

should the United Nations do in the face of this threat, which is basically international in character, and in the face of this problem which affects collective security?"⁴⁴¹

Whilst the 1952 oral hearings of Olympio, Antor, and Odame before the Fourth Committee certainly marked the climax of their efforts to securitise Togoland unification, the resolution adopted by the General Assembly most certainly did not go as far as they had hoped. But they expressed their frustration to such an extent that it was unequivocally heard by delegations from states of the Global South as well as the Eastern Bloc, who were more than content to denounce the colonial policies of the Western powers anyway. Although the two Administering Authorities of Togoland got off lightly, they had to fear that the unificationists now had the attention of the world public opinion altogether.

Thus, to limit future declarations, such as Olympio's "reign of terror"-speech before the Fourth Committee during the General Assembly's 7th Session (1952), the colonial powers sought to extend the Trusteeship Council's restrictive *rules of procedure* to the General Assembly. During Anglo-French conversations on colonial issues related to the United Nations on 4 and 5 February 1953, the French delegation argued forcibly that hearings of oral petitioners by the Fourth Committee represented...

"[...] a dangerous tendency, which should be resisted by all means. They [the French] pointed out that the hearing of witnesses by the Assembly encouraged extremist movements in the territories from which they came, inflated the petitioners' own importance in the territories, and established a most undesirable direct contact between vociferous agitators from the territories and certain delegations in New York. The British delegation while paying tribute to the efficacy of the French counter-petitioners at the 1952 Session, agreed that such hearings, if they became general practice, might be severely damaging to the prestige of the Administering Powers in the territories. M. Pignon^[442] regarded it as very important that these hearings should be brought under control in 1953, and that petitioners should be heard by the Fourth Committee only after preliminary examination of their petitions by the Trusteeship Council. [...] the United States Government might be persuaded to take the initiative in the matter. [...] hearing of petitioners from non-self-governing territories could in no circumstances be permitted, and the British delegation reaffirmed that this was one of our 'sticking points'."⁴⁴³

6.5.4 A Spectre haunts Africa – the Spectre of the "Red Menace" (1953)

Marc Michel summarizes the year 1953 as "a year of anticipation, preparation, and consultation with parties, associations, chiefs, and notables in both Togos regarding the eventual reconstitution of a [Joined] Council, this time elected by universal suffrage."⁴⁴⁴

441 GAOR, "7th Session: Plenary" (1952), p. 458.

442 Léon Pignon was the head of the political department in the Ministry of Overseas France.

443 TNA (London), CO 554/665, *Togoland*, Anglo/French Conversations on Colonial Questions in the United Nations: 4th and 5th February, 1953, p. 2.

444 Michel, "The Independence of Togo," p. 307.

But far from the public eye, much more happened, since 1953 marked a series of changes in the colonial security and intelligence services in British Togoland and the Gold Coast.

A considerable impetus, as Rathbone holds, consisted in London's fear of communist infiltration, which it considered ubiquitous in the structures of the colonial administrations. In March 1953, the Security Liaison Officer for West Africa, Philip M. Kirby Green, for instance, drafted a circular on how to respond best to suspected acts of sabotage and eavesdropping by the Soviet Union in West Africa.⁴⁴⁵

Not even a month later, in late April 1953, the Permanent Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, Thomas Lloyd, reminded Governor Arden-Clarke that "It is not true that a communist threat exists only where there is an organised communist party, or where there are apparent contacts with overseas."⁴⁴⁶ Lloyd found the information-gathering procedures inadequate and emphasised the routinisation of security- and intelligence-related work, which should not just take place during emergencies: "In normal Colonial circumstances [...] It is important that the machinery for assessing and reporting on intelligence should be systematic and regular, and that such reporting should not take place only when there appears to be some particular problem to investigate."⁴⁴⁷ Despite the lessons already drawn from the Accra Riots, the Colonial Office held the view that the intelligence services needed to focus their activities on *externally* induced threats. While Lloyd insisted on scrutinizing communist influence in the colonies, Governor Arden-Clarke considered that Westminster's insistence on the 'red menace' had little substance and never took the Special Branch's evidence of Soviet infiltration very seriously.⁴⁴⁸ Yet, Governor Arden-Clarke bent to London's will, prompting the *Local Intelligence Committee* (LIC), chaired by the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Defence, Reginald Saloway, to get the ball rolling.⁴⁴⁹

The LIC identified the most important sources that could pose a threat to public order and stability in labour unrest ("from natural causes [!], e. g. economic pressure [...] or artificially fomented, e.g. by communist-inspired organisations"), opposition to taxation, political parties and "so-called Youth Organisations inspired with communist ideology and methods."⁴⁵⁰ Accordingly, most of the work of the Special Branch was therefore concentrated on the activities of organised trade unions and political parties in the urban centres of the territories.⁴⁵¹ Not only were Special Branch officers required to keep in

445 TNA (London), FCO 141/4999, *Gold Coast: security and political intelligence; policy*, Secret Letter SF. 1310, 31 March 1953.

446 TNA (London), FCO 141/4999, *Gold Coast: security and political intelligence; policy*, T.I.K. Lloyd to Charles Arden-Clarke, *Securiy and Political Intelligence* (without number), 29 April 1953, p. 3.

447 TNA (London), FCO 141/4999, *Gold Coast: security and political intelligence; policy*, T.I.K. Lloyd to Charles Arden-Clarke, *Securiy and Political Intelligence* (without number), 29 April 1953, p. 2.

448 TNA (London), FCO 141/4999, *Gold Coast: security and political intelligence; policy*, Arden-Clarke, Secret Letter, 17 August 1953.

449 TNA (London), FCO 141/4999, *Gold Coast: security and political intelligence; policy*, Local Intelligence Committee, Notes of a Meeting held on 23 May.

450 TNA (London), FCO 141/4999, *Gold Coast: security and political intelligence; policy*, Local Intelligence Committee, Notes of a Meeting held on 23 May.

451 TNA (London), FCO 141/4999, *Gold Coast: security and political intelligence; policy*, Pol.F.200. Vol.VI, Reporting of Information of Security Interest by All ranks, 5 June 1953, p. 2.

close touch with large businesses, such as mining companies, but also with local government officers in their areas. A remarkable feature was the division of tasks in intelligence work: the police's Special Branch collected intelligence, but it was mainly up to the colonial District Officers, that is, a *political* administrator and not a security professional, to assess its content. This aspect was subject of discussion of the LIC, which divided intelligence into two categories: *security intelligence* "i.e. intelligence of threats to public order and stability" and *political intelligence* "i.e. intelligence of developments which might lead to breaches of public order and stability."⁴⁵² That is, for LIC, it was the 'hard facts' of current circumstances that constituted 'security,' while the assessment of contingencies seemingly constituted the 'political' element of intelligence work. In fact, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lennox-Boyd, who constituted the terminus for all security and intelligence reports from the British Empire, would later admit the indistinguishability of 'security intelligence' and 'political intelligence':

"As regards the collection of information, it is in practice impossible and indeed wrong, whether 'security' or 'political' purposes are in view, to draw a distinction. [...] All intelligence in varying degrees has a 'political' bearing; while, on the other hand, intelligence derived from a 'political' source may have just as much bearing on internal security as that derived from a 'security' source. [...] The term [political intelligence] was originally used in 1948 to make plain that the Secretary of State did not desire a new series of reports dealing simply with the 'security' aspects of administration. What was required was a regular and comprehensive collation of all important information, including inter alia matters of 'security' concern such as the activities of nationalist movements, local societies and organisations and in particular Communist activities."⁴⁵³

For this reason, Lennox-Boyd thought it better to have the governors abandon the distinction in the monthly reports to be submitted to him, but remarkably by abandoning the term 'political intelligence' rather than 'security intelligence.' One cannot help suspecting that Lennox-Boyd issued these instructions with the intention of interpreting his function under the neutral light that 'security intelligence' casts, rather than the indicative one that 'political intelligence' casts.

By May 1953, Special Branch grew sevenfold to a total strength of 73. Yet, more importantly, the network of paid informants on which the Special Branch relied also grew. Due to source protection, exact figures are not available but by June 1953, Governor Arden-Clarke was "satisfied with the arrangements the Police have made for penetrating potentially subversive organisations. I am advised that it is comparatively simple to make such arrangements on a financial basis."⁴⁵⁴

452 TNA (London), FCO 141/4999, *Gold Coast: security and political intelligence; policy*

453 TNA (London), FCO 141/5000, *Gold Coast: security and political intelligence; policy*, Alan Lennox-Boyd, *Organisation of Intelligence* (Circular No. 458/56), 28 May 1956, pp. 1–2.

454 TNA (London), FCO 141/4999, *Gold Coast: security and political intelligence; policy*, Charles Arden-Clarke, *Security and Political Intelligence* (G/2250), p. 2 [100], 8 June 1953

According to Rathbone, it was London that “was far more convinced about the communist menace in the Gold Coast than the ‘men on the spot’.”⁴⁵⁵ In fact, for these ‘men on the spot’ intelligence gathering was more of a nuisance. In May 1953, instructions were given that, in addition to Special Branch officers of the police, the Regional Officers of the colonial administration should now also contribute to the *Weekly Intelligence Reports* (WIR) for CenSeC and LIC.⁴⁵⁶ The Chief Regional Officer of the Cape Coast, A.J. Loveridge, made his frustration about the instructions known to Secretary of Defence, Saloway:

“The country abounds in quarrels and I don’t think they are more or less than they were before [...] Government Agents spend their lives dealing with these things and the only difference between now and former days is that there is a Minister now who gets to hear of them and a Ministry that gets alarmed.”⁴⁵⁷

Saloway saw himself compelled to reprimand the Regional Officer, insisting that he should simply comply with the instruction.⁴⁵⁸ In response to the new instructions, the Regional Commissioner for Trans-Volta-Togoland, George Sinclair, saw himself incapable of providing the LIC with intelligence information. He complained about the inadequacy of intelligence gathered in British Togoland, since only one Special Branch officer was responsible for Trans-Volta Togoland. This very officer also had to devote his time to the Eastern Province in the Gold Coast. Sinclair therefore complained:

“There is no ‘Branch’ in this area. [...] It often happens that the information contained in these [intelligence] reports comes not from the region but from French territory or from Accra where some of the political parties operating in this region have their headquarters. At present the Regional Officer has no access.”⁴⁵⁹

Sinclair recommended therefore the establishment of a *Regional Intelligence Committee* (RIC) for Southern Togoland. Ironically, just five days earlier, LIC discussed and rejected such an idea, since it was concluded that information must reach the central committees as quickly as possible, and a multiplicity of committees might cause delay. There was also the danger of security information leaking out if too many people knew about it.⁴⁶⁰ Yet, Arden-Clarke gave Sinclair a free hand and allowed him to create such a Regional Intelligence Committee at his own discretion. Consequently, Sinclair hoped to receive copies of all Special Branch reports, which were of concern to the TGT region but issued

⁴⁵⁵ Rathbone, “Police intelligence in Ghana in the late 1940s and 1950s,” p. 114.

⁴⁵⁶ TNA (London), FCO 141/4999, *Gold Coast: security and political intelligence; policy*, Secret Letter No. 539, 28 May 1953.

⁴⁵⁷ TNA (London), FCO 141/4999, *Gold Coast: security and political intelligence; policy*, Secret Letter No. 385/SF9, Loveridge to Saloway, 12 June 1953.

⁴⁵⁸ TNA (London), FCO 141/4999, *Gold Coast: security and political intelligence; policy*, Secret Letter No. 539, Saloway to Loveridge, 27 June 1953.

⁴⁵⁹ TNA (London), FCO 141/4999, *Gold Coast: security and political intelligence; policy*, Secret Letter 0038/SF7/3, Political Intelligence in Trans Volta Togoland, 28 May 1953.

⁴⁶⁰ TNA (London), FCO 141/4999, *Gold Coast: security and political intelligence; policy*, Local Intelligence Committee, Notes of a Meeting held on 23rd May, p. 3.

in Accra. However, the Superintendent of Police in Accra was not willing to have the Special Branch Officer in charge of Togoland and the Eastern Region of the Gold Coast send the Special Branch reports to Sinclair.⁴⁶¹ Sinclair, who had already taken over SLO Robin Stephens' duties on a transitional basis in 1949–1950 after tangling with the latter, refused to be swayed. The dispute over responsibilities went through several government officials, reaching once again Governor Arden-Clarke, who had to put his foot down. Finally, it was decided that only clippings pertaining to the Trans-Volta-Togoland Region would be allowed to be forwarded to Chief Regional Officer Sinclair.⁴⁶²

Three months after the order has been passed to the Regional Officers, in September 1953, the Gold Coast's Under-Secretary of Defence, P.H. Canham, complained that none of the Regional Commissioners provided him at all with 'security intelligence' or 'political intelligence' and that he was therefore constantly put in an embarrassing situation during the weekly LIC meetings.⁴⁶³ Six months later, the given order was again a topic during a CenSeC meeting, since only one report had been submitted. In the end, on recommendation by SLO Kirby Green, CenSeC decided to implement Sinclair's idea of establishing territory-wide Regional Intelligence Committees.⁴⁶⁴

These episodes show that there was at times rivalry and nuisance concerning responsibilities between local government officials and security officers. The communication about the intelligence reports from the regions is revealing. Apparently, a recurring concern was the work that went into the reports, how they circulated, who was allowed to read which reports, how much information was duplicated, etc. Ultimately, the colonial security and intelligence apparatus, including the Special Branch, was a bureaucracy machine, which was by no means well-oiled.

Governor Arden-Clarke, for his part, went beyond Arthur Young's recommendation to Africanise the Special Branch and planned to have the new African ministers, especially Nkrumah, slowly be integrated into the security concerns of the Gold Coast by furnishing them the Special Branch's *Weekly Intelligence Reports*. However, much was concealed from African ministers since different versions of the reports were produced for the British and the African Ministers. Nonetheless, African participation in LIC meetings changed the style of communication within the security apparatus. Given its focus on trade unions, this concerned especially the African Minister of Labour, who was henceforth invited to attend the meetings of the LIC. The Colonial Office found Arden-Clarke's plan "bold and shrewd" yet wished him success with this "imaginative experiment."⁴⁶⁵ The

461 TNA (London), FCO 141/4999, *Gold Coast: security and political intelligence; policy*, Secret Letter, Regional Intelligence Committees, 6 July 1953.

462 TNA (London), FCO 141/4999, *Gold Coast: security and political intelligence; policy*, Secret Notes 539, 22 July 1953.

463 TNA (London), FCO 141/4999, *Gold Coast: security and political intelligence; policy*, Secret Note No. 539, P.H. Canham, 8 September 1953.

464 TNA (London), FCO 141/5000, *Gold Coast: security and political intelligence; policy*, Extract from CENSEC Agenda Meeting, 1 April 1954.

465 TNA (London), FCO 141/4999, *Gold Coast: security and political intelligence; policy*, Secret Letter from C.Y. Carstairs to Arden-Clarke, 2 June 1953.

SLO, Philip Kirby-Green, on the other hand, was less pleased and considered this move an entry “into a danger zone.”⁴⁶⁶

The SLO’s concerns were soon to be confirmed, putting an abrupt end to Arden-Clarke’s experiment. When in August 1953 it became known that a “Most Secret” document had been stolen from Nkrumah’s office, Arden-Clarke’s staff insisted that the African Ministers should not see the *Weekly Intelligence Reports*. Though Arden-Clarke felt that Nkrumah, who was Prime Minister after all, should see the reports in the interest of the “Security of the State,”⁴⁶⁷ he was surprised by Nkrumah’s reaction to them:

“He [Nkrumah] has expressed to me his reluctance to read them [the Weekly Intelligence Reports]. He went so far as to tell me that he would prefer not to have access to them, and it is only because of my insistence that he continues to receive them. I am not sure why this should be, but think that it is largely due to his dislike of facing unpleasant facts which do not accord with the wishful thinking in which he is prone to indulge. I shall learn more about this in due course.”⁴⁶⁸

The SLO later argued that Arden-Clarke’s wishes to integrate Nkrumah could no longer be followed so as not to leak intelligence reports and compromise Special Branch informants.⁴⁶⁹ When he told the Minister of Defence and Foreign Affairs, E. Norton-Jones, of his reluctance to entrust Nkrumah with the reports, the racist undertone of his reasoning came to light:

“It is admittedly extremely difficult for any Special branch to obtain reliable information in any Colony in which ‘nationalism’ is the basis of all political activity. It is also admitted that of all races the African is the most difficult for a Special Branch to handle when it comes to dealing with informants. It is therefore very much to the credit of the very small Gold Coast Special Branch that they have been able to acquire and to control one or two informants in key positions. By ‘key positions’ I mean that these informants are in a position to produce the type of intelligence which is required by those who have the responsibility for administering the Colony. Obviously no Special Branch can ever guarantee complete coverage of the security and political field all the time, and certainly this cannot be done in the Gold Coast. The fact remains that the Special Branch have today one or two extremely well-placed informants and the very fact that they are ‘well-placed’ makes their position one of extreme delicacy. It is on these few informants that Special Branch largely rely for their ability to perform their duties in supplying for His Excellency the Governor the intelligence which His Excellency requires, and if for any reason Special Branch were to lose control of these informants they would not be able thereafter to fulfil their obligation, and what is more they would not be able to replace those informants by any others. It has taken

466 TNA (London), FCO 141/4997, *Gold Coast: Special Branch Summaries*, Philip Kirby Green to Chairman Local Intelligence Committee, 20 July 1953.

467 TNA (London), FCO 141/4999, *Gold Coast: security and political intelligence; policy*, File No. 539, Personal Note, 10 September 1953.

468 TNA (London), FCO 141/4999, *Gold Coast: security and political intelligence; policy*

469 TNA (London), FCO 141/4997, *Gold Coast: Special Branch Summaries*, Philip Kirby Green to Norton-Jones, 9 September 1953.

a long time and a good deal of public money to acquire control of these individuals and there are no alternative sources.⁴⁷⁰

A day later, a letter from the Superintendent of Police, argued along the same lines.⁴⁷¹ As Arnold holds, such instances show how the heads of the security services willingly “defied the authority of the Governor and threatened the stability of diarchy because of its views of Kwame Nkrumah.”⁴⁷² The described episodes of disunity within the British security and intelligence apparatus show that the Ministry of Defence, the Regional Commissioners, the SLOs – in short, all the security professionals involved – feared that the constitutional changes would lead to serving two masters and ultimately to conflicts of authority and loyalty. The disunity in the security apparatus was not only symptomatic of the approaching decolonisation but rather symptomatic of the lack of an agreed colonial order.

Accounting for “Most Secret” (1953)

The “Most Secret” document, which was stolen from Nkrumah’s office, was titled “The Future of Togoland under United Kingdom Trusteeship.” The classification of the authorless document as “Most Secret” does not correspond to the usually used “Top Secret” of British government papers. Therefore, it can be assumed that the document did not originate from within the Colonial Office or the colonial administration of the Gold Coast.

However, in June 1953, the Colonial Office obtained a copy of said document, which according to the Colonial Under-Secretary, William Gorell Barnes, displayed the author’s detailed knowledge about the intricacies of “charterology and U.N. tactics.”⁴⁷³ According to Gorell Barnes the document was written in the UN Secretariat, possibly (though not certainly) by the original founder of the Ewe Newsletter and Ewe unification movement, that is, Daniel A. Chapman, who by then had already decamped the Ewe unification cause and joined the faction of Kwame Nkrumah for the sake of an early independence of the Gold Coast. Thus, coined by Governor Arden-Clarke as “Chapman’s memorandum,”⁴⁷⁴ the “Most Secret” document analyses the strength of the CPP in Togoland and suggests steps to increase its influence. Most importantly it lays out a plan on how to satisfy the UN that Togoland will be integrated into the Gold Coast⁴⁷⁵: “Undoubtedly the safest and best way of persuading UNO is to arrange for UNO to be bombarded by a broadside of petitions which demand the integration of British Togoland into the Gold Coast [...] A plebiscite, however, would not be acceptable because the opposition to be expected from

⁴⁷⁰ Emphasis in original, TNA (London), FCO 141/4999, *Gold Coast: security and political intelligence; policy*

⁴⁷¹ TNA (London), FCO 141/4997, *Gold Coast: Special Branch Summaries*, Security Intelligence, Superintendent of Police, 10 September 1953.

⁴⁷² Arnold, “The Cat’s Paw of Dictatorship”: Police Intelligence and Self-Rule in the Gold Coast, 1948–1952,” p. 175.

⁴⁷³ TNA (London), CO 554/668, *Togoland under UN Trusteeship: future policy*, Secret & Personal Letter, WAF 262/177/02 Annex, 3 July 1953, para. 4.

⁴⁷⁴ TNA (London), CO 554/668, *Togoland under UN Trusteeship: future policy*, Inward Telegram, Secret & Personal (No. 73), Arden-Clarke to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 29 June 1953, p. 1.

⁴⁷⁵ GAOR, “8th Session: 4th Committee” (1953), p. 323.

the French would serve to delay it.”⁴⁷⁶ If Chapman was indeed the author of the document, it would mean that the former founder of the AEC has conspired against the remnants of the movement he helped to create.

Shortly after Nkrumah made his “Motion of Destiny” speech in the Gold Coast Legislative Assembly on 10 July 1953, asking the British government to set a date for self-government, the disaster that “Most Secret” would unleash took its course: less than six weeks after the Colonial Office itself first got to see the document, a petition from the AEC was received in Accra, announcing that the “Most Secret” document will be send to the Trusteeship Council for circulation. It is unclear how the memorandum exactly came into the hands of the unificationists. Governor Arden-Clarke assumes that Nkrumah himself, in an attempt to persuade Sylvanus Olympio to integrate all of Togoland into the Gold Coast, handed the memorandum to Olympio, with the result that it was rapidly reproduced and a summary of it appeared in the local press.⁴⁷⁷ If this was the case, the plan backfired: since “Most Secret” revealed the CPP’s plans to integrate British Togoland, a rift occurred between Nkrumah and Olympio as well. Other archival sources speak of a theft from Nkrumah’s office,⁴⁷⁸ such as a telegram by the SLO, Philip Kirby-Green, stating that the plans were stolen from Kwame Nkrumah’s office and, by a roundabout route, ended up in the hands of Antor and the Togoland Congress.⁴⁷⁹

Attempts to stop the circulation of “Most Secret”

When the news broke, the British Permanent Representative to the Trusteeship Council, Alan Burns, attempted to persuade Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld that petitions containing classified information illegally obtained by petitioners should not be circulated, but the latter refused since no “grave damage to the security of the state is involved.”⁴⁸⁰ The publication of “Most Secret” was a disaster for the British as it confirmed, from the French point of view, their suspicion that the British’s long-term plan was to annex French territory.⁴⁸¹

The last possibility for the British was to suppress the hearing of petitioners. At the beginning of the Assembly’s 8th Session (1953), the Fourth Committee had again several requests for oral hearings before it and, as had happened in the previous two years, the

476 Senyo G. Antor, *“Most secret” politics in Togoland: the British government’s attempt to annex Togoland to the Gold Coast* (New York: Comtemporary Press, 1954), p. 11.

477 TNA (London), CO 554/668, *Togoland under UN Trusteeship: future policy*, Arden-Clarke to Gorell Barnes, Secret Letter 571/7, 4 August 1953, p. 1.

478 TNA (London), FCO 141/4999, *Gold Coast: security and political intelligence; policy*, handwritten note, 18 August 1953, [125] p 1.

479 TNA (London), FCO 141/4999, *Gold Coast: security and political intelligence; policy*, Telegram (Pol. F.21/1), 10 August 1953, PM. Kirby Green to Chairman L.I.C.

480 TNA (London), CO 554/668, *Togoland under UN Trusteeship: future policy*, Secret Letter, W.A.C. Mathieson to John Martin, 30 July 1953.

481 TNA (London), CO 554/668, *Togoland under UN Trusteeship: future policy*, Secret Letter, W.A.C. Mathieson to John Martin, 30 July 1953; ANT (Lomé), 2APA Kloto/23, *Affaires Politiques*, Examen du Plan Secret du Gouvernement du Gold-Coast Relatif à l’Annexion du Togo sous Tutelle Britannique – Divulgué en Juillet 1953 – Traduction in extenso (without number), without date, p. 2 and 5.

Administering Authorities troubled the Fourth Committee with a debate on the admissibility of oral hearings. The colonial powers were unwilling to grant these hearings but were expectedly outvoted by the anti-colonial majority.

As agreed during Anglo-French conversations of February 1953,⁴⁸² the British delegation thereupon proposed the establishment of a sub-committee to make recommendations on the adoption of rules of procedure for oral hearings in the Fourth Committee. The proposal established that out of its eight members of the sub-committee, four should consist of members of the Trusteeship Council (two administering and two non-administering).⁴⁸³ Once the proposal was made, the French delegation argued “to postpone consideration of any requests for oral hearings until the sub-committee had completed its work.”⁴⁸⁴ Suspiciously specific, the British representative expressed that the British’s intention was not to restrict the right of petition and was solely in the interests of orderly procedure.⁴⁸⁵ The French delegation supported the proposal arguing that the right to petition might be misused by petitioners forming “the advance guard of communism in Africa.”⁴⁸⁶

The Yugoslav representative, Josip Djerdja, questioned the French and British intentions:

“one of the basic elements of the International Trusteeship System was the right to petition. It was the United Nations’ right and duty to examine petitions and recommend measures to be taken to eliminate grievances. The petitions system was a means of establishing close contact between the United Nations and the Trust Territories. The value of the assistance to be given to the inhabitants of those Territories, and their confidence in the United Nations, would depend largely on whether or not petitions and oral hearings were given thorough consideration. Some of the statements made in the course of the discussion could only be interpreted as attempts to restrict the rights of the inhabitants of the Trust Territories, which were guaranteed by the Charter.”⁴⁸⁷

Most of the anti-colonial state representatives found the British proposal to establish a sub-committee to develop rules of procedure for oral hearings “tantamount to transferring competence to a body which was not essentially answerable to the Fourth Committee.”⁴⁸⁸ They did not believe that the number of requests for oral hearings warranted rules of procedure for the Fourth Committee anyway. For them, petitioners should not only have direct access to the General Assembly, but hearing petitioners should assist the Assembly in considering the issues before it. Thus, the British proposal was rejected.⁴⁸⁹

482 TNA (London), CO 554/665, *Togoland, Anglo/French Conversations on Colonial Questions in the United Nations: 4th and 5th February, 1953*, p. 2.

483 A/C.4/L.271, available at GAOR 8th Session, Annexes, (A/8/Annexes), *Agenda item 13: Requests for oral hearings-United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: draft resolution*, p. 1.

484 GAOR, “8th Session: 4th Committee” (1953), p. 10.

485 GAOR, “8th Session: 4th Committee” (1953), p. 10.

486 GAOR, “8th Session: 4th Committee” (1953), p. 17.

487 GAOR, “8th Session: 4th Committee” (1953), p. 20.

488 GAOR, “8th Session: 4th Committee” (1953), p. 59.

489 GAOR, “8th Session: 4th Committee” (1953), p. 28.

Thullen holds that the Togoland unification question reached its peak at the Assembly's 8th Session (1953). 13 out of 82 sessions of the Fourth Committee dealt exclusively with this question, clearly showing the importance attached to it. France also attached significant importance to this session as the French Foreign Minister, Georges Bidault, noted just a week before the discussion on the Togoland problem to the French Overseas Minister: "It is undeniable that in Black Africa, Togo has served and is serving as a starting point for the work of disintegration of the opponents of our imperial vocation."⁴⁹⁰ There is a certain historical irony behind this assertion, considering that less than two years earlier, Antor prophesied to the General Assembly the opposite result, that is, "the loss of Togoland would lead sooner or later to the disintegration of the whole French Union."⁴⁹¹

Oral Hearing

When in November 1953, the delegation of the Togoland unificationists appeared again for an oral hearing before the Fourth Committee, their attacks had it in spades. First Alex Odame attacked the Trusteeship Council and the 1952 UN Visiting Mission to West Africa, both of which allegedly "had joined the Administering Authorities in a concerted and ingeniously planned policy to defeat the basic guarantees, rights and protections accorded to those peoples under the Charter."⁴⁹² Thereupon Antor claimed that instead of working toward the establishment of the *Joint Council on Togoland Affairs*, the British government had done its utmost to integrate Togoland into the Gold Coast. He said the "Most Secret" document now before the Fourth Committee served as evidence of the methods employed by the British government. He called for the Trusteeship Agreement to be amended so that a UN Special Commissioner could draft a constitution for a unified and free Togoland.

Knowing that after his last hearing before the Fourth Committee he almost succeeded in having the General Assembly punish France and Britain with an embarrassing resolution, Olympio stepped up his securitising attacks by maintaining that in French Togoland:

"increasingly repressive measures had been taken to make it impossible for his party [the CUT] to hold meetings or to pursue any normal political activities. The police and gendarmes had even entered private houses to break up private meetings and arrest those responsible for organizing them. In Lomé public meeting places were cordoned off a few hours before the meetings were to start and all those who wished to attend were forcibly driven away. Several peaceful citizens had suffered bodily injuries in that way, although they had committed no offence. Members of parties furthering unification and independence were treated almost as outlaws; if they were attacked, they could expect no help from the police. They were dismissed from the government services and business houses on flimsy pretexts."⁴⁹³

⁴⁹⁰ MAE (La Courneuve), 77QO-2, *Politique intérieure*, Le Ministre des Affaires Étrangères à Monsieur le Ministre de la France d'Outre-Mer, 5 November 1953, p. 4.

⁴⁹¹ GAOR, "6th Session: 4th Committee" (1951), p. 163.

⁴⁹² GAOR, "8th Session: 4th Committee" (1953), p. 320.

⁴⁹³ GAOR, "8th Session: 4th Committee" (1953), p. 326.

Photo 16: Petitioners of Togoland Congress (17 November 1953)⁴⁹⁴



Source: UN Photo.

Olympio expressed the urgency to liberate French Togoland from the clutches of the French Union where it would be “deprived of any hope of ever attaining self-government or independence.”⁴⁹⁵ Olympio dedicated a lot of time to highlight the repression by the French administration, its police violence, the banning of meetings and the harassment in the issuing of visas.⁴⁹⁶ Finally, Olympio called for elections held under UN supervision.

Whilst Frederick Brenner (PTP) disputed most of the points put forth by the unificationists, Robert Ajavon (PTP) attacked the UN since in recent years the abuses of the right to petition had been increasingly corrupting the very principle:

“The Trusteeship Council and the Fourth Committee, through their indiscriminate acceptance of all petitions and their desire to discredit a colonial Power, had been induced six years previously to acknowledge the reality of a problem which they knew to be insoluble because it did not rest on a serious foundation. The Fourth Committee had ultimately convinced itself of the insolubility of the problem of Ewe unification, but meanwhile vain hopes had been aroused in the minds of certain Togolanders, social unrest had been stirred up, and the development of Togoland had been considerably retarded. Togoland unification was a convenient way out for the Committee. But the problem was almost impossible of solution; procrastination was therefore indicated.”⁴⁹⁷

⁴⁹⁴ This photograph shows the three representatives of the Joint Togoland Congress (seated, left to right): R.E.G. Armattoe, Alex K. Odame, and Senyo G. Antor. Standing behind them is Theodore O. Asare, a Togoland-born New York lawyer.

⁴⁹⁵ GAOR, “8th Session: 4th Committee” (1953), p. 326.

⁴⁹⁶ GAOR, “8th Session: 4th Committee” (1953), pp. 327–37.

⁴⁹⁷ GAOR, “8th Session: 4th Committee” (1953), p. 360.

The British representative, W.A.C. Mathieson, strongly objected to the securitising language used by the unificationists. He criticized that Armattoe “had spoken with a lack of restraint which was particularly indefensible when coming from a man of such wide education and persuasive or rather elusive eloquence.”⁴⁹⁸ Likewise he criticized Odame, who “had claimed that a reign of terror existed in Togoland under British administration. Those words were generally used to describe a situation characterized by murder, public disorder and violation of human rights. The visiting missions had pointed out in their reports on the Territory [...] that the freedom of speech, movement and assembly was fully respected in Togoland under British administration.”⁴⁹⁹

Yet, the accusations of the unificationist caught on with anti-colonial state representatives, such as the Polish representative, Joseph Winiewicz, who held:

“The representatives of the different Togoland organizations had clearly shown what methods were being used by the Administering Authorities to reach their ends, and how the interests of the peoples under trusteeship were being neglected. [...] Political meetings were cynically banned, and persons who dared to show the slightest opposition to the government were subjected to police terror and imprisonment.”⁵⁰⁰

General Debate

Unsurprisingly, the following debate was heated and resulted in the consideration of three draft resolutions. The first draft resolution reaffirmed the basic premises of the unificationists, stating that “the unification of the two parts of Togoland is the manifest aspiration of the majority of the population of the two Trust Territories” and recommended the re-establishment of the *Joint Council on Togoland Affairs*, but this time with the power to consider and make recommendations on the question of unification and on all other matters affecting the two territories.⁵⁰¹

The second draft resolution called on the Administering Authorities “immediately” to review electoral eligibility in the territories and to introduce a system of voter registration based on personal identification to ensure universal, direct, and secret suffrage.⁵⁰² Both the French and the British delegates considered the draft to be completely unrealistic. The French delegate, Léon Pignon, voiced: “The French Government was of course in favour of universal suffrage, and in practice the system had no political disadvantage but many advantages. However, at the present stage of development in Togoland, and in dark

498 GAOR, “8th Session: 4th Committee” (1953), p. 365.

499 GAOR, “8th Session: 4th Committee” (1953), p. 366.

500 GAOR, “8th Session: 4th Committee” (1953), p. 369.

501 GAOR, “8th Session: 4th Committee” (1953), p. 408. The draft resolution A/C.4/L.308, available at GAOR, 8th Session, Annexes, (A/8/Annexes), *Agenda Item 13*, 6, was approved by the Fourth Committee by 44 votes to 0, with 8 abstentions (including U.K. and France) and later approved in plenary as General Assembly resolution 750 A (VIII), *The Togoland unification problem*, A/RES/750(VIII)[A] (8 December 1953), available from digitallibrary.un.org/record/666076.

502 The draft resolution A/C.4/L.309 was approved by the Fourth Committee by 48 to 1 (Belgium), with 3 abstentions (U.K., France, and Canada) and later approved in plenary as General Assembly resolution 750 B (VIII), *The Togoland unification problem*, A/RES/750(VIII)[B] (8 December 1953), available from digitallibrary.un.org/record/666078.

Africa generally, the problem of universal suffrage was not a political but a social problem.”⁵⁰³ Pignon basically argued that Africans themselves were not ready yet to fully accept democratic elections to ensure representation. Nevertheless, France abstained and did not vote against the resolution after the word “immediately” was deleted from the resolution.

The third draft resolution, which was aimed at preventing the integration of British Togoland into the Gold Coast under any circumstances, was the most controversial.⁵⁰⁴ The draft resolution considered that further amendments to the Gold Coast Constitution would require a revision of the Trusteeship Agreement as far as the administrative union was concerned and stated:

“Any revision of the trusteeship agreement [...] with a view to the integration or annexation of the territory, or any part of it to the Gold Coast would be contrary to the principles and purposes of the international trusteeship system.”⁵⁰⁵

In response to sharp criticism from the Administering Authorities and a few Western delegations, the initiators of the draft amended the text so as not to exclude the possibility of eventual integration once both territories have achieved self-government or independence.⁵⁰⁶ Britain insisted that Article 76 of the Charter did not require self-government or independence of a trusteeship territory as a separate entity, and that the third draft resolution therefore denied the future of a British Togoland in which the people freely chose integration with a self-governing Gold Coast.⁵⁰⁷ The British delegation therefore submitted an alternative text:

“The integration of Togoland under British administration, or any part of it, to the Gold Coast can only be accepted as a satisfactory termination of the trusteeship agreement if the prior agreement of the General Assembly is obtained by the administering authority in the light of the principles and purposes of the international trusteeship system.”⁵⁰⁸

However, this was unacceptable to the anti-colonial majority, which continued to insist that the Charter did not allow for the transformation of an *administrative* union into a *political* union under any circumstances. Following a paragraph-by-paragraph vote, the

503 GAOR, “8th Session: 4th Committee” (1953), p. 391.

504 See GAOR, “8th Session: 4th Committee” (1953), p. 409. The draft resolution A/C.4/L.310 was approved the Fourth Committee by 33 to 8 (including U.K. and France), with 12 abstentions.

505 A/C.4/L.310, paragraph 3 available at GAOR 8th Session, Annex (A/8/Annexes), *Agenda item 31*, p. 7.

506 A/C.4/L.310/Rev.1 “Considers further that the integration of Togoland under British administration, or any part of it, to the Gold Coast before both territories have attained self-government or independence, would be contrary to the principles and purposes of the international trusteeship system.”

507 GAOR, “8th Session: 4th Committee” (1953), p. 407.

508 A/C.4/L.317 see GAOR 8th Session, Annex (A/8/Annexes), *Agenda item 31*, p. 10.

Committee rejected the amendments by the Administering Authorities and adopted the original texts.⁵⁰⁹

Although the Fourth Committee adopted the resolution, it still had to go through the plenary. Again, the British delegation was successful in its strenuous effort of hallway diplomacy to secure a rejection of the controversial third paragraph in plenary by taking advantage of the Assembly's two-thirds voting rule.⁵¹⁰ Once more, the now pruned resolution then passed with little opposition.⁵¹¹

Thullen notes that the UN's failure to find a mutually acceptable solution to the unification question was partly due to the extreme complexity of the issue, but also because the second UN Visiting Mission (1952), through its more than ambiguous report, failed to live up to its proper function as the eyes and ears of the UN.⁵¹² Therefore, the Fourth Committee was confronted with a situation in which anti-colonial petitioners demanded an immediate solution in line with their own interpretations. The colonial powers, on the other hand, merely willing to set up various bodies to study the problem and facilitate contacts between the two territories, categorically rejected the solutions favoured by the General Assembly. Thus, the unificationists' securitising moves resonated with most representatives of the anti-colonial states, partly because they could identify with the petitioners due to their own colonial past. In consequence, most of the anti-colonial state representatives tended to distrust the statements of the colonial powers since they were more justificatory than explanatory. There was much truth to the remark by the Syrian delegate, Abdul Aziz Allouni, made at the end of the Assembly's 8th Session, that there was...

“[...] a tendency for the machinery [of petitioning] to become an automatic device into which petitions were fed at one end, together with the explanations of the Administering Authorities, and highly polished resolutions came out at the other end. Under the pressure of mass production there was a danger that those resolutions would tend to show a standardization of thought and action.”⁵¹³

6.6 Turning the Tides I: British Togoland (1954–1957)

At the Trusteeship Council's 13th Session (1954), as usual the Council members were divided between the Administering Authorities who praised the political advancement of the Gold Coast in which British Togoland participated and the non-Administering Council members who feared that integration might prevent Togoland unification.⁵¹⁴ How-

509 GAOR, “8th Session: 4th Committee” (1953), pp. 408–9.

510 TNA (London), FCO 141/5027, *Gold Coast: Anglo-French cooperation on security matters in West Africa*, Secretary of State to Governor of Gold Coast, 30 November 1953.

511 GAOR, “8th Session: Plenary” (1953, 440). The third paragraph was rejected by 28 to 17, with 3 abstentions. See Resolution 750 C (VIII), *The Togoland unification problem*, A/RES/750(VIII)[C] (8 December 1953), available from digitallibrary.un.org/record/666079.

512 Thullen, *Problems of the Trusteeship System*, p. 148.

513 GAOR, “8th Session: 4th Committee” (1953), p. 461.

514 TCOR, “13th Session” (1954), pp. 135–37.