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AFRICA'S MEDIA EMPIRE: *DRUM*'S EXPANSION TO NIGERIA

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I

Publishing in Africa remains so difficult an enterprise that many publishers have collapsed, their dreams disappearing with them. This is especially true of the print media, particularly newspapers and magazines.[1] During the past century, many magazines and newspapers failed to establish a loyal readership, keep costs down, insure wide circulation, or turn a huge profit. Consequently, not many African magazines can be viewed as "successful." *Drum* magazine, however, remains an exception.

In 1951 *Drum*, a magazine written for and by Africans, was established in South Africa. *Drum* enjoyed a great deal of success and is now widely recognized as having been a driving force in black South African culture and life throughout the 1950s and 1960s. In the South African historiography *Drum* has been thoroughly researched.[2] The magazine's

[1]See, e.g., Clement E. Asante, *The Press in Ghana: Problems and Prospects* (Lanham, 1996); Dayo Duyile, *Makers of Nigerian Press: An Historical Analysis of Newspaper Development, the Pioneer Heroes, the Modern Press Barons and the New Publishers From 1859–1987* (Ikeja, 1987); Chris W. Ogbondah, *Military Regimes and the Press in Nigeria, 1966–1993: Human Rights and National Development* (Lanham, 1994); Chris W. Ogbondah, *The Press in Nigeria: An Annotated Bibliography* (New York, 1990); E. E. Oluwasanmi, Eva McLean and H. Zell, *Publishing in Africa in the Seventies* (Ile-Ife, 1975); Fred I. A. Omu, *Press and Politics in Nigeria: 1880–1937* (London, 1978); and William A. Hachten and C. Anthony Giffard, *The Press and Apartheid: Repression and Propaganda in South Africa* (Madison, 1984).
[2]E.g., Graeme Addison, "DRUM BEAT: An Examination of Drum." *Creative Camera* no. 235/236 (July/August 1984), 1462–65; Michael Chapman, ed. *The Drum Decade: Stories from the 1950s* (Pietermaritzburg, 2001); Lindsay Clowes, "'Are

impact on South African journalism, literature, gender configurations, African resistance, and urban South African culture has been documented and often lauded by various scholars. Many former members of the South African edition's payroll, both editors and staff alike, have gone on to become successes in literature, journalism, and photography. Often such staff members credit *Drum* for directly shaping their careers and directly state this in their writings.[3] Consequently, *Drum* is often associated only with South Africa. While *Drum* greatly influenced South Africa, its satellite projects throughout Africa were no less important. These satellite projects cemented Drum's reputation as the leading magazine newspaper in Africa and each edition became fixtures in west African and east African societies.[4]

You Going to be MISS (or MR) Africa?' Contesting Masculinity in Drum Magazine 1951-1953," *Gender and History* 13 (2001), 1-20; Mac Fenwick, "'Tough Guy, eh?' The Gangster Figure in Drum," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 22(1996), 617-32; Patricia Morris, "The Rise and Fall of DRUM," *New African* (October 1984), 52-53; Kenda Mutongi, "'Dear Dolly's' Advice: Representations of Youth, Courtship and Sexualities in Africa, 1960-1980," *IJAHS* 33(2000), 1-23; Colin Osman, "Drum: An Introduction," *Creative Camera* no 235/236 (July/August 1984), 1438-41; Claudia Schadeberg, Jurgen Schadeberg and J. R. A. Bailey, *Have You Seen Drum Recently?* (Princeton, NJ, 1995); and Dorothy C. Woodson, *Drum: An Index to "Africa's Leading Magazine," 1951-1965* (Madison, 1988).

[3]Arthur Maimane, "I Carried a Gun…," *Creative Camera*, no. 235/236 (July/August 1984), 1442-43; Todd Matshikiza, *Chocolates for My Life* (London, 1961); Bloke Modisane, *Blame me on History* (New York, 1963); Ezekiel Mphahlele, *Down Second Avenue* (Boston, 1971); Es'kia Mphahlele, *Afrika, My Music* (Johannesburg, 1995); Kerry Swift, "A Life More Abundant: A Retrospective Look at DRUM Magazine in the 1970s," *Rhodes Journalism Review* 2/1 (1991), 35-42, and Kerry Swift, "DRUM—The Later Years," *Creative Camera* no. 235/236 (July/August 1984), 1466-69.

For information concerning the white editorial staff see Tom Hopkinson, *In the Fiery Continent* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1962); Tom Hopkinson, "How to do Business in Ghana," *Creative Camera*, no. 235/236 (July/August 1984): 1450-1 (this essay consisted of an abbreviated chapter of Hopkinson's *In the Fiery Continent* due to political considerations in Ghana at the time); Anthony Sampson, *Drum: An African Adventure—And Afterwards* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1983); Sylvester Stein, *Who Killed Mr. Drum?* (Bellville, South Africa: Mayibuye Books, 1999). Jim Bailey, *Drum*'s predominant owner, has released a four-volume book series entitled *The Beat of Drum* and it documents *Drum*'s accomplishments and trials throughout its history.

[4]Besides *The Beat of Drum* series, several published works celebrate the magazine's satellite projects. See, for instance, Jim Bailey, Carole Cooper and Garth Bundeth, eds., *Kenya: The National Epic* (Nairobi, 1993); Sally Dyson, ed., *Nigeria: The Birth of Africa's Greatest Country, vo1. 1 & 2* (Ibadan, 1998); and Tom Hopkinson and Tim Couzens, eds., *Zimbabwe: The Search for Common Ground Since 1890: From the Pages of DRUM Magazine* (Lanseria, South Africa, 1992).

This essay aims to fill a gap in the current historiography by opening up for discussion *Drum*'s satellite projects. The focus of this essay is on *Drum*'s expansion into Nigeria. The Nigerian edition of *Drum* was arguably the most successful and profitable of all of the magazine's endeavors, and proves that the creation of a pan-African popular magazine was both feasible and profitable if properly administered. This essay argues that the Nigerian edition was an exception in comparison to *Drum*'s other expansionist projects under Jim Bailey's ownership, and, although its existence was brief, the *Nigerian Drum* enjoyed a large amount of success. Consequently, special attention will be paid to both the successes and failures of *Nigerian Drum*. In yet another essay, we will show the usefulness and limitations of Drum as a source for history writing.

II

Drum was founded in 1951 by Robert Crisp and Jim Bailey under the title of *African Drum*. The two set out to produce a magazine that offered the black South African population a publication that addressed their interests. Initially, the magazine was a complete failure: deadlines were not met and its circulation was extremely low. Its base in Cape Town kept the magazine out of touch with the non-white South African population throughout South Africa, as the city had a rather small African population.[5] In the beginning months, the circulation of *Africa Drum* was estimated to be only 20,000 copies per issue and, by his own admission, Bailey was "losing two thousand a month."[6] This failure was largely due to the magazine's paternalistic approach to its African readership. *African Drum* suffered from what long-time *Drum* editor Anthony Sampson refers to as the "white hand," the obvious influence by white management. This turned potential readers away from the magazine.

Desperate to turn the magazine into a profitable enterprise, Bailey hired Sampson as the magazine's editor-in-chief, and Crisp left the organization soon after due to fundamental differences with Bailey, thus leaving Bailey as sole owner of the magazine. Bailey and Sampson had met as undergraduates while at Oxford and became close friends soon afterwards. Although neither had prior experience in business or in journalism, together the two transformed the magazine. They investigated what potential readers wanted. Sampson credits a Johannesburg boxing pro-

[5]Colin Osman, "The Men In the Centre: Sylvester Stein and Jurgen Schadeberg," *Creative Camera* no. 235/236 (July/August 1984), 1444.
[6]Anthony Sampson, *DRUM: The Newspaper that Won Africa* (Boston, 1957), 20.

moter, Job Rathebe, with convincing Jim Bailey and the rest of the management to move away from a paternalistic image of "Merry Africa." According to Sampson, Rathebe told Bailey:

> You see, it's got the white hand on it—that's what I call it. *Drum*'s what white men want Africans to be, not what they are. Now, take this tribal history business, which you call 'Know Yourselves': we all know ourselves quite well enough, Mr. Bailey, I assure you. . . We don't want *Drum* to remind us. What we want, you see is a paper which belongs to us—a real *black* paper. We want it to be our *Drum*, not a white man's *Drum*.[7]

Rathebe's statements, along with similar statements from others, convinced Bailey and Sampson to alter drastically the magazine's look, image, and approach to township life. For the November issue the magazine shortened the name to *Drum* in hopes of distancing itself from the earlier stereotypes of *African Drum*. In his account of his own experiences with the paper, *Drum: The Newspaper That Won the Heart of Africa*, Sampson detailed *Drum*'s formula for success, which was to offer readers a steady diet of "Cheese cake, crime, animals, babies . ."[8] Sampson went on to remark: "The workers of the world were united, at least, in their addiction to cheese cake and crime."[9] Complete with this drastic change in content came *Drum*'s relocation to Johannesburg, a city that Sylvester Stein, Sampson's eventual successor as editor-in-chief, described as "the pulsating centre of African life."[10]

This new phase of the magazine in the 1950s marked the beginning of what many South African scholars have come to refer to as "the *Drum* Decade."[11] Soon *Drum* had a new look, and began to deal primarily with the issues close to the urban African. The magazine went from printing paternalistic "Know Yourself" stories to articles on crime syndicates,

[7]Ibid., 21.
[8]The first edition of Sampson's book was printed in 1957. It was later reprinted in 1983 under the name of *DRUM: An African Adventure — And Afterwards*, which included the original text of the 1957 edition but with a newly added epilogue. For the purpose of this essay, we will cite the 1983 edition only when citing Sampson's epilogue, which was not included in the 1957 edition.
[9]Sampson, *DRUM: The Newspaper*, 27.
[10]Osman, "The Men in the Centre," 1444.
[11]Michael Chapman, a professor of South African literature, has released an edited volume under the same title, *The Drum Decade*. The work compiles many of the stories that appeared in *Drum* during the 1950s, and also includes an essay examining "*Drum* and its Significance in Black South African Writing".

American styled jazz music, shebeen life, and other happenings in Cape Town, Durban, and on the Reef (the greater Johannesburg area).

Short stories also became staples in the magazine throughout the 1950s. These stories were written by African and colored writers, and the magazine soon lost its "white hand." Short stories were vital to the magazine's growth for two reasons. These stories were usually based predominantly on everyday urban events like crime or township life that the *Drum* reader could relate to and wanted to read about and established to the readership that the magazine had successfully found its "African voice." The stories became major staples when Sampson and Sylvester Stein edited *Drum*. They were cheap, quick ways for the magazine to "report" and address township life without spending large amounts of money on transportation, information, or fact-checking. Consequently, essay contests were routinely held, and *Drum* encouraged readers to send their own short stories.

The essay contests also became an easy way for the magazine to find potential writers. The contests brought in hundreds of letters and stories. Often a winner of the contest received an official award, which was the contest's monetary prize, and the unofficial reward, which was a position in the magazine. Through this approach the magazine was able to find and recruit a very gifted group of South African writers/journalists. Soon writers such as Can Themba, Todd Matshikiza, Arthur Maimane (who often wrote under the pen name of Arthur Mogale), Henry Nxumalo, Casey Motsitsi, Lewis Nkosi, and Ezekiel (later Es'kia) Mphahlele were brought in and soon became the magazine's main core of journalists. By bringing a unique style that was distinct to urban Johannesburg, this group of writers literally made the magazine (in his account, Sampson is quick to remind his reader that "*Drum* was meant to be written entirely by Africans").[12] They wrote with a "township" flair, and, most importantly, their topics interested *Drum* readers, virtually erasing any traces of the "white hand" from the magazine.

This new approach and these new writers, along with a heavy dose of photographs of beautiful cover girls, caused the magazine's popularity to skyrocket, consequently boosting its circulation figures. In March 1952, *Drum*'s one year anniversary, the magazine became the media choice of urban South African population with Henry Nxumalo's legendary exposé on the brutal treatment of farm workers in Bethal.[13] Nxumalo went undercover as an illiterate farm hand and, writing under the name of Mr.

[12]Sampson, *DRUM: The Newspaper*, 56.
[13]Sampson, *DRUM: An African Adventure,* 41.

Drum, provided readers with detailed account of the dire situation on these farms in "Bethal To-Day." Readers were shocked to see Mr. Drum's article, along with the graphic photographs accompanying the article, and anxiously bought the issue. The impact of Mr. Drum's exposé on *Drum*'s initial success cannot be overstated. As Sampson explained:

> Though *Drum* did not change Bethal, Bethal changed *Drum*. "Mr. Drum" caught the imagination of our readers. He was a person, not a magazine, he was one of them. He saw and experienced life as they did; he was a confidant that shared their troubles. In letters and conversation, we could see the beginnings of a valuable bond between Mr. Drum and his readers.[14]

Nxumalo's success officially marked the African population's wide acceptance of the magazine and soon the magazine was seen by many as the mouthpiece for Africans in South Africa.

Exposés of this nature soon became commonplace in the magazine as Mr. Drum (whose role was filled by various authors) exposed segregationist policies throughout the Anglican churches in South Africa, various crime syndicates and gangsters on the Rand and throughout South Africa, a farm system on the Western Cape where workers were paid in alcohol rather than wages, and various other issues dear to readers' hearts. These articles assured *Drum*'s readership that its staff aimed to represent African interests and not those of the apartheid government.

In order to build on the success of the magazine and increase circulation figures, Bailey decided to expand out of the greater Johannesburg area, and offices in Durban and Cape Town were soon established. This not only broadened the magazine's readership, but also provided it with more contacts in those areas. This allowed *Drum* to tackle topics dealing with various areas in South Africa. Soon the magazine began to appeal to readers outside of the Reef, and thus drastically improved circulation figures. By 1953 the South African sales of *Drum* rose to 60,000, tripling the magazine's initial circulation figures from 1951.[15]

News of the magazine's success quickly spread throughout the continent, as well as to Britain and the United States. Letters from readers throughout South Africa, Africa, and even the world began to pour into the *Drum* offices. While far from a household name, *Drum* would be widely known in political circles throughout Africa and among journalistic circles in the world.

[14]Ibid.
[15]Sampson, *DRUM: The Magazine*, 54.

III

While it would take *Drum* a significant amount of time to develop into a truly African magazine rather than a South African one, Bailey had grand ambitions of expanding into the rest of the continent from the very beginning. The magazine's success in South Africa enabled its continued expansion, and articles from contributors in various African countries began to appear in it. west African contributions to the magazine began to appear in *Drum* as early as March 1951, when A. D. Divine contributed an in-depth look at "Gold Coast Elections." Numerous articles from east Africa also appeared throughout the magazine during 1951.[16]

Drum became available in Ghana and Nigeria in late 1951, nearly a year after the first issue was printed in South Africa. It was immediately taken up by a Nigerian readership, and Nigerian readers were quick to write letters to *Drum*. While the magazine began to publish such letters as early as November 1951 (probably meaning December for the west African edition), possibly the most glowing praise came in the September 1952 edition from one G. T. S. Mirilla of Lagos.[17] Mirilla wrote: "I am one of the happiest people into whose hands your wonderful magazine fell. It is actually a world-wide magazine, complete in every way and full of useful knowledge. Congratulations from brothers and sisters in Nigeria as a whole."[18]

In April 1953 *Drum* announced the 1952 winner of its initial "Handsomest Man in Africa" contest. The contest was a spinoff of the magazine's Miss Africa beauty contests, and the magazine had not intended to offer such a contest until its office was flooded by photographs of men from all over Africa asking to enter the Miss Africa beauty contests. Francis Gordon of Lagos was named the winner of this "MR. AFRICA!" contest, and his victory may have been part of Bailey's expansion project into west Africa.[19] Gordon's brief biography featured him spending time in Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast, and Nigeria. We believe that Gordon's victory may have been seen as a cheap way to incorporate more west African material without exceeding budgetary constraints.

Around 1957 Bailey continued *Drum*'s expansion process by setting up two permanent offices in Lagos and Accra, as well as numerous circu-

[16]Woodson, *DRUM,* 165.
[17]Due to shipping considerations the international edition of *Drum* was usually distributed a month after the release of the South African.
[18]Letter to the editor entitled "Happiest Soul," *Drum* (August 1952) (September 1952 for the international edition), 20.
[19]*Drum* (March 1953) (international edition April), 43.

lation networks throughout west Africa, although it does appear that the magazine had other correspondents in Kano, Kaduna, Calabar, and Kumasi.[20] *Drum*'s 15a Wesley Street office in Lagos became, in the words of Tom Hopkinson, *Drum*'s editor in chief who replaced Sylvester Stein, "the control centre for the whole west Coast."[21] The two main west African offices worked closely together and often shared the same manager.[22]

Drum's expansion continued steadily. Slowly, satellite offices and/or contacts were established in Tanganyika, Rhodesia, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ethiopia, Congo, Nyasaland, and Uganda throughout the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. In 1956 *Drum* celebrated the fact that it was the "largest sale [of all magazines based] in Africa!"[23] Though Bailey admits that "we continued publishing one edition until approximately 1960," the magazine's popularity in these satellite areas was, at worst, respectable.[24] By 1969 the three editions (west African, East African, and South African) combined to have a weekly circulation of 470,000.[25] Bailey and the magazine's management even toyed with the possibility of developing separate Swahili and French editions of Drum in order to boost circulation figures.

Bailey was an immensely popular and well-connected person. His father, Sir Abe Bailey, was a celebrated British pilot and an affluent diamond mogul, from whom his son received a large portion of his fortune. Sir Abe Bailey had many connections with British colonial officials, which he passed on to his son. On the other hand, the younger Bailey's work with *Drum* allowed him to befriend prominent African nationalists such as Julius Nyerere, Obafemi Awolowo, Jomo Kenyatta, Tom Mboya, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, and Albert Luthuli. Bailey successfully straddled both the colonial and anticolonial worlds. He could have a personal relationship with Winston Churchill (who was a great friend of Bailey's father) while befriending African nationalists. Regardless of his friends' political views, Bailey successfully maintained these friendships and often employed his connections to aid *Drum*'s expansion into Africa. These friendships and connections were particularly useful in Drum's distribution in west Africa. As Bailey notes:

[20]"How DRUM Beat Them All!," *Drum* (May 1956) (international edition June 1956), 24.
[21]Anthony Smith, "West African Roll" in *The Beat of DRUM* (Johannesburg, 1983), 1:33.
[22]Hopkinson, *In the Fiery Continent,* 30.
[23]"How DRUM Beat Them All!" 24.
[24]Patricia Morris, "The Rise and Fall of DRUM," *New African* (October 1984), 53.
[25]Hachten/Giffard, *Press and Apartheid*, 148.

> when a friend, the Reverend Robin Hudson . . . decided to visit those countries in Africa which he had travelled through when he was part of Lord Haley's Commission, putting together Haley's classic study of British colonies in Africa, *African Survey,* I asked the Reverend Robin to appoint agents for us in Ghana and Nigeria to whom we could ship copies. In Ghana he appointed a lawyer in Cape Coast who still owes us money; in Nigeria he appointed the head clerk of Niger House in Lagos…[26]

Throughout his tenure as owner of *Drum*, Bailey repeatedly exploited such contacts and friends to arrange exclusive interviews with political and business leaders, contribute guest commentaries, provide general feedback, and gain any other advantage that he could over his competition. During the initial stages of the magazine's expansion, the editions of *Drum* in west and east Africa were virtually the same one sold in South Africa. Drum did not have the resources to offer separate editions or designate a certain number of pages dealing with these areas. However, the magazine somehow maintained respectable sales in these regions.[27]

Oddly, what initially made *Drum* popular in South Africa was fundamentally different from what interested readers in Kenya, Ghana, or Nigeria. For South Africans, *Drum* became, as *Time* magazine reported, "the leading spokesman for South Africa's 9,000,000 negro and Coloured population," but for the west and east African readership the magazine meant something fundamentally different.[28] In other words, while South African readers could identify with the events being reported and knew where non-white townships like Sophiatown or District Six were, Nigerian and Ghanaian readers saw these South African topics and stories as foreign and strange. These readers read the magazine to find out about South African news and to gawk at the magazine's cover girls, not to find out information about local news and politics. Consequently, the number of readers in these countries was limited.

Because west African readers had very different interests and lives than their South African peers, offering a strictly South African edition to west African readers continued to produce relatively low circulation figures (though respectable for not catering specifically to a west African market), which kept the magazine's profits low and its debts high. Anthony

[26]Jim Bailey, preface to *Nigeria: The Birth of Africa's Greatest Country,* ed. Sally Dyson (Ibadan, 1998), 1:ix.
[27]*Drum*'s early returns on its West African expansion was successful enough, according to Bailey, ibid., "that Mr Anthony suggested he should abandon his career in Niger House and join us full time."
[28]Sampson, *DRUM: The Newspaper*, 53.

Smith, the man credited with opening up *Drum*'s offices in Accra and Lagos, remembers the difficulties in selling this South African-based *Drum* to readers in Nigeria and Ghana:

> Our task, of course, was to sell *Drum*. To help us in this endeavour the Johannesburg office would despatch bundles of newsprint thick with stories of unbelievable irrelevance to our West African lives: profiles of unknown heroes, accounts of gangsters, love stories whose names, places and details were quite alien. Even the date on the front cover would be long since gone by the time the only ship leaving Cape Town *en route* for 'the Coast' had dumped our goods nearby. . . . Even the competitions, offering suites of furniture or mere money, had passed their closing dates before we caught sight of their various offerings. There were girls in the magazines, a basic feature for readership appeal, but they were not our girls. The advertisements were of black people but not our kind. These Drums did not have us in mind.[29]

It remains both puzzling and extraordinary that Ghanaian and Nigerian readers even contemplated purchasing the paper. Future editor Tom Hopkinson's first reaction to reading west African *Drum* was to ask, "was *that* what we were trying to put across?"[30] Bailey would eventually realize, through persistent nagging by numerous editors, that the magazine would never take off in west Africa if changes were not made to make that edition of the magazine more west African oriented.

These initial attempts to west Africanize *Drum* came about rather slowly. Stein recalled that the difference between the early west African editions and the South African editions was "8 pages of the South African edition changed in the middle."[31] It appears that the west African edition would have been hard pressed to provide any additional articles, as the staffs in both areas were extremely small. On his initial visit to Nigeria, Hopkinson notes that the staff in Nigeria initially consisted roughly of only two people: Nelson Ottah, then *Drum*'s lone Nigerian reporter, and Matthew Faji, *Drum*'s only photographer in Nigeria.[32] Regardless, it did represent a move to cater to west African interests. Jurgen Schadeberg, *Drum*'s German head photographer, who is often credited in tutoring *Drum*'s fledgling photographers, remembers, "the copies were lapped up by west Africans… [as *Drum*] was more their own way."[33]

[29]Smith, "West African Roll" in *Beat of Drum,* 1:33-34.
[30]Hopkinson, *In the Fiery Continent*, 20.
[31]Osman, "The Men in the Centre," 1446.
[32]Hopkinson, *In the Fiery Continent*, 36.
[33]Osman, "The Men in the Centre," 1446.

Further compounding the magazine's difficulty in attracting readers from areas outside South Africa, inefficient printing and infrequent shipments often caused issues of the magazine to be released to west African markets weeks, even months, after their initial release. In *Into The Fiery Continent*, his book dealing with his experiences with *Drum*, Hopkinson detailed how complicated and amazingly inefficient the process of supplying *Drum* to the west African offices was:

> But the West African edition, printed in Johannesburg from material air-freighted down from Ghana and Nigeria, had a long and complicated journey before it could meet its readers. The printed copies had to make their way by train for several days to Cape Town; be unloaded in the docks; get on board a steamer to West Africa; be unloaded again in Lagos and Accra; sorted and repacked in appropriate quantities; and then distributed over vast territories by train, mammy-wagon, bicycle, canoe, or whatever means might be available. All this meant that, instead of working on the May West African edition during April, we were busy on the one dated July, which would not go on sale till the end of June.[34]

These time delays proved both difficult and trying, as west African issues would go on sale long past the printed date and often, as Schadeberg noted, such editions often "were turning yellow" when they arrived at newsstands.[35] Like before, *Drum* would find ways to adapt, deal with, and overcome such difficulties.

Due to these great time lapses, many of *Drum*'s once "breaking" stories were "old news" before west African readers could even get their hands on the magazine. For instance, in June of 1960 President William Tubman of Liberia visited Nigeria, but news of his visit did not appear in the magazine until its October edition.[36] Similar delays appeared frequently throughout *Drum*'s early history, as even the magazine's coverage of Nigeria's October 1 independence appeared initially only in the January 1961 issue.[37]

This time delay forced Drum to alter significantly its strategy concerning "breaking" stories. Hopkinson details *Drum*'s unique approach to journalism:

[34]Hopkinson, *In the Fiery Continent*, 53.
[35]Osman, "The Men in the Centre," 1446.
[36]"A Big Welcome For President Tubman," *Drum* (October 1960), taken from *Nigeria* 1:267.
[37]"How We Celebrated Independence," *Drum* (January 1961), taken from *Nigeria*, 1:278-81.

> Because of this long delay, we could of course cover nothing topical, and in spite of all our caution we would be sometimes caught out—perhaps because someone died or a Minister went out of office. But in the absence of better-organised competition, and in the general dearth of reading material on the west Coast, *Drum* somehow managed to go ahead.[38]

Due to these initial limitations, the subject matter and articles that appeared in the west African editions were often "timeless" pieces that could be written months in advance and would still interest the reader when published. Consequently, the stories dealing with west Africa stuck to articles such as "Damn the god that fears twins,"[39] "Night out in Lagos,"[40] "Are the Herbalists Healers or Fakes?,"[41] "Secrets of the Man with 600 Wives,"[42] and "Do you believe in Juju?"[43] Such articles dealt primarily with religious, sociological, and even mythical topics. Regardless of the quality or newsworthiness, these features became popular and helped *Drum* become the most widely read magazine in Africa.

In addition to these "timeless" pieces were articles profiling politicians, artists, celebrities, and other elites. These articles offered biographical, even autobiographical, profiles of west African celebrities such as Cyprian Ekwensi,[44] boxer Hogan Bassey,[45] and jazz musician Zeal Onyia.[46] It was in such a work that *Drum* proclaimed Wole Soyinka to be "Nigeria's Bernard Shaw."[47] Since these features could be run months after they were written, they could also be saved for future use while still allowing *Drum* to get in touch with its Nigerian readership.

A major advantage of the west African and east African editions was that racial tensions in their respective regions were less pronounced. The

[38]Hopkinson, *In the Fiery Continent*, 53.
[39]"Damn the God that Fears Twins," *Drum* (January 1957), taken from *Nigeria,* 1:43.
[40]"Night Out in Lagos," *Drum* (April 1955), taken from *Nigeria,* 1:54.
[41]J. Amon Okoe and Francis Gasso-Porsoo, "Are the Herbalists Healers and Fakes?" *Drum* (September 1958), taken from *Nigeria,* 1:96–97.
[42]Alexander Chia, "Secrets of the Man with 600 Wives," *Drum* (July 1958), taken from *Nigeria,* 1:104–05.
[43]O. A. Alakija, "Do You Believe in Juju?," *Drum*, December 1958, taken from *Nigeria,* 1:98.
[44]Bob Nwangoro, "The Literary World of Cyprian Ekwensi," *Drum* (August 1957), taken from *Nigeria,* 1:72.
[45]Hogan Bassey, "Hogan Bassey Talks About His Fighting Life," *Drum* (May 1957), taken from *Nigeria,* 1: 58.
[46]Joe Panford, "Nigeria's Hi-De-Ho," *Drum* (March 1956), taken from *Nigeria,* 1:55.
[47]"Wole Soyinka—Nigeria's Bernard Shaw," *Drum* (March 1961), *Nigeria,* 2:31.

apartheid regime's promotion of racial divides and designated roles for every race even seeped into the *Drum* offices. Hopkinson remembered that unlike South Africa, "West Africa was a lotus-land, where black and white could be friends, enemies—indeed lovers if they wanted—without the race-furies being invoked, from inside themselves as well as outside; and an editor could take his staff round the corner for a drink."[48] *Drum* did not need to avoid and omit photos of whites and Africans interacting. For instance, in 1957 the Sylvester Stein-led *Drum* planned on running a photo of Althea Gibson, the African American tennis player, kissing a white opponent at Wimbledon. Bailey saw the photo as inflammatory and knew its use would only invite more interference by the South African authorities. Thus, Bailey pulled the photograph from the South African edition, but it remained in the *Drum*'s other editions.[49]

While *Drum* was rapidly gaining many friends, allies, and readers throughout west Africa, it was not widely accepted by all parties in west Africa, particularly in Nigeria. Many British colonial officials found the magazine to be pushing the limits of decency, and around 1955 Cecil King, a British colonial media mogul in west Africa, chided Bailey for *Drum*'s provocative subject matter and was told "In our west African papers we eliminate, as far as possible, sex, crime and material likely to raise the tension between the white and black races."[50] Despite such criticism, *Drum* refused to bend to its critics, and the magazine continued to offer a heavy amount of sex and crime in each issue.

As time progressed and the west African market began to open up, Bailey and *Drum* looked into offering a west African edition that would be more relevant to Ghanaian and Nigerian audiences. Therefore, reporting topical events in west Africa became a major part of the west African edition. By appealing to the interests of the Ghanaian and Nigerian populations in west Africa, circulation began to increase steadily. Anthony Smith states that only "after requesting west African pages, delayed com-

[48]Hopkinson, *In the Fiery Continent*, 45.

[49]Bailey's decision to pull the photograph from the South African edition is even more relevant to this essay, as Stein resigned from *Drum* directly because of this. Stein resented Bailey and voiced his irritation by writing a commentary about the decision for Reuters and the South African Press Association. The article offered a negative image of Bailey and labeled him as a "racialist." This eventually reached Nigeria, and Bailey had to spend a great deal of effort convincing Nigerians that he was not a racialist. (Jim Bailey, "Letting the Genie Out of the Bottle" in *Beat of Drum,* 1:131)

[50]John Chick, "Cecil King, the Press, and Politics in West Africa," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 34(1996), 390.

petition dates, Yoruba, Ibo, Ewe, Fanti, and Ga girls, better shipping, and the words WEST AFRICA somewhere on the cover, we set off a selling spree."[51] In the end *Drum* had, as Sampson deftly put it, "to come to terms with different Africas."[52]

While the west Africanizing of *Drum* progressed rather slowly, it appears that Bailey began seriously to envision creating a wholly separate west African edition as early as the mid-1950s. Unfortunately, Stein's premature and unexpected resignation, which stemmed from Bailey's removal of the Gibson photo from the South African edition's cover, forced the magazine temporarily to delay its expansion until Hopkinson's hiring in 1958. In *Who Killed Mr DRUM?*, Stein's published account of his time with the magazine, he noted that both he and Bailey planned on going "to Nigeria for a year to put the west African offshoot of *Drum* on its feet."[53] Although such a trip never materialized, Stein's statement remains vital to our analysis. Since Stein was brought in as editor-in-chief of *Drum* in 1955, we believe that this agreement between him and Bailey must have been made between late 1955 and early 1957, therefore this demonstrates Bailey's desire to expand the west African edition much earlier than the hiring of Hopkinson, who is ran the magazine during such expansion.[54] Stein's tenure with the magazine lasted roughly three years. His departure impeded *Drum*'s west African expansion significantly, as it forced Bailey to find a replacement for Stein rather than devoting resources and time to the west African edition.

Although delayed significantly, *Drum* would later confront its need to provide two separate editions for its Ghanaian and Nigerian readerships once Hopkinson was hired as the magazine's editor-in-chief. Hopkinson wrote that "my visit to Ghana and Nigeria—short as it was—had showed me that the two countries were different from, and not entirely sympathetic to, each other. Therefore the sooner we were printing a quite separate edition for each territory, the better."[55] Once this happened, *Drum* became more relevant to Nigerians and Ghanaians, and circulation figures in both areas increased accordingly, even outselling its South African and east African counterparts.[56]

[51]Smith, "West African Roll" in *Beat of Drum,* 1:34.
[52]Sampson, "The Early Drum" in ibid., 1:18.
[53]Stein, *Who Killed Mr DRUM?*, 170.
[54]Chapman, *Drum Decade*, 197.
[55]Hopkinson, *In the Fiery Continent*, 63.
[56]Osman, "DRUM: An Introduction," *Creative Camera* no. 235/236 (July/August 1984), 1440.

IV

While *Drum*'s initial success in Nigeria and, for that matter west Africa generally, came from a barebones staff, in order to produce a true west African and eventually Nigerian edition, the magazine would have to cater to the interests of its west African readers. *Drum* continued to publish one edition until, in the words of Jim Bailey, "approximately 1960."[57] This creation of a west African, and eventually a Nigerian, edition meant that more reporters, photographers, and support staff had to be hired and stationed throughout the area, and more pages would have to be designated for articles based on west African events.

The creation of a separate Nigerian edition made *Drum* even more popular in Nigeria. Many of the *Drum* staff believed the creation of two different west African editions was logical, and felt that it was a project that *Drum* should have undertaken years earlier. Roy Paulson, then head of the "business side at Lagos," may have summed up such an opinion when he, according to Hopkinson, stated, "No one in Nigeria wants to read a life of Nkrumah or the story of a Ghanaian football team—and it must be the same, I suppose, in Ghana."[58]

Due to the creation of a separate Nigerian edition, *Drum*'s influence and popularity grew immensely in Nigeria, and the magazine began to set new highs for circulation figures. Hopkinson remembers Roy Paulson stating that "this last month, September, we've sold something like 145,000 copies out of 148,000 sent up to west Africa. The returns are fabulously low, two or three per cent. Why, even in Europe they reckon it's a 'sell-out' when they have six per cent returns, and here with our home-made distribution we're getting half that. I never thought it could happen."[59] Paulson's observations capture how Nigerian readers had successfully received the Nigerian edition by the early 1960s.

Drum's popularity allowed it and its staff to befriend many of Nigeria's most influential elite, as well as its most renowned celebrities. The magazine boasted guest columns by Nigerian celebrities such as Wole Soyinka, Fela Ransom-Kuti, and Cyprian Ekwensi. Politicians and government officials such as Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Obafemi Awolowo, and Nnamdi Azikiwe all graced the pages of *Drum* and often used its pages as a platform to express their opinions.

In comparison to its more established South African brother, issues of the Nigerian edition, once established as a different entity, contained few

[57]Morris, "Rise and Fall," 53.
[58]Hopkinson, *In the Fiery Continent*, 124, 125.
[59]Ibid., 124.

short stories. Part of the reason behind this shift was Hopkinson's newly-implemented photographic approach, which naturally reduced the pages devoted to fiction and replaced them with photographs throughout the various *Drum* versions.

Unlike South Africa, where *Drum* could have a main base in Johannesburg, with a handful of correspondents in Durban and Cape Town, the west African *Drum* was more diffuse. After his first eighteen months with the magazine, Anthony Smith noted that *Drum* had "some 300 agents" throughout Nigeria (among Lagos, Kano, Port Enugu, and Ibadan) as well as in Ghana (Kumasi, Takoradi, and Accra).[60] In particular, the Nigerian edition was *Drum*'s largest endeavor. "In Nigeria alone," Bailey noted, "thanks to our valiant staffers, *DRUM* eventually had twenty-two offices across the country." Nigeria was vastly bigger than any of *Drum*'s other editions, as the magazine had only ten offices throughout the rest of Africa.[61]

Regardless of how many decisions were made in, or how little influence each *Drum* office in Nigeria had on the Lagos, Accra, or Johannesburg offices, these local offices were often the key in efficiently distributing the magazine and making sure Nigerians were buying it. *Drum* could not afford to wait for Nigerians to come to it to buy the magazine, so the west African staff took the magazine to the readers. Often one or two individuals were put in charge of particular areas or cities, and they would serve as the magazine's area representatives, thus taking care of distribution and sales throughout their specific areas.

Often Ghanaian and Nigerian *Drum* employees would go on "promotion tours" in an attempt to increase publicity, attract readers, and increase distribution numbers outside of Lagos and Accra. Anthony Smith remembered that "[t]he promotion tours were unbelievably exhausting. There were bad roads, awash with thick mud. There were ferries, never quite up to the task of carrying the big lorries which were themselves not quite strong enough for the loads they had on board."[62] Due to the brutal and tiring nature of these promotional tours, it was vital for the magazine to have many agents throughout west African cities and countryside.

[60]Smith, "West African Roll" in *Beat of Drum*, 1:34.
[61]Bailey notes that the magazine had four offices in South Africa (presumably in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban, and possibly Port Elizabeth), three in Ghana, one in Sierra Leone, one in Rhodesia, and one in Kenya, as well as one office based in London. (Jim Bailey, preface to *Kenya, The National Epic: From the Pages of Drum Magazine*, ed. Jim Bailey, Carole Cooper and Garth Bundeh (Nairobi, 1993), iv.
[62]Smith, "West African Roll" in *Beat of Drum,* 1:34.

Although sales rose steadily, the magazine failed to become profitable in Nigeria until the late 1950s or early 1960s. During the lean years Bailey was often forced to cut corners and become extremely cost-conscious. He had a reputation for "penny-pinching," leading to major disputes with his editors and managers.[63] *Drum*'s operating costs often outweighed profits, and it took Bailey nearly two decades to devise a system that would make *Drum* profitable. As a result equipment was often outdated or needed repair. Often staff members had to make do with shoddy automobiles, desks without chairs, and broken camera equipment (Christian Gbagbo, a *Drum* photographer in Ghana, even complained that he had to take photographs with a camera that had a lens covered in fungus).[64]

Throughout the history of the Bailey-owned *Drum*s, the issue of disparities in pay was never fully resolved. In particular, white staff members were often paid much higher salaries than their black peers. While the argument that white staff members were often in leadership positions and thus should naturally be paid more appears logical, Bailey's belief that he treated all employees fairly regardless of race becomes blurred when lower-level white staff members earned much more than Africans in equal or even superior positions. This was particularly true in *Drum*'s satellite offices in east and west Africa because, according to Bailey, "at the time whites were mostly better organisers and better organisation men."[65]

During Hopkinson's initial visit to the Lagos office, Nelson Ottah, then only a reporter but who would later become editor of *Drum*'s Nigerian edition, confronted Hopkinson on the disparity in pay between Ottah and one of the white clerks. The newly-appointed, appalled, and equally hesitant Hopkinson responded with: "What I believe myself, Nelson, is that everyone should be paid according to the contribution he makes—irrespective of his colour, his age, the number of his children, or the grandparents dependents on his support. . . . All I can say is this: if you'll help me build up this paper in Nigeria, I'll do my utmost to see you get a fair return."[66] Ottah held up his end of the bargain by making the Nigerian edition of the magazine into a "paying" enterprise, but it remains unclear whether or not he received any sort of compensation for his work with the magazine. Since he remained with the magazine for many years after this initial meeting, it appears that the pay dispute was eventually resolved, although certainly with a heavy dose of foot-dragging on the part of management.

[63]Nelson Ottah, "The Inside Story" in *Beat of Drum*, 1:111.
[64]Hopkinson, *In the Fiery Continent*, 28.
[65]Jim Bailey, "Letting the Genie Out of the Bottle" in *Beat of Drum,* 1:125.
[66]Hopkinson, *In the Fiery Continent*, 38.

Bailey's frugality, however, did not completely incapacitate *Drum*'s writers and editors. Often editors could arrange for pay increases, put in orders for new equipment, or increase expenditure budgets if they could successfully convince or haggle with Bailey. When Hopkinson arrived in Nigeria for the first time as editor-in-chief, his editorial staff consisted of only two members—Nelson Ottah, as "local editor" (which we believe consisted of writing and editing the majority of the stories that originated in the Lagos office) and Matthew Faji, whose camera work needed much improvement and was not on a level of the South African journalists such as Schadeberg, Magubane, or Berry.

Nigerian *Drum*, however, overcame Bailey's frugality, a relatively small staff, and various other obstacles. *Drum*'s success under such strict financial guidelines is a testament to the work and dedication of its reporters and editors. Broken lorries, fungus coated lenses, and a general dearth of basic amenities did not prevent *Drum* from becoming a successful magazine. *Drum*'s office in Kano, according to Hopkinson, "turned out to be a gap between two houses, with a piece of corrugated iron as roof and a long trestle table as equipment."[67] Yet even under the harshest conditions, Nigerian *Drum* met deadlines and produced a quality product.

Although he was thousands of miles away in Johannesburg, Hopkinson's influence on the magazine's progress in Nigeria must not be overlooked, as the creation of a separate edition in Nigeria almost coincided with his appointment as editor-in-chief. Unlike the magazine's previous editors in chief, Hopkinson, hired by *Drum* at the age of 53, had already had a successful career in the English media and had hands-on experience editing and laying out a magazine.[68] Hopkinson's experience was greatly welcomed by the *Drum* management, and his ability to train journalists and photographers in a relatively short period of time quickly became an asset for the magazine. His influence on the Nigerian *Drum*'s staff remains apparent, and Ottah credits Hopkinson for "everything I subsequently came to know about the really professional side of magazine journalism."[69]

Hopkinson dramatically altered *Drum*'s appearance, as well as how the magazine was put together. He sought to clean up the magazine's layout by making it more organized and essentially transformed *Drum* from a publication featuring articles and short fiction into a magazine dominated by photojournalism. Rather than featuring multiple stories or photos on the cover, the Hopkinson-led *Drum* featured one attention grabbing

[67]Ibid., 122.
[68]Morris, "The Rise and Fall," 53.
[69]Ottah, "The Inside Story" in *Beat of Drum,* 1:110.

photo on the cover, much like *Life* or *Paris-Match*.[70] During his initial visit to the *Drum* office in Accra, Hopkinson proclaimed at a staff meeting, "*Drum* is going to become a picture magazine. Yes, I know you've had a lot of photographs in it in the past, but now the photographs are going to be the paper. People are going to buy *Drum* for its pictures."[71] For the Hopkinson-run *Drum*, image—particularly the image on the cover—was everything, in the sense that an attractive looking, well put together magazine would catch the eye of potential readers. In *Fiery Continent* Hopkinson stated that "[t]he cover's the poster. Make it attractive enough—and people will buy. When we get the paper known, they'll take the contents on trust."[72]

One of *Drum*'s most remarkable achievements was that it sold thousands of issues per year in a continent where the level of literacy was often low and the formally-educated segment comprised a negligible percentage of the total population. This was particularly true in Nigeria where, according to Bailey, "[i]n those days (the beginning days of *Drum* in Nigeria) the literacy rate in Nigeria was about five or ten per cent."[73] Bailey's numbers are a bit off. The 1952–53 official census in Nigeria listed 6% of Nigerians as having an Elementary IV (Standard II) education and another 6% being literate through other means. These numbers were much higher in urban areas, where Lagos's literacy rate was estimated at 49.1%, 33.7% having a Elementary IV education while 15.4% gaining literacy through alternative means.[74] With the overwhelming majority of the Nigerian populace being illiterate, trying to market a magazine to a widely illiterate market proved quite difficult, as it severely limited the amount of potential readers.

Africa's largely illiterate public, however, may have provided the Hopkinson-led *Drum* with a considerable advantage over its competitors. For *Drum*, photojournalism and photograph spreads would often be the basis of the magazine, limiting the amount of text and thus allowing the magazine to attract both literate and illiterate readers. Therefore a low literacy rate may have actually served to strengthen and preserve *Drum*'s position as the dominant magazine throughout Africa.

While Hopkinson had his own master vision of what *Drum* should be, his advice and vision were not always shared and followed by local edi-

[70]Hopkinson, *In the Fiery Continent*, 37.
[71]Ibid., 27.
[72]Ibid., 20.
[73]Bailey, preface to *Nigeria,* 1:x.
[74]Nigeria. Department of Statistics, *Population Census of Nigeria 1952–53* (Lagos, 1953), 8.

tors such as Ottah. Ottah states, "I decided that I would do my best to satisfy my chairman's craving in each issue of the magazine. But, at the time, I had also made up my mind that *Drum* should be allowed to become more political and less archaeological—to become a magazine for the living rather than a compendium of the weird and the malefic in Nigeria."[75] Thus, under Ottah, Nigerian *Drum* became a highly politicized paper.

While Nigerian *Drum* was predominantly influenced and shaped by Hopkinson and Ottah, Bailey maintained guidelines with vigor. For instance, he strove to keep *Drum* on the "cutting edge" of Nigerian and African journalism, but he also wanted to avoid direct conflict with government officials—therefore inflammatory comments were to be avoided whenever possible (two warnings that were often ignored by Ottah). Instead of inciting the ill-will of African governments, Bailey felt that *Drum* should continue its formula of cheesecake and crime. The influence of this cheesecake and crime formula resounded throughout the pages of the west African and eventually the Nigerian editions, where articles such as "A New Terror Gang is Born,"[76] "Smuggling – Nigeria's Curse,"[77] "Is Shitta a Murderer?,"[78] "Jack the Ripper of Abakaliki,"[79] "Is Ritual Murder Still Going On?"[80] and "Terror in the Cameroons"[81] appeared frequently. Attempting to duplicate the South African version's Bethal success, the magazine tried to expose criminal injustices whenever it could. One of the west African edition's most lauded exposés was its uncovering of the harsh conditions of Fernando Po entitled "Free Ticket to Hell" in the April 1957 issue.[82]

The overwhelming majority of *Drum*'s politically minded stories presented a positive spin on elections, political leaders, political parties, and the government as a whole. One must contextualize this coverage within

[75]Ottah, "Inside Story" in *Beat of Drum,* 1:107.
[76]Godfrey P. Daramola, "A New Terror Gang is Born," *Drum (*September 1959), taken from *Nigeria,* 1:169.
[77]"Smuggling—Nigeria's curse," *Drum* (January 1961), taken from *Nigeria,* 2:23–24.
[78]"Is Shitta a murder?," *Drum* (November 1961), taken from *Nigeria,* 2:33–34.
[79]Ottah, "Jack the Ripper of Abakaliki," *Drum* (December 1958), taken from *Nigeria,* 1:162-64.
[80]Ottah, "Is Ritual Murder Still Going On?," *Drum* (January 1959), taken from *Nigeria,* 1:132-34.
[81]Ottah, "Terror in the Cameroons," *Drum* (May 1960), taken from *Nigeria,* 1:229–32.
[82]Isaac Pepple, "Free Ticket to Hell," *Drum* (April 1957), taken from *Nigeria*, 1:74–77.

the time period. *Drum* was publishing during the dawn of independence and the pinnacle of pan-Africanism, so it was only natural for the magazine and its staff to be overly upbeat and overwhelmed with optimism. Regardless, the magazine did not make any major effort to produce "hard hitting" criticism reminiscent of the other newspapers of the period.[83] In the August 1960 issue, the magazine printed an article entitled "Our Boat of Destiny," which declared that Nigeria had "at the helm of her affairs, six honest men," and even featured a doctored photo of all rowing together in a canoe.[84] These "honest men" were Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Azikiwe, Awolowo, Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello, Dr. M. I. Okpara, and Chief S. L. Akintola. The piece gave specific bits of advice (but no harsh criticism) to the leaders. It stated:

> To Sir Abubakar we say: Keep rowing without rocking. To Chief Awolowo: Row, but keep in time with the others. To Dr. Azikiwe we say: Mind the dangerous ground ahead. To the Sarduana: Keep steering straight ahead. To Chief Akintola: Keep on pulling strongly. And to Dr Okpara: Don't try to row faster than the others.[85]

The magazine's initial strategy to integrate politics into its pages was conducive to features about specific politicians. The above politicians had numerous features written about their political life, background, interests, or hobbies. These features were often bland and did not really strike the reader as political, but fit perfectly well with the magazine's strategy to aim for "timeless" pieces that would still be newsworthy by print time. The magazine published articles such as an interview with Azikiwe's father, who confessed that "[m]y son did not take my advice (to stay out of politics)," and a profile of the minister of labor, Joseph Modupe Johnson, as "a gay firework of the new Africa."[86] Usually such profiles presented leaders in a positive light; this would change as *Drum* became more and more politically oriented.

Bailey considered South Africa home; he certainly could not feel the same about Nigeria or, for that matter, any of the other *Drum* offices

[83]See, e.g., Adigun A. B. Agbaje, *The Nigerian Press, Hegemony, and the Social Construction of Legitimacy, 1960-1983* (New York, 1992); Luke Uka Uche, *Mass Media, People and Politics in Nigeria* (New Delhi, 1989).
[84]"Our Boat of Destiny," *Drum* (September 1960), taken from *Nigeria,* 1:240.
[85]Ibid., 241.
[86]Isaac Pepple, "I Begged Him to Quit Politics, Says Zik's Father," *Drum* (April 1958), taken from *Nigeria*, 1:8-9; "The Glamorous J.M. Johnson Gets a Kick Out of Life," *Drum* (September 1960), taken from *Nigeria,* 1:245.

throughout the continent. For Bailey, other African cultures and societies were foreign and weird. By visiting the *Drum* offices throughout the continent, he could only begin to understand the complexities of each region, nation, or culture. Nigeria, to Bailey, forever remained an oddity, and most of his personal accounts of his experiences in west Africa emphasize these oddities, thus giving the impression that his experiences in Nigeria were dominated by the weird and adventurous. In *Nigeria: The Birth of Africa's Greatest Country*, a two-volume collection of articles and stories that appeared throughout the magazine's Nigeria edition, Bailey remembers a particular titbit of advice that he gave Anthony Smith, the first editor of the west African satellite offices. Bailey wrote, "I advised him (Smith) that when one's stomach was unaccustomed to tropical conditions it was wise to take a form of liquid cement to west Africa. His first letter from west Africa hit my desk in Johannesburg. It began with three words: 'I'm shitting blood.'"[87]

Though Bailey would eventually relinquish most of his creative control to Hopkinson and Ottah, he maintained a great deal of influence on the magazine's content. In *The Beat Of Drum*, Ottah remembered Bailey's naïve thinking about Nigeria and its cultures, and remarks:

> I had by then learnt many things about Mr Bailey. I had learnt to rely on him as a mine of quaint, bizarre and weird information. I had also learnt not to take his information at face value. . . . It was simply as a result of my eventually finding out that the not-so-genteel and not-so-educated Nigerians from whom he got most of such information generally exaggerated them in the telling, and that Mr Bailey who, despite his long acquaintance with Africa, was still in the habit of seeing his dear Africa as the locale of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Lost World*, generally accepted it without question.[88]

It appears that such anecdotal stories encapsulate what Nigeria and, for that matter, what west Africa meant to Bailey. For the Nigerian readership the area meant something much different, and the magazine would not truly tap into the wants and needs of this readership until *Drum*'s Nigerian staff was given more creative control.

From reading Ottah's statement it becomes clear Bailey's "dear Africa" or "dear Nigeria" was often full of half-truths, legends, or even outright falsehoods. Consequently, the initial issues of the Nigerian edi-

[87]Bailey, preface to *Nigeria*, 1:ix.
[88]Ottah, "The Inside Story" in *Beat of Drum*, 1:113.

tion were encouraged to explore the spectacular and mythical. Throughout this period *Drum* printed articles featuring towns "where pygmies are treated like giants,"people eating "dog steaks for dinner,"myths that left their readers asking "could it be true,"and other societal oddities (both real and fabricated).[89]

It appears that eventually Bailey was wise enough to realize his own biases and naïve opinions towards Nigeria, and he allowed the satellite offices some semblance of autonomy. Bailey's influence on the magazine was still evident and he refused to have the final say in matters of primary importance. Ottah said that "[u]nlike Harry Luce, Mr Bailey never edited stories written by his field editors…. But he had his own way of letting a writer know that he was not 'with it', as far as the chairman was concerned."[90] This was particularly true with the Nigerian edition, as Ottah was given control, although not the complete control of editor-in-chief.

While Bailey did eventually agree to give the west African editions relative autonomy as far as content goes, he continued to keep a close eye on finances. "For the sake of economy," writes Bailey, "I began the organisation of our sales force and their supervision by motorcycle."[91] Unlike most of *Drum*'s writers, photographers, and editors, Bailey never lost sight of the fact that the magazine was a business. Throughout the time he owned *Drum*, Bailey invested thousands of pounds, possibly more, into the magazine without receiving any sort of significant profit. Often he had to pump monies from his own personal savings in order to keep the magazine and its affiliates afloat.

The split of the west African *Drum* into a Ghanaian edition and a Nigerian edition brought in higher profits and thus allowed the paper to expand. Roughly two years after Hopkinson's arrival, it appears that *Drum* decided to make a concerted effort to spread into the eastern region of Nigeria. Soon Solomon Manquah was stationed in Enugu and was to act as *Drum*'s cameraman for the east region.

By the early 1960s *Drum* had experienced unprecedented popularity and growth, and the magazine had a considerable amount of influence throughout west Africa. The Nigerian edition amassed a circulation figure close to 90,000 per month while the Ghanaian edition's circulation

[89]Ottah, "The Town Where Pygmies Are Treated Like Giants," Drum (October 1959), taken from *Nigeria,* 1:204–06; Bob Nwangoro, "Dog Steaks For Dinner," *Drum* (January 1957), taken from *Nigeria,* 1:44. "Could It Be True?" became frequent columns where readers could ask *Drum* about local legends, myths, and rumors. Source: *Nigeria*, 1:59-60.
[90]Ottah, "The Inside Story" in *Beat of Drum,* 1:113.
[91]Bailey, preface to *Nigeria,* 1:x.

peaked at 65,000.[92] Richard Priebe, a scholar of west African literature, proposed that "no magazine has ever had the popularity *Drum* had in Ghana."[93] In Nigeria the magazine experienced similar success. In "The Critic and Society: Barthes, Leftocracy and Other Mythologies," Wole Soyinka remarked that "the average Nigerian reader [of the 1950s and 60s] . . . was weaned on *Drum* magazine…"[94] Though the readers had access to other magazines and newspapers, it is important to note that Soyinka, as a driving force in Nigerian literature, recognized *Drum*'s impact.

V

By appointing Ottah as editor of the Nigerian edition, *Drum* was embarking on a new era. His promotion marks one of the particular instances where the Nigerian *Drum* became very much different from its counterparts in Ghana, east Africa, or even Johannesburg, for this was the first time in the publication's history that an African was given some semblance of control over the content of the magazine.[95] To Ottah it was only natural that a Nigerian should run *Drum*'s Nigerian edition, and on his initial meeting with Hopkinson, he asked, "perhaps you will explain to me, Mr. Hopkinson, why a white man—Mr. Agnew in Accra, who has never been in Nigeria for a whole week in his life—has been put over me to tell me what to do, and to instruct me in what will interest my own people?"[96] History would prove Ottah correct, as he would go on to transform the Nigerian edition into an extremely popular magazine and, more importantly in the opinion of Bailey, a profitable endeavor.

The reasons for Ottah's promotion were twofold. The first, and ultimately more important in the eyes of *Drum* management, was that the white head of the Nigerian office, referred to only as Agnew, had decided to leave the paper, and *Drum*'s dire financial state made it advantageous to find a cheaper replacement to manage the Nigerian office.[97] The second reason for Ottah's promotion was that he had dazzled both Bailey and

[92]Richard Priebe, "Popular Writing in Ghana: A Sociology and Rhetoric" in *Readings in African Popular Culture*, ed. Karin Barber (Bloomington, 1997), 91.
[93]Ibid.
[94]Wole Soyinka, "The Critic and Society: Barthes, Leftocracy and Other Mythologies" in *Art, Dialogue and Outrage* (London, 1993), 115.
[95]Though Henry Nxumalo and Can Themba were promoted to associate editors, they were never given the levels of autonomy that was bestowed on Ottah.
[96]Hopkinson, *In the Fiery Continent*, 37.
[97]Ibid., 124–25.

Hopkinson with his ability to find newsworthy stories and determine which stories were fit to print and which ones were not. Ottah swiftly increased the Nigerian edition's circulation figures in his first few months as the magazine's editor.

From the very beginning of his career with *Drum*, Ottah impressed Bailey, Hopkinson, and virtually every other member of *Drum*'s Nigerian staff. One of his first contributions to west African Drum was a profile on Nnamdi Azikiwe. The article was celebrated by *Drum*'s management, and Ottah cemented his reputation as "a crack go-getter."[98] In *In the Fiery Continent*, Hopkinson notes his feeling about Ottah having the potential to be a remarkable journalist after perusing his previous work:

> As I looked slowly through the material Nelson had assembled, I felt, for the first time since I came out [of Britain to edit *Drum*], a glimmer of hope for the future of our magazine. The writing was sometimes long-winded and repetitive. . . . But there were flashes of brilliance; phrases of revelation. Above all, the choice of subjects was first-rate; in Ottah we had stumbled upon a natural journalist.[99]

Having worked previously on Azikiwe's *West African Pilot*, Ottah had been one of *Drum*'s only professionally trained African journalists (although Ottah's training, by his own admission, was at best negligible).[100] After meeting Ottah, Hopkinson saw his potential and hoped that *Drum* could successfully attach itself to Ottah in order to ensure the paper's success. Hopkinson wrote that "I felt committed in my mind . . . to Nelson for encouragement, and whatever guidance he would accept in his drive to soar to the summit of West African journalism, dragging—as I hoped—our paper after him."[101] Although he was often headstrong and reckless, Ottah also was eager to succeed, and it was apparent to every member of the *Drum* staff that he wanted to become a topflight Nigerian journalist. Later, the Nigerian *Drum* would become Ottah's platform to express his political opinions and climb to the forefront of journalism in Nigeria.

While Ottah transformed the magazine, he was not given free reign over the magazine. Initially Bailey may not have fully believed that Ottah could successfully run the Nigerian edition, and in 1961 Alan Rake, the long-time editor of the East African edition, was sent to Nigeria as man-

[98]Ottah, "The Inside Story" in *Beat of Drum,* 1:108.
[99]Hopkinson, *In the Fiery Continent*, 39.
[100]Ottah, "The Inside Story" in *Beat of Drum,* 1:102.
[101]Hopkinson, *In the Fiery Continent*, 45.

aging editor. Rake admitted that his duties as managing editor were "really to keep an eye on expenditures and ensure *Drum*'s survival in the shifting sands of post independence politics."[102]

In producing Nigerian *Drum*, Ottah was certainly not alone, as he had much help from the rest of his predominantly African staff. Unfortunately, documentation on many of the Nigerian edition's staff members is extremely rare and only minimal accounts of their work and contributions to the Bailey-owned *Drum* exist. Consequently there is very little information on the careers of writers such as Samuel Umunna Uba, an extremely gifted journalist who went on to be the first African to join the editorial staff of the London *Times*, and photographer Matthew Faji.[103]

With its many successes throughout the continent, it is easy to overlook the many problems that plagued the Nigerian edition. A high staff turnover rate remained a dilemma that Nigerian *Drum* had to repeatedly deal with.[104] While poor wages may have been a contributing factor, Ottah himself appears to be a main reason for the magazine's horrific turnover rate. Ottah's standards for assistants and staff were impeccably high, and one was usually fired after failing to meet these standards. He writes, "I might, who knows, well have fired them (his various staff members) so quickly not so much because they were so bad as because I was in a hurry, as Mr. Hopkinson had hinted at, to make it to the summit of the west African journalism."[105] Regardless of the reasons for the high turnover rate, Ottah acquired a reputation for being "the fastest gun in shooting down journalists," something he later refers to "as gross as leprosy."[106]

[102]Alan Rake, "A Drum boy in Africa," *New African*, no. 375 (June 1999), 12.
[103]Ottah, "The Inside Story" in *Beat of Drum,* 1:112.
[104]Oddly, few of the supremely talented black South African writers and journalists took positions in the east African and west African editions of the magazine. Few of these men could be considered true journalists, as they were more fiction writers or artists than reporters. Such was the case of Lewis Nkosi, Es'kia Mphahlele (who lived for a significant time in Nigeria teaching African literature but never contributed to the Nigerian edition), Casey Motsitsi, and Todd Matshikiza. Of the many true journalists, Nxumalo was murdered while on assignment in a township, Nakasa took a scholarship through Harvard and was on his way to becoming an influential international journalist in America when he abruptly died in New York City (the reports were that he committed suicide by jumping from a New York skyscraper but rumors surfaced that Nakasa was pushed by South African officials), and Maimane went on to work for the British Broadcasting Corporation. It appears, however, that few, if any, of these writers were offered positions in the satellite offices when they were forced into exile by South African government.
[105]Ottah, "The Inside Story" in *Beat of Drum, vol. 1*, 112.
[106]Ibid.

As the Nigerian edition became more and more Nigerian rather than South African, the style and content of the magazine dramatically shifted. Nelson Ottah's passion for politics drew the magazine deeper into political debates, and he feels "that it was in the field of political journalism that Nigerian *Drum* made its greatest impact."[107] Rake wrote that "month by month [Ottah] would write huge diatribes painfully dissecting the ethnic weakness of the Nigerian political system."[108] Sampson noted that "[Ottah] wrote with a political extraversion very different from the black South Africans."[109] Whereas the South African edition often needed to avoid direct conflict with the apartheid regime, the Nigerian edition could initially discuss politics far more freely, although military coups and the Biafran war would eventually alter this relationship. As democracy in Nigeria began to deteriorate, so too would the magazine's freedom to openly criticize politics, which would ultimately lead to Nigerian *Drum*'s downfall.

Ottah's writing was often overtly political, and no politician could escape his criticism. As time progressed, his writing began to offer blunt criticism of prominent leaders and officials. In an article entitled "Zik's Troubled Years," Ottah concluded with a scathing criticism of Azikiwe.[110] Ottah writes, "[i]f June, 14, 1958, has any lesson at all for Zik, it is that his charm is no longer so bewitching; that his ability has become slightly suspect; and that his eloquence may no longer be able to compete with the growing realism of Nigeria politics."[111] For Ottah, a former employee of Azikiwe and a proud Igbo, to offer such blatant criticism remains rather impressive. Although at one point Ottah aligned himself with Awolowo's Action Group, he would come to attack the AG as well.

Ottah detested ethnic politics, dishonest politicians, and a populace that failed to hold their leaders accountable for repeated failures. Often he expressed his impatience with Nigerian politics. Ottah's "Straight from the Shoulder" article from the December 1958 issue might be the best example of this, as the piece calls out virtually every prominent Nigerian leader for "a lack of guts." The Nigerian populace is not exempt from Ottah's sharp tongue, and he goes on to state

> [i]t is lack of guts that has stopped the people from telling their leaders that they must, in everything they do, put Nigeria first, put one country,

[107]Ibid., 115.
[108]Rake, "Drum Boy," 12.
[109]Sampson, *DRUM: An African Adventure*, 213.
[110]Ottah, "Zik's Troubled Years," *Drum* (October 1958), taken from *Nigeria,* 1:81-83.
[111]Ibid., 83.

> above regions or tribes. It is lack of guts that has stopped the people from firmly demanding of their leaders a bill of rights—to protect the liberty of individuals and minority groups after independence.[112]

Ottah felt he had a duty to present an honest, straightforward opinion to readers, and he began to offer more blatantly critical articles by the 1960s. His style often pulled no punches and, as the years went on, Ottah began to throw more punches. In his article entitled "Sir Abubakar Balewa is no Turtle-Dove," Ottah writes, "Sir Abubakar Tafawa… might be snuffed out by any of the four falcons hovering at his flank."[113] The four falcons to which he is referring are Azikiwe, Bello, Awolowo, and Chief Festus Okotie-Eboh. Although he initially praised politicians such as Azikiwe and Awolowo, he began to sour on them as time wore on, and his writings reflect the evolution of his political alliances.

Bailey and the rest of *Drum*'s management were willing to allow Ottah to politicize the Nigerian edition, but Ottah was told not to stray away from the staple topics of sex, crime, and cheesecake. Ottah admitted that "I couldn't replace its cheesecake pictures with anything more serious as Mr Bailey firmly continued to maintain that sex was universal."[114] Consequently *Drum* continued to offer Nigerian readers healthy doses of sexy cover girls and crime, as well as political discourse.

While the brash political nature the magazine had adopted boosted sales, it also brought the attention of the authorities. It appears that Ottah—and consequently Nigerian *Drum*—were often reckless and even baited governmental authorities. In remembering the magazine's coverage of Awolowo's trial and conviction, Ottah states that he saw Awolowo as "a poor man's Jesus" and he was unwilling to allow such an atrocity to go unreported. Ottah stated that "I disobeyed all warnings, both visceral and external, that I was receiving. I was prepared to join the chief in his prominent solitude should the Nigerian authorities threaten me with either shutting up or going to jail."[115]

By committing itself to producing scathing editorials, lively photos, and harsh criticism of Nigerian officials, *Drum* felt the need to comment on any major political event, and this would eventually prove to be a major obstacle to the Bailey-owned Nigerian *Drum* and even more disas-

[112]Ottah, "Straight From the Shoulder," *Drum* (December 1958), taken from *Nigeria*, 1:91.
[113]"Sir Abubakar Balewa is no Turtle-Dove," *Drum* (May 1960), taken from *Nigeria,* 1:212.
[114]Ottah, "Inside Story" in *Beat of Drum,* 1:114.
[115]Ibid., 1:115.

trous to Ottah's career. About a month following the 1966 coup, Nigerian *Drum* ran an article entitled "Sarduana [Bello] Rises in His Shroud to Confess his Sins." According to Ottah the article was designed to "demonstrate to the new military regime that *Drum* was all for it (the 1966 Coup), and all against the former civil regime."[116] However, by the time the issue came to press, Sarduana Bello had been murdered and the enraged north had exploded against the Igbo-led coup, which eventually led to the Nigerian civil war.

This proved to be biggest hurdle that the Nigerian *Drum* had to overcome. Ottah, a proud Igbo, refused to maintain a neutral stance, and the magazine began to side with the Biafran side. Consequently *Drum*'s relations in Nigeria quickly deteriorated. Ottah's actions went directly against Bailey's apprehensiveness of politically minded editors. Bailey insisted that it was the editor's responsibility to avoid inflammatory statements that could put the magazine in hot water with African governments, while continuing to produce a product that would interest readers and sell papers. This was a balance that Ottah could not maintain, and it severely impeded *Drum*'s success in Nigeria.

Aware that bad relations with government officials could hinder a paper's ability to operate, and thus deeply damage profit margins, Bailey responded quickly and attempted some sort of damage control. In order to calm tensions between *Drum* and northern Nigerians officials, Bailey personally organized a polo match between the emir of Katsina's team and a respected team from England.[117] Bailey's act of goodwill, however, would only provide a cosmetic cure to Drum's tarnished image in the north.

Following the "Sardauna" article's printing, Ottah, by his own admission, "became a hunted man from the very minute that *Drum* issue… went on sale."[118] He left his position as editor of Nigerian *Drum*, went into hiding, and was eventually pressured into joining the Biafran side of the Nigerian civil war, where he became "Biafran Directorate for Propaganda." Thus the "Sardauna" article, in effect, killed Ottah's career with *Drum*, as many thought that the postwar Nigerian readership would not accept an Igbo as the editor of the magazine. In 1973 Bailey brought Ottah back, but this time as an advisor, which permitted him to stay in the background rather than the limelight.

Losing Ottah was a major blow to *Drum*, not only because he was the driving force behind the Nigerian office and edition for so long, but also

[116]Ibid., 1:117.
[117]Sampson, *DRUM: An African Adventure*, 217.
[118]Ottah, "Inside Story" in *Beat of Drum,* 1:117.

because the magazine struggled to find a stalwart editor who could act as a support pillar for the magazine during such tumultuous times. Bailey planned on Sam Uba taking over for Ottah, but he was refused entry into Nigeria during the Biafran war. Consequently Dapo Daramola replaced Ottah and, according to Ottah, he was quick to leave when he "had come by money and left the firm to enjoy it."[119] Over the next eight years, Nigerian *Drum* struggled to replace Ottah, and by the time it had begun to rebound from Ottah's departure, the Bailey-owned Nigerian *Drum* had come to an end.

From early on, Bailey envisioned *Drum* tapping into the growing popularity of the Pan-Africanist movement. The potential to connect the Pan-Africanist wave sweeping across the continent to *Drum*'s offices with contacts from Monrovia to Dar es Salaam, from Cairo to Cape Town appeared obvious to Bailey. *Drum*'s main hurdle to acceptance by Pan-Africanists was that it was based in South Africa, as opposed to Pan-Africanist bastions of Ghana, Nigeria, and Tanzania. Therefore it became quite difficult for the magazine to tap into the movement's popularity.

To compound matters *Drum* was owned and often seen as being controlled by whites. Many African governments came to distrust the magazine and often made life difficult for its editors.[120] In Ghana Colonel Acheampong's coup of January 1972 spelled disaster for *Drum*'s Ghanaian edition. In a 1984 interview by Patricia Morris for the *New African*, Bailey stated that "[w]e were asked for a bribe of C9000 [9000 Cedis] by the army, which we refused to pay. Then paper and ink ran out anyway because the national resources had been pinched. So we had to cease publication in Ghana at that point."[121] Such bad luck and conflicts with west African governments continued, and the Nigerian edition of *Drum* would suffer a fate similar to its Ghanaian counterpart.

By the 1970s the majority of the African continent acquired a disdain for, and firm opposition to, the apartheid regime. Around this time Nigerian officials had led the movement to force South Africa out of the British Commonwealth.[122] It was here where Bailey ran into difficulties. He was seen as a white South African, exploiting African labor throughout the continent in order to produce profits, and many Nigerians thoroughly

[119]Ibid., 1:120.
[120]Many African leaders viewed the magazine as an agent of the South African government, and *Drum* had already been briefly shut down by the Nkrumah government in 1962. (Tom Hopkinson, "How to do Business in Ghana," *Creative Camera* no. 235/236 (July/August 1984), 1450-51.
[121]Morris, "Rise and Fall," 53.
[122]Sampson, *DRUM: An African Adventure*, 203.

resented this.[123] This, combined with resentment from Nigerian officials stemming back to the Biafran War, proved to be the downfall of the Jim Bailey-owned *Drum* in Nigeria. In 1974 Nigerian officials passed the Enterprises Promotion Decree, which prevented foreign ownership of many kinds of businesses in Nigeria.[124] While Bailey was personally assured by the then-attorney general, Chief T. Elias, that the decree would not apply to *Drum*, Bailey soon found out that it did indeed apply to him. He was forced out of journalism in Nigeria and the Nigerian *Drum* was sold to Nigerian owners, thus killing Bailey's dream of creating an African-based media empire.[125]

VI

By the late 1960s and 1970s the Nationalist Party in South Africa had become more militant and skilled in its efforts to stamp out any forms of resistance or anti-apartheid discourse. Police and intelligence forces acquired a vested interest in the activities of *Drum* publications, and they began to interfere with it in hopes of forcing *Drum* out of existence. The South African office was raided by the South African security forces multiple times, and its staff was harassed to the extent that virtually every writer and editor was forced into exile. While never succeeding in fully incapacitating the magazine, this interference, along with the start up of *Pace* (a government-owned pale imitation of *Drum*), did disrupt the magazine enough that Bailey was forced to sell *Drum*'s South African edition.[126]

Although *Drum*'s demise was not as glorious as its impact, academics are increasingly giving *Drum* the credit and attention that it merits. The Bailey-owned magazine ran continuously throughout Africa for thirty-three years, and at the height of its continental popularity, the Bailey-owned *Drum* sold close to 500,000 copies per month.[127] While these circulation figures are certainly impressive, they hardly represented a sizable dent in the millions of potential readers throughout the continent. Thus

[123]Bailey even noted that he was labeled a racist by many Nigerians after Sylvester Stein published his version of the dispute over the Althea Gibson cover. As noted, Bailey refused to publish the cover in South Africa, but he did allow it to be printed for the west African and east African editions. Stein's version of the story, however, had already been published before.
[124]Ottah, "Inside Story" in *Beat of Drum*, 1:120; Morris, "Rise and Fall," 53.
[125]Sampson, *DRUM: An African Adventure*, 214.
[126]Ibid., 220-22.
[127]Morris, "Rise and Fall," 2.

one cannot claim that Drum fulfilled its goal of becoming Africa's version of *Life* or *Time*. It did, however, come closer than any other African magazine before or after it.

Drum's expansion into Nigeria proved both successful and disastrous. Almost single-handedly, it introduced the world to the possibility of an intra-African media outlet and became the magazine of choice for many readers throughout the continent. Although Bailey's dream had been dismantled prematurely, *Drum* proved that such possibilities could succeed under the proper circumstances.

Who actually should be credited with Drum's success in Nigeria, and who is to be blamed for its failures are two questions that may never be fully answered, as many of the editors and managers—Hopkinson, Bailey, and Ottah, in particular—took credit for the successes and blame each other for its shortcomings. The three repeatedly butted heads over creative control and budgets, and all three should be praised and faulted for the success and failure of *Drum* in Nigeria. But even their failure has left an enduring legacy: *Drum*, a racy magazine, rich with photographs and ethnographic data.