

ഇശൽ
വൈത്യകം
ത്രൈമാസിക ലക്കം: 46

Ishal Paithrkam

Online issue 31

print issue 46

June 2026



Mahakavi Moyinkutty Vaidyar

Mappila Kala Akademi

Department of Cultural Affairs

Government of Kerala-India

June 2026

ഇശൽ പൈത്യകം

ത്രൈമാസിക

ലക്കം: 46

2026 ജൂൺ

പകർപ്പാവകാശം: പ്രസാധകർക്ക്

ചീഫ് എഡിറ്റർ

ഡോ. ഹുസൈൻ രണ്ടത്താണി

എഡിറ്റർ

ഡോ. ഷംഷാദ് ഹുസൈൻ. കെ.ടി.

അസോസിയേറ്റ് എഡിറ്റർ

ഡോ. അനീസ് ആലങ്ങാടൻ

എഡിറ്റോറിയൽ ബോർഡ്

ബഷീർ ചുങ്കത്തറ

ഡോ. പി.പി അബ്ദുൽ റസാഖ്

എം.എൻ. കാരശ്ശേരി

സൈദലവി ചീരങ്ങോട്ട്

പ്രസാധകർ

മഹാകവി മോയിൻകുട്ടി വൈദ്യർ

മാപ്പിള കലാ അക്കാദമി

കൊണ്ടോട്ടി: 673 638

ഫോൺ: 0483 2711432

Ishal Paithrkam

E-ISSN: 2582-550X

Peer-Reviewed

Two issue per year

Bilingual

Issue: 46

Online issue: 31

June: 2026

all rights reserved

Editor

Dr. Shamshad hussain. KT

Publisher

The Secretary, Mahakavi

Moyinkutty Vaidyar mappila

Kala Academy, Department of

Cultural affairs, Government

of Kerala, Kondotty Post

Pin: 673638

India

Ph: +91 483 2711432

Printed at

Kerala state C APT

Kozhikode

www.mappilakalaacademy.org

www.ishalpaithrkam.info

ഇശൽ പൈത്യകത്തിൽ പ്രസിദ്ധീകരിക്കുന്ന രചനകളിലെ ആശയങ്ങൾ മാപ്പിളകലാ അക്കാദമിയുടെതോ, സംസ്ഥാന സർക്കാറിന്റേതോ, സാംസ്കാരിക വകുപ്പിന്റേതോ ആയിരിക്കണമെന്നില്ല - എഡിറ്റർ

copyright rests with the publisher. the authors are responsible for the contents and views expressed.

Power, Memory, and Resistance: The Politics of Contesting the Hitchcock Memorial in Kerala

Dr. Sivadasan P

The politics of colonial commemoration in India left behind a contested landscape of statues and memorials, many of which became focal points of nationalist resistance after independence. This study examines the trajectory of the Hitchcock Memorial in Kerala, erected in 1928 at Valluvambram in Malabar to honour R. H. Hitchcock, the District Police Superintendent who led the suppression of the Malabar Rebellion of 1921. Intended by the colonial state as a symbol of imperial valour and deterrence, the memorial was immediately challenged by nationalist leaders. It became the subject of satyagraha campaigns, public protests, and political resolutions. Its relocation to the Malabar Special Police Camp in 1969 and eventual demolition of the restored structure at the police camp in 1988 reveal the shifting meanings of colonial monuments in postcolonial Kerala. By tracing the memorial's contested afterlife, this paper situates the Hitchcock Memorial within broader debates on colonial commemoration, nationalist resistance, and postcolonial memory politics. The analysis highlights how imperial symbols were reinterpreted, resisted, and replaced by memorials to indigenous struggles, such as the 'Wagon Tragedy' Memorial. The Hitchcock Memorial thus serves as a lens for understanding the dynamic interplay among power, memory, and resistance, demonstrating that monuments are not static relics but rather evolving sites of historical contestation in the public sphere.

Key Words: British Empire, R. H. Hitchcock, Malabar Rebellion, Malabar Special Police, Appu Nedungadi, Valluvambram, Holwell Monument, Socialists, the Communist Party, Subash Chandra Bose, Malabar District Board, R. Lescher, Imbichi Bava, E M S Namboodirippad, Malappuram, and Kozhikode.

After India's independence from the British Empire, memorials and statues erected during the colonial period became sites of intense opposition. These monuments, designed to inscribe imperial authority into public spaces, were increasingly challenged as symbols of domination rather than commemoration. The trend gained momentum in 1939 when Subhas Chandra Bose called for the destruction of the Holwell Monument in Calcutta, a structure that celebrated sacrifice for colonial triumph¹. Inspired by this call, Muhammed Abdurahiman Saheb demanded the removal of the Hitchcock Memorial at Valluvambram in the Ernad Taluk of Malabar District, Madras Presidency².

Erected in 1928, the Hitchcock Memorial commemorated the colonial government's suppression of the Malabar Rebellion of 1921 under the leadership of R. H. Hitchcock, then District Superintendent of Police. From its inception, the memorial was contested, symbolising imperial violence rather than valour. Opposition to it spanned decades—from its conception in 1927 to its eventual demolition in 1988 at the Malabar Special Police Camp in Malappuram, Kerala. This trajectory underscores the broader politics of memorialization in Kerala, where colonial monuments became focal points of nationalist resistance and postcolonial reinterpretation. Acts of vandalism, protest, and removal of such memorials were not isolated incidents but part of a larger struggle to reclaim public memory and redefine historical narratives in independent India³.

The colonial state in Malabar left behind not only administrative structures and repressive mechanisms but also memorials designed to inscribe imperial authority into the local landscape. Among these was the Hitchcock Memorial, erected at Valluvambram in Southern Malabar to honour R. H. Hitchcock, the District Superintendent of Police who played a decisive role in suppressing the Malabar Rebellion of 1921⁴. Hitchcock's sudden death from heart failure in 1926 while

returning to England marked the end of his personal trajectory, yet the memorial installed in his name endured as a contested symbol of colonial power in the region⁵.

The practice of commemorating colonial officials and military figures was widespread in British India, particularly from the late nineteenth century onward. Such monuments functioned simultaneously as instruments of imperial commemoration and as reminders of colonial dominance. In Valluvambram, however, the Hitchcock Memorial acquired a different resonance in the decades that followed. Rather than serving as a neutral marker of memory, it became a focal point of nationalist opposition, embodying the clash between imperial commemoration and anti colonial resistance during the final phase of the Indian freedom struggle. After Independence, the Hitchcock Memorial was removed from its original site at Valluvambram and relocated to the Police Camp at Malappuram, symbolising the shifting meanings of colonial monuments in postcolonial Kerala. Its trajectory—from installation as a marker of imperial valour to eventual displacement—provides a critical lens for examining the politics of memory, resistance, and historical representation in both colonial and postcolonial Malabar.

R. H. Hitchcock served as District Superintendent of Police in Malabar during the outbreak of the Malabar Rebellion of 1921, itself rooted in the wider context of the Non Cooperation and Khilafat movements of 1920–22⁶. Hitchcock was instrumental in establishing the Malappuram Special Police⁷, a force specifically created to suppress the rebellion⁸. Initially tasked with controlling the Mappila Muslims—whose resistance stemmed from poverty, agrarian grievances, and the brutality of colonial policing—the force was soon reorganised and enlarged as the Malabar Special Police. Under Hitchcock’s leadership, it underwent rigorous training in Kannur and Kozhikode to intensify its campaign against nationalist resistance⁹.

The British Empire celebrated Hitchcock’s role in suppressing the rebellion as a decisive imperial victory. Evidence of this triumph was prominently displayed at the Empire Exhibition of 1924 in London, where the Malabar campaign was presented as proof of Britain’s enduring control over India. The Hitchcock Memorial, erected two

years later, thus became not only a tribute to a colonial officer but also a symbolic assertion of imperial dominance over a region long marked by resistance¹⁰.

Immediately after the erection of the Hitchcock Memorial at Valluvambram, vernacular media began questioning the legitimacy of honouring R. H. Hitchcock—widely remembered for his brutal suppression of the Malabar Rebellion of 1921—with a monument situated in the very terrain of nationalist struggle. This critique reflected a broader pattern across India, where colonial memorials were increasingly contested as symbols of oppression rather than valour.

A parallel can be drawn with Madras, where public opposition arose against the statue of Colonel James George Smith Neill, notorious for his role in the massacres at Allahabad during the 1857 revolt¹¹. Erected on Mount Road to glorify imperial sacrifice, Neill's statue became the target of the Neil Statue Satyagraha, organised by the Madras Mahajana Sabha and the Provincial Congress Committee in the 1920s. The campaign demanded its removal, framing the statue as a symbol of colonial brutality rather than heroism.

In Kerala, similar sentiments were voiced by *Yogakshemam*, a Malayalam news magazine, which raised the possibility of organising a satyagraha against the Hitchcock Memorial soon after its inauguration in 1928¹². This anticipation of protest reveals that even the colonial authorities recognised the likelihood of popular opposition to such commemorative projects. The Hitchcock Memorial, therefore, was never a neutral monument; from its inception, it embodied the tension between imperial commemoration and nationalist resistance.

The remembrance of R. H. Hitchcock was never organically connected to the people of Malabar, who regarded him as a cruel police officer responsible for the imprisonment and killing of thousands. Instead, it was the colonial government that sought to instrumentalise Hitchcock's name to reinforce its hegemony in Malabar, particularly amid the intensifying anti colonial movement of the 1920s. Establishing a memorial in his honour was intended not as an act of commemoration but as a strategy to perpetuate police terror and deter future uprisings in South Malabar.

As part of this broader programme, the state undertook systematic efforts to identify and control sites of historical memory associated with resistance. The Malabar Special Police compiled lists of the burial sites of *suhadakkal*¹³, accompanied by brief accounts of their struggles and the names of the dead. These sites were placed under regular surveillance, and ceremonies of remembrance such as *nercha* were banned to suppress the collective memory of the national struggle¹⁴.

While remembrance of anti colonial heroes was actively curtailed, the colonial state simultaneously invested in renovating and constructing memorials for those who had served the British in suppressing resistance. Old tombs of police officers and members of the Malappuram Special Police were repaired, and new memorials were erected after 1921 as part of a state sponsored effort to inscribe imperial authority into Malabar's historical landscape. It was within this framework that the District Police Department resolved to erect the Hitchcock Memorial¹⁵.

In December 1926, E. H. Colebrooke, Assistant Commandant of the Malabar Special Police, initiated correspondence with various agencies to explore the possibility of erecting a memorial in honour of R. H. Hitchcock. In response, Barton Sons and Company, Madras, expressed their willingness to manufacture the memorial in copper or bronze¹⁶. During the same month, P. Orr and Sons, Madras, also expressed their interest, proposing to produce marble tablets as a commemorative object dedicated to Hitchcock¹⁷.

Archival records reveal that the installation of the memorial involved a carefully organised fundraising mechanism. Contributions were solicited not only from policemen and officers of the district but also from wealthy landlords and collaborators who had sided with the British during the Malabar Rebellion of 1921. This initiative culminated in the creation of the 'Police Hitchcock Fund Collection,' financed entirely through such contributions¹⁸. The memorial at Valluvambram was officially inaugurated in April 1928, symbolising the colonial state's attempt to overwrite the memory of resistance with monuments to repression¹⁹. Archival correspondence reveals that British officers expressed keen interest in erecting a grand memorial in Malappuram

to honour Hitchcock, who had played a central role in establishing the Malabar Special Police²⁰.

Beyond the memorial itself, Hitchcock's legacy was extended into civic initiatives. A school founded under his leadership at Malappuram was renamed the "Hitchcock Memorial Upper Primary School", and proposals were made to construct a public well in his memory. In the social context of the 1920s—marked by caste restrictions and pollution taboos that excluded marginalised communities from access to wells and tanks—such memorials often took the form of water facilities. These structures, while serving practical needs in emerging urban spaces, simultaneously functioned as instruments of colonial commemoration, embedding imperial authority into everyday life²¹.

The Malabar Rebellion can be traced to the early nineteenth century, following the establishment of East India Company rule in Malabar after the defeat of Tipu Sultan in 1792. The Company dismantled the reforms introduced under the Mysorean regime of Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan, reforms that had significantly benefited the Mappila Muslims. These measures had opened opportunities for marginalised groups in the Brahmin-dominated society of Malabar to embrace Islam and gain freedoms ensured by the Mysorean state, such as access to public spaces, property ownership, and the right of women to wear upper cloth. The Mysorean reforms also weakened the rigid practice of untouchability and liberated enslaved communities from Brahminical bondage.

With the restoration of pre Mysorean landlord dominance under Company protection, resentment grew among the Mappilas and lower classes. Their anger soon translated into organised resistance against both colonial authority and landlord oppression, leading to a series of Mappila outbreaks in the early nineteenth century. These uprisings were met with severe repression, as the East India Company deployed military force and dismissed the protests as "fanatic riots" against British officials and landlords. Religion became a powerful ideological framework for resistance. Mappila fighters who perished in the struggle were venerated as *suhadakkal*, and memorial festivals known as *nercha*²² provided occasions to honour their sacrifice. The

padappattukal of the Mappila community further sustained the collective memory of these heroes, ensuring that the spirit of resistance continued to resonate across South Malabar throughout the rebellion²³.

The colonial administration relied on the support of influential Malayali elites to implement the project. On 20 April 1927, the District administration convened a meeting at the residence of Rao Bahadur Appu Nedungadi, attended by C. G. Tottenham and R. Lescher, the latter serving as Secretary and Treasurer of the Hitchcock Memorial Committee. By this time, the committee had already raised 7,679 rupees through contributions from the police and donations from prominent natives, with expectations of reaching a total of 10,000 rupees. At this meeting, the location of the memorial was debated. The first proposal was Ottupara Hill at Malappuram, but the final decision placed the monument at the **junction of the Manjeri–Malappuram–Ootacamund** main road, approximately twenty five miles from Calicut, ensuring maximum visibility. The committee requested that the Public Works Department be entrusted with the construction. It also resolved to allocate surplus funds to the upkeep of the Hitchcock Police School in Malappuram and to Mappila scholarships²⁴. Several prominent figures—including Mankada Krishna Varma Raja, Kalladi Moidutty, and M. Narayana Menon—abstained from attending the meeting. Although these individuals had supported colonial measures against the rebels of 1921, their absence reflected an awareness of the potential popular anger surrounding the memorial project.

The proposed site for the erection of the Hitchcock Police Memorial was the triangular junction at Valluvambram, where the Kozhikode–Ooty Road diverges into the Manjeri–Nilambur–Ooty Road and the Kozhikode–Palakkad Road. Archival records indicate that Rao Bahadur Mankada Krishna Varma Raja, Khan Bahadur Kalladi Moidutty, and Police Chief M. Narayana Menon were members of the memorial committee. This location was deeply symbolic. Valluvambram lay at the threshold of rebellion affected regions, straddling the Ernad and Valluvanad taluks. It was also an *amsam* division in Ernad, closely associated with the Pookkottur War of 1921, where Mappila fighters clashed with British forces. Pookkottur, situated nearby on the Kozhikode–Palakkad Road, became a landmark of

resistance. Although the British succeeded militarily, they remained haunted by the possibility of renewed uprisings in Malabar²⁵.

This anxiety was a major factor behind the decision to erect the Hitchcock Memorial at Valluvambram. The site functioned as a symbolic gateway into a terrain of suspicion and resistance, and the memorial was intended to serve as a visible warning. By commemorating Hitchcock, the colonial state sought to remind the public of the brutal consequences of defiance—mass imprisonment, deportation to the Andaman Islands, and the massacre of large numbers of rebels at the hands of the police.

Before the construction of the Hitchcock Memorial at Valluvambram, the District Magistrate summoned the chiefs of local mosques and prominent Mappila leaders of Pookkottur to the regional court at Malappuram. They were formally warned of the consequences of observing *nercha* festivals in memory of fallen martyrs or of disseminating anti government messages among the people. To reinforce this warning, a notice in Malayalam was issued by J. A. Thoran, District Magistrate of Malabar, and affixed at key public locations in Pookkottur. This act of surveillance and intimidation underscored the colonial state's determination to suppress collective remembrance of the *Suhadakkal* and to prevent the resurgence of *anti-government mobilisation* in the aftermath of the Malabar Rebellion of 1921²⁶.

The Socialists and younger members of the Indian National Congress rallied behind Subhas Chandra Bose when he assumed the presidency of the organisation. Inspired by this spirit of contesting colonial memorials, the Socialists—who had gained influence within the Congress movement in Malabar—launched several struggles to expand their mass base. One such campaign was the demand to remove the Hitchcock Memorial at Valluvambram. This agitation, known as the “Hitchcock Smaraka Satyagraha Pracharana Jatha,” was announced for 23 December 1938. Twenty volunteers, all Congress members, were selected to participate in the disciplined march, each wearing a badge supplied by the Satyagraha Committee²⁷. A notice published in the newspaper *Prabhatham* invited applications for volunteer work by 15 December 1938²⁸. The movement was led

by prominent Socialist leaders, including A. K. Gopalan and Muhammed Abdurahiman Sahib, then President of the Indian National Congress.

The march from Kozhikode to Valluvambram, under Gopalan's leadership, became a powerful act of resistance. Its protest song gained wide popularity in Malabar, vividly recounting the cruelty of R. H. Hitchcock, who had overseen the massacre of hundreds of Mappilas and the imprisonment and deportation of many to jails and the Andaman Cellular Prison²⁹. Along the route, the marchers received enthusiastic receptions from local communities, reflecting broad public support³⁰. To further mobilise opinion, the Satyagraha Committee published a pamphlet on the Hitchcock Memorial, documenting the people's opposition since its erection. The pamphlet condemned the memorial as a symbol of colonial repression, commemorating a police chief responsible for the murder, imprisonment, and transportation of Mappila rebels on charges of treason³¹.

Immediately after the announcement of the Satyagraha march against the Hitchcock Memorial, the British police began harassing local communities, interrogating them about who was responsible for organising the protest. The newspaper *Prabhatham*, in its issue of 28 September 1938, reported that several secret police personnel visited places such as Pookkottur to identify those behind the agitation³².

Meanwhile, the Malabar District Board Council, the elected body governing the district, passed resolutions demanding the removal of the memorial, which had come to symbolise police brutality against the Mappila people. Although the Council's powers were limited by colonial restrictions, its representatives voiced popular grievances and adopted resolutions opposing the imperial state's curtailment of civil liberties. At its meeting held at Koduvayur on 25 October 1938, the Council passed significant resolutions—calling for a ban on liquor, temple entry rights for untouchable communities, and universal suffrage for all adult citizens in Malabar. Among these, a resolution presented by P. V. Kunhalan specifically urged the British government to dismantle both the Hitchcock Memorial at Valluvambram and the Malabar Rebellion Memorial at Kozhikode, which honoured police

officers notorious for the killing, imprisonment, and deportation of Mappila rebels during the Malabar Rebellion of 1921³³.

Despite these demands, the Hitchcock Memorial remained at Valluvambram even after Indian Independence on 15 August 1947. In 1948, the Madras Government issued an order to remove the memorial and relocate it to the Malabar Special Police camp. However, this directive was never implemented, and the memorial remained at Valluvambram until 1969. The Communist Party, which held a majority in the Malabar District Board, passed a resolution urging the Madras Government to remove the Hitchcock Memorial before the formation of the united Kerala in 1956. When the first government of United Kerala, led by the Communists, came to power, it opened the Malabar Special Police with sufficient Muslim appointments—reversing the colonial ban that had excluded Muslims from serving in the force³⁴. When the Left returned to power again in 1967, it revived plans to dismantle the Hitchcock Memorial. The decision was implemented, and the memorial was shifted to the Malabar Special Police Camp at Malappuram³⁵. In its place, the Government of Kerala resolved to construct a new memorial at Valluvambram to commemorate the cruelty inflicted by the colonial regime on the people of South Malabar during the Malabar Rebellion of 1921. This initiative continued the long standing Socialist and Communist opposition to the Hitchcock Memorial and reflected their commitment to honouring the memory of the rebellion. Under the ministry of E. M. S. Namboodirippad, Imbichi Bava, a senior Communist leader and Minister for Transport, spearheaded the construction of the new memorial. It was designed to recall the Wagon Tragedy of 20 November 1921, when seventy prisoners were deliberately confined in a railway parcel wagon during transfer to distant prisons, resulting in mass suffocation and death. Although freedom fighters had long demanded a memorial for these martyrs, the demand remained unfulfilled until 1969. The Kerala Government finally erected the ‘Wagon Tragedy Memorial Bus Stop’ at Valluvambram, built in the form of a railway wagon, and inaugurated it on 15 June 1969³⁶.

Despite these developments, senior officers of the Malabar Special Police continued to venerate R. H. Hitchcock even after

independence. In 1988, they restored the Hitchcock Memorial at the MSP Parade Ground in Malappuram. This act provoked widespread public criticism, and the memorial was once again dismantled and relegated to a vacant space within the police camp³⁷.

The Hitchcock Memorial remained a focal point of public debate from the moment the idea was conceived, and its contested presence endured until its final demolition in 1988. The fragments of the dismantled memorial are still preserved within the police camp, standing as silent remnants of colonial memory. They continue to await the possibility of renewed political debate over R. H. Hitchcock and the brutalities inflicted upon the masses of British Malabar.

The history of the Hitchcock Memorial demonstrates that monuments are never static; they are dynamic sites where power, memory, and resistance intersect. Initially erected to glorify colonial suppression, the memorial quickly became a focal point of nationalist agitation, symbolising the brutality of the empire rather than its valour. Its relocation to the Malabar Special Police Camp and eventual demolition in 1988 underscore the enduring contestation surrounding colonial symbols in independent India.

By tracing the memorial's afterlife, this study highlights the politics of commemoration in Kerala: how imperial monuments were resisted, reinterpreted, and replaced by memorials to indigenous struggles such as the Wagon Massacre³⁸. The Hitchcock Memorial thus stands as a case study in the transformation of public memory—where colonial authority sought permanence, but popular resistance ensured its impermanence. The Hitchcock Memorial is not merely a relic of empire but a lens through which we can examine the contested politics of memory in colonial and postcolonial Kerala. Its story affirms

that the afterlife of empire is written not in stone but in the struggles of people who refuse to let monuments dictate history.

Endnotes

- 1 See for details *Old Fort William and the Black Hole*, GICPO- No. 6888, I.R.D, 23.02.1904 in Partha Chatterjee, *The Black Hole of Empire: History of a Global Practice of Power*, Princeton University Press, 2012.
- 2 The *Prabhatham* newspaper of the 1930s provides ample evidence of the emergence of people oriented movements in Malabar under the leadership of the Socialists, aimed at drawing the Mappila community into the broader national struggle. Muhammed Abdurahiman Saheb emerged as a central figure in organising these efforts, acting as a committed disciple of Subhas Chandra Bose and channelling his vision into local mobilisation.
- 3 Dr Jadunath Sirkar, a prominent historian of India, criticised the act of destroying historical objects and wrote an article about this. He said that ‘the mark of a civilised society is to preserve the memorials of historic continuity, because every generation is the cumulative product of the lives of the generations that have gone before it.’ See Dr Jadunath Sirkar, ‘Statues of Foreigners’ in *The Modern Review*, Vol. 93, No.2, February 1953, pp. 423-424.
- 4 Vernacular newspapers in South India had charged R H Hitchcock for the murder of seventy people in the Railway Wagon massacre in the month of November 1921. *Sutandiran*, a newspaper, reported on 3rd September 1922 that R. H. Hitchcock was responsible for all the colonial cruelties inflicted upon the people in Malabar, as he was the Superintendent of Police in the District. And the newspaper charged that ‘the thief had become the judge’ for appointing the same responsible officers for enquiring into police atrocities in colonial Malabar. See *Sutandiran*, 3rd September, 1922, MNNPR, Tamil Nadu State Archives.
- 5 The Cenotaph pieces kept at the Malabar Police Camp at Malappuram show that R H Hitchcock died on 31st August 1926.
- 6 File No. G1(a)-24514/2017/M dated 30th August 2017 of the Malabar Special Police, Government of Kerala, gives a detailed description of the service of R H Hitchcock in the history of Malabar.
- 7 R. H. Hitchcock’s book on the Malabar Rebellion is titled *A History of the Malabar Rebellion, 1921*, first published by the Superintendent, Government Press, Madras in 1925. It runs to about 340 pages and was later reprinted under the title *Peasant Revolt in Malabar: A History of the Malabar Rebellion, 1921*, by Manohar Publishers, with editions in 1983, 2019, and, most recently, in 2026.
- 8 A special police wing called Malappuram Special Police was formed at Malappuram in 1884 to curb the outbreaks of the people against the colonial government. By the outbreak of the First World War, the army of the Madras Government stationed in Malabar was withdrawn to serve in other parts of the country. Thus, the police force in Malabar was handling the anti-state rebellions in Malabar. When organised resistance against the government began, the Madras government decided to form a 300-strong Malabar Special Police in 1921. David Arnold, ‘The Armed Police and Colonial Rule in South India. 1914-1917’ in *Modern Asian Studies*, II, I, 1977, pp. 101-125.
- 9 See File No. G1(a)-24514/2017/M dated 30th August 2017, *op. cit.*
- 10 See *Official Guide: The British Empire Exhibition 1925*, Printed and Published by the Heetway Press. The book was the result of the Empire Exhibition held

at Wembley in Britain in 1924. Also see B D Garga, *From Raj to Swaraj: The Non-fiction Film in India*, Viking, 2007. This exhibition displayed images from the 'Malabar Rebellion Film' produced by the British Government, which demonstrated the colonial state's victory in suppressing the people's resistance in Malabar in 1921.

- 11 Many agitators were arrested by the police in Madras city for taking part in the Neill Satyagraha protest, which was supported by M K Gandhi. The Indian members of the Madras Legislature had passed a resolution to remove the statue from the city of Madras. Later, the statue was removed to the Ripon Building Campus and later to the Madras museum when the provincial government under C. Rajagopalachari was sworn in. At present, the Neil Statue is preserved in the Anthropology section of the Government Museum, Chennai, Tamil Nadu. For details, see Neill Statue Satyagraha, www.wikipedia.org, accessed at 3.30 PM on 12th June 2026.
- 12 *Yogakshemam*, 18th April 1928.
- 13 The Malayalam term 'suhadkkal' refers to martyrs who died for their faith among the Muslims of Malabar. By the nineteenth century, the Mappila community had begun to commemorate the heroism of these martyrs through *nercha* festivals, which became important occasions of collective remembrance. These practices not only celebrated sacrifice but also served to sustain memory and reinforce the spirit of resistance against colonial domination.
- 14 A similar memorial was constructed by the government at Tirurangadi in South Malabar after 1921. It was in the name of William John Duncan Rowley, an Assistant Superintendent of Police of Palakkad, who was killed at Tirurangadi during the Mappila Rebellion on August 20, 1921. He was aged 28. Similarly, a memorial stone was erected in the name of many Malayali people who were also killed during the police operation of the British government during the 1921 event. These memorials were established for those people who fought and died for the empire. Similarly, a public well was dug at Anakkayam in memory of the police service of Chekkutty, a Mappila who was murdered by the people under the leadership of Variyankunnath Kunhahamed Haji during the 1921 Rebellion in Malabar.
- 15 MSP Disposal File No. 148/28 dated 13.09.1928, Kerala State Regional Archives, Malappuram,
- 16 Letter received by E H Colebrooke, Assistant Commandant of Police, Malabar Special Police, from Barton Sons and Company on 20th December 1926. Kerala State Regional Archives, Kozhikode
- 17 Letter received by E H Colebrooke, Assistant Commandant of Police, Malabar Special Police, from the P. Orr and Sons Company, Madras, on 23rd December 1926. Kerala State Regional Archives, Kozhikode
- 18 An amount of Rs. 7679 was collected from various police staff of the Malabar District by April 1927. The 'Police Hitchcock Memorial Fund' was deposited in the Kozhikode Branch of the Imperial Bank of India. See Letter from the Kozhikode Branch of the Imperial Bank of India dated 6th July 1927. See MSP Disposal File 128/48. Kerala State Regional Archives, Kozhikode.
- 19 *Yogakshemam*, a magazine of the Namboodiri Yogalkshema Sabha operating at Thrissur, reported this news on 18th April 1928. Also see MSP Disposal File 128/48. Kerala State Regional Archives, Kozhikode.
- 20 Letter from Lescher of Nilambur expressing interest in establishing a proper memorial at Malappuram itself and opposing the site of Valluvambram selected by the Malabar Special Police. See the letter from R J Lescher of Nilambur to G

- R F Tottenham dated 26 October 1927. MSP File Collection, Kerala State Regional Archives, Kozhikode
- 21 Letter from Lescher of Nilambur dated 26 October 1927. MSP File Collection, Kerala State Regional Archives, Kozhikode. Lescher acted as the Secretary and Treasurer of the Memorial Committee)
- 22 The Mappila community had begun to commemorate the heroism of these martyrs through *nercha* festivals, which became important occasions of collective remembrance.
- 23 There are studies by M Gangadharan and Robin Jeffrey about the *nercha* festivals in Malabar and the Mappila *padappattukal* through which a new genre of memory and history was created by the Mappila people to fuel the continuous struggle against colonialism and landlordism in Malabar.
- 24 Malabar Special Police Disposal File No. 148/28. Dated 13.09.1928, Kerala State regional Archives, Kozhikode.
- 25 *Ibid.*
- 26 Notice issued by J A Thoran, District Magistrate of Malabar, dated 26 April 1922. MSP File Collection, Kerala State Regional Archives, Kozhikode.
- 27 A Socialist magazine in Malayalam, *Prabhatham*, published a report on the protest march in its issue dated 2nd January 1939.
- 28 A Socialist magazine in Malayalam, *Prabhatham*, regularly published report about the protest march and the journal was published from Kozhikode. .
- 29 It is said that the song was written in the traditional *patappattu* style of South Malabar, which represented the oral way of transmitting the history of British cruelties in Malabar against the Mappila community. The song is believed to have been written by a Socialist and a school teacher named Kambalath Govindan Nair under the title 'Eranattin Dheermakkal' (Brave Sons of Eranad). A Malayalam magazine, *Desabhimani*, was banned by the British government in 1944 for publishing this song. This song is published along with the details of the Hitchcock Memorial in K J George Francis, *Keralathile Police Sanghatana: Oru Sathyanveshanam*, Kochi, 2013, pp. 29-30
- 30 See *Prabhatham*, 2nd January 1939.
- 31 The *Hitchcock Smarakam*, pamphlet in Malayalam published for the 'Hitchcock Satyagraha Committee' by the publisher of *Yuvalokam*, printed at the Empire press, Kozhikode, 1938.
- 32 On 19th September 1928, a team of police people from Malappuram reached Pokkoottur visited the village to find people supporting the Satyagrahi volunteers. They visited many places including the sites in South Malabar where clashes had occurred between the police and the people. See *Prabhatham*, 26th September 1928, p. 17.
- 33 Detailed news was published in the *Prabhatham* on 31st October 1938, p. 20.
- 34 The Joint meeting of the Thiruvithamcore Kochi, Malabar organs of the Communist Party had issued a resolution during the twenty-fifth year of the Malabar rebellion of 1921, declaring that the struggle was an integral part of the freedom struggle against the imperial rule and the ordinary people had to suffer severe experiences because of the brutalities of the colonial police and their agents. This was a strong statement that the 1921 rebellion was not a Communal action by the Mappila people alone, but a movement against colonial rule, like the Civil Disobedience movement. See *Desabhimani* newspaper 15-23 September 1973.
- 35 See in K J George Francis, *Keralathile Police Sanghatana: Oru Sathyanveshanam*, Kochi, 2013, pp. 29-30.

- 36 The same Bus Stop is present at the same stop with a marble plate with the details that the foundation stone was laid down by Sri, Imbichi Bava, Minister for Transport on 15th June 1969.
- 37 See K J George Francis, *Keralathile Police Sanghatana: Oru Sathyaveshanam*, Kochi, 2013, pp. 29-30
- 38 The murder of seventy people in a railway wagon during the Malabar rebellion of 1921 is recorded in colonial records as 'Wagon Tragedy'. This is challenged by recent works which argue that this was a planned murder of the people captured by the British police as prisoners were dumped in a closed railway wagon during transportation to faraway prisons. For details, see Dr Sivadasan. P, *Wagon Tragedy: Kanavazhiyile Koottakuruthi* in Malayalam, National Book Stall, Kottayam, March 2015.

Dr. Sivadasan P

Senior Professor

Department of History

University of Calicut

India

Pin: 673635

Email: sivadasan@uoc.ac.in

Ph: +91 9447101158

ORCID: 0009-0007-4217-5158