CHAPTER - VIII

BOOK PUBLISHING IN AFRICA

Publishing is an integral part of the intellectual and cultural system of any country. This system includes such diverse elements as book stores, printing establishments, universities, libraries, newspapers, radio, television, cinema etc. In some countries, the intellectual system is highly complex and includes a dense assertion of institutions and agencies with large mass audiences. In others, the system is rudimentary and limited to a small educated minority. There is also an international aspect to the intellectual system which includes the import and export of books and other mass media, copyright arrangements, and translations. Publishing is only a small part of the intellectual system in most nations, particularly those which are highly industrialized and have a variety of accessible alternatives to books. Publishing is part of a complex system of institutions and relationship which are
rapidly changing in a world of speedy technological development.

Thus, our overriding concern is with books. Since we are primarily concerned with intellectual or knowledge distribution systems, our forces will be mainly on scholarly books. Volumes which contribute to the total store of knowledge. Although books are no longer the only means of advancing the high culture of a society, they remain central to the development and distribution of knowledge. Books are one of the most important means of intellectual communication and continue to be at the centre of the intellectual 'system' of various societies. This is perhaps even more true of nation which are not as technologically advanced as the United States.

Books are not published in a vacuum. Publishing is affected directly by many social, economic and political elements, and by both national and international conditions and trends. The publishing firm is bounded by the physical constraints of production and distribution - for example, labour and transportation, availability of outlets, printing presses and the cost of paper.

The publisher is also greatly affected by broader social conditions. The nature of the educational system, the condition of libraries and other book purchasing institutions, the rate of literacy in the population and
accessibility of alternative media all influence publishing. Publishing is vitally important to the intellectual systems, but it is only a part of a complex network.

"The educational system is a key consumer of printed materials. In the United States, at least 30 per cent go to libraries, and many libraries are connected with schools and colleges. Elementary and secondary school texts alone account for 16 per cent of book sales."¹ In many developing countries, the proportion of books sold to educational institutions is even higher, because relatively few individuals can afford to purchase books and channels of retail book distribution are generally inadequate. In recent years, a university enrolment have risen dramatically in most countries, the market for textbooks at the post-secondary level is also having brisk activity in publishing.

Little is known of the ways in which textbooks are selected, or about their authors. For the most part, textbooks are not written by the most outstanding authors and although publishing houses often place considerable editorial stress on producing well-written and saleable textbooks, standards in many countries, including the United States, are not outstanding by high.² In fact,

many textbooks are commissioned by publishers. They identify areas of current curricular demands or to present books which are centered around new teaching materials because more sales are involved. They solicit authors to prepare texts in academically popular fields where materials are lacking. Libraries constitute another key market for books.

In many other countries, where textbook production is less competitive or in the hands of centralized agencies, books are often less responsive to changing needs. In many of the developing countries, and of course in the Socialist countries, textbook publishing is in the hands of government agencies, which have control over both decisions about what is published and the means of production.

The rate of literacy in a society is a key variable with regard to publishing while most industrialized nations have nearly universal literacy and levels of schooling quite high, these countries are in a minority in the world. Low literacy rates characterize many Third World Nations. Furthermore, even the minority of individuals who are literate often cannot afford to purchase books. Consequently, book sales are limited, and the publishing enterprise is constricted. In a sense, publishers are serving only the tiny minority of their population that is literate and can afford to buy books. A small audience means small and
expansive editions, high costs means books are available to fewer people. As a result of these factors, the growth of publishing in developing countries has been slow and intellectual life, the educational system, and other elements of society have suffered.

In addition to literacy, language is often an important issue in publishing. While seldom considered in such linguistically homogenous nations as the United States, Britain, France or West Germany, language is a key intellectual, educational and even political problem in many countries particularly acute in the Third World. Some countries have competing languages which are used by large minorities of the population.

Another aspect of the language problem concerns Third World countries which continue to use a European language for educational, scientific and often commercial purposes despite the fact that this language is spoken by only a small minority of the total population. For education and publishing, the continuous use of a 'foreign' language which is known by only a small proportion of the population necessarily limits the circulation of books and circumscribes the market considerably. Typically, books about politics, science and technology, other intellectual subjects continue to be written in the European language even after some changes in the linguistic situation begin.
to occur. Despite the coming of independence and a sense of nationalism in most Third World countries, reliance on written materials in European languages continues to be widespread.

Publishing has an important international context. Publishers, particularly in the industrialized nations which use a 'world' language, export large quantities of books. Books are also frequently translated from one language to another. The transmission of written materials is a key aspect of intellectual life and the availability of books to an international audience is a key element in the international circulation of ideas and technology. Questions of access of books, of the costs of obtaining permission to translate books, of copyright of commercial arrangements across frontiers are all important to publishers and indirectly to intellectual life.

The printed word is a key to the creation and diffusion of knowledge, to the maintenance of an active intellectual life and to the development of advanced technology. While other media such as film and television have had an impact throughout the world, their importance is perhaps less in the Third World, and books journals therefore hold greater sway. Despite low (but increasing) rates of literacy, books play a key role in providing training and skills needed for modern technology and
education. Books are not the sole artifact of a culture, but they are among the elements of a modern society. As one observer has put it:

"To establish an indigenous publishing house is an act of liberation and therefore, a necessity because it breaks the control, indeed the monopoly, which the white races have had over world literature, for which reason they have controlled the mind of the African."

The production and distribution of books is controlled by publishers. They not only make ideas available to a public but in many ways share in deciding which ideas well emerge into the arena of public discourse. They are, in a sense, 'gatekeepers' of knowledge and culture.

Although publishing is a complex enterprise, producing everything from scientific treatise to comic books, this study is only concerned with the role of publishing in the creation and diffusion of pure and applied knowledge.

The nature of the 'book hunger', as Barker and Escarpit have recently called it, can be seen in the fact that the 34 industrialised countries, with only 30% of the world's population, produced 81% of the book titles.

While it is difficult to define exactly what goes into a viable publishing enterprise, and there are substantial differences between countries, it is possible to outline some of the precondition for the emergence of a strong book industry.
(i) A sufficiently large base of effective literacy.

(ii) A mass educational system which makes use of the printed word.

(iii) A modern white collar class which feels that books are important and has sufficient purchasing power.

(iv) Adequate availability of printing paper.

(v) Adequate printing equipment.

(vi) Professional skilled in publishing.

(vii) Ancillary skills such as editorial and writing abilities.

(viii) Commercial distribution and promotion networks of professional standard.

(ix) Adequate long-term capital.

(x) Government policies which are conscious of the importance of books.

A nation need not fulfil all of these conditions to have a flourishing publishing house, but many of them must be met. Publishing is a complex undertaking which is very dependent on the social, intellectual, economic and political milieu in which it exists.

The Unesco constitution states, "since wars begin in the mind of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed. Books constitute one of the major defences of peace because of their enormous influences in creating an intellectual climate of friendship and mutual understanding."

We live in an environment which is forever changing
and placing new demands on society. We witness growing intra and international tensions. If we are to meet these challenges in a way that will result in improving the quality of life for everyone, then we must learn to communicate effectively internationally with people of different cultures, religions, political ideologies and social and economical levels of development. Books offer one of the most effective means of communication.

Thomas Carlyle wrote, "all that mankind has done, gained, or been, it is lying as in magic preservation in the pages of books. They are the chosen possession of men." And another noted Scholar wrote, "The book is the best of companions. In all circumstances it remains the most faithful counsellor. When you travel it is your guide. It breaks the solitude multiplies acquaintances and points out the route to follow."

Publishing is the result of certain conditions, both developing and developed nations will need to do certain things before publishing can develop and grow. As regards developing nations.

(i) They must provide adequate funds in their national budgets for the training of teachers and the acquisition of teaching materials.

(ii) They must provide schooling to all their young people.

(iii) They must encourage intellectuals to acquire writing skills so that teaching materials will be tailor-made to meet local conditions and culture.

(iv) They must provide incentives for authors by allowing them freedom to express individual creativity and by recognizing and safeguarding the legal and moral rights of indigenous and foreign authors.

(v) They must provide incentives for foreign publishers to share their publishing expertise. One effective way is to permit foreign publishers to establish publishing subsidiaries while allowing them to retain a percentage of ownership sufficient to justify the financial and human investments.

(vi) They must assist in the development of book marketing and distribution channels. Such assistance include the construction of libraries, the training of librarians and marketing specialists, special reduced postal and transportation rates for cultural, educational and scientific materials.

Mr. James Stewart of the Asia Foundation recently wrote, "at the minimum, libraries provide the facilities where in compulsory education system graduates and adults who have gone through reading courses can maintain their hard-won literacy."

(vii) They must encourage the development of an infrastructure for the manufacturing of books. This includes the training of technicians, low cost loans for the purchase and for import of equipment, the elimination of import tariffs and the availability of paper and other materials.

(viii) They must embark on the régional programme to train translators so that the abundant availability of foreign knowledge can be translated into vernacular languages particularly in those disciplines where indigenous authorship is found wanting.

(ix) They must develop educational programmes and reading materials for functional illiterates.
They must encourage young people who have acquired elementary and middle-school training to continue reading by providing reading materials suited to their level of comprehension and at prices they can afford.

While a substantial percentage of the population of a country is acquiring the ability and desire to read, attention must be given to the development of publishing expertise.

In this regard, the meeting of experts on book development in Africa was held at Accra, Ghana, from 13 to 19 February 1968. His Excellency Dr. Modjaben Dowuona, Commissioner for Education of the Government of Ghana, in a message of welcome, declared that educational and social progress cannot endure without the stimulus that comes from reading. In spite of the vast natural resources of Africa, he said, Africa can progress and develop only with knowledge, the knowledge that can be gained through books. Noting that African governments could do a great deal to encourage book production, Dr. Dowuona emphasized the role of libraries, bookshops, mass media and cheap editions in spreading the book reading habit.

A statement by Mr. Robert Gardiner, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, was read on his behalf by Mr. S.I. Edokpayi, Head, Manpower and Training Section of the ECA. The message stated that an adequate supply of books could contribute to social and economic progress, as well as to education. He said that the book industry could form an integral part of
national development and called for training programmes to assure these qualitative and quantitative requirements. Finally, the Executive Secretary's Message urged a cooperative effort on an international and multinational as well as regional basis to cope with these problems.

Speaking on behalf of the Director-General of Unesco, Mr. Tor Gjesdal, Assistant Director-General in-charge of Communication, observed that the meeting had been convened in order to examine the problems of book development in relation to overall economic and social progress in Africa. Although great possibilities now exist to increase the supply of books, this "book revolution" had not yet attained its full potentiality in Africa. It was essential to start a concerted attack on the double problem of ensuring books for education and of building sound domestic publishing industries.

Under the auspices of UNESCO, a meeting of experts on book development in Africa was held at Accra in February 1968. The conference offered five points as guidelines for the establishment of priorities for book development planning. The first two of these points were:

1. Authors of educational and cultural books should as far as possible be Africans.

2. The first languages to be promoted should be African languages.

It was also recommended at this meeting that National Book Development Councils should be established in African
countries.

With a view to implementing these recommendations, the Sierra Leone government requested the services of a UNESCO expert who would be required to base his investigations on the following terms of reference:

1. To assess the present needs for both text and non-text books at all levels.

2. On the basis of this assessment to draw up an integrated programme for Sierra Leone covering all aspects of book development - planning, production, printing, distribution, libraries, and bibliographies - for a 5-year period.

3. To make a cost estimate for the programme drawn up and to recommend non-governmental and inter-governmental sources of financial aid.

4. To make practical recommendations to the government as regards the establishment of a Book Development Council, in accordance with the proposals made by the Regional Meeting of Book Development Experts, Accra, February 1968.

In response to this request, Mr. Phillip Harris arrived in Sierra Leone on April 4, 1970. He made a report, which emphasized, the need for an integrated book development programme in Sierra Leone. This need is expressed in the following quotation from his introduction:

Books are not only needed for efficient educational communications, they are also instruments of liberty, joy, beauty, individual maturity and national identity. An integrated programme for book development must encourage a nation's writers, artists and poets, have regard for indigenous languages and culture, promote fluency in the official language, care for happiness of children, and provide for the needs of life-long education. Special provision must be made for those who acquire literacy late in life or outside the school system. A library system to make all such books
available, an efficient pattern of distribution and retail setting to encourage individual ownership of books, local publishing and printing industries to provide economies and reduce dependence on experts are among the concerns of a book development programme.4

In a speech delivered by the minister for education, the Honorable Taaitta Towect, at a dinner party of the East African Library Association, said, "I would, however, like to finish by expressing the appreciation of the Kenya National Commission for UNESCO, of which I am the Chairman, for the cooperation it has received from the entire book community, including librarians, in the establishment of the Book Development Council of Kenya."5 When UNESCO was urging member countries to set up Book Development Councils, it was promoting a NATIS concept which spells out very clearly this requirement:

That there should be established Book Development Councils by law to bring under their umbrella all those parties that are involved in the production of the "the book" archivists, authors, booksellers, documentalists, educationists, information scientists, librarians, printers, publishers, and users of information with a view to ensure that all manuscripts submitted to a printer are immediately assigned with ISBNs and ISSNs and thus, enable bibliographers to have facilities to trace all materials that are nationally printed.6


Ng'ang'a has outlined some of the functions of the Book Development Council:

act as a national agency for concerted planning and cooperation and management of various activities of all groups, bodies or individuals, both public and private concerned with books;

encourage indigenous authorship and ensure the provision of opportunities for local writers, publishers, translators, and printers to produce both in national official language and in the vernaculars;

arrange to carry out a comprehensive study and research programme on all problems essential for the development of the book industry and for provision of an effective service to the reading public;

ensure the establishment of suitable machinery for promotion of the reading habit among all age groups, particularly among children.7

The role of the elite in developing countries is considered very important since leaders are responsible for moulding public opinion and determining policies. The media, equally, has a place of primacy in developing societies. It is said that, by A.D.2000, information will be multiplying four times faster than population. Publishing forms a significant segment of the media.

It has been observed in the developing societies of falling within the circumference of the Afro-Asian world, against the backdrop of favourable objective factors, that

the level of success or failure achieved in any of the countries is dependent upon the dynamic role assumed by the leaders of the publishing community. In fact, it is possible to enunciate a principle that can have validity for all situations in developing countries.

Publishing in developing societies cannot be studied in isolation. It is part of a world-wide phenomena and is to be reviewed in an international context. Exports have indeed become vital to the book trade. Upto one-third of total receipts to U.K. publishers were coming from exports as early as 1937, and despite a slight decline in the 1940s, the figure has remained high even since. In 1975 exports were worth £133 million (including exports by booksellers), 39.7 per cent of total sales. 8

Publishing came into the developing world as a colonial legacy. Modern education is a gift of the Western masters and publishing came in its trail.

In the initial stages of the colonial rule, publishing in the Afro-Asian countries came to be established only as subsidiaries of publishing houses with their headquarters in the capitals of the western world. No doubt, they have made a substantial contribution in promoting publishing yet their role was and still is essentially that of a subsidiary. Mostly, they have devoted themselves to reprinting or importing books from the 'mother' countries.

The most reliable export markets, however, are the English-speaking former colonies in the Third World. This is because this market is almost entirely grounded in the educational industry, with its firmly established ties with educational institutions of the former imperial power.

Figures show the huge leaps in book imports in recent years in Kenya the increase was from $1.5 million in 1970 to $3.6 million in 1971, and in Nigeria from $7.6 million in 1970 to $13.2 million in 1971. For many countries, imports provide the bulk of books available. The scale of imports in to Africa is indicated in Table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Imports (U.S. $)</th>
<th>Main Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>2,83,000</td>
<td>U.K., 91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>4,18,000</td>
<td>USA, 53%; U.K., 22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>1,14,71,000</td>
<td>UK, 6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>12,04,000</td>
<td>UK, 55%; Sweden, 23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>7,31,000</td>
<td>UK, 55%; USA, 14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>39,75,000</td>
<td>UK, 80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>8,92,000</td>
<td>UK, 2%; Italy, 17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


British companies dominate educational publishing in Asia and Africa. Yet direct sales to these countries actually declined in the early 1970s, with sales by local subsidiaries taking their place. By the 1970s over two-thirds of Oxford University Press's turnover in Nigeria was comprised of books produced in Nigeria.  

Oxford University Press (OUP) set up a branch in Nairobi in 1963, and has been in Ibadan since 1949, although OUP's activities in Nigeria stretch back a half century. Longman, with a staff of 100 in Nigerian alone, has enormous African interests. Concentrating on school texts and support materials, Longman has branches in Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Uganda, as well as Nigeria. Smith has stated, "During the 1960s and 1970s six British firms, Evans Brothers, Heinemann Educational Books, Longman, Nelson, Oxford University Press, and Macmillan and Co., have continued to keep a hold on the (Anglophone African) market by increased localization."

As it is discussed earlier that main emphasis would be on the book publishing only. There now arises the question of who in these African societies has access to books, and what features of society determine the pattern of

access. The question can be answered simply - the students. With around 80 per cent of the book trade being educational books, students are clearly the major users of books. Determining who outside the formal educational system gains access to books is a more central issue to publishing and the book world.

The Figure 8.1 shows that the message of a book passes to more people than its readers. Through speech and action it can reach contacts of the readers, whether it be as a retold joke or as a fundamental change in lifestyle. Figure 8.11 also delineates some of the agencies and institutions necessary to bring a book from an author to the reading public.

The flow of book messages through other media is increasing in the West through greater intermedia contact and penetration. However, this is not a prominent feature of African communication.

The most basic factor in determining direct access of books is literacy. With adult (15 years old and older) illiteracy standing at about 74 per cent in non-Arabic Africa in 1970, three fourths of the population is excluded from reading. This figure is higher in Sierra Leone, where literacy has not yet reached 10 per cent, and lower in others. In Sierra Leone, for example, the potential school-going population between the ages of 5 and 12 years was
Figure 8.1 Channels of Access to an Author's work
THE BOOK INDUSTRY

AUTHORS

MANUSCRIPTS

PRINTED BOOKS

INVESTMENT

PROFITS

MANUFACTURERS OF EQUIPMENT, PAPERS, TYPE, GLUE, CLOTH, INK, THREAD ETC

PRINTERS

PUBLISHER

TRANSLATORS

ARTISTS

LITERARY AGENTS

SUBSCRIPTION SALE

MAIL DISTRIBUTION

BOOK CLUBS

EXPORT JOBBER

FOREIGN MARKET

INDIVIDUAL USERS OF BOOKS

WHOLESALESA & JOBBERS

RETAIL BOOKSELLERS

INSTITUTIONAL PURCHASERS

SCHOOLS, LIBRARY, ETC

SOURCE OF CAPITAL, BANKS, INVESTORS ETC

Figure 8.11
estimated in 1962 at 430,000; but the number of children between these ages actually attending school was only 103,000, or less than 25 per cent. Throughout the continent illiteracy is more prevalent among women (83 per cent) than men (65 per cent) and more extensive among the poor than in towns. The number of adult literates is small in all African countries.

Another factor which haunts African book production is the vast array of languages of the continent, many of which are used by comparatively few people. In West Africa, Nigeria has over 200 local languages and dialects and Ghana 56, while Sierra Leone has 18. Countries with a multiplicity of local languages cannot publish books in all of them. At present they publish in a few languages of comparatively wide diffusion. Sierra Leone, produces primers, readers and other literature in five of its 18 languages and primers only in two other languages. In the West, greater affluence among specialist readers allows publishers to produce titles for minority interests. In Africa, a person literate in only a minority language is unlikely to find many books or other publications available in that language.


There are three basic ways to obtain a book: buying, borrowing or receiving as a gift (Figure 8.1). Western publishing has always focussed its attention on individuals buying either for themselves or as a gift for others. The focus of attention for the multinational publishers in Africa has been the educational system. It is easier to find a range of books on sale in the cities. Rural population have been variously approached in different parts of Africa by peddlers, literature bureau vans, and the religious book-stalls which are off shoots of churches.

Giving books as presents is not an established feature of African social life even among the urban intelligentsia. There is no equivalent to the Christmas book-giving bonanzas of Western countries.

The major constraint on book-buying by literates in Africa is poverty. Libraries have always been seen as one way around this constraint.

There are also social and physical elements of many African societies that determine access to books and reading. President Nyerere pointed to some of these:

Too often in our own society a person who sits down to read is accused of being lazy or of being unsociable. This attitude we must change. When we get to the position where a man and wife can sit together in the evening each reading or reading to each other, and when their children are encouraged to learn out of school by reading books which are easily available, then we shall have made a big break through in our development.15

The role books play in the societies of anglophone middle Africa and in their development varies with the type of book and with the readership.

School books function as tools of education. They can contribute to the development of human resources necessary for national development. They are broadly controlled by the curricula, the exams, and in varying degrees by the ministeries of education. Finer control is exercised by authors, editors and the buyers through the market. School books and primers or readers for new literates are the most urgently needed types of books in Africa. Books issued by the Ghana Library Board in 1961-1962 were maximum in the case of 'children's books and educational books'. Many African governments have recognized both the need to provide free school books and the political popularity of this measure. If families have to purchase school books, the pupils from the already disadvantaged backgrounds suffer, and the purchase of school books becomes a mechanism for reinforcing in equalities.

In colonial times, history school books for Africa were grossly unbalanced. Extensive coverage was given to events in Europe and minimal attention was given to the history of African society. Africans tended to be cast in

a passive role and political pressure for independence played down. This was the result of the controls on the educational system and the attitudes and unbalanced knowledge of the authors and editors of the era. Meanwhile, the social history of the common person, the dominated classes, the stateless societies, and the extension of underdevelopment through unequal trade tend to be ignored, which is a distortion of history.  

Turning to academic and tertiary books it almost goes without saying that their main use is to extend, increase and spread knowledge.

The African market is still largely dominated by metropolitan tastes acting through international market forces. These forces determine what is available for readers and which manuscripts are published. Since it is those books published by the multinationals that most easily reach the developed world, an African academic or tertiary teacher whose work is published by a multinational is much more likely to break into the international circuit, with all its prestige and benefits.

Scholarly books are particularly difficult to distribute adequately since the market is small and dispersed over a wide geographical area. In the Third World, distri-

Distribution is especially difficult because of transportation problems, an especially small market, few channels for publicizing books, limited bibliographical tools, and the general level of poverty. 19

As discussed earlier, many Third World nations are faced with language problem which impinge directly on book publishing. The legacy of colonialism has left many African nations with educational systems which function largely in a foreign language - English or French - which is understood by only a small fraction of the total population. The language problem is a serious one for the Third World in many respects, and it has major implications for publishing as well. In 1973, in Kenya out of 190 titles, 145 were in English while only 45 were in national language, Swahili. In Uganda, in 1971, 141 were in English and 64 in national language, out of total 205. In Ghana, in the same year 88 titles were published in English, only 12 titles were produced in national languages. In Tanzania, in 1976, 181 titles were published in English out of 399 titles. Close to one-half of the books published in India annually are in English, yet only 2 per cent of the Indian population is literate in English. Efforts to develop Swahili in East Africa have been hindered by the lack of a

publishing apparatus, reluctance of some Africans to use the language. In much of the anglophone Africa, publishing is dominated by firms based in the industrialized nations especially Britain. These firms publish most of the scholarly books.

There has been relatively little recognition at the governmental level of the importance of scholarly publishing. Universities have not taken much interest in fostering scholarly publishing, and when they have been involved in the publishing enterprise at all, it has with a few exceptions been at the level of providing textbooks for their own students, often in fields where indigenously produced texts did not exist.

The bulk of scholarly books in the Third World come from two main sources at the present time. These two sources are: (1) publishers in the industrialized countries, who export their books to the Third World (Table-8.1) and (2) commercial and, occasionally, governmental publishers in the Third World. Such as Ghana and Guinea, are beginning to incline towards state publishing. Ghana plans to set up a State Publishing House for the production of school books and other publications. Guinea has a large state printing press, the Imprimerie Nationale in Conakry, which produces

political books under the auspices of Government.

It is to the reader's advantage that a commercial publisher faces competition, makes a careful study of the reader's needs and has a real interest in seeing that books are as well written and as attractively produced. Commercial publishing has been established in Africa over the years, although mainly through foreign publishing houses. And, as one publisher observed, it may be a backward step to substitute the idea, "The government (or some centralized body) will give you all the books they believe you need. Those are the ones you must use", for the principle "Let publishers produce all the books they can and let people have the ones they chose."

Commercial firms should as far as possible be financed, and therefore controlled locally, and should use local men and materials. However, there should be opportunities for foreign publishing businesses to establish themselves in a country. This could be facilitated through the establishment of Afro-foreign publishing firms. In Africa, the majority of such indigenous scholarly publishing is carried out by local branches of foreign publishing firms such as OUP and Macmillan.

Scholarly publishing almost inevitably is an unprofitable undertaking and often requires a direct or indirect subsidy. As one expert noted concerning university
presses, "We publish the smallest editions at the greatest cost, and on these we place the highest price, and then we try to market them to people who can least afford them." In the context of Third World, subsidies are virtually mandatory, and the university press offers a means of accepting outside subsidy.

Most of the scholarly books concerning a country as large as Nigeria are published outside the country or by expatriate firms within Nigeria. The establishment of university presses at two of Nigeria's leading universities during the past decade or so has improved situation somewhat, but the output of books of most of these presses is very limited - perhaps ten to twenty new titles per year. The university presses are concerned with scholarly publishing, and have the potential of serving an important need, but the universities have not provided their presses with the necessary resources. The situation in Ghana is similar, with the establishment of at least one university press in recent years and the emergence of a government-sponsored publishing house which has taken some interest in scholarly publishing. Francophone African nations are poorly served by indigenous publishers of any sort, and the majority of the

very small number of scholarly books published about these countries is generally published in France and exported back to Africa. Anglophone East Africa has seen the development of several private publishers, sometimes with the assistance of Britain firms, which have a strong interest in scholarly publishing.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR PUBLISHING IN AFRICA**

As publishing has become an international industry, dominated by large corporations with vast resources, publishers in less industrialized countries have been forced to fight against worsening odds to establish local autonomous industries. The economies of scale are large in publishing and printing, whether achieved by a large number of titles or bigger print runs. William Mitchell, former editorial manager for OUP in Nigeria, rightly stated:

> The non-indigenous publishers in Nigeria have generally been more heavily capitalized than their indigenous colleagues. This may be because publishing, with the relatively slow and difficult returns on capital which it offers, has been less attractive to indigenous capital than other forms of entrepreneurship. Whatever the case, the willingness and capacity to deploy large sums of capital has been a central factor behind the dominance of non-indigenous publishers in Nigerian educational book markets.22

The wait for returns on capital may be longer than a small publisher can afford, unable as he is to fall back on

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A second factor giving a competitive edge to the non-indigenous publisher is the variety of subsidies which effectively cut the price of imported books. The United States Information Agency (USIA) assisted publishers in producing 143 million copies of over 16,000 editions between 1950 and 1968. The agency often contributes up to 80 per cent of the cost of production, and by 1969 its donated books programme involved 3 million volumes per year.

Since American books are often expensive, a variety of methods are required to keep prices down in newer markets. Arrangements with local distributors for regional distribution contracts or simple reprints arrangements in return to royalty on sales serve this function.

A third obstacle for local publishers is the difficulty they face in attracting authors. Writers seek wide sales, which only the distribution networks of the multinationals can offer them. The prestige of publication by a famous established house in London, Paris or New York is a powerful lure away from the limited - if righteous - satisfaction to be gained from patriotic or political support for a local publisher. Even indigenous university presses are caught in this trap. "The local university presses

seldom get a manuscript that has not been rejected by at least one overseas publisher."²⁴

In Anglophone Africa, state publishing establishments have very often relied on British or American commercial publishing expertise. Macmillan and Co. organized arrangements with governments in Ghana, Uganda, Tanzania and Nigeria during the 1960s which eventually became state publishing houses.²⁵ As Nottingham puts it, "Outside interests get much of their profits from producing the material concerned outside Africa and selling it to these (State) publishing houses which become mere merchandising depots."²⁶

Successful attempts at setting up genuinely autonomous indigenous publishing houses have obviously been made. East African Publishing House (EAPH) is an example of it, was established in Nairobí. It was founded in 1965 under the aegis of U.K. publisher André Deutsch with financial support from an American foundation. Despite its comparative success, EAPH could not find its way into world markets without making arrangements with Heinemann Educational Books.

The problems of a house like EAPH show a further parallel with other media. Media professionals come to


depend on skills, styles of work etc. John Nottingham, long
the guiding influence at EAPH, has written about precisely
this problem:

The educational environment was still so British
that we were not able to question many of the
publishing assumptions that were made by ministeries...
I am convinced that all publishers in East
Africa use unnecessarily high quality paper for
many of the school books.... We were forced to
realize that we would have to fight a battle, which
should never have needed fighting, on someone else's
battle ground with the weapons be chose. We had to
convince the East African governments that publish­
ing was not an insuperably difficult skill which
local people could not possibly achieve.27

The continuing depression of Africa publishing in the
grip of these various pressures is amply illustrated by
production figures. While book production in the United
Kingdom in the 1970s has been up to 40,000 titles a year, in
the United States over 80,000, and in France up to 30,000
figures for 1973 show Ghana's production at 136, Tanzania's
at 123, Nigeria's at 1316, Kenya's at 224.28(See Appendix).

FUTURE PRIORITIES

The increasing educational development in some African
countries suggests that school books, primers and readers
are the most urgently needed books in Africa. Primary

   Industry: A study in decolonization. In Richard
   Jolly, ed. Education in Africa. Nairobi : EAPH, 1969,
   p. 303.

education, the mass literacy programmes will necessarily be in both the indigenous languages and French or English, and readers and other books in these media will preferentially be produced within Africa. Textbooks for secondary and higher education have up till now been borrowed from U.K. and France with little modification. If recent trends in curricula reform are to be meaningful text books on history, geography and the sciences should be completely rewritten for local environment and experience. This involves not only local authors with teaching experience but also artists for illustration if books are to be adapted to African life and culture. This in turn will lead to support and encouragement of local production including printing in African countries. In the first order of requirements will be books on social sciences and translations of works published elsewhere into local languages and new fiction, travel biography and folklore in these languages. As the cost factor of imported books inhibits the reading habit both among school going and adult population, the local production of paperbacks at lower cost will increase both the sale and flow of books.

Thus in order to have a flourishing library system that will have a strong impact on publishing, or a strong publishing system that nourishes the library system along the lines of the developed countries, developing countries
like Africa can take no short cuts. Patient planning and careful experimentation is needed. The need for Publishers' Association is just another step to link up the library system with the existing publisher - education - bookseller complex by establishing school libraries and village libraries. There are few publishers' associations in Africa. Publishers' associations should be established in all countries with two or more publishers. Indeed, in countries such as Ghana and Uganda, where state publishing has been tried, it has not been entirely satisfactory. Among functions which these associations can perform are the following:

(1) Promote favourable conditions for the publishing industry by ensuring that the factors listed in the foregoing section continue to operate.

(2) When necessary, examine the problem of translation rights, perhaps in collaboration with other publishers' associations in neighbouring countries. Most foreign publishers are unwilling to grant translation rights to African publishers because royalties are small and their remittance may be uncertain. The reason is that due to the limited diffusion of many local languages, editions of translated works are small and African publishers cannot give satisfactory guarantees of sales. Ethiopia is one country whose requests for translation rights have been refused by
An association of publishers or associations of publishers in neighbouring African States working together might be able to examine the whole problem and perhaps determine how translation rights might be obtained on terms satisfactory to both the original foreign publisher and the African publisher.

(3) Examine, possibly in collaboration with printers or booksellers or their associations, other books trade problem such as those affecting the printing and distribution of books and the supply of paper.

Thus one of the steps towards a community provision of book services is for the government, the largest cohesive unit within which the community operates, to make decisions that will stimulate all aspects of the book services.

No matter how much is done to promote book sales in the developing countries, there will always be a number of titles, whether published for children or adults which the average reader cannot afford. It is the basic function of libraries to provide such books.

A good library service in fact does more than this because in itself it is an incentive to reading. In addition, there is but one step from reading library books to buying one's own books as far as funds permit. A good library service can thus help to create a flourishing book trade as well as be a useful supplement to it. In a region
such as Africa, where average incomes are low and may remain so for sometime, it is all the more essential that countries provide themselves with effective library services.