

DOSSIER

COMUNICAÇÃO: LÍNGUAS, RITUAIS E
MASS-MEDIA EM ÁFRICA

ETHIOPIA'S "RADIO VOICE OF THE GOSPEL" (1963-1977) IN CONTEXT-SOME HISTORICAL OBSERVATIONS ON INTERNATIONAL SHORT WAVE RADIO BROADCASTING TO AND FROM SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

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Introduction: Radio Voice of the Gospel in Brief

Radio Voice of the Gospel (RVOG) was a major international Christian missionary radio station based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Owned and operated by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), it transmitted programmes in altogether twenty languages to Africa and Asia during the years 1963-1977. RVOG was an ecumenical project in which churches of various denominations – from Protestants to the old Ethiopian Orthodox Church – participated.

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RVOG was meant to be “a voice of the voiceless”, an instrument through which the African and Asian indigenous churches – using a network of strategically located programme production studios inside each target area – could reach their own peoples with a culturally and socially relevant message. The intended professional quality programming was to be carefully balanced between evangelistic content (about 30 per cent of programme time) and cultural, developmental, entertainment, general information and news programmes (about 70 per cent), all produced from a Christian perspective. Thus, the majority of RVOG programming was clearly meant to be of a non-evangelistic, more general nature appealing to a wide audience. Within this general programme content the concept of “development” was a key motivating factor.

In March 1977, as a consequence of the radicalization of the Ethiopian revolution, RVOG was occupied and nationalized by Mengistu Haile Mariam’s Marxist military government. The station then received a new name reflecting its new ideological purpose: “Radio Voice of Revolutionary Ethiopia”. Besides earlier studies by others, the present author’s master’s thesis and forthcoming doctoral thesis deal in greater detail with various aspects of this unique international radio project.¹ However, this article attempts to clarify RVOG’s role and particularly its setting in the “battle for the minds” fought on the busy radio waves over Sub-Saharan Africa in the 1960’s and 1970’s.²



¹ Lundgren 1983; Palo 1994, etc.

² This article is based on parts of the present author’s master’s thesis (Palo 1994) and doctoral thesis (under preparation).

International Broadcasting Develops on Short Wave

Since the 1930's radio broadcasts on short wave frequencies have been one of the most efficient means of reaching large masses of people all over the world with media communication. Short wave transmissions are reflected back to Earth from the ionosphere layer surrounding our planet. The short wave signal is thus capable of making several "leaps" of up to thousands of kilometres. This enables the reception of broadcasts originating even from the far side of the globe.³

Radio broadcasting for the general public commenced through long and medium wave experimentation in the Americas and Europe in the 1910's and 1920's. By the early 1930's the possibilities offered by the long-distance propagation qualities of short wave were understood. International (or external) broadcasting began in this frequency range.⁴

The European colonial powers started beaming short wave services to their colonies. The Netherlands took the lead in 1927 and France and Britain followed suit. The Soviet Union, Germany, Italy and Japan quickly began proclaiming their totalitarian ideologies on short wave in many languages. In 1939, at the beginning of World War II, over 25 countries were broadcasting programmes for a foreign audience. The war increased the number of countries operating external broadcasting services to more than 55.⁵

In the 1950's radio was challenged by the new medium of television in industrialized countries. At the same time, radio listening began shifting from medium, long and short wave to the newly introduced FM frequency band which offered better reception and sound quality. However, an FM transmitter is only capable of covering a very limited, local area. In order to cover an entire country on FM a dense transmitter network is normally necessary. Like television, FM radio broadcasting spread at first mainly to the industrialized countries which had the resources and know-how to adapt the new technology.⁶

³ Browne 1982, 1-2, 15-16.

⁴ Browne 1982, 48; Franzén 1979, 2; Hemánus & Varis 1979, 73; Nieminen 1982, 40-43; Schmidt 1980, 30.

⁵ Binder 1994 (*The New York Times*, 28th August); Browne 1982, 48-50; Nieminen 1982, 43; cf. Kennedy 1979, 71.

⁶ Browne 1982, 16.

The move to FM has diminished short wave audiences especially in Western industrialized countries since the 1950's. In developing countries medium wave broadcasts have become increasingly popular. The future of international short wave broadcasting was questioned already in the 1960's, but its predicted end still has not arrived. Particularly in the Third World, including Sub-Saharan Africa, short wave broadcasts have continued to attract a large listenership.⁷

From the 1950's to the 1970's the number of radio listeners in the world grew rapidly, thanks to new inexpensive transistor receivers.⁸ This period was also the heyday of short wave broadcasting. By 1978 even half of the African countries were targeting foreign audiences with their "public relations" radio services. However, a more dominant feature was the East-West propaganda warfare of the Cold War. Short wave broadcasters like the Voice of America and Radio Moscow competed by raising their transmitting powers and establishing relay stations in strategic locations around the world to guarantee better reception in their target areas. The East Bloc resorted to jamming Western broadcasters.⁹

The global imbalance in information has also manifested itself strongly in international broadcasting. The industrialized "North" has had the money and the means to dominate the medium, while the underdeveloped "South" has mostly been a passive spectator. Although the coming of independence prompted many Third World countries to begin external broadcasts in the 1950's and 1960's, lacking resources have severely limited their efforts. The undeveloped state of Third World mass media has helped provide a large audience for American and European broadcasts.¹⁰

⁷ LWFBS Report 1963-1969, 91 put it this way: "Post-mortems on shortwave are not overdue; they are overdue. Things look up for shortwave broadcasting, in Africa and Asia especially. The shift to medium wave has proved to be slower than anticipated. Satellite communication has relieved shortwave of heavy loads of international point-to-point traffic. The International Telecommunications Union is working on plans to widen the shortwave bands..."

Cf. RVOG's 1966 views in *Preaching Christ* 1966, 1, 70: "During the next eight to ten years shortwave will have its maximum usefulness, after which most developing countries will have good local medium wave systems, television and possibly satellite television coverage. Shortwave will be put in a poor competitive position compared with these high quality local services."

See also Baglo 1972, 156-158; Binder 1994 (*The New York Times*, 28th August 1994) summarizes: "According to audience surveys, shortwave listenership continues to increase."

⁸ For global receiver statistics 1955-1980 see *BBC Annual Report and Handbook* 1982, 50.

⁹ Browne 1982, 17-18, 52-55, 98-108, 135-145, 227-230; Fitzgerald 1987, 6, 8; Hemánus & Varis 1979, 129-132; Nieminen 1982, 43-44; Baglo 1972, 19-20; Cousins 1978, 11, 16, 27.

¹⁰ Browne 1974, 175; Browne 1982, 274-277, 290, 293-295; cf. Hemánus & Varis 1979, 140-144.

The Rise and Heyday of Christian Short Wave Radio

Churches and mission organizations were not slow to recognize the potential of radio broadcasting for spreading the Christian message "even to the ends of the earth". Arthur Gook, a British Protestant missionary, had founded a small radio station in Iceland already in 1927. The local broadcasts were heard all the way in California.¹¹ In 1931 two significant Christian radio stations went on the air on the old and the new continents. In February 1931 Vatican Radio began operating a five-kilowatt transmitter. On Christmas Day of the same year station HCJB, the Protestant "Voice of the Andes", entered the airwaves from Ecuador with the modest power of 200 watts.¹²

Until the end of the Second World War the Catholic Church was ahead of the Protestants in short wave broadcasting. UNDA, the international Catholic radio and television organization, had been founded already in 1928. Guglielmo Marconi, often considered the "inventor of radio", designed and built the first transmitting facilities of Vatican Radio. Thus the Pope had at his disposal a technically advanced radio station through which his voice could be heard in all the world. In 1939 Vatican Radio was already broadcasting in ten languages.¹³

The Catholic Church also developed broadcasting projects in other parts of the world. In January 1937 Rádio Renascença began regular medium and short wave transmissions in Portugal. During the 1930's Catholic stations were established in Argentina and Brazil.¹⁴

"Going into all the world and making disciples of all nations" has not been easy for the Church in the post-World War II setting. The population explosion has increased the number of people to be reached. Many countries, particularly Muslim and Communist states, have forbidden or restricted Christian witness and missionary work. In this situation the Evangelical Protestants in the United States began to see a tremendous

¹¹ Cook 1981, 33-34; Schmidt 1980, 37-38; cf. Cousins (1978, 22): "The first missionary radio station in the world was HCJB". Neither does Kennedy (1979, 71) mention Gook's pioneer station.

¹² Browne 1982, 50, 299; Cook 1981, 64, 68; Kennedy 1979, 71.

¹³ Browne 1982, 306; Cushen 1990, 21; Kennedy 1979, 71; Moreira das Neves 1980, 11, 29.

¹⁴ Moreira das Neves 1980, 37, 39, 132.

potential in radio missions. In the words of former Trans World Radio President, Dr. Paul E. Freed,

I believe superpower radio is the only logical means available to the church to reach a majority of the unreached population of the world.¹⁵

Short wave broadcasts were found capable of penetrating closed frontiers. Religious broadcasts were also discovered to be a means of supporting isolated Christian minorities.¹⁶

The “transistor revolution” of the post-war decades made radio receivers rapidly a commonplace also in developing countries. The estimated number of radio sets in sub-Saharan Africa (excluding South Africa) grew from 360,000 in 1955 to 4,800,000 in 1965. By 1975 the number had increased to 18.5 million.¹⁷ Certainly not everyone possessed a radio, but in the Third World receiver statistics do not quite reveal the actual number of listeners. Often villagers have bought a common receiver and then crowded around it in the evenings.¹⁸

The year 1948 was significant for the future of Protestant missionary radio. It was then that the Far East Broadcasting Company (FEBC) began broadcasting from the Philippines. In the same year the planning of the later global missionary radio giant Trans World Radio started. In Cairo, a conference of the Near East Christian Council (NECC) recommended establishing a radio station (this was the first idea leading towards RVOG).

¹⁵ Freed 1979, back cover.

¹⁶ Cook 1981, 35-36; Cousins 1978, 13-17, 85-86; Leine 1963, 145-146, 148-150. Ruud (1977, 47-48) is rather optimistic about radio's potential: “As the Reformation took advantage of the printing press, so mission today can take advantage of the radio. Luther called for self-determination of one's religious belief based on personal confrontation with the Scriptures. A mass-produced and mass-circulated written Word made this possible. The principle is somewhat the same with radio.”

Cousins (1978, 10, 13) also uses the “printing press - radio” analogy. However, he avoids undue triumphalism by writing cautiously about “the opportunities and problems” the audio and video revolution presents to the communication of the Christian faith.

¹⁷ BBC Annual Report and Handbook 1982, 50. Cf. Lundgren 1983, 26; Cousins 1978, 10; Hemánus & Varis 1979, 101-103. LWFBS: RVOG, Report 1957-1963, 10 mentions Africa as a whole having 4.5 million radio sets in 1959 and two years later 6.5 million.

¹⁸ Cousins 1978, 10-11; Leine (1963, 77) writes of up to two hundred Africans crowding around a radio set! Cf. Hydén (1967, 262) says radio receivers were still far too expensive for most Africans in the 1960's. Hydén claims that in Tanzania there were still large areas without any receivers. Furthermore, the technical quality of the cheap transistor receivers was poor, which made listening difficult.

Enthusiastic American students at Wheaton College were about to start the West Africa Broadcasting Association, which later founded radio station ELWA in Liberia.¹⁹

From 1948 onwards Evangelical short wave stations, most of them operated by organizations based in the United States, have proliferated around the world.²⁰ According to one estimate, by 1958 there were 25 or 26 privately operated Protestant radio stations and about an equal number of Catholic stations. The combination of missionary zeal and capital made possible the tremendous growth of powerful worldwide station networks.²¹

Sub-Saharan Africa in the first two post-colonial decades was the target of five international Christian short wave stations and numerous secular broadcasters.²² Vatican Radio's African service was transmitted from Italy. ELWA had been the voice of the Sudan Interior Mission in Liberia since 1954. Then came the Ethiopia-based RVOG in 1963. Two more Evangelical stations were to follow: FEBA started in the Seychelles (1970) and TWR in Swaziland (1974). All these stations beamed programmes in African languages to several target countries.²³

Catholic radio stations have often displayed a positive, constructive attitude towards society and culture. In addition to religion they have included news, cultural, educational and developmental programmes in their schedule. The ideal has been to base all programming on a Christian understanding of life. Catholic broadcasting has thus provided a service to society at large, especially in Portugal, Spain, Latin America and the Philippines.²⁴

¹⁹ Lundgren 1983, 27.

²⁰ Overviews of the development of international missionary broadcasting are given by Browne 1982, 300; Cousins 1978, 22-29; Franzén 1979, 91-92, Appendix 1; Palo 1993 (Kotimaa, 16th March).

²¹ Browne 1982, 300-301; Kennedy 1979, 71-76; Palo 1993.

²² Browne (1974, 175) estimates that in 1972 "some 40 nations outside of Africa and 19 within Africa were pumping propaganda by radio into and around the continent...The result is a stunning babel of voices..."

²³ Franzén 1979, Appendix (Bilaga) 1; Head 1974, 207-210. **Note:** Radio CORDAC, which operated in 1963-1977 from Burundi, might by stretching one's imagination also be considered a very limited international operation, since it reached some listeners in neighboring countries (Head 1974, 208). WRTH (1965, 150; 1966, 150; 1967, 140; 1968, 152; 1972, 110; 1973, 114; 1974, 119; 1975, 130) information, however, points more to a local service character.

²⁴ Moreira das Neves 1980, 29, 37-38; cf. Browne (1982, 58 n. 7.) on the Philippine Catholic station Radio Veritas.

In the 1960's and 1970's some Catholic stations began openly criticizing society's evils and

In its attitude towards society and culture, the Ethiopia-based Lutheran/ecumenical RVOG's programme philosophy was somewhat similar to many Catholic broadcasters. However, most of the other Protestant stations made evangelistic preaching the rule of their programme policy. Often other kinds of programmes have been ignored or only used as "bait" for attracting converts. The result has been that mainly a narrow, already Christian audience has been reached. Whether this really is "missionary broadcasting" has been questioned.²⁵

James C. King has observed that while several states' external broadcasts specialized in propaganda, the Evangelical stations have concentrated on propagating "a theological view of a depraved world doomed to destruction unless immediate and total conversion to a fundamentalist theology is forthcoming". King comments that Christian stations broadcasting to Third World countries ought to recognize also other responsibilities than evangelism, namely in the areas of education, health and agriculture. This is just what RVOG sought to do.²⁶

The reasons for the aggressively evangelistic programme policy practiced by most Protestant short wave broadcasters since the 1930's have been partly economical, partly theological. Many stations have depended for much of their financing on selling air-time to American radio evangelists. But many have also believed that God calls people to salvation only through direct evangelism. Spending money on non-religious programmes would thus be "bad stewardship".²⁷

injustices, becoming an opposition voice in dictatorships. Challenging those in power has now and then resulted in the closure and destruction of stations by authorities. Moore (1994, 15-18) describes Bolivia's Catholic stations' clashes with military authorities. In Portugal, Rádio Renascença played a key role in starting the 1974 revolution. However, Moreira das Neves (1980, 106) condemns this.

²⁵ Browne 1982, 308-309; Cousins 1978, 17-18, 68-69, 113, 116-117; Palo 1993. According to Kennedy (1980, chapter "Who Do You Think You're Talking to", 11) many of the evangelistic programmes broadcast to an international audience have been syndicated American evangelistic "shows" made for a U.S. audience. The cultural relevance of such programmes is doubtful.

²⁶ King 1973, 248-249. Cf. Browne 1982, 34; Binder 1994 (The New York Times, 28th August) interviewing BBC World Service's audience research director: "The cold war was the field of struggle for ideologies...Mr. Mytton said echoes of the effort to persuade by broadcast may still be found in the programs of five evangelical Christian stations..." Cousins (1978, 127) criticizes "western evangelical/fundamentalist" preaching programmes for proclaiming the "western capitalist middle-class nature of the Christian message and its utter irrelevance to the problems of the twentieth century or the Third World".

²⁷ Browne 1982, 302; Cousins 1978, 68-69, 119; Kennedy 1980, 10-11. Cf. Baglo 1972, 130-131.



Ethiopia:

Radio Voice of the Gospel and the National Broadcasting Scene

In 1972 it was estimated that over 90 percent of Ethiopia's twenty-five-million population was still illiterate. In such a situation radio had quite understandably become the country's most important medium of communication, as was common for most Third World countries. RVOG's Report on Audience Research in Ethiopia claimed that radio was "the single medium which government uses to inform and maintain the status quo as well as to interpret its administrative policy". To be more accurate, the two official daily newspapers *Addis Zemen* (Amharic) and *The Ethiopian Herald* (English) as well as television broadcasts in the Addis Ababa area should also have been mentioned. Nevertheless, it remains true that the printed word and television only reached a very small élite group (see Tables 1 and 2 below). Radio was Ethiopia's only real *mass* media, but due to the country's extreme poverty and linguistic diversity (over 80 languages!) even it was unable to reach the entire population.²⁸

Table 1: The circulation of Ethiopia's two main daily newspapers in the years 1966 and 1974²⁹

	<u>1966</u>	<u>1974</u>
Addis Zemen	10,000	28,000
The Ethiopian Herald	6,000	8,000

²⁸ Negusse Haptewold 1969, 1, 2; Audience Research 1972, 27; Negussie Teffera 1986, 19, 67-69, 72, 79, 119; Bahru Zewde 1991, 200.

²⁹ Negussie Teffera 1986, 67.

Table 2: The approximate number of radio and television receivers in Ethiopia in 1955, 1961, 1965 and 1973³⁰

	radio receiver	TV sets	population
1955	12,000 (ca.)	-	-
1961	305,000*	-	18,000,000
1965	300,000*	2,000	21,000,000
1973	175,000*	20,000	25,900,000

* These figures seem rather uncertain, especially the dramatic fall in the number of radio receivers in 1973. Cf. below in Table 3. the government estimate that in 1970 there were 500,000 receivers in Ethiopia!

Broadcasting had practically been a government monopoly in Ethiopia until the Lutheran World Federation Broadcasting Service (LWFBS) was granted a station franchise in 1959. The only other exception to the rule was the Armed Forces Radio and Television Service which had operated low-power radio (medium wave and FM) and television transmitters serving United States military personnel in Eritrea since the early 1950's. The main national broadcaster was the Ethiopian Broadcasting Service (EBS), also known as Radio Addis Ababa, Radio Ethiopia or Voice of Ethiopia.³¹ The development of broadcasting in Ethiopia is outlined in the following chronological table.

Table 3: Broadcasting in Ethiopia, 1935-1974³²

1935	Irregular radio broadcasting begins on 7th September. Emperor Haile Selassie's first appeal to the world for assistance against the Italian invasion is carried on 13th September.
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³⁰ WRTH 1956, 22; WRTH 1962, 112; WRTH 1966, 70; WRTH 1974, 405; Negussie Teffera 1986, 79.

³¹ WRTH 1956, 80, 148; Preaching Christ 1966, 70; WRTH 1966, 272; WRTH 1972, 114; WRTH 1973, 118; WRTH 1974, 123, 291; Negussie Teffera 1986, 76.

³² Preaching Christ 1966, 70; Negusse Haptewold 1969, 1-2, 4-5; Head 1974, 38-40; Lundgren 1983, 109, App. II 1-3; Lundgren 1984, 78; Negussie Teffera 1986, 47-49, 73-83; WRTH 1956, 80; WRTH 1962, 112; WRTH 1963, 121; WRTH 1965, 153; WRTH 1966, 153, 258; WRTH 1967, 143; WRTH 1968, 155; WRTH 1972, 114; WRTH 1973, 117; WRTH 1974, 122.

- 1937 An Italian radio station in Addis Ababa goes on the air on 9th May. A system of loudspeakers for the diffusion of propaganda by radio is installed in Addis Ababa.
- 1941 The Italian occupation of Ethiopia ends. Haile Selassie's government starts Ethiopia's first regular radio broadcasts with a 2.5 kW short wave transmitter. Programmes are soon produced in Amharic, English, Arabic and Somali.
- 1942 The Press and Information Department is established in the Ministry of the Pen and becomes responsible for radio programming. Ten years later the department is transferred to the Ministry of Finance.
- 1953 A 7.5 kW short wave transmitter left by the Italian forces in 1941 is repaired and begins carrying Radio Addis Ababa programmes.
- 1955 Professional studio equipment is installed at Radio Addis Ababa. Most people hear the broadcasts through government public address systems installed in the central squares of most administrative regions and in various parts of Addis Ababa.
- Radio Addis Ababa (using the call letters ETHA) transmits on three short wave frequencies with low power (1 kW, 2.5 kW and 7.5 kW). "Foreign service" broadcasts in English and Arabic are beamed to Europe with the 7.5 kW transmitter. (WRTH 1956)
- 1957 A broadcasting technical assistance agreement is signed with the United States' government.
- 1958 All public telegraph, telephone and radio facilities are placed in the hands of the Imperial Board of Telecommunications of Ethiopia (IBTE).

- 1959 The new Ministry of Information begins receiving an annual budget.
- *On 27th November the LWF is granted a franchise to build and operate a Christian radio station.*
- 1960 Two short wave transmitters (each 10 kW) are installed as part of the United States technical assistance agreement. Besides expanding its local programmes, Radio Addis Ababa begins regular transmissions to West and Northwest Africa and Western Europe in English and French, to North Africa and the Middle East in Arabic and to Central and East Africa in Swahili. These external broadcasts are discontinued after a year (according to Head; WRTH information contradicts this) “in the interest of consolidating and expanding local programmes” (according to Negusse Haptewold).
- 1961 The government installs Ethiopia’s first medium wave radio transmitter (1 kW). - Radio Addis Ababa’s International Service transmits in English to the Middle East, to Europe and to West Africa on short wave with an increased power of 20 kW (WRTH 1962).
- An agreement is signed between the Ministry of Information and the IBTE, according to which the IBTE shall handle all technical aspects of broadcasting, whereas the programming and production remain the responsibility of the Ministry.
- *On 15th February the LWF and the IBTE sign a station contract establishing RVOG. Test broadcasts (1 kW) on short wave begin on 30th October.*
- 1962 According to WRTH 1963 Radio Addis Ababa’s International Service (20 kW) still transmits in Arabic, English and French to the earlier mentioned target areas.
- 1963 The EBS radio training school is established in cooperation

with the government of the Federal Republic of Germany.

- *RVOG's first 100 kW transmitter starts regular short wave broadcasts on 26th February. In addition to the programmes in various languages to foreign target areas RVOG broadcasts a half-hour Amharic programme to Ethiopia on short wave. The second 100 kW short wave transmitter is in operation from 5th May. In September RVOG begins a local medium wave service (1 kW) with Amharic and English evening programming for the Addis Ababa area.*

1964 The first EBS high-power short wave radio facility (100 kW) is installed. - According to WRTH 1965 the International Service of Radio Addis Ababa still continues in Arabic, English and French to the earlier mentioned target areas, but with only 10 kW.

- The Ethiopian Television Service begins broadcasting on 2nd November in Addis Ababa. The TV coverage area is limited to a radius of about 50 kilometres. The number of TV sets in Addis Ababa is ca. 500 - two years later over 5000. The TV service begins with a staff of 29.

- *RVOG increases its daily programme time in Amharic to Ethiopia on short wave to 45 minutes.*

1965 Radio Addis Ababa is renamed "Radio Ethiopia".

- In October the Ministry of Education in cooperation with the Ethiopian Television Service commences educational TV programmes to schools in Addis Ababa and the surrounding areas.

1966 The United States supply the EBS with two powerful medium wave radio transmitters (100 kW each) which are located in Addis Ababa and Harar. A third 50 kW medium wave transmitter begins operation in Asmara. The domestic coverage and reception quality of Radio Ethiopia improves greatly.

- Radio Ethiopia's International Service is no longer mentioned in the WRTH 1967 listings.
 - *RVOG has 165 station employees, of whom 30 are expatriates.*
- 1969 Radio Ethiopia's technical facilities in use: two 10 kW and three 100 kW shortwave transmitters, two 100 kW and one 50 kW medium wave transmitters, located in Addis Ababa, Harar and Asmara. More medium wave stations are planned. Six broadcast languages: Amharic, English, Somali, Arabic, French and Afar. Programming 17 hours a day. Staff: 102 permanent employees. Experimental educational radio programmes are to be launched in October.
- The Ethiopian Television Service has 50 staff members.
- 1970 The government estimates that its radio broadcasts are reaching an audience of approximately 5 million, roughly 20 percent of the total population. The number of receivers in use is estimated at 500,000. (Cf. Table 2 above.)
- With the departure of its West German teaching staff the radio training school in Addis Ababa closes. The facilities are turned over to regular EBS production functions.
 - *RVOG increases its daily programme time in Amharic to Ethiopia on short wave to 1 hour. RVOG's Addis Ababa medium wave service broadcasts 6.5 hours per day in three languages: Amharic (2 h 15 min), English and French.*
- 1972 *RVOG's audience research points to about 25 percent of Ethiopia's population listening daily to its Amharic broadcasts. (Lundgren 1984)*
- 1973 Radio Ethiopia's domestic service broadcasts in Amharic, English, Somali, Arabic, Afar, *Galegna*, *Tigre* and *Tigregna* (WRTH 1974).
- 1974 The Ethiopian Television Service has about 100 employees.

In 1969 *Negusse Haptewold*, General Manager of the EBS, lectured at a RVOG studio directors' conference on "The History and Development of the Ethiopian Broadcasting Service". He said that in developing countries like Ethiopia radio broadcasting had a significant role to play in creating a sense of national unity and cohesion as well as in supporting governments' development programmes in the fields of education, public health, agriculture, community development, etc. Informational and educational broadcasts for both adults and children were vital for achieving the government's goal of "broad general economic progress" for Ethiopia. Neither should entertainment be overlooked, since it attracted listeners to the station and broadened their view of the outside world. Radio was seen as the best instrument for reaching a largely illiterate population scattered over vast areas. The official newspaper *Negarit Gazeta* had defined the purpose of the EBS as "to establish, maintain and operate Radio and Television broadcasting facilities within the empire in the interest of providing educational, informational and entertainment programming of such nature as will best serve the public interest."³³

In the case of the EBS, "public interest" was in fact always interpreted as being synonymous with the emperor's interest. Before concluding his lecture Negusse Haptewold did not forget to praise his ruler – he made it clear that broadcasting was a part of "the broad spectrum of progress initiated and guided by His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I".³⁴ Until 1974 the Ethiopian media, radio included, could well be described as a massive public relations exercise praising the achievements of the emperor. Strict censorship by the Ministry of Information saw to it that the media did not deal with any controversial matters such as unemployment, demonstrations and strikes, the cost of living and price increases, land tenure, tenancy and land tax, the misuse of development funds raised from voluntary contributions, etc. The widespread corruption and delicate political issues were taboos.³⁵

In 1986 *Negussie Teffera*, an Ethiopian journalism scholar critical of the Haile Selassie régime, assessed the development of Radio Ethiopia up to 1974:

³³ Negusse Haptewold 1969, 1-4.

³⁴ Negusse Haptewold 1969, 6.

³⁵ Barton 1979, 256-262; Negussie Teffera 1986, 52-54, 56-63.

With improved facilities, expanded staff, and with the help of a specialised radio training school within the Ministry and advisers from abroad, Radio Ethiopia rapidly adopted more sophisticated concepts of programming, and production and began to be the most important organ of information and education, as well as effective propaganda machine in the Haile Selassie Empire.³⁶

It is fair enough to say that the pre-1974 EBS was concerned with the great issues of development and education, as its efforts in educational broadcasting demonstrate. However, these issues were difficult to tackle when at the same time defending an authoritarian form of government that contributed to the social and economic backwardness of the country.

It is interesting to note the positive remarks about RVOG with which the general manager of the EBS ended his 1969 lecture:

...the establishment and existence of the Radio Voice of the Gospel has made immense contributions to the educational needs of the people of the host country. It not only supplements the efforts of the EBS but sometimes even surpasses that effort in its service to our people. It has also become a contributing factor to the evolution and progress that the EBS is making. This healthy competition between Radio Voice of the Gospel and the EBS, I can assure you, is very much welcome by the programme staff of Radio Ethiopia – since we have both one major objective, one major goal – the cultural and educational enlightenment of the Ethiopian people.³⁷

Negussie Teffera also recognized – although rather vaguely for someone who had worked as a senior editor at the station – that RVOG “played a vital role” in the Ethiopian mass media scene, despite its priority being international broadcasting.³⁸ RVOG was the only domestic competitor

³⁶ Negussie Teffera 1986, 75.

³⁷ Negusse Haptewold 1969, 6.

³⁸ Negussie Teffera 1986, 76-77.

challenging the EBS. In terms of daily broadcast hours in Ethiopian languages RVOG lagged far behind, but regarding broadcast coverage of the country and production quality the comparison was favourable. Whether RVOG ever actually reached a larger audience than the EBS (see Table 3: 1970, 1972) may be questioned, but it is a fact that with its varied programming and renowned news service RVOG attained a wide listenership in its host country. RVOG also enjoyed good relations with the imperial government.³⁹



Broadcast Schedule				
Year	Day	Language	Programme	Time
1963-1964	Monday	Amharic	Radio Ethiopia	19:00-20:00
	Tuesday	Amharic	Radio Ethiopia	19:00-20:00
	Wednesday	Amharic	Radio Ethiopia	19:00-20:00
	Thursday	Amharic	Radio Ethiopia	19:00-20:00
1965-1966	Monday	Amharic	Radio Ethiopia	19:00-20:00
	Tuesday	Amharic	Radio Ethiopia	19:00-20:00
	Wednesday	Amharic	Radio Ethiopia	19:00-20:00
	Thursday	Amharic	Radio Ethiopia	19:00-20:00
Radio Voice of the Gospel, Box 654, Addis Ababa				



Broadcast Schedule	
<p>STATION: Radio Voice of the Gospel is owned and operated by the Ethiopian Church Council. It is the only station in Ethiopia.</p> <p>PROGRAMME: The station broadcasts a variety of programmes in Amharic, English, and other languages. It includes news, religious programmes, and educational content.</p> <p>TECHNICAL DATA: The station is located in Addis Ababa. It has a power output of 100 kW and a frequency of 1000 kHz.</p> <p>PERSONNEL: The station has a staff of approximately 50 people, including a director, a general manager, and several programme producers.</p>	<p>STAFF: The station has a staff of approximately 50 people, including a director, a general manager, and several programme producers.</p> <p>PROGRAMME COVERAGE: The station broadcasts a variety of programmes in Amharic, English, and other languages. It includes news, religious programmes, and educational content.</p> <p>MAP: A map of Ethiopia showing the station's coverage area. The map is labeled 'RVOG Area of Broadcast Coverage' and shows the station's reach across the country.</p>



³⁹ Audience Research 1972, 16-18, 24-25, Part IV - Tables, Section 1, Question 4; Lundgren 1983, 112, 230.

International Broadcasting Made in Africa

The wave of decolonization that swept over Africa in the 1950's and 1960's coincided with the "transistor revolution". As more affordable receivers became increasingly common in Africa radio broadcasting became the primary medium of mass communication in the newly independent states. Television was still a newcomer and only reached a small minority of African populations. Governments quickly realized radio's usefulness in nation building and began acquiring new, powerful transmitters. Domestic programme production largely replaced relays of the former colonial powers. With few exceptions broadcasting became a government monopoly in the new states.⁴⁰

In 1960 external service broadcasts were beamed to foreign audiences from less than ten African countries. Soon, however, the nationalist feeling awakened in the new states manifested itself in the governments' eagerness to make their existence and views known abroad. Like the new national anthem and flag, the acquisition of a hundred-kilowatt short wave transmitter became a symbol of national independence. Several new African external services appeared on short wave.⁴¹

The following chronological table places RVOG and other missionary broadcasters in the larger context of the development of international broadcasting in Africa.



⁴⁰ Maclin 1967, 1-2; Stenman 1972, 133; BBC ARH 1982, 50; Lundgren 1983, 26; Parviainen 1996, 95, 96.

⁴¹ Stenman 1972, 133; Jacobs 1979, 36; Mäntylä 1982, 168, 170; Cushen 1990, 18; Parviainen 1996, 93.

Table 4: International Short Wave Broadcasts from African Countries, 1954-1974⁴²

NOTE: FS = foreign/external/international service
 HS = home/domestic service
 H = number of programme hours per day
 L = number of languages broadcast
 P = transmitting power in kilowatts (kW)
 T = target areas to which transmissions are beamed

(Christian missionary radio stations in *italics!*)

- 1954 *LIBERIA: The Sudan Interior Mission opens radio station ELWA. By 1955 it broadcasts in English, French, Arabic, Hausa, Yoruba, etc. T: West Africa / L: 5+ / H: ca. 6 / P: 10 kW*
TANGIER (INTERNATIONAL ZONE): "The Voice of Tangier" (later Trans World Radio) begins evangelistic broadcasts to Europe. The station is closed by the Moroccan government by the end of 1959. - In 1955: T: Europe / L: 7 / H: 3+ / P: 1 x 2.5 kW, 1 x 10 kW
- 1955 EGYPT: The state-run Egyptian Broadcasting Service operates an extensive FS, Radio Cairo.
 T: 5 continents / L: 12 (1965: 27 - 1973: 33) / H: 20 (1965: 33 - 1973: 45) / P: 100, 50, 40 kW
- ETHIOPIA: The state-run Radio Addis Ababa operates a small "foreign service" in Arabic and English.
 T: Europe / L: 2 / H: 3.5 / P: 7.5 kW
- MOZAMBIQUE: Rádio Clube de Moçambique carries a pop-

⁴² Kennedy 1979, 71; Lundgren 1983, 109; Kivikuru 1989, 51; WRTH 1956, 76-87; WRTH 1962, 108-122; WRTH 1963, 116-132; WRTH 1965, 146-165; WRTH 1966, 148-166; WRTH 1967, 138-154; WRTH 1968, 150-166; WRTH 1972, 105-131; WRTH 1973, 111-135; WRTH 1974, 115-139.

ular commercial FS, “Lourenço Marques Radio”, in English (and by 1961 also Afrikaans).

T: Southern Africa / L: 2 / H: 17 / P: 7.5 kW

SENEGAL (FRENCH WEST AFRICA): Radiodiffusion Federale AOF, Dakar broadcasts FS programmes in English and Portuguese on its HS transmitters. T: West

Africa / L: 2 / H: 0.5 (twice a week) / P: 25 kW, 4 kW

TANGIER (INTERNATIONAL ZONE): The Voice of America relay station broadcasts around the clock in various languages. T: Europe, Middle East / L: many / H: over 24 h / P: 100 kW, 50 kW, 35 kW

- The private commercial broadcaster Radio-Africa-Tanger starts “Radio Eurafrika”. T: Europe / L: 8 / H: 9. *The service additionally carries IBRA Radio’s evangelistic programmes. The station is closed by the Moroccan government by the end of 1959. IBRA:*

T: Europe / L: 8 / H: 5+ / P: 20 kW, 10 kW, 5 kW

UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA: The South African Broadcasting Corporation’s (SABC) Africa Service broadcasts in English and Afrikaans.

T: Africa / L: 2 / H: 10.5 / P: less than 20 kW?

1960 ETHIOPIA: Radio Addis Ababa’s new transmitters carry FS programmes. By 1964 (perhaps already by 1961?) the FS is discontinued. (See Table 3: 1960-1966) T: Middle East, Europe, West Africa / L: 4 / H: 2.5 (1963) / P: 2 x 10 kW

1961 CONGO, REPUBLIC OF THE (LEOPOLDVILLE): The state-run Radiodiffusion Congolaise operates a FS carrying news in English, French, German, Italian and Spanish. By 1964 these broadcasts had ceased, probably because of the Con-

go crisis. T: Africa, Europe, Asia, Oceania, "Western Hemisphere" / L: 5 / H: 9 / P: 50 kW

GHANA: The state-run Ghana Broadcasting System operates a new, powerful FS in Arabic, English, French, Hausa, Portuguese and Swahili.

T: Africa, Europe / L: 6 / H: 12 / P: 4 x 100 kW

LIBERIA: ELWA broadcasts with increased power. T West, Central, East and North Africa, Middle East, North America / L: 10+ / H: almost 20 / P: 50 kW, 10 kW (by 1971: 2 x 50 kW, 2 x 10 kW)

MOROCCO: The state-run Radiodiffusion Marocaine broadcasts Arabic HS relays and FS in French and English (from 1962 also Wolof). T: Africa, Middle East/L:4 (1962) / H: ca. 17 hours / P: 1 x 100 kW, 2 x 50 kW

SENEGAL: The state-run Radiodiffusion du Senegal broadcasts a short FS programme to Europe twice a week on a new, powerful transmitter. By 1964 the broadcasts to Europe have ended and the transmitter carries Radio Senegal's "International Network" to West Africa mainly in French but including English.

T: Europe, by 1964 only West Africa / L: 2 / H: 15 min twice a week, by 1964: 17 hours daily / P: 100 kW

TUNISIA: The state-run Radiodiffusion Tunisienn broadcasts a two-hour daily Arabic FS. By 1962 the service relays Arabic HS programming. T: North Africa, Middle East / L: 1 / H: 2 (1962: 12.5 - 1964: 21) / P: 50 kW

1962

IVORY COAST: Radio Abidjan begins a FS broadcasting in French and English.

T: West Africa / L: 2 / H: 7.5 / P: 100 kW

LIBERIA: The Voice of America (VOA) opens a relay station carrying its English, French and Swahili programmes. T: Africa / L: 3 / H: 12 / P: 50 kW

1962 NIGERIA: The Nigeria Broadcasting Corporation starts its FS, the Voice of Nigeria. Programmes are first in English and French. By 1964 Arabic and Hausa are added. T: West and Central Africa - by 1964 all Africa, Middle East/L: 2 (1964: 4) /H: 2 (1964: 7)/P: 2 x 100 kW

SOUTH AFRICA: The SABC Africa Service broadcasts in English, Afrikaans and French.

T: Africa / L: 3 / H: 12+ / P: 2 x 20 kW

1963 *ETHIOPIA: RVOG begins broadcasting. T: Africa, Middle*

East, South Asia / L: 8 (1974: 13) / H: 7.5 (1974: ca. 15 / P: 2 x 100 kW

1964 ALGERIA: State radio begins HS relays (Arabic, French, Kabyl) on short wave. T: North Africa, Middle East, Europe/L: 3 / H: 40.5/P: 50 kW

LIBERIA: The VOA relay station increases transmitting power and adds Arabic to its broadcast languages. (Amharic added in 1965). T: Africa / L: 4 (1965: 5)/H: almost 18/P: 250 kW, 50 kW; by 1971: 6 x 250 kW, 2 x 50 kW

TANGANYIKA: Radio Tanganyika broadcasts a daily FS programme in English on its HS transmitters. T: Africa / L: 1 / H: 1 / P: 1 x 20 kW, 1 x 5 kW

1965 ALGERIA: State radio begins FS in English and Spanish. T: Europe / L: 2 / H: 1 / P: 2 x 50 kW

CONGO, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE (LEOPOLDVILLE): The government's regional station Radio Interprovinciale du Katanga begins a FS in French, called "La Voix de la Fraternité Africaine" (The Voice of African Brotherhood). T: Africa / L: 1 / H: 3 / P: 10 kW

GHANA: Ghana Broadcasting System's FS gets two 250 kW transmitters. Transmissions are extended to new target areas. Bambara (to West Africa) is a new broadcast language. T: Africa, Europe, the Americas, Australasia, Far East/L: 7 / H: 45 / P: 2 x 250 kW, 4 x 100 kW

1971

LIBERIA: The BBC West African Relay Station begins to carry programmes in English, French and Hausa. By 1971 the service is discontinued.

T: West Africa / L: 3 / H: almost 10 / P: 10 kW

MALAGASY REPUBLIC (MADAGASCAR): The state radio begins testing a FS in French and English.

T: West Africa, Europe / L: 2 / H: 1 / P: 100 kW

MOZAMBIQUE: Lourenço Marques Radio's new, powerful transmitter broadcasts around the clock in English and Afrikaans. T: Southern Africa / L: 2/H: 24/P: 100 kW, 5 kW

1965

RWANDA: Deutsche Welle Relay Station Africa in Kigali begins operation, broadcasting in German, English, French, Amharic, Hausa and Swahili. T: Africa / L: 6 / H: 12.5 / P: 1 x 250 kW

TANZANIA: Radio Tanzania broadcasts FS programmes in English, Portuguese, Sena, Zulu and Herero on a HS transmitter. T: Southern Africa/L: 5/H: 1 h 15 min/P: 1 x 20 kW

1966 ASCENSION ISLAND: The BBC South Atlantic Relay Station starts with broadcasts in English, French and Hausa. Portuguese and Spanish are added in 1967.

T: Africa, Latin America (1967) / L: 3 (1967: 5) / H: 5 (1967: 24) / P: 4 x 250 kW

CONGO, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE (KINSHASA):

“La Voix de la Fraternité Africaine” broadcasts in French, Swahili and English on Radio Lubumbashi’s new, power fultransmitter. Portuguese programmes begin in 1967.

T: Africa / L: 4 (1967) / H: 6 / P: 100 kW

SOUTH AFRICA: The SABC’s FS, now called “Radio RSA - the Voice of South Africa” gets two new high-power transmitters. Programmes are broadcast in English, Afrikaans, French, Portuguese, Zulu and Swahili. T: all Africa, Middle East, Europe, North America / L: 6 / H: 20 / P: 2 x 250 kW, 2 x 20 kW

1967 BOTSWANA:

The BBC Central African Relay Station begins broadcasting in English. This relay ends by the early 1970’s. T: Southern Africa / L: 1 / H: 11 / P: 10 kW

SOUTH AFRICA:

Radio RSA adds 2 high-power transmitters and begins broadcasts in Dutch and German. T: (see 1966) / L: 8 / H: 25 / P: 4 x 250 kW

TANZANIA:

Radio Tanzania gets a high-power transmitter and increases FS broadcasts (in English, Comoro, Shona, Ndebele, Portuguese, Sena, Zulu, Ovambo, Herero). T: Southern Africa / L: 9 / H: 2 / P: 1 x 100 kW

- 1970 **SEYCHELLES:**
 FEBA (Far East Broadcasting Association) starts broadcasting. T: South Asia, Middle East / L: 11 (by 1971) / H: 9.5 / P: 30 kW
- 1971 **MALAGASY REPUBLIC (MADAGASCAR):**
 Radio Nederland Wereld-omroep's new relay station carries Arabic, Dutch, English, French and Indonesian programmes. T: Africa, Australia, South and Southeast Asia, Middle East / L: 5 / H: 21 (1973) / P: 2 x 300 kW
- MALAWI:** The Malawi Broadcasting Corporation begins FS programmes in English and Chichewa. T: Southern Africa / L: 2 / H: ca. 6 / P: 100 kW
- 1971 **MALI:**
 The state-run Radio Mali operates a FS in French, English and Spanish. The service seems to have ended by 1973. T: East and South Africa, Madagascar, Asia, Europe, the Americas / L: 3 / H: 1 / P: 100 kW
- MOROCCO:**
 Radiodiffusion Marocaine's FS broadcasts in Arabic, English, French and Spanish. T: West, North and Equatorial Africa, Middle East, South America / L: 4 / H: 27 / P: 100 kW, 50 kW
- RWANDA:** Deutsche Welle's relay station now has a second high-power transmitter. T: Africa / L: 6 / H: 36+ / P: 2 x 250 kW
- SOUTH AFRICA:** Radio RSA increases its transmission power. T: Australia, New Zealand, Africa, Middle East, Europe, North America / L: 9 / H: 27+ / P: 4 x 250 kW, 2 x 100 kW

SUDAN: The state-run Radio Omdurman broadcasts FS programmes in Somali dialects, Arabic and English. T: Somalia, Southern Sudan / L: 3 / H: 3 / P: 1 x 120 kW, 1 x 20 kW

TANZANIA: Radio Tanzania's FS broadcasts in English, Nyanja and Portuguese. T: Southern Africa / L: 3 / H: 6+ / P: 100 kW, 10 kW

TUNISIA: Radiodiffusion Tunisienne relays its Arabic HS with increased transmitter power. T: Middle East, North Africa / L: 1 / H: 19 / P: 1 x 100 kW, 2 x 50 kW; by 1972: 3 x 100 kW, 1 x 50 kW

1972

ALGERIA: State radio broadcasts the politically subversive programmes "Voice of Palestine Revolution" (Arabic, 1 hour daily) and "A Voz da Liberdade" (The Voice of Freedom, Portuguese, 20 minutes daily), the latter to Portugal.

- Algeria's own FS programmes are broadcast in Arabic and French. T: Arab world, Middle East, West Africa / L: 2 / H: 5 / P: 120 kW, 100 kW

CONGO, PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF THE (BRAZZAVILLE): The legendary Radio Brazzaville, which had begun as the "Free France" station during World War II and later carried France's FS programming (ORTF) in French, English and Portuguese, ceases operation. T: Africa, Far East / L: 3 / H: 0 / P: 50 kW

LIBYA:

The state-run Libyan Broadcasting Service begins FS broadcasts in Arabic. T: Palestine / L: 1 / H: 0.5 / P: 100 kW

SWAZILAND: Swaziland Commercial Radio begins FS broadcasts in English. T: South Africa / L: 1 / H: 18 / P: 1 x 10 kW

1973

CONGO, PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF THE (BRAZZAVILLE):
The state radio "La Voix de la Révolution Congolaise" broadcasts programmes in Portuguese and vernacular languages on former Radio Brazzaville transmitters. T: Angola / L: 2+ / H: 0.5 / P: 50 kW

GUINEA: Radiodiffusion Nationale ("La Voix de la Révolution") has occasional FS broadcasts in English, Portuguese and Arabic. T: West Africa / L: 3 / H: irregular / P: 100 kW

MOROCCO:

Radiodiffusion Marocaine carries the "Voice of Truth", a politically subversive programme in Arabic to Libya, one hour a day. - The Arabic HS relays continue, but the foreign-language short wave service has ceased. T: North Africa, Middle East / L: 1 / H: 22 / P: 100 kW, 50 kW

SEYCHELLES:

FEBA gets a more powerful transmitter. T: South Asia, Middle East / L: 14 / H: 10.5 / P: 1 x 50 kW, 1 x 30 kW, 1 x 3 kW

SOMALIA:

Radio Mogadishu broadcasts FS programmes in Italian, English, Afar, Amharic, Swahili, Galla and Arabic. T: neighbouring countries/L: 7/H: almost 3/P: 50 kW, 5 kW

TANZANIA:

Radio Tanzania's FS broadcasts in English, Portuguese, French, Afrikaans and vernacular languages. (Liberation movements' programmes are carried.) T: East, Central and Southern Africa/L: 5+ / H: 7.5/P: 1 x 50 kW, 1 x 10 kW

ZAIRE: The state radio La Voix du Zaire's HS includes a

FS programme in Portuguese and vernacular languages. T: Angola / L: 2+ / H: 0.5 / P: 100 kW

ZAMBIA: The state-run Radio Zambia begins a FS with programmes in English, Afrikaans, Portuguese and vernacular languages. T: Southern Africa/L: 4+/H: over 5.5/P: 2 x 50 kW

1974 *SWAZILAND: Trans World Radio begins transmitting. T: Africa/L: various /H: ?/P: 4 x 30 kW*

Table 4 above demonstrates how external service broadcasting on short wave experienced tremendous growth in Africa in the 1960's and 1970's. The founding of RVOG was no isolated phenomenon, but occurred in an era when states, liberation movements, religious organizations and even some commercial enterprises became strongly involved in short wave broadcasting. *Donald R. Browne* has estimated that in 1972 there were 19 African nations and additionally about 40 nations on other continents "pumping propaganda by radio into and around the continent", the result being "a stunning babel of voices".⁴³

Behind these endeavours were four main groups of broadcasters with widely varying objectives (see Table 5).

Table 5: Main groups of international broadcasters in Africa⁴⁴

group (ownership) - examples	objectives
<p>1) African national broadcasters (government) - Radio Cairo, Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, Voice of Nigeria, Radio RSA, etc.</p>	<p>assertion of national identity, propagation of political ideologies (Pan-Africanism, African & Arab Socialism, etc.), support for liberation movements & opposition groups, struggle</p>

⁴³ Browne 1974, 175.

⁴⁴ Cushen 1979, 37, 189; Mäntylä 1982, 169-170; Matos Maia 1995, 122-124; Parviainen 1996, 94-96.

	against <i>apartheid</i> , creating goodwill (PR operation)
2) international broadcasters' relay stations in Africa (state / public service) - BBC, VOA, ORTF, Deutsche Welle, Radio Nederland	creating goodwill (PR), providing "unbiased" news (as understood in the West) & development-oriented programmes, counterbalancing anti-Western influences
3) international Christian broadcasters (religious organizations) - ELWA, RVOG, FEBA, TWR	proclaiming the Gospel, creating goodwill towards churches, missions & their message, providing news & developmental programmes
4) commercial broadcasters (private) - Lourenço Marques Radio, Swazi Commercial Radio	providing an audience for advertisers, selling airtime to interested organizations (religious, etc.)

The performance of the new external services varied considerably. Many of the African national stations (group 1) remained very modest operations as to the quantity and quality of their output. Often their objective was reduced to reaching the neighbouring countries. Lacking financial and technical resources resulted in unreliable transmissions and programme production. Ghana and Uganda, for example, built high-power short wave facilities which suffered from transmission breaks lasting several years. On the other hand, Egypt, South Africa and Nigeria are examples of countries which managed to keep big external services on the air continuously.⁴⁵ The big international broadcasters (group 2) also had the resources for maintaining a strong presence on Africa's airwaves. The

⁴⁵ Stenman 1972, 133; Mäntylä 1982, 169-170; Nieminen & Talvitie 1996, 37; Parviainen 1996, 95.

few religious and commercial broadcasters (groups 3 & 4) were generally services of a more limited character - either regarding broadcast coverage or hours in a given language.

For most African states external service broadcasts were in fact a luxury. Developing their domestic radio services on short wave was far more important, since that was usually the easiest way of securing a nationwide broadcast coverage. National medium wave or FM coverage was far more difficult to achieve, since these frequency ranges require dense transmitter networks, whereas short wave coverage can be attained with one single transmitter.⁴⁶

Besides the relay stations (group 2), many short wave transmissions were beamed to Africa from other continents. International broadcasters such as Radio Moscow, Radio Peking and Vatican Radio were also competing for African listeners. In fact, one of the motives for establishing RVOG was precisely this ideological warfare for the souls and political sympathies of Africans.⁴⁷

In terms of transmitting power, in 1963 RVOG compared favourably with its competitors. By the 1970's, however, as short wave frequencies had become highly congested international broadcasters began raising powers. With its aging equipment RVOG was left behind in the race for superpower transmitters.⁴⁸ It should, however, be noted that technically RVOG performed very well. During its fourteen years of operation less than 0.01 percent of airtime was lost due to technical faults or power failure.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Browne, 1982, 16; Mäntylä 1982, 169.

⁴⁷ Lundgren 1983, 29.

⁴⁸ Cushen 1979, 138-139; Jacobs 1979, 36; Nieminen 1982, 44; Lundgren 1983, 123, 146, 280.

⁴⁹ Lundgren 1983, 110-111, 147.

Abbreviations

AOF	French West Africa (<i>Afrique Occidentale Française</i>)
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
EBS	Ethiopian Broadcasting Service
ELWA	The official call letters of the Sudan Interior Mission's radio station (Liberia); "Eternal Love Winning Africa"
ETHA	The official call letters of Radio Addis Ababa (1955)
FEBA	Far East Broadcasting Association (Seychelles)
FM	Frequency modulation
IBRA	International Broadcasting Association (Pentecostal)
IBTE	Imperial Board of Telecommunications of Ethiopia
kHz	kilohertz
kW	kilowatt
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
LWFBS	Lutheran World Federation Broadcasting Service
ORTF	Office de Radiodiffusion-Télévision Française
RVOG	Radio Voice of the Gospel (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
TWR	Trans World Radio
VOA	Voice of America
WRTH	World Radio TV Handbook

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