

CHAPTER II

PERIYAR MOVEMENT AND THE JUSTICE PARTY

Periyar Movement differed from the Justice Party both in its mode of appeal and to the communities it hoped to reach. The tone of propaganda of movement and the Justice Party were conditional by the type of leadership as well as by the membership. The Justice Party leadership was drawn mostly from the landowning class, the zamindar class and the merchant class and from the middle and the upper middle class castes such as the Vellala, the Chettiar and the Naidu, which had a high ritual status, wealth and education, compared to other non-Brahmin caste groups.¹

The Periyar Movement chiefly represented the socially and economically backward non-Brahmin castes. Likewise, they espoused the cause of the meagerly paid agricultural labourers and unskilled workers mainly drawn from depressed castes in rural and urban areas. The Periyar Movement publicised the social and economic discontent among the backward castes and at the same time enlisted their massive support.² The South Indian Liberal Federation came into being to promote the political interests of non-Brahmin caste Hindus. This Federation became popularly known as the Justice Party. In December 1916, the Party issued the non-Brahmin Manifesto, surveyed the conditions of the non-Brahmin communities, and pointed out the suggestions for the their

¹ Eugene F. Irschick, *Politics and Social Conflict in South India, The Non-Brahman Movement and Tamil Separatism 1916-1929*, California, 1969, p.334.

² Krishnasami, M.S., "Marainta Mavirar" *Kuttuci Gurusami Ninaivu Malar*, Madras, 1966, p.84.

advancement. The propaganda machinery and the enthusiasm of propagandists brought successes to the party in the elections.³

The party's only newspaper, *The Justice*, went into liquidation. Soon after that Raja of Bobbili started *New Times* in early 1933. Even the paper was not popular among a section of the Justicites because it was the mouthpiece of the Raja rather than the organ of the party.⁴ Faced with these handicaps, the Raja had no choice but to seek an informal political alliance with Self-Respect Movement which would provide the necessary propaganda as a weapon to fight against the Congress party.

The primary concern of the leaders of the Justice Party in 1934 was to improve the public image of the party in order to contest legislative assembly elections. The Justice Party accepted the Self-Respect Movement's Erode programme to over-ride the orthodox Brahmin opposition and the atheistic propaganda was carried on. Nevertheless the political understanding between the Self-Respect Movement and the members of the Justice Party, contrary to the expectations of the Raja, neither strengthened the party nor consolidated its position in subsequent elections. Instead, Periyar's entry into the Justice Party helped his emergence as a political force in the Madras Presidency.

In their searching analysis of Congress candidates, the Self-Respect Movement did not spare the *sanatanists* or the orthodox Brahmins for their opposition to the Sarda Act and the Temple-Entry Bills; the former sought to

³ "The Non-Brahmin Manifesto", *Justice Party Golden Jubilee Souvenir*, Madras, 1968, pp.3-4.

⁴ *Madras Mail*, Madras, 20 September 1933.

prevent child marriages and the latter tried to lift the ban on the temple-entry of depressed castes. As the Brahmins opposed these social acts on the basis of the Hindu scriptures, the followers of the Self-Respect Movement despised both the scriptures and the Hindu religion for their sectarian bias.⁵ Ignoring the main issue whether the electors should decide for or against the Justicities, the non-Brahmin electors overwhelmingly responded to the call for *swaraj* by electing Congress candidates.⁶ Periyar had an idealistic view of the functions of the Self-Respect Movement in society and wished to see it turning into a great social movement, devoting its energy to shape the cultural life of the people on non-sectarian lines, removing the inegalitarian aspects of the institution of caste and religion in society.⁷ On the other hand, Ramanathan, one of the close aides of Periyar opposed his efforts because he neither liked the idea of the Self-Respect Movement nor its organisation being used to strengthen the Justice Party.⁸ But when the Justice Party and Self-Respect Movement came closure in politics, Ramanathan lost his faith in Periyar and left the party in 1935 along with his followers. He became the minister for Public Information and Administration in C.Rajagopalachari's ministry from 15 July, 1937 to 29 October, 1939. Periyar continued his support to Justice Party and he was elected as its President when he was in jail in 1938 for the anti-Hindi agitation.⁹

⁵ *Madras Mail*, Madras, 20 November 1934.

⁶ *The Hindu*, Madras, 20 November 1934.

⁷ Under Secretary's Safe File No. 896, 30 June 1934.

⁸ *Madras Mail*, Madras, 16 November 1935.

⁹ *Fortnightly Report*, First Half of June 1938.

Periyar Movement possessed valuable political assets in their agitational abilities and their style of anti-Brahmin invective. As a result, Periyar was able to get support from Justice leaders in 1930 and instructed Self-Respect volunteers to work for the success of Justice Party candidates in the Legislative Council elections. When preparing for the Central Legislative Assembly elections in November 1934, Justice Party candidates, particularly A. Ramaswami Mudaliar, sought of Periyar's monetary support. But it was often hard to separate agitational skills from counter productive invective. Much of the Self-Respect propaganda for Justice Party candidates contained violent abuse of Brahmins and their religion. It was disadvantageous for the Justice Party because Brahmins were allowed to join the Justice Party by a decision of October 1934. But the move forced S. Kunjitam and S. Guruswami's wife to argue that they did not wish to destroy Brahmins; they wanted to destroy Brahminism that is nothing but Hinduism.¹⁰ Even more confusing was the fact that Self-Respect volunteers campaigned actively for a Brahmin *sanathanist*, Rao Bahadur G.Krishnamachari, backed by the Justice Party for the Tanjore-Triuchinapalli seat. G.Krishnamachariar was the President of the local *Varnasharma Swarajya Sangam*, had earlier, held the seat and was supported by *Varnasharamites* and *matadhipatis*. He was also a wealthy *mirasdar* in Triuchinapalli and Tanjore and was elected. All three Justice Party candidates lost, but Periyar continued to support the Justice Party and urged his supporters to do so as well.

¹⁰ *The Hindu*, Madras, 16 June 1930.

P. Jeevanandam, a member of the Nanjilnad peasant caste and a communist agitator of Nagercoil in Travancore State opposed Periyar's reversion to the Justice Party in February 1935. At a conference of Self-Respect Movement at Tiruturaipundi, Tanjore district in February, 1935, P.Jeevanandam led a revolt against Periyar whom, he claimed, had betrayed the movement. Periyar openly admitted in the conference that he had abandoned socialist propaganda because of government's harassment and he left the conference early because he found himself in a difficult situation.¹¹ In April 1935, the dissident group within the Self-Respect Movement arranged a meeting in Tiruchinapalli and formed the Self-Respect Socialist Party to work in co-operation with Congress; though, it was suggested that they might actually join the Congress Socialist Party, they did not decide to do so until November 1935.¹² Periyar's decision to support the Justice Party candidates in the 1934 election to Central Legislative Council helped to capture the uneasy balance, which had developed since his return from Europe.

At the most local level, Self-Respect meetings and activities continued to give access to government's favour. For instance at a Self-Respect meeting in Virudhunagar in March 1935, attended by the Justice Party Education Minister S. Kumaraswami Reddiar and the Raja of Bobbili, S.A. Muthu Nadar, editor of the *Nadarkulamithiran*, moved a resolution demanding the removal of the punitive tax levied on Aruppukottai residents. Muthu Nadar, with the help of

¹¹ *All India Congress Committee Papers*' File, New Delhi, 1936, p.79.

¹² Baker.C.J., *The Politics of South India*, 1920-1937, New Delhi, 1976, p.525.

W.P.A. Soundarapandian secured government's recognition for a school at Aruppukottai.¹³ May Day celebrations were also held in Aruppukottai.¹⁴ It was the result of involvement in the election campaign for the Central Legislative Council. Congress candidates like T.S.S. Rajan spent much time in travelling to combat a strong opponent.¹⁵ A. Sathyamurti, in 1935, attempted to get all potential voters to register themselves as a way to enhance Congress prospects.¹⁶ Various boards were established in 1935 and 1936 to involve local leaders consequently.¹⁷

Many Justice Party members joined the Congress. Members of the United Nationalists who opposed the Justice Party too joined the Congress simultaneously. However, new recruits were made for the Self-Respect Movement. For instance, George Joseph, a Justice Party member came over to Congress in 1936 because it became apparent to him that only by changing his affiliation he could be elected to the Palayamkottai Municipal Chairpersonship.¹⁸ P.Subbarayan, the leader of the United Nationalists joined the Congress in order to extend his political career.¹⁹ Periyar as the leader of the Self Respect Movement, in July 1936 told that, if the Congress Party would accept the principle of communal representation and the social reconstruction programme of the Justice Party, he would readily sign the Congress creed and persuade the

¹³ *The Diary of S.A.Muttu Nadar*, Viruthunagar, 30 March 1935.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1 May 1935.

¹⁵ Rajan.T.S.S., *Ninaivu Alaikal* (T) Madras, 1947, p.276.

¹⁶ *The Hindu*, Madras,9 January 1935.

¹⁷ All India Congress Committee Papers file, New Delhi, 1935, p.19

¹⁸ *The Hindu*, Madras, 24 August 1936.

¹⁹ *Madras Mail*, Madras, 2 July 1936.

members of his party to do likewise. The Congress leaders were unwilling to espouse the apparent social goals of the Justice Party and its Communal Government Order.²⁰ Minister of Information S.Ramanathan under the Rajagopalachari ministry in 1937, left the Self-Respect Movement and joined Congress in 1935.²¹ Because of the trait of being intransigent, stubbornly refusing to compromise with Periyar, new powers devolved. Congress leaders like Sathyamurti drew larger crowds than the Justice leaders. Part of the attraction of Congress leaders came from their increasing control of local bodies. But their popularity also stemmed from the fact that some of these individuals deliberately created images of themselves which were of least, partly based on the Gandhian model.²² This image was cultivated even among the newly joined Congress men. For instance, K.D. Sivasubramania Aiyer, a property owner in Tanjore spoke of his spirit of self-denial and in the promotion of public welfare, which the Congress demonstrated.²³

LOCAL BASES OF POWER

One of the main reasons for the rise of Congress in Tamilnadu and in the Madras Presidency was the decay of the Justice Party control over its local bases of power. In an attempt to stop the march of Congress into these local bodies, the Justice Chief Minister, the Raja of Bobbili, worked for the local self-government machine for all it was worth. For instance, Bobbili appointed

²⁰ *The Hindu*, Madras, 31 August 1936.

²¹ Viswanathan.E.Sa., *The Political Career of E.V.Ramasami Naicker-A Study in Politics of Tamilnadu, 1920-1949*, p.196.

²² Morris James.W.W., *Politics and Society in India*, New York, 1962, p.141.

²³ *The Hindu*, Madras, 4 August 1936.

Municipal Commissioners to supervise the Congress Municipal Councils, of Madurai.²⁴ That procedure led to fights and disagreements which put the Congress in more difficult situations. Unfriendly Municipal Councils to the Justice regime were suspended.²⁵ He delayed the elections and divided the districts to create more district boards in Tanjore, Salem, Coimbatore, North Arcot and Chingleput. Lord Erskine, the governor of Madras, described the way of Bobbili, as manipulated system. If the Congress won the election then the minister postpones, as he had the power to do, the entry into office of the new board and issues an order allowing the old board to carry on for a month or so. During that period attempts were made to induce various members of the new boards who were elected as Congress candidates or independents to change their allegiance and vote for a Justice Party President when the time came for the new. When the board was bifurcated, the Government nominated persons to represent minorities if the circumstances required it.²⁶

In Tanjore District, when the District Boards were divided, one of the Chairpersonship elections went to the Congress and the other to the Justities. Bobbili was determined to do everything at his disposal to put down the threat of local Congress victories. In 1935, Justice Party leaders sought to organise local support for the party in Virudunagar, Salem, Tiruchinapalli and Coimbatore.²⁷ A Justice Party meeting at Guntur pledged Rs.100000 of which Rs. 25, 000 came

²⁴ Baker, C.J., *Politics of South India*, 1920-1937, p.271.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.272.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 272-273.

²⁷ *The Hindu*, Madras, 17 July 1935.

from Raja of Bobbili himself,²⁸ only Rs. 89,000 was actually collected.²⁹ Paid organisers were appointed under the leadership of Periyar. Both before and after the Guntur Conference, volunteers under the direction of Periyar's Self-Respect groups spoke on behalf of Justice Party candidates.³⁰ However, the continued unwillingness of the Justice Party leaders to accept the atheistic and socialist goals of the Erode Programme of Periyar caused a great deal of distress among the local Self-Respect leaders. In August 1935, in a meeting of Self-Respect Movement in Madurai, it was resolved that they would not support the Justice Party candidates, if the Erode Programme was not accepted by them. Though the Justice Party finally adopted the Erode Programme in November 1935, it was hardly noted by Justice leaders afterwards. Nevertheless, the Self-Respect leaders propogandised for the Justice Party. Periyar, C.D. Nayakam and W.P.A.Soundarapandian undertook tours of in the entire Tamil districts.³¹ However, the former Self-Respect leader, S.Ramanathan who became a member of the Congress, criticised the participation of his former Self-Respect colleagues in political activity.³²

Local elections held late in 1935, after the adoption of the truncated 'Erode Programme' by the Justicites and electoral tours of various Justice leaders, indicated that the Justice Party preparations and the structural situation were not sufficient. One of the most important effects of the legislation of local

²⁸ *Fortnightly Report*, First Half of October 1935.

²⁹ Viswanathan.E.Sa., *op.cit.*, p.194.

³⁰ *Kudi Arasu*, Madras, July 14 1935

³¹ Baker.C.J., *op.cit.*, p.14

³² Viswanathan.E.Sa. *op.cit.*, p.196.

boards in the Madras Presidency during the 1930 was to destroy the basis of much of the easy control, which the Justice Party leaders had over their local supporters. Many local boards were saddled with Municipal Commissioners who prevented the chairperson from continuing the level of influence. In 1934, Taluk Boards were eliminated and District Board members were elected directly. Moreover, Chairperson of the District Boards could be ousted by votes of no confidence from the board members. The frustrations caused by these new regulations raised political temperatures. Justice candidates and their supporters found it difficult to manage the system.³³ Opposition groups who had smoldered during the 1920s considered a closed justice system that used some of the dissatisfaction with the prevailing justice hegemony to bring Congress factions into many local bodies.³⁴ Looking back over the local elections of 1935 and 1936, T. Prakasam, an Andhra Congress leader, described the situation in a way that when the Congress resolved to capture these bodies with a view to prevent corruption and purify them and strengthen its own position, there was necessarily a rush to the Congress ranks when applications were called for membership. It was difficult to distinguish bona- fide applicants from false persons.³⁵

The electors voted to Congressmen with large majorities; everyone was forced to recognise that unless he seeks election on a Congress ticket, he does not have even a ghost of a chance to be returned. Such false men created

³³ Under Secretary's Safe File No: 897, 20 December 1934.

³⁴ *Baker.C.J. op.cit.*, p.14.

³⁵ *G.O.No.470*, Public Department, 22 March 1935.

troubles.³⁶ One such person was M.D.T.Kumarasami Muddaliar, a descendant from a family of Tondaimandala Vellalas called the Dalavais who acted as renters under the Nawab of Arcot in the late eighteenth century. A big private choultry in Sivalapperi, in Tirunelveli district, which was their home district, had an annual income of Rs. 20,000 in the early twentieth century and was controlled by the family.³⁷ It owned other properties too. Kumaraswami Mudaliar as a leader supported the Justice Party until 1935. On 26 November, 1935 he signed the Congress pledge and on the next day itself he was elected president of the Tirunelveli District Board on the Congress ticket.³⁸ In the election to the District Boards in Karnool, Anantapur and Chittoor in Andhra, the Justice Party won narrow majorities but just before the election of the president, all these majorities melted and the official Justice Party candidate for chairman lost the election.³⁹ The flood of entrants into the Congress Party and resultant victories in the local elections were apparent in late 1935 and early 1936. At the same time like many of the elections to the Legislative Council in 1920, there was considerable confusion as to what Party label the candidates adopted either before or after the elections. Some candidates were elected on the Congress ticket subsequently. Somasundara Bharati was in the Congress Party during the 1920s. who continually made attempts in the Congress to make Tamil a political instrument. Trained and earning his living as a lawyer, Somasundara Bharati

³⁶ *The Hindu*, Madras, 18 August 1936.

³⁷ Pate, H.R., *Madras District Gazetteers: Tirunelveli*, Madras, 1917, p.485.

³⁸ *Madras Mail*, Madras, 25 November 1935.

³⁹ *NNPR*, First Half of November 1935, pp. 198-99.

published a Tamil classic, *Tamilaham* in 1912, made an attempt to demonstrate the cultural independence and antiquity of the Tamils.⁴⁰ He was also able to get a resolution passed in Congress meetings of 1919, that political meetings should be carried on in Tamil and not in English.⁴¹ In seeking permission for the Vaniga Chetti, an oil-pressure caste, to enter the temple of Thiruchendur in Tirunelveli district, he affirmed that the right of temple entry should be open to all. After the foundation of Annamalai University in 1929, he was appointed Professor of Tamil. He resigned from the position and discontinued his active connection with the Congress. Uma Maheswaran Pillai, like Somasundara Bharati, was a lawyer. During 1920s and 30s he was an important worker of the Justice Party and was the President of the Tanjore Taluk Board. He was a president of his own community association. He presided over the Agamudaiya Conference in Ramnad in 1929. He helped to foster the growth of the Karantai Tamil Sangam in Tanjore and encouraged the study of Tamil.⁴² He was active in Tamil *pandits* meeting at Tiruchinapalli and provided food and lodging for a Saiva Siddhanta Conference in Tanjore. As a lawyer, he defended Periyar against a liable charge made against him by the *mirasdar* of Needamangalam.

On 21 April 1938, the Madras Government under C.Rajagopalachari passed an order introducing the study of Hindi, compulsory in certain secondary schools in the Presidency.⁴³ Conferences were organised to popularise the goal

⁴⁰ Engene F. Irschick., op.cit., p.285.

⁴¹ *The Hindu*, Madras, 25 June 1919.

⁴² *The Almanack 1929*, Madras, 1929 p.123.

⁴³ G.O.NO. 911, Public Department, 21 April 1938.

of the Anti-Hindi Movement. In the first meeting at Tiruchinapalli K.A.P. Viswanathan got an opportunity to expose his organising spirit. On 28 February 1938 an Anti-Hindi conference was held in Kanchipuram under C.Sambasiva Chettiar.⁴⁴ K.V.Reddi Naidu, an uncompromising critic of C.Rajagopalachari, questioned the very hypothesis of a common language formula. He questioned whether a common language was essential and indispensable in a federal country like India for the assimilation of its people for developing their sense of patriotism or for the solidarity of the nation.⁴⁵ Though he was a Telugu, he gave the presidential address in English in praise of Dravidian culture and Tamil. Dr. P.Subbarayan, the Congress Education Minister, remarked that simply hearing Reddi Naidu as champion of the cause of Tamil against Hindi in English made him feel that Tamil was the alien language.⁴⁶

When the Justice Party in Madras city formed a boycott committee on 1 June 1938 the movement began to pick up momentum. They picketed the private home of the Congress Chief Minister, C.Rajagopalachari, at Mambalam. In addition they organised pickets in front of the Board High School at Thiruvavarur, Tanjore district and at the Hindu Theological High School, Madras where Hindi was taught. Salem town was also the scene of considerable disturbances. Periyar, a radical leader with leftist convictions, was elected as Justice Party's leader in 1938, when he was in jail due to anti-Hindi agitation. He enunciated and propagated a theory that in the name of nationalism, a small

⁴⁴ *The Hindu*, Madras, 8 March 1938.

⁴⁵ *Madras Mail*, Madras, 28 February 1938.

⁴⁶ *The Hindu*, Madras, 4 March 1938.

group of Aryans was dominating over and exploiting a large Dravidian group.⁴⁷ Financial assistance for the movement was received from different sources. Besides small amount was collected from donors. However much of the amount was obtained from W.P.A.Soundarapandian and K.A.P Viswanathanan, which indirectly motivated the growth of the movement. When Periyar was released from prison in 1939 a number of individuals collected money and presented a purse to intensify the movement. In the mid of 1939 G.D. Naidu an industrialist and bus operator, supported the movement with financial assistance.⁴⁸

Anti-Hindi agitators who demonstrated in Madras city were not the natives of the city but were brought into the city by the Justice Party organisers and they were court-arrested. The popular leaders under arrest in the course of anti-Hindi agitation were Swami Shanmukananda, Palladam Ponnuswami, C.D.Nayakam, Swami Arungirinathar, C.N.Annadurai and K.M.Balasubramaniam. The evidences inform us that when they were questioned about why they were supporting the movement, the arrested picketers said that they earned perhaps fifteen to twenty rupees a month and that they had come to protest because they had been given money.⁴⁹ On another occasion one picketer named Ghouse Mohideen, a seventeen year old Muslim who was arrested in front of Rajagopalachari's house, had a grudge against the government for neither educating him nor

⁴⁷ The Presidential Address of *Periyar E.V.Ramasami* delivered at the Fourteenth Confederation of the South Indian Liberal Federation, Madras, December 1938.

⁴⁸ *Kudi Arasu*, Madras, 25 June 1939.

⁴⁹ *The Hindu*, Madras, 9 August 1938.

securing him a job.⁵⁰ Though these are the interesting examples of individuals who were recruited by Periyar and those who assisted him, it appears that-as one judge put it, they are people living in rural areas who are not in the same position as the people in this town who appeared to have started the agitation. The bulk of the demonstrators had little ideological coherence other than loyalty to a particular local leader.⁵¹

Already the Self-Respect Movement members, at the Viruthunagar Conference in August 1931, condemned the introduction of Hindi in national politics as a retrograde step, which would benefit only the *sanananists*.⁵² Thus, in spite of Gandhi's support, the eagerness, and the interests generated by Brahmins, Hindi could not make much headway among the large section of the people in the Province of Madras until 1937. The Justicites, the Self-Respect volunteers and the leaders of the Muslim League opposed the attempts to replace English by Hindi because to them it was a regional language spoken essentially in some provinces in the north and it was as much a foreign language as English to South Indians.⁵³ If for the North Indians English was not *swadeshi*, Hindi was *vedeshi* for the Tamils. But C.Rajagopalachari himself made it very explicit that Hindi would be taught as a compulsory subject in an extraordinary

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 12 November 1938.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 8 July 1938.

⁵² *Sanananist- A follower of Sanatana Dharma*, Orthodox religious observance: Periyar.E.V.R., *Namadu Kurikkol*, Madras, 1948, p.12.

⁵³ *Madras Mail*, Madras, 17 and 24 August 1937 and 23 February 1938.

statement made at a meeting held at Triplicane on 16 June 1938. This exposed his dictatorial attitude and much to the dismay of his political opponents.⁵⁴

C.Rajagopalachari's unpolitic statements on the sands of Triplicane beach gave a signal for the anti-Hindi agitators to intensify their campaign. Picketing became more persistent and slogans were shouted in immorderately. Slogans such as down with *poonul rajyam* and down with *uccikkudumi rajyam* were shouted much to the indignation of Brahmins. The terms *poonul*, the holy thread worn across the body, and *uccikkudumi*, a tuft of hair on the head were the characteristic symbols of the Brahmin way of life, and therefore they were drawn as verban caricatures to depict the Premier and more especially the caste he represented. These symbols were held up as objects of ridicule and the Congress rule itself was derided as Brahmin Raj.⁵⁵ The number of anti-Hindi meetings rousing the masses against the government also increased. The leaders of the Self-Respect Movement and the members of the Muslim League planned to organise a march in favour of the anti-Hindi Movement and to create greater awareness among the masses. On 1 August 1938, Periyar, Khallifullah, Vedachalam, Alagirisamy, R.Tirumalaisami, Mrs. Ramamirtham Ammal started a march to Madras.⁵⁶ One presumption of the Justice leaders was that the picketing would not only intimidate government leaders but would feed on other movements and other discontented people. After all, the number of those

⁵⁴ *The Hindu*, Madras, 17 June 1938.

⁵⁵ *Sunday Observer*, Madras, 25 September 1938.

⁵⁶ *Madras Mail*, Madras, 3 August 1938; Ilanceliyan, M., *Tamilan Totutta Mutal Por*, (T), Madras, 1940 pp.115-116.

affected by the compulsory Hindi scheme was very small. Therefore, until October, 1938 the government was able to contain the protest with ease. In October 1938 Periyar began his provocative speeches.⁵⁷ In the following month prisoners who were imprisoned for three months were released from jail. But women started to picket in Madras. On 21 November 1938 a riot took place in a procession because of the arrest of eight women. Many of those in the crowd belonged to the depressed class students from the nearby Tondaimandalam Vellala High School in the Georgetown area of Madras city. The crowd was small but the police in duty were 1,500 in number. However, some of the members of the crowd jostled a police inspector who was a Brahmin. They pelted stones on the office of *Dinamani*, *The Indian Express*, *Tamil Mani* and *Ananda Vikatan*, all the journals were the staunch supporting agencies of the Congress. A Brahmin seated in a car was attacked and pelted stones at coffee stalls of the Brahmins. Panchakashara Mudali who lived in the tense area walked on the streets with his ten associates, made remarks against the 100 or so Brahmins of Georgetown.⁵⁸ For the first time, the leaders of the Anti-Hindi Movement began to get substantive support from people who had no pretensions to higher education.

Stalin Jagadesan, a member of Self-Respect Movement from Thiyagaraya Nagar, Madras commenced a fast unto death from 1 May 1938, not only to protest against compulsory Hindi education but also to press the

⁵⁷ G.O.No:16, Public Department (Confidential), 5 January 1939.

⁵⁸ *Fortnightly Report*, Second Half of June, 27 June 1938.

government to withdraw its orders.⁵⁹ Periyar sided with the anti-Hindi campaigns and wrote a series of inflammatory editorials in *Kudi Arasu*, from 8 May 1938 and urged every pure-blooded Tamilian to rise against the Aryan menace.⁶⁰ This gave a wider fillip to the anti-Hindi agitation. L.Natarajan Parayar, an anti-Hindi agitator, picketed before the Hindu Theological High School on 5 December, 1938,⁶¹ was arrested and sentenced for seven and half months imprisonment. While he was in prison he was admitted in the General Hospital, Madras for acute stomach pain but died. According to the Premier C.Rajagopalachari, Natarajan picketed before the school because he was an illiterate. He complained that the opponents of Hindi, to carry on their agitation, exploited widespread illiteracy among the Harijans. Natarajan's custodial death was fully utilised by the agitators and Justicites to stir up popular feelings against the ministry. The action of the government created a martyr for the anti-Hindi cause and an opportunity for C.N. Annadurai to capitalise on his oratorical skills.⁶²

The most outstanding and immediate outcome of these activities was the conviction of Periyar for inciting women to disobey the day 13 November 1938, when, following the second of his speeches, the procession had formed which resulted in the riot.⁶³ Periyar was arrested and his illness caused grave concern among the Justicites. In the mean time, the Justicites received the news of the death of Thalamuthu Nadar, an anti-Hindi campaigner. Meanwhile Periyar was

⁵⁹ *Madras Mail*, Madras, 2 May 1938; *Kudi Arasu*, Madras, 8 May 1938.

⁶⁰ *Kudi Arasu*, Madras, 29 May 1938.

⁶¹ *Madras Mail*, Madras, 9 January 1939.

⁶² *Sunday Observer*, Madras, 23 January 1939.

⁶³ G.O.No. 241, Public Department, 3 February 1939.

fined Rs. 1,000 and given a sentence of rigorous imprisonment for one year. But it was later changed to simple imprisonment under public pressure.⁶⁴ One of the main goals of the anti-Hindi leaders was to force the police to act irresponsibly towards the picketers and thereby to generate support for the movement. From November 1938, to the beginning of 1939, there were many rough police activities.

There were many instances of local feelings of resentment towards the Congress government. At Salem, in October 1938, there was a clash between the police and professors in a meeting of Periyar and Somasundara Bharati.⁶⁵ In January 1939 another serious confrontation occurred between Congress and Self-Respect groups. There was wordy quarrel between Justicites and Congressmen in Viruthunagar, stones were pelted at a Congress meeting when the question of Hindi compulsory was seriously discussed. In February 1939, at Viruthunagar three anti-Hindi agitators attacked a Congress worker who was seriously wounded. By the end of February, 1939, there was so much hostility between Congressmen and anti-Hindi agitators in the port town of Tuticorin. To bring law and order situation under control the police department prohibited the public meeting and gatherings. Disturbances occurred in Triuchinapalli, Srirangam, Kumbakonam and Vellore too.⁶⁶ The entire political temperature of Tamilnadu rose, as the intensity of the struggle between Congress and the Justice Party increased and police methods became rougher and rougher.

⁶⁴ *MLAD*, Vol.XII, May 1939, p.513.

⁶⁵ *The Hindu*, Madras, 19 October 1938.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 22 April 1939.

The Congress members of the Legislative Assembly expressed their deep concern over Periyar's health who was in jail. The ministry finally released Periyar from jail without any pre-conditions.⁶⁷ On 18 June, 1938, a women's delegation led by Dharmambal met C. Rajagopalachari who assured them that no compulsion was attached to the teaching of Hindi in school.⁶⁸ The non-Brahmin Women's Conference of 1938 too protested against the imposition of Hindi in schools. Periyar addressed the conference and requested the women folk to oppose Hindi imperialism and exhorted them to arrest its expansion in the south even at the cost of their lives.⁶⁹ Mrs. Meenambal Sivaraj, wife of High Court Judge N. Sivaraj, Mrs. T. Neelambigai Ammaiyar, daughter of the Tamil Scholar, Maraimalai Adigal, attended the conference. Dr. (Mrs) Dharmambal, and other social workers. The women social workers were very much pleased with the selfless works of E. V. Ramasami for the welfare of the down trodden and women. In November 1938, a unanimous resolution was passed to confer the title 'Periyar' on E. V. Ramasami. It goes as a prefix with his name. He was simply called 'Periyar', which in English means the venerable or the great man.⁷⁰

The speech of Periyar was neither forceful nor fiery when compared with the speeches he had made on other occasions on the same subject. But the unemotional speech had its own impact. Women for the first time participated in the anti-Hindi agitation in large numbers. Five of these women, who had

⁶⁷ *Madras Mail*, Madras, 29 May 1939; Sami Chidambaranar, *Tamilar Talaivar(T)*, p.199.

⁶⁸ *Kudi Arasu*, Madras, 24 June 1939; *Madras Mail*, Madras, 20 June 1939.

⁶⁹ G.O. No.241, Public Department, 3 February 1939; *Kudi Arasu*, Madras, 19 November 1938.

⁷⁰ *Kudi Arasu*, Madras, 19 November 1938.

arranged the Women's Conference, picketed the Hindu Theological High School and they were arrested and sentenced to six weeks imprisonment. On 14 November 1938, Periyar participated in a protest meeting, organised by Tamilar Kazhagam. He extolled the heroic action of the five women who had gone to jail but made a fervent appeal to other women in Tamilnadu to emulate their spirit and come forward to defend their mother tongue from the onslaught of an Aryan and alien language.⁷¹ His clarion call had immediate effect and women from all walks of life came forward with much enthusiasm. In the Tamil districts the agitation had already caused law and order problem for the government, and the image of the Congress was tarnished. Picketing and arrests became a routine feature, and over 215 agitators were sent to jail by August 1938. Moreover, communal and racial controversies were revived to the disgust of the enlightened section of the Tamil community.⁷²

As Rajagopalachari was assuming a more authoritarian position and trying to make friends of the coercive arm of the government, opponents of the Congress ministry adopted tactics and positions which were in many ways copies of the previous Congress style in the Civil Disobedience Movement.⁷³ Anti-Hindi participants adopted the apparatus of asceticism as Swami Arunagirinathar, and fasted to coerce Rajagopalachari into canceling compulsory Hindi instruction. In August 1938, Periyar organised a march from

⁷¹ *Sunday Observer*, Madras, 20 November 1938.

⁷² *Madras Mail*, Madras, 15 August 1938.

⁷³ *Sunday Observer*, Madras, 26 December 1938.

Tiruchinapalli to Madras city to protest against the imposition of Hindi.⁷⁴ It had been first popularised by Gandhi in his Dandi march and later by Rajagopalachari in his march to Vedaranyam. The Muslim League leader Khalifullah who supported Periyar organised anti-Hindi processions in Tiruchirapalli and in other districts. It gave him an admirable position among Christians and Muslims of the Madras Province. K.V. Reddi Naidu expressed that the behaviour of the agitators against compulsory Hindi instruction was only a repetition of the method. They had been thought to look on it as a panacea for all evils lathi and cane charges by the police on innocent people, arrests and imprisonment of respectable men, raids in offices, prosecutions under the Criminal Law Amendment Act, which the Congress had always wanted to be repealed, and repression of the worst kind.⁷⁵

Rajagopalachari's perception of the government authority was not only just as authorisation as his justice and British predecessors. He was perhaps ever more authoritarian. He himself confined to the governor that strong action paid off and that the British had been much too lenient with the Civil Disobedience volunteers.⁷⁶ In January 1939, when conflict between anti-Hindi agitators and the police was at its height, Lord Erskine, the Governor of Madras wrote 'Rajagopalachari was even too much of a tray for me, for though I may want to go back twenty years, he wishes to go back two thousand and to run India as it was run in the time of King Asoka. Rajagopalachari instead of

⁷⁴ *Fortnightly Report*, Madras, Second Half of September 1938.

⁷⁵ *The Hindu*, Madras, 27 February 1938.

⁷⁶ Gopal., S., *Jawaharlal Nehru-A Biography*, Vol.I, Cambridge, 1976, p.231.

repealing the Criminal Law Act, he used it consistently against anti-Hindi demonstrators and other as well'. Though anti-Hindi prisoners were released after the expiry of terms, starting in early days of November 1938, the total number of arrests in connection with the anti-Hindi agitation rose to 831.⁷⁷ The style and effectiveness of the police under the Criminal Law Amendment Act prompted several public bodies and individuals to question the way of functioning of the police. T.T.Krishnamachari, an MLA and businessman expressed that, no one who has watched the manner in which the Criminal Law Amendment Act has operated against the misguided anti-Hindustani agitators can feel that the law is any less oppressive because it is administered by a popular government.⁷⁸

Equally important was the criticism of the members of the Congress Socialist Party. They found that police stenographers were transcribing their speeches and their movements were secretly reported to the Criminal Investigation Department. At a meeting of Congress Socialists in Tellichery in Malabar district on the West Coast a visiting leader, Dinkar Mehta said, I was very shocked.... and surprised to find that as soon as I got down from the boat at Mangalore, I was followed by the C.I.D. and inquiries were made about me as in the olden days. In spite of Ministers, these constant reminders of our

⁷⁷ *Fortnightly Report*, First Half of March 1930.

⁷⁸ *The Hindu*, Madras, 21 July 1938.

slavery are being administered to us. Is it not time that such barbarous practices are given up.⁷⁹

P. Jeevanandam, another Congress Socialist leader said, though he believed that the Congress Ministers had the right to take office he deeply resented that Rajagopalachari made attempts to imprison and detain the Socialists in Tamilnadu.⁸⁰ He declared that the Criminal Investigation Department were the eyes and ears of the government and advised the Socialists that simply giving support to the Congress ministry was not sufficient. They should conduct themselves in such a way that the doubts existing in the minds of people should be removed. Gandhi supported Rajagopalachari's action and the operation of the police to control the situation by making a distinction between laws, which were enacted to protect the foreign government, and those, which were supported by the Indian public.⁸¹ The actions of the Madras Government were perfectly justified by him. Moreover, Gandhi felt that it was insufferable that youngsters and even grown-up people should assail homes and offices and how unmentionable imprecations against those who were shouldering their burden amid the greatest difficulty. He believed that Rajagopalachari would be foolish if he did not use some of the sections of the Criminal Amendment Act and got rid of the obnoxious ones.⁸²

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 16 May 1938.

⁸⁰ *The Hindu*, Madras, 16 May 1938.

⁸¹ *Harijan*, Madras, 23 October 1937.

⁸² *The Hindu*, Madras, 10 September 1938.

On 6 November 1938, Raja of Bobbili resigned the leadership of the Justice Party.⁸³ The agitation against Hindi assumed momentum. Periyar who was imprisoned in early December 1938, was elected as the leader of the party while he was behind the bars. His presidential address was read in his absence, in a meeting and demanded a separate Dravidian State for the Dravidians. Some of the Justice Party members of Telugu districts suggested that Periyar was the most competent person to lead the party. The same opinion was also prevalent among the Justicites in the Tamil districts. P.L.Ramasami Mittadar of Pagaluatti, the president of the local branch of the Justice Party, wrote a lengthy letter in the *Sunday Observer*, in which he argued that a 'man of masses', like Periyar should lead the party if it was to survive the political crises in the Madras Presidency.⁸⁴ In April 1939, Periyar was released from prison.⁸⁵ C. Basudev, resigned from the secretaryship of the Justice Party in March 1939 and K.A.P. Viswanathan's, whose organisational skills and energy had aided the anti-Hindi Movement.⁸⁶ Periyar's position was further consolidated through the progressive Tamilisation of the Justice Party. On his release however, he quarrelled with K.A.P. Viswanathan. He selected fourteen members of the Executive Committee over the protests of P.T. Rajan. C.N. Annadurai was included in his committee and became the organising secretary. C.N. Annadurai came under the influence of Periyar, and a master- disciple relationship developed between them.

⁸³ Nikilan A.Perumal, *Bobbili*, Coimbatore, 1960, p.134.

⁸⁴ *Sunday Observer*, Madras, 13 November 1938.

⁸⁵ Sami Chidambaranar, *op.cit.*, p.8.

⁸⁶ Viswanathan. E.Sa., *op.cit.*, pp. 318-319.

Thereafter C.N.Annadurai became an ardent admirer not only of Periyar but of the social and political dogmas for which he stood. Then he became one of the leading protagonists of demand for Dravidanadu and a spirited advocate of social and economic justice in society.⁸⁷ After the resignation of the Congress Ministry in October 1939, the Justice Party Executive Committee met to decide whether it would accept office or not. Muthiah Chettiar, a Nattukottai banker wanted a place in the ministry and pushed hard to get the Executive Committee to agree to accept office. He was, however unsuccessful in the race. Periyar's will prevailed and he continued to use the party as the basis for later demands for communal arrangements over government hiring.

The Justicites elected Periyar as its leader for a second term when the Fifteenth Justice Confederation met at Tiruvarur on 24 August 1940. For the uplift of non-Brahmins, resolutions were unanimously passed in the conference. It was suggested that the provisions related to the Communal Order was to be altered so that the non-Brahmins could have more appointments both in the provincial and central services.⁸⁸

When the Second World War broke out in 1939, C.Rajagopalachari's Congress Ministry followed the British Government's decision to involve India in the war. Consequently the Justice Party was left alone in the arena of politics. Since the government withdrew the compulsory Hindi order, Periyar demanded the formation of a separate country for the Dravidians. It was vigorously made,

⁸⁷ Maraimalaiyan, A., *Peraringar Annavin Peruvalu*, (T) Madras, 1967, p.119.

⁸⁸ *Madras Mail*, Madras, 25 August 1940; Periyar E.V.R., *Namathu Kurikkol*, Madras, 1948. pp.27-29.

but it did not evoke any response beyond the Tamil districts. Even among the Tamils it did not gain as much support, as did the Congress demand for *swaraj*.

Apart from making propaganda, Periyar as leader of the Justice Party failed to build his campaign on a sound democratic basis. Periyar's leadership did not materially change the fortunes of the Justice Party. He slowly changed the Justice Party's colour, watered it down, almost elevated it and got it merged with the Dravida Kazhagam.

The Fourteenth Confederation of the Justice Party began its three-day session at Madras on 29 December 1938. Volunteers wore red shirts and were waving red flags.⁸⁹ While the Justicites concentrated the attack in their speeches on the measures adopted and the policies pursued by the Congress Ministry, the Self-Respect members played largely on the emotions of the audience. The members of the Self-Respect Movement, Alagirisamy, A.Ponnambalanar and others fanned the flame of hatred towards Brahmins by their provocative speeches and emphasised the increased bitterness that had been engendered by the anti-Hindi campaign. Tamil separatism was advocated, and the North Indians were despised for their imperialist designs.⁹⁰

According to the Justicites the Communal G.O. was not strictly followed in the public services, and in the medical services. Periyar, therefore, reasoned; 'if ninety seven percent of the people became alive to their rights and realise the

⁸⁹ No special significance was attached to the red shirt and red flag except that they were temporarily adopted as the party's uniform and flag respectively. Until then the party had no flag of its own and the union jack was hoisted at the annual confederations of the Justice Party.

⁹⁰ *Kudi Arasu*, Madras, 7 January 1939.

absurdity of the claims of the so-called superior caste and that is called communalism, I wish that we may always have that communalism as the cardinal principle of life.⁹¹ He attacked the claims for superiority by birth and not that acquired by wealth and position. Further he commented the leftists that they took a lead in organising anti-*zamindar* conferences, the Congress interested in abolishing the *zamindari* system appeared in 1938 as a measure to weaken the Justice Party which drew its leadership mostly from *zamindars*. Periyar stated that acquired superiority could be easily eradicated by legislative and other measures but the superiority in the society claimed by birth in a particular caste was to be eradicated by uniting the all the *sudras* under one organisation.⁹²

The Fifteenth Conference of the Justice Party held at Tiruvarur on 1 August 1940 resolved that for the progress and preservation of the Dravidian culture, civilization and economy, the Madras Presidency, the homeland of the Dravidians, should be separated and placed directly under the Secretary of State for India. Further it demanded separate electorate for Dravidians and Adi-Dravidas application of the Communal Government Order for appointment to government jobs and reconstitution of the State Public Service Commission with Dravidian and Muslim members, and all India services, de-Brahminisation of services, abolition of sales tax and tobacco tax protection of handloom and lessening of *marwari* business.⁹³ The conference appealed to the non-Brahmins

⁹¹ *Madras Mail*, Madras, 29 December 1938.

⁹² *Kudi Arasu*, Madras, 1 January 1939.

⁹³ Resolutions of the Fifteenth Confederation of the South Indian Liberal Federation held at Tiruvarur on 24 August 1940.

to return themselves as Dravidians, and take steps to eradicate completely caste differences among themselves.

Periyar introduced the theory of sons of the soil, and repeatedly stressed that a predominant majority of ninety seven percent of the native population was kept down by a small minority, three percent of Aryan foreigners. This was an exploitation and enslavement and was attributed to Aryan domination and not to the British rule as the same government had brought progress and advancement to the Aryans. He asserted, that it was not for want of patriotism and for the love of agitation for separation, but it was for self- preservation and self-respect.⁹⁴

To the Justicites the Congress was a Brahmin protection agency unfit to look after the vast majority of non-Brahmins. In the Executive Committee meeting of the Justice Party in October 1939 it claimed that it appealed to the British Government not to negotiate any constitutional changes with the Congress alone as this would not find the non-Brahmins in the south.⁹⁵ The decision for a separate Dravidanadu and the vigorous propaganda of Periyar were criticised by the nationalists and their press. They unanimously condemned Periyar and the Justice Party for following a retrograde policy and undermining the unity of the country. *Swadesamitran* wrote that it was not only mischievous but also dangerous especially when the Indian National Congress was demanding *swaraj* for the whole country.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Periyar.E.V.R., *Namadu Kurikkol* , Madras,1948 p.26-35.

⁹⁵ *Sunday Observer*, Madras, 5 November 1939.

⁹⁶ *Swadesamitran*, Madras, 18 November 1939.

In the first week of January 1940 Periyar went to Bombay to gain national recognition for this demand. He met Dr. B.R.Ambedkar, M.A. Jinnah and the leaders of the Muslim League and the Scheduled Caste Federation. Apart from this, Periyar had discussions with two Maharashtrian leaders, V.P.Jadev and M.R. Jeyakar. Both M.A.Jinnah and B.R.Ambedkar seemed to have given their moral support to Periyar.⁹⁷

On his return from Bombay, M.A.Jinnah's leadership and his statesmanship were praised at the public meetings of the Justice party. In return, the provincial leaders of the Muslim League gave their support to Periyar's campaign against Hindi and his demand for Dravidanadu, and they attended the public meetings. On 21 February 1940, the Government of Madras abolished compulsory Hindi education in a bid to win the co-operation of all political parties.⁹⁸ Although Hindi was abolished as a compulsory subject in the school curriculum to pacify the Provincial Congress leaders, it was retained as an optional subject in the first three forms and further grants were promised for its extension to the higher forms. As expected, both Periyar and C.Rajagopalachari expressed their general satisfaction over the decision, but criticised some of its provisions.⁹⁹ M.A.,Jinnah was the first national leader to send his congratulatory message to Periyar.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ *Kudi Arasu*, Madras, 21 January 1940.

⁹⁸ *Madras Mail*, Madras, 21 February 1940.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 23 February 1940.

¹⁰⁰ *Kudi Arasu*, Madras, 3 March 1940.

In March 1940 when M.A., Jinnah declared at the Lahore Session of the Muslim League that the Muslims should have a separate, independent nation, Periyar was the first Tamil leader in the south to issue a press statement in support of it. Thereafter Periyar began to speak more on the lines of dividing the country into three parts: Dravidanadu, Muslim India and Aryan land. He advocated the three-nation doctrine as the only solution for solving the political impasse in the country.¹⁰¹ Periyar declared in a public meeting that if the Tamils wanted to be free from the Brahmin-Banya domination in the cultural, economic and political fields, the only answer was a separate country for the Dravidians.¹⁰² With its separatist policy the Justice Party organized the Dravidanadu Partition Day celebrations throughout the Province.¹⁰³ A map of India showing Dravidanadu was displayed at a special conference held at Kanchipuram on 2 June 1940. The whole of South India and Deccan including a portion of Bengal were shown as Dravidanadu.¹⁰⁴ In the Salem public meeting on 4 December 1940, Periyar declared that non-Brahmins would merge with Congress if it 'guaranteed a due share of power' to them without elucidating or elaborating what then would be the Justicites stand on the Dravidanadu issue and the future role of their party in politics.¹⁰⁵

Periyar started a local agitation at Triuchinapalli protesting against the exclusive dining arrangements made for Brahmin passengers in the railway

¹⁰¹ *Kudi Arasu*, Madras, 31 March and 7, 14 and 28 April 1940.

¹⁰² *Madras Mail*, Madras, 5 April, 1940; *Sunday Observer*, Madras, 14 April 1940.

¹⁰³ *Sunday Observer*, Madras, 21 April 1940.

¹⁰⁴ *Kudi Arasu*, Madras, 3 and 9 June 1940.

¹⁰⁵ *Madras Mail*, Madras, 5 December 1940.

restaurants and succeeded in abolishing it in May 1941.¹⁰⁶ He gave equal importance to the political and social programmes of the party. He demanded the abolition of all social inequalities, especially those based on birth, rather than political independence.¹⁰⁷ When the date of visit of Cripps' Mission was announced on 11 March 1942 and the British Government's proposals for the realisation of Self-Government for India after the end of Second World war;¹⁰⁸ Periyar hurriedly consulted with the members of the committee who were supposed to frame a constitution for the Dravidian State and decided to send a Justice delegation. Accordingly W.P.A. Soundrapandian, Samiappa and Muthiah met the members of the Cripps' Mission on 30 March 1942 and placed before them the proposal of the Justice Party for a separate nation for the Dravidians. The members of the Mission sympathetically viewed the demands of the Justice Party.¹⁰⁹

The commission met the Muslim League and the Scheduled Castes Federation in Delhi. The details of the so-called tripartite agreement were not reported to the party. The Justices thought it was an undemocratic, and an unhealthy precedent set in a political party. Some of them opposed Periyar's leadership and cast doubt on his capacity to lead a political party, especially when the political situation of the country was in a fluid state. The General-

¹⁰⁶ *Sunday Observer*, Madras, 25 May 1941.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*,

¹⁰⁸ *Government of India*, Home Department, Political, File No.18/3/42, poll (1), Confidential Fortnightly Report for the month of March 1942. S.V.Ramamurthy, Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras to E.Conran Smith, Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department D.O.No.p.4-6, 20 March 1942, p.2.

¹⁰⁹ *Sunday Observer*, Madras, 20 April 1942.

Secretary, K.A.P.Viswanathan, became his arch critic. C.N. Annadurai's support was also uncertain, W.P.A.Soundrapandian and Samiappa extended their support to K.A.P.Viswanathan. However K.A.P.Viswanathan resigned in June 1942 and accused Periyar that he used the party to serve his own personal ends. This political charge against Periyar was repeated several times in his later political career.¹¹⁰ Periyar accepted the resignation without any hesitation. The powers vested in K.A.P.Viswanathan were entrusted to C.N. Annadurai as a tactical gesture. C.N. Annadurai accepted the offer of Periyar. It made C.N. Annadurai build up his political career. He considered it wise to support Periyar in the hour of trial and help him transform the Justice Party with the available force in the politics of the country. In July 1944, Periyar announced that the Sixteenth Confederation of the Justice Party would be held in August.¹¹¹ P.T. Rajan and Annadurai rallied for the leadership of the party, but friends of Periyar like Soundarapandian and Samiappan, favoured a more enlightened and democratic leadership.¹¹² Annadurai drafted a resolution to change the nomenclature of the Justice Party and to transform it into a social organisation so that it would not offer to anybody any incentive to seek power or position. It was known as the 'Annadurai resolution'. The members should drop existing castes titles and should never append them to names in future and that the original South Indian Liberal Federation should henceforth be known as the

¹¹⁰ Parthasarathy, T.M., *D.M.K. Varalaru* (T), Madras, 1963, p.32.

¹¹¹ *Kudi Arasu*, Madras, 15 July 1944.

¹¹² Interview with Thiru.Sankaranarayanan, Nagercoil, 10 February 2005.

Dravida Kazhagam.¹¹³ Periyar was unanimously elected to preside over the conference and party's convention and his leadership was extended for another term. Finally the resolution was passed with dubious unanimity. Thus, the Justice Party became a Dravidian Federation or the Dravida Kazhagam in 1944. Periyar claimed that there was a little difference between the new organisation and the Justice Party. The Dravida Kazhgam's social aims attracted enthusiastic young men. But as its political objective was limited and opposed to the Congress concept of Indian nationalism, especially when the whole nation was imbued with that fervour, it was difficult for the Dravida Kazhagam to make a wide range of impact on the people.

¹¹³ Periyar, E.V.R., *Namadu Kurikkol*, pp.38-40; *Kudi Arasu*, Madras, 5 August 1944.