



The Fall of Peace

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) withdrew from the six-month old peace talks as its ultimatum to the Sri Lankan government ended on 19 April. Earlier, the LTTE announced a 28 March deadline to the government demanding 1) the total lifting of the economic blockade 2) closing of the Pooneryn army camp, south-west of the Jaffna peninsula 3) the removal of the ban on fishing 4) freedom of movement for armed Tiger fighters in the east.

The 28 March ultimatum was announced after Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunge rejected the four LTTE demands in a 7 March letter stating that these could have serious military repercussions if granted outside the framework of an established and durable peace. Following the LTTE deadline President Kumaratunge, in a letter to LTTE leader V.Prabhakaran on 24 March said that the government was willing to lift the ban on fishing and remove the economic blockade.

President Kumaratunge also suggested a date between 2nd and 10th April for the fourth round of talks. Tamil MPs and Tamil observers have pointed out that agreements with the LTTE, particularly those relating to the economic blockade, were not being implemented by the government. The army seemed to be taking its own decisions, refusing to allow items on which the ban had been removed by the government. As April approached, a government appeared to be waking from long sleep show-

ing deep interest to continue peace talks and announcing a removal on the ban on fishing and the lifting of the economic blockade. It was clear that the government was aiming, not at peace, but at the Sri Lanka Paris Aid Group meeting scheduled for 27 and 28 April.

LTTE leader Prabhakaran welcomed Ms Kumaratunge's decision in his letter and agreed for the government and LTTE delegations to meet in Jaffna on 10 April for the fourth round of talks. Mr Prabhakaran, however, emphasised the need to implement government decisions and alleviate the long sufferings of the Tamil people of the North-East, before political negotiations could commence. Although the LTTE had requested the inclusion of members in the government negotiating team who would be able to continue to participate over a period of time with a mandate to take decisions on crucial issues the government continued to send personal friends of Ms Kumaratunge stating that the government team would include negotiators with authority to take decisions, only when political negotiations begin. Observers, however say the People's Alliance, which has been out of power for 17 years, is unable to find suitable people with negotiating skills to tackle complex issues.

Colombo University's History and Political Science lecturer Jayadeva Uyangoda, Head of MIRJE Charles Abeysekera and Anglican Bishop Kenneth Fernando joined the government delegation headed by Presidential Secretary K.Balapatabendi, "visiting" Jaffna on 10 April. Army's Brigadier Siri Peiris and Navy's Captain Rajaratne were included to watch the military's interests. Mr. Abeysekera, a prominent leader in the NGO

world is also the Chairman of the Languages Commission, while Mr Uyangoda has been appointed Chairman of the Sri Lanka Foundation in addition to his duties as lecturer.

Political observers say that it is a government ploy to provide positions with attractive remuneration to human rights activists creating phoney and powerless commissions to keep them quiet and occupied. It is the opinion of many Tamils that Mr. Abeysekera and Mr. Uyangoda have already compromised their valuable neutral positions by agreeing to be members of the government team.

Despite optimism, the fourth round of talks, ended in deadlock. After meeting the government team along with ministers Lakshman Kadirgamar and GL Peiris during her holiday in Nuwara Eliya, President Kumaratunge wrote to Prabhakaran on 12 April informing that the demands relating to the closing of the Pooneryn camp and the armed LTTE fighters' movement in the east cannot be met, but this decision would be reviewed after three months. This move by President Kumaratunge was described by some intellectuals and politicians in Colombo as 'a brilliant political manoeuvre'.

Tamils however, argue that the President acting in a shabby manner is beginning to show her true colours. Tamils say except the issue that relates to allowing armed LTTE cadre to move freely in the East, the other three issues relate to the suffering of the people and there is no justifiable the President to consider them as simply "demands" by the LTTE and need to be negotiated with them.

In his letter of 19 April withdrawing from the talks Mr. Prabhakaran says "The removal of the economic embargo is the only constructive decision we were able to obtain from you as a result of appraising you of the true situation during the talks that took place over the last six months".

A statement on 23 April from the LTTE's International Secretariat in London says that to describe the granting of basic human rights of life and livelihood to a section of the country's own citizens as "concessions" and "privileges" is surely a hark back to the same attitude adopted by the Sinhalese governments in the past.

The statement further says: "Even on the question of the lifting of the economic embargo --- the government was guilty of bad faith on two counts: While a propaganda blitz was launched from the Colombo and international media, and directed at donor countries, that the economic embargo was fully lifted, not even a fraction of what was agreed and gazetted, has been reaching the Tamil people in the north. The military authorities at the Vavuniya checkpoints have been seeing to that----".

"Count Two: The government has been using the relaxing of the embargo and fishing ban as a bargaining chip, as was proved even by the recent acts of government in reimposing the economic embargo and the ban on fishing, soon after the LTTE withdrew from the peace process. The latest announcement ---is that the Kilali route from the peninsula has also been made out of bounds which means helicopters are free to strafe all boats that use this crossing"

The LTTE statement also accuses the government of simply talking of a "political package", but not making it public while the LTTE has spelt out the four basic principles for a political solution that would be acceptable. The four principles are the same

tabled at the 1985 Thimpu conference by all the Tamil militant groups and the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF):

1) Recognition of the Tamils as a nation; 2) Recognition of the Tamil Homeland; 3) Recognition of the Tamil right to self-determination; 4) The granting of fundamental rights and freedoms to the Tamil people.

The statement concluded by saying "----the LTTE has not closed its mind, or its doors towards an eventual durable peace. At the same time it cannot drop its guard, as long as the Sri Lankan government persists with its hidden agenda of a military option".

Since the withdrawal from the peace talks the LTTE has sunk two naval gunboats. It has also brought down two aircraft with surface-to-air missiles. Observers say the use of missiles thrusts the whole conflict into a new dimension. The military has begun bombing and shelling civilian areas and thousands of Tamils have been arrested in the east, Colombo and the Hill Country.

The government is increasingly criticised for the failure to disclose its devolution package. The Tamils now suspect that the President and her government have nothing to offer. The Tamil representatives say that their efforts to find a durable solution are being thwarted by the government's attitude and they may be forced to withdraw their support to the government. The intransigency of the government has led to various rumours and assumptions. There is a strong view among the Tamils and political observers among the Sinhalese that the government fears on three counts to make public its devolution package. Firstly, devolution may be decried as "giving too much to the Tamils", by other parties, particularly the opposition UNP. Secondly, the Tamils may reject the proposals as "giving too little too late". But most importantly, the President and her government may well

be aware that components of a separate Tamil state are already existence within the island of Sri Lanka which have not been fully disclosed to the Sinhalese people. It would shock the people in the South if it is disclosed, and the blame would fall on the new government. Observers say, for this reason both parties are blaming each other.

Whatever the reason, it is apparent that the government is desperate in its attempt to neutralise the growing recognition among the international community that the country may be on the path to separation by the actions of successive governments.

The attempt to amend the constitution is the recent strategy of the government to hoodwink the international community and to satisfy the Sinhalese masses. The first working draft on the new constitution published by the government has disappointed even some of its supporters.

The foremost place given to Buddhism in the 1978 Constitution which militates against the multi-racial and multicultural society has been retained in the Article 6 of the draft. Justice Minister G L Peiris has already assured Buddhist high priests that Buddhism will continue to enjoy constitutional status and government patronage. Observers believe that other articles such as Article 6 (National Flag shall be the Sinhalese Lion Flag), Article 7 (National Anthem shall be the Sinhalese Sri Lanka Matha) will be retained. Article 79 of the draft says "Parliament shall not abdicate or in any manner alienate its legislative power and shall not set up any authority with any legislative power." This provision will prevent the setting up of a federal system and it follows that article 2 of the 1978 Constitution which says that "Sri Lanka shall be a Unitary State" will also be retained.

Minister Peiris seems to believe

that constitutional changes should not upset the Sinhalese people. He seems not worried about the feelings and aspirations of the Tamils. Reports say that he proposes to strengthen the fundamental rights provisions. But from the draft it is clear that the Tamils will continue to suffer under the proposed constitution.

Article 16(1) of the draft says all existing legislation will continue, which means the Prevention of Terrorism Act, used to kill thousands of civilians, will continue to be in force. There is no provision for review of existing legislation by Parliament or by a commission within a specified time limit. Although Articles 17(1) and 112 provide remedy for infringement of fundamental rights by executive or administrative action, the provision for judicial review of laws (Article 110(2)) limits the time for application to two years.

Under Article 15 of the draft, all fundamental rights are derogable, including the right to life and the right not to be subject to torture, which is a violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The only non-derogable rights under the fundamental rights chapter in the draft are provided for by Article 10(4) relating to privacy, family, home, correspondence and unlawful attacks on honour and reputation. Further, all other fundamental rights articles are applicable to all persons. But Article 12(2) applies only to citizens. This means that non-citizens can be discriminated against on grounds of ethnic group, religion, language, caste, sex, political opinion or place of birth. Because of the citizenship problem which has devastated the lives of over a million plantation Tamils, observers suspect a hidden government agenda in this provision.

Article 19 of the draft takes away the power of Parliament to amend or repeal any existing law relating to the official language. Article 19 has the effect of reviving the Official

Language Act 1956 which has remained dormant under the Thirtieth Amendment to the Constitution since 1987.

Some of the Articles in the draft will perpetuate the discrimination against the Plantation Tamils. Although Article 7 provides that no distinction shall be made between citizens by descent and by registration, Article 8 says sections 23 and 24 of the Citizenship Act will apply to those who acquired citizenship by registration. Sections 23 and 24 of the Citizenship Act provide for the loss of citizenship. Article 9 of the draft says that Articles 7 and 8 will apply to all existing legislation on citizenship. This means, for example, a registered citizen by descent will lose citizenship if he/she lives outside the country for five years, whereas a citizen by descent will not. The vast majority of the plantation Tamils will be affected as they are registered citizens under the Citizenship Act 1948, Indian and Pakistani Residents (Citizenship) Act 1949, Indo-Ceylon Agreement (Implementation) Act 1967, Grant of Citizenship to Stateless Persons Act 1986 and the Grant of Citizenship to Stateless Persons (Special Provisions) Act 1988.

Article 13(7) of the draft refers to arrest, detention and deportation under the Immigrants and Emigrants Act and the Indo-Ceylon Agreement (Implementation) Act, which have exclusively applied to Plantation Tamils. Article 13(7) is totally unnecessary as the government claims that the citizenship problem has been solved by the 1986 and 1988 laws referred to above.

The draft proposals illustrate that the government is not serious about solving the Sri Lankan problem through devolution. Tamil observers are doubtful that the "devolution package" of the government will have provisions to satisfy the aspirations of the Tamil people.

In a statement to the press President Kumaratunge says the Sri Lan-

kan government is now considering a military response to the LTTE attacks. She has also dropped the "peace-loving" facade worn before the Paris Aid Group meeting and says LTTE leader V. Prabhakaran killed former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in cold blood. She also says that she is on the Tiger hit-list and accused LTTE as a "ruthless armed group". Surprised observers say she has forgotten that the Rajiv Gandhi murder trial is still continuing and none of the accused have still been found guilty. She has also forgotten her own statement when she appointed commissions to inquire into the killings of former Sri Lankan President R.Premadasa, former DUNF leader Lalith Athulathmudali and her husband Vijay Kumaranatunge. She said that people should not rush to conclusions and accuse anyone, but await the outcome of the enquiries.

Meanwhile, Tamils including the peace makers, NGOs and others who are trying to create a climate for open dialogue between the LTTE and the government have alleged that it was incorrect and a blunder on the part of the President to consider the LTTE as simply an "armed group". The LTTE has grown into an effective, strong and determined body representing the aspirations of the Tamil people for freedom from oppression and tyranny. Perhaps it was intentional on the part of the President Chandrika to make a reference to it as a "group" to avoid recognition of the LTTE as having equal status. Some observers say that this is to satisfy India, as otherwise it would be difficult for India to seek LTTE leader Prabhakaran's arrest and extradition to stand trial. Keeping LTTE within the definition as a "group" would also have many other advantages to Sri Lanka. But, what the government is failing to understand is that if a positive dialogue is to develop for a negotiated settlement, the LTTE must be recognised as a force to reckon with. Only as

equals both parties could reach agreement and bring an end to the war. Tamil people, including those who are opposed to the LTTE accept the position that the LTTE is no longer an armed group and if the government has a genuine desire to bring about a lasting solution to the Tamil problem it must accept the reality and begin positive dialogue as equals.

The statement of President Kumaratunge came, not immediately after the planes were shot down by the LTTE, but after three days of discussions. Some observers believe that the statement is calculated. The direct accusation of Mr. Prabhakaran may mean that a secret discussion was held in India for his extradition and that Sri Lanka may now seek military assistance from India. Tamil observers say that President Chandrika's attitude has changed following her visit to India. Though the President and the government of Sri Lanka continue to say that they have not sought any military help from India to fight the war against the LTTE, political sources say that the President had asked and India has offered help with conditions, beginning with a new friendship treaty for 25 years. Observers also say the proposed treaty would dent the sovereignty of Sri Lanka. The Indian proposal inevitably has led the President and the government to shop around for military assistance elsewhere. Chandrika Kumaratunge who has been talking peace and who received a massive people's mandate for peace, now talks of war. Her new stance will be a bitter disappointment for millions of people, particularly the Tamils at home and abroad longing for peace. If she has to hold on to power, she has to please at least someone. Analysts say she will please the military.

Growing dissension..... Why should we be treated as second class citizens

There is a growing appreciation among foreigners, especially journalists and NGO representatives about the manner in which the North is being administered. This was the general opinion of the peace-makers and negotiators who have visited the North and the many Tamils who visit Colombo to attend to various personal matters.

To many of those who have experienced the administrative machinery in the South - corruption, mis-management, bureaucratic red tape, discrimination, political interference and break-down of law and order - the manner in which the North, viewed as a separate state, is being governed by the LTTE may come as a surprise. Some observers however, have raised doubts whether the strict discipline in administration will continue without the armed LTTE.

The growth of the LTTE and the administrative machinery developed in the North have no doubt strengthened the position of the Tamils in Sri Lanka. The government of Sri Lanka can no longer ignore the legitimate rights and aspirations of the Tamil speaking people of Sri Lanka. They have been forced to accept the reality and become a proper government working towards the welfare, security and development of all citizens.

Murugesu Sinnathamby, a teacher from the North who visited Colombo recently to attend a wedding. He said over the telephone to London - " We don't need to ask for equal status for Tamil. Tamil is the language of administration in the North. We are no longer worried about how we will be treated in the South. No matter how long Tamils have settled and

what their social and political status is, the Tamils living in the South continue to remain as second class citizens, still fighting for the right to use their language, seek employment and compete to enter universities. Tamils in Colombo are living with eternal fear of being arrested, detained, harassed, threatened and sometimes tortured. This is not how the Tamils in the North are living. I may not accept all what the LTTE does, but I am certainly proud of them. They have brought to existence the taste of freedom from oppression. Yes, LTTE needs to address complaints against them on human rights. They must look inwards and correct their mistakes. They are aware that changes are necessary and have shown willingness to change. People are also beginning to change their views about LTTE. They need support and encouragement.

" I will certainly not stay in a place where I am treated like a second class citizen. Look at what is happening! The Tamil MP (referring to Joseph Pararajasingham) who has polled the highest number of votes in the Batticaloa Tamil District still arguing for equal status for the Tamil language. What response is he receiving? Only a patient hearing from the Language Commission. Can they solve the problem? The answer is no. Because, they don't have the will, inclination and power. Why should we look for concessions? Now, we have a place of our own. Let us consider the development of our land, our language, our culture and our people. This is a major task and the Tamils need every help that they can get, including from the Sinhalese people who are longing for peace in the island.



TIC ACCESSION LIST

A selection of documents received by the Centre in March/April 1995

SHR 3468

First working draft for consideration by Select Committee of Parliament on the Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs; 1994

DESCRIPTORS: Select Committee / Peace Initiative / Constitution / Sri Lanka / Ethnic Problem

SHR 3469

A step towards solving the ethnic conflict

Sri Lanka: Democratic People's Liberation Front; 14 December 1994

3p.

DESCRIPTORS: Peace Initiative / Ethnic Problem / Sri Lanka / PLOTE

SHR 3470

The amendments and proposals for the consideration of the Select Committee on the Constitution of the D.S.R. of Sri Lanka by Karavai Kandasamy

Sri Lanka: Democratic People's Liberation Front; 14th November 1994

12p.

DESCRIPTORS: Peace Proposal / Sri Lanka

SHR 3472

Press release: Sri Lankan government engaged in cosmetic exercises?

Tamil Eelam: LTTE Head Quarters; 27th February 1995

3p

DESCRIPTORS: Peace Initiative / Negotiation / LTTE / Sri Lankan Government

SHR 3500

Entru Mudiyum Engal Poaddikal? by S.K.Mahendran

Canada: International Human Cultural Association; 1st November 1994

298p

DESCRIPTORS: Political History / Sri Lankan Tamils

SHR 3501

Supplementary Report to the initial report of the state party of Sri Lanka on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child

Colombo: The NGO Forum on the Rights of the Child; November 1994

DESCRIPTORS: Children/ Sri Lanka / Rights

SHR 3502

The peace process and the incident near St. Sebastian's; Mannar

Jaffna: UTHR; 15 October 1994

4p.

DESCRIPTORS: Killing /Civilian /Mannar District / Human Rights Violation /Security Forces / Recommendation

SHR 3503

Padaviya - Weli Oya: bearing the burden of ideology

Jaffna: UTHR; 13 February 1995

3p.

DESCRIPTORS: Colonisation / Genocide / Tamil Homeland

SHR 3506

Into Tiger territory: a visit to Sri Lanka's Northern Province

7p (Unpublished document)

DESCRIPTORS: Visit Report / Economic Blockade /Northern Province

SHR 3507

Privatisation of plantation management and the working class by Sunil Bastian

33p (Unpublished document)

DESCRIPTORS: Plantation Workers / Up-Country Tamils

SHR 3510

Hand-book for peace activists: commentary on the peace proposals of the World Solidarity Forum and answers to questions arising from them.

Colombo: World Solidarity Forum Sri Lankan Group; November 1993

42p

DESCRIPTORS: Peace Initiative /

Human Rights Violation / Situation Report / North-Eastern Province / Southern Province / Muslims/ Aid / Children / Buddhism / NGOs

SHR 3511

Notice to rejected Sri Lankan asylum seekers returning to Sri Lanka on a voluntary or forced basis and other related documents

Colombo: UNHCR; July 1994

11p

DESCRIPTORS: Deportation / Sri Lankan Tamil /Refugees / Switzerland

SHR 3514

A proposal for a federal political structure for Sri Lanka

Colombo: MIRJE; 1995

12P

DESCRIPTORS: Peace Initiative / Sri Lanka /Ethnic Problem

SHR 3518

Press release: LTTE releases sixteen more war prisoners

Tamil Eelam: LTTE Head Quarters; 18th March 1995

1p.

DESCRIPTORS: Press Release / LTTE / Detention/ Prisoners / Hunger Strike

SHR 3517

Treatment and rehabilitation of cancer patients in North-East Sri Lanka

Middlesex: CANE

4p.(Unpublished document)

DESCRIPTORS: Health / North-Eastern Province / Statistics

SHR 3523

A democratic constitution for Sri Lanka

Colombo: The Movement For Constitutional Reform

104p

DESCRIPTORS: Proposal / Constitution / Sri Lanka

Amnesty concerned over unclear mandate of disappearance commissions

Amnesty International says in a report published in April titled "Sri Lanka: Time for Truth and Justice" that mandate of the three commissions into disappearances might unduly restrict the scope of investigations. Amnesty is further concerned that the limits imposed on the commissions' scope and functions should not prevent the important process of uncovering the truth and seeking justice.

President Chandrika Kumaratunge appointed the three independent commissions of inquiry in November 1994 to investigate the thousands of disappearances and extrajudicial executions since 1 January 1988. The commissions were appointed for three separate areas: Western, Southern and Sabragamuwa provinces; Central, North-Western, North-Central and Uva provinces; North-East province.

The mandate of the commissions does not explicitly stipulate that extrajudicial executions fall within the scope of the investigations and there appears to be uncertainty among the commissioners themselves about the mandate. Amnesty says that there is also uncertainty among commissioners as to whether or not the investigation of short-term disappearances (that is people who were held in unacknowledged detention for a period of time but who were later "released" or somehow found their way into official custody) would be included in the mandate. Investigation of these cases is important because they would be able to provide evidence of the *modus operandi* of the security forces and others responsible for many "long-term" and as yet unclassified disappearances. Amnesty further adds that whether abductions of people suspected as "traitors" by the LTTE would fall within the commissions' mandate is also unclear.

Amnesty International has observed lack of consistency between the three commissions in their approach to

their mandate and has recommended that a mechanism is set up through which the three commissions solve issues involving interpretation of mandate and consistency in methodology.

As the existence of three separate commissions may make it difficult for the full truth to emerge about the underlying structural, institutional or policy factors which allowed widespread human rights violations, Amnesty has urged the three commissions to produce one consolidated report. The final report must be made widely available throughout the country and the government should announce the steps in response to the report within a reasonable period of time from its submission to the President.

Amnesty International is concerned that the commissions are mandated only to investigate cases after 1 January 1988, pointing out that it has documented over 680 disappearances in the north-east from 1984 to mid-1987. There were also 12 disappearances in the south in 1987. (The Tamil Information Centre has already pointed out that killings before 1984, particularly the murder of 53 Tamil political prisoners in Welikada prison will not be investigated and that the beginning date of the commissions' mandate has been chosen to exclude most of the disappearances and extra-judicial executions of Tamils but to include those of Sinhalese people in the south).

There is also concern that security forces accused of grave human rights violations continue to hold office and may interfere with investigations, notably in the north-east where concern pertains to police, the army, Home Guards and armed militant groups. Amnesty has urged the President to consider granting the commissions power to

order the suspension from duty of members of security forces responsible for violation falling within their mandate. Amnesty has also urged the government to ensure that complainants, witnesses, lawyers, commissioners and others involved are protected from violence or intimidation.

Amnesty International has further recommended that witnesses, including civilian or military officials, whether retired or in active service, should be compelled to co-operate with the commissions and be liable to be held in contempt if they refuse to give evidence and the commissions should be given access to statements, documentary evidence and other information held by the security forces, legal and medical records and existing court files.

Conflicting statements by ministers and the President has raised doubts over government policy on punishment of offenders and Amnesty has urged the government to clarify its position on the prosecution of the (TIC has learnt that according to some officials at the Ministry of Defence there will be no more prosecutions of security force members. Since hostilities between the Army and LTTE began on 19 April, there have been calls in the south to scrap the north-east commission).

Amnesty International has urged the government to act promptly to ensure that those responsible for grave human rights violations are brought to justice. This principle, Amnesty says, should apply wherever such people happen to be, whatever the nationality of the perpetrators or victims and no matter how much time has elapsed since the commission of the crime.

Amnesty has also urged the government to repeal the Indemnity (Amendment) Act as a sign of its commitment to bring those responsible for human rights violations to justice.

MARCH DIARY

MARCH 01

PEACE PROCESS ON COURSE: Speaking at the opening of the offices of the public Utilities Commission President Chandrika Kumaratunga refuted claims made by the LTTE that the government was not co-operating in taking forward the peace process.

MARCH 02

HUNGER STRIKE: Sixteen policemen held as Prisoners of War by the LTTE for nearly four years went on a hunger strike demanding the government to lift the economic embargo imposed on the northern Tamils with a view to facilitate their release.

MARCH 03

EDUCATING THE BACKWARD: Batticaloa District Education Enlightenment Society decided to help the students in Year 5 and GCE O/L from the educationally backward areas in the district through free lessons and the supply of revision materials and examination guides.

MARCH 04

AUTHORITY FOR REHABILITATION OF NORTH: In a letter to the President, the LTTE requested the government to appoint an independent Authority with full powers consisting of representatives of the Government & LTTE to plan and implement the rehabilitation programme in the North.

MARCH 05

COST OF PEACE: Deputy Defence Minister Col. Ratwatte visiting troops at Thandikulam check point in Vavuniya informed them that the Cessation of Hostilities agreement was holding well and the end of war would not throw soldiers out of employment as they would be engaged in development activities.

MARCH 06

RECONSTRUCTION OF NORTH: The Presidential Secretariat requested the LTTE to nominate two members to serve in the President's Special Task Force for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the North.

REPATRIATION OF REFUGEES: Five hundred and one Tamil refugee families left the Indian port of Rameswaram on their way to Mannar.

MARCH 07

DIPLOMATS IN JAFFNA: Senior officials from the embassies of 12 countries including USA, Japan, UK and Canada met LTTE officials in Jaffna and held discussions on the peace process and reconstruction.

MARCH 08

JAFFNA STUDENT PROTEST: Jaffna University students organised a protest march supported by all school students in Jaffna over the discriminatory cut-off points affecting the entry of Tamil students to the Universities.

MARCH 09

INDUSTRIAL STRIFE: Seven hundred plantation workers of the Liddesdale Estate in Nuwara Eliya District kept away from work over unmet trade union demands.

MARCH 10

BEEFING UP THE ARMY: Walk-in interviews were held at several army recruitment centres to select 2,000 soldiers for new infantry battalions.

MARCH 11

FISHERMEN ASSAULTED: Thevasigamani (55 yrs), K.Rajendram (45 yrs) and Thambiah (42 yrs) were arrested by the navy while fishing at 6.30 a.m. off the coast of Nagarkovil in Jaffna District and

were being held at Kankesanthurai. Complaints were also made to ICRC over the assault on seven other fishermen in the same area.

MINISTER AGAINST EMBARGO: In an interview to a Tamil daily, acting Minister of Planning and Ethnic Affairs, Jeyaraj Fernandopulle said that a total lifting of the economic embargo on the North was a necessity.

MARCH 12

SEARCH OPERATIONS: Kottaimunai and Thandavan areas of Batticaloa were cordoned off by the security forces who conducted a detailed search on all villagers.

MARCH 13

FISHERMEN ARRESTED: Two fishermen were arrested by the navy at sea off the Sulipuram coast in Jaffna District and were held at Karainagar base. Their boats were impounded and the nets damaged by the soldiers.

MARCH 14

SEARCHES IN EAST: Mudaliyar, Adigar and Kallady Roads in Batticaloa were surrounded by police and Army personnel in the evening. In the search of all houses even that of the Mayor was not spared and resulted in the Mayor complaining to the authorities about this humiliation.

MARCH 15

DIPLOMAT IN BATTICALOA: Norwegian Development Co-operation Minister with Norwegian officials and those from NORAD spent the second day at Batticaloa to ascertain the ground situation for future development efforts.

MARCH 16

AUSTRALIAN ASSESSMENT: The Second Secretary of the Australian High Commission toured Batticaloa to assess the situation prior to embarking on development aid in

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the area.

MARCH 17

ARMY CHIEF ON WAR EFFORT:

Commander of the army Lt. General Gerry de Silva told Reuters that soldiers wished peace more than anyone else as a military solution is nowhere near after 11 years of confrontation.

MARCH 18

PRISONERS OF WAR RELEASED:

Thirteen policemen and a soldier held by the LTTE for nearly four years were released to the ICRC after a hunger strike staged by them.

ARREST OF PLANTATION TAMILS:

Three Tamils in the plantations were arrested by the Hatton Police on suspicion of links with the LTTE.

MARCH 19

ARSON ATTACK: Dwellings of plantation workers at Udalage Estate in Ratnapura District were burnt down by unidentified persons.

MARCH 20

EXTORTION IN EAST DENIED:

The Sammanthurai-Batticaloa Branch of the LTTE has in a communique denied allegations that it was engaged in any extortion and has reiterated that all fund raising had in fact been suspended as from 08 January 1995.

MARCH 21

MEANINGFUL DEVOLUTION:

At a seminar on "Official Language Policy and Ethnic Strife" held at the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute, President Chandrika Kumaratunga stressed that meaningful devolution of powers is the only way for permanent peace.

MARCH 22

INDIA WELCOMES PEACE EFFORTS:

Presidential Secretariat issued a statement refuting certain

reports in the national press and reiterated that the Indian government had in fact welcomed the peace moves of the Sri Lankan government.

MARCH 23

INDUSTRIAL ACTION:

Plantation workers at the Dayagama Estate in Nuwara Eliya District staged a strike over 16 demands relating to conditions of employment.

MARCH 24

FISHERMEN TARGETED:

Soldiers at the Mandaitivu Island army camp in Jaffna District fired on fishermen at sea in the evening disrupting all fishing activity.

MARCH 25

LTTE MEDICAL SCHOOL:

Entrance examinations to the Health Assistants Training Course for the Jaffna District were held at the Jaffna Hindu College. The examinations for the Wannai District were held at the Kilinochchi Maha Vidyalayam for

SABRE RATTLING:

Air force's Avro aircraft flew several reconnaissance missions over Vadamaradchchi and its coast in Jaffna District.

MARCH 26

SEARCHES IN MANNAR:

All house at Ward No.4 and Kevi areas of Pesalai in Mannar District were searched in the afternoon by security force personnel.

MARCH 27

TAMIL STUDENTS DISCRIMINATED:

Examinations of the second year students in the Tamil medium at Aruppola Technical College in Kandy were cancelled after students had taken their seats in the examination hall. The last minute cancellation was explained as caused by the results of the previous examination being not released.

MARCH 28

SECURITY TIGHTENED:

Police removed LTTE posters in Batticaloa and searched residences at Iruthayapuram, Mamangam and Koolavady areas. New checkpoints were established at access points to the town centre.

DEADLINE EXTENDED:

The LTTE extended its deadline over the withdrawal from the peace process and Cessation of Hostilities by three weeks to 19 April in view of positive statements by President Chandrika Kumaratunge. President announced in New Delhi that her government was ready to lift the ban on the transport of fuel to the North.

MARCH 29

DEATH BY SUICIDE:

L. Navaneethan a LTTE fighter committed suicide consuming cyanide, at the Kurumanvely security checkpoint in Batticaloa District.

MARCH 30

UNIVERSITY IN PROTEST:

Undergraduates, Lecturers and non-academic staff at the Eastern University in Batticaloa demonstrated against the proposal to more the faculties presently at Vantharumolai to Amparai District.

MARCH 31

TAMIL ARRESTS IN COLOMBO:

Four school principals from the plantation sector attending the Diploma Course conducted by the National Institute of Education were arrested by the Wellawatte police.

ANOTHER SEARCH IN EAST:

Puthur and Veechukalmunai areas in Batticaloa District were cordoned off by police and army personnel at dawn. An intense search of the area and residents followed at great inconvenience to them.

APRIL DIARY

APRIL 01

POLITICAL VIOLENCE: Provincial Council member of Tamil Group TELO M.Anushamoorthy was shot at his home in the vicinity of a security force camp in Batticaloa, by unidentified persons alleged to be members of LTTE.

APRIL 02

MILITARY CAMPS FORTIFIED: LTTE announced Eastern Special Task Force and Army camps at Kanjikudichcharu, Kaluvanchikudy, Thirukovil, Nolavanai, Akkaraipatru, Komai, Kanchirukudah, Sagaman, Karaitivu, Kalmunal, Kumburmoolai, Cheddipalayam, Kannginagar, Unnichchai, Nelpathavil and Karavai were being strengthened.

APRIL 03

STRIKE IN TALAWAKILLE: Around 5,000 plantation workers on Diagama North and Henwald estates were involved in a strike over several demands. Trade Union representatives say that although agreement had been reached on the demands, the managements had failed to implement.

APRIL 04

EXAM CANCELLED: Tamil students at the Arupola Technical College in Kandy District have complained to the Human Rights Task Force after their examination on 27.3.95 for the Higher National Diploma was cancelled by the principal without due authorisation from the Commissioner of Examinations. The students have also complained to the ombudsman.

APRIL 05

MALARIA IN JAFFNA: Reports said malaria was spreading in the Jaffna peninsula. Over 250 people have been treated at the Jaffna hospital. Thenmaratchy area has been badly affected.

APRIL 06

ILLEGAL OCCUPATION: Kandy MP S.Rajaratnam said in Parliament that estate lands were being illegally occupied by outsiders which may result in resident workers being forced to leave.

BARREL BOMBS IN THE NORTH: People's Alliance Galle MP Nanda Gunasinghe said in Parliament that 13,000 barrel bombs, each weighing 300 kilos have been dropped in the north by the Sri Lanka Airforce in the last ten years.

APRIL 07

TELO UNDER ATTACK: TELO leader Sivapatham Vinothalingam has requested protection for TELO members in the East from Deputy Defence Minister Anuruddha Ratwatte.

APRIL 08

MYSTERY KILLING OF SOLDIERS: Two soldiers from the Idaikadu camp in Jaffna District were killed by gunfire in mysterious circumstances.

VICTIM OF VIOLENCE: T.Jeyarajah (28 yrs), a former member of Tamil Group EPRLF and now assisting the security forces was shot dead at Palugamam in Batticaloa District by unidentified persons.

APRIL 09

RESETTLEMENT OF REFUGEES: Vavuniya Reports said that a meeting chaired by Vavuniya Government Agent K. Ganesh it was decided to expedite resettlement of refugees in army-controlled areas. The Manik Rice Mill will be converted to a transit camp.

APRIL 10

PEACE TALKS: Fourth round of talks between the government delegation and the LTTE in Jaffna ended with little progress. Two members of the delegation stayed on for further talks to clear some residual matters.

APRIL 11

PEACE MARCHERS

ATTACKED BY SOLDIERS:

Villagers of Mahilaveduwan in Batticaloa District marching towards the Governments Agents office to present a petition on the pursuit of peace were attacked by the soldiers of the Varunaithivu camp. One of the marchers S.Navaratnam received gunshot wounds and was admitted to hospital.

APRIL 12

UGC TO SUBMIT REPORT: The Committee to inquire into the high cut-off marks for northern students for University admonition chaired by Higher Education Minister Richared pathirana, requested a full report on the issue from the University Grants Commission.

APRIL 13

FISHERMEN HARASSED: Mannar fishermen have complained that are being harassed by Indian fishsemen. Hundreds of Indian fishermen are fishing in the Mannar sea and on occasions have robbed fish and nets of the local fishermen.

APRIL 14

COMMEMORATION: The tenth anniversary of the attack on Karaitivu in Amparai District was observed. In the attack by the security forces in 1985, 125 people were killed and 800 houses and five temples were destroyed.

APRIL 15

NO TRANSPORT: Reports from Verugal in Trincomalee District indicate that road transport from Batticaloa terminate at Vakara four miles short of Verugal forcing passengers to walk the four miles.

APRIL 16

EXTENSION OF SERVICE: The Sri Lankan government has extended the services of Army

APRIL DIARY

Commander Gerry de Silva by another two years.

APRIL 17

PLANTATIONS PRIVATISATION: Reports said that the Commission into the next stage of the Plantations Privatisation which has now submitted its report to the President did not have a Tamil member. Plantation Trade Unions have been criticised for failing to urge the ILO and the international trade union movement to conduct independent investigations into the privatisation.

APRIL 18

LTTE WITHDRAWAL FROM PEACE PROCESS: The LTTE informed the government of its confirmation to withdraw from the peace negotiations and the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement in view of the government's failure to implement decisions agreed at negotiations.

APRIL 19

GUN BOATS SUNK: Fast gun boats "Ranasuru" and "Sooraya" of the navy lying in anchor at the naval base in Trincomalee were sunk by Black Tiger frogmen. Twelve sailors were killed and 21 were injured. Four LTTE divers also died.

MILITARY RETALIATION: Security forces in Mannar imposed a ban on all fishing in the area. Vellavelly village in Batticaloa District was surrounded by the Special Task Force who ordered all residents to remain indoors the whole day. Coastal areas in the North were shelled from naval ships and Mandaitivu army camp.

APRIL 20

BODY RECOVERED: Security sources disclosed the recovery of the body of a LTTE cadre near the Elephant Pass army camp in the Kilinochchi District.

APRIL 21

OFFENSIVES IN EAST: Commander of the army Lt.Gen. Gerry de Silva with key officers from military headquarters visited Kattumuvukulam camp in Batticaloa District to launch "operation Jayamaga" against LTTE bases the following day.

APRIL 22

PRE-EMPTIVE STRIKE: The LTTE struck the Kattumurivukulam army camp from where "operation Jayamaga" was to commence. Twenty nine soldiers were killed and 45 were injured. Fourteen LTTE cadre were also killed.

APRIL 23

TAMILS DISPLACED: Following the attack on the Kattumurivukulam army camp, 260 Tamil families fled the village. This is the 3rd time since 1990 that they were displaced from the village.

APRIL 24

AERIAL BOMBING: Air Force planes bombed Vidathalthivu in Mannar District randomly killing Mrs. E.Adaikalamuthu and injuring four others. A school building was completely destroyed after being directly hit.

APRIL 25

AUSTRALIAN DISPLEASURE: Australian Foreign Minister Senator Gareth Evans condemned LTTE's attack on ships and an army camp.

APRIL 26

TAMIL CIVILIANS SUFFER: One fisherman was killed and another injured at Pallimunai in Mannar District as a result of naval gunfire. Maruthamunai police personnel beat up over 50 residents of Thuraineelavanai village in Batticaloa and the local MP called for an immediate investigation.

APRIL 27

ARMY FORAY: Troops from the Nochchimoddai army camp in Vavuniya advanced towards Rambaikulam and Sondakkarakulam with air

and artillery cover to destroy huts used by the LTTE as checkpoints for travellers to and from the North. Troops returned to base after two hours losing three soldiers in the operations. Eighteen LTTE cadre were killed according to army sources.

LTTE INTRUSION: Army bunkers at Aralithurai on Kayts Island in Jaffna District were attacked by LTTE resulting in the death of 18 soldiers including an officer and injury to 14 others. LTTE lost four cadre in this attack.

APRIL 28

TROOP CARRIER CRASH: An Avro aircraft of the air force ferrying troops out of Palaly Air Base crashed while making an emergency landing after being hit by an LTTE surface-to-air missile. All 38 security force personnel on board were killed.

CHECKPOINT UNDER FIRE: Police checkpoint at Vavumathivu bridge in Batticaloa District camp under LTTE fire resulting in the death of one policeman and injury to two others.

APRIL 29

ANOTHER TROOP CARRIER LOST: A second Avro aircraft of the air force carrying 49 troops and 3 journalists approaching palaly Air Base was hit by LTTE ground fire and crashed killing all on board

APRIL 30

POLICE AMBUSHED: Three policemen were killed when a police foot patrol was ambushed by the LTTE at Koppaiveli in Batticaloa District.

Donors urge greater role for private sector

The Sri Lanka Aid Group Meeting in Paris on 27 April under World Bank auspices, pledged \$850 million (Rs 42.5 billion) financial support for the current year. In the event of peace, donors would also contribute substantial additional resources for the reconstruction of the North-East.

Nine European nations, Canada, Australia, USA, Japan and the IMF, the Asian Development Bank and the European Commission among other international agencies participated in the meeting. A statement issued after the meeting says that the donors agreed with the Sri Lankan government that there is no higher priority than peace if Sri Lanka is to realise its full economic potential. While expressing support to the government's peace efforts, the donors deplored the resumption of hostilities by the LTTE and urged the LTTE to re-establish the cease-fire and to engage in talks on a durable solution. Donors commended government steps to improve human rights and urged continued and strong efforts.

There was emphasis at the meeting for a greater role for the private sector. The meeting urged the government to continue to nurture the private sector as a major source of employment and income growth. Donors commended the government's renewed privatisation efforts, including encouraging private investment in infrastructure. They urged the government to broaden the scope of privatisation to include state-owned banks and utilities and to eliminate obstacles to privatisa-

tion and to private investment. In order to reverse the lagging agricultural performance, the statement says, the donors welcomed the introduction of long-term leases in the state plantations and the review of land tenure arrangements.

The statement further says donors voiced concern about the re-introduction of commodity subsidies. Referring to reconstruction, donors emphasised the need for a national perspective, prioritisation and integration of reconstruction programmes. Donors also stressed the role of the private sector and NGOs and the need for consultations relating to reconstruction with the LTTE.

In her statement to the donors President Kumaratunge said the Sri Lankan government was committed to a programme of divestiture of public assets which will involve strategic partnership with the private sector on a case by case basis. A Public Enterprises Reform Commission will examine partnerships with the private sector.

Ms Kumaratunge said restoring peace will be the single major objective of the government. The government had made, she said extraordinary concessions to ameliorate the hardships of people living in areas affected by the conflict, with a view to honourably negotiating an extensive devolution of political power to a defined region within a unified state. While a preliminary dialogue with the rebels was going on, estimate of rehabilitation and reconstruction had been taken to release the trade embargo and provide basic infrastructure.

President Kumaratunge said that it was unfortunate, for reasons best known to them, the rebel leadership had decided to break the agreement on a cessation of hostilities. The government's commitment to peace and democracy within a united Sri Lanka is total. The President further said that the government was not discouraged by the setback and that she hoped international opinion and the great desire of the ordinary people in affected areas will make the rebels realise that there are no military solutions to the problems perceived by them. "For our part, we are willing to go anywhere, any place, any length, to seek a peaceful and honourable resolution acceptable to our people of the problem which has seriously retarded our Country's progress" she said.

The President was confident of restarting the peace negotiation process which she said will be strongly backed by all the people and the international community. The rebels need further assurance that with peace, they will be able to obtain the support of the international community for reconstructing the damage and rehabilitation of the affected people.

A private sector conference hosted by the World Bank was held on 28th April. This conference, attended by executives of companies from Asia and the Pacific region, Europe and North America, was said to provide an opportunity for domestic and foreign investors to discuss with the government the business climate in Sri Lanka. Twelve private company directors and representatives of business organisations from Sri Lanka participated.

Government Agent threatens Trincomalee Tamils

Reports from Trincomalee say that concerted attempts are being made by Sri Lankan government authorities and security forces to drive the Tamils out of some areas for Sinhalese colonisation.

In 1972 when the Plantain Point army camp was extended Tamils living in the surrounding areas were asked to leave. They were later given land at Linganagar on the promise that title deeds will be issued to them. Because of continuing violence those given land and those who lived there earlier fled from Linganagar.

Recently arrangements were made to resettle these Tamils. But false title deeds have cropped up making life difficult for them. The army has completely destroyed the landmarks on the land such as houses and trees. Investigation by local people has revealed that at least three title deeds are now available for the land at Linganagar.

One document says that the land was transferred by T D Peiris on 10 April 1979 to the 22nd Brigade of the army. Another deed says the land was transferred on 4 April 1979 to the 22nd Brigade which arrived in Trincomalee only on 26 June 1989. Earlier only an Army Engineering Divisional school functioned in the Plantain Point area.

These two deeds say that the total extent of land is 47 acres 30 perches. They further say that 39 acres 1 rood, 23 perches belong to the army and 26 acres 39 perches belong to the Colombo Dockyard. These two add up to 65 acres 18 perches while the total extent is said to be 47 acres 30 perches. Yet another deed says the land was transferred to the 22 Bri-

gade on 14 October 1979. There has been no gazette notification for a transfer of the land to the army.

On 21 September 1991, the then North-East Governor Seniviratne wrote to the military coordinator in Trincomalee informing that 500 houses were to be built for people in Linganagar and requested the army to refrain from conducting military exercises in populated areas.

Jaffna MP. Douglas Devananda said in Parliament recently that the Trincomalee Government Agent is attempting to evict 40 families resettled in Linganagar. He has threatened the residents that he will demolish their houses. The MP has pointed out that thousands of Sinhalese families from other areas have been illegally settled in state land in Trincomalee. However, no action has been taken against these families. The members of the forty Tamil families were all born in Trincomalee and have lived there all their lives. Mr Devananda has requested the Minister to intercede and allow the families to live in Linganagar.

In Trincomalee, private lands and houses belonging to Tamils have been occupied. Refugees returning from India have found that their houses have been taken over by Sinhalese families from other districts. Military violence and fighting has driven out many Tamil families from their home areas. Sinhalese families are being brought in to be settled in lands vacated by Tamils. The army and the government officers are actively involved in Colonisation in Trincomalee. The government is encouraging settlements by appointing only Sinhalese people to high government positions in the district.

HUMAN SHIELDS

Security force personnel from the Morakkottanachenai camp in Batticaloa have resumed the use of civilians as shields for their safe mobility during security operations. For their daily patrol of railway lines through the Sandively expanse the troops round up around 100 villagers to march ahead of them for the critical two miles. Even passersby on bicycles are forced to join this human shield.

CIVILIAN HARDSHIP IN EAST

The security force personnel are preventing fishermen from the coastal villages of Kalkudah, Kayankerni and Mankerni in Batticaloa District from going out to sea. Price of fish has consequently doubled in the area. Residents of Peithalai village in Batticaloa District were subjected to indiscriminate assault by a police patrol proceeding along the Valaichenai-Kalkudah Road.

HOSPITAL AS SECURITY FORCE CAMP

The Vakarai Hospital in Batticaloa District is not functional as it serves as an army camp. International agency, NORAD has allocated funds for the restoration of this hospital to serve the medical needs of the villagers. But development is hampered by the continued presence of the troops at the hospital building. With the Batticaloa District Hospital not having any specialists, the population has great difficulty in meeting its medical needs. Batticaloa MP Selvarasa has appealed to the Minister of Health to intercede to make the security personnel vacate the Vakarai hospital.

Five years of Deception is Enough says LTTE's Political Affairs Deputy Leader *Karikalan*

LTTE's Political Affairs Deputy Leader Karikalan in a recent statement released in Batticaloa in the East on the status of the negotiations with the government says:

"The Tamil problem has existed for 50 years now and therefore it cannot be solved immediately and will have to be dealt in stages. The LTTE agreed on the cessation of Hostilities as a token of our faith in a solution. A permanent cease-fire is essential for negotiations but the government has still not agreed to this. We presented four matters for consideration of the government, but none of them was implemented and government is attempting to force on us some other solutions.

The terms on which the LTTE and armed forces should act in the East have not been spelt out. The no-go area of 600 meters applicable to the North does not prevail in the East where the situation is altogether different. Readiness of the armed forces to launch ambushes should cease. Fishing should be allowed in the lagoon and the sea. We made these demands to the government and did not lay them down as preconditions. But the government turned a deaf ear to our demands. Four monitoring Committees were appointed whereas we wanted six. Check points in the East should be dismantled and the unannounced economic blockade practised in there should be removed. People should be allowed to move freely without harassment and constant searches.

Our talks centred on North-East although the government was con-

cerned with Jaffna as the hub. SL Rs 4.5 million to be allocated to the Northern Province for rehabilitation was scaled down to SL Rs 0.5 million for the peninsula and dwindled to the sum to meet the Jaffna municipality area.

Planned colonisation continue even after the change of government and cession of hostilities and this should be stopped and those colonised should be removed. Planned colonisation of Muslims in Tamil areas is an attempt to rekindle the animosity between the two communities. 300 muslim families have been settled at Redideniya in the Vaharai Regional Secretariat Divisions under the name change as Rizwipuram. This has been achieved under the Cloak of a Mahaweli settlement without the knowledge of even the Regional Secretary.

Omaniyamadukulam has become Kasarapura. 150 Muslim families have been settled at Mathurankerni even without land permits and they are in contravention of government regulations. Many Tamil divisions in Valaichachenai Regional Secretariat have been paired with Muslim divisions. Appointments to Valaichachenai bus depot Board of Directors too has led to displeasure among the two communities. Business premises of the Tamils have been subjected to encroachment. Such steps are being taken on the assumption that we will not act to jeopardise the Cession of Hostilities. We resent such steps. Attempts will also be made to accuse us should the two communities be at loggerheads as a result of these measures.

The SL Rs 5 million granted by Germany for North-East development is being utilised for Sinhalese

Colonisation.

Tamils supported the President hoping for peace and therefore we will consider a government solution based on North-East amalgamation. The government must negotiate on this basis with no recourse to war.

Tamil leaders have been deceived in negotiations with successive governments during the last 50 years. Other groups too had negotiated while supporting the government. It is therefore not possible to be deceived in the future too. EROS group has joined us. The other groups too should benefit from this lesson".

Essential Services Curtailed

The Government Agent, Mullaitivu has warned that if access roads at Mullaitivu are not repaired urgently, transport of food and other essential items would grind to a halt. The stretch of road upto Oddisuttan from Mankulam is extremely bad and therefore Puthukkudiyiruppu has become accessible with much difficulty. The 1995 allocation of funds to attend to the urgent repair of roads has not been made available and the situation is made worse by there being no emergency fund for any repairs as obtaining in other districts.

PALMYRAH PALM DECLARED A NATIONAL RESOURCE

Tamil Eelam Economic Development Organisation has uncovered a master plan to augment the palmyrah plant as a commercial crop by the year 2000. By the turn of the century it is planned to have 2 million palms which would provide succour to those engaged in this sector and also form a vital segment of the economy.

Christened the "Katpaha chcho-lai plan" it envisages the development of the sturdy palmyrah palm's endless potential to support future generations too. Well laid out palms are to form palmyrah estates much in the fashion of tea and rubber plantations. Planned planting of the palms will facilitate easy access of the palmyrah to those whose livelihood depends on its cultivation. Haphazard ownership of trees in private lands as obtaining at present will cease by there being plantations and is expected to contribute immensely to a saving on man hours spent in reaching the palms by workers.

Palmyrah plantations will inevitably lead to a mechanisation in the reaping of yields. Palmyrah sap and toddy production is bound to reach higher levels with

mechanisation. Higher yields per tree coupled with mechanisation is expected to drastically reduce the price of refined sugar or jaggery obtained from palmyrah sap. Alcoholic by-products obtained from the palmyrah are to serve as fuel too.

Significantly, mechanisation and commercialisation of the palm are seen as a means of creating a social change among the workers engaged in the palmyrah trade. The economic benefits accruing from the palmyrah plantation sector will be attractive to all and help to break the notion that only a particular social group will take to the palmyrah trade, according to the TEEDO.

TEEDO has planted 15,000 palmyrah seedlings in 1991, 157,000 seedlings in 1992 and 346,000 in 1993 under its palmyrah development scheme. It is claimed that turning to the palmyrah palm is a step towards future development. Palmyrah palm's soil erosion deterrant capacity and its reforestration strategy for added rainfall have also been stressed in the master plan unveiled by TEEDO.

REFUGEE RETURNEE TO JAFFNA IN CONFUSION

One hundred and eighty five persons from 62 families removed from India were returned to Jaffna on 24 March. UNHCR officials assisted their passage by boat through Kilaly across the Jaffna lagoon. It had been reported that Government officials who supplied breakfast to the refugees indicated their inability to provide transport for the returnees to reach their homes.

UNHCR officials contended that that they were not responsible for providing food or transport to the refugees. They, however, accepted their responsibility for providing Rs. 1,000 worth of equipment for each refugee family.

The refugees watched in distress the squabble between the UNHCR and Government officials on the role of each in assisting the returnees. Questioned on their plans for resettlement, one returnee accepted that they as refugees had left everything to God as they had no control on their destiny. We could only follow orders of different masters at different stages and at different points of time as that is the only way to save our souls, added this refugee.

Book Launched on Self-Determination

The book titled "The Right to Self-Determination: The Tamil National Question" written by Helena J Whall, researcher at the Tamil Information Centre was launched at a gathering in Eastham on 8 April 1995.

In his opening address TIC Chairperson Dr P Pasupathy Rajah said that Helena worked with the meagre facilities offered at the TIC offices. But, she launched herself with enthusiasm and dedication in writing the book which should be considered as an important introduction to human rights workers in influencing international opinion and seeking support to realise the Tamils Rights to self-determination.

Helena Whall in her presentation said that the main reason for writing the book was to attempt to define ambiguous concept of right to self-determination, a right the Tamil United Liberation Front in Sri Lanka first espoused in 1976 and which the Sri Lankan governments have consistently denied at every opportunity. The book is important at the moment because of the peace process initiated in Sri Lanka. It provides a kind of starting point for the negotiations that are taking place.

Historian and National Development Officer Mr Michael Williams, traced the history of the modern concept of self-determination.

The principle of self determination is a product of what historians have called the dual revolution of the late 18th Century. On the one hand political democracy spreading from the US and France and on the other, industrialisation and urbanisation spreading from England to the rest of the world. In Europe, the nation has been understood on linguistic terms. The implication is that everyone speaking the same language should be assembled together in their own state. The crucial watershed in the history of nationalism is the French Revolution of 1789, before which most European states were the personal domain of dynastic rulers. There were six exceptions in 1789. All of them were in Western Europe. France and England had emerged as nations in the course of centuries of war,

so were Spain and Portugal.

The re-conquest of the Iberian peninsula from the Muslims which lasted for five hundred years. Two interesting exceptions were Holland and Switzerland. Holland was the product of a war of liberation - the first modern war of liberation extending over 70 or 80 years. The people of Holland fought against Spain, a great power. It was a struggle comparable to the struggle of Vietnam against the United States and it went on for several generations. The Swiss confederation emerged in the middle ages and fighting for their independence against several powerful countries. And interestingly from the outset Switzerland was a confederation and for 100s of years each canton had its own army, laws, system of weights and measures and yet they were able to band together against an external threat.

The French Revolution transformed the conception of the state as the personal property of a monarch and established the modern connection between sovereignty of the people and national self-determination. The French Republic was a Unitary State. It was born indivisible, has a single currency has a single language, set of laws, even reconstructed local government. France demonstrated the power of nationalism as a means of mobilising the population. The great period of the development of nationalism in Europe during the 19th Century may be viewed in three stages. First the period, 1815-48 when there was a clear link between liberalism, radicalism and nationalism. There were two main types of nationalism - on the one hand in countries like Italy and Germany there was an attempt to bring together a host of different states into one single powerful state on the French model. On the other hand the historic states that have been partitioned...classic examples are Ireland, Hungary and Poland. At that time there seemed to be no conflicts between different nationalities. It was

assumed that once each nation was free, there would be an international community of nations.

The year 1848 was a watershed. It showed the weakness of popular movements in the face of determined repression. It also revealed for the first time conflicts between rival nationalisms occupying the same territory notably between Poles, Germans and Hungarians on the one hand and the Slavs on the other in much of central and eastern Europe. This is essentially a social conflict because the Slavs tended to be peasant whereas the Poles, Germans and Hungarians were of trading middle classes and yet occupying the same territory.

The second phase 1848-71 broke that link between liberalism and nationalisms, between democracy and the national principle. Germany and Italy were unified. The German empire excluded Austrian Germans and retained the rule of dynasties. Within Austria-Hungary there was a compromise between the Germans and the Hungarians to rule their own subject peoples. The Poles rose in revolt but were crushed.

The third phase between 1871-1914 saw the rise of Slav nationalism which was directed against Austro-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire. This Slav nationalism over much of Eastern Europe was exploited by a great power - Russia in order to undermine Austro-Hungary. 1919 was the highpoint of national self-determination in Europe. Europe of the Versailles treaty and what became the Soviet Union were conceived of as collections of nation states.

The 1919 Treaty of Versailles showed the grave weaknesses of principle of national self-determination. Crucially there was no exact boundary between the linguistic groups. All of the new states that were created contained minorities. There was an inevitable bias in the settlement of Versailles. The victorious powers - France, England and US wanted to

contain German power. There was a complete failure to apply the principle of national self-determination to the empires of the victorious powers. Interestingly USSR was also constructed on national lines. It held together basically by the all union Communist party and in practice national self-determination only applied for proletarian states that adjoined the Soviet Union.

Hitler was able to exploit the anomalies by taking Austria, dismembering Czechoslovakia in which he was helped by Hungary and a singularly short-sighted invasion of Poland. After the war these contradictions were resolved by ethnic cleansing on a massive scale. Because the Germans deservedly lost the war 13 million Germans were expelled from Poland, Czechoslovakia, parts of Russia, Romania and were driven to what is now Germany. The second World War weakened the European empires and led to the triumph of self-determination in the colonial world including Sri Lanka. The demand for national self-determination was associated with urbanisation and the emergence of a local intelligentsia. There was a need to create nations very rapidly as a part of the process of national liberation. Because the colonial boundaries paid no respect to indigenous peoples, today we are living in the aftermath of another collapse of empires.

More new and nominally national states have been formed after 1991 than in any other time during the 20th Century - today it seems, with the conflicting forces at work in the world, there are increasing constraints on the ability of individual states to run their own affairs. Massive globalisation - financial globalisation over the last few years, increasing volumes of capital flows are not controllable even by the most powerful country.

Adrien Wijemanne analysed the

concept of self-determination.

The first part of the book shows vividly the labyrinthine and convoluted processes by which normative principles evolve in international law. The original national self-determination now the self-determination of peoples - an instructive change in itself - is a case in point.

The theoretical possibility of reconciling territorial integrity with the self-determination of a people within a state is conceivable. Substantial and consistently supported devolution of power or eventual federal arrangements may work under certain favourable circumstances. For instance, the chances of success will be heightened if such steps are taken, with the minimum of resistance by the state. The experience of "external self-determination" i.e. freedom from colonial rule, is not encouraging; in many cases the devolution of power in ever-increasing measure only whetted the appetite for total freedom - both Ireland and India are prime examples of this.

Where the situation is more fraught - as when the state has resisted and the demand for self-determination has stiffened into stubborn persistence - the prospects of success must diminish.

In the final stage, where an armed struggle has broken out and has taken the form of guerrilla warfare with the state fighting for its territorial integrity.

Any hope at all of a peaceful outcome within existing state boundaries would lie, therefore, in the prescience of the state in acting conciliatorily at the earliest possible opportunity. The recommendation in the last chapter is a constructive proposal for a multi-lateral UN institution to handle potentially in-

cediary situations before combustion commences.

The situation in Sri Lanka has already gone far beyond such remedy. The LTTE is armed and cannot be disarmed by the best efforts of the Sri Lankan army. Already the LTTE has established some of the essential elements of civil government in the area under its control - a legal and judicial system, arms production, a civilian militia, trained forces for both guerrilla and conventional warfare and a navy. None of these structures can, or will, be dismantled. Nor can they be assimilated into the Sinhala state. A de facto state of Eelam exists.

In its recent pronouncements the LTTE has coupled a willingness to consider a federal proposal with autonomy. Even "sovereignty" has surfaced in the discourse. There has never been the slightest hint of a willingness to disarm voluntarily as a quid pro quo for any constitutional arrangement. There cannot be a single state either federal or unitary with two armed adversaries within it.

As this becomes clear in the direct negotiations due to commence shortly the Sinhala state may come under pressure. In the eyes of the Sinhala people and their government the leadership of their army is so discredited and the troops so demoralised that they are unlikely to chance such a gamble. If, however, such a folly is embarked upon, it could well imperil the very survival of civil government in the Sinhala state.

The only possible alternative now to total separation is an union of independent states similar to the Benelux Union. That could provide the setting for an agreement on mutually minimum levels and the harvesting of the "peace divided" so vitally necessary for both nations.

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