

with the Western neighbour or even better: unification. In a society based on orality, like Togoland, markets were hubs of slogans, where CUT and Juvento political propaganda was spread through informal conversations with neighbouring market women.<sup>806</sup> The majority of market women, who spread political word and ideas, saw no gain from the administrative clique of the pro-French PTP or UCPN.

*Photo 36: Juventists singing party song on election eve (26 April 1958)*



Source: UN Photo.

The French were not aware of this development because during past elections in French Togoland a large number of female voters followed Juvento's and CUT's call for boycott. It was not until the 1958 elections that the boycott was lifted due to UN election monitoring and the floodgates of female CUT and Juvento supporters were opened.

In this present study, which is devoted to a history of silence, it should not be omitted that in the unification movement, too, it was primarily men who as petitioners, political actors, and negotiators, elbowed their way into the foreground of historiography. Nevertheless, the CUT and Sylvanus Olympio owe their rise to electoral power largely to women, who thus also set the course of Togo's historical rise to independent statehood.

### 6.8.3 Termination of Trusteeship & Independence

Since Olympio's conviction in May 1954, he was prohibited from running for elective office. Yet, the Statute did not stipulate that the Prime Minister must be a member of the

806 Ginette A. Kponton, "La Femme Dans La Lutte Pour La Décolonisation (1946–1960)," in Gayibor, *Les Togolais Face À La Colonisation*, Vol. pp. 218–19.

Legislative Assembly. Thus, after the election results were announced, the French High Commissioner, Spénale, auditioned the leader of the new parliamentary majority party, that is, Olympio, and appointed him Prime Minister, who was unanimously confirmed by the Legislative Assembly. Jonathan Savi de Tové, founding member of the CUT, was elected President of the Chamber.

Olympio did not consider upsetting the French. In his inauguration speech on 16 May 1958, he declared that: “In an independent Togo, France will be the most favoured nation, and my government will endeavour to improve the opportunities for real co-operation between the two countries”<sup>807</sup>

In August 1958, the Legislative Assembly (now renamed Chamber of Deputies) adopted a motion authorizing the Togolese Government to open negotiations with the French Government on the future modifications to the Statute. Two things were of import: First, after the 1958 elections, it was not the Ministry for Overseas France anymore that was responsible for Togoland affairs, but the Foreign Ministry took the helm of Franco-Togolese relations. This took a lot of colonial clings out of the negotiations. Second, the April 1958 elections virtually coincided with de Gaulle’s return to power and the impending establishment of the Fifth Republic. This new French government had much less to do with the period of repressive measures against the CUT and Juvento. It approved the main amendments to the statute, including Togo’s independence in 1960 and the consequent termination of the Trusteeship Agreement. On 23 October 1958, Togo’s Chamber of Deputies adopted a resolution proclaiming the decision in favour of complete independence. The resolution proposed 1960 as the year for its fulfilment and requested the UN General Assembly to maintain trusteeship until that date.

When in October, the Trusteeship Council met for its 8<sup>th</sup> Special Session (1958) to examine the results of the parliamentary elections in French Togoland, the chairman of the UN electoral observation mission, Max Dorsinville, felt justified in saying that “the mere presence of the United Nations mission had helped to create circumstances favourable to the free expression of the people’s will.”<sup>808</sup> The French representative, Jacques Kosciusko-Morizet, lay out the transfer of power and the inauguration of the CUT under the leadership of the new Prime Minister, Sylvanus Olympio, and the decision that the trusteeship territory would become independent in 1960.<sup>809</sup> On 17 October 1958, the Council unanimously recommended to the General Assembly to take steps to terminate the Trusteeship Agreement in 1960 upon the attainment of independence by Togo.<sup>810</sup>

A month later, in November 1958, Olympio reappeared solemnly before Fourth Committee (no longer as a petitioner but as the incarnation of his country), where (“avec plaisir”<sup>811</sup>) he accepted the invitation to sit on the benches of the French delegation – just like the pro-French anti-unificationists before him.

807 Togo Legislative Assembly, “2<sup>nd</sup> Legislature: Debats” (1958)

808 TCOR, “8<sup>th</sup> Special Session” (1958), p. 1.

809 TCOR, “8<sup>th</sup> Special Session” (1958), pp. 2–3.

810 TCOR, “8<sup>th</sup> Special Session” (1958), p. 9.

811 GAOR, “13<sup>th</sup> Session: Plenary” (1958), p. 437.

Photo 37: Olympio (with nameplate of France), 4<sup>th</sup> Committee (3 November 1958)



Source: UN Photo.

On 14 November 1958, the UN General Assembly approved the joint proposal of France and Togo to proclaim independence on 27 April 1960,<sup>812</sup> that is, exactly two years after the electoral victory of the CUT.

With the independence of the “Republic of Togo” a subsidiary aim of the unificationists was achieved. Two main factors were responsible for this success. On the one hand, it was the determination and constant securitising efforts by the unificationist petitioners, above all Sylvanus Olympio, and on the other hand, the attitude of their audience – the anti-colonial states in the General Assembly of the United Nations, which resisted the French plan to declare trusteeship over.

The April 1958 elections came just before de Gaulle’s return to power and the establishment of the Fifth Republic. It was thus also the temporally coincidental change in French colonial policy that contributed to Togo’s genuine independence because the fall of the Fourth Republic and de Gaulle’s reoriented ‘decolonisation’ policy radically modified French policies and motives in colonial matters. In the hope of peace in Algeria, the French Union was reshaped. While a first phase of the French Union’s assimilation policy established at the Brazzaville Conference created territorial assemblies in Overseas France, this was abandoned in favour of a second phase of autonomy policy. The *loi-cadre* was intended to allow territories to establish their own local administrations. France’s new Constitution of 1958 replaced the French Union with the French Community. However, the French Community dissolved amid the Algerian War, almost all other African colonies were granted independence in 1960 after local referendums. Yet, Togo’s independence left unresolved the efforts of some Togoland and Ewe unificationists. The problem of unifying the Ewe remained: Only the UN, whose goodwill Olympio wanted to maintain at all costs, could enable him to fulfil his wishes in this matter.

812 GAOR, “13<sup>th</sup> Session: Plenary” (1958), p. 437.