Biographical Notes

Arangasamy Naicker, 1884-1947; land lord; President of the Karaikal Harijana Seva Sangh; popularized Charka, Kadhi and organized reading rooms; extended his helping hand to the labour movement of 1920s and 1930s; editor of the journal called Kudiarasu; elected as the Mayor of Tirounallar commune (Karaikal); hoisted Indian National Flag on municipal office on 15 August, 1947 (Indian Independence Day).

Aurobindo Ghosh, 1872-1950; extremist in Indian National Congress; took refuge at Pondicherry in 1910; started an Ashram in Pondicherry; strong advocate of the concept of double nationality-both French and Indian- for French India.

Bharathidasan, 1891-1964; a Tamil poet in Pondicherry; original name K. Kanakasuburatham, popularly known by his penname Bharathidasan; influenced by nationalist poet Subramania Bharathi; propagated the need for a change in the social structure; his writings are noted for their banter and satires against existing caste distinctions; editor of the journals Puduvai Murasu and Kouyil; a pro-French activist adhered to the Dravidian ideology.

Bholanath Das, one of the members of the Radical Society at Chandernagore along with Bonomali Pal, Sadhucharan Mukharjee and Satish Sur; started an agitation demanding an equal number of representatives for Chandernagore in the Representative Assembly.

Crocicchia, served as French Governor in French India between 1936 and 1937; during his tenure French India witnessed political violence and caste war which resulted in the exodus of large number of people from Pondicherry to the adjoining British Indian territory.

Desbassayns de Richemont, served as French Governor 1825-27; famous for his educational and land reforms in French Establishments in India; made considerable effort to change the Establishments into commercial centres.

(Count) Desbassayns de Richemont, son of the former Governor Desbassayns de Richemont; a liberal; elected as Député from French India to the French Chambre des Députés in 1871; elected as Sénateur of French India in 1876; brought many of the political and social reforms of the Third Republic to French India.

Emile Hecquet, founded the French-Indian Liberal Party in 1870; dominated French Indian politics in the late nineteenth century.

Gallios-Monthbrun, politician; prominent in French Indian politics in the late nineteenth century; conservative and opponent of French Assimilation policy in India; founded Conservative Party in 1871 and fought for French settlers’ interests in French India.

Henri Gaebelé, leading industrialist in French India; dethroned Shanmugam Vellayuda Modeiliar from French Indian politics in 1908 and had uninterrupted sway in Pondicherry politics for another 20 years; safeguarded the French settlers’ interest in French India.

Henrique Duluc, French man and a radical; editor of the Journal *La Politique Coloniale*; elected to the French Assembly from French India in 1898 and1902; opponent of the French assimilation policy in India; advocated association rather than assimilation.

Jawaharlal Nehru, 1889-1964; freedom fighter; first Prime Minister of India and first Minister of External Affairs (1947-64); architect of Non-Aligned Movement; an ardent democrat, internationalist, advocate of scientific method and modern technology; held a high opinion of French culture and French democratic institutions; interested in establishing a cultural centre in Pondicherry so that Pondicherry remains a widow to the French culture; solved the French Indian problem in an amicable manner contradictory to the contemporary world practice; visited Pondicherry in 1936 and 1956.

Jules Godin, Paris based lawyer; liberal and a friend of Ponnuthambi Pillai; elected as Député from French India to Paris in 1875; brought more assimilation through the Act of Renonciation of 21st September 1881 for the benevolence of French Indian society.

Justin Godart, Senator, a labour representative, had been sent from France by the council of Ministers in 1936 to tour all the French Indian settlements to study the social and labour problems; based on his report a benevolent labour code for French India was passed in April 1937.

Joseph David, Franco-Indian; lawyer and labour leader; dominated French Indian politics in 1920s and 1930s; founded the Franco-Hindu party in 1930 and became the Mayor of Pondicherry in 1935; during his tenure Pondicherry witnessed large scale political violence.

Lecour, business man of Nantes; first elected member (through universal Franchaise) from French Establishments in India to the French Constituent Assembly in 1849; secured his victory by a secret alliance with the notables of Pondicherry on the agreement that he would act according to their wishes.

Lemaire, Governor of French India, 1904-5; sent back by Shanmuga Vellayuda Modeliari in a disgraceful manner; his return to the French Indian politics in 1906 marked the decline of Shanmugam’s political regime; elected as Député in 1906 in the midst of a caste war between upper-castes and lower-castes in Pondicherry and a war of communalism between Hindus and Muslims in Karaikal.
Leon Blum, leader of the Socialist party in France (Section Française de L'Internationale Ouvriere); well known in French India for his reforms especially for his labour legislation designed to protect native rights.

Louis Rassendran, land lord and politician in late nineteenth century Pondicherry; leader of the high-caste Christians; associate of Ponnuthambi Pillai Laporte; became the leader of the Renonçants since the death of Ponnuthambi Pillai in 1886; member of the French India Conseil Général and Conseil Local.

Ponnuthambi Pillai Laporte, 1832-1886; belonged to a powerful Vellaja caste-Christian community in Pondicherry; had his education at Petit Séminaire at Pondicherry and got a degree in law; went to Paris; passed his higher degree exam at a time when getting degree in Law was considered to be the highest level of education; joined the civil service as an interpreter of police in 1853; promoted in 1856 to the post of interpreter in chief of the Tribunals; emerged as a leader of the Christian community in Pondicherry; entered politics in 1870; pro-assimilationist; brought many social reforms for French Indian society from the Third Republic in association with Jules Godin; elected to Conseil général and Conseil local of Pondicherry and virtually dominated the French Indian politics until his death in 1886; has a street in Pondicherry named after him; donated his property for the benevolence of Christians and the French Indian society.

Piere Alype, 1846; born on 24th February 1846 in Reunion Island had education in Paris; started his carrier as a journalist in the Journals ‘La Cloche’, ‘Le Siècle’; editor of the Parisian journal France d’outre-mer; anti-assimilationist and traditionalist; entered French Indian politics in 1881; elected as Député of French India, 1881, 1885, 1889 and 1893.

Sandouodéar, born in 1821; was the eldest son of a retired Thassildar (tax collector) of Villianor town; well educated; in Pondicherry he worked in different government offices and in 1856, t he age of 35, acquired left Pondicherry to Martinique and then to Paris; by virtue of the different positions he held, somewhere in 1960 acquired the post of Professor of Tamil at Collège de France in Paris; involved in active politics in French India from 1871 to 1914.

Sellane Naicker, 1884-1965; qualified for Certificate d’études Primaires Elementaire in 1896, joined Collège Colonial in 1898 and studied Latin and French; took his degree in law in 1909 and received practical training in the law college at Aix-Marseille in France between 1909 and 1910; practiced as a lawyer in Pondicherry court; nominated as a senior advocate in 1919; honoured with the title Chevalier de la Légion d’Honneur in 1931 for his outstanding contribution in the field of law and administration; leader of the Vannia caste; served as Municipal Councillor from 1919 to 1925; became Mayor of Oulgaret Commune in 1928; elected to the Conseil Général in 1919 and held many designations in the French Indian administration; founded the Popular Party in alliance with Joseph David in 1922; later formed a Franco-Hindu Party in 1928 along with Thomas Aroul and Joseph David; a staunch nationalist; became the leader of the merger movement as the President of the
Pondicherry Merger Committee in 1952; founded the Pondicherry National Congress in October 1954 to fight against the opportunist politicians.

**Selvarajulu Chettiar, 1901-1938:** businessman who flourished as a Contractor, Stevedore, Dubash and leader of Mukkuvar (Fishermen) caste; served in the Financial bureau in the French Indian administration; a political boss in Pondicherry and a friend of Joseph David; became President of the Pondicherry Conseil Général and Conseil Local; assassinated on 17 December, 1938 by a communist called R. Ramaiyya.

**Subramania Bharathi, 1881-1921:** famous Tamil journalist, poet, patriot and philosopher; sought refuge from British oppression in Pondicherry in 1908; edited the journal *India* and spent his time writing brilliant poetry and prose.

**Shanmugam Vellayuda Modeliar, 1845-1908:** popularly known as ‘Nadou’; born in a powerful Vellaja community of Pondicherry; had education at Colonial College at Pondicherry; land lord, head of the Hindus and emerged as the prominent politician in French India in the late 19th century; traditionalist and anti-assimilationist; controlled the reins of French Indian politics well over 30 years (1875-1908); the French Government honoured him with the title Chevalier de la Légion d’Honneur for his outstanding contribution in the field of politics and administration in 1894; has a street in Pondicherry named after him and a Siva temple constructed on his grave.

**Subbiah V., 1911-1993:** labour leader and Communist; had education at Petit Séminaire and College Calve; organized a Youth League in the year 1931 along with other Students Associations of Colonial College and Calve College; organized a strike for the introduction of compulsory primary education in the French language and in the vernacular languages spoken in the respective territories; member of the Indian National Congress during 1930-42; started the Mahajana Sabha in 1937 in Pondicherry; started the French India Communist Party in Pondicherry in 1942; as Secretary of Harijan Siva Singh (1933-42) was responsible for the uplift of villagers, opening of night schools etc.; started the National Democratic Front in 1945; as a Depute of the French Parliament (1946-1948) his political objective was to fight for autonomy within French-Union; started campaigning for total liberation after 1948; Indian Government issued a warrant against him in 1948; re-entered Pondicherry only a week before the de facto transfer of power on 1 November, 1954.