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Author(s): D. E. K. Amenumey

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THE PRE-1947 BACKGROUND TO THE EWE UNIFICATION
QUESTION: A PRELIMINARY SKETCH

D. E. K. AMENUMEY

From 1947, thanks largely to the numerous petitions and delegations sent by various groups of the Ewe people to the General Assembly and the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations, the world became suddenly aware of what has been called the "Ewe Problem", that is the question of devising a solution to the political division of one people—the Ewe. It is clear however that the problem did not suddenly emerge out of the blue in 1947 nor did the victims become aware of their disabilities consequent to this division only in 1947. The problem had been long-standing. In fact it had existed from the moment a European power set up an international boundary cutting across the Ewe territory. Right from this time in the 1880s we hear of protests from the people affected, against splitting the Ewe. This phase was the precursor to the later more positive demand for unification.

It has been fashionable to reiterate the platitude that the people so concerned had in fact never been politically united in precolonial times. Admittedly this was so but it is one thing to exist as a complex of disunited but sovereign chieftaincies free to co-operate when the occasion demanded, and quite another to have a colonial international boundary cutting across the country of a people who are one tribe. It has been doubted in certain quarters whether there is any link between the resistance movements in Africa on the eve of colonialism and the nationalist agitation after the second World War. As far as the desire for unification in Eweland is concerned there seems to be no doubt: 1947 merely saw a continuation of what had been going on since the 1880s. This article surveys the reaction of the Ewe people to the division of their territory prior to the fateful year 1947.

The Ewe people inhabit the territory equivalent roughly to the south-eastern quarter of Ghana and the southern half of Togo. The current population is about 1.1 million. The people have a tradition of migration from the east—from Ketu a town in modern Dahomey. They have lived in their present habitat since from about the middle of the seventeenth century. They were later joined by a few immigrant groups from west of the river Volta. In their new homeland they did not form a single political entity, but split into a number of subtribes—i.e. chiefdoms and paramountcies. There were about 120 of these at the turn of this century. Some of the more important 'states' are the following: along the coast going eastwards from the river Volta—Anlo, Some, Bé, Gen; inland immediately behind the coastal states—Peki, Adaklu, Ave, Tove, Ho; and in northern Ewe country—Kpando, Watsi and part of Atakpame.

These subtribes varied one from the other in size, degree of political centralisation, military strength, etc. and were all independent of one another. They recognised themselves as essentially one people but like the ancient Greeks, far from uniting, they warred one on the other. For example, there were numerous quarrels and instances of fighting between Anlo and Gen from as early as the 1680s.¹ These were attributable to attempts by either state to engross as much of the slave trade as possible to the exclusion of the other, and also occasionally due to barefaced slave raiding. Again there were conflicts between Anlo and Agave (aided by non-Ewe people of Ada and Accra) due mostly to a clash of economic interests, *viz.* salt and fishing rights in the lagoon and along the river Volta.² In 1750, 1767, 1776 and 1784, there were instances of Ewe states fighting one another in concert with non-Ewe allies. Again in 1833 Anlo aided Akwamu to try to subjugate Krepi. Yet again in 1864–65, 1868 and 1873–74, Anlo and Peki fought in opposing camps.³

These numerous eighteenth and nineteenth century intra-Ewe wars caused considerable disorganization in the territory and threatened to align individual Ewe states into 'blocks' or *ententes* in partnership with some non-Ewe neighbours. All the same the effect on the indigenous political scene was not as radical as that of the 'imperial factor' in later years. The fact is that despite these wars, there continued to be trade and other contacts between the various subtribes and there was no international boundary separating one subtribe from the other. There was mutual co-operation between individual subtribes when the occasion demanded. It is necessary to stress these facts, because it has not always been appreciated that the European colonial system brought a new element into the existing political fragmentation of the Ewe. A new dimension was given to their continued existence as separate states. The Ewe people had the misfortune to be colonised by more than one colonial power. The consequent setting up of an international boundary cutting across the people brought in disabilities hitherto non-existent.

In the second half of the 19th century, the Ewe territory was brought within the European colonial system. After a false start in 1850, Britain "acquired" jurisdiction over Anlo in 1874 and thereby started the process of piecemeal acquisition that stretched over a number of years. There is no evidence of Ewe subtribes banding together to resist the creeping arm of European imperialism. Individual Ewe subtribes stood aloof while Britain acquired jurisdiction over their fellow Ewe subtribes. The situation, however, changed when Germany came on the scene in 1884. This entry of a second imperialist power into the Ewe country meant the institution of an international boundary cutting across the country. When this became apparent the Ewe people who had hitherto been disunited protested strongly against the

¹ Amenumey, D. E. K., *The Ewe People and the coming of European rule 1850–1914*, 1964 (unpublished London M.A. thesis) pp. 30–31.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 31–33.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 67–87.

splitting of their country into two colonial systems and strenuously resisted. The Krepi were utterly opposed to the idea. For example the chiefs of Abudia, Adaklu and Waya were unwilling to agree to any division of the country.⁴ Most Krepi chiefs who had on other occasions denied they were under the jurisdiction of Peki, then submitted that Peki was their liege lord, with the hope that this tactical move would obviate the prospect of having some of them assigned to Germany. Some refused to accept German flags which would have signified their acceptance of German rule. They had to be forced militarily to accept the fact of the German presence. It must be stressed that protest took the only form it could have taken. At this time there was no United Nations to which memoranda could be sent. There were neither the Sylvanus Olympio's nor the Daniel Chapman's of a later period to channel and mobilize agitation. Nor would the governments have been amenable to any such pressure emanating from the colonies. This was the time of the traditional political authorities—illiterate and unable to 'touch' the Europeans. Resistance was beaten. The protests of the chiefs were contemptuously ignored. Anlo and Some, on hearing rumours of a contemplated sale of part of the Ewe territory east of the Volta to Germany, sent a strong protest to the British Colonial Office to no avail.⁵

Thanks to the boundary agreements between Britain and Germany (1885–1890), the Ewe territory was split into two. The states of Anlo, Some, Klikor, Peki and Tongu became part of the Gold Coast Protectorate, and the rest of the Ewe country became part of the German Protectorate of Togoland. Protests, resistance and acts of defiance continued. Chief Kwadzo Dei of Peki for example was loath to accommodate himself to the split of what he considered his territory into two rival colonial systems.⁶ Such protests and representations were ignored.

By 1890 formal acquisition of political authority in the Ewe country by Britain and Germany had been completed. The two governments proceeded to substantiate their jurisdictions. The colonial order impinged on the two parts of the country to varying degrees. Germany having only recently entered the colonial scene, resorted to force both to subdue the people and to create the impression of military strength—the possession of which she envied the Gold Coast government. The incidence of colonial rule on the Ewe subtribes in Togoland was therefore quite harsh. The government exacted compulsory labour, resorted to severe punishments, imposed a host of direct taxes, restrained the people's freedom to trade and infringed on their right to the land. The power of the traditional political authorities, the chiefs, was effectively curtailed.⁷

⁴ C.O. 879/30 section 424, No. 46 of 30th March, 1892.

⁵ C.O. 96/195, No. 20888 of 20/10/1888; C.O. 96/195, No. 23039 of 20/10/1888; C.O. 879/28 section 356, No. 97 of 10/12/1888.

⁶ Amenumey, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 234–304.

On the Gold Coast on the other hand, thanks to the policy of indirect rule, the traditional chiefs retained a greater juridical competence and administrative authority than their counterparts in Togoland. There was no direct taxation, the people retained the right to the land, there was freedom of trade and terms of sentences permitted by law were less severe. The Ewe people on either side of the European-established border came to realize that life on the Gold Coast was less harsh and was preferable to that in Togoland. In Togoland the people reacted to the harsh administration by emigrating in large numbers to the Gold Coast, even at the risk of imprisonment if apprehended. The fact that there were greater employment opportunities in Togoland notwithstanding, the Ewe people there looked to the Gold Coast with longing eyes. Those in the Gold Coast pitied their hapless brothers in Togoland.

In 1914 therefore on the declaration of war against Germany, the Ewe chiefs on the Gold Coast loyally aided the government in its operations against the Germans in Togoland. They fondly hoped that the defeat of Germany would provide an opportunity for a reunion with their brothers in Togoland. A number of Anlo chiefs were later awarded medals for their exertions during the War.⁸ They had exerted themselves because they were convinced that through playing a part in the elimination of Germany they were helping to end the division of the Ewe country. The Ewe people in Togoland on their part welcomed the invading British forces with open arms when they entered the colony in August 1914. All looked upon the Allied victory over Germany with satisfaction, expecting that in due course all Eweland would be united under one and the same administration. This they believed would let them undergo development as one large unit which would be more favourable to greater economic and social progress than any development in small units. In 1914 this was not wishful thinking. On the Gold Coast, Government policy had consistently favoured amalgamation of subtribes into bigger political units to serve as viable vehicles of indirect rule. After all, Anlo and Peki attained their current dimensions by absorbing neighbouring Ewe subtribes with the blessing and encouragement of the government.

Besides, events in the immediate post-war years raised the hopes of unification very high. During the occupation of Togoland the British and French authorities made a provisional agreement to divide the territory into two. This partition was arbitrary. The greater part of the colony including the capital of Lome and its hinterland went to Britain. This meant that nearly all the Ewe people now came under one colonial administration for the first time. The Ewe people welcomed the agreement. To them it represented the beginning of an eventual unification of all the Ewe. They fondly expected that the remaining section of former German Togoland, by far the smaller

⁸ G.N.A. Acc. 550/50: Record of chiefs 1880-1934, p. 115.

part, would eventually be joined to its western part. These expectations were never fulfilled. The chiefs and people who had fought to eliminate Germany were acutely disappointed.⁹

Lome and the hinterland were later separated from the western section of Togoland. Under Article 119 of the Peace Treaty at Versailles Germany renounced in favour of the Principal Allied and Associated Powers all her 'rights' over her overseas possessions—among them Togoland. On the 7th May 1919, the Supreme Allied Council decided that France and Britain should determine between themselves the future regime in Togoland and recommend its adoption to the League of Nations.¹⁰ Under the terms of the Milner-Simon declaration of 10th July 1919, Britain and France agreed to determine the frontier separating the authority of the two governments in Togoland.¹¹ It was specifically agreed that the eventual delimitation was to take place on the ground and take notice of the demographic factors etc. In 1920 Britain handed over two-thirds of the former German Togoland to France. This meant that within the short space of six years certain people had to adjust themselves to three different colonial systems. It meant some people in the French mandate territory had to learn a third European language after German and English. It also meant that certain Ewe groups not previously divided now found themselves straddling an international boundary. The hopes raised in 1914 had been dashed to the ground. The former German Protectorate of Togoland was split into two mandates to be administered by France and Britain.

When the League of Nations conferred the mandates over Togoland to Britain and France in July 1921, the boundary line set up between the two spheres corresponded to the line agreed on by the July 1919 declaration which was in effect the boundary till 1956. This had the effect of splitting the Ewe country into 3 sections: (a) the Ewe section of Togoland under French Mandate, (b) the Ewe section of Togoland under British Mandate, and (c) the Ewe section of the Gold Coast colony. This division belied one of the principal recommendations of the Joint Anglo-French memorandum of May 1919 submitted to the League of Nations concerning the disposal of Togoland. This recommendation had laid down that the "terms of the mandate should take into account firstly the interests of the natives, up till now artificially separated from the areas occupied by the people of the same race". As far as Ewe country was concerned, this recommendation was not adhered to.

All the more galling was this to the Ewe chiefs and peoples when they reflected that satisfaction had been given to other people in similar circum-

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ P.M.C. 1st session, C.445 (1)b M.345 (b) 1922 VI, August 1922.

¹¹ British and Foreign State Papers 1922, vol. CXVI, London, H.M.S.O., 1925, p. 828.

tances. In Northern Togoland the Dagomba tribe petitioned for the unification of their territory in 1914. The comment of Governor Hugh Clifford of the Gold Coast on the subject is worth quoting.

It should be noted for future reference that any attempt once more to divide the Dagomba country in a manner which is opposed to the ethnological distribution of the native population will be keenly resented by the chiefs and people both in the Northern Territories [of the Gold Coast] and in the Sansanne-Mangu districts of Togoland. The foregoing remark applies with equal force to the feelings of the natives in the Peki and Misahohe districts and to the Awuna [Anlo] population of the Keta and Lomeland districts.¹²

It is clear therefore that the Gold Coast Government was aware of the Ewe problem. But though satisfaction was given the Dagomba people, the Ewe demand was not met. The people refused to accept the situation lying down. In 1919 as soon as the proposed partition of Togoland was made known, there was an immediate protest by the Ewe people in the Lome and Keta districts i.e. from both the French and British spheres. In September 1919 a number of Ewe chiefs sent a despatch to Lord Milner—the British Secretary of State for the Colonies. It stated that the possibility that part of Togo might be transferred to another power had filled them with great apprehension and that on account of tribal, territorial, educational and economic considerations they wished to be under British Rule. It further stated that the absorption of Togo into the French colonial empire would sever the Ewe in Togo from those of the south-eastern Gold Coast and seriously interfere with their economic progress. With an interesting sense of history the despatch concluded: “The feelings of His Lordship’s petitioners will be more clearly understood when they are considered side by side with those of the inhabitants of Alsace-Lorraine at the time of the German annexation in 1871”. Further protests by the Ewe states of the Gold Coast resulted in the newly constituted Congress of British West Africa taking up their case with the British Government in 1920. It did not succeed.

Having failed to make any impression on the two mandatory governments, the Ewe chiefs and people next tried to make representations to another power which they hoped would exercise some favourable influence on their behalf. Accordingly a note was handed to President Harding of the United States in 1921 which stated *inter alia* “that Togoland handed to a government other than Britain is a ruin to Togoland because of its connexion with the Gold Coast”. Further protests were sent to President Wilson in 1922 and to Ormsby Gore in 1926. All available avenues of lobbying were tapped to no avail.¹³

Now in view of the persistence of these petitions, and the fact that in the case of Dagomba the colonial powers were willing to oblige, it is necessary

¹² British Parliamentary Papers. Accounts and Papers vol. XLVII—1914 and 7872 London 1915, pp. 51–52.

¹³ For details of these petitions cf. U.N. Trusteeship Council Document T/81 of 3/12/1947, memo prepared by the secretariat.

to find out why France and Britain consistently turned a deaf ear to the Ewe demand. A survey of the documents creates the impression that the administering powers and the Ewe people had been arguing at cross purposes. They had conflicting ideas as to what constituted the indigenous political unit or group that should not be split. While the Ewe people doubtlessly thought in terms of the entire Ewe country as the unit that should be placed under one administration, the British Government for example thought in terms of individual Ewe subtribes. Therefore while it was prepared to consider favourably cases in which people were cut off from their farms or subtribes split into two,¹⁴ it was not prepared to consider the Ewe country as one political entity.

The British attitude was articulated by Capt. Lilley, a former District Commissioner in Togoland under British Mandate: "It would not have made any difference to the Ewe tribe had the division of say Kuma been placed in the British Zone or that of Leklebi in the French. The international boundary has in no wise divided the Ewe-speaking people as a tribe. Though the Ewe-speaking people may have originally been a connected tribe, they have never been such since the exodus from Nuatja. Since that time they have been independent clans".¹⁵ The Ewe retort was that this kind of argument glossed over the fact that the setting up of a colonial international boundary cutting across the country fossilized the subtribal boundary lines. The colonial order brought a new complexity and dimension, hence new answers and settlements were called for. Granted the fact of the colonial status of the Ewe people, the only means of approximating to the contact, identification and co-operation in pre-colonial times, would be the unification of the entire tribe under one colonial rule.

Having failed to make an impression on the administering powers, the Ewe people next carried their petition on to a different platform. When the mandates over the former German colonies were established, the task of supervising the mandated territories was entrusted to a Permanent Mandates Commission which operated the mandate system on behalf of the League of Nations. The mandatory powers were obliged to submit to the P.M.C. annual reports on the situation in the mandated territories. The P.M.C. was to examine these reports and advise on all matters concerning the observance of the mandates. It was also entitled to receive petitions from the inhabitants of the mandated territories or from any other source.

The Ewe chiefs and people made full use of this last obligation and competence of the P.M.C. A number of petitions, requests and memoranda were

¹⁴ cf. Report by H.M. Government in U.K. to League of Nations on Administration of Togoland under British Mandate for the year 1929, pp. 6-7. In 1929 exchange of territory was agreed upon between France and Britain to avoid splitting the Akposso division in French and Adjuti division in British Mandates.

¹⁵ P.M.C. 35th session Oct.-Nov. 1938, C.418 M.262 1938 VI, 2nd meeting, p. 18.

sent to the League of Nations through the P.M.C.¹⁶ The petitions dealt with a wide range of requests. Some referred to specific inconveniences. Some like those of the notables of Anecho and the first petition from the chiefs and people of Woame asked for a modification of the customs frontier, for arrangements to permit the free movement of persons and commodities. Others like the second and third petitions of the *Bund der deutschen Togolander* and one from Sosuvi recounted grievances and incidents which in some cases had, they claimed, led to bloodshed in Togoland under French Mandate.¹⁷ Those of Woame and Akposso-Buem dealt with instances in which people living near the frontier had their farms and homes separated by the boundary.¹⁸ The Petition from the *Bund* protested against the assignment of part of the former German Togoland to France and requested the return of the entire territory of Togoland to Germany.

Unlike the situation later under the Trusteeship Council, the Permanent Mandates Commission dealt with these petitions rather perfunctorily. In fact the composition of the membership of the commission entirely by the mandatory powers was not such as to predispose it to a thorough investigation of complaints emanating from colonies and mandated territories. It declared the petitions demanding the return of Togoland to Germany as incompatible with the provisions of the mandates system.¹⁹ On the basis of unattested and unverified statements made by the mandatory powers, the allegations about atrocities and disabilities were dismissed as groundless. As far as the frontier difficulties were concerned, the P.M.C. expressed the hope that the mandatory powers would take the appropriate measures to meet the situation. This evaded the real issue. As far as the really crucial issue was concerned, both the administering authorities and the P.M.C. were reluctant to open the question of the boundary line. For example in 1928 during the fourteenth session of the commission, the boundary question came up for discussion in response to the petition from the chiefs and people of the Woame district in French Togo. Ransford Slater, the Governor of the Gold Coast and currently the British representative on the commission said: "It had been hoped that as a result of the war and subsequent division of Togoland, it would be possible to eliminate entirely any division of the tribes. As far as the northern section was concerned, the division of territory had

¹⁶ For an inventory of petitions sent to the League of Nations cf. P.M.C. Documents, *passim*; also Trusteeship Council Document T/81 of 3/12/1947. The following petitions re the Gold Coast-Togoland border were submitted to the P.M.C. (1) Petition from the *Bund der deutschen Togolander*, 7th session; (2) Petition from the *Bund der deutschen Togolander*, 11th session; (3) Petition from the *Bund der deutschen Togolander*, 13th session; (4) Petition from the chiefs and inhabitants of Woame, 15th session; (5) Petition from the notables of Anecho region, 22nd session; (6) Petition from Sosuvi, 24th session; (7) Petition from the President of the National Rulers Society of Togoland, 26th session, (8) Petition from the *Bund der deutschen Togolander*, 25th session; (9) Petition from the chiefs and inhabitants of Woame, 26th session; (10) Petition from J. A. Agboka of the *Bund*, 34th session.

¹⁷ P.M.C. 11th session 1927, Petitions.

¹⁸ P.M.C. 15th session, C.305 M.105 1929 Annex 10, p. 257.

¹⁹ P.M.C. 15th session, C.305 M.105 VI, p. 10.

been successful in this respect but the tribes in the south were not satisfied. It was however the British Government's policy to restrain the tribes from reopening questions which must be regarded as having been finally settled in 1919 and 1922 and I had always assumed that it would be improper for the local government to do so".²⁰ The hint was taken. The P.M.C. was always wary of embarrassing individual mandatory powers as far as the situations within their mandatory territories were concerned.

Throughout its life from 1922 to 1939 therefore, even though the League of Nations (through the Permanent Mandates Commission) was aware of the disabilities resulting from the partition of the Ewe territory, it made no serious attempt to end the partition. Instead it was mainly concerned about getting the administering powers to remove this and that particular disability or inconvenience. The nearest the administering authorities themselves came to meeting the Ewe demands, was the guarantee given in 1928 that individual family or subtribal rights to land on either side of the boundary would continue to be enjoyed by the owners.²¹

Some material progress was achieved during the period of the League of Nations. Just as Russia had tried to kill Polish nationalism in the late nineteenth century by providing her Polish subjects with some material well-being, so was it expected that this material progress would assuage the Ewe feeling of injustice. However the fact that this material progress was not uniform (thanks largely to the different policies pursued by Britain and France) only served to underline, as far as the people were concerned, the obnoxiousness of the division and consequent development of one people along different lines.

Some of the details of this divergence will now be looked at.

When the mandates over the two Trust Territories of Togo were conferred, Britain was allowed by the terms of the mandate to administer her mandate area as an integral part of the Gold Coast. For practical purposes, the predominantly Ewe southern section of British Mandated Togoland was administered as part of the Gold Coast and formed part of the same administrative province as the Ewe States of the Gold Coast.²² To complement the examples of Anlo and Peki which had long been viable political units of local administration or indirect rule, the Gold Coast Government encouraged the multiplicity of towns and chiefdoms into which the British Mandated Togoland Ewes had been split in German times, to amalgamate into confederacies. By 1939 all the Ewe subtribes in this region except five had amalgamated into four large states, *viz.* Akpini,²³ Asogli, Avatime and Atando.

²⁰ P.M.C. 14th session, C.568 M.179 VI, p. 20.

²¹ P.M.C. 15th session, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

²² P.M.C. 3rd session, A.19 1923 VI, 4th meeting.

²³ P.M.C. 19th session Nov. 1930, C.634 M.262 1930 VI, p. 36; P.M.C. 21st session Nov. 1931, C.830 M.411 1931 VI, p. 41.

These became the recognized units of local administration. Each had a State Council which under the presidency of the Paramount Chief could make bye-laws on all matters pertaining to the general good of the individual state. The states generally performed all functions of local government under the supervision and with the advice of administrative officers. They administered a number of minor public services. However the Ewe people of the mandate area had no representation on the Legislative Council, the law-making body of the Gold Coast. Anlo and Peki on the other hand by virtue of their membership of the Provincial Councils instituted in 1925 could be deemed to be represented.

In French Togo on the other hand the chiefs enjoyed a much smaller degree of authority and judicial competence. At all levels administration was carried on through government officials and chiefs appointed by the government. Villages were grouped into administrative units. Three categories of chiefs came to be appointed: village chiefs, ward or district chiefs, and chiefs of cantons.²⁴ These were appointed by the Administration and were usually from amongst literate employees of the government—clerks, interpreters, etc. To all intents and purposes these chiefs were officials. They carried out the orders of the administrative officers. As far as participation in the formulation of administrative policy went, a token gesture was made by instituting Councils of Notables in 1924. These councils were to advise the administrative officers. Initially members were chosen by the Commissioner of the Republic (as Togo was called); later on members were elected for terms of three years. In practice the councils enjoyed little influence over the decisions of the administrative officers.

The Ewe states of the British sphere enjoyed some of the economic development that took place in the Gold Coast. Generally however economic development was limited to increased cocoa production. Production rose more than three-fold between 1923 and 1938.²⁵ The Agricultural Department ran a demonstration farm, employed an inspector of produce and an agricultural survey officer. In the area of French Togo also there was some economic development due to government attempts to increase agriculture. The most important step in this direction was the establishment of Provident Societies in 1934. These were to provide the local peasant farmers with credit for the purchase of seeds and equipment. The government provided subsidies for each society. Loans were made to individual members of the societies. These Provident Societies promoted agricultural development by financing the purchase of machines like coffee decorticators, the establishment of nurseries, the supply of plants, the purchase of livestock etc. On the other hand an economic report in 1939 claimed that only a small number of the

²⁴ P.M.C. 33rd session Nov. 1937, C.551 M.388 1937 VI, 11th meeting, p. 107.

²⁵ From 3,542 tons to 12,316 tons in 1938 equivalent to 8 per cent of the total Gold Coast output.

indigenes were permanently employed in commercial and agricultural enterprises, i.e. 1,481 in the entire country.²⁶ While the Ewe people in the British sphere continued to be free from direct taxation, their brothers in the French area were subject to a number of direct taxes like labour and poll taxes. An increase in labour tax and market dues in 1932 led to serious demonstrations.²⁷

Some formal education was provided directly and indirectly by both mandatory governments. In the British sphere the government did not run any schools. It was the missions—Roman Catholic, Bremen (*Norddeutsche Missionsgesellschaft*) and A.M.E. Zion Church—that provided education. The government however granted them subsidies when certain stipulations were met. On the eve of the 2nd World War there were 83 assisted and 37 non-assisted schools in British Togo, and government subsidy to the schools amounted to £11,336. In all 6,000 boys and 1,500 girls were in school. There were 7 grades besides the infant class in the educational course. In the early grades tuition was provided in Ewe and after the 3rd grade English became the medium of instruction. Parents paid fees ranging from 3d. to 6d. per month for infants, 1/- to 1/4d. for standards 1 to 3, and 1/8d. to 2/2d. for standards 4 to 7.

In French Togo on the other hand a number of schools were operated by the government besides government subsidies being given to the missions. In contrast to the situation in the British sphere, instruction was in French throughout. The local language was not taught at any stage at all. The mission schools had to follow a syllabus identical to the one of the government schools. The education course comprised a primary, a senior primary, and a secondary or complementary stage. Primary education was fee-free, and students who got into secondary schools but whose parents could not afford it had their fees paid in whole or part by the government. By 1939 there were 53 government schools with a pupil roll of 4,902. The protestant and catholic missions had a roll of 1,245 and 4,540 respectively.²⁸

In the field of health services, development in the British sphere was inadequate. Apart from a hospital at Keta in Anlo and another at Akuse outside the Ewe country but within reach of it, no development took place. In the French area, a vigorous health service was operated. There was improvement on what was inherited from the Germans. As the Ewe section was the seat of the government it accordingly had a concentration of essential social services. Its regional capitals like Lome, Anecho and Atakpame boasted hospitals, and there were dispensaries in its other parts. At these hospitals and health centres, free medical service was given to *bona-fide* paupers.

²⁶ P.M.C. 36th session June 1939, C.170 M.100 1939, 7th meeting, p. 57.

²⁷ P.M.C. 24th session Oct.-Nov. 1933, C.619 M.292 1933 VI, 7th meeting, pp. 52-54, and 123-126.

²⁸ P.M.C. 36th session June 1939, C.170 M.100 1939 VI, 6th meeting, p. 58.

Generally therefore, development in the Ewe country taken as a whole was varied. But it was not only this. Policy in the British and French spheres was animated by different colonial philosophies. British policy took account of the indigenous culture of the people and tried to provide for its development. French policy on the other hand was one of "assimilation". It was aimed at converting the dependent people into citizens of France. It therefore aimed at imbuing the educated indigenous community with the best that French culture could offer instead of developing the indigenous culture. As the people saw it, this was inimical to the true development of the Ewe as one people. Consequently, the provision of some amount of social service notwithstanding, the division of the Ewe country between two totally different administrations was felt by the people to be unjust and this led to widespread dissatisfaction both among literate and illiterate Ewe.

The problem of partition therefore remained a continued source of irritation and dissatisfaction to the people. Agitation became more and more intense. With the outbreak of the 2nd World War the tempo mounted. Most Ewe people expected that the outbreak of war between the European nations and the anticipated change in the political pattern would provide another opportunity for the revision of colonial boundaries in Africa, during which process the Ewe demand would be met provided the pressure was kept on. Besides, the war accentuated the difficulties of the frontier and brought into focus the other material disabilities concomitant to political partition. During the war difficulties arose between France and Britain. Contact between the various Ewe people in the British and French zones became very difficult and sometimes altogether impossible particularly in the years 1940-42. Till 1940 there had been continuous traffic between the two sections of Togo because the frontier did not constitute a barrier. The currencies of both territories circulated alongside each other in either territory. This situation changed in June 1940, when after the fall of France to Germany the government of French West Africa supported the puppet Vichy government. The pro-Vichy government closed the frontier between the French and British sections of Togoland. French West Africa including French Togo was cut off from France by an allied blockade and was unable to maintain the trade on which it had lived. This meant that during this period French Togo had to rely on its own resources and live within the closed economy of F.W.A. This occasioned a good deal of economic hardship. In 1943 the allied occupation of North Africa forced the government of F.W.A. to surrender the control of F.W.A. to men loyal to De Gaulle. French West Africa was united with the Comité of National Liberation in June 1943. French West Africa including Togo re-entered the war. In the case of Togo it became necessary to place the country on a war production footing. The British and other French African territories which had been at war since 1940 had succeeded in stepping up their production to the level demanded

by the allied armament programme. Overnight French Togo and French West Africa as a whole had to adjust themselves to the same rhythm.

The hardships of the war naturally intensified the demands for unification and various organizations throughout the entire Ewe country and elsewhere took up the demand. Agitation for unification, as has been shown, did not begin with the privations and inconveniences incident to the closing of the frontier during the 2nd World War. However, without doubt this was a powerful stimulus to greater agitation. Throughout the war period Ewe-owned newspapers repeatedly attacked the partition in general and the French administration in particular.

On the 10th December 1940, Chief Kwadzo Dei X of Peki petitioned the Governor of the Gold Coast in the following words, "Nothing will give me more pleasure than to see a United Ewe people after the War."²⁹ In February 1943, he again reminded Governor Burns, "a united Eweland after the war is what we are looking forward to as a means of real advancement for the Ewe people, as it was before the German administration". On the 17th February 1943, Asogli, one of the newly amalgamated states in British Mandated Togo, petitioned the British Government to annex French Togo to British Togo. On the 20th September all the Ewe paramount chiefs of British Togo, expressing the views of the entire population, petitioned Oliver Stanley, the Secretary of State for Colonies, currently on a visit to the Gold Coast: "Whatever damage had been done already by the division into British and French Mandated Togos could easily be restored if the whole country [i.e. Togo] should be under one Government and be administered as a colony. However if owing to international agreements, the whole country can't be placed under British Government, we would be satisfied with the removal or moderation of import and export restrictions which had been formed and the barrier between the 2 zones".³⁰

The Ewes in the Gold Coast were not to be outdone. As has been seen, Kwadzo Dei of Peki had already sent a number of protests. On the 21st September 1943, Anlo also petitioned the Secretary of State for the removal of the frontier that had been created and hitherto maintained by the various governments exercising political authority within the area stretching eastwards from Atiteti to Grand Popo. "This has operated detrimentally against the original unity and aspirations of the inhabitants of the area. We beg that the removal of these frontiers with the consequent annexation to the Gold Coast, the territories that lie between the Keta district and the river Mono be given the paternal attention when a much desired political adjust-

²⁹ *cf.* U.N. Trusteeship Council Debates, Annexes Vol. 2, 1947, 2nd session, Appendix A.

³⁰ *cf. ibid.* for details of the various petitions from traditional rulers of the different parts of the Ewe country and various bodies of the Ewe people, to representatives of the British Government or some other authority concerned, for the unification of Eweland under one and the same administration.

ment of territorial boundaries in Africa comes to be considered at the close of the World War". On the 24th August 1944, the Asogli State Elders addressed Governor Burns. "The British Government has promised us self-government. Equally with self-government we value the restoration of Ewe unity. If at present nothing can be done to give us unity with our families in French Togo, at least a public promise can be given that union will be achieved within a definite time of 10–15 years. During that period the terms of union can be worked out and thereafter the Ewe people will be able to go forward together to full development".³¹ Now the demand for unification presupposed the belief in the need and the ability of the various sections of the Ewe people to live and work together as one people.

It may be argued that as a people who considered themselves essentially one it should not have been very difficult for the Ewe people to come together. But then, as has been suggested, the colonial phase had imposed a new dimension on Ewe affairs. The people had been subjected to differing colonial systems. Could they still co-operate after the exigencies of the colonial phase? It is worth noting that a number of developments had been taking place or were taking place; which developments revived the tradition of co-operation and gave substance to the expectation that the people on either side of the boundary could live in a single political system.

What has been called a cultural renaissance among the literate section of the Ewe people around 1940 led to a widespread pride in Ewe accomplishments, culture and history; and this in turn generated a high degree of cultural awareness. Ewe leaders of thought appealed to the past and the oneness of the people. Pupils in the Ewe schools in both the Gold Coast and Togo under British Mandate used primers which contained a version of the oral tradition about the Ewe past. Again people like Daniel Chapman and Father Henri Kwakumé wrote articles and booklets on aspects of Ewe history and culture. Again there were songs composed by Ephraim Amu emphasizing the oneness of the people. All these served to popularize and spread the ideal of unification.

Again, complementing the efforts of the Ewe intelligentsia, institutions like the Ewe Presbyterian Church helped to create a tradition of co-operation across the boundaries and hence to a certain extent played a part in unifying the different sections of the Ewe territory. The Ewe Presbyterian Church tried to serve all the Ewe people without regard to the frontiers. This policy was helped on by the fact that fairly early in its history, the African clergy (i.e. Ewes) acquired responsibility for the running of the church. The Ewe Presbyterian Church had developed out of the *Norddeutsche Missionsgesellschaft* (Bremen Mission) which had been operating in the Ewe territory since 1847. Before 1914 the *N.D.M.G.* had worked in the Ewe sections of both

³¹ *Vide* fn. 30 *supra*.

the Gold Coast and Togoland, thus providing some degree of unity. After 1917 the German missionaries were expelled from Togoland. Both the British and French governments then invited their own nationals to take their place. In the Gold Coast, the United Free Church of Scotland took over the church for a short time but soon it was decided to form an Ewe church which would be run by Ewe ministers. The Ewe Presbyterian Church was accordingly founded.

In Togoland under French mandate when the German missionaries were expelled in 1917 the local church was proclaimed independent. It was on its own till 1929 when the *Société des Missions de Paris* came to its aid. The Paris Society took over the former facilities of the *N.D.M.G.* by representing the indigenous protestants before the authorities and by helping to organize schools in accordance with the requirements for teaching French in the French Togo schools. The Ewe Evangelical Church in French Togo remained autonomous. But there was close co-operation between it and the Ewe Presbyterian Church of the English section. Both used the same bible translation and hymn book, and met in a general synod every three years to maintain church unity.

The church therefore contributed a good deal to the diffusion of the spirit of Ewe unity and also the building of the tradition of co-operation across the frontier.

The adoption of one variant of the Ewe language (Anlo) as the basis for literary Ewe again helped to diminish the linguistic difference between the various Ewe dialects.

Again the close relationship between the Ewe Presbyterian Church of the Gold Coast and Togoland under British Mandate and the Evangelical Church of Togoland under French Mandate, demonstrated the possibility of co-operation between the Ewes of the three territories in other fields as well.

Thus when the people clamoured for unification, the development they wanted was something which could be demonstrated to be possible and practicable.

Until the war period protest and petition for Ewe unification had come mainly from the traditional authorities—the chiefs. During the years of the war and the immediate post-war years, a new class of people emerged to organize and mobilize the people in the demand for unification and to make use of the favourable situation of the times, particularly of the United Nations and its Trusteeship Council system. Until 1940 although individual chiefs and Ewe states had continually petitioned for Ewe unification, there was no political organization to co-ordinate the campaign. On the other hand organizations aimed at achieving a unification of the two Togos (a different proposition) had been in existence since the 1920s. The most notable of these was the *Bund der deutschen Togolander*.

The association is reputed to have been originally founded by the Germans while they were still in Togoland. After the First World War and the assignment of Togoland to Britain and France, the association was re-organized at Accra by a group of old German-educated clerks etc. who found themselves out of work because they were literate only in German. They may genuinely have thought the German administration superior to the French administration. They desired the return of the Germans and from 1925 they began to send a number of petitions to the League of Nations demanding the return of the two mandated Togos to Germany. The declared aim of the *Bund* was "to watch over the welfare of our country to keep a close liaison with Germany and to defend the interests of Togo". It was alleged to have pestered the government of French Togo with claims and protests, and also to have distributed and posted tracts offensive to the government. It frequently reported "atrocities" in French Togo and demanded that the League of Nations make France quit Togo and restore the country to Germany.³² The Permanent Mandates Commission which studied these petitions on behalf of the League of Nations always replied that such demands were incompatible with the mandates and therefore outside the competence of the commission. Another organization dedicated to the unification of the two Togos was the "Togoland Union" formed in 1943 by a group of teachers in the southern section of British Mandated Togoland. It sought "to bring together through lawful means the two Togoland territories".

In the nationalist awakening that began to sweep through colonial Africa in general and West Africa in particular in the war and immediate post-war years, the Ewe demand for unification was given a new fillip. A new class and type of men came forward, and new methods began to be adopted to pile on the pressure. A number of organizations and parties began to spring up in the three sections of the Ewe country, dedicated to working towards unification. All the organizational techniques and political media which were to help mobilize the independence movement elsewhere in colonial Africa came into play. Parties run by a middle class intelligentsia and professional men instead of the traditional chiefs; youth movements; a nationalist press to whip up enthusiasm for the cause—all these came into use.

The first of the Ewe political parties dedicated to unification was the *Comité d'Unité Togolaise* (C.U.T.). It actually grew out of an earlier a-political organization—the *Comité d'Unité Togolaise du Nord et du Sud*. It was a social organization created by Governor Montagné to fight against the German claims for the restitution of Togo. It was an assembly of a large number of chiefs of both north and south French Togo who affirmed their attachment to France. One of its aims was to bridge the gap between the northern and

³² For details of the activities of the *Bund* cf.: P.M.C. 11th session July 1927, A.27 1927 VI Appendix A, p. 17; P.M.C. 13th session 1928, A.17 1928 VI; P.M.C. 21st session Nov. 1931, C.830 M.411 1931 VI, 22nd meeting, p. 159; P.M.C. 25th session May-June 1934, C.259 M.108 1934 VI, p. 145.

southern peoples of the territory. Not much was achieved in this regard. In about 1941 a number of the prominent Ewe intellectuals in Lome—Augustino de Souza, Sylvanus Olympio and Savi de Tove—revived the C.U.T. They found it tactical to adopt the old name for the practical purpose of obtaining official permission, but to all intents and purposes this was a new party aimed at achieving the unification of Ewes in the two Trust Territories and the Gold Coast.

The C.U.T.'s origin and transformation is illustrative of a general trend which characterized, not only the Ewe question, but also the mobilization of nationalist agitation for independence throughout colonial Africa. A number of organizations in the urban centres which in their origins were strictly social associations, came to provide the nuclei around which political parties were built. Starting with the C.U.T., the post-war years witnessed a proliferation of organizations in the three zones of the Ewe territory. These took their rise from a number of so-called "Improvement Associations", young men's associations etc. which were originally mainly literary or merely social and which had existed in the urban areas for some time. Now all these began to agitate for Ewe unification. Typical of these was the Ewe Unionist Association which sprang from the Ewe Union which had existed in Accra for a long time without any definite objectives. The new organization however carried a definite political objective.

Again symptomatic of the general post-war agitation in colonial Africa, a nationalist press came into being. In May 1945, partly in response to requests for help from the C.U.T. and partly as a result of the flowering of Ewe cultural nationalism, D. A. Chapman, an Ewe university graduate on the staff of Achimota Secondary School began to publish a monthly journal called *The Ewe Newsletter*. It aimed at stimulating Ewe cultural consciousness and at agitating for unification. The publication reminded the Ewe people of their disabilities. The maiden issue exhorted its readers:

The time has come for us to make a careful study of our problems and look ahead into the future

Today Eweland is divided into a western zone under British rule, and an eastern zone under French rule. Experience and the march of events have taught us that we must work for the eventual unification of the whole of Eweland. We feel the effects of the partition of our people but the colonial powers hold the key to the problem. For our own part however, it is essential that we should achieve without delay, mutual trust and co-operation within each State and among the various Ewe States and also establish sound and progressive native administrations.

Chapman also used the medium of the *Ewe Newsletter* to canvass the idea of an all-embracing organization to coordinate the efforts of the various

organizations working for unification. The editorial of the tenth issue in February 1946 states:

All the Ewe Unions and Societies throughout Africa must federate and appoint a central Committee to help in the solution of our problems. We all call upon our chiefs to work for the federation of all Ewe States to deal with this and other vital matters.

The individual requests of the various Ewe States have been ignored. United, their requests will be hard to resist. The Ewe chiefs and notables of French Togo have given me a shining example of solidarity in putting forward their views.

Chapman did the necessary ground work and on the 9th June 1946, drawn from the entire Ewe country, traditional chiefs, elders, and representatives of the several Ewe unions³³ attended a mammoth meeting at Accra either in person or by proxy. This All-Ewe Conference decided to establish three organs to help the cause: (1) The Ewe Central Committee, (2) The Ewe Working Committee, (3) The Ewe Central Fund.

The working committee comprising the President, the Secretary and the General Secretary of the All-Ewe Conference was empowered to act in all matters affecting the welfare of the Ewe people of the three zones. It was agreed that every male adult should contribute 4/- and every female adult 2/- to the central fund. A target of £10,000 was fixed for March 1947. The Conference was an amalgam of all the various organizations that strove for unification. Like the typical congress-type political organization, it claimed to represent all the Ewe people and embody the Ewe national will and aspirations. There is good reason to believe, and this had been attested by a British Colonial official,³⁴ that the objects and views which the Conference expressed were those of the great mass of the Ewe people, both literate and illiterate.

Thus when Sylvanus Olympio went before the Trusteeship Council in 1947 as delegate of the All-Ewe Conference to make oral representation, the Ewe problem was not being articulated for the first time. All it meant was that new methods were now being used in place of earlier expedients which had proved useless. It is clear however that the United Nations presented an important forum in which to air the Ewe grievances and bring the problem to the notice of the entire world.

With the death of the League of Nations Council in 1939 the supervision of the Mandated Territories had been terminated. On the conclusion of the war the question of the territories came into the picture once more. In January

³³ Some of these organisations and unions were: The Nafrico Progress League, The Ewe Benevolent Association, The Anyako Union, The Some Union, The Ewe-speaking Catholic Union, The Anecho Union, The Agome-Palime Union, The Adji Union, The Glidji Union, The Zewla Union, The Ewe-speaking Society, The Novisilele Habobo, The Ewe Charity Union, The Togoville Union.

³⁴ U.N. Trusteeship Council Debates, 2nd session, 1st Part, Document T/58 on 17/11/47.

1946 at a meeting of the newly formed United Nations General Assembly, Britain and France promised to draw up trusteeship agreements for the two Togos and place them under the U.N. Trusteeship system. By December the agreements were approved by the General Assembly, and approved as the Ewe intelligentsia pointed out without any reference whatsoever to the people of these territories. As early as on the 18th January 1946, the chiefs and notables of French Togo had cabled the Trusteeship Council renewing the "request that British and French Mandated Togolands be placed under the U.N. Trusteeship". On the 31st January this had been followed by another cable from the Ewe Unionist Association to the Trusteeship Council:

Ewe of the Gold Coast, the two Togos support cable from chiefs and notables of French Togo . . . Union of all Eweland under Trusteeship with Britain as administering authority strongly desired by Ewes.

There were cables from Ewe communities in places like Kumasi, Takoradi etc. in support of these sentiments.

Through the medium of the *Ewe Newsletter* Chapman kept the people informed about the state of affairs. The March and April 1946 issues carried excerpts from the debates of the Trusteeship Council on the Togo Mandates. On the 20th August 1946, the General Secretary of the All-Ewe Conference petitioned the British Government and the United Nations Organization:

Ewe people strongly protest against the partition of their homeland and against proposed perpetuation of this dismemberment of Eweland as envisaged in the Draft Trusteeship Agreement for British Mandated Togoland. Representatives of Ewes chosen by themselves should be allowed to be present at Trusteeship Council or Committee meeting to partake in discussion of the Draft terms of Trusteeship proposed for the British and French Mandated Togos.

As has been seen, the United Nations approved these draft agreements in December without any deference to this representation at all.

Most nationalist campaigns have been subject to a number of disabilities which either modified or hamstrung the nationalist drive, viz. traditional pre-colonial hostilities within the group or country; tensions between groups as a result of uneven development, acculturation and acquisition of modernity; tensions between the nationalistic westernised elite and the traditionalist chiefs and masses; and finally, differences within the ranks of the westernised elite itself.³⁵ Some of these disabilities definitely plagued the Ewe unificationist drive. Not all the Ewe people favoured unification. At the time when the campaign for unification was mounting up, a number of political parties were formed by Ewes and others who had objectives opposed to those of the majority of the Ewes. One of these was the Togoland Union, a political party established in 1943 in Togoland under British Mandate. It was founded by a group of teachers. Many of its members were Buem and not Ewe. It was

³⁵ Coleman, J. S., "Nationalism in Tropical Africa" in *American Political Science Review*, vol. 48, 1954, pp. 404-22.

emphatically opposed to Ewe unification. What it sought to achieve was the unification of the two Togos. The main reasons for its platform were firstly a desire to appeal to the non-Ewe groups in Togoland; but secondly and more important was the fear of domination by the Ewe of the Gold Coast. Following the establishment of British administration in British Mandated Togoland, many of the higher positions in the administration, in education and even in the Ewe Presbyterian Church tended to be filled by English-speaking Ewe from the Gold Coast, i.e. from Anlo and Peki. There was also the memory of Anlo's alignment with Akwamu and Ashanti against the people of this area in the 19th century. Basically it was this antagonism towards the Anlo and Peki Ewe people from the Gold Coast which accounted for the lack of support evinced by most Ewes from British Togo for a unified Eweland which would include the Ewes of the Gold Coast.

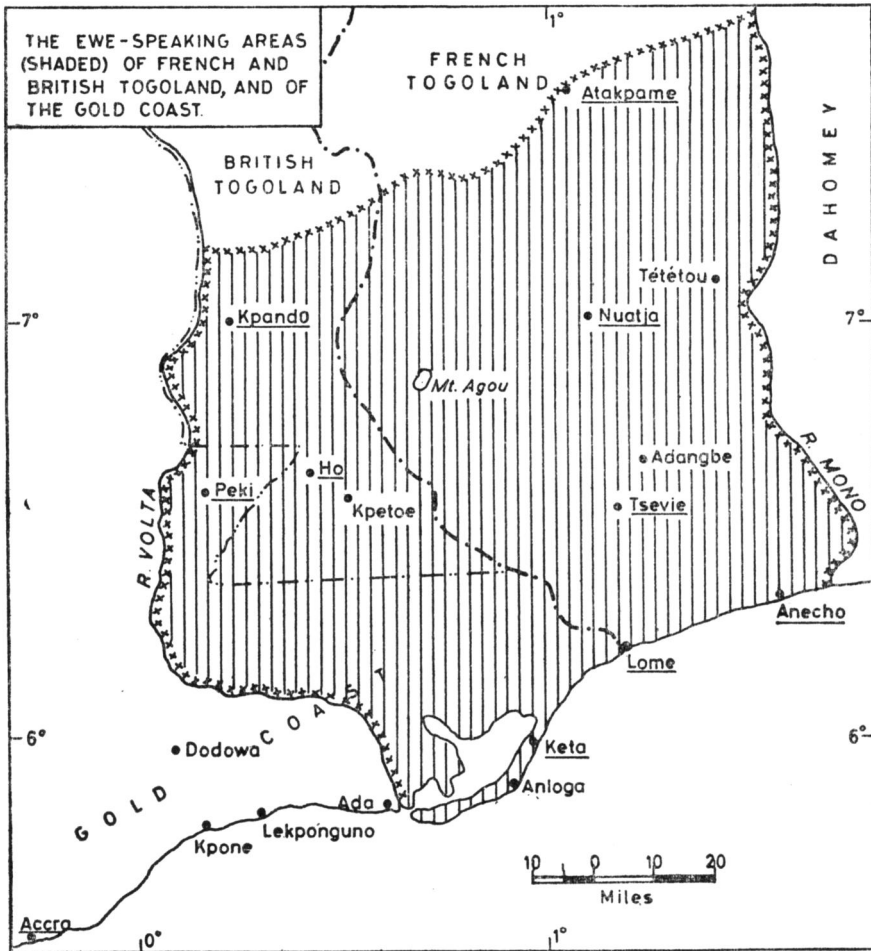
Another anti-Ewe unification party was the *Parti Togolais du Progrès*. It was created in 1946 in French Togo. Its objective was to oppose the platform of the unificationists. From its foundation it presented arguments against the creation of an Ewe state under a single administration. It however accepted in principle the future unification of the two Togos into a single independent state. What it actually stood for was that the individual parts of Togo should currently develop along separate ways. Again the composition of the membership of the party reveals the reasons and explanations for its stand. It was composed principally of Ewe and other southerners who held positions in the French government service or had in one way or the other benefited from the "présence française". They calculated that they would have to make some sacrifices if ever unification of Eweland came about.

To conclude, when in 1947 the demand for Ewe unification was mounted on a world platform and hence brought to the notice of the world at large, agitation had been going on for many decades. The great majority of the people demanded unification; but there was a sizable corpus of dissenting voices.

SOURCES REFERRED TO

Material for this article has been collected from a number of unpublished archival sources and published League of Nations and United Nations documents. The C.O. series refer to documents from the Colonial Office housed at the Public Record Office, London; G.N.A. refers to Ghana National Archives; P.M.C. series refer to published proceedings of the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations; T/ series refer to Trusteeship Council published documents.

SKETCH-MAP



Note in connection with the above, provided for readers of the articles on Ewe Unification and on Eweland's Adangbe, that southern Dahomey also speaks languages (Gũ, F5, Mahi, etc.) which can be classified as Ewe. Currently they are normally not so classified in ethnography, but are so classified in linguistics.—Editor.