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READING, WRITING AND RALLIES: THE POLITICS OF 'FREEDOM' IN SOUTHERN BRITISH TOGOLAND, 1953–1956

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ABSTRACT: Examples of chant, song and written propaganda from the mid-1950s are examined here in order to probe the debates and relationships which influenced the political future of the Ewe-speaking areas of southern British Togoland. While microstudies have been important in explaining sources of division between communities in these areas, propaganda provides a means of understanding the arguments, idioms and ideas about the state which brought many different people together behind the apparently peculiar project of Togoland reunification. The main source of tension within this political movement was not competing local or communal interests, but the unequal relationships that resulted from uneven provision of education. Written and oral propaganda texts, and the rallies where they were performed and exchanged, point to a surprisingly participatory and eclectic political culture, where distinctions between the lettered and unlettered remained fluid and open to challenge.

KEY WORDS: Ghana, Togo, ethnicity, nationalism, education, Christianity.

INTRODUCTION

THIS introduction has three purposes: first, to explain the particular status of southern British Togoland and the bitter struggle that emerged over its future in the mid 1950s; second, to suggest what an analysis of political propaganda can add to the existing scholarship; and third, to outline the main arguments of this article. The area surrounding the southern quarter of the present-day Ghana–Togo border has a complex political history that has fascinated and mystified scholars in a variety of disciplines. A border was first drawn through the Ewe-speaking peoples during the creation of the British and German colonies of the Gold Coast and Togo at the end of the nineteenth century (see map).[1] Following the carve-up of German colonies after the First World War, the Ewe-speakers were divided by a three-way split, between the British Gold Coast Colony in the south and west, and the British and French spheres of Togoland in the east. The latter became mandated territories of the League of Nations in 1921 and then trust territories of the United Nations in 1947.

[1] The British and German governments signed agreements in 1887, 1890 and 1899, each aiming at a more precise division of territory.
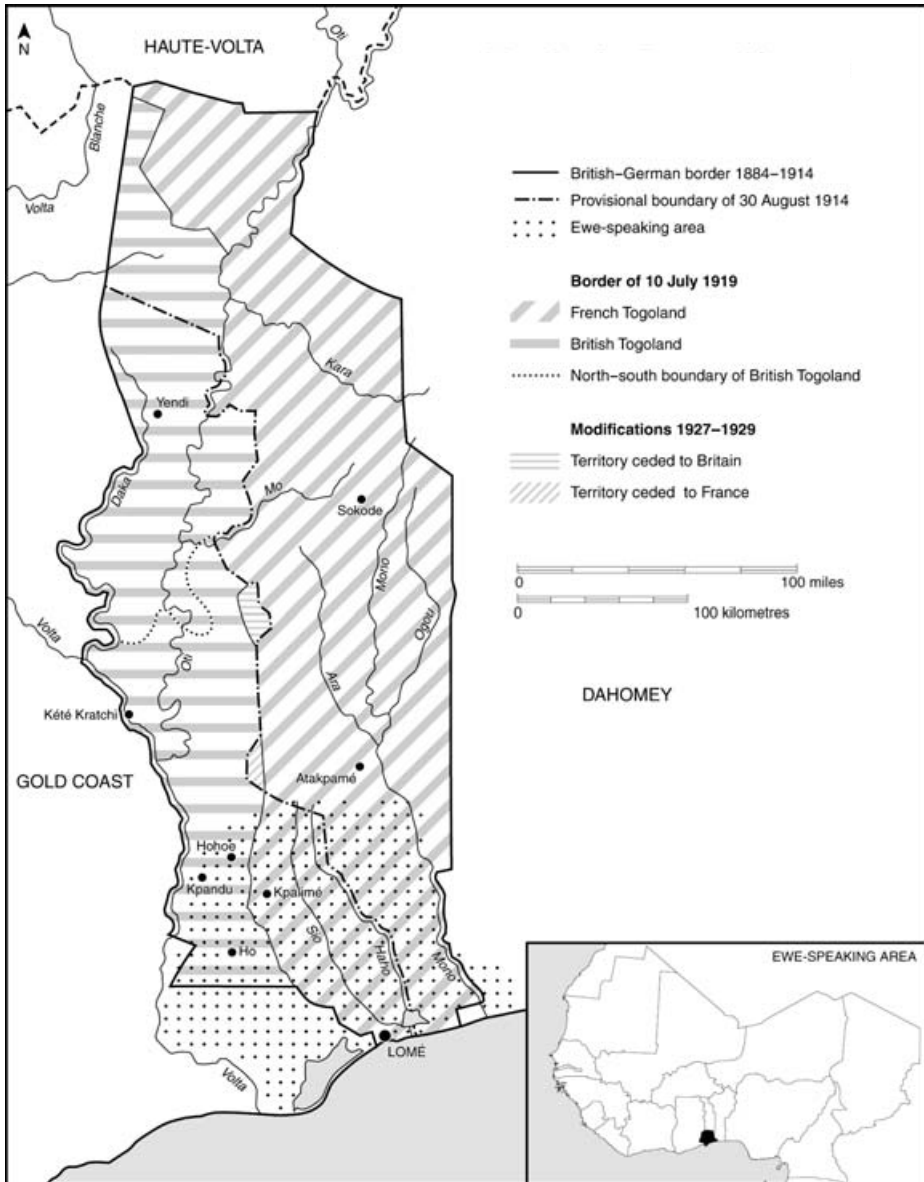
Map 1. Ewe-speaking area and changing colonial borders.

The particular international status of the two Togolands bequeathed a series of records which scholars have consulted in their studies of the border. African inhabitants of the Togolands complained bitterly about the obstacles that the border placed in the way of economic and cultural activity, and about the particular disadvantages afflicting those in the French-administered zone. These complaints were investigated by United Nations Visiting Missions in 1949, 1952 and 1955, and were discussed at both the Trusteeship Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations on many occasions.

While the colonial administering authorities did not resolve the issues raised by African petitioners, some administrators appeared to accept that it was natural and even legitimate for the Ewe-speaking peoples to seek a greater measure of political unity.[2] Early academic studies of the border area also shared this assumption. Western political scientists were concerned with the challenges that 'primordial attachment' among the Ewe-speakers might pose to the newly independent states, and to the pan-African blocs, which emerged from artificial and shifting colonial borders.[3]

The first major study produced by an African scholar, D. E. K. Amenumey, worked within the same paradigm, but approached the problem from the opposite angle, highlighting the obstacles that colonial borders and policies had placed in the way of political expression of common ethnic identity.[4] Amenumey suggested that, from the late 1940s, the movement for ethnic unification – that is, across the Ewe-speaking areas of the southern Togolands and the southeastern Gold Coast – was complicated, and ultimately undermined, by the machinations of the colonial administering authorities, and by the emergence of competing African associations. These associations, while superficially sympathetic to aspirations of Ewe unity, prioritized the reunification of the two trust territories as a means of protecting particular interests. The basic dynamic, then, was one of 'legitimate' ethnic identity being undercut by 'selfish' interest groups which had sprung up in response to divisive aspects of colonial government and economy.[5]

This article focuses on the period in which the complex and competing demands of African associations within southern British Togoland were reformulated and simplified under the pressure of British moves to prepare the neighbouring Gold Coast colony for independence. In 1949, specific proposals for constitutional reform sent out a clear message: in order to participate in organs of self-government, the people of southern British Togoland would have to exercise their votes within units that combined them with people from the neighbouring colony in a Trans-Volta Togoland Region.[6] Political leaders in southern British Togoland disagreed bitterly

[2] Michael Ensor, who served as Britain's special representative to the United Nations and hosted both the 1952 and 1955 Visiting Missions in British Togoland, described initiatives such as the Joint Consultative Commission for the two Togolands as a means of 'reducing the nuisance of the border' but acknowledged that, unfortunately, it had not satisfied the people. Interview with Michael Ensor, Travellers' Club, London, 25 Feb. 2000.

[3] C. E. Welch Jr., *Dream of Unity: Pan-Africanism and Political Unification in West Africa* (Ithaca NY, 1966); W. S. Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy, 1957–66: Diplomacy, Ideology and the New States* (Princeton, 1969). The expression 'primordial attachments' is borrowed from C. Geertz, 'The integrative revolution: primordial sentiments and civil politics in the new states', in C. Geertz (ed.), *Old Societies, New States* (New York and London, 1963), 109.

[4] D. E. K. Amenumey, *The Ewe Unification Movement: A Political History* (Accra, 1989), particularly 59–117, where Amenumey details the deliberate moves of colonial administrations to inhibit pro-unification activity among Africans.

[5] *Ibid*. 118–55. Teachers and cocoa farmers in southern British Togoland were identified as important interest groups.

[6] In October 1949, the Coussey Committee submitted its recommendations on constitutional reform, including a proposal to create a Trans-Volta Togoland Region,

among themselves over whether it would be possible or desirable to resist this British attempt to 'integrate' the trust territory with a self-governing Gold Coast, and which strategies and alliances should be adopted.

Boycotts of elections to Gold Coast bodies proved ineffective, and it became apparent, firstly, that the Gold Coast nationalist Convention People's Party (CPP) intended to contest and win seats in Togoland constituencies, and secondly that the CPP would pursue the British strategy of integration.[7] This prompted a defection of some former southern Togoland leaders to the CPP, and a reorganization of those who continued to oppose integration.[8] Out of this reorganization emerged the Togoland Congress, which advocated the separation of British Togoland from the Gold Coast, and the preparation of the two Togoland trust territories for reunification and joint independence.[9] By late 1953, the voters of southern British Togoland were confronted with a straightforward choice: reunification or integration, the Togoland Congress or the CPP.

In comparison to petitions for pan-Ewe ethnic unity, the movement for the reunification of the two Togolands appeared quite incomprehensible, both to many observers at the United Nations and to African opponents and colonial administrators back home. The two Togolands did not represent a coherent cultural area: even the predominantly Ewe-speaking southern areas were peppered with non-Ewe enclaves, while the populations of the central and northern areas spoke completely different languages and practised different religions. A reunified Togoland would reconstruct the borders established by the former German colonizers, rather than uniting ethnic groups. Even supporters of Togoland reunification acknowledged that serious practical obstacles stood in the way of reuniting a French-administered zone with a British one.[10]

In 1956, the United Nations sponsored a plebiscite in order to settle the constitutional status of British Togoland, and, mainly as a result of the northern vote, the integrationists emerged victorious. An early analysis of the plebiscite results offered a potential explanation for the mysterious appeal of Togoland reunification in the south.[11] Voting appeared to operate on communal lines: district council areas, and the local council areas within them, tended to opt for either integration with, or separation from, the Gold

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comprising the Ewe-speaking areas of the southeastern Gold Coast and the southern section of British Togoland. The region was created in 1952 and the regional council met for the first time in 1953.

[7] Elections to the Gold Coast Legislative Assembly were held in February 1951. Local council elections were held in April, October and December 1952, and the local councils sent their representatives to the first session of the Trans-Volta Togoland Council in July 1953. In each case, conflict within the Togoland Union contributed to a disappointing performance.

[8] G. O. Awuma and F. Y. Asare of the Togoland Union both crossed the parliamentary carpet.

[9] A more detailed account of conflicts and reorganizations within southern British Togoland is provided in P. Nugent, *Smugglers, Secessionists and Loyal Citizens on the Ghana–Togo Frontier: The Lie of the Borderlands Since 1914* (Athens OH, 2002), 171–88.

[10] See below, p. 138.

[11] J. S. Coleman, 'Togoland', *International Conciliation*, 509 (1956), 74.

Coast by substantial majorities.[12] In other words, local issues, rather than adherence to a broader party manifesto, were determining voting behaviour. Other scholars have since developed this point, using microstudies to demonstrate how support for the Togoland Congress, and indeed the CPP, in the mid-1950s, followed fault lines established by earlier local and district disputes.[13] Paul Nugent's recent work locates these disputes within broader social change brought about by educational and commercial opportunities (particularly in cocoa farming), highlighting the role of 'sub-elites' in bridging the gap between local disputes, Togoland issues and national political parties. Rather than treating Ewe identity as a 'given', Nugent demonstrates how it was mobilized, adapted or even rejected according to specific local circumstances.[14]

Microstudies, then, have been important in articulating the divisions between local and even sub-local communities in southern British Togoland. What such studies have not fully explained, however, is the second pattern that emerged in the plebiscite: large majorities in favour of separation from the Gold Coast (and, thus, by implication, in favour of Togoland reunification) were counted across the most southerly two districts, Ho and Kpandu, while two of the local council areas that lay immediately north of Kpandu district also voted for separation, by somewhat smaller margins.[15] In other words, in spite of differing local and even individual experiences of chieftaincy disputes, cash cropping, labour migrancy, Christian conversion and Western education, there was a clear block within southern British Togoland where the majority of voters wanted the same thing.

Propaganda is important because it gives us a unique means of understanding why many people rallied with such enthusiasm around an apparently peculiar political project.[16] Without it, we can only extrapolate from

[12] The plebiscite voting papers did not specify reunification with French Togoland as an option: rather, voters were required to choose between separation from, or integration with, the Gold Coast (for precise wording, see *ibid.* 68). This, combined with the decision to confine voting to the British trust territory, and not extend it to French Togoland, was bitterly resented by reunificationists. See my Ph.D. thesis: K. Collier, '*Ablɔɖe*: networks, ideas and performance in Togoland politics, 1950–2001' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Birmingham, 2003), 235–9.

[13] D. Brown, 'Politics in the Kpandu area of Ghana, 1925 to 1969: a study of the influence of central government and national politics on a local factional competition' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Birmingham, 1977); P. Nugent, 'National integration and the vicissitudes of state power in Ghana' (Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1992).

[14] Nugent, *Smugglers, Secessionists and Loyal Citizens*.

[15] A detailed analysis of the plebiscite results can be found in Coleman, 'Togoland', 68–80, and in Nugent, *Smugglers, Secessionists and Loyal Citizens*, 189–98. For some speculations on the failure of the reunificationists to capture the northern vote, see Collier, '*Ablɔɖe*', 227–35.

[16] Scholars have already consulted newspapers such as the *Ewe Newsletter* and the *Guide du Togo* that were produced by Ewe- (and sometimes non-Ewe-) speakers in the Gold Coast and in French Togoland. However, it seems that not since Amenumey published *The Ewe Unification Movement* has anyone consulted the two newspapers that were produced by southern British Togolanders for a home audience. The *Togoland United Nations Association Newsletter* and the *Togoland Vanguard* are not listed in any regional or national archive catalogue in Ghana or Togo, and although they appear in the catalogue of the Balme Library at Legon, I was not able to locate the copies (despite several searches of the basement). Clippings from the *Togoland Vanguard* were sent to the Fabian Colonial

United Nations records what arguments really motivated people in this area, and we cannot understand how people discussed these arguments among themselves in their towns and villages. As we shall see, the written propaganda produced by opinion leaders and political representatives in southern British Togoland focused not on ethnicity, nor on the different local disputes from which the Togoland Congress may indeed have hoped to benefit, but on the historical processes that created a Togoland national identity, and on the constitutional and economic arguments in favour of a reunited Togoland.

These texts bear remarkable similarities, in both argumentative content and idiom, to the popular political chant and song that was often invented independently of an educated leadership. This suggests that, in spite of the didactic and even moralizing tone of written propaganda, many less-educated supporters were not simply instructed in Togoland nationalism. Rather, they already shared with their leaders and representatives fundamentally similar understandings of the issues at stake in the mid-1950s. The driving force behind the movement for Togoland reunification was a consensus on the unique role of the state as a guarantor of freedom and an agent of development. The first part of this article, then, is concerned with what the reunificationists held in common.

Solidarity of objective, however, did not eliminate tension between those who represented the reunificationist cause outside the region, and those who mobilized behind it at home. The second part of this article is concerned with those tensions. While Western education was accepted as a prerequisite for the representation of Togoland interests in Gold Coast and international forums, it was not regarded as a guarantee of constancy or efficacy. Indeed, less-educated supporters resented their dependence on more highly educated representatives. Written texts provided a distinctive network of individuals with an opportunity to assert their claim to articulate and represent the interests of Togoland. But the uneven provision of a specific type of missionary education also meant that political life in the southern districts was surprisingly participatory and eclectic. Distinctions between the lettered and unlettered may have been more fluid than written texts initially suggest, and they were also open to challenge. In their face-to-face encounters at rallies, less-educated supporters found a means of testing their representatives' commitment and holding them to account.

FORGING A MOVEMENT FOR 'FREEDOM'

1953–1954: new battle grounds, new weapons
The oral and written texts considered here were produced in a period when the reunificationists were confronted by a British–CPP alliance which was able to determine the electoral and administrative structures within which the Togoland question had to be contested. In response, S. G. Antor's Togoland Congress adopted a two-pronged strategy. Firstly, in order to counter the influence of colonial powers on the Trusteeship Council, the reunificationists gained the right to appear in person before the Fourth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly. Here they

Bureau in 1951, and these are available at Rhodes House, Oxford, FCB Papers, box 89, file 3.

presented arguments which emphasized Togoland's special status as a trust territory and the responsibility of the international community to protect its right to self-determination as a prerequisite for its effective national development.[17]

Secondly, reunificationists abandoned boycotts of Gold Coast elections and mounted a vigorous campaign aimed at winning more seats in the parliamentary elections that were scheduled for June 1954. Written propaganda texts, often encompassing excerpts from speeches and petitions made to the United Nations, were sold and circulated at political rallies held throughout the southern section of British Togoland.[18] Representatives demonstrated to their supporters the activity undertaken outside in favour of Togoland reunification, while local rallies provided an occasion for performing the mobilizing chants and songs that had been produced at home.

Three written texts are considered here. The first, *Togo Nukae Hiawo?* (Togo, What do you Need?), was written in Ewe by G. K. Tsekpo, and printed in Accra by the West African Graphic Company in 1953.[19] Theodore O. Asare's *The Case for a Reunited Togoland* was published in New York in 1953, while '*Most Secret' Politics in Togoland*, edited by S. G. Antor and Paul Ecker, was also published in New York approximately a year later, with the assistance of the Movement for the Democracy of Content.[20] The status and intentions of these authors will be discussed below. First let us see what arguments they made, and how far these arguments tallied with those expressed in the chant and song that were produced by supporters at home.

Nationals and foreigners

In all the written texts, historical narratives were used to represent a prior state of unity, establish causes of disunity, and suggest the appropriate steps

to eradicate conflict. Common to these narratives was a concern to establish the proper basis of nationhood, and the authors employed two methods: firstly, they sought to define categories of 'we' and 'they'; secondly, they argued that the social and economic development of the 'we' group would best be served by a particular political settlement. Reunificationists seized the initiative in shifting the argument away from ideals of unity that were based on an ethnic, pan-Ewe, identity. They emphasized instead the potential of colonial systems to bind Africans together into national processes of social and economic development whose character was determined by that of the mother country. For them, the 'we' group was not 'the Ewe', but rather those people whose first experiences of Western medicine, education and infrastructural development had been shaped by a German tradition.

Antor argued that 'By 1914 German influence and tradition had become firmly established', while Asare emphasized the rupture and disunity that had resulted from the partition of Togoland between Britain and France. Antor argues:

As education began to develop and as new political institutions took shape … It became quite clear to both groups of Togolanders that these policies, if they were continued, would make the two regions as different from each other as Great Britain and France and result in complete absorbtion [*sic*] of the two trust territories into their respective colonies and/or political systems.

Recognising this eventuality, the leaders … are seeking unification of the two regions making Togoland again one nation and one cultural group as they originally were.[21]

The non-ethnic basis of nationhood presented by the reunificationists was inclusive of the plethora of non-Ewe minorities living in the southern section. Some of these authors originated from these areas.[22] From the late nineteenth century, the religious and educational activity of Pietist missionaries sent from Bremen, north Germany, had helped to establish Ewe as a vehicular language among many of these groups, and had enabled their students to enter the same educational institutions as those who spoke Ewe as a first language.[23] Linkages between Ewe and non-Ewe groups had also been established through precolonial trade networks and, from the early twentieth century, through participation in cocoa farming.[24]

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[21] Antor, 'Preface', in Antor and Ecker (eds.), '*Most Secret*', 3, and Asare, *Case for a Reunited Togoland*, 10.

[22] According to two of my informants, Asare came from Worawora in Buem, north of Hohoe, where Twi rather than Ewe serves as a vehicular language – hence *nkabum ne biakoye*. Interview with Michael Senoo and Richard Banibensu, Dansoman, Greater Accra, 14 Aug. 2000. Antor came from Logba, where Ewe is spoken only as a second language; see life history of Antor in Collier, '*Abləɖe*', 63–5. Tsekpo came from Alavanyo, near Kpandu, where Ewe is the first spoken language.

[23] In Amedzofe-Avatime, amidst a non-Ewe mountain people, the Bremen mission opened a seminary and teacher training college in 1894. This institution was the first in German Togo to train African teachers, and thus Amedzofe developed an importance out of all proportion to its size.

[24] Togoland's cocoa land was concentrated in Buem, north of the Ewe-speaking town of Hohoe. The earlier inhabitants of Buem spoke Lelemi, but they were joined in the first half of the twentieth century by large numbers of Ewe-speaking cocoa farmers.

Hence Tsekpo, despite writing in Ewe, was not appealing to an exclusionist ethnic sentiment. His text rather claimed that differences of mother tongue and religion were less important than the role of Germany, the 'mother' country, in the construction of a national Togoland identity:

If something hits and kills a hen, the chicks will gather together in one part of the hutch. They do not go to another chick's mother. They will stick together and help to feed one another ... White fowl, black fowl, red fowl or any fowl, are all towns of Togo.[25]

A corollary of this Togoland identity was the reunificationist portrayal of the Togoland Congress as a national liberation movement, and the CPP as a foreign and intrusive political party.[26] Thus Asare complained: 'As a direct result of the New Constitution of the Gold Coast, the business of government in the Gold Coast has now become a game of party politics, and Togoland has been made a football in the game'.[27]

Although the Togoland Congress was being forced, rather than choosing, to play the CPP at its own game, by 1953 it was also committed to winning electoral contests, and this meant countering the potential appeal of the CPP's 'Self-Government Now!'. The CPP was a slippery opponent in the Togoland question, for, on the one hand, it could claim to be the future Ghana's only nationwide anti-colonial party, but on the other hand, it also appealed to ethnic sentiment in Togoland. In particular, CPP propaganda suggested that a higher proportion of the trust territory's population would achieve unity with ethnic kin through integration.[28]

The reunificationists were concerned to shift the argument away from ethnic identity and focus instead on the nature of self-government. They pointed out, both at home and at the United Nations, that self-government as part of the Gold Coast was not self-government for Togoland at all: it was an annexation manoeuvred by a colonial stooge. Thus in his Introduction to '*Most Secret*', Ecker wrote:

imperialism sooner or later in almost every case, must call upon a 'native', properly educated in the ruler's 'civilising mission', to assume the robes of government and supply the pretence of self-government for a hostile population ...

Basel missionaries had introduced Twi as a language of school and worship in late nineteenth-century Buem, but in 1903 transferred their stations to the Bremen mission. Thus some southern Togolanders who used Twi as a first or vehicular language opposed both the introduction of the Ewe liturgy and the choice of the name 'Ewe Presbyterian' for the Bremen mission's successor church. After the Second World War, the name 'Evangelical Presbyterian Church' was adopted to take account of these objections. Nugent emphasized that, in spite of this apparent division between language groups, there were important factors that drew the Ewe-speakers closer to the non-Ewe minorities within the southern section of British Togoland. He also notes that the minorities were well represented within the Togoland Congress. Nugent, *Smugglers, Secessionists and Loyal Citizens*, 119–24, 171–6 and 189.   [25] Tsekpo, *Togo Nukae Hiawo?* 6–7.

[26] The distinction between nationalist movement and political party was also made in Asante politics in the mid-1950s, although it was employed to a different end. J. Allman, *The Quills of the Porcupine: Asante Nationalism in an Emergent Ghana* (Madison, 1993), 110.   [27] Asare, *Case for a Reunited Togoland*, 17.

[28] CPP propaganda, and its overt appeals to ethnic sentiment, are considered in Collier, 'Ablɔɖe', 173–7.

… he may appear to conduct a struggle against the very ruling forces whose interests in the last analysis he is on the scene to protect … he is a figure deeply cynical, a Quisling, a Gottwald or a Chiang Kai-Shek.[29]

This distinction between 'nationals' and 'foreigners', between legitimate concern with Togoland's national destiny and calculated political interference, was also apparent in the chants and songs that were invented exclusively for use within the trust territory by its African inhabitants. Many of these Ewe-language chants and songs were invented by women, who sang them during the course of gender-segregated everyday work, and at rallies which they attended together with men.[30] The CPP was often referred to as *Akoko*, meaning 'cockerel', which was the party's symbol. *Akoko* is a Twi word, and by using a language that was widely spoken in the Gold Coast, Ewe-speaking inhabitants of southern British Togoland were underlining the 'foreign' origins of the CPP. Ewe-language chants also distinguished between 'natives' of Togoland, who were assumed to be supporters of reunification, and the 'foreigners' who backed the CPP: 'CPP-tɔwoe, Miyi afee, Togoviwo l' Ablɔɖe me!' ('CPP people, go home, the children of Togo are living in freedom!').[31] These distinctions were also conveyed in interviews with party supporters. One man from Alavanyo (near Kpandu) explained, 'We did not want anyone coming here from that side to rule us', and another, from Hohoe, described Kwame Nkrumah, the CPP leader, as 'someone who came in the Gold Coast, he came in Accra and he wanted to extend his arm'.[32]

In principle, then, Togoland nationalism extended through both the northern and southern sections of the British trust territory, and aimed to reunite the French and British zones. In this respect, reunificationist demands in the mid-1950s were quite different from the demands that had been made in the late 1940s for an ethnic Ewe homeland. In practice, however, the northern section posed a problem to the reunificationists. German-led educational and infrastructural development may indeed have bound the non-Ewe minorities of the southern section closer to their Ewe neighbours. Northerners, however, who did not use Ewe even as a second or vehicular language, had participated in infrastructural development mainly as cheap and unskilled migrant labour.[33] Government and mission provision of

[29] Ecker, in 'Introduction' to Antor and Ecker (eds.), '*Most Secret*', 4.

[30] Interview in Ewe with Mercy Akosua Tegbe, Hohoe, 19 Sept. 2000 (translation by Lydia Osei Brantuo). Tegbe was a wife of the late Chief Gabusu IV of Hohoe, who had supported the Togoland Congress in the 1950s. Following the passage of the Preventive Detention Act in July 1958, he went into exile in Kpalimé in French-speaking Togo. Tegbe had travelled with him, and both remained there until the fall of Nkrumah in 1966.

[31] I am grateful to Gladys Akoli of Taviefe for providing me with a tape-recording of this and other reunificationist songs and chants, and to Richard Banibensu (former tutor at the Institute of Adult Education, Legon) for translating them.

[32] Interview in Ewe with Cleophas Ntsri, Alavanyo-Agoxoe, 19 Sept. 2000 (translations by Rose Ntsri and Lydia Osei Brantuo), and interview with Revd. E. T. Adiku, Hohoe, 13 Sept. 2000. Both Hohoe and Alavanyo (near Kpandu) were Togoland Congress strongholds.

[33] This was apparent in the construction of the Lomé–Kpalimé railway, which mainly benefited producers in the centre and south of the country, but which was constructed using northern labour. U. Schuerkens, *Du Togo allemand aux Togo et Ghana*

educational and health facilities under British trusteeship divided the northern and southern sections of British Togoland as much as it divided the territory as a whole from the French zone.[34] Reunificationist propaganda, then, was not 'ethnic' in the sense that it referred exclusively to the Ewe, but the 'we' group that such propaganda most successfully mobilized was, in effect, 'we the southern Togolanders'.[35]

Government and development

Having established the 'we' group which they hoped to mobilize, the authors of propaganda texts then proceeded to marshal the evidence that their own political solution would provide the path to more rapid and far-reaching socioeconomic development. CPP propaganda put forward a simple case for integration: accepting that the British administration had done little in terms of amenity development or infrastructural improvements in the trust territory, the first CPP government awarded a special development grant to the Trans-Volta Togoland Region.[36] It thus held out the promise that the neglect experienced under British administration would not be repeated if the trust territory achieved its independence as part of Ghana.

The reunificationist case was more complex. Antor argued that the failure of the Cocoa Marketing Board to keep separate accounts for the trust territory enabled the Gold Coast not only to control a major source of revenue, but also to disguise how much that revenue amounted to and whether it would be sufficient to support an independent joint Togoland state. Antor suggested that, if they were net contributors to Gold Coast government revenue, inhabitants of the trust territory had no reason to feel grateful for any special development funds provided to the Trans-Volta Togoland Region.[37] Thus, in the mid-1950s, the immediate arguments turned on

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indépendants: changement social sous régime coloniale (Paris, 2001), 57. For a more general critique of German administration and the use of forced labour, see M. Nüssbaum, *Togo, Eine Musterkolonie?* (Berlin, 1962), and A. Knoll, *Togo under Imperial Germany, 1884–1914: A Case Study in Colonial Rule* (Stanford, 1978).

[34] Bremen mission activity did not extend to the northern section of Togoland before the First World War. After the war, the British sought to administer northern Togoland as part of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast. Missionary activity was restricted across the North until the 1930s, although the White Fathers succeeded in opening a school at Navrongo in 1907. Northern British Togolanders became bound more closely to the people of the Northern Territories through their shared dependence on a small number of educational institutions, particularly the government school in Tamale. P. Ladouceur, *Chiefs and Politicians: The Politics of Regionalism in Northern Ghana* (London, 1979), 49–53, 59, 70, 83–93, 107–10, 134–45.

[35] The Krachi district transferred from the northern to southern section of Togoland in December 1950. *Ibid*. 77. Here, cocoa farming and missionary education were less important and Ewe was not widely spoken. The reunificationists did not gain significant support in this district.

[36] Nugent, *Smugglers, Secessionists and Loyal Citizens*, 187.

[37] Antor, 'Statement … to the Fourth Committee …', in Antor and Ecker (eds.), '*Most Secret*', 19. Clippings from the *Togoland Vanguard* (Rhodes House) indicate that Coleman was incorrect in suggesting that British Togoland farmers wanted a free market in cocoa ('Togoland', 36), and that Nugent is correct in identifying a separate Togoland marketing board as their preferred alternative. *Smugglers, Secessionists and Loyal Citizens*, 186.

whether British Togoland was receiving a fair share of cocoa revenues, and whether it had enough resources to support an independent state.

These arguments, however, rested on a more deep-seated and widely held conviction that the trust territory's relative lack of secondary schools, medical facilities and motorable roads was directly attributable to the absence of a government of its own. Written propaganda was peppered with images of the colonial state as a parental figure, implying that a young nation, like a household, could only be built up through government's fair and prudent husbanding of material and human resources. Reunificationist writers suggested that the defeat of the 'mother country' in the First World War had left Togoland in the position of an 'orphan'. Not only had the partition of Togoland interrupted the processes of national development initiated under German rule: it had also, in Asare's words, relegated the two Togolands to 'the position of a colonial "step-child" waiting in line until the Administering Nations could get to them'.[38]

In his Ewe-language text, Tsekpo used a similar metaphor to pursue this theme:

It is true that someone who takes on the role of a father will not be as good as a real father. When orphans are with a group and it is time to eat, the orphans will be sent to the river to fetch water. By the time they come back, the rest of the group have finished the food, leaving a few crumbs in a bowl.[39]

Neither the transfer of sovereignty from the British to Africans, nor the impressive plans for the future Ghana's economic development, could alter this basic dynamic. As a marginal member of another 'household', Togoland would always receive less favourable treatment, no matter how great its contribution or how prosperous the household became. By contrast, argued Tsekpo, if the towns of Togo could overcome their differences (as symbolized by the different-coloured fowl), they could 'stick together and help to feed one another. They have one mouth and one stomach, so when one eats a little, all will be fed'.[40]

In interviews, informants who had experienced little or no school education expressed similar sentiments. They emphasized that Togoland had 'certain amenities' of its own, and thus, in order to avoid further exploitation and to promote the development of resources, it was vital to reach a political settlement in which Togolanders would 'know our share'.[41] Chants and songs forcefully asserted that a reunified and independent Togoland state was the best safeguard for the people of the trust territory:

> Tɔgbe Gabusu be:
> Togo mayi Dahome o,
> Yigbe!

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[38] Asare, *Case for a Reunited Togoland*, 27.
[39] Tsekpo, *Togo Nukae Hiawo?* 6–7.   [40] *Ibid*. 6–7.
[41] Interview with M. K. Asase, Ho-Dome, 18 May 1999, and interview in Ewe with E. K. Mfojoh, Sokode-Gbagble, 2 June 1999 (translation by Lydia Osei Brantuo). Mr. Asase had attended the EP primary school in Ho for 3 years; Mr. Mfojoh had not attended school at all. The most important 'amenity' in the trust territory was the River Volta, which both the British and the CPP wished to dam for the generation of hydroelectric power for the future Ghana's industrial development.

Tɔgbe Gabusu be:
Togo mayi ɖe Ghana o,
Yigbe!

Eyata miele Togoa yi
Togo tɔ enye Ablɔɖe
Ablɔɖe gbadzaa![42]

Chief Gabusu says:
Togo will not go to Dahomey,
[French Togoland will not integrate with Dahomey]
No way!

Chief Gabusu says:
Togo will not go to Ghana,
[British Togoland will not integrate with Ghana]
No way!

Therefore, we are joining Togo.
Togo's right is freedom,
Complete freedom![43]

'Ablɔɖe gbadzaa!' was also used as a chant in its own right, and it conveyed the notion that freedom would be most meaningful when it was 'complete' and enjoyed 'everywhere' – in other words, when both British and French Togoland had achieved separation from neighbouring colonies and been reunited as an independent state.

Reunificationists clearly believed that the state had a unique power, not only in setting in motion social and economic processes that could bind citizens together in a national identity, but also in making decisions on investment and expenditure that would determine the pace and distribution of all future development. Although it was Nkrumah who said 'Seek ye first the political kingdom and all things will be added unto it', the phrase could also have come from the mouths of Tsekpo, Asare or Antor, or indeed any number of reunificationist spokesmen or supporters.[44] In this respect, the reunificationist pre-occupation with the state, and their expression of this concern through metaphors of food and eating, could be located within a broader pattern of 'politics of the belly' in late colonial and postcolonial Africa.[45]

However, reunificationist ideas about freedom and independence did not derive purely from a desire to stake out claims for individual and communal accumulation in a decolonized future – although their opponents certainly accused their proponents of this.[46] There was also a strong

[42] I am grateful to Mercy Akosua Tegbe of Hohoe for providing me with a tape recording of this song. Interview with Mercy Akosua Tegbe, 19 Sept. 2000.

[43] Translation by Richard Banibensu.

[44] Nkrumah used this phrase in the 1951 CPP manifesto, *Towards the Goal*. D. Austin, *Politics in Ghana, 1946–60* (London, 1964), 131.

[45] J. F. Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly* (New York, 1993).

[46] D. A. Chapman, a founder-member of the All Ewe Conference and later cabinet secretary to Nkrumah, informed me that Antor 'just wanted to be prime minister of an independent Togoland, but it was selfish because he was not qualified'. Interview with D. A. Chapman, Nyaho Clinic, Greater Accra, 21 Sept. 2000.

defensive element: a reunified and independent Togoland state was per-
ceived as a necessary safeguard against a return to the suffering, exploitation
and servitude experienced in the past. This was alluded to in the following
song:

> Togoviwoe, mis'abləɖe gə me,
> Abləɖe gəme nye bena
> Dəkuisinənə
> Fukpekpewo nu ava yi.[47]
>
> Children of Togo, understand freedom
> What freedom means is
> Independence
> All suffering will be over.[48]

Here, *dəkuisinənə* (political autonomy) is presented not as equivalent to
'freedom' (*abləɖe*), but rather as a means to achieve it. This emphasis on
'autonomy', or 'standing alone', captures not only the desire of reunifica-
tionists to end the disadvantageous association of British Togoland with the
Gold Coast, but also a desire to protect Togolanders against the condition of
being 'unfree'. And to the reunificationists, becoming a marginal member
of another household amounted to a form of servitude.[49]

The Ewe word *abləɖe* translates roughly as 'freedom', and was certainly
used as a straightforward response to the CPP's English-language slogan.
Missionary Westermann's dictionary, however, is suggestive of the historical
implications of the Ewe term. While *abləɖenyenye* is translated as *das Freisein*
(the state of being free) and *abləɖenyinənə* as *Freiheit* (freedom), *abləɖe* itself
is likened to *Stand des Freien* (the free-born strata). Similarly, Westermann
indicated that an *abləɖeme* is a *Freigeborener* (free-born person), while a *kluvi*
is someone born into servitude.[50] The choice of the slogan *Abləɖe!* – as
opposed to any of the similar Ewe terms that denote freedom in its more
abstract sense – may indicate that reunificationist calls for 'freedom' were
invoking memories of being 'unfree' or 'subservient'.

Thirty years before scholars began to deconstruct the notion of ethnicity
in Africa, reunificationists were arguing that their identity was not simply
ascribed, but was also developed. Written texts focused overtly on the
historical circumstances of German missionary activity and German colonial
occupation. But both oral and written texts alluded to experiences in the
precolonial period. An authoritative academic text on the precolonial history
of the areas that became southern British Togoland's reunificationist

[47] Tape-recording of song provided by Gladys Akoli, Taviefe, 31 Aug. 2000.
[48] Translation by Richard Banibensu.
[49] A. A. Perbi, *A History of Indigenous Slavery in Ghana from the 15th to the 19th
Century* (Accra, 2004), 1–12, provides a summary of scholarly debates over the definition
and practice of slavery and servitude within Africa, and a comparison of Twi and Ewe
terms corresponding to 'servant', 'pawn', 'slave' and 'war captive'.
[50] D. Westermann, *Wörterbuch der Ewe-Sprache I* (Berlin, 1905); *Wörterbuch der Ewe-
Sprache II* (Berlin, 1906); and, with G. Dauble, *Biblia alo nonlo kokoe la le evegbe me*
(Bremen, 1931), I Korintotowo, ch. 7, v. 22. I am grateful to Professor J. D. Y. Peel for
encouraging me to look for references to freedom and slavery in the Ewe Bible.

heartland is yet to be written.[51] Nonetheless, examinations of the histories of the better-documented neighbouring states, along with early missionary and traveller accounts, have made it possible for scholars to discern some key aspects of the precolonial experience of the peoples of this area that may have influenced understandings of freedom, independence and development in the mid-1950s.

First, there was no established tradition of centralized political authority comparable to that of the precolonial Akan (Twi-speaking) states of the Gold Coast. As Nugent notes, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the future Ho and Kpandu districts had been populated by waves of migrants, including the Ewe-speakers from the east, and people from the coast and the west who were fleeing the armies of Akwamu.[52]

Second, during the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, these migrant peoples were subjected to invasions and to varying degrees of economic exploitation and political control by states (Anlo, Kwahu Dukoman, and particularly Akwamu) which themselves became drawn into subordinate relationships with Asante.[53] The people of the future Ho and Kpandu districts were tribute-paying subjects of Twi-speaking states for almost two centuries.

Third, resistance in 1833 was punished between 1869 and 1871, when Asante armies crossed the Volta, not in order to establish a rigorous system of administration, but with the specific intention of capturing large numbers of slaves.[54] This invasion, as Lynne Brydon demonstrates, had a 'cataclysmic effect', disrupting trade networks and leaving the region depopulated and prone to famine.[55]

Fourth, scholars have noted that Germany was able to establish its colony of Togo in the gap between the weakened African conquest states of Asante

[51] The experiences and strategies of the precolonial coastal Anlo Ewe (who were first colonized as part of the Gold Coast rather than German Togo) are considered in S. Greene, *Gender, Ethnicity and Social Change on the Upper Slave Coast: A History of the Anlo Ewe* (Portsmouth NH, 1996), and in E. K. Akyeampong, *Between the Sea and the Lagoon: An Eco-Social History of the Anlo of Southeastern Ghana c. 1850 to Recent Times* (Athens OH, 2001). Scholars may have been deterred from studying the precolonial history of the inland Ewe groups considered here by the fragmentary and dispersed nature of written sources, and the language skills that would be required to piece written and oral sources together.

[52] Nugent, *Smugglers, Secessionists and Loyal Citizens*, 17; Greene, *Gender, Ethnicity and Social Change*, 24–5; J. K. Fynn, *Asante and its Neighbours 1700–1807* (London, 1971), 21; N. Gayibor (ed.), *Le peuplement du Togo: état actuel des connaissances historiques* (Lomé, 1996), 86–91; R. Sprigge, 'Eweland's Adangbe: an inquiry into an oral tradition', *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, 10 (1969), 87–128.

[53] Fynn, *Asante and its Neighbours*, 70; I. Wilks, *Asante in the Nineteenth Century: The Structure and Evolution of a Political Order* (Cambridge, 1975) 25; R. Kea, 'Akwamu–Anlo relations, c. 1750–1813', *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, 10 (1969), 33–6.

[54] C. Welman, *The Native States of the Gold Coast Part I* (London, 1969), 10–12; M. Johnson, 'Ashanti east of the Volta', *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, 8 (1965), 33–59; D. Maier, 'Asante war aims in the 1869 invasion of Ewe', *Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural Science*, 65 (1987), 232–44.

[55] L. Brydon, 'Catastrophe, colonialism and change east of the Volta' (paper delivered to the African Studies Association conference, Boston, 30 Oct. to 2 Nov. 2003), 2, 4–8.

and Dahomey.[56] It was during a period of 'reconstruction' of agriculture and trade in the last quarter of the nineteenth century that the German-speaking missionaries re-established stations east of the Volta and introduced both training in craftsmanship and literacy in local languages. It was in the first decade of the twentieth century that the German colonial administration made serious efforts to increase production for export and to direct trade away from coastal settlements in the British zone and towards their port at Lomé.[57]

The point here is not that further microstudies would expose any direct correlation between an uncontested collective memory of Asante invasion or German colonization and communal voting patterns in 1954 or 1956. Clearly, there were some localities where precolonial experiences of enslavement did not result in votes for the Togoland Congress.[58] The point is that the precolonial and early colonial experience of the Ho and Kpandu districts created references which influenced the presentation, interpretation and evaluation of the political options that were available in the mid-1950s. Support for a restoration of the German borders – that is, for a reunified Togoland – did not stem from rose-tinted recollections of German administration.[59] Rather, reunificationists tapped into (but did not necessarily monopolize) a broader, and sometimes unspoken, acknowledgement of previous marginality and servitude, and identified more openly the material benefits that had derived from finally having a state of one's own. As one reunificationist supporter put it:

I can't tell you the atrocities that the Germans did to our people who couldn't pay their taxes. We used to say … 'Death is better than a German prison' … But one thing about the Germans … in thirty years they developed the country so fast that they had put a telephone in Yendi.[60]

While reunificationists were persuaded of the need for an independent Togoland state, they were also aware of serious practical obstacles that might reduce individual and community prospects of material advancement:

The problem was that the other side of Togo [French Togoland] is two thirds and we [British Togoland] are only one third. When we join, which language are we to take? … If you wanted to go to Nkrumah [support integration], people would say, 'You are bad, you are unpatriotic, you want to throw your country to the Gold Coast!' But then, if you wanted to join with Togo [support reunification] others will say, 'What? You want your children to go to school to learn French, to start from scratch while the French Togolanders are running ahead of you?'[61]

The complex and mutually exclusive nature of such calculations precluded any straightforward process by which reunificationist leaders in southern British Togoland could construct a national identity on behalf of their

[56] Nugent, *Smugglers, Secessionists and Loyal Citizens*, 22, citing Wilks, *Asante in the Nineteenth Century*, 57, and Johnson, 'Ashanti east of the Volta', 57.
[57] Brydon, 'Catastrophe, colonialism and change', 8–14.
[58] Nkonya is a case in point.
[59] As suggested in Brown, 'Politics in the Kpandu area of Ghana', 240–1.
[60] Interview with Revd. E. T. Adiku, Hohoe, 14 Sept. 2000. Yendi was situated in the far north of British Togoland; see map.
[61] Interview with Revd. E. T. Adiku, Hohoe, 13 Sept. 2000.

followers, either by lumping together at a territorial level a series of local disputes, or by presenting a clear-cut case based on material self-interest. Togoland reunification was not a neat or convenient solution. The study of propaganda renders the strength and prevalence of reunificationist feeling comprehensible because it reveals that the engagement between leaders and supporters was predicated, at least in part, on a historically created and widely shared suspicion of unfavourable incorporation into larger political units.

ECLECTICISM, ENLIGHTENMENT AND EXCHANGE

Orality and literacy, English and Ewe

It is perhaps unsurprising that there are so many congruities between the arguments, assumptions and idioms of written and oral propaganda texts. For over a decade, scholarly work on African texts has questioned whether literacy can be treated simply as a technology that has the universal effect of prompting transitions in epistemological and ontological systems. Now, instead, there has been growing interest in how oral norms affect people's engagement with literacy in specific social contexts.[62] In Ghana, the chief's linguist (Twi: ɔkyeame; Ewe: tsiame) provides one possible model of how language ought to be used in discussion of, and thus writing about, political affairs. The role of the linguist is to 'interpret': through his facility with language, he can convey criticism or dissent in an elegant and indirect manner that will not jeopardize the honour of the stool (the chief's office) or the unity of the people who recognize its authority. Similarly, the linguist enhances the chief's authority by presenting his comments as the product of reflection, consultation and consensus.[63]

This may explain why reunificationist authors, and indeed their CPP opponents, tended to portray the conflict arising over Togoland's future as an abnormal or unnatural state of affairs. Tsekpo suggested that, by personal example and through their writings, reunificationist authors could foster harmony within the Togoland nation and reduce the 'confusion' that had been introduced by the intrusions of the CPP.[64] As Tsekpo wrote:

Our brains are divided into ten, and we are ten groups who are quarrelling. Every group is blaming the other. The author of this book will never blame any of these ten groups. We should advise and be patient with one another. We should discuss the problem, listening first to one, then to the other.[65]

He thus invoked an idealized picture of an author disseminating the consensus view that had emerged from a dignified discussion among elders.

[62] For a recent summary of these debates, see D. R. Peterson, *Creative Writing: Translation, Bookkeeping and the Work of Imagination in Colonial Kenya* (Portsmouth NH, 2004), 1–9.

[63] For a recent discussion of how state journalists assumed the role of the president's ɔkyeame in the 1990s, see K. Yankah, *Free Speech in Traditional Society: The Cultural Foundations of Communication in Contemporary Ghana* (Accra, 1998), 26–7; J. Hasty, *The Press and Political Culture in Ghana* (Bloomington, 2005), 62–70.

[64] 'Confusion' is still a popular term in Ghana (including the areas that were previously southern British Togoland), and is frequently used to describe situations of conflict and disagreement, thus implying that harmony and consensus are more natural conditions.

[65] Tsekpo, *Togo Nukae Hiawo?* 5.

Although Asare was writing in English, some features of his text tally with Kwesi Yankah's description of how oral appeals were presented to a chief and elders: by treating a chief and his office with respect, a petitioner could place upon the chief an obligation to justify this respect by finding a wise and just solution to the dispute at hand.[66] In criticizing the colonial administering authorities for failing to respond to the findings of the 1949 and 1952 Visiting Missions (which had come to meet with Togolanders face-to-face), Asare also recalled the United Nations' ultimate responsibilities as an arbiter and a guarantor of justice.[67] The Togolanders were thus implicitly likened to an unfortunate people suffering at the hands of a malevolent sub-chief who was subverting the righteous recommendations of a higher authority. Reunificationists sought the right to speak directly to the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly because they believed that this was the most effective means by which they could draw the attention of the United Nations to the delaying tactics employed by the colonial administering authorities in the Trusteeship Council.[68]

This faith in the ultimate primacy of the face-to-face encounter is an interesting aspect of the mixture of unconscious influences and strategic appeals that characterize reunificationist propaganda. Reunificationists treated the face-to-face presentation at the United Nations as a culmination of, not an alternative to, the mastery of written English and of United Nations documents and procedure. These skills, and their conscientious deployment, were necessary for the preparation of a credible and authentic case: the petition was the document that would open the door for a truly compelling physical appearance. Authors thus made a conscious effort to engage with United Nations' delegates on the terms that they believed would best enhance understanding of and sympathy for the reunificationist cause. Asare, for example, made legalistic claims in citing large chunks of the United Nations charter, and demonstrated his knowledge of world history in comparing the Togoland question with other cases in which the rights of small nations to self-determination had been at stake. His educational achievements are further reflected in the academic format and tone of his work.[69] Similarly, Antor seized on an opportunity to attack his opponents' credibility and authenticity by pointing out that the Togolanders who backed

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[66] K. Yankah, *Free Speech in Traditional Society: The Cultural Foundations of Communication in Contemporary Ghana* (Accra, 1998), 26. Yankah, however, has tended to suggest that the use of English in Ghanaian media and political institutions may exclude or inhibit the traditional restraints on free speech. In other words, the choice of language, not simply the mode of transmission, alters style.

[67] Asare, *Case for a Reunited Togoland*, 11–13.

[68] Their CPP opponents complained that the reunificationists had indeed won a more favourable response through their early appearances at the United Nations. Collier, '*Ablɔɖe*', 200.

[69] Asare structured his narrative into an introduction, six chapters and a synopsis. The author's voice was minimal: chapter headings took the passive form, and, even when explicitly introducing his own agenda, Asare opted for an academic vocabulary, using expressions such as 'Our thesis here'. *Case for a Reunited Togoland*, 3, 8. As a member of the New York bar, Asare had significantly higher qualifications than all the other major reunificationist spokesmen and representatives.

the CPP had been coached for their United Nations' appearances, whereas reunificationists had mustered their own intellectual resources.[70]

Reading, writing and responsibility

These resources, however, were valued for much more than their strategic use in opening the door for the face-to-face representation of Togoland interests in outside bodies. Authors also suggested that linguistic and literary abilities conferred upon them both a moral responsibility to represent truthfully the situation to foreigners abroad, and a didactic responsibility to raise the level of political debate at home. It was through the exercise of these responsibilities that leaders and spokesmen asserted their claim to articulate and represent the interests of the people of Togoland, and it was through face-to-face encounters that the moral and didactic responsibilities conferred by literacy were best discharged.

The processes by which an indigenous political leadership established itself in this area are interesting because, as Nugent notes, 'The striking feature of British Togoland … is that it did not have a true educated elite beyond a narrow cadre of school teachers'.[71] Whereas political leaders in both the French Togoland and the Gold Coast had often graduated from European or American universities, those in southern British Togoland had typically completed their elementary education in local mission schools and had proceeded straight to teacher training colleges. While some Roman Catholics also participated actively in the Togoland Congress, its leading and founder members (S. G. Antor, E. O. Kofi Dumoga, G. O. Awuma, F. R. Ametowobla and K. A. Ayeke) all attended schools that were established by German-speaking Pietist missionaries sent by the Bremen missionary society in the late nineteenth century. The leading and founder members of the reunification movement had also all served as teachers, pastors or catechists for a part or all of their professional careers. In the training for and exercise of these roles, they were continually using the face-to-face encounter in order to discharge the moral and didactic responsibilities conferred by literacy.

The early Bremen missionaries who transcribed and standardized the Ewe language also prioritized its use in schools, and this policy was continued by the successor (Ewe Presbyterian, later Evangelical Presbyterian) church.[72] Creative writing in Ewe was a core component of the teacher training

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[70] S. E. Olympio, S. G. Antor and A. K. Odame, letter to the Chairman of the Fourth Committee, 4 Dec. 1953, cited in Antor and Ecker (eds.), '*Most Secret*', 23.

[71] Nugent, *Smugglers, Secessionists and Loyal Citizens*, 164.

[72] In 1857, missionary Schlegel produced 'Key to the Ewe Language', an Ewe grammar and word list. This was later supplemented by Westermann's more substantial grammar and dictionary. B. Schlegel, *Schlüssel der Evhe-Sprache* (Bremen, 1857); Westermann, *Wörterbuch I*, *Wörterbuch II* and *Grammatik der Ewe-Sprache* (Berlin, 1907). These texts adopted the Ewe spoken by the Anlo of the Gold Coast as the standard form. In spite of objections from both the German colonial administration, and from students who saw the commercial uses of English, the mission conducted primary education almost exclusively in Ewe. B. N. Lawrance, 'Most obedient servants: the politics of language in German colonial Togo', *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 159 (2000), 489–524 at 498–504. EP Church middle schools also included Ewe as a compulsory part of the curriculum.

curriculum, and considerable prestige was attached to it. One Togoland Congress activist, M. K. Agbodza, recalled that, during his time at the Akropong Teacher Training College, he wrote a short story entitled *Kesinɔnu kple Yayra* (Property and blessing) which was selected by missionary teachers and sent to Thomas Nelson and Sons publishers in the UK. It was subsequently adopted as a school reader. In order to encourage further publication of Ewe texts, and select school readers from them, the EP Church formed a Literature Committee, the chairman of which was none other than teacher–catechist G. K. Tsekpo.[73]

The readership of Ewe texts also extended beyond the classroom. From the early 1930s, the EP Women's Bible Class fostered literacy in Ewe across southern British Togoland.[74] By the late 1940s, church efforts were complemented by the work of government mass education officers, who saw mother-tongue literacy as the 'opening wedge' to a much broader programme of community development through self-help projects based on agriculture and skilled manual labour.[75] In both church and government attempts to extend literacy, there was a strong emphasis on the moral and social obligations of the literate to volunteer for unpaid teaching. Indeed government programmes depended heavily on the linguistic skills, craftsmanship and musical capabilities of mission-trained Africans, and could not have reached significant numbers of potential adult students without this volunteer force.[76]

Literacy, then, was neither equivalent to, nor wholly dependent on, school education, and individuals who wrote in Ewe actively sought and easily found an adult market for their work. G. K. Tsekpo established his own printing press at Hohoe, and although he produced political propaganda in the mid-1950s, his other work included local histories of Alavanyo, farmers' almanacs, and books of proverbs.[77] In spite of this variety of genre, Ewe texts written by mission-educated teachers nearly always included a strong

[73] Interview with Revd. E. T. Adiku, Hohoe, 14 Sept. 2000, and interview with M. K. Agbodza, Santrokofi-Benua, 19 Sept. 2000.

[74] Interview with Comfort Kumatse, Amedzofe-Avatime, 22 Apr. 2004, and L. Brydon, 'A "religious encounter" in Amedzofe: women and change through the twentieth century', in T. Falola and J. D. Y. Peel (eds.), *Christianity and Social Change in Africa. Essays in Honour of J. D. Y. Peel* (Durham NC, 2005).

[75] K. Skinner, 'Mass education in the late colonial Gold Coast: improving villagers or training citizens?' (paper presented to the ASAUK Biennial Conference, London, 13–15 Sept. 2004).

[76] Estimates based on the 1948 census suggest that, in the three districts of southern British Togoland, there were 50,380 adults between the ages of 16 and 45, of whom 43,600 were illiterate, 4,880 were literate in the vernacular, and 1,900 were literate in English. Gold Coast, Department of Social Welfare, *Plan for Mass Literacy and Social Welfare* (Accra, *c*. 1951), 21–5. Data collected by mass education officers suggests that there were 4,000 adult learners registered for government mass education classes in southern British Togoland in 1949, and 28,000 adult learners in the somewhat larger Trans-Volta Togoland Region by 1952. Gold Coast, Department of Social Welfare and Community Development, *Welfare and Mass Education in the Gold Coast, 1946–1951* (Accra, *c*. 1951), 49–55 and 77, and *Literacy Campaign 1952* (Accra, 1952), 13.

[77] G. K. Tsekpo, *Bu ENu Kpo* (Lomé, 1960); *Eweduko fe Gletigbale* (Hohoe, 1950); *Ketonase* (Accra, 1953); *Minya Zɔzɔ* (Accra, 1959); *Sasadu: Nutinyagbale I* (Hohoe, 1952); *Sasadu: takpekpe adelia II* (Accra, 1954).

element of improvement, in which readers were cautioned against immoral attitudes and behaviours and were provided with alternative role models.[78] It is thus unsurprising that mission-trained authors of political propaganda regarded Ewe as an equal medium to English, and that their texts suggested that leadership based on more advanced levels of education was not merely a privilege or entitlement, but also a responsibility.

While authors were certainly keen to assert their particular claim to articulate and represent Togoland's interests, and quick to question the credibility and authenticity of their CPP opponents, their self-image also demanded that their engagement with less-educated supporters should contain a strong didactic element. Thus there was no attempt to enforce a rigid distinction between those who could access the eloquent 'strategic' arguments presented outside in English, and those who were confined to rougher but more 'authentic' arguments spoken at home in Ewe. Rather, authors such as Antor deliberately published excerpts from the case they had presented outside, and made this work available alongside Tsekpo's Ewe texts at political rallies in southern British Togoland.[79] Literate supporters regarded the impromptu translation and discussion of these texts as a key part of their contribution to the reunification movement.[80]

Reciprocity at rallies

All political activists, whatever their level of school education, agreed that facility with written and spoken English was a prerequisite in the selection of representatives for the Gold Coast Legislative Assembly and the United Nations.[81] They did not, however, regard these skills as guarantees of constancy or efficacy. Togoland Congress supporters were particularly embittered by the betrayal of two representatives who were elected to the Gold Coast Legislative Assembly as reunificationists in 1951, but defected to the CPP shortly afterwards. As one informant put it: 'Asare and them, they knew everything, and we sent them to the United Nations and everything. But leaders, you know, they just crossed the carpet, and that was why our Togoland politics was spoiled'.[82]

[78] M. K. Agbodza, *Kesinono kple Yayra* (London, 1948) (Property and blessing), was a treatise against greed. Other books were quite explicit in their attempts to use 'traditional' Ewe stories as a means of uplifting their readership. Revd. E. T. Adiku, who served as secretary of the EP Literature Committee under Tsekpo's chairmanship, co-authored a book entitled *Nufiame-Nutinyawo* – literally 'stories that teach us', i.e. proverbs – which became a school reader and was reprinted four times. E. Adiku and E. Adom, *Nufiame-Nutinyawo* (London, 1949).

[79] Tsekpo also produced some shorter Ewe pamphlets on the reunification issue (copies in author's possession). I am grateful to the late E. K. Gavu of Dzogbofeme-Avatime for providing me with examples of Tsekpo's work.

[80] Interviews with G. S. K. Adedeme, Amedzofe-Avatime, 24 July 2000 and 13 Aug. 2000.

[81] Collier, '*Ablɔɖe*' is based on approximately eighty interviews with political activists and supporters, the majority of whom were reunificationists from southern British Togoland.

[82] Interview with M. K. Asase, Ho-Dome, 20 July 2000. The two members of the Legislative Assembly who defected to the CPP were G. O. Awuma (a native of Ho and founder of the Togoland Union) and F. Y. Asare (a native of Buem, educated at Mfantsipim in Cape Coast).

Indeed, in interviews, reunificationist supporters sometimes cast themselves in the role of 'loyal foot soldiers' who, through the lottery of educational opportunities, had been forced into a dependent relationship with their more highly educated and yet unreliable peers.[83] From their point of view, literate leaders had a kind of power that was not easy to keep tabs on as it tended to be exercised in distant forums. We have already seen that literate leaders sought to appear at the United Nations as a means of countering the colonial administering authorities' circumvention of the Visiting Missions' recommendations. Similarly, political rallies back at home provided an occasion for a face-to-face encounter in which representatives' commitment and endeavour could be appraised by their supporters. During the mid-1950s, these rallies became central to the business of 'doing politics' in southern British Togoland, as indeed in other parts of the future Ghana. The rally, then, perhaps has a more general significance as a means by which ordinary people could survey and challenge the activities and decisions of untrustworthy literate forums.[84]

A former district commissioner who had been based in Kpandu in the mid-1950s recalled that there would be a rally in one of Togoland's bigger towns every month.[85] The United Nations missions that visited the trust territory in 1952 and 1955 acknowledged the importance of rallies by attending competing events organized by both the Togoland Congress and the CPP in the major towns of the southern section (Ho, Kpandu and Hohoe).[86] The Visiting Missions focused on rallies as indicators of the strength of feeling over the Togoland question, and of the large numbers of people who wished to express these feelings. Rallies, however, were also significant as sites of exchange between educated representatives and their less-educated supporters. They provided a forum for an eclectic and participatory political

[83] The term 'loyal foot soldiers' is borrowed from Allman, who describes how the radicalism of the *nkwankwaa* (commoners or young men) in Asante was constrained by their leaders and by their sense of loyalty to the Golden Stool. J. M. Allman, 'The young men and the porcupine: class, nationalism and Asante's struggle for self-determination, 1954–57', *Journal of African History*, 31, 2 (1990), 277.

[84] Rallies and mass meetings in Asante are described in Allman, *Quills of the Porcupine*, 102–4. In a slightly different context, T. C. McCaskie makes the following point: 'To this day Asante people, now long familiar with the instrumental and other advantages of literacy, persist in the view that writing is somehow inauthentic … It is felt that writing is not really the way in which to tend to the best interests of oneself, for such necessary husbandry depends upon face-to-face communication with others'. T. C. McCaskie, *Asante Identities: History and Modernity in an African Village 1850–1950* (Edinburgh, 2000), 236.

[85] Interview with David Heaton, Wimbledon, London, 5 April 2000. Heaton is a former district commissioner who was based at Kpandu in 1952–6, and then at Ho, 1956–7, where he served as assistant secretary to Krobo Edusei, the regional commissioner of the Trans-Volta Togoland Region (later renamed Volta Region).

[86] United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in West Africa, 1952, *Report on Togoland under United Kingdom Administration Together with Related Documents* (New York, 1954), 2; and United Nations Visiting Mission to the Trust Territories of Togoland under British Administration and Togoland under French Administration, 1955, *Report on Togoland under British Administration Together with Related Documents* (New York, 1956), 1–3.

culture, and ensured a degree of mutuality and reciprocity in an otherwise unequal relationship between representatives and supporters.

In particular, rallies were often called in order to collect funds to support reunificationist petitioners' travel to the United Nations in New York, and were also held to coincide with their return in order that progress could be reported.[87] By publishing the cases they had presented, and distributing copies back at home, representatives sought to persuade their supporters that they were working hard on their behalf, and thus to ensure the flow of funds that permitted the face-to-face meetings in New York that they all considered so important. Similarly, rallies provided an occasion on which leaders and representatives could demonstrate their continuing commitment to the reunificationist cause, not by enlightening their supporters through rational and informed discussion, but by participating in and leading the popular chants and songs that emphasized loyalty, courage and, above all, readiness to fight.

The political geography of southern British Togoland was important in determining the nature of rallies. Events were typically held in towns that were party strongholds, but support for the opposing party was often strong in some of the villages that lay in close proximity. Thus a rally organized by one party would often prompt the other to call for a competing event.[88] Physical identifiers of party loyalties, such as flags and women's cloths, were means of demonstrating the numerical strength of support, while chants and songs emphasized that defeat of opponents could best be manifested through their ousting from public space. Thus the reunificationist chant, 'Akoko, suie suie!' ('Cockerel [CPP], out out!') was countered by a CPP song that employed the Twi language that was widely spoken in the Gold Coast: 'I used to be *Ablɔɖe*, now I am CPP, *eye eye*' (*eye* meaning 'it is good').[89] The same former district commissioner, David Heaton, described the CPP wo-men as 'Nkrumah's secret weapon': their presence was formidable as they marched or danced, chanting, down a town's main street in their matching cloths. In this respect, the reunificationists may have been some-what disadvantaged: the superior financial resources of the CPP enabled it to bus in supporters, including those from outside the trust territory, and provide them with hospitality (in the form of free food and drink) and party cloths.[90]

In their texts, authors tended to present themselves as an educated elite that was informing and improving the political behaviour of their com-patriots, but, in the course of rallies, they appeared to be willing participants in the more aggressive chants and songs. Antor had his own particular warm-up chants, while Tsekpo, in spite of his written insistence on 'listening first to one and then to the other', was also famous for setting popular

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[87] Correspondence with E. K. Datsa of Amedzofe-Avatime, n.d. (but *c*. Nov. 1999).

[88] For example, the town of Kpandu favoured the CPP, but many nearby villages (including those of Alavanyo) were Togoland Congress strongholds. Similarly, Hohoe was a Togoland Congress stronghold, but nearby villages (such as those in Nkonya) favoured the CPP.   [89] Interview with David Heaton, London, 5 Apr. 2000.

[90] Interview in Ewe with 'Nyɔnufia' (Queenmother) Mama Adomwa I and elders (all former CPP supporters), Anyirawase-Awudome, 19 July 1999, translation by Lydia Osei Brantuo.

reunificationist chants to music from the Ewe Hymn Book.[91] While the United Nations Visiting Missions recognized the significance of rallies, their attendance was cut short on at least one occasion due to the risk of violence. Colonial administrators contended that the 'danger of disorder' was 'very great indeed'.[92]

<div align="center">CONCLUSION</div>

Political life in southern British Togoland was both eclectic and participatory in the mid-1950s. Male and female farmers, artisans, traders and a variety of others with little or no school education were far from confined to a simplistic discourse based on exclusionist ethnic sentiment. Indeed, some explicitly rejected ethnicity and used chant and song to assert alternative identities and political preferences that were influenced by historical experience as much as by calculations of local or individual material interests. Their inability to read, write and speak English left many supporters dependent on more highly educated figures to represent them to outside bodies, but, for much of the year, these figures were not living in Accra and participating in some distant urban civil society. Rather, they were living in small towns and villages, and participating in, rather than directing, a popular political culture in which the Ewe language, in both its written and spoken forms, served as a medium for a wide spectrum of sentiments and arguments. While Bremen mission-school education and broader attempts to teach literacy in this area bequeathed some distinctive features to the relationships between representatives and supporters of Togoland reunification, these features worked in tandem with an acceptance of the primacy of the face-to-face encounter. Here, as perhaps in other parts of the future Ghana, rallies were regarded by literate and illiterate alike as an indispensable part of the work of political mobilization and political representation.

The mid-1950s may have been a singular period. Nugent has pointed out that, in spite of majority support for reunification in the 1950s and an outbreak of secessionist activity in the 1970s, the southern Togoland 'periphery' has become surprisingly well integrated with the Ghanaian 'centre' since independence in 1957. This he partly attributes to the general expansion of educational opportunities in the former trust territory in the 1960s, and to the particular emergence of a new elite whose careers were launched from institutions of higher education and professional training in Ghana.[93] Doubtless, the former Togoland constituencies have indeed participated in

[91] David Heaton described how Antor would rouse the crowd by shouting 'Ablɔɖe' with ever increasing volume, shifting the stress from the first syllable to the second and then the third. According to a former Togoland Congress activist, the most important Ablɔɖe song that was not invented by women was Togo fe Ablɔɖe, which was Tsekpo's adaptation of Ewe Hymn Book No. 340. Telephone conversation with Kofi Kodzi, Edmonton, London, 5 May 2003.

[92] United Nations Visiting Mission, 1952, Report on Togoland under United Kingdom Administration, 4. This occurred in Jasikan, a non-Ewe-speaking town in the cocoa-growing area north of Hohoe. The Visiting Mission had intended to visit a cooperative but curtailed its itinerary 'when it observed that the two rival factions were beginning to demonstrate and grow rowdy'. Also, interview with David Heaton, London, 5 Apr. 2000.   [93] Smugglers, Secessionists and Loyal Citizens, 219–20.

the broader African pattern of selecting representatives with the necessary skills and contacts to stake out for their home communities claims to the resources and opportunities controlled by the central state. Nonetheless, as tertiary qualifications and professional experience have become more accepted as prerequisites to parliamentary candidacy, there may also have been an increasing gap in education and in lifestyle between representatives and those who elected them, and an attendant diminution in possibilities for meaningful participation, accountability and exchange.[94]

[94] Other scholars have also indicated the potential significance of the expansion of university education in the years following independence. See, for example, S. Geiger, *TANU Women: Gender and Culture in the making of Tanganyikan Nationalism, 1955–1965* (Portsmouth NH, 1997), 166, 179–83 and 189–201.