



L T M

NEWS REVIEW

FILM & INFORMATION UNIT

LONDON TAMIL MANRAM

தமிழ்த் தேசிய அவணச் சுவடிகள்

FALSE INFORMATION ON L.T.T.E. LEADER



In an article dated 5 September 1984 by Mervyn de Silva from Colombo in the prestigious Financial Times which is a credible mainstream news paper of the UK it was claimed that the leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam had been killed when the Sri Lankan navy fired on a boat in their surveillance zone off the Northern coast. V.Prabhakaran leader of the LTTE was nowhere near the so called confrontation area within the surveillance zone. However the leader of the LTTE has continued to direct his liberation fighters who later carried out an operation on 10 September at Mullaitivu. The Sri Lankan government sources have yet to confirm the claims made by the FT that large caches of arms and propaganda material were seized during this operation. The so-called death of the LTTE leader was carried in a small column on page 5 of the FT which seems to indicate the FT's own reservation as regards to the accuracy of Mervyn de Silva's reports from Colombo.

LETTER TO THE TIMES:

In an attempt to challenge the recent shelling of Valvettiturai Ivan Corea wrote a letter to the Times on 24.8.84 claiming that the Sri Lanka navy does not possess the capability of shelling the coastal town of Valvettiturai. However a video tape was recently shown at a press conference held by The London Tamil Manram which was also attended by Lord Gifford QC showing the damage caused by the shelling at VVT. (see also 'What The Papers Say' for further details).

HIGHWAY TO MURDER

The latest attempted destruction and decimation of the Tamils of Sri Lanka took yet another twist in its uncontrolled path of violence when at least 17 Tamils were killed as a long distance coach on its way from Colombo to Jaffna was hijacked near Vavuniya in the early hours of the morning on Tuesday 11 September.

The incident which was said to have taken place in the village of Poovarasankulam 6 miles from Vavuniya, armed gunmen wearing khakhi uniforms hijacked a bus travelling from Colombo to the Northern Province capital of Jaffna. At gunpoint the coach was commandeered and driven to a lonely spot along the road to Mannar, where the women and children were separated from the men. The gunmen then reportedly, opened fire on the male passengers, firing indiscriminately and without mercy. Other reports state that women and children too had been fired upon in the incident. Confirmation has been received that the undergarments of seven women missing had been since found, however without any trace of the female passengers.

The government has denied that the gunmen involved in the massacre are soldiers of the Sinhalese army. They said that guerillas, former soldiers dismissed from the army on disciplinary grounds, or extremist political elements may have committed the massacre.

The government also in its usual response of callous disregard for Tamil lives has not made any attempt to find the perpetrators of this latest orgy of bloodletting on innocent civilians. Instead it has responded by diverting funds earmarked for the proposed development projects of the Northern Tamil areas, to fight Tamil freedom fighters. The Minister of State Mr. Ananda Tissa De Alwis said that the cabinet has also decided to give the armed forces and police, whatever new powers they felt were necessary.

The question that still remains is, what more powers can the cabinet decree on a force that has taken on itself to date, to murder, burn, plunder and pillage the population it was meant to protect.

Editorial Note

The Times and the Daily Telegraph describe the above incident as having been carried out by Tamil separatists. This information is incorrect as in its own admissions the Sri Lankan government sources have made it clear that they consider the gunmen to be their own Sinhala extremists. LTM information Unit has lodged a strong protest to the above two newspapers pointing out the inaccuracies of the news item.

Farcical Justice!

A motion of censure against the Chief Justice, Mr. Neville Samarakoon is likely to be moved in parliament by the government. A parliamentary select committee by a majority decision of 5 to 2 held that further action was warranted, as a speech made by the Chief Justice at an award ceremony in March this year constituted improper conduct, and conduct unbecoming of the holder of the office of Chief Justice. The offending passage of the speech of the Chief Justice is as follows:-

For the past one year we have been trying our best to fill about 492 vacancies. Several have been eyeing these jobs. But we have a ruling imposed on us that we should recruit only from a place called the Job Bank.

It has no place, no buildings, it is only in name, but it is a most powerful place because if I recruit somebody from outside I am surcharged for the salaries for one whole month or well over eighteen months. I was trying to fill these vacancies.

(Continued on page 3)

RAPE OF MANNAR

The rape of Tamil cities by the security forces of the Sri Lankan government gathered even greater momentum when they set ablaze the Tamil speaking town of Mannar on 12th August and indiscriminately fired on civilians at two other places. The troops set fire to virtually the entire Tamil-dominated Mannar in retaliation against a guerilla ambush of a military convoy. More than 3000 families had lost their homes in the army violence in the town, located south of Jaffna on the Gulf of Mannar. It is said only four or five buildings have been left standing in Mannar. The National Security Minister Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali, evaded reporters queries about the new arms airlift from a South African plane, but he said he suspected foreign assistance for a sophisticated mechanism that went off in the North Central Mannar killing soldiers over the weekend. But he did not specify the source. The destruction in Mannar covered almost the entire bazaar area and extended to homes in neighbouring Manthai and Adambava villages. A source estimated that the damage will take about ten years to rebuild Mannar. There are also reported cases of looting and at least five separate incidents of killing civilians by the security forces. The Jayawardene government has embarked on this risky gamble of seeking a military solution under the guidance of the Israeli experts who are trying out the same brutal methods they had been adopting against the Palestinian people. The Sri Lankan government is being foolish in attempting to crush the Tamils by killing indiscriminately and terrorising the population. The Sri Lankan army is not going to succeed where Israel itself had failed to extinguish the Palestinian spirit. At one stage the Sri Lankan reflexes were conditioned by imaginary fears of Indian intervention. Now the Jayawardene government has swung to the other extreme of imagining that India will do nothing beyond making some threatening noises if it went

ahead with its program of liquidation of the Tamil militants in a brazen bid to find a final solution to the Tamil problem. The hardliners in Colombo are making a grave mistake in imagining that India will let down the Tamil community by pleading helplessness in the face of this diabolical action. At some stage the point of no return will be reached if they persist in this fatal miscalculation.

FARCICAL JUSTICE (cont. from page 2)

The Job Bank send me once a month or so five or ten people who have got on to the Job Bank list through their MPs. Half of them are unemployed. Some of them are supposed to be typists but they cannot type a word. They cannot spell. But we have to employ them. Some of them have the impertinence to bring letters from MPs which I throw into the wastepaper basket. I cannot employ them and I am finding it very difficult to run the establishment. I am telling you all this to illustrate that the employable, educated youth of this country are unable to get jobs outside the Job Bank. The Job Bank is a fraud on the youth of this country. It is like the Blood Bank. You have to wait for the donor and the donor here is the MP. The Bar Association of Sri Lanka is expected to summon a meeting of its executive committee to decide on a course of action, should the government consider further action as recommended by the select committee.

ISRAEL IN HOT PURSUIT

In the past 15 years, states such as Israel and regimes such as the former Rhodesian and the present South African, have invoked a right of hot pursuit, an alleged right to follow guerillas into adjoining states which are supposed to provide sanctuary on a permanent basis for members of national liberation movements. Sometimes this alleged right is associated with the intention to mop up guerilla camps, or it is justified as a reprisal. Both mopping up operations and reprisals are breaches of the territorial integrity of the territory of the adjoining state contrary to Article 2 4 of the UN Charter and therefore illegal.

The present invasion by the Israelis into Tamil Nadu is cause for concern. It goes without saying that the Mossad adopted tactics against the PLO launching its own Palestinian faction which then indulged in activities calculated to horrify the world and isolated the PLO. A similar tactic was used in the recent Meenambakkam airport massacre of 32 innocent people. During a raid the Tamil Nadu police seized the following articles, 100 kgs of gelatin sticks, chemicals like red phosphorous, sodium metal, detonator wires, 90 metres of PVC cable wires, 200 metres of ordinary electric wires and two timing devices, soldering material, crystal capacitator and 1 kg of potassium cyanide normally used for committing suicide.

It is also reported that the crystal capacitator a sophisticated electronic device was of foreign origin. Announcing this at a recent news conference in Madras, K. Mohandoss, Director General of Police crime and intelligence added It appeared that more than one agency was involved in the blast . Airport, customs and police officials passed the suitcases containing the bomb from one hand to the other and now each is trying to pin the blame on the other. It is learnt that the first bomb alert came

around 8.15 p.m. shortly after the Air Lanka flight, on which the baggage had been booked, had taken off. The message was duly conveyed to the airport security, who in turn passed it onto the customs.

Thereafter four other calls were received, the last one around 10.45 p.m. Customs were informed about these calls and they were also told about the identification of the suitcases. In fact, the airport duty officer had personally identified the baggage after checking the tag numbers The caller had mentioned the tag numbers also . In each case security and airport officials seem to have assumed that the customs would remove the baggages. The customs officials are believed to have dismissed the calls as a hoax and were inclined to suspect that the suitcases contained contraband gold. Worse, a senior customs official is reported to have walked out of the airport around 10.10 p.m. even though he had been informed about the bomb. Also surprising is the fact that when finally the matter was taken seriously the public address system was not used. Instead, officials are reported to have tried to meet up with individual passengers awaiting other flights at the airport and informed them about the bomb alert. Another intriguing aspect is that the Indian government has ordered only an inter - departmental administrative inquiry and has not instituted a commission of inquiry. An administrative inquiry which naturally precludes many persons from testifying lead to doubt whether the truth will ever come out and whether any persons will really be held responsible for the delay in removing the baggage. Another interesting factor is the presence of four Sri Lankan detectives who were reported to have already reached Madras from Colombo via Trichi. It is also learnt that a special Air Lanka flight which brought the relatives of the dead on a Monday also had on board some Sri Lankan intelligence officials dressed as crew members.

Erosion of Democracy in Sri Lanka

Lalith Athulathmudali, Cambridge graduate, Sri Lanka's National Security Minister and heir apparent to Jayawardene's presidential throne, threatened during the 1980 general strike to send the striking workers to Kanatte cemetery. Lalith, no longer content with idle threats, has unleashed the Sri Lankan security forces in a bloody campaign of terror against the Tamil population of Northern Sri Lanka since becoming National Security Minister. In March and April 1984, hundreds of thousands of innocent Tamils were terrorised by the armed forces and thousands killed.

In August 1984, in response to an offensive launched by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam the Sri Lankan armed forces responded with indiscriminate attacks on civilian Tamils and their homes. In Valvettiturai the huts of fishermen were destroyed by naval and police attacks- some 3000 people became refugees. In the town of Mannar Jayawardene's drunken soldiers engaged in an orgy of arson and attacks on Tamil speaking Muslims and set fire to over 100 shops. Even Mr. Mohamed, the corrupt Transport Minister was forced to admit to the actions of the troops and promised compensation to the victims.

Well over 100 people had died in this latest round of violence and according to the National Security Minister 400 youths were arrested in Valvettiturai and 100 in Point Pedro by the 10th of August alone. It is believed that as many as 1000 Tamil youths may have been detained by the armed forces. Jaffna the main Tamil town, became a ghost town while only the funeral parlours stayed in business, providing a 24 hour service!

The bankrupt policies of President Jayawardene have brought disaster to Sri Lanka. Inflation is back at 20%, unemployment is over 15%, the rate of economic growth has come down drastically from the average of 6% in 1978-82. The debt service ratio will

be 25% at the end of this year and will go up further in the coming years of world economic downswing. In addition all welfare measures and subsidies on food, education, health, transport and fertilisers have been cut drastically. To continue his mad plans JR seeks yet more loans which will mean the complete subjugation of Sri Lanka to western imperialism. Already decision making on important economic matters is taken out of his hands by the imperialist masters.

The workers movement has re-emerged from the defeat of the 1980 general strike and the 1983 racist pogrom as the main opposition to the ruling class. The plantation workers strike in April 1984 was a great step forward in this respect. Despite the lack of leadership given by the trade union leaders, the workers movement is nevertheless gathering momentum. There is also growing unrest amongst the youth. The recent struggle in the campuses which resulted in the death of two students, shows the determination of the youth to fight against this oppressive government. The peasantry has launched a massive campaign against the new water and land taxes which were introduced with the backing of the IMF. There is also general protest from all people against the increase of taxes and reduction of welfare measures. On top of this the Tamil people have launched a courageous and determined struggle against national oppression. Neither the pseudo heroism of common criminals nor the opportunist antics of Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) leaders could conceal the real mass struggle of the Tamil people. The Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) led by Anura and Srimavo Bandaranaike instead of leading the oppositional masses, has moved into a position of loyal opposition. Anura Bandaranaike has become an indirect prop of Jayawardene's bonapartist dictatorship.

The United National Party government now stumbles from crisis to crisis and is wrecked with internal splits and

(cont. page 6)

Liberation Tiger Victories at Mullaitivu and Point Pedro

About 30 army personnel and police commandos have been killed in two separate incidents involving LTTE at Kokilai near Mullaitivu and Thikkam near Point Pedro.

In the first incident, which has claimed the largest single casualty against the Sri Lankan government forces since July 1983, consisting of a lorry and 3 jeeps was heading towards Point Pedro. At Thikkam the lorry was hit by a land mine which was planted by the LTTE and caused severe damage to the convoy killing 20 of its occupants. LTTE sources confirm that the lorry was carrying the commando unit which was responsible for the death of Capt Ranjan alias Kanaganayakam Gnanenthramohan of the LTTE in an earlier incident.

In a second incident at Kokilai near Mullaitivu 9 Sri Lankan soldiers were killed when a military convoy was blown up by a land mine. In a desperate attempt the Sri Lankan security forces, in what is seemingly becoming common practice returned to the place of the incident and went on the rampage killing innocent civilians and set alight shops and houses belonging to Tamils

Democracy in Sri Lanka

(cont. from page 5)

divisions. There is no possibility that on the basis of capitalism the Tamil national question can be solved in Sri Lanka. The All Party conference has dragged on for eight months with no solution in sight. The Sinhala bourgeois are unable to solve the basic problems of Tamil masses of language, rights, jobs, non-discriminatory education and the right of genuine autonomy i.e. the establishment of Tamil Eelam.

Instead JR proposes the formation of a second chamber (which would not even enjoy the powers of the senate from 1947-71) and in this way at continuing the All Party conference indefinitely. In fact one third of the members of this second chamber would be non-elected government stooges. The bourgeois Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) are willing to compromise the Tamil liberation struggle in return for seats in second chamber.



WHAT THE PAPERS SAY

Tamil guerrillas control north

From Roland Edirisinghe in Colombo

Security forces in the northern peninsula of Sri Lanka were bracing themselves yesterday for a new offensive by the Tamil guerrilla movement.

By mining nearly every road taken by military convoys in the northern peninsula, the guerrillas have succeeded in hemming the police and armed forces into their stations and cantonments. This has given the guerrillas a free run of the peninsula and made them the effective authority there.

As a consequence, day to day life in Jaffna has been totally disrupted. The streets are deserted, the schools remain closed and shops are open for not more than an hour or two a day. An unofficial 24-hour curfew is being observed.

Meanwhile, the full death toll in Saturday's attack on a police commando unit, and the sequel in which police are alleged to have gone on the rampage in the nearby town of Point Pedro, have yet to be officially ascertained. Government sources confirmed yesterday that only four police com-

mandos had been killed when the jeep in which they were travelling was blown up by an explosive device buried in the main highway. Ten other police commandos were injured in the attack, three of them critically.

An official statement on the incident said a relief police task force consisting of a lorry and three jeeps was heading towards Point Pedro. "At Tikkam, the lorry was hit by an explosive device and all those who were in the lorry were killed or injured. Of these, four were killed, three seriously injured, and seven received minor injuries."

"The others in the jeeps dismounted and fired in the direction from which the explosive device had been set off. They recovered the bodies of those killed and injured and took them to the Jaffna hospital with the assistance of the army."

"The terrorist casualties are not known, and no terrorists have been captured in this incident."

"We have also received allegations that in Point Pedro some shops have been burnt and some persons have been killed. The Inspector General of Police has been directed to conduct an inquiry regarding both incidents. A further statement will follow."

The National Security Minister, Mr Athulathmudali, who made the statement, refused to comment on reports that as many as 16 civilians were killed when policemen went on the rampage in Point Pedro after the incident.

Evidence of Sri Lankan atrocities shown

The London Tamil Manram last week called a meeting to highlight the extensive damage caused to life and property when the Sri Lankan navy, launched a shelling attack on the coastal town of Valvettithurai, early this August, in which it is alleged that over 3,000 Tamils were made homeless. The Manram praised the efforts of a few brave men who had dared to film the devastation caused to this coastal town in the North of Sri Lanka and smuggled the film to Britain.

The Sri Lankan government has denied shelling Valvettithurai, but the video tapes appear to show evidence to the contrary. It is alleged that the shelling took place in retaliation for an offensive by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). This fishing community has also experienced hardships by having their fishing areas declared a 'surveillance zone'.

The video film was smuggled back to Britain and watched by a number of journalists. Lord Tony Gifford QC and K. Balu Sekaram of the London Tamil Manram. The film showed the extensive damage that the village had sustained as a result of continuous mortar shelling.

Although the Sri Lankan Minister of National Security said that the security forces had launched a major counter operation against the terrorists in Valvettithurai, he maintained that the damage caused to private property 'as a result of cross-fire' was minimal.

The gaping holes in the walls and roofs of houses, cottages and shops seem to imply that the damage could

only have been caused by mortar shelling. Local men and women allege that about fifty fishermen's boats have been set on fire by the forces.

Members of the fishing town, as a result of being made homeless, are said to be sheltering in temples and community centres.

said that he was sickened, and struck by the details. He drew a broad analogy between the discrimination and repression that is being felt by the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka and the

peoples' homes and property. He regards the film as a valuable piece of evidence that should be shown to the world. He spoke of his recent visit to Sri Lanka and remarked on the



Relam Solidarity Campaign picketed the Israeli Embassy

people of the north of Ireland. In both instances the state apparatus is continuing with a deliberate policy of repression.

The response of Labour MP, Jeremy Corbyn, had also been recorded on the video after he had finished seeing it. He said that he was shocked and appalled by the damage done to the

huge military presence in Jaffna. He also drew attention to a number of countries that were supplying the government of Sri Lanka with military aid.

K. Balu Sekaram of the London Tamil Manram said that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam were the vanguard movement of the Tamil masses.

GUARDIAN September '84

ASIAN TIMES September '84

Holding the line against Sri Lanka's ferocious Tigers

GUARDIAN September '84

From Eric Silver
in Jaffna, Sri Lanka

Northern Sri Lanka is sliding into an intermittent civil war which no one can win. The principal losers are the 500,000 Tamils who live there.

The young Tamil Tigers separatist guerrillas are now better armed, better trained, and better led than in the past. The security services reply in the only way they know — with a show of force which may intimidate the population, but hardly conquers hearts and minds.

Tamils complain that mutual fear and hostility are enhanced by the absence of a common language: the troops deployed in the north are all drawn from the majority Sinhalese community.

Brigadier Nalin Seneviratne, who has been in charge of anti-terrorist operations here

since February, knows now that he has a fight on his hands. The brigadier, a big, unexpectedly genial career officer in an open-necked camouflage shirt with no insignia of rank or regiment, does not underestimate his task.

The frequency of guerrilla operations has increased, he said this week in his headquarters next to Jaffna airport. "The method of their attacks on security forces seems to be more sophisticated, in the way of equipment as well as training. The numbers involved have also increased. Whereas previously eight or 10 were coming on bicycles, now they hijack vehicles on the road and come with two or three vans or lorries.

It could be 20 or 30 terrorists at a time. And to carry out an operation and swing their people around, they are using radio transmitters. Their

command and tactics seem to be well controlled. They know what they are doing. Before it was hit-and-run. Now they're standing and giving the security forces a fight."

The Tigers' weapons, too, are more advanced now, though still in the steam era, if not the days of the horse and buggy. Brigadier Seneviratne reports that they now use sterling sub-machine guns, self-loading rifles, shot-guns and repeaters, as well as more professionally manufactured grenades and hand bombs.

He estimates that the guerrillas have up to 60 men under orders. The number deployed in the Jaffna peninsula has increased in the past month. But he believes the rebels are finding it harder to recruit new fighters.

Asked what evidence he has that they are being trained

across the straits in south India, the brigadier points to the testimony of Tiger prisoners: "Some of them have admitted that they have been trained in India. We have also stopped some boats and they have admitted leaving the shores of India, even giving us the time they left.

"They were bringing equipment across — explosives, commercial gelignite, weapons and ammunition, also propaganda material, posters and leaflets. Some of them even said they were printed in Madras."

He has come across no evidence to support the Government's claim that the guerrillas also receive assistance from the PLO and Libya, although an intelligence officer sitting in on the interview said there had been some signs of this before the brigadier's time.

The brigadier said that no

Israeli or ex-SAS advisers had been sent to help him.

What were his aims? "I am trying to contain the terrorism in the first instance," he replied. "It's difficult to stamp it out completely if they are able to secure sanctuary in some other place I cannot get to."

Did he mean India? "Absolutely. It is impossible for me to stamp it out because they can fight me from that sanctuary whenever they want."

The logic of this is that his job is to hold the line: it is up to the politicians to produce a solution.

Questioned about increasingly convincing reports of indiscipline among security forces, he claimed that they were now more under control. "The Minister of National Security (Mr Lalith Athulathmudali) himself has made it a point to address all

troops when he visits any camp. He has brought to their notice that every man on the street is not a terrorist, and that they should be treated accordingly."

There were signs before this month's round of provocation and response that discipline had been tightened, but foreign correspondents who have visited Mannar and Valvettilural in the north this week and reported seeing houses and shops destroyed by security forces can testify that control is far from universal.

The adroitness and suspicion show on the army side as much as among local people. Significantly, Brigadier Seneviratne helped us find a taxi for the 10-mile drive into town when the interview was over. He preferred not to send us in one of his Jeeps because it might be fired on.



Namibia in Struggle

A delegate from the LIM participated in the 'Namibia Independence Now' campaign conference which was launched by the Namibia Support Committee and the Anti-Apartheid Movement on 10 September in London. The Campaign was launched by the General Secretary of SWAPO. Detailed reports of our participation with the struggle of the Namibian people will follow in our future news Reviews.

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