

Hot Spring

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No. 23

ANNAI POOPATHY COMMEMORATION

The Sixth annual commemoration of Annai Poopathy's martyrdom started all over free Tamil Eelam territory on 19.3.94 and will continue for a complete month.

Six years ago Annai Poopathy attained martyrdom fasting unto death at Batticaloa, when Tamil Eelam was occupied by the Indian Army.

POPE TELLS AMBASSADOR

"CONCERNED OVER

CONFLICT IN SRI LANKA"

His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, told B.A.B. Goonetilleke, the Sri Lankan Ambassador, when he presented his Credentials at the Vatican on January 13, 1994, that on various occasions in recent years, he (the Pope) had expressed concern regarding the internal conflict in his (ambassador's) country, a conflict which had consumed thousands of lives, inflicted immense suffering and had a devastating effect on family and community life.

A report in this connection said:

On Thursday 13th. of Jan. 1994, H. E. Mr. Bernard Anton Bandara Goonetilleke, Ambassador for Sri Lanka, presented his Letters of Credence to the Holy Father John Paul II. In his discourse to the new amba-

multireligious and multi-cultural societies in various parts of the world...

The religious, cultural and ethnic differences within a country should be treasured as gifts which help citizens to appreciate the oneness of the human family in the natural and legitimate diversity of its members. Sri Lanka is facing a major challenge in this regard.

On various occasions in recent years, I have expressed concern regarding

the internal conflict in your country, a conflict which has consumed thousands of lives, inflicted immense suf-

fering and had a devastating effect on family and community life...

Lasting peace can be established only if mutual trust is nurtured between conflicting factions.

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WHOM ARE YOU TRYING TO HOODWINK?

(A) The Land Development Ordinance will be amended to provide that citizens of Ceylon be entitled to the allotment of land under the Ordinance. Mr. Senanayake further agreed that in the granting of land under colonisation schemes the following priorities be observed in the Northern and Eastern Provinces.

- Land in the Northern and Eastern Provinces should in the first instance be granted to landless persons in the District;
- Secondly - to Tamil - speaking persons resident in the Northern and Eastern Provinces, and
- Thirdly - to other citizens in Ceylon, preference being given to Tamil citizens in the rest of the Island.

The above is clause 4 of the Dudley - Chelvanayakam Pact dated 29.3.1965.

The UNP leader Mr. Dudley Senanayake, Deputy Leader J.R. Jayawardhene and Mr. Esmond Wickremasinghe associated in drafting the provisions of the Pact on behalf of the UNP.

Whom does Mr. Ranil Wickremasinghe, the present UNP Prime Minister propose to hood-wink now by saying that the UNP does not accept the Tamil homeland concept?

What do the provisions clearly indicate? Do you want further proof of acceptance of the Northeast as the Tamil homeland by the UNP too?

HISTORIC CONVENTION TO RE-ORIENTATE CHURCH Decides to Write to Pope: Postpone Visit or Visit Jaffna too

A Pastoral Convention of Bishops, priests, religious and laity with representatives from all parishes in Jaffna, held between 5th to 14th March, 1994 at St. Patrick's College, Jaffna, decided to send letters to the Vatican requesting the Pope, His Holiness John Paul II to postpone his proposed visit to the island to a more peaceful time or otherwise His Holiness considers visiting Jaffna too at least for a few hours. In the alternative His Holiness was to be requested to impress on the Government of Sri Lanka the need to declare ceasefire and start talks with the LTTE as a gesture towards peace before His Holiness visited Sri Lanka.

The delegates also expressed grave concern that the Government of Sri Lanka with the connivance of the Hierarchy will misuse the Papal visit for its own propaganda.

For the first time in the history of the Roman Catholic Church of Jaffna, a diocesan-wide Pastoral Convention of Bishops, priests, religious and laity, with representa-

with Bishops B. Deogupillai and Rayappu Joseph and over 80 priests. Bishops Ambalavanar and Jebanesan of the CSI church and Rev. Nesakumar of the Anglican church were present. The sessions of the Convention were held at St. Patrick's College, Jaffna from the 8th. to the 14. of March 1994.

A Church caught in the afflictions of an ethnic war for the last four years, with seventeen of its parishes closed and a large part of its membership displaced as refugees in their homeland, was meeting in sessions to take stock of her past and renew and strengthen herself for a challenging future.

The nearly 270 delegates from all walks of life for each day of this Convention, assembled together in prayer, discussion and discernment of all aspects of church life in this war-torn Northern Province. Fraternal delegates from the other two dioceses of Mannar and Trinco-Batticaloa included Bishop Rayappu Joseph and a few priests.

The Convention was held under the title "Towards a renewed and sharing church". During this last decade of the century, on the invitation of the present Pope John Paul II, the world Church is renewing herself in preparation for a new

(Continued to page 4)

A VISION COMES TRUE

Prof. A. Thurairajah, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Jaffna is due to retire from his onerous duties at the end of March for private reasons. He has, however, accepted the post of Vice-Chancellor of the Open University in Colombo.

The retiring Vice-Chancellor had a vision in his life. While yet an under-graduate at the Faculty of Engineering at the Ceylon University, an elderly friend had asked him what he proposed to do at the end of his academic career. Without batting an eyelid, the

young engineering student gave a straight answer that he would establish an Engineering Faculty in Jaffna. The elderly friend was not only taken aback by this reply but also shocked, for there was then not even a University Campus in Jaffna at that time. Yet setting up of an Engineering Faculty for the University of Jaffna, was the dream of this Student. Well done, Vice-Chancellor, that vision has come true! Only the buildings have to come up at Kilinochchi.

Injured While Asleep Shell Attack on Valvettiturai

E. Mahendiran, aged 51, of Valvettiturai was injured while in sleep, when an artillery shell launched from the Sri Lankan Army camp at Palaly hit his house. Three of his children who were asleep with him miraculously escaped unhurt.

On Tuesday, March 15, about 11.30 p.m. artillery shells were fired towards Valvettiturai. One shell hit the house of E. Mahendiran who was injured. He was asleep at the time when the shell hit the house and injured him. Three of his children who were sleeping with him, however, were unhurt. The house was damaged. Another shell hit the house of Gnanasuntharam also of Valvettiturai. The walls and house were damaged. There was however, no injury to person. Shell attack was carried out on the village of Valalai too but no report of damage was received.



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Genocidal Attack

Yet another display of cowardice and genocidal intent on the part of the Sri Lankan Army caused the death of four innocent Tamils and injury to three others.

We refer to the wanton shell attack on thickly populated Jaffna city by the Sri Lankan Army encamped at Mandaitivu on Tuesday, March 15.

Five shells were launched by the Sri Lankan Army from its well-protected and safe confine at Mandaitivu without even having to move an inch from its position and the result was the unexpected tragedy.

The provocation was too much even for the most responsible and senior officer of the Sri Lankan Government in Jaffna, viz. the Government Agent, Jaffna, who immediately sent a wireless message to the Defence Secretary, General Hamilton Wanasinghe, complaining against the shell attack.

Even the ICRC which keeps complete silence and stands aloof from anything that it considers beyond its mandate, has acted in the this matter. The resident Team Head of the ICRC at Jaffna has sent a message to his Colombo Head Office about the attack. The death of four civilians and the injury caused to three others may well bring the incident within the ICRC's mandate.

There is more than sufficient evidence to prove that the Sri Lankan Armed forces killed more non-combatant civilian Tamils in the Northeast than they killed LTTE fighters in the name of the war.

Artillery shells are savage killer-instruments. They suddenly come on people nowhere near any theatre of war. They really come as if they were bolts from blues. Even thunderbolts can be predicted by the seasons but not the shells. And this is what happened last Tuesday. People were minding their business when with a bang shells exploded in various parts of Jaffna and took toll of human lives.

The shell attacks clearly demonstrate the genocidal intent of the Sri Lankan Army. Whoever who dies will happily (for the Sri Lankan forces) be a Tamil. Killing as many as possible Tamils is the motive force behind shell attacks. Shells launched, when there is no fighting going on and indiscriminately on residential areas prove beyond all doubt, the evil genocidal intent of the Sri Lankan government and its armed forces.

Placed in this pathetic situation - in the situation of not being able to live peacefully in their own homes - the Tamils are naturally inclined to question the sincerity of those who speak of non-proliferation of arms and at the same time supply these deadly war materials to a Government like that of Sri Lanka which claims to be at peace with all countries and only troubled a bit by some 'terrorists' as the Government prefers to call the LTTE.

D. B. Wijetunge now says that there is no war and that there is only a 'terrorist' problem. Admittedly Sri Lanka is not at war with any other country. If so, what is the need to sell these deadly war materials to the Sri Lankan government?

The history of the war is an eloquent testimony to the fact that Sri Lanka requires all these war-materials only to accomplish genocide. But the irony of it all is that Governments which preach peace go on supplying war materials to a Government which requires foreign money and weapons to accomplish genocide but would otherwise pooh pooh and ridicule all efforts at mediation as 'foreign.'

Air Vice-Marshal Terrence Gunawardena: Framing Credentials for Diplomatic Posting?

—Sanmugam T. Singham

"And, ye shall know the truth, and the truth, shall make you free"

— John 8:32

The truth contained herein, may, in every possible likelihood not contain Terrence Gunawardena from getting posted as the Sri Lankan ambassador to Malaysia. The perspective here is that; interested people whoever it may be, shall be made free to discern the truth, it is hoped to justify a fair conscience.

The outgoing Air Chief, has reportedly said that he could have wiped out terrorism within 24 hours in the North East, had he been not considerate about civilian casualties. Bravo! What a humanitarian!

Fiction and Facts

The fictive ploy here, very characteristic of the present UNP regime since 1977 is, to subtly and surreptitiously perpetrate all imaginable nefarious state misdeeds, and then coat the black into white. The state media and the goaded press constitute the unholy brush. The Sinhalese people and the outside world bask on the painted scenario - invariably detrimental to the former and elusive to the latter. Elusive because they constantly fail to coerce a peace thrust on the ethnic embroilment. Instead, they aid and abet violations of human rights - condone and even compliment the violators.

Facts speak

Terrence Gunawardena after a four-year stint at the helm of the Air Force, the last of the three years being crucial (which covers the on-going 2nd Eelam War) stands indicted with all the monstrous and despicably cowardly acts of human rights violations by the Air Force in the North East.

Leaflets were air-dropped, several times and at several places asking people to take shelter in temples, churches and schools. Then, with no army action around, the very same places were targeted for bombing spree. The dastardly act of carpet bombing at Valvettiturai in late January, '91 for three consecutive days, began long before the stipulated time, the people were asked to vacate the city.

Often, sick and wounded on their way to hospitals; children studying in schools, on their way or back from schools; tiny tots cuddling in parents' arms in sweet slumber at dead of night; patients at hospitals; de-

votes at prayer in temples and churches, have perished from bombings by the Air Force - Marchettis, Puccaros, Supersonics, Avros, Y-8's, 'Copters and what not. The maimed and mentally affected abound to tell their wailing woes.

Here remains in testimony in Tamil Eelam: devastated temples, churches, schools and even hospitals - twisted metal, broken rafters, heaps and heaps of rubble to vouchsafe the atrocities of the Air Force. The dead and maimed; orphans, widows and destitutes account in thousands. Can any member of the N. G. Go., Red Cross in particular who has worked in this region or is still in service, or the members of the various peace missions or the various missionaries who have visited, give an open denial to the above facts through an impartial media?

Idiotic display

Soon after the Poonakari debacle, the wrath and anguish of the Sinhala people were not in the least reflected at the highest levels of the UNP. Deliberations were on at Sri Kotha for the choice of the next Presidential candidate: an idiotic display. The Commission of Inquiry to probe the Poonakari flop had second billing.

The appointment of the Commission, the handing over of the report by the Commission to the Army Commander, Cecil Waidyaratne who had earlier relinquished his post in ignominy and that too, much earlier than it was made known to the President, is all the more idiotic. The accused assumed the role of the jury and the judge! A common scenario in Sri Lankan jurisprudence: a glaring spotlight on the ethnic arena where the State perpetrates violations of all basic human rights and sits in judgment to vilify the defenders as 'terrorists.'

The Report is eloquent on its silence. The exact number that was stationed at the Poonakari complex at the time of combat; the number missing and the number that died, were not accounted for in detail. Earlier media reports account well over a thousand but scaled it down to a few hundred. However, there were accusations levelled on the Army Commander of human rights' violations for having sent recruits to the battle front without proper training.

Add up the reported suicides by well over a dozen of the recruits for alleged inhuman treatment at Palaly. A mass suicide by Sinhalese soldiers is very hard to believe. Punishment for mutiny? It is probable. Nevertheless, the report is a 'planned affair' to exonerate the real culprits for a safe passage to diplomatic assignments.

A difficult task

An impartial probe and just verdict, even though very much in the air, is definitely a difficult task. It is beyond the realms of any commission of inquiry under the UNP regime. There have been barrages of accusations over the media, through the years that there have been improper modalities pursued in the purchase of military hardware. Bofor's-type scandals! Obsolete weaponry to annihilate 'terrorism'. Nevertheless, such impropriety and plunder which involve millions and millions of hard foreign currency, cannot be manipulated without the connivance and complicity of the political leadership with that of the Service Chiefs. They constitute partners in pillage-complementary to each other. A very lucrative business to pursue a military solution! No matter who kills whom. This is the specific reason for ambassadorial postings - an ingenious device for 'sharing spoils'. This again is the mystery that eludes a just and fair probe / inquiry into the scandals of military purchases. The ignominious irony is that these are the leaders who whip up communal frenzy in the name of patriotism. While the Serendib isle bleeds and festers, cancers of society thrive!

Another J. R. innovation

The Presidential decree in 1979 soon after the passing of the Prevention of Terrorism Act was addressed to Brigadier 'Bull' Weeratunge to wipe out terrorism in its entirety in the Jaffna Peninsula, with specific mention of LTTE. The Brigadier reported to J. R. Jayewardene after six months that the mission was accomplished and got his ambassadorial posting to Canada.

Today, fourteen years later, after 22,500 army personnel including hundreds of officers have deserted the S. L. army, i.e. more than the total strength then in 1979; after debacles at Mankindimalai; Kilali (Operation Yarl Devi) and the total wreckage at Poonakari, ironically again at the hands of the LTTE,

(Continued to page 4)

Navy Attack on Fishermen

I burnt to death in Boat-Another Injured

A Sri Lankan Navy's Dvora Boat which was proceeding from Kankesanthurai towards Vetrilaikerni sent volleys of cannon fire on fishermen engaged in fishing at Munai sea near Point Pedro. This happened on Saturday,

March 12 about 7.00 a.m. M. Francis, a father of eight children, who was out fishing, was hit in his boat. He was killed on the spot and his body was charred by the fire that caught the boat on which he was fishing.

T. Selvarajah, father of three children, who was in the same boat was seriously injured and was admitted to the base hospital at Point Pedro. The boat, engine, nets and other fishing implements were burnt down.

CONFRONTATION AT NAVATKULAM

S.L. ARMY RETREATS

Reports from Vavunia said that on March 6, Sunday, a fight ensued between Sri Lankan Army and LTTE in the Navatkulam Jungle area in Vavunia District. It is said that the Sri Lankan Army advanced to

this area to round up LTTE. About 11.45 a.m. fight ensued between the combatants which lasted for half an hour at the end of which the Sri Lankan Army retreated.

Three Sri Lankan bombers

and a helicopter were engaged in supportive action during the whole fight.

One Sri Lankan soldier was reported killed and many were injured.

The LTTE said that one of its fighters died in this confrontation.

Ariyaratne Contradicted

By Own Official

Dr. A. T. Ariyaratne, the Leader of the Sarvodaya (NGO), has been contradicted by his own official and the Co-ordinator of the Consortium of NGOs functioning in Jaffna.

Dr. Ariyaratne, in an interview to the 'Sandesaya' (Sinhala Programme) of the B.B.C., had claimed that the Sarvodaya was administering more than fifty per cent of the camps for displaced persons in the Jaffna peninsula. According to Dr. Ariyaratne the Sarvodaya was maintaining 134 out of 233 camps for displaced persons in Jaffna peninsula.

This claim of Dr. Ariyaratne has been denied both by the Jaffna Region's Sarvodaya Co-ordinator and by the Co-ordinator of

interviews to local dailies both officials denied the correctness of the claim made by Dr. Ariyaratne in his interview with the B.B.C.

Sarvodaya's Jaffna Co-ordinator said that the claim of Dr. Ariyaratne was completely inaccurate. He said that the activities of Sarvodaya were maintained in Jaffna only with great difficulty and financial crises. Even the wages of employees have not been paid for several months. The Sarvodaya Head Quarters has not provided the necessary finances even to maintain a single camp for displaced persons in Jaffna. In this context the statement of the Leader is shocking.

The Jaffna Co-ordinator

of Sarvodaya also said that it was sad to note that Dr. Ariyaratne has come out with inaccurate statements for purposes of propaganda and added that he was sending a denial to the B. B. C.

The Co-ordinator of the Consortium of NGOs in Jaffna said that apart from supervising 34 camps of displaced persons in the Uduvil area, Sarvodaya was not engaged in any other relief work in the Jaffna peninsula. He said that the claim made by Dr. Ariyaratne that the Sarvodaya was maintaining 134 constituting more than 50 per centum of the displaced persons, was completely false.

He said that the news bulletin published by the consortium reveals the number of camps and NGO administering them. The Sarvodaya leader's statement would affect the working of the N. G. Os. and the Consortium could not support such false propaganda.

Air Vice—

(Continued from page 2) all within a span of 6 months, we have the sickening scenario of two Service Chiefs of the Army and Air Force, Cecil Waidyaratne and Terence Gunawardene standing upright on the debris of failed missions, bargaining for ambassadorial postings. The former even after being stripped off from using army titles by special Presidential Decree, clinching his posting to Thailand in army style. Terence Gunawardene is scheduled for posting to Malaysia.

ASEAN-the dumping ground?

Both 'gentlemen' go eastwards to an economically vibrant regional complex-ASEAN. Neighbouring Countries as well - a sound place for joint venture investments, unlike our shoddy

SAARC. Perhaps, there are other reasons. Premadasa Udugampola, another notorious violator of human rights under state patronage (J. R. breed) aspired for posting in the U.S. but reportedly was turned down by that country for obvious reasons.

Cecil Waidyaratne's initial interest was Italy. Even though the switch-over eastwards was not made known, the ascertainable factor is that the US and the countries of the European Community are very much awake and alive in pursuing and upholding human rights. Sri Lanka's record in this respect is a dismal one. The memorandum submitted at the 50th Sessions at Geneva by seventeen Non-governmental humanitarian agencies presently going on, regarding human rights violations by Sri Lanka, is an apt reminder.

Invariably human rights violations are perpetrated by the Police and Armed Forces. To have been Chiefs of the Army and Air Force in Sri Lanka is definitely not the 'prize tag' for diplomatic acceptance by any country that upholds human rights.

If President Wijetunge's assertions - an impartial inquiry - will be instituted over the arms purchase or the Poonakari Debacle, is in good intent, these two men have no right to leave the country - leave alone diplomatic assignments. But such commissions of inquiry in this crucial year of elections will be hara-kiri for the UNP.

But the facts remain. Scare of the skeletons is driving away the Service Chiefs. The army stands indicted with not only ones that have been exhumed at Sooriya kande, and those that are rotting at Poona-

LOVE FOR LAND? IT'S A MUST

Media View

Buddhist monks are said to have carried out a mammoth demonstration in protest against alienation of lands to the Tamils.

Do you think that an attempt has been made to obstruct the alienation of some new lands? The tale here is entirely different.

The Ministry of Tourism has given back the land at Mahaperithenai to the National Development Board to which it originally belonged. Two hundred and seventeen Tamil families were living on that land. What is their position?

Negotiations were held in Colombo regarding this matter at the Ministry of Tourism. It was agreed to give alternate lands and to provide them with houses in last December.

The demonstration was only an attempt to abort that promise and to make Tamils forego their lands.

Most of the religions stress that one should seek eternal bliss in Paradise by renouncing the craze for land, gold or woman.

Perhaps in that light, it is a noble spiritual advice preached to the Tamils with great compassion exhorting them not to have any craving for land but to forget it!

But we believe that the Tamils have not yet attained that high standard of spirituality to accept such suggestions tendered with political motives which will ultimately make them lose the very land on which they reside and render them destitutes.

The States of Sri Lanka and India signed agreements to confer citizenship status on the stateless Up-country Tamils and they were granted citizenship.

This is, however, not the first time indirect pressures have been applied to deprive them of their lands.

Is it necessary to teach the Government the strategy to grab lands in the Up-country, when it is already possessed of the know-how and has grabbed the lands of the Tamils in the Northeast under the cloak of extension of airfields and under the pretext of important government needs?

Eelanaadu - Editorial of 28-02-94

LAW SOCIETY AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the Jaffna Law Society was held on Saturday, March 5, at the Jaffna Hindu Ladies' College Hall.

The following were elected office-bearers for the ensuing year:-

President:- Mr. C. Kodeeswaran

Vice Presidents:- Mr. C. Balakrishnan

Mr. S. Thiyagarajah

Hony Secretary:- Mr. A. Muthukrishnan

Asst. Secretary:- Mr. S.P. Sivagnanam

Mr. S. Paramarajah

Treasurer Mr. A. Sanmuganathan

Committee Members: Mr. P. Kumarasamy

Mr. A.K. Nadarajah

Mrs. S. Ilangoan

Mrs. S. Sornalingam

Mr. S. Gunabalasingam

Mr. S. Thavapalan

Mr. M. Thiyagarajah

Mr. R. Jayasingam

Hony Auditor:- Mr. T. Packianathan

A vote of Condolence on the untimely death of Mr. M. S. Suntharalingam, former President, was also passed.

Oh, Women of Eelam

Liberation is yours,
Take it with both your hands.
You're still, as you were.
But the world new and changing
is yours for the asking.
Tear apart the veils
that hide your liberation,
Extend your welcome hand
to Women Tigers of Eelam.
Liberate your First love - the Nation
You will then be liberated.

S. N. Prakash

kari but also many more, kin lay underneath. And over which the army is this is what the UNP sitting pretty. claims, a democratic process

The Eastern Province is a mass grave yard where the people were goaded to the polling booths for local council elections, while the skeletons of their kith and Eastern Province.

Sooner or later, truth is bound to manifest. So shall Tamil Eelam.

IN JAFFNA CITY

SHELL ATTACK
KILLS FOUR CIVILIANS

Four people were killed and three others injured, when shells launched by the Sri Lankan Army encamped at Mandaitivu hit various parts of Jaffna.

On Tuesday, March 15, about 10.30 a.m. the Jaffna city shook with explosions from shells. Five shells launched from Mandaitivu hit various parts of the city.

At Rasavinthottam Road

A shell which exploded in the residential area of Rasavinthottam Road at Jaffna caused instantaneous death to four persons. Mrs. Paranthaman Indiranee (age 53) mother of four children, who was standing at the door of her house, was hit and died on the spot. Her daughter, Gowri, (age 19) was also killed instantaneously. Mr. Suntharam Siva-yogasantharam, a Veterinary Surgeon, aged 56, who had gone to Mrs. Indiranee's house to treat an animal there, also fell a victim to the shell explosion.

Mr. S. M. Pilethiran (59) who was going along Rasavinthottam Road at the time of the shell attack also died on the spot.

Mrs. Sinnammah Sinna-thurai, (aged 80) mother of the dead woman Mrs. Paranthaman Indiranee was injured. A small chapel nearby, sheltering Our Lady of Grace, was also damaged.

At Gurunagar

Three shells exploded at Gurunagar. K. Sellamani (36) and V. Vadivel (50) were injured.

Temple Damaged

The Meenadchi Amman temple at Kottadi was damaged by a shell that hit the Kottadi area.

The sudden shell attack created panic in the city. Schools were closed and children sent home. People in the town ran here and there for safety.

Complaints to Colombo

The Government Agent, Jaffna complained about the attack to the Secretary, Defence Ministry by wireless communication immediately.

The Team Head of the ICRC at Jaffna brought the incident to the notice of the ICRC office at Colombo.

Anti Malaria Campaign Week

At a conference held at the Jaffna Secretariat, chaired by the Govt. Agent, Mr. K. Manickavasagar, it was decided to observe the week March 18 - 25 as Malaria Prevention Week.

In view of the increased incidents of Malaria it was decided to carry out propaganda and voluntary cleaning services to bring about awareness of the need to prevent the spread of Malaria.

The Conference was attended by all Divisional Secretaries, Regional Director of Health Services and representatives of the Consortium of N. G. Os.

they had to depart "with their tails between their legs". Instead of trying all means to avoid further violence the Government is only bent on more bloodshed, despite their failing economy and warnings not to use foreign aid for "defence" spending (really "offence" spending).

So, it is patently obvious to the world, that the intended referendum to decide on the de-merger of the NE province is all bunkum, which cannot be implemented even if the referendum succeeds in electing to de-merge, because the Tamil freedom fighters will never let them succeed.

The unfortunate Sinhalese are like the Burghers of Hamelin who could not stop the Pied Piper from taking their children away. Such is the blinding force of Sinhala Buddhist Chauvinism which still continues to believe in the Mahavamsa theory of "Sinhadeepa" and "Dharmadeepa" that other minorities are accepted only on the grace and favour of the majority Sinhalese Buddhists.

When will they ever learn to give up their childlike ways and begin to live like mature reasonable adults?

Courtesy: Tamil Nation

New Era Publications, Luckshmi building, Dutch Rd, Kalviyankadu Jaffna.

Historic Convention...

(Continued from page 1)
millennium. In response to the Pope's call, there will be a national convention too in 1995. But the Church in Jaffna, realizing that the challenges facing the Tamil people in the struggle for liberation are so threatening, wished to strengthen her resources and renew herself to meet the varied challenges for a new service and leadership among our suffering people.

By returning to their sources of divine revelation and to the teachings of the church, they found that the Church of Jaffna has to be more prophetic in standing up for justice and peace and more service-oriented in helping the thousands of war-victims in the province.

On the last day of the Convention the delegates voted on ten aspects of Church life and discerned some pastoral priorities for the immediate future. Greetings of love, loyalty and obedience were sent by all the participants to the Pope.

During the Convention it became known that the present Pope, His Holiness John Paul II is to visit Colombo for a day in January to beatify the 18th.

Century Oratorian Priest, Father Joseph Vaz, who worked first in Jaffna and then went to Kandy where he died.

Father Joseph Vaz, from Goa in India, came to Ceylon under the guise of a beggar to serve the Catholics who were then persecuted by the Dutch East India Company VOC. He landed in Mannar and then came to Jaffna and worked here for some years. The Catholics of Jaffna and Mannar, especially those of the village of Sillalai, have a deep devotion to this priest who has been hailed as the Apostle of Ceylon. In fact, there is a commission work-

ing in the diocese for the spread of devotion to this Priest. The Priest himself has expressed his deep gratitude to the Jaffna Catholics for saving him from death.

Hence the announcement of the Pope's visit evoked mixed feelings of joy and grief. As Catholics, all the participants rejoiced at his visiting the island and beatifying their beloved Apostle of Ceylon. But the fact that the situation of the Tamil Catholics caught in war and imprisoned without a legal exit to participate in the Papal visit was unconsidered by the National Hierarchy of the Church, made them all very sad.

Though the National Church is ignoring their plight and going ahead with their detailed preparations for a fitting celebration of the event, the delegates unanimously decided to send letters to Vatican expressing their mixed feelings and requesting that either the visit be postponed to a more peaceful time or that His Holiness considers visiting Jaffna too at least for a few hours or that He impresses on the Sri Lankan Government to declare ceasefire and start talks with the LTTE as a gesture towards peace before visiting Sri Lanka. The delegates expressed grave concern that the Government with the connivance of the Hierarchy will misuse the Papal visit for its own propaganda.

The Convention, wherein a large section of lay people participated, is bound to help the Church of Jaffna to become more people and world-oriented and to improve her witness of Christian life as well as her role of leadership in social and political affairs of the people.

Pope Tells—

(Continued from page 1)

The willingness of parties involved to meet and talk to one another is the indispensable condition for reaching an equitable solution to the complex problems that can seriously obstruct peace.

The Catholic church in Sri Lanka has a long and venerable tradition of service to the nation. While the church carefully maintains her independence from the

State, and her autonomy in her own sphere of authority, her members actively pursue the common good in a spirit of harmony and co-operation with all their fellow citizens.

She contributes to national life by forming the conscience of her members in openness towards others and respect for them, in that tolerance which accompanies their search for truth and in a spirit of solidarity...

Catholic citizens in your land have been active in defending freedom and promoting health care and education. At this moment in the life of their country, Catholic Sri Lankans are among those, who are devoting themselves to works of justice and reconciliation.

As followers of the Prince of Peace, they are trying to foster within families and communities, a climate of harmony that will lead to the cessation of hostilities and attacks on human life...

A Bunkum Referendum

by Lt. Col. Anton J. N. Selvadurai

In their quest to negate the Tamil demand for a separate homeland, all the Sinhala Governments since independence have opened up lands in the Eastern Province and brought in Sinhala colonists in order to change the ethnic demography.

What was once a covert operation has now become a military operation with indigenous Tamils being ruthlessly supplanted by Sinhalese transported there by the lorry loads by the Government. One glaring example is the case of 'Manal Aru' in the Trincomalee district, which was converted into its Sinhala equivalent of "Weli Oya" almost overnight when Tamils were driven off by the army, and properties including those of several Tamil owned companies confiscated by Gazette notification and distributed to the new colonists from the south.

Changing the ethnic demography in order to counter Tamil demands for freedom and after that having a referendum is dirty cheat, undemocratic and highly un-Buddhist. The North East Province is the original Tamil

homeland which was the Tamils' Kingdom before the British merged it with the rest of the island in 1833 for administrative purposes. The Tamils naturally want to retain it as such. Already parts of the North West province and South East province which were once a part of the Tamil kingdom have been Sinhalised and lost forever to the Tamils.

Sinhala colonisation with a view to holding a referendum in order to make it look democratic would be like importing lorry loads of Tamils into Moratuwa to increase their population ratio to over 50% and then asking them to have a referendum in the "Sinhala Only" policy.

The fact that Tamil speaking parties including the SLMC have been out of the parliamentary Select Committee which has recommended the referendum, shows the inflexibility and paranoia of Sinhala Buddhist Chauvinism. They want to have it at any cost.

The army has guaranteed the driving out of the LTTE in 4 months. The IPKF said something similar too, but