CHAPTER III

CONGRESS SOCIALISTS AND WORKING CLASS

In the process of the growth of labour movement, new leadership was also emerging. The caste conscious working people of the State became class conscious. The social change and the consequent political awakening in Travancore made the workers to find asylum in political leadership. By this time as part of national developments, the Kerala Province Congress Committee was formed in Malabar in 1934. Soon the message of socialism had wider appeal in Travancore also. However the socialist leaders, as part of their political campaign encouraged the labour force to consolidate. Political leaders began to decorate the presidency of labour associations. With the formation of the State Congress, the socialist programmes became radical. Meanwhile the workers in Travancore developed into an independent class. The vacillating leadership of the State Congress facilitated the socialist perspectives. With the support of the radical youth leaguers, the Malabar socialists found no difficulty in attracting the working class to their platform.

Emergence of Congress Socialists

With the spread of labour unions, proper leadership of the movement became the need of the time. The political
transition in the princely state was from Congress Gandhians to Congress Socialists. Though the ideology behind the worker-peasant organisations was circumscribed by the Congress Socialist Party, no doubt, many leaders got inspiration from the revolutionary upsurge in Soviet Union and the vigorous attempt on the part of many leaders of the national movement to imbibe the principles of scientific socialism so to build a movement based on cadre building and leadership.¹ The public men who came forward to help labourers from their unions were mostly political workers. There were few who did not have any link or association with the national movement that was developing in the country. In the initial stage many leaders of the Indian National Congress were predominantly associated with the trade union movement. The first president of the All India Trade Union Congress was the radical leader, Lala Lajpat Rai who was at the same time the president of the Indian National Congress.² Thus from the very beginning the trade union movement was very closely linked with politics and political issues.

The Gandhian era brought the Congress committees to Travancore. Quite a good number of Congress men from Travancore

participated in the political conference at Ottapalam in 1921. For the first time political matters on Kerala were discussed in the Ottapalam conference. In consequence, nearly sixty four Congress committees were formed in Travancore. The Congress leaders of this period were A.K.Pillai, V.Achuta Menon, C.Sanku Pillai and K.G.Sankar. This revealed the potential for nationalist political mobilisation that existed in Travancore. A number of workers in Alleppy area took four anna membership in the Congress. Closely following the freedom movement was born the organised and militant trade union movement in the Malabar area, which however was able to attract to itself the already existing trade union organisations in Travancore. In fact the new peasant movement in Malabar included in its ranks the entire peasantry, including the agricultural labourers. There was a difference in the development between the Malabar area on the one hand and Travancore on the other. While the centre of all provincial activities was the struggle for freedom from British rule in Malabar, the question of political and socio-cultural democracy directed against the princely rule dominated in Travancore. Soon the political parties ideologically committed

to improve the conditions of the working class have championed the cause of the workers and have organised themselves into unions. The emergence of Congress socialists to the working class leadership was in parallel to the growth of modern democratic consciousness in Travancore. The Vaikom Satyagraha agitation in 1924 was the last direct intervention of Congress leadership in the political development of Travancore till the end of the thirties.

Political Overtones

Supported actively by the Congress leaders of Malabar, the lower castes of Travancore wanted the eradication of untouchability and right of entry into temples. The Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee entrusted the work to K. Kelappan Nair, T.K. Madhavan, Murur Nilakantan Namboodiripad, T.R. Krishnaswamy Aiyer and K. Velayudha Menon. Moreover in a meeting at Quilon on 6 February 1924 it was resolved to work for temple entry for the Harijans and for their freedom of movement on all public roads. Soon a satyagraha campaign was started in front of the temple at Vaikom in central Travancore on 30 March 1924. The Satyagrahis were led by T.K. Madhavan, K.P. Kesava Menon, A.R. Pillai,

C.V.Kunju Raman, Mannathu Padmanabhan and K.Kelappan. The non-Brahmin Congress leader of Tamilnadu E.V.Ramaswamy Naicker also joined the satyagraha at Vaikom. At the initiative of the social reformists, the Indian National Congress chose to sponsor the satyagraha struggle at Vaikom temple. To illustrate, in February 1924 the Congress leaders summoned at the office of Swarat, a daily published from Quilon, and resolved to proceed with their fight against untouchability. Thus the Vaikom Satyagraha of 1924 first demonstrated the interaction of the social reform movement on the working class.

In April 1924, the Travancore Labour Association had resolved to hold a festive annual meeting in imitation of the Indian National Congress. The three day labour conference was attended by more than 2,000 workers including lawyers and journalists of different castes. By the time a band of volunteers led by K.P.Kesava Menon walked to the temple precints, they were served with ban orders by the District Magistrate. In defiance, many batches of volunteers staged satyagraha and courted arrest. During the labour conference, word was received of

12. Damodaran, K., and Narayana Pillai, C., Keralattile Swatantriya Samaram (Malayalam), Trivandrum, 1957, p.120.
the arrest of leading satyagrahis at Vaikom. At once fifty volunteers were despatched across the backwater to aid the satyagraha including K.C. Govindan, who was to serve as General Secretary of the Labour Association for more than five years. 13 At the meeting, one of the speakers asserted that just as the Russians managed to obtain freedom by putting an end to their royal family, so the Ezhavas must also fight to the very end and that they must be prepared to sacrifice their lives when time comes. 14 The satyagraha ended in compromise in November 1925 with the Travancore Government building a short stretch of new road. In fact the Vaikom Satyagraha greatly contributed to the social awakening in the State.

The Vaikom Satyagraha was followed by a forceful demand throughout the State for temple entry. In 1928 the Self Respect League was established at Nagercoil in South Travancore with P. Chidambaram Pillai as President and R. Ramalingam as Secretary. 15 The members of the League, mostly Ezhavas, aimed to break the caste system in the State and wanted the right of entry at Suchindrum temple. With the influence of the leaders

15. Field, D.W., No. 26, 24 June 1933, Political Report to T. Austin, Dewan of Travancore, D. Dis. 746/1933/CS.
of Self Respect Movement in Tamilnadu like E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker, R.K. Shanmukham Chetti and Sundara Pandya Nadar, the League passed a resolution requesting the Travancore Government to approve Suchindrum Satyagraha. 16 In April 1930 the satyagraha campaign was started at Suchindrum. This campaign of social rights echoed the effects of the Vaikom Satyagraha of 1924 and the consequent political consciousness of the downtrodden sections in Travancore.

By 1930 the Travancore Labour Association became increasingly militant. It became more and more a ground for young leftward moving activists politicised in the Civil Disobedience Struggle of 1930-1933. The fact was that the Labour Association staged a public meeting to welcome the volunteers on their way to Malabar to offer civil disobedience in May 1930. 17 While the Congress was emerging as the undisputed leader of the democratic people, an internal crisis was slowly developing within the Congress organisation itself. The new revolutionary forces of left nationalism and socialism that had taken shape in the course of the 1930-1932 struggle had crystallised into a definite socialist group within the Congress challenging the Gandhian leadership. 18 In May 1930 a section of volunteers led by Ponnara G. Sreedhar from Travancore who were

16. Ibid.
on their way to join the Salt Satyagraha, received a warm welcome from the Labour Association at Alleppy. Further, when the Salt Satyagraha volunteers had passed through Quilon, K.G. Sankar presented a purse on behalf of the labourers and encouraged them by promising that the labourers of Quilon were prepared to help the volunteers with any number of men and money. And when Jawaharlal Nehru visited Quilon in 1931, he received a warm welcome from the labour population of Quilon led by K.G. Sankar. In fact the search for an alternative by the disillusioned nationalists attracted them to the Congress Socialist Party platform that was emerging at the national level as a left pressure group within the Congress.

In Travancore the changing class relations forced a large number of people, without any consideration of caste or creed to join the agricultural and industrial labour force. When the old family pattern and the land had gone, it was not surprising that the helpless young Nairs drifted towards the excitement and idealism of first Gandhian and later Marxist politics. Men of many castes met at the work spots, all of them indignant at the disabilities enforced against them by the old society. However political developments in the state

also revealed a social awakening among the people, especially the working class. The preconditions to modernisation were much more strong in Travancore than in Malabar area. The Ezhava Social Reform Movement was the most radical aspect of the social awakening that accompanied the rise of capitalism.\(^{21}\) The widespread discrimination of the radical interpretations of Sree Narayana Guru's teachings played an important role in the emergence of the modern democratic consciousness in the state. The Congress policy of non-interference in the affairs of princely states contributed to thwarting the emergence of secular national platforms for the cause of caste oppressed in Travancore. It should be noted that the resentment against caste discrimination and savarna domination was much stronger in Travancore and had given the higher level of economic development and capitalist relations in the region. The new social class of capitalists emerged not from the traditional dominant castes but from the non-Hindu communities such as Muslims and Christians or avarna castes like Ezhavas. Their efforts to gain a social status and political leverage more befitting to their improved economic conditions inevitably led to political questions given to the Hindu princely order closely linked to the caste hierarchy. Meanwhile the working people of Travancore were seriously watching the political developments in the state through the Travancore Labour Association.\(^{22}\)

\(^{21}\) Thomas Isaac, *op.cit.*, p.66.

\(^{22}\) Prakasam, R., *op.cit.*, p.79.
The Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930-1933 attracted scores of young Travancoreans who were radicalised in the jails of British India. A number of volunteers from Travancore left for Malabar to join the Civil Disobedience agitation. While in jail, the young satyagrahis had come into contact with the representatives of left trends within Congress as well as non-Congress nationalists such as the terrorist groups. However E.M.S. Namboodiripad considers this as an important reason for the course of evolution of the young radical nationalists into Congress Socialists rather than Communists. When they came out of prisons, the idea of socialism was not new to them. The notable leaders among them were P. Krishnapillai, E.M.S. Namboodiripad, A.K. Gopalan, K.P. Gopalan, Keraleeyan, Chadayanuri and K. Damodaran.

In the meantime the Constitutional Reforms of 1932 complicated the socio-political condition in Travancore. These reforms provided for an electoral scheme based upon property qualifications, giving enough chance to the Nair community who formed the major land-owning class. Thus within the State itself the Abstention Movement led by members of the Christian,

Muslim and lower caste Hindu middle class, attempted to force the princely government to remove all privileges hitherto reserved for higher caste Hindus. The coir workers in Travancore, dismayed at the reductions in wages, were soon caught up in the excitement generated by the abstention campaign. In a meeting at Trivandrum on 17 December 1932, the abstentionists presided over by E.J. John, an active Congress leader, formed a common political organisation, the All Travancore Joint Political Congress. The leaders of the Labour Association, P.K. Velayudhan and R. Sugathan took active part in the working of the joint political Congress and the abstention campaign. Once again the political overtone on the workers' movement in Travancore was revealed when the working class of Alleppy led by R. Sugathan had struck work, protesting against the arrest of C. Kesavan, a leading abstentionist. However under the shadow of socialists in the Congress, the labour class of Travancore formed a force to face the threat of administration as well as the capitalists.

Formation of the Congress Socialist Party

Radical idealism gained currency in Travancore with the formation of the Travancore Youth League. In the beginning, the association of Youth League with the Congress programmes were only moderate in tone. Though many socialists in the Congress


27. Prakasam, R., op. cit., p. 79.
Party had no clear idea of what 'socialistic principles' meant, a large number of young people were completely dissoluted with the reformist facets of the Gandhian philosophy and were looking for a revolutionary alternative. In Travancore these socialists first extended their work among the coir workers of Alleppy in collaboration with the Youth League. Thus the administration had readily admitted that a body of persons styling themselves as the Travancore Youth League were openly advocating socialistic and communistic doctrines. In fact the work of young socialists excited a large number of workers and middle-class people to join the political struggle. Amidst their political campaign, the Congress leaders now concentrated on the grievances of the workers. By 1930 the idea of socialism became quite familiar among the labourers, creating a socialistic movement in the State. In a conference of Ezhava Youth at Quilon in 1930, S. Ramanathan, leader of the Self Respect Movement in Tamilnadu, described the glory of Soviet Revolution. Moreover the leftist publications like Mathrubhoomi, Swadeshabhimani, Swarat, Sahodaran, Mitavadi and Yuktivati began to publish articles on the October Revolution.

29. Press Communique, Government of Travancore, D.Dis. 283/1933/CS.
It was from 1931 that the 'Communist League' began to function at Thaicaud in Trivandrum. This pioneering group of communists had no organisational contact with communists outside. The leaders behind the organisation of the League were Ponnara G. Sreedhar, N.C. Sekhar, G. Sivasankara Pillai, Thiruvattar Thanupillai and N.D. Kurukkal. Significantly this group of leaders organised the Trivandrum Press Workers Union with V. Achutha Menon, a Congress sympathiser, as president. Meanwhile the Labour Association at Alleppy trained a large number of labour leaders to observe the socio-political developments in the State and to lead the labourers towards a socialist society. The leadership of the Indian National Congress also desired the integration of peasantry with the nation in order to strengthen the striking capacity of the anti-imperialist forces. Meanwhile the principle of the participation of outsiders in the organisation of trade unions in India was given legislative recognition by the Trade Union Act 1926 of British India. Thus the achievements of the labour movement in India during 1925-1930 were mainly due to the missionary spirit in which outsiders guided the working class. The attitude of Government of India in this period, in respect of labour problems, was one of non-interference. They stepped in only to keep law

31. Ibid., p.41.

and order. Further, there were sporadic splits among the trade union organisations at the national level. In Travancore leading newspapers were publishing notes on socialism, revealing to the labour population the secrets of economic revolution and exhorting them to organise.  

When the radicals in Indian National Congress met in Patna in May 1934 and organised the Congress Socialist Party, a branch of the new party was established in Malabar also. The Kerala Branch Committee in Malabar under the leadership of young socialists P. Krishnapillai, K. P. Gopalan, and E. M. S. Namboodiripad provided ample scope for the radicals to extend their activities among the working class. They participated with great enthusiasm in organising peasants and workers. The first meeting of the Congress Socialist Party held at Calicut under the chairmanship of K. A. Kelappan elected a committee of seven with C. K. Govindan Nair as President and P. Krishnapillai as Secretary. The organisation of peasants and workers on socialistic principles was made a principal item of the constructive programme of the Congress. By the end of December 1934 the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee appointed an action committee consisting of

33. Kerala Kaumudi, 6 June 1937, Press Cuttings, D.Dis.1500/1937/CS.


P. Krishnapillai, K. P. Gopalan, and Chandroth Kunhiraman Nair, to organise labour. Thus the working class had awakened as part of the freedom movement in Kerala. The organising workers in Travancore found proper leadership with the Congress Socialist leaders. The socialists could successfully link up the class struggle of industrial workers and its allies with the overall national struggle. Very soon the Communists in Travancore found asylum in the Congress Socialist Party and continued their activities within that Party until 1939. In fact the growth of the Communist Movement in Travancore can be traced back to the direct involvement of the members of the Congress Socialist Party who later joined the Communist Party of India.

**New Leadership**

The formation of the Congress Socialist Party inspired the workers to consolidate. The organisation of workers became part of their programme. By the end of 1934 they organised a meeting of socialist leaders to expedite the works of Congress movement in the State. This meeting constituted


an adhoc committee for the purpose with A.K. Gopalan as Secretary. Soon A.K. Gopalan and P. Krishnapillai visited Travancore and continued their work of consolidation to attract many more workers to the socialist movement. They organised meetings at Trivandrum and Neyyattinkara. Meanwhile certain newspapers in Travancore published articles cautioning the people against joining the Socialist Party. Even the Youth League advertised the Congress as a movement of capitalists. Yet the socialist leaders were successful to get a number of new members to the Party from Travancore. It is the political leadership and the organisational capacity of P. Krishnapillai which backed the growth of Socialist Party as well as the trade union movement in the State.

Now P. N. Krishna Pillai who had already a reputation with the government as a young radical moved from Trivandrum to Alleppy, the industrial city of Travancore. Soon the link between the Youth League and the Travancore Labour Association became more tangible. The enthusiasts of the Youth League claimed to have sent P. N. Krishna Pillai to Alleppy to establish a firm connection with the workers. P. N. Krishna Pillai became the Vice-President of the Labour Association in May 1937, and was an important figure in the events surrounding the General

Strike of 1938.\footnote{Report of Inspector of Police, Alleppy, 17 November 1938, D.Dis.461/1939/CS.} Socialist leaders like P.Krishnapillai, K.K.Warrior and K.Damodharan had selected active young coir workers and educated them on topics dealing with politics, economy and society of Kerala. In Alleppy a group of Congress Socialists led by K.N.Das was inculcating political leadership to the industrial workers.\footnote{Prakasam, R., op.cit., p.83.}

The Congress nationalists generally denounced the Abstention Movement and its demand as anti-national. But the Kerala Branch of the Congress Socialist Party argued for active intervention of Congress in the politics of the princely States and extended support to the Abstention Movement, despite its communal overtones. \textit{Prabhadam}, a weekly published from Shoranur since 1935 and sponsored by the socialist leader E.M.S.Namboodiripad, backed the Abstention Movement and the cause of the workers.\footnote{Ibid., p.79.}

At the same time the socialists were striving for the creation of class organisations against the barriers of caste and community. The most important contribution of the Congress Socialist Party to the political development of Travancore was the leadership it provided for the emergence of an independent working
class movement. But unlike in Malabar a militant peasant movement did not develop in Travancore. The only notable development in the State was a movement of coconut cultivators protesting the fall in coconut prices.\textsuperscript{44} In the absence of a strong peasant movement in Travancore, therefore, the Congress Socialist Party confined its intervention in developing class movements mostly among the industrial workers. Nevertheless, it is significant to note that the socialists programme emphasised the need for not only organising the workers but also the peasants, combining demands for abolition of landlordism and removal of indebtedness with improvement of working conditions of agricultural labourers. In August 1935, A.K. Gopalan, speaking at a meeting of Congress workers, stressed on the immediate need for organising peasants.\textsuperscript{45} In addition the socialists were able to bridge the anti-savarna struggle as part of the general working class struggle for democracy.\textsuperscript{46} Though K.A. Kelappan and C.K. Govindan Nair were among the important leaders of the Congres Socialist Party with whom the radicals had their differences, the anti-imperialist struggle necessitated the need for unity with wider sections.

\textsuperscript{44} Govindan Nair, M.N., \textit{Emmente Atmakath\=a}, (Malayalam), Trivandrum, 1984, pp.205-206.

\textsuperscript{45} \textit{The Hindu}, 23 August 1935, p.6.

\textsuperscript{46} Thomas Isaac, "From Caste Consciousness to Class Consciousness: Alleppy Coir Workers during the Inter-War Period", \textit{Economic and Political Weekly}, Vol.XX, No.4, 1985, p.1245.
From 1930 the Travancore Labour Association sponsored the Thozhilali paper with incessant publication of notes on the development on the labour movement. The paper gained wide circulation throughout the State. In Alleppy the Congress Socialist Party was functioning in the office of All Kerala Thozhilali Dance Club. As a matter of fact, the Joint Political Congress formed in 1932 backed the programmes of the Congress Socialist Party from the very beginning. Moreover the socialist led Congress committees and Congress conferences also lent support to the demands of the working class. Thus was brought about the coordination of the independent class organisation of the peasantry with Congress committees which laid the basis for a real anti-imperialist united front with the peasantry as its main driving force.

By 1934-1935 the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee was one with a leftist majority. And these left radicals convened the first All Kerala Trade Union Congress at Calicut in May 1935. This labour conference was attended by a number of labour leaders from Travancore. The conference set up an all Kerala Trade Union Committee, helping the formation of a number of trade unions in the princely State. While urging the workers

47. Balaram, N.E., op.cit., p.87.
to join the struggle for political freedom, the Conference demanded membership in the Congress for all members of the trade unions. Moreover the socialist conference had many resolutions supporting the immediate demands of workers and peasants. In fact the right wing leaders of the Congress stoutly opposed all these resolutions. In Travancore the resolutions of this socialist conference were carried out by M.N. Govindan Nair, P.T. Punnose, K.C. George, and others. Thus while giving a proper leadership to the workers' movement, the Congress Socialist Party had also a programme to connect the working class movement with the National movement.

As a result of the organisational work by the socialists, they could achieve the confidence of the working people in the state. Thus it is very clear that the Congress Socialists took the initiative in organising the labour conferences. By this time the Government of Travancore was trying to conserve their power by putting down the surging wave of political consciousness of the people by repressive measures. In fact the members of the State Legislative Council warned the administration that "the best way out of the present impasse is to establish a responsible government in Travancore". The Second Labour

49. Prakasam, R., op. cit., p.73.


Conference at Trichur on 25 April 1937, after the formation of the Congress ministries, revealed heightened maturity of the working class. The political consciousness of the workers was evident at the Trichur conference. The Second Trade Union Conference resolved to establish a branch of the AITUC in Kerala and nominated P. Krishnapillai for the purpose. It exhorted the associations to affiliate with the AITUC. In order to coordinate the labour activities in the state, the Trichur conference constituted an All Kerala Labour Committee with P. Krishnapillai as Secretary. The socialist leaders by their speeches excited the labourers to do away with the capitalists and encouraged them to move against British imperialism. Soon the workers emerged as an independent class which later hastened the spread of Communist ideology among the socialist leaders.

**Politicisation of the Working Class**

When the socialist leadership could consolidate the labour force, the labourers as a class had achieved political consciousness. In Travancore the labour agitations had always been controlled and led by political agitators. Significantly the origin of Congress Socialist Party was simultaneous with the

52. Prakasam, R., *op. cit.*, p. 76.
birth of the State Congress. It was in Alleppy that the first group of socialists was formed under K.N. Dutt in 1938. In fact the Congress Socialist Party welcomed the State Congress move and attempted to rally the democratic sections under the banner of the Congress to fight for responsible government in Travancore. Moreover when the State Congress started Civil Disobedience Campaign in August 1938, the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee came out in active support of the struggle. They organised jathas to Travancore and set up a Travancore Struggle Aid Committee. Actually the socialists linked up the working class struggle with the agitation for responsible government launched by the State Congress in Travancore. In their meetings, the labour leaders exhorted the workers to join the State Congress. The association of socialists with the State Congress converted their programmes radical and soon the revolutionary ideas gained popular recognition.

As a consequence to the consolidation work of the socialists, the demands of the labourers now included political issues also. It should be remembered that the first Trade Union Conference at Calicut in 1935 resolved to lead the workers towards the struggle for national freedom. The socialist leaders inculcated confidence in the working people and directed them towards

the strike movement to achieve their rights. Consequently the Alleppy workers readily came forward to become the members of the Party. Through the socialist press the labour leaders put forward their political demands such as labour legislation, legislative representation, franchise right and responsible government in Travancore. Labour processions have been organised from Alleppy to present their grievances before the administration. The Government, with a serious note on the labour question, have noted the demands of the labour unions as "controversial and unconnected with labour questions". Meanwhile in August 1937 the Socialist Party submitted a memorandum of grievances of the labour class to the Government of Travancore. They had protested against the reduction of wages for the coir workers of Alleppy. But the administration was silent in convincing the labour force and the socialist leaders and, this later resulted in the General Strike in 1938.

Between 1930 and 1935 the socialist leaders led many labour strikes in Alleppy resulting in the formation of many new labour associations. Meanwhile the Prabhodam paper had revived its circulation from 11 April 1938 after a brief interval from Calicut with E.M.S. Namboodiripad as editor. With a wide circulation in Travancore, the paper brought the message of

56. Confidential letter from Chief Secretary to Government of Travancore, No.257, 11 October 1940, D.Dis.257/1940/CS.
Socialist Party to many sections of the State. 57 By 1938 the Congress Socialist Party organised its strong wing at Alleppy. On the other hand, influenced by socialistic and revolutionary ideas, the Youth League also aspired for speedy and positive action. Thus when the Alleppy workers had struck work, the socialist leaders such as P.Krishnapillai, K.K.Warrior, R.Sugathan, C.O.Mathew, Pathrose, P.K.Padmanabhan and K.K.Kunjan could readily organise the workers and lead the strike to a successful end. To help the striking workers, the Socialist dominated Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee appointed an Aid Committee at Ernakulam consisting of P.Krishnapillai, E.M.S.Namboodiripad, P.Narayanan Nair and K.A.Damodhara Menon. 58 The Working Committee of the Congress had resolved to send a jatha of volunteers to Trivandrum to support the strike movement in the State. The Committee appointed A.K.Gopalan as convener for the jatha programme. 59 The Shadow Committee appointed by the State Congress also extended their support to the socialist leaders to lead the labour. Indeed the socialists were doing vigorous propaganda work among the labourers and agricultural workers to unite both these organisations, with a view to utilise their services in case civil disobedience was declared by the Indian National Congress. 60 Secret correspondence regarding this move was passing between the leaders

58. Ibid., p.110.
60. Inspector General of Police, Trivandrum, 25 March 1940, Copy of Secret Report, D.Dis.504/1940/CS.
of All India Congress Socialist Party and K.C. George who represented Travancore in the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee. The prominent members of Travancore Youth League such as Ponnara G. Sreedhar, Poojapura Krishnan Nair, Sreekanteswaram Raman Pillai, N. P. Kurukkal, N. Kunjuraman Nair, N. Thanu Pillai and others were secretly working under the direction of K.C. George. The Resident for Madras States had informed Dewan C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyer, the attempts of the Malabar Socialists to assist the strikers of Travancore by incessant jathas from outside the State into Travancore.

The labour agitation in certain centres at Alleppey created even a situation of armed confrontation between the workers and the police. Nevertheless socialist leaders like P. Krishnapillai and others toured many parts of the State encouraging more workers to join the strike. In fact they had converted the labour force in the State into a mass political power. In Alleppey A.K. Gopalan, soon after his release from jail, met a number of Youth Leaguers from Trivandrum in the first week of November 1938 to enlist support to the striking workers. By early November the labourers had noted the betrayal of the State Congress. The socialist leaders too reinforced coir workers' suspicion of the State Congress and the sense of their own united

61. Ibid., D.Dis.504/1940/CS.
and independent identity. It was this failure of the State Congress that brought most of the Socialists and Youth Leaguers to the logic of forming Communist Party in Travancore. With this a crop of class conscious cadres rose to the leadership of the Working Class Movement in Travancore. The organised workers experienced with the vacillations of political leadership of the State Congress, quickly found out a proper leadership with the Congress Socialist Party in the State. By 1940 most of the Congress Socialists in Travancore had joined the Communist Party along with growing numbers of the most politically active coir workers. These Congress Communists consolidated the labour force and remained within the fold of the maternal organisation. In fact the Kerala Socialists were seriously considering the question of sending deputation of agitators to assist the labour and kisan movements in Travancore. To sum up, under the guidance of the socialist leadership, the Working Class Movement in Travancore began to grow with wider perspectives.

64. The New Age, 7 April 1957, p.11.
65. However A.K. Gopalan has commented that the Congress Socialist Party merely adopted Gandhian ideology and advocated capitalism. To him, the Party had emerged not from a class-conscious movement but from the national movement for freedom. (Gopalan, A.K., op.cit., pp.84-85).
67. The Resident for Madras States, Doc.158, 14 December 1939, letter to Dewant of Travancore, D.Dis.504/1940/CS.