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TWO COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE "NOTABILITE RURALE DE SIVAME"
CONCERNING TOGOLAND UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION

(Circulated in accordance with rule 24 of the rules of
procedure of the Trusteeship Council)

Sivamé, 5 January 1958

Notabilité rurale de Sivamé, Cercel of Anécho,

Canton of Aklakou

Subject: Arbitrary collection of direct tax

Copy to the Secretary-General of the United Nations (New York, U.S.A.), in the
form of a petition.

To: THE HIGH COMMISSIONER of the French Republic in Togoland
THE PRIME MINISTER of the Autonomous Republic of Togoland
THE PROCUREUR OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC IN TOGOLAND - LOME
THE ADMINISTRATOR FOR OVERSEAS FRANCE, Commandant de Cercle of Anécho

c/o Cantonal Chief Messan Sognigbe of Aklakou
and Chief Dovi Teko of the village of Sivame

We the undersigned, notables and parents of children of the village of
Sivamé, have the honour respectfully to inform you of the following:

Our children and brothers left the Territory of Togoland years ago to settle
elsewhere, in foreign territories: Nigeria, the Ivory Coast and the majority in
Ghana, for purposes of work, apprenticeship and education. Most of them are
master craftsmen and the others are apprentices and students.

As it is the rule that taxes must be paid in the place where one is, they have been regularly listed in the census registers of the places where they now live and they pay taxes there.

In August 1957, however, we were hounded and harassed by our Chief to pay taxes henceforth for our absent children, who have already discharged the same obligations for the same year wherever they now are. The regular receipts for those payments, collected by us, were brought to the attention of our Chief and we begged him to accompany us to Zébé, the chief town of the cercle, so that they could be shown to the local authorities.

Returning from Zébé, where he had gone by himself without our knowledge, our Village Chief called us together to inform us that the Administration had refused and rejected the receipts sent to us by our children as evidence.

Our peasant naiveté having been thus abused, we were obliged to hand over the amount of the tax to our Chief, which he made us pay quickly, with the help of four local policemen (gardes de cercle). Most of us, including even women, were brutally imprisoned by the policemen upon the orders of the Chief for not having brought the sum at the proper time. This action on his part disgusted us all.

We request you to take into consideration that if it is a question of voting these children of ours will never have the right to vote in Togoland. As a lawyer, you know better than anyone that any person who has left his own territory for several years must pay taxes to the Administration of the territory in which he resides. You know better than anyone that students and apprentices are exempt from taxation. You also know better than anyone that a person must have attained his majority in order to be subject to taxation.

The children for whom we were ordered to pay taxes last August, and whose names appear below, have been gone, some of them since 1936, others since 1943 and some of them since a later date and we appeal to you to request our Chief, Mr. Dovi Teko, to let us know how he has handled this matter vis-à-vis the Administration since that date.

Afantsawo Folly, master carpenter at Accra (Ghana) since 1936
Têko - " " " - 1943

/...

Kangle Goudo Ananivi, master carpenter at Accra (Ghana) since 1936
 Abassou - " "
 Hometowou Kouévi-Gou, apprentice carpenter at Accra (Ghana)
 Messanvi - pupil at the Aklakou official school (Togoland)
 Kinvi Kouévi pupil at Denu (Ghana)
 Agbovi Kangni apprentice carpenter at Accra (Ghana)
 Folivi Ekoué " "
 Kouévi Abalo " "
 Kouévi - " "
 Têko - apprentice tailor " "
 Ayitévi Sossougan, master carpenter " "
 Anani " "
 Dossou Sossou " "
 Egbetowogna Sossou pupil " "
 Zodji Amoussou apprentice carpenter " "
 Midonso Amoussou Ganke " "
 Amegnizi " blacksmith at Lomé (Togoland) (returned to the village
 several months ago because
 of ill health)
 Sossouvi Amoussouvi, master carpenter at Accra
 Koffi Akakpo " "
 Ekin Amoussou apprentice carpenter " "
 Djossou Amoussou, master carpenter at Abidjan (Ivory Coast)
 Kouévi Alihouévi, apprentice tailor at Lagos (Nigeria)
 Kouévi Folly Kpatso, apprentice carpenter at Accra (Ghana)
 Anani Amoussouvidjin, apprentice carpenter at Accra (Ghana)
 Mawoutodji Messanvi " "
 Messanvi P. Amoussou Kinglo " "
 Kouassivi Amoussouvi " "
 Amoussouvi Folly Montiglo, master carpenter " "
 Folivi Akouété " "
 Folly Gbeblèwou Amoussou, " "
 Ananivi Amoussou, apprentice carpenter " "
 Kouassi Akouètèvi " "

/...

Accordingly, we ask you to be so good as to order the restitution of the amounts improperly collected in taxes through the abuse of power, authority and trust, so that our anger may be appeased and the spirit of good neighbourliness may again reign in our village as in the past.

Hoping that this exploitation of the ignorance of the peasant masses will be remedied, we express in advance our confidence that in view of the validity of our grievances they will receive the favourable consideration which they merit from those who are responsible for the prestige and honour of the Authorities concerned.

Folly Djo Ani (thumb print)	Sossou Dosseh (thumb print)
Kouévi Gou Amoussou "	Amoussou Kinglo "
Messan Amoussou "	Agbassou Sossougan "
Amoussouvidjin Teko "	Akouètèvi Gnamavor "
Amoussou Adanto Messan "	Kouévi Messanvi "
Folly Kpatso Koukou "	Folly Gnamavor "
Amoussou Ganke Ahouansou (<u>Signed</u>)(illegible)	Amoussou Kougonnou "
Amoussouvi Amenoudidi (thum print)	Alihouévi Messan "
Ananivi Ayi "	Kouévi Ablui Amousou (<u>Signed</u>)(illegible)
Kangni Ani "	
Abalo Attiogbe "	
Ekoué Azougou "	
Akouété Adamah "	

/...

Sivame, 22 February 1958

Rural inhabitants of the village of Sivame (cercle of Anécho)

To the Administrator for Overseas France, commandant de cercle of Anécho

c/o Mr. Dovi Teko,
Chief of the village of Sivamé

Subject: 1958 taxes and needs of the public

Copy to the Secretary-General of the United Nations (U.S.A.) in the form of a petition

Sir,

We, the undersigned taxpayers of the village of Sivame, trusting in your wisdom and spirit of social justice, have the honour to inform you as follows:

For about forty-two (42) years now our village has been paying taxes to the French Administration in Togoland. You know better than anyone that taxes are collected for the express purpose of providing the towns and villages with PUBLIC EDUCATION, WATER SUPPLY, ROADS, MEDICAL CARE etc...

We are certainly not telling you anything new when we inform you that we are suffering more than the inhabitants of Kouve from the drought. Our women do not sleep at night. They are obliged to be up all night in order to find two or three (2 or 3) jars of water for which they have to go a distance of more than four kilometres (4 km) there and back.

Considering that our area is an arid one and that more than one hundred (100) villagers nevertheless contribute regularly each year to the public budget, need we remind you that the primary needs of our village have all along been so neglected that we have never had the benefit of an OFFICIAL SCHOOLROOM, MEDICAL CARE, ROADS AND WELLS?

Very fortunately we were visited on Saturday, 8 February 1958, by Mr. Lazarus Lawson, Deputy for Anécho to the Legislative Assembly of Togoland, who made the following statement to us:

"When I came here last time, I was greatly astonished to find that the inhabitants of Sivamé were suffering serious hardship as a result of the drought. No well has been built to supply the village and, to make

matters worse, there is no school and no medical assistance and the roads are not repaired at all. Upon returning to Anécho I immediately went to see the Commandant de cercle and asked him why the village of Sivamé had been so overlooked and neglected. What do you do with the money raised in taxes from that village? This disgraces us and sullies our good name in the region. Sir, I ask you to hasten the construction of a well in that village. The Commandant promised me that he would take the matter up in earnest and do whatever was necessary.

"We now have all powers in our hands. All the Administrators take their orders from us, the indigenous inhabitants. It was our labours that brought the Autonomous Republic of Togoland into being. We want to progress by stages but the opposition wants to achieve everything at one blow..."

Such statements by a Deputy, Lazarus Lawson of Anécho, fill us with confidence and the sincerity of his speech is undoubtedly based on a quotation from the Practical Taxpayer's Guide: "Local taxation has taken the place of statute labour. The proceeds are intended for the financing of public works carried out in the circonscription in which the taxes are levied, (Orders No. 532/ed of 17 October 1944, J.O.T. 1944, p. 570, original text, No. 648/cd of 17 November 1945, J.O.T. 1946, p. 36 and No. 683/f of 6 September 1946, J.O.T. 1947, p. 45)".

Accordingly, we request you to order that public funds should be used to hasten the construction of a well to supply our village; otherwise our tax for this year, 1958, will not be paid to the Administration.

If we are not supplied with drinking water within a reasonable period of time, to ease the hardships which this lack is causing to the women and mothers of the village we, the people of the village, shall be faced with the painful necessity of proceeding on our own initiative to construct a well, which is a primary and indispensable requirement in the daily life of the village.

Hoping for a satisfactory outcome and stressing the urgency of an equitable solution,

We have the honour to be, etc.

Amoussouvi Amenoudidi	(thumb print)
Folly-Djoh Ani	"
Folikoué Folly	"
Tossou Houessou	"

/...

Akouété Foligan	(thumb print)
Kougavo Teko	"
Alihouévi Messan	"
Folisé Kouévi	"
Amoussouvi Kougavo	"
Yaovi Kougavo	"
Folly Koukou	"
Sodagbo Kangni	"
Ananouvi Kouevi	"
Folivi Afanwubo	"
Kangnivi Messan	"
Kouévi Gbede	"
Kangni Messan	"
Kouaovi Amoussou	"
Kouévi Kangni	"
Kouégan Messanvi	"
Abalo Attiogbe	"
Kangnivi Kouevi	"
Anatovi Kouevi	"
Messanvi Afanwubo	"
Anatovi Amoussou	"
Têko Gbede	"
Houessou Messan	"
Amoussouvi Foli-ze	"
Folly Kouevi Gnognoe	"
Têko Amoussouvidjin	"
Têko Aziabu Folly	"
Foligan Kouevi	"
Afanladi Kougonnou	"
Tossou Folikoue	"
Kangnigan Ani	"
Kangnivi Ani	"
Folivi Kouevi-Gou	"

Kouévi Messanvi	(thumb print)
Messanvi Kangni	"
Sossouvi Kouevi-Gou	"
Folivi Kouevi-Te	"
Loossou Ahouansou	"
Amoussouvi Tossou	"
Amoussouvi Kangnivi	"
Kangni Ekoue	"
Folly Aziave Adade	"
Kougbenà Demassi	"
Kouassi Aditi	"
Blassi Sounou	"
Ahouangbêvi Ganke	"
Nyékouadje Assougan	"
Tonato Amoussou	"
Têko Kangni Ahoun	"
Amoussouvi Folly	"
Amoussouvi Kangni	"
Agbawoêde Plassi	"
Ahouanyêvi Ganke	"
Kouévi Kangnivi	"
Ananouvi Hounkpati	"
Folly Gnamavo	"
Loko Kangni	"
Amegnizi Ganke	"
Têtêvi Kangni	"
Sossou Dosseh	"
Akakpovi Tosou	"
Têko Kangnivi	"
Sogba Sossouvi	"
Akouêtêvi Gnamav	"
Akouêtêvi Kangni	"
Folly Dovo Kuevi	"
