

## **WHAT IS IN A FLAG? THE SWASTIKA AND TOGOLAND NATIONALISM**

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### **Abstract**

Flags were important symbols in the acquisition of colonies in Africa since 1884. Karl Peters and two colleagues went to Zanzibar in 1884 with 'a number of German flags and treaty forms and hoisted the flags at Mbuzini'.<sup>1</sup> In 1886, the British governor in the Gold Coast Colony distributed flags to Krepi chiefs who signed the Krepi bond of 1886. This article adds to our knowledge on the appropriation of symbols in colonial situations in Africa and elucidates the influence of Nazi ideology on the Togoland Congress in its fight against the integration of the Trust Territory into the Gold Coast. The flying of the Swastika by the Togoland Congress was a controversial incident which has not received attention from scholars but which offers an opportunity to re-examine the political views of Togoland from a new perspective. Most scholars who worked on British Togoland focused their research mainly on post World War 1 histories of the region. Yet most of the historical processes of the post-World War 1 era actually started in the second half of the nineteenth century with the formal German colonization of the territory.

### **Résumé**

Les drapeaux ont été des symboles importants dans l'acquisition de colonies en Afrique depuis 1884. Dr. Karl Peters et ses deux autres collègues sont allés à Zanzibar en 1884 avec «un certain nombre de drapeaux allemands et traités et ils ont hissé les drapeaux à un endroit appelé Mbuzini». En 1886, le gouverneur britannique de la Côte-de-l'Or (Gold Coast) distribua des drapeaux au chefs Krepi qui signèrent le traité de protectorat de Krepi de 1886. Cet article ajoute à notre connaissance sur l'appropriation des symboles pendant l' époque coloniale en Afrique et clarifie l'influence de l'idéologie nazie sur le Congrès de Togoland dans sa lutte contre l'intégration du Territoire sous tutelle au sein de la Côte-de-l'Or. Le flottement de la croix gammée par le Congrès de Togoland fût un incident controversé qui n'a pas reçu l'attention des

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<sup>1</sup> R. N. Lyne, 'Germany's Claim to Colonies: The African Mandates', *Journal of the Royal African Society*, Vol. 38 (April, 1939), p. 257.

chercheurs, mais qui offre l'occasion de réexaminer les opinions politiques des habitants du Togoland sous un nouvel angle. La plupart des chercheurs qui ont travaillé sur le Togoland britannique ont principalement mis l'accent sur l'histoire de la région après la première guerre mondiale. Pourtant, la plupart des processus historiques de l'après-guerre ont effectivement commencé dans la deuxième partie du dix-neuvième siècle par l'officialisation de la colonisation allemande du territoire.

## Introduction

The immediate problem that confronted the British and the French following the defeat and subsequent withdrawal of Germans from Togoland in 1914 was how to prevent the return of Germany to Togoland and how to purge Britain's newly acquired territories of German ideology and philosophy. American President Woodrow Wilson and other anti-imperialist elements in Europe had worked to ensure that all former German colonies came under the League of Nations' Mandate. Consequently, Britain and France had to administer former German territories within a framework of international supervision and responsibility under the aegis of a Permanent Mandate Commission (PMC). The terms of the Mandate were clear: the mandatory powers were not granted with sovereign authority over the mandated territories.<sup>2</sup> The mandate, however, took a long time to come into effect due in large measure to delay in finalising the boundary demarcation between British and French spheres of Togoland.<sup>3</sup> The final demarcation confined Britain to a landlocked area of about 40 miles wide and 320 miles long. Thus the former German colony remained under the Mandate until 1946 when it became a Trust Territory under the United Nations' Trusteeship, following the dismantling of the League of Nations.

One of the arguments put forward by Britain in seeking the mandate to administer a portion of Togoland was the desirability of uniting people of the same ethnic origin.<sup>4</sup> However, an attempt to form an ethnically coherent boundary between the British and the French spheres of Togoland resulted in unifying only the Dagomba kingdom in the northern sector. In southern British Togoland, dominated by the

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<sup>2</sup> Andrew J. Crozier, 'The Establishment of the Mandate System, 1919-25: Some Problems Created by the Paris Peace Conference', *Journal of Contemporary History* (1979), p. 486.

<sup>3</sup> The Boundary Protocol was issued in 1929.

<sup>4</sup> NA CO96/702/4, Governor of the Gold Coast to Sir Philip Cunliffe, Secretary of State for the Colonies, 23 January 1932.

Ewe sub-group, no such unification was achieved. This became a source of resentment and disenchantment, particularly among the Ewe who came under British Mandated Togoland. Since 1914, German educated Togo-landers tried to mobilise the collective experience of the former German subjects to create a Togoland identity and to inspire Togoland nationalism. The British sought to tackle the problem by speeding up the integration of British Togoland into the Gold Coast. In 1949, the process was moved a step further with the proposal by the British colonial government to create the Trans-Volta Togoland Region which would bring the inhabitants of British Togoland and the Gold Coast Ewe areas together in a regional body.<sup>5</sup> Ostensibly, the creation of such a body was to make it easier to resist pressure in future for the unification of the British and French Togolands. The protests and violence aroused by the integrationist policy have been dealt with in all the standard narratives on the Togoland unification problem. What this article seeks to do is to discuss the adoption of the Swastika by the Togoland nationalists in their fight against the policy to integrate British Togoland into the Gold Coast. The incident invites us to look more specifically at how European ideologies influenced African nationalists.

### **A History of the Swastika**

The Swastika has a long history of usage which pre-dated the emergence of Nazism.<sup>6</sup> The origin of the Swastika is clouded in obscurity but the word is known to be of Sanskrit origin and means 'well being'; but, of course, it has many meanings and interpretations because its original form went through changes over time.<sup>7</sup> In other words, many patterns of the Swastika evolved since its first appearance in the Oriental world in pre-historic times. From the Orient, the symbol spread to many other cultures throughout the world, including Africa, Europe, and the Americas where it was used for religious and ornamental purposes. It was said to be one of the most ancient symbols associated with the

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<sup>5</sup> The proposal was contained in the Coussey Committee Report of 1949 on the future political direction of the Gold Coast.

<sup>6</sup> The Swastika is also known as the 'gammate cross', 'gammadion' or 'Flyfot'. See Thomas Wilson, *The Swastika; The Earliest Known Symbol and Its Migrations with Observations on the Migration of Historic Times* (Delhi, 1973), p. iii and iv.

<sup>7</sup> The most comprehensive research on the Swastika is in Wilson, *The Swastika*; Steve Kasher, 'The Art of Hitler', *The MIT Press*, vol. 59 (1992).

worship of the sun.<sup>8</sup> The Akan cultural regions of Ghana had ornaments and regalia with various forms and shapes of the Swastika symbol. The popular *adinkra* cloth worn by chiefs and the affluent in Ghana has the Swastika as one of its prominent symbols. A particular form of the symbol associated with the kings of Asante was circular compared to the European one which was a square. The European form had the arms of the design bent at right angles in a clockwise direction while that of the Akan had the arms pointing to the left in anti-clockwise direction. It is generally known among the Akans as *Okore-namtam* which means ‘eagle’s feet’; but the Asantes call it *Nkontimsefuopuaa*.<sup>9</sup> The young girls who attended to the Queen Mother of Asante at the *Manhyia* palace in Kumasi normally designed their hair in the circular form of the Swastika to signify purity and integrity.<sup>10</sup>



The Akan circular form of the Swastika associated with the *Manhyia* palace.<sup>11</sup>

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the European form of the Swastika assumed commercial importance in the Akan gold economy; most gold weights were embossed with different shapes of the angular form of the Swastika.<sup>12</sup> A team of researchers at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon, gave the commercial name of the angular form of the Swastika as *fihankra*

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> See Rattray, R. S. *Religion and Art in Ashanti*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (1927, pp 265); *Daily Graphic*, 8 August 1951, p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> Rattray (1927: 265); *Daily Graphic*, 8 August 1951, p. 1.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Kwame Amoah Labi and Boachie-Ansah (2008: 21).

which suggested the symbol also had some commercial and spiritual protective value.<sup>13</sup>



Various patterns of European Swastika embossed on gold weights used in Akan Gold producing areas in pre-colonial era.

Source: Institute of African Studies Museum, University of Ghana, Legon.

In the early twentieth century, Hitler's Nazi adopted a particular form of the Swastika described by J. B. Danquah, a leading Gold Coast intellectual and politician, as a 'mongrel in religious symbolism'.<sup>14</sup>



The Nazi flag showing the Swastika as the main symbol. Source: Google.

Hitler used the Swastika (after some modifications) as the emblem of the National Socialist Germany because he linked the symbol, which he considered to be a sign of prosperity and victory, to the Aryan race.<sup>15</sup> His desire was to promote Hellenic

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<sup>13</sup> Various patterns of the Swastika (*fihankra*) embossed on gold weights are still on display at the Institute of African Studies Museum, Legon.

<sup>14</sup> *Daily Graphic*, 8 August, 1951.

<sup>15</sup> Wilson, *The Swastika*, p. xiii. The design of the Nazi form of the Swastika is accredited to Hitler himself. See Steve Kasher, 'The Art of Hitler', Vol. 59, *The MIT Press* (winter, 1992), p. 49.

and Germanic cultural identity.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, the first decades of the twentieth century signified the promotion of Aryan ethnic identity through the writings of Germanic and Australian scholars.<sup>17</sup> To Hitler, the Swastika was central to the creation of the supposedly 'Aryan cultural identity'; a movement that sought to promote racial and cultural purification and restoration of Aryan antiquity. Consequently, the Swastika, which used to be a benign symbol of life and sun in Germany, then assumed 'emblematic' status signifying anti-Semitism in Hitler's Germany from 1935.<sup>18</sup> All this crystallised into radical Nazi ideology which was founded on what Hauner has called 'a mixture of social Darwinism and of pathological anti-Semitism', an ideology that held the view that the Aryan race was predestined to rule over all races.<sup>19</sup> The Swastika, and the Nazi ideology associated with it, held sway in Germany until 1945 when it was proscribed by the Allies; then in 1946 the Nazi party itself was declared a criminal organisation.

In 1950, years after the Swastika ceased to be a national emblem in Germany, the Togoland Congress (TC), an umbrella organisation which spear-headed the fight against the integration of British Togoland into the Gold Coast, adopted the symbol as a political tool in the fight for the unification of Togoland as the Gold Coast moved tumultuously towards independence. The reasons behind the adoption of the Swastika by the TC and the British colonial government's reaction to the issue constitute the main thrust of this article.

### **Togoland/Ewe Nationalism**

Togoland nationalism is the growing awareness among the different ethnic groups in the former German Togo of their shared colonial experience and, for that matter, a common identity.<sup>20</sup> In other words, Togoland nationalism was a discourse that sought to mobilise the collective identity of the inhabitants of the former German colony as a basis for promoting Togoland unification.<sup>21</sup> This nationalist fervour started in the early 1900s when the Bremen missionaries

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<sup>16</sup> For the emergence of the notion of Germanicism in Hitler's Germany, see Bernard Mees, 'Hitler and Germanentum', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 39(2) (2004), p. 265.

<sup>17</sup> Mees, 'Hitler and Germanentum', p. 265.

<sup>18</sup> Quote taken from Mees, 'Hitler and Germanentum', p. 255. For a detailed discussion of the significance of the Swastika, see Kasher, 'The Art of Hitler', p. 49.

<sup>19</sup> Milan Hauner (1978).

<sup>20</sup> Yayoh (2010: 22).

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

promoted the Ewe language as a medium of instruction through the school and church systems. The process was aided by the translation of the Bible into Ewe in 1915.<sup>22</sup> In fact, the Ewe Bible, in the words of Lawrance, provided the ‘Ewe subgroups a mutual intelligibility on which they could build cultural, political and social objectives’.<sup>23</sup>

When the Germans were expelled from Togoland following the end of the First World War, an independent Ewe Church emerged by the 1920s in line with the idea mooted by the Bremen Mission in 1911 to train the natives to become independent of Europeans.<sup>24</sup> By the late 1920s, the church had developed and begun taking over most of the responsibilities of the German Mission following a gradual increase in the number of indigenes trained as pastors and deacons. Most of the indigenous pastors, who had been trained in Germany, were exposed to ideas of nationalism and on their return, they became active advocates of Ewe / Togoland nationalism. Skinner demonstrates how the Bremen Mission trained teachers who later became founding members of the Togoland unification movement in the late 1940s.<sup>25</sup> She notes in particular, S. G. Antor, E. O. Kofi Dumoga, and G. O. Awuma, F. R. Ametowobla and K. A. Ayeke who had served at various times as pastors, catechists or teachers. Iliffe, who referred to education as ‘the chief dynamic of colonial change’, cited Ewe as one of the ethnic groups which embraced missionary education in the 1900s.<sup>26</sup> In effect the church was instrumental in shaping Ewe identity and promoting nationalism among Togolandese.

Similarly, a good number of these German educated Togolandese belonged to the League of German Togolandese, also known as *Bund der Deutsch Togolandese*, founded by the Germans during their period of occupation of Togoland.<sup>27</sup> In 1925 the group was reorganised by some Togolandese in Accra with the objectives of

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<sup>22</sup> Debrunner (1965: 132-136).

<sup>23</sup> Lawrance (2007: 123).

<sup>24</sup> Debrunner, *A Church*, p. 132.

<sup>25</sup> Skinner, ‘Reading, Writing and Rallies’, p. 141. Welch recounts the conscious effort made by the church to create Ewe unity. See Welch Claude Emerson, *Dreams of Unity: Pan-Africanism and Political Unification in West Africa* (Ithaca, 1966), p. 43-48.

<sup>26</sup> John Iliffe, *Africans: The History of a Continent* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 229.

<sup>27</sup> PRO CO 96/719/3, League of German Togolandese (Bund der Deutsch-Togolandese) Circular, Accra, 19 December 1925; PRO CO 96/7/751/8, Petition to the League of Nation by the Bund. (Not Dated).

establishing a close contact with Germany and undertaking to represent Togoland at the League of Nations.<sup>28</sup> This was why the Bremen mission that had been in the territory long before the advent of German colonialists was very wary of allowing its schools to be used to teach German or ‘colonial mentality’.

This notwithstanding, pro-German feelings remained strong in the southern section of British Togoland. It will be recalled that in 1933 the Third Reich designed a programme meant to spread Nazi influence in its former colonies in Africa and to force the League of Nations to abolish the mandate.<sup>29</sup> The *Kolonialgesellschaft*, an organization formed by various pro-colonial groups in Germany in 1922, under the Nazi regime, embarked upon a campaign to promote German interest in the former colonies in Africa, to encourage Germans to visit Africa and to fight for the revision of the Versailles Treaty.<sup>30</sup> As part of its foreign policy, the Nazi regime gave assistance to Germans in the former German colonies, particularly the *Bund* and ‘the West African Plantation Company in former Togo’.<sup>31</sup> Records found at the UN showed that the Hitler Youth Movement was engaged in systematic education of the youth in Southwest Africa (now Namibia) on Nazi ideology with the hope that the territory would be given back to Germany.<sup>32</sup> It is on record that Hitler had difficulty accepting the defeat of Germany in the First World War.<sup>33</sup> On 28 April 1939, Hitler delivered a speech to the Reichstag in which he said, ‘the only claim I have made, and shall continue to make, on England is that for a return of our colonies’.<sup>34</sup> Interestingly, Hitler considered Cameroon and Togo to be of no economic value to Britain, but he found them to be ‘of vital importance to Germany’.<sup>35</sup> The West African Plantation Company in German Togoland continued to receive support from the Nazi. This was in line with Hitler’s avowed aim of exerting ‘increasing political and

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<sup>28</sup> PRO CO 96/719/3, League of German Togoland, 1925

<sup>29</sup> Barron, Sampthe L. (ed.). *The Nazi Influence into Germany's Lost African Colonial Empire: Lost Documents on the Third Reich*, Vol. 2, Salisbury, N. C., (1978) p. i.

<sup>30</sup> Mary E. Townsend, ‘The German Colonies and the Third Reich’, *Political Science Quarterly*, No. 2 (1938), p. 188-193.

<sup>31</sup> Townsend, ‘German Colonies’, p. 200.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Milan Hauner, ‘Did Hitler Want a World Dominion? *Journal of Contemporary History*, No. 1 January, 1978), p. 17.

<sup>34</sup> Quote taken from R. N. Lyne, ‘Germany’s Claim to Colonies: The African Mandates, *Journal of the Royal African Society*, No. 151, (1939), p. 280.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.



economic pressure with an aim towards forcing the League of Nations to end the mandates, thereby returning these colonies to Germany'.<sup>36</sup>

After 1937, the Third Reich continued the policy of pushing for the restoration of her lost colonies; and that demand was made more forcefully during the great depression to the point that it became an issue for debate in the British parliament.<sup>37</sup> British public opinion began to be swayed by reports in the British press in favour of some concessions to be given to Germany. In fact, Viscount Samuel in the House of Lords called for some consideration to be given to the return of Germany's former colonies along with the elimination of the war guilt.<sup>38</sup> In Tanganyika, there were speculations in the 1930s that the mandate was a temporary measure and that the Germans would eventually return to the territory. This prompted large agricultural companies, such as the Indian sisal company, to sell their lands with the excuse that the future political direction of the territory was not certain.<sup>39</sup> On 17 July 1943, the Hitler Youth Movement was banned in Southwest Africa for what the Advisory Council of the Mandated Territory of South West Africa referred to as 'subversive activities' carried out by the movement.<sup>40</sup> Its leader, Captain von Losnitzer, was ordered to leave the territory within seven days.<sup>41</sup> All this shows the influence of Hitlerism in the former German colonies in Africa; a crucial factor in the promotion of Togoland nationalism.

In addition Collier's analysis of the impact of adult education on the territory from 1947 to 1966 shows how those inhabitants who benefited from such programmes offered by the University College of the Gold Coast came back to the Trust Territory with ideas of nationalism.<sup>42</sup> The curriculum of the programme reflected political developments in the Gold Coast at the time.<sup>43</sup> Kate Collier noted the

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<sup>36</sup> Barron (ed.), *The Nazi in Africa* (Salisbury N. C., 1978), p. i.

<sup>37</sup> Townsend, 'German Colonies', 188-203.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, p. 203.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, p. 20

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Katherine Alexandria Collier, '*Ablode*': Networks, Ideas and Performance in Togoland Politics, 1950-2001, PhD Thesis (University of Birmingham, 2002), p. 123-155.

<sup>43</sup> Details of the subjects taught under the Adult Education programme can be found in Rhodes House Library, Oxford [hereafter, RHL], NSS. Afr. S. 1877, Papers of Lalage Bown, 3 May 1953. See also Collier, '*Ablode*', p. 127.

contact between Togoland participants in the Adult Education programme and leaders of the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) and concluded that the formation of an alliance of political leaders in the southern section of British Togoland was attributable in part to the Adult Education programme.<sup>44</sup> There 'was a clear determination to prevent Togoland's fledging elite from being submerged within that of the Gold Coast'.<sup>45</sup>

By the 1940s this Togoland national consciousness began to provide outlet for the formation of voluntary organizations and the crystallization of quasi-political parties which transcended territorial divisions, particularly in the southern section of British Togoland. The emergence of these nationalist movements reached new heights by the 1950s as the Gold Coast began to witness tumultuous political change. The most important of these quasi-political groupings were the All-Ewe Conference (AEC) formed in 1946, the Togoland Union in 1947 and the Togoland Congress in 1960. The All-Ewe Conference started as Ewe Union in Accra in 1943. Membership of the group was fairly representative of educated people from all parts of Eweland including Peki, Anlo and Ewes from the French mandated Togoland. Nugent describes the founders of the AEC as a lobby group in Accra which sought to win the Gold Coast nationalists over in the fight for Ewe unification.<sup>46</sup> Its aim was to fight for the removal of the Anglo-French boundary drawn between British Togo and French Togo in 1922. Some of the leaders from the British side of Togoland included D. A. Chapman and Philip Gbeho from the Anlo area of the Gold Coast Colony and G. O. Awuma, Kofi Dumoga, V. O. Anku, E. Amu and S. G. Antor from the southern section of British Togoland. Those from the French mandated territory were represented by the *Comité de l'Unité Togolaise* (CUT), formed in 1938 and led by Augusto De Souza, Sylvanus Olympio and Jonathan Savi de Tove.<sup>47</sup>

The AEC's dissatisfaction had its origin in the economic inconveniences imposed on the Togoland by the different fiscal policies of the mandatory powers and by

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<sup>44</sup> Collier, 'Ablode', p. 125-126..

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* p. 155.

<sup>46</sup> For details on the activities of the AEC, see Welch (1966: 43-52); Nugent (2002: 164-74).

<sup>47</sup> Nugent, *Smugglers*, p.164. The date taken from Welch, *Dream of Unity*, p. 68.

the rigid regulations of trade across the frontier owing to the world war.<sup>48</sup> Togoland nationalist leaders exuded bravery and absolute tenacity by drawing inspirations from Gandhi's political strategy of using non-violence means to achieve their objectives.<sup>49</sup> There was also a militant youth group in French Togo called *Juventó* whose objective was to educate the youth on Togoland nationalism — the idea that Togoland was a separate political entity which should be allowed the right to govern itself. Another factor in the rise of Ewe/Togoland nationalism was the launch in May 1945 of a monthly journal known as the *Ewe Newsletter* edited by D. Chapman, one time leading member of the AEC. He started the journal as a mouthpiece of the ALL-Ewe Conference and from 1946 an Ewe-language version also appeared. This enabled it to reach out to numerous Ewe readers in both British and French Togoland. In its bid to forge Ewe consciousness and nationalism, the journal became most critical of the administering authorities.<sup>50</sup> As Skinner has shown, literacy in the Ewe language was key in mobilizing support for the unificationists.<sup>51</sup>

As the Gold Coast began to move towards independence, the need to decide on whether to join Ghana or Togoland pushed Togoland to begin to reflect on their identity. Though identity can change dramatically over time, there was still awareness in the 1940s and 1950s of the role of Anlo Ewes (in the Gold Coast Colony) in aiding Akwamu and Asante slave raiding and slave trading activities in the northern Ewe region in the nineteenth century. In 1947, E. O. Kofi Dumoga, V. O. Anku, G. O. Awuma and S. G. Antor, all from British Togoland, revived and exploited this historical rift between the northern Ewe and the Ewe of Anlo to canvass for secession of Togoland in the Trust Territory from the AEC and to form the Togoland Union. The aim of Togoland Union was Togoland unification (not Ewe unification) and it campaigned on the platform of 'Togoland for Togoland'.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Public Records and Archive Administration, Accra (PRAAD/A) ADM 39/1/339, Unification of Ewe-Speaking People, Memorandum on Administration of the Southern Section of Togoland, 1946.

<sup>49</sup> F. A. Dyke (1954: 29).

<sup>50</sup> *The Ewe Newsletter*, September, 1947, p. 1.

<sup>51</sup> Skinner (2007: 141-143).

<sup>52</sup> See Public Records Office (PRO), London, CO 96/827/3, Togoland: Minutes of Southern Togoland Council, Ho, 29-30, 1950; Dennis Austin (1964: 189); Amenumey (1996: 119).

Later in 1950, the different political groupings in the Trust Territory merged to form the Togoland Congress (TC) after a conference held in Borada in the Buem region of the southern section of British Togoland. Some non-Ewe speaking people in the Buem region and some northern Ewe supported the TC because they feared that any form of unification which would include the Gold Coast Ewes would be dominated by the latter.<sup>53</sup> The leader of the TC, S. G. Antor, spearheaded the campaign for unification of the two Togolands as an independent state.<sup>54</sup> The TC, now the umbrella organization propagating Togoland nationalism, resisted any move to bring the Ewe of the Trust Territory together with those in the Gold Coast.<sup>55</sup>

Consequently, the emergence of the TC increased the tempo of the fight for and against Togoland unification. The leaders sought to direct the enthusiasm of the largely discontented youth in the territory towards Ewe/Togoland Nationalism. This led to the growing awareness among the inhabitants of their special status under the UN Trusteeship arrangement and that they had the option not to be integrated into the Gold Coast Colony. To this must be added the role of the UN Visiting Mission as a catalyst in the surge in Ewe/Togoland nationalism. The presence of the Mission was important in the process of 'political activation and mobilization in which groups and strata of the population [were] progressively drawn into the vortex of active political involvement'.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, the 1949 and 1952 Missions' reports which recommended measures favouring Togoland unification testify to this assertion.<sup>57</sup> The Mission was responsible for the evolution of rival political groupings in the Trust Territory and the fierce struggle for recognition and power that became a feature of the years preceding independence in 1957.

Most of the delegates on the Mission were from countries that were essentially anti-colonialists, such as the USSR, China and India. They visited the territory in 1949, 1952 and 1955. The 1949 Visiting Mission, for example, found the existing political arrangement to be 'inconsistent with the progressive political development of the indigenous inhabitants of the Trust Territory towards self-

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<sup>53</sup> United Nations Visiting Mission Report, 1950.

<sup>54</sup> For details about Antor, see Yayoh, 'Local Government in Ewedome', p. 193.

<sup>55</sup> See Amenumey (1996: 139-147); Nugent, *Smugglers*, p. 182; J. S. Coleman (1956: 35).

<sup>56</sup> Coleman, 'Togoland', p. 51.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.* p. 47.

government and independence'.<sup>58</sup> The task of the Mission in ascertaining the sentiment of the inhabitants provided a platform for the western-educated literates, such as Antor, who began to feel that the future direction of their region was in their hands. In many respects, the Mission whipped up anti-imperialist sentiments in the territory through 'the publicity given the principle of self-determination [leading to] fundamental changes in foreign rule'.<sup>59</sup> Colonialism became the most criticised force as the inhabitants became aware of their rights to self-government and independence as well as their special position as a Trust Territory. It was in this regard that Coleman stressed the role of the Visiting Mission in 'the political awakening of the people of Togoland'.<sup>60</sup> Indeed, the desire of the mission to promote the separate identity of Togoland provided fertile ground for Ewe/Togoland national consciousness.

### **The Adoption of the Swastika**

In 1950, following petitions from Togoland on the controversial question of the creating of Trans-Volta Region comprising the southern section of British Togoland and the Ewe areas of the Gold Coast, the Colonial government set up a Standing Consultative Commission in order to consult fully with representatives of the whole of Togoland on all questions affecting the political direction of the territory.<sup>61</sup> Part of the remit of the commission was to determine whether the southern section of British Togoland should be organised in a separate region for the purpose of regional government or whether there should be a Trans-Volta Region embracing both southern Togoland and the Ewe sections of the colony. The creation of the regional body was contained in the 1949 Coussey Committee report on local government reforms in the Gold Coast. Regional administrations were needed at this stage to assist with the building up of local councils. Such local government bodies were to form the framework under which district administrations would be able to work.

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<sup>58</sup> PRO CO96/7904, Consideration of the 1947 Report by the Trusteeship Council, 1949.

<sup>59</sup> Welch, *Dream of Unity*, p. 74.

<sup>60</sup> Coleman, 'Togoland', p. 51.

<sup>61</sup> CO 96/827/2, Colonial Office to J. Fletcher-Cooke, ESQ, the UK Delegation, New York, 12 June 1950; Co 96/827/2, Minutes of Meetings of Southern Togoland Council, 1950.

But in the context of British Togoland, the creation of the Trans-Volta Togoland Region to include Ewes in the Gold Coast Colony was to bring the territory very closely into the Gold Coast, which would make it more difficult for any group to pursue in future the unification of the British and French Trust Territories. Hitherto, the Southern Togoland Council, a separate body established under a new legislation on 1 September 1949 for the southern section of British Togoland, had two main objectives. First, it was to deliberate on matters affecting the general welfare and interest of the persons in the southern section of British Togoland and second, to elect a Togoland member to the Gold Coast Legislative Council and some other statutory bodies. The Southern Togoland Council opposed the plan to form the regional body and argued that it was not represented on the Coussey Committee and the Standing Consultative Commission. The Standing Consultative Commission was to meet at Lome in the French Togo. Records show that the British government itself was not sure about the outcome of the Commission's deliberations. There were genuine fears, on the part of the British colonial officers, that the larger French membership of the Commission, elections of which were rigged by the French, would be used in some way contrary to the wishes of the people.<sup>62</sup> The TC, on the other hand, saw the creation of the Trans-Volta Togoland Region as a subtle way of preventing the unification of the two Togolands instead of respecting and preserving Togoland identity and trusteeship status.<sup>63</sup>

In December 1950, a new constitution giving greater representation and say in government to Africans came into effect in the Gold Coast.<sup>64</sup> In the general election that followed in 1951, the Convention People's Party (CPP) led by Kwame Nkrumah won the majority seats in the new National Assembly. Nkrumah himself won the Accra municipal seat although he was in prison at the time the election was conducted.<sup>65</sup> The British colonial officers then had the duty of repackaging Nkrumah and presenting him to the people 'as a responsible leader'.<sup>66</sup> Nkrumah thus came out of prison in February 1951 to be the 'Leader of Government Business' and subsequently the Prime Minister in 1952.<sup>67</sup> Nkrumah

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<sup>62</sup> CO 96/827/5, Togoland Administration, Sir C. Arden-Clarke to the Colonial Secretary, 13 November 1950.

<sup>63</sup> RAG/H A/D 138(3), Flying of the Swastika, 1 October 1951.

<sup>64</sup> David Apter, *Ghana in Transition* (Princeton, 1972), p. 163.

<sup>65</sup> Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 103.

<sup>66</sup> Frederick Cooper, *Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge, 2002), p. 64.

<sup>67</sup> Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 154 & 156.

now began to collaborate with the British under what he termed 'tactical action' but which was described by David Apter as a 'combination of ideological purity and pure political opportunism'.<sup>68</sup> These developments had direct bearing on the trusteeship status of British Togoland. The diarchy of the Gold Coast was determined to integrate the Trust Territory into the Gold Coast while the TC vehemently opposed such a move and rather sought the unification of the two Togolands as an independent entity. The UN Trusteeship Council observed that the plan to create a Trans-Volta Togoland Region, conceived in 1949, 'appeared to have the effect of strengthening the integration of the southern section of the Trust Territory with the adjoining part of the Gold Coast'.<sup>69</sup>

Consequently, politics which in British Togoland had been localised and focused on native states now assumed greater intensity at the regional level with a bitter contest between the diarchy in the Gold Coast Colony and the Togoland Congress. What fuelled the consternation of the TC was the 'progressive devolution of real executive power to the CPP component of the Executive and the Legislative Assembly'.<sup>70</sup> Indeed, from 1951 the British government devolved its financial responsibility in the Trust Territory to the CPP-dominated government in the Gold Coast. Such a move was strongly contested by the unificationists who argued that the responsibility towards the UN rested on the shoulders of Her Majesty's Government; therefore the governor would be neglecting his responsibility if it passed the whole financial burden to the Gold Coast government.<sup>71</sup> It would more importantly mean the abolition of the concept of a separate identity of the Trust Territory. In addition the TC averred that the integration of Togoland into the Gold Coast would subordinate the development programme of Togoland to an independent Gold Coast.<sup>72</sup> Meanwhile the British government had made a statement to the UN that when the Gold Coast became independent it was not prepared to remain in Togoland.<sup>73</sup> This notwithstanding, the Togoland Congress

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<sup>68</sup> Apter, *Ghana in Transition*, p. 214.

<sup>69</sup> Report of the Trusteeship Council to the General Assembly, New York, 23 July 1949 to 24 July 1950.

<sup>70</sup> Coleman, 'Togoland', p. 20.

<sup>71</sup> CO, 96/826/9, Colonial Development and Welfare Assistance.

<sup>72</sup> Paul Nugent, 'National Integration and the Vicissitudes of State Power in Ghana, PhD Thesis, (University of London), p. 123-147.

<sup>73</sup> Howe (1957: 179). This British position was confirmed later in 1954 by the governor. See also RAG/H Trans-Volta Togoland Council Addresses, Arden-Clarke to Trans-Volta Togoland Council, 17 December 1954.

still felt it had a strong case, for the UK government had no mandate from the UN to transfer its responsibility over the Trust Territory to the new Gold Coast government.

The Convention Peoples Party (CPP) itself had advantages to gain in seeking the integration of Togoland into the Gold Coast. Its stance emanated from the proposed Volta River project, an elaborate hydro-electric power scheme which involved the damming of the Volta river. It would have been unthinkable for the Gold Coast government to build such a gigantic dam so close to Togoland and allow the latter to become an independent nation. That would have had serious security implications for the Gold Coast. It was imperative, therefore, that Togoland remained part of the Gold Coast without which the project might well have been abandoned.<sup>74</sup> Consequently, the CPP which hitherto had no foothold in the territory began moves to open branches of the party in the Trust Territory. In May 1950/51, Kwame Nkrumah toured the territory to canvass support for the bid to integrate British Togoland into the Gold Coast Colony.<sup>75</sup>

At its inaugural meeting in Borada (the capital town of the people of Buem in the present-day Volta Region) on 3 November 1950, the TC passed a resolution calling on the Gold Coast government to establish a separate legislature for the Trust Territory so as to advance the development of the territory towards self-determination.<sup>76</sup> It was also resolved at that meeting to boycott the Consultative Commission and the Joint Togoland Council proposal put forward by the government in the Colony.<sup>77</sup> When it became apparent that the diarchy government in the Gold Coast was bent on creating the regional body and subsequently integrating the territory into the Gold Coast, the TC reacted by adopting a flag embossed with the design of the Swastika in fighting what it called British and French imperialism. It is important to note, however, that Germany's colonisation of Togoland started in the early 1890s and ended in 1914, at which time the Swastika was not the German state symbol. We noted earlier that the Nazi party adopted the Swastika in the early 1920s and it became the main symbol in the German national flag in 1937. Again, by the time the TC adopted the

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<sup>74</sup> RAG/H ACC No.334, Petition from Togoland Youth Association, Ho District, to the UN Trusteeship Council, 28 September 1953; Amenumey, *Ewe Unification*, p. 145.

<sup>75</sup> RAG/H, Togo Union to the Secretary General, United Nations, New York, 11 May 1951.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid*



Swastika, it ceased to be a German national symbol. Therefore, on all counts, the adoption of the Swastika was quite out of date; this calls for an exploration of the reasons for its adoption by the TC at that point in time.

The TC flag had a red background with stars at its four corners and the Swastika embossed in the centre. The red signified the suffering imposed on Togoland by the partition of their country between the British and the French in 1922; the stars were expression of hope and aspiration for Togoland unification. According to the Togoland nationalists present at the Borada conference in 1950, the Swastika symbolised 'progressive' development of the region under the Germans.<sup>78</sup> Consequently, the flag became the official symbol of the Togoland Congress and it was hoisted at the forecourt of the building that housed the conference; some were also circulated in the Ewe areas of the southern section of British Togoland. The symbol itself was angular but its arms (unlike those of the Swastika) were pointing to the left in anticlockwise direction.

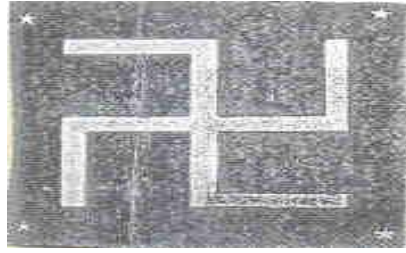
Members of the TC were not sure how their membership in a regional body (that would include Ewe in the Gold Coast Colony) would affect their trust status and a possible unification with French Togo.<sup>79</sup> Since the British took over Togoland from the Germans, the area had witnessed the influx of Gold Coast Ewes, mainly from Peki and from Anlo, the coastal regions to the south. Therefore, as G. O. Awuma, one of the Togoland nationalist leaders, observed, it was difficult to see how Togoland could be given education in self-determination when all the key positions in the local councils, the schools, commerce and even the churches were filled with 'adventurers' from the Gold Coast Eweland.<sup>80</sup> The feeling of Togoland was that the new regional body was going to operate at the pleasure of Gold Coast Ewe who were more educated than the Ewe in the Trust Territory.

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<sup>78</sup> Regional Archive of Ghana/ Ho (Hereafter, RAG/H) ACC/092, Togoland Affairs and Agent Demand, 31 May 1951.

<sup>79</sup> Regional Archive of Ghana/ Ho (RAG/H) D/DA 1060, Memorandum on Togoland (Southern Section) under British Trusteeship, Nov. 1950.

<sup>80</sup> RAG/H A/D140A, Gerald O. Awuma to the Colonial Secretary, Gold Coast, 7 June 1952. The domination of the Trust Territory by Anlo and Peki Ewes is also noted in Coleman, 'Togoland', p. 35.



Togoland Congress flag adopted in 1950.<sup>81</sup>

In fact, the UK government's report on education, which was corroborated by the UN report on scholarships, showed that the majority of the most educated people in British Togoland were teachers; however, out of twenty scholarships made available to the southern section in 1948, only one was awarded to an indigenous teacher.<sup>82</sup> It had been observed by the Trusteeship Council in 1950 that some Gold Coast Ewe teachers were transferred to British Togoland and were given Togoland addresses so that they could benefit from the scholarship scheme.<sup>83</sup> This created the impression of official connivance with Gold Coast Ewe to deprive indigenous Togoland of scholarships meant specifically for the latter. This happened to be one of the grievances of the TC against their integration into the Gold Coast.

The Gold Coast government saw the adoption of the Swastika as a sinister act designed to incite the British and the French. Indeed, the two European powers had unutterable loathing and contempt for Hitlerism and all it stood for. Although the Swastika was long proscribed, its presence continued to evoke fear.<sup>84</sup> Due to Hitler's pursuance of the objective of 'racial purification', Nazism became synonymous with war and genocide.<sup>85</sup> To the British colonial officials, therefore, it was unthinkable that the leaders of the TC and, by extension, the people of Togoland could resort to glorifying Hitlerite sadism. By adopting and, in fact, hoisting the Swastika, the TC was equating the partition of Togoland between Britain and France to the suffering of the victims of the Nazi concentration camps. The Anglo-French partition deprived the people of British Togoland the right to free trade with their counterparts in the French zone. The railway from Kpalime to the port of Lome was the obvious outlet for the exportable produce of a large part

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<sup>81</sup> See *The Daily Graphic*, 8 August 1951

<sup>82</sup> *Togoland Report*, 1948.

<sup>83</sup> UN Trusteeship Council, Fourth Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Petitions, New York, 13 July 1950.

<sup>84</sup> *Daily Graphic*, 27 March, 2008.

<sup>85</sup> Kershaw (2004: 242).

of Southern Togoland but the Anglo-French partition placed the railway and the port of Lome under French control. Many Togolandese preferred to trade with Lome instead of Accra but they could no longer have free access to Lome. This undoubtedly dislocated trade in the southern section of British Togoland.

As expected the incident generated a lot of concern and uneasiness among British and French officials because, from the perspective of the colony, the presence of the Swastika could cause disturbances and render the territory ungovernable. The immediate reaction of British officials was to describe the incident as an act of 'gross stupidity which only sought to discredit the TC and the inhabitants of the territory'.<sup>86</sup> In consequence, the colonial government placed a ban on the use of the Swastika in the British Togoland. To the colonial government, there was the possibility of Hitlerism inspiring resonance in the Trust Territory; the threat of foreign political ideologies with subversive activities influencing Ewe/Togoland nationalism was real.<sup>87</sup>

On the local front, the adoption of the Swastika was attacked on cultural and ideological grounds. The cultural view point, led by J. B. Danquah, criticised the choice of the European pattern of the Swastika and averred that the circular African version which depicted African fine art and rich culture would have been preferable.<sup>88</sup> Ideologically, critics equated the symbol with the ideology of Hitler, in view of pro-German feeling current among the older generation in Togoland who had been educated on German philosophical thought and classical ideas. Thus the reaction of the British colonial government has to be understood within the broader context of Ewe/Togoland nationalism, which had been growing since the nineteenth century, and the lingering pro-German feeling in some sections of the Trust Territory. Although many locals found English more useful for commercial employment, pro-German feeling was still strong among a good number of Togolandese.

When the British colonial government took over its share of the former German Togoland it was uneasy about the lingering German influence in the territory.

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<sup>86</sup> RAG/H S.092/3 Senior District Commissioner to the Chief Commissioner of the Colony, 6 September 1951.

<sup>87</sup> Dyke, *Togoland*, p. 31.

<sup>88</sup> *Daily Graphic*, 8 August 1951, p. 1.

According to David Brown, British officials were aware of the desire of some German educated Togolandese to see the Germans return to the territory.<sup>89</sup> The aim of the British colonial government therefore was to establish authority over the region by eliciting the loyalty of the inhabitants. The first in a string of policies implemented was the division of British Togoland into southern and northern sections. The northern section was integrated into the Northern Territories Protectorate of the Gold Coast. The southern section on the other hand was placed under the aegis of the Commissioner of the Eastern Province (CEP) with headquarters at Koforidua in the Gold Coast Colony.

In effect, although the territory remained formally distinct, an effective merger came about through the extension of the authority of the CEP. To cement the merger, Nana Ofori Atta, *Omanhene* of Akyem Abuakwa (in the Gold Coast Colony) and a leading member of the Gold Coast Legislative Council as well as the President of the Provincial Council of chiefs of the Eastern Province, toured the southern section of British Togoland in 1926.<sup>90</sup> The supreme court of the Gold Coast exercised jurisdiction in the southern section where civil cases operated under the presidency of political officers seconded from the Gold Coast.<sup>91</sup> There were, however, special laws in the territory that dealt with native administration, native courts and the alienation of land.<sup>92</sup> The argument advanced by the British colonial government in favour of the merger was that the people of the southern section had many things in common with the communities in the adjoining areas of the Gold Coast colony. Therefore the merger was seen as much as in the interest of the inhabitants as it was a matter of administrative convenience.

It was this same German influence in the region that provided one of the motivating forces behind the British policy to create Native Authorities (NAs) in the territory in 1932 with powers to control local affairs.<sup>93</sup> The crux of the matter was that by creating NAs, the British officials sought to redirect the commitment of the inhabitants from the *Bund* to the colonial administration. In addition, as

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<sup>89</sup> David Brown, 'Politics in the Kpando Area of Ghana, 1925 to 1969: A Study of the Influence of Central Government and National Politics upon Local Factional Competition', PhD Thesis (University of Birmingham, 1977), p. 18.

<sup>90</sup> NA CO96/672/5, Report to the Council of the League of Nations, 1927.

<sup>91</sup> 'In the absence of a local criminal code, that of the Gold Coast was introduced as a basis of procedure'. See NA CO 96/724/2, Annual Report on British Mandated Sphere of Togoland 1920-21.

<sup>92</sup> NA CO96/780/4, File No. 31458/6, Native Administration, 1924.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

Brown noted, the creation of NAs would reduce the influence of the German and other missionaries in the region.<sup>94</sup> In spite of this, German influence remained highly perceptible in British Togoland. Although the Nazi regime was long gone, since the defeat of Germany in the Second World War, the adoption and hoisting of the Swastika caused the British colonial government to be distraught about the designs of the TC. There was no doubt that the TC wanted to use the Swastika to emphasise the unique status of Togoland as a separate territory from the Gold Coast Colony.

It would appear, therefore, that the ideological argument and criticism of the TC was pushed too far. The TC was not seeking to bring the Germans back into the territory, for the defeat of the Germans in 1914 was greeted with jubilation in British Togoland. The inhabitants contributed generously to the British war effort because they were happy to get rid of the Germans who had ruled the territory with high-handedness. Although some pro-German feeling was still evident in the territory, it was mostly associated with the elderly.<sup>95</sup> Some of the younger inhabitants might possibly have seen pictures of the Swastika but they could not have had any strong association with it. Therefore, hoisting the Swastika in itself was not likely to provoke disturbances in southern Togoland, as very few people appreciated its significance. Therefore the increasing agitation for Togoland unification could not be interpreted simply as Hitlerism. Instead, it should be seen more as a manifestation of frustration and suspicions about British and French positions on the future of the Trust Territory.

Since the Anglo-French partition of the former German territory, the two administering authorities pursued different policies in administering their respective territories contrary to the trusteeship agreement. As stated earlier, this was to make any attempt at unification of the two Togolands difficult. Now the plan to integrate British Togo into the Gold Coast meant complete liquidation of British Togoland and for that matter the broader Togoland nationalist agenda. Thus the desire to create Togoland with all the attributes of a nation would be dashed. What the TC sought to do was to exact certain elements such as Hitler-like tenacity and fanaticism without which Togoland could not hold their own

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<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> RAG/H S.092/3 Senior District Commissioner to the Chief Commissioner of the Colony, 6 September 1951.

against the determination of the diarchy government to integrate British Togoland into the Gold Coast. In addition, the TC also wanted to represent the spirit of the Hitler Youth Movement, *Hitler Jugend*, which was highly admired by Togoland. Fundamentally, the critics failed to realise that the same symbol, which in the hands of Hitler represented 'race superiority and purges', could in the hands of another leader represent purity and tenacity of purpose.<sup>96</sup> In utter defiance and indignation, the TC in a press release stated that 'if the use of the Swastika annoyed the British and the French, all the better'.<sup>97</sup> To the TC and its followers, 'there was little to differentiate Hitler's *Herrenvolk* theories from the undeclared policies of Britain and France on the future status of Togoland'.<sup>98</sup>

Furthermore, the adoption of the slogan *ablode* by the TC in its campaign gave further credence to the fear of the colonial government that Togoland. *Ablode* (an Ewe concept) implied freedom to create a Togoland nation governed by Togoland and that such a nation should be accorded the same recognition given to any nation in the world. In effect, *ablode* echoes the relationship between the suffering of the victims of Nazism and the oppression of Togoland by the British colonial government. In this respect the TC succeeded in using the Swastika to further create Togoland identity and whip up Togoland nationalism to the extent that the Togoland unification question dragged on till it became a matter of debate in the UN General Assembly. That the Togoland issue could only be resolved through a UN-sponsored plebiscite in 1956 was indicative of the tenacity of the Togoland nationalists in going the whole hog to have their grievances addressed.

More importantly, the colonial officers were themselves divided on the question of creating regional bodies in the Gold Coast and its dependencies. It was said that the system of local government contemplated in the colony and the Trust Territories had been designed based on British model but there seemed to be some misconceptions about what was meant by local self-government of the British pattern. The British conception of local government had no semblance of federalism at the local level. The local governing bodies in Britain, though distinctive organizations, were part of a highly unitary state organization. Government therefore decided to thread cautiously and to undertake intensive

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<sup>96</sup> RAG/H Lanthe Lee, Accra to the Joint Togoland Congress, 12 September 1951.

<sup>97</sup> *Daily Graphic*, 22 August 1951

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

propaganda campaign to educate Togolanders on the benefits of creating the regional body.

By 1954, it became obvious that the integration of the Trust Territory into the Gold Coast was a foregone conclusion. The victory of the CPP in the general election moved the political development of the Gold Coast and Togoland rapidly towards independence. It established a sovereign government that would place the administration of the Gold Coast and the British Togoland in the hands of Africans.<sup>99</sup> It introduced significant political advances both at the local and national levels to the extent that the number of Togolanders on the Gold Coast national legislative body had increased from one in 1951 to six in 1954.<sup>100</sup> The UK Trusteeship Council Order-in-Council 1954, to all intents and purposes, effectively put an end to any hope of unificationists realising their objectives.<sup>101</sup> The reforms also saw the emergence of an all-African cabinet in the Gold Coast which included G. O. Awuma and F. Y. Asare, all from the southern section of British Togoland.<sup>102</sup>

Moreover, the revenue accruing from Togoland was included in the budget of the Gold Coast and the expenditures were allocated to the territory based on the needs of the part of the Gold Coast with which it was integrated.<sup>103</sup> The argument was that if it were not for the close association of the territory with the Gold Coast, the resources of the Trust Territory would be woefully insufficient to support the standard of development programmes being initiated in the territory.<sup>104</sup> For the quarter of a century that British Togoland had been administered as part and parcel of the Gold Coast, all the modern ideas, philosophical and political

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<sup>99</sup> Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 200; Amenumey, *Ewe Unification*, p. 86.

<sup>100</sup> See RAG/H ACC343, Mr Scott to the Fourth Committee of the Trusteeship Council, 8 December 1954. The TC participated in these elections because, according to Amenumey, it feared CPP supporters in the Trust Territory could be elected to speak on behalf of the territory. See Amenumey, *Ewe Unification*, p. 87-88.

<sup>101</sup> The UK Order-in-Council of 5 May 1954 was the last in a series of successive constitutional reforms that progressively brought Togoland closer to the Gold Coast short of a plebiscite.

<sup>102</sup> The two Togolanders defected from the TC to join the CPP. See Skinner, 'Reading, Writing and Rallies', p.143.

<sup>103</sup> UN Visiting Mission Report, p. 6.

<sup>104</sup> NA CO96/827/826/9, Colonial Development and Welfare Assistance to Togoland, 1950.

thoughts, institutions, trade practices, monetary policies, and indeed the overall way of life of the people of British Togoland had developed along British lines. Therefore, any attempt at unification at this point in time could be a retrograde step in the political and economic development of the Trust Territory. All this fed into the CPP's agenda that focused on creating a strong centralised and unitary state which would include the Trust Territory.

Meanwhile, the prospects of unification with French Togoland looked very bleak, making the stance of the TC untenable. As late as 1954, the French authorities made it crystal clear to the UN that they had not contemplated any programme towards rapid independence of that territory.<sup>105</sup> Moreover, no one could guess the exact conditions under which French Togoland would eventually be granted independence, or whether or not those conditions would be compatible with the aspirations of all Ewes.<sup>106</sup> This notwithstanding, the TC still felt it had a strong case, for the UK government had no mandate from the UN to transfer its responsibilities over the Trust Territory to the new nationalist government in the Gold Coast. The persistence of the TC led eventually to the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement paving way for the 1956 plebiscite which resulted in victory for integrationists.<sup>107</sup>

### Conclusion

As the Gold Coast moved towards independence, the trusteeship status of British Togoland brought the issue of integration onto the international stage. The dynamics of Togoland identity coupled with the CPP-dominated government's determination to integrate the Trust Territory into the Gold Coast complicated matters. The integration of Togoland into the Gold Coast was no different from what happened in some parts of Africa where the partition of the continent forced smaller African political entities to dissolve in larger ones.<sup>108</sup> In the case of British Togoland, the real danger was that any ethnographic state within the southern

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<sup>105</sup> UN Special Report on Ewe Unification Problem, New York, 1955.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*; R. W. Howe, *Black Star Rising: A Journey through West Africa in Transition* (London, 1957), p. 179.

<sup>107</sup> RAG/H, Press Release No. 1565/54, Office of the Secretary to the Governor, Accra, 23 December 1954.

<sup>108</sup> One exception to this general observation is the case where Gambia avoided incorporation into a united Senegambia.



section would be anachronism and that the resolution of the problem in 1956 came as a breather to the CPP and the UK government.

Although the Swastika was proscribed as soon as it was adopted and hoisted by the TC, the incident may open up some questions which are of interest to scholars of Germany and of Tanganyika, Togoland, Kamerun and German South-West Africa. But the issue of Togoland nationalism also fits into the broader debate on how colonialism created nations and new identities in Africa. In the pre-colonial era, the notion of identity appeared to be fixed in the region which became known as Togoland because of the heterogeneous nature of the region. Each ethnic group maintained their distinct cultural identity. All this changed with the partition of the territory and subsequent political re-organization embarked upon by the colonial powers. Thus, the colonization of the territory and the lingering German influence, the promotion of Ewe language through the church and school system, the emergence of political movements, and the special status of the territory were some of 'the historical processes that created a Togoland national identity', in which case the hoisting of the Swastika was merely a catalyst.<sup>109</sup> Thus the adoption of the Swastika should not be read as glorification of Nazism, instead, it should be seen more as expression of frustration faced by Togoland in their quest to create a Togoland nation.

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<sup>109</sup> Skinner, 'Reading, Writing and Rallies', p. 128.

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