

Democratic Breakdown in Nkrumah's Ghana

Working Paper

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Abstract: Why do some post-colonial democratic institutions survive while others do not? This chapter explores this question in the context of Ghana, the first colony to win its independence on the African continent and an example for other anti-colonial activists. On March 6, 1957, the British transferred power to a popularly elected nationalist party in a largely optimistic context. A creeping authoritarianism gradually eroded this optimism via a series of oppressive laws, culminating in the 1960 Republican Constitution which granted wide-ranging powers to the executive and signaled an end to Ghana's first democratic episode. Why did Ghana's democratic regime break down a mere three years after its inauguration? How did multi-party politics leading up to Independence transform into increasingly repressive one-party rule? Common explanations for democratic breakdown, including ethnic conflict and economic decline, fail to adequately explain this evolution. This chapter argues, rather, that the sources of this outcome lay in the nature of Ghana's colonial experience as a Limited Administrative Colony, characterized by late opportunities for self-rule and limited incorporation of the local population into the administrative apparatus before Independence.

The Gold Coast served as Britain's model African colony from 1946 to 1957 as progressive reforms guided the path toward Independence under a popularly-elected nationalist party in a largely optimistic context.¹ Indeed, post-WWII reforms included the first African majority legislature² and were initiated partly because the British deemed the Gold Coast to be the most politically advanced of the African dependencies, a 'model colony' ready for orderly and constitutional progress toward self-government.³ The Gold Coast did not exhibit the racial problems typically associated with colonies of white settlement such as Kenya or Zimbabwe. It was relatively prosperous from cocoa, bauxite, diamonds and gold, and it enjoyed significant reserves totaling nearly 200 million £ at Independence (Rooney, 2010, 21). The Gold Coast did not suffer from centrifugal ethnic conflicts, as, for example, Nigeria did, but had resolved these issues through peaceful negotiation and election.⁴ Rather, it enjoyed a mass-based independence movement led by a charismatic leader, Kwame Nkrumah, which pushed for early self-government and which the British greeted after 1951 with acquiescence.⁵ Finally, the colony's human capital was comparatively high; in the coastal regions, it had the highest literacy rate in

¹ In 1950, Governor Arden-Clarke condemns lawlessness and intimidation perpetuated by the CPP in the name of 'Positive Action' and says it damages the colony's movement to self-rule and its role as a pioneer among colonies for peaceful decolonization: "This is a critical time for the Gold Coast. This country is being watched by the eyes of the world. The Gold Coast is about to make a great constitutional advance. The world is wondering if the plan now being considered is before its time. It is asking whether the people of the Gold Coast have the capacity and the determination to shoulder their new responsibilities and undertake their complex task of building up and carrying on a good government under a new constitution. It would indeed be a disaster to this country if the impression was given to the outside world that the exponents of 'positive action' are representative of the people of this country of that 'positive action' is an example of the methods of government that will be adopted under the new constitution. ... Since the beginning of 1948 this country has been suffering from hooliganism, intimidation and threats of violence. Attempts have been made to subvert all constituted authority, to separate the people from their Chiefs, to bring the Chiefs and Chieftainship into disrepute and now to coerce Government by unlawful strikes designed to bring hardship and suffering on the people" (PRAAD ADM 14/2/58 Legislative Council Debates. Session 1950, Issue No. 1 (Vol. 1) 19 January 1950, p. 6-7).

² PRAAD ADM 14/2/47 Gold Coast Colony: Legislative Council Debates, 1946, Issue No. 2. (23 July 1946 – 24 July 1946)

³ Martin Wight writes in his 1947 assessment of the Gold Coast legislative council: "the Gold Coast people find themselves the pioneers of political advance and the touchstone of political competence in Africa" (207).

⁴ The National Liberation Movement (NLM) in the Ashanti Region was by far the strongest of these ethnic opposition movements, and yet at its peak during the 1956 elections, it was able to win only 12 of the 21 Legislative seats within its own Region and zero seats outside it (Austin 1970). Moreover, it was prepared to accept a compromise position to constitutional debates before Independence (Allman 1993, 166).

⁵ After Nkrumah became Leader of the Government in 1951 (Prime Minister in 1952), Governor Sir Arden-Clark (1949-1957) cooperated extensively with him to facilitate the transition to freedom. There was a degree of friendship, admiration and paternalism in the relationship of these two key figures (Rooney 1988).

Africa at 30% (Apter 1972, 8).⁶ As Apter (1972) describes, “For Great Britain, the Gold Coast is the showpiece of successful institutional transfer. It is the model to which people in the Colonial Office point, as do others anxious to see Africans democratically govern themselves” (8). Given this auspicious start, why did Ghana’s democracy break down after only three years?

Despite the country’s enviable position, Nkrumah’s government had within the first few years of Independence passed legislation that severely restricted political activities.⁷ The CPP leadership declared criticism of and opposition to the Government to be subversive and justified its repressive activities in the name of security, prosperity and national unity.⁸ Further, in 1959, Nkrumah officially fused the party and state, declaring: “Comrades, it is no idle boast when I say that...the Convention People’s Party is Ghana. Our Party not only provides the government but is the custodian which stands guard over the welfare of the people.”⁹ These activities culminated in the 1960 Republican Constitution which provided wide-ranging executive powers including the authority to appoint, dismiss and discipline members of the Public Service, dissolve the National Assembly, veto any Bill in whole or part, and give directive by ‘legislative instrument.’¹⁰

The central question of this chapter then is what led such an auspicious democratic start to become repressive one-party rule? It argues that two jointly necessary features for democratic survival were absent at Independence. Though a leader in numerous areas of development on the continent, Ghana suffered from a colonial philosophy much like its neighbors in which the British

⁶ Note that functional literacy was well below 20% across the entire Gold Coast territory suggesting variation within the colony (Foster 1965, 171).

⁷ These included the Deportation Act (1957), The Emergency Powers Bill (1957), The Avoidance of Discrimination Bill (1957), Preventive Detention Act (1958), Regional Assemblies Bill (1958), the Constitution (Repeal of Restrictions) Act (1958), Constitution Amendment Act (1959), and Sedition Bill (1959) (See PRAAD ADM 14/7 Ghana Parliamentary Debates 1957, 1958, and 1959).

⁸ At the inauguration of the Republic of Ghana in the House in 1960, Nkrumah’s sessional address explicates the primacy of internal security for the regime: “The Government are determined to ensure that a sound base is provided for the modern and stable society which we are endeavoring to build for our people in Ghana. For that reason we will adopt a most ruthless attitude to stamp out all corrupt and mercenary practices. Greater vigilance also will be exercised in maintaining and ensuring internal security and in rooting out all subversive elements” (PRAAD ADM 14/7/17 Ghana Parliamentary Debates. Official Report – First Series Volume 20. 4 July 1960, p.12).

⁹ Africa Evening News, 16 June 1959

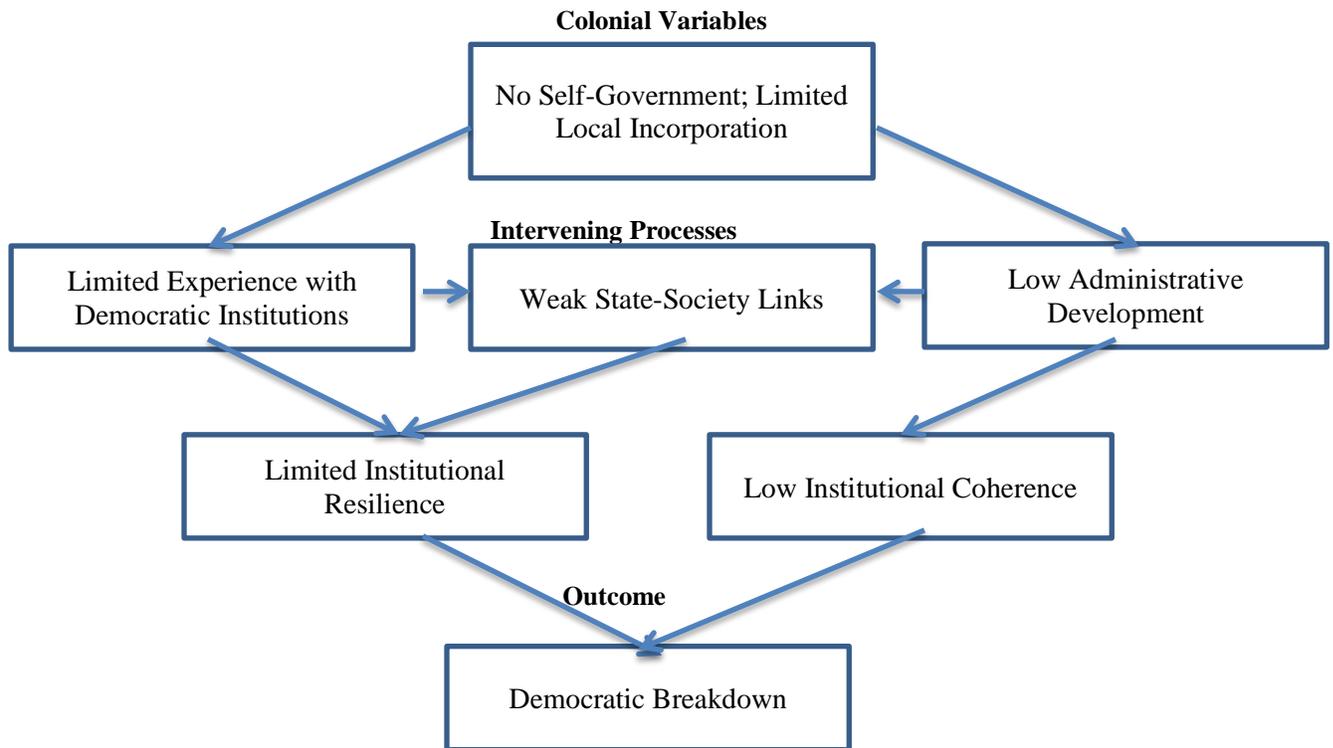
¹⁰ PRAAD RG 17/1/179 Republic (and Republican Constitution)(5/1/60-21/6/60) Nkrumah Papers. The Republican Constitution is also available in full in Austin (1970) Appendix C, pp.430-446.

permitted only late self-rule via democratic elections and limited local incorporation into the state administration before Independence. I label this type of colony a Limited Administrative Colony and argue that its legacy made democratic survival less likely.

A Theory of Limited Administrative Colonies and Democratic Breakdown

In Limited Administrative Colonies, the British conceded only late opportunities for self-rule and local incorporation into the administration until late. At Independence, these colonies thus faced the challenges of limited democratic experience, low administrative development and few formalized state-society links. In these colonies, inchoate democracies thus suffer from limited institutional coherence and resilience. Instead, informal networks dominated, hindering state effectiveness and undercutting the viability of democracy. Figure 1 illustrates this sequence:

Figure 1: Ghana: Limited Administrative Colony and Democratic Breakdown



In Ghana, the features and consequences of this type of colonial experience manifested as

follows. Despite a progressive 1946 Constitution, in 1948, riots catalyzed a series of rapid constitutional reforms. The British and the Gold Coast educated elite led these reforms with the intention to modernize political institutions in a gradual progression toward self-government.¹¹ By 1948, however, the Gold Coast social scene was not what it had been during the 1920s when gradual reforms were welcomed and applauded.¹² After the riots, a national party, the Convention People's Party (CPP), emerged and demanded 'Self-Government Now' (Austin 1967, 545). When the party won an impressive victory in partially direct elections in 1951, the British reasoned that the new nationalists would be the 'solution to the crisis,' and they moved to a plan for rapid decolonization (Crook 1986, 82). Six years later, the country would be fully independent.

Between 1951 and 1957, the Gold Coast held three national elections, two of which included direct elections in all regions of the country (1954 and 1956). Victorious in all three elections, the CPP governed alongside the British throughout the late-colonial period. Despite these successes, the CPP struggled to subsequently consolidate its authority while embracing democratic institutions.¹³ Governor Arden-Clarke (1958) describes this period as 'an atmosphere of perpetual crisis' (35).

Three factors explain the CPP's inability to consolidate its authority. First, up to this point the administration of the colonial state had been largely staffed by overseas officers. The campaign to reform the civil service was a longstanding one, but it had been met with little actual progress until after 1951.¹⁴ In 1949, the percentage of Africans in the total Civil Service was 10%, and less than 2% of these were in the Senior Service (ibid, Appendix 1). By 1954, this percentage had

¹¹ Nana Anor Adjaye II reflects this attitude well: "For a hundred years we have passed through the stage of, first of all, "No Seats"; then, next, "Nominated Seats"; then thirdly, "Elected Seats"; then, fourthly, "Unofficial Minority", and today, in one great bound, leaving a great many flights behind us, we have climbed on to the next but one or two steps in the rungs of the ladder of self-government" (PRAAD ADM 14/2/44 Gold Coast Colony: Legislative Council Debates. Session 1945, Issue No. 1 (19 March 1945, p.118-119).

¹² PRAAD ADM 5/3/63. Watson, Aiken. Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast, 1948.

¹³ Austin (1967) argues that this is perhaps a function of the fact that the anti-colonial battle was won so easily, in less than 2 years from the formation of the CPP, the British had made a promise to grant the colony independence (554).

¹⁴ PRAAD ADM 5/3/82 1951 A Statement on the Programme of the Africanisation of the Public Service

increased to 35% in the total Civil Service with only 7% of these in the Senior Service (ibid, Appendix 2). In short, less than three years before Independence, foreign officials still vastly dominated the state administration. As such, at Independence the Ghanaian service had few experienced personnel to draw on in order to gather information about the population it was to govern, let alone govern it.

Second, the CPP's limited experience with democracy exacerbated the problem of administrative weakness. The CPP proved to be quite skilled at the electoral game, able to mobilize the masses on a national scale (Bob-Milliar 2014). Its challenges were more pronounced, however, in governance, responsiveness to society and accountability in office. After gaining power, CPP officials were paradoxically both over-confident, such that they interpreted their electoral victory as a blank check for governing, and insecure, such that they interpreted any criticism as an attack on the state itself. Officials invested in the CPP's survival but were unwilling to stand up against it to preserve democratic principles. This manifested in three ways: excessive hostility toward opposition, internal party fractionalization, and cooptation of social groups and actors.

Finally, the CPP government's lack of knowledge of the population coupled with its limited democratic experience made it only very loosely connected to society. Even after 1951, politics remained intensely local. On the one hand, the CPP was frequently skillful at recognizing and exploiting local disputes.¹⁵ On the other hand, neither its party organization nor its resources were adequate by themselves to win all three pre-Independence elections without an additional

¹⁵ An example of this is the longstanding Brong-Ahafo/Asante dispute. In return for supporting the CPP as against the NLM, the ruling party granted this area its own region, passed on 20 March 1959 (PRAAD ADM 14/7/11 Ghana Parliamentary Debates. Official Report – First Series. Volume 14. 20 March 1959); Rathbone (2000) describes how this pattern was interwoven with contentious chieftaincy politics in which, particularly in the Akan areas, there were almost always disputes over secession, with numerous persons eligible for the stool but only one selected via popular support. This was accomplished by making promises to be fulfilled via patronage when on the stool and to stay in office, these promises needed to be fulfilled. Thus, both the campaign and the consequences of losing the battle over secession could be large at the local level and generate an out-group situation that promoted dissent. The CPP was able to exploit these local rivalries to its advantage.

attribute:¹⁶ the spoils of public office.¹⁷ As Austin (1967) notes: “Having been elected to office in 1951 on what was then an irresistible programme of ‘self-government now’, it was able to use its powers as a government to sharpen its appeal as a party. Thereafter, it could reward those who supported it and threaten its enemies with the withdrawal of government favour” (543). The CPP, as with other anti-colonial movements, came to power on the back of promises, which party officials sought to fulfill frequently through patronage.¹⁸ Meanwhile, the predatory state exacerbated social chaos, where CPP actors enflamed local rivalries in competition for state spoils.

In short, the CPP came to power with only limited experience with democratic institutions, weak formal links between the state and society and low levels of administrative development. When the newly independent regime faced opposition from outside and within its own party, it responded aggressively, passing numerous laws that undermined political liberties and democratic competition and participation. Rapidly, the party structure and the state became indistinguishable. After Independence, the state suffered from both low institutional coherence and resilience. The CPP government was unable to respond to challenges via the existing democratic framework and instead altered the rules of the game to one-party rule. In the remainder of this chapter, this argument is elaborated through three sections which expand on the nature of the intervening causal processes in Ghana: limited democratic experience as a result of bypassing early nationalists in post-War Gold Coast, weak state-society links exemplified in a

¹⁶ This inadequacy is suggested by Austin’s 1961 anthropological examination of elections in far northern rural constituencies in Ghana. His detailed empirics suggest first that the politics surrounding national elections in these remote spaces were hardly concerned with vague notions of independence and freedom, but were intimately connected with local rivalries and jealousies. Second, he notes that the actual electioneering process involved substantial amounts of revenue for contestants (not so much to buy votes as to establish goodwill), but that these funds always came from partnerships at the local office, not from the central Accra office. Even by 1956, there did not exist a CPP party office in the two constituencies he examines. Finally, however, what the CPP did have as an advantage in 1956 was a record of government patronage.

¹⁷ One of the most widely used sources of government funds came from the Cocoa Purchasing Company (PRAAD ADM 5/3/102 1956 Jibowu’s Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Affairs of the Cocoa Purchasing Company Limited and Government Purchasing in regard to the future constitution and control of statutory Boards and Corporations in the Gold Coast (1 September 1956).

¹⁸ The most infamous of these was surely, “Seek ye first the political kingdom and all other things will be given unto you” (Nkrumah 1960, 2; Biney 2011, 3).

case study of the politics of chieftaincy, and low administrative development despite longstanding appeals for reform. Finally, the chapter examines the emergence of Ghana's one-party state between 1957 and 1960 in order to demonstrate how these colonial era variables manifested to bring Ghana's first democratic episode to an end.

Bypassing Early Nationalists: Limited Democratic Experience in Post-War Gold Coast

The Gold Coast was heralded in 1947 as a pioneer amongst African colonies for its advanced political development.¹⁹ Between this period and independence, however, the British bypassed those with the longest political experience for control of the state in favor of a national commoners' party. The commoners' party governed for three years of self-rule in a state of perpetual crisis before Independence. During this period, the government and opposition developed a hostile and violent relationship characterized by attack and counter-attack. This state of perpetual crisis set the stage for and defined CPP government officials' political experience, conditioning their approaches to dissent and opposition politics after Independence. Governing officials invested heavily during this period in securing the inchoate CPP from internal and external threats, rather than nurturing the institutions of democracy. After Independence, these tactics escalated further until the party and state became indistinguishable.

This chapter illustrates this sequence of events in several parts. First, it provides an overview of pre-WWII political developments and the early nationalist activities of the Gold Coast educated elites. Then, it examines the rise of the nationalist commoner's party and the Independence struggle. Third, it look at the CPP in office in order to demonstrate the evolution of the party's informal governance style. Finally, it examines the rise of an opposition and the nature of contests over the Independence Constitution.

Pre-WWII Political Developments: Bypassing Early Nationalists

¹⁹ The Gold Coast's role as an example for other colonies on the continent was emphasized repeatedly throughout decolonization. In 1946, both the message on behalf of His Majesty the King and the British Governor emphasize the importance and significance of this constitutional development not just for the Gold Coast, but as a model for other African colonies, the Governor noting: "make no mistake about it – we are being watched" (PRAAD ADM 14/2/47 Gold Coast Colony: Legislative Council Debates. Session 1946, Issue No. 2. (23 July 1946 – 24 July 1946), p. 6)

What is striking about Gold Coast political developments prior to WWII is that the educated elites, those most familiar with “the laborious, inadequate years of apprenticeship which [they] had been obliged to accept as members of the early legislative councils” did not inherit the state (Austin 1967, 555). Indeed, they were bypassed twice, first in the Guggisburg Constitution of 1925 by the chiefs and again in the 1951 election by the commoners’ party. Their development is nonetheless significant because 1) they waged the battles that were picked up by the CPP after WWII, 2) they formed the primary opposition to the CPP after 1951 and 3) although the Gold Coast was perhaps the most politically advanced among Limited Administrative colonies in 1946, it failed to capitalize on potential democratic experience because this small group was, after 1948, rapidly marginalized²⁰.

The Gold Coast educated elites gained influence with the colonial administration from 1897 when they formed the country’s first political movement, the Aborigines Rights Protection Society (ARPS). For the next twenty years, they served as the spokesmen for the chiefs and people. The primary objectives of the ARPS were not so much colonial overthrow as progressive integration into the existing governing apparatus and protection from colonial encroachment on traditional domains.²¹ Thus, during the early 20th century, the educated elites and chiefs were largely cooperative.

The shared goals and methods of the educated nationalists and chiefs conflicted in the early 1920s, however. Seeking greater integration into the colonial administration and especially the legislature, J.E. Casely Hayford formed the National Congress of British West Africa in 1919 (Holmes 1972, 423-435). When the Congress bypassed consultation with the chiefs prior to advocating reform,²² Governor Guggisburg and the favored chief at the time, Nana Sir Ofori

²⁰ Bob-Milliar (2014) refers to this group as the ‘Reactionary Lawyers.’

²¹ The ARPS Constitution of 1907 puts down as its Objects and Aims: a) To inculcate to members the importance of continued loyalty to the British Crown and b) To be the medium of communication and right understanding between the Government and the people (RAGC CPC 1/2 Constitution of Gold Coast ARPS 1907, ARPS Papers)

²² It was less the aspirations of the Congress than their method that created a rift with the chiefs. The ARPS and Congress were jointly considering schemes for electoral changes between 1918 and 1921 but internal disagreements delayed their filing requests with Governor Guggisburg, and in 1920 the Congress petition bypassed the Governor and

Atta,²³ drew up the Constitution of 1925 which entrenched chiefly authority at the expense of these elites.²⁴ The Constitution created Provincial Councils which would “constitute the channels through which Government for the first time could become acquainted with the views of the people as a whole” (Wight 1947, 48). This was a stark rejection of the role the educated Africans (ARPS) had played since 1897.²⁵

For the next two decades, the educated elites variously selected from two paths of resistance: cooperate with the chiefs to push for gradual change within the colonial framework or work to have the Constitution repealed.²⁶ The majority of the educated elite selected the former option and embraced an admittedly conservative brand of politics. While relations were tense, they cooperated with the chiefs, brought grievances to the colonial rulers via the few elected chiefs on the legislative council, and sent joint delegations to London.²⁷ In other words, this group of educated elites was neither anti-colonial nor anti-chieftaincy as they pragmatically consented to their subordinate position and worked toward gradual change.²⁸

was sent direct to London (Holmes 1972, 428-29). It had been up until that point an unwritten rule that the early nationalists would consult with the chiefs before pushing for reforms or protesting against legislation by the colonial government. (NAGC CPC 1/7 Resolutions passed at the Conference of Natural Rulers with Executive Committee of the GCARPS held at Cape Coast in March 1926, ARPS Papers).

²³ The split between the chiefs and intelligentsia in 1920 was also highly personalized between Nana Sir Ofori Atta, Omanhene of Akym Abuakwa, and J.E. Casely Hayford. The former contributed greatly to the war effort and became the favored colonial collaborator until he died in 1943. He was appointed to Legislative Council from 1916 and was made the first African member of the Governor’s Executive Council in 1942 (Holmes 1972, 421-25).

²⁴ The Constitution was progressive, as it included the first elective element, but the method of election proved controversial. Only three municipal members were directly elected, and six were elected through the new Provincial Councils of Chiefs (PRAAD ADM 14/2/44 Legislative Council Debates. Session 1945, Issue No. 1 (6 March 1945 – 19 March 1945), p. 118-119.)

²⁵ In a petition to the House of Commons in 1934, the ARPS declare themselves the “duly constituted and sole authorized representatives of the Kings, Rulers and Chiefs of the GC” as provided by the formation of the ARPS in 1897 (RAGC CPC 1/18 Gold Coast Aborigines Rights Protection Society Petition (to the House of Commons) 1934, ARPS Papers).

²⁶ In 1934, the Chiefs and intelligentsia jointly protest the colonial Waterworks and Sedition Bills. The ARPS refused to participate in their delegation, however, and sent their own contingent to London. When the Secretary of State for the Colonies refused to meet with the latter, as non-representative of the people of the Gold Coast, they stayed on for two years. By the time they return, not having accomplished much, the organization was in serious financial straits (NAGC CPC 1/163 GCARPS Delegation 1934, ARPS Papers).

²⁷ Sedition and Waterworks Bills in the 1930s

²⁸ This was for a number of reasons. Foremost, the Provincial system of the 1920s was such that the elite had to defer to the wishes and interests of their paramount chiefs, thus serving as a restraining influence on too radical demands for political change. The alternative was to accept a marginalized position of seemingly futile radical politics that the ARPS was currently occupying. Second, the educated elite not infrequently had ties to the traditional class. Thus, while Nana Ofori Atta was one of the principal architects of the Provincial system that had locked the elites outside of their position of power, J.B. Danquah was his nephew and there remained a sense of ambiguity about the proper relationship between these groups from this cross-over. Thus, the tension but also partnership of the chiefs and elites characterized

In this state of affairs, the chiefs and elites jointly petitioned the British for a revised Constitution during the interwar years (Holmes 1972, 818; Wight 1947, 199). The 1946 Burns Constitution introduced an African unofficial majority (indirectly elected), brought the Ashanti and Colony regions together in one Legislature for the first time, and created the first Territorial Council in the North. While the Burns Constitution was heralded as a landmark in Gold Coast history,²⁹ chiefs continued to dominate African participation.³⁰ Both the educated elites and chiefs initially approved this evolution, but the former soon became disenchanted.³¹

It is within this political context that the educated elites formed the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) in August of 1947.³² This was the first post-1945 political organization, but it was itself the product of various political associations, societies, and movements from earlier

the politics of the 1930s and 1940s out of both necessity and desire. It was through this partnership and three years of consultation that the constitutional proposals were drawn up with agreement of all factions on what to submit to the colonial government in 1944 (Holmes 1972, 830).

²⁹ For example, member of the Legislative council, Nana Anor Adjaye II commends the progressive Constitution, noting: “Your Excellency, I desire first of all to thank Your Excellency for the new and epoch-making Constitution. It has, for one thing, inspired the peoples of this country with renewed confidence, making our hopes refreshed. In our destiny within the Empire, we conceive it our duty and prerogative to climb the steps of freedom which have been held out to us from on top. And for a hundred years we have been climbing the upward steps, unwearied, undaunted. For a hundred years we have passed through the stage of, first of all, “No Seats”; then, next, “Nominated Seats”; then thirdly, “Elected Seats”; then, fourthly, “Unofficial Minority”, and today, in one great bound, leaving a great many flights behind us, we have climbed on to the next but one or two steps in the rungs of the ladder of self-government” (PRAAD ADM 14/2/44 Legislative Council Debates. Session 1945, Issue No. 1 March 19, 1945).

³⁰ The new legislative council included 6 officials, 5 directly elected members for the municipalities (2 for Accra and 1 each for Cape Coast, Kumasi, and Sekondi-Takoradi), 13 indirectly elected members through the Provincial Councils in the Colony and Ashanti, 6 nominated members by the Governor and any extraordinary members appointed by the Governor. Thus, it was an African majority (24/30), but not a directly elected African majority (5/30). (PRAAD ADM 14/2/47 Legislative Council Debates. Session 1946, Issue No. 2. (23 July 1946 – 24 July 1946).

³¹ Member of the Legislative Council, Mr. Moore, congratulates the advanced constitution, but simultaneously notes that it has come up short: There is no doubt that this Constitution is not all that could be desired, but it is certainly a long step forward in our political advance” (ADM 14/2/47 Gold Coast Colony: Legislative Council Debates. Session 1946, Issue No. 2. Accra: Government Printing Dept. (23 July 1946 – 24 July 1946), p. 32). Part of the reason for this was that, under the leadership of Danquah, the chiefs and the elites were in a better relationship leading up to the July 1946 elections than they had been in since before the institutionalization of indirect rule via the provincial councils in the 1920s. Thus, when the elites approved of the indirect elections for the Legislative Council through the territorial councils, they perhaps naively believed that the chiefs would use part of their allotment to elect non-chiefs to these positions (Holmes 1972, 834). In July 1947, however, the Joint Provincial Council of the Colony elected only 2 non-chiefs for its 9 positions. The Ashanti Confederacy Council did a little better by electing 2 of its 4 seats to non-chiefs (ibid, 835). Thus, the power remained largely with the British Governor and, among the Africans, with the chiefs as the spokesmen of local opinion (PRAAD ADM 14/2/44 Legislative Council Debates. Session 1945, Issue No. 1 March 19, 1945; Wight 1947, 196).

³² The stated goals at the first meeting of the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) in September 1947 were: (a) that the Convention is of the opinion that the contact of chiefs and Government is unconstitutional, and (b) that in consequence their position on the Legislative Council is anomalous” (Austin 1961, 280).

decades.³³ Its leadership thus included numerous personalities long experienced in nationalist agitation. The UGCC was notably an elite, not mass, organization. As a class, its leadership was largely reluctant to, if not unaware of, the potentials of mass organization.³⁴ They were educated in the British liberal tradition, were conservative both economically and politically, and quite often had familial ties to chiefs.³⁵ As Richard Wright noted after an interview with Danquah: “He was of the old school. One did not speak *for* the masses; one told them what to do.”³⁶ Thus, while the elite were the most experienced with the colonial-style political institutions, they were less familiar and even uncomfortable with popular politics.³⁷ When mass unrest exploded after WWII, they were thus prepared to take their place as institutional heirs, but not to corral mass mobilization. Thus, with its typical combination of resistance and restraint, the UGCC’s goal was explicitly stated: “to ensure that by all *legitimate constitutional means* the direction and control of government should pass into the hands of the people and their chiefs *in the shortest possible time*” (Austin 1961, 280, emphasis added).

In short, prior to WWII, the Gold witnessed the rise of a significant though small group of educated nationalists. For some five decades these elites variously participated in and actively engaged with the colonial rulers as participants, intermediaries and advocates of reform. By the end of WWII, their decades of experience placed them in potentially good standing as events catalyzed a movement toward self-rule. However, this elite group thought and knew little of popular politics. Along with the British and traditional rulers, they failed to anticipate the mass mobilization of 1948.

³³ Among these the Aborigines’ Rights Protection Society, the National Congress of British West Africa, the local Ratepayers’ Associations, the Gold Coast Youth Movement, the Kotoko Society, etc. (Austin 1961, 273)

³⁴ Dr. Donkoh Fordwor makes this distinction by describing Danquah as “a patriot, not a politician” (Interview on July 20, 2015).

³⁵ For example, Dr. J.B. Danquah, the leader of the Gold Coast Youth Movement and founding member of the UGCC, was the younger brother of Nana Ofori Atta I, the colonial masters’ favored collaborator until his death in 1943, and the uncle of William Oforio Atta, the paramount chief’s son.

³⁶ Wright (1954), 221.

³⁷ There had been direct election in the four municipalities (Accra, Kumasi, Cape Coast, Sekondi-Takoradi) since the 1930s. These were largely the reason for the formation of the Ratepayers’ Societies. These were held with a severely restricted franchise, however, and did not extend outside the major urban centers. They were hardly the training grounds for the mass electoral politics that would take them by storm in the 1950s.

The Rise of a Commoner's Nationalist Party and Independence Struggle

Thus, while the UGCC began advocating more anti-colonial positions, the Gold Coast masses were not yet politically conscious but increasingly discontented with the economic and social situation – soaring prices, unemployment and swollen shoot disease plundering the cocoa plant.³⁸ These hardships and an expanding elementary-educated population served as a match waiting for a spark.³⁹ In 1948, a boycott on imported goods in Accra corresponded with an ex-servicemen's march and turned into riots and looting.⁴⁰ During a six-week State of Emergency, 29 people were killed and over 200 injured.

While the UGCC was not the architect of unrest,⁴¹ it took advantage by sending a cablegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies stating that civil government had broken down and that the Working Committee was prepared to take over an interim government.⁴² They demanded the removal of chiefs from national politics, introduction of mass electoral politics, and local participation in the instruments of government. The six leading party members were soon detained.⁴³

³⁸ The 1930s had been characterized by a tumultuous pattern of unrest among cocoa farmers – a cocoa boom, then a crash in prices which sparked the formation of unions, 'hold-ups' and efforts to organize local companies for marketing and selling of cocoa (dominated by European merchant companies), another wave of high prices during which unrest subsided, and so on (Holmes 1972). In the 1940s, a swollen shoot disease was ravaging the cocoa plants, and the colonial government responded with a 'cutting out' policy. Swollen shoot disease affected a quarter of the total crop in 1948. The 'cutting out' policy was made compulsory in 1947 and the government sent labour gangs out to cut the trees whether or not the farmer conceded (Holmes 1972).

³⁹ PRAAD ADM 14/2/49 Legislative Council Debates, Session 1947, Issue No. 2. (16 Sept 1947 – 22 Sept 1947); Note that this is with the exception of the Northern Territories which stayed remarkably quiet while the status quo in the rest of the colony turned on its head. The NT representatives were integrated into the national Legislative Council beginning only in 1951 and introduced direct elections only as late as 1954.

⁴⁰ PRAAD ADM 5/3/63. Watson, Aiken. Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast, 1948; PRAAD ADM 14/2/50 Legislative Council Debates, Session 1948, Issue No. 1. 27th April 1948 – 7 May 1948, p. 92.

⁴¹ The British accused the UGCC leadership of fomenting the chaos, but there is evidence that the leadership was at Saltpond at a meeting when the riots started and returned to Accra only after events had well-begun (Austin 1961, 283; PRAAD ADM 5/3/63. Watson, Aiken. 1948. Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast, 1948. Appendix 14 Text of Long Telegram addressed to Secretary of State for the Colonies on the 29th February, 1948 (by the President of the UGCC).

⁴² Nkrumah also sent a shorter telegram in the same vein.

⁴³ Akufo Addo, Ako Adjei, Ofori Atta, Danquah, Nkrumah and Obetsibi Lamptey

The 1948 riots set in motion a series of rapid changes. First, the British called a constitutional committee to rectify the ‘outmoded’ political set-up.⁴⁴ Second, Kwame Nkrumah, who returned to the Gold Coast less than two months before the riots to become Secretary of the UGCC, was soon the largest beneficiary of the unrest. His ability to capitalize on and extend mass mobilization, specifically among the youth⁴⁵, women and ‘commoner’ class, soon drove a wedge between his supporters in the UGCC and its leadership.⁴⁶ The leadership deemed Nkrumah’s tactics too radical, lawless and counter-productive (Austin 1961, 285-286).⁴⁷ Despite this tension, Nkrumah and the UGCC leadership continued in their uneasy relationship until mid-1949 (Austin 1961, 285).⁴⁸ During this period, Nkrumah furiously traveled and opened branches throughout the Colony and Ashanti,⁴⁹ stirring up most especially the ‘youngmen.’⁵⁰ Meanwhile, the educated elites were still waging their own battle against the chiefs and colonial masters, still believing the greatest challenge to taking their rightful place as heirs to the colonial institutions in an independent Gold Coast came from the British, as opposed to mass mobilizations.⁵¹ The educated

⁴⁴ PRAAD ADM 5/3/63. Watson, Aiken. Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast, 1948

⁴⁵ Of note is that the terms ‘youth’ or ‘youngmen’ are not strictly a reference to age in Ghanaian society. Historically, the term is a reference to the commoner, or non-royal class. Within traditional society, this group was also referred to as the ‘malcontents’, because they were the most active group without royal blood which sought to reign in chiefly overstep (Rathbone 2000, 24).

⁴⁶ Milne (1999) describes the difference in approach between Nkrumah and the UGCC leadership: “Nkrumah traveled hundreds of miles in an old car, holding meetings, organizing local party branches and making speeches. Within six months over five hundred branches of the UGCC had been formed. The rapid build-up of support for the UGCC reflected the terrific pace at which Nkrumah worked. . . Nkrumah spoke in everyday, easy to understand language when explaining the UGCC’s aims and goals. His manner was so different from that of the business and professional leaders of the UGCC who were inclined to maintain a disdainful distance from the people, often speaking in academic terms” (37).

⁴⁷ The disconnect between Nkrumah and the UGCC leadership is evident in the interviews of the Watson Commission into the Disturbances. Nkrumah welcomed responsibility for the protests and viewed them in line with his own advocated tactics. Indeed, Nkrumah wrote a plan of action for the Working Committee in February advocating the use of civil disobedience, expanded organization across the country and the formation of a shadow cabinet. The UGCC leadership roundly condemned the proposal (Austin 1961). The others disassociated themselves with the chaos, emphasized their preference for constitutional means of change, and only then reiterated their own calls for political change (PRAAD ADM 5/3/63. Watson, Aiken. Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast, 1948).

⁴⁸ Austin (1961) argues that the UGCC leadership hardly knew the extent of Nkrumah’s activities and whether or not it was in its favor, but did not expel him because they were afraid of what he would do without them.

⁴⁹ 209 branches in August 1948, according to the UGCC (Austin 1961, 285)

⁵⁰ At this stage, the press and literature generally refer to this group of party activists as the ‘verandah boys’ (Bob-Milliar 2014)

⁵¹ The second municipal member for Accra, Mr. Obetsebi Lamptey, argues against the colonial administration’s insinuation that the intelligentsia and UGCC are associated with communist links: “What we are fighting for is a constitutional structure that will pass power into the hands of the people and their Chiefs; a constitutional structure that

elite continued to emphasize their preference for seeing the battle through on constitutional terms.⁵²

Ultimately, Nkrumah went too far after creating his own private newspaper, setting up the Ghana National College for the students expelled during the 1948 riots, and organizing the youth section into an umbrella organization, the Committee of Youth Organization (CYO). These series of crises finally led Nkrumah to split with the UGCC and form his own movement, the CPP (Austin 1970, 85).⁵³ While the UGCC leadership feared the consequences of this departure for their political aspirations, they continued to cooperate with the British and chiefs. Thus, when the British appointed the all-African Coussey Committee for Constitutional Reform, several UGCC leaders served.⁵⁴ For more than six months, this group drew up Constitutional recommendations while Nkrumah actively mobilized the masses throughout the south (Nkrumah 1961, 18)⁵⁵.

will give us the right to govern ourselves and rule this country as we think fit; a constitutional structure that will give us a government responsible to the electorate, that will give us a government dependent on the will of the people; and the accusation of a desire to secede from Britain, which has been echoed in debates in the House of Lords is as wicked and malicious as it is unfounded. ...No responsible statesman in this country has ever suggested secession from the British Crown. At any rate it is not part of the political programme of my Party – the United Gold Coast Convention” (PRAAD ADM 14/2/54 Legislative Council Debates. Session 1949, Issue No. 1.15 March 1949 – 14 April 1949, 171). On April 14, 1949, Dr. J.B. Danquah echoes a similar accusation of British complacency and the need for political reform: A caretaker Government must take care; a caretaker Government must prepare the way for and not obstruct or delay the coming of the heir into his inheritance. We feel that the failure of Africanization and the increasing numbers of Europeans taken on in the Senior Service is the evidence of an attempt to obstruct and choke the coming of self-government at its source; we feel that this kind of inflated budgetary expenditure will surely leave this country bankrupt before self-government comes. We feel strongly that the time has come to call a halt, to take stock and make an end of all new and hastily thought-out commitments. This is a time that tests and tries men’s hearts. This is a time when an inefficiency Government which has lost its grip must cease to tamper and to tinker with the destinies of a country the control and direction of which must soon pass out of their hands into the hands of the people and their Chiefs” (ibid, 191-192)”. Finally, Rev. Baeta argues that the single biggest stumbling block to achieving self-government was the State Councils, which “are very jealous of their own autonomy” (PRAAD ADM 14/2/57 Legislative Council Debates. Session 1949 Issue No. 3 (8 Dec. 1949 – 14 Dec. 1949)

⁵² Dr. Danquah emphasizes the need to maintain a ‘sweet reasonableness’ when pushing the colonial government for more rapid political devolution: “There is, in my faith and hope, every reason to believe that if we keep to that sweet reasonableness that has so far characterized sane leadership in the Gold Coast today, this country, Ghana, will be the first African country to reach what the Governor called ‘full stature’, full Dominion status” (PRAAD ADM 14/2/57 Legislative Council Debates. Session 1949 Issue No. 3 (8 Dec. 1949 – 14 Dec. 1949) p. 90).

⁵³ In a cunning political move, when Nkrumah formed the CPP, he adopted the word ‘Convention’ from the UGCC because it contributed to the smooth transition of the population he had already organized from one party to the other (the UGCC having been frequently shortened to ‘the Convention’ during the initial years of organization)(Interview with VCRAC Crabbe; Interview with Donkoh Fordwor)

⁵⁴ PRAAD ADM 14/2/53 Legislative Council Debates. Session 1948, Issue No. 4. 14 December 1948 – 16 December 1948

⁵⁵ Nkrumah’s target groups included most especially the youth societies in the Colony and Ashanti towns, as well as farmers, petty traders, drivers, artisans, school teachers, clerks and letter-writers (Austin 1970, 55).

The Coussey Constitutional Report was published on 22 December 1950. It provided for a unicameral legislature composed of a speaker, 34 representative members for the Colony, 19 for Ashanti, 19 for the Northern Territories and 3 for Southern Togoland. Two-thirds of the legislative members would be elected, either directly in the municipalities or via electoral colleges in the rural areas, the other 1/3 through the Territorial Councils. It also recommended the retention of 3 ex-officio members as cabinet ministers and 6 special interest members representing commercial and mining interests (two with votes).⁵⁶

As many of its members participated in the Committee's debates, the UGCC accepted the report's recommendations, even if it came up short on several dimensions.⁵⁷ Initially, Nkrumah declared the Constitution 'bogus and fraudulent' and called for a campaign of non-violent protest and civil disobedience termed 'Positive Action' (Austin 1970, 87). Nkrumah also hesitated, however, presenting an alternate constitution (short of self-rule) in November,⁵⁸ and meeting with the Colonial Secretary and Governor before resolving any action. At this meeting, both Arden-Clarke and Saloway report that Nkrumah was willing to wait until after the General Election to issue his demands, but that the CPP and TUC leadership was 'enmeshed in the coils of its own propaganda' and that they had no control over 'their wild men.'⁵⁹ Even after this, two announcements that Positive Action had started were reported and denied in the party's newspaper (Austin 1970, 89). On January 6, the TUC forced the issue by declaring a general

⁵⁶ PRAAD ADM 5/3/69 Coussey Report of the Committee on Constitutional Reform 1949

⁵⁷ It is worth noting that Danquah and other party members submitted a Minority Rider to the Report which disagreed with the areas where it came up short of self-government. (ADM 14/2/58 Gold Coast Legislative Council Debates. Session 1950, Issue No. 1 (Vol. 1) Accra: Government Printing Department. 19 January 1950.). Nonetheless, as Rev Baeta notes in the Legislative Council, he commends the Committee for "[putting] down these recommendations without shame and without apology, but with commonsense and a sense of reality" (ADM 14/2/57 Gold Coast Colony: Legislative Council Debates. Session 1949 Issue No. 3 Accra: Government Printing Department (8 Dec. 1949 – 14 Dec. 1949)

⁵⁸ NAGT NRG 8/5/28 Committee for Constitutional Reform. Resolution of the Ghana (Gold Coast) People's Representative Assembly passed at the West End Sports Arena Accra on Sunday November 20, 1949; Note that the resolution was extremely similar to the Minority Rider issued by the UGCC members of the Coussey Committee. It included ex-officio member of Cabinet and Governor's power of veto

⁵⁹ In the end, certain sections of the CPP declared Positive Action twice, each time the Party newspaper denying it, before the TUC forced the issue on January 6 (Arden-Clarke, Charles. 1958. "Eight Years of Transition in Ghana" *African Affairs*. 57(226): 32; Saloway, Reginald. 1955 "The New Gold Coast" *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs) 31(4): 469-476.

strike, and Nkrumah finally announced Positive Action two days later.⁶⁰ This trajectory suggests that while Nkrumah had successfully mobilized social actors in a national movement, he did not as yet control these forces.

After the start of Positive Action, the Colonial Government issued a State of Emergency, declared a curfew in the major towns, and arrested the TUC and CPP leadership variously for sedition and illegal striking. The UGCC and chiefs condemned the CPP's radical actions, believing that the British coercive response proved that their more moderate course of reform was the right approach.⁶¹ These two groups remained largely unaware of how advanced the mobilization of Gold Coast society was at the time.⁶²

The youth especially were ready to hear the CPP call to action. Voluntary local CPP activists (known as verandah boys)⁶³ set up party branches, issued propaganda and mobilized their local

⁶⁰ Noting Nkrumah's hesitation to take extra-constitutional measures at this early point in his political career is helpful for foreshadowing some of the events to take place when Nkrumah becomes leader of the Independent Ghana. While several scholars are quick to attribute all dictatorial measures to Nkrumah's persona and agency, this would again be an incomplete assessment (Omari 1970). My colonial legacy argument does not discount the possibility of agency and indeed recognizes that Nkrumah was a unique and charismatic personality whose presence shaped much of Ghana's pre and post-Independent history. It emphasizes rather that even this larger-than-life character acted within and among structural incentives, constraints and relationships. Whereas he was not immune to the strategic calculations associated with dealing with a colonial ruler, he would not be immune to the different though no less important strategic assessments of dealing with political opposition and party members in the post-colonial period. He did not singularly drive CPP politics even when the party was at its strongest – 1949-51.

⁶¹ See for example: Nana Sir Tsibu Darku IX, Second Provincial Member for the Western Province, Council motion affirming: 1) "That this Council deplores the grave disorders and acts of violence in certain parts of the country which a political group has brought about by its so-called 'weapon' of positive action, employing strikes, boycotts, non-cooperation and other acts of lawlessness to coerce the Government and other constituted authorities into accepting certain political views; 2) That this Council denounces the various acts committed and encouraged by such irresponsible groups as inimical to the peace and security of the country; 3) That this Council records its high appreciation of the stand made by a great majority of the people who, realizing the futility of such lawless acts in the political and industrial fields, have refused to participate in them and have stood firm against the intimidations of those who have set their hearts upon disruption of the country's peace and security; 4) That in the opinion of this Council the illegal strike is unjustified and that this Council endorses Government's announcements in this regard; and 5) That this Council highly appreciates and strongly supports the emergency measures taken by Government to deal with the situation and urges Government to take all necessary steps to prevent further outbreaks of violence and other acts of lawlessness, and to restore and maintain the normal life of the community in all parts of the country" (PRAAD ADM 14/2/58 Legislative Council Debates. Session 1950, Issue No. 1 (Vol. 1) 19 January 1950, p. 9); Mr. Nii Amaa Olenku, nominated member, seconds the motion, declaring that all want self-government now, but this must be fought for by legal and constitutional means, as "Our greatest achievements in politics have all been won that way..." (ibid, 11-12).

⁶² Both Mr. Addai, the Municipal member for Kumasi, and Mr. Agyeman, the fourth Ashanti Member, note that the youth have been misled into violence, and while they agree with the ultimate goal of self-rule, they strongly condemn these methods of agitation" (PRAAD ADM 14/2/58 Gold Coast Legislative Council Debates. Session 1950, Issue No. 1 (Vol. 1) 19 January 1950, p. 16-17). Their arguments suggest an interpretation of events as the product of a few radicals stirring up trouble rather than a distinct social movement calling in a sense for more revolutionary activities.

⁶³ The term 'verandah boys' was used by the UGCC elite and its allies to characterize the CPP's 'youth' as hooligans. The term was a reference to the usually "criminal groups of disaffected youngsters" engaged in pimping or theft during

communities (Bob-Milliar 2014; KB Asante Interview). The election that followed entailed both colonial acquiescence to the CPP and the popular rejection of the traditional rulers and educated elite. According to Austin (1970):

“By 1950, the protagonists of the Burns constitution had been displaced so effectively that earlier arguments for and against indirect rule, for and against the chiefs and the intelligentsia, were no longer heard: they belonged to a seemingly vanished colonial order when the unofficials quarreled among themselves and the officials ruled the country. Now, power was to be handed over in large measure to new leaders who had hitherto played no part in national politics” (91).

While the election had numerous flaws,⁶⁴ there was fairly widespread support for the CPP (Austin 1970, 141-146). The CPP capitalized primarily on widespread localized grievances, be they disputes against chiefs, farmers and workers’ frustrations, or unemployed youth, etc. They even took advantage of their leadership’s prison terms by celebrating them when they were released as ‘Prison Graduates’ (ibid, 114-115). Finally, CPP propaganda included an emotional appeal, speaking of African pride against the imperialists as well as unity of the Common Man against the chiefly agents of colonial rule (ibid, 131).

The mass discontent, however, was any political groups’ for the taking. It is as significant that the UGCC was unable or unwilling to exploit this discontent as the CPP did. The UGCC’s first strategic error was to miscalculate the extent to which the British were willing to let these areas of discontent grow after 1948 without using coercion (Crook 1986). To their credit, this was perhaps not an obvious shift – they had spent the better part of two decades towing a conservative line of reform precisely because its more radical tactics had been counterproductive.⁶⁵ That being said, the CPP leadership and membership, of a later generation and with none of the experience of

WWII, who slept under roadside verandahs of trading houses. Though carrying a negative connotation when used by the UGCC, CPP activists soon embraced the appropriated the title to mean commoner or youth (Rathbone 2000, 24).

⁶⁴ low registration (40% in the Colony and Ashanti together), minimal understanding of electoral procedure, and limited turnout (Austin 1970, 113)

⁶⁵ Recall Casely Hayford’s National Congress deputation that England which resulted in the entrenchment of indirect rule policies and a split with the chiefs that took Danquah nearly twenty years to repair.

the educated elites, proved less hesitant and indeed rejected all warnings that their radical protests would prove counter-productive.⁶⁶

The elites' second grave error was their limited understanding of popular politics. By 1950, the intelligentsia and chiefs were cooperating after three decades of tense relations, both having mutual fears of the youngmen coming to power (Austin 1961, 286-295). They remained hopeful of their electoral chances given that 18 seats were designated for the Territorial Councils and their potential influence with the 21 Northern seats. While the difference in the CPP vs. UGCC campaign messages were really not all that much different (self-government now vs. self-government in the shortest possible time) – their tactics were (Donkoh Fordwor Interview). The UGCC relied almost exclusively on their partnership with the chiefs (Rathbone 2000; Austin 1970, 145).

Ultimately, the CPP won a resounding victory with 29 of the 33 electoral college (rural) seats and all five of the municipal seats (Austin 1970, 141). Notably, Nkrumah was elected despite being in prison at the time. There were also 18 territorial seats, 6 representatives of the European Chambers and Mines, and 3 ex-officio members, only a small minority of whom were sympathetic to the CPP (ibid, 147). Nonetheless, when the British asked the CPP to form a government, it had a working majority (34/65) to do so.

Though clearly dominating the political scene in 1950, the CPP was still inchoate.⁶⁷ Nonetheless, the British interpreted this as the beginning of a smooth process of political institutional transfer (Arden-Clarke 1958). The CPP appeared in 1951 to offer much in terms of overcoming many of the challenges that were plaguing its neighbors: lack of national unity, politicized ethnic divisions, strong local autocratic forces that undermine elected elements, etc.

⁶⁶ September 15, 1949. CPP Policy is Suicidal. Letter from J.B. Danquah to J.K. Dadson, Esq. P.O. Box 190, Takoradi. Available in: Akyeampong, H.K., compiled by. 1971. *Journey to Independence and After: J.B. Danquah Letters. Volume II: 1949-1951.* Accra: Waterville Publishing House.

⁶⁷ Austin (1970) describes this stage of party development as such: "The nationalist party was still inchoate in 1951. The 1949-50 struggle had been too short – its election victory too easily gained – to shape the party into an adequate instrument of control, and nothing was clear in practice as to the relationship between its various sections. Nkrumah had been made Life Chairman, but he had yet to adopt the role of 'unique Leader' (163).

What then explains Ghana's authoritarian reversal? I argue that the answer lies in one important feature -- despite its late-colonial 'social and political revolution', Ghana still faced the challenges associated with a legacy of a divided administration with few local participants. Those participants that had existed among the educated elites, were bypassed by electoral failure and then marginalized shortly after by the CPP in office. Thus, for the group that did come to power, internal divisions became apparent not short of three years from the CPP's 1951 electoral victory.

The CPP in Power: Evolution of an Informal Governance Style

In 1951, the CPP formed the Government with Nkrumah as its Leader of Government Business.⁶⁸ This began a period of official apprenticeship, as the CPP held a small executive majority and substantial legislative minority. In general, it was a rocky transition for the inexperienced nationalist leaders more familiar with anti-colonial opposition than operating the 'colonial' government (Austin 1970, 154). The CPP government needed to find a careful balance between fueling and curtailing the mobilized expression of colonial dissatisfaction among its supporters such that it facilitated the final push for independence but it was not turned against the party. In this section, I describe some of these issues in the realm of internal (CPP) fractionalization and external (opposition) challenges. This period came to define many CPP methods of constraining opposition and disciplining internal challengers, a style of governance and usage of state institutions to consolidate party power that would persist after Independence.

Internal Divisions in the CPP

As a first action in office, Nkrumah sought to move the CPP's activities from violent 'Positive' to gradual 'Tactical' Action in order to slow down the revolution.⁶⁹ When he did this,

⁶⁸ This position was renamed Prime Minister in 1952 (PRAAD ADM 14/2/70 Legislative Assembly Debates. Session 1952, Issue No. 1 (Volume II) March 7, 1952 – April 18, 1952).

⁶⁹ On March 12, 1952 in the Legislative Assembly, Nkrumah defends Tactical Action: "Here, I must once more define what I mean by Tactical Action for those who have not yet comprehended the tactics and strategy of our party in the struggle for self-government. Tactical Action, Mr. Speaker, is based on the idea that power depends on carrying out definite tasks within the existing political framework, that is, adapting the tactics of the party to the needs of a given situation. Tactical Action and Positive Action are diametrically opposed; otherwise you call it revolution. Do you stand for Revolution? Or Evolution?" (PRAAD ADM 14/2/70 Legislative Assembly Debates. Session 1952, Issue No. 1 (Volume II) March 7, 1952 – April 18, 1952, p. 774).

there was a split in the CPP between the revolutionary socialists and those satisfied with being the dominant partner in the colonial administration. Other controversies included widespread rumors and allegations of corruption and bribery in the government as well as criticisms over the close relationship between Nkrumah and Governor Arden-Clarke (Austin 1970, 166).⁷⁰ The result of these top-level divisions was a series of expulsions and resignations from the party executive in 1951.⁷¹ In 1952, a fresh round of internal party revolts pitted the radicals against the loyalists over the question of the timetable for self-government.⁷²

These initial programmatic controversies were just the beginning, however. Threats started to appear from the plethora of local and regional differences. These local rivalries which Nkrumah and the verandah boys had previously exploited to corral popular discontent against the colonial administration were now a central weakness for the CPP which in practice depended “on the ability of the leaders to bind together a vast collection of local (often conflicting) loyalties” (Austin 1970, 175-76). A series of local and regional reforms in the march to independence sparked a growing volume of particular interests brought forward by members of parliament, constituency secretaries, local youth associations, and then opposition parties.

The first of these controversies was over the 1953 Van Lare Commission, tasked with defining electoral constituencies.⁷³ The most forceful opposition to its Report came from the Ashanti Region where the Report recommended 21 seats, an increase in number by two, but a

⁷⁰ Kwesi Lamptey moves that the Legislative Assembly approve the setting up of a Committee to investigate corruption in the Government in 1952, citing several foreign newspapers in his claim (PRAAD ADM 14/2/72 Legislative Assembly Debates. Session 1952, Issue No. 2. June 17, 1952, p. 272-273). The subsequent Korsah Commission Report is published in 1954, but between 1951 and 1952 rumors circulated freely (PRAAD ADM 5/3/94 Report on the Commission of Enquiry into Mr. Braimah’s resignation and allegations arising therefrom (Justice K.A. Korsah) 1954). Austin (1970) describes the scene as such: “The refusal of CPP ministers to live in the bungalows provided for them in the outskirts of Accra, the large houses which they built and drew rent allowance for in town, the flamboyant style of living of many of the party members, stories of the need to buy contracts from ministers and ministerial secretaries, and the failure of an Anti-Bribery and Corruption Committee were produced as evidence of the distance the party’s leaders had travelled from the early days of 1949” (165).

⁷¹ This included Kwesi Lamptey, Dzenkle Dzewu, Ashie Nikoe, Saki Scheck, B.F. Kusi, H.P. Nyemitei, Nuh Abubekr, Mate Jole, K.A. Twumasi Ankrah, Sydney Brown, E.S. Nartey, J.G. Waniker, K.G. Kyem, and Kojo Nkrumah (Austin 1970, 167-68).

⁷² Kurankyi Taylor, de Graft Johnson, Cecil Forde, Eric Heymann, Anthony Woode and Turkson Ocran (ibid, 168).

⁷³ Allman 1993, 22-23; PRAAD ADM 14/2/80 Legislative Assembly Debates. Issue No. 3. 3 November 1953 – 18 November 1953

decrease in percentage of the newly expanded legislature. Opposition among MPs from Ashanti appears to be less about ethnic antagonism than about a perception of a loss of power for their region. When the Ashanti members demanded 30 seats, the motion was defeated, but the issue was hardly resolved.⁷⁴

The second crisis came from the nomination of CPP candidates for the 1954 election. Local conflicts the CPP had exploited in the 1951 election reemerged in 1954, and constituencies split into warring camps. While conflict remained local, the national party executive had centralized its own authority and decided to select all candidates itself (as opposed to the local constituency executives nominating one or two potential candidates and forwarding them on to the national headquarters in Accra) (Austin 1970, 217).⁷⁵ When Nkrumah announced the names of the 104 nominees and issued a warning that all others should stand down, a number of CPP ‘rebels’ persisted in running. A week later, the CPP formally expelled 81 candidates at Subin Valley, Kumasi (ibid, 225). Many expelled members then ran as independents. In all, there were nearly as many Independents in 1954 (160) as there were candidates of the parties (163).

There were a few causes of this lack of party discipline. First, with few real opponents, the CPP had essentially already won its struggle. The British had conceded independence, and opposition parties had not yet emerged. Under such circumstances, it was difficult to enforce party discipline. Second, the fortunes of CPP government officials had changed dramatically in three years – for example, instead of riding in buses, they drove American saloon cars – and thus many local leaders wanted a piece of the government cake (Austin 1970, 212).⁷⁶ These events exposed the weakness of the mass party, built on the shoulders of anti-colonialism, but not well institutionalized.

Opposition Politics

⁷⁴ The motion failed in the Legislative Assembly on 17 November 1953 with 13 Ayes and 37 Noes (PRAAD ADM 14/2/80 Legislative Assembly Debates. Issue No. 3. 3 November 1953 – 18 November 1953, p. 574).

⁷⁵ For the CPP alone, 1005 claimants for party nominations were received for only 104 constituency elections (Austin 1970, 217). Austin (1970) argues that the National Executive Committee was also divided and that final decisions were almost certainly made by Nkrumah, Gbedemah, Botsio and a small group of advisers (221).

⁷⁶ PRAAD ADM 14/2/68 Legislative Assembly Debates. Session 1951, Issue No. 4. Vol. II 7 December 1951

Meanwhile, the challenges in the national party presented an opportunity for opposition movements that did not exist in 1951. First, the UGCC, discredited by its total failure in the 1951 elections, started a new party in May 1952 called the Ghana Congress Party (GCP). The educated elites were joined by those who had been expelled or resigned from the CPP after 1951 (Allman 1993, 34-36). This was naturally an uneasy partnership as the former CPP members were far more radical ideologically (Allman 1993). Beyond criticizing the increasing adulation of Nkrumah,⁷⁷ the GCP found it difficult to find an alternate program to the CPP's demand for self-government.⁷⁸

Second, the Northern Territories developed its own party called the Northern People's Party (NPP). Despite challenges from late administrative and political development,⁷⁹ the Northern Territories articulated a singular set of interests in 1954 predominately under the unity of their 'non-southern-ness.'⁸⁰ In addition, the Northern Territories was far less developed than the south, and there existed great anxiety about the removal of the British as it might mean subjugation to the South.⁸¹ The 1954 manifesto emphasized the need to grant special programs and funding to the North such that it may 'catch up' to its southern neighbors (Austin 1970, 230). Finally, there was extensive attachment to traditional institutions in the North and thus fears that the CPP's

⁷⁷ See, for example, the Accra Evening News (CPP Paper) on 19 June 1954 which praises Nkrumah as "Man of Destiny, Star of Africa, Hope of Millions of down-trodden Blacks, Deliverer of Ghana, Iron Boy, Great Leader of Street Boys, personable and handsome Boy from Nzima..." (quoted in Austin 1970, 282).

⁷⁸ This is echoed by Nkrumah's own assertion that 'Until Independence, there is only one political platform – that is, independence – and I happen to be occupying it' (Arden-Clarke 1958, 37).

⁷⁹ The Northern Territories were only created as a single entity as late as 1901, developed their own regional Territorial Council in 1946, were not brought into national politics until 1951, and had no singular ethnic group that formed a cohesive bond among its smaller communities.

⁸⁰ Landouceur 1979 argues: "Essentially, however, Northern regionalism had its origins in the growing awareness on the part of certain groups of Northerners of the great differences and disparities between their region and the rest of the country" (248). Note that the NPP's 1954 campaign slogan was 'North for the northerners' (Austin 1970, 229).

⁸¹ On behalf of the Northern Territories Council, the Council Chairman forwarded a letter to the Coussey Committee stating: "The decision is that it is too soon a time that we should have self Government; but we will ask Government to double the help they are giving us, so that we can come in line with the Southerners and then ask for self Government. We feel that our brothers in the South are more advanced than we, and we want to be in line with them. We should develop our standard of education and other things. It would have been fair and reasonable if the whole Gold Coast wished for self-Government but we are not ready" (NAGT NRG 8/5/28 Committee for Constitutional Reform (Coussey)).

local and regional government reforms would undercut these positions of power.⁸² This attachment meant also that the natural social base of the CPP (commoners) was a disadvantage in the north where traditional hierarchies of power remained entrenched (Bob-Milliar 2014).

Finally, the Moslem Association Party (MAP), initially out of Kumasi, found support among the ‘zongo’ (settler) communities of the main towns in 1954. Though the name denotes religious orientation, the party’s impetus turned more on its members’ immigrant status and the need to protect themselves from an aggressive local nationalist party (Allman 1991; Austin 1970, 189). Nonetheless, the MAP used Islam as a point of unity in the urban settler communities.⁸³ It brought with it distinctly militant tactics which would serve as a reference point for a stronger, more broad-based regional movement after the 1954 election (Allman 1991, 21). Finally, the Togoland Congress formed in the East which rallied the Ewes under the call for an Ewe homeland and sought reunification with the neighboring French trust territory (Austin 1970, 189).

The one binding feature of the opposition members was that they were fiercely anti-Nkrumah and anti-CPP from the start.⁸⁴ Accusations of dictatorship and totalitarian tendencies were to resound through the late-colonial period and into independence. Likewise, the CPP’s response to opposition criticism and campaigning was to aggressively accuse it of sedition, treason, and generally trying to discredit all of their activities.⁸⁵

⁸² In 1955, the Northern Territorial Council expressed its concerns to the Constitutional Advisor, Sir Frederick Bourne, as such: “We have reasons to believe that recent legislation passed on traditional affairs clearly indicate that it is the intention of the present Government to annihilate chieftaincy from the Constitution and administration of a self-governing Gold Coast. We, therefore, affirm our contention that to have disregard for chieftaincy in this country will only spell disaster” (NAGT NRG 8/5/57 Minutes of the Standing Committee of the NT Council, 1951 – 56. Appendix to Minutes of the 41st meeting of the Standing Committee of the Northern Territorial Council held at the Regional Office, Tamale, on 23rd November 1955. Address by the Chairman to Sir Frederick Bourne, Constitutional Adviser).

⁸³ In 1954, Muslims made up between 10-15% of the Gold Coast population, and spanned large parts of the northern rural territories as well as made up significant voting blocks in southern urban centers (Allman 1991, 2). Despite Islam’s longer influence across the northern territories, however, the MAP would grow out of and compete in the southern urban centers in settler neighborhoods primarily.

⁸⁴ For example, in the process of drawing up the 1953 Constitution, representative William Ofori Atta condemns the ‘secret negotiations’ and favoritism between Governor Arden-Clarke and Nkrumah: “...I was to issue a warning that by disregarding the intelligence of the country and bargaining in secret with single leaders to make them extremely popular, omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient is a sure way to totalitarianism.” (PRAAD ADM 14/2/70 Gold Coast Legislative Assembly Debates, 1952. Issue No. 1 (Vol II) March 7, 1952 – April 18, 1952, 744.

⁸⁵ This sort of language is evident in, for example, a debate in the House in 1952 over Danquah’s motion to formally recognize an Opposition. In the course of this debate, Mr. Inkumsah speaking for the Government notes that the supposed reason for the opposition is to criticize, but is actually to ‘unseat the preset Government... Thus, in order to

Ultimately, in the 1954 election, the CPP won handsomely, securing 72 seats in the 104-seat legislature and 55% of the votes.⁸⁶ Thus, the British and CPP Government prepared to move to Independence.⁸⁷ But the opposition had been competitive, and the nationalist movement had shown cracks in its armor. In this context, a new, unexpected opposition party emerged which exposed these vulnerabilities, played on the CPP's weaknesses and exerted grievances of its own to put the entire national project in jeopardy.

Debating the Independence Constitution: Violently Debating Decentralization

Though the CPP won a majority of seats in the 1954 elections, grievances were rife. The CPP and opposition were engaged in a violent campaign over the shape of the new nation (Allman 1993; Austin 1961). Between 1954 and 1957, a bitter national contest between the CPP and opposition parties would demonstrate the very real divisions across groups in the colony as well as the CPP's weak capacity to contain local chaos. Under the backdrop of a national debate over a federal vs. unitary constitution, both the CPP and opposition were actively engaged in fomenting intimidation and violence and exploiting local rivalries to gather support. In this dispute, either side increasingly distrusted the other. The CPP passed legislation, advocated policies, made declarations, and gave warnings which appeared to attack the existence of the Opposition

achieve their ulterior motive, the promoters of this sinister move have endeavored day and night, through a serious house to house campaign, propaganda, and all forms of solicitations in the shape and semblance of a careful but cunning coercion of certain members, to secure an appreciable number of persons to form the much talked of, and would-be, Opposition. Other representatives noted that the opposition was 'inspired by the devil' and that it had no place in the country, at least until it had achieved self-government. The logic goes that any good citizen would hold implicit faith in the elected national leader. On this notion, the Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Mr. Casely-Hayford, argues that an Opposition inside the Assembly is warranted, even if the present one is not constructive, but any opposition politics outside of the House is 'dangerous' because it tries to 'distort and twist the policy of the Government' in the remotest villages where the Government cannot properly respond to its vindictive attacks. Finally, Mr. Krobo Edusei argues that the Opposition is conspiring against the government and should be brought up on formal charges as such. As we will see shortly, these were not merely idle words; they were backed by Government action leading up to and particularly after 1954. (PRAAD ADM 14/2/72 Gold Coast Legislative Assembly Debates, 1952. Issue No. 2. July 4, 1952, 472-490).

⁸⁶ The Independents won 22% of the popular vote and 11 seats. The NPP won 15 seats. The Togoland Congress won 4 seats in its stronghold, and the MAP only one seat and the Ghana Congress Party, one seat (Austin 1970, 243).

⁸⁷ On July 10, 1953, the Gold Coast Legislature passes a Motion on Constitutional Reform calling for Her Majesty's Government to introduce an Act of Independence in the UK Parliament declaring the Gold Coast a sovereign and independent State within the Commonwealth (PRAAD ADM 5/4/105 1953-1954 Despatches on the Gold Coast Government's Proposal for Constitutional Reform exchanged between the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Governor, 24th August, 1953 to 15th April, 1954.).

altogether, although they made official declarations of a commitment to democracy.⁸⁸ Meanwhile, the Opposition increasingly pursued extra-constitutional means to exert its position.

Whereas the opposition to this point had been dispersed and weak, the CPP rebellions represented a weakness in the alliance of the youngmen.⁸⁹ Ashanti was particularly susceptible to anti-CPP sentiment owing to the combination of disagreements over nominations as well as designation of constituencies (Austin 1970, 258).⁹⁰ Historically, however, the youngmen were not a sufficient force by themselves for mobilization, and the national scene remained quiet in June and July 1954 (Allman 1991, 48).⁹¹ In August, however, the opposition sprang to life when the CPP introduced the Cocoa Duty and Development Funds (Amendment) Bill.⁹² The Bill fixed the price of cocoa for farmers well below the world price and allocated the profit to development projects.⁹³ Non-CPP legislative members deplored the act, arguing that it exploited cocoa farmers and set the price far too low.⁹⁴ Outside the Legislature, major backlash came from Ashanti where the cocoa issue affected not just farmers but also labourers, transport workers, marketers, brokers, traders and shop owners (Allman 1991, 38; Austin 1970, 255). Cocoa thus served as a catalyst for widespread mobilization in Ashanti, organized and led by the youngmen.⁹⁵

⁸⁸ For example, Nkrumah, on the discussion in the Legislative Assembly in 1954, notes the valuable role of an Opposition in developing procedures and conventions of parliamentary democracy: 'We are fully conscious of the value of informed and constructive criticism and are determined to do everything possible to establish in this Assembly the procedures and conventions of parliamentary democracy, which must include a properly organized opposition' (PRAAD ADM 14/2/81 Legislative Assembly Debates. Session 1954, Issue No. 1. 2 February – 12 March 1954. p.122).

⁸⁹ This was in part backed up by popular sentiment, as over 41% of the Ashanti electorate had voted in 1954 against the CPP and more than 1/5 for the CPP rebels (Austin 1970, 257).

⁹⁰ The Kumasi branch of the AYA met at the Kumasi State Council Hall on August 25, 1954 to debate the Cocoa Duty issue, and during the course of the discussion, forcefully removed Krobo Edusei, Osei Bonsu and John Baidoo, CPP Assembly members who had voted for the Bill (Austin 1970, 258); By July 21, 1955, two fully separate branches of the AYA were operating, one in support of the CPP, the other in support of the NLM (NAGK ARG 2/10/2 Ashanti Youth Association 1950-1976).

⁹¹ Without bringing in allies from other segments of society, the youngmen lacked the economic resources and political and cultural legitimacy to lead in Ashanti. For a longer discussion on the historical role of youngmen in Ashanti society, see Allman 1993, 28-36 for discussion on the history of 'youngmen'.

⁹² PRAAD ADM 14/2/82 Legislative Assembly Debates, 1954. Issue No. 2. 10 August 1954

⁹³ Note that the price of cocoa was fixed to the same as the previous year, even though at the time the world price was skyrocketing (Austin 1970, 254).

⁹⁴ *ibid*

⁹⁵ The Kumasi branch of the AYA met at the Kumasi State Council Hall on August 25, 1954 to debate the Cocoa Duty issue, and during the course of the discussion, forcefully removed Krobo Edusei, Osei Bonsu and John Baidoo, CPP Assembly members who had voted for the Bill (Austin 1970, 258); By July 21, 1955, two fully separate branches of the

The youngmen thus combined economic and political grievances and expressed both in terms of Ashanti nationalism. The NLM was officially launched in Kumasi on 19 September 1954.⁹⁶ By October, it attracted both Ashanti chiefs as well as the educated elite, who provided financial resources and political legitimacy to the movement (Allman 1993, 42).⁹⁷ Despite the chief's historic competition with the youngmen, their collaboration came from what was perceived to be the CPP's ongoing onslaught against chieftaincy since 1951, particularly via local government reform (Austin 1970, 260; Rathbone 2000). The elite were a willing partner because the CPP had disinherited them of their rightful place as institutional heirs. While the elites gave the movement an articulate message and set of aims, the youngmen organized, agitated and fomented chaos among the Ashanti masses (Allman 1993, 63).⁹⁸

The grievances of the Movement were laid out in its appeal to the Asanteman Council on 19 October 1954: a) the Cocoa Duty and Development Fund Ordinance of 1954 disregards the farmers' interests, b) the 'hush hush' attitude of Government to farmers' reactions to the Cocoa Duty is a 'dictatorial tendency' which could drive the country into a communist state, c) the CPP has a 'deliberate policy of insulting, vilifying and discrediting the traditional rulers and elders, d) 'party loyalty and not efficiency and ability has become the chief criterion of filling important and responsible offices.' Corruption and bribery run rampant, and e) there is no permanent solution except for a federal constitution.⁹⁹ Three days later, the Asanteman Council sent a telegram from to the Governor demanding a federal constitution and that the issue be examined

AYA were operating, one in support of the CPP, the other in support of the NLM (NAGK ARG 2/10/2 Ashanti Youth Association 1950-1976).

⁹⁶ Symbolically, Ashanti youngmen announced the Movement at the site where Nkrumah had expelled the CPP rebels before the election (Subin Valley).

⁹⁷ Note that not all the youngmen in Ashanti were prepared to join with the traditional rulers, their political experiences largely putting them in opposition to this group. However, there was enough recognition that the chiefs offered a potent symbol of Ashanti unity, a necessary tool if you were going to pitch the cocoa issue in terms of Ashanti interests (Austin 1970, 259).

⁹⁸ This was accomplished by appealing "for support in the name of the Asantehene, the Golden Stool, Ashanti interests, Ashanti history, and Ashanti rights" (Austin 1970, 265).

⁹⁹ NAGK ARG 2/2/4 Asantehene Demand for a Federal Government for the Gold Coast (1954-56). Memorandum from the NLM to the Asanteman Council on 19 October 1954

by a special Commission.¹⁰⁰ After October, Kumasi in particular would be rife with assaults on CPP supporters, demonstrations, violence and destruction over the next three years.¹⁰¹

Then, the violent Ashanti movement partnered with other opposition parties (NPP, MAP, GCP, TC), causing the British to hesitate, “no longer sure where the balance of power lay in the colony,” and conceded discussions on the federal issue.¹⁰² Repeated attempts were made to bring both sides together between 1954 and 1956,¹⁰³ but the opposition declined to participate because they felt that such discussions were fruitless and would be unproductive.¹⁰⁴ Without opposition participation, each Committee concluded that a federal system was deemed ‘unsuitable and

¹⁰⁰ NAGK ARG 2/2/4 “Resolution by the Asanteman Council Praying for a Federal Government for the Gold Coast”; NAGK ARG 2/2/4/6 Federal Government for the Gold Coast

¹⁰¹ Austin (1970) describes the scene as follows: “The newly elected government was taken completely by surprise. Yet many of the CPP members in Ashanti resisted the appeal of the new party with the result that, by the end of 1954, a violent conflict developed in Ashanti between rival gangs which struggled against each other wherever the CPP or the NLM was unable to establish a local stronghold of single-party rule. As the quarrel deepened, the colonial administration was drawn into the dispute, to find itself in the uncomfortable position of a referee obliged to interfere in a contest in which the participants declined to recognize any rules” (250).

¹⁰² Austin 1970, 250; NAGK ARG 2/2/4/51 Reply on 3 January 1954 from the Sec. of State to the Asanteman Council

¹⁰³ These efforts included including Nkrumah’s initial outreach to the Asantehene, Nkrumah’s Select Committee of 1954, the British-organized Bourne Committee of 1955, the Achimota Conference of 1956 and numerous debates in the Legislative Assembly (PRAAD ADM 14/2/84 Legislative Debates, 1955. Issue No. 1. 15 February – 6 April 1955; ADM 5/4/130 1956 Report of the Achimota Conference; PRAAD ADM 5/3/100 1955 Report of the Constitutional Adviser Sir F.C. Bourne). The Asantehene refused to meet with the Bourne Commission as well, as it was a waste time, seeing as how the State Council (Ashanti) Amendment Bill had already been passed so there was nothing further to discuss until it was revoked. They argued that the Bourne mission had been obstructed by the passage of this Bill (NAGK ARG 2/2/112/70 Minutes of Emergency Meeting of the Asantehene Council held on November 24, 1955 at the Kumasi State Council Hall); The Asantehene also refuse to attend Nkrumah’s Achimota Conference on the same grounds. They reasoned that participation would be counterproductive as it would ‘rubberstamp’ whatever Nkrumah wrote (ibid).

¹⁰⁴ On 5 April 1955, Nkrumah introduces a motion in the Legislative Assembly for a Select Committee on Federal System and Bicameral Legislature. The Opposition rejects the motion on the grounds that it neglects to include the provision for a Constituent Assembly as the appropriate means by which to debate these two issues and that it sidesteps a vital part of the Opposition’s demands by trying to convert the Legislative Assembly into what amounts to a Constituent Assembly. They then proceed to walk out of the House (PRAAD ADM 14/2/84 Gold Coast Legislative Debates, 1955. Issue No. 1. 15 February – 6 April 1955. P. 1874); When the Select Committee Report is subsequently debated in the Assembly on 8 August 1955, the Opposition again walk out (PRAAD ADM 14/2/85 Legislative Assembly Debates, 1955. Issue No. 2. 26 July – 12 August 1955); In terms of the Bourne Commission, the NLM and its allies declined to discuss with Bourne because “the recent State Councils (Ashanti) Amendment Bill directly attacked the heritage and culture of Ashanti and *pro tanto* stultified my mission” (PRAAD ADM 5/3/100 1955 Report of the Constitutional Adviser Sir F.C. Bourne: Accra, Government Printer p. 3). The State Councils Ordinance allowed for chiefs to appeal directly to the Government in disputes against other chiefs and thereby by-pass the established mode of traditional conflict resolution via the State Council or Asanteman Council. In effect, the Cabinet and Nkrumah would be the final arbiter in stool disputes. It was seen as a direct attack on the institution of chieftaincy and an attempt to “establish dictatorship in this country.” Legislative Assemblyman, Mr. Kusi, bemoans: “When traditional custom is destroyed and the people have no custom and no culture whereby to model their way of life, the only form of government that could be established in this country would be that of Russia. In fact, the Government has a list of people whom it will execute when independence is achieved. I am one, the Asantehene is another ---” (PRAAD ADM 14/2/85 Legislative Assembly Debates, 1955. Issue No. 2. 26 July – 12 August 1955. p. 588; NAGK ARG 2/2/112/39 Minutes of Emergency Meeting of Asanteman Council held on the 27th and 28th October, 1955 at the Kumasi State Council Hall, p. 7)

unworkable as far as the Gold Coast was concerned.”¹⁰⁵ As a compromise, the committees recommended the establishment of Regional Assemblies.¹⁰⁶ The NLM and its allies consistently rejected these concessions, arguing that only a fully representative Constituent Assembly could deliver a fair constitution (Austin 1970, 305).

Meanwhile, while Nkrumah and the CPP worked to reconcile with the opposition at the national stage, they simultaneously sought to undermine opposition efforts in Ashanti. This took several forms. First, the Ashanti Region was by no means homogenous and there was opportunity to court groups that saw Ashanti nationalism as inimical to their interests.¹⁰⁷ Second, the CPP made appeals to the population to support Independence.¹⁰⁸ Finally, the CPP appealed to local interests and exploited local conflicts.¹⁰⁹ It is perhaps telling that the national efforts at reconciliation were paired with potentially counter-productive maneuvering at the local level. For exploiting local conflicts involved enflaming them, and with each move, the NLM and its allies were more convinced of the CPP’s dictatorial tendencies. These efforts are nonetheless suggestive of the CPP’s evolving governance style. On the one hand, they made public efforts to

¹⁰⁵ PRAAD ADM 14/2/85 Legislative Assembly Debates, 1955. Issue No. 2. 26 July – 12 August 1955. P. 360; Sir Frederick Bourne notes that “The “Proposals” are based on a revolt against excessive centralization: this can surely be corrected by less drastic administrative changes than those so far recommended by the NLM” (PRAAD ADM 5/3/100 1955 Report of the Constitutional Adviser Sir F.C. Bourne, p. 3).

¹⁰⁶ Regional Assemblies were to have specific responsibilities in the fields of development, agriculture, communications, works, housing, education and health PRAAD ADM 5/3/100 1955 Report of the Constitutional Adviser Sir F.C. Bourne

¹⁰⁷ Note that the Ashanti comprised only 45% of the population in their own capital, Kumasi, in 1955 (Austin 1970, 286). For example, the Brong-Ahafo group provided such an opportunity, historically conquered by the Ashanti and in contest with the Brong chiefs over authority and lands (Austin 1970, 294; PRAAD ADM 5/3/127 Report of the Committee on Asantehene-Brong Dispute. 26 June 1952).¹⁰⁷ The CPP strategically began to support their cause and made promises in this vein. The State Council (Amendment) Ordinance of 1955 went some way in this, as it gave the Brong chiefs an outlet of appeal in disputes that bypassed the Asantehene (Austin 1970, 296). At the CPP-initiated Achimota Conference in 1955, moreover, the Committee recommended that when Regional Assemblies were set up, the Brong-Ahafo should have their own regional assembly (PRAAD ADM 5/4/130 1956 Report of the Achimota Conference).¹⁰⁷ These strategies ultimately culminated in the creation of a separate Brong-Ahafo Region in 1959 (PRAAD ADM 14/7/11 Ghana Parliamentary Debates. Official Report – First Series. Volume 14. 19 February – 20 March 1959).¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁸ PRAAD ADM 14/2/88 Gold Coast Legislative Assembly Debates, 1956-57. Issue No. 1. 15 May – 22 May 1956; Austin 1970, 284

¹⁰⁹ As Austin (1970) notes: “...Ashanti was itself a federation of many points of power, distributed in party hierarchically, in part territorially, within which paramount chiefs quarreled with their subordinates, rival royal houses were divided over succession claims, and neighboring chiefdoms challenged each other in the law courts over land and boundary rights. There was a rich field of opportunity in these disputes not only for the CPP but for the participants themselves” (292).

reconcile with an opposition that severely distrusted it by initiating forums for national discussion. On the other hand, they worked to shore up party support via informal and personal networks by exploiting local conflicts. Both the CPP and opposition turned a blind eye toward, if not utilized, their supporters' use of violence in local spaces to facilitate this process.

Ultimately, the British forced the issue by holding a third general election in 1956.¹¹⁰ The election was to be a mandate for the grant of independence based on Constitutional proposals submitted to the House.¹¹¹ The CPP ran candidates in every constituency and based its campaign largely on the strength of its record in government and the claim that a vote for the NLM or its allies meant a vote for imperialism.¹¹² The Opposition, by contrast, hoped that each of its coalition parties would carry their respective region and campaigned for federalism and against CPP dictatorship (Austin 1970, 324-25).¹¹³ Despite these national overtures, there remained the necessity to play on local interests and rivalries in the constituencies.¹¹⁴

Ultimately, the CPP won 71 of the 104 seats and 57% of the popular vote (Austin 1970, 348-349).¹¹⁵ Even after this electoral defeat, however, the Opposition continued to reject the CPP bid for independence, arguing that a legitimate constitution had not been agreed upon and that the election results supported their calls for federation because the CPP failed to win a reasonable majority in each of the Regions.¹¹⁶ This was perhaps a reasonable interpretation or perhaps a

¹¹⁰ The CPP made several last appeals, via Nkrumah and then by sending Kojo Botsio to London, to avoid such an outcome, to no avail (Austin 1970, 308-309).

¹¹¹ PRAAD ADM 14/2/88 Gold Coast Legislative Assembly Debates, 1956-57. Issue No. 1. 15 May – 22 May 1956

¹¹² This appeal runs something like Krobo Edusei's comment: "If you vote for the red cockerel you vote for Kwame Nkrumah's Constitution; if you vote for the black card, which is the NLM, you sabotage self-government for the next twenty years. And the country will be doomed forever" (PRAAD ADM 14/2/88 Legislative Assembly Debates, 1956-57. Issue No. 1. 15 May – 22 May 1956. p. 142).

¹¹³ Dr. Busia notes that the NLM and its allies, should they happen to lose the election in what would be a national disaster, "are prepared to meet it as such and to take all steps IN and OUT of the Legislative Assembly to mitigate the evil" (Ashanti Pioneer, 14 July 1956, quoted in Austin (1970) p. 328).

¹¹⁴ This is indicated across the board by the fact that 205 of the 225 candidates were from the local constituency where they contested (Austin 1970, 324).

¹¹⁵ Austin (1970) calculates that roughly 50% of those registered actually cast votes, and that roughly 35% of the adult population voted in 1956 (347).

¹¹⁶ PRAAD ADM 14/2/89 Legislative Assembly Debates, 1956-57. Official Report – First Series. Volume 1. 30 July – 19 September 1956

desperate attempt to continue the fight. Regardless, the CPP perceived such overtures to be proof of the opposition's purely destructive objectives.

Despite these objections, on 3 August, 1956, the Prime Minister put the Motion for Gold Coast Independence before the Assembly.¹¹⁷ In January 1957, the parties finally agreed on a constitution which was essentially the same as the proposals put forth by the Bourne Report.¹¹⁸ With a Constitution approved, Ghana became independent on 6 March 1957.

Conclusion

The Gold Coast was heralded in 1947 as a pioneer amongst African colonies for its advanced political development. Its 1946 Constitution provided for the first African-majority legislature, and it became the first colony to gain its independence on the African continent in 1957. In the course of events, however, the educated elites with the longest experience in training, education and participation in lobbying through formal channels for political reforms would be bypassed for control of the state. A mass party emerged after World War II which would rather inherit the state apparatus. The CPP's first years of power after 1951 were spent in apprenticeship and the following three governing under self-rule. Thus, this limited experience of governing under democratic institutions meant that when the inchoate CPP organization suffered from both internal defection and external opposition, it relied on informal processes to gain and maintain power, such as distributing parts of the state to loyal supporters and exploiting local jealousies and rivalries, and fomenting chaos in the countryside.

Meanwhile, a hostile relationship developed between the CPP government, new to both democratic and administrative roles, and the opposition, experienced in these roles but bitter in their failure to secure them. The period of self-rule (1954-57) was characterized by attack and counter-attack throughout much of the country but predominately in the Ashanti Region. While

¹¹⁷ The Opposition walked out of the Assembly during Nkrumah's motion for independence (PRAAD ADM 14/2/89 Legislative Assembly Debates, 1956-57. Official Report – First Series. Volume 1. 30 July – 19 September 1956)

¹¹⁸ PRAAD RG 17/1/59 New Constitution: Personal Letter from Sir Arden-Clarke to Dr. Kwame Nkrumah dated 18 September 1956; Austin 1970, 357

the colonial and CPP government kept these conflicts from escalating to a national scale, this state of perpetual crisis set the stage for and defined the experience of the CPP government officials. Their views of dissent and opposition politics were to condition their initiation of policies after Independence in what we will see gradually escalates to a one-party state. We now turn to the late-colonial development of a predatory state and its weak links society.

**A Predatory State and Chaotic Society:
the politics of chieftaincy in late-colonial Ghana**

Ghana has a long history of social organizing via clubs, councils, movements, unions, etc. starting from around the turn of the 20th century.¹¹⁹ These social organizations remained small, elite-centric and largely located in the municipal areas of Accra, Sekondi-Takoradi, Cape Coast and Kumasi before 1948 (Holmes 1972, 782). Holmes (1972) describes their limited effectiveness as such: “Because circumstances were unfavorable to the achievement of their [anti-colonial] objective, the methods adopted by them frequently seemed ineffectual, compromised, bizarre, opportunistic and even ill-chosen” (412). Beyond intermittent protests against specific colonial measures,¹²⁰ broad political consciousness did not follow these elite organizations until after World War II in Ashanti and the Colony and even later in the Northern Territories (Austin 1970, 7; Kimble 1963, 29). Nor did elites make concerted efforts to mobilize from below, preferring rather to lobby within the context of the colonial system for their particular concerns including increased wages for civil servants, subsidies for municipal improvement, and elite electoral representation (Holmes 1972, 416-417). While political/social organizations were rather inchoate prior WWII, they were nonetheless more advanced than other African countries at the time (Wight 1947, 207). It was partially for this reason that the British conceded a comparably advanced constitution in 1946 with the first African-majority legislature (Austin 1970, 7).

¹¹⁹ Several examples include the Aborigines Rights Protection Society (ARPS), National Congress of West Africa, The West African Youth League and the Gold Coast Youth Movement.

¹²⁰ Examples include the Income Tax of 1931, Sedition and Waterworks Bills of 1934, cocoa hold-ups in the 1930s, etc.

This basic background needs to be juxtaposed against the post-1951 development of a corrupt and predatory state which came to define relations between state and society in the early Independence period. How and why did this evolution transpire? How did violence and extra-constitutional activities become the dominant manner by which social groups challenged the behavior of the state instead of legally-sanctioned channels of opposition? This section argues that a cyclical pattern was at work between the CPP government and social, political and economic organizations which continuously escalated tension between them until the former set out on a course to gradually eliminate or coopt the latter.

While these dynamics characterized relations between the state and multiple types of organizations, evidence of this phenomenon is illustrated by a case study of one such institution: chieftaincy. By taking the evolution of relations between the state and chieftaincy as a case study of state/society relations, I demonstrate three aspects: first, the countryside in particular was in a chaotic state at Independence owing to the parties' role in exploiting and enflaming local rivalries. Second, the CPP did this partially by distributing state goods to loyal parties such that both the CPP and social groups came to see the state itself as a good to be disbursed. Meanwhile, the CPP came increasingly to identify the party as the state and thus viewed party dissension as the same as dissension against the entire national project. Third, the CPP was skillful at generating institutional change by legally manipulating their composition without involving legislative bodies.

This section examines these features in the context of a battle between the CPP state and the institutions of traditional rule. The case study is used to illustrate the evolution of the predatory nature of the state as against one major aspect of Gold Coast (then Ghana) society. The argument is less that hostility toward chiefs was somehow an inappropriate position for the nationalists to hold; indeed, one could note that it was not uncommon in colonial contexts for nationalist forces to oppose traditional systems and see them as competitors for power (Migdal 1988). The contention is rather that the manner through which the nationalists attacked and relegated

chieftaincy to a shell of its former self is illustrative of the state's (the CPP's) predatory relationship against social groups. Its manner of gaining and winning electoral support centered around coercion and cooptation of local actors and groups. After 1951, the state was frequently the prize, the promise and the means by which these tactics were used. The specific case of chieftaincy provides useful evidence because it is present across the country and became a core component of the uneasy transition from a colonial to independent state.

This section is laid out as follows: first, it provides a brief historical background to the evolution of chieftaincy in Gold Coast politics starting with the turn of the century and extending to the birth of the nationalist movement in 1949. Second, it describes the initial clashes between a fast-growing nationalist movement and conservative traditional institutions during the former's initial bid for power between 1949 and 1951. Third, it looks at the dynamics of state relations with this core social institution after the CPP comes to power from 1951 to independence in 1957. Finally, it discusses some of the legacies of this war against chiefs for the nature of relations between state and society and the emergence of a one-party state. It argues that, in the absence of formalized institutions to facilitate information-sharing between state officials and social groups, relations between the state, increasingly synonymous with the CPP party, and society were progressively characterized by cooptation, predation and coercion via informal institutions.

Nationalism and Sidelining Chieftaincy

The role of traditional authorities changed under the colonial administration, a process which was completed in the early 20th century when the British brought the Ashanti and Northern Territories under their control (Rathbone 2000; Kimble 1963). From 1897 when the British clashed with local elites and chiefs over attempts to legislate land, the two groups partnered to combat imperial overstep, a situation which persisted for roughly 20 years (Holmes 1972). By the end of World War I, however, "the growing professionalism of the British Civil Service, the hardening of more systemic racism and the British predilection for working with chiefs had gradually excluded the coastal elite from such roles" (Rathbone 2000, 14). At the same time,

segments of the educated elites became more anti-colonial and opposed anyone who supported the system of alien rule as it stood. Thus, elites and chiefs began to compete for influence, events reaching a head in the early 1920s when the National Congress of British West Africa attempted to sidestep the traditional authorities in their calls for greater administrative integration (Holmes 1972, 428). At this juncture, the British made a strategic decision to back the chiefs as the more likely keepers of the colonial *status quo* and further entrenched their role in the colonial administration (Rathbone 2000, 14). The 1925 Constitution thus provided for the election of three municipal members and six Provincial Council of Chiefs members (Kimble 1963, 396-97; Wight 1947). The educated elites were now outnumbered by colonial members and traditional authorities in the Legislature. In addition, the British passed a series of laws that further defined and expanded the influence of the chiefs to tax, administer, and legislate their local spaces via Native Administration and Territorial Councils (Kimble 1963).

For the next 20 years thereafter, many, though not all, educated elites strategically chose to work with as opposed to against the chiefs, partnering and lobbying where interests aligned to influence colonial decision-making (Holmes 1972, 464). This followed a particularly conservative agenda owing to the stronger position of the chiefs in the partnership. The elites thus campaigned for progressive development with an emphasis on increased availability of education and African participation in the administration.¹²¹ This was the state of affairs through WWII.

In 1948, riots rocked the Gold Coast and the Watson Commission was called in to investigate the sources of unrest.¹²² The Commission concluded that the expansive role of chiefs in the political scene was “dying on its feet” and that the 1946 Burns Constitution was ‘outmoded at

¹²¹ While Governor Guggisberg was infamous for introducing the Provincial Councils Scheme, he was also responsible for a great deal of progressive legislation in the way of education, development, and administration. Thus, while the political opportunities bypassed the educated elites, there were progressively more of them being created and gradually more opportunities for their participation in the lower levels of government.

¹²² PRAAD ADM 5/3/63. Watson, Aiken. Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast, 1948.

birth' (Rathbone 2000, 19). Evidence from the Commission's interviews suggested popular hostility to chiefs who had overstepped their authority.¹²³

Out of the riots, Nkrumah began to mobilize a group of commoners first under the UGCC and then the CPP. The CPP's members and leadership were of a different social category than the formerly predominate educated elite. Foremost, these new nationalists had none of the connections to chiefly stools¹²⁴ that had helped to keep some of the educated elite at bay since the 1920s (Austin 1970). Further, they were made up of the Gold Coast 'youth', a group of persons with longstanding significance in local politics as those who keep chiefly authority in check.¹²⁵ These factors made them especially opposed to any continued dominance of the chiefs. Beyond the Watson Commission, the new nationalists began to advocate for anti-colonial reform, notably in its new newspaper, the Accra Evening News.¹²⁶ In it, instead of referring to the Gold Coast "people and its chiefs" as had been the longstanding practice in Gold Coast politics, this new group was now largely using 'workers' or 'masses' (Rathbone 2000, 22). In short, the chiefs were on the wrong side of the growing nationalist movement.

In 1950, the educated elite and some chiefs sat for six months in the Coussey Commission to design a new Constitution (Rathbone 2000). Meanwhile, Nkrumah's mass movement was expanding by opening new branches throughout the southern part of the colony and increasingly confronting the chiefs (Austin 1967, 545-548). In September 1950, the CPP held a national rally and concluded that the chiefs' involvement in national politics was no longer appropriate. In October, the Joint Territorial Council responded by discussing the potential of banning the CPP

¹²³ PRAAD ADM 5/3/63. Watson, Aiken. Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast, 1948.

¹²⁴ A 'stool' is Akan terminology and refers to a real 'throne' upon which a chief sits and is used as a synonym for the chief's office and the state over which he presides. Thus, when a chief comes to office, he/she is 'enstooled' and when he leaves office, he/she is 'destooled' (Rathbone 2000, 13).

¹²⁵ Naturally, chiefs viewed this activity in a negative light and referred to this group as the 'malcontents' and 'agitators'. When the CPP was born, they were known as the 'verandah boys'. (Rathbone 2000, 23; see also Allman 1993, 28-36 for discussion on the history of 'youngmen').

¹²⁶ In what would become an oft-repeated phrase, on January 5, 1950, an editorial in the Accra Evening News noted: "...Chiefs in league with the imperialists who obstruct our path...will one day run away and leave their Stools" (Accra Evening News)

nationally.¹²⁷ At the local level, the CPP confronted chiefs by engaging in local disputes. Rathbone (2000) notes that “the local representation of the national political struggle frequently reasserted older cleavages. Almost inevitably these reflected the tensions between the old, chief-dominated Native Authorities and sections of commoners” (25). In these disputes, chiefs fought back and often formed a renewed alliance with representatives of the UGCC to reassert their authority.¹²⁸ Further, the *Accra Evening News* began to publish reports which specifically supported one side or another in contests over stools (ibid, 27).

These activities were to set the stage for the 1951 election and the CPP in government. They suggest not simply hostility toward the institution of chieftaincy, though this is part of the nationalist movement as well, but a particular type of confrontation that involved intimate knowledge of local disputes and actors and that had the potential to be quite violent if not monitored by a higher authority. As we will see, because the institutions of the party and the state failed to provide the formal means of monitoring these confrontations, and because the CPP often had an incentive to exploit them, fomenting local chaos via chieftaincy disputes became a primary means to gain support from segments of society.

The CPP Governance Style and the War on Chiefs

After 1951, the CPP went through a period of government apprenticeship, having gained a substantial minority of the Legislative Assembly seats in the general election and a majority in the Executive Council (Austin 1970, 154). At this time, the party was still inchoate and, as mentioned, the newly elected representatives were inexperienced in governing and generally only minimally educated (Bob-Milliar 2014, 296). The party was plagued by waves of dismissals and resignations and rumours of corruption. Meanwhile, the party witnessed a large and rapid expansion of the rank-and-file, and it entered a period of increased public spending as it sought to

¹²⁷ Accra Evening News, 25 August 1950 & 26 October 1950

¹²⁸ For example, in June 1950, it was alleged that chiefs in the Northern Territory were trying to crush the CPP branch recently opened in Tamale (Rathbone 2000, 25).

deliver on goods promised during the campaign and prepare the country for Independence (ibid). Spending focused on Africanization of the civil service, expansion of education and reorganization of the local government (Austin 1970, 154-157).

Local government reform in particular had a large impact on the role of chiefs, who were now only to perform ‘customary functions’ via the pre-existing traditional councils.¹²⁹ In August 1951, the Legislative Assembly passed a Bill to create modern local councils (Rathbone 2000, 30). Debates focused on the curtailment of many of the chiefs’ long-held powers at the local level and the creation of an Upper House at the national level for the chiefs, the latter of which was rejected. Chiefs lost effective control over one of their most powerful resources, stool land, which now could not be alienated by a chief without consent of the local council (ibid, 31). Further, revenue from lands and courts would no longer go to stools but directly to local treasuries (ibid, 31-32). As these sources of revenue were transferred, the traditional councils effectively became dependent on local councils for an annual grant. As one concession to these far-reaching reforms, the chiefs were guaranteed 1/3 membership on the local councils, as these seats would be appointed by the Territorial Councils themselves (ibid, 32). There was constant conflict between the new elected local councils and chiefs between 1951 and 1954 over their areas of authority and in particular over the distribution of revenue between the councils (ibid, 44-45).

As major policy changes altered the fundamental source of authority at the local level, the CPP also worked to extend its network of support further into rural spaces. Thus, these formal institutional changes were accompanied by informal strategies to win local support by backing dissident groupings in the countryside where hostile chiefs resided. Rathbone (2000) describes the scene and the potential for CPP exploitation as such: “virtually every chieftaincy, virtually every stool, was in reality a tense political cockpit. Obviously the fault-lines of dissent differed from place to place. But squabbles and sometimes very dangerous confrontations were the

¹²⁹ ADM 5/3/123 Report of the Select Committee of the Legislative Council appointed to make recommendation concerning Local Government in Ashanti. London: C.F. Roworth. 1951

essence of chieftaincy politics” (34). In other words, there was ample opportunity for a disloyal chief to be destooled and replaced with assistance from the national party. This is not to suggest that the CPP created local disputes where none existed. Rather it armed existing dissidents against rival chiefs. These maneuvers frequently had nothing to do with national political issues at all but “the divisive quality of stool politics was [nonetheless] a potentially effective recruiting sergeant for a new political party” (ibid, 37; Austin 1961).

The courts served as a second component of local government reform, an institution which was not well-regulated by the colonial government (Kimble 1963). The Korsah Committee issued a detailed report in 1951 that outlined the violations, inefficiency, and general organizational disarray of courts in rural areas (Rathbone 2000, 50-51). Despite the report’s battery of available evidence and extensive proposals for reform, the CPP government did not propose legislation to follow-through with any of its recommendations. This was likely not a function of budget issues, for the CPP had increased their spending in other areas during this period in line with high cocoa prices (Austin 1970, 157-161). Rather, Rathbone (2000) argues that there was little incentive to spend this money as it was easier and less costly to simply replace existing personnel with CPP supporters. This process was easily facilitated by the Minister of Local Government who had the legal authority to approve or oppose appointments made by local councils or appoint or remove members to sit on court panels (52-53). This procedure is important because it serves as a foreshadowing of government methods after 1957 where procedures of executive instrument were favored over fully-debated legislation to achieve an end with minimal confrontation. The manner of change is not unconstitutional, yet the impact is no doubt to consolidate CPP authority without subjecting the government to full public scrutiny and opposition (ibid, 85).

A particular chief’s response to these activities, however, cannot be assumed. There were numerous reasons to support the CPP if only to protect oneself against the government’s war against the institution. Beyond this, politics in the countryside remained inherently local and thus the focus tended to be on proximate disputes rather than national gestures. As Austin (1961)

describes of the 1954 election in two rural Northern constituencies: “An able candidate can use local rivalries from personal jealousies and long-standing rivalries between lineages” (13). Thus, one might support the CPP in order to gain the party’s support in the destoolment of a rival chief and his council, or support the CPP in order to protect oneself from local efforts to destool, or in order to gain developmental resources from the state.¹³⁰ Finally, one might support the CPP (or the NLM) because of local coercion and violence from one side or the other (Rathbone 2000, 79). Not infrequently, the most vocal chiefly opponents of CPP government paid dearly for this resistance.¹³¹ Further, when the NLM emerged in the Ashanti Region after the 1954 election, it was supported by the Asantehene and numerous smaller chiefs (Allman 1993, 55). The CPP retaliated by passing the State Council (Amendment) Ordinance in August 1955 which gave power to the lesser chiefs to appeal in their cases against higher chiefs directly to the government, thus bypassing the traditional hierarchy in the region and granting greater discretion to the government to support CPP-loyalist chiefs in disputes against non-CPP rivals.¹³²

Finally, there was the issue of constitutional protection. The CPP was clever in utilizing legal avenues to influence the composition and orientation of chieftaincy institutions. Of course, these efforts took place in the politically volatile environment of transition, and there were accordingly moments when the chiefs sought to secure their future through increased constitutional protections. These efforts were consistently denied or left unresolved. For example, in debates over the 1954 Constitution, the Asanteman Council and the Joint Provincial Council sent a joint

¹³⁰ Austin (1961) describes the mentality of the electorate in a rural northern constituency in 1954 as such: “Thus the successful candidate must try and live up to his campaign promises: he is regarded by many of his constituents as an investment, and he will be asked for jobs and scholarships or for help in local disputes often far beyond his capacity to satisfy all those who, having helped him to become an Assembly member, now expected something in return” (14-15). On an extreme case, an entire region was carved out of the Ashanti as a bribe for supporting the CPP. This latter case is in reference to the Brong Ahafo Region which was created in 1959 (RG 17/1/158 Brong Ahafo Traditional Affairs (7/7/59 – 30/7/59)).

¹³¹ For example, the Akyem Abuakwa district, home to several key members of the UGCC including J.B. Danquah, Akuffo-Addo and Ofori Atta, was stripped of developmental goods, its chiefs threatened with destoolment and its people incited to revolt against its chiefly leadership. Meanwhile, the Okyenene was almost neurotic in opposing CPP support in his district, even allegedly supporting forces to go out and harangue voters known to support the CPP and refusing to allow a CPP branch to be established in the district (Rathbone 2000, 38-43).

¹³² PRAAD ADM 14/2/85 Gold Coast Legislative Assembly Debates, 1955. Issue No. 2. 26 July – 12 August 1955

response to the Government's White Paper for constitutional change. They requested a House of Chiefs at the national level, a statutory role for the chiefs' territorial councils and the formal recognition of traditional authorities as essential elements of local administration (Rathbone 2000, 59). Nkrumah visited both territorial councils in June 1953 (ibid, 60). At their meeting, the parties agreed that chiefs should be kept out of national politics by ensuring that appeals from the territorial councils be forwarded to an impartial committee and that the CPP would appoint a commission of inquiry to examine the question of an Upper House. Both of these agreements were to be fulfilled after the 1954 election; neither proposal was ever undertaken. In short, the CPP sought to assuage outspoken rivals when necessary by appealing to them for patience. The other major instance of this tactic involves the Regional Assemblies and regional Houses of Chiefs secured in the Independence Constitution, but left unspecified until after the British departed. After Independence, they were rapidly dismantled.¹³³ Finally, it is perhaps also telling that the oft-repeated phrase that chiefs shall not be involved in 'party politics' applied only to chiefs who supported parties other than the CPP.¹³⁴ This tendency foreshadowed the later view of the party and the state as the same entity, loyalty to the latter implying loyalty also to the former.

In short, in interacting with the social institutions of chieftaincy, the CPP exhibits several strategies which are suggestive of the manner in which the party, and thus the state, interacted with society more broadly. First, one of the CPP's primary strategies during and after elections was to capitalize on stool disputes by supporting the dissident group against a non-CPP-supporting chief or vice versa. Second, after gaining state office, this support was frequently given via promises or distributions of state resources to strategic partners at the local level or the

¹³³Foreshadowing Nkrumah's intentions, his declarations in the Cabinet in 1954 suggest frustration with chiefs' continued lobbying for constitutional 'safeguards,' arguing that no safeguards would be necessary "if they simply performed their functions in a manner acceptable to their subjects" (quoted in Rathbone 2000, 62). Indeed, in the legislative debate over the fate of the Regional Assemblies in 1958, Nkrumah reveals his longheld intention not to honor this concession, declaring their establishment a 'rape on mother Ghana' (PRAAD ADM 14/7/9 Ghana Parliamentary Debates. Volume 12. 3 November – 19 December 1958, 16).

¹³⁴ Rathbone 2000, 62; NAGK ARG 2/10/2/57 "Resolution Calling for the Asantehene to Refrain from Party Politics" Ashanti Youth Association 1950-1976; RG 17/1/13 Traditional Councils (Asanteman, Ashanti Situation) "Draft Letter to Traditional Councils from meeting of Cabinet on 22nd October 1954" Nkrumah Papers

withholding of developmental goods to non-supporters. Third, where this strategy was not effective, the CPP removed legal titles of paramountcy from non-loyal chiefs in order to provoke local dissension, facilitate the destoolment and replacement of the chief with a more loyal partner and subsequently reestablish paramount status. In this way, the CPP was able to manipulate the composition of the institution to assure loyalty to the party, and thus state. The CPP thus utilized the state to maintain its influence against potential opposition (in this case chiefs) by using strategies of cooptation, predation and coercion. These became important tools of the state after Independence as well.

Legacies of Nationalism for Post-Independence Chieftaincy

One legacy of the politics of late-colonial chieftaincy was that the rural areas were essentially in chaos by 1957. Because of the cyclical escalation of local disputes, rural disputes were rife throughout the late-colonial and early independence period. When the CPP strategically supported one chief against another in a local dispute, this support undermined and marginalized their supporters. Because CPP support was also frequently tied to patronage for the winners, the net result was bitterness among the losers, promoting a circle of coercion and conflict (Rathbone 2000).

In other cases, the new local council clashed with traditional institutions over what authorities each held and how much money should be allocated to the latter's activities (Rathbone 2000, 44-45). The result was to reduce the effectiveness of either institution in providing local governance. Finally, NLM and CPP supporters perpetrated violence in the countryside without either party's oversight. This was because the state, as we will see in the next section, remained small and its knowledge of and control over peripheral areas limited. Thus, violence tended to go unchecked and conditioned a politics of retribution and revenge (Rathbone 2000, 102).

Part of the process of supporting loyalists and punishing dissenters was the strategic disbursement of public goods. The Jibowu Commission suggests evidence of several cases where

CPP officials used the state to distribute patronage.¹³⁵ The use of the state to control specific social actors and communities with impunity was to be a common tool after independence as well. Moreover, this was to set a relationship of private distribution between state and society.

Beyond the chaotic realities of a state not yet in control of its population, territory, and officials, the case study of relations between the state and chieftaincy suggest foreshadowing of the manner through which the CPP sought to control social interest groups after Independence. One significant point is that the CPP frequently manipulated situations on the ground instead of introducing and debating legislation. For example, despite ample evidence of the need to reform the courts, the CPP government never attempted to do this via legislation. Rather, it set up several commissions of enquiry and in the meantime filled the courts with party supporters. Second, the CPP often saw itself as synonymous with the state (Austin 1970, 31). This is illustrated in its rhetoric on chiefs' involvement in party politics – a phrase which was directed toward non-CPP chiefs only.¹³⁶ Finally, the CPP made promises to interest groups in order to placate them without any real intention of fulfilling them. This tactic was effective in putting off the chiefs' demands for constitutional safeguards through Houses of Chiefs as well as regional safeguards through Regional Assemblies.

Limited Administrative Development despite Longstanding Calls for Reform

A common characteristic across limited administrative colonies is that the most fervent and longstanding contestations of early nationalists against the colonial occupiers were over access and integration into the administrative apparatus. In the Gold Coast, early anti-colonial activities were not focused on overthrowing the foreign regime so much as encouraging greater local incorporation into its institutions (Kimble 1963; Holmes 1972). This contest centered on two

¹³⁵ PRAAD 1956 ADM 5/3/102 1956 Jibowu's Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Affairs of the Cocoa Purchasing Company Limited and Government Purchasing in regard to the future constitution and control of statutory Boards and Corporations in the Gold Coast

¹³⁶ Rathbone 2000, 62; NAGK ARG 2/10/2/57 "Resolution Calling for the Asantehene to Refrain from Party Politics" Ashanti Youth Association 1950-1976; RG 17/1/13 Traditional Councils (Asanteman, Ashanti Situation) "Draft Letter to Traditional Councils from meeting of Cabinet on 22nd October 1954" Nkrumah Papers

primary dimensions: expansion of education and training opportunities and local incorporation into and promotion in the civil service ('Africanization')(Wight 1947,176). These contests frequently jockeyed back and forth for primary importance, with periods when advancements in opportunities for educational opportunity outpaced avenues for climbing the bureaucratic ladder and other moments when rapid administrative expansion was juxtaposed uneasily with limited applicants of sufficient qualification (Kimble 1963, 123).

Nonetheless, both opportunities were necessarily limited and thus centered as a point of contention until the last moments of colonial overrule. Unlike the Indian, Ceylon or Malayan civil service, for example, competitive examinations for the civil service were never introduced in the Gold Coast. Thereby, entry points into the service were few, and where these points were made, promotion beyond the lower ranks was extremely limited until the Second World War (Justice Crabbe Interview). This is despite an ambitious policy set forth in the 1920s by Governor Guggisburg to Africanize the civil service, a program which was ultimately abandoned (Kimble 1963, 122-124). Further, a Junior and Senior Service largely separated African from European public servants. Less than a decade before independence, there were only 98 Africans out of a total of 1300 senior appointments in the Gold Coast.¹³⁷ Instead, the colonial administration preferred to work through existing traditional institutions at the local level to maintain law and order, provide revenue, and organize community-level development (Holmes 1972).

The result of late opportunities for training and integration into the colonial apparatus was that the civil service remained small in size and reach at independence. While a small group of elites who had achieved advanced education and served in the colonial administration were of high quality and proficiency, this group was limited and too small to retain its professional character when faced with the direct political interference of the governing party after Independence (Interviews with Justice Crabbe). At Independence, a process of integrating the

¹³⁷ PRAAD ADM 5/3/63. Watson, Aiken. 1948. Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast, 1948

state and party began in earnest. Such dictates were achieved via cooptation and/or coercion at all levels of the polity. Increasingly, officials utilized the state as a private source of wealth, accumulation, power and impunity. Moreover, because the state (and party) had limited knowledge of the population outside a few urban centers, it became increasingly paranoid about activities against it. When the opposition was weakened to near extinction in 1960, this manifested in the regime turning increasingly against its own ranks (Fordwor 2010, 92-112; Omari 1970). Accusations of treason, conspiracy, assassination attempts, detentions, exiles, and, in 1966, a coup d'état filled the last six years of the CPP regime (Bretton 1966).

This section argues that the CPP, despite its ability to canvas sufficient votes to claim a mandate to lead the Gold Coast to independence, knew little about its population and territory. These challenges spanned the country and manifested in outbreaks of violence, disorder and corresponding state repression after 1957. The CPP also coopted or disbanded organizations seen to be in opposition to the centralized party state, including traditional rulers, regional assemblies, local government institutions, as well as civil society groups and the civil service itself (Austin 1970). This section outlines this administrative development in five sections: pre-1946 Political Design, Bureaucratic Development, Direct Taxation and Government Revenue, Public Services, and Transportation and Communications. It sets the scene for a discussion of the resulting challenges associated with a limited administrative apparatus for maintaining democratic institutions after Independence.

Pre-1946 Political Design

Compared to its African neighbors, the Gold Coast had early contact with Europeans along the coastal areas. As early as 1554, British ships arrived on the coast, though the British government did not assume control of these trade settlements formally until 1821 (Fordwor 2010). In 1874, Britain proclaimed the southern coast as a separate Gold Coast Colony with its own Governor, Executive and Legislative Council (de Smith 1957, 848; Kimble 1963, 302). This process included the new presence of British District Commissioners, courts and indirect taxation.

Even so, these changes affected primarily the small class of local merchants, traders and lawyers. The great majority of conflicts and daily affairs continued to be mediated under traditional structures of justice, tax and chiefly authority.

The Ashanti Region, after an armed resistance in the late 1800s, was finally annexed to Britain in 1901 when it became a separate Protectorate under the authority of the Governor (Kimble 1963, 323). It was not joined administratively with the Colony until 1946. In 1901, the Northern Region were also annexed to the British Crown as a Protectorate via negotiation of individual treaties with chiefs throughout the area. It would remain a separate legal entity until as late as 1951 when it was finally brought under the legislative instruments of the Gold Coast.

In short, by the early 1900s, the entire territory of the Gold Coast was brought under British control. However, the three regions were administered separately as the Colony, Ashanti and Northern Territories. It was not until 1951, a mere six years before Independence, that the colonial rulers completed the administrative unity. This meant that, while the three territories were under the authority of the same Governor and while they were covered under the budget of the Colony, their legislative and judicial instruments remained distinct. The net result of these distinctions was that the populations in these territories did not come to share a common nationalism until after World War II (Holmes 1972, 12). The Colony and Ashanti, via increased communications, transportation, and trade, evolved an uneasy though fruitful partnership against the colonial regime throughout the 1920s and 1930s. This culminated in their agreement to sign proposals for a common legislature in the early 1940s at the persuasion of Gold Coast nationalist, J.B. Danquah (*ibid*, 825). By contrast, the predominance of subsistence agriculture and lack of communications and transportation meant that the Northern Territories were slow to develop a sense of regional autonomy, and when the realities of integration into a wider Gold Coast became inescapable, this regional identity took the form of “non-southernness” (Ladouceur 1979).

In short, the administrative institutions remained heterogeneous and their degree of intensity across the regions were distinct until the late stages of colonialism. Beyond the final executive

authority of the Crown via the Governor after 1901, no common set of legislation existed across the colony until the 1950s. The realities of government intervention in people's lives remained localized, and protests against colonial rule were decreasingly fierce from the Coast, to Ashanti and finally to the Northern Territories.

Bureaucratic Development

Parallel to the heterogeneous administrative structures in the respective regions, calls for reform and opportunities for integration into the bureaucratic machinery were also diverse. They were most longstanding and pronounced in the Gold Coast Colony, where colonial imposition was made earliest. Agitations for integration started as early as 1850, when a small group of educated Africans evolved via missionary connections (Kimble 1963, 93). In these early years, a handful of coastal Africans were brought into public service as clerks, cashiers, and justices, largely depending on the whims of the Governor (Kimble 1963, 65-68). Despite a few successes, there remained an overarching feeling of distrust and resentment against integration of educated locals until much later (Kimble 1963, 87-93).

As administrative responsibilities increased, cost effectiveness and health concerns for overseas officers meant turning to Africans to fill vacant posts (Kimble 1963, 94). In 1883, of the 43 high-level posts, nine were filled by Africans, including seven District Commissioners (ibid). This seems to be good start to a program of incorporation, but the fortunes of Africans were reversed by the turn of the century; the qualifications required for an increasingly complex administrative apparatus were raised, and fewer Africans were said to sufficiently meet the requirements (ibid, 97-98). As this happened, those Africans who had made senior posts slowly dropped out for various reasons, and no effort was made to replace them (ibid, 99). In short, an educational/training system that failed to keep pace with changing administrative demands meant that incorporation actually retrogressed just as expectations among a local elite were expanding. This was not a function of a constricting government apparatus, but that Europeans were being brought to fill in new positions and fill abdicated ones. In 1908, the senior service had grown to

274 officers, only five of which were African (Kimble 1963, 100). At the same time, limited opportunities for advancement once in the service became the object of resentment.¹³⁸

It was in this context that post-WWI demands were made for increasing integration. Governor Guggisburg came to the Gold Coast in 1920 with goals to address the issue of Africanization as well as broad-based development. In 1921, he proposed a plan to the Legislative Council which called for the gradual replacement of at least 50% of the existing European staff in the service. (Kimble 1963, 107). This was coupled with a reorganization of the service to provide a clear path for training and promotion. Between 1919 -1926, 27 Africans were admitted into positions previously reserved for Europeans (ibid, 122). Moreover, the plan officially set forth a 20-year goal to increase the total service to 558, of which 229 (40%) would be Africans (ibid).¹³⁹ When the economy slumped during the depression, the ambitious plan was abandoned and by 1948, there remained only 98 Africans in the Senior Service of over 1300 (7.5%).¹⁴⁰ Africanization remained a cornerstone of Gold Coast demands through independence.¹⁴¹

Other Committees on Africanization met in 1941 and 1943.¹⁴² Progress, however, remained largely non-existent.¹⁴³ Then, after World War II when nationalist agitation for self-government intensified, the issue was re-examined (Arden-Clarke 1958). In 1951, a Commission on the Civil Service reported that the single most important factor in the transition was the Africanization of the civil service. The Report blamed the inchoate educational system, the rigid structure of

¹³⁸ One of the outspoken advocates of more egalitarian processes of recruitment and promotion was Casely Hayford's National Congress of British West Africa (Holmes 1972).

¹³⁹ This included any section of the administration except justices and political officials, a point of contention in the Legislature but one which was in line with Governor Guggisburg's political reforms in terms of promoting the role of traditional institutions and authorities at the expense of the educated elite (Kimble 1963, 122).

¹⁴⁰ PRAAD ADM 5/3/63. Watson, Aiken. 1948. Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast, 1948).

¹⁴¹ By way of example, an editorial in the CPP's party paper in mid-1953 calls for the ambition to cater for ourselves should begin to realize itself now, now, now" (Accra Evening News, July 2, 1953)

¹⁴² In 1941 Captain V.J. Lynch Committee made recommendations for plan but was considered too rigid (Sessional Paper No. 1 of 1944); in 1943, Burns adumbrated a new policy in which preference to be given to Africans except in Police and Political Administration. Progress, however, remained largely non-existent (e.g. in 1945, an African was appointed to the post of Assistant District Commissioner, but since then none have been found 'suitable' (PRAAD ADM 14/2/59 Legislative Council Debates. Session 1950, Issue No. 2, Vol. 1 (28th February 1950 – 3rd March 1950)

¹⁴³ PRAAD ADM 14/2/59 Gold Coast Legislative Council Debates. Session 1950, Issue No. 2, Vol. 1 (28th February 1950 – 3rd March 1950)

promotion, and the rapidly expanding civil service for disappointing progress. The report bemoaned that insufficient Gold Coast graduates had the proper education and existing civil servants had limited training to take over the European posts.¹⁴⁴

In 1954, the Public Service Commission published a report on the progress of Africanization which noted that between 1949 and 1954, the total size of the establishment increased from 1663 to 2560 and the percentage of these positions held by Africans from 10% to 35%.¹⁴⁵ In terms of Senior Establishment Officers, the number of Africans increased from 32 in 1949 to 180 in 1954. In the total civil service (junior and senior appointments) by 1956, a year before independence, there were 9178 (76%) Africans and 2828 (24%) Europeans. This transformation was a function of both a rapid Africanizing of the service after self-government was conceded in 1954, the increased vacancies left by early European retirements and the expansion of the overall service as the government expanded public goods provision.¹⁴⁶

In short, Ghana underwent long-term agitation for integration into the colonial administrative apparatus. Despite successive promises, it was not until after the path to self-government was laid in 1951 that these promises began to be fulfilled. The result was that political advancement far outpaced administrative development, a function of long-term colonial reluctance or neglect to concede opportunities to Africans (Saloway 1955, 473; Apter 1972, 281).

Direct Taxation and Government Revenue

Direct taxation serves as a useful indicator of state institutionalization because it represents a huge collective action problem. There are challenges associated with getting government officials to construct the state organizations to make direct taxation possible at all. The development of

¹⁴⁴ PRAAD ADM 5/3/138 Report of the Commission on the Civil Service of the Gold Coast 1950-51, Vol I.

¹⁴⁵ PRAAD ADM 5/3/82 1951 A Statement on the Programme of the Africanisation of the Public Service

¹⁴⁶ PRAAD ADM 7/7/6 Digest of Statistics, The Office of the Government Statistician Vol. V No. 3. November 1956; PRAAD ADM 8/3/30 1956-1957 Staff List – African and Junior Appointments; PRAAD ADM 8/2/35 1956-1957 Staff List – European and Senior Appointments; Government expenditure rose by roughly 73% between 1953-1957, due largely to the expansion of the social services (PRAAD ADM 7/6/6 Ghana Economic Survey 1957. p. 4-5).

this system in the Gold Coast under colonial rule was highly controversial and several attempts to generate public revenue in this way were tried and abandoned.

A general poll tax was introduced in the early 1850s, but it led to extensive tension (Kimble 1963, 169-189). In the coastal towns, several other attempts were made through the late 19th century but each protested and then abandoned. Rather, customs duties on trade were maintained from this point (Kimble 1963, 307-312). Thus, by 1938, 98% of tax revenue came from indirect taxes, largely import and export duties (Crook 1986, 86).

Legislation was finally successfully introduced in 1943 (Kimble 1963, 327). The first year of the assessment was 1945 for a total of 1,515,584£ from 3,068 assessments. By 1949, 5,310 assessments were made for a total of 2,959,000£.¹⁴⁷ The Philipson Report notes that in 1951, more than 85% of this income tax was derived from Companies Tax and that traders paid 2/3 of the total tax recovered from individuals. Moreover, the indigenous population contribution to direct taxation was less than 1%, as “the Income Tax Department is not organized as yet to bring within its ambit the indigenous community except in obvious cases.”¹⁴⁸

During these post-war years, where pressures to expand public services and create a steady stream of government revenue were high, there was need to increase revenue coming from additional taxation and improve the structure by which taxes were collected.¹⁴⁹ Despite these pressures and calls for reform, by 1957, Ghana still only brought in roughly 10% from direct taxes as a percentage of total revenue.¹⁵⁰ The largest amount of revenue was generated to fund the 120million £ development plan from 1951-59 thus came from the export of cocoa – which, in 1960, made up 58.8% of exports (Austin 1970, 5).

Public Services: Education

¹⁴⁷ PRAAD ADM 14/2/59 Gold Coast Legislative Council Debates. Session 1950, Issue No. 2 (Vol. 1) 28th February 1950 – 3rd March 1950; PRAAD ADM 5/1/209 Report on the Income Tax Department for the Year 1947-8. p. 9.

¹⁴⁸ (PRAAD, ADM 5/3/77 1951 Philipson’s Report on Regional Administrations, p. 59

¹⁴⁹ PRAAD ADM 14/2/49 Legislative Council Debates. Session 1947, Issue No. 2. (16 Sept 1947 – 22 Sept 1947)

¹⁵⁰ PRAAD ADM 7/6/6 1958 Ghana Economic Survey 1957 p.VI.

As noted above, education was heavily intertwined with the campaign for increased Africanization. Up to the late 1920s, educational development was led almost exclusively by missionary activities in the Colony and Ashanti (Foster 1965). In 1891, there were roughly 139 elementary schools servicing some 5000 students, and only 3 of these were Government Schools (Kimble 1963, 78). By 1919, there were still only 19 Government Schools (ibid). Opportunities were highly skewed in terms of distribution across the three regions – in 1919, there were 186 total schools in the Colony, 23 in Ashanti and only 4 total in the Northern Territories (ibid, 84).

Secondary schools suffered even further challenges and were frequently too poorly financed to sustain activities – the first government secondary school opened after WWI (ibid, 85-86). Fundamental to Governor Guggisburg's development plans in the 1920s was an expansion of the educational system. The keystone of this expansion was plans for a Government-run secondary school, Achimota, which was formally opened in 1927 and by 1943 enrolled 98 pupils.¹⁵¹ By the 1930s, there were 18 Government Schools as well as 241 assisted schools, only 5 of which were in the Northern Territories (Foster 1965, 121).

The 1920s expansion of the primary school system meant that a number of students attended a few years of school but were unqualified or unable due to space constraints to continue on to the limited opportunities beyond Standard VII (16 years old).¹⁵² This group of elementary-school leavers was to become the central activists and leadership of the CPP after 1949 (Austin 1970, 17). In 1948, the year of the riots, there were 286,688 students in primary school, though the large majority of them stopped after infant junior courses (11 years).¹⁵³ Of these, less than 1/3 attended government or government-assisted schools.¹⁵⁴ Moreover, there were only 5 government and grant-based secondary institutions, and 19 non-assisted ones.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ PRAAD ADM 5/3/48 Report of the Commission on Higher Education in West Africa. June 1945

¹⁵² PRAAD ADM 14/2/48 Legislative Council Debates, Session 1947, Issue No. 1. 18 Mar 1947 – 28 Mar 1947

¹⁵³ Austin 1970, 14; PRAAD ADM 14/2/50 Legislative Council Debates, Session 1948, Issue No. 1. 27th April 1948 – 7 May 1948)

¹⁵⁴ PRAAD ADM 5/1/204 Report on the Education Department for the year 1946-47, p. 9

¹⁵⁵ ibid, 10

It is not until the 1950s when self-government was conceded that a government-directed educational expansion took off (Foster 1965). Despite the fact that the Gold Coast had developed the most extensive education system on the continent outside of the Union of South Africa, functional literacy at the turn of self-rule remained well below 20 percent (Foster 1965, 171). By Independence, there were a total of 3571 primary schools, 1131 middle schools and 60 secondary schools throughout Ghana (Foster 1965, 187-191). As a percentage of the total school-age children, these facilities enrolled just less than 40% nationwide in 1960 (Table 1). Of note were the wide discrepancies across regions, ranging from a low of 11% in the Northern Territories to a high of nearly 60% in Accra (ibid). This illustrates well the long-term colonial attention on urban areas compared with relative neglect of the rural areas, particularly where administrative facilities were not expanded sufficiently to reach peripheral spaces. Much like similar claims in Northern Nigeria, the lack of educational opportunity and relative underdevelopment of the Northern Territories became a central point of contention in the advancement toward self-rule.¹⁵⁶

Region	Number of Children of School Age	Number of Children of School Age at Present in School	Percentage of School-Age Children in Attendance
Western	327620	132660	40.5
Accra	105970	63170	59.6
Eastern	273160	136010	49.8
Volta	194850	89630	45.9
Ashanti	270940	132000	48.7
Brong-Ahafo	140440	44700	31.8
Northern	276760	32380	11.7

¹⁵⁶ In the debates in the Legislative Council over the Ewart Commission Report on Education, representative of the Northern Territories, Tali-Ni, argues that limited educational opportunities was a central point of concern in this debate: "...the government should be based on the will of the people. That is quite right, but it is equally true that if Government should be based on the will of the people, the people must know what they want. They must also be able to pass an intelligent judgment when an issue is presented to them. I feel that an ignorant and indifferent electorate cannot be the basis of a sound democracy. Those of you who have been up to the north can bear me out on that statement. We lag greatly behind the people of Ashanti and the Colony in education, so what we really want you to ask for us is more and more education – we want to be seen in the colleges, that is, more and more scholarships for us, so that we might also come up to a very reasonable standard of education. If we were to permit popular elections in the north, we feel that it would lead to wholesale corruption, intimidation and even the sale of ballot papers and what is more, the people would not be able to elect worthy representatives. That again is due to lack of education" (PRAAD ADM 14/2/58 Gold Coast Legislative Council Debates. Session 1950, Issue No. 1, Vol. 1, 19 January 1950, p, 182).

*Foster, Philip. 1965. *Education and Social Change in Ghana*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press .p.189

Transportation and Communications

As mentioned, the cocoa industry dominated the Gold Coast economy from the 1880s through independence with, by the 1920s, thousands of small-scale local cocoa farmers, brokers, creditors and debtors, as well as a handful foreign firms and marketing organizations. By and large, locals dominated the farming community while foreigners dominated the marketing and trade fields (Holmes 1972, 31). By 1939-40, the Gold Coast was exporting over 250,000 tons of cocoa per year (ibid, 34). The industry fluctuated massively, however, depending on global markets and changes in production due to local conditions.¹⁵⁷

The expansion of this cash crop as well as mining (timber and gold) required more efficient systems of transport in the late 1800s, and the first practical step toward achieving this infrastructural expansion occurred in 1893-94 when a preliminary survey was completed (Kimble 1963, 28). When prices for these goods on the international market were high, periods of transportation expansion ensued. For example, between 1919 and 1925, the total mileage of motorable roads increased from 1300 to 4374 miles.¹⁵⁸ During this time (1921), cocoa made up 75% of domestically produced exports in the colony (Austin 1970, 5). During the final phase of colonialism between 1946 and 1960, motorable road networks increased from 8114 miles to 19236 miles (Austin 1970, 5).

Railway transport also expanded, though it never went further than Kumasi in the Ashanti Region, some 168 miles from the coast.¹⁵⁹ The combination of this and very limited road networks had the impact of keeping inhabitants of the Northern Territories outside the reach of

¹⁵⁷ For example it decreased from 85% of all exports in the mid-1920s to a mere 29% during World War II (ibid, 35).

¹⁵⁸ PRAAD ADM 5/3/24 Report by The Hon. W.G.A. Ormsby-Gore, MP. (Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies), on his Visit to West Africa during the Year 1926. p. 54).

¹⁵⁹ PRAAD ADM 5/3/24 Report by The Hon. W.G.A. Ormsby-Gore, MP. (Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies), on his Visit to West Africa during the Year 1926)

transport until after Independence. Railway construction ceased to expand in the 1930s and thus ultimately railway networks covered roughly 600 miles in total (Holmes 1972, 380).

Finally, communications systems also increased across the colony. A postal system was introduced in 1888 and included 61 post offices as well as 46 telegraph offices by 1907 (Kimble 1963, 31-32). The expansions in transport and communications were notable during the colonial period and facilitated the economic opportunities they were designed to address. As noted, because the Northern Territories lay largely outside these economic opportunities, it remained largely isolated in the lead-up to Independence. By contrast, the Colony and Ashanti were connected by a grid of rail and road networks which could be used to transport goods and people.

As with other colonies of this type, however, there remained significant challenges even in these areas of reaching rural populations outside the main networks connecting the few major towns. Thus, the coastal towns of Sekondi/Takoradi, Cape Coast, and Accra as well as the Ashanti regional capital of Kumasi served as meeting points for exchange of economic goods via these lines of transport and communication. However outside of the metropolises, movement and communication remained challenging and affairs inevitably local (Austin 1961). In 1957, despite relatively high urbanization rates compared to other colonies on the continent, still roughly 85% of the population lived outside the major towns.¹⁶⁰

Conclusion: Impact of Limited Administrative Capacity

Limited administrative capacity meant that the CPP had minimal knowledge of its population, particularly in the peripheral areas. Though elected as a nationalist movement, its major constituencies were in the urban spaces, whereas rural support tended to come from exploitation of local conflicts (Austin 1970). Even in 1956, the formal connections between the central government in Accra and local constituencies was quite limited. As such, the leadership was never quite sure of its support or of the particular grievances that might turn people against it

¹⁶⁰ Austin 1970, 5; PRAAD ADM 7/7/6 Digest of Statistics, The Office of the Government Statistician Vol. V No. 3. November 1956

(Austin 1967). A dramatically altered domestic scene had surprised the government several times already in its short reign, in the expulsion of nearly 100 CPP rebels as well as the NLM's rapid emergence in national politics. The latter wreaked havoc in the Ashanti Region to a point when CPP officials were essentially exiled from the region (A.B. Akosa Interview).

Moreover, the CPP's rapid rise to power transpired less through well-organized and far-reaching institutions but through the ad hoc, and often uncontrollable, activities of verandah boys. Lines of communication and transportation as well as availability of educational resources remained problematic. Finally, sources of revenue were volatile, being drawn primarily from cocoa exports with a new and extremely limited apparatus of taxation.

In effect, political institutional transition occurred at the same time as administrative expansion, leading to a situation whereby the hitherto professional public service was at Independence gradually politicized and compromised. Despite lip service to the non-political nature of the civil service, because the CPP increasingly saw itself as synonymous with the state, loyalty to the latter meant active loyalty to the former.¹⁶¹

The CPP's rapid rise to power on the back of local chaos, its limited knowledge of the population, and the constantly changing domestic field of opposition led to the party's increasing paranoia after independence. In many ways, the CPP's own uncertainties and methods of state coercion to prevent poorly understood forces from overtaking it were evident prior to 1957, but their most egregious manifestations were constrained by the need to cooperate with an unruly opposition lest the British withdraw their promise of independence. It is to the dynamics of the gradual destruction of democracy in Ghana's newly independent country that I now turn.

¹⁶¹ Justice Crabbe describes a process whereby between 1957 and 1960 there was a persistent assault on the independence of the Public Service which was characterized by intimidation and indoctrination (Justice Crabbe Interview).

Independence and the Emergence of a One-Party State

At Ghana's independence, the scene was optimistic.¹⁶² While the opposition had failed to win a federal constitution and the process of agitation had been violent and contentious, they were largely satisfied with (or resigned to accept) the creation of Regional Assemblies and Houses of Chiefs.¹⁶³ When March 6 approached, the country was relatively calm, the opposition had gained no real territorial stronghold which might condition secession, and the country enjoyed a strong economic position bolstered by high cocoa prices (Austin 1970, 364; 367-68). Nonetheless, one would see shortly that the CPP was not satisfied to operate on the assumption that the country had developed enough unity to support inter-party competition. Within a few short months, the CPP government began a process of gradually dismantling the Constitution and constraining the realm of political activity. This process culminated in the Republican Constitution in 1960, which granted extensive unchecked powers to the executive.¹⁶⁴ Why did the model colony derail its democratic institutions so shortly after independence? Why was a dominant party with national support and three electoral victories under its belt anxious to clear the political space of any viable competition and participation?

This section outlines the manner through which this gradual erosion of multi-party politics took place by increasing state coercive capacity, constraining the available space of legitimate political activity, and strengthening the CPP party structure. The CPP justified these measures by calls to rapidly develop and unify the nation and to generate security in the state.¹⁶⁵ I will discuss

¹⁶² Governor Sir Arden-Clarke notes that "he did not think that there was any real desire for a real dictatorship in Ghana, or that there was anyone there who would, or could, make an effective dictator" (1958, 36). Moreover, the African continent was closely watching the triumph of the nationalists (Milne 2000, 77-78).

¹⁶³ There existed some limited calls for secession, particularly from the Asante Youth Association (AYA) after the election and after the Colonial Office issued a grant of independence (Allman 1993, 162-163). Beyond this, the opposition's last-ditch efforts to object to independence under a unitary constitution were less aggressive and included arguing that the general election vote breakdown reflected a need for federalism and walking out of the Parliament during the motion for Independence (PRAAD ADM 14/2/89 Legislative Assembly Debates, 1956-57. Official Report – First Series. Volume 1. 30 July – 19 September 1956 p. 140). When The Secretary of State for the Colonies left the Gold Coast in 1957 after the final constitutional talks, he expressed pleasure to find that there was underlying unity and a wide measure of agreement (Allman 1993, 177).

¹⁶⁴ PRAAD RG 17/1/179 Nkrumah Papers

¹⁶⁵ On August 29, 1957, Prime Minister Nkrumah gave a speech on Economic Development, Democracy and Internal Stability. In it he argues that the economics goals of the country are such for rapid advancement in a few years what

each of these political maneuvers in turn while examining why the CPP was prone to disassemble democratic institutions.

This chapter argues that three factors are essential for understanding this course of democratic breakdown. First, limited self-rule prior to independence meant that the CPP government was still inexperienced in utilizing democratic institutions. As in the pre-independence period, CPP officials were largely unsure of their success and anxious to protect power because they were unsure how long it would last (Austin 1970, 362; 416-17). The rise of the NLM and regional opposition parties had demonstrated the volatility of democratic politics. Though the CPP had emerged victorious, its officials continued to jealously guard their newfound positions of power.¹⁶⁶ In addition, there was a strong tendency to treat the party and the state as synonymous and electoral victory as a mandate for any action the party thought necessary.¹⁶⁷ Correspondingly, behaviors and words that opposed party activities were seen as illegitimate, seditious, and

other countries have taken hundreds of years to accomplish, notes that there are many cases of countries which have sacrificed democracy in the name of economic development (and vice versa) and that stability regardless must be the priority (PRAAD ADM 14/7/3 Ghana Parliamentary Debates. Official Report – First Series, Volume 7. 20-30 August, 1957); Again, in a Broadcast on June 30, 1959, he treats economic development as a war to be waged: “The battlefield is not the only place where men can demonstrate their patriotism and rise to great heights. The task which we are about to engage upon is no less heroic than war, for it is a struggle against poverty and want, backwardness and disease, illiteracy and ignorance” (PRAAD RG 17/1/138 Nkrumah Papers, 19).

¹⁶⁶ One of the first moves of the new CPP government was aimed at consolidating its hold in the regions, which had hitherto proved problematic as it offered the opposition room to maneuver. In an alarming similarity to colonial-style administration, the Government appointed all CPP party members (not administrators) to the positions of Regional Commissioners. Indeed, they also unconstitutionally expanded the number of regions (appointing Brong-Ahafo its own Commissioner though no Region yet formally existed). Austin (1970) describes this as: “The fusion of party and government power was thus demonstrated as clearly as it could be at local and regional level: the party boss sat in the former colonial commissioner’s office, and presided over an administrative hierarchy arranged much as in colonial times, which he now placed at the service of the party” (378). Further, the Minister of Finance, K.A. Gbedemah, defended this unconstitutional maneuver on the grounds of administrative efficiency: “I am to say that the Government are very conscious of the fact that this country is governed by a Constitution and every step that the Government take will be within the spirit and letter of the Constitution. But the Government are faced with certain administrative problems which are not envisaged in the Constitution and therefore any action to make the running of the administration easy will also be within the spirit of the Constitution” (PRAAD ADM 14/7/2 Parliamentary Debates. First Series – Volume 6. National Assembly Official Report. First Session of the First Parliament of Ghana. 23 April – 12 July, 1957, 468).

¹⁶⁷ For example, in justifying the introduction of the Preventive Detention Bill which gave the Government the authority to detain persons up to five years without trial, Mr. R.O. Amuako-Atta, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Communications, argues that the Bill is justified in that it will bring calm to the country, “as it meets the wishes of the majority of the people in this country” (PRAAD ADM 14/7/8 Ghana Parliamentary Debates. Official Report – Volume 11. 1 July – 5 September 1958, 440). By which, given the fact that the Bill was introduced under a Certificate of Urgency and was thus fast-tracked through Parliament with less than one day in total of deliberation, that the CPP’s electoral majority provided it with a unquestionable confidence in all its activities (Justice Crabbe Interview).

unpatriotic.¹⁶⁸ Such activities were met with harsh security provisions and restrictions to the space for political activity, measures which may have been contemplated prior had not the colonial ruler acted as a moderating force.¹⁶⁹

Second, despite Ghana's long history of organization via clubs, societies, movements, etc., these groups tended to be urban-based and elite-centric.¹⁷⁰ By contrast, rural spaces remained generally unconnected to the state and broader social organizing (Austin 1961, 3). What the rise of a national party did produce, however, was a situation whereby political parties sought to exploit local disputes in order to mobilize supporters. Apparent especially in the NLM/ CPP contests, local activists were not well controlled in their activities (Allman 1993; Austin 1970). In other words, the national parties fanned the flames of local contestation but offered no means to tame them.¹⁷¹ By Independence, the countryside was in a chaotic state and remained unconnected to institutions of the state (Rathbone 2000).¹⁷² After independence, the CPP government dealt with this chaos via harsh legislation centered on ridding the country of security challenges.

Finally, the colonial state remained quite small even by 1957 and African integration into these institutions even less.¹⁷³ This meant that the government's reach into peripheral spaces in particular was limited. While the colonial civil service was of high and professional quality, its

¹⁶⁸ In the Legislative Councils of 1956 over the Government's Constitutional Proposals, Mr. Krobo Edusei argues: "If you vote for the red cockerel, you vote for Kwame Nkrumah's Constitution; if you vote for the black card, which is the NLM, you sabotage self-government for the next twenty years. And the country will be doomed forever" (PRAAD ADM 14/2/88 Gold Coast Legislative Assembly Debates, 1956-57. Issue No. 1. 15 May – 22 May 1956, 142).

¹⁶⁹ Examples of this are numerous: When the conflict with the NLM reached an irreconcilable point, the Secretary of State for the Colonies forced a third general election though the CPP vigorously opposed it; when the CPP passed the State Councils (Amendment) legislation in 1955 which gave the state discretion in chiefly disputes above the paramount chiefs, the Colonial Secretary and other colonial officials worked for its repeal; and when the CPP was split between a radical minority that called for its immediate unilateral declaration of independence vs. a more moderate group which sought to negotiate a peaceful transition to independence via Tactical Action, Governor Arden-Clarke supported Nkrumah and the latter group, providing them with leverage to defeat and expel the party radicals (Allman 1993; Austin 1970).

¹⁷⁰ Holmes (1972) offers a detailed breakdown of these pre-WWI organizations.

¹⁷¹ One example of this phenomenon in the CPP was the over 100 CPP rebels who refused to accept the central committee's decision to reject their nominations in favor of other candidates. 81 of these rebels still ran as independents in the 1954 election (Austin 1970, 225).

¹⁷² One broader manifestation of this was the difficult and contentious transition from traditional local governance to a more modern system of local governance. This process, initiated by the CPP after 1951, remained in a volatile state at Independence (Arden-Clarke 1958).

¹⁷³ On the eve of Independence, there were only a total of 2785 civil service officers, 43% of whom were overseas officers (Austin 1970, 8).

small size made it difficult to carry an expanding bureaucracy after independence. Rather, the CPP gradually engaged in a persistent assault on the independence of the Public Service Commission and other public institutions (Justice Crabbe Interview). Further, it began to coopt social organs and control them through the central party apparatus. Finally, with few institutionalized checks and balances having been established up to this point, the rapidly expanding administration was turned into a private source of wealth and power. Several of these tendencies were evident prior to independence,¹⁷⁴ but corruption became rampant afterward.¹⁷⁵

In short, as a function of democratic inexperience, weak state-society links and administrative limitations, the CPP gradually disassembled the democratic regime by further centralizing the party, converging it with state institutions, coopting social organizations, and restricting the space for political competition and participation. These activities culminated in the Republican Constitution of 1960 which provided for extensive executive authority. Now I will walk through the post-Independence sequence of events which ended in the destruction of Ghana's first democratic institutions and the emergence of a one-party state.

Constraining the Opposition

Within the first few years of independence, the CPP passed several pieces of legislation which effectively deprived the opposition of space to operate in order to consolidate its support across the country. First, the CPP passed the Deportation Act in August 1957 which was pushed through rapidly by suspending Standing Orders that it might move directly to the Committee Stage of debate.¹⁷⁶ The Bill provided for the deportation of any individual whose presence in the

¹⁷⁴ ADM 5/3/94 Report on the Commission of Enquiry into Mr. Braimah's resignation and allegations arising therefrom (Justice K.A. Korsah) 1954. Gold Coast: Government Printing Department, Accra; ADM 5/3/102 1956 Jibowu's Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Affairs of the Cocoa Purchasing Company Limited and Government Purchasing in regard to the future constitution and control of statutory Boards and Corporations in the Gold Coast (1 September 1956).

¹⁷⁵ KB Asante Interview; PRAAD ADM 5/3/184 1966 Report of the Jiaage Commission appointed to enquire into the Assets of Specified Persons with WP. 20/69; PRAAD ADM 5/3/115 1966 Report of the Commission to Enquire into the Kwame Nkrumah Properties (Fred Kwasi Apaloo)

¹⁷⁶ PRAAD ADM 14/7/3 Ghana Parliamentary Debates. Official Report – First Series, Volume 7. 20-30 August, 1957.

country “is not considered to be conducive to the public good (ibid, 70).¹⁷⁷ This provided for the removal of any person without trial and was used extensively against the leaders and members of the MAP as they tended to live in settler communities in urban centers and had roots in neighboring countries (Allman 1991). Then, in December 1957, the CPP introduced the Avoidance of Discrimination Bill to “prohibit organizations using or engaging in tribal, regional, racial or religious propaganda to the detriment of any other community, or securing the election of persons on account of their tribal, regional, or religious affiliations.”¹⁷⁸ This piece of legislation was in line with the CPP’s narrative of national unity, but was also effective at undermining potential opposition lines of support, owing to their historical association with Ashanti (NLM), Muslims (MAP), the Northern Territories (NPP) and Togoland (TC).

The CPP government also engaged in a continuing onslaught against non-CPP chiefs in an effort to deprive the opposition of its areas of local support. These efforts were aimed most especially at constituencies in the Ashanti Region. Several Commissions of Inquiry were set up in 1957 to investigate the activities of State Councils in several of the most notorious opposition localities including Akim Abuakwa, Kumasi, and Asanteman Councils. When the Reports were released, each of these councils were found guilty of the charges of misconduct against it. In addition, in 1958 a series of chiefdoms were down and up-graded in their statuses as paramount chiefs. When the government granted or withdrew recognition in this way, room was left open for local pro-CPP groups to destool those chiefs who had brought government disapproval. After a pro-CPP chief replaced the destooled chief, the state would in time regain its status as paramount (Austin 1970, 377-78). By this process, every pro-NLM chief in Ashanti was replaced (ibid, 378). In this way, the CPP was able to persuade (intimidate) the local population to support the CPP or

¹⁷⁷ Leaders and members of the MAP were the most affected by this Act, as they tended to live in settler communities in urban centers and had roots in neighboring countries (Allman 1991)

¹⁷⁸ PRAAD ADM 14/7/4 Ghana Parliamentary Debates. Official Report – First Series, Volume 8. 13 November – 19 December 1957, 485). The Avoidance of Discrimination Act had precursors in a 1954 motion in the Legislative Assembly which condemns all sectional, regional and religious parties with specific reference to the MAP and NPP, though the actual banning of such parties is not carried through until 1958 (PRAAD ADM 14/2/82 Gold Coast Legislative Assembly Debates, 1954. Issue No. 2. 27 July – 13 August 1954)

in the very least less actively oppose it. The effectiveness of this strategy is highlighted by the results of local election defeats for the opposition in 1958 including Kumasi itself and then a series of defections of northern parliamentarians to the CPP (Austin 1970, 384-85).

By 1958, the relationship between Opposition and Government had deteriorated such that three full days of Parliamentary debate were filled with each side hurling insults at the other, the opposition arguing that the government was guilty of intimidating Chiefs and Opposition members, overtaking the judiciary, intimidating non-CPP supporters, using the police for ill purposes, discriminating in Government activity by recognizing pro-CPP chiefs and not recognizing non-CPP chiefs, and deporting persons without proper trial.¹⁷⁹ The Government responded by defending the Government's responsibility to maintain law and order and noting that "there is a limit to everything, especially when Members of the Opposition go round and seek to undermine the foundation of our Independence and to undermine democracy...there is a limit, even to democracy."¹⁸⁰ By 1960, though the opposition was still nominally in existence, it was "reduced to no more than a token force" (Austin 1970 395).

Shoring up Security

One of the major justifications for centralizing and expanding the role of the state in Ghana was to deal with security challenges. First, a series of legislations to deal with security challenges were instituted which effectively by-passed the judicial system and frequently targeted individual opposition members. Coming out of a tumultuous end to colonial rule with the emergence of the aggressive and often violent NLM, there existed a mood of apprehension and hostility to opposition despite a peaceful transfer in 1957.¹⁸¹ The authority to constrain such opponents,

¹⁷⁹ PRAAD ADM 14/7/8 Ghana Parliamentary Debates. Official Report – Volume 11. 1 July – 5 September 1958.

¹⁸⁰ *ibid*, 98-99

¹⁸¹ In August 1957 following the debate over the Deportation Act, Nkrumah makes a speech condemning subservice opposition: "But if we are to achieve this objective and make economic progress the House must realize that we must have a much greater degree of self-discipline than we have had up till now. The Government are determined to deal firmly and effectively with any individual or group who indulges in subversive activities calculated to undermine or coerce the Government in any shape or form. Internal security is essential if we are to have either prosperity or democracy" (PRAAD ADM 14/7/3 Ghana Parliamentary Debates. Official Report – First Series, Volume 7. 20-30 August, 1957, 321-322).

however, had been largely in the hands of the colonial government up to this point. The three primary sources of challenge were a new opposition movement in Accra called the Ga Standfast Association, a recent opposition movement in the Ewe Togoland area which was angry at its integration into Ghana, and some continuing tension in Kumasi in the Ashanti Region (Austin 1970, 373). The CPP utilized a series of new laws to combat these and other perceived threats. First, between April and July 1957, the Ministry of Interior, Krobo Edusei, introduced motions to combat lawlessness in parts of the Trans-Volta/Togoland, suspend the Kumasi and Accra Councils, and deport non-citizens without trial.¹⁸² Then, the CPP government passed into law the Emergency Powers Bill on 2 December. Edusei emphasizes that this bill was necessary to create internal security as an essential assurance for the Government to carry out its plans for industrial development. The Minister acknowledged that the issues of security in Accra, Volta and Kumasi had since quieted down but that: “Nevertheless, the Government believe that there are still those in the country who, if the opportunity offered, would be ready to resort to force.... The Government do not claim that a state of emergency now exists or even that one is likely to occur in the foreseeable future. They would, however, be neglecting their duty to the country if they abandoned at this stage, the powers necessary to deal swiftly with any recurrence of civil disorder such as we have seen in recent years.”¹⁸³ Less than one month later on 30 December, a Local State of Emergency was declared in Kumasi.¹⁸⁴

In July 1958, the CPP passed the most notorious and far-reaching legislation: the Preventive Detention Act. It was introduced in the House by the Prime Minister himself under a certificate of urgency (Justice Crabbe Interview). By this time, the CPP had grown impatient with the judicial procedures that slowed its ability to maintain security and deemed them inadequate (KB Asante

¹⁸² PRAAD ADM 14/7/2 Parliamentary Debates. First Series – Volume 6. National Assembly Official Report. First Session of the First Parliament of Ghana. 23 April – 12 July, 1957.

¹⁸³ PRAAD ADM 14/7/4 Ghana Parliamentary Debates. Official Report – First Series, Volume 8. 13 November – 19 December 1957, 178.

¹⁸⁴ PRAAD ADM 14/7/5 Ghana Parliamentary Debates. Official Report – First Series, Volume 9. 18 February – 19 March 1958

Interview).¹⁸⁵ The PDA allowed the government to detain a person for five years without appeal for conduct prejudicial to the defence and security of the state.¹⁸⁶ The Prime Minister justified the introduction of the Bill on the grounds that there were significant internal and external threats seeking to destroy the Government because of its rapid success and world influence.¹⁸⁷ Other CPP officials echo this claim that the state must “consolidate its achievements.”¹⁸⁸ The Prime Minister then argued that the only people who need to worry about the Bill are those who perpetuate violence and terrorism against the state. Finally, the other major line of argument suggested that democracy could be preserved sometimes only by undemocratic means and that the bill must therefore be viewed in its long-term objectives.¹⁸⁹ In November 1958, the Minister of Interior notes that his intentions to combat the conspiracy against the CPP state in a harsh fashion remain in line with long-term objectives to establish “a modern, progressive, unitary State.”¹⁹⁰

Regardless of intention, the effects of the PDA were far-reaching. In November 1958 alone, the government detained 38 persons without trial (Austin 1970, 381). The PDA naturally tended to target the opposition which by 1960 had been reduced from 32 to 16, three being held in

¹⁸⁵ Of note is that fact that the legislation was initially drafted to include Advisory Committees, which would be composed of three persons appointed by the Governor-General to hear evidence within the initial period of detention. The Committees were ultimately rejected by the Cabinet and removed (ADM 13/1/27 Cabinet Minutes. January – December 1958).

¹⁸⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ In the Parliamentary debates, he argues that “In less than two years of independence, Ghana has already achieved considerable world influence. Ghana has achieved considerable world influence. Ghana has achieved that influence primarily because we are regarded as a country in the forefront of the movement for the Independence of the whole of the African Continent. For that very reason there are many forces in the world today who would like to see us fail. Past experience has shown us that there are some people of influence in the world who have persistently pursued a policy of misrepresenting Ghana with the idea of attempting to show that Africans cannot rule themselves, and that therefore, in the interest of Africans themselves, colonialism should continue... We have to accept the fact that at present there are in this country a number of people who, if they cannot succeed by lawful democratic means, are perfectly prepared to resort to violence and terrorism. It is true that their efforts in this respect have been up till now ineffective” (ADM 14/7/8 Ghana Parliamentary Debates. Official Report – Volume 11. 1 July – 5 September 1958, 407-409).

¹⁸⁸ *ibid.*, 417

¹⁸⁹ PRAAD ADM 14/7/8 “Speech by Minister of Information and Broadcasting” Ghana Parliamentary Debates. Official Report – Volume 11. 1 July – 5 September 1958, 497

¹⁹⁰ “I have myself taken over the portfolio of the Interior because of the difficulties which we are at present experiencing and which we may continue to experience for some little time. These difficulties arise out of the existence of an organized conspiracy to destroy the Government by force. In dealing with any such conspiracies the utmost firmness must be shown, and we must not allow ourselves to be deflected from doing what we know to be right by criticism either from at home or from abroad. On the other hand, it is equally essential in dealing with such a conspiracy not to lose sight of our long term objectives which are to establish in Ghana a modern, progressive, unitary State where persons of different racial and tribal origins live in harmony together and where the energies of all are devoted to raising our standards of living, developing our cultural heritage, and providing an example to Africa of how people can unite to achieve peace and prosperity” (PRAAD RG 17/1/138 Nkrumah Papers).

detention, one in exile and 12 having crossed to the CPP (ibid, 386). If the purpose of the Act was to create greater security for the Government, it seemed to have the opposite effect as after 1960 the PDA was turned against CPP officials themselves.¹⁹¹ Finally, in October 1959, the Sedition and Treason Bills were revised from their introduction in 1947 to broaden their scope and make their penalties more severe.¹⁹² The sum total of these measures, particularly in the PDA, were that Ghana was essentially under martial law by 1960. The central government could detain and deport persons without trial or evidence at its sole discretion.

Strengthening the Party and Expanding its Network

As noted, one of the major challenges that the CPP government faced at Independence was the limited administrative reach across the country and its equally limited knowledge of the population. This challenge tended to fuel its insecurities and drove it to enhance its coercive powers against the population and opposition. It also recognized that this was a challenge that needed to be directly overcome, however, and it took a predatory approach to consolidating its hold over society in order to deal with it – specifically by strengthening, centralizing and converging the party structure with the state and incorporating social organizations under the party umbrella.

One of the ways that the CPP was able to do this was by incorporating a number of auxiliary institutions into its fold. First, the government gave the United Ghana Farmers' Council (UGFC) statutory recognition before liquidating the Cocoa Purchasing Company (CPC) in April 1957 and putting its functions under the former. Because the ties between the UGFC and the CPP government were explicit and direct; “In essence, the CPP obtained full and direct control over the purchasing of cocoa, the foundation of Asante’s economy” (Allman 1993, 1987). Then, The Industrial Relations Act created a centralized structure which replaced the former Trades Union

¹⁹¹ Austin 1967; Nkrumah himself notes this failure in 1961 when he acknowledges that the Party itself needed to be purged of unsavory elements. This was not limited to the rank-and-file, but infiltrated even the top leadership of the Party (Milne 2000, 121).

¹⁹² PRAAD ADM 14/7/14 Ghana Parliamentary Debates. Official Report – First Series. Volume 17. 27 October – 16 December 1959)

Council (TUC) and brought a number of national unions under CPP control. Further, a National Cooperative Council of the CPP's creation replaced the heretofore independent Alliance of Cooperatives. Finally, the party strengthened its Women's Section, Youth Movement, Builders' Brigade and brought them closer to the main body of the CPP (Austin 1970, 382). These efforts to bring social organizations directly under CPP control covered each of the major power blocks in Ghana at the time including youth, women, and farming and trade, especially related to cocoa.

It was not sufficient merely to bring these organizations under its fold, however, it also had to generate goodwill, and it did this by distributing state spoils. As Austin describes:

“Evidence not only of the intention, but of the ability, of the CPP to enforce its authority lay all about the electorate – in the recently acquired fleet of white Fiat cars bought for its officers by the TUC, in the lorries which carried groups of uniformed Builders' Brigaders across the constituencies, in the procession of large cars which accompanied the District Commissioners and CPP members of parliament from polling booth to polling booth, in the activities of the constituency agents who urged electors to ‘vote red’ for the letters YES and for Nkrumah, and the Flood of propaganda leaflets and posters which appeared during the weeks before the first day's polling” (Austin 1970, 388).

This program of demonstrating state and party power among the people also operated as a propaganda campaign. Nkrumah and the CPP supported the Ghana Young Pioneer Movement which served as a group of ‘vanguard activists.’ Supported by political power, the activists lived and worked with the people, explaining the Party's policies and objectives in a program of public education. Activists were trained initially by the National Association of Socialist Students Organizations (NASSO) but were later brought directly under the CPP Central Committee. They were tasked with bringing up the level of political education among activists and increasing the loyalty to the Party (Milne 2000, 119).

Second, in centralizing the party and state, the CPP eliminated the Regional Assemblies. The Regional Assemblies were the constitutional concession made to the NLM and its allies in the lead up to independence. Their actual formation, however, had been deferred until after Independence on the guidance of a Commission. In April 1958, the Report of the Regional Constitutional Commission was published. It made detailed recommendations for the Assemblies to exercise a range of powers. Before introducing the legislation to the House, however, the

Government's Statement on the Report, seriously restricted the suggested authority and essentially reduced the Assemblies to advisory bodies. When the House passed the legislation in this form, the opposition boycotted the Assemblies' elections (Austin 1970, 378-79). The Assemblies were thus filled with pro-CPP members. Thus, when the CPP passed the Constitutional (Repeal of Restrictions) Bill reducing the requirements for amending the constitution¹⁹³, the CPP was able to abolish the assemblies altogether by commanding the elected members to vote for the institution's dissolution (Austin 1970, 380).¹⁹⁴

Further, the CPP waged an assault against the independence of the Public Service. Justice Crabbe describes this process as using political indoctrination and regimentation to pervert the neutral and professional characteristics of the administration. He notes that the CPP leadership utilized intimidation, threats of victimization and unwarranted interference to try to control the Service, which resulted in undermining its dignity, integrity and morale (Justice Crabbe Interview). Meanwhile, Nkrumah justified this process by accusing the Service of disloyalty to the Government.¹⁹⁵

Finally, the CPP consolidated its control and an effective end to Ghana's first democratic episode in adopting the Republican Constitution in 1960. The new Constitution provided the

¹⁹³ Prime Minister Nkrumah argues that the process of amending the Constitution is far too cumbersome, most especially in terms of gaining support from chiefs and regional assemblies (ADM 14/7/9 Ghana Parliamentary Debates. Official Report – First Series, Volume 12. 3 November – 19 December 1958)

¹⁹⁴ The course of this plan are outlined in detail in the Executive Cabinet minutes (PRAAD ADM 13/1/27 Cabinet Minutes. January – December 1958). Moreover, the Legislative Minutes suggest that the Prime Minister at least had very little intention of maintaining his promise of Regional Assemblies after Independence: “• “I said that the Opposition committed a rape on mother Ghana by forcing these Regional Assemblies upon the country. We had to accept them. It was the lot of the CPP to have an x-ray of the stomach of the ‘woman’ that had been raped. When we examined the stomach of the ‘woman’ we found within it a leprous baby; so we said we did not want it and that was why the Opposition did not contest the elections. They know – And that was why they did not contest the Regional Assemblies elections. In fact, I meant what I said then. The Regional Assemblies are of no purpose at all to the country. Let them go” (PRAAD ADM 14/7/9 Ghana Parliamentary Debates. Official Report – First Series, Volume 12. 3 November – 19 December 1958,16)

¹⁹⁵ In a Broadcast Speech on 30 June 1959, Nkrumah announced that the Government would be cracking down on perceived anti-CPP activities in the Civil Service: “It is our intention to tighten up the regulations and to wipe out the disloyal elements in the civil service, even if by doing so we suffer some temporary dislocation of the service. It is the Government's view that the defections in our civil service must be tackled vigorously and that now is the time to do so as we embark upon our Second Development Plan. For disloyal civil servants are no better than saboteurs and it is therefore better to make some sacrifice now at the beginning of our herculean task, than to allow things to drift until a situation has been created which will be hard indeed to remedy” (PRAAD RG 17/1/138 Nkrumah Papers, 17-18)

Executive with the authority to appoint, dismiss and discipline members of the Public Service, dissolve the National Assembly, veto any Bill in whole or in part, and give directive via legislative instrument.¹⁹⁶ After 1960, the Opposition was non-existent, the CPP dominated the unicameral assembly and Nkrumah served as President with extensive authority wielded via the new Constitution. The attack against disloyal elements continued, but there being scarce if any opposition, the tools of detection and intimidation were wielded against the CPP itself. Within a few years, both the party and the state were in disarray and Nkrumah himself was increasingly the object of assassination attempts (Rooney 2010, 322-347). The situation remained like this until 1966 when Nkrumah was toppled in a coup d'état.

Conclusion

Ghana represents a Limited Administrative Colony in which colonial rulers conceded self-rule only very late and consistently refused to integrate local actors into the governing administration. The consequences of these colonial policies for independent Ghana were limited administrative development, weak state-society links, and minimal experience with democratic institutions. The CPP's minimal experience with democratic politics made it excessively uncomfortable with opposition politics. When the newly independent regime faced challengers from outside and within its own party, it responded aggressively, passing numerous laws, which sought to undermine political liberties and democratic competition and participation. Though these features were evident during the late colonial period, the CPP's electoral successes in some ways masked them, and the presence of the colonial government reduced several of its most conspicuous manifestations.¹⁹⁷ Because CPP officials had invested heavily in the party structure but not in democratic institutions, energies went into consolidating the former until the difference

¹⁹⁶ PRAAD RG 17/1/179 Republic (and Republican Constitution)(5/1/60-21/6/60) Nkrumah Papers

¹⁹⁷ For example, the Colonial Office essentially forced a third general election on the CPP despite its unwillingness to concede this victory to the opposition (Austin 1970, 308-309).

between the party and state were indistinguishable.¹⁹⁸ The party structure demonstrated resilience against external and internal threats – jailing, repressing or eliminating those who demonstrated opposition to it – at the expense of democracy. This trade-off was often acknowledged explicitly, when officials argued that long-term goals of progress, modernity, unity, security and even democracy often entailed short-term sacrifices of democratic principles.¹⁹⁹ CPP officials demonstrated little willingness to confront the party in favor of democratic principles until the CPP itself began to turn in on itself, well after Ghana had become a one-party state (KB Asante interview).

Second, state institutions demonstrated very little coherence in that the state could make very little sense of the population frequently outside its grasp. In the absence of this knowledge, Nkrumah’s nationalist party built its popular appeal by exploiting local rivalries and coopting social organizations and integrating them directly into the party structure. Under this platform, the state expanded greatly and a predatory state developed which distributed patronage to its supporters and dispensed punishments to its enemies.²⁰⁰ These activities came to define state-society relationships to the detriment of the development of formal channels of political grievance expression and state responsiveness. By 1960, the government passed a new Constitution with expansive executive discretion and powers, a limited space for opposition, and a coopted judiciary, civil service and civil society. Ghana’s first democratic episode thus came to an end via the gradual erosion of its core elements.

¹⁹⁸ In 1959, Kwame Nkrumah gave a Speech on the 10th Anniversary of the CPP, declaring: “Comrades, it is no idle boast when I say that... the Convention People’s Party is Ghana. Our party not only provides the government but is the custodian which stands guard over the welfare of the people” (Africa Evening News, 16 June 1959)

¹⁹⁹ For example, in the legislative debate over the introduction of the Preventive Detention Act, both the Minister of Information and Broadcasting and of Local Government argue that undemocratic means are often necessary to preserve democracy (PRAAD ADM 14/7/8 Ghana Parliamentary Debates. Volume 11. 14 July 1958 pp. 497-514).

²⁰⁰ PRAAD ADM 5/3/184 1966 Report of the Jiagge Commission appointed to enquire into the Assets of Specified Persons with WP. 20/69; PRAAD ADM 5/3/115 1966 Report of the Commission to Enquire into the Kwame Nkrumah Properties (Fred Kwasi Apaloo); The largest prize went to the Brong peoples who benefited from a particularly intense struggle in Ashanti. They gained an entire Region in 1959 because of their support for the CPP, a promise made in the late-colonial period (PRAAD ADM 14/7/11 Ghana Parliamentary Debates. Official Report – First Series. Volume 14. 19 February – 20 March 1959).

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