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**HISTORICAL APPRAISAL OF CHIEF OBAFEMI AWOLOWO AND DR NNAMDI AZIKIWE'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO NIGERIA'S JOURNALISM**

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**ABSTRACT:** *Founding fathers of the Nigerian press have made tremendous contributions to journalism practice in the country. This paper takes a look at the contributions of two towering founding fathers of the Nigerian press- Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, from historical research perspective, digging into archival materials from media historians and evidences from the duo major publications: Nigerian Tribune and The West African Pilot respectively. The work which is anchored on the gatekeeping concept of the media has put in proper perspective the contributions of two media icons of the mid-twentieth century Nigeria's journalism for academic and professional scrutiny. Lessons from the professional ups and downs of the probed veteran journalists and their relationship with their audience will, in no small measure, justify the social relevance of the discourse. The study recommends among other things that journalism institutions in the country should identify and teach contributions of the founding fathers of the Nigerian press to enable young journalists have a solid foundation in their profession. The study also recommends among other things that modern day journalists in Nigeria should sustain the fire brand journalism practice of the duo which appears to have gone into extinction.*

**KEYWORDS:** Nigerian press, journalism, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Newspapers

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## **INTRODUCTION**

It is completely and absolutely impossible to discuss in historical terms, the Nigerian press, without laying a foundation of the African experience. Akalugo (2001, p.1) noted that "the emergence of printed word in Africa is closely associated with the coming of the whiteman to the continent." The Portuguese, the Spaniards, the Belgians, the English, the Dutch, the French and the Germans all rushed to Africa for economic, political and religious interests. Sierra Leone, Gold Coast among other countries played critical roles in the birth of West African Press. A renowned media historian, Jones-Quartey traced the history of West African press back to what he described as the "very beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the history of what we call the Anglo-African press."

In English speaking West Africa, journalism began, under official auspices in 1801 in Freetown, with the then Gold Coast settlements, Lagos colony and Gambia following progressively later (Jones-Quartey, <http://digitalised.lib.msu.edu/project/Africa>). Tsumasi (1974, p.499) attested that African owned presses and newspapers made a significant contributions to the development of nationalism in West Africa. The extant literature shows that African newspaper editors and proprietors were frequently involved in political organisations which aimed ultimately to increase African participation in colonial political processes.

Generally, the anti-colonial press in Africa was typified by those newspapers which appeared during the terminal period of colonialism. These included in West Africa, *The Gold Coast Leader*, *The Accra Evening News*, *The West African Pilot*, *The Nigerian Daily Times*, *The Gambia Outlook*, and *Sene-Gambia Reporter*; *The Gambia Weekly News* and the *Sierra Leon Daily Guardian*. These papers were edited by foremost West African journalists, for instance, the *West African Pilot* was edited by Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria and the *Gold Coast Leader* by J.E Casely – Hayford of Ghana (Akalugo, 2001). In Nigeria, the history of mass media dates back to 1859 when the first newspaper ever published in Nigeria emerged. The Reverend gentleman behind this historical experiment in newspapering was an Anglican priest from the Church of England, Reverend Henry Townsend. (Duyile, 2013).

Historically, many people laid the foundation of newspaper press in Nigeria. The likes of Rev. Henry Townsend, Horratio Jackson, Kitoye Ajasa, Duse Mohammed Ali and many others contributed in adding some cubits to the height of Nigerian press. Ibbi (2016) noted that nationalists like Herbert Macaulay, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo among others set up newspapers and later became great icons of leadership in the country whose shoes have remained too big for the feet of modern crops of leaders in the continent to fit in. Omu (1974, p.521) argued that the chief weapon of the nationalist movement in West Africa in the nineteenth and early twentieth century was the newspaper press. He opined that in the absence of political parties which did not emerge on time, “the newspapers were the only significant vehicle of public opinion and medium of political pressure and propaganda.”

Before the independence of many African countries, the African press brought its contributions to bear in media literary and public opinion. A media expert confirmed this development: Between 1880s and 1940s, the region known as British West Africa became dynamic zone of literary and textual experimentation. African – owned newspapers offered local writers numerous opportunities to contribute materials for publication and editors repeatedly defined the press as a vehicle to host public debates rather than simply an organ for communication of news or editorial ideology. (Newell, 2013).

Probing the journalistic of so contributions of me founding members of the Nigerian press would therefore help us to appreciate their writings skills, ideologies, spirits among other things. It will also help us to reconnect the past with the present and create a better journalism future for up-coming journalists in Nigeria. The paper is expected to also fill the existing gap

in terms of bringing the contributions of the veterans of our noble profession in proper perspectives. This discourse therefore investigates the contributions of Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe on Nigeria's journalism.

### **Objectives of the Study**

This study seeks to holistically unearth the journalism contributions of Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe on Nigerian journalism practice. It is set to address the following objectives:

- i. Examine Chief Obafemi Awolowo's contributions to journalism profession in Nigeria.
- ii. Evaluate Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe's contributions to journalism profession in Nigeria.
- iii. Evaluate the implications of the duo's (Chief Awolowo and Dr Azikiwe) contributions to journalism practice in Nigeria.

### **METHODOLOGY**

This study relied on existing information for data collection and analysis. It is a desk research which according to Daramola and Daramola (2011, p.38) is "carried out in the office by reference to organizational records, published data, past research findings or any other sources which do not require face-to-face facts contacts with subjects of research or with representative of other data sources." The study which is based on secondary data, used collecting documents technique of data collection where "the data needed already exist in an accessible form and merely to be found." (Ofotokun, 2000, p.15)

### **Brief profiles of Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe**

This section provides brief profiles of Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe.

#### **Profile of Chief Obafemi Awolowo**

Chief Obafemi Awolowo was born a time when Nigeria was a slave state. Ajuluchukwu in Babatope (1978) described Awolowo as one of the triumvirate of leaders who wrested freedom and independence from the iron grip of imperialism and colonialism. Born at Ikenne, Ogun State in 1909, Awolowo according to Daramola (2013, p.87) "after his primary education, completed other studies at home as a private student" before venturing into law programme. Awolowo worked with *Daily Times* in September 1934 to raise money for his legal studies. Chief Awolowo served his reportorial period under the editorship of Chief C.A Titcombe who he described as an aristocrat, humourist, horse-riding, enthusiast, not only accessible to people of the reporters' level. (Duyile, 2004). Awolowo also wrote for *The Telegraph*, *Daily Service* and *The Comet* of Duse Mohammed Ali. He established his own paper, *The Nigerian Tribune* in 1949. Chief Awolowo was a journalist, lawyer, politician and Premier of the then Western Region of Nigeria. He floated the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) in 1978 and challenged Alhaji Shehu Shagari who contested under the platform of National Party of Nigeria (NPN) but lost the election to the latter. Daramola (2013, p.88) captures the political adventure of Chief Obafemi Awolowo:

Chief Obafemi Awolowo lost his bid to become president of Nigeria on three occasions, 1960, 1979 and 1983. Awolowo led the Western Region government from 1951 to independence, first as Premier of the region and later as leader of the opposition in the parliament. Babatope (1978, p.6) describes Awo as a fighting machine for genuine freedom and a “thinker, builder and planner.” *This Day* (2018) remarked that Awo was “deep, profound, engaging, resourceful, committed, indomitable and clairvoyant.” Awo had his political travails between 1962 and 1965 during the political crisis that engulfed the Western Region. He and his supporters were arrested, tried and jailed for treason. In 1966, the General Yakubu Gowon led administration released Awo from prison and later appointed him Deputy Chairman of the ruling military council and Federal Commissioner for Finance. He died on May 9, 1987 and was buried in his home town, Ikenne, Ogun State, southern Nigeria.

### **Profile of Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe**

Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe from the Ibo tribe in Eastern Nigeria was born in Zungeru, Niger State on November 16, 1904. Duyile (2004, pp.79-80) captured his academic profile:

He had his elementary formal education at CMS Central school, Lagos, Hope Waddell Training Institute, Calabar and later received his university education at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Howard University, Washington and Storer College, all in America. Dr Azikiwe had a diploma in journalism and a degree in Anthropology.

Unlike Chief Obafemi Awolowo who started his journalism career within the country, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe cut the teeth of his journalism career in Baltimore, U.S.A with the “Afro American” weekly newspaper published by John Murphy. This pan Africanist and topflight political philosopher became the Governor-General of Nigeria in 1960 after Nigeria gained independence. A nationalist and radical journalist to the core, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe also worked and became the Editor-in-Chief of *African Morning Post* in Accra, Ghana having joined the paper in 1934. He later returned to Nigeria after his romance with Gold Coast journalism and founded his newspaper, *West African Pilot* on November 22, 1937. This passionate lover of Africa who was widely known as Zik of Africa, is described by Encyclopedia.com as “a staunch defender of his Ibo people, and he helped to end the civil war that oppressed his tribe in the late 1960s.”

Daramola (2013, p.82) noted that “Zik preached and lived as a detribalised Nigerian. Zik narrowly escaped being the Premier of the Western Region. He spoke Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba fluently.” He became the first president (ceremonial) of Nigeria in 1963 and died in May 1996.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This section deals with review of related literature on the subject matter. Review of key concepts and relevant literature are considered here.

#### **Concepts**

The key concept in the work is journalism.

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## **Journalism**

Journalism is the act of documenting and reporting topical events through different communication channels to the audience (viewers, listeners and readers). Folarin (1998, p.2) describes journalism as “the process of gathering, organising and dissemination of information principally through the mass media of newspapers, magazines, radio, television to inform, educate and entertain heterogeneous and scattered audience.” In a similar view, Anaeto and Onabajo (2007, p.1) view journalism as “the art of collecting, producing and presenting information and events through the medium of radio, television, newspapers, Internet or any appropriate medium using words, pictures, graphics, etc.” The contents of journalism according to them are news, features, editorials, public service announcement, documentaries and advertorials. There are three fields of journalism. These are, print journalism, broadcast journalism and online journalism. (Anaeto and Onabajo, 2007). Adedara and Bewaji (2017, p.234) identifies three approaches in dealing with the concept of journalism. These are the sceptical approach, the empirical approach and the normative approach.

On the sceptical approach, they argued that “this is a serious situation in which one is sceptical or absolutely unclear about attempts to define journalism or even what parameters are to be used in defining the profession and practice of journalism.”

Empirically, one may take a careful look at clear examples of journalism over history and note the type of activities in which journalists were engaged, such as: gathering information, editing stories, publishing news and opinions. Then we use these features to provide a definition that separate it from novel writings, story-telling, or editing information for a government database or a publishing house. (Adedara and Bewaji, 2017). The normative approach according to them, is based on an ideal view of journalism as accurately and responsibly informing the publics. A writer who has these skills and these ethical commitment is capable of practicing good (well-crafted, well researched) and ethically responsible journalism. (Adedara and Bewaji, 2017, pp.234 - 235).

## **Theoretical Framework**

This discourse is built on the gatekeeping theory of the press. Through their exploits in journalism, Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe during their time had manned news gates, setting agendas on diverse national issues in Nigeria. Akinfeleye (2007, p. 45) reasoned that the “gatekeeper’s “theory” is not a “theory” in the true sense of the word. Rather, it is a typology, that is to say, a way of looking at something.” McQuail (2005) contends that the term “gatekeeping” has been widely used as a metaphor to describe the process by which selections are made in media work especially decisions regarding whether or not to allow a particular news report to pass through the “GATE” of a news medium into the news channels and, finally, to the general public.

The term “gatekeeper” as reasoned by Nweke (2007,p.2) was “probably, first used by the Austrian psychologists, Kurt Lewin, in 1951 and later in 1958, to describe those personnel who controlled food channels within groups during the World War II.” Later, he argued that the term was used to describe those who controlled the relay of news in the communication

channel. The concept of gatekeeping as advanced by Ishiekwene (2007, p. 12) “suggests that not all information that gets to a newspapers house, for example, can make the news. And not all information that makes the news deserves equal treatment. There is need for someone to stand as a watch, a moral conscience, to filter what gets published, and how.” There lies the job of an editor.

The question at stake now is, who is a gatekeeper? Akpan (2006, p. 77) defines a gatekeeper as “a person who by selecting, changing and rejecting messages can influence the flow of information to a receiver or group of receivers.” The gatekeeper’s choice concerning what information to select and reject according to Akpan (2006, p. 77) is influenced by many variables. These are ethics, economics and competition among the media.

**Ethics** – it is an ethical judgment that determines what is “fair.” Both personal and professional ethics (that is the extent of the gatekeeper’s awareness of his or her beliefs) will influence whether the gatekeeper’s likes or dislikes, attitudes and interests play a part in news selection. In the course of considering the duo’s contribution to Nigerian journalism, the ethical variable in the gatekeeping process was examined.

**Economics** – most mass media in our country are profit making. To this end, advertisers or sponsors may have a major impact on news selection and editorials. It shall be considered if profit making was one of the activating circumstances that led to the establishment of the duo’s papers.

**Competition among the media** – with many media available, competition is likely to raise the overall level of professionalism, thus ensuring a more objective presentation of information. Others are **legal restrictions such as libel, slander, etc** which will affect news selection and dissemination; **deadlines** affect the depth as well as the time available to determine accuracy of news selected; and **the news value** – the intensity of a news item in comparison with others. (For example, if the personality involved in a story is the president, definitely, the gatekeeper will accommodate the story and forego the others). Extant literature on Awolowo and Azikiwe’s journalism practice has proved that the former established *Nigerian Tribune* to “compete” with the latter’s *West African Pilot*.

The news element or judgement is also a critical factor in this theory. In the gatekeeping process of the duo’s journalism, the colonial masters were framed as the enemies as this has raised the ethical issue of news objectivity. Communication experts have further probed the news variable of the gatekeeping concept.

Ijeh (2010, p.112) observes that under gate keeping functions, “news media have to decide what events to admit through the gates of the media on the grounds of newsworthiness and other criteria.” He further explains that “gate keeping” has become necessary because of the quantum of information in news form and media contents garnered by field reporters and other media content sources of media houses, most times, exceed the available news holes and air

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time through which they are to be conveyed to the audience, with or without some form of treatment, based on certain conditions.

Folarin (1998) identifies factors that influence or shape the gatekeeper's work. These include timing; ownership of the medium; management policy; perceived needs and preferences of the audience; gate keeper's perception of reality; views of professional colleagues; advertisers' interest; offerings of competing media houses; available media content; legal considerations; ethical considerations; and ideological orientations.

Gate keeping in Nigeria is at two levels: the external and internal gate keeping. External gate keepers include all individuals and institutions that sufficiently influence media workers in the decision of what to select to present as news to the audience. The internal gatekeeper may be the reporter, editor, cameraman, photographer...(Ijeh 2013, p.111).

Taking the argument further on audience metrics, some scholars (Cohen, 2002 and McManus, 1994) submit that within the journalistic field, the introduction of audience metrics could potentially change how news items are made and ultimately be a deciding factor in the power over the quality of news production. One reasonable fear is that tools allowing news organisations to monitor the audience would be used for economic gain rather than informative needs.

White (1997) opines that since the early days of news media research, the individual journalist has been considered important in shaping the news. This brings about Karsson and Clerwall's (2013) position that news judgment is interesting because it guides the actual gate-keeping process.

Scholars contend that factors such as cultural proximity, level of conflict, the ease with which information can be obtained, reader appeal, democratic relevance and connection to societal elites are also important in news judgment and gate keeping process (Galtung & Rage, 1999; Harcup & O'Neill, 2001; Kocach & Rosenstiehl, 2001).

Since journalists news judgment is unique and is to be considered sacred and opaque knowledge that separate journalists from outsiders (O'Neill & Harcup, 2009; Tuchman, 1972), any changes in the news judgment itself or in journalist integrity in carrying out news judgment may have critical implication for both the news and for the journalistic profession (Karlson and Clerwall, 2013).

The gate keeping concept in this study will enable scholars have better insight into how Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe handled their news judgment in their newspapers and factors that influenced their gate keeping functions. Ijeh (2013, p.111) attests to the fact that "no member of the audience can escape the media news gate keeper. This is because the gate keeper not only selects what to present as news but also gives it some measure of treatment ...the gate keeping theory explains why one news item is handled differently in several media houses and why a news item may find ready acceptance in a media house with great prominence while it may be ignored or downplayed by another media house." This theory is apt for the

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study because of the newsroom politics and internal mechanism that guide the news screening at several levels from the reporter, editor to the publisher.

### **Chief Obafemi Awolowo's contributions to Journalism profession in Nigeria**

Chief Obafemi Awolowo's style of journalism was captured in the maiden edition of the paper in 1947 by its founder, Chief Obafemi Awolowo. (Daramola, 2013). In an article entitled "A Paradox of Freedom", Chief Awolowo defined his journalistic philosophy:

The most potent weapon should be adopted, a frank tongue and pungent pen, a tongue and a pen that will care less of what the opponents might say, how they might feel and will have enough courage to call hypocrisy, humbling tyranny their true names. Such tongue, such a pen will mortify the proud and provoke despotism to repent its ways.

The philosophy was repackaged in the 1970s in what was termed "The Five Dimensions of our Editorial Policy". Daramola (2013, pp.85-86) captured the dimensions: The first dimension believes that a newspaper owes tremendous responsibility to the public it serves and must not compromise such for hope of reward or fear of adverse consequences from any quarter. Secondly, the newspaper is committed only to the constraints imposed by law. Thirdly, the paper will publish pleasant and unpleasant news, regardless of the personalities involved. The fourth dimension is that the *Nigerian Tribune* holds a definite standpoint and the fifth dimension is that the newspaper will from now and the next millennium remain constructive, balance and courageous in its analysis of issues and comments.

Duyile (2011, p.87) argued that the newspaper proprietor may simply disclose in his maiden edition issue why he thought it wise to start the publication but he may not elaborate on his real intentions. It is important therefore to hear from Chief Awolowo himself in order to have an insight of what historically informed his journalistic venture. This position is captured by Duyile (2004, p.79) thus:

As there was no effective vehicle for the rigorous ventilation of suppressed grievances, a journalistic vacuum was thus created by Dr. Azikiwe very cleverly exploited and usefully when he returned to the country in 1937 to establish the *West African Pilot*, which whatever its literary defects, was a fire-eating and aggressive nationalist paper of the highest order, ranking in this regard with the Nigerian *Daily Telegraph* under Ernest Ikoli and the *Lagos Daily News* but much better produced.

From the above statement, it can be inferred that Dr Azikiwe's *West African Pilot* instigated the establishment of *Nigerian Tribune* by Chief Awolowo. Chile and Ende (2006, p.29) confirmed that the setting of *Nigerian Tribune* was a response to the establishment of *West African Pilot* group by Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe. Their views:

As educated Nigerians that had seen life in developed societies, the likes of Azikiwe and Awolowo were not oblivious of the influence which the mass media wield, much as educated Nigerians were unheard as nationalists to chase away the British colonial overloads, they



haboured the desire to assume leadership with the exit of the colonialists. Awolowo felt that Azikiwe was having an advantage with his *West African Pilot* group thus informing the reason to checkmate him with his own group.

The above statement takes us to the connection between politics and media which Ampuja, Roivista and Valiverronen (2014, p.112) argued resonated with current discussion of mediatisation. Torwel (2014) observed that during the colonial rule, educated Nigerians elites used the pen as a tool for journalistic agitation for independence. Jibo (2003) noted that the Nigerian press during the colonial era was well focused and saw its predominant role as educating Nigerians on the ills of colonialism.

Chief Obafemi Awolowo initially ventured into journalism to raise money for his legal profession. However, his dreams were dashed. Duyile (2004, p.102) noted that “his eight months with *Daily Times* fetched him about sixteen pounds at the maximum. His salary was two pounds and two pence per inch per column for every report that Chief Awolowo wrote and got published.” In his book cited by Duyile (2004, p.102), Awolowo gave a detailed description of the economic wretchedness of journalism profession during his time:

Journalism was an unprofitable, frustrating and soul depression career at that time in Nigeria. There was a general but inarticulate contempt for newspapermen, particularly the reporters. They were regarded as floatsam and jetsam of the growing community of Nigerian intelligential: they were seen as people who took to journalism because they were not good in anything else. Journalism was not well paid then as a good job in the civil service or in a mercantile house. Only editors and their immediate assistants could afford to own a bicycle. Even Mr. Ernest Ikoli, the most brilliant and most formidable journalist of the time did not own one: he could not afford it. The editor of the *Nigerian Daily Times*, then the only prosperous newspaper, used a bicycle for a long time. Then he owned a car which was nothing more or less a ramshackle box on four wheels.

Despite the above scenario, Chief Obafemi Awolowo did not give up on journalism. He persisted until he became a media icon. He revealed the secret behind the establishment of *Nigerian Tribune* having been dissatisfied with *Nigerian Daily Times*. “In the midst of my dissatisfaction with the *Nigerian Daily Times*, I entertained the ambition that when I came into my own, I would establish a newspaper which would be livelier and better run than that paper.” (Duyile, 2004).

Beyond the print media, it is also on records that Chief Obafemi Awolowo was one of the strong forces that pushed for the establishment of Western Broadcasting Corporation in 1959 in Ibadan by the government of Western region (Akalugo, 2001, p.20).

### **Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe’s Contributions to Journalism Profession in Nigeria**

In the case of Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe’s *West African Pilot*, pan Africanism was one of the driving forces that led to the establishment of the paper. The paper’s maiden edition launched by the

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proprietor on November 22, 1937 contained *West African Pilot's* philosophy that defined its style. Daramola (2013, p.72) noted:

...the *West African Pilot* is a child of circumstance and we are cognizant of the fate of many child of circumstance in the theatre of world's history. Nevertheless, this new organ of public opinion is dedicated to perform its task in concert with its contemporaries in the spirit of humility and candour and co-operation... consistent with this policy, we shall not scramble to focus the spotlight of public opinion on any issue which affects the destiny of Africa in the light of sincere and honest convictions.

Media historians see Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe's style of journalism in different perspectives. Duyile (2004, p.75) describe the journalism mission of *West African Pilot* as coming into existence to "reinforce the ongoing struggle against colonialism and also provide vehicle for ventilation of the peoples suppressed grievances". Daramola (2013, p.73) added that Zik's journalism "was bold, acrobatic, intensive, sensational and nationalistic in outlook." He noted that Zik introduced a good measure of pictorial journalism, introduced banner headline into Nigerian journalism. *West African Pilot* also brought on board the use of cartoon strips into Nigerian journalism and also carried a gossip column. Daramola (2013, p.77) avers that "the *West African Pilot* introduced another style of news presentation. This time, it was one sentence, one paragraph. This was a deviation from the old style of lengthy, windy sentences of news writing characterised by the Victorian epoch." Zik was a prolific writer and a good poet (Daramola 2013). All these combined together must have sharpened his style of reporting. He was seen to be the master of the language and lover of bombastic English.

There are indications that some places and people may have influenced Zik's love and passion for journalism. Ciboh (2007, p.17) confirmed this development:

Upon his graduation from Lincoln University, Azikiwe returned first to Ghana, where he worked on the *African Morning Post*. He came first to Ghana, because Ghana at this time was more radicalised in terms of "Pan Africanism" than Nigeria. In Ghana, Azikiwe met personalities like Wallace Johnson, a Sierra-Leonean of Marxist inclinations who studied in Paris where he was reputed to have a newspaper called *Negro Worker*.

In a similar direction, Akalugo (2001, p.14) noted that Nnamdi Azikiwe attributed to Thomas Horatio Jackson "his (Zik's) early interest in journalism." Thus, when Azikiwe founded the University of Nigeria Nsukka, a School of Journalism was named after Jackson.

The motto of *West African Pilot* was *Show the Light and the People will Find the way*. Omu (2000). The paper according to Chief Obafemi Awolowo "blossomed in every corner of the country as the champion of the common man...the teacher, the trader, the clerk...it went to the top."(Uche, 1989, p.95). Ciboh (2007, p.21) attributed the success story of *West African Pilot* to some reasons. First, probably because Azikiwe was the first trained Nigerian journalist to own a paper in Nigeria. Secondly, Azikiwe's combative and provocative journalism was the principal source of his fame.

Through the *West African Pilot*, Zik widened what Omu (1978) described as social basis for the profession of journalism in Nigeria. Ndolo (2005, p.42) noted that the paper became the “prototype of modern journalism in today’s Nigeria.” It is important to stress that apart from *West African Pilot*, Azikiwe had other newspapers in his chain. Ndolo (2005, p.42) listed the papers: *Eastern Nigeria Guardian*, established in 1940 at Port Harcourt as the first daily in Eastern Nigeria; *Southern Nigeria Defender*, established at Warri in 1943; *Daily Comet*, established in 1944 at Kano; *Nigerian Spokesman* established in 1945 at Onitsha and *Northern Advocate* established in Jos in 1949.

Dr Azikiwe introduced a feedback mechanism through letters to the editors. Ciboh (2007, p.22) noted that through “this method of feedback, people in their contributions were able to awaken in themselves political consciousness.” Other remarkable features of Azikiwe’s journalism are captured by Ciboh (2007, p.22) thus:

He dosed his newspaper pages with some human interest elements and made his papers unforgettable companions of his readers. Azikiwe introduced certain unique departments in his newspapers such as Gossip Column, Women’s Page, Book Review Column, Short Story and Sport Columns. His readers loved these columns and identified themselves readily with the columns.

### **Implications of Chief Awolowo and Dr Azikiwe’s contributions to Nigerian Journalism practice**

Journalism style can be appreciated in different perspectives. There is style of the time (generational) and individual style. Folayan (2015, pp.193 - 194) provide insight into some journalistic eras in terms of style in the Nigerian media landscape:

Since 1959 when the Nigeria’s first newspaper, *Iwe Irohin* debuted journalist-writers of various shades have emerged to reflect the various generation as they passed by. From the early 1920s to 1959 were the religious advocates who wrote basically from the persuasive point of view. The 1920s and 1960s were the vibrant era of the nationalist journalist-writers (Nnamdi Azikiwe, Ernest Ikoli, Obafemi Awolowo, S.L. Akintola, Peter Enahoro (Peter Pan). The post independent journalist-writers in the country were development-conscious in their writings (we may call them the nation-builders) e.g Lateef Jakande, (John West), Bisi Onabanjo (Ayekooto), Bola Ige (Cicero).

Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe through their journalistic seed in Nigeria have raised different writers who transferred their mantles to younger generations of journalists who found expression in different styles. Duyile (2004, p.80) confirmed that the “products of Zikist journalism later formed the cream of Nigeria’s best editors of the fifties.”

The no-nonsense stance in terms of standard by some modern newspapers in Nigeria can also be traced to Zik’s journalism culture. Duyile (2004, p.78) remarked concerning Zik’s newspaper: The news reporting standard of the newspaper was equally high as any reporter

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who made any speed error on the front page was subsequently surcharged. He would pay two shillings.

For Chief Obafemi Awolowo's brand of journalism, there are many take-away lessons for modern Nigerian journalists. Number one, his paper *Nigerian Tribune* has been able to overcome the "infantility" syndrome (premature death of newspapers) which characterised the Nigerian press family. From 1949 to date, *Nigerian Tribune* is 69 years old despite attacks from different quarters. It is a fine specimen of surviving ideology, philosophy and voice in Nigerian media landscape. Unlike Dr Azikiwe whose paper has a pan African posture, Awo's *Nigerian Tribune* was, and still, a mouth piece for the Yorubas, his people before the generality of Nigerians. Eribo (1997, p.54) reasoned that "Nigerian newspapers appear national in their coverage, but are slanted in favour of ethnic, regional and political interests of owners." The *Nigerian Tribune* was a paper that had such ethno-regional interest and its survival up till today can be attributed to nourishments of such interests. However, on a negative side, the political partisanship of newspapers could be counter-productive to the existence of corporate Nigeria. Jibo (2003) lamented that by over amplifying political differences, the Nigerian press heightened tensions which contributed to the fall of the first republic. Based on this permutation, Torwel (2014, p.34) concludes that "the Nigerian newspaper press hardly serves national and common political interest."

One of the implications is that most Nigerian journalists today are pretending to be discharging their fundamental responsibilities to Nigerians but in reality, they are promoting ethnic and regional interests in their news judgement and style of reporting.

Again, *Nigerian Tribune* also served as a training ground for many Nigerian journalists. Daramola (2013, p.86) commended *Nigerian Tribune* for its fearlessness, nationalistic orientation and patriotism and averred that "for many years the *Nigerian Tribune* served as training ground for many aspiring journalists in Nigeria."

It is remarkably to state that Awolowo and Azikiwe went into partnership to own newspapers jointly under the name Amalgamated Press. Ciboh (2007, p.24) argued that "this partnership was short-lived because of political rivalry between them. Azikiwe was president of Amalgamated press of Nigeria. Both of them were concerned with their parties and personalities."

Awolowo entered into another partnership with Roy Thompson Group, a British-Canadian newspaper conglomerate in 1958. They operated under the platform of Allied Press of Nigeria Limited, APN. The group according to Ciboh (2007, p.24) "bought the *Daily Service* from Nigerian Youth Movement and changed its name to *Daily Express*, and later to a magazine, the *Service Magazine*. The group resurrected and also integrated *Iwe Irohin* as a vernacular publication. The group also improved the management and printing quality of newspapers particularly the *Nigerian Tribune*."

Other members of this group were *Middle Belt Herald*, Jos, the *Northern Star*, Kano, the *Eastern Observer*, Onitsha and *The Advocate*, Uyo. Even though other members of the group have fizzled out of existence, the *Nigerian Tribune* still appear regularly on the newsstands (Chile and Ende, 2006, p.29)

The Allied Press of Nigeria Limited partnership was also short-lived because Awolowo used the papers to promote ethnic and political interest against Thompson's desire. Again, "Thompson did not consider himself making enough profit on his investments. He therefore financially withdrew from the partnership." (Ciboh, 2007, p.25).

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### Chief Awolowo's contributions to Journalism Profession in Nigeria

From the data, we can deduce that Chief Obafemi Awolowo has contributed his quota to Nigerian journalism most especially in the area of newspapering. His major paper, *Nigerian Tribune* which was vocal, aggressive, punchy and pungent (Daramola 2003, p.86) in style was able to survive the storms that lead to premature death of newspapers in Nigeria. Ciboh (2007, p.33) affirmed that "most of these early newspapers had a short life span. Their short life span was due largely to lack of expertise, inadequate financial resources and at most times, due to instability from colonial administrators." It promoted nationalistic cause as Ciboh (2007, p.24) averred that the *Nigerian Tribune* came at the height of Nigerian nationalism. The paper also promoted the cause of the Yorubas, Awo's tribe from South Western Nigeria. According to Chile and Ende (2006, P.30) the *Nigerian Tribune* since inception has remained a highly political newspaper which continually places the interest of the Yoruba nation high in its operations."

The Awo group of newspapers according to findings revamped vernacular journalism and added value to regional journalism. The *Nigerian Tribune* also provided training opportunities for many Nigerian journalists. In other words, it assisted in building human capacity for the Nigerian journalism market. For many years, the *Nigerian Tribune* served as a training ground for many aspiring journalists in Nigeria. (Daramola, 2013, p.86).

It is also on records that Awo influenced the establishment of both radio and television services in Western Nigeria. Chile and Ende (2006, p.38) presented the radio scenario:

The first situation that gave rise to a strong regional radio station was the debate between Chief Awolowo of the Action Group party and the then Governor-General, John Macpherson. Chief Awolowo had publicly declared the Macpherson constitution inoperable. Disgusted by Awolowo's criticisms, General Macpherson made a broadcast on national radio discrediting Awolowo. Awolowo who was on the receiving end sought equal time to reply in vain. Chief Awolowo was furious and accused the NBS of being a tool manipulated by the government. This fuelled the desire by the Western Region to own their radio facilities.

Akalugo (2001, p.20) had earlier laid claim in respect of the establishment of Western Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation in 1959 as contained in the data. We can see the interplay of some gatekeeping elements in Awolowo's journalism. These are Awo's personal and professional ethics of skewing the news in favour of his political and ethnic interests; media economics which has kept *Nigerian Tribune* on the newsstand up till today and the paper's ability to survive competition among other newspapers. Through the gatekeeping process, Awo was not only able to decide which occurrences come to public awareness but was able to influence the ways in which these occurrences were perceived through the kind of editorial treatment given to them.

### **Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe's contributions to Journalism practice in Nigeria**

Available data revealed that Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe through his newspaper fought colonialism and also laid foundation for modern day journalism in Nigeria. In line with the data generated in the study, Azuh (2018) established that the chain newspapers established by Dr. Azikiwe generated biting opposition against the British Colonial rule. He added that the anti-colonial posture of Zik's newspapers contributed to a large extent, the eventual independence of Nigeria in 1960. Ciboh (2007, p.21) also aligned with Azu's perspective when he noted that the "newspaper were established and used as instruments for fighting colonialism and gaining independence for Nigeria."

Findings also revealed that Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe used his *West African Pilot* to promote pan African ideology. Chile and Ende (2006, p.20) remarked that "Zik realised that plural nature of Africa having different cultural aspects and for the fact that literacy level was low among many parts of Africa."

Available data also showed that Zik added value to Nigeria journalism through his style which Daramola (2013, p.73) described as "bold, acrobatic, intensive, sensational and nationalistic in outlook." He also reinforce media literacy by providing feedback mechanism to readers for proper illumination in the market place of ideas. Also notable from data is human interest journalism that Zik introduced for the pleasure of readers.

Daramola (2013, p.77) applauded the introduction of special pages in the *West African Pilot* alongside "political news published with human interest." Zik must be credited with starting the first populous indigenous Nigerian newspaper with readership and a national scope (Daramola, 2013, p.79). Another significant contribution of Dr. Azikiwe to Nigeria journalism is in the area of regional journalism. Daramola (2013, p.78) opined that "the provincial news attracted the interest of the man in the far-away village."

Like Chief Awolowo, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe also journalistically groomed a lot of people based on available data. The remarkable exploits and achievements of the Zik's group of newspapers, not only made Zik one of the founding fathers of nationalism, but also the pathfinder and father of modern journalism. Many renowned journalists served either as reporters or editors with the Zik's group. (Azuh, 2018).

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A one-time nationalist and elder statesman, Chief Anthony Enahoro who was an editor with Zik's newspaper commended the impact of *West African Pilot*:

...here was a novel type of newspaper, catering for the taste of the people...above all edited by the colourful personality with those degrees. The people feel for him. The *Pilot* was made. (Uche 1989, p.95).

Here, we can also see the gatekeeping influence which Zik had on the social, cultural, ethical and political happenings of his time as a journalist and newspaper proprietor.

### **Implications of Chief Awolowo and Dr Azikiwe's contributions to Nigerian Journalistic practice**

A major striking resemblance between Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe's styles of journalism is reflected in the fire brand journalism of their newspapers – *Nigerian Tribune* and *West African Pilot* adopted. Daramola (2013, p.86) affirmed this viewpoint:

Like *West African Pilot* of Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, the *Nigerian Tribune* was vocal, aggressive, punchy and pungent. It never pretended to be friendly with colonial administration. Each time, it came out with thunderous, fearless editorials hitting directly at the colonial masters.

Daramola added that even when Chief Awolowo was sent to prison for treason, the newspaper took to guerrilla journalism, publishing in undersigned places.

It is remarkable to state that both Chief Awolowo and Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe were courageous and fearless journalists who had their education overseas. Both were nationalists who contended with the colonial masters using the power of the pen. Both nationalists left indelible footprints on Nigerian journalist soil through journalism.

Ate (2008) cited by Ate and Ikerodah (2012, p.54) captured the community journalism the community journalism exploits of Chief Awolowo and Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe:

Historically, the late sages, Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe played crucial roles in the establishment of community newspapers in Nigeria. The duo established provincial newspapers which marked the beginning of the recognition of the role of community journalism and national development. The newspapers established by these leading nationalists, sociologically brought into limelight the cultural artefacts and ideo-facts of the rural people in print journalism. They painted the sorry picture of abject poverty of rural dwellers. These papers informed the rural dwellers of great things or issues within their domains and those in cities. Through vernacular newspapers, village dwellers were wooed and mobilised to participate in developmental programmes of their communities, thus engendering social change.

### **CONCLUSION**

This discourse concludes that both Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe had fire brand journalism styles of writing. This is what Daramola (2013, p.86) described as “vocal,

aggressive, punchy and pungent.” Both persons were fearless in their journalism mission. However, there were some differences in the journalism crusade of the duo. Chief Awolowo gave ethnic and regional attention to his news content in the *Nigerian Tribune*. Chile and Ende (2006, p.30) submitted that “the *Nigerian Tribune* since inception has remained a highly political paper that places the interest of the Yoruba nation high in its operation.”

It is gathered that both Chief Awolowo’s *Nigerian Tribune* and Dr. Azikiwe’s *West African Pilot* in terms of news presentation were serious minded and respected newspapers. Awo and Zik also reported rural and regional journalism in their papers. However, in terms of style, Azikiwe adopted yellow journalism style. Daramola (2013, p.77) described Zik’s style as having a good measure of pictorial journalism, introduced banner headline into Nigerian journalism. *West African Pilot* also brought on board the use of cartoon strips into Nigerian journalism and also carried a gossip column. This therefore means that zik is the father of yellow or sensational journalism in Nigeria.

However, Azikiwe placed his premium on national and African news in his *West African Pilot*. This development may not be unconnected with Zik’s earlier journalism practice in Ghana, then known as Gold Coast as reflected in his profile. Chile and Ende (2006, p.19) noted that “Zik also drew his inspiration from one of his political associates, Kwame Nkrumah whom Zik took abode with for sometime.”

### Recommendations

The following recommendations are desirable and inevitable:

- i. It is important that all mass communication and journalism schools or departments in Nigeria should include the journalism exploits of the two media icons – Awolowo and Azikiwe in their curriculum. This development would enable the upcoming journalists in the country to have a solid foundation of the journalism profession.
- ii. Modern day Nigerian journalists should sustain the fire brand styles of journalism used by Chief Awolowo and Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe in fighting socio-political and economic ills in the country.
- iii. Nigerian newspaper proprietors should under study the journalistic philosophy and strategy of Awolowo that has kept his *Nigerian Tribune* on the newsstand close to seven decades.
- iv. Based on the unsuccessful media partnership experience of Awo and Zik, there is need for newspaper proprietors to develop workable media partnership models for the Nigeria’s media ecology.
- v. The vernacular and regional journalism employed during the times of Awolowo and Azikiwe should be resuscitated to enlighten the rural populace.

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