

S. C. O. T.

STANDING COMMITTEE of TAMIL SPEAKING PEOPLE

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Wiping out the Tamils

Students of contemporary history of the situation in Sri Lanka with particular interest in the Human Rights violations will no doubt recollect that every now and then utterances such as 'wiping them out', 'cutting off all supplies', 'skinning them alive', in relation to the Tamil community have come from the highest quarters in government and in the Opposition. If these had come from people who were not in positions of authority, or if they were statements that appeared to emanate purely on impulse, then they can be dismissed as matters that did not merit any consideration. When taken in the context of what has gone on in the Island in recent times they assume a level of relevance and importance and become worthy of serious thought and comment.

There has been a steady and systematic attempt to segment the Tamil community by a cleverly designed process of state colonisation and an attempt by the use of force to scatter Tamils in the Island (and to shores abroad) with the hope of leaving a demoralized and deprived few.

Are the Tamils going to be 'wiped out' from the North, East or plantation areas of Sri Lanka? What of the Tamils, Sri Lankan and non-Sri Lankan abroad?

Take the 'Great Tamil movement' in recent times, within the Island first. Refugees in their land of birth, forced to move from one district to another, from one camp to another without the foggiest idea as to what fate will befall them the following day!

Take the 'International Movement'! Seventeen thousand asylum seekers in West Germany alone in 1985? Four thousand five hundred in France, Two thousand seven hundred in Switzerland and Two thousand in the U.K.? (see the new refugees: cold hearts and prejudice, Guardian, Saturday 29th November 1986).

These are all people **fortunate to be alive!** One shudders to think of the numbers who have been eliminated by pogroms and other means. The Amnesty International continues to highlight year after year the practice of unlawful killings and 'disappearances' in Sri

Lanka. There does appear to be at least a small measure of success in the 'wiping out' operation!

The U.N. Convention on the **Prevention of the Crime of Genocide** (General Assembly resolution 2670 of 1948) defines Genocide as 'killing or causing serious bodily or mental harm of a national, ethnic, racial or religious group committed with intent to destroy such a group in whole or in part.'

Has enough been done by the expatriate Tamil community, by Tamils who have managed to secure for themselves 'the right to life, liberty and security' (Articles 3 & 5 of the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights) to campaign for those same privileges for their less fortunate brethren who remain subjected 'to torture, to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment'?

What is our response to the rapidly escalating situation regarding the refugees widely scattered in Sri Lanka, India, many European countries and elsewhere? Some quarters in the International Community still appear to consider Tamil refugees as economic migrants and not the genuine victims of persecution. It is a matter for some consolation that the head of the Terre d'Asie, a voluntary organisation in France, and UNHCR's former representative in Paris Henriette Taviani holds the view that the Tamil refugees are not fleeing simply because of the civil war in the country but because of **racial persecution in Sri Lanka.**

The expatriate Tamils have many responsibilities to discharge urgently. Organisations both in the U.K. and other countries need to intensify their appeals to the International Community to do everything possible to instil at least some sense into the powers that be in Sri Lanka that racial persecution must be stopped forthwith. Urgent measures need to be taken as regards the welfare of the large numbers of refugees and this responsibility cannot be totally abrogated to the governments which (often reluctantly) have agreed to offer temporary asylum.

There must be a concerted and co-ordinated effort by expatriate Tamil organisations to rise to this new challenge. The immediate needs of refugees and problems related to their future settlement are matters which demand urgent thought and action.

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DR. KANAPATHIPILLAI ARUMUGAM — OUR FOUNDER PRESIDENT

At a time of grave crisis to the Tamil community, at a time when darkness stubbornly refuses to leave — a beacon has been snatched away from us.

Realising that a sound economic base is a sine qua non for any community striving to preserve its freedom and identity Aru initiated a broad plan to not only help rehabilitate the battered Tamil community in Sri Lanka, but also reshape its future with increased self reliance and dignity.

The events of 1977 convinced him that the tasks ahead required wider support from the expatriate community and that is how the Standing Committee of Tamil Speaking People — SCOT — came to be inaugurated in that year.

He was the main guiding force of SCOT since its inception nine years ago.

He believed in frank and forth-

right expression of his views and would often quote John Milton's words 'Give me the liberty to know, to utter and argue according to conscience, above all liberties.'

It was largely his vision, his deep concern for the less privileged, his insistence that SCOT should have the highest standards of credibility and accountability, that have made it the leading expatriate Tamil organisation in the UK. Since its inception SCOT has been able to offer help worth over a hundred thousand pounds collected from members and well wishers, has been able to channel support from many International agencies and take the lead in the campaign against the violation of human rights in Sri Lanka. Those of us whom he left behind have a duty by him and the great vision for the future which he represented — to translate that vision into reality.



WHY WE ASK FOR MORE

Over the nine years of its existence SCOT has been able to donate nearly £100,000 of your money towards various projects. We give below a list of the major items of project expenditure.

SCOT Project Expenditure Since Inception — August 1977

TRRO — Settlement of Refugees — Kallaru	£2550
TRRO — Kannady Farm — Refugees Settlement	£2000
TRRO — Knitting Machines — Rehabilitation of Young Women, Batticaloa	2500
Citizen's Committee, Jaffna — Water Pumps for refugee settlement	2500
Gandhiyam Society — Experiment with one acre farms	1000
Setting up Vocational Training Centre — Gurukulam	6500
Ootru Organisation — Feasibility Studies	2700
Cardiac Resuscitation Unit — Jaffna Hospital	2900
Setting up Typing School — Trincomalee	1200
Oxfam Relief Work in Sri Lanka	8000
EHEd, Trincomalee — Construction of Houses for Refugees	6400
Refugee Rehabilitation, Jaffna — Iyakachchi Housing Scheme	7500
Shri Shanmuga Trust, Trincomalee — Support for Orphanage	1500
Indian Prime Minister's Relief Fund	3400
MUST, Madras — Support for Medical Supplies	1000
OFERR, Madras — Relief for Refugees	2000
Eelam Repatriates Organising Society, Madras — Relief	500
TRRO — Refugee Relief — Mullaitivu	5000
Trincomalee District — Refugee Relief	4000
Ramakrishna Mission, Batticaloa — Construction of Houses	2000
Ramakrishna Mission, Batticaloa — Orphanage	1000
'Saturday Review' Relief Fund	5000
Plantation Workers Educational Fund	2500
Ramakrishna Mission, Point Pedro — Refugee Relief	1000
Jaffna Public Library	2000
Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation, Madras	1000
Yari Palm Brush Industries	2500
Renaissance refugee Relief, South India	1000
● excludes small discretionary grants totalling approximately £600	81,100

Be assured — every penny is accounted for and utilized for a worthy cause.

Our task is better achieved through increased donations.

PRESS PUBLICITY FOR SCOT'S WORK

SATURDAY REVIEW

Saturday Review, a journal in English published in Jaffna and edited by the veteran campaigner Gamini Navaratne, has consistently and fearlessly championed the cause of the Tamils.

Members and well wishers of SCOT will know of the contributions made by SCOT towards the Saturday Review Relief Fund (see April 1986 Newsletter). The initial contribution was acknowledged in the 24th May issue of 'SR' with the comment that SCOT was the largest single contributor to the fund.

The SR reproduced in full the Editorial in the SCOT Newsletter with the comment that it contained 'much food for thought for the Tamil people both in Sri Lanka and abroad'.

Saturday Review, quite apart from its excellent journalistic rôle, has been engaged in Refugee Rehabilitation work. SCOT has so far contributed £5,000 (1985-86) to the SR relief fund. There have been many discretionary disbursements of small value to local relief organisations. The SR is now planning to donate an ambulance to Jaffna Hospital.

EELANADU

Eelanadu still stands as the lonely but unremitting voice of the Tamil people in Sri Lanka. Mr. Mannicka Iddikadar, retired Civil Servant, writes a regular column in Eelanadu. He attended the SCOT Tamil New Year Lunch in April this year. On his return to Sri Lanka he devoted his column in the 18th June issue of Eelanadu to give publicity to SCOT's activities especially to refugee Rehabilitation efforts through OXFAM, TRRO and other organisations.

BATTICALOA — RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

Members and well wishers of SCOT will be aware that SCOT donated £2,000 to the Ramakrishna Mission, Batticaloa, for the construction of houses for victims of ethnic violence. A further sum of £1,000 was sent as a contribution towards expenses being incurred in running the orphanages and looking after the children of refugees.

Swami Jivananda of the Ashram at Kalladi Uppodai Batticaloa in his letter dated the 23rd November, 1986, gratefully acknowledged our contribution. He writes, 'Namaskarams to all those devoted members of SCOT. . . we, here, despite all the troubles surrounding us, are able to continue this little service, because of the selfless help rendered by kind Atmans like yourselves'. He also highlights the fact that the Ashram is unable to accept more children because all 27 places have been taken up and it costs Rs250 per month for each child to be maintained.

TRINCOMALEE DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

Last year SCOT donated a sum of £3,000 to the T.D.D.A. for refugee relief work. The Association has sent us its audited accounts, notes of the AGM and plans for future rehabilitation projects. SCOT has sent a further £1,000 to supplement its earlier grant.

YARL PALM BRUSH INDUSTRIES

A Project by displaced employees

The co-ordinating Committee of Displaced Employees based in Jaffna, Sri Lanka, set up a private registered company 'Yarl Palm Brush Industries Ltd.' with the help of twelve small-time investors who were themselves displaced employees. In an unusual departure from normal funding practice SCOT arranged for a 'loan' to the C.C.D.E. to support the Industry. The company formally accepted in an exchange of letters the stipulations laid down by SCOT — notably that any interest that would accrue to SCOT will be utilized to purchase shares for the paid employees of the company. A sum of £2,450 was loaned to C.C.D.E.

POINT PEDRO — SARADA SEVASHRAM

This Ashram is run by Swami Chidrupananda and serves the poor and needy in the Point Pedro Area. The Ashram was founded in 1969. In recent years the Point Pedro and Valvettiturai areas have been badly affected due to repeated excesses of the security forces. The Ashram is being run on donations and despite financial and other constraints has been active in providing relief to many families.

SCOT made a donation of £1,000 to the Sri Rama Krishna Sarada Sevashram and the Swami has acknowledged receipt of the donation and has provided details of the disbursements made.



The picture shows Srimathi S. Subramaniam, Principal, Vadamardchy Hindu Girl's College handing over on behalf of the Sarada Sevashram dry rations and cash to a mother who lost two of her children. The Swami in his letter dated 17th October thanks SCOT for bringing at least a modicum of hope and happiness to a battered village where Deepavali would normally have been such a joyous occasion.

TAMIL REHABILITATION ORGANISATION

The TRO is based in Adayar, Madras, and provides relief support for about forty camps around Chengleput, Madurai, Dindigul and Tanjavur districts. They have already carried out relief work costing over 5 lakhs of Indian Rupees, funded by contributions from Tamils all over the world. The TRO is offering support to about 650 families with over 1,000 children of school attending age.

SCOT has already provided £1,000 towards TRO's Health Projects.

Dr. Jeyakularaja who works actively with the TRO, currently in London, met officials of SCOT and briefed them on work undertaken by the TRO. SCOT in addition to contributing to the Refugee Rehabilitation Projects has agreed to assist TRO in securing help from international agencies. Contact has already been established with Health Unlimited and TROCAIRE the Catholic Agency for World Development based in Dublin.

RENAISSANCE — TAMIL NADU

Renaissance is an organisation based in Pudukkottai, Tamil Nadu, engaged in providing much needed health services to the refugees.

This organisation was originally recommended to SCOT by OXFAM as a body which deserves financial support due to the excellent work it is currently engaged in. SCOT has forwarded a sum of £1,000 towards their fund to set up a mobile medical unit. An acknowledgement gratefully accepting our donation has been received.

PIG FARM PROJECT — EELAM REPATRIATES ORGANISING SOCIETY

Eelam Repatriates organising Society based in Madras submitted a request for support to set up a pig farm. The project is based on a market survey conducted in Tamil Nadu and is designed to utilise the returns on the venture to settle displaced families. SCOT has undertaken to donate £1,000 towards the proposed budget of the project.

LINKS WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS TAMIL INFORMATION CENTRE

Members and well wishers of SCOT will remember that one of the resolutions passed unanimously at the 1985 A.G.M. urged the Executive Committee to intensify its efforts to collaborate with other organisations which have objectives similar to those of SCOT. In pursuance of this, close links are being developed between SCOT and the Tamil Information Centre.

There have been many informal and formal meetings between the TIC and SCOT — Human Rights Council concentrating specifically on aspects related to the February 1987 sessions of the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva.

It is proposed to discuss other areas for collaboration at future meetings.

CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE OF TAMIL ASSOCIATIONS

A sub-committee of SCOT was set up to explore avenues of increasing collaboration between SCOT and the C.C.T.A. There has been a useful exchange of views and it is hoped that closer links could be developed in the future.

OTHER ORGANISATIONS OXFAM

SCOT has continued its close working links with OXFAM. Jeff Alderson, erstwhile representative of OXFAM in South India and Sri Lanka, attended the SCOT meeting which hosted Dr. Paul Seabright to discuss the effects of the ethnic conflict on the economy of Tamil speaking areas. Mr. Sam Kenrick, currently Assistant Field Director, OXFAM, was hosted by officials of SCOT at a special meeting followed by dinner.

QUAKERS

SCOT has been in close touch with the Society of Friends (QUAKERS). The most recent contact has been in relation to a workshop organised by Quakers International on how Members of Parliament could be lobbied. The experience gained by SCOT was valuable because it showed the extent of preparation that is required to carry out this task, particularly in regard to Human Rights work.

OFERR — MADRAS

The Organisation For Eelam Refugee Rehabilitation has been very active in South India in providing relief to many Tamil refugees. Readers will recollect that SCOT made a donation of £1,000 to OFERR last year.

SCOT provided a further sum of £1,000 towards relief support being carried out by OFERR



Clothes being distributed by Mr. S. Kugathasan, Secretary, OFERR, among the refugees at Vilankudi Refugee Camp, in Madurai District, Tamil Nadu, in the presence of Mr. M. Kumarasamy (Special Tashildar) representing the Rehabilitation Department of Tamil Nadu Government.

A SUCCESSION OF DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

SCOT has invited several distinguished visitors in the field of Relief and Rehabilitation and Human rights, to share their thoughts and expertise with the general membership.

Professor Eliezer

Professor Eliezer, currently President of the Federation of Tamil Associations of Australia, addressed the SCOT Human Rights Council on the 13th July, 1986. He stressed the need for co-ordination among expatriate Tamils in their efforts to help the Tamils in Sri Lanka.

Dr. Brian Senewiratne

Dr. Senewiratne is a consultant Physician based in Brisbane, Australia. For many years he has been campaigning for a non-violent resolution of the ethnic problems in Sri Lanka, for improved conditions and political rights for the plantation workers and in general against the deprivation of Human Rights in Sri Lanka. He addressed a well attended meeting organised by SCOT on the 8th August, 1986 at the Putney Methodist Church Hall.

Members of the Indian Parliament

Three members of Parliament from India, Mr. Manik Reddy (Telugu Desam — Andhra Pradesh), Mr. Satya Prakash (Lok Dal — Uttar Pradesh), and Srimati Vidyawathi Chaturvedi (Congress 1 — Madhya Pradesh) attended the SCOT Human Rights Council meeting held on 7th September, 1986. They were briefed on the plight of the Tamils in Sri Lanka and the MP's undertook to discuss the problem with their colleagues in India and also distribute any documents sent to them.

Dr. Paul and Mrs. Isabelle Seabright

Dr. Paul Seabright, Fellow in Economics, Churchill College, Cambridge, and Mrs. Isabelle Seabright, a

journalist, were guests of honour at a special meeting organised by SCOT at the Royal Society of Medicine, Wimpole Street on the 25th September, 1986.

Dr. Seabright had visited the Jaffna Peninsula in the latter part of 1985 and had contributed a paper on the crippling effects of the ethnic conflict on the economy of the Tamil area. He led a discussion on the plight of the economy especially in relation to agriculture and the fishing industry in the North and emphasised the need for careful planning in rehabilitation efforts, and how the role of the expatriates could be made more effective.

Mr. K. Sivapalan

Mr. K. Sivapalan, President of the Trincomalee Citizens Committee currently in U.K. addressed SCOT on the 26th October, 1986, at Putney Methodist Church Hall. He gave a detailed account of gross violations of Human Rights committed against the Tamils in Sri Lanka and extolled the expatriate Tamil Community to redouble its efforts to bring these violations to the notice of the International Community.

SHOBANA SHINES AS SAMRAJ SINGS

SCOT was privileged to host another evening of Classical Indian Dance by Shobana Jeyasingh on the 20th September, 1986. This time the occasion was given added splendour by the distinguished presence of Valluvoor Samrajpillai. Samraj comes from an illustrious family of choreographers and the Valluvoor style is noted for its lyrical lines and its great rhythmic vitality. We were fortunate to have with us this great master who was honoured by the Government of India with the title 'Natya Samrat' for his excellence in the rendering of 'jathis' (vocalised rhythmic passages), for his choreography and for his services for the advancement of Bharata Natyam. He was accompanied by his own ensemble of musicians, Sri Ratnasabapathy on Mirudungam, Sri Krishnan on violin and Selvi K. Usha, vocal.

Shobana has always been willing to assist SCOT in its fund raising activities. Two years ago she gave an excellent performance for SCOT at Riverdale Hall in Lewisham.

With Valluvoor Samraj providing the Nattuvangam Shobana gave of her best and left no doubt as to how she came to receive so many accolades and why she is widely acclaimed as one of the foremost exponents of Bharata Natyam.

Those who were present at St. John's, Smith Square, had not only witnessed an excellent performance, but had also contributed to the coffers of SCOT for its Human Rights work. They would have remembered John Powys's words 'culture is the bedrock, the final wall, against which one leans one's back in a god-forsaken chaos'.

**Dates for your diary**

New Year lunch — 1p.m. Sunday, 4th January 1987
Tamil New Year lunch — 1p.m. Sunday, 19th April 1987
Deepavali Lunch — 1p.m. Sunday, 18th October 1987
Musical Evening and Christmas get together — 6p.m. Saturday, 19th December 1987

All events to be held at Lola Jones Hall, Greaves Place, off Garratt Lane, Tooting Broadway, London, SW17.

For tickets and further information contact: The Treasurer SCOT, 181 Torbay Road, Harrow, Middlesex. Telephone (01) — 422 — 8984