


"THE FIRST COMMUNIST MINISTRY IN KERALA, 1957-1959"


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This is to certify that the dissertation entitled
"The First Communist Ministry in Kerala, 1957-1959",
submitted by Georges Kristoffel Laeten is in partial
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This study purports to examine the background of the first Communist ministry in an Indian state, and the reasons which led to its final dissolution after 28 months. In the main part of the dissertation we have tried to analyse the attitude of the Communist government towards the educational, economical, agricultural and industrial problems. This attitude and the mass line and legislative measures resulting from it serve as an explanation for the nature and the extent of the struggle of the opposition parties and the communal organisations, as is analysed in the final part of the dissertation.

The basic weakness of this study is the fact that no sufficient analysis has been made of the arguments within the Communist Party of India, relating to the specific use that could or should be made of the parliamentary path in one state, in a Congress ruled country. In order to do this we should have gone deeper into party documents and personal experiences. No sufficient time was available for this. Also the language barrier was a serious obstacle, and I am thankful to Usha Menon and Sukumaran Nair for having helped me out in checking and translating Malayalam newspaper reports and Assembly debates.

I am also indebted to the staff of the Jawaharlal Nehru University library, the Sapru House library and the Nehru Memorial library in New Delhi, the University of Kerala library, the Kerala Assembly Library, the Department of Politics of the University of Kerala and the Indian School

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PART I

IDEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In 1957, the Communist Party of India was quite clear about the stage and therefore the aims of the revolution. However, differences within the Party existed on the possible peaceful nature of the revolution and even more on the class nature of the ruling Indian National Congress and the State Power. Many of the important aspects of these differences did not come into the open during the Communist ministry in Kerala, since, no decisive battle was possible in that state. The regional communist strongholds were not yet able to defy the central power structure in New Delhi. Nevertheless, as we shall elaborate later, many controversies within the CPI were touched off or deepened by the events in Kerala. The example of Kerala, as it is empirically studied in the second and third part of this thesis, has to be assessed in the light of the changing political analysis of the CPI and of the economic structure in which the bourgeois-democratic revolution was to take place.

Generally, in communist circles the idea prevailed that the Parliamentary democracy was a viable alternative for the implementation of the necessary measures on the road to socialism. The CPI leaders in Kerala even foresaw that, due to the competition between the Communist Government in Kerala and the Congress Governments in other states, the people would gain increasing benefits. An optimistic faith in the then

current theory of peaceful transformation and the belief that a healthy people's government in Kerala would open the eyes of the electorate in other parts of India led to a reliance on parliamentary professions.

Some changes in the Indian National Congress had, in the view of many communist leaders, warranted a new approach towards the INC and a new hope of attaining socialism peacefully. The second Five Year Plan had been launched with a socialist perspective and with a major role for the public sector. The parliament had amended the preamble of the constitution to include as the aim of the Indian people the establishment of socialism in their country and the Congress Party had pledged to realize that socialism at its Avadi Session. Generally India had been moving towards friendly relations with Russia and China and some polarization was observed in the Congress which came to a head at the Gauhati session in 1958 with the emergence of the Congress Socialist Forum.

1.1. The Parliamentary Path of Transformation Towards Socialism

1.1.1. Peaceful Transformation:

Authors of many propaganda booklets, and also most scholars have asserted that "Kerala is the only State in the whole world where communists came to the power through democratic process".¹ In such a perspective the victory of the CPI during the March, 1957 elections could be explained as due to a whimsical temporary dissatisfaction of the voters with the moral and ethical decline of the ruling Indian National

Congress in the state, and in that perspective again the liberation struggle and the dismissal of the Communist Government in July, 1959 could be explained in terms of the psychological dissatisfaction of the people with the alleged ill-behaviour of the Communist party and its members.² In both cases the reference to other examples of the working class party coming to power and its dislodgement by the antagonised classes could only serve as spokes in the wheels of the anti-communist forces, who now maintained that the communists had espoused the new theory under the orders of the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU, but had not really changed their violent totalitarian mind. In fact, a historical examination of the forms of struggle would reveal that the armed uprising had been the political result of concrete historical realities and that particularly an armed struggle should not be started until a revolutionary situation had taken shape or was emerging, which was clearly the case in the Russian and Chinese revolutions. Other victories of the revolutionary movement, peaceful and through the ballot box, had occurred in Hungary in 1919, in the German states of Saxonia and Thuringia in 1923, in Spain in 1936, in several Eastern European countries as East Germany in 1946 and Chechoslovakia in 1949 and in North Vietnam 1954.

What had changed with the Twentieth Congress and the meeting of the 12 Communist parties in November 1957 in Moscow was the emphasis on the emergence of a socialist system which had changed the correlation of class forces on a world scale.

This emergence created new possibilities of newly independent countries to consolidate their independence, to build their independent national economy in the non-capitalist way, and thus creating the possibilities for a peaceful transformation towards socialism. The Chinese Communist Party objected to such an easy solution, even after the addition to the original Soviet draft at the Moscow conference that "Leninism teaches, and experience confirms, that the ruling classes never relinquish power voluntarily".³ The CPI ever since the 1951 Calcutta Congress had shifted increasingly towards the acceptance of such a peaceful road.⁴ In 1956, though violent revolution was still considered to be inevitable in certain conditions, Ajoy Ghosh stressed at the Fourth Congress of the CPI at Palghat "If the working class heading the people is able to develop a powerful mass movement and secure a parliamentary majority, if the position of reactionaries in the state apparatus is weakened through a series of measures and through the extension of democratic rights for the people, if reaction is unable to secure a sufficiently broad mass base for its counter-revolutionary activities then it is quite possible that fundamental changes will be affected in a more or less peaceful way".⁵ This was confirmed by a directive of the polit bureau in July, 1957, which observed that "Parliament and the state legislatures have become the most important forums of fighting for the cause of the people and the country".⁶ This theoretical stand was reiterated at the next congress, at Amritsar in 1958 where Ajoy Ghosh summed up that the possibi-

lity existed for the curbing of the anti-democratic tendencies of the bourgeoisie, and for securing a majority in parliament and overcoming the resistance by means of mass action.⁷ Indeed, the Amritsar resolutions mentioned that, "The Kerala experience has also shown that the verdict of the ballot box in favour of popular forces is not necessarily respected by the vested interests. It has to be defended by mass actions".⁸

In Kerala this path of peaceful, electoral strategy had been followed with success, though the actual development of the class struggle, as in Vayalar and Punnappra in 1946, proved that the tactical option for violence or non-violence could not be used as a doctrinaire recipe. E.M.S. Namboodripad had repeatedly argued that the revolution in India would develop in a way different from China and Russia, "because India enjoys some democratic rights which make it possible to use the parliamentary methods in the fight against the imperialism and feudalism."⁹ He also asserted that it would even be possible to start this transformation to communism under Congress rule, which was enacting legislation curtailing the political power and economic privileges of the exploiting ~~the~~ classes: "The bureaucratic apparatus of the government alone could not carry out the transformation The broader masses must be mobilised and their organisations used as instruments through which the legislative acts could be turned into reality."¹⁰ According to EMS this possibility would certainly exist when the Communist party possessed the electoral majority. Referring to the peaceful transformation

towards socialism in China after the revolution, he pointed out that they had the advantage of a strong socialist factor in the political sphere.¹¹ These factors in Kerala, as the administration, the army, the police and the secret police, remained outside the decisive influence of the Communist government. This in fact defined the whole range of possibilities for the Communist government. An editorial in New Age-Weekly stated this clearly when the government was sworn in. "For, apart from the limitations of the constitution itself, there are certain retarding factors even more powerful than the articles of the constitution. One has to reckon with the fact that the State power in India remains in the hands of the exploiting classes. It is these classes, again, which occupy a dominating position in the economic life of the country. It will be the worst illusion, therefore, to think that these classes will take kindly to the advent of a popular democratic Government in Kerala or reconcile to the democratic and historic process that would inevitably follow." The editorial in the Communist Weekly concluded with the hope that "the political and ideological differences between the Congress and our party will not be allowed to enter into the constitutional plane and come in the way of co-operation and assistance.

This hope was cherished by a significant group around S.A. Range, P.C. Joshi, Bhowani Sen, Mohit Sen, S.S. Yusuf and others, who had an increasing faith in the progressive policy of Jawaharlal Nehru and assumed he could be relied upon in the defence of a leftist Ministry. The National Council of

the CPI meeting at Madras in October, 1958, took exception to this trend, and asserted that the actual developments had belied the hopes of an easy course.¹³ Also Bhupesh Gupta, member of the Central Committee of the CPI, warned against revisionist opportunism, since "Marxism-Leninism teaches us that whether the path is peaceful or non-peaceful it is mass struggles and mass actions that decide the major issues in bourgeois society. Even for strengthening the parliamentary content of parliament it is necessary to fight parliamentary illusions".¹⁴

In the specific conjuncture in Kerala, however, it was argued that armed clashes and violent resistance should only be encouraged when it would really settle the issue. This was not the case in Kerala since the ultimate economic, military and political power remained with the Centre. In the second place, it was argued that even the working class was not yet firmly behind the Communist government and that not only communal ideologies but also constitutional slogans still had a strong hold on the masses.¹⁵ The appeal for peaceful constitutional methods was certainly advantageous from the point of view of tactics since it enabled the Communist party to sidestep attacks on them on this issue in a conjuncture where state power could not be seized anyway. It, however, obscured to a great extent which group in the CPI in Kerala had turned this tactical advice into a strategic position.

Two questions arise in this connection and are only partially answered in the last part of this thesis. In how

far is it permissible for a revolutionary party to appeal to peaceful means, as leading members of the CPI did.¹⁶ In how far is the talk about the limited possibilities of a revolutionary government in a non-revolutionary situation,¹⁷ liable to weaken the revolutionary will of the proletariat and in the end disarms the Communist party ideologically. The Revolutionary Socialist Party even accused the CPI of denying the masses the right to revolt and resist. For "there is no moral or political warrant for desisting from the course of forging mass actions against a government simply on the ground that it has come to power constitutionally and we are living in a parliamentary democracy. No opposition party - far less a Marxist Party - in this time of crisis can afford to delimit its activities to safe parliamentary forms of agitation alone".¹⁸

The second question is whether in the absence of armed resistance the CPI really mobilised the masses in an attempt to establish democracy from below and to bring more and more people within the fold of the Communist party and its organisations. Not many empirical investigations have been done in this respect. Kathleen Gough concluded from her data that the communist rural councillors conducted the class struggle "among people without power or property against men, who have property and power", and in this process made proper use of the panchayat boards. "Such actions, while occurring within the present legal framework and geared to immediate goals, were viewed by the communist as revolutionary class

..

struggles since they educated and organised the propertyless to support the Communist Party's long range political programme of public ownership of land and capital goods".¹⁹

1.1.2 Allies in the Bourgeois Democratic Revolution

In the existing conditions and with the present correlation of forces, the party election manifesto explained that in those states where the democratic forces were strong, the Communist party would strive to create conditions in which democratic governments, based on a coalition of democratic parties and individuals, can be formed.

Though in 1957 there was some more prospect for realising this condition in at least one state, the policy had been followed for years and had met with some success, especially in Kerala. The Communist leaders in the state had started already in 1948 with the formation of a united front with other non-Congress democratic parties and this led to a first tangible result in 1952 when the Kerala Pradesh Congress both in Travancore-Cochin and Malabar was reduced to a minority both in terms of the votes polled as well as in the seats secured. This success, however, was only appreciated as an indication that instead of the Congress succeeding in isolating the vanguard from the masses of the democratic movement the Congress was itself getting isolated from the masses. EMS Namboodiripad then particularly warned for mistakes in the direction of "underestimating the role of parliamentary work in further advancing the democratic movement, equating the

gradual process of mass disillusionment with the Congress which was taking place with the already completed process of the isolation of the Congress from the people, advancing forms of struggle for which the masses were not yet ready, etc."²⁰

There were acute differences among those parties who agreed to come to an electoral understanding. The RSP and the Kerala Socialist Party for example insisted that the United Front should be confined to left parties, to parties that accepted socialism and objected to bring in the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party and other bourgeois-nationalist parties into the United Front, because, they said, the struggle at that conjuncture was for socialism and against the bourgeoisie as a class. EMS Namboodiripad explained the difficulty and the task of the CPI as follows: "The party will have to carry on a simultaneous struggle against the right reformism and left sectarianism in its own ranks; to combine a firm ideological struggle against alien trends as represented by the RSP, KMPP, KSP, with the practical day-to-day work based on a united front in action with them; to carry on a firm consistent struggle against the disruptive leadership of other parties like the Muslim League, Socialist Party, Travancore Tamilnad Congress etc., so as to draw their ranks towards the united front; to develop a systematic campaign among rank and file Congressmen themselves so as to further isolate the reactionary Congress leadership, etc."²¹

In the Travancore-Cochin elections in 1954, the CPI had made significant concessions in order to accommodate its electo-

ral allies in the anti-Congress Front, and generously allocated a disproportionate by large number of seats to the PSP though the latter party refused to subscribe to the common programme of the United Leftist Front of CPI, RSP and ESP, and showed some reservation for the electoral agreement.²² But once the elections were over the PSP leadership refused to extent the electoral agreement into the formation of a government. The Praja Socialist Party decided against a coalition with the CPI and the RSP, and, consequently could form a minority government supported by the Congress delegates. When two years later the Congress Party withdrew its support, the UFL, the United Front of Leftists, led by the CPI, was still prepared to support the PSP government without wanting to have ministerial seats. By that time, on its own, the CPI had already got half of the seats in the Malabar District Board Elections.

Though all elections had shown a constant decline of not only Congress but also PSP support, the CPI in the 1957 elections, decided to try again to come not only to an electoral understanding, but also to a common programme with the PSP, as well as with the RSP and KSP. According to the State conference of the CPI in Trichur from 22 to 24 June 1956, the main tactical consideration in the elections remained to be the defeat of the Congress Party, as had been decided by the Maduvani Congress of the Party, and therefore offered a common minimum programme and negotiations on electoral adjustments were proposed. However, the appetite of the Praja

Socialist Party grew to such an extent that in Malabar, where they had won only one seat during the 1954 District Board elections they wanted to nominate 20 and later 15 candidates. Though the CPI was prepared to grant them as many as 13 candidates, the negotiations broke off, and only two days later the PSP agreed on an anti-Communist electoral understanding with the Muslim League, which was soon joined by the RSP.²³ Even a vehemently anti-Communist author, Victor Fic, agreed that the CPI was very liberal in the allocation of constituencies, but in the end could only accept the demands of the other parties at the cost of almost self-destruction, and seems to understand that the Communist leadership was aware that "even if the party had won the majority of the seats in the assembly on its own, it would have to invite the PSP to share power in the Cabinet in order to isolate the Congress and prevent the eventual formation of a hostile PSP-Congress combination which could harass, and even depose, the Communist regime".²⁴

The results of the elections showed that the RSP, which had agreed to the minimum programme of the CPI, but participated in the elections on its own, had been totally routed, and that the PSP had secured nine seats only. The Kerala State Committee of the Communist Party considered these seats a welcome addition to their uncomfortable majority of 65 seats out of the 126, and invited the PSP to join the ministry "at any stage". It appealed to the PSP and to all people to help in implementing the election programme; "We want all sections

of the people and all parties to give their criticism, opinions and suggestions and cooperate with us in working out the programme and run the government."²⁵ Till weeks after the formation of the government the offer was repeated several times but was rejected by the local leaders and the National Executive of the PSP.²⁶

The CPI attitude towards the Indian National Congress was undergoing slight though not unimportant changes. The change, or rather debate, related to the emergence of a left wing inside the INC and therefore to the increasing scope for cooperation between the CPI and the democratic Congress leaders in the realization of the People's Democracy. This trend was particularly relevant for the attitude of the Kerala Communist ministry towards the National Congress leaders and the state apparatus under their control.

The third Congress of the CPI at Madurai, in the beginning of 1954, had called for the replacement of the Congress governments by Governments of Democratic Unity. Soon afterwards, however, dissident voices emerged, following a leftward turn of the INC not only in the foreign policy, but also in the domestic policy. One of the first pointers in this direction was Ramamurty's Thesis of the National Platform: the progressive forces should utilize the present progressive direction of Nehru's foreign policy to reverse the reactionary internal policy, or the reactionary forces would use the weakness of the progressive forces to get the anti-imperialist

policy reversed. Though the Political Bureau favoured the Thesis, the National Executive of the CPI rejected it, since, "It virtually calls upon Nehru to take care (sic!) over the leadership of the struggle for peace and defense of freedom in India".²⁷ In the meantime, also R. Palme Dutt's advice on the combining of the struggle for peace and the struggle for freedom and therefore a support to Nehru's peace policy, had been rejected. The reconciliation of the conflicting lines in the CPI seemed realized with the month-long discussion of the Central Committee in June 1955, which adopted a political resolution supporting Nehru's foreign policy, noticing some progressive shifts in his otherwise reactionary domestic policy, and the resolution, therefore, called for the Party's participation in the national reconstruction programme of the government. The resolution, however, maintained that India was passing through the national democratic revolution and that the national bourgeoisie had proved incapable of completing even that bourgeois-democratic task.²⁸ This line was further elaborated by EMS Namboodiripad and Ajoy Ghosh in "Questions and Answers arising from the June 1955 Resolution of the Central Committee," which appeared in New Age Monthly later that year. In a series of articles in New Age Monthly in 1953, EMS had already stressed the inevitably slow and complicated process of the transition to socialism, with a dual task: "struggle for the present, new bourgeois-democratic revolution and for the future, proletarian socialist revolution"²⁹ EMS considered this dual policy

to be still valid, and coined it as the fight for the victory of the non-capitalist path: "Although in its social character the first steps taken is still fundamentally bourgeois-democratic, and although its objective demand is to clear the path for the development of capitalism, yet it no longer belongs to the old type of revolution led by the bourgeoisie..."³⁰

The scope of a national unity with the bourgeoisie was yet flatly denied by Namboodiripad, since there was no conflict between two classes within the bourgeoisie, but only between two sections. This thesis that the differentiation between the 'national bourgeoisie' and the 'collaborationist bourgeoisie' had not yet taken place was confirmed by Ajoy Ghosh "... no section of the bourgeoisie could be said to have gone over to imperialism, though individuals might have. The contradiction between imperialism and the bourgeoisie as a whole remained If such a differentiation has already taken place, if the pro-imperialists are out to sabotage the second Five Year Plan and maintain the colonial order, then it would be perfectly correct to join hands with the government..."³¹ Ghosh thereupon attacked the erroneous notion of an already differentiated Indian National Congress and described a call for a coalition government as nothing more than a call for the extension of the present government.

The Fourth CPI Congress, at Palghat, in April, 1956, also rejected the line of the general united front with the Congress Party, which was nevertheless advocated by one third of the delegates.³² The resolutions adopted, however, spoke

about a leftward swing among Congressmen and Congress masses, and with them the CPI could join hand in the common struggle for the implementation of the progressive slogans of the otherwise monopolist and landlord-dominated Congress Party. During the Pre-Palghat intra-party discussions and at the Fourth Congress itself the alternative policy calling for an alliance with the national bourgeoisie in the fight against pro-imperialist and pro-feudalist elements was strongly advocated by the group headed by P.C. Joshi, C. Rajeshwar Rao, K. Damodaran and others.³³ This stand was immediately supported by the Russian scholar Modeste Rubinstein, who, in the New Times of 5 July and 2 August, 1956, analysed the 'Non-Capitalist Path for Underdeveloped Countries', with particular reference to India. He contended that the objective possibilities for such a path existed in India, and that, as a matter of fact, Jawaharlal Nehru was advocating such a path. The inference from that situation therefore, was that cooperation should be extended to Nehru in that endeavour.³⁴

When the Communist Government assumed office in Kerala this trend of increasing reliance on the socialist and democratic forces in the Congress Party had appeared among large sections of the CPI leadership. This position remained unaltered, even at the Fifth Party Congress at Amritsar in 1958, in which it was concluded that there was much common ground for united activity between the masses following the Congress and the CPI in the realisation of the progressive plans of the government, and that "in this connection the importance of

our work in local boards, municipalities and cooperatives has acquired a special significance".³⁵ The CPI thus expected to be able to locally implement the Preamble to the Constitution, the Second Five Year Plan and the Congress resolutions of Avadi and Gauhati. But altogether cooperation with the Congress Party remained impossible, since the extreme right, reactionary elements, who lacked a mass basis, were not only working via the parties based on communalism and casteism, but also were trying to gain a tighter grip over the Congress Party, where they found their real strength. The Amritsar resolutions thus pointed for the first time to the consummation of the split within the INC. This reference to the differentiation in the INC, factually supported by the emergence of the Congress Socialist Forum at Gauhati in January, 1958, indicated that the CPI would be prepared to move much closer to the Congress Party. The first occasion for such a move followed the Nagpur Congress of the INC in February 1959, in which was called for radical land reforms, mainly centering around the principle of cooperatives. Ajay Gosh very soon informed that the CPI had decided to offer its full cooperation to the Congress in so far as the implementation of the socialist pattern was concerned, and "to see that the declarations made do not remain on paper". Ajay Gosh was fully supported by Joshi and Dange, who wanted to go still further in their support to the INC, but he was heavily criticized by Dhupesh Gupta, J. Bosu and Randive. Sympathetic to ^{the} right wing in the CPI, Link regretted this, since "all people of

the country are moving in the direction of socialism and demand of all parties in the country, a wholly non-sectarian and patriotically nationalist outlook".³⁶

It was hoped that the Kerala Communist government in its turn would be supported by the leftist elements in the Congress Party, against the forces of reaction, which tried to undo that ministry. Mohit Sen of the CPI pleaded for that support when he characterised the opposition as elements who had previously tried to sabotage the constructive policies of the previous governments from within, and were now openly subverting India's parliamentary democracy and the progressive measures. What they oppose, he wrote "is neither proletarian dictatorship, nor the people's democratic dictatorship but a ministry which functions within and under the aegis of the bourgeois-led centre, based on a bourgeois democratic constitution. It is actually bourgeois-democracy that the opposition is attempting to subvert in Kerala. Once again the Marxist truth is being carried into practice by very anti-Marxist parties - no principle or programme is sacred if proprietary interests are affected in the slightest way. Bourgeois democracy is threatened, above all, by the bourgeoisie."³⁷

At the present stage the CPI only wanted to put the first steps in the bourgeois-democratic revolution on the road to socialism, and the Party, therefore, did not want to introduce full-fledged socialist measures. The CPI, at its Palghat conference 1956, had drafted the following Political Resolution:

"The party has to defend resolutely the interests of the oppressed masses - the working class, the agricultural labourers, the poor and middle peasants, the artisans and urban middle-classes, who are the worst sufferers under Congress rule. It is they who form the majority of our people and, therefore, must constitute the firm basis and the main force of the democratic movement at all stages of its development. The Party must simultaneously champion the just demands of the rich peasants and of the small manufacturers and businessmen". 38

In the next chapter we shall try to analyse the various classes and the existing socio-economic formation in Kerala. This will allow us to understand the specific meaning of this bourgeois-democratic revolution in the economic field and to understand the framework in which the governing Communist Party of India chose to adopt the particular policy during this period.

NOTES

1. R. Ramakrishnan Nair, How Communists came to power in Kerala, 1965, preface; Manfred Turlach, Kerala. Politisch-Soziale Struktur and Entwicklung eines Bundeslandes, Wiesbaden, 1970 (hereafter as: Turlach), p. 152; Victor M. Fic, Kerala: Yenan of India. Rise of Communist Power 1937-1969, 1970 (hereafter as: Fic, Kerala) p. 70ff.
2. For the CPI coming to power, see the explanations given by R. Ramakrishnan Nair, op. cit. Fic, Kerala; S.C. Joseph, Kerala, The Communist state, 1959; Democratic Research Service, Kerala under Communism, a report, 1959 (hereafter as: Kerala under communism); Jitendra Singh, Communist Rule in Kerala, 1959 (hereafter as: Jitendra Singh) and others. For the dissatisfaction which allegedly caused the mass participation in the Liberation Struggle, see Part III of this thesis.
3. The specific Chinese stand can be found in a.o.: Peking Review, 3.6. 1958 (Resolutions of the 8th National Congress of the CPCC on the Moscow Meeting of Representatives of Communist and Workers Parties), and the CPCC's June 14th Letter (A Proposal concerning the general line of the international communist movement, CPC, 14th June 1963). See also Appendix to Victor M. Fic, Peaceful Transition to Communism in India: Strategy of the Communist Party, 1969 (hereafter as: Fic, Peaceful Transition).
4. For the purpose of this study we need not go into details. The evolution can be found in: Gene D. Overstreet and Marshall Windmiller, Communism in India, 1960 (hereafter as: Overstreet and Windmiller), Mohan Ram, Indian Communism, Split within a split, 1969 (hereafter as Mohan Ram); Miroslaw Victor Fic, Peaceful Transformation to Communism in India 1954-1957. A comparative study of Kerala, Ph.D. Thesis, New Delhi 1962 (hereafter as: Fic, Thesis); Fic, Peaceful Transformation, all parim.
5. Quoted from: Fic, Thesis p. 386.
6. New Age, September, 1957, p. 21.
7. New Age, July, 1959, p. 57.
8. Resolutions of the Communist Party of India (Amritsar) C.P.P. 1958, p. 15.
9. New Age, November, 1953: "Stalin, Mao and the National Liberation Movement".
10. Quoted by Fic, Kerala, p. 83-84.
11. New Age, November, 1956: China's Peaceful Socialist Transformation.

12. New Age, 7th April, 1957, p. 4.
13. On the Decisions of the National Council, CPP., pp. 13-14. Also Link, 19th October, 1958.
14. New Age, July, 1958, p. 10.
15. That at least is the retropective opinion of P. Govinda Pillai en K. Ramachandra Menon, during interviews with the author.
16. See, for example, New Age, June 1959 ('The Opposition in Kerala'), and, New Age, July 1959 ('The Opposition in Kerala).
17. Minister for Food, K.C. George, Hindu, 15.5.1957.
18. The Call, July, 1959, "The Right to Revolt and Resist."
19. Kathleen Gough; Communist Rural Councillors in Kerala, in: Journal of Asian and African Studies, 1969, pp. 181-202.
20. E.M.S. Namboodiripad, Kerala, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow, 1968, p. 195. Also in E.M.S. Namboodiripad, The National Question in Kerala, 1952, p. 172.
21. EMS Namboodiripad, The National Question in Kerala, 1952, p. 175.
22. Turlach, pp. 125-129. The agreement on candidates in the anti-Congress electoral understanding in Travancore Cochin in 1954 gave 38 constituencies to the PSP, 36 to the CPI, 12 to the RSP, and 8 to the KSP.
23. Reports in the Hindu, especially 14.1.'57, 16.1.'57 and 19.1.'57. A fairly good account of the Communist United Front Activities is given by Turlach, pp. 106-155.
24. Fic, Kerala, p. 65.
25. Hindu, 26.3.'57. See also the Hindu editions of 24.3.'57 and 25.3.'57.
26. Hindu, 3.5.'57 and 8.4.'57.
27. Fic, Thesis, p. 144; Fic, Peaceful Transition, p. 99; Mohan Ram, pp. 65-66; Overstreet and Windmiller, p. 309ff.
28. FIC, Peaceful Transition, pp. 135-163, reproduces the full discuss on on this resolution. Also: Communist

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29. New Age, November, 1953 (Articles by EMS and Chen Pota); FIÉ, Peaceful Transformation, p. 77ff.
 30. New Age, Sept., 1955 (Prospects of Capitalist Development in India).
 31. New Age, December, 1955 (The Indian Bourgeoisie, p. 12).
 32. Overstreet and Windmiller, p. 322; Mohan Ram, p. 72; Times of India, 26.4.'56.
 33. For an idea of the controversy see, FIÉ, Peaceful Transition, pp. 238-256.
 34. The Article was also reprinted in New Age, Oct., 1956.
 35. Resolutions of the Communist Party of India (Amritsar) CPP, 1958, p. 13.
 36. Link, March, 1959, p. 10, Hindu, 25.2.1959.
 37. New Age, June, 1959 (The opposition in Kerala, p. 60).
 38. The Political Resolution, Adopted at the Fourth Congress of the Communist Party of India CPP, 1956.

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1.2. The Transitional Economic Structure

At the formation of the state of Kerala in 1956, comprising Malabar, Travancore and Cochin, almost all large-scale industries in the new state dated from before independence and were owned or had been initiated by the Government. But, notwithstanding Government intervention no real liberation of the forces of production had occurred. The problem was not the lack of capital as was pointed out in the Report of the Industrial Survey of Travancore: "The state is not lacking in money but there is a great shyness and unwillingness to invest", and this unwillingness was attributable to "the comparative safety of landed property, the failure of various industrial enterprises, the profit obtainable from moneylending, higher and safer than business could ever pay, the lack of actual cash for investment purposes".¹

Capitalist industrial undertakings mainly belonged to two kinds: the gradual expansion of and subsequent qualitative changes in the existing manufacture and handicraft industries, and the export oriented industries, especially tea, rubber, cashew and coir, making use of the external economies. At the same time not as a result of the industrial development of Kerala, but preceding it a section of the landowners or their tenants and the foreign planters started making use of the landed property as capitalist farmers.²

Apart from these few, specific capitalist relations of production the socio-economic structure of vast regions and sectors was characterised by a transitional pattern with in-

effective production, absence of developed capitalist methods of production and a tremendous influence wielded by religious, tribal, and caste customs, resulting in immobile social relations. This pattern may be called the secondary socio-economic pattern, since, though, it may still have a large geographical and sectorial significance, the real pulling force in the state was capitalism. Further, though, the capitalist methods of exchange and to a lesser degree of production had already made a noticeable headway, this capitalist structure still acted jointly with pre-capitalist structures and the socio-economic structure of the state, can, therefore, be described as a structure transitional to capitalism.

1.2.1. Occupational Outline:

A global view of the division of the population over the various industrial categories reveals a comparatively low and constantly decreasing proportion working in the agricultural sector. This could indicate a more advanced stage in the transition towards the industrialised society. This, however, was not the case.

It has been shown that the rate of natural increase as well as the rate of net migration in the previous decades exceeded by far the Indian average.³ This increasing population had been absorbed in the plantations and in the expanded cultivated area. But after the depression of 1929 both roads were getting blocked. As will be seen from table L.2.1.A (See also appendix L.2 Table 1) the primary sector started employing less of the additional force.

II.2.1.A. Distribution of the working force, Kerala, 1901-61.

Year	Total	Agriculture	Industry	Goods production	Tertiary sector
1901	100	63	18	81	19
1911	100	62	19	81	19
1921	100	61	18	79	21
1931	100	47	16	63	37
1951	100	56	20	76	24
1961	100	47	19	66	34

Source: Census, 1961, Kerala Part I A (I) p. 693.

This trend intensified during the decade 1951-1961, so much so that agriculture could absorb only less than 2 lakh workers out of a total increase of 12.57 lakhs in the work force. This indicates that the capacity of the agricultural sector to provide additional employment was only marginal.⁴ Most significantly, however, the shift was not towards the secondary but towards the tertiary sector, at least according to the census reports. In fact, in real terms this shift meant that considerable numbers landed up in a position of quasi-constant unemployment. Whereas the population in Kerala increased with ^{by} 164% between 1901 and 1961 (India 83%), the working force increased only ^{by} 98% (India 69%). Consequently the Census (1961, Vol. VII, Part IA (I), B. 412) noticed a drop in the percentage of employed people to the total population from 44% to 33% over the decades. Table I.2.1.B. gives a simplified picture of the distribution of thousand persons over the different categories in 1961.

Table I.2.1.B. Occupational Distribution of 1000 persons:

Region	Cultiva- tor.	Agr. Lab.	Total Primary sector	Secon- dary sector	Tertiary sector	Non- workers
India	227	72	370	57	74	570
Kerala	70	58	170	89	112	667

Source: Census 1961, Vol. VII, Part I A (I).

Kerala, witnessed thus not only a sharp increase in unemployment, but also an abnormal increase in the tertiary sector. This point needs some clarification. While agricultural labour had an accelerated increase during the previous decades, during the last decade it decreased by 12.23%. The group under General and Unspecified Workers in the tertiary sector increased abnormally to 14% of the total workers. It is however not correct to classify the latter group as a kind of Lumpenproletariat, or floating labour, which "rising proportion reflects a flow from want of dynamism in the other sectors of the economy". (Census, op. cit., p., 697). More than half of them were in fact agricultural labourers, as was shown convincingly by the Bureau of Economics and Statistics.⁵ After rectifying this miscalculation, it will become clear that agricultural labourers, as well as cultivators, have increased at least at the same pace as the total population. This again would mean that the tertiary sector was not unnaturally important and that the proportion of agricultural labour was quite considerable in comparison with other Indian states. Finally, the distribution in the secondary sector

reveals that Kerala is much more industrialised than India, with 18% of the work force, compared to the all India figure of 10% only. Even in regard to the employment in manufacturing other than household industries, Kerala with more than 9% of the work force stands next only to Bengal which is admittedly a highly industrialised state.⁶ Again, these figures hide more than they say. The higher figure for Kerala is due to the unusually high representation of women in this category, and, moreover, the enormous disguised unemployment, for example more than half of the labour in the handspinning of coir being redundant. One author came to the conclusion that the higher employment figures in the industrial sector are more "the result of push forces of an overworked agricultural sector than the pull factor of industrialisation".⁷ Also, and even more significant in the global assessment of the industrial sector, are the poor technology, the extremely small size of the establishments, the location of these industries, the low percentage of industries using power and other factors. The conclusion would be that, though Kerala's industrial sector employed a higher proportion of the state's working force compared to the rest of India, "most of them are employed in low-productivity, agro-based and backward industries such as coir, handloom and beedi",⁸ with the result that the per capita production in the industrial sector was only Rs. 539, compared to Rs. 1294 for India.⁹

Thus, for the time being we can conclude that in the mid-fifties Kerala was characterised by its proportionally

high unemployment and casual and floating employment, as well as unproductive employment, that its seemingly higher stage of industrialisation was reducable to a higher rate of employment of women in the not further qualified 'secondary sector', and that there was a proportionate high percentage of agricultural labourers but a low percentage of people engaged in agriculture.

I.2.2. Agricultural Sector:

We shall deal with the pattern of land tenures and the unequal distribution of land in a later chapter when we take up the specific land legislation introduced by the Communist government, which was mainly related to these aspects. In order to get a comprehensive picture of the nature of the agricultural development in Kerala, we shall here analyse the different agricultural classes and their differentiation in terms of occupation and farming techniques. This will enable us to determine whether, to what extent and with what consequences an independent capitalist development was possible in the agricultural sector.

I.2.2.1. Characteristics of Agricultural Classes:

Sixty percent of all agricultural households owned or cultivated less than one acre. This phenomenon has been observed in different countries, since the allotment of small plots to the rural worker proved to be in the interest of the feudal landlord and the capitalist farmer. These peasants do

not really belong to the proletariat, but belong to the classes often characterised as 'semi-owners' (Mao) or 'dwarf peasants' (Lenin). In his work 'Development of capitalism in Russia', Lenin even concluded that "this does not prevent the economist from classing them all as one type of agricultural proletarian. The juridical basis of his right to his plot of land is absolutely immaterial to such a classification".¹⁰

This is illustrated not only in Kuttanad by the attached labourers with their homesteads,¹¹ but also by a sample survey in Travancore-Cochin in 1954.¹² The percentage of holdings held by agricultural labourers was 32.8%, the average being 0.5-1.0 ac²

agricultural owners	28.7%	"	3.6-5.1	"
tenants	12.5%	"	3.6-5.9	"
non agriculturists	26.0%			

If we draw this picture further we see that, in the case of Trivandrum almost 90% of the holdings were held by owner-cultivators, and that notwithstanding the much smaller average size of the plots than in other districts, it had as high a percentage of agricultural labourers as the other districts, ie. 55% cultivators and 45% labourers. (Survey on Land Reform in Kerala, p. 9 and p. 40). Moreover, we know from the 1961 Census (Kerala, Part III, BXII) that out of the 29000 cultivating households (sample) as many as 19000 had only one person engaged in cultivation. From these facts we can come to the hypothetical conclusion that a large chunk of these owner-cultivators are more frequently occupied on other jobs and other plots than on their own plots. In fact,

this conclusion is being confirmed by other sources. Many of these cultivators had only some cents of land, and, "agriculture may not be the main source of income for these households and in most cases all the land they hold are but the plots forming their homesteads". The Survey on Land Reforms based this conclusion on its finding that "as many as 71% of the cultivator households have not even a single person engaged in agriculture".¹³

While there were more than 24 lakh households holding land, only 7.04 lakh families were classified as actually engaged in agriculture, which means in fact only 28.47%. (Survey on Land Reforms, p. 52). This trend is particularly true in the smaller size-groups as is very clearly shown in table I.2.2.1.A.

Table I.2.2.1.A. Number of Persons Engaged for holding and per Acre.

Size	Family persons per holding	persons per Acre
0-1.0	0.14	0.36
1.0-2.5	0.47	0.31
2.5-5.0	0.84	2.24
5.0-10	1.07	0.15
10-15	1.29	0.13
15-20	0.96	0.06
20-25	0.94	0.04
+ 25	1.57	0.03
All	0.36	0.20

Source: Survey on Land Reforms in Kerala, Bureau of Economics and Statistics, 1968, mimeo, p. 52.

The extent of the subsidiary interest in agriculture of the owner-cultivator in the smaller size groups is also illustrated by the data collected by the Rural Debt Survey 1961. The average value of gross produce per cultivator household in Kerala was only Rs. 586 during the whole year, the average value of the net receipts from salaries, wages and trade amounted to Rs. 655. and from other receipts to Rs. 144.¹⁴ According to Pillai and Paniker, in the following table, the adult family members in the smallest size group seem to spend only 6 days per year on their own farm:

Table I.2.2.1.B. Distribution of Labour Days per Adult Family Member (In Kuttanad Villages)

Size	Farm work	Hired out	Off farm work	Total
0-1	5.8	29.2	110.5	145.5
1-2.5	27.2	20.3	97.7	145.2
2.5-5	35.0	11.3	68.8	170.8
10-15	34.5	0.2	116.1	145.2

Source: V.R. Pillai & P.G.K. Paniker: Studies in the Economics of Farm Management, Mimeo, 1962, p. 152.

From Pillai and Paniker, see table I.2.2.2.B, we also learn that in the lowest size group every third person engaged on the plot is an agricultural labourer, which would explain the high percentage of this group in typical owner-cultivator districts. All this becomes less surprising, since the small plots where the bulk of the owner-cultivators is to be found are almost fully dry land plots. The crops on this land are mainly coconut and tapioca.

Table I.2.2.1.C. Share of Major crops in the Total Output.

Size	Group	Paddy	Cocoanut	Tapioca
1-1.0		13	51	22
1.0-2.5		56	27	5
2.5-5.0		61	27	7
5.0-10		61	29	2
10-15		71	21	1
15-25		69	20	1
+ 25		92	8	-

Source: Pillaí and Panikar: Studies in the Economics...,
Mimeo, p. 168.

It is thus clear that the small farms are mainly garden farms, where the output per acre is much less than in the paddy fields, but so is the cost per acre. This farming, therefore, is resorted to by small owners or garden cultivators, who employ now and then some farmhands - e.g. toddy-tappers - but try themselves to eke out a living in another occupation. Often this occupation will be agricultural labour.

The landlord class was only slowly moving towards capitalist agricultural relations and techniques of production. The proportion of leased in land to the total wet and dry land, as is given in Appendix I.2.2., table 1 shows clearly how both small and big tenants were dependent to a very large extent on the landlords. These landlords owned 37% of the land though they represented only 2.3 of the households. In fact even less, since the definition of landlord-all landowners who have leased out even a bit of land-turned many distress 'land-

lords' into full-fledged ones. In any case in the +25 acres group (13% of all landlords) 70% of the area was leased out (Cfr. Appendix I.2.2. Table 2).

In total still as much as 64% of all land was leased out on an average of 12.20 acres per landlord. This goes to indicate that land was still predominantly owned by the old feudal class, and, that in many cases, especially in the highly profitable paddy cultivation, possession had gone over to medium and large tenants. An indice for the change in the nature of the old landlord class is the fact that absenteeism was not very frequent in the large size groups. In fact, only in Ernakulam and Kottayam districts, absentee landlords were to be found in the +5 acres group (Survey on Land Reforms, Part III, Schedules, Table 14). This together with an increasing process of evictions which had been legalised,¹² and together with the fact that the landlords also leased-in 17% of their possessions, proportionately increasing with the size of the holding (Appendix I.2.2, Table 3) points to a conversion from the feudal rentier to the capitalist farmer. In total they possessed one seventh of the cultivated area. Though it is thus still the reality that the landlords did not invest capital but appropriated surplus value via the easier and safer way of rent collecting, it was also significant that many of them were starting cultivating their own lands.

The tenants can broadly be classified in two groups. The

earnings (cfr. Pillai and Panikkar, p. 135) and in short, is bound to the feudalist overlord by financial and operational obligations. The second type of tenants represent a picture of full development with positive farm labour earnings, fairly high returns on capital investment, and, shortly, a much lower input/output ratio. If the landlords would decide to resume the leased-out land, in order to start capitalist farming it was reasonable that the small tenants would oppose it vehemently. For the rich tenants it was reasonable to expect that they would support anti-eviction legislation, but on the other hand would oppose a ceiling on land in possession, which actually they did alternatively in 1957 and 1959. Indeed, these tenants are not small fries. According to Varghese's study, "The average area of owned land in the hands of owner-cultivators is much less than in the case of rent receivers or tenants. A phenomenon akin to what has been observed in the case of Cochin households, namely, that of large owners leasing in more area than they own and thereby moving into the category of tenant cultivators is strictly seen in Kuttanad".¹⁶ In fact, of all the holdings of over 15 acres some 70% was being held by tenants (Census, 1961, Kerala, Part III, B XI).

The socio-economic implications of these trends were realised by the Communist Party of India as obstacles for the bourgeois-democratic revolution. On the one hand it was realised that till then enormous resources had been disappearing for ages into the pockets of parasitic landlords, directly through rent. It was therefore a welcome sign that landlords

took to agriculture themselves and that rich peasants were enabled to develop their farms on independent lines since, as the Second Five Year Plan had pointed out, this "would also transfer a part of the national income from recipients who use it largely for luxurious consumption to recipients who will use it for production purposes and for raising their low standard of living".¹⁷ Independent capitalist development in the Indian countryside however, would open up an era of evictions, misery, unemployment as had been depicted by Karl Marx in the case of Ireland; a new rural proletariat would be created that was inferior to the previous situation of the feudal tenants and agricultural labourers. Marx wrote that while in England, an industrial country, the process of capitalist development on the countryside could go on gradually, "in Ireland an agricultural country, the agricultural reserves recruit itself from the town, the cities of refuge of the expelled agricultural labourers. In the former, the super-numeraries of agriculture are transformed into factory operatives; in the latter those forced into the towns whilst at the same time they press on the wages in towns, remain agricultural labourers and are constantly sent back to the country districts in search of work".¹⁸ With the prevailing economic structure and class relations in India a picture similar to the development of Ireland could develop once a lasting basis for capitalism in agriculture had been laid. The CPI accused the Indian government and the class policies which it pursued, "policies which do not liberate the peasantry from the age-long

bondage but which, while curbing feudalism, promote and strengthen all types of capitalist interests in agriculture". Congress wanted to create a class of substantial landholders "by transforming feudal landlords into capitalist landlords and also by helping and strengthening the rich peasant, a class which can be depended upon to produce enough surplus of agricultural wealth to meet the requirements of capitalist development in the country...".¹⁹ In order to circumvent this possible capitalist development the CPI choose to opt for another path, a path which would allow capitalism to develop in agriculture but which at the same time would not produce the same results as in Ireland. Against that danger the National Council of the CPI in its meeting at Madras, October 1958, called for a "complex struggle of class alignments during the course of struggles depending upon the nature of issues involved and the dominant character of class relations in the area concerned (and) based under all conditions on the unity of poor peasants and agricultural labourers in firm and unshakable alliance with the middle peasant".²⁰

The implementation of these principles can be judged from the Kerala Agricultural Relations Bill which was introduced by the Communist government in Kerala. In the context of this transitional character of the agricultural economy and of the assumption that the state power had to intervene drastically in order, on the one hand, to stimulate that transition towards capitalism and increased production and on the other hand to prevent the existing socio-economic disparities from developing

into a new Irish catastrophe, it is necessary to first illustrate the character of this transitional agricultural economy.

I.2.2.3. Differentiation in the Nature of Farming:

The differentiation in the methods and means of production had not yet advanced significantly. Improved implements were not to be found to any great extent in either category, but nevertheless a modest and in proportional terms even marked increase was to be noted. (Cfr. Appendix I.2.2., table 4). However almost no borrowed money was spent on agricultural improvements. Indeed, from the following table emerges a marked difference in the purpose of borrowing in a selected district, Quilon.

Table I.2.2.3.A. Borrowing for various purposes: Expenditure in Rs. and (Average Amount Percentage to the Total)

Size	Total	Capital in agricul- ture	Current farm Exp.	Non- Farm business	Family	Others
Big	806	200(25)	31(4)	174(22)	323(40)	78(10)
Large	564	104(18)	25(4)	121(21)	247(44)	68(12)
Medium	197	24(13)	8(4)	37(20)	98(51)	20(11)
Small	108	8(7)	1(1)	26(24)	66(61)	8(7)
All	219	31(4)	8(4)	50(23)	108(49)	na

Source: All-India Rural Credit Survey, 1951-52, as given in the District Gazetteer of Quilon, p. 35.

It may be noted that the vast bulk of the loans in the mid-fifties were obtained from professional moneylenders, traders, landlords, etc., and that many large cultivators did not use

the money available in order to modernise their agricultural holdings. Even in the sixties the official Survey of Land Reforms came to the conclusion that there was sizeable capital formation, though not so much on agricultural practices: e.g. 4% on improved seeds, 6% on fertilisers and a negligible part on agricultural implements.²¹ The Travancore-Cochin Banking Enquiry Commission, 1956, noted as a distinguishing trend that "whereas the banks functioning in the rural areas were deposit centres those in the urban area were advance centres. The Commission observed that the major portion of the funds acquired in the rural areas is financing economic activities in urban areas".²² (stress added)

Thus, altogether there was not much institutional money available in the rural areas. The available money was too expensive so that almost all loans the peasantry could secure were distress loans, used in rescuing them from a state of destitution and certainly not in risky investments. In fact, especially for the small farmers the rates of interest were prohibitive. Significant for the degree of differentiation of the peasantry is that the AIRCS 1951-52 as well as previously the Report on the Enquiry into the Family Budget of Industrial Workers in Cochin State 1945-46, found a marked difference in the rate of interest for agricultural workers and small peasants, and the upper-size strata.²³ In addition to this, as Pillai and Panikar have shown for the Kuttanad villages, 61% of the agricultural households had no financial assets at all and only 27% had more than Rs. 100. There were 32% without products

in store, and 22% with a value of between 0-100 Rupees.²⁴ Agricultural improvement for the large majority of the peasant thus seemed to be an unheard of thing. For a small section of landlords and tenants, a quite different situation was obtainable.

This advanced class of landlords and tenants possessed money and/or cheap sources of credit and used it for purchasing the not fully necessary but in any case highly remunerative fertilisers. Table I.2.2.2.B shows how different the farms in the extreme strata were:

Table I.2.2.2.B. Indices of Monetisation (Percentages)

Size of holding	Manure			Seeds		Labour	
	Home Prod.	Pur-chased	Ferti-lisers	Home Prod.	Pur-chased	Family	Hired.
0-1	67	21	12	32	68	65	35
1-2.5	52	23	25	66	34	46	54
2.5-5	53	25	22	73	27	29	71
5-10	36	31	33	82	28	17	83
10-15	18	22	61	78	22	10	90
15-25	12	11	77	89	11	7	93
+ 25	7	9	84	100	0	4	96

Source: Pillai & Panikar: Studies in the Economics ...

While one group owned the raw material and buys labour power, the other group toiled mainly with its own labour and had to buy the raw material. In the case of the fertilisers and insecticides the latter group was not even able to purchase them and had to fall back on home produced manure.

This compiled material tends to show that there was a more pronounced capital investment in land development in the larger holdings, though not yet in the purchase of modern machinery. This absence must have been mainly due to the secluded and isolated character of the agricultural sector, where labour was docile and often even attached to the land-owner. The probably accelerated increase of machinery indicates that the internal structure in the countryside was changing. In that perspective a more rapid transformation of techniques may logically be expected. In fact, there was some evidence that this had been taking place on the large paddy fields, e.g. in Kuttanad, where the capital intensity per acre in 1960 was more than five times higher than even in Punjab.²⁵

This coincidence is not so strange: the introduction of machinery in agriculture not only leads fatally to the establishment of capitalist relations, but also, it is being introduced after patriarchal relations in the peasant economy have broken down, as was the case in the kaval cultivation with its huge armies of agricultural labourers. This rural proletariat had become a powerful force, which was reflected in the fact that on the large estates twice as much of the wages was being paid in kind than elsewhere and that even on those estates the attached labour — for maintenance work in the lean season — was still being paid in cash.²⁶

1.2.3. The Industrial Sector:

In the appendices we have brought together some statistics which give a relative and absolute picture of the extent and

nature of the industrialisation of Kerala in the late fifties. Reisman and Shirokov classified Kerala among the group of the least developed Indian States (Appendix I.2.3 Table 1), which they characterised as follows. The cottage industries preserved here are extremely backward and the trade and usurious capital wield considerable influence in them. Their development into higher forms of industry is very slow. Big factories however have been built in these areas, usually by entrepreneurs from the more developed areas or by foreign capitalists. At the present stage the new enterprises do not compete with local cottage industries either for the nature of output or markets (they supply chiefly the more developed areas). Thus, a peculiar discontinuity in different stages of industrial development and the co-existence of little-connected and directly opposite forms are a feature of these areas. The authors observe that the processes of the modernisation of the industrial structure are only starting and that "On the whole, under the existing structure of industry no clear-cut polarisation of interests both within the bourgeois class and between it and the working people is noticeable in the less developed states".²⁷ We shall elaborate this analysis, and attempt to shed some light on the character of the household-industry, on the extent of capitalistically employed wage labour, and on the nature and possibilities of the rising capitalist class.

Almost every product is being produced in the household industry, which employed almost 10% of the working population.²⁸ For certain commodities which were produced directly for the

market more workers were engaged in this domestic industry than in the manufacturing proper. These workers comprised weavers, spinners, precision instrument makers, furnacemen, moulders, most food-beverage and tobacco workers and in short almost all conceivable occupational groups. If we disaggregate the whole structure further we shall see that these industrial commodity producers are independent workers, subordinated to capital. At bottom, in fact, these workers are more often than not straight wage workers, though they are organised in a different form, in a combination of labour power, merchant's capital and industrial capital. The domestic workers have even been proletarianised to such a degree that most of them have to rely mainly on family labour and this creates conditions which, as Lenin observed, "convert the dwellings of the home workers into hotbeds of infection and occupational diseases",²⁹ and represent the most liberal form of capitalist exploitation. The Census of 1961 classified 43000 household industries with 88000 family workers and only 16000 hired workers. Moreover 85% of this latter group of pure wage labourers were employed in the units with more than five workers.³⁰ These few exceptions of households employing wage labour only confirm the nature of the proletarianisation of the vast bulk of the households in this group.

We have shown elsewhere that self-employment is not the predominant feature of this sector and also have traced the evolution towards centralised production, with the help of the examples in some industries.³¹ Let us repeat the short out-

line. The implicit dependence for the marketing of the produced commodity turned into explicit dependence caused by debt slavery and the isolation from the finished goods market and the raw material markets. This system where the producer was still technically independent was giving way slowly to the far more powerful system of centralised capitalist production, at least in essence. In appearance cottage industry remained widespread. Indeed, this evolution had a twofold organisational character: factory system as well as cottage system, especially for those qualities of products of for those products where no direct supervisions is necessary. The merchants instead of putting out raw materials, started manufacturing themselves, often retaining the old organisation of the production. Outside their own field these merchants were followed by the capital of well-to-do farmers and the emerging entrepreneurs, especially where capital investments were low and profits high. The fact that capital has not been flowing freely towards industrial undertakings does not contradict the argument that capitalism was developing and that the classes with surplus money were investing, starting in the less risky industries. Those ventures were exports units as cashew and coir and establishments with hand-production, where, moreover, no division of labour in a central factory was necessary.

Large scale industries as such mainly signified coir and cashew works. Appendix I.2.3 Table 2 gives some idea about the magnitude of these works. The innumerable small ones belong to a different industrial category altogether, with all structural

characteristics of the cottage industry: no regular employment, labour charges amounting for 70% of the cost of production and a small capital of some hundred rupees. But even the situation of the registered factories proper is not much different. According to one study on the coir industry the number of these factories increased from 266 to 792 in the period 1944-57, but only a few had managed to put their enterprise on a sound financial and technical basis. It remained a highly unorganised industry.³² At first glance the contrast with the cashewnut industry is striking. The latter is solely large scale and is dominated by a few capitalists as J.A.P. Musuliar, who started with one factory and by the mid-fifties owned 26 of them, with an employment of 13000 workers.³³ However, and though the production was soaring, even in this sector capital investments remain low; a grading plant, a hothouse and a few sheds for shelling, peeling and grading are all that is required. The returns are high, or, as an Industrial Tribunal noticed: "The business being highly speculative, individual proprietors goaded solely by the profit motive left no stone unturned to add on the number of existing factories and engage innumerable workers for a while with a view to hasten the manufacture of kernels to meet the demands from outside when prices shot up in the fluctuating foreign market".³⁴ The same story of low capital investment could be repeated for tiles, rubber, copra, mills, matches, splints and veneers and others. The question thus arises whether capital was really being diverted from usury and petty trade towards production. Or was capital still

mainly been used in unproductive pre-capitalist business and in production with ~~an~~ rather low capital investment.

There are many references which indicate the minor role of big-scale investment in capital intensive modern industries. Let us sum them up. More than 91% of the industrial establishments of the state did not use power as against 56% for the country as a whole, and of the 251 factories in the rural areas with more than hundred workers as many as 161 did not use power at all.³⁵ It also happened that the units employing more than fifty workers represented only 0.5% of the total units while the single-man operated units alone formed about 51% and those in the 2-4 size group 42% of the total. Moreover, two sectors, textiles with 29% and foodstuffs with 18% formed the majority of all industrial establishments.³⁶ The net value added was the lowest in India in the non-factory sector as well as in the factory sector, where the Indian average was more than twice as high (Rs. 1059 vs Rs. 2500).³⁷ The Techno-Economic Survey of Kerala by the NCAER, based on calculations by the NSS put the capital per worker at Rs. 2737 versus the All-India average of Rs. 5830. (See also appendix I.2.3 Table 3) The same survey concluded that, "It may be mentioned here that although in overall terms the industrial sector in Kerala does not occupy a very impressive place there exist some industries which are technically in the forefront of the country's industries".³⁸ Indeed, Kerala had been a pioneer in many fields but one should clearly understand that all these factories, paper titanium, rare earth, rayon, fertilisers, chemicals etc., were set up

by the state or Central Government or by outside capital. In the period 1952-61 there was a pronounced increase in registered factories from 1663 to 2413; the total of industrial establishment was calculated by the Census 1961 as 58365 with 394787 persons employed.³⁹ This increase could be attributed to the small scale production of food, wood, rubber and similar traditional commodities.

Again, the hesistant approach on the part of the possessors of wealth does not deny the fact that growing numbers were trying to turn their wealth into industrial capital, as can be judged from Appendices I.2.3. Table 4 and I.2.3. Table 5, which show a marked and proportionately steep increase in the number and capital of non-agricultural co-operative societies and joint stock companies in the production branches. The most relevant facts for our purpose are the following: There was a significant increase in mercantile and manufacturing companies, while the earlier nexus of capital, the banking and insurance branch, has remained stagnatory, and moreover, with a very low rate of floating capital. Actually subscribed capital was mainly put to full use in plantations and mills. The ratio of non-agricultural cooperatives to agricultural cooperatives had narrowed down from 1/5 to 2/3, and more important, the working capital of the former now exceeded the latter by almost 100%. The progress of the non-agricultural credit societies and the amount of loans granted is seen to be even larger, but this was being offset by the enormous increase in the loans granted by the Central Credit Societies, mainly for payment of debt, etc.

It is finally important that the proportion of equity capital was very low and that loan capital formed a very significant part of the total capital. Moreover, institutional sources as cooperatives and government's finance corporations only played a secondary role so that the bulk of the capital still had to be bought from moneylenders and commercial banks with their high and often prohibitive rates of interest.⁴⁰

Let us finally consider how the private capital and entrepreneurship were forthcoming in a few typical industrial projects started by the government of India: the industrial estates of Pappanamcode, Trivandrum, and the estate of Kolaikadavu, Alleppy. Both were started in 1957. In the former it lasted two years before any industry, other than units run or sponsored by the government, started. The situation was different in Kolaikadavu. Within a short period many units came forward which did not stand a need of the special facilities of the estates (soap making, candle making, splicing and veneers). After new promises of increased raw material quotas, loans and other concessions were made, new flows of entrepreneurs appeared, most of them with a view of acquiring raw materials which were in short supply at controlled rates. Many were receiving raw materials without production since it was possibly more profitable to sell them in the black market than to turn them into finished products.⁴¹

It was on the basis of this economic structure that the CPI thought it unjustified to bar the private sector from participating in the advance of the economy, which was in the state of initial development. It was the accepted policy that

neither the material nor the social prerequisites for such a policy had matured and that the government should make use of all available instruments in the expansion of industrial and agricultural production and in the accumulation of capital. Therefore, instead of coming down drastically on private capitalist property or of giving full freedom and ample financial assistance to the peasantry and the capitalists, the Kerala Communist Government decided for a transformational bourgeois-democratic stage. In the next part we shall illustrate how this policy was implemented during the 28 months.

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NOTES:

1. S.G. Barker, Report of the Industrial Survey of Travancore, Trivandrum, 1919, pp. 22-23.
2. Some literature on this subject can be found in T.C. Varghese; Agrarian Change and Economic Consequences, 1970; EMS Namboodripad, Kerala, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow, 1968; T.K. Velu Pillai, Travancore State Manual, 1940, Vol. III.
3. K.C. Zacharich, A Historical Study of Internal Migration in the Indian Sub-continent, 1964.
4. Survey on Land Reforms in Kerala, Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Trivandrum, 1968, Mimeo, p. 8.
5. Working force estimates 1951 and 1961, BES, Trivandrum, Mimeo.
6. M.A. Oommen, Small Scale Industries in Kerala, Ph.D. Thesis, Trivandrum, 1967, p. 50. A revised form of this thesis has been published as: Small Industry in Indian Economic Growth. A case study of Kerala, 1972. We shall, however, refer to the Thesis.
7. Op. cit., p. 51.
8. R.V.B. Nair (ed), Development of Kerala, 1972, p. 6.
9. NCAER, Techno-Economic Survey of Kerala, 1963, pp. 9-10.
10. V.I. Lenin, The Development of Capitalism in Russia, Moscow, 1964, p. 178.
11. Typical examples are the highly capitalistic farms in Kuttanad where 12% of the labour force was attached labour (Agr. Lab. Eng. Report 1956). They had small plots but were paid in cash and not in the more enumerative wages in kind as the casual labourers.
12. All India Agricultural Labour Enquiry..., 1954. The figures are quoted from: District Gazetteer of Ernakulam-Trichur (ed. by A. Sreedhara Menon), p. 305.
13. Survey on Land Reforms in Kerala, op. cit., p. 46.
14. Figures quoted from: K.N. Raj, P.S.K. Panikar and T.N. Rishnan, Some Perspectives on Planning and Development, Centre for Development Studies, Kerala, 1972, p. 5.
15. Prakash Karat gives a tentative idea in Social Scientist, 1973, October, pp. 31-32.

16. T.C. Varghese, op. cit., p. 109.
17. Quoted by Bhowani Sen: Evolution of Agrarian Relations in India, 1962, p. 266.
18. Marx, The Capital, Progress Moscow, Vol. I., pp. 662-3.
19. Ajoy Gosh, On the Decisions of the National Council (1968), CPP, p. 16.
20. Ibid., p. 18.
21. Survey on Land Reforms, p. 98ff.
22. A. Sreedhara Menon, District Gazetteer of Quilon, p. 363.
23. Figures are given in the appropriate sections of the District Gazetteers, ed. by A. Sreedhara Menon, e.g. Quilon (p.357), Trichur (p. 338), Cannanore (p. 371).
24. Pillai & Panikar, Studies in the Economics of Farm Management, Mimeo, 1962, pp. 82-85.
25. Pillai & Panikar, Land Reclamations in Kerala, 1965, pp. 50-52; T.C. Varghese, op. cit., p. 120.
26. Pillai & Panikar, op. cit., p. 57, pp.119-22. The same authors, Studies in the Economics of Farm Management, Mimeo, 1962, p. 133.
27. Reisner and Shirokov, in: Asia in Soviet Studies, Nauka Moscow, 1969, pp.218-9. Also in: Ulyanovsky & others: Industrial Revolution & Social Progress, PPH, 1970, p.29.
28. Census 1961, Vol. VII, Part I, A(I), p. 698.
29. V.I. Lenin, Development of Capitalism in Russia, p. 443.
30. Census 1961, Vol. VII, Part III, Tables BXIV to BXVI.
30. In two unpublished papers: Nature of Travancore's Economy between the two World Wars, and, the Economic Structure of Kerala in the mid-fifties.
32. B. Unnithan, Coir Industry in Kerala, Ph.D. Thesis, Trivandrum 1968, Unpublished, p. 18.
33. Kerala Gazette, 27 August 1957, (Industrial Award).
34. Ibid.
35. M.A. Oommen, Small Scale Industries in Kerala, op. cit., p. 60, table.

36. M.A. Oommen, op. cit., p. 15.
37. NCAER: Techno-Economic Survey of Kerala, pp. 9-10.
38. NCAER, op. cit., p. 140.
39. Census 1961, Vol. VII, Part I A(I), p. 51 and pp. 695ff;
also, NCAER, op. cit., p. 143.
40. M.A. Oommen, op. cit., pp. 311-313.
41. M.A. Oommen, op. cit., pp. 179-80.

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PART II.
THE COMMUNIST PARTY IN OFFICE.

In the elections to the State Assembly held in March 1957, the Communist Party of India emerged as the majority party, and on 5 April the new government of nine communist and two independent ministers was sworn in. During the first months in office, the Communist Government took several steps, in a "well-planned bid for mass support"¹: it drafted the Land Reform Bill, introduced the Education Bill and constituted the Administrative Reforms Committee, introduced a surplus budget, improved the jail system and increased the salaries of several categories of employees, it stayed the eviction of tenants and hut-dwellers, reduced the salaries of ministers and the high-paid gazetted officers, and commuted jail sentences. In this part we shall analyse these and other steps the ministry took in the fields of education, agrarian relations, industrial development and labour relations.

II.1. Educational Reforms.

We shall first analyse the existing educational system, then review the history of the state intervention and the changes introduced by the Communist ministry, and finally describe the reaction of the various parties and interest groups to the Bill, and explain the reasons why the Education Bill became an important issue in the agitation, culminating in the Vimochana Samaram.

II.1.1. The Educational System in Kerala:

The government of Kerala conceded that the private educa-

tional institutions "had rendered commendable service in the matter of promoting education whether for proselytisation or for profit, or perhaps for self rewarding social service."² The educational system which had provided the state with the by far highest percentage of literates in India was at the same time under strong attack. Joseph Mundassery, the Minister of Education, himself had been a teacher in St. Thomas College Trichur, where he had not accepted the tyranny of the ecclesiastical private management. He wrote a widely appreciated novel, about the distress of the teachers, 'Professor', and subsequently, was excommunicated from the Syrian Christian Church and made to leave his job. Due to this long experience as a teacher and as a legislator it was claimed that "no other state in India can boast of an education minister more experienced and better fitted for handling the educational portfolio"³

It was alleged by various sources that the private managers saw their schools as a profitable business concern, where fees kept rising unusually fast with the fame of the school and where appointments became a sort of an auction, the jobs going to the highest bidders, who, anyway, would lend up in a "disgraceful situation in which they were treated as servants of the management"⁴. This profit motive was by some explained as a necessary corollary to the economic structure of the state: since there was no industrial bourgeoisie, "The alternative source of power and position was by getting into seats of state services", and the moneyed class, therefore, recognised the opportunities of

..

trading in educational institutions instead of industrial enterprises.⁵ The injustice towards teachers was facilitated by the rising educated unemployment, which was an indirect consequence of and in its turn a direct cause of the educational structure. Already in the early thirties nobody less than C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyer had warned that one could "foresee that middle class unemployment which is every day on the increase, will necessarily lead to a situation which will be intolerable... There is therefore also a great political necessity for reorganising our system of education."⁶

According to the statistics provided by the Government of Kerala, in 1957 more than 20% of Kerala's population was attending the near 10000 institutions with well over 80000 teachers. Apart from the qualitative problem of standardisation and diversification towards more technical training, the government felt that the most acute problems were those of regulating the working and the juridicial power of the various institutions under the ministry of education. Whatever the extent of scandals, corruption and grievances, they were bound to remain unredressed since there was no legal basis for enforcing the governmental orders, so that this major department had ultimately only the power to spend money. The following table gives an idea of the expenditure under this head:

Table II. 1.1.A.
Rise of Expenditure on Education in Travancore-
Cochin and Kerala

Year	Total Expenditure in lakhs Es.	% of total Expenditure on Revenue Account(7)	Plan Expenditure in Kerala	
			Social Services in lakhs Es.	Of which education %
1951-52	247	18	44	2
1953-54	349	34	48	9
1955-56	575	29.5	89	8
1956-57	711	34.9	190	24
1957-58	958	37.8	441	37
1958-59	1374	36.0	646	44
1959-60	1475	34.8	632	41
1960-61	1621	33.5	844	48

Sources: 2&3 P. Bacheekrishnan Nair, A Study of Educational Finance, Appendix E, M. Ed. Thesis, Unpublished, Trivandrum 1961.

4&5 Census 1961, Vol. III, Part IA(I), p. 718

This school system worked favourably for the Brahmins, Syrian Christians, Jacobites, Marathanites, Nairs and even for the Backward Christians, but worked very unfavourably for the Ezhavas, Muslims, Scheduled Castes and Kammalas, who constituted 65% of the population, but were proportionally heavily underrepresented in the educational system, as is clearly born out by Appendix II. 1, Tables 1 and 2.

The ratio of government and private institutions was 2 to 7 in 1957 and the enormous change towards a 3 to 5 ratio during the years of the EMS government was mainly due to the takeover of

1200 school run by the Malabar District Board. Of the nearly 6000 private schools 2200 were run by the Church.

Table II. 1.1.B
Schools for General Education in Kerala,
1957 and 1960

Type of school	Government		Private	
	1957	1960	1957	1960
High School	140	244	612	628
Upper Primary Schools	255	500	1314	1300
Lower Primary Schools	1627	2651	4999	2742
T o t a l :	2013	3395	6825	5670
Training Schools	NA	292	NA	360

Source: Government of Kerala: Towards a Better Educational System, 1960, and Statistical Abstracts of Kerala 1959-60.

The responsibility for the payment of teachers and many other expenses through the managers was taken over by the government and this increased the share of the government funds considerably. Moreover, the cost per pupil in private schools rose too sharply, as will be seen from Table II.1.1.C. Consequently, the direct expenditure, given to the private managements without any possibility of supervision or verification, totalled between 6 and 7 crores⁰

Table II.1.1.C.
Expenditure on Education per source and
per pupil

Year	Percentage of expenditure		Per pupil cost (RS) in		
	Government Funds	Other sources	Government Schools	Private Schools	
Primary educa- tion.	1951	92.3	7.7	9.20	10.04
	1956	99.1	0.9	-	-
	1957	-	-	15.05	25.98
Seco- ndary school educa- tion.	1951	51.4	48.6	27.78	6.32
	1956	68.2	31.8	-	-
	1957	-	-	26.61	26.68

Source: P. Radhakrishnan Nair, A Study of Educational Finance, p. 110 & Appendix I, based on the Administrative Reports of the Education Department.

II.1.2. History of the State Intervention in Kerala

The Kerala Education Bill in 1957 had nothing in common with the so-called communist strategy of subversion and regimentation which were ascribed to it, but was merely a repetition of previous attempts in Kerala and in other states to implement some bourgeois-democratic measures.

Nobody less than her Highness Parvathi Bai of Travancore had, as early as 1817, issued rescripts directing that the state should defray the entire cost of education of its people and that the schools and management should be conducted under the supervision of the state. This early recognition of the "principle that the cost of education is a charge on public funds and the supervision thereof is the legitimate function

of the state",¹⁰ was partially implemented in the vernacular schools from 1875 onwards. The policy of grants-in-aid jacked up the number of private schools from 20 to 440 in one decade. The departmental control on the efficiency and powers of the managements, however, was only introduced in 1910, resulting in a sudden drastic drop in schools, and was 5 years later reviewed with a gravitation towards the restoration of the old policy of encouraging private schools without too much supervision.¹¹ The full effect of imposition and withdrawal of departmental control is seen from the following table:

Table II.1.2.
A Development of the Vernacular School
system 1875-19 in Travancore.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Government Schools</u>	<u>Private Sided</u>
1875	177	20
1884	223	440
1910	498	1908
1912	703	158
1914	841	863
1915	1020	870
1919	1676	1223

Source: Based on T.K. Velu Pillai, Travancore State Manual, Vol. III, and P. Radhakrishnan Nair, A Study of the History and Problems of Educational Finance in Kerala, M.Ed. Thesis, Unpublished, Trivandrum, 1961.

Following the findings of the Travancore Unemployment Enquiry Committee, an Educational Reforms Committee was established in 1933, but it came to a negative conclusion on state control: "Such a policy would largely increase the cost of education, would

do serious damage to long standing vested interests and would not necessarily ensure better and efficiency education".¹²

(emphasis added)

At the same time the debate about this controversy was raging in the Cochin Assembly as well, and to a notion objecting to the unnecessary interference in the matter of appointments, the education minister replied that some interference was necessary "in view of the liberal grant that the government is giving and ... of the complaints that the government has been receiving from the teaching staff".¹³ The Travancore government had tried again in 1945 to introduce educational reforms, but the reaction of the Church was sudden and forceful, threatening that if "the primary rights of the individuals are effected to the slightest extent as a result of the socialistic policy of government, nature will grow angry with the government, rouse up all the forces under the sun and wipe out from the face of the earth the unjust authors of nationalization".¹⁴ The attack by the Catholic Bishop of Changanachery in a pastoral letter was directed against nobody less than the last Dewan of Travancore, who subsequently was forced to make peace. Again, a new compromise was the nullifying result after the government of Travancore-Cochin in 1951-52 planned to increase the salaries of private school teachers, with the accompanying requirement that 80 percent of the school fees be remitted to the government and with the compulsory appointment of teachers from a list approved by the state.¹⁵

• It was finally, not only in Kerala but in many other

states of India as well that similar principles were being implemented. The tendency towards increasing state control of private schools, and even nationalization, was evident long before. Some enacted clauses, moreover, had a questionable constitutionalist¹⁶. Even the Catholic Bishop's Conference of India had to report in 1958 that "such steps are not inspired by any prejudice against our schools, but (are) merely the result of the present climate in the country which is less favourable to private enterprise and would rather encourage the public sector."¹⁷

II.1.3. The Kerala Education Bill:

The regulation of the educational system as was promised by the CFI in Kerala as one of the major points in the election platform, had thus become historically necessary. This regulation required a legal basis, and soon after coming to power, the government announced that the statutory basis for the improvement of general education and of the plight of the teachers was in active preparation.¹⁸ As early as July 7, 1957 the Kerala Education Bill was introduced and the divided opposition started with delaying manoeuvres. The government, possibly due to lack of experience, refused to circulate the bill in order to elicit public opinion and ordered the Assembly Select Committee to report back by 20th July. After discussions with the Central Government, however, this demand of the opposition was accommodated, as well as some suggestions made by the Union Home and Law Ministers. However, on September 20 the bill got through its second reading, though the opposition, in collaboration with

the Central Government was able to put off its implementation till 1st June, 1959, as we shall see later.

The Objects and Reasons of the Bill were "to provide for the better organisation of general education", and more specifically to provide for a check on the payment of salaries to and security of service of the teachers and on the administration of the institutions.¹⁹ Mundassery, replying to the discussion on the Bill, told that the intention of the Bill was to protect the right of the teachers: "their dependence on the sweet will of the manager should cease".²⁰ The bill stipulated that all payments of wages should be done to and by the government directly and that teachers could be appointed by the managements only from a state panel of qualified teachers, who, after appointment, could not be suspended on flimsy grounds. The most controversial clauses related to the takeover of aided schools. For a maximum period of 5 years, when necessary "in the interests of the pupils of the school", the government may, under clause 14, and without any notice, take over the management of the school against payment of an objectively fixed rent. Within 3 months the educational agency may apply for a restoration. Clause 15 gave government the legal ground for the takeover of the school "for standardising general education in the state, or for improving the level of literacy in any area or for more effectively managing the aided educational institutions in any area or for bringing the education of any category under their direct control".²¹ However, "no notification shall be issued unless supported by a resolution of the legislative

Assembly", and compensation would be paid on the basis of the market value. The bill also specified that the administration of the education be carried on by the management, while inspection, control and supervision of their schools ~~and~~ be by the education department.

The Bill was hotly debated, before it was finally passed on 29.11.'58, though the modifications introduced to it were only minor. One of the more important amendments was moved by the Congress leader of the Opposition, P.T. Chacko, who had close connections with the Church and the planters.²² The amendment specified that "for the purpose of giving representation to communities, appointments in private schools shall be deemed to be appointments in Government schools". He justified the principle involved for granting reservation in private schools as well, since, "The entire salary of teachers is paid by government. Hence communal reservation should be made applicable in making appointments to all these ... vacancies".²³ The government welcomed this amendment by one of the most outspoken spokesmen of the interests of the Syrian Church for one of the most sensitive issues, reservation. EMS Namboodiripad was very suspicious about the caste organisations, since they, encouraged by the reservation, would consolidate the caste separatism, and knew that, therefore the grip of these organisations on the peasantry, proletariat and middle - classes had to be broken first if they were to be organised as classes. They had thus a potentially reactionary character, but the government, notwithstanding some contrary recommendations by

the Administrative Reforms Committee, decided to continue reservation "as a necessary arrangement only for such a period as would enable the socially and educationally backward communities to catch up with the rest of the population".²⁴

Chacko's amendment is not fully understandable, unless it was meant as the cutting of one's nose to spite the other, since it would limit the teaching possibilities of the Nairs.²⁵ The Select Committee also added a clause that nothing in the Kerala Education Bill should affect the rights of the minorities under the articles of the Constitution, and that, therefore, the provisions of the Act should not apply to schools other than government schools, and those aided by the government. Managements could thus opt out of the aid-system and continue as recognised schools. Nevertheless, the churches alleged that the Bill was a planned attempt to break the private managements and that as such it was contrary to the rights of the minorities as guaranteed by article 30 of the Constitution. The Advocate-General denied the relevance of this article, since, "An Institution under Article 30 cannot be said to be recognised or aided; it is a school run of the manager's own choice. No school, aided or recognised, can be conducted by a manager as of his own choice. State-aided institutions are run by the managers... in accordance with regulations and rules laid down by the state".²⁶ While the Bill was waiting its approval by the President in New Delhi, an official delegation of the anti-Bill agitation went there. Their plea that the Bill was anti-constitutional²⁷ convinced the Central Government and therefore,

though after several months of hesitation, the Bill was referred to the Supreme Court.²⁸ The Kerala Communist Party strongly resented this action. According to M.N. Govindan Nair, the General Secretary of the CPI in Kerala, the reference was done "just to satisfy the objections of some private parties who happened to be supporters of the Congress in a particular state".²⁹

The central decision was generally seen as an encouraging success for the Syrian Christians and Latin Catholics, though the final verdict of the Supreme Court on 22nd May 1958 was a shattering blow for them. In support of the Bill the court pointed out that the right to administer schools would not mean the right to administer them inefficiently and if state aid was given to them, the state should have statutory rights to improve certain regulations.

The framing of the rules of the Act in April 1959 gave cause to some uneasiness in the Communist camp as well. Not only was strict religious neutrality prescribed, but the proposed rules also prohibited students and teachers from taking part in agitations, which "may result in ill-feeling between different sections of the people".³⁰ Also some other rules, which reflected Government's desire to placate the educational authorities, were amended in the Assembly, though old authoritarian practices were not fully done away with.³¹ In mid-'58 it was also alleged that communists' "minister motive is seen in full nakedness in the preparation and prescription of text-books", which were intended to "enslave the minds of the students

to the ideology of the rulers by a rigorous control over syllabus.... common to all totalitarian governments".³² Government indeed in November 1957 had ordered various committees to prepare new textbooks for the primary classes, and these books were introduced in the schools from the next school year onwards. The charge made by the Church evoked from Joseph Mundassery the remark that "this is ironic to the extreme, coming as it does from spokesmen for a world religion which has sought, through the centuries to enforce the dogmas and punish... those who question or challenge them, besides forbidding the Faithfull from reading books arbitrarily put on the index."³³ Nevertheless, the Government appointed a committee to enquire into these allegations. The committee of enquiry noticed the occurrence of inadequate passages, but attributed it to the absence of an adequate machinery of supervision. The main conclusion of this report, however, read that "there has not been any concerted attempt on the part of the authorities... to indoctrinate the pupils in anti-religious ideas", or "at indoctrination of communist ideology, or an intention... to belittle the achievements of India".³⁴ A comparison of some passages in the old and new textbooks, moreover, would reveal that the old version contained unhistorical facts, value judgments and a slandering misrepresentation of communism.³⁵ Although this report by Maruvilla Jacob was submitted in January 1959, the opposition kept harping on this very sensitive issue.

II.1.4. Reaction to the Bill:

- . The government's attempts at educational reforms had

attracted the immediate attention of the various groups and interests who had a stake in the existing system. The opposition parties in Kerala alleged that in the field of education, government was trying to bring about a hidden 'qualitative change' through an open 'quantitative change'. In the words of the KPCC, "what they did was to cover up their innovations in the field of education by universally accepted ideals and behind them lay the foundation for communist dictatorship. The surest way to regimentation is the brainwashing of the future generation"³⁶ This logic was repeated again and again in vosiferous writings and speeches and had an enraging effect upon large chunks of the population.

At the end of May, 4 Archbishops and 13 Bishops of the Catholic Church met in a conference to take exception to the assumption of the government that primary education was the responsibility of the state,³⁷ and sometime later the Malabar Catholic Association and the protestant Christian Association in their resolution against the reform proposals stated that the government "wanted to effect a thorough change in the educational system, with the ulterior aim of injecting into the children atheism and other aspects of communism".³⁸

Joseph Mundassery made it clear after the introduction of the Bill, that the government did not want to discourage private agencies in the field of education or take away their rights, and indeed in practice the new government had already sanctioned the opening of 16 private high schools.³⁹ Nevertheless, the leaders of the Congress party joined the Church authorities,

and while the former education minister L.M. Pylee evaluated the Bill as a "blatant manifestation of totalitarianism", the KPCC and the Legislative Congress Party condemned it as "ill-conceived, ill-drafted and totalitarian in its approach" and warned that it was likely to open up avenues "for the regimentation of educational activities".⁴⁰ Even before the debates in the Assembly could start, Father Vadakkaz had, in a circular to the religious heads, called for a crusade against the communist regime, proposing the parish priests to "form 2000 small units of youths, well informed and active against the communists ...".⁴¹ This call for the violent struggle was not yet echoed by the Congress M.L.A.s. It appeared that during the first reading the party did not have a coherent approach, and certainly not in the violent language it used during the Vinochana Samaran.

The general line, as represented in the dissenting minutes to the Report of the Select Committee,⁴² attacked only 3 clauses of the Bill. The first was the provision for the appointment of teachers from the district-list (clause 11), which was regarded as "bad and objectionable". Instead appointment from a state list was suggested. Secondly, the power to acquire schools (clause 15) should only be made use of in cases of gross mismanagement. Thirdly, clauses 17 and 18, relating to the constitution of a Local Education Authority, which might become a menace to proper administration, were objected to. Similar dissenting minutes were added by C.M. Mohammed Koya, Muslim League, and P. Thanu Pillai, PSP. However, the Congress

dissent went further beyond the actual wording of the clauses: "We feel that one of the objects of the Bill notwithstanding public utterances to the contrary is to make education a monopoly of the State... We are definitely of the opinion that in the field of education private agencies should be encouraged. The Bill... discourages such non official efforts."⁴³ In the separate statements in the Assembly, three divergent opinions could be observed among the Congress delegates, reflecting the division between the christian and non-christian community. On the one hand stood K.R. Naraynan, the general secretary of the SNDP, who declared that he saw no efforts to introduce communist ideology into the educational system. He appreciated the Education Bill as a welcome initiative and asked for the fullest collaboration from all sides in order to better the lot of the teachers.⁴⁴ His view was closely akin to that of the independent Umesh Rao, who also felt that "if this Bill is obstructed by other parties almost all the teachers in these schools will turn communist. So this fear of infiltration is neither fight nor substantial".⁴⁵ However, in this approach Narayanan stood almost alone, though the more moderate group supported him in some respects, possibly out of tactical considerations, since one could not very well attack the essence of the Bill without being characterised as anti-teacher and anti-progressive. This middle group, as a matter of fact, consisted of the more mature politicians who were "not going to plead that those private agencies who militated against the progress of the State should be retained or tolerated",⁴⁶ and who realized that "all Commu-

nities cannot have equal representation if the major part of educational institutions was in the hands of certain sections of the community.⁴⁷ Both the deputy leader of the opposition, P.P. Ummar Koya and the leader of the opposition, P.T. Chacko, called for eliciting the public opinion and for a conference of all interested parties. This view was also defended by Smt. Leela Damodara Menon, who said: "The provisions in the Bill for supervision and control are really to be welcomed. But at the same time, I feel that to consider all the managers of private institutions as criminals is going too far. Again I repeat that it is very necessary to severely deal with a manager who breaks the rule or does not maintain proper standards in schools or goes against the interests and welfare of the teachers."⁴⁸

She only asked that the 'Sword of Damocles' should be removed, but others in her party went much further⁴⁹; the Bill was stigmatised as totalitarian in its approach, of a piece with the general policy of dictators like Hitler and it treated the managers as criminals, giving them rigorous penalties as reward for their pioneering enterprise. The radicals in the party were, following the successes of the anti-Education Bill struggle on the central and local level, joined by the more cautious politicians in the state Congress party.⁵⁰ Congress, together with Muslim League leaders, who at that stage also opposed the Bill, attacked from public platforms the measures that would benefit teachers and pupils, and were able to build up considerable support.

At this stage of the struggle, the split in the Congress ranks remained noticeable. The national newspapers generally gave a qualified critical support to the Bill,⁵¹ and among the local newspapers at least two pro-Congress dailies, the Mathrubhumi and the Kerala Kaumudi, did not support the campaign. Still less support came from Malabar where the Christian representation in the INC was unimportant: "The agitation against the Education Bill is not very strong in Malabar. It is centered around christian missionary schools and the PSP and Congress are not very keen",⁵² and Christian leaders had to come from Travancore-Cochin to mobilize the disagreement. In Kozhikode, INC members openly supported the bill. For instance K.V. Krishnan, a leading Congress advocate exhorted the government not to allow State money contributed by Hindus, Muslims, Christians and other communities to be spent for spreading religious faiths of the minorities".⁵³

In any case, the INC organisation and the ML stood firmly behind the emerging anti-Education Bill campaign, though their efforts to come to an understanding with the PSP and to form an all-party platform did not succeed. At Kottayam, on 18th July 1957, while the Bill was being debated in the Assembly, the opposition parties could not agree on the necessity to start a campaign for the overthrow of the Communist Government.⁵⁴ The unwillingness of the PSP to join in any campaign at this moment resulted from the generous spirit with which its members welcomed the Education Bill in the Assembly. M. Narayana Kurup stated that the Bill was necessary in order to protect the

teachers from exploitation by the management, that the provision to take over schools was in consonance with the directive principles embodied in the constitution, and that, "the freedom to propagate religion cannot be construed as liberty to teach religion in schools aided by government".⁵⁵ Some went even further and expected that the Bill would "eliminate the management system altogether, for it had been amply proved that the system lent itself to abuse".⁵⁶ However, the Christians in the PSP, as K.A. Thomas and Joseph Charukatt, opposed the Bill consistently. It thus appeared that P. Thanu Pillai was attacked from both sides in his party and two MLAs resigned temporarily from the party.⁵⁷ Two communal organisations, the SNDP and the NSS, who, in the early fifties had united in the Hindu Maha Mandal in order to fight the Christian domination over state affairs,⁵⁸ came out in support of the Bill.

Shri Mannath Padmanabhan, the leader of the NSS, was impressed by the progressive character of the Bill. He felt that only vested interests were attempting to reject it.⁵⁹ A resolution of the NSS council appreciated the main clauses of the Bill, an appreciation which it repeated 18 months later. The most laudable support to the government was given by Mannan at his press conference of the 28th August, 1957, abusing the small minority of christians who did not support the Bill: "It is quite clear that these ecclesiastics are frantically running about an account of the fear that, once the Bill is passed, they will not be able to continue their usual looking of other's purses. Those who support them are leaders belonging to certain

political parties and their leaders who were ousted from power. Their only interest lies in sabotaging the Communist regime at the earliest opportunity ... In my opinion this useless threat which may sow the seeds of unrest should be stopped."⁶⁰ As we have already seen, a similar attitude was taken by NSDP leader, K.R. Narayan. The support of this caste was considered as logical, even after the Ezheva R. Sankar was elected Kerala Congress President in April 1959, since the gulf between the Ezheva middle classes and the Ezheve working classes was considered greater than between the Nair classes,⁶¹ They were, therefore, less likely to come up for the class interests of the upper and middle classes in their caste, as happened within the Nair community at the later stage of the Communist Government.

These groups were backed by some Church leaders as well, minly of the protestant Churches. Indeed, the findings of the Alwaye Study Conference, August, 1957, were very pronounced in this respect. The general conclusion was that it would be unfair to make the Bill a pawn in the political game in the state and maintained that the "present education Bill expresses the state's increasing sense of responsibility in the matter of education. We also see in the Bill the possibility of reducing the communal bias prevalent in the present system and... the malpractices that have become common among a section of the management of schools have made the introduction of some legislation inevitable".⁶² A Christian businessman, A.K. Thampy, in his paper at the conference, referred to the advocacy of the Metropolitan of Mar Thoma Church and the Roman Catholic Church

of violent revolt as the emergence of fascist tendencies. He concluded: "Unwillingly though, this has betrayed the class nature of the leadership of the Church".⁶³

But by and large the Church authorities were in active opposition to the educational reforms. This opposition was one more step in the constant war the Church had been fighting against the Communist danger. Many instances reveal the active part the ecclesiastical dignitaries and pastors had played in the election campaigns. The famous communist peasant leader and M.P., A.K. Gopalan, recalled: "The Christian fathers called all the Christian voters, especially the women, to the Churches and told them that those who voted for the Communists would go to hell, and those who voted for Congress to heaven. They were asked to swear, touching the cross of the Christ, that they would not vote for the Communist candidates".⁶⁴

It is no doubt that the Church had a major influence and that the evil characterisation of communism still found a fertile breeding ground. Only few days after the publication of the Kerala Education Bill, the Church was able to organise mile-long processions in Ernakulam, Quilon, Changanacherry, Alwaye, Alleppey, Palai and other centres. Further, it was claimed that a petition requesting the withdrawal of the Bill received one million signatures by the beginning of August. In that month the Catholic-led reaction raised the movement to its

fever-pitch. Stormy demonstrations took place in many places on 26th August, as in Trivandrum where 50000 demonstrators, hooted at by almost as many counter-demonstrators, were spear-headed by 3000 blue-uniformed Christophers.⁶⁵

We shall analyse later the significance of the Church and the Christophers during the Liberation Struggle, but shall now deal with the Agrarian Reforms, which made the Nair leaders join the anti-Communist struggle.

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Notes

1. Marshall Windmiller, Constitutional Communism in India, in : Pacific Affairs, March 1958, p. 27.
2. Government of Kerala Towards a Better Educational System, 1959, p. 2.
3. Malaviya, p. 30.
4. Joseph Mundassery, in: op.cit., p. 29.
5. RKB Nair (ed), Development of Kerala, Trivandrum, 1972, p. 129.
6. T.K. Velu Pillai, Travancore State Manual 1940, Vol. III, p. 749.
7. The report of the B.G. Kher Committee in 1950 had recommended a fixed percentage of 20% of the state revenues only. See, Ministry of Education, Pamphlet No. 64, p. 6.
8. Opposition sources invariably estimated the number of private schools much higher. K.P. Pillai, p. 98, No. 7798 of them. The Malabar District Board Schools, though not yet directly run by the government were not private schools as such.
9. Government of Kerala, Kerala State Administrative Report 1958-59, p. 122, and, Statistical Abstract of Kerala 1959-60, pp. 85. Of their official expenditure of 756 lakhs in 1959, the managements received 674 directly from the government.
10. T.K. Velu Pillai, Travancore State Manual, Vol. III, 1940, p. 700.
11. Op. cit., p. 701 ff.
12. E.K. Zachariah, Contribution of the Church to the Progress of Education in Kerala, M.Ed. Thesis 1960, p. 49. Also T.K. Pillai, op. cit., p. 722.
13. Cochin Legislative Council, 7th August, 1933.
14. Quoted by V.K.S. Nayer, op. cit., p. 188.
15. Donald E. Smith, India as a Secular State, Princeton 1963, p. 365.
16. Donald E. Smith, op. cit., gives the example of the U.P. Intermediate Education (Amendment) Act 1958, granting the power to take over recognised institutions not receiving

- aid as well (p. 368). Also: Government of Kerala, The Education Act and its Opponents, 1959.
17. Quoted in Donald E. Smith, op. cit., p. 364-5. Also B.T. Ramadive refers to the Niyogi Committee which made an official investigation in 1955 after the foreign Church missions had made charges against the Indian Congress government (New Age Monthly, Sept. 1959). The charges were proved as false.
 18. Hindu, 12.4.1957.
 19. Turlach, p. 163; J. Singh, p. 551; Kerala Gazette Extraordinary of July 1957; Kerala Under Communism, p. 38 ff; Malaviya, p. 31 ff. K. Padmanabha Pillai in his 40 pages on education deals in 4 short pages with the bill and its history, alleging that the real motive was the "vengeful determination of the education minister to reduce the Private school managers to the position of sweepers and water drawers". (Padmanabha Pillai, The Red Interlude in Kerala, Kerala Pradesh Congress Publication, Trivandrum, 1959, p. 137. (Hereafter as K. Padmanabha Pillai).
 20. Hindu, 21.7.1957.
 21. We quote the clauses as given in the Kerala Gazette Extraordinary of July 1957 (Education Bill.)
Austin
 22. Turlach, p. 169;/(Anatomy of the Kerala Camp, New Delhi 1972 (Hereafter as Austin) p. 35, mentions Chacko's proposal to delete the rule prohibiting forcible proselytisation in schools.
 23. Government of Kerala, The Agitation in Kerala, p. 4-5. Also, Synopsis of the Kerala Legislative Assembly Debates, 13th July, 1957.
 24. Government of Kerala, The Agitation in Kerala, p. 7. EMS Namboodiripad, Kerala, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow, 1967, p. 116; Link 12.10.58 and 7.12.58. The SNDP wanted an indefinite continuation of the system, while the NSS wanted the end of communal ratic everywhere.
 25. Simple arithmetic would illuminate that Nairs, much more dependent on government schools, and with the Christian not taking in applicants from reserved communities, could only apply for a limited number of government jobs. As revealed by Appendixes II. 1. the Nairs, Christian and Brahmins had an appropriate high number of students.
 26. Proceedings of the Kerala Legislative Assembly, 28th Aug., 1957. See also clause 538, II of the Constitution.
 27. Mainly contrary to 30(1), giving rights to the minority

- to establish and administrate schools, and 30(2) prohibiting discrimination in the matter of grants-in-aid by government. The Hindu 8.10.57. See also among others, Hindu 9.8.57, for the Memo sent by the Catholic Bishops Conference to the Union Minister for Education.
28. Hindu, 4.1.58, and 29th April-24th May 1958 for the daily proceedings of the Supreme Court. Also: All India Reporter, 1958, p. 956 ff. See also: Lok Sabha Debates of 17-18th March, when the Bill was finally sent to the Supreme Court.
 29. Hindu, 19.1.1958; Malaviya, p. 37 accused "Rabid anti-communists in the top Congress executive, turning their eyes away from the genuinely progressive and secular purposes of the Bill, utilised the whole affair as a good weapon to malign the communist government on a national plane." "For Nehru's explanation see, the Times of India 3.1.1958. EMS says: "no rhyme or reason in referring..." while meeting home minister Pandit Pant. See Hindu, 4.1.1958. Hindu, 12.1.1958 for the reaction of the Kerala CPI.
 30. Hindu 18.4.1959; Link: 26.5.59, reporting a press conference by the secretary of KCP affirming that the rules were not acceptable to his party.
 31. K. Padmanabha Pillai, p. 138; Hindu, 16.4.59. One of the deleted rules still stated that corporal punishment by the headmaster should not exceed six cuts on the palm at any time, and for the same offence, such as deliberate lying, obscenity of word or act, and flagrant insubordination.
 32. KPCC Memorandum, presented to the President of the Indian Republic, New Delhi 1959 (Hereafter as KPCC Memorandum), p. 22; K. Padmanabhan Pillai, p. 117.
 33. Government of Kerala, The Kerala Education Act and its Opponents, p. 14.
 34. Kerala Government Reply, pp. 43-44. Kerala Under Communism, pp. 46-49; K. Padmanabha Pillai, pp. 117-124. Also Hindu 3.10.58, for catholic attack on "canons of materialistic Hedonism".
 35. One example, actually cited by the private school managements in their memo to the President in support of their allegation against the communist ministry, was the following text from an old textbook: "Communism encouraged violence and does not believe in an omnipotent God. The communists forget that man has a soul". See, Economic Weekly, July 1959, p. 892.
 36. K. Padmanabha Pillai, p. 205.
 37. Hindu, 4.6.57; also 16.7.57 and 29.7.57.

38. Hindi, 4.7.57.
39. Hindu, 14.7.1957 and 13.5.1957.
40. Hindu, 13.7.1957 (L.M. Pglee) and 14.7.1957 (KPCC).
41. Hindu 19.7.1957, government press release with copy of the circular. Vadakkan denied later, 21.7.57, to have called for a crusade or whipping up communal emotions. Also: Malayala Rajyam 19.1.57, reports the Kurishuydham or cross-war.
42. Kerala Gazette Extraordinary, 24th August, 1957.
43. Ibid.
44. Synopsis of the Kerala Legislative Assembly Debates, 20.7.57. In the final liberation struggle, K.P. Narayanan even resigned from the Executive of the Pradesh Congress.
45. Proceedings of the Kerala Legislative Assembly 20.7.57, p.2232.
46. P.P. Ummer Koya, in, Synopsis of Assembly Debates 13.8.57.
47. P.T. Chacko, in, Synopsis of Assembly Debates 13.8.57.
48. Proceedings, 20.7.57, p. 2268.
49. See among others the statements by C.A. Mathew, K.C. Abraham, Alexander Parambithara, K.M. George during the debates in July.
50. Four days before the Bill was finally accepted in its third reading, E.P. Poulouse had the audacity to ask for the deletion of the clause on direct payment of wages to teachers, for "it may be argued that the right to administer schools has been curtailed", whereupon law minister Krishna Aiyar reacted: "Clause 9 here undoubtedly has made most unhappy the 'holy men' in charge of our educational institutions and brought a hopeful smile of the hungry pedagogues working in those institutions" (Proceedings, 26.11.1958).
51. Malaviya, p. 34 ff, and stray copies of the Times of India and Indian Express. The Hindu, gave also qualified support, though sometimes more critical as e.g. in the Editorial of 17.7.57, quoting Archbishop Mathia". "The teachers may benefit financially but the final result will be iron control ... and politics will enter..." Also, Hindustan Standard 10.7.57, with the argument that, "Thousands of different communities from the lowest untouchable to the highest Brahmins had their schooling in Christian institutions", an argument which would whip up violence if the institutions were Muslim.

52. Malayala Rajyam, 29.7.57, reporting from Kozhikode.
53. Hindu, 17.7.57.
54. Malayalam Rajyam 21.7.57.
55. Synopsis of the Kerala Legislative Assembly Debates 13.7.57.
56. Ibid. (P.M. Kunhiraman Nair).
57. See Hindu, 31.8.57 and 3.9.57, for resignation of C.C. Jawardhanan and K.A. Thomas. Compare also report of 25.8.57 about the inner party row in the select committee. The National General Council was not in favour of the agitation (The Weekly Kerala, 19.10.57) Some local non-Christian leaders, however, also joined the movement.
58. V.K.S. Nayar, Communal Interest Groups in Kerala, in: D.E. Smith: South Asian Politics and Religion, Princeton 1959. The author also mentions that the communist government in a sense was welcomed by the NSS "because the Syrian Christian had practically no influence over it..." (p. 180).
59. Malayalam Rayam, 15.7.57.
60. Desabandhu, 28.8.57, quoted in: Government of Kerala; The Agitation in Kerala, p. 3.
61. V.K.S. Nayar, op. cit., p. 183.
62. Alwaye Study Conference, 1957, The Communist Rule in Kerala and Christian Responsibility, 1957, p. 11.
63. Ibid., p. 45.
64. A.K. Gopalan, Kerala, Past and Present, P. 94. For Christian Support to the CPI, see: V.K.S. Nayar, op.cit.; Fic, Thesis, p. 527; Fic: Kerala, p. 71ff.
65. Hindu, 27.8.1957.

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II.2. AGRARIAN REFORMS:

The solution of the agricultural problem in Russia, Eastern Europe and China after the Communist Party came to power was based on analogous patterns. First the land was cut up and given to the tiller, and, after some years of individual cultivation, the peasants organised into cooperatives. Finally, land was gradually transferred into communal property. Lenin explained this pragmatic but slow procedure, pointing out that "this is the demand of the overwhelming majority of the peasants. And the idea and demands of the majority of the working people are things that the working people must discard of their own accord: such demands cannot be either 'abolished' or 'skipped' over."¹ The Communist Ministry in Kerala, very much aware of the limitations imposed on it by the adherence to the Constitution with various provisions guaranteeing the inviolability of private property, set about the task of implementing the first stage of the land reforms, the redistribution of land. The CPI thereby confined its agrarian reforms to the implementation of the programme laid down by the Second Five Year Plan and the Ayadi Resolution of the Indian National Congress Party in 1956.

Before spelling out these reforms and their repercussions, let us first attempt a brief discussion of the distribution of holdings and of the land tenure pattern in Kerala at that time.²

II.2.1. The Agrarian System in Kerala:

1. Distribution of Holdings:

The high pressure on land was, together with the high degree of commercialisation,³ decisive for the agricultural

structure in Kerala. The Lorenz curve would give it the lowest slope among the Indian States,⁴ and, in order to understand fully the impact of the dispersal of landed property, this highly unequal distribution of land is to be set against a very low manland ratio. Moreover, this degree of inequality only refers to the households owing land, and these represented in Kerala a mere 14 lakhs out of the 25 lakhs rural households, which, again, gives a percentage which was much lower than in other states in India.

Table II. 2.1.A

Households Owning No Land: All-India:	11.68%
Kerala	: 30.90%
Madras	: 24.20%
Mysore	: 18.64%
Bengal	: 12.30%
U.P.	: 2.73%

Source: NSS, 17th Round 1962.

The general picture was that the mean size per operational holding was extremely small, with 92% of them being less than 5 acres in extent and accounting for only 51% of the total area. Sixty percent of the households possessed less than one acre and they accounted for 12% of the area only, or 2.5 times less than the top 2.5% with more than ten acres. This, however, has to be modified in various respects. Indeed, if we consider the ownership per holding the distribution becomes even more unequal, to the extent that the bottom 60% of the peasants owned only one

third of the top one percent in 1956.

Table II.2.1.B.
Distribution of Ownership Holdings
According to size.

Size	1956		1966		Average Area per holding
	% of Hhs.	% of Area	% of Hhs.	% of Area	
1 acre	55.6	8.10	60.0	10.2	0.33
1.00-2.50	21.1	11.4	22.4	15.0	1.11
2.50-5.00	11.3	13.3	9.0	14.2	2.37
5 - 10	6.5	14.9	5.8	17.7	4.78
10 - 15			1.5	8.0	5.75
15 - 20	4.1	20.5	0.4	2.5	11.45
20-25			0.2	2.3	16.00
+ 25	1.4	31.8	8.7	30.1	53.75

Sources: 1956 Second Five Year Plan of Kerala, 1958.
1966 Report on the Survey of Land Reform in Kerala.

A notable feature of the size distribution was the regional differences. The Northern Malabar districts had very huge estates, while the Travancore region was mostly characterised by its small peasant proprietors.⁵ This is also evidenced by the Census of Land Holdings and Cultivation, 1956: Where in Travancore-Cochin the number of owned holdings of over five acres constituted only 5% of the total, in the three Malabar districts this percentage went up to more than 30%. It can also be seen in Appendix II.3, table 1, that these holdings comprised almost the total of the land. This should be compared to the distribution in a southern

district (Appendix II.3, table 2), where the majority falls within the 10-50 cents group, though here also many extensive estates were to be found, even in the wet area. These figures after all, present a false picture of the agricultural redistribution of land the government had to originate. Indeed, though extensive tracts of surplus land were situated in the Malabar districts, this surplus included the forests and plantations. After the exclusion of both categories the large operational holdings as classified in Appendix II.3, Table 3, were mainly to be found in Chittur, Palghat, Alathur, Kuttanad, Vaikam, Kottayam, Kottarakara, Triruvella, Neyyattirkara, and Muvattupuzha. In the Kuttanad area for example 40% of the holdings was less than 2.50 acres, but also 40% was larger than 5 acres.⁶ In some of these areas highly capitalistic farming techniques were being introduced and this was reflected in a far superior yield per acre.⁷

2. The Land Tenure Pattern:

In the landholding patterns also huge differences were noticeable between the districts North and South of Ernakulam, which is very clear from the next table.

Table II.2.1.C.

Distribution of Households classified by Type of Holdings (In percentage of total household units.)

Region	Land-lords	Owner-Cultivator	Tenant	Kuddikidappu
1	2	3	4	5
Trivandrum	2	89	2	8
Quilon	2	88	4	6

Table contd..

1	2	3	4	5
Alleppey	2	57	14	27
Kottayam	1	50	35	14
Krnakulam	3	36	43	18
Trichur	3	6	74	17
Palghat	2	13	79	6
Kozhikode	2	7	87	4
Cannanore	4	24	58	14

Source: Survey on Land Reforms, p.40.

This pattern of land holdings thus reveals that in Malabar the number of tenants ^{was} four times the number of owner-cultivators. It/therefore normal that tenancy reforms evoked more enthusiasm among the cultivating households in Cannore, Kozhikode, Palghat and Trichur than in the Southern districts.

Broadly, in the two areas the same types of holdings were obtainable. Absolute proprietorship was held by the jenni, but this absolute ownership of the land had been abolished in Travancore-Cochin, where the 6000 jennias were only entitled to receive a yearly sum, the jennikaram, which, after all, represented a huge amount of money. The kanomdar, deriving his tenurial right directly from the jenni was, therefore, the real proprietor in the southern districts. In these districts also the cultivators of the Sircar pandaravaka land which constitutes 70% of the cultivated area were given private, saleable and heritable property rights as early as 1865. The verumpattomdar was a tenant-at-will under one of the two mentioned categories

and in practice, thanks to the various loopholes in the existing laws, did not have a guaranteed fixity for tenure. Still less rights had the kudikidappukaran, persons who had no land of their own to erect a homestead and who had built a hut on the plot given by the landlord for that purpose.⁸

At least two qualifications have to be added to this hierarchical description of the tenure pattern. The first one concerns the nature of the jennis. In the ancient past extensive areas of landed property had been bequeathed to the temples managed by Namboodiris and local chieftains. The idea behind the large-scale transfer of ownership of land to the gods and goddesses was that "the common man would not protest against giving anything to the deities, whom he also worshipped. At the same time, as the trustees of the temple funds and their administrators the small group of namboodiris and nair chieftains could enjoy all the wealth owned by the temples. The ownership of land by devaswoms still continue as a dominant feature of our agrarian relations".⁹ Indeed, except for Trivandrum and Kozhikode, the Devaswoms covered 15 to 43% of the total tenancy area under jennis.

The small jennai holders (-25 acres) were comparatively widespread in Trivandrum and Alleppey, but the largest chunk of the area still had to pay the regulated jennikaram or, as in Malabar, feudal rent to the big jennies. These comprised the royal families, the namboodiris and the nair chieftains who had rights in between 60-70% of the area under jennies in Trivandrum, Kottayam, Ernakulam, between 75-85% in Palghat, Kozhikode, Cannanore, and between 35-40% in Quilon, Alleppey and Trichur.¹⁰ The whole area under the jennies amounted to almost 20 lakhs acres which, to-

gether with the 12 lakhs acres under other landlords amounted to 36% of the total area.

The other specification relates to the situation of the intermediaries. Again, their presence was more felt in Malabar, where even in the mid-sixties when legislation tending to eliminate them had been passed by the Congress Government (1962-1964) 10% of the cultivating households possessed intermediary rights, amounting to 25% of the area, as is shown in the following table.

Table II.2.1.D.
Classification of Cultivated land, According to the Position of Hierarchy.

Region	Total		1st Pos.		2nd Pos.		3rd Pos.		4th Pos.	
	Dry	Wet	Dry	Wet	Dry	Wet	Dry	Wet	Dry	Wet
Travancore	431	111	338	61	91	45	3	5	-	-
Cochin	79	41	40	3	38	32	1	3	-	3
Malabar	277	184	31	21	167	108	73	49	6	3
Kuttanad	112	733	112	288	-	455	-	-	-	-

Source: T.C. Varghese: Agrarian Change and Economic Consequences, 1970, p. 169.

This evidence is reinforced by another, official survey in more or less the same period, which came to the conclusion that 8% of the contact rent was being paid to intermediaries. The percentage for the paddy area alone went up to 11%.¹¹ Though no exact figures were available for the period in which the EMS government drafted its Kerala Agricultural Relations Bill, one can understand that, with a more complex pyramidal structure prevailing before the land reforms had been passed, the intermediary group constituted quite a considerable number in Malabar as well as in Travancore-Cochin.

II.2.2. Comprehensive Intervention in the Agrarian Relations:

The government had opted for an anti-feudal and not for a socialist reconstruction of the agrarian system. Its limited purpose was to shatter the parasitic domination of the jennis, landlords and intermediaries who, in collaboration with the usurious money-lenders, made any reasonable development of the forces of production impossible. Directly through rent alone, on account of the parasitic land tenure, tens of crores of rupees got waste every year in unproductive consumption by the upper crusts of the feudal structure. Moreover, the money-lending structure with its entailing mass indebtedness kept the peasants suppressed by feudal bondage. The CPI had decided to implement the guidelines of the Planning Commission, but was not inclined to adopt piecemeal legislation, plugged with loopholes and nullifying provisions, as the Indian National Congress was enacting in other parts of the country.¹² The party's recommendations took notice of the fact that in the absence of other protective measures, it would be erroneous to view the redistribution of land or the organising of cooperatives as sufficient steps. The same old forces that had bonded and suppressed the rural population in the past would undercut all well intended legislation. The Kerala Agricultural Legislation Bill therefore was in itself comprehensive, and, moreover, preceded by a range of preparatory measures. Immediately after coming to power the Communist government made the Governor promulgate Ordinance Nr. 1, staying all the eviction proceedings for occupiers of land and Kuddikiddapus. When one month later a bill embodying the same principle was presented to the assembly, the Opposition wanted

its reference to a select committee with sufficient time to suggest modifications. The refusal by the government caused a walk-out by the whole opposition and P.T. Chacko, though "in general agreement with the principles of the Bill", called the action by the CPI majority as one, "which smacked of a totalitarian outlook."¹³

Expecting that the landlords, in anticipation of the proposed land reforms legislation would take recourse to large-scale eviction of tenants in order to prevent them from getting such rights as would accrue to them because of their cultivatory possession, the government imposed a status quo: "an effective law to stop the spate of evictions so much witnessed in other states despite legislation."¹⁴ Also soon after the assumption of office, EMS Namboodiripad announced the decision that all available government land would be assigned to the landless and poor peasants. It was expected that it would be possible to settle thousands of families on the thus estimated 7, 5 lakh acres of cultivable waste. However, it was only in November 1958 that the Chief Minister could hand over the first 493 deeds of land, with an apology to his peasant audience "for the delay in distributing Government owned waste land. 7000 acres have been found to be available throughout the state for such distribution. It is to be distributed to landless peasants through committees with representations from all parties set up specially for the purpose."¹⁵

On 21st August 1957 a Kerala Compensation for Tenants Improvement Bill was published, and though it mainly sought to unify the similar laws existing in Malabar (1899 Act) and

Travancore-Cochin (1956 Act) it reflected a new approach. For the definition of tenant under this bill included "a person who, as lessee, sub-lessee, mortgages or sub-mortgages or in good faith believing himself to be a lessee, sub-lessee, mortgagee or sub-mortgagee of land, is in possession thereof".¹⁶ (emphasis added) Also a bill providing for the abolition of jennikaram was published on 23rd November, two days after the Agricultural Debt Relief Bill, the enactment of which gave a relief of Rs. 2 crores to 21733 agriculturists by the end of 1958. In the meanwhile in his address to the first session of the Assembly the Governor indicated government's high priority for the land reforms proper: the government abandoned its original proposal to appoint a committee to study the land reforms, but started right away with the preparation of the Draft Bill itself. The Kerala Agricultural Relations Bill, after being examined by the Planning Commission was published in the Kerala Gazettee of 18th December and, after its introduction in the State Assembly, circulated for eliciting public opinion. The communists claimed that the Bill did "not of course go beyond the programme of the planning Commission",¹⁷ but, even then, as the analysis of the Bill will show, it had nevertheless far-reaching implications in three major respects: fixity of tenure, ownership rights and ceiling.

1. Fixity of Tenure:

The Bill provided that no holdings by permanent cultivating tenants should be subject to resumption, unless in certain restricted cases. Specially mentioned in this respect were the

kudikidappu who got heritable but not alienable rights, and these cultivators who in the document held by the landlord were described as servants, agents or mortgagees, but in fact could prove that they were real cultivating tenants. In case their holding was resumed the landlord should pay them one year's rent as a scotium, but this resumption would only be possible for the extension of any place of public religious worship, for the construction of buildings for residential purpose, and for self-cultivation. These exemptions, which elsewhere provided all possible loopholes, had been restricted in an exemplary way. Religious institutions were not allowed the right of resumption for cultivation or building purposes. And for building purposes, the landlord could resume only 20 cents, if the tenants's possession was below one acre, and the tenant should be left with at least 20 cents. Self-cultivation in the Bill meant cultivation by oneself, by family members or by hired labour. However, the landlords would not be able to resume land for starting big-scale capitalist farms: if the tenant possessed a holding in excess of the statutory ceiling, the owners could resume land up to the extent of making their total possession 5 acres of double crop cultivated land. In no case could he resume more than 50 percent of the surplus land of the tenant: if the tenant possessed less than the ceiling area, the landlord holding less than 5 acres was free to resume a portion not exceeding half the area of the peasant and not raising the extent of land in the possession of the landlord above 5 acres of such double crop paddy land. However, when

the tenant of a smallholder had as owner or as tenant more land than the smallholder, the constituted land tribunal was given the right in the Travancore-Chchin part of the State to order that the entire holding could be resumed by the smallholder.

The Bill reduced the fair rent drastically to, depending on the fertility of the soil, between one-fourth and one twelfth of the gross produce. It was also important that all arrears of rent by a tenant to his landlord should be deemed to be fully discharged on payment of one year's rent in the case of tenants holding less than 5 acres, three year's rent in the case of tenants holding between 5 and 15 acres and six year's rent in the cases above 15 acres.

2. Total Abolition of Tenancy:

The Bill vested all rights of the landlords in land held by the tenants in the state, and the tenant got the right to purchase from the state the ownership of the holding he possessed. The purchase price, the aggregate of 16 times the fair rent, could be paid in 16 yearly instalments or in a lump sum of only 12 times the rate fixed. The dispossessed landlords or intermediaries were entitled to compensation in cash or bonds, at a rate ranging from 16 times the fair rent in the case of the first five acres to six times for above fifty acres.

This provision did not, however, apply to land under religious or charitable institutions or trusts, provided that the entire income from such lands was appropriated for the purpose of the organisation.

3. Land Ceiling:

The upper limit of landholding had been fixed at 15 acres of double-crop paddy land or its equivalent, which went up to 30 acres in the case of dry land. For each additional family member one extra acre had been provided and some kinds of transfers were allowed: partition, on account of natural love and affection, and in favour of a tenant. These transfers would, obviously, reduce the extent of surplus land available, but the government reckoned that nevertheless the rights over considerable tracts of land would be assigned to deserving households. The order of priority for such assignments placed first the tenants, whose land has been resumed, followed by expropriated landlords with less than 3 acres, cooperative societies whose members were agricultural labourers, agricultural labourers and so on.

The Bill got through its third reading in March, 1959 and was sent to the President of India for his approval on 27th July, four days before the Centre imposed the Presidents Rule on the State.

II.2.3. Political Silence of the Opposition:

Throughout the state innumerable mammoth Kisan jathas in support of the Kerala Agricultural Relations Bill were organised. It was also noticed that the peasants, irrespective of their party organisations, gathered in their respective villages, where they discussed the implications and shortcomings of the Bill. All these discussions were finally "followed by a special session of the State Karshaka Sangham (peasant orga-

nisation), which suggested certain changes in the bill. This popular participation in the discussion of the Bill is something unique, a parallel to which can hardly be found in any other Indian State."¹⁸ Added to this popular support was the government's repeated pledge to implement the various Congress resolutions on this matter and the recommendations of the Planning Commission.

It would thus have been a dangerous game for the Congress Party to launch an attack on this Bill as it had done on the Kerala Education Bill. Actually, compared to the major importance of agrarian reforms, and even absolutely, there was an unusual silence, and references to the Bill were to be found only very sparsely. The same phenomenon had been observed during the previous PSP Government with its cautious land reform measures. Though these reform proposals became "the starting point of a state-wide historical campaign, unleashed by the Congress", the Government was not attacked for these proposals: Congress accused the PSP of suppressing the minorities, of endangering the freedom of the citizens and of lawlessness.¹⁹

The very same accusations were repeated against the Communist Government, while the Opposition at the same time tried to introduce subverting modifications in the Assembly.²⁰ Congress was joined by the party which it had removed from office in 1956, the PSP, led by its former Revenue Minister P.S. Nataraja Pillai.²¹ According to them the task should be to consolidate the fragmented holdings into economic holdings, instead of trying to distribute poverty and instead of giving ownership

rights to anyone who happened to be in the possession of any plot of land. Moreover, the leaders of the two parties, P.T. Chacko of the Congress and P.T. Pillai of the PSP, first had questioned the expediency of the Bill. Since an atmosphere of guerilla warfare existed in parts of the state they held that the Bill should not provide for further troubles by encouraging the attempts to dispossess the rightful owners and to cultivate other people's fields. Therefore, instead of further disturbing the tranquility, the leaders submitted that "the Bill should ensure as little harm as possible to as few as possible, but do greatest good to the largest number of people."²² In fact outside the Assembly serious clashes occurred at that time in most taluks in Quilon and Allapppy districts, between landowners and agricultural labourers.²³ In his note of dissent to the Report of the Select Committee, another imminent PSP - leader, M. Narayana Kurup, invoked the constitution, which guaranteed equality before law and equal protection and proposed the cultivation of excess land on cooperative basis for "its successful working would have helped to bring about a change in the mentality of small-holders in favour of cooperative farming. That golden opportunity has been lost".²⁴ The landholders equally invoked the constitution, submitting that "the Bill is a direct challenge to the democratic ideals enshrined in the Constitution of India".²⁵

However, not everybody in the Opposition was against the Bill. In the PSP the Bill was welcomed by P.R. Kurup and C.G. Janardanan and as late as May, 1959, the Congress Party

received the resignation of the secretary and a member of the Kerala Legislative Congress Party, K.K. Viswanathan and K.R. Narayanan. The latter was also the general secretary of the SNDP Yogam, and had, together with the editor of the Kerala Kaumudi, K. Sukumaran, persistently opposed the anti-government agitation. From the initial appreciation of the Kerala Agricultural Relations Bill and the opinion that "if any ministry improves the lot of workers and peasants it can only be the Communist Ministry",²⁶ The Ezheva community moved to state-wide counter-agitations in support of the Bill.

On the left the proposed reforms were also attacked for their leniency. In the PSP it was K. Chandrasekhar, who saw nothing progressive and revolutionary in it, and reproached K.R. Gowri for not taking radical steps, more particularly against the landlords who, in anticipation of the Bill, were transferring "their property in the names of Govindan or Madhavan and redistribution has already taken place on a very large scale".²⁷ The other warning came from the Revolutionary Socialist Party, whose national general secretary Tridib Choudhury expressed his disappointment on the content of land reforms and on the other political issues. He maintained that the ^{maintained that the} left approach of the CPI was slipping off.²⁸

The main offensive was launched by the leaders of two communities, the Christians and the Nairs. The landed interests in Kerala were dominant in these communities, as is reflected in table II.2.3.A.

Table II.2.3.A.
Share of the different Communities in Travancore
in the Number of Sales & Purchases of land
(Percent)

Community	1926		1930		1935		1940	
	S	P	S	P	S	P	S	P
Brahmin	4.5	2.1	4.3	2.7	3.4	3.2	3.0	2.4
Nayar	38.6	29.2	41.6	36.1	44.4	36.2	47.2	27.7
Ezheva	10.2	12.7	13.3	15.8	14.7	17.2	14.2	13.1
Christian	23.8	33.9	19.5	15.5	17.7	22.2	18.3	18.0

Source : T.C. Varghese, *Agrarian Change and Economic Consequences*, 1970, p. 217.

While the Christians appear as a fast rising group of landowners, the Nairs still remain the biggest group. Though it may be presumed that within the two groups considerable differences existed, the class consciousness originating from these differences, was not yet so much developed that it could break up the loyalty within the community to a considerable extent. The organisations of these communities radically opposed the land reforms. It is learnt even from sources sympathetic to the anti-communist movement, that e.g. the Nair Service Society, led by Mannath Padmanabhan, launched a crusade against the Bill, became "The Nairs are the principal landowning community in the Travancore-Cochin area and the Bill affected them most".²⁹ The same source also alleged that the presence of a powerful Nair lobby pressed the Travancore-Cochin group of the CPI, led by M.N. Govindan Nair, to mediate for 'go slow' tactics, against the Malabar communists, who did not face the problem of

antagonising the powerful Nairs and wanted the quick and radical enactment of the Bill. In April 1959, Mannath Padmanabhan made one of his first scathing attacks on the Agricultural Relations Bill³⁰, which led him one year later to an alliance with the Church against the Communist ministers: "It will not be possible for them to save themselves by effecting some changes in the Education Act or the Land Bill, because our aim is to remove the Communist Government Let me declare that my mind will be set at rest only after sending these communists, bag and baggage, not merely from Kerala, but from India and driving them to their fatherland - Russia."³¹

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Notes

1. V.I. Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 24, p. 500.
2. Most polemical writings by the anti-communist front cover the agrarian issue very minimally and unsubstantially. Even an outstanding work as Turlach's dwells on it with a few words only.
3. I have analysed this high degree of commercialisation, reflected in the increased cropping of perennial and other cash crops in two unpublished papers: Nature of Travancore's Economy between the Two World Wars, and, The Economic Structure of Kerala in the Mid-fifties.
4. R.V.B. Nair (ed), Development of Kerala, Trivandrum, 1972, p. 48.
5. The historical socio-economic evolution of the two patterns is amply illustrated by T.C. Varghose, Agrarian Change and Economic Consequences, 1970.
6. V.B. Pillai & P.G.K. Panikar, Studies, Vol. I, also give the mean size per fragment, being 1.1. acres, but ranging from 1 cent to 40 acres.
7. Statistical Abstract of Kerala 1959-1960, pp. 22-23.
8. For a more detailed description: Bhowani Sen, Evolution of Agrarian Relations in India, Delhi, 1962, p. 226 ff., Malaviya, p. 86ff.; H.D. Malaviya (Land Reforms in India) p. 188ff.; Travancore State Manual, 1940, Vol. III, p. 6 ff. and especially T.C. Varghose, op. cit., parim.
9. Survey on Land Reforms in Kerala, p. 75. This survey was done almost ten years later but its general findings are broadly applicable to the situation in 1957 as well.
10. Survey on Land Reforms, p. 77.
11. Survey on Land Reforms in Kerala, p. 91.
12. This point has been analysed by Grigory Kotowsky: Agrarian Reforms in India, 1964. Also in Bhowani Sen, op.cit., pp. 189-225. For a critique on the Congress Nagpur Resolution on Land Reforms see, S. Gupta, in : Economic Weekly, Special Number, July 1959, and Malaviya, pp. 134-35.
13. Hindu, 8.5.57 and 9.5.57.
14. Malaviya, p, 85.
15. Link, 16.11.58. The order was promulgated on 14th Sept. '58.

16. Kerala Gazette Extraordinary, 21.8.57. See also the Debt Relief Bill on 21.11.57.
17. Bhowani Sen, op. cit., p. 229. However, the Bill is much closer to CPI's N. Prasada Rao Minute of Dissent. See: Reports of the Committees of the Panel on Land Reforms, Planning Commission, 1966.
18. Malaviya, p. 89.
19. Quote from EMS Namboodripad, Kerala: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow, p. 204, Also : Turlach, p. 134; Malaviya, Op.cit., p. 7; Kerala Under Communism, p. 60.
20. For an idea of the amendments, see, Malaviya, p. 95, and the Synopsis of the Kerala Assembly Debates, Budget Session, 30th March - 4th April, 1958.
21. His statement in Times of India, 7.1.58 which expresses similar fears as the Advocates Association Memorandum (Hindu 1.3.58): Financial ruin, upsetting of Rural economy, social unrest and chaos.
22. Hindu, 29.3.58 and 3.4.58. E.T. Pillai is quoted addressing the Assembly.
23. Hindu, 26.3.58 and 28.3.58.
24. Quoted in: Kerala Under Communism, p. 71. A devastating picture is drawn by A Sachidanand ('Sarwadaya in a Communist State, Bombay 1961) of the cooperatives set up by the Gramdan movement. The Congress Resolution at Gauhati called for agricultural cooperatives, but more than 1 year later Congress general secretary, Sadiq Ali ~~would~~ that still more time should lapse between acceptance of the idea and its implementation: "The Idea of cooperatives is simple but its translation into practice.... presents a rather bewildering variety of problems". (AICC Economic Review, 1.5.59).
25. Memorandum by the Palghat District Landholders 'Association'; quoted in Kerala under Communism, p. 71.
26. K. Sukumaran in: The Weekly Kerala, 9.11.57. Also Hindu 11.5.59, 16.5.59 and 23.5.59.
27. Proceedings of the Kerala Legislative Assembly 21.12.57; Malaviya, p. 94. Actually the attacks had after the same content: the present Bill was alleged to be far from the CPI preachings in the election manifesto and far from socialism (Hindu 20.4.58).

28. Hindu, 20.8.57. It was indeed as early as September 1957 that the Central Committee came to the conclusion that "The attitude of the RSP toward the communist government needs, therefore to be modified accordingly" (The Call, October, 1957.)
29. Kerala Under Communism, p. 66.
30. The Weekly Kerala, 10.5.58. At this stage Mannam made also his first public attacks on the Kerala Education Bill.
31. Extracts from 2 speeches by Mannam in Malayalee of 4.5.59 and 28.4.59, as reproduced in: The Agitation in Kerala, (Government of Kerala Publication, p. 9).

* *

II.3. Industrial Policy and Development:

II.3.1. Collaboration with Private Capital:

The achievement of rapid industrial progress was one of the most important targets the Communist Government of Kerala had set before it. Ajoy Ghosh, the national secretary of the CPI, described it as "the task of rebuilding Kerala, and therefore we need the cooperation of workers and capitalists.

But even before the Government could start on this path, a controversy between New Delhi and Trivandrum had developed. The communist party announced that if it came to power it would nationalize the foreign-owned plantations in Kerala. This was immediately objected to by the Indian National Congress, more particularly by the Prime Minister, who declared that for the sake of getting a few crores of rupees what was at stake was the honour of India: "I am not going to tamper with the honour and good name of India just to gain a few crores of rupees."²

In his press conference on the day after the announcement of his party's victory in Kerala, M.N. Govindan Nair, put up with the objections of the Centre, stressed that it was not his party's intention to do anything beyond the constitution. Some days later EMS declared: "Our proposal with regard to the taking over of foreign plantations is so reasonable and so essential for the development of the economy in Kerala that we have every hope that we can, through consultations convince the Centre of the necessity for the same". He however continued, that "if it is found in the course of actual

implement-ation... that provisions of the Constitution do not allow the implementation of a particular item in the manner in which it had been formulated, we would hold further consultation with the Centre and do our best to implement as much of it as possible within the framework of the Constitution".³

Thus, though for the CPI the nationalisation of the plantations had been an essential premise for the economic development of the state, the party leaders nor the communist government started an ideological fight with the Congress government in New Delhi. As such this whole episode is a practical example of the professed adherence to the constitution. Indeed, the central decision was accepted rather meekly, for, "while everyone realises that we cannot create a revolution in Kerala by working the constitution, there are possibilities of doing some good to the people. If we work the administration without corruption, and when the people realise that all the propaganda directed against us by various agencies is false, we will be able to get the confidence of the people elsewhere in this country also".⁴

For this confidence, after all, a noticeable industrialisation was needed. This should be attained with the help of private capital. After being summoned by the Governor of Kerala, EMS declared that his policy as the Chief Minister would not be to establish a communist society. Businessmen and traders would be encouraged, but at the same time he would curb their tendency to excess profiteering. His govern-

ment was not adverse to industrialists making reasonable profits, and promoted the coming in of any capital, including American capital, provided it came in on reasonable terms.⁵ The new Minister for Industries, K.P. Gopalan, added that they would provide all kinds of facilities: the industrialists would get a "reasonable profit, but also the workers should get a reasonable share of the profit".⁶ The government desired that a number of industries should spring up in the private sector, and was prepared to offer maximum credit facilities, and, if necessary, to participate in the share capital of the concern. The Planning Commission had suggested that the governments should not invest in shares in private industrial concerns, and K.P. Gopalan announced that the state government had approached the centre for exempting Kerala from this general rule. The participation related also to foreign investments, as for example in the case of a Japanese cable factory, which got a 20% government investment,⁷ though the main bulk of the shares was subscribed to national firms investing in Kerala. After Independence there had been a lull in government's participation till 1957, when the pre-independence trend was taken up again.⁸ The nationalisation of industries was limited to the Water Transport Corporation, which took over the ownership of the passenger and cargo motor-boat services, with some 1500 workers. This action was attacked by the opposition as a dubious deal which gave the owners of "worthless junk of rotten timber and broken engines profit

..

without risk, authority without responsibility, and directorships".⁹

One of the private owners who decided to invest in Kerala was G.D. Birla, one of the biggest Indian industrialists, and whose decision to invest in a Communist ruled state was expected to act as a forceful example for other Indian industrialists.¹⁰ After five days of office, K.P. Gopalan informed that the Birla house had proposed to open some industries in the state and in an interview some days later G.D. Birla also declared that he might start a pulp factory. The initiative, however, started before the Communist election victory, when the Union Government had suggested to him to start a factory in the Nilambur forest area. More than one year after the first negotiations between G.D. Birla and the Communist government, in June, 1958, Birla could announce that a complete accord had been reached with the government "on the rights and responsibilities of the management".¹¹ Before long the content of the agreement (Appendix II.4) leaked out and the communist ministry came under severe attacks for its "Anti-Working Class Agreement with Private Capital", in which the management were given blanket powers: "The firm has the right to hire and discharge labourers, and the right to plan, direct and control the operation of the plant and to make rules and regulations for the purpose of maintaining discipline, order, safety or effective operation of the company's work. Wages on a scientific basis (are) to be prepared by the company and bonus will not be related

to the company's profit but only to efficiency and production".¹² The Communist Party of India itself came out openly in disapproval of some of the provisions in the agreement. So did the communist AITUC, which had not been consulted and reacted strongly to the harmful provisions, but after some time decided to stop its protest. Apart from these negative aspects, however, the government was quite successful in the industrial policy, as is shown in the plan fulfillment and in the increase in industrial enterprises.

II.3.2. Industrial Progress:

When EMS Namboodripad took office, the second Five Year Plan was already in its second year. The state had got a share of Rs. 87 crores and the Kerala Communist Party in its election manifesto demanded for a minimum of 200 crores, though this demand was later brought down to 130 crores. This/^{was}also realised to be unattainable and the government, therefore, decided to shift as many resources as possible from non-productive to productive sectors. Due to the planning priorities of the previous administrations in Kerala only 8% had been earmarked for industries, compared to 18% for the All-India figure. His predecessors, in the assessment of Namboodripad, had been more interested in the construction of a street or a school in their constituency than in the planning and implementation of a rational industrial policy.¹³ India, in the meantime, had reached a severe financial crisis and the Government of Kerala realised that

it should be satisfied if the allocated 87 crores would be available. As a sacrifice to India as a whole it was prepared to adopt a new approach, realizing that in the present context of increasing difficulty for the entire national plan it would not be possible to have big schemes but that it would still be possible to have a series of small schemes prepared and executed: "Schemes of petty and minor irrigation, each of them benefiting not thousands of acres, but hundreds, even scores; not big factories employing hundreds, but Small Scale and Cottage Industries employing a dozen or even less, etc.." ¹⁴

Although the Communist ministers did not have experience in the working of the state administration and had no hand in the drawing up of the plan, their record in the first year was already much better than the Congress performance during the previous years, as is amply born out by table II.3.2A. Perhaps more striking are even the sectorial differences. When the first plan was supposed to concentrate on agriculture, the fulfillment in that sector was less than 44%. Most vital resources needed for the development of food production were diverted to transport and communications, and the miscellaneous sector. ¹⁵ The global plan fulfillment rose from 58% in 1956-57 to around hundred percent during the second year of the Communist ministry, and dropped again to 86% during President's rule.

Table II.3.2.A.
Plan Fulfillment in Kerala (In percentages
of target)

Sector	1st 5 Year plan	Second 1956-57	Five Year Plan 1957-58
Agricultural Subjects	43.9	52.0	70.06
Irrigation & Power	94.4	101.0	94.4
Industry & Mining	52.3	47.0	55.8
Transport & Communication	32.6	68.0	93.4
Social Services	84.1	31.2	65.1
Miscellaneous	400.9	81.7	66.3
T o t a l :	83.5	58.9	76.9

Source: H.D. Malaviya: A Report to the Nation, p. 116.

The estimated targets themselves show a similar difference in the planning efficiency of the Communist and the non-Communist governments, and this resulted in a far higher physical yearly achievement as a percentage of the total Five Year period. The figures in table II.3.2.B give clear evidence of this progressive rising of the targets and the achieved results. It is significant that there was a sharp decline again in the plan fulfillment after the Communist government had been removed from office. These achievements were moreover realised on a sound budgetary basis. Although the government had abolished sales tax on commodities of daily consumption, as food, dry fish and books, it could raise its income considerably through agricultural super-tax and surcharges on less needed commodities, thus through more direct and less indirect taxation. Consequently, Finance Minister Achutha Menon could introduce his first budget as a surplus budget, at a moment when the other Indian states together had a total budget deficit of Rs. 77 crores.¹⁶

Table II.4.2.B.
Expenditure under the Second Five Year Plan

Head of Development	Financial target 1956-61	Accounts 1956-57	Accounts 1957-58	Accounts 1958-59	Revised Estimates 1959-60	Accounts 1959-60
1. Agriculture	1579	157 (10)	189 (12)	255 (17)	345 (22)	327
2. Irrigation & Power	3209	514 (16)	536 (17)	610 (19)	702 (22)	652
3. Industry & Mining	684	85 (12)	101 (15)	150 (22)	169 (25)	105
4. Transport and Communication	557	98 (17)	169 (30)	182 (32)	172 (31)	155
5. Social Services	2381	127 (5)	336 (14)	568 (24)	693 (29)	563
6. Miscellaneous	290	22 (8)	40 (14)	62 (21)	78 (23)	79
T o t a l :	8700	1003 (12)	1370 (16)	1825 (21)	2159 (24)	1680

Source : Compiled from Statistical Outline of Kerala, 1960, and Statistical Abstracts of Kerala, 1959-1960.

Note : Rupees in Lakhs between brackets the percentages to the total financial target for each head of development.

The resulting industrial changes were clearcut.¹⁷ In employment figures, the communist ministry meant that the aggregate man-days worked went up from 324 lakhs in 1957 to 476 lakhs in 1958, followed by only a small increase to 489 lakhs in the next year when the ministry was dismissed. The number of average daily workers went up from 107629 to 165822 and 168400 respectively, which indicates that the existing industrial potential was put to fuller use. This trend was reflected in the employment expectations of the lakhs of unemployed Malayalees: in 1958 an average of 12010 employment seekers got themselves registered per month compared to less than 8000 in 1957 and 8900 in 1959. This huge demand for jobs, however, could not be satisfied and the size of the Life Register of the Employment Exchange rose from 69915 to 133661 by March, 1959. Respectively 201 and 121 people got registered for every clerical post and unskilled job. Incidentally, another indice of Government's support among the people is provided by the success achieved in the small savings scheme: the gross collection in one year increased from 370 to 460 lakh rupees, which resulted in a doubling of the net savings. Thus the unemployment register increased in spite of the increase in not only the number of the working days but also in the number of jobs, which rose with 39000. The increase in the number of factories was even higher: from 1613 to 2128 and then to 2275 which means that in 1958 the number of factories increased with 30%. As is shown in Appendix II.2, table 1, the factories,

though with relatively small employment potential, were opened not only in the traditional sectors as rice and oil mills, textiles, coir manufacturing printing, splints and veneers, and rubber goods, but also in motor repairing, general engineering, type retraining, artificial manures, forgings and ship-building.

No doubt the financial assistance provided by the Kerala Government gave forceful support to the economic development. Of all Indian states, Kerala topped the list of the amount of loans to the small scale industries; Afterwards, from 1960 onwards a sharp drop occurred, and no longer was considerable financial assistance given to small scale industries at great risk.¹⁸ That the government was not able to solve all acute problem is for example born out by the fact that the industrial dispersal was not promoted in this period. The concentration of industries due to external economies persisted, mainly in the two belts of Ernakulam-Alwaye and Quilon-Kundara. Only 10% of the State loans was sanctioned to Malabar, and even a much lesser percentage of Malabar's demand for raw material was granted.¹⁹

The centrally initiated industrial estates in Papanamacode and Kollakadavu also did not produce the expected industrial initiative, and while quite a number of sheds were occupied by the government for unproductive purposes, in many other sheds the units were practically inactive, except for the receipt of monthly raw material quota which, afterwards could be sold in the black market.²⁰

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Notes

1. Hindu, 27.3.1957.
2. Hindu, 2.2.1957.
3. Hindu, 26.3.1957. The Chief Minister would however, not give an assurance that foreign capital would not be nationalised (Proceedings of Assembly, 30.4.1957).
4. Times of India, 18.3.1957 (M.N. Govindan Nair at a Press Conference).
5. For similar statements, see the Hindu on 29.3.1957, 6.4.1957, 8.4.1957, 11.4.1957, 12.4.1957, 4.10.1957, 22.4.1958 etc.
6. Hindu, 4.12.1958.
7. A few foreign companies decided to invest in Kerala. Namboodiripad, however, could not secure investments from Russia during his visit there (Cfr. Michael Kidron Foreign Investments in India, 1965, p. 117).
8. For exact figures, see, Government of Kerala, Finance Accounts 1958-59 and the Audit Report 1959, Appendix E. Also, The State Administrative Report 1958-59. In the Palathare Bricks and Tiles, government participated for 95% but got only 2 of the 4 directors. For the government owned and government-managed industrial concerns, see the Finance Accounts, the Appropriation Accounts, and the Government publication, Industrial Undertakings in Kerala State 1960-61.
9. Kerala Under Communist, p. 119; The Indian Worker 26.4.58 and 21.7.58. Actually the government got 5 directors on the Board, the boat owners 3 and the Boat Crew Association 2 with a capital participation of respectively 50,40 and 10%.
10. Turlach, p. 182.
11. Hindu, 16.6.1958. The agreement was reached on May 2.
12. The Indian Worker, 14.7.1968.
13. Turlach, p. 180.
14. Government of Kerala: Kerala on the March, November, 1967. p. 5. In September, 1957 (Hindu, 20.9.57), EMS declared he would bring that "sacrifice to India as a whole if cuts in the second Plan are necessary", but he would resist to it with united voice, since more likely a heavier cut was to be expected for Kerala which had less schemes belonging to the core of the plan.

15. EMS Namboodiripad, Kerala and the Ugly Face of Congress, 1961, p. 17.
16. The surplus of 7 lakhs actually developed into a deficit of 141 lakhs, which was still far less than the usual practice. See, A. Menon in: New Age, Monthly, November, 1959; A.K. Gopalan; Kerala, Past and Present, p. 97; Turlach, p. 183.
17. The figures in this section are derived from : Kerala State Administrative Report 1958-59, Kerala 1959. An Economic Review; Statistical Abstracts of Kerala 1958-59 and 1959-60; Census 1961, Kerala, Part I A(I) and National Council of Applied Economic Research : Techno-Economic Survey of Kerala, 1962; Malaviya, pp 109 ff.
18. NCAER, Techno-Economic Survey of Kerala, pp. 148-49.
19. M.A. Commen ; Small-Scale Industries in Kerala, 1967, p. 269.
20. M.A. Commen, op. cit., pp. 232-73 gives an accurate picture of the working of these estates.

* *

II.4. LABOUR POLICY:

The CPI had promised an immediate increase of 25% in the pay packet of the workers if it came to power. This was, obviously, a bold promise which for the government, in view of their policy towards the prospective capitalist investors, was of doubtful practical value. The situation for the government's own payroll, however, was different. Government's policy in this respect showed a clear option in favour of the lower strata. We shall deal first with the wage reforms, and further we shall take up the structure of the labour movement.

II.4.1. Wage Reforms:

Less than two weeks before the elections in Kerala the government employees were given a considerable wage increase. Three days after coming to office the Communist ministry passed a stay order for the wages of the gazetted officers, freezing them at the original limit, in a bid to iron out the extreme differences, and increased the wages of the labourers in government commercial undertakings considerably.¹ Finance Minister Achutha Menon announced in July 1957 the institution of a pay commission in order to rationalize and adjust the pay structure. In the meantime the wages of various other low-paid government employees were enhanced. An American journalist reported that the Communist ministers put up quite a show in this respect: While the pay of village headmen was ostentatiously raised from 6.75 dollars a month to almost 11 dollars a month, they cut their own pay from 155 to 72 dollars a month.²

The bonus in the state services was fixed at 8% as deferred wages plus an additional 5-8% based on the income of the department. The principle of bonus as deferred wages was consistently applied in the factories, services and workshops. Government informed that "bonus paid was neither an incentive bonus or a profit sharing bonus, but purely an ex-gratia bonus. They also added that refusal of bonus to the workers was likely to lead to discontent and that bonus was being allowed even in certain other government commercial concerns working at a loss".³ Incidentally, this principle was severely attacked by the Union Minister for Industries, Morarji Desai, who concluded that "The first problem is for people to be kept alive. Then alone will arise the second problem: to make them prosperous".⁴ Bonus thus paid by the Government shot up from Rs. 52000 in 1955-56 and Rs. 57000 in the next year to Rs. 83307 in 1957-58.⁵

Only after almost one year in June 1953 the government could publish the Recommendations of the Pay Commission,⁶ but this gave, after all, an increase of at least 10 rupees over the pre-revision scale, raising the monthly minimum for the lowest paid peons to 76 rupees. The pay of gazetted officers was also revised in conformity with the principle of fixing higher pay to highly technical personnel, though the earlier stay order at Rs. 1000 was maintained. Finally, emoluments of teachers was enhanced by 15 to 100%.⁷ Another instance in which the state power was used in favour of the working class was the decision to provide discharged workers 50% of their pay

when they were dismissed on questionable grounds pending the adjudication or arbitration of their disputes with the employers. This measure was not liked by the Central Government. The Minister of Labour in New Delhi, G.L. Nanda, declared that it was the function of the trade union and not that of the State to support dismissed workers.⁸

The wage increases for the private industries and agricultural labourers was less easy, and in the first place realisable through the Minimum Wage Act. Some industries had already been brought under the act, and during the 28 months that the CPI was in office, the scheme was extended to twelve more industries: Cashew, tile manufacture, timber industry, toddy tapping, agriculture, printing presses and others. This list of statutorily fixed minimum wages became far incomparable to the rest of India. Though the percentage increase over the existing wage scale was only marginal, the total increase resulted in quite a smart flow of money from the employer's pocket to that of his workers. The reaction was appropriate, as in the case of the sixty five tile factories with 6000 workers, which closed down in July 1958, one week before the minimum wage were to be enforced, and in the case of capitalist agriculturalist and coconut garden owners who chose to engage other workers at the old rates, which resulted in frequent disputes and clashes with the previous, communists workers. It was often alleged that the state apparatus elsewhere in India was either too weak or unwilling to implement the Government

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orders in this respect. Though it could not be claimed that both factors had been overcome in Kerala, in the end it was possible that, helped by the party organisations, the information about their legal rights reached the workers, and these in turn could press the employers for the full implementation of the enacted reforms. This helped to ensure that the legal benefits reached the workers. Statistically, an illustrative example of this feature is the amount of money given to the female workers as maternity allowance. It is seen from table II.4.1.A that the number of female workers applying for this benefit increased with almost hundred percent during this period.

Table II.4.1.A.
Payment of Maternity Benefit.

Year	Number of Women.	Amount paid	Approximate per capita (Rs.)
1955-56	12156	6,56,000	53
1956-57	14650	8,23,000	56
1957-58	18264	14,67,000	80
1958-59	20333	11,59,000	57
1959-60	20167	11,34,000	56
1960-61	10184	7,16,000	70

Source : K. Ramachandran Nair : Industrial Relations in Kerala, 1973, p. 53.

It was observed that especially the wage policy gained the communists much support among the lower strata of the population. They realised that this was their government, who

showed more concern for them than any previous government. This was the intended policy of the party, indeed, but it was not only that. For EMS, in his critique of Indian planning, had attacked the mistake of neglecting the enlargement of the buying power of the people as a condition for industrialisation. More employment and higher wages were to act as accelerators in the industrial development.⁹

II.4.2. The Trade Union Movement:

The wage reforms initiated by the Government were only one aspect of the broad working class policy. This policy was determined by the objective and subjective conditions of the working class movement, which we therefore shall analyse first, progressively pointing at changes occurring during this period. One outstanding fact about the proletariat in Kerala was its high degree of organisation. It is futile to try to assess the unionisation as compared to the total employment, since most sectors given in the Census Report of 1961 have an amorphous composition and do not always belong to the organised industries. In any case, there were some 175000 plantation labourers, 160000 workers in registered factories, 230000 in other manufacturing establishments, 5 lakhs in the household industry, almost 10 lakh agricultural labourers and more than 10 lakhs in the services. Of all these, two and a half lakhs were organised in unions submitting returns in 1957.

This is a remarkably high figure, even higher than West Bengal (176894) and Madras (214676) and only less than Bombay

(460004) and Bihar (309124).¹⁰ Actually, the trade union movement in Kerala started rather late, with the first noticeable strike taking place in 1938.¹¹ After the second World War, however, the progress was very rapid and should be compared to the development in the other states in the periods 1951-56. The trade union membership in most states was stationary with the exception of Madhya Pradesh from 30302 to 48422 members, Madras from 138507 to 214171, Bihar from 1640007 to 291945 and Bombay from 352191 to 384375. The development in Kerala can be seen from the table II.4.2.A. The total membership in Kerala at the beginning of 1951 stood at 12041 and evolved as given below:

Table II.4.2.A.
Growth of Trade Unions and Membership.

Year	Unions on Register		Membership of Unions submitting returns		% of unions submitting returns to total
	Number	Annual growth	Number	Index	
1951-52	555	-	55500	100	-
1953-54	641	44	85215	154	-
1955-56	791	73	1,30789	234	-
1957-58	1219	214	3,56786	645	68
1958-59	1550	331	3,68497	670	59
1959-60	1663	113	3,23281	582	53
1960-62	1853	95	2,62410	476	48
1963-64	1639	107	1,98131	359	41

Sources: The Indian Labour Statistics, December, 1958; Abstract of Labour Statistics of Kerala, 1970 K. Ramachandran Nair, Industrial Relations, in Kerala, 1973, p. 134.

Unionisation thus took huge strides under the communist government, and the reasons for this might be that the fear of becoming victimised by the employer had disappeared under the state protection, that the workers saw more scope in a struggle for the implementation of their legal rights, or even the appearance of scab unions under the patronage of the government or the opposition. The last eventuality is, however, less likely, and this is more or less indicated by the last column, showing a very high percentage of healthy trade unions submitting returns.

It is moreover significant that a higher degree of unionisation was the rule in those sectors of the organised industry which fell under the minimum wage scheme. This relation appears from table II.4.2.D, which gives the increase in trade union membership during the three years, as compared to the total employment in the organised sector. In some cases, as coir, cotton and rubber the membership is even higher than the employment. This is very significant, because it proves that not only the industrial proletariat in Kerala, but also the workers in the unregistered manufacturing establishments and the household industry, had a certain degree of unionisation. This would indicate that even in those sectors the workers, in addition to the highly organised toddy tappers and agricultural labourers, were taking to the weapon of organisation.

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Table II.4.2.B.
Employment and Trade Union Strength in
Selected Industries.

Industry	: Employment : : 1958 :	Trade Union Membership		
		: 1957 :	: 1958 :	: 1959 :
Plantations	175000	83968	95427	94267
Food, Tobacco	80000	48967	62019	70471
Cotton Textiles	19283	25179	24364	16195
Coir	13397	22254	25367	33722
Woodbased Industries	12400	4122	6210	6782
Tiles	12521	8466	9454	11004
Printing	3876	2270	2835	2969
Rubber	2223	2639	2685	2398
Transport & Communication	NA	45720	51559	49851

Sources : Statistical Abstract of Kerala 1958-59, and
1959-60.

The bulk of these organised workers had a communist orientation, led by the CPI dominated All India Trade Union Congress and the RSP dominated United Trade Union Congress.

Table II.4.2.C. Hold of the All India Organisation
in Kerala, 1960.

Organisa- tion	Unions	Membership	% of Membership of to the total
AITUC	187	98413	38.5
INTUC	69	47459	18.5
UFUC	67	41809	16.3
HMS	16	3334	1.3
Others	498	66164	25.4
T o t a l: 827			100

Source : Abstract of Labour Statistics, Kerala, Travancore, 1970.

Efforts were being made to unite the leftist trade unions, the best example of which was the T.V. - Sreekantan formula in 1951 between the AITUC and the UTUC. Very soon it came to a rift again.¹² The rivalry played a significant role in the 28 months of the CPI government.

The connivance of INTUC leaders with employers and with the Congress ministers had in some cases been proved, especially in the plantations,¹³ and this fact, combined with the increased power of the Communist trade unions under a working class ministry, weakened the mass support of the Congress led trade unions considerably.

II.4.3. The Trade Union Movement, Under A Working Class Government;

Addressing the Delhi Chamber of Commerce, the Kerala Industries Minister K.P. Gopalan stressed that in Kerala the investments were more safe and sound as the government of the state was a government which had the complete confidence of the working class and which was pledged to maintain industrial peace.¹⁴ Elsewhere he stated that it was their primary aim to industrialize the state, and that, if industries were to thrive, there should be peace between the management and labour and industrial disputes should therefore be settled amicably.¹⁵ K.P. Gopalan also said that the working class had to understand the two-pillar approach: the labour class should be contented, but at the same time it had to play a patriotic role in increasing production.¹⁶

These utterances were not only meant for the consumption of prospective investors, but were a basic premise of the CPI. The Chief Minister during his inaugural address to the Legislative Assembly had pointed to the necessity to make the employers realise the vital role they had to play in bringing about efficiency in production and management, thereby making the Five Year Plan a success. Prerequisite for the industrial peace and the uninterrupted process of production were the friendly and cordial relations between the employers and employees. Namboodiripad said: "The main obstacles in the way of such an atmosphere are that the employers are reluctant to recognize the organisations of employees", and expected that once this change in their attitude was brought about the organisations of the employees would maintain peace. He added: "However, since it is likely that some employers have no such confidence, I would like to utilise this opportunity to make it clear that we, on our part, will try to bring about such an attitude on the part of the employees."¹⁷

Throughout the 28 months the CPI stuck to its consistent line of making capitalists and workers work together in a proper atmosphere, which would give both groups a fair deal in financial terms and would further the industrial expansion. However, we shall see that the industrial peace was not forthcoming, mainly due to three reasons: the lock-outs resorted to by many industrialists during labour disputes, the political agitations by Congress-led trade unions, and the reluctance of

the RSP-UTUC leaders to accept the limited aims as pursued by the CPI at this stage of the bourgeois-democratic revolution.

In ~~taking~~^{bringing} up these aspects we should first draw a general picture of the incidence and the nature of strikes during this period, since the data of the preceding period were found to be less reliable, we shall give only the data of the following ~~five~~ years as a kind of contrast or comparison. The figures given in Table II.4.2.A under number of work stoppages does not contain the number of lock-outs which shot up from 7 in 1956 to 216 in 1957 and then down again to normal figures from mid 1958 onwards.¹⁸

Table II.4.3.A
Industrial Disputes Resulting in Work-stoppages.

Year	Industrial Disputes	Strikes	Workers Involved	Man-days lost	Incidence of time lost *
1957	7724	277	135000	1004000	1.91 (3.6)
1958	7769	365	109000	1073000	1.92 (2.0)
1959	6889	261	54000	282000	0.87 (0.2)
1960	5027	243	159000	1057000	N.A. (1.1)
1961	5383	274	81318	442000	N.A. (0.4)
1962	4156	324	99284	2127000	N.A. (4.6)

Source: Indian Labour Gazettee, 1957-60; Indian Labour Journal, 1960 onwards; Statistical Abstract of Kerala, 1959-60; Abstract of Labour Statistics Kerala, 1970.

* between brackets the questionable figures given by R. RamachandranNair, p. 194.

The time loss as a percentage of the total time scheduled to work, as given in the last column of the previous table,

remains high throughout the years and is definitely much higher than similar figures for Bombay and even West Bengal, though it was on par with Madras (Appendix II.4. table 1. The incidence in fact, is only 50% of the above figures). Similar rough comparisons should, however, not lead to the conclusion that ^{on} working class in Kerala had lost all discipline. Indeed, not only the proletariat in the registered factories, but also plantation workers and various service personnel were constantly involved in strikes under the other Governments also, and that they were throughout on the alert showed itself again in 1962 and in the mid-sixties with a yearly loss of more than 20 lakhs mandays. The high number of strikers is thus ^{/not primarily due to} ~~/an~~ alleged explosion of indisciplined actions by the communist working class once the CPI had been voted to form the government. A break-up of the strikes in the different industries as given in table II.4.3.B. would, moreover, show that the strike wave was mainly limited to two industries, the cashew industry in the first year and the plantations in the second year.

Table II.4.3.B. Mandays Lost in work-stoppages per Industry (000).

Year	Cashew	Coir	Plantations	Textiles	Tiles	Others
1957-58	500.0	11.1	50.2	85.1	246.2	339.7
1958-59	75.5	6.3	70002	134.4	18.3	75.8
1959-60	47.8	3.3	10.2	0.5	23.8	38.2

Source : K. Ramchandran Nair, Industrial Relations in Kerala, p. 182.

The inference from these data would be that strikes were mainly linked to specific problems in each industry, mainly in the cashewnut and the tiles industry in the first year and in the plantation in the second year. The data also show that the working class was not in the hands of the Vimocha Samara Samita. The latter assertion is amply born out by the fact that in the final month of the liberation struggle, July 1959, the overall minimum of only 1151 mandays was lost, or 8500 less than in the next month.¹⁹

What then was the specific action the various parties adopted in this strike wave? Obviously the unions ~~of industrial~~ which should have been more amenable to the propagated idea of industrial peace at this conjuncture were the communist trade unions, led by the AITUC. Before the CPI came to power these unions had been used both as an economic and as a political weapon. This role changed considerably under the communist government to the extent that strikes were no longer political and were mainly made use of in order to help the government settle the issue. This explains why many strikes were of a short duration. Subsequent to the warning given to the capitalists by the unions a tripartite conference, convened by the labour ministry, would be organised if the managers were unwilling to negotiate with the trade unions directly. Some degree of success in these negotiations or resulting from these conferences made it easier for the communist workers to establish themselves in the factory or industry concerned. This

pincer movement was, after all, never pressed too hard, for the Communists argued that till the real political and economic power was in their hands each settlement would present some kind of compromise, helpful for both workers and employers.²⁰

That this method did not always work is shown by the sharp increase in disputes settled through adjudication. Though in the words of Labour Minister, T.V. Thomas it was the accepted policy of the government to effect the settlement of industrial disputes through methods of conciliation, which was according to the I.L.O. the 'more civilised form', he could not prevent the percentage of industrial disputes terminated by adjudication to shoot up to more than six percent.²¹

This policy of the government and the towing of this line by the communist unions did not always favour the workers who were engaged in the actual disputes. The most illustrative example of this discrepancy between benefits for workers in a particular struggle and the exigencies of the general working class movement occurred in July 1957 in the Kuttanad nilam cultivation. Some ten thousand landlords in this area, which produced one fifth of the Kerala rice production, threatened not to plant any paddy if the government allowed the agricultural labourers to have a free hand, ruling out police interference. They also declared their inability to pay the wages as put forward by the labourers at a tripartite conference some days earlier, which had been convened by EMS Namboodiripad and T.V. Thomas. Government's reply was quite radical. The Kuttanad

Karshaka Sangham had already accomodated some wishes of the landlords, and the latter were now advised to do the same in order to create a contented labour force. Moreover, the governor issued an ordinance giving special powers to collectors, enabling them to take necessary steps as bunding, pumping and dewatering if the landlords failed to do so. However, only two days later at a tripartite meeting chaired by the labour minister at Kottayam, the landlords carried their point. Police patrols were posted in suitable places in order to make them available if a situation arose. The landlords were given ample benefits as pumping subsidies, cheap electricity regulations, insecticides, manure and bunding materials. In regard to wages and hours of work they were compelled to accept the rates recommended by the Minimum Wages Advisory Board, but, however, this stipulation was largely nullified, since the number of labourers to be engaged as well as which labourers to be engaged was ~~to~~^{to be} determined by the cultivators themselves.²²

Such partial defeats for the working class were not digested by the RSP, who accused the Communist Government of pursuing anti-labour policies, being "more eager to profitate the vested interests in the state and avoid clashes with the Nehru Government than to fulfil its promises to the people who returned them to power."²³ UTUC-leader, N. Sreekantan Nair, attacked their "un-Marxian, opportunistic approach to social and economic problems" in their anxiety to "placate the recalcitrant employers. In order to wean away the employers from

the cry of insecurity.... they try to be more loyal than the king".²⁴ These unions ultimately created widespread embarrassment for the government's labour policy. The rivalry, which no doubt existed between the two leftist trade union organisations, was on the ideological plane reinforced by the stand the RSP-UTUC took on the question of implementing socialist measures and the accommodation of the working class demands. While the CPI had decided to go ahead cautiously, checking the repercussions of decisions against single capitalists on the actual battle field, the RSP took the rule of the working class for granted and saw now much reason for coming to a tactical understanding with the capitalists.

T.V. Thomas had declared that the workers had the right to strike and resort to picketing without government's interference, and argued that once this principle was accepted, it would be advisable if workers who opposed a strike did not try to defy the picketers.²⁵ However, when one week later 400 UTUC workers started picketing the Vijayamohini Mills in Trivandrum and prevented the staff from leaving the factory, the police interfered and arrested 65 workers. The workers had resented the decision by the management to reduce their bonus ^{by} ~~with~~ their dues to the cooperative shop. The dispute ended up in a lock-out which lasted for two months. It was not the first incident in which UTUC picketers had been arrested or fined. Already in May, a labour stay-in in the government Engineering Workshop in Trivandrum, for the categorisation of the wage structure,

had met the same fate, for the government thought that the action was ill-advised and premature, and would result in a serious loss. It was not the last incident either. The most serious one, which made the RSP opt for a resolute anti-government policy, occurred at Chandanathope, North of Quilon, in July 1958. The UTUC-led workers would not allow lorries with finished goods to leave the cashewnut factory which had locked-out the striking workers. Police protection was obtained, and following some incidents,²⁶ the police opened fire and killed two labourers. The official enquiry by Justice K. Sankaran came to the conclusion that the firing was fully justified, and that, generally, the spirit of defiance against law and order by the working class and students had to be effectively checked: "it is high time that the workers are made to realize that they are not entitled in the name of picketing to commit all sorts of penal offenses against others".²⁷ Clarifying in the Kerala Assembly the role of the police when goods are removed from the factory, EMS Namboodiripad declared: Several times the Chief Minister and the Law Minister have made this point clear that wrongful restraint being an offense, any set of persons, five or more in number, who have this object, constitute themselves into an unlawful assembly".²⁸

For the sake of objectivity, it should be added here that on the one hand the ISP was already taking part in the anti-government and anti-Communist student agitations before the Chandanathope incident, and that, on the other hand the police

was also ordered to intervene in cases where communist unions gheraod the management, as at Kilikollur, November, 1957.²⁹

Outright political in their struggle were the INTUC Unions. Their most outstanding struggle was conducted in the state-managed Seetharam Mills at Trichur, which lasted 74 days, and when the dispute was solved on 28th July 1958 some 1320 persons had been arrested. The conflict originated from a very trifle issue. Five INTUC workers had been dismissed upon their refusal to accept a departmental transfer from the winding to the reeling section. Other workers had accepted this temporary arrangement at the same wages, which was done with a view to clear the stocks that had accumulated in the reeling department. Congress leaders, however, argued that the whole thing was manipulated to break the Seetharam Labour Congress. An official press release quoted ex-Chief Minister, Panamally Govinda Menon, who conducted the struggle from Trichur itself, as saying that the liberation struggle of the Congress had started and quoted also his exhortion in a Malayalam daily to "the police, military and all sections of the people" to support the struggle.³⁰

The incident ended as it had started: the five workers were transferred to the reeling section. There had been no loss in production, but in the meantime a very serious agitational atmosphere had developed in the major cities in Central Travancore-Cochin, sparked off by the boat-fare agitation of the students. The day before the settlement in the Seetharam factory five Congress workers had been killed in a clash with

a Communist jatha at the Congress office at Varandrapilly near Trichur. In another incident at Peringotukara it was alleged by INC Secretary Sadiq Ali that a communist crowd led by a local communist leader besieged a house for three hours, broke open the room in which the Congress workers had taken shelter, belaboured them brutally until they became unconscious. They were then paraded out in the jeep with a red flag and taken out through the streets to the police station.³¹

Obviously, the problem was whether the CPI was using the trade unions in order to physically liquidate the Congress workers, and not whether the communist unions were using violence or not. We shall deal with this aspect later.

The official leaders of the INTUC had already from April 1957 onwards cried for central help against their physical elimination by the communists. Hooliganism was stated to be rampant in Kerala, and, "If the communists utilise the Government machinery and violence to bring about totalitarian conditions in Kerala, the people of the state as well as the Union Government have to take serious notice of the situation".³² As early as August 1957 the INTUC came to the conclusion that, "The Communist Government of Kerala stands in the dock, condemned, with its hand smeared with blood, its face tarred and forehead branded as 'destroyers of Democracy'.³³ The Congress trade unions almost every week reported details about mounting lawlessness and communist attacks on their members, and, accordingly called for President's Rule and for the declaration of the

CPI as illegal. Even if this Central help would not be forthcoming, the INTUC could achieve one objective with their cry about lawlessness: it would prevent employers from investing in the state. This inference is clear from the analysis the Indian Worker made in May 1957: "The repeated emphasis on unconditional and all-round peace can only have one motive: the communists want to live down the reputation they have built up for industrial strife, indiscipline, violence and murder.... If only they are able to secure the confidence and approbation of some capitalists and managers to get started a few industrial units in this State, their reputation for orderliness and progress will shoot up sky-high, and this, they expect, will pay substantial dividends in the next elections throughout the country".³⁴

Even then, the communist trade unions were not always opposed by the other unions, and at some occasions it even came to a harmonious cooperation. A joint action committee of various plantation unions, mainly AITUC and UTUC, settled, with the help of the Labour Minister, in May 1957 the bonus issue for the tea, coffee and rubber plantations, and in this way avoided a scheduled widespread strike. The INTUC unions also participated in the joint struggle of some 70000 workers in about 150 cashew factories around Quilon, where an agreement on bonus and unemployment compensation was reached in August 1957. The most noted example of interunion cooperation, this time with the INTUC as dissenting force, was the strike

in the High Ranges in November 1958, the high flush month in the tea estates. The earliest strike notice was given for the eighth of October, but things turned out otherwise. A certainly not pro-communist weekly, Commerce, described the happenings as follows. When it seemed that the communists were stealing the thunder, the Congress Labour attempted to be one step ahead: "the faction-ridden INTUC-led unions had found some semblance of unity under the direct presidency of the INTUC President only a few weeks ago. In order to reassert its position, the INTUC Union immediately went on strike on the 4th of October. The Communist Union followed immediately. The Communist tactics again put the INTUC union into a disadvantageous position. So, the latter negotiated for a settlement with the management for the reference".³⁵ That the Congress Union was divided and weak was beyond doubt, and three months later the INTUC office in Munnar was even sealed off by the police at the request of leaders of two rival groups.³⁶ But the union claimed anyway to control the majority of the workers, wanted the issue settled by adjudication, and ordered her members to start the work again. The government did not accept the majority claim and the other unions started picketing the estates.

In the ensuing incidents two communist workers were killed by police firing, and the strike caused generally a real stir, because of the heavy losses in import earnings. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru at a press conference even suggested that EMS Namboodiripad supported the strike and welcomed the resulting

fall in foreign exchange because he had not got enough financial assistance from the Centre.³⁷ Also the British Deputy High Commissioner, looking after the interests of the British-owned Kannan Devan tea company, intervened, but T.V. Thomas, the Labour Minister, told him that the strike had every justification and that government had no intention of advising the strikers to put an end to the agitation.³⁸

The Joint Action Committee of the AITUC, UTUC and IMS suspended the strike by the end of the month and started talks in a tripartite conference, in which they united for a negotiated settlement for all 400 tea estates, while the INTUC stuck to the adjudication settlement for the dispute in Devicolam only. The Joint Action Committee finally agreed to government's proposal for a Conciliation Board, and the three unions ended unitedly what they had started unitedly. Only the INTUC went on spreading the story of the betrayal of the workers by the communists with the object of crushing the INTUC, and, therefore, the EMS Government should be dismissed and the Communist Party of India should be declared illegal.³⁹

II.4.4 New Rules of Conduct for Police and Trade Unions:

Reviewing the six months of office EMS Namboodiripad wrote: "It is not enough to put an end to the hitherto existing practice of using the Police against the activities of the Trade Unions, Kisan Sabhas and other mass organisations.... It is necessary to work out a relatively long term basis for the settlement of those questions which have strained... the relations between

the capitalists and workers...."⁴⁰ Indeed, already during the second month of the ministry it was announced that a comprehensive bill relating to the code of conduct and discipline of the unions was under preparation, and that provision would be made for one negotiating body for one industry. The announcement was immediately strongly attacked by the INTUC, forgetting that the same principle had been acted upon in some other Indian states, and that also the Lok Sabha in 1947 had passed an amendment to afford compulsory recognition to the most representative union.⁴¹

It was, however only in 1959, on 14th March, that the Kerala Industrial Relations Bill was published in the Kerala Gazette and discussed in the Legislative Assembly. Some clauses were debatable from a working class point of view. Clause 8(3) stipulated that only such registered trade unions with at least 15% of the workmen would be eligible for recognition. According to clause 9, the right of the recognised union consisted in negotiations with the employer, display of notices in the premises, collections of subscriptions from inside the premises, participation in the enquiry against workmen and representation of those workmen before the officers conducting the enquiry. According to clause 12 the union which had the support of the majority of workers in the factory, or by lack of majority union several unions together who agreed to do so, would be deemed to represent all workmen employed in that industry and would be entitled to enter into negotiations to all matters

specified under wage structure, hours of work, rationalisation, production, bonus, allowances and benefits. The majority union or unions were the sole authority to bargain on these issue, and a collective agreement signed by them "shall not be reopened by any other recognised trade union... during which the settlement is in force" (clause 23). The Bill, if accepted, would indeed prevent the growth of splinter unions and contribute to industrial peace, but it would also mean a very serious obstacle for leftist trade unions to grow in areas and factories were they were weak. Even if they were that strong that they had the right to be recognised, their recognition would be withdrawn if they violated the code of conduct and discipline of the Bill. The neutralisation of the police in labour disputes allegedly resulted in mounting lawlessness in the state, and thus deserves closer scrutiny.

Even some pro-Congress sources welcomed the decline of the power of the police in Kerala in view of their "arrogant and corrupt" behaviour in Travancore: "The Inspector of Police in any Taluk was easily the most powerful and hence the most influential person in that area. Receiving more than adequate compensation, the police officer invariably used to serve the power and interests of the rich men of the place. This sort of thing used to create a reign of semi-terror in towns and villages".⁴² The CPI had come to the same conclusion, but since the state power was not in its hands this powerful 'socialist factor in the political sphere' could not be used

for the defense of the working class. The solution therefore was to change the conduct of the police in the sense that their interference in labour disputes and land disputes would be curtailed. The idea was severely attacked by the Congress Party in Kerala. Quoting from the government publication 'Three Months of Popular Rule', in which the Chief Minister had elaborated the principle of neutralisation of the police, E.P. Poullose, Congress M.L.A., warned the Assembly that "the function of the Police will be... to render first aid to the injured and take the dead bodies for post-mortem to the hospital ... I submit that we are on the verge of a great calamity so far as law and order is concerned. But the centre is there and they will intervene, if things continue like this".⁴³

EMS countered the allegation that since the police was not allowed to do its work properly, the morale was dropping drastically, with the argument that intervention in labour disputes was the role of the Labour Department, and not of the Police. He said that "this concept was so alien to the owning classes that they would not look upon this as anything but divesting the police of its powers. They had been so used to the uses of the coercive power of the police in the matter of labour and agrarian disputes".⁴⁴ According to him the bogey of law and order had been created by these classes because his government was a government which was trying to bring about a change in the role of the State in the mutual relations between the owning and the toiling classes.

The cry of insecurity was mainly raised by two groups, the Congress Party and the Associations of Planters. Within three days of the assumption of office by the CPI Ministry the AICC general secretary, Shriman Narayan, and the KPCC passed a resolution on "lawlessness and sense of insecurity", and urged the Communist Party and the Government "to cry a halt to excesses committed by communist party workers against their opponents".⁴⁵ Shriman Narayanan repeatedly made charges against the police policy of the CPI which he said, had resulted in a demoralised police force.⁴⁶ The planters made repeatedly statements and published reports with details about the incidents. In his answers, EMS used to describe their cry of lawlessness as a parrot cry, and, moreover, the atmosphere was not one of lawlessness, but one of insecurity caused by the feeling that "Workers are no longer to be treated as dump cattle as under the British Raj."⁴⁷

But anyway, in some places during the twenty eight months a critical law and order situation prevailed, as for example in March 1958 in Quilon District where the district Magistrate restricted "the carrying of swords, spears, choppers, bludgeons, daggers, guns or sticks more than 18 inches in length. The restriction in respect of these lethal weapons is necessary in the interest of public peace and tranquility, as long as the Magistrate deems so".⁴⁸ Agricultural and industrial disputes resulted in widespread agitations in which several persons on both sides of the dispute were killed or injured. Marshall

Windmiller came to the conclusion that, though it was difficult to assess the accuracy of the charges of a break-down in law and order, there was no doubt that there were numerous incidents in which the "police stood by" while workers overstepped the bounds of legality in making demands of their employers. Without giving evidence of the alleged inaction of the police, he described the behaviour of the workers as "overcome by the enthusiasm of having a working class government in power".⁴⁹

It is agreed by other sources also that this situation ceased after some months, and even the UPASI, United Planters Association of South India, which, during the initial months had spread various stories about lawlessness, noticed the change. Its President declared in September 1957, "I should like to express our appreciation of the fact that in recent weeks the police have been taking the necessary action against law breakers in most districts. I think all here will join me in expressing our relief on reading the press statement issued by the State Government on the 11th of September, with regard to the use of police force".⁵⁰

The previous president of the UPASI had acknowledged one month earlier that the development towards more violent struggle showed itself in every Indian state. But what was more serious in Kerala was, "the statement by the Chief Minister that employers cannot expect assistance from the police, even, apparently, when Trade Union activity has passed its lawful bounds...."⁵¹
(emphasis added.)

The more relevant point in view of both statements is thus whether violence occurred with the connivance of the government, "whether the machinery of government moved against communists also, if they committed offences. It may well be that a member of a party in power commits offences, as many Congress-men in Congress-ruled states have committed...But the machinery of law has to be set in motion effectively and impartially against the miscreants, without reference to their party label".⁵² The Government claimed to have acted according to this principle, and also the CPI, for example after the 1958 July labour and student disturbances, warned her workers to isolate those who made attempts at violence. The government fully accepted the Chandanathope Report, and specified her police instructions in that light. If the picketing workers could not be persuaded peacefully, "the next step of prompt removal of token obstruction is suggested. If this fails, use of force after issuing warnings and taking all moderate steps has to be attempted. It should be made clear to all parties that police force is ready, if parties concerned compels its (firearms) use and rule out other courses".⁵³ This use of force and firearms⁵⁴ created several complaints, even from the section of the unions affiliated to the AITUC.⁵⁵

The Chandanathope Report, moreover, blamed the Government for being too soft in handling the political opponents, especially for the withdrawal of cases, which had become a common feature in the settlement of disputes. It had become a clause

of the strike agreements that all cases which had arisen in connection with the strike would be withdrawn, and the Report viewed this development very critically: "Penal offences committed against person and property cannot cease to be offences merely because the offender happens to be a student or a trade unionist."⁵⁶ It will be seen from table II.4.4.A that the government had been undiscriminating in the application of this controversial principle.

Table II.4.4A
Number of Cases Withdrawn Till 31.12.58.

Congress	143
P.S.P.	30
Muslim League	4
R.S.P.	11
Congress & P.S.P.	722
P.S.P. & Muslim League	49
Congress, P.S.P. & other Opposition Parties.	284
Congress & R.S.P.	48
Communists	244
Non-Party	292
Total :	1827

Source: Kerala Government's Reply to K.P.C.C. Memorandum, 1959, Annexure III.

Several cases ^{he} where the government failed, allegedly failed or refused to give police protection were published

by the opposition parties and refuted by government sources.⁵⁷ The K.P.C.C. publication in October 1958, True Picture of the Situation in Kerala (A Rejoinder), gave a dozen cases of police inaction, by the way, all happening in estates belonging to Harrison & Crosfield and Duncan Bros and dating from May and June the previous years. Yet, the Congress Union Minister for Industries and Employment, G.L. Nanda, after touring the area in October, 1957, declared that, though the planters were labouring under a sense of insecurity, they were noticing "an improvement in the situation recently in so far as the police has become more active in the discharge of its functions".⁵⁸ The representative of the Planters Associations told the Kerala Police Reorganisation Committee that "the Communist Government has not made discriminations against the employers in giving protection during the industrial disputes". Yet he was of the view "that the said policy statement had an adverse effect on the moral of the police and made them uncertain about their functions and powers".⁵⁹

It thus appears that not facts, but a possible psychological effect of a government statement was used by the employers against the CPI labour and police policy. The fact of indiscriminating use of the police was reinforced by the findings of the official report of enquiry into the police firings in Munnar in the High Ranges, October, 1958, in which two communist plantation workers were killed. S. Govinda Menon, who conducted the enquiry, reported "Numerous instances

have been brought to my notice where the police have been only too anxious to protect the willing workers from intimidation, threats of violence and attacks". The instances of violence "emphatically show that the police protection was always available for the willing workers and their assertion to the contrary is without bonafides".⁶⁰ According to the report, the anxiety shown by the management to interest themselves in local politics and to play one union against the other was a disquieting feature.

Actually, this attitude had been revealed by the planters themselves. They argued that there had been a shift from a burst of violence and riotous behaviour to a total disregard for the management, and since these techniques had more deadly implications, they claimed that the only defense available to them in meeting the new challenge had been taken away "by their voluntary abandonment of the political weapon. Not only the planting organisations but also like bodies in other industries must consider how far this self-imposed restraint has helped them when everything concerning their affairs are being determined by political factors".⁶¹

This concealed threat came immediately after the defeat of the opposition candidate in the bye-election in the High Ranges in May 1958, which affirmed the CPI majority in the Assembly. Already in December 1957 the planters had been deeply involved in the plot to bribe two MLAs, R. Balakrishna

Pillai and Shiva Dass.⁶² The plot was exposed by the CPI-MLA Balakrishna Pillai himself the day before it was to be executed and the Communist Party retained its majority in the Kerala Assembly.

II.4.5. Cooperative Societies:

In three sectors, public works, coir industry and toddy-tapping the government tried to protect the workers from exploitation by middlemen and contractors, and for this purpose it set up new or improved the existing cooperative societies.

In this endeavour, however, the Communist initiatives encountered serious resistance. The main thrust of the attack by the opposition was the allegation that the schemes were intended not to help the workers, but to enrich the party : "To ensure a steady flow of money to the Party and Party workers, it was to the cooperative movement that they turned. (The cooperatives) were the three tributaries that irrigated the party workers and finally throw their residuary waters into the Communist Party".⁶³ The first controversy centered around the

proposal, in compliance with the directive of the Planning Commission, to organise Labour Contract Cooperatives.⁶⁴ They were formed as organisations of the labourers, meant to execute P.W.D. contracts and with the view to eliminate the middlemen. Initially, 25 pilot projects were started in different N.E.S. Blocks, and their success made the government decide to have these labour cooperative societies drawn up in all 84 Blocks, In future, all government contract works costing up to 25000 rupees would be given to the working people directly, and not any longer to the financially prosperous and notoriously corrupt private contractors. Only in 42 of the 94 blocks applications had been received, and all those applying societies were registered. This thus clearly refuted the argument of the Opposition that only Communist Societies were given a chance to apply, and that several non-Communist societies had been rejected.

The coir industry, the most important cottage industry, employing some 8 lakhs of people, had been continuously exploited by adulterators, middlemen and money lenders.⁶⁵ The Congress government, therefore, initiated in 1950 the Coir Cooperative Scheme. The Communist ministry, reviewing the scheme during the previous years, came to the condition^{clu} that its implementation had helped "these very middlemen and moneylenders whom the Congress Government apparently wanted to exclude. At the same time it kept at bay the labour class for whose salvation the scheme was ostensibly formulated."⁶⁶ The opinion that all chaos, squander and misappropriation in this industry and hence destitution of the labourers was brought about by the mis-handling of the scheme was also confirmed by an official enquiry. The incentive for formation of societies previously was the government assistance, which in turn was relative to the capital collected. It was thus natural that, except in a handful of societies, the representation to workers and small producers was generally very insignificant and the actual benefits extended to them had been very small. Added to the lack of capital was also the nature of feudalist bondage, with the cottage workers being kept under the hold of the dealers and master producers by the grant of advances or by indebtedness which prevented them ~~by the~~ ~~gxa~~ from getting out of that personal bondage. The enquiry concluded: "The advantage of initiative having thus gone into wrong hands in the initial stages, the subse-

quent efforts of those who got in naturally tended in the direction of preservation of their interests, and not to enlarge the field".⁶⁷

In a memorandum to the government in 1955, R. Sankar, who in 1959 became the president of the KPCC, alleged nepotism, inactivity and squandering of resources, and pressed for appropriate measures. The CPI ministry merely executed this request, not under any extraordinary, dictatorial powers, but under the ordinary provisions of the cooperative act itself. It appointed Rectification Committees in 25 out of the 187 societies, transferred the Coir Special Officer to another job, and provided facilities to the poor workers to take shares in a society by offering them loans. Opposition parties, however, alleged an attempt "to capture all flourishing cooperative societies.... The managing committees of many cooperative societies were superseded by the state government to provide for their own partymen. Now, most of the coir and handloom societies are in communist hands and money flows from the treasury to these societies by way of loans and grants".⁶⁸

The most controversial cooperative scheme, and ultimately also the most inflammatory one, were the Toddy Tappers' Societies.

The tappers were engaged by the highly prosperous arrack and toddy shops contractors. Under the Abkari Acts the government could grant to any persons and on any condi-

tions the right of manufacturing and selling the liquor. Till then this right had been given to private contractors by auction, but in June 1958 Revenue Minister K.R. Gowri informed the Assembly that in future Abkari rights would be given on a negotiated basis to the cooperative of tapping labourers, which in fact was a long standing demand of the Toddy Tappers' Union. In addition to the already existing cooperative shops in three places, more than 500 shops were brought under the cooperative fold during 1958 and 1959. There were also financial reasons for doing this, for the revenue in regard to toddy rentals had been coming down during the previous years, mainly due to the united efforts of the associated contractors, who brought down the rates during auctions. Moreover, minimum wages had been fixed for the tappers and this resulted in increasing and sometimes even violent disputes.

Opposition newspapers, publications and official leaders started a militant campaign, accusing the CPI and its Government of reducing the shops to a network of communist cells, of rejecting as a rule non-communist sponsored applications, of causing a revenue loss of 4 to 30 lakh rupees, of supplying loans to the communist-led cooperatives in order to secure their trade unions dependable financial resources, and so on. The first accusation might have had some truth in view of the tappers traditional allegiance to the communist party, but the other insinuations were

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factually proved by the Government as being merely verbal assertions.⁶⁹ After all, for the labourers themselves, the scheme worked out to be very beneficial, and so was it for government's revenue. In the post-communist period the system of negotiated contracts with the co-operatives was not discontinued. In the second year of their existence the cooperatives granted their workers an increase of 27%, paid holidays and a yearly bonus of 40 to 240 rupees, instead of the 10 to 20 rupees given to them by the private contractors.⁷⁰

We shall see later⁷¹ how the controversies on the three cooperative schemes and on other labour problems led to an innumerable number of incidents: These incidents were usually described by the opposition parties as communist goondas waylaying and attacking unguilty and unprovocative non-communist citizens. We shall also see how the Governor of Kerala, in his report to the Union Government advising the imposition of President's Rule, used exactly the same accusations though they had factually been disproved by his own Government. It should in that context also be remembered that the very same charges had till then, been made against the Congress party in Kerala, or, as it was put by a reliable neutral scholar: "No doubt these methods were particularly objectionable, because the communists used them purposefully as means in the class struggle, and therefore, had more success than the Congress party. However, the emphasis

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N o t e s

1. Government of Kerala, Kerala on the March, 1957, pp. 17ff.
2. Time, 29.4.1957.
3. Government of Kerala, Audit Report 1958, p. 42.
4. Hindu, 15.12.1957.
5. Compilation from Government of Kerala, Appropriation Accounts 1957-58. Appendix 2.
6. Kerala Gazette, 24th June 1958, Hindu, ~~21~~.21.6.1958.
7. Government of Kerala, Towards a Better Educational System, 1959, p. 17.
8. See the report on the Conference of State Labour Ministers at National, Hindu, 18.5.1958.
9. I am indebted this paragraph to Turlach, p. 179.
10. Indian Labour Gazette, Statistics, December 1959.
11. EMS Namboodiripad, Kerala, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow, p. 159 ff.
12. K. Ramachandran Nair, Industrial Relations in Kerala, 1970, p. 122; K. Padmanabhan Pillai, p. 272.
13. For one example of this, see, Kerala Gazette, 1 October, 1957 (Award of Industrial Dispute): "Police forces were terrorising the workers with INTUC workers freely moving about in police vans and showing up to the police the members of the Communist Union to be hunted out". Also H.D. Malaviya, p. 44.
14. Hindu, 4.10.1957.
15. Hindu, 24.4.1957 and 12.4.1957.
16. Hindu, 26.2.1958.
17. Hindu, 6.4.1957. Malayala Rajyam, 6.4.57 quotes the original Malayalam where the words used are muthalali and tozhilali (capitalists and workers, not necessarily employers and employees); Malaviya, p. 45, quotes Namboodiripad speaking to the AITUC Congress at Ernakulam, December, 1957.
18. K. Ramachandran Nair, Industrial Relations in Kerala, 1970, Appendix V, gives these figures, but many of the other figures are very inaccurate.

19. The monthly details per industry in Statistical Abstract of Kerala 1958-59, published by the Department of Statistics, Government of Kerala.
20. For this understanding I am indebted to M. Govinda Pillai, then MLA, and Ramachandra Menon, then KSTUC President.
21. Hindu 20.10.1957; K. Ramachandran Nair; Industrial Relations in Kerala, 1970, p. 215; Kerala on the March, Government of Kerala Publication, 1957, p. 16.
22. This Account is based on reports in Hindu, and Times of India, between 30.7.1957 and 8.8.1957; Proceedings of the Kerala Assembly 22.8.1957.
23. The Call, October, 1957: Decisions of the Central Committee at Lucknow.
24. Hindu, 2.11.57.
25. Hindu, 31.8.1957.
26. The incidents are reported differently in K. Sankaran's Chandranathope Enquiry Report, K. Padmanabha Pillai, p. 83; and Open letter from N. Sreekantan Nair to the Central Executive of the CPI (The Call, August, 1958, pp. 15-20).
27. Hindu, 17.12.'58, Jitendra Singh, pp. 85-87.
28. Reported in Hindu, 19.12.1958.
29. K. Padmanabha Pillai, pp. 80-82, Hindu, 20.11.1957.
30. Hindu 7.6.1958; Kerala Government Reply, p. 36; K. Padmanabha Pillai, p. 86; Jitendra Singh, pp. 71-74; KPCC True Picture of the situation in Kerala, parim.
31. Hindu 4.8.58. Also: Lok Sabha Debates, 11.8.58.
32. Indian Worker, 3 May 1957 (Editorial).
33. Indian Worker, 15 August, 1957.
34. Indian Worker, 3 May 1957.
35. Commerce, 15 November, 1958.
36. Hindu, 9.2.1969.
37. Hindu, 8.11.1958.
38. Hindu 23.10.1958.

39. Indian Worker, 15.12.1958.
40. Kerala on the March, Government of Kerala Publication, 1957, p. IX.
41. Report of the Kerala 'Police Reorganisation Committee, 1960', p. 30-31. For the announcement in the Kerala Assembly: Hindu: 25.6.1957.
42. S.C. Joseph; Kerala, The Communist State, 1959, p. 115.
43. Proceedings of the Kerala Legislative Assembly, 28.8.'57, pp. 569-571.
44. Hindu, 15.8.57, H.D. Malaviya, pp. 44-45.
45. Kerala Under Communism, p. 92; Kerala Government Reply p. iff. Similar allegations and statements in J. Singh; K. Padmanabha Pillai; Report of the Kerala Enquiry Commission, Indian Commission of Jurists, 1960, all parim.
46. See two examples in Hindu, 2.9.57, and, Times of India, 21.7.57.
47. Hindu, 14.9.57.
48. Government press note, in; Hindu, 29.3.58. See also: Kerala State Administrative Report, 1958-59, section on law and order.
49. Marshall Windmiller, Constitutional Communism in India, in: Pacific Affairs, March 1958, pp. 22-35.
50. The Planters Chronicle, Official organ of the UPASI, 1.10.57. Also statements in H.D. Malaviya, p. 64.
51. The Planters Chronicle 1.9.57.
52. Kerala government's Reply to the KPCC Memorandum, p. 36.
53. Text of Instructions to the Police, laid on the table of the Kerala Assembly, Hindu, 9.12.58.
54. Due to the dependence on the Army Ordinance Depots the police was compelled to use the deadly dangerous 303 bore rifles. The police principles for disposal of unlawful assemblies were not changed by Nambudiripad's government: No hesitant use of force, and if firing is opened, the aim should be low but effective (no firing over the heads, no blank fire, no buckshots). See: Report of the Kerala Police Reorganisation Committee, 1960, pp. 66 ff.

55. Police Reorganisation Committee, op. cit., p. 27.
56. The Chandanathope Report was not available to us. We therefore quote from the extracts in: Hindu, 17.12.57.
57. For a good survey see: Jitendra Singh, pp. 56-84; K.P.C.C. Memorandum; Kerala Government Reply; True Picture of the Situation in Kerala; Rejoinder to the True Picture; Report of the Kerala Enquiry Committee, op. cit.
58. The Indian Worker, 14.10.59, Hindu, 4.10.59.
59. Report of the Kerala Police Reorganisation Committee, p.26.
60. Reported in Hindu, 11.3.59.
61. The Planters Chronicle, 1 July, 1958.
62. H.D. Malaviya, pp. 71-74, New Age Weekly, 16.12.58.
63. K. Padmanabha Pillai, p. 37.
64. Kerala Government Reply, p. 23 and Annexure VII.
65. A description is given by A. Sreedhara Menon: Kerala District Gazetteers, Quilon, p. 326, and by Bhaskaran Unnithan: Coir Industry in Kerala, with Special Reference to Marketing and Trade, Ph.D. Thesis, 1968, Parim.
66. Kerala Government Reply, p. 20.
67. Ibid., Annexure 5.
68. Kerala under Communism, pp. 105-06. Similar allegations in J. Singh, p. 124 ff.; KPCC Memorandum, p. 8; K. Padmanabha Pillai, p. 37 ff.; and Kerala Government Reply p. 16 ff.
69. For allegations and refutation, see op. cit., 68.
70. Economic Weekly 1960, p. 4. Reference from Turlach.
71. See Part III.
72. Turlach, pp. 177-78.
73. In Kerala Government Reply, pp. 19-20, one case is mentioned in which the government gave the toddy shop license to an insolvent society, moreover not formed by the tappers, because the managing members were Congressmen.

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Part III

NATURE AND EXTENT OF THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE

From March 1959 onwards, the communal organisations of the Nairs and the Christians on the one hand and the major political parties, the Indian National Congress, the Praja Socialist Party and the Muslim League on the other, joined forces in an anti-communist, extra-parliamentary struggle, which, on 31 July resulted in the imposition of President's Rule on Kerala. "It is true", The Times of India wrote on 1 July, "that the Central Government has the constitutional right to intervene when there is a break-down in the administration. But for the Union Government to intervene after the condition for intervention has been partially created by the party that it represents, would be to pervert the constitution".

The endeavour to create such conditions had been going on since April 1957, when the Communist Ministry was sworn in. We have already seen in the previous part of this dissertation that the government took several legislative initiatives which hurted the interests of various sections of the population. Before analysing the Liberation Struggle we shall now give a brief outline of the preceding 24 months, concentrating on the incidents leading to the final struggle through Kerala. During his tour/the Indian President, Rajendra Prasad, declared on Republic Day 1957: "I am happy that this great experiment which is being made in your state is going to serve

on the cooperative policy by the communists, was beneficial for Kerala in the sense that with this government a period of an intensified foundation of new cooperatives was initiated". The same writer also continued that the communists were not accused of corruption in favour of powerful people or relatives. The scheme benefited the members and supporters of their party, which was normal, for" the CPI government was a reversal of the previous governments, and the previously beneficiary strata of society had to do without anything".⁷² This picture after all is blown up to the extent that it gives a stereotype story of the class struggle and the dictatorship of the proletariat. The government had to be constantly aware of not hurting too many people at the same time, and thus driving them into the active opposition camp, and had to check the implementation of its decisions meticulously so as not to give the opposition examples to prove that the CPI really tried to subvert the State machinery for its so called party interests.⁷³

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as a great lesson, not only to other states but to the country as a whole as an example of co-existence, of living and working together... for the good of all". The next day Rajendra Prasad concluded: "whatever I have seen and learnt during the past few days of my stay here has convinced me that you can look forward to the future with hope. I feel happy to say that your government is grappling with the problems with enthusiasm and in spirit of service".¹ The INC after all, took great exception to this assessment by the Indian President, and was particularly angry because he had made the Communist Government respectable by his speech.²

In the meantime, the opposition of the Churches and the Kerala Congress against the Education Bill was resulting in widespread protest demonstrations, who challenged the resignation of the Government. In the meantime also the Congress leaders and the PSP leader P.T. Pillai had tried to create a paper panick and appealed to the Centre for protection against the unconstitutional acts of the Communist ministry.³ But the Praja Socialist Party joined the INC only in the second, much publicised agitation in October 1957, the Kattampally encroachment, where both parties instigated and took the defense of poor harijan families who encroached upon Government paramboke lands. The CPI government was planning to distribute the paramboke cultivable land on a planned basis and used force against the demonstrators and evicted the encroachers, despite the opposition. However, the defeat

of the two parties turned into a victory, and one day after the final solution of the Kattampally agitation, the two leaders, P.T. Chacko and P.T. Pillai, at a Student Conference, called for a United anti-communist front.⁴ Later P.T. Pillai announced several times that the alliance and cooperation between the parties which believed in democracy would be an effective and fruitful reality soon.⁵ By February the PSP and INC agreed to have a common candidate for the Devicolam by-election.

Due to some irregularity, the election of Rosamma Punnoose, the Communist MLA had been invalidated in that constituency. If the CPI would lose this seat it would also lose its working majority in the Kerala Assembly. The INC was very hopeful of winning the election, and therefore stopped calling for Central Intervention. The K.P.C.C. President D.A. Domodara Menon declared: "The Congressmen in Kerala have made it clear that they do not desire to seek Central Interference to turn out the present Government. It will be undemocratic on their part to have any such idea. What the Congressmen here stand for is the triumph of parliamentary democracy and defeat of the Communist Government by a popular vote and not by interference of the Centre".⁶ While the plantation constituency, with a high proportion of Tamhlian population, was toured by several Congress Union and Tamil State Ministers, the Kerala Government decided that its ministers need not participate in the election campaign and explained

this move as the greatest assurance the government and the CPI could give for the free and impartial conduct of the elections.⁷ Nevertheless, the powerful INTUC Trade Union Leader B.K. Nair, supported by INC, PSP and Muslim League, was beaten by 7000 votes in a constituency where the CPI had only recently been gaining a mass basis.⁸

Only after the results were known, it was alleged that the electoral rolls were tampered with, to the extent that almost twenty percent of the voters had been imported from other constituencies. This coincided with the beginning of widespread disturbances from June till August 1958, mainly led by the petty-bourgeois youth, as the one Anna boat fare, the Water Transport Corporation and the Seetharam Mill agitations. It was also alleged that the CPI was training a private militia, which was being used to forcibly enter other's land,⁹ and the cry for Central Intervention was raised again. This continued till the Centre imposed President's Rule on 31 July 1959.

During these agitations Namboodiripad warned for a civil war situation. Speaking on 1 June at Coimbatore, the Chief Minister appealed to the opposition to cooperate and create a more friendly and more cordial atmosphere. He continued that he saw as the only alternative the culmination of the tense political struggle into a protracted civil war (Appendix III). The Opposition explained his speech as a declaration of war, as the long awaited threat by the Communists to start

the physical liquidation of their political enemies, and was even "happy that Mr Namboodiripad has at last thought it fit to reveal the real intentions of his party (and to dispel) from the minds of the people the illusions passed at the Amritsar Conference".¹⁰ Moreover,ⁱⁿ the wake of the Coimbatore speech and the interpretation given to it by most non-communist spokesmen, a series of serious incidents in which various political groups were involved coincided with some statements by Communist leaders which seemed to confirm the Opposition leaders in their suspicion.¹¹

The INC and the PSP and the newspapers controlled by them started a vociferous appeal to the Centre, but after some weeks the efforts petered out. The civil war-threat abuse was not accepted by the Centre, and by some sources the CPI government was even praised for its handling of the situation. We shall quote a long comment from Parliamentary Studies, in which the commentator first remarks how easy it is in a democratic framework to criticise the government without adequate evidence. "It is to the credit of Shri Namboodiripad's government that they have so far refrained from being provoked, in general, to indulge in vituperative and hate campaign. In this context, the speech made by EMS Namboodiripad was bound to come as a surprise". The article continued that later elucidations have largely restored confidence, and that "Wordings apart, it may be worthwhile to remember that what EMS Namboodiripad said was not very far from the real situation.

If majority rule is not accepted by the minority, democracy ceases to function and particularly in a country like India where democracy is yet to take its roots it behoves all to respect the democratic principles. But in the Centre as well as in the rest of the Indian states, the Kerala's Chief Minister's party is in a minority and the principle that he was enunciating ought to be accepted in its proper spirit by his colleagues elsewhere.... There is no surer guarantee of keeping the Communists on the track than to allow them to rule where they have a majority as they certainly have in Kerala".¹² (stress added) Nevertheless, as we shall see during the Liberation Struggle, the warning by the constitutionalists in New Delhi, was not consistently paid attention to. The stereotyped accusations against the communists were used again by the Kerala Opposition, and would be accepted by the INC at the Centre, once the struggle in Kerala had been sparked off in 1959.

The occasion to this struggle was provided with the findings of the Rice Deal Enquiry Commission, which became known in March 1959, at the moment that the Nair Service Society was deciding to join the other movements in the Anti-Education Bill agitation. In July 1957, Mysore, Madras, Andhra and Kerala were grouped together in the Southern Rice Zone, and it was expected that the surplus of Andhra would find its way to the markets in Kerala. The export of rice from this zone to other states had, indeed, been banned and the Centre consequently reduced its supply to Kerala from 25000 to 10000 tons of rice

per month. However, when the food situation in Calcutta and Bombay became serious, exports from Andhra to those areas were allowed again, prices increased and the Kerala Government could not find private traders who were prepared to import rice at a fixed commission from that state. It therefore decided to buy 5000 tons via a private firm in Madras, which was proposed to them by A.K. Gopalan, MP. The first rice arrived in Sept. 1957, and immediately charges of corruption in favour of the CPI and sympathisers of the CPI were raised. In March an investigation committee was constituted with the limited scope of finding out whether the deal was justified and whether there had been an avoidable loss in this deal. The report revealed that the necessity of import of rice had been expressed by all parties in the Assembly, that the Centre had declined twice to requisition the rice at fixed prices and also that the merchants in Kerala had refused to bring in rice from Andhra at a fixed commission. The manager of the Madras firm, who had been a communist 15 years earlier, accepted the terms, though during the negotiations the terms were changed slightly in favour of his firm. P.T. Raman Nair concluded that there had possibly been an avoidable loss, but concluded that "with the utmost good faith there are risks involved in the conduct of the business of the Government", and that, moreover, in later deals, on worse terms for the firm and even after inviting tenders, the Madras firm was contracted to deliver some 45000 tons.¹⁴

Some days after the publication of the report in March

1959, the leaders of the INC, the PSP and the ML met for an immediate action against the attitude of the government with regard to ^{the} findings of the Rice Deal Enquiry Commission. Government had "no rights to continue in office", and P. Thanu Pillai called to the people "at this hour of grave peril in the history of the state, to be prepared for a mass agitation to compel the Government to resign".¹⁵

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N o t e s

1. Hindu, 16 and 17th August, 1957, Windmiller, op.cit.,p.30.
2. Hindu, 25.8.57.
3. Proceedings of the Kerala Legislative Assembly, May 1957, p. 483.
4. Hindu, 25.11.1957.
5. Hindu, 19.12.57, 16.1.58, 31.1.58 and 30.4.1958.
6. The Weekly Kerala, 4.1.1958.
7. Hindu, especially 27.4.58.
8. Malaviya, p. 121, gives a detailed account. Kerala under Communism gives disclosures, unrevelling the so-called mystery of the CPI victory, a 17000 bogus votes (pp.100-04).
9. The assertion of the existence of a private army of 50,000 communists was taken for granted by various authors, though none of them gives any evidence for it. Fic, Thesis, p. 710, Turlach, p. 188.
10. The Weekly Kerala, 7.6.1958.
11. Kerala under Communism, pp. 96-97. The PSP leader, P.T. Pillai, e.g. remarked "In spite of professions about their change of intentions and methods the recent repeated threats of the Chief Minister were an unmistakable indication and proof that the Communists of India did not propose to shed an iota of their totalitarianism, their violence and questionable methods". Hindu, 13.6.1958.
12. M.N. Govindan Nair had called for the formation of people's committees (Times of India, 22.7.58), and this was seen as a clear sign that the party wanted to abrogate the responsibilities of maintaining law and order (Kerala Under Communism, p. 95; Fic, Thesis, p. 706.
13. Parliamentary Studies, New Delhi, August, 1958, pp. 7-8.
14. Government of Kerala, Rice Deal Enquiry Commission Report Trivandrum, 1959. See also Kerala Under Communism, pp. 52-57; Link, 28.12.58 gives some interesting details.
15. Hindu, 17.3.1959.

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III.1. The Chargesheet Against the Ministry:

The charges against the Communist ministry, on the basis of which the Vimochana Samaram was launched, were, in fact, the same as the charges made against the Communists as soon as they took over office. The Statesman noticed on 16 June 1959, "The draft of the chargesheet against the Communists now released was in reality prepared a few days after the Congress defeat in the election in that State; many of the accusations could be and have been levelled against the Congress Ministers in other States". The charges had often been made and denied, and, though the actual chargesheet had not yet been made public, the Opposition let it appear as if the whole Liberation Movement was based on these charges. In the first week of May in Kerala the Congress/had decided to get ready a comprehensive chargesheet and on that basis to stiffen the agitation with a view to oust the CPI from power. On July 7, the chargesheet was scrutinised by the Congress High Command and presented to the the Indian President. It was released to the public more than one week later. The major charge was that it was the consistent policy/composed exclusively of the Communist party members, of the government to create "a privileged class for whom nepotism, favouritism, etc., are shown and corruption had become rampant, with the funds of the State exchequer stealthily flowing into party fund".¹

The charges levelled against the Communist Party and the Communist ministry included: corruption in government deals and in the cooperative schemes, rigging of by-elections, curtailing of educational freedom, high-handedness of the police, increase of criminality and unchecked actions by the

communist trade unions, victimisation of non-party members in the administration, in the police and in the judiciary, financial bankruptcy and economic failure. The Communist Party's application of double standards and its disbelief in the Constitution and Democracy had created great bitterness, conflict and insecurity of life and property in the state, and, consequently, there had been a big shift among the vast masses of the people against the government, which had reduced the minority vote of 41% secured by the CPI considerably. Therefore with two solid blocks of people divided by a wall of suspicion, a 'disengagement' through Presidential intervention and fresh elections would prove beneficial.²

A closer study would reveal the hollowness of these contentions.³ The CPI had a minority vote, but the same was the case for the Central Congress Government and for 11 out of the 13 ruling State Congress Government. The argument that there had been a change in popular support was, in any case, difficult to prove. It had been the assertion of most non-communist observers and politicians that the CPI was voted to power not because the people had any particular leanings towards Communism, but because the people were angry, temporarily dissatisfied with the Congress, and that all this was over now. Even if such a shift had taken place, even if it might be expected that at the next elections the people of Kerala would correct their mistake thoroughly, it was difficult to understand why this certainty implied that the government

should go right away, without waiting for the elections which were bound to come. It was not part of the parliamentary practice in India that an elected government, supported by the majority in the legislative assembly, would quit because there might have been a change in the popular sentiment. Since the right of recall did not exist, the government and the Assembly could not be asked to agree to fresh elections whenever the Governor thought that he would sense that the popular sentiment had turned against the elected government.

Moreover, it might well have been that the government had enhanced its popularity, as was evident in the bye-election in Devicolam and several municipal and panchayat elections. The last example of this occurred while the liberation movement was being launched, when at the end of March, the CPI captured the majority in the Muvattapuzha Municipal Council, which was a Congress stronghold before. The CPI was convinced that, even if one could speak of an upsurge against the Communist government, there was an equally strong upsurge in favour of the government, among the sections of the population who benefited from the new legislative initiatives. "Unfortunately, this is not a particular vocal section of the community although its strength at elections should not be underrated. On the other hand, the Communists have antagonised some of the more vociferous classes and hence all the sound and fury against them".⁴

If then, there appeared to be a mass upsurge against the

CPI government, it should be assessed properly. In the first place, no doubt that the mass media, which were almost fully in the hands of the opposition parties and had been spitting venom upon the Communists during the whole period, spread a highly one-sided picture of the events. Petty police actions were frightfully exaggerated as terrible repression, rallies by the Communists were blacked out, violence against the government was incited and even small jathas and public meetings were given the aureol of heroic, glittering mass manifestations. Only Communist publications and some reports and letters in national dailies and weeklies gave a different picture of the events in Kerala. Huge CPI meetings were organised in all taluks, and in the towns many demonstrations rivalled and even outnumbered those of the liberation struggle. This happened for example on the second anniversary of the ministry, on 5th April, when the opposition parties were unable to mobilise the people in the Anti-Andhra Rice Deal protest, and in the second week of May at the Annual Conference of the Kerala State Communist Party at Trivandrum, which ended with one of the biggest processions and meetings ever seen in the state capital.⁵

However, pro-Congress and communal newspapers exaggerated the extent of support gained by the anti-Communist demonstrations, and played down the people's support to the Government. A glaring example of this tendency was the ~~news~~ coverage given to the demonstrations organised during the visit of Jawaharlal Nehru to the state at the end of June 1959. While the massive

pro-government demonstrations on the second day passed almost unnoticed, the anti-government demonstration on the previous day had been given full publicity.⁶ When Nehru arrived, the poor catholic fisherfolk in the coastal belt near the airport, who were at that time passing through the lean months of the monsoon, without fish, with soaring rise of the price of food and without earnings, were lining up along the road, demanding the dismissal of the government. They were mostly ignorant of the content of the placards they were carrying, but were, however, portrayed as the defenders of democracy. A correspondent of a reliable weekly reported: "What is happening here in Kerala is almost unbelievable. One reads the newspapers and gets the impression that the whole place is aflame. But here in Trichur - and this is supposed to be one of the Centres of the mass upsurge - there is hardly anything happening".⁷

The 'mass upsurge' had, moreover, two aspects. With ~~on~~ the one hand, 'mass demonstrations' composed of the catholics and the Nairs under the leadership of Mannath Padmanabhan. His meetings were like traditional temple festivals, organised with the great pomp and splendour. His processions were arranged like a deity marching into the battlefield in a chariot, installed on a peacock throne, with ceremonial umbrella overhead, a victory horse and elephants and other paraphernalia. The volunteers marched in military style with swords unsheathed in their hands marching on both sides of Mannam. This showed how the feudal-reactionary ideology of the movement was perfectly symbolised by the medieval trappings

adopted.

On the other hand, the organisation of pickets in front of schools, buses, offices and public buildings could be sustained without massive backing of the population. In this connection, one outstanding fact of the whole agitation was the lenient attitude of the CPI government. A political observer had remarked, "It will be too much to expect the Communists to remain calm when these exponents of Gandhism and non-violence make all sorts of unscrupulous alliances with Catholic reaction and the Moslim League..."⁸ But what actually happened was that the government and the party were all too zealous in the application of the basic 'democratic' principles. They extended democracy to the extent that all restrictions and bans on public meetings and demonstrations, which were generally imposed by Congress governments in other states, were withdrawn. For instance, throughout the 'direct action', the Ministry refused to make use of the Preventive Detention Act, and similarly shadowing of political workers of all parties and taking down of their political speeches were forbidden.⁹ A direct consequence of this policy was that the picketers who were rounded up by the police would be released the same evening, and could be found picketing again the next day. Hence, the figure of the total number of arrests, as was given by the Vimochana Samara Samithi, 149341, includes scores of people who had been arrested several times.

The other outstanding fact in connection with ^{/the pickets was} the organisation itself. Not so huge masses were needed for this pur-

pose, since, as was often done, it sufficed to have for instance twenty batches of six people, who succeeded each other in obstructing the entrance to the collectorate after the previous group had been removed by the police, to create during the larger part of the day an atmosphere of mass mobilisation. Moreover, Kerala not only has a huge unemployed population, which was still very often under the clutches of the anti-communist, feudalist-reactionary and intoxicating ideology of the religious leaders, but in the lean months of June till August, employment and food even dropped to an all-year minimum. With money, many of these people could be put on active guard against the 'ferocious communist monster.' One of the main leaders heading the catholic agitation later agreed that a copious flow of money had been received from vested interests in Kerala and also generously from abroad, and was used for lodging and payment of the volunteers.¹⁰

Thus, a situation was created which made it "appear" to Nehru "that a very considerable upsurge among large masses of people is taking place in Kerala against the Government there. I cannot measure the extent of it, but there is no doubt that it is on a big scale".¹¹ However, an important aspect of the liberation struggle was that nothing was done by the Central Government and the Congress leaders to moderate the agitation. Their ambiguous attitude and often open support for the mass upsurge added a sustaining impetus to that "mass upsurge". They generally took the charges against the ministry for ^{the} time.

In his statement at Coimbatore on 6 June, 1959, Jawaharlal Nehru warned against the possibilities of a violent conflict in the state. He attributed this to the people's general distrust of the Government, caused by activities of the party in power, which were not in keeping with the spirit of the Indian democratic constitution. Innumerable charges were made by other local and national leaders in this respect, but in the final analysis most of them belonged more to the realm of prejudice than of fact, as we have shown in the second part of this dissertation. Allegations against a Communist party in office were easy to make and they got a receptive audience since that party throughout its history had been stereotyped as a symbol of these allegations. The assertions went so far as to depict the Communist government as "a totalitarian island in a sea of democratic India",¹² and it thus made no sense to argue whether the CPI had acted against the Constitution, for Communists were only guided by the Communist ideology. And, therefore, it was considered to be constitutional to subvert the government machinery.

AICC member and ex-chief minister of Kerala, Pamampilly Govinda Menon thus gave this warning to the government employees: "But if the officials carry out the orders of this Government of the Communists who were vagabonds till yesterday and would be vagabonds again from tomorrow—they will be held responsible, and will be tried accordingly. Our liberation struggle is also meant to liberate you. If you open fire listening to the orders

of the Communists, we will take revenge upon you; there are men who are powerful enough to make you account for this... Congress is ruling India. The Prime Minister and the Central Government are living in this country. The IAS and IPS personnel should know one thing: if you do rotten things on the orders of the Communists you will have to answer for all that".¹³

We shall take up for a closer study two assertions - the spread of violence and the existence of cell courts - but first should refer to an assessment by an author who is a strong advocate of formal democracy and freedom. It would have been possible to prove, writes Manfred Turlach, that the mere tenure of office compelled the CPI to adopt a more constitutional behaviour, and as happened, they were open to critique and correction: the communists "in many cases agreed to the constitution of committees of enquiry, brought under control arbitrary actions of their own party organisations, had the agrarian reforms discussed by an unusually broad public, corrected the Education Bill conform to the propositions by the President and behaved otherwise in a manner which showed their eagerness to correct themselves and keep in spirit with the Constitution".¹⁴

There could therefore be no talk of the salvation of democracy from the totalitarian dictatorial communism, but rather from the communalist and casteist forces, controlled by the naked motives of the vested interests. It is also remarkable that, though a whole movement was launched against the unconstitutional practices of the government, not one single complaint about the violation of fundamental rights was sent to the High Court.

The Educational Bill sent to the Supreme Court was found constitutional.

Violence was clearly on the increase. The opposition brought this in direct relation with the release of political prisoners and the policy of the neutralisation of the police forces. The following figures were used in order to prove that the law and order situation had broken down.

Table III.1.
Table A.
Crime Statistics.

Nature of Crimes	Average 1953-1956	Average 1957-1958	Increase
Murder	179	264	47%
Theft, (House)	1360	1924	41%
Dacoity	19	21	11%
Robbery	79	91	15%

Source : Jitendra Singh, p. 60; K. Padmanabha Pillai, p.159.

The story was spread that this was a deliberate policy of the Communists, and that "even with the announcement of the election results a perceptible change came over the general attitude of the Communists. In the majority they had obtained in the elections and the power they were to achieve soon, they saw the freedom from the checks and controls they had experienced so long". And the resulting state of insecurity was said to be exploited by two groups, "the Communists and the habitual anti-social elements. But it did not take long for this distinc-

tion to disappear. The second has merged into the first".¹⁵

The government countered the repeatedly used statistics of table III.1.A with convincing counter-statistics. The total of cognisable crimes had been in a constant upswing, with, for instance an increase of 32% in 1954 and 56% from 1954 till '56, compared to a mere 7% in 1957.

Table III.1.B.
Total Cognisable Crimes in Kerala

1950	..	7438
1953	..	10215
1954	..	13514
1955	..	19551
1956	..	21063
1957	..	22624

Source: Kerala Government's Reply to KPCC Memorandum, p.33.

The Government also compared figures from the statistics of crime published by the Home Ministry in New Delhi, and related to the volume of crimes in the major categories, and came to the conclusion that for the total volume of crimes, Kerala had with the exception of Jammu & Kashmir the lowest All-India figure in 1957. The total number of more than twenty thousand cases actually also included almost 25% prohibition cases. The comparison with the other Southern states is given below:

Table III.1.C.
Volume of Crime 1957 (1 per 100000 of
population).

Category	Madras	Mysore	Andhra	Kerala
Murder	2.5	3.3	3.1	1.9
Dacoity	0.3	0.6	0.4	0.2
Robbery	0.9	1.3	0.7	0.8
House breaking	23.7	24.5	22.9	14.3
Theft	70.6	45.6	44.0	19.2
Rioting	6.8	3.7	6.5	6.4

Source : Kerala Government's Reply to KPCC Memorandum, p.34.

That the story of increasing lawlessness nevertheless could be spread is also partially due to the psychological state of mind of middle and upper classes, who, after all, created public opinion. Communism is inseparably linked up with the proletarian class, and this class, in its turn, is linked up with 'uncivilised behaviour'. The political correspondent of the Hindu gave in his report a typical example of this representation of facts. After remarking that the new members in the party and the sympathisers were not easily amenable to strict discipline, he continued: "The bulk of these people are regarded as having been drawn from a class with very little at stake and much less faith in dignified behaviour, decent language or drawing room courtesies", and called it "unknown, uncultured and uneducated people suddenly shooting up to positions of power".¹⁶

This observation, actually, had also a considerable political importance because it pointed to the arrival of a new class in the political arena. A New class was replacing an old class from the position of power and it was only normal to expect instances of violence. In fact, a scrutiny of the innumerable incidents reported by the forces behind the liberation struggle reveals that the major part of the incidents related to the extension of the political power to the socio-economic reality. Everywhere, there was abundant material for conflict, especially since the government from above had initiated some new labour and land legislation. The anti-communist propaganda described these incidents as groups of communist workers, fully armed with lathis, daggers and knives attacking innocent people, or as Communist goondas at night waiting near a roadside for innocent and defenceless political workers of the opposition to pass by. The attackers were always reported to be Communists, Communist sympathisers or alleged Communists, and many villages under their control were said to be unsafe for life and property. People had become afraid to move about "even for their personnel matters", and this "because (of) the preys of Communist spying and assaults during the past few days. The situation in this place had become very grave. It was reported that the Communist party issued passes to passers - by ~~the~~ in these parts. The passes contained the words 'Release them'..."¹⁷ The Chief of the Central Bureau for Investigation in New Delhi in his memoirs observed that, "No non-Communist was

safe in the State and hundreds of innocent men suffered brutal beatings for the only offence that they were not communists". And in the view of the CBI, "It was difficult for the party to restrain its cadres, who had by then tasted blood, and so the spate of violence continued."¹⁸

Slandering reports obscured that in most cases the incidents were the direct consequence of the unwillingness of the landowners and employers to implement the notifications of the new government. Illegal eviction of tenants met with instances of violence, and this violence increased with the number of people affected, as was clearly the case with the toddy-tappers and the agricultural labourers who wanted to have the minimum wages implemented.

Inter-trade union disputes also led to violence and murder, but the relevant question was whether the juridicial machinery of the government worked against the Communists also, if they committed offences. From the available information, it appears that it did.¹⁹

Closely related to the charge of violence was that of the existence of cell courts. In August, 1957 it was for the first time brought to the notice of the government, by R. Thanu Pillai, that "communist cells are appropriating to themselves the duties of the courts, the judiciary, the police, the magistracy and so on."²⁰

In total, thirteen cases were mentioned and taken as sufficient evidence that a network of cell courts operated as

a state within the state, whose judgments in all domains were binding, and who had the decree enforced with the help of the Communist militia.²¹ The government had a special investigation officer sent throughout the state. The officer came to the conclusion that the few cases which could be ascertained had existed during the first months of the government. About five of the thirteen cases, no information could be gathered, and in five other cases, a settlement of petty disputes was brought about through the good offices of members of the CPI. In three more cases, formal communications were sent by the local party cell to the individuals complained against, but each time the matter was dropped since one of the parties did not agree to such a settlement.

The latter cases got widespread attention. Photostat copies were laid on the table of the Legislative Assembly and the Rajya Sabha, by R.T. Pillai and Shiva Rao respectively, and were reproduced in most local newspapers. The Government claimed that it took proper action against such unauthorised conduct which was brought to its notice, but maintained that mere attempts to settle village disputes and petty quarrels had been grossly magnified and caricatured as cell courts. Law Minister V.R. Krishna Iyer in his reply to P.T. Pillai said in the Assembly: "I think any man, or any party, or friend could intervene in a dispute and mediate between the parties and endeavour to bring peace. Such agencies should be welcomed in the main".²² The reported cases should therefore be seen

as an exercise of consensual jurisdiction, in which influential people in the village attempt to settle disputes out of court, voluntarily and without recourse to any legal process and with no legal sanction behind them.

It had been, indeed, one of the peculiar aspects of the village structure that the adhigaris, in addition to their primary duty of collecting revenue, a power given to them by the state, were also empowered to try minor civil criminal cases, a power given to them by the village community. He was still often called the yajamanam or lord and "called upon to settle disputes over property and cases of assault, malicious damage to crops, trespass, etc..."²³ This conclusion was reinforced by the study of Kathleen Gough, who described the particularities of villages, where the traditional dominant caste retains control of most of the village land and employs a range of subordinate castes. In these villages "castes who have similar interests in opposition to their landlord employers call a halt to disputes concerning ritual rank. They band together to increase their economic strength in the market situation and to escape the relics of judicial servitude".²⁴ In this way non-Brahman disputes were prevented from passing to Brahmanical jurisdiction, and Kathleen Gough remarked that in Kerala already in the early fifties the "multi-caste assembly's role combined labour unionism with judicial functions, this time as a cell within the communist Party".²⁵

The allegations, however, retained their currency and provided the platform on which the local opposition parties

and the national anti-communist leaders could unite in an anti-communist struggle. The ultimate objective of this struggle was removal of the government against which no positive alternative could be found. In fact, it appeared that it was "partly to make up for their disunity in concrete issues that they have raised this negative political demand. Even here, it is clear that they cannot give a positive slogan".²⁶

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Notes

1. Hindu 3.6.1959.
2. These points are summed up and refuted by H. Austin, Anatomy of the Keral Coup., pp. 7, 1959, p. 85 ff. The grievances are reprinted in : V.B. Sinha, The Red Rebel in India, 1968, pp. 111-112.
3. Such a close study is to be found in H. Austin, op.cit. pp. 89-122.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 94.
5. Economic Weekly 30.5.1959; New Age - Monthly, August, 1959; Link 17.5.1959. See also Government of Kerala, Public Opinion on the Direct Action in Kerala, 1959 (Press Reviews) For the mass upsurge in favour of the government complete with photographs of mass demonstrations, see the weekly editions of New Age, especially the clippings from newspaper articles, July-August 1959.
6. Also in the national newspapers, e.g. Times of India, and Hindu, 24.6.1959 and 25.6.1959.
7. Economic Weekly, 27.6.1959.
8. K.P. Karunakaran, Nehru, Kerala and the National Unity, in: Parliamentary Studies, Vol. 2, No. 4, p. 28.
9. ~~Noru~~ Noru Gupta, The Communist Government of Kerala and its Record, in: Marxism Today, September, 1959, pp. 278-84.
10. Father Vadakkan in interview with author; also in Link, 22.8.1972; H. Austin, p. 99.
11. Nehru on 6 June, 1959. Quoted by: Kerala Under Communism, p. 132; Hindu, 7.7.1959; K. Padmanabha Pillai, pp. 195-97.
12. Acharya J, B. Kripalani, Vigil 1.9.1959.
13. Quoted from Deepika, 15.6.1959, in: Opposition Preparations for violent overthrow, Government of Kerala, p. 19.
14. Turlach, p. 193.
15. K. Padmanabha Pillai, p. 159 and p. 156.
16. Hindu, 4.10.1958.
17. Indian Commission of Jurists: Report of the Kerala Enquiry Committee, 1960, p. 15.

18. B.N. Mullik, My Years with Nehru, 1948,-1964, 1972, p. 339.
19. Kerala Government Reply, pp. III-XIII.
20. Proceedings of the Kerala Legislative Assembly, 31.8.1957.
21. K. Padmahabha Pillai, p. 165, Indian Commission of Jurists, op. cit., p. 88; K.P.C.C. Memorandum, para 13, Kerala Government Reply, para 13.
22. V.R. Krishna Iyer on 31.8.1957, quoted in Kerala Government Reply, p. 30.
23. Eric J. Miller, Village Structures in North Kerala, in: India's Villages, West Bengal Government Press, 1955, p. 47
24. E. Kathleen Gough; Criteria in Caste Ranking in South India, in: Man in India, 1959, NR 2, p. 125.
25. E. Kathleen Gough, op. cit.
26. Opposition preparations for violent overthrow of the government, Government of Kerala, p. 1.

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III. 2. The Joining Up of Forces in the Direct Action:

III.2.1. Lining up of Political Parties with Communal Forces:

The NSS conference at Changanacherry on 9 March, 1959 called on the members of the Nair community to raise their voice against the measures adopted by the Communist government against their interests. This awakening of the Nairs was described one month later by their leader Mannath Padmanabhan at the Chirayinkil Nair Conference as follows: "The Nair who is lazy, the Nair who does not mind whatever happens, is now organising, We should congratulate the Communists who helped this awakening. Oh, dear Communist regime, you please stay on for some more months. Let the Nairs be roused even at this late hour.... Let Nair arise to awake this Namboodiri who ate fish and rice from the huts of Pokkan (name of a poor Ezheva,)"¹ At that time Mannam also warned that no one who come to take away excess land could be sent back alive, and continued: "The Nair is going to take over the administration from the Communists. Nair is the simple reply to these who ask who will rule after the Communists".² His main attack during meetings in these days was against the communal reservation, since, in his own words, the Nair was economically backward, could not get a job and therefore had to bring down the government that neglected the Nair and deliberately introduced bills to harm the Nair.

Mannam, who had supported the Communist Government, especially its education bill, now wrote an open letter to the Chief Minister, asking for the withdrawal of the Education Act:

"I make the demand in accordance with the wishes of other managements also. I want to inform you that, in case it is not possible for you to withdraw it, we will be resorting to direct action".³ By the end of April his idea about the aim of the direct action had already taken a different form: no action for some changes in the Education Act or in the Agricultural Relations Bill, but for the removal of the Communist Government.⁴ It would be better for "the Communist Ministers to quit voluntarily without giving room for unrest and bloodshed. I give you the warning that, if you try to stick on to the ministerial chairs, the consequences will be terrible. If the people wrest power from these Ministers and subject them to trial, their ears and noses will have to be chopped off or they will have to be whipped in public".⁵

By that time Mannan and the NSS had already formed a close combination with the Church. The Christian community in Kerala consisted of two specific identities, but both of them had their anti-communism in common. The first group belonged mainly to the Syrian Christians and the Jacobites, the rising groups in all fields of economic and administrative activities. This leading business community as well as leading farming community—dominating the rubber, tea and coffee plantations—was extremely alarmed by the actions and intentions of the communist government. The relatively higher proportion of possessions in the hands of these communities, the class position and the traditional links with the international, uncompromising

anti-communist Churches united them in "a position with similar social and economical interests. This combination would constitute from the first beginning and throughout the full period of the Communist Government the hard kernel of the anti-Communist resistance".⁶ The other group mainly consisted of the lower class Latin Catholics, economically and culturally backward and for whom religion was "nothing but the fantastic reflection in men's mind of those external forces which control their daily life, a reflection in which the terrestrial forces assume the form of supernatural forces."⁷ This terrestrial force now was rising communism. In the Catholic Church only the ~~clergy~~ and the small portion of educated and possessing laymen had similar interests as the Syrian Christians, and these could make their followers believe that evil communism was launching the attack on the good supernatural forces: "The devil can offer a good deal that is attractive, nevertheless the wages of his service is ultimately death, the death of the soul".⁸ Therefore, response to the call for the deliverance struggle as a sacred moral and religious duty gathered strength.

In March 1959, a Kerala Catholic Bishop's Conference at Ernakulam had charted out a programme to launch a struggle against the Government, and under the given circumstances called upon their people "to take all necessary actions uniting with other communities to change the harmful clauses of the Kerala Education Bill". (Deepika 20.3.1959) According to this programme, soon afterwards a convention was held of Christian and

Nair leaders who formed an Action Council with Mannath Padmanabhan, Fr. Mammanali, secretary of the private school manager's Association, and V.O. Abraham. The convention decided to organise volunteer corps to defend the schools. On 8 April, the Christian Education Action Committee took the decision not to reopen their schools after the summer recess if the Act was not amended before then. On April 26, Catholic Bishops in Kerala in a circular exhorted Catholics to continue the agitation against the Act and asked their followers to oppose the implementation of the Act by all constitutional means. Since the Education Act had been duly approved by ~~the~~ Supreme Court, the Indian President and the Kerala Legislative Assembly, the call by the Bishops could only be interpreted as a call for unconstitutional action. Actually, at that very moment, the organ of the Catholic Church, Deepika, gave an open call for breaking the law. Its editorial on 28 April stated : "The Communist Government in Kerala, when it deals with their opponents should remember that the Constitution, the Central Government and the law of the country are binding on them. The Communists have the responsibility of conducting the Government according to constitutional methods. But the people who are opposing them have no such obligation." (stress added) One day later the editorial said that to run the schools under the existing circumstances "would be a deed against religion, society and the country. We need not have any respect for a ^{LAW} ~~law~~ which is unjust".

Mannam, who during March and April had been touring around the state, rallying the support of the Nairs, convened a conference of Muslim, Nair and Christian leaders at Changanacherry from 1 to 3 May. The conference called for mass action to save the state from the Communist danger and declared that the proposed agitation would be aimed at ending the Communist rule itself and not merely at defeating the Education Act. This had become necessary since the Communist rule was "defying human values, destroying morality, denying the right of existence to non-Communists, plundering public money and engineering communal hatred".⁹

The Muslim leaders participated in this conference and agreed to the removal of the CPI from office, but later announced their decision not to take part in the school closure movement.¹⁰

Political leaders of the INC, PSP and Muslim League also were present at the Changanacherry meeting. One week earlier, on April 25 at Ernakulam, they had already decided to constitute a standing committee to formulate measures for a joint front in elections and to continue the agitation for democratic rights under the Communists rule. On May 5, during a night session of the members of the KPCC, the District Congress Committees and the Congress Parliamentary Party at Ernakulam, while in the same town the Catholic Bishops' Conference resolved not to reopen its schools, it was decided to get ready a comprehensive chargesheet[†] and stiffen the agitation with a view to oust

the Government from power on the basis of these charges. The INC president Indira Gandhi was then touring the state and reported back to the AICC that what she had heard and seen was quite enough to frighten one for the future, especially since the CPI was exploiting communal tendencies to serve their party ends.¹¹ Jawaharlal Nehru shared this opinion during a press conference later, on 14 May, at which he asserted that there was no move of any kind by the Congress Party in Kerala to seek an alliance with the PSP and that there was no joint front as such, though in view of the situation in the state, there might be a cooperation in specific matters. Referring to the school closure movement, Nehru said : "Though not taking part in the 'big movement' led by the leaders of the Christian community, Bishops, Nair community, etc., against parts of the Education Act, the party could not come in the way of individual Congressmen who might perhaps be managers of schools, acting in the manner they think best".¹² These individual Congressmen, K.M. Chandy, Kalathal Velayudhan Nair, Cheriyan Kappan and P.S. George, had moved two resolutions at the Changanacherry meeting in the beginning of the month, pledging support to the school closure agitation and calling upon the people to liberate Kerala from Communism.¹³ This was justified by a member of the AICC and former chief minister of Travancore-Cochin, Panampillai Govinda Menon, who saw in the Communists nothing but "spies of the International Communist Party working as fifth communists", and warned that, "The people here will certainly destroy this royal family of commu-

nists. We are eating rice. We have also knives in our hands. If you funk, if you surrender to them, they will build their tower of victory here".¹⁴

The individual Congressmen were deeply involved in the anti-communist movement, and were eagerly working for the green signal by the national party leaders to join the movement as an organisation. The approval, however, was not granted easily, but was not denied by either. It seemed that the Congress leadership was divided on this issue, but that, however, the Kerala State Congress leaders let no options to the moderate elements in the Congress High Command. Sankar, the new KPCC president, after his meeting with the central INC leadership on 25 May, stated : "The Board has not given any instructions that the Congress should not have any connection with the agitation. The Kerala Congress has not taken any decision on this issue. The Congress will have sympathy towards this agitation so far as it helps to create anti-government feelings among the people and thus facilitate to oust the Communists from power".¹⁵ Only one week later, at the AICC session at Ootacamund, the Kerala leaders got the approval from Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Morarji Desai and U.N. Dhebar to give a positive lead to the action. The KPCC president explained that his organisation had been "permitted to carry on peaceful agitation on perfectly non-violent lines to enable the people to give vent to their feelings and organise themselves against the onslaught by the Communist government and party".¹⁶

The next day the KPCC after a six hour debate took the decision to start the struggle for the removal of the Communist government from office, and the very same evening, Sankar had talks with the PSP leaders P.T. Pillai, R.K. Kunju and A. Sridharan who in their turn had discussions the next morning with the Muslim League leaders K.N. Seethi Saheb and Pocker Saheb. On 5 June, Sankar could announce that a non-violent movement would start on June 12, the day to be observed as "Deliverance Day". The stand of his party was explained as follows: "The Congress, under the normal circumstances would have followed the normal path of constitutional agitation, but, it cannot be a passive spectator to the developments in Kerala where a people groaning under misrule by a government which has been subverting democracy and the constitution are moving forward...".¹⁷ The programme of action did not contemplate immediate steps to paralyse the government. Sankar explained on 'Deliverance Day', two days after the Kerala Agricultural Relations Bill had been passed in its third reading, that they would give the communists ten days to quit, and that only afterwards they would paralyse the government. This paralysing of the state machinery developed in collaboration with the communal organisations, but formally this was never admitted. Even on the 'Deliverance Day', fixed three days before the school closure movement started, the Congress president Indira Gandhi observed that there was "no relationship between the Congress and the so-called communal organisation".¹⁸ This was also the view of

the Prime Minister at his Press conference of 10 June: the charge of unconstitutional means did not apply to the Congress because "it was not a party either to the unconstitutional or violent agitation or to any alliance with communal elements. It was true that the communist party's normal tradition was not that of democracy".¹⁹ Actually, officially the communal organisations themselves took no part in the deliverance struggle with the exception of the Muslim League, which, however, did not take part in the school closure movement. The NSS was not part of the struggle, and the "Bishops as such have nothing to do with the deliverance struggle".²⁰

Not taking part in either of the two movements, formally and factually, was the **SNDP**, representing the interests of the low-caste, mainly working class Ezhevas. The Ezhava convention at Quilon on 17 May demanded that the 'ill-advised agitation' under the auspices of the NSS and the Churches should be withdrawn and pledged to organise a state wide counter-agitation. Some of the leading Congress members as K.R. Narayanan and K.K. Viswanathan, who were also active members of the SNDP, had growing differences with the general KPCC line. A pro-Agrarian Relations Bill jatha near Alleppey on 14 June was attacked by armed liberation agitators, and the Ezhevas were even chased within the offices of the SNDP. After these, what he called atrocities, K.R. Narayanan, Congress MLA, crossed the political lines, and came out openly against the Congress-led Liberation Struggle. He justified his decision as follows: "I have received

complaints that with the starting of the present political agitation in certain places where the Ezhevas are in a minority, they have been subjected to harassment by influential communities. Whatever be the political views of the members of the Yogam, and however different it might be from my own views, I have a duty to safeguard the fundamental rights of the members of the SNDP Yogam".²¹

The Revolutionary Socialist Party, often proclaiming to be on the left of the CPI, also took part in the "joint struggle to defend the democratic rights of the people". Objectively, the party, with a very active working class basis, acted with the reactionary vested interests against a progressive, though not 'socialist' government. Subjectively, however, they explained their participation as a positive element that could divert the upsurge from these reactionary influences. The RSP felt that the masses had lost confidence in the Communist government and joined the movement, because the party realised the social danger behind the agitation and should try to divert the moving masses to progressive channels. Denying that they were allying with the Communist forces, the party also maintained that it had joined the struggle, together with non-Communist trade unions on specific working class demands".²² The militancy of this party was a welcome contribution to the fighting strength of the Liberation forces, and it was expected that 5000 volunteers of the RSP would start the final assault on the Secretariat in Trivandrum on 9 August. In the view of the

Liberation Action Committee, this assault would be the start of the 'Save India Struggle' for the banishment of communism from Kerala and India, analogical to Gandhi's 'Quit India struggle'.²³

III.2.2. The Violent Counter-Revolution:

It was repeatedly pledged by the Congress leaders in Kerala and stressed by the Congress High Command that the Liberation Struggle would and should evolve along strictly non-violent lines. Jawaharlal Nehru even informed the Rajya Sabha that these pledges had been the reason why he had agreed to Congress members, participating in small batches in the satyagrahas. Congress people had never moved around in crowds, he said, but, were operating in small groups, which helped preventing "the whole thing being completely uncontrolled and everybody behaving or misbehaving".²⁴

The Government of Kerala made an interesting collection of clippings of the major Malayalam newspapers at the occasion of Jawaharlal Nehru's visit to the state from 22 to 25 June. It appeared from this that a call to mutiny in the services, violent struggle against the communists and total sacrifice for the divine cause was given by the leaders of the Church, the NSS, the PSP as well as the Congress. A pamphlet published by the Vimocha Samaram on 17 June characterised the Government: "the ten men-rogues and one woman-rogue who have come to rule with the authority given to them by the people and the staff who prop them up turning this small Kerala into a blood-soaked

field..." This pointed out clearly what kind of people the liberators were made to fight. The language used was far from unusual, as is evident from the following quotations.²⁵

The PSP organ Kerala Janatha wrote in the editorial of 18 June: "The people conducting struggle should be peaceful, should not resort to violence... this is the sort of statement the Kerala Governor is issuing. We accuse the government ... as a government of dacoits and thugs..... The people will not listen to the advice of adherence to non-violence, when the hangmen of the Government come to be headed them, whoever might be that Adviser". The leader of the party, P.T. Pillai, was reported in the issue of 16 June as saying: "If this government is not dismissed, the people of Kerala will be forced to overthrow it through a Revolution, and it would be better if the Centre and the Prime Minister would realise this quickly". More violent in his abusing language and in his call for the preparation of the battle, was the NSS leader Mannath Padmanabhan, at meetings always welcomed by prominent Congress leaders: "I will be with you till my death. The duty of a soldier is to obey orders. The orders of the leaders should be obeyed without questioning... If need be you should boldly face firing when you are asked to do so..." (Malabar Mail, 22.5.1959) In another speech a few days later, the leader of the struggle told his followers: "All communists should be hated like lepers. In my opinion not a single communist can be admitted in any house..... There is no way other than dragging them by their

legs and hurling them on the ground". (Kerala Janatha, 30.5.'59)

Equally advocating the use of force and the organisation of volunteers in every locality were the Christian leaders. Already during the first months of the ministry these volunteers had been active as the so called Christophers, or in a later stage as the shanti sena, social scouts, and self-defense groups. At the end of December 1957, the first questions rose in the Assembly, but Law Minister V.R. Krishna Ayyar, apart from some vague allegations about them being trained in Church compounds and being sent to agitational centres as Kattampally, Mundakkayam and Mattakkarra had not yet any clear information about this organisation.²⁶ According to the main organiser, Father Vadakkan,²⁷ the social scouts were founded in 1951 in Trichur as an Anti-Communist, Anti-Capitalist and Anti-Communist Front. This front was, under the instigation of the Bishop of Palai, transformed into a militia organisation for Christians only, and active mainly in East Kottayam, Trichur and the central coastal area. Father Vadakkan revealed later that money flowed freely from planters, local and foreign collections and Churches abroad and was used to feed, lodge and pay the "Christophers", who were drawn from the poorest sections of the Christian community exclusively. Even in the heat of the Liberation Struggle they remained a force separate from the middle classes in the movement.²⁸

Though the organisation remained quantitatively weak throughout the first year²⁹ with only minor ramification around

Trichur, they constituted one of the backbones of the Vimochana Samaram. The passion of these volunteers was whipped up by the Church leaders in the name of the religion in danger. In a pastoral letter, issued jointly by 16 Catholic Bishops on May 7, the Church dignitaries said: "Let us try our best in this grave juncture to defend our precious faith, taking refuge in God the merciful. We will have to suffer difficulties, discomforts and torture. Let us be inspired by the words of Divine: Blessed are these who are tortured in the name of justice, for their's the Kingdom of God.... O God! Almighty ! Give everyone of us plenty of blessings to face this crisis with courage and self-sacrificing zeal".³⁰ According to reports in the opposition newspapers, committees were formed in all parishes inspired by this and similar calls. In circulars and pastoral letters they were given the task to recruit at least one young man from every family "to be sacrificed in the struggle", and also to organise first aid teams. The authoritative Catholic newspaper, Deepika, bore the palm with its slander and its incitements to the crusade against communism. For instance, on April 29, the daily warned: "We have to face arrests, repression and criminal cases. Dozens of Bishops, thousands of clergymen and lakhs of disciples may be thrown into prison. These who cannot face this with dignity and self-respect, hereafter cannot be called Christians. Get ready to sacrifice everything. Let us fight as those who have nothing to loose". In its editorial of 19 June, commenting on police firings, Deepika referred to a statement by the Chief

Minister Namboodiripad, "who killed 12 persons and wounded many for the sake of maintaining his terror regime. History teaches that if one person being alive becomes responsible for the death of many, that person has no right to live".

This open call for violence and physical mutilation was justified by the leaders of the struggle, since they were fighting not a democratic, but a communist government which only understood the language of violence and terror. This conclusion had already been drawn by the mouth-piece of the catholic church after the one anna boat-fare agitation in July, 1958. Deepika noticed that the Anti-Education Bill agitation had been a mere agitation, not impeding the day-to-day administration of the government and kept thoroughly constitutional and peaceful, and hence had not been successful. The students in their boat-fare agitation eschewed peaceful methods and flouted law with impunity and the government in the end bowed before them. "What lesson does this teach us? The Communists will not yield before agitation; they will submit only before a struggle sufficiently butressed... If the people want any of their rights or privileges to be conceded by the Communist Government, they will have to resort to the use of force in such a way as to impede the administration". (Deepika, 14.8.1958)

Some of these newspaper clippings have been reproduced because they were also brought under the notice of the Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, who in his earlier writings had drawn a straight forward picture of religion as a conservative,

reactionary force. "The spectacle of what is called religion or at any rate organised religion, in India, and elsewhere has filled me with horror and I have frequently condemned it and wished to make a clean sweep of it. Almost always it seems to stand for blind belief and reaction, dogma and bigotry, superstition and exploitation and the preservation of vested interests".³¹ Nehru now in 1959 as the Prime Minister of the country in which one state was governed by the Communist Party, which saw in him a progressive politician, and as the dominating member of the Indian National Congress Party, which in one state was lining itself up with forces of religion and reaction, had to take a decision in favour of one of the twocontending forces.

Nehru was very hesitant to do so. At a press conference on 10 June in New Delhi, two days before the Deliverance Day, the Prime Minister countenanced any move which included undemocratic processes, especially picketing as proposed by the Catholic and Nair leaders, since, he said one could not judge things minus means. But despite this rejection, Hindustant Standard had to conclude that "there is no room for any categorical assertion, at last Wednesday's press conference, that he did not approve of unconstitutional means to overthrow a legally constituted Government".³²

In the mean time the Congress itself was in the forefront of the violent struggle, though the violence in the state was explained as due to government measures. While the explicit authorisation to take part in unconstitutional methods was

never given, the Congress High Command only on 29 June authorised the Kerala Pradesh Congress to continue the agitation against the Communist government in a peaceful and constitutional manner, and, though it deplored the picketing of schools and buses, it implicitly recognised the admissibility of some forms of token picketing. For example, it did not mention its objection to the picketing of offices.³³ The main importance of this 1500-word resolution by the Congress Parliamentary Board was that the Congress should not withdraw from the agitation, which had taken a clearly violent turn. Four days earlier in Trivanduram, Nehru had, referring to "this kind of laying-down-on-the-road business", only been able to say: "It does not seem to me to be the right method of approach in the present circumstances. Some kind of symbolic thing is a different matter".³⁴ The Kerala Congress leaders were never, at least not publicly, criticised for their unconstitutional, violent methods, which they adopted in word and deed. They repeatedly explicitly called for undemocratic methods, means other than the ballot box, closure of all schools and paralysing the government machinery and in the words of KPCC president R. Sankar, all these programmes "are with the full support of the Congress High Command".³⁵ In practice the Congress leaders were part of an organised struggle which was bound to end up in violence. The two former MLA's and the former minister, K.M. Chandy, Cheriyan Kappan and Kalathil Velayudhan Nair, who were members of the eight-men action Committee under Mannam, called for the

organisation of picketing and stayagraha. This, as the Kerala Gandhian Kelappan pointed out, was not taking place as envisaged by Gandhi, "but picketing today was a demonstration of strength. If an agitation for the closure ~~of~~ opening of shhools was to be conducted, there would be use of force".³⁶ Similarly, when a notification under the Indian Arms Act had appeared in the Kerala Gazette Extraordinary, suspending the arms licenses by the government in Trichur, Ernakulam, Quilon and Kottayam, P.T. Chacko, consequent on the publication of that notification, introduced a motion in the Assembly, referring to the "grave situation that has arisen in the State".³⁷

Significant was also the way the struggle was conducted. While the emotions of large masses were whipped up, and while they were never asked to restrain from violence, the exact plan of action was kept secret. On the eve of the Deliverance Day, the INC, the PSP and the ML decided that the direct action should start immediately afterwards, after the state-wide hartal the next day, but preferred to keep the chalked-out plan secret. Huge masses were mobilised even to the point of a fanatic-religious, anti-communist war, and in this situation of high expectations and tension, no specific guidance was given. The KPCC's 37-point declaration, which was released the next day, Deliverance Day, at Ernakulam, merely called upon the people to take a pledge for a "peaceful and uncompromising struggle for liberation".³⁸ R. Sankar observed that "if violence broke out, it would be the result of deliberate planning by the Communists".³⁹

Violence broke out several times, and in a number of cases the police had to resort to firing, resulting in a total of 15 deaths. A closer analysis of one of these firings, at Ankamali, will illustrate the nature of the 'peaceful and uncompromising struggle', and of the 'deliberate violence' used by the communists. Ankamali, near Alwaye, had a peculiar communal composition with almost 95% of the population belonging to the Syrian Church. Though almost 70% of the households had no land or less than 50 cents of land, the agricultural differences were not pronounced since only two percent of the families owned more than five acres of land. Industrial activities were mainly limited to need mat weaving on pre-capitalist lines, characterised by the absence of cooperatives and by exploitation of the producers by the middlemen.⁴⁰ The firing which took place in this locality on the evening of July 13, when, according to a wireless message by the police - the telephone had been cut - the police station was being attacked by some thousand people. Opposition sources, however, claimed that the killings represented a pure form of massacre, when a few people held a peaceful meeting some 200 yards away from the police station in protest against the beating of a young Vimochana Volunteer by the police.⁴¹ Congress president Indira Gandhi accepted this version of the story, and quoted a telegram sent to her by R.Şankar: the people of Ankamali had been picketing the toddy-shops in the place, and hence the sale of toddy dropped sharply. She quoted that, "Smarting under this, the

Communists instigated the police for a drastic action. They opened fire on the peaceful jatha to strike terror and cow down people".⁴² The government agreed that the picketing of toddy-shops was related to the agitation, but gave a different explanation for it: the cooperative scheme in toddy-tapping "naturally aroused the ire and malice of big contractors who used to monopolise the business and whose source of unconscionable profit was taken away by the scheme".⁴³

The Congress version is in full contradiction with the situation as it had developed in Ankamali. Exactly one month before the firing, a leader in Deepika, referring to the machevellian polices of the communists, put the question: "Is it wrong in these circumstances if we think in favour of being prepared even for shedding blood? The Communists will not hesitate to do anything if they find that there is no preparation on this side. On the other hand, the Communists might give up their mischief if they find there is, on this side, readiness to meet that and even more. That is why we may say that volunteers should be raised in all places. In Ankamali alone 5000 persons have arrayed themselves. It is not possible for the Communists hereafter to try to inflict pain on Catholic institutions".⁴⁴

The same newspaper referred to the activities of the 5000 volunteers on June 2, when an incident had taken place following the picketing of toddy shops in a non-prohibition area. We quote the relevant excerpts from the editorial. "Last Friday

when most menfolk had been away at work in the fields and other places, a posse of MSP and local police entered the houses at Pulliayanam.... The Church bells began to toll and people collected like flood waters when the police party left the place taking with them those whom they could lay hands on.... That was part of their tactics to intimidate the people generally and to crush the volunteer organisation. But Ankamali people proved that such measures really unify and enthuse them. A big crowd armed with spades, knives, pick-axe and other implements surrounded the police station and consequently there were no further beating". The editorial concluded that this incident showed that a big crowd can arrest police high-handedness "even without their resorting to violence", but added that there were still many unscrupulous police officers: "It is when some of these lathi-famous police officers are seen walking about the street, sick and coughing, that we understand, on enquiry, that the people have put an end to their blows".⁴⁵

As it happened, on the night that the Ankamali firing took place, Deepika wrote another editorial, instigating attacks on the police: "There were no untoward incidents fortunately because it was a day of silent procession and hartal and the people had decided not to be provoked whatever happened. If it were any other occasion, that would have ignited the conflagration capable of destroying everything. If the MSP is here for unlawful and oppressive measures, we hereby inform the Government that the people will wipe them and the machinery of oppression out of the

peace".⁴⁶ That very same evening in Ankamali untoward incidents were taking place and ignited the conflagration, but the National Congress leaders who visited the spot, or got first hand information from there, U.N. Dhebar, Indira Gandhi and Sadiq Ali reported that the police firing seemed to be unprovoked and that the agitation remained peaceful. The Chief Minister, EMS Namboodiripad, on the other hand submitted to the Prime Minister that the mobs who were fired at consisted of "fanatic christians." He said: "The charge of the KPCC President that Communist government want to isolate Christians and kill them will only help to further instigate the fanatics to violence. It is clear, from a violent mob one cannot be picked and shot. The casualty list in the Ankamali, Pulluvila and Kochuveli firings show that the Christian flock under the Church there was put into action. The Sunday preaching was that to kill a Communist would take the killer to heaven and if he was a minister, canonization was certain!"⁴⁷

The violent incidents made it clear that the Vimochana Samara Samiti could count on a mass following. These masses were brought into the struggle mainly by two communal groups, the Church and the Nair community, and were politically laid by communal leaders as Father Vadakkan and Mannath Padmenabhan, and by the political parties from the right to the left, the Muslim League, the Praja Socialist Party, the Indian National Congress and the Revolutionary socialist Party. The real forces behind it were explained by the CPI as follow: "For the first

time since 1952, a party with an absolute majority in the Legislature has been voted into office. It is true that the majority is slender, but, nevertheless, it is a majority. The party happens to be one which is disciplined enough to carry on with even such a slender majority. This has naturally upset the calculations of those people who have been carrying on with all sorts of group and factional intrigues and for them, therefore, political and ministerial instability had become a vested interest. Those who considered themselves and were considered by others, as powerful enough to make and unmake ministries did, for the first time ... become powerless....

While the 50 to 60 percent of the electorate who voted against the Congress in most other states knew very well that they cannot do anything against the combined might of the Central and State Governments, a feeling was injected into the minds of the same percentage of the electorate in this State who had a feeling (in) the back of their minds, that, on certain occasions and in certain circumstances, they can rely on the Central Government to intervene on their behalf and against the State Government".⁴⁸

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Notes

1. Hindu, 15.3.1959, Desabandhu, 17.4.1959 (quoted in: Government of Kerala, Opposition preparations for violent overthrow, p. 29). Most quotations from Malayalam Newspapers in this chapter are directly taken from Government of Kerala publications.
2. Desabandhu, 14.4.1959.
3. Malayalee, 29.3.1959.
4. Malayalee, 4.5.1959, See ~~note~~, 31, Chapter II.2.
5. Malayalee, 28.4.1959.
6. Turlach, p. 163.
7. F. Engels: Anti-Duehring, 1969, p. 374.
8. Always Consultation 1959, p. 41.
9. Quoted by Kerala Under Communism, p. 128, which gives also a chronological account of the events. The same in Indian Commission of Jurists, op.cit., p. 1ff.
10. Hindu, 20.5.1959, 7.5.1959 & 11.5.1959.
11. Hindu, 11.5.1959.
12. Hindu, 15.5.1959.
13. H. Austin, Anatomy of the Kerala Coup, op. cit., p. 36.
14. Speech on 5 May at Trivandrum, quoted from Hindu, 8.5.'59 and Deepika 7.5.1959.
15. Mathrubhoomi, 24.5.1959.
16. Hindu 3.6.1959, also 2.6.1959. See also Indian Affairs Record, Vol. 5, p. 160 ff. for the reports on the misunderstanding in the interpretation of this approval.
17. Hindu, 6.6.1959.
18. Hindu, 14.6.1959.
19. Times of India, 11.6.1959, Kerala Under Communism, p. 133. Times of India, 11.6.1959, K. Padmanabhan Nair, p. 133; Opposition preparations, op. cit., pp. 47-48, illustrates how Nehru's statements were distorted by the opposition newspapers, while they were fully reprinted by the three Communist newspapers.

20. See, Letter written by Auxiliary Bishop of Trivandrum, 17.6.1959 (Supplement to Social Action, July, 1959). For the NSS, this was confirmed by Mannam's private secretary, P. Sudasivan Pillai in an interview with the author.
21. Quoted in: Upsurge or Hooliganism, Government of Kerala, p. 10.
22. The Call, June, July, September, 1959. For the joint T.U. Convention at Mattachery, see the Indian Worker, 13 July 1959.
23. See reports from Indian Express, 23-26 July, in: H. Austin p. 52ff.
24. Rajya Sabha Debates, 25 August, 1959, (p. 1766).
25. The quotations are selected from: Opposition Preparations for Violent Overthrow of the Government. Facts placed before the Prime Minister, Government of Kerala, July, 1959. See also Nehru's observations in this respect, Hindu, 26.6.1959.
26. Proceedings of the Kerala Legislative Assembly, 21.12.1957.
27. Father Vadakkan in an interview with the author. He realised his mistake one year after the Liberation Struggle and lined up with the CPI, ~~Ma~~ letter with the CPI (M) against the vested interests. Also, H.D. Malaviya, p. 56 ff; Victor M.Fic., Kerala, Yenan of India, pp. 101-103.
28. This assertion that no one of them did ever or would ever have joined the low-class Christophers was reiterated by several middle class anti-Communist agitators (Interviews in August, 1973).
29. The Law Ministry counted more than 15000 of them in Dec. 1957. Father Vadakkan listed only 6000 in August 1958 (Fic, Kerala, p. 101). Fic counted more than 1 lakh in May 1959 (Fic, Kerala, p. 102). See also detailed districtwise police report in Annexure VIII to: Kerala Government Reply.
30. Quote from Op. cit., 25, p. 10.
31. Jawaharlal Nehru, An Autobiography, 1962, p. 374. See also L.R. Polonskaya and A.D. Litman, The Influence of Religion on the social thought of the people of the East, in: Asia in Soviet Studies, Moscow 1969, pp. 223-44.
32. Hindustan Standard, Calcutta, 14.6.1959 (in: Public opinion on the Direct Action in Kerala, 1959, p. 1067).

33. Hindu, 30.6.1959.
34. Hindu, 26.6.1959.
35. Kerala Janatha, 18.6.1959. Other speeches by P.S.George, C.M. Stephen, K.M. Chandy, K. Velayudhan Nair and others as reported by Janatha, Malayala Monarama, Deepika and Kerala Kaumudi can be found in Opposition preparations, op. cit.
36. Hindu, 13.6.1959.
37. Hindu, 7.6.1959.
38. K. Padmanabhan Nair, pp. 133-34.
39. Hindu, 12.6.1959.
40. Census 1961 Kerala, Part VI C, Village Survey Monographs, pp. 11, 44 and 52.
41. Panampilli Govinda Menon gives this report in his letter to the Governor of Kerala, June 16, in which he refutes the Governor for accepting the police statement, and hence becoming spokesman of a political party. See also, K. Padmanabhan Nair, p. 136; New Age Weekly, 14.6.1959.
42. Hindu, 16.6.1959.
43. Government of Kerala, Upsurge or Hooliganism, p. 12.
44. Deepika, 12.6.1959.
45. Deepika, 2.6.1959.
46. Deepika, 14.6.1959.
47. Government of Kerala, Opposition Preparation for Violent Overthrow of Government, Trivandrum 1959, p. 16.
48. Government of Kerala, Opposition Preparations..., op. cit., p. 3.

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III.3. Imposition of President's Rule.

According to the version given by the Central Bureau of Investigation, "The first person to see the red signal, which was looming large in Kerala, was the then Congress President, Indira Gandhi, and at the Coimbatore AICC Session, she made a strong plea for central action against Kerala".¹

Her father, Jawaharlal Nehru, however, "viewing the situation without loosing sight of the picture of India as a whole",² preferred a procedure that was less offensive to the CPI and that at the same time satisfied his own partymen. Therefore, when he visited Trivandrum from 22 to 25 June 1959, he made three suggestions: a discussion of all involved in the educational system, a round table conference on the chargesheet and an enquiry into the recent police firings. Chief Minister Namboodiripad did not agree to an enquiry into the police firings as long as the direct action was going on, but, concerning the two other suggestions, he was prepared to "do something to assuage the feelings of distrust and dissatisfaction which he (Nehru) felt is prevailing here".³ He accepted the suggestion to have a discussion on the Education Act with all involved groups, and in the meantime suspend the most controversial clause 11. If the discussion would not produce an agreement on the controversial issues, the government would submit the problem to the Prime Minister and also suspend these provisions temporarily in order to create a proper atmosphere. The second suggestion about a round table conference on the chargesheet was accepted by EMS, and invitations were sent to the opposition parties and caste organisations.

However, the efforts of the Chief Minister to implement the suggestions of Nehru did not elicit any positive response from the opposition. Mannath Padmanabhan, replying to the invitation to participate in the round table conference, observed: "The pretence of innocence the Chief Minister has assumed... and the dexterous offer of apparently accepting the Prime Minister's suggestions would not surprise anybody who knows the history of the Communist dealings in Russia and Central European states".⁴ The opposition party leaders and the bishops took a similar stand, and the invitation ~~was~~ turned down. The only solution acceptable to them was the dismissal of the ministry and the holding of new elections. The possibility of a compromise in the state thus came to an end.

The Congress High Command in New Delhi during its three-day session immediately after Nehru's visit to Kerala reached the same conclusion. In its resolution on 29 June, it called for elections and the suspension of the entire Education Act as the only way out, since "such a course of action would direct popular energy into proper democratic channels".⁵ The CPI leaders could foresee the imminence of Central intervention. The Central Executive Committee of the party in its meeting on 27 June, and reaffirmed by the National Council on 14 July, both meeting in Trivandrum, concluded that the call for fresh elections "is nothing but giving a democratic garb to a discriminatory demand which the opposition parties sought

to enforce through illegal means".⁶ Bhupesh Gupta later told the Rajya Sabha : "I tell you, we were not functioning in the Kerala Government as the tenant-at-will of the Congress High Command that we must resign wherever they liked us to do that. We do not do so. We communists have known how to die on our feet rather than to live on our knees".⁷ Anyway, it was indicated that at one stage, after his meeting with Nehru at Simla on 12 July, Namboodiripad was willing to consider the holding of mid-term elections under his care-taker government, which, however, in turn, was fully rejected by Padmanabhan and P.T. Pillai in their interview with the President one week later.⁸ Also, the Congress leadership seemed to be divided. Though the mid-term election was recommended by the Congress Parliamentary Board, there were said to be viewpoints which did not consider a fresh poll an effective remedy for Kerala. According to Acharya J.B. Kripalani, writing on the day of the central intervention, they included powerful voices as U.N. Dhebar and probably that of Pandit Pant. The remedy, according to them, would be to declare the communist party illegal and debar them from participation in the elections, after an amendment of the Constitution.⁹ After the elections, U.N. Dhebar explained: "The pathetic assumption that Communist approach of class conflict can be contained is, let me repeat with all the force at my command, unwarranted. That does not mean I am pleading for a ban on the party. I am pleading only for the realisation of the emergency".¹⁰

Already the call for fresh elections was explained as Central Intervention. Ajoy Ghosh said: "It is the Congress High Command, the Central Leadership, who must be recognised as the chief culprit. As a matter of fact, the Parliamentary Boards' resolution is itself a form of central intervention, is itself a direct and biased intrusion into the struggle that goes on there...."¹¹ The general secretary of the CPI did not pin much hope on the shades of differences and phrases within the Congress since, in his opinion, their united aim was to oust the Namboodiripad government. Namboodiripad also suggested the same: "There is so much talk of Central Intervention; it goes on and on. Why does not the Congress High Command intervene, at least, in the affairs of the Kerala Congress".¹²

While the collusion of the anti-Communist front and the Central state power was developing, the Kerala government tried to tone down the agitation without taking recourse to provocative measures. The only move which could be explained as provocative was the transference of the Home Portfolio from the non-CPI minister Krishna Iyer to the seniormost CPI minister Achutha Menon, regarded by the opposition as a tough communist. Generally, however the CPI refrained from a major counter-offensive, and the relative silence of this front enabled intelligence services to provide the Home Minister and the Prime Minister with evidence that Namboodiripad and his government became increasingly aware that, with the situation becoming intolerable, Central intervention alone could save their face,

an argument which was used by the Prime Minister in his justification of President's Rule.¹³

The INC gave the final push to Central intervention on 25 July, when the party president Indira Gandhi met the President of India. She emphasised that action was long overdue, and told that she had placed enough material before the Government in New Delhi to enable it to take firm and immediate action. Addressing a public meeting in New Delhi the same day, she said: "The Constitution is for the people and not the people for the Constitution. And if the constitution stands in the way of meeting the peoples grievances in Kerala, it should be changed".¹⁴

On the same day, in Trivandrum, during the visit of the general secretary of the INC, Sucheta Kripalani, it was decided that on August 9, the Secretariat in Trivandrum would be assaulted and the government ousted from it. This threat was possibly going to result in a 'bloodbath' and gave the Home Ministry sufficient reason to press for Central intervention.

Actually the preparations for Central intervention had already started, around 20 July. The CBI, together with the Law Minister A.K. Sen, were asked by the Home Minister, Pandit Pant, to prepare a chargesheet against the Kerala government. On 23 July, Pant had the chargesheet of thirty-six pages sent to the Governor of Kerala, "so that he could have the facts before him and then come to his own decision whether Central action was necessary. The Governor was dependent on the Kerala Police and the Ministers to give him the facts and it was clear

that most of the facts were being withheld from him".¹⁵ However, the Governor did not reply for three days, and on July 26, the Home Minister asked the Home Secretary, B.N. Jha, who was not in favour of intervention, to ring up the Governor on the secraphone in the presence of the CBI-Chief, B.N. Mullick, who was a staunch advocate of intervention. The latter remarked that "as Jha was opposed to Central take-over Pandit Pant wanted that the message should be sent in my presence, so that Jha should not sound indecisive... That evening Pandit Pant asked me whether I was present during Jha's talks with the Governor and whether the Governor understood the trend properly, and I replied in the affirmative".¹⁶ (emphasis added) That same evening the Prime Minister, much to the satisfaction of B.N. Jha, was still opposed to the 'action-wallahs'. B.N. Mullick seemed to have convinced Nehru the next day with his secret information that Namboodiripad himself wanted the take-over.

What happened next looked much like a thriller. Mullick was asked on the 29th morning (sic) by the Home Minister to verify whether the Governor was sending the report, and, after checking, it was found that the report was to be despatched by the afternoon's air service, via Madras, and was expected to arrive in New Delhi the next morning only. But Pandit Pant wanted the report verbatim the same night and the CBI, in Madras was asked to get the report from the plane, communicate the contents by telephone to New Delhi and despatch it by the

same plane. The dictation of the report over the telephone lasted one hour, and the result was a report of about thirty pages recommending the supersession of the Kerala Government. The decision was taken the same evening and when the report arrived the next morning orders were issued immediately, with effect from the 31st of July.¹⁷

There were some unhealthy features to this whole procedure. The first one concerned the report by the Governor itself. The CPI maintained that the whole thing was a 'command performance', a sort of excuse or after-thought, which came after the decision to intervene had been taken. The report itself was never released, and only after three weeks a "summary" of some 4000 words "prepared by the Governor himself" and received by the Centre on August 15 was submitted to Parliament.¹⁸ However, the wording of the summary and the charges made showed an exact similarity with the KPCC memorandum. After a whole range of allegations, which had been disproved or acted upon by the Communist Government, in the final part of the summary it was written that: "It may be true that such isolated instances of irregularities and partialities can also be found in other states. But as pointed out by Shri Acharya Kripalani, instances of commission and omission (in those states) are only the results of individual caprice, prejudice or even misconduct.... It cannot, therefore, be argued that Central Intervention would be unconstitutional whatever may be the intensity of the opposition of the people to the Government, and whatever the magni-

tude of such opposition".¹⁹

This was the only report made available, and though the Communist opposition in Parliament asked for it, the earlier reports by the Governor were not made public, and not even referred to. The previous reports could provide both the Governor and the President with a valuable alibi, since otherwise one has to approve of one of the points C.P. Bhambhri makes in his analysis of the role of the Governor in this particular case: "What was the Governor doing when the Communist ministry was committing these actions? Was he a helpless spectator of the so called 'mal-administration' for over a period of two years? Was he waiting for the people and the parties to level these charges to put his seal of approval on these charges later on. The conclusion is that if these allegations were true, the Governor was a party to it".²⁰

In the third place, the constitutionality of the imposition of President's Rule was questionable. No doubt, the imposition itself was a constitutional act, since the President is entitled to do so by the Constitution, even if he is "otherwise satisfied", thus not only upon receiving the report by the Governor. The latter need not, moreover, ask the advice of his cabinet, since one of his tasks is to keep the President informed about the working of the constitutional machinery in the state, and thus, he can act in his discretion and not merely as a "rubber stamp of his cabinet or a post office between his cabinet and the President".²¹ He was free to send

his reports and advise Central intervention.

Also the President of India acted constitutionally complying with that advice, but it was pointed out that one weakness of article 356 of the Constitution is that it allows the President of India to supersede the government of the state when he feels satisfied that a situation has arisen in which the government of a state can't continue working in conformity with the provisions of the Constitution. It was remarked that the President, whose proclamation was not questionable or scrutinisable by the Supreme Court, could decide to be satisfied when he felt he was satisfied. It was further debatable whether his satisfaction should enable him to make use of article 356, when the major reason for the imposition of Central rule seemed to be the agitation in the state which was going to paralyse the governmental machinery. In doing so, he sided "in favour of forces that are causing the internal trouble".²²

The public order had been disturbed several times in Kerala, and it was feared that the threat by the opposition parties to storm the State Secretariat in Trivandrum on 9 August could result in a total breakdown of administration, law and order. In that light Central intervention was justifiable, though it was not appreciated by all observers that Nehru opted to follow the same course as for example King Emmanuel when Mussolini in 1922 threatened to march to Rome.²³ Whatever the comparison, Central intervention could have taken other forms.

The President could have applied article 355 and given political and moral support to the state, as EMS had asked,²⁴ started negotiations on the sending of Central Police or Army, or a disciplinary action against the Kerala Congress Leaders itself. That this did not happen revealed the character of the Indian state as a whole and the nature of the dominating class interests in the INC. EMS Namboodiripad explained the sustained character and the final success of the Liberation Struggle, as possible "not because the 'liberators' had mass support behind them. They could do this because they had full confidence that the Central Government, led by their own all-India leaders, would supplement their 'liberation struggle' with intervention from above".²⁵ Thus, the prescription for this struggle was simple: "create enough trouble for the State to force them (to) vacate their office; should they refuse to oblige, do your worst-burning, looting, hartals, anything - so that the Centre could declare that the State Government was unable to control the situation".²⁶

Further, as M.N. Govindan Nair told the Minister of State for Home Affairs, B.N. Datta: "before dismissing the Government on the basis of the chargesheet they should have had the courtesy of asking for an explanation from the government before its dismissal". He also quoted the Chief Minister Namboodiripad's complaint about not even having received the KPCC memorandum: "It is thus without giving an opportunity to refute the charges against us that the governor thought it

fit to give his verdict that the charges made against us are substantially true".²⁷

Finally, the important decision was taken three days before the Parliament was scheduled to meet, with, among others, thirteen non-official resolutions pertaining to different aspects of the situation in Kerala, moved by the CPI. In the Lok Sabha, and though it was now responsible for Kerala, several adjournment motions by CPI members were disallowed, even when it was factually revealed by A.K. Gopalan, V.P. Nayar, and Renu Chakravarthi that organised assaults on Communists were taking place. Many Communists were reported to have been killed, and intimidation, especially of agricultural labourers was reported to take acute forms.²⁸ The Communist opinion about the Speaker and the Government was dramatically expressed by the Howrah MP Muhammed Elias, who was echoed by his party members when he told the House: "When the Kerala Assembly was functioning, you allowed an adjournment motion to be brought before the House by some other party. Now we are not allowed the right. Women are being raped".²⁹

It is, from the available evidence, quite probable that the Governor's report was indeed a 'command performance', and such a conclusion is certainly reinforced by the comparison of the charges levelled in his report with the reality, and by the fact that many of the charges were based on very flimsy grounds. Communist sources called the whole report a "falsification par excellence when it is seen that it is written by the constitu-

tional head of the State, who has access to the Ministries, Secretaries, and Heads of Departments and also to all government files and hence there is no difficulty for him to ascertain the facts".³⁰

It was seen that the Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru did not belong to the group of 'action-wallas', but once the decision had been taken, he became a staunch defender of it, a conversion which has been noticed in other cases as well.³¹

Apart from party-politics, and especially the power-structure in the Indian National Congress Party, in which Nehru saw the only tool of developing India, two facts are significant for his attitude. We mention them only briefly. In the first place, Indian unity and economic development were primordial political aims. As such, the Communists represented a progressive tendency, since they worked for the solution of the social problem.³² The coming to power of the Communists was, therefore, not necessarily to be judged as a tragical development, since, after all, the federal state's powers were limited. It was better to accept such a government under the unitary umbrella of the Indian state, and Nehru predicted that in a big country as India "there might be many permutations and combinations in the political structure of the States".³³

On the other hand stood Nehru's conception about the obsolescence of the marxist theory and the international subservience of Indian Communism. He thought that the Marxist economic system was better than the capitalism but stressed

that Marxism was more relevant to the conditions in the nineteenth century Europe, when there was no democracy. The capitalist structure had undergone "and is continually undergoing a change because of democratic and other struggles against it.... In some countries capitalism has achieved common welfare to a large extent. Democracy allied to capitalism has toned down many of its evils and has made capitalism develop some socialist features". In the same article, 'The Basic Approach', Nehru stressed strongly that violence, even small-scale violence, could under no circumstances secure a progressive socialist future, and, "communism has definitely allied itself to the approach of violence. Even if it does not indulge normally in physical violence, its language is of violence, its thought is violent and it does not seek to change by persuasion or peaceful democratic pressures, but by coercion and indeed by destruction and extermination".³⁴ This was not only common to Communists but also to anti-communists, for whom there were no shades, only black and white, and it reflected the old approach of the bigoted aspects of some religions. Nehru continued that it is not by some magic adoption of socialist or capitalist method that poverty suddenly leads to riches. The only way was through hard work and increasing the productivity of the nation and organising an equitable distribution of its products. In the final analysis, the quality of the human beings should count, in the sense of the old Vedantic conception that everything "whether sentient or insentient finds a place in the organic whole, that every thing

has a spark of what might be called the Divine impulse or the basic energy or life force which pervades the Universe". The Communist approach in this respect was "wholly unscientific, unreasonable and uncivilised".³⁵

The other point about Nehru's approach was his assertion that the CPI's "thinking apparatus lies outside the country".³⁶ Though he perceived some peaceful tendencies during the CPI Congress at Amritsar and in practice applied in Kerala, he also added that he had no doubt that if they would think more of India in Indian terms, they would cease to be a Communist Party according to the international lingo. At the moment, however, their mind was "a too imitative mind, a too copying mind, retaining no originality of thinking".³⁷

It is exactly these two facets that were used by the Prime Minister for the justification of the President's Rub he gave in the Rajya Sabha. Changes in the world had falsified the prophecies of 50-100 years ago, but the Communists with their "steel-frame of thinking" had not realised yet that the world now was dominated by machines, and that India, through proper use of those modern methods of production, could attain the welfare society through a third path. Further the Communist Party was more than a national party and therefore tended to go wrong". "They not only go wrong but because not being exactly of the soil of India, because of ideological and mental contexts and other things, they cannot be easily put right".³⁸ This, in fact, separated them from the communalists, since, after all, the Communalist groups and parties were functioning within the

Indian framework, though they were "conditioned to much by what had happened a thousand years ago". The Communist Party, though functioning in the present day, was conditioned in such a way that often isolated it from the basic thing - India. If the great majority of the Indians became Communists, Nehru felt that "it would not be India; then it would be something else. And I do not want that to happen, even though I want India to imbibe modern scientific, techniques, scientific theories, economic theories, economic organisations".³⁹ After all, India was not a "hothouse plant without roots in the country".

Specifically about Kerala, the Prime Minister did not refer to facts, but came generally to the conclusion that the Communists had had their chance and had failed to make use of that chance. The agitation of the people in Kerala was justifiable. "They were reacting to something which had tremendously upset the people. It was not something sudden (and) the Education Act as such had really no particular relevance, as far as the Congress was concerned... So far as the Agrarian Relations Bill was concerned, they were very largely in favour of it except, of courses, some minor points".⁴⁰ Nehru told the House that, as a matter of fact, the Congress had been doing the same and much better in other parts of India. He did not elaborate the most important points of the chargesheet: "Now, Sir, I am not, at the moment, going into that matter and saying whether this was true or not. I think it had a large

measure of truth in it. But what I am saying is that this idea had spread".⁴¹ (emphasis added.) With the assertion that the feeling of insecurity existed under the first Communist government in Kerala, the official debate on the first disposal of a Communist Government in an Indian state was closed.

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Notes

1. B.N. Mullick, My years with Nehru, 1948-1964, 1972, (Hereafter as: Mullick), p. 348.
2. Hindu, 25.6.1959. Nehru was reported to have advised the Kerala Congress leaders during his visit there to act accordingly.
3. New Age, Weekly, 5.7.1959; EMS had made a similar proposal, see Link, 21.6.1959.
4. Hindu, 26.6.1959.
5. Indian National Congress, Central Parliamentary Board's Decision on Kerala, in: Congress Bulletin, June, July, August, 1959, pp. 324-27.
6. New Age, 5.6.1959 and also 14.7.1959.
7. Rajya Sabha Debates, 25.9.1959, p. 1804.
8. Kerala Under Communism, pp. 144-45.
9. Vigil, 1.8.1959.
10. AICC Economic Review, 1.3.1959. The appropriate emergency action would be to bring a message of hope and some kind of constructive service programme to the bottom layers (p. 4).
11. New Age Weekly, 12.7.1959.
12. New Age, Weekly, op. cit.
13. Mullick, p. 356; Rajya Sabha, 25.8.1959. Fic plays this alleged preparadness up very much, starting from the Always Special Conference, November 1958 to the National Council, July 1959 (Thesis, p. 710); Link 19.7.1959 and 26.7.1959. The Communists characterised these rumours as a canard used to justify the Central intervention.
14. Statesman, 26.7.1953 (Quoted from Indian Affairs Record 1959, p. 159); Kerala under Communism, p. 147. The Congress president later denied having said this.
15. Mullick, p. 355.
16. Mullick, p. 355-56.
17. Mullick, p. 356. Also, Kerala Under Communism, p. 148.
18. The summary is reproduced in Kerala Under Communism, Appendix VI. Debates in Rajya Sabha on August 24 and 25:

intervention by Bhupesh Gupta and Govindan Nair, and the answer by Minister of State for Home Affairs, B.N. Datar, who gave after a long tussle as the date of receipt of the summary: July 15; after remarks he changed it into August 15 (p. 1578).

19. Summary of the Governor's Report to the President. A.J.B. Kripalani had argued this in Janatha, July 19 and 26, and Vigil, 25.7.1959. Sadiq Ali argued later, after the elections in which the Communists had secured an increased support, that the President's Rule was still justified on account of the "intensity of passion" behind the Congress votes. (AICC Economic Review, 15.2.1960).
20. C.P. Bhambhari, The Governor and the Emergency, in: S.A. H. Haqqi: Union-State Relation in India, Meerut, 1968, p.90.
21. C.P. Bhambhari, op. cit., p. 93.
22. A.S.R. Chari, Senior Advisor, Supre Court of India in his article in New Age, 26 July 1959.
23. Acharya J.B. Kripalani, Vigil, 8.8.1959, Bhupesh Gupta, Rajya Sabha, 25.8.1959.
24. Purushottam Singh, Governor's Office in Independent India, Deoghar 1962, pp. 171-74; Hindu, 26.7.1959 (Request by EMS); Turlach, p. 194.
25. EMS Namboodiripad, Kerala and The Ugly Face of Congress, CPI Publication, p. 6.
26. EMS Namboodiripad, Economics and Politics of India's Socialist Pattern, PEH, 1966, p. 365. The violence in Kerala was not comparable to the violence in Bombay around the language agitation for bifurcation of the state, and the food riots in Calcutta, where each time some hundred persons were shot down. But in these cases the state governments got the full support of the Centre.
27. Rajya Sabha Debates 24.8.1959, p. 1598. The Kerala Government could only answer to the press reports on the memo.
28. Lok Sabha, 3.8.1959 and 5.8.1959, Rajya Sabha 10.7.1959; also A.K. Gopalan, Rule of Terror in Central Travancore, Memo submitted to the Governor, 1960, Manfred Turlach, p. 195
29. Lok Sabha Debates, 5.8.1959, p. 668.
30. C. Unniraja in: New Age Weekly, 6.9.1959.

31. See for instance Neville Maxwell, *India's China War*, Faico, 1971, especially p. 121 ff.
32. Mullick, p. 133.
33. Mullick, p. 132.
34. Nehru, *The Basic Approach*, in: *AICC Economic Review*, 15.8.1958.
35. Nehru, *op. cit.* The article is also reprinted in *World Marxist Review*, 1958, Vol. 4, and sharply criticised by P. Yudin as a subjectivism which sees India's backwardness as due to the lack of philosophical principle which would inspire the people.
36. *Hindu*, 13.9.1958; Nehru is addressing a AICC meeting.
37. *Hindu*, 25.4.1958. Public Speech in Trivandrum.
38. *Rajya Sabha Debates* 25 August, 1959, p. 1770.
39. *Rajya Sabha Debates*, *op. cit.* Nehru's speech is also reprinted as "Facets of Indian Communism", in: *AICC Economic Review*, 1.9.1959.
40. *Rajya Sabha Debates*, 25.8.1959, p. 1763.
41. *Rajya Sabha Debates*, *op. cit.*, p. 1774.

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THE AFTERMATH : THE CPI AND THE 1960 ELECTIONS:

Six months after the Central intervention the new election campaign in Kerala started, pitting against each other the CPI and the Triple Alliance of the INC, PSP and Muslim League. Compared to 1957, there were 78 straight contests instead of 23, and the number of contesting candidates averaged 2.5 per seat, a record low in the annals of the Indian elections.¹ On the election day, 1 February 1960, 84.75% of the electorate cast its vote. These two factors were, according to Ajoy Ghosh "a clear indication of the sharpness and intensity of the struggle".² However, not everybody in the party seemed to have grasped the full impact of the election battle. According to Ranadive, the party had forgotten that a big class and political war was being fought, not for the electoral victory, but for political supremacy.³

The CPI, which in the meantime had grown organisationally stronger,⁴ promised in its election programme to fight for the implementation of the Agrarian Reforms Bill, the Debt Relief Bill, the Education Act and other beneficial legislations, to build a new and prosperous Kerala and to have a stable and popular government.⁵ The opposition parties the Church and the NSS made similar promises, but based their whole campaign on anti-Communist and communal feelings. Fervant use was made of the events in Tibet and of the overruling power of the Central Government: the Communists were branded as fifth columnists and no rice or industrial projects would be given by

the Centre if the people would again decide to incur the wrath of New Delhi.⁶

The electoral strategy of the CPI was based on an appeal to democratic elements to fight right reaction, which represented a "terrific onslaught on all that was democratic and progressive in the foreign and internal policies of the Nehru government".⁷ For EMS Namboodiripad, it was a struggle between reaction and "the national, progressive, democratic policies for which the entire national movement has always stood..."⁸ The elections were also described as a "struggle to defend and strengthen the positive aspects of Nehru's policy", and, according to M. Basavapunniah, it was, therefore, a fight against the political compromising of the INC, a fight to defeat the alliance of Congress with casteist, communal and religious groups. He asserted, "The defeat of this alliance will be the biggest victory in the fight against growing right reaction in the country, as well as within the Congress Party".⁹ The strategy to win over the democratic elements within the INC was one of the directives given by the Fifth Kerala State Communist Conference, held in Nov. 1959 at Trichur. The CPI should build a united front against Congress in the elections, but not an anti-Congress united front: "Our enemy is not the Congress as such, but the reactionary forces inside and outside the Congress.. Hence all these Congressmen who stand firm on the declared policies of the Congress and are prepared to fight ~~the~~ the Swatantra-PSP-Jan Sangh combine and their friends inside the Congress are our allies."¹⁰ Notwithstanding this soft approach, some representatives at the Trichur conference attacked the

party for being sectarian, for formulating the policies and implementing them "in such a way as to only consolidate those sections of the people who are already with us, overlooking the need of winning over new sections and for bringing about a fundamental shift in the balance of forces in our favour".¹¹

The election results proved that a significant shift had taken place among the people, not away from the Communist Party, but towards it. Though the CPI and the independent candidates supported by it lost almost two thirds of the seats in the Assembly, the percentage of their share in the votes increased from 40.7 in 1957 to 43.3.¹² In absolute figures this meant that the CPI got 13 lakhs more votes than during the previous elections, or an increase by 50%, mainly due to the fact that there were 23 lakhs extra voters. In Alleppey, Ernakulam and Cannanore, the share of the CPI went down, but in most districts a steep increase had occurred. In Palghat, the percentage shot up from 40.8 to 53.8, though the party could not increase its number of seats. In Trichur, with 3 more candidates fielded, the CPI lost two of the eight seats, though it increased its share in the votes from 32.1 to 43.2% without and 48.8% with the independents. In Trivandrum also, the Communist Party lost six of the eight seats it had secured in 1957, though it increased its support from 38.3 to 45%. Even in the Christian belt of Kottayam, with 4 more candidates fielded, the percentage of votes for the CPI went up from 29.2 to 40.6%, but also here the party lost one of its three seats.

..

The CPI had thus been routed in the Assembly, but, except for three constituencies, it had increased its popular support everywhere. This increase was particularly pronounced in the constituencies with more than two agricultural labourers for every cultivator, the Heavy labour pressure areas, as is evident from the election chart on the next page.

The leaders of the Communist Party considered the election results both as a victory and as a defeat. It was seen as a big success that almost 13 lakhs more voters had supported the CPI, "in the teeth of opposition from all political parties, the frenzied appeal to Church, God and hell, and the persistent campaign of villification. (This) was a tribute to the confidence engendered by our ministerial and Party activities among new sections of the masses."¹³ However, for B.T. Ranadive, who made this analysis, it was even more important that the triple alliance had been able to dig into the recesses of the old society among the backward masses and to fence off a big section of these down-trodden masses by calling the aid of communal and religious organisations. The miscalculation of the Communist Party in this connection had been to overestimate the impact of the popular measures enacted by the Communist ministry and to think that at least everybody who was benefited by the ministry would automatically vote for the CPI. In the view of Ranadive, this expectation arose out of "an underestimation of the pull of ideological forces, of the obscurantist forces of religion and caste, because (we) did not correctly place the impact of anti-Communism as a political force".¹⁴

Election Table - 1957-1963

Per cent of Valid Votes Polled in Each Category and Valid Votes Secured by Each Party
in Each Category

By Labourer-Cultivator Ratio

REGION	Year	Heavy Labour Pressure Areas			Moderate Labour Pressure Areas			Low Labour Pressure Areas			Cultivator Domination Areas		
		1957	1960	1963	1957	1960	1963	1957	1960	1963	1957	1960	1963
Kerala State	Votes Cast	57.06	81.23	67.50	66.02	85.25	74.29	64.79	83.88	73.53	75.07	87.81	78.58
	INC	41.14	35.50	41.16	43.07	41.81	48.63	35.58	32.80	45.69	39.53	34.63	34.39
	CPI	42.84	50.00	39.87	37.81	42.34	30.15	32.99	37.26	30.45	34.91	38.57	28.42
	SSP	7.17	10.44	12.10	8.36	8.36	3.61	12.26	15.99	9.99	8.07	18.57	3.69
Malabar	Votes Cast	54.55	79.17	63.13	55.65	81.71	69.94	59.68	80.78	71.51	-	-	-
	INC.	40.72	39.58	32.29	34.94	35.19	39.85	34.00	25.77	32.55	-	-	-
	CPI.	42.75	56.99	41.76	40.83	46.74	36.26	25.66	39.39	38.07	-	-	-
	SSP.	-	13.35	19.03	7.30	-	5.30	11.19	16.06	13.74	-	-	-
Travancore	Votes Cast	59.31	59.60	76.34	76.48	69.97	77.75	67.54	84.95	73.27	76.05	87.93	76.95
	INC.	41.49	56.79	56.62	42.57	45.21	58.73	31.84	32.68	57.01	37.75	28.93	53.75
	CPI.	42.92	25.31	33.82	34.54	43.94	36.23	40.29	43.44	36.93	31.77	40.64	28.06
	SSP.	13.09	-	-	6.78	6.23	-	14.94	18.92	8.37	8.01	21.69	4.36

Source : K.S. Krishna Murthy - S. Lakshmana Rao : Political Preferences in Kerala, New Delhi, 1968.

Though some progress had been made in the Christian belt, Ajoy Ghosh also admitted the fact that "the overwhelming majority of the Catholic masses, even those belonging to the poorest classes, have not supported our Party".¹⁵ As George Lukacs wrote, with the creation of a society with a purely economic articulation, class consciousness reached the stage of possible cognition (Bewusstwerdenkoennen): "From then on struggle in society was reflected in an ideological struggle for the consciousness and for the veiling or exposure of the class character of society".¹⁶

In this struggle, the CPI preached caution, in conformity with the assessment of the National Secretariat that the elections had shown that the party and the democratic forces were not yet strong enough to overcome the combination of all reactionary and communal forces in order to win an electoral victory".¹⁷ The next immediate steps, therefore, had to be the organisation of a more broad-based and more united struggle against reaction,¹⁸ the winning over of progressive Congressmen,¹⁹ and, "to move quickly to end the present polarisation, to heal the breach between the different sections of the masses so that Kerala's advance can be resumed. Taking the realities of the situation into consideration, the fact that a majority of the electorate has voted for the triple alliance, our Party has stated that it will work as a constructive opposition party..."²⁰

The new government, a Congress-PSP government supported by the Muslim League who got the speakership in the Assembly, was sworn in, and its tasks were considered to be more difficult

than before 1957. Indeed, now it was agreed that the Communist ministry had been "efficient and free from corruption".²¹ This was also the impression of Kathleen Gough, who came to the conclusion that the Communist period deepened the existing class struggle and liberated propertyless people from their old ties of subordination. In this situation, "Especially if the economy does not rapidly develop and spread its benefits, the poor will now, of their own initiative, sabotage efforts at restoring the class relations of pre-1957".²²

* *

Notes

1. Election Commission of India, Report on the General Elections to the Kerala Legislative Assembly, 1960, p. 14.
2. Ajoy Ghosh, The Kerala Elections, in: Political Affairs, April, 1960, p. 63.
3. B.T. Ranadive, Kerala, In: New Age, March 1960, p. 43.
4. The party membership had increased from 25000 in 1956 to 62000 in 1958 and 72000 in 1959; the three newspapers had increased their circulation from 39000 to 62000 during the three years, and the AITUC unions and the Kerala Karshaka Sangham now had a combined strength of 450000. (Source : T.C. Unniraja, Fifth Kerala State Conference, in: New Age, January 1960, p. 5.
5. New Age - Weekly, 3.1.1960.
6. Ajoy Ghosh, op. cit., and, January editions of New Age Weekly.
7. M.N. Govindan Nair in the political organisational report to the Fifth Kerala State Conference. Report in: New Age Weekly, 6.12.1959.
8. EMS Namboodiripad, The Anti-National Face of Congress Allies, in: New Age Weekly, 24.1.1960.
9. M. Basavapunniah, No Ordinary Elections, in: New Age Weekly, 3.1.1960.
10. Resolution of the Fifth State Conference, quoted from T.C. Unnirajan, op. cit., p. 8.
11. Ibid, p. 5.
12. For the results we refer to: Election Commission of India, op. cit.: Ramakrishnan Nair, How Communists Came to Power in Kerala, 1965; K.G. Krishna Murthy and G. Lakshmana Rao, Political Preferences in Kerala. An Electoral analysis of the Kerala general elections, 1968; Craig Baxter, District Voting Trends in India, 1969.
13. B.T. Ranadive, op. cit., p. 42.
14. Ibid; p. 44.
15. Ajoy Ghosh, op. cit., p. 64.
16. Georg Lukacs, Klassenbewusstsein, in: Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein, Werke, Volume 2, 1958, p. 228.
17. Statement of the National Secretariat of the CPI on the

- Kerala Election Results, in: New Age, 14.2.1960.
18. EMS Namboodiripad, A Temporary Setback for Democracy, in: New Age, 14.2.1960.
 19. Resolution of the Kerala Party Executive, in: New Age, 14.2.1960.
 20. B.T. Ranadive, op. cit., p. 54.
 21. Hindustan Times, 29.1.1960. Similar editorials in Times of India, Hindu, Free Press Journal, etc.
 22. Kathleen Gough, Village Politics in Kerala, in: Economic Weekly, 27.2.1965, p. 420.

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APPENDIX - I.2. Occupational Structure.

TABLE - 1 Distribution of Population under different Occupational Groups in 1911 & 1951 Malabar, Travancore and Cochin.

Occupational Groups	Malabar			Travancore			C o c h i n		
	1911	1951	Total 1951 (1000)	1911	1951	Total (1000)	1911	1951	Total (1000)
Agricultural Occ.	<u>60.7</u>	<u>51.1</u>	<u>2429.3</u>	<u>53.2</u>	<u>57.2</u>	<u>4307.1</u>	<u>50.4</u>	<u>44.7</u>	<u>783.2</u>
Cultivating land- Owners.	3.2	6.5	307.9	34.0	30.5	2295.3	5.1	3.5	149.2
Tenants.	27.3	20.1	993.7	3.6	5.8	939.1	22.5	12.6	220.0
Agri. Labourers	25.3	22.4	1067.9	6.7	19.8	1488.6	18.2	21.9	383.2
Rent Receivers	3.3	2.1	99.8	2.8	1.1	84.1	1.9	1.7	30.8
Cultivators of special crop.	1.6	-	-	6.1	-	-	2.7	-	-
Non-Agri. Occup.	39.3	48.9	2328.9	46.8	42.8	3320.7	49.6	55.3	969.4
Non-Agricultural Production.	18.8	16.2	77.15	19.6	21.1	1586.8	23.2	21.6	379.1
Commerce & Transport	12.2	11.8	561.1	9.9	4.4	710.0	13.5	13.6	237.7
Others	8.3	20.9	996.2	17.2	12.3	423.9	12.9	20.1	352.2
Total Population:	100	100	4758.2	100	100	7527.8	100	100	1752.6

Source: T.C. Vanghese: Agrarian Change....., pp. 126-129.

APPENDIX - I.2.2. Agriculture

TABLE - 1. Proportion of Leased in Land in total Possessed Land.

Size	W E T		D R Y	
	Proportion	Acres	Proportion	Acres
0-1.00	47.6	18.1	46.1	240.7
1.00-2.5	62.4	90.9	42.5	296.5
2.5-5.0	61.8	155.0	42.1	267.6
5 - 10	66.2	181.0	23.5	160.6
10 - 15	64.8	73.0	35.4	118.2
15 -20	53.4	28.2	35.3	24.7
20 - 25	60.4	20.7	24.2	35.9
+ 25	70.1	125.0	19.6	74.8

Source: Survey on Land Reforms in Kerala, pp. 55-6.

I.2.2. Table 2. Composition of Ownership Holdings of Landlords According to size.

Size of Holding	Number, % to Total	% of the Group	Area owned and pass, % to total	Proportion leased out
0 - 1.0	11.77	0.85	0.51	52.73
1 - 2.5	23.21	4.52	5.20	43.73
2.5 - 5	18.90	9.26	5.40	45.96
5 - 10	16.05	12.00	9.88	39.95
10 - 15	7.89	22.85	6.60	52.77
15 - 20	5.85	75.44	7.73	44.98
20 - 25	3.35	63.77	5.96	43.88
+ 25	12.99	83.71	60.72	70.01
Total :	100	4.36	100	63.55

Source: Survey of Land Reforms in Kerala, pp. 44 & p. 63.

I.2.2. TABLE : 3

Composition of Operational Holdings of Landlords

Size of Operational Holding	Number with leased in land as % to total	Proportion of leased in land is % total possessed land
0 - 1.0	6.81	5.99
1 - 2.5	15.14	11.58
2.5 - 5	32.90	21.10
5 - 10	36.84	23.47
10 - 15	40.02	23.58
15 - 20	36.02	28.20
20 - 25	38.64	11.98
+ 25	45.00	14.14
T o t a l :	25.64	17.83

Source: Survey, Op. cit., p. 45.

I.2.2. Table 4. Capital Investment in Agriculture.

	Year	State	Triva- ndrum	Quilon	Kott- ayan	Tri- chur	Malabar & Kasargode
I PLOUGHS							
(a) Wooden	1951	510908	25127	67476	70950	70534	276792
	1956	570327	25408	71960	69567	98313	305074
(b) Iron	1951	13126	43	2298	112	10148	525
	1956	10225	298	4738	477	3379	1343
II OIL ENGINES							
	1951	1158	4	255	153	304	442
	1956	2504	34	622	381	763	704
III ELECTRIC PUMPS							
	1951	1630	1	29	19	1516	65
	1956	723	2	175	139	367	40
IV Tractors							
	1951	59	1	15	18	7	18
	1956	187	1	42	73	3	68
V GRANIS							
(a) More than 5 years	1951	686	NA	NA	NA	NA	76
	1956	1858	105	847	249	548	109
(b) Less than 5 years	1951	939	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	1956	2366	525	866	297	404	274

Source: Statistical Abstract of Kerala, 1958-59, p. 30.

Note for I (b) and III the Trichur figures which bring down the progress in the state and most certainly reflect on overestimation in the first census (1951).

Appendix I.2.3.

Table - 1

Employment and National Income in India by States
in 1961 (Share of Different Types of Industry, %)*

	E M P L O Y M E N T			N A T I O N A L I N C O M E				
	Cottage Industry	Small scale Industry	Large scale Industry	Share of employed in industry to total employment;	Cottage Industry	Small scale Industry.	Large scale Industry.	Share of Industry in National income.
	100%					100%		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Group I								
Maharashtra	39.0	29.7	31.3	11.3	14.1	23.7	62.2	22.8
West Bengal	27.0	34.7	31.3	15.6	11.9	29.1	59.0	23.2
Gujarat	50.9	21.5	27.6	12.9	15.1	28.9	56.0	21.2
Group II								
Punjab	60.4	30.3	9.3	12.6	39.6	43.8	16.6	16.1
Madras	58.7	29.7	11.6	13.4	24.1	45.1	40.8	16.7
Mysore	62.7	26.5	10.8	12.4	19.5	40.8	39.7	15.3

contd....

contd.. Table 1.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Group III								
Kerala	48.0	38.5	13.5	18.0	11.8	59.2	29.0	15.2
Andhra Pradesh	79.2	14.5	6.3	12.3	38.8	30.0	31.2	9.1
Uttar Pradesh	69.2	21.1	9.7	9.0	27.5	32.0	40.5	8.9
Bihar	71.3	16.2	12.5	7.7	24.6	24.3	51.1	17.4
Madhya Pradesh	70.0	13.4	16.6	6.1	43.6	19.2	37.2	13.0
Rajasthan	77.7	16.2	6.1	8.0	32.2	33.1	33.7	7.4
Jammu and Kashmir	63.2	27.4	9.4	8.4	62.4	26.7	10.9	9.5
Assam	72.9	12.7	14.4	7.5	45.4	11.3	43.3	18.2
Orissa	96.0	5.7	8.3	8.0	47.4	20.9	31.7	7.7

Source : Census of India, 1961, Vol. I, Part II A(ii), Delhi, 1962, pp. LVIII-LIX; Income and Structure of Manufacturing Industry 1960-61 (A State wise Analysis), New Delhi, 1964, pp. 40-48; Distribution of National Income by States 1960-61, pp. 141-43, pp. 9, 114. Table indebted to Reisner and Shirokov.

Factories and Workshops classified by Industry and size of Employment in Kerala State

Industry Group	RURAL								URBAN								Total Grand Total	Percentage distribution
	1	2-5	6-9	10-19	20-49	50-99	100 & above	Total	1	2-5	6-9	10-19	20-49	50-99	100 & above	Total		
1. Food preservation, processing etc. & beverages	1848	3486	285	250	89	166	132	6456	594	1481	203	105	36	14	25	2458	8914	20.44
2. Manufacture of beedi & cigar	4424	1904	348	238	90	9	...	7018	462	949	253	128	54	8	...	1854	8872	20.33
3. Textiles	400	1985	562	370	97	6	8	3428	222	834	250	136	97	14	15	1566	4994	11.45
4. Manufacture of coir & coir products	103	1893	740	444	203	60	36	3479	3	200	144	113	39	23	29	551	4.30	9.24
5. Manufacture of wooden articles including plywood products	260	42	42	29	10	1	5	773	135	476	70	49	20	5	7	762	1535	3.52
6. Manufacture of leather products including shoes and chappals	171	181	3					445	93	589	9	3	1			495	940	2.15
7. Basket weaving	30	116	12	13	9	1		181	19	40	5	10	1	1		76	257	0.59
8. Rubber products	56	240	60	57	37	13	8	471	6	49	5	3	3	1	1	68	539	1.24
9. Manufacture of chemicals, paints varnish, fertilizers etc.		2	3	3	5	1	2	16	3	10	2	4	1	1		21	37	0.08
10. Manufacture of crackers	24	111	22	8	6			171	5	21	1	2				29	200	0.46
11. Matches	2	5	6	11	30	13	2	69	1	2	7	6	16	16	3	51	120	0.28
12. Manufacture of pharmaceuticals, ayurvedic medicines etc.	572	409	12	12	2	2	3	1012	69	125	10	6	4	1		215	1227	2.81
13. Soaps, candles e.c.	322	254	11	7	2		1	597		111	11	9	7	1	1	156	753	1.73
14. Bricks & tiles		33	46	41	65	45	17	247	1	13	12	24	13	11	17	91	338	0.77
15. Cement & cement products	2	4	3				1	10		11	1					12	22	0.05
16. Glass & glass products	142	248	5	2	1			398	20	78	2					100	423	1.14
17. Manufacture of paper & allied products	5	9		1	3			18	11	9	1	3				24	42	0.10
18. Pottery	5	293	17	3	3			494	6	29	3	1	1			40	534	1.22
19. Manufacture of non-metallic mineral products such as pigments, titanium dioxide etc.	5						5	170				5	2		2	25	165	0.38
20. Aluminium products		1						2	1	2					1	4	6	0.01
21. Tin cans & copper vessels	137	107	2	2	1			250	116	281	23	5	8	2		465	715	1.64
22. Manufacture of agricultural implements, screws etc. (Blacksmithy & foundry)	1291	1461	31	18	9	3	2	2815	204	463	28	16	15	1	3	730	3545	8.13
23. Manufacture of small machinery, machine tools, parts etc.	2	6	1	3	1		2	15	11	16	8	3	4	2	1	45	60	0.14
24. Electric meters & allied products	1	3	2		1	3	2	12	6	18		1			1	26	38	0.09
25. Cycle parts & accessories				3	2	1		6		3	2	3	1		1	10	16	0.04
26. Manufacture of jewellery	1010	1747	46	10				2813	312	1224	53	18	1			1608	4421	10.13
27. Ivory products	1	6	1					8	9	57	14	6		1		87	95	0.22
28. Printing, publishing of books	10	146	25	6	2			189	19	295	99	73	23	5	2	516	705	1.62
Grand Total	11196	15353	2325	1536	672	224	228	31534	2374	7196	1223	733	347	107	109	12089	43623	100.00
Percentage distribution	25.65	35.20	5.33	3.52	1.54	.51	.52	72.28	5.44	16.5	2.80	1.68	.80	.25	.25	27.72	100.0	

[Prepared from Table E III given in Census of India, 1961, Vol. VII, Kerala Part IV B. Housing and Establishment Tables (Trivandrum, 1964) pp. 29-49. Tailoring, Repairing and servicing units and industries having less than 5 units in the State are omitted.]

Source: M.A. Oommen, Small Industry in Indian Economic Growth, 1972, appendix A table 4.

APPENDIX I.2.3. Table 3.

Estimate of Income from Small Scale Industries for 1960-61 at Current Prices

	Household Industry			Non-household small scale Industries			Small scale industries sector		
	Number of persons engaged	Net output Rs. '000	Net output per person Rs.	Number of persons engaged	Net output Rs. '000	Net output per person Rs.	Number of persons engaged	Net output Rs. '000	Net output per person Rs.
1. Andhra Pradesh	1424071	296382	208	348167	229031	658	1772238	525413	296
2. Assam	279868	279211	998	33229	69863	2102	313097	349074	1115
3. Bihar	895938	315355	352	269766	310325	1150	1165704	589536	506
4. Gujarat	310424	242839	782	257208	463735	1803	567632	706574	1245
5. Jammu & Kashmir	61330	54062	881	26650	23261	873	87980	77323	879
6. Kerala	486367	89326	184	389609	454359	1166	875976	543685	621
7. Madhya Pradesh	790628	385186	487	213321	168648	791	1003949	553834	552
8. Madras	1133476	243670	215	651803	777115	1192	1785279	1020785	572
9. Maharashtra	727611	555416	763	685972	931005	1357	1413583	1486425	1052
10. Mysore	524747	174149	332	285795	364687	1276	810542	538836	665
11. Orissa	456219	132650	291	64421	58092	902	520630	190742	366
12. Punjab	404453	504264	1247	280446	557399	1988	684899	1061663	1550
13. Rajasthan	337614	98719	292	120285	97993	815	457899	196712	430
14. Uttar Pradesh	1455061	483932	326	533022	559604	1050	2288083	1043536	456
15. West Bengal	439119	496042	902	659567	960420	1456	1098686	1356462	1235
16. Delhi	16347	19234	1177	121346	241032	1986	137693	196712	1429
17. Himachal Pradesh	23551	28721	1220	5636	10301	1827	39022	39022	1337
18. Tripur	24568	32104	1307	9788	6009	614	34356	38109	1109
Grand Total	9771392	4331262	443	4956031	6282879	1268	15047413	10514443	699

Source: See NCAER. Distribution of National Income by States 1960-61. Tables 54 and 55. Columns (4), (7) and (10) are worked out.

Source: M.A. Oommen, Small Industry in Indian Economic Growth, 1972, appendix A table 3.

I.2.3. Table 4. Finance Capital:
 Abstract of Joint Stock Companies - Historical Evolution in Travancore 1927-51.

B R A N C H	N U M B E R						March 1951 in Subscribed	Lakh Rs. Paid up.
	1927	1932	1936	1942	1948	1951+		
Banking, Loan Insurance	51	684 [ⓐ]	271	159	159	253	546	54
Transit, Transport	5	10	7	17	43	51	53	48
Training, Manufacturing	40	78	66	101	381	590	1205	713 [Ⓢ]
Mills Presses	4	6	4	5	32	62	136	123
Plantations	44	38	38	65	85	102	460	437
Hotels, Entertainment	-	6	-	3	9	37	24	20
Total (+ Others)	152	924	390	356	665	1119		

Source : Compiled from the Statistics of the Governments of Travancore & Travancore-Cochin.

Notes : + Refers to Cochin as well

[ⓐ] Figures reflect the boom in the Pre-20 period.

Amassed wealth was invested in Banking sector and could not sustain further growth.

[Ⓢ] Almost half of this sum represents governments fertilisers and Chemicals of Travancore.

I.2.3. TABLE 5: Evolution of the Co-operatives.

	1926	T R A V A N C O R E			:	T R A V A N C O R E - C O C H I N		
		30	42	46		47	49	51
Number of Socs.	1925	1806	1464	1871	:	2356	2650	2726
Agric. Socs.	1071	1440	1097	1275	:	1490	1478	1596
Non-Agri.Socs.	232	336	337	524	:	816	1118	1073
Central Credit Socs.	2	3	4	5	:	11	12	14
.....								
Working Capital*	1327	1319	2972	3806	:	6959	5441	6290
Non-agriculture	483	1921	3008	970	:	1818	4360	4872
Central Credit	578	1333	970	1818	:	4360	4872	338
.....								
Loans Granted*	1171	1934	310	576	:	1185	1628	1643
Agriculture	492	1338	396	409	:	2223	2806	3789
Non-Agriculture- Central Credit.	-	-	-	-	:	223	3601	7687

* Figures 1000

Source : Compiled from Statistics of Travancore and Travancore-Cochin.

Appendix II.I (Table 1).

Students as percentage to population 1964-1965.

	Population	Soc. back- word section.	Students in 1st Standard	Xth Standard	NR in Xth as % of population
1. Ezhevas	3527 (25%)	3439	176	24	6.80
2. Muslims	3027 (20%)	2917	134	85	2.83
3. Latin Cath	783	751	18	3.4	4.46
4. Backward Christian.	250	245	20	2.7	11.11
5. Kammalas	650	637	23	3.6	5.67
6. Scheduled Castes.	142 (10%)	NA	63	6.4	4.7
7. Scheduled Tribes	207	NA	5	0.4	0.2
8. Nairs	2579 (17%)	-	111	33	13.1
9. Brahmins	253	-	10	4.7	14.6
10. Syrian Christian	1310 (9%)	-	60	15	12.1
11. Jacobites	715	-	27	8.3	11.6
12. Marathomites	282	-	12	4.5	16.5

Source : Report of the Commission for Reservation of
Seats in Educational Institutions in Kerala,
1965.

Appendix II.I. Table - 2.

Statement showing the number of seats which each
community would have secured had there been
no reservation in respect of Engineer-
ing Colleges.

	Qualified Applications	Seats Secured	Qualified Applications	Seats secured.
	1962-1963		1963-1964	
Ezhevas Thiyyas	281(11.95)	53(7.74)	248(11.17)	34(5.02)
Muslims	190(8.08)	22(3.22)	195(9.02)	20(3.00)
Other Backward Hindus	169(7.18)	28(4.24)	171(7.91)	25(3.69)
Other Backward Christian.	20(0.85)	3(0.44)	37(1.91)	4(0.59)
Latin Cath	53(2.25)	5(0.73)	44(2.03)	8(1.18)
Sched Castes + " Tribes	32(1.36)	2(0.3)	22(1.02)	4(0.59)
Brahmins	293(12.46)	115(<u>16.83</u>)	253(11.70)	114(<u>16.83</u>)
Nairs	636(27.05)	193(<u>28.25</u>)	511(23.64)	188(<u>27.73</u>)
Other Commun.	88(3.74)	25(3.66)	79(3.65)	34(5.02)
Christians	589(25.05)	236(<u>34.55</u>)	601(27.81)	246(<u>36.33</u>)

Source : Report of the Commission for Reservation of Seats in Educational Institutions in Kerala, 1965.

Appendix II.2. Table -1.

Distribution of owned Holdings in Malabar

<u>Size</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Acres</u>
0 - 1 acres	196,000	116,000
1 - 5	276,000	630,000
5 - 10	97,000	699,000
10 - 20	68,000	969,000
20 - 100	39,000	1,424,000
100 - 1000	2,552	496,000
+ 1000	93	345,000

Source : A. Sreedhara Menon(ed): Kerala District Gazetteers, Kozhikode, 1962, simplified from p. 253.

Appendix II.2. Table - 2.

Distribution of Holdings in Quilon.
Number of Holdings

<u>Size</u>	<u>Wet Land</u>	<u>Dry Land</u>
Below 5 cents	23,000	49,000
5 - 10 "	47,000	69,000
10 - 25	107,000	181,000
25 - 50	72,000	165,000
50 - 75	32,000	95,000
75 - 100	18,000	51,000
1 - 5 acres	51,500	133,000
5 - 10	3,500	9,000
10 - 20	1,300	2,500
20 - 100	600	1,140
100-1000	52	110
+ 1000	2	7

Source : A. Sreedhara Menon(ed): Kerala District Gazetteers Quilon, 1964, p. 300.

APPENDIX II 3. Table 3.

Sample Households engaged in Cultivation Classified
by Interest in Land and size of Land cultivated (Rural)

Region	-1 Acre	1-2.5 Acres	2.5-5 Acres	15-30 Acres	30-50	+ 59	+ 15 Acres (Owners) [§]	Number of Cultivating Hhs.
Kerala	93576	61882	24038	1284	243	100	-	193 674
Cannanore	6426	6927	2505	103	18	4	6000	17 136
Kozhikode	6587	7294	3061	136	25	7	2100	18 776
Palghat	3462	5370	3350	506	97	33	3000	15 683
Ernakulam	7829	6133	2356	52	6	5	1700	12 343
Trichur	4112	4508	2329	102	20	7	4400	17 371
Kottayam	10968	6716	2453	107	18	12	6800	21 618
Alleppey	14203	5677	1922	158	41	27	1000	23 027
Quilon	23544	11998	3673	47	11	2	200	40,468
Trivandrum	16454	7259	2389	73	5	3	100	27,252
.....								
Kuttanad (ALP)	273	291	195	99	34	20		
Chittur (PZ)	57	250	336	246	66	19		
Alathur	301	562	493	72	11	3		
Trichur	823	1102	622	33	6	3		
Mupandapuram	1653	1742	890	33	10	2		

Source : Census of India 1961, Kerala, Part III, Table B.XI. The figures relate to cultivated land, owned or possessed. [§] This Column lists all holdings of the + 15 acres groups, inclusive of forests and plantations (Source: P.K. Gopalakrishan, in Nair, ed., p. 60).

Appendix II.3, Table 4.

LAND TRANSFER, 1957-1966 (In percentage of Total period)

	Total owned land Transferred		Owned & Possessed land transferred		Leased out land <i>Trf.</i>		Possession of owned Area <i>Trf.</i>		Possession of leased in Area <i>Trf.</i>	
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
1957	4.6	6.4	4.1	3.2	11.2	15.8	1.1.	2.4	2.8	1.6
1958	6.1	5.8	6.4	7.3	2.7	1.1	17.3	15.6	12.0	23.7
1959	2.9	4.2	2.6	4.8	5.8	2.6	3.8	2.4	5.5	5.1
1960	14.9	23.6	15.02	29.3	10.3	6.7	4.0	7.9	14.5	8.3
1961	5.3	3.8	5.61	2.7	7.6	6.9	3.0	2.8	8.6	6.5
1962	11.6	8.9	11.5	10.2	13.0	5.0	16.6	21.0	10.2	7.8
1963	16.4	20.1	16.7	12.7	13.5	42.4	15.8	18.0	17.0	25.1
1964	20.6	13.5	21.4	16.5	10.8	4.6	17.5	18.0	8.7	5.9
1965	10.7	8.4	10.0	7.6	17.9	11.0	12.3	8.5	13.6	8.4
1966	7.0	5.3	7.0	5.7	7.2	3.9	4.6	3.4	7.1	7.6
Total 10 years	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

- Column 1 refers to be number of cases, column 2 to the area, in percentage.

Source: Survey on Land Reforms in Kerala, pp. 79-81.

Appendix II.3.

Agreement between the government of Kerala and the Gwalior
Rayon Silk Co., Ltd. India (Extracts)

1. That it is the right and responsibility of the company to maintain discipline and efficiency in the plant, and to hire labourers and to discharge them for any cause which to the company appears just, and to relieve labourers from duty on account of inefficiency or lack of work or other valid reasons subject only to the provisions contained in the standing orders of the company, consistent with the statutes in force.
2. That the introduction of time standards and selection, placing and distribution of personnel are the responsibility of the company, and that the right to plan, direct and control operations of the plant, to introduce new or improve production methods, to extend production facilities, and to establish production schedules and quality standards are solely and exclusively the rights and responsibilities of the company....
3. That it is the right of the company to make such rules and regulations, from time to time, for the purpose of maintaining discipline, order, safety or effective operation of the company's work and to require compliance thereof by labourers.
4. That the company shall:
 - (a) Pay wages and dearness allowance in accordance with a wage schedule which will be prepared by

the company on the basis of scientific job evaluation.

- (b) Provide termination benefits, leave, holidays and welfare amenities in accordance with rules to be framed by the company and notified to the employees....
 - (c) Ensure the settlement of grievances expeditiously and frame the procedure for handling of such grievances.
5. That bonus will not be related to the company's profits but where found necessary by the company will only be related to and paid on efficiency and productivity, according to schemes which may be formulated by the company from time to time.
6. (a) Government will take timely and positive steps to prevent is interruption in production....
- (b) Government will, therefore, do his utmost to ensure that the laws, rules and regulations, relating to the company's relations with labour, and taxes and levies on the company are so administered as not to materially alter the conditions under which the company begins its operations.

Source: Text of the agreement as laid on the table of the Kerala Legislative Assembly, 2 July, 1958.

Appendix II.3. Table - 1.

Growth of Industries During 1957, 1958 & 1959.

Name of Industry	No. of factories opened during		No. of factories closed during		No. of factories working during		
	1958	1959	1958	1959	1957	1958	1959
Rice Mills	70	9	9	60	84	145	94
Oil	127	5	4		770	200	205
Tea	7	1	3		123	122	123
Cashew	35	4	31		170	174	178
Beedi	19	2	22	3	89	86	85
Textiles	49	43	8	5	192	233	271
Coir	35	8	6	1	124	153	160
Saw Mills	60	18	20	1	83	123	140
Plywood Factories	4		3		14	15	15
Packing cases	11	6	2		15	24	30
Splints and veneers	20	2	8	3	65	77	76
Wooden furniture	14	1	4		16	25	26
Printing	72	19	3		192	161	180
Tyre Retreading	13	15			3	16	31
Rubber	20	2	12	1	62	70	71
Artificial Manures	2				1	3	3
Bricks and Tiles	10	4	1		146	155	159
Forgings	3				1	4	4
General Engineering	22	4	11	3	32	43	44
Ship Building and Repairing	5				2	7	7
Repair of Motor Vehicles	35	6	8		65	92	98
All Industries	692	194	214	80	1652	2130	2244

Source: Kerala 1959, An Economic Review, pp. 95-98.

Appendix II.4. Strikes in Registered Factories by States

State	Factory Workers	Workers (000) Involved				Man Days Lost				Incidence of Time Loss		
		1957	1958	1959	1960	1957	1958	1959	1960	1957	1958	1959
Bombay	1066	191	226	199	293	879	1324	664	1054	0.24	0.26	0.18
Kerala	166	185	109	35	175	1004	1073	293	1057	1.91	1.92	0.87
Madhya Pradesh	161	25	18	15	34	163	151	200	136	0.34	0.22	0.16
Mysore	186	49	41	56	24	365	416	311	42	6.39	0.70	0.49
Madras	326	116	90	186	190	719	742	1053	750	0.79	0.74	1.11
West Bengal	686	116	264	142	153	1314	2536	1642	2606	0.37	0.63	0.75

Source : Indian Labour Gazette 1957-1960, Indian Labour Journal, 1960, ff.

+ : Factory workers only includes 'factory' workers. The strike figures, however, relate also to plantation workers. It is thus obvious that the figures of the incidence of time loss in Kerala should be calculated as a percentage of the man days of at least 340,000 workers. Consequently this figure would drop by more than 50%.

Appendix - III.

EMS Clarification in Assembly of Coimbatore Speech. Proceedings, 9 June, 1958.

The essence of the policy pursued by the opposition is their hatred for communism. It does not matter to them that there are differences among themselves both on questions of broad policy as well as day to day practical questions, all these differences should be subordinated to what they consider to be their central task- "destroy communism".

This policy of anti-communism stands in sharp contrast to the policy of rational unity which we have inherited as a tradition of several decades long national-democratic movement. It was for such a policy of national unity that the Congress has always stood (and) finally forced the British to Quit India in 1947.

The attainment of national independence has not made it less necessary to forge national unity. The only difference the attainment of independence has made is the change in the objective for which national unity has to be forged...., for rapidly overcoming our social, economic and cultural backwardness. If in the pre-1947 period the necessity was for the unity of all the anti-imperialist forces regardless of their mutual differences on ideological or other issues, the necessity today is to subordinate all such difference to the supreme need of so developing over economy and social and cultural life that we can rapidly go forward to the cherished goal of socialism though peaceful and democratic means.

Such a national unity for the attainment of our national goal of socialism makes it obligatory for all of us - whether we are Congressmen, Praja Socialists, Communist or people belonging to other political parties, or belonging to no party - all to enter into a friendly competition as to who serves best the cause which is dear to all of us. We should, of course criticise one another, even fight one another....., but this mutual criticism and mutual struggle should be directed towards mutual correction in order that the nation as a whole can profit from the activities of all.

It is not this attitude of mutual criticism and mutual struggle with a view to mutual correction in the interests of the nation as a whole, but an attitude of "destroying" one of these groups, namely the Communists, that is inherent in the policy of anti-communism pursued by the opposition in Kerala. It will inevitably lead to a situation in which the two contending groups will be forced to embark on a policy of mutual annihilation leading to a national tragedy rather than a policy of national advance through mutual correction. It was this that led to the protracted civil war in China...."

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