

CHAPTER I

THE EVOLUTION OF PRESS IN KERALA

The printing press in India was a western import which has turned out to be the most beneficial legacies of Western colonial rule. As elsewhere in South India, the pioneers of press in Kerala were the Western missionaries. The main driving force behind their journalistic zeal was, ofcourse, the propagation of Christianity. But that does not take away from the revolutionary significance of the introduction of modern printing press in this part of the world.

Before the evolution of the printing technology, journalism had no existence in Kerala. The evolution of printing, rapid increase in the number of educational institutions and above all the mass interest in current affairs led to the inception of vernacular journalism.¹

The first printing press was established by Rev. Benjamin Bailey in the C.M.S. Press Kottayam in 1811, with the help of the British Resident Colonel Monroe. Rev. Bailey may rightly be considered as the father of modern Malayalam printing technology. A carpenter and two blacksmiths were made to live in the press for the sake of moulding modern alphabets in Malayalam. However, Kerala could not claim the credit of commencing printing in Malayalam; Malayalam printing first commenced at the Curier Press in Bombay in 1811. The first book to be printed in Malayalam was the Holy Bible.²

¹ Puduppally Raghavan, *Kerala Pathrapravarthana Charithram* (Mal.), Trissur, 1985, p. 13.

² P.J. Thomas, *Keralathile Kristeey a Sahityam* (Mal.), 1935, pp. 84-85.

According to the Press Commission Report, released in 1954, the 'Vijnana Nikshepam', published from Kottayam in 1840, was the first newspaper in Kerala. Two inadvertent errors occurred in this report; it misquoted 'Jnana Nikshepam', the name of the journal, as 'Vijnana Nikshepam' and its year of publication as 1840 instead of 1848. Many committed the same mistake later.

Now it has been generally acknowledged that '*Rajya Samacharam*' was the first journal published in Kerala. It came out from Illikkunnu, a remote village near Thalassery, in June 1847. The size of the journal was Royal with eight pages and was printed in a hand-made cyclostyled press. The journal was published by the German Basel Evangelical Mission from Nettur, Thalassery. Neither the name of the editor nor the price of the journal was given in the journal. Perhaps it was a publication intended for free circulation. While K.P Vareed argued that Fr. Muller might have been the editor of the publication,³ Murkoth Kunhappa felt that it might have been edited by no less a person than Dr. Hermann Gudert,⁴ the coordinator of the Basel Mission.⁵ Anyway, what can be said with a measure of certainty is that Gundert was the moving spirit behind '*Rajya Samacharam*'.⁶

The contents of '*Rajya Samacharam*' were mostly evangelical and were often critical of other religions, especially Hinduism and Islam. From June

³ K.P. Vareed, *Dr. Herman Gundert*, Kottayam, 1973, pp. 94-95.

⁴ Born in 1814 at Stuttgart in Germany, Hermann Gundert arrived in India in 1836 as a missionary. He reached Kerala in 1838 and made Thalassery his centre of activity. He lived at Illikkunnu in Nettur near Thalassery from April 1839 till he returned to Germany in 1859. He was known to have a special aptitude to study languages and knew no less than 18 languages. Gundert had made immense contribution to the development of Malayalam language, the Malayalam-English dictionary being his most lasting legacy.

⁵ Murkoth Kunhappa, *Malayala Manorama Samskarika Tharangini* (Mal.), Kottayam, 1973, p. 95.

⁶ K.K.N. Kurup and K.J. John (ed.), *Legacy of Basel Mission and Hermann Gundert*, Calicut, 1993.

1847 to December 1850, forty-two issues of the journal had seen the light of the day. The paper used was of such durability that even the lapse of more than one and a half century could not damage it. It was one Kannankatu, a native, who composed the type.

'*Paschimodayam*' was another journal published by the Basel Mission, Nettur, from Illikkunnu. The first issue came out in October 1847. It too was a cyclostyled issue like the 'Rajyasamacharam', with an annual subscription of only half a rupee. This was the second journal launched by Hermann Gundert and was also the second in Malayalam. At the end of every issue the name of Fr. Muller was printed as the editor. However, it was widely believed that the hands that were set behind 'Paschimodayam', as was the case with 'Rajyasamacharam', were that of Gundert himself.⁷

The proclaimed aim of the publication was to appraise the people in these parts of the world about the modern trends in the then existing western science and other scientific exploration. Gundert was an expert news editor who could coin most suitable headings and captions. He never failed in the matter of providing illustrations. 'Paschimodayam' mostly dealt with astronomy, geography and Kerala history. Astronomy, in particular, was dealt with in detail giving the solar system, movement of stars, distance in between them etc. According to Murkoth Kunhappa, write-ups in the 'Paschimodayam' contained modern knowledge from the west.⁸ With 'Paschimodayam' began the dissemination of modern knowledge in Kerala. No wonder, the journal circulated not only among the Christians but also among the Hindus. It will be no exaggeration to state that modern journalism in Kerala commenced with 'Paschimodayam'.

⁷ K.P. Vareed, Op.cit., pp. 94-100.

⁸ Murkoth Kunhappa, op.cit., pp. 104-06.

The first printed magazine in Malayalam language was the 'Jnana Nikshepam' published at the CMS Press, Kottayam in November 1848. The credit for starting this journal goes to Rev. Benjamin Bailey of the Church Mission Society. Arch Deacon Koshy and Rev. George Mathen were also actively involved in the conduct of this paper.⁹ It was an eight-page monthly with price one chakra. The contents of the journal have done justice to the title which means 'Treasury of Knowledge'. As has been mentioned earlier, the general impression that it was the first journal in Kerala was corrected later. 'Njana Nikshepam' can be considered as the first magazine in Kerala which imbibed all the features of a modern journal. Just below the title, a list of contents was given on either side of the journal under the banner 'Sangathi Vivarangal' (subject matter), one after another.

Rev. George Mathen published 'Vidya Samgraham' in 1864 with Richard Collins, the principal of CMS College, as the patron. This publication, which was also known as the 'Kottayam College Quarterly Magazine', did not last long. Between 1864 and 1867 only three volumes had come out.

The first newspaper published from Kerala was in English, the 'Western Star' from Cochin in 1860. It was also the first publication started by non-clergies in Kerala. The first editor of this paper was said to be Sir Charles Lawson who later became the editor of the 'Madras Mail'. In August 1864, a Malayalam edition of the 'Western Star' was published which was named 'Paschimataraka'. Ittoop writer and T.J. Pailey were the early editors of this first newspaper in Malayalam. Later Philippose Asan became the editor.¹⁰

⁹ Department of Public Relations, *The Press in Kerala*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1977, p. 2.

¹⁰ C.L. Antony, *Bhashagadya Sahitya Charithram - Prasthanangalilude* (Mal.), Kottayam, 1958.

In 1870 another newspaper started publication from Kochi which was titled '*Kerala Pataka*'. It had as its editors Mangalath Kunjunni Asan and T.J. Pailey who was earlier connected with '*Paschimataraka*'. The appearance of '*Kerala Pataka*' seems to have had an adverse impact on the circulation of '*Paschimataraka*', the publication of which was stopped for a brief period. In course of time the two papers merged to form the '*Paschimataraka-Keralapataka*', but this arrangement did not last long and '*Paschimataraka*' reappeared in its original name. There is however no evidence of the continued existence of '*Kerala Pataka*'. Under Philippose Asan, the '*Paschimataraka*' made frequent attacks on the Catholics and the Pope.¹¹ The paper also gave enough space for news of public interest and was not afraid of attacking bureaucracy.

W.H. Moore started the '*Travancore Herald*', an English paper from the CMS Press, Kottayam in 1867. As a supplement to this, he also published a Malayalam paper from the same press, the '*Santishtavadi*'. Because of its outspoken criticism of Divan Madhavarayar's administration, the Travancore Government banned its publication. '*Santhishtavadi*', thus, became the first martyr to the cause of freedom of the press in Malayalam journalism.¹²

All these early publications were run by Protestant Christians and the one thing common to all these journals was their criticism of the Pope and Catholic principles. This naturally injured the pride of the Catholics and they felt the need of having their own publication. Their first venture was '*Kerala*', started in 1866 by Anthony Annavi, a Catholic from Kochi.¹³

¹¹ K.M. Cheriyan Kozhuvallur, *Kalloor Oommen Philippose*, Kottayam, 1973, pp. 47-48.

¹² Chummar Chundel and Sukumaran Pottekkat (ed.), *Malayala Pathra Charithram* (Mal.), 1977, p. 95.

¹³ G. Priyadarshan, *Malayala Pathrapravarthanam-Prarambha Swaroopam* (Mal.), Trissur, 1982, p. 36.

But the major catholic mouthpiece was the 'Satyanadakahalam' which started publication from Kunanmavu on 12 October 1876 under the auspices of the Italian Carmelite Mission. There is difference of opinion as regards the first editor of 'Satyananda Kahalam'. Though the name of Fr. Candidus, an Italian missionary, is printed below the first editorial, several scholars have accepted the name of Fr. Louis Vaippisseri as the first editor on the basis of some Carmelite documents and tradition. The first editorial promised that the paper would give preference to general knowledge and news. Its publishing centre was shifted to Varapuzha in 1879 and later to Ernakulam. Started as a fortnightly, it was issued thrice a month from 1900 and then converted into a weekly. After an uninterrupted independent existence of nearly a century, it merged with the 'Kerala Times' in 1970. After the merger, the Sunday edition of the 'Kerala Times' was styled as 'Satyanandam'. Though 'Satyananda Kahalam' was started with the objective of working for the material and spiritual well being of the Catholics, it also contributed to the general progress and welfare of the people of Kerala.¹⁴

The next paper to come out from Kochi was the 'Kerala Deepakam' in 1878. It was started by Kathru Sahaji Bappu, a Muslim from Kochi. As such, it was the first paper on behalf of the Muslim community in Kerala. But it appears that the paper did not have a long existence.

From the embers of 'Paschimodayam', which died out in 1851, yet another light in Malayalam journalism was kindled in 1874. The new journal was named '*Keralopakari*'. The journal was printed at the Basel Mission Press, Mangalore and published from Nettur, Thalassery by the Basel Evangelical Mission. Lawrence Porathur, an evangelist, was the most famous among the Indians who edited this journal. He was a scholar and thinker, and his articles enriched Christian literature. The magazine had a lifespan of 42

¹⁴ Puduppally Raghavan, op.cit., p. 63.

years. It had 16 pages and its annual subscription was 12 annas. 'Keralopakari' contained social, religious and literary matters.

In 1878 '*Malayalamitram*' was published from Kottayam. Its lifespan must have been very short and nothing was heard about it later. '*Kerala Chandrika*' was started in 1879 from Trivandrum. Vengayil Kunhiraman Nayanar¹⁵ wrote political articles in it which were highly critical of the administration. Because of official opposition '*Kerala Chandrika*' did not have a smooth run and had to stop publication before long. The *West Coast Spectator*, an English weekly printed by Vakil Poovadan Raman from the Spectator Press, Calicut started publication in 1879 with Dr. Keys, an Englishman, as its editor. Later, its name was changed as the '*Malabar Spectator*'.

Devji Bhimji, a Gujarati merchant of Kochi, had made significant contribution to the growth of Malayalam journalism in its early phase. Coming to Mattancherry from Gujarat at the age of ten in 1840, he became, through sheer hardwork, a successful merchant and industrialist. Having been attracted to printing and publishing, he founded the Keralamitram Press in 1867 and published a number of books. In January 1881, he started publishing a weekly, '*Kerala Mitram*', from the same press under the editorship of Kandathil Varghese Mappila, who was later to found the '*Malayala Manorama*'. The weekly's approach towards social issues of the time did not betray any religious or caste bias and it became acceptable to people belonging to all castes and communities. Good literary articles including book reviews adorned the pages of '*Kerala Mitram*' during this period.¹⁶ Perunna K.N. Nair had characterized '*Keralamitram*' as the first real

¹⁵ Popularly known by his pseudonym '*Kesari*', Vengayil Kunhiraman Nayanar was a celebrated journalist known for his wit and sharp humour.

¹⁶ Chummar Chundel and Sukumaran Pottekkat (ed.), *Op. cit.*, p.100.

newspaper in Malayalam.¹⁷ Varghese Mappila left 'Kerala Mitram' after two years and for the remaining twelve years of its existence it was edited by Mangalath Kunjunni Asan. Unfortunately, it could not survive long after the death of its founder, Devji Bhimji in 1894. For a few years Devji Bhimji had also published a Marathi journal, 'Kerala Kokil'.

The first Malayalam newspaper published from Malabar was 'Keralapatrika', started by Chengulath Kunhiraama Menon in 1884 from Kozhikode. This was printed from the Vidyavilasini Press, founded by Kalahastiyappa Muthaliyar, former Munsif of Calicut. A graduate teacher in Kozhikode, Chengulath was a prolific writer. When he visited Calcutta in 1884 to attend the conference of the Indian National Association, he conceived the idea of starting a weekly on the model of the 'Amrita Bazaar Patrika'. With the foundation of the Indian National Congress, 'Kerala Patrika' became, for all practical purposes, the mouthpiece of the Congress. It translated the name of the Congress as Bharatha Mahajana Sabha.¹⁸ The resolutions and the addresses of its leaders received wide coverage in the 'Patrika'. It also featured news on international affairs.

As the editor of 'Kerala Patrika', Chengulath could wield a free pen that struck out against official corruption and injustice. He was fined Rs. 51 for publishing an article criticizing the Government. It must have been the first instance in Malabar when an editor had to face punishment for freedom of the press.¹⁹ Impressed by the crusading spirit of 'Kerala patrika', it is said that the Travancore Raja subscribed for 200 copies for distribution among his officials. Kunhiraama Menon also waged a crusade against the caste system.

¹⁷ Perunna K.N. Nair, *Malayala Pathrathinte Kadha* (Mal.), Ernakulam, 1976, p.15.

¹⁸ Ullur S. Parameswara Iyer, *Kerala Sahitya Charithram* (Mal.), Vol. VI, Trivandrum, 1957, p. 442.

¹⁹ K.P. Kesava Menon, *Samakaleena Keralaeyar* (Mal.), (Vol. I), Kottayam, 1974, p. 22.

Sanjayan rightly observed that Kunhirama Menon was to Malayalam journalism what Kumaran Asan was to modern Malayalam poetry.²⁰ Chengulath is rightly considered the father of political journalism in Kerala. He retired from the conduct of the paper in 1910, leaving it in the hands of his nephew Cheriya Kunhirama Menon (popularly known as M.R.K.C.), who was already a famous literary figure. Because of his other pre-occupations, MRKC could not manage the paper properly. Sanjayan and Koyipalli Parameswara Kurup were some of the other editors of 'Kerala Patrika'. Among the prominent persons who wrote articles for it, the names of Appu Nedungadi (the author of 'Kunthalatha'), O. Chandu Menon (the author of 'Indulekha') and Vengayil Kunhiraman Nayanar ('Kesari') deserve special mention.

'Kerala Patrika' which was the main spokesman of the Congress in Malabar during its moderate phase, turned a critic of the national organization once it embarked on an extra-constitutional and law-breaking agitation under Gandhi.

The 'Malayali' was a monthly started in 1886 in Trivandrum as an official organ of the Malayali Social Reform League which later became the Malayali Sabha. Pattayil Raman Pillai Asan was its first editor. Later under C.V. Raman Pillai, a literary giant and a Government employee, it became a crusader for social and political reform. 'Malayali' is remembered most for being the moving spirit behind the Malayali Memorial agitation. It raised the slogan of 'Travancore for Tavancoreans' and vehemently criticized the policy of appointing Tamil Brahmins in the higher posts of the state service. Later C.V. Raman Pillai had to resign, when the Travancore Government prohibited its employees from running a press. The paper itself shifted the publishing centre to Thangasseri in Kollam, which was a British enclave, fearing official

²⁰ M.R. Nair, *Sanjayan* (Mal.), Vol. II, Kozhikode, 1970, p. 25.

retaliation.²¹ Swadeshabhmani K. Ramakrishna Pillai served as its editor for a brief period around this time. He was followed by K. Velu Pillai as the editor. It was during this period that Sahitya Panchananan P.K. Narayana Pillai wrote a series of satirical articles titled 'Kalikala Vaibhavam', under the pseudonym, 'Damanan'. It became an instant hit and the paper's circulation increased significantly.

Later 'Malayali' was shifted back to Trivandrum and came out as a daily under the editorship of M.R. Madhava Warriar. Under him it supported the struggle for responsible Government in Travancore, and its name and circulation reached new heights during this period. But the Government retaliated by prohibiting the publication of the paper and it had to stop publication till 1946. In that year it restarted publication as a daily from Kesavavilasam Press, Trivandrum. In 1960 the proprietorship of the paper passed on to the Nair Service Society and it began to be published from Changanachery. A decade later, 'Malayali' went out of publication.

'Nasrani Deepika' started publication on 15 April 1887 from the Mannaman St. Joseph Press on the initiative of Nasrani Jatyaiikya Sangham. As its name suggests, it was a 'Christian paper'. The first Managing Editor of the paper was Nidhiyirikkal Manikkathanar. From 1895 onwards it was published thrice a month; in 1899 it became a weekly; from 1912 onwards it was published twice a week and in 1927 it became a daily. It was the imaginative leadership of Fr. Evujin that gave the newspaper a new direction. He shifted the publishing centre from the remote Mannanam to the Kottayam city and deleted the word 'Nasrani' from its name so as to make it acceptable to all communities and castes.

²¹ Kerala History Association, *Kerala Charithram* (Mal.) (Vol. II), Kochi, 1974, p. 783.

Upliftment of the community had always been the main aim of 'Deepika' and in pursuit of that end no sacrifice was deemed big enough. Though Christians did not get my significant benefit out of the Malayali Memorial agitation, 'Deepika' still supported it. It also supported all agitations waged by Christians and other minorities and backward classes for equal rights and status vis-à-vis the forward classes. 'Deepika' was also in the vanguard of the 'Nivarthana' or Abstention movement. The struggle for responsible Government in Travancore got general support from the part of 'Deepika'. There were, however, occasions when the paper was found wanting in taking a bold stand; for eg: it supported the Travancore Government's deportation of Swadeshabhimani K. Ramakrishna Pillai. 'Deepika' also played a significant role in the agitation against nationalisation of education in Travancore in 1995. The contribution of 'Deepika' in the field of culture and literature was no insignificant.

Reference has already been made about the English paper 'West Coast Spectator' from Calicut launched by Poovadan Raman. As a supplement to it, a Malayalam weekly was started on 3 October 1888. This was 'Kerala Sanchari' and its first editor was Vengayil Kunhiraman Nayanar ('Kesari'). Under C.P. Govindan Nair, a teacher of Guruvayurappan College, 'Kerala Sanchari' made considerable progress.²² Its critical approach towards the social, political and cultural issues of the time was commendable. In 1921, C. Krishnan, the prominent Ezhava leader and editor of *Mitavadi* bought the rights of *Kerala Sanchari* and the latter was merged into the former.

The tradition of the missionary pioneers was kept up by some journals started by certain priests, for the propagation of Christian philosophy and teachings like 'Karmala Kusumam', 'Sathyadootham', 'Cherupushpam', 'Osana' and 'Penthikoshth'. Hindu scholars, on their part, felt the need of replying to

²² Chummar Chundel and Sukumaran Pottekkat (ed), op.cit., p. 108.

the criticism of the Christian journals and clarify the doubts of the people and started journals like 'Arya Siddhanta Chandrika' from Kozhikode, 'Kerala Dharshanam' from Kottarakkara, 'Sivagogivilasam' and 'Abhinava Keralam', edited by Vagbhadananda Guru and others from Malabar.

The establishment of 'Malayala Manorama' marks a turning point in Kerala journalism.²³ Eversince he left the 'Keralamitram', Kandathil Varghese Mappila had been thinking of starting a newspaper on his own. For this purpose, a joint stock company was formed, the second of its kind in Kerala and the first by the Keralites, viz., the Malayala Manorama Company in 1889 at Kottayam. It started its publication as a weekly on 22 March 1890 under the editorship of Varghese Mappila. Under him, *Malayala Manorama* gave a prominent place to linguistic and literary matters; of the four pages of the paper, one full page was allotted for these. On the initiative of Varghese Mappila, a forum of Malayalam poets was formed which was called the Bhashaposhini Sabha. The Sabha had played its own role in unifying the three different administrative units of Travancore, Cochin and Malabar into a single cultural unit. The *Bhashaposhini* monthly was launched as part of this great endeavour.

After the death of Varghese Mappila in 1904, his brother's son K.C. Mammen Mappila took his position and guided the paper for the next half a century. His long stewardship was responsible for making the *Malayala Manorama* what it is today. Even as he renovated the paper and published news of social, political and national importance he also took care of its financial side, making *Malayala Manorama* one of the greatest success stories of Indian press industry. Started as a weekly in 1890, it was converted into a bi-weekly in 1901 and from 1918 it was issued thrice a week; finally it was

²³ P.K.K. Menon, *History of Freedom Movement in Kerala* (Vol. II), Trivandrum, 1966, p.499.

made a daily on 16 January 1928. In 1937, the *Malayala Manorama Weekly* was launched with E.V. Krishna Pillai as its first editor.

The contribution of *Malayala Manorama* in the social, cultural and political fields has been immense. Its first editorial was about the education of the untouchables, *Pulayarude Vidyabhyasam*, which strongly argued for extending education to the untouchables of Kerala. The paper extended support to the social and political movements like Malayali Memorial, Ezhava Memorial, Temple Entry Agitation, Abstention Movement and the movement for responsible government in Travancore. Its strong espousal of the cause of responsible government in Travancore inevitably led to a clash with Diwan C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer's Government. The Government confiscated the paper on 9th September 1938 for publishing, the news about the police firing at Neyyattinkara. The office of the *Malayala Manorama* was sealed on 10 September and its editor K.C. Mammen Mappila along with his brother K.C. Eappen and his son K.M. Eappen were arrested and sent to jail. The paper could resume its publication only after independence.

A year after the birth of *Malayala Manorama* from Kottayam, another 'Manorama' began publication from Kozhikode as a fortnightly. This was started by the Kerala Mahajana Sabha which was a forum of some prominent personalities of Kozhikode for discussing social and political issues of the day, and had the patronage of the royal family of the Zamorins.²⁴ To distinguish it from *Malayala Manorama*, it was popularly called the *Kozhikodan Manorama*. When K.P. Kesava Menon was studying law in England, he used to write articles for the *Manorama*, under the title *Bilathi Visheshangal*. The paper was forced to stop publication in 1940 owing to newsprint scarcity caused by the World War II.

²⁴ Perunna K.N. Nair, op. cit., p.43.

The first newspaper to be published in the name of the Ezhava community was the *Sujananandini*, started by Paravoor Kesavan Asan from Kollam in 1892. The *Ganaranjini*, a literary magazine launched by Udaya Varma from Nadapuram and the *Saraswathy*, published from Thalassery by Murkoth Kumaran were some of the other papers that came out during this period. On the initiative of Appan Tampuran and Kodungallur Kunjukuttan Thampuran, *Mangalodayam*, a bilingual monthly was launched by the Yogakshema Sabha. A major portion of it was printed in Sanskrit and only a small portion in Malayalam. The *Nair*, started as a monthly in 1902 by Kainikkara Kumara Pillai, projected mainly the customs and manners and the history of Nairs.

The *Paropakari* was one of the earliest Muslim journals to be published from Malabar. Starting from 1902 *Paropakari* continued to be published for about three years from Kozhikode under the editorship of prominent Muslim reformer Sayyid Makti Tangal.

Vivekodayam, the official organ of the Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam, was launched in 1904 from Trivandrum with Kumaran Asan, the great poet and General Secretary of the Yogam, as the editor. The upliftment of the backward communities, especially the Ezhavas and Thiyyas, was the aim of this publication. K. Damodaran and R. Sankar, among others, also served as its editors. Later C.R. Kesavan Vaidyar purchased it and published it from Irinjalakuda. No other newspaper did make as much contribution as did *Vivekodayam* towards upliftment of the avarnas in Travancore.²⁵

In 1905 Vakkom Abdul Khader Moulavi started the Swadeshabhimani Press in Chirayinkil taluk and published a newspaper from it in the same name, *Swadeshabhimani*. In 1906 he entrusted the editorship of the

²⁵ Puduppally Raghavan, op. cit., p.146.

publication to K. Ramakrishna Pillai (later he become famous as Swadeshabhimani Ramakrishna Pillai) who was already experienced in journalism. As the editor of *Malayali* in 1903, his articles in it were sensational and very popular. Soon Ramakrishna Pillai became a co-partner of the Swadeshabhimani Press and paper, and it was shifted to Trivandrum in 1907.

He was a patriot with uncommon courage and a strong critic of the corrupted bureaucracy. *Swadeshabhimani*, under him, fought for the dignity and liberty of the individual and freedom of the press. The paper became a nightmare to royal officials, especially the Diwan of Travancore, P. Rajagopalachari. His editorial on 24 August 1910 which concluded with the wish that 'if Vishakam Thirunal were the Maharaja, Diwan P. Rajagopalachari would have been punished by flogging him with the cudgels of the Maharaja's horsemen', invited the royal proclamation deporting him from Travancore and confiscating his press and paper.²⁶ The deportation made him the greatest martyr for freedom of the press in Kerala. After deportation he edited the *Atmaposhini* from Kunnankulam from 1913 to 1915. He had also authored a number of pioneering works including the biographies of Karl Marx and M.K. Gandhi and a series of articles on socialism. Afflicted by tuberculosis, his last years were miserable. He died in 1928 at Kannur.

'Kavana Kaumudi' which started publication from Pandalam in November 1904, was unique in that it was a fortnightly in the poetic medium. Started under the patronage of Pandalath Kerala Varma Thampuran, it was dedicated to the development of Malayalam poetry. After two years its publication was shifted to Trissur; in 1909 it returned to Pandalam for a brief period. After P.V. Krishna Warriar assumed its publication, 'Kavana Kaumudi' was published from Kottakkal. It had made incomparable

²⁶ *Swadeshabhimani*, 24 August 1910, Quoted in Puduppally Raghavan, *Ibid.*, p.189-90.

contribution Malayalam poetry. Krishna Warriar also published 'Dhanwanthari' a medical magazine, in 1904 and 'Lakshmi Vilasam', an economic magazine in 1906.

Pallath Krishan started the 'Kerala Chintamani' in 1905 from Trissur with Kunnath Janardhana Menon as its first editor. Later V.C. Balakrishna Panicker, the famous poet became its editor. Like *Swadeshabhimani*, 'Kerala Chintamani' also took keen interest in political developments of the time. But unlike Ramakrishna Pillai, Balakrishna Panicker did not make any personal criticism. Murkoth Kumaran also served as its editor for some time.

Though there is no unanimity of opinion over the year of commencement of *Mitavadi*, 1907 appears to have more acceptability among scholars.²⁷ The address of G.K. Gokhale at the Benares session of the Indian National Congress in 1905 was believed to have inspired Murkoth Kumaran to launch a newspaper in the name of *Mitavadi* (meaning 'moderate'). When Sivasankaran, a wealthy businessman from Thalassery consented to be the proprietor, *Mitavadi* became a reality with Murkoth as the editor. No issue of *Mitavadi* in its first phase, when it was published from Thalassery, has come to light; but there are enough evidence to prove that it gave a prominent place to news.²⁸ Kumaran Asan's epoch-making *Veenapoovu* was first published in *Mitavadi* in parts, despite the fact that Travancore, the home and centre of activity of Asan, at that time could boast of a number of celebrated literary journals. The reading habit of the educated youth of Malabar grew considerably because of *Mitavadi*. The pages of *Mitavadi* were also open to a

²⁷ While Murkoth Kunhappa considered 1908 to be the year in which *Mitavadi* started publication, P.V.K. Nedungadi thought it was 1904. However, many others like Perunna K.N.Nair, K.P. Kesava Menon, T.M. Chummar and G. Priyadarshan argued that the year was 1907.

²⁸ G. Priyadarshan, op. cit., p.119.

number of debates and controversies in which such literary giants as Muloor and M.K. Gurukkal participated.²⁹

The quitting of Murkoth Kumaran as editor because of some strain in his relations with proprietor Sivasankaran was a great blow to *Mitavadi*. Before long *Mitavadi* was bought by C. Krishnan from Sivasankaran. C. Krishnan was one of the prominent Thiyya leaders who took keen interest in the upliftment of his community. He started publishing *Mitavadi* as a magazine from Kozhikode from August 1913 onwards. Under C. Krishnan, *Mitavadi* was a 'Thiyya Publication'; critics even called it the "Bible of the Thiyyas".

Later, Krishnan acquired the rights of 'Kerala Sanchari' and merged it into 'Mitavadi'. With a crusading spirit 'Mitavadi' fought against the tyranny of the caste system. It generally supported the British Government and opposed the national movement under the leadership of the Congress, as being dominated by the Brahmins. After sustained efforts at the upliftment of backward castes for more than a quarter of a century, 'Mitavadi' went out of publication in 1938.

Malabari, which started publication as a weekly from Tirur in 1909 under the ownership of Kizhedath Madhava Menon had a short life span of two years, but it was a fruitful one, under the editorship of V.C. Balakrishna Panicker, renowned poet. He showed boldness in criticising the government in important matters of state. His sharp criticism of the action of the Travancore Government in deporting Swadeshabhimani Ramakrishna Pillai is especially worth mentioning.

Kerala Kaumudi started publication as a weekly from Mayyanad in 1911. There is a view that Mulur S. Padmanabha Panicker was its first

²⁹ Ibid., p. 120

editor.³⁰ Anyway, the heart and soul of 'Kerala Kaumudi' during its early years was C.V. Kunjiraman, a multi-faceted personality - a poet, historian, journalist, all combined. 'Kerala Kaumudi' was shifted to Kollam and then to Trivandrum. It became a full-fledged daily in 1940. It has made immense contribution to the social and cultural progress of Kerala. Its support to the social reform movement was total. The Abstention movement and the movement for responsible Government in Travancore got great encouragement and support from it. It was considered as a mouthpiece of the Travancore State Congress. 'Kerala Kaumudi' continue to be a prominent newspaper in Kerala.

T.K. Madhavan, a prominent Congress leader, launched the *Deshabhimani* in 1914. It rendered valuable service in the struggle for responsible Government in Travancore. It fought against caste inequality and stood for social reform. '*Deshabhimani*' advocated the need for temple entry for Harijans and Ezhavas.³¹ T.K. Madhavan was one of the leading lights of the Vaikom Satyagraha and '*Deshabhimani*' was in the vanguard as one of the torch bearers of the Satyagraha.

When the Nair Service Society (NSS) was founded in 1914 as the premier organisation of the Nair community, it felt the need of having its own mouthpiece. Thus the '*Service*' was started in 1919 from Karukachal. Expectedly it highlighted the activities of the NSS and stood for reform in the Nair community.³²

'*Yogakshemam*' and '*Unninambudiri*' spearheaded the campaign for the reform-minded and progressive among the Nambudiris of Kerala and their organisation *Yogakshema Sabha*. Both the papers were printed at the

³⁰ *Mulur Janma Satabdi Smarakapatram* (Mal.), p. 146-47.

³¹ A.K. Pillai, *Congressum Keralavum* (Mal.), Trivandrum, 1935, p. 356.

³² Puduppally Raghavan, *op.cit.*, pp. 162-64.

Mangalodayam Press, Trissur. V.T. Bhattathiripad was the moving spirit behind the publications. EMS Nambudiripad was closely associated with 'Unni Nambudiri'. The role played by both these publications in reforming the Nambudiri community during the first half of the 20th century cannot be over emphasized.

'Samadarshi', which commenced publication from Trivandrum in 1918, became immensely popular under the editorship of A. Balakrishna Pillai, alias Kesari A. Balakrishna Pillai in 1923. The paper, under him, supported the political and social movements of the time including the Vaikom Satyagraha. He ruthlessly attacked the corrupt and high-handed aristocracy of Travancore. When the Government introduced the Travancore Newspaper Regulations in 1926, to bring the newspapers under stricter control, the management of 'Samadarshi' prevailed upon Balakrishna Pillai to resign. But he did not sit idle for long and started a new periodical, 'Probhodakan' in 1930. Only 14 copies were published and it was banned by the Travancore Government. He next launched 'Kesari' on 17 September 1930 and continued his crusade against the autocratic policies of Diwan C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer. 'Kesari' was also short-lived and was banned in 1935.

K. Ayyappan, who was to become famous as 'Sahodaran Ayyapan', launched 'Sahodaran', a monthly, in 1920 from Cherayi. It was the embodiment of the principles and ideas of Ayyappan, which was identified with the upliftment of the untouchables and the downtrodden of Kerala. 'Sahodaran' encouraged rationalism and Socialist doctrine³³ and fought for social, political and legal equality.³⁴ It mobilised the people for responsible Government inter-caste and dowry-free community marriage and temple entry agitation.

³³ K.A. Subramanian, *Sahodaran Ayyappan - A Biography*, Kochi, 1973, p. 87.

³⁴ M. Sahadevan, *Towards Social Justice and Nation Making - A Study of Sahodaran Ayyapan*, Palakkad, 1993, p. 57.

The Rise of Nationalist Press

The beginning of Gandhian era in Indian politics also marked an important stage in the evolution of press in Kerala. Though political journalism had already started and newspapers supporting the 'moderate' Congress had appeared on the scene, the major thrust of the journalism of the pre-Gandhian era was social reform. It was the rise of M.K. Gandhi at the helm of the freedom movement that inaugurated a new era for the press as for politics. The new found confidence of the Indian people that marked Indian politics after the advent of Gandhi was reflected in the rise of an intensely nationalist press.

The first full-fledged nationalist newspaper published in Kerala was 'Swarat', a fortnightly launched by A.K. Pillai from Kollam in 1921. It enthusiastically supported the Gandhian movement and exhorted the readers to boycott foreign goods. In 1926 'Swarat' was converted into a daily and shifted to Trivandrum. The paper was in the forefront in spearheading the campaign in favour of the Vaikom Satyagraha.

G. Raman Menon launched the 'Pauran', a monthly from Kayamkulam in 1921. After three years, it was converted into a weekly. The 'Pauran' was a strong advocate of the 'Swadeshi' and published Gandhiji's articles on the subject.³⁵

'Bhaje Bharatam' was a paper published from Chengannur under the editorship of M. Mathunni and Shankarathil Sankara Pillai, to propagate Congress views. The editors were punished for treason in 1923, just before the beginning of Vaikom Satyagraha and put in jail. They were the first

³⁵ Native Newspapers Reports (hereafter NNPR), 36/1928, Tamil Nadu Archives (hereafter TNA), Chennai.

Congress political prisoners from Travancore.³⁶ Their imprisonment put an end to the publication of 'Bhaje Bharatam'.

The 'Bhaje Keralam' started publication from Ernakulam in 1921 with Paliyath Cheriya Kunjunni Achan as editor. It took up Congress propaganda in a major way and was also highly critical of the policies of the Government of Kochi. Ultimately its press was sealed by the Government for publishing an editorial severely criticising the Diwan, Sir Vijayaraghavachariyar.³⁷

V.K. Chinnammalu Amma, the sister of V.K. Krishna Menon, published the 'Navayugam' from Calicut in 1921. Vallathol Narayana Menon's nationalist poems which were published in it, attracted the readers at that time. It may be noted that another paper in the same name, 'Navayugam' was launched later from Trivandrum by the Communist leaders of Travancore.

The most important nationalist newspaper to emerge at this time was the *Mathrubhumi* from Kozhikode. The prominent Congress leaders of Malabar came forward to launch it to fill a political vacuum created by that political volcano, the Malabar Rebellion. After the suppression of the Malabar Rebellion and the withdrawal of the Non-cooperation Movement and until almost the end of the twenties, the political struggle for freedom was on a low key.³⁸ Not only the Congress programmes but the entire public activity of Malabar virtually came to a halt. 'For a long time after the Rebellion, no public activity was possible in Malabar. Enmity towards the Congress was evident everywhere.... Some Hindu leaders accused the Congressmen of treason for joining the Khilafatists.... The Muslims complained that those who had induced them to join the Congress, abandoned them when police

³⁶ Puthupally Raghavan, op.cit., p.218.

³⁷ *Ibid*, p. 218.

³⁸ A. Sreedhara Menon: *A Concise Political History of Modern Kerala*, Madras, 1987, p. 53.

oppression and firing by the troops started".³⁹ The Congress leaders failed to link with the people directly and they had no other media of communication of their own. Because of the psychosis of fear, editors in Malabar were not prepared to publish news of the national movement. It was in these circumstances that the Congress leaders, after due deliberations, resolved to found a publishing company, the *Mathrubhumi* Printing and Publishing Company'. K.P. Kesava Menon, K. Madhavan Nair, Kurur Neelakantan Namboodiripad, Ambalat Karunakara Menon, T.V. Sundara Iyer, Dr. A.R. Menon and P. Achuthan were the directors of the company when it was registered. The company had an authorised capital of Rs. one lakh, comprising 20,000 shares of Rs. 5 each.⁴⁰ Though the company was registered in 1922, the *Mathrubhumi* newspaper was published only after one year. In the beginning it was published as a tri-weekly. Its directors had decided to publish the first issue of the paper on the first anniversary of Gandhiji's arrest on 18th March, 1922. However, the first issue came out on 17th March 1923, as 18th March happened to be a Sunday.⁴¹

The editorial board of the *Mathrubhumi* consisted of K.P. Kesava Menon as the editor, K. Madhavan Nair as the Manager, P. Ramunni Menon as Assistant Editor and K.V. Kunjunni Menon, Kozhippurath Madhava Menon and T.P. Chandukutty Kidavu as members. The team was workaholic with a restless mind. *Mathrubhumi's* origin was the symbolic expression of the national awakening of the country.⁴² In the first leader of the *Mathrubhumi*, it set forth the objective thus: "Human life is a noble obligation. Everyone must have the absolute freedom for the realisation of that obligation. All must be enabled to enjoy spontaneously the fruits of their

³⁹ K.P. Kesava Menon: *Kazhinja Kalam* (Mal.), Kozhikode, 1957, p. 1128.

⁴⁰ V.R. Menon, *Mathrubhumi yude Charithram* (Mal.) Vol. I, Kozhikode, 1973, p.49.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² K.P. Vijayan, *Pathrangal Vichitrangal* (Mal.), p.17.

wisdom, labour and ability. The customs, rules and regulations that reduce it and weaken and destroy human self-respect must be kept apart as they are not conducive to the progress of humanity. It is the only way to attain progress, freedom and peace completely in the world. We will be examining all the other subjects on this premise".⁴³

The *Mathrubhumi* was the voice of the Indian National Congress. The paper published Congress programmes promptly and tried to educate the people on the virtue of patriotism. It always gave maximum coverage to Gandhi. K.P. Kesava Menon, P. Ramunni Menon, K. Kelappan, P. Narayanan Nair and K.A. Damodara Menon were some of prominent editors who contributed to the growth of *Mathrubhumi* as the pre-eminent nationalist paper of Kerala. Started as a tri-weekly, it was converted into a daily in 1930, to bring home to the people of Malabar, the hot news about the momentous developments in connection with the Salt Satyagraha. The '*Mathrubhumi* Illustrated Weekly' started publication in 1932, with Gandhi's photo adorning the cover. A detailed discussion on *Mathrubhumi's* role in the freedom movement will be undertaken in the next chapter.

Prominent Congress leader Muhammed Abdurahiman Sahib started publishing the '*Al-Ameen*' from Kozhikode on 12 October 1924, the birthday of Prophet Mohammed. Besides Abdul Rahman, who was also the editor, the director board of '*Al-Ameen*' included A.K. Kunhi Mayan Haji, C.P. Alippikkeyi, K.M. Seethi Muhammed Haji, Kunji Pokker Kutty, Manapattu Kochu Moideen Haji and others.⁴⁴ Started as a tri-weekly, it began to be issued as a daily in 1930. The objective of Abdul Rahman in publishing the '*Al-Ameen*' was to rouse nationalist spirit among the Muslims of Malabar. It was a time when the Hindu-Muslim brotherhood fostered by the Khilafat-

⁴³ *Mathrubhumi*, 17th March, 1923.

⁴⁴ S.K. Pottakkat *et al.*, *Muhammed Abdurahiman* (Mal.), Kozhikode, 1978, p. 139.

Non-cooperation Movement had crumbled, and the Malabar Muslims, after the harrowing incidents of the Malabar Rebellion, had turned anti-Congress. To bring them back in to the nationalist cause was a Herculean task, which was exactly what Muhammed Abdul Rahman sought to achieve through the 'Al-Ameen'. Nationalist Muslims of the day like E. Moidu Moulavi, P.P. Ummer Koya and P.A. Muhammed Koya were closely associated with the paper. In 1930, when the Salt Satyagraha was in full swing and the Government turned against the pro-Congress press, the publication of 'Al-Ameen' had to be stopped for a short period. It re-started publication and continued its outspoken criticism of the government. In September, 1939, when the World War II broke out, an editorial of the 'Al-Ameen', under the caption 'Congress and the War', advocated and exhorted the readers not to cooperate with the war efforts of the British. An infuriated Government promptly banned the paper on 29 September 1939.⁴⁵

The 'Lokamanyan' was launched from Trissur in 1920, with Kurur Neelakantan Namboodiripad as the founder-editor and Poovathingal Sebastian as the publisher. It highlighted the ideology of the Indian National Congress. It passionately advocated that the women of Kerala must adopt Khaddar and work at the 'charka' and be willing to sweat a little when others shed their tears.⁴⁶ In 1923, the Government of Kochi charged the editor and publisher with treason for publishing certain editorial, critical of the Government⁴⁷. With the imprisonment of the editor and publisher, the brief but fruitful life of 'Lokamanyan' came to an end.

⁴⁵ There will be occasion to discuss in detail the stand taken by Abdul Rahman and the 'Al-Ameen' on some controversial issues, in the next chapter.

⁴⁶ *Lokamanyan*, Trissur, Oct-Nov, 1922, (NNPR 1/1923, pp. 50-51, TNA, Chennai)

⁴⁷ Pudhuppally Raghavan, *op.cit*, p.209.

The 'Kerala Kesari' was launched by Moyarath Sankaran, a prominent Congress leader from Vatakara in January 1924. Moyarath also served as its editor upto 1930. 'Kerala Kesari' did not have an uninterrupted life because of financial problems. Moyarath had suffered a lot, both financially and otherwise, to run the paper. 'Kerala Kesari' was second to none in whole heartedly supporting the Vaikom Satyagraha and the Salt Satyagraha.⁴⁸

Amsi Narayana Pillai edited the 'Mahatma' from Trissur in 1930, which propagated the ideology of the Indian National Congress. P. Kesava Dev, the famous novelist and writer with an acerbic pen, was also associated with the 'Mahatma'. The 'Kerala Dasan' started publication from Trivandrum on 22 March 1924. Joseph Chazhikkadan and M.M. Varkey were its editors. Its provocative editorial annoyed the authorities which led to the arrest of M.M. Varkey and the closure of the paper. Later, on 20 January 1926, Varkey released the 'Dasan', a weekly from Trivandrum. 'Dasan' stood for the rights of the Catholics and supported the Abstention Movement. When the weekly turned against the Diwan, C.P. Rama Swamy Iyer, through its editorials, the Government banned its licence. A man with a crusading spirit, Varkey was not to be silenced by such government measures. He started publishing the 'Yuva Bharathi' on 2 November 1934. The C.P's Government, on its part, was also determined not to allow Varkey to continue his attack on the Government policies. 'Yuva Bharathi' was promptly banned by invoking the clauses of the Press Regulations Act of 1926. Varkey, now, shifted his publishing activities to Kochi and edited the 'Malabar Mail', through which he continued his crusade against the despotic reign of Sir C.P. C.P retaliated by banning the paper in Travancore, by an order.

The 'Malayala Rajyam', a nationalist weekly, was published in 1929 by K.G. Sankar, a Congress youth leader, who gave up his studies to join the

⁴⁸ Moyarath Sankaran: *Ente Jeevitha Kadha* (Mal.), Kozhikode, 1965, pp, 207-215.

Non-cooperation movement. Earlier he had served the 'Malayali' and was forced to resign from it over a controversial editorial, which criticised the Travancore Government.⁴⁹ The paper was printed at Sree Ramavilasm Press, Kollam. After two years it was made a daily. The 'Malayala Rajyam' also started the first illustrated weekly in Malayalam, the 'Malayala Rajyam Illustrated Weekly'. The 'Malayalam Rajyam' welcomed the formation of the Socialist party in the Congress. Referring to the Meerut Conspiracy case and other hostile measures of the Government against the Communists, the 'Malayala Rajyam' observed that by carrying out a Communist hunt, communism could not be suppressed. Even in England, the Communist party had not been declared an unlawful organisation and therefore the Government could not think of suppressing the spread of Communist ideas in India alone.⁵⁰ When K.G. Sankar relinquished the control of the paper owing to ill-health, his brother, K.G. Parameswaran Pillai became the owner of the 'Malayala Rajyam' publication. He reversed the nationalist posture of the paper and it became supportive of the policies of Sir C.P. It was rumoured that K.G. Parameswaran Pillai was nominated to the Sree Mulam Praja Sabha in 1944, as a reward for the support rendered to Sir. C.P.⁵¹

The 'Gomathi', started in 1930, was printed from the Vidyavilasini Press, Trissur. Kunnath Janardhana Menon was the founder-editor. The paper strongly argued for the unity of the Malayalam speaking areas. The name 'Gomathi' was given to this journal by combining the first two letters of Gosree (Cochin), Malabar and Thiruvithamkur. The 'Gomathi' was the first ¼

⁴⁹ Department of Public Relations, op.cit., p.19.

⁵⁰ NNPR 1933, p.68, TNA, Chennai.

⁵¹ A. Sreedhara Menon: *Sir C.P. Thiruvitamkur Charithrathil* (Mal.), Kottayam, 2008, p. 387.

anna ('Kalana') paper published in Kerala.⁵² It did not have any objective other than bringing to readers the news of the day.⁵³

The 'Deepam', an illustrated monthly, was published by Thomas Paul from Ernakulam, with Murkoth Kumaran as the editor. The first issue came out on 17 August 1929. The 'Deepam' gave prominence to literature and knowledge. However, it also supported the agitation for a responsible government in Travancore.

'Yuvabharatham' was a profoundly nationalistic weekly edited by T.R. Krishnaswamy Iyer from Palakkad. Modelled on Gandhi's 'Young India', it enthusiastically supported the Gandhian programme. Its printing press was sealed by the Government in 1831 for publishing a poem written by T. Subramanian Tirumumbu, extolling the Civil Disobedience Movement and challenging the British paramountcy.⁵⁴

The 'Prabhatam', the first 'Socialist paper', to be published from Malabar,⁵⁵ was originally owned by K.S. Nair and published from Palakkad. Later, E.M.S. Namboodiripad and Ramachandran Nedungadi purchased it and released it as a weekly from Shornur in 1934. E.M.S. was the editor and Ramachandran Nedungadi the manager. 'Prabhatham' was the official organ of the Congress Socialist Party in Kerala. E.M.S. wrote a questionnaire in it under the pen name, 'Surendran'. The paper supported the progressive movements in Kerala and also helped a lot to spread Socialist and Communist ideas.⁵⁶ It encouraged labour movements and popular uprisings in Kerala. The 'Prabhatham' translated articles from the 'Congress Socialist', the official

⁵² Pudhuppally Raghavan, *Op.cit.*, p.249.

⁵³ *Ibid*, p. 219.

⁵⁴ 'History of the Freedom Movement in Malabar' (Part V), TNA, Chennai.

⁵⁵ Puduppally Raghavan, *op.cit.*, p. 220.

⁵⁶ Berlin Kunhanandan Nair: *Enpathuthikanja EMS* (Mal.), 1990, p. 54.

organ of the All-India Congress Socialist Party.⁵⁷ The 'Prabhatham' published a poem, 'Atmasandesham', written by Chowara Parameswaran on Bhagat Singh's martyrdom. It was an appeal for a revolution to end the imperialist domination of the present social order and to achieve independence.⁵⁸ The Government ordered the management to deposit Rs. 2000/- as security. Since the management had no money to deposit, the 'Prabhatham' had to stop publication. After three years, the licence was restored and publication shifted to Kozhikode in 1938. The paper was now the organ of the Communist movement, reflecting the political evolution taking place in Kerala. However this time the 'Prabhatham' was not destined to last long.

'Deshabandhu', launched by Subrahmanian Tirumumbu from Nileswaram in 1929 and 'Swabhimani', edited by A.K. Kunhikrishnan Nambiar, propagated the nationalist ideology in North Malabar during a very active phase of the national movement - in the late 1920's and early 1930's.

A.C. Kannan Nair released a hand written magazine, the 'Sakthi', from Kanhangad in 1930. He received the whole hearted support and assistance from another freedom- loving man K.T. Kumaran Nambiar. Later it was printed at A.V. Press, Kannur and circulated mainly in North Malabar. An article written by Dr. Sutherland, an American free-thinker, in the 'Modern Review', edited by Ramanand Chatterjee, was translated and published in the 'Sakthi' under the caption, "Who must rule India?" This was enough to provoke the authorities and their wrath fell on the 'Sakthi', leading to its disappearance.⁵⁹ Poets like P. Kunhiraman Nair, Kuttamath, Kadathanad

⁵⁷ E.M. Sankaran Namboodiripad: *How I Became a Communist*, Trivandrum, 1976, p.125.

⁵⁸ Fortnightly Report (hereafter FNR) 1936-1940, p. 18, TNA, Chennai

⁵⁹ K.K.N. Kurup, *A.C. Kannan Nair-Oru Padanam* (Mal.), Trivandrum, 1985, pp. 29-30.

Madhavi Amma, Vidwan P. Kelu Nair and literary critic, Kuttikrishna Marar were associated with the journal.⁶⁰

The 'Chandrika', official organ of the Muslim League in Kerala, started publication as a weekly from Tellicherry in 1934, with T. Muhammed as the first editor. It was converted in to a daily in 1939 under the editorship of K.K. Muhammed Shafi. During the World War II, owing to the scarcity of newsprint, 'Chandrika' was published as a tri-weekly. After the war, it was again converted into a daily and was shifted to Kozhikode.

'Pauraprabha' was a daily published from Kottayam in 1938 by Z.M. Parettu. Later C.M. Stephen, a Congress leader, purchased the paper and published it first from Mavelikkara and then from Trivandrum. It extended support to the struggle for responsible Government in Travancore. 'Pauradhwani', another daily from Kottayam, was started, in 1939 by K.M. Chacko. Later he also released 'Purakahalam' from Trivandrum Both 'Pauradhwani' and 'Pura Kahalam', supported the State Congress agitation for responsible Government in Travancore.⁶¹

The 'Kaumudi' started publication under the ownership and editorship of C. Kesavan in 1937. In 1940 it published a message of George Thomas that the supreme duty of the people of Travancore was to work for responsible government. This provoked the Diwan, Sir. C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer, who promptly banned the paper and revoked its licence. K.T. Thomas, the Congress leader, and C. Kesavan launched the 'Prabodhini', a weekly which was also promptly banned by the Travancore Government which, under Sir C.P., was notoriously intolerant of the press. The 'Nava Sakthi', which started

⁶⁰ Manuscript Library, Section - Individual B-N, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (hereafter NMML), Teen Moorthy, New Delhi.

⁶¹ Pudhuppally Raghavan, *Op.cit*, pp. 220-221

publication under the editorship of T.M. Varghese and V.K. Velayudhan, did not last more than two issues either.

The 'Harbinger' was an English weekly published by the Arya Samajists from Calicut. Launched

The 'Swatantra Bharatham' was a clandestine four-page weekly that released 17 issues during the Quit India days. Unnerved by the outspoken nature of its articles, the authorities searched for the printing press, which was sealed at Kutaku, in South Canara. But it re-appeared soon, being secretly printed at such places in Malabar as Chemancherry near Koyilandy, Tellicherry and Kozhikode. However, the police had the last laugh, who raided the press at Chamancherry and arrested Madhavan Kidavu, Unni Nair, Krishnan Nair, T.P. Kunhirama Kidavu, K. Gopalan and C. Damodaran. Mention must also be made of N.V. Krishna Warriar, Kinath Narayanan, S.K. Pottekkat, V.A. Kesavan Nair and R.M. Manakkalath, who were the brain behind the editing of this clandestine publication which was a bold attempt at challenging the Government curbs on nationalist journalism.⁶²

The 'Deenabandhu' started publication on 26 January 1941, as a weekly from Trissur with V.R. Krishnan Ezhuthachan as the editor. It was the official organ of the Cochin Prajamandalam and mainly featured news about the political movements in the state of Kochi. It was to commemorate the name of Deenabandhu C.F. Andrews that they named the weekly as 'Deenabandhu'.⁶³ Krishnan Ezhuthachan and his staff were imprisoned in connection with the Quit India movement. The Government of Kochi stopped the newsprint and banned the publication of 'Deenabandhu' for reproducing an editorial from the 'Snehitam', published from Trissur, under the caption

⁶² M.G. Indiradevi, 'The Blooming of Swatantra Bharatham' in the Journal of Kerala Studies, Vol. III, March-December 1981, p. 41.

⁶³ V.R. Krishnan Ezhuthachan: *Atmakadha* (Mal.), Kottayam, 1997, p. 185.

'Naranayattu' (Man-hunt), which deplored the lathi charge by the police in Trissur on 5 August 1942. In 1944 it restarted publication. In January 1946 it was shifted to Ernakulam and released as a daily. 'Deenabandhu' gave full support to the struggle for responsible government in Travancore which resulted in its ban in Travancore.⁶⁴

After the demise of the 'Prabhatham' in the late thirties, the Communists in Malabar were without a paper of their own until the 'Deshabhimani' started publication as a weekly from Kozhikode in 1942. M.S. Devadas was its first editor. Deshabhimani's main focus was on the grievances of the workers and peasants. It also highlighted the corruption among government officials.⁶⁵ In 1946 'Deshabhimani' became a daily. The paper was critical of many of the policies of the Congress ministry led by T. Prakasam in Madras, especially the Government's hostile attitude towards the Communist party. The publication of 'Deshabhimani' was suspended in 1946 for publishing an article on the 25th anniversary of the Malabar Rebellion, by E.M. Sankaran Namboodiripad, with the caption, 'Preaching and Warning of Malabar Rebellion'. In Travancore the official organ of the Communist party was the 'Janayugam', started as a weekly in 1947 from Kollam, with N. Gopinathan Nair as the editor.

The National War Front published the 'Paurasakthi' from Kozhikode in 1944, with B.G. Varghese as its editor. The paper was started with the object of supporting the war propaganda machinery of the government.⁶⁶ Once the War was over, the objective of the paper also underwent a change. Popular leaders like K.A. Damodara Menon and Varghese Kalathil also served as its

⁶⁴ Prajamandala Charithra Rachana Samiti: *Kochi Rajya Prajamandalam* (Mal.), Kochi, 1985, p. 391.

⁶⁵ Dr. K.K.N. Kurup *Nationalism and Social Change - The Role of Malayalam Literature*, Trissur, 1998, p.127.

⁶⁶ Pudhuppally Raghavan, *Op.cit.*, p.224.

editors during the post-War period, by which time it became a daily. For some time, 'Paurasakthi' was the official organ of the Praja Socialist Party in Kerala.

The 'Kerala Bhushanam' was launched from Kottayam as a daily in 1944. K.K. Kuruvila was the founder-editor of the same. Later A.V. George purchased and published it for some time. Thangal Kunju Musaliyar started the 'Prabhatham' weekly (not to be confused with the 'Prabhatham' published from Malabar by the Communists) from Kollam in 1944. Later it was converted into a daily. A Krishnan published the 'Express' from Trissur in 1944. A profound nationalist and Socialist, his ideas invariably found expression in the columns of the paper. Kunnath Janardhana Menon was the editor.

This brief survey of the evolution of press in Kerala from 1847 to 1947 brings out the inspiring spectacle of its transformation from being an ideological apparatus of the missionaries and colonialism to being the flag bearer of Indian nationalism. The potentialities of the press as a disseminator of ideas was first made use of by social and religious reformers. But it did not take long for political journalism to take deep root in Kerala. By the 1920's, nationalist press came off age and by the 1930's a strong leftist press came on the scene, reflecting the political transformation taking place in Malabar.