

Matancherry. T.M.Abu formed a group and beat up these soldiers and stopped this misbehaviour. Then in 1944 T.M.Abu resigned his P&T job in the govt. His father was very sad and died in 1945. In 1945 he joined CPI as a wholetimer. In 1946 T.M.Abu started work with the legendary TU leader of Kerala i.e. George Chadayamuri in the Cochin Port & Cargo Labour Union. T.M.Abu was made Gen-Secretary and George was the President. It was the time when Achutanandan was the State Gen-Secretary of the party. The first demand over which T.M.Abu began his TU work was for end of the contract system for the port and dock workers. The British govt. rejected it though they were regularising port and dock workers in UK. Then RIN Mutiny took place and the famous Punarpayalar struggle and uprising took place in the heart of rural Kerala. Party was underground and everybody was evading arrest. After independence on 15 August 1947 all arrest warrants against the communists were withdrawn. But then Calcutta congress of 1949 took place and BTR replaced P.C.Joshi and started the armed revolution against the 'running dog of imperialism' i.e. PM Nehru. In 1948 the GOI passed the Dock Workers Regulation of Employment Act but the party being underground thus they could not do much for workers through it.

In 1949 all including T.M.Abu were arrested and remained in jail for over 2 and a half years. The TU movement was lost in some ways to them due to the fact that much of the main leadership was behind bars. After coming out of jail in mid-1951 T.M.Abu started work in the port and dock workers. From then have been in the struggle of the port workers till today. In 1960s and late 50s became a key functionary of the TUI in WFTU that deals with ports and docks. In 1969 was elected as Councillor of the Cochin Corporation. Later became Gen-Sec and President of the All India Port and Dock and Waterfront workers Federation and remained there for many years. Apart from the Port and Dock workers T.M.Abu was also President of the State Headload Workers Federation and also Cochin Fishery Factory Workers Union. Also was office bearer of many Shipping and Transport companies workers. Now trying to influence the State government to declare the Cochin port as an international port like Vizag because Cochin is only 8 nautical miles from all the major world sea routes that pass from the East to the West. This according to Abu would help the population in Kerala gain lot of jobs. T.M.Abu was once also the Mayor of Cochin. Overall T.M.Abu is one of the towering leaders of the port and dock workers of Kerala and being from the Muslim community and a committed communist makes him one of those rare TU veterans.

#### (12) K.C.MATTEWS

K.C.Matthews is another veteran TU leader of Kerala and has also a unique place in Kerala's rich TU history. He was born on 8<sup>th</sup> September 1924 in Trichur. He was his father's first child and studied his primary education in Trichur. His mother died when he was only 9 years old of pneumonia and typhoid. Father worked as an engineer in the British camp. It was difficult for him to bring the children up so he put them in a boarding school. Then studied in MCC Madras. Those years i.e. 1939-40 were very turbulent as national movement was at its peak. Joined MSO which was affiliated to AISF. Then did B.A. from Allweyae. Formed CPI cell in college. In 1940 became CPI member. In 1942 CPI was legalized. Went on a one day hunger strike in his college. On 9<sup>th</sup> Aug. 1942 all leaders were arrested. In protest the college AISF organised protested and they were arrested. Then suspended from college as he from AISF issued some

statements against C.P.Ramaswamy Iyer. In 1943 started working with AITUC as assistant to the office secretary and first was sent to work with Coir Workers. At that time there were over 50,000 coir workers. Then started organising struggles for them on issues like working hours and increase in wages and lot of other issues of coir workers. In 1946 the Diwan called a Tripartite. K.C.Matthews organised the workers against the sudden declaration by the maharaja that he will not be part of the Indian Union. In this struggle over 100 were killed by the maharaja's police. K.C.Matthews was targetted by the kings police and arrested in 1946 for 2 years RI. Got released on India's independence day. In 1948-49 K.C.Matthews organised armed raids into police offices one the BTR line came into being. In that armed raid to get out some arrested comrades K.C.Matthews himself was arrested. In jail by judgement for 7 years but actually insided from 1950 April to 1957 April. When the first EMS govt. came to power in 5<sup>th</sup> April 1957 that the detainees of BTR 's armed struggle got released. Once out started working in TU. Became President of KSTC union . Then became president of Kerala State Electricity Federation and was one of its founding fathers in 1970. Then was Vice-President of National Federation of Road Transport Workers for over 15 years. In 1984 Gen-Secretary TUI Transport in WFTU. Was also in many committes of ILO. Thus K.C.Matthews is one of those towering figures know particularly in the left circles for his historic role in the armed struggle launched by the CPI in 1949 under BTR and later also CR.

(12) K.C.MATTHEWS, Ernakulam.

K.C.Mathews is a legend of a trade unionist in Kerala. He is in his 80s but is of very excellent health. He is famous for his role in organizing armed raids into police stations during the post-1949 period when the CPI had decided that the only way out was total armed revolution and for this all the symbols of the GOI led by an imperialist lackey called Nehru should be destroyed. K.C.Mathews led many such raids on police stations and after that was arrested in April 1949 and remained in jail till 1957 when the EMS govt. came to power in Kerala. This was really one of the main reasons for his legendary status in Kerala. However he did a lot of TU work and is a bhismapitama in that respect too. He led the Coir Factory workers which numbered over 50,000 even in those days and led many of their historic strikes which had a lot of violence too in it. In fact the coir workers struggle in Kerala is also legend and K.C.Mathews is regarded as one its towering leaders of yesteryears. Then after the party split and formation of CITU K.C.Mathews revived and in fact kept up the AITUC in 60s, 70s, and 80s. The other unions he led were the Kerala State Transport Employees Union for more that 15 years. Then similarly for over 15 years he led the Kerala State Electricity Federation. Similar was the case in National Federation of Road Transport Workers Union. Then he was TUI Gen-Secretary of transport in the WFTU and was leading over 20 million transp

ort workers worldwide. He thus became a collosus as far as transport workers is concerned. Then he led the Aluminium workers and FACT workers of Allwaye and various other unions, though the above were his main. Thus the interview with K.C.Mathews proved very insightful as far as labour history is concerned and lot of useful information was got.