



LRF KANYAKUMARI
MUSLIM ARTS COLLEGE

Thiruvithancode, Kanyakumari, Tamilnadu, India.

LEMURIA RESEARCH FORUM
SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE



CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that *Dr/Mr/Mrs/Ms T.G. SABEMA GOPAL, Asst. Prof* of *History, Muslim Arts College* participated in the Second International Conference of Lemuria Research Forum on "REVELATIONS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION" held at MUSLIM ARTS COLLEGE, Thiruvithancode, on 22/08/2022 and presented a paper entitled *Activities in the Communist Movement in P. Krishna Pillai*.

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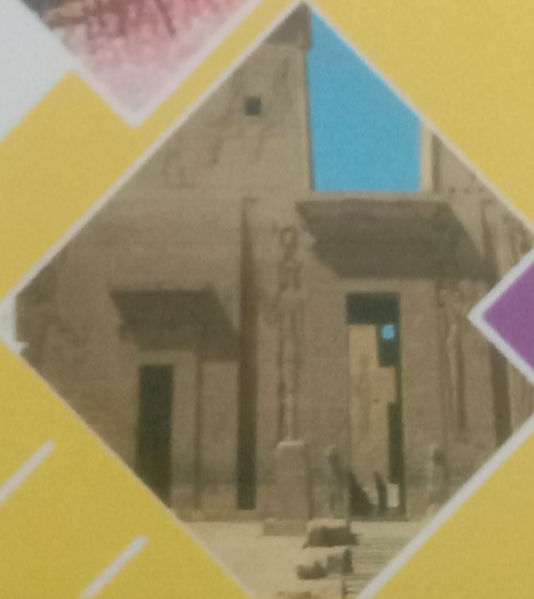
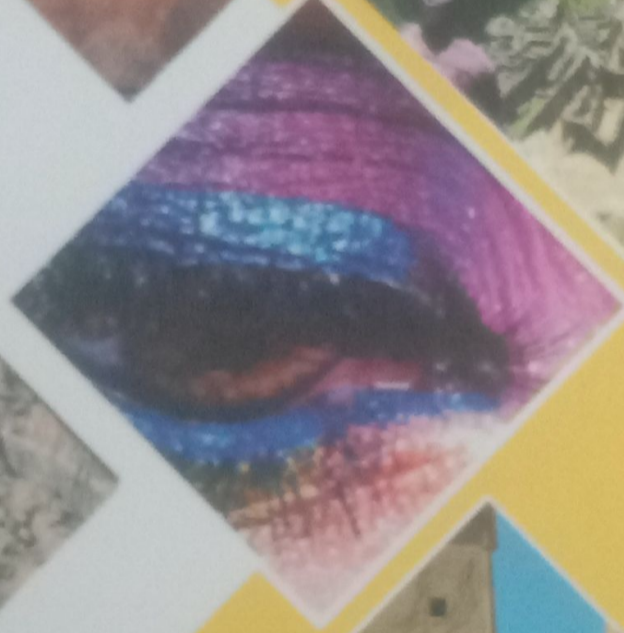
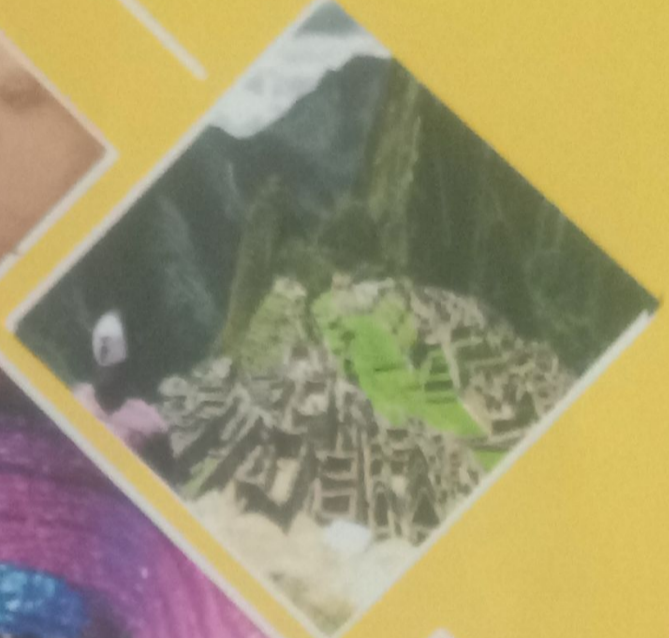
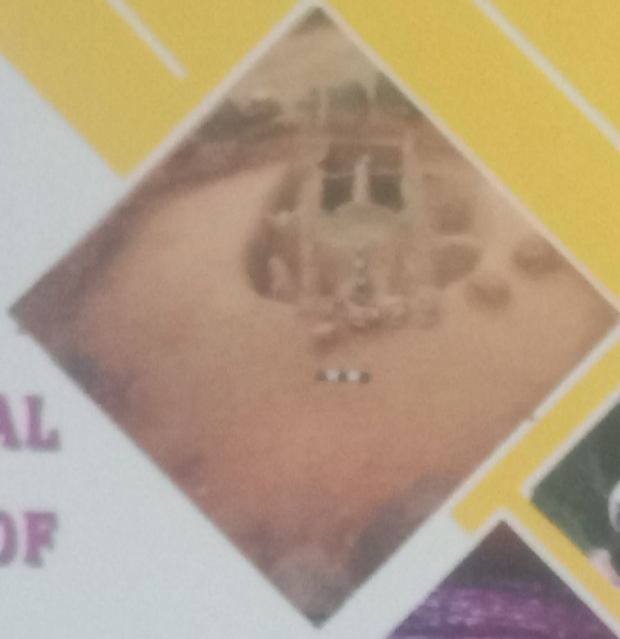
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SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF LRF -2022



THE LEMURIA RESEARCH FORUM
KANYAKUMARI



22.08.2022

REVELATIONS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION

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ACTIVITIES IN THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT IN P. KRISHNA PILLAI

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Abstract

The approval of the Indian National Congress the British Government of India necked the Indians into the Second World War Congress repeatedly insisted on the British to declare their war aims. If the war was or making democracy safe for the world, as the British claimed, the same should be assured to the Indians. But the British could not give a categorical reply, they just evaded the issue. The British imperialism transferred the huge expense of war upon the common people and tried to destroy the revolutionary forces one by one.

The socialist workers in Kerala began to think deeply and at many places party meetings were held. At all these meetings the general opinion was to exploit the situation to gain independence and plan a new course of action. It was in this background that a meeting of the Congress Socialist Party leaders was held at Pinarayi in December 1939. It was at this meeting that the Kerala Communist Party took shape. Thus a new party wedded to Maxian tenets came into existence. All of them who were members of the Congress Socialist Party accepted the decision and joined the Communist Party. Krishna Pillai and E.M.S. Nambudirippad give a detailed report on the future programme of the Communist Party. It was only after these celebrations that the meeting unanimously accepted the decision to form the Communist Party.

Introduction

The socialist workers in Kerala began to think deeply and at many places party meetings were held. At all these meetings the general opinion was to exploit the situation to gain independence and plan a new course of action. In January 1940, i.e., shortly after the Pinaryi Conference Krishna went underground. But clandestinely he worked for building up the new party. The first thing the Communist Party did was mobilizing the common people against the sufferings brought in by war. Peasant organizations

and trade unions stood ready for a united agitation K.P.R. Gopalan was elected the secretary of the Central agitation Committee. Their main demands were dearness allowance to neutralize cost of living opening of ration shops, punish officials who resort to extortion of war funds and minimum guaranteed price for agricultural produce. Mass signature campaigns, demonstrations and public meetings were held. By July the agitation gained strength and fury of a whirlwind. Within a few months of the formation of the communist party in Kerala they got an

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opportunity to put this strategy into practice. The congress issued a call to observe 15 September 1940 as Anti - Repression Day.

Political History of Malabar

In the political history of Malabar 15th of September 1940 has become a memorable day. Meetings were held at several places in Malabar to protest against the repressive measures of the government. Arrests, lathi - charge and firing took place at many places. The police acts at Tellicherry. Morala and Mattannur were terrible and beyond description. There was firing at Tellicherry, which resulted in the death of two. At Morala, because of stone throwing, a Sub - Inspector and a constable were killed. Following this incident the police searched the whole country for nabbing K.P.R. Gopalan. A cash aware of Rs. 500/- was announced for those who gave any clue leading to the arrest of K.P.R. Gopalan known to the people all over Kerala, as a defendant in the Morala case. All important leaders, including K.P.R. Gopalan had already gone underground. But many were traced out and charge - sheeted. Lartly, K.P.R. Gopalan was also arrested and, after trial, was sentenced to death. However, thanks to the intervention of Mahatma Gandhi, the death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment. At Mattannur also the people had to fight with the police.

P. Krishna Pillai reached Vaikkam

In December 1940 Krishna Pillai reached Vaikkam while he was on constant move in the underground. He was arrested and was immediately sent to the Cenral jail at Trivandrum. From there he was removed to Edalakkudi sub - jail near

Sucindrum. It was here that Krishna Pillai met his partner in life, Thankamma.

While in Jail he acquainted himself with Thankamma through hiring Hindi books. Later on, through Thankamma he established connections with the outside world and exchanged ideas. Through letters he acquainted Thankamma with the revolutionary movements and revolutionary leaders. He was released from Edalakkudi sub - jail in March 1942. On he third day of release, by signing a document at the Edalakkudi Sub - Registrar's Office, they accepted Thankam's as his partner in life.

Agriculturists in Kayyur village

During the last week of March in 1941 a group of agriculturists in Kayyur village classed with the police. It was a dispute between the tenants and landlord, but the police was there to help the landlord. In the clash that followed a policeman was killed. For months afterwards Kayyur village tasted the grip of police terror. Many people were beaten up and hundreds were 'arrested'. Any persons who had even distant connection with the communist party were hunted down whether they are communist workers or otherwise. Madattil Appu, Koittarril Cirukandan.

The Kayyur case decree was pronounced on 2nd February 1942. Five persons were sentenced to be hanged. They were Madathil Appu, Koittarril Cirukandan, Patora Kunnambu Nayar, Pallikkal Abubakkar and Curikkadan Krishnan Nayar. Out of this five, however, Krishnan Nayar, being a minor, was sentenced only for five years imprisonment. All those who were sentenced were led to the jail. It was decided to hang them in March 1943. The

sad news reached when the first communist party meeting in Kerala was being held in Krishna Pillai was elected as the Secretary. Immediately after suspending the meeting Krishna Pillai and his friends rushed to the house of Madathil Appu. There was a gathering in front of the house. There was police patrol outside. Krishna Pillai distributed the funds which had been collected to help the families of defendants of the Kayyur case.

The next day, along with P.C. Joshi, P. Sundarayya and others, Krishna Pillai went to the jail gate. When they stepped into the cell, the Prisoners stood up and saluted them in the military style. P.C. Joshi tried to speak but he could not, he had burst into tears. At this time Krishna Pillai with boldness came to the front and told them that they were returning from Kayyur. But he also could not say anything more. Tears rolled on his black face; unable to control himself he turned his face aside.

Those who went to console the convicts who were expecting death were consoled by the convicts themselves and sent back! The convicts told the visitors "Comrades don't feel sorry for us. We are proud that we have done our duty. Our only desire is that our movement should gain strength at any cost. Tell the comrades to work hard and energetically to reach the destination."

On 29th March 1943, the condemned were hanged. It is reported that they moved to the gallows with firm steps shouting slogans "Inquilab Zindabad", "Communist Party Zindabad". "Let Imperialism perish" and "Let landlordism perish". In the words of P.C. Joshi "They lived as true patriots they died as noble martyrs". Desabhimani, which

started as a newspaper was published first by the end of 1942. It was the mouthpiece of the Communist Party. The first editor of the weekly was M.S. Devadas. A call to raise a two lakhs rupees fund was made by the party. The leaders and workers in Kerala accepted the challenge and came forward to carry out the task in a competitive spirit. By this time Desabhimani was registered as a public limited company. For raising the fund many comrades sold their property and even donated the mangalya sutras of their wives. But a regular flow of funds came from the workers, the peasants and middle class men, it was at this time that R. Sugatan sold his only property and donated Rs. 200/- towards the party fund. Contributions began to pour in enabling the party to establish a printing press of its own in 1944. Krishna Pillai was very particular in shaping Desabhimani as a truly people's paper. Under his able leadership and guidance Desabhimani started a new style of reporting.

Activities of the party were slowly spreading to new areas. For the first time a women's wing was formed. Wives of almost all top leaders like Krishna Pillai and E.M.S. Nambudirippad actively participated in this. However, the communist party was forced to make a reassessment of its position immediately after the Second World War. It was felt that a new plan of functioning was necessary and P. Krishna Pillai took the initiative to frame a new programme of action. A number of agitations by the working class and peasant group were launched by the communist party. The new programme gained strength and momentum. Finally it led to the historic armed uprising of the workers and

peasants against government machinery at Punnapra – Vayalar in 1946. It was P. Krishna Pillai who planned this struggle as well as other organizational agitations in north Malabar.

The Punnapra – Vayalar uprising was aimed against the continuation of Divan's rule and his pet idea of an "Independent Travancore". Besides, due to the ravages of the Second World War, life of the working class and tenants was deplorable. The Communists suspected a strong section of the State Congress was slowly entertaining the idea of an "Independent Travancore". Landlords and factory workers were systematically exploiting the tenants and the workers. The government, they felt, was conniving the activities of the vested interests. All these factors had their share in precipitating the Punnapra-Vayalar uprising.

Punnapra and Vayalar are two village of the present Alleppey district. The workers of various trades and tenants had organized themselves under the leadership of the Communist Party. They

were given the necessary study classes by leaders like Krishna Pillai. E.M.S. Nambudirippad, K.C. George etc. They formed volunteer camps and got training in using arms. They were getting prepared to face any eventuality.

Conclusion

The government also prepared to face the workers. Finally, the volunteers and the police clashed at Punnapra on 24 October 1946. Many workers and volunteers lost their lives. Nearly thirty policemen were killed by the mob. The government declared martial law in the area on 25th. However, on 27th the military and the volunteers of the Vayalar camp also clashed. Here the numbers of casualties were great than at Punnapra. According to K.C. George even the wounded were burnt alive by the police. Though there are controversies and disagreement on the gain of the Punnapra-Vayalar uprising, it was Krishna Pillai's efforts and the people's faith in his leadership which precipitated the crisis to such a magnitude.

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