

pore, Malaya, north Borneo, Brunei, and Sarawak. “Suddenly,” Georgina Sinclair noted, “the Colonial Office was preoccupied with global security.”¹⁵⁹

6.3.2 The Abidjan Troubles & the Service de Sûreté

But the French also had their own problems to contend with. Ever since Felix Houphouët-Boigny and the *Rassemblement Démocratique Africain* (RDA), instigated a general strike in 1948, the French considered the Ivory Coast as a “hotbed of communism.”¹⁶⁰ The French feared that the RDA would spread Communism to other African colonies and, thus, began liaising with the British over the RDA. The British received most of the intelligence through the General Consul of France in Accra, Charles Renner, who operated a network of informants in the Gold Coast, yet whose information was mostly based on rumours. His information was therefore usually always treated with caution by the British. For example, an informant of the French Overseas Ministry leaked information to the British that Sylvanus Olympio, although not a Communist himself, was in close touch with the RDA.¹⁶¹ However, Governor Cédile, in a private conversation with Security Liaison Officer Robin Stephens, was “emphatic that there was no communist or fellow-traveller tie-up with the Ewe Movement.”¹⁶²

Especially the French wanted to intensify the exchanges on security and intelligence matters. In July 1949, the Assistant Cabinet Chef of the High Commissioner in French West Africa in Dakar, M. Lefevre, responsible for political and security intelligence for French West Africa, visited Accra for exchanges in colonial security affairs. Although Lefevre informed the Gold Coast authorities that the Ivory Coast’s new Governor, Laurent Péchoux, was successful in its hard-handed crackdown of the RDA, he agreed to exchange reports regarding the activities in the Ivory Coast of interesting Gold Coast political figures and vice versa. According to the British records, Lefevre was “very anxious to collaborate closely with British authorities in intelligence matters,”¹⁶³ so that he returned once more to Accra in May 1950.

In British Togoland, guided by the policy of *indirect rule*, nationalist tendencies were legitimate and therefore enjoyed greater freedom. The British were more afraid of communist personalities like Kwame Nkrumah. Thus, the British were interested in obtaining information regarding communist activities in French West Africa,¹⁶⁴ which were “a

159 Sinclair, *At the end of the line*, p. 56.

160 TNA (London), FCO 141/5026, *Gold Coast: Anglo-French cooperation on security matters in West Africa*, Secret Letter Pol.F.16/1/1, S.L.O. R. Stephens to Colonial Secretariat, 13 April 1949.

161 TNA (London), FCO 141/5026, *Gold Coast: Anglo-French cooperation on security matters in West Africa*, TNA (London), FCO 141/5026, *Gold Coast: Anglo-French cooperation on security matters in West Africa*, Summary of a Discussion About Political Development in French West Africa.

162 TNA (London), FCO 141/5026, *Gold Coast: Anglo-French cooperation on security matters in West Africa*, Secret Letter, G.W. Thom to R. Scott, 5 February 1949.

163 TNA (London), FCO 141/5027, *Gold Coast: Anglo-French cooperation on security matters in West Africa*, personal note, 17 March 1950.

164 TNA (London), FCO 141/5026, *Gold Coast: Anglo-French cooperation on security matters in West Africa*, Saving Telegram No. 2047, Arden-Clarke to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 3 November 1949.

beam of light in the eye of the S.B.”¹⁶⁵ For example, when George Sinclair, a Senior Assistant Colonial Secretary, wanted to enquire about French information on the apparently workers’ strike-related events in Abidjan,¹⁶⁶ he called the SLO for West Africa, Colonel Robin Stephens. The latter, in turn, was very displeased with this unorthodox approach, explaining he reported directly to the Governor and would not work with “underlings.” Sinclair speculated that Stephens was just acting angrily because he had no information about Abidjan, since he had to focus all his attention on Nigeria. Sinclair later wrote that Stephen’s “failure to let us know immediately of the recent troubles in Abidjan is typical of the lack of useful Service that he has so far rendered to this Government.”¹⁶⁷ Because of this disagreement, CenSec decided in October 1949 that the Gold Coast needed its own SLO and on a transitional basis appointed Sinclair as the first Gold Coast SLO from 1949, whose duties included personal visits to all stations in the Gold Coast, assistance in the preparation of security schemes and the collation of information, and submission of reports on all security matters.¹⁶⁸ Sinclair, who later obtained the information about the Ivory Coast from Superintendent of Police, L. Chapman, was aware that the latter could not spare another officer to inquire on the Ivory Coast because the Special Branch was too busy keeping an eye on the CPP. Sinclair therefore proposed an Anglo-French security exchange.¹⁶⁹ As Senior Assistant Colonial Secretary, Sinclair’s forays into Anglo-French security cooperation were to be of later use, since in 1952, in his capacity as Chief Regional Commissioner of the Trans-Volta-Togoland Region, his information was instrumental in coordinating French responses regarding the Togoland unification movement.

In contrast, the French, guided by the policy of assimilation, perceived nationalist movements primarily as a challenge to their direct rule and were, thus, interested in obtaining intelligence on nationalist movements in British territories, such as the All-Ewe-Conference. Yet, in fact, there was no security or intelligence report exchange between French and British Togoland officials – one of the reasons why pleadings for more Anglo-French cooperation in colonial security matters was not always condoned. For example, the Commissioner of Police, L. Chapman, demanded that a more considerable effort be made to work more closely with French officials, emphasizing personal contact. Yet, Michael Ensor, Permanent Secretary at the Gold Coast’s Ministry of Defence, already felt a degree of unease regarding the informants of French Consul General in Accra, Charles Renner: “There are it seems to me already far too many French officials and semi officials who drift about in the Gold Coast. [...] They [the French] have rarely seem to pass on information to the French Consulate or ask the Consulate for information.”¹⁷⁰ Likewise, whilst the French suggested that a representative of the *Sûreté’s Service de Documentation*

165 TNA (London), FCO 141/5027, *Gold Coast: Anglo-French cooperation on security matters in West Africa*, handwritten note, Ensor, 31 November 1950.

166 TNA (London), FCO 141/5026, *Gold Coast: Anglo-French cooperation on security matters in West Africa*, Liaising with French African Police, 11 April 1949.

167 TNA (London), FCO 141/5028, *Gold Coast: security reports from the French*, Anglo-French Intelligence and R.D.A. troubles in Abidjan, handwritten note, 3 February 1950, para. 3–4.

168 TNA (London), FCO 141/4990, *Gold Coast: Security Liaison Officer, West Africa*, p. 14.

169 TNA (London), FCO 141/5028, *Gold Coast: security reports from the French*.

170 TNA (London), FCO 141/5027, *Gold Coast: Anglo-French cooperation on security matters in West Africa*, handwritten note, Ensor, 31 November 1950.

et de Contre-Espionage (SDECE), an equivalent to MI6, should be stationed in Accra, the British Secretariat of State for the Colonies found:

“the question of security generally in France, and therefore in French Colonial territories, gives cause for anxiety [...] An S.D.E.C.E. representative in Accra would have special opportunities for obtaining information and would necessarily be free to tour without restriction in West Africa, and his reports might reach the wrong quarters both in France and Africa. [...] any proposal for posting of a representative of M.I.6. in one of the French territories would be unlikely to be acceptable to the French authorities, and this may be thought to be a further argument against agreeing to a corresponding appointment in British territory.”¹⁷¹

Therefore, Anglo-French exchanges on security and intelligence matters were, thus, put on hold until the reorganization of the Gold Coast's intelligence services in 1951.

6.4 Securitising Petitions I: Trusteeship Council (1949–1951)

6.4.1 New Restrictions for Petitions & Visiting Missions (1949)

Following Olympio's presentation during the 2nd Session of the Trusteeship Council, the Administering Authorities postponed the consideration of all petitions until after the Visiting Mission. Consequently, there was no progress regarding petitions. Then, between 3 and 5 January 1949, representatives of France, Belgium, and the United Kingdom, that is, three of the five administering powers met at the Colonial Office to coordinate joint tactics for the Trusteeship Council's upcoming 4th Session. It was agreed that a revision of the favourable rules of procedure, which had been secured because of the Soviet Union's absence during the 1st Session (1946), had to be resisted under any circumstances.¹⁷² It was agreed that Soviet criticism regarding inadequate health, education, and other social services in the Trusteeship Territories should not, as a rule, be answered by counterattacks on practices in the Soviet Union and its satellite countries – only in the case of criticism regarding economic exploitation and human rights should the representatives of the Administering Authorities make use of material to silence criticism by counterattacking such practices in the Soviet Union.¹⁷³

Yet, in any case, it was recognized that the other non-Administering Authorities were a more difficult problem than the Soviet representative. It is noteworthy how in the emerging schism of the Trusteeship Council, the Administrative Authorities, in good

171 TNA (London), FCO 141/5027, *Gold Coast: Anglo-French cooperation on security matters in West Africa*, Saving Telegram No. 14, Secretary of State for the Colonies, 31 November 1950.

172 ANOM (Aix-en-Provence), 1AFFPOL/3316/3, *Affaire Ewe*, Note of Provisional Conclusions reached at Anglo-French-Belgian discussions held at the Colonial Office in London 3rd to 5th January, p. 6.

173 ANOM (Aix-en-Provence), 1AFFPOL/3316/3, *Affaire Ewe*, Copy N° 14, Confidential resumé of a general discussion between representatives of Belgium, France, and the United Kingdom on future policy towards the Trusteeship Council, p. 1.