

REJECT ICHR'S DISTORTION OF LEGENDARY PEASANT STRUGGLES IN KERALA

Joint Statement of Left Parties and Organizations

We consider the position of the Indian Council for Historical Research that the Punnapra-Vayalar, Kavumbai and Karivellur martyrs, who are the pride of political Kerala, are not freedom fighters is distorting history and demand that democratic political Kerala should strongly protest against this.

The BJP government is continuing to infiltrate Sangh Parivar supporters into such institutions as part of the saffronisation of all educational and cultural history institutions. The saffronisation is rapidly taking place in the NCERT, Pune Film institute and other cultural and educational institutions under the Central Department of education. The target groups of the Sangh Parivar are constantly intervening to push the politics of division on issues like textbook production, curriculum and syllabus. As soon as P.Jamkhedkar came to head, he stated the history of India need to be re-written in the true sense of the word. As part of this, the Sangh Parivar forces who joined the Indian Council of Historical Research are trying to negate the Punnapra-Vayalar, Kavumbai and Karivellur martyrs who were part of the freedom struggle in Kerala.

Not only the Hindu Mahasabha and the RSS, the then organizations of the Sangh Parivar, had nothing to do with the freedom struggle, but they were also involved in the betrayal of the freedom struggle. When VD Savarkar was arrested and imprisoned in the Andaman Cellular Jail in 1911, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, popularly known as a Veer Savarkar, one of the groups working for Indian independence in London Savarkar, approached the British authorities for mercy. But the British authorities rejected the mercy petition, but the 'hero' Savarkar filed another mercy petition on November 14, 1913. In it Savarkar said that he and his colleagues would carry out and support any task set by the British government if he was released on mercy. Thus Savarkar, who was released from prison, betrayed the freedom struggle and served as a British slave until his death. MS Golwalkar, Deenadayal Upadhyay, Balraj Madhok, L.K.Advani, K.S.R Malcani and A.B. Vajpayee did not take part in the freedom struggle at any stage. R.S. Shyamaprasad Mukherjee, the leader of the Hindu Mahasabha, wrote a letter to the Viceroy on July 26, 1942, when he was the Deputy Chief Minister in the cabinet of the Muslim League.

After Narendra Modi came to power in 2014, the Sangh Parivar organizations in general have a grudge that they had no role in the freedom struggle. The Sangh Parivar recognizes the fact that they cannot gain prominence in history without 'correcting' the existing history of the Country. As a country with different nationalities, the anti- imperialist and anti-feudal struggles that took place in India were also considered as part of the national freedom struggle. Therefore, Kaiyur, Karivellur, Punnapra-Vayalar, Telangana and Thebhaga are all part of the freedom struggle. Historians have acknowledged that the Punnapra-Vayalar struggle of September-October 1946 was part of the freedom struggle. Indrajith Guptha, was the Home Minister in I.K.Gujral's cabinet. On January 20, 1998, at the initiative of Indrajith Guptha, the Central Government recognized the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal struggles, including Punnapra-Vayalar, as part of the freedom struggle.

Travancore Diwan CP Ramaswamy Iyer (CP) declared Travancore as an independent State and advocated for an American model of governance. Along with this political situation in the post-Second World period, tense national political developments and severe food shortage led to the declaration of a struggle by coir- farmers, fishermen, blacksmiths and beedi workers for wages and other rights. On September 15, 1946, a general strike was declared by about a dozen Unions of workers who had been subjected to severe exploitation and oppression by landlords and capitalists. The Communist Party started a volunteers camp in Cherthala and Ambalapuzha taluks to combat the severe persecution of landlords, goons and the police of CP. At the same time, the Travancore State Congress and the Communist Party rejected the reforms of CP and decided to intensify the agitation for a responsible government. It was against this backdrop that the general strike of September 15, 1946 took place. The workers started agitating demanding responsible governance along with financial demands. Coir workers in Cherthala and Ambalapuzha taluks in Alappuzha also refused to merge with the Indian Union.

Fishermen and farmers went on strike and took to the streets under the slogan of CP's Independent Travancore in the Arabian Sea. CP deployed troops to suppress the protesters. Workers confronted the army with machetes. More than 500 were martyred for a free and united India.

The Karivellur agitation and martyrs' movement was a blazing fire in the revolutionary minded people of North Malabar. The countryside was gripped by severe food shortages after World War II. Famine and poverty conquered the countryside. Lord Chirakkal Thampuram was transporting the leased paddy to S.A.V. Under the leadership of Kunjambhu, the people and the peasants blocked it.

The people were attacked by Chirakkal Thampuran's goons and Malabar State police (MSP). Comrades Thidil Kannan and Keenery Kunjambu were martyred.

With the formation of the All India Kisan Sabha in Malabar in 1936, the struggle against feudalism and imperialism intensified under the Red Flag. Kalyat Janmi and Karakattidam Nayanar were the owners of the land and property in Irikkur Firka. Under the leadership of the Kisan Sabha, the peasants resisted the anti-agrarian stance of these cruel landlords. The goons and the MSP supported the landlords' anti-farmer stance and unleashed violence against the farmers. The Kisan Sabha and the Communist Party decided to march to the camp. On the night of December 29, 1946, the farmers' camp was attacked by the MSP. Comrades Pulkal Kunhiraman, P. Kumaran, Manjeri Govindan, Aloramban Krishnan and Thengil Appanambayar were martyred. The others arrested were sent to Salem Jail. On February 11, 1950, comrades Thalian Raman Nambiar, OP Ananthan Master, P.Narayanan Nambiar and Paramban Kunhiraman were killed in a shooting at Salem Jail. The liberation struggle of Goa, the struggle against Nizam and the Mayazhi struggle were all part of the freedom struggle.

The followers of Savarkar, who apologized in the Andaman Cellular Jail, are now insulting those who sacrificed their lives in the freedom struggle when they came to power. The Sangh Parivar has invaded all areas. They mock local myths and celebrations. The Sangh Parivar sees even celebrations of unity like Onam as a celebration of dwarf victory. Mahabali is unacceptable to the Sanghs. They are trying to 'correct' history, deny local nationalities, ignore local language and impose Hindi.

This agitation had a decisive influence on the unification of the CP and the merger of Travancore with the Indian Union. Therefore, the Punnappa-Vayalar agitation was part of the Indian freedom struggle. The efforts of the Sangh Parivar forces to insult and humiliate that struggle should be resisted by all the Malayalees.

The Malabar revolt of 1921, known as the 'Mappila riots' took place as part of the Khilafat movement. All Musliar and Waryan Kunnath Kunhahammed Haji were the leaders of the agitation carried out by the farmers of Ernad taluk. Mahatmaji and Khilafat leaders came to Kozhikode and called for a joint anti-British struggle. The Wagon Tragedy was part of the 1921 agitation. The ICHR is pressuring the Central Government to remove the leaders of the Malabar Revolt from the list of freedom fighters. However, the Khilafat movement and Malabar agrarian uprising of 1921 were part of the freedom struggle. The Sangh Parivar's move to downplay it and downplay its historical significance is reprehensible. M. Sreekumar - MCPI (U); K.S. Hariharan - RMPI; M.K. Dasan - CPI (ML) Red Star; P. Suseelan - CPI(ML); Dr. V. Prasad - Mass Movement for Social Alternative; Adv. Rajadas - AIKF; V.V. Rajendran - AICTU; Roby Arayakkandy - AIFTU(N); Jayan Konnikkara - TUCI.

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