

SRI LANKA: STATE TERRORISM AND THE TAMIL SPEAKING PEOPLE



Victims of Sri-Lankan State Terrorism

AUGUST 1984

Eelam People's Information Centre.

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The **Far Eastern Economic Review** (20 September 1984) described the relations between the Sri Lankan State and the Tamil speaking People as having reached "The point of no return". The roots of this current political crisis, which has arisen between the State and the Tamil population, in Sri Lanka lies in part in the pogroms organised and executed by the State against the Tamil speaking people since 1977.

The degree and brutality of these periodic, genocidal attacks, suitably cloaked in the rhetoric of "Sinhalese-Tamil conflicts", have escalated over the years: attacks which at first (in 1956 and 1958) affected Tamils living in some of the areas populated by the majority Sinhalese speaking population now effect the entire Tamil speaking people.

The escalation has also been one of kind: whereas earlier pogroms were carried out by armed Sinhalese thugs, encouraged and directed, and protected, by the government in power, more recent pogroms (August 1977, August 1981 and July 1983) have seen the active participation of the armed forces in acts of atrocities against the Tamils. Thus, the terrorism unleashed by the Sri Lankan State against the Tamil speaking people is now conducted directly by the "security" forces.



August 1984: Destruction of property by the Sri Lankan Army



August 1984: Murdered victim of the State Security Forces



August 1984: Victims of torture by the State Security Forces

தமிழ்த் தேசிய ஆவணச் சுவடிகள்



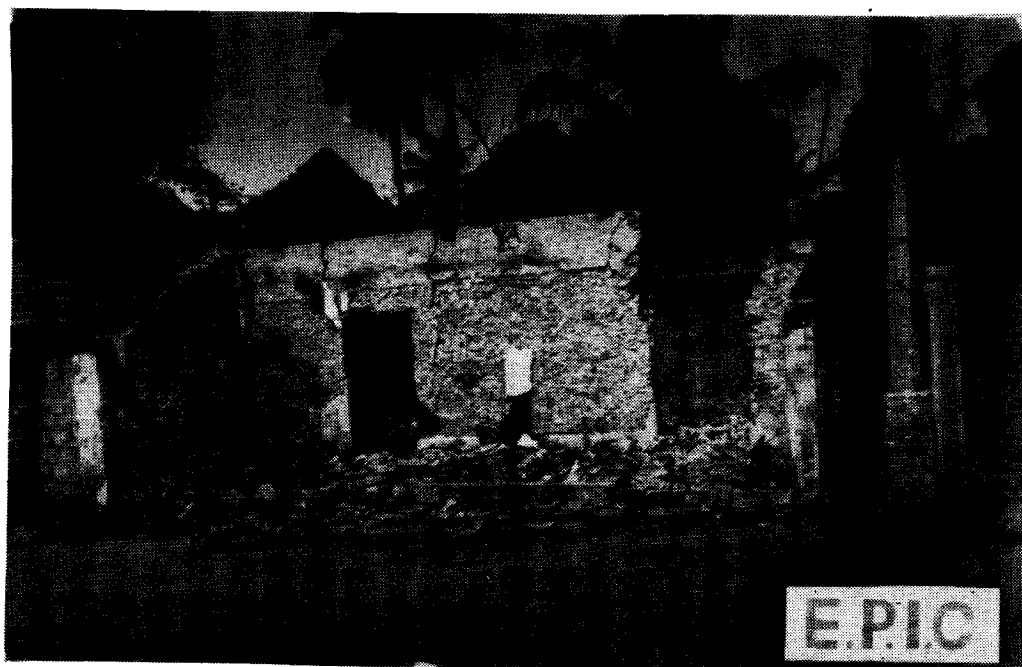
Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) posters all over Eelam condemning Sri-Lankan-Israeli connection.

VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

“Security” operations, that is, the atrocities committed against Eelam people in violation of the United Nations Charter of Human Rights, have required the introduction of draconian legislation in order to protect those who issue the orders for, and execute the acts of, terrorism. Under the 1979 Prevention of Terrorism Act (modelled on South African legislation), a person could be detained without trial for up to 18 months and confessions extracted by the Police have become admissible as evidence. *Habeus Corpus* has been suspended and persons arrested by the police or armed forces often “disappear”, only to turn up later as mutilated and decomposing corpses strewn along streets. Torture of suspects is routinely practised.

Not surprisingly, the **Daily Telegraph** (15 August 1984) reported that in Jaffna, the principal city in Eelam, “Undertakers are working round the clock”.

However, State terrorism has failed to intimidate the Tamil speaking people or blunt their just struggle for freedom. In desperation, the State has sought assistance from counter-insurgency “experts” in Britain (officially described as ex-SAS officers) and Mossad in Israel in order to “refine” its terrorist tactics. The role of Mossad in Sri Lanka is of particular interest.



August 1984: Houses destroyed by the Sri Lankan Army

The genocidal nature of State terrorism against the Tamils has its roots in a “theory” of racial supremacy which has, and continues to, inform the world view of those who wield political power and who control the State apparatuses.

Just as the Nazis in Germany had claimed that the Germans belonged to the Aryan Race, the dominant ideology among the right-wing Sinhalese is the belief that the Sinhalese people are Aryans; again, as Adolf Hitler had claimed that Germans had only Germany, reactionary Sinhalese politicians have repeatedly asserted that the Sinhalese have only Sri Lanka. This world view had led the Nazis to launch the Holocaust. Whilst in Sri Lanka, the anti-Tamil politicians among the Sinhalese have rationalised the State-sponsored extermination of the Tamils on the preposterous argument that there are more than 50 million Tamils in South India and that, therefore, the elimination of Tamils in Sri Lanka would cause no material harm to the prospects of Tamils surviving as a people in the world as a whole.

Progressive sections among the Tamil speaking people responded to this emergence and growth of a Sri Lankan variant of Neo-Nazism – which, for a while, was masked by the symbols and rhetoric of Sinhala-Buddhist revivalism – by organising a Resistance Movement in the mid-1970s. The State, in turn, responded by escalating the level of violence against the Tamils. The then Prime Minister, Mr. J.R. Jeyawardene, set the stage for the 1977 pogrom by his bellicose declaration in Parliament (18 August) that: “If the Tamils want war, I will give you war”. His statement was broadcast repeatedly over the state-owned radio every half an hour; the pogrom followed, in which Tamils were killed in their hundreds and over 100,000 of them, who were made refugees, fled to the safety of Eelam (the northern and eastern regions of Sri Lanka which is the traditional homeland of the Tamils). This State terrorism against the Tamil speaking people and the defacto segregation of the Tamils have been repeated in 1981 and 1983, and they continue to be the unstated policies of the Sri Lankan Government.

State terrorism against the Tamil speaking people revealed an additional dimension of cultural genocide when, on June 1st 1981, the Jaffna Public Library was burnt down by the Police. About 100,000 volumes and irreplaceable manuscripts were destroyed, thus depriving the Tamils of a unique record of their literary heritage.



August 1984: More destruction by the State Army

LOSS OF LIFE AND PROPERTY

In the past year, (July 1983) the army of occupation in Eelam has repeatedly and indiscriminately attacked the Tamil civilian population, killing more than a thousand and destroying valuable property.

- * June/July 1983: In Colombo, almost all business establishments and most of the houses owned by Tamils were attacked, looted or burnt. The death toll has been estimated at between 800 and 1,000.
- * On two separate massacres carried out by the State in the Welikada Prison, a total of 53 Tamil political prisoners were murdered.
- * June/July 1983: In Trincomalee, 214 houses were burnt and about 200 Tamils were killed.
- * 23rd/24th July: In Jaffna, the Army went on rampage and killed 50 Tamils, including 6 children and an old man of 83. During a subsequent rampage on 26th/27th, the Army murdered scores more, including a University lecturer and students, bringing the total deaths to about 100.
- * Tamils living in the plantation areas were attacked, notably in Kandy, Ratnapura, Badulla, Nuwara Eliya, Matale, Gampola and Monaragala, resulting a death toll of about 500.
- * Between July and September 1984, "security forces" or, more appropriately, the death squads run by the Government, have carried out atrocities in Vadamarachchi, Valvettithurai, Jaffna, Chunnakkam, Vavuniya and Mannar, and murdered over 50 people.



June 1984: Protest by the Muslim people against the opening of an Israeli Section in Colombo

THE ISRAELI CONNECTION

The Government of Israel, which does not have diplomatic relations with the Sri Lankan Government, set up an Israeli Interest Section in the United States Embassy (**Jerusalem Post International**, 3rd-10th June 1984). The Israelis have evidently offered the Sri Lankan State the "West Bank Solution" as an effective way of resolving the crisis between the State and the Tamil speaking people: this consists of three major tactics:

1. general measures to terrorise the Tamil population:
 2. a systematic destruction of the social and economic infrastructure in Eelam:
- and
3. induce the out-migration of the Tamil population in order to weaken the popular base of the Resistance Movement.

An additional objective of the Israelis appears to be the encouragement of atrocities against the Tamil speaking people by the armed forces so as to isolate the Sri Lankan Government from the international community: thereby make the state more dependent on Israel and, by extension, on the United States. Such an eventuality will also assist the Israelis in their global expansion of Zionist influence.



June 1984: Protest by the Muslim people against the opening of an Israeli Section in Colombo

Opposition to Israeli intervention is growing and has come particularly from the Muslim community in Eelam.

The Tamil speaking people gratefully acknowledge the solidarity expressed by the Middle Eastern countries in this regard.

The Tamil people are, therefore, struggling against State terrorism, inspired by Neo-Nazi tendencies, and the expansion of Zionist influence in Asia. This is a struggle which the Tamil speaking people must win and will win in order to secure the future of not only the Tamils but also of Sri Lanka as a whole.

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