THE PRINT MEDIA AND CLASS INTEREST IN NIGERIA: A CASE STUDY OF AN IDEOLOGICAL STATE APPARATUS

BY

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DEDICATION

For George

Through you, I reached out soon

and realised a dream that once seemed

illusory to contemplate.

I love you.

DECLARATION

I, Fidelia Nzekwu, do hereby declare that to the best of my knowledge the data contained in this dissertation is from my original research and it has not been submitted to any other university for examination.

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CERTIFICATION

This thesis entitled "The Print Media and Class Interest in Nigeria: A Case Study of an Ideological State Apparatus" by Fidelia Nzekwu meets the regulations governing the award of the degree of M.Sc. (Political Science) of Ahmadu Bello University, and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

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ABSTRACT

The print media has been studied as one of the state's ideological apparatuses which sustains an existing status quo. The mass media's performance is conceived within the context of the class interest it represents. In other words, stratifying the media like other social groups in the society indicates an inherent association with the state and the ruling class whose ideological preferences it generally shares. The Daily Times. New Nigerian. National Concord and Nigerian Tribune examined here establish that while it may be argued that these newspapers do not necessarily claim to share similar purposes with the ruling class, the differences between the papers on the one hand, and between them and the government on the other are reflections of intra-class conflicts. The contests date back to colonial Nigeria with the rise of some newspapers to advance the socio-economi c and political interests of the imperialists.

In order to ascertain the proposition that the Nigerian print media operates under the ideological direction of the state, we try to see how the newspapers react to three national issues; the Green Revolution Programme and industrial actions

of the second civilian government and the anti-Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) protests of the incumbent administration. The issue of press freedom is also addressed in order to consolidate the assumption that the freedom of the press is no barrier to the cooperative relationship between the Government and the print media. The unity of state/media aspirations, no doubt, is partly an attribute of restricted press freedom. Still, while a free press may result in increased intra-class disagreements, it is shown that this would not really mean a departure from the noted ideological course of the newspapers. This is essentially because class affiliations and the entrenched system of production instil what we perceive as a 'natural[1] homogeneity between the print media and the ruling class.

CONTENTS

Page

CHAPTER 1

(i) INTRODUCTION: Nature of the Problem 1

(ii) Methods of study and Analysis 4

(iii) The Print Media in a Capitalist Society: A Theoretical Apparisal 10

(iv) Social Classes: The Nigerian Variant 20

(v) The Print media and the Culture of imitation: A Theoretical perspective 34

CHAPTER 2:

(i) Evolution of the print media and the Nigerian Newspaper 52

(ii) Factors responsible for the emergence of mass press 53

(iii) The emergence of the mass media in Nigerian 60

(iv) Socio-Economic functions and political relevance of the print media in colonial Nigeria 67

(v) Newspapers in post-colonial Nigeria 72

CHAPTER 3:

(i) The Daily Times, Nigerian Tribune, New Nigerian and National Concord 1979-1985: An Overview 84

(ii) The Newspapers 1979-1985: Research findings 92

(iii) Ideological leanings of the Newspapers 97

Page

(iv) The Second Republic 1979-1983 107

(v) The Green Revolution and The Newspapers 108-127

(vi) A Synthesis of the positions of the newspapers on the Green Revolution 127

(vii) The Second Republic: Industrial Actions 132

(viii) The newspapers and strikes: Research Deductions 137

CHAPTER 4: The Military Regime - 1984-1990 147

(i) Buhari's Government: 1984-1985 147

(ii) Babangida's regime:- 1985-1989: SAP 150

(iii) 1986 Budget 153

(iv) SAP BUDGET: Survey Inferences 156

(v) Anti-SAP protests 157-164

(vi) Anti-SAP Vehement riots: Newspapers survey Deductions 164

CHAPTER 5

(i) Government and the Press: Co-operation or Conflict? 174

(ii) Press Control: A Universal Phenomenon ..188

CHAPTER 6: Press freedom in Nigeria: The Nigerian Press struggle for its Independence 198

(i) Nigerian Press, the struggle for its independence ....

(ii) Nigerian Print Media: protecting the nationss interest? 216

SUMMARY CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION 229

BIBLIOGRAPHY .....

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1(i) NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

It has become necessary to examine the role of the mass media and its contribution to the process of development in the Third World in general, and Nigeria in particular. The necessity stems from its vital role as conveyor of information between the rulers and the people. Just as it passes down information from top, from the rulers to the base, the ruled so should it, in like manner, transmit knowledge from the people to the governing group. Thereby, diffusing dominant and potential development efforts, in which members of that society recognise their contributions towards national development, and get geared for greater participation in developmental processes. The usage of the media as a meaningful instrument of growth resides in the existing socio-economic well-being of a given society. Hence, the present level of development in the Third World which can barely be described as impressive is reasonably attributive to what function the mass media serves in it./ To the ideas and knowledge conveye The

'message' of the medium thus, has appropriately been termed, the 'idea' which brings forth some form of consciousness or mode of thought that gradually directs a society's way of life.[1]

The mass media, in this light, is suitably defined as a part of the 'ideological state apparatuses',[2] giving its place as one essential means through which the state educates its citizenry, and projects national development guarantees the maintenance of the status quo. The co-ercive nature of the state is ensured by two apparatuses; that of repression, evident in such public forces as the army, the police, the courts, the prisons and the administration; and the 'ideological' apparatus, adopting Althusser's term. The ideological comprises, among others, law, trade unions, the political system of parties, the means of communication, etc. The ideological apparatus is invaluable to the state because, conceded Mattelart and Siegelaub,

> Beyond the institution of direct force, the state requires organised consensus. The state cannot merely be content with carrying out repression; it must assume a function of 'mediation' to use Gramsci's term. This function of mediation installs the state as educator and guarantor of organised consensus.

> This function Althusser designated as ideological state apparatus and which the Italian theoretician grouped together within the concept of civil society.3

A mass medium cannot be an equal representative of two varying ideologies. Where it seeks to maintain a system, it cannot, at the same time, effectively defend what rebels against it. It is in this light this work aims at examining the print media in Nigeria as an ideological state machinery which serves almost always, the interests of the state. This study involves authenticating our perception of the print media's interest as identical to those of the ruling class. When we speak of the 'interests of the state', we refer simply to those of the ruling class. They are indivisible given the state's provision of the ideological and physical requirements of system stabilisation. As an inveterate tool of system maintenance, the state obligatorily nurtures and imparts the ruling ideology. It is/its only way to effectively sustain the political conditions needed to reproduce established relations of production. The ruling ideology in this instance refers to the ideas, beliefs and practises designed to munify the regeneration of the capitalist or 'mixed economy' mode of production.

However, the print media's perpetuation of the purposes of the state by no means implies a conscious intent on its part to do so. The reasons and the ways through which the Nigerian print media consociates with the ruling class provide the goal of this research.

1(ii) METHODS OF STUDY AND ANALYSIS

The daily newspapers are the point of focus in this analysis. The existence of private-owned newspapers in Nigeria has not allowed for ostensible projection of ideas contrary to those majorly espoused by the state, as perhaps, it would be expected of them. For some explicable reasons, the private and government-owned (state/public) newspapers, amidst divergent quests, are unable to deviate, deliberately or otherwise, from echoing the wishes and aspirations of the dominant class. It is therefore, of fundamental interest to this survey to offer possible explanations to how and why these papers exhibit a hegemonial posture with the prevailing ideology in the country. Isolating the print media for study arises from its greater allowance for an analysis of class interest. The entertainment objective, and more importantly, government's monopoly of the electronic media

entrenched in the nation's constitution tends to leave a non-opague resolution to the question of whose interest is being served.

This research basically revolves around four daily newspapers; The Daily Times (DTs), the New Nigerian (NN), the Nigerian Tribune (NT), and the National Concord (NC). Their analysis spans ten years and encompasses three regimes: Shagari's civilian administration - from 1979-1983, Buhari's military regime, 1984-1985 and the present Babangida's military government which began in 1985. Where exigent however, a couple of other daily newspapers would be randomly picked and sampled to help validate some assumptions that may be volunteered here. The criteria for choice of newspapers is primarily based on two factors; period of existence and circulatory power. The Daily Times and the New Nigerian newspapers are the oldest existing government newspapers. Besides, they display what looks likes greater inclination to a nationalist outlook being owned by the Federal Government. While the New Nigerian is hundred percent Federal-Government funded, the Federal Government has the largest shares in the Daily Times Group. The Nigerian Tribune has been selected for not only

being the oldest existing private newspaper, but also because it claims (ed) to represent the socialist ideology. By way of juxtaposing it with the others, the legitimacy of the Tribune's claim would be sought. Among other private newspapers, the National Concord runs second to the Punch in period of existence. But we figured the Concord possesses a greater circulatory power. The accessibility of a newspaper to a larger number of the populace is a good judge to its place in national development. Circulatory capacity, therefore, cannot be omitted.

The papers would be sampled through a descriptive content analysis. By this, all relevant contexts to the various issues being examined would be given interpretations subject to our perception and comprehension while making a comparative study of the papers. Five other chapters are included here. Chapter two gives a background to the genesis of the print media and the Nigerian newspapers, with emphasis on the experimental papers. This undertakes an assessment of their maiden editions or perhaps, anniversary editions that clearly spell out again their set objectives. The period chosen for analysis is

expected to show the consistency with which such goals have been pursued. Chapters three and four look into two national programmes and one national issue. While Chapter three explores the Green Revolution Programme and the issue of strikes in the second civilian administration, the fourth chapter undertakes a study of the military regimes; the stance of the papers generally and, in particular, on the anti-SAP violent protests of May 1989. Contextual samples are strictly to be derived from the papers' 'editorials,' 'opinions' or 'commentary' columns. These columns, we believe, best reveal the papers' own candid impression about events. They bear no by-lines, thus, pointing out that they are representators of all who decide and participate in what the papers churn out to the public. By this, we have chosen to ignore, really, the intricacies of who actually decides what these columns report. For the purposes of this research we are content to assume that these 'anonymous' columns reflect the values of the newspapers proprietors.

The programmes and issue opted for proof have been so chosen because of what appears like implicit class differences in them. The Green

Revolution carried along with it mixed feelings from the populace. It was a renowned issue of debate in the Second Republic. While some described it as an encouragement to both big and small-scale farmers, many perceived it another fruitless inculcation of capital-intensive farming, meant to enrich further a small clique of capitalist farmers while discouraging and impoverishing peasant farmers who constitute the larger segment of the Nigerian population. The industrial actions of the second civilian regime posed another popular feature of that administration. Like all universal strike actions, they generally, seemed to reflect class differences between the workers and the ruling class. The recent Structural Adjustment Programme, commonly called SAP, has been the most fiercely propagated economy recovery programme. It has equally been the most violently rejected. We see it necessary to assess the papers' position on a SAP which the planners religiously seek to consummate and find exact criticisms against it intolerable and duely punishable.

Chapter five, which is a sort of prelude to the sixth glimpses over the universal cooperative relationship between the government and

the press, often bringing about the clipping of the freedom of the press. With adductions from the fifth chapter, the sixth and last chapter addresses the struggle of the Nigerian press to free itself from Government's constrictions more pronounced in the military regimes. We adduce here however, that while press freedom still lacks proper definition and to a limited extent, has consolidated Government/Press relationship, the struggle is not a vigorous effort to unclub the basic interest they share with the Government, which really earns them being called 'Ideological State Apparatus'. Some Acts and Decrees promulgated to shackle the print media would be viewed, and findings from the newspapers endow our deductions. This chapter also comprises the conclusion. It sums up a number of press foils in Nigeria ingenerate in the print media schematism.

THE PRINT MEDIA IN A CAPITALIST SOCIETY: A THEORETICAL APPRAISAL

It is generally accepted that a mode of communication is conditioned by an existing mode of production. Emphatic on the capitalist society, some studies revealed the role of the media as one in alliance with the processes geared towards the reproduction of the capitalist mode of production. (Mattelart and Siegelaub, 1979) (Downing, 1984) (Gardner, Media Politics and Culture) (Smith, 1980). Explicit in these works is the mass media's function in both developed and developing societies as a propagandist tool for Western culture, depicting too the needs of the ruling class in such countries to consistently justify and legitimize their rule. In developing countries, this is believed to mystify 'a consciousness of the real problem of development and dependency...[4]

The Nigerian print media presents itself as one of the ruling class veritable ideological mechanisms, instilling on the people its interests. This is achieved in a number of ways as would be pointed out later on here. Most glaring however, is that majority of the newspapers have been found to belong to members of the bourgeois class, many

of whom are affiliated to the ruling group. Yet, some of such proprietors may conveniently be lumped under the middle class which really does not alter the situation of things very much. For it is the proper definition of this middle class that has historically proved cumbersome due to its growth and alliance with the upper class or that also identified as the 'ruling class'.

John Downing's The Media Machine argued for instance, that the capitalist class, being just a small segment of the society and unable to rule alone needs class allies to secure their rule. The petty-bourgeoisie, among whom are journalists provide the much needed alliance. Downing found the media therefore,

> ... an integral part of the development of the institutional ideological complex of capitalist rule - a part of the development of the ruling class in alliance or struggle with other classes...5

Similarly, Marx and Engels in the German Ideology described the media as an extension of the capitalist system. They conceived the idea of the ruling class the 'ruling idea' at every given period, giving their control and manipulation of the available material means of production.[6] Against

this background, while acknowledging the dearth of researches devoted to adequate analysis of the collaboration of the indigenous bourgeoisie with the imperialists, Maltelart and Siegelaub conceded to the existence of this alliance.

> There are innumerable studies that describe the invasion of magazines, television serials, advertising messages and other cultural merchandise from the U.S. in Third World countries. Yet, in the literature on this theme, there are very few analysis which are capable of explaining how imperialist works in connection with the internal bourgeoisie and the local ruling classes which serve as its relay accomplice.[7]

Schiller asserted likewise, that the 'communication industries' be understood as fostering the interest of the ruling class, which in the Western context, is the capitalist class.[8] And Hans Magnus Enzensberger's The Consciousness Industry succintly proffered that the mind industry's main preoccupation is immersed in the sale of the 'existing power' rather than its products. He illustrated that the press has always been susceptible, one way or the other, to the influence of capital.[9] These, views, undoubtedly, have their merit, Yet, the secondary place emphatically accorded

role of profit, of adverts in the news business could be doubted. In Nigeria, for example, the newspapers main business is debatable. In fact, it could easily be assumed that prior to their purposes is the generation of profit, though circumstantial evidences prove such sweeping assumption erroneous. The issue of profit would seem to apply primarily to the private newspapers whose political character often appears to be in undesirable competition with the economic requirements of the paper.

Rafael Drinot Silva's contribution in Communication and Class Struggle stressed the prominent place of the advertising agencies as a power within the media, essentially reproducing the capitalist ideology. Silver argued that the bloom of the industrial revolution and the subsequent expansion of the market place involved the newspapers in an economic process where producers were linked to the consumers through advertising. Thus, relegating the news to a secondary position. Because the rise of the press allowed for advertising, and resultantly, organised market in the beginning of the 19th century, it must not be forgotten that the development of the market necessitated and

advanced the need for the press. Silva observed that,

> From then on, the market, advertising and the media developed together, with the nature of advertising and the communications media being determined by their participation in the capitalist economy. 10

What is inferrable is the idea of promoting capitalism through emphasis on profit accumulation for the newspapers. While it is no falsehood that the media in developing societies, generally, are subservient to the capitalist ideology, it is also stating the obvious to say that in doing this, the media is more accessible to some social strata in the society. Besides their ownership and control by a privileged few, more often than not, it is solely the literate persons who identify themselves with it. Nigeria is a case in point where the majority of her populace are still not literate and the increasing escalation in prices of newspapers further diminishes the percentage of the learned persons who read newspapers.

Government-ownership of most newspapers in the country does not seem to have made any meaningful difference in this affair. Of about the thirty-five

newspapers published in the country as at 1987, the Federal and state governments between them owned about twenty-two of them and political considerations were the basis for appointment of chief executives and editors of these papers.[11] The inavialability of the newspapers to a majority of the citizenry makes sceptical having to describe the mass media as the 'nation's conscience'.[12] The inadequacies of the Nigerian Newspaper gives great cause for concern as their greater permissiveness to views from the general public ought to lend credence to their being the society's watch dog. Government's total ownership of the electronic media and to a very large extent, the print as well, elucidates the argument that increasing government control innevitably amounts to increase in its power to manipulate and control all forms of expressions held to pose a threat to the stability of the government and, of course, to 'national interest'. Thus, it is not only in societies like Russia that the print media severely under-represents some section of the society.[13] Because the Nigerian Newspaper principally speaks for the ruling class, the ordinary citizen is usually not well represented.

It is in this light that the press has time and again been accused of assisting the repression

of the dominated and exploited class. They make it a success by the breeding of an ideology which culminates in deeply reinforcing the dominatòn of one class by another and therefore, widening the gap of inequality between property owners and the dominated. This is a goal not in jeopardy even where government newspapers patently criticize, in very strong terms, the government itself. Some critics of the capitalist press have been moved there in, to suggest that the role of the press should be one of 'heading the tide of discontent that millions of working people feel under capitalism.. into the safe harbour of reformism'.[14] It is the nature of this reform that is disputable.

Socialist scholars, for example, insistent on the role of the left press dismiss the mass media as a sort of conspiracy to hold down the working people by confusing and disarming millions of workers. For these scholars, newspapers are one of the causes of 'false consciousness' among working people.15 Many of such criticisms on the capitalist press substantially highlighted means by which the press sub-dues sources of alerting workers to their rights and obligations. Example of this could be found in bias coverages of issues and events of

crucial advantage to the welfare of workers. Many of these judgements, however, have paid inadequate attention to a number of cogent problems militating against the capitalist press particularly in Africa. Such problems include; changes in government often accompanied by attendant political changes - new laws, decrees, acts, that all make a derision of attempts by some sectors of the press to instil considerable consciousness in their audience. These reproofs have underscored the expectations of a press owned by a fraction of the bourgeois class in league with the ruling class. There has also been a play down, unfortunately, on the tasks involved in heading off disatisfactions felt by the workers, such as; the liberty to do so without being proscribed in the case of newspapers and news magazines; and the coercive institutions of the state often conveniently employed in subordinating obstinate labour channels for expressing such discontent the rulers would rather not hear. Then, there is the lack of unity among workers and the gross inefficiency of many labour leaders. Thus, workers do not always speak in unison. Grievances are usually expressed in insignificant piece-meal which is hardly ever propitous to the workers.

Labour leaders in turn, for sundry reasons, not excluding comfortably lumping themselves with the ruling oligarchy, turn their backs on vital pressing problems of the workers. Labour Unions in most Third World countries appear too weak to persistently continue with the struggle for the working people. It is not the objective of this work to delve into the workings of the labour unions, especially as they exist in dependent capitalist entities since it would engender a deviation from our stated course of research. Suffice it to say for now that there is enough reason to describe the organisation of the media in Nigeria as a material element in the overall alliance of the capitalist class with the petty-bourgeoisie, who could, as a necessity ally with the exploited to maintain the status quo. Besides the coercive nature of the state, quite useful in homogenising the press and the ruling class, this homogeneity is also a product of the social status of most newspaper proprietors in Nigeria.

Findings on West African countries, Nigeria being a profound example, point to Western education as having created an 'African elite' who established the very first African newspapers.[16] Nnamdi Azikiwe and the late Obafemi Awolowo fall within this group of African elite who set up the pioneering

indigenous private newspapers in Nigeria. With Azikiwe's later assumption of the office of President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and Awolowo, Premier of the then Western region, they both became members of the ruling oligarchy and their individual papers, in accordance, faithfully represented their interests as rulers of assigned regions. It was evident in the papers' protection of the objectives of the NCNC - Azikiwe's political party then, and the AG which was founded by Awolowo.[17]

Evidently, there exists a comprehensible link between the interest of the press and that of the ruling class which dates back to pre-independent Nigeria. Owners of newspapers at that time were core members of the indigenous ruling body. It was only natural therefore, that their papers identified with their aspirations. Details of this are provided in the second chapter. Nonetheless, we see it expedient to assess classes as obtainable in Nigeria. This is expected to fairly establish who constitute the ruling class as well as clearly set out the class we consider, fundamentally represented in the newspapers.

1(IV) SOCIAL CLASSES: THE NIGERIAN VARIANT

Although man has for long accepted the inequality among men in society, the controversies surrounding the basis and characteristics of social classes have not been expunged. Beginning from Plato, societies were presumed structured, so that citizens belong to various strata; the Guardians, the Auxilliaries and the workers.[18] Rousseau conceived the existence of two kinds of inequality among men - the natural physical which is the product of nature and consists of difference of age, health and body strength and the state of the mind or of the soul. And there is that which may be called moral or potential inequality because its genesis duels on a 'kind of convention ... and is authorised by the consent of men'.[19] This comprises of the different privileges some men enjoy at the detriment of others. For example, the state of being wealthier, more honoured, more powerful, or in a position to exact obedience. Aristotle was conscious of the essence of inequality among men in societies to the general welfare of that community. He offered what he considere the 'best political communication' necessary for the

relations between men. The 'ideal city', he conceptualised, consists of '... equals and similars which generally, are the middle class. Thus, ensuring moderation and checking excess. He oposed any control by two other elements believed to exist in all societies: the very rich and the very poor. The former he judged as 'willing to submit to authority' and the latter, not only 'too degraded to participate as citizens, but are biologically inferior.[20]

Bottomore, however, regarded the boundaries of social classes as less precisely defined. Because they take no root in any specific legal or religious rules as castes or feudal estates, their characteristics are exclusively economic.[21] The rise of social classes therefore, is associated with the first historical expansion of productive forces, based on the production of surplus which involved the extension of the division of labour beyond the family. And subsequently, there was an emergence of private ownership of economic resources. Karl Marx became the first to provide an extensive and indepth concept of the rise of social classes and their historical role in the social changes in societies. The struggle between opposing classes is pristine in his perception of the history of existing

societies. His Communist Manifesto explicitly affirmed at the beginning that, 'the history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggles'.[22] For Marx, the appearance of all social classes is essentially the effect of a society's mode of production and relations of production. Each mode of production, agriculture or industrialism, procures its attendant antithesis and stratification of the society. This could prevail in a relationship between the land-owner and the slave, or between the capitalist owner of the factory and the worker. He saw men's interests in different relations to the means of production as inevitably antagonistic, thus, the persisting struggles among classes in societies.

In consonance with Marx, Weber concerted to the control of property as fundamental in the determination of status change of an individual or class. He however, included Power and Prestige and projected these, along with property control as the basis of hierarchical structure. Weber acknowledged the very close link between economic and political power inspite of the demarcation he drew between property differences which he stated generates classes and Power differences which beget

Political Parties.[23] Lenin, likewise, defined social classes in respect to the ownership of the means of production. For him social classes are,

> Large groups of people differing from each other by the place they occupy in the history determined system of social production by their relation (in some cases fixed and formulated in law) to the means of production; by their role in the social organisation of labour, and consequently, by the dimensions and mode of acquiring the share of social wealth of which they dispose.[24]

Lenin's conception of social classes based on Marxist thought is further grounded by Robert Tucker who explained social classes as a manifestation of the degree of the development of division of labour. The division of labour prevalent in a nation foremostly leads to the separation of industrial and commercial from agricultural labour'[25] and eventually, to the cleavage of town and country and to the conflict of their interests. He elaborately explained that the division of labour gradually gives birth to various splits among the individuals cooperating in definite kinds of labour. Centering the formation of social classes on the ownership of the means of production, Tucker remarked that at the level of communal and state-ownership, the division of labour and class

relation between citizens and slaves is completely developed. Hence, the opposition between town and country and later on between states which represent town interests and those that represent country interests.

Marx identified two principal classes - the bourgeoisie and the working class which are fairly easily ascertainable in most societies. But his intermediate class, those often referred to as the 'middle classes' have posed numerous problems to his theory on class because Marx's middle classes have enormously grown to negate his vision of them as the classes to, in time, disappear in modern societies. This middle class encompassed small producers, craftsmen, artisans, small farmers and self-employed professional men, many of whom have been absorbed into large capitalist enterprises.[26] Though Marx's study chiefly delineated England at that time, it has been found to hold some universal relevance to Europe, Asia and Africa. Adhering strictly to Marx's notion of class is knotty when applied to Africa, considering the keen discord in the historical processes of Europe, the foundation for Marx's theory and Africa. Africa may not be described as a classless society; yet, social stratification in Africa is highly contested.

African societies are portrayed as having practised the caste and feudal estate systems, just as the derivation of classes in these societies is traceable to their distinct modes of production.

Studying Africa generally, Ben Turok considered four class structures: the Bourgeois Proper, under which he identified four closely related actors (i) International capital, (ii) the state bourgeoisie, (iii) the comprador bourgeoisie, (iv) the national bourgeoisie. These constitute fractions of the bloc, capital, and on the one hand, are homogenous in relation to labour and the masses, while on the other some factors bring them on contradictory terms.

The Petit-Bourgeoisie: This is defined as 'characteristically ambiguous' in recognition of its tendency to ally with the ruling bourgeoisie and the subordinate classes. However, Turok alluded to Poulantzas who pictured the 'traditional petit-bourgeoisie' as marked by

> ... the combination of ownership with the absence of direct exploitation of wage-labour ... This group may also engage in landlordism, money-lending and a range of petty practices...27

Poulantzas, furthermore, proposed the existence of a fragment of this petit-bourgeoisie and called them

'New Petit-Bourgeoisie'. Listed in this group are, non-productive wage earners also known as 'white-collar workers' in such enterprises as banks and commercial firms. They are said to be quite distinguishable from the working class. The New Petit-Bourgeoisie neither possesses economic ownership nor the means of production. They, therefore, do not exactly belong to the bourgeois class. This is also the group boxed together with the working class by some who found explanations for doing so in the presumption that they are wage/salary earners. But Poulantzas firmly held that what is important is not that they earn wages or salaries, but rather, the unproductive nature of their labour. Others enlisted in the 'New Petit-Bourgeoisie' group include, doctors, lawyers, accountants and other professionals - their 'ideological' role being merely the provision of critical support to the neo-colonial regime which protects their interests. This stratum is believed to exercise no direct political domination over the working class.[28]

We have some reservations about Poulantzas' New Petit-Bourgeoisie. What, for instance, distinctively distinguishes the traditional petit-bourgeoisie, he characterised as given to 'landlordism', 'money

lending', etc. from the new Petit-Bourgeoisie he majorly concerned himself with their overall alliance with the bourgeoisie? Does he wish to impress the notion that the so-called traditional petit-bourgeoisie depict no affiliations whatsoever with the bourgeoisie? And was colonialism not responsible for the almost simultaneous rise of Poulantzas' traditional petit-bourgeoisie and the lawyers, doctors and accountants? Or perhaps, there existed a traditional petit-bourgeoisie pre-colonialism? Regardless of the blurrness in fractionalising the petit-bourgeoisie, we are not oblivious to the substance of this class. And that predominantly, is its role as middle-men who usually politically associate themselves with the bourgeoisie.

The third structure discovered by Turok is the Working Class. Just like the petit-bourgeoisie, the qualifying features of this class are complex to itemise. Divergent views are held about who fall within this category. A summation of these differing opinions generate problems in attempts to credit the working class with a proper definition. Fanon, for example, considered them a sub-section of the middle class connected to the bourgeoisie by special interests. He found them alien to the masses. Ake described the proletariat the working

class because the proletariat incloses both workers and peasants. Meanwhile, Saul and Arrighi argued that the working class (workers) embraces two groups; the 'semi-proletarianised peasants' engaged in wage employment, and the 'proletariat proper' with stable employments. The proletariat proper, being skilled labourers, earn higher incomes than their unskilled counterparts - the semi-proletarianised peasants. The skilled workers, in union with the 'elites and sub-elites' in the civil service and expatriate firms constitute the 'labour aristocracy'. They were also shown as inclined towards becoming junior partners of the dominant power bloc.[29] The peasantry is designated as the last class structure in African societies. Those inclusive in this stratum are, subsistent farmers, the poor rural people, not leaving out agric-wage labourers. They were also defined as 'the major victims of the injustices and inefficiencies of the post-independence state ...'[30]

In Nigeria, the emergence of social classes has been attributed to the ownership of the means of production, as well as in the development of the forces of production. Onimode's classification of the Nigerian society presents an appreciable

picture of what still obtains presently in the country. Neo-capitalist Nigeria is likened to an extension and a development of colonial class formations. He suggested three formations associated with the process; (i) the imperialist bourgeoisie also termed 'imported oligarchy'; (ii) the domestic bureaucratic bourgeoisie and (iii) the working class. The bureaucratic bourgeoisie denote the domestic comprador exploits nurtured by the foreign bourgeoisie through education and religious indoctrination. For Onimode, this class nurses identical interest with the imperialist bourgeoisie on many issues. Belonging to the bureaucratic bourgeois class are five major strata; (i) the political and higher administrative elite, such as leaders of petty-bourgeois political parties, permanent secretaries, traditional rulers - emirs, obas, obis, etc., (ii) commercial, financial industrial and contractor petty-bourgeoisie, (iii) officers corp of the armed forces and police who guarantee the protective cover for the bureaucratic bourgeoisie. These three strata, that is, the politico-administrative elite, the business oligarchy, and the military-polite elite constitute the ruling class of the Nigerian bureaucratic bourgeoisie since the sixties.[31]

Onimode's Nigerian 'ruling class' is largely in line with Marx's 'upper class' or 'ruling class'. This group is recognised by its ownership of the principal means of production and the control of the sources of political domination - legislation, courts, administration, military force, and the agencies of intellectual persuasion.[32] He found detectable two other fractions of the bureaucratic bourgeoisie that are ally to the first three primary among these is the professional group: doctors, lawyers, academic, engineers, the higher clergy and other associations who offer technical and operational assistance to the ruling class. The second stratum is the managerial section, alternatively called 'intendant class'. Included in this group are, national functionaries and salariat who acquired managerial technique and training in Western educational institution or in the local ones greatly influenced by Western standards. The professional and managerial put together become the 'middle class'. Finally, in neo-colonial class formations are the working people or the proletariat, made up of the peasantry, factory workers, operators and other wage slaves. The rank and file soldiers and policemen, students, petty-artisan, such as tailors, shoe-makers, petty

traders and the unemployed all fall within this group.

Onimode's and Turok's class structures have quite a number of things in common. Turok's however, hinders adequate understanding of social classes as begotten in many African societies, Nigeria in particular. His fractionalisation of the Petty-bourgeoisie breeds ambiguity and confusion. Nonetheless, worthy of note is Onimode's domestic bureaucratic bourgeoisie which is a combination of three of the four fractions of Turok's 'bourgeoisie proper'. These are, the state bourgeoisie, the comprador and the national bourgeoisie; and the petit-bourgeoisie split into the traditional and the 'New' petit-bourgeoisie. Identifying the ruling class in Nigeria from Onimode's model is less burdensome where one is severely in search of the indigenous ruling class. He does not perceive the working class and the peasantry as two distinct classes as it does appear in Turok's description of class structures in Africa. Rather, Onimode's working class embodies the peasants.

We are aware no one model of social stratification is infallible since no one society

is static. Just as the society grows so does its class structures which become liable to some metamorphosis. Onimode, like many other authors was alert to certain loop holes in his model. Hence, he was sensible to the complicacy of the working class and identified one concrete problem with it as the prevalence within it of a 'labour aristocracy' of trade union leaders whose class positions are obviously proletarian, but acquire the life styles of the petit-bourgeoisie, given their jobs as union officials. He also observed that the professional stratum of the bureaucratic bourgeoisie does, at times, get incorporated with the domestic ruling class through party affiliation and political appointments. Onimode, as earlier stated, is not alone in this dilemma. Citing Saul and Arrighi, Turok commented on the alliance that could be formed between the labour aristocrats and the dominant power bloc. Consequently, simply placing them in the working class proves insufficient.

What does all this potend for the state, the ruling class and the print media in Nigeria? Taking Onimode's model, it is easy to understand what is meant when we say the state newspapers, naturally, are in harmony with the ruling class if it is remembered that the state in Nigeria is an

integral part of the ruling body. This group has identity in Turok's 'Bourgeoisie proper' and Onimode's 'domestic bureaucratic bourgeoisie', The Nigerian print media may be classed under Onimode's bureaucratic bourgeoisie whose three strata, he argued, have formed the ruling class in Nigeria since the sixties. And for convenience, the print media, in Turok's class structures belong to the 'New Petit-Bourgeoisie'. The print media, whether a segment of the domestic bureaucratic bourgeoisie or the New petit bourgeoisie confederates with the ruling class, and that is most important here.

It is troublesome to fit the Nigerian print media into one class. The factors of affluence and deference could automatically elevate some newspaper proprietors to the 'upper class' and others, the 'middle class'. However, we take solace in the general acceptance of the existence of some unity between the upper or ruling class and the middle class. If this is established, the role of the print media as an ideological state apparatus is intelligible. Associated with the ruling class, and being a very viable channel through which the rulers normalise the system because they could also easily associate themselves

with the other lower classes, it makes sense that they nurture one ideology with the ruling class.

However, the subordination of the Nigerian newspapers to the interest of the dominant class is not an obliteration of the various superficial interests among the papers which bring them into conflict. State and private newspapers do now and again, hold conflictual views on certain issues. Government newspapers war with each other, just as the private newspapers do. But these differences, we found, are really only intra-class wranglings. They are not basic ideological antagonisms, therefore, they enforce no meaningful socio-economic vicissitude in the capitalist system. The collaboration to maintain the system is carried out in various ways. One of such is through the fostering by the print media of an imperialist culture.

1(v). THE PRINT MEDIA AND THE CULTURE OF IMITATION: A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

To examine the print media as an ideological state apparatus, we conceive the need to do so on the premise of a culture of imitation because ideology embraces the ideas and practises that inform man's way of life. It reveals the existence

of a necessary link between 'inverted' forms of consciousness and men's material existence'.[33] It is also 'everything... relevant to man's political condition and puts forward a doctrine that would be necessary in forging, sustaining or changing that condition'.[34] Every society's life finds root in one form of ideology or another.

When we speak of a culture of imitation, we essentially refer to the imposition, adaption and the cultivation of an ideology; in Nigeria's case, capitalist in essence, which directs and controls a people's mode of existence. This process resides in the relationship between the <u>super-structure</u> and the <u>base</u>. The super-structure, that is, the production of ideas and opinions by persons is perceived as intimately associated with man's material activity, 'the processes in real life and its praxis'.[35] Here, the culture to copy dictates a transcedental transmission of values and ideas in a one way process involving three elements; the industrialized/imperialist societies, the indigenous ruling segment in the developing societies, and the citizenry. Critical of the media's unilinearly function, from top to bottom, Maltelart and Siegielaub annotated:

> A transmitter transmits the super-structure of the capitalist mode of production to the receiver, an audience, the great majority of which does not see its own pre-occupations and models of life reflected in the messages transmitted but rather, the aspirations, values and norms which bourgeois domination considers to be most favourable for its survival. Thus, what is at issue is the appropriation of an event or a piece of news, in which the people are the actors, in order to legitimate the system of domination. 36

In monopolising the news, the ruling class sets apart for itself the products of social forces and proclaims itself 'absolute master and sole interpreter of the interests of society as a whole'. The bourgeoisie, therefore, can be said to possess 'the dynamic of information', the authors concluded.

Assimilating the salient socio-economic doctrines of imperial cultures is fundamental in Nigeria's dependent capitalist posture. The capitalist inclinations are precipitated and sustained by a befitting ideology of which counterfeiting major ethics of the developed capitalist society is principal. The Nigerian print media plays a remarkable part in this process. Some explanations have generally been

proferred for why the objectives of the news industry extends beyond the ostensible advertising of goods and services and the protection of nationalist intentions. Some of these studies have stressed the impact of news media activities in the developing societies, than in industrialised nations.

Carl Gardner, for instance, alluded, to Enzensberger's essay on the industrialization of the mind where Enzensberger argued that the products of the mind industry must be sought beyond the common notion of a 'sellers' and buyers' market ... or production costs'. He found this idea valuable but pointed out that to drum consistently and solely on the commercial interests is to trample on the role of the mind industries in societies. The sale of its products is not overriding to the mind industry's main business, but rather, selling the existing order to perpetuate the prevailing pattern of man's domination by man, he maintained. Hence, 'No matter who runs the society and by what means, ... an entire industry is engaged in ... eliminating possible features and reinforcing the present patterns of domination.'[37] He conceptualised the mind industry's major pre-occupation as residing in

the promotion of those ideas that seek to reinforce an existing status quo.

On a more particular level, Nordenstreng and Schiller censured the colonisation of the Third World for the genesis of the instillation in these countries of a culture of imitation; what they named 'cultural colonisation'. They advanced the argument that colonisation subjected the Third World to a political, economic and socio-cultural subservience. These less developed societies, undergo therefore, a gradual transformation of their values and behavioural patterns to reflect those of the metropolitan countries. The authors alleged that the attainment of independence by the colonies brought no genuine change in their social status. Rather,

> ... the infused patterns have been maintained and reinforced through a variety of mechanisms. Education has traditionally played an important role. Members of the elite and the middle class were (are) frequently educated in the major developed countries, where, of course, they were (are) also exposed to the life styles of the host societies. Similarly, domestic education in many Third World countries is based on material imported from former metropoles. Old socio-cultural ties are also strengthened by foreign language broadcasts, newspapers, and extensive cultural programmes of major developed countries. All these

> mechanisms whose control is usually also highly concentrated disseminate the values and behavioural patterns of a few major developed countries, which thus, keep intentionally or not, the developing countries within the socio-cultural orbit of these countries. 38

Screening the role of advertisements in this dispensation, the authors vividly explained that while advertising directly appeals to a society's value-orientation, especially its consumer values, it simultaneously sells 'products' as it does 'ideas'. Advertising thus, engineers the consuming patterns already entrenched in the developing countries.

In an article titled 'National Sovereignty and International Communication. Culture in the process of dependent development', Raquel Salinas and Leena Paldan opined that economically, cultural imperialism is presently being increasingly associated with the role of the transnationals in the development of capitalism. Among organs perpetuating
/ this purpose is the media whose activities propel cultural imperialism. This, crucially, is in relation to the media's role in the reproduction of the capitalist mode of production, both at the economic and cultural ideological level.[39]

In another reference to Salinas and Paldan, Chin Chuan-Lee declared that what the authors called 'dependent development' present a more enlightening explanation to cultural imperialism. This dependency is nourished by 'multi-national conglomerates of monopoly capitalism' which aid the industrialisation of some peripheral areas.

> ... coopting the expanded local bourgeoisie and the middle class into the sphere of metropolitan cultural influences, while intensifying the marginalisation of lower classes. As a result, the local culture of industry, in seeking larger profits in the market economy is especially responsive to the conditioning of the metropoles - and thus drives toward cultural homogenisation. 40

Chin Chuan-Lee found the mass media a part and parcel of this development. He had earlier asserted that as far back as the late fifties, the mass media has been construed as plunged into 'producing citizens through out the Third World with a magic modernising personality'. It is one <u>emphatic</u>, <u>innovative</u>, <u>cosmopolitan</u>, <u>achievement-oriented</u>, literate, etc. This personality pays minimal or no consideration to the extant structural inhibitions of such societies as well as the international

system. The author expressed doubts about the Third World mass media having convincingly proven themselves a vanguard of social change. This is all the more so because of their inclination towards being 'conservative cultural agencies' thrusting forward the norms and values of the status quo.[41] Buttressing this, he cited Nordenstreng and Varis who envisioned 'bourgeois journalism' or mass communication in capitalist society as performing three major functions: (i) to conceal class antagonism inside society and to compensate for the systems of alienation; (ii) to illegitimize the concrete social alternatives to the established order of society; (iii) to make profit a branch of commercial industry. Concluding, the authors defined the mass media as a sustainer of the status quo.[42]

Similarly analysing development and communication, Ronald Benge dwelled critically on the 'modern personality'. His argument was that universally, some sectors of the populace are gullible to the mass media's inculcation of a new image in them. Benge made the following submission;

> In between the educated (or over-educated) elite and the peasant masses exists what one could call a half-educated or clerical class, the members of which are permanently

> struggling to improve themselves by some kind of formal qualification like a General Certificate of Education. They are intent on freeing themselves from the threat of manual labour or a return to the land, and correspond to the lower middle class elements in advanced societies. Their precarious economic foundation are reflected in psychological insecurity, and having partly abandoned the attitude of the traditional society in which they were born, they are not equipped to adopt or even fully understand the new men above them. Such individuals will naturally respond to commercial adverts and will attempt to 'ape their betters' in their consumption of material goods; but that is not all. They do not represent in any sense a revolutionary force and their expectations are necessarily parasitic: the new attitudes must be sought elsewhere. 43

Benge marked this as the beginning of 'modernity' and the famous rising expectations 'the peasants never had. Mass communication, in particular, films and radio play a highly measurable role in this dispensation; they are 'mobility multipliers' leading people to imaginary universe and disciplining them in emphatic skills.[44] While Benge's postulation is remarkably applicable to Nigeria, his 'guilty' class, the one he addressed as the 'clerical class' is not the only class that dons the 'modern personality'.

Colonisation created modern persons in all identifiable classes in Nigeria, perhaps, save for the peasantry. And looking at the rise of the newspaper industry in the country, it is not wrong to assume that the most 'modern' among such modern personalities were in fact, the new African elite who schooled abroad - those Benge may wish to call 'over educated'. Having been perfectly steeped in the imperial culture, they, together with the colonial settlers diffused the alien culture overtly and subtly.

Quite expressive on the entire phenomenon of a culture of imitation is Anthony Smith's The Geopolitics of Information which detailed ample reasons for the nature of communication in the Third World. Smith laid the blame absolutely on 'dependency', promoted by the imbuing of an imperialist culture which represses the growth of indigenous values. He attributed the handicap of the newspaper industry in the Third World to the needs of the capitalist market to which the developing countries are subjugated. And more intensely articulating Third World's foster of an imperialist culture which he found concentrique to capitalism, Smith commented on its permeation in

all facets of journalism in the Third World.

> Western attitudes have been fed into the training of Third World journalists as much as that of other Third World technicians, professionals and craftsmen; inevitably, developing societies first imported an attempted Western newspaper culture when they imported the technology. The reporters of the developing world - those who have been trained abroad as well as those whose training has been on the newspaper in their own societies tend to be judged by Western standards. There is no measure of competence which is separable from the beliefs and attitudes of those who have designed the standards. The whole professionalisation of the media in developing countries is the result of cultural transplantation and the practitioners have thus to struggle with the special contradictions of their situation. 45

Salient to these arguments is the mass media, the print media's implementation of an ideology manufactured in the West. In Nigeria, the ideology, in newspapers and other socio-economic values tend to thrive in such ambiguous expressions as 'national interest', 'national security',[46] and public welfare. As a dependent capitalist society, the Nigerian print media may be construed as an extension of the capitalist system; borrowing Marxist idea. This implies an evolution of a

superstructure of ideas; genuine reflections of the capitalist mode of production, and widely spread by the print media. It is less astonishing therefore, that the developing world could really not have improved beyond their present status, their media being extensions of the Western culture.[47]

There is no doubt that Nigeria's colonial experience prepared the ground for capitalist biases. Colonialism preached a culture of imitation; a culture of 'importation' by proclaiming Western standard 'ideal' and compelling Nigeria, like many other African countries to bow before imperial norms. Colonialism generously offered the one ideology that has largely swayed meaningful economic independence and which till date, the mass media, in concert with the ruling class upholds. An aspect of the idea of 'importation' was evident in an assessment of the Daily Times' and the New Nigerian's stance on the problem of illiteracy in Nigeria a few years after independence. Observable was the papers' defects on the issue of education. While they creditably impressed the advantageous contribution of education to national development, they inappreciably instructed on what educational methods most appropriately suits a newly independent society like Nigeria.

Thus, there were countless clarion calls for more schools, the provision of instructive facilities, free education and so forth. But it was not deemed relevant to de-emphasise education for white collar jobs - jobs more in association with administrative purposes like it was in the colonial era. The entire idea of education seemed to have been chiefly predicated on colonial ideas - ideas that did not exactly encourage the development of indigenous technology along side the imported one. The Daily Times and the New Nigerian newspapers were, and are still owned by the Federal Government. They represent the interest of the Federal Government. We assume therefore, that their opinions about the educational requirements of this country in the period observed echo the opinions of the Government.

That government or state newspapers espouse the interests of the ruling class is at times too well asserted to hammer on. They were primarily set up for that purpose. However, can the same be said for the private newspapers we find in alliance with the ruling class? How the private newspapers harmonise their interests with those of the state would be explored in chapters three and four. We conclude here that having gathered together various

views on the assimilation of an imperialist culture by Third World Countries, Nigeria for one, the culture of imitation can hardly be isolated from the overall idea of an ideology in dependent capitalist societies.

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CHAPTER II

2(i) ## EVOLUTION OF THE PRINT MEDIA AND THE NIGERIAN NEWSPAPER

Historically ascertained is the idea that in the social production of man's existence, the relations of production evolved designate a society's level of harnessment of available material resources of production. Based on this, it has been postulated that a given mode of communication; when and where people communicate, with whom they communicate, and to some extent, what, and reasons for communication is in relation to the historical process. Various forms of communication generated by this age-old process, therefore, are associated with the circumstances of their birth and subsequent development.[1]

The mass media in different societies, is, to an estimable degree, a function of diverse social, economic, and political processes. Hence, the press in the U.S.S.R. and the People's Republic of China are not the same with those of capitalist Britain or the United States, nor dependent capitalist states like Nigeria. Their existence, nonetheless, are not divorceable from the needs of individual societies at given times to enhance socio-economic and political development.

2(ii) FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE EMERGENCE OF MASS PRESS

Factors responsible for the emergence of the mass press are still fairly debatable, although the rise of the print media has been linked with pressing economic necessities. But the debate is discernable, giving the complexities often embedded in extricating economic factors from the political in attempting to establish reasons for the relationships within societies and between one society and another. However, some have suggested that the birth of the mass media is a simultaneous response to both the economic and political demands of a given period. Mattelart and Siegelaub in this vein, argued that,

> The rise of the mass press could be seen as being simultaneously a dominant response to the economic necessity to increase the movement of manufactured goods and also a response to the pressing political need to communicate with all those who were doing the manufacturing. This implies that workers were already organised in production and in political struggle too, and that they thus, pose a political threat. 2

Stressing the economic factor as depicted in the power of advertising in the media, the authors

elucidated the role of the advertising agencies as 'a power within the media' in relation with other "different power groups". Thus, they expounded that, as the industrial evolution flourished, there subsequently, arose the need to expand the market place. This need was tensely dependent on advertising the commodities being produced in order to unite producers and consumers. Newspapers were beneficial in this economic process. This 'relegated the news to a secondary importance which it usually remains except when the hegemony of the capitalist class is being questioned, at which time, it becomes dominant.'[3] The rise of the press and the development of 'organised market' at the beginning of the 19th century, thereby, served to complement each other. For the authors, the core of mass communication is advertising.

On a broader perspective, the genesis of <u>information</u> and <u>knowledge</u> is similarly tracked out to the competition for the distribution of scarce resources. John Mchale's <u>The Changing Information Environment</u> is directed to the changes in the nature of resources. He is of the view that many of those 'value orientations' upon which <u>information</u> and <u>knowledge</u> operates rose from 'survival

relationships to earlier resource use patterns'. The survival phenomenon exercised by the allocation of scarce resources and the depletive nature of physical resources themselves, is portrayed as having been liable to many of the major bases for a society's 'social institutions', 'organised structures', and 'regulatory practices'.[4] Reliance on information and communication engendered societal alternations, from a pre-industrial, and industrially based forms to the post-industrial society. While a pre-industrial society is necessarily dependent upon 'raw materials as a game against nature in which there is diminishing returns', an industrial society is reliant on energy for the productivity of goods and,

> a post-industrial society is organised around information and the utilisation of information on the basis of organising the flow of knowledge. It is also a society uniquely dependent upon the compilation of theoretical knowledge ... Every society has always been dependent upon knowledge in order to grow. But it is only in the last decades that we have become uniquely dependent on the codification of theoretical knowledge in order to know where we are.5

Discoverings on the possible reasons for the

establishment of the mass media as have been presummed by scholars in the field of communication in various societies are legion. They generally revolve around the economic and political factors highlighted. Because quite a number of these studies have sought the genesis of these factors in the historical economic process of Britain, it is relevant to examine the evolution of the print media in particular, the newspaper, in this geographical spot. This is being done with an intent to validate its relationship with what obtains in Africa - West Africa, and in Nigeria.

Studying the capitalist media and the emergence of the mass media in Britain, Downing discovered that crucial to the development of the newspaper were certain economic and political changes which conceived the desire for 'news-news-sheets and newspapers' to convey information on political and other issues. He ruled out the assumption that growth in printing technology principally inspired the quest for news disseminated in the newspaper.[6] And in an indepth background to the coming into existence of mass communication, Colin Cherry connected the history of the mass media chiefly to the rise, in the 17th century, of

postal services in Britain seemingly controlled by government, and solely meant to serve 'government officials, merchants, all, but the common people'.[7]

This century marked the development of the press with an 'original purpose' to advertise, which was equally regarded as news. Cherry traced the advent of adverts as vital news in the press to the essay of Montaigne, a French essayist who in an article titled 'Of defect in our policies' emphasised the need to inform the public about the various sources of goods for sale and services, in order to achieve better distribution. The essay instigated the publication of a 'Publique Register' of advertisements as they are known today. Early publications, therefore, were meant to advise prospective buyers on where to fetch goods and services needed. Thus, these advertisements actually called Advices, meant to counsel the general public on where to buy or sell goods were, like other events, news. Earliest advertisements were on books, patent medicine and later, the 'new commodity tea'.[8] The period of 'advices' began the association of the news sheets or weekly newsletters (or pamphlets) with advertisements. England published for the first time, what looked like a

modern newspaper in conception in 1625. It was called Mercurious Britanicus, and was issued weekly.[9] By the middle of the 17th century, England is said to have produced the newspaper which closely linked newsreporting and advertising together.

England was not alone amongst nations of the world that found it expedient, at that time, to foster universal industrialisation. Charles Steinberg in The Communicative Arts, stated that the printing press actually started in Germany, although he generally linked printing to England.[10] Paying attention precisely to America's 'news industry', he noted that America's original single news sheet called a 'Coranto' was published in England in 1621 and was later followed by the publication of daily news sheets called 'duirnals'. Eventually, four page journals were printed and that developed into newspapers as they are recognised today. Steinberg saw the beginning of journalism (in America) as a direct consequence of both the printing press and the prospering industrialisation of the society. So, while the print industry developed out of the growing modern industrial state, conversely, industrialisation gave impetus to the development of journalism.[11]

Basic to these findings is the idea that the print media emerged in answer to the urgent economic necessity to allocate available resources. To accomplish this goal implied also, a need to direct and control the minds of the audience over preference for certain goods and services through advertisements. The print media, evidently, sold goods and services like it did ideas. It could aptly be described therefore, as an ideological machinery which appealed directly to a society's value orientations, manipulating especially, its consumer values'.[12] Mattelart and Siegelaub clearly conceived too that because economically, the media fulfills a function in the mode of production through advertisements, the 'real power of decision in mass communication rests in advertising and in the advertising agencies. The power of the advertising agencies over the media is based on their intermediary nature. A further implication of this, inconsiderably as it may appear, is the assumption that advertising agencies are the larger determinants of the economic and political welfare of a society - perhaps, the capitalist society notably. Their economic power, mirrored in the print media, potentially serves as harbinger of the political.

An analysis of the birth of the print media in Africa - West African countries especially, is of absolute interest to this work and that is crucially because the print media in West-Africa could generally be described as branches of what was established in the homelands of their imperial masters. It is hoped that inquiring into the African case, and more specifically Nigeria, the genesis of the newspapers' stance today in fostering one fundamental interest would gradually be made lucid.

2 (iii) THE EMERGENCE OF THE MASS MEDIA IN NIGERIA

The mass media in African societies, like their counterparts in developed nations are candid reflections of a variety of political circumstances.[13] What may prove difficult to establish is the immediate reason for their appearance - economic, social, or political? In an outline of the history and tradition of the African press, Henryka Schabowska and Ulf Himmelstrand commented on West Africa's initial lack of 'interest' or 'need' for 'European or European-style newspapers'. This interest was to develop eventually with the development of Western education. Western-type education which was required to train Africans for administrative

purposes under the colonial indirect rule system, also created a 'new African elite' who founded the very early editions of African newspapers.[14]

Fred Omu, also writing about Iwe Irohin, Nigeria's first indigenous newspaper noted that no newspaper existed in West Africa in 1880, but the middle of the 19th century saw a substantial rise in the establishment of newspapers which were, 'as a rule ephemeral, but ... vigorous and informative'

> ... Earliest of this was the Sierra Leone Gazette founded by officers of the Sierra Leone company and which experienced alterations and restorations of name until 1827 when it was given up. In 1822, the Gold Coast Gazette was established in Accra and patterned after the Freetown Newssheet. Four years later the Liberian Herald was inaugurated in Monrovia by Charles L. Force, an American Negro-Painter who had migrated to Liberia under the auspices of the Massachusettes Colonisation Society of Boston, U.S.A. During the second quarter of the 19th century, these fore-runners were succeeded or strengthened by a flourish of newspaper activity. Nigeria played a notable part in these pioneering efforts. On 23rd November, 1859 the Iwe Irohin was founded in Abeokuta by Rev. Henry Townsend, a missionary from Exeter, England. It was first published

> as a Yoruba-language fortnightly but it became bilingual when an English language supplement was added from March 8, 1860. In October 1867, it came to an abrupt end. 16

The Iwe Irohin established by British Philanthropic movement to mobilize opinion in favour of their programmes acquired the status of a missionary tool outside Britain.[17]

Omu stated further that the printing presses set up by the missionaries were many. From 1836 - 1846 for instance, a bi-monthly journal called Africa's Luminary was published in Liberia by the Committee of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church in New York. In Sierra Leone, the Wesleyan Missionary Society brought out the Sierra Leone Watchman in 1843 and twelve years later, associated themselves with the C.M.S. in publishing the African and Sierra Leone Weekly Advertiser. In Nigeria, the Presbytarian Mission installed the first printing press in Calabar in 1846. Eight years later, a printing school was set up in Abeokuta by Townsend.[18] Omu found Townsend 'a link in a chain of missionary journalists who sought to encourage the spread of education and enlightenment in African societies'.

Iwe Irohin, titled 'Iwe Irohin fun awon ara Egba ati Yoruba', that is "The Newspaper for the Egba and the (Oyo) Yoruba" had education as its dominant theme. The didactic essays featured in it scanned subjects ranging from world geography to spelling. Iwe Irohin seemed to have 'introduced more educated Africans to what had become an intrisic part of enlightened society in Europe and other lands and what was to become the chief weapon by which the educated Africans were to exercise their power of participation in their own government'.[19]

Sharing this view are Schabowska and Himmelstrand who expressed the early consciousness a Lagos newspaper which became an 'organ of protest voicing grievances tried to raise in its audience in 1880.[20] The Lagos Weekly Times was published in 1880 and was founded by Richard Beale Blaize. Other papers that came up in the late 19th century were Lagos Observer in 1882, symbolising the intellectual aggression that characterised political activities during this period. The Eagle and Lagos Critic were established in 1883. The beginning of the 20th century witnessed the rise of more newspapers, such as the Nigerian Chronicle, produced in 1908, the Nigerian Times, 1910, and in

1914 there were others like Nigerian Pioneer founded by Kitoye Ajasa and the West African Pilot by Nnamdi Azikiwe. John Payne Jackson's Lagos Weekly Record, Herbert Macaulay's Lagos Daily News, Ernest Ikoli's African Messenger and a host of others were all published within this period.[21]

Prominence has been consistently accorded to the development of indigenous African newspapers along with nationalist activities. Rosalynde Ainsle in an article, 'The Press in Africa, Communications Past and Present' maintained that the most effective weapon for nationalist struggles in Africa were the indigenous newspapers.[22] Graham Mylton, in support of this noted that 'the West African English language press rapidly took on a more militant and nationalist tone, particularly in Lagos, Nigeria ...'[23] And when independence was guaranteed, more party newspapers emerged being worthy instruments of successful political campaigns. Azikiwe's NCNC party controlled ten newspapers in 1959, while Obafemi Awolowo's Action Group (AG) the rival party, controlled fourteen.[24] Omu, like Schabowska and Himmelstrand concured to the status of the newspaper in the 19th and 20th centuries as a genuine tool of nationalist agitations. This had to be so because,

> In the absence of political parties which did not emerge until the third decade of the present century, the newspapers were the only significant vehicle of public opinion and the medium of political pressure and propaganda. 25

In Schabowska and Himmelstrand's opinion, the press served as the platform to political power, and nationalist organisations 'have grown up around the press rather than organised membership'. Because aspirants to political leadership solicit the support of newspapers or own one themselves, the newspapers unvoidably developed as media of individual political leaders and the parties they led. Its conseq uence was also 'the highly personalised character of the press'... effected in 'frequent and extremely vituperative press wars between candidates for leadership'.[26] Schabowska and Himmelstrand perfectly captured what prevailed among Nigerian newspapers at different moments of political campaigns. The papers being sampled here are no less guilty of this as would be shown eventually in the succeeding chapters.

However, not disputable is that the newspaper industry grew in African societies in union with growing nationalist movements which ardently pressed for independence. But this was not a

phenomenon pertaining to Africa alone. It seemed to have universally embraced all colonies. The American press played 'a more partisan role both in influencing public opinion and in reflecting that opinion' in the latter part of the 18th century as the country drew nearer independence. It became strongly politically influential, aiding the strive for freedom.[27] The Nigerian Newspaper proved remarkably different during the colonial regime and a couple of years to the attainment of independence. This marked the period exceptionally burdened by the struggle of political parties belligerently canvassing for support from the populace.

A less intensive sampling of the Daily Times, the oldest existing government newspaper from the 1940s, to the early 60s as well as a couple of years before the outbreak of the Nigerian civil war clearly divulged an appreciable shift in emphasis from imperial news to indigenous political activities indicating elections to several offices in different provinces. This is ostensibly evident in the unusual allocation of the front and back covers to political parties' affairs besides considerable spaces alloted to such businesses in the inside pages. The political activities were featured,

more often than not, by screaming captions of parties' internal squabbles, manifestos, meetings, rails in replies to other parties, etc. The Nigerian Daily Times of the 40s, up to 1949 when its name was altered to Daily Times, in contrast, particularly occupied itself with foreign news, paying more attention to events, both trivial and grave, in Britain. The front and back pages very, very rarely bore any news without Europe.

2(iv). SOCIO-ECONOMIC FUNCTIONS AND POLITICAL RELEVANCE OF THE PRINT MEDIA IN COLONIAL NIGERIA

Of more interest to this study at this juncture, is an attempt to verify the chief purpose for which the Nigerian Newspaper was instituted. From available facts that lend themselves to analysis, this has proved thorny. The association of the print media to missionary movements tends to bring primarily to bear the educational factor. This is copiously applicable to Iwe Irohin, Nigeria's first indigenous newspaper. Besides the spread of pastoral interests, the newspaper seemed basically set to educate its audience and disperse the benefits of literacy. Thus, publishing variances between the salaries of

the educated workers and the wages of labourers in Abeokuta was aimed at invigorating the advantages of education. But how effectively that achieved the desired end was an entirely different matter since the illiterate labourer's inability to read obliterated his possible awareness of the paper's existence.[28]

The educational inclinations of this bi-lingual paper, its lessons on geography and spelling which introduced its audience to the elightened/modern societies of Europe generated two major effects. The first was the initiation of its readers into a world beyond their environment, alien in all ramifications. And the second entailed the later reliance on education by the African elite as a durable weapon for political aspirations.[29] Because the Iwe Irohin's interest has been overridenly defined as evangelical and scholastic,[30] its economic values, if it did patently project any that is, must have been veiled. A newspaper like John Payne Jackson's Lagos Weekly Record that appeared fundamentally politics-oriented seemed to have made translucent its economic objective, but not wholly successfully.

The Lagos Weekly Record is illustrated as

having been funded by European firms through their insertion of advertisements. And once when their interest seemed insulted, they threatened to put the paper out of circulation by withdrawing the advertisements. Jackson, at this point, was left with one choice - compromise his political interests with the economic derived from the European merchants. In Omu's account,

> Jackson, unprepared to lose his advert patronage and subsidy - that would have meant the collapse of his enterprise - but anxious to protect his editorial independence, presumably had to suspend publication while he reappraised the whole situation. 31

This is a revelation of the power of the advertising agencies in the print media. It emphasises too the longing of a clique of producers, perhaps owners of the means of production as well, to be sole determiners of information disseminated to the public. So long as those knowledge fed the populace were not inimical to their interests, the Lagos Weekly Record was allowed survival. Important here also is Jackson's recognition of the advantage of adhering to the whims and caprices of the European merchants and he perhaps unwillingly,

obliged them. All in all, Jackson's Record obviously fell a victim to capitalist manipulation and control. What happened to Jackson still obtains today, maybe with a difference in the direct controllers of information transmitted, with the exit of the colonial rulers. Those in possession of the sledge-hammer with which to forge the newspapers into what shape they desire are the indigenous rulers themselves - the Government.

Nonetheless, the Nigerian Newspaper is an offshoot of the British. A random sampling of the Nigerian Daily Times (Daily Times), from 1941 to 1955 clearly portrayed it as promoting, first and foremost, the economic interest of the colonial rulers. The Nigerian Daily Times suited the description of the Advices that are said to be symbols of the very early newspapers in Britain in the 17th century. The priority granted advertisements is not concealable from the way they were featured. They enjoyed the largest amount of space; the largest-size pictures, and the boldest captions. Not even news from Europe competed with them in any of these characteristics. The colonial government was quite eager to show that uppermost in their objectives was the directing of the value-orientation of the 'natives', their consumer value-

orientation in particular. The minimal space provided for local news titled 'News from the Provinces' was interspersed with these notices. 'News' from the provinces were nothing more than insignificant miscellaneous notices on weddings, installation ceremonies, deaths, burials, arrival or departure of prominent indigenous administrators to one province or another, or to a foreign country; recovery of 'important persons' from illnesses, and so on. The very pressing need to sell goods and services like it was in Britain in the 17th century was conspicuous. The major difference tended to have been that here in Nigeria, the imperial rulers were faced with the collosal problem of educating the 'natives' to enable them read, understand and imbibe the alien culture being infused.

From 1949 a conscious effort was made in the Daily Times to de-emphasise the too prominent place given advertisements. Observable is the minimization of advertisements portraying European models, a little drop in the number of advertisements inserted in every single edition and the introduction of more news about the provinces which, however, essentially centered on political activities. The

advertisements, it was further observed, no longer compulsorily carried the largest photographs or captions. The former pass-port-sized photographs that usually accompanied political news, especially those from Europe no longer obtained. Superficially, besides nationalist events which forcefully flooded pages and pages of the newspaper, the Daily Times and the Nigerian Daily Times were, in essence, the same, perhaps, only depicting some minor variance. The economic goals did not alter. In the Daily Times, the scarce appeal to Nigerians to patronize Nigerian-made goods was not matched with the same vigour that promoted foreign goods. The very bold advertisements captions that clearly spoke for foreign commodities were missing for Nigerian-made goods. It was a paradox to theoretically perpetuate indigenous products and at the same time, majorly feature advertisements of foreign products.

2(v) NEWSPAPERS IN POST-COLONIAL NIGERIA

Keenly examing the Daily Times and the New Nigerian brings to the surface their rise from the economic and political needs of the various governments in Nigeria. Outside its economic purpose the Daily Times' political reports from 1950 to independent Nigeria were more concentrated on events in the then Western region, the Eastern

region was given a fair coverage while the North was the least identified in the paper. From our observations, it may not be wrong to say that the Daily Times championed the political interests of the Western region above all else. Little wonder then, the New Nigerian appeared. Indisputably, politics was crucial to its establishment in 1966 from a previous paper called the Nigerian Citizen.[32] Where did the paper stand, and has continuously done so from inception? Its maiden edition proclaimed;

> There are many things we shall strive to achieve - but above all we shall try to be a good newspaper, dispensing news and comment without fear of favour. As a Northern newspaper we shall seek to identify ourselves with the North and its peoples; their interests and aspirations. For that we offer no apology.[33]

Other objectives of the paper itemised were the support for national unity, opposition of tribalism, racism and all forms of discrimination; reverence for truth and encouraging the expression of public opinions. The political pre-occupation of the New Nigerian has partly been found in the declaration of its first Managing Director, Mr. Charles Sharp:

> ... the North lacked the means to communicate their political philosophy, not only to their growing band of supporters, but also to potential supporters in other parts of the federation. The message was there but there was no means of getting it across ... By 1963 the old Northern regional government was aware that it was losing the battle of propaganda in Nigeria and attached great importance to the creation in the North of a modern daily newspaper, together with a radio and television station. 34

That the New Nigerian unshakenly stuck to its guns for a while is not in doubt. A cursory study of the paper in 1966 and early 1967 unclosed the paper's determination to relate to its audience Northern views and events- in particular, political events. With the outbreak of the civil war in 1967 and the subsequent anxiety nation-wide for unity, the New Nigerian gradually developed from being purely a regional paper to a more national outfit.

The Nigerian Tribune set up in 1949 claims to be a crusader and protector of the 'weak', the 'oppressed'[35] and the 'defenceless'.[36] The Tribune is said to have come into existence to principally fight for the common man and the preservation of democracy in Nigeria. However, nationalist intensions which encircled the political ambitions

of its founder, Obafemi Awolowo are not ruled out. Culled from its December 10, 1949 editorial, one of the paper's 40th anniversary editions strongly expressed the Tribune's aggitation for an independent Nigeria. It implored Nigerians to relentlessly fight to free themselves from the imperial rule, tolerating the pains bound to come with it. In the paper's opinion;

> Many of us talk glibly about freeing our country from the yoke of imperialism, but few really appreciate what it will cost us in efforts, in sacrifice and suffering to achieve this nolde objective. At present, our alien rulers are rather over indulgent with us because they realise our weakness and are well aware that behind our shouting are very little efforts, if any toward a really positive nationalism. .... The time is however fast approaching when we will constitute a real challenge to the imperialist rule and against this time, we need be prepared to weather a really great storm! 37

While the Tribune's pre-independence nationalist status is not in question, how proficiently it has represented the voice and interests of the 'common man' is. Most transparent is its invaluable loyalty to the sectional and political aspirations of its founder,[38] the defunct Action Group, and

later, the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) both founded and led by Awolowo. The Tribune excelled in this between 1949 and 1984 when its proprietor aspired for the nation's presidency. We didn't find any other political party between 1979 and 1984 as having backed in the eulogy the UPN and Awolowo did on the pages of the Tribune. The paper also engaged in the defamation of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) in particular, which was its strongest rival at that period.

Similar political reasons have been advanced for the emergence of the National Concord in March 1980. The Concord is believed to have, as a priority launched its owner Moshood Abiola into politics and into the NPN. The front page comment of the very first edition gives validity to this. While it listed harmony, unity, peace, friendship, understanding and cooperation in Nigeria as its major ideals, they indeed appeared very shallow juxtaposed with its 'Giant Size Ambition'. Under this caption, having creditably enumerated politics and the bane of military intervention since 1960 the paper enunciated,

> The only hope of any aspiring leader in this country is that President Shehu Aliyu Usman Shagari should succeed and

> thereby ensure that all aspirants have a shoe to step into.... One happy result of the 1979 elections is the emergence of the NPN as the only party which received considerable support in only one. His nearest rival came first in five states and second in only one state ... If properly nurtured, and encouraged, the NPN has the ingredients that make for the improvement of the lot of the Nigerian masses under an atmosphere of peace, unity and CONCORD. And that is where we stand. 39

The paper went on to pledge its devotion to the NPN until 'a viable coherent political alternative to it' is provided. Like most other newspapers, the Concord is committed to democracy in Nigeria and fair representation of varying views irrespective of their authors and place of origination. The Concord 'ideal' is also given as aiding the war against tribalism, corruption and indiscipline.[40] The appearance of the National Concord in 1980 was timely for whatever political interests its publisher nurtured. Its Proprietor who at that time was also the Chairman of Ogun State branch of the NPN passionately protected the NPN Federal Government. It fiercely venerated the person of the then President, Shehu Shagari.

The NPN states enjoyed its support as well.

The Concord obviously found the UPN in sour taste and it was quick to show it. Evidences abound in the numerous cartoons that mocked the UPN leader. Most guilty of these caricatures was the page two cartoon. Between March and December 1980, its chief victim of derision was the UPN leader, and occasionally, international figures. When Abiola defected from the NPN, the paper's change in tune was quite detectable. The few months before the 1983 general elections present the Concord's most unsavoury critiques on the Federal Government, the President and several other members of the NPN. Together with these was the glaring sympathy now felt for the UPN. In summary, if the National Concord today, can afford to describe itself as a crusader of harmony, justice and fairness, to claim to have been such ten years ago is tantamount to being guilty of the exact 'ideals' it sought to defend.

Taking all these collectively, one may argue that the print media in Britain, in no small way, informed what existed and still considerably does in the print media in Nigeria. Early British newspapers were useful economic and political

instruments of the rulers. Newspapers in colonial Nigeria assumed a similar role. It is not a surprise therefore, that the pioneers of the indigenous Nigerian newspapers found political expressions in their papers. They relied on their paper's ability to stir political consciousness among the people having witnessed both at home and abroad the power of the print media towards moulding the perceptions of a people and directing their way of life. Politics greatly enhanced the development of newspapers in Nigeria. This does not deny possible economic reasons for their emergence. But, the political factor is that potent it clamps on the economic.

The root of the Nigerian print media as an ideological state apparatus is traceable to the colonisation of the country. The newspaper(s) has consistently served the dual purpose of (i) being an ideological tool for aspiring political rulers and (ii) being the machinery through which the rulers legitimise and maintain the existing status-quo. This does not conclusively assume that the indigenous owners of the newspapers had no 'good' intensions since it is equivalent to an over-simplification of the arguments proferred. Many nationalists who also owned newspapers could be

described as genuine advocates for the betterment of their people. Unfortunately, their desirable intentions to lead their societies towards a path of meaningful development seemed to have been relinquished no sooner they assumed offices as new leaders of that polity.[41] Newspapers that overly indulge in the veneration of these rulers and their policies even when they err, or make very light the grave, misdirect the development path of the society. The Nigerian newspapers have, in ample ways shielded the present system of dominance of one class by another and thus, broadened the inequality gap among sectors of the country. The ensuing chapters offer details of this.

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CHAPTER 3

3(i) THE DAILY TIMES, NIGERIAN TRIBUNE, NEW NIGERIAN AND NATIONAL CONCORD 1979-1983: AN OVERVIEW

This Chapter undertakes an analysis of the newspapers in the second civilian regime, from 1979 to 1983 respectively. Its objective is to offer proof from the papers' editorial, opinion and commentary columns to show the papers. disposition towards conducing to the ideological preference of the state. The Green Revolution Programme and the industrial actions are the issues being periscoped. In as much as findings in this chapter are strictly based on the opinions of the newspapers, interpretations and deductions from these are not outside our understanding of them.

As purveyors of information, the Nigerian newspapers may be defined as the conveyor in a continuing dialogue between the Government and the people. Newspaper-men are an important part of Gramsci's 'organic intellectual', a term conceived in the society. The concept of the organic intellectual mirrored 'the entire apparatus used in elaborating and (spreading) culture in the capitalist (system) of production as delegate and carrier of ruling class hegemony in civil society'.1

The media apparatus of which the newspaper is an integral part is regarded as associated to the ruling class. Here, John Downing's posits may be reconsidered. Downing's The Media Machine espoused the argument;

> If we recognise that a capitalist class cannot rule by terror alone for a long period, that it must normally be able to win acceptance of its leadership of the rest of society, then equally we must see that it cannot rule by itself either. Since the capitalists are always a small percentage of the population in any country, they need class allies to secure their rule. Their normal class ally is the petty bourgeoisie, that is accountants, lawyers, doctors, surveyors, estate agents, workers, educators, journalists. This is the class closest to the bourgeoisie in level of income, social background, life style, aspirations and general ideology. 2

The newspapers being examined have not contradicted Downing's view. In their responsibility as go-between between the rulers and citizenry they are expected to superintend over all sectors of the economy. How effectively the print media in developing countries delivers to the wishes and aspirations of the entire society is doubtful. In Nigeria, one may ask still: have newspapers satisfactorily assailed themselves of subservience

to the rulers? Have they proved themselves a credible and reliable voice of the people generally? Are all claims to objectivity and fairness on the part of a majority of these papers genuine, if a supposition could be made to the existence of the word 'objectivity' in the newspaper industry? An indepth study of the four Newspapers in this research admits a solid point: no newspaper efficiently serves two masters. In fact, evidences here prove that in Nigeria, it is so much easier and perhaps, more convenient to oblige dutifully, the interests of the ruling class than that of the people. True indeed, the people provide the market, they are the buyers. But factual too is that the ruling class, through the state, possesses monopoly of the power to terminate the market of a newspaper regarded as recacitrant by proscribing it.

Sampling these four newspapers from 1979 to 1989 reinforced the following; (i) objectivity is nonsensical and subject to multiple perceptions. (ii) Parochial interests of the papers is paramount; (iii) they are defenders of social groups that candidly, are potential allies to the ruling class. This notion stems from the fact that most newspapers, if not all of them, are owned by

politicians who demand to be rulers themselves. (iv) They profusely limit themselves to the interests of the elite and the ruling class by shirking the expected two-way process of information dissemination. (v) Information transmitted seem moulded by a small editorial body whose own interest, the world as they perceive it, what they believe and have deliberately chosen for the public to hear, as well as when such knowledge should be conveyed, all come to play in the whole process of information delivery. Hence, some issues and events we expected addressed at the period of occurence were either neglected or tackled long after events had over-taken them.

While it may be argued that some newspapers carry out interviews with workers and peasants, insufficient as they may be, none of the papers studied here showed any signs of having genuinely felt the pulse of the dissatisfied workers, farmers or students. No distinct channels were provided through which their ingenuous opinions as the real actors in the situation could be aired. Consequently, what tends to cut across the papers are generalisations of presupposed causes of dissension and agitation among the citizenry. Most reasons sub-indicated, for example, for the country's backward agricultural sector are over-flogged

points of view. Lack of any meaningful development in the nation's agriculture inspite of decades of voicing those well-known problems is proof that the impediments to agriculture in Nigeria transcend those theoretical presentations. Furthermore, observable is the lavish utility of references credited to officials at the helm of affairs. Not one concrete allusion was found made to what a peasant farmer, market woman or road transport worker claimed. And there really is no way of unveiling new problems if the views of those who genuinely suffer them are not thought very relevant.

Taken aggregately, ample reasons abound why private and government-owned Nigerian newspapers aid the maintenance of the capitalist system of domination. However, this should not be interpreted as their being devoid of criticisms of the policies and practices of those in power. To assume so is to muddle-up the styles by which it is effected. It also amounts to unduely debasing the newspapers to the level of automatons and puppets tied to the apron string of rulers, which they really are not. Their role as sustainers of a given system exceeds mere non-criticisms of the system because they do censure the government where

there is need to do so; sometimes, even to their own detriment.

Serving the function of an ideological state apparatus it was found, embodies the entire method of news production; a whole catalogue of activities that cannot be completely explored here. This work however, restricts itself to the lack of criticism where deictically there should be one. It also takes into consideration the <u>quality</u> and <u>fairness</u> of news coverage and analysis. We are strongly of the opinion that the impact of a critique or a news analysis depends upon what form it assumes; how it is stated. This is of great import to this research bearing in mind the notion that the media inevitably conflicts with the government because 'its purposes and those of government are not the same, should not be the same, and cannot be the same'.[3] This is a contestable idea. Results from the newspapers sampled show that the media's objectives and those of the government may not be the same. But that they should not, and cannot cohere under convenient descriptions as 'national interest', 'public interest' and more famous in the military regimes, 'Patriotism' and 'Saboteur' is almost impervious to figure out.

The purposes of the newspapers and those of the Government become a little less complex to discern looking at the historical background to the establishment of the newspapers. If they were instituted to incite nationalist ideas against colonial ones, would they be expected to reverse their role post-independence and rebel against the new nationalist rulers who set them up? This has largely explained the advisory character of their criticisms against the Government. What makes more sense to media brushes with the government is detectable in their clash with other government apparatus; the state bureaucracy; the police, laws, etc...

Bestowing credence to this, John Wale in <u>The Politics of the Media</u> asserted that the media and the state are natural opponents because these two apparatuses of government have double minds about each other. A certain tension separates them on the one hand, while on the other, undeniable ties bind them. Wale thus, observed that antagonism between them is as old as the Press itself because,

> First duty of the press is to to obtain the earliest and most correct intelligence of the time and instantly, by

> disclosing them, to make them the common property of the nation... the press lives by disclosures; whatever passes into its keeping becomes a part of the knowing and the history of our times; It is daily and for ever appealing if possible the march of events - standing upon the breech between the present and the future and extending its survey to the horizon of the world. The state man's duty is precisely the reverse. He cautiously guards from the public eye the information by which his actions and opinions are regulated; he reserves his judgement on passing events till the latest moment, and then, he records it in obscure or conventional language he strictly refuses himself. If he be wise, to the practical interests of his own country, or to those bearing immediately upon it; he hazards no rash surmises as to the future; and he concentrates in his own transactions all that power which the press seeks to difuse over the world. The duty of one is to speak; of the other to be silent. 4

Conflict between the media and the state in Nigeria does not necessarily involve differences in overall intension. Quarrels reveal only, variances in modes of obtaining that goal.[5] Criticisms from the newspapers are usually meant to alert the Government on availing its set goals to stabilise the system. The print media, therefore, is distinct from the apparatus of physical coercion

such as the armed forces and the prisons which rigidly employ physical might to command deference and submission. Noticeable is that of the more recent, the ruling class has resorted to an increasing use of the physical repressive apparatus like the National Security Organisation (NSO) and the prison to control publications of the press. This would be elaborated upon subsequently. However, important to say is that explanation for the closer tie between the state and private newspapers after the Second Republic are partly derivable from this situation.

3(ii) THE NEWSPAPERS 1979-1983: RESEARCH FINDINGS

What was vulgarly notorious within this period is the intra-class disagreements between political parties viciously projected by the papers. Thus, when the Nigerian Tribune, for example, did seem to cotend with the rulers, the Federal Government, over the need to increase the minimum wage of the worker, controversies enveloping the Tribune itself pointed out that the paper merely found the issue of 'minimum wage' at that moment suitable to settle the UPN's scores with the NPN. So also did the Daily Times and in particular, the New Nigerian get even with the UPN by loudly singing the plight

of teachers in Bendel State especially. It appeared the most natural thing to do for a UPN state that had sculptured for itself the reputation of being the most confrontational to the Federal Government. In many other cases, the papers, the National Concord and the Nigerian Tribune more notably, overtly traded, less cautiously ratings on behalf of the UPN and the NPN. Although these two newspapers exhibited more of this phenomenon among the four papers examined here, it was not a perculiar incident to them. A cursory sampling of the Nigerian Statesman owned by the Imo State government which also was the Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP) state uncovered similar wrangling between the Statesman, the Tide and the Trumpet. To the Statesman, the Tide and the Trumpet were NPN's megaphone whose sole aim was to paint Imo State black before the eyes of the Federal Government.

It has been posited earlier in the first Chapter that state-owned Newspapers in Nigeria could understandably, be dismissed as indispensible organs of those in power. But this may prove cumbersome with the private Newspapers. Ironically, we found a reversal case. Government Newspapers evidently seemed more vocal about the difficiencies of the system, not by the number or frequency of

their criticisms, but by the might of sense and meaningfulness to the situation and the Nigerian polity. State newspapers also turned out to be better representators of the sensibilities of the people. They expressed greater sensitivity to the predicament of workers generally.

On an elementary level, the Daily Times, Nigerian Tribune, New Nigerian and National Concord patently had the following in common from 1979 to 1983: (i) their front and back page cover stories essentially featured events related to the ruling class. Each of the papers in this vein, favoured the political parties of their publishers. The papers were campaign tools. Thus, the New Nigerian and the Daily Times would report almost nothing outside the Federal Government's activities. The National Concord, between March 1980 and June 1982 in like manner gave preference to the Federal Government and the NPN. The Nigerian Tribune was highly loyal to Awolowo and the UPN ideals. These superceded Federal Government Programmes and Policies. (ii) The papers' major reports on other political parties, in particular, their immediate rival's almost always served to discredit such parties. (iii) Where the covers were not glorifying their political parties or exposing the vices of other

parties, they were given to sensational foreign news. Incidentally, not many of such exciting events seemed to have occured in the foreign scene within this period. (iv) The papers' cartoons participated efficiently in the war between the parties. In this respect, the National Concord and the Nigerian Tribune surpassed the others.

While the Daily Times, the New Nigerian and the Nigerian Tribune remained absolutely consistent in character, the National Concord inevitably switched course. Against this background, the Federal controlled papers faithfully identified themselves with the ideals of the Federal Government. The Nigerian Tribune was one paper that saw unconditionally, nothing commendable in the Federal Government and its policies and it firmly abided by this course till the abrupt termination of the Second Republic. The National Concord, on its part, broke away from the passionate propagators of the Federal Governments course when its publisher quit politics. The paper vividly resigned itself to showing all parties, the NPN and the UPN most importantly , as total failures. Regardless of the Concord's new objective, it really could not identify itself with any other group outside the ruling class. This is depicted

by its presentation of the strike crisis.

Putting the results of the general assessment of the papers together from 1979 to 1983, the notion that they basically serve the interest of the ruling group is reinforced. While the Daily Times the New Nigerian and the National Concord defended the NPN, which also was the ruling party at the federal level, the Nigerian Tribune represented the UPN leader and the governors of the five UPN states. Thus, the Concord became an ideological apparatus to the Federal Government and the NPN states, and the Tribune was the same for the UPN states. Activities of the papers at this period went a long way to demonstrating that the conflicts among the papers were actually differences among members of the same class. To reiterate, the Government papers fought the unsavoury practices and pronouncements of the UPN States Governors. And the Tribune, standing for the UPN Governors attacked the Federal Government. The Tribune became more proficient in this in 1982 at the dawn of multiple industrial actions in all sectors of the nations economy. The paper never relented in accusing and censuring the Federal Government and the then President, Shehu Shagari for making administering socialist ideals difficult for the

UPN States Governors by delaying revenue allocations to all states of the federation.

However, interesting to find is that at this period, the Tribune was not, frankly, pre-occupied with the fate of the workers who had laboured for many months on end without salaries as it was with what it perceived as, perhaps, the Federal Government's intention to discredit the UPN Governors before their supporters. Finally, findings generally disclosed that the uncertain terms, 'national interest' and a little more concretely, 'public interest' both came to perfectly shield the ideals the Newspapers espoused. They all employed these words in explaining away both laudable and condemnable actions of the politicians.

3(iii) IDEOLOGICAL LEANINGS OF THE NEWSPAPERS

All societies pitch their existence on one form of ideology or another. Ideology as conceived by Marx is a pattern of beliefs arising from existing social conditions and serving to mask these conditions especially in a capitalist system. The birth of ideas is congruous with man's material condition. Some scholars after Marx conceded that ideology is that of the r uling class 'because the class which is the ruling

material force of society is by virtue of its position, its ruling intellectual force'.[6] Plamenatz therein, considered four major ways ideology is manipulated politically. '(i) It is used to bring and hold together a disciplinedgroup that was able to take quick advantage of changing circumstances to achieve political power; (ii) to induce people to make great sacrifices for causes which have meant much more to the ruling class than the masses; (iii) to extend the power of a government outside the country in which it already has power; (iv) Used inside a political party or other organisations by people endeavouring to get or retain control of it. These are strictly political uses.'[7]

The newspapers' ideological inclinations could be perceived as the values and postures the papers nourish as ideal in relation to the country's social and material conditions. The ideology may simply reflect that already extant or it may denote a totally different system of ideas. Before attempting a detailed analysis of how the private and state-owned newspapers help sustain the present capitalist ideology of the country, let us take a look at their ideological preferences. This is

expected to propine some explanations to how they serve.

The Daily Times, New Nigerian, and National Concord plainly patronised a similar ideological interest. This, perhaps, is as a result of their affiliation to the values the 'Federal' Government favours. The rulers would like to call it 'mixed economy', but it has equally been more appropriately described as dependent capitalism. None of them were canny about the incredulity of those who professed to be the 'left' or socialist. They willingly exposed and scoffed the uncertainties and contradictions among the socialists, especially with the short-lived merge of the UPN the NPP, the Great Nigeria Peoples Party (GNPP) and the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) into what was called 'Progressives'. A New Nigerian editorial captioned 'Governor Rimi's Suggestion' strongly criticised the governor's advocation for a ceiling on the salaries in the private sector. It apprehended such call as 'prepositions' and 'downright outrageous arguing that,

> ... Seen from another angle, the governor is saying the private sector should be pulled down or rationalised on the basis of what the

economy can take. Secondly, this notion views the present economy purely as an extension of the colonial one. This is partly true. Since the indigenisation Act, the structure of both ownership and management of much of the private sector is now in the hands of Nigerians. If there are any beneficiaries of the fat salaries here, then, it is the same Nigerians who enjoy them. In socialist eyes this may be seen as a form of exploitation. But Nigeria is not a socialist country yet although the socialists may argue that it is better to make it one way or the other than the present hybrid (mixed Economy). But to impose this aspect of socialism in a capitalist setting is to court disaster. 8

The Daily Times had once stated too the hopelessness of endeavouring to re-orient the Nigerian capitalist system rather than protect it. With the coming of the present military regime, the paper advised;

> ... the IMF should be persuaded to change its conditionalities for Nigeria. Where it remains recalcitrant, we must call its bluff and look inward for solutions to our economic problems. This means more emphasis on self-reliance especially in food, raw materials and machinery. Since Nigerians seem irredeemable capitalist in their orientation, this administration should concern

> itself with only the vital areas of the economy such as defence and finance. The bulk of the economic activities should be left to the private sector. With less government, the burden of this administration will be tremendously reduced and the nation will be better for it. 9

The National Concord, on many occasions flouted the socialists and their own socialist principles. In an opinion titled 'Jakande's rough Tactics' the paper admonished Governor Jakande of Lagos State for, (i) directing that bull dozers demolish Alayabiagba market while the traders at the market were still waiting for a court verdict as to whether or not the market should be demolished, and (ii) acquiring twenty-six secondary schools established by private individuals and missionaries in the state, saying he did it in public interest. The Concord wondered whose public interest the Governor could be protecting if he in pursuit of socialist principles acquired nine hundred plots and Awolowo, three hundred and sixty plots.[10] Again in its October 2, 1982 'opinion' headed 'Troubulous Alliance' the paper asked the leaders of the Progressive Peoples Alliance (PPA) to pack it up since they were yet to come out with a 'convincing' and 'credible' alternative to the ruling party.

(The PPA was an incorporation of the UPN, NPP, GNPP and PRP).

The most asper critiques on socialism, however, were featured on third page of the Concord from 1980 to 1981, particularly in the columns; 'Periscoping the Assembly' and 'House Call'. The former once addressed the issue of squandering for self-aggrandisement by the then UPN Governor of Bendel State, Professor Ambrose Alli who was charged with spending public fund for the burial of his father (April 25, 1981). Under same column, in a write up; 'Dogs eating Dogs?' Labake Adebiyi the author pointed out the contradictions in the socialist camp in which Governor Alli's UPN colleagues in Bendel State accused the Governor of deviating from socialist paths and requested that he answered his defects within a given ultimatum.

A 'House Call' article - 'Of Economics and Deceit' explored the unrealistic proclamations of the UPN which in union with the Nigerian labour Congress (NLC) vehemently called on the Federal Government to enforce a minimum wage of ₦300.00 for workers generally. The paper noted that the UPN itself had promised workers a minimum wage of ₦200.00 during its electioneering campaigns in 1979 and had been unable to pay Government's stipulated ₦100.00

in its states. It concluded that the UPN's acclaimed fight for the workers' welfare is thus, deceitful and only targetted to catch votes.[11] What cuts across the Daily Times, the New Nigerian and the National Concord as perpetuators of the capitalist ideology is the notion with a revolvency on the private sector. They vociferously defended the need for private property-ownership. They concerted and iterated the healthiness of privatising most sectors of the economy for valuable economic development in Nigeria. These papers, therefore, need not have categorically stated that capitalism was their armour. That was not necessary since what they did not prove them otherwise. For one thing, they were neither socialist nor communist.

The Nigerian Tribune, professed socialism. Its founder and owner, Obafemi Awolowo, without mincing words, claimed to be a socialist. Like the Concord, between 1979 and 1983, page three of the paper was firmly locked in sermonizing socialism as the best alternative for Nigeria, and how the UPN, unrivaled, epitomised all Nigeria could ever wish for from a socialist government. January 11, 1979 and February 4, 1984 editions of the newspaper featured typical examples of such write-ups.

Pioneering these however, seemed to be an article on a lecture delivered by Tunji Otegbeye on the occasion of the seventieth birthday of Obafemi Awolowo titled, 'The Unity Party of Nigeria and Struggle for Socialism'. The lecture was a laudation of Awolowo's supposed contribution to socialist thought in Nigeria in his books, The Peoples Republic, and The Tactics and Strategy of the Peoples Republic. This article celebrated Awolowo's strive to expose the evils of the capitalist system especially the injustices arising from the forces of supply and demand and the profit margin. The socialist system was regarded as cherishable because it extirpates the evils of the capitalist system and is postivively superior to the latter.[12]

Thus, the UPN was portrayed as the only one, that, going by socialist principles sought to make the people 'subjects', not 'objects', through shifting the emphasis of politics from personalities to the entire citizenry.[13] Yet, the Tribune's ideological case is a little foggy. It acknowledged the 'mixed economy' pursued by the nation ('Front Page Comment', January 13, 1986) and the press' natural duty in maintaining this ideology. Hence, refuting the notion that the private newspapers are unpatriotic in a front page comment, 'Troubled

Image', the paper commended the military administratic of General Buhari for trying to improve its public image through meeting media executives. It observed that that Government errorneously perceived private-newspapers as out to confront and subvert it. The Tribune further regretted that,

> It (government) also believes that those who own and edit these newspapers are not patriotic and nationalist just because they criticise the government or hold views different from its own ... The government will do itself a good service by tapping the opportunity offered by these newspapers to propagate its activities ... The last military government did not have any problems with the press; It may well be a matter of style. Journalists in private and government-controlled news media are patriotic Nigerians like others in other callings and stations serving the nation. No newspaper can sell in chaos and newspapers will not therefore, promote chaos. The fundamental goals of a united Nigeria are agreed. But methods of achieving the goals may vary. We believe in Nigeria and we defend its vital interests.... 14

True to its words, the Obasanjo regime of 1979 luxuriated in the full support of the Nigerian Tribune. Studying the paper in 1979 showed its devotion to what the Daily Times called a 'romance' between the government and the press. The Tribune

exuberantly employed very lofty, flowery and becoming language in extoling the Obasanjo regime and the General himself. One of the paper's January 1979 comments tagged Obasanjo, 'the standard bearer and epitome of our aspirations'. And in another captioned 'We are Proud of You Segun', the Tribune had this to say about the then Head of State;

> We are convinced that for once we have got a leader who knows his onions. We have a leader who understands his people, their temperament, their whims, their idiosyncracies, and their social demeanors. 15

Tribal considerations have been suggested as an inherent part of the Tribune's practices, the genesis of which are traceable to colonial times when the Action Group (AG) and its chain of newspapers severely favoured the interests of the Yorubas together with nationalist demands. However, the Tribune promptly informed the Buhari regime to hasten and repair whatever damage may have been done to government's image and sort out its relationship with the press. How the Nigerian Tribune calculated entrenching socialist ideology while complying to serve the capitalist one at the same time became a bewilderment. However, suffice it for now to grant the Tribune the benefit of its

claim to be a socialist paper. Findings on this soon attempted resolving the Tribune's posture.

Giving the ideological leanings of the four newspapers involved in this research, the following are deducible: While the Daily Times, New Nigerian and National Concord may be estimated as asserting the same ideology, the Nigerian Tribune wished to differ. It stood aside, no doubt, in theory, and it cannot be faulted as failing in this course if the degree to which it wrote the virtues of socialism is taken into consideration. The Tribune, therefore, donned the status of a fervid fighter for the demolition of the capitalist system under the socialist banner popularly defined at that time as 'Awoism'.

3(iv) THE SECOND REPUBLIC 1979 - 1983

The second civilian regime is being used as the first concrete evidence of the harmony of interest between the private and public or state newspapers being studied in this work. A general assessment of the papers has been undertaken but the Green Revolution Programme and Strikes form the nucleus of analysis. All facts utilised here are based on the paper's editorial, Commentary and Opinion columns.

The second civilian administration which began in October, 1979 started off as an already ailing economy. This was acknowledged by the papers generally. (NT, April 3, 1982; NN, December 5, 1979; DTs, December 30, 1981). The preceding military government of General Segun Obasanjo had imposed austerity measures to help revamp the economy. Amongst the measures to assist resuscitate the agricultural sector was the ban of the importation of rice, while attempts were made through Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) to cultivate home-grown varieties and achieve self-sufficiency in food. President Shehu Shagari's Green Revolution came therefore, as another effort in the many exploited to revive a suffocating agricultural sector.

3(v) THE GREEN REVOLUTION IN A NUTSHELL

The Green Revolution Programme was launched by the President in May 1980. It was conceived as a five year programme and was five pronged: (i) aimed at improving and modernising small-scale farming (ii) Encouraging large-scale agriculture by co-operatives, private companies and individuals (iii) Undertaking intensive and mechanised large-scale agriculture through government intervention (iv) Undertaking a methodical food conservation and distribution and (v) Systematically develop rural

areas called Systematic Rural Development (SRD).

The Green Revolution cannot be described as a wholly successful agricultural programme. Inappropriately defined modalities seemed to have sooner destined its failure. This agricultural policy was extensively viewed as providing many channels for mismanagement; continuously exploiting and dampening the enthusiasm of petty-farmers who constitute majority of the Nigerian rural populace. Criticisms against the programme included; the inavailability of fertilizer (NT, November 17, 1981; N C, April 4, 1981); poor distribution net work for both farm inputs and rice (NN, June 10, 1981; NC, February 7, 1981; DTs, March 10, 1981), and the frustration caused farmers due to unattainable agricultural loans (NC, April 12, 1982; NN, March 13, 1981). The strongest undoing of the programme to the Tribune existed in the restriction of import licence on rice. The paper was unyielding in its zealous call for the lifting of the ban on rice and better still, to place its importation on a general licence (NT, February 3, 1981; December 12, 1980; November 3, 1980; December 13, 1980; July 15, 1981).

Because the Green Revolution, in the final

analysis, especially with the demise of the civilian administration, was flawed as a vitalisation of the domination of one class by another (of the bourgeois farmers over the petty rural farmers), it is expedient to keenly understand the papers own concise perception of the programme. But more relevantly, this is expected to bolster judging the papers as partners in one game. We have relied on one or more of their editorials, commentaries and opinions. One of each of these could have been sufficient if only the papers did not opt, quite often, to subtly sentence the programme in bits and pieces spread out in a number of their editorials. We have chosen to examine the Green Revolution in two closely-related dimensions. The first looks at the papers' individual overall impression of the initiation of the programme and the second surveys their dissatisfactions about it. Like it has been stated, there was a non-evasible need to employ more than one of the papers' opinions because we found a comprehensible reluctance of a couple of these newspapers to frankly and intensely evaluate the programme as they did when the military took over in December 1983. Thus, though the Green Revolution officially came to an unceremonious end in 1983, the National

Concord, for instance, wrote its most virile estimate of the non-performance of the programme in 1984. However, summarily, the Green Revolution was supposed to have been the most significant and benefiting programme to the rural farmers in particular and the Nigerian society in general.

This section is two-dimensional. The first is directed at the papers' general perception of the Green Revolution and the second, their views on the programme's foredoing is taken into account.

3(vi) THE GREEN REVOLUTION AND THE NEWSPAPERS:

THE DAILY TIMES

The paper thought the whole idea of a Green Revolution commendable. In an 'Opinion' - 'Values of the Green Revolution', it was inked by the debate on the modalities for this 'hopeful' agricultural policy. The controversy centred on what role government ought to play in the implementation of the programme. For the Daily Times,

> The majority of Nigerians who are compelled to pay-out half their earnings to buy food items do not really care whether agricultural development is the exclusive,

> concurrent, or residual responsibility of the various levels of government. Nor does it matter to them whether it is the federal, the state, or the local government that sets up the farms that will grow the food which the entire nation must very soon have. 16

The Daily Times favoured the participation of the three levels of government, the federal, state and local governments in the Green Revolution. It gave consideration to the following; the state virtually owns all the lands, the local governments know the real farmers and the Federal Government provides the funds. It conclusively remarked that what was most pressing at that time was the urgency with which the nation could avert its near total dependence on food imports.

On the lapses of the Green Revolution the 'Daily Times Opinion' sampled from 1980 to 1983 made no overt criticism of the programme. It chiefly concerned itself with projecting Government's efforts towards making it prosper (May 26, 1980; June 27, 1981; December 30, 1981; June 27, 1981). With the arrival of the military in 1984, the Daily Times would not betray easily its loyalty to the course of the ousted regime.

Hence, it evaded clearly stating that the Green Revolution and the nation's agricultural sector had not actually contributed reasonably to the development of the economy. However, it obsecrated the new military government to

> ... ally with foreign partners and go into profit-making in order to generate money from agriculture while introducing modern simple and cheap means of production to the average farmer. 17

The Daily Times was the least involved in exploring the shortcomings of the Green Revolution. It believed there should be abundant food, but refused to imagine that the availability of foods also depended on who cultivated them. Going by its general opinion about the programme it was not too relevant whether or not the petty farmers were integrated adequately in this revolution. Little wonder then, the paper merely restated what Government claimed it was doing, and went along to praise Covernment's assertions. Investigating and verifying such pronouncements, especially as they affected genuine rural farmers was not within its area of business. Covernment had said it was delivering and that was that. The Daily Times, on the Green Revolution was the state's most competent propaganda tool.

THE NEW NIGERIAN

The New Nigerian affirmed that the idea of a Green Revolution, indeed, should go a long way to solving the nation's food problem that was getting quite acute. It lauded all processes taken by Government and the President towards its success. But the paper warned against Government's intended one year crash programme in the Green Revolution.

> There is very little need for haste ... Crash programmes launched in this country in the past did show a curious tendency of always crashing. Thus, meticulous planning with regards investments in irrigation, fertilizer production and distribution, farm credit facilities and massive and imaginative propaganda are necessary if we are to avoid the Green Revolution failure exprienced by India in the seventies. 18

The paper commented further, that Nigeria stood a chance of accomplishing real agrarian revolution through organising the small, local farmers into collective cooperative farming. For the small farmer must be made the pivot of the Green Revolution venture if the scheme must not end up creating 'the revolution in the bank accounts of some very few 'progressive' farmers to the detriment

of general development and sustained agricultural growth'.[19]

Although the New Nigerian, like the Daily Times was apparently dedicated to impressing on the public Government's strive towards realising the dream of the Green Revolution (NN, January 26, 1981), the paper was bolder than the Daily Times in laying bare the deficiencies of the programme. In an editorial named, 'The Neglected Ones' the paper pointed out;

> ... inputs like fertilizer, treated seeds and bank credits have continued to elude most farmers, farmers have been put off by the excessive bureaucracy of the process of acquisition, resulting in the sole ability of enlightened farmers to benefit from various schemes.... 20

Studying the New Nigerian's overall presentation of the Green Revolution impelled that while the paper did not indulge in strongly subjecting the programme to an out right want of success, it also did not portray it as a huge success. One area the New Nigerian painstaking protected Government's goal was 'hoarding' especially of rice. It was invested in exposing and reporting all cases of hoarding it was aware of.

Its aim was quite relumed, it needed to show that the controversial rice was locally being cultivated in abundance, but its scarcity was the making of saboteurs of the programme, not the Federal Government's. Many of such exposures were spaced out in other pages of the newspaper. However, brilliantly, the New Nigerian concealed a lot for the Government. Its editorials on the Green Revolution seemed to say; the Federal Government promised to bring foods to your door steps. It has kept its pledge, but we also are aware these foods are not available to you for some reasons. Blame your state bureaucracies, the distributors and the traders.

THE NATIONAL CONCORD

The Concord conceded to the need for a food policy to develop the country's agricultural sector while making food cheap and easily reached. It was severely bound towards offering Government designs of getting this programme achieve desirable results. It proposed in an Opinion Column that rather than have state farms where farmers were civil servants, Government's involvement should stop at land acquisition, clearing and allocation to owner farmers who then, through soft well-timed loans would be able to stand on their feet as early as

possible.[21] Other suggestions raised ranged from the need for mechanised agriculture through model farms, to Government's direct involvement in production.[22] For the paper, 'the success of the Green Revolution programme will put an end to our uncontrolled reliance on other countries for our food'... This, it believed, was why 'the programme cannot afford to fail'.[23]

On the delinquency of the Green Revolution, the paper appreciably portrayed the inadequacies of the programme just as it highlighted Government's endeavours in it. Evaluating the success of the programme in an 'Opinion' titled 'Looking Ahead', the paper had cause to doubt extoling the Green Revolution giving that,

> If for example, we are to accept the current price of rice as an indication of the inflationary trend in the country, it would be a sad commentary to recall that at the time the soldiers were returning to their barracks in 1979, a cup of the grain cost 15 kobo where as it now sells for 50 kobo. What this calls for is a more dedicated approach to the lofty programme of the Green Revolution and a realistic review of the ban on the importation of essential food items. 24

And in another 'Opinion', the paper noted the lack of proper participation of the farmers at the grassroot in the programme.[25] The Concord's most austere critique of the scheme was found in a 'front Page Comment' headed Verdict 83' and published two days after the toppling of the Shagari administration. The Concord sternly lamented that in the ousted civilian regime,

> ... the economy went bananas sending the prices of food and essential goods through the roof while a few rosy-cheeked flatterers, sycophants, hustlers, and other categories of ruffians made, without sweat, millions of naira on rice, fertilizer, import licences ... Two ends clashed: to be self-reliant or to be an importer nation. Shagari's government chose the latter and wished for the former ... The supreme paradox came in the shape of a farmer-nation also being a food-importing nation. Food production received no incentives other than fertilizer contracts and river basin rhetoric. This lip-servide to local production created a virgin farmland for food importers who made rearing business at the expenses of the hapless and helpless poor.26

Considering the Concord's other commentaries on the Green Revolution not included here, this appeared an exhibition of the long-awaited

opportunity by the paper to lash out on a Government and political party its publisher had disengaged from. There is no doubt that many of the issues addressed above were true. Still, because the paper also found reasons, occasionally, to perceive the other political parties as no better than that heading the seat of government, its blast at the deposed administration was partly understood as sentimental - another display of intra-class discrepancy.

Nonetheless, among the four newspapers examined here, the Concord was found to have best drawn Government's attention to the unpropitous limitations of the Green Revolution. Some of such reports were featured in these editions of the paper; January 1, 1981; January 26, 1981; February 7, 1981; April 15, 1981 and April 8, 1982. Like the New Nigerian, its expressed restrictions to the programme came more in the shape of advices. Again, like the New Nigerian, in these it never failed to add that Government was doing all it could to overcome the problems and surely, the shortcomings would be successfully eliminated. The most imploring defence it was seen to have put up on behalf of the Government and its programmes resided in an opinion titled 'Surviving the Crunch'.

The paper posited that from the mid-1981 it could no longer be ignored that the country was heading for a severe financial trouble and the austerity measures imposed to combat it were not achieving the expected results. Meanwhile, the paper deplored; import bills had risen, local industries of sundry goods were experiencing a gradual loss of their markets and worse still, planners and economic advisers were blind to the impending danger. Nonetheless, the Concord opined,

> There is no doubt the nation will survive the present economic slump but governments have to be more fore-sighted and meticulous in spending. Not unexpectedly, the opposition quarters have seized the opportunity to sing their usual songs. Nobody is impressed. It is not that they can do better in the circumstances. 27

The Concord also heaped the 'near' failure of the Green Revolution on distributors, 'traders with a warped sense of patriotism' who thwarted all efforts to make commodities available to the citizens, and politicians, especially those on the opposition side who allied with the traders to sabotage government's plans.[28] April 8, 1982 and July 16, 1982 opinions are examples of other such

defences accorded Government. The Concord struck a remarkable ressemblance with the New Nigerian in its coverage of the Green Revolution. Like the latter, the Concord's general view of the programme may be summarised as; Factual indeed, the Green Revolution is fraught with numerous complications. Government partakes in some of the blame, but a lot of these are generated by unpatriotic Nigerians. Valid too is the economy's passage from fair to worse, particularly its agricultural sector. Government is not insensitive to the ensuing hardship, and obviously, it is doing its very best to arrest the bad situation. Do not be too critical of this administration, none could have done better! Worthy of note also is that even after the Concord publisher decamped from the NPN, and subsequently, from politics (NC, July 17, 1982), the paper's critiques against the Shagari administration which became harshly worded, never really convincingly deviated from the general impression stated above.

THE NIGERIAN TRIBUNE

The Tribune was not unconscious of the growing insufficiency in food in the country. Its August 8, 1981 'comment' captioned 'Starving Africa' for

instance, called on the Government to, among others, incorporate 'the farmers' into the Green Revolution and establish large-scale farms in various centres in the federation. The newspaper, above all, depicted a very high sense of pessimism for the programme from the onset. Six months after the Green Revolution was officially launched, the Tribune described it as a 'disaster', as 'a veritable conduit' for members of the NPN to make money in preparation for the 1983 elections.[29] Within the same period, it qualified the Green Revolution as Government's way of starving the nation for five years.[30] It found this food policy as 'about to send the masses to a common grave'.[31] The Tribune's major grievances solely rotated around Government's restriction on the importation of rice. Each comment it cared to make in 1980 and 1981 overbearingly focused on the ban on rice importation. Commenting again on the essence of the Green Revolution in 'Rice Politics', February 3, 1981, the paper laconically described the Green Revolution as an 'idiosyncrazy' the President 'added to our world of jargons' during his last electioneering.

Severing the Tribune's general perception of

the programme from its honest reservations about it mounts up to splitting a head in two. The paper's overall impressions about the Green Revolution spelt nothing but doom and these were gravely relished with political sensibilities. One of its criticisms however, reasonably argued that the programme lacked the modalities to make it feasible and consequently, perpetuated the flee of most traditional farmers from their farms. Stating other causes of dearth of foods the paper alleged,

> ... the second factor for food and especially rice scarcity was that the NPN Federal Covernment created an artificial scarcity of rice in our markets by placing its importation under licence. The folly of placing an essential food item under licence when its demand cannot yet be met by local production had been stressed by patriotic Nigerians./ Federal Covernment authorities for placing rice under licence was that experts advice had assured the Federal Covernment that Nigeria would be able to meet its rice needs from local production in five years time. Thus to Ribadu road the best and only way to protect non-existent infant industry to maturity from foreign competition is to starve the populace for five years. 32

/The ostensibl reason given by the

In another 'comment' the paper solicited for a de-emphasis on 'middlemen farmers' while priority be

accorded farmers who actually till the soil. For the latter are those genuinely in need of bank loans, farming equipment at subsidized or no rate and other financial and technical supports. It also suggested a partnership between the Federal Government and the states in cultivating other food crops according to areas of advantage.

To fairly assess the Tribune from these, it is important to first ascertain the expected role of the 'left press' which the Tribune ought to symbolise. Carl Garner demonstrated the vital task of the left press as one to 'counter false consciousness and fight for the supremacy of socialist ideas, not as an abstract ideology but as one fashioned and enriched by workers' struggle and experience'.[33] Thus, the left press must point to the contradictions and absurdities of capitalism in order to compare it to a system run under workers control.[34] Gardner rigidly asserted that to do all these, the press must undertake a painstaking research and investigation. For,

> Socialism is not just about
> workers' control of factories,
> It must be concerned with the
> whole of society and the

> quality of life. Socialist papers must fuse socialist ideas with the experience of those fighting at the grass-roots. 35

If Gardner's postulation is acceptable as universally binding on all socialist papers, be they in industrialised societies or in developing countries, then, the Nigerian Tribune falls short of what may be termed a socialist paper. Its inability to evince, by way of investigation, the inherent contradictions implanted in a capitalist system and all the more manifestable in a dependent capitalist society as they were evident in the Green Revolution indicated its interests strayed from those of socialism. The Green Revolution Programme was colossally tasked by capitalist inconsistencies. They reared themselves in the large-scale farms or those also calldd 'modern mechanised farms. They inconcealably dwelled in the nation's dependence on imported rice even while the locally grown variety were reportedly rotting away (NN editorial, August 27, 1982) and also being exported to neighbouring countries (NC opinion, July 16, 1982). The contradictions were fomented in the importation of fertilizer (NC 'opinion', April 4, 1981) and the involvement

of businessmen and foreign partners generally.

Rather than bring these problems to public consciousness, the Tribune subsidied in them. Its grudge against the Green Revolution was heavily laid on the ban on rice importation; on the placement of its import licence on restriction. This single act by government, in its opinion, was 'callous' (Tribune Comment, November 3, 1980; 'wicked' (December 13, 1980). But no sooner did the Buhari military regime step in than the paper became the loudest advocate for a complete ban on the importation of rice, figuring that, 'we have done without it in the past, Nigerians will not starve'.[36] It was clear the small rural farmer could not be given the licence to import rice. What he'll get in return is a downright rejection of his variety and perhaps, resultantly, relapse into subsistent farming. So, whose course was the Tribune fighting in the rice import palaver if not that of the privileged few? And the advancement of political bitterness?

Paradoxically, the capitalist newspapers amplified the aftermath of importation on peasant farmers and the perpetual economic boundage it would fix the country (NN, December 5, 1919)

(DTs, May 7, 1980) (NC, February 7, 1981). They too were alive to the economic complications of large-scale farming schemes (NC, February 7, 1981). These papers became Government's most persistent pressure to blend into the Green Revolution the labour of petty farmers if it hoped to sincerely deliver results. Summarily, the 'capitalist newspapers' turned out to be greater pointers to the vices of the capitalist system. Because the Nigerian Tribune could not, even on a superficial level defend its claim to socialism in these and more, we think it intelligible to dismiss the Tribune as an ideological apparatus fostering the dependent capitalist status of the country. In this light, we also certainly believe that the paper's silence on issues that should visibly encourage the contests at the grassroot intend consent to the system.

3(vii) A SYNTHESIS OF THE POSITIONS OF THE NEWSPAPERS ON THE GREEN REVOLUTION

Having studied the Newspapers' positions on the Green Revolution, three basic conclusions are reached (i) They all seemed to have majorly disseminated information in a top to bottom process, what Andreas Fuglesang calls 'one-way flow of information'.[37] None of the papers showed signs

of having actually communicated with the peasant farmers in order to acquire first hand knowledge about their fears, disappointments and general laxity. The Concord and the Tribune set aside distinct columns for tackling political issues but no room was specifically spared for attending to such issues that affected the well-being of the lowly in the society. From 1979 to 1983 for instance, it was observed that the third page of the Tribune and the Concord purely addressed issues related to politicians and political activities. Thus, none of the papers could factually substantiate why loans and other farm inputs eluded farmers. And why those who obtained them but could put them into no valuable use faced such difficulties. They are numerous reasons therefore, to see that the papers' presentations of a Green Revolution that was not exactly 'green' to rural farmers were defective.

The Green Revolution exceedingly unclouded the intra-class contentions among the papers. It could be recalled that the first Chapter stated that what may be construed as distinct classes in opposition in the newspapers are really disagreements among members of the same class. To begin with,

the proprietors of the newspapers analysed are, either way, members of the ruling oligarchy. The case of the state newspapers is lucid. The Concord publisher, as illustrated in the second chapter, was, for some time, the Chairman of the Ogun State branch of the NPN. And the Tribune publisher, besides leading the UPN, professed a socialist ideology (Awoism) which the UPN states were expected to practice The war encapsulating the papers engulfed the leaders of the NPN and the leaders of the UPN.

Being guided by evidences in our investigations, practically, the Tribune's profession to serving socialist interests, and thereby, implicitly, a 'left' newspaper, are best regarded as fallacious. If this is established, the clashes of interests between the UPN and the NPN fought on the pages of the Tribune, New Nigerian, Daily Times and Concord are quite transparent. The collisions, we believe, were continuations of the contest for political power at the Federal level. The masses had no part in it. The Green Revolution luminates this. Rice, which was deliberately made a controversial issue when it should not have been, that is, barely six months after the official initiation of

the Green Revolution programme was an effective cloud over the underlying political dissension. Some validity exist in this notion if it is carefully considered that the Nigerian Tribune and the New Nigerian avowed rice was not, and should not be the major sustenance of the economy, neither should the citizenry depend on it. (Tribune, August 8, 1981; NN, November 12, 1980). The New Nigerian candidly opined;

> The hunger scare in the rice affair only exists in the hungry pockets of the powerful rich few and their numerous proteges. Afterall, there are substitutes. Moreso, the ratio of those who depend on rice to the total population is still very small. Our legislators and elite must know that the majority is not incidental to them. 38

To drive home the intra-class differences, the papers delighted in accusing one another time and again of bias coverage; of trying to run down each other's ideals; of being propaganda mechanisms for individual interests (NC, January 27, 1984; NN, August 25, 1983). To shamelessly employ rice as a campaign gimmick could not have been so clearly stated any where else / but in a 'Tribune Comment' in which the paper alluded to Awolowo's

address to the Annual Conference. The comment recalled the Tribune publisher's cry for the lifting of the ban on food. The paper confidently informed its audience that Awolowo's appeal for food importation is enough proof that 'he deserves victory in 1983' (NT, December 18, 1980). The paper's wearisome excessive cynicism and criticisms against all Shagari's policies and actions save for one, the President's pardon to Ojukwu and Gowon, and very often expressed in language unbecoming of responsible journalism further explicated the intra-class conflicts.

Inferable from these taken aggregately is the verification of the hypothesis which sees the newspapers as an ideological state apparatus. This could be viewed from two angles (i) Had the Concord publisher been enthroned as the President of the nation, his government's most viable ideological instrument would have been the National Concord besides the electronic media. The same is applicable to the Nigerian Tribune were Awolowo elected as President. (ii) Reiterating that already stated; While the Concord could be perceived as an ideological apparatus to the Federal Government and the NPN states, the Tribune was no less for the UPN states.

3(viii) THE SECOND REPUBLIC - INDUSTRIAL ACTIONS

Nigeria is yet to experience, and may never again be beset by the pathetic spate of industrial actions that characterised the second civilian regime, famously between 1981 and 1983. The frequency of strikes by workers in all sectors of the economy was alarming. The nation seemed to have stood still at this period. More endemic was strikes by teachers. Perhaps, excluding the police force, all other workers, doctors, nurses, dock workers, bankers, market women, road transport workers, etc. took turns to down tools in one protest or another, which / almost always centred around non-payment of salaries and benefits. The Newspapers dismissed many of the strikes as mischievous and unpatriotic while others, such as those of the Teachers were judged as legitimate. The economy was glaringly turbulent. States owed some workers as much as ten months salaries (NN, April 30, 1982). Others sought to offer workers half-pay (NC, August 19, 1982). 1980 to 1983 spelt squandermania for the country as all states frantically hassled to fulfill realistic and farcical promises to their electorates (NN, April 22, 1982; NC, April 20, 1982). Strikes best designated the state of the nation.

This section explores the paper's presentation of strikes in the civilian regime. This is intended to prove again that the papers fundamental interests are indivorceable. Our selected opinions arise from the little problem that not all the papers commented on all strikes in their editorials, commentaries or opinion pages. And this research rigidly relies on these columns. Therefore, it is not possible to show here each paper's impression about doctors strike, teachers' or bankers' strike since some of them treated the strikes collectively, while some picked out specific ones for analysis.

ON TEACHERS' STRIKE

THE NIGERIAN TRIBUNE

The Tribune argued that the strikes embarked upon by the teachers were in order given that teachers work hard. However, it primarily asserted that the state Governments were free of any blame. It was the Federal Government's reduced allocation to the states that had inevitably caused non-payment of salaries. Hence, the paper waved off the strikes easily in the following arguement;

> ... because Federal Government allocation to states has grown smaller, teachers have had to strike in several states, Benue, Niger, Bendel, Ondo, Kwara, Rivers, Cross-Rivers. Teachers cannot be blamed because teachers are hard working people and deserve their pay. 39

The Tribune called on all state Governments to find teachers' pay any way they could.

THE DAILY TIMES

The paper was less concerned with other months salries yet to be paid workers, teachers specifically. It was emphatic on the non-payment of December 1981 salaries and saw the situation as 'pathetic', pointing out that,

> ... the period involved was when many families needed money for Christmas and New Year shopping and festivities. Worse still, because many of the states which refused to pay their teachers were able to generate funds, inspite of the nation-wide austerity, to pay other categories of workers. This discriminatory attitude is condemnable because teachers are supposed to b e given preferential treatment for the vital role they play in society 40

It further remarked that while teachers in advanced countries are among the most highly rated

professionals, in Nigeria, their fringe benefits are not only low, but irregular.

ON STRIKES COLLECTIVELY

THE NEW NIGERIAN

Noting the number of strikes being undertaken at the same time, their frequency, and duration the paper found cause to ponder strictly on what this potends for the nation's economy.

> ... All of these are happening at a time the economy is in bad shape. One way or another, they are bound to affect efforts to revitalise the economy. But the workers have a case. Dock workers petrol and gas workers and bank workers are fighting for implementation of minimum wage and fringe benefits. It is their entitlement so they have right to fight for it. This however, does not make the time and the weapon right... Some mischievous labour leaders believe and make their followers believe that strike actions hurt the government and employers more than the workers. They are wrong. Often their victories through strike actions amount to nothing.... 41

THE NATIONAL CONCORD

The paper focused on strikes outside the teachers' - radio and TV workers, bank workers, dock workers, etc. It is a restatement made

earlier by the paper in an 'Opinion' titled 'Unnecessary' in which it thought that too many unwarranted strike actions were in force. On the so-called 'unnecessary' strikes the Concord declared,

> ...We are not saying that the workers had no case. We are not even saying that the respective managements had been less reckless than workers ... But whether workers' grievances warranted strike action is debatable. The frequency, speed and ease with which workers strike in recent times gives all serious Nigerians concern. It is either that our labour unions operate with a reckless definition of what justifies strike actions or they are being deliberately unpatriotic and mischievous... The fragility of our economy is an open secret. The truth of a world economic recession imposes great limits on the financial concessions managements can make at the moment. 42

THE DAILY TIMES

The Daily Times found dismal the effects of strikes on the country's economy, but more so, the Daily Times also thought workers were intentionally being unpatriotic considering Government's favourable'disposition toward their welfare'. In the paper's opinion,

> In recent months workers of the Central Bank embarked on a number of industrial actions to back-up their demands .... Their strikes generated ripples that adversely affected every facet of the economy.... The industrial action was undertaken inspite of government good disposition toward their welfare. Strikes are a weapon for workers to fight for improved conditions of service, but it should be exercised with caution because they do not good to any body... President Shehu Shagari revealed during the May-Day ... that the nation lost 2,557,081 May-Day between January 1980 and April, 1981 as a result of 265 strikes involving 221,000 workers. This is bad enough for a developing country. 43

3(ix) THE NEWSPAPERS AND STRIKES: RESEARCH DEDUCTIONS

In totality, the outcome of inquiries into these papers' judgment of industrial actions replicate John Downing's findings on the media in Britain and their presentation of strikes. Downing, in, The Media Machine affirmed that the media pay little attention to the realities of class struggle in work; editors rarely allowed workers the opportunity to speak for themselves in the media, hence, pictures presented of industrial conflict scarcely ever comes from the strikers. He therefore, described the media as,

> ... Visibly a part of bourgeois democracy. Officially, anyone has the right to speak through them. Superficially, a variety of interests express themselves about strikes. Actually, the producers on strike are the last to be asked their views.44

Citing Hartmann's observations on strikes, he maintained that the 'why' of strikes is left out and 'what is absent from the explanation of strikes is amply made up for by stressing their impact'.[45] He illustrated that in the docks strike in Britain for instance, this was simply outlined as the damage to the national economy. For the media always assumed this economy was all 'our economy'. Thus, enough reason seemed to exist for why petty class differences of this nature be 'brushed aside and the strike called off in the national interest of 'our economy'.[46] Downing went on to indicate that here, an ideology is nurtured. It is one which stipulates the existence of a 'national social interest' superseding sectional disputes or class interests. Through this ideology, workers are accused of 'deliberately refusing to act for the welfare of their fellow citizens'.[47] The author conclusively opined that media coverage of strikes in Britain provide a gigantic arrangement in favour of class collaboration with capital.[48]

The Tribune, Daily Times, New Nigerian and Concord newspapers all offered insufficient explanations to the strikes of the second republic. The issue of 'hardwork' trivially adduced as reason for teachers' strike in the Tribune was a grand understatement of the reality that the forces of domination of one class over the others; of exploitation, were notoriously at work. The question of 'hardwork' was a relegation of the fact that workers, employed labourers of any capacity, hardworking or not, had an uncompromising right to salary and wages. The Tribune's penchant for picking on the Federal Government at the slightest chance to do so was also well articulated. If the paper endeavoured to face realities squarely, perhaps it could have deeply questioned as the Daily Times did, the foul game of paying other workers, at least occasionally, with the meagre allocations, and consistently ignoring teachers. The truth of the matter as we see it is, the Tribune was far too submerged in its political ambitions on behalf of its publisher to honestly bother about the afflictions of workers. And this really goes to show too that where the paper could not capitalise on its position to pursue the socialist principles it cherished, its ideals and those of the other papers were synonymous.

The Daily Times, on its part, while expressing sentiments for the teachers, could be faulted for two things. The first deals with the whole idea of domination expressed above: It is sad enough to find, like the paper aptly observed, that teachers, and many other workers generally, take home very paltry wages. To deny them this for months on end is almost suicidal. The second screens the paper's inculcation of discrimination among workers when it assumed it was averting it. Thus, to suggest that teachers ought to be shown 'preferential treatment' at the expense of other workers amounts to proclaiming; we would rather have other workers go without pay than the teachers. Besides ostensibly discouraging a section of the working class, the idea of 'preference' serves to disunite and deharmonise workers and their interest.

The New Nigerian, the National Concord and Daily Times impressions of strikes aggregately exhibited a common track; they stressed the 'effect' rather than the 'why'. As in Downings findings, it is observable they all imprinted the 'national interest' ideology. This they imposed over workers own well-being, thereby, suggesting that workers welfare and 'national interest' are separable. The New Nigerian succinctly implied so

when it warned that workers are always the losers in industrial actions. But some controversy stirs up here. Is the nation an abstract entity? Is it divisible from its people, so that when workers withdraw their services the nation carries on and prospers? It soothes the nerves of Government to hear workers being ordered back to work like the papers never failed to add. But none of them attempted to demonstrate how this treats the workers interests in contempt.

There is no doubt that based on these newspapers' expositions on strikes they homogenised their interests with those of the ruling class and thus, contributed to upholding the status quo. They were symphonic on the essence of maintaining law and order. They agreed upon the need to repress whatever appeared like a potential rebel against the system, a phenomenon marked by workers' agitation of varied dimensions. Capitalism cannot thrive in a chaos-ridden Nigeria, in a nation where workers all rise and insist in uninon on better conditions of services as circumstances in the Second Republic almost brought to bear. The newspapers examined abated, in these ways, what may be described as conflict between the workers and the ruling class. The state and private newspapers

effectively helped sustain Nigeria's system of material reproduction that cannot favour the labour force equally as it does the ruling group.

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45. Downing, p.35.

46. Downing, pp.35-36.

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CHAPTER 4

THE MILITARY REGIME

THE NEWSPAPERS - 1984-1990

This Chapter and the preceding one seek the same end. It is purely another test to the idea that the newspapers serve the interest that guides the nation towards the system of producing and reproducing her material existence. We concentrate on the Structural Adjustment Programme introduced in 1986. But the papers have also being cursorily assessed in the regime that briefly existed before that which initiated the present Structural Adjustment Programme.

4(i) BUHARI'S GOVERNMENT: 1984-1985

It hardly came as a surprise when Nigeria reverted to a military government in December 1983. What , with the disturbing unhealthy state of the nation. With the fall of the civilian government was the emergence of an undemocratic administration headed by General Muhammadu Buhari. The jubiliant reception granted the new government it could be said, was drawn from all nooks and crannies of the country, the newspapers not excluded. For the very first time in the history of the Nigerian polity, her people seemed to have unanimously risen

to felicitate a military regime. Buhari's administration which was only permitted a twenty month existence by the present regime marked a conspicuous difference in the papers.

They were compelled to suddenly rest those petty inter-party skirmishes of the civilian regime for an embracement of a government vastly recognised as Nigeria's salvation. Those who styled themselves socialists briskly relieved themselves of the illusory socialist rules and ebulliently pledged solidarity to a government generally regarded as, 'the paroxystic phase of a global process assuring the redeployment of the capitalist system, which demands the reinforcement of social control...'[1] The newspapers were convinced the new military government was in the nation's interest. The Nigerian Tribune in 'Welcome Breather' passionately revered it as God's final intervention to save His people from imminent catastrophe (Tribune Comment, January 3, 1984). The Daily Times and the New Nigerian accepted its coming as in national interest (DTs front Page Comment, January 3, 1984; NN Editorial, January 6, 1984). For these papers, the toppled civilian regime clearly possessed debris that needed to be flushed out. And the Nigerian Concord in a similar notion,

welcomed the soldiers because the nation did not seem to have known its interests under President Shagari, and 'if it did, it lacked the will to defend them' (Concord Opinion, January 2, 1984).

Randomly sampling the newspapers for the twenty months period of existence of the Buhari regime manifested their endeavours to justify the regime's sublime intentions. The sole contending issue which clashed Government and the press at this time was the enactment of Decree 4. The Decree stringently muzzled the press and they found cause to reponder over the legitimacy of the military's 'national interest'. Decree 4 held Buhari's Government and the press in infinite enmity. Hence, when in August 1985 another 'divine corrective' military administration took over power and the citizens found the purposes of the new Government questionable, the press was more eager to entertain it. Their warm hospitality to the latest regime - could not be pretentious with the abolishment of the draconian Decree 4. The novel regime presided over by President Ibrahim Babangida relished the consistent backing of the press from 1985 to 1988. By early 1988, some sections of the press, piqued by what appeared like 'Decree 4 political gimmick' began to despair over

the persisting fettering of the press and of course, the further degenerated state of the economy. Still, the newspapers are accomplices to what Nigeria is today, by design or by accident. And this is evident in their presentations of the regime's Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) - the gravest austerity measures this country has known. And in our opinion, the least that has trully improved the lot of Nigerians, at least for now. We see their judgements of the anti-SAP riots of May 1989, the most striking verification of the merging of the interests of Government and those of the press, newspapers specifically.

4(ii) BABANGIDA'S REGIME 1985 - 1989: SAP

The military administration of President Babangida, on its advent, complacently pressed on a SAP ideology it confidently held as the sole rescuer of the country's deplorable economy. It divulged in earnest conviction that our redemption lies no where outside SAP. For 'SAP is the only alternative we have if we are to reduce Nigeria's total dependence on oil as its foreign exchange earner... there is no viable alternative'.[2] And so is Nigeria grudgingly stuck with the Structural Adjustment Programme. Whence came SAP?

Newswatch dated it back to 1986 when after late 1985's attempt to salvage the economy, some austere measures were imposed with the nation's rejection of a loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The proposals which declared a fifteen month economy emergency included; two to twenty percent levy on workers, an eighty percent subsidy removal from petrolleum and an extension of wage freeze. Accruing no significant impact on the economy, July 1986 procreated the Structural Adjustment Programme supervised by officials of the World Bank. It was meant to pursue four goals: (i) find the true value of the Naira, (ii) transcend public sector impotency through rectifying public expenditure programme and rationalisation of parastatals, (iii) Reschedule the nations medium and long-term debts (iv) encourage a net inflow of foreign capital while keeping a lid on foreign loans. Following up these measures, Government has had to auction the Naira; abolish import licencing system; liberalise trade and withdraw controls from the economy, and tighten monetary and fiscal policies. Government has also embarked on commercialisation and privatisation. It banned the importation of such grains as maize, rice and wheat

in order to encourage import substitution and the utility of local raw materials.[3]

While Newswatch marked 1986 as the genesis of SAP, The Analyst completely disagrees with this. In an elaborate specification of the origins and rationale of SAP, the magazine intrepidly stated: 'The notion that the Structural Adjustment Programme started in Nigeria in July 1986 when President Babangida declared that it had started is ... a public relations gimmick'.[4] The Analyst comprehensively demonstrated that SAP began with the economic stabilisation policies of the Shagari regime which comprised; cutting down public expenditure, restricting imports and striving to diversify exports. It found these in line with the austerity packages prescribed by the IMF and the World Bank since 1944 when they were founded. The Analyst noted that what appears like dissimilar policies of the Shagari, Buhari and Babangida Governments merely represent different stages in the effectuation of the World Bank SAP package in Nigeria.[5] However, SAP is popularly associated with the present military Government. Its modus operandi were spelt out in the 1986 national budget. The presentation of the SAP budget of 1986 in each of

the newspapers being surveyed is being used as a guiding step towards properly identifying their candid opinions about the programme. What we see as the salient aspects of the programme with undisguised physical bearings on the lives of the people are those being examined. They are, the removal of petroleum and oil subsidies and the privatisation and commercialisation of several government parastatals.

4(iii) 1986 BUDGET

NIGERIAN TRIBUNE: The paper was optimistic about the stern measures delivered in the budget. It opined that Nigerians had long cultivated an immunity to the threatening lengthy period of a Structural Adjustment in both medium and long term. On the removal of petroleum subsidy, sanctioning it, the paper simply waved off the act as 'long overdue'. It reasoned that the new price per litre would only equalize what obtains in neighbouring states, as well as discourage the smuggling of the commodity. Conscious of its repercussions on transport and commuters, the Tribune, trifling its impact, judged that the 'public will adjust to the new rates and learn to undertake only journeys that are absolutely necessary'. It urgently added,

'in any case, it is part of the price to pay for the needed adjustment'. The Privatisation and Commercialisation of government parastatals simply tallies with the mixed economy 'we have elected to operate', the paper estimated. And it implored the Federal Covernment to ensure absolute disengagement.

NATIONAL CONCORD: The entire package was impressive it affirmed, pointing out in utter conviction that the nation was finally being offered 'a budget of development'. And for the very first time in Nigeria's history, a scheme to pursue the objectives of self-dependence and sufficiency had been produced. Acknowledging the innevitable effects of the removal of subsidies, the Concord found relief in Government's intention to finance food and develop rural areas with the bulk of savings generated from the withdrawal of subsidies. Concluding, the Concord submissively remarked,

> However, going through the provisions in the whole package, we cannot but hail budget '86 as one of realism, though initially, it is bound to cause some distress in many households. The latter is the price for self-sufficiency and self-reliance, no matter how painful. 6

NEW NIGERIAN: exercised less optimism about the budget. It meticulously weighed the benefits to be

eventually derived as well as the precarious. Paying close attention to the distress bound to arise from the retraction of oil subsidies, as it would pertain to the welfare of the common man, and the rural dweller in particular, the paper counselled that undesirable hikes in food and other essentials be readily checked. Evaluating privatisation and commercialisation, it kicked against Government's intention to privatise banks and other financial institutions. Taking an overview of the budget, the New Nigerian visualised it as hopefully setting the stage for transforming this nation into 'the land of milk and honey.'[7]

DAILY TIMES glossed that the budget was indeed, 'a tough and bitter medicine', but nonetheless, one truly committed to putting the economy on the right passage to economy restoration. It esteemed the issue of petroleum and oil subsidies as apposite to circumstances which are, dolefully, abnormal. For the situation was one of an 'economic emergency'. It entreated Nigerians to make sacrifices, and in tune with this therefore, transporters need accept the marginal drop in profit with the removal of petroleum subsidy as their sacrificed quota to economy revival. On privatisation,

the paper was more expressive on the policy as it affected schools. For it, the allowance for private ownership of schools was worthy of praise.[8]

4(iv) THE NEWSPAPERS AND SAP BUDGET: SURVEY INFERENCES

While majority of the papers surveyed here commendably undertook a solicitous economic analysis of the budget to fairly direct their valuation of the outlined policies, a couple of them were swept away by a desperate urge to concur. The Concord and the Tribune delineated more of this tendency. Giving just how well off SAP measures as provided in the '86 budget implemented by many other African countries have transformed their economies, we judge the newspapers as obsequious. SAP, as it is plain to see today, does not seem to yield its fruits in five years. Our leaders themselves have had to face this reality, hence, the alterations in the dates they expected the nation to begin to reap the pleasant products of SAP. SAP may sooner ameliorate Gross National Product (GNP) than the lives of the citizens. And what essence does a bonus in GNP hold for a people increasingly wallowing in the excruciating labour of a structural adjustment? It is against this background, we criticise Concord's concluding sentence in the text quoted and Tribune's superabundant assurance that

Nigerians have long developed a thick-skin for suffering. We also maintain placid reservations for the New Nigerian's 'land of milk and honey'. It appeared the most palatable comment its funders would love to hear after the paper's implicit keen assertions of doubts. However, the newspapers generally, finely adressed their determination to enlighten the people on the need for a SAP they, in union with the ruling class see as in the interest of the nation.

4(v). ANTI-SAP PROTESTS

Impetuous protests broke out in the country in May 1989. They were famously related to as anti-SAP dissents as the instigators, it is commonly held, gravely demanded an end to the Structural Adjustment Programme. The chaos emitted massive destruction of private and public property and loss of lives. SAP had imposed an overly distressing affliction on the people, in particular the average Nigerian. Thus, the very violent anti-SAP riots of May could have passed for a pure case of two distinguisable classes in opposition - the workers, typified by the students who incited the demonstrations and the ruling class. However, later reports sought to convincingly discount the

assumption that the incident was some class conflict as it appeared. The credulous insinuations that students only masqueraded the truly / aggrieved section of the bourgeois class lie in the President's reprobations in an address to the Armed Forces Consultative Assembly (AFCA) (NT Comment, June 6, 1989).

He is reported as having claimed an anticipation of the wild resistance since this administration, through SAP, had 'antagonised several interests groups in the country'. Among the groups listed were; the 'business community', 'Professional Commission Agents' who are injured by the removal of import licencing and the tramelling of other brisk money-making avenues; the 'political class' whose members are said to have pillaged the nation's treasury, and the 'professional politicians who want to hold this nation to ransome forever'. A prudent evaluation of the groups enlisted unravelled the delusion in imagining inter-class disaffections. In our opinion, they are fragments of the ruling class. Nevertheless, the President's speech was not a denial of SAP's rough impositions on the people. It was not meant to assuage Nigerians

on a possible extermination of the programme either. The newspapers were provided another opportunity to assess SAP with integrity, and they did. Their very first comments on the anti-SAP riots have been / chosen for analysis. This is essentially because we believe they are the most ardent and principal impressions of the papers. Again, all texts quoted are drawn from the papers' editorials opinions and commentaries.

THE NEWSPAPERS AND ANTI-SAP PROTESTS

THE DAILY TIMES

The paper was swift in re-echoing the President's submission that the agitations spelt more than could be discerned with the eye hence, it yielded that SAP 'fall outs' partly explained the incident but not all of it. After briefly reporting the sequence of events in Benin, the state from where the uproar began, the paper interjected;

> Undoubtedly, we cannot pretend to be unconscious of structural violence wreaked on the populace by SAP. But then, counter-violence in the form of the mindless orgy which gripped Benin-city in the past few days is certainly uncalled for. It is apparent that such violence will get us no where. Rather, it will only bring about an

> anarchy - a phenomenon that will certainly ensure a bleaker profile for this beleaguered nation ... It is only in a conducive and relatively peaceful atmosphere that the few positive fall outs from SAP can be effectively consummated. 9

Assuming the role of a peaceful mediator, the Daily Times called on both sides to 'cool it'. Having reproached the contending students, it besought the Government to reappraise SAP's achievements in order to painlessly diversify its burden. The paper supplicated for calm and order in view of the transition programme which it supremely held as the 'stated course' the nation must not be detracted from.

NIGERIAN TRIBUNE

The Tribune, with enthusiastic efficiency, became Government missive expounder. It took time to analyse and explain the President's message to the AFCA to the public. It told its audience the President had no intention to terminate the Structural Adjustment Programme because it is still the resolution to the nation's 'economic malaise'. It narrated, acquiesced, that the President said well when he attributed some overt response to SAP

to the average Nigerian's ignorance of the philosophy behind it. The paper also volunteered that besides this, some Nigerians are indeed unaware of 'the magnitude of the economic problems inherited by this administration'. The Tribune concurred that the students may have just been a cover to the several interest groups the President named as having been antagonised by SAP;

> We share the sentiment that a regime that has done all these is at the battle with elements who must have made themselves its sworn enemies. And social erruptions can easily be caused through such elements. But while appreciating all these and, indeed, the enormity of the problem this administration is tackling, we believe that President Babangida's speech need not have been as larcerating as it was. Given the psychology of the time it was delivered, such an address had the potentials for creating a divide between the military and civilians. 10

It reminded Nigerians of the deplorable state of the economy, which should engender understanding and tolerance. Ending its commentary on the anti-SAP hostile emission, the Tribune announced that the President's pronouncements were a restatement of the administration's consigned economic goals as well as its commitment to the transition programme.

NEW NIGERIAN

The New Nigerian vented its resentments fiercely on the students. It was the only paper that despised, in its entirety, regarding the protests as anti-SAP. It made it appear an abomination to as much as imagine the riots were indeed against SAP. Therefore, it deliberately styled it 'Students Unrest'. And in an undaunted pro-Government rundown of the May incident, the paper exhaustively reprimanded students for confronting the Government and perhaps, without permission, disturbing the nation's peace. The New Nigerian bewailed;

> Certainly and as government itself has acknowledged, some pain and sacrifice have accompanied the Structural Adjustment Programme. However, since government has clearly indicated its intention to pursue the programme to its fruitful conclusion, there is then something very confrontational in students issuing orders to government to scrap the programme. 11

The paper, like the others, decried the situation where students allowed themselves be manipulated by Government's adversaries. In a lavish display of superfluous syntax, it issued beliests on how students must resort to dialogue with Government on

contestible issues; why Government's strives for the betterment of the country and the evil mechanisations of economic saboteurs need be appreciated. It supplied the public, what we see as Government's manifesto of its accomplishments in agricultural production and of course, its well diffused open-door policy.

NATIONAL CONCORD

The Concord warned against employing outrageous demolition of property in expressing despondency. It acknowledged students pre-rogative to speak their minds, but sternly rebuked them for the disruption of public order which 'may permanently do damage to the society they are seeking to protect'. The paper explained that SAP should be considered a new chart to steer the country on a different course after other pre-SAP designs have tended to severely reverse the country's economic movement. In this light, therefore, SAP ought to be given a chance to transform the pitiable economic state of the country.

> ... It is legitimate for various Nigerians to have different views about approaches to structural orientation. Those at the helm of affairs should be given a chance to implement theirs ....

> Like any other human drawn-up document, the present SAP package is not perfect. There is an urgent need to put together schemes which will check the adverse socio-economic effects of the present SAP package.... As experts say, we cannot avoid a decline in standard of living based on the consumption, orientation of the time of boom. This is the cost of adjustment. 12

4(vi) ANTI-SAP VEHEMENT RIOTS: NEWSPAPERS SURVEY DEDUCTIONS

That the newspapers are in cordial partnership with the ruling class in the endurance of the system is a truism ensured by their contracted presentation of the anti-SAP riots. While we do not subscribe to a recourse to outrage in pressing out discontents, we find the papers' flippant allusion to the cause of dissention abhorrent. Take the Tribune's pre-occupation with the potential discord between the military and the civilians, possibly sparked off by the President's untimely larcerating insistence to pursue the course of SAP infinitum. The Tribune did not only enwrap itself in such insipid insignificancies, but sank in incredible insentience when it cautioned the Government against creating the impression it could be pressured into giving concessions! This

was the paper's concluding reaction to the declaration of a SAP relief package. And this avowed 'socialist newspaper' loyally took up the duty of an abject spokesman to a capitalist Government!

The New Nigerian's anti-SAP commentary was an astounding contrast to its SAP budget scrutiny. We found the crystal change arose out of some complex editorial shufflings. New Heads beget new editorial policies. In our estimation, the New Nigerian of the anti-SAP incident is a crabbed renovation of the paper in the Green Revolution, the strikes and the SAP budget of 1986. Its obstinate refusal to address straight the problem at stake in the SAP protests does not become of the paper. It also recladded itself and paraded as Government's avid applauder with hardly any self-independent opinions. Hence, it sounded even less optimistic about the fate of Nigeria than its funder. This veritably explains the papers tendency to portray Nigeria as operating some form of totalitarianism where its people have no rights whatsoever to contest Governments' schemes that affect their lives. We wave aside the paper's incoherent stream of arguments and irrelevant restatement of Government's blue print on agriculture in what it

called 'Students Unrest'. On the anti-SAP riots the Federal Government could not have been more generously blessed with an amplified version of itself in the New Nigerian.

The National Concord vigorously nourished what the others exuded. Although not as vociferously as the New Nigerian, it piled majority of the blame on students. And that makes some sense since they led the demonstrations. Also fairly sensible is the paper's imploration that where the nation has been undertaking a trial and error policy, this regime ought to be patiently permitted a chance to experiment on the Structural Adjustment Programme. It did not fail to remind the public that the fall in living standards is merely apposite to the sacrifices SAP must extract in order to set the economy bloomy. The Daily Times on its part, emits notoriety for continually playing 'mother' mediator in the drama of discord between Government and its citizens. It chose this role in addressing industrial actions of the Second Republic and did not falter in it in the anti-SAP protests. While the other newspapers assumed an ephemeral parental role, the Daily Times tends to live-up to its age as the oldest existing newspaper presently, and thus,

protracts its plea for order to the neglect of; why the rigid oppositions? However, its anti-SAP riots judgment endeavoured, more than the others, to disperse the viles of the Structural Adjustment Programme.

Seen in one piece, the newspapers' anti-SAP presentations repeatedly lack, as they did in the strikes, the WHY of the riots. It is important to clarify an idea here. The newspapers tackled a WHY, but it reposed overwhelmingly on why the Structural Adjustment Programme was introduced. This is not the same as offering an expository on why students and other participants in the protests took exasperately to the streets. There exists a perenial prejudicial valuation of conflicts between the Government and the People in the newspapers studied. The bias is usually in favour of Government. This unmistakenly informs their fancy to diligently instruct their audience on the wisdom of sustaining a SAP and the calamities to befall the country if she remits it. They are equally as industrious in playing down the exigencies that push the people to the wall in revolt against the system. It is in the responsibility of the newspapers to accuse the

exploited of threatening the stability of the system when they strike out through industrial actions and austere protests that the ruling class finds strength. It is in proclaiming the ideology of the ruling class as paramount and unequalled as it is done with SAP that a prevalent system of despicable unequal distribution of material resources thrives.

The ruling class cannot exist without the newspapers. They are a part of the life blood of the ruling body besides the apparatuses of physical repression. Both private and state newspapers in Nigeria discharge unequivocal mutual services to the dominant ideology. What separates them is best perceived as Style to borrow the Tribune's term. We recapitulate the Tribune's earlier admission of the 'agreed upon' interests of the country which the private newspapers do not betray even in a jarring censure of the Government. The interests of the private newspapers therefore; is in an unruffled harmony with those of the state newspapers except of course, that naturally, the mode of realising them differs (Tribune Comment, September 27, 1984). The Green Revolution Programme,

the industrial actions of the Second Republic and the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP)of the present military administration are explications of this. Why they sustain the ideology of the ruling class is abridged into the following four presumptions steadily premised on inferables from a careful examination of the papers; (i) Obviating the state papers, the others were established by politicians aspiring for prospective leadership roles. They constituted a part of the Government. And as illustrated already, these papers, in the second civilian regime were a medium of the states controlled by their publisher's political parties.(ii) These politicians are members of the 'new African elite, some of who schooled in the home countries of our colonisers, while others tutored in a colonised capitalist Nigeria, also became pupils of the imperial masters. They therefore, had unavoidably absorbed a capitalist way of life, which did also conduct the values they nurtured. Now, shedding the cloak of this imbibed alien culture is like grasping a mirage. Hence, some of those alive to the exploitative character of capitalism in this environment, understandably, longed for a 'superior' ideology. Perhaps, one that could visibly blot out existing stupendous inequalities between the

colonial masters and the 'natives'. But they, severely associated with the country's developed dependent capitalism cannot whisk the country to something completely new. For the papers, an option stared them in the face - join the band if you cannot beat them. But those who had constantly shrieked they ideologically differed from the system and vowed to change it could not simply mortify this clamour before their admirers. Expectedly, they put up a seeming fight against the status quo. But these only lived on the pages of their newspapers. This we believe, considerably defines the Tribune's status in the Second Republic. The paper comfortably cast aside its socialist inuendos with the coming of the military.

An article published in the July 7, 1982 edition of the National Concord, captioned 'The Ideological Hoax' made a fair exposure of the ideological contradictions the five registered political parties in the second civilian regime exhibited. The article alluded to the screening of the five parties undertaken by Claude Ake who was then the President of the Nigerian Political Science Association. Ake strove to show that they were ideologically the same. The NPN, he pictured, was

'a collection of feudal elements and buccanear capitalist'. And the UPN was 'a more conservative force than the NPN in so far as it is entrenched in capitalist production and far more adroit in the defence of capitalism'. He additionally observed,

> ... the truth is that economic survival and political power have become so interwoven in Nigerian politics that the ideological factor has almost become irrelevant. Yet, we are daily harangued with party men of all lives parading false political postures while vigorously pursuing the basic Nigerian concept of economic survival.13

The write-up advanced that the 1983 electioneering campaigns proved categorising the Nigerian political stage a cumbrous task. This is all the more slippery with socialist UPN's ally with capitalists and socialists from other parties to form the 'Progressives'. Exonerating Ake's assertions, we detected the Tribune's flashy spread out of its feathers to display their hidden colours no sooner the hussle for leadership suddenly ceased with the intervention of the military. (iii) Competition for market and advertisements means that the power of capital entrenched in the advertising agencies cannot be ruled out in the structure of the newspapers. (iv) Distant, this may appear,

but the various application of physical coercion to get recalcitrant papers to submission, or better put, to order hardly provides any room for defiance from the norm.

We submitted in the first Chapter that the newspapers seem to have been more enchained in the military regimes. Nigeria has known more military governments than democratic ones. And the newspapers' experiences in the military regimes have contributed to, and strengthened their part as ideological instruments for the ruling class. The next Chapter makes an inquiry into how much press freedom could model the papers ideologically, beginning from its universal applicability.

NOTES

1. Armand Mattelart and Seth Siegelaub, Communication and Class Struggle: Capitalism Imperialism 1 (New York: International General, 1979), p.404.

2. "The Scramble for Alternatives", Newswatch, 24 July, 1989, p.14.

3. Ibid.

4. "SAP - Its Origin and Rationale", The Analyst, Dec. 1987, p.14.

5. Ibid.

6. "Finally A Budget for Development", National Concord, 6 Jan. 1986.

7. "Babangida's New Deal I", New Nigerian, 3 Jan. 1986.

8. "Budget '86(1): Overview", Daily Times, 4 Jan. 1986.

9. "Give Peace a Chance", Daily Times, 30 May, 1989.

10. "IBB's Speech to the AFCA", Nigerian Tribune, 6 June, 1989.

11. "Student's Unrest", New Nigerian, 6 June, 1989.

12. Anti-SAP Student Demonstrations", National Concord, 1 June, 1989.

13. Yakubu Mohammed, "The Ideological Hoax," National Concord, 17 July, 1982, p.3.

CHAPTER 5

5(i) GOVERNMENT AND THE PRESS: COOPERATION OR CONFLICT?

That the press is a wielder of strong influence in nation-building is not suspect. What has remained considerably controversial is what relationship it ought to keep up with Government - the custodian of national development. Varying propositions exist on this and they were found to be subject to environment; to preferences in the social means of reproduction. Government/press relationship is being demonstrated here under the freedom of the press. We do not see the two as separable as they both explain each other. By this, it is anticipated that the degree of government interference in the press tells exactly the level of independence of that press, and so does an insubordinate press relay government's place in its affairs. We found the government-press phenomenon a hard nut to split because, as it would be made explicit afterwards, quite a number of intricacies are glued to press freedom as practiced by even the most reputed embracer of a free press.

However, on this issue, there appears a prevalence of two schools of thought with a point of convergence, yet, dissimilar in one respect. The ideas are emanations from the West

and the East respectively, with the West represented by the United States of America and the East, the Soviet Union. The Soviet's perception of an unimpeded press does not run parallel to the U.S.A.'s. Where both thoughts are in contact spells what we see as their concession to the need for the Government and the press to co-exist as mutual cooperate partners defending the basic ideology of the state. And they go asunder because one idea the West's precisely, tends to allow for more conflictual incidences with the other wielder of power - Government, while the East's almost totally rules out such occurrence. But, we marked that the differences between the press and government, often visible in the Western notion of a self-governing press, are not really at the national ideological level. In this sense, the predominant capitalist interests of Western societies do not seem to be in jeopardy in press/government contestations. In fact, the Western press bears an enviable reputation as the most proficient vigilante of its government's activities, thereby, ensuring Government respects, and consistently upholds the constituted ideology revered by the state.

On the basis of this, and more significantly,

in consideration of the arguments purported in this research, illustrated in the third and fourth Chapters, we intend to regard government/press interaction as one of cooperation, not conflict. It is a cooperation that unavoidably generates disagreements now and then, giving the disclosing power of the press bound to collide with the Government's when the latter desperately desires absolute secrecy. Having stated these, it is useful to fairly elaborate the grudges the two contending thoughts hold against each other. In brief, the Soviet finds the Western press' allowance for multiple interests in determining their output unsagacious. They, in particular, maintain that advertisements helplessly intrude on the freedom of the press, as the interests of advertising agencies are not ignorable. And, Enzensberger's assertions may be recollected in which he argued that the press has always been under the influence of capital, and that has limited their obligations to their audiences.[1]

Other socialist writers like Geoffrey Sheridan and Carl Gardner have sternly criticized the role of advertisements in the capitalist press as Enzensberger did, together with what they understood

as the dictation of press turn out by a few individuals who take it their exclusive preserve. In this light they reasoned;

> To a Thomas or a Murdoc (it) is the freedom to appoint the person of his choice, to decide autocratically what shall and shall not reach the eyes of the million of readers. In turn, his subordinates understand the general limits within which to report and trim their copy accordingly. Much of this is unspoken - many journalists share their editors' social and political assumptions and not a lot of 'freedom' is involved in such process. 2

While Sheridan and Gardner believe this of the capitalist press, Anthony Smith, on the opposite side, contended the Soviet's idea of an unbiased press. The whole practice of rigidly restricting the press to the aims of the society and government is obtuse, he posited. He broadly saw this as an infringement on the freedom of the people as well. Juxtaposing the Socialist world's conception with that of the capitalist, Smith claimed;

> The Socialist world shares a different doctrine, though similar practice to that of many capitalist developing society. It functions on the

> assumption that the press must only present information consistent with the society's acknowledged goals. A dull propagandist uniformity envelops the Socialist media.[3]

Smith found the Socialist press' reliance on government directives an unhealthy practice. For him, government ought to be distanced from the press to enable it monitor administrations' activities efficiently and liberate it from being mere tools of regimes. Smith's submission is the back bone of postulations volunteered before him and now by scholars who have endeavoured to examine the press as it exists in the West and have also suggested it as the 'right' relationship between government and the press.

Thus, John Milton stressed the need for the print media to be liberated from oppressive controls by the church or the state - the only two institutions he thought large enough to threaten the freedom of the press.[4] Similarly, Prime Minister Taoiseach of Ireland, speaking on the relationship between the Government and the press to the World Congress of the International Federation of Journalists in Dublin, 1968, advanced that the 'ideal relationship' should indicate a trust worthy partnership, with each treating the other's rights and legitimate

functions with due consideration. Both therefore, must recognise that the preservation of freedom depends on keeping government/press association remote.[5] Sharing this view as well is James Deakin, an American journalist who covered the White House for St. Louis Post Despatch for twenty-five years. He conceded to the separation of the purposes of the press and those of government since they are not the same. Forcing them into 'an artificial and unatural agreement' therefore, is to cause the nation harm.[6] Although press freedom laudably flourishes in Western nations, the U.S.A. epitomising the notion, its existence is not impeccable in these societies.

There appears some inherent historical need of the society, represented by the Government to stipulate boundaries for the press. And Smith's suppositions may provide an aperture through which lighting all nations' inclinations to prescribe for their news industries could be effected. He sums up the question as the indisputable status of information and knowledge in the entire operation of resource allocation. Information, being a sort of social resource of a special kind enables the productive function of other resources. The availability of outstanding information defines

the existence and value of other resources. He added,

> ... Information when treated as a resource, raises automatically the wider question of social allocation and social control since by its nature, information arises from society, ... but has to be allocated to specific interests in order to be exploited. It is thus, like a mineral resource. The problems of privacy, access, commercial privilege, public interest are problems of allocation and priority and value of the kind that every society has had to debate incessantly in history and has now to do so again in this new guise. 7

Besides Smith, Raquel Salinas and Leena Paldan have sought economic and political clearance to government/press purposes that do occasionally lead to them striking against one another. The authors found the realities urging government to lay the border line for the press in economic exigencies. Thus, the many factors stimulating the states' keen stand .. on the distribution of available resources would no longer permit the liberal role of the media. They, however, promptly pointed out that these new disclosures be understood as inconsistencies among sectors of the dominant groups in a society. The hinderances to the

performances of the press, no doubt, partly express themselves in the economic needs registered above. Yet, the economic, simply taken as stated is a sateless explanation to all that obstruct the press from perfectly governing itself. The proposed economic factor could skew the impositions on the freest press in the universe. And, several grounds have been supplied as inducements of a hampered press in the West.

Taking the case of Britain, Sheridan and Gardner convincingly felt her media could be anything but free, magnified by the ownership and control of the mass media by a micro unelected section of the population. The media's concern, therefore, is rendering the economic and ideological values of a similarly unselected minority, the owners of capital, and in other words, the ruling class. The structure of the British press resultantly, inspires a systematic representation in the reporting of the lives and activities of the majority of the population, not excluding an inconsiderable number of significant oppressed minorities. Naturally, its consequential continuity is a process of distortion of information from the mass media and the proffering of a general concession

of a world view that tallies with capitalism and its need to maintain its hegemony. The authors did not disregard the possibility of an unintended conspiracy on the part of the media. For in the opinion of most journalists, editors and proprietors, what they hand over to their audience is sincerely 'objective' and 'natural truth'. It is thus, not an amazement they passionately solicit, just as they complacently claim to keep a free press. Perculiar to the British press in contrast to other European countries' they observed, is the excessive dependence on advertisement revenue. In effect therefore, a large number of newspapers with esteemable circulations, usually leaning towards the left of the political spectrum, have had to fold up having lacked advertisement income. Others in circulation densely possess advertisements and invariably, an increase in the 'implicit influence of advertisers to maintain particular editorial policy'.[9]

Writing in the newsmagazine, Mother Jones under the composition, 'A Visitor in King Ronnie's Court', Jon Snow seemed to have vindicated Sheridan and Gardner. Placing Britain and America side by side, he judged the British Establishment as undertaking an agreement with the press on what

should and should not be transmitted. And unlike America where constitutional provisions readily safe-guard the freedom of expression, legal obstacles in Britain make reporting less aggressive. Enhancing this circumstance is the non-existence of a written constitution, Bill of Rights and the freedom of Information Act. Furthermore, there is a deadly system of liberal law that effectively intimidates the bravest journalist and an official Secrets Act that forbids 'coverage of anything'. The final encroachment on the free flow of information is the 'D Notice' system in which some media Heads 'sit on a committee with government security officials and vet sensitive material deemed a threat to national security before publication'.[10] Britain's discouraging situation was also rigorously articulated by John Thale in screening contributions offered towards checking the growth of monopolistic tendencies in press-control, and fostering the freedom of expression. He closely considered a contributor's iracund assertions strongly refuting Britain's supposedly prevailing independent press when he wrote;

> We claim that from the inside we know more about the freedom of the press than anybody else.

> For years we have watched this freedom being whitted away. We have watched the destruction of great papers. We have watched the combines come in, buying up and killing independent journals, and we have seen the honourable profession of journalism degraded by high finance and big business. Worst of all, as a result of this, we have watched subservience replace judgment, and we are worried.11

Britain runs behind America as the most celebrated inculcator and sustainer of press freedom in the capitalist world. But even America's self-acting press nurses some lacuna in its relationship with the Government. Snow, in the piece already alluded to condemned the American press' unhealthy driftage from its venerable lead in attained insubordinate press. Snow found a retrogression from the pioneering role of reporting dishonesty in government disappointing to observers of the American press. This was in reaction to the lack of investigation into the true condition of the Reagan presidency, particularly in relation to the Iran-gate, the Contragate scandal.[12] Snow's was not a lone voice expressing frustrated expectations in American press occasional want of neutrality. Todd Gittin in the afore-cited Mother Jones disclosed that in reporting international matters, when it pertains the arms race, especially,

the American press is more of a 'megaphone' amplifying 'the noises out of Washington - principally from the President'. The press is also seriously dependent and subservient to the pronouncements of the Chief Cabinet Secretaries, top military officers, powerful members of Congress, and major lobbyists;

> What these powers think important, journalism thinks important. The reporters who cover the White House, the Pentagon and the State Department tend to breathe the same ideological air. Their style may be raffish but their posture is one of insouciant subservience. 13

The officials sought determine the structure the 'key questions take. The reporters consciously limit their questions to inadequacy, and suit their interviewees to the questions designed. Thus, while American journalism may not be simply dismissed as siding with the White House, it significantly does because, reasoned Gitlin, 'even when the media gives modest voice to modest dissent, they still defined issues as the various wings of the establishment define them'; 'that is the rule' even though there are exceptions.[14] He bought the assumption that most media organisations 'are

infinitely more comfortable as stenographers in the laps of the powerful than as watch-dogs howling outside their doors'.[15]

While America delights in a less blemished reputation of sustaining an unbound press than Britain and other developed capitalist nations, the chinks in press liberty, universally englobing all societies in the world; Government's inexorable pursuit to restrain their press appears fitting if Smith's perception is taken as apt. It extensively disentangles the twisting issue of Government/press cooperation which also produces the curtailment of the freedom allowable to the press. He noted the residence of certain forces in the society inevitably propelling what is salient, the instinct for what is relevant for readers and listeners built into the journalistic profession. Because information - flow within a society predominantly determines society's culture, how it preserves itself and relates to its internal groups, societies see the need to control its internal flows of information. The concealed, the 'silences' Smith opined, 'control a society and keep it 'stable' much more than the conscious noise which it generates.'[16] Hence, the entire notion of press freedom is fraught

by inherent paradoxes. And reporters and editors every where understand they cannot freely write exactly what they desire.

The freedom of the press as obtainable in Britain and the U.S.A. have been stressed because we think the Nigerian press identifies well with them in various aspects. Besides, its motive is also to show that while the Nigerian press may display some inclination to subservience to the advertising agencies, like Britain and America, its problems definitely go beyond the intrusion of advertiser's interests. The Nigerian press appears more driven towards acting for the Covernment. Pressure from advertisers is misty, so do findings in this work indicate. Submissions here however, have attempted to unfold that the freedom of the press hardly thrives flawlessly anywhere. Governments all over the world exercise some control over their press. Some go to striking extents to enforce the cooperation between it and the press. In the Soviet Union for instance, what is said to be the most characteristic of the newspaper is the permission for the perpetration of a sole 'scientific' theory in keeping with the Soviet doctrine - Marxism - Leninism.[17] But press restraint is not

a recent development. It is as old as the institution itself. From the moment information and knowledge became a useful resource in the production and allocation of material resources, there equally emerged a necessity to direct and manipulate information in order to attain desired goals.

5(ii) PRESS CONTROL: A UNIVERSAL PHENOMENON

Studying the genesis of barriers to the freedom of the press in Britain, the first in the printing field, Cherry outlined advertising in the press as having initiated press regulation. By Cromwell's time, he expiscated, the pressure for both news and goods consumption, bred by advertisements which was formerly non-existent, caused government some anxiety by the 1960s and 1950s. Government's concern was emblazed by the greater recognition the political values of advertisements had gained. Uneasy fear about monopoly soon led to setting up a surveyor of the press in 1963 which issued licences permitting publishing. Thus, political control, forced selling, and other forms of clogs in the wheel of the press eventually took strong hold. They are not modern phenomena.[18]

In another elaborate exploration of Britain's

case, Steinberge found print-journalism as a mass media an impendent problem for the illiterate ruling elite. The introduction of a licencing system speedily ensued under Henry VIII, decreeing that no 'printing shop' be established in absence of the official 'imprimatur' of a representative of the crown. It was an advancement to the setting up of a stationers company ultimately exercising authoritarian control as well as direct secreening and censorship of all print materials, in particular, the newspapers intended for distribution to the public. Of course, there were remissions in, and objections to this government regulation. John Milton's rigid critique on press restrictions in Areopagetica is one worthy of note. The reign of William and Mary seemed to have ushered in in 1688 some press freedom in England as government restraints diminished.[19]

The violation of the freedom of the press was not exclusive to Britain. Steinberge also portrayed America as having suppressed an independent press. He illustrated that the publisher of the first American Newspaper, Benjamin Harris, who fled England on account of his clash with the authorities over an uncomfortable publication found America, his new settlement, no better than the vicinity he fled. His foremost newspaper to appear in the

colonies in 1690 called, Publick, Occurrences Both Foreign and Domestick continued along anti-catholicism which had been responsible for his problem in England. Because the press was licenced, and Harris was not issued with an official permit to publish, and partly because he was critical of the colonial Government, Publick Occurrences was expelled from business.[20]

Generally, however, noted the author the press continued to operate along political party lines. Andrew Jackson's reign being the most notorious. Jackson was strictly accused of converting Washington Globe to his administration's 'mouth piece'. Harold Innis remarked on this too. He confirmed that Jackson's success was fostered by journalistic corroboration, and the Globe played an indelible role in it. Hence, the Globe has been described as 'the first presidential organ to become an institution of government, and Jackson as the first President to rule through the newspaper press'.[21] With the dawn of the civil war, Lincoln was compelled to work in direct partnership with newspaper editors and he skilfully fashioned means to keep them in check, through, among others, appointing them to 'diplomatic posts! Time and again, therefore, Steinbergestated, newspapers and

other media have been charged with 'corrupting the news', 'slanting their stories" 'harrassing liberal writers' and 'insisting on conservative point of view'. But more important to these is Government's compelling influence on the press as each administration's attitude is critically crucial in maintaining a free press.[22]

Bringing into perspective the freedom of the press in the Third World, Smith, writing under the heading 'Double Standards of Freedom?' indicated that although journalists in the developing world are prepared to struggle for an independent press, the fights may take a long time to come. The vision is tenable, deliberating the centuries of vigorous strives, revolutions fought by Europe, chiefly in demand for a self-governing press.[23] The Third World, he rightly discovered nurtures several views on the role of journalism and the inherited extant practice and doctrines of a competive objective press. Thus in Accra, Ghana, the Essah Committee constituted to look into the conditions of service of journalists did speculate that journalists could only discharge their duty appropriately if government always recognises their just claim to achieve 'public interest' as they see it. Government

behests to journalist to print, hold back publications, abstain from commenting on certain issues or by any means pervert truth are strays. The Committee concluded; 'Unpleasant facts do not disappear by being swept under the carpet. They merely fester'.[24]

Enforcing the argument that developing countries dismally, are battling with a gravely confined press, Smith gave reference to Joe Rodrique's contribution at a conference of the International Press Institute. Rodrique, Editor in Chief of the Nation Group of Newspapers with its headquarters in Nairobi quoted himself when he said,

> I do not believe that in any independent African country, a newspaper editor can say to himself he will operate under the publish and be damned doctrine and expect to get away with it.25

Kenyan's way out of the ideological maze involved 'compromise' and 'eclectism'. By so doing, they compensated all forms of external pesterment. In Africa, West African countries more definitely, where many regimes are undemocratic and majority of the newspapers are under state ownership, Rodrique's estimation is rational. Nigeria is,

in union with African nations that have 'compromise and eclectism deeply entrenched in their press. A November 12, 1981 editorial of the New Nigerian newspaper softly malleated it. While confuting allegations that the newspaper is not competently free of the Federal Government's dictates, the paper warned that 'freedom' is a relative term since,

> It would of course amount to an insult on public intelligence to suggest that any owner of a mass media, whether public or private would foot the bill and retire quietly to let the management publish just about any thing. 26

It went on to justify its propounded view, arguing intelligibly that individuals and Governments own the press for no other reason but to circulate their points of view. It must be considered too that law and order and the society's 'progress' are Government's responsibility. Since not all points of view are conducive to the maintenance of order and progress, a Government that fails to take cognisance of the danger of freedom being turned into libertinage is not respectable. Smith on his part, decided that Third World's press will infinitely be coloured by the press of President

Marcos of the Filipinos, which, working under the martial law furthered his 'particular brand of personal guidance of the nation'. Third World press is one with the guise of Indonesia's under President Suharto which was simply sealed off by Government command during the country's 1978 elections.

Nigeria may not have been exposed to such corporeal circumstances as the cited Filipinos' and Indonesia's. But that is not ruling out the possibility of such occurrences in its entirety where military administrations persist in integrating themselves forcefully in the nation's politics. It was Cherry who suggested that the developing world's press would find serenity with their Governments if they eschew sharp or impulsive criticisms of the Government. This cannot be neglected if they wish to remain in business among others. And its relevance arises from the idea that 'opposition and criticism are things that have to be afforded, for all freedoms are relative to overall social conditions, including that of the press'.[27] Yet, Cherry seems to have jogged, or [illegible] indequately examined the burdens of the African press. His presumptions are credible, but criticisms have proved to be only a fragment of

Government/Press fall-out in most African countries. Nigeria's case is one indeed remarkable.

Smith captured better what obtains in Nigeria as in many other African countries. He noted that,

> Even where journalists willingly subject their craft to the developmental needs of their society, they have, nevertheless, still found themselves at logger-heads with their governments. 28

This is particularly factual with the Nigerian press. Newswatch, for instance, was quite apprehensive about the much canvassed 'development journalism' being the resolution to Government/Press frictions in Nigeria. It argued that proposers of development journalism, having perceived the principal duty of the press in the Third World as one of active support for the development efforts of the Government, tend to be oblivions of the truth that presently in Nigeria, most press and broadcast reports centre on Government activities.[29] What then does the Nigerian Government desire of the Nigerian press which excites it to dexterously clip the wings of the press whenever it feels uncomfortable? If the following Chapter unravels fairly well what appears incomprehensible, Government/Press cooperation illumed in the preceding Chapters would be grounden.

NOTES

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12. Jon Snow, "A Visitor in King Ronnie's Court", Mother Jones, p.42.

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14. Ibid.

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20. Steinberg, p.83.

21. Harold A. Innis, The Bias of Communication (n.p.: University of Toronto Press, 1951), pp.164-165.

22. Steinberg, p.83.

23. Smith, p.149.

24. Smith, p.150.

25. Ibid.

26. "We are Independent", New Nigerian, 12 Nov. 1981.

27. Cherry, p.197.

28. Smith, p.15.

29. "Cry Thy Beloved Press", Newswatch, 19th September, 1988, p.15.

CHAPTER 6

6(i) PRESS FREEDOM IN NIGERIA: THE NIGERIAN PRESS' STRUGGLE FOR ITS INDEPENDENCE

Deliberations on Government/Press dealings in this country are inconclusive. Intermittently, the debate tends to assume broader dimensions, and this is partly becasue some vexatiously insinuate that an unconstrained press is something the Nigerian media must achieve for itself, not pray for. How it ought to successfully accomplish this in military regimes is bedevilled by complexities. If democracy is expected to incite and gradually turn over an unconfined press, reminiscing the press background perplexes ways they could shun intimately serving party benefits. However, press freedom as it relates to Nigeria is perceivable in multiperspectives. This chapter takes on one of the angles and our choice of analysis is meant to furnish the aims of this research.

The Nigerian press, has, for quite some time been engaged in strifes to liberate itself from hinderances to its public services. Its prime encumbrance since the late seventies has proved to be the Government, both at the State and Federal level. The Nigerian Government is universally looked on as an adversary to the press for reasons

that are understandable and for some others that make little or no sense to the desirable goal of national progress. Contemplating Government's relationship with the press, Saidu Shehu, in Hotline newsmagazine established that the adversarial co-existence provides the expected balance of power in the constitution or the decree. The newsmedia moves to challenge the power concentrated in Government whenever it is allowed to serve free of Government control. The remarkable higher speed of news delivery has further enhanced that power since 'early access to accurate information provides a valuable advantage affecting the poltical, economic, or security interest of a group or the nation'.[1] Government, therefore, would not afford, from sheer omission, to ignore the power of the press. The competition in the newsmedia evolves a wide variety of restrictions which impede on the journalist. Thus, journalists and their media are licenced, reporters frequently pestered, prosecuted, killed and news-magazines proscribed. Shehu takes on further, newsprint or advertisements may be refused publishers. Government also readily limits incoming world news and outing domestic news.[2]

The measure of freedom assignable to the Nigerian press is conspicuous in what has come to

symbolise Government/Press relationship as a whole. It abides more in the common recurrence of harrassment of press men by the authorities. These acrimonious experiences tipped the African Concord, are a reflection of 'the severe limitations that assail the journalist in exercising the freedom essential for the attainment of professional fulfilment and the full flowering of the press.'[3] The intended press confinement scans the imperious emphasis on the unpalatable nature of 'offensive reports', not on their truthfulness. Where, therefore, such reports are classed as 'embarrassing', they ought to be interdicted from public consumption, accurate to facts or not. The other issue bordering on the freedom of the press, reckoned the African Concord, deals with the ownership of the newsmedia machinery. It sought answers to the unhealthy ownership status of the media from interviewees among whom was E.A. Ogunde, lecturer in Press Law, Mass Communication Department, University of Lagos. Ogunde thought a government-controlled press scabrous because Government exonerates itself from being 'watched' effectively. As such, the nation can speak of genuine press freedom only when Government relinguishes ownership of mass media

organisations since this contradicts the free market economy Nigeria claims to operate. He rejoined; 'I wonder why a regime that says it wants a free market economy should loath a free market of ideas'.[4]

In another vein, the former Deputy Editor of The Guardian newspaper, Amma Ogan enumerated among others, that the freedom of the press deals with the journalist's social, ethnic and political biases. Journalists are, without saying, quite prejudiced in transmitting knowledge. They misrepresent information conveyed and on the psychological level, they are inhibited from speaking what is true.[5] The African Concord disproved impressions that liken this phenomenon exclusively to the Government-owned press;

> As in the government-owned media, the time-worn dictum 'he who pays the piper dictates the tune' applies as much in the private press. During the Second Republic this was quite common phenomenon. Private newspapers aped the stands of their publishers and led to press wars between some papers representing different political stand points. 6

It found regretable the growing situation where press balk in Nigeria has not only put the chains on journalists but has done same to the ordinary citizen who insists on remaining unnecessarily silent.

Unfortunately, it is a circumstance sealed by the Official Secrets Act which stipulates that the licence to speak, especially on certain issues is a reservation for only a particular cadre of government officials. The majority of Nigerians, hence, maintain a culture of abstinence from comment.

While many agreed entirely with views offered in the Concord, some others waved off the agitation for an independent Nigerian press as absurd. In another survey of individual estimations on special considerations for the press by Newswatch, among those who believed the press as it is today already savours plenty of freedom and requires nothing more is a T.C.I. Onuoha. He was recorded as stating; the press has too much power, 'powers to commit murder through libel... it will be very inappropriate to give them more powers to bury their crimes'.[7] Bola Adeniyi, former columnist with the Nigerian Tribune also thought the clamour for a free press non-essential because 'the Nigerian press is the freest in the world. What journalists should fight this time around is for abrogation of some laws militating against the press'.[8] And in Concord with Adeniyi, Dayo Duyile, acting Director of the Nigerian Institute of Journalism described the

present struggle for a self-governing press as 'frivolous' and 'emotional' and enclosed;

> As far as I am concerned, there is press freedom in this country. What is there now is good enough if journalist themselves are responsible and they practice according to the norms and ethics of the profession. 9

From the above, it is acceptive that the 'freedom' of the press conjures different meanings to different people. And this brings us back to the fact that no concensus has been reached on what precisely, the freedom should entail. What is not obscure is that the Nigerian press is considerably free. But also unfeigned is that Government's unrelenting move to leash the press based on its preferences gets one to wonder just how less obsequious the press is to regimes' directives. When an administration vows to pursue ends vididly crushing the people uncriticised, how does the press venture into spreading the hurts of such goals? What newspaper in the country presently, would bravely draw the undesirables of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) and go unscathe? There does appear to be troubles hunting the press not entrenched in the nation's constitution like Adeniyi and Dayile would absorb. These and those decreed seem historically stitched to the

function of the press - the Nigerian Newspaper specifically. It has been one of Government's favourite ways of enforcing the existing ideology and stabilising the status quo.

Studying some of the mediums through which the press in Nigeria has been entrapped, the African Concord explained that the first legal obstacle came in 1903 with the enactment of the Newspaper Ordinance. The Act directed that newspaper editors print their names at the rear of the newspapers they superintended. The editors were glaringly exposed to all sorts of perils. In 1908, Herbert Macaulay, the reputed nationalist, incurred the anger of the colonial administrator when he published the alleged erroneous practices of Governor Egerton in the Railways. Another Decree was concocted then to check the press. The Seditious Ordinance Act of 1909 was the product, and it forbade publishing Government wrongs because it was a 'criminal offence' to do so. The Act did not neglect to caution that 'truth' was no palliate or justification whatsoever for any such publication. This edict is still in force despite its colonial genesis. Akin Oyebode of the Law Department, University of Lagos, rightly noted in the African Concord that successive regimes have taken shield under it while stifling the press.[10]

The 1962 Official Secrets Acts is said to have migrated from this edict. Here, information about Government, no matter how trivial, are rendered classified. Newbreed and Newswatch magazines fell victims to it in 1978 and 1987 respectively and were proscribed.

Another of these laws which perhaps, is not as famous as some others is the 1961 Defamation Act which considers the naming of a Government official or any one involved in a public event defamatory. But what may be regarded as the most malevolent media constraint is the Seditious Offences Act of 1964, revealed the African Concord. It judged this 'a classical case of refurbishing the obnoxious 1909 ordinance', and one that has claimed more preys than any other. For among others, the Federal Government threatened to legally try leaders of the banned Nigeria Labour Congress under it over the conflict on the removal of oil subsidy.[11]

While the curb on the freedom of the press in Nigeria obviously began in the colonial era, the military Governments have been justly seen as the greater executors of all that curtails press turn out. They may wish their actions to the press be known and appreciated as a prominent part of their

role as the 'corrective regimes' they all claim to be. But Mattelart and Siegelaub chose to fit them in a broader and more intricate global process, where they should be taken as promoters of the capitalist ideology. Thus, to the authors, the 'military state apparatus' is a constituent of the modern 'political, ideological and cultural forms' aimed at a reinforcement of the capitalist system which permits 'bourgeoisie maintenance in power' and 'social control'.[12] The military regimes in Nigeria in this respect, have much in common with the colonial Governments. Their relationship with the press is more or less a fortification of what began in colonial Nigeria. However, we observed that the intrenchment did not take effect immediately Nigeria achieved independence. Government appeared too preoccupied with reuniting a war-torn nation to set boundaries for the press. It rather, was aware the press was a necessary medium for national unity. The press and government therefore, faced a onerous task and a very pressing one too. The newspapers, between 1968 and 1975 commendably assisted the Government in soldering many of the chinks that threatened to cleave the nation infinitely with the civil war. It is in this light Mohammed Wada's inference that

the control of the press by the military regimes during in General Olusegun Obasanjo's military Government would not be faulted. He hinted that two Decrees enacted in this period were Decree No.2 and No.4. Decree 2 empowered the Chief of Staff, Supreme Military Headquarters to detain for three months anyone whose action were judged a threat to state security. Decree 4 was meant to protect public officials against false accusations.[13] Decree 2 has also been called the 'preventive detention Act'.[14] The Newbreed magazine was prohibited publication under it in 1978 and the Newswatch, in 1987. Decree 4 convicted two journalists of The Guardian in 1984; Tunde Thompson and Nduka Irabor, for publishing a report on the posting of Nigerian ambassadors.[15] Although this Decree was repealed by the Babangida administration, the fate of journalists has remained permanently set, due to the existence of Decree No. 2 which still allows the detention of 'offending' journalists without trial.

Newswatch reflected that the most restraining and wearisome point in question in the freedom of the press are the ridiculous laws, not stated in the statute books, but created to manage situations as

they crop up. 'lb this effect, it out].aid the fabrication of an enabling decree in 1970 to b$_a$ck up the outlawed Nowbreed. **And** in 1987, having done same to the Newswatch, the present military Government likewiso, promul fated, live days later, a backing up decree to legitimize the six month proscription order. About those, a respondent remarked;

> Adhoc decrees ... erode not only the power of the press, but the power of a self-governing people. It casts the government in the role of the accuser, the prosecutor and the judge. 16

The London-based Guardian also primly condemned Decree No. *k* in pithy terms;

> Th o pres s h a s rosi gn ed i t s el f to the pronouncements of public men and the government is pre-occupied with incestuous monologues with itself. **And** out of this, what stands out is the impoverishment of the state itself, and the stilling of the very process by which the nation regenerates i tsel f. 17

The Guardian was sounding no alarm if it found Decree No. *k* not befitting to a potential free press Ln Nigeria. Its producers felt otherwise; that the Decree should serve to instil some responsibility in journalists. Thus, defending its 'necessity[1] in

1975, General Obasanjo saw it as simply put into law for,

> Articles and comments in the Press tended to be disatisfying, unbecoming and couched in intemperate language, bordering on rudeness. Constructive remarks and comments can be made without being overbearing, rude and insulting. 18

Whether or not journalists whisked away to detention under the Decree for various write ups have written 'rudely' and 'insultingly' or were merely paying the price for making public what would be prefered kept secret is beyond the scope of this work. But one thing is ascertainable. If the Obasanjo administration convicted pressmen for uncultured publications, successive regimes were (are) not bound to his criteria. They have always freely laid down their own unwritten rules on what is enough to summon journalists for interrogation and detention. For instance, between 1987 and 1988 in particular, the present military government, for countless reasons reprimanded pressmen. Press faults ranged from stories published said to be 'untrue', those the security agents 'did not like' to reports that questioned the claims and actions of the Federal Government. In all these, company executives, managing directors, editors and their numerous

assistants were arrested, questioned, detained or fired. (Newswatch, 14 Sep. 1987, pp.12-16). Some other press executives whose reports failed to go down well with the Covernment had charges that could easily send them to goal heaped on them such as, 'gun running and nefarious activities' (Newswatch, 19 Sep. 1988, pp.10-11). Cartoonists and photographers were not spared from these threats and ruffles. Government persists in ensuring the maximum control of what press lenses and carricatures offer the public that these dance to its tune. (African Concord, 16 Aug. 1988, p.19).

However, while the military regimes are characterised by unceasing harrassment of journalists, detainments over alleged disconcerting publications, proscriptions, relieving journalists of positions in government-owned press in particular, and haunting them in several ways, what seemed to have been aggravated in the Second Republic was dearth of information. Cyril Chuma Okonkwo, writing in the Daily Times on 'The Press and the Legislature' addressed the many attempts made by the Constituent Assembly and other state assemblies to deny the press coverage of assembly sittings because press reports were not favourable to the image of the assemblies.[19]

The struggle for an independent press in Nigeria has, visibly, taken in a number of issues which range from deliberate scarcity of information to the abolishment of extremely severe written and non-written laws. A notable aspect of the struggle which has brought almost no change whatsoever to the status of the press is the establishment of the Nigerian Media Council Decree, first, in 1978, and later, amended in 1988. The Media Council, as an organisation, was constituted to promote the attainment and 'maintenance of the highest professional standards in the Nigeria press'.[20] The Council inclosed the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ); the Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE); and the Newspapers Proprietors Association of Nigeria (NPAN), the lot that also made up the Nigerian Press Organisation (NPO). When the Obasanjo administration proclaimed into law the Nigerian, Press Council Decree 31, constituting the Nigerian Press Council in 1978, its outlined objectives were; (i) Registering persons who wish to practice the profession of journalism; (ii) producing a code of conduct to guide journalists; (iii) dealing with public complaints about the conduct of the press and journalists. These stated objectives were unacceptable to media practitioners for some reasons including the fact

that many media employees were not, and need not be journalist; the composition of the Press Council stipulated in the Decree rigidly favoured the Government; and the Press Council had been authorised powers of a 'Press Court' not only of a media control and 'advisory body'.[21]

The improved Council Decree of 1988, known as the Nigerian Media Council Decree 59 of 1988, was similar to the highly contested legislated one of 1978 in many aspects. The new Decree was assigned to, (i) encourage the achievement and sustenance of the 'highest professional and commercial standards by the Nigerian media'; (ii) insure the defence of 'the rights and privileges of journalists in the lawful performance of their professional duties; (iii) investigate accusations against the media and journalists, and the behaviour of persons or organisations towards the media; (iv) reappraise advances likely to limit the supplementation of information from the media, as well as recommend means to arrest such developments. Again, like the preveningDecree, the amended is besot by deficiencies. The Sunday Concord assessed the principal problems as that which empowers the Media Council to decide who qualifies as a journalist; register sanctioned practioners; debar or delete the names of erring

journalists from the register. This section of the Decree constrains the practice of journalism since contributors to newspapers, magazines, etc. are not all practicing journalists who qualify to register or desire to do so as journalists. But more importantly, contenders of the Decree fear the greatest animation of a Government regulated press where a 'Government-sponsored council' registers and de-registers journalists.

The second point against the new Decree is the refusal to allow media practitioners to establish their own code of professional conduct, rather than have the mode of practice imposed on them by the Council. One strong criticism against the 1978 Decree applies here too. And that is, converting the Council to some 'Media Court', reprimanding and punishing straying journalists, thereby, subjecting journalists to the punitive measures of both the regular law courts and the media examination. There exists the problem of under-representation of practicing journalists in the membership of the Council set in the Decree. And consequently, the vicious circle of Government nominees appointing in turn, subordinate candidates. The other puzzle innate in it is, the Decree's requirement that the

'particulars' of journalists be provided, involving their names, address, qualifications, etc. thus, readily making media men susceptible to dangers from Government agents more definitely. This seems like the polished form of the 1903 colonial Act that directed newspaper journalists to imprint such 'particulars' at the foot of the papers. Therefore, effortlessly throwing displeasing press men into the hands of the colonial administrators.[22]

The Nigerian Media Council Decree No.59 of 1988 will successfully bring about everything but a valuable free press, and that is essentially because it is not non-governmental. Media practitioners and organisations themselves have displayed laxity over what affects them for a very long time. Government, surely, would hardly be inveigled to relinquish the prescriptive role it has relished unchallenged. But this not withstanding, the press needs to rise to the struggle and institute a council with professional considerations deferred by all media men. While the media tackles the task of legislating meaningful laws to regulate its practice, it must address too what seems to constitute a nuisance to the issue of press freedom in Nigeria. It was best expressed by Saidu Shehu when he asked;

> Which is the most fundamental right? The individual's access to diverse views and the individual's capacity to to express views beyond interpersonal conversation; or the collectivity's right to determine what in the best interest of society, the individual shall see, hear, read and be permitted to convey? 23

Also disturbing is resolving whether or not the press ought to entertain the expression of all conflicting views, for the antagonistic interests certainly make journalists partisan and unable to accommodate opposing opinions in their media.[24] Settling these distressing subjects could contribute towards defining the measure of freedom the Nigerian press must reach out for.

6(ii) NIGERIAN PRINT MEDIA: PROTECTING THE NATION'S INTEREST?

Despite the regular sour confrontations between the Government and the print media, resulting in Government's fervent disposition to belt the press tighter, the freedom of the press is ultimately pitched on the 'public interest', 'national interest' pedestal. The compatibility of press/Government motives as demonstrated in chapters three and four may be understood as the synthesis

of the yearnings of both parties to preserve the nation's interest (DTs, February, 2, 1984; NN, November 12, 1981; NT, September 5, 1985; NC, March 3, 1984). Determining and translating the nation's interest has equally secured the disparities between Government and the press. The competing desires are inclined towards deciding what information and knowledge may and may not be disseminated to the public in the interest of the nation. While the media feels responsible enough to predict this, Government does not seem to trust the ability of the press to prudently sift information auguring well for its (Government's) image and set goals. The confrontation may last a long time because of; (i) the indistinctiveness of 'national interest' in defining domestic ends, and (ii) many Government/ Press conflicts cannot be adequately interpreted as 'national interest' questions where the issue at stake is the protection of a Government official.

However, it would help the purpose of this work to clarify what Nigeria's overriding interests are, and we opt for the President's idea since his, more than any other, guides Government decisions. In his contribution to All-Nigeria Conference on Foreign Policy at Kuru, 7th April, 1986, the

President simply stated that National Interest is National Security. He preferred the term 'national security interest' because national interest is 'vague' and 'elastic'; an 'attractive' name yet, 'deceptive'. Walter Lippman's argument on national security formed the basic of his explanation. Thus, a 'nation is secure' where sacrificing its 'core values' is not threatened if it intends to prevent war, and is able to maintain these values if challenged. Concretising further the national security concept, President Babangida drew attention to the many forms it could assume as propounded by Social Scientists. 'Subversion of core values through economic sabotage counterfeiting, drug trafficking, espionage, and cultural subversion' are 'subtle' dangers to national security because they harm national survival. In his own terms therefore, national security interests,

> can be used to refer to such concepts as 'self-preservation', 'self-defence', and even 'survival'. In short, National Security means that the state should survive; It means it should live without serious threat to all values that are regarded as important or vital. 25

The President's notion of 'national interest' or 'national security interest' hardly resolves the ambiguities and vagueness he charged national interest of pungently possessing. And that is because 'self-preservation' and 'survival' are very 'elastic' concepts in themselves and his non-exposition of these terms, even in brief, simply reinstates the flexibility and blurness of the ideas. While nations of the world may accommodate 'national security' as a vitalism to 'survival,' 'national interest' still appears the more treasured expression of decision justification, even in Nigeria. Couloumbis and Wolfe, for example, agreed that the uncertainty of the concept has not deterred its consistent use to 'explain', 'prescribe' and 'predict' national and international behaviour.[26] What has continuously plagued fully grasping the utility of the compound word is catalogued in six questions. Although the authors examined it in relation to 'international behavioural patterns, the questions posed might bring about an annihilation of the obliquity of national interest if settled.

One could ask therefore, 'how do we arrive at a generally acceptable or standardized definition of national interest? What is specifically in the

national interest of a given country and its people at a given time and in regard to a given issue? "Who decides what the priorities of state action are going to be, and when, and how they are to be implemented? How and by whom are enemies defined? How and by whom are friends designated? What is the role of the government when faced with serious internal disagreements regarding national goals and values?'[27] Driving home the manipulative tendencies of national interest concept, Couloumbis and Wolfe exemplified this with several actions of world leaders explained as in the benefit of individual nations.

> ... President Abraham Lincoln argued that civil war would be less painful than the break-up of the Union. Adolf Hitler justified his expanist policies, including a mindless multi-front war in the name of Germany's national interest. Joseph Stalin destroyed or disciplined Russian farmers and other 'anti-Soviet' elements by the millions in the name of Soviet Union's interest. [28]

These divergent and hyper-expanded employment of national interest has called for an analysis of who determines what is advantageous to the nation. On this, the authors reflected on two predominant schools of thought in the field of International

Relations - those convinced national interest can be obtained objectively and rationally, and those who argue that arriving at national interest involves 'a struggle among various subjective views and preferences'. Plato's ideas have informed the former and Aristotle's the latter. For Plato, 'public good' could be reached by 'a few highly learned detached, and fair-minded advisors' possessing 'awesome and unchecked power'. Their decisions regarding the general 'good' would be wise being bereft of 'the yearnings of lesser minds,... selfish and sectarian pressures'.[29] Plato's prescription has served dictatorial governments well, leftist or rightist. Defenders of authoritarianism, thus, hold that one person endowed with strength, wisdom, knowledge and power can make 'good' decisions. Aristotle thought differently. For him, national interest is best achieved through the 'democratic process' where the combination of opposing interest into decisions is arrived at through continual debate by the peoples' representatives at the same time. Couloumbis and Wolfe found Aristotle's approach a historically proven better decision-making process.

A little expatiation has been given to these

concepts in order to set forth the argument that in undemocratic systems, almost always, the 'objective' and 'rational' model is dominant. If our assumption is in order, that clearly leaves the press a futile battle in the envisagement of what is 'good' for the state. But this is not the maxim guiding the analysis of the papers studied here, as it has been shown that as ideological state apparatuses, they buy and circulate the ideals of the ruling body. In so doing, they involuntarily clash with the authorities because, naturally, means of attaining the objectives agreed upon differ. But this does not imply genuine ideological conflicts as already illustrated. We ask if the subservient nature of the papers accrues from the increasing tendency of Government to noose the press, especially in the military regimes, and found the answer in the affirmative. In the military administrations, the newspapers examined did not only proclaim their allegiance to the ideology represented by the Government, they were also lettered alike. This is what we detected the clamp on press freedom achieved. In other words, Government's 'no-go' areas and insistence on having some policies and programmes plausibly covered rather than captiously presented,

got the newspapers technically similar. They, therefore, seem to have been bequeathed with one scrolling and semantic style. Most notable of these is the technique through which the newspapers recoil from stating what is too obvious for comfort. It has become the rule.

Based on the surveyance of the four experimental newspapers, we, in concert with Mattelart and Siegelaub consider the freedom of the press as the freedom of property.[30] The media is majorly owned and controlled by the property-owning class; the bourgeoisie and the petit-bourgeoisie. If the bourgeois class, depicted by the press recommends they present the world as they see it unregulated, we recognise it as an importunate demand by a rich privileged minority to 'freely' pick, enjoin and spread knowledge, guarding their interests, to the majority whose preferences are bound to be subsidiary. Scrutinising the papers revealed that the ideology which preserves the nation has little or no substance in Government/Press disputes. 'What should be disclosed, 'when' and 'how' to disclose information rouse the discords. The print media in Nigeria has plenty of liberty to pass on what ideology it favours. The Nigerian Tribune,

from its inception, had ample opportunity to instruct on its socialist doctrine. The Tribune is still in circulation and to the best of our knowledge, has never been out-lawed, not even on account of its 'leftist' status. The Analyst newsmagazine, famous, not only for its socialist ideals but also for its daring critiques of the Nigerian system is quite regular on the newsstands. Perhaps, existing in a capitalist system means being caught-up in capitalist requirements and contradictions. They are, therefore, bound by the laws in the statute books as well as those yet to be decreed.

However, let it not be forgotten that while the Government may coerce the print media into cooperating with it, the Nigerian media already nurses an inborn concordance with Government; with the system. They would not afford a destabilisation of the process through which their source of livelihood originates. There will be no market and no jobs in chaos. Thus, while they struggle to free themselves from Government-control, the ideological purpose they serve is not endangered. Nigeria has not shown any signs of blotting out the capitalist goals she pursues, imbued in the 'mixed-economy'. This is

the one interest, we believe, the Nigerian print media would always be compelled to 'freely' protect.

NOTES

1. Saidu Shehu, "The Mass Media: Opponents and Threats", Hotline, 18 April 1988, pp. 15-16.

2. Saidu Shehu, "The Mass Media: Opponents and Threats", Hotline, p.16.

3. "Media in the Noose", African Concord, 16 Aug. 1988, p.19.

4. "Media in the Noose", African Concord, p.19.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

7. "The Press as Collosus: Fact or Fallacy?", Newswatch, 14 Sept. 1987, p.12.

8. "The Press as Collusus: Fact or Fallacy?", Newswatch, p.15.

9. Ibid.

10. "Media in the Noose", African Concord, p.21.

11. "Media in the Noose", African Concord, p.22.

12. Armand Mattelart and Seth Siegelaub, Communication and Class Struggle: Capitalism Imperialism I (New York: International General, 1979), p.404.

13. Mohammed Wada, "Class Ideology, and Political Economy as Domestic Sources of Nigerian Foreign Policy", Diss. University of California, 1985, p.66.

14. U. Farouk Mohammed, "The Press and Stability", Daily Times, 2 Feb. 1984, p.3.

15. "Media in the Noose", African Concord, p.22.

16. "The Press as Collosus: Fact or Fallacy?", Newswatch, p.19.

17. Wada, p.66.

18. Ibid.

19. Cyril Chuma Okonkwo, "The Press and the Legislature", Daily Times, 5 June 1980, p.2.

20. Doyin Abiola, "Media decree: Let's Return to British Model", Sunday Concord, 29 April 1990, p.20.

21. Ibid.

22. "Media in the Noose", African Concord, p.21.

23. Saidu Shehu, "The Mass Media: Opponents and Threats", Hotline, p.16.

24. "The Press as Collosus: Fact or Fallacy?", Newswatch, p.19.

25. Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida, "National Interest is National Security", Nigerian Journal of Political Science, Vol.5, Nos.I&II (1987), p.108.

26. Theodore A. Couloumbis and James H. Wolfe, Introduction to International Relations (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1990), p.96.

27. Ibid.

28. Couloumbis and Wolfe, pp.96-97.

29. Couloumbis and Wolfe, pp.97-98.

30. Mattelart and Siegelaub, p.121.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The idea that the print media works under the ideological direction of the state has been the major interest of this study. It has entailed looking at the general consensus on the usefulness of a medium or an institution to link and harmonise the interests of all sectors of the society. It has equally involved illustrating that this stated objective has proved difficult for the Nigerian print media to considerably accomplish because it is overly pushed to serve as a priority, the wishes of the state. The less satisfactory performance of the print media, especially in recent times is increasingly disturbing given the bridge role expected of it from Government's monopoly of the electronic media.

We find the heavily slanted service of the newspapers in favour of the ruling class an invaluable means of stabilising the system. Two reasons are seen as accountable for this tilt. The first tells of the social status of the newspapers which fixes them in the bourgeois class - a class in alliance with the governing class. The second deals with extracting compliance from them through the state apparatus of repression -

the security agents and the prison. Thus, chapters one and two are various analyses of the class relationship between the newspapers and the government. While the first chapter evaluates the class alliance and assesses a remarkable mode of pervading ruling class values, that is, through the instigation of a culture of imitation, the second traces the genesis of media/government association. Findings here reveal that the connection is as old as the birth of the print industry and in Nigeria, it also goes back to the establishment of newspapers in the colonial era. A detailed examination of the Daily Times portrayed the assertion of imperial capitalist interests in many forms; religion, education and advertisement of goods served as adequate channels of spreading alien ideals. These were the values of the ruling class made to flourish in the Nigerian Daily Times as it was called. Inspite of the little alterations here and there in the character of the Daily Times, up to the period of independence and immediately after, the paper maintained a reputation for firmly adhering to the directives of its founders. Today, the Daily Times still largely lives by the recognisable advertisement physiognomy and protection

of government interests as it was in colonial Nigeria. The Iwe Irohin which was purely meant to serve the indigenes of a geographical location in the country also existed to instruct on foreign ideas. Thus, it preached Christianity. It taught geography in relation to Britain and the elementary technics of reading and writing. The Iwe Irohin was obviously an indigenous newspaper specifically designed to circulate the norms of the colonisers.

Chapter two demonstrates as well that politics greatly defined the later objectives of the Nigerian Newspaper just before independence to date. While pre-independence drove them all towards a glaring identical end, post-independence politics left the papers sternly pre-occupied with the various sectional political interests favoured by their proprietors. Without underscoring the commercial aims of the newspapers, politics, nonetheless, constituted the stronger factor for the emergence of many more newspapers. Petty political squabbles soon englobed the private and public newspapers in the Second Republic. But this was no dissemblance to their defence of the basic ideology of the state which we believe represents the fundamental interest of the papers

themselves. Chapters three and four disclose how the Daily Times, New Nigerian, National Concord and Nigerian Tribune are pro-government ideas. The Green Revolution, Strikes and anti-SAP riots offer some proof to the newspapers' furtherance of the prevalent system of reproduction of material resources. Findings here uncover that the dominant sources of attaining this are; (i) a partial coverage of conflicts between government and the people always beneficial to government; (ii) inadequacy of opinions sought from the public; (iii) a biased interpretation of the agitations of the dissatisfied.

These chapters note that government/print media accord does not imply lack of conflicts or disagreements between these two wielders of power. The newspapers examined reveal the differences as merely those among members of the same class over styles of obtaining the agreed upon national goals. The Nigerian Tribune stated this directly in defending its service to the course of the Buhari administration. The others revealed just as much in their presentations of the assessed contensions between government and the citizens. The conflicts between the print media and the governing class were heated up in the

Second Republic for two reasons: (i) democracy allows for wide political debates which authoritarian regimes smother; (ii) the second civilian regime displayed amateurish politicians who played the game of politics with excessive bitterness and used their newspapers as War drums. The arrival of the military in 1984 erased the sectional antagonisms as politicking suddenly ended and the newspapers abasidesly sang unity and cooperation with the new military government. The reasons we found tenable for the hasty shift in the posture of the papers include; (i) the need to deter all political hoaxes aimed at securing votes as there really was no need for political campaigns; (ii) the acknowledgement of the military's monopoly of the authority to decide what political associations and parties are eligible for registration when democracy is permitted to reign; (iii) the scare of the military's resort to physical coercion, unchallenged, in bringing obdurate media men to order.

From 1984 to date the print media has exhibited predictability in analysing national issues. The demise of democracy in 1984, the increasing control of the press by government and the subsequent

passionate debate over press regulation have combined to make press activities highly transparent - too apparently state tools. We argue that in as much as some inherent alliance exist between government and the print media, press harrassments through decrees, the NSOs and the prisons have reinforced their obligations to the ruling class, thereby almost turning them into robots with a negligible sense of independence. However, we do not see the freedom of the press as the freedom to deviate from preserving the ideology nurtured by the state or the ruling class. It is against this background Chapter five briefly scans press control as a universal phenomenon. The chapter chiefly explicates that all nations of the world exercise some measure of control over their press, not excluding the world's freest press. But more importantly, it drives home the idea that even with a total freedom to govern itself, the media is virtually nothing besides an ideological weapon of the system in which it thrives - upholding it under the common term, 'national interest'.

Having established this, the sixth chapter focused on the Nigerian case. It had been observed earlier in chapters three and four that the interests

of the print media and those of government are unified under the words 'national interest' which is alternatively referred to as 'national security interest'. The last chapter tried to validate press impositions that guarantee they are subservient to the goals of the ruling class by viewing some decrees and acts promulgated to check the print media and some efforts made by the media to govern itself. It found that the freedom of the press in Nigeria is yet to be adequately defined, but taking it superficially, it is best described as the freedom of the property-owning class. We understand the struggle as one of the bourgeois class, (both the bourgeoisie proper and the petit-bourgeoisie) to enjoy some monopoly over dictating knowledge passed to the populace - when, and how it is transmitted. It also means a continued relegation of the interests of the masses to a secondary place as it is already since the capitalist interests of this class are bound to supersede others. In essence again therefore, the freedom of the press in Nigeria is the freedom to protect the ideology which informs the nation's mode of existence.

In its duty as an ideological machinery of

the state, the Nigerian print media is fraught by problems that extend beyond government's coercion. Press defects may be comprehended under what Smith simply calls 'dependency'. For the dependent state of the developing world is reflected in the African newspaper. Third World's insistence on the restructuring of the international communication machinery is seen as an aspect of their strive to exercise full control of the process of their economies. The struggle is based on the accusation levelled against the West for cultural domination of the world by its communication resources: 'news collecting resources", the advertising agencies, international newspaper chains and newsprint companies, etc....[1] For Smith, media institutions in the Third World should be assessed within the context of the capitalist system in order to sufficiently grasp their lapses. The rise of the newspaper was a part of capitalism's urgent need to bring the exploited part of the world into a single market; to distribute prices and entrench values.[2] The news agencies emerged from this historical process. The author argued that media organisations in the Third World would begin to be meaningful organs of national development when such institutions could fashion out independent styles and priorities,

eschewing the present 'supportive role' they play to the norms and systems produced outside their environment. Citing Shelton A. Gunaratne, he agreed that media dependency has achieved for the developing world a broadening of the gap between their leaders and the subjects.[3]

Smith's proposals are reasonable to the extent that a system dependent on prescriptions from without its environment ensures that its media lives by the dependent status of its socio-economic processes. While on a highly stretched level the incapabilities of the Nigerian print media may be understood as 'dependency' as expounded by Smith, it may still not easily and entirely explain some difficulties that limit the duties of the press. These frustrations extant in the internal workings of the system itself have been properly articulated by Graham Mylton. In a fairly detailed study of the internal practices of the Nigerian Newspaper, he discovered that the Nigerian journalist, both of the private and state newspapers shies away from stories that are time and money-consuming. Because he lacks the investigative will-power, there is a fidel reliance on the utterances and actions of some individuals in the society. Since the

Nigerian journalist assumes that the freedom of the press is the licence to criticise, investigating facts and fallacies is neglected. Consequently, speculations, rumours and hear-says become the backbone for stories reported.

Mylton chiefly attributed this situation to the undeveloped communication networks in the country. The telephone is poorly ineffective, the postal services are anything but fast. Personally visiting those whose comments are required is less profitable because the possibility of their availability for remarks is almost nil.[4] And where by chance they are accessible for comments, we observed that stated laws and other forms of pesterments on citizens believed to have spoken embarrassingly, more often than not, especially in recent times make them chose not to speak. Again, the Nigerian journalist is compelled to rely on very scanty resources among which is press releases by government officials. Verifying these reports continuously proves difficult to check. The Nigerian Newspaper, therefore, is laden with 'dependency' on external sources and on petit internal resources.

However, to appreciably overcome a majority of these problems, the Nigerian journalist needs to cultivate the spirit of investigation above all. This, no doubt, involves plenty of time and money and a closer relationship with the deprived segment of the population whose interests we believe, are still gravely under-rep Being an ideological apparatus of the state should not imply negligence of the will of those from whom the stat expects compliance and cooperation. In fact, the ideolog purposes of the ruling class would be better served through enabling the citizenry assert and identify their tasks as complementary to those of the state. The anti-S events, for instance, has shown that the media's adheren to a pro-government stand at all times does little to check instability. If these are inclined to the struggle for a free press, the Nigerian print media could serve more responsibly as an ideological state apparatus. However, how willing the Nigerian press is to accomplish these is an entirely different matter.

The newspapers, nonetheless, could entertain more space for public reactions to issues at the Federal, State and Local Government levels. These write ups need not be censored bein the opinions of the writers, except to delete language that is conspicuously uncouth. Publishing them with the names and addresses of the writer

would maintain the credibility of the papers. In this regard, there is also the need to increase the number of letters from readers published. Observations indicate an insignificant allocation to letters in all the newspapers. Some of the papers did not allot as much as ¼ of a page to letters.

News from the rural areas where the majority of the population reside should be given priority if the print media intends to break the trend of being representatives of a minority. These information should cover all aspects of development as it affects the rural people. Pronouncements of the rural elite and their activities should be matched by investigations into what authentically obtains. This would help unconceal virgin problems of these areas.

It is important that government hands off ownership of newspapers especially as the nation moves towards democratic politics. Competition among the papers would consequently, be intensified as they strive for acceptance from a wider public. Government must orient itself to accept in good faith, severe criticisms and judgements by the news media. The courts are there to resolve the problem of libel against government officials where it occurs. Debates and dissentions are a part of the democ

process, the citizenry, the recipients of government activities must air their views and assess those representing it, and it is to the advantage of every government to listen and heed to the views of the people.

Finally, the massmedia should strengthen its efforts to free itself from the clutches of government. The newsmedia, in particular the print, knows better what bars its duty to the people. It is therefore, better placed to create regulations to combat its set backs.

NOTES

1. Anthony Smith, The Geo-Politics of Information (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), p.73.

2. Smith, p.74.

3. Ibid.

4. Graham Mylton, Mass Communication in Africa (London: Edward Arnold (Publishers) Ltd., 1983), pp.125 - 126.

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