

*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.”<sup>171</sup>

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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> Session (1946), had to be resisted under any circumstances.<sup>172</sup> 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.<sup>173</sup>

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.

old colonial fashion, imagined themselves as impartial experts to vindicate the criticism of the trusteeship constellation:

“the Trusteeship Council might find itself faced with an apparently unbridgeable cleavage between administering and Non-Administering Authorities. The Administering Authorities, however, from the majority of the permanent members, and they alone are in a position of gradually to establish a tradition of impartial and at least non-political, if not informed, approach to the questions before the Council. If they adhere constantly to this line, there is at least a reasonable change that such a tradition, which alone can make the Council a workable body, may eventually prevail.”<sup>174</sup>

It was agreed that the arrangements for the Visiting Mission to Togoland should be debated as late as possible and that the subject of petitions should be kept as low as possible on the agenda.<sup>175</sup>

However, at the beginning of the Council’s 4<sup>th</sup> Session (1949), the Council was informed that the Secretariat had received two petitions marked “Private” and “Confidential.” In one of them the petitioner had specifically requested that the subject of his petition should not be made known to the Administering Authority. The Secretariat requested guidelines from the Council, since there was no provision in the rules of procedure for such cases.<sup>176</sup> In the ensuing debate, the divide between the positions of the Administering and non-Administering Authorities became apparent once again: The French representative, Roger Garreau, recalled that when the rules of procedure were being drafted, he had warned the Council of the results of making the petitions system too wide in scope: “If the *right of petition were abused*, the Secretariat and the Trusteeship Council might often be placed in a difficult position.”<sup>177</sup> All Administering Authorities rallied behind the proposal made by the Belgian representative, Ryckmans, that...

“[...] When the petitioner asks specifically that the subject-matter of his petition should not be brought to the notice of the local authority, [...] the petitioner should be informed that all petitions received by the Secretary-General will, as soon as they, are transmitted to the Trusteeship Council, necessarily be known by the Local and Administering Authorities. The petitioner should be asked whether, in those circumstances, he wishes his petition to be transmitted to the Trusteeship Council.”<sup>178</sup>

Again, Garreau maintained that only signed petitions should be considered as written in good faith and therefore underlined:

174 ANOM (Aix-en-Provence), 1AFFPOL/3316/3, *Affaire Ewe*, Copy No. 14, Confidential resumé of a general discussion between representatives of Belgium, France and the United Kingdom on future policy towards the Trusteeship Council, p. 2.

175 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. 2.

176 TCOR, “4<sup>th</sup> Session” (1949), p. 29.

177 Emphasis added, TCOR, “4<sup>th</sup> Session” (1949), p. 30.

178 TCOR, “4<sup>th</sup> Session” (1949), p. 65.

“The author of a petition should always assume responsibility for his statements. There was no Trust Territory in which any person had a valid reason for remaining anonymous, or needed to fear reprisals from the Administering Authorities. [Even] If such a case should arise, the Secretariat could not take a decision; that was a matter for the Council.”<sup>179</sup>

Similarly, the British representative, Burns, echoed: “No anonymous document should be received as a petition by the Trusteeship Council. There was no reason why any petitioner in a Trust Territory should fear reprisals.”<sup>180</sup> Only the Iraqi representative, Abdullah Bakr, expressed concern that a petitioner should have the right to have his or her name kept secret if he or she so desired. Yet, with so little resistance, the proposal was thus adopted by eight to four votes.<sup>181</sup>

However, the proposal only covered petitions where the author was known but wished his or her identity to remain confidential. Although the Secretariat had not received any anonymous petitions so far, the Administering Authorities immediately made the initiative that anonymous petitions should not be treated as petitions at all. The Belgian representative, Ryckmans, urged to speak of “anonymous *communications*” because in his opinion “there was no such thing as an anonymous petition.”<sup>182</sup> Also, the American representative, Sayre, doubted that anonymous petitions could be regarded as petitions at all since “they lacked the weight of a signed document and were therefore ‘inconsequential’.”<sup>183</sup> Once, again, a proposal was made by Ryckmans that no anonymous communications should be published as unrestricted documents. He maintained that that his proposal was designed only to restrict the publicity given to anonymous petitions but in no way prejudged the further treatment they should receive.<sup>184</sup> Garreau felt that Ryckmans’ proposal did not go far enough, probably because the proposed restrictions still gave too much authority to the UN Secretariat on how to deal with potentially compromising petitions. He championed that anonymous communications as well as confidential petitions should not be considered first by the Secretariat but by the *Ad Hoc* Committee, which should have the right to accept or reject them. In the end, it was agreed that “anonymous communications sent as petitions should not be circulated as unrestricted documents unless the Council decides otherwise.”<sup>185</sup>

The rule concerning anonymous petitions forced authors of written petitions into Hansen’s *silence dilemma* of securitisation because the disclosure of their identity might have provoked reprisals of the Administering Authorities or observation by their secret police. This amendment to the rules of procedure was only the beginning of the Administering Authorities’ campaign against anonymous petitions. Petitions, whether anonymous or confidential, could now no longer securitise the administration without running into the silence dilemma.

179 TCOR, “4<sup>th</sup> Session” (1949), p. 67.

180 TCOR, “4<sup>th</sup> Session” (1949), p. 67.

181 TCOR, “4<sup>th</sup> Session” (1949), p. 69.

182 TCOR, “4<sup>th</sup> Session” (1949), p. 71.

183 TCOR, “4<sup>th</sup> Session” (1949), p. 67.

184 TCOR, “4<sup>th</sup> Session” (1949), pp. 70–71.

185 TCOR, “4<sup>th</sup> Session” (1949), p. 71.

When in the course of the session, the Council dealt with the examination of the 1947 annual reports for Togoland, the French and British delegations presented the Trusteeship Council with a joint interim report, describing the work of the Consultative Commission and the measures implemented by both administrations in the Togolands.<sup>186</sup> The conclusions of the report pointed to the need to reorganise the economic relations between the colonial territories in West Africa as a whole and to establish a commission to study the economic problems of West Africa. The idea of a formal commission to investigate general economic relations in colonial West Africa found both supporters and opponents in the Colonial Office, but by July 1949 the French Overseas Ministry was to express its opposition. The French preferred to limit cooperation to a joint mission investigating the problem of Togoland and the Conventional Zone, but to leave aside the broader question of economic relations.<sup>187</sup>

At the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> Session (1949), the question arose on how to deal with petitions submitted to UN Visiting Missions since the number of petitions considered by the Council increased somewhat, mainly due to petitions received by the 1948 UN Visiting Mission to the trusteeship territories in East Africa, that is, Ruanda-Urundi and Tanganyika. The procedure of the *ad hoc* Committees revealed its first problems due to the lengthy discussion in the Council and, in addition, the Administering Authorities repeatedly asked for further postponements in the submission of their written statements. Thus, in view of the forthcoming 1949 Visiting Mission to the trusteeship territories of Togoland and Cameroon, the Soviet delegate, Aleksander Soldatov, sought to broaden the terms of reference for the Visiting Missions by allowing them to investigate petitions on the spot. Expectedly, the Administering Authorities rebutted this initiative, arguing that only the Council was vested with the sufficient authority to decide upon petitions, not the Visiting Missions. Thus, the Soviet amendments to the rules of procedure were defeated,<sup>188</sup> and the French insisted successfully that consideration of all present and future Ewe petitions be postponed until the Council had begun consideration of the report of the Visiting Mission during the next session.<sup>189</sup>

Documents of the British administration in the Gold Coast reveal that the French were “most anxious that the Visiting Mission to West Africa should go to the Cameroons before the Togolands. [...] if the Mission starts by becoming preoccupied with the Ewes it will think of little else during its time in West Africa and everything else it sees will be coloured by the aspirations of the Ewes.”<sup>190</sup> As concluded during the Council’s debates, the French and British authorities, thus, gave instructions to the local authorities that Visiting Missions merely had power to “accept” petitions, yet, not to “investigate” them.<sup>191</sup>

186 TCOR, “4<sup>th</sup> Session” (1949), p. 288. T/255, *Examination of annual reports: Togoland under British administration, 1947, Togoland under French Administration, 1947: statements by the delegations of France of the United Kingdom*.

187 Kent, “The Ewe Question,” p. 236.

188 TCOR, “5<sup>th</sup> Session” (1949), p. 28.

189 TCOR, “5<sup>th</sup> Session” (1949), p. 54.

190 PRAAD (Ho), VRC/AD/1185, *Trusteeship Council 6<sup>th</sup> Session June 1950*, Secret Letter [25165/2/49], L.H. Gorsuch to Robert Scott, 14 July 1949.

191 PRAAD (Ho), VRC/AD/1185, *Trusteeship Council 6<sup>th</sup> Session June 1950*, Telegram No. 530, Governor of Gold Coast to Secretary of the Colonies, 25 June 1949, p. 2.

In addition, during the Council's debate, the French and British delegation also suggested a change in the rules of procedure that would have resulted in the report of the Visiting Mission being sent directly to the Council's member delegations and not being distributed as an official trusteeship document until after the Administering Authorities had attached their comments on the report to the report itself.<sup>192</sup> This proposal was met with astonishment by the non-Administering Authorities. The Philippines' delegate, José Inglés, saw the proposal as exacerbating the already unequal distribution of voices in the Trusteeship System:

"[...] if it could be supposed that the report of a visiting mission might be unjustly unfavourable to the Administering Authority, it might equally be supposed that such a report might lack impartiality about the population of the Territory visited. If, therefore, it was desired to grant the Administering Authority concerned the right to reply to the comments of the visiting mission, the same right should be granted to the population of the Territory visited. The Administering Authorities were represented on the Council; they had the right to have a special representative present and taking part in the Council's discussion of the visiting mission's reports; experts of the Power administering the Territory customarily accompanied the visiting mission to that Territory, and that Power was able to submit to the Council its comments on the visiting mission's report. The peoples of the Territory visited, on the other hand, had only the right to address petitions to the Council if the visiting mission's report lacked impartiality towards them. How could they exercise that right if they were unable to take cognizance of the contents of that report? The Council should have before it the comments of both the Administering Authority concerned and of the peoples of the Territory visited before it drew its own conclusions and made its own recommendations on the visiting mission's report."<sup>193</sup>

The Soviet delegate seconded this view, stating that...

"The proposal before the Council would have the effect of still further restricting the means by which the populations of the Trust Territories could inform the Council of the real conditions in those Territories. A certain tendency was discernible to bring the work of the visiting missions under the control, or even the censorship, of the Administering Authority of the Territories they visited."<sup>194</sup>

The British delegate, Alan Burns, regretted to note that all the statements made by the delegation of the Philippines and the USSR...

"[...] clearly betrayed suspicion of the Administering Authorities and of any proposals put forward by them. It was most unfortunate that the Council should be divided into Administering Powers and non-administering Powers; [...] as long as the latter per-

192 TCOR, "5<sup>th</sup> Session" (1949), p. 12.

193 TCOR, "5<sup>th</sup> Session" (1949), pp. 313–14.

194 TCOR, "5<sup>th</sup> Session" (1949), p. 314.

sisted in the attitude they had thought fit to adopt, the Council could not function as it should, and the blame would not rest with the Administering Authorities.<sup>195</sup>

Due to the irreconcilable positions, it was decided to postpone a decision in this regard until the next meeting. This heated exchange illustrated that while anti-colonial Council members repeatedly pushed for petitions to be dealt in a timely and effective manner, the colonial powers tried to drag out the review process. The frustration of the anti-colonial Council members was best captured by the Soviet delegate, Aleksander Soldatov:

“Petitions were very important documents; their examination was one of the Council’s principal functions. The examination had been postponed from the fourth to the fifth session; it might well be deferred from the fifth to the sixth or even longer. The Council should not treat petitions in such an off-hand fashion but should act upon them immediately.”<sup>196</sup>

Given the Cold War dynamics, the Soviet stance was transparent. Just a few years earlier, the Soviet Union had positioned itself against the right of individuals to petition the UN. However, if petitions could be directed against the Western trusteeship powers, the Soviet Union strongly supported this instrument and once-colonised states pushed to facilitate the petition process.

Thus, when during the General Assembly’s 4<sup>th</sup> Session (1949), its Fourth Committee, responsible for trusteeship- and decolonisation-related matters, was informed about the influx of petitions, it resolved on basis of an Egyptian-sponsored resolution that the Council shall facilitate and expedite its examination procedure ensuring that the findings of Visiting Missions should be promptly and effectively acted upon.<sup>197</sup>

### The 1<sup>st</sup> Visiting Mission (1949)

During the Council’s 6<sup>th</sup> Session (1949), the chairperson of the 1949 UN Visiting Mission to the Cameroons and Togolands, Awni Khalidy, released the Mission’s report to the Council. The Mission concluded that the existing frontier between British and French Togoland was a hardship for the people and confirmed that much of the Ewe people seemed to favour the formation of a unified Eweland comprising, the southern section of the two Togolands and two neighbouring districts of the Gold Coast. Merely eliminating the economic disadvantages resulting from the border would not meet the Ewe unification movement’s objectives.<sup>198</sup> The mission noted that “If unification is not satis-

195 TCOR, “5<sup>th</sup> Session” (1949), p. 317.

196 TCOR, “5<sup>th</sup> Session” (1949), p. 265.

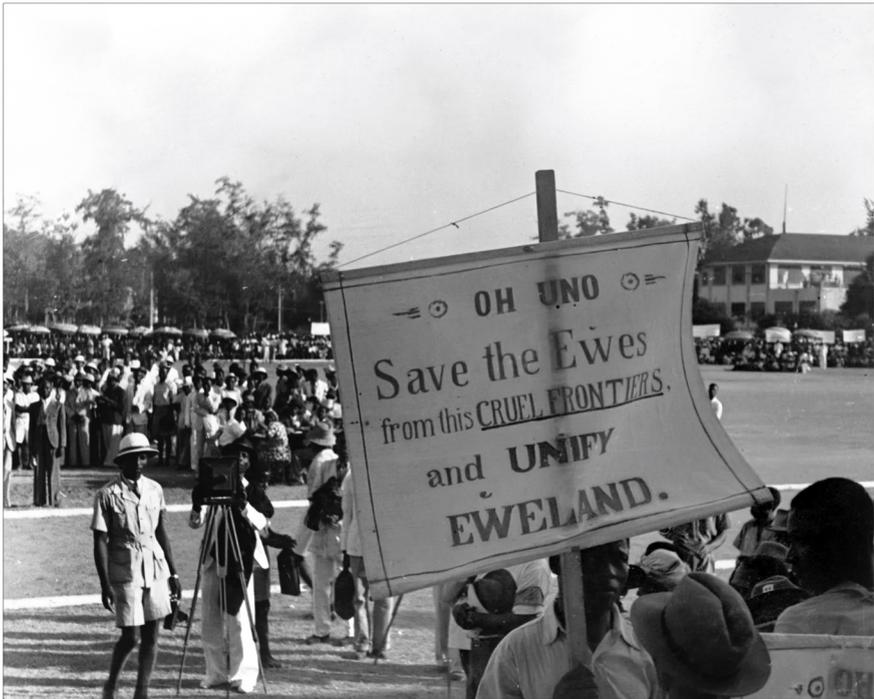
197 General Assembly Resolution 321, *International Trusteeship System: petitions and visiting missions*, A/RES/321(IV) (15 November 1949), available from [undocs.org/en/A/RES/321\(IV\)](https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/321(IV)).

198 TCOR, “6<sup>th</sup> Session: Special Report of the first Visiting Mission to the Trust Territories of Togoland under British Administration and under French Administration on the Ewe Problem” T/463 (1950), available from [digitallibrary.un.org/record/794632](https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/794632), p. 35.

fied to some appreciable degree, the *danger* of an intensified local nationalism [...] seems unavoidable.”<sup>199</sup>

Such distinct assessments on the part of the Visiting Mission were a result of meetings with the unification movement, during which the unification of the Ewes was securitised. For example, photographs taken by the Visiting Mission clearly show that the UN was approached as an audience to save the Ewes from “cruel frontiers” by reunifying Eweland (see Photo 7).

Photo 7: Ewe Unificationist awaiting the Visiting Mission, Lomé (December 1949)



Source: UN Photo.

Yet, the mission also reported that another very large section of public opinion, spearheaded primarily by the *Togoland Union*, considered that “self-government or independence, [...] must take the form of a Togo State with frontiers more or less corresponding to those of the former German Togoland.”<sup>200</sup> In northern part of French Togoland, the majority of the population was indifferent about the Ewe cause while

199 Emphasis added, TCOR, “6<sup>th</sup> Session: Special Report of the first Visiting Mission to the Trust Territories of Togoland under British Administration and under French Administration on the Ewe Problem” (1950), p. 34.

200 TCOR, “6<sup>th</sup> Session: Special Report of the first Visiting Mission to the Trust Territories of Togoland under British Administration and under French Administration on the Ewe Problem” (1950), p. 35.

“many chiefs and notables, while expressing themselves in favour of the idea of a reunited Togoland, [...] are opposed to any change of trusteeship authority [...], and have also voiced their fear of possible Ewe domination in the event of immediate unification.”<sup>201</sup> In the northern part of British Togoland “public opinion, as expressed in the statements of the tribal chiefs, appears to be hostile to the reconstitution of Togoland within its pre-1914 boundaries,”<sup>202</sup> thus, reflecting to some degree the position of the Administering Authorities, that more difficulties would be created than solved by reuniting the two Togolands, which would separate other groups, such as the Dagomba.

The Mission proposed solutions, echoing the ambiguousness of the Anglo-French interim report, as they were so vaguely formulated that they opened the door to a wide range of interpretations:

“(a) a *political* solution within the framework of the two existing Togolands;  
 (b) an *economic* solution within the framework of the two existing Togolands; or  
 (c) a *general* solution to be sought within a wider political and economic framework including the two Togolands.”<sup>203</sup>

Yet, like a securitising drumbeat, the final sentence of the report reads “the Mission feels that it is its duty to point out that the problem has attained the force and dimensions of a nationalistic movement and that a solution should be sought with urgency in the interest of peace and stability in that part of the world.”<sup>204</sup>

The Administering Authorities on the other hand noted in their joint observations attached to the report that “the Ewe [...] are far from being agreed themselves upon a political and administrative solution [...] also between different representatives of the Ewe themselves.”<sup>205</sup>

Apart from its report, the Visiting Mission flooded the Council with petitions to such an extent that in retrospect the British Council representative, Alan Burns, noted disparagingly that petition writing had become “a national sport in tropical Africa.”<sup>206</sup> The mission had received a total of 255 petitions, almost a quarter of which related exclusively to the Ewe question.<sup>207</sup> Overall, the petitions included demands for greater economic development, better treatment by the colonial powers, more political freedom and the

201 TCOR, “7<sup>th</sup> Session: Reports of the United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in West Africa” Supplement No.2 (T/793) (1951), p. 82.

202 TCOR, “6<sup>th</sup> Session: Special Report of the first Visiting Mission to the Trust Territories of Togoland under British Administration and under French Administration on the Ewe Problem” (1950), p. 36.

203 TCOR, “6<sup>th</sup> Session: Special Report of the first Visiting Mission to the Trust Territories of Togoland under British Administration and under French Administration on the Ewe Problem” (1950), p. 37.

204 TCOR, “6<sup>th</sup> Session: Special Report of the first Visiting Mission to the Trust Territories of Togoland under British Administration and under French Administration on the Ewe Problem” (1950), p. 38.

205 TCOR, “7<sup>th</sup> Session: Reports of the United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in West Africa” (1951), p. 83.

206 Burns, *In defence of colonies*, p. 119.

207 TCOR, “6<sup>th</sup> Session: Special Report of the first Visiting Mission to the Trust Territories of Togoland under British Administration and under French Administration on the Ewe Problem” (1950), p. 39. A broad selection of these can be found at UN ARMS (New York), S-1554-0000-0004, *Africa – Togoland – Visiting Mission – Petitions and Communications*, 1949.

revision of local laws. A significant number of petitions considered the main cause of their problems to be the border, which separated communities from their fields and imposed tariffs on them: 39 petitions requested Ewe unification and 30 petitions requested the unification of British and French Togoland.<sup>208</sup> A large number of the petitions emphasized the “artificiality” of the border and echoed the AEC’s proposal for a referendum. Criticism, especially that of a few anonymous petitions, was directed particularly against the French administration and its election methods for the half-heartedly established Anglo-French Consultative Commission, which was supposed to remedy all these problems.

At the very beginning of its 6<sup>th</sup> Session (1950), even before the discussion of the report began, the Council decided to establish a sub-Committee to find a solution to the volume of petitions by revising the Council’s rules of procedure.<sup>209</sup> Eventually the sub-committee<sup>210</sup> recommended that the *ad hoc* Committees should classify all petitions into three categories:

- a) petitions, which specifically called for an intervention by the Council,
- b) all others,
- c) except those, which were manifestly inconsequential, such as notes of appreciation.<sup>211</sup>

In practice, this meant that the sub-Committee did not consider expanding the *ad hoc* Committees’ review process or making it more efficient, but simply recommended to limit the number of communications that would be classified and still considered as petitions under the Council’s lengthy examination process. The ulterior motive behind this proposed classification scheme became clear when Ryckmans’ stated that “a petition of a general character was not a true petition, which, by definition, must seek redress for a personal or collective grievance.”<sup>212</sup> Ryckmans’ comment foreshadowed the silencing of petitions in the coming years, in which petitions of general character, such as the ones demanding Ewe or Togoland unification, were grouped together and treated as a single petition. In other words: they were swept under the carpet.

Yet, the sub-Committee also recommended to undo the Council’s previous decision that anonymous petitions may only be circulated after the Council’s approval, allowing

208 Welch, *Dream of Unity*, p. 92.

209 TCOR, “6<sup>th</sup> Session” (1950), p. 4.

210 Composed of representatives of Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Iraq, Philippines, and the United Kingdom.

211 TCOR 6<sup>th</sup> Session, Annexes (T/6S/Annex (Vol.1)), *Item 10 of the Agenda: Revision of the Procedures of the Council*, T/L.8 and T/L.13, 92, available at [digitallibrary.un.org/record/1626202](https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1626202). However, this was also in the eye of the beholder. As early as 1947, the Secretary-General classified a petition as “manifestly inconsequential” which called for the reunification of French and British Cameroon. The reason for this classification could have been that it was only a postcard and the sender lived in the USA. See *Petitions Received by the Secretary-General*, T/180 (14 June 1948), available from <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3848545>.

212 TCOR, “6<sup>th</sup> Session” (1950), pp. 267–68.

the *Ad Hoc* Committee to recommend that anonymous petitions be circulated without restriction.<sup>213</sup> As a response to this proposal, the colonial powers proposed that anonymous ‘communications’ should not be considered petitions and only signed communications requesting redress for specific grievances should be classified as petitions at all.<sup>214</sup> The anti-colonial members of the Council considered this proposal a rigorous curtailment of the right to petition.<sup>215</sup> The representative from the Philippines, José Inglés, protested that “Administering Authorities were sufficiently protected against slanderous communications [...] to the effect that anonymous petitions should first be circulated to members of the Council only,” adding the concern that “Law enforcement and detection agencies had been known to act on anonymous communications.”<sup>216</sup> The British representative, Alan Burns, replied to this accusation:

“it was the duty of the Trusteeship Council to assist the Administering Authority in its task of leading the people living under the trusteeship system towards self-government, by promoting their general development. Nothing could be more detrimental to their moral development than to encourage them to submit anonymous petitions, a cowardly practice which the Council should in no way condone.”<sup>217</sup>

The French representative, Henri Laurentie, also argued his opposition to anonymous petitions with reference to the superior European moral code:

“the Trusteeship Council had never judged those practices by the moral code of the so-called backward peoples but had invariably done so on the basis of the European moral code [...] He saw no reason why the Council should depart from that policy in dealing with anonymous petitions which, since the existence of free speech in the Trust Territories had not been questioned, must be motivated by some other reason of a questionable moral nature. In addition, from his experience in Africa he was convinced that anonymous petitioners were aware of the impropriety of their action.”<sup>218</sup>

In suppressing anonymous petitions, Laurentie sought to influence Council members by insisting on evaluating them according to European norms, thereby dismissing these petitions as morally questionable. This illustrates *illocutionary disablement*, wherein power dynamics, including colonial influences, distort securitising speech acts to the extent of incomprehensibility, effectively silencing them through epistemic violence.

Awni Khalidy and José Inglés expressed concern that the *rules of procedure* were being instrumentalized to eliminate anonymous petitions even though there were not even many of them.<sup>219</sup> It did not seem that the issue could be resolved. The Administering Au-

213 TCOR, “6<sup>th</sup> Session” (1950), p. 185.

214 UN ARMS (New York), S-0504-0004-0001-00003, *Committee on Rules of Procedure (1–11th Meeting (Conference Papers Nos. 1–10))*, Conference Room Paper N° 12, Final Report to the Trusteeship Council, p. 3

215 TCOR, “6<sup>th</sup> Session” (1950), p. 269.

216 TCOR, “6<sup>th</sup> Session” (1950), pp. 265–66.

217 TCOR, “6<sup>th</sup> Session” (1950), p. 266.

218 TCOR, “6<sup>th</sup> Session” (1950), pp. 268–69.

219 TCOR, “6<sup>th</sup> Session” (1950), p. 269.

thorities seemed eager to set a small-scale example when the Council rejected the consideration of an anonymous petition from Rwanda-Urundi by a narrow majority of 7 to 4 explicitly on the basis of its anonymity.<sup>220</sup>

When the discussion resumed on the volume of petitions received by the 1949 Visiting Mission to West Africa, it revolved, on the one hand, around the question of how the petitions received so far can be processed most effectively and, on the other hand, whether it is at all possible for the Council to consider all those petitions in its debates during current session, since the Mission had received 255 petitions, rounding up to some 2000 pages.<sup>221</sup>

The Iraqi representative, Jamili, complained about the rule previously adopted by the Council that Visiting Missions themselves could not consider petitions. He pointed out that this called into question the validity and value of any Visiting Mission. Conversely, by lifting the restriction, the Visiting Missions could ease the burden on the *Ad Hoc* committee, which until then had to assess petitions on its own.<sup>222</sup> Based on this, the American representative, Francis B. Sayre, suggested an *ad hoc* Committee to submit a further report on procedure for dealing with the petitions presented to the Visiting Mission to West Africa.<sup>223</sup>

Yet, the Belgian and British representative, Ryckmans and Burns rejected, this suggestion and repeated their proposal to identify petitions of general character so that “the Council could accordingly dispose of them quickly, and so be free to deal properly with the remaining petitions sooner than was at present thought possible.”<sup>224</sup> The French representative, Garreau, pointed out that a large number of such ‘general petitions’ referred to “matters such as the unification of the two Togolands, which were not within the purview of the Council.”<sup>225</sup> He warned the Council that there was grave danger of it exceeding its competence. As was already indicated by the 1947 proposal for the petition examination procedure, the French delegation wanted to return to the protective provisions, which were in place for the examination procedure of the Mandate System. By calling into question the Council’s competence, Garreau was paving the ground for the petitioners’ forthcoming *illocutionary frustration*.

The French delegation concluded that the Council would not be able to complete its agenda by the scheduled end of the session and requested that consideration of the annual reports on the two Togolands be postponed until the Council’s 7<sup>th</sup> Session (1950). The representatives of Britain and France agreed that by then, they would present a plan to the Council to resolve the Ewe problem. The Belgian representative, Ryckmans, additionally urged that the consideration of the annual reports on the two Togolands, the reports of the Visiting Mission and the “relevant general petitions be grouped together under one

220 TCOR, “6<sup>th</sup> Session” (1950), p. 271.

221 TCOR, “6<sup>th</sup> Session” (1950), p. 298.

222 TCOR, “6<sup>th</sup> Session” (1950), p. 298.

223 TCOR, “6<sup>th</sup> Session” (1950), p. 298.

224 TCOR, “6<sup>th</sup> Session” (1950), p. 300.

225 TCOR, “6<sup>th</sup> Session” (1950), p. 315.

agenda item so that the Council could consider the situation in the two territories and report to the General Assembly on the question as a whole.<sup>226</sup>

Thus, the concern, which the Soviet delegate, Aleksander Soldatov, had expressed at the previous session proved to be fully accurate. Consideration of all petitions received by the UN since Olympio's oral hearing in December 1947 had been deferred until the second half of 1950. Some petitions, whose authors had been waiting for a response for more than two years, were not even considered yet by the Council.

### Oral Hearing

Yet, toward the end of the session, a three-member delegation from the AEC, comprising Ephraim Amu, Albert Simpson, and Sylvanus Olympio, made its way to Geneva, where they were heard by the Council on 20 March 1950.

*Photo 8: Amu, Simpson & Olympio at Palais de Nations, Geneva (20 March 1950)*



Source: UN Photo.

Olympio pointed out that the report of the Visiting Mission had recognized the inadequacy of a purely economic, social, and educational approach, arguing that the Standing Consultative Commission (SCC) had had its day and needed to be replaced by a body with broad powers to deal with all aspects of the Ewe question. Olympio repeated that the AEC did not call for the creation of a fully independent Ewe state but argued that once the Ewe territories had been unified under a single administration, the Ewe could one day occupy a proper place in a system of federated states that could be developed for West Africa as a whole.<sup>227</sup>

The subsequent questioning was the first time that Olympio expressed his frustration by securitising the passivity of the Administering Authorities before the Council – a

226 TCOR, "6<sup>th</sup> Session" (1950), p. 413.

227 TCOR, "6<sup>th</sup> Session" (1950), p. 499. Olympio's foresight regarding what was to become ECOWAS was as prophetic as it was a thorn in the side of the French and British, who had their own associations of states in mind rather than African ones.

foretaste of the securitisation moves that were yet to follow in the coming years. Olympio expounded that “the whole problem had so many aspects that if it was not solved the difficulties would become so complicated that they might get out of hand.”<sup>228</sup> Olympio’s securitising insinuation was picked up by the Iraqi representative, Awni Khalidy, who asked what Olympio meant by the words “getting out of hand?” Olympio assured that the AEC was “composed of responsible people who desired an orderly solution of the problem in co-operation with the Administering Authorities, but if there was much further delay in solving the problem, it might pass into the hands of people who preferred different methods of dealing with it. The situation might then become *dangerous*.”<sup>229</sup> Khalidy asked whether, in the event of the Ewe people not receiving satisfaction, the movement was likely “to follow the same dangerous course as was usually followed by nationalist movements which were thwarted.”<sup>230</sup> Olympio said the Accra riots of 1948 and the recent developments in the Gold Coast were an example of what he had in mind. Khalidy felt incapable to compare the Ewe movement with the Accra riots, since the Council was not in possession of precise information on happenings there.

In fact, the British effectively attempted to present their administration as being firmly in control of the situation, guaranteeing law and order. The annual report for Togoland under British administration bagatellised the 1948 territory-wide riots as a “minor disturbance [...] arising from a variety of causes.”<sup>231</sup> And maintained the “population receives little social benefits other than peace and security.”<sup>232</sup> The annual report’s passage covering the disturbances did not mention any killings, played down the riots and in turn blamed the rioters for looting European businesses:

“Associated with these disturbances was a *small* dissatisfied band of ex-Servicemen comprising a *very small* portion of the total number of men demobilised, and allied to certain disorderly elements in the population. [...] Representatives of the ex-Servicemen demanded from the stores to be supplied free of charge with small supplies of petrol and other commodities and in most cases obtained what they wanted. [...] The men involved in this incident were arrested [...] Police was reinforced [...] and order was restored without difficulty.”<sup>233</sup>

However, a discussion in the Trusteeship Council about the implications for the British trusteeship administration never came about. Just before Olympio’s hearing, the Council had decided to postpone the debate on the annual report. The British intention may have been to avoid uncomfortable debates in the run-up to the AEC hearing.

228 TCOR, “6<sup>th</sup> Session” (1950), p. 501.

229 Emphasis added, TCOR, “6<sup>th</sup> Session” (1950), p. 501.

230 TCOR, “6<sup>th</sup> Session” (1950), p. 501.

231 HMG, “Togoland under United Kingdom Administration: Report for the Year 1948,” Colonial Reports 243 (1949), p. 54.

232 HMG, “Togoland under United Kingdom Administration: Report for the Year 1947,” Colonial Reports 225 (1948), p. 93.

233 Emphasis added, HMG, “Togoland under United Kingdom Administration: Report for the Year 1948” (1949), p. 54.

Nonetheless, Olympio's insinuation resonated with the non-Administering Council members. As ex-Chairman of the Visiting Mission to West Africa, the Iraqi representative, Awni Khalidy, stated that "the Mission had considered that the Ewe unification movement was being conducted in a very orderly manner. But it was a nationalist movement, with dangerous elements like all nationalist movements; it should not be thwarted and so encouraged to develop along violent lines."<sup>234</sup>

Olympio's plea was supported by the representatives of the non-Administering Authorities, such as the Philippines, China, the Soviet Union, and Iraq. As such, the representative of the Philippines introduced a draft resolution, which supported Olympio's expositions by calling on the French and British authorities to develop and to include a *political* solution to the Ewe problem in the memorandum they would submit to the Council at its 7<sup>th</sup> Session. Yet, in view of the already-taken decision to postpone the discussion of all petitions from Togoland until the 7<sup>th</sup> Session, this motion was not voted on and the debate was adjourned.

#### 6.4.2 The Anglo-French "Master Stroke" (1950)

At the 7<sup>th</sup> Session (1950), the French and British delegation presented their Joint Memorandum, which recommended to replace the Standing Consultative Commission (SCC) with an Enlarged Consultative Commission (ECC). Nugent considered this move a "master stroke."<sup>235</sup> Originally, the instruction to establish the SCC, which the Trusteeship Council gave to the Administering Authorities in 1947, was primarily a response to the Ewe petitions of 1946 and 1947, calling for the unification of their territories. But the French and British established a Joint Anglo-French Consultative Commission on *Togoland* Affairs, thereby emphasizing that they were committed to taking a broader view, as they were obliged to the entire population of both territories. Yet, as mentioned before, already at the SCC's 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting in December 1948, frustration was caused amidst the African representatives whether the work of the SCC related only to Eweland or to the two Togolands.

As the memorandum outlined, by increasing the number of the Commission's elected representatives to 45 and weighting the seats according to population, with 28 seats going to French Togoland and 17 to British Togoland, the Administering Authorities were able to give the appearance of treating the two Togolands seriously as one, while at the same time drown out the voices of the unificationists. With this new arrangement, there were also representatives from the northern regions of both territories who were aloof to the Ewe cause. With French Togoland accounting for almost two-thirds of the seats, it was easy for the French to marginalize the demand of the Ewe, who would find themselves in the minority in the Commission.

Following the decision to discuss the Visiting Mission's report at its 7<sup>th</sup> Session, the Council heard for the first time several representatives from other political organizations from Togoland. In addition to Sylvanus Olympio, who again represented the AEC, Fran-

234 TCOR, "6<sup>th</sup> Session" (1950), p. 501.

235 Nugent, *Smugglers, secessionists & loyal citizens on the Ghana-Togo frontier*, p. 177.