

**MUSLIM POLITICS IN KERALA
(1921-1967)**

*Thesis
submitted for the award of
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in History*

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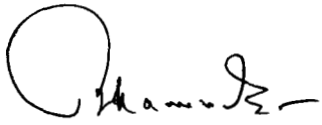
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CERTIFICATE

Certified that this dissertation "**MUSLIM POLITICS IN KERALA (1921 - 1967)**" prepared by **Mr. T.A. MOHAMED** is a genuine and bonafide work done under my supervision and no part of this has been submitted for any degree, certificate or award previously.

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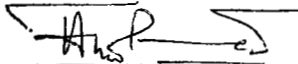

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DECLARATION

I, **Mohamed. T.A.**, do hereby declare that the thesis "MUSLIM POLITICS IN KERALA (1921 - 1967)" is the result of my own work under the supervision of **Dr. K. T. Mohammed Ali**, and that no part of it has been used by me for the award of any other degree, diploma or title, before.

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P R E F A C E

The research study outlined here viz. 'Muslim Politics in Kerala (1921 - 1967)', is an attempt to bring to limelight the role of Muslims in the political arena of Kerala. Their role in the freedom struggle and their involvement in the activities of the major political parties such as the Indian National Congress, the Socialist and the Communist Party of Kerala and the rise and growth of Muslim political movements have been investigated in this study.

The dissertation contains nine chapters besides the Introduction. The first chapter traces the history of the Khilafat Movement in Malabar. The involvement of Muslims of Malabar, Cochin and Travancore in the Nationalist - Congress Movement has been discussed separately in the second, fourth and fifth chapters. The third chapter discusses the role of Muslims of Mahe, which is a part of Malabar geographically, in the freedom struggle against the French. The Sixth chapter analyses the involvement of Muslims in the Congress in its post - Independence activities. The rise and growth of the Socialist - Communist Movements and role of Muslims have been discussed in the seventh chapter. The origin and development of Muslim political movements, especially the rise and growth of the Muslim League form the subject of eighth chapter. The last chapter sums up the study.

Though some studies had previously been conducted on the history of Mappilas, the Malabar Rebellion of 1921 and on the role of Muslim League in Kerala politics, no serious study had so far been made exclusively of the role of Muslims of Kerala including the Mappilas of Malabar in the Nationalist – Congress Movement, their role in the freedom struggle of Mahe, and their role in the Socialist – Communist Movements.

The study is based mainly on materials collected from the archives and libraries such as the Tamil Nadu Archives, Chennai, the Kerala State Archives, Trivandrum, the Regional Archives, Calicut, the Kerala Legislative Library, Trivandrum; The Centre for Development studies, Trivandrum; the University of Kerala and Calicut, the A.K.G. Centre Library, Trivandrum; The M.N. Smaraka Library, Trivandrum; Keluvettan Padana Kendram, Calicut, Tellicherry Muslim Association Library and Farook College Library. The old files of the 'Mathrubhumi', the 'Chandrika' and the 'Desabhimani' from their respective libraries have also been consulted. Besides, the researcher has conducted interviews with many important political leaders and freedom fighters. Their ideas have contributed much to the preparation of this work.

For the completion of the study, I have received assistance from various sources. I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to my Supervising Teacher Dr. K.T. Mohammed Ali (Head of the Department of Islamic Studies and Culture, University of Kerala) who guided me with moral

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ABBREVIATIONS

AICC	:	All India Congress Committee
AIML	:	All India Muslim League
CPI	:	Communist Party of India
CPI(M)	:	Communist Party of India (Marxist)
CSP	:	Congress Socialist Party
Cr.PC	:	Criminal Penal Code
HFM	:	History of Freedom Movement
ISP	:	Indian Socialist Party
IUML	:	Indian Union Muslim League
KMPP	:	Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party
KTP	:	Karshaka Thozhilali Party
KSP	:	Kerala Socialist Party
ML	:	Muslim League
KPCC	:	Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee
PSP	:	Praja Socialist Party
RSP	:	Revolutionary Socialist Party
NSS	:	Nair Service Society
SNDP	:	Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam
SRP	:	Socialist Republican Party
SSP	:	Samyuktha Socialist Party
UDF	:	United Democratic Front
LDF	:	Left Democratic Front
TNA	:	Tamil Nadu Archives
TTNC	:	Travancore Tamil Nadu Congress

INTRODUCTION

EARLY CONTACTS BETWEEN KERALA AND WEST ASIA

It is an established fact that from time immemorial Kerala had contacts with the countries of the western world. The Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Phoenicians, the Arabs, the Greeks, and the Romans were some among the foreigners who had made contacts with the Kerala coast. The reputation that ancient Kerala was the land of spices brought the foreigners to this part of the country. The Assyrians and the Babylonians had carried on an extensive trade in cardamom and cinnamon from the Kerala coast. The ancient Egyptians used spices from Kerala to make perfumes and preservatives for mummification of their kings and other noble persons.

One of the earliest references about the spice trade can be seen in the Old Testament. It says: "And King Solomon made a navy of ships in Eziongeber, which is beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red sea, in the land of Edom; and Hiram sent in the navy his servants, shipmen that had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of Solomon. And they came to Ophir, and fetched from thence gold... and brought it to King Solomon."¹ It again says, "... Once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold and silver, ivory, and apes and peacocks."² All these goods excepting silver were the products of Kerala ; the

1. *The Holy Bible*, I, Kings, 9:26-28.

2. *Ibid*, verse 10:22.

Hebrew names for ape (*kapim*) and peacock (*Tukim*) are obviously Tamil words. The place Ophir has been identified by some scholars with Beypore.

Besides biblical references philological evidences also give proof for Greek and Arabian commercial contacts with Kerala. For instance in Malayalam ginger is called *inchi* (in Arabic *zanjabil* and in Greek *zinziber*). Likewise the Greek word *Oryzi* is said to be derived from the Tamil word *Arisi* (in Arabic *Arz* and in Malayalam *Ari*). The Arabic word for camphor is *Kaphur*, which is said to be derived from the Malayalam word *karpuram*. The Arabic word *sandal* and English word sandal might be derived from the Indian word *chandanam*. Similarly, the Arabic words like *hail* (cardamom, in Malayalam *elam*), *qaranful* (clove, in Malayalam *karampu*), *tambul* (betel, *tambulam* or *vettila* in Malayalam) etc. testifies to the close relationship between the Arabs and the Keralites. All these evidences prove the give and take that existed between Kerala and other countries in olden days. It is assumed that even the name of Malabar was given by the Arabs (in Arabic *Malaibar*) by clubbing the Malayalam word *mala* (mount) with the Arabic word *barr* (continent, land) or with the Persian word *bar* (country, coast).³ They had given such names to other places also like Hindbar, Nicobar etc.⁴ To the Arabs, Malabar meant the entire Malayalam speaking territory stretching from Ezhimala (Mount Eli) to Cape

3. William Logan, *Malabar*, Vol.I, p1.

4. Shamsulla Qadiri, *Pracheena Malabar* (Mal.) Tr. By V. Abdul Qayum, p2.

Comorin. Al Biruni (970 –1039 A.D) appears to have been the first to call the country Malabar.⁵

In the Arabic literary works written in the pre-Islamic period also references can be seen about the products of Kerala. For example in one poem the famous Arabic poet Imrul Qays compares the excreta of a deer with seeds of pepper.⁶ The products of Kerala, which were demanded highly by the people of West Asia and Europe, were pepper, cardamom, cinnamon, ginger, and turmeric. Among them pepper was valued highly by the Romans as gold and silver. When Rome was besieged by Alaric, king of Goths, in the fifth century after Christ, a part of the ransom demanded for sparing the imperial city from destruction was 3000 pounds of black pepper.⁷

The Roman coins found at Kodungallur (Muziris) also testifies to the trade relationship that existed between Kerala coast and western countries. It is to be borne in mind that the Arabs also, till the caliphate of Abdul Malik, used the Roman gold coins for trading purposes.

The establishment of *Pax Romana* in the Mediterranean world in the time of Augustus Caesar (31 BC – 14 AD) and the discovery of monsoon winds by Hippalus (45 AD) gave a fillip to the trade between Kerala and the west.

5. C.A. Innes, *Madras District Gazetteers*, Malabar, Vol.1, p2.

6. Mankada Abdul Azeez, in *Chandrika Weekly*, 9 September, 1995.

7. E.H. Warmington, *The Commerce Between the Roman Empire and India*, 1928, p140. quoted in A.P. Ibrahim Kunju, *Studies in Medieval Kerala History*, p5.

The discovery of Hippalus reduced the duration of the voyage from Berenice on the African coast of the Red sea to Muziris on the Malabar coast to about seventy days.

Though these early foreign contacts were mainly commercial, they led to the spread of three major world religions, namely, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam to this part of the country at a fairly early date. All these religions reached Kerala coast much earlier than it reached other parts of the country. According to legends, Christianity was introduced in Kerala in 52 A.D. by Apostle St. Thomas, who had landed at Malankara, a place near Kodungallur. As per traditions the Jews began to settle in Kerala coast in 68 AD in order to escape from religious persecution at their hometown, Jerusalem.⁸ Like wise, it is believed that Islam was introduced to Kerala coast at the very time of its introduction at Arabia, through traders and missionaries. Sayyid Sulaiman Nadwi says, "It is an open fact that long before the muslims settled in northern India, there were colonies in southern India".⁹ The Arabs had trade centers and settlements in places like *Kalikut* (Calicut), *Shaliyat* (Chaliyam), *Fanderina* (Pantalayani), *Dahfatan* (Dharmadam), *Hili* (Ezhimala), *Kanjurkut* (Kasaragod), *Manjarur* (Mangalore), *Kadankallur* (Kodungallur), *Kulum* (Quilon) etc.

8. K.V. Krishna Ayyar, *The Zamorins of Calicut*, p51.

9. Sayyid Sulaiman Nadwi, "The Muslim Colonies in India Before the Muslim conquests", *Islamic Culture*, VIII (1934), p478. (Quoted in Roland E. Miller, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala*, p39).

RISE AND SPREAD OF ISLAM IN KERALA

There is no clear-cut evidence to show that how and when Islam originated in Kerala. But it is a fact that unlike in northern India, Islam was introduced in this coast not by any conquerors or invaders, but it was spread by traders and missionaries in a peaceful way. It is also a clear fact that the whole of Kerala had not been ruled by any Muslim rulers or dynasties. The only exception to it is the rule of Ali Rajas who ruled over Cannanore, Laccadive Islands and Maldiva Island and the Mysorean rulers, Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan, who ruled the northern part of Kerala for a short span of twenty-six years (1766 – 1792) . Even without the use of force and absence of political authority, a large concentration of Muslims can be seen in Kerala coast especially in the Malabar area, which testifies to the role played by the traders and missionaries in the spread of Islam.

It is believed that by the middle of seventh century almost all the people of Arabia had accepted the faith of Islam. Naturally the Arab traders who came to the coastal regions of Malabar after this period were also followers of the faith. It was due to their effort that Islam spread in this part of the country.

The advent of Islam into Kerala is attributed by some scholars to the conversion of the last Chera Emperor, Cheraman Perumal, into Islam. According to the Muslim tradition, a few Muslim pilgrims who were on their way to the Adam's peak in Ceylon, landed at Kodungallur and met Cheraman

Perumal there. Hearing of the teachings of Islam, the Perumal wished to meet the prophet and he accompanied the pilgrims on their return journey to Mecca. There he met the Prophet and embraced Islam. Then after some time he decided to return to Kerala, but was taken ill and died on the way and was buried at Zufar on the Arabian coast. The Hindu tradition contained in the *Keralolpatti* agrees in general with the Muslim tradition. In the Portuguese accounts of Duarte Barbosa¹⁰ and Barros also such traditions are recorded.

Tuhfatul Mujahidin, written by Shaykh Zainuddin towards the close of 16th century, describes in detail the conversion of Cheraman Perumal and the arrival of Malik ibn Dinar, Sharaf ibn Malik, Malik ibn Habib et.al. at Kodungallur. As per tradition they constructed a mosque at Kodungallur which is said to be the first mosque in India. According to Shaykh Zainuddin, Malik ibn Dinar settled at Kodungallur and deputed his nephew Malik ibn Habib to spread the religion in other parts of Kerala. Accordingly he visited important centers of Kerala and constructed ten mosques.¹¹ But according to *Rihlatul Muluk* written by Suhrawardi, Malik ibn Dinar and others had established eighteen mosques and appointed eighteen Qazis.¹² However, the exact date or period of their visit are not known.

10. M.L. Dames, Ed., *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, Vol II, pp2-4.

11. Shaykh Zainuddin, *Tuhfatul Mujahidin*, Tr. by C. Hamza (Mal.), p52.

12. M. Abdul Samad, *Islam in Kerala : Groups and Movements in the 20th Century*, p3. and K.M Bahavuddin, *Kerala Muslims : The Long Struggle*, p23.

Some inscriptions discovered at Pantalayani and Madayi, both were later Muslim centers and are listed among the places where Malik ibn Dinar and his group had established mosques, presents strong evidence for the presence of Muslims in those areas. At Pandalayani on one tomb-stone it is inscribed that one Ali ibn Udthorman had died and was buried there on 166 of Hijra (782 AD). In the Madayi mosque its founding date is inscribed as 580 Hijra (1124 AD).¹³ Some gold coins issued during the period of Umayyad caliphs (661 – 750 AD) are found at Kothamangalam, indicates either Arab trade with south-west coast of India or the presence of Arabs in that region. However, the earliest clear evidence of Muslim presence is represented by the *Terisappally* copper plates. It was a deed by which some land was given to the *Terisappally* of Quilon by Ayyanadikal Tiruvatikal, the Governor of Sthanu Ravi Varman (844-885 AD), the Chera King. This was executed in 849 AD in which ten Muslims had signed as witnesses.¹⁴ It testifies not only to the presence of muslim community at Quilon in the 9th century but also to the prominent place they had acquired in the socio-economic setup of the country by that time.

Islam spread very widely in Kerala especially in the urban centers, which were the pockets of Arab trade for example Calicut, Cannanore, Kasargod, Panthalayani, Chaliyam, Madayi, Parappanangadi, Tanur, Ponnani, Chavakkad, Kodungallur, Cochin, Kayamkulam, Quilon, Alleppey etc. It

13. C.A. Innes, *op. cit.*, p25.

14. Roland E. Miller, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala*, p43.

testifies to the fact that Islam was spread in this region by the Arab traders and sailors. Shaykh Zainuddin has listed ten places where Malik ibn Dinar and others have constructed mosques. Among them two places (Mangalore and Barkur) are in the present Karnataka state. In the rest, all are Arab trading centers; and except one place (Srikantapuram) all others are situated in coastal areas.

With the settling of the *Makhdum* family at Ponnani in the second half of the fifteenth century, Ponnani became a great center of Islamic activity.¹⁵ It is believed that they belonged to Yemen and after propagating Islam in several parts of the present Tamil Nadu, they came and settled at Ponnani. The famous Islamic scholars, Shaykh Zainuddin I and Shaykh Zainuddin II belonged to this family. Likewise the *Ba Alavi* saints arrived at Calicut from Hadramaut in 1746 AD. They were well-received by the Zamorin, who had provided them with a house at Calicut. Later he had shifted his abode to Mamburam. This most revered house of Sayyids is popularly known as '*Mamburam Tangals*'. Thus Mamburam and Tirurangadi became important centers of Muslims. Another group from Hadramaut led by Sayyid Ahamad reached Quilandy in 1770 A.D. with the intention of trade and propagation of Islam.¹⁶ They are known as *Bafakhies* Yet another trading-cum-missionary group came from Yemen and settled down at Calicut in 1797 AD under the

15. Asghar Ali Engineer, Ed., *Kerala Muslims – A Historical Perspective*, p25.

16. P.P. Mammad Koya, *History of the Muslims of Calicut* (Mal.), p96.

leadership of Shaykh Ali Barami.¹⁷ They are known as *Baramies*. Ibn Battutah, the famous traveller, had mentioned about the activities of some missionaries like Shaykh Fakhruddin, Shaykh Shahabuddin, Sarsary and others whom he had met while he was in Kerala.¹⁸ All these factors point to the role played by the traders and missionaries in the propagation of Islam.

Another factor, which helped the speedy expansion of Islam was the social condition that prevailed in Kerala, in which people were divided and subdivided on the basis of casteism. To escape from such evils within the Hindu community, many lower caste people embraced Islam. As Gaspar Correa observed: "By becoming Moors they could go wherever they liked and eat as they pleased. When they became Moors, the Moors gave them clothes and robes with which to clothe themselves."¹⁹ The lower caste Hindus were attracted to Islam not only by the social upgradation it guaranteed but also by the better economic prospects opened to them by conversion.

PATRONAGE BY THE RULERS

Another factor responsible for the fast growth of Islam in Kerala was the tolerant policy followed by the Hindu rajas of Kerala. This was

17. *Ibid*, p97.

18. K.A. Neelakanta Sastri, *Foreign notices of South India*, pp239-42., quoted in A.P. Ibrahim Kunju, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala*, p21.

19. Henry Stanley, Ed., *The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*, p155., quoted in A.P. Ibrahim Kunju, 'Genesis and Spread of Islam in Kerala', *Journal of Kerala Studies*, Vol III, Part III and IV, p487.

particularly so in the case of the Zamorins of Calicut who had patronized the Arabs and the Muslims in all ways. He had two ends in his mind when he followed such a favourable policy towards the Muslims. Firstly, to organize a good naval force, he needed the help of Muslims, because crossing of the sea was considered sacrilegious by the Hindus. So he had issued orders that from every family of fishermen one or more of the male members should be brought up as Muslims.²⁰ Secondly, economically also the presence of Muslims was beneficial to him. For, the brisk foreign trade brought economic development to the country. So, realizing these factors the Zamorins encouraged Muslim settlements in different parts of the state. Kolathiri and Valluvakonatiri also pursued the same policy with regard to Muslims. Shaykh Zainuddin observed: "The Muslims throughout Malabar have no *amir* possessed of power to rule over them, but their rulers are unbelievers... The rulers have respect and regard for the Muslims, because the increase in the number of cities was due to them... The government fix the allowance for Qazis and Mu'addins and entrust them with the duty of carrying on the laws of the Shariat. No one is permitted to neglect the prayer on Fridays."²¹

When the Zamorin founded Calicut, he induced the Arabs to settle there by providing certain special concessions. They were given freedom to convert people to Islam, and were also given the monopoly of the import and

20. T.W. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam*, p266.

21. Shaykh Zainuddin, *op. cit.*, p60-61.

export trade.²² The Arabs frequented Calicut more than any other port, with the result by the middle of fourteenth century Quilon and Kodungallur declined and Calicut had taken their place as the center of foreign trade between Asia and Europe. The Arabs not only made Calicut a great port in the west coast of India but they even helped to spread the name and fame of the Zamorin in Europe.²³ With the financial and military support provided by the Muslims, the Zamorin was able to extend his away over Valluvanad. It is said that, as a reward for the help, the Kozhikode Koya was given a place of honour at the *Mamankam* festival.

After making a comparative study among the rulers of Kerala, Shaykh Zainuddin arrived at a conclusion that among the rulers of Kerala, the Venad raja has got the biggest military force. Second to him came the Kolathiri. But the Zamorin was the most powerful and famous. This is due to the influence of Islam and his love for the Muslims and respect for them, especially for those who came from far off lands.²⁴

Regarding the harmonious condition that prevailed in Kerala, Shakykh Zainuddin writes that though Muslims constituted a small portion of the total population, the members of the major communities never behaved in a hostile manner.²⁵ They neither prevented conversion of Hindus to Islam nor they did

22. K.V. Krishna Ayyar, *op. cit*, p52.

23. *Ibid*.

24. Shaykh Zainuddin, *op. cit*, p54.

25. *Ibid*, p60.

any harm to them. Instead they had shown respect even to the Muslim converts from low castes.²⁶ Foreign travellers who visited Kerala like Sulaiman (851), Al Idrisi (1153), Benjamin (1165), Marco Polo (1293), Rashiduddin (1300), Ibn Battuta (1342), Ma Huan(1405), Abdul Razak (1442) et.al. have testified to the religious tolerance of the kings and people of Kerala.

By summarizing the condition of Kerala before the coming of the Europeans, K.M. Panikkar stated :“Malabar was leading a comparatively happy, though politically isolated life. In many ways her organization was primitive, but she had evolved a system in which trade flourished, different communities lived together without friction, and absolute religious toleration existed.”²⁷

ADVENT OF THE PORTUGUESE AND ITS EFFECTS

The advent of the Portuguese was an epoch-making event in the history of Kerala. Some of the factors which prompted the Portuguese to undertake the journey to India are the following:

- 1) Increased demand for the oriental commodities, especially spices, in the European countries.
- 2) Hitherto the major share of profits of European trade went to the Italian traders. Hence the non-Italian traders were looking for an alternative route to the Orient.

26. *Ibid*, p61.

27. K.M. Panikkar, *Malabar and the Portuguese*, p24.

- 3) When the Turks, who were not tolerant like the Arabs, captured Constantinople in 1453, they did not allow the European merchants to pass through the countries under their control. So the closure of the route compelled them to find out an alternative sea route to the East.

Prince Henry, the Navigator (1394-1460) provided all encouragement to the Portuguese sailors to conduct geographical discoveries. He founded a School of Navigation and engaged the services of great Italian sailors, geographers, mapmakers, and ship-builders. Though no actual discovery of any important sea route could be made during his lifetime, he had the satisfaction before his death to know that his sailors had succeeded in discovering some places in the West African coast. Portuguese colonies were established there.

After the successful endeavour of some of the Portuguese sailors like Bartholomew Diaz, Vasco da Gama started his voyage on 8th January 1497 from Lisbon and reached a place called Malindi (just north of present Mombassa). There he met some Indian merchants who put Ahmad Ibn Majid, an Arab pilot, at his disposal. This enabled him to sail straight across the Indian Ocean to the Malabar Coast.

The advent of the Portuguese had a great impact on the history of Kerala. They came to India with two main objectives in their mind. Firstly, to get the hold over Indian spice trade and secondly to proselytize the people of India to

Roman Catholicism. In their homeland they were engaged in war with the Moors (Muslims) and they were able to oust them out of power. But when the Portuguese reached the African coast and later the Malabar coast what they found was that the control of spice trade was with the Muslims. "The city of Calicut... was all inhabited by foreign and native Moors, the richest that there were in all India".²⁸

The Portuguese desired to monopolize the entire spice trade of Kerala but it could not be accomplished without depriving the Muslims of the trade. Hence they put forth the demand for the banishment of Muslims from Calicut. But the Zamorin was not prepared to comply with it. For, the Muslims were living in this country not like foreigners, but as natives, and from whom Zamorin's kingdom received much profit.²⁹ When Vasco da Gama found that the Zamorin was not going to expel the Muslims, he retaliated by attacking Arab vessels and traders.

The war between the Portuguese and the Zamorin, supported by the Muslims, lasted for a century and more. During the course of the war, the Portuguese plundered their properties, burnt their cities and mosques. Shaykh Zainuddin observed: "Destruction of mosques, torturing Muslims without reason, prohibiting Haj pilgrimage, piracy and loot, burning religious books,

28. Correa, *The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*. Tr. by Henry E.J. Stanley, p154. quoted in Miller, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala*, p62.

29. *Ibid*, p328. quoted in Miller, *Ibid*, p63.

insulting the Prophet... forced conversion of Muslims ... rape of women... and innumerable, unthinkable cruelties are commonly practiced by the Portuguese".³⁰

In this desperate situation of Muslims, Shaykh Zainuddin, a great religious scholar from Ponnani, came forward urging the believers to engage in a holy war against the Portuguese. It was with this view in mind that he had written the book "*Tuhfatul Mujahideen Fi B'asi Akhbaril Burthughliyyin.*"

One of the important results of the Portuguese attacks was that the Mappila community became militant. Francois Pyrard who visited Calicut in 1607 reported that he had found all the Muslims there, as well as the Nairs, went armed.³¹ As pointed out by Roland Miller, "... There is no record of the Mappilas being engaged in any militant activity, defensive or offensive, prior to the Portuguese period. The events themselves indicate that the Mappilas had to learn the "art" of fighting a war.³² Another effect of the situation was that the Mappilas now began to adopt a more of concentrated settlement pattern. Many of them migrated to the interior places and sought employment in agriculture in small scale industries; others became pretty shopkeepers or landless peasants. Most of the Arab merchants who had settled at Calicut left

30. Shaykh Zainuddin, *op. cit*, p68.

31. Stephen Frederick Dale, *Islamic Society on the South Asian Frontier, The Mappilas of Malabar, 1498-1922.* p63.

32. Roland E. Miller, *op. cit*, p77.

the place due to the troubled situation. This has been confirmed by Duarte Barbosa.³³

This migration of Muslims to interior lands made the rural situation more complex. Because the lands were owned by the upper caste Hindus and the Muslims got only tenant right in the feudal order that existed in Kerala at that time. Not only that the superior castes treated the Muslim tenants in the same way as they treated the lower castes involved in agricultural operation. This caused conflicts between the Muslim tenants, who were enjoying more freedom and equality in their religion than the Hindu landlords.

The continuous wars with the Portuguese brought about decline of Malabar trade and commerce. The loss for monopoly in foreign trade hit the Muslims severely and they entered upon a period of great economic crisis. As Hamid Ali observed: "The discovery of the Cape of Good Hope ... was an evil day for the Moplahs... In the keen struggle for supremacy on the Eastern seas the Moplahs came out vanquished ... and never since have they regained their wealth and their glory."³⁴

The worst effect of the presence of the Portuguese was that it weakened the communal harmony on this coast. As pointed out by KM Panikkar, "The policy of cruelty towards Mappilas and tolerance towards

33. M. L. Dames, Ed. *op. cit*, p76.

34. Hamid Ali, 'The Moplas' in T.K. Gopala Panikkar (ed.), *Malabar and its Folk*, p269.

Hindus in Malabar was sure to have brought about a rift between the Hindu and Muslim communities of Malabar".³⁵ The Hindu rajas like Kolattiri, Cochin Raja etc. made alliances with the Portuguese to protect their own self-interest and to contain the power of the Zamorin. Their Nair soldiers also joined with the Portuguese in the battles against the Mappilas. At last the Zamorin himself joined with the Portuguese and fought against Kunhali IV, when they drifted apart, and treacherously handed over Kunhali to the Portuguese. All these created a sense of alienation between the Muslims and the Hindus.

In short "economic retrogression, estrangement from Hindus, bitterness against Christians, and a new militancy"³⁶, were the effects of Portuguese period on the Muslim community in Malabar.

THE MYSOREAN RULE AND ITS IMPACT

While the Mappilas of Malabar were leading a desperate life with the advent of the Portuguese, the appearance of Muslim rulers from Mysore delighted them and they received them as deliverers. Though they could rule the Malabar area only for short span of twenty-six years (1766-1792), to the Muslims it provided a psychological boost.

The appeal made by the Palghat Raja to Haider Ali to help him against the Zamorin brought the Mysoreans into contact with Malabar. After coming

35. K.M. Panikkar, *A History of Kerala*, p159.

36. Roland E. Miller, *op. cit*, p75.

into power in Mysore, Haider Ali invaded Malabar in 1766. Tipu, who succeeded Haider Ali in 1782, attempted to stabilise his control over Malabar. But his defeat in the Third Mysore War (1792-92) thwarted his schemes. By the Treaty of Srirangapatam (1792), Malabar was ceded to the British.

The Mappilas found a good opportunity to improve their lot during the Mysorean period. They helped Mysorean rulers in their endeavour and in their enthusiasm they even got enrolled in the forces.

Though the Mysoreans ruled Malabar only for two decades, their rule produced several important changes in the administrative field, many of which were beneficial to the region as well as to the Mappilas and progressive in nature. For instance, for the first time land was surveyed and a system of direct payment of a portion of the annual yield to the government was introduced. The most important aspect of the land settlement was the elimination of the intermediary. The Mappilas were the beneficiaries, for, till the date they were prevented from becoming land owners by the land tenure system that prevailed in Malabar. All these reforms adversely affected the privileged classes, the Nairs and Namboodiris. So, whenever they found an opportunity, they sided with the enemies of the Mysorean rulers.

In Kerala the Mysorean rulers are alleged to have persecuted and forcibly converted the Hindus to Islam and destroyed their temples. But it is a pity that those who put forward this opinion failed to produce sufficient proof

to their argument. For instance, KP Padmanabha Menon in his *History of Kerala*³⁷ has portrayed a communal picture of the Mysorean rulers. Roland Miller makes the following observation about it. He says: "Menon is largely dependent on Buchanan for this description. The latter in turn was dependent on Murdoch Brown. The writer has not met any Mappila who admits ancestry originating in a forced conversion."³⁸ Another significant fact is that in other parts of Mysore kingdom, both Haider and Tipu are considered to be extremely tolerant rulers. What happened in Kerala was that, the Nairs being the warrior class had to fight with the Mysoreans, and the Mysoreans instead tried to disarm them. Besides that according to the royal decree, the system of polyandry, which was prevalent among the Nairs, was abolished and the women fold were ordered to cover their bosoms. Such acts of Tipu were being described as a policy of 'Islamisation'.

Anyway, the estrangement developed during the Portuguese period between the Muslims and the Hindus further widened during the Mysorean period.

BRITISH DOMINATION OVER MALABAR AND ITS EFFECTS

With the Treaty of Srirangapatam, Malabar was ceded to the English by Tipu Sultan in 1792 and it became a part of the Bombay Presidency. In 1800,

37. K.P. Padmanabha Menon, *A History of Kerala*, Vol II, p267fn.

38. Roland E. Miller, *op. cit*, p93, fn.

Malabar became a district of Madras Province and that setup continued till 1956.

From the very beginning of their rule, the British followed a favourable policy towards the Hindus as they were opposed to the Mysorean rulers. Whereas the Muslims, who had sided with the Mysoreans, hated the rule of the English. Because the economic and administrative measures followed by the British were found to be detrimental to the interests of the Muslims. For instance, prior to the occupation of Malabar by the British, the Mysoreans had collected the revenue directly from the cultivators through their own officers. The English East India Company re-introduced the old system by delegating the authority of revenue collection to the old rajas and chieftains of Malabar. The assessments made by them were unequal and the Mappilas were "rated more highly than the Hindus".³⁹ The Mappilas in turn refused to pay taxes which resulted in fall of revenue collection. On account of these reasons, the Company finally decided to take over not only the collection of revenue in the District of Malabar, but the control of the entire administration of the District by 1800.

Even before the establishment of direct control over Malabar by the British, disturbances had started in some parts of Malabar, led by Mappila leaders like Elampulasserri Unni Mutta Muppan, Chemban Pokker, Athan

39. C.A. Innes, *op. cit*, p73.

Kurikkal and Hydros. Unni Mutta, who was an official under Tipu, is said to be the first man in Malabar to organize a united opposition against the British.⁴⁰ The British tried to woo him in order to bring him on to their side by offering him a pension of Rupees one thousand per annum, but he refused it. When the British understood that he can not be captured or appeased, a reward of Rupees three thousand was declared for his capture. A British contingent led by captain Mac Donald attacked and demolished the houses of Unni Mutta and his companions situated at Pandalur Hill. But these atrocities did not weaken the advance of Unni Mutta and others; instead it only stimulated their efforts. In the turbulent atmosphere that prevailed in south Malabar the British found it very difficult to administer the country. In order to make an on the spot study, the Governor of Bombay, General Abercromby, decided to visit Malabar. Meanwhile the English officials in Malabar tried to win over Unni Mutta again by declaring amnesty and offering some concessions. But Unni Mutta did not comply to it; instead he continued his fight with the English. He strengthened his forces by joining with another Mappila arebel leader, Chemban Pokker. While the English forces were trying to check the advancement of the Mappilas, the defeat inflicted on the forces of T.H.Baber, an English official in charge of south Malabar, created apprehension in the English camp.

40. C.K. Kareem, *Kerala Muslim Directory* (Mal.). Vol III, p38.

It was a time when Pazhassi Raja was advancing against the English. Unni Mutta and his followers also joined him in their effort against the English. The mountainous Wayanad region, the seat of Pazhassi Raja was advantageous for organizing guerilla warfare.

Another Mappila leader, Chemban Pokker, who was a revenue official in Cheranad under the British was accused of bribery and was imprisoned in the Palghat fort. He made a miraculous escape from there and continued his struggle against the British by joining with Unni Mutta and Attan Kurikkal. The English contingent sent to capture Chemban Pokker was repulsed. This success encouraged him to make an unsuccessful attempt on the life of George Waddell, the southern Superintendent of Malabar.

The incessant combats going on in south Malabar compelled the Bombay Governor to make a thorough study about the situation. Hence he appointed Major Walker as an enquiry commission. In the report submitted by Walker, he criticized the policy adopted by T.H. Baber, the official in charge of south Malabar and George Waddell, the Southern Superintendent of Malabar. The report also recommended general amnesty to the rebels; and requested to follow a policy of reconciliation with them. But these measures failed to produce the desired effect, since the rebel activities were intensified. At last in 1802, Captain Watson's army attacked and killed Unni Mutta and Attan

Kurikkal. In 1805 Chemban Pokker also died fighting with Captain Watson.⁴¹ The death of these leaders did not stop the rebellious activities of the Mappilas; instead it continued.

In this period some of the Muslim religious scholars also had played a key role in the struggle of the Mappilas against the British like Sayyid Alavi Tangal (1749-1843) and Sayyid Fazl Pookoya Tangal (1823-1901) of Mampuram and Umar Qazi (1757-1852) of Veliyankod.

Sayyid Alavi Tangal vehemently criticized the British atrocities on the Mappila peasants and exhorted the Mappilas to take arms against the alien rulers. For this purpose he had composed a poem, *As Saiful Bathar*. He is said to have participated in the Cherur riot, in which a wound occurred and he died in 1843. The British authorities were very much concerned about the role of Sayyid Fazl in the outbreaks that occurred during the first half of the 19th century. Though his role in the riots was not proved categorically, the authorities had decided to deport him with other family members to Arabia. Secretly it was carried out on 19th March, 1852.

Like the Tangals of Mampuram, Umer Qazi of Veliyankod criticized the actions of the British and he refused to pay taxes to the British government. He is said to be the first to advocate a 'Non-payment of Tax Agitation' in

41. *Ibid*, p45.

India.⁴² He sent letters to the Diwans of Cochin and Travancore in 1819, urging them to fight against the British.⁴³ He was asked to appear in the Katcheri at Chavakkad and was arrested and jailed. The next day he was not found in the jail, probably some sympathetic policeman might have released him. Later he was summoned by the Collector to Calicut where he was asked to express regret for advocating non-payment of taxes. But he refused and he was again imprisoned for some days. Later sensing the mood of the Mappilas Collector Macleod ordered his release.⁴⁴

As the disturbances continued, the government appointed in 1851 T.L. Strange as special commissioner to trace out the causes for Mappila resentment. In the report presented in 1852 he attributed two important causes for the revolts.

- 1) Mappila fanaticism supported by the priestly class, and
- 2) Land-hungry rich Mappilas who, for their selfish ends, were exploiting the religious sentiments of the illiterate and poor Mappilas.

So he recommended a stern policy towards the rebels which included:

- 1) Confiscation of the property of the guilty
- 2) Deportation of suspects
- 3) Restriction on the possession of weapons

42. *Ibid*, p253.

43. P.K.A. Raheem. ed., *Vanneri Land (Mal.)*, p155.

44. A.P. Ibrahim Kunju, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala*, p226.

- 4) Restriction on the building of mosques and
- 5) Formation of an exclusively Hindu police force.⁴⁵

Excepting the fifth recommendation, the government accepted all other suggestions. Accordingly 'Moplah Outrages Act' and 'Moplah War Knives Act' were passed in 1854.

The Collector H.V. Conolly was arguing for long with the Madras Government that Sayyid Fazl should be banished from Malabar to prevent the Mappila revolts and the Madras Government was demanding proof from the Collector about Thangal's involvement in the riots. But hitherto he could not show any evidence for it. The Strange Commission, which depended largely on the evidences, provided by Mr. Conolly attributed 'Islamic revivalism' as the root cause for the revolts. As evidence for it Strange has mentioned the increased number of 'wandering faqirs' and increase in the population of Muslims. After seeing enough reason for the banishment, the Madras Government issued orders favourably and it was tactfully carried out by Collector Conolly on 19th March, 1852.

With the exile of Sayyid Fazl, the spiritual leader of the Mappilas, they became more desperate and resorted to terrorism. In retaliation for the banishment of Sayyid Fazl, Collector Conolly was murdered by a suicidal squad at his well guarded bungalow in Calicut on 11th September, 1855. How the

45. R.H. Hitchcock, *A History of the Malabar Rebellion*, p12.

assassins got into the bungalow and how they escaped after the incident is a mystery. Some days later the alleged culprits were captured and killed. Although only four persons were involved in the murder case, seven hundred and nineteen people were arrested and nine villages were fined a total of Rupees 38,331 and eight *anas*. Due to these measures the Mappila community experienced great sufferings.

Even after following a severe attitude towards the rioters, the extent and intensity of the revolts only increased. The Madras government, therefore, instituted another enquiry committee under William Logan in 1881. He undertook a thorough enquiry and his report exploded the myth of Mappila fanaticism and pointed out that agrarian discontent was the root cause of these uprisings. Logan's report was a sympathetic and correct appraisal of Mappila problems. He suggested a number of measures for the improvement of the condition of the cultivators. It resulted in the passing of the 'Malabar Compensation for Tenants Improvement Act' in 1887 and 1900 and a 'Land Acquisition Act of 1894, which made it possible for the Government to acquire land for Muslim cemeteries.

The passing of these Acts did not produce the desired effect. For, the landlords continued their malpractices and oppressions towards the tenants. Charles Innes, the Collector of Malabar, in 1915 after making an enquiry of the situation has noticed the following points for the deplorable condition of the

peasants. They are:

- 1) Rack - renting
- 2) Insecurity of tenure
- 3) Inadequate compensation
- 4) Exorbitant renewal fees and
- 5) The tyrannical attitude of the *jenmis*.⁴⁶

With the commencement of twentieth century several changes took place in the Mappila community. Due to the adversities several Mappila peasants moved to Cochin or Travancore. Some of them moved to Kolar Gold Fields and yet others migrated to foreign countries like Malaya, Ceylon, Burma etc. When the first world war broke out, some of them were recruited to the army.⁴⁷

The long and unending struggle against the land lords and the state had affected the Mappila psyche much. Many of them either lost their lives, or were exiled to Andamans or Australia, and collective fine was imposed on many villages by the Government. These sufferings created hatred in the minds of Mappilas not only towards the Government but to everything that brought by them like their religion, their culture and even their language. That is why

46. *Report of the Malabar Tenancy Committee, 1928*, i, Chapter II, quoted in K.N. Panikkar, 'Peasant Revolts in Malabar in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', in A.R. Desai, ed., *Peasant Struggles in India*, p615.

47. T.V.K., ed. *Muhammad Ishaq Smaranika*, p45.

the English language was proclaimed by the *Ulama* as the 'language of the hell'. They did not even use Malayalam language; instead they introduced *Arabi-Malayalam*, that is, Malayalam mixed with Arabic words and written in Arabic script. They did not send their children to the schools where these languages and secular subjects were taught. This attitude of segregation resulted in illiteracy, unemployment, and farther backwardness of the community. In this situation a group of scholars came forward with vision and wisdom, led by Sayyid Sanaulla Makti Tangal (1847-1912), Shaikh Muhammad Mahin Hamadani Tangal (d.1922), and Vakkom Muhammad Abdul Khadir Moulavi (1873-1932). Though they were against Christian missionary activities, they stressed the necessity of English and secular education along with religious education for the progress of the community. Due to their efforts, Muslims especially in the southern region, which was the center of these reformers, came forward to get their children educated. The healthy competition that existed in the educational field among the various communities in south Kerala also had contributed to the increase of Muslim students. Since such an atmosphere was lacking in north Kerala, the Mappilas of Malabar remained backward. Their condition worsened with the outbreak of 1921 Malabar Rebellion.

Several studies have been conducted on the history and culture of the Mappilas of Kerala. The earliest account of the Mappilas was given by Shaykh Zaynuddin through his *Tuhfathul Mujahidin*. It has been translated into

English and Malayalam. It deals with the Kerala-Portuguese relations in the 16th century.

Among the books which were published in the early 20th century on the history and culture of Mappilas, C Gopalan Nair's *Malayalattile Mappilamar* (1917) and TK Gopala Panikkar's *Malabar and its Folk* (1929) are important. The latter contains a chapter on the Mappilas by Hamid Ali. PA Sayyid Muhammad published *Kerala Muslim Charithram* in 1956 which was the first work to encompass the whole period of Kerala Muslim history.

Many books have appeared in Malayalam and English on the Malabar Rebellion of 1921. The important among them are *1921-le Malabar Lahala* by K. Koyatti Moulavi, *Khilafat Smaranakal* by Brahmadattan Nampoodiripad, *Malabar Kalapam* by K Madhavan Nair, *Malabar Kalapam - Oru Padanam* by M. Alikunhi, *Ali Musliyarum 1921-le Khilafat Lahalayum* by KK Muhammed Abdul Kareem, *The Moplah Rebellion of 1921* by C Gopalan Nair, *Moplah Uprisings* by Sukbir Chaudhary, *Peasant Revolts in Malabar* by Soumyendranath Tagore, *Moplah Rebellion* by Conrad wood, *Against Lord and State* by K.N. Panikkar, *A History of Malabar Rebellion* by Hitchcock and *Malabar Rebellion* by M. Gangadhara Menon. *Peasant Struggle in India* written by D.N. Dhanagare and *Peasant struggles in India* edited by A.R. Desai contain chapters on the Rebellion of 1921.

A good number of books have appeared on the life and period of Abdurahiman Sahib, the veteran congress leader and freedom fighter. The important among them are *Keralathinte Veeraputran* by KA Keraleeyan, *Ente Kootukaran, Muhammed Abdurahiman* by E. Moidu Moulavi, *Muhammad Abdurahiman*, a detailed biography of Abdurahiman Sahib prepared by S.K. Pottekat and others and *Sreejith Muhammed Abdurahiman* by Muhammad Yusuf. Besides these *Dheeratmakal* by P.P. UmmerKoya, *Maulaiyude atmakatha, Ormakal* and *Charitra Chintakal* written by E. Moidu Moulavi contain information regarding the contributions of Abdurahiman Sahib and other important Muslim leaders to the cause of the India's freedom struggle. Vakkom Sukumaran's *I.N.A. Hero Vakkom Khadar* is the only work published on the life of Vakkom Khader, the first martyr of the Indian National Army.

Only a few books have appeared on the life and career of communist-socialist Muslims. A biography prepared by Jamal on the life of P.K. Kunju, a veteran socialist leader, entitled *Kunju Sahib*, a book edited by T.V.K. on *Muhammed Ishaq* and another edited by I.V. Das on *E.K Imbichi Bava* entitled '*Pariveshangalillatha Jananayakan*' are the only book available on the life and career of Muslim communist leaders.

Quite a good number of books are published on the life and period of Muslim League leaders like Seethi Sahib, Bafaqi Tangal and CH Muhammed Koya. '*Sher-I-Kerala Seethi Sahib* written by KK Muhammad Abdul Kareem,

'*Seethi Sahib*' by TM Savankutty, *Seethi Sahib* and *Bafaqi Tangal* by Abu Siddiq, *CH inte katha* by Navas Poonur, *CH Muhammed Koya – Rashtreeya Jeeva charithram* by MC, *CH inte prasangangal* by AM Najeeb and Haleem etc. are worth mention. Books like *Vazhikattikal* by KP Kunhi Moosa, *Muslim League-sambavangal*, *Nakha Chitrangal* by TP Cherooppa contain information about the Kerala state Muslim League and its leaders.

Some recent studies conducted by European as well as Indian scholars helped to bring out more facts about the history and culture of the mappilas. It includes *Mappila Muslims of Kerala* by Roland E Miller, *The Mappilas of Malabar 1498-1922* by Stephan Frederick Dale, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala* by A.P. Ibrahim Kunju, *Mappilas of Malabar* by SM Muhammad Koya, *Kerala Muslims - A Historical Perspective* edited by Asghar Ali Engineer, *Kerala Muslim Directory* edited by P.A. Syed Mohammad, *Kerala Muslim Charitram, Directory and Stitivivarakanakku* edited by CK Kareem, *Mappilamarum Keralavum* published by Institute of Mappila Studies, Trichur, *Muslimingalum Kerala Samskaravum* by P.K. Muhammed Kunhi, *Mahattaya Mappila Sahitya Parambaryam* by C.N. Ahmed Moulavi and KK Mohammad Abdul Kareem, *Kerala Muslim Monuments* by VA Ahamed Kabeer, *Islam in Kerala* by Sayyed Mohideen Shah and *The Development of Education Among the Mappilas of Malabar 1800-1965* by K.T. Muhammad Ali.

Rise of Muslims in Kerala Politics written by M Abdul Aziz is the only work on the role of Kerala Muslims in the field of politics. But it discusses only the history of Muslim League in Kerala. No authentic and serious study has been conducted so far on the role of the Mappilas and other sections of the Muslims of Kerala in the Congress – Nationalist Movement, Struggle against French, role in the Socialist – Communist Movements, rise and development of Muslim political movements etc. The present study is an endeavour to fill up this lacuna.

CHAPTER I

KHILAFAT MOVEMENT IN MALABAR

THE KHILAFAT

The Arabic word *Khalifah* means a successor, a lieutenant, a vicegerent, or a deputy.¹ After the demise of Prophet Muhammad, in 632 AD, when Abu Baker was elected as the new ruler of the Islamic State he gave orders that he should be described by the modest title of *Khilafat Rasul Allah* (Successor of the Apostle of God). Umar Farook, who succeeded Abu Baker in 634, called himself *Khalifah al Khalifah al Rasul Allah* (successor of the Apostle of God). Since this designation was found to be too long and clumsy, he decided to be called himself with the title *Khalifah* (vicegerent) or *Amir al Muminin* (Leader of the Believers).² So, from the period of Umar onwards this simple title began to attain more significance. The first four successors of Prophet Muhammad are known as *Khilafatur Rashida* (Pious Caliphate 632-661). After them the Islamic world was ruled by the Umayyad rulers (661-750), the Abbasids (750-1258) and the Ottomans (1518-1924). They were the temporal and spiritual heads of the Islamic world. Exception to it was the period of Mamluks of Egypt. The Mamluk Sultan though they had delegated the spiritual powers to the descendents of the Abbasids, the temporal powers were held by them. This order continued till 1517, when the Ottoman ruler Salim I defeated the Mamluks

1. Thomas Patrick Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, p263.

2. Thomas W. Arnold, *The Caliphate*, p30.

and seized the holy cities, Mecca and Madina. The nominal Abbasid Caliph, Al Mutawakkil surrendered all his spiritual authorities to Salim I, and he declared himself the Caliph of the Islamic world in 1518. That was how the Khilafat rule reached the Turkish hands. Till 1924, this most revered seat was held by them. Generally speaking the protectors and the custodians of the two holy cities, Mecca and Madina, are regarded as the Caliph of Islam. It is to be noted that the Shiah sect among Muslims did not accept the rule of Caliphs, instead they upheld the concept of Imamate. According to this belief Prophet Muhammad had nominated Ali as his successor and Imam and with the Prophet, the Prophet hood came to an end and after him people would be guided by Imams who are to be the descendants of Ali.

MUSLIMS' CONCERN OVER TURKEY

Since the exalted office of the Khilafat was with the Turks, the Indian Muslims were watchful of the happenings in Turkey. The Muslim news papers published in India had given more coverage to the news on Turkey.³ The wars which broke out in the later part of 19th century⁴ and early part of 20th century⁵ in which Turkey was a party, made the Indian Muslims more

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3. In 1909, Makti Tungal published an evening paper from Cochin called *Turki Samacharam*. It contained news about the political and religious issues related to Turkey. Due to financial crisis the paper did not last long. *Prabhodhanam Special*, April, 1998, p108.
 4. The Crimean war (1853-1856).
 5. The Balkan wars (1912-1913).

anxious. Special prayers were held in mosques for the success of Turkey.⁶ The Muslim press like the *Zamindar* published from Lahore, by Zafar Ali Khan, the *Comrade*, published from Calcutta by Moulana Muhammad Ali, the *Aligarh Institute Gazette* published from Aligarh by Sayyid Ahamed Khan, the *Muslim Gazette* published from Lucknow by Moulavi Wahiduddin Salim, etc. had expressed great concern of the events in Turkey. As these happenings created unrest among the Muslims of India, especially north Indian Muslims, Mr. Petrie, who was the then Assistant Director of the Intelligence Bureau, made some enquiries in the Punjab. What he understood was that a strong rumour was spreading among Muslims that the Christian powers including Britain had entered into a secret alliance with an aim to attack Turkey and to destroy Islam.⁷ The rumour had been strengthened by the abrogation of the partition of Bengal in 1911, which was viewed with dismay by Bengali Muslims who regarded it as a breach of faith on the part of the Government.

As a gesture of sympathy towards Turkish people during the Balkan wars in 1912 a medical mission went to Turkey led by Dr. Asnsari. In 1913, a scheme was promulgated by Mushir Hasan Kidwai of the United Provinces for the formation of a society called the *Anjuman-I-Khuddam-I-Kaaba*, aimed at maintaining the honour and safety of the *Kaaba* and the defence of the holy

6. HFM file No.94, G.O.No.2040(Conf.), 9 December 1912 (Judicial Dept.)

7. P.C. Bamford, *Histories of the Non-cooperation and Khilafat movements*, p110.

places from non-Muslim aggression.⁸ Muslim leaders like Moulana Muhammad Ali, Shoukath Ali, Moulana Azad, Abdul Bari, et al. supported his view.

FORMATION OF KHILAFAT COMMITTEE

When first world war (1914-1918) broke out, Turkey joined the war on the side of Germany, Austria, Hungary and Bulgaria (Central Powers). Great Britain joined war with the countries like France, Russia, Italy, Rumania, Greece, Belgium, Portugal, Japan and China (Allied Powers). At a later stage America also joined them. These developments put the Indian Muslims in a more perplexed and bewildered situation. Since they are the subjects of the British, it will be considered treason if they take sides with the Turks against the British, and it will be considered a sacrilegious act if they fight against the Caliph by siding with the British.

Meanwhile the British Government issued a proclamation to its Muslim subjects in which it assured that the Muslim holy places in Arabia and Mesopotamia and the port of Jeddah would not be attacked, and there would be no interference with the haj pilgrimage.⁹ Again, on 5 January, 1918, the British Prime Minister Lloyd George declared in the Parliament that the Ottoman Empire would not be deprived of Constantinople, nor of "the rich

8. *Ibid.*, p113.

9. Gail Minault, *The Khilafat Movement – Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization in India*, p52.

and renowned lands of Asia Minor and Thrace which are predominantly Turkish in race".¹⁰

Coming back to India, the educated Muslims, as well as the theologians began to show more interest in the national movement. After signing the pact between the Congress and the Muslim League at Lucknow (1916), known as Lucknow Pact, the Hindus and Muslims began to come closer. As a symbolic action for this, Swami Shradhanand, a staunch Arya Samaj leader was asked by the Muslims to preach from the pulpit of the Jama Masjid at Delhi while Dr. Kitchlu, a Muslim leader, was given the keys of the Golden Temple at Amritsar.

During this period of political consciousness, the Muslims heard the alarming news that, at the end of the war all the pledges given by Britain and its allies were being violated, the Ottoman Empire had been partitioned by the victorious countries and Thrace had been taken away from Turkey. The Muslims felt that the system of Khilafat also would be undermined. Even the Shias, who did not recognize the Caliph, shared their anxiety over the decline of Muslim's power and the uncertain condition of the holy places. At this juncture a Khilafat committee was formed under the leadership of Moulana Muhammad Ali, Shoukath Ali, Moulana Azad, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Hasrat Mohani and others (1919). At the end of April 1919, the Ali brothers wrote a

10. *Ibid.*

letter to the Viceroy in which it was demanded that all the territories included in the Turkish Empire must remain as hithertofore under independent Muslim occupation and control.

A deputation consisted of thirty five leaders including Ali brothers, Azad, Abdul Bari, Gandhiji and Swami Shradhanand met the Viceroy on 19th January, 1920 to appraise him of the feelings of Indian Muslims with regard to the Khilafat question and future of Turkish Empire.¹¹ They also requested him to convey their views to the Peace Conference at Paris.

On February, 1920 another delegation of Indian Muslims consisting of Moulana Muhammad Ali, Sayyid Hussain, editor of the *Independent*, Sayyid Sulaiman Nadwi et al. went to England. But they failed to make any headway in their effort with the British Government. At last on March 17, 1920, British Prime Minister Lloyd George informed them that Turkey could not be treated on principles different from those applied to other countries and that though she would be allowed to exercise temporal sway over Turkish lands, she could not be permitted to retain lands which were not Turkish.¹²

Since all constitutional efforts had failed to secure the demands, Muslims now resorted to other measures. On 19th March, 1920 another 'Khilafat

11. PC Bamford, *op.cit.* p148.

12. *Ibid.*

Day'¹³ was observed with special prayers, *hartal* and an appeal to the Viceroy to reconsider their desire. The Central Khilafat Committee met on 11th April, 1920 at Bombay and resolved to sever all connections with the Government, including resignation from legislative councils, and civil and military service, withdrawal of Muslims from the army, refusal to pay taxes, relinquishment of all titles and honours conferred by the Government etc.¹⁴ To ratify the decisions of the Central Khilafat Committee in favour of non-co-operation, an All India Khilafat Conference was convened on 1st of June at Allahabad. The Congress leaders also attended the meeting. But due to differences of opinion among the leaders of the Congress on the question of non-co-operation movement, they decided to call a special session of Congress in September, 1920 at Calcutta.

The special session of the Congress met at Calcutta, supported Gandhi's plan for non-co-operation with the Government till the Punjab and Khilafat wrongs were removed and swaraj established. The people were asked to boycott Government educational institutions, law courts, and legislatures.

KHILAFAT AGITATION IN MALABAR

The Khilafat Movement was brought to the attention of the Mappilas through the Conference of the Malabar District Congress held at Manjeri on

13. A Khilafat day had been observed earlier on 17 October, 1919. See HFM file No.81, p100, TNA.

14. PC Bamford, *op. cit.*, p152.

28th and 29th April 1920. It was attended by a large number of Mappilas.¹⁵ Kasthuri Ranga Ayyankar, the then editor of 'the Hindu' presided over the conference. Besides him, Annie Besant, K.P. Kesava Menon, Manjeri Ramayyar, M.P. Narayana Menon, K Madhavan Nair, Abdul Khader, Ponmadath Moideen Koya, and others also took part. The chieftains like Cheriyettan raja of Calicut, Ilaya raja of Nilambur and Mankada Udayavarmaraja also participated in the conference, as delegates.¹⁶

On the first day itself, after the presidential address, the 'Khilafat issue' came up for discussion. A Ranga Swami Ayyankar and Moideen Koya made a speech on the topic. On the second day heated exchanges of views were made on the resolutions relating to constitutional reforms, Khilafat issue and tenancy problem. Due to strong request from a section of the delegates, resolution on Khilafat was taken up for consideration first. The resolution on Khilafat was read by Komu Menon in which he requested the British Government to take a decision on the Khilafat issue as desired by the Indian Muslims and as per the promise done by the authorities to them. If not, as decided by the Conference, to Muslims as well as Hindus would adopt a policy of non-cooperation with the Government. At that time Annie Besant came forward with an amendment to it, by saying that it would be adventurous to

15. The first Political Conference of Malabar was held at Palghat in 1916. Then annually Political Conferences were held at Calicut, Tellicherry, Badagara and lastly at Manjeri.

16. AK Pillai, *Congress and Kerala* (Mal.), p33.

urge the people to observe non-cooperation. Some people like Shanmugha Muthaliar supported this view. Some of the delegates like Abdul Khadar, Moideen Koya and K Madhavan Nair spoke on the occasion opposing the views expressed by Mrs. Besant. At last the resolution was adopted with a thumping majority.¹⁷

An important point to be noted here is that, the Manjeri conference had adopted the non-cooperation resolution, months before it was being accepted by the Congress as its programme.¹⁸

The Manjeri political conference discussed the tenancy issue also. A resolution demanding legislation for the protection of tenants of Malabar was moved by K.P. Raman Menon and was seconded by PA Krishna Menon . Chieftains and the landlords who attended the session opposed the resolution and a dissenting note signed by them was submitted to the Chairman. However, majority of the delegates voted in favour of reforms and the resolution was adopted. As a result many landlords resigned from the party.¹⁹ Another resolution demanding the abrogation of the Mappila Outrages Act was also accepted.

17. *Ibid.*, p37.

18. S. Ramachandran, 'Manjeri Conference'. *Contours of Change – Moidu Moulavi Smaranika*, p21.

19. Perunna KN Nair, *Congress Movement of Kerala*(Mal.) p22.

With the Manjeri political Conference, the series of 'Malabar District Conferences' came to an end. The Manjeri Conference was described as a turning point in the history of Malabar politics, because unlike the earlier conferences, a large number of people especially Mappilas had attended the conference. Hectic discussions were held especially on topics related to Mappilas, for example, the Khilafat issue, the tenancy problem, and repeal of Mappila outrages Act. In spite of opposition from a section of delegates, these issues were favourably discussed at the conference. In short it generated a nationalist spirit and anti-imperialist consciousness among the people especially among the Mappilas who were the majority community at Manjeri area. Hence after this conference, several public meetings were organized in many parts of Ernad and Walluvanad Taluks like Kondotty, Tirurangadi, Malappuram and other places by the leaders of Khilafat and Tenancy Movement.²⁰

VISIT OF GANDHIJI AND SHAUKAT ALI

With the aim of carrying the message of the Non-co-operation and Khilafat Movement, as decided at the Allahabad Session of the Khilafat Conference (June, 1920), Gandhiji and Shaukat Ali visited Calicut on 18th August, 1920. They were given a rousing reception by the Congress - Khilafat

20. Saumyendranath Tagore, *Peasant Revolt in Malabar, 1921*, (Mal.) Tr. by KKN Kurup, p8.

workers. Shaukat Ali in his speech described the idea of Non-co-operation as a notion based on Islamic principles; but if it proved unfruitful, more rigorous methods would be adopted. Gandhiji in his speech said that : 'If the Muslims offer non-co-operation to the Government in order to secure justice in the matter of Khilafat, it is the duty of Hindus to help them as long as their means are just'.²¹

The visit of the national leaders like Gandhiji and Shaukat Ali generated new enthusiasm among the people especially among the Mappilas, which resulted in the formation of Congress - Khilafat committees in various places of Malabar. At Calicut a Khilafat committee was formed with M. Kunhikoya Tangal (President), Hassan Koya Molla, Melekandy Moidu and U. Gopala Menon (Secretaries). E Moidu Moulavi and P Moideen Koya were appointed as organizers.²² Due to their effort more and more people were attracted to the Khilafat movement. Chekku Molla was a prominent organizer of the movement who had struggled hard to spread the message of the movement in Kondotty and other interior places.²³ Tirurangadi, which had been a great center of Muslims due to the presence of the revered Mampuram Tangals, became a strong-hold of Khilafat-Congress Movements. A Khilafat committee was formed there with PM Pookoya Tangal (President), Ali Musaliar

21. *The collected works of Mahatma Gandhi*, XVII (July - November, 1920), Delhi, pp177-80 cited in Miller, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala*, pp132-133.

22. K.Koyatti Moulavi, *Malabar Riot of 1921* (Mal) p5.

23. *Ibid.*

and KM Moulavi (Vice Presidents), K.P. Kunhi Pocker Haji and Pottayil Kunhahammed (Secretaries).²⁴

Tanur was another center of Congress-Khilafat activities where a Khilafat committee came into existence at a fairly early date. The following were the important leaders of the Tanur Khilafat committee : Cheru Koya Tangal (President), Pareekutty Musaliar (Secretary), Ummayyathantakath Puthenveetil Kunhi Khadar and T.K. Kutty Hassan Kutty (Joint Secretaries).²⁵

Like wise Khilafat committees were formed at Pukkottur, Tirur, Ponnani, Nellikuth, Kalpakancherry and other places under the leadership of energetic and enthusiastic leaders like Kunhi Tangal of Malappuram, Vadakke Veetil Mammad, Variamkunnath Kunhamad Haji, Sayyid Hydrose Imbichi Koya Tangal, Odayappuram Chekutty and others.

In line with the decision taken by the Central Khilafat committee volunteer corps were also constituted under the auspices of the regional Khilafat committees. Fez cap with crescent mark, Kaki shirt and pant was the uniform of the Khilafat volunteers.

During this period some books and periodicals also appeared on the scene related with the Khilafat issue. In 1920 A Muhammed Kunhu started a

24. *Ibid.*, p6.

25. CM Kutty, 'A Martyr of 1921' (Mal) in *Kerala State Muslim League Souvenir*, 1959, p38.

journal called *Khilafat Patrika* from Varkala. It made valuable contribution for the national movement in Kerala. But it could bring out only six issues; after that it ceased to exist.²⁶ Another journal by name *Khilafat* was published from Anjengo.²⁷ Some of the Pamphlets published during this period were proscribed by the British government. For example, Pareekutty Musliar, the Secretary of the Khilafat Committee of Tanur, had published a pamphlet titled *Muhimmathul Mu'minin*, in which he urged the people by quoting the scriptures that Muslims should not co-operate with the British, who were fighting with the Islamic Caliph and it is their bounden duty to oppose them by all means. As per the Madras Government Gazette issued in 1921, this booklet was not only banned but also those who possessed it were sentenced to five years imprisonment without trial. Those scholars who had put their signature and written statements ratifying it at the end of the book, like Cherusseri Ahmad Kutty Moulavi, P. Abdurahiman Musaliar, Bava Musliar, *et. al.* were seriously warned by the police. The author of the booklet, Pareekutty Musliar went underground and later escaped to Mecca.²⁸

In the latter half of 1920 several massive Khilafat meetings were conducted at places like Calicut, Tirurangadi, Tirur. Tanur, Vengara, Kottakkal,

26. Abu Majida, 'Kerala Muslims and Journalism' (Mal) in *Prabhodhanam* Special issue, April, 1998, p109.

27. PA Syed Muhammad (ed.), *Kerala Muslim Directory* (Mal.), p621.

28. CN Ahmed Moulavi and KKM Abdul Kareem, *Glorious Mappila Literary Heritage* (Mal.), pp71-72.

Malappuram, Manjeri, Ponnani and other places. One of the features of these meetings was that all these meetings were arranged in places where Mappilas were in majority and the chief organizers of the meetings were also Mappilas.²⁹

The district authorities viewed these developments with alarm. The District Magistrate E.F. Thomas, on 5th February, 1921, issued an order under section 144 of Cr.P.C prohibiting the Khilafat leaders like K. Madhavan Nair, U. Gopala Menon, Variamkunnath Kunhamad Haji and others from convening or speaking at any public meeting in Ernad Taluk. On 10th February the prohibitory order was extended to some of the villages of Walluvanad Taluk also by the Joint Magistrate of Malappuram. On 12th February, Collector Thomas requested the Government of Madras to issue orders prohibiting meetings throughout the District of Malabar, but the Government was not in favour of general prohibition and told the District Magistrate to use his powers under section 144 Cr.P.C. to prevent meetings or processions.³⁰

ARREST OF YAQUB HASSAN

The Congress-Khilafat leaders of Malabar invited Yaqub Hasan, a prominent leader of the Khilafat Movement of Madras, to address two public meetings on 15th and 16th February at Tanur and Calicut respectively. As soon as Yaqub Hasan arrived at Calicut on 15th February, he was served with a

29. M. Gangadhara Menon, *Malabar Rebellion (1921-1922)*, p85.

30. *Ibid.*, p97-98.

prohibitory order under section 144 Cr.P.C. However, Yaqub Hasan decided to violate the order and address the meeting. District Magistrate decided to take action against Yaqub Hassan and the local congress-Khilafat leaders – Madhavan Nair, Gopala Menon and P. Moideen Koya. They were sentenced to six months imprisonment when they refused to give security to keep peace or even to give a written undertaking that they would not speak at the meeting arranged on 16 February.³¹

As a protest against this action of the district authorities, 17th February was observed as a day of *hartal* in Calicut.

MAJLISUL ULAMA

On the model of the 'All India Jamiyyathul Ulama' of Delhi, an *Ulama* association was formed at Trichinopoly as a forum for the *Ulama* to work in the political field.³² A special conference of it was held at Erode on 2nd and 3rd of April, 1921. Some of the *ulama* of Kerala who were inclined to the Congress politics also attended the meeting. Vakkom Abdul Khadir Moulavi was instructed to propagate the ideas of *Majlisul Ulama* in Kerala. At the Congress Conference, which was held at Ottappalam from 23rd to 26th of April 1921, a Kerala unit of the *Majlisul ulama* was formed. The following were elected as office bearers. PM Sayyid Alavi Thangal (President), Vakkom Abdul Khadir

31. AK Pillai, *op.cit*, pp44-46.

32. E. Moidu Moulavi, *Reflections on History*(Mal.), p29.

Moulavi and Hamadani Tangal (Vice-Presidents), E Moidu Moulavi (General Secretary) Kattilasseri Muhammed Musliar, KM Moulavi and Arabi Shamnad (Joint Secretaries).³³

The Kerala Ulama Conference held on 25th April, 1921, in the Congress conference pandal at Ottappalam under the chairmanship of Sayyid Murthaza Sahib had adopted the following resolutions:³⁴

- 1) As the European Powers are trying to destroy the Khilafat, all Muslims in Kerala should set apart a portion of their Zakat for the Khilafat and Smyrna funds.
- 2) All the Muslims of Kerala should resort to non-violent non-co-operation with the Government.
- 3) All Muslims of Kerala (both male and female) who have attained twenty-one years of age should become members of the Indian National Congress, in order that India may obtain Swaraj through the efforts of the Congress and set aright the Khilafat affair.

Names of forty one important Moulavis who had attended the meeting were given in the conference records, which included the names of Kattilasseri Muhammad Musliar, Pareekutty Musliar, Hamadani Tangal, Vakkam Abdul Khadir Moulavi, KM Moulavi and Moulavi Arabi Shamnad.³⁵

33. *Ibid.*, p30.

34. File of Public Dept. G.O.No.491 dated 3 August 1921, TNA.

35. *Ibid.*

A committee was constituted to conduct the business of the ulama conference till its next general meeting. They are : Sayyid Murthaza Sahib (President) Vakkom Moulavi, Hamadani Tangal and P Kunhahamed Moulavi (Vice- Presidents), E Moidu Moulavi (General Secretary), Kattilasseri Musliar, Arabi Shammad, E.K. Kunhahamad Kutty Moulavi, Ahamed Kunhu Moulavi, U. Kunhahamad Moulavi and TM Ahamed Kutty Moulavi (Assistant Secretaries) and PS Bappan Koya (Treasurer).³⁶

It was resolved to hold the next general meeting at Tellicherry. But it did not take place perhaps due to the rebellion, which broke out in the latter half of August, 1921.

The proceedings of the ulama conference including the speech made by its secretary was later published in a booklet form. T Hassan Koya Molla was its printer. The government proscribed it and its author and the printer were given 2½ years' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 300 on the secretary and Rs. 1000 on the printer was also levied.³⁷ The fine imposed on Hassan Koya Molla was paid by his business partner C. Kunhu Moosa. So, Hassan Koya Molla had undergone only two years imprisonment.

Later when the pro-British ulama published a booklet titled '*Mahakul Khilafathi, Fismil Khilafa*, criticizing the Khilafat agitation, E Moidu Moulavi,

36. *Ibid.*

37. E. Moidu Moulavi, *Moulaviyude Atmakatha* (Mal.), Appendix I, p202.

secretary of the Majlisul ulama, published another booklet named '*Dawathul Haq*' as a rejoinder to it. This booklet was also banned by the Government.³⁸

The '*Kerala Majlisul Ulama*', which is said to be the first association of the Islamic scholars of Kerala, did not live long. When the rebellion broke out some of its leaders were arrested and imprisoned while some others made an escape to Kodungallur or other places in order to avoid arrest. Since most of the ulama with progressive outlook were staying at Kodungallur at that time, it caused for the formation of a new association for the Muslims called the '*Kerala Muslim Aikya Samgham*' (1922) and an association of the ulama called the '*Kerala Jamiyyatul ulama*' (1924). On account of its progressive views, the orthodox section left the '*Kerala Jamiyyatul ulama*' and formed another organization called the '*Samasta Kerala Jamiyyatul Ulama*' in 1925. Due to the rise of these two ulama organizations the '*Kerala Majlisul ulama*' slowly disappeared from the scene.

THE OTTAPPALAM CONFERENCE

The first All Kerala Provincial Congress Committee meeting was held at Ottappalam from 23 to 26 April, 1921. A large number of Mappilas attended the conference. As part of the conference, a Tenants' conference, a Khilafat conference and a students' conference were also held.

38. *Ibid.*

On 25th morning the Tenants' conference was conducted presided over by K.P. Raman Menon and on the same day evening a Khilafat session was held presided over by Sayyid Murthaza of Trichy. The Mappilas attended both these conferences with great interest. At the end of the Khilafat session Paliyat Cheriya Kunhunni Achan made a short speech in which he asked the audience to give some donations to the movement. Within a short time a sum of Rupees one hundred was collected from the audience.³⁹

The authorities were stunned by the great enthusiasm shown by the public in the conference and they were more worried about the growing sense of fraternity between the Hindus and the Muslims. Hence, without any provocation, the police harassed the Khilafat volunteers. P Ramunni Menon, Secretary of the Reception Committee and Hameed Khan, Secretary of the Madras Khilafat Committee who went to the market to pacify the people, were assaulted by the police.⁴⁰ Even those who stood in the vicinity of the conference hall were also attacked by the police.

It was in the Ottappalam conference that Muhammad Abdurahiman had made his maiden appearance in the political arena of Kerala. At that time he was studying at Jamia Millia and Moulana Muhammad Ali directed him to go to Malabar to propagate the message of the Khilafat and the Congress

39. AK Pillai, *op.cit*, p56.

40. *Ibid.*, pp56-57.

movements. He was well received by the leaders at Ottappalam. After the Ottappalam conference, when the Malabar District Khilafat Committee was reconstituted, Abdurahiman was appointed as its General secretary. With the arrival of Abdurahiman the activities of the Congress-Khilafat Committees were intensified.

PONNANI ULAMA CONFERENCE

The pro-British ulama had convened a meeting at Ponnani on 24th July, 1921 with a view to convince the public that the activities of the Khilafat-Congress Movements are against the teachings of Islam. To counter it E Moidu Moulavi, Secretary of the '*Kerala Majlisul ulama*' , convened another meeting of the ulama on the same place and on the same date.⁴¹

In this situation, fearing breach of peace the authorities issued order prohibiting all processions in the town. The Congress-Khilafat leaders also had taken care and posted volunteers to see that people are not proceeding in procession. While Ali Musliar and his followers arrived at Ponnani at about 11 a.m. they were stopped by the police near Ponnani Bridge, which resulted in a minor collision between the two parties. Immediately the Congress-Khilafat leaders like Muhammad Abdurahiman and K Kelappan rushed to the scene and pacified Ali Musliar and others. Later they were taken to Puthu Ponnani,

41. Public Department File, G.O, No.514 dated 15 August, 1921, TNA.

the venue of the '*Majlisul ulama*' conference. Where as the 'loyalist ulama' conducted their meeting near Ponnani wharf. According to Moidu Moulavi the meeting of the 'loyalist ulama' was a great flop. For, in spite of the rigorous campaign made by the authorities for the success of the meeting they could get only two scholars (Puthiyakath Bava Musliar of Ponnani and Kuttiamu Musliar of Veliankot) who were already known for their anti-Khilafat attitude.⁴²

THE PUKKOTTUR INCIDENT

Pukkottur was a strong center of the Khilafat activities and Vadakke Veettil Mammad was a staunch activist and unit secretary of the Khilafat Movement. Probably due to his association with it he was dismissed from the post of Manager of the Nilambur Kovilakam by the Tirumulpad. Mammad then approached the Tirumulpad and demanded salary arrears amounting to about Rs. 350/-. Tirumulpad at last yielded but took revenge by filing a case, against Mammad on the charge of the theft of a gun. Inspector M. Narayana Menon who was enquiring into the case asked Mammad to appear before him at a house belonging to the Nilambur Kovilakam at Pukkottur.⁴³

Mammad went to meet the Inspector by taking about 2,000 volunteers with him. Finding his condition unsafe, the Inspector escaped from the scene without taking any action against Mammad. But he prepared a long, highly

42. E. Moidu Moulavi, *Reflections on History*(Mal.), p32.

43. Brahmadattan Namboodiripad, *Khilafat Memories* (Mal.), p31.

exaggerated report of the situation and sent it to the Collector. On the basis of this Collector Thomas wrote to the Governor requesting him to send a full battalion to Calicut. What the Inspector wanted was to teach the Mappilas a lesson for the insult which was meted out on him on 1st August, 1921 at Pukkottur.⁴⁴ However, the whole of Malabar had paid an immense price for the impudence of an Inspector.

KHILAFAT MEETING

In the first week of August, 1921, a Khilafat meeting was conducted at Tirurangadi. In the meeting K.P. Kesava Menon presided and local Khilafat leaders like Ali Musliar, Kunhalavi, Lavakutty and others were also present on the days.⁴⁵

The atrocities committed by the police on the Khilafat volunteers of Ponnani and Pukkottur were the subject of discussion at the meeting. Many spoke on the occasion criticizing the authorities.

To counter the brutalities, the Khilafat volunteers had started to collect and make weapons. Keeping these developments in mind K.P. Kesava Menon exhorted the people to be restrained and non-violent in their reactions and not get provoked by the actions of the police.⁴⁶

44. *Ibid.*, p32.

45. *Ibid.*

46. *Ibid.*, p33.

Meanwhile on 15th August, 1921 Congress-Khilafat leaders like K. Madhavan Nair, U. Gopala Menon and P Moideen Koya were released from jail after their completion of six months' imprisonment.⁴⁷ A grand reception was given to them on 15th August at Cannanore and on 16th at Tellicherry. On 17th a rousing reception was accorded to them at Calicut. The crowd was in a jubilant mood and they paraded the leaders through the streets.

The success of Calicut meeting and the cordial relation that existed between the two major communities alarmed the District authorities. They unleashed a policy of repression against the Congress-Khilafat activists. Exaggerated reports were sent to the Government to the effect that the Mappilas were preparing for a bloody war against the Government by collecting arms and manufacturing weapons. The Collector requested the Government to reinforce the force stationed at Calicut.⁴⁸ Madras Government sent AR Knapp, a member of the Governor's executive council to assess the situation. Knapp found the Collector nervous and the action contemplated by him unrealistic and unwarranted by the prevailing situation in Malabar.

THE REBELLION

On 19th August, 1921, District Magistrate Thomas proceeded to Tirurangadi with a contingent of army and police to arrest eighteen Khilafat

47. Yqub Hasan, who had been arrested along with these leaders had been transferred to Trichy Jail and he was released from there.

48. Brahmadattan Namboodiripad, *op.cit.*, p34.

activists of Tirurangadi including Ali Musliar. On the early hours of 20th August they reached Tirurangadi and searched the Kizhakkepalli. But they found that Ali Musliar and the other wanted men were not present in the mosque and no weapons were kept there. The police and the soldiers then made a search in the Khilafat office which resulted in the virtual destruction of the office.⁴⁹ Later taking three Khilafat volunteers into custody, the police party retired to the *cutchery*.

Meanwhile a rumour had spread widely in the neighbouring villages that the Mampuram Mosque, one of the most important and revered centers of Mappilas, had been fired at and destroyed by the British force. On hearing the news Mappilas from the neighbouring places like Parappanangadi, Tanur, Kottakkal etc. rushed to Tirurangadi. To the large number of people who assembled near Kizhakkepalli, TV Muhammad, and KM Moulavi, two Khilafat leaders, made short speeches and exhorted them to keep patience and to get dispersed. The people obeyed them.⁵⁰

The happenings at Tirurangadi reverberated in Tanur also. By beating drums people were gathered and Kunhi Kadar, a Khilafat leader of Tanur, in his address asked the people to rise to the occasion to help their brethren at Tirurangadi and get ready for a fight against the British army. He had also

49. KM Moulavi, *Khilafat Memoirs*, p85.

50. *Ibid.*, pp86-87.

said that the time had come to topple the British *raj* and set up the Khilafat government.⁵¹

At about 9 a.m. Kunhi Kadar and his followers numbering about 3000 men started from Tanur towards Tirurangadi. At 11 a.m. when they reached a place half a mile away from Tirurangadi, a police party led by Main Waring (Dy. Inspector General of Police), Hitchcock (District Superintendent of Police) and E.V. Amoo Sahib (Dy. Superintendent of Police) also reached there. The police ordered them to stop and to get dispersed, but the Mappilas continued to advance and the police fired upon them which resulted in the death of nine Mappilas.⁵² Khilafat leader Kunhi Kadar and 39 others were arrested by the police.⁵³

Even after this incident people remained calm till 2 p.m. In the afternoon representatives of the Mappilas under the leadership of Ali Musliar went to see the British officers to request to get the arrested leaders released. At the *Kutchery*, the deputationists were asked to sit down and when they did so, order was given to open fire. Nearly twenty people died on the spot and many were wounded. On receipt of the news, the people turned violent. That was how the Rebellion started and it soon spread to other parts of Ernad Taluk.

51. Hitchcock, *A History of the Malabar Rebellion*, 1921, Appendix III, p208.

52. *Ibid.*, p206.

53. Later Kunhi Kadar was hanged on 26 February, 1922 at Cannanore Central Jail on the charge of waging war against the King and his properties were confiscated by the Government. *Ibid.*, p210.

Later rebellion spread to Walluvanad, Ponnani and some parts of Kozhikode Taluks also. The excited crowd attacked the symbols of British authority, namely treasuries, *kutcheries*, police stations, etc.

Insurrections took place in sequential order in places like Tanur, Parappanangadi and Pukkottur on the 20th August, at Manjeri, Kalikavu, Karuvarakundu, Chembrasserri and Pandikkad on the 21st, at Perinthalmanna and Mannarghat on the 22nd, and at Cherplasserri on the 24th and so on.⁵⁴ In all these places the government offices were destroyed, records were burnt, treasuries were looted, roads were blocked and communication system was disrupted. In short everything went out of control in Ernad, Walluvanad and Ponnani Taluks.

Though from the very beginning of the disturbances the Congress - Khilafat leaders like Abdurahiman Sahib, Moidu Moulavi, P. Moideen Koya, K.P. Kesava Menon, K. Madhavan Nair and others tried to keep the people restrained, the actions of the police and the military sabotaged all their efforts. The leaders lost their control over the people and the local Khilafat leaders. Then everything in the disturbed areas was controlled by the rebel leaders like Ali Musliar, Variamkunnath Kunhamad Haji, Chembrassery Tangal, Sithi Koya Tangal, Konnara Tangal and others. They declared themselves as rulers in their respective areas.

54. KN Panikkar, *Against Lord and State*, p147.

Meanwhile the authorities decided to deal with the situation with an iron hand. Martial law was proclaimed over Ernad, Walluvanad, Ponnani, Kozhikode, Kurumbranad and Wynad Taluks on 29th August, 1921.⁵⁵ A special Tribunal Ordinance was issued to try martial law cases relating to the rebellion and it started functioning on 23rd September, 1921.

As far as possible the Mappilas avoided direct combat with the British forces and used guerilla tactics. So, the British employed the Gurkhas and Burmese troops, who were well – accustomed to jungle and guerilla warfare. The Mappilas who were not organized and following obsolete form of warfare could not withstand the British, Gurkha and Burmese forces. The ‘Melmuri incident’ in which 246 mappilas were killed by the British Dorset forces⁵⁶ and the ‘Train Tragedy’ incident in which 67 Mappilas were suffocated to death etc had an adverse and grave effect on the Mappila psyche. By the end of February, 1922 all the important leaders of the rebellion were captured and were given death sentences on the charge of waging war against the King.⁵⁷ Slowly to a considerable extent normal life was restored and on 25th February, 1922, the martial law was lifted.

55. HFM-X, No.94, TNA.

56. Hitchcock, *op.cit.* p138.

57. The dates in which the rebel leaders were executed are as follows : Chembrassery Tangal (5 January 1922), Seethi Koya Tangal (9 January, 1922), Kunhamad Haji (20 January, 1922), Ali Musliar (17 February 1922), and Kunhi Kadar (26 February, 1922).

AFTERMATH OF THE REBELLION

The Malabar Rebellion of 1921, which lasted for about six months, had affected far-reaching consequences in the social and political structure of Malabar. Unlike the Mappila outbreaks of 19th century, which were limited in scope and extent, the Rebellion of 1921 was more intense and widespread. It had embraced almost the whole of the erstwhile Malabar District. The impact of the Rebellion was also tremendous.

The Rebellion, which was widespread in 220 Muslim majority villages of Ernad, Walluvanad, Ponnani and Kozhikode Taluks, adversely affected the Muslims much. According to the official estimate 2,337 Mappilas were killed, 1652 were wounded and 45,404 were captured.⁵⁸ A total of 252 mappilas were executed by court martial, while 502 were sentenced to life imprisonment. There were 8,796 Mappilas in jails convicted in connection with the Rebellion.⁵⁹ According to Koyatti Moulavi, about 10,000 Mappilas were killed and 14,000 were imprisoned.⁶⁰ Among the Mappila prisoners 1170 people died in jail due to contagious diseases like cholera, small pox, malaria, etc.⁶¹ In certain cases, prison sentences were commuted to fines in order to relieve the pressure on

58. Home Po.. 1923, F.No.1929. p.IV, National Archives, New Delhi, cited in AR Desai (ed.) *Peasant Struggles in India*, p.624, and Dr. N. Dhanagare, *Peasant Movements in India*, p81.

59. *Proceedings of the Madras Legislative Council*, Vol.XVI, 1924, p30.

60. K.Koyatti Moulavi, *op.cit*, p106.

61. *Proceedings of the Madras Legislative Council*, Vol.XVI, 1924, p33.

the prisons and to obtain funds. A sum of Rs. 3,63,468 was collected as fines from about 5000 Mappilas.⁶² During the Rebellion period almost all the central prisons were over-crowded with Mappila prisoners. Hence, additional temporary accommodation facilities were provided in five central jails. Besides four temporary sub jails were opened in the Malabar District (one each at Calicut and Malappuram and two at Cannanore).⁶³ Till the middle of October, 1923, there were 1219 Mappila prisoners in Andaman Islands, convicted in cases related with the Rebellion.⁶⁴

ANDAMAN SCHEME

In September, 1924, the Government introduced a scheme of deportation and resettlement of Mappila life prisoners to the Andaman Islands. From the very inception of the scheme, the Mappila leaders like Uppi Sahib, Muhammed Schamnad and Abdurahiman Sahib came forward vehemently criticizing the scheme. They feared that the Government was trying to banish the possible number of Mappilas from Malabar.⁶⁵ The committee headed by Sir Alexander Cardew, appointed to enquire about the condition of prisons by the Government in 1919 had recommended that the Andaman Island was not

62. Letter from RH Hitchcock to Addl. Dt. Magistrate, cited in AP Ibrahim Kunju, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala*, p132.

63. *Report on the Administration of the Madras Presidency, 1922-23*, pp28-29.

64. *Proceedings of the Madras Legislative Council*, Vol. XVI, 1924, p159.

65. K. Uppisahib, 'Mappila Prisoners of Andaman Island' in the *Mathrubhumi Daily*, 13 June, 1925.

fit for human habitation as it was a place prone to epidemics like Malaria and the inhabitants of the Island in those days were great murderers, thieves and other rogues who were creating all kinds of heinous activities. Due to the wide gap in the male-female ratio the moral standard of the inhabitants was also in a pitiable condition.⁶⁶

The 'Kerala Political Conference' held at Payyannur on 25th February, 1925 under the Chairmanship of Jawaharlal Nehru vehemently opposed the 'Andaman Scheme' of the Government.⁶⁷ In the All-Party Muslim Conference held at Amritsar in September, 1925 presided over by Sir Abdur Rahim, a resolution was moved by Muhammad Abdurahiman, urging the Government to repeal the 'Andaman Scheme'. Though some loyalists stood against the resolution, at the end it was unanimously passed.⁶⁸ On 28th December, 1925, the All India Khilafat Conference also adopted a resolution declaring its resentment against the 'Andaman Scheme'. The resolution was moved by Yaqub Hasan of Madras.⁶⁹

As a result of these protests, the Government sent a four member enquiry committee to Andaman Islands to get the true picture of the situation. It consisted of Muhammad Schamnad (MLA), Sayyid Murtaza Sahib, Mir Abbas

66. *Ibid.*

67. VS Keraleeyan, *Great Son of Kerala*. (Mal), 1998, p116.

68. SK Potttekkat, *Muhammad Abdurahiman*. (Mal). p183.

69. Sukhbir Choudhary, *Moplah Uprising*, p65.

Ali Khan and Dr. Musa Sait. In this report submitted to the Government except Musa Sait all others criticized the 'Andaman Scheme'.⁷⁰ But the Government by accepting the opinion of Musa Sait and ignoring the views of the other members of the committee and the outside protests, proceeded with their earlier plans.

ALIENATION

From the very introduction of Islam in Kerala till the arrival of the European powers especially the Portuguese perfect harmony prevailed among the various communities of Kerala. The policy followed by the European powers adversely affected the communal relationship in Kerala, which resulted in communal conflicts. For the commercial benefit of the Europeans and to establish their rule here, they thought it necessary to have division between the various religious groups. When the Khilafat committees were formed in various parts of Malabar and the Hindus and Muslims came closer for a common cause, the British viewed it as a dangerous omen.

When rebellion started by the end of August, 1921, the rebel leaders like Ali Musliar, Kunhamad Haji and Chembrassery Tangal asked their lieutenants to provide protection for the Hindu families. On one occasion Kunhahamed Haji told the people: Do not kill or fight with Hindus. Do not

70. M. Moideen Kutty Haji, *Wagon Tragedy Smaranika* (Mal), p100 and M. Rasheed, 'Sahib', *Madhyamam Daily*, 22 April, 1990.

persuade them to accept Islam against their wishes. If we harm the Hindus, they will join the Government. That will culminate in our defeat.... We have no hate towards Hindus. We will punish those who help or support the Government.⁷¹ EMS Namboodiripad says that guards were appointed in his house during the days of the Rebellion and incidentally they were Mappilas and there was no problem to them from the side of the Mappilas.⁷² Likewise the Kottakkal Kovilakam was guarded by a group of Muslims led by Odayappurath Chekutty, a Khilafat leader of Kalpakanchery.⁷³ But, he was captured and was sentenced for long term imprisonment.

According to K.P. Kesava Menon, in the early stage of the rebellion the rebels never attacked Hindus. Later when the military came and began to hunt the rebels, situation changed. They asked the Hindus to point out the rebels. If they disobey the military, they will punish the Hindus. If they go with the military to show the rebels, the rebels would retaliate on the Hindus.⁷⁴ The Tuvvur massacre (25 September 1921) was an incident which took place in this manner where 34 Hindus and 2 Mappilas were killed for the support given by them to the army.⁷⁵ Besides this some incidents of forcible conversions of the

71. Sardar Chandroth, 'Kunhamed Haji, Brave Mappila Hero', *Charitram*, No.4, 1971, p191.

72. EMS Namboodiripad, *Autobiography* (Mal), p40.

73. Moidu Moulavi, 'Communal Rebellion? No. Freedom Struggle :' *Wagon Tragedy Smaranika* (Mal), p25.

74. KP Kesava Menon, *The Past* (Mal.), p118.

75. KN Panikkar, *op.cit*, p179.

Hindus to Islam in some part of the District were also reported. To counter this the 'Arya Samajists' started *shudhi* (re conversion) movement. All these events caused a rift between the two communities and they began to view the member of the other community with suspicion.

The communal division was followed in the relief and reconstruction activities administered after the rebellion also. It appeared that in the relief activities the Khilafat committee was more concerned with the welfare of the Muslims while the Congress was concerned with that of the Hindus. In one of his letters Abdurahiman Sahib had remarked that 'the Congress workers seem to particularize their relief activities to Hindus alone'.⁷⁶

Though this was the condition of Malabar just after the rebellion, one significant point to be noted was that there were no major communal conflicts in Malabar during the post-rebellion years.

IMPACT ON THE CONGRESS

The rebellion had hit adversely the National Movement activities in Malabar. During the period of the rebellion and after it till 1927 the Congress activities came to a stand still. As K.P. Kesava Menon put it: "For a long time after the rebellion no public activity was possible in Malabar. Enmity towards the Congress was evident everywhere. The authorities stated that the

76. Pub. Dept. (Conf.) G.O.No.327, 2 November, 1921, TNA.

Congressmen had brought down calamity on the country through participation in the Khilafat agitation. Some Hindu leaders accused Congressmen with treason for joining the Khilafatists. They even wanted all the Congressmen in Malabar to be imprisoned. The Muslims complained that those who had induced them to join the Congress, abandoned them when oppression by the police and firing by the military started.... Many of the Congress committees became non-existent. Some of the Congress men were imprisoned. Some others left the Congress.⁷⁷

The Muslims felt very sad and depressed over the attitude of some of the Congress leaders. They felt that they were being betrayed by the leadership at a crucial stage. The declaration of the Allahabad AICC denying the responsibility for the events on the part of the Non-co-operation and Khilafat Movements⁷⁸ and the silence kept by the Congress party at the time when atrocities committed by police and the military upon the Mappila community, made them very desperate. The Mappilas began to identify the Congress with the Hindus. Such an impression was created by the attitude and activities of some of the Congress leaders themselves. A unit of Hindu Mahasabha was formed in 1929 and a conference was held at Tirunavaya. Out of 43 committee members many of them were the leaders of the Congress party also such as U. Gopala Menon, K Madhavan Nair, K Madhava Menon, K.P. Raman

77. KP Kesava Menon, *op.cit.* p126.

78. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *History of Indian National Congress*, Vol. I, p228.

Menon, *et. al.* C Gopala Menon, K Madhavan Nair, K Kelappan Nair, Kongattil Raman Menon and others were associated with the activities of Nair service society and other associations of the Nairs.⁷⁹ All these developments eventually helped only to alienate the Mappilas from the nationalist cause.

IMPACT OF THE REBELLION ON NORTH INDIAN PROVINCES

The reports about the sufferings of Mappilas were received with alarm by the North Indian Muslims. Several philanthropists like Moulana Abdul Kadar Kasuri of Lahore came forward to help the afflicted mappilas of Malabar. The exaggerated tales about the fate of Hindus in Malabar inflamed the feelings of the Hindus of the Northern provinces. The cry of Hinduism in danger was raised and movements of Shudhi (re conversion) and Sangathan (organization) was planned.⁸⁰ The exaggerated reports about the rebellion which appeared in the north Indian papers as well as the cry for revenge made by certain leaders resulted in the outbreak of a series of communal riots in the North like Multan (1922), Saharanpur (1923), Kohat (1924) and Calcutta (1926).⁸¹

79. See for the detailed report about the activities of Kerala Hindu Maha Sabha: Mathrubhumi Daily 12 March 1929, 11 April, 1929, 13 April, 1929, 4 May 1929, 5 May 1929, 23 October, 1929 and 16 January, 1930.

80. Trachand, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol.III, p497.

81. M. Ganghadara Menon, *op.cit.* p482 f.n. and AK Pillai, *op.cit.* p84.

INFLUENCE ON PEASANT MOVEMENTS

When peasant movement made its appearance in the northern part of Kerala in the 1930s led by KA Keraleeyan and others, it is a fact that they got inspiration from the Malabar Rebellion of 1921.⁸² KA Keraleeyan had toured the south Malabar region for about six months before the constitution of *Karshaka Sanghoms* in North Malabar. In the peasant's meetings they used to sing a song in which they praised Kunhahamed Haji as a 'hero' of Kerala.⁸³

REFORMATION OF THE SOCIETY

The intricate and troublesome situation created by the rebellion impelled the leaders of the Mappila community to take up reform activities for the revival of the society. The leaders of the community felt that something must be done to save the community from these types of calamities occurring again in future.⁸⁴ Their wish materialized with the establishment of the *Kerala Muslim Aikya Samghom* at Kodungallur in 1922. The leaders of this reformist organization were Vakkom Abdul Khadir Moulavi, Hamdani Tangal, KM Moulavi, E.K. Moulavi, Seethi Muhammed Sahib, Manappatt P Kunhi Muhammad Sahib and others. Every year they conducted conferences at

82. KKN Kurup, 'Malabar Rebellion - An Appraisal' in *Niravu '97*, 30th Anniversary Souvenir of Tirurkad Ilahiya College, p152.

83. *Ibid.*

84. EK Moulavi, 'Kerala Muslim Aykya Samghom and the Reformation in Kerala Muslim Directory, pp468-9.

different centers of Kerala till 1934, which resulted in the rejuvenation of the Muslim society.

The Government also realized the fact that something should be done on their part for the betterment of the Mappila community especially in the educational field. With this objective they had started some single Teacher schools. A post of special officer for Mappila Education was also created.⁸⁵

TELLICHERRY KHILAFAT CONFERENCE (1923)

The Tellicherry Khilafat conference was held on 1st and 2nd May, 1923, under the Chairmanship of Dr. Sayyid Mahmud, a veteran Congress leader from North India. Bee Amma, mother of Moulana Muhammad Ali was the other chief guest of the conference. It was the first Muslim conference after the rebellion and a large number of Muslims from all over Kerala had attended the meeting.⁸⁶

The leaders in their speeches exhorted the people of both the communities to stand united and forget and forgive the sad and unhappy events happened during the period of the Rebellion. The conference resolved to appoint an enquiry commission to study and report about the causes and events of the Rebellion so as to avert such happenings in future and in order to bridge

85. E. Moidu Moulavi, *Moulavi's Autobiography* (Mal.), p90.

86. *The Mathrubhumi Daily*, 3 May, 1923.

the gap and separation between the two communities that had been created due to the Rebellion.⁸⁷

The conference adopted a resolution condemning the act of forceful conversions, looting, murder and other atrocities committed during the period of the Rebellion. In another resolution moved by P Moideen Koya the conference expressed its deep sense of sorrow and horror in the 'Wagon Tragedy' incident. A committee consisted of Moulana Sha Sulaiman, Dr. Sayyid Mahmud, AK Kunhi Mayan Haji, K Kelappan, KM Seethi Sahib, PS Muhammad and P Moideen Koya was formed to construct a memorial for the martyrs of the 'wagon Tragedy' incident.⁸⁸

While some of the leaders who came from outside Kerala like Sayyid Mahmud, Yaqub Sahib and others tried to visit the riot-hit areas in Ernad, on their way they were checked by the police at Pulikkal and served with a prohibitory order issued by the District Magistrate.⁸⁹ They did not, however, venture to break the law and they returned.

With this conference, the activities of the Khilafat Movement in Malabar, almost came to a close. Moreover, when Mustafa Kamal Pasha became the President of the Turkish Republic, he abolished the age-old institution of Khilafat

87. *Ibid*, 5 May, 1923.

88. *Ibid*.

89. *Ibid*.

on 3 March, 1924. With this, the relevance of the Khilafat agitation became altogether non-existent.

CHAPTER II
THE ROLE OF MUSLIMS IN THE NATIONAL
MOVEMENT IN MALABAR

From the very beginning of the formation of the Indian National Congress, educated Keralites, especially those who had settled in other states had taken interest in its activities. Among them the majority were well placed Nairs. In the beginning Muslims of Kerala had shown little interest in such activities.

Since Malabar was included in British India, the Congress movement also started its activities first in Malabar unlike Cochin or Travancore areas. Though the first political conference of Malabar was held in 1903 at Calicut, the first Congress committee was formed only in 1910.¹ However, the active organizational work had started only in 1916 when a District Committee of the Congress was formed at Calicut with K.P. Kesava Menon as Secretary. He was also the Secretary of the District Committee of the Home Rule League. Likewise P.A. Kunhahammad was the Assistant Secretary of both these organizations.² Due to his effort a large number of Mappilas were attracted to the Congress and the Home Rule League.³ Another prominent Mappila leader who deserves mention is Ponmadath Moideen Koya, who became an active

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1. Perunna K.N. Nair, *Congress Movement in Kerala* (Mal.), p12.
 2. A.K. Pillai, *Congress and Kerala* (Mal.), p13.
 3. P.K.K. Menon, *History of Freedom Movement in Kerala*. Vol. II, p71.

politician by the time of the second Malabar District Political Conference which was held at Calicut in April, 1917.⁴

Since the office bearers and workers of the Congress and the Home Rule League were the same, public meetings and processions of these two organizations were conducted jointly in several places of Malabar. Within a short span of time several units of these two organizations were formed and hundreds of people became its members. Besides the activities of the Home Rule League, the Congress conducted District Political Conferences every year from 1916 to 1920 in different parts of Malabar. As these conferences were mainly dominated by rich men and landed gentry, the resolutions adopted at these conferences were also not revolutionary in tone or content. Any way, these political conferences, helped to create political consciousness and nationalist spirit among the people of Malabar.

Among the District Political Conferences, the Manjeri Political Conference, which was the last of its kind, deserves special mention with regard to the number of delegates who attended it and the zeal and enthusiasm shown by the Mappilas in the activities of the Congress. The main reason for the large-scale enrolment of the Mappilas in the congress was due to its support to the Khilafat issue.⁵

4. P.P. Ummer Koya, *The Great Souls* (Mal.), p100.

5. K.P. Kesava Menon, *Some contemporary Keralites* (Mal.), p90.

As decided by the Congress session of Nagpur (December, 1920), Provincial Congress Committees on linguistic basis were formed. Thus by uniting Malabar, Cochin and Travancore, a Kerala Provincial Congress Committee was formed in the beginning of 1921 itself. Under the provincial committee five district Congress Committees such as Tellicherry, Kozhikode, Palghat, Cochin and Travancore were also constituted.⁶ The first Kerala Provincial Congress Conference was held at Ottapalam from 23rd to 26th April, 1921. In this conference also a large number of Mappilas attended and a special session on the Khilafat issue was held on 25 April, which was presided over by Sayyid Murthaza Sahib. It was in this conference that Muhammad Abdurahiman Sahib had made his maiden appearance in the political arena of Kerala and became one of the top leaders of the Khilafat-Congress movements of Kerala.

Four months after the Ottapalam Conference, rebellion broke out in Malabar and for some time there was no political activity in Malabar. Moreover, though the Congress leaders stood against violence and against rebellion, the prominent leaders like Muhammad Abdurahiman, Moidu Moulavi, Hassan Koya Molla, MP Narayana Menon, Brahmadattan Namboodiripad and others were put behind bars by the Government by charging different cases against them.

6. Perunna K.N. Nair, *op. cit.*, p23.

PALGHAT POLITICAL CONFERENCE

After a short span of languor in the political arena caused by the Rebellion, the Second Kerala Provincial Political Conference was held at Palghat on 6 May, 1923.⁷ It was presided over by Sarojini Naidu. Bee Umma, C. Rajagopalachari, and Devadas Gandhi were the other dignitaries who attended the conference.

As this conference was convened immediately after the Rebellion, in the speeches of the leaders and in the resolutions read in the Conference, often references were made about the Rebellion. KP Gayatri vallabhayyar, the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the conference, in his speech asserted that poverty of the people and the oppression of landlords were the real cause of the Rebellion, and not the Khilafat issue or the Non-co-operation Movement. For, years before the commencement of the Khilafat agitation, many riots had occurred in the district and the enquiry commissions in their reports had pointed out the relationship between the outbreaks and the tenancy problem.⁸

The following resolutions related with the Mappilas were adopted by the conference.

- a. It expressed sorrow on the occurrence of the Rebellion and condemned the inhuman atrocities like the thousands of murders, forcible

7. A.K. Pillai, *op. cit.*, p84.

8. *Ibid.*, p85.

conversions etc., that had taken place during the Rebellion. The Conference also expressed its condolence to the innocent victims who had suffered during the Rebellion at the hands of the rebels, the police and the Army.

- b. It condemned the inhuman actions of the authorities in causing the death by suffocation in a Railway wagon, of a large number of Mappila rebel prisoners, and expressed sorrow at the tragedy.
- c. It appealed to the Hindus and Muslims of Malabar to forget and forgive past unpleasant wrongs and to foster harmony and brotherhood among the communities.
- d. It appointed a five-member committee consisting of Sarojini Naidu, Dr. Sayyid Mahmud and K. Madhavan Nair to enquire into the various events that occurred during the rebellion and to find out ways and means of preventing such occurrence in future. But this committee could not make any enquiry.⁹

BIRTH OF 'AL-AMEEN'

When Abdurahiman Sahib started his political activities at Calicut, he was conscious of a great flaw, namely the lack of an organ supporting the cause of the Congress. Though there were four Malayalam dailies at that time such as the *Kerala Patrika*, the *Manorama*, the *Kerala Sanchari* and the *Mitavadi* and

9. TNA, History of Freedom Movement Files, No. 103, p29-30.

three English newspapers such as *The West Coast Spectator*, *The Reformer* and the *Champion* published from Calicut, all of them refrained from lending support to the Congress-national movements and from publishing news or articles criticizing the authorities.¹⁰ So, from the inspiration got from 'The Comrade' of Maulana Muhammad Ali, Abdurahiman Sahib decided to start a newspaper in Malayalam from Calicut. He had discussed the matter with other prominent Congress leaders like Moidu Maulavi, Hassan Koya Molla, Kattilasserri Musliar and others. Meanwhile Abdurahiman Sahib was arrested during the time of the Rebellion.

After the completion of two year's imprisonment Abdurahiman Sahib was released on 11 August 1923. He again devoted his time for the establishment of a newspaper. For this purpose, to collect share from the public, he even went up to Burma with some Muslim delegates from Rangoon who had came to attend the Congress session at Kakinada.

In December 1923, the Al-Amen Company was registered with Abdurahiman Sahib as Managing Director and A.K.Kunhi Mayan Haji, T. Hassan Koya Molla, Haji K Seethi Muhammad, PC Aluppi Keyi, Manappad Kochu Moideen Haji and Panapparambil Kunhi Pokkerkuty as Directors.¹¹

10. S.K. Pottekat, et al., *Muhammad Abdurahiman* (Mal.), p140.

11. *Ibid.*, p139.

The first issue of *Al-Ameen* was released on 12, October 1924, on a *Milad-i-Shareef* day. At first it functioned as a tri-weekly newspaper (Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday). Abdurahiman Sahib himself was the Chief Editor. The editorial board consisted of E. Moidu Moulavi, K. Ahmad, TK Muhammad, Muhammad Kannu and Vidwan TK Raman Menon.¹²

The 'Al-Ameen' instilled a spirit of nationalism into the people, especially among the Mappilas. It was a time when Muslims in general had kept aloof from getting modern education and even from studying Malayalam language. Hence, persons who can read and understand Malayalam literature were very few and the persons who read newspapers were very limited in number within the Muslim community. So, besides the task of encouraging a spirit of nationalism among the Mappilas, reformation of the community and its uplift were also taken as the objectives of Al-Ameen. It published articles attacking all the evils and vices that prevailed in the society such as dowry system, tomb worship, ostentation, *Kathu Kuthu* (to make holes in the ear from top to bottom to put ornaments in it), *nercha* (religious festival in honour of a saint), etc.¹³ Under the auspices of Al-Ameen Youth forums were organized in several parts of Malabar to work against the evils and corruptions in society.¹⁴

12. *Ibid.*, p143.

13. M. Rasheed, 'Contributions of Sahib and Al-Ameen', *Prabodhanam* Special Issue, April, 1998, p57.

14. *Ibid.*

Al-Ameen began to be published as a Daily from 25 June 1930. In the editorials and in the articles the paper used to criticize the policies of the Government vehemently. On account of this the Government, under the Press Ordinance, demanded the management of *Al Ameen* to pay rupees 2000/- as security. But they did not pay the amount and the authorities confiscated the *Al- Ameen* press¹⁵ on 4 August, 1930.

After the expiry of the Ordinance *Al-Ameen* re-appeared on 20 November 1930. But due to financial crisis it again became a tri-weekly. Once again on 15 March, 1939 it began to be published as Daily. Later, during the Second World War period, on account of its editorial supporting the Civil Disobedience Movement and other activities of the Congress and its strong stand against the British, the Government ordered to stop its publication. Thus with the issue of 29 September, 1939, its publication came to an end.¹⁶

Though the *Al-Ameen* had a very short span of life, it had done a tremendous job to foster the spirit of nationalism among the youngsters and among the Mappilas. Like the *Swadeshabhimani* of Ramakrishna Pillai and *Kesari* of Balakrishna Pillai, *Al-Ameen* also faced strong opposition from the Government as well as from the opponents within the society. Though both '*Mathrubhoomi*' and *Al-Ameen* were pro-Congress newspapers, a large section

15. K.P. Kesava Menon, *op. cit.*, pp94-95.

16. S.K. Pottekat *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p162 and TNA, Collector's Fortnightly Report, 2nd half of September, 1939.

of Hindus considered *Al-Ameen* as a Muslim paper.¹⁷ Where as a large section of Muslims, especially the orthodox group criticized it as a 'Wahabi' paper as it used to criticize the evils in the society. At the same time the people of Cochin and Travancore considered it as a daily of Malabar.¹⁸

Though Abdurahiman thought to publish it again, owing to several reasons his wish never materialized.

SWARAJ PARTY IN MALABAR

In the year 1922 serious differences arose among the central leaders of the Congress on the question of entry into the Legislative Councils. One section led by C.R.Das and Motilal Nehru advocated that nationalists should end the boycott of the Legislative Councils, instead they have to enter them in order to obstruct their working according to official plans, expose their weaknesses, and thus use them to arouse public enthusiasm. Sardar Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Dr. Ansari and others opposed this view. They warned that legislative politics would weaken nationalist fervour and create rivalries among the leaders. They therefore stood for constructive programmes like spinning, work for Hindu-Muslim unity, removal of untouchability, etc.

17. *Ibid.*, p145.

18. *Ibid.*, p146.

In December 1922, the Swaraj Party came into existence with C.R. Das as President and Motilal Nehru as one of the Secretaries. The new party functioned as a group within the Congress.

The attention of some of the Congress workers in Malabar also turned to the activities of the Swaraj party, as general elections to the Legislative Councils were imminent. Local committees of the party were soon organized everywhere with a view to organize election propaganda. In 1925 unit of the Swaraj party was formed at Calicut with T.V. Sundara Ayyar as President and K. Madhava Menon and A. Karunakara Menon as Secretaries. Hassan Koya Molla, K. Madhavan Nair and P. Ramunni Menon were elected as members.¹⁹

THE CALICUT POLITICAL CONFERENCE

The Third Political Conference of the K.P.C.C was held at Calicut on 16th and 17th April, 1927.²⁰ K.Madhavan Nair, U.Gopala Menon, S.V. Abubacker, *et. al.* were the Chief organizers of the conference.

In this conference also memories of the Rebellion resounded in the speeches and in the resolutions passed by the conference. K. Madhavan Nair, Chairman of the Reception Committee, in his welcome address, after describing the inert political condition of Malabar since the Rebellion said that

19. TNA, H.F.M. File, Vol. 103, pp37-38.

20. *Ibid.*, p40.

the authorities looked upon those who wore *Khadi* with suspicion and hatred. Moreover, if it happened to be a Mappila, he would be produced before the court on the charge of waging war against the King. Many of those who had honestly and sincerely worked to stop the rebellion were imprisoned on the charge of conspiring with the rebels. On account of these people were afraid to come out openly to do any national work.²¹

The following resolutions related with the Mappilas were passed at the conference.

- a) The conference protests against the Government scheme to send the Mappila women to Andaman Islands.
- b) The conference requests the Government to release those innocent Mappila prisoners against whom no criminal cases were proved.
- c) The conference requests the Hindus and the Muslims to strive hard to end communal rivalries and suspicion.²²

NORTH MALABAR POLITICAL CONFERENCE

In the North Malabar Political Conference held at Cannanore in January 1928 also the Rebellion and its impact on society and politics came up for discussion. K. Uppi Sahib, M.L.C, who was one of the chief organizers of the meeting, in his welcome speech stressed the need for Hindu-Muslim unity.

21. *Ibid.*, p41.

22. A.K. Pillai, *op. cit.*, pp120-121.

He also warned the followers of both these communities to be alert against the policy of the Government to create suspicion and hatred among them.²³

The meeting unanimously passed a resolution to boycott the Simon Commission.²⁴

BOYCOTT OF THE SIMON COMMISSION

In November 1927, the British Government appointed a Commission headed by Sir John Simon to look into the question of further constitutional reforms for India. All the members of the commission were Englishmen. The Indians in general protested against this act of the Government, who viewed it as a violation of the principle of self-determination and a deliberate attempt to insult the self-respect of the Indians. In the Madras session of the Congress in 1927 it was decided to boycott the Commission at every stage and in every form. The Muslim League, Home Rule League, Hindu Mahasabha, etc. also extended their support to the Congress in this issue.

In the editorial published in *Al-Ameen* on 2 February, 1928, Abdurahiman Sahib described the importance of the agitation against Simon Commission and urged the Muslims to be in the vanguard of the agitation.²⁵

23. *Ibid.*, pp123-124.

24. *Ibid.*, p125.

25. S.K.Pottekat *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p199.

A propagation committee was constituted by the Congress Committee with a view to give maximum publicity to the agitation so as to make it a great mass movement. Muhammed Abdurahiman Sahib, K. Kelappan, M. Sankaran Nambiar, et al. were the members of the committee. They toured round Malabar spreading the mission.²⁶

On 22 January 1928 a meeting was convened at Calicut Town Hall with the intention of informing the public about the programme of agitation and other decisions of the party. In the meeting presided over by M. Narayana Menon, the Municipal Vice Chairman, Abdurahiman Sahib addressed the gathering. He, in his speech, urged the two communities to stand united and asked the advocates to boycott the courts and the students to boycott the schools.²⁷

On 29 January the Congress leaders of Malabar met and adopted two resolutions. In the first resolution it urged the people to observe 3 February, 1928, the day on which the Simon Commission arrived at Bombay, to observe complete *hartal*. The second resolution recorded a protest against the alleged activities of some police officials to organize public meetings spuriously welcoming the Commission.²⁸

26. *Ibid.*, p200.

27. *Ibid.*, pp200-201.

28. *Ibid.*, p201.

On 3 February 1928, just like in other parts of the country, in Malabar also *hartal* was observed and people struck their work on that day. On that day evening a great procession led by Abdurahiman Sahib, K. Madhavan Nair, Hassan Koya Molla and others moved to the Municipal office with black flags in their hands. M. Narayana Menon, the Municipal Vice-Chairman, hoisted a black flag in the Municipal office. Then the procession moved to the beach where the leaders like Abdurahiman Sahib, P. Moideen Koya and others spoke to the gathering.²⁹

Though Sir John Simon and other members of the Commission had planned to visit Malabar also according to schedule, after visiting some places in the erstwhile Madras state, they returned to North India.³⁰

PAYYANNUR CONFERENCE (1928)

The Fourth Kerala Provincial Political Conference was held from 25th to 27th May at Payyannur with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in the chair. The conference adopted seven resolutions, of which the fourth one was moved by K. Uppi Sahib. In the resolution he strongly criticized the inert and indolent attitude of the Government in the 'Andaman Scheme issue' inspite of the strong protest against it from the people, especially from the Mappilas.³¹

29. *Ibid.*, p204.

30. *Ibid.*, p205.

31. A.K. Pillai, *op. cit.*, p133.

In another resolution, the conference requested the Indian National Congress to adopt *Purna Swaraj* as its goal at the annual session, which was to be held at Calcutta during the year. All these resolutions were carried by a thumping majority.

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT (1930)

The Lahore session of the congress held in December 1929 passed a resolution declaring *Poorna Swaraj* to be the objective of the Congress. The meeting also announced the launching of a Civil Disobedience Movement. But it did not draw up a programme of struggle. That was left to the will of Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhiji before taking any extreme step made an offer to the Government. It was an eleven-point demand, which included repeal of salt tax. He in his letter had informed the Viceroy that he would wait for a reply till 11 March, 1930 on the issue; if not he would start direct action against the Government. Not receiving any reply from the Viceroy, Gandhiji started the Civil Disobedience Movement on 12 March, 1930 by marching from Sabarmati to Dandi with 78 chosen followers. There Gandhi and his followers made salt in violation of the salt laws. This act was a symbol of the Indian people's refusal to live under the British regime.

The Salt Satyagraha launched by Mahatma Gandhi had its repercussions in Kerala also. But, the differences of opinion on the issue of Civil Disobedience Movement among the leadership of the K.P.C.C caused some

confusion in the beginning. Owing to differences with the leadership on the issue, Madhavan Nair, one of the prominent leaders of the Congress resigned from the K.P.C.C.³²

In the beginning of the agitation, generally speaking, the Muslims also kept aloof without joining the struggle. At the time there were differences of opinion among the Muslim leaders in the national level itself. Muhammed Ali Jinnah, Moulana Muhammad Ali, Shaukat Ali and others opposed the stand of Gandhiji and dissociated with the Civil Disobedience Movement. At the same time other Muslim leaders who supported the view of Gandhiji formed a new party at their meeting held at Allahabad in 1929 called the Muslim Nationalist Party led by Moulana Azad, Dr. Ansari, Ahmad Khan Shervani and others.³³ Owing to differences of opinion on the question of salt satyagraha, Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan resigned from the Khilafat Committee.³⁴ All these developments had its repercussions in Kerala also. When a procession of satyagrahis started from Calicut on 13 April, 1930 under the leadership of K. Kelappan to break the law at Payyannur beach only one Muslim named Mustafa from Palghat joined them.³⁵ Hassan Koya Molla walked a while along with the procession and returned.³⁶

32. M.P. Manmathan, *Kelappan* (Mal.), p142-143.

33. E. Moidu Moulavi, *Moulavi's Autobiography* (Mal.), p123.

34. S.K. Pottekat, *et al., op. cit.*, p210.

35. E. Moidu Moulavi, *op. cit.*, p124, and HFM File, Vol. 103, p19.

36. TNA, HFM File, Vol. 103, p17.

Meanwhile signs of change appeared in the attitude of some section of Muslims. K.M. Seethi Sahib, Editor of a Malayalam journal called the '*Aikyam*' published from Cochin, in one of his editorials called upon Muslims of Kerala to awake and to enter the battle field to free the motherland. After saying that Islam is always opposed to slavery of any kind, he emphasized that the fight for the freedom of the country is a bounden duty of a Muslim. Therefore it was disgraceful on the part of Muslims to keep idle at this juncture. He called upon the Muslims to join the struggle as volunteers and made an appeal to the nationalist Muslim leaders like Abdurahiman Sahib and Moidu Moulavi to give a lead to the Muslims of Malabar in this regard.³⁷

After a short spell of indecision, Abdurahiman Sahib, Moidu Moulavi, and other muslim leaders changed their mind and resolved to take part in the movement actively. When a second batch of satyagrahis reached Calicut on 24th April, 1930 under the leadership of T.R. Krishnaswamy Ayyar of Palghat, they were given a rousing reception at the Calicut Railway Station, under the leadership of Abdurahiman Sahib, Moidu Moulavi, Hassan Koya Molla and others. On 27th April, a statement issued by Abdurahiman Sahib appeared in the '*Mathrubhumi*' in which he made an appeal to his Muslim brethren to join the struggle and announced that himself, Moidu Moulavi, Hassan Koya Molla, P.Moideen Koya, N.P. Abu and K.V. Ahmad Koya had decided to join the salt

37. TNA, HFM File, Vol. 103, p17.

satyagraha. He also appealed to his community to be restrained, non-violent and not to be tools in the hands of the government.³⁸

On 27 April 1930 a grand meeting of the Congress was held at Calicut beach presided over by Hassan Koya Molla. At the meeting also Abdurahiman Sahib proclaimed his decision to join the struggle along with other Muslim leaders. He also requested the Mappilas to go with him patiently, bearing all the adversities for the liberation of the country or at least doing no harm to the satyagrahis.³⁹

The decision of the leaders to join the agitation was received by the youngsters with happiness. A large number of them poured to *Al-Ameen* office and to *Al-Ameen* Lodge, which were the centers of nationalist Muslims at Calicut, to get themselves enrolled as satyagrahis.⁴⁰

On 5 May, 1930, a batch of satyagrahis led by Abdurahiman Sahib and Moidu Moulavi started from Calicut. At Payyannur they were well received by the public. On that day evening Abdurahiman sahib and Moidu Moulavi addressed a public meeting there. In their speeches they had given replies to the queries and doubts raised by a section of Muslims against the Civil Disobedience Movement. Abdurahiman sahib in his speech severely criticized

38. Muhammed Abdurahiman, 'Kerala Muslims and Civil Disobedience', *The Mathrubhumi*, 27 April, 1930.

39. S.K. Pottekat, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p215.

40. E.Moidu Moulavi, *op. cit.*, p125.

the stand taken by some of the organizations like '*Malabar Muslim Jama'at*' of Calicut, '*Ilfattul Islam Sabha*' of Baliapatom etc. which had spread notices against Muslims joining the agitation. He also explained to the people why they disagreed with Moulana Muhammed Ali on this matter.⁴¹

In spite of the efforts made by the leaders to convince the Muslims about the necessity of the agitation, a section of Muslims still continued to harass the satyagrahis. This compelled Kottal Uppi Sahib, M.L.C., to issue a statement in the *Mathrubhumi* requesting the Muslim reactionaries not to disturb and obstruct the Congressmen and the satyagrahis as they have been doing in several places in Malabar.⁴² Moidu Moulavi, who was heading a batch of volunteers started from Payyannur to Calicut on a propaganda tour, in his speeches exhorted the youth not to get misguided by the reactionary Muslim leaders. Moulavi's speeches slowly opened the eyes of many Muslims, especially the youth, many of whom repented of their actions and vowed to join the freedom struggle and many of them got enrolled themselves as satyagrahis.⁴³

On 12 May 1930 under the leadership of Abdurahiman Sahib, P. Krishna Pillai, K. Kelappan, and others a group of volunteers marched to the Calicut beach for breaking the salt laws. Suddenly the police party attacked the

41. *The Mathrubhumi*, 7 May, 1930.

42. *Ibid.*, 10 May, 1930.

43. TNA File, Vol. 103, p32.

satyagrahis and many suffered injuries in the police assault. Leaders like Abdurahiman Sahib, P. Krishna Pillai, N.P. Abu and K.V. Ahmad Koya were badly manhandled. The police arrested the leaders. They were tried and sentenced to nine month's imprisonment under section 145 IPC and Section 74 of C and F Madras salt Act. They were taken to Cannanore Central Jail. Later Abdurahiman sahib was transferred to Vellore jail.⁴⁴

After the arrest of the senior leaders, Moidu Moulavi was elected leader of the satyagraha committee. For about 1¹/₂ months he held that responsibility.⁴⁵ The policy of arrests and repression by the authorities culminated in generating political consciousness and new enthusiasm among the people. Large number of them especially the youth irrespective of caste and creed came forward to join the satyagraha. Even from Cochin and Travancore areas people came to Calicut and participated in the movement and got arrested.⁴⁶ Meanwhile the police arrested Moidu Moulavi, and some Muslim youngsters like P.A. Zainudheen Naina (Cochin), Sayyid Muhammad (Trivandrum) Muhammad Yusuf (cannanore), Abdul Gafoor (Coorg) et al.⁴⁷

When K. Madhavan Nair, President of the Provincial Congress Committee was arrested on 9th July 1930, Hassan Koya Molla was elected

44. *Ibid.*, p36 and 59.

45. E. Moidu Moulavi, *op. cit.*, pp136-137.

46. *Ibid.*, p137.

47. *Ibid.*

President of the KPCC,⁴⁸ at a meeting of the K.P.C.C held at Calicut on 20 July 1930. Under his leadership the activities of the Civil Disobedience Movement continued to attract more and more youths.

The programme of the Civil Disobedience Movement included besides violation of salt law, abstention from attending the educational institutions by the students and the offices by the public servants, picketing of shops dealing in liquor and foreign goods, bonfire of foreign made cloth and non-payment of taxes. People from all walks of life participated in these types of agitations with great enthusiasm and the patriotic zeal of the people reached its zenith during this period.

After the signing of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact on 5 March 1931, the Civil Disobedience Movement was temporarily withdrawn. All the arrested persons in Kerala were released from jail following the declaration of general amnesty.

KERALA MUSLIM CONFERENCE

With the objective of forming an organization for the Muslims of Malabar, Travancore, Cochin and Southern Karnataka aiming to work for the protection of their rights as well as to reform the community a meeting of the

48. TNA, H.F.M. File, Vol. 103, pp91-92.

Muslims was convened at Tellicherry on the 22nd and 23rd August, 1931.⁴⁹ In the meeting presided over by Jamal Muhammad Sahib of Madras, Moulana Zafar Ali Khan of the Punjab, Muhammad Abdurahiman Sahib and KM Seethi Sahib were also present.

In the meeting Abdurahiman Sahib moved the following resolution:

'This conference is of opinion that the political goal of India is swaraj with adequate protection to all minority communities, and appeal to all Muslims to work with that aim'.⁵⁰

K.M. Seethi Sahib seconding the resolution condemned the action of a section of Muslims as well as others who obstructed Congress work. He expressed distress over those Muslims who were playing mischief in obstructing Congressman in the struggle for independence.⁵¹

At the national level, the Second Round Table Conference held in London in September 1931 ended in failure and Gandhiji returned to India. The Government then adopted a repressive policy towards the Congress. Important Congress leaders including Gandhiji were arrested. The Civil Disobedience Movement, which was suspended in March 1931, was started again. At the same time the Government declared the Congress as an unlawful

49. *Report of the Kerala Muslim Majlis*, p2.

50. TNA, H.F.M. File, Vol. 103, p29.

51. *Ibid.*, p30.

organization. Congress committees were dissolved everywhere and during this period the activities of the Congress was carried on by duly appointed 'Dictators'. Hundreds of people from all over Malabar participated in the struggle. They broke the ban on meetings and processions, picketed liquor shops and violated the salt laws.

Pariyatta Moosa, a Councillor of Tellicherry Municipality, who was nominated to be a Dictator to carry on the movement, was arrested, fined Rs.500/- and awarded rigorous imprisonment for two years and half.⁵²

MEMORIAL ON POLICE ATROCITIES IN MALABAR

When the Government adopted an oppressive policy towards the Congressmen in order to put down the Civil Disobedience Movement, even non-Congressmen viewed it with resentment. So, some prominent citizens representing all parts and interests of Malabar jointly sent a memorial to the Government of Madras requesting the Government to put an end to the atrocities on the satyagrahis in the police lock-ups. The signatories included Abdul Sattar Sait, M.L.A., Khan Sahib C.K.P. Mammu Keyi, Advocate K.K. Pokker, Tellicherry, Khan Sahib K. Kunhamad Koya, Calicut and others.⁵³

During the budget session also members from Malabar criticized the Government on its repressive policy to suppress the Civil Disobedience

52. *Ibid.*, p61.

53. *Ibid.*, p70.

Movement. Khan Sahib T.M. Moidu, a member of Madras Assembly and President of the Malabar District Board, who was a great supporter of the Government also spoke condemning the cruelties of the police in Malabar.⁵⁴

AGITATION FOR THE RESTORATION OF MAMBURAM TANGAL

The Mamburam Tangals, a Sayyid family hailing from Hadramaut and settled down at Mamburam, near Tirurangadi, were highly respected by the people of South Malabar. One important Sayyid of this family by name Sayyid Fazal Pookoya Tungal (1823 – 1901) was persuaded by the British administrators to go into exile to Arabia under suspicion of his role in the outbreaks that occurred in his time. After Haj, Sayyid Fazal was not allowed by the authorities to return to India. Not only that, properties owned by Sayyid Fazal was handed over by the authorities to a loyalist, Khan Bahadur P.M. Attakoya Tungal of Calicut.⁵⁵

When Abdurahiman Sahib went on pilgrimage to Mecca he met some of the members of the Sayyid Fazal's family there. He had planned to bring back Ali Tungal, the fourth son of Sayyid Fazal, and his family members to Malabar. On 16 January, 1933, Abdurahiman Sahib convened a meeting at Calicut town hall to discuss the issue. In that meeting presided over by Moidu

54. *Ibid.*

55. M. Rasheed, 'Mamburam Jaram Agitation' (Mal.), *Madhyamam Daily*, 3 June, 1990.

Moulavi a 'Mamburam Restoration Committee' consisting of 33 persons was formed. Under the auspices of the Committee public meetings were conducted all over Malabar requesting the Government to permit them to come back to Malabar and to restore to them their lost properties. With the same purpose Abdurahiman Sahib had published articles in English and Malayalam newspapers. The All Kerala Muslim conference and the Kerala Muslim Youth Conference which were held at Calicut on 12th and 13th May, 1933 also passed resolutions requesting the Government to permit the heirs of Sayyid Fazal Tangal to come and restore to them their old privileges.⁵⁶

On the request of the Restoration Committee Ali Tangal arrived in Malabar on 13 February 1934 from Cairo through Colombo.⁵⁷ Immediately on his arrival the British administrators told him to return to Colombo at once.⁵⁸ Ali Tangal then went to Mahe, a French colony. He stayed there for about eight months and after realizing that the efforts of the Restoration Committee were going to be a failure due to the attitude of the Government, he returned to Arabia on 30 September, 1934.⁵⁹

Even after the return of Ali Tangal, the Restoration Committee continued their agitation programmes. Abdurahiman Sahib and others used it

56. E. Moidu Moulavi, *My Companion Muhammed Abdurahiman Sahib*, (Mal.), p218.

57. M. Rasheed, *loc. cit.*,

58. TNA, Fortnightly Report, Ist half of February, 1934.

59. M. Rasheed, *loc. cit.*

as an issue in the election campaigns of 1934 (the Central Legislative Assembly) and 1937 (Madras Legislative Council). In 1937 when the Rajaji Ministry came to power, the Restoration Committee under the leadership of Abdurahiman Sahib conducted a signature campaign and gathered more than a lakh signatures on a petition requesting the Government to grant permission to Ali Tangal to come back to Malabar and occupy his position there. But the Rajaji Government did not do anything. Then Abdurahiman Sahib decided to continue the agitation. But when the Second World War Started, the Rajaji Ministry resigned and Abdurahiman Sahib was imprisoned on 3 July, 1940.⁶⁰

What prompted Abdurahiman Sahib and others to fight for the restoration of Mamburam Tangals was that, they were greatly revered by the Mappilas of Malabar as the spiritual leaders of the community.

DEVELOPMENT OF GROUP RIVALRIES IN THE CONGRESS

In the 1920s itself groupism and infight started within the Congress Party. Personal rivalries as well as ideological differences adversely affected its growth. At first there were only two groups within the K.P.C.C. The first group was led by K. Kelappan Nair, K. Madhava Menon, K.A. Damodara Menon, R. Raghava Menon, M.P. Govinda Menon, U. Gopala Menon, C.K. Govindan Nair, A.V. Kutti Malu Amma and others, belonged to this group.

60. *Ibid.*

In one sense they represented the interests of landlords and high caste Hindus. Majority of them were advocates and resided in the Chalappuram area. That was why Muhammad Abdurahiman had given them the nickname, 'Chalappuram Gang'. This name was widely used in 1930s among the opponents of Kelappan group. He also called them 'Sunday Congressmen' as they were mainly advocates by profession and spent their time in the courts in the week days and attended to the Congress affairs only on holidays.⁶¹ However, Kelappan and other members of his group called themselves as 'Gandhian group' and they claimed that they were the true followers of the Gandhian path.

The second group led by Abdurahiman Sahib mainly consisted of nationalist Muslims like E. Moidu Moulavi, P. Moideen Koya, Hassan Koya Molla, N.P. Abu, K.V. Nurudheen and others. Some non-Muslims like R.V. Sharma, A.C. Raman, V.S. Keraleeyan, A.V. Menon and P.C. Koran also belonged to this group.⁶²

Kelappan and Abdurahiman had some similarities. Both of them hailed from aristocratic families and were well educated. Both were hot-tempered and stubborn in their outlook. At the same time they were good philanthropists who had shown great concern for the communities to which

61. E.M.S. Namboodiripad, *Autobiography* (Mal.), p151. and M. Rasheed, 'The Chalappuram Gang' (Mal.), *Madhyamam Daily*, 22 November, 1987.

62. M Rasheed, *loc.cit.*

they belonged. Both of them also tried to reform their communities in many ways. Besides this, they were good patriots who had spent everything in their hand for the cause of the country. But both of them took opposite stand in politics and competed each other to get control of the party. Interestingly both were branded by the other group as communalist.

By the beginning of 1930s the infight in the party intensified. The election to Calicut Municipality held in 1931 further worsened the situation. In that election Abdurahiman Sahib was allotted the VI ward, which had least chance of victory. When Abdurahiman Sahib informed his unwillingness to contest from there, then he was asked to contest from the VII ward. From that ward also till that date only one Chantu Adhikari had got elected. In the party there was an understanding that if Abdurahiman Sahib got elected, he would be given the post of the Chairman of the Municipality.⁶³

Abdurahiman Sahib won the election with a thumping majority. Several workers and leaders of the Congress demanded that he should be made the leader of the party. At a function organized in honour of Abdurahiman Sahib, one Congress leader in his address declared that Abdurahiman Sahib would be the next Mayor of Calicut.⁶⁴ But due to the rivalries within the party everything went upside down. The opponents of Abdurahiman Sahib

63. S.K. Pottekat, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp254-255 and Moidu Moulavi, *op. cit.*, p150.

64. *Ibid.*, pp255-256.

advocated that Abdurahiman Sahib was a youngster with no experience in the field of administration. They also spread the notion that he was an out-and-out communalist and if he got elected as Chairman, the office of the Municipality would be filled with the Mappilas.⁶⁵

Meanwhile some congressmen belonging to the Hindu community convened a meeting at Calicut beach to discuss the issue related with the Chairmanship of the Municipality. The meeting presided over by Anantan Master passed a resolution favouring Abdurahiman's candidature for Chairman's post.⁶⁶

On 27 November 1931 a meeting of the Councilors was held under the Chairmanship of U.Gopala Menon in order to arrive at a consensus on the issue. There it was decided that P. Achyutan would contest to the post of Chairman and Abdurahiman to the post of Vice Chairman. This decision made the Abdurahiman group disappointed. Finally election was held for the post of Municipal Chairman. The Congress candidate P. Achyutan got 12 votes. The other candidates namely, M. Karunakaran and Abdurahiman got 11 and 6 votes respectively. As per rule one who received the least votes among the candidates was to keep out of the contest and re-election would be conducted.

65. *Ibid.*, p256.

66. *Ibid.*

Accordingly re-election was held and the result was that the Congress candidate Achyutan was defeated and Karunakaran was declared elected.⁶⁷

This election though it seemed a minor and insignificant event outwardly, it had effected far-reaching consequences in the political arena of Kerala. It deepened the estrangement that was prevailing among the Congressmen still further. Abdurahiman Sahib kept aloof from the Congress leadership for a while and submitted his resignation from the posts held by him in the party.⁶⁸

The squabble between the Congressmen continued through the pro-Congress dailies namely the *Mathrubhumi* controlled by the right wing of the Congress, and the *Al Ameen*, managed by the nationalist Muslim group in the Congress.

Effects of rivalry among the Congressmen was reflected in the election to the Calicut Municipality held in 1934 and 1937; in the Malabar District Board election held in 1934 and 1937, in the election to the Central Legislative Assembly held in 1934, in the election to the Madras Legislative Council in 1937 and in the election to the Kerala Provincial Congress Committees which were conducted each year.

67. *Ibid.*, p258.

68. *Ibid.*

In the election to the Calicut Municipality held in 1934 Abdurahiman was allotted a ward, which was said to be a strong hold of the Kelappan group. The result was that Abdurahiman was defeated by a margin of 34 votes.⁶⁹ But in the same year he was elected to the District Board from Tirur *Farkha*. In 1937, he was asked by the party to file his nomination again from the Tirur *Farkha* to the Malabar District Board. At first he did so, but later he withdrew from the contest in protest against the disregard shown towards the Muslims in the list of candidates in the election.⁷⁰ Hence Kainikkara Abdulla Kutty Haji, the dummy of Abdurahiman became the Congress candidate.

The election of 1934 to the Central Legislative Assembly was a turning point in the history of Malabar politics. In the West Coast constituency there were two seats : one general and the other reserved for Muslims. In the General constituency Samuel Aron was declared as the Congress candidate. In the Muslim reserved constituency, there was no official candidate for the Congress. However, Abdurahiman Sahib and Abdul Sattar Sait filed their nomination papers as independent candidates.⁷¹

With this election a new group emerged among the Muslim politicians. They were the leaders of the Muslim Majlis of Malabar and at the same time sympathizers of Muslim League K.M. Seethi Sahib, Sattar Sait, B. Pocker Sahib,

69. M. Rasheed, 'Manoeuvres of Congressmen', *Madhyamam Daily*, 27 May, 1990.

70. *Ibid.*

71. S.K. Pottekat, *et al., op. cit.*, pp311-312.

A.K. Khadar Kutty, A.K. Kunhi Mayan Haji, C.P. Mamu Keyi and others belonged to this group. They supported Sattar Sait in the election. Whereas the nationalist Muslims like Moidu Moulavi, Kattilasseri Muhammad Musliar, Hassan Koya Molla, P. Moideen Koya and others supported Abdurahiman Sahib.

The election was held on 10 November 1934 and the result was declared on 16 November. To the surprise of everybody Sattar Sait was declared elected by a Margin of 322 votes. Several reasons were attributed to the defeat of Abdurahiman Sahib. In those days only taxpayers had the right to vote. The followers of Abdurahiman were mainly youngsters, who had shown great enthusiasm but had no right to vote. At the same time landed gentry who had voting right generally supported Sattar Sait. It was also alleged that the Kelappan group had played some part to get Abdurahiman defeated.⁷²

After his defeat in the election, Abdurahiman Sahib resigned from the Committee of Kerala Provincial Congress. What prompted him to take this step was the activities of some Congressmen during the election to get him defeated.⁷³ Getting disappointed Abdurahiman kept away from active politics. In 1935 he again appeared on the political scene.

72. M. Rasheed, 'Sahib', *Madhyamam Daily*, 10 June, 1990.

73. S.K. Pottekat, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp322-323.

By the beginning of 1930s a new group emerged in the K.P.C.C. This group led by P. Krishna Pillai, E.M.S. Namboodiripad, A.K.Gopalan, P.Narayanan Nair, and Sardar Chandroth Kunhiraman Nair was called the Socialist Group, or Left Wing in the Congress. One interesting fact is that when a meeting was convened in May, 1934 to discuss about the formation of a Congress Socialist Party within the Congress, it was presided over by K. Kelappan, a well-known leader of the Rightist group. Moreover, another Rightist leader C.K. Govindan Nair was elected as the Secretary of the Congress Socialist Party. Several other Rightist leaders like K.A. Damodara Menon also had attended the meeting.⁷⁴

The true intention of the socialist group was revealed only at the Provincial Congress meeting held at Shornur in October 1934. In that meeting a resolution was adopted expressing lack of confidence in the efficacy of the Gandhian principles of truth and non-violence as tools in the fight for freedom. When it was put to vote fifteen members favoured it and ten opposed.⁷⁵ It resulted in division in the party and both the leftists and the Rightists engaged in a race to capture the party. During the seventh Kerala Provincial Congress Conference held at Calicut in May, 1935, the leaders like Brelvi, Prakasam and Sambha Murthy tried to bring the two groups closer. A pact was signed by the two group leaders. But it did not last long.

74. Perunna K.N. Nair, *op. cit.*, p86.

75. K.A. Keraleeyan, *Great Son of Kerala* (Mal.), p187.

In 1936 elections were held to the K.P.C.C. Abdurahiman Sahib filed his nomination from Ponnani. Though his opponents were not so competent or powerful compared to Abdurahiman Sahib, he was severely defeated. The table given below showing the election result would show the grievous situation prevailed in the party on account of the group politics.⁷⁶

P.Krishna Panikkar	120 Votes
P.I.Kaimal	60 Votes
Abdurahiman	6 Votes
K.C.S.Panikkar	1 Vote

With this election, the group-war in the party was intensified. This time the Rightists captured the K.P.C.C. However, many of the District and Taluk Committees were in the hands of the Leftists.⁷⁷ Meanwhile the Abdurahiman group also allied with the Leftists. The Rightists described it as 'Mecca-Moscow Pact'. Anyway, the coalition of socialists with the nationalist Muslims was a great blow to the Rightist group. The result of it was reflected in the election to the Madras Legislative Council in 1937 and in the election to the K.P.C.C. held in 1938.

76. S.K. Pottekat, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p440.

77. K.A. Keraleeyan, *op. cit.*, p187.

As per the Government of India Act of 1935, elections to the state assemblies were conducted in 1937. In Malabar, elections were held to eight General seats, six Muslim Reserved seats, and one seat each reserved for the Christians, landlords, labourers and women.⁷⁸

The K.P.C.C controlled by the Rightists resolved not to put any official candidates in the Muslim reserved seats. Abdurahiman Sahib declared that he would contest in the election only if the party wanted to do so. At last the Central Committee's decision came. They had decided to field Abdurahiman as the official candidate of the party in the Malappuram dual constituency.⁷⁹ When the election results were announced Abdurahiman Sahib who got 27398 votes and Khan Bahadur Unnikkammu who got 12323 votes were declared elected.⁸⁰ The defeated candidate was a landlord named Chekku. From the other Muslim reserved seats two members, namely, P.I.Kunhahammad Kutty Haji and P.K.Moideen Kutty who were elected as independent candidates from Calicut-Tellicherry urban and Palghat Dual constituencies respectively, joined the Congress later.⁸¹

In the Madras Assembly the Congress captured the majority of seats, that is, 159 seats out of 215 seats in the Assembly. C. Rajagopalachari was

78. M.C., *C.H. Muhammad Koya* (Mal.), p55.

79. M. Rasheed, *loc. cit.*, 10 June, 1990.

80. S.K. Pottekat, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p518.

81. *Ibid.*

elected as the leader of the parliamentary party. It was sure that a member from Malabar area would be included in the Cabinet. There was a strong rumour that Abdurahiman would become a minister. Two delegations one under Kattilasserri Musliar and another under Manjeri Sundaram, met Rajaji to request him to take Abdurahiman in the cabinet. But the Rightist wing strongly stood against him. Hence Kongattil Raman Menon, a member of Kelappan group, was taken to the Cabinet.⁸²

The nationalist Muslims felt betrayed and they even asked Abdurahiman to resign from the party. But he stood firm. However, in the assembly he behaved as an opposition member, criticizing the faults of the Government.

In 1938 elections were conducted to the K.P.C.C to elect its new office-bearers. This time the nationalist Muslims and Leftist group joined together. Abdurahiman did one thing. He wrote a letter to Gandhiji describing the condition of the party in Kerala where the Muslims were being ignored by the party leadership, which was in the hands of the Rightist group. Soon, Abdurahiman received a telegram from Gandhiji giving a green signal to capture the party⁸³

82. *Ibid.*, p512.

83. M. Rasheed, *loc. cit.*, 17 June, 1990.

It did happen so. The nationalist Muslims and the socialists captured the K.P.C.C. Abdurahiman was elected the President, E.M.S Namboodiripad was elected the Secretary and P.Narayanan Nair became the Treasurer.⁸⁴ The election was held on 14 January, 1938.⁸⁵ Under the new leadership of the K.P.C.C activities of the Congress party were intensified. Unions of labourers, peasants, teachers, students etc. were organized. Study classes were conducted to Congress workers. A volunteer corps was organized under Sardar Chandroth. Services of artists were utilized to spread the message of the Congress among the common people of Malabar. Gradually the membership of the Congress during this period was multiplied.

The ideological differences between the Congress groups were reflected in the Ninth Political Conference held at Calicut on 25 April 1938. About thirty resolutions were adopted in the conference. In a resolution moved by K. Unneen Moulavi about the 'Mappila Reconstruction Fund', he made a reference about the Malabar Rebellion which he described as a peasant Revolt. The Rightist leaders like K. Madhava Menon argued that it is not a peasant uprising and they demanded to remove the attribution of the word 'peasant' from the resolution.⁸⁶ Though the amendment was voted out it was a clear indication of how things were being viewed by the different sections within the Congress.

84. K.A. Keraleeyan, *op. cit.*, p190.

85. S.K. Pottekat, *op. cit.*, p442.

86. *Ibid.*, pp448-449.

Another incident which sharpened the differences between the Congress groups was the issue of a secret circular by Abdurahiman Sahib, President of the K.P.C.C against Kelappan who was then the President of the Malabar District Board. In the circular issued on 10 June, 1938, the President of the K.P.C.C had asked the lower committees of the Congress to enquire into allegations against the President of the Malabar District Board and to verify its veracity and report it to the K.P.C.C secretly.⁸⁷ Instead of ascertaining the truth of any particular charge, the K.P.C.C had asked to collect complaints and allegations against the District Board.

The issue of secret circular became a great controversy. Kelappan approached the A.I.C.C President with his grievances. As a result J.B.Kripalani, General Secretary of the A.I.C.C wrote a letter to the K.P.C.C President asking him to withdraw the circular. Thus it was withdrawn.⁸⁸

Another scene of rivalry between the Kelappan group and Abdurahiman group was witnessed during the election to the Malabar District Board held in 1939. In that election Abdurahiman had contested from Wandoor *Farkah*. There members of the Kelappan group came forward openly against Abdurahiman. Among the Hindus they propagated that he was an out-and-out communalist, whereas to the Muslims he was being described as a

87. M.P. Manmathan, *op. cit.*, p198.

88. *Ibid.*, pp204-205.

'Wahabi'. The result was that Abdurahiman was defeated. But in other constituencies, members of Abdurahiman group were got elected. This time the administration of the Board was captured by the Abdurahiman group with K.V. Noorudheen as President and E.Kannan, as Vice-President.⁸⁹

By the end of 1939, some of the members of the socialist group met at Pinarayi near Tellicherry and decided to join the Communist Movement, though they had maintained their membership in the Congress. At the same time members of the Rightist wing of the Congress formed the Gandhi Seva Sanghom, to propagate the Gandhian ideals like non-violence.⁹⁰

In the elections to the K.P.C.C. held in 1939 and 1940 also the Leftist-Muslim alliance came to the leadership again. In 1939 Abdurahiman became the President of the K.P.C.C by gaining 82 votes. His opponent M.P. Govinda Menon got only 19 votes.⁹¹ In 1940 the contest was between Abdurahiman and Kelappan. This time Abdurahiman polled 54 votes whereas Kelappan got 34 votes.⁹²

The tenth Kerala Provincial Political Conference was held at Parappur, near Kottakkal. The dignitaries who came from other states like Mian Iftiqarudheen and T. Prakasam, to attend the conference expressed

89. M. Rasheed, *loc. cit.*, 10 June, 1990 and Perunna K.N. Nair, *op. cit.*, p97.

90. M.P Manmathan, *op. cit.*, pp206-207.

91. S.K. Pottekat, *op. cit.*, p454.

92. *Ibid.*, p464.

unhappiness in the rupture in the party in Kerala. Under their effort an agreement was signed by the leaders of the Rightist and Leftist wing of the party.⁹³

When the Second World War broke out, Abdurahiman Sahib, who was the President of the K.P.C.C as well as Kerala unit of Forward Bloc, was arrested on 3 July, 1940. Besides him several other leaders were arrested which resulted in the real break-up of the party. P. K. Moideen Kutty, a follower of the Kelappan group was elected as President of the K.P.C.C by a section of Congressmen while K.T. Kunhiraman Nair was elected as President by the Leftist Group Congressmen.⁹⁴

After the Second World War, Abdurahiman Sahib and other leaders were released from jail. Abdurahiman Sahib was in jail for about five years and two months. Within this five years great changes had taken place in the political scenario of Kerala. The Communist Party and the Muslim League had increased their strength by gaining more followers. Majority of the Muslims who had been hitherto the followers of Abdurahiman Sahib had crossed over to the Muslim League.⁹⁵ The rest had moved to the Communist Camp.⁹⁶ Only a few continued their fellowship with the Congress.

93. Perunna K.N. Nair, *op. cit.*, p98.

94. K.A. Keraleeyan, *op. cit.*, p192 and Perunna K. N. Nair, *op. cit.*, p101.

95. C.P. Kunhalikutty Keyi, ' Sahib to Jail and Myself to the League', *Cheenttu*, Malappuram District M.S.F Souvenir, 1990, p62 and S.K. Pottekat, *op. cit.*, p638.

96. S.K. Pottekat, *op. cit.*, p637.

These developments caused changes in the attitude of Abdurahiman. He made friendship with the Kelappan group. Being an extremely religious person, he had many points of disagreement with the Communists. Once, after his release from jail, a reception was accorded to him at Nediyruppu by the Congress party. There the local leaders of the Communist Party offered him a garland, but Abdurahiman refused to receive it. In his speech also he asserted that he had no affinity with the Communists.⁹⁷ On another occasion he described the Communists as 'fifth Columnists of India's struggle for independence'.⁹⁸

Due to the absence of the socialists and communists the party once again came under the control of the Rightists known as Gandhists. Thus in 1942, P.K.Moideenkutty⁹⁹ became the President and C.K. Govindan Nair Secretary.¹⁰⁰ Due to the absence of rival groups peaceful atmosphere prevailed in the party. However, group rivalries again raised its head in 1948 within the Rightist wing. This time Kelappan and K.A.Damodara Menon stood on the one side and C.K. Govindan Nair and K. Madhava Menon on the other. The antagonism between them continued till the resignation of Kelappan from the Congress. The departure of Kelappan from the Congress did not put an end to

97. *Ibid.*, p638.

98. *Ibid.*

99. P.K. Moideen Kutty was the only prominent Muslim member in the Kelappan Group. Incidentally he was also a land-lord like the many in the Rightist camp who were not in favour of any radical change in the existing system.

100. Manmathan, *op. cit.*, p231.

the split or rivalry in the party but it still continued, taking new leaders, forms, and tactics.

MUSLIM MASS CONTACT PROGRAMME

After the end of the Khilafat Movement, the Muslim masses of Malabar had maintained a lukewarm attitude towards the Congress. But owing to the hard and tiresome efforts of the leaders like Abdurahiman Sahib, Moidu Moulavi, Hassan Koya Molla, P. Moideen Koya and others, a large number of Muslims were attracted to the Congress and the national movement. This trend continued till the latter part of 1930s. In 1937, a branch of the All India Muslim League had begun to work actively among the Mappilas. By the end of 1939 a secret branch of the Communist Party also begun to function in Malabar. A large number of Muslims who were hitherto members of the Congress Party like K.M.Seethi Sahib, B.Pokker Sahib, K. Uppi Sahib, K.M. Moulavi, Abdurahiman Bafaqui Tangal and others had left the party and joined the Muslim League.¹⁰¹ At the same time another section of Muslims who were also the followers of the Congress, quit the party and joined the Communist Party. The prominent persons among them included: E.K. Imbichi Bava, Muhammad Ishaq, Sadhu P.Ahmad Kutty, Appa Koya, Koya Kunhi Naha, Nadukandy Muhammad Koya and others.¹⁰² Even before joining the

101. T.M. Savan Kutty, *Seethi Sahib* (Mal.), p57.

102. S.K Pottekat, *op. cit.*, p637.

Communist Party, they had been members of the Congress Socialist Party, which in the beginning functioned as a separate group within the Congress party.

It was a time when the Muslims, not only of Malabar but the whole of India, were being attracted to the political line of the Muslim League. Hence with the aim of attracting more and more Muslims to the Congress, Jawaharlal Nehru emphasized the need to start a Muslim Mass Contact Programme.

At Calicut, a well-attended public meeting of nationalist Muslims and others was held on 31 May, 1937 to consider the Muslim Mass Contact Scheme announced by Pandit Nehru. In the meeting presided over by Kattilasseri Musliar, Moidu Moulavi, P. Moideen Koya, K.Kelappan, H.Manjunath Rao, and N.C. Shakhar spoke. They urged the Muslims to join the Congress and to fight the British untiedly.¹⁰³

In another meeting convened by the KPCC on 13th June, 1937, a committee consisting of Kattilasseri Musliar, Abdurahiman Sahib, S.Khalifa Amanath, P.Krishna Pillai and E.M.S. Namboodiripad (Convener) was appointed to contact Muslim masses in Malabar and to enroll them as members of the Congress.¹⁰⁴

The Malabar National Muslim Conference held at Cannanore on 14 May, 1939 also passed resolutions appealing to the Muslims to join the

103. TNA, H.F.M., Vol.103, p165.

104. Ibid., and Fortnightly Report, 3 July, 1937.

Congress. In another resolution, the conference expressed its strong objection to the plan prepared by Abdul Latif, the leader of the All India Muslim League, dividing the country into 'Hindu India' and 'Muslim India' under the pretence of solving the Hindu-Muslim problem. The resolution condemned it as dangerous, for, it would only stand in the way of the progress of the Muslims of India.¹⁰⁵ The meeting was presided over by Moidu Moulavi.

These Muslim Mass Contact Programmes, its meetings, and resolutions did not produce the desired effect on the Muslims of Malabar. Not only that, in some places statements were issued by a section of Mappilas urging the Muslims not to join the Congress.¹⁰⁶ As opined by Eric Miller, the victory of Abdul Sattar Sait over the stalwart leader of the Congress, Muhammad Abdurahiman, in the election to the Central Legislative Assembly in 1934, was a symbolically significant event.¹⁰⁷ It was a clear indicator of how things were developing in Muslim politics of Malabar.

In those days Congress was being described and propagated by a section of Muslim Leaguers as an organization of the Hindus.¹⁰⁸ Hence the Congress Muslims were compelled to form an organization exclusively meant for the Muslims but associated with the Congress, namely, the Muslim Majlis. Another objective of this organization was to disprove the claim, that the

105. *Ibid.*, p181.

106. FNR, 23 July, 1937.

107. R.E. Miller, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala*, p161.

108. Moidu Moulavi, *op. cit.*, p174.

Muslim League was the only organization representing the Muslims.¹⁰⁹ A unit of the Muslim Majlis began to function in Malabar with K.V.Noorudheen, President and C.N.Imbichi Mammu, Secretary.¹¹⁰ In many parts of Malabar its units began to function. National dailies like the *Hindu* and the *Mathrubhumi* encouraged them by giving more coverage to their activities.¹¹¹

When election was declared to the Central Assembly in December 1945, the Muslim League fielded Abdul Sattar Sait in the Muslim Reserved West Coast constituency consisting of Malabar, Nilagiri, and South Canara districts. The Muslim Majlis also decided to field its own candidate. Though they found it difficult to get a suitable candidate, at last the name of Palat Kunhi Koya was declared. Abdurahiman Sahib, who was just released from jail, was in the forefront of the election campaign for the Majlis candidate. In the middle of the rigorous election work, came the sudden death of Abdurahiman Sahib on 23 November, 1945. It was a great loss to the Majlis and to the Congress. In that election Sattar Sait, who scored more than 6,000 votes was declared elected. Majlis candidate Palat Kunhikoya got only a little more than six hundred votes. He had forfeited his deposit also.¹¹²

In the elections to the Madras Legislative Assembly held in March, 1946 also the Muslim Majlis had fielded their own candidates. The candidates

109. *Ibid.*, p174.

110. *Ibid.*, p170.

111. *Ibid.*, p171.

112. S.K.Pottekat, *op. cit.*, p634.

were P.V.Abdulla Koya (Kozhikode – Tellicherry – Cannanore Muslim urban constituency), V.Mammu (Chirakkal), Tayyalakandy Muhammad (Kottayam), Parol Hussain (Kozhikode), Palat Kunhi Koya (Malappuram) and KA. Ibrahim (Ponnani and Palghat).¹¹³ All of them lost to the League candidates. The elected members were B.Pokker Sahib, P.P.Hassan Koya, A.K.Kadar Kutty, P.K.Moideen Kutty (who was the President of the K.P.C.C earlier), Koyappathodi Ahmad Kutty Haji, K.M.Seethi Sahib, Abdurahiman Ali Raja and M.V.Hydros.¹¹⁴

These election results clearly showed that the Majlis and the Congress were losing their influence over the Mappila community, whereas the Muslim League was gaining greater strength and weight among the Mappilas of Malabar.

LAST PHASE OF THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE

When the Second World War broke out in 1939, the British Government declared that India was at war with Germany. As a protest against this unilateral decision of the Viceroy, the Congress High command instructed the Congress Ministries to resign immediately. But the Congress leadership also made it clear that they would not embarrass the Government by launching any mass struggle at that stage. The Leftists in the Congress were

113. V.S. Keraleeyan, *op. cit.*, p243.

114. *The Chandrika*, 23 March, 1946.

not happy with the decision. In Kerala they had decided to observe 15 September 1940 as 'Anti-Imperialist Day'. In defiance of the wishes of the central leadership, that day was observed with meetings and demonstrations all over Malabar. In places like Tellicherry, Morazha and Kayyur it resulted in violent clashes between the police and the demonstrators. The police resorted to lathi charge and firing to disperse the crowds. In a firing near Tellicherry two demonstrators, namely, Abu and Chattu Kutty were killed.¹¹⁵

The A.I.C.C., which met under the leadership of Gandhiji in October, 1940 gave a call for Individual Satyagraha. Thousands of people joined the struggle and courted arrest in Malabar. They included K.Kelappan, P.K.Moideen Kutty, M.V. Abubacker, K.C.Nambiar and others.¹¹⁶

After the failure of Cripps Mission, the Congress decided to take more vigorous steps to compel the British to accept the Indian demand for independence. The AICC met at Bombay on 8 August, 1942 passed the 'Quit India' resolution and proposed the starting of a non-violent struggle to achieve this aim.

Prominent leaders of the Congress in Malabar were in jail during the time of the agitation. Hence a group of young Congressmen under the

115. Perunna K.N. Nair, *op. cit.*, p102.

116. *Ibid.*, pp103-104.

leadership of K.B.Menon took active role in organizing the movement in Malabar. Meetings and demonstrations were organized in several parts of Malabar.

Students boycotted the schools and colleges, government offices were picketed, railway lines were removed, telephone wires were cut and Railway stations and other government offices were attacked. The Government resorted to repressive measures to meet the situation. Among these incidents the most sensational one was the Keezhariyur Bomb case in which a group of your adventures led by K.B.Menon made twenty two bombs for the purpose of destroying bridges, railway stations, government offices, railway lines, etc. The bombs were made very secretly in a house at Keezhariyur, a place near Quilandy. Later these bombs were taken to Puthiyara and to Parappanangadi and from there to other parts of Malabar. As planned earlier all these bombs were exploded on 17 November, 1942 causing heavy damage to the Government offices, railway stations etc. As the police moved very fast all the accused except a few were captured. The prominent among them were K.B.Menon, V.A.Kesavan, N.P.Abu, K.Muhammad Naha, P.Mammooty, V.Abdulla Koya Tangal, K.T.Alavi, and others.¹¹⁷ All of them were sentenced to long term imprisonment.

117. TNA, Public (Confidential M.S.) G.O. 2197 dated 6 August, 1943.

Generally speaking youngsters of that period had been attracted to revolutionary movements and their method of working. Achyut Patwardhan, who was visiting Kerala, had taken study classes to some youngsters on how to have a revolution. During this period two Mappilas namely, Moideen and Pakku were arrested on charge of conducting sabotage activities in Tellicherry area.¹¹⁸

Youngsters of that period had great regard and admiration for Subash Chandra Bose and his programmes. Abdurahiman Sahib had maintained close contact with Subash Bose. When a unit of the Forward Bloc was formed in Kerala Abdurahiman Sahib became its President.

Subas Bose planned to organize an armed struggle against British rule with Japanese help. With this end he formed the Azad Hind Fauj (Indian National Army). It had functioned as the military wing of the Indian Independence League of Malaya. A large number of Indian residents in Malaya, Singapore etc. and the Indian soldiers and officers captured by the Japanese forces from Burma, Malaya, etc. became its members. Under the auspices of the Indian Independence League, an institute called 'Swaraj Institute' started functioning from Penang with the aims of giving training to the civilians in the use of weapons, war techniques and espionage. Out of 33 members of the Institute who got themselves enrolled in the Suicide Squad, 11

118. Pavanan, *Acquittance*, (Mal.), p296.

were Malayalees.¹¹⁹ Among them Vakkam Muhammad Abdul Khadar deserves special mention.

Abdul Khadar was born at Vakkom in Chirayinkil Taluk on 25 May, 1917. While he was a student he was attracted to the freedom struggle and became an activist of Travancore State Congress. When the police atrocities on the Congress workers intensified, Khadar left for Malaya in July, 1938. There also he came into touch with the activities of Indian Independence League and the Indian National Army.¹²⁰ He was enrolled as a member of the suicide Squad and had undergone rigorous military training at the 'Swaraj Institute' of Penang.

With the aim of doing spy work in India four batches of I.N.A men were sent to India, two batches through land route and the other two by sea route in a submarine. Abdul Khadar was the leader of the second group of I.N.A men, which had to go by sea route.

The group led by Abdul Khadar started from Penang on 18 September 1942. On 28 September they landed at Tanur. As it was wartime, policemen were patrolling the coastal areas. A military outpost had been instituted there and they were also vigilantly observing the coastal area. Moreover it was Ramzan time, hence people had assembled in the beech. It was in such an

119. Vakkom Sukumaran, *I.N.A. Hero Vakkom Khadar* (Mal.), p77.

120. P.K. Muhammad Kunhi, 'With me a hindu too...', *Chandhrika Weekly*, 16 August, 1997.

atmosphere, Vakkom Khadar and others landed at Tanur. People suspected the strangers as spies of either Japan or Germany. The constable of the Coastal Patrolling Service immediately sent messages about the arrival of spies to the higher authorities. All the five I.N.A men were arrested and taken to Calicut for interrogation and from there they were taken to Madras.

For about a year they were put in prison at St. George Fort. Then after trial, the Judge of the Special Court in his judgment ordered to hang four persons including Khadar after the completion of five years rigorous imprisonment, one person was given life imprisonment and fourteen others were ordered to be set free. The judgment of the Special Court was later referred to the approval of the High Court. The High Court went a step further and ordered that the four persons should be hanged at the earliest as they had committed a very serious crime.¹²¹

Abdul Khadar and others then submitted a petition to the Viceroy seeking mercy but it was rejected.¹²² Thus the death sentence was carried out on 10 September, 1943 at the Central prison of Madras.¹²³ Abdul Khadar was said to be the first martyr of the Indian National Army.¹²⁴

121. C.K. Kareem, *Kerala Muslim Directory*, Vol.3 (Mal.), p111.

122. Vakkom Sukumaran, *op. cit.*, p136.

123. *Ibid.*

124. Vijayan, 'Vakkam Khadar', *Madhyamam Daily*, 10 September, 1993.

Two other Muslims who had contacts with the I.N.A and deserve mention were A. Muhammad Sahib of Ponnani¹²⁵ and Abdurahiman Kaka of Cannanore. A. Muhammad joined the I.N.A while he was at Singapore. Abdurahiman Kaka was a merchant in Burma and he came into touch with the INA from there. On one occasion when a reception was arranged to Netaji at Burma, Kaka met him and offered 40,000 rupees to the INA fund. He worked in the propaganda wing of the INA. The British Government arrested him and he was imprisoned till the end of Second World War.¹²⁶

AGAINST PAKISTAN DEMAND

From the year 1940, when the All India Muslim League came forward with the 'Pakistan Resolution', till 1947, the year in which India was partitioned, big demonstrations and grand meetings were held throughout India demanding the creation of Pakistan under the auspices of the Muslim League. At that time the Muslim League had started its activities in Malabar, but it did not have much following in the beginning. It slowly gained strength under the leadership of Sattar Sait, Seethi Sahib, Pokker Sahib, Uppi Sahib and others. Gradually the Mappilas were also attracted to the agitation for Pakistan.

It was a time when the nationalist Muslim leaders like Abdurahiman Sahib, Moidu Moulavi and others were in jail and Ponmadath Moideen Koya

125. P.K.A. Raheem (ed.), *The Vanneri Land*, (Mal.), p329.

126. M. Rasheed, 'Between The Lines' (Mal.), *Madhyamam Daily*, 12 July, 1987.

and Hassan Koya Molla had died. Hence the Muslim masses who hitherto stood with the Congress were found to be like sheep without shepherd. The League leadership of Malabar exploited the situation and attracted the common people as well as the elite group to its fold by supporting the agitation for Pakistan.

After their release from jail Abdurahiman Sahib and Moidu Moulavi attended many meetings in which they vehemently criticized the Pakistan demand of the Muslim League.¹²⁷ Abdurahiman Sahib viewed it as an issue of Muslims of North West and North East India.¹²⁸ The Muslims of South India would not get any benefit from the creation of Pakistan. Though one third of the population of Malabar were Muslims, Malabar was not going to become a part of Pakistan or the people of Pakistan were not going to receive such a large number of population from Malabar. Even if they receive the Mappilas to Pakistan how can they live in a strange place whose language, customs, culture, etc. were very much different from that of Malabar. Abdurahiman Sahib presented these arguments before the community to explain to them the futility of their demand for Pakistan.¹²⁹

All these arguments of Abdurahiman Sahib went into deaf ears. The Mappilas in general favoured the viewpoint of the Muslim League. But

127. P.R. Nambiar, *Communist Movement and Freedom Struggle of India*, pp156-157.

128. S.K. Pottekat, *op. cit.*, p626.

129. *Ibid.*, p624.

interestingly, when the dream of Pakistan became a reality only Sattar Sait had gone to Pakistan, other League leaders remained in India. Of them some continued their relationship with the League, some others became inactive and still others left the party and joined other secular parties.¹³⁰

130. M. Abdul Aziz, *Rise of Muslims in Kerala Politics*, p35.

CHAPTER - III
THE ROLE OF MUSLIMS IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST
THE FRENCH IN MALABAR

In Kerala, Mayyazhi (Mahe) was the only region conquered and ruled by the French. Mahe situated on the coastal region between Badagara and Tellicherry became a French pocket in 1725.¹ It remained so till 16 July, 1954 when Mahe and other French territories were merged with India.

After the visit of Mahatma Gandhi in 1934, nationalist movements started functioning in Mahe. The activities of the Congress and its struggle for freedom in Malabar had its impact in Mahe also. At the beginning the Congress had no units in Mahe, but many people of Mahe had taken membership in the Congress Committee functioning at Azhiyur. During the time of Civil Disobedience Movement, when it was difficult to get the pamphlets and notices printed in other parts of Malabar, the Congress workers got them printed at Mahe. It was also used as a place to hide in order to escape from arrest.² In 1938 the sympathizers of the Congress formed the *Mayyazhi Mahajana Sabha*. Some Socialists also joined the organization and actively worked for the liberation of Mahe from foreign yoke.

Even after the withdrawal of the British from India, the French authorities did not change their attitude and continued to remain in India, which

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1. G.B. Mlleson, *History of French India*, Vol.I, p64.
 2. Perunna K.N. Nair, *Congress Movement in Kerala*, p305.

created distress and disaffection among the people of Mahe. Meanwhile bilateral discussions started between the Governments of India and France on the question of the future of French territories in India. It was resolved to conduct a referendum in the French-Indian territories including Mahe. Thus it was decided to conduct Municipal elections in October 1948 throughout French India.³

The undemocratic and discriminatory methods followed by the Pro-French politicians in issuing the voter's identity cards for the ensuing Municipal elections led to resentment among the voters. The Mahajana Sabha alleged that the identity cards were not issued properly and made a complaint regarding this to the local administrator. On 21 October, 1948 evening a large number of voters of the Mahajana Sabha, who could not get redress from the Administrator with regard to their complaint, marched in procession to the Mayor's residence and represented their grievances. As he refused to interfere in the matter, they then proceeded to the Municipal office. An altercation in the Municipal office between freedom fighters and the authorities led to a flare-up and uprising. They set fire to the records of the Administrator's office and then proceeded to the police station and disarmed the police force there. With the result, the French administration in Mahe collapsed and the

3. Mangalat Raghavan, 'The Story of Mahe Liberation' (Mal.), *Gandhi Memorial Sports and Arts Club Souvenir*, 1986, p64.

administration was taken over by the Mahajana Sabha headed by I.K.Kumaran.⁴ On 22 October, Mahajana Sabha men led by I.K.Kumaran lowered the French flag and hoisted the Indian flag. In that function among others M.Muhammad Kunhi had participated. Immediately a telegram was sent to the India Government stating that French rule had ended in Mahe, so the Government of India should take over the administration at the earliest. Leaders of the Mahajana Sabha met and formed a Defence Council under the leadership of I.K.Kumaran. The members of the Defence Council were C.E.Bharathan, Mangalat Raghavan, Kummaya Raghavan, K.P.Abdul Khadar and others.⁵

Surprisingly on 25 October, a Cruiser of the French Navy arrived off Mahe. The captain of the ship hoisted the French flag again and thus the French rule was reinstated in Mahe.⁶ With the restoration of the French administration, they resorted to most inhuman and repressive measures against the freedom fighters. As a result many had to seek refuge outside Mahe in the Kerala state.

After the re-capture of Mahe, the French military arrested some of the leaders of the Mahajana Sabha including P.K.Usman. Ponnambath Keloth Usman was an Arabic teacher of Pallur school and was an activist of the

4. V. Subbiah, *Saga of Freedom of French India*, p323-324.

5. C.H. Gangadharan, *Mayyazhi* (Mal.), p181.

6. Maheyan, 'Freedom Struggle of Mahe' *Sri. I.K. Kumaran Master Saptati Volume*, 1973, p15-16.

Socialist party.⁷ He was charged with sabotage of the French rule and was sentenced for five years rigorous imprisonment and a fine of 1000 Francs.⁸

P.K.Usman and the other arrested leaders were released on 3 November 1953. The long-term imprisonment and the brutalities of the police had badly affected his health. Even then he continued his struggle against the colonial power.

In 1954 the Mahajana Sabha launched its last liberation struggle. On 9 April, 1954 P.K.Usman and N.C.Kannan started the agitation, defying the French regime by shouting anti-government slogans. They had carried Indian flags and placards demanding the French to quit India. They were caught by the police and Usman Master was cruelly beaten up by goondas and police. At the police station the police officials told him to set fire to the national flag but he refused. Thereupon he was again put to brutal repression until he became unconscious.⁹ This time he was sentenced for one-month imprisonment.

By June, 1954, the Action Committee of the Mahajana Sabha decided to intensify the struggle through all means including the imposition of an economic blockade.¹⁰ Mahe being dependent for all its requirements on Kerala,

7. Mangalat Raghavan, 'A Revolutionary who challenged the French Rule, *The Mathrubhumi*, 6 April, 1958.

8. *Ibid.*

9. *Ibid.*

10. Maheyan, *loc. cit.*, p19.

people of Mahe suffered a lot and began to clamour before the Government for their essential requirements. Meanwhile a pro-merger resolution was passed by the Mahe Municipal Council. More and more government employees and some constables began to ally with the liberation forces. The French Government, finding no other way, initiated talks at higher levels and decided to leave Mahe.¹¹

On 16 July 1954 the Administrator and other French officials left Mahe by handing over power to I.K.Kumaran, President of the Mahajana Sabha. He constituted a 15 member council to carry on the administration in which P.K.Usman was a member. This set up continued till 1st November 1954 when Pondicherry state was formed by joining mahe with it.¹²

Besides P.K.Usman, his brother P.K.Ibrahim, K.P.abdul Khadar, K.A.Ummer Haji, M.P.Moidu, Anthruman and other Muslims had participated in the freedom struggle in Mahe against the French.¹³ P.K.Usman, who had been put to police persecution on many occasions, breathed his last after a major operation at Vellore Medical College hospital on 23 March, 1958.¹⁴

11. V. Subbiah, *op. cit.*, p326.

12. Perunna K.N. Nair, *op. cit.*, p320.

13. Mangalat Raghavan in an interview at his residence at Tellicherry on 19 November, 1997.

14. C.H. Gangadharan, *op. cit.*, p225.

CHAPTER - IV
THE ROLE OF MUSLIMS IN THE NATIONAL
MOVEMENT IN COCHIN

Since Cochin was a princely state, not coming under the direct control of the British Government, the activities of the Congress and other nationalist organizations were also not so active or vigorous in the Cochin state compared to Malabar. Though congress committees had been formed at Trichur and Ernakulam as early as in 1919,¹ it became active only after 1921, when the Kerala provincial Congress Committee came into being by joining Malabar, cochin and Travancore. Trichur became the head quarters of the District Congress Committee of Cochin.²

The prominent Muslim leaders connected with the freedom struggle of Cochin were V.K.Kutty Sahib, K.M.Seethi Sahib, K.C.Mayin Kutty Mehtar, K.M.Ibrahim P.A.Sainudheen Naina and C.P.Ummer.

K.M. Seethi Sahib came in touch with the Congress movement at a fairly early date. While he was a student he boycotted the classes in response to the call given by Gandhiji. He also had organized a meeting at Shamghumughom beach to protest against the arrest of Congress leaders like Yaqub Hasan, P.Moideen Koya and others at Calicut.³ He became a member of the K.P.C.C and the A.I.C.C. In 1929 he himself along with A.B.Salem attended the Lahore

1. Perunna K.N. Nair, *Congress Movement in Kerala (Mal.)*, p139.

2. *Ibid.*

3. T.M. Savankutty, *Seethi Sahib (Mal.)*, p30.

Session of the A.I.C.C representing the K.P.C.C.⁴ He was elected to the Cochin Legislative Council in 1928 and 1930.⁵ He effectively voiced the needs of the Muslim community in the Assembly. Due to his efforts in the Assembly several legislative measures affecting in the Muslim community such as the *The Kutchi Memon's Act*, *Muslim Women's Marriage Dissolution Act*, *Muslim Succession Act*, *Waqf Act*, etc., were introduced and passed into law in the Cochin Assembly.⁶ In 1933 Seethi Sahib resigned from the Legislative Council as well as from the Congress party,⁷ and later shifted his residence to Tellicherry and became the leader of the Muslim League in Malabar.

K.M.Ibrahim and K.M.KunhiMoideen, two brothers of Seethi Sahib, started their career by organizing agricultural labourers. K.M.Ibrahim and K.M.Kunhi Moideen got elected to the Cochin Legislative Assembly in 1934 from Kodungallur and Kattur respectively.⁸

In 1928, as the Congress party had given a call to boycott the Simon Commission, in Cochin too under the leadership of the Congress leaders like Kurur Neelakantan Namboodiripad, V.K.Kutty Sahib and others, grand demonstrations were held when some of the members of the Commission visited Cochin.⁹

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4. K.K.M. Abdul Kareem, *Sher-i-Kerala, Seethi Sahib* (Mal.), p43.
 5. K.P.K.Thiruthi, 'Marhum K.M. Seethi Sahib', *Chandrika Daily*, 26 April, 1970.
 6. K.K.M. Abdul Kareem, *op. cit.*, p45.
 7. V. Muhammad, 'Seethi Sahib', *Kerala State Muslim League Souvenir*, 1959, p221.
 8. C. Achyuta Menon, *Social and Political Essays* (Mal.), pp53-54.
 9. Perunna K.N. Nair, *op. cit.*, pp144-145.

When Civil Disobedience Movement started in 1930, V.K.Kutty participated in it and had given leadership to the movement with other leaders in Cochin State. Some persons like P.A.Sainudheen, Mayin and others went to Malabar in order to participate in the Salt Satyagraha and courted arrest there. Another important incident of the period was the arrest and conviction of Manappad Kunhahammad Haji of Kodungallur on a charge of sedition for having written a pamphlet entitled *Rakthalekha*.¹⁰

An All Cochin Political Conference held at Trichur on November 21, 1937 with Pattabhi Sitaramayyah in the chair passed a resolution demanding the introduction of Responsible Government in Cochin.¹¹ But as the Haripura Session of the Congress (1938) had passed a resolution declaring its policy of non-intervention in the affairs of the Native States and authorizing the formation of separate and independent organizations to carry on internal struggles in the states, it was not possible for the Cochin District Congress Committee to begin an agitation for Responsible Government in Cochin on its own.

The new nationalistic spirit prevailed in the Native States resulted in the efforts for the establishment of Responsible Governments. With this aim two organizations came up in Cochin, namely, 'The Cochin Congress' and the

10. C. Achyuta Menon, *op. cit.*, p54.

11. Perunna K.N. Nair, *op. cit.*, p152.

'Cochin State Congress'. Though they bore the suffix 'Congress' with their names they had no connection with the Indian National Congress.¹² K.M. Ibrahim was a member of the Working Committee of the Cochin state Congress.¹³ The activities of the Cochin Congress and Cochin state Congress were limited to inside the Assembly. Outside the Assembly their activities were very limited and within the Assembly also they were not in favour of any radical reforms. Hence some members of both these organizations left the parties and formed the Cochin State Praja Mandal under the leadership of V.R.Krishnan Ezhuthachan on 26 January, 1941.¹⁴ They were attached to the Congress and were following the policies and programmes of it. Among others, C.P.Ummer had attended the formation meeting of the Praja Mandal.¹⁵

The Government watched the activities of the Praja Mandal with vigilance. They had banned the annual session of the Praja Mandal which was proposed to be held on 10th and 11th January, 1942 at Irinjalakuda. To protest against this action of the Government a meeting was convened at Ernakulam. C.P.Ummer and Kamaludheen were the speakers. The police did not prevent the meeting but at the end of the meeting Ummer was taken to the police station, interrogated and was later let off.¹⁶

12. *Ibid.*, p153.

13. P.K.K. Menon, *History of Freedom Movement in Kerala*, Vol. II, p383.

14. Perunna K.N. Nair, *op. cit.*, p157.

15. Committee for Praja Mandal History, *Cochin State Praja Mandal* (Mal.), p78.

16. *Ibid.*, p111.

During the time of 'Quit India Agitation', a secret paper was published from Cochin entitled *Samara Kahalam*. It is to be noted that, it was printed in the paper supplied by the Cochin Government. After a short period, its publication was stopped with the arrest of its publishers, namely, K.C.M. Methar and A.P.Nambiar.¹⁷

For participating in the Quit India struggle several political workers got arrested. The important Muslims arrested during this period were C.P.Ummer, C.A Abdul Khadar, Muhammad Haneefa, A.I. Jaleel and V.A.Sayyid Muhammad, who was a student of Maharaja's College at that time.¹⁸

The Government continued their policy of harassing the leaders and workers of the Praja Mandal. At the end of January 1947 the Magistrate of Chittoor issued a prohibitory order against the two leaders of the Praja Mandal, namely, Mathai Manjooram and R.M.Manakkalath, from making speeches within the border of Chittoor Municipality. Ignoring the order both of them addressed public meetings in Chittoor. Manjooran was arrested and Manakkalath escaped to Malabar. Hence the court issued warrant against him. At that time the leftists in the Praja Mandal made a declaration that if the authorities were not ready to set free Manjooran and repeal the warrant issued against Mannakkalath on or before 31 January 1947, then they would start a

17. *Ibid.*, p141 and Perunna K.N. Nair, op. cit., p167.

18. *Ibid.*, p141-142.

satyagraha in front of the Viyyur Central jail on 1 February. They began to enroll volunteers for the Viyyur March. Then the District Magistrate issued another order prohibiting demonstrations, meetings and shouting slogans within half a mile circumference of the Viyyur Central Jail. Violating the prohibitory order, hundreds of workers arrived at Viyyur and conducted the satyagraha. Police immediately arrived on the spot and arrested the satyagrahis like K.C.M Methar, C.K.Muhammad, A.K.Kochunni and others. Later they were set free. Again they violated the law and conducted speeches. The police arrested them and later released them without taking any action. This process continued till the release of Mathai Manjooran and other leaders and the repeal of prohibitory orders on 4 February, 1947.¹⁹

The Cochin State Praja Mandal became the most popular political party of Cochin. People's faith and recognition of its activities were reflected in the election to the Cochin Assembly held in 1948. Out of total 53 seats in the Assembly, Praja Mandal contested in 51 seats and won 43 seats. While, the People's Congress contested in 43 seats but could secure only 4 seats. The remaining six seats were won by independent candidates. Among the victorious Praja Mandal candidates the prominent Muslim candidates were K.C.M Methar (Cheranallur Muslim reserved constituency) and K.H.Sulaiman

19. *Ibid.*, p255-260.

(Mattanchery). V.K.Kutty Sahib, another prominent Muslim leader who contested the election under the banner of People's Congress was defeated.²⁰

In November 1948, the Praja Mandal was merged with the Indian National Congress. The new ministry turned out to be the first full-fledged Congress ministry in Cochin. Thus the struggle for responsible government in Cochin reached its successful culmination. In May 1949 the two states of Travancore and Cochin were integrated to form a new state known as Travancore-Cochin. The Maharaja of Travancore became the constitutional head of the new state.

20. *Ibid.*, p367.

CHAPTER - V
THE ROLE OF MUSLIMS IN THE NATIONAL
MOVEMENT IN TRAVANCORE

Though the percentage of Muslims was lower in Travancore State compared to Malabar or Cochin, they had played significant role in social and political fields. The great Muslim reformer Vakkom Abdul Khadir Moulavi belonged to this area. In fact it was from him that all the later Muslim reform movements working in Kerala derived inspiration and guidance.¹ In 1906 he started a newspaper called *Swadeshabhimani* with Ramakrishna Pillai as Editor. Moulavi gave him full freedom in the publication of the paper. In spite of the incessant warnings from the authorities neither the publisher nor the editor was ready to make any change in the policy or attitude followed by the paper. With the result the press and the paper were confiscated by the authorities.²

Vakkom Moulavi had attended the first All Kerala Provincial Political Conference held at Ottappalam in 1921.³ He had attended the special Khilafat session held along with the Conference. He was also connected with the activities of *Kerala Majlisul Ulama*, an association of nationalist Muslim scholars, and became one of its Vice-presidents.⁴

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1. Jamal, *Kunju Sahib* (Mal.), pp153-154.
 2. M. Muhammad Kunnu, *Vakkom Moulavi and Reformist Leaders* (Mal.), p54.
 3. K.K.M. Abdul Kareem, *K.M. Maulavi Sahib* (Mal.), p90.
 4. E. Moidu Moulavi, *Moulavi's Autobiography* (Mal.), p201.

A new Kerala Provincial Congress Committee was constituted in 1921 at Ottapalam as per the decision of the Nagpur Congress to have provincial Committees reorganized on linguistic basis. At the conference five District Committees were also formed including that of Travancore. Among the early leaders of the Congress party of Travancore, the names of H.B.Muhammad Rawuthar and Pareed Sahib deserve mention.⁵

In 1930 when Gandhiji started the Civil Disobedience Movement some youngsters from Travancore went to Malabar and took part in the Salt Satyagraha and courted arrest. They include among others P.Sayyid Muhammad, Vaikom Muhammad Basheer, Muhammad Yusuf and others.⁶

In Travancore there were 64 Congress committees spread over several Taluks.⁷ But the public life in Travancore had been dominated for a long period by communal politics. It all began with the presentation of the *Malayali* and *Ezhava Memorials* in the last decade of the 19th century. A petition signed by more than 10,000 persons belonging to all castes and creeds was presented to Maharaja Sri Moolam Tribunal on 1 January, 1891, which came to be known as the *Malayali Memorial*. In that the Memorialists prayed that local people be given more representation in the state services as against the Tamil Brahmins drawn from outside Kerala, who dominated the state services so far. It was

5. Perunna K.N. Nair, *Congress Movement in Kerala* (Mal.), p265.

6. *Ibid.*, p280.

7. P.K.K. Menon, *History of Freedom Movement in Kerala*, Vol. II, p91.

really a Nair sponsored plea for privileges and positions.⁸ In consequence, the Ezhavas submitted another memorial in 1896 pleading for the extension of civic rights, government jobs, etc., to the lower castes.

Muslims of Travancore who had a numerical strength of about three lakh people, also now became conscious of their deplorable condition. They began to feel conscious about their legitimate share in the public services, adult franchise and proportionate representation in the legislature. They also were fully aware of the need to improve the educational facility for the Muslims of Travancore. The first step in this direction was initiated by N.A.Muhammad Kunju, a philanthropist and merchant, by establishing an organization at Alappuzha known as *Lajnatul Muhammadiya Association* (1914).⁹ Likewise at Quilon an association called *Muslim Dharma Poshini* was established by some philanthropists of Quilon.¹⁰ Both these organizations have emphasis on the advancement of Muslims in the educational field. The Quilon-based organization did not last long.

Another important association of Muslims of Travancore was the *Travancore Muslim Mahajana Sabha*, founded by N.A.Muhammad Kunju, under the guidance of Vakkom Abdul Khadir Moulavi. It was formed at a meeting

8. A. Sreedhara Menon, *Political History of Modern Kerala*, p6. also see *Kerala Through the Ages*, Department of Public Relations, Government of Kerala, p103.

9. Lajnatul Muhammadiya Association, *Diamond Jubilee Souvenir*, 1976, p13.

10. Sayyid M. Bava, 'Muslim Community Activities in Travancore', *Kerala State Muslim League Souvenir*, 1959, p45.

convened at Trivandrum on 21 August, 1921 by N.A.Muhammad Kunju, with the aim to consider ways and means of removing the difficulties suffered by the Muslims in the State. Owing to differences of opinion among the leaders and due to opposition from other sections of Muslims it also ceased to exist.¹¹

The other Muslim organizations formed during this period were the *Chirayinkil Taluk Muslim Samajam*, *Young Muslim Association*, *Travancore Muslim Mahasabha*, *Travancore Muslim Service League*, etc. H.B.Muhammad Rawther, H.B.Abdul Khadar Rawther, M.K.A.Mytheen Kunju, N.A.Yusuf, P.K.Kunju, P.S.Muhammad and others were the leaders of these movements.

Meanwhile proposals for the reorganization of the *Sri Mulam Praja Sabha* and *Sri Chitra State Council* were published in October 1932. It was found that they were quite unsatisfactory as far as Muslims, Ezhavas and Christians were concerned. They were not given adequate representation in the legislatures in proportion to their population, while the Nairs, as before, were over-represented.¹² Consequently Muslims along with other under-represented communities decided to fight against these proposals.

THE ABSTENTION MOVEMENT

On 17 December 1932, the Christian, Ezhava and Muslim organizations met together in the London Mission Society Hall at Trivandrum

11. *Ibid.*

12. R. Ramakrishnan Nair, *Constitutional Experiments in Kerala*, pp14-19.

to concert measures jointly for achieving their goal. It was thus that the *All Travancore Joint Political Congress* came in to being. A deputation of the Joint Political Congress submitted a memorial to the Dewan on 9 January, 1933 led by M.V. Joseph, C. Kesavan, P.K. Kunju and others. It was submitted on behalf of the organizations like S.N.D.P. Yogam, Lajanathul Muhammadiya Association, The All Travancore Muslim Service League, The Hidayathul Islam Sabha, The Travancore State Catholic Congress and other Christian organizations.¹³

The move by the Joint Political Congress failed to evoke any favourable response from the Government. Hence the leaders of the Joint Political Congress again met in the L.M.S. Hall, Trivandrum on 25 January, 1933 under the presidentship of E.J. John and formally resolved that the members of the Christian, Ezhava and Muslim communities should abstain from taking part either by voting or by standing as candidates in the elections or by accepting nominations to the reformed Legislative bodies as long as the Government do not make provision for the representation of all deserving communities proportionate to their population in the Legislature. This resolution marked the birth of the Abstention Movement. The term 'abstention' was ingeniously devised to distinguish it from the non-cooperation movement though its operation was much the same.

13. P.K.K. Menon, *op. cit.*, p342.

The abstentionists held mass meetings to create public opinion. Processions and signature campaigns were also conducted. At the annual session of the Kerala Muslim Youth Conference held at Calicut on 20 April, 1933 resolutions were passed in support of the Abstention Movement. In another resolution the conference requested the Government to desist from the policy of repression¹⁴ The All Kerala Muslim Conference held at Calicut on 13 May, 1933 under the Chairmanship of Sir Muhammed Habibullah, The Dewan-designate of Travancore, also passed a resolution describing the claims advocated by the Joint Political Congress as just and based on sound political ideas. The conference prayed the Government of Travancore to call off the scheme of repression launched by them. It was proposed by K. M. Seethi Sahib and seconded by K. Uppi Sahib.¹⁵

In spite of the repressive policy followed by the Government, the movement proved a great success. By the close of 1937, the Government was compelled to accept all the demands made by the Abstentionists.

In spite of the success achieved in the Abstention Movement, the Muslim community of Travancore suffered greatly on account of absence of a powerful organization to lead them. A move in this direction was made in a conference, which met at Varkala in December, 1945. It was resolved to form

14. The All Travancore Joint Political Congress, *Travancore : The Present Political Problem*, p57.

15. *Ibid.*

'The Travancore State Muslim League' with P.S. Muhammed as President and P.K. Kunju as Secretary. Within a year it was able to enroll 30,000 Muslims as members. By the end of 1946, the number rose to 36000 members.¹⁶

By the end of 1937 another significant event took place in Travancore, that was, the Nairs also joined hands with Ezhavas, Christians and Muslims. The prominent leaders of these four communities met at Trivandrum on 16 February, 1938 and resolved to form an organization.¹⁷ Thus the Travancore State Congress was born on 23 February, 1938 with the objective of securing responsible government, adult franchise and protection of minorities through just and peaceful means.¹⁸

On 4 July, 1938 leaders of the Joint Political Congress met for the last time and decided to dissolve the organization and join the Travancore State Congress.¹⁹ With the emergence of State Congress, the activities of the Travancore District Committee, almost came to an end.²⁰

Soon after the establishment of the Travancore State Congress, under its auspices agitation started throughout the state demanding responsible Government. C.P. Ramaswami Ayyar, the Diwan decided to suppress the

16. K.K. Kusuman, *The Abstention Movement*, p44.

17. George Mathew, *Communal Road to a Secular Kerala*, p97.

18. *Ibid.*

19. *Ibid.*, p98.

20. Perunna K.N. Nair, *op. cit.*, p226.

agitation by using force. Students also participated in the agitation. K.M. Muhammad Basheer and C.M. Stephen were the student leaders. At the same time the K.P.C.C decided to help the agitation with men and material. Two processions started from Malabar, on 9 September 1938, the first led by A.K. Gopalan and the other led by T. Muhammad Yusuf, declaring solidarity with the agitation in Travancore. When the processions reached the state of Travancore, they were arrested.²¹

The Diwan declared the State Congress and Travancore Youth League as unlawful organizations. The State Congress had given a call to start Civil Disobedience Movement. The Police then issued prohibitory orders on leaders like Pattom Thanupillai, P.K. Kunju, T.M. Varghese and others against making speeches from 25 August, 1938 for fifteen days.

Meanwhile due to differences of opinion with some of the leaders of the Congress, P.K. Kunju resigned from the executive committee of the State Congress.²² He then became active in the Travancore State Muslim League. When election to the Travancore Legislative Assembly was declared in 1948, State Muslim League and the State Congress arrived at an understanding regarding the election. Accordingly, out of the nine seats reserved for the Muslims, the League would contest in eight seats and the Congress would

21. *Ibid.*, p239.

22. Jamal, *op. cit.*, p135.

contest in one seat only. In that election, the other communal organizations like the Nair Service Society, the *Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Sanghom*, the Catholic Congress etc. also co-operated with the Congress. When the election results were declared out of 108 Assembly seats the Congress and its allies secured 94 seats.²³

After the election, the first ministry of Travancore was constituted with Pattom Thanupillai as Chief Minister. T.M. Varghese and C. Kesavan were in the Cabinet. In spite of a strong demand from the Muslim community nobody from them was included in the cabinet. Pattom was the President of the State Congress also. Some leaders like T.K. Narayana Pillai argued that the same person should not occupy two important offices at a time.²⁴ Besides that since Pattom belonged to the Nair community, the Christians, who provided the real social base of the State Congress, did not like his leadership. A no-confidence motion against Pattom was moved by K.M. Chandy and it was passed.²⁵ Then T.K. Narayana Pillai was elected as the leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party. In his ministry also there was nobody to represent the Muslim community in the Cabinet.

23. *Ibid.*, p153 and Perunna K.N. Nair, *op. cit.*, p273.

24. S.C. Joseph, *Kerala the 'Communist' State*, p43.

25. K. Sadasivan Nair, 'The Congress Party in Kerala, 1947-1963', unpublished Ph.D Thesis, University of Kerala, 1970, p221.

In October, 1948 the Travancore State Congress merged with the Indian National Congress and it became a Unit under the K.P.C.C.²⁶ When Travancore State and Cochin State were integrated on 1st July, 1949, the Congress Committees also merged and T.K. Narayana Pillai was again elected as the leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party. The members of the Travancore State Muslim League who stood as a separate block in the Assembly now resolved to merge with the Congress party. In order to give them representation in the Cabinet T.A. Abdulla was made a minister.²⁷ But soon a demand was held from some quarters that the number of ministers should be reduced in order to cut short expenditure of the state. In response to it three ministers including T.A. Abdulla resigned from the Cabinet on their own.²⁸ This incident instigated some of the old Muslim Leaguers to resume its own politics. But majority of them advocated to eschew politics and to function as a social organisation.²⁹ Some others like P.K. Kunju resigned from the League and joined Praja Socialist Party.³⁰

After the resignation of T.A.. Abdulla from the Cabinet headed by T.K. Narayana Pillai, it took five years for a Muslim to get a seat in the Cabinet. When a P.S.P Ministry led by Pattom Thanu Pillai came to power in 1954 with

26. Perunna K.N. Nair, *op. cit.*, p276.

27. C. Narayana Pillai, *From Pattom to Panambilly* (Mal.), p138.

28. Perunna K.N. Nair, *op. cit.*, p278.

29. Sukumara Panikkar, 'Muslim League in Kerala' unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Kerala, 1977, pp84-85.

30. Jamal, *op. cit.*, p173.

the support of the Congress from outside, P.K. Kunju was inducted as the Minister of Labour.³¹ But this ministry also did not last long due to agitation by the members of Travancore Tamil Nadu Congress, demanding the accession of Southern Travancore with the Madras State. Besides that groupism and split developed in the P.S.P on all India basis. One group led by Ram Manohar Lohia quit the party and formed the Socialist Party. It had its repercussions in Kerala also.

After the collapse of Pattom Ministry, a Congress Ministry was formed in February, 1955 headed by Panampilly Govinda Menon. A.A. Rahim was included in the Cabinet along with the other three ministers.³²

31. *Ibid.*, p179.

32. Perunna K.N. Nair, *op. cit.*, p287.

CHAPTER - VI
THE ROLE OF MUSLIMS IN THE CONGRESS
AFTER 1947

After the independence of the country some remarkable changes took place in the political scenario of India and the attitude of the Muslims towards the Congress. In contrast to the line taken by the Muslims of other parts of India, in Malabar, Muslims still continued to show interest in the activities of the Muslim League. In other parts of the country while the Muslim League became inactive or non-existent after the partition, it began to increase its strength and influence in Malabar. It is to be noted that even in Travancore-Cochin the League chose to disband its activities in 1949 and it did not resume its activities until 1956.¹ At the same time another section of Muslims began to associate themselves with the Communist Party and its activities.

The sudden death of Abdurahiman Sahib was a great blow to the nationalist movement. Nobody from the Muslims rose to the stature of Abdurahiman Sahib to give leadership and guidance to the nationalist Muslims. Even then a large section of Muslims still remained with the Congress. P.K. Moideen Kutty, K.A. Ibrahim, P.P. Ummer Koya, T.O. Bava, A.A. Raheem et al. rose to prominence after independence. E Moidu Moulavi

1. Abdulla Haji Ahmad Sait, *Ernakulam District Muslim League Souvenir*, 1969, p10.

was still active in the Congress, but never tried to get any office in the organizational level or in the administrative field.

P.K. Moideen Kutty became a political activist after the election to the Madras Assembly held in 1937 in which he was elected as an independent candidate from the Palghat Muslim Reserved constituency. Under the inspiration of Abdurahiman Sahib and others he joined the Congress. In the group politics within the K.P.C.C. he had shown sympathy with the Right Wing of the Congress led by K. Kelappan and others. Majority of the landed gentry had allied themselves with the Right Wing, hence there is nothing unnatural in his decision to side with the Right Wing. As a result when Abdurahiman was arrested at the outbreak of the Second World War, Moideen Kutty was raised to the exalted office of the President of the K.P.C.C. by the Right Wing of the Congress in 1942-43 periods². Later in 1945 he left the Congress and joined the Muslim League. Then again in 1952 he returned to the Congress. After that he contested in three elections on Congress ticket from Trithala (1952), Kuttippuram (1957) and Tanur (1962); in all these he was defeated.³

K.A Ibrahim, brother of Abdurahiman Sahib, came into prominence with the Quit India Movement. On one occasion he became Chairman of Kozhikode Municipality. He was leader of the Muslim Majlis and had

2. M.P. Marmathan, *Kelappan*, p231.

3. C.M. Kutty, 'Immortal Moideen Kutty Sahib', *Chandhrika Daily*, 5 May, 1998.

contested to the Madras Assembly on two occasions but was defeated. In 1950 in the by-election to the Madras Assembly from Malappuram, there were two candidates for the Congress due to the group rivalries. K.A. Ibrahim had filed his nomination as the candidate of the official group led by C.K. Govindan Nair. At the same time Palat Kunhi Koya also filed his nomination as Congress candidate supported by K. Kelappan. But a few days before the election, the Congress withdrew the candidature of K.A. Ibrahim. Then on disciplinary grounds Palat Kunhi Koya also removed from the contest. Hence M.P.M Assankutty Kurikkal of the Muslim League had an easy walkover in the election.⁴ In the election to the Madras Assembly held in 1952, K.A. Ibrahim contested on Congress ticket from Malappuram (General) constituency. Though he was defeated by K.M. Seethi Sahib, the League candidate, he could secure 30572 votes. Seethi Sahib had received 37076 votes.⁵

The rivalry within the Congress party between Kelappan group and C.K Govindan Nair took a new turn in the year 1950 which resulted in the resignation of Kelappan from the K.P.C.C. Consequently, the K.P.C.C. was re-constituted on temporary basis with C.K. Govindan Nair, President and K.A. Ibrahim, Secretary.⁶

4. M.C., *C.H. Mohammad Koya – A political Biography* (Mal.), pp136-139.

5. *Assembly Elections since 1951*, Department of Public Relations, Government of Kerala, p38.

6. Perunna K.N. Nair, *Congress Movement in Kerala*, p129 and M.P. Manmathan, op. cit., pp307-309.

P.P. Ummer Koya was attracted to the Congress movement at a young age while he was a student. In 1949 he was unanimously elected to the Malabar District Board from Koduvally constituency.

In the election to the Parliament held in 1952, the K.P.C.C. fielded P.P. Ummer Koya as its candidate from the Kozhikode constituency. It was a time when a section of Congressmen under the leadership of Kelappan had resigned from the Congress Party and had joined the Kisan Mazdur Praja Party of Acharya Kripalani. In Malabar they had entered into an election understanding with the Communist Party also. With the result Ummer Koya was defeated by the K.M.P.P. candidate, K.A. Damodara Menon. In that election Congress could secure only one seat out of seven Parliamentary seats from Malabar.⁷

In 1953 elections were held to the Madras Legislative Council, P.P. Ummer Koya contested from Malabar District, which included South Canara also. He won the election and the party made him its chief whip.⁸ After the formation of Kerala State he had contested from the Manjeri constituency to the Kerala Assembly in 1957. After winning the election, he was made the Deputy Leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party. In 1960 he again contested from Manjeri Constituency and won the election and became the Minister for

7. Ibid., p133.

8. P. Damodaran, 'A Former Minister without any Masks', *Malayala Manorama*, 24 November, 1996.

Education and Sports in the Ministry headed by Pattom Thanu Pillai.⁹ When Pattom was made the Governor of Punjab, he abdicated and R. Sanker became the Chief Minister. Under him also Ummer Koya continued to function as a Minister, by changing the portfolio to Public Works and Electricity Departments.¹⁰

A. A. Rahim was a prominent leader of the Congress in the post-independence period. Like many in those days he also entered politics as a student leader. He was the Union Chairman of Travancore University. In 1954 he was elected to the Travancore-Cochin Assembly from Karunagapally and became a minister in the ministry led by Panampilly Govinda Menon. After the formation of Kerala State, he was elected to the Kerala Assembly from 1957 onwards continuously five times.¹¹

Another leader who came to Congress through student politics and became a top-level politician was T.O. Bava. In 1952 he contested to the Travancore-Cochin Assembly from Aluva constituency, but was defeated by M.M. Khadar of the Communist Party. Again in 1954 they fought each other from the same constituency in which T.O. Bava came out victorious.¹² In 1957 and 1960 he was again elected from the Aluva Constituency to the Kerala

9. *Ibid.*

10. *Ibid.*

11. Cherian Philip, *The Row of Leaders* (Mal.), p336.

12. V.R. Vijayaram, 'Blessed Life', *Kerala Kaumudi*, 11 August, 1997.

Assembly. In 1963 he became the General Secretary of the K.P.C.C. and in 1967 he became the President of the K.P.C.C. It was during his tenure as the President of the K.P.C.C. that split broke out in the party on all-India basis in 1969 between the groups led by Indira Gandhi and Nijalingappa.¹³ Till 1971 he was the President of the K.P.C.C. During the second term of E.M.S. Namboodiripad as Chief Minister, he conducted a *padayatra* from Kasargode to Trivandrum with a view to rouse the feelings of the people against the E.M.S. Ministry.¹⁴ It is to be noted that corruption charges brought out by him in the Kerala Assembly had later culminated into 'Liberation Struggle' against the E.M.S. Ministry which ultimately resulted in the ouster of the ministry and the imposition of President's rule in the state.

Among the women folk only a few had entered the political field. It would be the least as far as Muslim women were concerned. In this context the rise of A. Nafeesath Beevi to prominence deserves mention. She belonged to a noble Muslim family of Quilon. She was born in Krishnapuram, a place near Mavelikkara. After completing her graduation and legal studies she started her career as an advocate.

Later she entered politics and became a member of Travancore-Cochin Congress. Very soon she became a member of K.P.C.C. and A.I.C.C. In 1957

13. Cherian Philip, *op. cit.*, p202.

14. V.R. Vijayaram, *loc. cit.*

she made her debut in the election arena by filing nomination as Congress candidate from Alleppey. But she lost to the veteran Communist Leader T.V. Thomas to 4500 votes. In the 1960 election to the Kerala Assembly, however, Nafeesath Beevi captured the Alleppey seat by defeating T.V. Thomas. Not only that she was elected as Deputy Speaker of the Assembly also. In 1967 the party asked her to contest from the Manjeri Parliamentary constituency, a strong hold of the Muslim League where Ismail Sahib, President of the Indian Union Muslim League, was contesting. Nafeesath Beevi got 91,238 votes (31.5%) whereas Ismail Sahib received 1,98,732 (68.5%) votes.¹⁵ Again in 1979 she had contested from Vamanapuram Constituency to the Kerala Assembly, but was defeated. Then she concentrated her attention on social and women's welfare activities.

In the organizational level as well as in the ministerial level the presence of Muslims dwindled compared with other communities. In the party level the K.P.C.C. had four Muslim Presidents, namely, Hassan Koya Molla, Muhammad Abdurahiman, P.K. Moideen Kutty and T.O. Bava, Hassan Koya Molla was elected the President of the K.P.C.C. on an emergency situation in July 1930, when K.Madhavan Nair, then the President of the K.P.C.C. was arrested in connection with the Civil Disobedience Movement.¹⁶ When the Left

15. V.B. Singh and Shankar Bose, *Elections in India, Data Handbook on Lok Sabha Elections*, 2nd edn., p218.

16. A.K. Pillai, *Congress and Kerala*, p154.

wing of the Congress and the nationalist Muslims joined hands in 1938, Abdurahiman was elected the President of the K.P.C.C. In 1939 and 1940 also he was elected to that exalted office. In 1942 while the top leaders of the Congress were put to prison with the commencement of the Second World War, the Right wing of the Congress elected P.K. Moideen Kutty as President of the K.P.C.C.¹⁷ After Independence, T.O. Bava was the only Muslim to achieve the highest office in the K.P.C.C. K.A. Ibrahim and T.O. Bava had become the General Secretaries of the K.P.C.C.

Among the six ministries, starting from Pattom Thanu Pillai Ministry of 1948 till R.Sankar Ministry of 1962, no Muslim Congress man got any chance to become the Chief Minister of the state or opposition leader of the assembly. In the ministerial level also Muslims did not get their due representation. In the first Travancore-Cochin Ministry headed by T.K. Narayana Pillai, T.A. Abdulla became a minister for a short period. Then in 1955 in the Panampilly Ministry A.A. Rahim was appointed as Minister for Health. P.P. Ummer Koya was fortunate in getting an office in the Ministry headed by Pattom Thanu Pillai in 1960 as Minister for Education and with the change in the Chief Ministership to R. Sankar, he was also included in the Ministry as Minister for Public works.

17. Perunna K.N. Nair, *op. cit.*, p101.

No Muslim Congressman had ever become the Speaker of the Assembly. A. Nafeesath Beevi got a chance to become the Deputy Speaker of the Kerala Assembly in 1960 and had been in office till 1964.

Though a large section of Muslims had become members in the Congress party, only a few had been given ticket to contest to the Assembly or to the Parliament. Lack of popular, charismatic persons among the Muslim Congressmen also might have been a reason for their inadequate representation in the Assemblies. In the first election to the Travancore-Cochin Legislative Assembly, in 1951 the Congress party had fielded 97 candidates, of which only six were Muslims. They were A.A. Rahim (Quilon Constituency) Bava Sahib (Pathanapuram), Pareed Rawther (Omallur), K.P. Muhammad Shareef (Alleppey), T.O. Bava (Alwaye) and Kunju Moideen (Kodungallur). Among them the only successful candidate was Pareed Rawther. All the other candidates secured second place in the election.¹⁸ A member of the Travancore Tamil Nadu Congress, a separate organization but affiliated to the Indian National Congress fielded one N.A. Noor Muhammad from Kalkulam constituency and won the election.¹⁹

In the election to the Madras Assembly held in 1952, Congress had fielded four Muslim candidates, namely, K. Ahmed Kutty (Tirur Constituency),

18. *Assembly Elections since 1951*, Department of Public relations, Government of Kerla, pp16-32.

19. *Ibid.*

P.K. Moideen Kutty (Trithala), A.P. Muhammad (Perintalmanna) and K.A. Ibrahim (Malappuram). But all of them were defeated. It is to be noted that though three of them had contested from Muslim majority areas, they failed to get through in the election. In all these they lost to the League candidates whereas at Trithala, a Socialist candidate was successful. It was a clear indicator that Congress was losing its influence among the Muslims while Muslim League was gaining strength in Malabar.

In Travancore-Cochin, where the State Muslim League had stopped their activities and merged with the Congress the condition of Muslims was a bit better. For instance in the election to the Travancore-Cochin Assembly held in 1954, the party had fielded seven candidates, namely, K.P. Alikunju (Nedumangadu), K. Shahul Hameed (Varkala), A.A. Rahim (Karunagappally), K.A. Muhammad (Chadayamangalam), T.A. Abdulla (Alleppey-II), T.O. Bava (Alwaye) and Abdul Khadar (Kodungallur). Among them three won the election. The successful candidates were T.O. Bava, Abdul Khadar and A.A. Rahim. N. A. Noor Muhammad (Padmanabhapuram), fielded by Travancore Tamil Nadu Congress also was among the successful candidates.²⁰

In the first election to the Kerala Assembly held in 1957, Congress contested in 124 seats of which 17 were Muslim Congressmen, but only three came out successful. They are P.P. Ummer Koya (Manjeri), T.O. Bava (Alwaye)

20. *Ibid.*, pp32-38.

and A.A Rahim (Quilon). Prominent among the defeated candidates were P.K. Moideen Kutty (Kuttipuram), A.Sunna Sahib (Chittoor), Assanarkutty (Tanur) and Nafeesath Beevi (Alleppey). In Malabar though P.P. Ummer Koya was successful in the election, in other constituencies, the trend of 1952 election continued. In the Lok Sabha elections held in the same year the party fielded two Muslim candidates, but both of them were defeated. The candidates were K.P.M. Shareef (Ambalapuzha) and P. Kunhikoya (Manjeri).²¹

The election statistics of 1957 clearly shows that except Muslim Community all other major communities of Kerala had cast their votes only on communal lines. The following table will reveal this fact.

Community	Percentage of Seats Won	Percentage of Population
Hindus	61.0	69.8
Christians	21.3	20.6
Muslims	17.7	9.6
Total	100.00	100.00

In the interim election to the Kerala Assembly held in 1960 Congress party made an alliance with the Praja Socialist Party and the Muslim League.

21. V.B. Sing and Shankar Bose, *op. cit.*, pp277-280.

So they improved their result by registering 5,82,044 votes more and capturing 20 seats more. The Congress contested in 80 seats and won 63 seats. Eight Muslim candidates contested in which six came out successful. The victors included A.A. Rahim (Quilon), Shamsudheen (Varkala), Nafeesath Beevi (Alleppey), P.K. Abdul Khadar (Kodungallur), T.O. Bava (Alwaye) and P.P. Ummer Koya (Manjeri).²²

In the election to the Lok Sabha held in 1962, out of 18 seats the party put up, there was only one Muslim candidate, namely, Shahul Hameed (Chirayinkil), but he was defeated.²³

In the election to the Kerala Assembly in 1965, the Congress contested alone and secured 36 seats out of 133 seats they contested. Though the party put 14 Muslim candidates only four came out successful. They are A.A. Rahim (Iravipuram), K. Shahul Hameed (Varkala), V.P. Marakkar (Alwaye) and K.C.M. Methar (Kodungallur).²⁴ It is to be noted that all these successful candidates came out from Muslim pockets of Travancore-Cochin areas. Though the party fielded Muslim candidates in Muslim majority areas of Malabar, none of them came out successful. In Malappuram and Kuttippuram constituencies, the Congress got only third position. In other Muslim majority constituencies also the Congress candidates were defeated with bigger margins.

22. *Assembly Elections since 1951*, Department of Public Relations, Government of Kerala, pp76-94.

23. V. B. Singh and Shankar Bose, *op. cit.*, pp277-280.

24. *Assembly Elections since 1951*, pp95-121.

In the 1967 election to the Kerala Assembly the left parties like CPI (M), CPI, RSP, Samyukta Socialist Party, etc. joined together and formed a United Front and extended it by including the Muslim League and the Kerala Congress in it. The Congress fought alone and fielded its own candidates in all the 133 seats but could secure only nine seats. This time the party fielded ten Muslim candidates, but all of them were defeated.²⁵

In the Parliament elections held in the same year, the party fielded three Muslim candidates, namely, T.M. Abdulla (Tellicherry), A. Nafeesath Beevi (Manjeri) and A.A. Rahim (Quilon) but all of them were defeated.²⁶

When we analyze things we can understand that the estrangement of the Muslim Community with the Congress was not a sudden development but a process that had started years back in nineteen-forties. The unfortunate and sorrowful experiences of Abdurahiman Sahib in the party, the fate of T.A. Abdulla in the Congress, etc. had made even the Nationalist Muslims think against the Congress. Moreover, against the back-drop of the Congress forming an alliance with the coalition parties including the Muslim League and winning the election with the crucial support of the Muslim League without its being given a berth in the Cabinet, and of the further political development of the post of Speakership being filled by the League nominee

25. *Ibid.*, pp122-145.

26. V.B. Singh and Shankar Bose, *op. cit.*, p227-280.

C.H. Muhammed Koya against the vacancy created by the death of Seethi Sahib, the stand taken by the Congress in 1961 insisting upon Muhammed Koya's quitting the Party before taking charge as Speaker created disaffection in the minds of Muslims towards the Congress. This disaffection is conspicuously reflected in the results of 1965 and 1967 Assembly elections.

CHAPTER VII
THE ROLE OF MUSLIMS IN THE SOCIALIST AND
THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENTS

Though political parties based on the ideologies of Socialism and Communalism appeared in Kerala late in nineteen thirties only, quite a large section of Keralites were aware of these ideologies even earlier through booklets and articles published in newspapers. Swadeshabhimani K. Ramakrishna Pillai brought out a biography of Karl Marx in 1912, which is said to be the first of its kind published in any Indian language.¹ He had also published a series of articles on Socialism and Communist Manifesto in '*The Atmaposhini*' monthly published from Kunnamkulam. In those articles he had elaborated the basic principles of Marxian socialism in simple but lucid language.² The successful experiment of communist ideology in Russia with the October Revolution of 1917 also had created an impact on the intelligentsia, especially the youngsters. The articles appeared in the *Mathrubhumi*, *Swadeshabhimani*, *Sahadaran*, *Mitavadi*, *Yuktivadi* etc. expressing warm praise of the soviet experiments attracted the youngsters to the socialistic ideology.³

The social reform movements like *Sri Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam* (1903), *Catholic Mahajana Sabha* (1905) *Sadhu Jana Paripalana Yogam* (1907),

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1. T.J. Nossiter, *Communism in Kerala*, p95 fn.
 2. N.E. Balaram, *Communist Movement of Kerala*, Vol I, (Mal); p48.
 3. *Ibid*, p49.

Yogakshema Sabha (1909), *Nair Service Society* (1914), *Muslim Mahajana Sabha* (1920), *Kerala Muslim Aikya Sanghom* (1922) etc which were very active during the first quarter of the 20th Century created a congenial atmosphere in Kerala conducive to the work of the progressive groups by providing an intellectual awakening in almost all communities by their social reform activities. The newspapers and periodicals with progressive outlook such as *Sahodaran* published by Ayyappan, *Kesari* edited by Balakrishna Pillai, *Karshaka Tozhilali* published by KM Ibrahim etc published news and articles supporting socialist ideology and Russian experiments which tend to promote thinking on socialistic line among the intelligentsia of Kerala.⁴ Consequently, industrial labourers and agricultural workers began to organize themselves with a view to promoting the interests of labourers in different sectors and thereby various trade unions germinated.

TRADE UNION MOVEMENTS

The first known Trade Union in Kerala constituted on 31st March 1922 in the industrial belt of Alleppey was known as the Travancore Labour Association.⁵ The founder of this movement was Vadappuram Bava alias P.K.Bava, a young Muslim who was the Yard Superintendent of the Empire

4. *Ibid*, p53.

5. E. Balanandan, 'Political History of the Trade Union Movement in Kerala', *Chinta Weekly, Silver Jubilee Volume*, (Mal.), 1988, p47.

Coir Works of Alleppey.⁶ In the first meeting of the Association presided over by PS Muhammad, some four hundred workers participated. The meeting elected MK Antony as President and PK Bava as Secretary. A seven member executive committee was also constituted. Originally they had adopted the name 'Labour Union', but three months later they changed the name into 'Labour Association'.⁷

Every year, annual conference of the Association was held at Alleppey. The fourth annual conference of the Association was held at Alleppey on 3 June 1928. In one of the resolutions passed by the Conference, it appealed to the Government to nominate a worker's representative to the Legislative Assembly. It was decided to send a delegation of member's deputation consisting of PK Bava, PS Muhammad and PK Madhavan to meet the Government authorities. At the session, Sri.PS Muhammad was elected as the new President while PK Bava was again elected as the Secretary.⁸

When the list of nominated members to the Assembly was released by the Government, the labourers felt aggrieved as no representation was given to them in the list. But the Government made a strategic move by nominating PS Muhammad, the President of the Labour Association, as a representative of

6. Lakshmidharan, 'History of Trade Unionism in Kerala since 1947', unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Calicut, 1988, p9.

7. R Prakasam (ed.), *History of Trade Union Movement in Kerala* (Mal), pp32-33.

8. K.C. Govindan, *Memories of an Early Trade Unionist*, p31.

the Muslim community. Even so, Sri. PS Muhammad strongly advocated the cause of labourers and cleverly defeated the move of the representatives of the factory owners to introduce a bill declaring strikes as illegal.⁹

PS Muhammad was the President of the Labour Association till 1935, though a section of the members of the Association had stood off alleging that he acted more as a representative of the Muslim community, than that of the Association both in the Assembly as well as outside. Subsequently on 3rd June, 1935 PK Kunju was elected as the new President of the Association.¹⁰

Soon after taking charge as President of the Labour Association, PK Kunju along with other leaders of the Association called on Diwan Habibullah and submitted a memorandum demanding the expeditious introduction of a comprehensive labour bill and nomination of worker's representatives to the Assembly.¹¹

Notwithstanding the election of the new President of the labour union, the Government decided to nominate Sri. P.S. Muhammad to the Assembly that year also. Then a joint deputation consisting of the representatives of the Travancore Labour Association, Quilon Labour Union and *Navika Tozhilali Sanghom* met the Dewan and expressed their disapproval of the nomination of

9. *Ibid*, pp31-32.

10. *Ibid*, p49.

11. *Ibid*, p51.

PS Muhammad submitting a memorandum. But the government did not give way.

Meanwhile, after quitting the Labour Association PS Muhammad formed the Alleppey Labour Union with the support of ML Janardhanan Pillai, KC Karunakaran and others.¹² But due to strong opposition from other sections of labourers it did not last long.

The Labour Association was registered under the provisions of the Trade Union Act in 1938. Later it assumed the name Travancore Coir Factory Workers Union.¹³ By the beginning of 1938 the condition of workers became miserable due to decline in wages. Many causes were being attributed to this phenomenon. There was world wide economic depression in the nineteen thirties resulting in deflation and decrease in wages. Due to appallingly lower wages to agricultural labourers, they opted for factory employment, which offered comparatively better benefits to workers. The competition between the labourers for getting work ultimately resulted in reduction of wages. Another reason for reduction of wages was the competition between the factory owners for getting orders from foreign markets. In order to get more orders they resorted to under quote the prices, which also affected the labourers in the form of wage cuts.¹⁴

12. K.C. Govindan, 'Travancore Labour Association', *Kerala History* Vol. 2, (Mal) p212.

13. R. Prakasam, *op cit*, p99.

14. D. Jayadeva Das, *Working Class Politics in Kerala*, p149.

An emergency meeting of the coir factory workers was convened by the Union in March, 1938 at Alleppey in which a resolution was passed to organize a general strike of coir workers. The Government decided to put down the strike by arresting the Union leaders including P.K. Kunju. In protest against these arrests the coir workers of Alleppey struck work and observed one-day *hartal* in the town. The striking workers then gathered before the police station and demanded their leader's release. The police violently lathicharged the crowd which resulted in the death of one Bava, a labourer who became the first martyr in Kerala for the cause of the labourers in their fight for asserting their rights.¹⁵ Since then as a precautionary measure the Government banned all processions and public meetings in Quilon district for a period of one month.¹⁶ The striking labourers proceeded to Kanhikuzhi, a place in Kottayam district and conducted a protest meeting there.¹⁷

Being the first organization of the labourers, the Travancore Labour Association with its leaders like PK Bava, PS Muhammad, PK Kunju, KC Govindan and others have done a tremendous job in the history of the trade union movement of Kerala. Though its activities were limited to the coir workers of Alleppey, the demands raised by them through resolutions on many occasions had brought many benefits for the labour class in general. Some of their demands were the following:

15. R. Prakasam, *op cit*, p100.

16. P Krishna Pillai, *O! Comrades, Advance*, vol II (Mal), p358.

17. *Ibid*, p359.

- a) Representation should be given to the labourers in the Legislative Assembly like the planters and landlords.
- b) Primary education should be made compulsory.
- c) Untouchability should be banned by a royal decree.
- d) As in educational institutions, medical tests should be conducted in factories also.
- e) A Welfare fund should be arranged for the old and the disabled.
- f) Universal adult franchise is to be introduced.¹⁸

It is evident that all these demands are progressive in nature. It is also noteworthy that they had published a weekly journal for the benefit of the labourers called *Thozhilali* at a fairly early period of 1925.¹⁹ P.K. Kunju had thought of developing it into a full fledged daily news paper.²⁰ His ideas did not bear fruit. However it emerged as an important mouth-piece of the working class all over Travancore.

The Cochin Labour Union came into existence in February 1933. They had concentrated their attention on the various problems related to the labourers. Leaders of Agricultural Labour union like KM Ibrahim, KM Kunju Moideen et al had shown interest in their activities.²¹

18. E. Balanandan, *loc. Cit*, p47.

19. *Ibid*

20. K.C. Govindan, *op cit*, p53.

21. C. Unni Raja, 'Cochin Labour Union', *Kerala History*, vol II, (Mal), p229.

Two other organizations of the industrial labourers, which were founded during this period, were the Travancore Mineral Workers Union of Chavara (1938) and the Tata Oil Mills Worker's Union of Cochin (1938). KA Muhammad was the Vice President of the Mineral Worker's Union.²² C.P. Ummer was one of the important organizer of the Tata Oil Mills Worker's Union.²³

Other important trade unions of Cochin were the Port Cargo Labour Union and *Kochi Turamugha Tozhilali Union*. TM Abu was the Secretary of the former while AA Kochunni was the Secretary of the latter. When the leaders of these unions were arrested in 1953 by the Travancore-Cochin Government in connection with a labour dispute, the infuriated mob marched to the police station demanding the release of the arrested leaders. Thereupon, police fired upon the people, which resulted in the death of two labourers namely Said and Saidali. Several others were severely injured following the police firing.²⁴

In the Cochin Assembly VK Kutty was the first nominated member to represent the labourers. Thanks to his efforts the Cochin Assembly had taken measures limiting the working hours of the labourers to eight hours a day.²⁵ KM Ibrahim was also a strong member of the Cochin Assembly who had raised his voice for the cause of the toiling masses.

22. K.C. Govindan, *op cit*, p67.

23. K.C. Govindan, *Kerala History*, Vol II, (Mal), p239.

24. R. Prakasam (ed.), *op cit*, p256.

25. *Ibid*, pp 78-79.

PEASANT MOVEMENTS

A decade after the formation of labour unions, peasant movements began to organize the measures in Kerala. The most prominent among them was a movement established by K.M. Ibrahim called *Karshaka Thozhilali Prasthanam* in 1932. The other important leaders of the movement were K.M. Kunhi Moideen and Mathai Manjooran. The movement, which was originated in Eriyad, soon spread to the other parts of Kodungallur Taluk and to Mukundapuram and Kanayannur Taluks.²⁶

KM Ibrahim and KM Kunhi Moideen were the younger brothers of KM Seethi Sahib. KM Ibrahim had completed his graduation from Aligarh Muslim University. Even as a student he was attracted to the socialist ideology and after his studies he turned his attention to the causes of the peasants.

The condition of the peasants and labourers was miserable throughout the world in the early thirties on account of world wide economic depression. Due to the Great Depression of 1930 prices of agricultural commodities like coconut and paddy declined which affected the farmers adversely. Those who had taken loan from moneylenders found it very difficult to repay the money, which resulted in the confiscation of their properties. A large number of cultivators who fell in debt had lost their lands.²⁷

26. E. Gopalakrishna Menon, *Freedom Struggle in Cochin State*, p132.

27. *Ibid.*

In Kodungallur majority of the farmers belonged to the Muslim community while most of the moneylenders were Tamil Brahmins. It was this situation, which prompted KM Ibrahim and others to start an organization to work for the cause of peasants. It should be observed that though their organization is referred to as *Karshaka Thozhilali Prasthanam* they were not concerned with the issues and problems of the farmers only.²⁸

In this connection, the organization decided to hold a meeting at Eriyad in November 1932 to explain the schemes and programmes of the movement to the people, but the Cochin Government, unfortunately enough banned the meeting. However, violating the ban order, they conducted the meeting as scheduled. The top leaders of the movement including Ibrahim and hundreds of others were arrested by the authorities.²⁹

The arrest of the leaders stirred up mass agitations. The members of the movement decided to conduct a satyagraha in front of the residence of the Dewan to draw the attention of the authorities to the problems faced by the peasants and to get their arrested leaders released from prison. It was a time when the viceroy Lord Irwin had scheduled to visit Cochin. A big procession was organized under the leadership of Kunhi Moideen and Mathai Manjooran.³⁰ They raised slogans demanding the release of their fellowmen and relief for

28. *Ibid.*

29. Prajamandalam Committee, *Cochin State Praja Mandal* (Mal), p53.

30. E. Gopalakrishna Menon, *op cit*, p133.

the farmers. The Police lathicharged the processionists and many of them were arrested. It brought about countrywide protest and created tension throughout Cochin State. The Government was compelled to appoint an enquiry commission under P Kumaran Ezhuthassan to enquire about the circumstances that led to the lathi charge.

The enquiry commission in its report reprimanded the police for its atrocities. When the findings of the report were discussed in the Assembly the members severely criticized the Government. Finally the Government yielded to the demands of the peasant movement. A moratorium on debt was declared and the Government informed its decision to appoint a committee to enquire into and report on the relief measures to be taken by the Government on the agricultural liabilities of the peasants in the state. The Economic Depression Relief Enquiry Committee on this basis, in 1938 recommended establishment of a Land Mortgage Bank to advance loans to the agriculturists.³¹

It was mainly due to the efforts of KM Ibrahim and other leaders of the *Karshaka Thozhilali Prasthanam* that several enactments were passed by the Cochin Legislative Assembly for the benefit of the peasants. *The Karshaka*

31. C.Balan, 'Peasant Consciousness and mobilization : A case study of Peasant Movement in Cochin', *Proceedings of the International Congress on Kerala Studies*, vol III, 1994, p61.

Thozhilali was a periodical published by the *Karshaka Thozhilali Prasthanam* from Mattanchery.³²

In the election to the Cochin Assembly held in 1934 both KM Ibrahim and KM Kunhi Moideen were elected from the constituencies of Kodungallur and Kattoor respectively with big margin. It testifies to the people's trust in and regard for them due to their active participation in the peasant agitations.³³ C.Achyuta Menon, a prominent communist leader, referring to the Debt Relief Act enacted by the Rajaji Ministry in 1937 observed that, the peasant movement led by KM Ibrahim had got it passed years before in the Cochin Assembly from an autocratic Maharaja without the backing of any all India organization like the congress.³⁴

In spite of its various achievements the movement gradually weakened and disappeared from the scene mainly because like Ibrahim and Kunhi Moideen the leaders of the movements later abstained themselves from its activities. More over, this movement had no political backing from any organization. When the *Karshaka Tozhilali Prasthanam* ceased its activities, *Cochin Karshaka Sabha*, *Karshaka Sanghom* etc. came forward taking up the cause of the peasants.

32. C. Unni Raja, *Kerala History*, vol II (Mal), p165.

33. C. Achyuta Menon, *Social and Political Essays* (Mal), pp53-54.

34. C. Achyuta Menon, *Pages of Memory* (Mal), p93.

CONGRESS SOCIALIST PARTY

By the end of nineteen twenties a leftist wing emerged within the Congress Party on national level under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhash Chandra Bose. They opposed imperialism, capitalism and landlordism. A section of young students also got attracted to their line of thinking. The example of the Russian Revolution had aroused interest among many young nationalists. Many of them were dissatisfied with Gandhian political ideas and programmes and turned to socialist ideology for guidance. In 1925, the Communist Party came into existence. Many peasant parties were founded in different parts of the country by this time. In the agitation against Simon commission also a large section of workers participated in cities like Bombay and Calcutta. In Uttar Pradesh the peasants organized a 'No Tax Campaign'. Large number of people came out in rebellion in places like Peshawar, Chittagong, Sholapur etc. It was the time when the Second Civil Disobedience agitation was at its peak. All on a sudden Gandhiji suspended the movement in May 1933. Being desperate a section of young congressmen decided to form the Congress Socialist Party.

At this time in Kerala also a discussion was going on among the Congressmen on the question of forming a forum of socialist minded people. The congenial atmosphere for it was created by a series of articles published in the *Mathrubhumi* Daily written by Pandit Nehru named 'whither India'

supporting the socialist ideology.³⁵ Through the contacts between the congress men and some of the accused in the Lahore conspiracy case, Meerut conspiracy case etc. and due to the contact with persons belonging to some of the Bengali radical groups in jail, some Congress men began to show a leaning towards the socialist ideology.

A formal conference of socialist minded congressmen was held at Calicut on 12 May, 1934 under the chairmanship of K. Kelappan. The conference adopted a resolution which said that 'an organization named Congress socialist party should be formed'. The meeting elected CK Govindan Nair as President, P.Krishna Pillai as Secretary and five others including EMS Namboodiripad as members.³⁶

As in other parts of India, the Congress Socialist Party worked within the Congress Party as a strong leftist group in Kerala also. Many of the Congress workers who were active in the Civil Disobedience Movement joined the Congress Socialist Party. The Left Wing dominated by the socialists led the agitations of workers and peasants. They organized the working class, peasants, students, youth and the intellectuals. In 1935 they organized a Kerala labour conference along with the conference of the Kerala Socialist Party at Calicut.³⁷ In the same year in the seventh Kerala Provincial Political

35. N.E. Balaram, *Communist Movement in Kerala*, vol I (Mal), p70.

36. *The Mathrubhumi Daily*, 15 May, 1934.

37. N.E. Balaram, *op cit*, p80.

Conference held at Calicut , due to pressure by the leftist group, resolutions were adopted supporting the cause of peasants and labourers.³⁸ In 1935 they started a newspaper called the 'Prabhatham' from Shornur. It published news and articles supporting the cause of socialist ideology. In 1936 they organized the students of Calicut under the banner of Calicut Student's Union.³⁹ In the same year some Muslim students of Calicut who were the workers of 'Vidya Kusumam' magazine joined the Calicut Student's Union and became its active workers. The school teachers were also united under the banner of Aided Elementary School Teachers Union.⁴⁰ Likewise a forum of left minded, revolutionary writers was formed at Trichur in 1937 by the name 'Jeeval Sahitya Sanghom'. Later in 1944 its name was changed to 'Purogamana Sahitya Sanghatana'. They produced many plays with revolutionary theme which helped a good deal for the growth of trade union and peasant movements.⁴¹

With the help of these organizations the Leftists strengthened their mass base and increased their influence within the Congress. Those Congressmen who continued to profess faith in the efficacy of the Gandhian ideology of truth and non-violence in the fight for freedom came to be known as the Rightists. At the same time a third group emerged within the Congress Party under the

38. Victor M Fic, *Kerala, Yenan of India*, p16.

39. C. Bhaskaran, 'Student Movement in Kerala' in *Chintha Silver Jubilee Special*, 1988, p95.

40. K. Damodaran, *Freedom Struggle in Kerala* (Mal), p52.

41. E.M.S. Namboodiripad, *Autobiography* (Mal) p310.

leadership of Muhammad Abdurahiman Sahib and Moidu Moulavi known as the Nationalist Muslims. They made common cause with the Leftists against the Gandhian or Rightist group. In course of time, the K.P.C.C was captured by the Leftist group. In the election to the K.P.C.C held from 1938 to 1940, the candidates put forward by the Leftist-Nationalist Muslim alliance won all the seats. Thus Nationalist Muslim leader Abdurahiman Sahib was elected as President of the K.P.C.C consecutively from 1938 to 1940. EMS Namboodiripad, the leader of the Leftists was elected as Secretary of the K.P.C.C. in 1938 and 1939. In 1940 another Left candidate P. Narayanan Nair became the Secretary of the K.P.C.C.

Under the leadership of Leftist K.P.C.C office bearers, the strength of the party increased. Congress Committees were established in every village in Malabar. These committees were directed to set up reading rooms and night schools and to maintain black boards outside the office exhibiting the important news of the day. Through such measures they were able to create political sense and political consciousness among the ordinary members of the Congress.⁴² The left led K.P.C.C (1938-39) also started a volunteer corps its own. They also arranged summer schools to give training to volunteer officers. In these schools classes were conducted on subject like Indian History, World History, Political Science, Principles of Economics etc.⁴³ In this way K.P.C.C

42. E.M.S. Namboodiripad, *Kerala, the Mother Land of Malayalees*, (Mal) p346.

43. *Ibid*, p348.

was able to bring together 5000 full time workers for the party. The total number of Congress membership also rose from a few thousands in 1936 to about 70000 in 1938 in Calicut⁴⁴ alone. Among them a good number belonged to the labour class, peasants, petty shopkeepers or elementary school teachers. Surprisingly many of them had become the office bearers of the party.⁴⁵

The friendship between the Leftists and the Nationalist Muslim group revived Congress activities in the Ernad, Valluvanad and Ponnani Taluks. For, after 1921 Rebellion, people of these regions, especially the majority Mappila folk, had kept away from active political activities. Now not only the Mappilas of the above mentioned region but even those Muslims who were staying outside the Mappila zone began to show keen interest in the activities of the Congress. The visit of Muslim leaders like Sayyid Brelvi, editor of the 'Bombay Chronicle', Yusuf Meharali, an executive member of the All India Socialist Party, Ameer Hyder Khan, a young revolutionary of Andhra Pradesh, et al had helped in creating a pro left line of thinking among the Mappilas of Malabar.⁴⁶ In Malabar at that time the muslim nobles with titles like "Khan Saheb" or 'Khan Bahadur" had been following a pro – British and anti Congress attitude. Naturally they were hostile to Abdurahiman Sahib and his followers and were friendly with the Muslim Leaguers. So the speeches made by Yusuf Meharali

44. T.J. Nossiter, *Communism in Kerala*, p75.

45. E.M.S. Namboodiripad, *op cit*, p348.

46. E.M.S. Namboodiripad, *Autobiography* (Mal) p338.

in Malabar, vehemently criticizing the attitude of the pro-British Muslim nobles and the Madras Government who were giving protection to such men, had helped in creating a good impression about the socialists in the minds of the Nationalist Muslims.⁴⁷

The solid relationship between the Leftists and the Nationalist Muslims strengthened the Congress Party also. Under their leadership they conducted political conferences at district, taluk and provincial levels. Among them the Eighth, Ninth and Tenth All Kerala Provincial Political Conferences which were conducted at Calicut (1938), Bakkalam (1939) and Parappur (1940) deserve special mention with regard to the size, number of delegates and representation of national leaders. In the Eighth Political Conference presided over by Jayaprakash Narayanan, a resolution was adopted which demanded removal of ban on the activities of the communist party. Moreover, the conference made a remarkable observation about the 1921 Rebellion by describing it as an agrarian revolt.⁴⁸ In the 9th Political Conference also a resolution was adopted favoring the Mappilas which demanded that the amount extracted from the Mappilas as collective fine during the 1921 Rebellion be set apart as Mappila Reconstruction Fund.⁴⁹

47. *Ibid*, p304.

48. Prasanth Mithran, *Socialist Movement in Kerala* (Mal), p60.

49. E.M.S. Namboodiripad, *op cit.*, pp182-183.

The contact with the socialists instilled in the minds of the Nationalist Muslim leaders regard for the cause of the peasants and the labourers. Abdurahiman Sahib became the President of the Calicut Teacher's Union and Malabar District Board Teacher's Union.⁵⁰ For a long time he was the President of Malabar Motor Worker's Union.⁵¹ When agricultural labourers of Kodungallur agitated under the leadership of K.M.Ibrahim and Cheriyam Manjooran, Abdurahiman Sahib also joined them and had gone to meet CG Herbert, the Dewan of Cochin, to discuss the problems with him as a representative of the agitators.⁵² Abdurahiman Sahib had also gone to Kalikavu and Karuvarakundu along with the Leftist leader H. Manjunadha Rao to organize the rubber plantation workers there.⁵³ It is to be borne in mind that Abdurahiman Sahib had done so not to solicit mere sympathy with issues related with the labourers and peasants but to get them enrolled in the freedom struggle against the British.

In 1939 the Second World War broke out and as a result several leaders including Abdurahiman Sahib were arrested and imprisoned. It resulted in the split of the Congress Party into two. The Rightists elected P.K. Moideen Kutty as President where as KT Kunhiraman Nambiar was elected as the President of

50. V.S. Keraleeyan, *Greatson of Kerala* (Mal), p221.

51. *Ibid*, p218.

52. *Ibid*, p215.

53. *Ibid*, p218.

the Leftist faction of the K.P.C.C.⁵⁴ Meanwhile the A.I.C.C had decided to start Individual Satyagraha in September, 1940 under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. But the K.P.C.C not satisfied with this decision exhorted its members to observe September 15 as Anti – Imperialist Day. There were meetings and demonstrations all over Malabar on that day which resulted in clashes between the people and the police. The police resorted to lathicharge and fire. The people retaliated by pelting stones at the police. It resulted in the death of a Sub Inspector at Morazha and two youths at Tellicherry. The Congress high command took serious note of the situation and appointed a commission headed by Dr. P. Subbarayan to enquire into the affairs of the organization in Malabar. As per the recommendations of the commission the K.P.C.C was dissolved and an ad hoc committee was constituted with RKL Nandkolyar from Bihar as President.⁵⁵

The Kerala Congress Socialist Party which had started functioning from 1934 at Calicut had altogether conducted 6 annual conferences, the last of which was held at Tellicherry on 16th, 17th and 18th of June 1939. From all over Kerala 170 delegates attended the meeting which was presided over by P.Narayanan Nair. The historic session of the party through a resolution decided to merge the party with the Communist Party of India which had started its activities secretly from 1937 onwards.⁵⁶

54. Perunna K.N. Nair, *Congress Movement in Kerala* (Mal), p101.

55. *Ibid*, p103.

56. Prasanth Mithran, *op cit*, p63.

The news about the merger was heard with shock by its national leaders including Jayaprakash Narayanan. The socialist with anti communist stand put pressure on Jayaprakash and at last in 1940 it was decided to expel the communists from the C.S.P.,⁵⁷ but in Malabar the majority had gone over to the Communist Party by this time.

FORWARD BLOC

In 1939 due to differences of opinion with Mahatma Gandhi, Subash Chandra Bose left the Congress and formed All India Forward Bloc. From Kerala, Abdurahiman Sahib was nominated as one of the members of its executive. He was chosen as the President of its Kerala unit⁵⁸ and was called by his followers 'Kerala Netaji'.

Soon units of the Forward Bloc were established throughout Malabar. A good number of nationalist Muslims and some leftist Hindus joined the new party. As there were no differences of opinion, in Malabar the followers of both the parties worked together and organized meetings, conferences and even processions.

When second world war broke out, the Communist and Forward Bloc leaders including Abdurahiman Sahib were arrested and imprisoned. So,

57. *Ibid*, p64.

58. S.K. Pottekat, *Muhammed Abdurahiman*, p641.

Abdurahiman Sahib and his new party did not get the opportunity to do anything concrete. Though Abdurahiman Sahib was an out-and-out antagonist of communist ideology and he exposed his resentment through his writings and speeches on many occasions. While he was in jail, a good number of Forward Bloc activists joined the Communist Party.⁵⁹ Thus the activities of the forward bloc had a natural end in Kerala.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA

Though the Communist Party of India was founded in 1925 at Kanpur, it took several years to reach Kerala. In Kerala the first Communist group was formed in 1931 by the name 'The Communist League', but its activities were restricted to in and around Trivandrum region. In other parts of Kerala the Communist minded people did not form any separate party, but worked within the Congress Party. It was only later in 1934 that they began to function as a separate group under the banner of Congress Socialist Party.

The Communist Party was formed in Malabar in 1937 with a four-member unexposed group consisting of P. Krishna Pillai, E.M.S. Namboodiripad, N.C. Shekhar and K. Damodaran.⁶⁰ By 1939, an overwhelming majority of the C.S.P. cadres had joined the Communist and

59. E.M.S. Namboodiripad, *Kerala, the Motherland of Malayalees*, p379.

60. E.M.S. Namboodiripad, 'The Growth of Communist Movement in Kerala', in *Chintha Siver Jubilee Special*, 1988, p39.

units were formed in all talukes. On May 1939, the cadres of C.S.P. met at Pinarayi and resolved to dissolve C.S.P. and form the Communist Party openly. Soon after with the outbreak of the World War fearing repression many of the cadres went underground. The Government had banned the party in 1934 and the ban was lifted in July 1942 due to the changed policy of the party after Russia's decision to join the war on 22 June, 1941.⁶¹

Immediately after the Pinarayi Conference, meetings of the leaders of workers of the Party were held at Cheruthuruthi and Ernakulam with a view to extending the activities of the party to Cochin and Travancore areas.⁶² Soon the party spread to the length and breadth of Kerala within a short span of time. The Party contested all the elections and had increased its strength after each election. But in 1964, it had faced a major crisis and had split up into two factions on all India basis. In Kerala, a major section of people sided with the stand taken by leaders like AK Gopalan, EMS Namboodiripad and others who had broken away from the Communist Party of India by forming an independent party called the Communist Party of India (Marxist). Among the Muslims also majority of the followers as well as leaders like EK Imbichi Bava, Sadhu P Ahamed Kutty, K.Kunhali and others had gone to the side of C.P.I.(M).

61. Victor M, Fic, *op cit*, p23.

62. N.E. Balaram, *op cit*, p247.

PRESENCE OF MUSLIMS IN THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT

The Muslim population of Kerala is concentrated in the erstwhile Malabar District. According to the census report of 1931 they constituted 30% of the population of Malabar.⁶³ Moreover they were treated as a backward community like the Thiyyas and Pulayas. Their literacy percentage was also very low. Consequently the majority of them were unaware of the developments going on in the world or about the rise of new ideologies like socialism or communism. Even those who knew about these did not go after them presuming that these new ideologies were sacrilegious or against the tenets of Islam.

The close relationship between the leftists and the Muslims within the Congress from 1934 onwards changed the whole picture. With the support of the Muslims, the leftists captured the K.P.C.C. Muslims in turn were able to become the office bearers of the party and were able to send members to the District Board and to the Legislative Assembly with the support of the Leftists. This relationship continued even after the formation of Forward Bloc under the leadership of Nationalist Muslims. It is to be noted that at a time when in other parts of India the relationship between the followers of Forward Bloc and Communists was strained in Malabar their relationship was cordial.⁶⁴

63. Census of India, 1931, Madras, Vol XIV

64. E.M.S. Namboodiripad, *Kerala the Motherland of Malayalees*, (Mal), p379.

The Muslims of Malabar got attracted to the socialist and communist ideologies due to the following factors.

1. The systematic and disciplined style of functioning of the party, their critical approach, pressure for change, exciting call to create a new world etc. attracted some mappilas to communism.
2. Due to the close association with the Communist leaders in jail, many prominent personalities like Messrs A. Mohamed Koya (Appa Koya), Nadukandi Mohamed Koya, KP Mohammed Koya, Mohammed Yusuf, Koya Kunhi Naha; EK Imbichi Bava et al. were converted to communism. An exception to this was the case of the Muslim League leader K.K. Abu who came in touch with the Communist leaders in jail, but he never turned communist even as he was an active worker and later leader of the Socialist Party.⁶⁵
3. The students and educated people turned communists by reading books and articles. At Calicut, the Communist leader P.Krishna Pillai had made good contact with the student community and had conducted study classes to the students. The Calicut Students' Union was the only organization of the students which later merged with the All India Students' Federation. The Students' Federation was controlled by the communists. E.K. Imbichi Bava, K.P. Mohamed Koya, K. Ali Koya, N. Ahamed Koya,

65. K.K. Abu, 'Turning Points', *Chandrika Weekly*, 14 September, 1996, p22.

P.A. Mohamed Koya *et. al.* were the prominent workers of the students' Federation in Malabar.

4. The unemployment problem, poverty, starvation, price hike, exploitation of poor by the upper class and other social evils had worried and annoyed the common people. The Communists won over the people by promising a quick relief from all these problems by launching an era of social justice by redistributing the land, by creating more job opportunities and by rising the wages of workers.
5. It was a time when there was widespread illiteracy, and the people especially the Mappilas were steeped in conservatism and superstitious beliefs. Majority of the religious heads and scholars instead of opposing these evils favoured and fostered them. At the same time the Communist leaders stood against them and had created an impression that they are rational and progressive in their approach and thereby some educated Muslims had become Communists.⁶⁶
6. Like the Kerala People's Arts Club (K.P.A.C.) of Kayamkulam which had helped the Communist movement by staging many revolutionary dramas, in Nilambur a *Yuvajana Kala Samithi* and in Areacode a *Yuvajana Sanghom* had promoted the Communist movement in a bigger way through the medium of art. Nilambur Balan, Nilambur Aysha, M. Usman,

66. Basheer Randathani, 'From Denial to Conviction', *Chandrika Weekly*, p14.

K. Kunhali, K. Saidalavi and others were connected with the activities of the youth and arts clubs.⁶⁷ *'Ijj Nalloru Mansanakan Nokku'* written by E.K. Ayamu, *'Ee Duniyavil Nhan Ottakkanu'* written by M. Usman and other dramas were staged by *Yuvajana Kala Samithi* throughout Malabar and were well appreciated by the people.

7. The peasants and labourers came in to the fold of Communism through the peasant organizations and trade unions. With the strike of the Railway workers in 1928 more and more trade unions sprang up in different parts of Kerala. They organized labour strikes on various grounds. Among them the Tile Factory Strike of Feroke (1935), Cotton Mill Strike of Calicut (1935), Tin Factory Strike of Palluruthi (1936), Beedi Workers Strike of Ponnani (1939) etc. deserve special mention. It is said that by 1937, altogether in Kerala there were as many as sixteen trade unions. Most of them used red coloured flags and shouted slogans like *'Inquilab Zindabad'*, *'Red Flag Zindabad'* *'Down with Imperialism'*, *'Down with Capitalism'* etc. Most of these labour unions were controlled by the Communist leaders and in due course they were affiliated to the All India Trade Union Congress (A.I.T.U.C.) of the Communists. By becoming members of such trade unions, the Mappila labourers also became Communist activists. That was how the Mappila beedi workers of

67. In an interview with Advocate K.V. Salahudheen at his residence at Areacode on 19 November, 1995.

Kondotty, Tellicherry, Ponnani etc. and the plantation workers of Kalikavu, Karuvarakundu and Nilambur turned communists.

It is to be noted that when the Mappila labour class rallied round the Communist movement, the Muslim League had started its own trade union called the Muslim Labour Union⁶⁸ as a reaction to it.

8. With a view to wooing the Mappilas to Communism, at one stage, the Communists had even supported the Muslim League's demand for the formation of 'Mappilasthan' and 'Pakisthan'.⁶⁹ Even at the national level the Communist Party had taken a stand favouring the League demand for Pakistan.⁷⁰ P.C. Joshi, the then General Secretary of the party, while in his tour in Malabar in March, 1943 had also expressed the same view. He had asked the Congressmen to concede to the League the demand for self-determination.⁷¹ At one stage E.M.S. Namboodiripad had even brought out a leaflet inciting the Mappilas for a revolt. The Government took serious note of it and had taken action against the *Deshabhimani* for publishing such a call.⁷²

68. K.K. Abu, *loc cit*, 31 August, 1996, p10.

69. Kainikkara Padmanabha Pillai, *Communist Rule in Kerala* (Mal), p14.

70. A.R. Desai, *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, p425, G. Adhikari, *Pakistan and National Unity*, p36, and *The Dsheshabhimani Daily* dated 18 July, 1943.

71. *The Desabhimani Daily*, 28 March, 1943.

72. Fortnightly Report for second half of August 1946 and the *Mathribhumi Daily*, 27 August, 1946.

With the intention of widening the mass base of the party, the Kerala unit of the C.P.I. had taken a decision to creep in to the communal organizations like the Nair Service Society, Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Sanghom, the Namboodiri Yogakshema Sabha, Pulaya Maha Sabha etc. Like wise in the nineteen forties they had crept in to the Muslim League and supported its demand for Pakistan and slowly enticed its followers into Communism.⁷³

In January 1945 when the All India Muslim League leaders like Liaquat Ali Khan, Zafar Ahmad Ansari, Siddiq Ali Khan et al. visited Calicut, along with leaders of the League, the leaders of the Communist Party, various trade unions and Student's Federation also went to the railway station to receive them. They garlanded the leaders and shouted slogans like "Congress-League Zindabad," "Pakistan Zindabad" etc.⁷⁴

When the Muslim League decided to observe 16 August, 1946 as Direct Action Day, the Communist Party issued a circular to its lower units to co-operate with the League in the observance of the Day.⁷⁵

73. Perunna K.N Nair, *op cit*, pp118-119, Kainikkara Padmanabha Pillai, *op cit*, p13 and M.Ali Kunhi, 'Makers of Disruptive Tendencies', *The Chandrika Daily*, 23 October, 1961.

74. *The Mathrubhumi Daily*, 18 January, 1945.

75. E.Balakrishnan, 'Communist Movement in Kerala' Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, p351.

In spite of these efforts by the Party, they could attract only a small section of the Mappila Community into its fold. The following were the main causes for it.

1. Most of the religious scholars viewed the Communist ideology as anti-religious and regarded the Communists as atheists or infidels and ordered the Muslims not to make matrimonial alliances with them. In their religious discourses they described the symbol of the Communists, the sickle as a weapon to kill God and hammer to strike at the head of the believers.⁷⁶
2. The Muslim landlords and wealthy men strongly stood against the Communist movement as they knew it very well that its growth would impede their interests in future. Generally speaking the wealthy class among the Muslims supported the Muslim League movement.⁷⁷
3. The presence of Muslim League itself was a force against Muslims joining the Communist movement. In other words if the Muslim League was not there a good number of Mappilas would have joined the Communist Party.⁷⁸ The formation of a separate trade union for the Muslim League named Muslim Labour Union, also acted as a check against Mappila

76. In an interview with Advocate N. Ahamad Koya at his Residence at Calicut on 11 November, 1995.

77. In an interview with K.P. Mohamed Koya at his Residence at Feroke on 4 November, 1995.

78. In an interview with K.P. Mohamed Koya at his Residence at Feroke on 4 November, 1995.

working class joining the Communist trade unions and thereby preventing them from joining the Communist Party.

4. The book written by C.M. Ahmad Moulavi in Malayalam entitled 'Wealth Distribution System in Islam', also had desisted the educated Muslim from joining the Communist movement. For, it led many Muslims to think that their religion has a better economic system than Socialism.⁷⁹

IMPORTANT MUSLIM COMMUNIST LEADERS

K.V. Mohamed Ishaq (1920-1992)

Mohammad Kutty Alias Mohamed Ishaq was born in a noble family of Anakkayam. While studying in the native high school he jumped in to the freedom struggle and became a follower of Abdurahiman Sahib. Abdurahiman Sahib sent Ishaq to Jamia Millia for higher studies. At Delhi he came in touch with the national leaders of the Communist Party and joined the All India Students' Federation. Later he became the secretary of the Delhi Provincial Committee of the Students' Federation. In 1939 he joined the Communist Party and soon became the office secretary of the Delhi unit of the Party.⁸⁰

When he came to Malabar, Party leaders like E.M.S. Namboodiripad and P. Krishna Pillai entrusted him the task of building up the Party in Malabar

79. In an interview with K.K Mohamad Abdul Kareem at his Residence at Kondotty on 26 November, 1997.

80. Muzafir, *Muhammed Ishaq* (Mal) ed by T.V.K, p26.

especially among the Mappilas.⁸¹ He had earnestly undertook the task and through his speeches he attracted a lot of common people to Communism. In 1946 the Communist Party fielded him in the election to the Madras Assembly from the Malappuram Muslim Reserved Constituency. He was the first Muslim candidate put forward by the party under its own banner in an Assembly election in Kerala.⁸² In the election though defeated he got 5,234 votes.

Ishaq attended the famous Calcutta Congress of the Communist Party in 1948 and supported the moderate stand of P.C. Joshi. When the party was banned after the Calcutta Thesis in 1948, like other leaders of the party, he also went underground. At that time while his stay in concealment, he planned an attack on a Muslim money-lender's house. But the scheme failed in its execution and the culprits were arrested. On account of this the party severely criticized Ishaq.⁸³ The Party was also not happy with his love affair with a student at the time of his stay in concealment. At last due to his differences with the Party, he left the Party and went to Delhi.

After some years he returned to Malabar to campaign for EP Gopalan, a CPI candidate. In 1976 he had attended the CPI conference at Malappuram. He had been a leftist and a socialist throughout his life but he never returned to active politics again after his departure for Delhi in the year 1950.

81. *Ibid*, p32.

82. I.S Namboodiri, *Muhammed Ishaq* (Mal) ed by T.V.K, p130.

83. Padmavathi Ishaq, *Muhammed Ishaq* (Mal) ed by T.V.K, p87.

Sadhu P Ahamad Kutty (1911-1975)

Sadhu P. Ahamad Kutty came to nationalist activities in 1934 as a follower of Abdurahiman Sahib. While in the Congress, he became a member of the K.P.C.C and President of the Ernad Taluk Congress Committee. In 1936 he was elected to the Malabar District Board on Congress ticket. He was arrested on 9 July 1940 for having addressed a public meeting at Malappuram in protest against the Government's repressive policy.⁸⁴ He was sentenced to three years' imprisonment. He was released in 1942 but again he was put under bars on account of his active participation in the Quit India Movement. Later he was released from jail, but by that time he had become an ardent supporter of the Communist Party.⁸⁵

In the undivided Communist Party, he became the Secretary of Taluk Committee and Mandalam Secretary of the Party, state committee member of *Karshaka Samghom* and President of Ernad Taluk *Karshaka Samghom*. The party had nominated him from the Malappuram Constituency to the Kerala Assembly in 1960 and 1965. In both contests he was defeated but could secure more than twelve thousand votes.⁸⁶

84. K. Karunakaran Nair, *Who is who of freedom fighters in Kerala*, p22.

85. Malappuram P. Moosa, 'Sadhu P. Ahamad Kutty : The voice and strength of the Mappila Land', in *Desabhimani Daily*, 17 February, 1975.

86. *Assembly Elections since 1951*, Department of Public Relation, Government of Kerala, pp 76-121.

Following the split in the party, he joined the CPM. He had attracted many Mappilas to trade union movements and to communism through his speeches and singing 'revolutionary songs' and by arranging processions and public meetings.

E.K.Imbichi Bava (1917 – 1995)

Imbichi Bava was born in a family of fishermen in Ponnani. He had gone to Calicut for his school education. There he came in touch with the activities of Students' Federation in 1936 and soon he became its Secretary.⁸⁷

While a student Imbichi Bava became a follower of Abdurahiman Sahib and was attracted to the national movement. In the Congress Party he sided with the leftist faction and consequently he joined the Congress Socialist Party. By organizing the beedi workers and fishermen of Ponnani, he entered the Communist Movement. Then he became the leader of many agitations of peasants and workers in Ponnani and other parts of southern Malabar.

In 1940 and 1942 Imbichi Bava was arrested and imprisoned on account of his participation in the freedom struggle. With the change of policy of the Communist Party with regard to the war to join the war, the Communist activists including Imbichi Bava were released. After his release, he spent his

87. Vallathol Narayanan Kutty, 'Homage by a Childhood friend', in *Desabhimani Daily*, 15 April, 1995.

time in organizing strikes and agitations against the authorities to get the prices of essential commodities reduced and wages of labourers increased. He also conducted a 'Palm Leaf Agitation' against the increase of the price of palm leaf, which is used by the poor people for thatching. The 'Servants of India Society' also came forward with their help in this venture.⁸⁸

In 1948, when the Communist Party was banned, Imbichi Bava went into hiding in order to escape from police arrest. But he continued his activities underground. In 1952 he was elected to the Rajya Sabha. In 1957 he contested from the Ponnani constituency to the Lok Sabha, but was defeated. However, in 1962 he was elected to the Lok Sabha from Ponnani itself. In 1967 he got elected from the Mannarghat Constituency to the Kerala Assembly and became a Minister for Transport.

While in the CPI, he was one of the members of its National Council. He was also the Secretary of the Palghat District Committee before the split in the Party. When the party split in 1964 at national level, he was among the thirty two leaders of the party who initiated the formation of the CPI(M).⁸⁹ In 1970-71 period he led the 'Surplus Land Agitation' in Malappuram District.

88. Pavanan, *Parichayam*, p307.

89. *The Desabhimani Daily*, 12 April, 1995.

K.Kunhali (1924 – 1969)

One of the founder leaders of the Communist Movement in South Malabar, Karikkadan Kunhali was born in a middle class family in Kondotty. He had his school education at Malappuram and before completing it, he had joined the Air Force in 1942. After finishing his three years' military service, he returned to Malabar. There he took initiative in forming an organization for the ex-servicemen.⁹⁰

When Kunhali became an active worker of the Communist Party, they assigned him the task of giving leadership to beedi workers employed in sixty-two companies in Mysore. Within a short span of time he became the leader of hundreds of beedi workers there. When the party was banned in 1948, he went into hiding but was later caught.

After his release the party entrusted him the task of organizing the plantation labourers in the eastern region of Ernad Taluk. From 1953 – 57 he led the 'Surplus Land Agitation' of the peasants in the panchayaths like Nilambur, Kalikavu, Amarambalam, and Karuvarakundu. In these regions, the peasants under the leadership of Kunhali marched to the excess lands owned by the *Janmies* and occupied them. In the regions like Poolapadam, Thalappalippotti, Tholappan Kai Colony, Pottikkallu etc. the excess lands

90. *Sakhavu Kunjali Memorial* (Mal), p13.

captured from the *Janmies* were distributed among the peasants and labourers.⁹¹ At the time of his death he was the President of the Ernad Plantation Labour Union.

In the first election held to the Parliament after Independence in 1951 the Party fielded him in the Malappuram constituency. He was defeated in the election, but secured 52,000 votes. In the first Panchayat election of Kerala held in 1964, he contested from Kalikavu and became the first President of the Kalikavu Panchayat.⁹² At the time of India – China war, he was arrested according to the Internal Security Act. During that time an election was going on to the Kerala Assembly in which the Party fielded him to contest from Nilambur and won the election. Again in 1967 he was elected from the same constituency to the Kerala Assembly. On 26 July, 1969 he was shot near the A.I.T.U.C office at Chulliyodu and died two days later on account of it.⁹³

Edakkod Muhammad, Koya Kunhi Naha, Nadukandi Muhammad Koya, KP Muhammad Koya, Paloli Mohammed Kutty, Muhammed Yusuf, A Muhammed Koya (Appa Koya), PK Muhammed Kunhi et al were the other important leaders who worked hard among the people especially among the mappilas of south Malabar in order to bring them to the fold of Communism.

91. *Ibid*, p43.

92. *Ibid*, p23.

93. *Ibid*, p15.

Likewise, Abu Master, Razak Master, KC Muhammed, KA Salih, Kathirummal Ayammad, Moosan Kutty Master, Pallikkal Aboobacker, and others had striven their best to propagate the Communist ideology among the Mappilas of North Malabar. In the Travancore region, TA Majeed who became a minister in the first ministry of Namboodiripad, Ayisha Bai, the first Muslim woman to get elected to the Kerala Assembly⁹⁴ and the first Deputy Speaker of the Kerala Assembly were among a few who became prominent in the Communist Movement.

Along with other communities, the Communist Muslims of North Malabar also had stood in the forefront of the 'Anti Repression Day' observed on 15 September 1940. On that day at Tellicherry two persons, Abu Master, a primary school teacher and Chathukutty, a beedi worker were killed in Police firing. They were said to be the first martyrs in the cause of Communist Movement in Kerala.⁹⁵ One T.C. Ummer was given eighteen months rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rupees five hundred for taking part in the agitation by disobeying the order of the authorities.⁹⁶ In the agitation which took place at Morazha, thirty eight men were convicted out of which three, M.Mammd, M.Ibrahim and V Aboobacker were Muslims. Among them M.Ibrahim was given life term imprisonment.⁹⁷ For taking part in the Kayyur

94. P.A Syed Mohamed, *Kerala Muslim Directory* (Mal), p638.

95. K.K.N Kurup, *Agrarian Struggles in Kerala*, p4.

96. *The Mathrubhumi Daily*, 29 October, 1940.

97. *Ibid.*

agitation which was held in March 1941, altogether sixty one persons were convicted. Among them five persons including Pallikkal Aboobacker were given death punishment.⁹⁸

SOCIALIST MOVEMENTS AND THE MUSLIMS

As suggested earlier, in Kerala, the Congress Socialist Party merged with the Communist Party of India in 1939. On all India basis the CSP took a decision to change its name into Socialist Party in 1947. After independence, differences of opinion broke out within the Congress Party which resulted in the formation of a new Party called the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party (K.M.P.P.). After the general election of 1952 a rethinking developed among leaders of the Socialist Party and the K.M.P.P. on account of their failure in the election which resulted in the merger of these parties and the formation of a new party called the Praja Socialist Party.

Later again split occurred in the P.S.P and the old Socialist Party was rejuvenated by Ram Manohar Lohia. In the early nineteen sixties again problems arose within the P.S.P after the ouster of Ashok Mehta from the Party. These developments not only weakened the P.S.P but the opposition front as well. Finally it resulted in the merger of SP and P.S.P in 1964 and a new party emerged which was known by the name Samyukta Socialist Party (S.S.P.).

98. Andalatt, *History with out record*, (Mal), p104.

In 1968 problems arose in the Kerala unit of the SSP due to a decision of its central leadership to withdraw their ministers from the Cabinet. One section upheld the decision while the other opposed it. Those who stood against the decision of the central Committee left the Party and formed Kerala Samyukta Socilaist Party (K.S.S.P) which was later renamed as Indian Socialist Party (I.S.P)

PROMINENT MUSLIM LEADERS

PK Kunju (1905 –1979)

P.K. Kunju was born of a noble family of Kayamkulam. While a student at Aligarh Muslim University, he was attracted to the national movement, stopped his studies, and became an active worker of the Congress. He was in the vanguard of the Abstention Movement along with C Kesavan, TM Varghese and NV Joseph.

In 1935 P.K. Kunju joined the Travancore Labour Association and soon became its President. He remained in the post till 1939.⁹⁹ In 1937 he became the Joint Secretary of the All Travancore Joint Political Congress. He was the whip of the Parliamentary Party also in the Travancore Assembly.¹⁰⁰ During that period he strove hard for the welfare of the labour class and demanded due representation for them in the Assembly. At that time he had also edited a

99. Jamal, *Kunju Sahib*, p85.

100. P. John John, *Coalition Governments in Kerala*, p209.

paper for working class called the '*Thozhilali*'. In 1940 he resigned from the Labour Association in order to devote more time to the activities of the State Congress. By the end of 1940, due to differences of opinion with other leaders of the Congress, he left the Party and joined the Travancore State Muslim League.

In 1953 P.K. Kunju left the Muslim League and joined the Praja Socialist Party. He soon became its Treasurer and Parliamentary Board member. In the interim election to the Travancore-Cochin Assembly held in 1954, Kunju Sahib contested from the Krishnapuram constituency and won the election by a margin of 7,357 votes. Thus, he became a minister for Labour Affairs in the P.S.P. Ministry headed by Pattom Thanu Pillai on 17 March, 1954.¹⁰¹ In the first election to the Kerala Assembly which was held in 1957, Kunju Sahib contested from Karunagappally as a P.S.P. candidate but was defeated.

P.K. Kunju was one of the front line leaders of the Liberation Struggle against the E.M.S. ministry. On 15 July 1959 he met the Governor along with other leaders like Mannath Padmanabhan and PT Chacko with a memorandum demanding the dismissal of the EMS Ministry. Accordingly the ministry was dissolved on 31 July 1959 by the President of India. Then in the interim election of 1960 Kunju Sahib contested from the Krishnapuram constituency on PSP ticket and won the election and became the Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Party. In the PSP Ministry headed by Pattom, Kunju Sahib

101. Jamal, *op cit*, p179.

was not included and in frustration he said that he was not included because he was a born of a Muslim woman's womb. The Party took a serious view of this statement and decided to suspend him from the party.¹⁰² Two years later with the outgoing of Pattom from Kerala politics after being nominated as the Governor of Punjab, P.K. Kunju was re-admitted to the Party and became its Parliamentary Party leader.

In 1965 PK Kunju contested from Alwaye constituency on SSP ticket but failed to get through. But in 1967 he came out victorious from the Kayamkulam constituency and became the Minister for Finance in the EMS Ministry. As a minister he introduced several reforms like the Government Lottery Scheme, Hire Purchase Scheme, Chitty Scheme controlled by the Government etc. Later, on charges of corruption the Chief Minister asked him to step down and he did so on 12 May, 1969.¹⁰³

P.K. Kunju who joined the socialist movement through the P.S.P. in 1953 remained in it till his death on 18 August 1973. While P.S.P. merged with the Socialist Party and formed the Samyuktha Socialist Party in 1964, Kunju Sahib joined that Party and when the Party split in 1968 he remained with the faction led by K Chandrasekharan. Important Socialist leaders like Arangil Sreedharan, P Viswambaran, PR Kurup and others also stood with them and

102. Prashanth Mithran, *op cit*, p203.

103. *The Chandrika Daily*, 13 May, 1969.

they severed their relationship with their central leadership and formed a new Party by the name Kerala Samyuktha Socialist Party which was later renamed as Indian Socialist Party. Among the Muslim Socialist leaders, besides PK Kunju, SM Noohu, PA Haris, PM Thampi Rawuther and K Moidu joined this faction of the Party where as KK Abu and Mattappally Majeed stood with the faction led by the KA Sivaramabharathi which got the recognition of the national leadership.¹⁰⁴

K.K.Abu (1920 – 1999)

K.K.Abu was born in Chokli in Cannanore District. At a young age he was attracted to the freedom struggle and became a Congressman. When the police chased him he left for Burma. After his return from there he became a Muslim League activist. He organized the labourers and founded the Muslim Labour Union in 1944.¹⁰⁵ Under his leadership the union had conducted many labour strikes.

In 1948 Abu was arrested and imprisoned in the Cannanore Central Jail. Due to his association with the Communist leaders like AK Gopalan, Imbichi Bava, Appa Koya and others in jail he was attracted to socialism.¹⁰⁶ The books written by Dr.Lohia, Jayaprakash Narayan and others also had greatly

104. Prashanth Mithran, *op cit*, pp251-253.

105. K.K. Abu, 'Turning Points', in *Chandrika Weekly*, 31 August, 1996.

106. *Ibid*, 14 September, 1996.

influenced the mind of KK Abu. Consequently after his release from jail in 1948 he joined the Socialist Party.

In the Socialist Party, he had been a member of its National Executive Council for a long time. He had been elected to the Kerala Assembly in 1965 and 1967 from the Kuthuparamba constituency on the Socialist Party ticket. Following the split in the S.S.P. in 1968, he sided with the official group recognized by the national leadership of the Party and was appointed the Parliamentary Party leader of the Party.¹⁰⁷

K.M. Soopy (1934 -)

He came to politics through the Progressive Student's Front of which he was the State Secretary from 1950 to 1953. Then he joined the Socialist Party and became a member of its state committee. In 1968 he was elected as the state Joint Secretary of ISP. In 1970 he was elected to the State Assembly from the Peringalam constituency.¹⁰⁸

KP Muhammad (1922 – 1998)

Through Students' Federation, KP Muhammed entered politics. For some time he worked in the Congress Socialist Party and later joined the

107. Prashanth Mithran, *op cit*, p250.

108. Cheriyan Philip, *The Leadership*, (Mal), p318.

Socialist Party. He became the Joint Secretary of the All India Young Socialist League. He also worked as a member of the National Executive of the Socialist Party. He had also acted as the Secretary of the State Committee of the Party. He had been elected as the State as well as the All India President of the Lohia Vichar Manj.¹⁰⁹

Kayikkara Ahamed Husain (1914 – 1980)

Ahamed Husain of Quilon was a close associate of PK Kunju and had a great role in the formation of the PSP in Kerala. He had played a good role in the spread of socialist movement in Travancore area. In 1957 he contested from Chirayilkil to the Lok Sabha and in 1962 he had contested the election to the Rajya Sabha, but in both elections he was defeated.¹¹⁰ His son Kayikkara Shamsudheen was also a socialist. He had been the State General Secretary of the Independent Students' Organization, the students' wing of the Socialist Party. In the election to the state Assembly held in 1965 and 1970 the Party fielded him in the Iravipuram constituency but he was defeated. In the election to the Rajya Sabha held in 1969 also he failed to get through.¹¹¹

Besides the above leaders, the role of the following leaders also deserves mention. They include SM Noohu, SK Khadar, SKS Jaleel, PA Haris,

109. Dr. M.N. Karassery, 'K.P. Muhammed : Fighter of Social Justice', *Madhyamam Daily*, 3 April, 1994.

110. Dr. C.K. Kareem, ed. *Kerala Muslim Directory*, Vol III (Mal), p476.

111. Cheriyan Philip, *op cit*, p299.

MA Ibrahim Kutty, Mattappally Majeed and Alikunju Sastri. Alikunju Sastri had represented the PSP in the state Assembly in 1960. The names of PM Muhammed Ali, one of the founding leaders of the students' wing of the Socialist Party called the Independent Students' Organization ¹¹² and PP Moideen, one of the founding leaders of the *Yuvajana Sabha*, the youth wing of the party¹¹³ also deserve special mention.

Among the Socialist Parties, the representation of Muslims was less in the Revolutionary Socialist Party. Ahamad Karoth, M.Rasheed and AA Malayali were among the few Muslims leaders of the Party. AA Malayali later crossed over the CPI while M Rasheed left the Party and formed the Trotskyist Group.¹¹⁴

112. Prashanth Mithran, *op cit*, p186.

113. *Ibid*, p247.

114. In an interview with M. Rasheed at his residence on 21 November, 1995.

CHAPTER VIII
RISE AND GROWTH OF MUSLIM POLITICAL
MOVEMENTS

Muslims of Kerala were not an organized group socially or politically till 1922. The Rebellion of 1921 and the human and economic loss it brought about agonized the minds of Muslim leaders who had decided to do something to save the community from such hardships and to do something to avoid such situations happening again in future.¹ At that time Kodungallur, where the Muslim reformist leaders had went into hiding in order to escape from the police atrocities on account of the rebellion, became the centre of Muslim reformation in Kerala. At Kodungallur, the Muslim leaders like KM Moulavi, EK Moulavi and others had formed an association called *Nikshpaksha Sanghom* with a view to settling disputes between the different Muslim families of Kodungallur. Due to their effort unity and peace were established in the community in and around Kodungallur. When the membership and branches of the *Sanghom* spread, the leaders decided to convert it into an all Kerala association of the Muslims. Thus, the first organization of the Muslims of Kerala was born.² KM Moulavi, EK Moulavi, Seethi Mohamed, Manappattu Kunhi Mohamed, Seethi Sahib and others were the founding leaders of the movement.³

1. E.K. Maulavi, 'Kerala Muslim Aikya Sanghom and Reformation' in *Kerala Muslim Directory* (Mal), p468.

2. *Ibid*, p470.

3. N.K. Ahamad Maulavi, 'Aikya Sanghom and the Muslims of Kerala' (Mal), p16.

Though the *Sanghom* concentrated mainly on social reformation and educational advancement of the community, it had shown interest in the political affairs of the community too. For instance in the Third Annual Conference of the *Sanghom* held at Calicut in June 1925 and in the Fourth Annual Conference held at Tellicherry in May 1926, resolutions were adopted against the scheme of the Government to deport the Mappilas to the Andaman Islands.⁴ Likewise the Third Annual Conference of the *Sanghom* in a resolution requested the Government to provide reservation for the Muslims in the Taluk and District Boards as in the Assembly.⁵

Though the *Sanghom* was not a political organization, several Muslim political leaders of that period like Seethi Sahib, Mohamed Schamnad, TM Moidu, Uppi Sahib and Pokker Sahib were connected with the activities of the movement. From 1922 to 1934, the *Sanghom* conducted twelve annual meetings. Finally, in 1934 at the Twelfth annual conference held at Cannanore it was decided to merge the *Sanghom* with the *Kerala Muslim Majlis* as the aims and objectives of both the organizations were similar and the leadership of the movements was also the same.⁶

4. *The Mathrubhumi Daily*, 18 May, 1926.

5. *Ibid*, 6 June 1925.

6. E.K. Maulavi, *op.cit*, p477.

KERALA MUSLIM MAJLIS

The *Kerala Muslim Majlis*, the first Muslim political organization of Kerala was born on 22 August 1931 at an 'All Kerala Muslim Conference' held at Tellicherry.⁷ The conference was convened with the aim of having a common platform for the Muslims of British Malabar and the neighbouring regions like South Canara, Cochin and Travancore to discuss the problems and to get their grievances redressed. Advertisements showing the aims and objectives of the conference were published in newspapers with a request to send representatives from the Muslim organizations and *Jama'at* mosques to the conference. The Conference was well attended with delegates from all parts of Kerala. Jamal Mohammed, a Muslim leader from Madras and Moulana Zafar Ali Khan from Punjab were the important guests at the meeting.⁸ The conference through a resolution decided to form an organization to take steps to redress their grievances and to work for the political, educational, social and economic advancement of the community. Thus, the *Kerala Muslim Majlis* was formed with M.Jamal Mohammed as the President and K.Uppi Sahib and Abdul Sathar Sait as Secretaries. People from different places and belonging to different political parties got representation in the new organization. For instance, Muhammad Abdurahiman and E.Moidu Moulavi of the Congress, TM Moidu, a Justice Party leader and member of Madras Legislative

7. *Report of the Kerala Muslim Majlis*, 1933, p2.

8. *Ibid*, p3.

Assembly, Mohammed Schamnad, a Muslim leader from South Canara and member of Madras Legislative Assembly, Muhammed Sharool from Kasargod, HB Muhammed Rawther and PS Muhammad, two prominent Muslim leaders from Travancore, Sulaiman Sait, Municipal chairman of Cochin et.al were members of the Committee.⁹ According to Vakkom Abdul Khadir Moulavi, never before in Kerala was such a successful meeting held with the support and representation of Muslims from different places and different groups.¹⁰

In the Kerala Muslim conference about thirty resolutions related to the educational, economic and political needs of Muslims were passed, which included repeal of 'The Moplah Outrages Act', disbanding of Malabar Special Police and release of Mappila prisoners. Abdurahiman Sahib moved a political resolution defining Indian political goal as *Swaraj*. Seethi Sahib condemned the action of those who obstructed the Congress in its struggle for independence.¹¹

The second anniversary of the Majlis was held at Calicut on 14 and 15 May 1933 under the presidentship of Sir Muhammed Habibullah, a member of Viceroy's Executive Council. Though differences of opinion on political line had been visible in the association from its very inception,¹² they widened during its second anniversary session. All this began with the stand taken by

9. *Ibid*, pp6-7.

10. Vakkom Maulavi's *Deepika in one volume* (Mal), p420.

11. P.K.K. Menon, *History of Freedom Movement in Kerala*, Vol.II, p241.

12. K.K. Muhammed Abdul Kareem, *Sher-e-Kerala Seethi Sahib* (Mal), p60.

the organizing committee, not to conduct the Youth Conference along with the Majlis Conference and not to invite Yaqub Hasan to the conference as decided by them earlier. The youngsters got disappointed and they approached Abdurahiman Sahib and he decided in favour of conducting the conference whether the Majlis leaders permitted or not. Not only that they had also decided to conduct the function one day earlier to the Majlis conference and even decided to bring Yaqub Hasan to the conference. Accordingly, the Youth Conference was held at Calicut Town Hall on 12 and 13 may 1933. The conference was well attended. It adopted three political resolutions and also passed a resolution condemning the matrilineal system which was prevalent among the Mappilas of north Malabar and sent it to the Majlis committee for consideration. The resolution came before the subject committee for discussion. Majority of the Majlis leaders were from the north Malabar who were adhering to the matrilineal system vehemently and opposed the presentation of the resolution. At the same time Abdurahiman Sahib described the system as un-Islamic and therefore he advocated strongly for the adoption of the resolution. After heated discussion and exchange of words between the leaders, finally the resolution was passed.¹³ All these things resulted in the widening of the feud between the leaders in the Majlis.

13. S.K. pottekat et. Al., *Muhammad Abdurahiman* (Mal), pp271-272.

Meanwhile election to the Central Legislative Assembly was held on 10 November 1934. From the West Coast Muslim reserved constituency Abdurahiman Sahib and Abdul Sathar Sait contested as independent candidates. When the election results were declared the nationalist Muslim leader Abdurahiman Sahib was defeated by Sathar Sait by a margin of 322 votes.¹⁴ This victory of Sathar Sait, who later became the founder of Muslim League in Malabar, was a clear indicator of how the Muslim politics was going to develop in Malabar.

The Third annual conference of The Majlis was held at Cannanore on 23 and 24 May 1936 under the presidentship of Husain Imam, member of the Council of State. At this session, the Majlis leaders had decided to accept the leadership of the All India Muslim League.¹⁵ The last conference of the Majlis was held at Tellicherry on 1 May 1937 presided over by Sultan Abdurahiman Ali Raja of Arakkal who was later elected as the first President of the Malabar District Muslim League.¹⁶

FORMATION OF MUSLIM LEAGUE IN MALABAR

Due to differences of opinion among the leaders of the Majlis on political grounds, that is, whether to remain in the Congress or to have a separate organization for the Muslims, the activities of Majlis came to a

14. *Ibid*, p317.

15. *The Mathrubhumi*, dated 27 May 1936.

16. *Ibid*, dated 5 May 1937.

standstill. At the same time Abdul Sathar Sait, who was elected to the Central Legislature, came in touch with the leaders of the All India Muslim League. Advocate B Pokker Sahib who was practising in Madras also came in touch with the leaders of the League there.¹⁷ Seethi Sahib who later became one of the top leaders of the League shifted his legal practice from Cochin to Tellicherry in 1932 and became a member of the "Muslim Club." Prominent Muslim nobles of Tellicherry like Sathar Sait, AK Kunhi Mayan Haji, CP Mammu Keyi and others were the members of this cultural club. In the evenings they met at the club and held discussions on various topics.¹⁸

Sathar Sait maintained good relationship with the national leadership of the League and was soon nominated to the Working Council of the Party. Uppi Sahib and Seethi Sahib were nominated to the National Council of the Muslim League.¹⁹ At the same time some prominent leaders from other parties like KM Moulavi and MK Haji from the Congress and TM Moidu from the Justice Party joined the Muslim League. In short the background for the formation of a unit of the League was slowly and steadily developing at that time in Malabar.

As per the Government of India Act of 1935, elections to the state assemblies were conducted in 1937. As far as the Muslim politics of Malabar

17. T.M. Savan Kutty, *Seethi Sahib* (Mal), p55.

18. *Ibid*, p45.

19. K.M. Seethi Sahib, 'Progress of Muslim League in Kerala' in the *Kerala State Muslim League Souvenir*, 1959, p10.

was concerned it was a turning point as it provided the first opportunity for the Muslim League to show its strength in Malabar. There were six Muslim reserved constituencies in Malabar and the All India Muslim League had put up two candidates. Among them AK Khadar Kutty was elected from Kottayam-Wynad constituency defeating KK Pokker while B Pokker Sahib who had contested from Kozhikode-Kurumbranad constituency was defeated by Attakoya Thangal.²⁰ Though not an official candidate of the Party, Abdu Rahiman Ali Raja, who was later elected as the President of the Malabar District Muslim League Committee, was elected from Chirakkal constituency unopposed. During the period of election Moulana Shaukathali visited Malabar in connection with the election campaign of Muslim League candidates. His speeches attracted many Muslims to the League.²¹

Against this background a unit of the All India Muslim League was formally established at a meeting held at Cannanore on the initiative of Kattakath Ahamad Kunhi Haji and others on 21 May 1937. At that meeting it was resolved to start more units in Chirakkal Taluk. At the same time, under the initiative of Ismail Sait and KA Muhammad the Cochin State Muslim League began to function from 1937 onwards.²² At Calicut also a unit of the League was formed in November 1937.²³

20. T.M. Savan Kutty, *op. cit*, p56.

21. *The Mathrubhumi Daily*, dated 16 February 1937.

22. T.M. Savan Kutty, *op. cit*, p57.

23. *Ibid*.

On 20 December, 1937 at a meeting held at Tellicherry, the first committee of the Malabar District Muslim League was formed with Arakkal Abdurahiman Ali Raja (President), KM Hassan Koya and K Uppi Sahib (vice-Presidents), Abdus Sathar Sait (General Secretary), KM Seethi Sahib and MV Hydros (Joint Secretaries) and CP Mammu Keyi (Treasurer).²⁴ Tellicherry was made the headquarters of the District League Committee. Under the leadership of the Committee, influenced specially by the charismatic personality of Sathar Sait and Seethi Sahib, the activities of the League spread to every nook and corner of Malabar attracting many young people to its fold.

By the close of nineteen thirties and at the beginning of nineteen fourteens, several national leaders of the League like Moulana Shaukathali, Pirpur Raja, Fazlul Haq, Nawab Ismail Khan, Chaudhari Khaliqus Zaman, Qazi Isa and even Nawab Liaqat Ali Khan visited Malabar addressing huge crowds in many Muslim centers of Malabar. Their tour and their oratory had a tremendous impact on the Mappilas of Malabar. The District League Conferences of 1940 (Calicut) and 1941 (Palghat) also turned out to a milestone in the growth of the Party in Malabar.

When the Second World war started in 1939, the British Government one-sidedly without consulting the Indian leaders, declared that India would join the war with the axis powers whereupon the Congress ministries resigned

24. K.M. Seethi Sahib, *loc. cit.*, p10.

in protest. Stating that the condition of Muslims under the Congress rule was miserable, the Muslim League decided to observe 22 December, 1939 as a 'Day of Deliverance'. As in other parts of India, in Malabar also the 'Day' was observed and resolutions were passed expressing gratitude and relief over the resignation of the Congress ministers.²⁵

DEMAND FOR PAKISTAN

When the All India Muslim League started an agitation demanding the creation of Pakistan, the Malabar branch of the League also fully supported it. In support of this demand the A.I.M.L resolved to observe 16 August 1946 as 'Direct Action Day'. In Malabar also the Day was observed with great enthusiasm. Meetings and processions were held through out Malabar. KK Abu was the convener of the agitation. He was even prepared to wage an armed revolt against the Government if so required. Abu had contacted Sardar Shaukath Hayath Khan who agreed to supply arms through Mysore border to Malabar.²⁶ But no tension or untoward incidents resulted from this in Malabar. Meanwhile the agitation demanding the creation of Pakistan attracted many Mappilas to the fold of Muslim League. PK Moideen Kutty, a former President of the K.P.C.C left the Party and joined the League in 1945 being attracted by this agitation.²⁷ Later Moideen Kutty and Seethi Sahib had even gone to the

25. *Ibid*, p12.

26. M.C. Ibrahim, *C.H. Muhammad Koya, Political Biography* (Mal), p114.

27. In an interview with P.K. Moideen Kutty at his residence at Kuttyppuram on 17 August 1997.

extent of demanding in the Madras Assembly the creation of 'Mappilasthan', a separate state for the Mappilas within the territory of India.²⁸ Though they failed to achieve this demand, the agitation for 'Pakistan' and 'Mappilasthan' had in a greater way helped in augmenting the Party's influence among the Mappilas of Malabar.

ALL INDIA MUSLIM MAJLIS

When the efforts of Gandhiji and others to restore Hindu-Muslim harmony failed to achieve the goal, the nationalist Muslims of Bengal got annoyed and hence decided to form an organization called the Muslim Majlis. Later its leaders decided to widen its scope by converting it into an all India organization. With this end in view a meeting was convened on 6th, 7th and 8th May 1944 at Delhi.²⁹ At the meeting an all India Committee of the Majlis was constituted with Barrister Khwaja Abdul Majeed as President and Dr. Shaukathullah Ansari as Secretary. The Majlis opposed the League demand for Pakistan and stood for Hindu-Muslim amity. It was a pro-Congress organization and so they had decided to work among the Muslims with the aim of bringing them into the national stream through the congress.

In July 1944 Malabar unit of the Majlis was formed with KV Noorudheen as President and CN Imbichamu as Secretary. Its members were mainly Con-

28. *Madras Legislative Assembly Debates*, Vol.V, March and April, 1947, p644.

29. E. Moidu Maulavi, *Memories* (Mal), pp72-73.

30. T.M. Savan Kutty, *op. cit*, p67.

gress Muslims and its flag was similar to the Congress flag with a slight difference that instead of Asoka's wheel, crescent was depicted at the center.³⁰ On 19th and 20th May 1945 a mammoth meeting of the Majlis was held at Calicut. Its national leaders like Khwaja Abdul Majeed, Dr. Shaukathulla Ansari and Moulana Abdulla Mistry participated in the meeting.³¹ On finding that the meeting was a success more village committees were formed and the Majlis workers intensified their campaign against the League and its demand for Pakistan.

ELECTIONS OF 1945

At the peak of the fight between the Muslim League and Muslim Majlis elections were held to the Madras Legislative Assembly (March, 1945) and to the Central Assembly (December, 1945), which provided an opportunity for these parties to test their strength and popularity among the Muslims of Malabar. All the candidates put up by the League were elected by a large majority³² while all the majlis candidates not only were defeated but with the exception of one candidate all the others lost even their deposits.³³ Two Muslim League candidates, K Uppi Sahib and SK Shaikh Rawthar, were also elected to the Madras Legislative Council.³⁴ In the election to the Central

31. P.P. Mammad Koya Parappil, *History of Calicut Muslims* (Mal), p155.

32. The elected members were : K.M. Seethi Sahib, B. Pokker Sahib, P.P. Hassan Koya, A.K. Khadar Kutty, P.K. Moideen Kutty, K. Ahamad Haji, Abdurahiman Ali Raja and M.V. Hydros.

33. P.P. Mammad Koya, *op. cit*, p157.

34. T.M. Savan Kutty, *op. cit*, p66.

Assembly the League candidate Abdus Sathar Sait was elected securing about seven thousand votes. The Majlis candidate who contested with the full support of the Congress got only six hundred votes and he lost his deposit.³⁵ In short, by winning these elections the League had clearly proved that the majority of the community supported their line of thinking.

EARLY LEADERS

From the very inception of the League in Malabar, the party was blessed with the presence of a good number of leaders having charisma and popular appeal. In the Tellichery-Cannanore area, Sathar Sait, Pokker Sahib, Uppi Sahib and others provided leadership for the community. In Kasargod Taluk, Mahin Schamnad, Mahmood Schamnad, Hameed Hasan Schamnad, Hussain Puthoor, Ahamad Husain and others strove hard for the spread of Muslim League.³⁶ In South Malabar NV Abdul Salam Moulavi, Perur Ahamad, Machingal Ahamed Kutty, PT Veerankutty Moulavi, KK Muhammad Shafi and KK Abu worked among the Muslims of Ernad Taluk spreading the ideals of the League.³⁷ Seethi Sahib played a great role for the growth of Muslim League in the whole of Malabar.

35. M.C. Ibrahim, *op. cit*, p94.

36. Seethi Sahib, *loc. cit*, p11.

37. K.C. Aboobacker Maulavi, *M.S.F. Malappuram District Souvenir*, 1990.

ANCILLARY ORGANISATIONS

In order to attract the students, the youth and the labourers to the Party, feeder organizations were set up. At Calicut a committee of the Muslim Youth League was formed in 1938,³⁸ MV Alikoya, Ponmanichintakath Ahamad Koya and Punathil Mammu were the leaders of the Youth League. About the same period, a 'Bala League' also began to function from Calicut with Kunhithan Maliyakkal Abdu as President and K.P. Hassan as General Secretary.³⁹ At a function held at Calicut on 23 and 24 January 1943 the Malabar District Muslim Students' Federation was set up with Hasantisa as President and P.Moidu as General Secretary.⁴⁰ CH Mohammed Koya, CM Kutty, SM Thangal *et. al.* were the prominent workers of the Muslim Students' Federation. During the same period a trade union of the League called the 'Muslim Labour Union', which is said to be the first of its kind in the history of the All India Muslim League, was set up under the leadership of KK Abu, PK Moideen Kutty, SKS Jaleel Thangal, SM Haneefa and others.⁴¹ Later some of the leaders like KK Abu, SKS Jaleel and others crossed over to the Socialist Party and PK Moideen Kutty and others moved to the Congress Party. With the result the Muslim Labour Union ceased to exist. The vacuum of a trade union for the Muslim League was filled with the creation of *Swathanthra Thozhilali Union*, a apolitical labour

38. P.T. Mammu, 'Muslim Youth League: Genesis and Growth', in *Mappila Nadu* Special issue, 1 March 1968, p55.

39. *Ibid.*

40. T.M. Savan Kutty, *op. cit.*, p59.

41. K.K. Abu, *Chandrika Weekly*, 31 August 1996, p10.

organization established at the instigation of Seethi Sahib. Though they considered themselves as an independent organization, its members as well as the leaders belonged to the Muslim League.⁴²

THE 'CHANDRIKA'

The *Chandrika* began its publication from Tellicherry in 1932 as an independent Muslim weekly. Sathar Sait, Seethi Sahib, AK Kunhi Mayan Haji and others were the main spirit behind the publication of the weekly. It was started to oppose the views and comments published in *Al-Ameen*, the mouthpiece of the pro-Congress Muslims. For a short period in 1935 the *Chandrika* stopped its publication. But from 1938 onwards it reappeared as a daily and as a mouthpiece of the Muslim League. In 1946 its publication was shifted to Calicut.

The *Chandrika* stood for the cause of Muslims by publishing news and views pertaining to the community. It also paid attention to nurture and encourage budding Muslim writers and poets.

MUSLIM LEAGUE IN THE POST INDEPENDENT ERA

After the partition of India, the Muslim League was facing the question whether to disband it or not. Important leaders of the League had

42. K. Abdul Azeez Naha, 'Our Labour Movements' in *Mappila Nadu* Special issue, 1 March 1968, p51.

shifted to Pakistan. Many members resigned from the League. Some of them left active politics while others joined other political parties.⁴³ In many states the League units had either ceased functioning or changed its name. For instance in Bombay they adopted the name the 'Fourth Party'.⁴⁴ In Travancore-Cochin the League decided to disband itself in 1949 and did not resume political activity until 1959.⁴⁵ Some people thought that there was no need for having a separate organization to protect the rights of Muslims as there was no obstacle to worship or to manage religious institutions. Some others argued that since the League had achieved its goal of creating a Muslim majority state of Pakistan, there is no need to continue that organization in India.

INDIAN MUSLIMS' CONFERENCE

A meeting was however convened by the former Chief Minister of Bengal H.S. Suhrawardi at Calcutta on 9th and 10th November, 1947 to assess the plight of Muslims after partition. From South India, Muhammad Ismail Sahib and Seethi Sahib participated in the meeting. Suhrawardi, who convened the meeting moved a resolution that since the demand for the creation of Pakistan was achieved, there was no need to continue with the League. But Ismail Sahib and Seethi Sahib opposed his views and argued strongly in favour

43. M. Alikunhi, 'History and Activities of the Muslim League' in *Ernakulam District Muslim League Souvenir*, 1969, p23.

44. Muhammad Raza Khan, *What Price Freedom*, p366.

45. Roland E. Miller, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala*, p168.

of the continuation of the League as the political party of Muslim in India. Most of the members who were present at the meeting also held the same view. So Suhrawardi's plan did not succeed. After the meeting Suhrawardi remarked that "two Dravidians from the South have come and foiled our scheme".⁴⁶

KARACHI CONVENTION

A Consultative meeting of the All India Muslim League was convened at Karachi on 14th and 15th December, 1947 to discuss the future of the organization. At the meeting it was decided to form an Indian Union Muslim League for India and a Pakistan Muslim League for that country. Ismail Sahib was elected to be the convener of the former and Liaqat Ali Khan was elected as the convener for the latter.⁴⁷

FORMATION OF INDIAN UNION MUSLIM LEAGUE

As per the decision of the Karachi convention, a meeting of the Muslim League leaders was held at the Rajaji Hall, Madras on 10th March, 1948 to chalk out the future programme. Seethi sahib, Pocker Sahib, Uppi Sahib and others attended the conference from Malabar.

At the Muslim League council held at Madras, members differed on the question of the continuance of the League. Some members argued that the

46. M. Alikunhi, *loc. cit*, p21.

47. K.M. Seethi Sahib, *loc cit*, p18.

League should be converted into an educational and cultural organization. Some others argued that the League should either wind up its activities or at least change its name.⁴⁸ But Ismail Sahib and Seethi Sahib strongly opposed their arguments and a resolution favouring the continuance of the League as a political Party was adopted by the meeting.

At the end of the meeting the Indian Union Muslim League Committee was formed with Ismail Sahib (President) and Mahaboob Ali Baig (Secretary). At the meeting a committee was constituted to draft a new constitution for the League. Sathar Sait, Seethi Sahib, Pocker Sahib and PK Moideen Kutty represented Malabar in the committee.⁴⁹ The new constitution was adopted on 1 September, 1951.

The period just after the partition was a gloomy one for the Muslims especially the followers of the Muslim League through out India. Some people questioned the patriotism of Muslims. Some others described them as fifth columnists. Not only Congressmen but even some Muslim Leaguers questioned the necessity for the existence of the League. Muslims felt that they were discriminated against by the administrators. In Malabar, PP Hassan Koya, MLA, and the office-bearers of the Calicut Town Muslim League resigned from the Party. It was at that time that the 'Hyderabad Police Action' had taken place.

48. M. Alikunhi, 'Muslim League in the pages of History', in the *Chandrika Daily*, dated 26 April 1970.

49. M.C. Ibrahim, *op. cit.*, p128.

The Nizam of Hyderabad who was not ready to merge with India had been dealt with by the Indian forces and Hyderabad had been annexed to India in September, 1949. Some Mappilas had been enrolled in the forces of Nizam. On the ground of suspicion some of the Muslim League leaders like Panakkad Pookoya Thangal, NV Abdul Salam Moulavi, Assan Kutty Kurikkal and others had been entered.⁵⁰ The Madras Government even passed an order that Mappilas should not be recruited to police force.⁵¹ President of the Indian Union Muslim League, Ismail Sahib had been requested by the Madras Government to issue a statement supporting the military action by the Indian Government and he did so.⁵² Seethi Sahib and other members of the League raised questions about the arrest of the Muslim League leaders in the Madras Assembly and submitted a memorandum requesting their release, but their attempt did not succeed.

ELECTIONS

The period that followed partition witnessed a lull in the activity of the Muslim League. Making speeches at the *milad* meetings or *madrassa* anniversaries were the only activity of the Muslim League leaders during this period.

50. T.M. Savan Kutty, *op. cit*, p78.

51. Muhammed Raza Khan, *op. cit*, p388.

52. *Ibid*, p389.

It was during this period of inaction that election to the Malabar District Board was announced in 1949. Muslim League decided to contest the election. No other Party except the Socialist Party led by Dr. K.B. Menon came forward to have alliance with the League in the election. That was the beginning of friendship between the Socialist Party and the Muslim League in Kerala politics.

When the League member Koyappathodi Ahamed Kutty Haji died, a bye-election was held in the Ernad-Valluvanad constituency on 28 October, 1950. MPM Assan Kutty Kurikkal contested as the Muslim League candidate. Against him the official faction of the K.P.C.C led by CK Govindan Nair put forward KA Ibrahim, brother of Abdurahiman Sahib, as their candidate. At the same time the rival Congress group led by K.Kelappan put forth Palat Kunhikoya as their candidate. To campaign for the League candidate their leaders like Ismail Sahib, Bafaqi Thangal, Seethi Sahib, Raza Khan and others came to Malappuram, which created a new enthusiasm among the Party workers.

Before the commencement of the election, the congress candidates withdrew their candidatures and the League candidate was the election with a thumping majority.⁵³ It is to be noted that it was the first election victory of the

53. M.C. Ibrahim, *op. cit*, pp138-139.

Party after the partition.⁵⁴

MUSLIM LEAGUE IN THE TRAVANCORE-COCHIN STATES

In the Princely States of Travancore and Cochin too the Muslim community had shown interest in the political activities. In the Cochin state, a unit of the Muslim League had been formed in the very year of the formation of the League in Malabar in 1937.⁵⁵ Ismail Haji Isa Sait, KM Seethi Sahib, Advocate KA Muhammad and others were the leaders of the *Cochin State Muslim League*. The unit of the League possessed a press and published a journal called to *Cochin Mail*.

In Travancore, though there had been a number of social and cultural organizations working among the Muslims, politically they were not united and they had suffered greatly on account of it. A move for the organization of a strong association was made in a conference which met at Varkala in December, 1945. It was decided to form *The Travancore State Muslim League*, with PS Muhammad as President and PK Kunju as Secretary. Within one year they were able to enroll 36,000 people as its members.⁵⁶ Later, due to differences of opinion, some persons under the leadership of Thangal Kunju

54. U. A. Beeran, 'Genesis and Growth of Muslim League' in the *Chandrika Daily* 26 April, 1970.

55. *The Mathrubhumi Daily*, dated 10 October 1937.

56. Jamal, *Kunju Sahib*, p143.

Musaliar left the organization and formed another organization called the *Akhila Travancore Muslim Majlis*.⁵⁷

In February 1948 election was held to the constituent Assembly in which nine seats were reserved for Muslims. As per the electoral agreement between the State Congress and the Travancore State Muslim League one Muslim reserved seat was given to the former and eight to the latter. In the election, the Travancore Muslim League secured seven seats.⁵⁸ After the election also the State League supported the State Congress Ministry. But in the Ministry led by Pattom Thanupillai they were not given a seat in the ministry. The Pattom Ministry did not last long due to factional squabbles within the state congress. Later, after the integration of Travancore and Cochin on 1st July, 1949, T.K. Narayana Pillai became the Chief Minister. In the same year, the State League had taken a decision to abstain from politics⁵⁹ and instead TA Abdulla, a leader of the State League was made a minister in the Narayana Pillai ministry.⁶⁰ He is said to be the first Muslim to become a minister in Kerala.⁶¹ Later he was removed from the ministry along with two others as per a decision to reduce the size of the Cabinet.

57. Sayyid M Bava, *Kerala State Muslim League Souvenir*, (Mal), p46. and C.K Kareem, *Kerala Muslim History, Statistics and Directory*, Vol 1. (Mal), p648.

58. Jamal, *op. cit*, p152.

59. *Ibid*, p157.

60. C. Narayana Pillai, *From Pattom to Panambilli* (Mal), p138.

61. P.A. Syed Muhammed (ed.), *Kerala Muslim Directory* (Mal), p384.

On the integration of the two states, Travancore and Cochin, the Muslim League committees also decided to merge and formed the Travancore-Cochin Muslim League. PK Kunju was elected the President of the new organization.⁶²

In 1952, in the first election held after India became a Republic, the Travancore-Cochin Muslim League tried to have an electoral understanding with the State Congress but the latter was not ready for it. This isolation in politics provoked many of the leaders of the League. This phenomenon was prevalent among a section of the members of the Muslim League through out India immediately after the partition. As a result in 1953, PK Kunju Sahib, one of the prominent leaders of the Travancore State Muslim League left the Party and joined the Praja Socialist Party.⁶³ In another development in the same year a section of the leaders of the Cochin Muslim League under the leadership of AB Kochunni met at Trichur and decided to convert the League into a social organization.⁶⁴ In the same year in a convention of the League held at Changanacherry also a resolution was passed demanding the discarding of politics by the League.⁶⁵

At an annual conference of the Travancore-Cochin Muslim League held at Perumbavur in 1957 under the Presidentship of A. Majeed Marikkar it was

62. Jamal, *op. cit*, p164.

63. *Ibid*, p173.

64. P.A. Syed Muhammed (ed.), *op. cit*, p384.

65. *Ibid*.

resolved to change the name of the organization into Kerala Muslim Jama't Federation and to concentrate its activities on social, economic, educational and religious affairs of the community.⁶⁶

With the formation of the Kerala state, units of the Indian Union Muslim League were established in Travancore-cochin area also. When KM Seethi Sahib and B.Pokker Sahib shifted their residence to Ernakulam, it became the headquarters of Muslim League in the South Kerala.⁶⁷

GENERAL ELECTION OF 1952

India became a Republic on 26th January, 1950. On the basis of the new Constitution, general elections were held throughout India in January 1952. The election of 1952 was significant because for the first time in the history of India elections were held on the basis of universal adult franchise. Like wise, as far as Muslims were concerned it was an important election because they were facing the first election after the partition of the country and after the abolition of the system of separate electorates for Muslims and other communities.

In the election, Muslim League contested in twelve seats to the Madras Assembly and won five seats. Compared to the Congress, which had contested in thirty-two seats and won only four seats, it was a great revival for the League.

66. *Ibid.*

67. Abdulla Haji Ahamad Sait, *Ernakulam District Muslim League Souvenir*, 1969, p11.

The victorious candidates were K Uppi Sahib (Tirur), Chakkeri Ahamad Kutty (Kottakkal), KK Muhammad Shafi (Perinthalmanna), Seethi Sahib (Malappuram-General) and M Chadayan (Malappuram-Reservation). In the election to the Parliament B Pokker Sahib contested from the Malappuram constituency and won it by defeating the nearest Congress rival candidate by a margin of about seventeen thousand votes.⁶⁸

In the Assembly election, no party got the required seats to form a ministry. Hence, the Communist Party and Kissan Mazdoor Praja Party approached the leaders of the League to support them to form a non-Congress ministry. But the League leaders categorically declared that they would not support a ministry led by the Communists. Not only that, after long discussions with other leaders of the party, Ismail Sahib, the President of the I.U.M.L. declared the party's stand to support the Congress for the formation of the ministry. This friendship between the two parties developed further into an election understanding in the Municipal elections, which resulted in the victory of the Congress in many Municipalities of Malabar. The alliance between the two parties continued also during the Chief Ministership of Kamraj Nadar who succeeded Rajaji as Chief Minister of Madras State.⁶⁹

The understanding between the two parties did not last long due to criticism and opposition from some quarters especially from the nationalist

68. M.C. Ibrahim, *op. cit.*, pp 153-154.

69. K.M. Seethi Sahib, *loc. cit.*, pp 22-23.

Muslims. So, in the District Board elections, there was no alliance between the Congress and the League and as a result, the election victory went in favour of the Communist Party.⁷⁰

FIRST ELECTION TO THE KERALA ASSEMBLY

Political parties of Kerala were engaged in hectic discussions to chalk out political strategies, when the election dates were announced in 1956. Everybody knew that, if there were no alliance, the Communist Party would sweep the polls. The State Committee of the Muslim League proposed that if the Congress, Praja Socialist Party and the League formed an alliance then the "Communist menace" could be averted.

By the end of December 1956 All India Congress Committee leaders like SK Patil, Panambilli Govinda Menon and others came to Kerala to discuss and work out the details regarding an election understanding with the leaders of the Muslim League. They had reached an agreement also. But at the Indore A.I.C.C Session when the matter came up for discussion, majority of the delegates vehemently opposed to have any truck with the League. At the same time leaders of the P.S.P tried to have an alliance with the Communist Party. When they failed in their effort, they approached the Muslim League. Consequently an agreement was signed between them on 15 January, 1957.⁷¹

70. *Ibid*, p23.

71. M.C. Ibrahim, *op. cit*, p240.

In the election, Muslim League contested in fourteen Assembly seats and three parliament seats. The following persons were the successful candidates in the Assembly election: CH Muhammad Koya (Thanur), Chakkeri Ahamad Kutty (Kuttippuram), MPM Ahamad Kurikkal(Kondotty), Avukkadar Kutty Naha(Tirurangadi), KV Muhammad(Mankada), K Hasan Gani (Malappuram), Bava Haji (Tirur) and M.Chadayan(Manjeri). In the parliament election, only B Pocker Sahib could win the election. He was elected from the Manjeri constituency. Seethi Sahib had contested the election from the Calicut constituency to the parliament but was defeated in a three-cornered contest with a congress candidate by a margin of 27870 votes.⁷²

This election had created far-reaching consequences. After the election, the Central Election Commission had recognized the League as a State Party and the election symbol of ladder had been allotted to them.⁷³ Due to the alliance between the Muslim League and the Praja Socialist Party, the Communist Party failed to secure absolute majority in the state election. Even in the Uttar Pradesh election the alliance had created repercussions as the Muslims there had cast their vote in favour of the P.S.P.

'THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE'

The first Ministry of Kerala headed by EMS Namboodiripad came to power on 8th April, 1957. Within a short period of his rule trouble started through

72. *Ibid*, p244.

73. T.M. Savan Kutty, *op. cit*, p103.

out Kerala. Private school managers came forward with agitational programmes against the Education Bill introduced by the Government. Politically motivated skirmishes and conflicts were a usual affair. Mannath padmanabhan, the leader of the Nair Service Society and K.Kelappan, well-known freedom fighter and leader of the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party launched an agitation against the Communist regime in the state. Under the auspices of the Indian National Congress and the Praja Socialist Party, a 'Liberation Struggle' was declared on 12th June, 1959. The State Council of the Muslim League which met on 22nd June, 1959 decided to join the struggle.⁷⁴

Twenty six out of twenty nine Municipalities, seven hundred out of Eight hundred and ninety five village panchayats and thirty Bar Associations passed resolutions demanding the resignation of the Communist Ministry.⁷⁵ Besides that almost all student organizations, youth organizations and trade unions came out in the agitation raising the same demand. The Government used all sorts of repressive measures to suppress the agitation. In the police firing twenty four people were killed and 1605 people were seriously injured.⁷⁶ Almost all the Malayalam dailies wrote editorials criticizing the Government action and supporting the demand of the agitators.

74. M.C. Ibrahim, *op. cit*, p257.

75. K. P. Baghat, *The Kerala Mid-term Election of 1960*, p27.

76. Perunna K. Nair, *Congress Movement in Kerala (Mal)*, p384.

On 15th July, a massive procession led by Mannath Padmanabhan, PK Kunju, PT Chacko, K Hasan Ghani and others marched to the Raj Bhavan demanding the dismissal of the Ministry and taking over of the State administration by the President of India. At last on the recommendation of the Governor, the President of India dismissed the Ministry on 31st July 1959.

PROGRESSIVE MUSLIM LEAGUE

In 1959, a rival organization to the Muslim League made its appearance in Malabar by the name the Progressive Muslim League. Idassery Muhammed Moulavi, KP Thangal, Moideen Kunhi, KP Muhammed Koya, Koya Kunhi Naha, MV Alikoya, Advocate K Alikoya and others were the leaders of the new Muslim political Party.⁷⁷ Most of its leaders as well as followers belonged to the communist Party. They criticized the Muslim League against its participation in the 'Liberation Struggle'.⁷⁸ In the election to the Kerala Assembly held in 1960 the Progressive League fielded its own candidates, allegedly to create confusion in the minds of the Muslim League supporters. In the election all of its candidates were not only defeated but they lost their deposits as well. After the election the new Party slowly disappeared from the scene.

77. In an interview with K.P. Mohamed Koya at his residence at Feroke on 5 November 1995.

78. *The Chandrika Daily* dated 22 September, 1959.

INTERIM ELECTION OF 1960

After the dismissal of the Communist Ministry, Congress leaders like Lal Bahadur Sastri, UN Dhebar and others came to Kerala to bring about an election understanding with the Praja Socialist Party and the Muslim League. Prime Minister Nehru and the Congress President Sanjiva Reddy came to Kerala for election campaign. At the election rallies they urged the people to cast their votes for the candidates of the Democratic Front comprised of the Congress, the P.S.P and the Muslim League.

The Democratic Front came out with a thumping majority. The Congress Party itself secured seats required for an absolute majority. So, they decided to form the Government without the Muslim League. At the same time the National Executive of the P.S.P decided not to join the Kerala Ministry, if the Muslim League had no part on it. Mannath Padmanabhan, the leader of the liberation struggle also strongly supported the demand of the League for their inclusion in the Ministry. But the Congress High Command did not agree to it.

After long discussions, a solution to the crisis was provided by the Muslim League by retreating from their earlier stand. They declared that the need of the hour was to save the state from the "Communist danger," and hence they did not wish to stand in the way of ministry-making. However, they decided to accept the speaker's post. Accordingly, on 22nd February, 1960 a coalition Ministry led by Pattom Thanupillai of the P.S.P came to power. KM

Seethi Sahib, leader of the Muslim League was elected unopposed as the Speaker of the Assembly. It was the first time after Independence that a Muslim League member got elected to this esteemed post.⁷⁹

On 17th April, 1961 Seethi Sahib died. Again, problems started in the Democratic Front. The Congress High Command was not in favour of giving the speakership to another League candidate. Meanwhile leadership of the League proposed the name of C.H. Muhammad Koya for the speaker's post. Then the Congress put up another demand that before contesting for the speaker's post Muhammad Koya should resign from the Party. The decision of the Congress was only the reflection of the Durgapur A.I.C.C resolution which demanded that the Congress should keep away from making alliance with communal forces. After prolonged discussion the League leaders conceded the demand put forth by the Congress and CH Muhammad Koya was elected as the third Speaker of Kerala Assembly defeating the Communist Party candidate Aysha Bai.⁸⁰

The concord in the front did not last long. With the bye-election of Kuttippuram, which was necessitated due to the death of Seethi Sahib, trouble started again in the front. Though a partner of the Democratic Front, the Congress had decided not to support the League candidate Muhsin Bin Ahamad, on the basis of the Durgapur Resolution. Not only that, a Congress rebel

79. M.C. Ibrahim, *op. cit*, p273.

80. *The Chandrika Daily* dated 10 June 1961.

candidate, K Kunhi Muhammad had contested from there. The Communists also supported him. But when the election result was announced, the League candidate came out successful with a majority of 9204 votes.⁸¹

The rift in the front widened further with the Lok Sabha election of 1962. In the discussions for seat adjustments, the Muslim League was not consulted and all the 18 seats were adjusted between the congress and the Praja Socialist Party. Disappointed with the developments, the Muslim League was not consulted and all the 18 seats were adjusted between the Congress and the Praja Socialist Party. Disappointed with the developments, the Muslim League state Committee which met on 9th November, 1962 decided to end its alliance with the Congress and asked CH Muhammad Koya to submit his resignation from the speakership.

In the Parliament election of 1962, Muslim League contested from Kozhikode, Manjeri and Ponnani constituencies. CH Muhammad Koya from Kozhikode and Ismail Sahib from Manjeri were declared elected whereas KM Alikunju who contested from the Ponnani constituency was defeated. The election victory of CH Muhammad Koya to the Parliament caused a bye-election in Thanur Assembly constituency. Muslim League contested the election alone and its candidate Dr. CM Kutty won the election with a majority of 12,936 votes.⁸²

81. *The Chandrika Daily* dated 28 September 1961.

82. *The Chandrika Daily* dated 29 April 1962.

Meanwhile some important political developments took place in the State. Pattom Thanupillai was appointed as the Governor of Punjab. Hence he resigned as Chief Minister of Kerala on 25th September, 1962 and R Sankar was sworn in as Chief Minister on the next day. But these steps created more problems in the state politics. For, the P.S.P became disappointed over the loss of Chief Ministership; whereas the Christian lobby in the Congress favoured PT Chacko for the Chief Ministership. It was in this situation that from the opposition side PK Kunju moved a no-confidence motion against the Government. A section of Congress MLAs led by KM George also voted in its favour. Thus the Sankar Ministry fell on 8th September, 1964.⁸³

MID-TERM POLL OF 1965

In the interim poll to the Kerala Assembly which was held on 4th March, 1965 Marxist Party made alliance with the Kerala Congress. Though Samyukta Socialist Party was in the front of the Marxist Party, it had made some election adjustments with the League. The Congress and the Communist Party contested the election alone. When the election results were announced no Party could secure majority. So the Assembly was again dissolved on 24th March, 1965.

83. G. Gopa Kumar, *Regional Political Parties and State Politics*, p87.

1967 ELECTION

The Fourth general election to the parliament and election to the Kerala Assembly were held in February 1967 simultaneously. The importance of this election was that the Muslim League which hitherto was adopting an anti-Communist line changed its policy and came forward to have an alliance with the Marxist Party. In that election, the Muslim League had fielded 15 candidates and won 14 seats. The successful candidates were E Ahamed (Cannanore), PM Aboobacker (Kozhikode II), M. Moideen Kutty Haji (Thanur), Avukkadar Kutty Naha (Tirurangadi), Bava Haji (Tirur), CM Kutty (Kuttippuram), Ummar Bafaqi Thangal (Kondotty), MPM Ahammad Kurikkal (Malappuram), VPC Thangal (Ponnani), CH Muhammad Koya (Mankada), Seethi Thangal (Guruvayur), MPM Jafar Khan (Mattanchery), M. Hakeemji (Kazhakkootam) and M. Chadayan (Manjeri). Hamid Ali Shamnad who contested from Kasargode constituency was the sole defeated League Candidate. He had been defeated by a small margin of 95 votes by a rival independent candidate.⁸⁴ In the Parliament election both Ismail Sahib who contested from Manjeri and Sulaiman Sait who contested from Kozhikode constituency were declared elected.

84. Department of Public Relations (Government of Kerala), *Assembly Elections Since 1951*, pp122-145.

SAMASTHA KERALA MUSLIM LEAGUE

Another development in this election was that a small section of the members left the League in protest against its alliance with the Marxist Party. K. Hasan Gani, a former Deputy Leader of the Muslim League Assembly Party, Sayyid Alavi Koya Thangal, K Muhammad Naha and others were the leaders of the new Party. The Samastha Kerala Muslim League which was formed on 16th November, 1966 fielded six candidates in the 1967 election. All of them were not only defeated but even their deposits were forfeited in the election. Altogether, they got only 3680 votes.⁸⁵ It was revealed that they had no backing in the community. At last, it was dissolved on 19th June 1968 and many of its leaders as well as workers re-joined the Muslim League.⁸⁶

MUSLIM LEAGUE IN THE GOVERNMENT

The year 1967 is a significant year as far as the Muslim politics in India was concerned. The Muslim League, which has been described as a 'dead horse' by Nehru, emerged as a vital and decisive force in Kerala. For the first time since Independence, the Muslim League became a ruling partner of a State. Actually, they had got this opportunity in 1960 when they became victorious with their allies namely, the Congress and the P.S.P. But after the election, the Congress High Command had denied them a place in the cabinet.

85. *The Chandrika Daily* dated 23 February 1967.

86. M. Abdul Aziz, *Rise of Muslims in Kerala Politics*, p75.

As per the previous understanding between the parties of the coalition, Muslim League was given two seats in the Cabinet besides the Deputy Speaker's post. Education and Panchayat portfolios were allotted to the League in which CH Muhammad Koya and MPM Ahamad Kurikkal respectively were declared to be nominees of the Party. MPM Jaffar Khan was announced as the Candidate of the Party for Deputy Speaker's post. Besides the two League members there were two other Muslim ministers in the Cabinet, namely, EK Imbichi Bava of the CPM who was in charge of the Ministry of Transport and PK Kunju of the Samyukta Socialist Party who held the Finance portfolio.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE LEAGUE MINISTERS

One of the important achievements of CH Muhammad Koya as Education Minister of Kerala was the establishment of a University in Malabar area called the Calicut University which was formed through an Ordinance issued by the Governor on 22nd July, 1968. Till the formation of this University, there existed only one University in the state, namely, the University of Kerala. The over-all development of the Malabar region which was very backward in all respects compared with Travancore, was the main motive behind the establishment of this new University.

CH Muhammed Koya introduced the Kerala University Bill 1967 in the Kerala Assembly and initiated the preliminary steps to frame a similar bill for the Calicut University. The bill was aimed at providing service security for

the private college teachers in the State and for preventing mismanagement of private colleges and giving representation to the students in the Senate and Academic Council of the University.⁸⁷

Hitherto, the language teachers in schools were treated only on a par with craft teachers in the matter of salary in spite of the number of hours of teaching work they had. All discriminatory rules against the language teachers (Arabic, Urdu and Sanskrit) were removed. On account of the liberal policy followed by the Government, about 12,000 Arabic teachers got appointment.⁸⁸

It was during this time that an order was issued providing direct payment to the private college teachers of Kerala. Thus, hundreds of private college teachers were saved from the harassment of private college managements. Government had also taken steps for making Secondary Education free by abolishing tuition and examination fees in High School classes. This measure provided immense relief to thousands of students and parents in the State.

The League members were constantly demanding adequate representation of Muslims in the Government services and the judiciary. Accordingly due to their effort EK Moidu was appointed Judge of the Kerala High Court.⁸⁹ Besides that it was only due to their pressure that the EMS

87. *Kerala University Act, 1967*, Government of Kerala, Trivandrum, 1967, pp1-8.

88. M.C. Ibrahim, *op. cit*, p336.

89. *The Kerala Kaumudi Daily* dated 25 March 1969.

Ministry was forced to grant ten percent reservation for Muslims in the Government services considering their under-representation in the Government services.⁹⁰

MPM Ahammed Kurikkal, who held the portfolios of Panchayats, Fisheries and Community Development, could remain in power hardly for one year since he died on 24 October, 1968. Later K Avukkader Kutty Naha was chosen to fill the vacancy of Kurikkal. Within a short span of time, Kurikkal had proved his merit as an able administrator. He had piloted a bill in the Assembly aiming at the decentralization of power. Unfortunately, it was not passed during his lifetime. He had been able to prepare a masterplan for the benefit of the fisherman. However, his greatest achievement was the creation of Malappuram District which had been the long-cherished dream of the Muslim League.

Actually, Muslim League had raised the demand for the creation of Malappuram District in 1960 itself. Alankode Abdul Majeed, a League member, while taking part in the discussion in the Assembly session demanded that a new district must be formed by joining northern Taluks of Palghat District and southern Taluks of Kozhikode District which were very backward in all respects.⁹¹ But nobody came forward to support his demand and the

90. *Proceedings of the Kerala Legislative Assembly*, Vol. VI, No. 1119.

91. *Cheenth*, Malappuram District M.S.F. Souvenir, 1990, p13.

Government also did not take any action on it. In 1968 at a State Muslim League conference held at Calicut, MPM Ahammed Kurikkal moved a resolution demanding the formation of Malappuram District. He was able to convince the delegates with the help of statistics that formation of a new District was the only solution for the eradication of backwardness in that area.⁹²

The demand of the Muslim League for the creation of Malappuram District created great concern and immediate reactions from several quarters. Newspaper dailies like the *Mathrubhumi* and the Indian Express wrote editorials ridiculing the demand of the League saying that Mappilas were still holding the kind of attitudes that had resulted in the partition of India.⁹³

In spite of the protests, the Government appointed N Kaliswaran as Special officer in connection with the formation of the new District who submitted his report in May, 1969. A Cabinet sub-committee consisting of EMS Namboodiripad, K.R. Gouri and CH Muhammed Koya held discussions about the report and approved it. The final decision for the creation of the new District was taken by the Cabinet meeting held on 5th May, 1969 and the new District officially came into being on 16th June, 1969.⁹⁴

92. *The Chandrika Daily* dated 24 October 1969.

93. *The Mathrubhumi Daily* dated 1 March 1968 and *The Indian Express* dated 28 February, 1968.

94. *Malappuram District Gazetteer*, 1986, p4.

Under the leadership of K.Kelappan and the leaders of the Janasangh agitations started against the formation of Malappuram District. An "Anti-District Bifurcation Committee" was organized in this regard.⁹⁵ At Delhi also attempts were made to force the Central Government to interfere in the matter. This was resisted by the then Home Minister on the ground that it was a State concern.⁹⁶

Though the C.P.M. had defended the demand for the formation of Malappuram District on the floor of the Assembly and outside, after the fall of the ministry they had changed their opinion. E.M.S. Namboodiripad, who was the Chief Minister of Kerala at the time of the formation of Malappuram District, after analyzing the situation later came to the conclusion that the formation of Malappuram District had helped the Muslim league in a bigger way to increase their political and organizational base. Not only that the whole authority of the new District went into the hands of the Muslim League and thereby helped the growth of 'Islamic communalism' in the State.⁹⁷

Within a short period schism developed in the United Front. Corruption charges were levelled against all the Ministers except the Chief Minister and the two League Ministers. *Samyuktha Socialist Party and Karshaka Tozhilali Party*, the two partners of the alliance, faced split in their parties. Due

95. Roland E. Miller, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala*, p183.

96. *The Indian Express* dated 26 March 1968.

97. E.M.S. Namboodiripad, *Communist Party in Kerala (Mal)*, Vol. III, p29.

to problems in the coalition, many of the Ministers resigned. At last the Marxist led coalition Ministry crumbled after it was defeated on a voting over a resolution presented by TA Majeed of the Communist Party of India in the Assembly. The EMS Ministry resigned on 24th October, 1969.⁹⁸

Though the coalition government collapsed within a short period, as far as the Muslim League was concerned it was a fruitful period in two ways. Firstly after partition it was for the first time that they got an opportunity to participate in the Government of the country and secondly, it emerged as a strong and decisive political force in Kerala.

98. Perunna K. Nair, *Congress Movement in Kerala* (Mal), p400.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

Muslims of Kerala who constitute nearly one fourth of its population, have developed a culture and history of their own, which is unique in every respect. Islam was introduced into Kerala not by force but in a peaceful manner by Arab traders and missionaries. The Hindu Rajas of Kerala, especially the Zamorins of Calicut, even encouraged the conversion of law class people to Islam.¹

The cordial and friendly relationship that existed between various communities in Kerala deteriorated with the arrival of the European powers. They brought with them communal disharmony and religious intolerance which were current in Medieval Europe among the different church groups and different communities. Among the Europeans, the Portuguese had taken the proselytization of the people to Catholicism as one of their objectives of coming to India.² Their attempt to forcefully convert the people to Christianity was resisted unitedly by the Hindus and Muslims in Kerala.

The reign of terror unleashed by the Portuguese aiming at the deprival of the Arabs from the spices trade of Malabar adversely affected the Mappilas. With the withdrawal of the Arabs from the Malabar Coast, the Mappilas who

1 T.W. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam*, p269.

2 F.C. Danvers, *The Portuguese in India*, Vol. I, p XXXVI. Quoted in Miller, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala*, p61.

depended on the Arabs became an economically ruined community. The great Muslim scholar of Malabar of that period, Shaikh Zaynuddin Makhdum of Ponnani came forward with a call for a *Jihad* against the Portuguese. The Kunjali Marakkars, the admirals of the Zamorins of Calicut fought bravely with the aim of ousting the Portuguese from the Malabar Coast. Though the Marakkars could not defeat the invaders completely, and decisively, it was due to their continuous harassment that the Portuguese were forced to retreat to Goa.

The incessant annoyance by the Portuguese compelled the Arabs to leave the Malabar Coast. With their departure, the Mappilas, who depended on the Arabs slowly moved to the interior areas seeking employment in the agricultural sector. The migration of Mappilas to rural areas evoked problems as the lands were mainly owned by the upper caste Hindus and the Muslims got only the right to occupy land in the feudal order that existed in Malabar during that time.

When Hyder Ali and Tippu Sultan conquered Malabar, the Mappilas heaved a sigh of relief on account of their introduction of reforms in the field of land policy and land-taxation. But when the British invaded Malabar, they re-introduced the old order. The new land settlement which was visibly favourable to the land-lords treated the upper caste Hindus as true ryots and allowed them to squeeze the tenants and sub-tenants, the majority of whom were Mappilas, for increased rents under threat of eviction from land.

The up-risings organized by the tenants and sub-tenants against the hard hearted land lords and their British protectors were being described as Mappila 'Outbreaks' or 'Outrages' by the British officials. Thirty two such uprisings had taken place in the Ernad and Walluvanad Taluks between 1836 and 1919.³

Unni Mutha Muppan, Chemban Pokker, Athan Kurikkal and Hydros were the Mappila rebel leaders during this period. At the spiritual level the religious scholars like Sayyid Alavi Thangal and Sayyid Fazl Pookoya Thangal of Mampuram and Umar Qazi of Veliyankod rendered their leadership. Sayyid Alavi Thangal exhorted the Mappilas to take up arms against the British where as Umar Qazi started a 'No-Tax Agitation' against the Government.

The British dealt with the situation firmly. Most of the rebel leaders were either imprisoned, exiled or killed. Sayyid Fazl Pookoya Thangal, the spiritual leader of the Mappils was deported to Arabia. The Mappilas thus became more desperate and they resorted to terrorism. It resulted in the killing of H.V. Conolly, the Collector of Malabar, by the Mappilas. In retaliation the British intensified their brutalities against the Mappilas. On account of this the Mappilas suffered a lot. The economic activities came to a stand-still and there by the people were subjected to much hardship and poverty.

3 K.N Panikkar, 'Peasant Revolts in Malabar in the 19th and 20th Centuries' in *Peasant Struggles in India*, ed. by A.R. Desai, p608.

These sufferings created hatred in the minds of Mappilas not only towards the British Government but also towards every thing that was brought by them including their language. Thus the Mappilas turned away from acquiring modern education, which eventually led to their backwardness in all walks of life.

It was with such a backdrop that the Twentieth Century set in. Though the activities of the Congress had begun in Malabar also the Mappilas did not show much interest in them till the beginning of the Khilafat Movement. When Gandhiji and Shaukath Ali visited Malabar in August 1920, with a campaign in support of the Khilafat issue, the Mappilas extended them a warm and hearty reception. The issues raised by the movement stirred the extremely religious and conservative Mappilas, who had been nurturing an anti-British feeling all along for the last so many decades. They joined the struggle *enmasse* which resulted in the sprout of Khilafat Committees through out South Malabar. Since the Congress supported the Khilafat Movement with a view to woo the Muslims to the Congress and to the nationalist movement, the Hindus also not only joined the agitation but also became the office-bearers of the Khilafat Committees. The number of Khilafat Committees increased and their meetings began to draw more public attention. Since all these developments were taking place in South Malabar which was even otherwise well known for its anti-British feeling, the Government authorities viewed such developments with great alarm and resolved to nip them in the bud with a firm hand.

The British authorities counter acted by arresting some activists of the Khilafat movement and by destroying their office at Tirurangadi. Soon a rumour spread that the military had destroyed the Mampuram Mosque, a much revered spiritual centre of the Mappilas. The Mappilas retaliated violently and it developed in to a great rebellion. The British on their part proclaimed martial law in the trouble-hit areas and unleashed a reign of terror. The rebellion was suppressed by employing Gurkha, Burmese and British Dorset forces. Rebel leaders like Ali Musliar, Variamkunnath Kunhahamad Haji, Chembrassery Tangal and others were executed.

From the nature of the rebellion it is clear that it was directed against the oppressive land-lords but the British authorities whole-heartedly supported them, owing to the fact that the rebels had targeted mainly Government offices, banks, courts and sub treasuries.⁴ Besides that the rebel leaders were charge sheeted and given death sentences on the charge of waging war against the King of Britain.⁵

It is to be noted that the Congress-nationalist leaders like Abdurahiman Sahib, Moidu Maulovi and others not only kept away from the Rebellion but strongly opposed violent actions on the ground that Gandhiji and the Congress had planned only a non-violent and peaceful agitation against the

4 Miller, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala*, p139.

5 Hitch Cock, *A History of the Malabar Rebellion*, p138.

Government and not a violent revolt. It is a pity that those leaders like Abdurahiman Sahib and Moidu Moulavi who were against use of violence were also arrested and kept under custody.⁶

The Rebellion was suppressed by the Government with a strong hand. As far as the Mappilas were concerned the total destruction brought about by the Rebellion caused them to reflect upon their lapses and mistakes. The introspection made by the leaders of the community resulted in the emergence of an association called the *Kerala Muslim Aikya Sanghom*, the first organization covering the entire region of Kerala in 1922.⁷ The *Sanghom*, though it concentrated mainly on social reformation and educational uplift of the Muslim community of Kerala in the beginning, soon began to show interest in the political affairs also which ultimately resulted in the formation of an exclusively political organization called the Kerala Muslim Majlis in 1931. The Muslim Majlis was in existence only till 1937. In that year the last conference of the Party was held at Tellichery and there after it was merged with the All India Muslim League.

The post-Rebellion period was a tough-time for the Congressmen to work in Malabar. According to K.P. Kesava Menon, "for a long lime after the

6 S.K. Pottekat, *Muhammad Abdurahiman* (Mal), p95. E. Moidu Moulavi, *Moulavi's Autobiography* (Mal), p58, and K.P. Kesava Menon, *Some Contemporary Keralites* (Mal), p94.

7 E.K. Maulavi, 'Kerala Muslim Aikya Sanghom and Reformation in Kerala', in *Kerala Muslim Directory*, (Mal), p468.

rebellion no public activity was possible in Malabar. Enmity towards the Congress was evident everywhere. The authorities stated that the Congressmen had brought down calamity on the country through participation in the Khilafat agitation. Some Hindu leaders accused the Congressmen with treason for joining with the Khilafath. They even wanted all the Congressmen in Malabar to be imprisoned. The Muslims complained that those who had induced them to join the Congress abandoned them when police oppression and firing by the troops started."⁸

Even under such adversities Abdurahiman Sahib, Moidu Moulavi and others not only remained in the Congress but also continued and intensified their activities. They started a newspaper called the Al-Ameen aimed at fostering the spirit of nationalism among the people especially among the Mappilas. Due to their effort a large section of young Muslims were attracted to the Congress-nationalist movement.

Nevertheless, a section of leaders within the K.P.C.C., who mainly belonged to the upper caste Hindu and landed gentry, under the leadership of K Kelappan tried to corner Abdurahiman Sahib and his supporters. They tried to keep Abdurahiman Sahib out of Party positions. When he contested elections, they openly worked against him and supported his rival candidates.⁹

⁸ K.P. Kesavamenon, *The Past*, (Mal), p126.

⁹ E.M.S Namboothirapad, *Kerala, the mother land of Malayalees* (Mal), p365.

In nineteen thirties, a socialistic group emerged within the K.P.C.C. They worked in co-operation with the Nationalist Muslim group which proved to be beneficial to both the groups. In the elections to the K P C C held in 1938, 1939 and 1940 the Leftist-Muslim alliance came to the leadership of the Party. To the Congress Party also it was a favourable period as its membership increased from 4114 in 1934 to 50394 in 1940.¹⁰ Not only that, under the new leadership of the K P C C, activities of the Congress Party were intensified by organizing unions of labours, peasants, teachers and students. Another impact of the friendship between the Leftists and the Nationalist Muslims was that it helped in a bigger way for the revival of the Congress activities in the Muslim pockets of Ernad, Valluvanad and Ponnani Taluks.

During nineteen thirties the Muslim politics of Malabar had taken a new turn with the emergence of the *Kerala Muslim Majlis* in 1931 and the Muslim League in 1937. Since the policy, programme and leadership of these two organizations had much in common, the *Kerala Muslim Majlis* merged with the All India Muslim League in 1937. The main difference between these parties and the Nationalist-Muslims was that while the former argued that the Muslim community should get their grievances conceded from the Congress first, as other wise, with the withdrawal of the British the condition of Muslims would become most unsafe in this country, the latter countered that it was

10 K. Gopalan Kutty, 'The Task of Transforming the Congress: Malabar, 1934-40, *Studies in History*, 5, 2n.s, New Delhi, 1989, p188.

better for the community to take part actively in the anti-British struggle along with other communities to safe guard their interests and to get their demands conceded.¹¹ In Malabar, KM Seethi Sahib and Abdul Sathar Sait advocated the former ideology where as Abdurahiman Sahib was the main protagonist of the latter group.

Though the All India Muslim League was formed in 1906 in Dacca, a unit of it was formally established in Malabar only in 1937. The election victory of Abdul Sathar Sait in 1934 to the Central Legislative Assembly had been a turning point in the history of Malabar. The Congress stalwart Abdurahiman Sahib was defeated in the election. In 1937 in the election to the Madras Legislative Assembly, though B. Pokker Sahib suffered defeat, it did not reverse the trend of League's growth in Malabar. In the subsequent elections also the Muslim League continued their triumphant march by winning more and more seats and there by increasing their popular base.

Meanwhile a branch of the Communist Party of India was formed in Malabar in secrecy in 1937. Till this date the Leftists were functioning within the Congress Party under the banner of the Congress Socialist Party. At the beginning Muslims as a community did not show any interest in the activities of the Communist Party as they considered it anti-religious and anti-Islamic.

11 E.M.S. Namboodiripad, *op. cit.*, p367.

But the friendship between the Leftists and the Nationalist Muslims within the Congress provided an opportunity for the Leftists to draw a section of young Muslims to their fold. The concept of a classless society that can only be achieved through a communist setup had allured some youngsters to Communism. The systematic and disciplined style of functioning of the Party, their cry for reforms and exiting call for the creation of the new world order also influenced them. Besides that during the time of the Second World War some zealous Muslim youngsters who were arrested and put behind the bars on security grounds came in touch with some revolutionary leaders there. In the prison itself they became communists. Some educated people became communists by reading books and articles on Socialism and Communism and by being impressed by the Soviet experiments. Some Muslim labourers especially fishermen, beedi workers and plantation labourers, came in touch with Communism through trade union activities. Any way, it is a fact that compared to other communities, the membership of the Mappilas is very thin in the Communist Party. The attitude of the community towards the Communist movement stood almost the same till the end of the nineteen sixties, that is, till the formation of an alliance between the Communist Party and the Muslim League.

In the first election to the Kerala Legislative Assembly held in 1957, though the Congress and the League held the same attitude towards the Communist Party, they failed to reach an agreement on account of the

differences on certain other points. With the result that the communists got majority and came to power in 1957. Two years later when the 'Liberation Struggle' started the League joined the agitation along with the Congress and the P S P.

The 'Liberation Struggle' ended in the dismissal of the Namboodiripad Ministry in 1959. The leaders of the 'Liberation Struggle' joined together and formed an 'Anti-Communist Front'. They faced the election jointly. On account of the election alliance the League could increase its strength from 8 to 11 in the Assembly and the Congress and the P S P benefited out of the alliance with the League in the Malabar area which resulted in the rout of the Communist candidates there. Altogether the Congress secured 20 seats more while the P S P 11 seats more in the Assembly. In spite of this, the Congress High command was not ready to give any berth to the League in the Cabinet. When the other partners of the coalition and the former leadership of the 'Liberation Agitation' insisted on the inclusion of the League in the Ministry, the Congress at last conceded to give them Speakership of the Assembly. Later, when Seethi Sahib, the Speaker of the Assembly, died the Congress insisted that C H Muhammed Koya, the League Nominee for the Speakership, should resign from his Party before he filed his nomination. This type of attitude shown by the Congress caused alienation between the Congress and the League. Not only that even the non-League Muslims viewed it with resentment. As a consequence in the 1967 election to the Kerala Assembly the League joined the Communist Front,

by setting aside all their differences and by making changes in the policy with regard to the Communist Party. Their only concern was to teach the Congress a lesson by keeping the Congress out of power.

The wish of the League came true. The Congress, which contested in every seat could secure only 9 seats as against 36 in 1965 and 63 in 1960 while the Communists (both CPI and CPI(M)) won 71 seats as against 43 in 1965 and 29 in 1960.¹² The Muslim League fielded 15 candidates out of which all except one came out successful with huge margins. In the 1960 election to the Assembly they had got 11 seats with the support of the Congress and the P S P. In 1965, they contested the election without the support of the Congress or the CPI. and hence could secure only 6 seats.

The alliance between the Communist Party and the League had created problems to both the parties from within. In the Muslim League, a section of its members protesting against the decision of the League leadership quit the Party and formed the Samastha Kerala Muslim League. A section of orthodox ulama under the leadership of K K Sathakathulla Maulavi, President of the Kerala Jamiyyathul Ulama openly criticized the changed attitude of the League leadership and exhorted the Muslims to vote for the Congress.¹³ At the same time though no open criticism came from the CPI(M), its leader EMS

12 The CPI had faced a split in the Party in 1964 which resulted in the formation of the CPI(M)

13 Victor M Fic, *Kerala, Yenan of India*, p385.

Namboodiripad justified the stand of the party on its alliance with the League and the Kerala Congress while replying to the criticism from some quarters that the alliance had helped the Communist movement in two ways. Firstly it thwarted the Congress plan of arraying the communal forces against the movement of the labour classes. Secondly, it helped to win over Muslims and the Christians who were following a hostile attitude to Communism, to the party and thereby to convert the party as a mass movement containing all sections of the community.¹⁴

The election alliance between the League and the Communist Party in 1967 had benefited both the parties. It helped the communists to capture more seats in the Malabar area and thereby keep the Congress out of power. It also provided them a chance to come closer to the Mappila community and to get in touch with their pulse. As far as the League was concerned the election alliance brought about more benefits to them. They contested and won more seats with bigger margins. In this election they also could carve out new pockets within and beyond the Malabar region. Two of its nominees became ministers and one of its members got the Deputy Speakership. It is to be noted that it was for the first time since Independence that the League got a chance to become the ruling partner of a state. In short the League emerged as a vital decisive political force in Kerala.

14 EMS Namboodiripad, *India's Freedom Struggle and the Communist Movement*, (Mal), p90.

The moral responsibility for making the Muslim League a political force to be reckoned with goes to the other secular national parties like the Congress and the Communist Party. While the major political parties sought the help of the League to capture power, the League by using their bargaining power tried to increase their mass base. It is to be noted that in Kerala the League was gaining strength at a time when in other parts of India they were losing their power or were witnessing a complete exit from the political scene.

In Kerala, as the League became a major political party and a ruling partner, the Muslim folk were inspired to join the Party. As a result the membership of Muslims in other parties gradually decreased. Eventually it led to the under-representation of Muslims in the leadership of the secular parties and the inadequate proportion of Muslim members in the Kerala Assembly and the Parliament representing secular parties.

Since the Muslims of Kerala joined the League *enmasse*, the Muslim community of Kerala became politically a united group, compared to the Muslims of other States. Through their partnership in the Government they were able to achieve more benefits to the Community. In educational and service sectors the Muslims of Kerala had moved ahead of their counterparts in other states, mainly due to the presence of the League. The social and educational organizations like the Muslim Educational society, and Muslim

Educational Association etc. joined hands with the League to attain this position.

The partnership in the Government and the contact the League had with the secular parties had helped the League to get transformed from a mere communal organization in to a non-communal and responsible political party striving for the welfare of the people and for the development of the nation. It is worth noting that in Malabar, which in the strong hold of Muslim League, the people could maintain communal harmony and there was no communal riot since its formation, though in other parts of India communal disharmony was often manifest.

The success of the League experiment gave cause to the other major communities of Kerala also to organize their own political parties. As a result the Kerala Congress of the Christians, the National Democratic Party of the Nairs, the Socialist Republican Party of the Ezhavas, the Indian Labour Party of the Dalits, the Democratic Labour Party of the Hindu fishermen, the Indian Labour Congress of the Latin Catholics, the National Socialist Party of the Hindu Nadars, the National Democratic Socialist Party of the Christian Nadars, the Janathipathya Socialist Party of the Jacobite Christians etc. came into existence. Among these caste or religion based political experiments and movements, of course, the Muslim League was the most successful.

APPENDIX I
REPRESENTATION OF MUSLIMS IN THE SECULAR PARTIES
(Kerala Legislative Assembly Elections)

Sl. No.	Year	Party	Seats Contested	Seats Won	No. of Muslim Candidates Contested	No. of Seats Won by Muslim Candidates	No. of Seats Lost to Muslim Candidates
1	1957	Congress	124	43	17	3	14
		Communist	100	60	5	3	2
		PSP	62	9	6	--	6
2	1960	Congress	80	63	8	6	2
		Communist	108	29	10	1	9
		PSP	33	20	3	2	1
3	1965	Congress	133	36	14	4	10
		CPI	78	3	5	--	5
		CPI(M)	73	40	8	3	5
		SSP	29	13	4	1	3
4	1967	Congress	133	9	10	--	10
		CPI	22	19	1	1	--
		CPI(M)	59	52	4	4	--
		SSP	21	19	3	3	--
		PSP	7	--	1	--	1

APPENDIX II
PERFORMANCE OF THE MUSLIM LEAGUE IN
THE KERALA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Year	Total Seats	Seats Contested	Seats Won	Votes Polled	Percentage of Votes
1957	126	16	8	2,75,623	4.72
1960	126	12	11	3,99,925	5.00
1965	133	16	6	2,42,529	3.83
1967	133	15	14	4,24,159	6.76

PERFORMANCE OF THE MUSLIM LEAGUE IN THE
LOK SABHA ELECTIONS FROM KERALA (Since 1957)

Year	Total Seats	Seats Contested	Seats Won	Votes Polled	Percentage of Votes
1957	18	4	1	3,51,940	5.81
1962	18	3	2	2,48,038	4.49
1967	19	2	2	4,14,091	6.60

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