

**THE LIFE AND TIMES OF A PATRIOT: A BIOGRAPHY OF CHIEF SIMON  
DIEDONG DOMBO**

**BY**

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**THIS DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA,  
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AWARD OF MASTER OF ARTS AFRICAN STUDIES DEGREE.**

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## DECLARATION

### Candidate's Declaration

*I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.*

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### Supervisors' Declaration

*We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Ghana, Legon.*



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## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my younger brother, Abdul Razak and my daughter, Wafaira Independence Babangida for their support and inspiration respectively.



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In producing this work, I had the support and encouragement of many individuals whose contributions had been significant. I hereby express my heartfelt gratitude to my supervisors, Professor Albert Awedoba and Dr. Ebenezer Ayesu for the patience they showed, for the guidance they gave me in locating sources, and also for the insights they gave me into my subject area.

My sincere thanks also go to Alice Avereireh whose work, *A short biography of the late Chief Simon Diedong Dombo*, served as the springboard on which mine was developed.

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## ABSTRACT

In Ghana, biography as a study of personal histories has not been seriously pursued. This is because not much has been done about the life trajectories of personalities, who undoubtedly have contributed immensely to the socio-economic, cultural and political development of Ghana. It is therefore important that by sampling some of the more fascinating figures whose lives and activities had affected the people and the nation dramatically, readers are given an idea of the astonishing richness and variety of the lives of these great personalities, which should serve as models for our youths aspiring to make a difference.

It is worth noting that, although the lives of a few outstanding personalities such as J. E. Casely-Hayford, John Mensah Sarbah, Kwame Nkrumah, J. B. Danquah have been captured widely and comprehensively, names of other prominent Ghanaians have sunk into oblivion. The reason seems that either they did not themselves facilitate the researching of their lives or they were consciously neglected by potential biographers. It is in the light of the insignificant coverage given to some of these great personalities that this researcher has chosen to work on the biography of the late Chief Simon Diedong Dombo, a man who became an icon.

The objective of this thesis therefore is to look at S. D. Dombo's life not only as a politician but also as a socio-cultural figure and educationist and hence bring to the fore the multifaceted career that S. D. Dombo had pursued.

The methodology for the execution of this thesis depends on both primary and secondary data of a qualitative kind. These included collection and study of personal documents – letters, memos, mementoes and notes, as well as interviews with the few of his contemporaries and family members and associates. Library and archival materials will also be located and used.

The study should be useful to historians, students, lecturers, researchers, politicians and even ordinary people. As a reference point, the study will provide them with a clearer understanding of the personality of Dombo and his contribution to the development of Ghana.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In Ghana, biography as a subject in the writing and study of history has not been common. This stems from the fact that that has not been done about certain personalities, who undoubtedly contributed immensely to the socio-economic and political development of Ghana. It is therefore important that by sampling some of the more fascinating figures whose lives and activities had affected the destiny of the nation, readers are given an idea of the astonishing richness and variety of the lives of great personalities. It is worth stating, however, that some of these personalities have been given a wide coverage as far as biographical study is concerned while the names of others have sunk into oblivion. There are many reasons for this: either they did not make themselves available to be studied or they were consciously neglected for whatever reason. Indeed, personalities like Dr. K. A. Busia, Alhaji Mumuni Bawumia, Kwame Nkrumah, J. B. Danquah and so forth have been captured widely and comprehensively as compared to others. For example, Kwaku Danso Bofo has written the political biography of Kofi Abrefa Busia which was published in 1996, Alhaji Mumuni Bawumia also authored in 2004, *A Life in the Political History of Ghana: Memoirs of Alhaji Mumuni Bawumia*, while June Milne authored *Kwame Nkrumah A Biography*. It is in the light of the insignificant coverage given to some of these great personalities that the researcher has chosen to work on the biography of Simon Diedong Dombo for it is the conviction of the researcher that much of the history of the Duori Traditional Area, the colonial education system of the North, the political environment of Ghana in the twentieth century as well as the cultural arrangement of the North can be learned and the inspiration gained by reading such a biography, if it were available. This could help us as a people to understand some of our present problems

and encourage us to direct our energies toward those problems with the view to solving them and thus making the future brighter for the current and the unborn generations.

### **1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

There are so many gaps needed to be filled regarding the life of S. D. Dombo. In other words not so much has been captured in the political blueprint with regard to the contribution of S. D. Dombo and the Northern People's Party towards the attainment of independence as well as the emergence of a dominant political tradition (Danquah -Busia - Dombo) in Ghana. Again, not much is known about S. D. Dombo, whose immense contribution gave birth to the above mentioned political tradition in the constitutional development of Ghana. Attempts by some scholars and historians like Albert Adu Boahen, in his book, *Ghana: Evolution and Change in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, Dennis Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, F. K. Buah, *A History of Ghana* and so forth to fill this yawning gap have not been satisfactory as their works concentrated on his political life. It is to deal with this deficit, which is the other side of the man, that the researcher has chosen the biographical study of S. D. Dombo so that the other side of the man such as the socio-cultural, educational would be known as applied to Kwame Nkrumah, J. B. Danquah, and other personalities of note.

### **1.2 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

This section examines the literature related to the topic, 'The Life and Times of a Patriot: A Biography of Simon Diedong Dombo'. It examines both primary and secondary sources related to the subject. It is the researcher's firm conviction that copious research ranging from the life of Dombo to his legacies has already been undertaken by both scholars and non-scholars alike. They have mentioned his political as well as his chiefly

and educational roles which are not adequate enough. These inadequacies are evident in the following works.

Ladouceur(1979) describes S. D. Dombo as the most important Northern politician in the years immediately preceding independence. He explains that in 1971, thirty-three former Members of the Legislative Assembly, Members of Parliament, and Members of the Northern Territories Council, after 1953 were asked to name the five or six most important Northern political leaders in the years preceding independence. In that exercise, the individuals named most frequently were S. D. Dombo, J. A. Braimah, and Yakubu Tali (all chiefs). Significantly, as far as the final result of the exercise was concerned, S. D. Dombo became first with a margin of three points which was very significant taking into account the number of respondents in the exercise. In his view, regarding the results, however, Ladouceur contends that the list is probably biased somewhat in favour of the Northern People's Party political figures. This reflects both the difficulties encouraged by the main Convention People's Party leaders in this period, and also the favorable view in which the Northern People's Party figures were held by a majority of both older and newer politicians among the respondents. In my view, however, what did the magic for S. D. Dombo was his selflessness and loyalty to the party. This stems from the fact that S. D. Dombo was promised a ministerial appointment by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah if and only if he agreed to join the Convention People's Party, which he consistently declined as compared to some of his colleagues like J. A. Braimah, Mumuni Bawumia who joined the Convention People's Party citing the general good of the North as their main justification. Indeed, not even the persecution and intimidation from his political opponent could change his mind to remain loyal to the Northern People's Party. It was also possible that Dombo was content with the position he held as

the Leader of Opposition at the time and that he might not be accorded the same dignity and recognition in the Convention People's Party.

Bawumia (2004) provides us with a fact that S. D. Dombo was the Chairman of the Northern People's Party in April 1954 at its formation. He explains the events that led to the decision to make S. D. Dombo the Chairman. This was at the first delegates' conference held in Tolon Naa's house at Sabongida, a suburb of Tamale in the Northern Region of Ghana, where they (members of the Northern People's Party) experienced intermittent disruptions from Messrs Ayarna Imoro, Ebenezer Adam and some other members of the Convention People's Party who came to the conference. Alhaji Bawumia discloses that the Congress proposed that he, Alhaji Bawumia, should be the Chairman of the Party. He, however, declined in favour of S. D. Dombo, the Douri Naa. His reason for the decline was that the strength of the party was in Mamprugu which included the present day Bawku and Bolgatanga Districts of the Upper East Region of Ghana. Bawumia therefore claimed that making him the chairman would create the impression that the Northern People's Party was a Mamprusi Party and could be labeled the Nayiri's People's Party, because the Nayiri, King of the Mamprusi Kingdom, was a staunch supporter of the Northern People's Party at the time. Bawumia seemed to suggest that the assumption of the chairmanship position by Dombo was by accident which seemed to underestimate the role played by S. D. Dombo as far as the formation of the Northern People's Party was concerned. Indeed, according to Ladouceur, in his *Chiefs and Politicians*, he brought out the role played by S. D. Dombo towards the formation of the Northern People's Party. In fact, he mentioned S. D. Dombo and J. A. Braimah as the first persons to raise the possibility of a Northern political party which would play much the same role as had the Northern group under the 1957 Constitution. This actually paved the way for J. A. Braimah together with Dombo, Yakubu Tali and Mumuni Bawumia to draw up a draft

constitution for such a party and secured the support of other prominent Northerners such as J. A. Nagba, Secretary of the Northern Territories Council at the time. It is not out of place therefore to conclude that the election of S. D. Dombo as the chairman after the decline of Mumuni Bawumia did not come out of the blue.

Buah (1980) mentions S. D. Dombo as the joint-leader of the United Party. According to Buah, to ensure that political parties were nationally based and also perhaps to cripple the small political parties in the country, the government passed the Avoidance of Discrimination Act in December, 1957. Following this Act, according to him, the opposition parties which were indeed sectarian, 'tribal' or regional, merged into one Party called the United Party under the joint-leadership of Dr K. A. Busia of the National Liberation Movement and S. D. Dombo of the Northern People's Party. How and why did S. D. Dombo become a joint-leader as mentioned by Buah when the Northern People's Party had decided otherwise in their meeting before going into the alliance with the National Liberation Movement? According to Bawumia in his memoirs, the Northern People's Party decided that in the event of an alliance being formed, the Northern People's Party leadership would abandon its position as official opposition in the legislature after the next general elections. This decision of the Northern People's Party, according to Bawumia, was to strengthen the Party's bargaining position with the Convention People's Party on the issue of constitutional safeguards and accelerated development in the North before the grant of independence (Bawumia, 2004). In essence, the Party agreed that if the alliance came into being, the National Liberation Movement should be mandated to provide a leader. This was because it was the considered opinion of the Northern People's Party members that with the financial resources at its disposal and having appeared to have a popular support in Ashanti, the National Liberation Movement could win all the twenty-one seats in Ashanti and many more in the Colony and was therefore likely to form

the next Government. Bawumia's view regarding Dombo as the Deputy Leader is corroborated by Ladouceur (1979) and Austin(1964). One therefore cannot but disagree with Buah who writes that S. D. Dombo was a joint- leader of the United Party when in actual fact it was unanimously agreed that after the alliance Dr. K. A. Busia not Dombo would lead the combined anti-Convention People's Party forces with Dombo becoming his deputy (Buah, 1980).

Boahen (2000) explains the launch of the Northern People's party (N.P.P) in April 1954 only two months to the elections with S. D. Dombo as a leading member. According to Boahen, the Party arose out of the fear of the people of the Northern and Upper Regions, especially the educated elite and the chiefs becoming dominated by people of the South after independence. Its aims, one might therefore expect, were to win respect for the culture of the people of the Northern Territories and to ensure that they were not left behind in terms of distribution of national resources. The leaders of this party included S. D. Dombo, the Duori – Na, Yakubu Tali, a Dagomba Chief, Mumuni Bawumia, J. A. Braimah and J. A. Nagba. The Northern People's Party was thus a regionalist party. In fact, Boahen failed to give us the specifics about S. D. Dombo as far as his political role at the time was concerned. It should be noted, however, that the party had a laid down structure after touring the Northern Territories to garner support from the people of the North towards the formation of the Northern People's Party (NPP). It was therefore obvious that the Northern People's Party had its interim executive before the launch Boahen refers to in his book, *Ghana: Evolution and Change in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. Indeed, S. D. Dombo was the Chairman as indicated by Bawumia (2004) and Ladouceur (1979). His description of S. D. Dombo as a leading member of the party is therefore vague and ambiguous.

Cudjoe (1998) traces the emergence of the Northern People's Party led by S. D. Dombo as a purely regionalist party formed to cater for the interests of the people of the Northern Territory. Cudjoe discloses that the political map got shredded more and more into conservative parties of various kinds with varied definitions as the second general elections in 1954 were gathering a momentum. Cudjoe, however, falls short of explaining the role S. D. Dombo played towards the formation of the Party, how he became the leader of that Party and what S. D. Dombo achieved as the leader of the Party together with his failures as the interim leader.

Danso-Boafo (1996) gives an account of S. D. Dombo and his position as the leader of the United Party (U.P) then in opposition. Danso-Boafo adds that in April 1959, the *National Assembly Disqualification Act*, which provided for the disqualification of any Member of Parliament who was absent for twenty consecutive sittings in any session without obtaining permission from the Speaker, was passed. Dr. Busia who was at the time on a lecture tour of Europe was consequently disqualified under the Act in May, 1959. As a result, Dr. Busia decided to stay in Holland and gave way to his deputy, S. D. Dombo, to lead the opposition in parliament. It is relevant to add that S. D. Dombo's 'new' position as the leader of the Opposition was contrary to the stand of the Northern People's Party which decided not to play any official Opposition role in the Legislative Assembly though it was in accordance with the British Parliamentary democracy. It is worth stating, however, that Dombo's re-assumption of this position came at a time when the parliamentary opposition from the North had all but vanished by 1960 (Ladouceur, 1979). This was due to the fact that of the sixteen opposition Members of Parliament elected in the North in 1956, ten had crossed to the Convention People's Party. Similarly, one had been forced to resign from parliament while another had gone into exile. Only four remained in the United Party. In fact, they constituted half the United Party

parliamentary membership of eight (Ladouceur, 1979, p.206). This is, of course, a powerful evidence of S. D. Dombo's loyalty and dedication to his party. Nonetheless, we need to find out the circumstances that led to his acceptance of the Leader of Opposition position. Was S. D. Dombo pressured to take up that position when indeed it was contrary to the policy of his party or his party relaxed that policy to satisfy the provision of the British Parliamentary democratic system? Those questions need answers since the author failed to address them in his work.

Danquah (1997) makes reference to the detention of S. D. Dombo together with three other Members of Parliament on October 3, 1961. Danquah expresses worry about the fact that all the four Members of Parliament lost their seats in the National Assembly on the grounds that they failed to keep the rule that provided that no Member of Parliament should be absent from the National Assembly for more than twenty days without the permission of the Speaker. In fact, Danquah bemoaned the fact that the arrest of a prominent Member of Parliament like S. D. Dombo was hardly mentioned in the press. Indeed to the Ghana Press it was no news, not a novelty. Danquah provides us the information on how S. D. Dombo was detained but falls short of telling us when he was released from the detention. It is logical to conclude that the detention was brief. This is because according to Ladouceur, following the Kulungungu Bomb incident, the Convention People's Party attempted to persuade the Northern opposition members to join them, offering some of them including S. D. Dombo ministerial positions which they refused. S. D. Dombo was consequently detained for five months in 1963 and was imprisoned again in January 1964, this time around for urging people to vote against the referendum establishing the one-party state. He remained in detention until the coup in 1966. Of course, it is relevant to go beyond the detention and the imprisonment and find

out the impact on his political career, his family, his friends, his community and to some extent his country, which the author failed to provide us with.

Avereyireh (2001) looks at S. D. Dombo as a teacher, politician and chief. Being a student project that earned her the Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Cape Coast, Avereyireh falls short of contesting some of the major issues given her by her respondents. She consumed everything from both the literature and the interview which makes her work a hagiography. Indeed, her work is full of praise-singing such as “ S. D. Dombo was the best in class, the first chairman of the Northern People’s Party, and so forth”. She also describes the relinquishing of his position as the Leader of Opposition in Parliament to K. A. Busia as a show of statesmanship on the part of S. D. Dombo. Avereyireh, however, fails to highlight the events that led to those attributes and positions. For example, how S. D. Dombo became the first chairman of the Northern People’s Party has not been captured in her work, the reasons for ceding his position as the Leader of Opposition to Busia are not given, a documentary proof of his academic excellence is not shown to ascertain the validity of that claim and so forth.

Avereyireh, as indicated earlier, makes us understand that S. D. Dombo was a chief.

However, we are in the dark as to the sort of chief he was whether a paramount chief or divisional chief.

Another strong argument Avereyireh makes in her work is that S. D. Dombo refuses to cross the carpet to the Convention People’s Party under Kwame Nkrumah. This Avereyireh concludes, makes S. D. Dombo altruistic. It is however significant to note that Avereyireh never mentions why S. D. Dombo unlike some of his colleagues in the Northern People’s Party did not cross the carpet to the Convention People’s Party. The reasons as well as other issues will be contested by the researcher before a valid conclusion can be reached.

Austin (1964) captures S. D. Dombo, who was acting as the Leader of the Opposition in the run up to the 1956 elections, pledging on behalf of the opposition in parliament on how to ensure a peaceful two- day poll. That was after the Prime Minister, Kwame Nkrumah, earlier gave the same pledge. Austin reveals that both leaders recognized that violence had to be held in check and at the very least, kept away from the polling booths (Austin,1964, p.336). At first, however, in the last weeks before the elections there seemed little hope that either side would call a halt to its campaign of violence and abuse. Indeed, the language of both the National Liberation Movement's Liberator (newspaper) and the Convention People Party's Evening News was replete with blood curdling accusations and threats of reprisals which necessitated that pledge from both leaders in order to ensure a peaceful poll. The evidence of this tension in the run up to the election flowing from the various newspapers are as follows: The National Liberation Movement's newspaper, The Liberator, in one of its headlines, 'Broken Pledge' described Nkrumah as the only notorious liar in the country whose word shall never be trusted. In fact, the paper described him as being an arch exponent of democratic centralism (Austin, 1964). On its part, the Convention People's Party's Evening News had its headline as 'Reject the Saboteurs of Freedom'. The paper described the National Liberation Movement and its allies as unrepentable devils and brutes who were merely out to ruin the future of Ghana. The Paper further published that persons belonging to the opposition group had attempted to poison the reservoir at Weija. Based on the above counter allegations captured by these newspapers, one can understand the call by Nkrumah and S. D. Dombo for violence-free polls notwithstanding the unrest that continued in Kumasi in the immediate post-election months which could have been worse but for those calls by Dombo and Nkrumah.

The above works of the authors substantiate my position that not enough has been said about S. D. Dombo in all aspects of the multifaceted life he had lived. Indeed, the authors as discussed above, placed much premium on the Party he was instrumental towards its formation to the neglect of S. D. Dombo as a person. It is also obvious from the literature that authors like Austin, Boahen, Buah only succeeded in mentioning S. D. Dombo's roles as a leading member of the Northern People's Party, Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly in the absence of K. A. Busia. The other ministerial positions we are not told. The fact is that Dombo was the Minister of Interior and later in-charge of Health in the Progress Party Government led by Dr. K. A. Busia from 1969 to 1972. In addition to the above limitations, we are not also given a detailed coverage with respect to his roles as a teacher and a chief by a lot of the authors whose works have been reviewed so far. The questions that the researcher sought to get answers to in this scheme of things include, what were the landmark disputes he settled as a chief? What were his achievements? And how did he become a divisional chief in the first place?

The objective of this project therefore is to go beyond what the various authors reveal about the political life of Dombo which somehow has not been exhaustive, to the other side of the man, which included socio-cultural, educational and so forth.

### **1.3 THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

One of the dominant political traditions that has held its own in the political terrain over the years is the Danquah-Busia-Dombo. This tradition emerged, following the formation of the United Party (U. P.) by major political players like K. A. Busia and J. B. Danquah of the National Liberation Movement on one hand and S. D. Dombo of the Northern People's Party (N.P.P.) on the other. It stands to reason that Dombo was

instrumental as far as the formation of that political tradition was concerned, which in essence captures the political side of him. There is therefore a missing link with regard to the other aspect of his life, which are educational and socio-cultural. To achieve the above objective, which is the purpose of the study, only a comprehensive research on the biography of S. D. Dombo will do. The study therefore seeks to trace his life history so that the multi-faceted career that S. D. Dombo pursued will be brought to the fore.

#### **1.4 METHODOLOGY**

The researcher employed both primary and secondary data in analyzing the subject. As far as the primary sources are concerned the researcher conducted interviews with family members and kin, eye witnesses and contemporaries and gathered information needed for the successful execution of this research. The archival materials, which included newspaper reports, for instance, described and interpreted historical events at the time since they are reflective of the past.

The researcher also consulted the available secondary material relevant to this work. These materials included books, articles in journals and newspaper reports. These acquainted the researcher with the diverse sides presented on the issues. These sources, it is important to emphasize, served as the springboard on which the theoretical framework was developed.

Since interviews with family members and kin formed part of the primary source, then the best location to start with was his hometown, Duori and his region, Upper West. This was where contact was established with the people that matter, who were either within the town, the region or outside the above bracket. This location also afforded the researcher an opportunity to know and hear from his opponents as far as politics and chieftaincy were concerned. With respect to how information was obtained from his

contemporaries and eyewitnesses, the researcher reached out to both the political tradition he belonged to (Danquah-Busia-Dombo) and his opponent (Nkrumahist-Tradition) who were best placed to recommend who and who to talk to on the subject.

Undoubtedly, there were difficulties in the conduct of such a research on a person who could be considered as a national figure looking at when and where he was born, where he worked, the sort of works he did and so forth. The anticipated difficulties encountered therefore were how to get his contemporaries and eyewitnesses to provide the researcher with relevant information about S. D. Dombo with relevant documents associated with him.

Another difficulty that was anticipated was how to get relevant documents like letters, parliamentary debates and proceedings and so forth. And obviously, the key amongst the above anticipated difficulties is funds, taking into account the places to go in search of data (primary and secondary) about a national figure like S. D. Dombo. In view of the fact that I did not get any grant for the study, financial assistance was sought from friends, family members and kin. On how to solve the anticipated difficulties with respect to the relevant documents, visits were paid to the archives both national and regional.

### **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The study will largely be useful to historians, students, lecturers, researchers, politicians and other people in their quest to know much about S. D. Dombo. As a reference point the study will provide them with a clearer understanding of the personality of S. D. Dombo and his contributions to the development of the North in particular and Ghana as a whole. Last but not least, this study will project his roles as a chief, politician and teacher which may serve as a guide to our modern day chiefs, politicians and teachers in the performance of their duties.

## **1.6 STRUCTURE OF THE WORK**

For the purposes of clarity, better analyses and quality presentation, the study was divided into five main chapters. The proposal constituted chapter one.

Chapter two focused on Chief Dombo's childhood and education. This included his family upbringing; his education up to the Teacher Training College level.

The third chapter looked at his chiefly and political life from 1948 to 1966. This included the circumstances surrounding his installation as a chief and how he had combined his chiefly role with his politics. The chapter also looked at how he started politics and what he went through within the period.

Chapter four continued to examine his chiefly and political life from 1966 to 1972. The chapter focused on how S. D. Dombo's reign as a Chief was, and how he combined his chiefly role and duties with those of a cabinet minister when his party was in government.

The last chapter, which was chapter five, dealt with his private and family life and how his private and family life was affected by his politics. The conclusion, which will form part of chapter five, focused on the achievements of S. D. Dombo and the significance of the study.

## CHAPTER TWO

### CHILDHOOD AND EDUCATION

#### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

The focus of this chapter will be on S. D. Dombo's childhood and education. This includes his family upbringing: how he was brought up, who nurtured him and how he related with his siblings and other family members will be brought to the fore. With regard to his education, the concentration will be on the schools he had attended, the positions he had held as a pupil and student, and the impressions of his classmates and family relatives about his academics and other activities. His professional career as a teacher will also be considered.

S. D. Dombo was born in 1923 at Duori, a village in the Jirapa-Lambusie District of the Upper West Region of the Republic of Ghana. According to Thomas Salia, a fifty-eight year old security man at Duori Health Center, the main occupation of the people of Duori is agriculture. They produce cereals, vegetables, mostly on subsistence basis. The people also engage in livestock production. Duori is relatively a deprived village. Indeed, the village has neither a Police Post nor Post Office. The people rely on boreholes and wells as their major sources of drinking water. In fact, there is only one health facility available which is the Duori Health Centre.

Duori owes allegiance to Jirapa, which is the seat of the paramount chief as far the source of its traditional authority is concerned. This makes the status of Duori with respect to the chieftaincy arrangement of the Jirapa-Lambussie District as a minor one.

The name of S. D. Dombo's father was Dong Kambo, who was the chief of Duori whilst the mother was Kangayire Maal. Both parents hailed from Duori. S. D. Dombo was nurtured in line with the culture, religious beliefs (African Traditional Religion) and social norms of the royal family in the palace of his father. But later, specifically when he started

school, he was converted to Christianity and chose Simon as his Christian and first name. S. D. Dombo's father could be described as wealthy by Northern (Upper Region) Ghanaian standards in the 1920s because he owned a ranch with cattle, sheep and goats which was a major criterion for measuring wealth. And as the tradition and custom required in the North, young S. D. Dombo became a shepherd, taking care of his father's livestock while learning to hunt at the same time (Avereyireh, 2001).

According to Madam Yelle, a 95 year old widow of Dombo's late elder brother, S. D. Dombo was the favorite son of his father who had many wives and obviously, many children. The crucial period in his life as a child was the time he lost his parents. Indeed, the mother died first followed by the father at the time he was fifteen years of age which was in 1938. At the age of fifteen, S. D. Dombo, an orphan, was left with unexpected responsibilities.

According to S. D. Dombo's younger brother, an octogenarian farmer, Bakuuro Dombo, though they had an elder sister and a brother, it was S. D. Dombo who assumed the responsibilities of their father and mother as they found themselves in a polygamous family, where all the women in the household took care of only their children without bothering much about the children of others. Bakuuro Dombo also disclosed that S. D. Dombo always prepared food for them and also cared for their welfare. This attitude of S. D. Dombo drew the attention of his grandfather, Soin, who developed a special interest in S. D. Dombo for the wonderful initiative of taking care of his siblings. Soin, therefore, extended his love and care to S. D. Dombo and the others by taking full responsibility for their upkeep. Obviously, at that young age, S. D. Dombo became the favorite of Soin, the grandfather. So, apart from running errands for him, the grandfather also discussed family matters with him.

The task of taking care of his siblings, possibly, molded him to be self-reliant and strong-willed in his perception and decisions about life which actually reflected in him as a family head and later as a politician and a chief

## **2.1 DOMBO'S EDUCATION**

It was not an uncommon feature in Northern Ghana during the colonial era for children to start school at a considerably mature age. The reason was that formal education was slow to spread as the Missionaries were not allowed to operate freely and to make their mission felt in all communities (Der, 1994, p.113). In fact, their movement into the Northern Territories was met with serious resistance. Also, formal education was not on the agenda of the colonialist as far as the North was concerned. Indeed, Chief Commissioner, W.J.A. Jones admitted that the people of the North were being regarded as “hewers of wood and drawers of water” (Der, 1994, p.113). Thanks however to Chief Commissioner Lt. Col. A. E. Weatherson whose interest was aroused by the ‘Boys Band’ formed by one Amadu Samba. Amadu Samba was the son of an armourer sergeant in the Northern Territories Constabulary in Tamale. The ‘Boys Band’ was initially given drills, but this was later supplemented by reading and arithmetic lessons given by Constable Clerk J. Afwring (Der, 1994, p.100). This effort grew into a school which the Commissioner opened in March, 1909. These developments were seen as the beginning of Western Education in Northern Ghana.

By 1919, a school had been opened at Lawra, a district in the Upper West Region of Ghana. Children were therefore drawn from “families of chiefs and better class natives in the various parts of the Protectorate” (Bening, 1978). These pupils were to be trained as clerks and interpreters to help implement the policies of the colonial government (Bening, 1978). It is significant, however, to add that though a school was opened in 1919,

enrolment did not follow immediately. The reason for the delay in enrolling pupils into the school, according to Kum Gandah, was that a child died at the same place the school was located under suspicious circumstance and therefore the two divisional chiefs namely, Gana( Jirapa Chief) and Kunkuu,the Chief of Nandom, who could have given the go-ahead were reluctant in that regard (Gandah, 2004).

Also, the need to establish schools at Wa in 1917 and Lawra in 1919, both in the current Upper West Region of the Republic of Ghana became pressing, according to Benedict Der, (see his *Missionary Enterprise in Northern Ghana 1906-1976. A Study in Impact*), following the closure of the White Fathers school at Navrongo in 1914 (Der, 1994, p.151), and the withdrawal of the Wesleyans from the mission field in the Northern Territories (Der, 1994, p.151). He adds that the Colonial Administration held a virtual monopoly over education in the North. C. H. Armittage, who became the Chief Commissioner in 1912, was thus in a position to put into practice the policy he advocated earlier in 1912: that is to say, forestalling mission education by opening up government schools at most principal administrative centres. Yet he did not carry out this policy. Instead, only two more schools were opened: one at Wa in 1917, the other at Lawra in 1919. Thus after nearly twenty one years of effective colonial rule in the North, the British administration had only four schools serving the Protectorate (Der, 1994, p.158).

Again, there was the pressing need to establish schools at the various administrative centres to train a new generation of chiefs and educate a few selected promising young men from each ethnic group using the English Language as the medium of instruction (Der, 1994). Consequently, when S. D. Dombo's grandfather was ordered by the District Commissioner to rally children for school, the opportunity fell on S. D. Dombo simply because they saw him as an intelligent chap who could take care of the younger ones (Avereyireh, 2001, p.15). Another reason was that he was a son of a chief.

Ironically, in the colonial era, schooling was perceived as a punishment on the grounds that schools were like military institutions as they also applied strict application of rules and regulations (Avereyreh, 2001, p.16). It went along with corporal punishment, a reason for not sending one's own children to school in those days. This is common knowledge. It would seem that S. D. Dombo was the sacrificial lamb, even if people do not wish to admit this now. The conditions were described as harsh by a section of the rural population. Some or most pupils had to walk a long distance to school. However, this hardship, as it was perceived in those days, was to mark the beginning of S. D. Dombo's success in life.

In assessing the reasons regarding the enrolment of S. D. Dombo into the Lawra Primary School in 1935, particularly the one that was based on his intelligence, I cannot but disagree with it. This stems from the fact that there are no educational records on S. D. Dombo before his admission into the school. What was therefore the yardstick that informed the conclusion that he was intelligent a reason for which he was admitted? In other words, was there any entrance examination as a requirement for admission? At any rate the principal criterion for admission was that one had to be the child of a chief as pointed out by Bening, Der and Gandah, which S. D. Dombo qualified to be enrolled as a pupil. Indeed, S. D. Dombo was enrolled in Lawra Primary School in 1935. The then head teacher of the school was Henrich Henkel, half German and Ghanaian (Avereyreh, 2001). According to Bakuuro Dombo, in school, S. D. was very intelligent, sociable and obedient. That he had always topped his class and held the post of a senior school prefect throughout his primary school days. It is important to state that usually, the bigger boys were made prefects, and not the brightest. This might have informed the decision of the school authorities to make S. D. Dombo a prefect to assist in the enforcement of rules and regulations in the school. S. D. Dombo was twelve years old at the time he was first

enrolled in the Lawra Primary School as compared to Kum Gandah who was nine years old (Gandah, 2004). Indeed, S. D. Dombo was made the school Naa (Chief) in February 1936, which was the beginning of the second term. In *The Silent Rebel*, Kum Gandah explains that Dakura Nuonuo was dismissed from his post as the school ‘Naa’ (Chief) and was replaced by S. D. Dombo (Gandah, 2004, p.44). The reason for the dismissal of Dakura Nuonuo was not made public, Gandah adds. But before S. D. Dombo assumed that position, he was the dining hall chairman. Again, according to Kum Gandah, those respective compound captains or prefects were called “chiefs” (‘Namine’ for plural and ‘Naa’ for singular) (Gandah, 2004, p.42). Regarding the assertion that S.D. Dombo was intelligent and clever and that he had always topped his class, suffice it to say, Kum Gandah in his exposition of academic activities in school, particularly the performance of students, S. D. Dombo’s name is not mentioned as one of the best students. Indeed, Kum Gandah mentions Abayifaa Karbo, Ar-inggo as the brightest amongst them (Gandah, 2004, p. 43). What Kum Gandah says, however, is that S.D. Dombo had a projecting voice which was one of the contributory factors that made him a good speaker in later years. On account of his baritone voice he was always given texts to learn and recite during important functions; this he said was part of his roles as the senior school prefect.

According to Der, the then District Commissioner for Lawra, H. A. Blair, was said to have taken a special interest in S. D. Dombo due to his brilliance (Der, 1983, p.275) . It is recalled that the District Commissioner, H. A. Blair categorically singled him out as a very promising young prince, who had a high Intelligent Quotient (I.Q.) grasping easily what he was taught in class (Der, 1983). S. D. Dombo was therefore seen as a potential clerk or assistant store keeper for the colonial administration in the Northern Territories.

As far as sports was concerned, Kum Gandah corroborated what Bakuuro Dombo said. In *The Silent Rebel*, Kum Gandah points out that Mr. Andoh instituted an award

scheme where he awarded students who excelled in academics and sports. He said this while discussing the ideas Mr. Andoh introduced when he took over from Mr. Henkel as the next head teacher of the school (Gandah, 2004). According to Gandah, “Athletes like Tiisip, Biz, Kankpoo, Naamu Terger, Diedong(Dombo) and many others collected prizes which I rather envied for I could not run for toffee” (Gandah, 2004, p. 105).

## **2.2 DOMBO AT TAMALE BOYS’ MIDDLE SCHOOL**

From Lawra Primary School S. D. Dombo proceeded to the Tamale Government Middle Boarding School. The Tamale Government Middle Boarding School was opened in 1927 and took over from the former Government Trade School that had been opened in 1922 with D. A. Mahama as the headmaster (Gandah, 2004, p. 112). Bawumia, in his memoirs, confirms that S.D. Dombo was his classmates (Bawumia, 2004). According to Bawumia, “I entered the Tamale Middle Boarding School in the Standard Four class in early 1940”. Standard Four (4) was Form One in the middle school. He adds that some of his classmates were S. D. Dombo, Abayifaa Karbo, Susana Henkel (Mrs. Susana Alhassan), Gyubunu Gandah, Bizooda Gandaa, Polkuu Kunkuu, B. K. Adama, Kwame Gyamfi and W. A. Mahama (Bawumia, 2004, p. 12). It is significant to state that the middle school then was the highest educational institution in the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast and Standard Seven( Middle School Form Four) was the highest grade a student could get to. In fact, the Tamale Middle School was the only Boarding Middle School that served the ten districts in the Northern Territories namely, Yeji, Yendi, Wa, Gambaga, Bawku, Salaga, Lawra, Damango, Navrongo, and later Sandema (Bawumia, 2004). This made selection into the school highly competitive. Another reason for the high competition was the fact that all the primary schools that were established were up to Standard Three. This meant that the Boarding Middle School could not absorb all the

graduates from the primary schools. In that case, a common entrance examination was conducted and only few were admitted. As far as the results were concerned, S. D. Dombo was among the pupils who passed the entrance examination and was thus offered admission to further his education in the school (Avereyireh, 2001). With respect to how they travelled to Tamale, Gandah explains that he and his colleagues, including S. D. Dombo had to leave for Wa by bus, the only part of the journey for which the native authority was prepared to pay for their transportation. They left early because it took between ten and fourteen days to travel from Wa to Tamale on foot (Gandah, 2004). He continues that at Wa, they passed the night at the Wa Junior School. At dawn the next morning they set out on foot for Busa which was nine miles away. They usually arrived there at about 9am where the Busa Naa's son, Adama Busa ( B. K. Adama, former Defense Minister in the Busia Regime) joined them and from there they set off for Bulenga, which was a further twelve miles away(Gandah, 2004, p. 109). According to him, they rested a while took their lunch and then started off for Ducie which was a further eight miles away. The last lap of their journey involved travelling through the bush where there was a lot of big game including lions and leopard which then led them to Tamale (Gandah, 2004, p. 109). As indicated earlier, the Tamale Middle School was a boarding school and so all pupils had to stay there for six months before coming back home on vacation. Since the journey was far, S. D. Dombo and his mates were guarded on their journey and the chiefs of the villages they passed through took care of their feeding, lodging and safety (Gandah, 2004).

Significantly, we were not informed about the year S. D. Dombo entered the Tamale Middle Boarding School. However, given that Mumuni Bawumia entered the Tamale Middle Boarding School in 1940, then, logically, one can conclude that S. D.

Dombo also entered the school in 1940 in view of the fact that Bawumia mentions S. D. Dombo as his classmate in that school.

Based on the above evidence from the memoirs of his class mates, contemporaries, and comments made by his family relatives, we can substantiate the views that S. D. Dombo was active both in sports and academic life even if he was not the best. The fact that he was even an ‘orator’, and a prefect, as Kum Gandah makes us to believe, should enable us to conclude that S. D. Dombo gave a good account of himself at the initial stages of his school life

### **2.3 DOMBO AS A TEACHER-TRAINEE**

After completing the Middle Boys’ School, S. D. Dombo entered the Government Training College (Bagabaga College of Education) in Tamale which was opened on the 31st January, 1944(Bening, 1978). After its official opening, the Government Training College became the highest educational institution in the Northern territories (Bawumia, 2004). S. D. Dombo was amongst the first batch of the fourteen student-teachers to be admitted to the College. According to Bawumia, S. D. Dombo was the senior prefect of the College, which was then housed on the old army compound which was very closed to what was then the Tamale Middle Boarding School (Tamale Secondary School). However, in June, 1946, the College moved to its present site, now referred to as ‘education range’. The Principal of the College at that time was K. J. Dickens.

At the College, students were paid allowances of one pound ten shillings (£1,10s) per month plus five shillings bonus (Bawumia, 2004, p. 12). The College provided free meals, accommodation and uniform. The uniform prescribed for the students and pupils of all educational institutions in the Northern Territories was smock and shorts (Bawumia, 2004, p. 12). Also, all students and school pupils alike were sponsored by the various

Native Administrations in the districts so that after completion of their course, they became automatic employees of the sponsoring Native Administration. Thus teachers on completion of their training became Native Authority Teachers but placed on salary scale similar to what existed in the Central Government Service of the Ministry of Education (Bawumia, 2004, p. 12). As indicated earlier, Dombo was amongst the first batch of the fourteen student-teachers who were enrolled into the College. Unfortunately, he and other students including B. K. Adama, a former member of the Northern People's Party (N.P.P) and a former Minister for Parliamentary Affairs in the second Republic, Abayifaa Karbo, were expelled from the College. The reason for their expulsion which was given by Bakuuro Dombo and Pognaa Fuunaayela, a younger sister of Abayifaa Karbo, was that the Principal of the College, Mr. K. J. Dickens, who was British, had ordered that students in the College should wear smocks to class. This directive was to spark a demonstration by the students of the College led by S. D. Dombo. They argued that if students at Achimota College wore western type uniform to class and not their traditional kente, then there was no basis for that directive to be implemented in their College. The conclusion of the students in that regard was that the Principal's directive amounted to discrimination based on a wrong impression that Northerners were inferior. Significantly, it was S. D. Dombo, the then Senior School Prefect who led the opposition and the demonstration. Indeed, he wrote and delivered the grievances on behalf of the students to the appropriate school authority. S. D. Dombo, accordingly, became the first student to be dismissed. Fortunately for him, he was re-admitted on the orders of the District Commissioner, H. A. Blair.

However, according to Bakuuro Dombo, during the short period of his stay at home, S. D. Dombo helped in the formation of the 'Home Guards'. These were a group of young people within Lawra District who came together to seek the welfare of the people of the district at large. S. D. Dombo rose to the rank of a 'corporal' and soon the 'Home

Guards' were placed under the supervision of the District Commissioner of Lawra, H. A. Blair.

It is however relevant to state that the protest by the students yielded a positive result, following the withdrawal of the directive to students to wear smocks to class. S. D. Dombo consequently continued his studies and successfully graduated as a professional teacher with certificate 'B'. Regardless of the withdrawal of the directive, which others judged as an achievement for S. D. Dombo as a student leader, one can also argue that there was no justification for challenging that status quo. This is because Bawumia, as indicated earlier, states that the prescribed uniform for students and pupils of all educational institutions in the Northern Territories was smock and shorts. However, in fairness to S. D. Dombo, he and the pupils were not objecting to their use of Northern clothes, rather they felt the rule supports and affirms a British perception that the Northerner was inferior and was to be discouraged from adopting modernity. It was the same issue that explained the Apartheid insistence that in schools, black children could only be taught Afrikaans and their languages, but not English. The British were trying to 'correct' what they felt were mistakes made in the South which led to agitations for self-rule.

#### **2.4 DOMBO AS A TEACHER**

After the completion of his course in 1946, S. D. Dombo was first posted to Eremon (a village near Duori) before moving to the Lawra Primary School. He later moved to Gbenbge where he opened and subsequently headed the Gbenbge Primary School located in the Lawra District for two years. According to Bakuuro Dombo, at Gbenbge, S. D. Dombo was accommodated by the Gbenbge Naa, as it was common for chiefs to host teachers who were posted to their communities. Indeed, S. D. Dombo lived

in the palace of the Gbengbe Chief. In appreciation of his service to the Gbengbe community, the Gbengbe Naa (Chief) married his daughter off to S. D. Dombo. The name of this woman who became the second wife of S. D. Dombo was Kulavi.

Also, as a teacher, S. D. Dombo read, explained and interpreted most of the policies and programmes of the colonial administrators for the benefit of the Chiefs especially the Lawra Naa. While at Gbengbe, S. D. Dombo paid frequent visits to Duori. At Duori, he exhibited his usual capabilities and worked with enthusiasm both as a teacher and community leader. For instance, he served as the link between the chief and his people on one hand and the colonial administration on the other as he did at Gbenbge. He also worked closely with the Christian Missionaries, who had established the Catholic Church to promote the welfare of the people of Duori (Avereyreh, 2001).

Based on the above account, it is clear that S.D. Dombo had struggled to achieve academic excellence. However, he did not have a long teaching career since politics had taken a better part of him. And as a prince, he seemed to know that one day he would shoulder the traditional responsibility of Duori. Indeed, this arrangement to have S. D. Dombo succeed his father's younger brother, Naa Bodiir, was becoming a reality when the latter died in 1948. This was an occasion of both joy and sadness on the part of S. D. Dombo. It was sad because his tremendous interest and appetite for scholarship appeared to have come to an end. And joy, because he was going to be the traditional chief of Duori, which was a glorious opportunity to lead his people. Indeed, at the ceremony that marked his enskinment, one British officer was reported to have remarked that S. D. Dombo was sacrificing his education in order to serve his people which meant that S. D. Dombo's opportunity for any formal education at a higher level would end in 1949 (Avereyreh, 2001).

Regarding the circumstances surrounding his enskinment, Timothy Dombo, a son and an aide to S. D. Dombo corroborated the account given by his uncle, Bakuuro Dombo, on the stiff opposition S. D. Dombo faced as far as his enskinment as the next Chief of Duori was concerned. The detailed account of that fierce contest and the events surrounding his installation as a Chief on the 17th April, 1949, at the age of 26, will be captured in the next chapter.

The above chapter sought to give an account of the childhood and education of S. D. Dombo. It also brought to the fore the strong impression he had made both as a student and a teacher which significantly impacted on his home district, Lawra. S. D. Dombo had also learned to be responsible at a tender age when he shouldered the responsibility of taking care of his siblings at the time they were orphans following the death of their parents. And accepting the benevolence of his grandfather, he rose to the occasion when the opportunity came for him to begin formal education. With determination and hard work, he achieved academic excellence. And by virtue of the fact that he was made the school prefect at primary and Training College levels, S. D. Dombo acquired useful experiences in leadership, which no doubt played out in his future endeavours, both as a politician and a chief.

## CHAPTER THREE

### DOMBO AS A CHIEF AND POLITICIAN (1948-1966)

#### 3.0 HOW S. D. DOMBO BECAME A CHIEF

This chapter assesses the life of S. D. Dombo both as a chief and politician from 1948 to 1966. It will examine the circumstances surrounding his installation as a chief and how he had combined his chiefly roles with his political roles. The chapter also takes on board how he started his political career as well as what he went through as a politician within the period under consideration.

According to Timothy Dombo, S. D. Dombo was one of the likely successors to the Duori skin by virtue of the fact that his father was a chief. However, as a minor, he could not succeed the father after the latter's death in 1938. In the fulfillment of that traditional requirement, Naa Bodiir, who succeeded S. D. Dombo's father made it known that S. D. Dombo would succeed him after his death. In that direction, S. D. Dombo was always closed to him and as a result he was taken through the customs and traditions governing the traditional functions of a chief.

Another reason for the choice of S. D. Dombo as the next Duori-Naa was his level of education. The need for educated chiefs, according to Mumuni Bawumia, followed the assumption of Mr. W. H Ingrams as Chief Commissioner in 1947. Mr. Ingrams re-established the Northern Territories Council (Bawumia, 2004, p. 67). The Northern Territories Council was initially a chiefs' council but later election to the council was made from the various Native Authorities with the chiefs sending representatives instead of attending meetings themselves. Meetings were conducted mostly in English and so it was convenient to elect educated chiefs and other literate individuals to represent the Native Authorities (Bawumia, 2004, p. 67).

It is worthy of stating, however, that the enskinment was preceded by a keen competition between S. D. Dombo and his cousin, Daribang, who was the son of the late Chief Bodiir, whom S. D. Dombo was to succeed. It was as a result of the contest that S. D. Dombo decided, upon advice, to vacate post at Gbengbe, a suburb of Jirapa where he was teaching, to settle at Duori. This was to familiarise himself with the people and also campaign for a support. According to Bakuuro Dombo and Timothy Dombo, the choice of a successor to Bodiir, the late chief, was settled through an election, which was conducted in March, 1949. S. D. Dombo consequently won the contest against Darenbeng who was older than him. It is relevant, however, to highlight that the conduct of the election was not a usual approach in deciding who became a next chief in the area. The traditional requirement, according to Timothy Dombo is that the eldest son of the chief automatically becomes the next chief upon the chief's demise. The decision by the kingmakers to use an election in that occasion was therefore an ad hoc measure, which was meant to break the deadlock.

According to Mr. Salia Dasaa and Madam Yelle, the late Naa Bodiir had already chosen S. D. Dombo as his successor before his death. They also disclosed that Daribang was condemned by some members of his family for his decision to challenge S. D. Dombo when it was public knowledge that Naa Bodiir had chosen S. D. Dombo as his successor before joining his ancestors. Dombo was consequently enskinned on the 17th April, 1949, at the age of 26.

Mr. Salia Dasaa told me that S. D. Dombo was one of the first educated chiefs in the Upper West Region.

According to Timothy Dombo, after winning the election to become the chief, S. D. Dombo was later installed by the District Commissioner for the Lawra District, H.

A. Blair as a sub-Chief of Duori. This ceremony took place on the April 17, 1949, at Duori.

### **3.1 THE BEGINNING OF DOMBO'S POLITICAL LIFE**

Organized political activity was virtually unknown in Northern Ghana until the late 1940s. There had been, of course, opposition among some ethnic groups, notably the Tallensi and the Lobi-Dagarti, to the establishment of British rule, but the only instance of organized political activity by educated Northerners before the Second World War occurred about 1936 (Ladouceur, 1979, p. 79). A number of Northern literates, mostly teachers, concerned about the backwardness of the Northern Territories, formed an Association in Tamale for the purpose of promoting Northern interest, particularly the acceleration of education (Ladouceur, 1979, p. 79). The Association was small and isolated, and its members made no attempt to contact the chiefs in order to form a united front. The chiefs were illiterates then, and many did not see much value in literary education. Nevertheless, the colonial administration felt that the establishment of the association represented a threat; the Association's demand for more schools could lead to more explicit political interests along the lines of similar associations in the colony, such as the Aborigines Rights Protection Society (A. R. P. S.). The Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories, E. N. Jones, together with the Senior Principal Inspector of schools, moved against the Association, first by warning and intimidation, then by penalties and transfers of the teachers involved. Since all the members were civil servants, the Association was soon disbanded (Ladouceur, 1979, p. 79).

The opening of the Government Training College in Tamale in 1944 provided a centre where grievances and politics could be discussed. At first, grievances were restricted to student issues. For example, strike over lack of sugar in the cafeteria in 1945,

and another about dissatisfaction over the school rules regarding dress. However, there was also a growing awareness among students of the enormous gap between the North and the South of the Gold Coast. In one incident in 1947, two of the older students at the Government Training Collage, Abayifaa Karbo and E. A. Mahama, protested against the rule which obliged Northerners, both pupils and teachers, to wear the smock at all times on school premises ( Ladouceur,1979, p.80). This incident focused attention on the Colonial Administration's policy of differentiating between Northerners and Southerners, since the latter could dress in European fashion if they wished. Some of the students attended Northern Territories Council (N.T.C) meetings as interpreters or advisors to the delegations from their districts, which allowed them to become acquainted with issues at the territorial level, including colonial policy, and frequently to guide the chiefs as to what they should say. Although newspapers were forbidden, some students received them, particularly the *Ashanti Pioneer*, and kept themselves informed about events in the South, especially after the riots of 1948(Ladouceur, 1979, p.81).

Indeed, according to Professor Benedict Der, a Professor of History, University of Cape Coast and Bakuuro Dombo, a younger brother of S. D. Dombo, S. D. Dombo started political activism following his association with people like B. K. Adama, Abayifaa Karbo, E. A. Mahama, Jato Kaleo, Yakubu Tali, Mumuni Bawumia and so forth, when they were at the Government Training College in Tamale. This political activism of S. D. Dombo was heightened by his membership of the various committees and councils. For instance, he became a member of the Coussey Committee on Constitutional Reform in 1949. He also became an appointed member of the Legislative Council with J.A. Braimah and Yakubu Tali in 1950 (Gandah, 2004).

The riots of February-March 1948, and the Watson Commission and Coussey Committee which followed, touched off a period of intense political activity in the Colony

and Asante, and for the first time nationalist leaders in the South turned their attention to the Northern Territories as a possible recruiting ground (Ladouceur, 1979, p.82). It stands to reason that the presence of these nationalist leaders in the Northern Territories deepened the enthusiasm of the Northerners, particularly the educated ones who had already witnessed the enormous gap between the North and the South.

### **3.2 DOMBO AS A MEMBER OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORIES COUNCIL**

The system of Native Administration in the Northern Territories was introduced in 1933 by the then Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories, Mr. W. J. A. Jones with the hope of having regular meetings of all chiefs in the Northern Territories. The council, it is important to emphasize, was established by the Colonial Administration with its headquarters in Tamale as a forum for Northern opinion. Mr. W. H. Ingrams assumed office as Chief Commissioner in 1947 and called a meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> December, 1947 (Bawumia, 2004, p. 67). Much of what was achieved for the North during the transitional period can be attributed to the efforts of the Council though Northern members of the National Legislature supplemented these efforts by their own contributions in parliament (Bawumia, 2004, p. 71).

Through the continued pressure and effort of the Northern Territories Council of which S. D. Dombo was a member, the Colonial Administration and later the Nkrumah Regime agreed to the establishment of the Special Northern Scholarship Scheme. The Scheme permitted Northerners who had no secondary education but who were desirous and capable of pursuing further studies to enter Tamale Secondary School at the expense of the Central Government. Those who benefited from the scheme included Seidu Hamidu, Abu Juam and many others ( Bawumia, 2004, p.72). In addition, Northern students were allowed free boarding in all secondary schools, Training Colleges and

Higher Institutions situated in the North. The central government provided and furnished all school buildings including Primary and Middle schools. The North achieved much more by way of development as a result of the efforts of the Northern Territories Council during the pre-independence period dating from 1951, to the post-independence period up to 1966 when the Nkrumah Regime was overthrown in a military coup (Bawumia, 2004, p. 72).

These developments and benefits in the education sector in the North, which are still being enjoyed by the three regions of the North are through the efforts of S. D. Dombo and his colleagues on the Northern Territories Council.

The scholarship remained in some form till fairly recently. University students enjoyed it until Dr. K. A. Busia and his administration stopped it in 1971. In fact, some students who were of S. D. Dombo's generation were sent to Achimota to study and come back as teachers.

### **3.3 S. D. DOMBO'S ROLES AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NORTHERN TERRITORIES COUNCIL**

In 1950, S. D. Dombo was elected by the members of the Lawra Confederacy to represent them on the Northern Territories Council (Minutes of a meeting of Northern Territories, 1950, Tamale). The Northern Territories Council was duly established by Administrative Order in 1946. The council held its first meeting in Tamale, in December, 1946. At that meeting, local issues relating to economic, educational and social development were discussed and these remained their main preoccupation in the early years. However, the council's deliberations were soon extended beyond the Protectorate to the political future of the Gold Coast (Bening, 1999).

Within the Council, S. D. Dombo further assumed political and administrative roles. He also used that platform to fight for the rights of the people (Bening, 1990). He spearheaded the fight for political, economic, social and educational interests in which the North lagged behind the South. In view of the greater need for development in the Protectorate, S. D. Dombo suggested a separate development plan for the region (Bening, 1990).

Members of the Northern Territories Council still demanded that a special scheme for the Northern Territories be initiated to “integrate the development of the country in order to produce a truly united Ghana”. The Northern Territories Council was later given the opportunity to have a representation in the Legislative Council in Accra. S. D. Dombo was given the nod by the Northern Territories Council. He subsequently became a member of the Legislative Council on the ticket of the Northern Territories Council (Bening, 1990). S. D. Dombo together with his Northern colleagues, somehow, successfully, pushed the Northern agenda which was the development of education in the North, when they officially took their positions as members of the Legislative Council. An empirical evidence is the free boarding system the senior high schools in the three northern regions are enjoying today, which incontestably, has increased accessibility of education in the North.

On the July 24, 1950, J. A. Braimah, Yakubu Tali, S. D. Dombo took the Oath of Allegiance as extra-ordinary members of the Legislative Council. They therefore became the first indigenous persons from the Protectorate to attend the Gold Coast Legislative Council as members (Bening, 1990). The Northern Members of the Legislative Council raised concerns in debates fighting to get the North to receive its fair share of development projects in the country. For instance, in one of the 1951 National Assembly sessions when a Bill on road construction from Kumasi to the South was laid before the House without

mentioning the North, S. D. Dombo took the floor and drew the attention of the House to the fact that there could not be any roads in the South without joining them from the North. He remarked: “But remember that almost all your meat that you get in the South is coming from the North”(Legislative Assembly Debates, April 4,1951).

On the 21st March, 1952, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah’s title was changed from ‘Leader of Government Business’ to Prime Minister (Austin, 1964). This was to step up the struggle for independence in the country. However, for S. D. Dombo, the interest of the North was not of a major concern to majority of the members of the Assembly from other parts of the country. He particularly expressed his views regarding the stand of the Northern Territories on the new Constitution of 1954 (Nkrumah Constitution), which he feared did not favour the North. He also told the Assembly that “the North was prepared to always back any side whether individual or party, whose views were in the best interest of our people in the country but we are not going to back any party or individual whose views are detrimental to us”(Legislative Assembly Debate, March, 1953).

S. D. Dombo also participated actively in debates on economic and social matters. Indeed, he expressed concern about the poor labour conditions in the country’s mines and cocoa farms, and hinted that if working conditions were not improved, especially on cocoa farms, the cocoa industry would be ruined by lack of labour. He argued that the lack of care such as frequent weeding of the farms was one of the causes for the spread of diseases (Legislative Assembly Debates, April 1951).

Again, S. D. Dombo also kicked against an Ordinance which he described as a ‘complete force being put on the Northern Territories ’(Legislative Assembly Debates, 19 th March, 1953) . The scheme was to establish a compulsory savings for mine workers of Northern extraction. It required a fraction of their wages deducted and placed in a saving account. This was vehemently opposed by S. D. Dombo and his Northern

colleagues on the grounds that the government had no right to tell the Northern mine workers how to use their money. They concluded that the arrangement was an infringement on their constitutional rights.

The Parliamentary Hansard discussed above has given us the indication of how vocal and active S. D. Dombo participated in the law making body. It is however important to go beyond this participation in debates and find out the dividends his contributions to parliamentary debates brought as far as the developments of the North were concerned.

### **3.4 S. D. DOMBO AND THE FORMATION OF THE NORTHERN PEOPLE'S PARTY**

In September 1953, the Van Lare Commission on Representational and Electoral Reform recommended that the Northern Territories be allocated twenty six seats in the new Legislative Assembly of 104 members. This allocation of seats to the Northern Territories introduced a radical new element into Northern politics (Ladouceur, 1979, p.111). The non -Convention People's Party (C.P.P.) politicians had previously looked up to only the chiefs whom they represented and their counselors, but now would have to face the greater uncertainties of popular election. No appropriate mechanism existed for meeting this new challenge. The Northern Territories Council was a formal organ of government based on the district councils and was limited in its function as well as being closely supervised by the colonial officials. While its members were free to discuss any subject, the Northern Territories Council (NTC) could not play an active role in an election (Ladouceur, 1979, p. 112).

Before the election, Northern leaders such as J. A. Braimah and S. D. Dombo hoped to achieve a political arrangement similar to that prevailing after the 1951 elections,

that is, with most of the Northern members of the Legislative Assembly acting as a non-partisan group to promote Northern interests, and with suitable Northern representation in the cabinet (Ladouceur, 1979, p. 112 ). Northerners were also upset that no Northerner had been appointed a minister after Braimah's resignation in December 1953. They were also dissatisfied with the government's development policy in the North, including of course, the failure to proceed with the railway from Kumasi (Ladouceur, 1979). Indeed, in 1951, it was only at the insistence of the Governor that Nkrumah included J. A. Braimah, a non-member of the Convention People's Party in his cabinet (Ladouceur, 1979, p. 113). Braimah, however, resigned in December, 1953 on allegation of bribery and corruption which came to light in the course of an enquiry by a Commission of Enquiry under Justice K. A. Korsah (Ladouceur, 1979 ).

With the Northern Territories Council eliminated as a possible active political body, the Northerners sought a different organizational base which would represent their needs. The first attempt was the Northern Youth Association, formed along the lines of similar bodies elsewhere in the Gold Coast. For instance, the Anlo Youth Association formed in the Volta Region, Togoland Union formed in 1943 by Kofi Dumoga and Victor Anku (Austin, 1964). But it quickly became apparent that such an Association would not be suitable to contest elections. For one thing, members of the Convention People's Party (C. P. P) joined the Association and it was obvious that the Convention People's Party (C. P. P) intended to contest the Northern constituencies on a party basis (Ladouceur, 1979).

The Convention People's Party's intention to contest the Northern constituencies constituted a direct challenge to the established Northern Leadership who regarded the Northerners in the Convention People's Party (C.P.P.) as little more than pawns in the hands of Southern politicians. The Convention People's Party (C.P.P.) in the North had an organizational base however weak, geared primarily to electoral campaigns and could

easily capture a good number of the twenty six seats against a disorganized opposition running as independent(Ladouceur, 1979).

The Convention People's Party's (C.P.P.) challenge, the Braimah affair, and the continuing mistrust many Northerners had of the Convention People's Party in general were sufficient to bring to an end whatever hopes there might have been of extending the co-operation that existed between the North and Convention People's Party (C.P.P.) government at the time of the debate on constitutional reform in July, 1953 (Ladouceur, 1979).The Braimah Affair was the allegation of bribery and corruption leveled against J. A. Braimah. This made his days as a cabinet minister in the Convention People's Party government come to a sudden and tragic end (Ladouceur, 1979, p. 110). Braimah became distressed when he realized that two thousand pounds he had accepted from an Armenian contractor, Aksor Kassardjian, had been offered as bribe (Ladouceur, 1979, p. 111). Indeed, Braimah had confessed what had happened to the Governor as he handed in his letter of resignation. On December 3, 1953, the Governor instituted a Commission of Enquiry under Justice K. A. Korsah to look into the circumstance which caused Mr. J. A. Braimah to resign his seat in the cabinet and the truth of any allegation relevant to such circumstance (Ladouceur, 1979, p. 111).

The idea of a Northern political party was broached for the first time in late 1953 when elections were in the air. The main impetus came from those who still felt that Northern Unity was paramount and that united, the Northern members of the Legislative Assembly would be a powerful group which could protect and advance the interests of the North. According to S. D. Dombo,

The Northern People's Party (N.P.P) came from us which still remained for the unity of the North. When the election was to come on in 1954, we wanted a means by which the North would speak

with one voice; otherwise it was unlikely that we would get anything. This urged us to come together and to fight on a unified front, for development, education, agriculture and communication ( Ladouceur, 1979, p. 114).

I think what cannot be glossed over, which of course was the key with respect to the circumstance surrounding the formation of the Northern People's Party ( N.P.P ) was political awareness. Indeed, according to Gandah, from about the early 1940 onwards, educated people from the Northern Territories were beginning to be politically aware and they stood their ground demanding their rights in front of their colonial masters and they did so much better than their forerunners. No wonder Northerners were prevented from going to Southern schools because it was believed they would be influenced by them. This awareness accelerated with the opening of the Tamale Teacher Training College in 1944 which was then the highest educational institution in the region (Gandah, 2004, p.220). Despite their political awareness, there were no organized groups except youth associations (as mentioned earlier about the Northern Youth Associations) that provided amenities such as football and tennis in villages and towns. These were formed by enlightened youths but soon fell apart if an enlightened person who was the motive behind the formation of the Association was transferred from or left the district. The Northern Territories Territorial Council was the forerunner of the Northern Territories Council (Gandah, 2004, p. 220).

Three members from this body, J. A. Braimah, Yakubu Tali, and S. D. Dombo, were added as extra – ordinary members to the Legislative Council to debate the Ewart Committee Report. Even in 1957 when the North was given nineteen seats in the Legislative Assembly, candidates sent to the electoral college were not party members but were nominated and selected by the District Commissioners (Gandah, 2004, p.220).

The only people who claimed to belong to the parties but did not hold party cards were southerners working in the district administrations in the North, and as a matter of pride they tried to show they belonged to one of parties in the South. In effect, there were very few Northerners who held party membership cards before 1954 and these few Northerners were notably in Tamale town just before the dissolution of the Legislative Assembly. Therefore, before Parliament dissolved, most members from the North, S. D. Dombo ( Duori- Naa), Mumuni Bawumia, L. R. Abavana, J. A. Braimah (the then Kpembe Wura), and Yakubu Tali (the then Tali Naa), among others, decided to form a party with Northern interests in mind and to fight the elections collectively. They found out that as a collective group in the Assembly, they were very effective on issues concerning the North (Gandah, 2004, p. 220)

Because of the reactions of their paramount chiefs, both the Kpembe Wura and the Tali Naa declined to take a leading role in the formation of the party but supported its formation whole heartedly. For instance, Yakubu Tali sought support towards the formation of the party in Dagomba. At the same time, some Northern Members of Parliament, especially those few who already held ministerial posts, were enticed to join the C.P.P and some others were promised ministerial posts if they stood and won the next elections. Persons such as J. H. Alhassani, Ayarna Imoru, Abavana, Asumda Ayebo, Akantiesi Afoko all decided to fight the elections on the C.P.P ticket (Gandah, 2004, p. 220). In the end, S. D. Dombo and Mumuni Bawumia were left to become the leaders of this new party that was to set up. As soon as Parliament was dissolved, Mumuni Bawumia was given the task of convincing the chiefs and people of the Mamprusi District, which at that time comprised the Kusasi, Frafra and the Mamprusi Districts about the need to form a political party. On his part, S. D. Dombo was given the task of convincing the chiefs and people of the North -West District of Bole, Wa, Lawra and Tumu and the Kasena-Nankani

Confederacy and Builsa areas (Gandah, 2004 p.221) so that they would not support them in the formation of the party they intended to form. To substantiate his position on the role of S. D. Dombo in the formation of the N.P.P, Kum Gandah said,

I was in Lawra when Chief Dombo addressed the youth in the Lawra District. I went to this rally with my brother Nuonato Gandah, the Birifu Naa, who was then the chairman of the Lawra District Council. Chief Dombo outlined the aims of the party whose name was to be ratified later at a conference in Tamale (Gandah, 2004, p. 221).

As indicated earlier in the literature review regarding the role played by Dombo in the formation of the Northern People's Party (N.P.P), J. A. Braimah and S. D. Dombo were the first to raise the possibility of a Northern political party which would play much the same role as the Northern group had done under the 1957 constitution. Braimah, together with Dombo, Yakubu Tali and Mumuni Bawumia, drew up a draft constitution for such a party and secured the support of other prominent Northerners such as J. A. Nagba, Secretary of the Northern Territories Council (N.T.C.) (Ladouceur, 1979).

According to Bawumia,

In March, 1954, Mr. S. D. Dombo, Imoro Salifu, Mr. J. A. Nagba and myself were mandated to tour the Northern Territories to introduce the new party to the people. The campaign of introducing the new party to the people was not an easy task due mainly to inadequate financial resources. We had to finance our transport and other expenses on the campaign by ourselves (Ladouceur, 1979, p.113).

As credentials, the founders of the Northern People's Party (N.P.P.) could point to their unquestionably Northern origins, their personal ties with the traditional leaders, their past record of service to the North and their obvious desire to safeguard Northern traditions and to advance Northern interests.

The Northern People's Party (N.P.P.) made straightforward appeals to Northern Regional sentiments and urged the maintenance and strengthening of regional solidarity and unity. Its party symbol was a clenched fist, with the words 'Always Together' as its party slogan; the party's song was entitled, 'The more we are together'. Its aims and objectives reflected the desire for development particularly of education and for ensuring that only Northerners would lead the North (Ladouceur, 1979). Ladouceur gives the following as the aims and objectives of the Northern People's Party:

1. to ensure that there is respect for the culture of the people of the Northern Territories (Protectorate),
  - a) to ensure their just treatment
  - b) to their protection against abuses;
2. to ensure a progressively increasing share in the administrative and other services of the country
3. to ensure the continuance and extension of a general system of elementary education designed to abolish illiteracy and to facilitate the vocational and cultural advancement of the population, child and adult and most important the provision of such facilities as may prove desirable and practicable in the interests of the inhabitants for qualified students to receive secondary and higher education, including professional training;
4. to ensure that by all legitimate and constitutional means the central and direction of Government in the country as a whole shall pass into the hands of the Chiefs and their

people as soon as they are capable to assume full responsibility and to press for the immediate development and progress of the Protectorate;

5. to take all possible steps to see that only people who actually have the interests of the country and particularly the Protectorate at heart and not carpet – baggers represented them in the Legislative Assembly;

6. to take all such steps and to do all such things as conducive to attainment of the above objectives and to co-operate or join with other bodies or organizations which have similar objectives for any common purpose (Ladouceur 1979, p.115).

### **3.5 DOMBO AS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE NORTHERN PEOPLE’S PARTY**

This section will focus on S. D. Dombo as the first Chairman of the Northern People’s Party and how he assumed that important position as the leader of a party that was to become the principal opposition party.

By the beginning of April, 1954, the unified campaign was over and the first delegates’ conference was held in Tolon Naa’s house, Sabongida, a suburb of Tamale in the Northern Region of Ghana. The Tolon Naa himself was present and participated in the deliberations (Bawumia, 2004).

The delegates’ conference approved the draft constitution, elected officers and discussed finances, staff and local branches. It had been presumed that Mumuni Bawumia would be elected Chairman, but he declined since it was felt that it would make the party look much like a Mamprusi Affair. In his place, S. D. Dombo was elected Chairman and Mumuni Bawumia Vice – Chairman (Ladouceur, 1979, p.116).

Indeed, Mumuni Bawumia’s memoirs corroborated the above position on how Dombo was made the Chairman. He, however, elaborated the reasons for his decline to become the interim chairman of the party. He said that he declined because the strength of

the Party was in Mamprugu including the present Bawku and Bolgatanga Districts of Upper East Region of Ghana and that he did not want the impression to be created that the Northern People's Party was a Mamprusi Party. Others could also label the party as the Nayiri's People's Party because the Nayiri, king of the Mamprusi Kingdom was a strong supporter of the N.P.P (Bawumia, 2004).

In *The Silent Rebel*, Kum Gandah states the inauguration of the N.P.P in 1954 with Dombo as its Chairman and Mumuni Bawumia as Vice – Chairman. Kum Gandah's testimony has not included the circumstances surrounding the election of Dombo as the Chairman of the Northern People's Party (N.P.P.)

In an interview with professor Benedict Der, he, however, disagrees with the view that if Bawumia had accepted to take the chairmanship position, S. D. Dombo would not have been given the leadership. It is important at this stage to scrutinize Der's argument regardless of the fact that he claimed he was present at the rally where S.D. Dombo arrived on a white horse. It was possible that the position of chairman of the Party was settled behind the scene before speeches were delivered by the stalwarts of the Party. At any rate, at delegates' conferences elections were usually conducted to select executives who would run the affairs of the party amongst the delegates before any rally could take place to introduce the elected executives. In other words, Der was not a delegate at the time but only a student-observer who could not have got the opportunity of witnessing what transpired among the delegates off camera. It will therefore be difficult to defeat the assertion of Bawumia and Ladouceur on how the chairmanship position was settled. Indeed, it should not be taken with a pinch of salt the view that the party had a huge following in Mamprugu State and so it would only be tactical to choose someone from the Mamprugu State to lead the party the reason upon which Mumuni Bawumia was first proposed which of course was a strategic move. Bawumia's argument regarding the huge

following of the Northern People's Party in Mamprugu comprising the whole Upper East Region, Gambaga etc. is hard to follow. It is a fact that the Nayiri, the King of the Mamprugu, was a staunch advocate of the Northern People's Party, but so was the Ya-Na, the King of Dagbon at the time. The Kusasi in the Bawku District were supporting the Convention People's Party.

### **3.6 DOMBO AND THE FORMATION OF THE UNITED PARTY (U.P)**

To corroborate Buah (1998), according to Ladouceur, the Avoidance of Discrimination Bill was presented to the Assembly on December 9, 1957 and passed into law ten days later. Its key operative clause forbade organization whose purpose was the benefit or advancement of any community or religious faith taking part in any election (Ladouceur, 1979). In anticipation of the passage of the Bill, the opposition parties agreed to fuse into a single party called the United Party (U. P) under K. A. Busia, with J. A. Braimah as deputy chairman, and S. D. Dombo a member of the twelve-man working committee. The N.P.P became the Northern Regional Branch of the United Party, with S. D. Dombo as the Regional Chairman (Ladouceur, 1979, p.164).

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of November, 1957, the United Party was inaugurated in Bukuom Square, at a rally presided over by K. A. Busia. Its executive was drawn from its component groups comprising the National Liberation Movement, Northern People's Party, Muslim Association Party, the Togoland congress, the Anlo Youth Organization, and the Ga Shifimo Kpee. The Chairman for the occasion was Ashie Nikoe who had performed the same function for the Convention People's Party at its first meeting on 12 June, 1949 (Austin, 1964, p.384).

For the Northern People's Party, gone were the days of aspiring for neutrality in the Assembly, striving only to promote Northern interest, with no alignment with parties

in the South. The Northern People's Party was now firmly aligned with the National Liberation Movement and with several other smaller parties which made up the anti-Convention People's Party coalition (Ladouceur, 1979, p.143).

The Northern People's Party leadership sincerely felt that this assortment of parties representing diverse interests would win the 1956 election and be called upon to form a government, and they were prepared to participate in such a government. The Northern People's Party even agreed that Busia, not Dombo, would lead the combined anti-Convention People's Party forces with Dombo becoming his deputy (Ladouceur, 1979, p.145). Indeed, Bawumia corroborated the deputy Leader of Opposition role of Dombo in the event that the Northern People's Party aligned with the National Liberation Movement. In his memoirs, Bawumia says, "It was unanimously agreed that Dr. K. A. Busia be the leader of the alliance and S. D. Dombo the deputy leader" (Bawumia, 2004, p.56). In fact, the exposition of Bawumia and Ladouceur contradicts the view expressed by Der that others describe the relinquishing of the Leader of Opposition position to Busia as a sell out on the part of S. D. Dombo which indeed was a source of resentment among some members of the Northern People's Party. It stands to reason, based on Der's statement, that the decision to cede that position to K.A Busia was unilateral contrary to the assertion of Bawumia. Perhaps the decision was reached by the executive of the Northern People's Party against the will of some members which is of course to be expected of any political organization that observes democratic principles.

### **3.7 WHY DID DOMBO NOT CROSS THE CARPET?**

Dr. Kwame Nkrumah and his Convention People's Party won the 1956 elections despite the merger of the ethnically based political parties which made it seem best placed to win that election. Clearly, after gaining that political victory in 1956, the Convention

People's Party consolidated its hold on political power. As the Convention People's Party consolidated power, there was pressure on the opposition benches to cross the carpet and join the governing side in Parliament.

As the Republic of Ghana was inaugurated on 1<sup>st</sup> July, 1960, only four Northerners remained on the non-government benches in the National Assembly. All the four hailed from the North-West (Upper West Region): they alone managed to resist Convention People's Party pressures. They included S. D. Dombo from Jirapa-Lambussie, Abayifaa Karbo from Lawra-Nandom, Jato Kaleo from Wala South and B. K. Adama from Wala North. All four remained in the National Assembly until 1965 when all except Jato Kaleo were dropped (Ladouceur, 1979, p.175). They were dropped because both S. D. Dombo and Abayifaa Karbo were detained by Nkrumah while B. K. Adama was on exile in Togo. My focus here is to isolate the reasons that might have informed S. D. Dombo's survival and resistance to the pressures to cross the carpet.

According to Der, in an interview I had with him on the 24<sup>th</sup> October, 2013 at the University of Cape Coast, S. D. Dombo was committed and loyal to the Northern People's Party because of what the party stood for, which was essentially to secure the just treatment of the North after independence. S. D. Dombo, he added, believed in what he and his colleagues were doing. He also believed in the development of the North and the maintenance of the chiefly power in the North.

It is an established fact, based on the available literature that S. D. Dombo was promised a ministerial appointment if he agreed to join the Convention People's Party (C.P.P.) (Ladouceur, 1979). Indeed, in the context of the co-operation between the Northern People's Party (NPP) and the Convention People's Party on the Togoland question, a suggestion was made that the two parties should merge. The initiative came from the Convention People's Party (C.P.P.) in the form of a proposal made by Nkrumah

to the Nayiri (the paramount chief of Mamprusi) that if the Nayiri advised the Northern People's Party to merge with the Convention People's Party (C.P.P.), he (Nkrumah) would make use of the best men in the North, and he promised to make Mumuni Bawumia and S. D. Dombo ministers in his Government. The Nayiri himself did not favor the proposal, but nevertheless, he put it to the Party which also rejected it (Ladouceur, 1979, p. 135). As if the promise of ministerial appointment was not enough, the Convention People's Party went to the extent of deposing all the chiefs whose relatives were Members of Parliament on the side of the opposition. As a result, many chiefs were destooled and deskinning by the governing party which was the Convention People's Party (Massing, 1994).

In assessing the genuineness or otherwise of the rejection of the offer made to S. D. Dombo, it is important to consider first of all the time the offer was made and also the role of S. D. Dombo in the Northern People Party (N.P.P.). The plebiscite was conducted in 1956 at the time S. D. Dombo was the Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Assembly earning £1500 as a monthly salary, though debatable, according to Kum Gandah, the then S. D. Dombo's part time personal secretary who was paid £15 as a monthly salary by S. D. Dombo. Indeed, in *The Silent Rebel*, Gandah remarks that there was some friction where S. D. Dombo was proposed as the Leader of Opposition when parliament was convened on the 29<sup>th</sup> of July, 1954, but was later recognized as the Leader of Opposition in parliament with a salary of £1500 (Gandah, 2004, p. 225). It was possible that Dombo was content with what he took home as his monthly salary and his roles as the Opposition Leader and the Chairman of the Northern People's Party (NPP) and was therefore afraid he could not command such a respect and dignity if he joined the Convention People's Party (C.P.P.).

If the Northern People's Party was formed to ensure the political and social development of the North (Austin, 1964, p. 184), then to achieve this objective, one would

have expected that the Northern People's Party (N.P.P.) would rather have formed an alliance with the Convention People's Party (C.P.P.) which was by then in power instead of the National Liberation Movement. However, to be fair to S. D. Dombo, we need to understand the position of the party as explained by Bawumia (2004). According to Bawumia, they saw the National Liberation Movement as capable of winning the 1956 elections. It was the considered opinion of the members of the Northern People's Party that with the financial resources at its disposal and having appeared to have popular support in Ashanti, the National Liberation Movement could win all the 21 seats in Ashanti and many more in the colony and was, therefore, likely to form the next Government. As it turned out they failed to win the election and about ten Members of Parliament crossed the carpet to the government side. Thus in the space of two years, ten Northern Members of Parliament crossed from the opposition to the government side and another two were eliminated by being forced to resign from the National Assembly (Ladouceur, 1979, p. 174). Why did Dombo not cross the carpet even when the Tolon-Na, who was a chief of high traditional standing, an educated and a cultivated man, and J. A. Braimah, who was described as an independent-minded person were defecting? Perhaps the timing was bad for him to defect having rejected several offers from Nkrumah previously. It cannot also be ruled out that there might have been behind-the-scene negotiation between Dombo and the National Liberation Movement which would make it difficult for him to defect. According to Bawumia, those of them who joined the Convention People's Party (C.P.P.) later were looked upon with suspicion and resentment that they were not genuine members. This was on the part of the other Northerners in the Convention People's Party (Ladouceur, 1979, p.188).

The above remark, made by Bawumia, making references to the suspicion and resentment that they faced in their defection to the Convention People's Party may

vindicate S. D. Dombo's decision to stay with the United Party. It was also a valid conclusion to reach that if there were negotiations between the two groups (the Northern People's Party and the Convention People's Party) the picture would not have been the way Bawumia had painted it. This was because, according to Bawumia, the Northerners within the Convention People's Party (C.P.P.) worked independently, not as a team. He added that they could not continue to function as a group for fear of arousing suspicion, especially from the Convention People's Party (C.P.P.) supporters from the North (Ladouceur, 1979, p.188).

### **3.8 DOMBO IN A POLITICAL LIMBO**

A major assassination attempt against Nkrumah took place in the Upper Region on 1<sup>st</sup> August, 1962. Nkrumah was returning from talks with President Maurice Yameogo of Upper Volta at Tenkudougou, some sixty miles North of Bawku. The Presidential cavalcade stopped to receive greetings from school children at the small village of Kulungugu just inside the Ghana side of the Ghana-Burkina Faso common border (Ladouceur, 1979, p.206). Kwame Nkrumah emerged from his car and a bomb exploded, killing five persons and injuring several dozen others, mostly children (Ladouceur, 1979, p. 206). The Kulungugu bomb incident led to significant changes both in Nkrumah's attitude and in the course of Ghanaian politics. A wave of detentions followed the assassination attempt (Ladouceur, 1979, p. 206).

Surprisingly, only one of the four remaining opposition members from the North was detained before the end of their term as Member of Parliament in 1965. Also, following the Kulungugu incident, the Convention People's Party (C.P.P.) attempted to persuade the Northern opposition members to join the party, offering some of them ministerial positions but they refused. S. D. Dombo was detained for five months in 1963

and was imprisoned again in January 1964 for urging people to vote against the referendum establishing the one party state. He remained in detention until the coup in 1966 (Ladouceur, 1979, p. 207).

According to Timothy Dombo, during this period, Dombo's family residence was constantly under search with the reason that weapons were being hidden there as part of a plot to overthrow the Nkrumah Regime. As a result of these threats, according to Timothy Dombo, the family tried convincing S. D. Dombo to retire from politics which he consistently paid a deaf ear to with the reason that he wanted to serve his people. S. D. Dombo was released after the coup in 1966. His life, both as a chief and a politician after the coup, will be the focus of chapter four.

### **3.9 DOMBO'S POLITICAL ROLES BEFORE INDEPENDENCE (1957)**

S. D. Dombo was a member of the Northern Territories Council and later served on the J. H. Coussey Committee on constitutional reform in 1949. He became an appointed member of the Legislative Council with J. A. Braimah and Yakubu Tali in 1950. He was then elected from the Northern Territories Electoral College in 1951 into the new Legislative Assembly with Kwame Nkrumah as Leader of the House (Gandah, 2004, p.81). When universal suffrage was extended to all people in the North, in July, he contested the elections and became the first Leader of Her Majesty's Opposition in Parliament (Gandah, 2004, p.82).

S. D. Dombo became a Member of the Legislative Assembly after the victory he had chalked in the June 1954 elections. According to Gandah, in the Jirapa- Lambusie Constituency, S. D. Dombo was opposed by Bapuoyiri Yelpoi, a teacher at Sabuli at the time and the son of the then Jirapa Naa (Gandah, 2004, p.224). This election was

characterized by accusations from S. D. Dombo that the Jirapa Naa was using undue influence on behalf of his son who was S. D. Dombo's opponent in the elections.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DOMBO: A CHIEF AND POLITICIAN (1966-1972)

#### 4.0 THE IMPACT OF THE 1966 COUP ON DOMBO

The chapter examines S. D. Dombo's chiefly and political life from 1966 to 1972. The focus here will be on how his reign as a chief was and how he combined his role and duties as a traditional chief with those of a cabinet minister when his political party was in government.

At six o'clock, on the morning of 24<sup>th</sup> February 1966, Ghanaians heard over their radio, an announcement by Colonel E.K. Kotoka, Commander of the Second Infantry Brigade Group, informing Ghanaians that: "The military, in co-operation with the Ghana police, have taken over the government of Ghana today. The myth surrounding Nkrumah has been broken" (Ladouceur, 1979, p. 212 ). After the overthrow of the Kwame Nkrumah Government, a new regime was proclaimed, the National Liberation Council, comprising four army and four police officers. A retired head of the armed forces, Lt. General J. A. Ankrah was made Chairman with the head of the police, J.W.K. Harley, as Deputy Chairman of the Council (Buah, 1980). The majority of the commissions appointed to head the ministries were, however, civilians. The members of the Council forming the cabinet, together with the Civil Commissioners constituted the Executive Council (Buah, 1980).

The focus of this section, however, is not to discuss the coup but to look at its impact, particularly how it contributed to the rehabilitation of S. D. Dombo who was imprisoned several times, as already captured in the previous chapters. Indeed, many of the Northern Members of Parliament were released from protective custody within a few months of the coup, following investigation which revealed that they had not been engaged in illegal activities (Ghanaian Times, May 22, 1966). Other Northerners were

kept imprisoned for long, but most were free after a year. Ayeebo Asumda, Regional Commissioner for the Upper Region, was released with the last batch of detainees on 10 May, 1968 (Ladouceur, 1979, p. 213).

#### **4.1 HOW THE 1966 COUP REHABILITATED S. D. DOMBO**

The 1966 coup restored respectability and favour to the former opposition politicians. Individuals such as S. D. Dombo and Abayifaa Karbo were released from detention immediately after the coup in 1966, while others such as B. K. Adama, Adam Amandi and Imoru Salifu returned to Ghana from exile in Togo and Upper Volta respectively (Ladouceur, 1979, p. 215). Political talent was in short supply in Northern Ghana and it was inevitable that old faces would reappear. In addition to those who went into exile or were detained under the Convention People's Party, several of the old Northern opposition who had gone over to the Convention People's Party under duress in the late 1950s, notably Mumuni Bawumia and J. A. Braimah, were welcome to return to the 'Northern group' as members (Ladouceur, 1979, p. 215). It is reasonable to agree with the assertion that all those who were not with the 'Northern group' highlighted above, were encouraged to return to the 'Northern group' considering the circumstances that led to their unavailability. Some were detained, others were forced to go into exile, while others defected under pressure. The basis of this favor for their return was that it would help solve the problem of lack of talent in the North.

#### **4.2 DOMBO AS A MEMBER OF A POLITICAL COMMITTEE**

In June, 1966, the National Liberation Council appointed a Political Committee to make proposals to it on modifications to enactments, decisions and policies to serve the public interest. Among the twenty-three members named initially were J. A. Braimah, S.

D. Dombo, Abayifaa Karbo and Dr. A. A. Illiasu, a history lecturer then at the University of Ghana ( Ladouceur, 1979, p. 215 ). Membership of the Political Committee overlapped with that of the Constitutional Commission appointed in November 1966, which had both Braimah and Karbo, as well as Adam Amandi and Dr. Hilla Liman as members ( Ladouceur, 1979, p. 215 ).

According to Ladouceur, there was a significant break from the pattern of appointing known politician to National Liberation Council bodies and commissions. In June, 1967, the National Liberation Council appointed a National Executive Council of fourteen civilian commissioners charged with ‘the general direction and control of the government of Ghana’. The appointment of civilian commissioners had been urged by the Political Committee and the press, and was made more urgent by an attempted counter coup by junior officers in April, 1967(Ladouceur, 1979, p. 215).

In my view, the release of S. D. Dombo and his subsequent appointment to the Political Committee was to rejuvenate the United Party which had a lot of its members either imprisoned or went into exile under the Convention People’s Party regime. Indeed, Dr. K. A. Busia was appointed to head the Civic Education Committee which was to catapult him to the national stage through his contacts with the people throughout the country. The role of the Committee, which was headed by Busia, was to educate the citizenry about their rights and responsibilities and to prepare them for the next general elections. Indeed, in the North, as in other parts of the country, the National Liberation Council, under J. A. Ankrah, led to a return into favour of the old Northern People’s Party/United Party political leaders in the mid-1950s, including some of those who had gone over to the Convention People’s Party, as well as a few younger, non-political individuals (Ladouceur, 1979, p. 216). At the national level, it was a relatively simple task for the military and police government to discard one set of politicians and bring in

another, although on a non-partisan basis, from 1966 to 1969 (Ladouceur, 1979, p. 216). So, as part of the political machination to ensure the victory of the United Party (U.P) which was metamorphosed into Progress Party, these personalities had to be marketed to the electorate in order to ensure a victory for the United Party (U.P) tradition in the next general elections which actually came to pass. In fairness to the National Liberation Council, however, the appointment of S. D. Dombo to the Political Committee should be seen in context. The political experience of S. D. Dombo clearly made him suitable for that committee since the committee was neither nor administrative.

#### **4.3 DOMBO AND THE NORTHERN YOUTH ASSOCIATION (NYA)**

The most significant political phenomenon in Northern Ghana during the three and a half years of the military and police rule was the rapid emergence of the Northern Youth Association and its equally rapid decline. There was a Northern Youth Association or Organisation as early as 1954, but it ceased to function when the Northern People's Party was established (Ladouceur, 1979, p. 218). The Northern Youth Association of the late 1960s represented the entry into politics of a second generation of Northerners and the revival of a Northern regional spirit similar to that which characterised the older generation in the early 1950s. Overtly, political organisations were not permitted under the National Liberation Council, but town improvement societies, youth associations, regional organisations and urban groups flourished. Such organizations had social and economic objectives along self-help lines, but in many cases their main function was to lobby the National Liberation Council on behalf of their town, district or region (Ladouceur, 1979, p. 218). According to one study, their principal characteristics were as follows: they were highly localized; they sought to link rural and urban members. The original pressure for their formation and the first leaders came from the rural areas, but leadership was later

taken over by better educated and politically ambitious persons; offices were divided between residents of the locality and some living outside. In addition, when the 'return to politics' came, these local associations provided powerful support for emerging politicians (Ladouceur, 1979, p. 218 ).

The Northern Youth Association possessed some of these characteristics, but it departed from the others in a number of key respects. For one thing, the original impetus for its formation came from a group of Northerners residing in Accra and active in National Liberation Council bodies or on their fringe. They included S. D. Dombo, Abayifaa Karbo, Dr. Hilla Liman and Imoru Salifu. No doubt they witnessed the rise of such associations in other regions with their lobbying activities, and felt that the North must also have a regional association if its voice was to be heard in national affairs, particularly in the allocation of development expenditure (Ladouceur, 1979, p. 218). They also felt the need to involve younger Northerners in quasi- political activities and to re-forge their own links with the rural areas of the North. The Last motive was especially important since many of the older politicians living in Accra or in exile had become isolated from events and opinion in the North. Catapulted into the national stage through their contacts in Accra, they recognized the need for some sort of support base in their region of origin (Ladouceur, 1979, p. 218). Accordingly, they called a meeting in Tamale in March, 1967 to discuss the matter. The participants decided to appoint an organizing committee or working group in Tamale to prepare for the formal inauguration of the Association and to act as a link with the group in Accra, which would prepare a constitution. It was also decided that the Northerners in the agricultural extension services and in the information departments would organise the youth in the villages. It was felt that the Northern Youth Association should exist as a non-party organisation which would act as an advisory group for those Northerners in responsible positions in Accra and for

future Members of Parliament. (Ladouceur, 1979, p. 218). However, by the time the inaugural meeting was held in September 1967, a split had developed in the Northern ranks corresponding approximately between those in Accra and those in the North, or between the older former opposition politicians and the younger Northerners who had not been involved in the Convention People's Party- Northern People's Party/United Party quarrels of ten to fifteen years before. The two groups became known as the 'Karbo group' and the Luguterah group (Ladouceur, 1979, p. 219).

In assessing the motive of S. D. Dombo regarding the formation of the Northern Youth Association, it will be important to consider the timing and the personalities involved. The formation of the Northern Youth Association came at the time the Convention People's Party was overthrown by the National Liberation Council which therefore opened a new chapter in the political history of Ghana. The formation of the Northern Youth Association, therefore, came at a time when the developmental gap between the South and the North was still widened. This underdevelopment of the North was traced to the action and inaction of the former opposition politicians from the North. Perhaps, it was a time for the older Northern Politicians to redeem themselves as far as the development of the North under a new dispensation was concerned.

In other words, S. D. Dombo, as indicated earlier, was not visible as he was imprisoned in the run up to the referendum that was to determine whether or not the electorate would give their approval to the one-party state the Convention People's Party was advocating. Clearly, it was another opportunity for Dombo to re-launch his political activism by drawing the attention of the new administration to his readiness to participate in the governance process.

#### **4.4 S. D. DOMBO AND THE 1969 ELECTIONS**

This section focuses on S. D. Dombo's participation in the 1969 elections and how and why he contested the elections on the ticket of the Progress Party.

Three months before Colonel A. A. Afrifa became the chairman of the National Liberation Council, the National Liberation Council had sworn in a Constituent Assembly to draw up a constitution for a civilian administration once again (Buah, 1980). The pace of political activities in Ghana accelerated with the appointment of the Constituent Assembly in 1968 (Ladouceur, 1979). The Constituent Assembly was composed of one hundred and fifty members selected by indirect election from statutory bodies and voluntary association or nominated by the National Liberation Council itself. Forty-nine members were chosen by the local council, six by the urban management committee, nine each by farmers, market women and chiefs on the basis of one for each region, and fifty-five by recognised institutions and organizations (Ladouceur, 1979, p. 224). The Constituent Assembly served as an appropriate launching platform for the entry or return to politics of a good number of the members from the North. Ten became candidates in the general elections of 1969, of whom seven were elected, and another two were appointed to high political posts after the election (Ladouceur, 1979, p. 224).

The ban on political parties was lifted on 1<sup>st</sup> May, 1969, while the Constituent Assembly was still sitting. Within two weeks, not less than sixteen political hopefuls announced that they intended to form political parties. In the end, however, only two major national parties emerged, the Progress Party, led by Dr. K. A. Busia, and the National Alliance of Liberals which was led by Mr. K. A. Gbedemah (Ladouceur, 1979, p. 224).

Dr. Busia built his political organisation around the old United Party leadership and he clearly enjoyed the support of several members of the National Liberation Council, and particularly of Colonel A. A. Afrifa, who became the Chairman of the National Liberation Council in April, 1969, after the resignation of General Ankrah ( Ladouceur, 1979, p. 224).

Busia's main allies in the North were B. K. Adama, Adam Amandi, J. A. Braimah, S. D. Dombo, Jatoo Kaleo and Imoru Salifu. They had all been active in the Northern People's Party and the opposition to the Nkrumah Government. Only J. A. Braimah had left the opposition rank for the Convention People's Party (Ladouceur, 1979, p.225). Adama, Amandi, Dombo and Kaleo all stood on the Progress Party banner in the constituencies which they had formerly held for the Northern People's Party/United Party ( Ladouceur, 1979, p. 224 ). The election was held on 29 August, 1969 and resulted in a landslide victory for Dr. Busia's Progress Party. The Progress Party won twenty-two of the thirty seats in the Northern and Upper Regions and the National Alliance of Liberals won the remaining eight. All the older politicians were elected, and in many districts, the 1969 elections can be seen as a continuation of the contest of 1954 and 1956 (Ladouceur, 1979, p. 229). For instance, in 1956, the areas of strongest Northern People's Party support were South Mamprusi, Tumu, Lawra and Wala, where the Northern People's Party won all seven seats; in the 1969 election, the Progress Party took all nine seats in these districts (Ladouceur, 1979, p. 229). Indeed, according to Timothy, a son and aide to S. D. Dombo, S. D. Dombo became a Member of Parliament from 1969 to 1972 on the ticket of the Progress Party by virtue of the fact that he defeated S. D. Dy-Yakah who contested him for the Jirapa-Lambusie seat on the ticket of the National Alliance Liberals.

The 1969 elections also meant that the North was now back in the mainstream of Ghanaian public life since most Northern Members of Parliament were members of the

majority party. As such, Northerners expected that they and their region would reap a just reward, particularly in terms of appointment to public office and increased development expenditures in the North (Ladouceur, 1979, p. 232). It was worthy of interrogating the reason behind S. D. Dombo's success in the elections that he was challenged by S. D. Dy-Yakah who was a lawyer at the time. Perhaps, the electorate took political experience into consideration which of course put S. D. Dombo ahead of his political opponent at the time. It was also possible that S. D. Dombo got some sympathy votes, which were occasioned by the persecution he suffered under Kwame Nkrumah and his Convention People's Party Administration. Another factor that cannot be swept under the carpet was his membership of the Political Committee that was set up in 1966 by the National Liberation Council regime. It is important to emphasize that the Political Committee started its work even before the ban on political parties was lifted which would have given S. D. Dombo the platform to re-launch his political career unlike his opponent who needed to wait for the ban on political parties to be lifted before he could campaign. Also, the fact that S. D. Dombo was a chief, though a minor chief, might also give him the edge over S. D. Dy-Yakah who though a lawyer, would not command a huge following like S. D. Dombo.

As indicated earlier, S. D. Dombo was a leading member of the Northern Youth Association. How then did he become a member of the Progress Party and subsequently contest the parliamentary election on the ticket of the Progress Party? It is an established fact that K. A. Busia and S. D. Dombo were political allies as far as the United Party was concerned. The fact is that the political alliance that formed the United Party was not collapsed before the formation of the Progress Party. What we know for a fact which was captured in the previous chapter is that some of the members, especially the Northerners, of the United Party crossed the carpet to the Convention People's Party. It stands to reason that the motive behind the formation of the Northern Youth Association was to woo the

Northern Youth to the Progress Party, which the main allies of Dr. K. A. Busia like B. K. Adama, Adam Amandi, Jatoo Kaleo, S. D. Dombo, Abayifaa Karbo and Imoru Salifu might have been aware of its future formation. Indeed, according to Ladouceur, the second general meeting of the Northern Youth Association was held in Bolgatanga, in September 1968. Although well attended, the meeting also saw signs of the internal divisions which were to paralyse the Association.

The reason for this, Ladouceur adds, was the underground political activity that was beginning in earnest which was inclined to support Dr. Busia's political movement. But to be fair to those members of the Northern Youth Association who were inclined to join Busia's political movement, the Ghanaian political climate was not receptive to the idea of regional or sectional parties of any sort; parties had to be national in aspiration (Ladouceur, 1979). The former Northern People's Party leaders felt that their future, and through them the future of their region, looked brightest as part of Dr. Busia's political movement. Thus on the one hand, the failure to establish or even to attempt to establish a regionally-based party was an indication of the degree to which the older Northern elite had been incorporated within the national political system, while on the other hand the concern of the youth to find a leader and a party which would adequately reflect and ensure Northern aspiration signified the continuing viability of the regional idea (Ladouceur, 1979, p. 226).

#### **4.5 S. D. DOMBO AS A MINISTER**

Dr. K. A. Busia was sworn into office on October 1, 1969 as Ghana's new Prime Minister, and in effect, Head of State with executive powers different from Nkrumah's presidential title. This was after Ghanaians elected him and his Progress Party (P.P) in the 1969 political elections (Assensoh and Assensoh, 2001, p. 70). With much fanfare on the

same date (October 1, 1969), the National Liberation Council formally transferred power to the Progress Party headed by Dr. K. A. Busia (Ladouceur, 1979).

Brigadier A. A. Afrifa, Chairman of the Presidential Commission, handed a copy of the new constitution to the Prime Minister, Dr. K. A. Busia, to symbolize the solemn act of transfer of power, charging him to do good to all manner of people under the constitution, uphold the integrity of the country and achieve a new dimension in the practice of democracy (Ladouceur, 1979, p. 232). As matters turned out, the Busia Regime barely lasted two years: on 13<sup>th</sup> January, 1972, his government was ousted by a military coup while he was out of the country. Despite its short life, the Second Republic witnessed a major transformation in the attitude of those who had advocated the cause of the North for nearly two decades (Ladouceur, 1979, p. 232). Three Northerners were appointed ministers in the Busia Government: S. D. Dombo, Minister of Interior, Jatoo Kaleo, Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, and B. K. Adama, Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs, a non-cabinet post. It seemed as though the North had indeed returned to a place of prominence in national political life with powers and influence that were more symbolic than real (Ladouceur, 1979, p. 232).

It was not out of the blue that S. D. Dombo was appointed Minister of the Interior for the fact that S. D. Dombo was Busia's political ally. In fact, they were the Leaders of Opposition in Parliament after the formation of the United Party in 1957. It is clear that the Interior Ministry is very sensitive, taking into account its responsibility of ensuring internal security of the country. The Police Service, Prisons Service and Fire Service all fall under this Ministry. The appointment of S. D. Dombo to that Ministry, therefore, proved to a large extent the degree of trust the Prime Minister had in S. D. Dombo. It was obvious that S. D. Dombo's academic qualification was not considered before his appointment. This is because at the time S. D. Dombo was a certificate "B" holder which

should have worked against him. The issue of political experience should be taken with a pinch of salt either because S. D. Dombo never held any ministerial position so that his first ministerial appointment was in 1969. That notwithstanding, S. D. Dombo's performance in that ministry should serve as the measure as to whether or not the Prime Minister's appointment of S. D. Dombo was a vindication. This should be settled after assessing his performance in that ministry which is the focus of the next section.

#### **4.6 S. D. DOMBO'S PERFORMANCE AS A MINISTER**

As indicated earlier, Dr. K. A. Busia took office as the second Prime Minister of Ghana on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October, 1969, to usher in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Republic. One major policy initiative of the Progress Party was the Aliens Compliance Bill introduced in Parliament in 1970. This Bill was passed into law on December 18, 1970 ordering all aliens resident in Ghana to either obtain the requisite permit or leave the country. Following the passage of the Bill into law, Syrians, Nigerians, Libyans, Lebanese, Sierra Leoneans, Malians, Togolese, Ivorians and other foreigners who did not have the requisite permits or meet the qualification for naturalization were to be deported (Ghanaian Times, January 23, 1970).

What is significant to this study as far as the Aliens Compliance Act was concerned, was the performance of S. D. Dombo as the minister who was to be responsible for the enforcement and implementation of that Act.

One of the initial challenges he was confronted with was stranded aliens whom the state had to cater for at the Afiemya and Aflao Welfare Camps. Disclosing this at a news conference in Accra on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 1971, Mr. S. D. Dombo, the Minister of the Interior, said Nigerians constituted the majority of the over five hundred thousand aliens in the country. In his explanation of how that problem of stranded aliens came about, S. D. Dombo said that the dissolved National Liberation Council notified all diplomatic

missions in the country to keep their nationals informed about the government compliance order but they failed to do so. As a result, when the order came into effect, some of the aliens became stranded (Ghanaian Times, January 23, 1970).

Aside the Aliens Compliance Act, there was another important matter which S. D. Dombo needed to clarify to Ghanaians, specifically, motorists. This was a controversy regarding the implementation on the use of fire extinguishers. So on 13<sup>th</sup> February, 1970, S. D. Dombo, as the Minister of Interior, assured motorists that the government had no immediate plans to make it compulsory for them to carry fire extinguishers on their vehicles. In an interview with the Ghana News Agency, S. D. Dombo said that although it was an important exercise, it was not economically viable because the purchase of the equipment entailed foreign exchange. Earlier, Mr. E. A. Quaiicoe, Chief Fire Officer, stressed the need for a legislation to make it compulsory for all motorists to carry fire extinguishers on their vehicles (Ghanaian Times, February 14, 1970, p.3). The statement of S. D. Dombo was therefore a counter on the Chief Fire Officer's, which was a clear case of a clash between a technocrat and a politician. S. D. Dombo was left off the hook may be because his directive was a decision of the government.

The above clash between S. D. Dombo and the Chief Fire Officer would have been a minor one as it did not land S. D. Dombo into trouble. The serious one, however, was to come on the 11<sup>th</sup> February, 1970 when S. D. Dombo as the Minister of the Interior and Mr. B. A. Yakubu, the Inspector General of Police were ordered to appear before an Accra High Court. Mr. Justice Charles Coussey, presiding over the court, made the order following a contempt of court application filed by Mr. E. N. Moore, a barrister, against them. The application alleged that the two men had deliberately deported Mrs. Birukoya Nelly Narh, a Russian house wife, while a writ she filed challenging her deportation was pending before the High Court (Ghanaian Times, February 11, 1970, p3).

Mr. Moore who was the counsel for Mrs. Narh in the writ had earlier asked the court to commit S. D. Dombo and the Inspector General of Police for contempt because their conduct amounted to contempt of the Court. Indeed, the Court found S. D. Dombo and the Inspector General of Police guilty of contempt of court and were bonded in the sum of one hundred new cedis ( N¢ 100) each to conduct themselves properly till the end of the term of their government. Both men expressed regret and apologized to the crowded court for their action when they were put in the dock at exactly 10:15am (Ghanaian Times, February 12, 1970, p1).

Two things must be considered in analyzing the High Court's ruling against S. D. Dombo and the Inspector General of Police.

First of all, the Court revealed to us its degree of fairness and neutrality in the dispensation of justice in the country. Taking into account the personalities involved, one would have expected government's interference in their favour considering the fact that they were huge public figures.

Secondly, the court might have weighed the weight of the conduct of the two personalities which made it difficult for it (court) to bend the rules in their favor. It was also clear that the conduct of S. D. Dombo and the Police Chief in their respective positions was nothing to write home about which would have made it difficult for them to get away with it this time around.

S. D. Dombo, according to his son and aide, was reassigned to the Health Ministry as a Minister in the latter part of 1971. The reason for his reassignment was not made public. It is not out of place, however, to conclude that his poor performance at the Interior Ministry could have informed the decision of the Prime Minister to reassign him to the Ministry of Health.

#### **4.7 HOW DOMBO COMBINED HIS CHIEFLY ROLE WITH HIS POLITICAL ROLES**

The fact has been established in the previous chapters that S. D. Dombo was both a Minister of State and a Member of Parliament in the Second Republic. The objective of this section, therefore, is to look at how S. D. Dombo combined both roles. According to Bakuuro, a ninety-two year old brother of S. D. Dombo, S. D. Dombo was most of the time in Accra in view of the fact that he was both a Minister and a Member of Parliament. Bakuuro was also quick to add that Dapila Dombo, the elder brother of S. D. Dombo, and later himself (Bakuuro) acted as the chief in S. D. Dombo's absence. Indeed, I was privileged to have witnessed a dispute that Bakuuro Dombo was to settle after I had interviewed him at Duori on the 6<sup>th</sup> July, 2013 between two citizens of the area. In fact, I could deduce from the body language of those present that he does not command any respect and trust from his subjects which I was told was due to his previous handling of disputes. It is the conviction of the researcher that S. D. Dombo did not live up to expectation as a chief before 1972 due to his absenteeism. This stems from the fact that the reports of questionable judgments against Bakuuro should have served as a ground for S. D. Dombo to settle at Duori or make frequent visits to Duori so that that level of mistrust associated with Bakuuro's handling of disputes could be reduced to the barest minimum. This, S. D. Dombo would not do because of what he was getting as a politician. My informants to the above information chose to remain anonymous. Indeed, they added that S. D. Dombo had to revisit some of the judgments of his brother, Bakuuro, in order to restore some dignity and respect to the skin, which he was given the traditional mandate to perform. In fact, a powerful evidence of the inefficiency of Bakuuro was that at the death of S. D. Dombo, it was Clement Soin Dombo, the eldest son of S. D. Dombo who

succeeded him (S. D. Dombo) though Bakuuro showed an interest to the skin. It is significant to stress that Bakuuro still plays a stop-gap role as far as the Duori skin is concerned. Indeed, he acts on behalf of Sylvester Dombo the current Chief of Duori, who succeeded his elder brother, Clement Soin Dombo upon the death of the latter.

S. D. Dombo took a permanent charge of the skin in 1972 when his government was overthrown by Ignatius Kutu Acheampong. This is self-evident that S. D. Dombo placed much premium to his politics at the expense of his traditional position as a chief. Ironically, it was his position as a chief that catapulted him to the level he had reached as far as politics was concerned.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### S. D. DOMBO'S PRIVATE AND FAMILY LIFE

#### 5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter concentrates on S. D. Dombo's private and family life. It includes his relationship with his wife, children, other relatives and non-relatives.

According to Timothy Dombo, a son of S. D. Dombo, S. D. Dombo had eight wives and thirty eight children, of which nineteen were males. The eldest son was Clement Soin Dombo, who later succeeded S. D. Dombo as the next chief of Duori, upon his death, in 1998.

According to S. D. Dombo's brother, Bakuuro, six of S. D. Dombo's wives were "skin wives" by virtue of the fact that he married them after his enskinment as Duori Chief in April, 1949. With respect to the ethnic background of the wives, Timothy told me that six of them were Dagao, one was a Dagomba and the other one was Asante. The following are the names of the wives according to the order in which they were married. Tengkuma Saapong, Kulavi, Kayhama, Songlakuu, Adisa, Yelesum, Margaret Assibi Nitori and Yaa Ayiwa. With the exception of Margaret Assibi who was a professional teacher, all of them were illiterates.

Interestingly, according to Bakuuro Dombo, Margaret Assibi was S. D. Dombo's former pupil at the Lawra Primary School and she was the wife that normally accompanied S. D. Dombo to important public functions. Timothy Dombo, however, added that Margaret Assibi was not necessarily the favorite wife of S. D. Dombo. S. D. Dombo preferred Margaret Assibi to the others because of her level of education. As a husband, father and chief, S. D. Dombo was referred differently by his wives, children and subjects. His children called him "Mba Naa" which means "Our Father the Chief". Some of the children also referred to him as 'daddy'. Madam Yelle, a widow of S. D. Dombo's

elder brother, described S. D. Dombo as loving and generous to every family member including herself.

As far as education was concerned, Abu Bakr Dombo, a son of S. D. Dombo who works at the Jirapa Education service, said in an interview that their father encouraged them to take their studies seriously if they wanted to be successful in life. He, therefore, made sure that they were all in school. This is no extra ordinary advice by a father who owed his life's achievement to his education. Abu Bakr's assertion can only be valid when one looks at the type of schools the children of S. D. Dombo attended and the levels they reached. In my view, taking your children to the best schools was in itself an encouragement and motivation which some parents failed to do, even though they had the capability and ability. Nonetheless, some of the children managed to reach respectable levels in education which made them occupy certain positions in their field of endeavours. For instance, according to Abu Bakr Dombo, Alice Dombo, a daughter of S. D. Dombo is currently pursuing a Master of Arts Degree in Germany, Mohammed Dombo holds a Master of Arts Degree which he has obtained from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Richard Dombo is a graduate of the University of Ghana, Legon, Timothy Dombo, a son and aide to S. D. Dombo was a Manager of Co-operative Bank, Wenchi Branch, from 1979 to 1983, Abu Bakr Dombo, a graduate of the University of Cape Coast who later pursued a Master of Arts Degree in Canada and so forth and so on.

I have also been told that as a teacher, S. D. Dombo took a keen interest in his children's education. Indeed, every teacher should know the importance of education and S. D. Dombo was no exception because of his background as a professional teacher. In fact, it would have been news if I had been told that S. D. Dombo did not take keen interest in the education of his children. According to Abu Bakr, their father allowed them to make their career choices. In that regard, just few of them are actively involved in

politics at the constituency level. For example, Timothy contested the Jirapa-Lambussie seat on the ticket of the New Patriotic Party in 2000 but was unsuccessful. His younger brother, Abu Bakr Dombo also contested the same seat in 2008 and lost.

According to Ajara Dombo, a daughter of S.D. Dombo, their father was not too strict on them. This made the children to see him as a friend and a counselor. From Ajara, the father usually found out from them what they wanted to be in future in terms of their career. She said that their father normally interrogated them, especially his daughters, about the men they went out with (Avereyireh, 2001). Of course, every responsible parent will like his daughter or son to get a good person as a marriage partner. So, I think that was not exceptional about S. D. Dombo's responsibility as a father. In relation to his wives, Madam Yelle said that 'Naa' was how they referred to him. 'Naa' in Dagaare means 'chief'. She revealed that S. D. Dombo had settled the wives at different locations: Lawra, Tamale, Kumasi, Accra and Douri. According to her, S. D. Dombo adopted this strategy because he travelled across the country and would like to feel at home wherever he found himself (Avereyireh, 2001).

To avoid discrimination, conflicts and extreme rivalry among his wives and children, from the words of Bakuuro, S. D. Dombo could move the children from their biological mothers to live with their step-mothers. It is important to stress that the arrangement to move the children was not a common traditional practice in the area but an initiative of S. D. Dombo. Apart from the above initiative, which was meant to foster unity and love, the whole family occasionally met at Duori during funerals, marriage ceremonies and on several other festive occasions.

According to Mrs. Margaret Assibi Dombo, S. D. Dombo provided all their needs for them anytime he visited them in their respective homes. To them, S. D. Dombo was a caring husband because he showed them love and affection and provided for them and

their children enough of what would keep them. She added that though he was a busy man, he took time to discuss domestic problems with them anytime he visited them. She said they were proud of him as their husband (Avereyireh, 2001). Indeed, a lot of women would have liked such a public figure as a husband regardless of how accessible he would have been to them.

S. D. Dombo did not only concentrate on the progress of his family. This is because according to Abu Bakr Dombo, S. D. Dombo took care of other children who were not his biological children. A beneficiary of this kind gesture, according to Abu Bakr Dombo, was Peter Nanfuri, a former Inspector General of Police and now Chief of Jirapa. This is expected of politicians who take these initiatives just to make themselves popular as a way of winning political capital. I therefore see S. D. Dombo's attitude in that direction as a clear practical example of those politicians and others who have ambitions to be leaders. In other words, S. D. Dombo was a chief another reason why he was not discriminatory and selective in his dealings with his subjects. From Thomas Salia, a fifty seven year old security man at the Duori Health Centre, S. D. Dombo usually stopped at every village on his journey either from or to Duori to discuss with the people problems affecting their lives. According to him, S. D. Dombo either remitted them instantly or assured them of his assistance which he usually fulfilled. Indeed, as a Member of Parliament, it was his duty to listen to the members of his constituents and find ways of solving their problems. This is another clear case of a Member of Parliament fulfilling a campaign promise which of course was not a new phenomenon in our political dispensation.

In my interaction with Mr. Thomas Salia, he constantly hammered on the fact that S. D. Dombo was generous. He testified to S. D. Dombo's generosity to me when he said that he personally went to S. D. Dombo and requested for his private car which was used

to take a sick person to the Jirapa Hospital, the only health facility that served the people in and outside the Jirapa-Lambussie District at the time.

Mr. Salia said he was overwhelmed by S. D. Dombo's response to his request because it was his first contact with him and was completely amazed that he accepted his request with alacrity. That for him was remarkable in view of the fact that it was the only car in that village at the time and one would have expected that the owner of such property, in this case S. D. Dombo, would choose to use such property alone. This kind gesture is undoubtedly commendable in any way you look at it considering the purpose of the request, which was a lifesaving one.

With regard to S. D. Dombo's religious beliefs, Bakuuro told me that he believed in the Africa Traditional Region though he sometimes worshipped with Christians and Muslims. However, most of his children decided to go along with the religious faith of their mothers. This, S. D. Dombo, according to Abu Bakr, never objected to. In my opinion this is not surprising because of the regular contact the children had with their mothers.

S. D. Dombo was a farmer and also owned some businesses aside being a politician. According to Abu Bakr, S. D. Dombo had a sugarcane plantation at Asokore in the Ashanti Region and a rice farm at Dontier in Ullo in the Jirapa-Lambussie District. He also had groundnut and maize farms and a large cattle ranch at Duori. S. D. Dombo, from Abu Bakr's account, also ran a transport business. His vehicles plied the Lawra -Techiman route. He also had grinding mills that operated in and around Duori. These investments were initially managed by members of his family and other people until his retirement from active politics when he then assumed full personal management of his business ventures.

According to Bakuuro, Timothy and Abu Bakr, S. D. Dombo's involvement in politics really affected the performance of his family responsibilities. Bakuuro, in particular, recounted the political persecution he suffered during the Nkrumah regime where every responsibility that S. D. Dombo had to shoulder was taken over by Dapila Dombo, Tamila Tuo-Kanwunu and himself. They were also unanimous that his inability to perform his family responsibility was deepened at the time he was both a Minister of State and Member of Parliament when he was most of the time in Accra.

One can therefore conclude that since 1954 when S. D. Dombo got the nod to represent the people of Jirapa-Lambussie Constituency in Parliament, the family, though to some extent joyful with that political achievement, also started missing him as a father, husband and a brother.

## **5.1 DOMBO'S ACHIEVEMENTS**

S. D. Dombo finally took a back seat after the Popular Front Party of which he was a member failed to win the 1979 elections. In that election, the People's National Party won seventy one (that is an absolute majority) of the 140 seats, followed by the Popular Front Party which secured forty two seats, thus constituting the main opposition in Parliament ( Buah, 1980). It was at this time that S. D. Dombo decided to settle down at Duori. As a full time chief, he paid attention to improving the lives of his people. Indeed, according to Timothy, S. D. Dombo actively involved himself in organizing developmental projects in his community. With his influence as a former Minister of State, a dam was constructed at Duori, the Gurpala-Babile road in the present Upper West Region was constructed, 'low cost' houses were built, teachers and nurses' quarters were built as well as a health post for the people of Duori. This implies that as a Minister and Member of Parliament no major development projects took place at S. D. Dombo's Constituency. It

is easy therefore to believe that the development of those facilities was part of the developmental agenda of the Ignatius Kutu Acheampong's Government and not due necessarily to S. D. Dombo's influence as a former Minister of State.

As a sub-chief, S. D. Dombo made it easier for his subjects to marry. According to Timothy, the use of the cowries in paying the bride wealth was creating a delay in completing the process of marriage because of the difficulty that was involved in getting cowries. To solve that problem, S. D. Dombo introduced a radical reform which was to replace cowries for modern currency. This initiative was vehemently opposed initially, especially by the elderly who wished that the status quo should be maintained. S. D. Dombo, however, stood his ground and saw to the implementation of that cultural change, which has now made it easier for marriage to be contracted.

S. D. Dombo finally joined his ancestors on March 19, 1998, at the Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital. He was buried at his family residence at Duori. Though dead and gone, S. D. Dombo is still eulogised by some politicians in their meetings with his family. For instance, Mahamadu Bawumia, the running mate of the New Patriotic Party's presidential candidate in the 2012 election, visited S. D. Dombo's wife, Margaret Assibi on the April 29, 2012 in the run up to the 2012 election and eulogised S. D. Dombo for his great service and dedication to the people of Ghana and the North specifically (<http://politics.myjoyonline.com>). Regardless of whatever the motive for the visit was, the bottom line is that the visit was a pointer to the recognition of S. D. Dombo as far as the formation of the Danquah-Busia-Dombo Tradition was concerned.

## 5.2 CONCLUSION

The study sought to explore the life of S. D. Dombo as a teacher, a politician and a chief, and this has been dealt with in the previous chapters. It is therefore appropriate at this stage to assess the significance of the study, which is a sub-section of this study.

The study of the biography of S. D. Dombo is to create the awareness of researchers to do same by writing biographies of other personalities whose contributions to the development of our country have been immense. It is a fact, though contestable, that biographical studies are not common because they are mostly centered on Heads of States. Indeed, it is not uncommon to see the biographies of former Heads of State whether or not their contributions led to the progressive developments of the countries they led. It is therefore important to state that this biographical study may encourage other future researchers to consider writing about other personalities who though were not Heads of State yet performed better than some Heads of State in their fields of endeavour.

It is also significant that by reading this biographical study, the reader will understand the pre-independence, independence and post-independence politics of Ghana, especially in the case of Northern Ghana. For instance, the reader is educated on the emergence of politics of regionalism in the North and its impact on national politics.

The biography of S. D. Dombo also tells us about the need for political loyalty regardless of political machinations and pressures. If for nothing at all almost all the literature makes us believe that S. D. Dombo was resolute because of what he claimed he stood for, which was the development of the North. On the other hand, the study also exposed how political miscalculations could affect the achievements of certain objectives that an individual or a group set to achieve. The conviction of the researcher is that S. D. Dombo as a leader failed to lead his group to align with a group that would have led to the achievement of their aims and objectives. The outcome of that miscalculation was the

failure of the North to bridge the developmental gap under S. D. Dombo's leadership at the time.

The understanding of Ghana's history in the context of the marginalization of the North is another angle that this study has exposed. Of course, the study has brought to the fore the circumstances that led to the formation of the United Party and the key protagonists in its formation. It is an established truism that the Northern People's Party of which S. D. Dombo was the leader was higher in rank than its allies with respect to its numerical strength in Parliament. However, none of the members of the Northern People's Party was recognized over the years as far as the recognition of the founders of that political tradition was concerned. In fact, according to Timothy Dombo, a son and aide to S. D. Dombo and a parliamentary candidate for the Jirapa-Lambussie Constituency on the ticket of the New Patriotic Party in the 2000 elections, the image of S. D. Dombo was not in the New Patriotic Party's headquarters unlike K. A. Busia and J. B. Danquah, which in my view was unfair to the members of the Northern People's Party at the time.

It is relevant to add that the study of S. D. Dombo's life, especially his politics, should reduce to the barest minimum the number of 'stomach politicians' in our body politics. In essence, anyone who becomes a politician should be guided by certain principles that will lead to the betterment of the living conditions of a greatest number. Indeed, S. D. Dombo refused to cross the carpet to the governing party, which was the Conventions People's Party unlike some of his colleagues, even when he stood to gain financially. Indeed, by way of comparison, the basic salary for a Member of Parliament was nine-hundred and sixty pounds a year from 1951 to 1959, before it was raised to thousand two hundred pounds (Ladouceur, 1979). A Ministerial Secretary received thousand five hundred pounds a year whilst a Minister received three thousand pounds. Allowances of various sorts could add from three hundred a year for Members of

Parliament to one thousand-three hundred or more for a Minister (Ladouceur, 1979). These figures are based on the reports of the Jiagge Commission set up by the National Liberation Council regime to examine the financial dealings of prominent persons in the Convention People's Party Government. This is an evidence that S. D. Dombo and three of his colleagues who refused to cross carpet to the Convention People's Party did that out of the principle they stood for, a lesson that our politicians and future politicians should emulate.

The study of a biography of S. D. Dombo has also highlighted the contributions of the Northern elite to the constitutional development of Ghana. It for instance substantiates the position that the Gold Coast at that time was not ready for independence taking into account the position of the Northerners regarding what should be done before the grant of independence.

Last but not least, the study has identified S. D. Dombo's ascension to the Duori skin which could have been marred by violence but for the widely held view that his predecessor chose him as his successor before his death. Even so, the occasion had to be settled through an election. The circumstances surrounding the enskinment notwithstanding, it is significant to consider S. D. Dombo's educational standing at the time which clearly placed him ahead of Darenbang, his competitor, whom I was told was an illiterate. On his part, S. D. Dombo did not choose a successor to the skin before his death, according to Timothy. From my interviews with some indigenes who wished to remain anonymous, the inability of S. D. Dombo to choose a successor is a source of an animosity amongst the children and other members of the family who felt and still feel that they were short-changed by the king makers.

In my opinion, however, regarding the failure of Dombo to choose a successor, S. D. Dombo was right because there was no heir-apparent arrangement in these societies. S. D. Dombo could have made a will but it was for the electors to do their job as king makers.

The researcher faced some challenges in the conduct of this research. First of all there was a great difficulty in finding archival materials like tributes, letters and other relevant documents. Even the National Archives in Accra could not help in that regard. What I could only lay my hands on as an alternative were newspapers. Also, the time and financial resources at my disposal did not allow me to travel round the country to gather useful data necessary for the study. Worst of all was getting in touch with some of his contemporaries who were either not alive or difficult to be located. Regardless of the above challenges faced by the researcher, what has been produced can still serve as a reference point as far as the study of the life of S. D. Dombo is concerned.

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