

## Life encounters of a Communist spouse

[Valliammai Subramaniam](#)



K.A. Subramaniam was a unique leader of the Sri Lankan Communist Movement. These are the memoirs of his Life Partner, Valliammai Subramaniam. She was active in many critical turning points in Sri Lanka's Political life in the last half century.

First Edition: 2024

Published by:

**South Vision Books**

491-B, 4<sup>th</sup> Link Road, Sadasiva Nagar,  
Madipakkam, Chennai - 600 091

[southvisionbooks@gmail.com](mailto:southvisionbooks@gmail.com)

+9194453 18520

Wrapper and Layout: Buby, Kalaiselvan,  
**ISBN :9788196126216**

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License (unversioned, with no invariant sections, front-cover texts, or back-cover texts) - [Valliammai Subramaniam](#)

**Dedicated to my beloved husband KA Subramaniam  
and  
countless comrades  
who are trying to build the common ownership movement  
in  
Sri Lanka.**

**I'm Here ....**

To give a voice against injustice  
Never feared  
Poverty has never added  
Enough surrounded by disease  
Search and solidity did not  
diminish Think Fuse  
The lifeblood I received  
more happy  
I found love and kindness  
in my husband  
I saw humanity and individuality  
In your highest image -  
honesty is sublime  
Your Mankind  
does not lie even in death.  
You wanted to see  
Social change and balance  
not far off.  
I'm here to remind you....

## Glossaries

I, Valliammai Subramaniam, called '*Mani*' (மணி) by my parents and my spouse. '*Sathiamanai*' refers to my family's home or heritage in Chulipuram, Sri Lanka.

The term "Sathiamanai" (சத்தியமனை) in Tamil can be broken down into two parts:

- Sathiya (சத்திய): This means "truth" or "honesty."
- Manai (மனை): This translates to "house" or "home."

Therefore, "Sathiamanai" can be interpreted as "House of Truth" or "Home of Honesty." It often signifies a place associated with truthfulness or integrity. In the context of names, it can carry connotations of a family or lineage that values these principles.

The following refers in the context of Valliammai Subramaniam:

1. My School - Pannagam Meyhandan Maha Vidyalayam (PMMV)
2. My comrade [K.A. Subramaniam](#) alias 'KAS'
3. My eldest son Subramaniam Sathiarajan alias '**Rasan**' or 'Meeran Master'
4. My daughter [Sathiamalar Raveendran](#) alias '**Buby**'
5. My youngest son Subramaniam Satheakeerthy alias '**Keerthy**'
6. My son-in-law [Nadesan Raveendran](#) alias '**Ravi**'
7. '**Aiya**' (ஐயா) means respectable person.

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## Publisher's notes

K.A. Subramaniam, known to the people as KAS, was one of the unique leaders of the Sri Lankan socialist movement. These are the memoirs of his wife, [Valliammai Subramaniam](#). He dedicated his life as a service, sacrificing himself with the authority needed for all the ethnic groups in Sri Lanka to live in unity. Valliammai Subramaniam is also the mother who lost her son, Sathiarajan alias Meeran Master, a liberation fighter who dedicated his youthful spring to the Tamil homeland. She was active during many critical turning points in Sri Lanka's political life over the past half-century. These are her memoirs.

The events of their lives serve as excellent examples of how love and familial relationships develop among people when they rise up for social liberation movements. Both Comrade KAS and Valliammai lived as the foundation for one another. Valliammai was an unwavering support in Comrade KAS's dedicated life, and during their daughter's marriage, KAS also cared for Valliammai's future well-being, illustrating that they lived a legendary love life together.

This book explains how the socialist movement and Comrade K.A. Subramaniam fought for the unified existence of the ethnic groups in Sri Lanka, sacrificing their lives. It also touches on how India exploited ethnic conflicts.

The suffering of women-headed families involved in the activities of these movements has not been sufficiently discussed. She has expressed the political trends of Sri Lanka over the past half-century from a mother's perspective. This viewpoint is unique. The contributions of women in social liberation work have not been adequately recognized. Researchers will agree that Valliammai's memoirs also subtly document such contributions. These memoirs will assist the new generation in learning.

**M. Balaji,**  
Founding Editor

[T. Neethirajan,](#)  
Chief Editor

[South Vision Books](#)

## Preface

The "KAS Sathiamanai Library" continues to receive appreciation from many for its contributions and ongoing various initiatives, with individuals offering their support and participation as much as possible. This reflects an environment in which the organization can thrive as a timely institution!

With the necessity of the times, Comrade K.A. Subramaniam has taken the lead in organizing and directing the contributions of the people to create historical field activities. The KAS Sathiamanai Library, which shines with his name as a symbol of that historical movement, undertakes initiatives to channel the people's power to create history again.

As one such initiative, this creation titled "Encounters of Life" is a valuable asset presented by the wife of Comrade K.A. Subramaniam, marking the launch of a book publishing project.

One of the significant turning points in Sri Lankan history was the moment of the "[October 21 Uprising in 1966](#)," with the banners reading "Destroy Caste Structures" and "Let Equality and Justice Prevail." Many regard the leadership that directed that procession moving from [Chunnakam](#) to Jaffna as their guiding light.

During the wave of social awakening, Comrade K.A. Subramaniam led a revolutionary march on May 1, Labor Day, in 1969, which was a decision by the [Ceylon Communist Party \(Maoist\)](#).

. Once again, he faced police attacks while leading that revolutionary procession. Such waves of historical uprising have been created by many!

Questions arise among many about how the family life of such a historical leader would have been structured. While achievers shine brightly in the social sphere, there are unfortunate instances where families that thrived with strength and resilience remain undocumented.

[Valliammai Subramaniam](#), who progressed in education with a scholarly background and confidently took on with a partner who was on a full-time party role, lived alongside Comrade K.A. Subramaniam, contributing greatly to their lives. She has given us a book that breathes life into a revolutionary people's leader.

With the clarity of the principle that "the people are the creators of history," she has shaped the arena for this and guided it—organizing those who will grow into people's leaders through it—while developing the processes of "from the people to the people."

Comrade K.A. Subramaniam was not a usurper who claimed all achievements as his own; instead, he was a guide who appreciated the people's power as a whole, engaging with fellow comrades and leaders.

The [October 21 Uprising](#) (1966-1974) against caste oppression achieved many accomplishments through the participation of many; it is a truth that must be emphasized that Comrade K.A. Subramaniam stood as a determined and inspiring leadership force, guiding and leading.

While he received historical recognition for his contributions, he intended to write about his life experiences under the title "A Communist's Self-Critique." He wanted to reveal his role in the errors that occurred during that great era rather than merely documenting his achievements.

Through the writings of [Valliammai Subramaniam](#), the founder of the KAS Sathiamanai Library, we will witness how the pages of life imbued with strong human determination have endured various pains and advancements!

[Nadesan Raveendran](#)

Administrator, KAS Sathiamanai Library  
Chulipuram, Sri Lanka.

## Foreword

I, [Valliammai Subramaniam](#), have written a series titled "Encounters of Life" on my Facebook. As it is set to be published as a book, I present this foreword to you, the readers, as an introduction.

I have written all the events that have occurred in my life just as they are. Many dear ones, who shed tears upon reading it, have contacted me via telephone expressing their thoughts, saying, "Mother... if this comes out as a book... wouldn't it create a way for the new generation to read and benefit from it?" It is that encouragement that has propelled this book into your hands.

Within it lies poverty. There is depth of love even in poverty. A voice has been raised against the oppression bondage of servitude. In it, there is neither subjugation nor domination. Because a voice has been raised against oppression, you will see the shackles, the remnants of bones, and the dried blood stains. You can also read the stories of sorrow told by the blood-stained clothes. You can witness the severity of hunger and deprivation. At the same time, having seen the hungry faces, we never turned away those who came seeking shelter with empty stomachs. There is also a narrative of facing the retorts of landlords, who, having no homes to live in, have had to reside in rented houses: "We won't allow anyone else to enter, only you." We have been subjected to the landlord's scornful comments: "We only rented it to you. We won't provide space for others to draw water from our well."

Despite all these oppositions, with the support and cooperation of comrades, we overcame all obstacles, transforming barriers into steppingstones to rise above and reach our lofty goals.

To anyone pursuing a goal-filled life, numerous interruptions, homelessness, relationships that cannot lend a hand, financial constraints, and the camaraderie extended during times of illness bring forth tears of remembrance. I present these reflections to you and seek your valuable blessings.

[Valliammai Subramaniam](#)  
Founder, KAS. Sathiamanai Library  
Chulipuram, Sri Lanka

## 1. Memorable Relationships -Written on 22 July, 2019

The friends, companions, esteemed teachers, elderly people with life experiences, loving families living abroad, and student gems who rushed to help me out of love when I was struggling are numerous. Even if I write them down annually, their number cannot be contained.

I have no personal politics. I do not have the depth of research or the ability to make decisions; I do not have the time for that either. Only women in such situations understand how many responsibilities, duties and workloads a wife of a full-time worker of the Socialist Party, a mother of three children, and a woman working in the government has.

Today, I am unable to live independently and have a disease called 'Alcer,' which prevents me from eating all kinds of food, as well as having osteoporosis, and I can only survive through English medicines. At the age of 80, I owe my gratitude to poet Azha. Pakeerathan, who established himself as a service-oriented person. He and my daughter Buby, have encouraged me to write in this form under this title.

My heart is filled with gratitude towards those who have recommended me and shown human dignity, both before and after my marriage, and even to this day. I have followed and needed to adhere to the advice and suggestions of some people to the extent that I took it as a necessity. The decisive words of some have found their way into my ears, thanks to the nurturing and upbringing of my mother in the household where she lived.

In 1925 my father went to Singapore for work by ship and my mother left with her eldest daughter to live in Sri Lanka. I used to call my father 'Aiya' in Tamil to give him respect. At that time, sea voyages took about two weeks. If one sent a letter, it would take a minimum of three weeks to arrive. This time has changed now due to scientific advancements, allowing us to see, talk, and exchange face to face messages instantly.

The inventors who provided these conveniences to the world are very capable geniuses! That time my young mother traveled alone by bus, mentioning the struggles she faced while traveling from [Chulipuram](#) to Jaffna and then to [Ariyalai](#), helped by a woman named [Neervely Somu](#). Those historical events are significant for me as well, especially during the times when my husband was not around, ensuring the safety of my children.

[Karainagar](#) (1962-1966), Kalaiyadi [Pandatharippu](#) (1967-1971), Tholpuram (1972-1976), Sathiamanai (1977-1991), Kandy (1992-1997), Singapore (1998-2011), Colombo (2012-2018), Sathiamanai (again from 2019) these are unforgettable homes surrounded by kind mothers! The motherlands that we lived in were surrounded by unforgettable mothers!

We have visited the homes of some members of the socialist party in search of them. In those houses, there are children and elderly parents. There are those who are sick and require wheelchairs, as well as households dealing with death, and situations where children have gone missing. The sharing of someone's sorrow by another is expressed in the '[Thirukkural](#)' 788, "As the hand of someone whose vesture slips away, Friendship at once the coming grief will stay."

The years are not arranged in order. The events and names are real. [Dr.S.V. Seenivasagam](#), Maan Muthaiya, Dr. Nandi Sivanaganasundaram, [Mathagal V. Kanthasamy](#), [S. Yoganathan](#), Petroliam S. Kathiravelu (father of Minister [Douglas Devananda](#)), Professor S. Maunaguru, [Professor K. Kailasapathy](#), progressive writer K. Daniel, Karthikeshan Master on Nallur Street, comrades [N. Shanmugathan](#), [R.K. Soodamani](#), E. Thirunyanamoorthy ([E. T. Moorthy](#)), [S. K. Senthivel](#), [T. Tharmalingam](#) (Nitchamam), [K. Suppiah](#) (Madduvil), R. Selvanayagam, E. Thambaiya ([Talawakelle](#)), [S. Navaratnam](#), and many others, along with my teachers in the town, Pandit A. Arumugam 'Aiya', Dr. Thambaiya, friends [Sundaram](#), and Chandathiyar...

The words get tangled as I try to type. I will pause and continue later...

## 2. My Teachers-Written on 24 July, 2019

We have many wise individuals with life experiences who have guided us with encouragement and advised us on how to navigate life while also balancing household responsibilities. I apologize if I go back in time in this narrative. These experiences date back almost 58 years. They come from families raised in traditional households where a male and a female, having determined to support each other's lives, married. They provided strength and encouragement during difficult times, and even though many have passed away, their memories remain with me, and I want to mention both the living and the departed.

As [Bharathiyar](#) beautifully said in his poem, "The merit of teaching all children to read is greater than any other," I too started my school journey at the age of 5, attending the School called Pannagam Meyhandan Maha Vidyalayam (PMMV) from the day [Navaratri](#) commenced. For all my initial education and the training that guided me into my profession, I owe a great deal to PMMV and my mother. From 1943, starting with the kindergarten level, I had the opportunity to study in a single PMMV school until the final [Senior School Certificate](#) (SSC) examination in 1953, when I turned 15. During that time, the number of teachers who served us was well over fifteen, but none of them are alive today. Yet, their service has endured, becoming a living legacy beyond two generations.

The first lesson was in ethics [Saivism](#), taught by Pandit A. Arumugam 'Aiya', Mr. Ilakupillai Arumugam, and Mr. Appathurai. The second subject, Mathematics, was taught by Principal Mr. C. Srinivasan and Assistant Principal Mr. Appathurai. History was covered by the respective class teachers, while English was taught by Mr. Jameson Kumaravel, Mr. Rajaiya Thampirasa, Vadaliyadaippu Ms. Muthukumar Manonmani, and others. Tamil grammar and literature were handled by Pandit A. Arumugam 'Aiya'.

Mr. Kalyanasundaram, a renowned musician from India, would also conduct classes in the afternoons. After our country gained independence, vocational education was emphasized in schools, with various craft classes. The sewing craft was taught by Mrs. Sivapakkium Nagalingam and Mrs. Nallamma Thangarasa from Mullaitivu, and other subjects were handled by Miss. Thambaiya, Mrs. Ponnamma Selvanayagam, Mrs. Vayithilingam Gnaneswari, and Miss. Manonmani from Achuveli handled weaving. Miss. Annalakshmi from Kopay was in charge of mat-making.

Moreover, as time went on, the subjects of biology and zoology were combined under the name "Country Life Science," taught by Thiru Ethir Mannasingham. He drew pictures of living organisms on the blackboard and illustrated their features from head to tail, making the lessons vivid. Even now, it brings back fond memories.

Particularly, the sewing subject was continuously conducted by Teacher Ms. Ponnamma, while the other two teachers were reassigned elsewhere. The Government Weaving Training College (GWTC) in Nallur operated for a long time, producing numerous guiding teachers over the years. Changes in leadership brought in new officials who took on responsibilities.

In 1954, along with three others from PMMV, I was enrolled with 25 students in that GWTC. At that time, Mrs. [Gunawardhana](#), a Sinhalese teacher from Southern Sri Lanka (Horana), was in charge. She was well acquainted with Tamil and English, having taught Tamil students in Jaffna and having passed examinations at the 'Tutoring Center' operating in Anaiypanthy Junction. She had a daughter named "Kanchanamala." After serving for a long time and receiving a promotion, she moved, and Mr. Kugadasan took over the responsibility...

### 3. The Family I Was Born Into-Written on 30 July, 2019

I haven't been able to write for the past 3-4 days. Writing only about myself is selfish. I should also write about my parents, siblings, and their education. From the day I

became aware, our parents would stay at the Paralai Murugan temple during the [Kanda Sashti](#) festival, spending a week in the temple during the month of October to observe the festival, listening to the teachings of the guru, who would tell us stories from the scriptures. Kanda Sashti holds immense significance for devotees of Lord Murugan. It commemorates the day when Lord Murugan defeated the demon, symbolizing the triumph of good over evil. Devotees usually narrate the [Kanda Sashti Kavacham](#) during this period. Whoever fasts and prays to Murugan for the six days of Kanda Sashti is believed to receive Lord Murugan's blessings.

They would narrate the tales of gods who refused to carry fish, and the demon siblings Suran, Singan, and Tharakan who imprisoned the gods. They would tell us how God Murugan appeared and fought to free the gods, all in a storytelling manner. "Veera Vel, Thara Vel, the one who rescued the celestial beings from captivity, the one who bathes in the river, the one with the striking spear, who takes down the mighty demon," and many such songs would echo in our ears, including those about the Vel, the Thirukai Vel, from the [Kandha Purana](#), attributed to [Kachiyappa Sivachariyar](#)!

In this way, worship at the temple, observing fasting, staying awake, and offering food to the deity on the last day, as well as observing rituals for our family deity during [Navaratri](#), Thiru Vembavai, Pongal, Padayal, Yajna, Abishekam, Kudiruththi, and [Annadhanam](#) were all performed by them. Annadhanam refers to the practice of donating food to those in need. In the end, they raised their three children with these practices. The new generation is unaware of this history. They lack even an inkling of what spirituality means, having studied in schools that did not teach about religious values.

My sister Lakshmi Pillai studied at PMMV School and qualified for the 5th-grade scholarship for further studies at the [Velalai Central College](#), staying in the hostel. My brother Ponnaiya studied at PMMV School and paved his way for higher education at the [Skandaravodhaya College](#) in [Kandarodai](#), later getting selected for the [Peradeniya University](#).

My sister also joined the Kandy Vellankalandi School as a mathematics teacher after passing her A/L exams. Mr. Suriyar and Ms. Lakshmi, from the Kampanai Amman Temple in Chulipuram, had four children: Ms. Gnanakka, Ms. Deviakka, Ms. Thilagamakka, and Mr. Suriyar, who also observe the Kanda Shasti festival. They were our guiding mentors, providing us with books and encouragement.

Ms. Deviakka, while serving as a teacher at the Chulipuram United Sangam School, would tell us stories about the kinship of the well-known [Arumuka Navalar](#), the relative Subramaniam Chettiyar, who came as a son-in-law without demanding any dowry. This family and their siblings' children, Ms. Kamala, Ms. Maragadavalli, Mr. Mahendran, Mr. Sethukavalar, Dr. Mani, Ms. Renuka, Mr. Murali, Ms. Seematti, Mr. Rasu (some names are not remembered... Ponnar, Manju, and numerous other members), were supported by our school examiners Mr. M. Nagalingam and Ms. Manonmani, who encouraged us to excel in our studies.

Scholars who have brought pride to the land, like Pandit A. Arumugam 'Aiya', along with the scholar [Vidwan N. Sivapatha Sundaranar](#), also hold a place as guides. Likewise, for my sister, Miss Marudhayinar, Mr. Thambu, Mr. Arichandran, Mr. [V. Rajasundaram](#), and Mrs. Devaki Sabaratnam, among many other teachers, along with relatives Ms. Varadha, Ms. Rajalakshmi, Ms. Nesamma, Ms. Bhavani, Ms. Thiyagaswary, Ms. Lokeshwari, Ms. Ratheeswary, Mr. Krishnan, Mr. Kanthan, Ms. Roopa, and many others.

In the same way, Vidwan Velan , Vidwan Vendan, Mr. [V. Ponnambalam](#) and [Mathakal V. Kanthasamy](#) were the seeds for my brother at the [Skandaravodhaya College](#) in [Kandarodai](#). In Kandy [Peradeniya University](#), [Professor K. Kailasapathy](#) and Professor [S. Thillainathan](#) are gratefully remembered for being teachers for him....!

In this way, I will continue in my next writing about meeting my dear husband Mr. K. A. Subramaniam who later became my comrade.

#### 4. My first meeting with friend KAS. -Written on 7 August, 2019

There was a woman named Ms. [Ambalappillai Sivanesam](#), whom everyone called Sellakka, in the GWTC hostel where I was staying. She liked me. She would share her admiration for me with friends regarding my calmness, handwriting, and songwriting. In the month of March 1955, on a Sunday (with prior permission from the principal), Sellakka (Sivanesham) wanted to take five of us to see the [Keerimalai Springs](#). Accordingly, we all set out, changed buses twice, and reached Mahajana College Junction, but by the time we got to Sellakka's house near the Kilanai Vairavar Temple, it was already past 11:00 AM. The plan to see the Keerimalai Springs was lost.

After a while her 'Chinnannai' (Little brother KAS) arrived shortly. He asked the visitors who had come to their house about their hometown according to Jaffna's cultural practices and discussed various inquiries regarding the family relationships, mentioning the names of friends working with him at the [K.K.S cement factory](#). Since none of my siblings worked there, I kept my mouth shut. After that, lunch was finished by 2:00 PM, and we caught buses to come back to GWTC at Nallur, reaching there past 5:30 PM. "Everyone was vocal except for one child who was not talking. I need to ask why the next time we meet," KAS thought in his mind it seems.

After that, in August 1956, my studies ended. They all left for their homes. However, a monthly magazine named "Deshabhimani" arrived at everyone's address. I couldn't understand the phrases in it. For example: "Sovereignty," "[Dictatorship](#)," "Superpower," "Dominance," and more than a thousand such words... words I had not read or encountered in school or college, words whose meanings I did not understand... phrases I had never read before... Who could I ask about the meanings? I would only know if I asked the person who sent that paper. His actions were based on the thought of making people politically aware. I understood that later.

However, beyond all this... I needed to find a job... through which I could pay off my father's debts... that concern was always hidden within me. Sellakka had written a letter through her brother KAS, saying she had sent clothes for two pillowcases which she wanted me to sew and send back to her with flower embroidery and that she was staying at the Trincomalee Police Quarters since her marriage had been arranged.

Comrade KAS also came home with the help of Akambi (My elder sister's son Mr. Sinniah Apputhurai) guidance. (When he came to the house, later friends and children would laugh and say I was hiding inside the 'Setthai' means fence made of dead leaves'). Comrade KAS ate the food given by my mother with both hands, as if he had known her for a long time. He stood up and allowed the sacred ash [Vibhuti](#) she brought from the temple to be placed on his forehead. Being a respectful elder, he had a great

affection for those parents who had given away their children at a young age. Therefore, my father later bought the land where 'Sathiamanai' was built through my younger brother Mr.A. Ponniah and gave it to his daughter (For me to live).

After that, I studied to become an Entrance Pandit and succeeded. During this time, I received many books in the mail for the offense of asking for explanations. These were translations from Bengali to Tamil. Since he was born and raised in a comfortable family, he did not know poverty or lack of commodities. Whenever he was reading, his mother or elder sisters would provide food at the desk. As a result of assisting in their own betel garden, father, elder brother Mr. A. Thangarajah, relatives, and friends helped comrade KAS to establish a community reading center in Kilanai, inviting progressive thinkers like Uduvil M.P. [V. Dharmalingam](#), Skandavarodhaya Teacher [V. Ponnambalam](#), and [Dr. S.V. Seenivasagam from Kankesanthurai](#) (KKS), providing them with leadership positions and honoring them, as the books they provided would say, "I also want to read." Thus, in his thoughts, I seemed to be a great intellectual being. However, that was not me; all I had was an [S.S.C](#) and a Government Weaving Training Center (GWTC) Final Certificate (1st Class). At this point, a Tamil song lyric comes to mind...

*"I couldn't sing... I couldn't read... I didn't know about school... I couldn't write... I didn't know the types of writing... I never wrote on paper. Even if I wrote, I had no habit..."*

I thought of myself as a woman who just sat at home, not doing anything... and the books filled with public principles came in the mail. In the meantime, I began to study 'Pandit' by taking a bus with Ms. Maheshwari Kanagasabai and Mr. Sivasanmukamurthi from our village at the Jaffna Bharathi Language School.

Later, I transferred to Vaitheeswarara Vidyalaya. There, I completed my Pandit entrance exam with Mr. Rajaguru and Ms. Pandithai Pakkiyam. For this class, my teacher friends, Kantharodai Vidhuvan Venathanar and Vidhuvan Velan, provided the books they had with them over time. My "Guru," Pandit A. Arumugam 'Aiya' who taught me, also held positions in the school. This course continued for more than two years... Our love grew through the postal mail. The debate was whether to become a school teacher or work in the trade sector. My comrade KAS had suggested that the trade sector was better for living alongside the people and creating new ideas. In order to become a school teacher, besides adding 25 students to the school, money should also be paid to the Hindu Board. With this thought, by the end of 1959, I joined the trade sector. One month of school leave for every 3 months in the education portfolio. But in the trade sector, if I also need leave for my [Sanskrit](#) studies, I have to show the reason and apply for leave from the trade sector department head office and get it. However, if I needed leave, I had to apply to the office with a reason. Nevertheless, even after performing well in classes, I could not achieve success in Sanskrit studies. That shortcoming still exists today.

Comrade KAS had his policies, practices, and as a full-time Party worker busy with his daily duties. Since I took the trade sector government job, I used to take the bus at the required time and maintained the leadership of 30 to 40 female students, with the title "Responsible Officer In Charge". When others saw that, many of them, who were older than me, came as students from several villages, and I felt troubled. While filling out the documents, I paid them the respect their age deserved.

This is the genuine guidance provided by my teacher, which has nurtured me in school. Meanwhile, I was encouraged to join the Sri Lankan Progressive Writers' Association. My vision and search began to expand little by little. Since I was also in the Progressive Writers' Association, I began to write. There, writers like Mr. K. Daniel, "Mallikai" editor [Dominic Jeeva](#), Padma Somakanthan, Eelam Somu, the Jaffna Poet, Agasthiyar, Hindumathi Markandhu, and poet [Sillaiyoor Selvarajan](#) were among those who inspired me.

Ms. Usha Panchanadeswaran, Ms. Maheshwari Ramanathan, Ms. Bhumadevi Chinnathurai and Ms. Maheshwari Kanakasabai, who were fellow students who studied with me in Bala Pandit class.

Among the many who came through my husband were [Dr. S.V. Seenivasagam](#), H.M.B Mohaideen, writer S.Yoganathan, Premji - Dr. Nandi Gnanesundaram, Vidhuvan Venthana, Vidhuvan Velan, Pandit Rajaya, Pandit Duraisingam, Pandit Sathiyadevi Duraisingam, Pandit Ilamurugan, and Sanskrit teacher Subramaniya Deshikar... Karainagar Saraswathi, Gnanambikai Chittrambalam, many such people...

Unlike other lovers, I would ask questions about the meanings of the phrases in the books I read, during our meetings... Time would slip away... The virtuous soul who serves among the people would protect the moral compass... Time or space... to protect the moral reins of a public servant among the people.... without touching the fingers. If we say that we are the ones who drove the days without time or time to touch.... will today's 'mobile phone' world believe it?

To be continued...

## 5. Studies and Work -Written on 13 August, 2019

On Sundays Pandit Scholar Classes.... I need to go for studies.... the other six days are for work..... As my days pass like this..... he also got fully engaged in politics by becoming a full-time employee at the [Chunnakam](#) party office, continuing not only his political work but also his literary endeavors. With the flow of letters, meetings occurred like flowers blooming. Some of my friends said he resembled Aravindan from the old Tamil movie '*Kurunji Mala*'. His tall stature, clean attire, composed calm speech, profound knowledge, and the affection he showed nurtured love and trust towards him.... Years 1960 and 1961 passed.

I couldn't manage to study with only one day on Sunday. This is because, unlike school teachers who have a one-month leave every three months, there is no such leave in the trade sector handicraft department. However, due to my eagerness to study... I made an effort with my mother tongue books as examples..... In the entrance Pandit scholar class, when the 'Nanool Kandik' lesson was there.... in the next class, it was '[Nanool Viruthiyurai](#)'.... likewise..... I studied even if I had to struggle through texts like [Thandiyalankaram](#), Nambiyakaporum, [Akananooru](#), and [Purananuru](#). The penetration of auditory education was only minimal. Sanskrit lessons, brother Sivasanmuga Murthy helped me as a guru. In 1960, I joined the second-level examination at the [Jaffna Sinhala Maha Vidyalayam](#).

After three months, in the resulting examination, I didn't pass the [Sanskrit](#) lesson. Other grammar and literary compositions were only simple achievements. For me, without taking a break.... for women.... those three period days too were spent running.... running... to the point of tears. When I thought of trying again the following year, I had already got a transfer from [Vaddukoddai](#), Iraththaladi to [Karainagar](#), Neelippanthanai. In this situation, at home, I was blamed for not passing the examination because of my comrade. Due to his dignified demeanor, knowledge, good conduct, and family background, at first, my parents liked my comrade very much, but later, they couldn't accept losing me to a full-time Party worker. Comrade KAS firmly believed that one could move life forward by renouncing everything against caste and social disparities. However, he insisted that one should focus completely on education. He said that through knowledge, many things could be done for society. In his letter, he wrote regretfully, "When I think of you, you appear to be a woman who takes care and says 'study, study.' Ultimately, if you don't succeed, please try again."

Regarding my natal birth home, will I finish constructing this house which is only at the door frame stage level? Or will I continue with the Pandit scholar class further....? Or will I fulfill the responsibility of my work which provides the monthly salary? In this state of confusion like a 'Tirichangu' (trident), I decided to only do my work.

Initially, my parents and I thought of entering the teaching profession. In between came my comrade community, people's involvement, entrolling 25 students for the Hindu

board, and donating money which confused me. However, my parents thought he would help us. The reason he didn't act that way became clear a few months later. He intended to join our family as a member, and due to his resolution, he couldn't use the influence of his party for his family. Moreover, he said, "Recommendation falls under the principle of giving priority to those born in oppressed or depressed communities."

The following year, when my sister was selected for the Science Advanced Level (A/L) class, she received a qualification from the [Velanai Central College](#). At the time she encountered the opportunity, and based on her intelligence, intended to study in the [Soviet Union](#) for medical or engineering degrees. She applied for the medical education field and submitted a copy to the Party. In this, the main determinant for intake is 75% by the Government and 25% by the Party. Therefore, due to the priority given to families with a strong ideological basis and those who consistently contributed to meetings, the brother of Chunnakam, [S.T.N. Nagaratnam](#), got an opportunity to study engineering, and another woman got the opportunity to study medicine.

Our parents lived and passed away as loyal followers of Mr. [A. Amirthalingam](#), who acted as our village leader in the [Tamil federal party \(ITAK\)](#). These details were not conveyed to my elderly parents. Even if conveyed, they were not in a mental state to understand. A remark without explanation that "Comrade did not consider the application requests of our two daughters" left an ingrained resentment in their minds. I, along with two loving ones from our village, joined the Entrance Pandit class held at Bharathi Pasha Vidyalayam on K.K.S Road in Jaffna. Money is needed to attend that class..... Among the teachers who came to perform duties there, Vidhwan Vendan was already known to my comrade through Mr. [V. Ponnampalam](#) and was one of the learned individuals.

Apart from them, Navali Pandit Ilamurugan, (he is the elder son of [Navali, Somesundaram Pulavar](#)) Neerveli Pandit Duraisingam, Mrs. Sathiyadevi Duraisingam, and Ariviyalai Pandit Rajaiya were especially notable for our [Sanskrit](#) class. Brahmasri. Subramania Sharma was among the prominent multilingual experts. One of his golden sayings still lingers in my memory: "*Mounam, Kalaga Nasthi*," meaning 'if one is silent, turmoil will not arise'; this is the philosophy of that life. Due to the large number of students in the above class, it was shifted to [Vannarpannai](#) Vaidheeswarar Vidyalayam.

During that time, Ms. Usha Panchanadeeswaran, Aanaikottai Markandhu Hindumathi, along with our former Tamil Sangam Pandit class teacher N. Pakkiyam and Pannakam P. Rajaguru continued their education without giving up. In 1959, based on a Government circular, teacher appointments were provided for everyone who reached the age of 21 trained in the following years.

The oral examination took place at the headquarters office in Colombo, and I got the opportunity to train under Miss Nadarasa Puranam (Chinna Mahes Akka), who was serving as the officer in charge at a station in [Ilavalai](#) village in the six-month training program. This sister served as an excellent guide, possessing great patience and competence.

Since I went to college along with school studies, the practical techniques were not clear to me. Chinna Mahes Akka was one among three who had been training at the Maruthanarmadam Women's Station while residing in the hostel. During those six months, it took a lot of time waiting and traveling through four bus stations: [Chulipuram](#), Sithankeni, [Pandatharuppu](#), and [Ilavalai](#). Some had the skill to choose stations where only one bus would connect. When I was selected, I didn't know how many buses had to change to reach a village called [Ilavalai](#). Only one thing was in my mind: that was to get trained by Chinna Mahes Akka.

After a few days, I went to [Pandatharuppu](#) Ladies College junction in the vehicle of Mr. Seenivasagam ( We used to call him China Uncle and many years later my daughter Buby also took his Van) and caught the [Keerimalai](#) bus coming from Mathagal. During those six months, only the 'medical' leave was accepted by the office administration. Even now, remembering those events brings back memories.... This age-old vagabond, even during the rainy season, have I climbed up and down while soaked in rain... ? I am thanking my feet that refuse to move now.

As I write this history, while typing out the memories that come to mind, I seem to have written down the first remembered events, resulting in occurrences that cannot be avoided, resulting in an unmanageable mess in the record...! Forgive me, isn't age creeping up on me?

## 6. A New Home and Sibling Love-Written on 20 August, 2019

My father returned from Singapore suffering from illness, and my mother says that she sold her jewelry to save him. In the early 1920s, my father married my mother, who was a young, beautiful girl living in a comfortable family from [Ariyalai](#) near Jaffna town. Afterward, as children died one after another, his illness and financial struggles led her to seek help at temples and ponds. This made me grow up quickly, looking after my younger sister and younger brother and managing household chores. In our village, there was no one to show love, offer advice, or serve as a role model outside the home. I found this situation challenging.

To continue building the house that had become stagnant, I decided that I had to work hard and sacrifice my studies. With the physical and financial support of my father, our house was constructed. With the help of Mr. Murugesu, we used 50 bags of cement and eight-inch stones to build it, stacking them near the well of my elder sister's courtyard. My younger brother (12-16 years old) assisted us with various tasks, and we arranged

the stones step by step. My mother initiated the rural fund collections from my salary of 272 rupees, contributing 100 rupees each month for two funds, balance 72 rupees which covered my bus fare, cooking, and other household expenses. We also had expenses for the family deity's worship and annual festivals. I fulfilled my mother's requests, such as "with my salary... temple expenses, rituals, and family debts," by giving her my entire earnings. Similarly for 27 years after my marriage (1962-1989), I did not keep my salary in my hands. I never let him feel that, "He does not earn money," as I knew that he is a Party full time worker and I dedicated myself to the household duties.

I tried to fulfill my responsibilities regarding the unfinished house, and my younger brother also contributed his physical efforts, never neglecting his studies. We had already bought [Palmerah](#) trees and were preparing to split them for different uses for the house roof structure. My father said that "the son who gave support to the house," and my younger brother received half of the house share, giving my younger sister half as well. My younger sister took out a bank loan to complete the house construction after my marriage, ensuring fairness. I did not take anything from the house that my mother kept for me. According to my father's loving request to my brother, "Buy a plot of land for 'Mani'(They and my comrade call me 'Mani' at home)," since they both acquired half of the house each.

With respect to the father who had recollected the gratitude of returning the land mortgaged to the temple owner, I was praised as "the child who supported the foundation... and built the part of the house." Over time, I learned that my brother donated his half of the house to provide electricity to his sister's house. Such is sibling love.

Now, that house stands empty, weathered by strong winds from the North, with the columns falling apart. 'Aiya' my father would say that according to the tradition of putting 5 metals such as gold, silver...etc should be put, my earlobe was put in the foundation cavity. But the home, where many children crawled, lies in disrepair. Who is to blame for this neglect? While some suffer without homes, this large house remains vacant! The grandchildren who once crawled around, including Rasan, Buby, Keerthy, my elder sister's children Apputhurai and Kanahambihai, my younger sister's children Visaharan, Kirupaharan and Suthaharan, my brother's children Lambotharan, Somaskanthan, and Kiritharan are from which generation that will restore it to a usable condition? Will I ever see it again with my own eyes?

I will write next about the rushed marriage that compelled me...

*Postscript: That house is now being renovated by my sister's son Dr. S. Visaharan.*

## 7. Communist Connections-Written on 30 August, 2019

The short story I sent at the end of 1961 was published in [Veerakesari](#) at the beginning of 1962. Under the title “Annadhanam,” it was published in the name of “Valli Subramanian,” along with two short poems titled “Who is the Martyr?” The monthly magazine ‘[Kalaimathi](#)’ was published from [Alaveddy](#). During that time, a monthly magazine called *Kalaichelvi* was also being published from Nallur.

At that time, even before the era of computer records, the [Veerakesari newspaper dated 21-01-1962](#) could still be obtained by Mr. [Velautham Nallanathar alias Raghavan \(RR\)](#), a close friend of my son Rasan, after crossing 50 years. During that period, school teachers like Ms. Padma Somakanthan, Ms. Kuramagal Vallinayagi, and others... Jaffna’s Yarl Nangai wrote a long serial story in *Veerakesari*. (The late Ms. Lakshmi Rajadurai was among those who published books...) Among the publishers were Ms. Hindumathi Markandu, from Aanaikottai (Studied with me in the Pandit class), Dr. Sivagnanasundaram Nallur’s “Nandi,” who wrote the novel ‘*Malai Kozhunthu*’. Hindumathi’s “Thangath Thamarai,” children’s stories, and the poetry collection of Jaffna Kavi Rajar gained fame along with the works of progressive writers like comrade K. Daniel and Mallikai [Dominic Jeeva](#). Various stories, novels, and poetry collections were published in Jaffna, Colombo, and the Eastern Province. News could be read and learned through the newspapers *Veerakesari*, *Dhinakaran*, and *Eela Nadu*. The newspaper ‘*Suthathiran*’, which promoted Tamil culture and traditions, gained significant influence among Tamils. The progressive ‘*Desabimani*’ was published monthly under the guidance of comrades H.M.B. Mohaideen and Premji Gnanam. Similarly, separate newspapers were being published for Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam. Locations like Jaffna Central College Hall, Jaffna Sinhala Maha Vidyalayam, Clock Tower Street’s ‘Rimmar’ Hall, and Sonaka Street’s primary school were active in publishing many books.

In 1962, [Thai Pongal](#) fell on a Sunday. A full pot placed in a square with [Kolam](#) decorated for the Sun God, some took the pot with the Pongal pan into the Swami room. By noon, they would remove the coconut, rice flour, and flowers from the pot and pour water into the well. Since that Sunday was the day of the Sun, it was in the Swami room as a full pot. On the morning of the third day, from [Chulipuram](#) I went to [Karainagar](#) for work and took a bus from there to finish my work at Jaffna Union, and by 3:30 PM, I returned to Karainagar (Neelippanthanai).

Indeed, I was late, and all my children said in unison, “Teacher, your uncle came. He had a bow knife in his hand.” They added that “he came to kill you” and that “you’re going to marry an idle young man who mingles with all castes without a job” and that “he knows everything about your fiance since he worked at the K.K.S Cement Factory in

1949,” and that “he thinks killing you would earn him respect,” and “he claimed to be your elder sister’s husband.” After having drunk heavily, he had many bad stories to share. So, they insisted that I must leave immediately as he had said he would return here. In fact my elder sister Ms. Rasamma married to Mr. Sinniah with 2 children Mr. Apputhurai and Ms.Kanahambihai. They lived adjacent to our home. However my elder sister passed away suddenly after giving birth to Ms.Kanahambihai. Later Mr. Sinniah married the Temple owner’s daughter Ms. Alahamma and had 2 children Ms. Gnambihai and Mr. Balachandran.

I thought, “Whatever happens, it doesn’t matter,” as it was also the third day, and I needed to carry out the good deed of breaking the pot, so I bought a ticket to [Chulipuram](#). The bus I boarded was a postal collection bus, which stopped at every post office to collect mail and reached Chulipuram by 4:50 PM. There was a kind of fear and panic. I thought problems might arise at home since there were only neighboring houses. The eldest son-in-law at home was a bit of a troublemaker. (He was someone who worked little and was not good at valuing money, but later he not only loved comrade KAS but also learned to respect him. He would come home and talk with my comrade for a long time. That was a success for our behavior and philosophy.)

I prayed to my family deity (ancestral goddess), [Bhadrakali](#), and then bought another bus ticket from the bus conductor to go directly to Jaffna. That only one decision was made by me throughout my entire life. I moved forward with many matters seeking blessings from my ancestral goddess within my inner self. This was an act that had permeated my blood. Even the first time comrade KAS came to our house, he brought along a boy (my elder sister’s son) playing ball outside the [Bhadrakali](#) temple. It was his father who threatened me with death. After that, I got off the bus and hurriedly came to Ms. Pushbaleela Murugesu (Jaffna Nursing Officer) house in Jaffna Clock Tower Road, and waited there for more than two hours. Comrade KAS had come in haste, with many questions within himself, after being informed by his comrades. Suddenly, a commitment to a major decision arose. It was 7:30 PM. At Mr. Murugesu Master’s house, some of his comrades were present. They all unanimously said, “If this wedding happens, the troublemakers will calm down. We have seen weddings that can end in disputes among relatives, and peace can be made the next day. Legally, there will be no problem for those who have passed the age of minor.”

What next? There’s a saying, “What if floodwaters rise above the head?” When I think of it in solitude, I wonder how I got this mental courage. That is the truth.

I was confident that even though comrade KAS is a single person but with guard surveillance surrounded by a great tree called “Communist Party” among the friends and comrades was a relationship bridge. Nallur’s Arasadi comrade Rajaya played key roles of friend, brother, and relation in many situations. The proposal for marriage with a public affair registrar of marriage Mrs. Nadarasa was held at Kalviyankadu. Normally

many people are involved for many days to arrange these events. The family of Ms. Pushpaleela Murukesu and the family of comrade Arasadi Rajaya protected us at their home, and since they had a vehicle in Nallur, many people collaborated to complete the auspicious event on Friday, 19-01-1962, when [Thai Pooam](#) and Pournami Poya holidays came together in four days.

As a role model for mentoring young women, and my application for a mark of “I have gotten married” on my neck meant there should be a [Thali](#) (mangalsutra) as symbol of the marriage. Comrade KAS agreed with a condition that [Thali](#) of ‘[Hammer and Sickle](#)’ with ‘paddy’ which is the emblem of his Party. The honored “Muthiraichandai Paththar Aiya,” who was called by this special name, presented a golden pocket watch to the honorable Queen Elizabeth Maharani with three revolving hands—minute, second, and inner circle—crafted by that great hand in 1952. The round-shaped ‘[Hammer and Sickle](#)’ [Thali](#) created by that master is still safely with me. Many times, it come across pawn shops for borrowing money. Nevertheless, it has not left me. When my comrade passed away, his [Thali](#) that carried many stories did not remain with me. It was in the pawn shop and I will speak about that later. Comrade Rajaya took all three children of Ms. Pushpaleela with him in his vehicle and brought them to the Shiva temple hall where my teacher Mrs. Ponnamma Selvanayagam was married. I agreed to accept the [Thali](#) that bore the mark of my comrade KAS. The auspicious [Thali](#) knot was tied around my neck by Ms. Pushpaleela in the Nallur Shiva temple.

Since I managed his stubborn actions with an understanding in accordance with my limited knowledge, I had comprehension in my mind. In his mind, treated me as a seven-year-old girl... who lived with the customs of the village... an ignorant teenage scared girl who had to repeat anything, take it and tell it... in his words ... It was "love".

With that in mind later as a father, comrade KAS told his daughter that “If a bond of marriage comes for you, it must be with someone who respects your mother.” According to this, not just me, but he would also give respect to others, including those who hold two portions of parents’ blessings. With blessings, Dr. [Nadesan Raveendran](#) became the family son-in-law who sought out a precious gift.

\*My daughter asks, “Mom, write about the love you have for Daddy.” That is, in his birth home, they would not give priority to friends, humanistic Seivan, or anyone, and without any rights, sometimes, relatives like his uncles would come and say with scornful words, “The destructive serpent has come to ruin the clan,” and express their grief, he was unable to bring about changes in their minds.

Living with traditional relationships devoid of policy and living in a blind manner, he wouldn’t allow his conscience to find a place, so during encounters, he faced situations where he was ignored at his house to decline in respect for his policy. Hence, he had to

face humiliation in front of his friends, so towards him, I developed a deep understanding... that was... an understanding. He too had an understanding of me... that was not love because I am not beautiful, not rich, and I am not a person with many brothers. So, please use appropriate words to fill this as you like.

After a long time... writing doesn't cooperate with my fingers... I will continue....

## 8. Meeting with Communist Comrades-Written on 9 September, 2019

On Friday, January 19, 1962, during the [Thaipusam](#) festival, after our wedding in Nallur, we stayed for a few days at Pushpaleela Akka's house and tried to rent a room nearby. At their house, there was a woman who cared for the children, and she also cooked for us. Memories of both families come to mind. My comrade had already told me how his mother would wait up, no matter how late, to serve him food.

Similarly, in my family, my father would wait at the bus station in the days for me to come. With days passing by in tears and amazement, both of us wondered if we were causing trouble to those who helped us. Meanwhile, money would only come in if I went to work. Apart from my wedding attire, I had no other clothes. Eventually, through comrade Rasaiya's help, we found a room to rent. It was near the Jaffna bus station, in a small arrangement. The tailor who owned the place would rent out rooms to those in need. The room was very basic, unsafe, but relatively cheap. We didn't even have salt for our meals. We bought food from a shop, divided it, and shared it, while I started going back to work. With determination in my heart and my spouse's full support, I resumed work, despite the hardships.

As I went to work by the Jaffna-Karainagar bus route 782 passed by our home, the pain I felt cannot be fully expressed in words. A close friend of our family, Mr. Chinnathambi, who owned a car, became our comfort. He had also taken photos of our wedding. We lived there from the Tamil month of Thai ( January) until the month of Chithirai (April) 1962.

[On February 3, 1962, news of our wedding was published in 'Desabimani'](#), the newspaper of the Communist Party of Sri Lanka. It said: "*Comrade K.A. Subramaniam, a member of the Jaffna division of the [Sri Lanka Communist Party](#) and the Secretary of the Jaffna division of the Communist Youth Union, who played a major role in the growth of 'Desabimani', and Comrade Valliammai Asaipillai, a member of the Progressive Writers' Association, were married last week. Our congratulations to the newlyweds.*" This was written by the administrator of *Desabimani*.

During our final week in Jaffna, comrades [V. Ponnambalam](#) and Maan Muthiah came to visit us. Other comrades from the Progressive Writers' Association, such as comrades

K.Daniel, [Dominic Jeeva](#), Agathiyar, Poet Pasupathi, S.Po., and others, also visited. My students from [Vaddukoddai](#) gifted me a pot, a kuthu vilakku (traditional oil lamp), and rings, while students from Karainagar gave me a kerosene cooker, rings, and kitchen utensils. Comrade K. Daniel gave us two heavy Silver pots. We sold some of the gold to make ends meet. In the midst of this, in the Tamil month of 'Maasi' (February), my sister, who was training to be a teacher in Kandy, had to come to [Palaly Teachers Training College](#) for her studies. She kindly asked us to accompany her to our parent's home. At that time, I was on a three-day period of leave. She removed a bracelet from her wrist, placed it on mine, and said, *"Sister, you didn't take anything for yourself. There are still some gold items at home."* She cried as she said this, showing her sibling love. Without hesitation, we went to my birthplace in Chulipuram with my spouse.

The pot I had placed during the Pongal festival in January was still there, untouched. After we arrived, on an auspicious day, my parents asked me to break the pot and pour the water into the well, as was the tradition every year. Despite his sorrow over not having been able to conduct the auspicious event this year, my father found solace in seeing the wedding [Thali](#) (mangalsutra) around my neck and the [Kunguma](#) on my forehead, a sign of marriage.

My parents... When we rented a house, they provided us with everything we needed: a large bed, curtains, a table, a rocking chair, floorboards, a grinding stone, a mortar and pestle, vessels, pots, a brass kerosene lamp, containers, spoons, and bottles—everything. They had done the same for my sister, gathering everything together. But for my brother, they didn't collect anything. According to the customs of Jaffna, it was typical for the girl's family to provide all these things, while the boy's family didn't contribute as much. My brother-in-law Mr. Sinniah had said, *"Isn't it honorable to conduct the wedding at home?"* referring to the tradition that a girl should be married off from her own home.

It was said that the KKS cement factory workers, Mr. Thambiyappa and Mr. Nainar from Pannagam, had spoken with my father about this: *"A daughter's worth is seen in giving her in marriage from home. Is he of a lower caste?"* My father had taken these words to heart, arranged with my brother to buy a piece of land later, and longed to see me living proudly on our own soil. The neem and coconut trees that he planted in that land, [Sathiamanai](#), still provide shade today.

With tears overflowing... I shall continue.

## 9. New Beginnings and the Party-Written on 21 September, 2019

Our life began with us seeking even basic necessities like cooking salt sardine. It was a time filled with astonishment, confusion, and pressure. To save time and money, we decided to move from Jaffna to [Karainagar](#). In Karainagar, we managed to rent a house on New Road, owned by Muthamma Jacob Teacher, thanks to the recommendation of a local seamstress from Neelipandhanai, who vouched for us, saying we would pay the rent regularly with my Government salary.

Some kitchen utensils were provided by Comrade K. Daniel, and many others were given by my parents. Ms. Mappanavoori Shivakozhundu, helped us by gifting a small oil canister, known as 'Thaachi.' Larger items like the bed, curtains, table, chairs, easy chair, and pestle were given by my parents arrived from Chulipuram by lorry. The efforts I made before the wedding, assisting my parents, left a lasting impression on them, fostering an emotional bond and respect for me.

(Here, I must mention a significant incident I overlooked earlier. During that time in January 1962, when I left home, certain relatives who were staying in the house saw the jewelry and chains that my father had given me safely stored in three locked boxes. When they saw it, both my father and mother broke down in tears, crying: "Our dear daughter 'Mani', didn't take anything for her. Other daughters when they elope from well-off families take gold and other wealth, but our patient child, are being wrongfully judged as greedy and materialistic," recounted Ms. Rasamani aunt, who cried as she shared this with me later in the month of April 1962.

Back then, it was common for people to take with them the jewelry and wealth they had earned when they got married. Whether in those days or now, having the support of one's parents ensured a smoother life. However, our new life began amidst an unequal society. We started living in the Church orderly house, and when walking to the bus stop, my husband would strike up conversations with young men, giving them newspapers and books, creating comradeship. Many young men in the area received Marxist and socialist teachings from him. Among them was Comrade K. Nadarajah from Chulipuram, a man with strong ideological beliefs. But the question still lingers in my mind: "Were they able to continue and sustain this work?"

Of course, to live, eat, and travel, one needs money, which I knew all too well. My husband always believed in the saying, "*The right hand should not know what the left hand gives.*" For 27 years, I entrusted him with my salary, and even our neighbors didn't know how we managed our household. My mother's stories of selling her jewelry to run the household when my father fell sick remained in my mind, guiding me.

We often had visitors like comrades Karthigesan Master, [V. Ponnambalam](#), [V.A. Kandasamy](#), and Neervai Ponnaiyan. Comrade Karthigesan Master, after conducting

classes for the youth who came, would stay the night and leave early the next morning by bus. At the time, he was a mathematics and English teacher at [Jaffna Hindu College](#). He provided practical explanations to the youth who asked questions about socialist ideas, and many of these youths later became prominent figures globally after the party split into two factions. What happened afterward, I do not know.

Comrade [Karthigesan Master](#) came from a well-educated family in Singapore and Malaysia. With the support of his siblings, he raised his children in a united and loving environment. He didn't speak much, but I remember one of his sayings: "சாதும் இன்றேல் சாந்தம் ஏது?" (*If there is no food, where is peace?*) How true this is.

Only when one is deprived of food does one understand the suffering of the working class, who sweat and toil, and who, after enduring for so long, finally raise their voices for justice. This is the human struggle that transcends race, language, and borders.

In many countries, especially in Europe, during the industrial revolution, terms like *landlord*, *slave*, *capitalist*, *worker*, *exploiter*, and *exploited* came into existence. Why? These terms were documented in books and later translated into different languages so that people worldwide could understand these concepts.

In Sri Lanka, books translated from Tamil in India, such as those published by Comrade [P.Jeevanandam](#)'s *Janasakthi*, and political works from authors like Vijayabaskaran, Vanamamalai, [Vallikannan](#), and [T.M. Chidambara Raghunathan](#), as well as literary-political journals like *Thamarai* and *Saraswathi*, provoked new ways of thinking and raised awareness.

My days passed with work, reading newspapers, party meetings, processions, and visits from comrades. With heavy hands, I will continue...

## 10. Home as a Party Hub -Written on 13 October, 2019

The house we rented was quite large, with two big rooms, two spacious verandas, and a kitchen attached to two additional rooms. It belonged to a retired teacher, Mrs. Jacob Muthamma, whom everyone affectionately called "Mummy," and so did we. No one ever asked about our ethnicity or religion, making the house a blessing for our way of life. Mummy had four children and many grandchildren. Since they were Christians, and their daughters and grandchildren had just visited for Christmas and New Year celebrations, the house was well-stocked with everything. We never had to borrow anything, not even plates or cups for our small family. Despite our humble life, they loved us dearly.

In Jaffna, among the younger generation, the question of "Why?" arises whenever a community is oppressed or discriminated against by another. Such a moment of awakening occurred in Karainagar in 1962. Comrade KAS had raised his voice for his Party, speaking out for actions that benefited ordinary people. He mentioned that, after the introduction of free education by Mr. [C.W.W. Kannangara](#) in 1945, followed by education in native languages in 1956, the government took over all schools in 1960. He recalled the resistance from some who opposed the government takeover, while many young people, like himself, supported it. Those opposing the change even threw rotten tomatoes at them. Nevertheless, the movement succeeded, and it gave all students equal access to education and opportunities for higher studies.

Next came the Tea Stall Protests. In those days at tea shops, there was a stick with 4-5 small tin cups attached, which were given to low-caste farmers when they came to drink tea after bringing their produce to the market early in the morning. The shopkeepers would pour tea in these cups without touching, and the farmers would pay for it. This humiliating practice was opposed by youth, leading to protests in various markets like [Achchuveli](#), Maduvil, Chunnakam, [Chankanai](#), Alavetty, [Kodikamam](#), and Chavakachcheri. I will write more about this later.

At that time, I was expecting our first child. There was joy at the thought of welcoming a new member into the family, but also sadness because we lived alone, separated from our relatives. Despite this, my work continued alongside comrade KAS's political work. During our time in Karainagar, some young men began questioning, "Why are Tamils oppressed by other Tamils?" or "What is the reason for Tamils to suppress Tamils?" These young men, driven by their determination and curiosity, reached out to the leadership of the Communist Party of Sri Lanka. In response, comrade [Karthigesan Master](#) was sent to Karainagar.

The Communist Party operated under strict discipline. When a comrade was sent to another village, they had to stay with a trusted comrade living in that area, as political work often had to be done in secret due to the threat of informants and state surveillance. Comrade KAS went to the bus stop at 5:45 PM to bring comrade [Karthigesan Master](#) home. By the time they arrived, nine young men were already waiting to greet him respectfully. Comrade Karthigesan Master had just returned from a visit to [Soviet Russia](#), and he brought with him a white and gray statue of Comrade [Lenin](#), a gift for my comrade, saying that it was only fitting that this symbol of socialism be given to him. Everyone cheered in excitement during the handover. Afterward,

Master spent over two hours answering questions, explaining that socialism is based on [Marxist](#) thought, but I lack the words and wisdom to explain it as he did.

At 9:30 PM, after dinner, it was time for comrade Karthigesan Master to rest. Though the house was large, we had few possessions. Still, comrade KAS made sure that Master had a comfortable bed, with a clean mattress, white sheets, and a pillow prepared earlier in the day.

The next morning, at 4:00 AM, the bus to Jaffna would stop at the New Road junction in Karainagar. I don't know the details of their journey, but I do know that they both woke up early, drank tea from the flask, and left to catch the bus. But what remains vivid in my memory is the white and gray [Lenin](#) statue, carved from stone. Despite moving to four different villages and six different homes over the years due to my job, comrade KAS always kept that statue safe, as a sacred object. Reflecting on this now, as his wife in my old age, I can't help but tear up, realizing that my comrade cherished both his party and his comrades throughout his life. I will continue...

## 11. Neervai's "Fictional Storybook"-Written on 30 October, 2019

In the last section, when I saw pictures of comrade KAS leading many events with Neervai Ponnaiyan beside him, memories of Neervai Ponnaiyan self-published *"fictional storybook"* came to mind, bringing both pain and frustration. Neervai Ponnaiyan, like some other self-serving opportunists, spoke of Marxism but lived a life filled with hypocrisy. I have lived through many truths, and even today, I sometimes choose to overlook certain things. But how long can I continue to do that? Sometimes, I fear I might burst out like I do when I feel anger toward Neervai Ponnaiyan.

Up until his marriage in 1970, Neervai Ponnaiyan worked closely with comrades. After a gap of twenty years, he wrote a book about himself, which he could freely do. He could have written a thousand pages, and no one would have objected. However, the issue lies in how he forcefully depicted comrade KAS's selfless life as a fabricated story, as though it was fiction. I still remember the absurdity of his claim: "KAS came to the party just to wash V.P.'s ([V. Ponnambalam](#)) car and clap during meetings." Yet, from the mid-1950s onwards, my comrade worked full-time, in the Party office until 1972, with

Neervai and serving the Party. He was also deeply involved in caste-opposition movements and May Day protests during that time. Where was Neervai during all this? Why did Neervai hide the fact that comrade KAS continued working for the Party, even when his health was deteriorating? Was there something Neervai was hoping to gain? In fact Neervai was very close to my comrade, me and my children with love till he left the Party in 1972.

Even when a loving plea like, “You’re suffering for your beliefs; let go and step away,” was heard from Neervai in 1972, without betraying the deeply embedded diamond-like principles, and without hurting others’ feelings, comrade KAS lived with a sense of sacrifice rooted in his conscience.

To think that someone as unworthy as Neervai Ponnaiyan, who couldn’t even match the shadow of such comrades with selfless ideals, was loved as a “faithful comrade,” and was trusted enough to be entrusted with our child (Sathiarajan) for weeks — does this not raise questions? Was the caretaker someone without any expectations? Or was it the camaraderie of protecting our baby boy in his home under the care of his mother and sister in 1964 and later returning the child to us on a weekly basis, which even today is remembered by me with immense gratitude and magnanimity?

Reflecting on how Neervai has been misrepresented in this context due to his ignorance, I end up reproaching myself. Ugh! How foolish it is to revisit and grieve over what he has written about this, even now?

Twenty-three years after my comrade’s passing, to see such a distorted portrayal in his “fictional” book form made me wonder if there was no one left to question this, not even his wife, who shared his life and carried forward his values! How does Neervai possess the audacity to believe that no one would challenge his version of events?

Comrade KAS never sought wealth, even during times of hardship. He didn’t run away when life didn’t turn out as expected. Instead, he distanced himself from comfort and wealth and dedicated his life to fighting for the oppressed until his death. The inner workings of the party were never known to outsiders. Despite the years, my comrade always refrained from criticizing other comrades, even those who left the movement. How could someone like Neervai, who lacks the commitment to the Party’s ideology, have the right to tell “stories in the middle of a plowing field” about him?

Neervai was not part of the league of comrades who, despite facing difficulties, never worked for personal gains or sought higher positions. Many great leaders, who even gave their property to the Party and lived exemplary lives, inspired me to dedicate my

life to the movement. Yet, Neervai's fictional portrayal and the baseless accusations against those who remained dedicated is something I cannot ignore.

Even though Neervai might have asked my son-in-law Dr. N. Raveendran, who joined the party in 1975, to "correct the mistakes" in his fabricated writing, the ideological flaws were still there. Did Raveendran use his editorial skills to make Neervai feel proud of his nasty work? Did he not see the factual errors in the content? Neervai never attended any Party meetings or engaged with Sathiamanai from 1975 to 2011. So how can anyone confirm the credibility of Neervai's claims?

Despite knowing all this, I wonder if Mr. N. Raveendran uncritically accepted Neervai's falsehoods. If it's wrong to interfere with freedom of speech, why couldn't he distance himself from this altogether?

As I think about these questions, I recall the memories shared by comrade KAS with Raveendran who stood with us from 1975 to 1989, both in joy and in hardship. Those fond memories run deep with the questions in my mind. As I struggle with aging hands and a heavy heart, I will continue...

## 12. Naming a Child as a Political Event-Written on 9 December, 2019

On October 30, 1962, at [Manipay Green Memorial Hospital](#), my beloved son, Sathiarajan (Rasan), was born. He was delivered by a doctor named Viswasam, a Keralite who had come to serve in the area. We were introduced to him by Selvi Elizabeth, the sister of [E. R. Thiruchelvam](#), who was my husband's close friend (I will certainly write later about him).

From when I conceived my child, from five months, we traveled monthly to the clinic from Karainagar. The doctor gave us a due date of November 10, 1962, but that year, Diwali fell on October 28, 1962. My sister, who was then in her first year of teacher training at the [Palaly Teachers' Training College](#), came to our home and took both of us by bus to Chulipuram. That night, after midnight, I experienced a situation where I could hardly stand. Early in the morning, we managed to reach Manipay by hiring a vehicle. After examining, the doctor admitted me, saying I should stay under his supervision and not return home. Without any prior preparations, I stayed at the hospital while my sister went home to gather the necessary items. The next day, Monday, my sister left for college to attend her classes.

After midnight that night, due to my condition, two nurses took me in a stretcher to the labor room. Five hours later, after enduring the labor pains—something only those who have experienced it can understand—I gave birth. Dr. Viswasam stood by me the entire time, sleeplessly attending to me. I remember the tools being sterilized. When I woke up in the morning, they transferred me back to the ward in a stretcher and then onto a regular bed. I recall Sister Elizabeth saying, "Once the swelling from the injection subsides, you will feel the pain from the stitches."

At around 9 a.m., they showed me my baby. Only Comrade KAS stood by me at the time. I believe I fell asleep again soon after. I heard my sister's voice: "After five hours of birth, the baby needs to be bathed in warm water." I could hear the clatter of dishes being prepared. My sister informed me that I had given birth to a baby boy and that all his organs were perfectly fine. The love and care she had for my son 'Rasan' lasted until his tragic accidental death in 2001, where she often referred to him with endearment as "my Rasan, my eldest child." The pain of his loss lingered, and not long after, she too became seriously ill and passed away in 2012.

My husband's close comrade, [V. Ponnambalam](#), came to the hospital with his wife. He said, \*"We have named our child 'Mavalirasan.' I think it would be fitting to name your child 'Sathiarajan.'"\* During my pregnancy, a group of youth from [Point Pedro](#) had performed the play \*"[Sampoorna Harishchandra Mayana Kandam](#)"\* at the Aaladi temple in Karainagar, Vikakal. In that play, there was a scene where Satheakeerthy, a minister unaware that the person guarding the graveyard was actually his king, sings tearfully, \*"I am searching for my brotherly king, searching and searching without finding him."\* To which the king, who is disguised as a gravedigger, responds with, \*"Satheakeerthy 'Aiya', I am Harishchandra, as you see me now."\* This emotional scene touched everyone's hearts, leaving many in tears. From that moment on, we decided that if I gave birth to a boy or a girl, the name would be Satheakeerthy, a symbol of truth and integrity. (In this play, Harishchandra was played by Mr. Vairamuthu, and Satheakeerthy by Mr. Mahalingam—this drama was well known in Sri Lanka, performed in many villages.)

After comrade [V. Ponnambalam](#) expressed his preference, \*"That is the minister's name, this is the king's name. Both represent truth in history,"\* and thus, the name Sathiarajan was given to our child by comrade [V. Ponnambalam](#). On the 45th day after the birth, among many comrades, Sathiarajan's name was officially bestowed in a naming ceremony by comrade [V. Ponnambalam](#). Even had invitations printed and distributed to comrades, calling it the \*"[Namakarana Vaibhavam](#)" (Naming Ceremony)\*. Many comrades and Party supporters from Jaffna attended the event, along with neighbors and friends who also supported us.

I must mention the challenges we faced at that time. Within the Party, criticisms of [ideological differences between China and Russia](#) were starting to arise. The naming ceremony was also seen as a political opportunity for comrades to gather in one place, and my husband wanted to invite everyone. However, he didn't discuss this with me. I was so focused on taking care of our Rasan and his curious little ways that I was completely absorbed.

Writing about my Rasan makes my hands tremble. Rasan! you were my everything, my strength, at just one year old. Oh, how many nights did we spend alone in our Karainagar home? I can't write anymore. The pain is too much. I will continue...

### 13. A Political Event: The Infant and the Youth Association Conference held on 10 March, 1963

When our eldest child, Sathiarajan, was just three months old, 56 years ago, in 1963, preparations were underway for the party's Youth Conference to be held at the Jaffna Municipal Hall. The party office on Stanley Road in Jaffna was busy with arrangements. My husband would return late at night, catching the last bus to Karainagar, where we lived in a rental house. Until then, my only companion was our baby, Rasan. My mother, though frail, helped with whatever she could. She was reluctant but came to help because I was working and couldn't manage alone.

The conference was scheduled for March 10, 1963. Many comrades from southern Sri Lanka ([Sinhalese](#)) were expected to attend. They were set to arrive early in the morning by train, and among them were women and babies. A woman from the Party had to be at the station to greet them. Many comrades were family men, and I was asked to go, which made me feel angry at my husband for the first time. How could I, with a baby and an elderly, ill mother, go to the railway station at such an early hour? I was ordered to take the early bus to Jaffna, and though anger simmered inside me, I had no choice but to go.

Leaving my mother, a sick old woman, alone with my infant son troubled me. She couldn't care for him properly, and at times, even carrying the baby was a struggle for her. Still, I reassured her with a lie, promising I'd be back soon. I took the early bus and reached Jaffna train station, where I had to wait for the delayed train. The southern comrades, including women and babies, arrived, and we took a vehicle to Comrade Karthigesan Master's house. However, his household wasn't prepared to accommodate everyone, so we moved them to another comrade's house near [Jaffna Hindu College](#). There was sufficient space for all the guests.

Once I saw them settled, I walked alone to the Ottumadam junction, a half-hour walk, as there were no [Auto Rickshaws](#) or other transport available in those days. The bus finally arrived around 9:30 a.m., and I reached home by 11:00 a.m.. When I got home, I found my mother in tears. She had struggled to care for the baby, even accidentally dropping him. The baby had been crying, and she was in great distress. My heart sank. Suddenly, I heard the sound of a vehicle outside—Neervai Ponnaiyan had arrived with a bag of rice and meat parcels in his hands. Comrade KAS had sent the supplies, trusting that I would host the guests, though he had no prior discussion with me about this.

My small kitchen had only a couple of pots and pans, and I had to borrow large cooking vessels, plates, and other items from Mummy's house next door. I somehow managed to cook lunch for the guests by 3:00 p.m., after which they all fell asleep, exhausted from their journey. Comrade KAS arrived later in the evening with another Sinhala comrade. With my mother's help, we prepared a dinner of brinjal curry, meat, and soup, and everyone ate well.

There were no bathrooms in our rental house, just an outdoor setup with palm-frond walls surrounding a makeshift bathing area. Our southern comrades, though from poor farming and labor families like us, showed no signs of discomfort or disdain. They accepted everything with a smile. They had spent the morning at a more luxurious house but told me that some of them had trouble figuring out how to use the modern bathroom there. One of them apologized to the homeowner for the mistakes, and they came to our house afterward.

I was deeply touched by how warmly they embraced our hospitality, despite our modest means. Even though our house didn't have a well, and we had to use the well at Mummy's house for bathing, they never complained. I remember visiting that same house in 2013 with my daughter, who wanted to see the place where she had grown up. The house had since changed hands, with a sister and her younger sibling now owning it. A modern bathroom and other facilities had been added, but the front verandah had been closed off.

The next morning, I prepared [idiyappam](#) for the children, while the others had bread, sambal, and tea. We all left together, taking the bus from Karainagar Puthu Road to the Jaffna Municipal Hall. After the event, the comrades thanked me and urged me to return home with my baby as soon as possible. In 1963, our humble home became an unexpected gathering place for a group of poor farming and labor families who had traveled from the South to the North. Among them was Comrade [Premalal Kumarasiri](#), a former Member of Parliament representing the [Hakmana](#) electorate. It was only later that I realized the significance of his presence among us and the deeper meaning behind his choice.

Unlike many political leaders of the time, who often stayed in the comfort of hotels or more formal accommodations, comrade Premalal chose to stay in our simple house, alongside the very people he fought to represent. While prominent Party leaders like

[Pieter Keuneman](#) or [N. Shanmugadasan](#) were known to stay in hotels during their visits, comrade Premalal's decision reflected his unwavering commitment to solidarity with the working class.

Comrade [Premalal Kumarasiri](#) used to stay in the Party office but staying with us demonstrated not just his ideological beliefs but also his deep personal connection to the struggles of ordinary people. His actions were a powerful statement, embodying the principle that a true leader walks alongside the people—not above them. This memory remains etched in my heart, a reminder of the rare leaders who truly live by their principles. Comrade [Premalal Kumarasiri](#)'s humility and dedication continue to inspire those who value authenticity and service over privilege and status. This made me write "Dr. Thilini Premalal Kumarasiri" as a fictional character in my short novel "[Karka Kasadara...](#)" published in 2019. I lost contact with many of those comrades after the split within the party.

I took great care of the guests despite our limited means, out of respect for my husband and his comrades. Though we lacked many conveniences, I was satisfied knowing that I had done my best. Many comrades lived in much better conditions, both in Jaffna and its surrounding areas. To this day, I wonder where their humanity was when they didn't offer to help us, despite knowing our situation.

At the conference, comrade [V. Ponnambalam](#) was elected unopposed as the district secretary of the party, and comrade K.A. Subramaniam was chosen as the youth league secretary. Several prominent comrades, including [Premalal Kumarasiri](#), [Pieter Keuneman](#), W.A. Dharmadasa, [N. Shanmugadasan](#), [V. Ponnambalam](#), [Sarath Muttetuwegama](#), A. Vaithilingam, I.R. Ariyaratnam, Karthigesan Master, and Banudevan were present. A small argument broke out between comrade [V. Ponnambalam](#) and comrade [Karthigesan Master](#), but I prefer to stay out of internal Party matters.

This youth conference marked the beginning of several such events in the months to come. Comrades would visit our house late into the night, discussing and writing their political work. Amid my mother's scoldings and my husband's faith in his comrades, Rasan was my only comfort. A few months later, I had to leave my baby in Chulipuram with my mother and travel by bus to work each day.

In Neervai Ponnaiyan's self-published book, he didn't even mention the 1963 conference or the hospitality extended to the southern comrades. He seemed to rewrite history and omit crucial details, all for personal glory. I still reflect on the many conversations I had with my husband after those events, and I remain alive, holding onto those memories.

In August 1963, I found out that I was pregnant with my daughter Buby. Comrade KAS went to attend the May 1964 youth conference in Badulla. I, heavily pregnant, experienced a complication and had to be admitted to the [Moolai Cooperative Hospital](#), where my sister stayed with me while keeping Rasan at home. Comrade KAS came back from [Badulla](#) on 18 May 1964 and Buby (Sathiamalar) was born under the care of Dr. Kumarasamy on May 21, 1964 in the same hospital. I will continue...

## 14. The Party Split and October Uprising-Written on 29 February, 2020

We lived in Karainagar for just five years, during which all three of our children were born. Rasan was born at the [Manipay Green Memorial Hospital](#), while Buby and Keerthy were born at the [Moolai Cooperative Hospital](#). My mother, who had come to help with the first two children, didn't come to assist or even visit for the birth of the third child.

My friend Mrs. Ranjitham Kandiah, who was staying at the hospital for her own reasons, was the first to bathe Keerthy. She was also the first to hold the baby. My parents were upset with me, saying, "Why did you need a third child when you're already struggling to raise the first two children without help?" They refused to come to see the child. After the stitches were removed, we returned home, and since there was no one to help, Ms. Karpagam, a neighbor, assisted me for a month.

On the 31st day, my father came and tied a "Pulippal" (Tiger Tooth) which he brought from Singapore around Keerthy's neck. It was shaped like a crescent moon, with green and red stones set at both ends, and was a family heirloom. Keerthy cherished it and later gifted the gold emblem from the center of the necklace to his wife, Dr. Susithra, after their marriage.

Comrade KAS used to say that he, too, wore a tiger tooth chain in his childhood. He didn't have any interest in gold jewelry later in life, but as a child, he was raised by his elder sister, Ms. Thangamani, who was well-educated and nurtured him by telling stories of progressive leaders. He was taken to Colombo and admitted to [St. Joseph's College, Colombo](#) by her. He was also cared for by his younger sister, Ms. Manonmani, whose daughter, Mrs. Malini Naguleswaren, became a teacher, acknowledging KAS's role in encouraging her to study.

On May 17, 1964, the final day of the Badulla Conference of the Sri Lanka Communist Party's Youth Wing, Comrade K.A. Subramaniam presided over a speech by Comrade [Premalal Kumarasiri](#).

During that time, tensions were high between the two factions of the Sri Lanka Communist Party, and by 1964, the party officially split. Comrade KAS aligned with the [Sri Lanka Communist Party \(Peking Wing\)](#), led by [N. Shanmugathan](#), which was based on Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought.

In June 1963, KAS had traveled to the People's Republic of China as a representative of the Youth Wing and the party, spending a month there. During this period, the current party leader, [S.K. Senthilvel](#), joined the party. We continued living in Mummy's house in Karainagar until Keerthy's birth, after which Mummy needed the house for her granddaughter's dowry, and we had to move.

With the help of my student, Ms. Annalakshmi (We used to call her Baby), we found a new house on Maruthadi Vinayagar Temple Road, owned by her relative, a warden in Colombo. After moving in April, I fell ill with severe pain and had to be hospitalized for three days. Meanwhile, a shard of glass injured Buby, while Rasan was playing with his sister Buby, but bleeding ...heavily. I cried out in panic. Child Buby said, "Please don't hit my brother. It's me....I'm the one". Fortunately, nothing serious happened.

Despite all these challenges, we continued living in that house until October 1966.

Amid these personal struggles, untouchability and caste-based discrimination were rampant. There were places where oppressed community Tamils couldn't enter, couldn't attend schools, and couldn't use public spaces. The caste oppression was brutal, and when it came to party work, Comrade KAS would forget about everything else—including his home, his wife, his children.

On October 21, 1966, the day of the [October Uprising](#) Comrade KAS left home in the morning and didn't return until midnight. I was left alone with three small children, anxiously waiting for him. My eldest son, Rasan, fell asleep holding his sister Buby's hand, while I was filled with anger. Other people had large families and support systems, but we had no one. Even though the party's work was significant, we were left without any help.

The 1966 October Uprising left a lasting impact. That night, I learned from comrade KAS's younger brother, [Mr. A. Ilangai Nayagam](#), who arrived late after cycling against strong wind through 9 bridges in the night, said that Comrade KAS had been arrested and beaten during a protest in [Chunnakam](#), which was demanding the abolition of caste discrimination. In fact Mr. [A. Ilangai Nayagam](#) was against comrade KAS's [Party](#) but belonged to [Pieter Keuneman](#)'s Soviet wing [Communist Party of Sri Lanka](#). In fact not only did he hide their father's death information from Comrade KAS due to the arrogance of inter-caste marriage, but also the fact that the father of the child named Subramaniam was Ambalapillai, in their memorial booklet.

Comrade KAS was detained, along with comrades [R.K. Soodamani](#) and [V.A. Kandasamy](#). The three arrested were released on bail at midnight for medical treatment. But the court case continued for some years. On behalf of them, legal expert Mr. [Nadesan Satyendra](#), who has an uncanny insight and skill in the subtleties of international constitutional law, appeared and secured the acquittal.

The next day, when Comrade KAS returned home, his body was swollen from the beatings. With the help of Ms. Annalakshmi's mother, a compassionate woman, treated him with oil massages and herbal baths. She took care of him for three days, ensuring his recovery.

Despite all the suffering we went through, I felt a sense of fulfillment in standing by my husband, a man dedicated to his ideology, even if it meant enduring hardships.

As the party continued its fight against caste oppression, Comrades [R.K. Soodamani](#), K.A. Subramaniam, [V.A. Kandasamy](#), [S.T.N. Nagaratnam](#), [Dr. S.V. Seenivasagam](#), and K. Daniel were among those who joined in the struggle. These events remain vivid in my memory as though they happened yesterday, and the nightmares from those days still haunt me.

Today, we continue to see the impact of the [1966 October Uprising](#). The victories we achieved came at a high cost, but they strengthened our resolve to fight oppression. I will write in detail later about the anti-caste struggles and the role of Comrade [S.D. Bandaranayake](#) in leading that successful movement. I will continue...

## 15. Workplace Hazard -Written on 8 March, 2020

In the last days of October 1966, after the October Uprising, we moved from Karainagar to the villages of Pannagam North, [Pandatheruppu](#), and Panipulam. It was a beautiful, quiet village. We found a house near the station that was available for rent, owned by Mrs. Thangamma, who was affectionately called Aunty Pakkiam by everyone. Tragically, her youngest daughter, Devi, had fallen into a well and died the previous year. She often recounted that story, warning us to keep our children away from wells.

She introduced us to a local shopkeeper from whom we could buy provisions, and she also brought in another lady for milk. It was she who taught me various cooking (meat) techniques I was unfamiliar with, like how much rice to use for making dosa and idli. She and her daughter, Rasathi, would observe [Pradosham](#) by fasting and only eating after lighting a lamp in the evening, preparing special vegetarian dishes like vadai, payasam, and mothagam for our children.

During our time there, we received great support from the village and from my family's visits, which brought comfort.

In 1967, Comrade KAS represented the Sri Lanka Communist Youth Organization at a youth conference in [Albania](#). Comrade [Rohana Vijayaveera](#) also attended the conference. When he returned, he didn't bring any gifts as usual but bought sweets from the local grocery store to share with the children. This surprised and worried Aunty Pakkiam.

While we were living there, renovations were underway at the village temple. During that year, we could fetch drinking water from the temple's well, but if we couldn't, we had

to go to a distant paddy field or wait for someone to bring it from the Post Office land. Back in Karainagar, a woman would bring a pot of water for just one rupee.

At that time, the cooperative stores allowed purchases on concession credit, which was beneficial until around 1970 when the practice was discontinued for those earning 300 rupees a month. There used to be a system of getting three packets for free and three packets for cash. That free rice was sufficient for us for the entire week.

Our budget for rent, provisions, milk, and children's medical expenses was tight but manageable. Aunty Pakkiam would often say, "Let's divide the salary wisely." According to her practice, when the rice from the fields was harvested, they would sell any excess. The small harvest supplemented their meals. The vegetables they grew would also contribute to their needs, and any surplus was sold to buy fish and other essentials. If there was one family member earning a monthly salary, they would save that money to buy land or jewelry.

Seeing my struggles, they would express concern, saying, "What if the child falls sick? You don't have the means to manage that!" The woman providing us milk would advise, "If you save just a hundred rupees each month, you'll accumulate a good amount in a year." But could I share the economic intricacies of my family life with them?

Could I explain that "My husband was an underpaid full-time [Ceylon Communist Party \(Maoist\)](#) employee"?

The idea of a savings account never materialized in my life. When I received a notice for a [Sinhala language](#) exam that I failed to attend, I cried. If I had some other source of income, I wouldn't have felt so lost. I will continue with how I navigated that challenging time and about two people who helped me during that moment of despair.

## 16. Failure in the Sinhalese Exam-Written on 25 May, 2020

When I received the notification about my failure to attend the Sinhala language exam, I cried. My husband was an underpaid full-time [Ceylon Communist Party \(Maoist\)](#) employee, but our lives were uncertain and filled with anxiety. We had three children to

care for without any external help. I was under pressure to study and pass the exams to maintain my job. I remember walking in the scorching midday sun, questioning why I had to walk so far from [Pandatheruppu](#). to [Chulipuram](#), wondering how I ended up in this situation.

We had only been in the village for a year since I moved from Karainagar, and I was still unfamiliar with it. The only support I had came from Aunty Pakkiam and her daughter Rasathi. In 1968, with no direction on where to go or whom to ask for help, I felt lost, much like being left in the wilderness. If I couldn't work, I wouldn't be able to pay rent or cover our expenses. How could I feed three children without any income? Despite this, I bought a book titled \*"Sinhalese Grammar"\* from the shop and tried to write and read. There's an old saying, "Without a teacher, knowledge is in vain," and it rang true for me. The letters were beautifully formed, but I didn't even know how to write them correctly.

During those searching days, my mother visited Dr. Thambiah, who mentioned that he held classes at his house, where many students were learning. Hearing that made me hopeful. Oh my God.....it is like "The garlic that I was looking for is stuck in my leg"..... I needed to study under Dr. Thambiah, who was known for translating the [Thirukkural](#) into Sinhalese. He welcomed me warmly, rearranging his schedule to accommodate me. At the same time, I had received a three-hour leave pass from the Jaffna District Head Office, which provided some security in case my superiors decided to inspect my workplace unexpectedly.

Despite this, a prominent man in the village sent a letter to my supervisor, saying, \*"She isn't present at the station. She goes out every afternoon to meet someone. Please investigate this immediately."\* The supervisor chuckled when he saw me, saying, \*"In a village filled with jealousy and deceit, women working here are indeed unfortunate."\*

In the Sinhalese language class, I was the only one working among those youngsters who had just passed their higher exams. The classes took place in the morning for them, while mine was in the afternoon. The other students were more knowledgeable, having studied for six months. There, I met [Sundaram](#) (Sathasivam Sivasanmugamurthy) and Thampipillai Santathiyar, who treated me like an elder sister. They were in the class with Selvi Bhavani Vaithilingam, who was particularly talented. Dr. Thambiah, who would often leave for personal matters, would ask them to guide me in his absence.

After studying under Dr. Thambiah for six months, I successfully passed the third-grade literacy examination and the oral exam conducted by the Department of Education, in addition to the SSC exam, which I had selected as an optional subject. I was now qualified for a government job, and I owe my success to Dr. Thambiah's guidance and Bhavani's support.

Alongside them, Ms. Rasathi, my neighbor's daughter, helped take care of my three children while I studied. As a young woman, I worked tirelessly to keep our household running. It's hard to believe that at the age of 31, I was a student studying a language! I reflect on this journey with amazement. I previously mentioned how those five years from 1966 to 1970 were filled with struggles. They were marked by my husband's disappearance, the impact of the anti-untouchability movement, and living a life of uncertainty.

The JVP ([Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna](#)) era, the turmoil in my life, the interruptions in my work, and the challenges of living in a rented home are all aspects I will elaborate on further.

## 17. Breaking the May Day Ban and Facing Attack - Written on 2 June, 2020

During the five years we lived in Kalaiyadi, Pandatheruppu village from 1966 to 1971, the Ceylon Communist Party (Maoist) was intensifying its activities. Comrade KAS had traveled to socialist countries like China and Albania in 1967 as a youth conference delegate. In 1969, he participated in the May Day rally, where he was attacked. Other significant events during that time included homes in Chankanai, Nitchamam, Madhuvil, and Kanpollai being set on fire due to caste oppression, visits from figures like [S.D. Bandaranayake](#), the MP from [Gampaha](#) with a Buddhist monk. Especially the entry of lower-caste people into the Madduvil Pannritthalachi Amman Temple and [Mavittapuram Kandaswamy temple](#) were held.

Comrade KAS, along with some Sinhalese comrades, attended youth conferences in countries like People's Republic of China and [Albania](#). He shared that at these conferences, many progressive youth from different countries gathered, and the

speeches and resolutions from the conference inspired them to think about how selfless comrades could influence the masses. He returned with many photos from these conferences, which captured the entire event. Unfortunately, much of it has been lost over time.

Then came the 1969 May Day. That year, May 1st coincided with Vesak Day (a significant Buddhist holiday), and a ban was imposed on the May Day rally. However, the Ceylon Communist Party (Maoist) had already decided that the rally and public meeting must be held. Despite the ban, Comrade KAS left early that morning to participate in the rally. The police denied permission, and this led to tension among the comrades. Many disagreed with the idea of seeking appeal permission from the authorities, believing that doing so would go against the spirit of the movement. Later Eelanadu S. M. Gopalarathnam and [E. R. Thiruchelvam](#) also wrote facts about Comrade KAS and such party activities as a public figure.

The events of May 1st, 1969, and the subsequent attack on the rally have been documented by many, including Comrade KAS's bravery. That night, my children and I waited until midnight for his return, but he never came. Our daughter, Buby, who always slept with her father, woke up crying for him the next morning. I had no information about what had happened to him and struggled to console her.

At around 10:30 am the next morning, Comrade S. Yoganathan arrived in a car, asking us to get ready immediately. We didn't know where we were going, but we were taken to [Jaffna General Hospital](#), where I saw Comrade KAS in the Accident Ward. His left hand was bandaged and attached to his neck, and his right arm was wrapped in a yellow cloth. Both his hands were rendered immobile. Lying next to him in the hospital was comrade Nadarasa from Maduvil. When our daughter saw her father, she started crying, asking him to take her home.

The next day, the comrades mentioned that there was a surgery scheduled for his left arm. At that moment, tears flowed as I typed this. Thanks to the doctors' expertise, they were able to save his left hand, which was severely injured. Comrade S. Kathirgamanaathan stayed by his side to assist with his needs.

After a few days in the hospital, Comrade [Shanmugathan](#), who had been abroad at the time of the May Day attack, instructed KAS to come to Colombo for further treatment. His wife, Parames Akka, sent me a letter during this time. Both Shanmugathan and Parames Akka are no longer with us, but I still have that letter, written on May 2, 1969: ( After the death of respected Comrade [Pon Kandiah](#), Comrade Shanmugathan had married his wife Parames Akka).

### **Letter from Parames Akka:**

\*\*\*

*2 May 1969*

*23/7 Schofield Place*

*Kollupitiya, Colombo-3.*

*My dearest sister,*

*We were deeply saddened last night to learn about what happened in Jaffna on May Day, especially about the injuries to our dear Comrade KAS. We can only imagine the pain you are going through. What can we do? In this capitalist regime, the path of struggle is never easy. We must be ready for any hardship or sacrifice. You must stay strong and comfort KAS and the children during this time. His recovery must be our top priority. Even if he is in the government's hospital, if he isn't receiving proper treatment or healing fast enough, you have the right to bring in a doctor from outside to ensure the best care. Don't fear the police's intimidation. If they refuse to allow this, you must fight back. We will send the necessary financial support. The post office is closed today due to the holiday, but we will send money by telegraph tomorrow.*

*We are eager to visit you and see KAS, but tomorrow morning Shanmugathan has a court case at 9 am, related to the May Day rally. After that, we will be traveling to [Albania](#). We won't be able to return until the end of the month, so we cannot come immediately. Please tell KAS that Shanmugathan and I send our love and concern. He must find strength in Mao's ideology and recover quickly. If the local treatment isn't sufficient, get a doctor from outside. There are legal provisions for this, and don't be afraid to fight back if necessary. You can also inform [S.D. Bandaranayake](#), who will visit soon. Keep the children happy and take good care of yourself. Our strength grows, and that's why the enemies of the people are resorting to harsh measures.*

*What more can I say? We wish we could be there. Stay strong.*

*Revolutionary greetings,*

*Parames Akka.*

...

Comrade KAS deeply valued his comradeship with [Shanmugathanan](#), and they shared a mutual understanding. Despite his immense pain, Comrades brought alcohol mixed with eggs for KAS to help him sleep. People began criticizing Comrade Shanmugathanan for leaving while KAS faced the attack, but Comrade KAS never held it against him.

Some arrogant fellows said, "Go and get beaten. Let them say that they are going abroad" they spoke furiously. Comrades [E. T. Moorthy](#), [V.A. Kandasamy](#), Neervai etc. were very angry at his condition. But Comrade KAS never spoke of giving up Comrade [Shanmugathanan](#). He was automatically reciting the side arguments. At some point I got angry too. I said let's see the medicine here. But the comrade decided to go. He writes the most beautiful English and Tamil characters with his right hand. It is true that I was also attracted by his beautiful handwriting. But he does all the other work with his left hand. When the police force attacked him, he covered his head with his left hand. A subsequent medical report (Xray) revealed that thirteen blows fell on the same spot on his shoulder strap and a severe blow to the abdomen. The left shoulder joint was cast and the left little finger was wired. [S. D. Bandaranaike](#) spoke about the attack in Parliament.

Eventually, KAS decided to go to Colombo for treatment as requested by Comrade [Shanmugathanan](#), to get specialized care for his injuries, which included severe wounds on his shoulder and abdomen. Unable to put his legs down and unable to walk, he was carried on a stretcher and then he went to Palali Airport in a passenger car and went to Colombo by airplane. A Sinhalese traditional fracture was specially treated in Colombo, Kollupitiya 23/7 Schofield Place. Comrade Hansur himself did his own chores like changing clothes, feeding, removing waste and cleaning, while he was under medical care. "The help done by Comrade Hansur is great". While the treatment was going on for months like this, he came back by plane once. It must be said that he lived (1969—1989) pretending to be a 'fit healthy' even though he could not lift his left arm up until his death.

The impact also ended our seven-year marriage. He never said any of this to anyone. A very, very high man. In some cases he will get a dullness in his eyes. I didn't bother him either. He stands tall, dressed in both clean clothes and dressed in pure white.

KAS's left hand, which was broken and surgically repaired with steel rods, never fully recovered. Even after his surgeries and extensive medical treatment, he could not raise his left hand properly. Despite the challenges, he carried on with strength and dignity, never showing the extent of his pain. He always appeared well-dressed and maintained a strong demeanor, knowing that his perseverance could inspire others to continue the struggle.

I will write more about the anti-untouchability protests, the arrival of [S.D. Bandaranayake](#), and the time Radha, [Shanmugathan](#)'s daughter stayed with us.

## 18. October Uprising and Caste Oppression -Written on 15 June, 2020

During the five years we lived in Kalaiyadi near [Pandatheruppu](#) village from 1966 to 1971, the Ceylon Communist Party (Maoist) intensified its activities. Comrade KAS traveled to Colombo for a Central Committee meeting, where he met with Comrade [N. Shanmugathan](#) at 23/07, Schofield Place, Kollupitiya. There, Radha expressed her intention to travel to Jaffna with KAS, and they came to our home in Kalaiyadi. Radha was a charming young woman, and we did our best to accommodate her in our humble home. For the first time, we bought a large mirror and a dining table to make her feel welcome. The women from the village came to see this lovely girl, and she played joyfully with our three children. Our son Keerthy especially grew fond of her, and she brought a small eye-opening doll with a red dress to play with them—a doll we kept safely for a long time.

Radha had heard about Karainagar's [Casuarina Beach](#), and to fulfill her wish, we all prepared lunch and went to the beach for a swim. Despite living in [Karainagar](#) for five years, it was our first trip to the beach. The following day, we took Radha to visit several villages related to the party, but we couldn't spend long in any one place. Shortly after, Radha and Comrade KAS left for Colombo, and later, she went to China [Shanghai](#) to

study [acupuncture](#) medicine. She requested pictures of our children to keep as a memento, and we had a photo taken at Ashoka Studio that remains a cherished memory.

Rasathi gifted Buby a dress that Rasathi had sewn for her. The saree I wore was given by Comrade Maan Muthiah's wife. This is the best saree I have ever owned. I wore it until it changed its original color of yellow. It was made of yellow fabric with black border. It was the only nice garment I had, and I wore it until its color faded. I will also talk about my friendship with them, as they often traveled to Malaysia. These memories remain vivid in my mind.

Our three children—Sathiarajan, Sathiamalar (Buby), and Satheakeerthy—were born during this time, but they didn't receive proper care or nutrition. Comrade KAS would leave in the morning and return at night. I would prepare dinner for both of us. During the days when my younger sister came to visit, she would cook and bring something special for us. My brother was still studying, and all of this added to my stress. I started gaining weight and had difficulty walking. Dr. Somas, who lived nearby, prescribed some medication for arthritis, but I still couldn't walk properly.

In Jaffna, caste discrimination was rampant. Government officials would overlook many incidents, and caste-based oppression continued. It was during this period that a major protest took place in Mattuvil, demanding the rights of the oppressed castes. On [October 21, 1966, the protest](#) emerged amid these tensions, as the Communist Party organized a rally to emphasize that caste systems must be dismantled and equal justice must prevail.

The planned rally in Chunnakam was significant, and had been a stronghold for leftist ideologies since the time of Comrade [V. Ponnambalam](#). The party office there proudly displayed the party flag, a symbol of their presence and influence in the area. Figures like comrade [S. T. N. Nagarathinam](#) and their families, who owned a shop, had a notable influence in the region. Many books have been published about this uprising, and I encourage everyone to read them to understand the historical context 'disintegrate the caste system and let equal justice flourish' better .

During the [1966 October uprising](#), prominent comrades from the youth movement of the Party such as D.D. Perera, M. Muthiah, [Balan Pasupathi](#) along with [K. Suppiah](#), M. A.

C. Iqbal, K. Sivarasa, S. K. Senthivel, [T. Tharmalingam](#), [K. Rasaiah](#), K. Sivajnanam and Irangunathan stood in the forefront. Comrades K. Daniel, [V.A. Kandasamy](#), [Dr. S. V. Seenivasagam](#), and [S. T. N. Nagarathinam](#) played significant roles with Comrade K. A. Subramaniam. A large public meeting was held in Chunnakam on November 25, 1966, presided by Comrade K. A. Subramaniam, where key figures like Comrade [N. Shanmugathan](#), [S. D. Bandaranayake](#), [Subair Ilankeeran](#), M.K. Anthanisil and others including Comrade [S.K. Senthivel](#) spoke passionately about the cause.

I have many anecdotes about [S. D. Bandaranayake](#) and how he treated my family and me with care, which I will share later. The atmosphere during the October uprising was charged with determination, as we marched to break the chains of caste oppression, and I am eager to discuss these experiences in detail.

## 19. Observations by Bandaranaike on Caste Violence -Written on 19 June, 2020

After the [1966 Uprising](#) took place, protests against caste discrimination, incidents of violence erupted everywhere in tea shops, where patrons were served tea in cups while others were forced to drink from discarded containers. Access to public wells and bathing facilities was denied, and people faced restrictions on entering temples. Festivals were disrupted as chariots were turned away from certain streets, and communal burial rights were denied. Segregation in public cemeteries continued, with designated areas assigned based on caste. These discriminatory practices were pervasive in schools and healthcare.

In this context, [S.D. Bandaranaike](#), a former MP from Gambaha, visited Jaffna several times in 1968 to witness the caste oppression and the suffering of marginalized communities firsthand. Accompanied by a Buddhist monk and a few Sinhalese comrades, he was guided by Comrade KAS to various affected locations, providing him with insights into the struggles of the oppressed.

One might wonder why there was no concern from Tamil parliament representatives from the northern region?. Those in power seemed indifferent to the atrocities faced by marginalized communities. S.D. Bandaranaike took a personal interest in the plight of

the affected, and his visit to a house that had been burned down remains a poignant memory.

He later recounted these experiences in parliament, creating a significant impact on the discussions surrounding caste discrimination. The aftermath was reflected in the electoral outcomes that followed. Not all upper-caste individuals were villainous; rather, only a few with extreme attitudes engaged in acts of violence.

One such incident involved a comrade, Maan Muthiah, who faced violent opposition from upper-caste individuals, forcing him to relocate from Chankanai. His relative visited my father, conveying the hostility he encountered and expressing that KAS, who was involved in local activities, should not interfere. My father, a man of timid disposition, cautioned, "Why does KAS need to engage in such unnecessary work? Those upper-caste individuals will act as they wish; it's better for you to focus on your family and not get involved in such conflicts." I never shared this with KAS, as I doubted it would alter his approach.

During [S.D. Bandaranaike](#)'s visit to Jaffna, he came to the house we rented in Kalaiyadi. Observing my struggle to walk, he brought a herbal remedy leaves called '*Mudak Koththan*' and advised me to mix it with Coriander leaves and consumes it. Since I was learning Sinhalese at the time, I communicated with him in that language, which brought him joy. His medicinal advice proved effective, as I eventually recovered.

S.D. Bandaranaike publicly discussed the arson incidents in parliamentary meetings, significantly impacting the discourse on caste discrimination. His remarks and the resultant media coverage compelled those responsible for these acts to retreat and adopt a more subdued stance. There's a saying in our country that goes, "If there's no one to ask questions, the one who's in charge will act as they wish." This reflects the growing awareness and activism within the communities.

The situation was exacerbated by various protests led by comrades like K. A. Subramaniam, K. Daniel, [V.A. Kandasamy](#), [Dr. S. V. Seenivasagam](#), and [S. T. N. Nagarathinam](#) during the October Uprising. These events brought together people from various backgrounds, united in their struggle against oppression.

In the two years we lived at the house of Mr. Ekamparam Siva Pakkiyam, many comrades visited us, including comrades [N. Shanmugathan](#) and Neervai Ponnayan. Others like Thiru Gnanamurthi ([E. T. Moorthy](#)), [S. T. N. Nagarathinam](#), S. Yoganathan family, Nellandaith Comrade Kumaraswamy family, Comrade S. Kathiravelu (father of Minister [Douglas Devananda](#)) who was head of the petroleum corporation, Comrade S. Sivadasan, Comrade [V.A. Kandasamy](#), N K. Raghunathan, Comrade K. Daniel, Comrade [K. Suppiah](#), Comrade [Mathakal V. Kanthasamy](#), Comrade M.A.C Iqbal, Comrade Kansoor, Comrade Salim, Comrade [Subair Ilankeeran](#) Family, Comrade [T. Tharmalingam](#) Family, Comrade [R.K. Soodamani](#) Family, Comrade [K. Rasaiah](#), Comrade [Balan Pasupathi](#) Family, Comrade Nallappu, Comrade [P. Kathiresu](#), Comrade Chinnathambi and many more comrades.... , comrades came and went. How many comradeships? We worked together with hopes for the future in a less comfortable home.

Among them Ms. Saroshini from Mattuvil is the most prominent sister who stood out. She worked in handlooms... saved a little money and graciously offered it into my hands. She knew that Comrade KAS was participating in the procession and getting sick....may be one of the reasons. Various friends and comrades joined us during this period. The comradeships we built were based on shared ideals and mutual support.

Note: Comrade [S. D. Bandaranaike](#) was born into a wealthy family and is a relative of [S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike](#). During his time studying for higher education in India, he claimed to have met notable figures like [Subhas Chandra Bose](#) and [Rabindranath Tagore](#). He was knowledgeable in agriculture and herbal medicine. After [World War II](#), he entered politics and joined the newly formed [Sri Lanka Freedom Party](#) (SLFP), campaigning for S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike. He was elected to Parliament in 1952 and re-elected in 1956; however, he did not accept the Minister position due to disagreements with S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike regarding the Sinhala Only Act. He joined the [JVP](#) (People's Liberation Front) in 1971 against the SLFP government led by [Sirimavo Bandaranaike](#). Our friendship with [S. D. Bandaranaike](#) and his family continued throughout their lives. I visited him with my family and Comrade [K. Suppiah](#) a year before his passing. At 96 years old, he had lost his eyesight. Seeing him in that condition caused me great pain. I need to write a personal note about him.

Following the events after the [1966 October uprising](#), I will continue to share about the challenges we faced during the [JVP](#) period, the threats we endured, and the struggles of a caste-ridden society.

## 20. The Growth of the JVP -Written on 25 June, 2020

In 1969, we had to go to Colombo for two reasons: to bring Comrade KAS and to see off Radha, who was departing for her medical studies in China. We were also invited to accompany them to the airport. I traveled by train with my children and brother. My brother dropped us off at Comrade [Shanmugathan](#) house in Kollupitiya before heading out on his journey. At that time, he was studying at [Peradeniya University](#).

After Ms. Radha's arrival, since there were no other children in the house, she played with my children as if they were her own. They played a game called "Kannaipothi" (Blindfolds). In this game, one person closes their eyes, while the others try to catch them. Despite many years passing, it feels as if it happened just yesterday. The children laughed and enjoyed playing, asking for more and more.

Two days later was Dr. Radha's departure day. We got up early in the morning and made our way to Colombo Airport. After checking in the travel boxes and passport, Radha came over to us, picked up child Keerthy, and bid farewell to everyone before heading inside. All of us went upstairs to the departure area. Since my children had never seen an airplane before, they were excited and shouted joyfully as the passengers boarded. Before leaving, they waved goodbye to everyone. Afterward, we returned to [Comrade Shanmugathan](#)'s house in Kollupitiya. Comrade Shanmugathan showed great affection and care for us, which was comforting.

In the evening, he offered to drive the children to the [Galle face beach](#). There were many colorful kites flying in the sky, creating a beautiful sight. Some kids played ball while others rode horses. Our children also got a chance to ride the horses. Before heading home, we enjoyed ice cream and bought balloons. The sunset over the western sea was a magnificent sight, painted in shades of red and yellow that words cannot describe. I have never enjoyed such natural beauty, and it wasn't just captivating for the children; it was wonderful for the adults too. As the children were having fun, their laughter was infectious, lifting everyone's spirits.

When we returned home, child Keerthy began to cry, saying, "I lost my slipper!" In such a crowded beach, where could we possibly find that tiny slipper? Keerthy, who had been quiet until then, expressed his feelings. We were assured by Comrade [Shanmugathan](#) and Radha that it was okay, and a new, valuable pair of shoes was

bought for him the next day. Comrade Shanmugathan would often jokingly say that it was his influence that brought Keerthy to speak for the first time.

Comrade KAS's sister, [Ms. Sivanesan](#) ( Sella Akka), who was a close friend of mine, lived in Avissawella with her family. Her husband Mr. Chinnathambu was working at the Avissawella police station. When we planned to visit, Comrade [Shanmugathan](#) offered his vehicle and driver to help us. Within an hour, we reached their place. Mr. Chinnathambu showed us the way to their residence and then left for his duties. Sella Akka (Sivanesan) prepared [idiyappam and sodhi](#) for us. We ate and returned to Colombo, taking the train back to Jaffna the following day, reaching our home. The happiness of bringing Comrade KAS home and Keerthy starting to speak was wonderful. Thus, the days passed.

In 1970, the JVP (Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna) movement rapidly spread among the Sinhala people across the country. Some of its members came to Jaffna, met with the Communist Party, and requested their support. [S. D. Bandaranaike](#) also aligned with the JVP. As a result, the police began to harbor suspicions against the leftists.

One Monday morning, a kind acquaintance of mine, who was a police CID officer, came to our house and calmly said, “Your husband is under surveillance. If the police catch him at home, they will arrest him and send him to Colombo.” I will continue with the story as it unfolds...

## 21. Police Raid -Written on 4 July, 2020

The movement known as the JVP (Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna) was founded on May 14, 1965, by [Rohana Wijeweera](#), who broke away from the [Sri Lankan Communist Party \(Chinese faction\)](#). The JVP announced its commitment to socialist equality and conducted several political classes. Influenced by these, many educated, unemployed rural youth and students joined the JVP in large numbers. They began secret preparations for an armed revolution.

In March 1971, the ruling [Sirimavo Bandaranaike](#) government became aware of the JVP's secret weapons stash. As a result, they started arresting members of the Ceylon Communist Party (Maoist) aligned with China. My husband, who promoted people's

liberation and people's politics aligned with Marxist principles, did not join Rohana Wijeweera. However, the police did not differentiate between them; they considered all of them as armed militants. The arrests of comrades like [Premalal Kumarasiri](#), [S. D. Bandaranaike](#) and a few others due to their involvement with the JVP raised suspicions. When a police officer came to inform me, both I and my children were filled with anxiety. It felt like “the rain has fallen, but the dirt hasn’t been washed away.”

I didn’t mention the police officer's visit or that he studied with me to anyone. That day, while the elderly woman Aunty Pakkiam from next door was visiting, I only shared this information with her. She offered comfort. Aunty Pakkiam held a deep affection and respect for my husband. Everyone trying to show themselves as a local dignitary expressed dissatisfaction about having a Communist living in their village. (I have mentioned this individual before.) I was fearful of him. Three houses away from where we lived was Dr. Somaskandar’s residence. His yard was quite spacious, with paddy growing well, which spilled over into our yard. Directly behind our yard were thorny bushes and a small mango tree. If anyone was hiding inside, it would be undetectable from outside. The fences were old and in disrepair. In our rented house, we had a private well, so we would fetch water from the elderly woman's house. Even better water would come from the village wells when my brother or my elder sister’s son visited.

Our house was empty during the day. During this time, due to my husband’s secretive life, the children sought friendship. Hence, all the neighborhood kids would play at our house after school. There were Rasan, Buby, Keerthy, Kones, Kedhis, Kanthan, Mangales, Bhavani, Ramani, Malika, Ritchy, Thasan, Pulendran, and Nirmalan. The leader among them was Ramani Nadesan. In that well, they would toss in leaves, salt, and chili powder and play around, though they cared very affectionately for my children. I would tell many interesting stories. However, there was a fear that when the police came, these children would make it difficult for my husband to hide.

That day was a weekend, and after many days, my husband had come home. I was hurriedly cooking while carrying firewood. My mother was also visiting. I didn’t tell her anything. Suddenly, a police jeep arrived in front of the house, and several officers jumped out. Their arrival was delayed... My husband ran away and hid behind the house. The children stood confused, unsure whether to follow their father or face the approaching police. The layout of our rental house allowed visibility of everything happening outside. (Today, that place has been demolished and replaced with a new house.) The police surrounding the house didn’t recognize anyone. The inspector who arrived asked, “Are you the wife? Are you a teacher? Do you have three children?”

converting what he knew into questions. My brother, who had brought my mother here, took our eldest son Rasan with him. Bhavani was also present. Police counted them as three.

“Where’s your husband? Where did he go? If he’s involved in treasonous activities, we have orders to shoot,” he said. I replied, “I don’t know anything. He came today. I was cooking to serve food.” To that, he said, “We will catch him anytime. When he comes, tell him to surrender to us. Otherwise, we will shoot him.” That day, my mother was visiting, and she kept insisting, “You go and bring KAS back.” As she said this, the little girl Bhavani held the baby on my shoulder. The police confiscated all the books, newspapers, and albums that were in the large room. Keerthy and Buby were stunned and hid behind me. There was a hope in my mind. I thought, surely a good, genuine person would not be shot by these men. Even though I had melted into his personality for fifteen years as a comrade and wife, whenever trouble arose, I would pray to Murugan and Bhadrakali. Even if he knew this, he never intruded into the spaces I had. I stood firm, feeling as if divine beings were with me, affirming my faith in protecting my husband.

My mother’s anger disturbed both my children and me. She was worried about her daughter and grandchildren. For her, her world revolved around us. With police surrounding the house and the same police who had taken my husband away returning, my husband was not with them, so my mind settled.

How did he escape? Who saved him? The ongoing police threats... I will continue...

## 22. Children's Struggles -Written on 9 July, 2020

The police took away the albums, publications, and some newspapers from our house and left. The two children, who had been stunned until then, began to cry out “Appa (Dad)... Appa (Dad)” due to my mother’s encouragement. Gradually, neighbors started to come in. After sending them off, the elderly woman Aunty Pakkiam from next door came. “Teacher... don’t be afraid. Your husband is a brave man. No one can harm him. He has cut the thorny bushes with a stick. He jumped and ran away into the paddy field. He has said not to come here for some time,” she said. (The comrade often shares this moment with his comrades, highlighting the affection that Aunty Pakkiam's motherly love held for him.)

After this, it became common for the police to visit frequently. As a result, my younger son Keerthy stood on the table and started saying, "I'll take the ants and climb the tree to throw it on the policeman's head." The young comrades visiting the house encouraged him. I, however, was filled with fear. In the following days, some comrades began to live secretly in different houses instead of coming to our house, and they, along with comrade [S. T. N. Nagaratnam](#), lived a clandestine life for nearly two months.

During this time, I received orders from the Department to go to Vadaliadaipu until the results for my Sinhala language proficiency test were secured. In the morning, Keerthy was sent to a teacher named Thavamani, who conducted a care center called "Nursery". Comrade [P. Kathiresu](#) helped to send him on his bicycle. I, along with my child Keerthy, return home... Baby, our daughter, used to sleep on the steps of the rented house after her Nursery, exposed to the sun, with her hand resting on her head, tears pooling in her palms. Who could I tell these miseries to? My elder son Rasan stayed with my sister. Meanwhile, my sister married a mathematics teacher named Sivasubramaniam, whom she loved. (He was a teacher for advanced level students at [Jaffna St. John's College](#).) Comrades did not visit our house anymore. My leg pain returned. During the few months when I could not walk, I was bedridden and had to stay at my mother's house. Buby was a toddler, and we transferred her to the Pannagam Meyhandan Maha Vidyalayam (PMMV) where I studied too. My sister had given birth to her elder son. My mother was not in good health. I was also there to trouble them without support.

One day I told Buby to check if the milk on the stove was boiling, but I couldn't keep my eyes open. I saw the elder son Rasan bring a large stool for his sister Buby to stand on top to reach the cooker height but she failed. I watched them cry. Rasan's task was to wash all the clothes. Meanwhile, the stories from my mother and relatives deeply affected my mind. I did not want to think back on those days.

The youngest son, Keerthy, was five years old. One day, Comrade [P. Kathiresu](#) came and said, "Comrade KAS wants to call Keerthy. He said he would be back in a few days," and asked for clothes for Keerthy. Rasan prepared those clothes. My family was terrified. They wondered why someone hiding would call a little boy. I couldn't do anything either. We gave a little money that I had to send him off. He went with the joy of seeing his father, whom he hadn't seen for a long time.

In 1971, when I secretly sent him to meet his father in Colombo, I learned later through their stories that his father KAS had changed in appearance. It was later revealed that Keerthy was taken secretly to Colombo to meet imprisoned comrade [Shanmugathan](#).

Keerthy was also sent with Radha to pass a secret letter to comrade Shanmugathan. At that time, comrade KAS was transfigured differently. Even Radha could not recognize him at first it seemed.

Attached is the photo taken while Keerthy was in Colombo. This shirt was stitched from pieces of cloth and given to Keerthy by Louis 'Aiya'. There, in the Cotta road, Borrella, a comrade named Louis 'Aiya' was running a tailoring business near the party office. Upon seeing the child, he felt an urge to give a gift to him. He, too, was someone who had struggled. He joyfully stitched a beautiful "shirt" for the child. "If you thank me daily, it is just like taking it as a favor," this "shirt" was safely preserved for a long time. When Keerthy saw [comrade Shanmugathan](#) in prison and communicated necessary information to him from comrade KAS, it increased Shanmugathan's interest in Keerthy. (After comrade Shanmugathan returned from prison, he bought a big Rocket toy for Keerthy when he returned from Albania. It was a three-tiered Rocket toy that opened with a flick. Keerthy kept it as a great treasure possession.)

After a few months, realizing that the authorities had found no truth in their investigation, they seemingly abandoned their search. My workplace transitioned from Wadaliyaddaippu to the Ganthiji's organization near my former school PMMV for a short period and then to work at the Tholpuram. My elder son Rasan went to [Chulipuram Victoria College](#) with my sister who was a teacher there at that time. The work of transferring Buby to the [Pandatheruppu Ladies College](#) was also done. The wife of comrade [Mathakal V. Kanthasamy](#) was a good friend of mine. We had developed familiarity due to collaborating on events organized by the Progressive Writers' Association and the Mothers' Association. Comrade [Mathakal V. Kanthasamy](#) was particularly attached to comrade KAS. Both of them insisted on transferring Buby to school. We enrolled Keerthy in the nearby Balwadi school, situated close to the Tholpuram Vikiniswa Vidyalaya. There were many children there. Keerthy couldn't forget his classmates, who studied with him. He would go and return with them every day. I will continue...

### 23. Commotion at the Rented House-Written on 15 July, 2020

According to the work transfer arrangement of spending nearly five years in every village, I had to move to Pannakam near my former school PMMV for a short period. I woke up early in the morning, cooked, and took the food along with the two little children

in my arms... I had to cross the large empty dry field known as “Kayappanai” (Meaning Palmerah without any fruits). The rain had flooded it completely. The children couldn't hold onto the waist-high grass, and the wind was swirling, soaking us and making my body shiver. I enrolled Buby in the Pannakam Meikandan school near my workplace. My elder son, Rasan, had gone to [Chulipuram Victoria College](#) with my sister. For several days, I had crossed that Kayappanai field, drenched in tears. There was no one to share my worries with. I had no desire to speak. Everything was “him” to me. I didn't know where he was or how he was doing.

On the right side of that Kayappanai field was an abundant large well. Whenever I see it, I remember the [1955 Tamil movie](#) story of [Nalla Thangal](#). See! What a shame this is...! Just for a moment..... just a glitch, then it's gone! “Oh! What misery this is...!” Just for a moment, the tumult in my mind vanished. “Amma! I think something pricked my leg. Please pick me up,” cried the child Keerthy, and that cowardly thought of that moment disappeared from my heart. I told myself, “You're doing this for a purpose! No harm will come to you anymore.” ... “You have saved the job you are looking for and become permanent! You won't suffer any kind of damage for the rest of your life”. ... After all, “pain is required for victory,” right?

During the few months when I could not walk, I was bedridden and had to stay at my mother's house but Buby and Keerthy were distressed. My sister had a little child, so I had to go to another place. A girl named Ms. Thaiyalmuthu, who was a student of mine at Pannagam, had unlimited love for me and the children. She would worry about seeing me unable to walk around. Her father was a bullock cart driver with five children. He was an affectionate person toward me and my children. I, along with my two children, stayed at their house for a week. Rasan was staying at my sister's house. None of these details were known to the comrade KAS.

In those days, there were no telephone facilities like today. It was unknown where he was until he came and told me. Due to not passing the Sinhala language exam, the teacher who worked at Tholpuram was fired by the government. This deeply saddened me. Like me, she also had three children. What would she do? “The government's hen's egg, breaks the citizen's stone” is a saying.

I was ordered to take over responsibility from her. Accordingly, I went to Tholpuram. .. At that time, the Police authorities had realized that there was no truth in their investigation, they seemingly abandoned their search for the comrade KAS. He came

back to support, and we prepared to move again to the house with the help of comrades Kansur and [P. Kathiresu](#). When the police were looking for my husband, he had been in hiding for several months, and the people of Tholpuram were aware of it... It seemed to be common knowledge that renting a house in that village was difficult. A man named Mr. Sivachithamparam, who studied with me, said that his mother Parvati had two houses and that he had already told them about us. We went to see the 2 houses. It was a spacious house with a public well in the middle. After passing that, on the left side was a newly built house in the shape of an 'L.' If we went further back, there was an old single-room house that we could walk into. The comrade KAS liked this old house for its inner remote location. The rent was ten rupees. Since there was a well, no one else would know about our movements. It had a large yard and an outdoor toilet. However, I did not like it because the well and the toilet were very far away. It was hard for me and the children to walk to the toilet with buckets of water. Despite the old house, the safety of his presence was important, so we chose this house. Thus, we secured a place to stay.

With the help of comrades Kansur and [P. Kathiresu](#), all the items from the Sivam teacher house arrived at the new house via a lorry. When we moved from Karainagar to Pandatheruppu in 1966, the comrade KAS fixed the beds and tables individually... But due to the attack on May Day in 1969, my husband lost the use of his shoulder joint, making it impossible to loosen or tighten the bed's nuts with a spanner. We had only Rasan with us. He was studying at Victoria College. We enrolled Keerthy in the nearby Balwadi school, situated close to the [Tholpuram Vikineswara Vidyalaya](#) and transferred Buby to the Pandateruppu Ladies's College. We arranged for her to go by a school van of Mr. Seenivasagam ( We used to call him China Uncle). In the meantime, I got the accumulated money that was on hold for the Sinhala Exam. We settled some loans and bought a big bed.

The year before this... he lived a secret life in the small villages of... Mullanai, Vlan, Ilavalai... So we went to those places to say thank you. Our house toilet was at the back and there was a big house nearby. But their toilet was also close to ours. They can see our house through a hole in the fence. The details of who is who are not known. One day comrade KAS hurriedly said, "Mani ( It is to me ).... Police Inspector Rajeswaran's house is in the back. It is like a story where a thief hides in a place without knowing it belongs to Police. Still, comrade KAS lived without identifying himself. The government suppressed and oppressed the JVP movement by killing 4,000 youths. Thus, the police department's search operation came to a halt. It was a relief. Even so, the comrade KAS continued to remain in hiding without revealing his identity. However, other comrades gradually began to trace our whereabouts and started coming. I will continue...

## 24. Own Land-Written on 21 July, 2020

There was only one family living near our house with an elderly father called Arumugam Appu, mother called Thangamuthu, and a middle-aged daughter called Ponnamah. They were engaged in selling dried peanuts and doing manual labor. The other houses were quite far away from us. The common well was next to a garden with a big tree. When the children want, comrade KAS would narrate tales to them. During that time, comrade [S. Yoganathan](#) was about to marry into a relatively well-off family in Colombo. We had a lot of respect and affection for him. We also went to see the bride. On his wedding day, we experienced a joyful atmosphere after many long days.

During that time, ideological conflicts within the party began again. Many Tamil and Sinhalese comrades came and discussed in meetings. To my knowledge, comrade [V.A. Kandasamy](#) was one of the most loved and respected comrades, especially by comrade KAS. One time when comrade KAS and he visited our house, comrade KAS mentioned that he carried him in his arms because he couldn't walk from the bus stop. He was someone who had organized his whole life as a full-time party employee without getting married. I always held him in high regard. He showed immense affection for my children. During those days, youth would come to listen to him speak. The fear of separation was highlighted through the visits and stories of comrades. When I asked comrade KAS if he had any issues in the party, he said, "The struggle within the party can only be understood through discussions aimed at carrying forward the organization for the good of the people. The existence of these discussions is indeed correct." My only worry was whether there would be a split.

One morning, on the porch of our house, comrade KAS had written, "A policy without practice is blindness; a practice without policy is foolishness." Same day Comrade V. A. Kandasamy came alone. After inquiring about our well-being, he gazed at the backyard and porch.

"Oh! Has comrade KAS written this for me?" Comrade [V. A. Kandasamy](#) asked me. I didn't think to get any information from them. I had never done that. "Just say you came. Take care of the children," comrade V. A. Kandasamy said before he left. For some reason, tears welled up in my eyes.

Due to the JVP problem, comrade [Shanmugathan](#) was in jail. At that moment, a few comrades like [Watson Fernando](#), Rosario, Ramaiya, [E. T. Moorthy](#) (comrades from the Red flag trade union), H. L. K. Karawita, and D. A. Gunasekara along with Neervai Ponnaiyan, [V. A. Kandasamy](#), Karthikeyan Master, and comrade [P. Kathiresu](#), had separated from the party, claiming comrade Shanmugathan was to be expelled. Comrade KAS did not accept that. Their conversations in my ears echoed the blame directed at the leadership for the impact of the 1969 May day anti-legislation procession. I never asked comrade KAS about it until the end. Later, they operated under another name as [Communist Party of Sri Lanka \(Marxist–Leninist\)](#).

As this happened within the party, conflict began to escalate between castes in the Chankanai village of Nitchamam. Comrades like [T. Tharmalingam](#) (Tharumu), Nallappu, Vikinaraja, Sinrasu (Comrade [S. Palani](#)'s brother), [Balan Pasupathi](#), and [K. Rasaiah](#) would visit frequently. There were signs of a resumption of police harassment.

During that time, comrade KAS's childhood friend [Sillaiyoor Selvarajan](#), brought a tape recorder with radio through BBC Anandi. Because of that, Rasan started listening to world news and film songs. The poem below in tribute to Comrade K A Subramaniam was read out as funeral oration by the late Sillaiyoor Selvarajan a close friend and a leading Sri Lankan Tamil poet:

*“Comrades who have gathered here*

*To recall in a cascade*

*Thoughts of a great man called Maniam (KAS)*

*His life of bravery, his conduct of humility*

*His broad outlook based on service,*

*To pay tribute to that immortalised soul,*

*Allow me a mere ten minutes to sing of my man.*

*Yes, I arrogantly referred to him as my man.*

*I called him my man*

*For there was such intimate fellowship between us.*

*Forgive me if I was wrong.*

*I said so since I was one who shared and lived among friends*

*In the warmth of his shelter with his wife and children*

*And comrades who united as one in the policies of struggle.*

*Forgive me if I was wrong.*

*Our friendship budded in my school days*

*Then we ran free. We were mere lads*

*Who parted company*

*In our adolescence, unaware of the revolutionary sweep,*

*Not knowing that we will meet again*

*To merge through struggles for rights that would dominate,*

*Through arguing the case for the oppressed and*

*The class struggle of the workers,*

*In political debate and in battles for cultural thought.*

*We met again in battlefronts, on the same side.*

*I met at [St Henry's College, Ilavalai](#)*

*Maniam, the meticulous student*

*Who preserved silence, with little time for chit chat,*

*A man of mystery,*

*An underground fighter who lives on after his death,*

*A leader who breaks his silence at the head of a mass rally,*

*A hero who did not sing and swear only to surrender,*

*A hero who achieved things without compromise.*

*Poetry stammers to describe that joy.*

*A silent tribute for Maniam (KAS)–*

*The fighter who refused to be silent*

*And spoke up in struggle for the masses?*

*A silent tribute in place of a battle cry?*

*Forgive me, I cannot!*

*We have been captivated by the communist way  
Along the path of [Marxism Leninism](#).  
We met. We spoke. We embraced the path  
And entered the battlefield on different fronts.  
I, in the front of art and literature, and  
He, in the field of relentless action in struggle.  
Having consumed the poison that  
Emerged in the churning of the cement factory struggle  
To feed the ambrosia to the **folk\***  
He continued in struggle in the hartal,  
In the militant demonstrations for equality in education,  
To dedicate his efforts to working class struggles,  
To lend his shoulder to the oppressed in caste conflicts,  
To lead the way like the flame of the lamp  
Amid ideological confusion in the worker's unions,  
To identify the issues by scientific analysis  
Without losing heat by communal violence,  
To work like a tusker and  
Struggle with character to the end with relentless militancy,  
And to lead a life true to the definition of a martyr.  
I am a friend of [K.A. Subramaniam](#), my man,  
The personification of friendship,  
The able master of egalitarianism.  
Poetry stammers to describe that joy.  
I recall the Comrade Maniam (KAS)  
Who identified the principles that prevent filth*

*From infiltrating art and literature and,  
When I among others was tempted,  
Stood behind to warn me,  
“Hey, Selva, do not be baffled”, and show me the way.  
Poetry stammers to describe that joy.  
As the times of close relationship  
Cast their shadows in my mind and soak my thought  
Poetry stammers to describe that joy.  
For me to sing of the times  
When Maniam and I discussed in privacy,  
The warm hospitality of his dear wife,  
The sweet words of the three tender children,  
Sathiarajan, Satheakeerthy and Sathiamalar,  
Calling me ‘Uncle’  
In a tone akin to the comfort of a cool spring,  
I do not have the words.  
Poetry stammers to describe that joy.  
The friend of the dispossessed, we have been dispossessed of you.  
Maniam(KAS)! My Marxist salutations to you!  
Farewell Maniam! But  
The golden moments of happiness I had with you,  
The golden moments in which we shared  
With sweet drinks and our majestic confidence in  
The desire to make a new world,  
They have not gone away.  
Your little boys, your little girl, your son-in-law*

*And so many more whom you had aroused before you went.*

*Those are golden moments, tender golden moments.*

*Farewell Maniam(KAS)! When you return*

*Your task would have been done.*

*The thoughts that you had,*

*The scenes of your great dreams*

*Would all have been realised.*

*Farewell my prince! When you return*

*With the desire for equality,*

*Communism would have blossomed on earth.*

*With aching hearts we would await your*

*Return from leave to see that new world.*

*Maniam(KAS)! My Marxist salutations to you.” -[Sillaiyoor Selvarajan](#) 1994*

\* Note: Refers to Hindu mythology where the Devas and Asuras churned the celestial ocean of milk with the celestial serpent as rope to extract its ambrosia, and when the serpent spat venom Lord Shiva swallowed it to save all living beings.

At the same time, comrade [Shanmugathan](#) also provided a big Rocket toy for Keerthy when he returned from Albania. It was a three-tiered Rocket toy that opened with a flick. At that time, foreign goods were rare. This led to them being featured in the [Chulipuram Victoria College](#) pre-centenary Exhibition. Meanwhile, my parents decided to give equal shares of the land I was born into to my sister and brother. This caused some concern for my father. I didn't argue with him. The hidden reason for not giving it to me may be that many comrades come to us with different social and economical status. The police were also searching for my husband very often. This was an unsettling life. I preferred to live without anyone knowing about it. What was the situation? Carrying the children like a monkey carrying its young, I struggled with the kids. My father often expressed worry about this. Later, under his request and insistence, my brother bought a piece of land for me in 1974.

“My daughter ‘Mani’ (It is about me), who nurtured and supported us in our troubles,” my father would tell relatives and neighbors. From the day the land was bought, we put up a fence and cleared the bushes in the yard. The previous house neighbors Arumugam Appu and Thangamuthu also did various cleaning jobs in the land for us. However comrade KAS occupied with his party works without showing any concern or attention to the land. “This is my preferred life with nothing to lose,” comrade KAS would say. When asked why the children should study, he would emphasize the importance of education and how it impacts society, the nation, and the world.

I will continue about the arrival of a group of youths named N. Raveendran, A. Chandrahasan, [S. Thevarajah](#) , Yogeswaran, Dayalan, Kriti, Velmurugan.....

## 25. The Birth of Sathiamanai -Written on 29 July, 2020

The calendar reminds me that it’s been a year since I started this series. For some reason, sharing all these experiences with all of you is not just about conveying many truths; I journey through my past, crying and laughing, sometimes feeling like a young woman, and experiencing many emotions.

I am grateful to the loving hearts that valued and supported my memories. The land measures four plots and costs 6,000 rupees, but I only had 3,000 rupees from my brother. The excess amount was given to me as a jewelry gift by my sister, which I had purchased from a merchant named Muthukumar with money that my mother saved each month during that time. The white stone ring was never worn by her; its beautiful shine kept it unused. The merchant, Muthukumar, took back that jewelry and with that money, we managed to finalize the deal. When purchased, there was an old well, three coconut trees, and four areca nut trees. My parents said, “Mani (It is to me), the money earned from your labor is going to waste for rent. It would be better to build at least a mud house to live in.” So they constructed a thatched mud house.

In these activities, the comrade KAS was not involved. One day, he went to Colombo and we thought it would take three or four days for him to return. Meanwhile, on a good day, my father said we could boil milk there to move into the thatched mud hut.

Agreeing, I took the children and went to boil the milk and prepare pongal. My father insisted we must sleep there on the first night. A small earthen pot raised to a certain height was there. After going around, I got struck by the idea. A small room had a big courtyard and other small doors, including a kitchen. They managed to make it a beautiful 'home' inside, even if it looked shabby outside.

On the smooth land, I spread a mat and prepared to sleep with the children. Although I felt regret at doing such a thing without the comrade KAS, I reassured myself that he would not accept such traditions. That night, suddenly, the comrade KAS came back and called out "Rasan!" The three children, who had been lying down, jumped up and ran forward. I was startled by the speed at which they walked. With a pot of pongal, my father handed it to me and said, "Give this to him to eat this!" Unable to keep up with them, I fled.

This incident is something I can never forget. If the children do something wrong, they will face the consequences themselves. That day, I was also with them on our knees. Somehow, we managed to calm him down and made him laugh. Then he regretted that we left my parents alone in the house. He then asked the children what name they would like to give the house. Elder son Rasan suggested 'Sathiamanai,' which everyone liked. That small mud hut surrounded by thatch with limited ventilation became our 'Sathiamanai.'

The well, where some plants grew, was referred to as the 'weeding well' by the sellers. After stirring the well several times, Mr. Boolokavaathiyar came on the weekend and pumped water with his water pump....went down inside to remove sludge and algae. We poured a lot of gloreen into it, ensuring it became a proper 'clean water well' for drinking.

Another situation led to a conflict between the two castes in Nitchamam. The higher castes began to harass the oppressed people with the help of the police. As a result, comrade Nallappu had stayed at our house for a few days while in hiding. When [Thai Pongal](#) arrived, comrade Nallappu brought sugarcane, bananas, vadai, and pongal. He said we would celebrate next year at Sathiamanai for the children. He played with my children, who became babies again.

One day, a large number of young men from a neighboring village visited our home. Among them, I recognized a few, including Yogeswaran, whose aunt was my student. Through that, I had a close relationship with his family. Ravi, whose house was directly across from mine, was very quiet. I had heard he was a terrible student. I didn't expect him to come to our house because I knew that his father was a staunch supporter of the Tamil liberation movement ([TULF](#)).

Others like Velmurugan, Thevaraja, and Krishnadas were new acquaintances. Dayalan was the son of the teacher Samy Vathiyar. I came to know that Chandrakasan was Mr. Alagaratnam's son. They had come to visit us, looking for comrade KAS. He wasn't at home that day. I thought it would be nice to have them with us. A large group of young men had come, which would have encouraged comrade KAS. I thought comrade KAS would be very happy with their arrival and their new plans for the party. Later, their visits became frequent. They would spend a long time asking many stories and matters. Ravi had just completed his studies at the [Skandavarothaya College](#). Yogeswaran was studying at the university. Chandrahassan had graduated as an architect. He was a relative of Ravi. Thevaraja was studying at law college. They were all students. During this period, Krishnadas, Dayalan, and Velmurugan were searching for jobs. During this time, comrade KAS was very cheerful and energetic. The visits from the youth occurred almost every day. Many Sinhalese comrades would also visit during that period, including Samal De Silva, Ratnayaka, and Gandhi Abayasekara.

I will continue about the assassination of Comrade Nallappu, the youth boycotting the 1977 election at Kalayadi, their fighting and imprisonment.

## 26. Election Boycott Actions and Their Reflections-Written on 3 August, 2020

In Nitchamam, comrade K. Nallappu was a poor farmer. He is my beloved brother, a diligent worker with a strong physique and a compassionate nature. He was cherished by those who knew him. These are not exaggerated praises or traditional accolades. He was a 'human being' loved by those who had interacted with him until today. He had taken a plot of land, supposedly belonging to the upper castes, on lease to farm. This lease was also affected by the caste-based oppression prevalent at the time. With the

help of the police, those with wealth and influence began to harass him. This led to ongoing conflicts.

Once, he had a direct confrontation with a police officer, and afterward, he began living in hiding. During that time, he stayed at our house for a few days. He supplied the vegetables he cultivated to the markets through a cart driver from the [Pandatharippu](#) area. The police learned about this and, by hiding in the cart, they discovered his whereabouts. When the cart driver realized the police were in the cart with him, he fled into the nearby palm grove. Tragically, that loving youth was shot dead by a policeman. The impact of this loss haunted our family for a long time.

Comrade KAS was always seen with a clean-shaven face, but following this incident, he stopped shaving and kept a beard for many days. He had only grown a beard twice in his lifetime—once during this time, and I will discuss the other in 1989 later.

The death procession of comrade Nallappu caused great commotion in the town of [Chankanai](#). Many tributes in his memory still resonate with my children, as they read them aloud with enthusiasm. In the verses of [Puthuvai Ratthinathurai](#)... Here is a poem about comrade K. Nallappu:

- > “By the bank of the stream, where the red sorrel grows,
- > In the garden untouched, a hibiscus blooms...
- > While reminiscing about you,
- > We never thought a crow would snatch our dear child.”

My elder son Rasan was deeply affected by this event. I have attached what he wrote about comrade Nallappu:

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What My Elder Son Rasan Wrote About Comrade Nallappu

We had their memorial book. Later, after our relocation, members of the National Arts and Literary Council of Sri Lanka safeguarded many of our books. They might still have it. Here's a part of the poem I wrote that day as Tamil Mangai...

After my thoughts expanded... {Excerpt: Tamil Mangai}

- > *"After my thoughts expanded, feeling the rush of emotions,*
- > *I remembered you, brave Nallappu.*
- > *Would slandering stop the struggle?*
- > *We shall become those who walk the Marxist path.*
- > *You showed history that political power is like the barrel of a gun.*
- > *By your death, you revealed*
- > *That due to the merciless actions of the armed forces,*
- > *We were all born and grew up*
- > *With the love of a person named Nallappu,*
- > *To say, 'Let the child be cherished'...*
- > *Killed and born again in the grasp of ideology,*
- > *The life of the strong and full man remains, right?"*

During this period, Ravi, Thevar, and Chandran's visits became medicinal for comrade KAS. The 1977 election season began. The Pandatharippu village was a significant voting bank for the [Tamil United Liberation Front](#). Despite some minor disagreements, [Mr.A. Amirthalingam](#)'s neighborhood too. Should I even say? In the 50s and 60s, although the Sri Lankan Communist Party participated in elections, they later became inactive with the cry of "Parliament is a den of thieves."

In this situation, the Sri Lankan Communist Party decided to boycott the election. However, the youth of Pandatharippu wanted to hold a public rally to boycott the election too, comrade KAS insisted that no problems should arise and that we should not disturb the goodwill of the village people.

But does young blood know fear? They attempted to prevent people from attending campaign meetings held by the elders of the village. In this regard, they organized an awareness meeting for the people. They conducted many progressive plays, exhibitions, and discussions. Even during the night, when Ravi had just joined the teaching profession, he returned to the village for this reason. Initially, comrade KAS tried to stop this opposition, but due to the situation escalating, he directly went to the field. To protect himself, he kept a revolver gun with him. I was always fearful of this. He kept the gun hidden from the eyes of the children.

At that time, Ravi's maternal uncle, Shanmugalingam Master, and other close relatives opposed this arrangement. During the ensuing scuffle, the gun fell from comrade KAS's waist. The situation had escalated so much that comrade KAS called the youth to retreat. It was not a matter unknown to comrades that he could reclaim the gun. Those who took the gun probably didn't have sufficient knowledge about it. As the trigger was pressed, a fragment struck a small boy nearby.

The police were informed, and they reported that someone had shot him. Understanding this, comrade KAS did not return home on Tuesday 19 July 1977 night. The youths—[S. Thevarajah](#), Dayalan, Ravi, and Yogeswaran—had all gathered at our home to meet comrade KAS. When I was preparing tea for them inside, the police surrounded our house with a guide. I will continue...

**I have written this above note through the voices of the youth with comrade KAS. and, based on my observations. The detailed note is provided below by [Nadesan Raveendran](#).**

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“1977 Elections and Our Boycott Actions – Their Reflections” by [Nadesan Raveendran](#)

The Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) faced the 1977 parliamentary elections, presenting the demand for a separate nation. At that time, our village's supporters faced issues regarding the Amman temple. Our village, previously regarded as

Amirthalingam's territory, faced significant turmoil during this critical time. They could not conduct even a small discussion because of the divisions among them.

While they were weak during this time, our party was actively working. Most of the youth in the village joined our youth association. Others also remained with our support stance. Many in the younger generation in the village agreed that we should organize a public rally to boycott the election. When the youth association made this decision, I was not present. I had just joined the teaching profession in [Punduloya](#).

When I returned to the village and met comrade KAS, he said, "The youth association decided there is no agreement with the party's Northern Provincial Committee regarding the boycott; please reconsider." At that time, I was the only party member representing our village. This issue was discussed in the Chankanai branch of our party. They had expressed that it was not a suitable time to hold the first public rally of our party in your village.

With these instructions, I again proposed calling a meeting for the youth association in our village. A large number of people were adamant that the public rally should be held on Tuesday 19 July 1977. Since a majority decision was made, the party did not intervene later. As the arrangements for the public rally were being made and the stage preparations were progressing, the confusion among the TULF members escalated, warning us that "blood would flow."

They all loved me dearly. However, we had ideological differences. When the situation worsened, Krishnadas and another comrade went to seek advice from comrade KAS. I went to Nitchamam to meet the party comrades in Chankanai.

With comrade [T. Tharmalingam](#) and a few other comrades, we discussed. We concluded that we should halt the arrangements and announce that the meeting would be postponed to another day. I returned to the meeting venue and explained the situation. Krishnadas shared what the conversation had been like with comrade KAS.

"We suggested you cancel the meeting, saying it would happen as anticipated; you were eager to hold it. Now, you must decide whether to retreat out of fear or not," comrade KAS stated, adding that our comrades felt that retreating would be wrong.

Many comrades were engaging with great determination in their work... The time for the meeting was approaching. Understanding that they would conduct the meeting without yielding to their threats, those rowdy relatives came in as drunken troublemakers, starting to instigate violence. The confrontation intensified. Our youth association comrades were successfully repelling their attacks.

I stood a little away from the public rally ground with a group; at the forefront of the confusion were my maternal uncle and another relative. They could not attack me, and as they were withdrawing, my attention was drawn to them. At that moment, comrade KAS and the Chankanai comrades arrived at the public rally ground.

While our comrades were positioned to overpower the enemies, they had no intention of engaging in the fight. However, in the confusion, the rowdy relatives seized the opportunity to wrestle them down, and the gun hidden under the belt fell to the ground. Understanding the situation, our comrades decided it was best not to stay there and retreated.

Reclaiming the fallen gun or attacking the enraged troublemakers was not a priority for the Chankanai comrades. Our only goal was to progress as Communists, advancing with our own strength. Later, fearing they would have to hand over the gun respectfully, they took it and gave it back to us.

Those who took the gun approached the local shop to operate it. It did not fire when they attempted to do so. "They brought a toy gun to play with," someone commented as they pressed the trigger, and the mechanism malfunctioned, sending pieces firing to the ground. A stone that flew from the ground hit a nearby child, Master Sinniah Poologam's hand, causing a bleeding injury.

They took the boy to the hospital, and reported that he had been injured due to our gunfire. We knew that a report had been made to the police. However, I did not believe they would connect the dots back to comrade KAS. We went to his house to discuss the matter with him. Based on prior experiences, he likely understood that he would be implicated in the report, so he did not come to his home.

We were uncertain, waiting for his return. Then, a jeep arrived. It was evident that capturing him was politically significant for the police. Five officers opened the door and asked, "Where is KAS? Who are you?" We replied that we were those who had come to see him.

"What's your name?" a police officer first asked Dayalan. He hesitated, appearing to take time as he casually answered, "R...a...m...n...than." By doing so, I understood he shouldn't disclose his real name. When I was asked, I replied, "Nadesan." Then, Thevar also gave a different name. Yogeswaran revealed his actual name. The fight took place when he had gone to fetch the comrades who were coming to the public rally from the bus. He must have thought that his name would not have been mentioned.

Immediately, an officer said, "This name is registered," and called Yogeswaran. Another added, "There are four people registered with KAS. We will take all four." As they prepared to board the jeep, a villager who had been called to point the way to our house indicated to us, saying, "These are the people."

Once taken to the police station, they began to question us, starting with me, "What is your name?" They pretended to threaten me, but instead sought clarification. I stated, "Oh, my full name is [Nadesan Raveendran](#)." I thought that revealing my full name was the reason I wasn't harmed. Later, I realized that when we were apprehended, the family members of comrade KAS had gone to nearby Mr. V. Rajsundaram Sir's house and told him about the situation. Because of his recommendation, we avoided being attacked.

The four of us were detained for more than a week in [Jaffna Fort Jail](#) and released on bail before [Mallakam](#) Magistrate Court on 27 July 1977. During the interim period, the election was held in Sri Lanka on 21 July 1977, and the four of us who were arrested, whose votes were intended to contribute to boycotting, were being drawn into the electoral reckoning. The TULF members had seemingly altered our votes through impersonation to their candidate.

We remained in custody for a week until we were released on bail, after which comrade KAS had also gone into hiding. The report from the doctor stated that the boy, Master Sinniah Poologam, had sustained injuries not from gunfire. Additionally, since they had not received sufficient evidence to testify against us regarding the gun being "respectfully" returned to the Chankanai comrades, the case was dismissed after a year-long delay.

In this incident, comrade KAS and the Chankanai comrades had ensured that we did not abandon our fight alone; if they had engaged in battle that day, our village drinking community would have been left with nothing. They wouldn't even have attempted to make it a routine. By treating our retreat as a weakness, the Tamil Eelam Movement had previously lodged complaints against us in the "Sri Lanka Police."

With the fury subsiding, we began to navigate our lives, and as days passed, the awareness that we could joke around with the Chankanai comrades became apparent to the warriors of our village. The comrades respectfully returned the gun they had given us, allowing us to continue our experiences with confidence.

I have repeatedly stated to many people in various circumstances that "the reason I could continue to thrive as a Communist and survive is due to the comrades from Nitchamam and Chankanai !"

Salutations to Nitchamam! - [Nadesan Raveendran](#)

## 27. Fourth World Tamil Research Conference -Written on28 August, 2020

The [Fourth World Tamil Research Conference held in Jaffna](#), Sri Lanka, was made possible through the efforts of the separatist leader. The conference was initially scheduled to take place in Sri Lanka in 1972. However, when the United Front, a socialist coalition, came to power in 1970, the Sri Lanka Progressive Writers' Association aimed to organize the Tamil Research Conference by bringing together those in power who had re-emerged. Yet, this plan fell through. Government representatives planned to hold the conference in Colombo. However, despite strong opposition from the government, a committee led by Professor [S. Vithiyandanan](#) decided to host the conference in Jaffna in 1974. A large number of people attended from every village. Scholars from Tamil Nadu and our country participated, along with researchers from countries like Singapore and Malaysia.

I was filled with eagerness to take my students to see the conference. During those days, comrade KAS had a lot of political work to do, so he told me to take the children along with the students. Accordingly, we all set off for the final day's event. Due to the heavy crowd on the bus from Karainagar to Chankanai , we got off at the [Ponnaalai](#) junction and took a bus to Jaffna from there.

That day, it was drizzling lightly. To avoid the rain, we took shelter in a sari shop. After a short while, we heard a loud explosion, similar to a bomb blast, and saw crowds running in all directions. There seemed to have been a major incident. I felt a heavy responsibility to ensure that all those children were handed over safely to their guardians. The shopkeepers, known for their long-standing business under the name 'Ragumania,' arranged for a lorry for us. My eldest son was just a small child at the age of eleven plus years.

Some tried to help the lorry driver, but their conversations and demeanor were not proper, leading us to complain. Because of this, we stopped them and boarded the vehicle with two helpers, and we all reached the village together. We felt relieved to hand over each child to their guardians.

The next day, the newspaper reported that “due to the collapse of an electric pole and the trampling by crowds, eleven participants in the conference died due to various actions, including police gunfire.” Comrade KAS mentioned that the name of a student from our neighborhood, Kesavaraja, was included in that report. We froze in shock upon reading it. He was a very mischievous boy. Mothers in the village wailed as they mourned, believing they had lost their own children.

The children from the Tholpuram Middle School were recognized for their talent and good character. Several students who had worked at places like the Valadi Middle School and the Ghandi Magan Memorial Center, where I had worked a few months ago, would often visit us, unable to forget us. Among them, some are living abroad, while others like the Nagapuri Kovil families, Bhagavathi Chellar, Pushparani Muthukumar, Valliammal Chelathurai, Sriraanjani Ramamoorthy, Sothimani Kathirvel, Pavalamalai Murugesu, Ponmalar, Mahalakshmi Vaithilingam, Thillainayaki, Sakunthala sisters, Selvanayaki, Arundhavanayaki, Saraswathi Ayyadurai, Satgunavalli, N. Saraswathi, and N. Annam (this child was unjustly shot during the IPKF period), Shanthanayaki, Ranjidevan, and Susheela Thavaraasa, along with a few others, continue to be notable figures in education and cultural sectors even today.

Among my former students, two have passed away. Nine are living abroad. Among those who have remained as family friends since then are the late Mr. Sivapragasam and Annavoodi's children: [Vijayalakshmi](#), Vijayakumar, Vijayarani (Ponnar Teacher), Vijayamala, Vijayaranjani, grandchildren Ambika, Kannan, Dr. Tharani, all of whom share deep love and affection for our family.

Mr. S. Vijayakumar is known throughout the Jaffna district for his willingness to do all electrical works by receiving phone calls from others. His son has recently excelled in the G.C.E. A/L exams, bringing us great pride. Among those who flourished as students are the Nagapuri Kovalar family and the Ranjini family, who continue to thrive in friendship.

In the late 1970s, Ms. [Vijayalakshmi Sivapragasam](#) left for [Singapore](#) in search of work, driven by the hopes of bettering her life and supporting her family. Her journey was not just about earning a living but also about carrying the love and warmth of home with her, even across the seas. When she returned, she brought with her a simple yet deeply meaningful gift for Rasan—a shirt. It wasn't just a piece of clothing; it was a symbol of her love, her sacrifices, and the bond that distance couldn't weaken. For young Rasan, that shirt was more than just fabric. It became his treasure, a prized possession he wore with pride and joy.

It was the only valuable shirt he owned, and he wore it everywhere—so often that, over time, it began to show signs of wear. Yet, even as it frayed and faded, it remained a testament to his gratitude and the significance of [Vijayalakshmi](#)'s thoughtful gift. This memory of the shirt stands as a poignant reminder of the love that binds families, the sacrifices we make for one another, and the joy found in even the simplest of gifts.

The business owners of the technical company "Maples," Krishna S. Raghulingam and Chandrika Raghulingam, and their children, Dr. Vishnupriya and Aravindhan, are also exemplary individuals. Those born and raised in Tholpuram have contributed significantly to creating enduring historical events and activities in their birthplace. Among them are Meesai Narayanan, the master builder of the Karainagar Koval property, and the late Mr. Sellaiya, known for importing screens from India and promoting historically significant drama, music, and theater performances.

In addition to his teaching duties, Mr. [K. Chinnathurai](#), the retired teacher, also used to conduct free lessons for local students in his home, and every Friday, he would perform puja at the Sri Chinnamman Temple, reciting the [Thiruvasaki](#) and [Thevaram](#). He served as a spiritual leader with dedication.

Another noteworthy figure is Mr. Murugaiya, known for his ability to perform in dramas from a young age, who gathered the village youth and trained them to perform historical plays in front of audiences in the temple grounds. He was a well-respected teacher, and he had his fair share of experiences with me.

The play "Kundhiyin Selvan," portion from [Mahabharatha](#) directed by him, was performed one [Shivaratri](#) night at the Sri Chinnamman Temple. When the mother let her child Karna float down the river in a basket, the heart-wrenching words she uttered resonated deeply within us. During that period, the sorrowful songs rising from Murugaiya's performance echoed with great emotion. He is a figure remembered fondly by many.

Among his companions is M. Sadacharam. Mr. Murugiah has been actively involved in showcasing his talent wherever he has gone, even after leaving his native land to live in Montreal, Canada. Local governors have expressed their admiration for him, with his achievements appearing in newspapers.

Likewise, his wife, Mrs. Visakapoosani, is very talented. Her siblings, along with their talents, include Banker Kugapoosani, a teacher (whose name I have forgotten), Thulasi, Chailoli Pavan Kandiah, and Gomathi. They have all excelled in education and various disciplines. Similarly, the children of Murugiah and Visakapoosani have excelled in education, music, dance, science, and mridangam.

Their eldest son, who has received a scholarship to study in Russia, is Mr. [Murugiah Narayana Moorthy](#), who has worked in various capacities, including the Singapore National library and broadcasting service after studying in Russia and Canada.

Once, during my time in Singapore, he successfully organized an event called "Kaalachakra" at the [Singapore National library](#). It was a moment of great pride for me to see him translate and convey a Russian language lecture delivered by a visiting

Russian professor into Tamil. His sister and brother also continue to shine in education and arts.

The elder sister, Jagadambikai Krubanandamoorthy, Lalithambikai (in Canada), Sharathambikai (in Germany), and Visagathasan (in Canada), have all made their mark in the fields of music and dance. Their children continue to contribute to history in meaningful ways.

Every day, Mrs. Kugapoosani Ramalingam, a retired banker, shares stories on social media that resonate with our experiences. A few days ago, she recounted our Sinhala learning time with [Sundaram](#) and Sandadiyar from the late Dr. Thambiah, who translated the [Thirukkural](#) into Sinhala, showcasing the importance of cultural preservation.

The master builder Meesai Narayanan, who constructed the house for Karainagar's Koval, is also remembered fondly. Through his lineage, we have seen remarkable individuals like Sarva Aishwaryam, who was born as a daughter of Mr. Sellaiya and later became the life partner of Mr. [K. Chinnathurai](#) Master.

Their children, including Nandapalan, Nandavathi alias Mathi, Latha, and Jayavar, are well-respected in the community. Tragically, Nandapalan, an excellent mechanic and driver, was unjustly killed by armed assailants.

I must talk about Nandavathi alias Mathi who is living in [Kandy](#). In 1993, when Rasan invited Keerthy and me to visit him in Singapore, we were faced with the daunting reality of not having enough money for flight tickets. With Keerthy still studying and all our jewelry already pledged in pawnshops, the situation felt impossible. It was then that Mathi stepped in with an extraordinary gesture of generosity. Without hesitation, she lent us her own jewelry so we could secure the funds needed. Her selflessness gave us the means to make the journey, fulfilling Rasan's wish to have us by his side. True to his word, Rasan later sent money to retrieve Mathi's jewelry, ensuring her kindness was honored and repaid.

Ms. Mathi's generosity did not end there. On 4 March 1994, when my granddaughter, Dr. [Shriranshini Satheakeerthy](#), was born at the [Peradeniya Teaching Hospital](#), Mathi was the first to hold her and feed her water. It was a moment of profound love and care,

symbolizing Mathi's unwavering presence in our lives during both joyous and trying times. Her actions are a testament to the power of kindness and the strength of the bonds we share with those who go above and beyond to support us. Mathi will forever be a cherished part of our family's story, her selflessness acts a reminder of the love that sustains us.

The old tales also bring forth the memory of Mr. Kanda, a healer who helped villagers recover from illnesses. His descendants, such as Yogeswaran and his sister Goma, have continued to uphold the family's legacy.

The stories and legacies of our community continue to flourish. While our connections have evolved, the essence of our shared experiences remains vibrant. The bonds we have forged through education, culture, and support endure, enriching our lives and the lives of future generations.

To this day they come and see me as 'Teacher'... Mr. Nataraja, the son of Krishnar Master, whom we fondly call Thiaku Vathiyar, had requested many times to come and address the [Tholpuram Sarvodayam organization](#) of which he is the head. I associate myself with the people of that town for a few years. Those students treated me as their relation. They still interact today. My granddaughter [Dr. Subhara Raveendran](#) started her childhood education at Sarvodaya which is very close to our Sathiamanai. I used to carry her there on weekdays. The sarvodaya relationship that started from then continues even today.

In the 'Pokkanni' public area, we have organized sports events, provided primary education through the Sarvodaya movement, facilitated community engagement, and offered music lessons, with everyone working together harmoniously. The social structure and moral values of this village are truly remarkable! Continuation to Follow...

## **28. Son's 'Sirupori' Signature Magazine -Written on 9 September, 2020**

I remember the year we lived in Tholpuram was 1975. I don't recall the exact date in the month of Aadi (July 2). One evening, our neighbors informed us that "the Mayor of

Jaffna, Mr. [Alfred Duraiappa](#), was shot and killed in front of the Varadaraja Perumal Temple in Ponnalai." The next morning, the newspaper reported that "as usual, on Sundays, the Jaffna Mayor would come to the Vishnu temple in Ponnalai for worship, but armed youths shot him dead. The police are conducting an investigation." At that time, I was unaware that there might be a connection with [Sundaram](#) and Chandathiyar, who were close to my husband. The J.V.P. was instigating unrest in the south while the north was experiencing this turmoil, which left my mind troubled.

By the end of 1975, we had gradually settled into this Sathiamanai. My front door neighbor, who was known as Mr. Kandiah Nagarasa alias Selvam, helped transport our household items in two trips using his bullock cart. Our Sathiamanai was located in a very narrow lane. My father's friend, known as Mr. "Appachiyar", lived with some comfort but was later afflicted by illness, leaving him in poverty. The wooden sculptures on the front porch of his big square house were made by my father. After Mr. Appachiyar passed away, when his second daughter was to be married, my father purchased this land for me. I have gathered a separate chapter on the history of Sathiamanai and will write about it later.

While Sathiamanai was still a hut, my father did a second milk boil for us to move in. Comrade KAS noticed that "Neerttu" (pumpkins) was hanging there at the corner from the roof. Upon seeing it, comrade KAS cut it down with a stick and threw it down. When I asked, "Why did you do this?" he replied, "This is all superstitious nonsense." This action caused my father great distress. "It won't allow any of that cursed near the houses we build. No homeowner would allow it to be cut and thrown away. What kind of nonsense is this?" my father lamented.

Consequently, a few days later, I found it difficult to walk and had to stay in the [Moolai hospital](#) for treatment. "You are fighting with a man whose work has put you in this condition," said my father worriedly. During this time, my elder son, Rasan, built a small hut where he could study. Every day, my comrade KAS would read the Island newspaper and wanted Rasan to translate it into Tamil. Rasan and Keerthy would fetch water for the torn coconut and flour, and my daughter Buby was placed in the girls' hostel at the Pandateruppu College due to her academic success. We could hardly bear a few days' of her separation from us. To ensure that our daughter would grow with a unique character, we decided to place her in the hostel. Even though we were at a distance, we all mourn together at home.

Days went by, and the 1977 elections arrived. It was a time when the Leftist Communist Party boycotted the elections. When the elections came, it was like a wedding in the northern Tamil community, filled with enthusiasm as they worked day and night on campaign activities, posting election notices on walls, organizing speakers for public rallies, and canvassing door to door. Months passed. In the last election in the Vattukottai constituency, Mr. Amirthalingam was defeated by Dr. [A. Thiyagaraja](#). However, in the 1977 elections, Mr. Thirunavukkarasar won with 71% of the votes. Mr.V. Rajasundaram, who lived near our house, also asked for votes. He received only 873 votes. Even today, it is said in the village that the number of people who dined at his house was more than the number of votes he received.

This election helped release our youths from jail and ensured that comrade KAS. was not imprisoned. Although I felt immense gratitude for that, I too joined in boycotting that election. Since I lived in Karainagar, I had known Dr. [A. Thiyagaraja](#), who was a very good honest man, but he suffered a crushing defeat. My elder son Rasan gradually began writing some political articles. He started a donation box in his hut to raise funds for the party's newspaper 'Tholilali'. He rallied the friends who visited our house and conducted a march around Sathiamanai. Comrade KAS, myself, Ravi, Devar, Chandran, Dayalan, Kruthi, Velmurugan, Surendran Sundaralingam, Buby, and Keerthy, along with many others, marched shouting slogans. Due to the poverty of the time, there were no means to capture photographs.

Many of them, except for comrade KAS and my elder son Rasan, are still around today. They must share this experience. Comrade KAS. nurtured our children in such a way that all three of them could point out every country on the world map. My elder son Rasan speaks and writes about the qualities of these places and their political situation. Suddenly, he developed the desire to start a handwritten signature magazine. That is "[Sirupori](#)." I will continue with that.

29. Office of the Magazine at Sathiamanai -Written on 16  
September, 2020

We decided to settle permanently in Chulipuram Sathiamanai from Tholpuram. If there is land to build a house, we can obtain a government loan. However, they will deduct from the salary every month. If we were to do some gardening, we could purchase a water pump at a subsidized rate. Comrade Markandar from Nitchamam needed one. I went, signed the loan collateral bond papers, and bought it for him. His brother-in-law is comrade [S. Palani](#). I will refer to him as my brother. He showed love and concern for me and the children after comrade Nallappu. Comrade [S. Palani](#) cut the palmerah trees from comrade Markandar yard and brought them for Sathiamanai roof. Comrade S. Palani's family played a pivotal role in Marxist-Leninist activism, with every member actively involved in the struggle for justice in Jaffna. His brothers, including Comrades [S. Rasathurai](#), S. Sinnathurai, and S. Veerawagu, were key contributors to the movement. Two brothers, S. Nallathambi alias Sinrasu and Balasingam, now living abroad, were also field fighters. Another brother comrade, [S. Thuraisingham](#) of the [New Democratic Marxist-Leninist Party](#), was abducted on 11 January 1991 and murdered by LTTE. Comrade [S. Palani](#) lost his youth in jails and his family's sacrifices, including abduction, imprisonment, exile, and loss of life, underline their deep commitment to the cause of equality and justice.

To build a house, we needed a loan to buy cement and sand. At that time, comrade KAS asked the children, "What should the house Sathiamanai look like?" The children suggested various shapes and names. My elder son Rasan suggested the name 'Sathiamanai' earlier and now he came up with a simple plan: three small rooms and a porch.

At this point, we could build only one room. We decided to start construction based on Rasan's design. We had to break stones from the nearby place for construction. We could manage the costs of buying the gravel this way. We started breaking stones for 'Sathiamanai.'

Immediately after the 1977 elections, Comrade [K.Suppiah](#) took Keerthy with him to Hatton, where he was working full-time with the New Red Flag trade union. On 18 August 1977, widespread [rioting against Tamils erupted](#), orchestrated by UNP thugs. Trapped in Hatton during the violence, they sought refuge at the home of [Dr. Radha Thabirajah](#) for their safety. After the riots subsided, Keerthy returned home safely with Ravi, but he had missed nearly two months of school as a result of the unrest.

However, it was only in the hut that the procedure took place. Rasan built a small hut with a thatched roof and called it 'Koddil' (meaning 'Little Hut'). It contained a small table, a bench, and a donation box for the party magazine 'Thozhilali' (Worker). One

day, he organized a meeting to start a 'Readers Circle' as "*Thozhilali Vasakar Vattam*" and publish a handwritten magazine. Friends Ravi, Chandran, Devar, Kruthi, Dayalan, Suresh, Buby, Keerthy, and I, along with comrade KAS, attended. There was a disagreement about the name. In the end, the name '[Sirupori](#)' (meaning 'Mini Spark') suggested by my elder son Rasan was approved. [Chairman Mao](#) had explained the impact of this, "A small spark can create a huge forest fire."

Buby and the other members were selected as the magazine editors. From that day forward, '[Sirupori](#)' was published every month, just like 'Thozhilali.' Kruthi drew the front cover illustrations, while Chandran wrote poetry, and Ravi contributed short stories, with articles written by Rasan as well.

By 1977, my daughter Buby had reached the appropriate age. I had to wrap her in cloth and send her to school quickly. That day, I had an accounting audit at the station. It was a challenging situation for me as I couldn't stand with my daughter. My sister had taken leave from college to come and help. Many relatives gathered at the house, creating a commotion. My sister was trying to prepare a traditional meal with curry while also cooking an eggplant dish in the clay oven. My daughter, who was accustomed to simpler foods, refused to eat anything, saying she didn't want anything but coffee.

They shared a special dish called 'Pongal' made with boiled rice, a lot of coconut milk, and offered it to everyone at home and in the neighborhood. I returned home just in time. On the fifth day, after preparing the milk, we were getting ready to send her to school. During this time, our grandmother visited and engaged me in all sorts of stories, poems, and paintings. Some friends and a few relatives, as well as six of our teachers, came to visit. Some party comrades, including K. Daniel, [S.T.N. Nagaratnam I. Tharmalingam](#) (Dharmu), and M.G.M Gunam from Karainagar, along with our dear Amamma (Mrs. Nagaratnam Jagannathan), came with garlands made of flowers and adorned the child.

The 'Aalathi' (traditional ceremony) also went splendidly. [Mrs. Paripooranam Rajasundaram \(Pari Aunty\)](#) came to bless Buby. Pari Aunty was considered to be the best elite of our village. My sister's family and my aunt's daughter's family were present. All my students came too. At lunchtime, one of our teachers said, "I need to rush home," and left. It was only after she left that we learned, "There is a woman from Nitchamam in her land picking chilies as paid labor. If the land owner eats with labor, what will happen to her honor?" she said after leaving.

Sister Pushpam was also a relative of that teacher but they didn't delve into what caste the visitors belonged to. That one person's actions stayed with me for a long time. I thought about how the majority Sinhalese people, often said to treat other Tamils with contempt, are really so good. I only saw love when they came home. When I mentioned this to my comrade, he said, "You have only seen our comrades. Hierarchy exists everywhere. We are trying to change this. When everyone else joins us then only this can be resolved," he said. I will continue...

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### 30. "Kandan Karunai" Play -Written on 23 September, 2020

Although it was written by N. K. Raghunathan, the contribution of young Padmanathan and the art group 'Amabalathadikals' (Outdoor dancers) in staging the play "Kandan Karunai" in various villages is noteworthy. "Kandan Karunai" was a Thaalalayam drama that was staged multiple times. It was designed as an awareness campaign against caste oppression. The performances by comrades, the music, and the stage setting evoked emotions akin to watching a movie, raising social awareness among the people.

We traveled to many places where it was staged. The children would perform in homes. When it was held in [Nelliady](#), we stayed at comrade Sivagnanam's house, who was a Railway Station Master. At that time, my elder son Rasan had an eczema allergy on his leg, causing wounds all over. Comrade Sivagnanam's mother prepared an oil for him, which helped heal his condition.

Those relationships continued even through many divisions. [Nelliady](#) comrades Sivagnanam, Sivarasa, Bhaskaran, and Sivam are remembered fondly to this day.

In 1975, comrade KAS, Sinhala comrade Gandhi Abeysekera, comrade [S.K. Senthilvel](#), and Sinhala comrade Ratnayake visited China. Wherever they went, comrade KAS's letters were a source of knowledge and social concern. He would start reading every day early in the morning, and he always had a small notebook or magazine in hand. Like him, my elder son Rasan also had a keen interest in reading and writing.

During the visit of comrades [Gandhi Abeysekera](#), [S.K. Senthivel](#), and [Ratnayake to the People's Republic of China in 1975](#), comrade [N. Shanmugathan](#) visited us with Radha when we lived in Sathiamanai hut. He asked, "Oh! Is this the house built by comrade KAS?" There was affection and compassion in his words. It had been five years since I had seen Radha after her marriage. After so long, she was joyful to see the children. All three had worked hard to build this house, and it showed. They had lost their childhood innocence due to the intense situations they faced.

Days passed quickly, and once again, a rift developed within the party. This affected not just me but everyone at home profoundly. I presumed it was merely a disagreement about principles. I thought, "Surely, comrades must have read all the books about disagreements..." My heart sank at that thought. Comrade KAS was tirelessly involved as usual. I really didn't ask him about it. I had read that a comrade [K. Balathandayutham](#) and his wife had parted ways due to ideological disagreements within the party in India. I thought it wouldn't be right to burden my comrade KAS with more difficulties. However, my elder son had a keen understanding of everything. He would tell me some things. Comrades like S.K. Senthivel, K. Thanikasalam, [S. Navaratnam](#), Vanniyasingham, [K. Suppiah](#) (New Red Flag Trade Union). Comrades from Nitchamam, and Kalaiyadi would come and go. Initially, I had no information about the Sinhala comrades.

During this period, comrade [S.K. Senthivel](#) married his sister-in-law. A big celebration was organized by an engineer who was a relative of his, with a large hall built for the occasion. We stayed at their house and returned home the next day. To forget the pain of party separation, I received a transfer letter from the Government to hand over Tholpuram Weaving Center and takeover the Moolai Weaving Center. I took over the responsibilities of the center under Mrs. Kamala Mahalingam.

Each time I went to a new center, I faced the challenge of nurturing and bringing together the students, only to be transferred again. I will continue...

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## 31. The Wonders of a Meaningful Life -Written on 2 October, 2020

Comrade KAS tirelessly worked to build and nurture the [new party](#). Sinhala comrades were also involved, with some coming from Southern Lanka. The “Thozhilali” newspaper had ceased, but the “Pattali” newspaper emerged. Subsequently, the “*Thozhilali Vasakar Vattam*” was renamed as “*Pattali Vasakar Vattam*” by my elder son.

For the first time, in 1978, the Communist Party of Sri Lanka (Left) was established. Comrade [K.A. Subramaniam](#) was elected as the General Secretary. The party grew by uniting old comrades across not only the Northern Province but also various parts of Sri Lanka, with many new comrades committed to political and literary pursuits. The National Arts and Literary Council flourished, and its Tamil magazine, “[Thayaham](#),” began to emerge again, connecting progressive writers. The editor, comrade K. Thanigasalam, worked closely with comrade KAS to write editorials for it. Initially, the party started running first called 'Patali' and later 'Sempathakai' newspapers. Comrade KAS sought assistance for edits and proofreading from both me and my elder son.

The party’s “Vasantham” bookshop also struggled with many issues. The bookshop was located in the building of writer K. Daniel along Muneswaran Road Jaffna. In this regard, many letters from writer Daniel were sent to comrade KAS. Some of these letters still exist. This caused a lot of distress for him. At one point, Marxist books and progressive works were thrown out onto the street. They floated in the rainwater all night long. This act raised questions about the value and affection I held for writer Daniel. He had given us two silver pots for our wedding. Those were the most valuable items we possessed. However, I was hesitant to use them after this incident. This is the truth. Yet, I didn’t share any of this with anyone.

At the same time, to help with stencil typing for Roneo printing, comrade Madhakal Kandasamy donated a typewriter to the party when he returned from [Radio Peking](#). For our generations, the Roneo machine provided copying technology as photocopiers were yet to be invented. Stencil duplication was a low-cost printing method that worked by forcing ink through waxed-paper stencils onto target paper.

At that time, the party faced many challenges, but comrades who didn’t give up operated with confidence. Ethnic hatred and Tamil sentiments were fueled among the people. The party grew by speaking of nationalism. Meetings, processions, and literary gatherings continued. Encouragement and guidance from intellectuals like [poet E. Murugaiyan](#), [A.J. Kanagaratna](#), Sriramanokaran, Petroleum Kathirvelu (father of

Minister [Douglas Devananda](#)), and professors [K. Kailasapathy](#), [S. Thillainathan](#), [M.A. Nuhman](#), and [S. Mounaguru](#), [S. Sivasekaram](#) played a vital role.

After the passing of comrade KAS, at its second national congress in 1991, the party changed its name to “New Democratic Party.” Later, in June 2010, at the 5th All-Sri Lanka Congress held in Colombo, it became the “[New Democratic Marxist Leninist Party](#).” Today, comrade C.K. Senthivel serves as its General Secretary.

For the past forty years, our party has fought and worked with the feeling that every individual should overcome inequalities to achieve their basic rights. I have witnessed those who have a thirst for knowledge and a desire to live as role models in my homeland. This has led me to understand that a life devoid of extravagance and accompanied by genuine support for others is indeed a profound blessing.

From the day I began my studies in my birthplace, I realized the importance of contributing positively to society. When I looked back at how comrade KAS lived after losing his job, I pondered whether I could support a single individual, a family, a community, or a nation in this journey. This led me to recognize the incredible impact of those who dedicate themselves selflessly.

In our village, there was a notable individual in our village named N. Senathirajah, who published wonderful new ideas under the title “*Desa Oozhiyin*” ( *Servant of the Nation*). He would paste these writings on walls of colleges and establishments like the Post Office etc. However, many would pass by, saying, “What a fool who doesn’t know how to live.”

This leads us to understand the truth behind the saying, “A solitary tree does not make a forest.” A single individual, along with their family and loved ones, naturally lives as part of society. When one individual ventures out for social service, the world often mocks them as “a fool who doesn’t know how to live.”

From the historical books we read, we see that those who impart valuable ideas and awaken societal consciousness often face poverty, illness, suffering, and challenges in their personal lives. Throughout their lifetime, they might not be able to advance these goals. Out of a hundred thousand, one may use their ancestors' wealth for social

transformation. Some, with their spouses' cooperation, engage in a certain level of good deeds. Others live peacefully, believing “as long as I have enough for my family, I won't bother anyone.”

Thus, the lives of people born into this world take many forms. To be continued...

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## 32. The Political Shift of My Eldest Son -Written on 23 October, 2020

The English newspaper "[Red Banner](#)" and the Tamil newspaper "Sembathagai" began to be published properly. Comrade KAS was actively involved in these tasks and in bringing the party to the people. He would rise early at four in the morning to write. Frequent letter exchanges took place. In [1979, comrades K. Thanikasalam \(editor of the magazine "Thayaham"\) and KAS visited the People's Republic of China](#). Wherever he went, the letters written by comrade KAS stirred global awareness and social consciousness.

Comrade K.A. Subramaniam wrote to me about their journey to [Kunming](#) in Yunnan Province, China, near the Vietnam border, from December 1 to 6, 1979. “Mani- (For me Valliammai), We stayed in Kunming, a city in the Yunnan Province of China, on the outskirts of Vietnam. You know the war that occurred here at the [China-Vietnam border](#), right? We visited several places. One-third of the population in this province belongs to 22 ethnic minority groups. There are many opportunities to learn here. This is where the largest stone forest in the world is located, similar to one in [Italy](#) but much smaller. Daily, thousands of people, including foreigners, come to enjoy it. It is filled with natural resources, various gardens, and ancient art represented in buildings and paintings, with a variety of grains, rice, and fruits.”

In 1980, my sister Lakshmipillai moved to [Nigeria](#) with her 3 children, where her husband was studying. My brother married on his own in 1974 in [Trincomalee](#) and had been working there. My parents wished to maintain the house they built, so they stayed there. My parents would occasionally visit us at Sathiamanai. My children would take care of their needs. Particularly, my younger son Keerthy stayed with them. After seven

months, my sister returned to Sri Lanka with her family at the time of my father's passing. My mother also passed away seven days later.

I often wept when listening to my mother recounting the story of Nalayini who is said to have even carried the disabled husband in a basket to a prostitute's house when he wanted to visit her. My mother endured everything for my father in her life. My beautiful, educated mother not only lost her sense of self in her final days but also her awareness. These memories have lingered in my mind. I would feel ashamed when my children looked after me. I was not like that. The limited economic resources, lack of relationships, and the political backdrop altered my life. I noted this in the earlier chapters.

After completing the final ceremonies for my father and mother, sister and brother returned to their respective homes. Both Rasan and Keerthy would light lamps and pray at the home where my father and mother lived. At Sathiamanai, we could only manage to build a one-room house with loans. The salary began to decrease. If we had electricity in the house, we could install a motor for the children's education and the garden. Mr. [V. Rajasundaram](#) Master next door provided us free of cost with the connection for two electric bulbs to illuminate the place. For us to connect to electricity, we would need to install five posts, which would require money for the connection. I pawned my '*Thali*' at the bank to get the connection. We had nothing else. I had a few jewels belonging to my sister. With the hope of recovering them when my sister returned, I pawned her '*Thali*' without asking for her permission. By installing the motor, we could produce coconuts, papayas, mangoes, bananas, and various vegetables, and we believed we could recover the jewels.

The joy of "the children are studying" was immense. My daughter, after achieving excellent marks in the fifth-grade scholarship examination at the Pandateruppu Women's College, had the opportunity to stay in the hostel. Over time, due to some hygiene issues in the hostel, she returned to study from home. When the principal collected a certain amount for her studies, she received it. With that money, Buby delightedly presented a blue bicycle to her father, comrade KAS. Keerthy had moved from Chulipuram Victoria College to Tellippalai Mahajana College with the help from comrade KAS's brother Mr. [A. Ilangai Nayagam](#).

The neighbors praised, "What's happening to you, Teacher! Is it good fortune? Rasan will go to University next year. Buby is a scholar. It seems Keerthy is going to get a

scholarship.” They would also quote, “A boy’s poverty lasts only till he is ten.” But the earth was not forgiving.

My eldest son began to shift his political perspective. I was unaware of this. When liberation fighters sought political advice from comrade KAS, he would solely listen and mingle with them. I viewed him as just a small boy. He, who had excelled in the NCGE (National Certificate General Education), began to come home late occasionally, and he seemed to be losing interest in his higher education in the biology field. His friend, Dr Bhavani Gnanachandramurthy, joined the medical faculty.

But... Rasan! The neighbor, Mr. [V. Rajasundaram](#) Master's son Paran, remarked, “If you had let him take Political Science, he would have become a brilliant student, just like his father , always speaking about politics.” Indeed!

While Rasan was in the seventh grade, he started a handwritten newspaper called “[Sirupori](#).” Krishna Dasan would draw its cover. I had mentioned this earlier. The newspaper included writings about the situations in India, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, China, and Russia. If my husband and I had been school teachers, we could have guided his studies. Many of those who served as school teachers are always attentive to their children’s futures. Those who work in remote locations or engage in other activities to support their families often find that their lives are dictated by their circumstances.

Whenever I went out to work, I heard that friends like Balamortay Sivam Gandhiyam Santathiyar, [Sundaram](#) Sivasanmugamurthy and others from [PLOTE](#) came to visit Rasan. In a house like ours, two houses down, Manonmani Teacher's friends would gather to chat.

I only learned these details later. I was busy with my work, and comrade KAS was preoccupied with party duties. Moreover, the riots of 1981 began... My period of trials was just beginning. To be continued...

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### 33. Sundaram was shot dead by LTTE -Written on 31 October, 2020

National political sentiments were being fractured along ethnic lines and politicized. Small incidents, searches, and arrests occurred frequently. The TULF members held an election campaign meeting for the district council at the Jaffna Nachchimar temple. During this time, police officers on duty became targets of gunfire, resulting in the deaths of two individuals. Following this, on the night of May 31, 1981, in the early stages of the violence, major markets, commercial establishments, the 'Eelanadu' newspaper office, and the public library in Jaffna were completely set ablaze. The destruction extended to Chunnakam and KKS. Over seventy thousand rare books were burned in the Jaffna Public library. Dr. [A. Thiyagaraja](#), who was a very good honest man, was also killed a few days before by the Tamil militants. Our comrades actively protested against this state violence and also condemned the political assassination of Dr. [A. Thiyagaraja](#).

For three months, I took leave from work to care for my father and mother, who were both unwell and eventually passed away. I resumed work afterward, but my focus on the children diminished. They, too, suffered from declining health, and so did my comrade KAS. Government employees went on strike and had stopped calling for work. As a loan was being deducted monthly at the rate of Rs. 80 from my salary, I felt that I had fallen into a significant predicament. The income from coconut trees I had planted earlier aided me in managing this situation.

In Sri Lanka, farmers engaged in food production were exerting significant effort in growing tobacco, onions, and chilies, earning the Northern Province the title of “wealthy province.” Among government employees, those earning Rs. 300 lived in families without any other source of income, caught in the dilemma of “neither asking for alms nor accepting alms.”

Building our Sathiamanai house was not just a physical task—it was a testament to our resilience and resourcefulness in the face of challenges. With limited means, we took it step by step, using whatever resources were available to make progress.

The roof was put together with cheaply available Asbestos sheets, while the windows were temporarily covered with empty conical bags, a creative solution that shielded us from the elements. Though the house stood without a main door for some time, it

became a home—a space filled with warmth, determination, and the will to persevere. Every brick laid, every corner built was a labor of love and hope. It wasn't perfect, but it was ours—a symbol of what we could achieve together, even in the hardest times.

Gradually, as circumstances improved, so did the house. What started as a humble structure transformed into a place where memories were made, challenges were overcome, and life was lived fully. The Sathiamanai house remains a powerful reminder that strength and perseverance can turn even the simplest of beginnings into something extraordinary.

In this context, my brother Mr. A. Ponniah faced an unexpected and troubling urinary issue while reading Masters Degree in the [University of Jaffna](#) that he couldn't comprehend. When he was examined at the Jaffna Teaching Hospital, it was determined that “the spinal cord in the lumbar region had been damaged, resulting in this issue.” Immediate surgery was required, and arrangements had to be made for blood donors. Consequently, our entire family had to rally together, leading to a four-hour operation. A catheter was inserted, and he remained in the hospital for two weeks before returning home. During this time, I took leave from work to care for him. He continues to mention this situation to this day. My sister-in-law, who was employed in Trincomalee, would visit on weekends.

[I recall a photograph which was taken in 1981 at the front of the entrance to the 'Sathiamanai' which had no doors.](#) My eldest son Sathiarajan, also known as 'Meera Master' of PLOTE with the eldest son of my brother, Ponniah Lambotharan, who was born on 06 Jan 1974 and joined LTTE as 'Viji' in 1988 at the age of 14 years and my comrade K.A. Subramaniam. Later all 3 had different political ideologies and passed away now. Early 1990 IPKF was preparing to leave Trincomalee, with its allied groups preparing to decamp with them. That was the situation at the camp in Uppuveli. The camp had a number of cadres who had caught a debilitating tropical infection and were convalescing. The LTTE attackers came by sea including our child Lambotharan (Viji). Hardly meeting any resistance LTTE killed over ten members groaning in sickness, loaded the captured weapons into boats and set off. One of the heavily laden boats capsized - it being the north-east monsoon - and about 22 LTTE men were drowned and then killed by IPKF. Only two senior persons survived and our beloved child Lambotharan was killed on 7 February 1990 in Uppuveli seashore by IPKF at the age of 16. I looked after him as a baby at Sathiamanai and was very upset that he joined LTTE even after knowing what happened to Rasan.

As time passed, I would walk from Chulipuram to Moolai. My legs were always in motion. Meanwhile, my eldest son began meeting with liberation fighters, claiming to go to his grandmother's house to light lamps and using that as a cover for his encounters. He became a guard for the initial fighters throughout the day. In the morning, he would return home in the evening, hang up his gang. My younger son, without saying anything, never mentioned any of this to me. There was hardly any time to talk with the children. My comrade KAS would only come home at night. Days turned into weeks, and my well-studied son, who had performed excellently in his studies, failed to qualify for University. This brought tremendous sorrow.

While running for work, I began to worry that I might lose my children's education. Comrade Paramanatham was the manager at the Colombo Continental Hotel, and he would visit our home frequently. He urged me to enroll my daughter in [Chundukuli](#), where his wife worked as a chemistry teacher. Their home was in Chundukuli. To prepare for the morning journey with my daughter to Chundukuli, comrade KAS. left for Jaffna.

On that day, 2nd January 1982 in the morning, dedicated liberation fighter comrade [Sundaram](#), was shot dead at Chithra Printers by LTTE. Upon hearing this, comrade KAS turned back with daughter instead of going to Chundukuli. This event affected everyone deeply. The Marxist consciousness and doubts were stirred by comrade [Sundaram](#), who frequently visited and nurtured relationships. My eldest son Rasan became extremely upset because of this. At that time, I didn't realize the impact of this situation.

Days went by; it was also [Navaratri](#). The ninth puja of our family deity, Bhadrakali, was to be performed at our house. We would do it ourselves as we always did before my departure. After I left home, my sister managed the ceremony. After she moved to Nigeria, my brother would send the money for the arrangements. I thought I would manage it.

My children and I prepared rice, lentils, milk, firewood, pots, and banana leaves, and we went to the temple. I called Rasan, "You go ahead; I'll join you shortly." But he didn't come to the temple. By the time the puja finished around eight o'clock at night, it was nearly nine by the time we returned home. Usually, after the [Navaratri](#) or [Thiruvempavai](#) puja, we would share temple offerings with all our neighbors. That night, since Rasan was not home, Keerthy and I went to neighboring houses to distribute the offerings.

Everyone would usually invite us for meals during the auspicious time of their festivals. In those days, we didn't have the convenience of mobile phones to contact everyone.

Even by midnight, Rasan had not returned home. I was filled with dread. Where could I search for him? I felt as if I had been blinded and was in a daze. What should I tell my comrade? My daughter and I were crying. My younger son Keerthy was constantly going in and out. Whenever we hear the sound of a bicycle, all three children would run to greet comrade KAS usually. On that day Rasan was not there. "Did the children eat? What happened today?" was the usual question from comrade KAS, to which my daughter replied, crying, that she hadn't seen her brother. To be continued...

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### 34. The Disappearance of My Eldest Son -Written on 10 November, 2020

When we realized that Rasan was missing, we began to cry together. Comrade KAS was at the edge of the garden, silent for a while. I called Keerthy and asked if he knew anything about Rasan's whereabouts. He seemed uncertain, saying, "He will come." However, comrade KAS didn't have dinner that night. Early the next morning, Rasan entered through the side of the house.

"Why, Rasan?" I asked, unable to express my fear and concern. "What did Dad say?" was his response. My son stood in the garden, talking with my daughter. I went to them and urged, "You both should go and explain things to Dad and ask for his forgiveness." He replied, "Why? They are big people. You are just kids. Their politics are different... Dad is on the right." My son Rasan added, "You won't understand. I won't come back to this place again." "Oh, brother..." the others started to cry softly, and he quietly went inside the house.

I told my comrade, "They say he's lying down somewhere in hiding, scared." I spoke this falsehood as a typical mother, trying to shield my son's mistakes. But his actions changed. Every day, he would translate significant news, including the editorials from the \*Island\* English newspaper. He was responsible for ensuring that water was provided for the newly planted coconut, mango, and banana trees. Keerthy took care of all these tasks for his elder brother.

Hiding my son's mistakes from my comrade was a significant error. Time passed, and Rasan's political involvement caused me distress. I feared that the police might come searching for my husband, followed by the army searching for my son.

In 1981, following [the attack on the Aanaikottai police station](#), military personnel searched for [Sundaram](#), who was known as Sadasivam Sivasanmugamoorthy, Ganapathipillai Kadirgamanathan, and Ganapathipillai Sivenesan. They arrested many people in our village, including Arumugam Sheyone from Pannankam.

In 1982, the Jaffna-Karainagar Road became a pathway for the naval base. One evening while I was walking to work on the Jaffna-Karainagar Road, at the junction of the Paanavetti, the Navy patrol was attacked. Following the attack, military vehicles began arriving in our neighborhood, leading to the arrest of many, including Mayilvaganam Chinniah, who owned a bicycle shop near the Chulipuram Bhadrakali temple and a student Ganapathipillai Mayilvaganam from [Chulipuram Victoria College](#).

By July 1983, an attack was conducted against army personnel traveling on a vehicle in the Jaffna-Tirunelveli area on July 23. Thirteen soldiers were killed in that attack. This incited violence not only in Colombo but also against the Tamil people living in the hill country. Among those arrested were Tamil political prisoners such as Thangathurai and Kuttimani, as well as several others, 3 from our village, including a child Ganapathipillai Mayilvaganam, Arumugam Sheyone, and Mayilvaganam Chinnaiya. A total of fifty-three Tamils were killed. The nation was in turmoil. Should I say more?

My eldest son completely withdrew from home. This made my comrade deeply worried. He began to blame me for my son's actions. In turn, I shifted the blame to my youngest son Keerthy. We were engulfed in tears. I saw a wall poster that read, "The way to change is to bear arms with strong hands." It bore my son's signature! Did I not know my son's handwriting? Another poster proclaimed, "To the Tamil mothers laboring for the nation, will you not offer a son to the cause?" This was seen by anyone passing by that road.

My comrade must have discovered those signatures. While we thought that national unity could bring liberation to the people, my son believed in fighting for rights divided by

ethnicity. What a massive discord this created within our household! With the attack on the Batticaloa prison and the recruitment of fighters... To be continued...

### 35. The Jailbreak in Batticaloa -Written on

I had forgotten to mention two other individuals who influenced Rasan during his college life. Both Vadaliyadaippu Sotheeswaran alias [PLOTE](#) Kannan and Suresh alias Surendran Sundaralingam were top students and leaders of the [Scouts](#) Division at the [Chulipuram Victoria College](#). They used to visit our home to read books owned by my comrade KAS. Initially introduced by [Sundaram](#) and Chandathiyar, I later understood that their purpose for coming was to discuss political matters with my brother. Their conversations may have influenced the leftist leanings of the *\*Puthiyapathai\** ( New Way ) movement.

Kannan and Suresh were mainly responsible for legally printing and distributing [Sundaram's](#) *\*Puthiyapathai\** magazine. After [Sundaram's](#) assassination, both of them went missing. Later, Kannan revealed that Rasan had sheltered him safely during that time. Rasan's political stance caused significant distress, not only to me but also to the understanding within our household. This deeply troubled my comrade.

Students from our village said that Rasan was attending political classes at Chulipuram Victoria College. Subsequently, stories began to circulate about Rasan giving speeches at several schools in the area (nearly all schools in the Jaffna district), temples, and community centers, and about several youths fleeing their homes. I learned that students from [Vattukottai Jaffna College](#) were among those who attended Rasan's political classes, and soon after, all students of Markandu Kannadasan alias Venkat's class went to India for training. Among them were Kanthan, son of my classmate Poologavathy, followed by Paramaguru Ganadevaguru, son of my classmate Pannagam Amudavalli, and [Sangarathai](#) Sasidharan, Sivakanthan, son of Nagalingam Master, [Sithankerney](#) Sivachandran, etc. went. Not only that, most of the PLOTE soldiers who had completed their training were killed by the Sri Lankan Navy along with a boat in the Indian Ocean. Not even a body was found (there is an unsubstantiated story that this was due to betrayal by LTTE ). Among them, many were acquaintances. The pains of agony are indescribable. I remember a poem I wrote earlier. I recalled that poem I had written:

> *"Father and mother will not permit,*

- > *Because of a decision taken by yourself,*
- > *By praying to [Sundaram](#), guided by Chandathiyar...*
- > *Having severed ties with misfortune...*
- > *Devotedly serving the Tamil cause...*
- > *Every thought and action moving forward without hindrance...*
- > *Having endured contempt, loving the freedom...*
- > *In the ominous prison, a fortress of darkness...*
- > *Years and ages have passed!*
- > *In the evening light, leaving a loving home...*
- > *Without going to meet comrades, waiting on the path...*
- > *Leaving to study, turning the tide of fate...*
- > *Loving liberation while being labeled as guilty...*
- > *With the accusation that they conspired for the 'Tamil Nation'...*
- > *Was it only my son? Thousands more...*
- > *Families, relationships, all gone to waste..."*

A relative told me that there were dozens of sandals left at my parent's home. Those traveling to India by boat were not allowed to enter the boat with shoes on. This was a story my youngest son shared. I wondered what would happen if the military saw that pile of sandals. I was worried about Rasan. His friends were displeased with me, wondering if I had said something wrong. They said that all those sandals were taken away in a sack by someone.

On September 23, 1983, the [jailbreak in Batticaloa](#) took place. Following the Colombo and [Welikada prison massacres](#) on July 23-25, 1983, Tamil political prisoners who had escaped were transferred to Batticaloa prison. Among them were 41 political prisoners who planned to escape. With the help of arms smuggled in from outside, they escaped in groups. Taking advantage of this opportunity, 150 inmates who were imprisoned for other reasons also escaped. Notable among those who escaped were [Douglas Devananda](#), [Ramalingam Paramadeva](#), [Panankadai Maheswaran](#), S.A. David, [Manikkadasan](#), Parandhan Raajan, and many others.

Two individuals who greatly aided from outside for this escape were 'Parthan', also known as Rajasathurai Jayachandran, and Ramalingam Vasudeva. One day, Rasan brought both of them home to confirm that his father was not at home. He said they wished to meet my husband. I felt this was a source of joy, but also a source of great anxiety. I offered them water and then shared about the political disagreements between my husband and my son. I figured they might have already met my comrade. I still don't know anything about that.

However, later, Rasan's friends told me that he had worked hard to save those who escaped from the jailbreak and sent them to Tamil Nadu. Recently, Rasan's friend [Sriharan Sivasingaraja](#) shared details about this jailbreak. I will include it here; take a look...

[https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story\\_fbid=10159033644236111&id=581066110&sfnsn=mo](https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=10159033644236111&id=581066110&sfnsn=mo) .

## **The Batticaloa Jailbreak**

The "Batticaloa Jailbreak" was an incident that involved the rescue of political prisoners. This jailbreak was not only remarkable and terrifying but also liberated many detainees who rejoined their respective liberation movements. The jailbreak was seen not merely as a military operation but as an action that would inspire a wave of enthusiasm among the people. Moreover, the people perceived it as a rescue operation for the lives of the political prisoners associated with all movements and a unifying action for the movements that had been advocating for unity.

Many who were released during this jailbreak are no longer alive today, while some continue to live as witnesses. Now, returning to the fragment that was released by Pulaththin, despite all these characters and contributions, the details of the jailbreak were shared unofficially by other movements. As mentioned before, the distribution of pamphlets began. The contents of these pamphlets faced several criticisms and refusals, and the leadership that would decide remained uninvolved. Printing pamphlets became complicated due to the imposition of curfews, disturbances, and fears. However, we had to find a way to print and distribute them among the people.

The pamphlet texts came to me in handwritten form. I was given the responsibility for printing them. As the curfew was imposed, no printing presses would be open. How could we print these pamphlets under such pressure? While I was pondering this, I

received information about a printing machine that was operated by foot in a secluded area. This printing machine belonged to a private resident, and its location was discreet, making it naturally a safe place, away from the main roads.

The owner agreed to do the printing work for the pamphlets. He would provide the ink and paper required for it and pay the required wages for the work, promising that no one would interfere with this work during those days. However, he insisted that I would be responsible for operating the foot-driven machine since it was not electric. He explained how to operate it.

While we were printing in his secluded printing press, he remained cautious, ensuring that the operation took place without any commotion or disturbances. For two whole days, he entrusted us with the responsibility of printing, ensuring that no military informants could report us.

Finally, the pamphlets were printed and packed into bags. After the darkness fell, we moved them to a safer location before their distribution. He was fully aware that this was just a small contribution to a greater cause. He conducted this printing work without any pressure or urgency from any organization. He considered it his contribution towards justice. The payment he received was merely a fair portion of his labor.

Now the pamphlet bags needed to be transferred from his house. During a dark evening, they came, arriving on bicycles. They also left with pamphlets containing revolutionary ideas.

On a bleak evening, they were coming. The newcomers arrived on bicycles. The bundles containing the pamphlets changed hands. The leader of the group was someone I had never seen before. A few bystanders stood at a distance and seemed to be looking at me. Even though I knew about him, I had never met him directly, either before or after that time in Sri Lanka. However, he was arrested by the Sri Lankan government in 1984 and imprisoned.

The very movements that had arisen claiming to fight for the liberation of the people had turned into oppressors. They offered oppression to the people, who were yearning for unity among the various factions. All movements revealed their fascist faces by

committing greater massacres against other groups. After the massacre of the Sinhalese public in Anuradhapura, which had been orchestrated by India, the Sri Lanka-India Accord was signed on July 26, 1987, and in the following months, he was released. Thirteen years later, in 1995, he came to see me in another country. Unlike today's era, there was no communication technology back then. He was searching for me with only my address.

*“Golden flowers bloom and shine brightly;*

*May the honorable patrons have good fortune.*

*The esteemed nobleman from the renowned land,*

*May the vine grow near the entrance.”*

Just like the small scholar who guided Thamipran to my house by giving an answer to his son, I too reached my residence when he arrived and confirmed that it was indeed the correct place. Seeing children playing nearby, I recognized that this was indeed my home, and he introduced himself as the son of my neighbor. It was astonishing because he recognized my face in the dark from a distance, identifying it even after 13 years since we last met. This was the first time I was seeing him in person.

Having married, he lived very close to us in the city, recognized as a refugee by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Later, he moved to our city. Time passed. After staying temporarily in Canada for some time, he returned to [Tromsø, Norway](#). During his journey to India, he stayed at my house as a stopover before going back to his previous city. He informed me that he planned to go to Chennai in the coming days.

I sent him by boat to stay at my house as a stopover on his journey to India and then to his previous city. From there he bids farewell saying that he will be going to Chennai in the next few days. Then comes the news of his death in a car accident in Chennai (25 August 2001). However, before that, I received news that he died in a car accident in Chennai.

On the day he was to depart by boat, I learned that he had taken them to a famous hill station via the cable car and had sung the song “I want to live like that bird” from [M.G.R's](#) films, enjoying the moment. You can listen to his voice from the 17th minute

here: [link](<https://youtu.be/dEBDUZxaMmk> ). - [Sriharan Sivasingaraja October 31, 2020](#)

Despite the rise of nationalist sentiments in the country, my comrade continued to rise early as usual to work on party affairs. Meetings with comrades continued. I was frightened as helicopters flew low over our house two or three times. The next day, our house lights suddenly went out. When I woke up and looked outside, the military had surrounded us. It was hard to believe what I saw.

Our house didn't have doors. The saying "Long doors should also be opened with respect" applied here. Even the dog didn't bark. We had a dog named 'Kittu' and a cow named 'Pattu'. (On Thai Pongal 1983, we gave a lot of sugar pongal, and Pattu died. My neighbors said, "It came for the head... It left with the cow." They believed Pattu was protecting Rasan from dying, which made me feel somewhat relieved.)

The military had come, stopping their vehicle's engine and pushing it forward by hand. Therefore, there was no noise. Surrounding military personnel began calling out, "Sathiarajan Subramaniam," and "Meeran Master." At that moment, I realized that the name 'Sathiarajan' was given by comrade [V. Ponnambalam](#) not the only one belonging to my son. Army knew everything about the people who had come and gone from India.

My comrade spoke about his political stance openly. The military officer who came later also discussed his political views differently. He might have been a Muslim; his speech sounded that way. Moreover, until I handed over my son to them, the military made my comrade go to the military camp once a month.

I didn't know what to do. My comrade's distress caused me great pain. Where is my elder child, who showed so much promise? Is he eating? I was crying, and the military rummaged through the torn books at the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation, which had a letter for Rasan regarding a job offer. My comrade, upon looking at it, remarked, "He seems to be very active now... You wouldn't know if you asked him. Do you remember the story of the thief who bit his mother's nose?"

I concealed some things, but that day, I truly knew nothing. My days passed in housework and cooking. I would cut down green coconut leaves and cook only after heating them on the stove.

I kept returning to seek blessings from the goddess of the temple. The military was suspicious. After a little while, my neighbor Mr. [V. Rajasundaram](#) came over and said, "Don't be afraid. Keerthy can stay with me and study. Just be careful with your daughter."

That evening, Ravi had escaped from the [Punduloya](#) riots and came home. Keerthy told Ravi everything that had happened. My comrade's worry upset Ravi too. "If you have to go to the [Elephantpass military camp](#) as per the Army's demand, then I will come as a companion," said Ravi. To be continued...

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### 36. Father, the General Secretary! Son, 'Meeran Master'! -Written on 12 December, 2020

Hundreds of young people from our village began to leave their homes. When children went missing, parents ran to our house without realizing the political conflict in our home. If they had understood it, they wouldn't have come, right? I am still trembling in anguish, unable to allow my comrade to hear their grief. I wonder if my eldest child has eaten? If he has slept? I am struggling to figure out whom to complain to. As soon as they arrive near our courtyard, some are seen with their heads lowered.

Comrade KAS went to the [Elephantpass military camp](#) one day a month a few times with the help of Ravi and used to sign as per the Army's demand. Many have gone abroad due to the unrest. During a video discussion with comrade Devakumaran (Kumar) in [Italy](#), he spoke about the role of diaspora conversation he had. Comrades [S. Thevarajah](#) and [S. K. Senthilvel](#) were also present. I consider that discussion to be of great importance.

“Tamils who have left Sri Lanka should unite with Sinhalese comrades there to protect the unity and independence of the nation. Otherwise, the truth is that they have gone due to economic difficulties. Fine, they might have taken that situation, but in the future, they should work for the country's welfare and freedom. But I believe they are committed to that cause. Kumar has already come back for the second time. He has experiences from Italy. There have been real changes happening in Italy. Economic and social developments have also taken place. Those who have gone from here must contribute to building up the [Italian economy](#) and safeguarding its freedom while also playing a part in protecting our country's freedom and building its economy. For that, they must involve the youth of Sri Lanka there by providing them with education and enlightening them about the country's situation to be of service.” The video link for this is available on the 'Sathiamanai' website. (<https://sathiamanai.blogspot.com/1982/06/?m=1> )

In early 1984, I had the opportunity to interact with [Professor S. Sivasegaram](#) when he stayed in Sathiamanai to participate in Professor [K. Kailasapathy](#)'s memorial meeting was organized by the National Arts and Literary Association in [Jaffna Veerasingam Hall](#) before he leaving for a foreign country (UK). [Professor S. Sivasegaram](#) later wrote about it and also in 1994 he visited us when we were living in Kandy.

In between, Rasan had visited India a few times. They can reach the Tamil Nadu coast in fifty minutes from our village, [Thiruvadinilai beach](#), using fast boats. The Indian and Sri Lankan Navy/Coast Guard is the only threat. On one of those visits, Rasan came to see me along with Rajendrarah Vasantharajah, a friend from Trincomalee, known as 'Chrishti' who was killed later in Vavuniya while escaping from the military patrol. They didn't stay for even five minutes. I couldn't even serve them tea. There was more fear about the arrival of the father than the worry that someone would come to arrest them. I shared the same feeling. After he left, I cried. For a while, there was a time when parents spoke proudly about their children, who had gone to fight. Until then, deaths had not been significant.

During this time, Janarthanan, popularly known as Vadaliyadaipu 'Jana,' was killed in a motorcycle accident. Kamala, a teacher who worked with me, lived nearby. Rasan said he conducted the final rites for him. I often remember the beautiful little boy, reading the novel '[Veeram Vilainthathu](#)' (*[How the Steel Was Tempered](#)*) by [Nikolai Ostrovsky](#) while lying on the ground.

During this time, comrade Kadiravelu, a former officer of the Petroleum Corporation (the father of Minister [Douglas Devananda](#)), had stayed with us for a while. Because of that,

comrade KAS also spent more time at home. I had special affection and respect for him. I considered it a blessing to have had the chance to take care of him like an elder brother. In reality, he was someone who gave me support and love when I was alone without any help. Since both he and my comrade were at Sathiamanai, Rasan stopped visiting the house. Here, comrades were discussing both unprincipled practices and policies with me.

My comrade also critiqued the determination and dangers involved in India providing training to freedom fighters. Some young people listened closely. Some did not accept it. The Sri Lankan government showed initiative in planned settlements. During this time, the party began to spread throughout Sri Lanka with the new comrades, including S. Rajendran, who had worked at the hill stations.

In 1984, the first National Congress of the [Sri Lanka Communist Party \(Left\)](#) took place. On September 2 and 3, 1984, the first national congress of the party was held, during which comrade [K. A. Subramaniam](#) was elected as the first General Secretary of the party.

The government's law and order administrative structures deteriorated. Thieves, criminals, and evil forces attempted to take advantage of this situation. They used the names of movements. At that time, the people were only familiar with the names of certain movements. Many members from the movements were unknown to the people. It was a time of clandestine operations. It was rare to see those wandering around with "I am a movement" throwing a "law killing" at someone. When I think of it, my stomach churns. My son is not the only one; many children of many mothers have flown away from home. Parents who cannot speak out are crying inside. Many have dropped out of school, why... many have even dropped out of university. Some families have only one child. Where have they gone? Is it within the country? Or to India... no one knows. Along with that, some people have stirred up a ruckus. The saying was that "If the parents are government employees, their jobs will be at risk." If that were the case, many of the fighters' parents, especially mothers, would be government servants. Even Malaysian youths, who heard the news of the killing of Tamil political prisoners at the [Welikada Prison](#) on the radio, renounced their families and left their country to India and joined the Tamil Liberation Movements. In some houses even girls have gone like that. My comrade's cousin brother's daughter from [Chulipuram](#) also went to India to join the movement. His mother came home for the first time. But he was understanding and generous. Thousands of youths from northern and eastern provinces left to fight. A few months have passed like this...' Some powders are coming from India. "The government

is going to kill Amy to catch them," said the commoners. In the meantime, the November month announcement came. I don't do any kind of work at home after Rasan leaves home. On that day, I was expecting that 'perhaps 1984....[Karthikai Vilakeedu](#) (November Illumination) Rasan may come home'. Because from the day when he was a small child... along with my father, Rasan used to cut the banana peel beautifully for the presentation... under the lamp. A warehouse is cut and coconut oil is left inside half of a dry coconut and burnt. Throughout the day they cut thorn sticks, wrap them in white cotton cloth and dip them in a bowl of oil. Look for big oysters and take them.... They are special lamps for [Ammi and Ural](#). They melt the rice flour and dip their right hand into it and sign the doors singing '*Mavili ... Sangli ... Varusam Orukka Vaa,,, Vaa..*'. It will be a happy illumination night for the boys and girls.

Just as we thought... Around seven o'clock in the night, along with Rasan, came a friend named Ponnambi ( [Suhan Kanagasabai](#), present-day live in [Paris](#)). I gave them bananas and porridge. Rasan split the porridge in two and said, 'One mouth for brother, one mouth for sister'. At that time the electricity suddenly stopped.

After a couple of minutes, when the power came back on, they hurried away saying, "It's a good omen." That day was the last day that Rasan came to Sathiamanai. His friend, [Suhan Kanagasabai](#), who came with him, is still living in France. He is still in touch with us. During the same period in 1984, six LTTE infant militants were abducted and killed in Chulipuram. Later I clarified in 1988, my son Meeran Master said about the incident... "He had no direct connection with the incident and said that if he had known, he would have prevented it." All those who died in this incident were very close friends of our family. We share in their family's grief.

In this period, on December 11, 1984, curfews were imposed 72-hours in the northern Jaffna District, Sri Lanka, including Piranpattu, Pandateruppu, Mathagal, [Valikamam West](#), Vaddukodai, Araly, Chankanai, Moolai and Chulipuram. To be continued...

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### 37. Meeran Master was Arrested -Written on 8 January, 2021

On that [Karthikai Vilakeedu](#) day, not just our house, but also the house of Ms. [Vijayalakshmi Sivapragasam](#) in Tholpuram and my neighbor Mr. [V. Rajasundaram](#)

Master's house, he visited with [Suhan Kanagasabai](#). At that time, Rajasundaram Master had told Rasan not to stay here and the Army intended to roundup this area soon. Moreover, the next day, he came to our house and conveyed this message.

On December 11, 1984, early in the morning, the Sri Lankan army imposed a 72-hours curfew that included our village, as well as Mathakal, Chillalai, Piranpattu, Pandateruppu, Valikamam West, Vaddukoddai, Araly, Chankanai, Moolai, Vadakampirai, Chulipuram Victoria College, Paralai Murugan Temple, Thiruvadinalai, and all the surrounding villages.

Keerthy was at Mr. [V. Rajasundaram](#) Master's house studying. Since Rasan had already given instructions, there was confidence that he would be safe. Because of that, although we were somewhat less fearful, there was still a certain anxiety within me. Suddenly, my comrade asked, "Is Rasan in the village?" I replied, "Yes, Keerthy said so." That was all I heard apart from a half word. Earlier, there had been a report in a newspaper about a Jaffan University's medical college student from Vavuniya named 'Lavan' who was arrested and stated in his testimony that he had contact with 'Meeran Master' and that he was translating the book '[Mao](#)'s Military Strategies.' Surely, my comrade must have seen that news. But he didn't say anything about it. That memory suddenly resurfaced.

People said that the leader of the PLOTE organization, [Uma Maheswaran](#), was standing nearby in Chulipuram. On that day, the comrade was at home. After making a meal from our land products murunga (drumstick) curry and fried plantains, I was distressed and unwilling to eat. There was no calm on my comrade's face either. This may have even been my astonishment.

Around seven o'clock in the evening, Ravi came to the house. This greatly angered my comrade. "Running around like this will have serious consequences. Why have you come?" he asked, concealing the familiar reply. Ravi did not say anything. Keerthy had already informed about Rasan coming that evening. That's why Ravi ran to know the situation at home in such a panic. They were all young men. Though he was a teacher, his age raised doubts. "The whole village is in turmoil. Stay alert and remain at your home; that is the safest option," we told Ravi.

Night fell. The next day was marked by an increase in severe searches and killings. On that day, Gunathilakam Bhaskaran, who was running to protect university students, was shot near the Tholpuram market. He was in a state where he could not be protected with injuries. Even then, that evening, his brother tried to save him, but he died. On the same day, during an opposing protest in front of the Paralai Murugan Temple, Kandiah Ainkaran was shot. Son of my friend Mrs. Ranjitham Kandiah. He was arrested with injuries and died without receiving treatment in custody. On that day, several outsiders also died in our village. Many from our neighboring village who were moving towards our village were caught in the rain and flood, many died without treatment, injured.

Thirunavukarasu Jagadeeshwaran and Kathiramalai Nandeesan died in the vicinity of the Amman Temple on the third day. Not only them, but more than 21 people died on that day in our village. The sounds of unrest were heard in the middle of the third day. On December 15, 1984, the curfew was lifted at 7 a.m., and the outsiders began to move a little. Everyone came to inquire about Rasan. All the days he spent were filled with meetings at schools, temples, and community centers.

Because of that, the people treated him like their own child and inquired about him through one another. The entire villages were filled with cries of death. No one knew who died, everyone was searching for their relatives. There were cries about the injured, where are the prisoners? There were no answers to the questions. Would the missing be found? Many had wandered about like lifeless bodies in the village for several days. The next morning, a girl who studied with Rasan at the college came with a message from Mullaitivu saying that a child from their home had been shot near the third junction. She came to know the truth.

Later, it was said that Ponnnavadi Jnanakanesh, known as 'Babu,' was shot and killed while being transported in a vehicle. He was born to a family with three or four girls. A tall, handsome boy who studied at Jaffna Hindu College. I wept uncontrollably. It was said that in the very incident of Babu's death (before reaching Chankanai junction), "Azhiyathagolam and Vasanth (from Chunnakam) were injured. Palamottai Sivam (Periya Mendis), Vijayapalan (Chinna Mendis), and Gopu (from Chulipuram) narrowly escaped." Keerthy came and informed me in the evening.

"Everyone knows Rasan is missing; no one knows anything," he said. I felt fear. Where to go and ask? Ravi came. All three of us laid our burdens on him, and he left to make inquiries.

Some friends of Rasan came and said, "He was standing there, he was standing here." When Rasan last came home, he was wearing something like a white sleeveless vest. He showed it to his brother and sister and explained, "This is a Bullet Proof Jacket." It was a fabric similar to banana stem fiber. I touched it as well. The next day, a young man came to the house wearing the same Jacket. Buby wept and asked, "Where is my brother?" He pointed at him and said, "He brought this." At that moment, we realized that he was also searching for Rasan.

On the fifth day, evening we heard the news that "Someone was shot by the army in the fields of Paralai, and blood was lying." With this news, Buby and Keerthy rushed to Paralai. They went in the morning and returned in the evening. When they returned, their hands were stained with blood. They brought with them a cut piece of grass soaked in blood and placed it in the lower part of the house, saying, "This is brother's blood." For the first time, my comrade cried.

"Where is my child? What happened? He cannot be dead," said my comrade. For me, I had a fear. For two days, we had been crying non-stop. My comrade usually listens to the news on the radio at night.

In the news, it was announced, "The person known as 'Meeran Master' who is connected to the political activities of the [People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam](#), Subramaniam Sathiarajan, has been arrested." Buby continued to weep until she went to see Rasan. I had the fear that my son might have died, but the thought that he was alive somewhat comforted me. However, the punishments he would face filled me with dread. The pain inflicted on my child, who first showed me many difficulties, was immense.

In an environment where I couldn't share anything with my comrade, I toiled alone. Yet, I held onto the thought that Rasan would be freed one day and immersed myself in temple worship.

Several young men, along with Rasan, had life experiences in the army camps of Kuranagar, Fort, Pallali, and later in Pusaa, Welikada... the prison life of various jails... To be continued...

### 38. Another Son Jayamanokaran Saravanamuthu Gave his Life to save My Son, -Written on 20 January, 2021

After the December 1984, 72-hours curfew, we did not know where my eldest son Rasan was being held by the Sri Lankan army after he was captured. The college principal Mr. [V. Rajasundaram](#), who lived nearby, comforted me, saying he could find out. Accordingly, in late February 1985, we learned that Rasan was imprisoned at the Kuranagar army camp along with several other young men. (Even a good person like Mr. [V. Rajasundaram](#) was kidnapped and destroyed by armed individuals; they did not even give his body back, which I will explain later.)

Those who went to see the prisoners were required to provide their name, address, and identification card, and to obtain a letter of permission from the Jaffna Government Agent office. Based on that, one day, the principal Rajasundaram Master, my daughter, and I set out in a hired vehicle. The principal's younger son Paran and his wife also came with us to see Eye Doctor Kannuthurai. After instructing us to stay in the vehicle, Principal Rajasundaram said he was going to the Jaffna Fort camp. We were disappointed, thinking we might see Rasan. While we waited for him at the hospital, some thoughtless people scared us by saying, "The army is bringing Rasan in a mask to show their hideouts here and there."

I had never moved this Palalai Pillai without wrapping him in my arms. The priest, who was a scholar, learned Sinhalese among us ([Sundaram](#), Santhathiyar, Guhapusani... and a few others). He could recognize the tears I left behind. When he saw the army outside the fields, he got out of the vehicle and stood alone to save Rasan, sacrificing himself, Jayamanokaran Saravanamuthu. (His comrades call him 'Comrade Rangan' and affectionately 'Aadu'.) He was from Mathakal. He studied with my daughter Buby. We placed the grass soaked in his blood in front of 'Sathiamanai,' saying, "This is my son's blood."

That Jayamanokaran, who kept Rasan alive for another fifteen years, I still remember today... Three months passed. The army did not come to our village. If Rasan had

shown up, the half-constructed housewives of our village would have climbed the army camp with me. Most likely, someone from each house had gone for training. No disaster occurred. Realizing that, the villagers began to come closer again. I felt deeply troubled, reflecting on the silence and concealments that had filled him.

In March 1985, the mothers of Tamil youths detained in army camps were given permission to visit them. Moreover, they could only enter the camp with a letter of permission from the Jaffna government official. Even Principal Rajashundaram had difficulty doing that. Each had to obtain the government official's permission themselves. The principal stated that there was a government charge against my son for having stolen the official's vehicle. My son's comrades said he had stolen it for the use of the leader of his movement. I attempted to meet the government official several times, but it was unsuccessful. I had to take a letter to register our identity card number at the office. There were many mothers like me present there.

Our neighbor Mr. Velupillai saw my distress and said, "You stay in the house; I will take care of it." Even that did not work out. After a long effort, I finally got the letter from the government official. I was planning to go alone to see Rasan but my comrade insisted on taking Buby along. How could I bring a beautiful young girl to the army camp?

My comrade said, "She must bravely face this world and live. This is her opportunity. She is intelligent and brave; she will be safe with you. Take her along." My work was in the small industry division of the Sri Lankan government. Our monthly salary was paid through the head office located near [Chundikkuli](#). Our income and expenses were submitted there. In any case, I had to go to the [Chundikkuli](#) office twice a month. Buby would also go to [Chundikkuli](#) for her studies. But we had no knowledge of Kuranagar in between.

The bus route number 782 Karainagar bus left early in the morning, reaching Jaffna city, and again, we would have to board a small vehicle to go back to the office, tightly packed, getting off at the school near the bus station. The visits to see the prisoners were only possible on weekends, and only two people were allowed. That street was deserted. The desire to see Rasan made me forget my foot pain from walking along [Mullu kampi veli](#) (Army's Fence) towards the Kuranagar camp. There, we were still instructed to stop the vehicle a certain distance away, and after arriving at the army office, we had to provide details such as the visitors' details, and submit the letter from

the government official to be allowed to see the prisoners. There were food stalls and water bottles placed nearby.

Whenever we heard the sound of helicopters, we would hide in the shade, and we could see the landing and takeoff of the large aircraft up close. The dust raised by the swirling winds along with it brought tears to our eyes.

After a long time, names were called one by one for visits. After receiving permission, my daughter and I were taken to the back of the building. This building was a multi-story structure built under a resettlement plan by the housing division. That's where the soldiers and prisoners were. Another mother, like me, was there. She said she was from [Kokkuvil](#). A few others were present; they were there for other matters. After some time, Rasan was brought in by two soldiers with weapons. Rasan's hands were handcuffed. Below his eyes, there were some... circular burn marks, looking like they had been inflicted in half. I did not ask about that. My beautiful, majestic child stood there, dejected and unrecognizable, like a stranger. That moment has not left my eyes to this day. A tremendous cry erupted in my heart. What were the tears of the three of us?

No one spoke. Thousands of questions drowned within the three of us.

Rasan requested us to take care of both father and brother. In the time when there was no sound of the frog, many days passed, "Rasan will be with you," my comrade had left me. The oldest wealth of my heart was Rasan, who had shown me much happiness. My mute friend, who sang loudly, stood still in the hands of the strange soldier with a 'mic.'

We had not brought any food items. We had no information about that either. At any moment, he had a pen and a book. I asked the child, "Will Rasan bring any books?" He hurriedly declined and insisted on his sister's and brother's education. I understood what he was trying to establish.

Where were you captured? What happened? Who else was with you? Many questions arose without sounding. After a few moments, they took Rasan inside. He did not turn back. I watched this happen four or five times.

Rasan's friend from Tholpuram, who loved him unconditionally, Ms. [Vijayalakshmi Sivapragasam](#), and Ms. Sinnaiya Gnambihai from the Pattharakali temple came to see Rasan with me. We lay in wait, anxiously anticipating when the door would open, saying, "Even if the sun scorches, even if the feet are worn out, we must see the child." They would show the first ones who came first. We are blessed to be allowed to see the prisoners. Within that military compound, a branch of the Sri Lankan bank was also operating. After the riots in 1983, the mothers of the children who went abroad were there to collect the money sent by their children. "This is our good fortune. Our child has escaped and is here to collect the money sent from there," I heard the voice of the mother of the household saying.

At that moment, it raised a stir, but political illiteracy was the reason behind our social structure's incapacity. Without properly applying that, politics is still conducted by putting forward elections.

After three months, the prisoners were transferred to the Jaffna Fort. The reason was that the Fort building was more secure than the Kuranagar building, which was surrounded by 'a ditch.' There is an old saying: "The government egg will break the housewife's Ammi stone." To be continued...

### 39. In Jaffna Fort Prison with My Son -Written on 9 February, 2021

On the weekend, as usual to meet the prisoners, we went to the Kuranagar detention camp. It was only after arriving there that we learned, "The prisoners have been transferred to [Jaffna Fort prison](#)." We woke up early in the morning, prepared food, and set out to see Rasan, intending to return by evening. The army's general announcement stated that we could see them on Sundays, but they would call names only at appropriate times. This was conducted in a disorganized manner. We were not allowed to bring food or clothing. The child was very thin, which was painful for me. Neither my husband nor my son, who were in politics, could lead a fulfilling life. Neither of them was reported to have been sought after by the army for searches or attacks. My colleague, Nagarajeshwary from [Maviddapuram](#), was the brother of Master Nagaraja, who was sought by the army. Later, he went to India. Santhathiyar the brother of teacher

Uruthiraschi had been around since the early days. Apart from that, I did not know anyone else at that time. I did not share my troubles with anyone. I had no time for that.

After a long wait, they finally told us that Rasan had been transferred from the Kuranagar camp to the Fort. Then what? Just one road. From the Jaffna bus station via the roundabout route... from the *Mani Koonda* (Clock) tower... heading east... crossing the Rimmer Mandap entrance until we reached the Fort military camp took over two hours. Every place we looked was filled with soldiers. There were no civilians or any other vehicles. It was eerily quiet. Helicopters flew over the Kuranagar camp. The public came to collect money from the bank. The Jaffna Fort military camp was surrounded by ditches, and it was said that crocodiles filled them. If any prisoners tried to escape, they would not be able to get away from the crocodiles. That was the level of security in which prisoners were held inside that Fort. Inside the Fort, there was also a hanging tree where prisoners were once hanged. With such high security, the army was confining prisoners within the walls of the Fort, and we approached the Fort in the scorching sun.

I remember visiting the Fort prison when comrades [T. Tharmalingam](#), [S. Palani](#), and Nadesu were imprisoned during the repercussions of the caste protests in Jaffna. At that time, I felt no fear. I had heard and read the stories of many prisoners who had been detained there. Walking along, we showed our identification cards to the soldiers on duty and went inside. Normally, mothers came to see the prisoners. But this time, my daughter came along too. I was fearful for her safety. What if the soldiers did something inappropriate? However, no one caused any disturbances on that day. They seemed like ordinary children of poor families.

After entering, we showed our identification cards and the letter of permission from the government official to the officer there, receiving a 'token' number for visitors, and we sat in the waiting area. There were two other people with us. We sat without any traditional greetings. They would bring in the prisoners in a jeep from the inner side of the Fort. According to the visiting number, they would call out the prisoners one by one. Standing nearby were soldiers who understood Tamil, and I realized that most of them belonged to the Muslim community. I can never forget the day I saw Rasan in the Fort for the first time. A soldier standing with Rasan said, "Did your parents say the mayor wants to meet you? I will bring him. Stay back."

We stood there, looking into each other's eyes. No one spoke. A wave of grief surged within me. "Where is my child? What happened? He must not be dead," Rasan said. I too felt scared. As I watched Rasan's face, the soldier took a package from his sleeve. Oh! Is he going to shoot my child right in front of me? I stood up in fear because Rasan's comrade Ketheeswaran had told me that some people had been shot while trying to protect him when a few individuals burned down the Nagavihara temple in Jaffna. Then, the army killed him along with the captured youth. Rasan had shared this story with me. Therefore, this officer's actions raised my alarm.

Rasan's expression was calm. "Mother, this weapon is not ours; it's a Russian-made pistol manufactured in 1984. Your son was holding this. This vest is bulletproof. He was captured with these." He told me he was searching for my son at our house. I didn't know what to say. Fear gripped me, realizing the army had come into our home. Who can recall any faces? That officer seemed to know everything. My daughter Buby stood there, crying. Looking at her, he said, "Are you also from Palam? You are wearing a red and black uniform." That was the first time I understood the significance of that outfit. Then he asked, "Was there any commotion when you came in?" The vest Rasan wore, which he had brought from his body, seemed to have rolled on the ground. It passed right before my eyes. When I explained this to Buby and Keerthy, I left. It became evident that Buby would cry upon seeing that.

On that day, Rasan's comrades, who had loved him unconditionally, were also present. He had been a wonderful son to me, someone who had shown me sorrows, a true comrade who was once filled with joy and spoke freely. His silence turned into a gaping void in my heart. A few weeks passed after this event.

Later in the month of October, the Kanda Sashti festival began. During this time, prisoners who were detained in the camps were allowed to receive food only from their homes. They were allowed to eat home-cooked food for the specified days of the festival, as permission was obtained from the army officer.

According to the legends, the story of Lord Murugan is one where the gods were imprisoned for refusing to carry fish under the orders of the demons. Unable to bear the pain, they pleaded for Lord Murugan's help, and he fought against the demons. The [Kanda Puranam](#) also relates to this, and so does the Kanda Sashti festival. Accordingly, bringing milk and fruits to give away and providing vegetables on that day during the 1985 and 1986 Kanda Sashti festivals were received by us.

We would bring boiled milk from the house next door and prepare it with a little salt, then mix in vegetables and cook it. If we could find fenugreek, bananas, or papayas, we would take those along too. This exchange of information brought us closer together. To be continued...

#### 40. Letter Exchange in a Water Bottle -Written on 23 February, 2021

Going to Jaffna Fort is extremely difficult. My daughter and I were the only ones who got off the Karainagar bus to go to the Fort. I later learned that some other mothers from Karainagar also came, after their son Marin was released, they came searching for our house. Without essential needs like hospitals, people do not come to Jaffna.

One day, I saw the burnt corpse of a youth hanging on an electric pole. My hands and feet began to tremble. "Who is this child's parent?" The ones armed with guns had delivered death sentences to the people. This filled me with anger and pain.

Next to the Jaffna bus station, near *Pullukulam*, is where we would arrive at the Fort. However, we couldn't go that way. The hospital street, the *Mani Koondu* (Clock tower) street, turning east, going down the second cross street, and then walking west would take a long time to reach the fourth gate of the Fort. After showing my ID card to the soldiers standing guard due to thirst, I had to enter. Many mothers like me came there. Friendships began to form with them. It grew from one person's visit across the prison boundaries, and later comrades imprisoned with Rasan mentioned this. Notable individuals include [EPRLF](#) movement's [Thambirajah Subathiran](#) alias Robert who was shot dead on Saturday, June 14, 2003 by LTTE, Kumar (from Trincomalee), Kumar (from Nuwara Eliya ), Guru from the TELO movement, Sothi from Karainagar, Maran from the PLOTE organization, and others like Anbanathan, Thangavadivel, Ravi, and Murali from the LTTE movement, who had lost their youth in prison with my son and had worked together to safeguard the well-being of Tamil political prisoners.

We discussed with the other mothers about sharing the food items we would bring for the next week. After a few hours, they would bring the prisoners in their vehicle and show them to us. They would only bring one person at a time. They would take them back after about five minutes. We could only see them every two weeks.

After Rasan was arrested, it was a cause of concern to keep Keerthy in the village. Hence, in the heightened search for Rasan, Keerthy was transferred from [Tellippalai Mahajana College](#) with the help from comrade [S.Sivathasan](#) (Comrade KAS's brother-in-law) stayed at the [Jaffna Hindu College](#) hostel. At this point, having Keerthy in Sri Lanka was a source of fear.

Keerthy was somewhat emotional. His childhood friend [Vairamuthu Shailakanthan \(Sajakan\)](#)'s sister, Ms. Vairamuthu Chandramalar, was working as an architectural draftsman in Colombo. When she visited the village, she said, "Someone she knows is sending people abroad. If we could gather ten people, one could go for free. We will send Keerthy with my brother. They can go there and study." I was struggling to provide for my family. The desire to take advantage of an opportunity that required no money for travel crossed my mind. This seemed like a good decision after being apart from my eldest son. But it was clear that my comrade KAS wouldn't agree.

After much struggle, my daughter Buby and I cried and obtained comrade KAS consensus by giving assurance that Keerthy would continue studying. We sent Keerthy with Ravi. Even though Keerthy stayed at my son-in-law Ravi's relatives' house in Colombo for a few weeks after leaving the hostel, they found no suitable travel arrangements. Hence, they both returned to Sathiamanai. After that, Keerthy began studying from home with the help of his close friend Sankaran Sivarathinam. Three months passed, and then in the month of October, the *Kanda Sashti* festival began.

In 1985, for the Kanda Sashti festival, permission was given for milk and fruits to be sent from home, and on the sixth day, they could bring and eat rice. My son told me that the army officer had issued the orders. I had taken leave for that entire week. Milk and fruits were all we had to eat. I woke up early in the morning and, after waking up Rajasathi akka, I would boil the milk and pour it into the water bottle.

(Generally, milk is not obtained when the time changes to early in the morning. The milk woman agreed to give me milk because of the love she had for Rasan and the respect I

had for her.) After boiling the fresh milk and putting in various fruits and coconut, the last meal would be brought back to him (as no weapons should be given or possessed inside). After five days of fasting, there would be rice on the sixth day. On the first day, I would provide food, talk briefly, wipe his face, and kiss him goodbye. On the second day, I brought the milk in another bottle obtained from a neighbor, boiled it, and, as usual, took fruits from our house—banana, mango, coconut water—and additional fruits given by neighbors.

On the first day, I had given him a flask (water bottle), which Rasan had brought back. When handing it over, he pressed his sister's hand and said, "Be careful with the water bottle. Be cautious." After passing the Fort gate, Buby said, "There must be something inside the flask. Only by opening it will we know." There would be soldiers on duty watching closely. The soldiers, who stood guard behind tall fortifications, kept watch diligently. Since it was dangerous if there were spies on the bus, we eagerly opened it as soon as we reached Sathiamanai. But disappointment awaited us. All that was left was sour milk, untouched and spoiled. We informed our comrade's household of our visit. After inspecting the bottle of hot water, he removed the plastic bottom. Inside, a tiny piece of paper, neatly folded, fell out. As they say, "Only a snake can recognize another snake's trail." Slowly unfolding it, it turned out to be cigarette rolling paper. It was a letter for his comrades, written in secret code. We managed to deliver it to the intended recipients through a friend who brought fruits to Rasan. In return, their message and our love were exchanged the next day in the same manner — a cigarette paper letter hidden in a bottle of hot water flask.

When my son Rasan was imprisoned, a small secret note was hidden inside the base of a hot water bottle flask. (Later, in 1988, he described how this was done: the military would use cigarette rolling paper and sharp pens, draining the ink into one part to be used.) My comrade was deeply concerned about Rasan's condition. Even though they stood on two different ideological poles, Rasan was still a child who carried out his father's duties and instructions with respect. The suffering of the elder child, who first showed signs of rebellion and was now enduring torture, pained my comrade.

On the 7th of August, 1985, our neighbor Mr. [V. Rajasundaram](#), the headmaster, was abducted by unknown individuals (TELO). No details about who they were or why it happened were known. This brought sorrow and anger to all of us. The confidence that once gave comfort amidst military arrests was now in question — who is left for whom? This was the question that arose. My comrade and Rasa were distressed, trying to find out the truth, but even after contacting many people, the real situation remained unclear.

At the same time, guerrilla fighters in Jaffna had installed a device that calculated the interval between shell sounds from the fort camp and triggered a siren accordingly. Additionally, they began to closely monitor military movements and lock the army inside the fort. The military started using sea and air routes to carry out their operations, becoming increasingly aggressive. We could see scars on Rasan's face from their harsh treatment. The military allowed civilians to enter only because they thought it would aid their strategy, but it didn't benefit them as much as they expected. This made them even more furious. Some soldiers, even while smiling, behaved coldly and indifferently.

During our time at the Palaly military camp, we followed our routine of visiting the fort. It was only after entering that we were told, "The prisoners have been transferred to Palaly for their safety." What could we do...? From there, I returned to Jaffna bus station, intending to continue recounting the suffering and hardships faced at the Palaly camp.

## 41. Palaly Army Camp to see my son Rasan. -Written on 22 March, 2021

I woke up at dawn, hurriedly finished cooking, and took my daughter with me to the fort camp. Once inside, they told us, "For the security of the prisoners, we've transferred them to Palaly."

In 1966, I went to Palaly Airport with my children to welcome Comrade [N. Shanmugathan](#) and Comrade [S. D. Bandaranaike](#). Even when my sister was at the Palaly Teacher Training College, I had never been there. I knew little about Palaly. Many of my comrade's relatives lived in the surrounding villages, but I had no idea what or where the army camp was. It was the first military base established in Jaffna since Sri Lanka gained independence from the British in 1948. The Sri Lankan Army set up headquarters for "Operations Monty" in 1952 to prevent illegal immigration of Indian Tamils. Since then, it had expanded into a large base with heavy security, and with the navy and air force nearby, it became a major military complex. Rasan had been moved there. I worried about new interrogations, new kinds of torture... What might happen? What could I do?

From there, I returned to the Jaffna bus station and boarded a bus heading to [Kankesanthurai](#). At Kankesanthurai junction, I got off and walked a long way. If you take the direct road, the camp is about a kilometer away, but crossing paths through fields, ruined plantations, deep water canals, and uneven terrain was exhausting. Along the way, people would say, "This isn't the right path, take another route." My hands were full with things I carried, and I didn't have good shoes. I didn't know if there were landmines, but I wandered around with my little daughter. There were no proper paths. After facing numerous military checkpoints, I finally got inside, but they told me, "It's past 5 p.m., you can't see him now," and turned me away.

I had no money left to return home. I had used it all up coming from Jaffna to Kankesanthurai. Who could help us now? I remembered my husband's niece, Vellaiamma, was staying at a relative's house nearby. I asked a boy from a farming family, "Do you know where the house of Mr. [Ambalappillai Thangarasa](#), known as 'Pathiri' Thangarasa from [Kollankaladdy](#), is?" He immediately took his bicycle and went to find her. Within half an hour, he returned with Vellaiamma. She understood my hesitation and generously gave me 50 rupees, saying, "It's already late. You should go to Kankesanthurai junction, get off at Tellippalai, and take the lorry to Chulipuram." She

urged us to catch the bus quickly, saying, "I'll visit to see my brother-in-law next time," and sent us on our way.

After traveling by bus and lorry, we reached [Chulipuram](#) and, exhausted, we arrived home with no strength left in our legs. My comrade, Keerthy, and Ravi had been worried, searching for us, thinking we were lost. We ate the cold leftovers from lunch as our dinner. Days went by like this. Rasan spoke more optimistically than before, talking about filing a case and discussing matters with [Amnesty International](#) in a way that even my daughter could understand. Sometimes, soldiers would come by while mothers waited outside, talking about the arrival of "food ships" and how they hadn't seen their relatives for days.

One day, after visiting the camp, we were a group of 10 to 15 people on our way back when a boy stopped us, saying, "The officer wants to meet you. We've been told that you are coming here to meet people and then informing the army." My heart raced, fearing what might happen next. My daughter, agitated, retorted, "Yesterday, we struggled to meet the prisoners, and now you're spinning stories. We're far from home and can't come here again." She spoke out fiercely. After a while, two men arrived on motorbikes and asked, "Who said someone just joined the movement yesterday?" I was truly scared. I had heard about women being abducted and killed by the Tigers. Just as I feared everyone would blame Buby, she stepped forward boldly, saying, "Yes, I said it. Is this what we do for a living?" The other mothers quickly intervened, saying, "We all said it, not just this child." That's what motherhood is. The man, whom I believe was Jaya from the Tigers, asked, "Are you Sathiarajan's sister?" I quickly replied, "Oh brother, she's just a young child, she spoke without thinking." He said, "I know your son. Whatever the army asks, just say you don't know," and allow us to leave. These are just some of the stories.

During this time, my comrade's health had worsened, suffering from kidney disease and high blood pressure. He had collapsed several times. The brutal attacks by the Police in 1966 and 1969 had physically weakened him. Moreover, the sinking into narrow nationalism from striving for an equal society also weighed heavily on his mind. With poverty at home, his eldest son in prison, and his illness, fear consumed me.

On May Day 1986, the [Ceylon Communist Party \(Left\)](#) led a massive rally from Nallur to Thirunelveli, despite the tense atmosphere in Jaffna. Thousands marched in the scorching heat, chanting slogans like:

- *Workers of the world, unite!*
- *The working class should rule!*
- *Buddha preached nonviolence, but J.R. preached war!*
- *Where is the country heading?*
- *Who are the real terrorists?*
- *J.R. is a terrorist!*
- *Athulathmudali is a terrorist!*
- *Reagan is a terrorist!*

My Comrade KAS led and addressed the rally, stating:

*"[Jayewardene](#) and his cronies call for peace and calm in the streets and the country every day in the newspapers. But when the democratic rights of the people are denied, when justice is denied, and when freedom is denied, violence is inevitable. The people have a duty to reclaim their rights. So if Jayewardene truly values justice or wants peace, he must first ensure that justice, freedom, and particularly the rights of the Tamil people are recognized. Peace will only come when Tamil rights are acknowledged, the northern and eastern regions are recognized as their homeland, and regional autonomy is granted based on this recognition."*

The video of this speech can be found here:  
<https://sathiamanai.blogspot.com/1986/04/may-day-rally-speech-in-1986.html>

At this time, Buby was preparing to study computer technology at the [Vaddukoddai Technical College](#) and during weekends at Jaffna University. My younger son Keerthy had passed his engineering exams and was looking forward to university. Meanwhile, Ravi had told my Comrade that he loved Buby and wanted to marry her. Comrade asked, "Does Buby know about this?". I will continue with Buby's marriage...

## 42. Daughter Wedding -Written on 18 April, 2021

In 1986, our neighbor's dog bit my comrade for the third time, causing a wound that began oozing pus. On top of that, he was suffering from edema, and the wound produced so much fluid that even the mat beneath him got soaked. We admitted him to the [Cooperative Hospital in Moolai](#), but with no money on hand, he needed someone to stay by his side to care for him. Ravi, who understood him well and could sense his needs without being told, provided that support, just like a son. It was also school holiday time for Ravi, which made it possible for him to help.

For Buby (my daughter), her father was everything. She would sleep with him and wave goodbye at the doorstep when her father went out. While others might act similarly, Buby's enthusiasm and love were clearly visible. Whenever her father's bicycle bell rang, all three children would run to grab the bicycle, with Buby leading the way. Ravi's affection for Buby was something even her colleagues noticed when Buby went on vacation to [Nuwara Eliya](#), and they mentioned it to her. After learning about this, Buby started throwing tantrums at home. Ravi shared this with my comrade, who responded by asking, "Does Buby know about this?" When Ravi said no, my comrade advised that Buby's consent was essential and encouraged Ravi to speak to her first.

Ravi's cousin sister Mrs. Bhagavathi Ratnadurai was concerned because Ravi had turned down several marriage proposals, often complaining to us. I, too, told her that things would happen in due time. However, I never thought of Ravi as becoming part of our family. As the situation shifted, though, I started thinking that someone like Ravi, who had helped us as if he were our own child, would make a great addition to our family. It was then that I recalled the saying, "A friend in need is a friend indeed," and began considering a more formal bond with Ravi.

My daughter was studying computer science at the [Vaddukoddai Technical College](#), the first of its kind in Jaffna. It was my comrade who had encouraged her to pursue this path, while Ravi also pursued his own degree studies, balancing university and work.

On June 29, 1986, 33 PLOTE (People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam) fighters returning from training were killed in the waters of the Indian Ocean by the Sri Lankan Navy, their bodies never recovered. Some believe that this happened due to a tip-off from a competing militant faction. Among those we lost were many friends and

comrades of Keerthy and Rasan. The pain was indescribable. The editor of \*Dinamurasu\*, Mr. Ramesh (Atputhan), and my comrade were sitting on the porch discussing something when we received the news. How my comrade continued that conversation afterward, I still do not know. With Rasan in prison, Keerthy studying from hostel, and our dear [Vairamuthu Shailakanthan \(Sajakan\)](#), who was like everything to us, also gone, we were devastated. Sajakan had grown up with Keerthy and was considered family by us, even staying with us during his school years.

Ravi must have felt the pain of seeing his esteemed comrade sick in the hospital, and thinking about marriage as a lasting bond, he must have felt that this relationship was not just a temporary one but a long-lasting connection like "a thousand-year-old seedling." The idea seemed right and compatible to me as well. The saying "fate and blessings are written on the forehead" came to mind. A marriage where both families understand and share common values would ensure lasting happiness. Keerthy had great affection for Ravi, and the feeling was mutual. Keerthy joyfully explained this to her sister, Buby (Sathiamalar). Meanwhile, Buby's friends, Nimal, Mohan, Jeevagan, and Kannan ('NiMoJeKa'), spoke to Buby and highlighted Ravi's good qualities, gaining Buby's approval. Though Buby was worried about having the wedding without her brother, her father's deteriorating health made her agree, and finally, the marriage was confirmed.

The wedding took place on 19 October 1986, with [poet E. Murugaiyan](#), the registrar of Jaffna University, presiding over the ceremony. Comrade [T. Tharmalingam](#) from Nitchamam and Ravi's uncle Mr. Alagaratnam signed as witnesses.

Many university lecturers and party comrades attended the event. PLOTE Vijayapalan alias Chinna Mendis, a comrade of Rasan, also joined us, although, tragically, he was arrested by the LTTE two days later and was later killed. Classmates of the bride from [Vaddukoddai Technical College](#), including 'NiMoJiKa' members, were also present. Close friends like Vathani, Kanakes, Vanmathi, and Jayachandra had been there from day one, taking care of the wedding decorations as if it were their own home.

Our relatives came from far and wide, including my brother Mr.A. Ponniah's family from [Nilaveli](#). Friends of Keerthy, such as [Ambalavanapillai Nirmalathas](#), Sivarathinam Sankaran, Kandhasami Arunagirinathan, Markandu Kugathan, Vairamuthu Shailasutha (Keerthy's childhood friend [Vairamuthu Shailakanthan's](#) twin sister), Sachithananthan Vijayraghavan, Dharmarathnam Rishindran, Anton Raviraj

Selvarathnam ( Dominic) , Durairatnam Ambikaipalan, and Saravanapavan Bavanchelvam, took care of everything as if it were their own sister's wedding. Many of the groom's relatives attended the ceremony, offering their blessings and participating in the wedding rituals.

In a symbolic gesture, Ravi's other uncle Mr. Shanmugalingam Master and my brother poured milk and blessed the groom, treating him as their own. Similarly, Ravi's paternal aunts and other women performed the rituals for the bride.

Poet E. Murugaiyan led the tying of the sacred thread (mangala naan), which Ravi then placed around the bride Buby's neck. Ravi's sister Indira played the role of a bride mate during the ceremony. Relatives like Mrs. Nagarathinam Nadaraja, Mrs. Pushpam Chandrahasan, and Mrs. Bhagavathi Rathinathurai also played significant roles. Our neighbor, Kovil Mudali Akka (Temple Owner), generously lent her jewelry for the occasion, saying, "Keep it for a month and return it."

The elaborate preparations for the wedding, from cooking snacks to managing the expenses for the wedding tent and decorations, were carried out by our dear friend Mrs. Sivapakkiyam Kandaiya, who handled everything with utmost care. The expenses were partly covered by pawning the house, and my comrade entrusted the painting of the house walls to a painter friend from Sithankeni.

After tying the sacred thread, [poet E. Murugaiyan](#) recited a blessing and handed it to the bride and groom. A message written by my eldest son, who was in prison, was read aloud by our family friend and prison officer, Mr. Madhavar Markandu. The message was written on a small piece of paper smuggled out of prison, a story in itself. Despite restrictions, prisoners would gather small pieces of paper and pens discarded by the army and use them to write letters, which would then be smuggled out. This was one of those letters. Had the good times not explored the bottom of that boiling water bottle flask, this would not have made it into history.

"A father who desired to uplift the working class – a mother who followed in his path – a brother who shattered oppression – a younger brother who lamented at injustice – a loving uncle and aunt – an ambitious Uncle Aunty– a comrade of wisdom – and a supportive circle – born to them as a child of great value, raised with love and affection, compassion and kindness being your nature, confusion and hesitation never being your

habit. In a life where one stands for social change, your partner must continue his duty in life. Among those we know, like [Marx and Jenny](#) (father/mother), may you too achieve victory in life."

Thus, the congratulatory message extended. When Mr. M. Markandu read aloud the secret wedding wish sent by the son, Rasan (Sathiarajan), who was then imprisoned in a military fortress, during his sister's wedding in October 1986:

The congratulatory message from poet Murugaiyan was as follows:

"May health and prosperity always continue in the life of Nadesanar's son, Raveendran. May sweetness and benefits spread, not only in duty but also in education, knowledge, and research. Progress with determination is highly desired.

\* \* \*

The fragrance of Subramaniathar's (Comrade KAS) service must spread, and the scent of truth from this house of truth 'Sathiamanai' must rise in an unmatched manner.

May happiness fill the earth, and may joy abound forever.

\* \* \*

Ravi, like the sun, will become radiant; before the sun rises, the lotus will bloom, and the flower's face will shine. We must cherish this opportunity and think of it; let them always gather in joy. May they be blessed with strength, wealth, and children.

\* \* \*

We praise the brilliance of the wedding auspiciousness. By knowing the welfare of others, we see clearly with intelligence, adorned with morality, we cherish enthusiasm, we cherish wisdom, we cherish clarity.

\* \* \*

May this day, which sweetens our thoughts, serve as a symbol of happiness.

With the flower of love, mixed with the scent of Ravi, let the juice overflow in the cup of life. Let the honey of life be enjoyed as a symbol of Tamil joy... We spoke of the newness that comes from the union of the newlyweds. Long live!"

With love,

On behalf of the assembly,

[E. Murugaiyan](#), Neerveli. 19-11-1986.

### 43. Within the same house, there were two opposing newspapers. -Written on 6 June, 2021

Amidst the sorrow of being separated from my eldest, the health issues of my comrade, and the never-ending struggles, my younger son had been accepted into the [engineering faculty at Peradeniya](#). My daughter's marriage was completed, and as soon as Ravi joined the Sathiamanai household and when I could say that ties with my relatives had been restored, it brought me comfort. Moreover, when the young men who were imprisoned with Rasan were released, they frequently visited our home. Many of them were involved in the movement. We began forming bonds with their parents as well. One such bond was Mr. Vijeyaratnam, alias [Sellakili Master](#)'s wife, who frequently visited our home. It so happened that during one of her visits, the wedding of comrade [S. Thevarajah](#)'s brother, Thevakumar, was taking place. Under the leadership of my comrade, we attended the [wedding of Thevakumar and Vallinayaki](#), and the ceremony surprised her. Comrade officiated the tying of the sacred thread (thali), and after the wedding, he gave a speech.

In his speech, he said: "Today marks the beginning of the second stage of their lives. Life is a struggle. The first stage of their lives was their battle against social oppression and poverty, which they each fought individually. Today, they are stepping forward to unify their lives under the bond of marriage, to continue their life struggle, supporting and relying on one another. At a time when countries and nations around the world are fighting for freedom, revolution, and independence, may your struggles unite with theirs. May your role in this great struggle for world peace and the welfare of humanity be fulfilled."

Sellakili Master's wife remarked, "I have seen many weddings conducted in temples, officiated by priests chanting mantras I could not understand. But today, what 'Aiya' (Comrade KAS) said were words necessary for life. Thank you for bringing me here. I will tell my friends about this."

During [Operation Liberation in the Vadamarachchi](#) region, many people were displaced from their homes. Our [poet E. Murugaiyan](#), who lived in [Neerveli](#), faced this situation too. His family, along with his two nieces, came to Sathiamanai. The days they spent with us, more than a month, were delightful. They were vegetarians and brought different kinds of vegetables, cooking delicious meals for us. Their daughter 'Kuyil' and

the other two children took care of everything, not allowing me to do any work. Their son 'Navalan' would sit next to me and ask me to tell old stories. If I teared up, he would get nervous and ask me to stop. Even during the cruel times of war, the poet [Murugaiyan's](#) family remains a cherished memory, and those days can never be forgotten.

On June 4, 1987, without Sri Lanka's permission, the Indian Air Force flew over and dropped food supplies to the people of Jaffna ([Operation Poomalai](#)). My comrade wrote in the party newspaper, \*Puthiya Poomi\*, "We cannot allow the imperialist power of India to trespass into our country." This angered \*Eelamurasu\* editors Mr. [E.R. Thiruchelvam](#) and Mr. [S. M. Gopalaratnam](#), who wrote in opposition, claiming that the communists did not want India to support the Tamil people. Soon after, in 1987, the India-Sri Lanka agreement was signed following India's intervention, and the [Indian Peace Keeping Force](#) (IPKF) entered Sri Lanka. Tamil leaders, along with the people, welcomed them with garlands and rituals. But not long after, when the Indian military began crossing its limits, fighting resumed. During this time, the Indian army distributed food to the people. At home, there were hardships. Villagers stood guard in line to get rice, oil, lentils, and flour, but Comrade refused to allow any of these supplies into the house. As usual, the drumsticks and banana plants from our garden sustained us. Nearby, Mr. Velautham's wife, Rajeswari, who had a large farm in Olumadu, was very attached to me. She knew about our family's situation and gave us a sack of paddy, which was of great help at the time.

With Rasan being transferred to the [Boossa prison camp](#), we couldn't even visit him. My younger son, Keerthy, had started attending Peradeniya. The Liberation Tigers and the Indian army continued their clashes. Bombs, gunfire, and death spread everywhere. My daughter Buby was pregnant. We couldn't provide her with proper food. My comrade encouraged her to read good books. Meanwhile, in Jaffna, military forces bombed and destroyed all the newspaper offices. Mr. [S. M. Gopalaratnam](#) brought his files and came to Sathiamanai. In that small house, on opposite sides, close friends with opposing views wrote freely about what they believed was right. They would sometimes argue, but the honesty and trust in their friendship were unshakeable, even today. I re-read the note journalist Gopalarathinam wrote about comrade KAS.

"In October 1987, after the Indian Peacekeeping Force bombed and destroyed the \*Eelamurasu\* printing press where I was serving as editor, the newspaper was printed for a few days from Tholpuram and Chankanai. During that time, KAS sent word through our mutual friend, [E.R. Thiruchelvam](#), asking me to come to his home. When I arrived, KAS insisted that I stay at his home. I joked, 'What would happen if an editor of

the Tigers' newspaper and a China-leaning communist party member like you both got caught by the Indian army?' He laughed heartily. His wife added, 'You gave him food when he was in hiding in 1971. Now he feels it's his duty to take care of you.' KAS's gratitude was unshakeable. When I criticized the communist party's stance on the Eelam liberation struggle in \*Eelamurasu\*, KAS responded through their newspaper. When we met again in Tholpuram and discussed these articles, Gopu remarked, 'In our friendship, nothing can come between us, nor can it grow any stronger,' KAS said in a firm voice. That was the code of friendship that KAS followed. His writings, rooted in different ideologies, offered great solace. The truth and sacrifices will never be forgotten. He had written with this in mind."

Amid this, bombs would fly over our house. During those moments, we would run to Ravi's village, Kalaiyadi, often taking only a bucket that my comrade used for his nighttime needs due to his loss of feeling in his legs. The bucket felt like our only prized possession, as other things seemed insignificant. (Since my comrade's feet had started to lose feeling and developed wounds prevented him from walking outside at night, and because he also had diabetes, it was difficult for the wounds to heal. My daughter Buby would clean and empty the bucket.) Our dog Kittu would also accompany us, and village dogs would join Kittu in fights. Buby would run, crying, calling out, "Kittu, Kittu!" I would stop her, saying, "Please don't call out the dog's name! If you do, they'll find out ( LTTE's Jaffna leader's name was also "[Kittu](#)" at that time) and attack us!" During the time of the Indian Peace Keeping Force, the hardships we endured were no small matter. Ravi's parents welcomed us without hesitation and supported us. His sisters treated Buby like their own, and seeing this gave my comrade and me immense comfort.

I will continue about the love and intensity that Rasan experienced while in prison...

#### 44. In Search of the Imprisoned Son: A Love Story -Written on 5 July, 2021

We didn't have any information about the [Boossa prison camp](#). During that time, I had shared my sorrows with people like comrade S. Kathiravelu and Mr. [A.J. Kanagaratna](#), and I had even cried in front of them. Comrade Kathiravelu (the father of Minister Douglas Devananda) made efforts to send a complaint letter to [Amnesty International](#). Meanwhile, [Justice T.W. Rajaratnam](#) from Tellippalai, who had provided excellent legal advice and handled some important cases for the party during critical moments, was

urged to inquire about Rasan's case. Since Mr. [T.W. Rajaratnam](#) was retired by then, his son Mr. [T.C. Rajaratnam](#) took over the case and refused to charge any fees.

Mr. [A.J. Kanagaratna](#) helped me to compile and sent all the news to [\\*Saturday Review\\*](#). Neighbors remarked that Rasan's father, who had always rushed to help others in times of trouble, seemed indifferent to Rasan's situation. But I knew of his love and concern for his children. Even though he was angry at his son for choosing the wrong political path, I could feel the pain of separation from his eldest child weighing on him. Yet, he continued to write and speak passionately about national unity and minority freedom.

During this period, one day, two girls who appeared to be around the same age as our daughter, came to our home. Upon inquiry, I realized I knew both of their families well. However, there seemed to be hesitation in their actions. Just then, my daughter Buby arrived and said, "Mother, she has loved our brother for a long time. He doesn't know about her feelings. She has been offering prayers and fasting in his name at temples. She wants to send him a letter." Buby narrated the whole story in one breath. Fear rendered me speechless.

That pretty girl comes from a scholarly family. Although her mother was my comrade's relative, it was a very traditional and orthodox family. Rasan's future was uncertain. When would he be released? What would he do afterward? Would he continue the struggle? Or take up work? Would he be like his father? Being born of a mixed marriage, caste prejudices still lingered, not only in our village but also in our society. In a flash, a thousand thoughts swirled in my mind.

I asked Buby, "Did you know about this earlier?" "Yes, mother. A sister of \* who studies with me told me about it a month ago. I confirmed it with them, and they both assured me. Our brother also had feelings for her, but her brother, being our brother's close friend, probably didn't disclose it. But she asked to meet you, so she came today," Buby explained.

Buby is a modern girl, courageous enough to face anything. Her father had raised her to be that way. Had my comrade been home, he would have given a thoughtful response. His absence was, in a way, fortunate. It allowed me to freely ask the young girl the questions that arose from my fears. I asked many doubts, including which zodiac star she was born under. My mother was skilled in astrology, palmistry, and writing

horoscopes. Her stubborn faith in these practices had deeply influenced me. After my comrade embraced Communism, he always believed in approaching everything scientifically, but he never suppressed my religious practices, even if he occasionally teased me.

After I had asked all my questions, I realized a school teacher, someone who genuinely loved my eldest son, had come to see me today. “He is a good boy, wise, and pure like camphor,” his friends used to say. He was insightful and skillful, a bit mischievous but brilliant. He had the same sweet voice as his father. I couldn’t help but feel a strange joy as I realized I had never heard of such love in any book, movie, or story before. The girl’s ability to stand on her own feet brought me contentment as a mother. I plucked two sprigs from the [tulsi plant](#) and gave one to each of them. Then I accepted the letter she had brought. The bottle of hot water flask exchange was stopped at that time. I didn’t know where or how I would deliver the letter, and I couldn’t bring myself to give her false hope.

A few days later, [Rasan wrote from the Magazine Prison](#), informing us of his transfer. We sent her letter as the first one to him. His response and how the love blossomed will be continued...

Note: I initially wanted to let this story fade away, but since many have twisted the truth with their imaginations and prejudices, I thought it better to reveal the truth while I am still alive.

## 45. Son Released from Prison -Written on 2 August, 2021

Friend Mr. [A.J. Kanagaratna](#) (August 26, 1934 - October 11, 2006) was a dedicated figure in the English journalism field, a prominent critic, and a writer from Sri Lanka. He excelled in various areas, including English literature, Tamil literature, literary criticism, modern literature, and drama. He was known for his significant contributions as a mentor and guide to many young writers, generally referred to as A.J. The integrity and trust that existed in that friendship continue to resonate today. I reread the notes written by friend [A.J. Kanagaratna](#) about comrade KAS.

"In the current complicated situation, the passing of comrade K.A. Subramaniam has added to the pressure on the left movement in the Northern Province. Comrade Subramaniam fought for the working people and the oppressed throughout his life. I don't need to say much about his struggle, as it is well known to many. Personally, I have lost a true friend due to his passing. As I write this, his smiling face appears before my mind's eye. We used to talk about many things, including politics, openly. While he never gave up his opinions, he was open to hearing others' viewpoints. The society he dreamed of has unfortunately passed away before him. However, thanks to the efforts of people like him, the day that society comes into being is drawing closer. When will that day be?"

We initially sent only the letter from that woman to Rasan. Later, Buby spoke to her father, brother, and her husband about it. My comrade might have thought that the links of the chain of caste connections should be replaced with other connections. Although the continuity of his family might have been an obstacle to Rajar's thoughts, he would prioritize the union of two minds. Hence, there was no restriction in that affection. My comrade told Buby to write a detailed letter to her brother. I believe that despite having been sent previously, both letters reached Rasan together. He had sent the letter separately on the same page.

In our correspondence, Rasan wrote about her noble qualities and mentioned that it was inappropriate to disrupt her life due to ignorance about her feelings. In her section, Rasan only inquired about her studies, work, and the health of her family members. However, Buby integrated the letter entirely with that girl's correspondence. After that, he began sending letters on his own. I thought that after a few letters, many of the subsequent letters were indeed for her. Therefore, since her name was mentioned outside, we started handing over the letters without breaking them open. Meanwhile, a comforting reply had arrived regarding a letter sent to the United Nations' International Forgiveness Commission, acknowledging that matter.

In the interim, [Justice Vanam Rajaratnam](#)'s son, a lawyer, Mr. T.C. Rajaratnam had filed a case for Rasan's release. Justice Vanam Rajaratnam (December 21, 1920 - January 15, 1994) was a leading Tamil lawyer, judge, and politician in Sri Lanka. He served as the chairman of the juvenile court commission, as a judge in the appeals court, and as a member of parliament. The integrity and trust that existed in that friendship continue to resonate today.

I reread the notes written by friend [Vanam Rajaratnam](#) about comrade KAS and wished to share them with you. Some histories must be widely spread, right?

"When I started working as a lawyer, [K.A. Subramaniam](#) would ensure my attendance in very challenging cases filed against workers and trade unionists, both at that initial stage and thereafter. During that period, the government and society subjected workers and trade unionists to great troubles. However, since Subramaniam was an inspiring leader for everyone, we rarely lost cases. The last case I attended on his behalf was related to temple access in Chavakachcheri. High castes attempted to poison wells. Police assisted the higher castes in preventing the downtrodden from entering the temple premises. The downtrodden organized themselves and prevented the police from executing this despicable, inhuman act. They even attacked the police. This was an exhilarating case, and the higher castes protested outside the court."

"We won the case. Though the area was a place where caste atrocities were committed, Subramaniam had prepared well for the case. He was well-versed in politics and had his own political philosophies, which he frequently shared with me. Despite some political disagreements between us, it never hindered our fruitful discussions when we met. Subramaniam was a caring friend. He would never fail to meet me when he came to Colombo. I had the opportunity to meet his son. He was known as a family friend, a prudent politician, and a person of integrity. I share the sorrow caused by his passing with his family and friends. Subramaniam was a patriot, a humanitarian, and a lover of the people, who tirelessly fought against the oppression faced by the downtrodden throughout his life. He fought valiantly, and his life has triumphed over death."

In the negotiations between the Indian and Sri Lankan governments, the release of political prisoners and the surrender of arms by militant groups were included. Therefore, the expectation arose that Rasan would be released. Despite the Indian government and military committing many violations and atrocities, it genuinely created a hope in my self-serving sense of nationalism.

Last year, the unified May day was formed. Comrade Annamalai of the [Nava Sama Samaja party](#), Comrade A. Vaithiyalingam of the Sri Lanka Communist Party (Moscow faction), Comrade S. Vijayanandhan, and Comrade S. Thirunavukkarasar, all leftist ideologues, gathered in Jaffna and conducted a very enthusiastic meeting at the Kokuvil public grounds. Comrade KAS, who was very ill, spoke enthusiastically with a lot of energy in his hands, sharing the joy that came from the unification of progressive forces. Again, clashes began between the Tigers and the peacekeeping force. Rasan was

transferred from Magazine Prison to Welikada prison. We were unable to go visit him. Nimal, who studied with Buby, would send a sports magazine called '[Sports Star](#)' to Rasan. Other news magazines were restricted, and thus Rasan's love flourished.

The agreement reached between Indian Prime Minister [Rajiv Gandhi](#) and Sri Lankan President J.R. Jayewardene on July 29, 1987, aimed to resolve the issues of the Tamil people in Sri Lanka. This agreement recognized Sri Lanka as a multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and multilingual country, acknowledged the North-East as the united homeland of the Tamil and Muslim peoples, and proposed the devolution of powers through provincial councils, with the Tamil language recognized as an official language.

On Tuesday, [September 22, 1987, political prisoners were released](#) gradually from the prison, facilitated through the legal system, and not just my son, but many young people were released. My daughter, with her husband's help, went to see her brother. They were brought back by the Chandrahasan family, who had signed for the highly sought-after young family. They were very affectionate and caring towards Rasan. They kept everyone at the Kappithawatte temple and later left. Rasan said he was emaciated. We couldn't bring the released child home because his life was in an unguaranteed state in Jaffna from LTTE. If the Tiger movement's members were captured, they would bite cyanide capsules and take their lives. Other groups that were captured faced the military's beatings and tortures, and they exited with physical pain.

My son wouldn't sit in a chair for more than five minutes. He expressed that he was suffering from a combination of discomfort and knee pain, unable to walk without difficulty. Rasan's girl also came with the villagers, friends, and comrades to learn news from Buby. She might have thought that she was the divine being for whom she prayed, as she held temple offerings and holy ash in her hand, believing that the release was a result of the divine. I also thought similarly. Even though united with my comrade, my tumultuous emotional state kept leading me to seek refuge in God, and it was that faith that kept me going.

After Rasan's release, he went to visit Mr. [T.C. Rajaratnam](#) to express his gratitude. He mentioned that he had married a relative of late Mr. [V. Rajasundaram](#) Master, who married in the [K.P. Ratnam](#) family. This newspaper clipping was included with Rasan's savings. I have no information on where Mr. [T.C. Rajaratnam](#) is today.

I will continue with the details of Rasan's marriage registration and the immense suffering that resulted from it.

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## 46. The Unending Grief of a Son After Marriage -Written on 29 August, 2021

After the marriage, I could not go see the liberated Rasan. The mother's heart ached, wondering if the child, who had borne physical and mental wounds for three whole years, would get good food and care. Daughter Buby came and, without fail, told every story. The woman would come to the house occasionally. Days passed like this. Buby and Ravi shared everything about how they saw Rasan for the first time at the temple. Those from various movements were not only kind to each other but also knew about each other's families. It was a time when they feared having a movement-related fighter in their home due to the country's situation. Still, Chandrakanthan invited Rasan to his home with love and fed him with respect, without any interruptions from others, while Rasan stayed on the upper floor of the temple and the flat-roofed house.

With the help of friends, he went to India to see a family from Orattanad that loved him dearly. There, the relationship between him and that woman blossomed through letters. He traveled with Palamottai Sivam and Vaddukoddai Deni to [Bombay](#). He sent us those photographs. Later, he returned to Sri Lanka. With friends' assistance, Buby said that Rasan had married that woman in a registered marriage. Although he was worried that he couldn't stand beside her, his heart was soothed by the distress caused by the Tigers and the military. However, this did not last long.

That day was 1988 [Vaikasi Visakam](#). The chariot festival at Paralai temple. I usually fast on this day. I would let the wind carry all my joys and sorrows to that '*Vayal Veli Samy*' (*God of paddy field*). As I finished lunch, a friend of Keerthy rushed in and said, "[\\* Akka \\* has died after eating 'Alarikottai' \(poison\)...](#)" This was hard to believe. Should I cry for the deceased woman? Or should I cry for my son, who waited to continue living with hope? Why all these sufferings? Why did the lives of the children who wanted to live come to an end? A thousand unanswered questions echoed in my mind. Buby and my comrade took the night bus to Colombo to see Rasan. Actually Rasan hadn't seen his

father since he joined the [PLOTE](#) movement. My comrade was going to see Rasan for the first time in this sorrowful time.

Buby was pregnant with a four-month child. After three days, they returned to Sathiamanai. Buby was continuously crying. The news of the woman's death had reached the village through the newspaper, and many people came to pay their respects. The reason was unknown, but I was also bewildered hearing the half-baked stories from the visitors. The friend was also in a confused state. Until now, I had not mentioned her name. However, many who knew us were well aware of these matters. The economic situation, permanent employment, and many reasons that contradicted the caste system might have played a role. What do you think? The loss of the little girl for our family continues to be an unhealed sorrow to this day. Rasan wore the ring adorned with her picture until the end. The letters expressing his love and feelings, written from 1981 to 1988, were carefully stacked in Rasan's bag. They are a treasure. His brother Keerthy named his child after her. His love continues to live with us today.

## Letters

Due to some political disagreements, Rasan did not go to the office of the movement he belonged to. Relatives were also hesitant to keep Rasan at their homes. For a few days, he slept on the upper floor of the Bambalapitiya Kathiresan temple and, with the help of Mr. [V. Rajasundaram](#) Master's son, Paran, finished the morning duties at a restaurant near the temple and returned. Later, comrade [S. Thevarajah](#) took Rasan to Kandy. At that time, Mrs. Kalalatchumi Thevarajah was teaching in Kandy. Since comrade E. Thambiah was getting married, I went to Colombo with my cousin's daughter, Ms. Gnambigai Sinniah, saying I could see Rasan too.

I saw Rasan after one and a half years. He had a long beard. After much pleading, I got him to cut his beard and took him to the wedding. What would he do now? He had no money, no job. There was no hope for life. I returned to Sathiamanai, burdened with grief. After Mr. [V. Rajasundaram](#) Master passed away, his helper had a daughter named Ms. Kanageshwari. With no father, she stood there, her mother asking me, "I cannot take this little girl who has come of age in my village and raise her. There's no one I can trust more than you. Would you keep my daughter in your house?" We were only drinking half a bellyful of porridge.

I said, "I can give that to your child. More than that, I will send her to school and let her continue her education." My neighbor's son Akhilan and Kanakam went to school together.

In the month of September 1988, Subhara was born. Amidst the continuous suffering, the music of the child filled the silent house with joy. The initials of Subramaniam, Buby, and Ravi combined to become "Subhara." I was so happy to see the comrade after a long time. The comrade, accustomed to waking up at dawn, would carry Subhara with him. He would sing songs about the moon, striking the roach against the wall. Knowing that mother's milk was important for the child, he would go to the seaside to buy 'Kili fish.' Due to the increasing military disturbances, party meetings began at Sathiamanai.

Discussions about political changes to oust the Indian Army were held. The violations by the Indian Army and the arbitrary actions of the Tigers created fear. Electricity was cut off. There was a shortage of food. Sudden explosions occurred. People began to set up camps in every house. Talks about the presidential election began. Premadasa from the United National Party (UNP) and Sirimavo Bandaranaike from the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) were said to be contesting against each other. I will continue with the presidential election campaign and the threats from the LTTE.

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## 47. Presidential Election Campaign Meeting and the Tigers' Threats -Written on 2 October, 2021

In 1988, amidst the prevailing conditions, my comrade emphasized the need for an alternative government through the Sri Lanka Communist (Left) Party to ensure that the Tamil-speaking people, along with the entire nation, could find at least a minimal solution to the suffering they were experiencing. Many members associated with the [All Ceylon Tamil Congress](#) and progressive factions united with the belief that only a change in government could drive back the Indian army and decided to support Mrs. [Sirimavo Bandaranaike](#) as the candidate for the Democratic People's Power in the presidential election.

Those regarded as liberation movement activists also lived in hiding due to the Indian army's lawlessness. This situation paved the way for unity and understanding among progressive democratic nationalist forces. Preparatory work for this began, and Comrade tirelessly moved about, often needing to go to Colombo.

Previously, Comrade [E. T. Moorthy](#) lived relatively nearby, and he would stay there. Despite having politically conflicting views, they maintained a strong friendship. During Professor [Kailasapathy](#)'s illness, my comrade frequently visited him at [E. T. Moorthy](#)'s home. Later, after establishing a situation where he could stay in his trade union office, Comrade started staying at the Ramakrishna Mission. It was well-maintained health-wise for a very low fee. At one point, he was admitted to a Colombo hospital due to health issues.

Comrades E. Thambiah, [E. T. Moorthy](#), Kadiravel (the father of Minister Douglas Devananda, my biological brother), and friend A. Kulendran visited and provided food. When my comrade returned to Sathiamanai, he worked energetically. Comrade KAS insisted on engaging with the people, merging politics with literature. His early political involvement began with the establishment of the [Bharathiyar](#) Festival at the Kilanai Community Reading Center near his home. I have previously mentioned this in detail in earlier notes.

One day, a couple arrived in a car that revealed their elite status. I did not recognize them. My comrade identified them and said that our Keerthy was in love with their daughter (Susithra) and had come to ask us to stop it. Comrade replied very calmly, "You could have told this directly to your daughter rather than coming all the way here." At that time, Keerthy was in the village because Peradeniya University was closed due to student protests. However, he remained inside the room. The relatives who had suffered injuries from a strong attack at the [Maviddapuram temple](#) entrance protest were their close relatives. "I have dedicated my life to breaking caste boundaries. Whether I go back to my relatives or not depends on Keerthy's decision. I will not break his love. Keerthy should think and decide," my comrade said. This shocked me greatly. Perhaps Buby had already spoken with her father and later with her brother Keerthy. The next morning, we began to operate as if we had forgotten everything.

A few days later, Keerthy went to India with Comrade Thevaraja's arrangements. The main purpose of that trip was to translate the poems of the [Hungarian poet Petőfi](#) into

Tamil, which were sung with vigor to awaken the sense of rights in a nation suffering under foreign oppression by the great poet [Subramania Bharati](#). This was done by the renowned writer K. Ganesh. Due to the prevailing conditions in the country at that time, the handwritten document could not be printed for several years. My comrade sent Keerthy, who was studying in Peradeniya, to the home of writer Mr. K. Ganesh to work on missing sections. With the assistance of Comrade Balaji from Chennai Book House ( Later renamed as [South Vision Books](#)), Keerthy also helped with the necessary tasks for the publication by the National Arts and Literature Association. At that time, Rasan was also in India, but there was no information from him.

The date for Mrs. Sirimavo's arrival for the presidential election campaign was set for December 14, 1988. Many comrades at home worked enthusiastically. The next morning, it was decided to hold a meeting at the Pandatharippu Hindu College grounds. I was preparing dinner for all the comrades. Suddenly, there was a commotion. The woman from the neighboring house exclaimed, "Thumpon and Vetri have come with guns. 'Aiya' and Buby have gone inside the room. What is going to happen? Are they coming here?" I rushed to the kitchen. The room door was slightly ajar. A gun was placed near the door. Ravi was standing outside with a gun. I understood I couldn't enter. I thought this incident was happening joyfully because of the friendship with the Indian army due to the differences with the Tigers. Moreover, since Thumpon had studied at Buby's school, there was a friendship. Vetri was a small assistant in PLOTE earlier and had come for Buby's wedding. I felt no fear regarding them. However, I was scared that the Indian army might launch several attacks.

Eventually, comrades [S.K. Senthivel](#), [S. Thevarajah](#), S. Navarathinam, and [S. Sivathasan](#) stood nearby. After a few hours, they came out and carried the guns with them. My comrade spoke with his comrades in the compound. Thumpon said that "You must not hold the meeting. 'Aiya', you are a good person, but we are the ones who killed '[Poddar S. Nadarajah](#)'. This order is from a higher place. It came from the forest." Buby cried out and shouted, "If you are getting married, they should be at the wedding, and if you are dead, you should put them in a higher place,". My grandchild Subhara was less than four months old. She was crying loudly.

I had already served food to the comrades. Only my comrade had not eaten. In my anxiety, I could not offer him anything. I was scared to ask him to eat. In times of curfew, Mrs. Sirimavo would come in the early morning. It is said that my comrade told them, "This is a time without communication facilities. We arranged this considering the country's main need." Early in the morning, Mrs. Sirimavo would leave Colombo. The

meeting would surely take place. "If you shoot me, perhaps that would stop it," my comrade reportedly said while Thumpon narrated the story of shooting the '[Poddar S. Nadarajah](#)'. Later Buby persuaded my comrade to eat the dinner and also gave him diabetic tablets.

They had to ask for permission from IPKF for the meeting being held to drive out the Indian army. In the early morning, Comrade got ready to leave for permission. One of the two white shirts he had was slightly new. When Buby brought it, he said, "No, this should be worn for the meeting; I will wear it later." After drinking the milk from the cup and getting ready, he left. When comrades stopped him, he said, "You go to the grounds and oversee the preparations. I will go alone." Buby cried loudly and insisted on leaving with the same outfit. I had little agreement about Buby going and leaving child with me. I was about to say something when she began to cry. The father went ahead on a bicycle while she followed in another bicycle. Not knowing that the milk cup was my comrade's food for the day, I re-entered the kitchen to prepare breakfast. The comrades at home gathered and discussed. I will continue with what happened next...

## 48. Sirimavo Bandaranaike's Public Meeting -Written on 6 March 2021

That day, I prepared food for the comrades staying at home, unaware that the only thing my comrade had drunk in the morning was goat milk coffee. I had posted about it earlier.

Until 1978, my comrade had boycotted all elections. Mr. [N.M. Perera](#) and comrade [Pieter Keuneman](#) faced severe criticism for the mistakes made by leftist leaders during Mrs. Sirimavo's rule from 1970 to 1977. Nevertheless, due to the blunders of the leftist leadership, which abandoned the SLFP in the 1977 election, the UNP government subsequently violated democracy by stripping Mrs. Sirimavo of her citizenship. The [Sri Lanka Communist Party \(Left\)](#) supported the main opposition candidates in the presidential elections of 1982 and 1988 against these undemocratic actions of the UNP government.

After my comrade and my daughter left on two separate push bikes in the early morning, the comrades who stayed at home prepared to leave for the gathering at the Pandatharippu Hindu College grounds. In the meantime, Comrade [S.K. Senthivel](#) mentioned that Comrade [S. Sivathasan](#) also was unwell. I do not know where Comrade [S. Sivathasan](#) went afterward, but he was supposed to translate Mrs. Sirimavo's speech into Tamil.

At this moment, I remember what Professor [S. Sivasekaram](#) wrote in 1991 under the title "Unity and Struggle":

"After 1977, the stance taken by the [Sri Lanka Communist Party \(Left\)](#) regarding the main opposition candidates who contested the presidential elections against the undemocratic actions of the UNP government and the people's vote during the parliamentary dissolution crisis in 1983 served as a good practical illustration of the policy of 'unity and struggle.' In a recent context of extreme tension, the unity and action of all forces that can come together has strengthened the party and patriotic progressive forces, enabling it to continue to operate even today. The voting stance of comrade KAS was a good practical illustration of the policy of 'unity and struggle.' The recent extreme tension was due to the unity and action of all forces that can come together, strengthening both the party and patriotic progressive forces, allowing it to continue

operating today. In this context, I consider the leadership and proactive actions of comrade KAS to be very significant."

Furthermore, "anyone who does not consider a comrade important, including any party member or those close to it, is not a friend. Comrade KAS does not wish to put anyone, including party members, at risk. In an environment where many consider revolution to mean violence and unnecessary bloodshed, comrade KAS, who does not wish for any unnecessary loss of life, believes that while sacrifices may be necessary for revolution, avoidable loss of life should be prevented. This humanitarianism, distinct from the worldview of other revolutionaries, has earned him respect and admiration from those who may disagree with him."

On this basis, the [Sri Lanka Communist Party \(Left\)](#)'s important members were not invited to this gathering to ensure their safety and to continue strengthening both the party and patriotic progressive forces. Time was passing. Only my child Subhara and I were left at home, along with Akhilan's mother. Child Subhara was crying for her mother's milk. It was hard to find milk. We were not accustomed to it. I was feeding her with rice porridge mixed with water and had given her some boiled rice. She was flushed and agitated while crying. After noon, Buby arrived. "Dad, didn't ask me to come," she said and left alone. I asked her several questions.

My comrade had received permission after some delay from the IPKF military camp in [Sillalai](#) to conduct the meeting, and it was the right time to go directly to Pandatharippu Women's College (two helicopters landed there). In the first helicopter, Mr. [Rathwatte](#), who was later the Minister of Defense under [Chandrika](#)'s government, and other security personnel arrived. They were welcomed by Mr. Alvaarpillai Kanthasamy. In the second helicopter, Mrs. Sirimavo arrived with Mrs. Lenarol. I remember having met Mrs. Lenarol earlier. In 1963, a women's organization called "Progressive Women's League" was established in Jaffna. A group from the Colombo Women's Union, including Mrs. Lenarol, Mrs. [Theja Gunawardena](#), Miss Nanayakkara, and a few others came to Jaffna to establish a branch here. Mrs. Uruthira Kanthasamy (Former Principal of Pandatharippu Ladies College) was elected as the president, Mrs. Thangam Kanthagnani as the secretary, I was elected as the assistant secretary, and Miss Chandrakanti [Seenivasagam](#) was appointed as a committee member along with five others.

Mrs. Kalalatchumi Thevarajah and her son Janamagan, along with their cousin, welcomed Mrs. Sirimavo. Kalalatchumi participated in several struggles, joining the [New Democratic Marxist-Leninist party](#) with her husband comrade [S. Thevarajah](#). At the end of 1966, I was transferred from Karainagar to [Pandaterippu](#) Panipulam village, where the house I rented was owned by Mrs. Kalalatchumi's mother, Mrs. Thangamma. I have known Kalalatchumi since childhood.

It is said that the IPKF Lieutenant General [A.S. Kalkat](#), met Mrs. Sirimavo in a traditional manner and spoke with her. The audio/visual footage of this is available on YouTube. Part 1: [\[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I1gnfvz18I0\]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I1gnfvz18I0)(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I1gnfvz18I0> ).

For Mrs. Sirimavo's safety, Indian military vehicles were not used; instead, Mrs. Lenarol and Mrs. Kalalatchumi escorted Mrs. Sirimavo safely from Pandatharippu Ladies College to the [Pandatharippu Hindu College](#) grounds along with my comrade. Although many, including Mr. [Kumar Ponnambalam](#), had come to speak, due to some issues, both Mrs. Sirimavo and my comrade were the only ones who spoke. Mr. Mothilal Nehru from ATTC translated Mrs. Sirimavo's speech. Comrades [S. Thevarajah](#), Mrs. Lenorol, Mr. [Kumar Ponnambalam](#), Mr. [Rathwatte](#), and Mr. Alvaarpillai Kanthasamy were all present on stage.

In his keynote speech, my comrade said, "What is the problem of the Tamil people? We are here not for personal ambitions or anything else; we stand together with all forces that fight for a solution. We believe that Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike will attempt to remove the Indian army." The audio/visual footage of this is available on YouTube. Part 2: [\[https://youtu.be/pdL3Gnucs2U\]](https://youtu.be/pdL3Gnucs2U)(<https://youtu.be/pdL3Gnucs2U> ).

Hundreds of people filled the entire ground. When Mrs. Sirimavo said, "As soon as I come to power, I will remove the Indian army," it astonished the Indian military personnel surrounding the crowd, which was a testament to the suffering the people had endured.

After the meeting concluded successfully, Mrs. Sirimavo, aware of the issue, invited my comrade to come to Colombo in a helicopter with her. My comrade refused.

When the Indian army told my comrade that they would provide him with security, he replied, "This meeting was held to remove you. I will take care of myself," and he left. The audio/visual footage of this is available on YouTube. Part 3: [\[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K2KVpoHA0CU\]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K2KVpoHA0CU)(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K2KVpoHA0CU> ).

After observing all of this, Buby stood back and waited. Ravi came after a long time. He seemed very tired. Since I learned everything from Buby, I did not ask anything. That night, we had no information about where my comrade was. All we could hear outside the house was the barking of dogs. The next morning, an unfamiliar person came and inquired about my comrade. When we said we did not know, he replied, "You must inform us if you find out."

On the second evening, a letter arrived from my comrade, brought by his common friend Mr. Pavalam from [Sillalai](#). It stated that he was safe at a friend's house and needed to change his place. They were somewhat related to LTTE, however their respect and love towards my comrade protected us. Later, Buby and Akhilan kept going back and forth, checking on my comrade's health. In the meantime, once again, Thumpan came and inquired. After nine days, comrades took my comrade to a party comrade's relative's house. From there, my comrade decided to go to Colombo. To be continued...

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## 49. I met my elder son after the 1988 Presidential election campaign -Written on 5 October 2021

1988 Presidential election campaign, which was unprecedented in Sri Lankan electoral history, as it became impossible to send even one election officer to some polling stations. Mr. [R. Premadasa](#) took the oath of office as President on January 2, 1989, having secured 50.43% of the votes.

I had mentioned that my comrade had stayed at the house of a friend living in a place called 'Pavalam' in [Sillalai](#) due to the arbitrary actions of the LTTE (the Liberation Tigers

of Tamil Eelam). One of the two brothers, who were the sons-in-law of the Pavalam family, was a supporter of the LTTE. My comrade had left his bicycle somewhere there and stayed safe. My daughter Buby, who went searching for her father, had come home for her three-and-a-half-month-old baby. However, Buby was worried about her father's ill health.

Party comrades wanted to ensure the safety of their comrade. Accordingly, Comrade S.Thevaraja accommodated him at the house of his close relative, Mr. Satkunam, in Aanaikottai, and after a few days, sent him to Colombo. My comrade stayed in a very modest lodge in Colombo. Later, with the help of a few friends at the [Colombo Ramakrishna Mission](#), he was able to stay for a lower fee than the daily rate. During that time, comrades like [E. T. Moorthy](#) (from the Red Flag Union), Kathiravelu (father of Minister Douglas Devananda, my non co-born brother), E. Thambiah, A. Kulenthiran, and Alwarpillai Kanthasamy were very supportive.

At this time, a letter also arrived from Mr. [Velautham Nallanathar alias Raghavan \(RR\)](#), a close friend of Rasan from the [Maldives, Male](#) Prison, who lived in my neighborhood. Despite political disagreements, my comrade showed great love and concern for him. It brought relief to his family and friends, who were suffering without knowing details about him, to know that he was alive. Comrade later mentioned some of the difficulties he faced in Colombo, while some were told by other comrades and friends.

Mr.V. Divyarajah (Now in Canada) went and sang songs like "We Will Create New History," discussing national developments. Many comrades visited him. My comrade felt the unresolved pain while speaking with Mr. [Uma Maheswaran](#) at the Ramakrishna Mission Hall. My comrade inquire about Rasan's comrades who died or were arrested in [Maldives](#) in November 1988, such as Vasanthi (Manivannan from Vadaliyaddaippu), Mr. [Velautham Nallanathar alias Raghavan \(RR\)](#), and others, while hiding his pain regarding political situations. Following an illness that night, he was admitted to the [Kumaran Ratnam Hospital in Colombo](#) by the administration of the Ramakrishna Mission. Afterward, he was transferred to the Colombo General Hospital based on [Dr. S. Ramachandran's](#) advice. During the days when the [University of Peradeniya](#) was closed, my friend Mrs. Ranjitham Kadaiah's son Sudhaharan stayed in Colombo with a few others, allowing Keerthy to see his father closely.

I, along with Buby's family, hurriedly set off to Colombo with the baby Subhara amidst many hardships. Looking back now, it brings tears to my eyes. We stayed at my friend

Mrs. Sivanesan Kunchu's house in Wellawatte and went to visit my comrade at [Colombo General Hospital](#). I still remember the help my friend Kunchu provided during that time. Rasan was in India. In the meantime, I mentioned earlier that comrade Thevaraja had sent Keerthy to India for book publications and to take part in social science forums, or to encourage Keerthy. Rasan also had connections in India through the movement.

With the financial help of Buby's friend Vadhani in Chennai, Keerthy arranged for Rasan to be sent to Bangladesh and then returned to his hometown. However, within a few days, Rasan had come to Colombo. When I asked "Why?" he mentioned that he had learned about his father's illness and had come because of that.

Initially, we stayed at Kunchu's house in Wellawatte before going to the hospital. There, the Sinhalese patients advised that "little babies" should not be brought to such wards. The nurses there were reluctant to take the baby to the hospital. However, during our days there, we brought Subhara along. My comrade had an unbreakable affection for the baby, Subhara. Even amidst financial and mental struggles, the child provided immense comfort. He spent time with her during moments at home, which was suddenly snatched away.

Meanwhile, while treatment was ongoing in Colombo, the police arrested Keerthy, who was staying in a place called '[Kirulapana](#).' During that period, operations to round up and arrest young people were rampant. Comrade KAS supposedly saw this in a dream and informed those around him. Later, it is said that Keerthy was released on the recommendation of Mr. S. Alagarethinam. After hospital treatment, we brought my comrade to the Ramakrishna Mission in Wellawatte. During this time, Rasan also came from India and joined us. Kunchu and [E. T. Moorthy](#)'s wife, Vasanthi, prepared our food. Mrs Sunitha Kulenthiran provided breakfast for us. Some days our lunches were provided by Mr. Alwarpillai Kanthasamy, who was the manager at the '[Shanthi Vihar](#)' [restaurant](#). How can we express our gratitude for their assistance?

With full hearts filled with worry and uncertain futures, Mr. A. Kulenthiran took some pictures with his camera near the room where we stayed at the [Colombo Ramakrishna Mission](#). Amidst the sorrows, we were all gathered together. At the mission, we met the family of Sharath Babu, who belonged to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam organization (LTTE). Surely, I must share more about them. To be continued...

## 50. Refusal to Seek Treatment in India -Written on 22 October 2021

Due to the cooperation of an accountant who worked at [Colombo Ramakrishna Mission](#), the seven of us stayed there for a very minimal fee. Rasan would sleep outside the door. As I went up to the upper floor to dry the wet clothes, I noticed a woman, probably around 40-42 years old, with a worried expression. We started talking. I learned that her only son had been killed, but there was no proper identification of who did it. Carrying the pain of separation from her son, she had moved there. Sarathbabu's father is a painter. They lived alone due to a mixed marriage. When we noticed that our comrade's health had improved to some extent, I wanted to go to Jaffna. She pressed a little money into my hand, saying, "Oh sister, I don't have a child, but let your husband live long, like a person who lives for others." I refrain from sharing some things she shared, as I cannot do so without her permission. The threat and movement of the LTTE in Jaffna had decreased, and our party comrades sent us news, so we returned to Sathiamanai again.

As Keerthy went to Kandy, Rasan left for [Bangladesh](#). When I was in Jaffna, my comrade's health condition deteriorated again. He received treatment from [Dr. S.Sivakumaran at Jaffna Teaching Hospital](#). During the treatment at Jaffna Teaching Hospital, Ms. P. Susithra (Keerthy's wife), Mr. N. Puvendran (Ravi's brother), and a few other comrades donated blood. While our comrade was receiving treatment at the hospital, 'Malligai' [Dominic Jeeva](#) and some of our old party comrades, along with our Jaffna comrades, came to visit. Comrades [Irupalai](#) Balan and [S. Navaratnam](#) brought food.

When we returned to Sathiamanai, comrade [V.A. Kandasamy](#) unexpectedly came to Sathiamanai. Once very close comrades, they had been estranged for a long time due to ideological differences. My comrade was lying on the floor and tried to get up but comrade V.A. Kandasamy sat on the ground, he held my comrade's hands tightly and said, "I will arrange for treatment in India. Let's go." With his usual feigned cheerfulness, my comrade replied, "I'm acting in defiance of India's arrogance. Thank you for your concern and visit," bringing the matter to a close. I recalled what comrade KAS had written in the past for comrade [V.A. Kandasamy](#), "A practice without ideology is

blindness; an ideology without practice is stagnation." After about two months, on May Day 1989, a rally meeting was held at a private educational institution in Stanley Road, chaired by Comrade KAS.

We traveled in a lorry with a child along with the comrades from Nitchamam. The Sri Lankan and Indian army's treatment of my comrade's speech was indeed related to their transgressions. I share that connection here. The Sri Lankan army, Indian army, and LTTE posed threats in three ways. The right to speak about the unity of the country is denied. The next morning dawned with fear... [Link to a video]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wmGqCkBRj4w>

[On May 1, 1989, Comrade K.A. Subramaniam, recovering from a serious illness, spoke on Stanley Road, Jaffna:](#)

*"If the [Premadasa](#) government has come forward for talks with the Liberation Tigers, we can understand that the truth we have already stated is indeed 'the truth.' We accept negotiations. At the same time, it could be temporary. It must create a pathway that both ethnic groups can live with freedom and sovereignty in our country, and that must be secured before establishing [Weli Oya](#) as a separate district. Moreover, the [Sri Lanka Communist Party \(Left\)](#) insists that the referendum in the Eastern Province must be temporarily suspended, and ideally, it must be abandoned entirely. This is the only way to instill confidence in the institutions that can go to negotiations and in the people. It could create an environment for conducting negotiations by mutually conceding. Apart from this, any decisions, conclusions, or weapons brought about by the will of the Sri Lankan government or the Indian government cannot establish peace in our country. This is our stance. We have been opposing Indian intervention since the beginning. The Sri Lankan government's [agreement](#) with India necessitates that the Sri Lankan people make some concessions. This concession must be a negotiating framework involving both India and Sri Lanka. This negotiation should be a collective effort from the Sri Lankan government, Indian government, and other liberation organizations that can lead to a successful conclusion. Anything else would pose a great threat to our nation and people.*

*Our stance regarding India is already known to you; still, I must reiterate some points. From the beginning, the Sri Lanka Communist Party, under the leadership of people like [Pieter Keuneman](#) and [S.A. Wickremasinghe](#), has warned about 'foreign intervention', even after the split due to the ideological differences, our party follows the same. This has been overlooked by the political parties and liberation movements in Sri Lanka. India began its expansionist agenda by exploiting the ethnic riots of 1983, and the Sri*

*Lankan government acted as if it supported this. An [agreement](#) of Indo-Sri\_Lanka Accord was formed. This is, in many ways, a confusing matter. While there are certain aspects within the agreement that could assist in the liberation of the Tamil people and their future, the majority of what is found in the agreement poses risks not only to the Tamil people but to all Sri Lankans. It must be opposed or reformed." On May 1, 1989, during the May Day meeting chaired by Comrade [K.A. Subramaniam](#), Comrade [S. Thevarajah](#) also delivered a speech. To be continued...*

## 51. Last Meeting -Written on 11 November 2021

The day when workers' rights are celebrated with bloodshed, and the white flag turns red, is observed worldwide as a day of great significance. That day was not extensively celebrated in Jaffna. The party had organized the meeting beautifully. The meeting and the comrades' sentiments brought immense fulfillment and hope to comrade KAS. We returned home after midday.

In the early morning, comrade Selvanayagam urgently arrived, stating, "A comrade from the E.P.R.L.F. came at midnight and said, 'Comrade KAS is in danger.'" This message came through a military soldier associated with the [CPIM](#), who interrupted the phone conversation. The Sri Lankan army, the Indian army, and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) posed a constant threat. Some comrades had already arrived. Under the pressure from them, comrade KAS had to leave the Sathiamanai immediately, carrying the thoughts he wanted to convey during the meeting held in Jaffna.

Comrade [S. Thevarajah](#) took him to Kandy and made him stay at [Hindu Cultural Hall in Kandy](#) first. There was a Muslim sister's guesthouse in 'Dangolla.' Two students from Peradeniya University, named Gnanasothi and Suresh, were also staying there. They kindly offered their room for my comrade to stay in. Keerthy was staying in the [Akbar Nell Hall](#). We also brought Akhilan, a boy from the neighboring house, and he too stayed at the [Dangolla](#) guesthouse with them. Comrade KAS held great affection for Akhilan and encouraged his educational progress. Later, my comrade received treatment from [Dr. Thilak Abeysekera](#) at [Kandy General Hospital](#).

The family and friends from Jaffna came to visit my comrade regularly. Likewise, party comrades also came to visit and exchanged advice. He had kept a beautiful baby suit for his first granddaughter, which was made through the lady of the house. Along with their child, Ravi and Buby traveled to Kandy, where they met Ms. Pushpam ( Now in Denmark). Memories of the pictures taken at [Peradeniya Botanical Garden](#) in Kandy with Suresh remain with us. Many comrades visited my comrade during his stay. Five months passed in this way.

On November 1, 1989, during a public Chinese book exhibition at the [Colombo Library](#), Akhilan noted that he was astonished to see comrade KAS standing joyfully and chatting for more than one and a half hours with his old friends and comrades. The pictures taken that day with comrade S. Thevaraja are vibrant memories.

In mid-November 1989, I too traveled from Jaffna to [Kandy, Dangolla](#). At that time, the JVP's other uprising occurred between 1987 and 1989. Just as there were actions in the Tamil regions with impractical policies and policies without practices, similar actions took place here as well. This led the army to unleash its powers upon the common people. The Sinhala people faced significant suffering from both sides. During our time at Sathiamanai, we had no means of news exchange, radio, or television equipment. On necessary days, Ravi would bring a radio from his house. Earlier, in 1972, a comrade named [Sillaiyoor Selvarajan](#) had gifted us a radio, but it broke down multiple times. Comrade Maan Muthaiya's son Mr. Mohan would fix it free of charge. Eventually, the radio became unusable.

There was a television set at the Kandy guesthouse. My comrade was aware of the assassination of [Rohana Wijeweera](#) (November 13, 1989) and had written a note about it. We watched films like '[Nayakan](#)' and '[Pagal Nilavu](#)' together on television. There were two little children there who would come and play with my comrade. One day, while out to buy medicine, we went to [Kandy Lakshman Studio](#) nearby and took a photo.

At that time, the elder Rasan was in [Malaysia](#). He was staying at the home of Mrs. Vijayakumari Poobalan in Malaysia. Rasan, who often traveled to Singapore regarding his visa, met a woman named Ms. Maheshwari Thangiah at a temple there. With their help, he sent Rupees 10,000 to his father in Kandy. While Keerthy was taking care of his father at [Dangolla](#), my comrade gave that money for Keerthy to attend the Engineering Council Course privately in Colombo because his faculty in Peradeniya was closed due to JVP. One day, my comrade's health deteriorated, and he was taken

to [Kandy General Hospital](#) by Mr. Gnanasothi ( Now in Australia) and Mr. Suresh ( Now in the UK) while Keerthy was in Colombo.

My comrade, who often said he would live for more than a hundred years, seemed to realize that his final days were approaching. Two days before I was to leave for the village, he asked me, “Don’t go to the village.” I didn’t know this would be my last meeting with him. My mind was fully occupied, thinking of the baby in my daughter’s arms, the child in her womb, the open well for the rainy season, and Ravi, who was going to the Aarumuga Vidyasala School for work. Unable to bear all these thoughts, I ended up returning to the village Chulipuram.

When I came to the village, I understood the true situation. Buby was cooking without any assistance, while the child Subhara was peering into the well nearby. This was a sight I witnessed because the house had no door in front of it. When I saw these things, I realized that my daughter was managing all responsibilities alone. My heart felt a bit at ease.

At this time, my daughter received an invitation letter to come to Kandy for a teaching appointment. With the help of the neighbor Akhilan’s mother, Buby set off. At that time, she was pregnant with a nine-month-old child. When writing in the letter, my comrade had stated, “Boy will be born, and he too will grow up to be wise like his sister Subhara.” We only had a few curry leaves for my comrade. Even though we were economically very weak, our hopes remained strong. To be continued...

## 52. Comrade KAS passed away. -Written on 23 November 2021

Leaving her daughter Subhara at Sathiamanai, while expecting her son [Sumanjan](#) soon, Buby traveled in the train to Kandy with Akhilan’s mother in condemnation. In a family, both men and women must work. Each must stand on their own feet and face life, which I will emphasize to those who interact with me. I told my daughter Buby the same. When many of her classmates went to Colombo for jobs, her father's health condition and the sudden marriage arrangements halted it. When this teaching job was obtained, she traveled with the thought that she could be with her father.

We did not know about the news that the comrade had again fainted and was admitted to the Kandy Hospital. However, Buby had received a letter from him. It was said that a [Buddhist monk](#)'s blood was transfused to my comrade admitted to the Kandy Hospital. Keerthy, who had not bathed for two days, went to take a bath. Only Akhilan was at the hospital with my comrade. In the end, with the food of a Muslim sister and the blood of a Buddhist monk in his body, my comrade raised his right hand as a sign that he was "departing" and left us, as Akhilan later said. His death was recorded as "[myocardial infarction](#)" on the death certificate. He insisted that his death should be noted as "departing / farewell." He even requested that the picture should show him raising his hand as a sign of departure. "Every moment of my life was for the people. I fulfilled my duties as long as my conscience allowed. Now is the time to depart," my comrade firmly said earlier.

Hearing these words, we cried uncontrollably. Seven years of love, 27 years of married life. He left me. Despite conflicts and anger, love always prevailed. Whenever the children make a mistake, I voluntarily stand on my knees along with them, then my comrade asks them to get up early because I am also standing. When his mistakes are pointed out, my comrade accepts them and corrects them. My comrade lost his mother's and father's love for me, he lost all relatives, town and home and wandered from town to town with me. Born in a comfortable house with a top floor, he lived in a flooded mud house in Sathiamani for me. He went to study with shoes on his feet, but walked all over the boiling tarsal roads with bare feet for his belief in Communism. Later, despite professor [K. Kailasapathy](#) advising him, my comrade began wearing slippers again in 1982 due to the insistence of professor [K. Kailasapathy](#)'s daughters. Having received initiation at the [Maviddapuram temple](#), celebrated by his parents as their temple, my comrade said that there should be no religious ceremonies during his final event. My comrade requested that his daughter Buby should also be included.

While traveling in the train, Buby thought, "I'm going to see my father," and the thought filled her heart. The white color of the sky reminded her of her father's white attire. When Buby left the house, she took along a paddy stalk and a kind of flower. Suddenly, the train stopped. For more than half an hour, the reason was unknown. She was worried that the time to see her father would be wasted. She is the daughter who lived for her father. Two railway officials arrived. They called out Buby's name, "Sathiamalar Raveendran." She didn't understand anything. "Your father's health is not good, and he is going to be taken to Jaffna. Therefore, we are asking you to disembark..." they said. (At this point, tears are hiding my eyes...)

The poet K. Ganesh, who learned about it through Keerthy, along with comrades [S.K. Senthivel](#), E. Thambiah, and Mr. A. Kulendran went to Kandy to take care of necessary work like the postmortem and death certificate. Buby was picked up in a vehicle with the recently deceased Mr. Thangarasa and Mr. Thondar Kandhasamy brought them to Jaffna. Akhilan's mother very carefully looked after Buby from the train to the vehicle and accompanied her to Sathiamanai. Despite the physician's strict warnings, my comrade continued reading newspapers until the end and was last reading the book "Reflections of an Indian Communist" by comrade [E.M.S. Namboodiripad](#). His body, which faced assaults from the police and caste guards during numerous illegal processions, finally departed at the age of fifty-eight.

From late 1987 onwards, though he had lost all sensation below his knees, my comrade behaved with skill. He traveled. Even he successfully rode a bicycle, too. Comrade KAS never told anyone that he had lost sensation in his legs. Even if he did tell, no one would believe him, for he walked so normally despite being unable to move his feet or fingers; my comrade's mental strength was remarkable.

The last letter he wrote (20-11-1989) was to comrade [Rajendran Sivanu](#). In it, he firmly wrote that he would attend the meeting in Colombo on December 10. On 29-11-1989, comrade KAS's body was brought to Jaffna and placed at the party headquarters in Jaffna City for the comrades' homage before being taken to Chulipuram for the final rites on 30-11-1989. A red flag was raised over him. The '[Hammer and Sickle](#)' he tied as a symbol of our marriage was not with me. It was sleeping in the pawnshop.

On behalf of the party committee for the final homage, comrade [S.K. Senthivel](#) presided over the final events. Family members, party comrades, and friends offered their final floral tributes. In these events, any ritualistic practices, caste-based procedures, or superstitious traditional ceremonies were not observed. The events were held with revolutionary honors due for a communist fighter leader.

[Professor Kailasapathy](#)'s daughter Ms. Pavithra, along with comrades and friends, delivered tributes from twenty-one people.

Our village had never seen such a long final procession with a red flag. The Indian army watched in surprise and with many questions. The crowd at his final event

demonstrated that the comrade could not be separated from these people, overcoming the disruptions from the [IPKF](#) Indian Army and the LTTE forces.

In the final (heroic) tribute to comrade [K.A. Subramaniam](#), the long procession bearing the red flag, Keerthy set ablaze the body of comrade KAS at the cremation site in [Thiruvadinilai](#). Buby was in the final month. She was dazed. She did not go there.

Note: After this, life experiences continued in Kandy, Singapore, Colombo, my eldest son's passing away in 2001, travels to USA, India, Malaysia, and Australia, and the return to Sri Lanka... Life's encounters continue. I think I can conclude this part here. I am grateful to Facebook for allowing me to share my feelings with you. Thank you to the dear friends who encouraged me by reading my posts.

## KAS. Sathiamanai Library and A Note by Mr. E.R. Thiruchelvam on the May Day Struggle of 1969

Comrade KAS's grave of his ashes was carried by Buby for 30 years, and it is upon this grave that the foundation of the [KAS Sathiamanai Library](#) and Hall has risen. As a final tribute, the land where my comrade's last lay has been reclaimed amidst numerous hardships, transforming into a dignified space for the people. The [door frame installation ceremony](#) for the Memorial Library building took place on the morning of 5 March 2021 under the leadership of Comrade [S. Palani](#).

### **Is the right of workers being denied? - [E.R. Thiruchelvam](#) -Written on 22 April 2018**

The purpose of this article is to recall an event that occurred fifty years ago.

“From 1965 to 1970, the first national government of Sri Lanka was in power, led by the [United National Party](#)’s leader, [Dudley Senanayake](#). None of the prominent figures who were part of this national government are now active in politics.

On May 1, 1969, May Day coincided with Vesak Day. The Sinhalese government, which prioritized Buddhism, officially banned May Day celebrations. All major political parties accepted this decision.

In the national government, [Senator M. Thiruchchelvam](#) represented the Tamil Congress as the Minister of Local Government. For some reason, the Tamil Congress accepted the government’s decision. This acceptance of Buddhism as the official religion of Sri Lanka by the Tamil Congress can be observed from this instance.

However, the Jaffna branch of the [Chinese Communist Party](#) completely opposed this government decision. They announced that May Day would be celebrated in Jaffna on May 1. Police permission for this was denied. [K.A. Subramaniam](#), an activist from the Jaffna branch, publicized the May Day arrangements through the media.

Consequently, the police engaged in intense operations. An order was issued from Colombo that May Day celebrations in Jaffna were not to be permitted under any circumstances. At that time, Mr. [R. Sundaralingam](#) was serving as the police superintendent. He was known to have a close relationship with journalists in Colombo. R. Thavarasa served as the assistant police superintendent and was a strict yet honest officer.

At that time, I ([E.R. Thiruchelvam](#)) was a journalist at the office of the Jaffna Eelam newspaper. My colleagues included Sellathurai ([Veerakesari](#)), Pararajasingham (Dinakaran), Kathiravellu (Daily News), Pushparathinam ([Daily Mirror](#)), and Arasarathinam (Dinapathi).

Subramaniam, a leader of the [Chinese Communist Party](#), was known for mingling freely with journalists. He would regularly gift calendars featuring Chinese images and multicolored printed books. Therefore, he was often in touch with us journalists to inform us about the May Day gathering.

On May 1, we were instructed by Mr. Subramaniam to stay in our office and that he would contact us at the appropriate time. From the morning of that day, I and other journalists waited for his call (at that time, there were no mobile phones or social media).

Meanwhile, over 2,000 police officers had been dispatched from other provinces to Jaffna. The police, prepared for conflict, created a scene reminiscent of a war zone in Jaffna.

For a long time, the [Chinese Communist Party](#) had been involved in the struggles against caste oppression, temple entry issues, and other social injustices in the capital. Places like Nirsamam in Chankanai, Manduvil in South Maratchi, Nelliadi in North Maratchi, [Maviddapuram](#) in Valikamam North, and Ariyagulathadi in Jaffna were strongholds of their struggles. Because of this, a significant number of police were stationed with heavy weaponry at these locations, suspecting that a May Day march or gathering could occur.

Until about five in the evening, there was no sign of disturbance. Jaffna city appeared deserted, with police jeeps roaming around sporadically. We were exhausted, waiting for Mr. Subramaniam's phone call.

At around five-thirty, a call came in. An anonymous voice instructed us to come to the [junction at Stanley Street - Kasturiyar Street](#) near the Windsor Theatre. Before I could hear the next detail, the call was cut off. I wondered if this was a trick by the police. However, I couldn't disregard that call. Within two minutes, I had reached the designated spot. Other journalist friends also arrived.

The Windsor and Raja Theatres were located at the junction. At around five-thirty, after a screening that started at 2:30 PM, more than 500 people emerged from both theatres. We thought they were regular patrons coming out after a movie.

Suddenly, both groups raised their red flags and shouted, "Long Live the Workers!" Unbeknownst to us, two individuals carrying a large banner that read "May Day" in red cloth led the way. The crowd surged behind them, chanting as they rushed down

Kasturiyar Street, through the mosque area, the chapati shop area, and the Malay shop junction.

As the procession crossed the Satharachi Junction and advanced toward the large Tamil temple in Jaffna, [K.A. Subramaniam](#) and other leaders were spotted there. Moments later, the procession would reach the Jaffna Police Station. Meanwhile, large trucks filled with police were brought in.

Their riot gear was aimed at the marchers. Tear gas was deployed. The police targeted Subramaniam, who fell in a pool of blood. Nevertheless, the marchers did not turn back in fear; they remained steadfast at that location. The police dragged Subramaniam away and threw him in front of an oncoming bus, narrowly avoiding being hit.

From the police's perspective, the May Day gathering was suppressed. However, it is a point of pride that those who organized the event achieved a significant emotional victory on May Day in Jaffna, despite the Vesak proclamation being disregarded. It's important to note the remarkable planning of the organizers, who sent about 500 people into both theatres for the afternoon screening, concealing red flags in their bags. The police's intelligence failed to detect this operation beforehand.

This well-orchestrated procession surged forward a mile in about five minutes, despite the thousands of police gathered there. The workers celebrated a victory that day. Mr. Subramaniam, who was injured during the attack, received treatment at Jaffna Hospital for a few days before being sent to China for further treatment.

On that Vesak day, there is no political unity between the May Day event organized by the Chinese Communist Party in Jaffna and the JVP's decision to hold May Day celebrations in Jaffna this year on Vesak Day.

In Jaffna, still struggling to recover from the pain of war, why should the [JVP](#) insist on celebrating May Day? Why not hold the event in some southern town on Vesak Day if they have ideological commitment and moral integrity?

[E.R. Thiruchelvam](#) 22 April 2018

**Below is my response with some minor corrections to the above article.**

Dear Senior Journalist [E. R. Thiruchelvam](#),

Thank you very much for your historical account. I would like to share some information that I know with you. The events of May 1969 occurred on Vesak, a sacred day for Buddhists, which is why the then [Dudley Senanayake](#) government imposed a ban on May Day processions. In defiance of this order, members of the Sri Lanka Communist Party (Maoist) held a massive rally in Colombo. [S. D. Bandaranaike](#), D. K. D. Jineendrapala, and [Watson Fernando](#) were arrested in Colombo on May 1, 1969.

I reread the 1989 note written by my friend, senior journalist [S. M. Gopalaratnam](#), about comrade KAS. Writing truths from a different political stance and platform provided immense consolation. Truths and sacrifices should not fade away.

*"Mr. Subramaniam, who was injured in that attack, was treated for a few days at the Jaffna Hospital before being taken to China for further treatment."* The reason I write this is that comrade KAS was injured in the May Day incident in 1969, and I had previously mentioned that comrade [N. Shanmugadasan](#) treated him at his home. During that time, comrade Shanmugadasan made several attempts to send comrade KAS to China for treatment. However, those efforts did not succeed. This situation caused disappointment for comrade Shanmugadasan regarding the Chinese party. Since this incident, his perspective on China began to change. Comrade KAS did not pay much attention to his health. However, there were ongoing debates between them regarding China. He would not have preferred to elevate himself in any matter. According to his conscience, he lived selflessly and passed away, in accordance with the [1963 agreement](#) he signed with his comrades. [Valliammai Subramaniam](#)

## Comrade Arangaa's Poem for Comrade KAS on 27 November 2022.

*In a meaningful arena,*

*Everyone is joyfully reminiscing.*

*At this memorial event...*

*Esteemed guests, comrades, family members, townsfolk, dear friends,*

*Greetings to all of you...*

*[Professor Kailasapathy's](#)*

*Memorial event...*

*On the commemoration day of Comrade [K.A. Subramaniam](#),*

*I am moved with emotion,*

*Because both were on the leftist path...*

*Two wheels,*

*Traveling together in ideology,*

*Witnessing many sacrificial flames,*

*Standing against untouchability,*

*They stood like the dawn...*

*Despite the collective awareness of*

*[Professor Kailasapathy's](#) virtues,*

*I stand here to speak of*

*The real leader in my memory—*

*Social activist KAS 'Aiya'.*

*The mountain named KAS 'Aiya',*

*Along with the leftist ideology...*

*I take pride in the fact that*

*My father walked hand in hand with you.*

*A son who came to*

*Conquer the oppression of caste—  
Like a cross raised in our companion,  
Bearing our sins like another  
[Jesus Christ](#).  
In the fertile land of bravery,  
Lying beneath the humble huts...  
Eating simple food in a single vessel—  
During the nights of their murders...  
Carrying the ideology as a dream,  
He shattered caste hatred,  
Uplifting the spine of our people.  
He experienced the pride  
Of their dignity.  
Even when they drank from  
The honey pot of our dignity...  
The divinity that came riding,  
Even when our bodies were torn apart.  
The son with the sword—KAS 'Aiya',  
The son who triumphed in life.  
When we stood confused,  
He came showing the direction.  
The root of the movement—  
He is the root of the dawn.  
The essence of socialism,  
The victorious essence against untouchability...  
Comrade of workers,  
Living a clean life,  
A man who lives for himself—  
A great man living for the liberation of his people.*

*Indeed, the great man KAS 'Aiya'*  
*Is a saint revered by humanity.*  
*Even when he was uprooted from his roots,*  
*Even when his bones were broken,*  
*He took in [Marxism](#) as medicine and arose again—*  
*Another Shiva of our land,*  
*KAS 'Aiya' is the embodiment of courage.*  
*When the threads of oppressed women*  
*Were spun into their dignity—*  
*Hearing the cries of suffering mothers,*  
*He saw the chaos and came to create a new beginning.*  
*Thus, you are our Bharat,*  
*A heart that does not tremble at seeing death,*  
*A son who sleeps with weariness,*  
*A man who without wavering—*  
*Faced enemies with a strong stance.*  
*KAS 'Aiya' is the noble light*  
*For our long journey...*  
*His loving wife...*  
*The children in his heart,*  
*Resting with love—*  
*Celebrating with joy,*  
*Holding the hands of those who are lowly—*  
*He lives as an esteemed figure in the hearts of our people.*  
*There is no lack of transformation here...*  
*In our dawn, the red sun rises—*  
*Those who mock us,*  
*Do not consider it worthless...*  
*A comrade who gave us a shoulder—*

*A good leader of workers.  
Seeing the pain in your red hands,  
He won over the hearts of the fearful.  
The essence of public property—  
In your last breath, the path remained open.  
Your voice on the podium...  
Your passionate voice resonated...  
It instilled fear in enemies,  
Dismantling their oppression.  
KAS 'Aiya'... our fertile land's dawn,  
A sculptor who sculpted  
For the oppressed...  
In the memorial of Mani Jaya,  
If your companion does not sing—  
What conscience will slay the entirety?  
He is the abode of mercy,  
The fighter of women's rights...  
Holding his husband's ideologies as his dream...  
In the processions of his struggles,  
He faded like a shadow...  
Yet, his voice echoes,  
Celebrating the oppressed as kin—  
A wonderful mother...  
When the wildness of the jungle men  
Made him ill...  
More than a mother, he was  
A revolutionary woman who safeguarded ideologies.  
Without fear, she raised her children  
With the [Communist](#) hammer...*

*The divine who tore away the veil...  
Indeed...  
In the massacre called truth...  
KAS 'Aiya' and Valliammai—  
A connection beyond all others...  
Many decades have passed,  
The huts in Nitchamam have gone...  
The red stones have fallen—  
In this fire, you lit the flame...  
Only remnants remained...  
Transforming the destinies of our people...  
From educational traders to the borders,  
Writing their names in engineering faculties,  
Reviving history in the medical fields...  
A comrade who came to destroy the pain called untouchability...  
No more masters...  
After decades,  
A brave victory that can never be silenced...  
KAS 'Aiya'...  
Not a comic figure—  
He does not lie still.  
KAS 'Aiya'...  
He may have fallen asleep,  
But his dreams and ideologies  
Do not rest...  
Like thousands of fiery wings...  
With passion, he rises again and again—  
With your name, this world thrives...*

- Comrade [Arangaa Vijayaraj](#) is comrade [P. Radha](#)'s daughter.