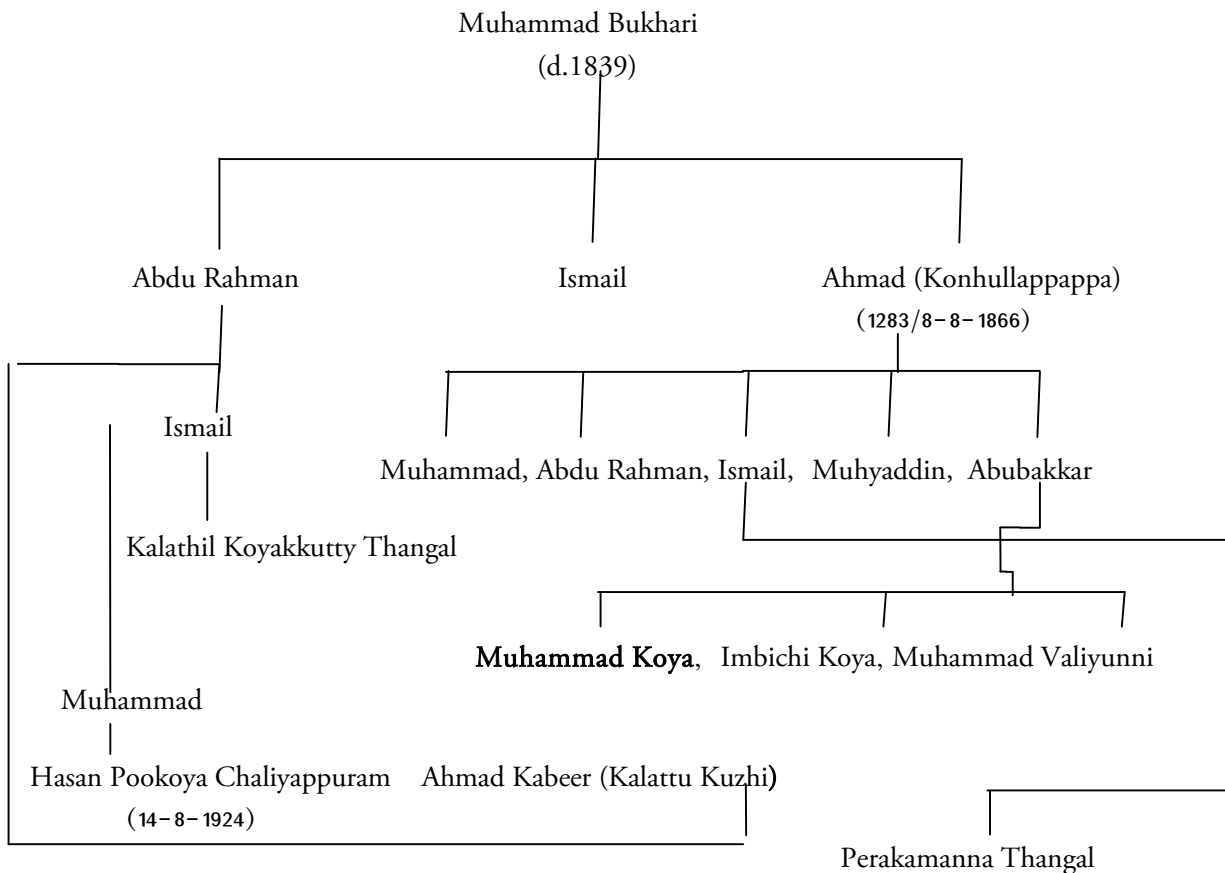


SAYYID MUHAMMAD KOYA BUKAHARI  
(KONNARA THANGAL) –A SUFI FREEDOM  
FIGHTER OF MALABAR

HUSSAIN RANDATHANI

The Muslim religious divines and the Scholars (*ulama*) had played a major role in the freedom struggles of Malabar. In Malabar, there exist two branches of Sayyids- those who migrated from Hadramaut and those from Bukhara. The former is commonly called Hadramis and the latter as Bukharis. The Bukharis were early migrants, the first of whom Sayyid Jalauddin settled in North Malabar in 1521. The Hadramis, on the other hand, began to settle here from eighteenth century onwards. The Bukharis were exclusive missionaries while the Hadramis engaged both as the heads of religion and trade. The Bukharis spread themselves far and wide in Malabar particularly in the southern parts of the district. They, as Sufis engaged in divine healing and preaching. People, despite their religious and caste differences, visited them in order to fulfill their vows and cure diseases. A descendant of Jalaulddin Bukhari had settled at Karuvanthuruthi near Calicut and one among them Muhammad Koya Bukhari, son of Abdu Rahman Bukhari migrated to South Malabar and settled at Konnara. His great grandson, with same name and title (Konnara Thangal) is the Sufi freedom fighter who through his guerilla tactics bravely fought against the British in 1920s.

### Genealogy of Konnara Thangals



Muhammad Koya, the great grandfather of the freedom fighter, migrated from Karuvanthiruthi, near Feroke and made Konnara, presently in the district of Calicut, as his centre and people visited him for spiritual healing and after his death his shrine became an hospice in the area. His predecessors continued the spiritual practices and all kinds of people, particularly the poor peasants visited him to fulfill their wishes. During this period the oppression of the Landlord-British conspiracy was hard pressing the peasants with new revenue laws and exaction of exorbitant tax called *patam*. The oppressed peasants found solace in the presence of the Thangal who used to console them with prayers and spiritual exercises. At many places, the tenants particularly the Mappilas were evicted from their lands without reasons and filing false suits in the courts. The religious edifices and burial grounds were destroyed in the evicted lands and the Mappilas took this as a direct challenge to their bosom faith. This was added with the international situation of the Khalifa, the leader of Muslim world, who had been continuously harassed by the British. A Khilafat Movement was started by the National leaders- Mahatma Gandhi and Moulana Muhammad Ali. The movement spread to different parts of the country and a branch was started in Malabar also. Here the soil for anti colonial actions was already fertile due to the continuous struggles against the British in previous years. Though the movement under Mahatma Gandhi was rooted in Non violence (*Ahimsa*) the Mappila with their previous experience made the movement a holy war against the British and landlords. At many places the religious divines and ulama took lead in the struggles.

### **In Khilafat Struggle**

Sayyid Muhammad Koya and his predecessors were famous for divine healing. People from different parts of South Malabar thronged to their presence seeking relief and he distributed chanted water and threads to them. The practice is continued till the date that people visit the graves of Konnara Thangals seeking their blessings. Sayyid Muhammad Koya, the great grandfather of the leader, who first settled at Konnara served the people with his divine healing and after his death his shrine became a pilgrim centre and asylum of the local Mappilas and Hindus whose poverty and atrocities from the landlords were evident. As did before under Mambram Sayyid Alawi and his son Sayyid Fazal, many a tenant converted to Islam in the presence of Muhammad Koya. The new converts were given shelter and stay at the mosque and were given preliminary instructions in the new faith. The wealthy Muslims used to give provisions for the better life of the new converts.

Unfortunately, the documents connected with the activities of the Thangal is mostly the official versions and full of fabricated stories depicting these freedom fighters as fanatics, robbers and savages. Some panegyrics in the native Muslim script is available, but they are silent on the freedom struggle of the Thangal, but describing his miracles and sanctity of life. The books written by the British officers, Hitchcock, Tottenham, C. Gopalan Nair, all British officers, give details on the war

efforts of the Thangal , but in the colonial fashion portraying him as fanatic and cruel as they did in the cases of all the rebels who fought against them. Muhammad Koya Thangal is known for his piety and service to the people by sharing their frets and fears, and leading the religious mission as did by the other Sayyids. He is the son of Sayyid Abubakkar, who also was famous for his piety and lived in the hamlet of Konnara, three Kilometres away from Elamaram on the banks of Chaliyar in the present district of Calicut. Muhammad Koya became active in the Khilafat movement and led the anti British revolts directly in his area. He was there in the Khilafat secret meeting held at Tirurangadi on 19 August 1921 along with Ali Musliyar, Variyan Kunnath Kunhahammad Haji, Karat Moideen Kutty Haji, Chembrasser Thangal, Kumaramputhur Seethi Koya Thangal and others . He also attended the meeting organized on 22 August 1921 in the house of Variyan Kunnath Haji. Kappad Krishnan Nair, Narayanan Nambesan, Thadiyan Moideen Kutty Musliyar, Koytha Abdulla, Nair Veetil Athutty, Payyanad Moideen, Thaliyil Unneen Kutty Adhikari, Kulapparamban Pocker, Cheruvakkath Usman and other eight persons attended the meeting. It was in this meeting the rules and regulations of the Khilafat Raj were prepared. The following decisions were taken: 1. No one should indulge in any acts harmful to Hindus, 2. Since the region is facing formidable threats, conversion altogether should be stopped, 3. Only five persons entrusted by this meeting have the right to collect donations to the Khilafat fund, 4. The expenses for the training of Khilafat soldiers should be met by the khilafat committees of respective localities, 5. The uniforms and weapons for the fight will be distributed by the Khilafat leaders including Ali Musliyar, Chembrassery Thangal, Konnar Thangal, Kunhahammad Haji and Kumaram Puthur Kunhi Seethi Koya Thangal, 5. Maximum arms have to be collected from landlords, and Government authorities, 7. Capital punishment will be given to those who molest women and boys under sixteen years old and those who indulge in treason helping the British, 8. Khilafat courts will be started for deciding the above cases. Passports will be given for distant travels and passes for exchanging goods, 9. Those government servants who declare loyalty to the Khilafat Raj would be given half salary for the first two months and full salary after that, 10.No need to give any tax in this year, 11. All the *pattam* (land tax) arrears to the landlords are hereby annulled 12. Next year new revenue system will be introduced, 13. Powers and positions, and titles of the officers will be continued as before, 14. Kunhahammad haji is entrusted with announcing the decisions to the public.<sup>1</sup>

This is the manifesto of the Khilafat Raj. Kunhahammad Haji and his followers visited different places in Ernad and Valluvanad areas and appointed governors and officers. At Konnara, Muhamamd Koya started a branch of the Khilafat court and a committee. Thangal was the president of the committee and Cheruvakkath Usman, the secretary. Earlier Kunhahammad Haji had convened a meeting here under the Thangal in connection with Manjeri Conference. Representatives from Mapram, Elamaram, Vettathur, Vazhakkad, Chaliyapram, Cheruvadi, Mavoor, Tathur and Kodyathur attended the meeting .

## **British Atrocities**

In Calicut area around Thamarasseri and Feroke, there were skirmishes between the tenants and the landlords in November 1921. The jenmi houses were attacked and looted by the rebels and the landlord families had to leave the place. At Nallur, near Feroke, some Tiyyans a lower caste, at the instigation of the land lord supported the authorities against the Mappilas and fabricated cases against innocent Mappila families there. Hitchcock records that one Tiyan from Puliya code, Ernad, had participated in looting the Pukkot illam in Parappur and came with the stolen property to Muriad relief camp.<sup>2</sup> The police had already started cleansing the khilafatists at different areas and they found that the drive should start from the eastern part of Calicut where the rebels were strong. The Gurkhas and the Burma rifles were deputed here under the command of Khan Bahadur EV. Amu Sahib along with a group of Malabar Special Police.

### **Chaliyapram mosque attacked**

In Calicut Taluk Mr. Avokkar Musliyar and Konnara Muhammad Koya Thangal led the struggles. All the brothers and relatives of Konnara Thangal and Avokkar Musliyar also participated in the retaliation. The troops from different areas (November 1921) moved through different ways to Eastern Calicut. On the way they attacked everyone who is found in Mappila dress. The land lords and their servants actively supported the troops in searching the rebels. They were mostly Hindus, except some from Mappilas who were also landlords or servants of the landlords. The police officer is said to have found a notice pasted by the Mukri (custodian) of the mosque exhorting the people to fight away the British.<sup>3</sup> Many Mappilas were arrested from the area. A section of the army moved Thiruvambadi, through Omasserri and attacked Mappilas many of whom escaped to jungles nearby. The object of the army was to capture the triumvirs of the struggles- Konnar Thangal, Avokkar Musliyar and Karat Moideen Kutty Haji.

The actions of the troops were horrible, that they didn't spare even the religious places of the Mappilas. They attacked every mosque of the area in the pretext of the capturing the rebels. They attacked or murdered innocent people who came for prayer in the mosques. The attack on Chaliyapram mosque further infuriated the Mappilas that revered persons were disgraced in front of the Mappilas. It was in October 1921, the troops attacked the Chaliyapram mosque, and entered the mosque after killing those who came performing namaz and dragged out the copies of the Quran and other holy books and tore them into pieces. They also entered the house of the Qazi of the mosque and looted it attacking the Qazi, Pookkoya Thangal, who was also the uncle of Konnara Thangal. This attack was the immediate reason to start an armed rebellion against the British and the landlord supporters.<sup>4</sup>

### **Konnara mosque**

After the attack on Chaliyapram, and the insult on Qazi, Pookkoya Thangal the Mappilas under Konnara Thangal strengthened the Khilafat army by recruiting people from various parts of Malabar. The British army camped at Kurumpara Mala, in Poolakkod with the aim of moving towards Konnara mosque, where the Thangal and his army were camped. When Thangal was informed of the British intention, he made a sudden attack on the camp of the troops (10 October 1921). The armies shot each other. Since the attack was at night none could distinguish each other. Many died on both sides. Next day the troops moved to Madathaumpara, on the banks of the river, just opposite to the Konnara Muhyaddin mosque where the khilafat army had camped. Here Muhammkad Koya Thangal had with him his four brothers (Imbichi Koya thangal, Cheru Kunhi Koya thangal, Konnar Valiyunni Thangal) and his relatives (Chaliyapram Koyakkutty thangal, Kalathil Valiya Koyakkutty thangal, Kolothumthodi Koyakkutty Thangal and others), all of whom laid their lives for the struggle. The khilafat army couldn't withstand the machine guns of the British. Several of the khilafatists lost their life in the battle. Pazhankan Muhammad Musliyar who was speaking at the mosque first fell as martyr. Konnara Thangal who led the war was safe and the people believed that the Thangal was unhurt because of his miraculous powers.<sup>5</sup>

### **Thathur mosque**

Thathur is also situated in Chaliyar region where Konnara Thangal had much influence. Here the mosque is very important connected with the martyres (*Shuhada*) for whom annual festival (*Nercha*) is held every year. A section of the British army (2/8) with the object of attacking every mosque in the region targeted this old mosque also. On 21 November 11, the troops moved towards Thathur mosque. It was in the 11 day of Rabiul Awwal, the month of the prophet's birth. As usually the people had gathered in the mosque for performing the noon prayer. Fearing the attack of the troops many also had took shelter in the mosque. When it was known that the troops are marching towards the mosque the inmates locked the doors from inside and started calling the adan (call for prayer) jointly (Kutta vank). The troops without forcibly opening the mosque, put fire to the mosque. This time many of the inmates opened doors and began to run away. The troops shot at them while running. Some burnt to death inside the mosque.<sup>6</sup>

### **Cheruvadi mosque**

The official documents also speak on the Chaliyappuram mosque incident that precipitated rebellion in the area. When Hassan Pookoya Thangal of the mosque was manhandled by the troops, his close follower Mr. Kattayan (Kattayath) Unnimoyin Kutty, a village officer convened a sudden meeting at Cheruvadi in order to retaliate the attack. He became the president of the committee by resigning his post of village officer.

A second meeting was held at Parappuram school in which ulema exhorted the Mappilas against the atrocities of the British troops and the landlords. Unnimoyin kutty also was present on the occasion. During the meeting Mr. Moyin Kutty asked Mullasserri Mammad to bring the box of village documents from the office. In the midst of the people he put to fire all the documents. In his speech Unnimoyin stated: Oh, My brothers. I am a servant of the British. Yes, the Adigari (village officer) of this village. Like me, you also had heard of the attack of the troops on the Chaliyapram mosque and the burning of the holy book. Not only of disgracing our beloved mosque and the holy quran which we respect more than our sons and daughters and ourselves, but also they were destroyed. I have no desire to live by knowing all these heartfelt events. Though we cannot win over the troops we can die for our pearl like faith. It is a sacred thing. Oh, the brave, Follow me those who are with a sincere mind.”<sup>7</sup>

The retaliation continued. On the birth day of the prophet , a feast was held at the house of the Mr. Unni Moyin and the elders of the area were invited. This time they heard the army was moving towards Cheruvadi, to revenge the Mappilas. After the ceremonies Unnimoyi took leave his family and with determination to fight in the way of God moved to the mosque with a large band of Mappilas. At the mosque Unnimoyi in his strong words pledged to fight away the British. He declared: “ I don’t expect, this holy war will end soon. Even then, I sacrifice my life and blood for the cause of our faith. Imperialism is annihilating this poor community including our spiritual leaders, to whom the community gives utmost respect. Perhaps, the whole community may be wiped out. Against this what I can do is to give my life. I am ready for it.”<sup>8</sup>

When the troops moved towards the mosque (12 November 1921), the Mappilas in the mosque jointly called the Adan (call for prayer/ *Kutta vanku*, a traditional practice of Muslims when any threat afflicted the area). A fierce encounter between the Mappilas and British took place and the leaders of the Khilafat including Unnimoyin and 59 others lost their life. Thirteen soldiers were killed. Mappilas from Areekode, Mavur, Nilambur, Pookkottur and Kodyathur participated in the struggle. The army fired at the mosque continually and the Mappilas retaliated at their best. When the firing ceased the army entered the mosque and massacred all who remained there. They insulted the imam and the sayyids and burned or tore the copies of the Quran and the holy books kept inside the mosque. The troops, put the mosque to fire and left. Hitchcock records: “On the morning of 12 Novemebr, 1921 the left flank of 2/8 approached the mosque at 9 am; and was fired on. The Mappilas were in the jungle and it was difficult to see them; firing continued for a long time; when the rebel firing ceased; the mosque was rushed; the jamadar , who led the party, was shot from the mosque, and a body of rebels rushed out with swords, and all killed with kukris.<sup>9</sup> Captain Mercer was killed and seven sepoy were wounded as per the British records. Zonal British Commander Mr. Humphrey records that the presence of Konnara Thangal and his people on the banks of

Beypore river and the adjoining jungles in the Taluk of Calicut , became a permanent menace to the British.<sup>10</sup> He also writes that because of the spread of the rebellions in various parts, the troops were insufficient and many of the chiefs have already been killed in various encounters.

On 19 December, the B Company of troops marched through thick jungles to Chaliyar river reaching near Cheruvadi. They attacked the Mappila houses and went to Thalapperumanna mosque in search of rebels. Here they shot four Mappilas. The troops also moved to Kodyathur and attacked the Mappilas. They entered the house of Koduvalli Adhikari (Village Officer), a supporter of the Khilafat, and seized his gun. On 21 December the army searched the Khilafat fighters in the jungles of Tambilonam and Perili and eleven fighters lost their lives in the encounter. Even women had hidden in jungles fearing the troops. On 31 December troops found a women camp at Pannikkode jungles. They belonged to Manasseri. There skirmishes between the rebels and the troops continued, but often the rebels couldn't withstand the bayonets of the troops. At Pudupadi the fighters attacked a police camp and seized weapons. They killed one toddy shop keeper, Kunhaman for giving news to the troops and attacked one Marakkar Katakundil and his servants for helping the troops. At Kudathayi also a Mappila house was attacked by the rebels for assisting the troops and the Cheruman watchers of the house ran away. The party under Thekkan Alavi attacked the police line and killed the servant of one Kadir Koya , a loyalist. The rebels made guerilla attacks on the troops while they made thorough search in the jungles. Unfortunately the rebels themselves lost their way and groups scattered in jungles. On 21 January Kondal Koyakkutty Thangal, brother of Muhammad Koya with fifteen fighters were taken into custody.<sup>11</sup> On 22 January, Imbichikoya thangal, another brother of Konnara Thangal was captured.

### **Hunts and reprisal**

On 16 January the troops had attacked the Kakkad mosque and seized the Mappilas from inside. The Garhwalis (troops composed of Rajputs and Brahmins ) and Gurkhas were utilized for massacring the Mappilas depicting them as rebels. Even the loyalist Mappilas were not spared, because the army whenever they saw a Mappila, identified him as a rebel and shot him. Even the timber labourers were murdered in this way. Hitchcock writes: The activity which drove the rebels to the hills and interfered with their food supply reduced the size of the two gangs, but those members who left the gangs instead of surrendering as in Ernad and Walluvanad, continued to hide in their own amsoms (locality), with their arms. There were several reasons for this. They received considerable assistance from all local Mappilas, many of whom were considered loyal by this time. They were really frightened of the Hindus. If they surrendered to one party of troops of police they were always liable to be hunted by another. Practically no arrests have been made. The practice of allowing real rebels who surrendered to go free had carried to excess in the hope of getting



information from them. The result was that, there was little or no reliable information; no one knew who was or was not a rebel and Hindus and Mappilas were both afraid.<sup>12</sup>

The army also took the help of loyal Mappilas to search Konnara Thangal. On 11 February 1922, Tharippoyil Unni Moyi who assisted the troops was shot by the rebels. At Kuttanchery (Tiruvambadi), the guerilla method was successful. The rebels shot at the army by sitting on the two sides of a path in the jungles and the army had to give up the search.<sup>13</sup> At Kodyathur, a group of Mappilas confronted with the group of Avoker Musliyar and Konnara Thangal and brought them and handed over to the troops. In February, a Hindu gang was attacked by the rebels at Koodathayi and proceeded to Koduvalli and attacked Chalil Abdulla , a loyal Mappila and raided his house. This rebel group was headed by Abdulla Musliyar, the brother of Avoker Musliyar. Some rebels pretended as loyalists, misguided the troops. One Poyilil Abdulla, a rebel leader and brother in law of Vayalil Moyi, a loyalist, pretending as a supporter of the troops gave false information to the intelligence officer. Thekkan Alavi's group attacked a Pullurammal Kunhoosa, who used to handover information about the movement of rebels to the troops, was attacked and his ear cut off. Different groups of the army moved around Mukkam area to capture Konnara Thangal and Avokkar Musliyar, but often failed while the rebels created continuous trouble from different parts killing and attacking loyal Hindus, Mappilas and often army camps .

### **Thangal captured**

Most of the men who escaped with Konnara Thangal were men from Omasserri and Puthur. The troops were sure that Konnara Thangal and his small band were hiding in the jungle. A thorough search was decided and more army columns were brought from Malappuram combined with Malabar Special Police composed of Nairs. Totally there were six columns who went to the jungle in small parties. The search went on for fifteen days, but in vain. The heavy rain also prevented the army in continuing the search. While returning disappointed on 1 May 1922, the column under Mr. Eaton, with the help of a Mappila man, who had seen Konnara Thangal and his men at Thambilonam, moved there and when they reached the place, they found that the Thangal and his party had already been escaped. While the troops were returning an army man saw Konnara Thangal himself on the east of Iruvanjippuzha river near Tahmbilonam, walking through a paddy flat , they watched him to go to a small shed on the edge of paddy flat 400 yards away. There was no way of approaching there and fire was opened on the shed. Three rebels were killed and about 15 got away. Next day the troops received 13 guns and 12 swords, some vessels and large amount of provisions and the Konnara Thangal's own box with his papers and a copy of the Quran, from the shed.<sup>14</sup>

During their search in the next day, the troops found three rebels killed in the previous day's attack. A wounded man was captured hiding in the jungle, Kepari Kunhamath of Puthur. According to him

he had joined Avoker Musliar stopping first for two months in Puthur with the hope of winning swaraj as promised. When the police came he, with others, fled to the hills. He then surrendered at Koru and went back and joined Vadakke Veetil Moyi's group from Omasseri. They split up on being constantly harassed by the police and he had joined Avoker Musliar again about March. He was one of the men sent to collect supplies. In the middle of April Avoker Mussaliar and the Konara Thangal joined forces near Pulikayam for a few days. Avoker Mussaliar then left towards the north again. He said the Konara Thangal's total strength was 38 when the attack was made but seven of these were out collecting rations.<sup>15</sup>

Few days after this incident, two rebels attacked the army camp of Deputy Police Superintendent Amu sahib at Velagnod and after firing ran away taking some helmets and knives. Amu Sahib was leading the search and he was ably assisted by Mr. Parikkutty, Adhigari of Koru and they captured Abdulla Musliyar, brother of Avoker Musliyar. This time Konnara Thangal and his one or two assistants were hiding in a cave. At Kurunkayam, the army captured Cheriya Avokkar Musliyar, the nephew of Avokkar Musliyar, and his brother Kunhi Rayan Musliyar with guns and swords. Mulliya veetil Ahmad Koya and Vadakke veetil Moyi, the chiefs of the rebels were also captured. Koyambrath Aydraman Haji was an active supporter of the troops and he helped to capture Avoker Musliyar and Konnar Thangal. Karimichalil Mammad Kutty and Vallikkal Imbichi Moithi helped the police to search Avokkar Musliyar, and the Musliyar was captured at Cheruvathur, on his way to Mangalore on 16 June 1922. Two Mappilas Mannithodi Mussakkutty and Yakkiparamban Rayin Mammad were sent to fetch the Thangal. At the same time the thangal moved to the north staying in mosques as a faqir, with a plan to reach Tellicherry from where to travel further to Bombay by train. Travelling through Pudupadi and Waynd, he had reached up to Mangalore from where finding no ships to go further he thought of returning and it was at Kuthuparamb he was captured on 25 August 1922.<sup>16</sup> Mr Hitchcock writes: "This leader (the Thangal) more than any other appears deserving of some sympathy ; it was not disloyalty and not hope of loot which induced him to throw in his lot with the rebels but a conviction that his religion had been insulted not in Turkey, but in Vazhakad."<sup>17</sup> Konnra Thangal earlier had written a petition to the officer of the commanding troops on the atrocities and murders of the army. The petition was kept in the box found in the shed. It seems that the petition hadn't sent to the officer. The petition enumerated the assaults by the troops and the insults done to mosques and women and the unbearable condition of the community.

### **Madhavan Nair**

K. Madhavan Nair, Koyatty Moulavi, Mujeeb Thangal, Abdu Cheruvadi, Moyin Malayamma and few other native writers had given an account of the atrocities of the British army on Mappilas

during their action. Most of these narrations are taken from the elders whose family members either witnessed or participated in the struggles.

Mr. Madhavan Nair, leader of the Congress party and a supporter of the Khilafat, introduces Konnara Thangal , as one who “ made to tremble the whole world, was a man about thirty years old. He was white in colour, lean and short with a serious looking face having a yellow silk cloth on his body and a sword on his waist. He was strong and bold.”<sup>18</sup> Mr. Nair appreciates the Thangals of Konnara that they were responsible for bringing friendship between Hindus and Muslims and their place was free from any kind of rebellion. The attempts of Karat Moideen Kutti Haji and Varian Kunnath Kunhammadaji, to bring the Thangals to the rebellion failed in the early stages. Later the Mappilas turned against the Hindus under the Thangal and converted many of them to Islam. The reason attributed to this change of mind was the atrocities inflicted by the police with the help of Hindus on the Thangals of Konnara , without any reason.<sup>19</sup> Mr. Nair also quotes statements of some converts, how they were forcefully converted to the new faith and how many of them escaped from the fury of the Mappilas. But this kind of stories is not found in the British documents. Nair quotes scertain cruel acts of Mappilas , persecuting the women and children and even the pregnant ladies. This kind of stories may well have suited for the justification of the persecution of the British authorities, but no British documents have mentioned any of these stories and the like, in their documents. The news journals which supported the British and the landlords often fabricated stories of cruelties in order to malign the true spirit of Khilafat movement. Though Mr. Nair intended to write a chapter on the atrocities of the British on Mappilas, and the measures taken after the rebellion, the book remained incomplete due to the demise of the author.

K. Madhavan Nair blames the British Hindu conspiracy for precipitating the rebellion: “ There is no doubt that the British troops and the Hindus went to Konnara to revenge the Mappilas. But this reactionary people, attacked not the real culprits, but the innocents, like Konnara Thangals who had never indulged in any kind of assaults and always stood for bringing peace in the area. It is heard that they dishonored the eldest thangal in many ways. They destroyed the holy books kept in his house and in the mosques and forcibly applied *basmam*/powder and made him to recite the name of Lord Narayana ( mark of conversion to Hinduism).<sup>20</sup> Madhavan Nair, however justifies this action by saying that, the assault on Thangal may be a retaliation for Mappila attack on Hindu *Jenmis* and obliteration of the temples, but he adds that, “ the action cannot be justified against these thangals who were more gentle among the fanatics who forcefully converted the Hindus that an unjust action cannot be washed away with another injustice. The innocent Thangals now realized that if this is the reward for quelling the rebellion and saving the Hindus, then, they made up their minds to annihilate the whole Hindus for which they cannot be blamed. If the innocent Konnara Thangal is to be blamed and punished for the assaults made by any of the Mappilas , thangal himself cannot be

blamed if he thought that all the Hindus are responsible for the crime done by any group the Hindus.” “These are the opposite deals of communal strife and perception. As long as we are affected with communal conflict and intelligence, it is not possible to save ourselves from these dangers.”<sup>21</sup>

The British officials including C. Gopalan Nair, intentionally conceals the atrocities of the British against the innocent Mappilas and their plight and how they were brutally killed by the Gurkhas and the British army. As observed by Kessava Menon, the Congress leader, “the army massacred women and children and they put fire to the houses. When the Mappilas ran away at the arrival of the army, they were shot down like animals. Criminals and innocents alike including youths and old ones, women and men left their houses fearing murder and took refuge in jungles and hills and stayed there so many days”<sup>22</sup> Kesava Menon continues: “In the early stages the rebels had no quarrel with Hindus. When the army started chasing the rebels the state of affairs changed. The army sought the help of the Hindus to capture the rebels. Otherwise, the Hindus would be punished by the army. If the Hindus helped the army to search the rebel, the rebels would punish the Hindus. Thus the communal animosity gradually became ripe. That is why the Hindus became targets in the areas of rebellion.”<sup>23</sup> Kesava Menon also records the story of a Muslim woman who had been pregnant. A police man stabbed her with a spear. Another police man cut the neck and hand of a Muslim boy.<sup>24</sup> When Sarojini Naidu visited Malabar after the rebellion she vehemently criticized the atrocities of the army and police. The government sent a letter to Mrs. Naidu asking her to withdraw such statement, but Kesava Menon in an article published in Hindu reiterated the statement made by Mrs. Naidu.<sup>25</sup>

In the British army there was a section called Kukri (meaning knife in Nepali), composed of Nepali Gurkhas, whose duty was to kill or get killed. They kept a special knife with a distinct curve in its blade called Kukri. The Gurkhas will some times hold the kukris in both hands. They continuously chop the heads of the rebels and bring the heads to the commander. However many of these Kukri army were massacred by Mappila rebels with their traditional Pishan Kathi, for which the British had set aside many pages in their Malabar war documents.<sup>26</sup> At Arur near Arikkode, one Akkaraparambil Gulam Musliyar of Omanur killed the Gurkhas with his knife before he was shot dead by the army. The army shot whenever they saw a Mappila during their march. The situation was felt like a huge war, that the army moving from various parts towards Cheruvadi- Mukkam area, massacred the innocent people. People were kept hid in jungles and other places when they heard the sounds of the boots of the army.

### **Forced Conversions**

Regarding the forced conversions K.P.Kesava Menon, writes: “The communal rigidity made it difficult to see the things rightly. Many were not ready to accept the facts. Acute debates appeared in

the newspapers on the forced conversion by the Mappila fighters. Someone spread them with more flavor. The Congressmen never indulged in such controversy. They collected reliable information cautiously and recorded them. A columnist made a statement in the *Hindu* that, if forced conversions took place in the rebel areas the Congress might have recorded them. Since such statements are absent, the stories of forced conversions are false”<sup>27</sup> Kesava Menon, later published an article regarding the forced conversions that took place during the rebellion, for which he had to face threats from the Mappilas. In the history of Malabar forced conversions happened during political turmoil. Tipu had given an option to the Nair militia when they were captured, to convert to Islam to save themselves from capital punishment. During the Malabar struggles the forced conversions and looting and burning and other atrocities took place as retaliation for helping the troops against the Mappila fighters. Even the Mappilas who helped the troops were not spared. So the forced conversions should be read contextually and not generally. Mass conversions took place in Malabar all times, in order to save from the cast atrocities faced by the low castes. These were voluntary conversions. Forced conversions took place only during the time of animosity that too during the rebellion when the Hindus were found helping the British. So the events during the rebellion should not be taken as a general subject. Many landlords and the British supporters took the option of conversion to avoid murder during rebellion.

### **Conrad Wood**

Mr. Conrad Wood, a British writer, after pointing out certain examples of Hindu landlords supporting the British military against the Mappilas, digs out the reasons of Mappila animosity towards the Hindu lords:

“Such manifestations of Hindu support for the military commonly included the rendering of active assistance in the work of suppressing the rebellion. Nor did the authorities fail to make use of this prevailing Hindu sentiment of antagonism to the insurrection. On 3 November 1921 at a conference at which A. R. Knapp, the Martial Law Commissioner, met "leading citizens" of Calicut. It was decided that in view of the critical situation in Malabar there should be recruited a citizen army of 800 through a committee of five prominent Hindus.<sup>28</sup> The outcome was the embodiment in January 1922 of the Malabar Territorial Force consisting of two companies of Nairs and two of Tiers(Tiyyar) (including one platoon of Christians), recruited mainly from the population of the rebellion zone. Far more important in the work of putting down the Moplah rising however was the well-armed corps known as the Malabar Special Police, the formation of which was proposed early in the rebellion and which from October 1921 played an important part in its suppression. The Malabar Special Police was a communal body, reminiscent of Captain Watson's "Nair Corps" of the beginning of the nineteenth

century, consisting wholly of Hindu and Christian ex-sepoys who were largely from the rebellion area, some having suffered personally at the hands of the insurgents. According to one source these military-style policemen were "thoroughly imbued with the spirit of revenge".

“ Even so, the Hindu thirst for vengeance on the Ernad Moplah was by no means solely expressed through the channels provided for the authorities. Wherever, in 'pacified' areas, or even in districts outside the rebellion zone, the Hindu had the upper hand, any Moplah whether associated with the rebellion or not, was liable to misuse at the hands of the non-Muslim civilian population. The Tier (Tiyar) community in particular, broad sections of which even before the outbreak of rebellion had been the name of support for Raj, was prominent in this harassing of Moplahs.”<sup>29</sup> Such manifestations of the general Hindu opposition to the rebellion naturally ensured a further twist to the spirit of communal antagonism and played an important part in generating the insurgent violence against Hindus which became increasingly frequent the insurrection took its course. The complaint of the rebels that the Hindus were helping the government side was easily translated into remedial action as communal violence. In October 1921, when the Konara Tangal first made his contribution to the rebellion, one of his injunctions was apparently that, since the troops were receiving assistance from the Hindus “none should be spared”. There can be no doubt that it quickly became the practice for the Moplah rebel to proclaim openly that the rising was directed against “both the government and Hindu.”<sup>30</sup> “In the case of the repeated acts of rebel violence against Hindus which were a feature of the insurrectionary campaign of the Konara Tangal in the eastern part of Calicut taluk and the adjoining areas of Ernad from late October onwards there may well have been a special factor. This was the fact that the communally-constituted Malabar Special Police was from late October 1921, mainly responsible for the suppression of the rebellion in this region. Certainly, the Special Police were participants in the government operations in the Konara Tangal's own area of Chaliyapuram. In northern Ernad in which a mosque was raided and the Koran insulted and which precipitated the Tangal's decision to join the insurrection.”<sup>31</sup>

We have already noted that Muhammad Koya thangal led the battles against the British, when they assaulted the mosques and the Mappilas at Konnara , Chaliyapuram, Cheruvadi and Thathur. Besides, the landlords and their servants actively assisted the British to capture and kill the rebels. When the troops came at Konnara in November 1921, they were assisted by the men of the landlords who pointed to the troops the Mappilas, who were inimical to them. The troops killed such people who were sometimes innocent and this also infuriated the Thangal to turn against the landlords and his people.

The statement of Konnara Thangal before the authorities and the judgement against Konnara Muhammad Koya Thangal clearly shows that his actions were anti British and not against any

particular community. He didn't spare anyone who supported the British, whether he is Hindu or Muslim.

### **Statement of Konnara Thangal**

Here are the excerpts from the statement of Konnara Thangal before EV. Amu Sahib, the Deputy Superintendent of Police on 22 August 1922, though it is often written by the officials at their own will or forcing the "culprits" to say as per the will of the officials. Often the statement is prepared by asking many questions to the arrested and compiling a report at the will of the questioner. Generally in every statement, taken from the arrested khilafatists, there are confessions of robbery, forced conversions and other prejudices. Even Kunhahammad Haji, the khilafat leader, who asked the followers to avoid any conversions and ill will towards the Hindus and himself took actions against such actions, was blamed for killing Hindus and forcibly converting them. There are instances of forced conversion of landlords and the supporters of the government, in order to stop their further persecutions of the tenants and to stop their support to the British. Sometimes the Mappila dacoits with the help of the loyalist Muslims indulged in robbery and forced conversions to tarnish the struggle putting the blame upon the khilafatists.

#### **The statement:**

"In the month of August 1921 a few days prior to the risings at Tirurangadi, I had gone to Nilambur to treat the Kazi of Nilambur for insanity. I was a special magician (spiritual healer) and I used to visit Manjeri, Wandur, Nilambur and other places before rebellion. While at Nilambur, I used to live in the house of Kazi of Nilambur. On my return from Nilambur to Konnara, at Edavanna, I heard about the occurrence at Tirurangadi. When I reached at Konnara, I heard there were some looting and dacoities in Arikkod, Vazhakad and adjoining amsams, and Nellara people (Those who had granaries) were concerned in them. Troops from Calicut came with Koyappathodika Koyakkutty and arrested Kolathil Pokkar and eight or nine others in connection with these dacoities and seized some guns and swords. A meeting also was convened at Vazhakad bazaar at the instance of Koyappathodika people to take measures to prevent further disturbances and induce the people to return the stolen properties to the respective owners. This meeting was attended by a large number of people from Mavur, Cheruvadi, Kodyathar and other neighbouring villages. The meeting was presided over by Chervoni (Cherunhi) Tangal. The Tangal advised the people assembled, that they should not create any disturbance. I was then unwell and did not attend the meeting. With this meeting and the arrests of Kolathil Pokkar and others, dacoities etc., subsided and there was complete peace for some time. In the month of October 1921, troops numbering about 360 came from Calicut via Kunniparamba and camped in a kalam (A spacious place under the landlords to dry and keep paddy with adjacent store houses) belonging to Nilambur palace at Chaliapram. Next morning after their arrival, troops attacked Chaliapram mosque, destroyed some of the sacred books and looted the house of my uncle Pokoya Tangal. The troops then returned to Calicut crossing the Eledam ferry. On account of this, I got excited and preached to the people that everyone should join hands to drive away the British troops by fighting. I then interviewed Karat Moideen Kutti Haji who was then camping at Arikkod with his rebels. Moideen Kutti Haji asked me that every Masalman should join together to oppose the British Government, who had insulted our religion. After interviewing Karat Moideen Kutti Haji I returned to Konnara. I again preached to the

people of adjoining amsams and exhorted them to take up arms to drive away the British government and establish Khilafat kingdom. I accordingly established a Khilafat court at Konara mosque and remained there with my followers, till I and my rebels were driven out by the troops in the month of November 1921. At Konnara mosque there were about four to five hundred rebels under me. Most prominent amongst them were-

1. Konara Cherunhi Tangal,
2. Koya Kutti Tangal,
3. Imbichi Koya Tangal,
4. Valiyunni Tangal,
6. Kotiyan Ahamad Kutti,
7. Mundaprath Marakkarutti,
8. Mannungal Veeran,
9. Chenthamkulangara Ahmad,
10. Arnocheeri Athan,
11. Munikal Petta Ali Kutti,
12. His son Saidali.
18. Moolayil Koya Kutti,
14. Moolayil Assan,
15. Kottapurath Kunhamad,
16. Kooliyagaparamban Moyin Katti,
17. Pathayathingal Cheriya Moyan, and
18. Kattilmannil Veeran Kutti.

The rebels under me set fire to the kalam which the troops occupied and burnt it to ashes. My uncle Pukoya Tangal objected to these things, but all his words were unheeded to. Cherunhi Tangal, Chaliyaprath Koya Kutti Tangal, Peramakkey (Perakappuram) Koya Kutti Tangal and my brothers Imbichi Koya Tangal and Valiyunni Tangal joined me in opposing the Government. Koyappathodika people were not with me and they were not consulted when I decided to oppose the Government. Rebel guards were posted all rounds in different centers to arrest Hindus and other people who were fleeing and to prevent the advance of troops. The rebel guards arrested several Hindus while running away with their properties and brought them to me. The Hindus so brought were all converted to Islam by me. I recited Kalima to them and they repeated what I recited. They were thus converted. While I was remaining at Konara mosque with my followers, Koyappathodika Kunhamad and his brother Moyan Kutti had come to Konara mosque twice and they returned home after prayers. They did not remain with me at Konara mosque as others did. They did not also take part in the conversion of Hindus who were arrested and brought by rebel guards. Koyappathodika Kunhamad's son Ayamutti and Muhammad Kutti Haji's son Ayamutti had come to Konnara mosque for prayer once. They too did not remain with me at the mosque. K. Moyan Kutti sent me some clothes to be given to these converted Hindus. Moyan Kutti sent the fresh clothes at my request.

Karat Moideen Kutti Haji and his party also visited Konnara, and remained with me for a couple of days. During his stay at Konnara, Moideen Kutti Haji also exhorted the rebels to keep up their enthusiasm and said that by doing so, all the white men would run away from the country soon. The rebels under Moideen Kutti Haji and myself destroyed the amsam cutcherry (court) at Cheruvayur. Koyappathodika people were not present when the cutcherry was destroyed. I had no faith in Koyappathodika people as they were found helping the Government and I gave a passport to Kunhamad



and Moyan Kutti to take their families to Calicut and Tiruvambadi respectively. Moideen Kutti Haji and his party returned to Arikkod after staying with me at Konnara for a couple of days. I did not see Kalluvettikuzhi Kunhalan Kutti with Moideen Kutti Haji and his party either at Arikkod or at Konara. At the end of October 1921 troops again visited Vazhakad and there was an encounter between the troops and the rebels under me and the troops went back to Calicut. I remained at Konnara with my rebels. Koyappathodika people were not anywhere in the vicinity at this time of this action.

A few days after, in the month of November, troops again visited Konnara and fired all the rebels. All got confused and ran to different directions. I and about 60 rebels ran towards the direction of Neerlak Mukkam and met Karat Moideen Kutti Haji and his party. Moideen Kutti Haji and myself then went to Nilambur where I met Variankunnath Kunhamad Haji, Abdu Haji, Chembrasserai Tangal and Mukri Ayamad. Mukri Ayamad with about 250 rebels then went to Pandalur and raided Pandalur. Ayamad and his party returned to Nilambur with several articles next day. Moideen Kutti Haji and myself then went to Tirurangadi via Kondotti to offer prayers at Mambram, but they had to go back from Olakara as there were troops at Mambram and Tirurangadi. Owing to the constant raid of the troops, I left Moideen Kutti Haji near Kondotti and proceeded towards Tiruvampadi and took shelter in the hill, east of Tiruvampadi with my rebels numbering about 60. While hiding in the hills, I met Avoker Musliyar and his party at Payanithottam on the banks of Iruvanhi river. While at Payanithottam with Avoker Musliyar and the rebels, troops came and opened fire. There was then an encounter between the troops and the rebels. This was in the month of January. In this action some rebels were killed and some wounded. The whole gang then flew away in different directions. Avoker Musliyar and myself then came and stayed at a place on the banks of Iruvanhi river, four or five miles north-east of Tiruvampadi. After this incident the rebels began to lose heart and they began to surrender one by one before the authorities and in consequence the gang became scattered and reduced in strength. Avoker Musliyar and myself operated together for a few days at different places. The troops attacked them in various places and they had to flee and I left Avoker Musliyar and moved about in the hills with my men.

In the month of Ramzan, I was camping at Tambilonam with my rebels numbering about 20 or 25. Between 5 and 6-30 in the evening troops came and opened fire. I was then praying and some of the rebels were then cooking food, some praying and others cutting leaves for serving food. Troops began to fire from the other side of the paddy field at Tambilonam. All ran to different directions through the jungles. After that I did not see any of my rebels. The following were amongst the rebels who were present at Tambilonam action

1. Pathayathingal Cheriya Moyan, Mavur.
2. Kundil Hussap Kutti, Kakkat.
3. Mayilambra Unni Moyi Haji, Puthur.
4. Meethalay veetil Ahamad Koya, Puthur,
6. Puvathingal Mammuni, Wandur.
6. Taripoyil Ali Kutti, Pannikode.
7. Alingal Veeran, Pannikode.
8. Alingal Unni Moyi, Pannikode.
9. Cholakkal Bappan, Puthur.

## 10. Valiyunni Tangal.

At Tambilonam action I lost all my rebels and arms and I flew away alone and escaped through the jungles. On the sixth day after my flight from Tambilonam, I reached Pudupadi and started to Wynad by road by walking, I then visited Kuthuparamba, Tellicherry and Mangalore. During my tour I used to rest in mosques posing myself as a beggar. I went to Mangalore with the intention of sailing for Bombay. I travelled by train to Mangalore without purchasing a ticket. I had no cash with me. At Mangalore I was detained by the Railway authorities for some time and was subsequently allowed to go away. I stayed in Mangalore for ten days resting in a mosque. Finding that there was no steamer to go to Bombay, I returned and came to Baliyapatam (Valapattanam) by train and stayed at Baliyapatam for more than twenty days. I then returned to Tellicherry with the intention of going back to Wynad and while going walking to Kuthuparamba I was arrested by Mappilla constables, Mannilthodika Moosa Kutti and Yakiparamban Rayan Mammad on the main road near Kuthuparamba last Friday (25th August 1922). During my journey I did not tell my name to anyone and I did not get any help from the Mappillas in any of these places. I was travelling alone throughout. I did not see any of my rebels after my flight from Tambilonam. Pathayathingal Cheriya Moyan was with me at Tambilonam. I do not know where he had gone to. Mangat Chalil Mohamad Ali was with me at Payanithottam and he left me at Payanithottam and joined Avoker Musaliar and I did not see him afterwards. I cannot say where he is now. While I was hiding in the hill, I used to get provisions through Avoker Musaliar and sometimes rebels under me used to bring provisions from Mukkam shandy (Mukkam market). I do not exactly remember things which happened months ago.” (Hitchcock, 198-200)

### **The judgement:**

IN THE COURT OF THE SESSIONS JUDGE OF THE SOUTH MALABAR DIVISION

Friday, the 23rd day of Maroh 1928.

Sessione Case No. 12 of 1923

PRESENT: G. H. B. JACKSON, Esq., M.A., I.C.S.(Sessions Judge)

Prisoner-Karuvanthiruthi Jarathingal Konnara Muhammad Koya Tangal.

Offences-Waging war against the King and abetment of murder, sections 121 and 302 read with section 114, Indian Penal Code.

Names and castes of Assessors-

1) Mr. M. R. Sivarama Ayyar, Brahman.

(2) Mr. U. B. Sreenivasa Rao, Brahman.

Opinion of Assessors- Guilty.

Finding of Judge- Guilty.

Sentence or Order-Accused is sentenced to suffer death subject to the confirmation by the High Court.

Name of prisoner's pleader, if any, Vakil Mr. A. V. Balakrishna Menon, appointed by the Court.

Committed by Mr. George Batty, Sub divisional Magistrate, Calicut

## JUDGMENT.

1. The accused K. J. Konara Muhammad Koya Tangal is charged that between 20<sup>th</sup> October 1921 and 1st May 1922 in Ernad and Calicut taluks, he waged war against the King; the offence punishable under section 121, Indian Penal Code. Three murders which he is charged with committing in furtherance of this offence have been specially detailed as a second count comprising the offences punishable under section 302, Indian Penal Code, read with section 114, Indian Penal Code, the murder of M. Krishnan Kutty Nayar on 24th October 1921 ; of K. Unni Moyan on 27th December 1921 ; and of K. Velu Nayar on 29th December 1921.

2. Sanction for prosecution under section 121, Indian Penal Code, is duly proved-exhibit A, P.W. 48.

3. The Deputy Superintendent of Police, P.W. 2, proves the outbreak of the Mappilla rebellion, and explains the methods adopted by the insurgents in their war against the King. Besides directly engaging the British troops, they murdered loyal Mappillas, forcibly converted Hindus for use as recruits in the war, murdered those who refused to be converted, and in order to obtain supplies, committed dacoity in Hindu houses. The accused, a Tangal of Cheruvayur, and as such held in big veneration by Mappilla, joined the movement in the middle of October 1921, actuated apparently by religious motives. He took no part in the initial stages when mischievous Hindus combined with Khilafal enthusiasts at Calicut, Ottapalam and elsewhere in order to subvert the authority of the British Government.

The various acts of war alleged against accused, their dates and witnesses who refer to them may be tabulated as follows:

20 October, Teyyambadi Kalam burnt at Cheruvayur, witness: 3,4

21 October, Seditious speech at Chaliyappuram: Witness, 5,6

22 October, Cheruvayoor Amsam Cutcherry burnt, Witness, 7,8

22 October, Dacoity in Krishnan Nayar's house, Cheruvayoor, Witness 9,10,11

23 October, Dacoity in Cheruvayoor Adhikari's house and supplies sent to rebel outposts Witness 12,13

24 October Afternoon, Murder of Krishnan Kutty nair, Witness 16,17

24 October Evening Seditious speech and gathering at Vanakath Witness 14,15

25 October Hindu refugees beaten, Witness 18,19

28 October Two Hindus murdered and forcible conversions Witness 16,17,18,19,20

29 October Action at Cheruvayur, Witness 3,23,24

11 November Action at Cheruvadi Witness 25,26

14 December Action at Pandalur, Direction from Pothukal Witness 1,27,28

27 December Murder of Karimbinakath Unni Mayan, Witness 29,30,31,32

28 December Murder of Velu Nair 33,34

4 January, Armed demonstration at Olagara, 35,36,37

1 May, Action at Thambilonam Witness 38.39.40.41

5. 20 October 1921 Burning of Theyyambadi Kalam, The special force spend the night of 19 October in this kalam, the property of Nilambur Kovilakam, PW 3, next evening a watchman, PW 4 says that 500 armed Mappilas led by the accused burned the kalam behaving like monkeys.

6. 21 October. Sedition at Chaliyapuram-The accused spoke in the mosque urging the Mappilas to fight the British and forcibly convert Hindus. This was reported to the police a month later by two Mappilas who say that they were forced to attend, P.Ws. 5, 6.

7. 22 October, Burning of Cheruvayur catchery-A Tiyyan and his medical adviser P.Ws, 7&8 were caught in Cheruvayur on 22 October and taken before the accused, who was on a bench directing the demolition of the catchery. The records were burnt. They promised to be converted, were released and fled to Calicut. They told their story in the relief camp, but made no formal complaint.

8. 22 October Dacoity at Krishnan Nayar's- A Nayar and a Tiyyan, P.W. 10 and 11, were guarding Krishnan Nair's house at Cheruvayur. On 22 October the accused came and dacoited it with one hundred armed rebels. They ran away to Calicut and informed the owner, P.W. 9, on 25th October

9. 23 October. Dacoity at Cheruvayar Adhikari's - A Nayar watchman, P.W. 12, was caught by two hundred rebels who looted the adhikari's house. A Tiyyan, P.W 13, was caught by the same band on its return. The two captives were taken before the accused at Edavannappara school and thence to Tekkepath house where a quantity of stolen property was stored, and where they saw the accused dispatching supplies to the rebel outposts. The Nayar told his story two months later after he had fled to Feroke, and the Tiyyan possibly earlier at Calicut but there is no written record of their reports.

10. 24 October. Murder of Krishnan Kutti Nayar.-A Nayar, P.W. 17, was caught on 21st October and taken before the accused at Konnara mosque where he saw Krishnan Kutti Nayar being asked about the gun of Nallaveethu house, and beaten. On 24th October they were again taken before the accused. There was another Nayar there, P.W. 16. On Krishnan Kutti Nayar's refusal to be converted, the accused ordered him to be killed. Four Mappillas murdered him in the river, fifty yards off within sight of accused and the witnesses. The other Nayar, P.W. 16, says he was caught while trying to escape from Mavoor. He also describes the murder and says that it was just after midday.

11. Seditious gathering at Vazhakad -Two Mappilas, P.W. 14 and 16, say that on the evening of the 24 the accused marched into Vazhakad with two hundred rebels shouting war cries, closed the bazaar, and held a meeting at the mosque, when the accused urged the establishment of a Khilafat Kingdom and the conversion of Hindus. They fled to Kondotti and

reported to the police there about a week later. Vazhakad is two miles off Konnara mosque, (D.W.2).

12. 26th October. Hindu refugees beaten-Two Nayars, P.W. 18 and 19, attempted along with fourteen others to escape from Mavoor on 24<sup>th</sup>. They were caught, and brought before the accused on October 25th. He said they had no business to carry the valuables away which might be devoted to Khilafat purposes, and beat them.

13. 28 October. Murder of two Hindus and forcible conversions -On 28th October all these Nayars, P Ws. 16, 17, 18 and 19 were again brought before accused at Konnara mosque. A band of rebels appeared on the other side of the river with two Hindus and shouted across for orders. Accused shouted back that the Hindus were helping the troops and none should be spared. They should kill them. Accordingly the two Hindus were murdered in the sight of all. The witnesses thoroughly frightened, allowed themselves to be converted and the accused recited the appropriate texts. Next month the troops came to Konnara and these converts escaped to Calicut. Raman Nair, PW 18, made a statement , exhibit K to the first class Magistrate in which he describes the murder of the two Hindus and names accused as present. Govindan Nair, PW 19, endorsed it in token of assent, and three others who endorsed it , PWs 20,21 and 22 were called in case the defense wished to cross examine them. The murder was also witnessed by Shankaran Nair, PW 24, who along with another convert PW, 25 was kept at Konnara mosque and witnessed next day's concurrence.

14. 29 October. Action at Cheruvayur- News was brought to the accused that the troops had arrived. He blessed the weapons of about 200 Mappillas, gave them flags, and told them to go and kill the enemy. Meanwhile the converts were employed in symbolically throwing dust, and imploring God to throw dust in the enemy's eyes. A prayer which the rebels, no doubt, thought was answered, for the Special Force walked into an ambush and had ten casualties, (P W. 8). The band returned in the evening and was praised for its victory by the accused, P.W. 24 and 26.

15. 2 November. Action at Cheruvadi.-The adhikari and menon of Thazhakad P.W. 25 and 26, noted as guides for the Gurkas when they attacked a mosque at Cheruvadi (in Calicut taluk just east of Cheruvayur). It was a frontal attack with firings and several casualties on both sides. The guides were within 80 yards of the mosque behind a band and if they were sensible they would have kept their heads down. However, they suggest that they were foolhardy and saw the accused and two other Tangals running away. Assuming that they did see something, and that is a liberal assumption, I still doubt if they identified all the leaders. Had there been time for such ample recognition the Ghurkas would probably have shot the fugitives. And if they did momentarily see some Mappillas dash past in the distance, it is only human nature on such an occasion to see a falcon on in every kite.

16. 14th December. Action at Pandalur. At any rate the rebels appear to have shifted their headquarters further north-east up the Ernad border after the Cheruvadi action, Two Mappillas P. Ws 27 and 28, were caught at Koderi and taken before the accused at Pothukal on 13th December 1921. The places are marked on the 1 inch 1 mile survey map. Pothukal is five miles south of the Gudalur taluk. On the 14<sup>th</sup>, they saw the accused and the Chembrasser Tangal dispatch a band of 350 rebels to attack Pandalur in the Nilgirs district. It returned next day with various weapons and was commanded by the Tangals.

17. There was a specially big sword among the weapons which was given to accused. Mr. Carver, a police sergeant P.W.1, describes how his party was attacked on 14th December at Pandalur, and he lost his sword, M.O. I. The Mappilla witnesses at Pothukal, and the witnesses who prove the subsequent incidents at Olagara and Tambilonam say that they saw the accused with a sword like M.O. I. and M.O. I. was found in the rebel camp when accused ran away after this last action. It is very probable, as the Crown suggests that the accused received and wore Mr. Carver's sword; but it is not absolutely impossible that he was not wearing one very much like it, and I attach little significance to this picturesque incident. The case stands or falls on the direct evidence, and not on presumptions.

18. 27 December. Murder of Unnimoyan.-The son of Unnimoyan, P.W.29, says that on 27th December twelve men fetched his father saying that accused wanted him. Next morning Ismail, Imbichi Ahamnd, Athan and others told him his father had been killed at Naduviledath Illam. He went to the spot with Athan and others, found the body with the head cut off, and buried it.

Ismail, P.W. 30, and Imbichi Ahamad, P.W. 32, were also captured on the 27th, and were taken to accused who was on the road with a hundred rebels. Athan, P.W.31, was taken from his shop on their way to Cheruvadi mosque, and from the mosque accused sent out various parties one of which brought in Unnimoyan. Then the rebels and their prisoners proceeded to Naduviledath Illom. Accused sat on a bench, and asked Unnimoyan why he took the men whom accused converted to Calicut. He ordered him to be beaten, and asked those who beat him to look and see if he was crying. They said he was not, so accused ordered him to be killed, and Ahmad Kutti and another cut off his head. The others were tried, and let off on promising to help the accused, and informed the authorities twenty days later.

19. 28th December. Murder of Velu Nayar.-Karunakaran Nayar P.W 33, his brother Velu Nayar, P. Velu Nayar P.W. 3t, and Raman Nayar had fled from Cheruvayur and returned on 28th December in order to harvest their ginger. While they were digging in a coconut paramba, Velu Nayar went to drink in a stream 80 yards below, and was cut off and killed by a band of rebels. The others hid in the bushes at the top of the hill, with a thick

growth of palms between them and the rebels. The witnesses are sure that they saw accused in command and heard everything that was said. But the Sub-Inspector, P.W. 43, who visited the scene says that they could not possibly heard an ordinary conversation. They came to Arikkod next day and gave discrepant accounts as prepared a complaint Exhibit C and gave it to the Sub Inspector. Velu Nayar was undoubtedly murdered, but I doubt the witnesses knew who committed the crime. Apart from the discrepancies the story is improbable because it does not sound like the accused's work. His habit as a rebel seems to have been sedentary, issuing orders and sentencing such men as were produced before him, but not roaming across the country.

20. Olagara-On 4 January 1922 accused and some rebels came to Olagara and had Kammunni Haji, P.W.30, produced before him. He made him swear that he would help the rebels and let him go. Kommunni haji immediately informed the troops near at Tirurangadi and they marched to Olagara next day, but the rebels had decamped. Mamoo PW 37, was also taken before the accused, the twenty swords which he had persuaded the local Mappilas to hand in were taken from his house.

21. 1, May. Action of Tambilona. A party of Mappillas, P.W., 38, 39 and 40, were gathering reeds at the bank of Calicut taluk when the rebels surrounded them with being spies. By this time accused, a fugitive and vagabond in the earth, probably feared that every man who found him would slay him. However, the Mappillas were allowed to go on promising to bring the rebels, supplies. They went straight to the Special Police Force which reached the spot that evening and came upon the rebels a little further on. The Subedar, P.W. 41, saw the accused about 78 yards off in black coat and red turban, but he escaped and the sword M.O 1 was found among other weapons left behind by the rebels.

22. On 25th August 1922 accused was arrested in North Malabar (P.W.12).

23. The crown proves some letters Exhibits D,E,F,G,H and J which were found in an abandoned rebel camp in March 1922. (PW 43) Exhibits D,E,and F are written by accused (PW 41). Also a letter Exhibit B sent to a Tangal, PW 45 and written by accused (PW 44) "I am sending 500 warriors for buying supplies." Exhibit B. "Please send eight guns. The troops are reported to be near Muna" Exhibit E. Kunhalikkutti writes, "It is impossible to sentence the ten prisoners before you arrive." And accused endorses on the letter, send the prisoners to Naduviledam. (Exhibit F)

24. The accused pleads not guilty. In the lower court he admitted that he consorted with the rebels, though he denied committing any murder; in my court he says he cannot remember what had happened. He cites two witnesses and as he wanted medical evidences, I examined the sub jail medical attendant.

25. Ramasesha Ayyar, D.W. 1, had seen accused on his visits to the Jail from 1st January 1923 to 22 March and had neither heard it suggested, nor noticed that the accused was mad. A merchant of Cheruvayur, D.W.2, heard a rumour that accused was mad ten years ago. A Mappilla, D.W.9, has known accused for twenty years, and has occasionally seen him insane, though he cannot remember when. After the outbreak he was not insane

28. The Crown relies on the exhibited letters as showing accuser's sanity, and there is

nothing in the evidence of the various witnesses who saw the accused to suggest that he was mad.

27. The assessors find the accused guilty as charged.

28. I find that accused was not insane, and that every incident as tabulated above has been proved against him, except his presence at the fight in the Cheruvadi mosque, and the murder of Velu Nayar. Without disparaging the other evidences I would mark as proved beyond all possibility of doubt, the murder of the two Hindus on 28th October, and the murder of Unnimayan on 27th December. These murders and the other acts were all in furtherance of the war which accused was waging against the King.

I find him guilty as charged of waging war, and of murdering Krishnankutti Nayar, and Karambinikat Unnimayan, the offences punishable under sections 121, 302 and 114, Indian Penal Code. Subject to the sanction of the High Court I sentence accused to be hanged by the neck until he is dead, sections 121, 302 and 114, Indian Penal Code Time for appeal seven days.

(Signed) G. H. B. JACKSON, Sessions Judge.

(From the judgment it is clear that the Tangal was hanged for waging war against the King and murdering two loyalists one a Hindu (Krishnan Kutti Nair) and other a Muslim (Unni Mayan). The whole thing also proves that the issue was not a religion against the other, but rebellion against imperialism. The attack on the mosque by the army with the help of the Hindu land lords and their supporters was the immediate reason for the rebellion in the area.)

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