

**DISSEMINATION OF MARXIST IDEAS
IN KERALA 1939—52**

Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

VINODAN T. K

**CENTRE FOR HISTORICAL STUDIES
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI - 110067**

1990

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I express my gratitude to my Supervisor, Dr. Bhagwan Singh Josh, who guided me in this study.

Prof. K.N. Panikkar made me realize the limitations of this dissertation. I am indebted to him for being so kind to me.

Without my friends who always reminded me of the value of time, this study wouldn't have been possible. I don't wish to name them for I believe it's painful to formalise one's true friendship.



Vinodan T.K.



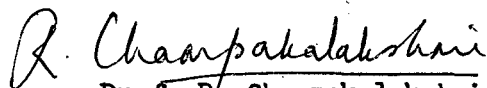
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY

NEW DELHI-110067

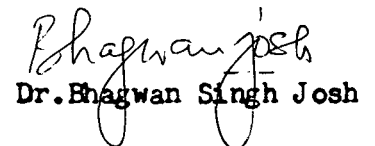
Centre for Historical Studies
Chairperson

C E R T I F I C A T E

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled "DISSEMINATION OF MARXIST IDEAS IN KERALA 1939-52" submitted by Shri. Vinodan, T.K. in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy of the University is a bonafide work to the best of our knowledge and may be placed before examiners for evaluation.


Prof. R. Champakalakshmi

(Chairperson)


Dr. Bhagwan Singh Josh

(Supervisor)

C o n t e n t s

	ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	
	INTRODUCTION	1
Chapter I	RADICAL IDEAS AND THE FORMATION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY	10
Chapter II	PROPAGATION OF MARXIST IDEAS AND COMMUNIST POLITICAL PRACTICE	26
Chapter III	APPROPRIATION OF TRADITION AND CULTURE	48
	CONCLUSION	68
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	76
	APPENDIX	86

I N T R O D U C T I O N

The second world which projected itself as an alternative and a counterbalance of power to the "doomed" capitalist order is in a deep crisis, seems almost irrevocable, showing that the socialist politics and economics practised in most parts of the 'socialist' world has failed. The popular movements against the 'socialist' regimes in Eastern Europe and their subsequent replacement by non-socialist governments clearly indicate that the people are no longer satisfied with the system that had once offered them a better future. Whether the failure can be ascribed to Marxism or not is a question of vital importance and the focal point of one of the most debated topics today - the relevance of Marxism. Does the popular upsurge against the 'socialist' regimes mean that the people have rejected Marxism as their ideology? This question leads to another important one - whether people ever accepted Marxism as their ideology?

The investigation into the process of Marxist ideological dissemination attract more importance in the context of present crisis in the socialist world. The studies on the Marxist ideological dissemination need to address themselves to the problems not only in the 'socialist' world but wherever the Marxist politics has a significant presence. In the third

world, Marxist politics mainly oppositional to the state power still holds an influence over the people as against the erstwhile socialist states where Marxist politics was completely identified with the state. Large sections of the people in the third world look up to socialism as an alternative to capitalism and Marxism has not lost much of its attraction as an oppositional ideology. As the third world situation differs from that of the 'socialist' world, the study of the process of dissemination of Marxist ideas in the third world demands a different approach.

The attempt here is to focus on some problems of Marxist ideological dissemination in a given Indian situation.

As distinct from most other parts of the country, the Marxist political movement in Kerala gave much importance to the propagation of ideas which had a good audience in the State. It is tended to assume that the ideology of Marxism does have enormous influence over the Kerala society, judging by the extent of popular support the communist movement enjoys in the State. However the relationship between the mass base of the communist movement and the influence of the ideology it preaches has not been subjected to historical research, so far. Numerous studies that existed on the communist movement in Kerala mainly deal with the problems of mobilisation of communist support base in electoral campaigns and victories and party programmes and their implementation. Though these studies make

passing references to the problems of Marxist ideological dissemination and its impact on the cultural and intellectual life of Kerala, none of them focuses on this theme.

The communist movement in Kerala evoked considerable interest among the academic and non-academic circles after its electoral victory to the State legislature in 1957. Most of the studies on the communist movement emanated from this new found interest. Quite naturally the studies originated primarily from the curiosity to observe how the communists function within a system sought to be destroyed by them, centred around the performance of communist State government. How the communists were able to establish a firm base in ^{the} State when they could not do so in most other parts of the country was also a question that intrigued them. The reasons for communists' success in Kerala was sought mainly in economic, political and social specificities of Kerala.

Victor M. Fic in his book, Kerala: Yenan of India...; tries to analyse communist politics in Kerala in relation with the strategies adopted by the communist party at national level. The popular support of the party is explained as the success of its strategies adopted according to the subnational

-
1. Victor M. Fic, Kerala: Yenan of India - Rise of Communist Power 1937-'69, Nachiketa, Bombay, 1969.

specificities, especially the peculiarities of caste system, of Kerala. The electoral performance of the Communist Party and of other political parties have been examined in detail in order to explain the impacts the party's strategies and tactics had had on its popular support.

The more comprehensive study by T.J. Nossitter, *Communism in Kerala: A Study in Political Adaptation*, is also concerned with the functioning of communist provincial government within the framework of "the bourgeois quasi-federal democracy".² Exhaustively using primary and secondary materials, Nossitter tries to analyse the nature of communist intervention in Kerala's economic and political life. The issues including the nature of the communists' interaction with the various social factors like caste and the nature and effects of communist politics in relation with the socio-economic relations are also the concerns of Nossitter's study.

G.K. Lieten's monograph on the first communist ministry in Kerala focuses on the governmental aspects of the first communist ministry.³ He also searches political reasons for the communist

2. T.J. Nossitter, Communism in Kerala: A Study in Political Adaptation, Oxford, 1982.

3. G.K. Lieten, The First Communist Ministry in Kerala, K.P. Bagchi, Calcutta, 1982.

success in the State. R. Ramakrishnan Nair's How Communists Came to Power in Kerala attempts to give an overview of the communist politics before the communists came to power in the State.⁴ Communalism vs Communism... by P.M. Mammen is a study on inter-play of various socio religious communities in Kerala's polity and society.⁵ The communists' interaction with these forces also forms a part of the study.

The micro level studies conducted by Robin Jeffrey, Kathleen Gough and Robert L. Hardgrave throw new lights on the nature of communist interaction in Kerala's social life.⁶ Kathleen Gough looks at the problem of grassroots mobilisation of the Communist Party. The problems of the communists' adoption to the bourgeois power structure is the Hardgrave's theme. Robin Jeffrey sets out to analyse the dynamics of Kerala society before the formation years of the Communist Party. Though she does not exclude the electoral performance of the Communist Party from

-
4. R. Ramakrishnan Nair, How Communists Came to Power in Kerala, Academy of Political Science, Trivandrum, 1969.
 5. P.M. Mammen, Communism vs Communalism: A Study of the Socio-Religious Communities and Political Parties in Kerala, 1892-1970, Minerva, Calcutta, 1981.
 6. Kathleen Gough, 'Village Politics in Kerala', EPW, 20 Feb. and 27 Feb., 1965; R. Jeffrey, 'Matriliney, Marxism and the Birth of the Communist Party in Kerala 1930-40', Journal of Asian Studies, November, 1978; Hardgrave, R.L., 'Caste and Kerala Elections', Economic Weekly, 17 April 1965.

his analyses, it is not the main concern in any of his studies.

K.K.N. Kurup's monograph, *Kayyur Riot: A Terrorist Episode...* is a study on a peasant revolt led by the Communist Party in North Malabar in 1941.⁷ The study tries to analyse the peasant revolt on the background of the peasant movement in Malabar and the communist politics of the period. K.C. George's book on 'Punnapra Vayalar' revolt⁸ is not an academic account of the revolt.⁸ The book compiles the personal versions of the participants. The author who was one of the leaders of the struggles gives his analytical views on the then existing political and economic situation.

'Communist Party Keralathil' by E.M.S. Namboodirippad and 'Keralathile Communist Prasthanam' by N.E. Balaram are two books in Malayalam that deal with the history of the communist movement in Kerala.⁹ E.M.S. Namboodirippad, one of the founder members of the Communist Party in the State, traces back the

-
7. K.K.N. Kurup, The Kayyur Riot: A Terrorist Episode in the Nationalist Movement in Kerala, Sandhya, Calicut, 1978.
 8. K.C. George, Immortal Punnapra Vayalar, PPH, New Delhi, 1975.
 9. E.M.S. Namboodirippad, Communist Party Keralathil, Chinta, Trivandrum, 1988; N.E. Balaram, Keralathile Communist Prasthanam, Prabhat, Trivandrum, 1990.

history of the early communist groups existed before the formation of the party. E.M.S explains the changes in strategies and policies of the party and touches upon almost all the problems related to the communist politics in Kerala from the formation of the party to the present. N.E. Balaram's book is a descriptive history of the evolution of the Communist Party in Kerala. The study covers up to the formation of the party.

As the foregoing review suggests, none of the works on communist movement in Kerala gives central importance to the question of Marxist ideological dissemination and the cultural and intellectual aspects of communist political practice.

The present study focuses on the dissemination of Marxist ideas in Kerala from 1939 to 1952. The question as to how Marxist ideas were being interpreted and propagated by the Communist Party will be the main concern of the study. The communist propaganda of the period from 1939 to 1952 forms the main source. Though the attempts to learn and propagate Marxist ideas predate the advent of the Communist Party, the year of the formation of the party has been chosen as the starting point here with the intention to study the nature of dissemination of Marxist ideas in relation to a definite subject, i.e., the Communist Party, with which Marxism was completely identified in Kerala. It is hoped that the study based primarily on the communist propaganda of a given period may help to have an

understanding of the nature of ideas that encountered the Kerala society and also of the manner in which they had been propagated.

The influence of Marxist ideas on the literature and art of the period also forms part of the study.

Many of the conceptual and methodological questions encountered by the theme may remain unresolved despite attempts to answer them. Many of them need more intense research.

To historically locate the Marxist ideological intervention, it is necessary to determine the nature of ideologies that had been operating in Kerala before the advent of Marxism.

The questions related to culture need a different conceptual framework. Whether the communists intentionally or unintentionally were able to break the hegemony of dominant culture and produce a counter culture is a question of vital importance that demands a deep analysis of the cultural patterns before the Marxist intervention and after.

To situate the process of dissemination of Marxist ideas in Kerala in a sound conceptual framework is beyond the scope of this study. The present study has no pretensions of solving any theoretical questions raised in relation to the subject. The attempt here is to document the ideas propagated as Marxist ideas in Kerala in a period in which communists' attempt to penetrate the society was on the high. The attempt

to draw the main trends in the literature and art of the period is intended to give an overview of the nature of interaction of Marxist ideas in Kerala culture.

Chapter I

RADICAL IDEAS AND THE FORMATION
OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

Radical ideas and left wing politics emerged in Kerala in the wake of the prolonged struggles against the traditional social structure that excluded no section of society. Socio-political movements of the late 19th and the early 20th century were the manifestations of the rising consciousness among the people. The struggles of the oppressed for social equality had shaken the foundations of the rigidly stratified Kerala society. The SNDP Yogam, the organisation which spearheaded this movement, was able to challenge the hierarchical social structure with its superior leadership and ideology.¹ The social reform movements did not confine to the lower castes alone. The struggles between the conservatives and radicals occurred within all castes and communities. Thus the social reform movements were instrumental in creating^a a new awakening among the masses.²

Robin Jeffrey argues that the communist ideas were acceptable to the masses in Kerala because they needed an ideology that could fill up the ideological void created after the destruction of the traditional matrilineal system and its ideology.³ When

-
1. Robin Jeffrey, 'The Social Origins of a Caste Association 1875-1905: The Founding of SNDP Yogam', South Asia, October 1974, p. 58.
 2. E.M.S. Namboodirippad, Nambodiriye Manushyanakkan, 1944, p. 34.
 3. Robin Jeffrey, 'Matriliney, Marxism and the Birth of the Communist Party in Kerala', Journal Of Asian Studies, November, 1978, p. 98.

Marxism came to Kerala, the traditional ideological system was almost completely destroyed.⁴

The first unit of the Communist Party in Kerala was formed in 1937 as a secret group consisting of five leading Congress Socialists. It was many years after the formation of the Communist Party of India.⁵ It took two years more for the secret group to become a full fledged political party.⁶ Though the official formation of the party took place later, the communist ideas found expression in various forms much before.

The Communist League, the first organisational expression of Marxist ideas in Kerala dates back to 1931. A trade union and some youth organisations were organised by this group in Trivandrum.⁷ They translated the manifesto

-
4. P.C. Joshi and K.Damodaran, Marx Comes to India, Manohar Book House, Delhi, 1975.
 5. Differences exist on the date of formation of the Communist Party of India. 1920, 1925 and 1934 are the dates given by different schools. (See G. Adhikari, Documents of the Communist Party of India, Vol. I, PPH, New Delhi, 1971; Muzaffar Ahmed, Communist Party of India: Years of Foundation, National Book Agency, Calcutta, 1959; E.M.S. Namboodirippad, Communist Party Keralathil, Chinta, Trivandrum, 1988.)
 6. The Communist Party started functioning among the masses after December 1939.
 7. N.E. Balaram, Keralathile Communist Prasthanam, Prabhat, Trivandrum, 1990, p. 56.

prepared by the Meerut conspiracy detainees and published it in the name of the Kerala provincial committee of the Indian Communist Party, though such a link had not been established. The objective of the group was "the establishment of complete Swarajya and a system of society based upon communal ownership and communal control of the means and instruments of production, and distribution of wealth by and in the interest of the whole community of India."⁸ The Communist League had not accepted the leadership of the nationalist movement and expressed its disapproval of the way in which the Congress led the freedom struggle. The Communist League was banned in the same year of its formation. The fact that this group was short lived and its activities had been confined to limited areas do not undermine its significance as the first organisation in Kerala that tried to translate Marxist ideas into practice.

The younger and radical sections of the nationalist movement in Kerala were dissatisfied with the moderate policies pursued by the nationalist leadership. The failures of the second civil disobedience movement and the Guruvayoor Satyagraha were two important events that caused wide scale discontent

8. N.P. Kurukkal, Pamphlet issued on behalf of the Kerala Provincial Organisation of Indian Communist Party, Trivandrum, 1931.

within the Congress.⁹ The discontented sections were in search of new avenues and were attracted to radical and left wing ideas. A branch of Anuseelan Samiti, a terrorist organisation based in Bengal, was formed at this period. The biographer of P. Krishnapillai sums up the factors that had an immediate bearing on Kerala's as well as the national politics of the period:

...the functioning of communist groups, the articles written in praise of the October Revolution and the Soviet system by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru... his later series of articles entitled "Whither India?", the peasant upsurge in U.P. and Punjab; the formation of trade unions; the Meerut conspiracy case trial; the inclusion of national leaders of the stature of Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. K.N. Katju and Bhilabai Desai in the defence committee of the Meerut conspiracy case; the echoes of the victory of the Soviet first five year plan made audible in Kerala by the forceful writings of K.P. Kesava menon, A.K. Pillai, A. Balakrishna Pillai, Sahodaran Ayyappan and M.C. Joseph. These were the various factors which together created a favourable situation.¹⁰

-
9. Guruvayoor Satyagraha (1932) was a mass movement led by the Kerala State Congress Committee for the temple entry of all sections including the untouchables. The struggle was withdrawn with the advice of Gandhi without getting the demand fulfilled.
10. T.V. Krishnan, Kerala's First Communist, New Delhi, CPI Publication, 1971, p. 28.

The Congress Socialist Party was the manifestation of the growing discontent towards the nationalist political leadership as well as of the influence of the emerging socialist ideas in Kerala's politics.¹¹ The young Congressmen who had been in jail during the second civil disobedience movement had a crucial role in forming the Congress Socialist Party in Kerala. In jail they got the opportunity to meet many radical and left wing leaders from outside the state and through them learnt about the emerging left wing ideas within and outside the nationalist movement.¹² They also had the opportunity to learn more about the Soviet Union and socialism. These ideas had

11. The Congress Socialists' differences with the Congress leadership was well articulated by A.K.Pillai, one of the leading ideologues of the Kerala Congress Socialist Party, in his welcome address to the 3rd Conference of the party. He held that the Congress capitulated to the vested interests, had let down the hopes of radical youth who joined it with great enthusiasm. He explained how it became imperative to form a new organisation, the Congress Socialist Party as part of the searching for new avenues to socialism (Welcome speech by A.K. Pillai in the 3rd Conference of the Kerala Congress Socialist Party, Talassery, 14. 6. 1936). A.K. Pillai's opinions on Congress and on the need for a new political organisation were not his personal views but commonly shared by the young Congress Socialists who were disillusioned with the nationalist political leadership.
12. "The terrorist leaders, Rabindranath Sengupta, T.N.Chakravarty and Romeshchandra Acharya were with us in Kannoor prison. Two Meerut conspiracy detenues, Ramakanth Tewary and Jayadev Kapoor also joined us... through them we got the opportunity to know more about the growing radical ideas." (K.P. Gopalan, in CPI 40th Anniversary Souvenir, CPI Kerala State Council, p. 198).

generated new hopes and the policies pursued by the nationalist leadership had been found incapable to realise these hopes. It was realised that a fundamental change in the participation and the leadership of the movement was necessary. They came out of the jails with the decision to work among the masses to ensure mass participation in the national struggle and thereby give a new direction to the national movement. Kerala unit of the Congress Socialist Party was formed by these young Congressmen.¹³

When the Congress Socialist Party was formed by the left wing within the Congress it became the rallying point of the radical sections in the Congress. The Congress Socialist Party involved with organising peasant movement, trade unions and various mass organisations. The activities of these organisations helped to draw large sections of masses into the anti colonial struggle. The rift between the left and the right wings in the Congress became evident on the issues raised by the peasants and trade unions struggles. The left wing and the right wing of the Congress had been vaguely identified as the

13. "After the second civil disobedience movement, the Congress activists had a meeting in which they discussed about Nehru's article on socialism ('Wither India?') and decided to form a socialist party in Kerala. All the participants were important Congressmen who had been in jail during the last civil disobedience movement." (P. Krishnapillai, Congress Socialist Party, Prabhatham, May Day Special, 1939)

'Congress of the poor' and the 'Congress of the rich' respectively.¹⁴

Before the advent of the Congress Socialist Party there had been attempts to organise the working class into trade unions and make them conscious of the need to fight for their rights. The new awareness manifested in the railway workers' strike in 1928 and in the activities of various trade unions formed in the early 1930s. The Congress Socialist Party tried to coordinate the activities of various trade unions and give a new orientation to the trade union movement by relating it to the political struggles. The all Kerala trade union conference called by the Congress Socialist Party at Kozhikode in 1935 was the first State level trade union conference held in Kerala.¹⁵ Many trade unions and trade union struggles had been organised under the leadership of the Congress Socialists. When the second all Kerala trade union conference was held in 1937, the total number of trade unions in Kerala was 16 and by

14. K. Madhavan, Payaswiniyude Theerathu, Prabhat, Trivandrum, 1987, p. 49.

15. All the trade unions represented in this Conference with the only one exception of Travancore Labour Association came into existence in the period between 1930 and 1935. Travancore Labour Association was formed in 1922 (Puthuppally Raghavan, Saghavu Sugathante Jeeva-charitram, Prabhat, Trivandrum, 1939, p. 35). The other prominent unions represented in the conference included Cochin Labour Union, Trichur Labour Union, North Malabar Labour Union and Trivandrum Press Workers Union (N.E. Balaram, Keralathile Communist Prasthanam, Prabhat, Trivandrum, 1990, p. 100.)

1939 it increased to 59.¹⁶

The landless and middle peasants constituted the bulk of the peasant movement built up by the Congress Socialist Party, which established a strong base in North Malabar and certain areas in South Malabar. Unlike in Malabar, the peasant grievances did not lead to militant struggles in Travancore and Cochin though the peasant movement had its units in these States. The landownership in these States were more diffused and the small landholders were more prosperous as against the situation in Malabar where a few landlords owned most of the land and the tenants' position was highly vulnerable.¹⁷ As most of the landlords were caste Hindus, the peasant struggles against landlordism had shaken the foundations of caste dominance in Malabar.

The Congress Socialist Party attempted to organise different sections of the society into their respective organisations. The All Malabar Students Federation and the Elementary School Teachers Union were prominent among them. The primary school teachers who had fought for their rights through the union had also

16. N. E. Balaram, Keralathile Communist Prasthanam, Prabhat, Trivandrum, 1990, pp. 104 and 150.

17. Robin Jeffrey, Matriliney, 'Marxism and the Birth of the Communist Party in Kerala', Journal of Asian Studies, Nov. 1978; T.J. Nossitter, Communism in Kerala, Oxford, 1982, p. 77.

played a major role in propagating socialist ideas among the masses.¹⁸ Despite their pathetic economic position the teachers enjoyed social respectability and their involvement in left wing politics helped to draw sections from the middle class, mainly from rural areas to the struggles led by the Congress Socialists.¹⁹ The student movement provided a new educated cadre base to the left wing of the nationalist movement.²⁰ The Congress Socialists had a leading role in the formation and activities of the 'Jeevatsahitya Sanghatana', the progressive literary movement that got inspiration from the All India Progressive Writers Association.²¹ The Congress Socialists actively participated in cultural activities and tried to use art and literature for political propaganda.

18. The primary school teachers in Malabar were poorly paid and were at the mercy of the all powerful private management. The Elementary School Teachers' Union fought for better salaries and against the highhandedness of the private management. The teachers union did not confine to the teachers' demands but actively participated in the freedom struggle. The teachers were also in the forefront of cultural activities. They tried to emphasise the necessity for a fundamental social change based on socialist ideas.

19. Interview with P.T. Bhaskara Panikkar, Trivandrum, 5. 5. 1990.

20. Interview with Kallat Krishnan, Kozhikode, 21. 5. 1990.

21. N.E. Balaram, Keralathile Communist Prasthanam, op.cit. p.181.

The leadership of the Communist Party of India had been in constant touch with many of the leading congress socialists in Kerala and a unit of the Communist Party was formed in 1937.²² The communists did not split away from the nationalist movement but remained in the Congress Socialist Party and functioned as the left wing in the Congress and were able to gain control over the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee in the years from 1938 to 1940.²³ The right wing in the Congress dissociated itself from left leadership and accused them of unleashing violence violating the basic principles of the nationalist movement.²⁴ The rift within the Congress led to the dismissal

22. P. Sundarayya and S.V. Ghate, the two prominent communist leaders had visited Malabar many times and established contacts with some of the leading Congress Socialists. S.V. Ghate was present in the meeting in which the first communist unit was formed. The membership of the first unit is a point of dispute. According to E.M.S. Namboodirippad who was a member of the first unit, four members constituted the unit (E.M.S. Namboodirippad, Communist Party Keralathil, Chinta, Trivandrum, 1988. pp. 7 and 65). Another member K. Damodaran says that there were five members (K. Damodaran, 'Puthiyoru Party Janikkunnu', Desabhimani, Krishnapillai Souvenir, 1955,p.30).
23. In 1938 Muhammad Abdul Rahman the leader of the nationalist Muslims and E.M.S. Namboodirippad, the leader of the CSP were elected as the President and the Secretary of the K.P.C.C respectively. The CSP and the nationalist Muslims together got majority in the K.P.C.C. In the next election in 1940 to the K.P.C.C. they were able to maintain the majority.
24. P. Narayanan Nair, Ara Noottandilcode, NBS, Kottayam, 1973, p. 203.

of left dominated K.P.C.C. which ultimately led to the breaking away of the communists from the nationalist movement.²⁵

The Congress socialists who fought against the right wing in the Congress had also differences with the national leadership of the Congress Socialist Party. The Congress Socialists in Kerala did not agree with the critical attitude of its national leadership towards the Soviet Union. For them the Soviet Union was the real example of socialist practice. Soviet Union's achievements had been an important factor that attracted them to socialist ideas.²⁶ The criticisms of the national leadership could not affect their regard for Soviet Union but

-
25. The differences between the right and left wing on the mode of struggle became more evident after the outbreak of the Second World War. The K.P.C.C called for protest demonstrations against the war on 15th September 1940. The right wing opposed to it on the grounds that it was against the decision of the national leadership which adopted the individual Satyagraha as the form of protest. The protest day marked violent incidents in various parts and the Congress high command dismissed the K.P.C.C at the request of the right wing and formed an adhoc committee.
26. "In those days our knowledge about socialist ideologies and its basic tenets were scanty and vague. But we knew that what we saw in the Soviet Union was a reflection of those tenets of socialism. Our faith in socialism was further strengthened by the fact that while the capitalist countries were facing widespread economic crisis, the Soviet Union was successfully launching its first five year plan and that its economic progress had no parallel in any other country. We could not find a better proof to convince the people about the capitalist system and the advantage of socialism..." (E.M.S. Namboodirippad, How I Became a Communist, Chinta, Trivandrum, 1976, p. 157).

TH-3835

contributed to widen the rift between the Kerala unit and the national leadership. The Congress Socialists of Kerala had also differences with the national leadership on the mode of struggle. The differences came to the fore when the Congress Socialists took a different stand from the national leadership on the question of war and demanded a mass movement against the war imposed upon the Indians. The Congress Socialists who could not find justification for the symbolic protest with which the national leadership was satisfied instead of a mass movement had moved closer towards the Communist Party. Ultimately the Congress Socialists in Kerala pulled out of the Congress Socialist Party and joined the Communist Party of India en masse.²⁷ Influence of the communist party unit formed in 1937 was vital in this transformation.²⁸

27. The Congress Socialists in Kerala took the decision to join the Communist Party in a meeting held at Tellichery in December 1939. (N.E. Balaram, Keralathile Communist Prasthanam, Prabhat, Trivandrum, 1990, p. 239).

28. The Communist Party's influence was stronger than the influence of All India Congress Socialist Party over the Congress Socialists in Kerala during the period 1937-39. As a pamphlet issued by the Party in 1943 states "the Congress Socialists in Kerala had established close links with the Communist Party since 1937. It is evident from a comparison of the contents of the Prabhatam Weekly (the official organ of the CSP in Kerala) of the period 1938-39 with the journals, the 'Congress Socialist', the organ of the AICSP and the 'National Front' of the CPI." (Surendran, Communism Neenal Vazhum, Desabhimani, Kozhikode, 1943, p. 8). The Communist Party unit formed in 1937 had an important role in this transformation. Various activities of this unit such as conducting study classes and circulating party literature including the party's national journal 'National Front' among the Congress Socialists had helped this process.

Indian National Congress did not involve in the internal politics of the princely states where the struggle was mainly against the autocratic rule of native princes and for democratic government.²⁹ The Travancore State Congress and the Cochin Praja Mandalam, the organisations that led struggles for 'responsible government' in Travancore and Cochin had accepted the leadership of Indian National Congress.³⁰ The radical left sections in these organisations had been functioning in close co-operation with the Congress Socialist Party. In Cochin the Congress Socialist Party had units in a few trade union centres. It was not the Congress Socialist Party but the Travancore Youth

-
29. A branch of the Indian National Congress was formed in Travancore in 1938 but was dissolved in the same year due to the Haripura Congress resolution that decided to keep away from the internal politics of the princely states (N.E. Balaram, Keralathile Communist Prasthanam, Prabhat, Trivandrum, 1990, p. 163).
30. When the Indian National Congress dissolved its branch in Travancore the popular sentiments against princely rule found expression in a new organisation, the Travancore State Congress formed in 1938. In Cochin, the government introduced an administrative reform in 1938 according to which certain portfolios had been delegated to a minister appointed by the king from elected legislators. Though the popular demands were not accepted, the Cochin State Congress was satisfied with the minor reform. The people were disappointed with the Cochin State Congress and wanted a new organisation that would represent their aspirations. The Cochin State Prajamandalam was formed in 1941 in this context. The Congress Socialists in Cochin had an active role in the formation and activities of the Prajamandalam (See K. Damodaran, and C. Narayana Pillai, Keralathile Swadhanthrya Samaram, Trivandrum, 1957, pp. 134 and 181-84).

League and the radical group in the Travancore State Congress which had links with the CSP that represented left wing politics in Travancore.³¹

The trade unions and peasant organisations had not confined to their economic demands but had taken active part in the political life.³² Their activities had also helped to give a leftward orientation to the politics in Travancore and Cochin. The left wing leadership that gave political direction to the

31. The Travancore Youth League formed in 1931 was in many ways a continuation of the Communist League the organisation formed in 1931. The persons who organised the Communist League were the ones who were behind the Youth League also. The Youth League had been functioning as a radical section in the Travancore State Congress since the latter's formation in 1938. Within one year of the formation of the State Congress, differences between the two organisations surfaced to the fore when the State Congress withdrew its memorandum of allegations against the Travancore Dewan at the behest of Gandhi. The withdrawal of the memorandum created widespread discontent in the State and the Youth League vehemently opposed the State Congress decision and reiterated the allegations. In 1939, a radical group was formed in the State Congress to function as an organised left wing. The Congress Socialist Party leadership was instrumental in forming this group (See K.C. George, Ente Jeevita Yatra, NBS, Kottayam, pp. 431-35).
32. The strikes called by the trade unions of Alleppey and Shertallai taluks in Travancore in 1938 was the first trade union struggle on political demands. The most important demand was to establish democratic rule in Travancore. 3000 workers participated in the strike. The magnitude of the participation shows the workers' involvement. (See Puthuppalli Raghavan, Saghavu Sugathante Jeevacharithram, Prabhatam, Trivandrum, 1979, pp. 95-105; P. Krishnapillai, 'Ithihasikamaya Panimudakkam', Prabhatam Weekly, 12 December, 1938).

trade union agitations had also tried to impart political education to the activists and built up a new cadre for the left wing in Travancore and Cochin.³³

The periodical and non-periodical press had also been used in propaganda. The left wing interpretation of national and international politics and the reports of the activities of various left oriented mass organisations had helped the readers to get an understanding of the left wing politics within and outside the state. The Prabhatam Weekly published by the Congress Socialist Party had a prominent role in imparting anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist sentiments among the people. Pamphlets and booklets had been brought out to articulate the positions of the left wing and to counter the right wing criticisms. The publications of the central committees of the Congress Socialist Party and the Communist Party had also been circulated.

The books on socialism and the Soviet Union had been very popular. 'Why Socialism' by Jayaprakash Narayanan was one of the most popular books of the period. The books by foreign authors like H.G. Wells and Bernardshaw, containing the ideas of Fabian socialism and the book on Soviet Communism by Webbs had tremendous influence on the intellectuals of Kerala. Marxian

33. M.N. Govindan Nair, Emmente Atmakatha, Vol. I, Prabhath, Trivandrum, 1988, p. 98; K.C. George, Ente Jeevitha Yatra, NBS, Kottayam, 1985, p. 462.

texts were not commonly available. Though translations from Marxian texts and articles on Marxian political economy appeared in party press, attempts to translate Marxian texts in a wide scale had been made only after the formation of the Communist Party.

When the Communist Party started functioning in Kerala it had a line of leaders armed with adequate political experience and mass support, thanks to their active involvement in the national movement. The long term association of the communists with the national movement as its left wing enabled them to establish a firm base in Kerala.

Chapter II

PROPAGATION OF MARXIST IDEAS
AND COMMUNIST POLITICAL PRACTICE

By championing the cause of the proletariat, the Communist Party perceived itself to be different. Believing themselves to be ^{the} redeemers of the oppressed, the communists classified other political parties as the stooges of the bourgeoisie, perpetuating exploitation.

The Communist Party had the bulwark of an ideology, and one which made it radically different from the rest - Marxism. And so the party believed that the world and the events around it had to be reinterpreted in the light of this theory.

E.M.S. Namboodirippad has made this very clear:

As a revolution based on the problems of the proletariat and their struggles to overcome the same is the objective of the communists, they have to adopt a theoretical position suitable to that, which is Marxism-Leninism. Thus unlike other political parties the communists must take the theoretical position of Marxism-Leninism...¹

But theory was not to be a luxury of the leadership, nor was it to be an intellectual's privilege. Theory has to be a cohesive force, that not only unites but drives the

1. E.M.S. Namboodirippad, Communist Party Keralathil, Chinta, Trivandrum, 1988, p. 116.

cadre to action. And so it has to be the right of every proletariat. Action then becomes complementary to theory, Marxism in that context was conceived as the guide to political action.

This inevitably led to a pragmatic appropriation of Marxist ideas. It was not disseminated purely on theoretical levels, but was carried out mainly as part of the political propaganda of the Communist Party which concentrated mainly on the political reality. The Marxist ideas were utilised to analyse and interpret specific situations.

Even after breaking away from the national movement, the Communist Party functioned within the broad framework of anti-imperialist struggle. Unlike the national movement to which freedom from colonial rule was the ultimate objective, the establishment of a socialist society was the goal of the Communist Party. Socialism was depicted as a historical necessity that would replace capitalism. The role of the Communist Party in accelerating this historical process had been emphasised. Socialism could be achieved only through a revolution led by the proletariat, for which the national liberation was a pre-requisite. A historical pattern in which the decay of capitalist society followed by the proletarian revolution and the establishment of the socialist society was drawn by the communists. This process is described in one of the booklets

issued by the party as follows:

The struggles between workers and capitalists and the recurring economic crises weaken the capitalist system. This hampers the growth of the productive forces. At this period, capitalism will be destroyed by the working class in a revolution and the foundation of a new social order will be laid by the working class by making the means of production under public ownership.²

With this understanding, the party participated in the anti-imperialist struggle.

Attempts have been made simultaneously to inculcate socialism in people's minds as a goal. The communist propaganda tried to emphasise the changes brought about in the material life by the socialist system and compared them with the reality in capitalist system. The Communist Party tried to attract the masses towards socialism by exposing the contradictions in the capitalism. The contradiction between private ownership and social production was referred to as the main contradiction within the capitalist society, in communist propaganda.³ Capitalism had been characterised as exploitative and the right to private property integral to it was considered as the basis of exploitation. Abolition of private property was the only way to end

2. K. Damodaran, 'Marxism'(I Part), Desabhimani, S. Malabar, 1948.

3. The communist propaganda give primacy to this contradiction in the capitalist system. In one of the booklets, K. Damodaran summarises this contradiction arisen out of the private ownership. "The capitalism declines due to its internal contradictions. Social production and private ownership - this is the contradiction inherent in capitalism". K. Damodaran, Marxisathinoru Mukhavura, Desabhimani Publications, Kozhikode, 1948, p. 13.

exploitation. Common ownership of the means of production was highlighted as the main feature of socialism.

The Communist Party propagated that capitalism was doomed and the future lay in socialism. This was explained as a historical necessity and the party attempted to elaborate the process of change from capitalism to socialism according to what it understood as the Marxist conception of history. The changes in political structure was explained as the result of the changes in the economic base determined by the relations of production. How the productive forces came into conflict with the relations of production and led to the breaking up of the existing relations and the emergence of the new had also been explained. The existing relations of production in India was characterised as capitalistic and was compared with the relations of production in the socialist countries. This comparison was to demonstrate to the masses the distinctions between the two systems. Relations of production and the means of production were explained to the masses by pointing out examples from the everyday life. The following passage from a party booklet shows how the communists explained the differences between the capitalist and the socialist systems, by using examples from everyday life.

In the capitalist countries, the means of production such as the land, the factory, the bank and the press etc. are owned by a few capitalists. Each one of the factories is owned by a capitalist. Who owns the paddyfields ploughed by the peasants of Karivelloor?

Chirakkal Thampuran. [Chirakkal Thampuran was a landlord in North Malabar who owned the major portions of land in Karivelloor village which was a stronghold of the Communist Party]. There is no landlord or capitalist in Soviet Union. There the workers own the factories and the peasants the land.⁴

Marxist political economy and the ideas of class, class war, state and revolution had been explained to the masses in simple terms. Marxist conceptions of wage labour, value and surplus value had been explained to elaborate the class position of the proletariat. The conflicts between the mutually antagonistic classes - the working class who sell their labour power for livelihood and the capitalists who exploit their labour - was explained as unavoidable. Class war in the capitalist society would ultimately lead to the break up of the class society. It had been propagated that the Marxian political economy was flawless in comprehending the economic reality. This attitude is evident in the following words of E.M.S. Namboodirippad:

The greatest achievement of the Marxist political economy is that is established with evidence and logic that the most developed form of surplus value is the system in which, the surplus value itself

4. K. Damodaran, 'Marxism' (Part I), op.cit., p.3.

ceases to exist and, each one works according to his ability and takes according to his needs. This clearly explains the secrets of the present day economics.⁵

The concepts of class and class war had been propagated along with the economic theories of Marxism that had exposed the exploitative nature of the class society. The trade unions, the peasant organisations and the Congress Socialist Party had contributed considerably to create class solidarity among the workers and peasants, before the formation of the Communist Party.⁶ The Communist Party tried to develop the class solidarity into a more matured class consciousness. The abolition of class society and the establishment of socialism had been used synonymously in communist propaganda. Class wars between the proletariat and the capitalists in the capitalist society would lead to the ultimate break-up of the class society. The Communist Party attempted to locate and explain

5. E.M.S. Namboodirippad, Socialism Ennal, Kozhikode, 1939, p. 13.

6. The study classes were one of the means of propaganda used by the trade unions and the CSP. The personal account of an attendant of the study classes indicate the nature of propaganda. P.A. Solaman, who attended the study classes held in Alleppey by Coir Factory Workers Union and the Congress Socialist Party records that he learned about exploitation capitalism and socialism from the classes held by K. Damodaran, the then leader of the Congress Socialist Party. Inspired by the classes he decided to leave his job as a factory worker as he thought it served only the capitalist interests and he joined the CSP as a full timer. P.A. Solaman, Sakhavu Damodarante Study Class, K.D.S., 1978, p. 168.

the forms of class war in the then existing situation. The struggles led by the party were characterised as the manifest forms of class struggle.

According to the communists, the state was the instrument of class dominance. The capitalist state was naturally the instrument of the capitalist rule. The socialist revolution would overthrow the capitalist state and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Communist Party explained that the dictatorship of the proletariat would not be permanent character of the socialist state. It would ultimately lead to a communist society in which the state would wither away. But it was explained that such a society would not be possible in a near future. E.M.S. Namboodirippad describes the nature of the socialist state in one of his pamphlets:

When a state, that represents the minority and suppresses the majority, is replaced by a state that represents the majority and suppresses the minority, the next step would be the dissolution of the state itself and the end of suppression. So, the dictatorship of the proletariat is considered as the first stage of communism.⁷

The communists portrayed the working class in all the countries as a part of the world working class movement. The working class movements in Kerala had been explained in the context of the struggles led by the working class all over the world. The history of the working class movements in

7. E.M.S. Namboodirippad, Socialism Ennal, op.cit., p. 15.

various countries had often been traced to establish the invincibility of the working class. The importance of world working class movement in communist propaganda is evident from the following portion quoted from a pamphlet issued by a local communist trade union leader:

The world capitalism is surrendering to the revolutionary forces of the working class. Capitalism is failing completely. The death-knell of capitalism sounds all over the world. The history of the world itself shows that the suppression of the people's demands would be self destructive to capitalism.⁸

This pamphlet refers to the history of the working class movements in various countries like England, America, France, Germany, Russia, Italy and Japan.

While discussing the role of various classes in a socialist revolution, the hegemony of the proletariat had been emphasised in communist propaganda, but ambiguities still existed in explaining the role of other classes. It is evident from the inconsistencies in party propaganda that the party lacked a proper perception of the role of the petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry in the socialist revolution. The petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry had often been included in the category of the revolutionary class as is evident from a pamphlet explaining the

8. K.K. Kunjan, Thozhilalikalalkithu Puthariyalla, Desabhinani, Kozhikode, 1946, p. 2.

nature of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This pamphlet says,

... the dictatorship of the proletariat is the dictatorship of the workingmen... The industrial workers, the rural labourers, the peasants who suffer from the landlords' oppression, the small traders, the small landowners, the small scale industrialists and the lower grade employees - all of them are included in this category of working people.⁹

Another pamphlet issued by the party gives a contradictory picture. It excludes the petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry from the category of revolutionary class. According to it,

there are three classes. The proletariat, the capitalists and the petty bourgeoisie. The first one is the revolutionary class and the second the reactionary. The petty bourgeoisie vacillates in between these two classes. The peasantry and the lower middle class belong to the petty bourgeoisie.¹⁰

Though theoretical ambiguities remained on the role of the petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry, the communists^{party} had not excluded them from its realm. Nevertheless sections from the middle class and peasantry constituted a strong base for the Communist Party in Kerala. The middle class intelligentsia had an important role

9. Surendran, 'Communism Neenal Vazhum', Desabhimani, Kozhikode, 1943, p. 4.

10. 'KSPyude Nayam Maulikamayi ISpyudethu Thanne', Pamphlet issued by the Communist Party of India, Kerala State Committee, 1948, p. 8.

in disseminating Marxist ideas and the peasants constituted the bulk of communist following, especially in Malabar, and the peasant movements one of the main spheres of communist activity. This paradox was not visible to the masses as the contradictions within the society was often presented as contradictions between the rich and the poor. The much generalised categorisations as 'the poor' and 'the common people' had provided enough space for different sections to identify themselves with the revolutionary class.

Though Marxism had been described as a theory that touches all spheres of human life, the theoretical aspects of it except the political economy had not been elaborated by the Communist Party. Political expediency and a lack of proper understanding had led to relegate the other aspects of Marxism. E.M.S.Namboodirippad had admitted later that

the party education of that period was not intended to develop the potential of the activists, to comprehend the fundamentals of Marxism and its worldview and, to interpret the specificities and problems of India according to this worldview. In fact, the fundamentals had not been taught in the party schools. Instead attempts to teach them had been looked down upon as symptoms of dogmatism. In the party classes, the main emphasis was on the changes that were taking place in national and international politics and party's policies towards these changes. Only those theoretical aspects that helped explain these changes and the party's policies were discussed.¹¹

11. E.M.S. Namboodirippad, Communist Party Keralathil, Chinta, Trivandrum, 1989, p. 172.

The study and propagation of Marxist theory was established as a prerogative of the Communist Party. Stalin's writings on party were the guidelines to the leadership of the Communist Party in Kerala.¹² Any attempt to study the Marxist ideas outside the party platforms had been ruled out as anti-Marxist. It was propagated that the study of Marxism had to be done in relation to practice. The word 'struggle' was commonly used in place of the term 'practice' in communist propaganda. Thus it was deduced that Marxism could not be studied in isolation from the struggles led by the party. E.M.S.Namboodirippad's exposition of the relation between socialist theory (Marxist theory and socialist theory were used synonymously in communist propaganda in Malayalam) and practice gives a clear picture of the importance attached to struggles in comprehending the theory of Marxism by the communist leadership in Kerala. He says,

Socialism bases itself on the relation between theory and practice. The struggles that does not base itself on socialist theory distorts; theory that does not correspond to the struggles is dead. Theory of socialism is the product of the struggles; socialism is the theoretical expressions of the class war led by the working class. So the greatest textbook from where one can learn about socialism is the class war around him. Socialist literature is only a means to understand it properly.¹³

12. Ibid. p. 102.

13. E.M.S. Namboodirippad, Socialism Ennal, op.cit., p. 15.

The party was projected as the unquestionable authority and to criticise the party's views was considered a sacrilege. This notion of infallibility of the party had practically closed all possibilities of open discussions within the party. To accept the formulations and policies of the party uncritically was even acknowledged as the greatest quality of a communist.¹⁴ Having a view different from that of the party's was considered a sign of indiscipline. This notion was so strong that the party members were hesitant to express their views even within the party, if it did not conform to the party's position. The communist leaders had admitted in later years that the trend was due to the influence of Stalinism that was predominant in world communist movement of that period. Narrating his personal experience, K. Damodran says,

...being both new to communism and relatively unschooled in Marxism and Leninism I accepted what I was told. There is a tradition in Indian politics of political gurus enlightening the masses and this tradition suited Stalinism completely. Hence we could accept anything and everything that were told to us by the party elders...¹⁵

-
14. Obedience to the party was often attributed as the greatest quality of a communist. For example, P. Krishnapillai, the founder secretary of the Communist Party in Kerala writes about one of his colleagues: "Never in his life, this comrade had put forward his views against the party's views. Never in his life he had taken an individual position independent from the party's position. I consider this as the greatest Bolshevik quality of comrade K.P.R." P. Krishnapillai, 'Kalthurunkile Viplavakari', Desabhimani Weekly, 20 December 1942.
15. K. Damodaran, 'Reminiscences of an Indian Communist', Interview with Tariq Ali, New Left Review, Sept.-Oct., 1975, p. 38.

E.M.S. Namboodirippad admits that the organisational principles of the party such as the principle of democratic centralism had been interpreted mechanically. He accepts that everything had been decided and executed by the leadership instead of involving the whole rank and file in the process of formulating the policies."¹⁶ E.M.S. also points out that this trend was the result of the Stalinist influence.

The counter propaganda to Marxist ideas was also very active. It came from different sections ranging from the ones who rejected Marxism in total, to those who criticised the communist party, claiming themselves to be the real Marxists. The party always tried to base their arguments as replies to the counter propaganda.

Both the critics and the defenders accepted the presumption that the Soviet practice was the true translation of Marxist ideas into reality. Thus the criticism against Soviet practice was considered as the criticism against Marxism and the arguments in defence of Soviet practice as arguments for Marxism. This complete identification of Soviet practice with Marxism in effect negated the distinction between them.

16. E.M.S. Namboodirippad, Communist Party Keralathil, op.cit., p. 173.

One of the main criticisms against Marxism was that it opposed religion. The criticism that Marxism denounced religion centred around the fate of religion in Soviet Union and was not elaborated as a disapproval of Marxist philosophical position on religion. Marxian phrases such as 'religion is the opium of the masses' had repeatedly been quoted in these arguments, not to develop a philosophical critique of Marxism but to corroborate the statements made against Soviet Union. Information and data from the Soviet Union had been drawn to substantiate the arguments. The statements like 'women had been made a public property in the Soviet Union' was quite common.¹⁷ The Communist Party was criticised as a party of atheists who did not believe in the eternity of human soul.¹⁸

The Communist Party also wanted to avoid a theoretical debate on religion. The Party concentrated mainly on refuting the criticisms made against the Soviet Union. It was argued that religion was a personal affair in the Soviet Union and the socialist state did not interfere in it. It was explained

17. C.H.M. Koya, Communism Mathavum, Thalassery Town Muslim Labour Union, 1946, p. 6.

18. Dr. M. Usman, Marxism Pisachinte Margam, Muslim Labour Union, Thalassery, 1945, p. 5.

that individuals' right to believe in religion was safeguarded by the state - but religion was not allowed to interfere in state affairs. It was explained that

to exploit the masses in the name of deity is not allowed in Soviet Union. This is not the denial of religious freedom but an action against exploitation... Religious groups are not allowed to interfere in political affairs but the priests personally can enter into politics. 19

The party tried to dispel the notion that it was a party of atheists. It was stated that, "the communist party includes people who do not believe in god and denounce religion as an opium of the masses. At the same time it also includes people who believe in god and worship regularly."²⁰ The Communist Party which was immersed in political activity had realised that a debate on religion would be disadvantageous to it. In countering the criticism the party was very careful in differentiating religion from religious institutions. The attack was never against religion but was focussed on the agents and institutions that exploited the people in the name of religion.

-
19. Russiyam Mathavam, Pamphlet issued by Peoples Reading Room, Trivandrum, 1946, p. 8.
20. Malabarile Muslim Votermarode, Pamphlet issued by Marxist Book Stall, Kozhikode, 1951, p. 8.

To attract the masses and to counter the criticisms based on religion, the communists used religious idioms and even quotes from the religious texts in their propaganda.²¹ It was argued that the ideal life envisaged in religious texts were possible only in a socialist society and the communist activity was in concordance with the scriptural prescriptions.

Different sections of intelligentsia had raised many a pertinent question related to theory and practice of Marxism. Most of them had emanated from a highly critical attitude towards Marxist ideas. One of the main concerns shared by many of the intellectuals was the freedom of individual in a socialist society. They argued that Marxism subjugates the individual will to the collective will and the society completely dominates the individual's life. The concept of the abolition of private property was also interpreted as the state interference in individual's rights.²² The communists did not challenge the basis of

-
21. The speeches of two well known communist orators from Malabar, V.M. Vishnubharatheeyan and E.P. Gopalan contained famous examples for the appropriation of religious idioms by the communists. Vishnubharatheeyan, the communist peasant leader from North Malabar used to explain the Marxist principles with the help of phrases from Upanishads and Puranas. E.P. Gopalan, the well known orator from the South Malabar used to quote from Koran to equate the Koranic principles with the Marxist ideas, especially in Muslim dominated areas.
22. "Each individual has the natural right to own his personal property. State originated after the origin of man and therefore human rights are not state-given. Natural human rights are more important than the authority of the state". Paul Manvettam, Rashtrathinte Kuthakayo, Pamphlet of 1951, p. 48.

posing the problem of freedom as contrary to socialism. They defined freedom as "the opportunity for everyone to get food and other essentials without being a slave to anyone."²³ The imposition of restrictions on individual freedom in socialist society was justified as to preserve the larger interests of the society. This justification ironically did not shatter the notion that the socialist state suppresses the individual's freedom, but in effect only ratified the criticism.

Marxism had been criticised also from an ethical point of view. It had been characterised as a theory that perpetuates violence and is sustained on the same. The anti communist propaganda highlighted the aspects of violence and coercion in Marxian principles and projected them as the main features of Marxism. The communists had been criticised for creating chaos in society by propagating the idea of class war which had been portrayed as a concept that generated hatred and animosity among the people.²⁴ Marxism was criticised again in the context

23. E.M.S. Namboodirippad, Onnekal Kodi Malayalikal, Desabhimani, Ko hikode, 1946, p. 66.

24. This criticism was vehemently put forward by a well known Malayalam writer M.R. Nair (popularly known as Sanjayan) through his writings. His portrayal of Marxism as a "terrible theory that suggests that the problem of hunger can be resolved through widespread killing, looting and burning" was typical of the anti-communist propaganda of the period. M.R. Nair, Sanjayan, Vol. 2, Kozhikode, Mathrubhoomi, 1986, p. 222.

of nationalistic politics and its ethics. One of the main planks of this argument was that Marxism, being a foreign ideology could have no meaning in the Indian reality. And moreover as India had Gandhism an ideology well rooted in this country, a foreign one was not called for.

In reply to the criticism that Marxism perpetrates violence, the communists tried to expose the injustices inherent in the exploitative capitalist social structure and argued that it was not they but the capitalist system that try to perpetuate violence. The communists did not negate the criticisms about the use of violence but tried only to explain the circumstances that made the use of force unavoidable.²⁵ It was explained that in a class society the ruling class would never give up its power voluntarily and thus the use of force was inevitable.

The communists argued that Marxism was an ideology that expounded the true nature of social relations applicable to every country and hence the criticism that it is foreign in origin has no basis. They made it clear that the Indian working class and its political party, the Communist Party of

25. "The proletariat will use force only when the capitalists try to suppress them by using force." Surendran, Communism Neenal Vazhura, Pamphlet, Desabhimani, Kozhikode, 1943, p.3.

India were the integral parts of the world working class and the communist movement.²⁶

Apart from these criticisms made by those who rejected Marxism in toto, the Communist Party was criticised also from a different standpoint. Various socialist groups and parties challenged the Communist Party's monopolisation of Marxist theory.²⁷ They argued that the Soviet practice, or 'Stalinism' as they called it, was a distortion from the Marxist concept of socialism and by following the Soviet path, the Communist Party in India was committing the similar mistake. The Communist Party was criticised for submitting and relating all aspects of human life to economics.²⁸ The Soviet state had been criticised for suppressing the democratic rights of the citizens. The socialists argued that the possibilities of a peaceful transition to socialism

-
26. "As the political party of the proletariat our party is loyal to the world working class movement". E.M.S. Namboodiripad, Janangale Sevikkan Namukkorunichu Pravarthikkuka, Pamphlet Kozhikode, 1952, p. 16.
27. "To reinterpret Marxism is nobody's prerogative. Marxism rejects the notion of infallibility. By claiming monopoly over Marxist theory the Stalinists are negating Marxism." V.C. Varghese, Tharakkallukal, Pamphlet, Malabar Socialist Party Publication, 1951, p. 23.
28. "To the Stalinists economic progress is the sum of life... They renounce all ethical values for the sake of economic progress". *ibid.*, p. 25.

should be explored in the Indian situation.

To the Communist Party these criticisms were part of a world wide attempt to malign the world communist movement and the Soviet Union. According to the Communist Party,

...the Soviet Union is the revolutionary army that fights the terrible class war unleashed by the world capitalist class, and the world communist movement is the fortress of this revolutionary army... Stalin is the leader of the revolutionary army and he is the one who guards the revolutionary fortress. Trotsky is a betrayer who tried to sell this army and the fortress to the world capitalist class.²⁹

The party rejected the criticism that the Soviet system was anti democratic and argued that the best form of democracy existed was in the Soviet Union. To defend the Soviet democracy, the party attempted to define the socialist democracy. According to it, in real democracy, "the enemies of the working class will be eliminated; they will be denied all democratic rights."³⁰ The arguments for peaceful social transition had also been rejected by the party. The argument for peaceful social transition had been characterised as a theory put forward by the

29. KSPyude Nayam Maulikamayil ISPyudethu Thanne, Pamphlet issued by the Communist Party, Kerala State Committee.

30. Indian Socialist Party Sakhakkalode, Pamphlet published by Left Socialist Group, 1951, p. 5.

petty bourgeoisie to drag the working class from the class war.³¹
 The party ruled out the possibilities of peaceful transition.

The communists reiterated and tried to elucidate their earlier arguments and no evidence is there to show that they did any introspection. All efforts had been made not only to justify but even to glorify the Soviet practice as it had been completely identified with Marxism. Naturally the criticisms against the Soviet Union or Stalin had been deduced as criticisms against Marxism. The criticisms about the Soviet distortion of Marxism and their effects on Indian communist movement had not been debated within the party.

The critics of the Soviet Union had been labelled as Trotskyists which had become a synonym for the word betrayer in communist propaganda. The following words of K.Damodaran throws light on the context in which the communists defended the Soviet Union:

In discussions with independent minded socialists I defended Stalin vigorously. I think the main reason for this was that we identified ourselves completely with the Soviet Union, which was then under constant attack by British imperialists and by the Congress right wing. Every strike was supposed to

31. *ibid.*, p. 3.

have been inspired by Moscow, every street demonstration was supposed to be led by agitators in the pay of Moscow. We defended the Soviet Union against these people, though of course completely uncritically.³²

Like most other parts of the world as well as of India, the communists in Kerala were led by the Soviet version of Marxism. Dogmatic interpretation of ideas often resulted in making communist propaganda mere mechanical exercises attempting to fit the existing reality into a set pattern. However, the communist propaganda which was part of the communist political practice closely identified with the masses gave voice to popular aspirations and was successful in establishing the credentials of the Communist Party as 'the common man's party'.

32. K. Damodaran, 'Memoirs of an Indian Communist, Interview with Tariq Ali', New Left Review, Sept.-Oct., 1975, p. 39.

Chapter III

APPROPRIATION OF
TRADITION AND CULTURE

The communists realised the need to address to the minds of the people not to their intellects alone for ideological dissemination. To penetrate into the ideologically segmented Kerala society, Marxism had to contend with the existing ideologies. Dissemination of Marxism through political propaganda was not sufficient to challenge the ideological preoccupation of the masses. The existing ideological foundations had to be broken for the new ideologies to enter in. The need arose to understand various persuasions the people were preoccupied with. In this context the communists attempted to understand the traditions, beliefs and culture of the people. They tried to appropriate the elements of tradition, beliefs and culture for the dissemination of Marxist ideas. New modes of dissemination became inevitable.

The communists were in search of new forms of propaganda that could communicate more effectively with the masses as well as create a sense of cultural unity among them. They found the traditional art forms extremely helpful for their purpose. Traditional art forms of different religious origins had been appropriated by the communists. The communists exploited the communicative ability of art and the mobilising potential of belief as well.

Religious themes had been replaced by the themes related to the problems of everyday life. National and international events of current political importance had also become a common theme in these art forms. The audience welcomed the change from the familiar old themes to the new ones and encouraged by the response of the audience, the communists explored the possibilities hidden in all art forms.¹ In Malabar, especially in northern parts, political communication through art forms had been an essential part of the communist political practice. The issues related to landlordism and the day to day problems of the masses had been the themes of other art forms. Staging of plays written exclusively for the purpose of political propaganda and performing of traditional art forms had been regular accompaniments of public meetings organised by the party. The most successful plays like 'Pattabakki' by K. Damodaran and 'Nammolonnun' by Cherukad were intended to make the masses aware of their class position and to generate class solidarity among them. Various art forms dealing with the day to day problems of their life had an emotional appeal among the masses.² The

-
1. The communists appropriated all traditional art forms from the more complex forms like Kathakali to the relatively simple ones like Ottamthullal. Poorakkali, Kummil, Kolakkali, Kaikottikali, Oppana, Kalampattu were some of the traditional art forms appropriated by the communists.
 2. For example, 'Menonte Meni', the Kummil performed by the communists almost all over Malabar, deals with the exploitation and harassment of the poor peasants by the village officials called Menons. The poor peasants who had been the victims of the bribery and highhandedness of the village officials could easily identify with this 'Kummil'.

communist appropriation of the art forms led to the secularisation of traditional art to a large extent and better communication among different religious sections was made possible.³

The party understood, as the role of religion in the making of people's consciousness was decisive, it was impossible to exclude religious media in ideological propagation. It may appear as a paradox that religious media being used for the propagation of an ideology that was not only secular but the one that had challenged the existence of religion. But this paradox was not visible to the masses as the ideas presented through these media did not contradict the basic premises of religion.

Though the religious symbols and idioms had been used in a secular plain, their roots were deeply in religious beliefs and the communists had in fact imparted new meanings to the idioms that were very much the part of people's beliefs. For example, the word heaven which has a definite religious connotation had been used to describe socialism. Such a term would naturally evoke the splendours that the belief had attributed to

3. The plays and other art forms had been adopted to changes according to local conditions. They tried to highlight local issues. The communist leaders intervening during the performance to make speeches were also not uncommon. The usage of art forms, even those of religious origin resulted in transforming the nature of these art forms. By highlighting the common grievances they helped to generate a sense of identity among the masses, irrespective of their religion and caste.

it and attract the masses towards it. The usage of terms familiar to people would also help the process of assimilation.⁴

The communists explored the possibilities of effective communication through the appropriation of the elements of myths and legends. The myth of Mahabali, the most popular myth among Malayalis was found suitable and the communists made full use of this in Marxist propaganda. Onam, the annual national festival of Kerala is in celebration of this myth. According to this myth, Kerala enjoyed supreme prosperity and there prevailed equality among the people in a bygone period under the rule of the legendary king, Mahabali. Onam is celebrated to welcome the arrival of Mahabali who, as the myth says, visits Kerala once in every year to see his people. All Malayalis ought to celebrate Onam in the best possible way and give a cheerful appearance during the festival days. Happiness and joy are the prevailing mood during the festival. The communists were well-aware of the importance of Onam festival in Kerala's social life. To make use the emotional attachment of the people towards the festival they portrayed themselves as the ones who try to establish the

4. In public speeches, songs and poems the Soviet Union had been depicted as analogous to heaven. For example, two of the poems popularised by the communists were 'Nariyude Chinta', and 'Nariyude Marupadi', the themes of which are the reflections of an old woman in which she compares the situations in the Soviet Union and India and expresses her wish to visit the Soviet Union, the human paradise. (See Desabhimani Weekly, 29th August 1943 and 18th June 1945).

happiness of the festival days forever. The myth had been handed over from generations to generations and the people of Kerala cherish it irrespective of their religious faiths.

The communists found the Mahabali's rule as an archetype of socialism. The myth of Mahabali's rule was hidden in the collective subconsciousness of the masses as the archetype of an ideal society. The communists identified this with socialism and the Soviet Union. Thus the communists made the most popular myth of the people perfectly suitable for their purpose. Numerous are the stories, songs, poems and other art forms that exploited the possibilities of this myth for the propagation of Marxist ideas. The following words of E.M.S. Namboodirippad exemplify the way the communists interpreted the myth:

Onam generates in us the sweet memories of an ancient Kerala where prevailed comfort, prosperity, equality and unity... The landlordism, the capitalism and the imperialism are systems that hamper the efforts to regain the Mahabali's rule... In modern times the Soviet Union is the country that realised the Mahabali's rule in practice. The 190 million people of the Soviet Union have been enjoying comfort, prosperity and equality, the virtues that we cherish and celebrate during Onam.⁵

5. E.M.S. Namboodirippad, Mavelinadinte Madhura Smaranayilninnu Bhavi Keralathilekku', Desabhimani Weekly, 3rd September 1944.

The Communists felt the need to involve in the social and cultural life of Kerala more intimately so that they could establish more proximity to the masses and practically negate the notion created by the counter propaganda about the alien nature of the ideology. They tried to use all opportunities to convey their message to the people. In Kerala, the temple festivals were the occasions in which people gather in large numbers in public places and the communists made use of these opportunities to propagate their ideas. It had almost become a practice of the communists to conduct speeches, exhibitions and other forms of propaganda in the festival places. Even the party periodicals gave reports of the temple festivals. The following passage from a communist periodical is helpful to understand the way in which the communists conducted the propagation of ideas during the festival:

Thousands of people gather in the festival of Thalassery Jagannatha temple. Our comrades, who do not miss a single chance to approach the people had organised a Soviet exhibition for five days... Charts showing the progress of the Soviet Union, photographs of the Soviet and Indian leaders and cartoons were exhibited. The meaning and importance of the exhibits had been explained to the visitors. 3295 people including 600 Muslims and 250 women visited the exhibition. The turn out was highest on 23rd February, and 7 speeches had been delivered on that day. 4000 people (including 800 Muslims and 300 women) listened to the speeches.⁶

6. Desabhimani Weekly, 7th March 1943.

The communists had been conducting similar activities in other temple festivals too. The appropriation of religious centres and festivals for the purpose of ideological propagation had attracted large sections of masses who would not have listened to other means of communist propaganda.

Through various cultural organisations controlled by the communists they were able to mobilise different sections of people. There were separate organisations for different sections such as youth, children and women.⁷ None of these organisations was to foster an affinity towards the Marxist ideas among the public. The importance attached to these cultural organisations by the Communist Party can be understood from the fact that even well known leaders of the party had been assigned to look after or take part in these cultural activities. Different cultural organisations together had often been controlled by the local party

7. The youth organisations participated in all cultural and social events in their respective villages. Some of them had run parallel schools and night classes. Women's organisations campaigned among the women and tried to impress upon them the need for social reforms and the women's participation in public life. The children's organisations involved in a variety of activities. The following report from a party periodical gives a picture of their way of functioning. "Separate meetings of children, processions, plays, songs, dramas, manuscript magazines etc. include the day to day activities of the children's organisation." (Desabhimani Weekly 7th March 1943).

committee or a local communist leader.⁸

The Communist Party realised the importance of reading rooms and libraries in influencing the cultural and intellectual life of the people. The communists took initiative in setting up a wide network of reading rooms and libraries throughout Kerala. The reading rooms and libraries that started during the period of the Congress Socialist Party had also come under the control of the communists. By the early 1940s there was at least one library in each village under the control of the communists in Malabar.⁹ Though the communists had not used the libraries for explicit political activity, they came to be recognised as part of the communist activity. The communists attributed much importance to the activities of libraries and carried them out without relegating them to the political activities.¹⁰ It is also

8. P. Krishnapillai, the founding secretary of the Communist Party in Kerala writes about one of his comrades: "... trade unions, students federation, organisations for the youth and children and the libraries and reading rooms - the centre of these in the Taluk is Kalyasseri and the man behind all of them is K.P.R." P. Krishnapillai, 'Kalthurunkile Viplavakari', Desabhimani Weekly, 20th December, 1942.

9. Interview with K.P.R. Gopalan, Kannor, 18. 5. 1990, and E.P. Gopalan, 23. 6. 1990, Pattambi.

10. There are so many instances of libraries being constantly attacked by the police. In Chirakkal Taluk in North Malabar the police attacked a library three times, each time destroying it completely, by confiscating all the books and damaging other belongings. But the communists challenged the police by reorganising the library after every attack. (Interview with Subramanya Shenoy, Payyannor, 17. 6. 1990).

evident from the fact that the libraries had been raided and attacked often by the police as part of the actions against the communist party.

The libraries and reading rooms acted as the nerve centres of local cultural and intellectual activity notably in rural Kerala. By attempting to identify themselves fully with the cultural life of Kerala the communists had been able to gain acceptance among different sections who were otherwise indifferent to or apathetic towards political activities and the ideas of the Communist Party. These were mainly the sections from the middle class who had shown leanings towards the moderate attitudes of the nationalist politics. They had reservations about the communists due to the anti-communist propaganda unleashed by the nationalist movement and the intellectuals. The cultural activities provided opportunities for the communists to establish close links with these sections and thereby influence their outlooks.

Caste organisations had exercised considerable influence in Kerala society. Realising the potential of these organisations to influence large sections of people, the Communist Party decided to infiltrate itself into these organisations.¹¹ The communists actively participated in the dissension within these organisations, especially about the questions regarding their approach

11. M.N. Govindan Nair, Emmente Atmakatha, Trivandrum, 1988, pp. 135-41.

to political issues and tried to give a new orientation to them.¹² The communists tried to win over younger and radical elements of these organisations to the Communist Party. Many of the top party leaders who came to political life through the caste organisations which were once instrumental in initiating reform movements in Kerala society, had commanded respect within these organisations. The communist leaders lost no opportunity to address to them the need to adapt to the changes that were taking place in social and political life.¹³

The activities of the communists through social and cultural organisations made them acquaint with the cultural dynamics of Kerala. The communists involved themselves in the attempts to find the common heritage of the politically and socially fragmented Kerala society. They tried to reinterpret the tradition and culture of Kerala and gave expression to the aspirations of the people for a united Kerala. The past had been reconstructed with the objective of evoking a sense of cultural identity. The communists tried to project themselves as the ones

12. C.G. Sadasivan, SNDP Yogavum Deseeya Pravarthanavum, Alleppey, 1944; Trichur Taluk SNDP Karma Samiti Pamphlet, Trichur, 1946.

13. E.M.S. Namboodirippad, Namboodiriye Manushyanakkan, Kozhikode, 1944.

who strive for the reemergence of the traditional virtues of Kerala society.¹⁴

II

The Marxist ideological battle against the existing values had its reverberations in literature. Influence of Marxist ideas manifested in a variety of forms in literary debates and creative writings. The communists in Kerala were lacking in theoretical knowledge to deal with the questions of art and literature. Still they involved themselves in polemics on literature with the inadequate knowledge and their views were passed as Marxist interpretations of literature.¹⁵ The critics and writers who were broadly in agreement with communists supported them in their earlier phase, but later dissociated when they adopted a more rigid position on literature.

The literary organisation 'Jeevatsahitya Sangham' formed in 1937 and its reincarnation 'Purogamana Sahitya Sangham' formed in 1944 had played an important role in literary activities. The

-
14. M.S. Devadas, 'Samskarikamaya Dasyathilninnu Keralathe Rakshikkan', Desabhimani Weekly, 25 January 1946
15. K. Damodaran and E.M.S. Namboodirippad, two prominent communist leaders who actively participated in the literary debates on behalf of the communists had later accepted that their knowledge of Marxian aesthetics was quite inadequate. K. Damodaran, Sahitya Niroopanam, Cochin, 1962; E.M.S. Namboodirippad in Mathrubhoomi Weekly, September 1981.

Communist Party's attempt to control the 'Purogamana Sahitya Sangham' according to its line, led to dissension within the organisation and ultimately broke it.¹⁶ The split in the organisation caused a division between communist and non-communist writers. Though the details of the debate are not the concern of the present study an overview of the same is not out of context.

The debates centred around the objectives of literature. In these debates, the problems related to the social basis and commitment of literature had been the focal points of discussion. Views ranged from a point of total rejection of the social role of literature to the total acceptance of literature as means of social change. The two contradictory viewpoints had been expressed in the respective phases, 'art for art's sake' and the 'art for the sake of life'.¹⁷ The nature of the debate is very evident from the phrases itself with which the views were identified.

The progressive literary movement which held literature as an integral part of life, sought to locate human problems at

-
16. P.K. Gopalakrishnan, Purogamana Sahitya Prasthanam: Nizhalum Velichavum, Kerala Sahitya Academy, Trichur, p. 124.
17. M.P. Paul, Sahitya Vicharam, N.B.S., Kottayam, p. 130.

the centre of literature. The entire debate on progressive literature revolved around this theme.

Progressive literature was perceived as an aberration from the literary tradition set by the classics.¹⁸ The usage of classics in justifying the criticisms against the progressive literature led to debates on the questions of literary and cultural tradition and its impact on contemporary cultures^{al} of life.

Progressive literature had to contend with the idealistic positions that did not attach much importance to contemporary reality. Kuttikrishna Marar, a leading critic of progressive literature, maintained that the contemporary reality would not have to have any relation to the creative writings of a period. According to him literature should deal with eternal questions and should not be polluted with the day to day problems of material life. To Marar, the artists were the elites of a society who should keep a distance from the public. Marar says:

The poet who is in search of eternal truth should always keep himself away from the common man. The poet does not come to the reader, but if a reader needs a poetry,

18. M.R. Nair, Sanjayan (Vol. 2), Mathrubhoomi, Kozhikode, 1986. p. 566.

he goes to the poet after obtaining sufficient learning and culture.¹⁹

Many prominent Malayalam writers had actively participated in progressive literary organisation in the late thirties and early forties. The objectives laid out by the organisation suggest that it provided enough space for different views with a common understanding on certain basic issues to operate within it.²⁰ M.P. Paul's definition of progressive literature was accommodative to most of the creative works produced during the period. According to him,

progressive literature would be universal in its attitude and outlook. It would have complete freedom over its theme and treatment. It should represent the aspirations of the people.²¹

-
19. Kuttikrishna Marar, Charchayogam, P.K. Brothers, Kozhikode, 1952, p. 14.
20. The objectives laid out by the organisation were: (a) To produce as well as to translate progressive literature, (b) to fight against reactionary forces in cultural sphere and to encourage freedom and literary progress, (c) to bring art and literature closer to the masses and to the reality, (d) to create a literary criticism that is inclined to resist reactionary tastes and that which encourages progressive tendencies, (e) to fight for the right to freedom of expression and to protect the interests of the progressive writers... (P.K. Gopalakrishnan, Purogamana Sahitya Prasthanam: Nizhalum Velichavum, Kerala Sahitya Academy, Trichur, 1985, p. 101.)
21. M.P. Paul, Sahitya Vicharam, N.B.S., Kottayam, 1953, p. 131.

The progressive literary movement totally rejected the elitist approach to literature. Changapuzha Krishnapillai, one of the most popular poets of Malayalam, in a spirited defence of progressive writers' movement, argued that in a class divided society every writer was bound to take a definite class position siding with the exploited.²² Changapuzha argued that it was not the masses, who went to the artist, but the artist who with his art came to the masses. According to the progressive literary movement, literature was also to take part in the struggles against the hard realities of life.

Progressive literary movement condemned the overemphasis on classical literature as attempts to draw away the literature from the contemporary reality. The progressive writers on the other hand wanted to focus their writing on the same. P. Sankaran Nambiar, a leading defendent of progressive literature had argued that the poets in Kerala enthralled by Ramayana and Mahabharata failed to see the reality right in front of their eyes.²³ He ridiculed ^{irs} ~~them~~ as a 'backward looking' ('Pinnoki') attitude and voiced the need for the creation of literature that 'looks forward' ('munnokki').

22. Presidential Speech by Changapuzha Krishnapillai at the Second Conference of Progressive Writers' Organisation, Kottayam (P.k. Gopalakrishnan, op.cit., p. 107.)

23. P. Sankaran Nambiar, Sahitya Nishkatam, K.R. Brothers, Kozhikode, 1953, p. 19.

The excessive dependence on Sanskrit had been identified as one of the reasons that alienated the masses from the dominant literary tradition.²⁴ The progressive literary movement felt it imperative to 'de-Sanskritize' Malayalam literature for encompassing a wider audience. This was not an attempt to reject Sanskrit literary tradition. Progressive literary movement, theoretically, did not agree with the extreme positions of accepting or rejecting the tradition per se. M.P. Paul who was the President of the Purogamana Sahitya Sanghatana makes it very clear, when he said,

the rich literary heritage not only of Sanskrit but of the entire world belong to the progressive writer, too. But progressive literature rejected the caste antagonism, obscurantism, servitude and superstitions that had grown along with the great tradition of the Sanskrit.²⁵

The argument made against the traditional culture in the name of progressive literature was not always in concordance with the theoretical position of critical acceptance adopted by the progressive literary movement. P. Kesavadev's one speech, a vehement attack on Malayalam literary classics, had been flayed by the critics of progressive literature and used to be projected as

24. P. Kesavadev, Kesavadev Kalnoottandinu Mumbhu, N.B.S., Kottayam, 1969, p. 35.

25. M.P. Paul, Sahitya Vicharam, N.B.S., Kottayam, 1953, p. 127.

an example of progressive writers' view on classical literature.²⁶ The criticisms of literary classics had been expressions of the desire for a new literature that depicted real human problems in the language of the people.

Though the progressive writers' organisation was broadly political and was perceived to be so, it was not a platform of partisan politics.²⁷ By the second half of the 1940s the Communist Party tried to dominate the organisation and the party's attempts to impose its rigid literary positions upon the writers led to internal dissension and ultimate break up of the organisation. The change in communist position is ascribed to the change in its political position which became more militant after the World War II.

The concept of social progress had been identified as the goal of the communist party. A host of writings that dealt political issues superficially had been promoted as progressive literature.

26. P. Kesavadev, *op.cit.*, pp. 29-42.

27. "The economic depression after the first world war and the growth of the egalitarian ideas among the working class and the lower caste Hindus after the Bolshevik revolution were the most significant issues during the formative period of Jeevatsahitya Sanghatana". (A. Balakrishna Pillai, quoted in P.K. Gopalakrishnan, *op.cit.*, p. 89).

The communists' approach to literature as a means of propaganda resulted in producing some literary works which were quite successful as political propaganda. Marxist ideas had been effectively communicated through them. 'Pattabakki', a drama staged hundreds of times is a famous example.²⁸ It depicts the tension in land relations and the injustice in the existing social structure, through the experiences of a poor family evicted from the land by the landlord. The family members were left with no option but to resort to pilferage and prostitution. The play tries to convey the message that the exploitative social system that creates inequality is responsible for poverty which perpetuates crimes in society. Socialism is the only solution for all these problems. The message has been conveyed overtly. In the end the sufferers vow to fight the system. Though the drama was not acclaimed for its literary merits, it had been a tremendous success as a means of political propaganda.

The successful cooperation of communists with the creative^v writers during the early period of progressive literary organisation resulted in producing a number of creative works that

28. K. Damodaran, the author of 'Pattabakki' was a prominent leader of the peasant movement and the Communist Party. The play was written to stage at a peasant conference. The author had no pretensions about the artistic quality of his play. He admits that his only intention was to project some of the burning issues faced by the landless peasants through the play.

exposed the existing social system and depicted the emergence of a new class and its ideology which was based on a realistic approach to the objective reality. The novel 'Randidangazhi', a typical example of these writings, depicts the rise of class consciousness among the agricultural workers of Kuttanad.²⁹ The novel begins depicting a situation in which agricultural workers accept everything as fate. It delineates the process through which they become class conscious and ends with portraying them fighting for their rights.³⁰

The influence of Marxist ideas in literature had not always been as simple or direct as it manifested in the progressive literature. Many forms of creative literature had dealt with rather complex questions about various aspects of human life and their interaction with Marxist ideas. 'Kudiyozhikkal', a poem which deals with the traumas of the middle class is an example.³¹

29. Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai, the author of Randidangazhi was active in the progressive writers movement in its early phase but distanced himself from it when the communists tried to impose their dominance upon the organisation. He along with many other writers who were attracted by the humanistic approach of the organisation found it difficult to function according to the directives of a political party known for its adherence to strict discipline.

30. The historical truth is depicted here through human situations captured in their reality.

31. For Vailopilly Sreedhara Menon, the author of Kudiyozhikkal, literature is not a means of propaganda. He tries to capture all the complexities of human life. In Kudiyozhikkal, the poet identifies himself with the middle class and try to depict the tragedy of his own class.

Progressive literature along with the left political movement had created stereo types of revolution and social change. Depiction of history as a progressive linear process and proletarian revolution, an inevitable future occurrence that would resolve all human problems were the stereotypes produced by them. Vailopilly's poem tries to go beyond these stereotypes. The vulnerability of the middle class and its apprehensions about the destructive aspects of revolution is the central theme of the poem. It is portrayed through the inner conflicts of a middle class intellectual.

An important effect of Marxist influence was that the literary themes began to centre around the marginalised social groups.³² The feelings and aspirations of these sections added a new vigour to Malayalam literature.

32. The persons from the marginalised social groups such as scavengers, rickshaw pullers, agricultural workers, coolies and beggars had become the main characters in literature. 'Odayil Ninnu', in which the main character is a rickshaw puller, 'Thottiyude Makan' (main character is a scavenger), 'Theruvinte Katha' that deals with the life of beggars and underworld, 'Balyakalasadakhi' in which the main characters had to undergo forms of extreme poverty are some of the most popular novels that depict the life of the underprivileged.

CONCLUSION

The leftwing politics in Kerala, even when functioning within the framework of nationalist movement, had tried to put the question of economic exploitation to the fore. The left politics in close association with the trade union and peasant movements was able to identify itself with the masses, through political actions and consistent propaganada against economic exploitation and social oppression. Even as part of the nationalist movement, the leftwing maintained that the question of economic exploitation was not resolvable by nationalist politics and its ideology. A different ideology was needed and Marxism was found to be the only ideology capable to resolve the problem. The left appropriated and projected Marxism as the ideology of 'the working class', 'the poor' and 'the common man'. Marxist ideological propagation and political practice had been mutually complementary, or to say more precisely, the former was part of the latter. The emphasis in the propagation of Marxism was on the practical use of the ideology in restructuring the society in favour of the exploited..

The communists' portrayal of socialism, the system they sought to construct over the ruins of capitalism, was of an affluent society. The attempt of communist propaganda was to inculcate

the masses with the idea that the prospects for a prosperous future lay with the success of Marxist ideology and politics. At the same time the moral superiority of the egalitarian socialist system over the exploitative capitalism had been asserted as to establish a sort of moral legitimacy to Marxist politics. Thus the communist party in Kerala sought to justify its moral superiority by projecting material and moral superiority it ascribed to the system that sought to be created.

The communist propaganda explained the history of social change as a process of progressive advance towards superior social forms culminating in communism. Explaining thus the process of social change in a way typical of classical Marxist tradition, it predicted the imminent downfall of capitalism and the emergence of socialism, the prelude to communism. Socialist revolution was deemed inevitable and Marxian politics committed to bring out the revolution claimed sanction of history. Projecting themselves as the agents of history, the Marxists tried to inculcate the masses with the belief that Marxism, 'the scientific theory' was 'the discovery' of the laws of social change and Marxian politics perfectly in accordance with these principles was unmistakable. This belief had been a great motivating factor for the communist ranks.

The working class politics practised by the communists and their emphasis on the leading role of the proletariat in the emerging struggles awakened the working class to the new social role and responsibilities assigned to them. The Marxist political practice including the propagation of ideas greatly affected the self perception of the working class notably in the rise of awareness of their rights and led to greater involvement and participation of working class in Kerala's politics.

In the process of growing into a potential political organisation, the communist party assumed the character of an all-powerful institution restricting individual viewpoints and giving little scope for independent thought within the party. The right to interpret and decide upon theoretical and practical questions was the monopoly of the party. The highly centralised character of the party, the ritualistic reverence it demanded from the cadre, and mechanical interpretation of ideas - all contributed to the institutionalisation of the party. The humanitarian concerns of Marxism often failed to impress the people due to the overemphasis laid on the institutionalised party. Rather than a means to achieve social change, the party was tended to be perceived as an end in itself.

Examples from Soviet experience had invariably been used to demonstrate the practicality of Marxist ideas and the superiority of the socialist system. Soviet Union had been glorified to enormous proportions in communist propaganda. The Soviet

system had been projected as an epitome of future society, free from all evils of degenerate capitalism and a real alternative to it, thus a beacon of hope to all the world. The critics as well as the supporters accepted Soviet practice as real translation of Marxist ideas. To defend Soviet Union in all its actions had become a practice of the party. The complete identification of Marxist practice with Soviet practice was no doubt, the result of the domineering influence, the Soviet Union under the leadership of Stalin had had over the communist parties the world over. Besides that the communists in Kerala who found it more convenient and useful to explain Marxist ideas relating to the examples from Soviet experience, especially to demonstrate the efficiency of the ideas, developed it as an important mode of propagation. The uncritical acceptance and glorification of Soviet practice had become an essential part of Marxist politics in Kerala.

By assuming themselves the responsibility to defend Soviet Union in every matter, the communists in Kerala had been constrained to adopt ideological and political positions in accordance with Soviet practice. The party positions on two of the most important questions, democracy and individual freedom, had been influenced largely by the socialist state experience. The party's negligence to the questions concerning democracy and its portraying of Soviet Union's as the best form of democracy were no answer to the questions about the real nature of

democracy under socialism or about the communist approach to democracy, but seemed to have strengthened the notion that democracy and socialism were mutually exclusive. The party's position defending restrictions on individual freedom for the larger interests of society also was not a negation of the criticism that socialist system was inherently despotic. Though there were isolated attempts to challenge the basic premises of the absolutist definitions of freedom, the communist arguments, on the whole failed to challenge the prevalent notion that democracy and individual freedom were not possible under socialism.

The communists realised the need to understand and adopt to the cultural ethos of Kerala, for successful ideological penetration. The attempts to use the elements of tradition and culture for ideological propagation resulted in the appropriation of myths, religious idioms and folk and classical art forms. The most successful of these was the adoption of Kerala's popular myth, the myth of Mahabali.

The communists' attitude to art and literature was primarily directed by a utilitarian motive, to use them as vehicles of ideas. The communists were successful in effectively exploiting the communicative potential of many of Kerala's classical and folk art forms which had been adopted to depict political themes, far different from their familiar themes. In the process, the capability of many of Kerala's traditional

art forms to deal with modern themes had been demonstrated. The communist appropriation of art forms, associated with religions helped the secularisation of many of them, to a certain extent.

Marxist influence in Malayalam literature manifested in many ways. The approach to literature as a means of propaganda had resulted in producing a host of writings lacking in creativity, falling far short in literary standards. Most of them were successes as political propaganda. The Marxist literary criticism in Malayalam, ill equipped to deal with the questions of literature hailed them as true representations of progressive literature using the definitions of progressive literature taken from Soviet literary criticism. Even while the party's basic approach to literature remained mechanical, it was accommodative to many of the important creative works that did not exactly fit into the communist definitions of progressive literature. The central concern of all these writings had been problems of material reality, mainly the problems of human suffering and inhumanity of the system. Most of the authors generally shared the humanistic concerns of Marxism. The communist literary positions tended to be more and more rigid and by 1948, became almost intolerant to the writings and authors who did not accept the party line. As the culmination of this process many prominent authors sympathetic to Marxist ideals who had been associated with the communists in 'Purogamana Sahitya Sanghatana', the literary organisation, pulled themselves out of

the organisation in 1948 when the communist party tried to impose its rigid literary views on them and to use the organisation for narrow political needs. The new political line adopted by the communist party of India in 1948 and the growing influence of Soviet literary criticism dominated by Stalinist views accounted for the changes in communist literary positions. Despite the superficiality of its approach, the communist intervention helped to generate debates on the questions regarding the social role and objectives of literature. The communist literary practice widened the domain of literature and created a new audience who were out of the reach of the dominant literary forms. Regardless of party's positions on literature, Marxist ideas had been influential in shifting the focus of literature to the problems of material reality.

The awakening created among the lower ranks of the population especially in rural areas was one of the notable effects of communist political practice in Kerala. With active support from the middle class intelligentsia, the communists brought people from among the working class, peasantry and the rural poor to the realms of cultural and intellectual life. To explain national and international developments to the masses besides political and practical questions had been part of the communist educative initiatives. Notwithstanding the partisan manner of these activities they helped to broaden the outlook of common people. The revelation that the destiny of the

common man was determined by various forms of complicated social economic and political relations itself had affected the popular perception of reality to a great extent.

By appropriating all available means of communication including periodical and non-periodical press and publishing houses, potential cultural institutions like libraries and reading rooms and traditional art forms, the communists prepared the paraphernalia needed for ideological penetration in Kerala society. The adoption of cultural institutions helped the communist party to create its own intelligentsia as well as to attract a group of sympathetic intellectuals, largely committed to Marxist ideals, not necessarily to the political positions of the party. The creation of the superstructural institutional apparatus may be the most important factor that helped the communists to penetrate large sections of Kerala society.

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

Pamphlets and Booklets*

- Abdullah, T.K.K. Muslingalum Varan Pokunna Theranjeduppum, Marxist Bookstall, Kozhikode, 1951.
- Achuthamenon, C. Kochiyum Aikyakeralavum, Desabhimani, 1947.
- Chadayan Master, P. Harijanangalum Assembly Theranjeduppum, Harijan League, Chirakkal, 1946.
- Chathan, P.K. Samudayathe Ottikodukkunna Vanchakarmar, Pulaya-mahasabha, 1944.
- Chathan Master, P.K., Janadhipathyam Sthapikkan, Vijaya, Irinjala-Namboodiri, P.S. and Kuda, 1951.
Kumaran, P.K.
- Damodaran, K. Marxism (Part I), Desabhimani, Kozhikode, 1948.
- Marxisathinoru Mukhovura, Desabhimani, Kozhikode, 1948.
- Datt, Kalpana Chittagong Kshamathinushesham
Janangalude Margam, Desabhimani Printing and Publishing House, 1948.
- Kayyur Sakhakkal Ennum Jeevikkum, Kozhikode, 1943.
- Kazhinja Randu Masam, Desabhimani, Kozhikode, 1944.
- Devadas, M.S. Chinayil Chiyarg Enthu Cheyyunnu, 1944.
- Punjab-Delhi Lahalekalunde Pinnil Nehru
Governmentine Marichidan Sramam, Desabhimani, 1947.
- Ibrahim, Mov Islam Soviet Unionil, Indian Communist Party
Malabar Committee, Kozhikode.
-

These pamphlets and booklets constitute the main primary source materials for the study.

- Induchoodan, V.T. Vadake Malabarile Aswasthyangalkku Aranuttaravadi?, Desabhimani, Kozhikode, 1947.
- Isahak, M. Mannenna, Panchasara Reshan Cheyyuka, Dasabhimani, Kozhikode, 1945.
- _____ Thuni Reshan Cheyyuka, Desabhimani, Kozhikode, 1946.
- Joshi, P.C. European Vijayavum Indiyude Swadhanthryavum, tr. M.S. Devadas, Desabhimani, Kozhikode, 1945.
- Joshi, P.C. Randam Loka Mahayuddham: Randu Ghattangal, tr. E.V. Dev., 1945.
- Thiruvithamkoorile Manthribharanam, Kerala Committee Communist Party, 1949.
- KSPyude Nayam Maulikamayi ISPyudethu Tharne, Kerala State Council, Communist Party of India, 1948.
- Swathanthra Kerala Rashtram, Indianjanadhipathyathinethiraya Mudhravakyam, Kerala Communist Party.
- K.M. Aikya Keralam Malayali Janatayude Janadhipathyavakasam, Marxist Book Stall, 1951.
- Koya, C.H.M. Communisavum Mathavum, Muslim Labour Union, Thalassery, 1946.
- Kumaramangalam, Mohan Kizhakkan Europile Karshika Viplavam, tr. E.V. Dev. Desabhimani, 1946.
- Kunjan, K.K. Thozhilalikalkkithu Puthariyalla, Desabhimani, Kozhikode, 1946.
- Indian Socialist Party Sakhakkalodu, Left Socialist Group.
- Manakkalath, R.M. Samadhanathinu Pinnil, Socialist Party, Trichur, 1951.
- Manvettam, Paul, B.A. Rashtrathinte Kuthakayo
- P.S. Mundasseriyyude Charithraveekshnam, Rao Sahib Socialisathinte Thatwasasthram, Desabhimani, Kozhikode, 1948.
- Nambcodirippad, E.M.S. Communistkarude Sakunam Mudakkan Nattukarude Mookku Murikkukayo?, Desabhimani, Kozhikode, 1945.

- Namboodirippad, E.M.S. Communistkarum Purogamana Sahityavum, Desabhimani, Kozhikode, 1948.
- Communist Partiyude Perilulla Akramanam Janadhyapathyathodulla Velluviliyanu, Desabhimani, Kozhikode, 1948.
- Congress Bharanathinu Keezhil, Desabhimani, Kozhikode, 1948.
- Congress Innu Manthripadam Sweekarikkanamo, Desabhimani, Kozhikode, 1945.
- Deseeya Thozhilali Federation Secretarikkumarupadi, Desabhimani, Kozhikode, 1943.
- Janangale Sevikkan Namukkorumichu Pravarthikkuka, 1952.
- Keralathile Communist Pravarthanam Rajyadhrohamo, Rajyasevanamo, Desabhimani, Kozhikode, 1943.
- Malabarile Krishikkarude Mumpil, Desabhimani, Kozhikode, 1946.
- Namboodiriye Manushyanakkan, 1944.
- Onnekalkodi Malayalikal, Desabhimani, Kozhikode, 1946.
- Socialism Ennal, Kerala Congress Socialist Party, 1939.
- State Congressinodum Mudhalalipathrangalodum Njangal Chodikkunna Chodyam, Desabhimani, Kozhikode, 1948.
- Swathanthramaya Lokathil Swathanthramaya India, Desabhimani Prasadheekaranasala, Kozhikode, 1943.
- Oru Communist Malabarile Muslim Voterarode, Marxist Book Stall, Kozhikode, 1951.
- Russaiyum Mathavum, Peoples Reading Room, Trivandrum, 1946.
- Soviet Nattil, Prabhatam, 1938.
- Punnoose, P.T. Sir C.Pyko Parivarthanam?, Travancore Communist Party, 1946.

- Sadasivan, C.G. S.N.D.P. Yogavum Desseya Prasthanavum.
- Sahir, Sajjad Indian Swadhanthrya Samarathil Muslim Leaginulla Sthanam, Translated from English, Desabhimani, Kozhikode.
- Surendran Communisam Neenal Vazhum, Desabhimani, Kozhikode, 1943.
- Trisoor Taluk SNDP Karmasamiti Lakhulekha, Vidyavinodhini, Trichur
- Unniraja, C. Madirasi Mumpottu Thanne.
- _____ Nehru Marshal Plan Namukku Venda, 1948.
- _____ Veval Padhathiyum Natturajyangalum, Travancore Communist Party.
- _____ Yata Sammelanam Aarude Vijayam?, 1945.
- Usman, Dr. M. Marxisam Pisachinte Margam.
- Varghese, B.C. Tharakkallukal Athava Swathanthra Matedara Republic, Malabar Socialist Party, 1951.
- Warrier, K.K. 1943 Thiruchuvararuthu, Desabhimani, Kozhikode, 1947.

Souvenir

- CPI Kerala State Council, CPI 40th Anniversar Souvenir, Trivandrum.
- Desabhimani, Krishnapillai Smaraka Grantham, 2nd ed., 10 . 9. 1955.
- K. Damodaran Memmorial Institute K. Damodaran Memorial Volume, Trivandrum, 1977.
- Kayyur Rakthasakshi Smaraka Committee, Kayyur Kayyur Rakthasakshi Smaraka Grantham, January, 1978.

Interviews

Bhaskarappanikkar, P.T., Trivandrum. 5. 5. 90

Gopalan, E.P., Pattambi. 23. 5. 90.

Keraleeyan, K.A., Kozhikode. 20. 5. 90

Krishnan, Kallattu, Kozhikode. 21. 5. 90

Kunjuraman Nair, C.M., Trivandrum. 6. 5. 90

Madhavan, K., Kanjangad. 16. 5. 90

Raghavan, Puthuppally, Alleppey. 25. 4. 90

Sadanandapai, Trivandrum. 7. 5. 90

Subrahmanya Shenoy, Payyannoor. 17. 5. 90

Umniraja, C. Trivandrum. 2. 5. 90

Books and Articles

- Althusser, Louis For Marx, Allen Lane, London, 1967.
- _____ Essays in Self Criticism, New Left Books, London, 1976
- Ayyappapanikkar, K 'Socialist Realism and the Progressive Movement in Malayalam', in Carls Coppola, ed., Marxist Influence and South Asian Literature, Chanakya, Delhi, 1988.
- Balaram, N.E. Keralathile Communist Prasthanam, Prabhat, Trivandrum, 1990.
- Chaithanaya, Krishna A History of Malayalam Literature, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1971.
- Damodaran, K. Enthanu Sahityam?, NBS, Kottayam, 1953
- _____ 'Memoirs of an Indian Communist: Interview with Tariq Ali', New Left Review, Sept.-Oct., 1975.
- _____ Pattabakki, Prabhat, Trivandrum, 1988.
- Eagleton, Terry Criticism and Ideology, Verso, London, 1982.
- Fic (M), Victor Kerala : Yenan of India, Rise of Communist Power 1937-69, Nachiketa, Bombay, 1969.
- Fromm, Erich (ed.) Socialist Humanism, Allen Lane, London, 1967.
- George, K.C. Ente Jeevita Yatra, NBS, Kottayam, 1985.
- Gopalakrishnan, P.K. Purogamana Sahitya Prasthanam: Nizhalum Velichavum, Kerala Sahitya Academy, Trichur, 1985.
- Gopalan, A.K. In the Cause of the People, Orient Longman, 1975.

- Gough, Kathleen 'Village Politics in Kerala', Economic and Political Weekly, 20th Feb. and 27th Feb., 1965.
- _____ and Sharma, Hari P. Imperialism and Revolution in South Asia, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1973.
- Gramsci, Antonio Selections from Cultural Writings, Harvard University Press, 1985.
- _____ Selections from the Prison Notebooks, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1971.
- Hardgrave, Robert L. 'Caste and the Kerala Elections', Economic Weekly, 17 April, 1965.
- Inglis, Fred Popular Culture and Political Power, Harvester Wheatsheaf, New York, 1988.
- Jeffrey, Robin Decline of Nair Dominance, Society and Politics in Travancore, 1847-1908, Vikas, New Delhi, 1976.
- _____ 'Destroy Capitalism: Growing Solidarity of Alleppey's Coir Workers, 1930-'40', EPW, July 21, 1984.
- _____ 'Matriliney, Marxism and the Birth of the Communist Party in Kerala 1930-'40', Journal of Asian Studies, November, 1978.
- _____ 'The Social Origins of a Caste Association 1875-1905 : The Founding of S.N.D.P. Yogam, South Asia, October 1974.
- Joseph, S.C. Kerala: The Communist State, Madras Premier, Madras, 1959.
- Joshi, P.C. and Damodaran, K. Marx Comes to India, Manohar Book House, Delhi, 1975.
- Kamenka, Eugene Ethical Foundations of Marxism, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1972.
- _____ (ed.) Community as a Social Ideal, Edward Arnold, London, 1982.
- Keavadev, P. Ethirpu, NBS, Kottayam, 1989.
- _____ Kesavadev Kalnoottandinu Mumbu, NBS, Kottayam, 1969.

- Krishnan, T.V. Kerala's First Communist: Life of Sakhavu P. Krishnapillai, CPI, New Delhi, 1971.
- Kurup, K.K.N. Aspects of Kerala History and Culture, College Book House, Trivandrum, 1977.
-
- Kayyur Riot: A Terrorist Episode in the Nationalist Movement in Kerala, Sandhya, Calicut, 1978.
- Kusuman, K.K. Abstention Movement, Kerala Historical Society, Trivandrum, 1976.
-
- Slavery in Travancore, Kerala Historical Society, Trivandrum, 1973.
- Lenin, V.I. State and Revolution, Progress, Moscow, 1972.
-
- What is to be Done, Oxford Univ. Press, London, 1970.
- Lieten, G.K. First Communist Ministry in Kerala, 1957-59, K.P. Bagchi, Calcutta, 1982.
- Lukacs, Georg History and Class Consciousness, Merlin Press, London, 1971.
- Madhavan, K. Payaswiniyude Theerathu, Prabhat, Trivandrum, 1987.
- Mammen, P.M. Communalism vs Communism: A Study of the Socio-Religious Communities and Political Parties in Kerala 1892-1970,
- Mankekar, D.R. The Red Riddle of Kerala, Manktlas, Bombay, 1965.
- Marar, Kuttikrishna Charachayogam, P.K. Brothers, Kozhikode, 1952.
-
- Kaivilakku, NBS, Kottayam, 1953.
- Marcuse, Herbert Soviet Marxism: A Critical Analysis, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London
- Marx, Karl Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, Charles H Keev, Chicago, 1964.

- Marx, Karl Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1956.
- Marx, Karl and Engels, Frederich Communist Manifesto, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1970.
-
- Menon, A. Sreedhara German Ideology, Progress, Moscow, 1976.
-
- Menon, A. Sreedhara A Survey of Kerala History, NBS, Kottayam, 1970.
-
- Menon, Vailopilly Sreedhara Social and Cultural History of Kerala, Sterling, New Delhi, 1979.
-
- Menon, Vailopilly Sreedhara Kudiyozhikkal, NBS, Kottayam, 1980.
-
- Nair, M.N. Govindan Emmente Atmakatha, Vol. I, Prabhat, Trivandrum, 1988.
-
- Nair, M.N. Govindan Emmente Atmakatha, Vol. II, Prabhat, Trivandrum, 1988.
-
- Nair, M.R. Sanjayan, Vols. 1 & 2, Mathrubhoomi, Kozhikode, 1986.
-
- Nair, P. Narayanan Aranoottandiloode, NBS, Kottayam, 1973
-
- Nair, R. Ramakrishnan How Communists Came to Power in Kerala, Kerala Academy of Political Science, Trivandrum, 1965.
-
- Nambiar, P.Sankaran Sahityanishkkatam, K.R. Brothers, Kozhikode, 1953.
-
- Namboodirippad, E.M.S. Communist Party Keralathil, Vol.I, Chinta, Trivandrum, 1988.
-
- Namboodirippad, E.M.S. How I Became a Communist, Chinta, Trivandrum, 1976.
-
- Namboodirippad, E.M.S. Kerala: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow, National Book Agency, Calcutta, 1968.
-
- Namboodirippad, E.M.S. National Question in India, People's Publishing House, Bombay, 1952.
-
- Narain, Jayaprakash tr. P. Narainan Nair Socialism Enthinu?, Mathrubhoomi, Calicut, 1938.

- Nossitter, T.J. Communism in Kerala: A Study in Political Adaptation, Oxford, 1982.
- Overstreet, G.D. and Windmiller, M. Communism in India: Perennial Press, Bombay, 1960.
- Paul, M.P. Sahitya Vicharam, NBS, Kottayam, 1953.
- Pillai, Elankulam Kunjan Studies in Kerala History, NBS, Kottayam, 1970.
- Pillai, Thakazhi Sivasankara Randidangazhi, NBS, Kottayam, 1984.
- Raghavan, Puthuppally Sakhavu Sughathante Jeevacharithram, Prabhat, Trivandrum, 1979.
- Rasheed, M. Sakhavu Damodaran, C.I.C.C., Ernakulam, 1990.
- Samuel, Raphael, (ed.) Theatre of the Left: Workers' Theatre in Britain and America, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985.
- Thirumumpu, T.S. Smaranakal, Kavitalakal, Kerala Sahitya Academy, Trichur, 1989.
- Ross, Andrews No Respect: Intellectuals and Popular Culture, Routledge.
- Williams, Raymond Culture and Society - 1780-1950, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1968.
-
- Resources of Hope: Culture, Democracy, Socialism, Verso, London, 1989.

APPENDIX

Brief Biographical Sketches of the Communist Leaders Who had an Important Role in the Dissemination of Marxist Ideas in Kerala, 1939-52:

- Achuta Menon, C. Born in 1913 in a middle class family at Trichur, in Cochin state. Had graduation in Law. Joined Communist Party through Cochin Prajamandalam. Was the secretary of Cochin District Congress Committee and the member of the K.P.C.C. Held the post of Secretary of the Cochin District Committee of the Communist Party and of the Kisan Sabha. Secretary of the CPI Kerala State Council at the time of the split in party in 1964. Remained in CPI after the split. Chief Minister of Kerala from 1970 to 1977. Retired from active politics in 1977.
- Balaram, N.E. Born in 1919 in North Malabar. Was active in Ramakrishna Mission in early age. Joined Congress in 1934. Secretary of the Kottayam Taluk Committee of the Congress. Joined the Congress Socialist Party in 1936. Participated in the CSP meeting held near Talasseri that decided to merge in CPI. Remained in the CPI after the split. Secretary of the Kerala State Council of the CPI during 1971-'84. Currently member of the Central Secretariat of the party.
- Damodaran, K. Born in 1912 in South Malabar. Participated in the second civil disobedience movement and got arrested. Studied at Kashi Vidyapith during 1935-37. Secretary of the K.P.C.C in 1938. AICC member in 1940. Member of the first communist group formed in 1937. Remained in the CPI after the split. Last years were spent in research on the history of the communist movement in India. Orator and philosopher. Author of many books on politics, philosophy, literature, economics and history. Died in 1976.
- Devadas, M.S. Born in 1912 in an aristocratic family. Worked as a college professor in Singapore. Editor of Desabhimani from 1942 to 1948. Prominent theoretician of the party. Joined CPI(M) after the split. Died in 1988.

George, K.C. Born in 1903 in Central Travancore. Practised Law at Trivandrum. Given up for full time politics. One of the leaders of the Travancore State Congress. Led the left wing politics of Travancore from an underground shelter in Cochin. Secretary, Travancore Communist Party. Member CPI Central Committee. Minister in first communist ministry. Remained in CPI after split. Died in 1986.

Gopalan, E.P. Born in South Malabar. Joined Congress in an early age. Was not happy with the Congress policies from the beginning. Did not accept the policies of Satyagraha. Did not participate in Guruvayoor Satyagraha. Became the president of Valluwanad Taluk Congress Committee in 1935. Remained in CPI after split. Popular orator of the party in Malabar.

Gopalan, A.K. Born in 1902 in North Malabar. School Teacher. Participated in second disobedience movement. Had leading role in Guruvayoor Satyagraha. K.P.C.C. Secretary in 1934. Secretary, Kerala State Council of the CPI in 1944. Leader of the CPI(M) group in parliament. One of the most popular leaders of the Indian communist movement. Died in 1977.

Gopalan, K.P.R. Born in North Malabar. Participated in the second civil disobedience movement and was imprisoned. Joined the Congress Socialist Party after the release from jail. Arrested in connection with the Morazha riot (15 September 1940). Sentenced to death. As a result of the popular movement, the government reduced the death sentence to life imprisonment. Joined the CPI(M) after split. Left CPI(M) and started a party called Bolshevik Party. Retired from active politics.

Govindan Nair, M.N. Born in 1911 in Central Travancore. Started social work among the Harijans. After completing graduation went to Wardha and stayed at Wardha Asram. The secretary of the radical group in the Travancore State Congress. Secretary of the Kerala State Council of the CPI when the party was elected to power. Member, C.P.I. Central Secretariat. Died in 1984.

Keraleeyan, K.A. Born in North Malabar. Prominent peasant leader of Malabar. Secretary, Malabar District Congress Committee in 1937. Leading role in the anti-imperialist peasant struggles. Remained in CPI after split. Retired from active politics.

Krishnapillai, P. Born in 1906 at Vaikkom in North Travancore. Studied up to 5th standard. Became a coir factory worker and left the job within six months. Influenced by the Vaikkom Temple entry Satyagraha - a Satyagraha for opening the approach roads to the Vaikkom Temple to the untouchables and lower castes. Had leading role in Guruvayoor Satyagraha. Leader of the Congress and the Congress Socialist Party. Became the Secretary of the first Kerala State Committee of the Communist Party of India. Died of snake poison at an underground shelter at Alleppey in 1948.

Namboodirippad, E.M.S. Born in 1909 in South Malabar. Participated in the second civil disobedience movement. Actively participated in social reform movements. Secretary of KPCC in 1934 and 1938-40. One of the founder leaders of the Congress Socialist Party in Kerala. Joint Secretary of the All India Congress Socialist Party. Member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party since 1941. Chief Minister in the first communist ministry in Kerala 1957-59. Presently General Secretary of the CPI(M). Leading theoretician of the party. Written many books on history, politics, economics and literature.

Narayanan Nair, P. Born in 1906 in Cochin State. Editor of Mathrubhoomi. Prominent leader of the Congress Socialist Party. Translated Jayaprakash Narayan's 'Why Socialism' into Malayalam. Associated with the communist periodicals, Prabhatam and Desabhimani. Remained in CPI after split. Died in 1973.

Sankaranarayanananthampi, R. Born in 1912 in an aristocratic family in Central Travancore. Had leading role in communist politics in Travancore. Conducted party classes for the cadre. Speaker of the first Kerala legislative assembly. Retired from active politics after split. Died in 1990.

Subrahmanyashenoy Born in 1913 in North Malabar. Was a Volunteer in Payyannoor Congress Conference. Dismissed from the school for burning the Union Jack. Went to Cochin in underground. Became Secretary of the Cochin District Committee of the party. Ended underground life after 1947. Joined CPI(M) after split.

Sugathan, R. Born in 1901 in Alleppey. Worked as a school teacher. Took part in social reform movements. Was the first secretary of the Travancore Coir Factory Workers Union. Secretary, Travancore Trade Union Council. Prominent trade unionist of Kerala. Remained in CPI after split. Died in 1970.

Unniraja, C. Born in 1919 in an aristocratic family in South Malabar. Editor of many communist periodicals. Conducted party classes. Remained in CPI after split. Leading theoretician of the party.



1238

* * *