CHAPTER - IV

LIBERATION STRUGGLE AGAINST COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT AND THE ROLE OF THE SYRIAN CHRISTIANS OF KERALA
THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE AGAINST COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT AND THE ROLE OF THE SYRIAN CHRISTIANS OF KERALA

The 1957 Assembly elections marked the emergence of the first elected Communist government in Kerala. Ever since the advent of Communism as a political creed it was a novel experience for the Communists to come to power through the ballot box. Attracting the attention of the world press, the first ever democratically elected Communist government came to power in Kerala on April 5, 1957, under the Chief Ministership of E.M.Sankaran Namboodiripad (EMS). After the Independence princely states of Travancore and Cochin merged together and formed a new state known as Thirukochi on July 1, 1949. When states were re-organized by the Central government on the basis of language, Malabar (districts of Palakkad, Kozhikode and Kannur) region, which was under the Madras presidency was added to Thirukochi. With the addition of Malayalam Speaking Malabar to Thirukochi the new State of Kerala was born on November 1, 1956.

Soon after the formation of Kerala, the state Assembly elections were conducted. In the elections the Communist Party came to power with a marginal majority. The victory of the Communist party in the Kerala Assembly elections was mainly due
to the factionalism in the Congress party on the one hand and the rivalry and jealousy among various communities on the other. The advanced communities such as the Syrian Christians and the Nair communities were traditionally supporters of the Congress. The Nairs who opposed to the steady growing power of the Christians in the Congress, as a result a good number of the Nairs cast their vote in favor of the communist party.¹ According to Rajani Kothari approximately two lakh Nairs cast their vote in favour of the Communist Party in the 1957 Kerala State Legislative Assembly elections.² Along with the Nairs the Ezhavas too cast their vote in favour of the Communist Party in the Assembly elections. The Nairs is an advanced community while the Ezhavas is a backward community in the socio—economic hierarchy of the Kerala Society. Even though there existed sharp differences between them in the socio—economic realm they joined together to resist the growing influence of the Syrian Christian community in the Congress party. The disunity among the various communities in Kerala was a fertile ground for the Communists to come to power in Kerala. The victory of Communists in Kerala was a rude shock to the Christian community in Kerala. Among the Christian community the Syrian

¹ Dr. E.J. Thomas, Kerala Samooha Ghatanayum Roopantharavum, (Malayalam), Kottayam: D.C-Books, 1982, p.111.
² Rajani, Kothari, Democratic Policy and social Change in India, Bombay: Orient Longman Ltd, 1972, p.132.
Catholics as well as the Latin Catholics were very much annoyed since the Church leaders and the Christian community had spared no chance in the past in portraying the Communist danger as the most awful calamity that could befall the country. The Christian community in Kerala was very much annoyed of communism, precisely because the leaders of the Church propagated about the persecution of Christians in the Communist countries of East Europe, Soviet Union and China by the Communist regimes behind the 'iron curtain'.

The leading Catholic daily the Deepika published from Kottayam in Kerala wrote the editorial highlighting "when the Communists are on the saddle in Kerala and the Congress enjoys the reins of power in Delhi, the best practical policy left with the Catholic community is to continue their co-operation with the Congress Party. If they accept such a policy the Catholics would have the advantage that they need not worry about the question as to what stand they should take with regard to the policy adopted and implemented by the Communist Government". This idea i.e. how to protect their community from the imminent danger of Communism was expressed through press, Church Hierarchy and Christian

---


4 The Deepika, (Malayalam Daily), Kottayam: April 17, 1957.
political leaders. The Christian community was very much concerned over the newly elected Communist Government’s proposal to make radical reform in the spheres of education. Meanwhile the Nair community (Kshatriyas of Hindu community) became uneasy over the anticipated land reforms. The Deepika daily gave a severe warning to the government against any attempt to touch the delicate field of education. Then on, the Christian community especially the Syrian Catholics as well as the Latin Catholics were trying to create public opinion against the government regarding the proposed education bill by Prof. Joseph Mundassery, who was the then education minister. He introduced the education bill in order to reform the irregularities in the field of education in Kerala. The Communist government introduced two bills in the Kerala Assembly. One is the education bill and the other is the land reform bill. They said that their aim was to reform education and through land reform to control the rich landlords and enable the landless tenants to get land. These two radical reforms caused great anger and disgust among the Syrian community and the land holding Nair community. These two communities joined together and fought against the Communist government that culminated in the agitation government popularly known as

5 The Deepika, (Malayalam Daily), op.cit, April 25, 1957.
The Christian Community and Education

The Christian missionaries took active interest in the field of education. The Maharajas of the princely states of Travancore and Cochin welcomed them. They started not only English education but also gave equal importance to Malayalam language in their curriculum. The system of education introduced by them was not confined to Christian community alone but to all irrespective of religion, caste or class. They treated everybody equal in the system of education that they had introduced in Kerala.

After independence, the European missionaries left India and the Christian community continued the education system that was introduced by the missionaries in Kerala. The leaders of the Christian community especially the Bishops and the clergy took initiative to start educational institutions. The Christian community under them united for such humanitarian activities. They raised fund from the people to buy land, to construct building and to make infrastructure for educational institutions. Their motto was to remove illiteracy and to build up a modern India. They welcomed all children without Caste, class or religious differences. It was open to
all and the educational institutions made them a powerful community in Kerala.

Even though they were running the educational institution, they found it difficult to manage them due to the shortage of funds. The government was not giving them any financial assistance or grant to run the institutions. Many Christian institutions found it extremely difficult to give salary to the teachers. Not only the Christian managed schools but also the educational institutions run by other communities too had to face such difficulties to run the schools.

**Issues behind the Bill:-** The private school managers were very powerful. There was no proper law and they managed the schools as they liked and the teachers were always at the mercy of the management. They had extensive powers to appoint staff and remove them from their job. So there was no security of job for the teachers. The management collected fees from the students directly and paid salary to the teachers. And the teachers were not given the salary regularly. Corruption was rampant in the running of the schools. As the teachers were not paid their salary regularly the teachers protested against the management.

The demands of the teachers were genuine. But most of the managements were in difficulty because the money collected from
the students was not enough to pay regular salary to the teachers. And the government was not giving the management any financial aid or grant to pay salary to the teachers. Therefore the management was in a crisis to run their educational institutions. The cry of the teachers was genuine. The government supported the teachers but they ignored the severe problems faced by the management to run the institutions. The government supported the teachers and ignored the genuine need of the management. The government brought the bill in favour of the teachers and purposefully ignoring the needs of the management. The aim of the government was to uphold the working class and suppress the dominant class who run the educational institutions. The Government by portraying the issues involved in the field of education was supporting the teachers because they were considered as labourers belonging to the working class while they saw that the private schools managements are the manifestations of a bourgeoisie class. In a democracy it is the paramount duty of a government, elected by the people through democratic process, that it should uphold the equality of the people, hear their grievances, protect their rights, and to arrive at a proper solution. But here they failed in handling the issues and used different yardsticks for the teachers and for the management. They supported teachers and neglected the management. Such attitude was a wrong assumption for a government. By going through these
issues their only aim is to support working class and saw management as the manifestation of capitalist class and ignored their problems. It was not an appropriate attitude for a democratically elected government. So they were more concerned to uphold Communism more than democratic principles.

The Education Bill

The Background for introducing the education Bill:- When the Communist Party formed its government on April 5, 1957, after the Kerala Assembly elections, the new government found that the department of education was consuming the largest share of the State’s budget and controlling more than 10,000 schools (7,000 of them being private), experienced great to streamline itself, for there was no uniform law to control the management of schools especially private. The Communist government conceded that the private educational institutions “had rendered commendable service in the matter of promoting education whether for proselytisation or for profit or perhaps for self rewarding social service”. The private school managers often saw their schools as a profitable business concern. But for Christian community to run the schools is for the

---


7 Department of Public Relations, Government of Kerala, 1959 g,p.2). Most of the private schools were run by religious communities such as Christians, Muslims and Hindus (Nairs and Ezhavas).
good of society more than any vested interest. Their aim is to remove illiteracy and to cull out a value based young generation. Even though the Church had greater mission to run the schools the society was predominantly favourable for the socio-economically forward strata of society. Such as Brahmins, Nairs and also for Syrian communities such as Syrian Catholics, Jacobites, Marthomites, while the existing educational system was very unfavourable to the backward communities such as the Ezhavas (backward Hindu Community), the S.C and S.T. These backward communities constituted 65% of the population, but were proportionally heavily underrepresented in the educational system and many aided school managers were violating the then existing Education Code with impunity. Numerous administrative malpractices such as receiving “donations” for appointment were followed by managers. Most of the schools run by the Christian community were exception to such malpractices. However, the trend in the field of education was not at all satisfactory. There was no accepted principle or rules for promotions–these were depending upon the will of the manager. So the teachers were demanding for a law, which will provide protection to their rights against managerial

---

encroachments. All the political parties without exception were insisting for regulation of the unbridled power of the private school managers by suitable legislation. The main opposition party, the Congress party, was demanding strict statutory control over the private school manager so as to inhibit his misdeeds and give relief to the teacher under him. Along with Congress party the CPI was also advocating radical educational reforms and a thorough reorganization of the entire educational set up in the State. The previous government under Congress party tried to reform education but failed either due to the rift within the party or opposition from outside particularly. In order to make a radical change in the field of education the Communist government decided to frame the draft of the education bill.

Draft of the Bill

The draft of the bill was prepared after examining the steps taken by the previous governments for ameliorating the conditions of the private school teachers and after considering the suggestions made by associations of teachers as well as the views of prominent

9 T.C. Narayana, KLA, Vol-VII, No.9, second session, 1959, p.909, Also, the Malayalam Rajyam (Malayalam Daily), Quilon: pro-Nair, June9, 1957, p.3. 

10 George, Kristoffel, Lieten, op.cit, p.35. 

11 CPI State council resolution, June 22-24, 1956.
persons in the field of education. The management too had many problems to run the schools but when the bill was prepared, they were totally ignored by the government. At the same time the government sought the advice of the central law and Home Ministries, which on being received were also incorporated in the Bill.

**Objectives of the Bill**

The objectives of the bill were to accord legal sanction to departmental rules and practices in order that it will be possible for the department of education to afford reasonable protection to the teachers to regulate the appointment conditions of service etc, of teachers in private schools without prejudice to the supervisory powers of managers; and to invest authority in the government to proceed effectively in the matter of grossly mismanaged schools.

The Education Minister said that the objective of the bill was to protect the rights of the teachers: "their dependence on the sweet will of the manager should cease."

---


13 Mundassery, KLA, Vol-1, No.25, First session (second meeting August), 1957, p.2293.


15 The Hindu, Madurai: July 21,1957.
Nature of the Bill

The Bill as published in the Gazette Extraordinary on July 7, 1957 consisted of 36 sections divided into three parts - General (sections 1-19), compulsory education (sections 20-290 and Miscellaneous (sections 30-36). According to the Bill, the government shall maintain a state Register consisting of the names of all eligible persons to be appointed as teachers. No person whose name is not included in the register shall be eligible for appointment in any school, government or private. Aided school teachers shall be appointed by the management only from the panel of names given to him by the prescribed authority. The management of any aided school shall be bound to appoint in suitable vacancies teachers retrenched from any other aided school, in the circumstances contemplated by the bill. The govt. shall pay the salary of all teachers in aided schools.

No aided school management shall be entitled to the maintenance and contingent grants and be free from any financial obligation towards the salary, provident fund etc, of teachers under

---

16 Section 12(I) provisions of the Education Bill.
17 Section 12(V) provisions of the Education Bill.
18 Section 13 provisions of the Education Bill.
19 Section 15, provisions of the Education Bill.
20 Section 11(I), provisions of the Education Bill.
him unless it discharges its responsibilities in accordance with the relevance of the bill. The properties of the school shall be in the custody and control of the management who shall be responsible to maintain them in proper and good condition. The management shall maintain the records of the school correctly and properly. The Bill had invested authority in the government to take over management of aided schools on a temporary or permanent basis if the management of any aided school neglects to perform any of the duties placed on it and it is felt that such a step will be in public interest, but before doing so except in emergencies the management shall be given a proper opportunity to explain its position. Clause 15 gave government the legal ground for the take over of the school for standardizing general education in the State or for improving the level of the literacy in any area or for bringing the education of any category under their direct control in accordance with the Directive Principles of State Policy enshrined in Article 45 of the Constitution Of India, the bill had provided for the introduction of free and compulsory primary education in the state for all the children up to the age of 14, if withdrawn prescribed penalties to parents, if they

21 Section 8(ii), provisions of the Education Bill.
22 Section 8(iii), provisions of the Education Bill.
23 Section 8(iv), provisions of the Education Bill.
24 Section 16(i), provisions of the Education Bill.
fail to send up their children to schools.\textsuperscript{25} For advising the government on educational policy and administration of the department of education, the government may constitute a State Advisory Board consisting of officials.\textsuperscript{26} The nature and objective of the bill was one sided i.e. supporting the teachers and ignoring the management, because of the situation created by the government. The nature of the bill was totally against the management. So the Christian community unanimously decided to protest against the education bill sponsored by the CPI government.

**The Pressure tactics and Protest of Christian community against the Education Bill**

The Christian communities particularly the Catholics were the most vehement opponents of the Bill. Their opposition commenced long before the Bill was introduced in the state Assembly. At every stage of the Bill, they organized resistance against it with a view to getting it withdrawn or suitably amended. Their struggle against the withdrawal of the bill ultimately resulted in the fall of the government. For that they mustered the support of all anti-communist political parties, groups, individuals and institutions and

\textsuperscript{25} Sections 24, 27 and 28, provisions of the Education Bill.

\textsuperscript{26} Section 4 (i), provisions of the Education Bill.
resorted to all conceivable means including violent ones. Before introducing the Bill in the Assembly the Catholic hierarchy* launched a campaign of propaganda intended to mould public opinion of the laity in its favour. The Catholic Bishops of Changanacherry Arch diocese, Quilon diocese and Trivandrum diocese met at Changanacherry Archbishops House on May 19, 1957 and decided to chalk out a detailed programme for an ‘education agitation’ and to raise a fund of rupees two lakhs for financing it. Initially Congress party was not involved in this movement and they kept away from it. But a top-ranking leader of the Congress party Cherian Kappan a Syrian Catholic and a M.P; was present in the meeting long before the publication of the Bill, the Catholics held protest meetings at the instance of the clergy evidently with the intention of dissuading the authorities from the proposed reform and to denounce Prof. Joseph Mundassery, the minister for education. In May 1957, when the government made it public its intention to include a provision in the proposed Bill for the appointment of teachers in aided schools from a list of candidates prepared by it, the Catholics branded the provision as a “trap” for the private school

---

27 C.N. Somarajan, pressure groups and Democratic Politics. Trivandrum: Chithra Publishers, 1982, p.84.
28 The Malayala Rajayam (Malayalam daily), Pro- Nair daily, Quilon: May 23, 1957, p.3, also The Janayugam, (Malayalam daily), CPI organ, Quilon, June 20, 1957, p.2.

* Hierarchy means a ranking of individuals as a group of officials, according to their authority or function in a church or government.
managers altogether from the field of education. The government was warned of general disorder in the States educational set up, if it went ahead with the idea of proposed list and the laity was reminded of the impending danger and asked to be ready for any sacrifice for opposing the proposal. The faithful according to the instruction of the hierarchy on June 10, 1957 formed a private school Rights defense Committee (PSRDC) to carry on an agitation against the education Bill. The Private Schools Rights defense Committee (PSRDC) demanded the government not to introduce the Bill in the legislature without circulating it first for creating public opinion. The All Kerala Catholic Congress (AKCC) an organization of the Catholic Community met at Kottayam on June 16, 1957, by a resolution not to include the provisions of the proposed Bill that might infringe the rights of minorities to preserve their religion, culture, language and script guaranteed by the constitution. The Church apprehended that the Bill might endanger its existence and that the rights of parents to educate their children in a Christian atmosphere would be imperiled. Further the Bill was projected as violating the fundamental rights of citizens. This added the strength

30 The Deepika, (Malayalam Daily), May 14, 1957, p.2.
31 Appanadesh, (Malayalam Daily), Kottayam: May 24, 1957, p.1
32 The Deepika, (Malayalam Daily), Kottayam: June 11, 1957, p.3.
33 The Malayalam Manorama, (Malayalam Daily), 'Resolution AKCC working committee', June 18, 1957, p.3. AKCC: means All Kerala Catholic Congress, an organization of the Catholic Community.
to the cry of "religion in-danger". The Catholics intensified their agitation after the publication of the Bill on July 7, 1957. Protest meeting was held at Trichur on July 9, 1957 and it was decided to hold hartal (close down) on July 12, 1957 in the diocesan educational institutions and industrial establishments in protest against the Bill. The Vicar General of the diocese of Trichur issued a circular to their educational institutions reminding them of their duty as loyal members of the Church to make the proposed hartal a success. A similar decision to observe hartal on July 13, 1957 was taken in the Palai diocese as well. According to the Catholic Church the Bill violated rights of the minorities under Article 30(1) and (11) of the Constitution to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice and the sole aim of the Bill was the nationalization of private schools. It was intended to regiment education on Communist lines and to bring teachers under the Communist banner. The Christians characterized the Bill as a subtle measure intended to convert Kerala into a Communist state. Local education committee conceived by the Bill was meant for Communist infiltration into private schools. It was against the provisions of the private School system scheme and violated the natural rights of parents to educate their children in a Christian

34 Deepika, (Malayalam Daily), July 2, 1957, p.3.
atmosphere and it sought to penalize guardians for violation of or non-compliance with its provisions. It was a blatant manifestation of totalitarianism as it restricted the power of the Judiciary and gave scope for any interpretation and executive arbitrariness. The church hierarchy was determined to oppose the bill with all its strength including religious appeal. The Bishops and other ecclesiastical dignitaries at a meeting which was held at Kottayam on July 13, 1957 formed an action committee known as Kerala Catholic Bishops Education Action Committee (KCBEAC), and also authorized the laity to form another Christian Education Action Committee (CEAC). They called upon the faithful to observe July 21, 1957 as 'prayer day' in disapproval of the Bill. The laity responded to the call of the clergy. Hartals, demonstrations and protest meetings were held. Resolutions denouncing the Bill passed in the protest meetings were sent to the President of India, the union Home Minister to the State Governor and to the Education Minister. Father Vadakkan a Catholic priest and a well-known anti—Communist went to the extent of calling upon the faithful to defy the law, unless the Bill was withdrawn forthwith. On 20th May 1957 the Bill was

36 The Deepika July, 14,1957, p.3. Ecclesiastical means pertaining or relating to the church or the clergy.
referred to a select committee. Among the Christians the Catholic community evolved a new strategy of agitation to enlist the support of the poorer and uninformed sections against the Bill as the select committee was to meet at Alwaye (a town near Cochin) to collect evidence on it. A petition signed by one million Catholics demanding the withdrawal of the Bill was submitted to the Governor of Kerala.\textsuperscript{40} The Catholic daily Deepika in an editorial on August 14, 1957, under the title “Education Bill—A Political Dynamite”, urged the laity to direct agitation against the government in power rather than making attempts to get the Bill amended.\textsuperscript{41} Deputations on behalf of the CEAC and PSRDC continued to meet the Chief Minister, demanding the withdrawal of the Bill or the circulation to elicit public opinion. The CEAC meeting at Kottayam on August 20, 1957 decided to organize a demonstration before the Assembly as the Bill would be taken up for reconsideration in the light of the select committee.\textsuperscript{42}

On August 26, 1957 about 70,000 people demonstrated before the Kerala Assembly. The demonstrators held a meeting which passed resolutions demanding the withdrawal of the Bill and Central interference to prevent the deterioration of law and order in the State

\textsuperscript{40} The Deepika, August 1, 1957, p.1.
\textsuperscript{41} Deepika, August 14, 1957, p.2.
\textsuperscript{42} The Malayalam Rajyam August 21, 1957, p.1
and to restore the sense of security. When the Bill was passed in the Kerala Assembly, the KCBEAC and the CEAC, meeting jointly, condemned it as "autocratic and unconstitutional" and resolved to intensify their agitation to prevent the Governor and the President from giving their assent to it. Telegrams in large numbers were sent to the President, the Union Home Minister and the Governor requesting them to withhold the assent to the Bill. For the intensification of the struggle the CEAC co-opted more members to it and decided to wait on the President and the Governor and submit a memorandum urging them to withhold their assent to the Bill. It further formed several sub-committees to prevent the implications of the Bill and removed the call for the raising of a volunteer crop. The CEAC on Sept 7, 1957 by a resolution asked private schools in the state to observe hartal on September 13, 1957 as a protest against the Bill. A deputation of the PSRDC met the governor on September 10, 1957 discussed with him the situation in the state arising out of the passage of the Bill and submitted a memorandum requesting him to withhold his assent to it. After the Bill was sent to the President for his assent, the agitationists focused their activities towards the

46 The Deepika, September, 10, 1957, p.1.
Central Government on Sept 30, 1957 a deputation of the CEAC met the Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and represented that the Bill aimed at seizing private schools as well as corrupting the content of education and therefore, the assent of the President to the Bill should be withheld.\textsuperscript{48} The Church hierarchy and the Kerala School Managers Association (KSMA) also made similar representations as well. By this time the government issued orders directing private school headmasters to remit fees to the treasury and to draw and disburse salaries of teaching and non-teaching staff directly, eliminating the agency of the private manager.\textsuperscript{49} But the CEAC protested against the Bill and filed a case in the High court. But the court gave a verdict in favour of government action. During this time the Catholics added a new tactics to their strategy of agitation, highlighting the section II of the act regarding the appointment of teachers as the most objectionable part and called for the cooperation and support of other communities and political parties in their struggle against it.\textsuperscript{50} The Catholics of Changanacherry on March 7, 1959, forming a diocesan education council decided to launch direct action against the Act.\textsuperscript{51} They tried to get the support of

\textsuperscript{48} The Malayala Manorama, October 1, 1957, p.1.
\textsuperscript{49} Government order, (C.Spl) 1-20592/57, EHD dated October 2, 1957.
\textsuperscript{50} The Malayala Manorama, Feb. 22, 1959, p.2.
\textsuperscript{51} The Deepika, March 8, 1959, p.1.
other communities particularly the Nairs, in their favour. By now the agitation took a turn more political than educational as the agitationists made it clear that they were not seeking redressal of any grievance but the overthrow of the government itself. The agitation turned political, the Christian community along with the Nair community formed the central column of the ‘Liberation struggle’, which brought about the fall of the Communist government.

**Introducing bill in the Legislative Assembly**

A draft of Education Bill was published on July 7, 1957, and it was presented to the Legislative Assembly on July 7, 1957. It was referred to a select committee consisting of representatives of all political parties in the Assembly. The report of the committee was presented to the Assembly on August 24, 1957. The discussion of the Bill which lasted over ten-and-a-half hours was referred to a select committee comprised 23 members who actively participated in the discussion. In the select committee 16 belonged to the opposition and 7, including the Minister for Education, to the treasury benches. The select committee consisted of 19 members with the minister as the chairman of whom 9 belonged to the CPI, (Communist party of

---

52 The Deepika March 20, 1959, p.3.
India), 6 to the Congress and two each to the PSP (Praja Socialist party) and the IUML (Indian Union Muslim League). On July 20, 1957 the select committee was asked to submit its report within three weeks. The members of the committee in their report suggested some drastic changes in the Bill.\textsuperscript{55}

The report of the committee was presented to the Assembly on August 24, 1957. The Bill was passed by the Assembly on Sept 2, 1957. Most of the modifications introduced to it were of minor importance. One of the most important amendments specified that “for the purpose of giving representation to communities appointments in private schools as well since “the entire salary of teachers is paid by the government. Hence communal reservation should be made applicable in making appointments to all these.... Vacancies”.\textsuperscript{56} P.T.Chacko, the leader of the Congress Party in the legislative Assembly proposed it. He was one of the most outspoken spokesmen of the Syrian Catholic Community. The select committee added a clause that nothing in the Kerala Education Bill should affect the rights of the minorities under the articles of the constitution and that therefore, the provisions of the Act should not apply to schools other than government schools and schools aided by

\textsuperscript{55} PA. Mamman, Communalism Vs. Communism. A, op.cit, p.104.

\textsuperscript{56} Department of Public Relations, Trivandrum: 1959, p.4-5.Also Synopsis of the Kerala Legislative Assembly debates 13\textsuperscript{th} July 1957.
the government. The Christian community and its leaders pleaded that the Bill was anti-constitutional, mainly contrary to 30(i), giving rights to the minority to establish and administrate schools and 30(2) prohibiting discrimination in the matter of grants—in-aid by government.\textsuperscript{57}

According to Article 30 and the rights of the Anglo-Indian community under Article 337 of the Constitution of India minorities have the right to establish and administer educational institutions.\textsuperscript{58} These rights are the following:

(1). All minorities whether based on religion or language shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.

(2). The state shall not in granting aid to educational institution, discriminate against any educational institution on the ground that it is under the management of a minority, whether based on religion or language Art, 337: is a special provision for educational grants to the Anglo-Indian community). The dissenting notes for the report were written first by the IMUL member C.H. Mohammnad Koya, the second jointly by the five congress party members, the third by PSP leader Pattam Thanupillai and the fourth

\textsuperscript{57} The Hindu 08.10.1957.

\textsuperscript{58} Art.30: Fundamental Rights of the Indian Constitution.
by P.M. Kunhiraman Nambiar of the same party. Their objections were mainly in terms of those sections, which in their opinion, were adverse to the interests of private school management and of minorities especially in the sphere of appointment of teachers establishment and functions of the local Educational Authorities etc. The education bill was passed unanimously on September 2, 1957. The bill then under Article 200 of the Constitution of India was referred by the Governor for the consideration of the President of India. The Central Law Ministry and Education Ministry had expressed their opinion that the Bill violated Article 30(i) of the constitution which guaranteed minorities the right to establish and maintain educational institutions of their choice as such there was a sure possibility of avoidable litigation. Also efforts were made by the private school managers particularly belonging to Syrian Catholic as well Latin Catholic communities and top Congress leaders of Kerala to persuade the Central Government not to approve the Bill. Finally the Bill was passed on Nov 28, 1958 received the assent of the president on February 19, 1959 to become an Act.

60 The Deepika (Malayalam daily), October 27, 1957, p.1; Also Deepika, October, 30, 1957, p.1
The Reaction to the Bill

After introducing the Education Bill in the Assembly, Government faced strong reaction from opposition parties and from various religious communities. The Government faced reaction against the bill mainly from three angles.

Firstly from the Christian community secondly from the part of other communities and thirdly from the part of the opposition parties.

1. Opposition to the Bill from the Christian Community

All Christian Communities in Kerala such as the Syrian Catholics, Latin Catholics, Orthodox Syrian Christians, Marthomma Christians and the Church of South India (CSI) joined together and opposed the Education Bill introduced by the Communist Government. The Syrian Christian leaders won their desired objective by giving a religious and communal colour against the education bill sponsored by the Communist Government that their religion is in danger. Among them the most vehement opponents of the bill was the Catholic community. It was evident from the attitudes of their Bishops and also from the part of the AKCC. The All Kerala Catholic Congress (AKCC) a community organization of the Catholics requested the government that the Bill should be
circulated for eliciting public opinion. Just like the AKCC the Catholic Bishops also registered their protest against the Government when the Bill was published on July 7, 1957. The Catholic Bishops presided over the protest rallies and meetings organized by the Catholic community soon after the publication of the education bill by the government. Truly speaking that more than any other Christian Community, the Syrian Catholic and Latin Catholic Community was deeply hurt and annoyed of the Bill. They protested vehemently against the bill due to the following reasons. Firstly they ran the largest number of private schools in the State. Secondly they suspected the motive of nationalization in the proposed Bill. The suspicion was stronger, since the Bill was sponsored by a Communist Ministry with whom the Catholic Church had everlasting enmity. Thirdly the Catholics foresaw an attempt on the part of the Government to introduce the teaching of Marxian ideology. Their fears were confirmed by the new text books introduced in schools during the year 1958-59. Even the text book enquiry commission appointed by the Government admitted that they were hastily prepared and contained mistakes. Fourthly the Catholic hierarchy preferred nuns and priests, as teachers in their schools and any curtailment of the power of appointment would put an end to this practice. Hence they could not accept even the change made by the select committee regarding the power of appointments
of teachers in the schools. The Catholic community and its hierarchy decided to go ahead with their plan against the Communist Government. The Church always attached great importance to education since it is one of the most effective means of religious formation. Consequently the Christian community had never been shy of defending their rights in the field of education and of demonstrating a readiness to make the maximum sacrifice for preserving her rights in imparting moral and religious instruction. Therefore, it was but natural that the Church leaders resented every effort of the Government to impose checks on the freedom of the Christian school managements.

The importance of education from the part of the Christians is explained by Msgr. L.J. Chittor. He was the Vicar general of the Archdiocese of Changanacherry in central Kerala. In his speech he said that “for the Catholics educational institutions were equally sacred as churches and they wouldn’t mind even laying down their lives for the cause of the freedom in the field of education.” The Bishops were particularly perturbed by the Government’s ambitious designs in the sphere of education. They protested the educational policy of the Communist Government. For that at the end of May 1957, four Archbishops and Bishops met in a conference to take

62 The Deepika, June 18, 1957.
exception to the assumption of the Government that primary education was the responsibility of the State.  

2. Attitude of other communities towards the Education Bill

Along with the Nairs the Muslims and the upper classes of the Ezhava community also protested against the implementation of the Bill. Later Nair community joined with the Christian Community to protest against the Education Bill of the government. The Nair and Ezhava communities at first welcomed most of the provisions of the Bill. The NSS the organization of Nair Community and the SNDP yogam, the organization of the Ezhava Community suggested that the appointment of teachers in private schools should be handed over in entirety to the public service commission. They supported this idea in all private schools through the principle of Reservation for backward communities. As per the existing conditions the Nair community and the Ezhava Community had no access to schools run by other communities. The Nairs could not gain through Reservation because they were outside the reservation category. But they thought that they would get a larger quantum of posts by securing appointments in the Christian managed schools. Secondly the Nair leaders were jealous of the growing influence of Christians in the field of education. Thirdly they thought that their interest would be

---

\(^{63}\) The Hindu June 4, 1957, July 16, 1957 and July 26, 1957.
safe in the hands of the CPI since the latter depend partly on their votes.

But the NSS later turned against the government and joined hands with the Christians in condemning the Bill. They joined hands with Christians because 50% of seats for seeking job were reserved to backward communities which was blessing for the Ezhavas since they belong to the backward Community. The Nairs being a forward community for seeking a job they had to face competition. Therefore the Nairs concluded that the Christians loss would only benefit the backward class and not the Nairs.\textsuperscript{64} The Communist Government tried to sue the Muslims regarding reservation. The League however feared that Communist encroachments among its community members and joined hands with Christians against the Government.\textsuperscript{65} The Ezhava community strongly supported the Education Bill because they were well aware that the education Bill would benefit their community. Apart from these community-based organizations that owned the educational institutions, there was the All Kerala Private School Managers Association that united the managers of all communities.


3. The Opposition Parties

All the opposition parties of Kerala reacted against the Education Bill because of the following reasons. Firstly they were afraid that the Communist Government was going to establish a Communist dictatorship in the field of education. The surest way to regimentation is the brainwashing of the future generation. This logic was reported again and again in vociferous writings and speeches of the opposition party leaders and had an engaging effect upon the large chunk of the population. Secondly another important reform introduced by the government in the field of education is the revision of the syllabus by the Government. The opposition parties unanimously protested against such a move of the Government. They alleged that the Communists had a sinister motive which was “seen in full nakedness in the preparation and prescription of text books” to enslave the minds of the students to the ideology of the rulers by a rigorous control over syllabus… common to all totalitarian Governments.

Campaign against the new Syllabus

During this time the Communist party appointed a committee to reform the school syllabus. Their aim was to renew the syllabus

---

67 George, Kristoffeel, Leiten, op.cit, p.43.
68 KPCC Memorandum 1959,p.22,
from 1st to 12th class especially the Malayalam text books. And also to reform from 6th to 12th class English text books. The Christians protested against this action and said that the textbooks are Communist based; immoral and atheistic. The Christian community was afraid that through the nationalization of text books the Communists would be able to use books of their choice to indoctrinate the youths in the Communist ideology. In fact, the Government had modified the contents of several textbooks in the Upper Primary and High School, especially of social studies in such a way to emphasize the achievements of Communist countries in contrast to India and other non-Communist countries. The Government’s effort to reach an agreement with the representatives of the Catholic Congress was unsuccessful. The Bishops of Kerala also publicly condemned the textbooks. The education Bill and the various progressive reforms introduced by the Communist Government infact made division among various communities of Kerala. The Christians, Nairs and Muslims turned against the Government while the backward communities especially the numerically strong backward community such as the Ezhavas supported the Government. Their policy made a sharp division among various communities of Kerala.

The education bill was aimed at isolating the Christian community from Hindu community. But the Nairs and High Class Ezhavas also found that as they owned many schools they would be affected. The service conditions of the teachers were not well defined and they are not uncommonly had to pay capitation fees to get appointment. The proposed bill empowered the Government to pay the salary directly to the teachers instead of paying through the management. The agitation led by Christians against the withdrawal of the education bill entered into another phase when the Government issued an order on 12 October 1957 implementing direct payment of salary to the schoolteachers. The government ordered Headmasters to sign the salary bill instead of Managers. Meanwhile the Managers Association gave an ultimatum to the government that unless the order of direct payment was withdrawn they would close down schools from Nov.1, 1959 onwards. Along with the Christian community the Nair community also supported the decision taken by the private managers association regarding the closing down of the schools. The private school managers opposed

70 E.J. Thomas op.cit, p.91.
71 "The Economic weekly," Education in Kerala", IX 27 July, 1957. Panampilly, the veteran Congress leader, when he was education Minister in the Congress Government tried to introduce a legislation along similar lines, but was compelled to give up his Education portfolio under pressure from Catholic Church. XVII, 24 April 1965, p.702.
the order on two grounds. First that the government was trying to take away the powers of managers, second that it was trying to enforce sections of the Education Bill before it became a law. Some managers filed writs in the High Court of Kerala challenging the validity of the writs. The implementation of direct payment got the anger of private managers but also the Christian as well as the Nair community and also a sizable number of the wealthy Ezhava community who are running private schools.

**Kerala Agrarian Relations Bill (Land Reform Bill)**

Soon after the assumption of office the Communist Ministry announced its decision to assign permanently to the landless and poor peasants all available government lands for cultivation so that agricultural production could be increased and as many landless families as possible could be settled. According to preliminary estimates 7.5 lakh acres of cultivable wastelands were available, excluding forestlands.  

When we analyse the land reform bill, which was introduced by the government led by the Communist party, it would be necessary to refer very briefly about the land system in Kerala before the time of independence. Before independence Kerala was divided

---

into three territories i.e. The Princely state of Travancore, princely state of Cochin and Malabar part of Madras presidency. The land system of these territories (1) Malabar (2) Cochin and (3) Travancore was not uniform.

(1). In Malabar there are three main forms of holdings, namely, (a) the jenmom (b), the kuzhikanam and (c) verumpattom. (a). Jenmom is absolute proprietorship of land. The owner is called jenmi. All the land even the forests and hills, are supposed to belong to the jenmies. (b) Under the kuzhikanam tenure, the tenure holder, called kanamdar, derives his title from the jenmi. His kanam that is the tenurial right, generally a lease of 12 years subjected to the payment of rent. In course of time, many kanammdars leased out their land to verumpattommdars. (c) Verumpattam is a simple lease for a single year. The verumpattomdar, in reality a tenant –at-will, may hold his tenancy either from a kanamdar or a jenmi direct. This was the land system prevailed in Malabar. It is a feudal system. And according to this system the jenmi is a feudal lord and he is the owner of the land, while the tenants are the cultivators of the land. Hence they don’t have any property right.

(2) The princely state of Cochin too had the same land system as in Malabar i.e. the jenmi system with its concomitant of kanammdars. In Cochin, by proclamations and enactments, by 1937 all
kanamdars received fixity of tenure. And by an enactment of 1943, fixity of tenure was granted to verumpattodars. (3) The position in the princely state of Travancore was different. Here through royal proclamations the fixity of tenure of the kanamdars was done subject to payment of rent. In 1933 the king of Travancore abolished the system of different kinds of dues, which the kanamdar had to pay to the jenmi. The various dues to the landlords were computed in terms of a definite sum of money. This mode of payment came to be known as jenmikkaram. Further, the government undertook to collect this jenmikkaram and pay it to the landlords. Thus, in effect, holders of kanam tenancies became absolute owners of land with transferable and heritable rights.

Thus, when the state of Kerala was formed in 1956, the Malabar tenants had the benefit of fixity of tenure and fair rents, and Cochin tenantry was granted fixity of tenure, neither of these was to be found in Travancore. The Congress government as the rulers of the state soon after independence brought no benefits to the tillers. The Communist ministry through the land reform Bill tried to put an end to the land system prevailing in Kerala.

Like education Bill another bill presented by Communist Government in the Assembly was the land reform bill. It was indeed a revolutionary step taken by the Communist Government. The Bill
was introduced in the Legislative Assembly on Dec. 18, 1957 and passed on June 10, 1959 and sent to the President for approval on July, the same year. Just like education Bill, which was equally attacked by the Liberation strugglers was the “Kerala Agrarian Relations Bill”. The Bill sought to limit the amount of land one could keep in possession. This bill actually challenged the land system that prevailed in the feudal set up of Kerala for centuries. The primary aim of the bill was intended to transfer the rights of those lands cultivated by Kudiyans (people who are Staying and cultivating the land of the landlords (janmi) but they have no right over the land). It must be observed here that the Bill respected landowners existing rights and only intended to modify such rights partially by providing compensation for any surplus land, which was to be taken over. In other words the Bill “was still a bourgeoisie agrarian reform and not a revolutionary measure passed exclusively on the peasantry’s behalf.”

According to the provisions of the land reform act, ‘Ceiling area’ of land is fixed at 15 acres for double cropland or its equivalent, i.e., 22.5 acres of single crop or 15 acres of garden land or 30 acres of dry land. Any land in excess of ceiling area shall be

surrendered to the land board. Persons so surrendering land are entitled to compensation, similar or to that fixed in the case of purchase by tenants. Any person who has no land or has land less in extent than the ceiling area can apply to the land board for assignment of land. The land board will assign the rights over lands assigned to them in an order of priority for such assignment: (1) a tenant whose land has been resumed; (ii) a landlord who has lost his rights over land by the operation of the Act, and who does not have land in his actual possession of more than three acres of double-crop land or its equivalent; (iii) cooperative societies whose members are agricultural laborers; and (v) adjoining cultivators. The existing rules under the Land Assignment Act apply to the assignment under this provision. The land board is empowered to manage surrendered land before assignment. The bill further contains provisions giving absolute protection to dwellers in huts that cannot be evicted except by providing them house sites and funds to raise huts in the same village. This was the provision of the Kerala Agrarian Relations Bill.

The Nairs of Central Kerala and North Travancoree who had supported the CPI in the election and who were also influential Janmis (Landlords) were seriously affected by this legislation. The growing influence of the Nairs in the Communist party due to their support in the election made them a formidable force in the CPI that
cannot be reckoned. This considerable influence of the Nairs that led towards a serious split within the CPI. One fraction was led by M.N. Govindan Nair a former NSS leader in Travancore and a General Secretary of the CPI in Kerala and K. Damodaran a Communist leader led another faction from Malabar who had no community affiliation. The influential Nair members of the communist legislature party briefed adequately by Mannath Padmanaban pleaded the case for the NSS so well that the General secretary of the CPI M.M. Ajoy Ghosh who was present at Alwaye, a town near Cochin, to bring about a rapprochement between these two groups, pleaded with the Malabar group not to antagonize the powerful Nairs of Travancore. Under these circumstances the CPI decided to adopt a go-slow policy towards the Bill. M.N. Govindan Nair announced that the Legislature Assembly would not consider the Bill, which was to meet that month. The Bill was adequately watered down to accommodate the Nair interest and finally passed in June 1959. In fact, the Bill did not contain essentially anything more than those reforms envisaged in the programmers of the Congress party, in U.P, Andhra, Madras, Mysore, Orissa, Manipur, Madhya Pradesh, and West Bengal.

75 P.A Mamman., op.cit, p10.7.
76 Ibid, op.cit, p.107.
The land reform Bill was directed both at Christian and Nair landed interests, but it was disastrous mainly to the Nair landlords.\textsuperscript{77} When the Agrarian Relation Bill was passed Mannam along with other Nair leaders as well as Syrian Christians opposed the Bill. The then Revenue Minister of Kerala K.R.Gouri in her reply to the debate on the Agrarian Relations Bill said that the Bill was not against Nairs or Christians or religious institutions.\textsuperscript{78} The Nair landlords regarded Christians as a close ally because it was equally aggrieved through the education bill brought by the Communist government. They declared, “If the Church wants us to protect its schools the Church should protect our lands”.\textsuperscript{79} In the land reform Bill that the class interest cut across the community boundaries was amply evident .The CPI stood with the backward classes and communities while the Congress, PSP and other opposition parties stood with the Christian and Nair communities. Finally “Land bill became almost the center place of the programme for social and economic progress in the state... All these programmes are oriented towards the peasants and workers who belonged to the Ezhava and

\textsuperscript{77} G. Mathew, Communal Roads to a Secular Kerala, New Delhi: Manohar Publishers 1982, p.150.

\textsuperscript{78} K.R. Gouri, ‘Kerala’s Land Bill’ Reply to the Discussion on the agrarian Relations Bill in the Kerala Legislative Assembly reproduced in New Age, July 1959,Vol-VIII, No7, P.1-12.

\textsuperscript{79} Joseph Vadakkan, op.cit; p.68, AKCC Bulletin, April 1959.
the Harijan communities. The land reform act led to the conflict between the upper class communities and lower class communities. Since the Ezhava community belonged to both these groups they were the beneficiaries of this reform. From the above explanations and arguments it is quite evident that The Agrarian Relation Bill faced a stiff opposition from the economically advanced communities such as Nairs and Syrian Christian. During the debate regarding the importance of the Bill in the Assembly debate in December 1957, E.M.S., the then Chief Minister said: "The Bill ought not to be viewed with a motive to find whether it is revolutionary or progressive. The question is that we must face the problem in a practical way, taking into consideration the existing objective conditions in the country". Emphasizing that it would be wrong to think that the last word can be said on land reforms today, EMS added: 'In the agrarian relations of our country, social and economic forces are in motion, producing impacts everywhere, and new developments are taking place'. Hence, the bill that was introduced was not, and could not be, the last word on the subject.

---

81 E.J. Thomas., op.cit, p.94.
The aim of Communist Party in bringing Education Bill and Land Reform Bill

In Kerala in the history of Communism that they came to power through ballot. As the party in power the Communist party was solely responsible for the making of Education Act. Its motives in bringing the Bill were manifold. First, the party was ideologically committed to nationalization of schools and an overall change in the system of education in Kerala. Secondly, they wanted to strike at the social power of the Syrian Christian community, which was its irreconcilable enemy. The Communists might have hoped that a gradual confiscation of schools might weaken the Christian community, which always supported the Congress party and opposed Communism. They expected that they may get the support of the Nair and Ezhava communities in their attempt to do so. Thirdly the Communists wanted to extend the principle of communal reservation to the appointment of teachers in private schools, so as to please the Ezhavas who were their supporters and with this reform they can build up their vote bank among the backward Ezhava community numerically a strong community comparining the Christian and Nair Communities. Fourthly, they wanted to improve the living conditions of teachers by ensuring them security of tenure and regular payment of salary. The minister for education took it in the...
later stages as a matter of personal prestige and insisted on implementing the law in spite of the differences within the party.

In the same way the land reform wounded the feelings of the Nair community. In Kerala the Nair community was a landowning community and they were landlords. The Nairs voted the Communist party and brought them to power. They thought that the Communists would favour their community. But when the communist government brought the land reform bill the Nairs turned against them because they were the landholders. Many backward communities were the tenants under them. The aim of Communist party was to liberate the backward toiling masses from the yoke of the Nair land owning community. Besides, by bringing such a bill the poor rich gap can be solved through land ceiling act. They thought that the exploitation of the poor labouring class and the actual tenants of the land can be liberated from the clutches of the Nair community who possessed acres of land. The communists who always stood for a classless society believed that through their radical reforms, they can carve out a new Kerala state beyond the clutches of various religious, class, community and caste oriented society. But it was in vain because they failed to get the support of the people who strongly stood behind their own communities. Kerala
was a traditional society where people are more affiliated to their socio-religious setup.

The Beginning of Liberation Struggle

On 8 March 1959, a meeting of over 200 prominent Nair community leaders were held at Perunna near Changanacherry in Kottayam DT, and decided to launch an agitation against the government. Mannam was the president of the NSS organization. In his speech at the meeting he declared that the time has come to put an end to the Communist rule. On May 1, 1959 a conference of the Christian and Nair Communities organization was held at Changanacherry and a ‘Liberation Council’ or Vimochana Samara Samithi was constituted under the leadership of Mannam. As the president of the Vimochanasamaram Mannath Padmanabhan came out in the open and commented, “Communist rule means rule of all the people, and he added,” “we could not wait till the next elections because by then they would have rigged everything, changed the voters list and got so much money that they could have bought votes.” The Syrian Catholic and Latin Catholic Community, the NSS a community organ of Nairs and the Congress rallied, behind Mannam, who openly proclaimed that the “objective of the

---

82 The Malayalam Rajyam (Malayalam Daily), March 10, 1959.
83 Taya Zinkin, Reporting India, London: Chatto and Winds, 1962, p.154
Liberation struggle was to throw the government out of power, and that the government could not hope to save itself even by withdrawing from its act. In the meeting he appealed to the people of the state to come forward in support of the private school manager’s agitation and turn it into a mass movement against the government. It decided not to reopen the private schools on June 1, after the midsummer vacation. The Samarasamithi decided to organize volunteer crops to defend the schools. In March 1959, Catholic Bishop’s Conference at Ernakulam had charted out a programme to launch a struggle against the government, and under given circumstances called upon their people to take all necessary actions and to unite with other communities. According to their programme soon after that a convention was held under Christian and Nair leaders who formed an action council consisted of Mannam, Fr. Mannanal, secretary of the private school manager’s Association and V.O Abraham, a lay Christian leader. On April 26, Catholic Bishops conference in Kerala in a circular exhorted the Syrian and Latin Catholic communities to continue the action against the government Act by all constitutional means. Since the Supreme Court, the Indian President and the Kerala Legislative Assembly had

\[84\] V.R. Krishna Aiyar, Daniel came to Judgement, Ernakulam, 1959, p.54.
\[85\] The Malayala Rajyam (Malayalam Daily), May 3, 1959.
\[86\] The Malayala Rajyam, (Malayalam Daily), May 3, 1959.
duly approved the Education Act the call by the Bishops could only be interpreted as a call for unconstitutional act. Actually at that very moment the organ of the Catholic Church, Deepika newspaper gave an open call for breaking the law. It’s editorial on 28 April stated: “The Communist government in Kerala, when it deals with their opponents should remember that the constitution, the Central government and the law of the country are binding on them. The Communists have the responsibility of conducting the government according to constitutional methods. But the people who are opposing have no such obligation”. One day later the editorial of the Deepika daily newspaper said that to run the schools under the existing circumstances “would be a deed against religion, society and the country. We need not have any respect for a law which is unjust”. The Christian community leaders especially their Bishops strongly protested against the Bill, mainly because they were afraid that their young generations might be brain washed by the reds. The Indian Express published an editorial “catch the young” in which a seething attack was made on the educational policy of the Kerala government. The editorial made comparison between Communists educational policy in China and the Kerala Bill. This editorial made an impetus among the democratically minded people to take arms against the communist government. It was a chance for other

87 George Koff, Malayalee March 29,1959, p.133.
communities to extend their support to the Nair Christian combination. Taking into account of this fact along with the Christians and the Nairs, Muslims also supported to outset the CPI government. But later they announced that they would not participate in the school closing down movement. Mannam who had supported the communist government especially its education bill at the end of March wrote an open letter to the Chief Minister, asking for the withdrawal of the education Act. "I make the demand in accordance with the wishes of other management also. I want to inform you that in case if it is not possible for you to withdraw it, we will be turning to direct actions". Meanwhile The NSS organization and its president Mannam had already formed a close combination with the Christian community.\(^{89}\) The Christian community in Kerala consisted of two specific identities. But both of them had their anti-communism in common. The first group belonged mainly to the Syrian Christians, the rising group in all fields of economic and administrative activities. This leading business community as well as the leading farming community – dominating the rubber, tea and coffee plantations – was extremely alarmed by the actions and intentions of the Communist government. The second group comprises mainly the Syrian Catholics and Latin

\(^{88}\) Indian Express, Madras, June 12, 1959.

\(^{89}\) The Malayalee, (daily) March 29, 1959.
Catholics that their Ecclesiastical relation with Vatican and its teaching against Communist doctrine influenced the Catholic community of Kerala to turn against Communism. One of the major reasons for Christians against communism is that it always hoisted the teachings of Marx that “religion is opium”. They were against religion, because of its teachings about Supernatural Being and the denial of the existence of God. Because of all these reasons the Christian community turned against Communism and they declared that communism is an atheistic creed and cannot be reckoned. The NSS and Christian community especially the Syrian Catholics as well as the Latin Catholic community vigorously and actively continued their fight against Communism. They were also aware of the fact that the communist government would never yield to any amount of pressure on their part. The leaders of the liberation struggle did not have any plan to overthrow the government instead to continue their agitation till the next election.

The Nair community joined the Vimochana samaram or liberation struggle along with the Christian community due to the following reasons. The most important reason that impelled the Nair community to indulge in the Liberation movement is that the policy of the government that affected the material vested interest of their community. The Agrarian Relations Bill or the Land Reform Bill
that the government had circulated and referred to a select committee adversely affected the Nair community. The Nair community is a rich community because most of the land belonged to this community. The request of the NSS, the communal organization of the Nair community asked permission to start an Engineering College at Palakkad was rejected. Again, the demand of the communal reservation in public appointments was not granted. They also felt that the revised education Bill, while exempting Christian and Muslim communities from the applicability of certain clauses had discriminated the Nair community. All these factors wounded the feelings of the Nair community. These factors helped them to join hands with the Christian community to launch the Liberation struggle against the government. In short all these factors indicate that liberation struggle was mainly an amalgam of Nair Christian agitation against the arbitrary educational policy and the land ceiling policy of the Communist Government.\textsuperscript{90}

The Pastoral Letters of Bishops – The sentiments and the Religious passions

The Catholic Bishops of Kerala jointly issued a pastoral letter in the first week of August 1957, asking their flock to prepare themselves for a “Dharma Samaram” (Agitation for Justice) against

\textsuperscript{90} Georges, Christopher, Leinten, op.cit, p.132.
the Communist government. The Catholic Bishops officially supported the (Liberation Struggle) Vimochanasamaram by publishing 'pastoral letters' in which they exhorted the Catholic community to oppose the education Bill even at the cost of their lives. Responding to the invocation of the Bishops the Christian community rallied behind them for the liberation struggle sponsored jointly by the Christian and Nair communities under the leadership of Mannam. Along with Mannam simultaneously the Church also worked to arouse religious feelings for a fight to finish against the 'anti-God' Communists who were going to take over their churches and schools. The statement of the action committee in the Changanacherry diocese exhorted the faithful saying: "it will not be too much if at least one young man from every house encouraged to come forward and enlist himself as a volunteer the parish committee for action." The public announcement of Mannam and the pastoral letters of the Bishops arouse communal feelings not only among Christians and Nairs but also among Muslims and the upper class and middle class Ezhavas to join together and planned for a liberation struggle which was popularly known as 'Liberation struggle'. In Malayalam this movement against the Communist government by various communities mainly sponsored by Ezhavas

91 Deepika 4, 1957.
92 V.R. Krishna Aiyar, op.cit, p.56.
and Nairs under Mannam is known as Vimochanasamaram. All Bishops as well as the priests of the Christian community supported this movement. Among the Christians their spokesman in the political arena was P.T. Chacko, a Catholic who was also a Congress leader. Mannam was in the vanguard of the Nair community. And their political leader was Pattam Thanu Pillai, the leader of the PSP (Praja Socialist) party. Middle and Upper class of Ezhavas joined the liberation struggle and its leader was R. Sanakr, the veteran Congress leader. Thee Muslims too lend their support to the Liberation struggle and its leader was Muhammad Koya. The reforms of CPI led government accelerated communal feelings by bringing them together under the banner of liberation struggle. They raised the “cry of insecurity”. Behind this cry was basically the panic among the vested interests at the very existence of a Communist Ministry, which they could not tolerate, even if it worked within the Constitution.  

The aim of the reform movement was to put an end to religious fanaticism and socio-economic division among backward and forward communities. However, their attempt could make a

---

93 Malavya, op.cit; p.23.also see the Editorial “Insecurity”, Kerala Bhooshanam (Malayalam Daily), April 13, 1957, Times Of India, January 16, 1958, Malayala Manorama, September 15, 1958.
sharp division in the social set up of Kerala and helped to strengthen communal feelings between forward as well as backward classes.

**Nature and Extent of Liberation struggle**

From March 1959 onwards, the organizations of the Nairs and the Christian community along with them the major political parties such as the Indian National Congress, PSP, RSP and the Muslim League extended their wholehearted support for the liberation struggle against the government, for their education and land ceiling policy. When the major communities and the opposition parties joined together under the banner of liberation struggle it became a massive movement against the government. The major charges of corruption leveled against Communist government was that it was the consistent policy of the government to create “a privileged class composed exclusively of the communist party members, from whom nepotism, favouratism, etc. are shown and corruption had become rampant with the funds of the state exchequer stealthily flowing in to party funds”94. The charges leveled against the Communist Party and the ministry included: corruption in government deals and in the cooperative schemes, rigging of votes in the by-election that took place in Devikulam constituency, curtailing of educational freedom, high-handedness of the police in the suppression of the people’s

---

94 Hindu, June 3, 1959.
movement. They openly questioned the right of the ministry to commute the "death sentences of confirmed murderers" and to release the "so-called political prisoners who were not under detention but who were punished for arson, violence and murder". Under the Communist Government's rule in Kerala the political atmosphere was burning. It led to the increase of criminality and unchecked actions by the Communist trade unions, victimization of non-party members in the administration, in the police and the judiciary, financial bankruptcy and economic failure. The Communist Parties alleged application of double standards and its disbelief in the Constitution of India and democracy were said to create great bitterness, conflict and insecurity of life and property in the state. So through these charges a Presidential intervention and fresh elections would be possible. Besides, they were accused of planting their men in all the key positions of the administration. The liberation struggle was a massive movement. The struggle to liberate Kerala formally commenced on June 13 with statewide picketing of the District Collectorates. Picketing and demonstrations continued every day. The liberation struggle was a campaign unprecedented in

---


96 Malavya op.cit, p23.

97 Henry Austin, 'The charges are summed up and refuted', Anatomy of the Kerala Coup, New Delhi: 1959, pp.85 ff.
magnitude and intensity in India. During the fifty days of liberation struggle from its inception on June 13 until the dismissal of the ministry on July 31, the police fired in seven localities with the result that 17 people were killed; lathi charges were made in 139 places, seriously injuring 332 and lightly 1,273; the communist underground organizations and militia committed 21 political murders. According to the version given by the Kerala Mail newspaper even the Indian independence struggle had not seen such human upsurge. 150,000 people were arrested of whom 40,000 were women. On 14 June violence broke out at Angamaly near Ernakulam when over 2000 demonstrators stoned the police station, demanding the release of a volunteer from the lockup. Clashes broke out between the demonstrators and the police that culminated in lathi-charges and firing. In that attack 5 persons were killed and hundreds including several policemen were wounded. In Trivandrum district firing

98 Taya Zinkin, Reporting India, London: Chatto and Winds, 1962, p.154. Government of Kerala purchased 5,000 tones of rice from a rice dealer in Andhra Pradesh without going through the normal formalities. The opposition parties raised questions of irregularities in the rice deal and demanded a judicial enquiry. The situation forced the Ministry to institute an enquiry commission to inquire and report on this deal. Justice P.T. Raman Nair of Kerala High Court was appointed commission of Inquiry. The' commission found certain irregularities in the rice deal .The commission in its report stated that the purchase resulted in avoidable loss to the state. Trivandrum: 1959, p.63.

99 The Kerala Mail (English Daily), August 2, 1959.


took place at Pulluvila and Vettukad where picketing turned violent. Here in the agitation five persons were killed. The People killed in the police firing were Christians. The police-firing at those two places strengthened the agitation. In the agitation a large number of women participated. The agitation succeeded in their effort to demonstrate that the ministry could rule only with the help of lathis and bullets. The agitators in fact succeeded in disrupting the normal life of the state. On July 15, a torchlight Jatha led by Mannam the leader of the liberation struggle accompanied by over one lakh people marched to the Raj Bhavan to meet the Governor. It was the hope of the liberation leaders that the Center would intervene at the proper time that sustained the fighting spirit of the agitators. Mannam, the leader of the liberation struggle urged the Governor to report to the President about the law and order situation and recommended him to take over the administration of the State. At last the governor sent a report to the President of India, stating that the Constitutional machinery in the state had broken down as a result of the agitation. On the basis of this report and upon the advice of Union Cabinet, the President of India as per Article 356 of the

102 Malaya Rajyam (Malayalam Daily), June 16, 1959.
103 They were 15 torches -lights representing the 15 victims of police firing at four places during the agitation.
104 Henry Austin, op.cit, p.7.
Constitution dismissed the Ministry, dissolved the Assembly and took over the administration of the State on 31 July 1959.\textsuperscript{105}

Taking into account the mass agitation occurred in Kerala related to the liberation struggle EPW reported: “What is happening in Kerala is almost unbelievable. One reads the newspapers and gets the impression that the whole place was up in flames. The Christian and Nair communities under the leadership of NSS leader Mannam organized the ‘mass upsurge’. The ruling class skilfully played in on the archaic religious caste consciousness as a last resort against the forceful attraction of the economic, progressive ideology of socialism”.\textsuperscript{106}

The period 1957-59, when the communists gained and lost power could be described as a period of community-class conflict resulting thereby, in horizontal conflict. The community–class factors were identified in the same section of the people; it was horizontal conflict between the upper class advanced communities and the lower class backward communities\textsuperscript{107}

**Christopher and Shanti Sena**

1. **Christophers:**- It was a militant group that comprises Roman Catholic youth, founded by the Catholic Bishop’s Hierarchy in

\textsuperscript{105} The Malayalarajyam (Malayalam Daily), July31, 1959.

\textsuperscript{106} The Economic and Political Weekly, June 27, 1959.

\textsuperscript{107} E.J. Thomas, op.cit, p.23.
Kerala. Spiritually and politically led by the Catholic priests, the Christopher's were used as a kind of private militia, to defend the Christian community from Communism. They adopted this name from the semi-military organization formed in Spain by the Catholic Church to overthrow the Republican Government elected by the people and help General Franco.\textsuperscript{108}

The Christopher's in their blue and white uniforms made an impact as a strong volunteer corps fully dedicated to the Church, to the Christian community and safeguard her interests. A memorandum was prepared by the police in May 1959 shows that the total membership of the Sena was over 1,00,000. The Christopher's were parish based volunteer groups and only Roman Catholics were allowed to join it. Later stage it was known as Shanti Sena, social scouts and self-defense groups.

2. \textbf{Shanti Sena}

On July 25,1958 Father Vadakkan, a Roman Catholic priest, organized what was known as Shanti Sena (Peace army) to oppose the militia of the communist party. The Christian and Nair communities joined hands and were most active in organizing the

\footnote{\textsuperscript{108} H.D. Malaviya, op.cit, p.58.}
Shanti sena. Sardar Chandroth Kunjiraman Nair military officer was the chief captain of this movement.\textsuperscript{109}

**TABLE**

Members of the Shanti Sena Catholic and NSS in various Districts of Kerala.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Catholics</th>
<th>NSS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trivandrum</td>
<td>9,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quilon</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alleppy</td>
<td>11,000</td>
<td>1,360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ernakulam</td>
<td>28,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannannore</td>
<td>4,136</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palghat</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>83,861</td>
<td>11,900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ‘A Note on Christopher and other Organizations’. Kerala’s answer to the KPCC charges the CPI, New Delhi, Sept 1959, pp.106-14.

Catholics—both Syrian and Latin Catholics, NSS (Nair Service Society), KPCC (Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee).

\textsuperscript{109} J.Vadakan, A priests encounter with revolution, Bangalore; Christian Institute for the study of Religion and Society (CISRS), 1974, p.67.
Opinion of Political leaders regarding Liberation Struggle (Vimochanasamaram)

1. Nehru said that Liberation struggle was a "mass upsurge." It was a movement that has taken place among major communities of Kerala. Nehru further added that "I cannot measure the extent of it but there is no doubt that it is on a big scale". In his statement at Coimbatore on 6 June 1959, Nehru warned of a violent conflict in the state. He attributed this to the people's general distrust of the government, caused by the activities of the party in power, which were not in keeping with the spirit of the Indian Constitution. And Nehru continued it was therefore fully constitutional to subvert such a duly elected, constitutionally established State Government. Nehru further added in the AICC Economic Review of 15 August 1958, the communist approach was "wholly unscientific, unreasonable and uncivilized". The agitation of people in Kerala was justifiable. They were reacting to something, which had tremendously upset the people. It was not something sudden and the education act as such had really no particular relevance as far as the Congress was concerned...So

---

110 Quote from Democratic Research Society 1959, p.132.
far as the agrarian relations bill was concerned they were largely in favour of it except of course some minor points.\textsuperscript{112}

2. Mrs. Gandhi the Congress President in a Press statement characterized the liberation struggle as a just, logical and Constitutional agitation.\textsuperscript{113}

3. The leading freedom fighter and Congress leader Acharya J.B.Kripalani depicted the Communist Government as a “totalitarian island in a sea of democratic India”.\textsuperscript{114}

4. E.M.S. Namboodiripad the then C.M. of Kerala said about the Liberation struggle that the liberation struggle succeeded not because the liberators had mass support behind them. They could do this because they had full confidence that the Central government led by their own all India leaders, would supplement their’ liberation struggle’ with intervention from above. Thus the prescription for the struggle was simply to create enough trouble for the state government to force them to vacate their office; should they refuse to oblige, the opposition would do everything possible so that the center could declare the State Government was unable to control the situation.\textsuperscript{115}

\textsuperscript{112} Rajaya Sabha Debates, August 25, 1959 p.1763.
\textsuperscript{113} Deepika, June 18, 1959.
\textsuperscript{114} Kripalani, Vigil (Daily) September 1, 1959.
\textsuperscript{115} EMS Naboodiripadop.cit, p.365.
5. In the opinion of the leader of the Indian National Congress, Panampally Govinda Menon that “it was a massive upsurge against the dictatorial trends of the government”.

Political Parties and Liberation Struggle

All the political parties in Kerala took part in the liberation struggle. The liberation struggle made a sharp division between the ruling party and the opposition parties. The ruling party introduced so many social reforms such as the land reforms and the educational reforms. Their aim was to control the power of the advanced communities such as Christians and Nairs. Being a radical Political party to build up a society through progressive socialist reforms was their ultimate goal. But in Kerala they could divide the society between rich and poor. They wanted to build up their vote bank by getting the backward classes and the toiling classes. This could only make division among various castes and religious and communal groups in Kerala society. Here it is essential to understand the attitude of the major parties in Kerala: the Congress party and the Communist party.

The Congress party and the Liberation struggle

The Christian and the Nair communities sponsored the liberation struggle. Both of them are economically and educationally
advanced communities. The land reform and the educational reform introduced by the Communist Government affected these two communities. In order to protect their vested interest they joined together and fought against the government under the garb of ‘Liberation struggle’. No doubt, it was a massive movement and in that movement all the opposition parties supported these two dominant communities and they also used this movement to sack the government. In the beginning Congress party was keeping away from the liberation movement. A good number of leaders in the Congress party hail from the Christian and Nair communities. The opposition leader was P.T. Chacko. He was a strong Christian. He requested the party to support the Christian community to protect their education rights. Besides Chacko Congress leaders like Cherian Kappan (MP), K.M. Chandy, Mathew Maniyankadan, T.A. Thomman (MLA), Vayala Idikkula (MLA), and Kidangoor Goplala Krishna Pillai another prominent Congress leader from Nair community were supporting their respective communities in the liberation struggle. During this time Congress party brought out many charges against the government. The Major charge was that it was the consistent policy of the government to create “A privileged class composed exclusively of the Communist party members for whom nepotism, favouratism etc are shown and corruption had become rampant with the funds of the sate exchequer stealthily
flowing into party hands''. The charges leveled against the Communist party and the ministry included: corruption in government deals and favoritism shown to co-operatives of Communist tapers, loss to state treasury in the Andhra rice deal, partiality in administration; creation of new posts for the Communists; inefficient police administration and the consequent insecurity; fanning up communal troubles; the defective education Act and the Agrarian Relations Bill, rigging of by elections, increase of criminality and unchecked actions by the Communist trade union, victimisation of non-party members in the administration, in the police and in the judiciary, financial bankruptcy and economic failure. The Communist parties alleged application of double standards and its disbelief in the Constitution and Democracy were said to create great bitterness, conflict and insecurity of life and property in the State. These were the charges leveled against Communist Government by Congress party.

In the meantime Mrs. Gandhi, the then Congress President, supported the private school management. And it was a boost for the Syrian Catholic community because they were the most affected Christian community on account of the educational policy of Communist Government. She also encouraged the KPCC to go

116 The Hindu, June 3, 1959.
ahead with its support. Soon Kerala State Congress unit came out with their support to the liberation movement. And liberation struggle became a mass movement against the state government. Taking into account of the political turmoil of Kerala State, the Congress president was firm in considering the dismissal of the government. She said in a public meeting in New Delhi, "The Constitution is for the people and not the people for the Constitution. And if the Constitution stands in the way to meet the people's grievances in Kerala, it should be changed". The Congress President later denied having made the reported statement. The support given by the Congress president was really encouraging the Congress party actively to participate in the Liberation movement along with the Christian and Nair communities. To support the liberation movement in itself was not wrong because the government challenged these communities about their minority rights. But the Congress sided with these communities and got the stigma that the Congress party is supporting and trying to foster communal politics.

The Communist party and the liberation struggle

Ever since the dawn of Communism as a political creed it was the first time that they came to power through ballot in Kerala. The people of Kerala were not Communists but they were annoyed and

117 The Statesman, July 26, 1959, Quoted from Indian Affairs Record 1959, p.159.
desperate with the way of functioning of the Congress party. Therefore the people voted in favour of Communist and brought them to power in Kerala through Universal adult suffrage.

As the party in power the Communist party was solely responsible for making education Act and Land Reform Act. Their motive was manifold. First the party was ideologically committed to the nationalization of schools and an overall change in the system of education in Kerala. Secondly they wanted to strike at the social power of the Christian community's that was its irreconcilable enemy because Catholic Hierarchy in Rome was against Communists. The Communists might have hoped that a gradual confiscation of schools might weaken the Christian communities power, which always supported the Congress party and opposed Communist party. They expected the backing of the Nair and Ezhava communities in their attempt to do so. Thirdly the communists wanted to extend the communal reservation to the appointment of teachers in private schools so as to please the Ezhavas who were their supporters. Fourthly they wanted to improve the condition of teachers by ensuring them security of job and regular payment of salary. The minister for education took it in the later stages, as a matter of personal prestige and insisted on implementing the law in spite of differences within the party. When the CPI formed the
ministry in Kerala their misgivings regarding its prospects because they were the first non-Congress government in India. Therefore the Ministry of education wanted to take up the legislation as early as possible.

From the outset the government was maintaining stubborn attitude toward the private school managers and toward the Christian community. It held that the Christians were not protected by Article 30(1) of the constitution of India and that the government is meeting heavy expenditure on the private schools, it should have control over them.

The Communist party instead of trying to win over the Christian community to its side used the same techniques on that of the opponents. It characterized the opposition as a Christian sponsored and prepared itself to meet it. The party conducted study classes to educate the followers of communist party about the education Bill and the land reform Bill and organized volunteers as a counter part of the Christopher’s and Shanthi Sena sponsored by Christian and Nair communities to put down the irreversible Bill sponsored by the Communist government.

When the Catholic community among the Syrian Christians raised the furor over the question of the textbooks the government
was not willing for an amicable settlement. Although the representatives of All Kerala Catholic Congress (AKCC) were summoned to a conference, the attitude of E.M.S the then Chief Minister and the Education Minister were not cordial. Besides, as the opposition to the Bill continued the government tried the technique of dividing the communities in Kerala.\textsuperscript{118} Eg: Sabarimala. The publication of the report regarding the Sabarimala temple arson case was meant for provoking bitterness between Hindus and Christians. Not only that the Communist Government tried to divide the Nair community and the Ezhava community on the question of reservation. They gave reservation for job to Ezhavas being the lower caste. However Nairs being the high caste doesn’t have such a privilege and not only that through land reforms the government tried to seize their land. The government could not make an inroad into these communities through the weapon of communal politics. The majority of the Nairs and a section of Ezhavas co-operated with the Christians in their opposition to the Bill.

\textsuperscript{118} Sabarimala is Hindu pilgrim center in Kerala. Many Hindus go to Sabarimala to worship Lord Ayyappa. Near to Sabarimala a place known as Nilackal. It is an ancient Christian Center and there is a strong traditional belief among the Syrian Christians that there was a Church established by St.Thomas in AD. 52, one of the Apostles of Jesus Christ. But there was no Church existing so the Syrian Christians based on the tradition wanted to construct a Church. Since it is on the way to Sabarimala the Hindus doesn’t allow constructing a Church. This attitude of Hindus made tension between Christians and Hindus.
The ultimate aim of the government was to divide the communities and to strengthen their reins of power in Kerala. The Communist government in Kerala was primarily interested in strengthening their party under the cover of democratic institutions and may also subvert the constitution itself. The Kerala government was not at all responsible to the legitimate demands of a large section of people. The government has persistently disagreed with the sentiments of a large section of the people. The whole Christian community as well as other communities in Kerala realized what a communist regime really meant. How it was a government run by the party? How is the terminology ‘people means only Communists and their fellow travelers’? How non-communists are not entitled to security of persons, having only a definitely inferior citizenship? There was no guarantee for security of persons or property. The law and order had broken-down and a reign of terror was in existence. The Communist cells were allowed to interfere in the day-to-day administration of the state and the State treasury was depleted to favour communist cooperatives and groups and even individuals. The democratic concerns and proprieties were thrown to the winds. They have come to the conclusion that if present regime is allowed to run its normal course it will tighten its’ stronghold in open as well
as hidden and subtle ways’ and kill democracy. ‘Some of the basic assumptions and actions of the Communist party’ of Kerala as showing ‘the scant respect they give to the spirit of democracy and some of the basic rights of man’. The signatories appear to be of the opinion that their 27 months confirm the fears that the government’s primary interest is to strengthen their party ‘under the cover of democratic institutions’.

Why the Christians of Kerala agitated against the Government led by Communist Party

The Christian community in Kerala is stronger than their fellow Christians in any other part of India. Among the Christians the Syrian Christians are highly advanced in education, agriculture and business. Therefore they have been a force to reckon with the government that curtails their socio-economic and political power in the state. As the Syrian Christians of Kerala claim their ancestry and faith from the time of the visit St. Thomas, a disciple of Jesus Christ, they had developed an inherent community spirit and strong faith. Historically, Christianity reached the Kerala coast much before it entered Europe. This community spirit that they are nascent Christians in India made them a cohesive communal force. Besides, they were deeply influenced by the Christian faith morals, dogmas, teachings and traditions. The Christians vehemently opposed
education bill and launched liberation struggle because they were afraid that through the nationalization of schools they would be prevented from imparting Christian education to their children, instead they may be taught Marxism and atheistic creed. Christianity especially Catholicism is against communism because it is against religion and its teachings. Communism as an ideology denies the existence of God and that is a pre condition to become member in the communist party. Therefore the Christian community, especially Syrian Catholics and Latin Catholics, were firm in their determination to resist the rising growth of Communism by all means.

Communists believed in people’s democracy. The “people here means the people of their own party”. The Communist cells in each locality tried and often successfully too, to interfere in the day-to-day administration. The party through the help of ministers tried to interfere with the work of Judiciary. The lawyers association in Kerala presented a memorandum to the president of India that gives a detailed explanation regarding such incidents. Their aim was to build up communist party by all possible means and to intimidate the rest of the people with a view of making them to join the party or at least remain submissive to them. The Communist party also

propagated that they could make great material progress by way of spreading literacy and scientific progress in countries like Soviet Union, East Europe and China.

All the opposition political parties in Kerala and also several of the major communities en bloc participated in the liberation struggle against the government. The education act is equivalent to nationalization, though that word was not employed, and makes it impossible for Christian schools ‘to carry on as such and strive to realize their distinctive moral and spiritual ideals’ and the closure of schools were therefore made logically inevitable by the new policy of the State. As for the Christians of Kerala the Communist perception is a dangerous creed to their religious belief and to the existence of their community in a free democratic India as a minority group.

**Conclusion (A critical evaluation of Liberation struggle)**

The Vimochanasamaram (Liberation struggle) is a movement that arose in a spontaneous manner. The Education Act and the Land Reform acts were only causes for this agitation. But it was a revolt of people in general, a democratically conscious lower and upper middle classes particularly, against the growing monopoly of the Communist party over the state. This is the reason why the agitation inevitably developed from a movement led by private school
managers into a mass movement for the liberation from the Communist rule itself. In the liberation struggle women and youth were in the forefront of the struggle and the 'rare unanimity' among all communities and parties were expressed through their demonstrations. Those who believe in democracy and the democratic institutions of India thought that the Communists would transform themselves from their totalitarian philosophy towards democracy. But this has been belied completely. Within the limits of the letter of the Constitution, the communists have put into practice their theory that the state powers they possess are to be used 'solely' in the interest of the working class. They tried to get party control over all the organs of the state except the Judiciary and they have employed every available means to neutralize the action of the Judiciary where party men and their interests are concerned. The Communists disregarded the legitimate democratic interests of significant sections of the people. Even they have neutralized police force that the police could not protect the people who are not supporting the party. The government failed to protect the interest of all classes. This attitude of the government led to the general breakdown law and order and people lost confidence in the system. According to K.M. Munshi the veteran freedom fighter and Congress leader, the Communist party had established a communist state (barring the judiciary), but it is the peril threatening us. Taking into account the political scenario that
occurred in Kerala owing to the liberation struggle, it divided the Kerala society into two opposing camps: Communist and non-Communist. This socio-political phenomenon is solely unique in two aspects. It is the first time a democratic constitution faced the problem of disciplining a totalitarian party in government and has the power to do it. The ‘liberation’ movement is not the result of political engineering but represents a spontaneous upsurge against the Communist denial in idea and practice of the common good. Secondly in such a situation any democratic constitution must seek to channelise the popular upsurge along peaceful channels; otherwise the inevitable result is either deterioration of the popular movement into violence or further growth of one-party totalitarian control of the State machinery. It is precisely these two threats a democratic constitution exists to prevent. The then P.M of India advised the Communist party and its government to resign and to face fresh election. However they were not ready, instead they were clinging to power by exploiting the democratic machinery of state through unconstitutional means. The people residing in Kerala irrespective of their caste and community had by then realized that the continuance of Communist rule in Kerala will be ‘the deaths—kneel of democracy in the State’ with repercussion all over India and elsewhere. They had therefore massed themselves to heroic action which was not witnessed earlier in this part of the country for a
whole century at least. The P.M. of India was well known for his deep concern for the preservation of values, rightly characterized it as a mass upsurge after an on-the-spot investigation and studies by himself.\textsuperscript{120}

The liberation movement was a great success for the growth and survival of the infant Indian democracy. No doubt the greatest success is that they could defeat Communism, politically. But this defeat can be as part of joining hands with communalism. Here in Kerala both Communists and Anti-Communists have vied with each other to create tense political conditions and no healthy democracy can thrive in such a situation. The Malabar Mail in its editorial of 15\textsuperscript{th} August States: “The success of the liberation struggle and the dismissal of the Kerala Ministry are regarded as a complement to the formation of the Swatantra party,” which was formed to stand for conservativism and traditionalism and against the “debauches of socialism.” The advanced communities of Kerala, the Syrian Christians and the Nairs, through their liberation struggle could uphold democracy but these communities are trying to capitalize the remarkable gain for their own ends more than for the good and the growth of the infant Indian democracy, by indulging into communal consciousness.