

As a last resort, the Administering Authority could simply ignore General Assembly resolutions that ran counter to its own judgement and wishes. Yet usually, the Trusteeship Council sought to avert such a crisis by forcing a compromise. There was a limit to how far the administrations were willing to go, and this was recognised by the anti-colonial powers.

## 6.2 The All-Ewe-Conference & First Petitions under Trusteeship

### 6.2.1 Formation of the 'Ewe Parties'

Before World War II, the governor of French-mandated Togoland, Michel Montagne, had decreed the creation of the *Comité du l'Unité Togolaise du Nord et du Sud*, as a counterweight to the Nazi loyalists of the *Bund der deutschen Togoländer*. After World War II, during negotiations on the UN Charter in San Francisco, this *Comité* was transformed into a political party, the *Comité du l'Unité Togolaise* (CUT). Under the presidency of the wealthy 'Brazilian' merchant, Augustino de Souza, the CUT campaigned for the 1946 elections of the representative assembly, the *Assemblée Représentative du Togo* (ART), which consisted of two electoral colleges. The first college was composed of 6 citizens of metropolitan France over-representing the French community of only 1,500 voters, while the rest of French Togoland's native male population elected the 24 African representatives of the second college. In the election, the CUT won 14 seats, the pro-French *Parti Togolais du Progrès* (PTP) one seat and the remaining 9 seats went to independent candidates. Sylvanus Olympio was elected President of the Assembly and Jonathan Savi de Tové was elected as the Togolese member for the Council of the French Union.

Whereas before the war, the name, "*Comité du l'Unité Togolaise*", stood programmatically for the cohesion of French Togoland in opposition to the threat posed by the Germanophile elements of the Togobund, it now stood programmatically for the (re)unifying tendencies of an Ewe elite around Sylvanus Olympio, Augustino de Souza, and Jonathon Savi de Tové. For the already Anglophile Olympio, the memory of his internment by the French authorities in 1942 must still have been fresh in his mind and led to an unequal preference to unify the Ewe under British administration.

In British Togoland, Daniel Ahmeling Chapman, another key figure in the early development of the Ewe unification movement, undertook similar efforts. Chapman was an Anlo-Ewe, born in Keta in 1909, that is, a Gold Coast Ewe, but received an early German education at the Bremen Missionary Society in Lomé, which probably resulted in his friendly relationship with the Germanophile ex-Togobundarian Kofi Dumoga.<sup>49</sup> Much like the other Ewe elites, Chapman was sent to study at anglophone institutions such as Oxford and Columbia University. Upon his return he worked himself up to become a Geography professor at Achimota College in Accra.

In January 1945, Chapman hosted a cocktail party at his home, where many prominent Ewe raised the possibility of assisting the Ewe in French Togoland that suffered

49 ANOM (Aix-en-Provence), 1AFFPOL/3297/1, *Affaires politiques*, Discours de D.A. Chapman devant la conférence Pan – Ewe, 3

privations due to the war efforts. In fact, by December 1945 the French administration already grew concerned about the substantial exodus of the population from French Togoland to British Togoland.<sup>50</sup> Chapman decided to start publishing an Ewe information leaflet, the *Ewe Newsletter*, the first issue of which appeared in May 1945, in English.<sup>51</sup> Chapman wrote about the history of the Ewe, about the privations in French Togoland, about the need to overcome divisions in Ewe society, to unite the Ewe under British administration, and about the importance of the new institutions of the United Nations. The *Ewe Newsletter* addressed the English-speaking Ewe population and was an important vehicle for disseminating information about the discussions taking place in San Francisco and London at the time on the new provisions of the UN Trusteeship System. Although mostly writing in a mild, teacherly tone, Chapman used more drastic, that is, securitising language in his criticism of the administration of French Togoland:

"The people of French Eweland want personal security; the right to work at a reasonable way instead of forced labour under the whip without remuneration; the right to have an effective voice in the election of their own chiefs; above all, they want union with their kinsmen on the British side of the frontier."<sup>52</sup>

In fact, on New Year's Eve, 1945, Chapman signed a petition together with 25 influential Ewe-personalities from the Anlo and Peki areas, among them the ex-Bundarians Kofi Dumoga and Gerald Otto Awuma to the Secretary of States for the Colonies, George H. Hall, pleading for the unification of the Ewes.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, Chapman endeavoured to create the *Ewe Unionist Association*, a political movement for all Ewes.<sup>54</sup> The numerous Ewe associations in the Gold Coast, such as the Ewe Central Committee, the Ewe Labour Committee, the Ewe Benefit Association, the Ewe-Speaking Catholic Union, the Ewe-Speaking Society, the Ewe Charity Union and the Ewe Central Fund, the Togoland Union, and the Trans-Volta Ewe Union unreservedly joined the call for unification.<sup>55</sup> The crowning result was a mammoth meeting with a few thousand participants, in Accra on 9 June 1946, at which the *All-Ewe Conference* (AEC) was established. Under the auspices of Chapman, the AEC adopted an "Ewe Convention," which would reject any trusteeship measure, which did not involve the establishment of a single administration for a 'unified Eweland.'

In August 1946, the AEC sent petitions to the UN, pointing out that no one had consulted the Ewe on the drafts of the Trusteeship Agreement and that Ewe representatives should have a say in the Trusteeship Council. These claims were discussed at an Anglo-French meeting in September 1946. Follow-up minutes show, that the British were torn

50 ANT (Lomé), 2APA Aného/71Add, *Affaires Politiques*, Exodes des populations du Togo français vers la Gold-Coast et le Togo britannique, N° 35e, 3 December 1945.

51 A major collection of these Newsletters can be found at PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/339, *Unification of Ewe speaking Peoples*.

52 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/339, *Unification of Ewe speaking Peoples*, Ewe Newsletter no. 6.

53 PRAAD (Accra), ADM 39/1/339, *Unification of Ewe speaking Peoples*, A Resolution on Eweland.

54 PRAAD (Accra), RG 17/1/224, *Daniel Chapman*, Note sur D. Chapman

55 Lawrance, *Locality, Mobility, and "Nation"*, p. 156.

between seriously considering the Ewe claims and not spoiling Anglo-French relations in colonial matters:

“Admittedly the U.K. might be able to say that these petitions are technically out of court because they were written before the territories came under trusteeship, but it is doubtful whether this legal quibble would now do us any good and in any case the Ewes (or Dr. Chapman himself) could very quickly write a new petition.”<sup>56</sup>

On 7 October 1946, Stephen Tonato Agbeko, President of the AEC, sent another telegram regretting that the French draft agreement for Togoland had not been communicated to the people of the territories and that the AEC opposed the British drafts, which ignored Ewe aspirations for a unified administration. However, as the Trusteeship System was not yet in place, the General Assembly did not consider itself the relevant audience and disregarded the telegram, adopting the draft agreements accordingly – simple *illocutionary silencing*.

Almost simultaneously with the General Assembly adopting the Trusteeship Agreements for French and British Togoland, Chapman was to leave the Gold Coast to accept a position as an area specialist at the *United Nations Secretary Department of Trusteeship and Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories*, where he worked until his return in 1954. It may be no coincident that Chapman worked at the UN when the first Ewe petitions arrived, and the British were already concerned that Chapman, in the role of an international civil servant, might be part of a future UN Visiting Mission to the Ewe areas.<sup>57</sup> In May 1947, Chapman wrote to Gerald O. Awuma, the ex-Bundarian and co-founder of the Togoland Union, to establish a United Nations Association in British Togoland, provided him with pamphlets, reports, illustrations, etc. on the work of the United Nations. Chapman thought that “this is the best, quickest and least expensive way of getting the information across to our people.”<sup>58</sup>

The *Togoland United Nations Association* (TUNA) was short-lived. Yet, a particularly diligent young member of TUNA, the teacher Senyo Gatrör Antor, published the Togoland United Nations Association newsletter from 1947 onwards, which, thanks to the information material provided by Chapman, kept the people of the trusteeship territory informed of what was happening at the United Nations.<sup>59</sup> Antor, who was himself a Guan and not an Ewe, was to break with Awuma in 1950 and become the leading figure in the unification movement on the British side of the Togoland border. One of the reasons for his desire to reunify Togoland lied in his simultaneous position as Secretary of the *Togoland Farmers Association*, which advocated for independence from the Gold Coast Cocoa

56 TNA (London), CO 537/2037, *Problem of the Ewe people in British and French Togoland*, 1947, K.E. Robinson, no title.

57 TNA (London), CO 537/2037, *Problem of the Ewe people in British and French Togoland*, K.E. Robinson, no title.

58 UN ARMS (New York), S-1554-0000-0003, *Africa – Cameroon and Togoland -Visiting Mission*, 1949, The United Nations and the People of Western Togoland, by Gerald O. Awuma, p. 7.

59 UN ARMS (New York), S-1554-0000-0003, *Africa – Cameroon and Togoland -Visiting Mission*, The Togoland U.N.A. Newsletter, Vol. 1., No. 3, September 1947.

Marketing Board, so that cocoa from British Togoland could be marketed independently and the revenue would not go to projects in the Gold Coast.

Chapman's trajectory in the further development of the unification campaign is more than ironic when gauged from a security-focused point of view: though his role was somewhat foundational for the post-war Ewe unification movement, upon his return to the Gold Coast he decamped from the AEC to Nkrumah's *Convention People's Party* (CPP), which advocated for the integration of British Togoland into the Gold Coast. After Ghana's independence, Chapman himself would assume the Chairmanship of Ghana's highest intelligence body, the Local Intelligence Committee (LIC), gathering intelligence for example on the Togoland Congress while his brother, Charles H. Chapman, would become Regional Commissioner in Trans-Volta-Togoland (TVT) and enforce the Avoidance of Discrimination Act and the Preventive Detention Act to quell Ewe and Western Togoland unrest.<sup>60</sup>

## 6.2.2 Establishment of the Petition Procedure

Before the start of the Trusteeship Council's 1<sup>st</sup> Session (1946), the unpleasant petitions from the AEC were again subject of an Anglo-French inter-ministerial meeting at Whitehall in March 1947. There, the possibility of the British offering Gambia or British Cameroon in exchange for the French parts of Togoland was discussed, but this was rejected on the grounds that it would be heavily criticised by the United Nations and would not appeal to the populations concerned.<sup>61</sup> In any case, the prestige of the colonial powers would be tarnished if they allowed themselves to be driven by the aspirations of a 'minor' nationalist movement and it was feared that giving in on this point would set a precedent for other nationalist movements, which could lead to the 'balkanisation' of the African continent.

At the end of the month, the Trusteeship Council was ready to start its work in New York. In admonitory words, UN Secretary-General Trygve Lie recapped during the inauguration of the Trusteeship Council that the debates in San Francisco and London...

"... may have raised the question in people's minds whether the interests of the nations or the interests of the inhabitants of the prospective Trust Territories were the paramount consideration. The Administering Authorities may have wondered on occasion whether they or the Trust Territories most needed United Nations protection."<sup>62</sup>

It was a sharp reminder that the Soviet Union boycotted the 1<sup>st</sup> Session of the Trusteeship Council. That's why, during the 1<sup>st</sup> Session, the non-administering Council members

60 The Prevention of Discrimination Act (1957) had a progressive veneer in name, but ultimately banned all parties based on ethnic, regional, or religious grounds. Parties like the Togoland Congress or the Ewe Associations became illegal groups practically overnight. The Preventive Detention Act (1958) gave the Ghanaian government the power to detain an individual for up to five years without the right of appeal.

61 TNA (London), FO 371/67718, *Problem of the unification of the EWE ethnic group in Togoland (under British and French trusteeship)*, 1947, Minutes "The Ewe Problem", William Blanch, 21 March 1947.

62 TCOR, "1<sup>st</sup> Session" (1947), p. 1.