

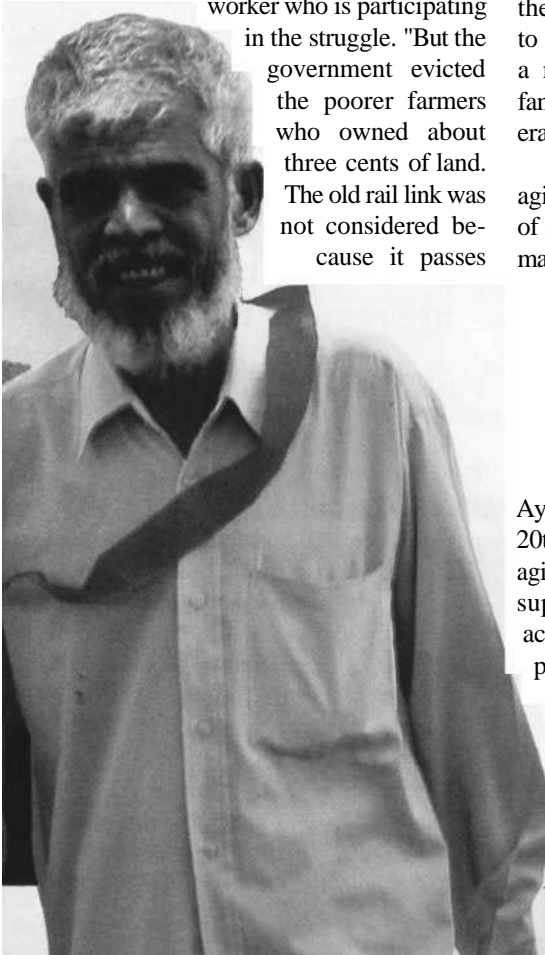


like Jayasree come from families of traditional Left supporters and are not anti-Marx in their beliefs. A reason why the CPM has branded them as Maoists.

**I**N THE heart of Kochi, a few yards from the High Court, a land struggle is being fought by 40 families evicted from Moolampally village to make way for the proposed multi-crore Vallarpadom Container Terminal. The families were forced out of their homes in the dead of night when they refused the compensation offered to them. "We are not against the terminal, but we demanded proper rehabilitation and tax exemption for the compensation package. But the government action was vengeful," says Francis Kulathingal, the leader of the agitation. Chief Minister VS Achuthanandan called the agitation a handiwork of Naxalites but retracted the statement the very next day after civil society groups rose in outrage.

"You can ensure road and rail connectivity to Vallarpadam terminal without evicting any of Moolampally's residents. Revival of the old rail link to the defunct Ernakulam Rail Good Yard was suggested as one alternative. It needed no acquisition and the expenses were also lesser," says CR Neelakantan, a social worker who is participating

in the struggle. "But the government evicted the poorer farmers who owned about three cents of land. The old rail link was not considered because it passes



through an area owned by Hindustan Lever where the company is planning to build posh apartments and villas."

Valanthakkadu is another hub of public anger against the LDFS development agenda. Located two kilometres from Moolampally, the entire Valanthakad island is being sold off to a Bangalore-based real estate developer for a multi-crore "knowledge city". Around 40 families of Dalits have been evicted and several hectares of mangrove forests razed.

Farmers at Mooriyad in Thrissur began an agitation last year to protect about 11,100 acres of rice fields from brick makers, sand mining mafia and tile factories by holding portraits of

### The entire Valanthakad island is being sold to a real estate developer for building a 'knowledge city'

Ayyankali, a Dalit social reformer of the early 20th century. The CPM cadre retaliated by damaging Ayyankali's portraits. "With the CPMS support, the mafia has already ruined 4,000 acres of rice fields," says Varghese Thoduparambil, leader of the farmers' front there.

The strong resistance in Chakkamkandam village against the setting up of the Guruvayur temple towns sewage treatment plant in their locality, the tribal uprising in Aralam in Kannur demanding distribution of

land of a loss-making public sector unit among landless tribals, the struggle by Dalits in Chengara near Pathanamthitta demanding the ousting of a powerful plantation group from government land after the lease period was over, movements against illegal clay mining in Mangalapuram in Thiruvananthapuram and in Kollam, the struggle against a proposed hydel electric project at Athirapally - such resistances are fast eroding the CPMS mass base.

"Farmers were committing suicide in Wayanad because of debt. The CPM only shed crocodile tears," says AC varkey, leader of the Farmers' Relief Forum in Wayanad, a district that has competed with Vidharbha and Anantapur for headline space in news media for "farmers' suicides".

According to social activist R. Ajayan, the Plachimada struggle against Coca Cola and the Kasargod struggle against pesticide giant Endosulphan were inspirational. Coca Cola was left trying to convert its bottling plant into a mango juice production centre, and Endosulphan has been banned in the state. Similarly, even though cases are still pending against about 300 activists, a polluting pig breeding centre at Kainoor in Thrissur has been shut down. The agitation against illegal bauxite mining in Kasargod is also gaining in strength.

But the CPM continues to be one-eyed. In December last year, its cadre in Chinnakanal in Idukki grabbed government land occupied by landless tribals at the behest of the tourism lobby.

