

Towards Linguistic-Cultural Integration

With the evolution of the militarist-feudal system described in the last chapter, the main outlines of Kerala as a distinct region of India were clearly drawn—a region which was, in all essential respects, an integral part of India and yet had its own specific features.

The equality and democracy of the pre-historic (primitive communist) society had been completely destroyed. In its place had emerged a new unequal, undemocratic society based on 'high' and 'low' castes. Social life in Kerala was in no way different from the rest of India. Kerala's caste organization was, if anything, even more unequal than in other parts of India: the system of untouchability here was far more rigorous.

This social transformation which took place under the cultural leadership of Brahminism brought the newly-emerging strata of the intellectual, administrative and other elite of society on par with their counterparts in the rest of India. Not only were the artistic, scientific and philosophical works of Brahminical culture fully imbibed by the elite of Kerala, but they also added to them by making their own contributions. Many poets, thinkers, philosophers and so on added to the treasury of Sanskrit literature and are respected for their contributions.

But the representatives of Brahminical culture in Kerala had their own individuality. They did not fully conform to the customs, manners and practices of Brahminical society elsewhere. We have already seen how the system of marriage, inheritance and so on, of the Kerala Brahmin is so unlike those of the Brahmin outside, and so close to those of the non-Brahmin here

that it is difficult to consider him part of the wider circle of Brahmins in India. This, is not confined to marriage and inheritance alone, but touches various other facets of social life.

This is seen from the fact that the Brahmin of Kerala takes as his authority for social customs and practices what is known as *Sankara Smṛiti*, rather than *Manu Smṛiti*. *Sankara Smṛiti* is said to be the work of Adi Sankara. This is most unlikely, since the great saint-philosopher is not known to have bothered himself about social customs and practices. *Sankara Smṛiti* is most probably the work of somebody who reduced to writing the prevailing customs and practices of the time. These are known as *anacharas* (deviations from accepted customs and practices).

This is as true of other religious faiths as of Brahminism. They, too, had to adapt themselves to the special conditions of Kerala. Buddhism, Christianity and Islam came to Kerala successively. Each of them made its distinctive contributions to the evolution of society and ideology in Kerala. But they added something of Kerala to their respective social and cultural lives; they also added something of their religious faith and ideology to the emerging cultural make-up of Kerala. We may see, for instance, Muslim families organized on a matriarchal basis, the practice of untouchability among Malayalee Christians, and so on. We also see that Christians and Muslims have given to Kerala some special forms of folk culture. Modern Malayalam literature and art forms are, in fact, the joint products of the Brahminical, Buddhist, Christian and Muslim cultural trends.

The cultural make-up of newly-emerging Kerala, however, was pre-dominantly Brahminical. Unlike in several parts of North India, Kerala never had a non-Hindu ruling elite down to the establishment of British rule. The Jew, the Christian and the Muslim had their respective places in the socio-political set-up, but they were subordinated to the dominant class-caste, which was caste Hindu. The political-administrative system was thus one in which the non-Hindus and low-caste Hindus were second class citizens.

Over and above these differences in the social organization is the big difference in economy and polity which marks Kerala off from the rest of India—the difference arising out of the evolution of private property in land. Kerala does not have the system of village community so vividly described by Karl Marx in his *Capital*: land is not ‘tilled in common’ as elsewhere; its produce is not ‘divided among the members’. It is, on the other hand, tilled individually by each cultivator who, however, has to share its produce with the landlord. Nor are the dozen or so individuals, described by Marx as part of the Indian village community, ‘maintained at the expense of the whole community’ as in other parts of India: each of these dozen individuals and several others was given some sort of right on the land itself or on its produce. Thus was created the system described as follows by Logan:

The unit of the Hindu social system was the family, not the individual.

An association of families formed a body-corporate. These guilds or corporate bodies had each distinct functions to perform in the body politic, and those functions were in old times strictly hereditary...The Nairs were the people of ‘the eye’, ‘the hand’ and ‘the order’ and it was their duty ‘to prevent the rights from being curtailed or suffered to fall into disuse’, [The] *Kanam* comes from the Dravidian word *kanuka* (to see or to be seen) and the root from which that verb is derived is *kan* (the eyes).. So that *kanam* in its original sense seems to have denoted this function of theirs in the body politic...But what was this supervision duty or right (*kanam*)? The *kon* (shepherd, king) and the *pati* (lord, master) had shares of the produce due to them as persons of authority in the land. And the specific word used in the ninth century A.D. to denote these shares [was] *pattam* signifying the *padu* (authority) *varum* (share)...The Nairs were no doubt spread over the whole face of the country (as they still are) protecting all rights, suffering none to fall into disuse, and at the same time supervising the cultivation of the land and collection of *kon* or kings’ share of the produce—the public land revenue in fact....

...all the state functionaries employed had well-defined shares of the produce set apart for them. The *kon* or king had his share. The *pati* or overlord (the hereditary grantee apparently if there chanced to be one) had likewise a share. And if there was no such *pati* or hereditary grantee, then it seems his share went to the general body of protectors and supervisors—the 'Six Hundred'—the Nayar guild, the *kanakkar*.

But when the right of the Perumal came suddenly to an end, their (*kon*'s) share of the produce was, in Malabar at least, certainly not passed on to the chieftains who in some measure supplied the Perumal's place...The chieftains certainly had revenues from their demesne lands, but from the lands of the bulk of those subject to them they levied nothing. The chieftains were hereditary holders (*jenmis*) of the lands from which they derived a share of the produce, and on the other hand, the bulk of their subjects—the headmen of the Nayar protector guild—had likewise become hereditary holders (*jenmis*) of their lands by usurping the *kon*'s share of produce.

If the fundamental idea of the Malayalee land tenures is borne in mind, namely, that the land was made over in tract to certain classes for cultivation, the above will be seen to be a most natural outcome of the Hindu system.

II

Thus was created the system of feudal landlordism, the system under which the *jenmi*, the *kanamdar* and other categories of non-cultivating tenants had each of them his allotted share of the produce. This system was subsequently modified and perfected by the British and the Congress rulers. It is, therefore, a target for well-deserved condemnation at the hands of all modern democrats.

But as Engels said with regard to slavery:

We are compelled to say—however contradictory and

heretical it may appear—that its introduction under the conditions of that time was a great step forward.... It is clear that so long as human labour was still so little productive that it provided but a small surplus over and above the necessary means of subsistence, any increase of the productive forces, extension of trade, development of the state and of law, or beginning of art and science, was only possible by means of a greater division of labour. And the necessary basis was *the great division of labour between the masses discharging simple manual labour and the few privileged persons, directing labour, conducting trade and public affairs, and, at a later stage, occupying themselves with art and science.*

Hence, while fighting our utmost to smash the system of feudal landlordism or its remnants we should recognize, again as Engels did in relation to slavery, that 'it is very easy to inveigh against it in general terms and to give vent to high moral indignation at infamies. Unfortunately, all that this conveys is only what everyone knows, namely that these institutions are no longer in accord with our present conditions and our sentiments, which these conditions determine.'

It was on the soil of the system of feudal landlordism that the various tribes and castes inhabiting present-day Kerala started developing into a linguistic-cultural community. For, the division of labour between the manual and intellectual workers, and the development of the latter from generation to generation, made possible by the allotment of a definite share of the produce to the classes (castes) that did not engage themselves in the direct process of production helped the unification of several dialects into a national language and culture based thereon.

Malayalam as a distinct literary language developed at a very late stage in our history. It was, in its early phase, subjected very much, first to Tamil and then to Sanskrit domination. But we find that, in the centuries after the fall of the Perumals, literary works in Malayalam begin to get emancipated from the clutches of both these languages and give birth to a really new

national language. Both in poems and other artistic-creative works, as well as in state records of different feudal rulers, we find a gradual development of a style that has the characteristics of a developing national language.

This process reached such an advanced stage by the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that it may well be considered the period of the formation of real national literature. We find in this period that the works of literature are not merely translations, or weak adaptations, or imitations, of some Sanskrit authors but original works (not, of course, original in the themes but certainly original in the style, imagery used, etc.): even further, the style and technique of writing were so popular that these works have become the classical works studied in every home, and continue as such even today.

It is not, however, only for the emergence of a national language that the centuries after the fall of the Perumals are remarkable. An equally significant flowering of the arts in general also took place in this period. Hindu temples, Christian churches and Muslim mosques became the centres of attraction for lakhs of common people who were entertained and enlightened through the various forms of religio-cultural activity; it was through these that Kathakali, Ottamthullal, Koothu, etc. developed and acquired the status of national arts. The artistes who developed these art forms and the audiences attracted by them have together created, through generations, a sum total of cultural sensitivity that has come to be part of the distinctive psychological make-up of the Malayalee.

It is true that most of these works of literature, most of these art forms, arose within the narrow compass of one caste or a group of castes: the classical literary works of Malayalam were mostly produced by Hindu authors and dealt with Hindu religious themes; so were Kathakali and other arts mainly of Hindu origin. It is also true that many of these national literary works were confined to upper-class (caste) circles. Nevertheless, these works of literature and art forms have laid the basis for the creation of a style and technique that go beyond all castes and communities; they are truly national. Furthermore, men of

culture, drawn, of course, from the *upper classes but of all castes*, began to appreciate and even adopt this style and technique in their own particular caste or religious circles. (The Chavittunatakam of the Christians is an adaptation of the Hindus' Kathakali).

This flowering of literature and the arts was nothing but the expression of the development of that 'community of economic life, economic cohesion' which, as is known to Marxists, is one of the characteristics of a nation. It was the absence of this community of economic life that led to the fall of both the Chera and the Perumal Empires. But the development of production and exchange which took place after the fall of the Perumals—the introduction of cash crops like coconut; the adoption of certain processes of utilizing primary produce for further (secondary) production; the development and perfection of some crafts; exchange of many products locally or even with the outside world; etc.—led to the development of domestic and foreign trade, greater and greater use of money, mortgage or sale-purchase of land, etc.

Thus was emerging, slowly and through the generations but nonetheless unmistakably, that pre-requisite for the formation of a nation—the national market. It was this, as is well-known, which attracted first the Arabs, then the Portuguese, then again the Dutch, the French and lastly the British, to the coastal towns of Calicut, Cochin, Quilon, etc., where they opened their factories and started trade. A change was also taking place in relative importance of Hindu and non-Hindu religious groups. The bigger role played by trade in the economic life of the people was giving added importance to the Christians and Muslims who were partly filling the gap which the absence of the *Vaisya* caste in Kerala had created.

This had its impact on the political-administrative system, too. For, the growth of trade necessitated a steadily expanding home market which, in its turn, made petty kingdoms ineffective and outdated. The progress had to begin and did begin.

The Zamorin of Calicut and the Rajahs of Cochin and

Travancore were the rulers who strengthened themselves most at the expense of petty kingdoms. Every one of them claimed the right to become the Emperor of Kerala—the Zamorin on the ground that he was the direct descendant of the Perumals, because the son of the last Perumal was the founder of the Zamorin dynasty; the Rajah of Cochin on the ground that the sister's son of the last Perumal was the founder of the Cochin dynasty; the Rajah of Travancore on the ground that he was the direct descendant of the Chera emperors. Which one of these three mighty rulers of Kerala was to become the emperor—this was the issue to be settled.

These rulers, however, were not satisfied with expansion within the geographical territory, of their kingdoms. They also demanded an extension of their political power, a restriction of the powers of feudal chieftains, temple associations etc. They wanted to put an end to the system under which both militarily as well as administratively, they were dependent on their feudal subordinates. They were, in short, trying to establish a type of state under which the ruler was supreme and the Naduvazhis Desavazhis and *jenmis* were under the absolute sway of the ruler.

With a view to the establishment of such a state they organized a system of ruthless terror against their feudal opponents. Many are the stories of conflict between the ruler and his feudal satellites, both the one and the other resorting to identical methods in asserting their rights. As the biographer of one of these rulers says, they 'conciliated those who deserved it; squeezed those who could be squeezed; helped those who deserved help; destroyed those who were to be destroyed—all this with a view to establish the principle of *one state, one ruler.*'

III

Does this mean that the process of the formation of nationalities, witnessed in Western and Eastern Europe when capitalism was developing there, was repeating itself in Kerala? Was the same development taking place throughout India?

The answer given by this author in his earlier writings—*National Question in Kerala* (1952) and *Kerala: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* (1965)—gave an affirmative answer to these questions. The chapter dealing with these developments was in fact titled 'The Birth of a Nation'. What was thus happening in Kerala was sought to be related to similar developments in other parts of the country.

This formulation was subjected to serious criticism by several authors, including the eminent Marxist historian, Prof. Irfan Habib, who pointed out that the development of modern nationalities or nations is inseparably connected with the emergence of capitalism and that this was absent in pre-British India referred to in this author's writings on Kerala. A distinguished Marxist scholar, Prof. Amalendu Guha, made a valid distinction between what he called 'regionalized communities of culture' which emerged in pre-British days and the nationalities that had been developing in the struggle against the British rulers. The former do not come under the category of nationalities or nations in the making. The emergence of the national movement had, it was pointed out, combined two processes: (1) development of the consciousness that Indians are a nation fighting for independent statehood; (2) the consciousness of belonging to one's own linguistic-cultural group.

The points of criticism made by these scholars are correct. This author did overestimate the extent of the development which took place in Kerala and in the rest of the country during the centuries immediately before the British became the rulers of the country. The linguistic-cultural unity towards which the people of Kerala and other parts of the country were moving can never be considered 'nations in the making' not to speak of 'nations being born'.

The question however arises; did the emergence of these 'regionalized communities of culture' make no difference at all as if Indian society was continuing unchanged after their emergence? In other words, why did these communities start developing in the couple of centuries before the British conquest and why, having emerged as distinct socio-cultural entities

did they fail to develop into nationalities or nations, as they did in Europe ?

The foregoing description of the pattern of social development in Kerala would help in finding answers to these questions. For several of the *Kodum Tamils* or unwritten folk languages came to be merged into the single Malayalam language, clearly demarcated from the sister languages of the elite in the South i. e. modern Tamil, Telugu and Kannada at a particular stage in the development of society. The earlier primitive communist, or tribal society, was battered down by the developing *Varna*-caste society and led to the development of productive forces, the further deepening of the division between the 'upper' and 'lower' castes, culminating in the emergence of the militarist-feudal political regime. These developments also led to the development of trade relations including those with foreign countries. Sizeable numbers of Jewish, Christian and Muslim traders came and settled on the coastal towns of Kerala.

This, however, was true of the entire country. Ever since the disintegration of the primitive communist tribal society at the hands of the Aryan invaders and the formation of the *Varna*-caste society a process of social consolidation and development had been unleashed. Wars of conquest and defence, the rise and fall of empires and kingdoms, extension of internal and foreign trade (though on an extremely meagre scale in comparison with Europe), the influence of the arts and sciences combined to throw up an intellectual, military-administrative and commercial-moneylending elite—the three *Varnas* of the *Chaturvarnya*, but including sections of non-Hindus. It was such an elite which helped the emergence of over a dozen modern Indian languages out of the scores of *Prakrits* in the North and *Kodum Tamils* in the South.

It will, no doubt, be erroneous to equate this elite of Indian society with the growing bourgeoisie of Europe about which Marx and Engels observed: 'The bourgeoisie has played an extremely revolutionary role upon the stage of history. Whenever the bourgeoisie has risen to power, it has destroyed all

feudal patriarchal and idyllic relationships.' The intellectual, military-administrative and commercial-moneylending elite of our country, on the other hand, played its conservative role, clinging to all that is outmoded in Indian society. It therefore, could not withstand the onslaught launched by the European bourgeoisie which came originally with trading missions, but ended with subordinating the country, its economy, polity and culture to a foreign occupying power.

Unable to resist the economic, military and political offensive of the European bourgeoisie, India's ruling classes could not carry forward the process of linguistic-cultural integration that had started with the Bhakti movement. The cause of linguistic-cultural development was, along with developments in others fields, sacrificed at the altar of foreign occupation.

Let us see how this happened in Kerala.

IV

It was in 1498 that Vasco da Gama landed in Calicut. Although he was welcomed by the Zamorin, the Arabs who had already entrenched themselves there prevented them from getting a foothold. Gama therefore went to the other port towns in Kerala—Quilon, Cochin, Cannanore—where he was more welcome. In a few year's time, the Portuguese established themselves safely on the entire western coast stretching from Goa in the north to Quilon in the south.

The basic policy pursued by the Portuguese in Kerala was to take advantage of the political rivalry between the Zamorin of Calicut and the Rajah of Cochin. The former had already brought all the feudal chieftains in what subsequently became South Malabar under his suzerainty, extended his power and influence to a part of Cochin and was on the point of overpowering the Rajah of Cochin himself through sheer physical force. The Cochin ruler was, therefore, in desperate need of help for maintaining his position—help which the Portuguese were in a position to give. The Portuguese were themselves in need of an alliance with the Rajah of Cochin not only in order

to get facilities for trading but also for them to be in a position to wreak their vengeance on the Arabs in Calicut. It was thus that, in the five successive wars waged between Calicut and Cochin during the 165 years of Portuguese ascendancy (1498-1663), the Rajah of Cochin saved himself from being devoured by the Zamorin, while the Portuguese saved themselves from their Arab rivals.

The alliance between the Portuguese and the Rajah of Cochin led to other similar alliances—with the Quilon and Cannanore rulers. The terms of all these alliances were substantially the same, fixing the price of pepper, agreeing to give the Portuguese a monopoly in buying pepper, recognizing the supremacy of the Portuguese in naval matters, exempting the Portuguese from taxation, giving the Portuguese captain alone the authority to try and punish offenders from among the Portuguese and native Christians etc. These agreements were thus the beginning of the process through which the rulers of Kerala were surrendering their sovereignty to foreign traders. What was attempted without any effect by the Cheras and the Perumals was thus accomplished by the foreign capitalists.

While the Portuguese were using the Rajah of Cochin against the Zamorin and thus establishing themselves in Kerala, their trade rivals, the Dutch, were becoming a powerful force. They landed on the Kerala coasts almost a century after Vasco da Gama, but, using the same policy of setting one ruler against his rival, they very rapidly strengthened themselves. An internal family quarrel was taking place at that time in the ruling family of Cochin and one of the princes sought the assistance of the Dutch who had already established themselves in Ceylon. The Dutch seized upon this golden opportunity, helped the prince to ascend the throne and in the process eliminated the Portuguese from their supremacy in Cochin, indeed from Kerala altogether. The Rajah of Cochin who was thus put on the throne by the Dutch became their virtual vassal. They were, even in official correspondence, referred to by the Rajah as 'the masters'. After thus establishing themselves in Cochin, they turned to other princes with several of whom they signed trade pacts.

The Dutch, however, could not become masters of Kerala because they had rivals in the English. Since the Dutch were very powerful in Cochin, the English turned their attention towards North and South Cannanore and Tellicherry in the north where they established their factories, and Quilon and Trivandrum in the south. Just as the Portuguese strengthened themselves by 'helping' the Rajah of Cochin, just as the Dutch used the quarrel in the ruling family of Cochin to establish their virtual rule through a puppet prince, so did the English use the ambitious prince of Venad, Marthanda Varma, to establish their supremacy.

That prince was one of those rulers of Kerala who wanted, on the one hand, to expand the geographical territory of their kingdoms by annexing neighbouring kingdoms and, on the other hand, to curtail the power of the feudal chieftains under them. It was he who, in one generation, expanded his kingdom from a petty principality of a few dozen square miles to the later state of Travancore and is thus rightly considered 'the builder of modern Travancore'. He was able to do this only because he skilfully and successfully utilized the rivalry between the Dutch and the English. The English for their part knew that by strengthening him they were strengthening themselves. Nor did he or his successor fail them, for it was the powerful King of Travancore who was the one supporter they had in Kerala when they had to fight and overcome the combination of Mysore and the French.

But, as soon as the Dutch and the French-Mysore combination of rivals were overcome, the English treated the Rajah of Travancore in the same way as the Portuguese and the Dutch had treated the Rajah of Cochin. The treaty of 1795, together with its modification by the new treaty of Colonel Munro as Resident-Diwan, made Travancore a tributary kingdom of the English in the full and real sense of the term.

This reduction of Travancore, the strongest of the rulers of Kerala, to the status of a dependent vassal of the English, together with the transfer of the allegiance of the Rajah of Coc-

hin from the Portuguese, the Dutch and Mysore to the English and the assumption of direct English authority in the rest of Kerala, made the end of Mysore (Tipu Sultan) the beginning of British rule.

V

The establishment of British rule stabilized the political divisions of Kerala as they existed at the end of the eighteenth century, i.e., permanently divided Travancore and Cochin, both from each other as well as from the rest of Kerala; it divided the nationally Tamilian part of South Travancore permanently from the rest of Tamilnad. Thus was the natural process of the formation of nationalities artificially checked by the violent interference of a foreign imperialist power.

We will see further on that this intrusion of imperialist powers was resisted by the people of Kerala who have written some of the most glorious chapters in the history of the anti-imperialist movement in India. It, however, remains true that the ruling classes as a whole acquiesced in the loss of their freedom and the freedom of their subjects though in the beginning a small section joined in the anti-British struggle. The ruling families of Travancore, Cochin and Calicut gave up their mutual struggle for the title of the Emperor of Kerala, all of them accepting the British as their lord and master. So did the lesser ones of the feudal hierarchy—The Naduvazhis, Desavazhis, Madambis, etc., those of them who survived the process of liquidation started by successive rulers in their attempt to set up a strong administration—accept Britain as the sovereign ruler of the land. The Namboodiris for their part also gave up their claim to be the spiritual leaders of Kerala society and accepted the supremacy of the British in all respects, including the spiritual. All sections of the ruling classes were, in fact, trying their utmost to salvage some of their former glory and, to this end, trying to gain the favour of the new supreme ruler.

The British rulers for their part knew that they would be unable to stabilize their rule unless they got the willing consent of the former ruling classes, unless they made them loyal ad-

herents of the new regime. They, therefore, set themselves the task of making such adjustments in the state system as would satisfy the vanity of the former rulers.

The acceptance of Travancore and Cochin as separate states ruled by the dynasties that had ruled for centuries was, of course, the first step. But that was not all. Other families like those of the Zamorin of Calicut, the Rajahs of Chirakkal, Arakkal, Kottayam, Kadathanad, Yalluvanad, etc., were also given various privileges including regular pensions. These families were even allowed the vainglorious formality of 'succession to the throne': that is, when the eldest male member of one of these families dies, the next seniormost male member is allowed to perform the formal ceremony of taking the *gadi*.

As for the Namboodiris and other non-ruling families, they were given back all the lands that they had once owned and, what is more, were made full owners of these lands with no restriction whatsoever in their relations with the tenants. The establishment of British rule, therefore, did not deprive any family belonging to the former ruling classes of the rights and privileges enjoyed by them, except to the extent that those of them who were ambitious enough to dream of extending their territories were stopped from further efforts in that direction.

All this, however, does not mean that things remained as they were. On the contrary, the very establishment of British rule was the biggest shock administered to the hitherto tranquil social order of Kerala, an order which had been built up through centuries. For, the state system that was set up by the British was meant precisely to further carry forward the process that had started within Kerala's social order—the development of market relations. We will see in the next chapter how the establishment of British rule hastened this process and brought Kerala into the arena of the world market, we will also examine in subsequent chapters the tremendous socio-political changes that have made Kerala an active partner in the democratic and socialist revolutionary movements of India and the

world. It is sufficient at this stage to note that the force that brought about these upheavals was the state system set up by the British. The changes brought about in the state system of Cochin by Colonel Munro, the British administrator who functioned both as Resident and Diwan of the two states of Cochin and Travancore and who in that capacity made the administrative system of these states such as to serve the need of British supremacy, are described as follows by the author of the *Cochin State Manual* :

Administrative Reforms: The Karyakars, who were placed in charge of Taluks when the chiefs were divested of their administrative powers, had hitherto combined in themselves all the functions of government. They were not only revenue and executive officers but were Munsiffs, sub-Magistrates and Police Inspectors. They were now divested of their judicial and police powers, and their duties were confined to the collection of revenue. For the proper administration of justice, two subordinate courts were established at Tripunittara and Trichur in 1812, each presided over by a Hindu and a Christian judge and a Sastri, and a Hazur court presided over by four judges including the Diwan. Justice was to be administered according to the *Dharma Sastra* and the customs and usages of the country, but a simple code was enacted for guidance of the judges in the matter of procedure. A force of police or Tannadars was organized and placed under Tanna Naiks, one for each Taluk, the supervision over the Naiks being vested in an officer attached to the Hazur under the designation of Daroga. These Tannadars had the duties of the modern police and preventive forces combined in them. Court fees began to be levied according to a definite scale, and stamped *cadjans* were introduced for engrossing documents. Between 1812 and 1816, a large number of proclamations and *hukum-namas* were issued defining the duties and powers of judicial, police and other officers. A definite scale of pay was established in the place of the indefinite exactions which the officers had hitherto been authorized to make, and some provisions were also made for granting pensions to retired

officers. Several of the vexatious imposts which pressed heavily on particular individuals or classes, and transit duties on grains and food stuffs, were abolished, and all arrears of revenue which remained uncollected till 1809 were relinquished. Several roads and bridges were constructed, though of a primitive pattern, and a large number of Sirkar Buildings, which had through the neglect of years fallen into a dilapidated condition, were repaired or reconstructed.

Revenue and Finance: The system of farming land revenue, customs and forests which had hitherto been in force, was abolished and Sirkar officers were appointed to collect these revenues directly. Vigorous measures were taken to extract large quantities of teak departmentally, while junglewood and minor forest produce were allowed to be removed by the people on payment of duty at the Chaukai (inland customs) stations. Preventive measures were taken to minimize the smuggling of tobacco and pepper which were articles of Sirkar monopoly, and salt was also made a monopoly article. The Devaswams and Uttupuras (religious and charitable institutions), which had in recent years been grossly mismanaged were placed on a satisfactory footing, and a definite scale of expenditure was laid down for their maintenance. An accounts department was organized and a system of accounts introduced, similar to the one then obtaining in the Company's territories. Thirty-three vernacular schools were established, one in each Pravritti, with a view to turn out a number of young men fit to be entertained as writers and accountants under the Sirkar. The successful carrying out of these measures obviously involved an immense deal of labour and difficulty, but Colonel Munro and Captain Blacker had the satisfaction of seeing their labour bear excellent fruit. The land revenue rose from Rs. 2,85,000 in 1811-12 to Rs. 3,27,000 in 1816-17, tobacco from Rs. 21,000 to 157,000, customs from Rs. 25,000 to Rs. 35,000, salt from Rs. 2,000 to Rs. 63,000 and forest from Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 62,000, and the total revenue from Rs. 4,96,000 to Rs. 7,55,000. The Rajah's Government was thus enabled during these seven years to pay off all arrears of subsidy and war

indemnity and also the major portion of the debts due to private parties, and His Highness expressed his immense satisfaction at these achievements in a remarkable letter to the Governor-General. 'Since Colonel John Munro was appointed Resident in my country in the year 1811', he said, 'that gentleman has by his indefatigable exertions and vigilance rescued me from an ocean of debt in which I was unfortunately involved by the corrupt and treacherous conduct of my ministers, and has enabled my self, my family and my subjects now to live happy and unconcerned, which favourable circumstances I cannot in justice avoid bringing to the notice of your Lordship in Council. (Pp. 150-2)

That the same changes were made in Travancore, too, has been explained in the *Travancore State Manual* (Vol. IV, Pp. 2-6).

Needless to say, this was in keeping with what was done in Malabar and other parts of India. The only difference was that, while in Malabar and other parts of 'British India' the Collector or other British officials were the direct authorities appointed by and responsible to the representative of the British King (the Governors and the Governor-General), the Diwan, Peshkar and other officials in the 'Indian states' were under the authority of the Rajah who was formally a 'sovereign' monarch 'allied to the British'. How 'sovereign' the ruler is, was seen on a number of occasions in various Indian states. Cochin, too, saw it during the First World War when the then ruler of the state, suspected to be conspiring with the Germans, was forced to abdicate. The fact is that, with all the paraphernalia of a ruling dynasty, the Cochin and Travancore families were mere cogs in the wheel of British administration, real authority resting not with these rulers but with the Resident or Political Agent and through him, with the Viceroy of India.

These cogs in the wheel of administration were, however, maintained by the British because they could not risk the dissatisfaction that their elimination might cause in the feudal circles. The main purpose for which the state system was

reorganized by the British being the most efficient exploitation of the people, it was necessary for them to associate as wide sections of the ruling circles as possible with the administration of the the country. Nothing would have served this purpose more than the maintenance of the ruling dynasties of Cochin and Travancore in the full enjoyment of their former privileges, provided, of course, they were made harmless in the actual enjoyment of political authority.

It may be mentioned in anticipation that this is the very policy that was continued by the Congress for some time after the transfer of power to India; the policy of 'integration and merger of Indian states' not only maintained the privileges of the ruling families but also continued the artificial division of nationalities like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra, etc. Big struggles had to be waged against this before the reorganization of states more or less on a linguistic basis was agreed to.

The establishment of British rule, therefore, meant that all that was progressive for the time in the medieval social order of Kerala was suppressed and all that was reactionary was stabilized. The cherished desire of successive generations for the unity of Kerala was suppressed. The emerging unity of the people was broken by the artificial cutting up of the region into three administrative divisions. The efforts at reforming and modernizing the administrative system, made by successive rulers of various kingdoms, were carried forward not to lay the basis for reforming and modernizing the entire social system, but to enable the British rulers to carry on their alien rule. The powers and privileges of the former ruling classes were curtailed, not in order to introduce democracy, but in order to establish the foreign imperialist rule in which the former ruling classes willingly acquiesced. The process of the linguistic-cultural integration of the Malayalees, as that of the other peoples throughout India, came to be an inseparable part of the Indian people's struggle for national liberation, directed against the British rulers and their Indian collaborators.