

# Saturday Review

## SRI LANKA

Vol. 4 No. 2

30th March 1985

THE  
MAN  
IS  
OUT!

It is indeed shocking for the women in Jaffna to see the latest posters that have been put up all over the walls of the Northern and the Eastern Province.

Portraying a woman as a symbol responsible for family planning is most ridiculous action. Let it be noted that both husband and wife decide their own family according to their economic viability. It is strictly a private and personal matter to be decided by the couple concerned. It is not a woman-only affair as portrayed by these posters. The man is missing.

MOTHERS' FRONT, Jaffna.

# TOWARDS A CEASE-FIRE

(BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT)

Prospects of a cease-fire on the Northern Front appear to have distinctly improved following the talks between Sri Lankan leaders and India's Foreign Secretary, Mr. Romesh Bhandari in Colombo this week.

Besides President Jayewardene Mr. Bhandari met the Prime Minister, Mr. R. Premadasa, the ex-Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. A. C. S. Hameed and the Minister of Rural Industrial Development, Mr. S. Thondaman (who is President of the Ceylon Workers Congress, the largest union representing plantation workers of Indian origin).

The main topic discussed, the *Saturday Review* reliably learns, was how an end could be brought to the hostilities in the North and negotiations resumed to find a lasting solution to the National Question, at the crux of which is the Tamils' demand for a more equitable sharing of state power and all that flows from it.

Mr. Bhandari had repeated India's offer of good offices in the search for such a solution.

It is significant that on the very day Mr. Bhandari began his talks with Sri Lankan leaders, President Jayewardene speaking at a function at Inginiyitiya called upon the Tamil militant youth groups (according to the Island of 27th March) 'to lay down their arms and come forward for talks', saying that he was prepared to grant an amnesty to all concerned.

The President's speech reflected new thinking within the Government on the National Question.

The new thinking, in turn, is apparently based on the growing realisation within the Government that its tough "military approach"

in the North it simply not working in the expected manner and that it is necessary to think of other means, even direct talks with the leaders of the militant groups, to work out a solution.

It was the SATURDAY REVIEW which last September first urged "INVITE THE TIGERS (THE MILITANTS) TO THE TABLE", stating that "Whatever settlement is arrived at by the participants at the All-Party Conference (then in sessions) would not be workable without the concurrence and co-operation of 'The Boys' (the fond term by which the Tamil people refer to the militants)".

Mr. Thondaman's recent visit to India is viewed by political observers as part of the Government's efforts to seek an early end to the hostilities in the North which are taking a heavy toll not only of human lives but also of economic resources which otherwise could be diverted to the development of all Sri Lanka.

President Jayewardene himself told this correspondent that he was willing to meet the leaders of the militant groups without any preconditions other than that they agreed to stop violence, that is, agreed to a cease-fire.

"I am not insisting that they renounce their demand for a separate state. The Army could be confined to the barracks and the Emergency Regulations imposed in the North could be relaxed provided they are willing to lay down arms and come for talks".

The militant groups, however, are likely to insist on a number of other conditions for any negotiations to get off the ground.

As reported in the SATURDAY REVIEW of 5th January, the militant groups have said that they are not averse to a direct dialogue

with the Government to seek a political solution—"provided one could be found and provided the proper atmosphere could be created for such a meeting."

Their thinking is reflected in a recent press release issued by a Tamil youth group containing "AN APPEAL TO OUR SINHALESE BROTHERS AND SISTERS Here are excerpts:

*We are earnestly willing to talk to you and appeal to your sense of fairplay, natural justice and humanity.*

*From the time the United National Party Government came to power (in 1977) it had been promoting hatred and violence against the Tamil people while at the same time suppressing the Sinhalese people politically and economically...It is making the Tamils the scapegoat for their economic problems...*

*We appeal to you as human beings. just think what the Army, which has a duty to safeguard the people, is practically doing in the North? They are indiscriminately massacring the Tamils, young and old, women and children every day. They are arresting Tamil youths without any reason and demanding payment from their parents for their release. How would you have reacted under similar circumstances?*

*Though we have been subjected to this sort of cruelty and inhuman torture, we have not attacked even a single ordinary Sinhalese. We never thought of looting the property of Sinhalese people or damaging them. Our enemy is the Government.*

*Our request is just this: "Allow us to live in peace. We don't want power to suppress anyone. There were several talks and negotiations to find out the possibilities of the Sinhalese and the Tamils living together, in a United Sri Lanka.*

*But the compradore bourgeoisie and racist politicians rejected all the proposals in their own selfish interests. At the early stages, we fought for our rights in non-violent democratic ways. But all the Governments that came to power let loose police and military terrorism on our people. In the name of enforcing law and order, the Government violated all democratic norms.*

*We do not forget the fact that during the race riots, when our people were subjected to inhuman and savage atrocities by the UNP members and their stooges, you have protected thousands of Tamil people by providing shelter and food, though you were not able to stop the atrocities.*

*Our National Liberation Struggle is neither entirely alienated from your problems nor is it against you.*

The preconditions demanded by some of the militant groups before the start of any negotiations, as reported in the SATURDAY REVIEW previously, include the release of all the youths held in custody as "terrorist suspects" at

(Continued on page 8)

## SHOT FROM THE AIR

Mr. Kathirgamathamby (50) assistant cashier at the Tellippalai Multi-purpose Co-operative Society, was killed and a number of other persons were injured when a lowflying helicopt allegedly sprayed bullets.

Tension prevailed in the area, with shopkeepers putting up their shutters and parents rushing to schools to pick up their children, while transport was suspended.



## Saturday Review

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To learn about that world-wide historical role of the proletariat as the builder of a socialist society, read the book "Lenin and Asia" by Attorney-at-Law T. Duraisingam, a pioneer of the socialist movement of our country.

Sinhala, Tamil and English editions of the book are available at bookshops.

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# SR FUND NEARS Rs. 200,000

We are happy to publish the second list of contributions to the SR Refugee Relief Fund and offer our profuse thanks to all the donors.

The Fund is fast approaching the Rs. 200,000 mark. But much more is needed to help even in a small way the hundreds of Tamil people who have been reduced to the status of refugees in the land of their birth through the operation of draconian emergency regulations.

We appeal to those who have already made donations in cash or kind to do so again, if possible, and induce others also to make contributions.

Anonymity will be respected, if requested.

The money collected is being directed mainly to the supply of drugs and infant food. Details of the disbursements will be published in the SR shortly.

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Anon.	Rs. 10,000.00
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Mr. K. Narayanasamy	100.00
Anon	200.00
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Anon	742.50
Mr. Baskaran Thalayan	100.00
Mr. I. A. Sivarajah and Mr. A. Sivarajah	500.00
Mr. S. Nadarajah	101.00
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Anon.	2,000.00
Mr. S. Rajanathan	690.00
Mr. S. Kulasingam	2,000.00
Anon	400.00
	(plus parcel of clothes)
Mr. K. Velauthampillai	500.00
Mr. M. Thuraisamy	500.00

(Continued on Page 7)

## SR BACK AGAIN

The publication of the SATURDAY REVIEW was suspended on 28th January 1985 by a decision of the Governing Council of the New Era Publications Ltd.

The decision was taken after a dispute the Editor had with the General Manager over the Fund he launched to provide relief to persons displaced by the Emergency Regulations of 30th November, 1984 and the consequent publication of two items by him in the 3rd anniversary issue on 26th January.

On item published on page 12 stated that the contribution of Mr. K. Visuvalingam to the SR Fund was NIL.

The other item on page 16 stated that "the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW no longer recognised Mr. K. Visuvalingam, J. P., as the General Manager of the SATURDAY REVIEW.

In the interests of the SATURDAY REVIEW and the cause which it is pledged to espouse, the Editor wishes to express regret for the publication of the two items in question.

— Editor

We wish to inform our readers that by a unanimous decision of the Governing Council of the New Era Publications Ltd., Mr. K. Visuvalingam continues as General Manager of the SATURDAY REVIEW.

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# POLLUTION -- VIA V.O.A.

There have been reports in the press about the possibility of an ELF (extremely low frequency) system being part of the Voice of America (VOA) high-powered transmitting station being established at Chilaw on Sri Lanka's west coast. If true, this has serious implications for strategic balance and super power conflict in the Indian Ocean besides grave environmental hazards of radiation to the population in and around the VOA transmitters.

The U.S. and Sri Lanka had signed an agreement in December 1983 for the establishment of six VOA transmitters with a total capacity of 2,500 KW, making it the largest radio transmitter outside the United States. Unlike the 1951 agreement between the two countries, establishing three transmitters of 35 KW each, the present agreement allows the U.S. to "instal associated communication and operation facilities" and the station will be manned by an unspecified number of U.S. personnel for at least seven years. Unlike the previous deal, the present one makes the U.S. responsible for the administration, operation and maintenance of the facilities, implying presumably that Sri Lanka would have no control or access to the facility spread over a 1,000 acres.

Strategic and space warfare are critically dependent on secure and timely communication systems. The U.S. relies heavily on its submarine force for first-strike as well as follow-on strikes in its nuclear strategy. The survival of communications during a nuclear conflict is vital to the command and control of strategic forces, thereby virtually controlling the ability to conduct a nuclear war itself. At the same time secure and rapid communications with the most vital of U.S. strategic triad—the nuclear armed submarines—is a pre-requisite for the credibility and efficiency of the system.

One of the most important links in the complex network of the U. S. communication system, including satellites, relates to the strategic submarine fleet. Because regular radio waves do not penetrate into the oceans, maintaining contact with submarines poses special difficulties. Ordinarily, submarines could raise an antenna to the surface but that reveals their position. Very-Low Frequency (VLF) wave-lengths, however, can penetrate the ocean to a depth of 10-15 metres and allow communications

without compromising survivability too much. The U.S. uses a network of VLF stations around the world (believed to include facilities at Diego Garcia, and in Australia amongst others) in the U.S. navy's fleet broadcasting system for submarine communications. Redundancy is provided for by eighteen specially equipped Lockheed C-130 Hercules aircraft trailing eight km. long VLF antenna in the air. Airborne patrol are, indeed, continuously in flight.

However this elaborate communication system is still cumbersome, susceptible to jamming etc. and poses risks to the security of nuclear-missile submarines, especially because the communication link is completed only when the submarine has an antenna near the surface. On the other hand, technology is making it feasible to detect submarines submerged at shallow depths. The submarines must also significantly reduce speed to less than eight kmph. for effective VLF communication as the

"Seafarer" especially because the underlying layers of low-conductivity rock makes that portion of the U.S. particularly suited for ELF transmission by providing geological resonance.

The governor of Michigan tried to veto the installation in 1977; and in 1978 President Carter ordered termination of the project in deference to opposition on environmental grounds.

The U.S. navy is now proceeding with an austere programme in Michigan under a revised name, Project ELF, scheduled to be completed in 1985. This smaller-scale ELF system would, cover only the north Atlantic and eastern Pacific Oceans and provide communications at reduced data transmission rate of less than one word in five minutes. Communications with submerged submarines in the western Pacific, and Indian Oceans is not possible with Project ELF. Improving the power and size of the system, even in another loca-

by

Jasjit Singh

depth increases to even 10 metres or so. The only available frequency for reaching submarines which are travelling at cruising speed and at operational depth is Extremely-Low Frequency (ELF). Although ELF transmits messages at a slow rate, it would be able to reach a submarine at all times. This capability is vital for any first-strike strategy as well as part of the U.S. Strategic Defence Initiative (popularly referred to as Reagan's "Star Wars"). ELF penetrates water hundreds of metres and is virtually unaffected by nuclear blackouts and jamming, thus providing the only sure method of communication with nuclear-missile armed submarines for follow-on strikes.

The U.S. navy started researching ELF in 1958; and an ELF test facility has been functional at Cl in Lake, Wisconsin, since 1969 with the system hooked to the navys communication system. To create a proper operational facility, the navy has been proposing a number of projects in Wisconsin which failed to mature due to public apprehensions about the possible harmful physical and environmental effects.

The upper peninsula of Michigan was then chosen as the likely site for the project—code-named

tion in the U.S., would only improve the data transmission rate, and would not extend the coverage. However, in case of strategic warfare, it is essentially these areas which could prove crucial. A comparable for a set of less powerful installation would be required in the Indian Ocean region Diego Garcia simply does not have adequate land for even a small ELF station and has the additional problem of interference with other communication systems on the densely packed island. Australia would appear to be another option. In fact, as early as 1970, Bob Cooksey, a lecturer in international relations at the Australian National University presented evidence that the so-called "weather station" near Alice Springs in the northern territory was actually an ELF facility.

And now comes the report of plans for possible ELF installation in Sri Lanka! On the face of it, the area of the proposed VOA location would appear to be too small to accommodate anything but a small ELF facility. However, it could cover significant areas of the Indian Ocean and pose a significant environmental hazard to the island.

Secure ELF communications with ballistic missile submarines in the Indian Ocean would constitute a

critical link in strategic nuclear conflict in which the U.S. may get engaged. Its importance in relation to time-sensitive targets is even greater; and thus constitutes a pre-requisite for "first-strike" nuclear strategy. The necessity and role of ELF communication coverage of the Indian Ocean have to be understood also in the context of the space warfare strategy of the United States.

The U.S. is developing a conventional warhead equipped with miniature homing vehicle as one of the most promising anti-satellite (ASAT) weapons. Trial firings from USAF F-15 Eagle fighter aircraft have already been carried out. The warhead could also be launched on Trident-I or Minuteman submarine-launched missiles to destroy satellites at very high altitudes of 24,000 km. or more. Anti-satellite operations would be time-critical and ELF communications with ASAT missile-armed submarines would be critical to the success of the operation.

The U.S. Strategic Defence Initiative also visualises destruction of Soviet ICBM during the "boost-phase" which means the first five or six minutes after the launch, and before the ICBM has had time to dispense and disperse its multiple nuclear warheads, one of the techniques being developed is that of "pop-up" attack. This, in essence, means launching a light high-speed interceptor missile which would explode a small nuclear device at nearly 1,000 km. altitude. The nuclear explosion would be employed to focus X-ray laser on to the hostile ICBM which by that time could be around 200-300 km. above the earth still in the boost phase. The dynamics of time and distances for such a highly time-critical interception destruction would require the interception missile to be launched from a submarine in the north-west Indian Ocean i.e., the Arabian Sea. A small ELF facility in the region could provide the necessary secure, automated and timely communication to the submarines submerged at its operation depth and speed. The system, of course, would be backed by the VLF and other communication systems at Diego Garcia, Masirah (Oman) and the U.S. central command HQ in the region.

If the press reports are true, this brings superpower confrontation and possible nuclear conflict to India's doorstep.

(Courtesy, The Times of India)





MR. S. J. V. CHELVANAYAKAM

*My prayers and agony for you and yours, and our Island torn asunder by hatred, carnage and violence. I know that you also grieve, and look beyond to lining behind the clouds for yet the resources of God to act within our lives, and for sanity out of travail.*

So wrote a noble son of Sri Lanka, the late Bishop Lakshman Wickremasinghe, to me and my wife in a letter from the U.K. dated 1st August 1983. The clouds have since darkened further. In fact, it was ten years earlier on what has now become Martyr's Day, 10th January 1974, that with a tragedy somewhat resembling Jalianwala Bagh in India, that the rule of law began to slacken in this country, and since July 1983, it has assumed the proportions of a "Reign of Terror" afflicting the Tamils of Sri Lanka.

Yet, we do well to remember that we live in one of the great moments of history, which has witnessed the almost complete decolonisation of the continents of Asia and Africa and liberation movements sweeping several countries in a continuous flow.

The greater has been our privilege since God raised for us a leader in the person of Samuel James Velupillai Chelvanayakam, who came to incarnate the mood and hopes of the Tamil people of Lanka almost in the manner in which Gandhiji incarnated the spirit of India; no less, his feeble frame enshrined the dedication to Truth and Ahimsa that made for the strength of the Mahatma. His historic achievement was to have implanted in his people a deep national consciousness of their identity as a people, with a language and cultural inheritance of their own, the territorial identity of their homeland, and their right to self-determination (or autonomy). And like the Mahatma, the Thanthai taught us that self-determination cannot be a gift from one people to another; it is a people's own self-expression.

# WE OWE TO THANTHAI CHELVA OUR TAMIL NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS: WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR US TODAY?

But, the prophetic leader who took his people miles and miles on the road to liberation, has left us a stupendous task. You will recall how Gandhiji urged a two-fold struggle—one against the dominant British power, the other to build a new society from within. The armour perfected for one battle could serve the other as well, if both are fought on the plane of human brotherhood and human dignity.

It is in the grave challenge posed by the crisis of today that the Tamils of Sri Lanka would do well to examine the working of their institutions, their self-governing bodies, their co-operatives, their business houses, their trade unions and how the public servants serve the people. They would do well to think of the kind of economic development they are after and to ensure that the education in their areas is geared to the tasks of development, and, not least, that their educational institutions help to produce "agents of social change".

Perhaps, the test and proof that we are fully committed to the development programme in our region is when its educational part includes provision for the disabled children and young persons equal to those not disabled. For example, we have yet to provide the first Tamil medium secondary school for the Blind.

Yet, underpinning everything else, as President Nyerere told the Food and Agricultural Organisation in 1979, it is a policy of rural development where effective decision-making power, political and economic power, lies with the inhabitants of the rural areas, that must be a description of the strategy of growth. It is here that books and periodicals and a network of rural libraries, become vital—for some as a complement to school and university, for others as a substitute. The modern public library's programme includes various activities—seminars, talks, film shows, T.V., study groups. They are a powerful motivation to learning and research and field action. It is a tribute to the strength of the Tamil Movement that at least here we have responded magnificently to the challenge of the present crisis. The delay in the payment of compensation to the burnt Jaffna Public Library notwithstanding, we are now engaged in reconstructing it even on bigger lines, and we have embarked on a programme of opening branch libraries, first in the City of Jaffna, later in the villages.

But development will have full meaning only when the people are not content with such amenities as free food-stamps and houses, but awake into the era of Human Rights! They must mature inward-

ly in the consciousness of what belongs to them and all their fellow-men as human beings.

They must know that all men are born free and equal in dignity and rights; that everyone has the right to freedom of information and ideas; that therefore it is a travesty of that right when over 75 per cent of the readership of the daily newspapers, and 100 per cent of the television audience is of state-controlled mass media.

They must accept that all have equal right to take part in government and have equal access to higher education and the public service. Activities in connection with our educational institutions and libraries, including shramadana teams, could effectively convey the meaning of the rights to all citizens.

There is the skill of discernment in the ordinary folk. It is when they are enabled to hearken to the call of man's humanity, they will see through the fiction of race propagated by mass media, and open up the springs of rights consciousness latent in their hearts.

*On this solemn occasion of the 87th birth anniversary of Thanthai Chelvanayakam, we who are heirs to his legacy, shall pledge that we shall continue this unfinished journey, not forgetting his injunction to be free from racial animosity and dedicate ourselves to Truth and Ahimsa.*

K. NESIAH

## APPRECIATION

### C. SUNTHARALINGAM

One of Sri Lanka's most colourful and controversial politicians, Mr. Chellappah Suntharalingam died at his home in Vavuniya on 11th February at the ripe old age of 90.

Mr. Suntharalingam, who hailed from Urumpirai, Jaffna, was a member of the Ceylon Civil Service and a lawyer before he joined the University of Ceylon as Professor of Mathematics.

He was first elected to Parliament from the Vavuniya constituency as an independent candidate at the 1947 general election and was Minister of Commerce in the first post Independence Government headed by Mr. D. S. Senanayake.

He was re-elected from the same constituency in 1951, 1952 and 1956.

He was the first person to voice the aspirations of the Tamil people for separate statehood, for the first time using the word Eylom.

A rare personality, belonging to one of the most famous Tamil families of Sri Lanka, he was an orator and debater of high calibre, as evident from his scintillating speeches in Parliament.

The death occurred on 9th February of Mr. Suppiah Shanmugasunderam, Assistant Government Agent of Jaffna. He was 59. He is survived by his wife and a daughter, who is in the United Kingdom.

### S. SHANMUGASUNDERAM

Mr. Shanmugasunderam was a loveable personality. He came into prominence as Divisional Revenue Officer in Delft where he served for 15 years.

Later he became the Public Relations Officer of the Jaffna

Kachcheri.

In this capacity he acted as Liaison Officer to the first party of Journalists from the South to visit the North at the invitation of the then Government Agent, Mr. Lionel Fernando in 1969.

As A.G.A. of Jaffna, he was Joint Secretary of the Jaffna District Development Council.

Only a few days before his death, he went to Peradeniya University taking 48 students who had been held up in Jaffna and were to sit their examination on 17th February.

Later, he visited Anuradhapura and brought a batch of youths who had been released from the Boosa Army Camp. He volunteered to go again to bring some more of these youths when at the Jaffna bus stand he had a heart attack and collapsed.

We at the SATURDAY REVIEW are grateful to him for the many courtesies shown to us, both in his official and personal capacity.



# A BISHOP COMMITTED TO HUMAN LIBERATION

Bishop Lakshman Wickremesinghe's premature death on 23rd October 1983 was mourned by persons in many walks of life and for a variety of reasons. This comment, however, is restricted to the part the late Bishop played as a committed and staunch upholder of true social justice and human liberation.

Born into a very well-to-do bourgeois family and privileged social class, Lakshman may also be said to have displayed, perhaps, the confidence of the bourgeois in being able to withstand the very pressures of that class with the consciousness and conviction of his own social role and commitment as a Christian leader. But the influences of home and school must undoubtedly have played an important part towards the shaping of his convictions and his approach, especially in his formative years.

Lakshman's home background was strongly Christian, while the state school he attended—Royal College—had a secular atmosphere in which distinctions of race, creed and caste simply did not matter. At that time no religion was taught in the school but passages from the sacred writings of the major religions were read out at assembly. This liberal and basically secular school background would surely have helped Lakshman, the committed Christian leader of later years, to relate himself as easily as he did to persons of different persuasions and to stand up for the rights of persons regardless of credal or ideological labels.

After distinguishing himself in studies and sport at school and obtaining a rare first class honours in economics with political science at the Ceylon University, Lakshman could of course have carved out a comfortable career for himself in the world, but he chose instead to serve by entering the ordained ministry of the Church. If the Catholic and sacramental tradition within the Anglican Church in which Lakshman was brought up helped to sharpen his social insights as a Christian, these insights would have been strengthened and deepened when he served his early years as an assistant priest in the Poplar parish in the East End of London. Poplar was a place deeply influenced by the Catholic Crusade led by the radical Anglican priest Conrad Noel,

which sought to recover the revolutionary spirit of early Christianity and in which movement liturgy and worship played an important part. It was at Poplar, too, that Fr. John Groser also of that movement was clubbed to the ground in his cassock by the Police at a meeting of strikers which he was addressing during the General Strike of 1926 in Britain.

## Social Action

On his return to this country, Lakshman while serving as an assistant priest in the Mutwal Cathedral Church functioned as Secretary of the Diocesan Committee for Social Study and Action in the Church of Ceylon, in which role he also helped to organise meetings of office workers at the Y.M.C.A. in Colombo Port, which led to the early beginnings of the Christian Workers Fellowship (C.W.F.) in 1958, of which movement he became founder-member. He played his role too, in the very first May Day Mass celebrated by the CWF and held at the YMCA Gym in 1960. (The 25th Anniversary of this CWF May Day Mass falls this year).

Lakshman thereafter served as University Chaplain in Peradeniya where, too, as a result of his ministry the social implications of the Christian faith received their rightful emphasis. Indeed, the close rapport between the Student Christian Movement and the CWF in those days was due in no small way to Lakshman's influence. It was at this time too that Lakshman and the CWF joined the Trade Unions in voicing strong opposition to the Public Security (Amendment) Act introduced by the Government.

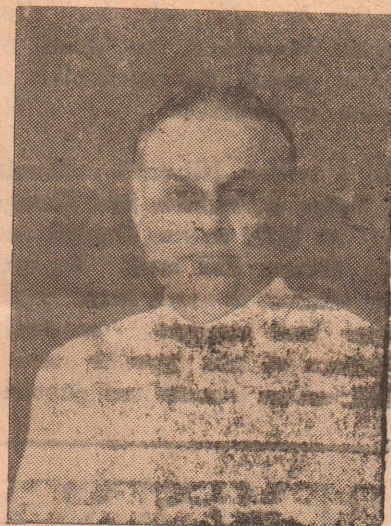
## Role as Bishop

Fr. Lakshman as he was then, became Bishop Lakshman of Kurunegala in 1962 to the delight of those committed to radical Christian social action, but they soon found to their dismay that he was now more cautious in his actions as a Bishop of the Church and even seeking to distance himself from the CWF he had helped to found.

Basil Willey has well observed that the Church of England with perhaps other English things has "power to comprehend in a vague synthesis principles really belonging to opposite schools of thought", and this peculiar style of Anglican

"balance" and "comprehensiveness" was sought to be pursued by Bishop Lakshman for a time.

Fortunately for him, events did not leave him free to continue playing such a conservative role. Came the youthful uprising of April 1971 and Bishop Lakshman was led together with Bishop Leo Nanayakkara of Badulla into helping to launch the Civil Rights Movement of which in due course Bishop Lakshman became President. Both Bishops were present with Metropolitan Lakdasa de Mel at the CWF May Day Mass in 1971 when all public meetings were banned and the Mass held in St. Michael's Church, Polwatta turned out to be the only public celebration of May Day in the country that year.



Bishop Wickremesinghe

The close friendship that arose between the Roman Catholic Bishop Leo and the Anglican Bishop Lakshman was one that mutually strengthened them in their stand for human liberation and meaningful social justice. While Lakshman was primarily an intellectual who carefully analysed issues before taking a position, Leo was above all a practical man who wished action

By Vijaya Vidyasagara

to match words. Their association therefore became a rich and fruitful combination in the cause of true social justice and live Christian witness. Both Bishops were members of the CWF and it was appropriate that their last meeting, too, should have been on a CWF occasion when they presided jointly over a CWF Workers' Mass held in the open air at Drayton Estate,

Kotagala, just 20 days before Bishop Leo's death.

## Workers Strikes

Although Bishop Lakshman's only real contact with the organised working class was through his CWF involvement, he endeared himself in a very special way to the workers when on 8th September 1980 he presided over an open air Workers' Mass organised by the CWF at the Ratmalana Kamkaru Sevana with the special intention of "Justice to the Strikers".

An anecdote related by the Bishop when he spoke at this Mass became the subject of much comment in public and in working class circles. This sermon of the Bishop in which he showed the connection between the Mass and the struggle of the masses was reproduced by the CWF in a pamphlet together with a newspaper article he wrote on "The Truth about the Strikes" and sold by strikers throughout the country in support of strike funds. That Workers' Mass led by Bishop Lakshman triggered off a host of other actions—Bodhi Poojas in Temples, mid-day fasts with prayer and meditation in some temples and churches and statements by religious leaders in support of the strikers.

Lakshman enjoyed the CWF Workers' Mass and regarded it as the most beautiful act of worship he had experienced. He was most appreciative too of the several other liturgies produced by the CWF and the way the Fellowship was able to use liturgy to communicate with the working people and their aspirations and make worship truly meaningful in a Sri Lankan context.

Bishop Lakshman also extended his fullest support to his good friend Sevak Yohan Devananda in his work at Devasaranaramaya, Ibbagamuwa, together with his involvement in peasant activity through the All Lanka Peasants Congress. The Bishop even appeared on a public platform with Buddhist monks, Christian clergy and trade unionists and spoke at a mass meeting held in Colombo on 9th, September 1982 in support of the demands advanced by six peasant organizations. This great concern of the Bishop for people in the rural sector was also reflected in the interest he showed in the educational and social work of Gami Seva Sevana, the CWF rural service centre situated at Galaha which was in his own Diocese.

Recognising, however, the need for solidarity and co-ordination

(Continued on page 6)



# A MULTI-FACETED MAN

"The greatest memorial to him will be to follow the way of life he led, to seek integrity, to follow uprightness, to care for others in their affliction, and to love and labour for their deliverance". Words uttered by the late Bishop Lakshman Wickremesinghe about Dr. R. L. Hayman, but so applicable to the beloved Bishop himself as he comes vividly before our minds at the time of his birthday.

Which of us, who had the briefest contact with him, could ever forget Bishop Lak's integrity, his sensitivity to people and situations, his total inability to prevaricate or to resort to euphemism, his impish humour which constantly leapt out to confound the pompous, the whole unconventional attitude and lifestyle of a man of God who dared to dream the impossible dream of human brotherhood, justice and peace, and strove to the end for its realisation.

The intellectual and moral stature of the man was such that he was bound to command the respect of all—even of those to whom his uncompromising integrity made him a thorn in their flesh. But when such a man cares passionately about people—all people—and can communicate that caring in the warmth of friendship

offered to village cultivators, to plantation workers, to university students, to humble men and women in all walks of life and all castes, creeds and communities, he inspires love and devotion.

He lived close to his Master all his life. He has been described as "a Bishop who was significant on the world scene as well as on the scene of his own diocese", but to many of us the most significant thing about this Bishop was that he reflected Christ's own identification with the powerless and the oppressed.

Bishop Lakshman was not infrequently referred to as a "radical". He could not have taken the term to mean anything less than a compliment. There was no other way for him as a Christian who tried his utmost to follow Christ, than to champion unpopular causes, to identify himself with the Civil Rights Movement, to speak out against racial discrimination or worker exploitation.

In a sermon delivered in London on "Mission, Politics and Evangelism" in 1979, to an English audience, Bishop Lak said: "An alienated church in Asia must opt to foster and support community agitators of this type to serve in rural, urban, coastal and plantation

sectors. They are as important for the mission of the church as parish clergy, community workers and evangelists. They may not be listed among the functionaries in the New Testament documents; they are essential functionaries in contemporary Asian Christianity. They are a sign that an alienated Church is serving where the Lord in judging and reshaping contemporary Asian society and the company of Christ's disciples within it. They bear witness to the prophetic function of the Church to make unpopular options and to face the harsh consequences of suffering and dying as martyrs for the cause of Jesus. They point to a religious vision that empowers people to resist injustice and the powers of evil, rather than simply acquiesce".

There were so many facets to the life and concerns of this extraordinary man that it is impossible to touch on them all in the brief space allotted to a newspaper article. He actively encouraged for instance, women who were struggling to free themselves from ancient shackles. At his insistence the National Cristian Council of Sri Lanka set up a Women's Commission to work, along with secular women activists and women's groups of other faiths, for the full participation of women in

church and society. He entered into deep dialogue with the clergy of other religions, particularly the Buddhist clergy, and won their friendship and trust. Bishop Lak ever worked to build bridges of understanding at all levels—between Christians and those of other faiths, between Sinhalese and Tamils, between up-country villagers and plantation workers, between the privileged and the under-privileged.

Just as Bishop Wickremesinghe was always eager to promote a truly indigenous liturgy for the Church in Sri Lanka, he was also in the latter years, deeply engaged in working out a distinctly Asian theology based on concrete situations in Asia today and relevant to the contemporary challenges that Asians face.

We have it on the authority of Canon Eric James that Bishop John Robinson's illuminating book "The Truth is Two-eyed", bears the influence of Bishop Lakshman's theological reflections which convinced Bishop Robinson of the importance of viewing God through Eastern as well as through Western eyes.

On his birthday, 25th March, the Kurunegala Diocese of the Church of Ceylon inaugurated "The Bishop Lakshman Wickremesinghe Memorial Fund", the main purpose of which will be to provide tangible support for the furtherance of the wide range of work and programmes born of the far-sighted vision of the late Bishop.

It was the indwelling Christ who gave meaning and purpose and direction to Bishop Lakshman's life. And because most of us recognized the fact, I can think of no better conclusion to this inadequate tribute than the words of a poet:

"Not merely in the words you say  
Not only in your deeds confessed,  
But in the most unconscious way  
Is Christ expressed.

Is it a beatific smile?  
A holy light upon your brow?  
Oh, no! I felt His presence  
When you laughed just now.  
For me 'twas not the truth you  
taught,

To you so clear, to me so dim,  
But when you came to me you  
brought

A sense of Him.  
And from your eyes He beckons  
me,

And from your heart His love is  
shed,

Till I lose sight of you and see  
The Christ instead."

ANNE

## BISHOP WICKREMESINGHE....

(Continued from Page 5)

among Christians and Church-related groups (including Roman Catholic) active in social action, Bishop Lakshman summoned a consultation of such groups on 12th, August 1982 in his Cathedral Chapter House. Those who so met, decided to continue as a Consultative Body under his leadership known as "Christians in the struggle for Justice."

### Last Years

The last years of Lakshman's life were dogged by ill-health and even a period of enforced rest abroad. But even when abroad, the Bishop was disturbed by what he regarded as the plain manifestation of undemocratic and authoritarian trends in the country. He even wrote a letter about the Referendum of December 1982 to the *London Times* which, despite his prestige as an Anglican Bishop was not published and which appeared in this country only after his death. The 1983 racist holo-

caust hurt him deeply and he toured all the affected areas and Jaffna no sooner than he returned to the island, and thereafter delivered a moving pastoral address to the Diocesan Council of Kurunegala just one month before his death, in which he spoke out his mind on the Sinhala-Tamil conflict. Indeed, it could be said that his exertions on this issue hastened his premature end.

At an Ecumenical Conference Lecture in 1981, Bishop Lakshman articulated what he felt should be the Christian option in Asia. Pointing to the incapacity of "indigenous welfare capitalism" to prevent "the concentration of profit power and privilege in dominant groups", he stated: "My own conviction is that the Church must opt for the ideology programme and strategy covered by the term 'indigenous Marxist socialism'. By this he meant a socialism realistically adapted to the local social context and a non-sectarian and undogmatic Marxism an "indigenous socialism influenced by rather than

dominated by Marxism"—to use his own words.

The short service held by the CWF round the bier of the dead Bishop just before the funeral mass began at the Anglican Cathedral in Colombo perhaps gave some expression to the implications of Christian witness in the present Sri Lankan context when it commenced with a meditation during which Buddhist monks chanted the traditional Pali stanza on the impermanence of life and ended with the CWF members present giving their departed comrade and Bishop a spontaneous clenched fist salute as their last gesture of farewell and resolve to carry forward the struggle for human liberation to which he dedicated his life.

The Bishop Lakshman Memorial Fund, which has been launched on his birth Anniversary—25th March—to promote the causes which the late Bishop espoused in his lifetime will at least serve to keep alive even in a small way the memory of this attractive, lovable and many-sided personality.



# SR FUND...

(Continued from page 2)

Anon.	1,000.00
Mr. S. Nadesan	300.00
Mr. Zam Sally	100.00
Mr. & Mrs. H. A. I. Gunatileke	200.00
Mr. R. Thambipillai	250.00
Dr. E. S. Thevasagayam	1,000.00
Mr. S. Sivapragasam	1,000.00
Anon.	1,000.00
Mr. Crosette Thambiah	100.00
M/s Almalani (Saudi Arabia)	\$ 55.00
Mr. D. P. Gopalasamy	Rs. 200.00
Anon.	500.00
Mr. S. Senathirajah	200.00
Anon.	250.00

The 3rd list of contributions will appear next week.

## COLLECTION BY COMPANY

In our first list of contributors to the S. R. Refugee Relief Fund, we mentioned that M.S. Mahendrarajah & Co., Jaffna, had contributed Rs. 3,215.00. The contribution was actually a collection made by the Company from the following:-

New Ananthas	Rs. 150.00
Thavarajasingam	50.00
Chitralaya, Jaffna	100.00
The Asia Trading Co.	100.00
Eswar Corporation, Jaffna	100.00
Nandhi Industries	50.00
Royal Motors	100.00
Rasa	50.00
S. J. D. Chelliah	50.00
T. Senathirajah & Sons	100.00
Mas. N. Krishanthan	50.00
Mayuran Enterprise	25.00
Ananth Motor Stores	200.00
Vijitha Motors	150.00
Shantha Motors	100.00
Durgha Auto Hardwares	50.00
Thambiayah & Co.	50.00
Thurai & Co.	200.00
S. Satkunarajah & Co.	50.00
Chellapa & Co.	150.00
Wigna Motors	50.00
Murugan Electrical Stores	50.00
Vasam Motor Stores	100.00
T. R. Gunashegarun	100.00
P. Somasundaram & Co.	50.00
Karumari Motor Co.	100.00
M. Chandirasegaram	25.00
Thambithurai	50.00
Rajine Motor Rewinders	100.00
Auto Suppliers	100.00
M. M. Abdul Cader & Sons	50.00
Mahendraraj & Co.	250.00
Anna	50.00
S. Balendran	50.00
Kamala Stores	20.00
Rasiah & Sons	20.00
Indra Hardwares	25.00
Radio Manuel	25.00
Manikam & Sons	25.00
Vigneswara	25.00
Vishnu Parts	25.00
Ravi Motors	25.00
Saravana Traders	25.00

Total Rs. 3,215.00

## NEWS BRIEFS

For the record, we shall be publishing in instalments, a list of events that occurred in the North from 1st January 1985.

The record is based on news items published in Colombo-based and Jaffna-based newspapers.

### JANUARY

1st - 200 youths were arrested at Thikkam, Alvai, Navalady and Sakkottai.

Ten youths were shot dead in Kalmunai. Karainagar coast was shelled.

2nd - Two policemen and two soldiers died in an incident in Jaffna.

3rd - A helicopter dropped leaflets requesting people to assist in the curtailment of terrorism.

4th - Fiftyeight refugees from Sri Lanka reached Nagapattinam coast in boats; 350 refugees were reported missing.

At Koliyarkulam in Vavuniya Mr. Yogarajah (46), a farmer, and his two daughters, Yoga (13) and Yogeswari (11), along with their neighbour, Mr. T. Kanagambigai (22) were shot dead in a "combing out operation".

5th - A retired music teacher, Mr. K. Thamotherampillai (64) and Mr. K. Gnanasegaram (32) were shot dead in a search-out operation. Dr. Sivagnavel, orthopaedic surgeon, Jaffna Hospital, was assaulted by security personnel on his way to the hospital.

6th - 586 youths were arrested in a sudden round-up in Jaffna town.

The Security Forces fired at a lorry driver and killed the driver, Mr. Balasundaram (30) and cleaner Mr. A. Sandirasegeram, both of Pallai.

7th - Father Mary Bastian, Parish Priest of Vankalai, and 11 others were shot dead. The body of Father Mary Bastian was missing.

Application forms were issued for people to apply for permits for the possession of bicycles.

### WRONG FIGURE

The amount contributed to the S. R. Refugee Relief Fund by the Lion's Club of Kopay is Rs.1,001 and not Rs. 100, as inadvertently published in our last issue, due to a typographical error.

8th - The Bishop of Mannar denounced the Government's statement on the "disappearance" of Fr. Mary Bastian.

Brigadier Nalin Seneviratne requested the people of the North "not to run" on sight of Security Forces.

A double-storied house was blasted by Security Forces near Ariyakulam.

9th - The Security Forces surrounded and destroyed a "Tiger hide-out" at Atchuvely. Government sources said that 14 people, including three youths and several children, died.

Several bodies were found burning in a cemetery near Jaffna town.

Fortyeight youths were taken into custody by the Security Forces.

10th - Valvettiturai Police Station was attacked by militants.

11th - India seized a Sri Lankan patrol boat when it intruded into Indian waters.

12th - Five main post offices in Jaffna were closed. A father and son were shot dead by Security Forces in Vavuniya.

13th - Six youths detained at the Boosa Army Camp attempted to escape but failed. One of them sustained injuries when the Army opened fire, Government sources said.

A Tamil teacher, Mrs. Parimalam Pathmanathan was killed by some unidentified men in Selvanayapuram, Trincomalee.

14th - Security Forces blasted five main culverts which connect Vadamardchchi are awith Jaffna.

A police sergeant was killed when some youths attacked a jeep in Kilinochchi.

The Security Forces shot dead two men near Karadipokku junction, Paranthan.

15th - Two more Army camp were set up at Navatkuli and Thondamannaru.

16th - The Security Forces injured a tractor-driver. The tractor, too, was destroyed.

In Mulliawalai, shots were fired from the Army Camp at Mullativu. Fourteen people were reported killed in the firing, including a woman aged 35 and an old man.

21st - Army reportedly went on a rampage at Point Pedro killing five civilians, including Mr. S. Arulanandam and Mr. N. Panchalingam. (To be Continued)



**AMIR OKAY**

Mr. A. Amirthalingam, General Secretary of Tamil United Liberation Front, who was admitted to Tewari Hospital, Madras, on 21st March left on the 27th.

# Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

**PLOT IN PLOTE?**

The Island reported on 28th March that the People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE) was in turmoil with many of its members leaving it in protest and that posters had come up in town on this matter.

## MASS MOVEMENT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Our proposal that strong organisation which could mobilise public opinion and action on an instant basis on any issue concerning people anywhere in the North should be formed immediately ap-

pears to be catching on—seven months after it was originally made! (Please see item "People's Action Team for Jaffna" in S.R. of 8th September 1984).

We followed up our original initiative with another write-up (S.R., 6th. October 1984) stating: "It is time the Tamil People of Sri Lanka took their destiny in their own hands."

"The youths have been compelled to take care of certain aspects of the situation, but there are so many other aspects which

need immediate and concerted action.

"Overriding everything else is the need for the Tamil people to be able to feel physically secure and to live with self-respect and dignity at least in their own homelands"

We also stated: "The proposal (to form a People's Action Committee) has been welcomed by a large number of individuals and organisations while a few individuals have expressed reservations.

"Among the latter, are some persons holding office in existing organisations. They appear to fear that their own positions may be undermined if an organisation of the type proposed is formed.

"The People's Action Committee is not going to supplant or supersede any existing organisation.

"The idea is to bring together all the organisations in the North engaged in People's welfare work because we believe that a co-ordinated effort would yield better results than the present individual efforts."

We began to lose interest in helping to form such an organisation because, as we have noted earlier, certain people seemed to be hostile to it.

Now the mood appears to be changing.

The newly-formed Mass Movement for Human Rights has started a campaign to form branches in all Assistant Government Agents' divisions in Jaffna District and bring them together under a Central Committee.

The branch in the Jaffna A.G.A.'s Division was inaugurated at a meeting held at the Law Centre Hall on 17th March 1985.

The following office-bearers were elected: **President:** Dr. G. Sebastiampillai. **Vice-President:** Mr. M. Kanagarajanyagam. **Joint Secretaries:** Mr. G. R. Rajasingam and Mr. A. Alvin. **Treasurer:** Mr. C. Thuraisingam.

Printed and published by New Era Publications Ltd., 118, Fourth Cross Street, Jaffna, on 30th March 1985. Registered as a newspaper at the General Post Office, Sri Lanka under QJ 101.

A Committee was also elected. Mr. S. Devarajan, Attorney-at-Law, spoke briefly on the objects of the movement and exhorted those present to enlist the support of all right-thinking citizens in the Jaffna Division. He said that similar branches would be formed in all other A.G.A.'s divisions in the District. A central committee would be formed thereafter.

## TOWARDS A CEASE - FIRE

(Continued from page 1)

various camps in the North and in the South; an end to the harassment of the civilian population in the North by the Security Forces and the repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

The argument of the militant groups appears to be that they are not willing to give up their struggle after making so many sacrifices without the devising of concrete measures to ensure that the Tamil people could live with dignity and self-respect in Sri Lanka.

There is reported to be a proposal for a representative of the Government to visit Madras shortly to seek interviews with the leaders of militant groups to ascertain their views on a cease-fire.

If the preliminary talk succeed, then the questions would arise when a joint cease-fire should be declared and when and where the main negotiations should be held and who should represent the Government and the Tamil people as a whole.

Certain influential persons from both communities are reportedly working behind the scenes to bring about a cease-fire.

If a cease-fire could be arranged, it would be the most hopeful development so far in the "North-South conflict".

## Colombo Boycott urged

PRESSURE on Mrs. Thatcher to call off an official visit to Sri Lanka next month is likely to be increased after a recent trip to the country by two representatives of the Parliamentary Human Rights Group. A motion urging her to cancel the visit has already been signed by more than 30 MPs.

A two-week fact finding tour of the island—though not to the northern Tamil areas—elicited promises from Colombo that the conditions of political prisoners would be alleviated, but so far, according to Mr. Robert Kilroy Silk, nothing appears to have been done. Mr. Kilroy Silk (Labour) was accompanied by Mr. Roger Sims (Conservative) and the two are preparing a report to be published shortly.

(THE GUARDIAN, London 12th March 1985)

## 4th Death Anniversary

The fourth death anniversary of Mr. S. Kathiravelupillai, who was M.P. for Kopay for many years, falls tomorrow.

The theoretician of the Tamil United Liberation Front, Mr. Kathiravelupillai had a clear vision of what the future held for the Tamil people and how they should act to preserve their identity and culture as a nation.

He died in Madras while he was on a mission to create the necessary Tamil and Indian opinion for the noble cause that he valiantly championed.

## APPEAL BY THE MOTHERS FRONT

In response to the appeal made by Mothers' Front, we received contributions in cash and kind.

So far, we have been distributing foodstuff to people who have been affected in the fishing villages of Mullagal, Polikandy, Poyity, Senthankulam, Mareesankoodal Elavalai, Valithoondal and Keerimalai.

We have distributed 65 bags of rice, 144 kilos of sugar and 86 packets of Lakspray milk.

This is just a drop in the ocean and we need more contributions

from generous well-wishers to extend our help to these unemployed fishing families. We appeal to you to assist us in what-ever form you are in position to help us.

We wish to reiterate that the condition of these affected people is appalling.

All contribution should be handed over to Mrs. Ganesh Balasingam, 25 Kachcheri-Nallur Road, Jaffna.

Nirmala Balaratnam,  
Ganesh Balasingam.

Joint Secretaries, Mother's Front.