TOWARDS FULFILMENT:

MANIFESTATION OF A SEPARATIST DEMAND
The demand for separate Tamil Nadu and its political expression of it, was definitely, the product or outcome of the spark of the anti-Hindi agitation. However, the combustible content had accumulated over a long period from its early days. The "attacks on yamuna dharna and emphasis on the Dravidian cultural tradition and its distinctiveness from Aryan cultural tradition led ideologically to emphasis on Tamil language and politically to the demands for a separate Dravidanadu".¹

For the first time when the stir against the Hindi imposition was growing into a popular movement coinciding with the Justice Party's leadership breaking up, consequently a virtual Tamil Party emerged. The Kudi Arasu had carried "Tamil Nadu for Tamilians" message in bold letters.² Subsequently in the next issue, E.V.R.


2. Kudi Arasu, 16-10-1938, PRLRC.
in the editorial explained in detail, about the necessity of this separation demand as a only solution to keep and preserve the Tamils identity against the exploitation of the Aryans and of the north. Soon after S.V.R.'s bold declaration, the activists, sympathisers and several Tamil scholars who of late began to associate themselves with the started emphasising the need for the Tamils to exist, as a separate country from the rest of India. At the Fourth Madras Province Tamils' Conference held on 27th December 1938, under the Presidentship of Kumararaja Muthiah Chettiar, the Tamils' flag bearing the emblems of the three glorious Tamil kings (Chera, Chola and Pandya) of the hoary past, was hoisted, because they were considered to be the independent Tamil kings of the southern India which represent from main Dravidian linguistic groups, namely, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada of today. In the 1930's in addition to the existence of both English and north Indian capital, the

new class of enterprising people hailing from the Brahmin community, to determine the economy of the Presidency in the fields of industry, trade, business and commerce had emerged, and as a result, the Tamils' capital which was growing under great constraints already had to encounter a new competitor, the Brahmin, in their ventures. Therefore, Kuthiah Chettiar and R.K. Shanmugham Chettiar, and others, the representatives of the Tamils' capital, to eliminate the newly emerged competitors, along with the north Indian capitalists, not speak of the British capitalists, as they were a far superior force to reckon with, had considered it an opportunity to actively associate themselves with the hope that if it was materialised, they would become the sole dictators of the Tamils' economy.5 There was a considerable curiosity among the learned public about the new demand of the SRM. Doubts were raised about the relevance of the terminology used and about the constituent bodies of such a country.

5. Pulamai (Bi-lingual) (Madras), 1979, p. 658.
5a. Bagner Hellman's article, "The Self-Respect Movement in South India".
5b. Nisarg (Monthly), June 1973, P. Ramamurthy's article "Darsha Inapprachanalyum Dravida Iyakkamam",
In an interview with *The Mail* held on 15th November 1939, K.V.R. had explained that all four linguistic groups of the Madras Presidency excluding four princely states would constitute the Tamil country which was a collective name recognized as Dravidanadu. Thus the demand for the "Tamil Nadu for Tamils" was replaced or substituted by "Dravidanadu for Dravidians" in the true sense of the word.

Thenceforth the "Dravidanadu for Dravidians" became the slogan and propaganda issue of the GRM.

A map of South India covering even the princely states of Hyderabad, Mysore, Cochin and Travancore printed in 1934 by George Philips Company, London, was released and published in the Kudi Arasu of 3rd December 1939, ostensibly with an intention to establish its claim over such a Dravidian region. At the Madras Province Fifteenth Justice Conference held at Thiruverur in Tanjore district on

- Hyderabad (Telugu), Mysore (Kannada), Cochin and Travancore (Malayalam) were princely states hence does not constitute the Madras Presidency then.

24th and 25th August 1940, under the Presidentship of E.V.R., the demand for a separate state for the Dravidians was unanimously made by the participants. Along with the Kudi Arasu, to carry this propaganda and other ideals of the SRM with socialist overtones, C.N.Annadurai started Dravidanadu, a Tamil weekly in Kancheepuram in 1941.

The SRM was compelled to seek the help and co-operation of the Muslims in Tamil Nadu, as they were next to the non-Brahmin community in terms of population. After becoming the President of the Justice Party, whose saddles were by then filled with sufficient self-respectors, E.V.R. had focussed the mission of the SRM on two specific issues. They were:

1. Abolition of compulsory study of Hindi
2. Attainment of a separate Dravidanadu-independent of North India.

Kudi Arasu, 25-8-1940, PRLRC.
As a result, the SRM could not find time to work for its social reform ideals as before. A section of the self-respectors and sympathisers who sincerely worked for the abolition of Hindī, could not digest this perceptible deviation from the SRM’s stand. Moreover they considered the demand for a separate Dravidanadu an impossibility. A section of the non-Brahmin Congressites and socialists who turned sympathisers of the SRM during its anti-Hindī struggle, found in its separatist demand under-current of anti-congress and anti-imperialist sinister designs to restore the defunct Justice Party in Tamil Nadu. On the other hand, by July 1938, an unbridgeable ideological gap had occurred between Mahatma Gandhi of the Indian National Congress and Muhammad Ali Jinnah of the Indian Muslim League. Thus when the former development had produced an unfavourable climate, the latter situation had given an opportunity to take it as an ally to boost the morale of the SRM. The feelers sent by the SRM to the Muslim League were responded

to and it (SRM) secured the necessary moral support from
the Muslims for its cause. But the support remained non-
committal. By way of acknowledging the successful
mission undertaken by B.V.R. as leader of the anti-Hindi
struggle, the compulsory Hindi C.O. was withdrawn by the
Government of Madras in 1940. Jinnah of the Muslim
League had sent a telegram thus:

Your magnificent stand sacrifices for people
at last secured justice. My congratulations.
Compulsory Hindi cancelled, Jinnah. 9

The SRM’s attempts to find an identity with Jinnah
and Muslim League, even after the latter declared its
celebrated idea of separate Pakistan in 1940, did not
succeed and it (SRM) felt isolated with its own
separatist demand. However, a section of the Tamil
speaking Muslims in Tamil Nadu, had expressed their
solidarity with the SRM against Brahmin or Aryan
domination in all walks of life. 10 C. Rajagopalachari

9. **KUMARARAO, 3-3-1940, PRLRC.**

10. Negan, Mahboob, "Tamilianakku Thunivaan Islamiyane?
did not like to see the S.R.M. trying to associate itself with the Muslims. He expressed his personal view point to the effect that the demand for a separate Dravidanadu was more important for South Indians than Pakistan for Muslims. E.V.R., while thanking him said, his scheme was worth considering. With the available support and sympathy the S.R.M marched forward to the Sixteenth Conference of the South Indian Liberal Federation (Justice Party) which was held at Salem in the last week of August 1944 and changed the name of the party to Dravida Kazhagam (Dravidian Association). The change in nomenclature of the Party to chaste Tamil, seemed to have attracted more number of Tamil chauvinists and the lovers of Tamil Renaissance to work for its ideals.

S.N.Ammadurai in a series of articles and speeches had reiterated the demand for a separate Dravidanadu. Like Kaivalyam Swamiar, who gave a valuable intellectual support to E.V.R. on social and religious


matters in the formative years of the SRM. C.N. Annadurai, excelled his predecessor, by not only helping E.V.R. to shape his rugged philosophy but also innovative in the techniques adopted to popularise it. As a spokesman of the SRM, he gave the geographical expression and the mode of Government the Dravidanadu might take thus:

We demand separate Dravidanadu. It is our aim to establish an independent Dravidian Federation. The Telugue, Malayalees and Kannadigas would join us, because, Tamil is the root language for them. The four language divisions constitute the Federation. But each language, like Tamil, would maintain its identity as a separate language of the division. This is independent from the Delhi rule. That is nothing short of the present Madras Presidency.13

During the anti-Hindi struggle, the SRM could successfully enlist the support and participation of the more number of middle and backward caste non-Brahmins, hitherto not dreamt of by any other Movement in Tamil Nadu. For

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the struggle for a separate Dravidanadu. C.N. Annadurai desired to mobilize the support of the oppressed section of the non-Brahmin society also, against all sorts of exploitation unleashed by the Brahmins, the north, the Congress and the British Government. He tried to instigate the masses as how the Dravidanadu was economically swindled and drained by the north-Indian capital. He alleged that the Dravidanadu was systematically given step-motherly treatment, in trade, industry, commerce and business by the central government and the Congress government and particularly the Congressites in Madras, had accentuated this process of draining Dravidanadu. In fact, the Dravidanadu had been made a virtual market-place for the north-Indian products. "To change this situation, we demand a separate Dravidanadu where we can utilize the available resources for our progress and development independently", he said.\(^\text{14}\) Regarding the treatment and position of the Aryans or Brahmins in such a Dravidian Federation, C.N. Annadurai expressed the view of the

They can live with us. Their domination in any field will not be allowed. They can earn their livelihood like other Dravidians. 15

But when the Madras Mail subjected the demand for the complex question of defence and the still more complicated problem of an independent Dravidandu's relations with other countries, including the rest of India, the advocates of the separatist demand seemed elusive and found it difficult to tackle the question. 16 Even the Dravidandu issue, visualised by E.V.R. was "based on a vague and contradictory formulation; it was geographically otterminous, with the Madras Presidency which was a multilingual entity (comprising the coastal and Rayalaseema districts which now comprise Andhra Pradesh; the Tamil districts which now constitute Tamil Nadu, the Malabar area of present day Kerala and the South Kanara district of Karnataka). Thus a large section of the Dravidian

15. Ibid., p. 45.
people who did not live in Madras Presidency and belonged to the Hyderabad, Mysore, Travancore and Cochin principalities were not covered by the demand for secession proceeding even the Pakistan demand of the Justice Party.

"Again, the demand was not for a federation of the peoples speaking the four Dravidian languages. Nor was it a demand based on the cultural identity of the four language nationalities that inhabited the peninsular south. It assumed that the Tamils were more Dravidian than the Telugus, Malayalees and Kannadigas. Nevertheless, it was a significant demand to the extent it was the first demand of the Muslim League", 17 As for the contention to stake its (the SRM) claim for the separate Dravidanadu that the State was economically drained by the capital of the North Indians was found untrue by P.Ramaswamy, a veteran Marxist of Tamil Nadu. According to him, it was the British capital in collaboration with the American and other imperialist

countries that determined the economy of not only Tamil Nadu but also the whole of India. In fact, all Indians had been subjected to economic swindling at the hands of the foreign capital and investment, he said. He declared:

The Zamindars, land-lords, farmers and labourers of Tamil Nadu belong to one race. Other than any struggle that would not bring socio-economic liberty to the oppressed race would not be a racial struggle. Instead it would result in the exploitation of the farmers and other workers at the hands of the land-lords and the imperialists. So, any racial struggle that hampers class-struggle in the society should not be permitted. 18

Thus the political analysts and others who professed opposing ideologies, dismissed the SRM's demand for Dravidanadu as a form of 'midsummer madness'. But the Madras Mail, seemingly, a newspaper which remained neutral to an extent (because, it published all shades of opinion of different parties in the Presidency) expressed the hope that the work of the advocates of Dravidanadu might be by their own extravagancies and that in the end

the robust common-sense of a policy of all-India unity
defeat them. It attributed the cause of the separation
demand to the attempt by the intellectually favoured to
secure control of the sources of power, to obtain monopoly
of administrative office, and stated that if this was
removed, the tendency to separation observable in North as
in South India, in Bengal as in Madras, might be combated
and the chances of united India made brighter.19 This
clearly indicates the powerful influence of the emerging
middle class in the Movement to put forth a demand of
this type.

Thus, the SRM, which appeared as almost 'a
middle class' in composition and structure, was the first
ever Movement in the whole of India, because, unlike other
Movements, it exhorted the racial and linguistic feelings
and sentiments supplemented by a territorial demand for a
separate Dravida Nadu or Tamil Nadu. This quest for a
separate identity was born more out of emotion than out of
reason as the then extant societal conditions proved.

19. Fortnightly Report for the second half of November,
1944, D.O.No.F.4-23, 7-12-1944, TNA.