

**ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF NEWSPAPER PRESS IN NIGERIA UP TO  
1960**

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**BEING A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND  
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THE AWARD OF BACHELOR OF ARTS (B.A.) DEGREE IN HISTORY**

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## **CERTIFICATION**

This is to certify that this project work was carried out by **EWEKA ENIYE FAVOUR** in the Department Of History and International Studies University of Benin, Benin City under my supervision.

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to God Almighty for His guidance and protection over my life particularly during the procession of this work.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My first unreserved and unending thanks go to Almighty God for His, protection kindness and blessing upon me and my family.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	i
Certification	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	iii
Dedication	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	iv
Acknowledgements	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	v

### CHAPTER ONE: THE BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Introduction	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Aims and Objectives of the Study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Methodology	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Scope of the Study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Literature Review.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Chapterization	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Endnotes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15

### CHAPTER TWO: ORIGIN OF NEWSPAPERS IN NIGERIA

Introduction	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17
Origin of Newspapers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	18
Decline of the Iwe' Irohin' fún àwon arà Egbá àti Yoruba Newspaper	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	25
Conclusion	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	27
Endnotes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	29

### CHAPTER THREE: DEVELOPMENT OF NEWSPAPER PRESS

#### UP TILL 1960

Introduction	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	31
Anglo African Press	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	35

Lagos Times and Gold Coast Advertiser - - - - -	38
The Lagos Weekly Record - - - - -	41
African Messenger and The Nigerian Daily Times- - - - -	46
Conclusion- - - - -	52
Endnotes- - - - -	54

**CHAPTER FOUR: ROLES OF NEWSPAPER PRESS IN THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF NIGERIAN POLITICS**

Introduction - - - - -	56
Roles of Newspapers in Political Development - - - - -	58
Information Dissemination - - - - -	58
Agenda Setting- - - - -	60
Watchdog Function- - - - -	62
Public Opinion Formation- - - - -	64
Education and Awareness- - - - -	66
Bridge Between Politicians and Citizens- - - - -	67
Advocacy and Mobilization- - - - -	69
Conclusion - - - - -	71
Endnotes - - - - -	72

**CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION**

Conclusion - - - - -	74
Endnotes - - - - -	79
Bibliography -- - - - -	80

## CHAPTER ONE

### BACKGROUND TO STUDY

#### Introduction

A newspaper is a form of printed publication where information about the latest news, such as current events and local activity is written. They consist of large stacks of folded paper so that readers can have an easy time flipping through the pages. A Newspaper is simply, a printed unbound paper that contains news about current political, economic, socio-cultural, educational, environmental, scientific-cum-technological and sundry affairs as well as other relevant sales information. A typical newspaper should therefore contain a blend of editorial contents news, features/news commentaries, articles, letters-to-the editors etc. Advertorial; advertisements, supplements and other paid commercial contents and pictorials pictures and illustrations that complement the news contents.<sup>1</sup>

A newspaper is a publication containing news and information and advertising, usually printed on low-cost paper called newsprint. It may be of general or special interest, most often published daily or weekly. The first printed newspaper was published in 1605, and the form has thrived even in the face of competition from technologies such as radio, television, and the internet. More so, a newspaper is a scheduled publication containing news of current events, informative articles, diverse features, editorials, and advertising. It usually is printed on relatively inexpensive, low-grade paper such as

newsprint. By 2007, there were 6580 daily newspapers in the world selling 395 million copies a day. The worldwide recession of 2008, combined with the rapid growth of web-based alternatives, caused a serious decline in advertising and circulation, as many papers closed or sharply retrenched operations.<sup>2</sup>

Be that as it may, the newspaper is a fraction of one of the means of mass communication known as the print media of the press. Printed media usually distributed weekly or daily in the form of a folded book of papers; the publication is typically sectioned off based on subject and content. The most important or interesting news will be displayed on the front page of the publication. Newspapers may also include advertisements, opinions, entertainment and other general interest news. General-interest newspapers typically publish stories on local and national political events and personalities, crime, business, entertainment, society, and sports. Most traditional papers also feature an editorial page containing editorials written by an editor and columns that express the personal opinions of writers. The newspaper is typically funded by paid subscriptions and advertising this doesn't change the significance of newspaper to the society as a form of education, enlightenment and most importantly its role of aiding proper dissemination of information. A wide variety of material has been published in newspapers, including editorial opinions, criticism, persuasion and op-eds; obituaries; entertainment features such as crosswords, sudoku and horoscopes; weather news and forecasts; advice, food and other columns; reviews of radio, movies, television, plays and

restaurants; classified ads; display ads, radio and television listings, inserts from local merchants, editorial cartoons, gag cartoons and comic strips.<sup>3</sup>

That as it is, though printing started as early as 1846 in Nigeria with the setting up of a printing press in Calabar by the Presbyterian mission, the first newspaper did not emerge until 1859 when an Anglican Missionary, Reverend Henry Townsend of the Christian Missionary Society (CMS) established what is now generally agreed to be the first newspaper known as Iwe Iroyin Fun Awon Ara Egba Ati Yoruba which literally translated means information newspaper for the Egba-speaking people and the Yorubas this event marked the origin and development of Newspaper press in Nigeria which will be looked into during the course of this study.<sup>4</sup>

### **Aim and objectives**

- i. to give a general introduction about the study.
- ii. to understand the origin of newspaper in Nigeria.
- iii. to examine the development of Newspaper press in Nigeria up till 1960.
- iv. to discuss the roles of Newspaper Press to the growth and development of Nigerian politics.

### **Methodology**

In order to achieve a comprehensive study of the origin and development of Newspaper press in Nigeria up till 1960, data obtained from primary and secondary sources were employed to carry out the study; Historical methods were also adopted.

**Primary Sources:** These include oral interviews, archival materials and reports.

**Secondary Sources:** Secondary sources includes published works from universities, private and public libraries, textbooks, articles, journals, unpublished essays and dissertations, which are considered relevant to the study. In the process of sourcing for materials in the course of the study, I made sure I sourced for books, journals and paperwork relating to the origin and development of Newspaper press in Nigeria up till 1960. More so, oral interviews were also carried and they arrived at a similar conclusion after discussing the research problem. Furthermore, I also carried out a background study of the various authors or writers of the books so as to make sure their works were free from subjectivity there by not been biased in the course of writing these works and the major reason for carrying out the background study was to weigh the intellectual capability of the various writers.

### **Scope of the Study**

The scope of this study spans through the pre colonial period up to 1960 and this study tends to carry out a thorough research work on the origin and development of Newspaper press in Nigeria up till 1960.

Furthermore the study seeks to reveal the origin and development of Newspaper press in Nigeria up to 1960; it's significance, evolution, contributions to the development of the society, as well as it's political structure.

More so, the study will also be lays emphasis on the important role played by newspaper press during the pre-colonial period, how it increased political participation amongst Nigerians as well as increasing the spirit of nationalism which resulted in the independence of Nigeria.

## **Literature Review**

There are several literatures that have tried to provide an understanding of the origin and development of newspaper press in Nigeria up to 1960. These literatures are relevant to this study because they provide the framework for our understanding of the origin and development of newspaper press in Nigeria up to 1960; as they provide information relevant for this research work.

Olu Akinsuroju, in a lecture delivered entitled, “The Nigerian Press, 1859 – 1969”,<sup>5</sup> he stated that the In West Africa, there was no newspaper by 1800 but by the mid Nineteenth Century, a substantial number of Newspapers had been established. In Nigeria, the establishment of the first Newspaper on 1st December, 1859 by Rev. Henry Townsend of the CMS at Abeokuta was to open the floodgate for newspaper proprietorship there were such forebears like the Nigerian Times which debuted on April, 1910; the Nigerian Spectator on May 19, 1923 and the Nigerian Advocate on August 1, 1923.

But as independence became consolidated on the African continent, with Nigeria as a reference point, the newspaper has been in the fore front in handling local socio-political challenges. Akinsuroju stated that in the process also, the survival of the

newspapers and coverage has become a daunting challenge with many newspapers coming up and soon dying off. This is unlike what obtains in other climes like America, Europe, etc. where some papers have been surviving for hundreds of years. For example, “Berrow’s Worcester Journal, which started as the Worcester Postman in 1690 and was published regularly from 1709, is believed to be the oldest surviving English newspaper”.. Others like the London Times of UK formerly called Daily Universal Register was founded on January 1, 1787, the Guardian Newspaper of London, UK 1821, the Washington Post Newspaper of USA July 8, 1989.<sup>6</sup>

This is why Olu Akinsuroju made the suggestions for papers to adopt a standard system of funding in order to remain financially viable. First is consolidation of Newspapers. But this suggestion could lead to homogenization. His second view is that, “Newspapers must attract advertisers, who prefer affluent readers. This need for profitable readers tends to slant news towards a higher socio-economic sector of the population”. His third filter is “symbiotic relationship” between the government and the media. But again, the risk of the media and government becoming too close is one that could water down their watch-dog role. Generally, in the quest to help the press to succeed, so many fundamental structural changes or innovations have been explored. Some of them are already being used. For instance, many countries including Nigeria have now settled for hybrid-print.<sup>7</sup>

C. W. Ogbondah, in his article entitled, "British Colonial Authoritarianism, African Military Dictatorship and the Nigerian Press",<sup>8</sup> he stated that the Nigerian Press

first emergent in our political arena is not to serve the political interest which its latter serve; up to the extent of exposing the atrocities which is been committed by some class of person who use Government as a shed. The most interesting fact at this junction is that those People did not fold their arms watching as a result of which lots were done in silencing them starting from Colonial era who introduced various Ordinances to the various Military governments that have governed us with series of Decrees and extended to the tagged democratic dispensation that we are and as a matter of fact they succeeded in silencing them which served as a shed to Corrupt Officers in Nigeria Government up till now and as well change the people's perception that corruption is normal practice.

More so, he called on the Nigerian Government {National Assembly in particular) to ensure passage of Freedom of Information (FOI) Bill or enact another Act that will guarantee Freedom of Nigerian Press because the fear of Nigerian Press by Nigerians and Nigerian politicians in particular is the beginning of wisdom which will assist in eradicating corruption in our political arena. Sincerely speaking, freedom of press is a threat to our politicians and their agents due to the magnitudes of various crimes perpetrated while in office ranging from corruption, assassination of opponents, character assassination etc which can be unveiled by a free democratic press which has been the basis of opposing its reality. He added that: " . . We cannot deny the fact that, we as a nation are asking too much from the media, especially the print media, however, the public was pushed to be asking too much from the Fourth Estate of the Realm, because it appears whenever the Press sneezes, politicians, especially the lawless Ones, catch cold".

Consequently, only politicians driven by concept of patriotism, honesty and mean-well-for the Nigerians will stimulate the passing of the FOI Bill. It is on the basis that he called he attention of-all members of the National Assembly.<sup>9</sup>

E. S. Ikoli, in his article entitled, "The Nigerian Press",<sup>10</sup> he explained the The Constitutional obligations and the expectable role of the Nigerian Press which states that the press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media shall at all times be free to uphold the fundamental objective contained in the Constitution; which cut across government and people, political objectives, economic objectives, social objectives, educational objectives, foreign policy objectives, environmental objectives, directive on Nigerian cultures, national ethics and duties of the citizen as well as to uphold the responsibility and accountability of the government to the people and that every person is entitled to freedom of expression, including freedom to hold opinions and to receive, impart ideas and information without interference. But to be sincere with ourselves this vested power in respect to press have been handcuffed by various law which pose great threat to them and as well served as an obstacle to some extent to Citizen natural right of contributing to their political development.

He further stated that "the only constitutional way our government can preserve itself or leave its people the fullest possible freedom to praise, criticize, or discuss as they see fit, all government policies and to suggest, if they desire, that even its most fundamental postulate are bad and should be changed" and that no agent or an institution can be use to achieve this than the Press. It is on this basis, he called on every Nigerians

to support the resurrecting of the dead FOI Bill and not only that but to ensure its passage unto law because its benefit is not restricted to the press freedom alone but will empower all Nigerians to demand good governance from those that are managing the affairs of the government which have made tremendous impact in some Countries. It should be noted that war against corruption in Nigeria is a child play without the existence of the FOI law; He went on explain that it is only when we do things properly we can achieve the goals for which we have set for ourselves as a people. Which connote at this point that it is only when Nigerian Press is empowered with FOI Law they can perform their duty properly as well as truly serves as the watchdogs and vanguards of our Nation as expected of them especially for the purpose of ensuring good governance and practicable democracy which will have great impact in re-orientating us to be good Nigerians.<sup>11</sup>

L. K. Jakande in his article entitled, "The Role of the Mass Media in a Developing Nation",<sup>12</sup> he stated that the printing press was used to disseminate news in Europe shortly after Gutenberg invented the letter press, employing movable type, in the 1450s. One of the first printed works that might qualify as news was an Italian account of a tournament printed in about 1470. A letter written by Christopher Columbus, reporting on his discoveries, was set in type and circulating in Barcelona before Columbus arrived there in April of 1493. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, thousands of printed news books, short pamphlets reporting on a news event, and news ballads, accounts of news events written in verse and usually printed on one side of a single sheet of paper, circulated in Europe and, to a lesser extent, in the new European colonies in America.

The first news report printed in the Americas described an earthquake in Guatemala and was printed in Mexico in 1541. Although they touched upon a wide variety of news, these news books and news ballads did not qualify as newspapers because they each appeared only once, to report on only one story, and they had no identity separate from the particular news story they told.

The newspaper industry has been around for over four centuries, and it has experienced a tumultuous run. Although the first official newspaper was published in 1605 in Strasburg, it was only during the Industrial Revolution, in the early 19th century, when the steam printing press and telegraph developed. This allowed inexpensive papers to be sold by street vendors to a larger part of the audience. Between 1890 and 1920, the industry grew and newspapers enjoyed the focal attention of being society's primary source of information. This was known as the 'Golden Age' for print media. However, the Great Depression disrupted this and in the 1930s newspapers were severely hurt, hundreds of companies halted or ended operations. This was escalated with the emerging broadcast radio, offering lower priced alternative news and as a result capturing a large portion of advertising revenues from newspapers.<sup>13</sup>

Be that as it may, television was the next technology that disrupted the newspaper business. It was a more powerful medium to distribute information and it overtook the newspaper and majority of national advertising in the 1960s. In response, newspapers consolidated. Family owned papers were taken over by parent companies, for example

Gannett Co. purchased over 50 newspapers between 1960 and 1980. There were also a few, like the New York Times Co. and the Washington Post Co. that went public at this time. This led to a decrease in number of competing daily papers and by 1971 only 2% of metropolitan cities had more than one newspaper. While this eradicated competition and made it harder to regulate the role of the press, it also gave those existing newspapers an opportunity to enjoy a semi-monopolistic position in their city; that is to say that the role of news paper press to the in the society cannot be overemphasized.<sup>14</sup>

Crowley Hover, in his book entitled, *Communication in History: Technology, Culture and Society*,<sup>15</sup> he traced the origin of newspapers down to the 15<sup>th</sup> century when he stated that the most important milestone in the development of mass communication came in 1456 with the invention of the printing press and movable type. In Mainz, Germany, Johannes Gutenberg paved the way for the reproduction of books for the masses by creating a usable printing system consisting of a simple set of metal characters. The Bible was one of the first books printed. Encouraged by a public eager for knowledge, the art of printing spread rapidly throughout Europe. Within 50 years, more than 30 thousand different books were printed, primarily religious and Latin classics. The invention of the printing press had a considerable impact on civilization as it had gone a long way in increasing societal awareness amongst the people. Eventually, more popular subjects such as history, travel and romance appeared, written in native languages and traded on the open market. Where royalty and the church had previously controlled information, the mass production of books now created a marketplace for ideas.

Circulation threatened the power of the church and state because knowledge could be a powerful tool and weapon. Nearly all governments and societies at one time or another sought to restrict the printing or distribution of books. A license to print was required in England from 1529 to 1695, although many prohibited books were still sold on the black market. Copyright protection for printers also became a concern, with England enacting the first copyright statute in 1518.<sup>15</sup>

In North America, the first book published was "The Whole Book of Psalms" in 1640 by Stephen Daye. One of the most famous books was "Poor Richard's Almanac", published by Benjamin Franklin every year from 1733 to 1758. Franklin established the first subscription library in America in 1731. The elite mostly possessed their own private collections. Thomas Jefferson's personal library was eventually purchased by Congress in 1815 to start the Library of Congress. For many years, the process of printing books changed little and production was generally slow. Only about 10 percent of the population could read, and books remained fairly expensive. But as literacy increased, more efficient techniques emerged to meet demand. In 1798 in France, a machine that could handle a continuous roll of paper was developed. Steam power was added in 1811 in Germany, and an American invented a rotary press in 1846. Type had to be hand set until the linotype was created in 1884 in the U.S. Faster printing methods and inexpensive paper led to cheaply produced books called "dime novels". Beginning in the 1870s, these popular, short novels sold for about 10 cents and covered such themes as adventure, romance, and the American frontier.<sup>16</sup>

That as it is, in discussing the evolution of Newspaper, we can say unequivocally that the use and production of books was first used in the dissemination of information before the use of Newspaper which to a large extent had gone a long way to boost the spirit of political participation as well as societal awareness of the people.

## **Chapterization**

This research work is divided into five chapters as follows:

### **Chapter One: Introduction**

This chapter which is the introductory aspect of this study consists of the introduction, aims and objectives, scope of the study, literature review and endnotes. Basically the aim of this chapter is to lay a foundation and make a general introduction of the study; the origin and development of Newspaper press in Nigeria up till 1960.

### **Chapter Two: Origin of Newspapers in Nigeria**

In this chapter we will be discussing the Origin of Newspaper In Nigeria even before colonial influence, as well as analyzing the various forms of Newspaper already in place before the advent of the Europeans.

### **Chapter Three: Development of Newspaper press in Nigeria up till 1960**

This chapter will be discussing the development of Newspaper press from the period of its formation up till 1960. This chapter will examine the evolution of newspaper

in Nigeria and how it has made huge impact to the lives of citizens as well as enhancing proper dissemination of information.

#### **Chapter Four: Roles of Newspaper press to the growth and development of Nigerian politics**

This chapter will be focusing mainly on the roles of Newspaper press to the growth and development of Nigerian politics; its use as a significant tool in the eradication of colonial rule with the increase of the spirit of nationalism.

#### **Chapter Five: Conclusion**

This is the sum total of all the chapters in this research project as it tends to conclude on the various findings during the process of putting the work together and it consists the major points that was highlighted during the course of this research work.

## Endnotes

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12. L. K, Jakande, "The Role of the Mass Media in a Developing Nation", *University of Ife, Faculty of Arts Series*, (4), 1974, p.65.
13. *Ibid.*, p.68.
14. *Ibid.*, p.69

15. Crowley Hover, *Communication in History: Technology, Culture and Society*,  
New York: Longman, 1999, p.34.

16. *Ibid.*, p.35

## CHAPTER TWO

### ORIGIN OF NEWSPAPERS IN NIGERIA

#### **Introduction**

At the middle of the 19th century, the Christian Missionary Society, among others, came to South-Western Nigeria through the Atlantic coastal land. At that time, the foreign missionaries teamed up with the freed and converted African slaves to work alongside with the colonial administrators. After establishing their missions in areas that were relatively close to the coast among the Yoruba, there was the need for some of them to spread the works into the hinterland.<sup>1</sup>

The Egbas people who had been freed from the slave trade and settled in Sierra Leone, where they had been educated by Europeans and had accepted Christianity, started to move to Badagry and then Abeokuta in 1839, just nine years after the founding of Abeokuta, when they learned that their people had left the Egba forests. To propagate Christianity in the area, Reverend Henry Townsend came in Badagry on December 19, 1842. He was dispatched by the Christian Missionary Society (CMS) in England to learn more about the Yoruba people and, in particular, the Egba tribe, who desired the presence of missionaries in Abeokuta. Townsend discovered that "Messengers of Peace," Methodist missionaries led by Reverend Thomas Birch Freeman, had arrived in Badagry before him once he landed in the city. On December 11, Freeman had visited Abeokuta at Sodeke's invitation and was just about to arrive back in Badagry when Townsend arrived. Townsend was encouraged by Freeman's account of his reception in Abeokuta.<sup>2</sup>

Sunday, January 8, 1843 saw the first church service that brought Christianity to Abeokuta, and Townsend delivered the sermon from Luke 14:12–24. The ceremony was held in Chief

Sodeke's home, and the interpreter was Andrew Desalu Wilhelm, a former Egba slave who had followed Townsend from Badagry and was already a catechist. Reverend Henry Townsend had to travel back to England via Sierra Leone a week later, on Tuesday, January 10, 1843, for his ordination, and Sodeke had given him gifts that included an elephant tusk, a big white goat, and twenty cowries in a wrapped calabash.<sup>3</sup> While he was away, Wilhelm oversaw the work in Abeokuta, and Christianity in the community grew significantly. When Townsend went to Abeokuta in August 1846 to continue his missionary work there, he was joined by a native and one of the liberated Sierra Leonean slaves, Reverend (later, Bishop) Samuel Ajayi Crowther. The missionaries' efforts had a variety of effects on the residents of Abeokuta. In addition to the social revival that took place, people started to profit from the 1849 start of cotton and ginger exports. As a result, the first newspaper in modern-day Nigeria, *Iwe Irohin*, was established and first published in Abeokuta in 1859. Additionally, the Bible was first translated into the Yoruba language in the year 1862.<sup>4</sup>

### **Origin of Newspapers**

*Ile iröhin fin an àwon ará Egbá àti Yorbá* was a journal published in both Yoruba and English for the Egba people of Abeokuta and the rest of Yorubaland for eight years, from 1859 to 1867. The Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.) oversaw *The New paper*, which is regarded as the first indigenous language newspaper in Nigeria and West Africa. Henry Townsend recruited an Egbaman named James Ede to be the newspaper's principal printer. Townsend's main goals were to spread the Anglican faith of Christianity and to inspire the Egbas and other Yorubas to read and write.<sup>5</sup>

Be that as it may, The Presbyterian mission established a printing press in Calabar, Nigeria, in 1846, but it wasn't until 1859 that an Anglican missionary named Reverend Henry Townsend of the Christian Missionary Society (CMS) published what is now regarded as the first newspaper. The name of the publication is Iwe Iroyin Fun Awon Ara Egba Ati Yoruba, which means information newspaper for the Egba-speaking people and the Yoruba.<sup>6</sup>

In 1854, the Reverend Townsend founded a printing plant and school in Abeokuta. This occurred exactly five years before to Iwe Iroyin's inauguration. The printing press and school finally provided a means of training skilled printers, who in turn trained journalists. The paper, as the first newspaper, has earned the nicknames "pace setter," "pioneer," "light," "pathfinder," and other variations. The indigenous were severely illiterate before to the publication of the first newspaper and subsequent publications, which greatly hindered missionaries' efforts to disseminate the Christian gospel. Iwe Iroyin was one of the journals that were established as a means of addressing this issue.<sup>7</sup> Reverend Townsend himself said that the newspaper was for the Egba people in particular, and the Yoruba people in general. Although, its emergence in 1867 was due to the cultural and political crisis between the Egba people and the European settlers, it was able to make tremendous impact; achieve some of the objectives it was set up to achieve. The Editor-in-Chief, Rev. Townsend stated clearly that the paper set up as a paper of information for the "Egba people of Yoruba", among the collateral means of exciting the intelligence of these people. He went further to explain that; I' have set on foot a Yoruba

newspaper my objective is to get the people to read, that is, to begin the habit of seeking information by reading, which has been very difficult. Iwe Irohin established by Rev. Townsend to provide an easy medium of communication between the missionaries and the Egba-speaking Yorubas; provide an easy platform through which the white missionaries traders and colonial officers can learn and master the Yoruba language for easy communication with the native people; further the crusade for evangelism by using it to spread the gospel to the remotest area of Egba land; Reverend Townsend made the people to form the habit of seeking information by reading newspapers; propagate religion and moral behavior to the native population with the aim of making the people to behave in line with the teaching of the church; demonstrate his love for journalism; inform, educate and entertain the people and by so doing bringing civilization to their doorstep, stop inter-ethnic wars, racial discrimination and clandestine slave business and publicize the activities of the church to the masses.<sup>8</sup>

Bearing the relatively short period of its existence, Iwe Irohin blossomed, served its purpose of establishment which was to educate the people . Iwe Irohin thrived well and became force to be reckoned with during the time. Records have it that at the advent of the newspaper, there were at least 3,000 people who were in schools had learnt to read and the missionaries felt it a duty to provide them with more literature. The newspaper was one of those creatures. The paper was also said to have educated the growing public about the history of politics of the time.<sup>9</sup>

Although, Iwe Irohin initially started as a Yoruba language vernacular newspaper, due to growing support and the need for English leadership, an English version of the paper was inaugurated, thus becoming the first bi-lingual newspaper in Africa. The



newspaper and other early missionary newspapers in Nigeria contributed immensely to the promotion of literacy and awareness about the importance of newspapers which were later used as a political tool for their struggle and agitation for independence.<sup>10</sup>

### A Picture of the Iwe Irohin Newspaper

The paper which was a 6.5" x 8" size of eight pages, each divided to two columns, which was basically concerned with reporting news about an opening of new parishes, arrival and departure of missionaries, ordination of new pastors/preachers, the death of religious leaders and such related news stories. It also carried announcements from the local chiefs, news about the arrival and departure of colonial governors and other top

government officials, news about towns and environs as well as commercial news on produce and their prices. Initially, it did not publish any advertisement and also avoided all kinds of advertisements related to immorality and alcohol. The paper, also published news items on ordinations, baptisms, confirmation and other related religious matters.<sup>11</sup>

The Newspaper's news contents, however, broadened after sometime to include subjects other than church matters such as stories about Abeokuta and its environs, commercial news about prices of products, announcement from local chiefs and the arrival and departure of colonial governors. The newspaper served as a forerunner for the first Yoruba Bible which was published in 1862. News from surrounding towns as well as Lagos colony began to feature later. Announcements from local chiefs, firms and government of Lagos colony were also carried.<sup>12</sup>

Although, Iwe Irohin played the pioneer role in the history of newspapers in Nigeria, it also faced the teething problems usually associated with such an important role. These problems notwithstanding, the paper managed to survive from 1859 when it was established to 1867 when it folded up.

Some of the reasons adduced for its survival include the inspiration the people received from the abolitionist movement which was on during the period. This movement which existed at that time encouraged natives and whites to be educated and come together to challenge the colonial masters and assert their own rights as citizens. The role played by the newspaper on the Reparation Scheme that was also known as the American-Negro Immigrants Scheme was another factor. The Newspaper was strongly

against the scheme which as supposed to be a platform for repatriating the negroes back to Africa their homeland. It is strongly believed that the activities of the paper led to its cancellation. The fact that Rev. Townsend put in his best into the paper also helped a lot because of his love and interest for journalism combined his pastoral work and journalism also helped. He actually derived joy in nursing the paper and thus contributed a lot to the success recorded by the paper.<sup>13</sup>

Some of the modest achievements that can be credited to the Newspaper include contributing immensely towards the abolition of the American-Negro Immigrants Scheme mentioned earlier on. The criticism of the scheme by the newspaper raised the awareness of the people about its disadvantage and it eventually led to its being done away with. The newspaper proprietor could also be said to be the first to establish formal journalism school in Nigeria. A lot of the graduates of Henry Townsend's journalism school established in 1854 were said to have worked as the initial staff of the newspaper. They learnt the rules of journalism on the job and later served as a base to recruit journalists and other professionals for the newspapers that were established later.<sup>14</sup>

The Newspaper can also be credited with the achievement of being the first newspaper in Nigeria and being the first bi-lingual newspaper in Africa. It therefore showed the way, and acted as an impetus for the establishment of other newspapers. Iwe-Irohin was no doubt the first radical newspaper in Nigeria because it continuously criticized the colonial government. The publisher's chief weapon in his ambitious political propaganda and shrewd maneuvering for power in Egbaland was Iwe Irohin. He was

reported by the then colonial governor, H. S. Freeman for encouraging and exacerbating the Egba hostility towards the Lagos government in the post-cession period.<sup>15</sup> The CMS authorities were then forced to caution Reverend Henry Townsend for this and other criticisms against the colonial government. He was subsequently forced to change his style and became less critical of the colonial government. The fact, however, remains that the paper started radicalism in the history of Nigeria's journalism.

The paper was noted for its condemnation of slave trade and other social vices and it advocated for morality and continuous humanism. It was strongly against human trafficking and was very vehement in its criticism of this social malaise. It is therefore on record that Iwe Irohin was in the forefront of attacking slave trade which clandestinely thrived in Nigeria until 1861 when Lagos was ceded to the British crown.<sup>16</sup>

In fact, one of the objectives of the paper which it achieved and can be regarded as a major achievement was the spread of the gospel. Apart from the fact that it served as a fore runner for the first Yoruba Bible which was published in 1862, it was also an instrument of spreading the gospel. It initially published mainly religious news and was used for announcing the arrival and departure of priests/pastors and other religious activities. The printing press also assisted in printing religious tracks, bulletins and other religious publications for the purpose of spreading the gospel. Iwe Irohin can be credited with spreading the gospel of Christ in Abeokuta, Ibadan, Lagos, Badagry and other parts of the country.<sup>17</sup>

It could also be argued that it contributed a lot in spreading western education and in the process achieved one of the functions of the press which is education. Many people were said to have learnt how to read and write so that they would be able to read the newspaper and others that followed it. Although, some people have stated that its readership was about 3,000, this is debatable. The fact is that if at least 3,000 people in CMS schools had learnt to read and write at the time Iwe Ironhin started publication, then the readership of the paper must have been far more than that number before it folded up. We cannot, therefore, be able to say that the exact readership of the paper was 3,000, as there was no readership survey at that time.<sup>18</sup>

### **Decline of the Iwe' Irohin' fún àwon arà Egbá àti Yoruba Newspaper**

The Newspaper which was published fortnightly, sold for 120 cowries or three strings or 'Ogofa' the equivalent of a penny, it carried no pictures and generally lacked typographical pluralism, it thus folded up five years later in 1867. A lot of reasons can be advanced for its failure. The major reason was that the paper had problems with the Egbas for its inconsistency during Egba-Ibadan war. They lost confidence in the Newspaper and the printing press. The paper no longer enjoyed advertisement patronage hence the paper's revenue dwindled. It was only making money from sales and book binding. Sometime in 1867 there was an uprising in Abeokuta, which led to the expulsion of Europeans, looting of missionary buildings and properties among others.<sup>19</sup> The Egba soldiers protested against British policy on the annexation of Lagos. It is effect on

Abeokuta claims over boundary adjustment between her and Lagos was another case in point

. In the ensuing battle the mob pounced on Henry Townsend's printing press and got it burnt. One other reason which has been advanced for the demise of the paper was the introduction of Islamic religion in Abeokuta and the whole of Egbaland. This affected readership as some new Muslim converts saw the paper as a Christian organ used to propagate the tenets of Christianity Furthermore, the socioeconomic issues that existed in Hausa country before to the Jihad have been used to justify the Jihad's declaration in 1804. It has been asserted that the Jihad was an uprising against the unjust and excessive taxes that the administrations of Egba land had imposed on the populace and that Usman Dan Fodio had harshly chastised. The Fulanis were forced to pay rent for the use of grazing areas, and unpredictable levies included the cattle tax (Jingali), market tax, and the increased collection of tribute from farmers. The Fulani pastoralists passionately fought and denounced these illegal extortions, particularly the cow levy. Therefore, it may be argued that the peasantry's high tax burden alienated them from the ruling class and thus help to partially explain the motivation behind the Jihad led by Usman Dan Fodio.<sup>20</sup>

In addition to this, accusations of corruption against the administrations of the Egba region were frequent because political officials engaged in corruption through the offering and receiving of bribes. It was also remarked that judges were increasingly perverting the course of justice. Given the unimaginable suffering and cruelty inflicted on

the populace as well as the opulent lifestyles of the majority of Egba chieftains, the Jihad almost devolved into a class conflict between the Hausa-Fulani commoners and their Egba rulers.

The inspiration and impact of reform movements in the Islamic world at the time contributed to the Usman Dan Fodio Jihad. It was thought that Fodio's crusade against the rulers of Hausa land, which extended all the way to Yoruba Egba region, was inspired by the jihadists' victories at FutaBondu and Futa Toro. The earlier jihads discussed below were intended to create Islamic nations that would uphold Shariah law as the supreme law and restore Islam to its original, unadulterated form, free of heresies and accretions. The Usman Dan Fodio Jihad had similar objectives. Therefore, it may be mostly accurate to say that Usman Dan was further inspired by jihadists' success in other regions of West Africa. However, this does not diminish the fact that Usman Dan Fodio's holy war had sufficient political, theological, and socioeconomic justifications.<sup>21</sup>

One thing, however, that the Iwe Ironhin Newspaper will be remembered for, is the fact that it shunned and rejected negative stories, such as reports on pornography, immoral behavior, crime and promotion of alcohol. Rather, it published up-to-date news on schedules of arrival and departure of cargoes and vessels ships to and from European countries.<sup>22</sup>

## **Conclusion**

With the formation and establishment of a Newspaper in 1859 which was regarded as the first Newspaper in the history of Nigeria as well as in West Africa, Townsend's

main intention was to propagate the Anglican faith of Christianity and to also encourage the Egbas and other Yorubas to read and write. The paper embraced the anti-slavery movement of the time and also made the proprietor, Henry Townsend, who with Samuel Ajayi Crowther translated the Bible and hymns to the Yoruba language, an influential man in Abeokuta.

That as it is, the major reason for the establishment of Newspaper in Nigeria was for the propagation of Christianity, thereby changing the ideology of the people which was based on gods, fore fathers and ancestors; it was also seen as a means of bringing a people who were seen as barbaric and introducing them to a new form of civilization.

However, the newspaper was also involved in some political matters of the time, especially those emanating from the viewpoints of the Egbas and it became a major repository of major views on different political events affecting the residents of Abeokuta during the period. The Newspaper had a positive impact on the people as it helped them participate actively in politics, created awareness which made the peoples of Egba engage in series of disagreements with their neighbors. Thought at its formation, the Newspaper is said to be a Yoruba Newspaper that is to say, it was made for the Yoruba people only; the Egba people to the precise; even with this backdrop it is regarded as the first newspaper to emerge in Nigeria and has laid the foundation for the development of Newspapers in Nigeria.

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## CHAPTER THREE

### DEVELOPMENT OF NEWSPAPER PRESS IN NIGERIA UP TILL 1960

#### Introduction

Although, Iwe Irohin played the pioneer role in the history of newspapers in Nigeria, it also faced the teething problems usually associated with such an important role. These problems notwithstanding, the paper managed to survive from 1859 when it was established to 1867 when it folded up. Some of the reasons adduced for its survival include the inspiration the people received from the abolitionist movement which was on during the period. This movement which existed at that time encouraged natives and whites to be educated and come together to challenge the colonial masters and assert their own rights as citizens. The role played by the newspaper on the Reparation Scheme that was also known as the American-Negro Immigrants Scheme was another factor.<sup>1</sup> The paper was strongly against the scheme which was supposed to be a platform for repatriating the negroes back to Africa their homeland. It is strongly believed that the activities of the paper led to its cancellation. The fact that Rev. Townsend put in his best into the paper also helped a lot because of his love and interest for journalism combined his pastoral work and journalism also helped. He actually derived joy in nursing the paper and thus contributed a lot to the success recorded by the paper.<sup>2</sup>

Some of the modest achievements that can be credited to the paper include contributing immensely towards the abolition of the American-Negro Immigrants Scheme mentioned earlier on. The criticism of the scheme by the newspaper raised the

awareness of the people about its disadvantage and it eventually led to its being done away with. The newspaper proprietor could also be said to be the first to establish formal journalism school in Nigeria. A lot of the graduates from Henry Townsend's journalism school established in 1854 were used as the initial staff of the newspaper. They learnt the rules of journalism on the job and later served as a base to recruit journalists and other professionals for the newspapers that were established later.<sup>3</sup>

The paper can also be credited with the achievement of being the first newspaper in Nigeria and being the first bi-lingual newspaper in Africa. It therefore showed the way, and acted as an impetus for the establishment of other newspapers. Iwe-Irohin was no doubt the first radical newspaper in Nigeria because it continuously criticized the colonial government. The publisher's chief weapon in his ambitious political propaganda and shrewd maneuvering for power in Egbaland was Iwe Irohin. He was reported by the then colonial governor, H. S. Freeman for encouraging and exacerbating the Egba hostility towards the Lagos government in the post-cession period. The CMS authorities were then forced to caution Reverend Henry Townsend for this and other criticisms against the colonial government. He was subsequently forced to change his style and became less critical of the colonial government.

The fact, however, remains that the paper started radicalism in the history of Nigeria's journalism. The paper was noted for its condemnation of slave trade and other social vices and it advocated for morality and continuous humanism. It was strongly against human trafficking and was very vehement in its criticism of this social malaise. It

is therefore on record that Iwe Irohin was in the forefront of attacking slave trade which clandestinely thrived in Nigeria until 1861 when Lagos was ceded to the British crown. In fact, one of the objectives of the paper which it achieved and can be regarded as a major achievement was the spread of the gospel.<sup>4</sup> Apart from the fact that it served as a fore runner for the first Yoruba Bible which was published in 1862, it was also an instrument of spreading the gospel. It initially published mainly religious news and was used for announcing the arrival and departure of priests/pastors and other religious activities. The printing press also assisted in printing religious tracks, bulletins and other religious publications for the purpose of spreading the gospel. Iwe Irohin can be credited with spreading the gospel of Christ in Abeokuta, Ibadan, Lagos, Badagry and other parts of the country.<sup>5</sup>

It could also be argued that it contributed a lot in spreading western education and in the process achieved one of the functions of press which is education. Many people were said to have learnt how to read and write so that they would be able to read the newspaper and others that followed it. Although, some people have stated that its readership was about 3,000, this is debatable. The fact is that if at least 3,000 people in CMS schools had learnt to read and write at the time Iwe Irohin started publication, then the readership of the paper must have been far more than that number before it folded up. We cannot, therefore, be able to say that the exact readership of the paper was 3,000, as there was no readership survey at that time.<sup>6</sup>

The paper which was published fortnightly, sold for 120 cowries or three strings or 'Ogofa' the equivalent of a penny, it carried no pictures and generally lacked typographical pluralism, it thus folded up five years later in 1867. A lot of reasons can be advanced for its failure. The major reason was that the paper had problems with the Egbas for its inconsistency during Egba-Ibadan war. They lost confidence in the paper and the printing press. The paper no longer enjoyed advertisement patronage hence the paper's revenue dwindled. It was only making money from sales and book binding. Sometime in 1867 there was an uprising in Abeokuta, which led to the expulsion of Europeans, looting of missionary buildings and properties among others. The Egba soldiers protested against British policy on the annexation of Lagos. Its effect on Abeokuta claims over boundary adjustment between her and Lagos was another case in point. In the ensuing battle the mob pounced on Henry Townsend's printing press and got it burnt.<sup>7</sup>

One other reason which has been advanced for the demise of the paper was the introduction of Islamic religion in Abeokuta and the whole of Egbaland. This affected readership as some new Muslim converts saw the paper as a Christian organ used to propagate the tenets of Christianity.

One thing, however, that the paper will be remembered for, is the fact that it shunned and rejected negative stories, such as reports on pornography, immoral behaviour, crime and promotion of alcohol. Rather, it published up-to-date news on

schedules of arrival and departure of cargoes and vessels ships to and from European countries.<sup>8</sup>

### **Anglo African Press (1863-1865)**

Before Iwe Irohin folded up in 1867, another newspaper Anglo African had been established. The owner of the newspaper Robert Campbell had earlier set up a printing press in 1862 in Lagos to train potential printers and pressmen. The paper eventually started publication on June 6, 1863 at the Oil Mill Street in Lagos. Robert Campbell, the publisher and editor, was a teacher and printer. Unlike Iwe Irohin, the paper was not bilingual; it was published in English language only. Robert Campbell was a British Jamaican trader and was born in Kingston, Jamaica of a Mulatto mother and a Scottish father. Campbell had earlier worked as an apprentice printer for five years before being admitted into a teacher training college where he trained as a teacher for two years. The publisher, who had earlier suffered racial discrimination in the United States, worked as a compositor for two years and later joined the institute of colored youth at Philadelphia, USA as a teacher. He joined the Freed Aid Society between 1859 and 1860 and was brought to Nigeria as part of the group to resettle the slaves coming from England.<sup>9</sup>

This newspaper is generally regarded as the first non-missionary newspaper in the country and was also considered as the first paper that attempted at real news papering in the country. It was published weekly for a cover price of three pence. Its content was mainly stories culled from books, magazines, foreign newspapers, novels, and other

sources. The initial circulation was between 30 and 50 copies weekly principally because of lack of funds.

The first futile attempt at censorship must have started with the attempt to scuttle the establishment of the paper. Mr. Freeman, who was the colonial governor of the colony at the time, was not happy with the emergence of the paper. He tried to stop it by requesting that the colonial office in London approve a tax to be imposed on any new newspaper that is to be established. The request was somehow not approved. It must, however, be noted that Anglo African became a pro government newspaper and enjoyed abundant government patronage.

In terms of coverage, the newspaper was significantly different from Iwe Irohin. While Iwe Irohin concentrated on Abeokuta and its environs, the Anglo African focused on both national and international issues and stands conspicuously as the first Nigerian newspaper to give consistent coverage to foreign news on its pages. The paper published a lot of commercial or business interest stories, such as activities in the ports, the arrival and departure of ships to and from Lagos to Europe, business activities among the white merchants and local commercial activities in the hinterland. Campbell's aim of publishing the Anglo African was essentially to exploit to the fullest the growing interest in Western education and enlightenment in Lagos and its environs in the 1850s by providing cheap and accessible materials, which would educate, inform and entertain its potential readers. The newspaper was, therefore, a source of inspiration to the movement which began in the 1880s.<sup>10</sup>

One of the factors that inspired Campbell into starting the Anglo African was no doubt the fact that Iwe Irohin which had earlier been established in Abeokuta in 1859 was doing very well and was attracting more and more readership. Campbell would have reasoned that a newspaper would do better in Lagos which had a larger population, more metropolitan, more commercial and with more educated people than Abeokuta. The establishment of the Anglo African, therefore, brought competition and some kind of rivalry into the Nigerian newspaper industry. The disagreement between the two early newspapers could be largely attributed to the disagreement between the two proprietors on certain fundamental issues. While the Anglo African was openly pro government, Iwe Irohin consistently challenged and criticized some policies of the colonial government. In the long run this became responsible for the short period the Anglo African existed because the people then saw it as supporting the government and not championing their cause and withdrew their patronage. They favored Iwe Irohin which they saw as championing their cause.<sup>11</sup>

One thing that could be said favored the establishment of the Anglo African at that time was the fact that Campbell was friendly with Henry Townsend. He had earlier assisted Townsend to organize the printing and publishing of his paper. In the process, he became familiar with the workers and was able to attract some of them to start his own, having ordered a printing machine from England. It is, however, surprising that Anglo African with all the support it had from the government did not last for up to three years. It folded up in 1865, about two and a half years after it started publication. One of the

main reasons that has been advanced for this is the fact that the people at the time favored a radical newspaper that was not on the side of the government which they considered exploitative and oppressive. Anglo African, therefore, lost readership and the generous official advertisements from the government alone could not sustain it.<sup>12</sup>

### **Lagos Times and Gold Coast Advertiser (1880 - 1883)**

It has been argued that it took another twenty years after the demise of Iwe Irohin before another newspaper was published in Nigeria, the argument has been faulted by available facts. Azikiwe specifically stated that the second newspaper emerged just few years after Iwe Irohin and that was the Anglo African. Actually, Richard Olamilege Beale Blaze, the publisher of the Lagos Times was an associate and contemporary of Robert Campbell the publisher of the second newspaper Anglo African. This lends more credence to the fact that the Anglo African was the second newspaper after the publication of Iwe Irohin in 1859.<sup>13</sup>

Richard Blaze was a printer by profession and a Yoruba by birth. He was of a rich parentage and his father was a rich and successful merchant in Freetown at that time. Richard Beale Blaze come to Nigeria in 1862 at the age of 17 and was a printer with Robert Campbell, the publisher of Anglo African. This he did until 1875 when he established his own printing press called Caxton Printing Press. The fact that Blaze worked with Campbell at the time Anglo African was published also supports the point that Anglo Africa existed during the period. Richard Blaze later worked with the government press in Lagos and served as a head printer.

Blaze who was born on November 32, 1845 in Freetown, served as an apprentice printer and later worked in the public service in Sierra Lone before coming to Nigeria. He invested his savings in a printing press and the business grew and prospered. Ten years into the business, he be same so rich that the colonial government estimated his wealth at about £150.000, which was quite some substantial amount of money at that time. He was certainly one of the richest men of the time. When he was about to establish the newspaper, he was quoted to have said that the newspaper was not inspired by returns but rather a philanthropic effort. However, the death of the newspaper was traced to lack of profit. Before they disappeared from the newsstand on October 24, 1883, Lagos Times and Gold Coast advertiser made come remarkable contributions to the history of newspaper development in Nigeria. The papers could be said to have flagged of the beginning of revolutionary press in Nigeria. They contributed significantly to the nationalist movement during the period and were able to highlight the grievances of Nigerians against the colonial government. Apart from carrying out the traditional functions of the press which involves informing, educating and entertaining the populace, they were able to point out the lapses and weaknesses of the colonial administration.<sup>14</sup>

The newspapers were in the forefront of the agitation to include Nigerian in the then dominated House of Representatives by the Europeans. It is on record that the newspaper as far back as the time agitated for the inclusion of natives in the House of Representatives dominated entirely by whites. It is widely believed in media and historical circles that the inclusion of some Lagos indigenes later in the House of

Representatives was as a result of the strong campaigns started by the newspaper. They also used the editorials and features columns to agitate against the governor's extravagant spendings, in some cases money was spent without due approval by the House of Representatives. They also criticized the heavy taxation system and the very poor quality of education provided for the local people. Apart from these, the papers used their pages to publish views on other burning issues at that time. They were published fortnightly and sold for six pence. Since Blaze parents were Nigerians, father, John Blaze from Oyo State and mother; Maria Blaze from Abeokuta, the papers could be said to be the first Nigerian-owned newspapers. The areas which the papers viewed vigorously, was the agitation for representation in government. At this time, the colony of Lagos had no representation in Accra where the governor lived. Power was held by the executive and legislative councils in Accra. By 1836, Lagos had her own legislative council consisting of the governor and some officials, all Europeans.<sup>15</sup>

The situation was not satisfactory to the natives and to the Lagos Times and Gold Coast Advertiser. The papers criticized the situation, contending that the government did not represent the people in any form or shape; advocating certain amount of internal self government. In the issue of March 9, 1881, one of the papers expressed disappointment that sixteen years after the House of Commons select committee's recommendation in respect of self government, no step was taken to implement the decision. In the words of the newspaper, 'we are not clamoring for immediate independence but it should always be borne in mind that the present order of things will not last forever. A time will come when

British colony on the West coast would be left to regulate their internal affairs'; on the issues of government expenditure, the paper argued that it would not be in the interest of the people for the government to spend the people's money without their consent. It also criticized government expenditure without the approval of the representatives of those who raised the money by direct taxation. The paper's motto was 'Be just and fear not.'<sup>16</sup>

### **Lagos Weekly Record (1891 - 1930)**

Before the emergence of The Lagos Weekly Record in 1891, there was the Lagos Observer which was established by Mr. J B. Benjamin, an African, who was at one time convicted for libel by the colonial government. This paper, Lagos Observer, is the fourth Nigerian newspaper. Iwe Irohin, Anglo African, The Lagos Times and Gold Coast Advertiser followed in that order. However, if the Lagos Times and Gold Coast Advertiser are regarded as separate papers although published by the same person, Richard Blaze, then the Lagos Observer would be the fifth. Although not very successful, records have it that the first edition of the Lagos Observer was published on February 15 of 1882, while the last edition came out on December 29, 1888.

There were also The Eagle and Lagos Critic published by Owen Macaulay, an African which were in circulation from March 31, 1888. The monthly papers which had their office at Odunlami Street in Lagos were sold for seven pence per copy. The two publications were combined probably like the Lagos Times and Gold Coast Advertiser. These papers were closely followed by The Mirror published also by an African, Adolphs Marke. The paper lasted from December 17, 1887 to November 17, 1888 and was sold

for three pence per copy. Although it was short lived, yet its place in the history of the Nigerian press cannot be ignored.<sup>17</sup>

The Lagos Weekly Record which commenced publication in 1891 was owned by a prominent and well known writer, John Payne Jackson. It is important to note that the paper initially started publication as Weekly Times in 1886 and was then owned by Richard Beale Blaze, but was edited by John Payne Jackson. Jackson, who was Blaze's bookkeeper at The Lagos Times and Gold Coast Advertiser lost the job because of his poor accounting knowledge and the love for alcohol. He managed the paper for about three months, but could not prepare a statement of account so that his publisher's share fixed at £5 a month could be determined. This infuriated Blaze his boss who had to fire him. Although a good editor, Jackson was a very poor manager. The fact that he could not manage the paper well led to its temporary closure. Richard Blaze however resumed publication of the paper on December 6, 1890 with the same name Lagos Times. To challenge him, Jackson himself started a paper with the name The Weekly Times. This led to Blaze heading to court to contest the ownership of the newspaper's title. Not prepared for a legal battle, Jackson had to drop the title and start another paper known as the Lagos Weekly Record.<sup>18</sup>

With the assistance of friends and the subsidy of £150 a year paid him by the colonial government, he was able to run the newspaper from 1892 to 1900 the popularity of the paper earned it advertisements of about £350 in 1895 and £400 five years later. When Governor Macgregor took over from J. T. Carter who had earlier left, he abolished

the subsidy of £150 a year. It was at this point that Jackson changed gear from a pro-government newspaper and became anti-government. He became a very strong critic of the government and practiced what was regarded as opposition journalism. The Lagos Weekly Record occupies a prominent place in the history of journalism in Nigeria for mainly two reasons. One is that it came to be one of the most radical papers in Nigeria at that time and the other was that it lasted longer than all other newspapers that existed during the period.<sup>19</sup>

Born to a Liberian family in Cape Palmas, in Liberia, John Payne Jackson was an emigrant from Maryland in the United States of America to Liberia. He attended The Training Institute in the Cavalier River in Cape Palmas where he showed interest in the liberal arts and printing. Jackson was a widely travelled man who visited Gold Coast and Lagos in the 1860s. He was more of a business man but had to abandon business to join the Lagos Times owned by Richard Blaze as a book keeper in 1882. The radicalism of The Lagos Weekly Record stems from the fact that its owner and editor, John Payne Jackson was himself an unrepentant radical and critic of the colonial government. He was a prominent and recognized leader in newspaper and nationalist activities from 1890 to 1915. He was also regarded as the most outstanding journalist in the whole of West Africa then.

There is no doubt that his career most exemplified the important role played by the newspaper in the history of Nigeria and West Africa in protest politics, he was an acknowledged force, inspiring and directing movement of agitation. He was the author of

most of the petitions which the people of Lagos forwarded to the local and imperial authorities during his life time. His newspaper, The Lagos Weekly Record was not only the most successful among its contemporaries but also an arsenal of ideas from which opponents of the government took their weapons.<sup>20</sup>

After the death of John Payne Jackson, his son, Thomas Haratio Jackson took over the editorship and management of the Lagos Weekly Record. Born in 1879, the young Jackson was educated in Sierra Leone with special interest in classics and reading. He was initially employed by Elder Dempster Agencies and later by Railway Department after he left school in 1898. He, however, decided to go into private business in 1904. His exit from the public service, Railway department, specifically, was connected with the strike he led in the protest against a new form of agreement for staff contracts that discriminated against African employees. While working in the public service, he took time off to assist his father in the Lagos Weekly Record and was a contributor to the Liberian Recorder of Monrovia, Liberia.<sup>21</sup>

The period of tutelage with his father prepared him for the great task ahead. The exposure also gave him some knowledge of newspaper management and crusading journalism that characterized the era. Keeping up the family tradition of writing public petitions and organization of protests, Haratio Jackson joined force with Herbert Macaulay to form the Nigeria National Democratic Party (NNDP). He was in fact, the secretary of the party for a long period.

Faratio Jackson, who built up a reputation as a well known prolific writer made use of complex words and quotation in his write-ups. He used the newspaper, Lagos Weekly Record to criticize imperialism and even physically resisted it by organizing and leading protests. The newspaper was also used to challenge the validity of British educational system of just memorizing scripts and providing literary education and opted for industrial or technical education. It advocated training skills and called for the establishment of a West African University. It was also against the adoption of European culture by Africans and is credited to have first used the words 'cultural imperialism'.<sup>22</sup>

The Jacksons (father and son) played very important roles in the history of journalism in Nigeria. Their roles were severally acknowledged by the late Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe. They were actually mentors to Nnamdi Azikie, generally referred to as 'Zik of Africa'. In appreciation of their roles in influencing him in journalism practice and the development of journalism in Africa, Zik named the first school of journalism in Nigeria established at the University of Nigeria Nsukka in 1960 after them. The school of journalism which is presently the department of Mass Communication, University of Nigeria, Nsukka is still referred to as 'Jackson School of Journalism'.

Apart from the Lagos Weekly Record, some other papers that were established during the period are Nigerian Times, established by J. B. Davis and Sapara Williams, the first Nigerian lawyer in 1910. The Lagos Standard established by George A. Willraus and S. H. Pearce in 1894 closed down in 1920, and The Nigerian Chronicle established by Christopher Johnson in 1900 which lasted till 1915. Others are the Lagos Echo,

established in Lagos, printed and published by P. P. Chris Mason in 1891 and became defunct in 1899, The Wasp, established by Sydney George in 1900 and lasted from March to August that year, and The Nigerian Pioneer; established by Sir Akintoye Ajasa in 1914 and lasted till 1936 The Nigerian Pioneer existed from 1914 to 1937 and is believed to have been edited by an English lawyer called Irving.<sup>23</sup>

### **African Messenger (1921 - 1925) and the Nigerian Daily Times (1926 -2004)**

The African Messenger commenced publishing on March 10, 1921 with its editorial office located at 24 Odunlami Street Lagos; but it was printed at the Awoboh press located at Pearse Square, Olowogbowo, Lagos. The paper was established by a well respected personality

Ernest Sisei Ikoli and was a weekly newspaper with the cover price of six pence, published by the Nigerian Printing and Publishing Company owned by the paper's proprietor. Publication was interrupted for some time in 1925 and it later transformed in 1926 into The Nigerian Daily Times. The new owner who bought the paper for five hundred pounds, The Lagos Chamber of Commerce renamed it The Nigerian Daily Times. The management of the paper appointed Ikoli as editor and director on a salary of three hundred pounds per annum. Born in Brass (presently Bayelsa State) in 1893, he attended the Bonny Primary School and Kings College, Lagos.<sup>24</sup> Although, an outstanding student, who later became a prefect and assistant master in science and mathematics at Kings College, he resigned from his teaching job and joined the Lagos Weekly Record as an assistant editor because of a disagreement with the school authorities in 1919. He worked

with Haratio Jackson for three years. After working as editor of the Daily Times for two years, Ikoli resigned to set up another newspaper known as the Nigerian Daily Mail, which was a sort of a rival. The paper lasted for barely one year and this led to Ikoli joining the Nigeria Daily Telegram owned by H. Antus Williams. He later worked as editor of the Daily Service which was run by the Nigerian Youth Movement before his death in 1960.<sup>25</sup>

Other early newspapers include The Spectator; published by Dr Akinwande Savage as a weekly paper in 1923. It started precisely on May 19, 1923. Dr Savage had earlier in association with his friend .J E. Casely Hayford contributed articles to the Gold Coast Leader in Ghana. When he came to Nigeria, he contributed articles to The Standard before establishing The Spectator in 1923. It only lasted until December 26, 1930. Another newspaper that was established by S.H. Braithwaite during the period was the Nigerian Advocate. It started in August 1, 1923 and was a direct opposite to The Spectator in terms of radicalism. Lagos Daily News is widely believed to be the first daily newspaper in Nigeria. Published by Mr Victor Bababoni, it started as a tiny daily news sheet and the proprietor ostensibly called it the first 'West African Daily' but it only survived for 67 days. The paper, including the Tanimola Printing Plant were sold to Herbert Macaulay and Dr J. Akinlade Caulcrick. This did not, however, terminate Bababoni's interest in journalism as he continued to contribute articles to other papers.<sup>26</sup>

One of the new owners, Herbert Macauley turned the newspaper into one of the most radical newspapers in Nigeria. He published any article he considered of public

interest whether others see it as libelous or not. Apart from his medium, he contributed articles to virtually all the newspapers that were circulating in Lagos at that time. He got easily angry with any editor who considered his article too radical and libelous. He even went the extra length to circulate such articles in form of pamphlets. His radical articles earned him the title 'father of Nigeria nationalism'. He successfully used the paper to promote the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP), a party he formed.<sup>27</sup>

Richard Barrow on June 1, 1926 established The Daily Times to fill the gap of a daily newspaper which Mr. Victor Bababoni unsuccessfully tried to fill with the Lagos Daily News. One of the main reasons for the setting up of the paper was the fact that the colonial government raised the price of the bulletin containing cabled messages from Reuters Agency and wireless news broadcast from £2 to £4 or E5, which were distributed to the European commercial community and other subscribers. Some people now decided to counter the domination by setting up the paper. Other reasons include the confrontational posture of the Weekly Record published by Thomas Haratio Jackson and the belligerent, propagandist and opposition of the Herbert Marcauley's published Lagos News. The advent of the Daily Times brought about one of the most successful publishing companies in Nigeria, the Nigerian Printing and Publishing Company Limited. The first editor was the well known journalist, Ernest Sessie Ikoli. The paper had to take over the assets of Ikoli's Messenger. The original name of the newspaper was Nigerian Daily times. Later, the paper became a tabloid and all the attractive features of this format sent the circulation soaring higher than that of any other newspaper before the takeover

by The Mirror; The Daily Times sold 7,000 copies in 1948, circulation was 10,000 copies daily. Three years later in 1957, 80,000: 1959, 96,000, 1969, 120,000 and in 1971, 120,000. By 1985, The Daily Times had almost hit the million mark.<sup>28</sup>

In 1935, the publishers of the West African Review in Liverpool bought over the Nigerian Daily Times, and in 1947, the London Daily Mirror group took over the Daily Times and dropped 'Nigerian' from the flag and it was known just as Daily Times. The publishing company had the largest collection of trained journalists and embarked on serious staff development programmes for its staff. To realize this, the paper established a training institute which was known as Times Journalism Institute in Lagos. The paper became the largest and most popular newspaper in the country and probably in Africa until about 2004 when it was closed mainly due to government interference since it was taken over by the government. The paper had many titles before its demise.<sup>29</sup>

Other early newspapers in Nigeria include The Daily Service established in 1933 as a weekly paper. It was first edited by Ernest Ikoli, a onetime editor of The Telegraph after he left the Daily Times. The Nigerian Tribune was established in 1949 by Chief Obafemi Awolowo, and in 1953 The Daily Service combined with the Nigerian Tribune to form the Amalgamated Press which started to publish some provincial newspapers in 1958. These include the Midwest Echo (Benin), the Middle Belt Herald (Jos) The Northern Star (Kano) and The Eastern Observer (Onitsha).

The Allied News Limited which is a merger of the Amalgamated Press comprising The Service, the Nigerian Tribune and the provincial papers was later formed.

The result was that in 1959, the Sunday Express which is a weekly was launched. In 1962, a new management took over and changed the Daily Service to the Daily Express but the Sunday and Daily Express eventually went out of circulation in 1965.<sup>30</sup>

The Comet, established by Duse Mohammed Ali in 1933 as an independent weekly paper is another early newspaper. Mr Ali had earlier edited African Times and Orient Review magazine in London. He tried to revive them in Nigeria without much success. The Zik press later bought over The Comet and turned it into a daily newspaper. Another paper, The Nigerian Eastern Mail was established by James Vivian Clinton in the Eastern part of Nigeria, specifically, Calabar in 1935. The Nigerian Eastern Mail tried to thrive until 1937 when the West African Pilot was launched by Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, Zik of Africa. Zik's paper was clearly anti-British and there was no pretense about this. It was vibrant and became one of the most radical papers in the history of news papering in Nigeria. In 1951, Clinton changed the Nigerian Eastern Mail to a daily known as Nigerian Daily Record and he also published a vernacular newspaper known as Obodom Edem Utin (Voice of the East). The newspapers died in 1952 due to the ill health of Clinton, the proprietor. He eventually died at the age of 71 on Friday 18, May 1973.

As earlier stated, the West African Pilot was launched in November 12, 1937 by Dr Nnamdi Azikewe through the Zik Press Limited. Zik had earlier worked as editor of the African Morning Post in Ghana from 1935 to 1937 after graduating in political science and anthropology in the United States. He was at a time jailed with a colleague, Isaac W. Johnson for publishing radical articles in the paper. On appeal, it was squashed

and he returned to Nigeria to start the West African Pilot. The same year he started the paper, his second book, *Renascent African* was published. *Liberia in World Politics*, his first book had earlier been published in 1934.

Chief Obafemi Awolowo stated that things were happening which aroused the resentment and indignation of Nigerians...as there was no effective vehicle for vigorous ventilation of suppressed grievances, a journalistic vacuum which Dr. Azikiwe clearly filled when he returned to the country in 1937 with the establishment of the West African Pilot which whatever its literary defects was; a fire-heating paper of the highest ever.<sup>31</sup>

The West African Pilot and The Comet were banned on July 7, 1947 for attacks on the colonial government as it acted as a bridge between the colonial and post-independence press and that it politicized Nigerians, making them conscious of their rights. It triggered off nationalists consciousness, which later culminated in the struggle for independence. The West African Pilot was distinct and marked out Azikiwe as the greatest success story of the Nigerian press before independence. The arrival of the paper marked the beginning of newspaper chain in Nigeria. It comprises the Eastern Nigerian Guardian (1943) and the Southern Nigerian Defender in Warri. The Comet was brought over and transferred to Kano which was later followed by Northern Advocate in Jos. Zik's newspaper industries spread across Port Harcourt, Onitsha, Owerri, and Enugu. Notable among the papers were the Eastern Sentinel and the Eastern Guardian. These newspapers were used to create awareness among the people of Nigeria. Hence, his West African Pilot had specifically this as its motto: 'show the light and the people will find the way'.

Apart from the West African Pilot and the other newspapers in the chain of Zik's newspapers, the Gaskiya Taft Kirabo newspaper was published by the colonial administration in the north and it started on January 1, 1939. There was also the Nigerian Tribune earlier mentioned published by Chief Obafemi Awvolowo from 16, November 1949 till date. This was preceded by Iyorin Yoruba in 1945. It was edited by Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola. Some of the characteristics of the early newspapers include the fact that they were mainly periodicals and their proprietors were in most cases their editors. Most of the proprietors were Sierra Leoneans and descendants of Sierra Leoneans. Papers like Iwe Irohin, the Nigerian Pioneer, the African Messengers were, however, exceptions. However, proprietorship changed later with the emergence of Nigerian proprietors. A major characteristic however is that most of the papers did not survive for a long period of time.

## **Conclusion**

Newspapers originally appeared in Nigeria thanks to an Anglican missionary named Rev. Henry Townsend, who founded the Iwe Iroyin in Abeokuta in 1859. His goals were to penetrate and have an impact on the Yoruba speaking population by fusing religion, education, economic, social, and cultural issues. Increased literacy rates and the later awakening of some African intellectuals, whose interests in social, political, and economic issues fueled a renewed zeal to contribute to national and international discourse through the Newspaper press, are additional factors that later contributed to the evolution and growth of the press in Nigeria.

It has been said that Nigerian newspapers and the mass media in general are the results of nationalist struggle. It is interesting to note that on Friday, December 21, 2012, the Nigeria Union of Journalists, Ogun State Council revived Iwé Irohin in Abeokuta, the capital of Ogun State, after it had been dead for 145 years.

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## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **ROLES OF NEWSPAPER PRESS IN THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF NIGERIAN POLITICS**

#### **Introduction**

It is hardly necessary to underscore the crucial role the media plays in promoting an atmosphere of good governance and political awareness. The media has a unique role in every society as the keeper of the public's interest and an interpreter of public issues and events. The media has a disproportionately large and influential role in our information-based society.

Press freedom is necessary for democracy. This is so because popular opinion depends on public awareness and information, and democracy is built on popular will. Public awareness is raised, promoted, and spread by the mainstream media. The press's primary duty is to inform the public about current affairs and events of general concern in a thorough, analytical, and accurate manner. The press must operate in accordance with the fundamental rules of professional ethics as well as the standards and values of journalism in order to carry out its duty and responsibility.<sup>1</sup>

A free press is essential for a democratic society to be both powerful and resilient. On the other hand, democracy is a prerequisite for press freedom. As a result, journalists and the media as a whole must support democracy. To achieve this, the press must continuously engage with the establishment and The press must constantly be on guard to defend and uphold peoples' rights to knowledge about all facets of their present and

future as well as their freedom of expression. knowledge must be presented in a clear and attractive way, and access to knowledge is a fundamental right of all citizens. The right to knowledge is a requirement for effective government, good governance, and the achievement of all other human rights, human rights, such as access to healthcare and education. The major goals should be to increase accountability and openness in government, as well as to ensure that the general public participates in governance and decision-making.<sup>2</sup>

The media must be reputable and reliable. The most significant resource for any media is trust. It can't be won back once it's lost. Because of this, all media must adhere to their commitment to delivering truthful and accurate news and other programming. The distinction between party politics and politics in general must be understood by the press. Media shouldn't be used as a platform or as an advocate for any political group or way of thinking. During elections and political campaigns, each of the legitimate political parties and candidates must be given an equal amount of time and chance to express their positions on public and political matters.<sup>3</sup>

Media serves as a watchdog in reporting corruption, complacency, and negligence. In a changing, competitive landscape, compliance to good governance has never been taken so seriously, as people demand more transparency from the government and rights and the fight against corr. During the course of elections, messages that encourage goodwill and harmony among all the ethnic groups, religions, genders, cultures, languages, regions, and communities should be broadcast.

In a developing country, the relatively low level of literacy, the variations in topography and limited access to electricity all make radio the most suitable medium to satisfy the information needs of the masses. A robust, independent and pluralistic media environment is crucial for good governance and the overall development of the country. Freedom of expression, free flow of information and fair reporting without government and commercial influences are accelerators of development.<sup>3</sup>

### **Roles of Newspapers in Political Development**

Newspaper press plays several important roles in the growth and development of Nigerian politics. Here are some of the key roles:

#### **Information Dissemination**

Newspapers serve as a primary source of news and information about politics in Nigeria. They play a vital role in informing the public about political events, policies, and decisions. Through their reporting, newspapers keep citizens informed about the actions and positions of political leaders, parties, and government institutions. Newspapers have long been recognized as a crucial medium for information dissemination.<sup>4</sup> They play a vital role in providing news and information to the public, contributing to an informed society. Some key aspects of the role of newspapers in information dissemination includes:

Primary Source of News; Newspapers serve as a primary source of news for many people. They employ journalists who gather information through interviews, research, and on-the-ground reporting. Newspapers cover a wide range of topics such as politics,

economy, local news, international affairs, sports, entertainment, and more. By reporting on current events, newspapers keep the public informed about what is happening in their community, country, and the world.

Furthermore, Newspapers go beyond basic news reporting by providing in-depth analysis and interpretation of events and issues. They offer comprehensive articles, investigative reports, and feature stories that delve deeper into the complexities of various topics. This analysis helps readers understand the context, implications, and multiple perspectives surrounding important issues.

Newspapers play a crucial role in holding individuals, organizations, and governments accountable. Journalists investigate and report on corruption, misconduct, and other wrongdoings, thereby promoting transparency and exposing abuses of power. This function helps ensure that those in authority are held accountable for their actions and promotes a more accountable and just society. More so, Newspapers contribute to public awareness and education by providing information on a wide range of topics. They publish articles, features, and opinion pieces that inform readers about important issues, scientific advancements, health, culture, and more. Newspapers also offer platforms for experts, academics, and thought leaders to share their knowledge and insights, fostering intellectual growth and learning.<sup>5</sup>

Local newspapers play a vital role in community engagement and cohesion. They cover local news, events, and issues that directly impact the community. By highlighting local achievements, concerns, and initiatives, newspapers help foster a sense of

community and encourage civic participation. They serve as a platform for community voices, letters to the editor, and opinion pieces, allowing residents to express their views and engage in discussions.

Newspapers serve as historical documents, providing a record of significant events, cultural changes, and societal milestones. They document the news stories, photographs, editorials, and advertisements of a specific period, serving as a valuable resource for researchers, historians, and future generations.

While the advent of digital media has transformed the media landscape, newspapers continue to be a trusted and influential source of information. They provide comprehensive and reliable reporting, analysis, and context, contributing to an informed public and a democratic society.<sup>6</sup>

### **Agenda Setting**

Newspapers have the power to set the agenda by determining which political issues receive attention and coverage. Through their editorials, opinion pieces, and news selection, newspapers can influence public opinion and shape political discourse. They highlight important political matters and bring attention to key issues, thereby influencing the political agenda and policy priorities.

Newspapers have a significant role in political agenda setting, which refers to the power of the media to influence the issues and topics that are prioritized and discussed in society.

Newspapers often engage in selective reporting in that Newspapers have the power to choose which news stories to cover and how much prominence to give them. The editorial decisions made by newspapers shape the public's perception of what is important and what issues should be discussed. By selectively reporting on specific political events, policies, or scandals, newspapers can highlight certain topics and downplay others, influencing the public's attention and understanding of political issues. Newspapers often have editorial sections where they express their opinions on political matters. These editorials can shape public opinion and influence the political agenda. Newspapers may endorse political candidates, express support or criticism for policies, and provide analysis and commentary that can sway public discourse and shape political discussions.<sup>7</sup>

Newspapers invest in investigative journalism, which involves in-depth research and reporting on political issues. Investigative reports can bring to light corruption, malfeasance, or other significant political scandals that might otherwise go unnoticed. Such exposés can have a profound impact on the political agenda by directing public attention towards specific issues and leading to policy changes or investigations.

Newspapers have the power to set the narrative surrounding political events and issues. Through their reporting and analysis, newspapers can frame political stories in a particular way, emphasizing certain aspects and downplaying others. This framing can influence how the public understands and discusses political issues, shaping the overall political agenda and public opinion.

Newspapers are influential in shaping public opinion, which, in turn, affects the political agenda. When newspapers consistently cover and emphasize specific issues, it can sway public sentiment and generate public pressure for political action. Public opinion, driven in part by newspaper reporting, can shape the priorities and actions of political leaders and policymakers. Political actors, including politicians, parties, and interest groups, often seek media attention to push their agendas. Newspapers play a crucial role in determining which political actors and issues receive coverage and how much prominence is given to them. By granting or denying media coverage, newspapers can impact the visibility and importance of certain political topics, thus influencing the political agenda. It is important to note that while newspapers have the power to shape the political agenda, they are not the sole influencers. Other media platforms, such as television, radio, and online media, also play a significant role. Additionally, public opinion, political events, and societal factors interact with newspaper coverage to collectively shape the political agenda.<sup>8</sup>

### **Watchdog Function**

The newspaper press acts as a watchdog over the political system, holding politicians and government officials accountable for their actions. Through investigative journalism and in-depth reporting, newspapers expose corruption, malfeasance, and abuses of power. By providing critical analysis and scrutiny, they contribute to transparency and help prevent the misuse of political authority. Newspapers play a vital role in a democratic society by serving as the "watchdogs" of government, businesses,

and other powerful institutions. The watchdog function refers to the role of the press in monitoring and holding accountable those in positions of power.

Newspapers often engage in investigative journalism, which involves in-depth research and reporting to uncover hidden information, expose wrongdoing, or shed light on important issues. Investigative journalism plays a crucial role in exposing corruption, fraud, abuse of power, and other unethical activities. More so, newspapers act as a check on government actions by reporting on political activities, policies, and decisions. They hold government officials accountable for their actions, scrutinize their policies, and provide analysis and commentary on their performance. This helps to ensure transparency, encourage ethical governance, and prevent abuse of power.<sup>9</sup>

Newspapers also investigate and report on corporate activities, such as financial irregularities, environmental violations, labor abuses, and product safety concerns. By exposing such misconduct, newspapers protect the interests of consumers, workers, and the general public. Newspapers play a vital role in safeguarding the freedom of speech and expression. They provide a platform for diverse voices and opinions, allowing for open debate and discussion on various issues. This function helps to ensure a vibrant and informed democracy.

Newspapers often take up causes that are in the public interest. They highlight social injustices, inequality, and human rights abuses, bringing attention to marginalized communities and pressing for necessary reforms. Through their reporting, newspapers can mobilize public opinion and influence public policy. Newspapers serve as a primary

source of information for the public. They provide news coverage, analysis, and expert opinions on a wide range of topics, including politics, economics, science, culture, and sports. This function helps to educate and inform the public, enabling them to make informed decisions. In an era of rampant misinformation, newspapers play a crucial role in fact-checking and debunking false or misleading claims. They verify information, correct inaccuracies, and promote evidence-based reporting. This helps to maintain the integrity of public discourse and combat the spread of misinformation. Overall, newspapers and their watchdog function are essential for a healthy democracy. They act as a bridge between the powerful and the public, holding institutions accountable, and providing a platform for the exchange of information and ideas.<sup>10</sup>

### **Public Opinion Formation**

Newspapers serve as a platform for diverse voices and opinions, facilitating public discussion and debate on political matters. Through editorials, opinion pieces, and letters to the editor, newspapers provide space for different perspectives, fostering a democratic dialogue and helping to shape public opinion. They contribute to the formation of an informed citizenry by presenting various viewpoints on political issues.

Newspapers play a significant role in shaping public opinion as they provide news coverage on a wide range of topics, including politics, economy, social issues, science, and culture. By selecting, prioritizing, and presenting news stories, newspapers influence the issues that receive public attention and shape the public's perception of those issues. Newspapers often feature editorial and opinion pieces written by journalists, columnists,

and experts. These articles express a particular viewpoint or argument on various issues. By presenting diverse opinions and analysis, newspapers contribute to the formation of public opinion by providing readers with different perspectives and influencing their thinking.<sup>11</sup>

Newspapers serve as platforms for public discourse and debate. Through letters to the editor, op-eds, and opinion sections, newspapers provide opportunities for readers to engage in discussions, express their views, and contribute to the formation of public opinion. These platforms facilitate the exchange of ideas and perspectives, influencing the collective understanding of various issues. Newspapers can influence decision makers, such as politicians, policymakers, and business leaders, by shaping public opinion. When newspapers consistently present a particular viewpoint or highlight certain issues, decision makers may take public sentiment into account when formulating policies or making important decisions. Newspapers' influence on public opinion can, therefore, indirectly impact the actions and behaviors of those in power. More so, Newspapers often reflect the social and cultural values of a society. They can reinforce or challenge existing norms, values, and beliefs through their coverage and editorial stances. By doing so, newspapers contribute to the ongoing evolution of public opinion on social and cultural issues. It is important to note that while newspapers play a significant role in public opinion formation, they are not the sole influencers. Other media outlets, including television, radio, and online platforms, as well as personal experiences, social interactions, and individual values, also shape public opinion in a complex and multifaceted manner.<sup>12</sup>

## **Education and Awareness**

Newspapers play an educational role by providing analysis, background information, and context on political issues. They help citizens understand complex policies, political processes, and the consequences of political decisions. Through their coverage, newspapers raise awareness about civic rights, responsibilities, and the importance of political participation.

Newspapers play important roles in education and raising awareness on various topics. Newspapers provide informative content on a wide range of subjects, including current events, politics, science, technology, health, education, and more. They offer in-depth articles, analysis, and expert opinions, which help readers stay informed and broaden their knowledge base. Local newspapers often focus on community news and events, providing residents with valuable information about local government, schools, businesses, and cultural activities. This coverage helps create awareness about local issues, encourages civic engagement, and fosters a sense of community.<sup>13</sup>

Newspapers often have specialized sections dedicated to specific topics, such as business, lifestyle, health, education, and the environment. These sections provide in-depth coverage, advice, and educational resources, catering to readers' interests and providing them with valuable knowledge. Many newspapers publish educational supplements or dedicated sections targeting students, teachers, and parents. These supplements may include study guides, career advice, educational resources, and articles on educational topics. They serve as a valuable resource for students and educators alike.

Newspapers feature opinion and editorial pieces that provide diverse perspectives on various issues. These pieces not only encourage critical thinking and reflection but also contribute to raising awareness and fostering public dialogue on important topics. Newspapers often run awareness campaigns on specific issues such as public health, social justice, environmental conservation, and more. These campaigns aim to educate the public, raise awareness, and inspire action to address pressing problems. Newspapers can use their platform to highlight the importance of various causes and mobilize public support. Newspapers provide a platform for readers to express their opinions, share personal experiences, and engage in public discourse through letters to the editor. These letters contribute to raising awareness, facilitating discussions, and encouraging a diversity of viewpoints. Newspapers themselves contribute to promoting literacy by providing reading material accessible to a wide audience. Reading newspapers helps improve language skills, critical thinking, and general knowledge, making it an educational activity in itself. By fulfilling these roles, newspapers contribute to the education of the public, foster awareness of important issues, and empower individuals to make informed decisions and participate actively in their communities.<sup>14</sup>

### **Bridge Between Politicians and Citizens**

Newspapers act as a bridge between politicians and citizens, facilitating communication and engagement. They provide a platform for politicians to communicate their views, agendas, and policy proposals to the public. Likewise, through interviews,

town hall reports, and opinion sections, newspapers allow citizens to express their concerns, feedback, and aspirations to political leaders.

Newspapers play a crucial role as a bridge between politicians and citizens, facilitating communication, information sharing, and accountability. Newspapers provide extensive coverage of political events, including elections, campaigns, and government activities. They report on the positions, actions, and statements of politicians, helping citizens stay informed about the political landscape and the decisions made by their elected representatives. Newspapers serve as a primary source of information about politicians and their policies. They publish interviews, speeches, and statements, allowing citizens to directly access the viewpoints and proposals of political leaders. By disseminating this information, newspapers enable citizens to form opinions and make informed judgments about political figures and their agendas.

Newspapers act as a watchdog, monitoring the actions and behaviors of politicians. Through investigative journalism, they uncover potential misconduct, corruption, or unethical behavior among elected officials. By exposing such issues, newspapers contribute to holding politicians accountable and maintaining transparency in the political process.<sup>15</sup>

Newspapers provide platforms for political analysis, opinion pieces, and editorials that offer commentary on political matters. These articles help citizens understand different perspectives and interpretations of political events, policies, and decisions. They foster critical thinking and encourage citizens to engage in informed debates and

discussions. Newspapers facilitate public discourse by providing letters to the editor, opinion sections, and online comment sections. These platforms allow citizens to voice their opinions, share their concerns, and offer feedback to politicians. By publishing and amplifying citizen voices, newspapers help bridge the gap between politicians and the public, fostering a two-way communication channel.<sup>16</sup>

Be that as it may, investigative reporting and analysis, newspapers play a significant role in holding politicians accountable for their promises, actions, and policy positions. They fact-check statements made by politicians, assess their campaign pledges, and evaluate their performance in office. By scrutinizing politicians' words and deeds, newspapers inform the public and help citizens assess the effectiveness and integrity of their elected representatives. Local newspapers, in particular, act as a bridge between citizens and local politicians. They report on community concerns, grassroots initiatives, and local issues that may require attention from politicians. By bringing these concerns to light, newspapers raise awareness and encourage politicians to address the needs and priorities of their constituents.<sup>17</sup>

### **Advocacy and Mobilization**

Newspapers can advocate for specific political causes, policy changes, or social issues. They can mobilize public support and create awareness around important political campaigns or movements. By highlighting social injustices, inequalities, or human rights abuses, newspapers can stimulate public action and contribute to the advancement of political reform and progress.

Newspapers can play significant roles in advocacy and mobilization on various issues. Newspapers often advocate for specific causes and social issues. They highlight injustices, raise awareness about marginalized communities, and champion the rights of vulnerable populations. By consistently covering and shedding light on these issues, newspapers can mobilize public support and encourage action. Newspapers feature opinion and editorial pieces that express support for specific causes or advocate for particular policy changes. These articles can shape public opinion, generate debate, and inspire readers to take action or engage with advocacy organizations working on those issues. Newspapers often cover protests, rallies, and other forms of activism. By reporting on these events, newspapers help amplify the messages and demands of advocacy groups and provide a platform for activists to reach a wider audience. This coverage can inspire and mobilize others to join or support the cause.<sup>18</sup>

Newspapers serve as forums for dialogue and debate on various issues. They publish letters to the editor, op-eds, and opinion pieces that allow individuals and organizations to express their perspectives and engage in discussions. This exchange of ideas can promote advocacy efforts and mobilize support for specific causes.

Newspapers often collaborate with advocacy organizations to raise awareness and support their campaigns. They may dedicate special features, series, or supplements to highlight specific issues and initiatives. By partnering with advocacy organizations, newspapers can leverage their reach and influence to mobilize public support and engage readers in advocacy efforts. Newspapers can provide information, resources, and practical

guidance to individuals and communities interested in advocacy. They may publish articles or guides that inform readers about ways to get involved, connect with advocacy groups, or contact policymakers. By providing such resources, newspapers empower individuals to take action and participate in advocacy efforts. Through their reporting, editorials, and opinion pieces, newspapers have the ability to shape public opinion and influence public sentiment on various issues. By presenting compelling arguments, highlighting stories, and providing factual information, newspapers can mobilize public support and create a sense of urgency around specific causes.<sup>19</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Overall, the newspaper press in Nigeria plays a crucial role in the development of Nigerian politics by providing information, fostering public debate, holding leaders accountable, and contributing to an informed and engaged citizenry. Newspapers play a critical role in connecting politicians and citizens. They provide information, analysis, and platforms for discussion, helping citizens engage with political processes, hold politicians accountable, and contribute to the democratic functioning of society. By fulfilling these roles, newspapers can effectively contribute to advocacy efforts, raise awareness about social issues, mobilize public support, and facilitate positive change in society.

## **Endnotes**

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17. L.K. Jakande, "The Role of the Mass Media in a Developing Nation", F. University of Ife, *Faculty of Arts Series* (4), 1974, pp.65
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## **CHAPTER FIVE**

## CONCLUSION

This study has so far critically examine the Origin and development of Newspaper press in Nigeria up till 1960; it unraveled the earliest types of Newspaper press that was established in Nigeria which were mostly owned by the Christian missionaries, activists, and politicians as at the time. More so, at its origin, these newspapers focused on disseminating the information in its region thereby limiting its coverage to that particular region. To a large extent these newspapers were indigenous as they were written in separate languages other than English.

The history of print media, also known as press or newspaper in Nigeria, can be traced back to the Renaissance period in Europe, when handwritten newsletters were privately distributed among merchants. These newsletters were intended to disseminate information on a wide range of topics, including conflicts, the economy, social traditions, and "human interest" topics. The newspaper eventually developed into a business model where some pages were devoted to advertising, allowing the publishers to cover some of the cost of printing and distribution.<sup>1</sup>

In Nigeria, community newspapers were first published in the 1840s by European missionaries who wanted to spread Christianity. Iwe Irohin, which started publishing news on November 23, 1859, was among the first news organizations. The newspaper cost 120 cowries, or one penny, and was distributed every fifteen days. The paper's circulation at the time was roughly 3,000, and it was well-read by the few literate Yoruba

people. The majority of the newspaper's articles covered church-related events, including ordinations and the presence and departure of religious dignitaries.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, it began disseminating tales about Abeokuta, the cotton and cocoa industries, and so forth. The publication also featured 1860 adverts from regional businesses and governmental organizations. *Iwe Irohin* was published in two editions eight years later, one in Yoruba and one in English.

The printing press was destroyed in 1867 as a result of the cultural and political conflicts between the Egbas and the British, which led to the expulsion of all Europeans from Egbaland. Eight years after the newspaper's founding, political and cultural tensions between colonialists and Egba natives caused an uprising in Abeokuta that resulted in the expulsion of all Europeans from the city in 1867. Egba rioters also destroyed the newspaper's printing equipment, which halted publication as they tore down the building. *Iwe Irohin*, the first newspaper in Nigeria, was put out of business by this terrible incident.<sup>3</sup> However, before it completely declined, it had already achieved its goal of instilling the Abeokuta population with a love of reading, allowing them to yearn for news after its demise.

Other newspaper industries did, however, emerge, all in Lagos; the Robert Campbell-founded *Anglo-African* replaced *Iwe Irohin* in 1863. The majority of the stories in this weekly newspaper were taken from foreign novels, magazines, books, and newspapers. The paper's main goal when it was first published was to take advantage of

the rising interest in Western education and enlightenment in Lagos in the 1860s by offering inexpensive and easily available content that would enlighten, inform, and amuse its readers. However, due to a lack of funding, the newspaper stopped publishing in 1865.<sup>4</sup>

More so, after Iwe Irohin's demise, additional newspaper outlets emerged. For instance, Robert Campbell founded the Anglo-African, the second Nigerian newspaper, in 1863. It was Lagos' first paper to be published. The paper's main goal was to use both Western and African knowledge systems to advance African self-improvement. In 1880, the third Nigerian newspaper was founded. The Lagos Times and Gold Coast Colony Advertiser were its previous names. It was founded by Mr. Richard Olamilege Beale Blaze, and Mr. Andrew M. Thomas and Mojola Agbebi served as its editors. Every fifteen days, a newspaper that cost sixpence was printed. The only important topics and issues of the day were the focus of this essay. On October 24, 1883, the daily finally ceased publication, only to make a brief comeback seven years later with little to no success. The West African Pilot is a different newspaper that had a significant impact on Nigerian newspaper history. "Show the light and the people will find the way," was the newspaper's motto. Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe launched The West African Pilot in 1937. With the help of this paper, there was a widespread uprising against British colonial control that eventually led to the country's independence in 1960. Many newspapers were founded as a result of the paper's strong influence, particularly in the 1960s various media

like the Anglo-African, The Lagos Observer and the impact of the Lagos Press in Nigeria, Lagos Standard aired their grievances against colonialism.

The Lagos Press, however, persisted in the Southern Protectorate. The Lagos Weekly Record, one of the media outlets, earned a reputation for speaking out against colonial injustices. In addition to calling for the Africanization of the civil service, it circulated popular sentiment, coordinated petition drives and protest marches against the colonial authority. Despite the press rules Lugard re-invoked, The Times of Nigeria, Nigerian Chronicle, and the Weekly Record played major roles in the press efforts for constitutional development in the united Nigeria. The Nigerian Constitution of 1922 was finally enacted. The Lagos Press, which employed and trained Ernest Sisei Ikoli, the founder of Nigerian professional journalism, became the cornerstone of the Nigerian Press as the cherry on top.<sup>5</sup>

During the colonial period, newspapers served various purposes, including facilitating communication between the British colonial administration and local communities, as well as providing a platform for local elites to express their views and concerns. These newspapers were often linked to political and religious groups, and they played a role in shaping public opinion and fostering nationalist sentiments.<sup>6</sup> Though the early newspapers faced challenges such as limited readership due to low literacy rates and the high cost of production. However, their impact gradually increased as literacy rates improved and the nationalist movement gained momentum.

In the post-independence era, newspapers continued to be influential in shaping public discourse and advocating for political change. The Nigerian civil war led to a proliferation of newspapers representing various ethnic and political interests, which sometimes contributed to heightened tensions. Over time, technological advancements led to changes in the newspaper industry.<sup>7</sup> The shift from traditional print media to digital formats, as well as challenges such as government censorship and economic pressures, have shaped the contemporary landscape of Nigerian journalism. In summary, the origin of newspapers in Nigeria can be traced to the colonial era, with the establishment of the Iwe Irohin in 1859. These newspapers played a crucial role in disseminating information, shaping public opinion, and contributing to the country's political and social developments and paved way for the establishment and development of other newspapers in Nigeria.

## Endnotes

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