

Council based their opposition to the proposal on several grounds: While in the case of British Togoland independence had been offered as one of the alternatives, in the case of French Togoland there was no such choice. Autonomy, as envisaged by the French, did not equate with self-government or independence as envisaged in the Trusteeship Agreement. While autonomy did not equate independence, sending United Nations observers could be seen as an endorsement of the referendum's results. Moreover, the referendum did not offer the possibility of independence outside the French Union, and no mention was made of a possible agreement that would allow reunification with British Togoland. Bottom line: the Council did not have enough time to consider the question, nor had it been authorised by the General Assembly to supervise any referendum for the purpose of terminating the Trusteeship Agreement. Instead, the Council decided to forward the French memorandum and the records of the Council's deliberations to the General Assembly, which was to consider the matter.

After the Council's decision, the French representative, Robert Bargues, stated that "France refused to be a party to any procedure which would delay the consultation. It refused to share the responsibility which the Council had just assumed of delaying the accession of Togoland to self-government. The referendum would therefore take place at the appointed time and under the conditions envisaged but in the absence of United Nations observers."<sup>650</sup> Since the referendum was already cast into law passed by the French National Assembly, the French were legally bound to proceed with the referendum anyhow.

## 6.7.2 The French Togoland Referendum (1956)

Amenumey holds that "Over the succeeding months it became clear that the [French] Government tended to conduct this popular consultation in such a manner as to achieve the particular results it wanted."<sup>651</sup> Guy Périer de Feral, a member of the French Council of State, was charged with supervising the referendum and was independent of the local French administration (yet, not entirely impartial). The French thought that abstention from the referendum will be weak.<sup>652</sup>

Despite the French administration's certainty about the insignificance of the unification parties and the outcome of the vote, peace was apparently not trusted and preparations were made for the worst case scenario: in preparation for the referendum, the *journal de mobilisation* was ordered from the *Commandant de Cercle* in Dapango to serve as a template for the entire territory.<sup>653</sup> The archival documents are not unambiguous, but it appears that the military bureau of the French administration wanted to have ready-made call-up lists in case political tensions arose in the course of the referendum. For perspective: In 1956, about 1,500 African soldiers were supposed to ensure the security

<sup>650</sup> TCOR, "7<sup>th</sup> Special Session: Report of the United Nations Commission on Togoland under French Administration" Supplement No. 2 (T/1343) (1958), p. 8.

<sup>651</sup> Amenumey, *The Ewe Unification Movement*, p. 286.

<sup>652</sup> ANOM (Aix-en-Provence), 1AFFPOL/2182/4, *Royaume-Uni, Le Referendum du 28 Octobre 1956 au Togo*.

<sup>653</sup> ANT (Lomé), 2APA Dapango/77, *Affaires Militaires*, Secret Letter No. 156/S, Pateul to Commandant de Cercle Dapango, 20 July 1956.

of French Togoland, an area with a population of just under two million, including only 1,200 Europeans.<sup>654</sup> Administratively, French Togoland was a miniature state whose security forces disproportionately outnumbered even the staff of the colonial administration. Amenume describes in detail how the pro-French PTP and UCPN once again collaborated with the administration and chiefs to disrupt the CUT and Juvento protest campaign in the run-up to the referendum.<sup>655</sup>

Since the unificationist parties were not allowed to participate in the committee revising the electoral lists, they again called for an electoral boycott. Of the total population, 41% had been registered as voters and of these, 77% participated in the referendum; 71.5% of the registered electorate voted for the Statute of the Autonomous Republic and 5% for continuance of trusteeship. Therefore, the referendum led unsurprisingly to a landslide victory in favour of the new statute and a “puppet government” under the new Togolese Prime Minister, Nicholas Grunitzky (PTP).<sup>656</sup>

### Protesting the Plebiscites (1956)

In the months following the referendum in British Togoland, over a hundred petitions were sent to the UN by a wide variety of organizations in the Gold Coast, British Togoland, and French Togoland.

Some petitions from pro-unificationists attempted to securitise what they referred to as a potentially dangerous misinterpretation of the referendum's results. A cablegram by Alex Odame implored the UN as the “world peace organization” to disregard the results and to press for unification, otherwise “serious unrest” and “ultimate war” might ensue.<sup>657</sup> Another petition by the Kumasi-based *Ewe & All-Togoland-Congress* pursued a similar strategy: First, the UN was hailed as a peace-making organisation, congratulating it on its ability to avoid open warfare in the Suez conflict. Now, “Togoland [...] requires the same positive action, to settle it at once and for all, unless we are to believe that it is only when blood is shed that you (U.N.O.) will step in.”<sup>658</sup> A letter from one of the few female unificationist petitioners even compared the proposed union of British Togoland with the Gold Coast to a forced marriage, which “will lead us to destruction, lamentation and various kinds of misery and finally civil war. If your aims are really the Protection of Human Rights and justice, please, save us.”<sup>659</sup> A petition of the Jasikan Ex-Servicemen Union demanded the separation and independence of British Togoland, pleading that the United Nations “must not force introduction of GESTAPO methods.”<sup>660</sup> Petitions from the integrationist camp, such as the CPP, welcomed the referendum result and warned the United Nations to ignore the protest of the unification parties.

The referendum in French Togoland was also a subject of several petitions. A petition by Ben Apaloo, president of Juvento, described how the French administration banned

<sup>654</sup> *New York Times*, “Togoland Facing Divergent Pulls,” 14 August 1956.

<sup>655</sup> Amenume, *The Ewe Unification Movement*, pp. 295–96.

<sup>656</sup> MAE (La Courneuve), 77QO-4, *Politique intérieure*, Annexe a la dépêche d'Accra No. 329/SC.

<sup>657</sup> UN ARMS (New York), S-0443-0030-0006-00006, T/PET.6/L.73, 01 July 1956.

<sup>658</sup> UN ARMS (New York), S-0443-0030-0004-00019, T/PET.6&7/L67, 14 November 1956.

<sup>659</sup> UN ARMS (New York), S-0443-0030-0004-00017, T/PET.6&7/L65, 01 November 1956.

<sup>660</sup> UN ARMS (New York), S-0443-0030-0006-00017, T/PET.6/L.84, 04 December 1956.

a Juvento rally in Aného. Since Juvento held it anyway, the police came to the scene with a “demonstration of force” and stormed in with beatings. A police officer from the French administration allegedly threatened Anani Santo’s life in the process. According to Apaloo’s petition, the entire incident showed how a “climate of insecurity” had existed in the run-up to the referendum in French Togoland.<sup>661</sup> Another petitioner from French Togoland put it briefly: “Give unification or we perish. [...] We are drowning, U.N., save us.”<sup>662</sup> In turn, a PTP-petition shared some of the electoral posters for the referendum, stating that Olympio and Santos “want to leave the chains of trusteeship on the hands of the people.”<sup>663</sup>

Yet, it was all in vain. Of the petitions that were on the agenda of the Council’s 18<sup>th</sup> Session (1956), 263 were postponed to the 19<sup>th</sup> Session (1957).<sup>664</sup> When at the opening of the Council’s 19<sup>th</sup> Session in March 1957, the Council was informed of the receipt of 4,508 communications, particularly from French and British Cameroon. Still, about 87 petitions originated from French and British Togoland. Because of the impending independence of British Togoland in 1957, the Trusteeship Council resolved not to process any pending petitions from British Togoland.<sup>665</sup> Hundreds of petitions were thereby silenced.

To deal with the remaining volume of incoming communications, at its 20<sup>th</sup> Session (1957) the Council established in addition to its Standing Committee on Petitions a two-member Committee on Classification.<sup>666</sup> Despite Soviet protests that the Committee on Classification was being used to eliminate thousands of petitions, it was decided that this procedure should be applied retroactively to the enormous number of pending petitions still awaiting examination, including the petitions that protested against the conduct of the referendum in French Togoland. The ‘successes’ of the Committee on Classification led to its annual renewal. As such, between 1958 and 1961, the Trusteeship Council dealt in a few resolutions with a staggering 17,014 petitions (14,411 from the Cameroon alone). Yet, the number of written petitions did not matter anymore. As a result, the Standing Committee on Petitions was dissolved and the Council itself dealt with a total of only 30 petitions until its dissolution in 1994.

### Oral Hearing (British Togoland)

After both referendums had been held several political parties were heard during the Fourth Committee’s 11<sup>th</sup> Session (1956). At the beginning of the discussion, the British representative informed the Fourth Committee that, subject to parliamentary approval, the Gold Coast would become independent on 6 March 1957.<sup>667</sup> Antor, Odame, Ametowobla, and Asamany spoke on behalf of the Togoland Congress, whilst Asare and

<sup>661</sup> UN ARMS (New York), S-0443-0031-0002-00015, T/PET.7/L29, 12 November 1956.

<sup>662</sup> UN ARMS (New York), S-0443-0031-0002-00016, T/PET.7/L30, 20 September 1956.

<sup>663</sup> UN ARMS (New York), S-0443-0031-0002-00008, T/PET.7/L22, 16 October 1956.

<sup>664</sup> United Nations, “UN Yearbook 1956” (1956), p. 316.

<sup>665</sup> TCOR, “19<sup>th</sup> Session” (1957), pp. 3–4.

<sup>666</sup> Including a member of an Administering and a Non-Administering Authority. Trusteeship Council Resolution 1713, *Review of procedures regarding petitions*, T/RES/1713(XX) (July 8, 1957), available from <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/218825>.

<sup>667</sup> GAOR, “11<sup>th</sup> Session: 4<sup>th</sup> Committee” (1956), p. 8.

Kumah appeared for the CPP, and Olympio, Santos, and Akakpo spoke for the AEC, Juvento and MPT, respectively.

*Photo 24: Togoland Congress and CPP before 4<sup>th</sup> Committee (ca. November 1956)*<sup>668</sup>



Source: UN Photo.

The unificationists generally agreed with the report of the UN electoral observation mission that the referendum in British Togoland was impartial, yet they argued that the results were not interpreted correctly. Odame voiced his dissatisfaction drastically:

"The plebiscite had, however, been held simply because the United Kingdom, having discovered a new kind of colonialism – the colonialism of the Commonwealth Club – wanted the Gold Coast to join that club as a larger, wealthier, and more desirable member than it would be were Togoland under British administration not integrated with it. In 1946, when the Trusteeship Agreement had been signed, the people of Togoland under British administration had already been under United Kingdom administration for thirty-two years. At no time during that period had it been suggested that they should be called upon to decide their own fate, the reason being that Togoland was a peaceful country. [...] If for thirty-two years Togoland under British administration had not been qualified to decide its own fate, it might be asked by what miracle it had been transformed within two years into a country fully qualified to express freely the wish to be self-governing. The truth was that in 1948 the people of the Gold Coast

668 From top to bottom, at left: Regina Asamany (Togoland Congress), Francis R. Ametowobla (Togoland Congress), S. W. Kumah (CPP). At right: Alex K. Odame (Togoland Congress), Senyo G. Antor (Togoland Congress), Francis Y. Asare (CPP).

had successfully carried out a revolution to free themselves from British colonial rule and Togoland was therefore to be sacrificed to satisfy the requirements of the new colonialism of the United Kingdom and France.<sup>669</sup>

Odame thus echoed the widely held view among unificationists that the referendum was the British response to the violent riots in Accra in 1948. Asamany found even more drastic words:

"World morality was at stake. Not only the people of Togoland, but all the Members of the United Nations and all the people of the world, were being cheated of justice. The matter involved profound moral, ethical, political and economic decisions which would affect all those who took part, and to overlook those facts and join the United Kingdom and France because they were world Powers and had mighty allies would be a step in the direction of a war in which mankind might be destroyed. [...] The people of Togoland and Africa had faith and confidence in the peaceful, just and democratic peoples of the United States, the United Kingdom, France and the Western bloc generally. They trusted those peoples to put an end to the flagrant violations of international agreements being practised by the United Kingdom and France."<sup>670</sup>

Odame and Asamany argued that the results of the referendum should be invalidated because a decision on the important constitutional or political question of changing the status of a trusteeship territory should require a two-thirds majority.<sup>671</sup> Ametowobla raised the question of the future character of statehood, as the population could not agree on a unified or federal constitutional form in the run-up to the country's independence. While the Northern Territories and Ashanti wanted a federation, only the Coastal Colony favoured a unitary system. But when by now already two of the three regions that made up the Gold Coast thought that their territory could not participate in independence because the present constitution did not protect their interests, one could hardly blame the people of British Togoland for being sceptical about rushing into an indefinite union with the Gold Coast. Thus, without certainty as to the nature of the constitution under which Gold Coast independence was to be granted, the General Assembly should not terminate the Trusteeship Agreement.<sup>672</sup> Antor elaborated on this point but affirmed that the Togoland Congress would consider the possibility of a union on the exclusive condition that Togoland would join the Gold Coast within a federal state, even though the Legislative Assembly had overwhelmingly approved a unitary constitution just two weeks earlier.

The CPP petitioners, Kumah and Asare, replied that the views of the Togoland Congress were those of the losing party. They stressed that the opinion of the majority should be respected, and the Trusteeship Agreement should be terminated. Kumah also maintained that integration would bring about at least partial unification of the Ewe people.

<sup>669</sup> GAOR, "11<sup>th</sup> Session: 4<sup>th</sup> Committee" (1956), pp. 17–18.

<sup>670</sup> GAOR, "11<sup>th</sup> Session: 4<sup>th</sup> Committee" (1956), p. 19.

<sup>671</sup> GAOR, "11<sup>th</sup> Session: 4<sup>th</sup> Committee" (1956), pp. 18–19.

<sup>672</sup> GAOR, "11<sup>th</sup> Session: 4<sup>th</sup> Committee" (1956), pp. 20–21.

Olympio argued like the Togoland Congress. He argued that the result of the referendum should be interpreted to mean that the population of northern British Togoland tended not to vote for integration within a unitary Gold Coast, but rather to favour 'union' with the Gold Coast's northern territories, the latter of which in turn did not want to join such a unitary state either. Nor did the overwhelming majority of Southern Togolanders who voted against integration in any way imply a complete rejection of integration with the Gold Coast. Voters in the south were much more in favour of a form of union that would, however, preserve Togoland's identity and not exclude a possible association of French Togoland with the future state.<sup>673</sup> Santos addressed the replacement of the term 'integration' by the term 'union' in reference to the future of Togoland under British administration. Far from being a simple matter of terminology, that substitution involved the whole question of the future of Togoland and, in his opinion, the responsibility of the United Nations.<sup>674</sup>

Santos and Akakpo then took on developments in French Togoland. Santos questioned whether 70% had really voted for the Autonomous Republic and the end of trusteeship, that is, for quasi-annexation by France. He further argued that rather than for true self-government there was no question that the *loi-cadre*, the Togo Statute, and the referendum in French Togoland were devised for decentralization of power "to strengthen the role of the population in the overseas territories, by which was meant a carefully selected *elite*".<sup>675</sup> He maintained that "Every possible means had been used to bring about the annexation: the good old colonial methods of corruption and pressure, ambiguity, deprivation of freedoms of all kinds, and intimidation, or even repression, of the mass of the people; the modern technique of manipulation of electoral lists and voting papers."<sup>676</sup> Akakpo made a similar point concerning the electoral practices in French Togoland: "During the election itself, intimidation and pressure had frequently been used by the Administration. [...] it's easy to imagine what could happen in the bush, where the *commandants de cercle* were monarchs, where autocratic chiefs abused their power with impunity and where the people were afraid to complain of the irregularities."<sup>677</sup>

## General Debate

In the general debate, three camps were emerging. A draft resolution was introduced jointly by eleven countries expressing approval of the union of British Togoland with the Gold Coast. Another camp contended a union might render impossible the unification of Togoland, a course which had been advocated by the General Assembly in the past.

The referendum in British Togoland was inconclusive because, on the one hand, the overwhelming majority in the southern part was against integration and, on the other hand, it was not clear whether the people wanted to live in a united Gold Coast with a unitary or a federal state. It was argued that it would be premature to agree to the integration of the British Togoland into the Gold Coast until there is an agreed constitution

<sup>673</sup> GAOR, "11<sup>th</sup> Session: 4<sup>th</sup> Committee" (1956), p. 25.

<sup>674</sup> GAOR, "11<sup>th</sup> Session: 4<sup>th</sup> Committee" (1956), p. 28.

<sup>675</sup> GAOR, "11<sup>th</sup> Session: 4<sup>th</sup> Committee" (1956), p. 29.

<sup>676</sup> GAOR, "11<sup>th</sup> Session: 4<sup>th</sup> Committee" (1956), p. 28.

<sup>677</sup> GAOR, "11<sup>th</sup> Session: 4<sup>th</sup> Committee" (1956), p. 30.

setting out the future form of statehood. For example, the Guatemalan delegate, Rolz Bennett, pointed out “the development of Trust Territories might give rise to de facto situations which neither the peoples of those Territories nor the United Nations could undo.”<sup>678</sup>

The third group of delegations sat more or less between the two camps. While it shared some of these reservations and fears, it took the view that integration British Togoland into the Gold Coast was the only practicable way by which the people of British Togoland could achieve independence without delay. Although the constitution of the independent Gold Coast had not yet been formalised, the Gold Coast government had already informed the Committee Fourth of the most important provisions. In any case, it would be better if the representatives of the peoples of the two countries, rather than the Fourth Committee, decided on it. Accordingly, the Fourth Committee adopted an amended version of the eleven-nation draft resolution by fifty-eight votes to none with eleven abstentions,<sup>679</sup> thereby approving the union of British Togoland with an independent Gold Coast and on the day of independence the Trusteeship Agreement should no longer be in force.

### French Memorandum to End Trusteeship (1956)

During the Trusteeship Council’s 6<sup>th</sup> Special Session (1956), that is, exactly one day after the Fourth Committee had approved the integration of British Togoland into the Gold Coast, the French government presented a memorandum,<sup>680</sup> declaring that since the people in French Togoland had voted for political autonomy within the French Union, it wished to end trusteeship and rejected any other solution for its future.<sup>681</sup>

Yet, the non-Administering Council members were not persuaded, especially since the French representative, Robert Bargues, explained that “external affairs and defence, the currency and foreign exchange system and the other matters enumerated [...] would depend on laws to be adopted by the French Parliament.”<sup>682</sup> However, the representative of Guatemala proposed that all documents relating to the referendum in French Togoland be transmitted to the General Assembly. All the non-Administering Council members supported this proposal, as well as the United States. They held that the Trusteeship Council could not take a decision without hearing from the petitioners and representatives of the new Togolese government, all of whom had appeared before the Fourth Committee and since the Fourth Committee was meeting at the same time, it did not have the information available to the Council. The remaining colonial powers, of course, considered this proposal an affront and protested that it was yet another of the many manoeuvres directed against them to increase General Assembly pressure on the Administering

<sup>678</sup> GAOR, “11<sup>th</sup> Session: 4<sup>th</sup> Committee” (1956), p. 64.

<sup>679</sup> GAOR, “11<sup>th</sup> Session: 4<sup>th</sup> Committee” (1956), p. 90.

<sup>680</sup> TCOR, “The future of the Trust Territory of Togoland under French Administration: memorandum by the Administering Authority” (T/1290), available from <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1653395>.

<sup>681</sup> TCOR, “6<sup>th</sup> Special Session” (1956), p. 1.

<sup>682</sup> TCOR, “6<sup>th</sup> Special Session” (1956), p. 6.

Authorities and to weaken the constitutional position of the Trusteeship Council “by depriving it of the safeguard provided for it in the Council’s parity of membership.”<sup>683</sup> Nevertheless, with the vote of the United States’ representative, Mason Sears, who regarded French Togoland’s autonomy as incomplete,<sup>684</sup> the proposal passed by eight votes to six.

The French representative, Robert Bargues, was furious about the “non-administering powers’ lack of objectivity”<sup>685</sup> and the decision of his American colleague.<sup>686</sup> Bargues feared the worst for French reputation and complained that Sears apparently “makes no secret of its desire to join, at every available opportunity, the bloc of non-administrating Nations.”<sup>687</sup> In the midst of a debate of colonial nature, it was obvious that the American Government found itself in great embarrassment. The Americans advised the French against their desire to terminate Trusteeship but offered support through other arrangements. They were not *per se* against integration of French Togoland into the French Union, yet, held “If in the current case we proceed too fast, it might prejudice future cases and weaken the possibility of maintaining European administration in areas that are not ready for self-government.”<sup>688</sup> The problem was not even the manner in which the referendum was held, since the US Government did “not believe that the views of the local population are necessarily decisive since they may not be necessarily prepared to express their views properly, and the United Nations should conduct investigations to ascertain if the various peoples are in fact ready to divest the United Nations trusteeship.”<sup>689</sup> Seldom do instances of racist mindsets and expressions of illocutionary disablement, through the abandonment of democratic principles and the silencing of the entire population’s voice, manifest with such stark clarity in archival records. The US delegation warned the French delegation to continue its demand to lift trusteeship before the Fourth Committee, which constituted the “worst possible forum” for them and advised to seek a compromise resolution.<sup>690</sup>

### Oral Hearing (French Togoland)

The Fourth Committee was already in its 11<sup>th</sup> Session (1956–57), when Gaston Defferre, Minister for Overseas France, Georges Apedo-Amah, the Minister of Finance of the Autonomous Republic of Togoland and Guy Perier de Feral, the referendum’s administrator,

683 TCOR, “6<sup>th</sup> Special Session” (1956), p. 8.

684 MAE (La Courneuve), 77QO-10, *Nouvel examen de la question togolaise par la 4ème Commission de l’Assemblée générale des Nations Unies*, Telegram 3115, 13 December 1956, p. 3.

685 MAE (La Courneuve), 77QO-10, *Nouvel examen de la question togolaise par la 4ème Commission de l’Assemblée générale des Nations Unies*, Circulaire N°110, 24 December 1956, p. 3.

686 MAE (La Courneuve), 77QO-11, *Nouvel examen de la question togolaise par la 4ème Commission de l’Assemblée générale des Nations Unies*, Secrétariat des Conférences, Note, 10 January 1957.

687 MAE (La Courneuve), 77QO-10, *Nouvel examen de la question togolaise par la 4ème Commission de l’Assemblée générale des Nations Unies*, Telegram N°3346/47, 22 December 1956, p. 1.

688 MAE (La Courneuve), 77QO-10, *Nouvel examen de la question togolaise par la 4ème Commission de l’Assemblée générale des Nations Unies*, Telegram N° 14682/88, 28 December 1956, p. 2.

689 MAE (La Courneuve), 77QO-10, *Nouvel examen de la question togolaise par la 4ème Commission de l’Assemblée générale des Nations Unies*, Telegram N° 14682/88, 28 December 1956, p. 2.

690 MAE (La Courneuve), 77QO-10, *Nouvel examen de la question togolaise par la 4ème Commission de l’Assemblée générale des Nations Unies*, Telegram N° 14682/88, 28 December 1956, p. 2.

appeared as members of the official French delegation. Against the advice of the US delegation, Defferre called for the Trusteeship Agreement to be ended and to that effect a memorandum by the Togoland Government was circulated to members of the Committee.<sup>691</sup>

Representatives of the PTP and UCPN endeavoured to argue that the statute granted the territory extensive internal self-government. Only Nanamale Gbegbeni (UCPN) used a more drastic tone when stating that “the sole aim of the so-called nationalists was to turn Togoland into a vassal of the independent Gold Coast. The chiefs and people of the North did not share that desire. [...] They did not want their country to be exploited by colonialists of their own race, to the detriment of its interests.”<sup>692</sup>

Photo 25: Pro-French Counter-Petitioners before 4<sup>th</sup> Committee (3 January 1957)<sup>693</sup>



Source: UN Photo.

Since the General Assembly had already passed a resolution contrary to the unification of French and British Togoland, Olympio (CUT), Santos (Juvento) and Akakpo (MPT) appeared no longer as embodiments of the unification movement but 'merely' as representatives of the opposition in French Togoland. They appealed to the Fourth Committee not to terminate trusteeship on the grounds that self-government granted by the statute was illusory, and that the referendum had been conducted in an atmosphere of repression and irregularities.

691 GAOR, "11<sup>th</sup> Session: 4<sup>th</sup> Committee" (1956), pp. 173-75.

692 GAOR, "11<sup>th</sup> Session: 4<sup>th</sup> Committee" (1956), p. 177.

693 From left to right: Victor Atakpamey (PTP); Michael Ayassou (Traditional Chiefs of the South); Nanamale Ghegheni (UCPN); and Sambiani Matevendou (Traditional Chiefs of the North)

Photo 26: Akakpo, Santos & Olympio before 4<sup>th</sup> Committee (03 January 1957)<sup>694</sup>



Source: UN Photo.

Once more, they securitised the threat to political liberties in French Togoland. Akakpo maintained that in French Togoland “political liberties did not exist. In the past political meetings had often been prevented by the police. A new tactic had now been adopted: it was the village and cantonal chiefs who, with the protection of the police, prevented the opposition parties from holding meetings in their villages.”<sup>695</sup> Santos reiterated that independence for French Togoland was a hypothesis formally excluded in advance by the referendum. Regarding the political campaigning, he added that...

“leaders of the Parti togolais du progrès and other sympathizers of the Administering Authority had been allowed to prevent the Comité de l’Unité togolaise, by threats of force, from holding political meetings; that Mr. Olympio, of the All-Ewe Conference, had been attacked by anti-Ewe elements who had gone unpunished [...] Such partiality for sympathizers of the Administering Authority was an old story and had been the subject of numerous petitions.”<sup>696</sup>

Olympio pointed out that the Trusteeship Council had already expressed on two occasions that it did not agree with the French demand to terminate the Trusteeship Agreement. It was only because of this that the French Senator for Togoland, Robert Ajavon, threatened that Togoland would sever all ties with the United Nations if the French plan was not accepted. The CUT, in contrast, would do all in its power to ensure that any change in relations between the trusteeship territory and the United Nations was af-

694 At left (profile): André Akakpo (MPT), Anani Santos (Juvento), Sylvanus Olympio (AEC). At the rostrum, Angie Brooks (Liberia), Benjamin Cohen, Under-Secretary of the U.N., Enrique de Karobena (Dominican Republic) Heinrich A. Wieschhoff, Committee Secretary.

695 GAOR, “11<sup>th</sup> Session: 4<sup>th</sup> Committee” (1956), p. 179.

696 GAOR, “11<sup>th</sup> Session: 4<sup>th</sup> Committee” (1956), pp. 180–81.

fected peacefully and in accordance with the Charter.<sup>697</sup> He expounded how “his own party for instance, because it stood for independence, had been systematically intimidated and persecuted. By a variety of improper practices, the political atmosphere had been so falsified as to make it appear that only a minority desired independence and unification.”<sup>698</sup>

Olympio asserted that the CUT would eventually cooperate on condition that the idea of ending trusteeship be abandoned and that new elections be held to the Legislative Assembly to make it a truly democratic and representative body. In this sense, it would be able to amend the statute so that it would be transformed into a constitution allowing for true self-government as a precursor to independence.

### General Debate

Once again, the opposition petitioners made quite an impression on the anti-colonial state representatives of the Fourth Committee. Haiti’s representative, Max Dorsinville, accused France of missing the alternative of independence in the referendum, which made the whole operation suspect in the eyes of the majority,<sup>699</sup> and Yugoslavia’s representative, Bozovic, accused France of holding the referendum in undue haste after assuring the General Assembly immediately before the referendum that the decision on the future of French Togoland would take years. Had France followed the United Kingdom’s example and organized and conducted the referendum in cooperation with the United Nations, the Fourth Committee would have been obliged to approve the results, even if they had not pleased all delegations.<sup>700</sup>

During the debate, the Indian delegation introduced a draft resolution that proposed that the General Assembly appoint a commission and send it to French Togoland to investigate the entire situation in the territory and report back. A similar draft resolution was made by five-powers and resubmitted in the form of amendments to the Indian draft resolution.<sup>701</sup> The course of the discussion signalled that the Fourth Committee would go no further and that the plan of the French Overseas Minister, Gaston Defferre, was bound to fail. The French should have listened to the warnings of the Americans.

Therefore, Apedo-Amah informed the Fourth Committee that “the Government of the Autonomous Republic of Togoland would be happy to welcome a United Nations information mission to observe at first-hand how Togoland’s institutions were functioning and how the Statute was being applied.”<sup>702</sup> Defferre stated that the French Government, which was responsible for Togoland’s foreign relations, associated itself with that request and confirmed France’s willingness to abandon its request to terminate trusteeship in 1957 “if the further course of discussion and the substance of the resolution adopted were

697 GAOR, “11<sup>th</sup> Session: 4<sup>th</sup> Committee” (1956), p. 183.

698 GAOR, “11<sup>th</sup> Session: 4<sup>th</sup> Committee” (1956), p. 183.

699 TCOR, “11<sup>th</sup> Session” (1952), pp. 207–8.

700 TCOR, “11<sup>th</sup> Session” (1952), p. 219.

701 Canada, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Liberia, and Peru.

702 GAOR, “11<sup>th</sup> Session: 4<sup>th</sup> Committee” (1956), p. 196.

acceptable to France.”<sup>703</sup> This new, more conciliatory attitude took much of the edge off subsequent discussions.

With the amendments, the Fourth Committee explicitly noted that the new statute had been approved by a substantial majority of the population of the Territory and considered it a significant step toward achieving the objectives of Article 76 of the Charter and the Trusteeship Agreement. The soon-to-be-dispatched United Nations Commission was to examine the situation in the Territory only regarding “the practical application of the new statute and the conditions under which it is applied.”<sup>704</sup> A Philippine amendment recommended that French Togoland’s Legislative Assembly should be constituted as soon as possible by elections based on universal adult suffrage. Based on equitable geographical distribution, the President of the General Assembly nominated on 20 February 1957, members for the ‘Commission on the Future of Togoland under French Administration’ under the Liberian chairmanship of Charles King.

*Photo 27: The “King-Commission” (3 May 1957)*<sup>705</sup>



Source: UN Photo.

For the unification movement, the 11<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly (1956–57) marked both a defeat and a triumph. A defeat for the Togoland Congress, since the decision had been sealed to incorporate British Togoland into the Gold Coast – and a triumph, since the opposition parties of French Togoland were able to inflict another defeat on France and the door to genuine independence (and possible reunification with neighbouring territories) had not yet been slammed shut.

<sup>703</sup> GAOR, “11<sup>th</sup> Session: 4<sup>th</sup> Committee” (1956), p. 213.

<sup>704</sup> See GAOR, “11<sup>th</sup> Session” (1956), Annexes (A/12/Annexes, *Item 39*, p. 59).

<sup>705</sup> Briefing on details of the commission’s organization (l.to r.): G. Makovsky (Interpreter), E. Meihns-torp (Denmark), Karl I. Eskelund, (Denmark); J. L. Delisle (Canada); J. A. Correa (Principal Secretary); Charles T. O. King (Liberia); Jose Rolz Bennett (Guatemala), Victorio D. Carpio (Philippines), Aleksandar Bozovic (Yugoslavia), Ian E. Berendsen (Asst. Secretary), and Richard W. Wathen (Asst. Secretary).