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Press Freedom and Political Development in Africa

By Chris W. Ogbondah

Abstract

The primary purpose of this paper is to critically analyze the importance of a free press (print and electronic media) in the political economy of the sub-Saharan African region. The paper argues that a free press is vital in the development of the political economy of the sub-Saharan region. It attempts to demonstrate how a controlled press, such as the African press, is incapable of unearthing graft, fraud, theft, corruption, bribery, embezzlement, smuggling and export-import swindles inherent in the ruling bourgeois class. For, corruption and these other illicit economic ventures by the dominant African bourgeois class have been identified as part of the reasons for the failure of development projects in Africa.

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La Liberté de la Presse et le Développement Politique en Afrique

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Résumé

Le but fondamental de cet exposé est de faire une analyse critique de l'importance d'une presse libre (imprimée ainsi que les mass média électroniques) dans l'économie politique de l'Afrique sub-Saharienne. On y postule qu'une presse libre s'avère un élément crucial, dans le développement de la politique économique de la région sub-Saharienne. Dans la communication suivante, on va tenter de démontrer qu'une presse censurée, telle que la presse africaine, est incapable de dévoiler l'échange des pots-de-vin, la fraude, le vol, la corruption, les paiements illicites, le détournement de fonds, la contrebande, et l'escroquerie liée aux activités de l'exportation et de l'importation, inhérents à la bourgeoisie au pouvoir. Car la corruption et ces entreprises harsadeuses dans l'économie, pratiquées par la bourgeoisie dominante en Afrique, ont été signalées parmi les obstacles qui empêchent la réalisation de certains projets de développement en Afrique.

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Introduction

African leaders argue that given the continent's subservient position in the global economic system, a colonial legacy and the fragility of newly independent African countries, a free press in the Western sense can too easily lead to instability of government to function and into internal chaos (Aggarwala 1977; Mboya 1970 & Sommerlad 1966). Thus, African leaders argue, press control is necessary for national development and political stability.

But the position of this paper is that curbing press freedom is not the panacea for sociopolitical stability and national development. Accountability of the governors to the governed is one of the essential ingredients in social stability and development.

Channeling national resources into development projects to provide pipe-borne water, electricity, health care, education and transportation etc will help bring about social stability and development. The embezzlement and mismanagement of national resources by those in political office is counter productive to social stability and development efforts. This paper does not argue that national development is contingent on establishing a free press. In fact, this point has been made by some scholars, including Howenstine (1991), Nam and Oh (1973) and Lee (1991). But its main argument is that the ability of the press to investigate and unearth embezzlement within the ruling bourgeois class is an important element in stemming down corruption which has been identified as one of the reasons for the failure of communication-for development programmes in Africa. For example, Pratt (1993) concluded that the pervasive corruption, mismanagement, and spoliation by African leadership is among the main reasons for the failure of development programs in Africa. Our argument therefore is that a free press can be a valuable weapon in fighting corruption.

To achieve its purpose, this paper will first review the literature on the role of the media in national development in order to contextualize the importance of a "free" press in the development of the political economy of sub-Saharan Africa. Next, the study will explain the concept, "free press," (press

freedom) because the term means different things to different people. Following that, is a description of some of the major recent attacks on the press aimed to curb its freedom. After that, the paper will make a critical analysis of political corruption in the sub-Saharan region, and show how corruption undermines improvement of the well-being of the masses. It concludes with an analysis of how a mangled and shackled press such as the African press will be incapable of exposing corruption, financial mismanagement, graft and other vices endemic within the ruling African bourgeoisie.

Theoretical Framework

One would expect that a free African press will be in a better place to assist in the development of the political economy of the sub-Saharan African region. This is because a free press is one that is capable of exposing the corruption, graft, ineptitude, bribery, mismanagement and the outright embezzlement of resources meant for national development by those trusted with the conduct of public affairs. What has partly accounted for the disappointing level of development in Africa is the fact that its political leaders mismanage and embezzle the resources that should have been used to improve the level of modernization as well as the overall social and material well-being of the generality of the people. Almost every African leader sees the state as an apparatus for private capital accumulation, a point that is also made by Zuckerman (1986) who said: "The way to make your fortune in Africa is to get into the state power apparatus and stay there" (p. 91).

Therefore, a good portion of the money that should have been used to increase and improve the standard of housing, educational facilities, transportation system, health and medical facilities, agricultural production and productivity etc, ends up in the private pockets and overseas bank accounts of the ruling African bourgeois class. This is why this paper hypothesizes that the ability of the press to expose intended and perceived corruptive behavior of the ruling elite is vital in the political economy of the sub-Saharan region because it could nip corruptive behaviour in the bud. Also,

a free press can help expose the whereabouts of embezzled resources needed for national development. Further, a free press can be useful in the decision-making process of the citizens on how their resources should be utilized for development.

One would also expect a free press to assist in the development of the political economy of the region by exposing mismanagement of development resources, and by pointing out unviable and misconceived development projects. Many a project undertaken by African governments are misguided and misconceived. Parfitt and Riley (1989) noted, for example, that the misconceived development policy by the Zairean government which put an emphasis on expensive and ultimately unproductive prestige projects such as the Maluku Steel Mill and Inga-Shaba powerline are to blame for some of the country's problems.

Also, the building of the 500-room Hotel Intercontinental in Central African Republic's Bangui residence is said to be misconceived by one report (see West Africa, April 18-24, 1994, p. 697). That project is a white elephant today because its undertaking was misconceived and inappropriate in a country where millions of people are malnourished and hungry. The argument being made here is that a controlled press is incapable of criticizing and pointing out the needlessness of misplaced and misconceived development projects. For example, when Peter Ajayi, editor of the *Nigerian Herald*, a government-controlled newspaper, criticized the building of an ultra-modern sports complex in Illorin, Nigeria, in 1977, and pointed out that the money should rather be spent in providing such basic social amenities as pipe-borne water and electricity for the masses, he was quickly demoted as editor of the paper (see Aboaba, 1979; Ekwelie, 1979; Ogbondah, 1986 & 1991; Onyedike, 1979 & 1983).

When the editors of *Society* and *Finance* magazines in Kenya criticized the waste and mismanagement of resources in Kenya by the government, security agents closed down their magazines and the editors went into hiding. Such attacks against the African press incapacitates its ability to expose graft, bribery, mismanagement, corruption and official stealing inherent within Africa's dominant ruling bour-

geoisie. A free press will be more capable of unearthing corruption in the government. A free press will also be capable of criticizing misconceived development projects. In these ways, a free press, more than a controlled press can be more effective in assisting the developmental effort because the embezzlement of money that would have ended up in the private pockets of corrupt government officials can be nipped in the bud or prevented.

Literature Review

Study after study has identified a litany of ways mass media can contribute to national development (see e.g. Bordenave, 1977; Golding, 1974; Schramm, 1976; Sinha, 1986 & Haule, 1984). Studies on the place of media in national development generally argue that a critical role of the mass media is the establishment of a sound and stable political framework in which a proper and congenial social environment is created that in turn promotes the expansion of other sectors of national development (Habte 1983, 1977). Studies in this field flourished in the 1960s with the formulation of the dominant paradigm by Lerner (1958), Schramm, (1964, 1967), Rogers (1962), Rao (1966) etc.

Schramm, (1964), for example, noted that the media can widen horizons i.e. the media can take a person to a hill and show him or her the world and people(s) he has never met. In this way, Schramm, argues, the media are a liberating force because they can break the bonds of distance and isolation, and transport people from a traditional to The Great Society" (p. 127). This role of the media, according to Lerner (1958), helps develop empathy" and psychic mobility" which he said, are fundamental qualities the people of a developing nation must have.

Among other scholars who have written on the role of the media in socioeconomic development are, Dube (1967), Lerner (1967) and Mishra (1971). Patel (1973) observed, for instance, that the press cannot be ignored in national development efforts. He said the media are particularly important because they are expected to play a leading role in inducing rapid change and development in societies along several

interrelated dimensions" (p. 189). Of the perceived role of the press in national development, one writer said: "At the national level, policy-makers in a number of countries are already seeking to ensure that the press is used for the general good (as governments perceive it) - as a tool for mobilizing the masses for development and the task of nation-building" (Righter, 1981, p. 57).

In this respect, Pye (1962, 1963, 1966) and Lauer (1977), for example, highlighted the role of the press in national integration, national unity, national image credibility, modernization of traditional agriculture and social habits. Pye (1966) particularly discussed the role of the media in political modernization, administrative and legal development, political mobilization and participation as well as in building democracy. Of the role of the press in political development, Pye (1966) said:

The communication process thus gives form and structure to the political process by surrounding the politicians on the one hand with the constant reminder that political acts have consequences and that people can have insatiable expectations of politics, and on the other side with the warning that illusions of omnipotence are always dangerous, even among people who have a casual understanding of causality (p. 156).

Coleman (1958), Hachten (1971), Hyde (1975), Idemili (1980), McKintosh (1966), Okonkwo (1976) and Omu (1978) who examined the role of the press in political development in Nigeria concluded that the press played a major part in political transformations that led to Nigeria's independence in 1960. Kasoma (1987), Abuoga and Mutere (1988) made similar conclusions about the role of the press in political development in Zambia and Kenya respectively. Nwosu (1994) succinctly concluded in one study that the newspaper can work along with a nexus of other interpersonal and group communication modes (traditional and modern) in a multi-media scenario to influence people's development-oriented attitudes, actions, and behavior, and thus help to bring about development" (p. 118).

Lee (1986) examined the role of mass media in national development in Nigeria, Guyana, Singapore and Hong Kong and concluded that the media are important in development. But Lee remarked that the media were more successful in

development efforts in Singapore and Hong Kong than in Nigeria and Guyana.

While some scholars, including Pratt (1986), Bofo (1985) Ugboajah (1985) and Morrison (1991, 1993) have highlighted the use of the theatre medium in development, Ainslie (1966) identified the importance of radio in development in Africa. This, Ainslie said, is because villagers depend so much on radio as a bearer of development news, a view that is also shared by Barney (1973), Rampal (1981) and Patel (1973).

One of the areas in which radio can be successfully used to bring about social change is in family planning, according to Shtarkshall and Basker (1985). They came to this conclusion after their study which examined the effectiveness of a series of programmes on Israel's state-owned radio broadcasting system, Kol Yisrael, in family planning. Ogundimu (1991,1994) also made a similar conclusion in separate studies on health education in Nigeria. Ezeokoli (1988) pointed out the role of television in promoting agricultural and health programmes in Nigeria. However, she concluded that television in Nigeria is still very far from attaining its full potential in national development.

Like Ezeokoli (1988), Egbon (1982) also pointed out the importance of television in national development and unity in Nigeria. But Egbon at the same time remarked that mass media alone do not make social and cultural changes to occur. Similarly, Rao (1966) views the role of media in national development with cautious excitement, and draws attention to the constant and cumulative interactions between mass media and national development creating the proper environment for modernization. Even the proponents of the dominant paradigm, including Rogers (1976 & 1978) who wrote about "the passing of the dominant paradigm," are offering alternative models of media linkage with national development. Such linkages are difficult under the best of circumstances, according to Stevenson (1993) who at the same time pointed out that communication alone cannot solve Africa's problems. Stevenson, however, did not discard the importance of the media in the development process. He said the media are a part of the development effort. Like Roa (1966) also, Ascroft (1981) identified problems militating

against the effectiveness of communication in development. According to Ascroft, lack of equitable system for delivering knowledge and skills as well as lack of cooperation of the local people in designing, planning and implementing development projects are some of the problems.

Melkote and Babbili (1985) have also pointed out some of the problems of the research linking media with national development as: a) the type of media messages audience is exposed to; b) the degree to which the audience internalizes development messages, c) the extent of audience's knowledge before being exposed to innovations, d) the receiver's "how-to-know" knowledge. Similar problems are also identified by Melkote (1987 & 1991), Pratt and Manheim (1988), Osia (1987) and Sonaike (1987).

Concept of Press Freedom

This study's main argument is that a free press is important in the development of the political economy of the sub-Saharan African region through its ability expose corruption and official stealing within the ruling bourgeois class. In order to provide a framework to understand the study, the concept, "free press," or rather press freedom, will be defined. This is because even though virtually every constitution in the world has guaranteed freedom of the press, the term has been interpreted differently according to the traditions and needs of each country. This point is also well made by Lowenstein (1966; 1967a; 1967b & 1968) and Chu (1970).

Even among journalists from Africa, Asia and South America, there are differences on perceived concepts of press freedom and the role of the press. For example, an African journalist discussing press freedom at a seminar in Strasbourg declared with the utmost conviction: "It is not a question of the right to dissent, but of the obligation to contribute," while at the same seminar, the director of an international professional organization also from Africa, championing the cause of freedom said: "The prisons are crowded with courageous journalists who are not prepared to accept dictation as to what they may or may not print" (Sommerlad, 1966, p. 139). Their opposing viewpoints are

typical of the diversity of opinion on what press freedom is. This is why a definition of the concept of press freedom is important in this study.

Weaver (1977) defined press freedom as - a) the relative absence of governmental restraints on the media; b) the relative absence of governmental and other restraints on the media; c) the absence of restraints on the media and also the presence of those conditions necessary for the dissemination of a diversity of ideas and opinions to a relatively large audience such as enforced right of access to newspapers and radio stations. Merrill (1974) said that press freedom is basically press autonomy: freedom from outside control in the professional activities of the news media. As far as Merrill is concerned, "maximum journalistic autonomy is the imperative of journalism" (p. 26).

In a cross-national study of press freedom, Nixon (1960, 1965) shed some light on the concept of freedom of the press. He began by accepting the International Press Institute's definition of an authoritarian regime, "one characterized by a permanent censorship or a constant and general control of the press," either by the government or the political group in power (Nixon, 1960, p. 17). He then defined what a free press system is. According to Nixon, a free press system is one in which private owners and independent journalists are free to supply news and opinions to the general public under the statutes of libel and decency which are applicable to everyone and not capable of arbitrary and discriminatory interpretation by the ruling power. In other words, the major criterion is the degree of control normally exercised by any official agency which has the power to interfere with the dissemination and discussion of opinions and information in the press.

Lowenstein (1967) criticized Nixon for not being specific enough in his definition. A better definition of press freedom would identify a "free" as well as a "controlled" press, and define the range of media included in the term, press (See also Lowenstein 1966a, 1968). According to Lowenstein (1967):

A completely free press is one in which newspapers, periodicals, news agencies, books, radio and television have absolute independence and critical ability, except for minimal libel and obscenity laws. A

completely free press has no concentrated ownership, marginal economic units or organized self-regulation...A completely controlled press is one with no independence or critical ability. Under it, newspapers, periodicals, books, news agencies, radio and television are completely controlled directly or indirectly by government, self regulatory bodies or concentrated ownership (p. 45).

A free press is one that is free from government control, according to Weaver, Buddenbaum and Ellen-Faire (1985). These definitions are summarized by Atkey (1969) who argued that freedom of the press is the absence of prior government censorship, and following publication no prosecutions for free expression other than on widely accepted principle of the general law of jurisprudence, and the guarantee of non-interference with lawful circulation. This definition of the concept of press freedom is aptly stated by Schramm, (1967) who in admitting that society itself exerts some controls on the press, contended that controls on the press should rest with ownership and the courts. Even when control of the press is left in the hands of media owners and the courts, Schramm, warned that media owners and the courts must not act irrationally or heavy-handedly. He said:

In general, countries in Western democratic traditions believe that there should be a minimum of control on the press, and that such control as there is should rest with ownership, which we hope will limit their attention to such offences as libel, obscenity, and sedition presenting a clear and present danger (p. 9).

The "clear and present danger" that Schramm made mention of in his definition as well as the guidelines and rationales adopted by the Supreme Court of the United States in establishing some controls on expression are well analyzed by Gilmore and Barron (1979) and Barron (1973).

In an examination of freedom of information as an international problem, Wei (1970) explained that press freedom is: a) The prohibition of government interference with the press in the form of censorship and similar previous restraints; b) The principle that any restrictions on press freedom must be applied or subject to review by the courts, and that courts alone have the right to impose penalties. Such penalties as Schramm, (1967) stated, should be limited to such matters as libel, obscenity and sedition.

To a working journalist, said a Kenyan editor, Ng'weno (1969), press freedom is freedom to cover, report and com-

ment upon such events as he or she considers of interest to the public. Ng'weno added that freedom of the press is freedom of the editor of a newspaper to publish such materials deemed of interest to the public (p. 1). Another African journalist from Nigeria, Tony Momoh, defined press freedom as the right of the people to know, and this has three phases—access to information, processing the information for publication without censorship in any form, and distribution of the end product through sale of the newspaper or magazine, or broadcast of the material without let or hindrance (see *Daily Times*, May 6, 1978, p. 21).

Other scholars who have expounded on the meaning of press freedom include Knight (1968), McCoy (1968), Hobart (1973) Bosmajian (1971), Levy (1963), Meiklejohn (1965) and Chafee (1967). Emerson (1963) noted that there is a link between press freedom and democracy, and added that "suppression of belief, opinion and expression is an affront to the dignity of man, a negation of man's essential nature" (p. 877). In another work, Emerson (1970) reiterated the marriage between press freedom and democracy, and said:

...freedom of expression is essential to provide participation in decision making by all members of society. This is particularly significant for political decisions. Once one accepts the premise of the Declaration of Independence that governments "derive their just powers from the consent of the governed"—it follows that the governed must, in order to exercise their right of consent, have full freedom of expression both in forming individual judgments and in forming the common judgment (p. 7).

This point was amplified by Justice Blackmun in the United States who wrote in one commentary that: "The liberty of the press is indeed essential to the nature of a free state...Every free man has an undoubted right to lay what sentiments he pleases before the public... (p. 504). The relationship between freedom of the press and democracy is also pointed out by Pandit Nehru, the one time Indian Prime Minister who once reminded the All India Newspaper Editors' Conference that: "The freedom of the press is not just a slogan....It is an essential attribute of the democratic process" (U.N. Economic and Social Council, Annual Report on Freedom of Information, 1962/63, p. 37). In making the same point, Gastil (1978) said that press freedom is simply

freedom from any of the various forms of censorship.

Press freedom is the absence of prior restraints and governmental attacks on the press and journalists for expressions of ideas, information and opinions made in the overall interest of the citizens of a society. Press freedom is essential to provide participation for the citizens of a society regarding the utilization and management of their resources for improving the well being of all and sundry.

Mangled and Mauled African Press

Measures utilized to restrict press freedom in Africa include prior censorship, seizure, closure and suspension of publications and media houses. Other measures are arbitrary arrest and detention of journalists, physical torture, murder, imprisonment of journalists, expulsion of foreign correspondents, dismissal and retrenchment of journalists, threats, intimidation etc. Some of the major attempts to restrict freedom of the press in sub-Saharan Africa in the last two years will be reviewed to shed light on the current nature of the problem in the region.

a) Media seizure and closure

In September 1993, for example, authorities in Equatorial Guinea banned the monthly opposition newspaper, *La Verdad*, the only non-governmental publication in the country. The government action followed an official warning in the previous week to members of the political bureau of the Convergence Pour La Democratie Sociale, the (recognized) opposition party which publishes *La Verdad* that the paper would be sanctioned if it did not voluntarily cease publication. The September 18, 1993 edition of the paper carried an article on the paramilitary youth group, the "Ninjas," which the government said contained false information (*Index on Censorship*, October 1993).

Earlier in July that year, the Nigerian government seized about 100,000 copies of *Telnn* in connection with the news magazine's critical commentaries on the annulled June 23, 1993 presidential election. Soon after that, on July 23 that

year, the government vexatiously closed down six media houses: *Abuja Newsday*, *Concord*, *Nigerian Observer*, *The Punch*, *The Sketch* and the Ogun State Broadcasting Corporation. The government explained through the then secretary for information, Uche Chukwumerije, that the action was taken because of the "excesses" of these media which continued "in spite of repeated warnings" (Ogbondah, 1994, p. 158). Notably enough, the January 1994 issue of the magazine was also confiscated by the new Sani Abacha Military junta for publishing an article titled "The return of tyranny: Abacha bares his fangs."

In Kenya, within six days of Daniel arap Moi's election victory in 1993, government security agents impounded several magazines and newspapers, including *Society*, *Finance*, *Economic Review*, *The Nairobi Weekly Observer* and *The People*. Security forces also raided the printing firm of Fotoform and destroyed the printing press which printed the country's independent press.

In March 1992, paramilitary gendarme in Cote d'Ivoire seized all copies of two opposition newspapers, *Le Jeune Democrate* and *L'Oeil du Peuple* for "offending the President" (*IPI Report*, no. 3, 1992, p. 4). The papers criticized the President for failing to punish his Army Chief who, according to an official commission's report, was responsible for the May 1991 army raid on the campus of the University of Abidjan during which soldiers beat up and raped students.

In April 1992, the military junta in Nigeria also closed down the premises of Concord Press at Isolo Industrial Estate in Lagos, just hours after the April 13 edition of the popular weekly news magazine, *African Concord*, hit the streets (*IPI Report*, no. 5, 1992). The Babangida led junta was angry over the cover story of the magazine headlined "Has Babangida given up," which criticized some of the government's economic policies.

On June 14, 1992, twenty plainclothes police officers, acting on Kenyan government order, stormed the headquarters of *Society* magazine. They seized 10,000 copies of issue 17 of the magazine and picked up the entire editorial staff, including its editor and publisher, Pius Nyamora and his wife, Loyce, who is a director of Nyamora Communications,

publishers of the magazine (*IPI Report*. no. 8,1992). The government accused the editor of publishing seditious articles aimed to tarnish the image of President Daniel arap Moi, and the Kenyan government.

Also in June 1992, authorities in Cameroon seized copies of *Le Messager*, Cameroon's best known independent newspaper, and arrested three of its journalists for publishing a cartoon of President Paul Biya. Two other newspapers *La Nouvelle Expression* and *Challenge Hebdo* were also suspended for "having gone on sale without going through the censorship commission." In the following month, authorities in Sierra Leone banned the weekly *New National!* after its editor-in-chief, Vandi Kallon, refused to reveal the source of an article about a delivery of Russian tanks to the country (*Index on Censorship*. September 1992).

b) Detention

Detention and imprisonment of journalists is another measure utilized to curb freedom of expression in the media. This measure serves two purposes: i) It discourages other journalists from disseminating criticisms of the government; ii) It chills and even freezes journalistic expressions at least during the period that the journalist is in detention or prison.

In October 1993 for example, six Sierra Leonian journalists with the independent weekly, *New Breed*, were arrested in connection with an article in the paper that questioned the involvement of the president, Captain Strasser, in an alleged diamond smuggling scheme (*Index on Censorship* October 1993). The journalists were Julius Spenser, Philip Conteh, Mohammed Jal Kamara, Ali Banguda, Mohammed Bangula and Donald John. The article comprised excerpts reprinted from the Swedish daily, *Expression*. And on October 15 that year, Thiamu Bangura, leader of the People's Party; Foday Yumkella, a business dealer in newsprint and Thorlu Yumkella, another businessman, were arrested and held for questioning about whether they had brought copies of the Swedish newspaper into the country.

In September 1993, authorities in Cote d'Ivoire arrested the editor-in-chief of *Bon-Qlr*, Georges Amani and another

journalist, Maxime Wangué, for publishing false news regarding the death of one of a group of 24 students on hunger strike. Earlier in the year also, the director of the weekly *Notre Temps*, Marcel Ette, was arrested and held incommunicado in Ghana where he had been researching a book for the French publisher, L'Harmattan.

In January that same year, the co-founding editor of the newly established weekly *New Express* in Malawi, Felix Phiri, was arrested for carrying "an unauthorized publication." He was returning from Zambia and was carrying preliminary copies of the newspaper whose cover stories criticized the government's treatment of political prisoner Martin Muntali (*Index on Censorship*, April 1993). The paper was due to be launched the same week the editor was arrested.

In Nigeria, government security agents in July 1993, arrested and detained Olayinka Tella, the Abuja bureau chief of *The News*, a weekly magazine. No reasons were given for the government action. Later in August, officers of the state security, SSS, stormed the Wuse district offices of the *Abuja News Day* and whisked off its editor, Emmanuel Udoka; production editor, Victor Effic; copytypist, Mariam Osakwe and a sales officer of the newspaper. Security agents later picked up the paper's editor-in-chief, Bukar Zarma, from his residence in Kaduna and drove him to Abuja where he was detained without explanation for two days. The government action followed the paper's publication in its July 21-27 issue that Deji, the son of M.K.O. Abiola (who aspired to take over political power from president Babangida) and Aisha, Babangida's daughter, may wed.

On February 12, 1992, three journalists of *Le Jeune Democrate* in Cote d'Ivoire -Ignace Dassohire, Emmanuel Kore and Jean Lia were arrested and detained in connection with an editorial in their paper which authorities said was "insulting to the head of state," and inciting the military to revolt (*IPR Report*, no 8, 1992).

In January 1992, authorities in Sierra Leone arrested and jailed the editor of the weekly *New Breed*, George Khoryama, for publishing leaked information of a meeting between leaders of the then All Peoples Congress (APC) and Sierra Leone's police chief, alleging that APC was not ready to

consider elections (*IPI Report*, no. 2, 1992). In the same month, the police in Gabon arrested and detained Professor Malema ("Professor" is his real name), in connection with the publication of a Botswana government "secret" document concerning the economic impact of a labor strike in his newspaper, *Meqi wa Dikqano*. The official Radio Botswana said Malema was detained under the National Security Act.

In the following month, authorities in Rwanda arrested and detained the owner of *Rwanada Rushya*, Andre Kameya, for violating national security and insulting the Rwandan president, Juvenal Habyarimana. Also in February that year, authorities in Equatorial Guinea arrested, tortured and jailed Placido Agbogo and Jose Dorrnsoro, a contributor to the country's first independent newspaper, *La Verdad*, for "insulting the president and disseminating subversive propaganda" (*IPI Report*, no. 4, 1992). Others associated with *La Verdad*, Celestino Obiang, Arsenio Molonga and Jose Nvumba, escaped arrest when they ran to the Spanish embassy to take cover.

In March that year, the editor of *Liberte* in Cote d'Ivoire, Jacques Kacou, was arrested and jailed for publishing an article that accused President Houphouet Boigny of ordering an army raid on University of Abidjan campus in 1991 (*IPI Report*, no. 8, 1992). Also in the same month, Kenyan government authorities stormed the Nation Group's Managing Editor's house and whisked off the editor, Wangethi Mwangi, in connection with an article in his paper about ethnic clashes in the Western Province. The editor was detained at the Nairobi Provincial Criminal Investigation Department. In the same month also, Kenyan authorities arrested and detained two senior editors of *The Standard*. Mitch Odero and Joe Nugi, in connection with the paper's reports on ethnic disturbances (*IPI Report*, no. 4, 1992).

It was for the crime of insulting the President and his family that authorities in Benin, in May 1992 arrested and jailed the editor of the independent magazine, *The Observer*. But in Zaire, it was for publishing an article on Christian demonstration that the editor of *Zair Wetu*, Mbuyi Tsibwana, was arrested and detained.

c) Prior censorship

Prior censorship remains mandatory in many African countries. In Cameroon, for example, despite President Biya's promises of "free expression," publications are subjected to prior censorship by government-appointed censors vested with the onerous responsibility to read and approve the contents of newspapers, including such mundane stories as road accidents. The popular Sunday morning radio programme, "Cameroon Calling," which used to be broadcast live, is now pre-recorded to enable an official board appointed by the Director of Information to censor it. A government directive issued in June 1992, directed that the programme would no longer be broadcast live because it had continued to be used "like a tribunal where, each Sunday, they (staff of the radio) put the government's credibility in question" (*IPI Report*. no. 8, 1992, p. 11). The directive accused journalists at CRT of challenging highly placed state officials and "inciting the population to revolt."

Intimidation, threats and torture of journalists are other forms of attacks on the press. In Malawi, for example, the ruling Malawi Congress Party, constantly intimidates journalists in its efforts to control the dissemination of information—a measure that the party considers crucial in its stranglehold on power.

While covering the birthday celebration of President Hastings Kamuzu Banda in 1992, for example, officials of the ministry of information told a reporter for South Africa Bureau, Hans Peter-Bakker: "If you don't stop taking photographs now, we will stop you permanently." And after his reports were published in South Africa, Peter-Bakker was told: "Don't bother to come back to Malawi" (*IPI Report*. no. 12, 1992, p. 23).

When the editor-in-chief of *Le Tribun du Peuple*, Jean-Pierre Mugabe, published an article critical of the government in the May 1992 issue of his paper, the government threatened to torture him, and the editor went into hiding for months. And in June that year, Antoine Mbrarushimama, director of *Izuba Le Soleil* escaped an assassination attempt by an army personnel (*IPI Report*. no. 9, 1992).

In many instances, security agents have tortured journalists. In August 1993, for example, authorities in Equatorial Guinea arrested and tortured several political commentators, including Francisco Micue and Jose Obama. Three months later, the police threatened that "something" would happen to them if they did not stop criticizing the government (*IPI Report*. no. 10, 1993). Another example was the February 1992 torture of journalists covering an attempted coup in Niger. Bourema Hama, a reporter for the Press Agency of Niger, was one of those severely beaten by security agents. His equipment was also seized.

d) Dismissal and suspension

The dismissal, or suspension, of journalists is another measure utilized to control freedom of expression. In 1993, the Mobutu government in Zaire suspended seven journalists from their posts at the National Radio and Television Company of Zaire (NRTZ) for expressing views critical of the government. The journalists were Charles Kamatanda, Michel Diawe, Leonard Kalala, Silvester Nudungayi and Simplicie Kalunga. Also, the government suspended Charles Wembui and Jean Bidwaya, both of Zaire Television for forming a separate journalists' association, "L'Association Pour Une Press Libre et Democratique" (*IPI Report*. no. 8, 1993, p. 2).

In Nigeria, the managing director of the mostly government-owned *Daily Times*, Yemi Ogunbiyi, was fired from his job early in 1992 for publishing a story in which Nobel Prize winner, Wole Soyinka, criticized the open ballot system of voting introduced by the military government. In January that year, authorities of Benin 20 Television in Cotonou, transferred Hounhakou Mesmin to the production department for announcing the results of an opinion poll commissioned by the independent *La Gazette du Golfe* on the popularity of the government during the evening news on January 19, 1992 (*Index on Censorship*. July 1992). The presenter of the national language (Kirundi) TV news in Burundi was suddenly dragged from the screen in front of viewers for failing to read the full text of a speech by the secretary general of the state's single, ruling party, Uprona,

and for emphasizing opposition views.

In many African countries, journalists are beaten up, threatened, fined, intimidated and harassed in governmental efforts to restrict the right of freedom of expression.

Corruption and Embezzlement of Development Resources

Why is the African press under constant attack by the government? What rationales help explain the control measures placed on the African press? This paper argues that the African press is controlled by the government for the fear that a free press would readily unearth the staggering proportions of graft, ineptitude, lack of accountability as well as the corruption, mismanagement, bribery, roguery and official stealing of the people's resources inherent within the ruling bourgeois class.

This point was also made by the publisher of the *New Arawa* in Uganda, Chris Opio, who said of African officials: "The corrupt ones are trying to cover up their corruption by shutting those papers that criticize them" (*IPI Report*, October-November 1993, p. 51). The editor of Cameroon's *Le Messenger*, Michel Epe, buttressed this point. Said Epe: "Independent papers are an impediment to the government, because they make public certain facts that could obviously reveal more truth, and they shed light on certain practices that have been in existence for a number of years (*West Africa*, Sept. 21-27, 1992, p. 162). One American journalist similarly observed that limitations placed on freedom of expression constitutes part of the methods utilized by leaders in developing countries to stay in power (See *IPI Report*, no. 1, 1988, p. 4).

The extent of corruption in African governments can be put in some perspective with three or four examples. The "ONAFITEX deal" in Zaire is one example. In 1973, the ONAFITEX (Zaire's national textile enterprise) purchased thirty ultra-modern cotton-treating plants in the United States of America for \$7.5 million. At the end of the transaction, members of the Zairean government delegation that made the purchase cornered \$450,000 worth of commissions into their private pockets (George 1988, p.114). In

Zaire, that amount will be sufficient to complete a project that could supply pipe-borne water to the teeming population without water in several villages. Baryart (1994) notes that every official decision affords opportunities for financial gain by government officials. He notes, for example, that "in 1974 the regional commissar of Shaba received \$100,000 a month in prebends, and a salary of \$20,000" (p. 78).

What *Time* magazine once wrote about Zaire's President Mobutu Sese Seko helps put the level of corruption among African leaders in deeper perspective. *Time* said that:

Mobutu's personal fortune, built on a network of private business, pilfering of public resources and, skimming the foreign aid that has flowed into his country, has been estimated at \$5 billion. He has bank accounts in Switzerland and other countries, an apartment on Avenue Foch in Paris, a palatial villa at Cap-Martin on the French Riviera and other residences in Spain, Portugal, Morocco and Senegal (*Time*, Feb. 22, 1993, p. 54).

This assessment of Mobutu Sese Seko is confirmed by Chapin (1986) who filed this report about the Zairean president. Chapin said:

The debt of the country is 5 billion dollars, and coincidentally that is the estimate of how much General Mobutu and his family have stolen from Zaire. He owns no less than seven chateaux in Belgium and France, as well as palatial estates and residences in Spain, Italy and Switzerland. He owns buildings in Ivory Coast, Presidential mansions in each of the country's eight provinces, and a palace in his own province. No one knows how much he has in Swiss banks, and he has exclusive use or ownership of numerous ships, jet planes (including a Boeing 747), at least fifty-one Mercedes, and so on....He also owns shares in every major foreign company in the country, in the banks, and (takes commissions of) 5 per cent of the country's minerals paid to his overseas accounts. Thirty per cent of the country's operating budget flows through the Presidential office with no further accounting (pp. 106-107).

Korner (1991) also noted that: "The value of public resources taken into private ownership by the Mobutu clan and other members of the ruling class can be estimated as roughly equivalent to Zaire's external debt" (p. 231).

The "Jaguar deal" in Nigeria is another example that helps put corruption in African governments in context. This involved a 1983 contract between the Shagari administration and British Aerospace for the supply of Jaguar fighter aircraft at the cost of three hundred million British pounds. Following the overthrow of the Shagari government on De-

ember 31, 1983 by the military regime of Muhammadu Buhari, it was discovered that British Aerospace paid twenty-two million pounds in bribe to top officials of the Nigerian government (*West Africa*, March 26, 1984, p. 691). One international arms dealer, Glanco Partel, once told Italian investigators that some African countries purchase arms solely for the kickbacks they receive from such contracts.

Also, a special tribunal that looked into the activities of the deposed Shagari government in Nigeria revealed that the then Federal Minister for Finance, Victor Masi, among other corrupt practices, received a \$2m-bribe in return for a government guarantee on foreign loan. The tribunal also revealed that the governors of the the then 19 states except Lagos state, improperly enriched themselves with public money. For example, it was found that the governor of the then Anambra state, Jim Nwobodo, stashed \$10m from the state treasury; and the governor of Kano state, Sabo Bakin Zuwo, tucked away \$6m in the ceiling of his house (Ogbon-dah, 1994).

Also, when Gen. Yakubu Gowon was overthrown on July 29, 1975, 23 commissions of inquiry that probed the activities of the regime found ten of Gowon's twelve military governors guilty of abuse of office (Dudley, 1982). During Gowon's regime also, the value of wasted public funds in the then Western state went from 11,143 Naira (about \$17,000) in 1972 to 67,598 Naira in 1973 (Lubeck, 1987). Companies that are unable to pay bribes to top government officials, lose contracts in Nigeria. For example, General Electric and Electronics in U.S.A. lost a \$1.8b contract in the mid 1970s because it refused to give a "dash" (tip) or "kola" in connection with the award of the contract. The contract went to ITT and Siemens of West Germany (*Forbes*, Dec.1, 1976).

The burning of several government buildings in the 1980s further attests to corruption in official quarters in Nigeria. After the overthrow of Shehu Shagari's government in December 1983, the 37-storey Nigerian External Telecommunications (NET) building, the tallest building in Africa and the Accounts section of the Federal Capital Development Authority in Abuja, were all set on fire apparently to conceal illegal and fraudulent activities of government officials (Fa-

lola and Ihonvbere, 1985, p. 1 08). One Nigerian journalist summed up the corrupt nature of Nigerian governments, and said that "the story of governments in Nigeria is largely the story of corruption..." (*Newswatch*, Aug. 25, 1986, p. 11). Writing on the corruptive propensity of government officials in Nigeria, Agbese (1988) said:

The magnitude and prevalence of the various cases of "abuses" and "corruption" in the Nigerian defense procurement process...amply demonstrate that these "abuses" and "corruption" are not aberrations and isolated deviations from the norm. On the contrary, they are the predictable and systematic features of a strategy of private capital accumulation that inordinately relies on the control of the state (p. 285).

Rimmer (1985) noted that: "In good times as well as bad, Nigeria is administered excessively, inefficiently, corruptly, and often ineffectively" (p. 445). Kenya is another African country administered excessively, corruptly and inefficiently. How public resources that could be used for social development is wasted can be seen from the amount of money spent on the presidential entourage. The presidential entourage, press, public relations units, security guards, hangers-on, vehicles etc, costs about a million Kenyan shillings a day i.e. about \$62,000 per day or \$23m a year (George, 1988, p. 93). That amount will be sufficient to provide pipe-borne water to hundreds of thousands of rural dwellers in Kenya.

The findings of the over forty commissions and investigative bodies appointed by the National Liberation Council (NLC) in Ghana, following the overthrow of President Kwame Nkrumah also underscores the depth and breadth of corruption of African governments. The findings of the special commission of inquiry headed by Justice Fred Apaloo revealed that the late Ghanaian president did not only use public money to distribute largesse to his favourites, he also set up special government agencies, such as the National Development Corporation (NADECO), Ltd., the Guinea Press, the Ghana Bottling Company, the National Paper Distribution Organization (NAPADO) etc through which he siphoned public resources into his private coffers.

During the hey days of the late president's administration, properties purchased by the government from a Greek businessman, A.G. Leventis, through NADECO, Ltd., was

deliberately inflated so that \$2.4m could be turned into the president's pocket (Levine, 1975). It was also revealed that "the president corruptly enriched himself with gifts." For example, when one Henry Djaba was under prosecution for fraud allegedly committed in collaboration with officials in the Ministry of Agriculture, he presented Nkrumah with a Mercedes Benz sports car, a bulletproof Mercedes Benz 600, \$50,000 in cash and a \$3,000-glider in the hope for a quashed indictment (Ibid, p. 29).

The setting up of special government agencies for the purpose of siphoning public money into the private pockets of the ruling aristocracy is common in all African countries. Callaghy (1983) noted that Sozacom, the parastatal responsible for marketing copper and cobalt in Zaire, was used to serve this purpose. According to Callaghy, officials used Sozacom's right of access to foreign exchange to make money on the black market. He said about \$1 billion was embezzled in this way by government officials (p. 47).

Hutchful (1979) also observed that between 1970 and 1980, a number of highly placed government officials and senior military officers in Ghana were engaged in a frenzy of corruption which included misuse of import licenses, awarding contracts to their girl-friends and other favorites, and taking dubious loans.

The action of Flight-Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings after coming to power in September 1979 further throws light on the ubiquitous nature of corruption in the country among the Ghanaian bureaucrats and military officers. Rawlings stripped high-ranking military officers of their illegally acquired wealth in the country. He imprisoned a number of them and executed former heads of state Acheampong and Akuffo along with six other senior officers. One writer noted that as a result of official stealing, not even the International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans made to Ghana could improve the living standard of the masses. The writer said: "In the atmosphere of corruption...the loans failed to make any improvements in the living standards of our people....Many of the loans found their way into the pockets of politicians and other officials..." (See *West Africa*, March 15, 1982, p. 750). Therefore, the press is controlled to incapacitate it from

exposing corruption in the government.

It is not that a free press will automatically or single-handedly bring an end to corruption in African governments. But it would help nip corruption in the bud by exposing many of the intended official schemes to embezzle public money. Also, a free press will help provide that check on the ruling bourgeois class which no other institution of the society can provide. In this way, the magnitude of corruption could be reduced. If corruption is partly responsible for the failure of development efforts in Africa as Pratt (1993) and some others have noted, then it can be logically argued that any institution that can help stem corruption is vital in the development of the political economy of the region. This role of the media in development will be significant if it is free to: i) investigate and expose corruption, fraud, theft, illicit economic ventures of all kinds and other official wrong-doings, including smuggling and export-import swindles by the aristocracy; ii) participate in the decision-making process of allocation and utilization of national resources for development.

The Port Authority deal in Sierra Leone can also help shed light on official corruption in Africa. The Port Authority deal involved transactions between Hamburg Port Consulting, the German company managing the Sierra Leone Port Authority, and the then Minister for Transport and Communications, Michael Abdulai. The clandestine agreement signed by the two parties required the German company to pay the minister \$100,000 a year if Hamburg landed the five-year management contract. Under the terms of the agreement also, the German firm was to have paid the minister's dependants the said money if anything had happened to the minister.

The company was awarded the contract in 1987, and it started making the illegal payments. By 1992 when the Momoh government was overthrown in a coup, the minister had received \$500,000, money that was added to the bill presented to the government by the German company (*West Africa*. Aug. 2-8, 1993, p. 1339).

Also, the Beccles-Davies Commission of Inquiry which investigated the activities of the deposed Joseph Saidu Momoh government in April 1992, further learned that of the

32 EC-funded development projects, only six were completed. The rest were either abandoned or not started at all, and the funds were unaccounted for by the government. Another way by which Sierra Leone's ruling aristocracy defrauded the masses was by smuggling quantities of diamonds and agricultural products out of the country. The Finance Minister, Salia Jusu-Sherriff estimated in June 1983 that about 60 per cent of diamond production, and all gold production was smuggled out of the borders (Parfitt and Ripley, 1989, p. 140).

In Niger, a commission of inquiry appointed to investigate corruption in the civilian government overthrown in 1992, also found widespread corruption in the deposed government, resulting in the dismissal of a hundred government officials in June 1992 for various corrupt practices. *West Africa* June 29-July 5, 1992).

Also, following Jean-Bedel Bokassa's ouster from office, it was discovered that the former self-appointed emperor of Central African Republic stole from the state property estimated at CFA 3,143,473,300. While millions of his people suffered from chronic starvation, Bokassa unwittingly used state money that should have been channeled, for example, toward agricultural production to build the 500-room Hotel Intercontinental, a white elephant situated right in the middle of Bangui's residential district (See *West Africa*. April 18-24, 1994, p. 697).

Cases of corruption in French-speaking countries have been analyzed by Dumont (1979) while Greenstone (1979) has described corruption in Kenya and Uganda. Corruption among the ruling bourgeoisie in East Africa is so rampant that members of this class have earned themselves the derisive Swahili name, "Wabenzi" (Jacoby et al, 1977).

In Kenya, to own a Mercedes Benz car is the ultimate goal in life, and top government officials aspire for it even though Nairobi, the national capital has one of the most extensive slums in the world, Mathare.

African leaders see the state as an instrument for private capital accumulation. Therefore, they aspire to get into state power apparatus as a way to make fortune rather than as a way to serve the people: using public resources to improve

the overall material and social well-being of the masses.

Analysis and Conclusion

Africa's social, economic and political problems are enormous, complex and difficult to deal with. There seems to be no one sufficient single blow to the problem. Taken as a whole, Africa's problem is like a jelly fish: it is difficult to nail.

The proponents of the earlier dominant paradigm and countless number of scholars have argued that the mass media can be used to assist in social, economic and political development. Even African leaders believe that the purpose of the press is to assist the government in the development effort (See e.g. Mboya, 1970 and Sommerlad, 1966). Of the role of the African press in the development process, the late President Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana pointed out that:

The truly African revolutionary press does not exist merely for the purpose of enriching its proprietors or entertaining its readers. It is an integral part of our society, with which its purposes are in consonance. Just as in the capitalist countries the press resents and carries out the purpose of capitalism, so in revolutionary Africa our revolutionary African press must present and carry forward our revolutionary purpose (Ainslie, 1966, p. 19).

Of the role of the media in the development process, another African leader, the late President Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt said "the press must be organized to take part in the process of social and economic transformation and to liquidate the interest of privileged groups who were exploiting...the people" (Nasser, 1982, p. 192). How can the press liquidate the interest i.e. the corruptive propensity of the ruling bourgeois class if it is not free? Therefore, it is argued in this paper that for the press to be able to do what the late Egyptian president suggested, it should be free, not mangled, and controlled from exposing corruption. Some scholars, starting from Lerner's (1958) articulation of the dominant paradigm" have proposed models of media linkage and development (See e.g., Haule., 1984 and Pratt and Manheim, 1988; Melkote, 1991).

But this paper argues that mass media alone cannot solve Africa's social, economic and political problems. The ability of the media to engage in constructive criticisms of the

actions of those trusted with public affairs should be an important aspect of the development effort. Therefore, this paper's main thesis is that the media's ability to investigate and unearth corruption, bribery, graft, inefficiency, waste, mismanagement and embezzlement of national resources as well as other vices inherent within the ruling African bourgeois class should be recognized as an important part in the development of the political economy of the sub-Saharan African region. It must not be ignored. It is not that exposing corruption and embezzlement of public resources by the ruling aristocracy will on its own lead to economic development. But exposing corruption can discourage official stealing.

One of the reasons why the Sub-Saharan African region is so economically depressed is because a good portion of resources meant for development have not been utilized for that purpose. Rather, the resources have been embezzled and siphoned into the private pockets of the ruling elite. How can any nation undergo significant development-i.e. the improvement of the material well-being of its citizens through the provision of electricity, pipe-borne water, motorable roads, healthcare, educational facilities, food etc if the political leadership embezzles the resources to be used for that purpose? Examples from two or three countries can be used to explain this point.

Zaire is one. This country's rivers provide a good natural system of transportation and a huge potential source of hydroelectric power. It is rich in natural resources. It has suffered little or no drought. Its farming land is fertile and rich. It has vast deposits of copper, uranium, diamonds, cobalt and other scarce minerals. Zaire posts 68.9 per cent of the world's production of cobalt and 29.3 per cent of the world's production of diamonds. (Onimode, 1988). Despite its vast resources and potential wealth, 80 per cent of Zaireans live in absolute poverty. Real wages are one tenth less than what they used to be at independence. Malnutrition and hunger have become native to the country. Infantile mortality is also high, and Zaire is the fourth poorest nation in the world. Its international debt is \$5 billion - and that is the amount that President Mobutu Sese Seko has embezzled

from the nation's treasury (Korner, 1991).

Government officials who helped buy thirty ultra-modern national textile-treating plants in the U.S.A. in 1973 embezzled \$450,000 by the time the purchase was over (George, 1988, p.114). That amount could have brought pipe water for millions in the rural areas.

If the press is free to engage in the discourse of how to spend public resources, the poverty, malnutrition and diseases may not be as severe as they are today. This is because there is an institution that is ready to speak out against corruption and the wrongful diversion of resources meant for development.

This point can also be explained with an incident between Mobutu and a group of thirteen members of the Zaire Parliament. In December 1980, the group wrote to Mobutu, noting that if even a quarter of the money stolen by government officials were returned from their foreign bank accounts, it would be sufficient to make a significant improvement in Zaire's economy. Mobutu who did not appreciate this advice, arrested and detained the members of parliament (Korner et. al, 1986, p.100). Since then, no member of parliament has thought of making such suggestions about the country's economy again. Likewise, the African press has been mauled in order to incapacitate it from criticizing corruption and embezzlement of resources that should have been used in providing health care, electricity, water, motorable roads, schools, hospitals etc.

It is also the unchecked corruption in Nigeria that is responsible for most of the nation's present social, political and economic problems. Nigeria is blessed with natural resources: rich agricultural soil, tin, ore, uranium, oil and educated manpower in every field of study. During the years of oil boom, 1973-1980, Nigeria earned \$25 billion per annum from petroleum (Ekwe-Ekwe, 1985, p. 624). But unchecked corruption and mismanagement of state resources have resulted in chronic poverty, hunger, disease and other social problems in the country. It was because of corruption in official quarters for example, that no one knew the exact amount of Nigeria's foreign debt at the end of 1983 when

President Shagari was overthrown. Some of the loans were dubiously made, particularly those involving Johnson Mathey Bankers (Parfitt and Riley, 1989).

The role of the media in stemming corruption, official stealing and other vices endemic within the ruling aristocracy is to expose these vices. In order to expose vices, the media ought to be free to do so. For example, *Tell* and *Newswatch* magazines in Nigeria were closed down in January and April 1994 respectively because they published commentaries that criticized the selfish motives of the present military government. In Kenya, following press criticisms of President Daniel arap Moi, security agents impounded several magazines and newspapers, including *The People*, *Society*, *Economic Review*, *Finance*, and *The Nairobi Weekly Observer*.

Sierra Leone, a country the size of Scotland or Austria, has considerable agricultural potential, bauxite, rustle (or titanium dioxide) industrial diamonds and deposits of gem in addition to deposits of iron ore and gold. Yet, the living standard of its citizens is depressing. This is partly because of unchecked corruption and embezzlement of resources needed for modernization and improvement of the well-being of its citizens. When the independent *New Breed* in October 1993 questioned the involvement of the president, Valentine Strasser, in an alleged diamond smuggling scheme, six journalists of the weekly paper were arrested by government security agents. In Nigeria, when the editor of the *Nigerian Herald*, Peter Ajayi, criticized the construction of an ultra-modern stadium in Illorin as a misdirected project because that money could have been spent in providing water, electricity or drainage system for the teeming rural dwellers, he was demoted as editor.

If a press system is constantly mauled and controlled like the African press, its ability to investigate and expose corruption, bribery, mismanagement, waste, embezzlement and other vices in the government will be severely limited. This is why we contend that even though the mass media alone cannot solve Africa's problems, freedom of the press can help stem corruption which has been nailed as one of the factors responsible for the failure of development efforts in the Sub-

Saharan African region.

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