



The Malabar Rebellion

What is Malabar Rebellion?

The Malabar Rebellion, also known as the Moplah Riots of 1921 was the culmination of a series of riots by Mappila Muslims of Kerala in the 19th and early 20th centuries against the British and the Hindu landlords in Malabar (Northern Kerala).

It was an armed revolt. It was led by Variyamkunnath Kunjahammed Haji.

The Course of rebellion

- ✓ The trigger of the uprising came from the Non-Cooperation Movement launched by the Congress in 1920 along with the Khilafat agitation.
- ✓ The anti-British sentiment fuelled by these agitations affected the Muslim Mapillahs (also known as Moplahs) of south Malabar region of Kerala.
- ✓ New Tenancy Laws: After the death of Tipu Sultan in 1799 in the Fourth Anglo-Mysore War, Malabar had come under British authority as part of the Madras Presidency.
 - The British had introduced new tenancy laws that tremendously favoured the landlords known as Janmis and instituted a far more exploitative system for peasants than before.
 - The new laws deprived the peasants of all guaranteed rights to the land, share in the produce they earlier got and in effect rendered them landless.

The Communal Angle

Most of the landlords were Namboodiri Brahmins while most of the tenants were Mapillah Muslims.

The Revolt

Fuelled by the fiery speeches by Muslim religious leaders and anti-british sentiments, the Mopillahs launched a violent rebellion. Numerous actions of violence were reported and series of persecutions were committed both against the British and the Hindu landlords.

Support

In the initial stages, the movement had the support of Mahatma Gandhi and other Indian nationalist leaders, but as it turned violent they distanced themselves from it.

Collapse

By the end of 1921, the rebellion was crushed by the British who had raised a special battalion, the Malabar Special Force for the riot.

Wagon Tragedy

In November 1921, 67 Moplah prisoners were killed when they were being transported in a closed freight wagon from Tirur to the Central Prison in Podanur. They died of suffocation. This event is called the Wagon Tragedy.