Voice of Nigeria started broadcasting in two languages - English and French.

In 1964, two more languages - Hausa and Arabic - were added. It is also strongly felt that, in the near future, listeners in East Africa will be able to hear programs in Swahili.

The Voice of Nigeria has grown from an 8 1/2-hour broadcast day to a 13-hour broadcast day. As the station attains its full growth, it will add more languages and more hours of broadcast. The over-all target is 24-hours-a-day broadcasts.

"One impression which one readily gets about the Voice of Nigeria is that the station is hardly audible outside the borders of Nigeria."<sup>1</sup>

Speaking on this problem of von, the then Federal Commissioner for Information and Labor, Chief Anthony Enahoro, said:

The NBC External Services must also broadcast the strongest possible signal to all countries which the Federal Government would like to speak. As you know, there have been complaints that the signals of the NBC were not very audible in certain places.<sup>2</sup>

This anxiety was expressed by the Commissioner during signing the contract for the \$24-million development project for the Corporation in 1975.

### Feedback of Voice of Nigeria

Various letters came from West African listeners to request records or to comment on programs they listened to or even to ask for general information. Engineering reports from West Germany and Scandinavian countries show that the station is clearly received in those countries.

The former producer of Hausa programs, the late Abdul Karim Zakari, always had a tray full of letters from listeners, mainly from West Africa. The Controller, Egbuna Obidike, had on his table a tape from a listener in Western Germany who recorded a program from Voice of Nigeria. There is evidence the station is heard far and wide.

At the same time, Voice of Nigeria's reach is not selective. In certain areas, one country will pick it up and her neighbor will not. In some places, reception is irregular. Writing to the producer of "Weekend Magazine," Ernest Okonkwo, one Abdul Wahab Animashawun from Ivory Coast, complained as follows in November, 1974:

Because we sometimes hear you for only two days when you keep reception breaking for five or six days before we hear you again and this happens intermittently for the last six months. <sup>3</sup>

From the complaints about Voice of Nigeria and the evidence of feedback from listeners, it is generally agreed that External Service of Radio Nigeria is still in the growth stages.

### Programs

In 1972, the Voice of Nigeria began transmitting 8 1/2 hours every



day in four languages: English, French, Hausa and Arabic.

Prominent among its programs are news commentaries, current affairs, cultural programs, features, and documentaries. These programs cover every aspect of Nigerian life - music, customs, social life, economic activities and industrial developments. Other programs that look beyond Nigerian scenes are also broadcast. Among these are "The World in Perspective," "Window on the World," and "African Development."

The 1964 USIA West Africa Survey indicates that the Voice of Nigeria is heard by 40 percent of the sample population of Ghana, nearly 20 percent of that of Togo, and that it receives approximately 150 foreign-listener letters a month.

There are indications that the Nigerian government feels, in retrospect, that it made ineffectual use of the service in bringing the Nigerian case to the rest of the world during the Nigerian Civil War, and that it is preparing to increase transmitter power.<sup>4</sup>

#### Staff and Departments

The Voice of Nigeria is being directed by an experienced broadcaster, Mr. Sam Nwaneri, who has been with the corporation from its beginning. There are five departments in the division. These include: news, music, talks, features and the languages of English, French, Hausa and Arabic.

Adamu Fiberesima is the head of the Music Department. Egbuna Obidike is the controller, while Mrs. A. Eronini is in charge of French broadcasts.

#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Ezebube Chukurah, "Is VON the Biggest Voice in Africa?" Radio TV Times (Lagos: Times Group of Companies, Jan., 1975), p. 18.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Sydney W. Head, Broadcasting in Africa (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1974), p. 192.

## CHAPTER VIII

### FEDERAL RADIO CORPORATION

A massive reorganization is going on in the Nigerian Broadcasting industry. The first step in this direction was restructuring of the former NBC into a Federal Radio Corporation. The Corporation has four linguistic zones - Lagos, Ibadan, Enugu and Kaduna. Explaining the details, the Federal Commissioner for Information, Dr. G. B. Leton, said the present stations of the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation have been handed over to state governments, while Voice of Nigeria, the external service of the corporation, becomes a separate department.

This separate department will be within the framework of the Federal Radio Corporation, directly responsible to the director general.

No state station in Nigeria now is allowed to install a transmitter with a capacity above 10 kw. The new arrangement is designed to ensure that only the Federal Radio Corporation would broadcast to the whole country, while the state stations would be limited to their area.

More emphasis is being placed on the development of home-made programs. All programs from the FRC are now broadcast in English while more time is allocated to purely Nigerian domestic news.

Also, employees of the former Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation, transferred to a state government, were given the choice to remain where they were or seek transfer to other stations.

After completion of the reorganization, the radio stations will reflect daily activities and government policies, especially on education, agriculture, health, culture and the land use decree.

#### Nigerian Broadcasting Commission

A commission to take care of radio broadcasting in the country was set up by the Federal Military Government. It is known as the Nigerian Broadcasting Commission.

In an interview, the managing director of the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria, Kaduna, Alhaji Dahiru Modibbo said the government had accepted the idea of setting up the commission but it was yet to be made a policy.

Dahiru said the commission, when established, would be responsible for collecting radio license fees.

The license fees would not be collected directly from individuals, but from 'sources.' The idea of collecting the license fees was to find a source of commercial revenue for state radio stations in the country.<sup>1</sup>

As of December 31, 1978, commercial advertising on all Federal radio stations in the country ceased. The decision to ban commercial advertising from all federal radio stations was "because the government would not like us to compete with the state radio stations."<sup>2</sup>

The decision was to assure that the young state radio stations would not be financially crippled. Members of the staff of the commercial division would transfer their services to other places within the corporation.

#### Nigerian Television Authority

The Federal Military Government of Nigeria recently re-organized

television into a more effective organization.

All the existing state televisions ceased to exist and were placed under the umbrella of the Nigerian Television Authority. This move affected the Western Nigerian Television, owned by the OYO state government; Eastern Nigerian Television Service, owned by the Imo state government; Radio Television Kaduna, owned by the Kaduna state government; and Midwest Television, owned by the Bendel state government.

The Nigerian television is under the chairmanship of Alhaji Babatunde Jose, former managing director of the Nigerian Daily Times group of companies.<sup>3</sup> On February 14, 1976, the Nigerian Head of State Lt. General Lusegun Obasanjo announced measures for further improvements.

The provision of an efficient telecommunications system is a corollary to the improvement and development of radio and television services.

Consequently, the Federal Government of Nigeria has awarded \$150 million to an American firm, TCOM Corporation of Columbia, Maryland, for a balloon-borne telecommunications and broadcast system.<sup>4</sup>

An expanded telephone, television and radio services for Nigeria will be provided using a total of ten aerodynamically stable, tethered balloons, called aerostats, which support electronic transmitting and receiving equipment at altitudes of 10,000-15,000 feet. The entire system is expected to be installed by 1979.<sup>5</sup>

FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Alhaji Modibbo Dahiru, Broadcasting Commission West Africa  
(London: West Africa Publishing Company Limited, December 18, 1978),  
p. 2564.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Lt-General Olusegun Obasanjo, A New Era of Dynamic Leadership  
(Washington, D.C., Federal Nigeria, Embassy Oct.-Nov.-Dec., 1976),  
p. 21.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

## CHAPTER IX

### ROLES OF PRINT AND BROADCAST COMPARED

Most texts on mass communication in Africa have been written without the awareness that most Africans gather their news from broadcasts - not from pages of newspapers and magazines.

#### Print

Few daily newspapers are published in independent black Africa. As a result of high rate of illiteracy, only 71 newspapers were being published as of 1974. These newspapers and magazines were read by society's elite.

Nigeria, the most populous country in black Africa, has at least seven dailies. These are owned by private, commercial interests as well as the government. These newspapers range from the now bankrupt West African Pilot to the wealthy and influential Daily Times group, which published more than ten general circulation publications and a few trade journals.

As the largest publishing and printing service in black Africa, the group's flagship publication, the Daily Times, has the greatest circulation and readership of any English-language weekly in Africa.

Despite the trend for various Nigerian state governments to start their own newspapers, the combined circulation of the Daily Times (200,000) and the Sunday Times (350,000) still exceeds the combined circulations of all daily and weekly government newspapers.<sup>1</sup>

The first decade after independence in black Africa took its toll of newspapers primarily owned by foreign interests. Independence brought nationalism into full bloom and many symbols of the Colonial era, including foreign-owned newspapers, found their days numbered. The London Daily Mirror group (International Publishing Corporation) operated the Daily Times in Lagos with Nigerian management, but the early 1970s found the foreign group with a diminishing financial interest in black Africa's largest publishing complex. The end of foreign investment was hastened in 1972 when the government issued the Nigerian Enterprises Promotion Decree.

It is required the Daily Times and other businesses to be exclusively owned by Nigerians as of March 31, 1974. Consequently, the one million shares owned by the Daily Mirror group were sold in early 1974 to the Nigerian public.<sup>2</sup>

To many observers, then, the take-over and control of the press by the new African leaders did not vary considerably from the format and pattern of the colonial press.

In Nigeria for example, media, particularly print, are still criticized for only addressing themselves to the sophisticated city dweller with sufficient education to grasp discussions of political and economic issues. In a society where only about 25 percent of the population can read and write, the impact of newspapers cannot be felt by the remaining big majority of 75 percent who can only appreciate or identify pictures in newspapers.

Radio, then, is particularly useful in Nigeria for informing the people. Radio has capitalized on Africa's great oral tradition. Nigeria utilizes broadcasting for education and to generate active party participation. Radio programs are followed by discussions, local



talks, and information pamphlets. Ali Mazrui well summarized the educational role of the press in Africa as follows: "A relative freedom of the press helped to achieve independence; but it could not be relied upon to achieve national integration after independence."<sup>2</sup>

An American scholar Roppa Guy has noted: "Information and education become synonymous in a developing country."<sup>3</sup>

The colonial legacy had a tremendous influence in shaping the press of black Africa. Without doubt the role and responsibilities of the African mass media are highly correlated with the attitudes and goals of high government officials. Olaf Stokke, associate director of the Scandinavian Institute of African Affairs, once wrote:

Several factors may influence the degree of control and direction of government owned newspapers and other media. The most important variable in this regard is probably the attitude to the role and functions of the mass media prevailing, first of all, within the government but also within the predominant social and political environment in general, especially at the elite level.<sup>4</sup>

When the struggle for independence gathered momentum, a pan-African Committee drafted a resolution about the role of the press in newly emerging independent black Africa. According to this resolution:

The function of the press is to inform, to educate, to entertain and amuse, to examine fairly and critically and to make constructive contributions to thought and discussion on matters of public policy and to provide a forum for the airing of ideas and opinions.<sup>5</sup>

For many African scholars and professional journalists who received their education in Western Europe or the United States, this resolution seemed highly reasonable and logical. A Nigerian journalist even thought that the resolution came closer to describing the press in his own country. Ola Coker wrote as late as 1968 the following description of the Nigerian Press:

This is the basic philosophy on which our communication media operate - that no matter what happens, we shall, like Socrates, seek the truth rather than try to persuade, and this is what our newspapers, our radio stations, our television stations and our other media of mass communication try to do; present the story as it is, with very little color. Human nature being what it is, you know, occasionally there is some slant to presentation, but in the main, the policy is to present the truth.<sup>6</sup>

Such lofty thoughts even in the U.S., the cradle of freedom and human rights, often do not match reality. In general, there are probably four major attitudes expressed by African leaders about the role and function of the press in independent black Africa. These themes are (1) harnessing and press for nation building; (2) the press as an instrument of national unity; (3) the need for "constructive" criticism; and (4) the press as an agent of mass education.<sup>7</sup>

Lloyd Sommerlad, who is the author of The Press in Developing Countries has this to say about the press:

They need the press to help create a feeling of nationhood among people traditionally divided by tribal loyalties; to explain the objectives of a new socialist society; to spread information about new and better ways of living and farming; to obtain cooperation in community and national projects; to win support for the party and its leadership.<sup>8</sup>

Some leaders often say that Africa needs all the energies of its people for nation building. This forms the basis of press-government relationships. In Nigeria, for example, Alheji Babatunde Jose, former chairman of the Daily Times and now chairman of the Nigeria Television Authority, said:

In the new nations and traditional societies of Africa . . . journalist has additional responsibilities to help in building a nation out of the multi-lingual, multi-cultured societies in countries where economic resources are inadequate to meet the expectations . . . In the final analysis, the journalist cannot claim to be healthier than the body and if law and order breaks down and there is chaos, there would be no newspapers, no journalists and no readers.<sup>9</sup>

During the International Press Institute Conference in Lagos in August 1975, a large number of delegates spoke about the occupational hazards to which journalists have been exposed all over Africa. There seemed to be consensus at the conference hall that rough treatment of the practitioners by the government functionaries resulted from misconception by African leaders about the proper role of the press.

The African heads of states, they suggested, do not appreciate the apt functions of the press, which transcend merely informing, entertaining, educating and reinforcing the cultural norms of the society, as well as giving feedback to the governments about the trend of public opinions.

Its functions went farther. They added that:

The press should criticize government policies regarded to be inimical to the public interests; mirror the going-ons in society to guide the authority to know the next line of action which can match and meet the aspirations of the governed, and occasionally, if need be, pressurized the authority to desist from any policy considered anti-social.<sup>10</sup>

The delegates further argued that no institution has an absolute answer to all problems; so the government should respect and tolerate an institution which offers constructive appraisal of its doings. Both have the same goal, to render service to society, though their methods of approach may differ.

#### Media Characteristics (Comparison)

At this time, it may be useful to look into the specific advantages and disadvantages that different media have within the total communication system. It is hoped that this will enable the reader to understand fully the reasons why it is emphasized that most Africans, and

Nigerians in particular, gather their news from radio and TV.

However, each of the media has certain unique qualities which it can use for its own benefit and, therefore, for the benefit of its audience and society at large. It must be pointed out that advantages attributed to the various media in Nigeria represent some amount of deduction from observation, the author's eleven years' personal experience in the industry, and thoughts of social scientists.

### Print Media

The advantages of the print media are:

1. Unlike radio, television and film, which present their material at a set pace, the print media (newspapers, magazines and books) allow the reader to set his own pace based on his abilities and interests. Only 25 percent of the population of Nigeria can read and write. Also the reader can scan or skip columns or pages as he pleases. He does not need to suffer the boredom or the bewilderment which the pace and content of other media may force upon him. Moreover, he may read at the time he chooses, stop when he wants, and resume his reading when he pleases. In short, he can expose himself to the print medium whenever he so desires.

2. Reading can be repeated. Unlike content of other media, printed matter is not necessarily limited to a single "showing." The reader can go back again and again. Radio and television programs, with few exceptions, are produced and broadcast only once. Films run for days or weeks, but rarely are seen twice by the same person. Therefore, theoretically at least (and often in practice), the print medium is capable of repeating the same message, as it were, to the

same individual.

3. Treatment of subject may be fuller. Print can develop a topic to whatever degree and whatever length seems desirable. Complex discussions, therefore, are generally more suited to presentation in print.

4. Specialized appeal is possible. Despite the tendency towards mass appeal, print still can cater, and does cater, to specialized interests. This is probably the greatest criticism levelled against the Nigeria Print Media - it caters for the few in the elite class. Print does remain the medium in which minority views most easily can find voice, and specialized interests can be met.

5. Possible greater prestige. Many writers have suggested that, for various reasons, the print media seem to have the highest prestige. One reason is that print is the oldest medium and, therefore, has a certain tradition and prestige associated with it; also that, since habitual readers get attached to specific publications, they are more likely to be influenced by "my paper."

If print does possess this prestige, then it should be able to exercise greater influence on readers. Research offers no conclusive evidence to support this view. But research has shown that, at least certain sections of the public, usually at the higher socio-economic, age and educational levels, do tend to attach more importance to what they read than to what they hear or see. On the contrary, a much bigger public, less educated and lower in the socio-economic scale, rates non-print media higher. This could reflect the high rate of illiteracy.<sup>11</sup>

However, if print does, in fact, have a greater persuasive effect, then in developing countries like Nigeria, it seems a shame that the

brunt of the persuasive task is being carried by media other than print.

### Broadcast Media

1. Television and radio have the great advantage of reaching people who cannot be reached by print, either because they cannot read or because, as in developing countries, distribution facilities are not adequate.

2. Another important advantage is the greater sense of actual participation that resembles face-to-face contact in television.

3. Broadcast media have the distinct advantage of speed.

4. Another advantage is that television and radio audiences have a sense of good feeling, since they know they are all listening to the same program at the same time, unlike newspaper readers. There is evidence to back up such a proposition, since there are audience ratings publications by Nielson and others to show that millions watch certain programs together at the same time. Programs such as "Gone With the Wind" and Alex Hailey's series "Roots" have shown that such a common experience does lead to greater effectiveness. In developing countries we can refer to radio farm forum experiments, budget speech by a head of state and educational programs to mention a few.<sup>12</sup>

### Film

"The cinema situation, it has been suggested, changes the sense of time and space of the viewer, who is more or less in conditions similar to those for inducing hypnosis."<sup>13</sup>

1. As a medium of information and knowledge, cinema has all the attributes of television, again with the added advantage of the bigger screen for long shots as well as close-ups.

2. Because of conditions under which films are screened, they have a greater potential to give audiences a sense of identification and even of concentration.

3. Films are regarded more as a medium of entertainment, but they do possess the ability to convey information on customs, habits, manners, and of people beyond an audience's immediate environment. They can be considerably forceful in bringing about changes in attitudes, beliefs and in behavior.

Among the characteristics of the various media, there are some distinct differences, as well as similarities. Each medium can capitalize on its unique characteristics. All of them can play complementary roles. Although sometimes, in the fierce competition for advertising income and public attention, the media have tried to cross their own natural lines, by and large, they make fairly good use of their special capabilities.

As information media, for example, radio and television primarily are useful in signaling events and providing first reports (example military coups in Nigeria). Radio and television have killed the newspapers' extra, leaving it to the newspapers to pick up details and, perhaps, for the magazines to analyze in even greater detail, without being rushed by the clock and incoming news developments. Film documentaries come under the same category as magazines.

The serious practitioner will bring to his work a knowledge of his particular audience and of his particular medium. It is the combination of these abilities, needs and desires that provide him not only with possibilities of effective communication but also challenges which face every professional.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Dennis Wilcox, Mass Media in Black Africa (New York: Praeger Publishers Inc., 1975), p. 39.

<sup>2</sup>Ali A. Mazrui, Mass Thoughts (Kampala: Makerere University Press, 1972), p. 162.

<sup>3</sup>M. Roppa Guy, "Communication for Modernization in a Nomadic Society," Master's thesis, Indiana University, 1970, p. 221.

<sup>4</sup>Stakke Olav, "Mass Communication in Africa Freedoms and Functions, in Reporting Africa (Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Affairs, 1971), p. 73.

<sup>5</sup>Robert L. Nwankwo, "Utopia and Reality in the African Mass Media: A Case Study," Paper presented at the African Studies Association Convention, Philadelphia, 1972, p. 1.

<sup>6</sup>O. S. Coker, "Mass Media in Nigeria," in Mass Media Systems, ed. Royald D. Colle for Department of Communication Arts, New York State Colleges of Agriculture (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University, 1968), p. 42.

<sup>7</sup>Wilcox, p. 24.

<sup>8</sup>Lloyd Sommerlad, "Problems in Developing a Free Enterprise Press in East Africa," p. 76.

<sup>9</sup>Chief Legum, Africa Contemporary Record - Annual Survey and Documents 1972-1973, p. 182.

<sup>10</sup>Lai Agbaje, "Need for Press Seminars for Rulers," Afriscopes (Lagos: Pan Afriscopes Ltd, 1975), p. 14.

<sup>11</sup>Lakshmana Rao, The Practice of Mass Communication, Some lessons from research (France: UNESCO Workshops, 1972), p. 35.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.



## CHAPTER X

### BROADCASTING AND POLITICAL CRISIS

In time of political crisis, radio has always assumed the role of being the first and, for a time, the only contact with the outside world.

"The wind of change is sweeping through Africa,"<sup>1</sup> Harold Macmillan said in a speech. At that time, the then British Prime Minister was referring to the rise of African nationalism and the resolve of African to exchange rule by European colonial masters for self-government and independence. Also the possibility at that time of direct involvement of the military in the politics of sub-Saharan Africa was not self-evident.

However, the past two decades have witnessed a politics of coup d'etat in Africa. Many scholars found rapidity of these coups d'etat very alarming. In the meantime, military regimes continue to multiply in Africa.

According to Huntington: "The military gets involved in politics for the same reasons that the clergy, students and labor do."<sup>2</sup> Since the main concern of this discussion is involvement of broadcasting in political crisis, an examination will be offered of reasons why military regimes seize radio stations each time there is a military coup d'etat.

## Background

The failure of the Westminster system of government led to political unrest in the then Western region of the country. Election to the Western House of Parliament was rigged by the ruling NNDP political party. "Chief Akintola and his government and party used every political and administrative control capacity at their disposal to ensure their continued power."<sup>3</sup> There was corruption and nepotism in the government, and general apathy and low moral among the Nigerian people who endured inflation from 1960 to 1965.

The completion by K. O. Mbadiwe of his mansion, ironically named the "Palace of the People," at his home town in the East in November 1965 was yet another example of the gulf between wealth and life-styles of different classes of Nigerians.<sup>4</sup>

The Nigerian political system was suffering from a severe case of mental fatigue.

The structural frame, the grid which should have held the various interests together and provided institutions and procedures for the non-violent resolution of conflict, in fact, made the situation worse. This structural framework became identified with the majority section and, thus, the political struggle with Ibo-North (Hausa-Fulani rivalry) over the prostrate West. So strong was this tendency that it overrode and distorted even the Nzeogwu Coup of January 1966, which was ideologically motivated, in the sense of intending to destroy old corruptions, but directed by an Ibo inner core and thus open to sectional interpretations.<sup>5</sup>

A second weakness of the structural frame was its openness to manipulation by political elites. It increasingly became nothing more

than an instrument for their purposes, ceasing even to carry out its own originally intended functions. It was the same structural frame which provided forces which overthrew the First Republic and its political leaders. Elements of the army officer corps, the Frame's major coercive arm, carried out the coup in January 1966. The resulting military government was in effect an alliance between officers and civil servants. When the political leadership had manifestly failed, then, it was the personnel of the structural frame, its own elites, who struck back and took command.

"In the conditions of the First Republic - and this may be true of many African states - they were the only alternative source of leadership."<sup>6</sup>

#### Why Insurgents Seize Radio Stations First

In periods of serious political crisis, radio stations have played vital roles. Luttwak, in his book Coup D'etat: A Practical Handbook, explained why insurgents take over radio broadcasting first. Writing on the Machiavellian guide he stated:

Control over the flow of the information emanating from the political center will be the foremost weapon in the establishing of our authority after the coup. The seizure of the main means of mass communication will thus be a task of crucial importance.<sup>7</sup>

In Africa, radio is certainly the most important means of mass communication. In any situation of extralegal struggle for power and control of the government, whoever controls the radio station at the capital of the Federation (Broadcasting House in Lagos) might make quick appeal for the mass support throughout the Federation.

For example, in the unsuccessful coup in Nigeria on February 13,

1976, led by Colonel Dimka, the insurgents first seized the broadcasting house about 6:30 a.m. and proclaimed that the government of General Murtala Mohammed had been overthrown and that he was dead. Forces loyal to General Olushegun Obasanjo put down the rebellion after about a six-hour battle for the Ikoyi radio station of the NBC in which many people lost their lives. The attempted takeover failed.

Speaking on his experience and ordeal, the then director general of the NBC, Christopher Kolade, said this about Colonel Dimka:

If a man rushes in here after slaughtering a Head of State and he says he wants to use your radio, you have to let him. The man had proved that he meant business. Was it not better to have allowed him do his thing his own way rather than have him knock down everybody in the studio? I think that would be a futile resistance.<sup>8</sup>

That same radio station had figured in another power struggle earlier on July 29, 1975, when the then Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon, was overthrown in a bloodless coup by General Murtala Mohammed.

Insurgents head first for the radio station, because, if the populace can be made to believe the government has been toppled, the coup has a greater chance of success.

"This principle is not lost on incumbent leaders; the radio station is often one of the best-guarded installation in an African capitol."<sup>9</sup> Because of broadcasting's physical centralization and the organization as a government monopoly, this is the most important and key installation to seize in order to assume power.

Because of its power, radio is the only medium capable of quickly reaching a significant portion of the population. Radio is often regarded as the voice of the nation and speaks with peculiarly direct authority. For example, a new leader, or his representative, can speak directly to the people, addressing them with full range of emotional

overtones. Radio also has the rare ability to sound an alarm and warning when trouble threatens. In a society like Nigeria, where the oral tradition is very strong, radio has great effect. Listeners tend to regard it as literally the government itself speaking.

Control of radio broadcasting is the quickest way for any insurgent attempting to seize power through a coup to establish authority as the new de facto government. The masses then usually are forced by circumstances beyond their control to accept the fait accompli and to obey the directives of the "voice of government" coming from their transistor radios.

Therefore, for political as well as strategic reasons, radio stations must be controlled in a power struggle.

In many instances, pirate broadcasts are used to good effect. During the Nigeria - Biafra Civil War, Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu, the Biafran leader, frequently utilized clandestine radio broadcasts to confuse and demoralize the Nigerian Federal Army (see Appendix A, Figure 5).

Compared to broadcasting, local newspapers, owned primarily by the government, play a secondary and passive role in the time of political crisis. Since they are not sure who the head of the government might be next week, newspapers often wait and are reluctant to report what many people had already learned from the radio.

Television, on the other hand, is confined to the immediate environs of urban centers. The small audience is usually the rich and educated urban elite.

In terms of external broadcasts, the BBC World Service, and Voice of America have both played prominent roles in giving information in time of confusion when the radio station is temporarily closed, and

fighting for control of the station continues between factions of machine-gun toting soldiers.

Christopher Kolade gave a personal experience of how broadcasters feel when soldiers rush into the studios with machine-guns:

I felt if they did not succeed at the Broadcasting House, they were prepared to fight to get it. In that case they would fight against unarmed people. The result could have been deaths. I was carrying the responsibility for the lives of all my staff and the only paramount objective was to ensure their safety.<sup>10</sup>

#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Victor A. Oloyunsola, Soldiers and Power, the Development Performance of the Nigerian Military Regime (Standord: Hover Institution Press, 1977), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Samuel D. Huntington, Political Order in Changing Society (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), pp. 221-222.

<sup>3</sup>Kenneth Post and Michael Vickers, Structure and Conflict in Nigeria 1960-1966 (London and Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, and Heineman Educational Books Ltd, 1973), p. 229.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 234.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 235.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 236.

<sup>7</sup>Sydney W. Head, Broadcasting in Africa (Philadelphia: Temple University Press), p. 395.

<sup>8</sup>Christopher Kolade, "Encounter with Dimka," interview with Willy Bozimo (Lagos: Sunday Times, December 25, 1977), p. 17.

<sup>9</sup>Head, p. 396.

<sup>10</sup>Kolade, p. 17.

## CHAPTER XI

### PRESS FREEDOM WITHIN NIGERIAN POLITICAL STRUCTURE

A recent UNESCO study showed that Africans had less access to news than peoples of any other continent. The largest and freest press in black Africa is noted to be in Nigeria.

The study also indicates that all radio and television stations in black Africa are government controlled.

Writing on Freedom and Government, William Rivers and Wilbur Schramm explain that:

Three kinds of freedom are clearly central to democratic society: Freedom to know, freedom to tell and freedom to find out. It is the fundamental responsibility of the mass media today to defend these freedoms against international forces, government, domestic power groups, individuals, and even restricting influences within the media.<sup>1</sup>

Also writing on press freedom, Harold Benjamin once said:

Communication is a necessary tool of learning, and mass communication is public-spirited press is, therefore, a chief instrument whereby contemporary society orders and changes its ways in the direction of clearly visioned goals of increased human welfare.<sup>2</sup>

Although the Nigerian press is free, it is necessary to look at various past governments to assess the situation properly. Looking at the press relative to the performance of the Gowon regime, it is necessary to relate the serious pressure and handicap under which it operates. Decree 21 of 1968 and Decree 53 of 1969 related to the Nigerian press. They stipulated that it is "an offense to publish in



newspaper, radio and television, or any other means of mass communication, anything which can cause public alarm or industrial unrest."<sup>3</sup>

The decrees, in addition, allow the right of arbitrary detention to the Inspector General of Police, the Chief of Staff of the Army, and the Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters, suspension of habeas corpus which is regarded as a traditional legal instrument for challenging unlawful detention in many cases. Despite outcries from the Nigerian journalists against these decrees, Gowon's regime was adamant.

In his book, Soldiers and Power, Dr. Victor Olorunsola explained that,

During the Nigerian Civil regime the efficacy of the press, as well as its objectivity, suffered tremendously due to several factors, among them parochialism and the primordial sentiments of the press and its management.<sup>4</sup>

The Nigerian press, during the civil war, gave strong support to the Federal Military government in attempts to keep the country united. It is also to the credit of the press that in the course of helping the Federal government to achieve its main objectives, the Nigerian Press has not shirked its social responsibility of condemning the government for some excesses, ineptitudes, corruption and lack of planning. On various occasions some editors have been detained for daring to speak the truth as they see it or reflect the yearnings of the governed. One also can recall the radio play titled "Trees Grow in the Desert," which landed the former Director General of the NBC behind bars at Alagbon Close.

However, the unconscious impotence, malperformance and lack of unity among Nigerian media during the civilian rule was resolved during the military regime. It is now an informal acceptance of the dictum "Publish and be fair."<sup>5</sup>

In his article "Search Your Mind," Ojonla emphasized that:

A gulf between the government and the press is a gulf between government and people. Thankfully the gulf between Doddan Barracks and Nigerian newspapers is being swiftly bridged - for had it continued it would have created a precarious situation for the whole country.<sup>6</sup>

In his report on the press in Nigeria to the conference of the International Press Institute in Zurich, Switzerland on May 12, 1975, Alhaji Babatunde Jose, then chairman of Daily Times of Nigeria said:

Freedom has not come to the Nigerian Press on a gold of platter. Although it is true (and one must be honest enough to admit this), that we have a benevolent military government in Nigeria, which has allowed the press to continue its great noble tradition of fearlessness, much of the freedom now enjoyed by the Nigerian Press has been hard won.<sup>7</sup>

Commenting on "Futre for Democracy in Nigeria," Pendleton Herring remarked: "The press is free, outspoken, and has been a crucially significant factor in the rise of nationalism."<sup>8</sup>

While examining the role the press should play in the present political condition, Dr. Olu Onagoruwa in his article, "The Crisis of Press Freedom," said among other things:

Men in the free society should be trusted to debate issues however emotional or dangerous, provided no breach of the law is occasioned. If a citizen takes the risk of breaking the law by his books or writing, that should be a question for him to answer to before the court.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, the primary function of the press is to inform the people. There should be free public debate on critical issues facing the nation, and, at the same time, one must not lose sight of preserving the stability of a nation.

One of the greatest advocates of freedom of speech and expression, John Milton, declared:

Truth is the only safe basis for a society's life . . . Society's stake in free speech and press is plain in the structure and functioning of a self-governing people, only

through a clash of ideas in the open marketplace can working truths be arrived at.<sup>10</sup>

It was on this principle that the Hutchins Commission on Freedom of the Press in the United States recommends:

The moral right of free expression achieves a legal stature because the conscience of the citizen is the source of continued vitality of the state. Wholly apart from the traditional ground for a free press - that it promotes the 'victory of truth over falsehood' in the public arena.<sup>11</sup>

When asked which choice he would prefer, Thomas Jefferson, one of the most respected presidents of the United States once decided that if he was allowed he would "prefer newspapers without government rather than government without newspapers."<sup>12</sup>

The Hutchins Commission made a further recommendation that:

The press itself should assume the responsibility of providing the variety, quantity, and quality of information and discussion which the country needs . . . Whatever may be thought of the conduct of individual members of the older, established professions, like law and medicine, each of these professions as a whole accepts a responsibility for the service rendered as a whole, and there are some things which a truly professional man will not do for money.<sup>13</sup>

Recently, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, leader of the Unity Party of Nigeria, and presidential candidate, accused some Nigerian Journalists of demanding money while performing their social responsibilities. Chief Awolowo should substantiate his allegations with evidences and proof. But if it is true, the responsibility of the industry to condemn corruption in Nigeria is questionable (see Nigerian Press Organization Code of Conduct in Appendix C).

#### Future of Press Freedom

In a frank interview with Willy Bozimo in the Sunday Times of December 25, 1977, the retiring Director General of NBC, Christopher

Kolade, said he did not consider as desirable any specific clause in the constitution for press freedom: "I do not see how it will improve the performance of the work of pressmen."<sup>14</sup>

Amidst inefficiency, corruption and inexperience, in less than a decade Nigeria has risen from a struggling third-world agricultural nation to an oil-rich power. Few countries can match the colossal economic strides of this fledgling nation - half Muslim, a third Christian - nestled in the crook of the continent's westward bulge.

Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Venezuela - all these oil countries have made tremendous changes in the past five years, and in the words of Harry Cahill, economics counselor at the U.S. Embassy in Lagos who said 'But they haven't come so far so fast as Nigeria.'<sup>15</sup>

The Nigerian press, however, is not moving as fast as the country. According to Dr. Kolade, "The pressmen are not exploiting the freedom they now possess to the full."<sup>16</sup>

And to determine the future role of the press and its freedom, structures of the mass media and the elected future government of the federation must be examined.

As of now, federal and state governments own and control radio and television stations. They partially control or own some leading newspapers. In the words of Alhaji, Babatunde Jose, chairman, Nigerian Television Authority:

Basically it means that the men and women who write news and views for the press and those who write and produce news and current affairs programs for radio and television should be reader and viewer oriented - their first loyalty should be to the public.<sup>17</sup>

The civilian president will be so constitutionally powerful that the nation will need a strong, fearless and devoted mass media to expose the irregularities of his action and policy.

Journalists often have contempt for politicians, believing they are

impotent tools in the hands of civil servants. On the other hand, civil servants, often jealous and sensitive of their intellectual detachment, suspect the motivation of politicians.

If the press is to be free, understanding between the press, government and the people is critical. There must be a sense of belonging and togetherness flowing from government to the people and vice versa.

The federal and state governments should adopt a policy of respect for, and confidence in, the Nigerian press.

Freedom of speech and press is close to the central meaning of all liberty. If freedom of the press is to achieve reality in Nigeria, government must set limits upon its capacity to interfere with, regulate, control, own and suppress the voices of the press. "Here belong free thought, free conscience, free worship, free speech, freedom of the person and free assembly. Freedom of the press takes its place with these."<sup>18</sup>

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>William L. Rivers and Wilbur Schramm, Responsibility in Mass Communication (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1969), p. 54.

<sup>2</sup>Afriscope, Press in Africa: How Free Is It? (Lagos: Pan Afriscope Nigeria Ltd, August, 1975), p. 65.

<sup>3</sup>Victor A. Olurunsola, Soldiers and Power; The Development Performance of the Nigerian Military Regime (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1977), p. 86.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ojonla, "Search Your Mind Publish and Be Fair," Nigerian Trust (Lagos: Trust Publication, 1975), p. 11.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Babatunde Jose, Nigerian Press Is Pro-Nigeria, Report on the Press in Nigeria to the Conference of IPI in Zurich, May 12, 1975, p. 7.

<sup>8</sup>Olu Onagoruwa, "Crisis of Press Freedom," Nigerian Affairs (Lagos: Times International, September 16, 1974), p. 7.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>The Commission on Freedom of the Press, A Free and Responsible Press (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947), p. 9.

<sup>12</sup>Sydney W. Head, Broadcasting in America (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1972).

<sup>13</sup>The Commission on Freedom of the Press, p. 92.

<sup>14</sup>Christopher Kolade, Sunday Times, Encounter with Dimka (Lagos: Daily Times, Nigerian Ltd, 1977), p. 17.

<sup>15</sup>Noel Grove, "Nigeria Struggles with Boom Times," National Geographic (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Press, March, 1979, Vol. 155, No. 3), p. 416.

<sup>16</sup>Kolade, Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Babatunde Jose, "Threat to Press Freedom in the 1980's," Sunday Times (Lagos: Daily Times Nigerian Ltd, 1978), p. 7.

<sup>18</sup>The Commission on Freedom of the Press, p. 116.

## CHAPTER XII

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Early in this thesis, the author traced the growth of broadcasting and the evolution of modern programming in Nigeria. Today television has surpassed radio as the leading medium of mass communication. It is intended for the literate elite groups who are busy during the day and who, at night, would rather look than listen. This group also can read and write.

However, the majority of people cannot read or write. They use the radio primarily. The radio audience outside Nigerian cities is growing rapidly. It is this audience the broadcaster should try to reach.

Many Nigerians are involved in educational and development processes - community leaders, civil servants, teachers, and workers. It is the broadcaster's responsibility to understand, work with and produce programs to fulfill their needs.

Radio and television share one advantage with film in Nigeria, as well as in other African countries. The illiterate can understand them, at least to a degree. They also have advantage over film, since they need not be concerned with transportation of projection equipment and film footage from village to village. The bad communication system, particularly the impassable roads, is no barrier to either medium.

Regarding cost, radio and television fare not better than film. The millions of dollars required to establish and maintain a nation-wide



broadcast network must be considered against the small budget of the country.

It is imperative, therefore, to stress that, it is not the mere presence of radio and television in Nigeria that matters, but rather, in the final analysis, how they are being utilized.

#### Recommendation

In the Nigerian broadcasting system there is greater need for technical competence and a high-quality sound. In many older broadcasting systems it is common practice for young men and women aspiring to become producers to start as technical operators. They are content to remain at this level for a year or so before they move into production. However, a young Nigerian with a university degree, who is earmarked for production, does not take kindly to beginning his career as a technical operator. In fact, he tends to reject attempts to provide him with any technical know-how without realizing that no broadcasting system can function effectively unless its producers are aware of what constitutes technical excellence.

The Federal Radio Corporation has set up seven new stations and is looking for announcers and administrative officers to man the new stations. Staff next in rank in Lagos were promoted out to the states as controllers on higher scales. Therefore, there is a loss of staff.

The Corporation should establish back-up training program to compensate for the loss.

In March 1977, proposals were submitted to the federal government to improve the lot of the NBC workers, most of whom are paid inordinately low wages. The government has not approved or disapproved the proposals.

From personal experience as a studio manager, the title "Studio Manager" is very deceiving. Other ranks such as producers and technical officers, look down upon studio managers just as people in the U.S. look down upon dishwashing operators, who are lowly-paid. The salary and promotion of studio managers should be improved, because they carry the most difficult part of recording programs. Without them, there is no program.

### Recruitment

The broadcasting industry must advertise its needs if it intends to have better qualified personnel.

In the UNESCO survey and report on Training for Radio and Television, it was recommended that emphasis be on talent, creative ability and an aptitude for broadcasting. The survey also stresses the importance of ability in its recommendation on promotion.

African broadcasting organizations were encouraged to gear up their efforts in basic training, on-the-job training, overseas training and special courses.

### Problems and Prospects

In many African radio stations, including Nigeria, music fills nearly two-thirds of each broadcast day, and in most cases, the music may not be predominantly African.

There is also the danger of the increasing gulf between the sophisticated city-dweller and the resident of rural areas. Broadcasters often have become so well-adapted to urban life that they often lose contact with the rural areas they largely serve.

Other problems include providing up-to-date studio equipment and transmitters to overcome the heavy atmospheric interference common in Nigeria. The author recommends that more programs should be broadcast in local and indigeneous languages.

For some time, African broadcasting has relied too much on generosity of the "have" nations, in particular, former colonial powers, such as the USA, Soviet Union and France, and supranational organizations such as UNESCO, whose motives for generosity may not always be purely philanthropic.

#### Seminars for Nigerian Leaders

There seems to be a misconception by some Nigerian leaders about the proper role of the press. To improve their relationship with the press, a series of seminars should be arranged for both military and civilian leaders, to afford them the opportunity to appreciate the apt functions of the press, which transcend merely informing, entertaining, educating, as well as giving feedback to the governments about the trend of public opinions.

#### University Education for Mass

##### Media Practitioners

Exposure to university education would enable a journalist to be intellectually equipped, original, creative and have a broader understanding of the communication process. This would enable him to appreciate the socio-economic development in a country undergoing a rapid change.

In addition, the journalist would be able to enjoy equal treatment

and comparable dignity with other professionals. Since he is not feeling inferior as a result of low education, and because his high academic attainment is tied to economic security, he would be occupationally mobile.

In Nigeria today, radio and television are providing a constantly improving standard of performance. However, the industry must open itself to young ideas, preserve the best of Nigerian tradition, and react to changing times in a positive fashion. The industry is at the beginning of understanding television is potential, both domestically and globally, as a means of mass communication. New developments in the industry are still to be explored. New developments such as cable and cassette provide radio and television contact with the Nigerian masses. After taking due notice of these obstacles, however, radio and television seem not only destined to play a leading role in the development of Nigeria, but are even now accomplishing much along these lines to uplift the society.

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APPENDIXES





APPENDIX A

FIGURES SHOWING MAPS OF NIGERIA  
AND BIAFRA

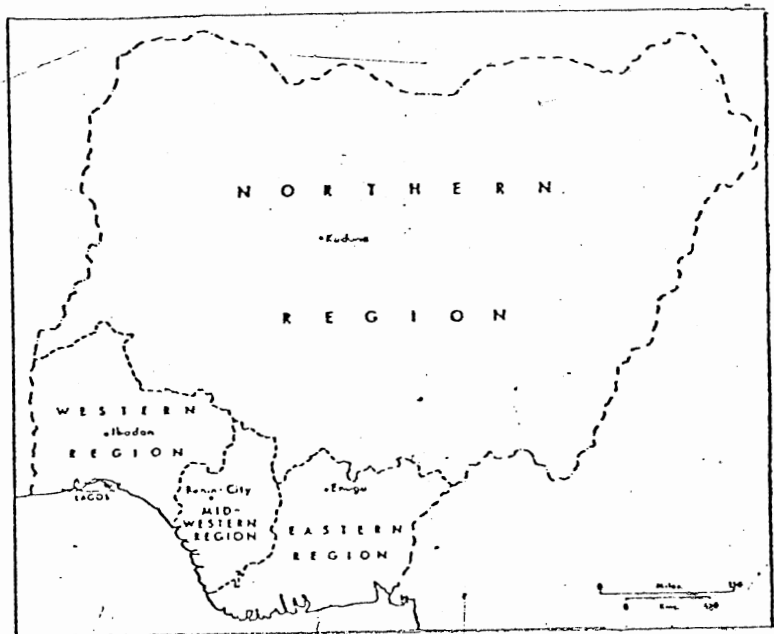


Figure 1. Map of Nigeria Showing the Four Regions

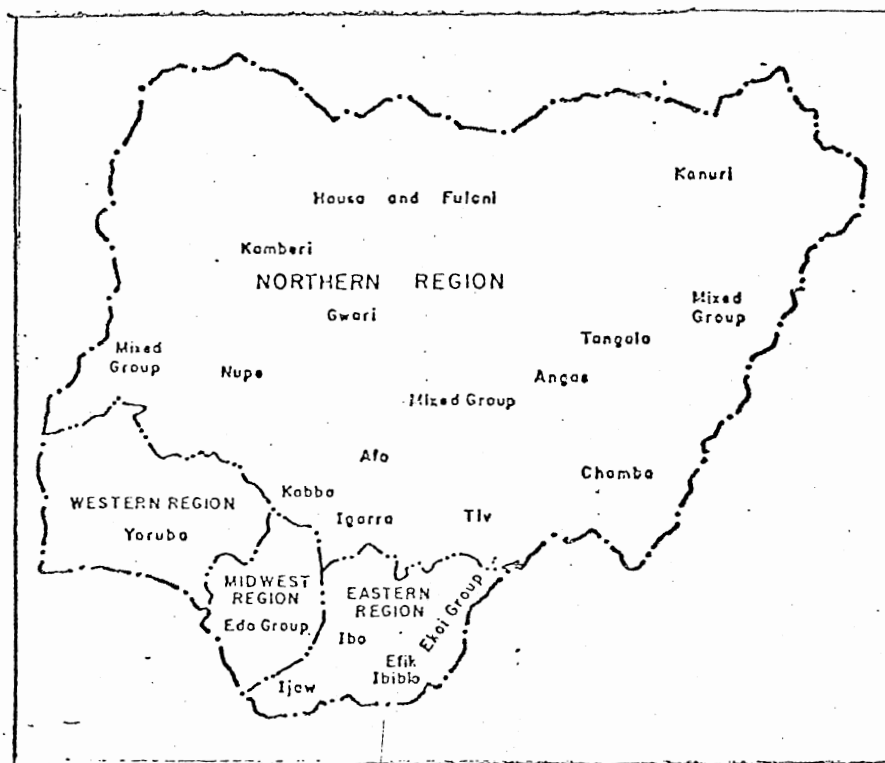


Figure 2. Map of Nigeria Showing the Old Structure of Four Regions and Major Tribal Groups

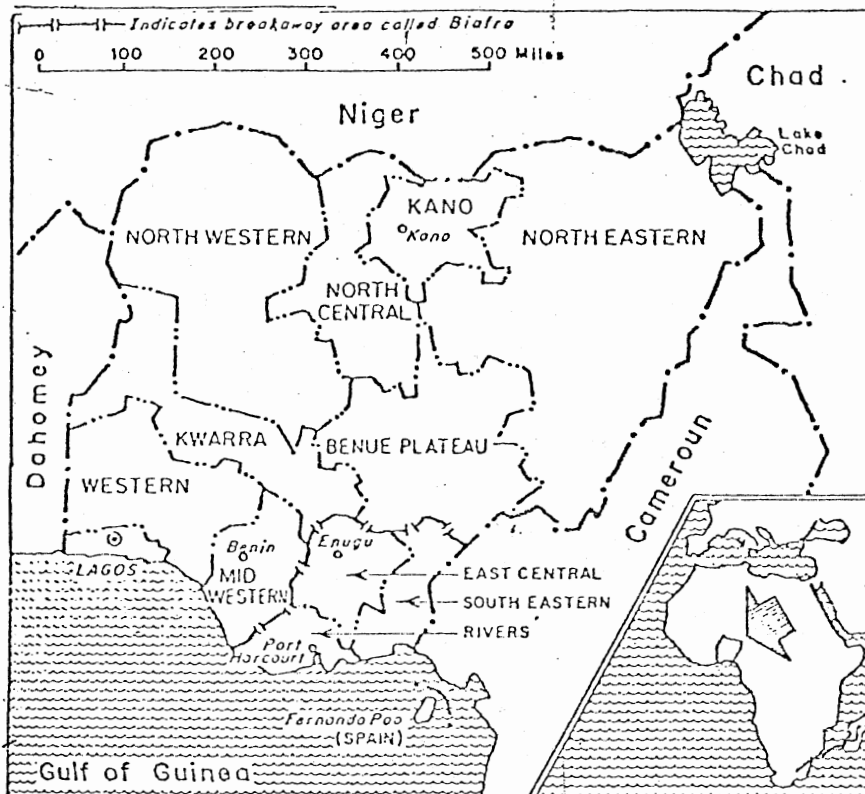


Figure 3. Map of Nigeria Showing the Twelve States

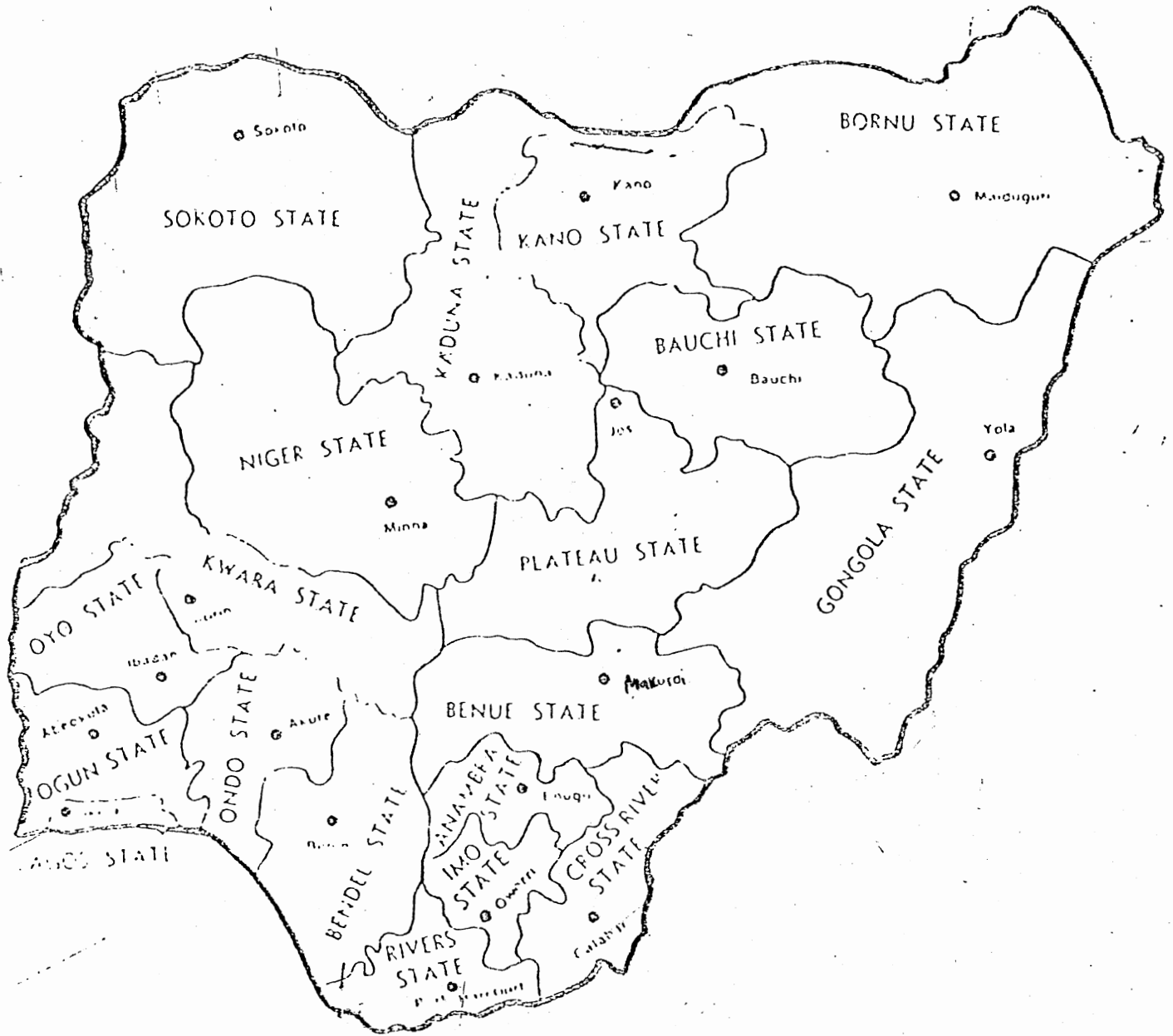
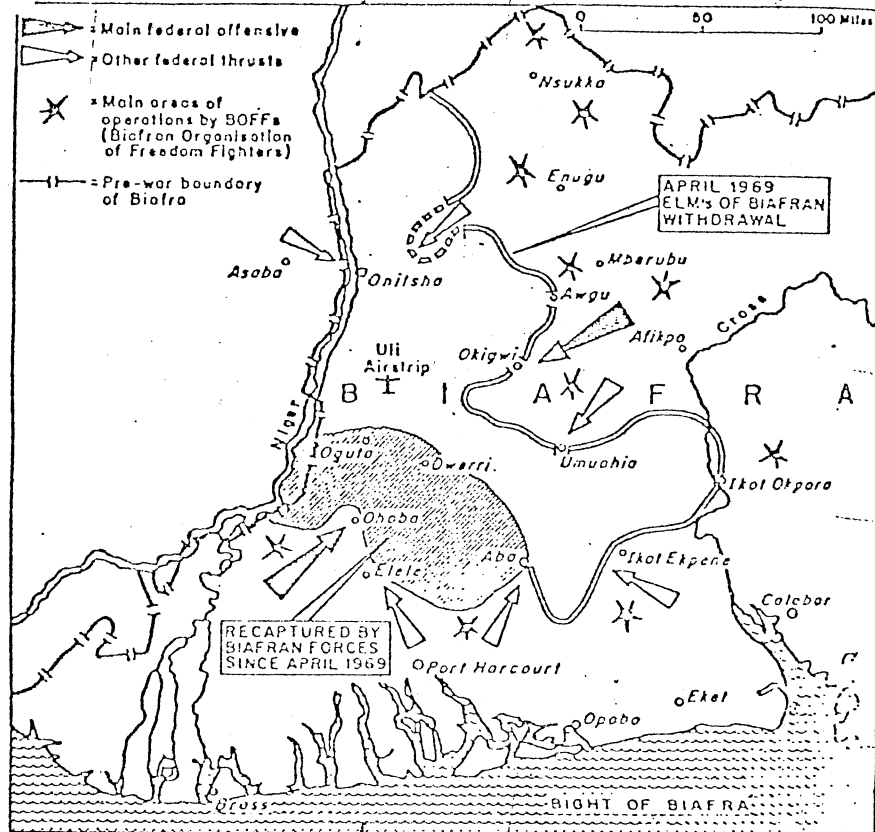


Figure 4. Map of Nigeria Showing the 19 States



Source: Geneka Zednek, The Nigerian War, 1972, p. 72.

Figure 5. A Map of Biafra Showing the Area Under the Rebels' Control During Phase IV

APPENDIX B

TABLES SHOWING SUMMARY OF SYSTEM FACILITIES,  
NET-WORK STATIONS AND LANGUAGES USED

TABLE I  
SUMMARY OF SYSTEM FACILITIES

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Population: 80,000,000

Radio Transmitters Sites: 18

Area Per Site: 20,000 sq. mi.

Languages: 30

No. of Radio Receivers:

No. of TV Receivers:

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TABLE II  
NET-WORK STATIONS AND LANGUAGES USED

Station	Languages
Lagos	English, Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo
Ibadan	English and Yoruba
Benin	Edo, Itsekiri, Urhobo, Igbo
Ilorin	English and Hausa
Sokoto	English and Hausa
Kano	English and Hausa
Kaduna	English and Hausa
Maiduguri	English and Fulfulde
Jos	English and Hausa
Enugu	English and Igbo
Calabar	English and Efik
Port Harcourt	English

TABLE III  
NBC-TV PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Time	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
10:00						
11:00			Educational Television -----			
3:00						
4:00			Educational Television -----			
6:00	News	News	News	News	News	News
6:05	Voices	Children's Hour	Children's Hour	Children's Hour	Children's Hour	News
7:00	News	News	News	News	News	News
7:05	Village Headmaster	Youth Forum	On Stage	Voices	Variety	News
8:00	Variety	Play of the Week	Judd for the Defense	Mogul	Soccer	
9:00	News	News	News	News	News	News
9:15	People and Places	Viewpoint	Feminine Fancies	Interlude	News Highlights	Voices
10:00	For Children	Show International	The Late Show	Mid-Week Movies	Village Headmaster	
11:00	News	News	News	News	News	

APPENDIX C

NIGERIAN PRESS ORGANIZATION

CODE OF CONDUCT

Reprinted here is the Nigerian Press Organization Code of Conduct.  
It is reprinted through the courtesy of Daily Times Nigeria Limited.

#### PREAMBLE

1. Abuse of the rights of the press are punishable by law. Indeed, the Law of Libel, civil as well as criminal and the Law of Contempt, deal adequately with such abuse.
2. Any abuse of the rights of the press, therefore, cannot be the objective of declaration.
3. But experience has shown many lapses in the practice of the profession and it has for long become apparent that a Code of Conduct must be established as among practicing journalists themselves, if they must fulfill their true functions and if a standard below which journalists may not be expected to fall, may be laid down.

It is in pursuance of these objectives that we hereby solemnly declare:

1. That the public is entitled to the truth and that only correct information can form the basis for sound journalism and ensure the confidence of the people.
2. That it is the moral duty of every journalist to have respect for the truth and to publish or prepare for publication only the truth and to the best of his knowledge.
3. That it is the duty of the journalist to publish only facts; never to suppress such facts as he knows; never to falsify either to suit his own purposes, or any other purposes.

4. That it is the duty of the journalist to refuse any reward for publishing or suppressing news or comments, other than salary and allowances legitimately earned in the discharge of his professional duties.
5. That the journalist shall employ all legitimate means in the collection of news and he shall defend at all times the right to free access, provided that due regard is paid to the privacy of individuals.
6. That once information has been collected and published the journalist shall observe the universally accepted principle of secrecy and shall not disclose the source of information obtained in confidence.
7. That it is the duty of the journalist to regard plagiarism as unethical.
8. That it is the duty of every journalist to correct any published information found to be incorrect.

VITA<sup>2</sup>

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