

TAMIL REFUGEE ACTION GROUP

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29/8/87

Dear.....Malarehi.....

Thank you for your help and support for Tamil Refugees and the issue related to them.

We will be very grateful if you can send a solidarity message for Tamil Refugee Action Group Annual General Meeting on 25th April 1987.

Thanking you,

Yours Sincerely

Rajes

*Rajes Bala
Chair Person.*

TAMIL RIGHTS GROUP

CONSTITUTION

1. The name of the committee shall be Tamil Rights Group.

2. Aims and Objects:

(a) To support the right of the Tamil people to determine their own future and their right to self-determination in their lands as laid down in Article 1 of the U.N. Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

(b) To publicise the conditions of the Tamils in Sri Lanka and to monitor developments affecting their human rights;

(c) To arouse the awareness of the Sinhalese people of the situation of the rights of Tamils;

(d) To support programmes to bring relief to the Tamils who are suffering from under-development or as a result of natural or man-made disasters;

(e) To advise aid agencies in the U.K. and Europe of the political implications of the schemes they support in Sri Lanka, including in particular those which involve land allocation in the Tamil areas and to press them to support programmes aimed at the development of the indigenous people;

(f) To press for the full right of a citizenship to be conferred on the Tamils who were made stateless in 1948.

3. Composition of Committee

The committee shall be open to all who support the aims and objects in 2. above.

(i) Officers: The Annual General Meeting shall elect annually the following:

The Chairperson
Vice Chair(s)
Treasurer
Secretary

(ii) Executive Committee

(a) The above officers and such other person as the committee shall elect, which shall not exceed twelve (12) persons in total, shall constitute the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall be elected on an annual basis in April each year by members who attend the AGM including members of other committees as defined under sub-paragraph (iv). The Committee shall have power to fill any vacancies which arise during the course of the year, and to co-opt members from the General Committee provided that there is a two-thirds majority in favour, and co-opted members do not exceed three in number.

(iii) Patrons

The Executive Committee shall have power to appoint persons who support the aims and whose association will further its objects as Patrons of the Tamil Rights Group.

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3. (iv) Sub-committees:

The Executive Committee may from time to time set up sub-committees and/or working parties to further its work. Any sub-committee must have at least one Executive Committee member present.

4. Meetings of the Executive Committee

(i) Quorum - a quorum for the Executive Committee shall consist of not less than eight (8) members, including the Chairperson of the meeting.

(ii) Frequency - the frequency of meetings shall be determined by the Executive Committee, but shall not be less than once each quarter.

(iii) In the absence of the Chairperson at meeting the Executive Committee shall elect a Chairperson.

(iv) All decisions of the Executive Committee shall be by a majority vote.

5. Finance:

(a) The Executive Committee shall have power to raise and receive such monies as may be needed to further its aims and objectives.

(b) Bank Account: The Tamil Rights Group shall have its own bank account.

(c) Payments made on behalf of the Executive Committee shall be authorised by the Treasurer up to the sum of £50.00. Payments exceeding £50.00 should receive the authority of the Treasurers and one other officer. In the Treasurer's absence, the Chairperson shall authorise cheques.

(d) Signatories to cheques: All cheques shall be signed by at least the Treasurer and/or in their absence, one other officer, and one or two other signatories agreed by the Executive Committee.

Tamil Rights Group 87 Gower Street, London WC1E 6AA

Telephone 01 - 380 - 0654

Hon. Secretary : Diane Grammer

Chairman - Dafydd Wigley, M.P.

SECRETARY'S REPORT 1980-81

Since the inaugural meeting of the Tamil Rights Group at the House of Commons (March 25th, 1980), members of the Executive Committee have been meeting approximately every six weeks during the evening to work on a number of issues and events. Much of last year was spent in the preparation of a report by Raveendran Salvadura, which documents the developments of the Tamil struggle, both in its historical context and current day events. We have been anxious to include within the report a section on the Sansoni Commission findings and the recommended Bill for the District Councils, supposed attempts by the Sinhalese Government to be seen doing 'justice' to the Tamil grievances. It is hoped that the report will be published in the near future, and it is intended to circulate it both to agencies and selected Parliamentarians, to groups and individuals both within the U.K. and abroad. The TRG would hope to co-ordinate a wider meeting of people who share our concern, so that we might attempt to evolve a strategy for action from the wider international community.

A regular newsletter is now underway, the first issue appearing in February, and the second one just released. We are developing links with individuals and groups, particularly abroad in Europe and the United States, and are drawing up a wide circulation list for the newsletter, which will cover both longstanding and recent developments within Sri Lanka. We have reliable information sources within the country, and have been receiving a steady stream of material and information that is obviously important to disseminate as widely as possible. The newsletter shall be published every two months, and people will be invited to subscribe to it, in efforts to help keep production costs down. The Group also recognises the importance of developing wider contacts in the media in the U.K. and is in the process of doing this.

Of prime concern has been the problem of Tamil refugees, many having left Sri Lanka to seek political asylum abroad. We have made contact with groups in West Germany, Denmark and France in attempts to assess the situation within each country. In Britain we had an earlier case of a young Tamil student who did not wish to return to Sri Lanka because of his political involvement there, and who wished to seek political asylum in this country. The response of the Home Office illustrated the British Government's ignorance on the Tamil situation and the internal tensions within Sri Lanka. The situation in France is particularly critical for Tamil refugees. Following a visit to Paris in May of 1980, Mary Dines prepared a paper on behalf of TRG on the refugee situation. At the request of Tamil groups within Paris, this paper was translated into french (Tamils en Crise) and forwarded to France for circulation.

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2. Secretary's Report.

The refugee problem is obviously going to be a long term one, and one TRG must expect to face for some time before any solution can be reached.

The TRG has also been pleased to welcome into its membership members of the Tamil students community, who have made a valid contribution to the work of the Group. Their presence has also highlighted the problems faced by Tamil students within the United Kingdom. We know that the Sri Lankan High Commission has approached various colleges and bodies of higher education asking for information on Tamil students. We are also aware from newspaper articles published in Sri Lanka that Tamil students studying with the U.K. are seen as political dissidents. These issues must be raised through the various international student bodies, and also at parliamentary level.

A fundraising evening was organised on 21st February, 1981, at Conway Hall, both to publicise the plight of the Tamil people, and the role of the TRG, and to also raise funds for our work. The programme for the evening includes slides and a talk, followed by a discussion on the situation; delicious Tamil food, and a dance and music recital. Everyone enjoyed the evening, and considerable hard work was put in to organising the programme by the members of the Executive Committee. It is hoped that a similar evening might be organised sometime later in the summer.

At the end of our first year, we are pleased to welcome Mr. Dafydd Wigley, M.P. for Plaid Cymru, as our Chairman, and look forward to working alongside him in the future. We are hoping to engage further parliamentary support, and have approached three M.P.s who we feel may be sympathetic to the aims of our Group, and would be prepared to take up the vice-Chairmanship. In particular, with the recent uprisings in Sri Lanka, it is important to recognise the significance of the TRG's role as a pressure and campaigning body, in efforts to support the Tamil people in their struggle for self-determination and freedom from racism.

Diane Grammer,
Secretary.
May 1981.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Tamil Rights Group, held on Tuesday, 12th May, 1981, Room 16, House of Commons, Westminster, SW1.

Present: Chairman: Mr. Dafydd Wigley, M.P.

Diane Grammer, Mr. A. Ampalavanar, Mrs. Mary Dines, Mrs Padma Perinpanayagam, Mrs. Adele Balasingham, Mr. R.V. Ramachandran, Mr. S. Sathiamoorthy, Mr. P. Nehruje, Mr. S. Kalamthy, Mr. N.S. Krishnan, Mr. C. Antonidas, Mrs. P. Antonidas, Mr. K. Balasekaram, Mr. K. Vaikunthavasan, Mr. V. Varadakumar, Rev. Michael Scott.

1. Opening remarks by Chairman Mr. D. Wigley opened the Annual General Meeting of the Tamil Rights Group and spoke of the very difficult situation within Sri Lanka. He spoke of the role of the Tamil Rights Group in drawing attention to the plight of the Tamils, and informed the meeting that a report on the current situation would be given later on in the meeting.

2. Election of Executive Officers

The Meeting re-elected Mr. D. Wigley as Chairman of the Tamil Rights Group for the forthcoming year.

It was proposed and agreed that the posts of Vice Chairmen should be honorary posts outside the fifteen Executive Committee posts.

The Chairman proposed that the Executive Committee should be empowered to co-opt the Vice-Chairmen to the Executive Committee. This was agreed.

The Meeting proposed that Mr. James Kilfedder, Mr. David Alton and Mr. Russel Johnstone should be nominated for the Vice Chairmen posts.

The Chairman informed the Meeting that Mr. Russel Johnstone and Mr. David Alton had indicated their willingness to take up the posts of Vice Chairmen. The Meeting welcomed this.

It was proposed and agreed that Diane Grammer should be elected Secretary of the Tamil Rights Group.

It was proposed and agreed that Mr. A. Ampalavanar should be elected Treasurer of the Tamil Rights Group.

The following twelve members were elected as members of the Executive Committee:

Mrs. Mary Dines	Mr. S. Sathiamoorthy
Mrs. Padma Perinpanayagam	Mr. P. Nehruje
Mrs. Adele Balasingham	Mr. K. Balasekaram
Rev. Michael Scott	Mr. R.V. Ramachandran
Mr. Charles Antonidas	Mr. H. Varadakumar
Mr. K. Vaikunthavasan	Miss Michelle Rosso

3. Secretary's Report

The Secretary's Report was agreed and adopted by the Meeting.

4. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's Report was agreed and adopted by the Meeting.

5. Resolutions

It was proposed that: the Tamil Rights Group should prioritise fundraising during the next year. This was agreed by the Meeting.

5. Resolutions

It was proposed that: 'this Meeting expresses its very grave concern for the reports that have come out of Sri Lanka and calls upon the British Government to take up with the Sri Lankan authorities the issue of one million disenfranchised Tamils, and to urge Her Majesty the Queen not to take part in the opening of the pending exhibition for adult franchise because of the plight of those one million who lost the right to vote following independence.'

This was agreed by the Meeting.

6. Any Other Business

Current situation in Sri Lanka. A report was given on the current situation in Sri Lanka, where some 87 people were arrested, and 37 of this number held in custody. The local police have been conducting intimidating house to house searches in the northern provinces, and there is general concern and fear amongst the Tamil community, as the situation deteriorates. The presence of outsiders visiting the country and observing the current situation has brought about inevitable repercussions. For example, the authorities rounded up and questioned those local people who assisted a German film team visiting Sri Lanka.

The Chairman said he would write to the Foreign Secretary requesting a meeting to see if the British Government can exercise pressure on the Sri Lankan Government. Amnesty International should also be approached. There was discussion about approaching Panorama to see if they would be interested in researching a programme on Sri Lanka.

It was agreed that members of the Tamil community in the U.K. should be encouraged to write to their M.P.s urging them to file an Early Day Motion in the House of Commons expressing concern about the worsening situation in Sri Lanka, and requesting the British Government to take up the problem of Tamils there.

Constitution. The Chairman outlined the importance of a formal Constitution to set out the procedure of meetings and statutory requirements for General Meetings, and to establish procedures for future meetings of the main supporters. It was agreed that the Executive Committee should prepare a draft Constitution at the earliest convenience.

Membership. It was agreed that a membership subscription of £2.50 per year should be paid by members, and that the amount should be £1.00 for OAPs and claimants.

New Nationality Bill. The implications of the new Nationality Bill were discussed, in relation to Tamils: Three main groups would be effected by the Bill:

1. Those Tamils living, but not born in the U.K.
2. Those Tamils who were disenfranchised as a result of independence
3. Those Tamils who were previously British Overseas Citizens in Malaysia and Singapore.

It was agreed that a draft memorandum should be drawn up for the next Executive Committee Meeting on June 9th. The Meeting empowered a small working group to draw up the memorandum on the Bill.

The Meeting closed at 8.00pm. The Chairman thanked people for coming.

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Hon. Secretary : Diane Grammer

Chairman: Mr. Dafydd Wigley, M.P.

Vice Chair: David Alton, M.P.
Sheila Wright, M.P.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE 9 MONTHS ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 1981

	£	£
Donations, Membership and Subscription for News Letter	280.10	
Donations for Tamil Protest	271.26	
	<u> </u>	551.36
 <u>Expenses and Payments</u>		
Stamps	150.31	
Photocopies of News Letters	86.70	
Tamil Protest Leaflets & Notices	177.35	
Institute of Communal Studies	10.00	
Donation to Tamil Refugees Re-Settlement in Sri Lanka	300.00	
Hire of Projector	5.00	
Bank Charges	3.50	
	<u> </u>	732.89
 EXCESS OF EXPENDITURE OVER INCOME *		<u>181.53</u>

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 1981

Cash at Bank		1,321.49	
<u>Less Cheques drawn</u>			
228186 Adhesive Labels	11.00		
228187 Rights & Justice	216.01		
228188 Typesetting for Leaflet	38.00		
228189 Institute of Communal Studies	10.00	<u>335.01</u>	<u>986.15</u>

REPRESENTED BY

Accumulated Fund

Balance at 1st April 1981		1,167.98	
Excess of Expenditure Over Income (as above) *		<u>181.53</u>	<u>986.15</u>

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PUBLIC MEETING

on TAMILS ARRESTED IN S. INDIA

to be held at Little Hall,
Wimbledon
on Sunday 20th June at 6.00 p.m.
Chaired by Mrs. Mary Dines

AIMS OF MEETING

1. To provide support for legal facilities for the arrested freedom fighters in India
2. To urge unity among the freedom fighters
3. To pay tribute to the martyrs of Tamil Eelam.

All those who are interested in the Tamil Eelam struggle are invited.

TAMIL RIGHTS

87 Gower Street, London WC1E 6AA

Vol.2, No.2

June, 1982

TAMILS IN BRITAIN FACE DEPORTATION

The hostile environment in which many Tamils live in Sri Lanka today has led many people living abroad to feel genuine fears about returning home, where they will face discrimination and possibly political harrassment. Already this is causing problems, especially in Britain.

In the past few months a number of Tamils have been picked up in Britain for immigration offences. These have included working "illegally" as students and overstaying their permits. Yet others have been faced with deportation on completion of their studies here. At this stage some have asked for their cases to be considered under the internationally agreed rules for asylum.

Some of those who have taken part-time jobs have done so because of the steep rise in overseas students fees which have not been matched by similar increases in the income of their parents or others who have sponsored their studies and they are, therefore, unable to manage without supplementing their allowances. It is a fact that the increases in fees have meant that only those who are sponsored by their governments or come from wealthy backgrounds can now afford to study in Britain.

Originally the British Government's insistence on overseas students obtaining permission from the authorities for part-time work was based on educational grounds - the argument being that studies suffered if a disproportionate time was spent at work. Now, apart from courses where work is part of training, the general Home Office view is that those who work are usually in Britain under false pretences and that their studies are only a blind for seeking employment. In the case of Tamils, this view has been encouraged by the Sri Lankan Government which is openly telling foreign governments that Tamils are migrating for purely economic reasons and want to enjoy the "good life" in Europe.

Many of those arrested have been picked up in police "sweeps" on supermarkets, restaurants and other establishments. Businesses run by Asians are particularly vulnerable to such raids. There is therefore a strong likelihood that those working without a permit or not "settled" in Britain will be charged. If students get into financial difficulties, therefore, they are advised to get in touch with one of the counselling agencies or their college welfare departments immediately.

The possibility of remaining in Britain after studies have been completed are remote, if not non-existent. Those who entered after 1st January, 1973, cannot, as previously, apply for their conditions to be revoked after five years and cannot obtain residential status. Nor can they change from one status to another (e.g. student to worker, visitor to student).

At the same time Tamil students and others who fear they will face harrassment - if not worse - should they return to Sri Lanka feel that they should qualify for asylum. This is not easy. It is not sufficient to show that an applicant has a generalised fear of discrimination or assault or that he would face economic hardship. He has to show that his personal history is such that he will face persecution - at least, imprisonment - because of his past activities, his associations or membership of a particular group.

Previous membership of legally recognised groups in Sri Lanka is unlikely to satisfy the Home Office that an applicant is a bona fides refugee. The T.U.L.F., for instance, is an officially recognised party, whose leader is also leader of the official opposition, and active participation in the T.U.L.F. by itself would not be deemed to constitute a threat to an applicant's safety.

The difficulties of providing proof of arrest, imprisonment or the fact that an applicant is wanted by the police in Sri Lanka means that those applying for asylum need to get advice and work on their cases before their situation develops into an emergency. Those who believe that they have a case should, therefore, get advice before their permit to remain in Britain expires, so that if their application is unlikely to succeed they can make other arrangements. If they leave things until they are faced with a deportation order they are unlikely to find another country to take them even if they have skills that would normally make it possible for them to work in, say, Middle Eastern countries.

PARLIAMENTARY MOVE

Publicly the U.N.P. Government claim that they want a peaceful solution to the Tamil problem. If this is so, one would have thought that they would be looking for ways of promoting harmony and reconciliation; they would be reassuring the Tamils that they have a secure place in Sri Lanka and that there will be mutual respect between all races.

It is surprising, therefore, to find that the Government should act in a way that is bound to provoke the Tamil population. The removal of the Sri Lankan parliament to Kotte, the centre of the old Buddhist kingdom, must be seen as one of their most insensitive actions. It may be that the old Parliament was unsatisfactory. But, even so, why did they have to chose Kotte for the new site, when it was bound to reinforce Tamil fears of Buddhist-Sinhalese domination?

A number of other nations have rebuilt their Parliaments or moved their venue after independence. They have usually selected as neutral a place as possible so as not to arouse old feelings and rivalries. So, the Australian Federal Parliament is in Canberra and Pakistan moved its Parliament from Karachi to Islamabad.

The U.N.P. Government, however, has chosen the most contentious site possible. Changing its name from Kotte to Jayavardhanapura is purely cosmetic and will do nothing to persuade Tamils that the U.N.P. is not being provocative.

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BUDDHISTS DECLARE WAR

In April a Buddhist monk, Gopitha Nayakathero, declared that 18,000 Buddhist monks had declared war. He said that "The time has come to defend our Sinhala race. We will never be slaves to anyone. For the last 2,500 years only Buddhist monks have safeguarded the religion".

He claimed that "The war could start at any time. The army of monks are already prepared for it. We don't care whether we live or die".

Behind the scenes, the U.N.P. Government also seems to have declared war secretly on the Hindu religion.

According to local people, Hindu statues among the ruins at Kurunthan Malai in Mullaitivu were taken away in Army trucks in November, 1981. Since then, employees from a local tile factory have been unobtrusively building a Buddhist vihare there. Local people who have shown interest in what is going on have been chased away and some young people taken in for questioning.

The old site housed both Hindu and Buddhist archaeological remains, although the local population is predominantly Hindu/Tamil. They fear that the desecration of the Hindu site is the first step in a process of Sinhalese colonisation of the area.

The Murugan temple opposite the Polgwela Railway Station is also being transformed into a Buddhist site. On 7th May it was whitewashed and the foundations for a Buddhist vihare are being laid.

NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS

Harrassment by Government forces continues

On 7th March police smashed up and looted shops in Pulliyankodal and Valanai. Some members of the public were assaulted.

Two days previously Chelliah Rajendram, aged 20, was shot and seriously wounded by an army patrol when he was walking outside his house in Stanley Road, Jaffna. There was no curfew in force at the time.

On 19th March schoolgirls in the Muslim town of Kalpitiya were being harrassed by naval personnel and one man tried to molest a 13-year old girl. He was beaten up by the crowd which gathered and then left and came back with reinforcements. They assaulted everyone in the neighbourhood, demanding the surrender of the girl's brother who had attacked the molester. Although the girl was rescued her parent's house was burnt down on the same night and they lost everything. No action was taken by the authorities.

Students demand release of university student

Winalarajah, a student at Jaffna University, was arrested at 4.0 a.m. on 24th April, a few hours before he was due to take his exams. Although a chronic asthmatic he has been kept in detention and no charges have been preferred against him. His fellow students have mounted a campaign for his release and, in spite

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of a ban on demonstrations, have marched publicly in his support. Some students caught distributing leaflets were arrested and this led to a rapid extension of the campaign, bringing in high school students as well as those at universities throughout the country.

There are now a total of 43 Tamils in detention without being charged in Sri Lanka.

Police fail to appear in court

Warrants have been issued for the arrest of 17 police officers who failed to appear in court in connection with charges of murder, robbery and arson during the rampage by the security forces in Jaffna in May and June last year. Another officer informed the court that he was unable to be present.

It is believed that the police department themselves are carrying out a departmental inquiry into the cases of 189 other policemen who are alleged to have been involved in acts of violence in the North during the same period.

CHRISTMAS CARDS

A full-colour card, showing Tamil refugees, is now available. This was printed in Sri Lanka for the Central British Fund for Tamil Refugees' Rehabilitation.

The card, with envelope, costs 25p. Please order now from the T.R.C. office.

TAMIL RIGHTS GROUP
87 Gower Street
London WC1E 6AA

21.12.90.

My dear Wesley,

Just recd your letter of 07.12. So I thought the best is to straight away reply. Thank you for this and the Peace card. Seasons greetings and all the best to yourself, the family and all our comrades there.

In fact I was mentioning you to a Sarath Narangala who saw me this morning about seeing to our requirement of a press. He is the man who runs the mono unit at Star Press. He has permanent business interests in UK and has given me 2 propositions re second hand presses from there. These are -

1. Heidelberg Letter Press; Model KSBA; size 18 x 22½; price CIF £4000. ~~max~~
Inclusive of duty this he says should cost us in all about Rs400,000.
Tabloid size.

2. Nebule (?) letter press; cylinder (Italian); size 22½ x 30. Price may cost a little above No. 1.

He says we will receive the press here within 20 days of opening of LC.

He is himself a seller of printing machinery and with your own knowledge of the trade we should be able to strike a bargain. He is in almost daily contact with his partner whose address is as follows:

John Liggins

2 St Alban Rd, Leicester, England.

Please get in touch with Liggins immediately, examine the machinery and get in touch with me. Narangala says shipping is no problem because we can use a container of his as he himself is an importer. I have given all this information to you because my understanding of these matters is wholly that of an outsider to the trade of printing, shipping etc. Please also let us know how you all can help in the purchase. We can manage the money for everything at this end.

I think the Heidelberg letter press should serve our purposes because in any case we will not be printing anything ~~max~~ larger than tabloid size. It can be conveniently used for commercial work like book printing too.

A good press commercially well run should give us all the money we need for party work. No other Party except for the UNP and the SLFP has the facilities we have in this regard - premises in Maradana, existing press machinery, and a mono unit which can be used as our own though it does not as yet belong to us. We can purchase this too at some stage.

As to the papers you have mentioned I am fully in agreement with you. I am confident we could get up the Sinhala weekly at least by May day. We are thinking of an English weekly too, and I am trying to get persons outside the Party but with left inclinations to come together ~~mx~~ with us for a broadbased English weekly. Much of all this will ofcourse depend on a viable press.

I must apologise to you for not having written earlier. Problem was - I was in Geneva in Geneva in August-September on the Richard de Zoysa case. That was the time of the UN sub-Commission on Human Rights. I had got accreditation from the International Commission of Jurists. De Zoysa's mother, Dr Saravanamuttu who was then in London also came to Geneva, and our joint work in Geneva, her work with AI etc in London and Europe, and my work here resulted in the 12 European aid donors mention the de Zoysa case in a letter they jointly wrote to the SL govt., just before the Aid Meeting in Paris on 25th October, expressing their dissatisfaction with the slow progress in the Richard de Zoysa case. Thereafter I had to spend a large amt of my time getting up the joint-Opposition motion in Parliament calling on the President to appoint a Commission of Inquiry on the circumstances of de Zoysa's death, and the police investigation held into it. Please contact AI and get yourself briefed on this. Bernard met Mrs B about the motion and she agreed to steer it - that is how it came in time to defeat the move of the Govt. aimed at preventing it from getting into the Order Book of Parliament. We got it in the Order Book on the 25th September. The Govt. were instrumental in getting the suspect Ronnie Gunasinghe and another to file civil actions in the DC claiming damages from Mrs S'muttu for naming them in the Magist. Court. This was done in order to block the motion from getting into Parliament. But in this they were late, and therefore the Govt. tried to block discussion on it on the ground that the matter was sub judice. Atha and others fought this out and thereafter the Speaker ruled that any objection to the motion on the ground that it is sub judice should be raised on the floor of the House, and this was fixed for Dec. 9th - Sunday. I had quite a job on this - getting the necessary material from the House of Commons etc and briefing our MPs. This was well worth it for our Opposition chaps did a marvellous job and the Speaker has just given his ruling permitting the discussion of the motion. So now I have

the task of getting the MPs ready for that debate. There is no doubt the Govt. will defeat the motion - but we must make full use of the debate to give publicity to-

1. this case being the one single instance which reveals the entire govt. apparatus that is used for extra-judicial killings.
2. that this is linked to the govt's handling of the plot which Ranjan W said he had discovered in an announcement he made to Parliament on the 23rd Dec. 1989.
3. the cover-up nature of the police investigation.
4. The AG's role in frustrating the MC inquiry, and his report to Parliament misleading it ~~about~~ about the MC proceedings on it and his own role in it.
5. the President's proved reluctance to appoint a Commission and the possible reasons for this.
6. the relation of this to the Govt's obligation to uphold human rights. etc

I am enclosing in this a letter I wrote to Bradman Weerakoon. You can use it any way you want.

While attending to all this I had to lead a CFL delegation to the Peoples Republic of China, responding to an invitation from their TU Federation. Siriwardene and Rassedin went with me. That took two weeks. It was a very useful and fruitful trip. On our return the Chinese ~~Embassy~~ Embassy hosted us and the PB to dinner. Their human rights situation too was studied and the bare facts were sifted from what was almost wholly Voice of America prop-aganda. I think the VOA, which had been given quite a free hand in China, did a great disservice to the pro-democracy movement which came from within the Party itself. American agents had infiltrated it and brought about its suppression. Now it is a centre-left party faction that is in control. TU and worker rights in the workplace are respected. But what is most interesting however is the economic change they are bringing about especially in the Eastern half of the country. Foreign technology and capital are extensively used and very much in demand. The present leadership is nevertheless careful to see that the basic "Socialistic" property relations subsist in the major areas of the economy. There is no privatisation as is being made out as happening in China by our media. I think I shall write something on this and send it to you.

Now you would see how busy we have been.

As to party work - it is quite clear that the LSSP is at present the major factor trying to bring about an alliance of all progressive forces against the UNP - in fact for the ouster of the Premadasa govt. Our position on this should have been clear to you from the CC resolution which Rassedin would have sent to you. We are in a situation in which we work both as the Five party alliance as well as the 3 party alliance. It is ~~as~~ as the 3 party alliance that we have started the on-going picketing campaign against the rising cost of living, repression etc. When the police interfered with the pickets in Maharagama (in which others too had joined) Bernard protested to Ranjan W and he wrote to Bernard assuring him that peaceful picketting will not be interfered with and that ~~we~~ we will accordingly instruct all police stations. We tested this out twice in Colombo ~~once~~ opposite our HQ, and the next with all 3-parties at Lipton square. Kandy organised a picket and Sathig -raha last week and at this Bernard, KP, Rajita and others were present. They were all beaten up by the police. Steps are being taken in respect of this. The picket and s'graha will spread to other areas too. The attempt will be made to bring in others too - especially the SLFP.

In the TU front too we have taken the lead in the Joint Committee in respect of pickets in the private sector, opposite workplaces, demanding for them too the 200/- 300/- wage increase promised to govt. workers - lower paid grade- in the Budget. In the joint-front the CP and the SLFP have agreed on this, but not the NSSP. For some abstruse reason their man - Linus- is standing against it. Perhaps this is because they have concluded their Collective agreements, and they do not want to go against the no-strike clause. Even this is no explanation because we have advanced only the idea of a picket and not of a strike.

We have now appointed District full time organisers in accordance with NM's will. This should do a lot for our organisation work. TU work is also being decentralised on a district basis. NM's residence too is being used after a minor repair the Trust has given it. Bernard's lecture on the Budget - the English one, was given there. The Sinhala one was at the Public library auditorium. Highly appreciated.

We have not neglected our other work either. The NM Memorial lecture - in Sinhala by the econ don Tilekeratne of Vidyodaya went off very well. After that we had lectures for Doric and Karlo. We are just now preparing for Colvin's on Feb 14th. His birthday Feb 17th. He died Feb 27th.

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The Party tried its utmost to bring the NSSP to some working agreement with us. About 2 months ago we met Vasu and W'bahu at my place. As the 5party alliance is geared to the Presidential election on which P'dasa can take us unawares we took up with them the question of the single opposition candidate. But both of the NSSP said that even though they would support a single opposition candidate (who they agree would be Mrs B) they want to be free to put forward nominally a candidate of their own and campaign for their own programme. They said they would not even ask the people to vote for their candidate! It is clear from this that they want to make the best of both worlds. Get full milage from the 5party alliance and at the same time carry on their own campaign even if it cuts across our own positions. Party is in no mood to allow such low pranks.

It is clear to me that the NSSP fight is neither with the UNP nor even with the SLFP. They are trying to outwit the CP and ourselves in order to be able to say that we betrayed the flag whilst they did not.

We have gone a long way to accomodate the MEP too within the 5 party alliance. Those of the SLFP who do not want the alliance with us try to emphasise differences on the Provincial Council issue. In order to take the wind off these sails we 3 parties formulated our position on this stating our commitment to the devolution as adopted in the Constitution and to its expansion (as far as powers are concerned) so as to give to the Tamil people in the North and the Tamil, Muslim and Sinhala people in the East one or more viable units of administration, and that on the basis of the experience of the PCs we agree that the unit itself may be reviewed. This should placate Tamil opinion too because dominant opinion there at present is for a regional unit as opposed to a provincial unit. The MEP (and the SLFP) do not appear to be opposed to

giving to those areas even one or more regional units- but especially the MEP is very hostile to devolution elsewhere on the PC scale. Well, we have set the ball rolling; lets see what happens.

At present we are carrying on with our 3 party seminars too. This is in addition to our own district level discussions. All this should certainly bring us to the level of the regional meetings you have suggested in your letter.

I had to leave this letter uncompleted in order to attend PB. Bernard had not recd. the letter which I am replying. He read my copy, and he recalls that Tissa had been asked to reply the letter which you had sent to all of us. I told him about the press machinery I have mentioned here. He too was happy with the idea. If you can raise part atleast of the money there he thinks we too could supplement the cost. So please act quick and write to me.

We had a very successful 55th anniversary meeting on the 18th. Today was the pola.

OSM Seneviratne told me last night that Champa (Visakha) was here but I have not met her.

Please give my personal regards to Kandane and wish him and the family well.

Yours

[Handwritten signature]

*Please send me a
fax number which can
reach you.*