

*Tyothirish*

# WHAT HAPPENED

IN

# KERALA?

*Review of the 30 months of  
Namboodiripad Government*

*Tyothirish*

*T-YOTHIRISH*

*Pandaram*

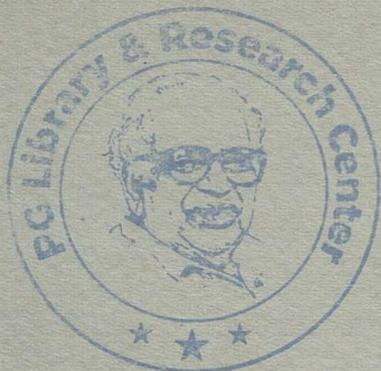
BY

C. ACHUTHA MENON

*[Handwritten signature]*

954.83

COMMUNIST PARTY PUBLICATION



954.83

Jyothish

Jyothish  
Gopindan  
Jyothish



1831

INTRODUCTION

THE RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN KERALA have been a matter of deep disappointment to the democratic-minded people all over India, who had come to look upon the united fronts in Kerala and West Bengal as the hope of the future.

Kerala had blazed the trail to the whole of India in the general election by forging a united front on the widest possible basis of all left and democratic parties and elements in the state, based upon a common minimum programme while in most of the other states of India the movement had not advanced beyond the stage of non-congressism. The result was seen in the brilliant victory in the election in which the United Front captured 117 out of 132 seats in the Kerala assembly and 17 out of 18 seats in the Lok Sabha, reducing the Congress to a small group of 9 in the state assembly and one in Lok Sabha.

Following this, E. M. S. Namboodiripad was unanimously elected as the leader of the United Front Legislature Party and he formed a ministry consisting of 13 ministers of whom 4, including himself, belonged to the Communist Party (Marxist), 2 each to the Communist Party of India, the SSP and the Muslim League and one each to the RSP, the KTP and the KSP. There was great rejoicing in the state, people celebrating the event with firing of crackers and pop-guns and distribution of *payasam*, etc. because great things were expected of this team.

Looking back after a period of two and a half years, the people feel frustrated because not only have their hopes not been realised, but also they have been treated to the most unseemly spectacle of the ministers themselves quarrelling and openly abusing each other. Finally the ministry has fallen.

Why has it happened that way? It is necessary for us to

go at some length into the history of the United Front in Kerala during the last 30 months in order to arrive at a clear understanding of the causes of these unhappy developments and be able to assess the role of different parties in the whole affair.

INTRODUCTION

1881

## DIFFERENCE IN BASIC APPROACH

The basic reason for this, according to us, is the wrong and sectarian approach of the CPM which is the leading partner in the United Front, on two questions which are of primary importance in the working of the United Front: (1) the role of UF government in the states in the context of developing the movement for replacement of the monopoly power of the Congress in the states as well as at the centre by a UF of left and democratic parties based on a common programme; and (2) the relations between the parties in the UF. On both these questions, the understanding of the CPM is so utterly unrealistic, wrong and sectarian that it does not either help to project the image of the UF government as a real alternative to the Congress or to cement the unity of the UF itself. This is the real crux of the matter, the reason for all their disruptive activities during the 30 months the UF government has been in office in Kerala.

The Communist Party of India's conception of United Front in the state is that it should prove in actual practice to be a real alternative to the discredited congress rule, in the sense that the administration should be clean, more alive to the grievances and needs of the people, more efficient and quick in the redressal of such of the grievances as are capable of being redressed within the limits of its resources, more democratic and responsive to the demands and representations made by various sections of the population, in short, a real alternative to the Congress. Of course, the power and resources of a state government functioning under our constitution are limited and we should certainly not be a party to foster unwarranted illusions among the people that everything that they desire

will be done for them. But within all these limitations, it is possible to give some relief to our much suffering people and give them a better administration than the Congress had given. Only in this way can the UF government be made to act as a potent instrument of struggle against the rule of the Congress, a point of attraction around which all the democratic and revolutionary forces which are out to overthrow congress rule in this country can be mobilised. This perspective has been clearly laid down in the resolution of the CPI National Council (Calcutta, 23-30 April 1967):

“It is the responsibility of the party to demonstrate through the achievements of these ministries that it is possible through consolidation of left and democratic unity to help these ministries use even the limited power they have to satisfy the urgent demands of the people  
• and implement the programme they have undertaken.

“This task can be performed only by relying on the support and the struggle of the awakened masses who are on the move and by strengthening the unity of the left and democratic parties and groups which constitute the government...

“The successes of the noncongress popular governments are above all in their close bonds with the masses and in their capacity to inspire and seek mass cooperation in all walks of national life.”

Such, however, is not the understanding of the CPM. They say that nothing worthwhile can be done under this constitution and, therefore, denounce as revisionist anybody who chooses to think otherwise. Hence, so far as they are concerned, there is no question of an earnest attempt to improve the administration and demonstrate to the people that ours is better than that of the Congress. They also talk of making the UF government an instrument of struggle, but how exactly this can be done if it fails to enthuse the people and endow them with hopes of a better future, one fails to understand. Their approach

seems to be rather to intensify the discontent of the people, in the fond hope that that will encourage people to rise in spontaneous revolt against the government. At any rate, such is the perspective clearly spelt out by B. T. Ranadive, a member of the CPM Politburo, in a speech he delivered in London recently:

“Mr. B. T. Ranadive, a member of the Politburo of Communist Party (Marxist) reminded at a public meeting here on Tuesday that the task of the Marxist-dominated United Front governments of Kerala and West Bengal was ‘to unleash discontent’ of the people rather than ‘to give relief’...

“Pursuant to this tactic, Marxist ministers have been told to press ahead with legislations which were likely to be vetoed by the centre or the High Court. Such confrontations were designed to tell masses of the impossibility of carrying through fundamental reforms under the present constitution. While not wishing to destroy United Front governments, Marxists were determined not to surrender fundamental aspects of this tactic...”

(Foreign correspondent, *Indian Express*, 22 June 1969)

Now this is not a mere academic question. These differing approaches have given rise to sharp conflicts within the UF on several issues such as on the questions of food, distribution of land, implementation of land reforms, on trade union issues, etc. Let us examine some of these.

## THE FOOD QUESTION

The issue of food was one on which the difference came out into the open in the most acute form from the very beginning. Kerala is a state which is a traditionally deficit. The staple food of the people is rice and the state produces only about 50 per cent of its requirements. Normally the rest of the requirements were met by import from Andhra and Tamilnadu and to a smaller extent from outside India. Since the introduction of single state zone system, the import of rice from Andhra and Tamilnadu came to a com-

plete stop. Although the central government had given a solemn undertaking at the time of introduction of single state zone system that it would supply the requirements of Kerala and see that the people of the state were not starved, the centre very often failed to keep its promise. Informal rationing had been introduced throughout Kerala from 1 November 1964 and rice was being supplied at the rate of 160 gm (about 6 oz) per adult per day besides 120 gm (about 4 oz) of wheat. For this it was calculated that over and above what could be gathered by internal procurement, about 75,000 tons of rice were to be supplied every month from outside. This the central government undertook to do and throughout the President's rule, this promise was more or less kept.

But with the assumption of office by the UF government, the supply from the centre began to dwindle and in certain months it went as low as 20,000 tons a month. This was so during the whole of 1967 and the earlier part of 1968. Naturally it gave rise to widespread discontent among the people.

In the situation thus created by the failure of the central congress government to satisfy the legitimate demands of the state, it was necessary to organise a struggle against the central government. There was no difference among the parties of UF on this and, in fact, the UF did organise several joint agitations by way of joint meetings, demonstrations, jathas, mass satyagraha before central government offices in the state, dharna before Prime Minister's house in Delhi, etc. and finally a statewide bandh on 11 September 1967. All the parties in the UF sincerely co-operated in these to the extent they could.

And yet the CPM openly came out in denunciation of other parties, especially the CPI for having tried to sabotage the bandh on 11 September! The call for the bandh was given at a very inopportune moment, considering the fact that it was just on the eve of Onam (Onam was on the 14th September that year), the national festival of the Malayalis, when the shopkeepers have the busiest season

of the year and so far as the workers were concerned, they were just on the point of drawing their Onam bonus after bitter and prolonged struggles in several factories. That the strike was a success throughout the state except for one or two centres despite these adverse circumstances was due to the strong political consciousness and solidarity of the working class in the state and for this they deserved the unstinted gratitude of the UF. And the CPM chose precisely this moment for indulging in their disruptive game.

And what was the ground for their criticism of their partners? In the Alwaye area, the strike was only a partial success and for this they cast the entire blame on T. C. N. Menon of the CPI. Now, it is a wellknown fact that the majority of the trade unions in the Alwaye area are politically neutral, in the sense that none of them is affiliated to any central TU organisation. By the mere fact that a CPI member happens to be the president or secretary of a union of this nature, it is unrealistic to assume that the entire workers of the union will participate in a political general strike called by the CPI or supported by it. And that was what happened in Alwaye on 11 September; the workers did not participate in the action. And for this T. C. N. Menon and the CPI were openly denounced as traitors and saboteurs although our party worked day and night for the success of the strike.

On the same day certain unions completely under CPM leadership in Tellicherry also did not take part in the strike; but they were, of course, not denounced! In fact, not a word was said about them. Such is the sense of fairness and justice of the CPM!

### WHAT ABOUT CPI STAND?

However that may be, the main difference between the approaches of the CPM and the CPI on the question of food is not this. The CPM contented itself with trying to concentrate all attention on the failure of the central govern-

ment. It completely ignored the responsibility of the state government.

We sharply demarcated ourselves on this question from the CPM. While it was true that the entire food needs of the state could not be met by internal procurement alone, we pointed out that being a UF government, it was the duty of that government to work out a proper policy on procurement and implement it effectively in order to show to the entire people of India what could be achieved in this field. If it was only a question of demanding more supplies from the central government, we could not hope to beat several congress state governments in this respect, which were equally vociferous about their particular requirements.

Progressive opinion all over India did ask the questions: What about their own performance in their own states? Did they make any serious attempt to step up internal procurement? The impression was that most state governments were afraid to touch the landlords and rich peasants in their states, and the cry for more food from outside was only to cover up this prolandlord-kulak policy.

It was the duty of the Kerala government to show that it differed basically in this respect from other state governments. We of the CPI demanded that this should be done, but unfortunately, owing mainly to the CPM's intransigence, this was not done.

Total rice production in Kerala in 1967-68 was estimated to be about 11 to 12 lakh tons. According to a special survey conducted by the State Bureau of Economics and Statistics, the marketable surplus was estimated to be about 20 per cent of the gross production. Hence, about 2.2 lakh to 2.4 lakh tons of rice must have been coming into the market. Even after making due allowance to all imperfection of the procurement machinery, it was reasonable to hope that the UF government should be able to collect at least 50 per cent of this marketable surplus into its own hands, that is to say, about 1.10 lakh to 1.20 lakh tons of rice. But the sad reality is that even after 30 months in

office, the Kerala UF government has not been able to achieve anything approaching this. Procurement has never gone beyond 80,000 tons per year. With this record of our government I do not know what moral right we can have to criticise any other state government in India for not stepping up internal procurement so as to supply us with rice!

### CPM SURRENDERS TO LANDLORDS AND BIG MERCHANTS

The CPI has been carrying on a persistent campaign for stepping up internal procurement. And in this campaign, we had to criticise the CPM and its food minister, Smt. Gouri, for their wrong policies. The CPM naturally dislike this and called it a slander campaign. It was nothing of the sort.

We put forward several concrete suggestion for working out a proper procurement policy. Exemption of small peasants whose holdings are less than 2 acres in extent from levy, increase of procurement price to Rs. 65 per quintal of paddy, graduated levy on all cultivators above 2 acres, procurement of the entire surplus through requisitioning from holders above 10 acres, institution of popular committees and the abolition of the private agency in the field of distribution at the wholesale stage and its substitution by the Food Corporation of India are some of the suggestions we made.

Most of these suggestions were ultimately accepted by the Coordination Committee unanimously, but except the first two, that is, exempting peasants whose holdings are less than 2 acres from levy and increasing the purchase price, not much has been implemented. Popular committees had also been constituted but they are now entirely defunct.

But the most significant thing in this was that the CPM food minister's failure to implement the decision to procure the entire surplus by requisitioning from the holders of above 10 acres as well as the decision to entrust the whole-

sale trade in distribution to the FCI. Even after two years these decisions still remain unimplemented! And this is the party which accuses other parties in the UF of being in alliance with the capitalists and landlords!

In this connection, readers will recall the notorious pronouncements that P. Sundarayya, the General Secretary of the CPM, made in a press conference in Trivandrum on 28 July 1967 which has become a byword for mendacity among the public in Kerala. Referring to the critical food situation in Kerala and his party's proposals for tackling it, Sundarayya claimed that his party had certain very revolutionary suggestions for solving the food problem, among which the most important was to procure the entire surplus from the landlords, but that unfortunately these revolutionary proposals could not be implemented because of the opposition of the other parties in the UF, chiefly the CPI. That Sundarayya's statement was false was known to everybody in Kerala, including the pressmen attending this press conference. Later on the CPM state leaders themselves had to admit that their General Secretary had made a missatement.

### WASTELANDS NOT DISTRIBUTED

One of the most important items in the Joint Election Manifesto of the UF related to the distribution of cultivable wastelands among the landless. Closely connected with this is the question of regularisation of occupation of forest lands by giving pattas to the deserving occupants. Both these items in the programme of the UF could be implemented with the least delay because there is no need for any legislation in these cases and hence no question of the constitution or obstruction by the centre can arise. And yet, after two and a half years of UF rule both these programmes remain unfulfilled. For this the entire responsibility is that of the CPM because the ministers who are responsible for the concerned portfolios, namely revenue and forest, are CPM members.

The CPI had been campaigning and agitating for imple-

menting these items of the election programme from the very beginning. We suggested that popular committees consisting of representatives of all political parties with the tahsildar as chairman be constituted at taluk level and all government land which could be distributed among the landless, after reserving whatever was necessary for public purposes, should be entrusted to these committees.

The revenue minister did not at first pay any heed to these suggestions. Meanwhile, the CPM units in certain areas where they were considerably strong began to lead landless people to forcibly occupy wastelands and they demanded that such lands should be given to the people led by them. Naturally other parties could not and did not remain idle. They also led landless labourers and poor peasants to occupy either government peramboke land or forest land. This led to a great stampede in land occupation and there were widespread clashes. The revenue minister tried to evict occupiers of other parties while protecting the occupation of her own party men. This, however, did not succeed because the occupants resisted the police successfully. Ultimately the whole question was taken up in Co-ordination Committee and the committee after prolonged and heated arguments and discussions decided on 29 March 1968 to set up all-party taluk land distribution committees, as suggested by us. It was also decided that at least 25 per cent of the land thus distributed should go to landless harijans.

However, this has turned out to be a "pyrrhic" victory, because although the popular committees have been constituted and their names published in the gazette, up to now, not a single acre of land has been entrusted to them for distribution, even 18 months after the decision of the Co-ordination Committee! Meanwhile the revenue minister goes on merrily distributing favours to her own party men and sympathisers and even to her relatives by assignments of land!

## VERY FEW PATTAS GIVEN

The story is the same so far as regularisation of occupation of forest lands is concerned. During the last 15 to 20 years there have been continuous and largescale encroachments in forest lands in Kerala so much so that the engineers concerned with the hydroelectric projects in the mountains and the forest department officials began to complain to the government that unless further encroachment is stopped and some of the present occupations on the project areas are vacated, not only will forest preservation become impossible but there may be actual danger to some of the hydroelectric projects on account of soil erosion and silting up of dams. Successive governments had tried to tackle this question, but failed because the peasants refused to vacate. Some of these occupations are of 12 to 15 years' duration in the course of which the hardworking peasants have cleared the forest, planted fruit trees like coconut, jack-fruit, mango, etc. which had begun to bear fruit, levelled the ground and converted it into rice fields, built schools, churches, market places, etc. Ultimately during President's rule in 1964-66, a parliamentary committee under the chairmanship of Shri Mathew Maniyangadan, M.P., was appointed to go into the whole question and recommend what to do. The committee recommended that except in the areas in which occupation was likely to prove a danger to hydroelectric projects, occupation in the rest of the areas has to be regularised by issuing pattas to the present occupants if they are found to be eligible for assignment of government lands according to rules. In no case was an occupant to get more than 3 acres of land; excess, if any, was to be recovered from him and made available for distribution by government to other eligible persons. Occupation in the project areas, which the committee clearly demarcated, had to be vacated and the persons evicted from such areas were to be rehabilitated if they were found to be poor and landless and without any other means of livelihood.

In the Election Manifesto of the United Front the promise

has been given that these recommendations of the Maniyangadan Committee would be implemented. The CPI had been campaigning for its implementation from the very beginning. After repeated attempts to draw the attention of the government to this question through the usual methods of questions in the assembly, calling attention motions, representations to the minister concerned, etc. had failed to produce any result, we had to resort to action—peaceful struggles, which included hungerstrikes and satyagraha before the government offices in the High Ranges where these occupied areas are situated. These were led by K. T. Jacob, the CPI M.L.A., who is the undisputed leader of peasant occupiers and president of the Kerala kisan sangh led by the CPI.

The movement spread far and wide and began to gain in intensity and militancy. Even the CPM in the local area was compelled to join in the struggle. At last the government was forced to open negotiations and concede the main demands of the agitators by agreeing to the grant of pattas without any delay and the agitation was withdrawn.

Here again the revenue minister has stalled the implementation of her promises. It has been estimated that about 2 lakhs of pattas had to be issued, if the work is to be completed. Up to now, even a fourth of this has not been completed.

The CPM has recently unleashed a huge propaganda barrage against the other parties in the UF accusing them of trying to sabotage the Land Bill. But what is the truth and what is their own record so far as implementation of land reforms is concerned?

### LAND REFORMS BILL DELAYED

The bringing forward of a comprehensive amending bill to change the existing Land Reforms Act of 1964 had the pride of place in the UF Election Manifesto. If the CPM were at all serious about land reform, this could have been done within one year of the assumption of office by the UF government, if not earlier. It might be remembered that the

earlier communist ministry of 1957-59 had found time even while faced with such tremendous odds as the "liberation struggle" launched by the Congress in league with all reactionary elements at that time to pass the Agrarian Relations Bill before it was dismissed at the end of 23 months of office.

This time there was no such opposition, in fact, no opposition worth the name. Moreover, we had not to begin from scratch with no model to go by as it was in 1959. The task was much easier since only some amendments were all that was necessary.

The revenue minister, Smt. Gouri, who was in charge of the bill, had the benefit of the great experience of the piloting of the earlier bill and, therefore, could be expected to do it this time with greater ease and expedition. And yet, in practice, it proved to be otherwise. It took her one full year and more, 18 months to be more exact, to prepare the bill and place it before the assembly. The bill was introduced only on 19 August 1968, and referred to a select committee. Even after that it took a very leisurely course under the chairmanship of the revenue minister. At last, the report of the select committee was placed before the assembly only in August 1969, that is, one full year after the bill was referred to the committee.

After having been responsible for this unpardonable and criminal delay, the CPM and its revenue minister suddenly pretended that they could brook no delay, not even a delay of one day, to give time to finally pass the Panchayati Raj Bill which was being discussed in the assembly in the August session of 1969, beginning on 4 August and ending on 22nd. As a matter of fact, if the CPM wanted to give priority to the Land Bill even in August 1969, it was up to its revenue minister to have completed the select committee report by the time the assembly was convened on 4 August. This was not done, nor had the Land Bill been included in the provisional agenda of the assembly. Moreover since the assembly was scheduled to meet only from 4 to 22 August, it was obvious that the CPM had no intention

of passing the bill in the August session. These are irrefutable facts.

And yet the CPM goes on accusing all the other parties in the UF of trying to obstruct the passage of the Land Bill. In fact, it was the CPI which demanded that the assembly should not adjourn on 22nd sine die but that it should assemble again after a short break for Onam, which fell on 26 August, and pass the Land Bill and other important pieces of legislation.

### STRAIGHT FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH

That much of the delay in getting the Land Bill passed was due to herself has been indirectly admitted by Smt. Gouri, the revenue minister. Here is what she said on 22 August in the Kerala legislative assembly while recommending the select committee report on the Kerala Land Reforms (Amendment) Bill for acceptance by the house:

“There has been much delay in bringing this law into force. I have stated the reason for it several times in this very house. We have to take into consideration, the state of affairs existing in the state at the time when this UF government assumed office. When President's rule was terminated and charge was handed over to us, the rice in stock with the government was barely enough to distribute 2 days' ration... Thus the whole energy of the government had to be spent in the solution of the food problem. Therefore, it was not possible to pay necessary attention to this question. But it could have been done differently. However, I confess to a certain weakness. When a bill is being drafted and made ready for the legislature, I have a desire to go through it. *I wanted to make my own contribution to the bill. Time was required for that. It was then that the food problem cropped up ... while trying to solve all these things I could not get the bill ready...* This bill was introduced in the assembly on the 19th of August. I had written to the centre asking for leave to introduce the bill on the 14th August 1968. It was actually received on 10th of April 1969.”

Thus, according to the revenue minister herself, the cause for delay was not any obstruction from the CPI, ISP, RSP or Muslim League but something else. The causes were, firstly, her own preoccupation with the food problem, secondly, her desire to make what she calls her own personal contribution and thirdly, delay in getting centre's sanction. As far as the first two are concerned, they cannot be considered valid reasons for the delay. If the minister for revenue was overburdened with work, the proper course would have been to entrust the food portfolio to some other minister and leave her free to devote her time more fully for preparing the Land Bill. In fact, the CPI had demanded that the food portfolio should be taken away from her. If this was not done, the blame is that of the CPM which alone could decide upon such a question, it being the major partner in the UF and moreover, the chief minister alone can decide on the allocation of the portfolio. As regards the second reason, the less said the better. It is simply preposterous to suggest that the toiling and starving peasants of the state have to be asked to suffer their lot for some more time simply to satisfy the vanity of a minister who thinks much of her "individual contribution."

In the light of these facts, the feeble attempt made to shift the responsibility for delay on to the shoulders of the central government will hardly hold water. It has been said on high authority that the practice of a state government seeking leave to introduce a bill in the state assembly on a matter concerned with a subject in the state list such as land reform is itself a redundancy.

The question naturally arises as to why a minister belonging to a party which shouts from housetops so much about smashing and wrecking the constitution should be so timid as to hesitate to get a bill passed even without previous approval. That would have been a bold attempt at widening the powers of the state government even while working the constitution. Even if the CPM minister was not willing to take any such bold initiative, the question still arises, why did it take such a long time for seeking

leave, even if that was considered necessary? For leave was sought only on 14 August 1968. And finally it is seen that even after leave was given on 10 April 1969, the minister was not in a position to finalise the bill till August 1969, that is four months afterwards. In the face of these facts which the minister herself has disclosed, one does not know with what justification she can accuse the centre of having delayed the bill.

### A GIFT TO THE LANDLORDS

It is not proposed to go into the detailed provisions of the bill here because that cannot be done within the scope of this pamphlet. However, it is necessary to touch upon one point. The CPI had demanded from the very beginning that while it was necessary to bring an Amending Bill, certain provisions of the existing Land Reforms Act of 1964 which had not been brought into force up to that time could forthwith be implemented. We specifically demanded that Section 72 of the Act of 1964 which deals with the vesting of surplus lands of landholders in excess of the ceiling area with government be implemented immediately. Although the Act of 1964 was brought into force in 1964 this particular Section 72 had not been implemented. This could be done simply by a notification in the gazette. It was necessary to do it because only by vesting all surplus lands above the ceiling area with the government could the alienation of such lands by landlords with a view to defeat the provisions of the ceiling law when it comes into force be prevented. Obviously, President's rule which came immediately after the Act of 1964 was passed and became law was not very much interested in bringing Section 72 into force by a notification. But that was not, or could not be the position of a UF government.

Whatever may be the shortcomings and imperfections of the 1964 Act they could be afterwards remedied through the amending legislation. Meanwhile both commonsense and revolutionary wisdom would have suggested that the course indicated by us was the best. But no. The CPM

would have none of it. They would have nothing to do with a piece of legislation passed by a congress government! So they insisted that we should wait till the passing of the Amending Bill.

— And what has been the result? If Section 72 of the Act of 1964 had been brought into force, as suggested by us, all transfers of land in excess of the ceiling by landlords after 1963 would have become invalid. Instead of that, the provision in the new bill is only to invalidate all transfers in excess of the ceiling after 1 July 1969. So all transfers made by the landlords in the state with holdings above the ceiling area in order to defeat any ceiling legislation during the long period of 6 years became valid! A clean gift from the CPM to the landlords of Kerala! After this one wonders whether there will be any land at all left for distribution when the new bill becomes law!

In the field of TU legislation, in spite of all our efforts to put pressure on the labour minister, Mathai Manjooran, who out-Marxists the Marxists themselves and is their protege, has consistently refused to bring in any legislation for compulsory recognition of trade unions based upon the results of secret ballot and for providing gratuity to workers at the time of their retirement. The powerful toddy-tappers' federation has, however, succeeded after a long struggle to force the minister to pass a legislation providing a scheme of provident fund and gratuity for toddy-tappers. Even this has not yet been implemented although the act has been placed on the Statute Book. Such is the record in the field of TU legislation. About other activities of the CPM in the working class front I shall have to deal with later on.

## AGAINST DEMOCRATIC DECENTRALISATION, TOO!

Decentralisation and democratisation of the administration have been most important demands raised by all progressive sections for a long time. The CPI and even the CPM have been among the foremost champions of the idea. And yet strange, as it may seem, one of the transformations brought about by the enjoyment of office in the CPM is that

its leaders are now vehemently opposed to the very idea. At the time of drafting the Election Manifesto, this transformation had not yet come about in the CPM and it may be therefore they also agreed to incorporate in the manifesto the promise that the UF government would bring in legislation for democratic decentralisation at the district and lower levels.

In pursuance of that the Muslim League minister for panchayats, the late Ahmed Kurikkal, brought in a bill for that purpose and the same was referred to a select committee. The select committee report and the bill as amended by it are before the assembly. And now the CPM has come out openly and unashamedly saying that it is opposed to the bill! A. K. Gopalan says that people of Kerala are not sufficiently mature to run such institutions! Difficult to believe and yet true!

We need not go far to seek reasons for this astounding somersault. It is all very simple. As long as the CPM ministers have control of the administration through the bureaucracy, that is the collectors, revenue divisional officers, tahsildars, etc. and can use the administration for their narrow party purposes through their control over these officers, they do not want to change the system. They are afraid that if and when a democratic set up comes into being at the district, taluk and panchayat level, these officers will be accountable to the elected representatives of the people at those levels and not to the minister direct. This they want to avoid. And that is the secret of their volte face.

During President's rule the practice in Kerala was that licences for retail shops to distribute rationed foodgrains and sugar were given on the recommendation of the local panchayats and municipalities concerned. This was a good practice in as much as these local government bodies were in a better position to assess local needs and the suitability of the applicants rather than the tahsildars.

But after the present UF government assumed office, the revenue minister cancelled the relevant rules and she now

decides as to who should be given a retail licence in any corner of the state. And, of course, she has to rely either on the advice of the local tahsildar or the dictates of her own party men in the locality. This is an example of the way in which the CPM approaches the whole question of administration.

### RECORD OF OTHER CPM MINISTERS

This is not simply a question of the vagaries of a certain individual minister or his or her inadequate appreciation of what is expected of a UF ministry. On the contrary, this flows from the whole approach of the CPM. The story is the same in the case of almost all departments handled by the CPM ministers. Without going into detail, we may just take note of the doings in the other ministries under the care of the CPM.

Besides the chief minister, who holds the portfolios of home and services and the revenue minister who is in charge of general administration and also commercial taxes in addition to land revenue, the two other CPM ministers are M. K. Krishnan in charge of forests and harijan welfare and Imbichi Bawa in charge of transport and jails. Beyond looking after the routine administration of these departments in the same old way that the congress ministers or the bureaucrats under President's rule had done before them, they have initiated no new policies in the departments under their control nor adopted any fresh approaches which would have helped to demarcate their administration from that of the Congress.

They have refused to implement even those policies which the progressive movement in the state including the undivided Communist Party had persistently demanded for the last decade and more. Mention may be made in this connection of two things, viz. (1) the nationalisation of private forests in Malabar, and (2) the gradual extension of nationalisation of private bus routes. Unlike in the Travancore-Cochin part of the state, where the forests are government owned, in Malabar the forests are in the hands

of private jenmis. It is agreed on all hands that for the purpose of effective preservation of forest wealth and also utilisation of forest lands for socially useful purpose like settling the landless or developing government plantations of rubber or cashewnut, etc. it is necessary to nationalise private forests. And this has been included in the Five Year Plan and funds provided for it. And yet it has not been carried out. In the case of transport also, nationalisation is confined to the Travancore part of the state, and could be gradually extended to the whole of Kerala. Of course, Imbichi Bawa has not failed to announce grandiose schemes of nationalisation, but up to now not a single bus route has been nationalised under his revolutionary dispensation during the last 30 months!

### ACHIEVEMENTS OF UF GOVERNMENT

From the foregoing one is apt to draw the conclusion that the record of the government as a whole is negative and that nothing good has been done. This, however, would be wrong.

Apart from the fact that ministers belonging to other parties were not imbued with the wrong and disastrous notions of the CPM, but were genuinely anxious to do something which would help to project the image of their government in people's mind in a better light than that of the Congress, the UF had to adopt certain popular measures by the very logic of its situation, which has conferred certain benefits on the people. Abolition of the hated police verification in the case of appointments to public service in the state, the payment of D.A. at central rates to all government employees and aided school teachers, and implementation of the pay commission report, increases in the wages and other benefits to workers in all government and quasi-government departments like the P.W.D., P.H.E., etc. and public sector undertakings like State Road Transport Corporation, Electricity Board, etc., enforcement of minimum wages for agricultural workers, enactment of the University Act which assures security of employment to teachers

under private management, exemption from tuition fees to all in the 9th and 10th standards of the secondary school, etc. were real achievements. In spite of these beneficial measures, however, the total picture is not very bright.

And the main responsibility for this is of the CPM, the major partner in the coalition, whose totally negative approach to the question has given a twist to the administration in the wrong direction.

The questions may be asked: What of the other parties? What were they doing all this while? What did they do to prevent this? It has already been stated that the CPI had carried on campaigns and had even launched several struggles to correct the wrong policies of the CPM. Sometimes they did succeed also in compelling the CPM to correct its policies, as for instance, in the case of land distribution. But it must be understood that this is an uphill task. For one thing, the CPM is the major party in the coalition and it has a large mass base, which it keeps feeding with anti-CPI propaganda all the while. Then again to struggle against the policies of a government in which you also are a partner is no easy job. It is likely to be misunderstood and dismissed as mere factionalism.

### WORK OF CPI MINISTERS

The CPI can, however, claim that it has struggled consistently and struggled with some success to give a turn to governmental activities in a positive direction by the solid work that its two ministers have done in the departments entrusted to their care.

Apart from stepping up internal procurement, the most effective step that could be taken to solve the food problem was to increase production. The CPI minister for agriculture, M. N. Govindan Nair, has taken up this task with crusading zeal and he has been able to infect everyone with whom he came into contact with his enthusiasm, including agricultural officers, cultivators, legislators, students and political workers. As a result, rice production increased from 11 lakh tons to 14 lakh tons in the course of two years,

i.e., an increase of 25 per cent, which is no mean achievement.

This was done through a series of measures like popularisation of high yielding varieties like I.R. 8; reclamation of wasteland, distribution of pump sets and extension of electricity, conversion of single crop into double and sometimes triple crop lands, bunding and reclamation of kayal lands, etc. It has been estimated that about 4 lakh acres of paddy lands out of a total of 12 lakh acres had been covered by the new high yielding varieties by 1968-69. 12,000 acres in Kayankulam Kayal, 350 acres in Paravur and about 400 acres in Muriyad Kayal near Irinjalakuda had already been converted into paddy land. In addition work is in progress to convert 3,000 acres in the great Vembannad Lake and another 400 acres in Ashtamudi Lake. The single largest area that is being tackled is the Trichur Kole area of 30,000 acres. Here it is not a question of reclamation because already one crop is being raised here. But by putting up permanent bunds of requisite strength and skilful water management, it is proposed to raise a second crop in the entire area. The Agricultural Refinance Corporation has agreed to advance the necessary funds by way of loans and the survey has already been completed. Another scheme is that of the ploughing up of 180,000 acres of hard laterite soil in Cannanore district; 2,000 acres have already been completed.

It is not only the minister's actual achievement that is noteworthy but also his way of tackling the questions, his approach to problems. In this people saw something refreshingly new. He tries to get the cooperation of the people at all stages. For instance, in the matter of survey of the abovementioned Kole land, he did not leave it to the bureaucratic apparatus which would have taken at least 3 years to complete it and meanwhile wasted reams of paper in correspondence. He approached the teachers and students of the Trivandrum Engineering College and asked them if they would be prepared to undertake the survey work during midsummer vacation as a work of love with

no remuneration except a small allowance of Rs. 150 for each student for his actual expenses. Prof. Vasudev and 80 final year students of the college enthusiastically volunteered for this task. They were given an enthusiastic welcome by the local Kole cultivators in whose homes the students were accommodated during the whole period of the survey. This was a wonderful experience for the students as well as the cultivators. The work was completed within a matter of two months, something unheard of in the annals of the P.W.D. And this was done in spite of stiff opposition from the P.W.D. (irrigation), whose officers actually passed a resolution of protest against the procedure! But it has to be stated here that a similar survey begun in a small block of the Kuttannad Kayal area by the P.W.D. during President's rule (i.e. sometime in 1965 or 1966) has not yet been completed!

Another unorthodox method the minister adopted was with regard to the popularisation of the high yielding varieties. Without depending entirely upon the departmental machinery alone he utilised the services of high school and college students also for this purpose. He announced that if the students were willing to cultivate small plots of paddy with their own physical labour in their house or school compounds, the agricultural department would give each student one packet of high yielding paddy seed together with another packet of fertiliser mixture required for its cultivation.

Both the Kerala Students Union (the congress student organisation) as well as the SF (CPI student organisation) took it up enthusiastically. Only the CPM student organisation abstained. About 200,000 seed packets were thus distributed. The students became the most enthusiastic propagandists of the new seeds in the countryside and thus did a service which the department officials could never have done even if they had worked for 5 years.

The CPM condemned this as a mere waste. Even if we concede that some part of the seeds thus distributed might have been wasted due to inept handling by the raw stu-

dents unacquainted with cultivation processes, the impact of the whole programme on the peasants was very considerable.

An experiment, though on a small scale, was also tried at cooperative cultivation. In Andoorakonam, a panchayat in Trivandrum district, about 300 small cultivators pooled all their resources together and cultivated jointly an area of 100 acres. This was the total extent of land that they could consolidate even after throwing in every bit of paddy land that each possessed. This experiment of cooperative cultivation was highly successful. Due credit must be given for the success of this project to the F.A.C.T., the public sector fertiliser plant situated in Alwaye, which initiated the project with the help of the agricultural department.

For all these, M. N. Govindan Nair, the CPI minister for agriculture, has received well deserved encomiums from all concerned except the CPM and its leaders. They have been extra careful not to let even one single word of appreciation escape their lips. To them M. N. Govindan Nair is only the ogre, who has introduced tractors into the Kerala countryside with the diabolic intention of depriving the agricultural labourers of their employment. Now a word about this tractor business will not be out of place in view of the great noise that the CPM has made about it.

What has happened is that Kerala like many other states set up an Agro-Industries Corporation. This was done only after the full cabinet had unanimously given its approval to the agriculture minister to go forward. One of the objects of this corporation is to popularise agricultural machinery among the peasants. Hiring or selling on hire purchase basis tractors to cultivators is among its functions. There is a great demand for tractors in Kerala from the cultivators. This is not only from rich peasants, but also from middle peasants and even small peasants. It is not as if tractors are being introduced for the first time by Govindan Nair into Kerala. It is estimated that there are at present about 500 tractors already working in the state, majority of them—more than 400—in Palghat district. Now it is an

interesting fact to keep in mind that Palghat is the district in which the CPM is the strongest, both among agricultural labourers as well as among peasants, including rich peasants. Almost all rich peasant sympathisers of the CPM are already in possession of tractors and we have yet to hear of a single struggle carried on by the CPM against these tractor-owning sympathisers!

The idea that tractors are used only by rich peasants is wrong, although they have certainly an advantage in the sense that they can purchase tractors whereas even middle peasants, though wanting to use tractors, cannot afford to buy them. What is actually happening in the countryside all over Kerala now is that the rich peasants, after having purchased tractors, are hiring them out after their use, to middle and small peasants at exorbitant rates. Although a tractor costs only about Rs. 12,000 to Rs. 15,000, it is said that in certain cases, the tractor owner makes as much as Rs. 10,000 a year out of hire charges alone!

The purpose of the Agro-Industries Corporation is to put an end to this unconscionable exploitation, by (1) making available tractors on easy hire purchase terms to smaller farmers; (2) direct hiring of tractors to small farmers at reasonable rates; and (3) encouraging cooperative societies of farmers to purchase tractors for hiring to their own members.

As for employment opportunities, it need not be denied that there is a certain amount of displacement of human labour wherever machinery is introduced. But it has to be noted that there are certain factors here which reduce the extent of unemployment that is likely to be caused. When single crop paddy land is converted into double crop or triple crop, employment potential is naturally increased. And in most cases, this conversion is not at all possible without the use of tractors because very often there will hardly be an interval of 10 days between the harvesting of one crop and the sowing of the next within which it is impossible to get the land ploughed by using bullocks. There is also the fact that use of tractors considerably re-

duced the cost of cultivation to the peasants, which is a vital consideration especially for smaller farmers. Besides, the advantage of deep ploughing which can be done only by tractors is too obvious to be stated. For all these reasons one cannot take up a position of outright opposition to tractors on principle, saying that it will displace human labour. But one has to adopt a practical approach, seeking to minimise the likelihood of unemployment and get local agreements between farmers and agricultural labourers about the extent to which tractors can and must be used. Experience in Kerala is that this is possible and in many localities tractors have been used with the willing cooperation of agricultural labourers themselves. The only thing is that CPM leaders very often are just not interested in such agreements but are anxious to use this question also as an additional weapon in their armoury against the "revisionist" CPI minister, Govindan Nair!

The same approach has been followed in the other department under the CPI minister, viz. the department of industries under T. V. Thomas. Soon after the assumption of office, the National Small Industries Corporation conducted an intensive campaign in Kerala for setting up small industries, the officers of the corporation receiving and processing applications on the spot for machinery or hire purchase from the corporation. With the active cooperation of the state government, an unprecedented number of applications—about 2,000—were received in one week. Of course, all of them cannot be expected to reach the final stage. But it has been stated that in the course of the last two years, as many as 847 small industries with a capital outlay of Rs. 284.15 lakhs have sprung up in Kerala employing 8,718 persons (these are figures given out on the occasion of the completion of 2 years in office by the UF government). In the same period 8 industries in the field of medium and large industries were started giving employment to 1,368 persons and involving a capital outlay of Rs. 10 crores. The exploitation of the huge mineral wealth of Kerala in the shape of beach sands containing ilmenite, monazite,

etc. is also under way by the starting of titanium complex, for which a licence has been obtained and preliminary work has begun.

The most difficult job in the industrial field is to tackle the traditional industries like coir, cashew, handloom, beedi, etc. The dilemma in the case of these industries is that if you start to modernise methods of production and introduce machinery, there will be largescale displacement of labour, whereas if you refuse to modernise, these industries cannot stand competition from modern industries and the level of wages cannot be raised.

Despite these difficulties, schemes have been devised for rehabilitation of the coir, handloom and cashew industries. A coir export house has started functioning in Alleppey and steps have been taken to control the price of husks so as to ensure fair wages to the workers. A comprehensive scheme involving the investment of Rs. 17 crores has been submitted to the central government for approval, since coir is an important export commodity.

The Export House is only a part of the entire scheme. A Cashew Corporation for importing raw nuts from outside the country and also export the processed nuts has been registered and started functioning. Since the funds given by the central government and Reserve Bank for handloom development are confined to the cooperative sector, the handloom industry in the Cannanore district in Kerala, which had developed historically on the basis of small factories, was in serious difficulty. It is in order to help this sector that a Handloom Finance Corporation has been set up.

The way in which the industries minister met the situation arising out of the sudden closure of beedi factories in the Cannanore district by the Ganesh Beedi Co., the biggest monopoly dealer in this field employing about 12,000 workers, had been praised by all including the CPM. With the bringing into force of Beedi and Cigar Act, the Ganesh Co. refused to implement the act and shifted their business to Mangalore in Mysore state. This created a very difficult situation. There was no way of compelling the employer to

come back, except by surrendering to him and agreeing to withdraw the act. This a UF government could not think of doing. Under the circumstances the minister conceived the eminently practical idea of organising the 12,000 beedi workers spread all over the district into 20 primary co-operative societies headed by an apex society which undertakes to make bulk purchases of the raw materials required for the industry, viz. beedi leaves and tobacco, distribute them to the primary societies on credit and recoup the money by purchasing the beedis manufactured by the primaries and selling them. The share capital that each worker has to contribute to the primary society is Rs. 20, which has been advanced to him as a loan by the state government which will be recovered in the course of a number of years. The worker has to contribute only Re. 1 on share application. This scheme has been working successfully for the last eight months and the workers were thus saved from unemployment. This shows how, by harnessing the enthusiastic cooperation of the people the government could do many things of a constructive nature, even with the limited resources at its disposal. It must be conceded that in this project the CPM fully cooperated. But the pity is that despite such concrete experience, they have not thought it fit to revise their general approach.

### DRIVE FOR DOMINATION

If the CPM's approach on the question of the role and functions of the UF governments in states has proved harmful to the image of the government and bred disappointment and frustration among the people, its attitude to the question of UF itself and the mutual relationship of the parties within the UF is downright disruptive and ultimately plays into the hands of the enemies of the UF. Its idea of the UF and the government under its leadership is that through the working of this government the CPM should go on increasing its strength and mass base and all other parties should definitely get weakened and ultimately eliminated.

We can understand this happening if the policies or tactics of the CPM were all along wholly correct and superior to those of other parties and these other parties were committing mistakes all along.

But no. The CPM approach is not that. If the desired end of the CPM hegemony does not come about, it should be forced and imposed on others and for this all means, fair or foul, can be used. The use of the administrative machinery in a partisan way so as to browbeat and weaken other parties in the UF has become a very important element in their tactics. And it is for this reason that the CPM grabbed all the important portfolios like police, services and general administration at the time of division of the portfolios.

### LABOUR POLICY

The CPM ministers in Kerala through their control of these portfolios and through them of the whole of the administrative personnel were, along with Mathai Manjooran, the labour minister, working havoc among the trade unions. This gentleman is the representative of a political party called the Kerala Socialist Party (KSP) which is nonexistent, except in name, as a party. He along with the now famous Wellington of the KTP has the rare distinction of having been one of the leaders of the "liberation struggle" in 1959. And Manjooran had boldly "dissolved" his party and actively campaigned for the Congress in the midterm election which came after the "liberation struggle". Such was the person to whom the CPM entrusted the labour portfolio in preference to such acknowledged veterans of the trade union movement in Kerala as T. V. Thomas of the CPI or T. K. Divakaran of the RSP. And this even though these parties at the time demanded that the portfolio should go to either of these two.

The reason for this behaviour of CPM is not far to seek. It wanted to use the machinery of the labour department to bolster up their pocket unions and disrupt the mass trade union movement. For that, a pliant instrument was neces-

sary and this they found in Manjooran, who since becoming minister has acted as a stormtrooper of the CPM. In the process, the CPM clean forgot the duty of the UF government of evolving such policies on the TU front which will be a model for congress governments both at the centre and in the states to follow. That would have been of immense help to the TU movement in other states. Not only did they not compel Manjooran to do it, but what is worse, he was allowed to do unpardonable things, which brought shame to the whole UF movement. His notorious memorandum containing the Kerala government's answer to the questionnaire of the National Labour Commission is well known. In that he has gone against some of the basic principles of the Indian TU movement built up through long years of struggle under the leadership of the AITUC. Here are some of the gems picked up from his answer to the questionnaire:

#### *Women's Employment:*

"In this state (Kerala), there is an abundant male population for employment. Improving the avenues of recruitment of women in the industrial field does not seem essential or desirable in this state particularly."

#### *Registrar's Powers:*

"He (the Registrar of Trade Unions) may be empowered to enforce (1) proper maintenance of accounts by the unions; (2) strict adherence by the unions to the rules of their constitutions; (3) to intervene wherever there are conflicts in the unions with regard to leadership and interest of the members. He may also be empowered to see that a certain percentage of workers of the establishment are members of the union before it is given registration."

#### *Code of Discipline:*

"The existing provisions in the code of discipline with regard to all the four items, procedure for verification, grant of recognition and rights of recognised unions... are theoretically satisfactory; but no value in practice. The

only trouble is that they cannot be enforced as the code of discipline is not a legal document. The earlier it is given legal validity, the better. The entire code of discipline must be given legal shape if possible."

*Ballot for Recognition of Unions:*

In reply to the question by the commission, "For determining the representative character of a trade union for purpose of grant of recognition, should the method of election by secret ballot be adopted?" the Kerala labour department stated—"No. It may be determined on the lines of the procedure laid down under the code of discipline for recognition of trade unions."

*Restrictions on Right to Strike:*

"At present, there is no restriction on strike and lockout except in public utility service as per Section 22 of the I.D. Act. Strike and lockouts during conciliation are very common. In case a strike/lockout takes place during this period, the officer conciliating should be able to approach the labour court for a declaration that the strike is illegal. If the declaration is given, the leaders of the union should be debarred from holding any kind of union office for 3 years."

*Piecerate Payment:*

"Initially... the time-rated system of payment of wages may be changed into a piece-rated system of wages."

*Bonus:*

• "...the decision of the Supreme Court (on provisions of Bonus Act) has not caused any adverse effect..."

It is worthy of note that the CPM, which has not let any opportunity whether justified or unjustified to openly denouncing every other party in the UF of "revisionism" and subservience to the bourgeoisie, has never openly criticised Manjooran's conduct on the question of the memorandum, although they had to finally acquiesce in compelling Manjooran formally withdrawing it on behalf of the Kerala

government. This was done only after the CPI had carried on a campaign against the memorandum for months and the issue was taken up at the level of the AITUC leadership.

This is, however, not an isolated example of the manner in which Manjooran was tackling labour issues. From the time of the late Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer in Travancore, the TU movement in Kerala had built up certain traditions and had compelled the government to observe certain democratic norms. There were Industrial Relations Committees for almost all important industries, topped by a State Industrial Relations Board. This tripartite machinery was functioning regularly. The first thing that Manjooran did was to consistently demolish this machinery. His plan of operation was simple. When a trade dispute arises and is not settled through the conciliation proceedings initiated by the district labour officer or regional labour commissioner, he very often directly interferes in the dispute and calls together all parties including dissident groups in the unions. This was deliberately done to aid and abet the CPM in its activity of splitting unions. When the CPM fails to get elected to the leading positions in the unions, it immediately goes out and, even without getting a union registered, approaches the labour minister, who very readily obliges it. The representatives of such groups are also invited by the minister to the conferences and he compels the employers to sign agreements with them. It is by such tactics that the CPM tried to capture certain unions from the CPI. The CPI had naturally to put up a stiff fight against these tactics and that was very often the cause of clashes in the TU field.

### THE MUNNAR STRIKE

The first big clash occurred in the High Ranges over the leadership of the massive Kannan Devan Hills Produce Co. Union. This is the biggest single unit in Kerala in the plantation industry, entirely owned by the British and employing about 100,000 workers, mostly Tamilians.

The recognition of this union had been withdrawn following a strike during the days of the Indo-Pak war in 1965. The top leaders of the union who were at that time CPM members were in jail. But the leaders who remained behind called the strike against the advice of our TU comrades such as Balachandra Menon, etc. because they thought they could make political capital out of it. But the results were not according to their calculations. The strike was an utter fiasco and had to be precipitately withdrawn within a few days with not a single demand conceded. And over and above that, the company withdrew recognition of the union. For a long time afterwards the union was completely paralysed, the workers were just helpless and could not do anything.

After the release of the leaders from jail, they tried to revive the union activities. Even while in jail, they had broken away from the CPM. After coming out they formally resigned from the CPM and after a short period of hesitation joined the CPI which helped them to revive the union activities and rebuild the union. This they did and ultimately they also regained from the management recognition of the union which had been withdrawn.

With these developments a big shift took place among the workers of the High Ranges. Whereas formerly the CPI had only a few isolated members here and there among the workers, now the entire leadership of this big union with a membership of 40,000 came over to the party and in the course of a few months a taluk committee of the party was formed under which there are about 400 party members. The CPM could not brook all this and especially the desertion of their party by Kurien and Stanley, the leaders of the union. They sought to wreak vengeance on them.

The CPM seized the opportunity of settlement of the bonus in 1968. The union, after negotiations, signed an agreement with the management for a bonus of 7½ per cent of the wages. The CPM workers refused to abide by the settlement although they also were members of the

AITUC union. They demanded  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent more. The number of CPM workers was hardly more than 300 out of the total of 100,000. They did not register a rival union but simply claimed that they were the rightful union! The leadership of this group called for strike against the bonus agreement and in this they were joined by the INTUC union under the congress M.L.A., N. Ganapathi, which commanded the loyalty of about 2,000 workers.

Naturally, the union opposed the strike and asked the workers to go for work according to the agreement that their union leadership had signed with the management. The strike call went entirely unheeded. It was then that the CPM resorted to other tactics. Since inside the tea estates and among the workers it had absolutely no strength at all, it brought a large force of nonworkers from the villages at the foot of the hills in jeeps and other vehicles with plenty of arms like crowbars, knives, choppers, crackers, etc. and began a blitzkrieg attack on the peaceful workers going to their work.

At first the workers were taken by surprise and they appealed to the police authorities. Unfortunately the police just did nothing to protect the loyal workers because they had instructions from above not to intervene in favour of the legal union. The labour minister encouraged this type of goonda attacks on workers by applauding it as the beginning of the "armed guerilla struggle" of the revolutionary workers and peasants! Of course, the AITUC workers could not take this lying down. They also organised to protect themselves and their union. They beat back these armed goondas and put them on the run. The so-called strike fizzled out in a few days. That was the end of it!

### POONJAR TODDY-TAPPERS' STRIKE

The story of the Poonjar toddy-tappers' strike is still more revealing. Here the original AITUC union was under CPM leadership. That leadership entered into an agreement about wages with the abkari contractor of the range, one Pappan, at 20 paise per litre of toddy delivered, whereas in

the neighbouring ranges as well as throughout the state the rate was 21 paise per litre. Naturally when details of the agreement were made known to the workers, there was a veritable revolt. Except for a handful of workers who remained loyal to the CPM the majority of them resigned from the union, formed a separate action committee and went on strike. The excise force was mobilised to break up the strike, scores of workers were arrested and cases instituted against them, the chottas (the flowering part from which toddy is drawn) of the toddy palms were cut down making the palms useless thereafter for drawing toddy. And on top of all this some workers and their leaders were taken to the excise range office and beaten up. A baton charge was also made by the excise constables against the workers who gathered in front of the range office demanding release of the leaders.

The strike gathered big mass support over the entire area. Joseph Thelly, one of the earliest communists in Travancore who followed A. K. Gopalan and E. M. S. Namboodiripad into the CPM at the time of the party split, voiced his strong protest against these atrocities which were perpetrated merely to save the pockets of the contractor Pappan. Finally he went on a hungerstrike in front of the secretariat in Trivandrum demanding an enquiry into the excise atrocities and for a settlement of the strike. For weeks this struggle went on. The issue was raised both inside the assembly and in the Coordination Committee. Finally, in the Coordination Committee E. M. S. agreed to institute an enquiry into the lathicharge and other high-handed action of the excise force.

But the very next day on the floor of the assembly, Smt. Gouri, in the absence of Namboodiripad (he had left for Delhi by plane in the morning), flatly refused to have any enquiry. The entire CPI legislature party had to abstain from the house the next day in protest against this. Subsequently, after Namboodiripad's return, an enquiry was ordered, but it was only a farce, in which the enquiry officer was not empowered to allow witnesses to be cross-

examined. The CPI had again to protest and boycott the enquiry.

## TRANSPORT STRIKE

Another important struggle which deserves mention in this connection is the strike in the Kerala Road Transport Corporation which took place in January 1969. The Road Transport Corporation is under Imbichi Bawa, the CPM minister for transport. Immediately after assuming charge he made M. M. Cherian, a member of the CPM, the chairman of the corporation. In itself, there is nothing wrong in this appointment. But the way he was made to function was highly objectionable. He was made to carry out the dictates of the CPM in the running of the corporation in a blatantly partisan manner without caring for the interests of the corporation, its employees or the general public.

One of the assignments the chairman seems to have been given by the CPM was to smash the AITUC union in the KSRTC which was under the leadership of the CPI. For this purpose, the CPM registered a rival union in the KSRTC. In the beginning this union had only a small membership. But subsequently they sought to augment the membership by enrolling those who had been given appointments as conductors, drivers, etc. by overlooking all regular rules of recruitment procedure and acting solely at the behest of the CPM.

Imbichi Bawa himself had to admit on the floor of the assembly that he had given direct appointments to 243 persons in the KSRTC even without advertising the vacancies and inviting applications. It has been revealed that among those so appointed were such distinguished people as the daughter of C. H. Kanaran, the secretary of the CPM state committee, and a niece of A. K. Gopalan, M.P. And he did this at a time when about 4,300 applications were pending with the corporation from candidates each one of whom had paid the application fee of Rs. 10 and were awaiting interview! Even when the procedures of advertising invitation of applications, etc. were gone

through by the chairman, this was a mere farce, because the chairman was under instructions from the CPM to appoint only those persons who were included in the lists prepared by the concerned district committees of the CPM. This became such a big scandal that all other unions in the KSRTC except the CPM union demanded that all recruitment to posts under the corporation should be left to the Public Service Commission.

Although this demand was also one among the demands on which strike notice was served, the other demands were concerned with the running of the department, chief among them being constitution of an appeal board to hear and dispose of appeals in the cases of disciplinary actions taken by the administrative personnel of the department against those under them, confirmation in regular service of all those temporary employees who had put in more than 240 days work in a year, unification of service conditions among different categories of employees (e.g. there were employees who were there when the department was run directly by government and there were others employed after it became a corporation and each category was governed by separate service rules).

The strike was conducted under the leadership of a joint action council consisting of representatives of all the unions joining it, viz., the AITUC union, INTUC union, the UTUC union and the drivers' union whose leadership had no particular political label. Only the CPM union opposed the strike. The government used all its powers and resorted to all methods, including such reprehensible practices as recruitment of blacklegs to break the strike. It is a sad thing to say but true that most of the district offices of the CPM in the state were turned into recruiting offices for blacklegs. In spite of all this, the workers remained firm and united. They had tremendous popular support also. Ultimately the government had to come down and sign an agreement conceding all the demands of the joint action council except the one of leaving recruitment to Public Service Commission. This the minister promised to

take up with the council of ministers. This has been formally conceded however only in the announcement made by E. M. S. Namboodiripad in the assembly on 17 October 1969, that is the statement which brought down the ministry.

### ANTHIKKAD STRUGGLE

The length to which blind anti-CPI prejudice could drive the CPM and its ministers was demonstrated in the toddy-tappers' struggle at Anthikkad in August 1969. Now the toddy-tappers' union in Anthikkad is one of the strongest, most organised and most militant unions in the state. To the chagrin of the CPM it is completely under CPI leadership. Out of about 2,200 workers, more than 1,800 are in the AITUC union, whose officebearers are members of the CPI. Hardly about 200 are in a rival INTUC union and another 100 or so in the splinter CPM union, formed after the assumption of office by the UF ministry in 1967. The immediate issue of the struggle was the closure of toddy shops in the Trichur Range from 1 August 1969, thereby rendering 2,000 and odd workers jobless.

This was not something not anticipated. The contractor who had rented the entire toddy shops in the range, one T. R. Raghavan & Co., had given notice several weeks in advance that they were surrendering the shops from 1 August and that government should make alternative arrangements for running them. Under the excise rules, the contractor could do so; the only thing is that if on reauction any loss is caused to the government by the auction bid being for an amount less than that agreed to by the earlier contractor, he was bound to make good that amount to the government and the latter could recover it from him. Usually what is done under such circumstances is that the government immediately orders the shops to be reauctioned and thus makes arrangements for the shops to be run by the new contractor from the fixed date, so that there will be no break in business and no unemployment for workers.

This could have been done in this case also, because the government had been given notice by the contractor sufficiently in advance. But the excise minister, Smt. Gouri, did nothing to arrange for reauction. The result was a complete stoppage of business from 2 August 1969.

The workers were angry. A big militant demonstration of the workers and others numbering more than 5,000 was taken to the Trichur collector demanding reopening of shops. The collector could do precious little in the matter. The CPM splinter union came forward with a proposal that they would run certain shops if entrusted to them. They tried their hand at running 3 or 4 shops. Their game was to indulge in illicit sale of toddy and arrack under the very favourable circumstances created by the closure of the regular shops and thereby make lots of money. They thought they could attract the unemployed workers from the AITUC union to their fold and thereby strengthen themselves. Police and excise being under CPM ministers, they also thought that they could merrily indulge in illicit sales without any interference on the part of the authorities. But they did not reckon with one thing.

When workers saw what was happening, they themselves came forward to stop the CPM mischief. They picketed the illicit sale places, smashed the shops and gave such a severe thrashing to the mischiefmakers that the latter had to run for their lives. The CPM had also to close its shops within a few days.

The only effective way of dealing with the situation was to arrange for reauction as soon as possible. This the minister deliberately delayed. Auctions were arranged twice by the excise department but still the sales were not confirmed and contracts signed. In fact, on the second occasion, the collector and the member of the Revenue Board were willing to confirm the bid in favour of certain contractors who had offered to take the shops at 35 per cent of the amount for which the original contractor had bidden in the first half of the financial year. The officials thought this was a very good offer and, therefore, recommended its acceptance.

But the minister of excise had other ideas. She gave instructions on the phone to the officials concerned not to confirm. This meant still further delay. All this while the workers were starving. They became restless. The union organised picketing of the collectorate. There were solidarity actions by other workers. Toddy-tappers from all over the state sent batches of volunteers from their unions to take part in the picketing. The women folk of the tappers' families also joined the struggle. A militant widespread mass struggle was thus conducted for 42 days. 900 workers were arrested of whom 236 including 41 women were remanded to jail custody and they were released on bail only on the termination of the struggle on 12 September. The cases have not been withdrawn as yet.

One may ask: what was at the back of the excise minister's stubborn resistance to settle the matter quickly? The reason is not far to seek. It is plain as a pikestaff that besides trying to disrupt the union and favour her partymen's pocket union, she was unwilling to harm the interests of the original contractor, Raghavan & Co. This company had taken on auction not only the entire toddy shops in the Trichur Range for 1969-70, but also other liquor business including arrack and foreign liquor. So when toddy is not available, people resort to arrack and foreign liquor which helps to augment the company's business. Further, since this contractor being bound by law to make good the loss to the government because of reauction of toddy shops in the latter half of the year, it is his interest to see that the amount of the bid in the reauction is kept as high as possible. This was precisely what the CPM minister was trying to do. That was why she postponed the auction twice. She was able to raise the amount to 50 per cent of the original amount. She thus faithfully served Raghavan & Co's interests. In the process, however, she completely forgot the 2,200 heroic Anthikkad tappers and their families who have been the torchbearers and the mainstay of the Communist Party and red flag in the area ever since 1940. In fact, while saving a few lakhs for the contractor, she had caused

a loss of about Rs. 8 lakhs to the tappers' families. This is the revolutionary Marxism of the CPM in action!

It is needless to recount more instances. The entire record of the administration in the matter of labour policy and its implementation is a blot on the fair name of the United Front.

## USE OF ADMINISTRATIVE MACHINERY

The shameless and planned use of the administrative machinery to serve the interests of the CPM and destroy the other parties of the UF passed all limits. The declared policy of the government was that there will be no interference by the police in labour disputes. But in actual practice this was implemented only in cases where the struggles were led by the CPM. In all other cases, i.e., where struggles were led by other parties, police did interfere and suppress the struggles with as much ferocity as in earlier regimes. What happened in Poonjar has already been referred to. The same was the fate of the Trichur foodgrain workers under CPI leadership. They along with their wives and children were subjected to a terrific lathi-charge by the Malabar Special Police. RSP trade union leaders in Kundara were likewise beaten up on the public road. In all these cases, the chief minister in charge of the police portfolio refused to institute any inquiry. But in the case of struggles conducted by the CPM the moment the police used some little force, the officer concerned were subjected to judicial inquiry and were immediately suspended. This was what happened in the Alleppey rubber factory strike and again in Viyappuram. In the latter case, the actual order of the suspension of the concerned circle inspector of police was issued only a day after the fact of suspension was published in the CPM daily *Deshabhimani*.

This was a clear case, therefore, of the chief minister acting merely as the instrument of the CPM and not as a responsible head of administration. The High Court found that the order was malafide, that is to say the order was issued, not because the chief minister was satisfied after

studying the facts of the case that suspension was necessary and justified but, merely because the CPM secretariat had asked him to do it. The High Court, therefore, quashed the order.

As days passed, the conduct of the CPM ministers in this respect became more and more shameless, their methods more and more crude. And this was not confined to labour disputes or TU and kisan struggles alone. The local leaders of the CPM began to assume the role of local fuehrers and dictate to the subinspectors of police and other officials, asking them against whom to register cases, against whom not to proceed, how to manipulate record when the accused happen to be CPM sympathisers and so on. Even ordinary criminal cases involving offences like grievous hurt, murder, attempt to murder, etc. were dealt with in this fashion. And on top there was an obliging chief minister who was willing to direct the officer to do the bidding of the CPM local bosses. Not only that. The chief minister descended to the level of withdrawing several criminal cases involving defalcation of money, cheating and criminal misappropriation. All this was done, of course, at the bidding of the CPM and in order to strengthen the party. Such an allround abuse of the administrative machinery was unheard of in any previous administration.

#### INTERFERENCE IN PORTFOLIOS OF OTHER MINISTERS

From this to interference in the portfolios of other ministers by certain CPM ministers was only a small step. But since ministers belonging to other parties were not prepared to put up with such interference, conflicts and clashes inside the council of ministers inevitably ensued. This was the spark that touched off public controversy among ministers belonging to the CPI and the CPM in May-June 1969.

Here it is not proposed to dwell at great length on this controversy but several instances of gross interference may be cited.

The chief minister had appointed one T. K. N. Menon, a cardholding member of the CPM, as additional public relations director. This gentleman was more interested in doing CPM propaganda than acting as the publicity officer of the government as a whole. While the agriculture department had a very efficient publicity wing which was conducting a series of very attractive exhibitions in important centres in the state, giving out actual figures of increase in agricultural production, T. K. N. Menon put out other figures which contradicted them. His attempt was to show that increase in production was not so much. He as a true follower of the CPM was obviously not happy that production had increased under the stewardship of the "revisionist" Govindan Nair.

When there was a public controversy between M. N. Govindan Nair and Gouri about the way the Rs. 1 crore assistance for flood relief from the centre was utilised, this T. K. N. Menon again issued a press release in the name of the government, defending Gouri against Govindan Nair. It was thus proved once again that he was the publicity officer of the CPM and not of the government although he was paid from the public treasury. When the chief minister, without even consulting Govindan Nair, the minister concerned, issued an order winding up the efficient information wing of the agriculture department and merging it in the public relations department under this T. K. N. Menon for very obvious reasons, M. N. Govindan Nair vehemently protested. Subsequently the chief minister had to withdraw this particular order and also to curb the exuberance of his additional director in certain other directions also.

It was Smt. Gouri's fixation that every square inch of land in Kerala state belonged to the revenue department under her and she could dispose of it according to her sweet will and pleasure. There was the instance of the lease of a plot of land from out of the land actually under the possession of the animal husbandry department, which was using it for a dry stock farm. Of course, the lease was in

favour of one of her own cronies and it was done without even consulting the minister concerned, M. N. Govindan Nair. In another case, she actually issued an order staying the order of M. N. Govindan Nair with regard to the eviction of certain encroachments. There was a scheme for encouraging private rubber plantations which was started by the late P. T. Chacko, the congress minister. According to this scheme, the government had at that time distributed small 3½ acre plantations, there was reserved one vacant plot to be used for this purpose as a common service plot. The encroachments were in one of such plots, and, therefore, had to be evicted since the rubber planting had reached the stage when tapping could be started. But the encroachers were CPM followers in the locality. So Gouri stayed the order of eviction passed by her colleague without even the courtesy of consulting him!

There was a certain method in all these and other seemingly mad acts of interference. And that was this: the object of the CPM ministers was not only to assert their superior and dominant position within the ministry but also to sabotage and obstruct the successful working of the departments under other ministers. In the process, they were not at all concerned as to what will happen to the record of the UF ministry as a whole and its image.

To what extent petty-mindedness and spite could go was amply demonstrated in the case of Gouri's interference in the distribution of the Rs. I crore assistance granted by the central government for flood relief in 1968-69. Although the money was got through the initiative of M. N. Govindan Nair and it was earmarked specifically for the purpose of granting loans to agriculturists whose crops and fields had been destroyed by floods, Gouri claimed that she must have control over the distribution of the funds through the revenue department. After some controversy carried on through the files, when M. N. Govindan Nair found that such controversy would result in delay in distribution of the loans, he agreed to entrust the money to the revenue department, after having drawn up an agreed scheme for

distribution. But after all this it was found at the end of the financial year that Gouri had succeeded in distributing only about Rs. 18 lakhs out of the Rs. 1 crore! Moreover, she also diverted Rs. 50 lakhs out of this to the P.W.D. for road building, which too was done without consulting M. N. Govindan Nair.

It is not M. N. Govindan Nair alone who had such complaints to make regarding interference in his portfolio. T. V. Thomas also had to protest against the arbitrary manner in which the revenue minister was dealing with the distribution of spirit which is a substance very much in demand in certain industries. But as spirit was an alcoholic substance, its control and handling fell within the jurisdiction of the excise department, which portfolio was in Gouri's hands. She saw to it, through her control of the disposal of spirit, that industries under the "revisionist" T. V. Thomas were starved of spirit and made to suffer. Time and again T. V. Thomas brought this to the notice of the chief minister and sought his intervention to set matters right but with no effect.

The Muslim League minister, late Kurikkal, had also several stories to tell of gross interference in his portfolio. But he is no more there to tell them. Naha who succeeded him as minister for panchayats and fisheries tells the story of how a sum of Rs. 40 lakhs allotted for improvement of fishing ports was diverted by Gouri, without his consent, to the survey department under herself.

## STORY OF CORRUPTION CHARGES

Steps to eradicate corruption in administration was one of the important items in the Election Manifesto of the seven party UF. Here is what was said about corruption in the manifesto:

"Effective steps will be taken to put an end to corruption on the part of the representatives of the people who take part in day to day administration. The central government has not as yet accepted and implemented even the recommendations of the Santhanam Committee in this respect.

Instead of taking strong measures to deal with corruption by the ministers of the central government the congress government seeks to protect corrupt ministers and congress leaders. In these circumstances it will be the government's duty to take anticorruption measures on the widest possible basis, of which a state government is capable of."

*(translated from Malayalam)*

#### *Srikantan Nair's Charges:*

It was, therefore, naturally expected by the people that this government will take some effective measures to deal with corruption at all levels in the administration. But after the first few months of office people were getting disillusioned. Not only was there no toning up and cleaning of the administration, but disturbing rumours of corruption by some of the ministers themselves became widespread. It could no longer be ignored. It was in these circumstances that the RSP leader, Srikantan Nair, M.P., brought forward his charges of corruption against several ministers. This created a sensation at the time.

The Coordination Committee was convened immediately on 5 November 1967 and it discussed the charges in all seriousness. The committee decided upon certain steps to meet the situation. So far as the charges made by Srikantan Nair were concerned, it was decided to refer them to a subcommittee of the Coordination Committee consisting of one representative each from all the UF parties. John Manjooran of the KSP was made the convener of this subcommittee. It was asked to make its reports to the Coordination Committee within 3 months. So far as the future was concerned, the Coordination Committee appointed another subcommittee of 3 members, viz., E. M. S. Namboodiripad, K. Chandrasekharan, M.P. (of the then SSP) and C. Achutha Menon. This subcommittee was asked to prepare a draft bill on corruption based on the recommendations of the Santhanam Committee and submit it to the Coordination Committee within one month. The latter subcommittee did its job promptly. The draft bill as prepared and submitted to the Coordina-

tion Committee within one month and after getting clearance from the latter, it was introduced in the legislative assembly by E. M. S. Namboodiripad himself as the Publicmen (Enquiries) Bill of 1968.

But the other subcommittee did not make any progress at all. It held three or four sittings, but not a single sitting was attended by all the members. The only member who cared to attend regularly, besides the convener, was C. Achutha Menon. The committee obviously could not proceed with these two alone. A further difficulty was found in the fact that nobody was willing to come forward to give evidence before the committee. Under the circumstances, C. Achutha Menon resigned from the committee, saying that it was useless to continue in it. The convener put up a brave show of carrying on with the work of the committee for some more time, but in the end he too gave up after submitting a report to the effect that nothing was proved! It would have been more correct to say that nothing was investigated and, therefore, nothing was found or proved. But since he had to serve his master, the CPM, he could submit only such a report.

And that was the end of the matter.

#### *Kanju's Case :*

Whatever the Coordination Committee or the constituent parties might have thought, the people were not satisfied about the way the charges were disposed of. Meanwhile fresh charges were mounting up, especially against the KTP health minister Wellington, the forest minister M. K. Krishnan (CPM) and the finance minister P. K. Kunju (SSP). Finally matters came to a head with the levelling of charges openly in the legislative assembly against these three ministers.

The charges against the finance minister were levelled in the assembly by Wilson of the SSP. By that time the original SSP in the assembly had split up into 2 groups, the ISP and the SSP. The majority group consisting of 12 members, including the Speaker, disaffiliated themselves

from the all-India SSP, whereas the minority group retained its loyalty to the all-India SSP. This group also was recognised as a constituent of the UF and they were given representation in the Co-ordination Committee, although not in the ministry. Wilson belonged to this group.

The charges against the other ministers were raised by the opposition Congress and Kerala Congress members.

The issue was discussed in the Co-ordination Committee. The committee, while censuring Wilson for ventilating charges openly on the floor of the assembly against a minister belonging to a constituent party of the UF before bringing it to the notice of the Co-ordination Committee, authorised the chief minister to make a statement on the following day in the assembly assuring the members thereof that the charges would not be ignored but that he would take time to study the records seriously and afterwards deal with them in the proper manner.

After the lapse of a few weeks, the chief minister came out with his decision saying that there was a *prima facie* case in the allegations against Kunju and that he was ordering an inquiry under the Commission of Inquiry Act. So far as the other ministers were concerned, he said that a *prima facie* case had not been made out.

This decision of the chief minister came as a great shock to the public as well as to the constituent parties of the UF. For they felt that this was patently discriminatory. Nobody could believe that the decision was arrived at as a result of a correct judgement based on the merits of each case, but they felt that the whole thing was based on political considerations and nothing else. This impression was heightened when the chief minister admitted in the assembly that he had not examined all the charges raised on the floor of the house against Wellington, but only two. His excuse for not examining the others was that the assembly secretariat did not send them to him! Whatever may be the impression outside Kerala, so far as the people of Kerala are concerned, Wellington's name had become synonymous with corruption by this time. And if the chief

minister absolved him, it only meant that the decision was based on the political consideration that he, Wellington, and his party, the KTP, always stood by the CPM in all the controversies that had arisen in the UF. And as for Krishnan, he was a CPM member, belonging to the chief minister's own party.

## SUBSTANCE OF THE DIFFERENCES

From that time on a furious controversy began both inside and outside the Coordination Committee about the question of corruption charges against ministers and how to deal with them.

The CPM maintained that in all cases of corruption charges brought against ministers, the chief minister had the constitutional authority and right to decide whether a *prima facie* case had been made out. Whatever may be the position in a single party ministry, the other parties of the UF refused to accept this position so far as a coalition ministry such as the present Kerala UF ministry was concerned. They were apprehensive that in such coalitions, the decision of the chief minister may not be based wholly on merits of the case, but may sometimes be vitiated by political considerations. They, therefore, argued that for deciding whether a *prima facie* case existed in every case of corruption charge levelled against a minister, there should be a commonly agreed independent machinery.

Santhanam had suggested a panel consisting of judges or exjudges or people of like status, from whom the government could nominate one for each case. This suggestion had been incorporated in the Publicmen (Enquiries) Bill to which the CPM had agreed and which their own chief minister had introduced in the legislative assembly.

Here the CPM staged a complete *volte face*. They went back upon their commitment to the bill and the proposals it contained. The CPM Politburo came forward with the theory that their ministers being representatives of the working class could not be subjected to the judgement of bourgeois judges! How they could reconcile this position

with their action in referring the case of one of their colleagues, viz., Kunju, to a commission consisting of a retired High Court Judge, the CPM alone can explain. However, there it was. They did not budge an inch from this position however long the argument continued.

It was then suggested by the SSP group that for the preliminary probe to decide whether there was a *prima facie* case, a committee elected by the legislative assembly and consisting of representatives of all parties in the assembly may be constituted. All the other parties of the UF were prepared to accept this suggestion. At one stage even E. M. S. Namboodiripad gave his word to Bafaki Thangal, the leader of the Muslim League, that he was prepared to accept this suggestion and refer Wellington's case to such a committee. Based on this assurance, the League leader C. H. Mohammed Koya moved a formal resolution in the Co-ordination Committee making this suggestion. But to the surprise of everyone concerned, the CPM state committee leaders, E. K. Nayanar and C. H. Kanaran, who were present, stated, contradicting Namboodiripad, that they could not agree to the resolution before getting clearance from their Politburo. Even then, everybody thought that this was only a formal objection and that at the next meeting of the Co-ordination Committee they would announce their acceptance of the proposal.

But instead what really happened in that meeting was that they rejected this proposal also. Thus the committee was completely deadlocked.

### CPI'S 13 POINT DEMAND

This position was reached early in 1969. By that time the CPI leadership was feeling more and more convinced that it was not merely a question of refusing to inquire into charges against a particular minister or wanting to protect him. The matter was far more serious. It was a question of the CPM's whole attitude to the United Front, the role of its party in it and to the functions of the UF government.

The CPI state executive, therefore, took stock of the whole situation and passed a resolution in its meeting held on 28 April 1969 making a 13 point demand to be fulfilled within the course of the next 3 months, failing which the executive warned that the CPI would be compelled to reconsider its attitude towards the UF government. Since the resolution has subsequently become famous, as a point of controversy, the full text of the resolution is given below:

“The executive committee of the Kerala state council of the CPI considers that the recent activities of the Communist Party (Marxist) are creating serious difficulties in the working of the United Front and the United Front government in Kerala.

“Certain difficult problems hitherto nonexistent are being created by them. Attempts to underplay and impede the progress being registered in the agricultural and industrial fields, to interfere unauthorisedly and unnecessarily in the portfolios of communist and certain other ministers to create difficulties and undermine the smooth functioning of their ministries, to encourage certain officers to publicly come out against and defy some of these ministers, to violate collective responsibility—these are some of the obstacles.

“It need not be mentioned that these activities go to create serious difficulties in the smooth functioning of the ministry as a whole.

“The stunning defeat of the Congress Party and the success achieved by the united fronts in the recent midterm poll in several states have led to a situation for the United Front and the United Front government of Kerala to advance all along the line.

“Instead of utilising this opportunity to strengthen the United Front and implement measures designed to advance the interests of the common people, the CPM has come out with activities designed to undermine and weaken the UF and launch a dastardly offensive on the Communist Party of India.

“They have concentrated all their energies to decry and denigrate CPI ministers in public and organise violence in the strongholds of the Communist Party.

“We do not wish to dwell at length on these new developments. It is enough to point out certain instances.

“The activities of the CPM on the agrarian front are concentrated in such a way as would facilitate only the disorganisation of food production.

“They have created a grave situation in central Kerala by openly defying the accepted policies of the UF and the government in this regard, by trampling underfoot the best interests of agricultural workers and agriculturists, by unleashing terror and violence to seek and secure narrow party advantages.

“They are deliberately obstructing food production. As a result, a situation has arisen where there will be no second crop of paddy this year.

“These activities please only the enemies of the UF and the blackmarketeers and hoarders. There cannot be a greater antinational activity in a state suffering from acute food shortage and scarcity.

“Another serious development is that the CPM is utilising the police department for advancing its party interests. Illustrations for this are many.

“While our repeated requests to institute judicial enquiry into the unprovoked and wanton repression indulged in by the police at Poonjar, Kundara and Trichur are rejected, the CPM minister displays discrimination by ordering judicial enquiry and other steps over incidents where their cadres or followers are involved.

“The latest and most blatant instance of this is the attitude displayed by the police during the illegal takeover of the office of the Boat Crew Association at Alleppey and the wanton terror and violence let loose at Kunnaman-galam.

“The great expectation of the people of Kerala when the UF government was installed in power was that a good and noncorrupt administration will come into being. The Com-

munist Party (Marxist) is particularly responsible for smashing these hopes of the people in the most shameless way.

“The allegation of corruption that has come up, particularly in the appointments in the transport department, purchase of tyres and the way bodybuilding in the transport department has been entrusted to a monopoly motor concern, the nepotism and favouritism displayed by the revenue minister in the matter of land assignment, the charges of corruption that have been raised against ministers of finance and health—all these have shocked the common people beyond description.

“As the largest party in the UF, the CPM is displaying criminal apathy and indifference to these serious charges. They have not done anything till now even to dispel the suspicions among the people caused by the charges of corruption and favouritism brought against their own ministers.

“It is a welcome step however that they have now come forward with a statement that the charges against the finance minister will be looked into. But why have they not displayed the same attitude towards the charges brought up against their own party ministers?

“It is this peculiar stand of theirs that makes us seriously doubt their sincerity regarding prevention of corruption.

“Our clear and firm view is that all the allegations against ministers raised on the floor of the assembly should be enquired into, including the preliminary enquiry, by no less a person than a judicial officer of the status of a High Court Judge.

“It is the same principle that is incorporated rightly in the Anticorruption Bill pending before the Kerala legislature. We are not able to understand why there should be a departure from this very welcome principle in regard to certain cases.

“Above all this, the CPM has made impotent the Co-ordination Committee—the UF’s forum where solutions are

to be evolved for all problems including those arising from day to day work. They have no compunction whatsoever in violating the decisions of this body.

“The recommendations evolved and accepted by all to make this body function effectively have been buried deep by them. An unbearable situation has thus developed. It has become increasingly difficult to go forward in this particular situation.

“If the working of the UF and the government has to become effective, smooth and harmonious, the attitude of the CPM requires a total change. We are aware that the other parties of the UF are also conscious of this critical situation within the UF. We appeal earnestly that a solution to this should be sought and found jointly by all of us.

“We are demanding that steps should be initiated for the solution of the following issues and problems, if the present critical impasse has to be resolved. These steps should be taken within three months. The executive of the state council wishes to make it explicit that if this is not done our party's attitude towards the UF government in Kerala will have to be reconsidered:

1) A judicial officer of the status of a judge of the High Court should go into the charges levelled against the finance minister and other ministers on the floor of the assembly. This should be applicable to all stages of the enquiry including the preliminary enquiry.

2) The illegal and unjustified interference in and consequent sabotage of the working of the industries and agriculture departments by CPM ministers should be put an end to. The cabinet as a whole or a cabinet subcommittee should review problems created so far by such interference and resolve them. There should be a guarantee that Section 18 of the Business Rules of Cabinet functioning should be strictly adhered to.

3) There should be an urgent enquiry into the failure to distribute the amounts allotted for relief to flood stricken agriculturists.

4) Firm action should be taken against officers who flout-

ed ministers' orders and issued open press statements against ministers.

5) The destructive activities being indulged in by the workers of the CPM against the agricultural workers, agriculturists, and agricultural development as a whole should be put an end to. Zonal committees with representatives of the agricultural workers, agriculturists and government should be set up to settle disputes that may arise between agricultural workers and agriculturists.

6) Take steps to pass into law the Trade Union Recognition Bill, Gratuity Bill, Agrarian Reforms Bill, Panchayat Bill and the Anticorruption Bill.

7) The scheme placed before the chief minister ten months ago by the minister for agriculture for building houses for agricultural workers should be taken up for consideration.

8) When many projects are given up due to paucity of funds, the revenue department has given remission to toddy-shop contractors to the tune of Rs. 2.5 crores without even reference to the cabinet. This should be enquired into.

9) The Coordination Committee had decided that wholesale trade in foodgrains should be brought under public sector. This decision is being flouted and private traders are being issued licences repeatedly. This should be enquired into and the decision of the Coordination Committee implemented.

10) Another decision of the Coordination Committee was that the surplus paddy should be procured effectively from rich peasants and landlords. This is also flouted and concessions are given to these sections. This should be subjected to enquiry.

11) The serious irregularities committed in land assignment should be looked into and guarantees made that hereafter all types of land assignments would take place only through the taluk land distribution committees.

12) All recruitments and appointments in public corporations such as transport, plantation, etc. should be made through the Public Service Commission.

13) There should be a permanent standing committee of the Coordination Committee with separate offices and joint conveners. Coordination committees should be also organised down to the regional levels to make the functioning of the UF effective."

The CPM reaction to this resolution was furious and instantaneous. They construed it as an ultimatum and took up the position that as long as the threat of an ultimatum was present, they will refuse to discuss any of the points in the resolution. That this was only a ruse to sidetrack the whole issue and avoid any serious discussion on the points raised in the resolution will be clear from the fact that the CPM refused to have any meaningful discussion on these matters even after the CPI spokesmen both at the state level and all India level made it clear that no question of an ultimatum was involved. Thus S. Kumaran, the secretary of the CPI state council, in the course of a statement in Trivandrum explained that it was not meant as an ultimatum. And later on N. K. Krishnan also confirmed this in a press conference held in Trivandrum on 12 July 1969 when the Central Executive of the CPI was meeting there. So it was not a question of any ultimatum that stood in the way of a meaningful discussion but the CPM's inherent aversion to discuss them.

And what after all was the gist of the 13 point proposals? It can be seen from a careful reading of the proposals that they can be reduced to 3 sets of proposals, all meant for immediate action. The first consists of proposals to deal with the question of corruption charges against ministers generally and the cases that had arisen up to that time in particular. The second consists of proposals for improving the administration and taking some measures, legislative and otherwise, to give urgently needed relief to the people. And the third consists of proposals to improve inter-party relations and bring about regular and effective functioning of the UF Coordination Committee.

The crisis that had arisen in the UF could be solved only by tackling all these abovementioned three sets of issues

simultaneously and in no other way. That was the understanding of the CPI state executive. Subsequent events have completely vindicated that understanding.

Despite repeated attempts stretching over a period of six months, from May to October 1969, the CPM did not show any readiness to accept any of the demands in the 13 point resolution, although to many of the demands in the resolution the UF as a whole was committed. This has to be seen clearly because the CPM is trying to make out that it is because of the undue stress that other parties had laid on the question of inquiry into corruption, to the exclusion of other socioeconomic issues that the deadlock continued. This is not at all true.

While insisting that a satisfactory solution to the question of inquiry into charges of corruption should be found, the CPI and the other parties equally strongly demanded solution of other issues also. The fact is that with regard to them also, the CPM adopted an adamant attitude. For instance, from the very beginning the other parties of the UF had been demanding that the Coordination Committee should have two or three joint conveners belonging to different parties instead of a sole convener from the CPM. Despite repeated attempts throughout the last 2½ years, this simple proposal has never been agreed to by the CPM. Even as late as 25 August 1969 in the talks that the CPI leaders, N. K. Krishnan, Yogindra Sharma and Achutha Menon, had with P. Sundarayya at New Delhi this was mooted, to which Sundarayya's curt reply was: "Let there be eight joint conveners!" The demand for elimination of private agency at the wholesale stage in the food trade and takeover by the Food Corporation of India was decided by the Coordination Committee in the middle of 1967. This remains unfulfilled to this day.

The distribution of government fallow lands through popular committees was decided by the Coordination Committee on 29 March 1968 but has not been implemented until now.

So far as legislation is concerned, although it has passed

the Land Reforms Bill, CPM has openly come out with its opposition to Panchayati Raj Bill and Publicmen (Enquiries) Bill, and has quietly sabotaged the TU Recognition Bill by not compelling the labour minister to bring it. One CPI M.L.A., P. S. Namboodiri, has introduced a nonofficial bill for the purpose and it is pending in the assembly.

The position, therefore, is this: whatever may be the UF election programme, whatever the Coordination Committee may decide from time to time, only the CPM writ runs, it will decide what the government will do or not do and all others have either to fall in line or get out.

They said this openly in so many words through a resolution they moved in the Coordination Committee in May 1969 demanding other parties to join with them in censuring the CPI for giving the so-called ultimatum. The other parties stoutly refused to do any such thing. And from that moment on, contrary to CPM calculations, the four other parties opposed to such tactics—the CPI, the Muslim League, the ISP and the RSP—came closer and closer together.

### FINAL SHOWDOWN

It was in these circumstances that the four parties of the UF decided to press for an inquiry into Wellington's case through a nonofficial resolution in the legislative assembly. Some of their members had given notice of such a resolution to be taken up on 22 August 1969. The SSP group who continued supporting the CPM throughout this controversy had also given notice of a similar resolution. Congress party members also had done the same. The ballot favoured the congress M.L.A. Devasikutty. His resolution was in very wide terms, demanding inquiry into the charges levelled against all the ministers on the floor of the house.

The four parties decided to move an amendment to that resolution confining the inquiry to Wellington alone. On that day, however, the CPM members indulged in uncontrolled hooliganism inside the house with the result that the Speaker in sheer helplessness adjourned the house. The resolution was, therefore, not adopted. But for the restraint

which the members of the four parties imposed upon themselves, there would have been bloody clashes inside the assembly that day.

Immediately after this, the secretariat of the CPM state committee instructed their M.L.A.s through a public statement to "collect allegations" of corruption against the ministers of the four parties, the CPI, the Muslim League, the RSP and the ISP. The allegations thus "collected" were put together in the form of memoranda to the home minister. It has to be pointed out that up to that time no M.L.A. belonging to a UF party (with the exception of the SSP M.L.A. who brought the charges against Kunju) had raised charges against any minister of the UF government. This convention was first broken by the CPM and it was only then that the M.L.A.s belonging to other parties brought forward allegations against CPM ministers. Even then the chief minister was excluded. The allegations against him were brought by a congress member.

Now the CPM seeks to make much out of the fact that the four parties resorted to this course while the chief minister was away in the GDR for treatment. But the chief minister before going had not even shown the courtesy of consulting his colleagues about what should be done in his absence.

The assembly was convened on 4 August 1969 without any consultation with other parties and without trying to solve any one of the issues that had brought to the open the rift between the various parties in the UF. At that time there was not the slightest hint that the chief minister would be going abroad. His journey to the GDR for treatment was suddenly decided and he left Trivandrum on 14 August 1969.

If the CPM had the slightest intention of settling the differences, E. M. S. Namboodiripad could have invited the leaders of the other parties for consultation about the arrangements to be made during his absence and requested them to keep pending the disputes till his return. He did nothing of the sort. He made his own decisions about the

arrangements, in accordance with the directions of the CPM secretariat and merely informed other parties what he had decided. And the arrangements themselves beggar all description from the standpoint of good sense and propriety. He nominated nobody as acting chief minister in his absence; but directed that cabinet meetings be held under the chairmanship of the different ministers in the alphabetical order of their names! He also nominated Smt. Gouri as the floor leader of the house, for the purpose of conducting business in the assembly. And on top of all this he entrusted the finance portfolio which was originally with the ISP and had been temporarily taken over by him on P. K. Kunju's resignation to Gouri.

When the leaders of the other parties gave expression to their resentment at the way they were being treated, the CPM leaders took umbrage. The relations between the parties, therefore, were very much strained and E.M.S.'s departure had not served to improve them. That was how the incidents on 22 August 1969 took place.

Before the assembly was adjourned sine die on 22 August, the report of the select committee on the Land Reforms (Amendment) Bill had been presented to the house and discussions had actually commenced. The CPM game was to accuse the other parties of wrecking the government with a view to sabotage the Land Bill. As already stated this was far from truth. The four parties countered this propaganda by demanding the early reconvening of the assembly to pass the Land Bill and other pending legislations such as the Debt Relief Bill, Panchayati Raj Bill and others. So the assembly was again convened from 29 September and took up consideration of the Land Bill.

#### RESOLUTION OF 3 OCTOBER

Meanwhile, no solution had been found for the dispute between the parties in the UF. Therefore, the four parties decided to give notice of a resolution demanding enquiry into charges against Wellington, to come up for discussion

in the assembly on 3 October. This time, the four parties took the precaution of giving notice in the names of all their members separately. The CPM members also likewise gave separate notices in their names for a resolution demanding inquiry into charges against the ministers of the four parties.

It so happened that the very first name balloted was that of E. Chandrasekharan Nair of the CPI. He, therefore, moved the resolution on 3 October. This time also the CPM members tried all obstructionist tactics but the Speaker put the resolution to vote and adjourned the house only after declaring it carried. The CPM members in the heat of argument forgot to demand even a poll and so the resolution was carried by voice vote.

Even at the eleventh hour, the CPI made a last minute attempt to avert a crisis. On 2 October, the CPI state council secretary, S. Kumaran, approached A. K. Gopalan and put forward a compromise proposal. He said that if instead of opposing the resolution on 3 October, the CPM was prepared to instruct Smt. Gouri as acting leader of the house to give an assurance to the house that the government was willing to institute an enquiry into the charges against Wellington and that government was further considering how the charges that had subsequently come up against other ministers should be dealt with and for that purpose would consult all parties, the CPI was prepared to instruct Chandrasekharan Nair not to press his resolution to vote but withdraw it on the strength of the assurance. A. K. Gopalan seemed to be willing to consider this suggestion and promised to give his reply after consulting his state committee secretariat. In the evening, however, he informed the CPI state council office that the suggestion was not acceptable to the CPM state secretariat.

Although the CPM members contended that the resolution had not been passed and one of their members, P. Govinda Pillai, M.L.A., even gave notice of a motion of noconfidence in the Speaker for having declared the resolution carried, they had to reckon with the hard reality that the resolution

had been passed and moreover, that resolution was a mandatory resolution which had to be carried out by the government. The resolution had also fixed a time limit of 15 days within which it was to be implemented. So they had to take a decision before 18 October 1969.

### THE LAST BID

On 11 October, the leaders of the four parties met at Calicut to take stock of the situation. There was no indication at that time that the CPM was ready to come to any understanding with them on any of the issues that led to the rift. They felt that all their attempts to find an honourable way out of the impasse were wrecked by the CPM. Hence they resolved to make a final appeal to E.M.S. Namboodiripad as leader of the UF. The resolution they adopted, after recounting all that had happened, said:

“In this situation, we once more appeal to Shri E. M. S. as leader of the UF to do the following:

“In response to the wishes of the constituent parties as well as of the ranks of the CPM and in accordance with the resolution of the assembly, issue an order before 18 October 1969 under the Commissions of Enquiry Act to inquire into the allegations levelled against Mr. Wellington. But this alone is not enough. Action should also be taken with regard to the following matters.

“1. The Coordination Committee be immediately convened to evolve a suitable machinery to inquire into the charges made both inside and outside the assembly against all ministers either by the ruling parties or those in opposition.

“2. Immediately implement the decisions of the Coordination Committee taken long ago, such as handing over of the wholesale trade in foodgrains to the FCI, taking over of rice mills, procurement of the entire surplus of paddy from big landlords, distribution of fallow land through popular committees and cancellation of

allotments made otherwise, stopping of unauthorised occupations, enquiry into police excesses, etc.

"3. Adopt in this very session of the legislative assembly such bills as the Land Reforms Bill, Debt Relief Bill, Trade Union Recognition Bill, Publicmen (Enquiries) Bill, Panchayati Raj Bill, etc.

"4. Streamline the functioning of the Coordination Committee in accordance with the suggestions already made by various constituent parties.

"5. Withdraw the resolution of noconfidence given notice of against the Speaker.

"6. Entrust all recruitment to public undertakings including the Kerala State Road Transport Corporation to the Public Service Commission.

"7. Subject the irregular appointments recently made to the KSRTC to an enquiry.

"8. Put a stop to the practice of utilising the administration, especially the police, to serve the ends of the party.

"If no satisfactory and clear decisions are arrived at quickly the continued existence of UF will be a violation of the promises made to the people, and, therefore, we will be compelled in that event to withdraw the support our parties gave to Shri E. M. S. Namboodiripad for the formation of a ministry under his leadership."

It will be noticed that the demands contained in the above resolution were more or less the same as were included in the 13 point demands of the CPI of 28 April 1969. And this resolution also met with the same fate at the hands of the CPM. The resolution was formally presented to E. M. S. Namboodiripad on 14 October 1969 immediately after his return from the GDR by the leaders of the four parties who explained its implications to him.

As in the case of the earlier CPI resolution, E. M. S. Namboodiripad said that there was nothing that was im-

possible of fulfilment or unreasonable in the demands contained in the resolution (although none of them had been implemented so far), but he refused to discuss any of them concretely unless the four parties admitted beforehand that the method followed by them of bringing the resolution in the open assembly and of taking the help of the opposition parties to get it passed was wrong. Of course, he was not prepared to admit that the methods adopted by his party, which drove the four parties to resort to the forum of the assembly, were wrong.

It was obvious that E. M. S. Namboodiripad was interested only in polemics and not in real solution of differences. Hence although there were a number of talks between leaders belonging to all parties of the UF in a last minute effort to stave off the crisis (including one between top CPI leaders Bhupesh Gupta, N. K. Krishnan and C. Achutha Menon and E. M. S. Namboodiripad, A. K. Gopalan and P. Sundarayya) all that was of no avail.

And E. M. S. struck the final blow that felled the UF by his assembly statement of 17 October in which he announced his decision to order inquiries against two CPI ministers, M. N. Govindan Nair and T. V. Thomas, and one ISP minister, P. R. Kurup, along with Wellington.

It is clear beyond the shadow of a doubt that this decision was not based on merits, but was clearly politically motivated and discriminatory. Since he was bound in terms of the resolution of 3 October to order an enquiry against Wellington, he was doing it, but while doing so, he was also ordering an enquiry against three other ministers belonging to the parties that had pressed for the enquiry against Wellington, for the unpardonable sin of having done so; that seemed to be the logic. This is borne out by what E. M. S. Namboodiripad himself says in the course of the statement:

“No one has examined the nature of the evidence for the allegations either in the case of Wellington or in the case of these other ministers. I, too, have not gone into them. But after the 3rd of October, I am bound to order

an enquiry even without a preliminary examination into Wellington's case. Under the circumstances, I consider it my duty to order an enquiry into the charges which appear to me to be equally grave as those levelled against Wellington. Thus looking into the gravity of the charges alone without averting to the nature of the evidence, I consider that it is necessary to enquire into the charges against the Hon. Messrs. M. N. Govindan Nair, T. V. Thomas and P. R. Kurup also. Accordingly I am issuing orders to enquire into the allegation against these also."

This is indeed a strange way for a responsible person, holding the office of chief minister of a state to behave. He orders for an enquiry into charges of corruption against his colleagues, some of whom had been his lifelong colleagues in the revolutionary struggles for national independence and for the rights of the working class, without satisfying himself by even a preliminary examination of the nature of the evidence, but merely looking at the "gravity" of the charges! This he did at a time when there were charges against all the 13 ministers, including himself. One might legitimately ask how he came to the conclusion that the charges against Govindan Nair, Thomas and Kurup were "graver" than those levelled against his colleagues of the CPM. His motives in excluding not only his CPM colleagues but also the ministers belonging to the RSP and the Muslim League, although they too had subscribed to the four party Calicut resolution of 11 October are much too transparent to require any comment. Only the CPI and ISP were beyond absolution and redemption; the RSP and Muslim League could hope for redemption if they were prepared for repentance and penance!

Another trick he played was that in the order of enquiry against Wellington, he included only 2 minor charges, when an assembly committee consisting of the representatives of the various parties had on the chief minister's own request to the Speaker collected 12 allegations from the pro-

ceedings of the assembly and presented them to the house. His excuse was that that report was received rather late, i.e., on the night of the 17th and he had to issue the order on the 18th. It was only after a privilege motion was raised in the assembly against him for disregarding the directions of the assembly that he revised his earlier order and included the 12 charges also.

In the face of this attitude, there was no other honourable course for the ministers belonging to these parties except to tender their resignation although E. M. S. Namboodiripad had very "generously" advised that since unlike in the case of Kunju, these orders were being passed even without a preliminary inquiry, the ministers were under no obligation to resign pending enquiry! Only his protege, Wellington, sought to take advantage of this advice but he also was compelled finally to resign, following the resignation of the others. Along with these three ministers, the RSP minister T. K. Divakaran and the League ministers, C. H. Mohammed Koya and Abukaderkutty Naha, tendered their resignation on the evening of 17 October.

Although the UF which had triumphed and come to power in 1967 with popular support had thus finally collapsed and lost the mandate of the people, Namboodiripad did not immediately resign. He made a show of putting up a brave fight to keep the UF alive, by writing letters to the ministers who had resigned to reconsider their resignations. But this was nothing but a clever manoeuvre, since the letters contained not a single suggestion to repair the damage done by him and his party to the UF. On the other hand, the letters were a further attempt to disrupt and divide the four parties which had stood together to fight the CPM's designs. Naturally, therefore, the request for reconsideration of the resignations was rejected. Namboodiripad insisted that he would not vacate office until and unless a noconfidence motion was brought against him in the assembly and passed.

In the course of the statement on 17 October and in innumerable speeches, press conferences, etc. during the following days, E. M. S. Namboodiripad again and again challenged the four parties to bring such a motion of no-confidence. His motive was very obvious; he wanted to tell the world that his ministry was toppled by the four parties with congress help. Thereby he wanted to pose himself as a martyr, a much injured man.

The four parties, on the other hand, wanted to put squarely upon his shoulders the responsibility of bringing about the dissolution of the assembly and President's rule in the state. They also wanted that the assembly by a formal resolution should go on record demanding an enquiry into charges against the CPM ministers and the KSP minister, Mathai Manjooran. That was why T. A. Majeed of the CPI gave notice of a motion in the assembly to raise a discussion on the statement made by E. M. S. Namboodiripad on 17 October 1969.

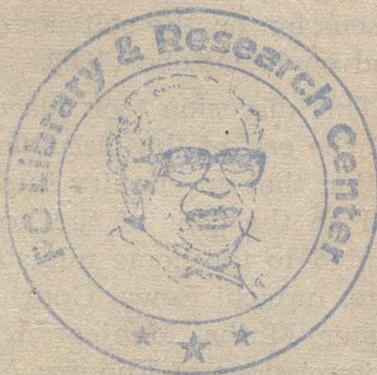
This discussion took place on 22, 23 and 24 October 1969. At the end of the discussion, Majeed moved a formal resolution that an enquiry into the charges of corruption levelled on the floor of the house and in the memoranda presented to the home minister against the three CPM ministers, Imbichi Bawa, Gouri and Krishnan, and the KSP minister, Mathai Manjooran, be ordered forthwith under the Commissions of Enquiry Act. Since according to strict constitutional propriety, E. M. S. Namboodiripad could treat a resolution demanding an inquiry into corruption charges as amounting to noconfidence if his name was included in it, the mover did not include his name. Still E. M. S. Namboodiripad insisted that it amounted to a motion of no-confidence. This was selfcontradictory since on the earlier occasion, although he was compelled to accept against his wish the resolution demanding inquiry into Wellington's case, he did not think it proper to treat it as noconfidence and tender his resignation. The resolution was passed 69 voting for and 60 against. The votes partywise, *for* and *against*, are as follows:

<i>For</i>		<i>Against</i>	
CPI	21	CPM	50
Muslim League	14	KSP	1
ISP	11	KTP	1
RSP	6	SSP	6
Karnatak Samiti	2	Independents	2
Independent	1		
Kerala Congress	5		
Congress	9		
	<hr/> 69		<hr/> 60

Immediately following the vote, E. M. S. Namboodiripad tendered his resignation to the governor.

26 October 1969

5707H1



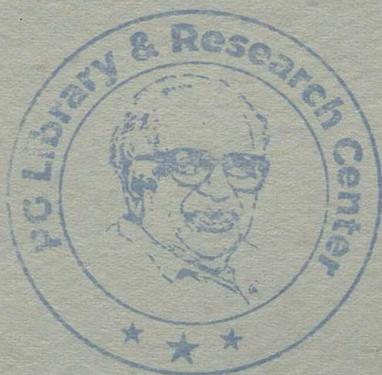
*First Edition: November 1969*

*Reprint : December 1969 : No. 20 (C 401)*

*Price: 75 Paise*

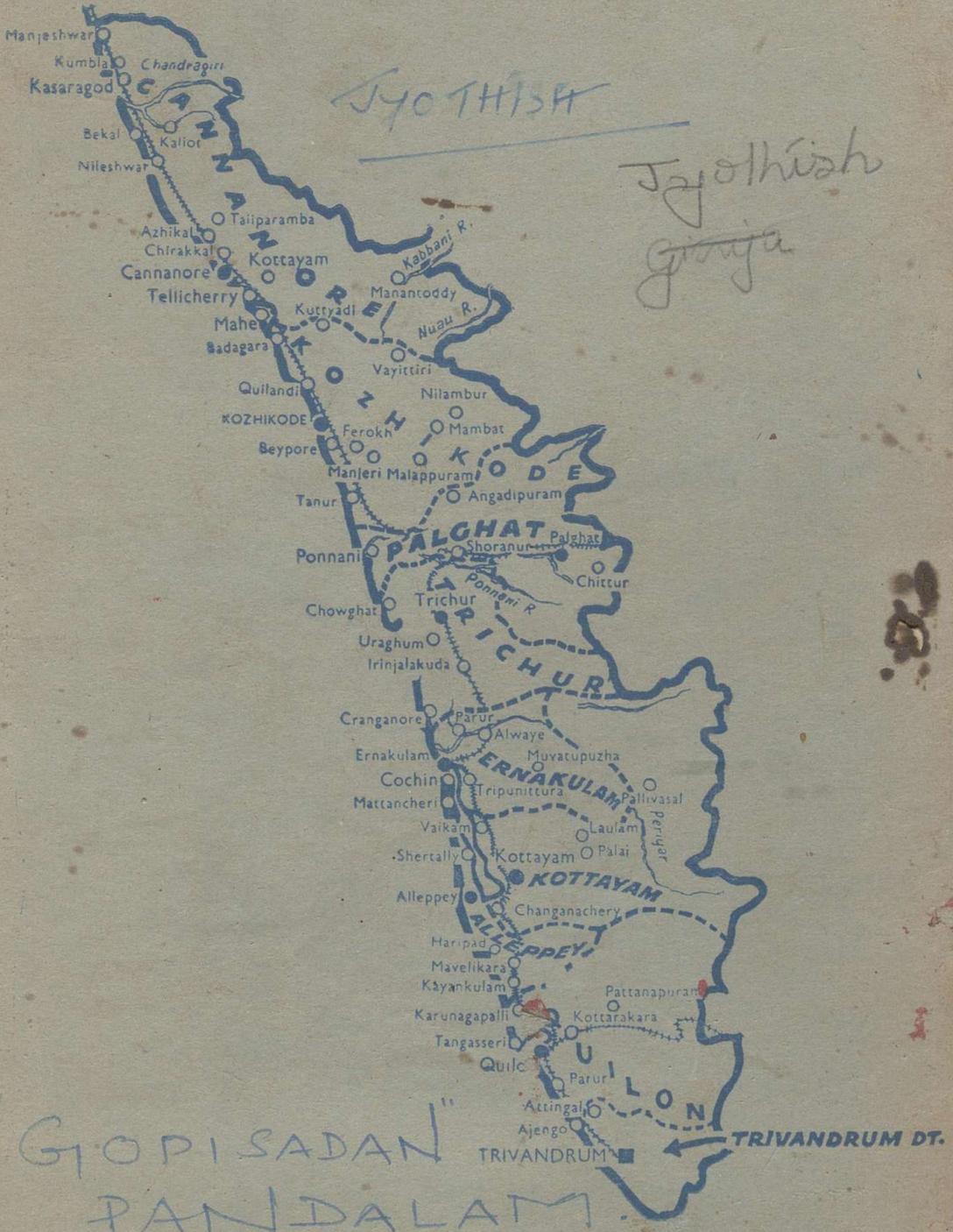
Printed by D. P. Sinha at New Age Printing Press, Rani Jhansi Road, New Delhi 55 and published by him for Communist Party of India, 4/7 Asaf Ali Road, New Delhi 1.

*Editor: M. B. RAO*



Jyothish

Jyothish  
Gurja



GOPISADAN  
PANDALAM

TRIVANDRUM DT.

Indic Digital Archive Foundation

*Jyothish*

# WHAT HAPPENED

IN

# KERALA?

Review of the 30 months of  
Namboodiripad Government

*Jyothish*  
*Pandalam* JYOTHISH  
BY  
C. ACHUTHA MENON

*Buy this*

954.83

COMMUNIST PARTY PUBLICATION

cm 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19

gpura.org

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23